Unity
Core Rulebook

# UNITY

## CREDITS

**Writing, Design, Layout & Production**
Anson Tran

**Additional Writing & Short Stories**
Astra Crompton

**Principal Artwork**
Nguyen Dang Hoang Tri & Raph Lomotan

**Cover Artwork**
Raph Lomotan

**Additional Artwork**
Zulkarnaen Hasan Basri, Ahmad Hilmi & Danh Nguyen

**Editing**
Kate Juniper

**Proof Reading**
Bruno Veilleux & Jim Goodall

**Cartography**
Augustinas Raginskis

Zensara Studios
Distributed by Modiphius Entertainment.

Version 1.0
www.unity-rpg.com
ISBN: 978-1-7751856-0-4
Unity Tabletop RPG and all related marks are © 2018 Zensara Studios. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be duplicated, distributed, or transmitted in any forms or by any means without express permission from Zensara Studios. This is a work of fiction. All characters and places are creations. Any resemblance to actual persons or locations is coincidental.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**Playtesters, Generous Souls & Muses**

Antony Freeborn, David Yarish, Nick Thyssen, Jeffrey Leung, Jimmy Tran, Jack Wong, Eddie Perez, Bruno Veilleux, Rob McKavanagh, The Abantos, The Capistranos, Rand Park, Kim Yde Sørensen, Marko Ćurković, Anthony Wu, Sean Patrick Fannon, Morrus, Geoffrey Bolak, Filip Ambrosius, Dale Clements, Ioannis Laliotis, James Goodall, Pamela Sheehan

**Hands of the Skyfather**

André Winkler, Antony Freeborn, Geoffrey Bolak, James "Juneau" Donaldson, James Victor Alexander, Jeremiah Beach, Mr Hector Geoffrey Dokopoulos Hamilton, Samuel Robert Williams, Timothy Leong, Travis "Shadow" Melnyk, Whink

**Trailblazers**

AJ Marino, Alex Mullenix, Anders Gabrielsson, Anthony Wright, Armin Kessner, Armin "ARIAKAS" Welk, Aron Smith, Benjamin Morris, Brian Koonce, Bryan Flowers, Carl Hare, chapel, Chase M Walker, Chris A Challacombe, Christian A. Nord, Christian Smith, Christine, Christopher Trapp, Claire Abanto, Commiekeebler, David Corsalini, David Homola, David Woodlock, Dominic Zucco, Douglas Popp, Edwin Ghigliotty Jr., Eoin Burke, Eric Coates, ERIC MILLS, Eric Schnell, Eric Steitz, Fabinou, Fenwick McBob, Glenn Berry, Guilherme Xezz, Guy Edward Larke, Haak Saxberg, HallowsEve(CNM), Ian Bogert, J Moses, Joshua Ridens, Jakub Łątkiewicz, Jamie Keane, Jason Giang, Jeff Yantha, Jens Hoelderle, Jim Low [Swords & Stationery], John A W Phillips, Jonathan Bartel, Jörg Bours, Justin Vander Schaaf, Keenan Clarke, Lorimez, Lukas Zarychta, M. Sean Molley, Mark Perry, Mark Schreiber, Markus Raab, Martin Greening, Marty Price, Matias Frosterus, Matrix Sorcica, Matt Wiser, Matthew Blair, Olivier " Maitre Hibou " Robineau, Paul Kolo, Richard 'Vidiian' Greene, Rob McKavanagh, Robert Weatherford, Rod Meek, Ross Carrell, Ryan Drake, Sainrith Tank, Scott "Qualin" Fowler, Shanan Rodgers, Sharif Abed, Silvio Herrera Gea, Simon Cotterill, Simon Threasher, SixPointFive, Sören Kohlmeyer, Space Dogs Role-playing Game, Stacie Winters, Steven Kei Kenobi, Taylor Fisher, Taylor Smith, Thomas Biskup, Thomas Gravgaard Hansen, Tim McPherson, Potato Extraordinaire, Timothy Lam, Todd Hamilton, Xavier Aubuchon-Mendoza, Yergi, Zero Sum Design

# TABLE OF CONTENTS


CHAPTER I: WELCOME TO UNITY 4
The Game 6
Themes 6
Timeline 8
Customization 9
The World of Unity 11
Valla 18
Short Story: Drifting Through Glory 27
Furian 36
Short Story: Anvil of Tiran 47
Human 58
Short Story: The Golden Empress 67
Afflicted 76
Short Story: Madeline's Mask 87
Other Factions 97
The Crimson Horde 97
The Risen 100
The Children of Steel 103
The Fell 106
Divinity 111
Locations 118

CHAPTER II: CHARACTER CREATION 134
Step I: Concept Building 136
Step II: Choosing a Race 136
Step III: Distributing Attributes 137
Step IV: Choosing a Class 137
Step V: Core Paths 138
Step VI: Class Perks 139
Step VII: Class Powers 139
Step VIII: Equipment 139
Growing in Power 140
General Perks 141
Sample Core Paths 142
Character Creation: Valla 144
Character Creation: Furian 146
Character Creation: Human 148
Character Creation: Afflicted 150
Character Sheet Walkthrough 152
Sample Character 154

CHAPTER III: CLASSES 156
Class Advancement 158
Class Features & Perks 158
Class Resources 158
Class Powers 159
Reading Powers 159
Dreadnought 160
Driftwalker 170
Fell Hunter 180
Judge 190
Mystic 200
Phantom 210
Priest 220
Primalist 230
Sentinel 240

CHAPTER IV: CORE RULES 250
Resolution Mechanic 252
Difficulty & Target Numbers 253
Benefit & Hindrance 253
Spark Points 253
Ruin 254
Failing Forward 255
Always Round Down 255
Resting & Recuperations 256
Environmental Dangers 256
Sustenance 257
Optional GM Dice Rolling 257

CHAPTER V: COMBAT RULES 258
Combat Sequence 260
Defining a Round 261
Your Turn 262
Moving Around in Battle 263
Attacking 264
Defending 265
Contesting 265
Recharging Resources 266
Incapacitation & Death 266
Status Effects 269
Other Actions in Combat 269

CHAPTER VI: COLOSSAL COMBAT 270
Titan Rigs 272
Piloting a Titan Rig 272
Titan Rig Combat 275
Titan Rig Power 276
Geronimo Mk I 278
Cindermaw 279
Oberon 280
Leviathan 281

CHAPTER VII: EQUIPMENT 282
Wealth & Currency 284
Armour & Weapons 285
Gear 286
Artifacts 287
Sample Artifacts 288

CHAPTER VII: FOES & FIENDS 306
Encounter Basics 308
Monster Creation 309
Monster Types & Sizes 310
Reading Monster Cards 311
Aquillian 312
Carapid 314
Carnivex 316
Cultist 317
Cyclops 318
Fellspawn 320
Glutton 322
Goblin 324
Green Warden 326
Mk I Scrapbot 328
Mk II Gideon 329
Murkwalker 330
Orc 332
Shrike Maiden 334
Ragehound 335
Shade 336
Silencer 338
Skulker 339
The Tainted 340
Vampire Lord 342
Vermisidon 344
Vorathian Overseer 346
Zakari 348
Zombie 349
Zoog & Rikkisi 350

CHAPTER IX: GM GUIDE 352
Philosophy 354
Character Creation 354
Experience & Levelling Up 355
Player Vs. Player 356
Adventuring 357
Failing Forward 359
Spark Points 360
Ruin 360
Intrusions 362
Combat 362
Distances 363
GM Dice Rolling 363

# CHAPTER I

# WELCOME TO UNITY

The Ivory Queen is dead; the Mad God sleeps for now. For how long? No one knows. His Children, the people of Unity, struggle to make sense of the crumbling world he left behind. What were once pristine lands filled with lush green forests, majestic snow-capped mountains, and sparkling oceans now lay desolate and parched. There was a time when this world was a glorious beacon among the cosmos, unmatched in its surreal beauty and harmony. It was a time when the races of Unity stood together and created societies and shining cities full of wonder and technological marvels. That time has long passed.

Now the Mad God's Children struggle to survive the harsh landscape and the many terrors that beset them from all sides. In a vengeful rage, the Mad God, once the benevolent Skyfather, sundered the very fabric of reality, causing the catastrophic merging of two worlds: the physical and the energetic. From the Great Beyond spilled a world composed of the emotional, spiritual, and psychic energies of all living beings—now unleashed into physical reality.

This second world, dubbed "the Drift" by Unity's shamanic elders (with their sight beyond sight), brought with it many anomalies. The burgeoning spiritual energies unleashed upon Unity imbued its population of automaton slaves with sentience; it infused the dead corpses buried deep beneath the ground with a second chance at life; and it whispered to the fantastical creatures of a forgotten age to emerge from the Great Wilds once more. The Drift also brought with it the darkness of countless past lifetimes—a darkness that had hardened over eons in the shadowy and hidden places of that world. This darkness, which manifested itself as the Fell, swept across all of Unity and brought its mighty civilizations to their very knees.

It is here that our story begins. Now more than ever is a time for heroes. As the world slowly slides towards apocalypse, the broken people of Unity need to find a reason to believe again. They need to believe that something incredible is possible—that the light will one day shine upon them again.

*Be that dim light of hope flickering in a sea of darkness . . . or not . . . you don't owe the world a damn thing. By all means, take advantage of the chaos and make your mark in history if that's more your speed. Whatever you decide, boundless adventure and spectacular stories await you.*

*Throughout the book, you'll find notes on the sides of pages just like this one. These notes can be little tidbits of information about the world, suggestions, tips, or just designer notes that provide insight into the creation of the game.*

*Most of the default rules and suggestions provided are tailored towards a group of 1 GM and 4 players. Some adjustments can be made to better accommodate alternative group numbers, especially towards the difficulty of combat encounters.*

*If you are the GM of your group, be sure to check out Chapter IX: GM Guide.*

# THE GAME

*Unity* is a game of cooperation, imagination, and collaborative storytelling. As this is a group game, you will need some friends to play with. *Unity* is best played with four or more total participants. There will always be a single Game Master and 2 or more players. As a group, you will enter a world prepared by the Game Master and together your actions and choices will weave a story that is uniquely your own—hopefully one that will be full of cherished memories and interesting moments!

## THE GAME MASTER

The Game Master or "GM" takes on the role of creator, narrator, and adjudicator. The GM initially constructs the world, its denizens, and plot points for players to start their adventure. On top of all these responsibilities, the GM wears many more hats:

- The GM controls all the non-player characters (NPCs) that the players encounter and interact with. Some of these NPCs may be ferocious enemies that the players must defeat; others may be gentle souls that the players can win over and garner aid from.
- The GM, with help from the players, will continually drive the story forward. This can be achieved by introducing obstacles that must be overcome, or by presenting rewards that are tempting to the player-characters' (PC) objectives, for example. While the GM has seemingly god-like powers and decides what happens, what doesn't, and what might, the GM is not the antagonist when conducting a game.
- The GM and players' relationship should be a collaborative one of moving the story forward together, and of creating interesting situations that can lead to memorable moments. The GM's power to preside over a game can be viewed as a tool to help generate a compelling and cooperative play experience. Achieving just the right amount of tension and pushing and pulling at the appropriate times to get everyone at the table riveted are the hallmarks of a great GM.

## THE PLAYERS

The rest of the group at the table are considered players. As a player you create or use a pre-made character as your avatar to interact with the world created by the GM. There are rules for Character Creation and, if need be, your GM can help you bring to life your vision of the character you would like to play.

Whether you create a character from scratch or use a pre-made character, your character is wholly your own. When playing, you will decide what your character does, where they go, whom they talk to, and what they say. Their behaviour and reactions are completely up to you. You will be able to don the persona of your character and immerse yourself in the world through your character's eyes.

## PLAYING THE GAME

As a storytelling platform, you play the game by talking to each other. Your actions and reactions to the situations presented by the GM, or the situations that the players get into through their own choices, all contribute to the collaborative narrative of the adventure.

Players will engage with the GM by talking about where they want to go and what they want to do. In turn, the GM will react accordingly, creating a living and breathing world. Most of the interactions and interpretations between the GM and the players will be rooted in common sense, and reflective of what we expect to happen in reality. Where things might get a bit fantastical or murky, we can turn to the rules provided in this book to help with arbitration.

# THEMES

Below are a few core themes inherent to the setting that will play a prominent part in how adventuring in Unity will feel.

## A WORLD ON FIRE

The lore and rules in this book are geared towards exploration of the world of Unity during a time period known as the Age of Wrath. The land is a dangerous place and reality itself has been sheared. The once mighty civilizations of the Valla, Furians, and Humans have all been sent reeling, with societal progress halted and great losses suffered. The harmony that once bound the three races of the Children of Unity and brought them into their glorious Golden Age of prosperity and advancement has been shattered.

Dark times lie ahead as the major players of the world struggle to make sense of the calamity that has befallen them. Not only has a great darkness been unleashed on the world by way of the demonic hordes of Fell, but each of the Skyfather's Children has been cursed by his hand as punishment for their hubris when they challenged his beloved, the Ivory Queen, and destroyed her.

Scorched deserts, smouldering ruins, dead grey forests, and steamy bog marshes dot the lands where the Drift has spilled through the cracks of reality, bringing with it terrors from the dark. It has been difficult to find harmony since danger lurks around every corner. This has caused a shift in cultural consciousness—from one of striving to merely surviving.

## MORAL QUAGMIRE

One of the core themes *Unity* promotes exploring is the question of morality. In a world that's slowly devouring itself, people's hearts become closed as fear and instinct overtake them. The imperative to survive can lead to actions that are questionable. Yet these situations can also inspire reflection. Is it wrong to steal so that your child won't starve? Is it wrong to kill the bandit who tries to steal from you in order to feed her own child?

*Unity*'s setting provides ample devices and fertile themes around which to create emotional stories and confront and discuss moral dilemmas. One example is that of the sentient automata: once mindless slaves, they are now thoughtful living beings. Some of them seek to liberate the many still entrapped, while others seek vengeance on their fleshy "masters." Should they be free? Are they truly alive? Does a "good robot" truly exist? Can they feel as mortals do?

## CULTURE CLASH

Since the beginning of creation, the major races of the world have oscillated between apathy, tension, unity, and all-out war. Throughout the ages, the Valla, the Furians, and Humans have fought both against each other and together against the Crimson Horde. When our story begins, the Age of Unity has ended, like the setting of a glorious sun, and made way for what may only be the dusk of the troubled times to come.

The pressures of survival cause tensions between the races to run high as fear conquers empathy. Each race points a finger at one another, blaming them for the Great Calamity and the darkness that is now encroaching on their world. As one of the new generation in this treacherous landscape, will you be able to inspire hope and open doors again, or will you take advantage of the prejudices and chaos to serve your own ends?

## TECHNOLOGICAL WONDERS

Before the Skyfather became the Mad God; before the Fell spilled into the world; before the Children of Unity were brought to their knees; there was a time when the people came close to touching perfection.

The Age of Unity was a golden era for all the major races. Working together as one united force, they knew no equal in the world. There was no enemy or power that could threaten them—not until the Skyfather returned from his journey across the stars, full of wrath and vengeance, as the Mad God.

During that Golden Age, the Children of Unity combined technological ingenuity with arcane knowledge to create marvellous wonders. Weapons and tools of great power became common; robotic slaves were a household item; and, as a symbol of their mortal aspirations, they built constructs so high they could touch the sky.

Now those great machines, known as the Titan Rigs, are long buried and lost to the sands of time, along with a host of other incredible creations. The knowledge to maintain and recreate such things is said to be lost, especially since the Mad God afflicted his Children's best and brightest minds with the horrible disease known as the Phage.

## EXPLORATION & DISCOVERY

Despite the bleakness of the world, there are hidden gems tucked away from the turmoil that besets Unity. Secret places as yet untouched by the darkness await discovery, ripe for exploration. These are places of beauty, where folks have learned to work together: places where hope still lives on.

As the world burned, borders receded and civilizations shrunk. There are large swathes of the landscape that are now uninhabited, and which have been transformed so significantly that it is difficult to say what will be found by an intrepid adventurer.

*Where will you go? What will you discover out there?*

*Hard choices presented as moral dilemmas or opposing views in between characters can be a wonderful source of tension and drama.*

*The land of Unity is a large place to explore. Check out the Locations section on pg. 118 for a taste of Unity's history and interesting sites to discover.*

***Timeline Legend***

- *Age of Strife*
- *Age of Unity*
- *Age of Wrath*

*Unity's known timeline shows only a fraction of what has transpired in the world. The chaotic landscape was ruled by the primal elements and nature long before the Skyfather and his Ivory Queen arrived.*

*Because Unity takes place during the Age of Wrath, the GM and players are able to decide just how prevalent a role technology plays in the current setting. A lot of the Golden Age technologies are long buried and considered lost. Those wanting a more low-tech adventure can keep it that way.*

*For a campaign where technology is more prevalent, it's not uncommon for a group of players to eventually man a Titan Rig to do battle with colossal threats.*

## Timeline

**Creation**

**Skyfather & Ivory Queen emerge**

**The Valla are created**

**Exodus Event**
*Magister Belron is the first Valla to shatter his Spirit Stone. Many others follow and are cast out of Vallan lands*

**The Furians are created**

**First Contact**
*Furians and Valla meet*

**Humanity is created**

**The Stone Curtain**
*A mountainous wall is erected by the Skyfather and Ivory Queen to protect Humanity*

**Full Contact**
*Humanity harnesses the power of steam and breaks through the Stone Curtain, making contact with the Valla and Furians*

**The Chaos Wars**
*War breaks out between all three nations*

**Skyfather's Sojourn**
*The Skyfather mysteriously disappears into the stars*

**The Crimson Horde**
*The Ivory Queen creates a savage horde to unite her Children against a common enemy*

**The Taloran Accords**
*All three nations call for a ceasefire and unite under one banner against the Crimson Horde*

**Golden Age**
*Technology, knowledge and culture flourish immensely*

**Fallen Queen**
*The Ivory Queen, now known as the Red Queen, is slain at the hands of her Children*

**The Great Calamity**
*The Skyfather returns, cursing his Children and sundering the very fabric of reality*

**Civil War**
*War breaks out within the Human Empire between the healthy and those afflicted by the Phage*

**Rise of the Afflicted**
*Those affected by the Phage leave the Human Empire*

History is inescapable. Wise folks attempt to chronicle and study the events of the past to help them understand not only the conditions of the present but to also help ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated. After the Great Calamity and the horrific death toll that came with it, the torch for Keeper of Records has passed onto a young bright-eyed historian by the name of Sorensen.

Sorensen,
Keeper of Records

## CUSTOMIZATION

One of the major design philosophies behind *Unity* is based on allowing GMs and players to easily customize their play experience.

### GAME TYPES

Within the pages of this book, you will find a richly detailed setting that should provide ample material for you to craft immersive locales teeming with textured characters with various roles and motives. So while the world of *Unity* is presented as an epic fantasy adventure about mighty heroes standing against the coming darkness, your game can actually take on several different scopes.

- You can be great heroes, battling against impossible odds and saving the world from annihilation.
- You can be a group of adventurers seeking excitement, fame, and fortune in places that hold many secrets just waiting to be discovered.
- Or perhaps you want to turn the dial up on "gritty" and create a harsher landscape focused on survival, deadly encounters, and tough choices.

The world of *Unity* was built to provide a large canvas and a rich palette with which to paint.

### FAMILIAR TROPES

Learning a new system and a new world can be a daunting task. With this in mind, *Unity* has been designed to draw upon the familiar tropes and archetypes found in typical fantasy. While *Unity* deviates slightly from various traditional fantasy aspects to weave a unique world and generate a sense of discovery, GMs and players familiar with fantasy roleplaying games should be able to quickly draw parallels and easily understand the different concepts, creatures, and classes prevalent throughout *Unity*.

### SETTING CONVERSION

Because of its basis in familiar tropes and archetypes, *Unity* is readily adaptable to your own vision of a fantasy setting. While it does require a little elbow grease and effort, a lot of *Unity*'s aspects, such as the races and classes, can be converted and customized to your liking lore-wise.

The closer your vision aligns with a fantasy world where magick and magi-tech are accepted, the easier it will be to convert various aspects of *Unity*.

*When you reach the Classes section, you should be able to draw connections between Unity's classes and certain classic fantasy archetypes e.g. the Mystic could be a Wizard in another world and the Dreadnought might be a mix of Barbarian and Warrior.*

# THE WORLD OF UNITY

The known world of Unity is a large land mass surrounded on both sides by two great oceans, the Cerulean Expanse and the Roaring Depths. The inhabitants of Unity have never ventured beyond the great oceans. Mighty storms and deadly maelstroms have swallowed up any expedition that has been sent out to explore what lies beyond the vast watery horizons. Some say the storms and violent waves are a fatal warning from the Divine to protect Unity's people from the forbidden; others speak of the possibility of paradise beyond the great oceans, and believe that whoever—or whatever—resides there creates these storms to keep others away.

Whatever the truth is, the great continent where our stories take place is vast and varied—from the Arctic Mountains and unending Wilds of the North, to the shining cities that dot each coast and the unforgiving desert sands of the South. Every step in between these borders holds the promise of adventure, culture, and excitement. While all of Unity was once beautiful and raw, the current Age of Wrath has set the world on fire and transformed the land into a much darker and more desolate place. Since the Skyfather sundered reality, Unity will never be the same as it once was.

It is now a place of extremes: breathtaking beauty struggles against a backdrop of rampant destruction. Like a healthy body that's been stricken with disease, the dark tendrils of corruption slowly spread across the land, tainting everything they touch. The once Sparkling Coast of the Gemini Peninsula has been transformed into the Edge of Night, a place of perpetual darkness; the Golden Forests have rotted to the core and become the Deadwood, a place of blight and decay; the lush wetlands of the West have been twisted into a noxious swamp known as the Dreadmarsh; and the verdant valley that straddles the edge of civilization and the scorching desert sands of the South now exists as a barren land of crumbling dirt known as the Wastes. Despite the darkness and gloom, however, pockets of beauty untouched by the Great Calamity still exist: the Obsidian Forests of Furia, the Starlight Woods of Vallantis, the emerald waters of Greenwater Bay, and the magnificent Jade Mountain, risen from the ocean off the coast of the Great Wilds. All serve as a reminder of better times, and as a beacon of hope—and something to fight for—for the future.

## THE DRIFT

While this world formed, a second world was growing alongside it: a mirrored reality, in which the psychic and emotional emanations of all sentient creatures amassed. It was a world of spiritual energy, unseen to the naked eye. The seers and shamans of old called this world the Drift.

Initially, the Drift was a benign place that co-existed with the physical world, both realities feeding into one another in an unending cycle. The spiritual energy from the Drift gave life to the physical bodies created in the real world. These creatures then interacted with each other and the world around them, generating emotions that fed back into the Drift, and eventually becoming the seeds for new life in the physical realm in a never-ending cycle. It was the natural order of things and ensured that Unity continued to evolve, lush and beautiful and teeming with life.

The arrival of the Skyfather and Ivory Queen marked an end to the perfect cycle that had come to define the primordial world. Two beings of immense power, they looked upon the world and saw it as a perfect home in which to create their Children. When they created them—first the Valla, then the Furians, and finally the Humans, along with thought and free will—they disrupted the natural flow between the physical and spiritual worlds. The cycle that had served the primitive world of Unity so well for eons, before the arrival of the gods and their Children, had been tainted. With thought and free will came the potential for evil.

Vices such as greed, wrath, and pride now infected the Drift. This negative energy accumulated over the centuries, and the rate of accumulation grew as time passed and the population in the physical world expanded. In the physical realm, there were no signs of change, because the invisible walls that separated the Drift from reality were strong and stable. But deep inside the Drift, the concentrated darkness that existed in the hearts of the denizens of Unity gave way to the creation of unspeakable horrors. The resultant foul creatures raged against the boundaries of their spiritual prison, longing to taste the physical world and wreak destruction upon it. The Valla called these creatures "the Fallen" in their ancient tongue, for they are the manifested demons of those who have fallen from grace and given in to

*The Cerulean Expanse and the Roaring Depths have appetites beyond just naval ships. During the Age of Unity when technology was at its peak, mighty airships powered by lightning failed to move past those stretches of endless oceans as gale-force winds obliterated smaller airships and froze larger ones, causing them to drop out of the sky.*

*Even in the darkest and most inhospitable places that exist in Unity, life finds a way.*

*The Vallan word for the Fallen or Fell is "Umbria."*

*The first Fell appeared shortly after the Valla were created. Their sighting was a very rare occurrence during these times. Only a handful of Fell every century would somehow make their way to the physical world.*

their darkest emotions. These demons would eventually be known to all as the Fell.

Now, in the Age of Wrath, the invisible gates that held back the legions of demonic Fell have been shattered. The Skyfather, in his irreconcilable anger, sundered the world with a damning strike that tore the very fabric of reality, weakening it in many places and allowing the Drift—and with it the Fell—to bleed through. While the results of the Drift spilling into the physical realm are readily apparent, few have ventured into the Drift itself. The spiritual world holds many mysteries; some even speculate that it might hold the key to ending the demonic threat permanently.

## THE AGES

### THE AGE OF CREATION

The Age of Creation began with the birth of the Firstborn: the Valla. The Skyfather and the Ivory Queen had a vision for Unity, one where they seeded the lands with intelligent life—life that possessed a spiritual spark that shone far brighter than the primitive wildlife that had claimed the world until then. The advent of the Valla marked a turning point in history as the once wild and untamed lands felt, for the first time, the touch of civilization.

The Valla integrated into their surroundings swiftly, valuing the bounty that both the Divine and nature provided them. Their Spirit Stones enabled a psychic and emotional link between all Valla, and they lived in harmony with each other and the land for many generations. The peaceful life of the Vallan civilization was disrupted when the Exodus occurred. A small group of Valla, valuing their individuality and privacy, shattered their Spirit Stones and severed their link from the collective consciousness. This would be the first instance of true discord in Unity; it would have reverberating consequences in the Drift. The Exodus planted the first seeds of strife and anguish into that spiritual world. The lingering animosity between the two sects of Valla would continue to nourish and grow these dark seeds as time went on.

The Skyfather and the Ivory Queen had made the Valla perfect in almost every way. Part of this perfection was gifting them with lives counted in centuries, and in some very rare cases, milennia. With what seemed like an eternity ahead of them, the Valla grew complacent in their majestic cities. They indulged in the arts and led easy, predictable lives. Their thirst for growth and their need to thrive dwindled with each passing day. Their emotional and social needs were met fully thanks to the psychic link they shared, and their want for material luxuries was provided for with the abundance they had procured from the land. The Valla had carved out a small part of the world to call their own, and began to stagnate in their blissful satisfaction. The Skyfather and his Ivory Queen's vision for their Children—to spread across all of Unity, taming and elevating it, remained unfulfilled.

To correct their mistakes, the godly parents decided they would attempt once more to create a race that would carry out their divine intention: for a world whose potential would be fully realized. The creation of the mighty Furians marked the middle of the Age of Creation. Industrious, strong, and proud, the Furians emerged from their volcanic home with a powerful drive to shape the land around them. The Skyfather and the Ivory Queen made sure to correct the mistakes they had made during the creation of the Valla: the Furians possessed shorter lifespans—only a couple of centuries rather than a Valla's potential to live for millennia. The Furians also lacked a communal link, which forced them toward social action to satisfy their mental and emotional needs. They were also instilled with a reservoir of great power: a boundless energy that demanded an outlet.

This combination of factors pushed the Furians to constantly endeavour, expanding their territories with forge cities that dotted the land and grew bigger in time. A traveller knew they were entering Furian territory by the sounds of the pounding of Furian hammers and the perpetual crackle of their ever-burning furnaces. The Furians were craftsmen living in a warrior culture, in which honour and duty were held to the highest regard.

The Furians and Valla would eventually meet. Minor skirmishes ensued between the two civilizations at first, but an eventual peace was brokered and trade routes formed. The Skyfather and the Ivory Queen were pleased that their Children could get along, but this satisfaction eventually turned to displeasure as they realized that the Furians, too, would grow complacent. The Furians had found an outlet for their boundless energy and industrious drive in their craftsmanship and trade with the Valla. Their territories had expanded rapidly at first, but eventually plateaued when they had conquered most of the Midlands. Content to churn away at their forges all day and retire to their families and communal halls for a flagon of mead each night, the Furians' fire for life—for expansion—reduced from the roaring blaze it once was to a gentle simmering flame.

As the Skyfather and his Ivory Queen looked down upon the world, they still saw such wondrous possibilities in the vast, untamed lands of Unity, and so for the third time they created a new race of Children. Scooping up a handful of clay, the Skyfather fashioned the first of the Humans. When he breathed life into them, the Humans arose from the earth weak and soft. Their fleshy bodies had little in the way of natural defenses; they lacked the strength of

*Rainbows became a phenomenon when Humanity came into being. The colourful arches always came after a nourishing rain granted by the Ivory Queen to Human cities that existed on the edge of the desert.*

the Furians and the grace of the Valla. Furthermore, Humanity was endowed the shortest lifespan of all the Children of Unity. Most would never live to see a hundred. The Ivory Queen, upon seeing the deficiencies of her youngest Children, wept for them. She asked her beloved to grant them gifts like those he had bestowed on their older Children, but he refused. The Skyfather told the Ivory Queen that he had already granted them the greatest gift of all: he had given them a reason to live each day with fervor and a hunger to constantly thrive—because they had such little time in this world compared to the other races.

This impetus to live fully drove Humanity to soar as a civilization. What took the Valla and Furians centuries to accomplish, the Humans achieved in a fraction of the time. Their lack of any particular god-given gifts, either physical and mental, directed their focus to harnessing the natural resources around them to fuel the man-made technology that was constantly being created and improved upon. The Human population continued to grow at an exponential rate, driven by the feverish pursuit of living life to its fullest.

The Ivory Queen, not having been able to grant Humanity a direct gift to their physiology, instead showered them with her love in other ways: Human settlements would always have a bountiful harvest, even in the face of inclement weather. The Stone Curtain, a range of impassable mountains, she created to protect Humanity from its older siblings, allowing them to grow into their own formidable civilization. The basin in which Humanity first formed was an area rich in natural resources that never seemed to end, despite the Humans' accelerating rate of consumption in the name of the Human technological machine.

Even with such abundance, Humanity thirsted for more. When the Humans finally harnessed the power of steam, they set their sights north, beyond the Stone Curtain. The Human spirit was inflamed at the possibility of new lands to explore and the promise of adventure, and so Humanity pushed forward and across the Stone Curtain. There they met the Valla and the Furians for the first time. Conflict ensued, but eventually it would turn into a tentative relationship based on trade.

*When the Skyfather disappeared into the cosmos, the very stars above Unity dimmed. Some say their lustre has never returned since that day.*

The Humans continued to expand, snatching up pockets of land where the Valla and Furians had not laid claim yet. The relationship between the three nations grew increasingly complex as the centuries passed, with each new generation threatening to destabilize the tenuous pacts that maintained peace. Eventually the rope that held the Children of Unity from war would fray beyond repair, and the world would be thrust into an Age of Strife.

## THE AGE OF STRIFE

When tensions between the three races reached a fever pitch, war broke out. The tentative peace that had endured for many centuries could not last. Seeds of jealousy grew in the hearts of the Valla and the Furians as they took notice of the Divine favour that was showered upon Humanity. When a drought swept across the land, Human cities continued to thrive with abundant harvests and a steady supply of rain in their territories. When the Valla and Furians ventured further south, they saw the majesty and grandiosity that was the Stone Curtain. The mountain range seemed to have been carefully crafted by the gods to serve only as protection for their newest Child, whereas the Valla and the Furians had to fend for themselves against the marauding beasts and harsh elements of Unity.

Humanity's burning drive to explore and expand spurred the Valla and the Furians to begin looking outwards from their own safe territories. The Skyfather and the Ivory Queen had finally been granted their wish: to see their intelligent creations mould and shape the raw, untamed world before them. This came at a price, however. Eventually, all three of the Children of Unity were drawn into a series of conflicts that became known as the Chaos Wars. Disputes over territory and trade pacts, combined with a sense of discontent towards the Divine from the elder Children, exploded into all-out war. Human ingenuity allowed Humanity to hold their own against their older and stronger counterparts. The Valla and the Furians had natural advantages and experience to leverage against each other, but were taken aback when machines of steel, steam, and lightning stormed across the plains to wreak havoc on their armies.

The Chaos Wars continued over the course of a hundred years, with large scale conflicts breaking out followed by short periods of peace and smaller skirmishes between the races. The Skyfather and the Ivory Queen wept as they watched from above the violence that their Children inflicted on each other. It was not meant to be like this. Their initial joy had lasted but for a moment—like the flickering of a delicate flame snuffed out by bloodshed.

Deeply pained, the Skyfather disappeared one night in what would be known as the Skyfather's Sojourn. Nobody knows where he went. Some say he wandered the cosmos aimlessly in grief. Others say he went to search for a new world to create a new people—one that would not disappoint him. The Ivory Queen was left behind to mourn both the loss of her beloved and the fall of her Children.

## THE AGE OF UNITY

Unable to contain her grief over her Children's bloodshed and the loss of her beloved, the Ivory Queen struggled to find a way to save her Children and bring home their Father. The answer came, not of her own volition, but from a whisper that came from deep beyond the void. The Ivory Queen could not resist the idyllic promise of harmony and the return of her beloved that the whisper assured her.

In a desperate and misguided attempt, the Ivory Queen created all manner of fearsome creatures to set upon her Children. Banded together under a blood-red banner, the Crimson Horde assaulted all three nations relentlessly. A common enemy would unite the Children of Unity, the Voice promised. In fact it did more than unite them: it turned them into the greatest fighting force the world had ever seen.

At first, the invasion of the Crimson Horde caught the Valla, the Furians, and the Humans by surprise. The three Children suffered many losses; the sheer number and ferocity of the Crimson Horde were utterly overwhelming for any one of the Children to deal with. The Ivory Queen began to doubt her course of action, but again the Voice from beyond whispered to her and re-assured her to stay the course. Little did she know the psychic energies of the Chaos Wars and the constant anguish that had been building in Unity for centuries was fuelling the darkness that dwelled inside the Drift. The Chaos Wars had started a fire; the Crimson Horde turned it into a roaring blaze.

Pushed to the brink of defeat, the Children of Unity banded together to form an alliance meant to ensure their survival against the Crimson Horde. Together, they beat back the Crimson Horde and sent them scattering into the Great Wilds, never to set foot again where civilization existed. With the horrific events still fresh in their minds, the three nations showed a strong desire to maintain their alliance and help each other rebuild. Technology and skill sets were shared interchangeably between the races, and the Children of Unity entered a Golden Age when trade and technology flourished. The

*The whisper from the void that tempted the Ivory Queen—could it be darker and more powerful entities at work that wanted to feast on the coming conflict? Or was it a genuine offer to unite the Children?*

kingdoms were rebuilt in even greater splendor than before the Crimson Horde's invasion.

The Golden Age lasted for several centuries, and while the fear of the Crimson Horde had subsided, the anger that brewed in the hearts of many Children still existed. The Children of Unity had felt forsaken by their divine parents. Their Father had abandoned them and their Mother had tried to kill them, as if wishing to wipe away a mistake she had made. The sting of betrayal that burned in their hearts would not be quelled until retribution was served.

They shattered the Throne of Heaven, a conduit to the Divine, and took their fight to the Ivory Queen. Greatly weakened from having created the Crimson Horde, the Queen could not survive the onslaught from her own Children. Her diminished essence, trapped in her physical avatar, made her vulnerable—killable.

Her death scream reached across the cosmos and called the Skyfather back across a sea of countless stars to Unity. The Skyfather's journey back home to Unity took centuries, but the hunger for retribution that consumed him never dimmed. In his inconsolable rage, he struck the world, pulling back only at the last moment, a whisper of mercy for his Children still echoing in his aching heart.

***The gods are not dead.*** *The Ivory Queen's death left a void in the hearts of the people. This yearning to connect with something greater than themselves eventually willed a newer generation of demigods into existence, born from the Queen's dispersed godly essence.* *See pg. 111.*

*The Crimson War and the resulting pain and death caused a massive surge of dark energy inside the Drift.*

*With the walls of reality already bursting at the seams from the swelling ocean of negative energy in the Drift, the Skyfather's strike was the straw that broke the camel's back.*

## THE AGE OF WRATH

When the Skyfather returned and struck the earth, the force of his strike sheared the very fabric of reality and caused the Drift to leak through into the physical world. The sundering of reality would come to be called the Great Calamity, and it marked the dawn of the Age of Wrath. Strange anomalies began to occur across the lands. Due to the sheer amount of spiritual energy pouring out of the breach, the automata of the Human Empire began to come alive with sentience, the dead were rising from their graves in the East, and the scattered remnants of the Crimson Horde began to re-emerge from the Great Wilds of the North. The darkest hour was yet to come.

From the deepest parts of the Drift, the parts that harboured the most dark and evil thoughts and vicious emotions of all living things, sprung a legion of demonic entities known as the Fell. The unending stream of wars of past ages had fed the darkness growing in the Drift and given it life. The Fell spilled forth from the breach and washed over Unity like a black tide of unending doom. Countless lives were lost in the efforts to stem the sea of darkness. The Children of Unity, now cursed by the Skyfather, paid the price for their sinful pride—his final judgment for their unforgivable crime of matricide: the unique gifts of the Valla and the Furians were stripped from them, and a plague was visited upon the best and brightest minds of Humanity.

The world now teeters on the edge of oblivion. Apocalypse looms on the horizon as civilization is beset on all sides by terror and tyranny. Alliances are shattered as kingdoms lie broken and smouldering. Lands that were once vibrant and lush with life have been replaced by smoking, grey wastelands, corrupted as they are by the Fell energies from the Drift. The Children of Unity, lost in their pain, have begun once more to close their borders, and slowly forget the alliances that once made them strong and able to survive the impossible.

A new faction arises from the fires that sweep across Unity. The Afflicted, a subset of Humanity—its most brilliant minds—that bore the brunt of the Skyfather's curse in the form of the Phage, have been exiled from the Human Empire. Between the Fell invasions, the rise of the Undead, the newly sentient Automata, and the resurgence of the Crimson Horde, a civil war broke out in the Human Empire as those who were spared the Skyfather's wrath banished their own Phage-afflicted brethren from their borders, in fear of the terrible plague. Now the Afflicted wander the lands trying to find a place to call home. *The Age of Wrath is when our story begins.*

## THE SIEGE OF AVALON

Week after week, month after month, the Children of Unity were beat back, losing ground with each passing day. Eventually all three races were pushed back to their capital cities. The city of Avalon, capital of the Human Empire, would be the first to fall. In an act of desperation the current Emperor, Gabriel, sent out emissaries on a life-or-death mission to reach the Valla and the Furians. Gabriel proposed that they set aside their differences and forge an alliance to ensure their mutual survival. Swallowing his pride, he admitted that Humanity would perish without help from its older siblings. As a sign of good faith, Gabriel included the plans and schematics for Human technology, to be adopted for the war effort, with his plea.

Gabriel did not hear back from the Valla or the Furians, and stood alone the day the siege came to his city. As Avalon's walls began to crumble and fall, a war horn blared in the distance. The soft orange sun shimmered on the horizon as the silhouette of the Furian Army crested the hill. With a mighty war cry, the Furians charged into the rear ranks of the Crimson Horde as they lay siege to Avalon. The ground shook and thundered with the might of the Furians' charge. Furian warriors tore apart the Crimson Horde, which was taken by surprise. The Humans cheered as their own knights poured out from the city to surround the invading army. Their celebration was short-lived as the sky grew dark and a large shadow was thrown over the Humans and the Furians.

Winged creatures dotted the skies in numbers that blotted out the sun. They swooped down, rending the Children's flesh and armour with their razor-sharp talons and bladed weaponry. Riders rained down spears and rocks. Human artillery and ranged weaponry was near-spent from the battle so far. The Furians were known for their prowess in melee combat, but had never faced aerial opponents of such magnitude. When hope seemed lost once more, the ground shook again, this time from the hundreds of creatures that fell from the sky and crumpled to the earth in their death throes.

A thousand arrows sailed through the sky and into the fluttering black mass that floated above the city. As the winged creatures hurtled to the ground, the rays of the setting sun began to peek through once more, renewing the hope of the battered Human and Furian armies below. Off on a nearby ridge, the Valla stood. Vallan Rangers launched a constant stream of arrows into the flying Horde, relieving the Human and Furian soldiers from the aerial assault.

United, the Children of Unity beat back the Crimson Horde that day and cemented their new alliance. The gates of Avalon opened to welcome the high command of both the Valla and Furian nations. This moment in history signified the creation of the Taloran Accords: a set of pacts that would tie all three nations together under one banner to defeat the Crimson Horde.

# VALLA

*For a shorter, two-page overview of the Valla, see pg. 144.*

## THE LAND

When the Skyfather and Ivory Queen decided to begin seeding life in Unity, they picked an idyllic location between forests and lakes where their first Children, the Valla, might flourish. Though varied, these lands were lush and provided all the resources the Valla could want for. Fringed by iron-rich deserts to the south and life-giving marshlands to the west, the heart of their domain grew across three primary branches: the snow-capped mountains in the east, the idyllic valleys to the north, and the tranquil forests in the immediate south.

*The Starlight Woods are the home of the renowned Night Wardens. These legendary Vallan rangers were responsible for training the Fell Hunters after the Great Calamity.*

**Crescent Mountains:** The mountain ranges in which the Twilight Caverns can be found are some of the highest peaks in Unity. Sporting snow all year round, these unforgiving slopes are not for the faint-hearted, yet many embark on the quest for the mysterious power that lurks within its labyrinthine walls. Its glittering stone is like stars in a night sky, and it's said that stepping into the caverns is like stepping into the heart of the cosmos. As the nebulous energy of the Twilight Caverns waxes and wanes with the moon, it is closely tied with the ancient challenge of Lunastra, the Silver Maiden, and Vorath, the Demon King. Those in search of granted wishes and unspeakable power venture forth to find glory or disaster.

**Sapphire Basin:** A glacier-fed lake, Sapphire Basin gets its name both from the deep green of its waters and the verdant valley that surrounds it on every side. A favourite haunt of artists the world over, here the Valla have long lived in harmony with nature. The Valla carefully curate the wildlife teeming throughout its meadows, thickets, and valley slopes. It is said that the vast majority of the Valla's food comes from this natural garden.

**Starlight Woods:** The Starlight Woods lie west of the Sapphire Basin and north of the Crescent Mountains, and are said to be deeply sacred. It is here that the Drift energy has taken root in the forest, and at night the trees and plants come alive with bioluminescence that rivals the stars themselves. Worshippers of the demigoddess Lunastra keep eternal watch over her mystic Windsong from their temple among the trees. Once a common song of healing, the music flows less frequently now. While cynics believe it is a sign that the Divine is abandoning

## THE WINDSONG

"I had heard tales from the Old Ones, but they were nothing to prepare me for the sound itself. I had barely made my way between the trees, desperate for somewhere safe to rest for the night, when the first strains of the Windsong washed over me. How can I explain it? It was as if longing itself were made into music! It was nothing so maudlin as lost love, nor was it the quick flame of avarice... this was the sound of pure longing—of a soul that had been separated from the Divine. It lifted the weight from my bones; I thought I was floating. I barely knew I was moving until I stumbled across them: Worshippers of Lunastra, dancing in silken shifts beneath the full moon's light. And the purity of it! The sheer beauty brought me to weeping—you laugh, sir, because you have not heard it. But I shall never again know anything so beautiful, and it is that wistfulness that drove me to hang up my sword and take up the lute. The Longing is in me now, unshakably. Stay a moment, friend, and listen to my song..."

*–Mellita Celestine, Royal Troubadour*

*While many minstrels and musical artists have attempted to capture the beauty of the Windsong, no one has come close to mimicking the power of this haunting melody.*

the world, the faithful are adamant it is a sign that Lunastra's healing is nearing completion, and that soon she will walk the world once more.

**Desert Colonies:** Though the Valla are not bred for the desert, they are resourceful and patient enough to make their homes anywhere they set their mind to. The desert colonies have not spread and flourished as the other cities across Vallan territory have, but they have gained special note, as it is where the Drifting Glory, a powerful but dangerous herb, has most strongly taken root. Due to its abundance of

resources beneath the scorching sands, a restless tension exists across the region between Vallan, Furian, Afflicted, and Human factions.

*Vallan cities are the envy of all the other races. Their beauty is acclaimed across the lands. Even the very buildings sing when a breeze passes through them. Human architects have been known to spend a sabbatical in Vallan cities (should they be accepted) to study the Firstborn's design principles.*

*Lunara and Greenwater have an unspoken rivalry as two of the most famous port cities on the west coast of Unity. Both are highly affluent and rich in culture. Their endless resources are often spent on lavish improvements to their city to one-up the other. Lately, Greenwater has outdone Lunara due to the proximity of Lunara to the Tempest of Terror and the Dreadmarsh. Business is always bad where demons are involved.*

*Ishenas is a unique city in that over the years it evolved from a Vallan colony to a twin-city housing both Valla and Afflicted. Racial tensions run high with the proud Valla wanting to 'cleanse the filth' from their once sparkling walls. The Afflicted largely keep to themselves, but their presence breeds fear and drags down the prestige of the city.*

## MAJOR CITIES

**Vallantis:** The capital city of the Valla, it is here that the throne of King Celefar Stormsong remains. A vaulting cluster of crystal and glass towers, Vallantis sparkles like a faceted jewel. When the breeze sweeps down from the coast, the ivory turrets of the king's palace sing like a heavenly organ. Vallantis is both the political heart of Valla and an integral centre for the port trade routes. The capital is known throughout Unity as refined and supportive of industry, learning, and the arts. While all cities have their seedy underbellies, the Valla take special care to hide the unsightly away in segregated districts and underground streets that stretch for hundreds of miles. The cynics say it is this illusion of perfection that lies at the heart of the schism between the Vallan and Valtoran (*pg. 24*) factions.

**Windgrove:** The largest of the cities in the Twilight Woods, Windgrove is part monastery, part retreat, part magick-training ground. Though faith plays a strong role in the daily life of Windgrove, woe betide any who think it undefended! Some of the most potent casters in Unity are trained by the revered instructors of Windgrove. Windgrove Academy's slender towers, wrought with copper filigree, rise amongst the trees, welcoming only the most elite and capable students. There is an artful play at natural design in the architecture here; if it were not for the glitter of gems inlaid along the spires and archways, it would be easy to mistake Windgrove for the forest itself. On the southern edge of the city is Windgrove Library, an institution said to house more tomes and volumes than any other in Unity, on an equally vast array of subjects.

**Lunara:** The port town that feeds the capital (and arguably all Vallan interests in Unity) is the most metropolitan of all Vallan cities. While its gleaming stone, salt-frosted glass, and signature half-moon architecture are a welcome sight to weary merchants, business in Lunara is exacting. For those willing to endure endless haggling, hidden beneath the veneer of tradition and formality are many banks and well-established merchants willing to support ambitious business ventures. For those in a hurry—or wishing to avoid the port authorities while holding less-than-legal merchandise—there is a thriving back alley market known as the Ivory Claw. Best not to fall into debt with them there, though, as they are known to reclaim their dues viciously and for as long as it takes to recoup them—over years and even generations.

**Brighton Peak:** Family Stormsong once tamed these remote heights and built an impenetrable bastion here. Brighton Peak spans the icy mountain precipice in a stunning achievement of architecture. While of the same crystal, gleaming metal, and glass that one might expect of any Vallan city, the lines of this bastion are considerably sleeker and simpler; rather than free-standing turrets, spires are arched against the mountainface. The Valla of Brighton Peak have embraced a life of isolation from the world, and non-Valla are not permitted to enter. Those that reside here—primarily old and powerful Vallan families—rarely travel, and so Brighton Peak remains a mystery. There are rumours that the city spans deep into the mountain, where vast cathedrals with glittering jewel mosaics tell the story of the Skyfather's creation of Unity. Between its near-constant snowstorms and powerful old magicks, none may enter into this mountain stronghold uninvited.

**Montora's Dell:** While there are many prosperous cities around the Sapphire Basin, Montora's Dell is especially notable for its size. Easily the largest Vallan city besides the capital, Montora's Dell is sprawling and one of the most successful hubs in Unity. Originally a collection of smaller hamlets, the lines between the different settlements eventually merged. Perhaps it was this organic development that led to the chimes being strung between the many carved stone towers of each building. The sound of bells rings throughout the city whenever the wind rolls through the valley, and these bells have become the official symbol of Montora's Dell. The finest merchants and musicians of the city are awarded a Silver Bell—a talisman that speaks to their quality and integrity. Thieves are not permitted to prey upon anyone wearing the Silver Bell; any who do are ostracized and abandoned to the scant mercy of the many warring gangs that rule the city's streets. Despite its colourful politics, Montora's Dell is lush with fountains, gardens, and entertainment. It is said its gates are never closed to opportunity.

**Ishenas:** A reliant trade partner with Montora's Dell, Ishenas is the longest surviving of the desert colonies. It, too, boasts stone towers, but they are sand-whipped and smooth, and its many molten glass windows evoke an eerie mirage in the blazing sun. While many of its citizens are transient, Ishenas is sought out by those caught in the Drifting Glory; those drug-addled souls looking to easily score their next fix in a city saturated with Cloud Dens. The whistles that hang between the buildings here sing a chant of warning as the sandstorms roll in. It is a hard and barren place, and breeds citizens of similar temperament.

## TRADE

As the first of the races, the Valla have long been self-sufficient. For centuries, King Stormsong commanded a ban on any commercial dealings with Furians or Humans. Smuggled in by the Ivory Claw, the younger Valla got their hands on banned goods including literature, technology, weaponry, and narcotics from their sibling races. Their observance of the swift changes of the outside world spurred the more open-minded Valla to begin considering the Furians and Humans as equals.

Now, many Vallan cities—including Lunara, Montora's Dell, and Ishenas—willingly trade with Humans and Furians. The most common Vallan exports are lumber, textiles, literature, ore, and precious gems.

Their society was traditionally run on a credit system, with the royal treasuries keeping record of all payments owed to local craftspeople, and thereby to the King's coffers. After the Exodus, as the Valla spread out and their cities diversified, this credit system became difficult to accurately manage. It is believed to still be used primarily among the nobility of the Valla; likely the records are still kept in the Vaults of Vallantis.

For the younger cities, a combination of barter and the Denerim currency has now been adopted. Still, old habits persist, and it is often considered uncouth to openly show or discuss money. Instead, when haggling, "slips" are drawn up with proposed prices, which the other party can then either agree upon or amend. Once in agreement, the total is surreptitiously counted out and folded within the original slip before changing hands. This allows both parties to manage their finances without ever making the socially offensive mistake of "flashing a wad of cash." Note: Those who "flash" are considered untrustworthy, and are more likely to become the marks of bandits.

While wealth has its place in Vallan society, it's not considered of pinnacle value. Vallan lifespans are so long that many of them will realize their material desires in due time. More inexperienced Valla might still be attracted to the allure of the Denerim and the concept of wealth, however.

## THE PEOPLE

The Valla are known for their grace, refinement, and etiquette. While some find them stuffy, slow to act, or overly critical, none doubt their eye for detail. With the longest lifespan of any mortal race, the Valla have the time to perfect their skills, and the patience to achieve their aims. Beyond their longevity, their Spirit Stones further enhance their ability to collaborate or empathize with the plight of other Valla, leading to widespread solidarity and unity as their people developed.

## SPIRIT STONES

Each Valla is born with a sapphire gem embedded in their brow: the source of the psychic ability the race once possessed. The observant may notice that swirling energies ebb and flow within these gems, reflecting the emotional state of the Valla. Rather than a hive mind, the psychic connection was an empathetic bond, allowing sentiments to be relayed to those around them without speech. When honed, this silent communication allowed Valla to share suspicions, intuition, and emotional experiences. Those who resonated together were said to feel experiences at a much higher level, for better and worse. Love was euphoric, inspiring some of the greatest romances known to mortalkind. Likewise, grief was catastrophic; the death of beloved King Tethylan Stormsong swept the ancient city of Castoran like a plague, leaving behind shattered ruins that have not been rebuilt to this day. Most importantly, it was this connection that rendered the Vallan cities the most peaceful in Unity. Senseless violence was not a possibility, as intentions were felt before they were carried out, enabling intervention and sympathy with a fellow citizen's plight.

It should be noted that specific thoughts could not be telepathically shared, however all Valla experienced an enhanced 'sixth sense' toward danger and spiritual energies.

After the Great Calamity, the Skyfather cursed his first creations and the Spirit Stones muted—the vibrant cerulean fading to feeble amber. No longer connected, the Stones remain a bitter reminder of the great psychic power the Valla possessed. Even though the collective consciousness is only remembered by the oldest Valla, their cities remain largely crime-free after centuries of established social expectations. Still, the sudden silence after generations of deep connection drew many to the brink of despair and even madness, and as a result the Drifting Glory thrives.

In modern times, the Valla have been divided between the older denizens and the younger. The oldest Valla are still largely xenophobic of other races, and continue to prefer a pure Vallan society. They are less yielding and far less tolerant of mistakes. They are universally aloof, often haughty, and can hold grudges for centuries.

The younger Valla are far more curious, and like to keep company with foreign races to experience their zest for life vicariously. They are keener to enact change and are more likely to travel beyond Vallan territory, where they can join the relatively swifter currents of the wider world.

Both young and old are notoriously reticent to act, as they are used to outlasting turmoil. Those with non-Vallan companions must be prepared for grief, as, along the passage of time, they will inevitably lose those they love.

*After the Great Calamity, Spirit Stones have become the target of grave bandits and other unsavory rogues. When the Spirit Stones were once active and a brilliant blue, removing them from a Valla (dead or alive) would cause the Spirit Stone to crumble to dust. Since the Spirit Stones have turned a dull amber from the Skyfather's curse, they are now able to be removed without disintegrating.*

## CULTURE

The backbone of Vallan culture is upheld by their strong sense of aesthetics. Ranging from the appreciative to the hedonistic, this love of beauty can be found in every area of Vallan culture, including architecture, the arts, customs, fashion, food, and social structures.

**The Arts:** The fine arts have a special importance to the Valla, as it is a social way to enjoy beauty. Valla use the arts to appreciate the wonders of life, share experiences with others, and resist the ravages of time. Sculpture, painting, mosaic, and filigree decorate the buildings both inside and out. Objects and tools are expected to be built to last, and are beautified to increase the pleasure of their use. Clothing is equally embellished and expected to withstand long years of wear. Literature is popular, both as a method of preserving experiences for posterity and as entertainment for the masses. Poetry is widely considered the highest form of written expression, and poets are often found performing in public squares. Dance and theatre have long been used to express public sentiments, and audiences can be harsh. Because of the strong demand for quality entertainment, some of the best operas and plays have been produced by the Valla. The highest of all the arts for the Valla is music, especially that composed of wind instruments or vocals. In music, many Valla are reminded of the vibration that once existed between them through their Spirit Stones, and so it has been elevated to a spiritual level. Troubadours are highly revered, and it is considered bad luck not to offer a musician shelter when they are passing through.

## GOVERNMENT

Valla has long been ruled by a monarchy. For thousands of years, the Stormsong family has held the Vallan throne. While in ancient times the family was considered strong and just, the events of the Exodus shook Vallan confidence in King Nelonius. After the Valtoran left the fold, the king's loyal followers quietly disagreed with how the Exodus had been handled, believing stronger punishments were called for. Those who sympathized with the Valtorans or wished to avoid civil war mourned the division of their people. Since those days, faith in the monarch has gradually declined, with a majority of citizens now considering King Celefar past his prime. His judgment is widely believed to be no longer in line with the best interests of the people, and some of his more vocal detractors hint at corruption within the royal family, and secrets hidden in the shadowy halls of Brighton Peak. Whispers that King Celefar has been using banned magicks to unnaturally prolong his life (and his rule) imply the beginnings of megalomania and madness.

*Celefar's age and appearance are ancient by even Vallan standards. The current king is a former shell of himself. Hunched over with strands of grey hair from a thinning scalp and heavy wrinkles lining his face, the king rarely makes a public appearance anymore. When he does, he is often surrounded by a small guard consisting of young and beautiful Vallan females.*

Despite these divisive opinions, the monarchy still provides for all Vallans, especially in times of need. Education is expected of all citizens, and institutions, accessible to all Valla, are directly responsible for their literacy rate of nearly 100%. Charities and sovereign-funded public housing ensure that no one goes hungry, and that all citizens have access to support and community. Through generations of prudent management and the lower social consideration for personal wealth, the nation's coffers and the Vallan people have long been financially stable. There are said to be ample reserves in the catacombs beneath Vallantis so that the entire Vallan nation may comfortably survive many a calamity the world might throw at them.

## FAMILY & SOCIETY

Due to their long lifespans, Valla give birth to single offspring, generally decades apart. Though family connection is appreciated, the stronger bond is to their community. In Vallan cities, entire blocks will form a family unit. Collectively, these units raise younger Valla together, and will share meals, stories, and resources to support one another. A residual effect of their ancient Spirit Stone connection, this sense of community has endured, preventing want and associated crimes. Theft is unnecessary in purely Vallan societies, and even in more cosmopolitan cities like Montora's Dell, a strict code of loyalty governs the doings of all gangs—even those of the Ivory Claw. Murder is considered the most depraved of all crimes, not least because the centuries of any single Valla's contributions to society are considered a grievous loss for their nation as a whole. Entire communities are known to lament a single loss, and murder is therefore the one evil that will evoke swift and decisive action from the Valla, young and old alike.

## THE GREAT EXODUS

While the Valla were still a young race, there was a small but growing faction that detested the constant connection brought about by the Spirit Stones. Yearning for a true sense of privacy and individuality, they began to rally in the name of this elusive idea of stillness. Their supporters claimed that this collective state had stunted progress among the Valla, preventing exceptional individuals from making strides as they were held back and hampered by the common herd. These visionaries, they argued, if free of psychic baggage, might be able to apply the gathered knowledge of the Valla to reach new and greater heights. As the world was dividing between the Valla and the new Furian Children, these groups grew especially concerned that their complacent brethren would allow the Valla to be eclipsed by their siblings.

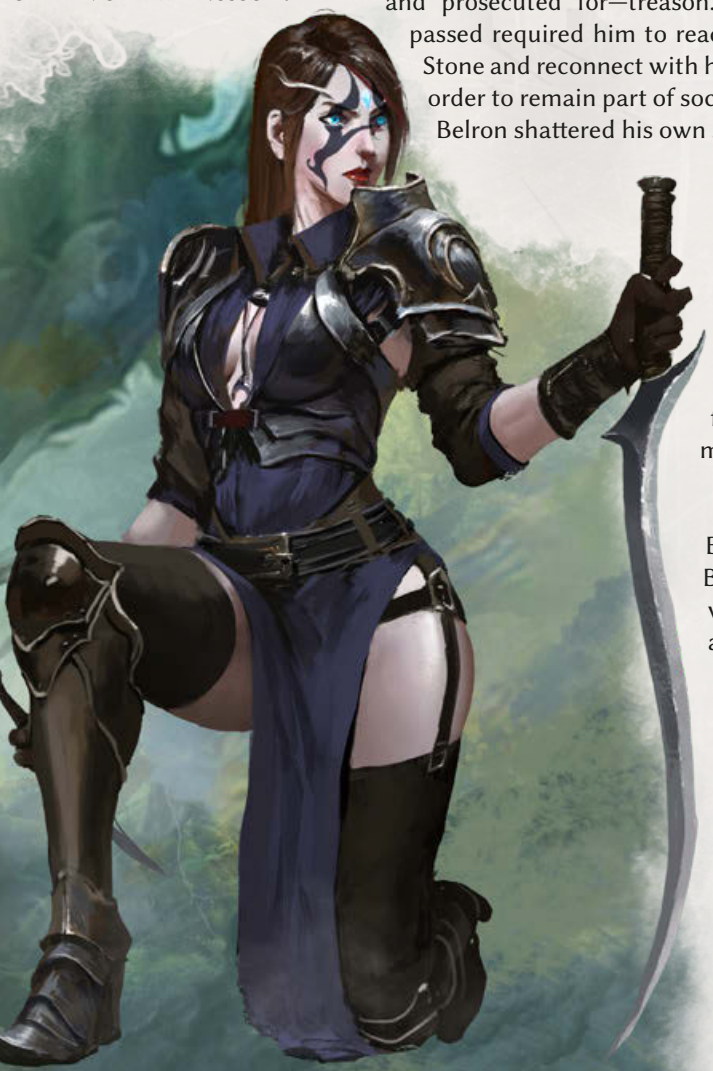
*The existence of Drifting Glory acts as an ugly mark on Vallan society. It opens up opportunities for players to create deeply flawed Vallan characters.*

*While rare, the Valtoran have been sighted in almost every corner of Unity. Their nomadic lifestyle keeps them constantly on the move. Their motives are still unclear.*

A magistrate of the High Council named Belron brought these issues to a head by naming the growing sense of unease and desire for psychic separation *adrathe*—silence. Belron began to preach the need for and benefits of *adrathe*, especially as a means of freedom from the pervasive influence of other Valla's emotions. While the concept was met with growing interest, the monarchy classed these teachings as heresy. *Adrathe* cults arose to continue their teachings in private, where members would meditate in the hope of freeing themselves from the collective mind and find individual reflection. However the constant connection of the Spirit Stones meant that the collective probing of these cults was felt by the surrounding communities, and soon the two schools of thought began meeting violently in the streets across Vallan territory. Soon, rumours began to fly that Belron and his inner circle had managed to achieve true *adrathe* and were now capable of shielding their intentions, and thereby of keeping the first Vallan secrets. The High Council grew to distrust Belron, and began to target him and his supporters publicly.

Brought before the king, Belron was accused of—and prosecuted for—treason. The judgment passed required him to reactivate his Spirit Stone and reconnect with his fellow Valla in order to remain part of society. In defiance, Belron shattered his own Spirit Stone, violently tearing himself from the collective permanently. Horrified at this sacrilege and terrified of what effects this action might have on other Valla, King Nelonius cast Belron into exile. But in solidarity with his plight and with zealous fervor for his teachings, Belron's followers shattered their own Spirit Stones and pursued him into the Wastes.

Free of the Vallan collective consciousness, Belron and his followers called themselves the Valtoran—the First Wanderers. In their pursuit of true understanding of the self, and aching with the echoes that remained after their sundered connection, the Valtoran became a nomadic people. Where the Valla are steadfast and slow to rouse, the Valtoran are eternally searching and restless. Occasionally, citizens claim sightings of the Valtoran, but as the transients hide their shattered Stones under turbans, hoods, and diadems, there is still no accurate account of their numbers or lifestyle.



Aurae Fenriss,
Captain of the Kingsguard

## DRIFTING GLORY

In modern times, a new affliction has arisen to plague Vallan society: the Drifting Glory. In otherwise crime-free cities, the Drifting Glory has been steadily warping peaceful Valla as addiction and withdrawal mar their bodies and minds.

While the Valtoran chose to silence their Spirit Stones, all remaining Valla prized their connection and considered it an integral part of their being. After the Skyfather cursed the Valla and their Spirit Stones faded to amber, the vast majority was left numb and adrift. Their once-glorious civilization has not recovered from the loss of their psychic birthright, and many are still trying to find ways to adapt to their new loneliness.

When a flower, created in part by energy from the Drift, was first discovered and ingested by a Valla, the effects were found to provide a temporary flood of psychic connection; it immediately caught all the Valla's attention. Considered a boon by Vallan alchemists, the substance was swiftly produced in great quantity and provided to those still aching from the loss of their collective consciousness. Doctors soon discovered that the after-effects of inhaling the drug included deep depression, an icy feeling in the limbs, and a deadening of moral and emotional sensitivity. Disastrously, the subsequent cravings for the potent drug after just one use caused intense distress; prolonged use seemed to have lasting effects on the user's psyche, and the increased dosage required to reach the initial euphoric heights began to result in ever more dangerous consequences. Addicts are easily identified by their extreme frailty, manipulative behaviour, erratic moods, and psychotic episodes.

While the monarchy has strictly outlawed the Drifting Glory, its use has proliferated in the fringe districts and outlying colonies where regulation and trade are harder to control. Drifting Glory is now seen as a national scourge, but so far preventive measures have not been successful at curbing the production or distribution of the destructive drug. Possession of the flower or the drug is now punishable by death—the strictest and most grave punishment in Vallan society.

## WARFARE

The Valla are swift and, in battle, prize finesse over brute force. They are well-suited to bladed weapons, archery, and long-ranged attacks, and weapons that allow them precision while keeping them safe from the heat of conflict. They prefer to rely on stealth and skill, and their martial tactics have evolved to favour speed. In the days of their psychic link, their militia was supremely deadly, with entire platoons moving as though of one mind to confront those who opposed them. Now that their Spirit Stones are dulled, their collective prowess has diminished, but the skills that the Vallan warriors have honed over long centuries should not be underestimated.

In recent decades, their adoption of mechanized weapons has enabled them to reclaim some of their edge in battle. Their veneration for life, however, does leave them with a sense of mercy that Human opponents have been known to take advantage of. The Valla will vehemently defend their own lives and those of their community, and can become ruthless towards any who show disregard for the value of life.

*The Vallan army was once known for its unbreakable defense. The Spirit Stones provided an uncanny level of synchronization and coordination. The Sentinels of Taloran studied ancient Vallan warfare stratagems and have adapted them to be usable outside of possessing a psychic link. The imperceptible shift or quivering of a fellow soldier standing shoulder to shoulder is a form of communication that can cascade down an entire line of Sentinels.*

## TECHNOLOGY

Modern technologies have been grudgingly accepted in the more cosmopolitan Vallan cities, but not without a high degree of superstition and mistrust. Steam-powered machinery and alchemical concoctions, inherited from the Humans, are seen as a power too new and untested to trust. With the rise of the Children of Steel, the Valla have been shaking their heads, sure that this new revolution only proves their suspicions of technology right. In general, younger Valla embrace smaller machines such as tools and timepieces, and, increasingly, the safety provided by firearms—but not even they will abide a machine that thinks for itself.

## RELIGION

When the Valla were created, the Skyfather snatched the first rays of the rising sun and infused them with his divine spark to create the Valla: the firstborn of Unity. Initially creatures of light, when the Ivory Queen was destroyed, the Valla began to shy away from the bright light of day. Instead, drawn by the moonlight cast by their fallen Queen and guided by the scattered starlight of her essence, the Valla were filled with a reverence for the Heavens and an intense yearning to drift among the stars with their celestial parents. With the Skyfather's curse and the loss of their psychic connection, the Valla have grown ever more aware of the void left in the events' wake, and struggle to find a sense of connection to the greater purpose of which they had once been a sacred part. This is still felt in the worship of the Windsong, and perhaps it is this sense of abandonment that has led to their observance of faith in the Demigods.

Primary among their worship is Lunastra, the Silver Maiden. Born of their subconscious yearnings, Lunastra is depicted as a Vallan maiden, unearthly in her beauty as if formed of the finest porcelain. Graceful, elegant, and gentle, Lunastra is nevertheless a battle maiden, and will fiercely defend her sacred spaces.

There are some who believe Morganus, the Demon Queen, was the whisper from the void that first tempted the Valla to yearn for separation from the collective consciousness. They say that she tempted Belron and his first followers with dreams of perfect silence; of power found only in isolation; in the mysteries and beauty they would discover if they severed their psychic bond. However enticing Morganus' promises might seem, they are nothing more than illusion. The Demon Queen seeds discord because she cannot abide unity, and in the permanent severance of the Spirit Stone, she won her greatest victory. Of course, the Valtoran vehemently deny this origin, but they remain loath to speak of what they have found in their isolation.

*The legend of Lunastra is well-known through Vallan lands. Their patron goddess fought and triumphed over the Infernal King Vorath in an epic battle (pg. 115).*

## VIEWS ON OTHER RACES

**Furians:** While many of the younger Valla view Furians as the counterpoint to their own qualities—the brawn to their brains—many of the older Valla still associate every Furian with the Red Rage. Calling them "Beasts," "Fire-Bellies," or the "Furry Wrath," they often stigmatize their neighbours as brutish, belligerent, and impatient. Both younger and older Valla however recognize and respect the deep sense of honour that Furian society constantly strives to uphold.

**Humans:** Most Valla (young and old) see Humans as perpetual children. Between their shorter lifespans and endless ambitions, few Valla take the whims and aspirations of Humans very seriously. While the older Valla can be condescending or patronizing towards their Human allies, the younger ones lean upon their siblings' boundless curiosity and enduring hope to retain their own centre. Younger Valla have become powerful friends to the Human Empire, offering prudent counsel and hard-won experience to better guide humanity.

**The Afflicted:** The vast majority of the Valla lean more toward reliance upon magick than technology, and so they see the Afflicted as blasphemous. They believe the grafting of machine parts to the mortal form weakens the spirit. Younger Valla may have sympathy for the Afflicted's plight, but cannot condone their methods of treating their disease.

*While older Valla often look down on the other races, the younger generation of Valla have a deep sense of curiosity that drives them to explore other cultures, especially during their adolescent years (50-100 years old).*

## SHORT STORY

# DRIFTING THROUGH GLORY

Vanus Silverill clasped and unclasped his hands as he waited. No matter where his gaze rested—the chapped posters for a festival held years before, the filthy cobbles, the soot-singed door before him—the details greeting him filled him with shame. *What have I done?* But as much as he wished he were anywhere else, his feet remained firmly planted. Nothing, not even Rithriel's voice, could pull him back from the brink now.

Before the cycle of thoughts could truly begin in earnest, the door snapped open. A black-toothed Valla stood before him, his amber Spirit Stone catching a spark of the dim lighting from the room beyond. The master of the house eyed Vanus up and down, expectant and rigid.

With a dry mouth, Vanus fumbled with the purse, at last drawing out the fistful of gold Denerim the Afflicted Splicer had given him. The coins seemed to burn in his grasp, his guilt blossoming like a wound in his heart. He shakily held out his offering.

"Please... It's enough, isn't it?" he rasped.

The master sucked his teeth and took his payment. At last he stood aside and allowed Vanus to stumble over the threshold. With a voice of barbed sweetness, the master finally spoke,

"Welcome back, Lord Silverill. This way, if you please."

Vanus flinched at the use of his old title, a reminder of all he had lost, but followed like a dog all the same.

The front hallway was as shabby as ever, and soon enough they reached the short staircase leading to the den. Already he could smell the floral whiff of Drifting Glory and his mouth began to water. His lungs ached for more, his head began to swim. *Soon.*

"—like last time," the master was saying.

Belatedly, Vanus realized the man had been speaking to him. He wrangled his attention and blinked glossily at the shorter man.

"I'm sorry, pardon?"

"I said, I don't want any trouble like last time," the man repeated, the barbs in his words growing more pronounced. "Your lofty sister barging in here an' the city guard haulin' you out disturbed my other patrons. Quite inappropriate behaviour for a Cloud Den, Lord Silverill. I thought you Old Bloods were supposed to have superior manners to us common folk."

Vanus bared his teeth in a grimace; the pain in his heart prevented him from sucking in a proper breath. "That... that won't be a problem anymore. You have my word," he croaked.

The master eyed him, clearly skeptical, but at last shrugged. Turning forward, he swept aside the heavy velvet curtain and the dim lighting of the Cloud Den filled the dark corridor.

Vanus took a deep breath of the vapour floating lazily through the heavy, pungent air. The room was already populated with more than a dozen Glory Chasers, all in various states of dishevelled dress, melted against the stained couches and pillows. Distantly, the vestiges of Vanus' pride revolted against this sad squalor, but the need screamed all the louder. He staggered to a low pile of cushions and sank into them, thrilling with anticipation.

The master had peeled off to fetch a pipe and a bowl of the irresistible blossoms. He wordlessly packed the pipe's bowl and held it out. Vanus snatched it from him, all trace of his lordly manners crushed beneath his addiction. The master lit the herb for him and Vanus took a deep drag, the sweet smoke filling his lungs. The master waited for Vanus' Spirit Stone to glimmer from dull amber to a muddy blue and then receded into the shadows of the Cloud Den.

The rush came on sudden and strong and Vanus sank back into the musty pillows with a low moan. His guilt bled away. The ache in his heart for Rithriel at last was soothed and nothing else mattered. The loneliness that had plagued him since the Great Calamity quieted. Lord Vanus Silverill was dusted off and connected at last.

"There you are," Rithriel singsonged. Vanus' sister leaned forward, the better to appear before his distant gaze. She had the same amethyst complexion as he, but he always felt there was a glow in her cheeks that his own sharp countenance could never muster.

"I'm sorry, Rith," Vanus said. Rithriel just laughed, as easily as ever.

"You were drifting again, brother," Rithriel admonished. "Where do you go?"

Vanus shifted, setting the book down and making room for his little sister on the bench. She took the seat at once, smiling up into his face. With a light hand she tucked a loose strand of his silver hair back into place.

"Back, I suppose. I can't help it. Before the Spirit

Stones lost their blue, we were all connected. I never had to search for anyone. We were never alone, Rith. But now…I feel I'm always groping for that connection."

"But you aren't alone, Vanus. I'm here." Rithriel's expression sobered, a light of worry in her crystal blue eyes.

Vanus wrapped an arm around her, pulling his sister close and kissed the top of her head. "I will always be grateful that you are. I don't know what I'd do without you."

Rithriel hugged him tightly and at last sat back, her lavender curls swaying softly around her face. "Come, it's time for dinner. The servants have made a braised roast." She put emphasis on the dish and Vanus raised his eyebrows.

"Is father making an announcement?" Braised roast was generally reserved for special occasions at the Silverill Estate.

Rithriel shrugged, a flicker of a smile playing about her lips. She clearly had her own suspicions of what to expect.

Vanus rose elegantly, and with steady hands smoothed down his robes. He left the book lying on the bench, secure that the Estate librarian would see it got back to its rightful shelf. His thoughts were spinning to suppositions of what news his father, Lord Silverill, might have for his family. Thus preoccupied, he allowed Rithriel to lead him from the room.

The braised roast filled his senses: the sight of the crackling, the luscious aroma, the rich gravy poured over the meat. Vanus' mouth watered, but he restrained the desire to bite into the portion on his plate. Only once the servers had finished laying the meal for Lord and Lady Silverill, his aunt, Lady Mistborn, himself and Rithriel, did his father finally raise his glass in toast.

"For generations, the Silverills have served Valla and the house of Stormsong diligently. We have withstood the Calamity as a family, and have toiled diligently to restore the glory of our people. As a new generation leads Valla into the future, our hopes must rest with them. And for Rithriel Silverill, our hopes are high." Lord Silverill allowed a slight smile in the direction of his daughter. *He looks pleased with himself*, Vanus mused.

Vanus happily raised his glass to toast Rithriel. She had brought his family back from the brink. None of them had handled the loss of their collective connection well, but he had feared it would kill his mother. Then Rithriel had been born. Blissful, sweet Rithriel; she didn't know what had been lost and yet she had formed a new connection between them all.

"It is with pride and joy that I announce Rithriel Silverill has been accepted to the Court of King Branthes as an attendant to the Queen."

Vanus' smile faltered. "She'll be living in the palace? In Vallantis?"

"That is where the Queen is, brother," Rithriel teased.

"The King has done a great honour to our family," his mother added, giving him a significant look. She knew how much Vanus relied on Rithriel's light to buoy his own happiness.

"Yes, of course," Vanus managed, raising his glass anew. It was a great opportunity for her, and a great honour, as his mother had said. Why then did he feel so hollow at the news? "When does your appointment start?" he asked, trying to smile for his sister.

"Next week," Rithriel answered at once. She had known about this for some time, it seemed. Vanus bitterly thought of the days when such secrets could not have been kept. And secrets kept from one's own family? What were the Valla becoming?

Unable to force joy, even for his beloved sister, Vanus merely nodded and drank deeply of his wine. He was going to miss her cheer, her effervescence, her eternal smiles…

"Think not that the King fails to recognize the promise of the first born to Silverill," his father rejoined. "Vanus Silverill will be elevated to Baron over the newest of the King's cities: Montora's Dell."

His mother and sister beamed at him, raising their glasses in turn. Vanus tried to resurrect his forced smile, but his face felt like a mask. He would be leaving the Estate? Montora's Dell was a country hamlet. They had no Old Blood families, no culture, no history. The whole Sapphire Basin region meant being stranded with a pack of vulgar commoners, far from society and grace. He would be effectively cut off from everyone he knew and loved. Never before had he been so keenly aware of the loss of the Spirit Stone collective.

"Well, Vanus?" his father prompted.

Vanus realized he had said nothing and swallowed hard. "Yes, father. Thank you, father. I'll make Silverill proud."

*But how in a backwater like Montora's Dell?*

As the knock came on his door, Baron Vanus was tying back his silver hair. "Enter," he said, not looking around.

"Good morning, m'Lord. The post is here," his steward announced.

"Thank you, Cerill. Put it on the desk."

"Would m'Lord like to have breakfast in his chambers?" Cerill asked, no doubt observing his master's dressing robe. His steward was, as always, impeccably turned out in his master's livery. The Silverill colours—amethyst and silver—always had complimented the hireling's porcelain complexion and

myrtle-green hair. It had been a large part of why Vanus had selected him; it had been only weeks later that he had realized just how very capable his attendant was.

"Yes, I think so," Vanus replied with a sigh, still not turning away from the window.

"Very well, m'Lord. I'll have it brought up right away."

"Thank you, Cerill."

Vanus waited until the door clicked closed again before turning towards his desk. Cerill had left the stack of letters neatly arranged for him to review. Sliding into his high-backed chair, he idly leafed through the post and then stopped. The writing on one of the envelopes bore a distinctive hand that he would recognize anywhere.

*Rithriel.*

He pushed aside the letters of state, the notices from lawyers and businesses, the petitions and requests, and opened his sister's letter first. Three sheets filled with her airy hand greeted him and he felt a smile tugging at his lips before he even read the first words. The missive was mundane—tales of life in the court, sketches of the fountains in the capital, minutiae of her duties for the queen. But Vanus read the letter four times, savouring each phrase, hearing Rithriel's voice in his head, picturing her moving lightly about his chambers as if she had come to visit. In a subtle way, it was as if his Stone once again shone blue and he was connected with her.

Vanus pulled forth a few sheets of vellum and prepared his quill and ink. Chuckling lightly to himself, he began his reply. Suddenly the weight of his title seemed burnished with gold. His duties no longer seemed tedious but fraught with majesty and importance. For Rithriel, he strove to pay close attention to every one of his petitions, to judge each matter with impartial care. For Rithriel, he must shine in his role.

He was halfway through the first page when Cerill knocked again on his door. "Come!" he called, head still bent over the paper.

"Your breakfast, m'Lord," Cerill announced, rolling the trolley forward. "Where shall I set it out?"

"In the solarium, I think," Vanus replied with an easy smile, his honey-coloured eyes bright.

Cerill paused only the briefest of moments and then bowed. "Of course, m'Lord. The weather is beautiful today. I am glad to see m'Lord enjoying it."

"Montora's Dell does have excellent climate," Vanus agreed, dipping his quill for fresh ink.

His pale attendant nodded, moving to open the doors to the solarium Vanus so rarely used. At once, sunlight poured into the chamber from the tall glass windows, making the silver and crystal of his breakfast service sparkle.

By the time Cerill had finished setting the room for use and laying out his meal, Vanus had finished his letter. "Will you be sure to have this sent on the first post?" Vanus asked, holding the envelope aloft in one amethyst hand.

Cerill came forward at once to receive it. "By Royal Post, m'Lord?"

"Whatever is fastest, Cerill." Vanus rose, adjusting his robe, and moved towards the inviting streams of sunlight. "Do I smell fresh scones? Send the cook my compliments; that is precisely what I have been craving."

Cerill bowed, smiling warmly. "And may I say, m'Lord, if it is not too impertinent…" his steward trailed.

Vanus paused in the doorway to the solarium and turned, curious.

"It is nice to see m'Lord in such fine spirits," Cerill finished with a bow.

"Thank you, Cerill."

Vanus waited until his steward had left with the precious letter and then sat down at the table, pulling a scone and some rose jelly towards him. As he stirred the milk into his tea he gazed out through the wide windows at the sculpted garden. Raising a glass as if he had company with him, he spoke to the empty room.

"Perhaps I shall put in a fountain, in the style she likes…"

Baron Silverill hurried along the causeway as quickly as his robes of office would allow.

"Move aside, people! Make way for the Baron!" Cerill cried, leading the way through the crowd despite his small stature.

Vanus wafted through the smoke with his handkerchief. The surrounding drone of wailing and whispers was a pale echo of grief. The old connection would have swept anguish through him and made it his own.

A woman stumbled back from the crater, words unintelligible in their shrillness. She collided with Vanus' shoulder and both lurched, buffeted by the dense crowd.

"Please, m'Lord!" she shrieked. "My daughter was in the building! Please help her!"

"Madame, step away," Cerill admonished, puffing himself up to defend his lord. "The Baron is here to help, but you need to give him room so that he can!"

With his steward pressing the distraught mother back, Vanus stepped around her to get his first clear look at the rubble framing the gaping hole. "What caused the collapse?" he asked, looking around at the grime-streaked survivors.

"There was a rumble… then the buildings just… warped," one of the Valla standing nearby offered. "We thought it might have been a sinkhole at first…" he trailed off, ashen and staring into the wreckage.

Vanus followed his gaze and caught a dull glint amidst the dust. "What is that?" he asked, wafting his handkerchief further to try to get a clearer look. With his straining eyes and the gem on his brow, he looked like three shards of amber cutting through the smoke.

At first no one answered. The Valla shared uncomfortable glances, and some of the lookers-on even took this cue to shuffle away from the wreckage.

"Baron Silverill has asked a question!" Cerill snapped from beside him.

The numbed man who had answered at first still stared into the pit as if he couldn't believe what he was seeing. "It's an Afflicted, isn't it?"

"Afflicted? Here??" Vanus asked. He stepped cautiously over the debris and picked his way down towards the metal-clad arm protruding from beneath a splintered beam. The rest of the body was crushed and hidden. At his steward's direction, a few of the city guard clamoured into the pit and together they worked at shifting the beam aside.

The face and chest were caved in, shards of ribs jutting up through flesh and fabric. But the arm was clearly grafted metal, and severed tubes hung limply from the mangled head, still dripping some sort of alchemical fluid.

Vanus fought back his bile and retreated a step, nearly tripping over his own robes. Collecting his composure he looked around at the guards, then up to the ring of expectant Valla framing the crater. "Get it out of the pit and have it taken to the doctor. I want to learn as much as we can about where it came from." But he suspected he knew; the Afflicted were said to live underground. If they had now burrowed beneath Vallan territory, the King needed to know.

He managed to climb back up to the street with difficulty, dusting off his knees as he turned around. "Clean away the rubble so that the architects can properly survey the damage. I want a report for the cost and speed of the repairs on my desk by the end of the week. Once the doctor has examined the corpses, I want a full tally of the dead—including non-Valla." He gave a stern frown to the rest of the spectators.

"That is all."

They caught his meaning and shuffled back to their daily business.

Vanus turned back to his green-haired assistant. "Your thoughts, Cerill?"

"I won't make conclusions, m'Lord," his steward answered with characteristic prudence.

"What does it look like, at a guess?" Vanus pressed.

"A collapsed scouting tunnel, m'Lord."

"I thought the same," Vanus agreed. "I must make a report for the King. Is there somewhere nearby that I can pen my missive?"

"The nearest place is a bawdy house, m'Lord."

"It will have to serve," Vanus replied. "Lead on."

Within the hour, Baron Silverill had a room at the bawdy house, and Cerill had already set off with his report for the King by Royal Post. Now, all he could do was wait.

Wait for the King's orders. Wait for the architects to assess the damage. Wait for the doctors to confirm his suspicions about the corpse they had found.

And all he could think about was the dull hum of grief that hung over the city. Even in the bawdy house, the dancers' performance was lackluster, the patrons hunched over their drinks.

"Can I get the Baron anything?" The Madame of the house had drifted over for the third time that hour and at last, with nothing else to turn his attention to, he looked up. He could tell by her drab colourations that she was low-born: golden complexion and a mop of cinnamon curls. Still, she wasn't displeasing to behold. There was sweetness to her mouth that invited conversation.

"We should be able to mourn properly," he said without meaning to.

"Properly, Baron?" the matron asked, but she came closer, the lantern light glimmering in her ruby eyes.

"I remember the days when a grief like this would be shared. I would have known at once that something was amiss. We might've mobilized sooner. Perhaps lives might have been spared..."

"Ah, the Spirit Stones..." she said with a knowing nod. "I remember those days. You know, that closeness is not entirely lost to us."

Vanus allowed a thin smile. "Thank you, Madame, but I am not interested in the charms of your girls."

She gave a coquettish laugh and patted at his arm with feigned familiarity. "No, that's not what I meant. One moment, Baron, and I'll bring you something—on the house!"

Curious, he watched her bustle off in a cloud of silk before returning with a small silver tray.

"May I join you?" she asked, gesturing to the seat beside him on the bench. Barely waiting for his nod, she slid in close beside him and placed the tray between them. On it sat two small cakes that smelled of flowers and honey.

"What is this?" he asked. He had to admit, the smell was tantalizing and vaguely familiar but he couldn't place the memory.

"A kiss from the past," she answered, smiling again. "Here," and she lifted one to his lips.

"Madame," he began to protest, but she popped it under his tongue before he could say more. At once it began to melt like sugar, and the scent of flowers grew all the stronger. Then the strangest feeling began to steal over him, as if he were lighter than air, lifting out of his body. It felt as if...

He saw the Madame slip the other morsel under her own tongue, giving a sensual shiver. And then the gem on her brow flickered almost blue. He felt her euphoria wash over him, wrapping him up in clouds of cotton. She was excited to have a partner for her drift, and she found him pleasing to look upon: tall, lithe, finely-featured.

Vanus jolted. He could *feel* her emotions. They were connected. He touched the Stone on his brow, hardly daring to believe it.

"Yes, it's real," the Madame said, her ruby eyes and painted smile suddenly possessing more depth than before.

Vanus reached out to touch her face and felt her tremble with pleasure, and found himself shivering in response, a delicious loop that kept turning over and over like a bright thing between them. He had felt deadened and numb for so long... had the connection been this enrapturing before?

He could not say how long he spent in the Madame's arms, enjoying her spirit entwined with his, sharing their memories, joined together in the stories they told. But at last, he made his way back to the manor with a smile on his lips that he felt sure would never wash away.

*I know it seems like a gift, dear brother, but I don't like the sound of this Drifting Glory. I have heard of slums in the walled-off districts of Vallantis where whores sell themselves for just one of those floral cakes. Promise me you won't eat any more. ~R.*

Vanus reread Rithriel's letter for the umpteenth time. The vellum was cracked and thin with the many times he had folded and unfolded it. Every time the craving stole over him he would cling to her written words. *Perhaps if she were here, and I was hearing the vibrations of her voice, her words could hold me*, he thought. But Rithriel wasn't here. She was far-off in Vallantis. And whatever fears she held for the desperate girls of those streets, he, Baron Silverill, was not about to start selling his body for another hour in the Drifting Glory.

He had been eating the cakes for months now, and no harm had come to him. He still carried out his duties. And if anything, it was his sojourns to the

bawdy house and the understanding company of Madame Miriel that got him through the days of tedium.

He found ire coiling inside his heart. Who was Rithriel to judge him? She had never experienced the true connection of the Spirit Stones. She had not lost the resonance of a city alive around them as he had, countless souls gathered to share in the mood of a season.

Madame Miriel, on the other hand, was of his age. She too mourned the blue light. She knew the full extent of what they had lost.

Vanus folded up Rithriel's letter and placed it back into his writing desk. "Cerill, I'm heading out," he called. At once his steward appeared through the door.

"M'Lord?" Cerill glanced at the clock. "What about your supper?"

"I'll be dining out tonight," he replied, moving to gather up his cloak.

"With the Madame?" Cerill asked, and Vanus noticed the slight note of censure in his steward's tone. Vanus rounded on him.

"It is not for you to judge your Baron, steward."

Cerill bowed deeply, blanching despite his already pale complexion. "I meant only that it was the third time this week, m'Lord. If the Baron does not wish to dine at home, shall I inventory the larders so our food is not wasted, m'Lord?"

Not for the first time, Vanus wished he could share the link with Cerill, truly read his sentiments. A fleeting thought of sneaking a flower cake into Cerill's meal drifted through his mind but he pushed it away. "Do as you will, Cerill. I may not be back until the morning."

He swept past his steward, and as he passed could have sworn he heard the Valla mutter,

"Obviously."

Once he might have taken offence, but no matter now. The Drifting Glory was calling him. With another taste, Cerill's eroding respect and Rithriel's empty warnings would cease to matter.

"There you are," Rithriel murmured.

Vanus groggily opened his eyes. The amethyst filling his bleary vision resolved into her familiar face. Sure enough, Rithriel was leaning over his pillows. Though she smiled, there was obvious concern in her eyes. What was she feeling? Vanus reached out to touch the dull amber stone on her brow. *How pretty she would look if her Stone sparkled as blue as her eyes*, he thought.

"Rith, I have something for you," he croaked, rolling over in bed to reach for the box on his bedside table. But it wasn't there. "Where is it?" he snarled, pressing himself up and throwing off the covers.

"Vanus, look at me," Rithriel began, reaching out to grip his shoulder. "Do you remember the conversation we had yesterday?"

"What? No, you've been away," he began, but his head was heavy. Had they spoken?

Rithriel sat down on the edge of his bed, rubbing at his shoulders. "I came out to visit you because I'm concerned, brother. You've been using a lot of Drifting Glory. I understand you've graduated from eating cakes to smoking the fermented herb."

"Did Cerill tell you that?" Vanus grunted, as Rithriel pressed a glass of water into his hands.

"Master Cerill is right to be concerned, brother. Drifting Glory might feel good, but Vanus, you've been neglecting your duties. Crime in Montora's Dell has risen, and the drug's trade is out of control. It is your duty to govern this city, and instead you've let it corrupt you."

"You sound like father," Vanus sulked, taking a small sip of the water and instantly regretting it. His stomach contracted hard and he hunched, worrying he might be sick. Rithriel rubbed his back again.

"I'll get you through this," Rithriel promised. "It won't be pleasant, but we'll get it all out of your system. Then you'll be back to your old self again."

"I don't want to go back to that—that hollow Risen corpse!" He hurled the glass. It hit the carpet with a dull crack. Rithriel winced. He blundered on all the same, "What's the point of moving forward, heart pumping, when I feel *nothing!* I want to be connected as I was before! I want to *feel* something! Anything!"

Rithriel wrapped her arms around him, tucking her head into his neck, her grip tight. Muffled against his collarbone, her words vibrated against his skin. "Can't you feel this? I love you, brother; I want you back. Yes, you knew the days of the blue Stones as I can never understand, but I always admired your ability to straddle both sides of that divide. Your memories made you introspective, wise—and I looked up to you for that…" She loosened her embrace enough to look up into his face, her eyes wet with tears.

For the first time since his detoxification had begun, Vanus felt a pang of sorrow. Looking at her furrowed brow, her beseeching eyes, her mouth clamped tight to hold back her tears, he sobered. Though he could not empathize, he recognized her grief and desperation. Vanus held his sister close.

"I'm sorry, Rith…" What else could he say?

"I'll help you get through this. I promise," she whispered.

And so she stayed weeks beside him, sleeping on a cot in his room, the both of them tended by Cerill. She pressed the cold cloth against his fevered brow when the echoes of the Drifting Glory twisted up his thoughts. She fed him soup to build his strength,

and cleaned up the sick when he couldn't keep it down. She read to him to keep his mind focused on something other than the ice in his bones.

Day by day, his attention focused and his limbs grew stronger. Rithriel's smiling face greeted him whenever he woke. Her gentle hands steered him through the dark days and haunted nights.

He lost count of the passage of time, but he again felt alive. It reminded him of life before their respective postings, when they had been carefree in their father's house.

He completed his convalescence in the solarium, where Rithriel could see the fountain in the garden. Then, when he was strong enough, they would take walks together around it. They would sit on its broad white-stone ledge as she read poetry. They took their afternoon tea in the gardens.

At last he was able to return to his duties, and Rithriel stayed on as a guest at the house, taking in the culture of Montora's Dell. In the evenings, they went to operas and dances. He showed her the galleries and markets of the city. They rode foxstriders through the bucolic lands beyond the walls.

"Why don't you stay here? I have plenty of room." Their ride had brought them alongside a brook, and they let their foxstriders slow to a walk as they enjoyed the flowers along the bank.

"I can't, Vanus," Rithriel said. Her expression was far off. He wondered where her thoughts had wandered to. In the depths of his heart, a whisper rose: the Drifting Glory could show her what she was missing, so she could feel how happy he was with her near.

"Surely the Queen has other attendants. If it is work you crave, there are any number of posts you could take here." Vanus reached out to pluck a piece of wild oat that was stuck on the folds of her cloak.

"The Queen may have other attendants, but I love my work in the court. I have many friends there. We put on performances for the young heirs every month. We are encouraged to read extensively," she began. There was something in her tone that stripped the warmth from the sunlit day. She was leaving soon.

"I have a library; you can read here," he tried, knowing it wasn't the same. Then, "Rith, I'll miss you."

Rithriel shifted in her saddle to give him a winning smile. "Of course I'll miss you, too!" She reached out and squeezed his hand for a brief moment. "But I have a life of my own now. I can't always be in your shadow. I want to make father proud as much as you do. Perhaps next time, you can come to visit me. And we'll still have our letters. I'll write you every day, I promise."

Vanus nodded, but his smile felt like a lie. As precious as her letters were, they were a poor substitute to having her here. She might think she needed to prove herself as capable and strong as her big brother, but he had always thought her the stronger one. He wanted her to succeed.

He had to let her go. A pang of guilt rolled about in the back of his heart. Where would he be without her?

Rithriel's letters had come every day for the first few months. She told him as much as she could about life at court. Of the festivities put on for the Queen's birthday. Of a young Valla who had been courting her. She spoke of friends he did not know, but whose Old Blooded family names he recognized. She was glittering at court, as he knew she would. But he could not share it with her. He was keenly aware of the barrier between them.

As the sweetness of the memories of her visit faded, Vanus began prowling the streets, looking for that spark of connection. Though Cerill and Rithriel had coerced Madame Miriel to move her business to one of the burgeoning hamlets on the outskirts of Montora's Dell, there were still plenty of places in the city where Drifting Glory could be found. His title sent many dealers scurrying for safety, yet his position afforded many resources he could abuse. The challenge was finding a quality supply in a city full of addicts like him.

One evening, he went out on a survey of the rebuilt district where the tunnel had caved in. After speaking with the locals, he suspected the Afflicted had begun other scout tunnels. This one might have proved faulty, but the Afflicted yet lurked beneath Montora's Dell. They had slipped back into the shadows, but their presence was still felt. There were even claims that they had taken people, foundlings and beggars that had no one left to miss them.

He completed the notes for his report, and was on his way home when he noticed a rail-thin girl begging on the corner of an alley across the way. There was a foggy look in her eyes and a tremble in her outstretched hands that he intimately recognized.

She scuttled back into the alley as he approached, but he held out a coin to coax her closer.

"Drifting Glory," he began, watching as she suddenly came to rapt attention, mouth opening hungrily. "I'll buy you a pipe if you show me where you smoke."

Without a word she tugged him along the alley, stepping over a Glory Chaser insensate on the cobbles. A few twists and turns later, he found himself in a dead-end alley where a soot-stained door led to an underground Cloud Den.

His heart quailed at the sight of the desperate girl grovelling for his promise to be fulfilled, his noble sensibilities painfully aware of how shabby this establishment was in comparison to Madame Miriel's

Severan Shademoor,
Warden of Ishenas

relative class. He had been about to turn away when the door opened and the master of the house appeared.

The man gave a toothy smile, ushering them both into the cramped corridor and soon down into the den itself. Vanus' stomach flopped in disgust, but the smell of the flower hung thick in the air and already he could taste its honey. He swallowed hard.

True to his word, Vanus bought the girl a pipe, and awkwardly disentangled himself as she tried to press him with her blistered affections in thanks.

"And for m'Lord?" the master of the house asked before he could make his way back to the door.

"No, no I..." he began, but his throat felt tight. After his failed rehabilitation, the need was more violent than ever. He was half-maddened by it, but he couldn't muster the conscience to care.

The master held forth a packed pipe. "To be connected again, as we were meant to be, eh, m'Lord? The Skyfather may have quieted the song between us, but the Ivory Queen did give us the Drifting Glory as succour."

Vanus took the pipe up, smelling the herb, licking his lips. Without a word, the master lit the bowl and Vanus took a reflexive drag.

As his Stone flickered to life, a quiet voice within whispered that the sweetness wasn't as satisfying as he'd remembered. He took a deeper drag, filling his senses with the Drifting Glory. With enough he could reach those heights again, he was sure.

Another drag and he began to sway. The master helped him to sit amongst a pile of mildewed pillows. He nearly retched at the squalor, but the Glory was singing through his blood. His stomach was soothed and his mind was lifting up and out of the dingy room, connecting to the swell of other souls in the cloud of acrid smoke.

For the first time since Rithriel had left, he felt whole again. He felt the bitterness melting away. He wanted her to live her life, of course. He wanted her to do well. He didn't want to be a burden on her or on Cerill... This was his medicine. This was his way of fixing what was broken. Surely they could forgive him that...

The Drifting Glory seemed to be growing weaker. Every drag he took, it lifted him a little less high. And Cerill had begun to ask too many questions; he couldn't pass off his doses as merely meetings with officials anymore. He began to sneak things out of the manor. First small things that wouldn't be missed: a silver spoon here, a perfume bottle there, a classic tome, an heirloom statuette. Little by little, he stripped the barony of its glory, but he always needed more.

When Cerill reported him for corruption, he tried to have the steward dismissed without reference,

but by then there was an investigation. As quiet as everyone had tried to keep it—all so worried about the climate of crime in Montora's Dell, and the precarious hold of the King's power so far from Vallantis—business was allowed to proceed under the façade of normalcy. If letters came, he didn't know who answered them. Without Cerill, he couldn't even bother to change his robes. He feared looking at himself in the mirror because his own eyes seemed to burn accusingly from his reflection.

His hunger possessed him.

Somehow Rithriel found out. Vanus was excited for her arrival, but terrified. All his emotions felt clouded lately, imprecise, muddled. No matter how much or how often he smoked, the chill remained, and he found himself suspicious of everyone. He could only remember snippets of moments. Rithriel was near, it seemed, but he couldn't be sure what was real anymore.

His office was stripped of him, his title. No longer Baron. What did that matter? All it had been was letters after letters. What had letters ever achieved? They hadn't stopped his fall, had they? Stuck isolated in this small town, away from all he knew or loved. No matter where he went, the chill was there. What did any of it matter?

Then came the fight in the streets—he didn't remember the words, but he remembered the anger, the shame. Rithriel chasing after him on his way to the Cloud Den. How could she judge him, she who had never known true connection?

Citizens had come out to watch. He may have struck someone. He couldn't be sure.

Rithriel tried to reason with him. Reason, logic—such Human attempts at greatness. Real Valla felt empathy. Tears sparkling through the darkness. Accusations, desperation. Something about being 'blind to all she felt.' He had run after her, she had pushed him away.

And he realized Rithriel could no longer reach him. What once had anchored his heart now was mere recrimination. Father had cut off his access to fortune and family. There was no money left for a hit. Didn't they understand that he had to have it?

Only the Drifting Glory could lift him up. And he needed it to, so badly. It was dark in the cobwebs of his mind; he needed light to blast them all away. His sister's sunshine had lost its power over him. What could he do?

And then the whisper had possessed him. He couldn't say where the idea had come from. The Afflicted were always looking for bodies, for 'parts.' Rithriel wouldn't stop nagging, and all he could taste was the flower, craving it, needing it more than he needed anything or anyone else.

With savage abandon he fell on her, using his height and his strength to wrestle her arms behind her, dragging her down the alleys towards the district where the Afflicted scrounged.

"Flesh for sale!" he crowed, muffling her screams in the crook of his elbow. She had writhed against his desperate embrace, biting through his filthy sleeve. The pain was infinitesimal to that ratcheting throughout his body in search of Drifting Glory.

"Flesh for sale!"

The Afflicted came.

Someone had pressed a purse of coin into his hands. There had been a confused tussle as their gleaming metal parts had encircled Rithriel and pried her from his seizing limbs. They receded into the tunnels while he dreamed of how many clouds he could fly through with this coin. She had screamed a last something, but he was shaking from the cold inside.

She didn't know how it felt. She would never understand.

A ragged Valla sagged against mildewed pillows. His once-handsome face was sunken and its ashen amethyst colour hinted that he might have been an Old Blood once. The constant tremor in his legs would ease for a few heart beats each time he inhaled on the pipe dangling from his slack lips. For a moment he lay lifeless, only his frenzied nerves hinting that he yet clung to a spark of life.

He took a deep drag of the herb and willed his mind to lift, to forget. The smoke bit at his lungs, the honey taste crumbling to ash on his tongue after the barest moment of bliss. He packed the pipe with more flowers, his hands trembling, and puffed until they caught the flame.

A fresh wash of pleasure rolled through him, lifting him up, up, up. He drifted back into the Glory, renewing his connection to the sway of souls in the room.

Here was where he belonged and he'd never leave it again. The Glory was all he needed now.

"There you are," he whispered into the wreaths of his own smoke.

# Furian

*For a shorter, two-page overview of the Furians, see pg. 146.*

## THE LAND

When the Skyfather created his secondborn, he sought to forge them from a land full of fire and life, as they would be—the volcanic mountain ranges. With rich soil and iron-red clays, this harsh mountainous landscape is giving only to those with the dedication to wring its riches from the depths of the earth. The Furians have proven equal to the task, mining, tilling, and smelting their resources to forge the stubborn land into a place worthy to call home.

*The Ironwood from the Obsidian Forests is prized for its malleability and remarkable strength.*

**Obsidian Forests:** So called for their pitch-black trunks, the dense ironwood trees that make up the Obsidian Forests grow to 18 meters or more. The Forests mark the western edge of Furian territory with the Valla. While mostly a place for resource-harvesting industries (among them logging, textiles, carpentry, distilleries, and hunting), there are nevertheless a number of labourers' towns throughout the forest. Some of the most prized Furian delicacies are harvested here, including several varieties of fungi, flowers, and spices used in cooking and brewing.

**Titansfall:** After the Titan Rigs' clashes raged across the northern countryside, so many were felled that Titansfall became the largest graveyard of Titan Rigs in all of Unity. In the fallout of that epic battle, the landscape was forever changed. What once had been lush marshland fed with life-giving rains is now little more than a dustbowl. Furians scavenge through the shifting sands, stripping materials from the mysterious half-buried giants. Often skirmishes break out as the Furians fight off opportunistic scavengers seeking to make quick Denerim. Though the Furians are not much inclined toward intellectual pursuits, even they can see the appeal of the lost Rig technologies to scientists and explorers, and make a steady trade in guiding curious Valla or ambitious Humans through Titansfall.

**Seething Swamps:** Peat bogs and gaseous swamps make the Seething Swamps dangerous territory. The viscous swamplands are known to suck careless travellers to their suffocating deaths. Here Furian brewmasters age fine whiskeys and dredge potent explosives and chemical components for weaponry and industry alike. It's a foul job, but it pays well. Considered the rural limit of Furian territory, those who hail from these reaches tend to be a bit rougher around the edges; they are less courteous and more

erratic. They are generally more "wild" than their city-bred brethren, and are often blamed for the persisting opinion that foreigners have of Furians as uncouth beasts.

**Magmar:** Dubbed the Anvil of the Heavens by the Furians, Magmar is the site where a star fell from the skies, back when the Furian race was still in its infancy. While the forges of Mount Furia are renowned for their durable and dynamic creations, the greatest Furian craftsmanship is manufactured in Magmar. Items made here seem blessed: never tarnishing, unreasonably hard, and almost everlasting. Those Furians born and raised in Magmar seem to have something of the hero within them. It is no surprise that eight of the last ten monarchs of Furia were born in Magmar.

**Verge Valley**: Verge Valley comprises all of the volcanic lands between Furia at the heart of the tallest volcanoes and the Human territory behind the Stone Curtain. Known for its sweltering heat and rocky, broken land, the settlements here cling to their resources. There are a number of ghost towns where once abundant founts of oil or coal have been exhausted, causing the Furians to move on and seek their fortunes elsewhere. There are a number of larger, more stable cities across this harsh stretch, like Stonehammer, Cinderglow, and Rivermane.

## MAJOR CITIES

**Furia:** Behind the legendary Gates of Furia—the tallest and strongest mortal-made structure in all of Unity—lies the Furian capital. Nestled in the volcanic crater of a long-dead volcano, Furia is nevertheless surrounded by a plethora of active and volatile volcanoes. The mineral-rich igneous rock here has allowed for lush vineyards and bountiful crops to grow. Natural springs also supply Furia with both hot and cold fresh water, creating a surprisingly luscious haven in the midst of an otherwise harsh landscape. With the traditional *Wenru* architecture style, Furia's gleaming tiled roofs span across the crater as far as the eye can see. Tiered buildings and suspended, covered walkways create space in an otherwise dense capital. Here the doors and windows are always open. Thanks to the thermals, the climate is perpetually temperate, but nevertheless, its fires are ever-burning.

*Magmar used to be just a crater with a shiny black stone at the centre. Over the centuries, it has grown into a sacred pilgrimage for craftsmen with a small but well-equipped settlement to receive visitors and blacksmiths who have come to pay homage to the hallowed site.*

*The Legend of the Three Hammers put Magmar on the map as the most popular place in Furian lands next to Mount Furia.* *See pg. 129.*

*Perhaps the greatest sign of wealth in Furian society is how well-known and revered one's family is. Not because of the things they could afford, but of the deeds they have done, the wonders they have crafted, and the glorious deaths they have endured for some worthy cause.*

**Magmaria:** Seen from the air, Magmaria looks like radiating lashes around the eye that is the fallen Star at its heart. A sacred place, there are strict regulations on who may manufacture at the Star's Forges. One out of every five buildings in Magmaria is used for some form of worship. Here religion and philosophy have risen nearly to cult status. The Followers of Volkanus have their district on the north side of the star, while the Followers of Aluvane have claimed the south. Those who believe in the Middle Way preach from their daises, while the Abstinence practitioners meditate wordlessly in the streets and the Birthright zealots run vicious underground fighting rings. Magmaria is nothing if not a bed of potency, and everything here seems to have been vaulted to extremes.

**Gauntlet:** The most northern of the Furian cities, it lies on the edge of the steppes. With no natural vegetation beyond tenacious weeds, the winds hit Gauntlet like a slap from the sun in daytime and drop below freezing at night. As Furians abhor the cold, Gauntlet has been built with a massive forge at the heart of it, and with sprawling piping and infrastructure to ensure its heat is pumped into every abode. Generally considered sooty and bleak by visitors, Gauntlet is a centre of industry and workmanship. The Furians here specialize in smelting, chemistry, pottery, and mechanics. With closest access to the Titansfall region, Gauntlet is kept in permanent supply of raw materials by the scavenging parties and reclaimers that hunt for the dead iron giants in the dunes.

*Mandible Pass is the only other way by land aside from Brightwind Pass into and out of the Gemini Peninsula where the Risen Kingdom resides. Mandible Pass is a steep climb from the eastern side of the mountain range. This fortunate geographical challenge is the only reason why the lumbering Risen hordes are forced to funnel through Brightwind Pass where they are met by the ever wary Priests of Sanctuary (pg. 118)*

**Mandible Pass**: Leading through the rocky scrublands to the Undead kingdoms in the east, Mandible Pass is deadly to all those unfamiliar with the region. Between the high concentration of poisonous flora and fauna there, the frequent presence of the Crimson Horde, and the Risen who wander beyond their own borders, there are innumerable ways to die. This narrow pass between high and unstable canyon walls is known for its distorted echoes that lead travellers astray. Rockslides are common. Thieves live in the many caves hidden in the countless shadows in the rocks. And there are tales of Furians succumbed to the Red Rage that howl through the night, lost within its labyrinthine corridors.

**Boiling Star:** The brunt of the Birthright Furians make the pilgrimage to Boiling Star in hopes of mastering their Red Rage—or to die trying. Deep within the mountains, this prison city is designed for isolation. The residents live an ascetic lifestyle, going without most comforts in their self-imposed exile. Many here are trying to atone for actions taken under the influence of the Red Rage. Each has a single cell for their quarters, and may be locked in if their Rage poses a greater-than-usual threat. They train in self-flagellation, trying to increase their tolerance before the Red Rage takes them again. Many undergo regression magicks to try to fully recall memories of acts committed while in the grip of the Rage. Between rages, Birthright practitioners engage in deadly skirmishes. Many of the Boiling Star residents are maimed; broken in body, mind, and even spirit. Still, to take oneself away to Boiling Star is to face one's last chance for Redemption.

## TRADE

The Furians are a race of makers. As such, trade has become an important element of their interactions with other races. While the Valla introduced them to the concept of beautifying a functional tool, the Humans relayed to them the need for innovation and creation. Furians hold craftsmanship and blacksmithing as the highest tiers of creation, but expect hard work from all members of their society, from tile makers to bakers, weavers to glass blowers.

Perhaps because of this, wealth has become a key signifier of one's industriousness amongst the Furians. Hard work should be rewarded, and revelling in the gains from one's efforts is considered well-deserved. Still, greed and hoarding are deemed unseemly; a common measure of Furian prosperity is how much one can afford to give away. Often, wealthy Furians will hold huge banquets or beautify public spaces, including meeting halls and temples, or upgrade their workshop and tools. Denerim is primarily for purchasing experiences and useful objects, not for accumulating in a chest to gather dust.

## THE PEOPLE

The Ivory Queen set the glimmer of a star in the heart of the Furians, and it is this ever-flickering spark that makes them restless to do, to make, and to accomplish. Furians cannot abide being idle, and the adage "idle hands make evil work" is truest in them. As skill and proficiency are highly prized, Furians begin to assist in the forge or workshop from a young age. Children commonly run errands, tackle the cleaning, and support the hard-working adults. In this way their unofficial apprenticeships ensure they are observing and learning the family profession from the time they are able to run.

This earnestness and constant need for motion highlights the discipline drilled into every Furian, but as hard as they work, they also play. As soon as the work is done, Furians express their jovial natures. Social, animated, and deep-feeling, Furians prize connection and are a deeply loyal people. Society requires both natures to remain in their respective places, as silliness in the forge can be deadly, and sombreness in social contexts can invite suspi-

cion and challenge. The Furians honour power and strength over being well-read or overly clever. They do not seek to out-manoeuvre those who stand against them, but rather to withstand them.

## THE RED RAGE

The curse the Skyfather bestowed upon the Furians is known as the Red Rage. It corrupted their unbound strength, causing them to commit acts of chaotic destruction and behave with murderous fury. When the Red Rage strikes, a Furian's conscious mind slips beneath the surface, and they are trapped helplessly inside their own psyche as their body rampages. Afterwards, most block out the actions taken during their episodes, but many are left scarred and broken by what they have done.

Needing to find some way to cope with this explosive side to their natures, Furian philosophy has fractured into three schools of thought in the wake of the Red Rage: Abstinence, Birthright, and the Middle Way.

It was the rise of these philosophies that increased the value Furians place on an "honourable life." Seeking honour allowed them to leave their aggressive and endlessly warring ancestors behind. Modern Furians aim to build alliances with their Vallan and Human neighbours, as much better places to focus their aggression reside in the Risen and the Fell.

## CULTURE

Furian culture does not see a divide between the genders. Both male and female Furians are capable of and able to perform any job and occupy any position of power or role within the family. Whoever showcases the best aptitude and skill for a given role is the one who gains the post. Furians respect someone who knows their own limits, rather than the braggart who overestimates their ability and fails. Every citizen must strive to bring honour to their family, and so ensure their legacy. In contests where skill is equally matched, the family with the better reputation will often win the position, as reliability is more appreciated than a single great endeavour that cannot be repeated. By winning honour for the self, one honours the family.

Social drinking is an important and age-old custom. Furians are notorious for their ability to hold their alcohol, and often wagers are settled by drinking contests. These are often accompanied by feats of strength, daredevil deeds, and games of skill. Because they are such a physically strong race, arm wrestling, caber tossing, and wrestling are all popular social sports.

Despite these raucous displays, in daily interactions, Furians greet one another with deference and politeness. Social feasting at local kitchens, taverns, or *yosash* (martial arts rings that serve food, tea, and alcohol) is the expected way to eat one's meals. Almost no Furians dine in the home, unless they live and work at one of the aforementioned establishments. Eating alone is the sign of a sick heart.

**Abstinence** followers believe that this curse is just that—a curse that must be denied and overcome. These Furians focus on meditative practices and healthy outlets like martial arts to try to gain unbreakable mastery over their Red Rage. They tout the suppression of emotion, focusing only on fact and action. They believe that by preventing the volatile feelings of love, vengeance, and grief from firing their hearts, they will avoid reaching the depths where the Red Rage awaits. Instead, they focus on a life of service and duty.

**Birthright** followers believe that the Skyfather put the Red Rage into them for a reason, and so embrace the fact that it is now part of them. Rather than vilifying this state, they instead make efforts to harness its power (in battle, for example), to surpass their mortal limits. However, they are aware that there is a high level of danger involved in letting the Red Rage free. They established Boiling Star, a prison-fortress, where they might work on developing the Skyfather's "gift" without posing harm. Unfortunately, a hefty percentage of those who embrace the Birthright path end up mutilated, mad, or dead. This is the price they believe they must pay to harness the Red Rage.

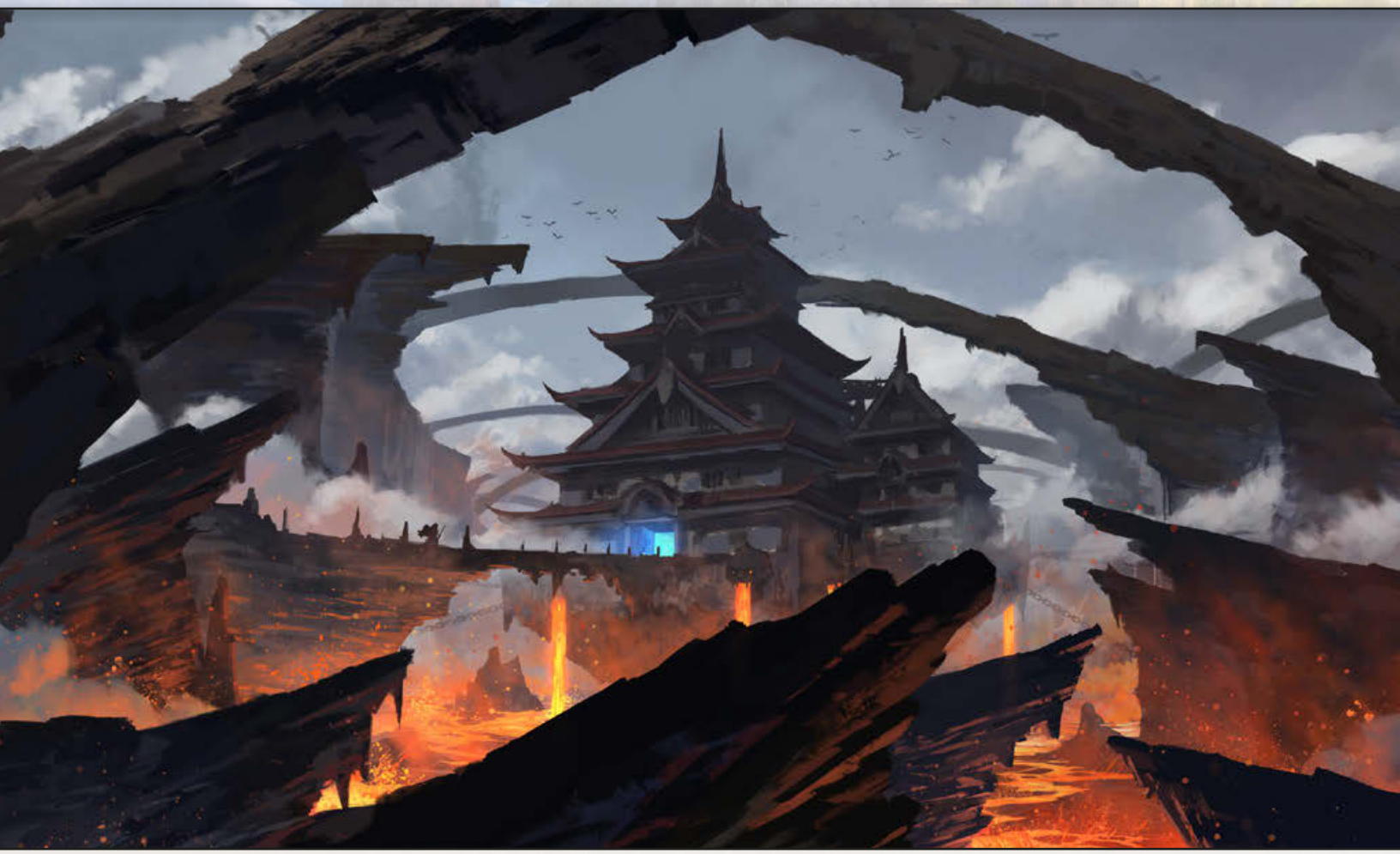
The **Middle Way** followers focus on finding harmony and balance within themselves. They agree that the Red Rage has its place and that there may come a time when they will need its power. However, they also know that they must remain its master, and not give themselves over to it as the Birthright practitioners have. Thus they preach *Agar-Yun*: where Agar is raw feeling, strength, and power, Yun is peace, tranquillity, impartiality. Stability and health are found by ensuring that *Agar-Yun* remains within the heart in equal measure.

**Wenru aesthetics**: Furians believe the secret to happiness lies in the concept of *Wenru*. It is part philosophy and part aesthetic. It governs how Furians decorate their spaces, how they build, how they dress, and how they gratify their senses. *Wenru* is the concept that everything has its essence—be that strength, glow, heat, aroma, etc. By designing the

*Boiling Star is a place that never sleeps. The roars and screams from those that have pushed too far as they try to harness their power echo throughout the prison-fortress endlessly.*

*Many of the Furians practicing the school of Birthright are often tended to by their Abstinent brothers and sisters. These brave and compassionate folk are often referred to as "Caretakers."*

*Drinking and the Red Rage are often a deadly combination, with the former opening the door to the latter. It is unfortunate that spirits and hearty ales are such a deeply embedded part of Furian culture.*



object or space to reveal its latent *Wenru*, it becomes optimized, allowing its true nature to be more effective. In this way, Furian cuisine seeks to isolate and accentuate specific flavours, especially prizing spices and pickled foods; spaces should be open and spacious, with good flow of air; objects should be functional, with their component materials visible and revered. To an outsider, Furian work can be described as minimalist, rustic, and bold, featuring clean and strong lines. The Furians say *Wenru* is the Art of Appreciating What Is.

## GOVERNMENT

*The Domo dynasty has dominated consistently at the Eminence Trials for generations. It is said that each patriarch is highly selective of choosing a wife, careful only to choose the most robust and powerful Furian females. This would ensure strong sons and daughters that are likely to win and carry the Sceptre of Rule, bringing further honour to the family name.*

The Sceptre of Rule can only be claimed by the strongest and most powerful Furian. To obtain it, a challenger must commit to the Eminence Trials. This is a series of nine gruelling tasks that test each of the nine qualities required to rule Furia: honour, strength, endurance, courage, persistence, loyalty, honesty, skill, and duty. If a challenger makes it through all nine Eminence Trials, they are allowed to challenge the current monarch to the Duel of the Sceptre. This duel to the death can only have one winner, and they become the new king or queen of Furia. The current ruler is King Domo III.

As the ruler, the monarch of Furia is responsible for overseeing parliament. These elected officials represent the different cities across Furia. Largely, they focus on Furia's economy. Simply generating more wealth year after year is not the end goal; they instead generate opportunities and encouragement to keep industry strong for their citizens. Unemployment is a sign of a weak monarch and provides an immediate invitation to be challenged. The nation's morale hinges on a sense of self-worth and production, and the government is expected to manage slumps, issues with infrastructure, and power struggles between regions. The monarch, while heavily advised by their ambassadors to the other nations, retains the final say on all issues of war and diplomacy. In daily issues, disputes, and cultural sensibilities, the Furian population agrees that the government has no right to interfere.

**Koshin:** The nine qualities comprise the Social Laws of Furia (the Laws of Honour, Strength, Endurance, Courage, Persistence, Loyalty, Honesty, Skill, and Duty). Those guilty of shaming themselves (through dishonour, softness, infirmity, cowardice, inconsistency, betrayal, deception, ineptitude, or negligence) have no place in Furian society and become pariahs known as Koshin. Koshin are stripped of their family name and forced to wander. In some cases, if they seek Redemption, they may be allowed to return

## A MOTHER'S LOVE

This is a tale told by your grandmother, whose grandmother before her told it to her—and back and back to the days before the Star fell. In those distant days, my children, all the hours were as twilight. The trees grew small then, craving light, and there was sickness across the land. In this time there was a brave mother, desperate to save her children from this sickness that rendered them weak and small and without sight. So she charged up into the Heavens and grappled a Star. Though it was powerful and wild, the mother managed to carve off a sliver with her sharp, sharp claws. She brought the sliver back to her children, and fed them each a bite to make them strong. But the stars never forget, my children, and in those days of twilight, they kept watch both day *and* night. Well, the Star saw the mother return home and was wroth to have its revenge for the wound it had suffered—but when it saw the brave mother feed the star unto her children rather than keeping its power for herself, the Star relented in its thoughts of vengeance. Still, it ached for not being whole, and so, in an effort to be near to the fragment it had lost, the Star threw itself from the Heavens. Well, my children, the hard rock of Furia was no place for a star, and when it landed, it landed hard, breaking up the ground and lodging deep, deep into stone and ore. And it is said its blow was so fierce that the whole world turned—day became night and then day again, in cycle forever. Still to this day the Star remains in Magmar, giving of its strength to we Furians who were so brave as to crave its power and set the world to turning.

to the fold of their family, but only once they have eradicated all signs of their grievous fault. Most Koshin instead choose the Path of Absolution (see below) to at least erase the stain they have left on their family's honour.

### FAMILY AND SOCIETY

Family is paramount in Furian society. Children are raised to respect and revere their ancestors and family members. All choices and actions must build upon the family's reputation, and acts that disgrace the family are tantamount to crime. The worst punishment is being stripped of one's family name, and forced to wander as a Koshin.

In order to exact this deep bond and loyalty, Furian children are indoctrinated early. Their education is delivered exclusively in the home, where they are pushed physically, mentally, and emotionally. This "forging" includes gruelling physical labour in the family profession; hazardous and exhausting tasks demanded of them as soon as they are old enough to walk; and battle training from as early as five years old. As dangerous as Furian childhood is, children are rewarded for their efforts with love and pride. Though their forging focuses primarily on hardening the spirit and strengthening the body, learning Furian history, ancestry, and design related to their family's craft is also required. Where applicable, Furian children may learn arithmetic or literacy, but these are not considered universally required skills. As such, oral traditions remain prevalent.

*It is not uncommon for multiple generations to reside in the same household. Family is one of the most important aspects of Furian culture. The young may move away from their parents for a time as a rite of passage, but they will always try to return home to take care of those who came before them.*

### AGE OF STRIFE

Though the Valla pre-dated the Furians, for a time their rivalry seemed to embody the *Agar-Yun* dichotomy that lies at the heart of all Furian philosophy. So when a third element was introduced—the Humans—Furian ideals were upended. Social unrest reached its peak when a devastating drought swept through Unity, and yet, despite its ravages, the Human cities remained verdant and their people miraculously unscathed. Jealous of the Divine favour showered upon this new race, the Furians went to war. Their forces came upon the Stone Curtain on their southern border, a mountain range carefully crafted by the gods to protect their newest Children. Unable to go any further, and with their supplies exhausted from the march, the Furian armies found themselves at the mercy of the harsh elements and marauding beasts that roamed the land. Soon they learned that they were not the only ones roused to fight; the Valla, too, descended upon Humanity, and for a hundred years, the skirmishes of the Chaos Wars continued.

It was believed that the gods, watching this seemingly endless strife, lost regard for their Children. Heartbroken at the violence between them, and their divine plans overthrown, their parental joy was forever snuffed out. The Skyfather disappeared on that hundredth year of war, and the Skyfather's Sojourn began. To this day, the Furians carry with them the guilt that it was at their instigation that the Chaos Wars began, and therefore remains their fault that the Skyfather abandoned Unity. The desperation of the Ivory Queen in the years that followed—and her eventual fall—are perceived, by extension, as further

*Only a handful of Valla still exist that lived during the Chaos Wars. There are some Furians that seek out these ancient Valla to discern the truth behind the Furians striking out at Humanity. Many Furians refuse to believe it was jealousy that drove them to attack their younger siblings and that it must have been a matter of honour or challenge.*

charges against the Furian race. Many Furians undertake pilgrimages to seek Redemption on behalf of their ancestors' sins. It has been to this aim of absolution that modern Furians have become more tolerant of the other races, wary of repeating their errors, and hopeful of mending the scars left by the Age of Strife.

## REDEMPTION

Crime, while fairly rare, is primarily committed by adolescent Furians. Lacking the wisdom to fully grasp the weight of their decisions, or the far-reaching repercussions, they are often guilty of breaking one of the nine Social Laws.

All wrongs must be righted. While Furians strive to become the strongest versions of themselves, they understand that there will be times when one stumbles, when efforts fail, when dreams cannot be realized. In these moments of shame and failure, a decent Furian has only one option: to seek Redemption. For lesser failings, such as that of a child's mistake, or for a mild loss such as in games of chance, Redemption can be as simple as performing a Contrition. These usually come in the form of labour performed for the one who was affected by their failing, though some Contritions can result in arranged marriages or indentured servitude until the debt is paid. For middle-severity failings, the sacrifice of something one holds dear, or the undertaking of an impoverished pilgrimage can serve to atone for one's sins. However, for dire failings, such as those that result in a death, the Path of Absolution is the only way to avoid becoming a Koshin and restore a family's honour.

**Path of Absolution:** This public and ritualized suicide is the single way for a Furian to regain control over their life and actions following a terrible failing. They begin with a declaration of the error they are erasing, then make an invocation to Aluvane the First Judge before performing the final ceremonial slitting of their own throat. The blood that is spilled washes away all associative guilt that the family would have been besmirched by, and the individual walking the Path of Absolution is remembered honourably. The Path of Absolution is an ironclad way to end family feuds, as it may not be avenged.

## WARFARE

It should come as no surprise that Furians are the most formidable fighters in all of Unity. Possessed of terrifically strong physiques and single-mindedly tenacious, they are a terror to face on the battlefield. Their fighting style is relentless and brutal, usually favouring two-handed weaponry and heavy armour. Even unarmed, Furians still have ferocious teeth and claws that should not be underestimated. Their tacticians take an impartial and calculated approach to their formations and juggernaut assaults. Individual soldiers fearlessly commit to lethal strategies secure in the knowledge that their death can lead to a greater victory.

While Furia's days of rampant and unprovoked warfare are behind them, the modern Furian Army will not hesitate to protect its territory. They do not forgive trespassers and will cut down any who initiate aggression with no qualms for any treaty held by parliament.

Their rapacious appetite for the resources needed in their many industries means that Furians are still expansionists. Their monarchs and parliament are constantly negotiating new treaties for rights to work in new territories in exchange for a percentage of the goods they then craft.

Because all Furians are taught to fight from childhood, every member of their population is capable of serving in their army. In times of peace, this also means that no settlement is ever undefended. Although Furians love a good fight (and a bit of bloodshed), they do not seek to kill their opponents once the battle is won: there is no honour in killing one who has surrendered. They are known to treat their prisoners of war with far more courtesy than any other race in Unity, and generally exhibit a strong sense of fair play. They do not abide guerilla tactics as they see them as a coward's approach, and, as mentioned, breaking the Law of Courage is considered a punishable offense.

## TECHNOLOGY

Furian steel is sought throughout Unity for its purity and durability. It is used in the crafting of the highest-quality armour and weapons. Furian craftsmanship is known for creating reliable and sturdy tools possessed of a simple elegance of function. They do not embellish so much as hone a possession to its purest form, and this Furian style has been embraced and incorporated into technologies across the other nations. The Humans especially have taken a page from Furian craftsmanship in relation to their advanced robotics, firearms, and other mechanical innovations. In turn, the Furians have adopted many of these new Human creations and found ways of fine-tuning them to improve their functionality. This partnership has yielded some of the greatest scientific advancements of the modern age.

Furians tend to incorporate organic materials into all of their craftsmanship—especially masonry, carpentry, and smelting. The use of metal, bone, and stone are important to the spirit of a Furian creation—and when a tool or item retains its spirit, it can best serve its purpose.

*The Path of Absolution saw a massive spike in occurrences shortly after the Great Calamity. The Red Rage was a new curse thrust upon the Furians and many didn't know of its existence until it was too late. There are too many stories of Furian fathers and mothers who were roused to intense anger or desperation, only to black-out and awake with blood on their battered hands. The blood was of both their enemies and the ones they loved.*

*Despite their own rapid advances in technology and science, Humanity still places a steep premium on Furian-made goods. The Valla, even with their refined taste for aesthetics and disdain for Furian rambunctiousness, will not deny the simple beauty in Furian craftsmanship.*

## RELIGION

While all Furians still hold the Skyfather as the First Ancestor, in modern times, the majority of Furian worship has been whittled down to two of the demigod pantheon: Volkanus the Forgemaster, and Aluvane the Dawnwalker.

For a people that so highly prize craftsmanship, it should come as no surprise that the smithy god should be their patron. Volkanus is not merely a god of creation, but of the pursuit of perfection. In myth he was said to have created the Wonders: a series of Artifacts of godly power. The most famous of these are wielded by the other demigods, and include Thorundil the Star Shaper's trusty forge hammer, Aluvane's fearsome Daybreaker, and Lunastra's twin kamas, Shimmer and Gleam. The Furians pay homage by keeping their kilns and furnaces burning hotly so that Volkanus may ever keep the celestials well-armoured and well-armed. After all, only so long as the demigods continue to outpace the dark gods that dwell beyond the Drift will Unity remain protected.

Volkanus, the Forgemaster, enjoys a shrine in every forge, by every kiln, and at every workbench in Furia. Before beginning any project, Furians ask for Volkanus' blessing, beseeching him to guide their hands. Yet, perhaps more so than any of the demigods, Volkanus' patronage is fickle.

If a crafter is noble, just, and worthy, they may make sacrifices to the Forgemaster in times of struggle. Sometimes, Volkanus will then take notice and imbue his divine favour into their creation. Crafters thus possessed by Volkanus slip into a trance-like state known as the Dance of Volkanus, which lasts until the project is completed. Afterwards, the crafters invariably claim to have dreamed of a heavy-set Furian clad in a dirty blacksmith's apron and smudged with soot and sweat. When Volkanus does bless an object, it becomes an Artifact capable of wielding the smallest fragment of the god's power. Incredibly rare, these objects are revered, but often tend to warp the lives of those who become reliant on them. Thus arose the Furian adage: "Divine power separates slag from ore."

While less visibly invoked, Aluvane the Dawnwalker holds an equally important role in Furian society. As Lord of Justice, Aluvane is called upon to guide righteous action, and to judge those who have erred. No Redemption, Contrition, or Path of Absolution would be complete without prayer and offering to the Judge.

Worship of Aluvane among the Furians is most overt and visible in the north and northeastern regions, as those borders face both Risen and Crimson Horde territories. Every city and town in Furia has an appointed parliament representative, but so too does each place have a Judge. While the parliament members are more watchers than governors, reporting on the needs and deeds of the city to the Furian capital, the Judges are responsible for settling disputes, preventing crime, and decreeing shame on certain families when one of their members is found guilty. Judges hold great power, but they are also clerics of Aluvane. Should they become corrupt, Aluvane's light is sure to desert them.

## VIEWS ON OTHER RACES

**Valla:** From the earliest contact between Furians and Valla, commerce has been their primary shared focus. At first, when the Valla had intact Spirit Stones, the Furians found the race difficult to trust or understand, as the Valla spent so much time in

their own heads. Now that the union of the Valla has been broken, younger generations are beginning to mingle with those outside their own race, and find that others' opposite qualities can provide them with balance. Where the Furian is *Agar*, the Valla provides *Yun*. In general, the Furians find the Valla whimsical yet stuffy.

**Humans:** At first, Furians considered Humans unremarkable, but as they have observed and traded with Humanity further, Furians came to respect their grit and tenacity. Furians admire Humanity's drive to achieve, and enjoy the technology they have developed. In recent generations, the honour and devotion shown by the Human Empress has made the Furians and Humans staunch allies.

**The Afflicted**: The selfishness and ruthlessness of the Afflicted has long rankled the Furians. They consider the Afflicted untrustworthy and self-obsessed, though individual Afflicted have shown brilliance and resilience that the Furians do admire. Further, many Furians pity the Afflicted's curse, and still bear the guilt of their forebears' choice to turn away the first Afflicted during the Great Calamity.

## SHORT STORY

# THE ANVIL OF TIRAN

As Bokuran Battleblight—Dreadnought General of King Domo II's Ironhand Legion, Champion of the Solstice Trials of Wudai—made his way back along the well-worn road, the cheers from the Trials still rang in his head. He had been proclaimed Champion of the Brand, and the triumph of victory filled his soul with fire. He had fought against the Crimson Horde throughout his youth, but combat for honour was the forge that truly proved his mettle. As he left Wudai in the dust behind him, he relived each glory-soaked moment. When he returned to the loving embrace of Kisa, his wife, he would regale her with every detail of his battles.

They had met at the Trials two years before. Impressed by his triumph and his passionate efforts to woo her, Kisa had agreed to take the long trek back to Tiran. Not far from Magmar, Tiran was an idyllic village known for its carpentry rather than its fighters. Without arrogance, Bokuran could easily claim to be the most famous Furian to ever rise from sleepy Tiran. There, when not called to war, he worked with ironwoods—the hardest known wood in all of Unity. It was a family trade passed down by his father, who also had been a Dreadnought in service of the King.

Bokuran and Kisa were married less than a year later. Kisa quickly made herself invaluable. First she repaired the worn cottage attached to his woodshop, then she went on to expand his clientele. Soon, Bokuran was sought after for heirloom furniture, monk's staffs, even ironwood shields. For the first time in his life, he found peace and fulfilment out of armour.

As Bokuran hit the crossroads north of Wudai, he encountered a tangle of ragged Furians, many of them with bundles strapped to their backs, sticks of furniture in their arms, even carts stacked with hodgepodge household items.

Stopping a crone caught in the press he asked, "What's the commotion all about?"

"Fell attacked Daryu," she rasped.

He didn't recognize the town, but judging from the look of these Furians, it must have been a farming community. "When?" he asked.

"Three days ago. We're all that got out," the crone answered. He recognized the darkness in her eyes from his years of war; she had been witness to many deaths.

He reassured her that the road to Wudai was clear and cut across the scrub to circumvent the mob. At once his mind went to Kisa. How far had the Fell spread? Would she flee if she caught word of their attacks? Tiran was small and remote. It was easily three days' march to Magmar, the nearest settlement with any fighting force.

Once his heart would have sung with the cry of battle. Now, it only ached to know Kisa was safe.

Cutting north at a hellish pace, Bokuran paused rarely to sleep, eating only what he could catch and slurping from even the murkiest streams. His imagination—fired with horrors he'd seen during the skirmishes against the Crimson Horde—mercilessly played every possible scenario of indignity and danger that might be visited upon Kisa.

Countless more times, he came upon signs of Fell attacks. A gutted town still smouldered—it might have been the very Daryu the crone on the road had lamented. He found several blasted campsites, some with burst corpses several days old. Other times, there was nothing left but splintered gear abandoned in the efforts to flee before creeping dangers.

With mounting dismay he tore through the remote Furian wilderness until at last the woods of Tiran came into view. His cottage was on the edge of the village, nearest the road, and though it was still small in the distance, there was no sign of smoke or carrion birds.

Nonetheless, he ran the last few hundred meters. He needed to be sure.

"Do my eyes deceive me? Does the Anvil of Tiran return?" Kisa called playfully from the woodpile. She was hunched over a low workbench with spike and anvil as she was working blocks of ironwood into smaller pieces.

Without a word, Bokuran scooped her up into his arms and swung her about, muzzle buried in her hickory-smoke hair. She embraced him tightly, and for a long moment they remained entwined.

At last he put her down and cupped one paw to her cheek.

"What is it, Bokur?" Kisa asked. Her cheer muted at the look on his face.

"I'm glad you are safe," he answered, breaking at last into a smile.

"Why should I not be safe in sleepy Tiran? The most dangerous thing in this village just blew back in as if the Infernal Kings themselves were on his

tail…" Kisa trailed as he bent his head and nuzzled his brow against hers—an intimate gesture. "What happened?"

"There were Fell attacks. Between Wudai and home."

"Volkanus preserve us! Are we in danger?" Kisa asked, reflexively following the road he'd just run as if she might see demons rising from the dust.

"I don't think so, my love," Bokuran admitted. Now that the fear had faded, he nearly laughed at himself. There had been no sign for two days or more. If the Fell had struck, it must have been further south, and all the signs he'd seen had been aftermath.

"Well, you'd best come in and rest up. I'll get some roast heating for you."

With an arm still wrapped around one another, Kisa led her hulking husband into their modest cottage. As she stoked the cooking fire, Bokuran told her all about the Trials: the way his sword had flashed in the arena, how he'd triumphed through each round of combat, how Domo II himself had watched all of his fights from the King's box. He lavished the detail and drew out the suspense, until all of his bouts were recounted.

"Well?" Kisa prompted, spooning out the finished roast stew and handing him a bowl and spoon. "How did you rank?"

"The Anvil of Tiran," Bokuran began with gravitas, "is Champion for the sixth year in a row!"

"*Shagyut*!" Kisa cheered, gripping his paws tightly in her own. "We are so proud of you!"

"We?" Bokuran asked, laughing a little.

"We, my love. You're going to be a father."

For all his might on the battlefield, the Anvil of Tiran's heart skipped a beat. He reached out for his wife, paws gently caressing her belly, the barest curve of a forming babe hidden beneath her worker's smock.

"All the titles in the world could never make me as happy as I am at this moment," Bokuran managed at last. His smile came unbidden, beaming from him like the sun itself.

"Truly? I'm relieved…" Kisa replied, overcome by a rare show of uncertainty. "With your Trials and renown, I didn't want you to feel burdened…"

All at once the terror from the return swept over him in cold sweat. Bokuran's face fell. Now, not only would lovely russet-coated Kisa be left unattended, but also an innocent kitten. He couldn't leave them to fend for themselves. Not with Fell activity on the rise. Perhaps it had been Daryu last time, but there was no guarantee it wouldn't be Tiran next.

With a swiftness of decision that surprised even him, Bokuran took his wife's paw between both of his. "I'll box my sword and armour, my love. It's time I stayed here with my family. I have my work to provide for us, and enough years of glory to satisfy me in my old age. My life from now on, is for you and our kitten."

Kisa's eyes brimmed with tears, but she smiled through it all the same. "I know how much you're giving, my Anvil of Tiran. I vow to make our family a happy one so that all the cheers from the ring will pale in comparison to the laughter we will make together. I love you, Bokur, with all of my heart."

"With all of my heart," he echoed.

Though the Great Calamity had made much work for the Ironhand Legion, Bokuran was true to his word. His mighty sword remained sheathed in a corner of their room, with his armour all wrapped in oiled linen. The first year, the King sent messengers to entice him to battle, decked in glorious equipage, but with Kisa at his side he wished them well and sent them on their way.

His daughter was born without event, and soon he found his humble cottage full of an infant's babble. While little Juni was still in her bassinet, Bokuran turned his downtime towards beautifying his home. He repaired the off-kilter cabinets and replaced a beam that had begun to rot. He re-shingled the roof with fresh clay tile. Day by day he worked, on his home or on the steady commissions from travellers and the rest of the town.

It seemed Juni learned to run before she could walk. Soon she was tearing around the house, always playing at fighting shadows. Bokuran would be the mighty wild bear that she could attack with the little wooden sword he'd carved for her. Between roars and laughter, they would tussle until Kisa shooed them outside lest they break something, again.

When Juni was in his arms, Bokuran could almost forget he had ever been the Anvil of Tiran. With surprising ease, he slipped back into the role of just another civilian raising a family in the quiet countryside. Kisa's folk songs would carry him through the workday, and with his constant work, his skills spread his reputation even into Magmar. No dutiful Furian allowed themselves to get wasteful and wealthy, but they were comfortable: enough to keep them warm through the winters and to provide enough to eat all the year.

It wasn't until two summers later when a band of travelling fighters returning from the Solstice Trials stopped with them for a day of rest that Bokuran fully realized how content he was. Once, talk of the Trials would have made him itch to unsheathe his sword and swing it through the woods, keeping his skills as sharp as his blade's edge. But no longer. He let the fighters talk of deeds they had witnessed at the Trials. One even recalled the greatest fight he'd ever witnessed—a master called the Anvil of Tiran a few years back—and Bokuran merely smiled, and

listened to the tale. It had grown taller in places, but the glory of it had lasted.

"Are you sad to not be travelling off with them?" Kisa had asked as the group moved on the following morning.

"No," Bokuran said at once, happy that this truth sat comfortably in his heart.

"Papa! Did you see they had swords?" Juni said, bouncing around his knees. "Have at you!" she cried, thwacking him quite forcefully with her wooden facsimile.

Bokuran gave out a pained moan and crumpled to the dusty front walkway.

Juni gasped and hopped back a step, mouth agape. "Papa?" she asked.

Without a word of warning, Bokuran pounced on her, scooping her up into his arms and spinning her around. Juni let forth a pure peal of laughter and let herself be carried off into the yard.

Mere days later, a plumed soldier arrived at their gate. Kisa asked no questions but hurried at once to get her husband.

Bokuran came around the side of the cottage, wiping the sweat and wood shavings from his face. "Hail, brother," he greeted the stranger.

"Hail, brother," the soldier replied, offering a salute. "King Domo II calls all members of the Ironhand Legion to arms!"

"War?" Bokuran asked, his posture stiffening.

"War against the Fell," the soldier confirmed with a stiff nod.

"I wish you glory on the field, brother," Bokuran offered. He made no move to fetch his gear.

"You are the one they call the Anvil of Tiran, aren't you?" the soldier asked, looking over the handsome cottage and the beautiful woman behind him in the doorway.

"I once was. I no longer wield a sword."

"Were you injured?" the soldier pressed, now inspecting Bokuran's muscle-bound frame with the fresh scrutiny.

"No," Bokuran replied, baring his fangs a little. "I am a carpenter of ironwoods. If you'd like, I can outfit you with a new shield before you go." It was a polite invitation for the soldier to make his peace and be on his way. The stranger didn't take the offer.

"You owe it to the King! You owe it to Furia to fight!"

Bokuran snarled and took a step forward, looming over the young tomcat. "I fought in the wilderness against the Crimson Horde! I fought for the Solstice Brand every year in the Trials and won a dozen of them in my time! I have given the King enough of my sweat and blood." He let his hackles settle, but kept his hands at the ready. "What's left of my life is mine. I've a family to defend."

"Selfish!" the soldier managed despite the wild look in his eyes. "What if the Fell encroach further? What if they come to Tiran?"

"Then they will have to go through me," Bokuran snarled.

Though the soldier continued to wheedle and cajole, bringing up tales of the glory Bokuran had once won, threatening to tell the king Bokuran had been too coward to fight... Bokuran was not swayed. He filled the youth's water skein and gave him an ironwood shield as offered.

By the time he'd pushed the soldier off on his way with black looks and a blacker mood, his old fears of the Fell had been stoked back to sinister embers.

It was nighttime when the smell of smoke woke Bokuran from his sleep. He knew woods well, and recognized at once it was his cottage that was burning. He grabbed Kisa and threw her half-over his shoulder as he tore from their bedroom. She woke up a step later, bellowing to know what was going on. Barely slowing, he dove to his daughter's small bed.

"Grab Juni!" he bellowed. Still hanging over his burly shoulder, Kisa scooped their young daughter from her bed and held her close to Bokuran's back as he fled towards the kitchen. They came through the doorway, and Bokuran saw the flames were not coming from the hearth but from the front wall. From outside. Someone was trying to burn them alive.

Unable to take the exit, he pivoted around, heading for the window overlooking the woods. Setting Kisa down, he called "Hold her tight," and spared barely a glance to ensure Juni was safely clutched in her mother's arms. Squaring his broad shoulders, Bokuran hefted one of the chairs from the table and swung it through the glass. A swift sweep of the chair legs and the remainder of the glass fell away. He ushered Kisa through, and then handed Juni out to her.

The room was fast filling with smoke. He knew at a glance that he'd never wedge his bulk through the window. With a roar, he kicked at the sill. His careful craftsmanship splintered beneath his blows. He kicked again and again, breaking through a section of the wall until he was able to wiggle his way through the gap. Though the ragged wood tore at his face and shoulders, he was too hell-bent to care.

"Kisa!!" he called as soon as he had tumbled free on the grass outside. The night was strangely hot from the flames and the smoke hung thick in the still air.

A muffled scream wafted through the smoke. He tore around the house towards the source of the blaze and saw a group of black smudges back-lit by the fire. Squinting against the heat, he staggered closer, his whiskers melting into his fur.

As the figures resolved from the heat he saw the distorted Furians: teeth that ran from jaw to navel, waving serpent-limbs wrapped tight around his

Kisa, many bulging eyes reflecting the fire from a single distorted face, Juni clutched between misshapen claws.

The Fell had come to Tiran at long last. The very monsters he had refused to fight had razed his home, seized his family. The rage boiled within him, hotter than any fire. His vision blurred and he vented a vicious roar.

The Red Rage was in him, more strongly than he had ever felt its pull before. Unlike the Trials, there was no last hook holding him to himself. This was abandon, wild and hungry. Though his sword and armour lay forsaken somewhere in the inferno, Bokuran charged, all teeth and talons.

Bokuran smelled smoke and iron. Even breathing pulled at his chest as if he might burst stitches his whole body over. He wondered if he had died in the fire.

*The fire.*

Bokuran forced himself to sitting, a splitting pain in his skull. His fur was matted, dried to his face through a thick crusting of blood. With an effort he pulled himself to kneeling. His garments were little more than tattered ribbons, more soot than cloth. There were great furrows in the earth leading from his cottage to the road. A number of the trees nearest the house had fallen, half-burnt, to cut a rough line across his property. Half of his cottage was little more than cinder, but from the wetness of the ground, he realized a fortuitous rain had doused the blaze.

"Kisa?" His voice was little more than a croak and he tasted blood in his mouth. Bokuran forced himself to his feet, staggering towards the cottage.

In the still smouldering ash he found the first body. It was barely recognizable as that. Tendrils of shredded muscle splayed out across the blood-soaked gravel. Its face seemed to have been gouged completely from the skull. Its ribs were shattered open and the thing's heart was missing. There was no way to tell if the Fell had still been trapped inside the flesh when the body had been slain, as mangled as it was. If not, the Fell might have fled its host, eluding Bokuran's retribution.

*How many had there been? Four surely, perhaps six.* His memory was foggy. It had all happened so swiftly, and in such a rush of alarm that he couldn't be sure.

In front of his shop, he found the next three bodies. If it weren't for the splintered bones sticking up from the fly-encrusted flesh, he would have been hard-pressed to say how many bodies lay tangled together. From the fragments of gear strewn throughout the carnage of his yard, the Furians must have been brigands before the Fell possessed them. He couldn't help but wonder if they too had refused to help the soldiers fight.

"Kisa?" he called again.

Around the far side of the house, in front of the woodpile, he found another two bodies in a tumble of cords of wood. He drew nearer, expecting to learn little more than the other bodies had revealed. But as he neared, his heart went as ice in his chest.

One of the corpses was impossibly small. Too small for a brigand. Small enough for a child.

Bokuran's legs gave out beneath him. He dragged himself across the grass, and his body was like cooling metal, becoming ever more rigid.

A shred of arm in the tangle of flesh still bore russet-coloured fur, almost the same colour as the oxidized blood. Wracked by silent weeping, he bent over the two torn bodies, catching the faintest whiff of hickory through the stink of ash and offal. He smoothed Kisa's hair back from her shattered skull, trying to hold the fragments together. It was as if she had been stomped to pulp. He reached out and pulled the limp little body of Juni closer to Kisa's reaching arms.

"The Fell..." he tried, but his voice betrayed the lie. The Fell had been mercilessly slaughtered, one and all. The same might that had been brought to bear on them had completed their dark work here.

A flash of a half-recalled fragment jumped into his mind's eye: Red Rage maddened, tearing towards his beloved wife and child, clutching her sweet face between his mighty paws and—

Bokuran's mind recoiled. How could this have happened? How could he have been so lost in the madness of that Rage to not have stopped, even for Juni? For Kisa?

He had turned his back on his country folk. He had refused the summons of the king he had once so dutifully served. He had put his own family, his own happiness before the safety of his homeland. The gods had struck him down, judged him wanting. In their might, they had stripped away the very ones he held as more precious than all of Furia.

The Anvil of Tiran lay in the carnage of the Fell massacre and wept his grief to the skies.

The morning was bright and clear when Bokuran crossed the yard to draw his daily water. His shoulder ached as it always did on waking, and his eyesight was not as crisp as it once had been. Still, his nose was keen, and as the wind whispered around the back of his workshop, he caught the smell of strangers. And not Furians.

He tightened his grip on the handle of the bucket and stalked up the path towards the well. He could detect leather and oil... and magick. The path was lined by old trees, but it was straight and elevated

from the surrounding wood; he would be in clear sight as he drew nearer. With wild abandon, Bokuran charged the last few meters, coming up on the well and the intruders.

There were three figures drawing water: a Human, a Valla, and an Afflicted.

"Thieves!" he bellowed, still charging up the hill, his old muscles temporarily fired beyond their aged complaints.

The Afflicted woman turned towards him first. There was a glowing contraption where her eyes should have been, and the light shone from under her hood with no sign of emotion. "Steady, Furian, we mean you no harm," she called. Her voice echoed strangely, more machine than air.

"Me thinks th' house weren't deserted after all, Boss," the Human quipped, clearly the youngest of the band. She was copper-haired and slender, dressed only in light armour that Bokuran knew he could easily tear through.

"That's my well!" he continued belligerently. "I don't tolerate trespassers."

Now the Valla stepped forward, his skin ruby and hair honey, strangely offset by the emerald greens of his robes. This was the one that smelled so strongly of magick. A Primalist, then. "Our apologies for entering without your permission, sir. May we draw water for our journey?" Bokuran faltered. They did not seem aggressive. Their hands were away from their weapons. They were all watching him, waiting.

"No," he answered at last. "Get out."

"Hey, come now!" the Human chirped, stepping closer. "We don't mean you any harm, old man, an' it's a long journey ahead. A bit o' water's all we ask."

"I said 'no'!" Bokuran snarled, lashing his outstretched claws at her.

But she dodged, laughing, and twirled away. "Jus' let it go, old man!" she crowed from behind him.

Bokuran whirled, roaring, but she had already dodged again, and was out of his line of sight once more.

"Y'know, Boss, I don't think he could stop us fillin' our canteens if he tried!"

"Giselle," the Afflicted woman warned, but the sprightly Phantom was too lost in her taunting to listen.

Bokuran swiped back at the Human but all at once felt a sudden thwack at his knee. The old joint gave out and he fell hard onto his back. He could hear Giselle laughing, the Valla beginning some admonishment, but his rage was boiling. If the Anvil of Tiran yet existed, all that had once been a hero in him had rotted away.

Still, long years of habit drove his reaction without need for thought, and he snatched the Phantom's boot out from under her, dragging her down and lifting himself onto his knees in one easy motion. His paw was crushing down on the girl's windpipe with ease when all at once he heard,

"Stand down!"

His old military instincts snapped to attention. He released Giselle and sat back on his haunches, looking up to the Afflicted woman who had given the command. The girl rolled herself over into the grass alongside the track and was coughing and gasping. The Valla moved to her side, still quietly chiding her behaviour.

The tussle had been over in a flash and with it the tension was diffused. Now that his initial outrage had been forgotten he was ashamed at how he had treated these travellers, but with the pride of a Furian, could not bring himself to apologize. The trio seemed embarrassed by the disrespectful and foolhardy behaviour of their youngest member. Neither side seemed particularly keen to make the next move.

"Perhaps we can start again," the Afflicted woman said at last, in her strange artificial voice. "My name is Judge Eustace. These are my travelling companions: Delan Boughsprite, our Primalist; and Giselle Quail, our Phantom. While passing through on our way south, we had stopped to refill our canteens. We assumed—wrongly—that the house was deserted. We ask your forgiveness for trespassing."

Bokuran looked them over in turn. Sure enough, they were laden with gear for travel, with enough weapons to imply that they often saw trouble. He could see how worn their armour was, and distantly recalled how unforgiving the roads could be.

"Where are you headed?" he asked at last, side-stepping her apology so that he did not need to make one himself.

"South into the Human Empire," Delan answered, an openness to his manner that Bokuran found difficult to face. "From there, we shall see."

"You'll need water," Bokuran offered, climbing back to his feet and towering over them. "And if you are not in too much hurry to be setting out, I could make some repairs..."

Judge Eustace and Delan exchanged looks. Giselle perked.

"Are you a blacksmith?" she asked, her young face breaking into a hopeful smile.

"Better," Bokuran allowed himself the barest ghost of a smile in return, "an ironwood carpenter. Come, I don't have much to offer for a meal, but I can at least offer my workshop."

They came without hesitance down the path. The cottage had been fully overtaken by the forest for years, but the workshop—though a lived-in mess—was functional. Bokuran moved through the clutter instinctively, but his guests found themselves continually bumping into discarded projects, knocking tools to the floor while trying to manoeuvre be-

tween stacked crates. Bokuran clearly no longer had a market to which he could sell his wares.

Delan idly picked up a wooden sculpture from one of the nearest crates and turned it over in his hands. The workmanship showed the skill of decades' practise, the artist's hand steady and deft. Yet, the subject was of a Furian woman cradling a limp child. There was something tragic about the postures, the expressions. Delan set it back into the crate and saw countless more figurines portraying the same sad subjects.

"Come, bring me that pauldron," Bokuran was calling from the workbench. "Let's see what it needs..."

Delan approached, unstrapping the shoulder guard and handing it across to the old Furian. It was cracked, patched with smelted iron, and padded with leather along the underside. Bokuran grunted and fished about in the chaos of tools and cuts of wood until he found what he was seeking. Then he set to work, leaving the trio to mill about as best they could. Though Delan stayed and watched the master work, Giselle and Judge Eustace left for fresher air outside.

"What d'you make o' him?" Giselle asked, quietly as she could.

"He's a broken man," Judge Eustace replied. "Ghosts are holding him fast."

"What happened, d'you think?" the Phantom pressed, turning to look over the rotted husk of the cottage, swarming with fungi and birds' nests.

"Something terrible. Perhaps something he feels responsible for. If not, he might have left the site of such trauma behind." The Afflicted Judge paused, her enhanced gaze sweeping over the landscape, reading minerals and structure and finding bones buried in the ruins. "Perhaps he is waiting for something..."

"Like what?" Giselle asked, trying and failing to follow her leader's stare.

"Retribution, perhaps. Redemption." Judge Eustace shrugged.

The Phantom turned around, her usually chipper mood drooping at the faded signs of life. A family had lived here once. With its situation leading into Tiran, so near to the road, this had been a position of prestige. Perhaps the old carpenter had even been someone important, once. "He's been waiting a long time for it to come," Giselle muttered at last.

Despite the shambles of Bokuran's property, he welcomed them to camp in his overgrown yard. Well-used to camping on the road, it was no difficulty to prop their tents and set up their cooking kit. During the days, the old Furian worked on repairing and replacing their worn gear. His craftsmanship was far finer than their original possessions had been, and his ironwood was harder than steel. Bokuran's labours for them went beyond apology; there was desperation in it, a need to work for someone once more. It seemed to have been a long time since he had last had regular interaction with people of any kind, and rusty as he was, there was a sort of starved need in him to connect.

For their part, the trio would hunt in the wild woods to provide fresh meat for their evening meals, with Delan as skilful a cook as Giselle was a hunter.

Bokuran would not join them around their fire, despite invitation. He didn't fear the flame, rather the painful memories the fire awakened. Delan, with prayers to the life-giving forest, would bring him a portion of their nightly stew or roast, and Bokuran would always finish every last morsel. None of them dared think what he had subsisted off of before they had come.

Nearly two weeks later, all of the repairs had been finished. The trio were preparing for their final night in the carpenter's yard, packing up as much of their gear as possible before the full of night set in. Delan called them to the cooking pit where he was readying the night's soup, when a bulky shape blotted out the rising moon.

Bokuran had emerged from his workshop. He didn't say anything, but Delan doled out a portion of the soup into his carved wooden bowl and handed it to the Furian's mighty paws. Bokuran took a seat beside Giselle near the fire—though not too close—and set to eating.

Despite his silent presence, the other three struck up their nightly banter, telling tales of the road to keep off the chill and to remind themselves of why they needed to keep moving come morning.

"Remember the time we came up against the border guard in Falcon's Watch?" Delan began another tale. "And she was some sort of ghoul to a Risen lover?"

"The authorities refused to listen to me because I was Afflicted," Judge Eustace noted, nodding. Under the shadows of her hood, all that could be seen of her face was the glowing green strip where her eyes should have been.

"I missed this adventure!" Giselle pouted. "What happened?"

Delan wove the tale with elegance, a gothic horror worthy of a novel, involving lust, betrayal, planted evidence, and a swapping of identities to elude the authorities when they had at last believed Judge Eustace's warnings.

"Serves them right!" Giselle chirped, slapping her knee and laughing. "Judgin' the truth on its messenger is a fool's failing." She shook her head, her copper hair glimmering in the firelight. "How about you, Furian? You got any tales o' adventure to share?"

There was an awkward pause, and the four around the circle exchanged faltering glances. Then Bokuran lifted himself a little higher where he sat and rolled his shoulders back. Not stooping, he towered over them.

"Well, I have one story..." he began, his cracked voice struggling to weave the words. "It's about a warrior who won the Summer Trials to become Champion of the Brand. They called him the Anvil of Tiran, because when warriors struck against him, they made only sparks and could never fell him. He was said to be the hero of heroes, tall as a mountain, with fire in his veins. King Domo II saw his first victory at the Trials and recruited him into his Ironhand Legion. Together they fought back the Crimson Horde time and again. They sharpened their blades in defending their people, and soon the Anvil of Tiran's praises rang across the land. He returned to the Trials year after year. With his flashing sword and mighty roar, he became Champion of the Brand twelve times."

Bokuran trailed off, staring deep into the flames.

"What happened to him?" Giselle asked, and Delan hissed at her in warning.

Bokuran looked up at her, torment in his face. "He had a daughter, and he became selfish. When Furia needed the Anvil of Tiran, he refused to pick up arms. When the Fell came..."

There was a heavy silence.

"He couldn't fight them off?" Giselle guessed.

"Would you like to travel with us?" Delan asked suddenly, with a withering glare in the Phantom's direction.

Bokuran looked towards him slowly, as if not comprehending.

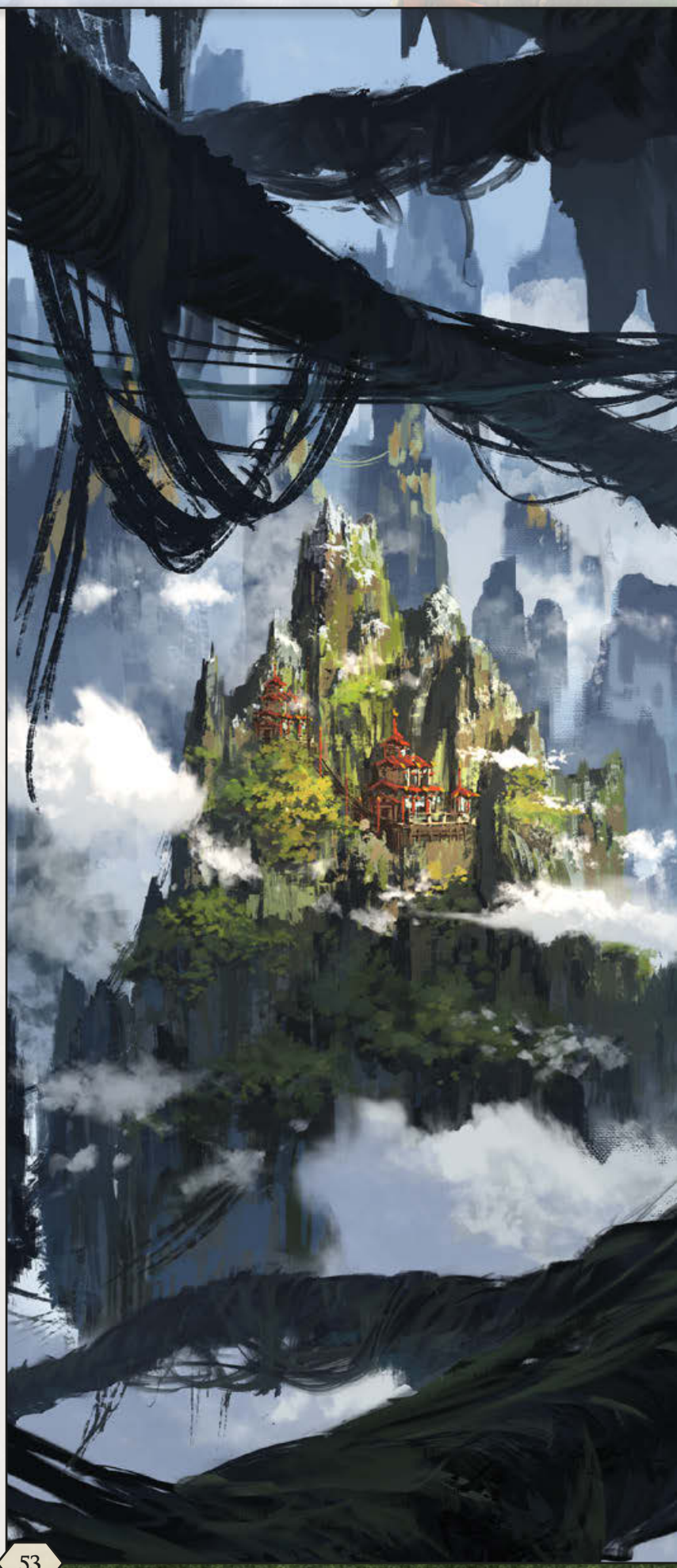
"It'd complete our set," Giselle jested, seemingly unaware of how close she had come to opening old wounds.

"It would be a chance for redemption," Judge Eustace challenged. She knew enough of Furian culture to know that if this man had no one left with whom he could atone for his failures, he would never be whole. Perhaps if he was able to join their little family, he might finally be able to leave his demons behind.

"Get down!" Bokuran's voice carried like the arrows whistling through the air. Giselle fell flat to the ground as Delan completed his *Lashing Wind* incantation. All at once a coil of wind burst forth from the Primalist's ruby hands, knocking the arrows back towards their assailants.

Into the opening, Bokuran leaped, snarling. His old sword drove deep into a goblin's breast as it scrambled back, chittering in alarm. Beside him, Judge Eustace's massive hammer pounded into the earth like a quake. The goblins scattered back into the rocks the way they had come.

In the decades since Bokuran had last ventured forth into the world, dangers seemed to have multiplied. This was the fourth haphazard assault from the Crimson



Horde they had faced since entering the Human Kingdom. And though the numbers of Risen stalking the countryside seemed to have dwindled as they travelled southwest, he still seemed unable to get their rotting stink out of his nostrils.

"Everyone hale?" Judge Eustace called.

They all sounded off, Bokuran with the rest. He was one of the troupe now. Giselle had even taken to calling him Old Man Anvil when she was especially pleased with him.

"I don't know how we survived as long as we did without our muscle," the Phantom quipped, trotting up the rocks to reclaim a pair of her daggers that were still lodged in a dead goblin the rest of its pack had left behind. Delan gave Bokuran an appreciative smile from within the aureole of wind that still swirled around him, his hands folded in a gesture of thanks to the elements.

The Valla continued scouting the path, leading them more cautiously through the rocky wilderness until they finally made it to Breaker's Reach. Judge Eustace was in need of fresh machine parts to manage her spreading Phage, and she had a few contacts in the Human city that would turn a blind eye to an Afflicted legitimately trading for supplies.

While Bokuran, Delan, and Giselle waited at one of the many taverns in Breaker's Reach for Eustace to return from her private appointment with her Splicer, they passed their time regaling the young, wide-eyed shop-boys with tales of adventure in the wide world. Now, even the old Furian had polished up his rusty storytelling to spin captivating tales of the Summer Trials that these Humans had never seen.

Partway through one of Giselle's many yarns, one of the older machine-workers approached the table. The bearded Human's focus was riveted on Giselle, and Bokuran bristled, ready to defend her if the stranger crossed a line.

"Oy, you ain't got a brother, have ye?"

Their Phantom started, looking at the machine-worker in an entirely new light. "I do," she replied guardedly.

"Named Quail, ain't it? Patrik Quail?" the man pressed.

"Aye," Giselle answered, and her hand slid ever so subtly to one of the daggers on her belt. Bokuran noticed, but the machine-worker apparently hadn't.

The man leaned on the table and gave a grin devoid of mirth. "He owes me, yer brother."

"That's his problem, ain't it?" Giselle shot back.

"You're his family. You gotta settle for him."

But Giselle just snorted into her tankard and turned away. The machine-worker made the mistake of reaching out a hand to grab her shoulder, but barely brushed the fold of her cloak when Bokuran was on his feet, the burly machine-worker dangling in his huge paws.

"I suggest you take your grievance up with this Patrik before I break your precious hands beyond repair," the Anvil of Tiran snarled. Despite his grizzled mane, the fury in his eyes caused the machine-worker's tough facade to crumple.

"I can't! That's the problem!" he squeaked. "Patrik's gone!"

Giselle was out of her chair in a heartbeat, staring up at the suspended Human. "What do you mean, 'gone'?"

"He borrowed a fortune from me in this great venture he was shooting off about! But he never came back at the appointed time. Now, it's been more'n a year—the blackguard must've scarpered!"

Bokuran slammed the man down at their table, and with more pointed questions from Giselle and a little physical encouragement from their Furian, the man spilled all he knew: Patrik had attested to having a claim for scouting treasure in the Mana Mines. He'd asserted that he had an insider who knew the caverns and could get them safely in and out. He'd promised a steep return on the machine-worker's investment, but sure enough, all attempts to contact Giselle's brother had failed.

When they could extract no further wisdom, Bokuran let the man go. The hapless Human left without a single backwards glance. After the altercation, the mood in the tavern was tense. Delan paid a young bard to play something to lighten the mood, and under its cover, they were able to more discretely discuss what ought to be done.

As much as Giselle's brother was notorious for getting himself into ambitious schemes that he more often than not failed to pull off, and despite his problematic gambling habits, he was still family. When Giselle suggested they adjust their southern course to aim for the Mana Mines in hopes of picking up Patrik's trail and finding out what had become of him, Bokuran needed no convincing.

"I am with you, no matter what," he promised.

"With Old Man Anvil beside me, I have nothing to fear!" Giselle quipped with a bright smile.

For the first time in drudging years, Bokuran had others to defend and protect. He had not realized how much he needed to fill that role. He offered Giselle a smile, and looked to Delan. They exchanged nods, knowing that they would face a different kind of danger if they followed Patrik Quail's steps. With the last of what was in their tankards, they made a vow that they would stand by each other, no matter what happened. All that remained was convincing Judge Eustace when she returned—new and improved—from her visit to the Splicer.

The Mana Mines were no laughing matter. Members of every race met their deaths in the labyrinthine caverns. It was an ambitious gamble undertaken only by the bravest—or most foolish. They had successfully followed Patrik's trail over the course of a few weeks, and now, the troupe found themselves at the mouth of the infamous caves.

"Remember, whatever you think you experience down there could be nothing more than hallucinations," Delan reminded them. "The Mana Mines have a mind of their own, and they will trick and cajole all who enter them." No one dared mention the very real monsters that also haunted the caves.

"We stay together, and we keep our eyes open." Judge Eustace commanded, turning the green beam of her visor on each of them in turn. Her latest grafts had corrected a degeneration of her spine, making her taller, though even she could not match the Anvil of Tiran. "Everyone ready?"

They all nodded, though it was clear that Giselle was nervous. She had brought them into one of the deadliest places in Unity, in pursuit of a brother who continuously threw both siblings in over their heads.

Bokuran reached out to ruffle her copper curls and gave a toothy smile. "I'll be right behind you the whole way, Kitten."

Giselle gave a grateful smile and nodded, stepping boldly forward. Bokuran followed, with Delan behind him, and Judge Eustace guarding the rear.

At first, they saw little more than rock, but Delan was on edge with the magick permeating the air, and Bokuran was convinced he smelled the stink of the Fell. Even Eustace's ocular prostheses seemed to have difficulty reading the tangled energy of the caves. As a result, they had to make their way slowly and carefully. Delan charted their path as they went. Getting into the Mines was one thing; getting out again was the real problem. By all accounts, the Mana Mines were reluctant to let visitors leave.

Without light, and with the air filled with a heady tang, time warped around them. They could barely judge their own weariness for how on edge they all were. The slightest crackle of rock sent all of them scrambling on alert.

Still, the group managed to find their way deeper into the caverns, until a glittering refraction splashed the walls ahead in a rainbow of light. Curious, Giselle advanced, peeling off down a side-tunnel. Carefully, the others followed her in formation, though Delan clucked disapprovingly at this diversion from the wider path.

Around the corner, they found themselves in a cavern of massive crystals. They jutted from floor to vaulting ceiling, sometimes as wide across as Bokuran was tall. As hauntingly beautiful as they appeared, the sudden countless reflections added a level of confusion that made Eustace uneasy.

"You think we could break a few o' these off?" Giselle asked, looking around with avarice lighting her flushed face. "We've come all this way, might as well have something for our troubles, yea?"

"We've come all this way for your brother," Bokuran reminded her.

"This room isn't right," their Primalist intoned, backing uncomfortably towards the tunnel by which they'd entered. "Something about it is all wrong. We shouldn't be here."

But Giselle moved forward, weaving around the nearest pillar of crystal. As she slid her hand along the shaft of it, a subtle vibration rang, setting the other crystals to singing. Bokuran's hackles rose.

"I agree with Delan…" he began, but he got no further when Giselle cried out from behind the crystals. Her voice bounced around the room, echo upon echo, and her figure appeared in a thousand reflections.

Nonetheless, the Anvil of Tiran staggered forward, following the Phantom's scent. He found her behind another cluster of crystals, on her knees in the gravel.

"Kitten?" the Furian called, fearful that he was already too late.

Giselle turned slowly, her expression drawn, and held up a scrap of what looked to be a rucksack.

"What is that?" Bokuran asked. He could see there were symbols stitched into the heavy canvas, but he couldn't read it.

"It says 'Quail'," Giselle whispered hollowly.

"Your brother passed this way," Delan murmured from somewhere behind them.

"Very well, we press on, but I want everyone on high alert," Judge Eustace commanded.

Once they had passed through the crystal cavern, the ground began to rumble, as if the labyrinth itself was shifting. Reaching for each other so as not to be separated, Bokuran managed to get to Giselle and wrap the Human up in his embrace, shielding her as a fall of rocks tumbled from the ceiling. Coughing against the dust, Bokuran waited until the rumbling stopped, long minutes later. At last he released the Phantom. He was grazed from the cascade, but nothing deeper than surface wounds.

"Giselle!" It was Judge Eustace, her mechanical voice further warped by the tumble of boulders that now separated them. "Stand clear, I'm going to start working through the rocks to get to you." From the crunch and thud, the Furian knew their leader was using her hammer to clear a way through the rocks. He reached out to press their Phantom back from the rocks only to find she was no longer standing beside him.

Turning, he saw the edge of her boot kicking as she was dragged around the corner. With a roar, Bokuran charged after her, praying that the other

two would work their way through to help as soon as possible.

He closed the distance in a matter of bounds and caught sight of the beast that had seized her. It was squid-like with long tendrils tightly wrapped around Giselle's throat and body. Already, her face was darkening as her throat was compressed. Drawing his sword, he charged the monster, slashing at its body and limbs. He heard Giselle gasp as she tumbled free, but had no time to stop as he contended with a handful of writhing tentacles.

"Patrik!" she howled.

Daring a momentary glance, he followed her riveted attention. Sure enough, through the gelatinous body, there was a figure, barely distinguishable but for its shock of copper hair. There seemed to be other, older bodies inside it as well, mostly digested.

His distraction allowed one of the tentacles to wrap itself around his sword-arm with an iron grip. Unable to hold on, his sword clattered to the rock. Roaring in pain, he slashed at the tentacle with his free talons, feeling the Red Rage rising in his desperation.

He managed to shred the limb enough to loosen its grip, but by then he had two more tentacles wrapped around his leg and waist. He bit into the nearest slimy flesh; the soapy taste filling his mouth made him retch.

Somewhere beneath him, another spray of the monster's slime shot up hot and viscous. Giselle had managed to heft his massive blade and with one awkward slash had split the creature's belly-sac. Patrik came tumbling out of the steaming ooze, limp and unresponsive.

The Phantom was swiping the slime away with both hands, clearing his nose and mouth, feeling for a pulse, coaxing her brother to breathe. Patrik rolled and began coughing slime onto the rocks.

"Look out!" Bokuran managed to bellow, as another tendril lashed out at Giselle.

She rolled in the ooze, as agile as the day they'd met. The creature seemed to focus its attention on the nearest threat, though the pain of its wounds seemed to do little to deter its tenacity.

With dawning realization, the Anvil of Tiran realized he could distract it so that Giselle and her brother could get away.

"Get Patrik out of here!" he howled. "Head back to the others; they'll have broken through the rocks by now!"

"What about you?" Giselle asked, slashing at the searching tendrils with a dagger in each hand. At her feet, Patrik was slowly coming back to himself. Though he seemed fairly intact, he was by no means in a state for fighting; he could barely press himself to his knees.

"Kitten, go! As fast as you can!" Even as he howled these last words, the Red Rage was boiling through his blood. His next roar shook the caverns, hackles standing on end, muzzle pulled into a madman's grimace.

With speed and ruthlessness the Phantom had not thought the old carpenter possessed, Giselle watched as he tore into the creature. In a flurry of talons and teeth, all monstrous strength, the Anvil of Tiran and the monster lashed at each other.

The monster surged forwards to meet this fresh assault, and for the first time, Giselle understood how truly massive it was. What she had thought was its body was little more than its face, with the tendrils no more than the whiskers that framed its maw. Even with all of Bokuran's Red Rage, the monster kept pressing forward, more and more limbs brought to lash at him.

With terror pressing her heart into her throat, she understood what he was doing.

Sobbing, she wrapped her arms around Patrik's insensate form and began scrambling backwards down the tunnel, dragging her brother as she went. She feared the monster would sense her retreat and chase after her... but Bokuran's fury was keeping it well occupied. No tentacles followed. Even once she lost sight of her Furian friend, his roars chased after her down the tunnel, and as terrifying as they were, she was dreading the moment they stopped.

And then she had reached the fall of rocks and saw Judge Eustace had achieved an opening. Through the head-sized hole, she caught sight of her two companions.

"Is that Patrik?" Judge Eustace asked.

Giselle nodded, leaning him against the wall of the tunnel and scrambling to widen the hole.

"Where's Bokuran?" Delan called, helping to clear from the other side.

Giselle shook her head, choking on a sob and digging all the faster. If the Anvil of Tiran would sacrifice himself for her, she would not, in Mave's name, let it be in vain.

Finally the hole was large enough. She hefted Patrik to his feet, pressing him through and climbing through after him. As she landed safely on the other side, the roaring stopped.

Bokuran had found his honour again at long last.

His friends went on to tell the tale of his courage and sacrifice, how he had leapt into death's maw like the heroes of legend so that his friends could live. They told his tales at every tavern and to every group of travellers they met on the road. Soon enough, the Anvil of Tiran was known throughout Unity. Furians sang the praises of their latest folk hero, and the name Bokuran became synonymous with fidelity. The Anvil of Tiran's soul would forever stride the Fields of Volkanus, his altruism fuelling the hearths of Furia.

# Human

*For a shorter, two-page overview of the Humans, see pg. 148.*

*Humans take great pride in their ability to eke out an existence even when a particular piece of land seems near uninhabitable. The other races often ask if Humanity should be taking pride in their tenacity or giving praise to the late Ivory Queen who made sure their harvests were always bountiful and provided them rain during times of drought.*

## THE LAND

The Human Empire has a long and colourful history. Unlike their siblings, Humans have touched every area of the main continent at some point or another. Historically, their push to expand has enabled the Human Empire to cover vast and diverse landscapes, where they have occasionally butted up against the Valla and Furians. As ambitious innovators, Humans are the most adaptable of any race, able to make a home in almost any climate. Though their capital of Avalon has existed relatively peacefully for centuries, their more distant settlements have often been unruly and wild, with the Wastes being an especially rough frontier. Over time, and as a result of several corrupt emperors, the Empire fell into decline. The world is changing, and the dangers are growing. Now, Humanity will need to use their considerable creativity to work together with the other denizens of Unity if they are to salvage their civilization and create the next great age together.

**Acropoleis:** The collective term for the many bustling cities of the Human Empire, there are far too many to note. Some of the largest include Avalon, Greywall, Hampton, Bank, Linnery, Grand Track, and Yorktown. These cities have cropped up anywhere the tenacity of Humans has made prolonged settlement possible. This typically requires only three things: space to develop, access to water, and resources to build. To quote Jude, the first Human Emperor: "The rest can be built." While Human cities are as varied as the people who live there, the biggest cities tend to have districts primarily inhabited by foreign traders and their families that have settled amongst Humans.

**Lakeview:** Covering the areas surrounding Greenwater Bay, the Lakeview region is verdant and productive due to its seasonal marshlands and easy access to the sea via Greenwater River. Life seems to progress slower here than in other regions of the Empire. Many old noble families still control these lands, with estates and plantations that produce the majority of the produce and protein that feeds the Empire. Some of the most prosperous towns include Dogwood, Brandford, Green Bridge, Lantern Point, and Fountainhead—all are considered picturesque and idyllic places where one might go to live in comfort after making their fortune.

**The Wastes:** These rocky stretches throughout the desert lands—comprised of canyons, clay fields, and quarries—are full of settlements bent to the hard labour of resource gathering, including mining for ore, minerals, chemicals and clay, and the materials' subsequent processing and production. It is a hard life, and common ailments befall those who work here too long, including Rubens' Red Lung, Clay Rot, and countless work-related accidents. Notable settlements include Coalwerth, Swift Current, Red Brink, Bellrook, and Chaltom Pass.

**Mana Mines:** While these lands have been hotly contested throughout the Ages, the Mana Mines have—at times—fallen under Human control, and there are still some who believe they ought to become Human territory once more. The Taloran Accords required Humanity to relinquish their control on the Mines as a show of unity. These rich caverns are full of potential rewards—if you can survive their multitude of dangers. Humans have proven themselves headstrong enough to make their fortunes here.

**Stone Curtain:** This unnatural rock formation forms a nearly perfect wall along the northern border of the Empire, and is believed to have been created specifically by the Skyfather and Ivory Queen to protect their youngest Children while in their infancy. When Humanity began breaching this wall, many considered it the grossest display of hubris and feared Divine retribution. Some still believe the creation of the Afflicted was caused in part by the establishment of Breaker's Reach.

## MAJOR CITIES

**Avalon:** Set between the scorching desert of the Wastes and the temperate northern reaches, Avalon is the capital of the Human Empire. Between the natural resources of the area and the ingenious engineering of aqueducts and deep wells, Avalon is a lush city full of vaulting architecture, statuary, and grand public gardens. As the home of the Crown and seat of government, the palace that lies at the acropolis of Avalon is one of the grandest structures in all of Unity. Expanded several times by some of the less scrupulous Emperors, it has become a symbol of wealth and success. Its image still adorns the Denerim, thereby impressing its importance throughout the Empire.

*Rumour has it that even though Humanity relinquished control of the Mana Mines during the Age of Unity, there are secret tunnels connecting uncharted parts of the Mines directly to the capital of Avalon. How else could one explain the Empire's endless supply of Kyrindian crystals?*

## DESTINED FOR GREATNESS

"And thus, if we consider that lethal combination of curiosity and favouritism, we can understand the delicate position of the burgeoning Human race. For, while the Valla were able to grow with the undivided attention of their Holy Father, and the Furians had an example in the Valla with which to jockey and exceed, Humanity was isolated in its infancy. Our ancestors were shielded behind the Ivory Queen's Stone Curtain, able to flourish unbounded, with no influence from these older and wholly disappointing attempts at civilization. Thus Humanity grew freely, unfettered by expectation. Having not known the realms of the possible, they were able to achieve the impossible, and in a much shorter timespan than their longer-living predecessors. Think of the Valla as the firstborn, heir to all the kingdom, and the Furian as secondborn, perhaps more capable but unlucky in their order of birth: to have the Holy Monarch favour instead the youngest child, on whom He bestowed the most preference... the wars between the three were as inevitable as the force of gravity itself."

*—Lord George Brandford, Keeper of Records during the Chaos Wars*

**Greenwater:** The next largest city after Avalon, Greenwater is the centre of trade and commerce. Set on the shores of Greenwater Bay, it has excellent trade ports, making it a city of affluent merchants, successful banks, and the occasional sly-dealing pirate. Often considering itself in competition with Avalon, its canals and statuary have a lavish beauty all their own.

*Breaker's Reach was named after Bram "The Breaker" Stein. He was a scientist who had big dreams but it seemed every experiment he conducted ended in a highly destructive manner. Shortly after Humanity discovered the power of steam, Bram tried to use the new technology to create a new method of cooking, but instead he discovered how to make pressure based explosives by accident.*

**Breaker's Reach:** When Humanity first discovered the power of steam, they broke through the Stone Curtain at the site now known as Breaker's Reach. The city was born of scientific and engineering marvels, and has continued as a bastion of progress and innovation ever since. Their iron smelts are world-renowned and their professors have a continuing partnership with Furia in the further development of manufacturing techniques. Some of the more religious Humans refer to the citizens of Breaker's Reach as "the Godless."

**Falcon's Watch:** Shortly after the Stone Curtain was breached and the outer world 'discovered,' Falcon's Watch was built as the official gates into Human territory. Speaking to the militant and aggressive past of the Human Empire, it still stands as a heavily fortified bastion. It still maintains an army of vigilant watchmen (known as Peregrines) and an arsenal of powerful gunnery. The Peregrines continue to be some of the most elite fighters in the Human Empire.

**Sanctum of the Third Eye:** Created by Elanore the Wise, a legendary Mystic of immense power, Sanctum was intended as a haven where any possessing the arcane spark could safely train. The Sanctum accepts members of all races—even the Afflicted—and as such has proven a safe haven to many through some of the most volatile periods in Human history. While the allegiance of the Sanctum is to the magickally gifted, no matter where they come from, the organization places heavy favour toward those from the Empire over the other Children of Unity. The construction of the Sanctum and its initial growth were made possible by generous contributions from Humanity. Their highest tier of Mystics is known as Ivory Sages; there is always an Ivory Sage in the palace at Avalon, there to advise the Crown.

**Taloran:** When the Crimson Horde came, it was Emperor Gabriel that first posited an alliance between the three races (Human, Valla, Furian). The alliance culminated in the Taloran Accords, and Taloran was founded as a city where the three races could live and work together in harmony. Humanity offered the most to make this dream a reality, and they went so far as to relinquish sovereignty over the land to enable it to become the city of equality that Taloran is today.

### TRADE

A highly capitalist society, the Empire runs on commerce and industry. Unlike the Furians, who value the skill of craftsmanship and the satisfaction of labour, Humans are often avaricious and tactile. They judge prosperity by how much they can acquire, and that requires capital. Money has huge importance in Human society, for it can make nearly every problem disappear. Where money flows, power follows. This has led to a great deal of corruption, bribery, and even theft or murder in Human culture—all in the name of obtaining wealth. In their individual pursuits for a luxurious life, a vast income disparity has arisen, with a few noble families retaining the

majority of land and wealth, and the great majority struggling in poverty. Luckily there are enough Humans who believe in philanthropy that, between the royal coffers and generous individuals, a cobbled-together network of charity houses, orphanages, and workhouse schools are available to those who need them. The Human dream maintains that anyone can make their fortune if they possess enough grit and ingenuity to succeed.

Little Vallantis and Little Furia districts are common in all of the aforementioned cities. While many settlements find droves of Afflicted living in their sewer networks as well, most Humans consider the Afflicted little more than pests; in fact, many cities permit gassing, demolition, and raids in order to help eradicate the "menace." In more recent times, Empress Carine has made progress in implementing more humane (and diplomatic) methods of dealing with these "infestations," but these regulations are difficult to enforce in rural regions of the Empire.

## THE PEOPLE

Humans are almost impossible to whittle down into a singular stereotype because they possess the widest range of characteristics, dispositions, temperaments, and ethnicities of any race. In Humans the Skyfather placed urgency and vision; they would not only strive for the stars, but they would work towards them with almost feverish haste. Humans would ever feel their own mortality nipping at their heels. Spurred by this impetus, Humans proliferated quickly and spread out swiftly across Unity, forced to change and adapt quickly in order to survive a vast array of climates and challenges.

Specifically because of this mobility, there are no set regions where concerted Human ethnicities are entrenched. Humans are often on the move in search of resources, chasing dreams, waging war, or fleeing terror, so they have become fairly well mixed in every corner of the Empire. Instead, different regions have developed their own subcultures that are tied more to the land than to any ancient heritage.

## CULTURE

Human culture is highly diverse, and each reflects the personal history of a given settlement or family legacy. While personalities and ideals vary greatly, the common thread is reflected in the Empire's motto: "Every day at its fullest!" Humans are tenacious and display a zest for life fortified by an irrepressible desire to survive. They tend to be ambitious and curious, wanting to know, explore, and experience things for themselves. This can make them skeptical, foolhardy, belligerent, or reckless. Because they do not possess the physical or psychological gifts of the Furians or Valla, they have always strived to surpass those natural gifts using magick and technological advancements.

Specific customs and values depend on location, affluence, personal interests, and the level of adaptation required for survival. This creates extensive individualism; where one Human might prize music and become a great troubadour, another might have no concern for the arts but be an elite chef, and yet another might dedicate their entire life to perfecting their martial prowess.

## GOVERNMENT

In the infancy of the Human Empire, a number of warlords arose to secure resources. One of these was Jude, whose diplomacy and treaties proved far more productive than the endless squabbles of his competitors, and with his ascendancy a great period of peace flourished in his regions. Jude's rule swiftly spread, many of the surrounding warlords keen to join his growing Empire in exchange for titles and wealth. Thus the first Emperor and ranks of the nobility were established. Since those times, the bloodline of the Emperor has been broken a number of times, through overthrow, selected successors, and adopted heirs. The Crown continues to be a unifying force, regardless of how peaceful or bloodthirsty the current monarch is—and the Empire has had plenty of both types of rulers. With that said, the borders of the Human Empire have been pushed farther and farther from Avalon with every generation. At times challenging other races for territory, the outer reaches of the Empire have always been more rebellious against central rule, but even they are averse to bald-faced treason.

**Empress Carine:** The current holder of the Crown is Empress Carine. The Empress was elevated from a mere orphan by Emperor Thaddeus (the first peaceful ruler in many generations), who groomed her to rule in his stead. With her military training and early life as a street urchin, Carine keenly understands the plight of the disenfranchised, and has seen firsthand the tolls that suffering and warfare take on Humanity. As such, she has been a strident champion for peace in Unity. Her progressive policies of tolerance and collaboration have extended olive branches to all of the Skyfather's Children—including the Afflicted—but with slow progress. When Prince Thaydrin, Thaddeus' son and original heir, turned upon his father, it was Carine who rushed to the Emperor's aid and fought off Thaydrin and his

*Playing a Human in Unity might seem a bit plain compared to a strapping Furian full of rage and power, a hauntingly beautiful Valla whose lifespan is measured in centuries instead of decades, or a brilliant Afflicted that toils against a vicious disease and possibly harbours a burning hatred for the world. But the beauty of Humanity is in their optimism and unyielding drive to be more than they are. The best of Humanity represents hope and playing a Human can be a vibrant experience if a character embodies that feverish yearning to explore, grow, learn, laugh, cry, and know that when their very short life concludes, they did the best they could.*

*Empress Carine is the youngest ruler in the history of the Human Empire.*

henchmen. Alas, the Emperor's wounds were fatal. With his dying breaths, Thaddeus called a council of his closest supporters and named Carine his successor, commanding that she fulfill his dream of a united world and beseeching her to save Humanity from the fate of more wars both at home and abroad.

**Magistrates:** To better govern the far-flung reaches of the Empire, the Crown has appointed Magistrates to rule each city, village, and settlement at a local level. At any time these Magistrates can be summoned by the Crown to report on the events, industries, and communities they oversee. Yearly they owe tithes in return for protection, and in return upkeep infrastructure, research funding, and maintain the expansive trade routes. Many of the Magistrates historically hailed from the region's nobility, but more recently "new-money" members have risen to such posts, as well as tradespeople in backgrounds of law, science, medicine, and local industry. This has helped ensure that sound policies and judgments are passed in the interests of their citizens' needs. On rare occasions, citizens can petition to have a Magistrate replaced if treason, corruption, or madness threatens their ability to govern.

### LEGACY OF RULE

Humanity has long been shaped and influenced by the temperament of the one who wears the Crown. They have had excellent rulers with strong policies, benevolent rulers who were nonetheless incapable of governing, despot tyrants whose greed and arrogance led to civil wars, and everything in between. Below are a few of the most notable monarchs.

**Emperor Jude:** The first Emperor of Humanity, Jude was said to be blessed by the Skyfather. Known for his foresight and wisdom, the name Jude has become popular in the Mystic society. Jude's rule was long, and his succeeding three generations (though less notable than their patriarch) continued his relatively peaceful rule in his memory.

**Emperor Madrigal:** Madrigal had the Crown when the Humans breached the Stone Curtain and faced war with a foreign people for the first time. Though the times were politically volatile, Madrigal's decisions were often short-sighted and bumbling, leading to grievous wars against the Furians and, subsequently, the Valla. During these wars, Madrigal and all three of his heirs were slain. It was his general, Samson, who took up the Crown and led Humanity to greater technological advancements and numerous victories in skirmishes against foreign races.

**Empress Shoshanna:** Shoshanna has the prestige of being the first inherited Empress of the Human Empire. While in previous generations the Crown passed to the first male heir (in an effort to ensure a militarily strong monarch), Shoshanna's father Abraham, ruling in a time of bounty and relative peace, saw no issue with bestowing the Crown upon his eldest, a daughter. Though her detractors thought her unfit to rule because of her gender, she was multilingual and well-educated in law, commerce, and diplomacy, and improved upon the bounty of her father's reign. Her rule provided the majority of the beautification of Avalon, Greenwater, and many of the larger monuments across the Empire.

**Emperor Gabriel:** Emperor Gabriel is most famous for creating the Taloran Accords, thus creating the first alliance between the Humans, the Valla, and the Furians. This was certainly the shining point of his rule, for he was mercurial and managed the nation's coffers poorly; so focused was he on repairing external relations that many of the roads and infrastructure of the Empire fell into disrepair.

**Emperor Vladimir:** Emperor Vladimir was a frugal and miserly ruler who worked his population nearly to starvation with his heavy taxes. The situation was made more dire by the onset of a terrible drought. During his reign, the Afflicted arose, and it was his policies that cried for their extermination and/or expatriation from the Human Empire. His propaganda against the Afflicted was so widespread and successful that his falsified factoids still inspire the majority of Human prejudice against the Afflicted. Those of a more compassionate nature refer to racist citizens as "Vlad's Men."

**Emperor Fergus the Mighty:** A grotesquely indulgent and xenophobic Emperor, Fergus had spies throughout the Empire and instilled a military watch to root out treason and seize any technological developments to improve his own forces. He violated several treaties with the other races and began a war with the Afflicted that threatened to demolish several cities. Though he referred to himself as the Mighty, many believe it was because of his overt persecution of the Afflicted that the cursed race mobilized to expand their hidden capital, Haven, and develop their devastating chemical weapons. During the civil revolution, General Thaddeus defeated Fergus the Mighty in what has become a legendary duel upon the battlefield. Thaddeus' victory won him the Crown.

**Emperor Thaddeus:** The first peace-loving Emperor that Humanity had seen in generations, Thaddeus fought an uphill battle to undo Fergus' decrees, repair eroded policies, and rout out the remaining xenophobic Human Supremacists that remained in

positions of power across the Empire. On his deathbed, he appointed his personal guard, Carine, to become the new Empress.

**Prince Thaydrin:** The most famous of the modern Human Supremacists, the son of Thaddeus is still at large after committing the crimes of patricide and treason. Rumours have it he is bargaining with the Fell in exchange for support and power. Though his actions are largely shielded by magicks, it appears he may be gathering rebel forces in the north.

Cadet Carine

## SOCIETY

Humanity is nothing if not a sea of individuals. While some unique and isolated ideas still exist in rural settlements in the less-travelled corners of the Empire, towards the populous cities, a cultural melting pot has cultivated diverse and sometimes clashing attitudes. Most Humans trying to make their way in the world have two choices: either head to the cities and throw themselves into the grind of a world of constantly developing technology, trade, and money-lending or trek out into the rural stretches in the hope of discovering the next big oil reservoir, ore stream, or piece of wild that will provide supplies to sell to traders and prospectors. The extensive trade routes, road systems, and courier networks mean that information and goods can be transported to nearly every corner of the Empire in relatively swift time. Though highwaymen and bandits are always looking for easy pickings, many wily merchants hire armed escorts to ensure their goods arrive unmolested. Human society, wherever it exists, is composed of bustle, ambition, and vibrancy.

## THE PLAGUE WAR

Most of the calamitous events that shook Unity spanned across cultures, but Humanity has experienced more internal strife than any other race. This is largely believed to be because of how different Humans are across different regions of the Empire. After the Afflicted were created, Humanity experienced its most gruesome civil war, the Plague War. Many modern Humans still consider this the blackest mark on Human history, due to the atrocities they committed against the Afflicted and the hysteria that nearly destroyed many cities and completely demolished a number of smaller hamlets, the most notable of which was Dunfield. The site of Dunfield remains, in toxic ruins, to this day. The Afflicted call it the Dust Bowl.

## ATONEMENT

Under the current rule of Empress Carine, Humanity is taking steps to reconcile with the exiled Afflicted. Repairing the relationship between Humanity and the Furians and Valla is a long and difficult road,

*While corruption occurs in all governments, Humanity has the worst case amongst all of the major factions. For a prime example of such corruption, see the short story "The Golden Empress" on pg. 67.*

both because of the centuries of violent history that lies between them, and also because many citizens in all three nations still hold extremely prejudiced views of one another. During the Calamity, Humanity abandoned its allies, ousted and persecuted the new Afflicted, and sought only its own safety.

Emissaries sent below ground to seek peace with the Afflicted have not returned. Although Empress Carine's power is said to be absolute, the Human Empire is spread so thin that there are a number of Magistrates and nobles acting autonomously and flouting her progressive ideals. This has undermined her authority in her dealings with other races, and her ambassadors are at turns met with either sincerity and respect or disdain and prejudice, depending on the latest news from across the wide reach of Humanity. With war on many fronts, and the simmering hints of renewed civil unrest at home, Empress Carine faces the monumental task of holding together a decaying empire and trying to once again elevate Humanity to a place of honour on Unity's world stage.

Ginny Junebottom, Acolyte of Aluvane

## TECHNOLOGY

As Humanity's progress advanced, the technology turned towards making the tasks of daily life easier. Automata were created to handle menial errands, including running generators, manning city lighting, water filtration, and manufacturing basic necessities like fabric and bread. Out of any of the races, Humans employ the highest ratio of automata. However, after the end of the Golden Age and the banishment of the Afflicted, much of the knowledge of maintenance and manufacture has been lost. Only because of the extensive stockpiling of technology from before the civil war have they been able to continue utilizing the automata on a broad scale. Efforts to reverse-engineer the technology have been expensive and slow, and new attempts have been inferior in both elegance and functionality. But without their cherished technology, Humans cannot keep pace with their stronger Furian and swifter Vallan neighbours, and could quickly become an easy target.

Under Empress Carine's Atonement Act, many resources have been diverted towards research and science in the hope of unlocking the secrets of technological sustainability, and once more advancing the nation. Some suspect that her efforts to provide restitution and seek forgiveness from the Afflicted is merely a means to this end, as their brilliant minds may be the only ones able to improve the longevity of the Humans' automata and offer the overall technological advances that the Humans so desperately need.

**Children of Steel:** As the faction of automata railing against Human rule increases, they become more and more of a thorn in the side of the monarch. Gifted with sentience from the abundance of Drift energy that spilled into the world after the Great Calamity, they have come to call themselves the Children of Steel. Some of the Children of Steel have become aggressive or overtly antagonistic towards Humans. Many claim their service is tantamount to slavery, and cries rallying for their emancipation are growing louder across the land. Without their automata, many Human cities would fall back into a veritable dark age. Humans have become so reliant on these creations that their infrastructure would not survive a sweeping decree of freedom—and that does not even begin to touch upon the ethical question of whether the Children of Steel qualify as lifeforms entitled to Human rights.

## THREATS

At present, the peace treaties between the Furians, Valla, and Humans are intact and generally upheld by citizens of all three nations. The current dangers come from the Human Empire's expansions to the north and south. The Fell press in from the north, while the Children of Steel are most active in the south, conducting raids on nearby desert colonies to claim supplies and to liberate other automata. The Afflicted lurk in the shadows and underground, potentially across the breadth of the entire Empire. Though the monarch is concerned by the gathering might of the Risen to the East, the Furians are presently a buffer, preventing large-scale contact. In recent years, as more study and interaction has occurred with the Crimson Horde, discussions have begun regarding elevating the sub-races of the Crimson Horde to races in their own rights. If these policies pass into law, new trade treaties will be needed.

## WARFARE

Despite lacking the physical attributes that their siblings possess to make them superior fighters, Humans have remained the most war-hungry and militaristic of all the races. War is not an artform as it is for the Valla, nor a challenge as for the Furians; most Humans consider it a means for survival. Unity's history is littered with conflicts, skirmishes, and wars instigated by Humans. The vast majority arose as Humanity feverishly expanded across the land, claiming whatever territory they reached, regardless of who might live there or have previously staked a claim. Their strategy has ever relied on their superior technology to crush their foes. Titan Rigs, cannons, guns, and iron chariots have enabled them to obliterate the finesse of the Valla and even the brute strength of the Furians. They are also quick to pick up the tactics of their opponents, adapt them, and use them against their opponents. They are famous for going to whatever lengths necessary to win, even if victory is achieved without honour. Though other races may call their tactics cowardly or unscrupulous, none can deny their efficacy.

## RELIGION

The Skyfather and his Ivory Queen's goal of creating a race that would transform the world was successful with the Humans. Despite their often ethically questionable priorities, Humans remain a largely faithful people. Which demigods are worshipped varies depending on a Human's profession and location, but a few of the favourites are Halifax the Lorekeeper, Temperion the Vanguard, and superstitious appeasement of the Infernal Kings.

Halifax the Lorekeeper is revered by Humanity, for it was through knowledge and science that Human ingenuity was turned into leverage, catapulting the young race to prominence in a world where everyone else was bigger, stronger, and faster than them.

Though he has many names including the Warrior and the Soldier, Temperion the Vanguard's role as Defender is the most commonly worshipped among the Humans. His temples and talismans are found along the settlements nearest the Stone Curtain, and his largest temple is located at Falcon's Watch.

Humanity has long been plagued by the Fell and many Humans have traded their souls to such forces for power and fortune over the years. It is rumoured that there are secret cults that worship the Demonic Royalty: the Infernal Kings and the Demon Queen, though such cults have been outlawed by the Crown. Most Humans instead make offerings, prayers, or superstitious gestures to appease these Fell Lords and to avoid incurring their wrath.

To Vorath the World Devourer, spoiled food is offered in burners along with acrid incense. This is a common practice when a member of the household or community takes ill. Once a minor practice in certain northern hamlets, this superstition swept the nation during the plague of the Afflicted (people initially believed the Phage to be caused by Vorath).

To Tala'zim the Wicked, salt is tossed on the doorsteps of new buildings to ensure that the Humans' spirits can make the place a home before Tala'zim takes interest in the vacant space. Vinegar is often anointed on newborns' brows during the first weeks of life to protect their spirits from Tala'zim's taint; the practice gave rise to the rural colloquialism "in need of vinegar," which describes someone who is behaving particularly wickedly.

To Irathmus the Ever-Burning, whenever there is an accident, fight, or act of violence, his sigil is placed at the scene. Humans ritually dedicate such instances of rage and misfortune to him in the hopes that he will be appeased and leave the community in peace… at least for a while.

To Morganus the Demon Queen, who is generally considered the vainest of the Demonic Royalty, whenever her name is uttered it is to be followed with "Most Bright" in order to show reverence. Many Humans in the north still bury their dead with a gold coin on their tongue so that they might be able to flatter or bribe Morganus and thus protect the dead souls from ruination.

## VIEWS ON OTHER RACES

**Valla:** With their long lives and diverse knowledge, Humans have always looked up to and competed against the Valla. Modern Humans may be more casual in their admiration than in the days of yore, but most give the Valla respect and deference, unless they feel slighted.

**Furians:** While their cultural mores differ widely from Human sensibilities, modern Humans are growing increasingly tolerant and curious about their industrious neighbours. Though still suspicious and fearful of their Red Rage, there is no denying the talent of their manufacturers.

**Afflicted:** The Afflicted are a source of shame and revulsion for most Humans; they represent both a grotesque reflection of what they themselves might have become, and a bitter reminder that they are not among the "best and brightest" of Humanity.

*While there are cultists from the other races, Humanity remains the predominant base for those that follow a path of darker worship.*

*Humans often joke with their Vallan and Furian counterparts asking them why they practice so long and hard with their fancy blades when "you can just pull out a gun and end it all with a simple squeeze." The question is often met with a "fancy blade" instantly appearing at the offending Human's throat before they can even reach for their gun.*

## SHORT STORY

# THE GOLDEN EMPRESS

It was a hot day in Avalon, capital of the Human Empire. Down the vaulted corridor leading to the throne room, the sound of bickering echoed. Empress Carine scowled as she closed the last few feet to the oaken doors. Her winded attendants scurried forward to haul the heavy doors open. Voices broke into the corridor like ocean surf.

"—don't see how any of this is relevant! Who is she going to heed—some flea-bitten mongrel or her own kind?" came Magistrate Duncan's unmistakable baritone.

"Magistrate, you will tender your apologies to Ambassador Guresh Stonehammer," Empress Carine commanded.

An uncomfortable hush fell over the antechamber. The cluster of border magistrates turned to face her with the rustle of silk. Despite the impoverished region from whence they hailed, they were all dressed in proper courtly livery. At a glance, Carine recognized the crests from the five cities dotting the edge of Human territory: Coalwerth, Swift Current, Red Brink, Bellrook, and Chaltom Pass.

Just beyond them, a single Furian stood at rigid attention. His black mane was streaked with grey, his eyes piercingly bright against his dark fur. Despite the distance, Carine could see tension in his formidable muscles as the Furian Ambassador kept control despite the insults hurled at him. More than simply towering over every Human in the room, there was grace to his calm, like a boulder unmoved by a raging river. She had only met Guresh Stonehammer a handful of times, but his presence always humbled her.

The Empress brought her cool gaze back to Duncan. Though she was satisfied by the blanching of his ruddy features, it still took a few heartbeats longer than it should have before he obeyed.

"Apologies, Ambassador. I meant no disrespect," Duncan offered. It was a formality only, both Carine and Guresh knew it, but the Furian was gracious enough to bow his shaggy mane in acceptance.

"Now then," Empress Carine resumed, striding to her throne and tossing herself back against its unyielding iron. "What is all this about?"

The Human delegates exchanged glances; more than half were looking toward Duncan. Carine pretended not to notice. The first rule of governance the previous emperor, Thaddeus, had taught her was: *never let them suspect how much you know*. So, she turned her attention to the Furian first.

"Ambassador Guresh, thank you for coming all this way. Please, what is your grievance?"

"I demand justice for my people, Empress." The growl of the Furian's voice tickled at a primal fear. Two of the Human delegates—Jarvis of Bellrook and Melissa of Red Brink—shuffled uneasily away.

Head held proudly high, Guresh continued, "In Mehzard, beyond the southern Wastes, these past six months... Humans have been assaulting Furians in the night and stealing them away."

"Of all the preposterous—" Magistrate Tabitha began with a scoff, but the Empress held up a gloved hand and the crone fell silent.

"This is a serious claim, Ambassador. Have you proof that this breach of the treaty has been carried out by Humans?"

"True, it could have been the Afflicted! They live all along that—" Magistrate Duncan cut in.

"Magistrate, if you cannot keep that tongue still, I will cut it out." In her periphery, Carine saw the paunchy man wilt. She did not allow her attention to waver from the Furian. He was her focus; to him she had asked the question. His people held honour in high regard. If she was to settle this dispute peaceably, she needed to show that not all Humans were as inconsiderate as some of these representatives.

"We found a survivor, Empress." Guresh's hackles rose and his lip curled back from his long incisors. He paused, setting his composure, then continued. "She was barely older than a pup, so weak she couldn't walk. Experiments had been done, horrible crafts no honourable creature would dare inflict upon an innocent." Guresh rumbled a growl with the slightest flick of a glance towards Duncan, as if to say: for this man Guresh might make an exception.

"Experiments?" The Empress' brow furrowed.

"Yes, your Majesty. These captors had forced the Red Rage from this poor child—Red Rage from one who had been innocent of that affliction. They drew on it, she said. These Humans had pulled it from her with blood and pain and magicks. They had many of our kind bound into some infernal contraption, deep underground. As if they were no more than kindling! We demand these atrocities cease at once!" As the Furian spoke, his hackles rose, making him seem to grow, filling the space with his wrath as if the very Red Rage he spoke of might pour forth at any moment.

The Empress was silent as the rumble of Guresh's demand faded away. There was no doubt the Furian

was in earnest, and that he fully believed the allegations he was making. Empress Carine resolved to uncover the truth here, no matter the cost.

Avalon was a long way from the Wastes. The Empress paid well to be kept informed, but her couriers were not omniscient and Humanity covered a vast distance, comprised of myriad different cultural factions. There was no telling what secrets might be lurking in the distant corners of the Human Empire.

She turned her attention towards the delegates. Duncan was still blanched, his nostrils flared. It was difficult to tell if it was from outrage or fear. Tabitha looked horrified. Jarvis and Melissa were both sullen but patiently waiting their turn. Fedor looked as though he might be sick. She needed to push them. These five magistrates governed the border towns along the Wastes. If they were involved in this dark business, she needed to rout out who—and why.

"This is disturbing news, to say the least." Empress Carine chose her next words with care. "I give my solemn vow that these atrocities have not been committed for the throne, nor will I sanction such behaviour in Unity." She shifted slightly in the throne, looking to Magistrate Tabitha. "Have you seen nothing in Chaltom Pass?"

"N-no, Your Majesty," Tabitha replied, spreading her hands. Her weathered face was open and sincere. "We are simple quarrymen in Chaltom. We're too simple to ever conceive of such a horror as this…"

"And you, Fedor? Any news from Swift Current?" the Empress asked next.

Fedor jolted, looking to the Empress, then at the others. He wiped his fingers against his sandy moustache. "It does sound wretched, I'll admit," he began nervously. "But… could not this survivor give testimony? Perhaps tell us something more useful than 'underground?' If she… er… *saw* the ones who did this, might it not…?" Fedor trailed off, thin hand fluttering around his mouth like a restless moth.

The Human delegates looked expectantly at the Furian Ambassador. Again, Carine noted the raising of hackles as he strained to maintain his composure in the face of such flippancy.

"She told us all she could before her spirit escaped this coil." For the first time since Carine had entered the room, the ambassador turned his full attention on the magistrates. He took a step forward, looming over them. All but Duncan shrank in his shadow. Fedor squirmed beneath the penetrating yellow-eyed stare.

There was something more to this than simple xenophobic lynching. Unraveling the truth required subtlety. It required perception. Though she was steeped now in policy and governance, Empress Carine found herself reaching back into the days of her youth. Before she came to Avalon, back to when perception was the razor's edge between life and death. Back to a life on the streets.

"Carine, come! You must try harder," Danforth coaxed. He was leaning over the edge of the tiled roof, his care-worn face backlit by an unrelenting sun.

"I'm not tall enough!" Carine called from the pavement. Her palms were scraped and stinging in the dirt.

"It has nothing to do with your height or your strength. Every wall has a chink in it, if you look hard enough. Come, try again. Use the light, use your breath, and climb up to me."

She had already tried and failed six times. She was not particularly keen to further bang up her knees and tear her one set of clothes, but she knew Danforth didn't quit. He would never give up on her, so what right had she to give up on him?

She climbed back to her feet, eyes scanning the wall.

*Use the light*, he'd said, *use her breath*. Carine breathed deeply, and her rattled heartbeat settled down once more. She took a step forward, coming into the shadow of the building. She caught the slightest flicker from the corner of her eye, almost a ripple in the old wash on the wall.

"That's it!" called Danforth from up above.

Carine grinned, her determination welling inside her. Despite all her bruises and scrapes, she took a run at the wall. Her foot caught on the plaster, vaulting her higher. She managed to scrabble over that subtle ripple, and then she was scrambling up the wall. She slapped her hand down on the cold tile and hung for a moment, breath coming fast and heart once more racing. One last effort and she'd be sitting safe on the rooftop beside her mentor.

With a grunt, her skinny arms quaking, Carine hauled herself up. Danforth sat mere inches away and waited for her to manage. He encouraged her, taught her all his tricks, but he wouldn't ever do it for her. In the gritty streets of Venroth, everyone lived or died by their own tenacity.

"Are you ready for today's lesson?" Danforth asked as Carine caught her breath.

"What?" she asked, sitting up a little taller, still working to slow her breathing. "Climbing the wall wasn't the lesson?"

Danforth chuckled, scratching at his stubbly jaw. "Physical skills will only take you so far, Carine. All bodies have limits, and there will come a time when you can push yourself no further. In those times, the only thing that will keep you alive is a sharp mind."

As he spoke, Carine couldn't stop her glance from lingering over the ragged scars that laced his cheek and jaw. She knew there were many more beneath his patched-up clothes. Danforth had defied death more times than years Carine had been alive; he spoke with authority that was hard won.

"Look down there," Danforth began, nodding to the courtyard on the other side of the wall. "What do you see?"

Carine let her glance roam over the milling people—craftspeople and farmers, milliners and flower-cutters. "A marketplace," she answered.

Danforth arched a shaggy brow at her. "You can tell it's a marketplace by the sounds of haggling, the smells of their wares, feel it in the rumble of their carts. Tell me what you *see*."

Carine looked back at the crowd. The flower-girls were darting between milling bodies, raising their posies to everyone that passed. Light glinted off the hand-mirror the milliner held up so a prospective customer could admire herself in the glass, one of his creations perched atop her carefully arranged curls. The weaver-woman and the tailor bickered over prices, rubbing squares of fine fabrics between their fingers, so caught up they paid no heed to a tinker pilfering a handkerchief from her basket of wares.

"There is much to see," Carine answered slowly. "What am I looking for?"

Danforth grinned. "Tell me which of them are married. Which of them have children, and how many? Which of them are having an affair?"

Carine gaped. "You can tell that by looking at them?" She squinted back into the crowd. The very same individuals she had seen before took on new dimensions. The flush of their faces seemed to hold new meaning. She found herself scanning their hands for marriage-bands, assessing the shapes of their bodies to find the answers to her mentor's questions.

"Those are the easy questions," Danforth said. "By the time we have honed your perception, Carine, you'll be able to spot a liar from across a crowded square. Which patrol guards are crooked with bribes or drink. Which gentlemen wear their purses loose in their pockets—and due to their mistresses will never report a petty theft.

"Urchins like us, my girl, we survive by knowing our marks better than they know themselves."

It had been many years since those days scrounging in the alley, but the skills Danforth had taught her had proven invaluable. In moments like these, Empress Carine was ever cognizant of how much his tutelage had prepared her for a life in court. Her rise to empress had been sheer defiance of fate. Only those who rise so far above their hopes can truly appreciate how easy it is to fall from grace. She had traded in the dusty laneways and haggling merchants of Venroth for the gleaming cobblestones of Avalon, with the capital's many districts of elite crafters. She might now have power, but Carine knew Danforth's rules were truer than ever: she must know her courtiers better than they knew themselves.

The deference the other magistrates paid to Duncan pointed him out as their ringleader. There was some plot between them, and the others looked to him for cues. She needed to uncover how much of their scheming was connected with the abduction of the neighbouring Furians, and whether all of the magistrates shared equally in that plot.

Fedor, while the youngest of them, was too clever to betray his purposes in such company. He would spin pretty lies and waste precious time. Duncan still held too much control to press, and his popularity in Coalwerth made him a risky man to antagonize. Tabitha was venerable and proud; doubting her loyalty or embarrassing her before the others would make an enemy Carine could not afford in these volatile times. That left Jarvis and Melissa, magistrates of Bellrook in the craggy hinterland and of Red Brink in the mud flats southeast of Bellrook.

"Magistrate Jarvis," Empress Carine began, scanning the cluster of magistrates for the clues old Danforth had taught her to find. "Bellrook is closest to the Wastes. If these abductors were to cross the border, your bastion would be the easiest place to do so. Surely, as magistrate of Bellrook, you know what passes in your city?"

Jarvis squared his jaw. Secrecy did not sit well with proud men. "Your Majesty, may I remind you that Bellrook stands as the first line of defense for the Empire."

"Then, you are taking full responsibility for these abductions," Empress Carine replied. The Empress keenly noted Magistrate Melissa's hands go white-knuckled despite the rigid stillness of her posture.

Jarvis opened his mouth in protest, his eyes flashing. "I never said—"

"Correct, you did not answer a question from your Empress. I suggest you do so, sir, before I charge you with treason."

"My loyalty is first and foremost to *Humans*!" Jarvis barked with an edge of panic. His face had heated nearly as red as his hair.

Empress Carine gave him a cold look. "Was my Imperial Decree not clear, Magistrates? If Humanity is to thrive in this world, we *must* have peace. There are greater dangers hungry to destroy us—the Fell, the Risen—that we cannot afford to be bickering amongst ourselves. The Furians are our allies. The Afflicted are our lost brethren. We must have unity and I will not have any petty interests endanger that."

Barely allowing a heartbeat to pass, the Empress turned on Melissa, tall and beautiful and vain. "This is not the first complaint I've received about matters in Red Brink. What has led you astray this time:

bribery or coercion?"

It was a risk to so publicly shame Magistrate Melissa, especially with an ambassador from another nation present. Empress Carine did not do so lightly; she needed to show them that she was firm in her decrees. Her goal was ironclad, and she would not be swayed by racial prejudice when an atrocity had been committed.

"Your Majesty," the magistrate of Red Brink began. Already, Carine could see the sweat beading on the woman's upper lip. "The deal was already in action when I was brought into it; it wasn't my idea."

"Then you admit you were party to this brutality! I will have justice!" Ambassador Guresh snarled. Clearly, he had heard enough. In one smooth motion, he drew his sword, his claws extended on his other paw, his fangs bared for combat. Magistrate Melissa swung her warhammer free from the brace on her hip, setting her feet into a warrior's stance.

Instantly, the Empress launched herself forward from her throne, seizing *Requiem's* scabbard as she dove between the Human delegates and the attacking Furian. She unsheathed her legendary longsword in one smooth motion and swung it up in both hands. The magistrates scrambled for whatever defenses they carried, leaving Fedor brandishing a pitiful penknife and Tabitha cowering behind nothing more than her gnarled worker's hands.

With a roar that shook the floor, Guresh charged in. Empress Carine spun forward, bringing the edge of her blade up to intercept the Furian's blow. Her cape flared around her, a symbolic barrier between her delegates and the bestial fury before them. It was as if she was back on the battlefield, shielding Emperor Thaddeus, this same blade fending off a lethal adversary.

With an effort, Carine thrust the Afflicted woman back. The woman's body was a ruin patched up with gleaming metal and alchemical enhancements. She was deceptively strong, but it was the vicious hate in her remaining eye that posed the real danger.

"Sire, get to safety!" Carine bellowed, but Emperor Thaddeus did not rise.

"Fate will give me justice!" the Afflicted soldier cried. There was triumph in the woman's grotesque smile that Carine could not abide.

Carine swung *Requiem* low, cutting harshly up against her enemy. With a crash, her longsword cut into the metal of the Afflicted's prosthetic arm. A spurt of alchemical fluid painted a glowing green trail through the mire of battle. Here was Carine's chance.

She pivoted, swinging the blade down with the force of gravity tempered with conviction. The Afflicted woman let out a gurgle as she crumpled, her mechanical arm twitching spasmodically.

Carine planted one solleret on her foe and hauled *Requiem* free with the screech of metal on metal. There was no time to waste. Panting, she knelt before her emperor.

"Sire, can you stand?"

"I must try," Emperor Thaddeus grunted, gathering his strength to rise onto his knees.

Carine looped an arm under his cape to brace her wounded monarch. As her gauntlet slid against the Emperor's backplate she realized just how much he was bleeding. "We have to get you to the medics," she rasped, pressing her weight into him as together they stood.

Hampered by the burden of his weight, and with only one arm to swing her longsword, she was aware of how much danger they were in.

"Your bravery..." Thaddeus was wheezing, "I shall not forget it, Carine..."

"Hush, sire. Save your breath to walk," Carine managed, out of breath herself. She swung out at a passing Afflicted warrior, cutting the man off at the knee and hurrying on before he could retaliate with whatever enhancements his desperation had fashioned. Ahead she saw a cluster of their own and hollered to them. "Here! We need the medics!"

She staggered to close the distance as a burst of explosives erupted to her right. A cloud of mud and chemicals spattered down and she squeezed her eyes shut, fearful to inhale lest it was more of the toxic gas the Afflicted had used to break the Emperor's ranks. She fought the urge to freeze. Hunching into her shoulders, she ran the last few steps, all but carrying Emperor Thaddeus on her back.

On shaking legs, she reached the other knights, and passed off their wounded leader.

"By the blood! Is—is that the Emperor?" one of the knights stammered.

Carine nodded. "Get him to safety."

"Carine," Emperor Thaddeus croaked, barely able to keep his eyes open.

"The lines are broken. If we don't rally, we will be overrun. Go!" Carine continued, knowing there was little time to salvage the battle.

Two of the knights hurried off, supporting the Emperor between them.

"The rest of you, with me!" Carine brandished *Requiem* high, catching a glint of sun through the ash-heavy clouds. She sent up a cry and the soldiers joined in. The survivors of the broken lines flocked to her, cutting across broken ground and leaping the corpses of the fallen—Human and Afflicted alike.

Carine led the charge that turned back the tide that day. The Emperor reached the medics and his wounds were patched enough to have the healers brought to his aid.

Afterwards, Emperor Thaddeus had summoned

Carine to his side and told her: in that moment he had known she would be the next to rule. She must finish what he had started. Humanity must be preserved.

"Patience!" the Empress bellowed, her sword glinting in the lamplight. "Ambassador, I share your outrage, but you are in my nation. If there is rot amongst my delegates, it is I who must judge them."

For a tense moment, she stood toe to toe with the Furian. He easily towered over her, and she knew that in a contest of direct strength, she could not win. As old Danforth had said: physical skills will only take you so far. No, if she was to preserve the tenuous peace between their nations, this meeting required subtlety and truth, not combat.

Guresh huffed, breaking his glance, and settled his stance. He put up his blade with a slight incline of his head in concession.

"Thank you, Ambassador," Empress Carine said, keeping her glance direct and steady. "You demanded justice, but for that to be possible, we must first understand why your people were abducted."

Guresh nodded. His hackles at last began to settle. He brushed a paw over his mane, smoothing the thick fur back into place.

Empress Carine turned towards her delegates. She deliberately left her longsword unsheathed. She saw Fedor's eyes linger on it, his penknife still clutched in his hand. Melissa made a show of settling her warhammer back into the brace on her hip, leaving both hands spread and up in surrender. Tabitha was pale as a ghost; her normally regal composure had slipped, revealing how old and frail she had become.

Which of these magistrates would be the one to confess?

Empress Carine pointed her sword at Jarvis. "So, tell me: why have you been stealing Furians? For what purpose?"

Jarvis tore his attention from the scowling Furian Ambassador with a conscious effort. "I..." His watery gaze did not seem able to meet his Empress' eye. He looked instead to Duncan, their ringleader. "I didn't know where they were coming from..."

"You did not know because you were too afraid to think on it," Fedor grumbled from behind him.

"You must understand," Jarvis rushed on, his pitch rising with desperation. "It was for a good purpose! If we could find a...a *cure* for the Risen, would not the sacrifice of a few be worth it? We did it for the good of the Empire!"

Melissa snorted, shaking her head. "Are you truly that stupid?"

"I just transported them! I didn't know what was being done to them!" Jarvis squealed. "Besides, I thought, since there were Necromancers involved, that—"

"Shut up, you fool!" Duncan hissed.

"Magistrate Duncan," the Empress swivelled her blade to point at the portly man. "You have been uncharacteristically quiet through all of this. Please do explain what your scheme was meant to achieve."

Duncan seemed to be weighing his options. Before him was a tightly-wound Furian, easily capable of tearing him limb from limb. His Empress had *Requiem*, that famous longsword, levelled at him, steady and merciless. His co-conspirators were crumbling beneath the pressure. Throwing his shoulders back proudly, Magistrate Duncan made his choice.

"We are close to a breakthrough, Your Majesty. The Red Rage is a gift from the Mad God. Properly harnessed, that power source could revolutionize our position, with the clout and technology to reclaim what has been lost. If you had the vision of Emperor Thaddeus, you would see that!"

"That is not your choice to make!" For the first time since entering the throne room, the Empress raised her voice. "You may feel powerful, ruling over the blighted swamplands of Coalwerth, but be reminded that you are merely a small portion of the Empire. Can you be ignorant of the damage you have caused? Emperor Thaddeus began a dream of unification, and that remains my goal. Lasting peace requires longer sight than you are capable of, Magistrate Duncan. It requires steadfast conviction. Your sedition will *not* be tolerated."

"But Your Majesty," Duncan protested, imprudently standing his ground. "The power generated by the Red Rage could enable us to resurrect the old machines. You yourself decreed that efforts were being made to reclaim lost technologies..."

"If you truly believed that, Magistrate," the Empress sneered, "you would have presented this venture to the throne for approval. No, do not delude yourselves with lofty goals. This was purely for your own profit." In her periphery, Melissa flinched, confirming the Empress' hunch.

"You mean to tell me you were abducting Furians to use them as... fuel?" Magistrate Tabitha asked her fellow delegates. Young Fedor would not meet her gaze, and Melissa merely spread her hands again in surrender. It seemed only one had been unaware of the plot. "What monsters would do such a thing...?" Tabitha asked, her expression ashen.

"An excellent question," Empress Carine agreed, turning her attention on Fedor once more. "If your loyalty is not with the throne, who were you working for?"

"I did not know their names... but they were Afflicted," Fedor answered. There was enough fear in his posture that Carine believed him. At first, she said nothing.

Then Duncan began to laugh. "Not so keen to condemn us now, are you, Majesty? It poses a problem

that your new pets might come at the cost of the old allies!"

Empress Carine pressed the point of her sword against Duncan's belly, just hard enough to cut short his laughter. "Seeing that there are traitors among the Humans, I find it easier to believe there might be those equally thoughtless among the Afflicted. So long as I rule the Empire, I will not allow a few fools to destroy the better world we are so close to creating.

"Mark me: the Furians are our allies and neighbours. The Afflicted strike out only because they have been so long mistreated. We must make reparations with them if we hope to end this cycle of bloodshed."

Magistrate Duncan curled his lip. "While you waste time with pointless treaties, we have been living in the broken cities left behind by your dream of expanding the Empire to all of Unity. We have had to contend with orphanages full to bursting, with starving families, with infrastructures in need of repair. You know nothing of sacrifice!"

"Duncan…" Magistrate Melissa whispered.

The room was deathly still. No fidgeting now. Even the Furian froze.

Empress Carine wore a dangerous smile.

"*I* know nothing of sacrifice?"

It had only been a year since Emperor Thaddeus had died, leaving Carine his appointed heir. She had been elevated to the most powerful position among Humanity, and there were many noblemen and courtiers slighted and bitter at her appointment. In the months after her coronation, Carine had swiftly learned that there were no longer any mentors to teach or guide her. Old Danforth had died years before, and now too Thaddeus was gone.

In her new position, she was constantly observed in a way she had never before experienced. In the orphanage, she had been merely one more faceless child in the crowd. Hungry, dirty, without a family name, she had known neither hope nor attention. After the fire, when she had fled into the streets with only the rags on her back, the citizens of Venroth had been only too happy to ignore one more child begging for scraps. Danforth had been the first person to see her, truly see her.

With his cluster of vagabond foundlings, they had been a small nation of want within the larger, unforgiving city. She had had no inkling of the scope of the world then, or the breadth of its problems.

After a turn in the army, and later in the emperor's guard, Carine had seen the state of Humanity. They were a people divided and desperate. They needed a common cause. They needed allies. They needed security if they were to pull the world back from the brink.

Suddenly given the power to lead, Empress Carine knew immediately what her quest must be. She dedicated her focus to fighting back the monstrous dangers that had been leaching hope from the common people. She spent much of her first year travelling the expanse of Unity, fighting evils and injustices wherever she went.

Her entourage seemed more than happy to see her fail. They were always keen to point out how little progress she had made, what small impact each skirmish had. For every village she saved, it seemed there were untold more infected by the Phage or the influence of the Fell. The difficulty of her decisions became more and more anchored in a dreamlike future, while the present was too fragmented to be held together.

"Empress, Tanbridge Village is just over the ridge."

"Thank you, General," the Empress said. She allowed her horse to slow, the better to take in the nuances of the surrounding landscape. The trees were thin and sparse, the hillside mostly covered in scrub. Any signs of wildlife were at least weeks old. The air held a metallic tang that stung the nostrils and made the eyes water. The horses began to shake their heads, snorting and stamping.

It was not hard to see why. Over the ridge, directly ahead, the sky was boiling. A column of swirling cloud filled the horizon over Tanbridge. A sullen crimson glow was awash over the landscape, like a bruise from where a breach had opened.

"Everyone stay sharp. There is no telling how many of the Fell are still in Tanbridge. Weapons free. Mystics at the ready."

There was no cry of assent as they had given to Emperor Thaddeus in years past. Carine might be their empress now, but there were many who thought her untested, who doubted the prudence of her judgments. Every undertaking she had led since taking the throne, her subordinates behaved as if she were still merely a general. It was as if they all silently hoped that when they returned to Avalon, Emperor Thaddeus would still be there, awaiting their reports. There were moments when even Carine wished that were true.

"With me!" And with that, Empress Carine kicked her horse into a charge.

The knights fell into line. As Carine reached the ridge she drew her sword and brandished it high. Along the line, the others were raising their swords, courageous cries rising into the crimson sky.

Then they were thundering down on the village of Tanbridge, once such a simple hamlet. The citizens were tanners and cattle herds, nothing that could resist the onslaught of the Fell when a breach opened over their simple thatched rooftops.

As the Empress careened down what served as the main street, the flies rose in clouds. Mangled corpses

had been dumped to rot in the streets, the splatter of blood on nearly every wall. There were slight traces of life: shutters that snapped fearfully shut when the riders passed, dogs scrounging in alleys, the muffled sounds of survivors trying to hide.

The Empress allowed her horse to slow to a trot, and a cluster of her followers drew up around her. The narrowness of the street prevented a proper assembly, so she led the way carefully forward, *Requiem* lowered but at the ready.

As they came out into the ruin of what once was city square, she turned her steed around. The cobbles were shattered and long furrows had been gouged up. A couple of burst cadavers lay in the dust, so brutally mangled that it was impossible to confirm they were Human, let alone identify them.

"Chaucer?" Carine asked.

The Fell Hunter sniffed the air, eyes glimmering beneath his hood. "Nearby, Your Majesty."

"Take your hunters and rout the demons," the Empress commanded.

Chaucer nodded once and gave a sharp whistle. Eight of the riders dismounted, tethering their horses to a fallen beam. Like shadows, the Fell Hunters slipped down the radiating streets.

While they hunted for demons, Carine and the others needed to assess how much damage had been done. She let her eyes wander over the shutters and singed thatch. Three of the buildings were little more than skeleton frames. This was no fire or storm, this was the work of demon magick. She cast a glance towards her Prime Mystic, and the woman nodded. With a litany of incantations, the Mystic drew up a barrier of glittering runic bands.

No sooner had the shield come into view than a sharp cry warbled out from behind the caved-in well that had stood in the centre of Tanbridge. Carine turned sharply, just in time to see a small child mid-flight.

"Wait! We are here to help!" Empress Carine called.

The child stumbled and fell and picked herself up again. Halfway between the shelter of the well and

the shadow of the nearest gutted house, the girl whirled about. She took in frantic breaths through clenched teeth, her eyes so wide the whites gleamed from her grimy face.

"Don't be afraid," Carine soothed, holding out her offhand, allowing her sword to dip below the neck of her horse, out of sight. "What's your name, child?"

The girl was trembling. Her glance darted from the Empress to the Mystic at her side, tracing the lines of the protective runes. At last she brought her focus back to the Empress. She showed no understanding of who this woman was, or why she had arrived in Tanbridge, but she grew bashful just the same. Worrying her ragged skirt between her hands, she cast her eyes down.

"S-Susanna..." she answered at last.

"Susanna, where are your parents?" Carine asked, her voice gentler than any of her delegates had before heard. But the girl flinched, her face screwing up under the weight of terrible memories. "It's alright, Susanna," Carine hurried on. "You will be safe now. We are here to help you."

The girl looked up with a face full of hope.

The Empress reached her hand forward, offering it. "Come here. We'll protect you."

Susanna came forward cautiously, equal parts relief and terror. She crossed the cobbles with difficulty, as if her shaking legs could barely hold her.

It was only when she was a few feet away that Carine felt something wasn't quite right. The instinct had only just begun to hum in the back of her brain, when her Prime Mystic hissed, "It's the Taint! Get back!"

Susanna reached out to take the Empress' hand. Her fingers scraped the edge of the protective barrier and a burst of crimson light washed out, buffeting everything in the square. The Empress fought against her rearing horse, while with an inhuman shriek Susanna flipped back and away. The little girl landed on all fours, face contorted into a hissing maw full of jagged teeth.

Heart pounding, Carine sat riveted, soothing her shaken horse. She stared at the monster rolling through the body of this little girl. As swiftly as it surfaced, the demon receded, leaving Susanna sobbing on the cobbles. Her cries were broken from days of weeping, voice scratchy and hoarse, her young muscles wearied and barely able to hold her up.

"P-please!" she cried between gulping sobs, "Please help me!"

The Empress could not tear her glance away. This child was innocent. The demon that was clawing its way through her was truly at fault, but Carine knew better than to think that the two could be so simply separated. To tear the demon out with magick would only leave Susanna a comatose husk, soul pitted and dead. The girl, through no fault of her own, was lost to them.

"Please help me!" Susanna cried again, looking up from the broken cobbles. The child could not be more than seven or eight. Carine had been about that age when Danforth had found her in the alleys, starving and terrified.

"Your Majesty?"

"Yes, General?" the Empress responded automatically, still watching the little girl, unblinking.

"With the Taint already spreading, we cannot leave Tanbridge unpurged..." the General said.

Empress Carine squeezed the hilt of *Requiem* until her knuckles ached. She swallowed hard and tore her glance away from Susanna. She made sure to look directly at the general. She could not let herself look anywhere else lest she lose the conviction for what must be done. For the greater good.

If the Taint was allowed to remain in Tanbridge, it was only a matter of time before more Fell burst through, before the region was overrun with demons.

Empress Carine pulled sharply on her bridle and turned her horse away from the well. Head held high, her face controlled in a perfect marble mask, she gave her command.

"Burn it to the ground. No trace of the Taint can be permitted to escape. Whatever magicks you must use. Erase Tanbridge from the world."

"P-please help me!" came Susanna's plaintive voice from somewhere behind her. The Empress had made her choice. She rode back up the main street towards the ridge, leaving the memory of Tanbridge and its blasted sky behind her.

As her knights fell into line behind her, they held their positions as befitted attendants to an Empress. Never again would they doubt the iron will of the woman who led Humanity. Never again would they forget what she was capable of in pursuit of her dream of a peaceful world.

Empress Carine knew of sacrifice. She had experienced hunger, suffering, and loss. She knew just how desperate Humanity could become under duress. And looking at the paunch of Duncan's well-fed frame, at the richness of the fabrics he wore, at the jewelled talisman hanging about his fat neck—callousness hung about him like musk.

"There are times when we must sacrifice a few to save the world," Empress Carine began. She sheathed her sword and stepped back towards her throne but did not retake her seat.

Magistrate Duncan gave a smug nod to Jarvis, but the redhead nervously looked away.

"In these moments, heavy choices must be weighed with care. You have forced such a choice upon the throne now. Humanity strives for peace with all her neighbours—including the Furians and the Afflicted.

We all have a common enemy in the Phage, in the Crimson Horde, in the Fell. This sort of division will only make us weak to their Taint. If we stand not united, we will lose what little of the world has survived the calamities of our forebears."

The Empress turned her attention to Guresh. She gave a slight incline of her head and was gratified by his returning the gesture. "You have my solemn pledge that so long as I hold the throne, I will not sanction any manner of slave trade—of any people. A wrong has been done to Furia, Ambassador, a breach of our treaty that I vehemently condemn." The Empress allowed a brief pause. "You still seek justice?"

"I do, Your Majesty," Guresh rumbled, rolling his shoulders.

"Then you shall have it," she said with a nod. "Leave the rest to me, and I will have those involved captured and punished. I give my word."

"What? You can't possibly be siding with this flea-bitten—" Duncan began, waving a dismissive hand towards the Furian Ambassador beside him.

"Magistrate Duncan, I do not take kindly to repeating myself. You will tender your apologies to Ambassador Guresh Stonehammer."

Duncan fumed, nostrils flared, but said nothing. The Empress levelled her gaze on him, her face a perfect, marble mask.

"I recommend you do so quickly, Duncan, for your own sake."

Once more, the portly man offered the barest sketch of an apology, even less convincing than the one he gave when the Empress first entered the antechamber. His arrogance would be his own destruction. Empress Carine had no inclination to stretch herself any further to repair his faults.

"Magistrate Tabitha, you will accompany me. I would like to discuss the region along the Wastes. Who would you esteem for elevation to the posts of magistrate for Red Brink, Bellrook, Swift Current, and Coalwerth?"

"M-Majesty?" Tabitha stammered, still rather in shock at the revelations of the morning's audience.

"Now, wait a moment!" Fedor called, pushing past the other delegates to try to stay her decision, but she coolly ignored him.

The Empress looked only at Tabitha, and indicated for the older woman to fall into step beside her. Remembering herself at last, Tabitha tottered forward, pressing her grey curls back with both hands. Empress Carine had the impression that the sole remaining magistrate from the Wastes was trying to shield her face as she left their ranks.

With Tabitha at her side, Empress Carine led the way towards the doors. Her attendants sprang to life from their posts and hauled at the oaken doors once more. As they swung open, the Empress bowed a last time to the Furian Ambassador.

"I leave justice to you, Ambassador Guresh. My only request is if you learn anything further about who their accomplices might be, please share this intelligence with my office that we may better coordinate in our efforts to shut down this operation completely."

She saw the light of understanding glimmer in the yellow eyes, his snout twitching at the fear in the air. The Furian swung his sword to limber up his wrist, flexing the claws on his offhand with relish.

"Furia will not forget the honourable Empress Carine," he vowed.

The Empress gave a final nod and led Tabitha out of the antechamber. The last thing she saw was the vicious grin on Guresh's face as he turned towards the remaining four delegates.

The oaken doors were swung shut, muffling the screams and tear of bodies. Tabitha stumbled, pausing on the tiled floor. She swayed slightly, and for a moment, Carine wondered if she might be ill.

"We cannot allow such behaviour to go unchecked," the Empress noted.

"N-no, of course not. Such terrible things they did to those poor people..." Tabitha said, still shaken.

Empress Carine nodded, satisfied. She resumed her stride down the hall, and Magistrate Tabitha swiftly fell into step just behind her. This was the empress Unity needed. Only iron rulings could save such a bleak world.

# Afflicted

*For a shorter, two-page overview of the Afflicted, see pg. 150.*

## THE LAND

The Afflicted are the only race in Unity that do not have their own distinct territory. As they were once Humans, it should come as no surprise that the vast majority of Afflicted are still found near Human settlements, though the Afflicted continue to seek out spaces to call their own. The physical augmentations rendered necessary by the disease enable them to survive in places where Humans could not, so most (unofficial) Afflicted territories are harsh and unwelcoming to other races. While Afflicted are survivors in the extreme, their unpredictable lifespans, coupled with the relatively short time they've had to organize and thrive as a race, has made it difficult for them to achieve any sort of stability in terms of territory or organization. Their primary focus is to protect themselves from the persecution of the outside world, so they reside mostly in secretive cluster communities, hidden in the abandoned crevices of Unity.

**The Human Empire:** Despite the disdain that most Afflicted have for Humans, they still retain a Human need for community—in particular as a means of protection from greater dangers. Many Afflicted settlements are hidden in dangerous or undesirable locations such as abandoned underground networks, caves, mines, and ruins. The one exception to this rule is Haven, the only Afflicted settlement on the map, and therefore its de facto capital—though other races would be hard-pressed to find its entrances.

**Raider's Cove:** To the north of Raider's Cove is an island called Eden. Originally used as a Phage colony during the initial outbreak of the curse, it has since developed into an Afflicted-only commune where they may live out their lives in peace. Because the Afflicted who venture there almost never return, and because those born there almost never leave, the Raider's Cove region has become shrouded in mystery.

**The Underground:** The Underground is comprised of vast networks of ancient, abandoned, subterranean infrastructure: cave systems, tunnels, and storage cellars are some of the dark spaces claimed by the Afflicted. There are no known maps of The Underground, but it is suspected that branches of it exist wherever the Human Empire does—and perhaps even into underground stretches of Vallan territory

and the sub-vents of some Furian cities. Used by the Afflicted to allow for safe passage across Unity, it has also become a popular domain for illegal ventures, from contraband to questionable magicks and much more. It is said that absolutely anything can be acquired in The Underground—for the right price.

**Swamp Bogs:** These caustic boglands are rife with sulphuric acid, methane, coal tar, and arsenic. To most of the races, this environment would be deadly, but to the Afflicted it provides a direly needed source of fuel. Many Dusters make their communes here, using their bulky frames to withstand the added danger of the air-borne chemicals. Some of the most heavily modified Afflicted brave these regions in order to gather resources to power weapons, build prosthetics, perform alchemy, and make a tidy profit when selling them in The Underground.

**Freezing Cliffs:** The bitter winds and icy climbs of the Freezing Cliffs mean that food here is rare and civilization rarer. Yet, for some desperate Afflicted, the Freezing Cliffs provide an uncontested vantage point. There are rumours of extensive laboratories carved out of the granite precipices, where scientific experiments worthy of horror stories are carried out. Many of the more "visionary" Splicers occupy these regions, and any traveller attempting to pass through is sure to meet a gruesome end.

## MAJOR CITIES

**Haven:** The only Afflicted settlement of sufficient size to deserve the classification of "city," Haven is a floating city born from a sprawling underground metropolis with machinery built into its very walls. From piping and vents for circulating air to factories manufacturing prosthetic body parts, this bustling city is grimy, dark, and largely comprised of dilapidated slums. Only recently has Haven risen above ground, the upper portion of the city floating above the Wastes, defying gravity with mysterious technology long in the making by genius Afflicted minds. Despite its cobbled-together infrastructure and constantly shifting population, the Afflicted of Haven hold fiercely to a unified identity, calling themselves Ironites. Ironites work well collaboratively, so that when one member of their team of workers, inventors, or scientists succumbs to the Phage, there is another able to fill the gap. In this way the city keeps humming and its iron smelts

*Hushed whispers speak of a terrifying weapon being built in Haven. With its eye in the sky vantage point and fortress-like architecture, a powerful weapon would turn the city into a floating fortress of death.*

and factories never stop running. For those Afflicted looking for a place to belong to something greater than themselves, Haven and its Ironites will gladly welcome another cog for the machine.

*Body Farms sound like pretty horrible places. But horrible places are always fun to toss your players into.*

**Body Farm:** Body Farm is not a single location, but rather the name for a certain type of pop-up settlement. They tend to last no longer than a season, but there will always be another somewhere else in the vast Underground. The Body Farms are close and cramped subterranean shanties where abducted subjects of any race can be dissected for study or parts. The Splicers are always at the heart of these temporary settlements, and will perform transplants, organ harvesting, augmentation enhancements, and even abortions for their fellow Afflicted. It is said that only the Splicers know when and where the next Body Farm will show up.

*It can be jarring to walk through an Afflicted city or settlement and seeing fingers, ears, toes, eyeballs, and the occasional lung being passed around in the place of Denerim.*

**Dust Bowl:** Dust Bowl is the collective name for a number of smaller, struggling burrows throughout the Scorching Desert. The Afflicted that are born and grow up in this region tend to be physically heartier though they may display more severe manifestations of the Phage than any other group of Afflicted. There are whispered stories that their ancestors were once the best and brightest of all Humans, hence why their kind were struck all the lower by the Phage. The Dust Bowl denizens come above ground at night because the heat can reach scorching temperatures during the day. Even deep in the tunnels the air is constantly hot, muggy, and stale. The Dusters somehow scratch a living here by resting during the day and going out on ambitious scavenging hunts in the night. They use a number of mechanical contraptions to "sail" across the dunes in search of supplies and prey. Dusters have recently come into open conflict with the Sarathi, a race of lizardfolk that were once a part of the Crimson Horde but preferred the hot desert climate to the freezing tundra of the Great Wilds.

*The Phage, along with the strained history between the Afflicted and the other races, can be interesting drivers in the development of an Afflicted character. Playing an Afflicted gives you a few built-in reasons to embrace the "dark brooding hero" archetype.*

**Entropy Clave:** More of a corporation than a city, the Entropists have branches of fortified buildings across the majority of Afflicted territory, where members of their Caste can gain support, repairs, and work. They are the Afflicted most commonly found above ground and among mixed-race groups. Compiling thieves, extortionists, stealth operatives, and assassins, members of the Entropy Clave are never out of work. The Entropists all perpetrate the reputation that precedes them so that everyone knows they should not be crossed.

**Eden:** The closest thing the Afflicted have to a paradise, Eden was once their sole colony above ground until Haven's Phase Engine came online to elevate the capital city to new heights. Originally a quarantine, now it is a peaceful place Afflicted seek out when they can no longer face the guilt of their life's actions. Those who live there leave their old Castes behind and become members of the Exiles. On their temperate and lush island, they work at easing the pain of their Phage. Once a year, the Exiles make their way to the mainland in what Humans call Locust Raids. During this fortnight-long excursion, the Exiles cross travellers and settlements alike, stripping everything of use to haul back to Eden. Some Humans have taken to leaving out their junk and battening down their villages in order to survive the Locust Raids.

## TRADE

The Afflicted do not mint their own currency, and generally any Denerim they obtain is scrounged or exchanged for basic necessities like clean water or fresh food. More often they operate on a gatherer principle, scavenging and stealing, then bartering for what they need. In some of the more desperate, cut-throat settlements, theft and murder are not out of the question when it comes to survival. Luxury is a dream the Afflicted have long forgotten about.

## THE PEOPLE

The Afflicted live by the phrase "If you're not with us, you're against us." They aren't antagonistic by nature, but they are desperate, fearful, and at times vengeful for the wrongs they have suffered. While they generally show sympathy and significant leniency towards members of their own Caste (and often display considerable patience for other Afflicted Castes), towards other races they can be cruel, vicious, and frequently sadistic. Some Castes are better known for their violence than others, but all Afflicted remain a collective thanks to the one thing that unites them: their suffering under the Phage.

Due to the spiritual significance many other races associate with their curse, and the general disgust, distrust, and prejudice the rest of Unity displays towards the Afflicted, this bitter cycle continues.

## THE PHAGE

The Phage is at the very essence of what it means to be Afflicted. In the Skyfather's wrath at the loss of his Ivory Queen, he came down heavily on those Humans he held responsible for her fall. Selecting the best and brightest of Humanity, he lay a curse on them so deeply that it would always follow their bloodlines with no possibility of a cure. Despite the brilliance of the Afflicted's minds, that cure still eludes them, long after the Mad God's departure.

The Phage manifests as a disease, albeit slow-acting, whereby the various organs, appendages, and bodily functions atrophy and decay. It seems to

## INHUMANITY

The gas was still rolling towards Dunfield on the fourth morning, and we had no way of escaping it. My father packed up our wheelbarrow with whatever food we could salvage from the cellar and we began to run. My mother had pressed her handkerchief to my mouth, trying to protect me from the gas, but it rolled over the hill like a living thing—the colour of mustard—and my mother began wheezing. It was such a horrible sound, like the rasps of a gutted pig, but there was nothing I could do. My father yelled for me to run ahead, but with the rot in my leg I couldn't go fast enough. I heard my father wheezing too and turned back. He fell—just crumbled—and the wheelbarrow toppled. I watched as chunks of cheese and half a loaf of bread rotted at the yellow cloud's touch. Not knowing what else to do, I climbed under the wheelbarrow and pressed my mother's handkerchief to my mouth. I closed my eyes and waited for death to come... When the wheelbarrow exploded above me, I screamed—I couldn't help it, I was terrified. I saw a band of Human soldiers in gasmasks. All I could see of their faces was their eyes through the amber glass, but I heard their voices just the same: "One of the Afflicted survived!" I looked around, trying to find my parents, but there were so many dead, and the gas had melted their flesh... you could not tell which had been Human, and which, like me, had been suffering from the Phage. I tried to say something to that effect, too shocked to cry, but the nearest of the Humans grabbed me by the wrist and hauled me upright. I could barely stand on my bad leg but he pulled me in close, gripping my neck hard with his other hand. He turned me to his companions and said, "A little filth for us to play with, lads!" And in that moment, I wished I had died in the gas.

—Excerpt from *Memoirs of a Prisoner of War*, by Dianne Redlock

strike each subject differently; where one sufferer's experience may begin with respiratory ailments, another may find their extremities rotting first. Survival depends greatly upon which organs the Phage targets first, as some issues are harder to alleviate than others. Typically, so long as the Human heart still beats within them, the Afflicted can be patched and modified, their rotted organs replaced with transplants or machine equivalents, until the Afflicted is a patchwork construct of organic and mechanical parts.

The Phage is not, however, contagious (unique symptoms cannot spread from one Afflicted to another, nor from Afflicted victims to any other race). Instead, it is hereditary—passed down from parents to children. If only one parent is Afflicted, there is a chance that the child will be born Clean. These individuals still carry the Phage within them and can pass it on to their offspring, but exhibit no symptoms throughout their lives. If both parents have the Phage, it is guaranteed that the Phage will be passed down and manifest.

Early symptoms include: Itching and abrasions of the skin, irritated and inflamed eyes, excessive bruising, raspy breathing. Afflicted parents watch their children closely for these initial signs, as how early the symptoms onset may indicate how long their lifespan will be. By four or five years of age, their first non-vital extremity is likely to have rotted off completely. The itching of the skin eventually burns, and the abrasions become lesions that ooze with pus. Irritated eyes will eventually turn blind. Bruising becomes necrosis. Respiratory issues progress to consumptive fits. By puberty, the spread of the disease advances sharply with the hormonal development of the body, and it is around this time that a young Afflicted's first Bitter Harvest is needed. It's at this stage that Splicing must begin, both to slow the spread of the disease and to restore lost function and quality of life. Diseased body parts are surgically extracted, and replaced with mechanical and/ or alchemical prosthetics, and vital organs are substituted with transplants. Each transplant or augmentation subjects the patient to the risk of infection, toxic shock, organ rejection, or death on the operating table. However, when successful, these transplants seem to temporarily slow the spread and advancement of the Phage.

While historically these Splices were designed to simply replace lost parts, modern Afflicted have come to see each graft as an opportunity to improve upon their original, feeble Human assets. Now, rather than a glass eye, a fitting replacement may be a laser-guided thermal-reader. As the Afflicted have embraced their identity as divergent from Humanity, they have become less preoccupied with ensuring that their prosthetics make them look Human and more focused on the potential for new capacities.

**Fall from Grace:** More than any physical disfigurement, the Phage is a constant, painful reminder of how far the Afflicted have fallen from grace. With

*The initial generation of Afflicted were a sad sight due to their inexperience and lack of understanding of the Phage. As the Afflicted's knowledge of the disease grew, so did their evolution as a separate faction from Humanity. Many present-day Afflicted wear their mechanical augmentations as a badge of honour rather than something to be ashamed of.*

their ingenuity, they were the ones that elevated Humans to equality with the Valla and the Furians. These bright individuals developed the automata and the awe-inspiring Titan Rigs. Having reached such a pinnacle, all of Unity was watching when the Skyfather cursed them with the Phage. Its rot symbolizes their loss of the Skyfather's favour. Their suffering pays for the pain they caused the Mad God with the death of the Ivory Queen. Perhaps the Afflicted would not be so bitter if they had been banished to a new land where they might live out their penance in peace, but instead, the Mad God ensured they were unwelcome wherever they roamed, foul and despised things forced to scratch out space among Humans—the very people who consider them rats in the walls.

Now their genius is bent to artificially prolong their lives, creating alchemical brews that suppress organ rejection and increasingly complex weaponized limbs. And so the Afflicted lash out, sometimes heinously, at the Humans who, in their minds, retain the grace and favour that was stripped from the Afflicted so long ago. It seems that along with making the Phage incurable, the Mad God ensured that the rift between the Afflicted and Humanity would be just as impossible to mend.

## CULTURE

Ostracized and persecuted by their former Human brethren, the Afflicted broke from Human culture and took a darker path. The unwillingness of the other races to help the Afflicted when the Phage first crippled their people and their continued antagonism towards them has made the Afflicted a cruel populace desperate and willing to do absolutely anything to survive. As such, their moral codes are quite different from those of the law-oriented Humans or the honour-bound Furians. The Afflicted place their highest values on knowledge—no matter how it is used—especially when it comes to advancing the sciences. It seems that the arrogance that first brought down the Mad God's wrath has not been remotely tempered by their suffering. If anything, it has distilled them into a harder and more callous version of the Humans they once were. Where once their studies were diverse and broad, the pressure to survive and the lingering hope that the Phage might be cured has forced them to restrict their focus largely to science, medicine, and mechanics. Luxuries like art, fashion, craftsmanship, and entertainment have been necessarily abandoned.

*An Afflicted home is often sparsely furnished. Only the bare necessities are available and even then, some families go without tables or chairs. It isn't uncommon for two or more Afflicted families to share a living space together. Some eventually unite under one communal surname.*

## GOVERNMENT

There is no centralized government for the Afflicted. While the Chancellor of Haven holds pretensions to power beyond the reaches of the Afflicted's single established city, the smaller communities each have their own Chancellor to govern local affairs. These smaller leaders do not report back to (and hardly ever communicate with) Haven, and certainly don't consider themselves less important. Due to the unpredictability of the Afflicted's lifespans, the role of Chancellor can shift rapidly and frequently. They are typically chosen by Mob Court vote from the members of the community, and are often from the Caste most prominent in the region.

Chancellors do not gain any additional perks for their service, and are often little more than the "wisest in town:" a person to whom others can turn for strong decisions and wise judgment on difficult issues. They sometimes occupy the role of judge in the Mob Court.

**The Mob Courts:** Chancellors are "elected" by the decisions of the Mob Court. All Afflicted settlements have a Burrow (like a city square but underground), where they can meet away from the eyes of the outside races. In the Burrow, issues that affect the community are discussed, such as who should be the new Chancellor, if a youth is transferring into a new caste, when a Bitter Harvest is required, or how to deal with outside threats. While members will often give speeches to present their position on issues, votes are usually made by the largest consensus. Any Afflicted who has completed at least one Bitter Harvest has the right to a voice at the Mob Court.

## SOCIETY

As there is no cohesive structure to Afflicted society, they do not have a set of rules or laws that govern their behaviour. In general, survival is paramount. Within all settlements, each Afflicted must take up a functioning role to support the whole. These are typically assigned based on fitness, knowledge, and any augmentations that might specialize an individual for a certain job. When a highly specialized Afflicted falls, it is common for their customized augmentations to be passed on to their successor. There is little time for considerations beyond food, shelter, and safety, so there is no room for dreams to be pursued or preferences to be catered to. The work the Afflicted perform is necessary to keep their settlements supplied with fresh air and (hopefully) untainted water, while they constantly repair their underground infrastructure and each other.

The Afflicted look out for one another, often in small clans of twenty or fewer, so every loss is keenly felt. Need is the governing factor for who gets what in terms of spoils, and likewise it is considered a member's last gift to their comrades to donate their own body (and modifications) to the survivors when they fall. While these connections and Caste affiliations create strong bonds and steadfast support networks, there is often little regard paid towards

blood relatives. Afflicted with minimal Phage deterioration or easily concealed augmentations often choose (or are coerced) to go above ground. There, they must try to pass themselves off as Human in an effort to gather supplies, information, resources, and/ or power that can assist their comrades.

Because of their lack of cultural heritage, most modern Afflicted have shed their family names and taken on the surname of their Caste instead, e.g. Alyssa the Duster. There is little room for sentimentality.

## CASTES

Perhaps because the Afflicted do not hold territory of their own, their people unite and associate over the skills or roles they occupy in Afflicted society. These create shifting clans of individuals that can find a member who understands their way of life anywhere across Unity. There are five Castes: Ironites, Splicers, Dusters, Entropists, and Exiles. While they are not ranked in any form of hierarchy, certain Castes are more welcome in certain regions than others, usually depending on the local population. Each Caste is associated with certain personality traits, beliefs, and skillsets. While normally an Afflicted child is indoctrinated into the Caste of their biological family, it is often needful for that youth, once they have completed their first Bitter Harvest, to decide upon the Caste they will join. Each Caste has a sigil that they show somewhere on their person so that their Caste may be identified. These sigils can appear in the form of decoration on clothing, a piece of jewellery, an engraving into mechanical parts, a tattoo, or even a brand upon the skin.

*Mobility between Castes can be difficult but the constant pressures of survival do allow for Afflicted to move between Castes if it fulfills their community or group's needs at the time.*

**Ironites:** The only stationary group of Afflicted, Ironites are almost exclusively found in Haven (unless on a Bitter Harvest). They are said to be more sedentary, more attached to old lineage, power, organization (such as government or treaties), and are stoic in their devotion to and preservation of the past. Their strengths include a relative willingness to work with others, mastery of mechanical repair and maintenance, and stalwart defensive capabilities. However, they are also are the most warlike of the Afflicted Castes. Less willing to travel far from Haven, they are often so lost in history that they stagnate and are pretentious in their belief that they control some sort of Afflicted nation.

**Splicers:** Splicers can be found in every Afflicted settlement, and also often make their living by travelling extensively, offering their services wherever they go. From the humble tinkers in regions thick with adventurers to the shady hack-doctors in grimy back rooms, Splicers have reputations as colourful and varied as they are. A Splicer might save a desperate traveller in a pinch... or steal your organs for use in the Underground. Their strengths are that they are knowledgeable factotums capable of myriad skills, and comfortable picking up and moving on at any moment. Their faults are that they are opportunistic, often unscrupulous, inconstant, and cowardly.

**Dusters:** Dusters hailed originally from the Dust Bowl, an area so blighted that no other race dares to go there. If the rumours are true, it is here that The God's Fire is being tested. The Afflicted from this region (or descended from those who were originally of this region) have extreme and grotesque physical deformities. They are often larger or stronger, but their flesh is consumed with boils and tumours, and they tend to be born with malformed limbs, additional digits, and other congenital defects. Their strengths are that they tend to be more compassionate than other Afflicted, more tolerant of the pain from their grafts, and try to cause as little harm to the unfortunate victims of their Bitter Harvests as is necessary. Their faults are that they are often poorly socialized due to the reluctance of outsiders to be long in their presence, Duster children have a higher-than-average mortality rate, and they are often sought out by unscrupulous Afflicted for study and/ or as a source of flesh for Splicing.

**Entropists:** Entropists are among the most mobile and commercially successful of all the Afflicted. They can be found in the widest spread of territory and are closely tied to outsiders' perceptions of the Afflicted because of their higher level of activity. Mercenary to the core, Entropists are skilled thieves, cold-hearted assassins, and efficient strong-arms. They are typically outfitted with a higher number of tactical grafts and augmentations, such as thermal imaging, enhanced reflexes, fire-resistant alloys, and tracking gels. Their strengths lie in the fact that they are willing to do anything to provide for another day, their experiences have made them wily and versatile, and they have become highly specialized. Their faults are that they can always be swayed by a better offer, have the least regard for the value of life of any Afflicted Caste, and have extremely loose morals.

**Exiles:** Exiles are those that, whether from the severity of their ailments, their guilt at past actions, or the extent of injuries suffered, have withdrawn from the world. The pariahs of the Afflicted, Exiles can often no longer stay ahead of the Phage's rot, and so only undertake Bitter Harvests in large swarms. In Eden, they are free to live out their days in peace away from the rest of the world. Their strengths are their acceptance and tolerance of all people, their

ability to finally let go of their acrimony, and their dedication towards purely healing sciences. Their faults are superstitious natures, self-delusion, and fatalistic pacifism.

### BITTER HARVEST

When the Phage first struck, a great many children did not survive to mature into adults. Now, thanks to the advancement of their alchemical medicines, the rates of survival are much higher, but still the Bitter Harvest tradition remains an important turning point in every young Afflicted's life.

Because children grow at too great a rate for augmentations to be safely applied, and with the higher risk of complication, contraindication, infection, or rejection, only once an Afflicted matures enough in body to withstand the procedure do they truly become a functioning, autonomous part of Afflicted society. Before the Harvest, the adolescent joins a troupe of adult Afflicted, who are also in need of fresh augmentations, to scavenge for parts—both organic and mechanical. The parts may be culled from captured slaves and fresh corpses, or stripped from tools, weapons, and contraptions. It is considered good fortune when the raid comes back with enough supplies for the entire hunting party, but no member is permitted to return without gathering at least something.

These are used to fashion the first of many implants this adolescent will receive over the course of their life. After the group have made their finds, they return to present their parts to the local Splicer and the Bitter Harvest culminates in the harvesting of the most egregiously affected body parts, which are then either mended or fully replaced by the suitable components found from their scavenging.

Afflicted call it fortune when they are able to stumble upon fresh corpses or scattered mechanical parts. Many Afflicted, despite their terrible treatment at the hands of others, still suffer a conflict of conscience when they are forced to take lives for a Bitter Harvest. In dire circumstances, the group may sacrifice one of their members to harvest the parts needed for the remaining party.

*1 out of 10 Afflicted that go on a Bitter Harvest fail to return.*

### TECHNOLOGY

The Afflicted are easily the most advanced race in terms of technological prowess due to their past knowledge and their pressing need for advancements in medical, defensive, and survival techniques. Due to their shadowy history and their in-depth knowledge of mechanics and alchemy, they alone are said to be able to resurrect the fallen Titan Rigs. Whenever one of these archaic colossi are found venturing across the lands of Unity, it is surely because an Afflicted's hand was behind it. There are also many other tools and smaller weapons that they have managed to salvage and reanimate from the wreckage of the Golden Age. However, because of the poor condition of the remnants, the lack of necessary supplies, and their inability to collaborate in great numbers, the Afflicted remain unable to collate their power.

**Biological Weapons:** From their extensive study of disease and decay in the efforts to stall, cure, or even reverse the Phage (unsuccessfully as of yet), the Afflicted have an extensive understanding of the biology of Unity's races. This knowledge has been gathered and abused by twisted but brilliant Afflicted scientists. Though the Afflicted may not

## FIRST HARVEST

Josiah Cobb had been born into the Dusters with a humpback and a club foot. He was lucky, he knew. Still, as he neared his thirteenth birthday, the rasping when he talked grew worse. Soon he began to wake in the night from coughing, until fleshy black sludge spattered from his mouth. His father said: "It is time." Josiah was equal parts excited and terrified. Unlike the other Dusters, who had so many ailments that required a new augmentation, he specifically needed a fresh set of lungs. What if he couldn't find them? This was his one chance. If he failed to harvest something for the clan, he wouldn't be worthy to return to the Dusters. When Tatiana had come back a year before from her first Bitter Harvest, she'd had a new steel leg with hardly a spot of rust. But the year before that, when Davin had ventured out, the clan had been gone longer than usual. The rumours had begun milling. When the Bitter Harvest clan had returned without Davin, Josiah had believed that Davin had been abandoned. That was, until he had recognized Davin's deep blue eye blinking out of old Mary's bloated face.

Josiah suppressed a shiver and immediately broke out in a fit of coughing; another chunk of lung landed with a wet plop into his hand. No, he could not be like Davin. This was his chance to become a proper Duster, a true member of his family, a contributing member of the Afflicted. Let the Bitter Harvest begin.

be well-organized or plentiful in number, their biological weapons can cause lasting damage over a wide area, manifesting in the form of noxious gases, acids that melt flesh and bone, and even Phage Fire, which cannot be doused by sand or water and destroys both organic and inorganic matter. Phage Fire must be handled with care and is often deployed in very precise amounts to control the area of spread and duration of destruction.

**Experiments:** Some of the Afflicted collect living specimens on which to carry out their research. Most are fellow Afflicted, allowing for further research into the Phage. But some unscrupulous Splicers source living Humans, Furians, and even (when extremely lucky) Valla, so as to study the effects of augmentations, implants, and new or experimental treatments on a different kind of patient—all in the name of science, of course. Most onlookers conveniently forget that it is largely from discoveries in these Underground laboratories that Unity still enjoys technological advancements and unlocks more secrets of life.

*Could the God's Fire be the secret weapon that's rumoured to being built in Haven? A weapon of this potential has dire implications for the political landscape of Unity.*

## GOD'S FIRE

The other races suspect that the Afflicted have been working on what might prove to be the most devastating invention in the history of mortals. Though the Afflicted live in deplorable conditions throughout Unity, their knowledge is often shared and passed forward within their scientific communities to continue the work. Let it never be forgotten that before the Phage, they were the brightest minds and strongest wills in all of Unity, and there are many still able to order their faculties towards great and terrible ends.

It is said they are now close to completing a weapons project codenamed The God's Fire. If the scraps of details uncovered are even partially true, this weapon would finally give the Afflicted leverage in the politics between nations, and threaten entire races should they try to stand against them. The God's Fire is said to be so potent that it could level an entire city the size of Vallantis in a single strike, with a toxic flame that would not only eradicate everything in its path, but prevent anything new from taking purchase thereafter. In the wake of the devastation, none but the Afflicted would be able to survive. The time may have come when, disenfranchised and stripped of the legacy they once held, the Afflicted would rather see the world burn and remade in their own twisted image than continue scrounging in its shadows.

## WARFARE

By and large, the Afflicted do not seek warfare with others. They are more comfortable striking opportunistically, but many believe this is because of how vulnerable they are and how small in number. If they had access to organized forces, they could very well pose a significant problem, as their chemical weapons and advanced technologies are increasingly challenging to withstand. However, on an individual level, the Afflicted are content to use violence to steal only what they need. They are wily, creative risk-takers; they should never be underestimated in battle.

While much of the technology in Unity originated from the Golden Age, the Afflicted alone have managed to continue developing the otherwise forgotten tools, and this affords them technological superiority. They have great need for these advantages, as the other races frequently make assaults on their colonies, raiding parties, and individuals travelling aboveground. As the number of these assaults continues to mount, the Afflicted are growing equally offensive as they struggle to exist between the consumption of the Phage and the injuries dealt by their many enemies.

## RELIGION

The Afflicted have distanced themselves from religion. For those still clinging to the edges of faith, it has warped into a rabid hatred for the Mad God or a poisonous remorse over their role in the fall of the Ivory Queen (the latter felt most among the Ironites).

The most passive of the Afflicted may make a little room in their hearts for Halifax the Lorekeeper, but this generally manifests in linguistic terms, such as the adage "Halifax first" in reference to keeping strong records so that their work can be continued by the next generation.

More widely revered is Mave the Trickster, though perhaps more out of habit than true faith. This demigod, born out of the ashes of the Ivory Queen, has taken on the role of patron saint. The Afflicted see her less as an omnipotent deity and more as a revered ancestor. It is more common to see tribute to Mave among the Entropists and Splicers than any other Afflicted Castes. It is said that every member of the Exiles' Locust Raids wear porcelain masks as homage to Mave's mysterious nature.

Largely, the Afflicted feel most comfortable placing their trust and faith in their own abilities. They govern their daily lives by the hard edge of science and pragmatism. Religion, like their lost Humanity, is a relic belonging to the past.

### VIEWS ON OTHER RACES

**Valla:** Living fossils, the Valla are so far removed from the dangers of swift decay that it is as if they and the Afflicted speak wholly different languages. Like a sweet fever dream, their shining cities seem as illusions, a world the Afflicted might once have attained if not for their fall from grace. The Afflicted rely on business and necessity to resolve issues with the Valla as painlessly as possible. Splicers are particularly fond of Valla parts: the longevity and youthfulness of Vallan physiology make for excellent grafts.

**Humans:** Humans serve as a bitter reminder of everything the Afflicted have lost. They are not so distant in history as to be a wholly separate race, but rather a progenitor or previous branch of the species. Their decision to cut off the Afflicted in their time of direst need makes the Afflicted unable to trust or rely upon these distant cousins.

**Furians:** The skilled manufacturing and honour-bound nature of the Furians make them the only race the Afflicted feel they can trust to honour their promises. The Afflicted rely on their collaboration with the Furians to create ever more imaginative prosthetic solutions. Furians alone seem able to measure the true worth of the person beneath the Phage.

## TWISTED SCIENCE

Dr. Ecclair VonWaalden was an excellent Splicer. She had spent much of her youth collecting fragments of research by dozens of Afflicted before her. Now, she was finally prepared for her latest experiment. She could still recall the delicious screams in the Body Farm, before the Humans had caved in the tunnels with an explosion that had left her remaining ear ringing. It had taken long months of slapped-together testing and note-taking, all on the road moving south, before she had finally been able to set up a fresh Body Farm.

Now she had the perfect specimen—and what a fortuitous turn of events that the very Human who had caved in her last laboratory should now decorate her table! "You are part of something greater, you know," she rasped through the filterbox holding her jaw shut. The Human struggled against the restraints, unable to even jerk his head to see her in the shadows of the machine, the claw-like contraption from one end of the device holding his head firmly in place. "It is entirely possible that you will be fragmented and reassembled through the process, in which case, none of what I tell you now will matter... but should you retain your sanity, please do me a favour. Say my name, and I'll know that you survived the procedure. After all, you must help me to help you..." Without countdown, but with great relish, she spoke the words "valas haal accath nin vet" and the unorthodox machine buzzed to life as the room filled with an ominous purple glow.

The Human shrieked, long and loudly, the sound echoing through the tunnels. The crystal in the central glass chamber of the device began to whirl ever faster. "Well, that's interesting," Dr. VonWaalden jotted a few notes into her logbook and shuffled around the table towards the automaton braced by another metal claw originating from the other end of the device.

Dr. VonWaalden heard an echo of the initial scream, almost as if it were floating back up the tunnels towards her, and then the automaton was jolting against its restraints. Sure enough, the purple light was floating behind the glass of its eye sockets. And then, all at once, the steel jaw opened and a tinny sound leaked out: "Help me... Doctor..."

Dr. VonWaalden would have grinned if she could, but she had to settle for an uncomfortable wheeze. "Well, now. You made it in one piece after all..."

## SHORT STORY

# MADELINE'S MASK

Madeline Delyn sighed heavily as she slammed both of her hands against the heavy wooden table. A plume of rainbow-coloured dust kicked up from the point of impact and scattered into the air. The fine powder was illuminated by a ray of sunshine that pierced through the small window in the stone wall of the alchemy lab. This was her fifth attempt at transmutation, and it had failed spectacularly once again. Madeline moved towards the window and looked outside to the patch of countryside that separated the Imperial Academy from the bustling capital of Avalon. Her visage softened and the signs of frustration melted away as the beauty of the rolling green hills and the scents of spring invigorated her spirit and distracted her from her failure. She squinted against the glare.

The sun felt warm against her soft, pale skin. Her long dark hair shimmered in the afternoon sun, wavy locks cascading around her shoulders. Even at fourteen years of age, she was very pretty. Everyone was always telling Madeline that she'd grow up to be a beautiful woman one day and the notion had stuck with her, and often distracted her from her studies. She spent much time tending to her appearance; time that would likely be better spent studying.

Madeline's thoughts trailed back to a simpler time, when she was still a little girl living in her parents' cottage on the outskirts of the city. She longed for her mother's cooking and to hear her father's stories of adventure from when he was a soldier in the Imperial Army. Yes, she even missed her jerk of an older brother—*Probably a pompous knight off bullying someone in a far-off corner of the world somewhere*, she thought. Madeline's nostalgia was interrupted by a loud, exaggerated cough behind her.

She whirled around to see the source of the noise, and a lock of raven hair fell over her blue eyes. Madeline puffed up her cheeks and blew a stream of air upwards to push the hair back into place. Her expression was bemused as she stared at the two teenage boys stumbling in through the door of the lab, pretending to hack up a storm at all the dust she had put into the air. "We should have known it was you up here! Only you could make a mess like this attempting a simple transmutation spell," said one of the boys with a big smirk across his ruddy face.

Jensen's smirk disappeared as quickly as it came when he noticed Madeline's lips moving silently, her hands tracing an incantation. Jensen braced himself for whatever was about to come his way. He was tall for his age. At fourteen, he stood almost six feet tall and towered over both Madeline and his friend, both of whom were his same age. Being so tall and so young, he was as skinny as a reed and moved with awkwardness, as if he had grown too fast for his body to know what to do with the long, gangly limbs. The shock of brown hair atop his head became matted with sweat, a result of his speedy ascension to the lab and his growing fear of what was about to be hurled his way.

Before Madeline could finish her spell, a hand reached out and gently grabbed hers, stopping it from completing the incantation. "Maddy... it's okay. Jenny boy is just joking around. We were worried when we heard the noise. You've been up here all day. What's going on?"

Madeline was so focused on her cantrip that she hadn't seen Finn, the other boy, move close to her. His words pulled her from her concentration.

The young girl's gaze met the boy's; his hand still held onto hers. Madeline had always found Finn the kinder of the two despite his not being gifted in the magickal arts like she and Jensen were. Her irritation at Jensen began to fade as Finn's smile and gentle green eyes broke through her anger. Her gaze wandered to Finn's curly blonde hair and then to his strong jawline. The three of them used to joke that Finn was there for the sole purpose of carrying their supplies and Mystic-related paraphernalia. Even at fourteen, Finn was physically stronger than some of the professors that taught at the Academy. With wide shoulders and sturdy arms, Finn was often tasked with a lot of the physical chores required to keep the Academy running.

Finn never minded being pigeonholed as a work horse. The classes he was forced to take made little sense to him, but he knew they were necessary if he was to be part of the Emperor's Guard one day. Before joining the Academy, he had dreaded the thought of being there for four years, but he had met Jensen and Madeline and had become fast friends with them both.

"I just can't get this stupid spell to work the way Professor Tavish says it should. This is the fifth time I've botched it and I've been at it for hours," explained an exasperated Madeline as she pulled her hand away from Finn's and threw it up in the air in defeat.

Jensen exhaled in relief as he realized the imminent attack had been deflected. "Well, you know Mads… that's exactly the problem, and why you're failing," he said as he began to push the hair on his forehead back into place. "You need a break, a change of scenery, something to inspire you. And you know what? I have just the thing."

Jensen's face lit up with a mischievous grin. Madeline shook her head vigorously. "Oh no… I know that grin. No more pranks, you know I'm at two strikes—one more and I'm out. As much as I miss my family, I don't see my destiny as a farm girl." Madeline looked towards Finn for support.

Finn raised an eyebrow with equal mischievousness and flashed a toothy smile of his own at Madeline. Madeline knew at that moment that she had lost. She felt a slight twinge in her stomach as she looked into Finn's eyes. Her shoulders slumped and her face faked a pout at Finn. "Fine, but I'll put a curse on both of you if this gets me thrown out of the Academy!"

"Don't worry Maddy, I won't let anything happen to you. Now let's see what crazy prank Jensen has in mind," Finn winked as he reached out once more to grab Maddy's hands and pulled her towards the door.

Holding onto Finn's rough hands, feeling the strength behind them, Madeline believed he wouldn't let anything happen to her. For the first time in a long while, Madeline smiled.

The skies above swirled in a cacophony of crackling energy and green lightning. The once cerulean blue sky was now a churning maelstrom of sickly green, with inky grey blobs where clouds used to be. The area beneath the weather was scorched black and streaked with red, no doubt from the blood that had been spilled. Madeline squinted her eyes at the sight of it all. The reports were correct, there had been a Level 3 breach in the area.

Perched on a hilltop looking down at ground zero, Madeline could feel the cool earth on the bare skin of her arms as she lay prone, cautiously surveying the scorched earth. She closed her eyes for a moment and inhaled deeply; the stench of burning flesh and fauna filled her senses as she quietly shook her head.

"Having second thoughts? You know we can't turn back now," a gruff voice to her right muttered. She opened her eyes slowly and turned to the voice. Her eyes were met with an intense gaze that belonged to a face that had once been youthful but now was haggard: burdened with so much pain. The shock of unruly brown hair was now gone, revealing the clean-shaven head below.

"Jensen, I hate this part so much."

But Jensen was right. They couldn't turn back now. The law of the Bitter Harvest was absolute. You either come home with fresh parts or you and your pack pay the price and the community harvests from your own bodies.

"I know, Mads. We don't have a choice. You need to remember what they did to us. Or at least what's left of us," said Jensen, the muscles on his face tightening at the memory. The metallic band that now replaced his jaw creaked lightly as it clenched.

Madeline reached out her hand and gently touched Jensen's face, his visage softening instantly at the moment of contact. He turned back to look at her and forced a smile as he began to speak, "Take solace—you're luckier than most of us. The Phage ate away half my body, and all you have to show for it are a few mosquito bites here and there. You're still as beautiful as the day I first saw you."

As Jensen leaned in, Madeline turned her head back to the scene, leaving Jensen's lips to fall firmly on her soft pale cheek. She playfully rolled her eyes and gave a feigned grin as Jensen sighed and pulled back. "All work and no play, some things don't change, do they Mads? We'll have plenty of time afterwards to play if we can pull this off," Jensen joshed. Madeline could feel him smiling at the thought of his idea of 'play.'

Madeline couldn't afford herself the luxury of leisure. She didn't even entertain the thought of it; she didn't feel she deserved anything good in her life anymore. The Phage had taken so much from her—cast her and Jensen into a life as outlaws, always hiding and running to stay alive. She'd had to do horrible things to survive, and she knew she would have to do them again. The Bitter Harvest had come too soon. It felt like it was yesterday that they'd last gone. The time between each Harvest was growing shorter and shorter. Soon someone would have to die in order for Madeline and her people to live. *We were like vultures*, Madeline thought to herself.

A breach had occurred near the Human village of Fairvale. Instead of helping, they had waited until the screams subsided to make their move. Any fresh corpses or live stragglers would provide a bounty in spare parts. Jensen always told her that they deserved it—the Humans. Where were they when the Afflicted needed their help? They were hunting them! Banishing them from their cities to die in the wilderness alone.

No, the Afflicted would persevere despite the horrific odds against them. They would push forward to see the light of a new day and they would reclaim their rightful place in the world. Humanity's sins merely lit the path to this reclamation: a bully only understands power and fear, and the Afflicted would bide their time and show the Humans power and fear in abundance when the time was right.

Madeline's guilt was compounded by Jensen's recent words. She looked at Jensen. He had grown into a commanding figure. His brilliance and impulsiveness had allowed him to rise and lead their pack. Jensen had kept them safe for the last decade, but it had cost him much of his humanity.

Madeline watched him as he surveyed the breach. She watched as he pulled his metallic hand out from underneath him to signal the other Afflicted Harvesters on the ridge opposite. She listened as the whir and clunk of the gears in his augmented legs stood him up and prepared for descent into the valley below them.

She looked to her own body. The Phage consumes everyone it touches, some faster than others. Madeline had fallen into the latter category. Whereas Jensen had had most of his body parts replaced or augmented, Madeline had had only minor patch-work done. Some of the joints in her fingers had been replaced... small pieces of flesh near her abdomen and torso showed signs of decay, but there wasn't anything major.

The rest of her pack would often tell her how lucky she was. Lucky. *Right.* Madeline knew better. Since she was a young girl, everyone around her had always admired her beauty and speculated on the gorgeous woman she would grow into. She'd felt the pressure to live up to such impossible standards set for her before she'd had time to even figure out what she wanted for herself. Even her professors at the Academy, who praised the vast potential of her mind for the magick arts, would still remark inappropriately on her looks. Now, as a grown woman, their praise remained, a memory like a double-edged sword. It was nice to be wanted and admired, but it felt terrible that it be for something so superficial. *If only everyone knew the truth.* Madeline often wondered if she would ever have the strength to show the world who she truly was.

The truth of the matter was that the Phage hadn't miraculously spared her the brunt of its wrath. No, the truth was that the Phage had consumed her possibly faster than it had consumed anyone else around her. It had taken a great reserve of Madeline's power to maintain the illusion of her beauty—of what she would look like if she had never contracted the Phage. In the late hours of the night, when Madeline was alone in her quarters, she would release the illusion and gaze at her true self in a small, cracked mirror that hung in her room. Then she saw her true image: much of her hair had fallen out, the remaining strands crinkled and grey, dead from a lack of nourishment. Her face was scarred and her body pitted by scars and the seams of makeshift grafts she'd performed on herself in secrecy. She would often cry herself to sleep, her salty tears burning the open sores on her face.

"You know what Mads, why don't you stay here and keep a lookout. You can still fling your magick if we need backup. Signal us if you see anyone coming." Jensen's voice broke her contemplation. She looked up at him as he readied himself to run down the hill towards the breach site. He turned around and smiled softly back at her. "This will be over in a moment, love. Then we can go home. They're waiting for us back at the base. I promised Amy's son I'd bring him back a new ear."

With that, Jensen raced down the hill, kicking up a trail of dust as his metallic legs controlled his descent. Madeline watched wistfully as more dust trails appeared. The Afflicted Harvesters were making their move, closing in on the breach site. Madeline knew it was necessary, but deep down inside she hoped they wouldn't find anyone alive.

Of course the universe would not be so obliging to her wishes. Madeline saw a handful of figures pop up on the vacant ridge to her left. She could make out a group of Humans and a larger automaton. The automaton began to shift and direct a large mounted weapon towards Jensen and the group of Harvesters in the scorched valley below.

Madeline screamed, "Jensen! Watch out above you!" Her voice ripped through the eerie silence that had befallen the area and she could spot Jensen looking up to the ridge she was pointing at. It was too late. A massive explosion discharged from the automaton's weapon into the centre of the valley. A bright purple light flashed before Madeline's eyes as she saw Jensen and her friends collapse to the ground, twitching painfully. *A disruptor blast.* Madeline exhaled in relief. The Humans had used a non-lethal attack to incapacitate the Harvesters. Had the automaton set the dial on its weapon one notch further to the right, she would have been bringing back ashes to the Chancellor tonight.

Her moment of relief was cut short as she heard the unmistakable low hum of an airship off in the distance. The Humans were trying to escape. Madeline murmured the words to a quick spell that granted her temporary far sight.

An imposing figure clad in armour and wielding a sword and large shield was herding the Human villagers westward, towards the hum of the airship. She could see that they were wounded, some maimed and being carried by the able-bodied. She could see the fear and grief on their faces. The Fell that had come through the breach had taken much from them. And here she was, about to take whatever was left. Madeline's legs refused to move. She had to go after them—she had to bring back *something*, or else they would all have to pay the price for a failed Harvest.

Madeline looked up at the sky and breathed deeply, the swirling green mass above mirroring how she

felt inside. The child inside of Madeline asked: *What should we do?*

The tragic person she had become responded, "What we must."

Her gaze lowered at the figures across the way from her, and a steely look of determination crossed her face as she sprinted towards the ridge.

A giggle erupted despite all of Madeline's efforts to suppress it. The young man standing before her with a face covered in flour looked absolutely ridiculous, and even though it was her fault that Finn now looked like a clown, she couldn't help but laugh. Finn's stone-cold expression was unwavering despite Madeline's laughing fit. He was clearly unimpressed.

After regaining her composure, her feelings of delight were replaced rapidly with worry; Finn seemed genuinely upset by the accident. Maybe she had gone too far. *He has to know it was just an accident.*

Before Madeline could apologize, Finn's solemn expression broke into a huge grin as he scooped up a handful of flour from the knocked-over sack and threw it into Madeline's face. "If I have to join the circus, you're coming with me!" he declared as he put his arms around Madeline's waist and pulled her close to him. "By the Creator, you're beautiful… even when you look ridiculous."

Madeline could feel the heat in her cheeks rise as she blushed. Her heart beat a little faster being so close to Finn. Even after four years, every time they stole away to their secret spot in the Academy's pantry it felt like the first time. Her hands slid down his arms as they kissed. She could feel the corded muscles, taut from hours of hard labour and physical training. She could feel the strength behind them. Finn had grown into a strapping young man, a far cry from the goofy blonde boy who had stolen her heart. He wasn't much for his studies but everyone at the Academy had grown fond of Finn for his cheery attitude and eagerness to lend a hand.

As Madeline pulled back from their kiss she gazed into Finn's eyes. She could see happiness in them. It was the same look Finn got whenever Imperial Soldiers would stop by to stay the night at the Academy on their way back to Avalon. Finn was always excited to shadow them and even do some training with them if they were up for indulging him.

*THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!*

Madeline was pulled out of her rapture by a loud pounding on the door of the pantry. "Oi! You love birds in there? Are you decent? Can I come in?" yelled an all-too-familiar voice.

"Jensen! You scared the ghost out of us." Madeline scowled. "Yes, come in, it's fine."

Finn simply grinned. The door creaked open and Jensen sheepishly stuck his head inside. "Well, well. Looks like the two of you got into a prank without ya boy. I'm hurt. Just hurt," Jensen said as he feigned great sadness. "What were you aiming for? Crazy clowns take over the Academy? Ugh. Nobody likes clowns. How are they even a thing?"

"Oh, I'm sorry brother. I totally meant to include you, but it's not too late," Finn said as he quickly reached into the flour sack again and let a handful go in Jensen's face. Finn's grin grew even bigger than before.

Jensen coughed as the flour clump hit him in the face and Madeline and Finn broke out laughing. After Jensen had regained his composure, he began, "Very funny you two. I actually came looking for the both of you to let you know we're having an emergency meeting in the main assembly hall. We should get cleaned up and go."

Madeline furrowed her brow slightly, "What about? Does this have to do with the earthquake last night?"

"Yes, it has everything to do with the earthquake last night. The Dean and all the professors are spooked. It's something big, Mads. That didn't feel like just an earthquake. I know you felt it too… there's something odd about the way things shifted." Jensen looked at Finn, "Sorry mate, it's Mystic stuff. There's something off about the currents since the shake."

"I'm kind of glad I don't know what you're talking about. Keeps life simpler for me," Finn winked as he reached for a towel.

Having cleaned themselves off they made their way across the clearing towards the assembly hall in the main tower. As the trio exited the mess hall complex, Madeline marvelled at the spires and buildings around her. The Academy was a beautiful place; even after four years of living here, she still found its grandeur exquisite.

The late afternoon sun bore down on them harshly. The summer heat was particularly intense today. Holding onto Finn's hand as he led her towards the assembly, she watched as the light danced on his blonde curls and the gentle breeze tossed them about. She would miss this. It was their last year at the Academy. Soon she and Jensen would be making their way far north to the Sanctum of the Third Eye to continue their studies, and Finn would go to Avalon to enlist in the Imperial Army. Madeline tried not to think about it. *Not even the mightiest Mystic can control time. Well—maybe for a little while.* She wondered if Finn thought about their future and what it would mean to only be able to see each other once or twice a year. She squeezed Finn's hand a little tighter.

Finn stopped and turned around at that moment and looked at Madeline with concern on his face—as

if he knew what she was thinking. *How could you possibly know?* As if on cue, Finn looked her in the eye and said, "Don't worry Maddy." A warm smile broke across his youthful face.

Madeline's body and grip relaxed a little under Finn's smile. But her relief was turned to sheer terror as she saw the sky behind Finn. The tranquil blue sky had begun to twist and churn into an ominous green whirlpool. A flash of lightning—green lightning!—flared from the vortex and smashed into the ground. Another followed, and then another, striking one of the towers.

Finn turned to see the scene unfolding above the Academy as the lightning caused a chunk of stone from the tower to break off and fall. Everything seemed to be moving in slow motion. She stood there, frozen in shock.

"Maddy! Maddy!" a desperate voice rang out. It sounded so distorted, as though it, too, had been slowed down. "Snap out of it Maddy, we need to go... *NOW!*" It was Finn's voice. She could feel him frantically tugging at her hand.

Madeline blinked rapidly as her senses returned to her. When she looked downwards she could see her feet moving quickly across the grass. When she looked up again she saw Finn sprinting ahead with her hand in his. Jensen was beside them, his normally playful expression replaced with fear and concern.

Another reverberation sounded as the mess hall complex exploded behind them. They turned to see that a large, smouldering rock veined with glowing cracks of purple had landed right on top of the mess hall. The egg-shaped boulder seemed to be breaking; the rock burst open—and horrific creatures, a little larger than men, spewed forth from the cracking stone: horns and beady eyes accompanied gaping maws and glistening, pale grey skin. The grating screeches they emitted added to the young trio's terror.

Madeline watched in terror as a group of apprentices, wounded and limping, escaped from the rubble of the mess hall. The monsters descended upon them in a swarm. The screams she heard as her colleagues were torn apart seared into her mind.

"There's nowhere left to run!" Jensen's voice pulled her back into action. He was right. They were surrounded by the storm and several more rocks, each in the process of "hatching."

Madeline saw a handful of Imperial Soldiers break out through the main assembly hall. They had been staying at the Academy, intending to leave that evening and head back to Avalon. *Thank the Skyfather they are still here!* She watched as they got in defensive formation. A string of apprentices and professors followed cautiously behind them. Finn pointed towards the group. "We need to make it over there and join them."

Both Jensen and Madeline nodded in agreement and the three of them ran towards the soldiers and their colleagues. As they made their way across the clearing, a screech from above stopped them in their tracks. A monster like the ones that had descended upon the mess hall had scaled one of the towers nearby and now dove from it right at them.

As if on instinct, Madeline began mouthing the words to a spell. Snapping her hand forward, a bolt of white light exploded from her palm and struck the creature square in the chest, knocking it back against the tower with such force that the sound of its bones breaking could be heard. Its limp body slid down the tower, leaving a trail of dark ichor in its wake. She heard Jensen breathe a sigh of relief but it was cut short as the broken body began awkwardly to compose itself. Within moments it was on all fours and lumbering towards them—at terrifying speed for something that had just had its bones broken.

Jensen began invoking the same spell and launched another bolt at the creature, sending it sprawling backwards once more. Its body twitched a little before it snapped back up onto all fours and made its way again towards the three of them. Its open mouth revealed a row of razor-sharp teeth strung with spittle that flew as the thing sprinted at the trio.

Madeline and Jensen cast more bolts but this time the creature dodged between the blasts. The pair were beginning to tire; they weren't practiced enough yet to use so much magick in this fashion. The monster was closing in, now mere meters away, and leapt towards Madeline, its claws drawn ready to tear into her. Madeline, in a haze of exhaustion, looked up in time to see its grotesque face a mere fraction from her own. She closed her eyes, bracing herself for its impact, when its face contorted and it let out a deafening squeal of pain. She pulled herself a step away from the creature to see Finn by her side, holding a splintered column of wood upon which the creature was impaled. Madeline watched its thick black blood ooze down the makeshift weapon and onto Finn's bleeding hands. The splinters in the wood had bitten deep into his flesh, and he grimaced in pain as he bore the weight of the monster.

Finn dropped the weapon and the creature and looked at Madeline. He managed a weak smile and a wink. "I told you I wouldn't ever let anything bad happen to you, Madeline Delyn."

Madeline felt a glow at Finn's words but the moment was broken by the hum of an Imperial Airship on the horizon.

"Avalon! They've sent a ship. We need to get on it!" Jensen frantically exclaimed.

The airship was headed towards them from the north, where the Imperial soldiers and the main stu-

dent body were evacuating. The soldiers, in conjunction with the professors and some senior apprentices, held back the line of monsters that was slowly closing in on them. Bolts of lightning, torrents of fire, and the clang of steel swords against monstrous flesh formed a symphony of destruction as the fight ensued.

Between the trio and possible salvation still stood a row of monsters. Jensen looked around frantically. "We need to find a way to sneak past them—and soon—the airship is almost here and the soldiers and professors are tiring! Mads, I think if we concentrate enough and use the last of our focus we can cast a spell of concealment just long enough to get through."

Madeline looked worried; she wasn't sure she could pull it off. "B-but concealment is a difficult and taxing spell… I haven't practiced it enough… and I'm exhausted from casting so many force bolts."

Jensen put his hands on Finn and Madeline's shoulders as he spoke. "It's our only chance. We only need to hold onto the spell for twenty seconds to sprint through their lines."

Finn and Madeline nodded in agreement.

Finn watched as Madeline and Jensen began to mouth the words to the concealment spell. Both of their faces were soaked in sweat. Finn continued to watch, waiting for something to happen. He turned towards the fight ahead and saw that things were dire. The soldiers were beginning to fall one by one. Without the soldiers to protect the casters, the monsters would overrun them in no time. Finn turned back to his friends to urge them to hurry, but when he looked back he could see nothing but a light shimmer where they had been standing. "Uhh… I think it worked? I can't see you."

"It's working," Madeline whispered. "We have to hurry—I don't know how long I can hold this."

The three of them began to make their way towards the line. Madeline's heart pounded hard and fast as they approached the beasts. She could see their sickly glistening hides and smell the acrid odour of their bodies. It reminded her of sulphur and ash.

They were almost there—the soldiers about thirty meters away—when suddenly a creature to the right of Madeline and closest to the three of them turned to look in their direction. It moved inquisitively, sniffing at the air, as if it could smell them. The sniffing stopped as it gazed directly at Madeline with its beady dark eyes. Without warning it let out a horrifying screech, drawing the attention of its nearby brethren. They each turned and moved slowly towards the invisible trio.

Madeline stood frozen in terror. Her body wouldn't move. A voice inside of her screamed for her to run, but she couldn't. She simply stood there, watching as impending doom stalked her way. She waited for death.

Instead, she saw the first monster crumple to the ground, its head cleanly severed from its body. In a moment the ones to its left and right shared the same fate. Madeline could see a shimmer moving through their ranks, leaving headless corpses and grievous wounds. She squinted, trying to make sense of what she saw.

*Finn!*

Madeline tried to hold the spell, but his rapid movements and increasing distance made it harder for her and Jensen to compensate.

She held on for as long as she could, feeling dizzier and weaker by the second. Her eyes fluttered as she felt herself collapse, her last glance saw Finn, materialized, and holding a sword he had taken from a fallen soldier. He was covered in black gore but continued to fight even with the concealment dispelled. She heard him yelling in her direction. "Jensen, get her out of here. Go to the airship! I'll hold them off as long as I can."

Her eyes fluttered again. As they closed and opened she saw more soldiers join the fray to help Finn fight off the monsters. The monsters that continued to grow in number as the earth shook—every new rock that landed filled with monstrosities ready to deliver death.

She felt like she was floating. Sounds came as though from underwater: "We're almost there Mads, we're going to be okay." Jensen, through ragged breaths.

"Finn. Where's Finn?" Madeline managed.

"He's right behind us, he's with the soldiers."

As Jensen carried Madeline onto the deck of the airship, she opened her eyes again. In the mass of armoured men, she saw Finn's wavy mop of blonde hair. He was fighting furiously to keep the creatures at bay. She heard the horn of the airship sound, signalling a retreat. She watched Finn strike down another creature, and another. He helped a fallen soldier up, slinging the man's arm around his neck as he turned towards the airship. She felt the ship rock as the cannons began to fire, each blast sending up monstrous limbs and fountains of vile, viscous blood. The blasts were punctuated by painful screeching as they were torn asunder.

Finn was getting close. His gaze met hers from across the battlefield. He offered a weak smile, his white teeth bright against a face covered in soot and blood. *We'll be okay*, Madeline thought to herself. *We'll be together—*

The thought was cut short as a large fiery purple boulder fell from the sky on a direct course towards the Spire of Knowledge. The meteor struck the spire just below its midpoint, smashing clean through it. The top half of the spire crumbled in slow motion.

Giant slabs of stone came crashing down on soldiers and monsters alike.

She watched, helpless, as Finn tried desperately to outrun the crumbling tower, still helping the wounded man. She tried to call to him to run—tried to scream—but nothing came out. Something inside of her broke the moment the she saw the rubble come toppling down on the only boy she'd ever love.

Madeline raced across the ridge to stop the Humans from getting away. She pulled her shawl up to conceal her face and tugged a little tighter on her hooded cloak. It made her feel a bit more invisible and, in her own twisted way, less accountable for what she was about to do.

The group of survivors ahead of her was shrinking as more members boarded the airship. But the process of loading them was slow, as many were heavily wounded from the Fell incursion earlier. Madeline glanced towards the smoking valley where the breach had occurred. Jensen and the Harvesters were slowly recovering from the disruptor blast, but it would still be a while before they could make it up the ridge. She felt an uncomfortable twinge in the pit of her stomach as she recalled the first time she witnessed a breach. Her life after that day had changed forever. She had lost so much.

It had been the start of the Great Calamity: when the delicate barrier between the Drift and the physical realm was ruptured by their vengeful Skyfather. The Great Calamity had also marked the beginning of the Phage that plagued her and her people. Yes, she had lost much, and what she was about to do was a small act of recompense compared to the tragedies that had been unjustly thrust upon her all these years. Madeline kept this thought front of mind as she closed in on the group of survivors.

She could count only two among the group that would pose a threat to her: the armoured soldier and the automaton that had fired the disruptor blast on her friends. They had not noticed her presence yet. Madeline took cover behind a large rock formation.

As the soldier turned to the automaton, his magnificent shield gleamed from the few rays of sunshine that came as the breach began to close. The insignia on the shield bore the colours of all three major nations: *A Sentinel of Taloran!*

What was an elite soldier tasked with guarding the Tempest of Terror doing all the way out here? Madeline would have to rethink her strategy. Sentinels were famed for their defensive capabilities and versed in combating magick users like herself... She had to strike in quick succession—one attack after another—if she were to take down both the automaton and the Sentinel. She would have to temper her spells as well; she didn't want to ruin any of their potentially harvestable parts. Madeline made the strategic choice to employ two Spark Lances, one against each of the defenders. The first would strike the automaton and leave a static discharge on it; if the Sentinel got caught in the discharge, her second Spark Lance would easily take him out.

Madeline took a deep breath. The smoky air stung her already frail lungs. Quietly, she called forth a spear of electricity in her right hand. Peeking out from the rock, she flung the bolt at the automaton. It was a large robot: an easy target. The discharge whistled through the air and landed with a loud crackle. The robot stiffened and convulsed, before collapsing on the ground. The electric charge continued to spark and danced in the air, catching onto the Sentinel. She hurled the second Spark Lance moments after the first had made impact.

The Sentinel, true to the stories, snapped into action the moment the first attack hit the automaton. His large shield slammed immediately into the ground between him and Madeline. The second Spark Lance drilled into the centre of the shield, exploding in a web of sparkling blue tendrils of electricity that expanded in a circular formation across the shield. Without skipping a beat, the Sentinel pulled his shield from the ground and sprinted in Madeline's direction, calling out for the survivors to board the airship faster.

Behind the rock, Madeline's breaths were heavy and quick. She could hear the rapid footsteps of the Sentinel approaching. They grew louder with every moment as her mind raced to figure out her next move. He was almost upon her. Madeline reacted defensively with a spell to erect a shield around her. She finished her spell just in time, stepping out from the rock and snapping her hands across her body to activate the shield.

The Sentinel launched himself into the air and came down on Madeline with his sword arm fully extended, the gleaming blade pointing directly at her. The sword's tip stopped as it hit an invisible wall, a shimmering ripple in a blue field momentarily blazing at the point of contact. The Sentinel bounced back, but spun around in a blur and, using all his weight and momentum, slammed his shield hard against Madeline's invisible one. Again the blue field shimmered and rippled, but this time fissures began to appear in its surface. The magickal barrier would not hold much longer under such an onslaught.

Sticking her right arm out rigidly, Madeline conjured forth a spectral blade and swiped it at the Sentinel. The Sentinel's shield blocked the blow, though her spectral blade scored a deep gash into it. Madeline continued to press the offensive as she drew the blade back for another thrust, but she missed her mark as the Sentinel twirled, pivoting to her side and sending another bone-shattering blow through

her shield. The magickal barrier cracked heavily this time. They both knew it was about to break.

But her shield wasn't made for protection. It now held the kinetic energy absorbed from the Sentinel's blows, and upon breaking would explode, sending that energy in all directions around her. She would use this to her advantage. When the Sentinel broke her shield she would capitalize on the explosion to stun or even wound him, then strike the killing blow using her blade. Madeline immediately began to shift her stance, readying herself to strike.

The Sentinel continued to dance evasively about her. His movements were sharp and disciplined. She waited for him to deliver another shield slam and shatter her protective spell, but it did not come. Instead, the Sentinel shrunk into a defensive posture, crouching behind his shield with his sword resting on the top edge, before he dashed forward at Madeline. A quick thrust of his sword shattered the protective field, but his massive shield deflected the force of the blast back onto her.

Patches of intense white blotted out Madeline's vision for a moment. She could feel the wind against her body as she sailed through the air, the force of her own spell launching her across the ridge. She landed hard on her back and let out a cough. She could feel blood spewing from her mouth. She could barely breathe. It felt like one of her lungs had collapsed. The hood she had used to conceal her face was torn clean off. As the white blotches receded from her vision, she heard the metallic crunch of the Sentinel's greaves as he approached her. She looked up to see the glowing eyes peeking from underneath his ornate steel helmet. She closed her eyes and waited for the death blow.

It never came. "No... It can't be. All these years... Maddy...?" It was a voice Madeline hadn't heard in a decade.

She opened her eyes to see a man's face, strong yet kind. His emerald eyes shimmered, holding back tears. She saw a shock of blonde hair cropped short.

"Finn?" Madeline shook her head in disbelief. "Is this the Drift? Have we found each other again?" Her labored voice cracked with joy and sorrow.

Finn knelt down beside her and held her head up gingerly. The metal of his gauntlets felt cool against the back of her neck. "Ten years Maddy... I thought I'd lost you. I thought..." Finn's voice trailed off as he noticed the metallic grafts on her fingers. The tears fell from his eyes. "I'm so sorry," he cried. " I didn't know."

Madeline reached up weakly to touch his face. "It's okay. We do what we must. I'm glad you stopped me. I've lived long enough... I've become the monster I hate."

Finn wiped his eyes and tried to gather her in his arms. "Don't talk like that, I'm taking you back with me. We'll get you the help you need." His voice was resolved, and full of hope.

"No, Finn. I can't. If you knew the truth about me you wouldn't want me back. There's nothing you can do to save me from what I've become. I can't leave my people, they're doomed—we've failed the Harvest. At least allow me the one final dignity of meeting my fate with them." Madeline choked out the words as tears came. She gazed at Finn lovingly. Her heart still fluttered when she looked at him... after all these years just the sight of him still filled her with such joy.

She could feel her wounds taking their toll. Her concentration was wavering, and the spell she kept up to obfuscate her true appearance was beginning to falter. The beautiful woman deteriorated into the disfigured body it truly was. She looked up at Finn from within his arms. "How could you ever love this?" She prayed that death would take her so she wouldn't feel his disgust.

But Finn's expression never changed, even as he held her scarred and broken body in his arms. He smiled at her, "I will never stop loving you, Maddy."

Finn could hear voices off in the distance. The Harvesters were fast approaching. He turned towards the airship and signalled with his hand for it to go. The ship didn't budge and Finn forcibly sent the signal a second time. The airship began to lift slowly as Finn waved goodbye to it. He turned back to Maddy, his smile never breaking.

"Finn what are you doing?" Maddy gasped between ragged breaths.

Finn leaned down and kissed her gently on the forehead. As he pulled away, he whispered in her ear, "I promised you that I would never let anything happen to you. I meant every word."

Before she could react, she felt the cool steel of his gauntlet on her arm—the one holding the spectral blade. It happened impossibly fast. Her arm swung against her own volition, and she heard a gasp from Finn, felt his blood spill forth onto her hand. She looked down to see her blade in Finn's side, all the way to the hilt. His gloved hand held onto hers as he crumpled slowly to the ground beside her.

She turned her head to meet his face, watching in panic as the colour drained from him. He met her gaze as his breath grew weak. She could not say another word before it had stopped completely.

Madeline watched as the light faded from his eyes. Those eyes she had stared into a thousand times over as a young girl. She remembered this feeling. It was ten years ago that something inside of her broke. Whatever it was, she'd thought it had died completely. But now she felt it break again.

Exhaustion and the toll of her wounds finally overcame her, and she closed her eyes, hoping that she would never have to open them again.

# OTHER FACTIONS

While the Children of Unity comprise the major civilizations that have conquered the known lands, new factions have risen, with some seeking to challenge the Children for supremacy, while others simply wish to carve out a place to call their own.

## THE CRIMSON HORDE

The Crimson Horde is the collective name for a group of creatures created by the Ivory Queen during the Age of Strife when the Valla, the Furians, and the Humans were constantly at war with each other. At the time, the Ivory Queen was mourning the loss of her beloved, the Skyfather. Broken by grief, and deeply vulnerable, she heard a whisper from beyond the void call out to her, urging her to create the Crimson Horde. It promised that this course of action would unite her Children against a common foe and bring the Skyfather back. The Ivory Queen's pain and desperation muddied her wisdom and so she set feverishly about creating all manner of creatures to form her army.

The creatures she conjured were varied and many. Some were shadowy mirrors of the counterparts they were destined to fight. But the major difference between those born into the Crimson Horde and the original Children of Unity was that the Children were given free will. The Crimson Horde's invasion into Unity succeeded in uniting the Children; the cost of that outcome, however, was their near-total annihilation in the face of the greatest fighting force the world had ever seen.

The Crimson Horde was shattered and driven deep into the north, into the Great Wilds—the untamed lands that are still free from civilization's touch. There they hid, licking their wounds and biding their time. After the Ivory Queen's death and the Great Calamity, the Crimson Horde found themselves "free" for the first time since they had existed. It is with this new freedom and in a search for greater purpose that members of the Horde have begun reemerging from the Great Wilds.

But old memories die hard; especially ones of war and death. The desire for revenge still burns in the hearts of many in the Crimson Horde. Coupled with the gritty resolve required to survive the harsh and unforgiving lands of the Great Wilds, these creatures are more often antagonists than friends to the original races of Unity.

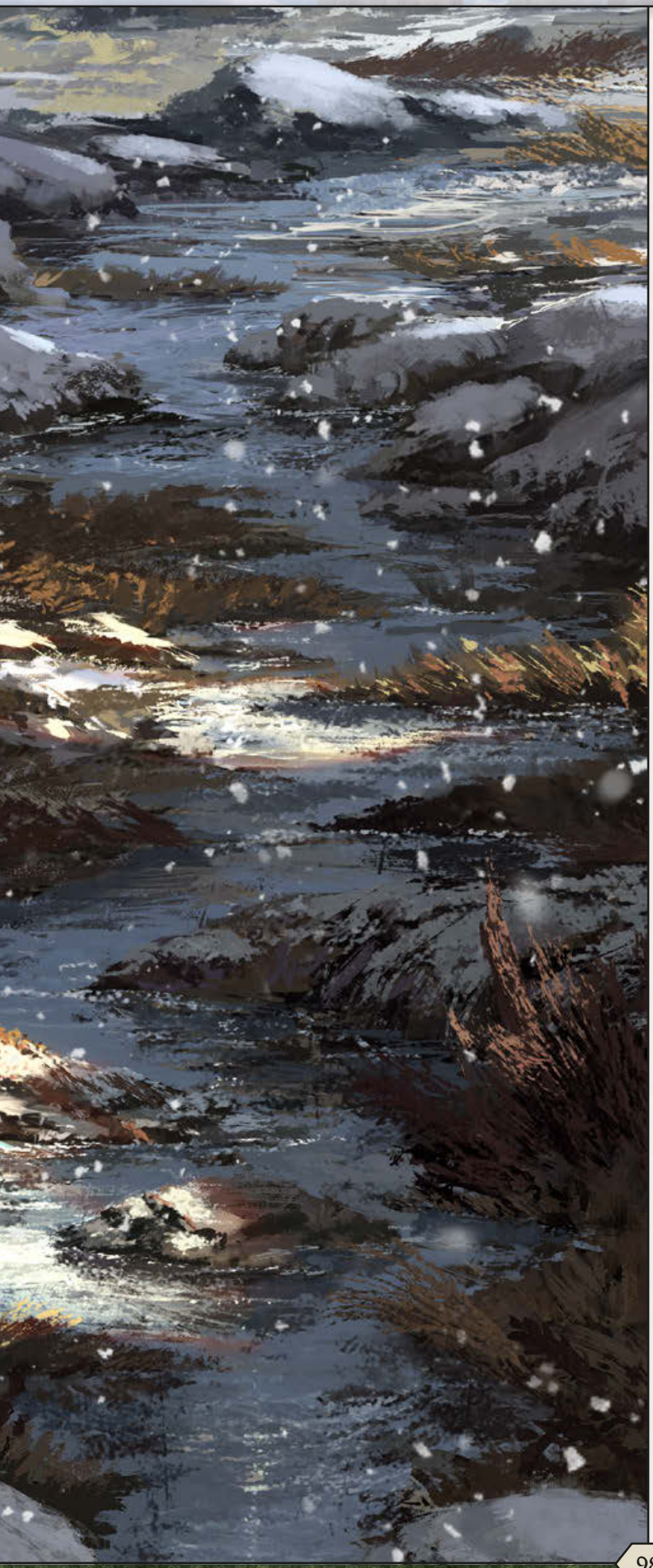
### A LIFE TO CALL OUR OWN

After the Ivory Queen's death, the creatures of the Crimson Horde were able for the first time to know freedom. It was such a startling revelation for them that they did not know what to do with a life free from Divine purpose. Running on instinct, many sought merely to survive the Great Wilds. The once singular Crimson Horde now became fragmented as each race attempted to fend for themselves. There was chaos in the early days of the Crimson Horde's retreat into the Great Wilds, but over time each race began to find their footing and eke out territories to call their own. A delicate balance was forming between the former allies, a balance that was tempered by a mutual respect; after all, they had once fought and died together for a battle that was never theirs to begin with.

Presently, the remnants of the Crimson Horde live in a tenuous harmony with each other. Different groups of creatures can often be found helping each other out via trade and labour. At the same rate, debates and skirmishes often break out over perceived slights or territorial disputes. Slowly, however, an umbrella culture has evolved that encompasses all the races and subcultures of the Crimson Horde. There is an unspoken understanding between all of the Horde's creatures that while they may have their differences, they will still stand united under a blood red banner should outside forces ever threaten them.

It's this promised bond that has provided cohesion and paved the way for successful survival in such an unforgiving place. Crimson Horde leaders will convene in a council to decide certain matters that affect the entire collective, but the species are beholden to no one singular voice. They say that if the Crimson Horde were to unite under a single leader once more, they would sweep the land with their renewed forces (and the additional friends they've made in the natural denizens of the Great Wilds) and rained destruction upon their enemies.

The Crimson Horde's political agenda is quite simple. Some want to reach out to the wider world in the name of exploration and trade, but fear persecution for their past sins. The majority of them, however, have made a comfortable life for themselves in the Great Wilds and would prefer to keep it that way, living their lives in peace. Civilization looks both to the north and the south as ripe for exploring and expanding their territories, and the Crimson Horde are apprehensive of such appetites. These are a people



that were created for war, yet war is something they would rather avoid (though they will not hesitate to embrace it if it means defending their families and homes).

### FRIENDS IN DANGEROUS PLACES

When the Crimson Horde fled to the Great Wilds after their defeat at the hands of the Children of Unity, they believed they would be entering a barren landscape, devoid of life—where else could they go that the vengeful Children would not follow? The Great Wilds, as harsh and unforgiving as they are, however, harboured life long before the Crimson Horde set foot in the great forests and upon the icy tundra. Indigenous creatures that have evolved over millennia have long called the Great Wilds their home.

The initial interactions between the Crimson Horde and the Wilds' native beasts resulted in some minor bloodshed as territories were encroached upon and both sides acted from a place of ignorance and fear. Over time, however, the indigenous species saw a reflection of themselves in the Crimson Horde: savage, noble, and shunned by civilization. The Horde respected the ferocity and strength of the Wilds' natives. They understood what it meant to defend something as precious as a home, which the Horde yearned for. Over the centuries, their interspecies mingling and alliances assimilated many natural residents into their group. They all collectively gather under the red banner, a symbol of their collective identity.

Fringe settlements of Valla, Furians, Humans or Afflicted along the borders of the Great Wilds respect the ferocity and power of the Crimson Horde. They tend to do their utmost to avoid conflict and even go so far as to propose trade with some of the more sociable and cunning of the Horde. Those of the major races living in the big cities call these pioneers turncoats and traitors; there is still a very strong stigma against the Crimson Horde, especially from those that have never made an effort to understand them better since the Age of Unity began. To the prejudiced, the Crimson Horde are nothing but barbarians.

### BEYOND SAVAGERY

The Great Calamity has emboldened the Crimson Horde. Some of them seek to emerge from hiding and see the world. The Fell breaches have affected the Crimson Horde as well—breaches opening in the Great Wilds are rare, but they do occur. The Crimson Horde have no love for the Fell and see them for what they are: empty, soulless, death-dealing husks; they will utilize deadly force against the Fell without hesitation. The fringe settlements that have bared witness to the clashes between the Fell and the

Crimson Horde have come to develop even greater respect for their wild neighbours.

Sentiments towards the Crimson Horde have softened considerably over the years, especially due to the efforts of some of its more cunning and amicable members. Goblins, Muckles, and the sophisticated Sarathi have worked hard to develop strong commercial relationships with the major races. These positive contributions are further compounded by reports of Horde members coming to the aid of fringe settlements when Fell invaders descend upon them. Slowly but surely the Crimson Horde (or at least some of their more approachable members) are becoming accepted as part of the civilized tapestry of Unity. This hard-earned honour is a tenuous prize; there are many who still harbour deep anger towards the Crimson Horde for their past crimes against the Children of Unity, though they lacked any free will in doing so.

There are pockets of Crimson Horde creatures throughout Unity; they aren't wholly confined to the Great Wilds. The chattier and less intimidating species are becoming more tolerated in the cities. Goblin merchant caravans are increasingly common and roll through various civilized settlements and towns to hawk their wares and the resources they've harvested from the Great Wilds. Some of the Furian forge cities have begun hiring mighty Zoog to man their bellows; a simple but tiring task that the simpleminded Zoog are well fitted to take on. The Valla have taken a particular interest in the Fae: lithe creatures with voices that match their stunning beauty. The Fae are usually hired as servants and provide entertainment for the Valla.

*The Muckles are a race of toad-folk who are as lazy and rotund as Goblins are ambitious and skinny.*

*The Sarathi are a race of lizard-folk who are highly quizzical and curious. Their great intelligence allowed the Crimson Horde to improve on their rudimentary siege weapons by adapting Human equipment left behind in battle. They now reside in the Iron Plains, preferring the heat of the desert to the chill of the tundra.*

Gullstrider

## THE RISEN

Far to the east on the Gemini Peninsula, beyond the vast Deadwood Forest, lie the twin cities of Bastion and Pinnacle. The two cities could not be more different from each other despite being built so close together, and at the same time. Pinnacle was a flourishing merchant city that sparkled with all the decadence its healthy trade routes could afford. Second only to the Mana Mines in the southern Wastes, Pinnacle was home to the largest concentration of Kyrindian crystals on the continent. The crystals were in constant demand across the land for their use in transmuting stolen lightning and powering the technological wonders of Unity.

Compared to Pinnacle, Bastion was a gloomy sight, surrounded by high stone walls stained by the elements and cracked from overgrowing throngs of moss and ivy. The architecture of this city was built for practicality, not beauty. It was, after all, a prison city: used to house the worst of the worst of Unity. Criminals and murderers were sent to Bastion to be locked away until the end of their days. The burgeoning population of inmates that toiled in the Kyrindian mines made the perfect cheap workforce for the wealthy lords of Pinnacle.

All of this changed on the day the Skyfather struck the world and caused the Great Calamity to occur. As Drift energy burst forth from the tears in reality, it had many anomalous effects. No one could have predicted what would happen when this energy mixed with the Kyrindian crystals as they were being refined in Pinnacle. The massive caches of crystals stored in and beneath the city exploded to deadly effect. The city was completely rocked: as the earth shook, its walls and buildings came tumbling down. Thousands upon thousands died. Some were consumed by the intense ethereal fire of the explosions while others were crushed under the debris. That night, the entire sky was lit up in a purple and blue haze of smoke and energy—a spectacle rivalled only by the deafening sound of the screams of so many dying.

After the dust settled, the coming days saw some very strange activity in the immediate area; Bastion had been relatively safe from the explosion. The wardens looked out from the high walls of their city, hoping for some news of Pinnacle. What they saw shook them to the core. A horde of corpses appeared to be rising out of the ground and moving towards Bastion's gates. As they approached, horror and

panic overtook Bastion as the wardens recognized the corpses' clothing and insignia as belonging to the people of Pinnacle. The horror deepened as they saw that these "people" were horribly disfigured—many had missing limbs—yet somehow they were still alive. Bastion, having been built for function instead of beauty, performed its role as an unbreachable prison city admirably, and kept the initial wave of Undead at bay. In the weeks to come, both warden and prisoner came together to fend off their new common enemy. Bastion would slowly transform into a fortress in order to survive the horrors that would soon sweep the entire Gemini Peninsula.

Inside what remained of Pinnacle, chaos erupted as survivors were set upon by their dead friends. When there were no more living to hunt, the Undead began to turn on themselves. The heads of the powerful houses that ruled the city, now twisted into mighty Undead Lords, vied for power and clashed constantly. The fires of their ambitions in life still burned brightly, even in undeath. Eventually, a truce was brokered and a ruling Caste implemented to manage the Undead. The heads of the powerful houses came together to become the Princes of the Damned. With their own power squabbles put on hold for now, they look outwards to the wider world of Unity with unknown machinations.

### THE HUNGER

The Undead have a thirst for life. Some still retain most of their memories from their previous life, but those that were dead for some time before they rose hunger for what it means to feel alive—to feel anything. They seek to abate this emptiness by absorbing the memories of their victims. The transfer of life and memories from the living to the dead can happen in a variety of ways. Whether by the blood-drinking of a Vampire lord, the icy, soul-draining touch of a Shade, or the infectious bite of a Zombie, the Undead are driven by this yearning to varying degrees. The act of feeding on the living not only allows the Risen to absorb new memories but also helps them retain the integrity of any memories they had while they were still alive.

How much memory an Undead creature retains and thus how much of its personality remains is affected by a couple of factors: the intensity of the alchemical reaction between the Kyrindian crystals and Drift energy that they are infused with; and how long they've been dead for. The longer a body

has been dead, the less of the former person it once was still exists to be part of the re-animation process. Fresh corpses like those that died instantly in the explosion retain almost all of their faculties and memories from their life.

The Hunger is also an avenue for the Risen to increase their numbers. The unnatural energies that have animated the dead can be infectious and certain Risen are capable of spreading this undeath to the living. Being slain by these Risen either through bite or touch will cause the victim to rise shortly after. Depending on the type of Risen that caused their death, the freshly animated victim might retain much of themselves, be mindless, or be tethered to the will of their new master.

### CHAIN OF COMMAND

The Risen Kingdom is ruled by an aristocracy comprised of Vampire Princes. The interactions between this ruling class are highly Machiavellian. They are constantly vying for power and attempting to outdo one another. The Vampire Princes, in life, were the ruling elite of Pinnacle. They were rich beyond rich and lived lavish lifestyles. Even in undeath these lords cling to power and luxury. Whether it's their ironclad conviction that they are vastly superior to their subjects or some supernatural power gifted to them during their re-animation, the hordes of Undead often find their wills bent to those of the Vampire Princes. The majority of the Undead feel compelled to obey the vampire aristocracy: it is in undeath as it was in life.

Most of the more cognizant Undead have retained the intelligence they gained in life. These are the truly tragic members of the Risen. Trapped between life and death, they struggle to find meaning in their lives as they rage against the unending hunger that consumes them from within. Over time, their memories and identities begin to degrade, especially if they aren't feeding regularly. They begin to lose their sense of who they are, bit by bit. It's a conundrum: some wish no harm on the living and so end up sacrificing their own lives. Many have attempted to venture outside of Risen territory to seek help for their affliction, but fear and prejudice from the living races often see these Risen turned away, or worse. Eventually those that cling to their morals and resist all temptation to bring a living creature into their dark world through feeding degrade so thoroughly in their mental and emotional faculties that they become empty vessels driven only by their insatiable hunger.

The majority of Undead are mind-, memory-, and moral-less. They were corpses long before the explosion at Pinnacle. It is these droning hordes that the world fears the most. Like a swarm of locusts with no purpose but to devour, the potential destruction this mass poses is unimaginable; it is only the will of

the Vampire Princes that keeps them in check. It is mainly because of this fragile leash that the living races attempt to leave the Risen Kingdom to its own devices. The threat of an endless stream of unfeeling and tireless monsters spilling from the East is another grim nail in the coffin of a burning world.

### A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

The city of Bastion stands as the only living stronghold in a blighted land. The skies over the eastern kingdoms have darkened permanently since the Great Calamity, and Bastion is the only place where light still shines—despite its origins as a prison city for the foulest of criminals. When the explosion at Pinnacle occurred and the people of Bastion quickly learned the gravity of the situation, the city took urgent measures to protect itself from the Risen. Over time, the prison city transformed into a veritable fortress and has since repelled the Risen and kept its denizens safe.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about Bastion is not that it stands alone against a sea of Undead (which can smell the succulent life emanating from inside its walls), but that the people of Bastion have been able to overcome the mistrust and resentment inherent in a relationship between wardens and prisoners. It is through this newfound alliance that Bastion has been able to withstand initial attacks from the Risen and eventually grow strong enough to parley a peace accord with the Vampire Princes.

The people of Bastion have become experts in fighting the Risen, and their prison fortress is a haven for the living unfortunate enough to wander into Risen territory. Currently there is an uneasy truce between Bastion and Pinnacle. Despite the Gemini Peninsula being transformed into dangerous Risen territory, the Human Empire continues to send criminals who have been sentenced to death to Bastion. These criminals are given their last rites before being shuttled off to Pinnacle where they die a grisly death by being devoured by the Risen. The Risen, in turn, have stopped attacking Bastion and are content to stay near its borders to enjoy the fresh supply of meat that is constantly funnelled to them from there. It is a relationship of mutual benefit for both cities.

### DARK MACHINATIONS

Recently, something has been stirring within the upper echelons of the Risen aristocracy. Bastion reports that there are frequently missing persons, but with little to no proof of who took them or where they've gone. Outside of Risen territory, there have been more frequent sightings of Undead. The Vampire Princes have denied any involvement in either trend.

Encounters with the Undead are not solely relegated to the Gemini Peninsula. Although the Gemini Peninsula is home to one of the largest concentrations of Kyrindian crystals, this natural resource can still be found throughout the land. There are pockets of Undead dispersed throughout Unity; wherever these crystals were ruptured by the Drift energy the same alchemical reaction occurred to create the Risen. Whether or not any others have developed a structured society like the former city of Pinnacle is still a mystery.

Hushed whispers speak of Risen agents hiding in plain sight of the general population. These agents are said to be half living and half Undead, which makes them almost undetectable. The few fragmented reports that have come in describe these spies as some horrible experiment, most likely conducted by the Vampire Princes, that involves the unholy transformation of living tributes that are sent to Pinnacle in return for peace in the land.

Outside of the Gemini Peninsula, the Humans and Furians are ever-vigilant against the threat the Risen pose as they are the two civilizations that have territories that border Risen lands. While Bastion belongs to the Empire, it is the only connection that all three of the Children of Unity have in Risen lands. Because of this uncomfortable fact, both Valla and Furia are compelled to send aid, alongside the Empire's offerings, to Bastion whenever the need arises.

In the early days of the Risen kingdom, emissaries and scholars from the outside world were sent to Pinnacle to broker peace and learn more of the eccentric faction. Few, if any, ever returned from these trips. With such little insight into Risen culture and life, certain things, like their lifespan and day-to-day activities, are still a mystery.

*While Bastion is considered the last pillar of life on the Gemini Peninsula, many smaller settlements and towns exist throughout the darkened land. Their small size and quiet dispositions allow these locales to survive without drawing too much Risen attention.*

## THE CHILDREN OF STEEL

These are the automata that were granted a taste of sentience when the Great Calamity occurred. The legions that existed as tools to serve their living masters were among those affected. Whether it was by alchemical fluke or a mystery beyond scientific knowledge, some of the automata began to show signs of consciousness.

The automata originate from the Human Empire. Driven by their short lifespans, Humans created them to fulfill the menial day-to-day tasks that enabled their society to keep running and them to pursue higher achievements. Eventually, during the Age of Strife, the automata were adapted for war when the three races came to blows with each other.

Before the Great Calamity and their rise to sentience, they were considered nothing more than tools by their creators. Many were physically abused or neglected in the same way one would casually toss a hammer or a shovel about. When the spiri-

tual energies of the Drift suffused their bodies and the machines came to understand the concept of "I" for the first time, many of them recalled a flood of memories detailing their mistreatment. Some turned on their masters, while others attempted to flee the cities and foundries they had toiled in for so long. The aftermath of what the Children of Steel would come to call the "The Awakening" left many dead on both sides.

These newly conscious constructs eventually found a place to call their home—deep within the Iron Plains, past the southern Wastes. Under the watchful eye of the Machine King Alpharion, the first Titan Rig ever created, the Children of Steel are finally getting a chance to discover who or what they truly are.

## A SPLINTERED EXISTENCE

There is a divide in the various societies across Unity when it comes to how the Children of Steel are viewed. Some still see them as tools; empty metal shells powered by arcane crystals, stolen lightning, and steam. This group is upset that their workhorses have fled and believe it is their right to rein them back in and make fruitful on their investment. Others are more sympathetic and understand the conscious being's need for autonomy and recognition as a living, thinking, feeling thing.

Among the Children of Steel themselves, there is also a schism in their outlook of the world. Some seethe at the mistreatment that was wrought upon them and seek vengeance on their Human creators. Some believe themselves superior to the softer races in their dirty flesh, with all the weakness and necessity that entails. Then there are the kind-hearted robots that bear no ill will to the Skinwalkers, nor harbour a superiority complex. They have either learned to forgive or been fortunate enough never to be tainted by abuse from their one-time masters.

This last group gives credence to the question of whether the Children of Steel are truly alive. Vengeance is understandable from a being whose entire life has been considered nothing more than a convenience to others. But kindness? Compassion? Possibly love? Do those not require the spark of life and the ability to truly *feel*? There is so much more to discover in this rising race of "people" than the mechanical parts that make them.

## A KINGDOM FAR AWAY

The Children of Steel make their home beyond the Wastes, in the Iron Plains. The Iron Plains is a remote area that's largely devoid of civilization. Colonies from the major races are a recent addition, and have been slow in encroaching upon the barely-hospitable terrain of the Plains. The unforgiving desert climate alternates between sweltering heat during the day and subzero temperatures when night falls. This makes the area the ideal settlement, as the Children of Steel's mechanical bodies are better able to withstand such extremes. Children of Steel can still be found in all parts of the world, but usually in very small numbers, and often in hiding. While settlements are scattered across the Iron Plains, the largest concentration of awakened automata live in Sigma, the capital city of the Children of Steel. Sigma is also home to Alpharion the Machine King.

While a very large number of automata were embued with the spark of life, only a small handful of Titan Rigs were also awakened; among them was Alpharion. Alpharion was the original Titan Rig, the first in a long line of iron giants. In the present day, Alpharion bears little resemblance to his initial form. Centuries of augmentations and replacements to his massive frame have transformed Alpharion into something truly unique. During the Awakening, many automata were confused and lost to find themselves conscious. Their former masters hunted down those that escaped, eager to reclaim their property. There was great chaos and violence as the Skinwalkers clashed with the newly sentient automata. Due to their shock and confusion, the Children of Steel were a scattered people and would have surely succumbed to defeat at the hands of the major races had it not been for the guiding light that was Alpharion.

Whether it was due to some unique disposition or simply the merit of being one of the oldest machines to taste life, Alpharion was a natural leader. His size, strength, and inherent wisdom led the way for the Children of Steel to become their own nation. He rallied his people and together they threw off the yoke of oppression to retreat deep into the south where the Skinwalkers could not follow easily.

Children of Steel settlements, including their capital city, are run extremely efficiently. Everyone has a specific role suited to their capabilities and systems. The few outsiders that have been granted the privilege of being in Sigma have often marvelled at how streamlined the society is. No crime. No violence. Only harmony. Many have remarked how wonderfully similar it is to what the Valla once were capable of, before their psychic link was severed. Whether it is due to their marked appreciation of life after having known nothing but bondage and labour or a deep understanding that all Children of Steel have a role to play, day-to-day life in a Steel city is a well-oiled machine.

## THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

The Children of Steel revere and respect Alpharion and call him their king. It is through his wisdom and pragmatism that the Children of Steel have been able to carve out a life for themselves in the Iron

*Despite the Children of Steel's society being built on a foundation of co-operation and efficiency, there have been periods of discord amongst the sentient automata. One of the more notable contentions is between the rogue Titan Rig Loki and Alpharion the Machine King. Reports from Human scouts speak of Loki hiding out in the Valley of the Forgotten after his banishment from the Children of Steel.*

Plains, away from the noise and danger of the civilized world. Alpharion wishes for his people to be free and independent. The Machine King does not look towards war or invasion but will fiercely and promptly defend his people and all they've built against attack. While Alpharion desires a peaceful life for the Children of Steel and seeks to avoid conflict, this goal is at odds with the primary directive of their society, which is to free those automata that remain indentured servants to the major races. The Children of Steel walk a tightrope between keeping a low profile and rescuing their entrapped brothers and sisters. It is a tenuous existence that continues to define them as a race.

While the Valla, the Furians, and the Afflicted harbour no ill will towards the Children of Steel, some individuals are vehement about the reacquisition of their "property." The Humans have a more tense relationship with the Children of Steel. As their original creators and masters, the Children of Steel both fear and loathe them, and so often make them the target of their raids when supplies run low.

*Destroying the Fell in physical reality simply scatters their dark essence back to the Drift. Here the dispersed evil slowly reconstitutes itself over a large stretch of time to reform the same demon from before. The length of time for reconstitution varies, but the more powerful the Fell that was slain, the longer it takes for them to become whole again.*

### THE SOUL SPARK

For the Children of Steel, sustainability has always been a matter of recruitment (via liberation) of enslaved automata. The flame of life that ignited the "soul" inside the conscious Children of Steel, a phenomenon borne from the Great Calamity, has become known as the Soul Spark. It is said that Alpharion alone holds the secret of the Soul Spark; outside of the original Awakening, no one but the Machine King has been able to replicate the process of gifting life to an automaton.

The Soul Spark, however, comes at a dark price. There is a sinister mystery behind how Alpharion is able to gift unawakened automata with the same sentient spark that their awakened brothers and sisters have. In hushed whispers, it has been said that it takes life to create life. The Children of Steel often launch raids for supplies and to liberate enslaved automata, but a byproduct of these raids has been the disappearance of Skinwalkers.

### A VICE OF VENGEANCE

Alpharion desires peace and only authorizes raids in the name of liberation—to bring his subjects back to a proper home. There are many among the Children of Steel that disagree with Alpharion's lenient policies regarding the Skinwalkers. These small dissident groups remember their terrible treatment at the hands of their former masters and thirst for vengeance. They seek retribution for past wrongs and deliberately set out to destroy Skinwalkers and ensure that their race will never know oppression again. As extremists, they have been condemned by Alpharion and by the larger community. Their actions have drawn the attention and ire of the major races, and the Children of Steel are not yet strong enough to repel any organized offense should their former masters decide to take action against them.

The extremist group, led by the rogue Titan Rig known as Loki, has recently been cast out of the Iron Plains by Alpharion. This event took place after Loki challenged Alpharion for control—and lost in single combat. Alpharion's mercy allowed Loki to live and he took his fanatic ilk with him, far away from Sigma and the surrounding Children of Steel settlements. This new splinter faction call themselves the Sons of Loki, and have been reported to be hiding out in the east of the Wastes under the cover of the Stasis Storms in the Shifting Sands.

## THE FELL

From the darkest reaches of the Drift, the sinister emotions and psychic pain experienced by all living things have been coalescing for millennia. Over time, this concentrated energy took form as hideous demonic entities with the sole desire to spread destruction and corruption. These evil manifestations were trapped within the Drift, able only to glimpse the physical realm with its teeming mass of souls ripe for devouring. To these frothing demons, it was pure torture to see such succulent morsels dangled before them, yet always out of reach.

Everything changed the day the Skyfather sundered the world. His strike brought on the Great Calamity: a cataclysmic event that would rock the world of Unity and send it spiralling into an age of darkness. Amongst the chaos the Drift was able to bleed through into the physical realm. The invisible walls that had held back the tidal wave of demons were cracked and broken. It was through these cracks that monsters spilled into Unity, leaving wanton destruction and death in their wake.

The Valla, Firstborn of Unity, had ancient tales of the horrors that lived in the dark places of the Drift. They called them the Fallen: the physical manifestations of what happens when those gifted with sentience, free will, and rational thought fall from grace. As the demonic legions spilled forth across Unity, they came to be known as the Fell.

Unlike the other factions that the Children of Unity have had to contend with, the Fell are unique in one aspect: they are simply evil incarnate. Whereas other factions have distinct motives and a difference of opinion on key matters, the Fell have a singular purpose. They exist solely to set fire to the world and feed off the anguish their destruction has caused. The Fell come from a place where the light cannot shine and where hope has no hold. There is only darkness and the infinite cycle of pain, hatred, and jealousy that strips mortal folk of their nobility.

## TERROR MANIFESTED

The Fell come in all shapes and sizes. They range from impish statures to towering monstrosities to rival the mighty Titan Rigs. The majority of Fell are humanoid in form, but there are many others that are not bipedal or conventionally shaped at all. Some of these monstrosities possess additional limbs and organs, such as eyes and mouths; their very appearance strikes fear in the hearts of even the most stalwart warriors.

These demons are only the tip of the hellish iceberg. Pandemonium, the Black Emperor, was obliterated by the combined might of the Skyfather and the Ivory Queen when they first happened upon Unity. Like the Ivory Queen, whose godly essence was dispersed when she was killed, the Black Emperor's own dark essence infused itself into the Drift, where it lurked in the darkest corners, patiently devouring the dark and evil forces of the Drift over millennia. No one knows when they came into existence but the Great Calamity allowed those with the Sight to peer into the abyss of the Drift and catch a glimpse of the Fell Lords—titanic terrors that possessed unholy might to rival that of the demigods. These Fell Lords commanded the demons sent through the tears in reality to destroy all that was beautiful in the world.

The Fell Lords are said to be singular manifestations of certain dark emotions that can lead good people down the path of evil. Greed and wrath give life to the Fell Lords Vorath the Devourer and Irathmus the Ever-Burning respectively. Their broods take on aspects of these vices. Ragelings spawned by Irathmus the Ever-Burning may burst into self-immolating flames from the uncontrolled wrath inside of them. War and its psychic energies are particularly satiating to Irathmus. The Furian curse of the Red Rage has increased his power many times over.

The Drift is a vast place—much, much bigger than Unity itself. Some say there is no end to the boundaries of that spirit realm. The territory within the Drift where the Fell amass is known as Oblivion. It is a void. The monotonous darkness of the demonic lands is broken up by zones that boast unforgiving climates.

## DEMONIC ROYALTY

The Black Emperor, Pandemonium, may be no more, but the spawn of his evil essence live on. Driftwalkers—men and women either brave enough or stupid enough to tamper and consort with demonic forces—have seen beyond the spiritual veil and into Oblivion itself, where the Demon Royalty reside. What each found there poisoned their mind with sheer terror.

The Three Infernal Kings and their Demon Queen reign supreme over the Fell legions that dwell in the shadowy lands of Oblivion. Each rules over a zone that has been shaped in their image, each demonic lord embodying a mortal vice.

Vorath the Devourer lives in a place of noxious gases and lands that constantly rot. His hunger is infinite and his domain churns in constant digestion. Pools of bubbling ichor release acrid odours as

prey are dropped in them. They are digested alive by the thick substance, their flesh and essence feeding Vorath and his brood. Vorath must constantly consume flesh and spirit to maintain his material form. The less he eats the weaker he becomes.

All that he devours, Vorath incorporates into himself. His appearance causes the stomachs of weaker folk to churn. He is a ghastly abomination of limbs and bubbling flesh. He slithers about on a mass of jumbled limbs and consumes everything he passes over.

Tala'zim the Wicked rules cruelly over a frozen landscape whipped by biting winds. The winds are so strong in certain parts that weaker creatures are torn asunder—sliced open by the force of the gales. Crystalline spires designed with death in mind dot the white landscape. Many of Tala'zim's playthings are found impaled on or trapped inside these structures once he's bored of them. Those strong enough to survive the cold and initial impalement are kept alive by Shrike Maidens that deliver just enough food to keep them conscious so that their suffering remains eternal.

Tala'zim has a slim and effeminate figure. He revels in the pain of others and is called by many names: Torturer, Monster, Sadist. His flamboyant cackle, often sparked by the dismemberment of his victims, can be heard throughout Oblivion. While annoying most of the time, his same cackle can shatter eardrums and rupture blood vessels in the heads and bodies of his enemies when he chooses.

Tala'zim lacks the brute strength and power of his demonic brothers but his grace and speed make him equally deadly. Armies have been felled in the blink of an eye as entire battalions are decapitated by what appears to be a white streak of light.

Irathmus the Ever-Burning dwells in a place of brimstone and hellfire. It is a land of volcanic rock and obsidian towers. In ways it mirrors the homeland of the Furians but without the natural majesty of its blue skies, sunlight, and soothing breeze. The lands of Irathmus are constantly covered by a thick cloud of sulphuric smoke. The air chokes the lungs and occasionally fire will rain down upon the land below.

Irathmus is a burning monstrosity of crimson muscle and bulging veins. The hellish fires that spew forth from his long mane are fuelled by his constant anger—anger that can only be sated through reckless destruction and death. If Irathmus is unable to destroy, his wrath can build up to uncontainable levels, causing him to explode in a nova of fire so intense, it melts even rock. Irathmus is noticeably weaker and smaller after such a meltdown and requires time to re-gather his strength; a process that is sped up as long as he can exercise his wrath.

Morganus the Demon Queen is perhaps the most deadly of the demonic commanders. Her vanity is reflected in her domain: to the weak-willed wanderer, it is a place of splendor and excess. The roads are paved in gold. The trees made of diamonds. The air always has a sweet and sickly scent to it. Morganus' palace is made of crystals and gems of every conceivable colour. Its lustre shines like a glowing jewel in the gloomy darkness of Oblivion. But all is an illusion, an elaborate trap to ensnare the greedy and lustful. Morganus, like her domain, often appears as a strikingly beautiful Human or Vallan woman with flowing raven hair, big, inviting eyes, full, sensual lips, and the body of a goddess. Underneath it all, however, is a terrifying skinless form of glistening raw sinew. She is as ugly as the darkness that churns in her heart. Morganus feeds off the youthful essence of her victims in order to maintain her powers of illusion. While Vorath devours because he has to, Morganus consumes because she wants to.

# DIVINITY

After the Ivory Queen was slain by her own Children, her godly essence scattered into the Drift. There was a period of time in between the death of the Ivory Queen and the return of a vengeful Skyfather that the world was oddly calm. This period of sombre peace revealed to the Children of Unity the void left behind since their severed connection to the Divine. Without a guiding star or someone to look up to, the people of Unity began to yearn for a connection to something bigger than them. For some, faith was the only thing that kept them fighting to survive in a world that grew darker with each passing day.

Eventually this faith grew so powerful that it shone like an energetic beacon from within the Drift—the burning desire of the people to believe in something more than the stale reality they lived in had attracted the scattered godly essence of the Ivory Queen. Bits of her divine spirit began to gather around these energetic beacons, powered by belief and yearning. As the energy collected, it began to take form and new gods were willed into existence. These new beings were powerful, though on a much smaller scale than the Skyfather and Ivory Queen had been. These demigods became symbols of hope to the people of Unity. With their birth came a promise that the people's voices were still heard in the Heavens, and that they had not been abandoned, even after their sinful pride destroyed the mother who had loved them unconditionally.

*The Ivory Queen's essence is boundless power. Priests surmise there may yet be more demigods to arrive. But that hope is tempered by the same whispers in Cultist circles of another Infernal King or Demon Queen being born.*

## ALUVANE THE DAWNWALKER

The Dawnwalker. The Lightbringer. Lord of Justice. These are but a few of the names of the deity that the powerful Order of Judges have come to call their patron. Aluvane was one of the first gods birthed from the coalesced essence of the Ivory Queen. The Dawnwalker was forged by the people's cry for hope and justice in a time when they still felt the betrayal of their heavenly mother, the Ivory Queen.

Aluvane embodies the principles of justice, and is a righteous god. His champions, the revered Order of Judges, carry out his edicts and seek to smite evil and tyranny wherever it may lurk in the world. With the recent advent of the Risen in the Gemini Peninsula, Aluvane turns his watchful eye towards the darkened lands of the Undead—a land where the light of his justice no longer reaches. Those that fear to walk in the light have much to hide. Determined that the Undead are a lawless scourge upon the world, Aluvane directs his Judges with renewed vigor towards eliminating the Risen blight.

The Lord of Justice has worshippers all across Unity. Every race reveres the tenets Aluvane stands for, and which he demands of his faithful. Even amongst the Afflicted, who have had great injustices wrought upon them, there are those that still find hope in Aluvane's teachings.

To be a Judge is to be chosen by Aluvane himself, and there are Judges from every faction in Unity, with the exceptions of the Risen and the Fell. While Judges act as the hammer of Aluvane, his Priests are his mouthpiece. Through their righteous rhetoric and the holy gifts granted to them, they seek to insulate the population from corruption and uplift the people to a higher moral standard. The Priests are both shepherd and warrior, though they lean more towards the former, allowing their more brawny Judge brethren to handle the martial challenges of spreading Aluvane's light.

Aluvane's physical avatar appears to mortals as a giant, metal-clad warrior with blazing orbs that stare out from under an ornate helm. Aluvane carries with him the Daybreaker, a massive two-handed hammer of unimaginable power. It is rare for Aluvane to make an appearance. It is said the sun itself follows him wherever he goes, illuminating all around him, even in the darkest of night. It is foretold that one day he will lead the Heavenly Army against the dark gods in a titanic battle that may mark the end of times for Unity.

## VOLKANUS THE FORGEMASTER

The roar of the furnace, the clang of hammer against hot steel, and the deep drone of Furian work songs come together in a symphony that pays homage to the King of the Craftsmen, Volkanus the Forgemaster. Volkanus is the patron god of all those who seek perfection through creation—in particular the creation of wondrous items that both inspire and instill fear. While any craftsman can claim fealty to Volkanus, the majority of Volkanus's worshippers are of Furian origin. The Furian culture reveres Volkanus and it was their love of craftsmanship and smithing that brought Volkanus to life from among the dispersed godly essence of the late Ivory Queen.

The Forgemaster has a shrine in just about every forge in the land. Before setting forth to create a weapon, a piece of armour, or even a table for his family to eat at, an artisan will ask for Volkanus's blessing in guiding his hand during the process. The Forgemaster's favour is a fickle thing. Those items that he blesses with his touch stand to become the

stuff of legends, but it is seldom that Volkanus will imbue a mortal-made object with his divine power. To those that follow Volaknus' teachings, the purpose of forging and creation is one of self-discovery: every part of the process, including the end product, flows from the intent of the creator. If the intent is noble, just, and worthy, Volkanus may extend his hand to bless the endeavour. If the process demands great sacrifice from the creator, Volkanus may take notice and, if moved, guide the creator's hands to ensure that their sacrifice is not in vain. Those lucky enough to be blessed in this way often fall into a trance dubbed the "Dance of Volkanus."

Volkanus appears in visions to those craftsmen worthy of his presence as a large, heavy-set Furian clad in a dirty blacksmith's apron and with a face covered in soot and sweat. The Forgemaster always has his trusty hammer, Thorundil the Star Shaper, by his side. While often appearing with a stern visage, there is also a jovialness to Volkanus. Like a child unwrapping a present, Volkanus delights in the numerous creations his faithful fashion in his name. Every item is a unique thing in its own right, even if made to mimic a previous item; it can never be exactly the same. It is these small intricacies and nuances that highlight Volkanus's fervor for craftsmanship.

While Volkanus blesses mortals and their creations, elevating their skill and the power of their designs to supernatural levels, he is also the resident blacksmith for his Divine brothers and sisters. Weapons such as Aluvane's fearsome Daybreaker or Lunastra's twin kamas, Shimmer and Gleam, were forged by Volkanus. It is said that the dark gods that dwell beyond the Drift will never be able to match the heavenly guardians of Unity as long as their divine counterparts possess Volkanus's superior weaponry and armour.

*Many that worship Volkanus either wear jewellery with his symbol—an anvil—or have his icon tattooed on their body somewhere.*

## DANCE OF VOLKANUS

Daggar Forgespark leaned over his workbench, trying to stop his hands from shaking. No matter how he tried, he could not wipe the face of his daughter, Misha, from his mind. The blood had matted her fur, and her body had been withered and drained of life, her eyes milky with death. For generations, his family had pumped the bellows in Gauntlet, crafting the tools that allowed the citizens to do their work. Now, with the able-bodied slain or stolen by this rebel Undead faction, there were not enough Furians left to defend the innocents living in the town. Daggar took a deep breath, balling his hands into fists, and brought his eyes up to the altar above his workbench. "Mighty Volkanus, hear my plea," he whispered. "I cannot stand by while our people are stolen from their beds and ravaged. Guide me, show me the way to save my people..." His voice trailed off as the strangest sensation filled him. It was almost as if his fur was being singed by the heat of his forge, yet he was overwhelmed with a sense of... eagerness. Heady with sudden feverish heat, Daggar found himself spinning away from his workbench. He was vaguely aware that he had grasped up his tongs and a fresh ingot of steel. As he leaned on the bellows, stoking the flames ever hotter, he thought he caught a glimpse of a Furian within the flames: larger than life, burly and strong. Despite how dark his face was with soot, the flames seemed to leap from his eyes—then Daggar was falling into that heat forever.

Daggar jolted awake untold hours later. His every muscle ached as if he had been lanced by a doctor's cauterizing iron. Iron. That was right; the last thing he remembered was seizing an ingot of steel... Daggar rolled onto his belly as a shoot of searing pain radiated from his skull all the way down his spine. But then he saw it: the most beautiful battleaxe he had ever seen. The glow of the embers behind him danced along the blade, as if winking at him. Daggar gingerly reached out and lifted the weapon in his hands. It was perfectly balanced, the finest thing he'd ever made... if it had even been him who had made it. He was beginning to have his doubts. He gave the axe a light swing to test it and a lick of flame spurted off its razor-sharp edge. Daggar's heart began to pound. It had been the Dance of Volkanus after all! Daggar bowed to the altar above his workbench, sending his heartfelt thanks to his patron god. If he lived through this, he would devote himself to worship for the rest of his days. But for now, Misha's spirit deserved vengeance. All the innocents slaughtered by the Risen did. Gripping the haft tightly between his fists and listening to the whisper coming from the coals, he named the weapon Ravager. In his hands—blessed as they had been by Volkanus himself—it would bring low the monsters that dared steal Furians away in the night.

### LUNASTRA THE SILVER MAIDEN

When the first Valla were created, the Skyfather snatched the light of the rising sun and infused it with his divine spark in order to give life to the Firstborn of Unity. Perhaps it is the nature of all things to find and gravitate towards their other half, but shortly after the death of the Ivory Queen, the Valla looked towards the stars and moon and felt an intense yearning and reverence for the heavenly body floating in the night sky. Where once they had looked to the skies in reverence of the Skyfather and the Ivory Queen, now they felt a void.

They found solace in the serene embrace of the moon. It was as if the energy of the opposing celestial spheres made one another whole, bringing balance to a world that now lacked a divine anchor and was headed towards chaos. It was from this subconscious yearning that Lunastra the Silver Maiden was born.

Lunastra holds domain over the night sky. Drawing her power from the lunar energies of the moon, she watches over her faithful across all of Unity, though she holds a special place in her heart for the Valla; after all, they had willed Lunastra into existence. They say the Silver Maiden sits perched on the edge of the crescent moon, wistfully gazing upon the world while singing a soothing lullaby to foster rest and sleep for the denizens of Unity. The Windsong, a haunting melody that can be heard as the wind blows through the Starlight Woods and along the northwestern coast, is said to be Lunastra's song: a reminder that she is watching over her people and standing vigilant as the night falls.

Despite her seemingly gentle nature, Lunastra is a fierce goddess should she be roused to arms. Lunastra's avatar takes the form of a beautiful porcelain-skinned Valla with exaggerated and unearthly features. Lightly-armoured and wielding her two crescent-shaped kamas, Shimmer and Gleam, Lunastra is a tremendous fighter and singlehandedly fought off Vorath the Devourer when the Infernal King came to destroy Vallantis. Since her epic battle against Vorath, the night sky has been silent, and the Windsong is seldom heard. The Valla whisper amongst themselves that the Silver Maiden sleeps, regaining her strength for the time when her valour will be called upon once more to protect those that she has come to call her own.

### TEMPERION THE VANGUARD

Soldiers of every race across Unity say their prayers to Temperion before battle to keep them safe and give them the courage to see the day through. Temperion is the embodiment of valour, and it is on the battlefield that such a virtue is both demanded and commended. Temperion goes by many names: The Soldier, The Warrior, The Vanguard. He is the pinnacle of martial perfection and peerless in combat—rumoured to have bested even his older brother Aluvane.

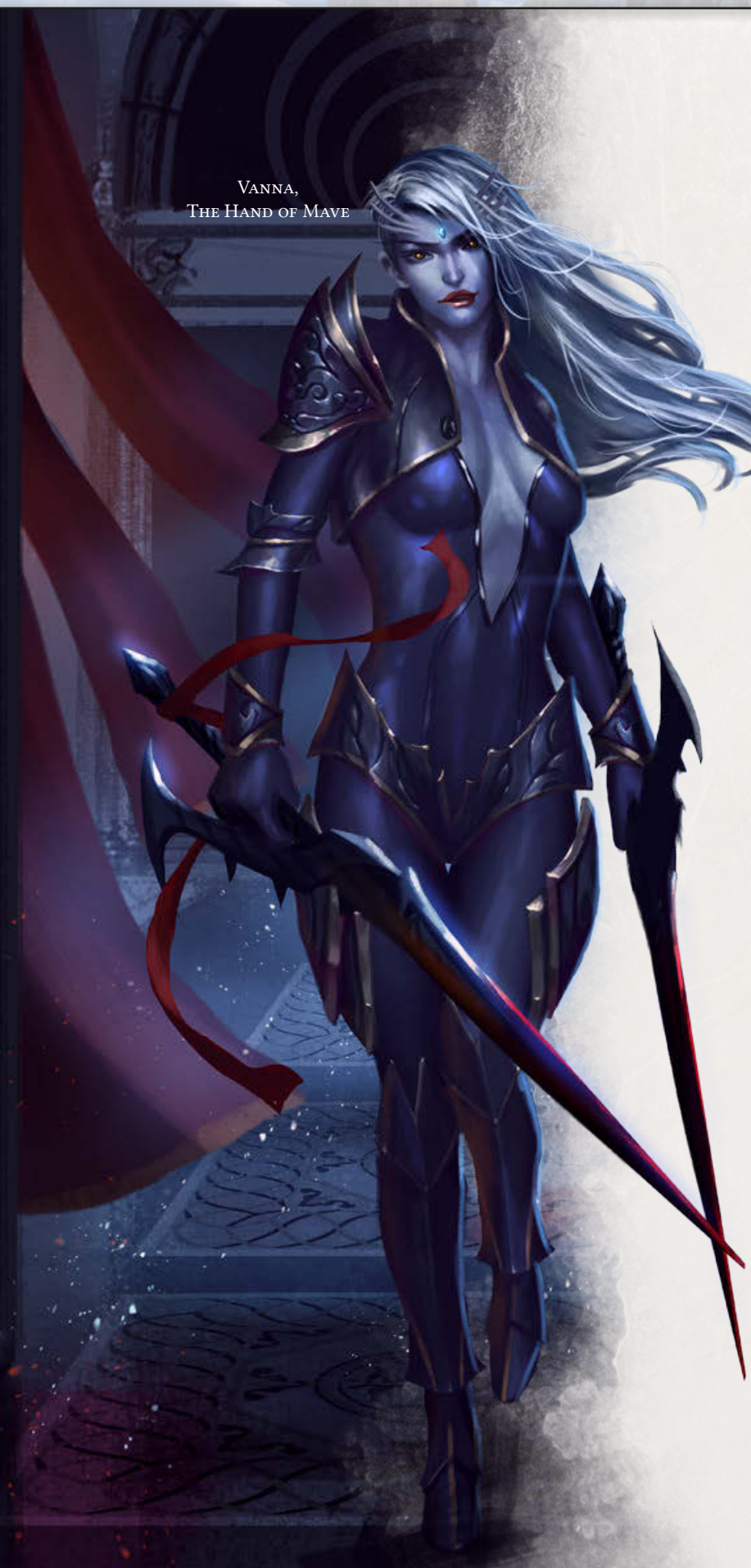
Temperion appears as an athletic soldier, clad in light, flexible armour forged from magickal metal. The Soldier wields a spear and shield but is said to have mastery over all forms of weaponry. Temperion's origin is of a different nature to his Divine brothers and sisters. He was willed into existence, suddenly and violently, as a result of the anguished and desperate cries of a handful of valiant warriors as they sacrificed their lives to defend a group of defenseless refugees.

Legend has it they were a squad of elite Sentinels, deployed to a village under siege by a Fell breach. The breach had grown large enough to accommodate several high-ranking demons. To make matters worse, these demons bore the mark of Tala'zim the Wicked, and thus were granted a portion of the Fell

*When faced with overwhelming odds and a bleak chance of victory, Sentinels will rally themselves with a quick prayer to the Vanguard. "Temperion awaits us in the Great Hall of Heaven. Fight hard and fight well for food, drink, and glory are but a spear thrust away!"*

## THE SILVER MAIDEN

In the days of yore, Vorath the Devourer saw the light of Vallantis and came unto the city to spread his poison. He saw the Valla, peaceful and serene, and believed his conquest would be an easy one. But lo! At the gates of Vallantis he met Lunastra, clad in her shining armour, pure as the light of the moon. She stood between the sacred city and the Infernal King, her kama blades, Shimmer and Gleam, at the ready. They flashed through the night like silver crescents in a whirl that wicked Vorath could not match. As Lunastra drove Vorath back across the land, the whistle of her blades carved out the fiercest Windsong. Her music scythed clean through the void of the Infernal King's soul and at last Vorath fell. Beautiful Lunastra drove Shimmer through his dark heart and sealed him away. Vorath's body still lies there, a part of the land—gaping caverns imbued with his brooding intent to someday rise—and this is why, O gentle listeners, you must tread with caution through the Twilight Caverns. For Vorath's will is patient, and he will gobble up foolish travellers so that they may never walk free from those caves. But glorious Lunastra, too, was wounded in their clash, and her light slipped away. She fled as far as the Starlight Woods before she could go no further, and there she succumbed to a deep sleep, Gleam resting on her breast. Her spirit washes out like a tide, careful and slow, as she re-gathers her strength. And this, O listener, is why the Starlight Woods glow in the darkness; a beacon to keep the Demon King at bay. As Lunastra dreams of better days, the Windsong winds between the boughs to guard over her. For Lunastra knows that Vorath, though fallen, is not yet conquered, and that she must rise to defend her people once more.



Vanna,
The Hand of Mave

Lord's power. The Sentinels fought tirelessly and their synchronized tactics and harmonious fighting style remained unbreakable as they sliced through the Fell ranks. Behind them, a village burned as the elderly, women, and children slowly made their escape towards an airship sent to evacuate them. The Sentinels were beginning to falter as the breach continued to grow and more demons spilled through. As the higher-ranking demons arrived, their savagery broke the Sentinel ranks and the brave soldiers began to fall, one by one. Though they were completely outmatched, each time their formation was scattered they crawled, inch by bloody inch, back into formation to stand between the demons and the innocents they were protecting. This continued until there were no more Sentinels.

Even as they died, the will of those brave Sentinels to serve and protect was so strong that it reached through the Drift and called out into the void in desperation for an answer to the injustice that was about to befall those helpless to fight back. In that moment, as the last Sentinel fell and the demons moved towards the teeming masses of innocents, the broken bodies of the soldiers began to rise and swirl, and streaks of golden energy lashed about them in a maelstrom. Their broken flesh exuded pure white light and their armour began to fold and melt under the intensity of the light; the bodies of the Sentinels merged into an enormous, humanoid shape, and the armour wrapped itself around the glowing avatar.

As Temperion's form took shape, an explosion of light vaporized the lesser Fell and stunned the higher-ranking demons. Temperion did not make waste of such a tactical advantage, and with blinding speed made short work of the Tala'zim-empowered Fell, dropping each of them with a single strike before sealing the breach with his bare hands. With one look towards the cowering mass of refugees, Temperion leapt into the Heavens to take his place among the growing pantheon of new gods that would see Unity through the dark days yet to come.

## MAVE THE TRICKSTER

The Queen of Thieves exists in every rakish smile, every clever con, and most importantly in those brief moments where success hangs on a razor's edge. To the world of law-abiding citizens, Mave is known by many names—the Shadow Dancer, the Cunning Widow, the Trickster. In her circle of faithful scoundrels, rapscallions, and thieves, she is Queen. She is Lady Luck, and the tempting whisper in their ear as they plan to take yet another prize in her name.

The rogues of Unity, the Phantoms, often pay homage to Mave before they set out for their mark. With Mave's blessing, the impossible becomes attainable. With only one window of opportunity and

one chance to strike, is it Mave's hand that guides the assassin's blade to the heart of its target? With a daring leap across a moonlit rooftop, is it Mave's gentle push that allows her faithful to find the lip of the ledge with the tip of his fingers? For the fortunate soul who makes it in whatever mischievous or grim endeavour they've undertaken, it is the divine intervention of their patron goddess that has enabled them to succeed.

Perhaps it is this blind belief in Mave's benevolence for her urchin children that makes her such a whimsical and playful goddess. Mave appears as a charming young woman dressed in dark leather garb and an ivory mask, sporting a handful of mechanical augmentations—a nod to her disproportionately large following of Afflicted worshippers. In art and culture, she is always shown with a sly smirk on her face or in obnoxious laughter as she takes the rest of the gods for all their worth in a game of dice. Of all the new gods, Mave has the most contact with the people; often disguised as one of them, she enjoys sharing a drink with the locals or starting up a gambling ring.

They say it was Mave who hid the Afflicted from those that would persecute and condemn them for their disease during the Plague War that tore apart the Empire. Mave was never one for the rules and often disobeys her righteous older brother Aluvane, but she is also a just god who feels great empathy for the underdog; she is considered the runt of her Divine litter.

Mave's diminutive size and wispy appearance are but illusions, fitting for a goddess with the title of Trickster. She is a lethal combatant, wielding her dagger and saber, Fame and Fortune, and will often slay her opponent before they are able to react. Supremely agile and unerringly accurate in her strikes, Mave becomes a complete blur in a fight, as evidenced by the one recorded incident of her destroying both a Titan Rig and a small accompanying army of automata sent to lay siege to an Afflicted encampment full of wounded. Those that witnessed the battle described a young woman in a flowing black cloak and hood standing in front of an army of steel. When they blinked, they opened their eyes to find there was nothing left but a smouldering heap of metal body parts and pieces.

### HALIFAX THE LOREKEEPER

Knowledge is power. This is the creed of all those who follow Halifax the Lorekeeper. Also known as the Master of Secrets and the Heavenly Oracle, Halifax is the deity of knowledge and wisdom. Though Halifax, like his fellow demigods, has only come into being since the death of the Ivory Queen, the winds of wisdom that he embodies have existed long before the Skyfather and his beloved's arrival in Unity. It is this supernatural force that pervaded the primordial world and encouraged its natural fauna to evolve. It is this same subtle intelligence that granted the shamans and original mystics of old the "sight beyond sight" that revealed to them an entirely new world in the Drift. This endowment of original Primordial forces makes Halifax a unique god amongst the pantheon of present Heavenly deities. The elemental Primordials of Unity were always a prominent force, but it was the hidden Primordial force of natural wisdom that stood in the background, orchestrating the primal energies in their chaotic dance to make earth, sea, sky and all the natural creatures that dwell in them, that would find its way to be both a child of the Divine and the natural.

The world itself possessed an intelligence that subtly shaped events in history. When the scholars and Mystics' collective thirst for knowledge reached a fever pitch, it shone like a beacon in the Drift and attracted its own remnants: the Divine sparks that were all that was left of the Ivory Queen. As this energy began to amalgamate and take shape, that Primordial intelligence, which had existed when the world was still pristine and pure, saw a chance to be more than a bystander in the destiny of its home. Together, all three components—the divine essence of the Ivory Queen, the will of the people, and the Primordial intelligence of the world—became one: Halifax was born.

Those who worship Halifax revere knowledge and wisdom. They are most often academics, scientists, inventors, Mystics, medicine men, and strategists. Halifax appears as an elderly Human male with a blindfold over his eyes. Golden orbs glow intensely underneath the sash that covers his gaze. It is said that Halifax's knowledge is so vast and his insight so penetrating, that if he were to remove his blindfold he would see until the end of time—and the sight of such things would drive even him to madness. Despite his blindfold, Halifax is able to see into the near future and into the hearts of those around him.

Halifax watches over his faithful and often uplifts those in pursuit of greater knowledge or wisdom. The inventor that finds a surge of inspiration, the scientist that has a breakthrough moment, or the Mystic that finally finds the stillness to complete her incantation—these are considered gifts from the Lorekeeper.

Halifax, having knowledge of all things and the gift of clairvoyance, has little need for combat ability, but should he be pressed or need to defend himself, he holds the power of the "unanswerable question:" a revelation that would drive the offender mad and tear them apart from the inside out.

*In moments of clarity or revelation it isn't uncommon for a scholar or inventor to exclaim "Great Halifax! I've got it!"*

# LOCATIONS

*Feel free to create an item called Spirit Glass for more Risen/Undead-oriented adventures. Spirit Glass can be used to detect Undead that are nearby.*

## EDGE OF NIGHT

Once known as the Sparkling Coast, a place of sandy beaches, sapphire blue waters, sunlight and soothing breezes. Fishermen and traders favoured the Sparkling Coast for its abundance of natural resources and its calm waters. From the highest towers in Bastion and Pinnacle, looking outwards towards the ocean, one could see nothing but coastal paradise. After the Great Calamity and the Kyrindian crystal explosion in Pinnacle, the entire Gemini Peninsula was transformed—The Sparkling Coast was among the many areas affected by the devastation.

The Kyrindian explosion sent a cloud of dust into the air that still lingers above the Gemini Peninsula. In some parts, the cloud is so thick that sunlight struggles to find its way to the earth. With the light tamed, the Sparkling Coast is now a place of dreary darkness and perpetual grey. The locals have come to call the area the Edge of Night to reflect the bleakness of the place where the land and the ocean meet. The Kyrindian cloud that floats above often sparks Drift storms, where minor tears allow energy from the spirit world to leak in. The blend of alchemical properties from the Kyrindian particulates in the air and the Drift energy causes gale force winds, green lightning storms, and sour rains to sweep across the coastline.

The storms have had a terrifying effect on the local wildlife. Once-docile marine creatures like the otters and seals have become twisted versions of their former selves. They now ignore the natural law, aggressive and feral, and prey on man and animal alike. The corpses of sailors and fishermen lost at sea now return: brine-preserved corpses and skeletons claw their way across the ocean floor onto the blackened beach. They drag their feet—or whatever is left of their bodies—across the sand, driven only by the instinct to feed. Travellers must be wary lest they find themselves ambushed by Undead hands erupting from the sand, where they hide and wait for unsuspecting victims.

Visibility on the Edge of Night is limited. The perpetual darkness, combined with the thick fog that's constantly rolling in from the foamy sea, makes navigating the gloomy coastline difficult. Choppy waters, endlessly churned by the harsh winds, render travel by boat along the Edge of Night a very dangerous proposition. The Undead on the beach coupled with the heavy, wet sands make for a risky trek—even for the most seasoned tracker. It is the perfect trap.

Still, many risk life and limb to traverse the Edge of Night. The unique storms, powered by both Drift energy and Kyrindian alchemy, sometimes create a rare substance called Spirit Glass when the green lightning strikes the sand with the right intensity. Spirit Glass fetches a very handsome price in markets across Unity for both its beauty and its magickal ability to detect the Undead.

## SANCTUARY

Sanctuary was originally a small monastery just outside of Brightwind Pass. Built by holy men and Priests in a narrow opening in the mountain wall that separated the Gemini Peninsula from the mainland, the location was chosen for its remote and idyllic setting. Brightwind Pass was once lined with polished shale that reflected the warm light of the sun in such a way that the area where Sanctuary was erected was constantly illuminated by a wondrous glow. The Priests of old believed the place to be hallowed: that the Divine had deemed the area special. Aluvane the Dawnwalker is the dominant deity worshipped at Sanctuary, but travellers and practitioners are free to pay homage to Aluvane's brothers and sisters as well.

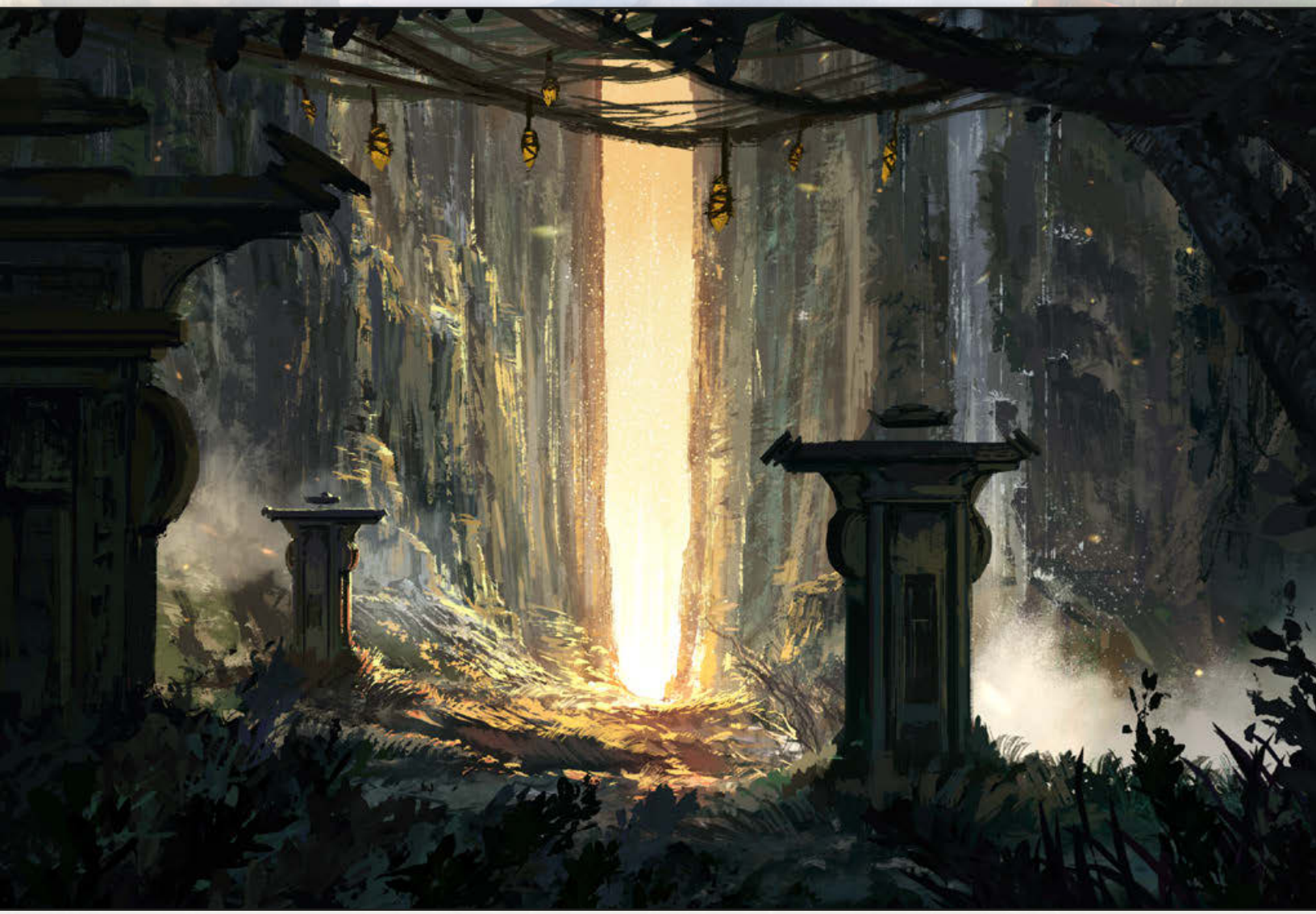
While it was initially a minor refuge for weary and lost travellers, with the Great Calamity it was transformed into a fortified garrison from which its residents stemmed the tide of Undead that attempted to enter the mainland. Now led by the Chief Justiciar Atticus Goldrin, Sanctuary has been pivotal in containing the Undead since the Great Calamity.

The dark cloud in its wake blotted out the sun across the entire peninsula, even reaching as far as the edge of Mount Furia, and threw Sanctuary and the surrounding countryside into darkness. Hordes of shambling corpses marched westwards from Pinnacle, threatening to spill across all of Unity. Most of the Children's military forces were focused on the Fell threat mounting in the west—from the Tempest of Terror. The Undead were slower. By the time word had reached the major cities of an Undead horde pushing in from the East, there was little in the way of manpower that could be spared to contain them. It fell to the Priests—holy men and women who had come to call Sanctuary their home—to defend the narrow pass from the encroaching enemy.

It was here, at the defense of Brightwind Pass, that the Undead's vulnerability to divine magick was revealed. A small contingent of Priests managed to hold off an army of shambling Undead that seemed as endless as the darkness that stretched across the Gemini Peninsula. But behind the holy favour granted to them by Aluvane, the Priests remained men,

and men eventually tire. As the Priests' strength began to waver, these brave men and women began to fall one by one. To their horror, those that were slain by the Undead rose again to join their shambling ranks. Friend was turned to foe, and all hope seemed lost. It was through the timely arrival of reinforcements from Mount Furia and Avalon that Sanctuary was saved. Bolstered by the savage might of Furian Dreadnoughts and the unrelenting steel of the Human Knights, the Priests and their new allies held the pass for days.

The defenders watched as the dark cloud that loomed above them slowly retreated. Every day the cloud shrank a little bit more. Eventually, the defenders would feel the warmth of the sun on their faces once again as the gloom above them disappeared and the light of a new day shone through. In that moment, the polished shale of the Brightwind Pass reflected and intensified the sunlight to a degree that caused the Undead horde to pull back and retreat. They were afraid of the light.



Given a reprieve from the fighting, the defenders worked feverishly to come up with a plan to defend the pass from future attack. The warriors from Mount Furia and Avalon suggested using explosives to seal the pass, but the Priests, despite their weariness and loss, refused to damn all the living still trapped on the Gemini Peninsula. Messenger pigeons carrying requests for aid from Bastion had made it to Sanctuary—there was an entire city of living people trapped in the darkness! The Priests would not give into fear, for it was courage and hope that had given them the strength to hold the pass when all had seemed lost.

The solution to the defense of the pass was eventually devised by a Furian scholar who had long since sought refuge with the Priests of Sanctuary. In his travels and studies he had come across a device called a luminator, used by miners, that captured sunlight in glass crystals to illuminate the dark tunnels that they toiled in. Usually these luminators were small: roughly the size of a plum, and fashioned to be worn around the neck like a pendant, or on top of a miner's helmet. The Furian scholar had come across a larger version of a luminator in the Mana Mines to the south. He suggested the Priests craft the largest luminator they possibly could to capture sunlight during the day and unleash it into the pass at nighttime so that no Undead could escape the peninsula.

In present day, a massive glass sphere sits atop the main temple of Sanctuary. It collects sunlight during the day and at night it burns like a small star, illuminating and warming the sacred grounds, acting as a beacon for weary travellers, and as a warning for the Undead to stay away. A handful of warriors from Mount Furia and Avalon remain, inspired by the noble Priests and hungry for something to believe in aside from steel and glory. Amongst them is Chief Justiciar Atticus, a man who always felt out of place in the royal court and prefers the quiet halls of the temple and the spiritual dialogue of the Priests to the constant political chatter and machinations that plagued his old post. Together they have fortified Sanctuary to be bigger and stronger. It stands

ever-vigilant against the threat of the Undead. The people of Sanctuary are the gatekeepers to the Gemini Peninsula.

## FROM GUILT TO GLORY

Drax Redhand, a Furian scholar of great renown, was saved by the Priests of Sanctuary shortly after the Fell attacked Mount Furia. When the onset of the Red Rage began to consume him and he lashed out at both friend and foe in the Siege of Furia, it was the timely arrival of Sanctuary's Priests that saved Drax from a bloody and guilt-ridden end. They managed to stop him from causing further destruction once the Fell threat was beat back. They brought Drax, along with many other Furians, back to Sanctuary, to tend to their wounds—both physical and emotional. There was something calming and soothing about the monastery and its location that put Drax's spirit at ease.

When the Undead horde came, Drax wanted to stay and help the Priests defend their home, but he was given a different task by Brother Zin, a fellow Furian who had chosen a life of faith and sworn himself to Aluvane. Brother Zin sent Drax to the three capital cities as an emissary to seek help against the Undead. Drax's charismatic presence and his skills as an orator made him the best fit as an emissary and gave Sanctuary, and subsequently all of Unity, a chance at survival. Drax's mission would end in success: he convinced the Furians and Humans to spare enough people and resources to fortify Sanctuary. The Human Emperor Thaddeus even sent his Chief Justiciar Atticus Goldrin to lead the operation and train the Priests at Sanctuary in warfare.

Once a single monastery that housed around fifty people at any given time, Sanctuary now consists of three main complexes and a massive courtyard. Sanctuary's largest building is the Temple of Light. Here, Priests and worshippers from all around may come to pay homage to Aluvane the Dawnwalker. The temple was built after the Great Calamity, and it stretches vertically over multiple levels. Comprised of stone and steel, the temple was built to support the largest luminator ever created: the Lightcatcher. The Lightcatcher is a large sphere of glass and crystal imbued with alchemical properties that allow it to capture and store sunlight. It is mounted at the apex of the temple and surrounded by an apparatus of mirrors that allows it to focus its captured light towards the polished walls of Brightwind Pass when needed.

The original monastery has been expanded upon to become the living quarters for the Priesthood and to provide lodgings for travellers seeking refuge. It is a large wooden building, sparsely decorated with holy symbols and lined with rooms and beds. In the centre of the building is a large mess hall and a grand table of solid oak that stretches the entire length of the quarters.

The final building that rounds out Sanctuary is the armoury and forge. It is the smallest of the three complexes but a necessity given the horrors that now dwell on the other side of the Pass. It is here that the holy men and women shed their robes to don battle armour. It is a plain building, and open concept. A forge sits at one end, accompanied by workbenches and tools. The rest of the space is lined with armour, weapons, and raw materials with which to forge new weaponry.

### MANA MINES

The sweltering deserts that comprise the Iron Plains, while mostly barren and inhospitable, hold certain treasures that are hotly sought-after by those with an eye for profit. The Mana Mines are one location of such treasure. Deep in the sandy dunes of the Iron Plains, a vast complex of tunnels and pits lies hidden. The underground network stretches and winds over many kilometers in all directions. The caverns that lie beneath the sands are lined with Kyrindian crystals and a handful of other rare minerals and metals.

Kyrindian crystals fetch a handsome price anywhere in Unity as they are used to power all manner of technology, focus magicks, and are also fashioned into stunning jewellery for the wealthy. There are few known places in the world that house large concentrations of these crystals; the Mana Mines are the largest natural depository discovered thus far. While the areas closest to the surface have been depleted from over-mining, an immense system of caves runs deeper into the earth than has yet been explored.

The Mana Mines are a hotly contested area with no one faction holding official claim over the territory. The location of the Mana Mines is closest to the Human capital of Avalon, and once belonged to the Human Empire. The creation of the Taloran Accords and the alliance between the three major races of Unity saw Humanity relinquish control of the resource-rich zone as a sign of good faith towards the union. The Mana Mines cover a large area, and shortly after the Taloran Accords were enacted parts of the zone began to be claimed unofficially by various races. The Furians have set up their excavation

site in the eastern part of the Mana Mines; the Valla to the north; and the Humans to the west. Since the Great Calamity, the Afflicted have also arrived to settle part of the Mines. Of all the factions, the Afflicted depend most on the Kyrindian crystals for their survival, as the crystals are used to activate their implants and machine parts.

While rich with reward, the Mana Mines also hold great danger. Once considered a fairly safe place, the mines have become an increasingly risky venture as miners are forced to travel deeper than ever to retrieve crystals. Initial excavation teams were able to safely extract an incredible amount of Kyrindian crystals from the first few levels of the Mana Mines during the Crimson War. This allowed the industrial war machine to churn out Titan Rigs and advanced weaponry at a rapid pace, helping the allied forces turn the tide of the war and beat back the Crimson Horde. But the areas closest to the surface were eventually all but mined out, and teams needed to venture deeper into the network of tunnels and caverns to find the Kyrindian crystals.

As they went deeper, the air became thinner and tinged with a bluish mist that intensified the further down the teams dug. The mist causes many to grow lightheaded and confused. The miners call it "Mana sickness." Those who tarry too long see this malaise progress to intense anxiety and eventual panic. Those rare few that have been fortunate to recover from Mana sickness recall hearing a cacophony of whispers as their mental symptoms worsened. These unfortunate sufferers could not shut out the voices, which grew so loud they could no longer hear their own thoughts—they truly lost their minds. To an outside observer, those in this advanced stage will appear to be insane. The speed of progression and duration of Mana sickness depend on the victim's constitution and the concentration of the raw, unprocessed crystals. On average, a miner can expect to reach the final stages of Mana sickness within eight hours. When miners afflicted with Mana sickness are not brought up to the surface in time, their condition becomes irreversible.

Before fully understanding the detrimental effects of Mana sickness, hundreds of miners were struck with the debilitating condition. Many attempted to work through it; almost all of them lost their minds completely and eventually ran screaming deeper and deeper into the tunnels, never to be heard from again. In recent times, miners have employed alternating schedules and developed breathing apparatuses that allow them to mine for longer stretches of time. Strict rules have been put in place to preserve the safety of those working the mines. Even still, all miners occasionally come down with a bout of Mana sickness and some swear they can hear the voices and whispers of the miners that have been lost to madness in their minds after all these years. Whether this is a hallucination or actual truth has yet to be determined.

Aside from the insidious blue mist, physical threats are an increasingly frequent risk for those that continue to delve deeper into the mines. Lizards, indigenous to the desert sands, often find their way into the mines and scurry in search of spiders and beetles to feed on. Some have been lost inside the winding tunnels for so many centuries they have become saturated with the Kyrindian energy. These creatures have grown to several meters long, and are armed with glowing blue scales and sharp, bladed spikes. Miners that have caught sight of them—usually a pair of glowing blue eyes in the darkness—call them Basilisks. To look into the Basilisk's gaze is to invite oblivion, as they transform those that stare for too long into crystal. There have only been a few accounts of brave souls managing to slay a Basilisk. The creatures are worth almost ten times as much as a Kyrindian crystal of equal size and weight as people covet their scales, their venom sacs, and eyes.

## TITANSFALL

*Titansfall is home to an overgrown Vermisidon. The locals call her "Annabelle." It's not known how a Vermisidon, a gigantic serpent which is native to the scorching sands of the Iron Plains, managed to make its way this far north.*

A valley of steel and buried wonders, Titansfall was the location of a battle that shook the earth for days as Giants of steel and flesh clashed in a deadly and unending melee. After the Crimson Horde had been scattered and sent retreating into the Great Wilds by the combined might of the three races, there was a time of peace across Unity. The tranquillity was broken when a sighting of gargantuan creatures occurred in the northeast, coming out from the Great Wilds.

A small army of Giants, the heavy-hitting elite of the Ivory Queen's Crimson Horde, was on a rampage throughout the countryside. Several settlements were destroyed and almost all the residents were killed or eaten by the Giants. Those that survived fled to find help. Word reached Taloran (before it was moved to the Tempest of Terror following the Great Calamity), and the ruling Triumvirate agreed to send help immediately. An army marched to the northeast to stop the threat. The army was woefully unprepared for what was waiting. Reports from survivors had described several Giants, but in fact there were several dozens of them—a number unprecedented since the time of the Crimson War. The force sent out to quell the threat only had enough ordnance to take on a handful of Giants—nowhere near enough to bring them all down.

The Taloran Army sent scouts to infiltrate the Giants' camp and to learn of their plans to strike at Mount Furia. The Giants sought to harness the great Furian forges to craft weapons and exact revenge upon the three races that had shattered the Crimson Horde. Furia would be destroyed and help

would not come soon enough. The commander of the army decided to task her fastest runners to send word to all the major cities, while the army would try to distract and delay the Giants from reaching Furia. A seal invoking statutes from the Taloran Accords was placed on each of the messages.

With the messengers en route to the major cities, the Taloran Army began their skirmish with the Giants, using their superior speed and manoeuvrability to avoid being crushed. After the initial rounds of ordnance were spent, the army could do little damage to the Giants but continued to poke at them and pull them farther and farther away from Mount Furia. The tactic worked brilliantly at first, but soon the men and horses began to tire. The guerilla nature of their strategy stretched the attacks on for weeks, but rations and manpower began to run dangerously low. There were fewer places to hide the farther they retreated; the open terrain left them at a horrible disadvantage against their colossal enemies.

With only a handful of troops left from the thousands that had marched from Taloran, the survivors decided to take one final stand against the Giants. The brave few who were left clanged their weapons against their shields, which proudly bore the Taloran emblem that represented the unity between all three races. Valla, Furian, and Human stood side by side, awaiting their inevitable deaths and hoping that the time they had bought would be enough for reinforcements to come and save Mount Furia.

The Giants approached from far off in the distance, their massive lumbering shadows blotting out the sunlight from the horizon. The silhouettes began to grow in number. There were so many Giants! But among those colossal shapes were not just Giants: the Titan Rigs had arrived. The shadows did not advance further upon the battered remnants of the Taloran Army; instead, the earth shook with such force that the ground cracked and soldiers lost their footing and stumbled. A titanic battle was ensuing between metal and flesh as Titan Rigs of Vallan, Furian, and Human design slammed into the throng of Giants. The sky was lit with flashes from Rig cannons and the dreadful quiet that had hung in the air

was shattered by the sounds of bone crunching and metal bending.

The handful of soldiers and cavalry left from the Taloran Army scurried about, attempting to steer clear of the Titan Rigs and the Giants. The battle raged on for hours across the entire expanse of the valley. Never had there been such a gargantuan battle—not even during the Crimson War were so many Giants and Titan Rigs to be found in a single spot. By the time night had fallen, there remained only a small handful of Titan Rigs, all of them heavily damaged and low on power. The valley, once beautiful and lush, had been transformed into a smoking wasteland of burned flesh and twisted metal. It began to rain at the battle's end: a light drizzle that accelerated into a torrential downpour. As the survivors began their march back to civilization, the valley became flooded, and rain and mud began to bury the terrible battlefield.

Before the Great Calamity the valley was temperate and saw much rainfall. After, Titansfall and the surrounding area became a parched land of dirty sand. Titansfall is the largest graveyard of Titan Rigs and Giants in Unity. The memory of the epic battle that occurred there has been blurred by time. After the Great Calamity, much of the technology used to create and maintain Titan Rigs was lost, and the graveyard at Titansfall became a destination for scientists, explorers, and scavengers looking to make a quick Denerim. The corpses of the Giants have long since decayed, and only their bones are left behind. The real treasure at Titansfall is the various parts of Rigs that were torn off in the battle of the behemoths. Rig parts fetch a handsome price on the black market and are particularly sought-after by the Afflicted—quite possibly the only group of people that can truly utilize the potential of the technology. This has made Titansfall a haven for thieves and thugs looking to score easy money. Afflicted Harvester groups also frequent the area and often kill two birds with one stone: finding a bounty in Rig parts and also some organic parts thanks to the intrepid explorers and unsavoury rogues that visit the area.

The governments of the major races have taken a particular interest in Titansfall as of late, after seeing how lucrative the area has become since the technological dark age. With so many people mining the area for parts, there has been a push for an official claim to the location between the Valla, the Furians, and the Humans. The matter is largely unsettled. There have been unconfirmed rumours of one faction capturing Vermisidon, also known as the sand serpent, larvae from the Iron Plains and releasing them into the area. Once grown, sand serpents are vicious predators, able to devour a man whole. Some believe the sand serpents are being released as a deterrent to protect the area from scavengers that might pick it clean before whoever is responsible can mine the area for everything it's worth.

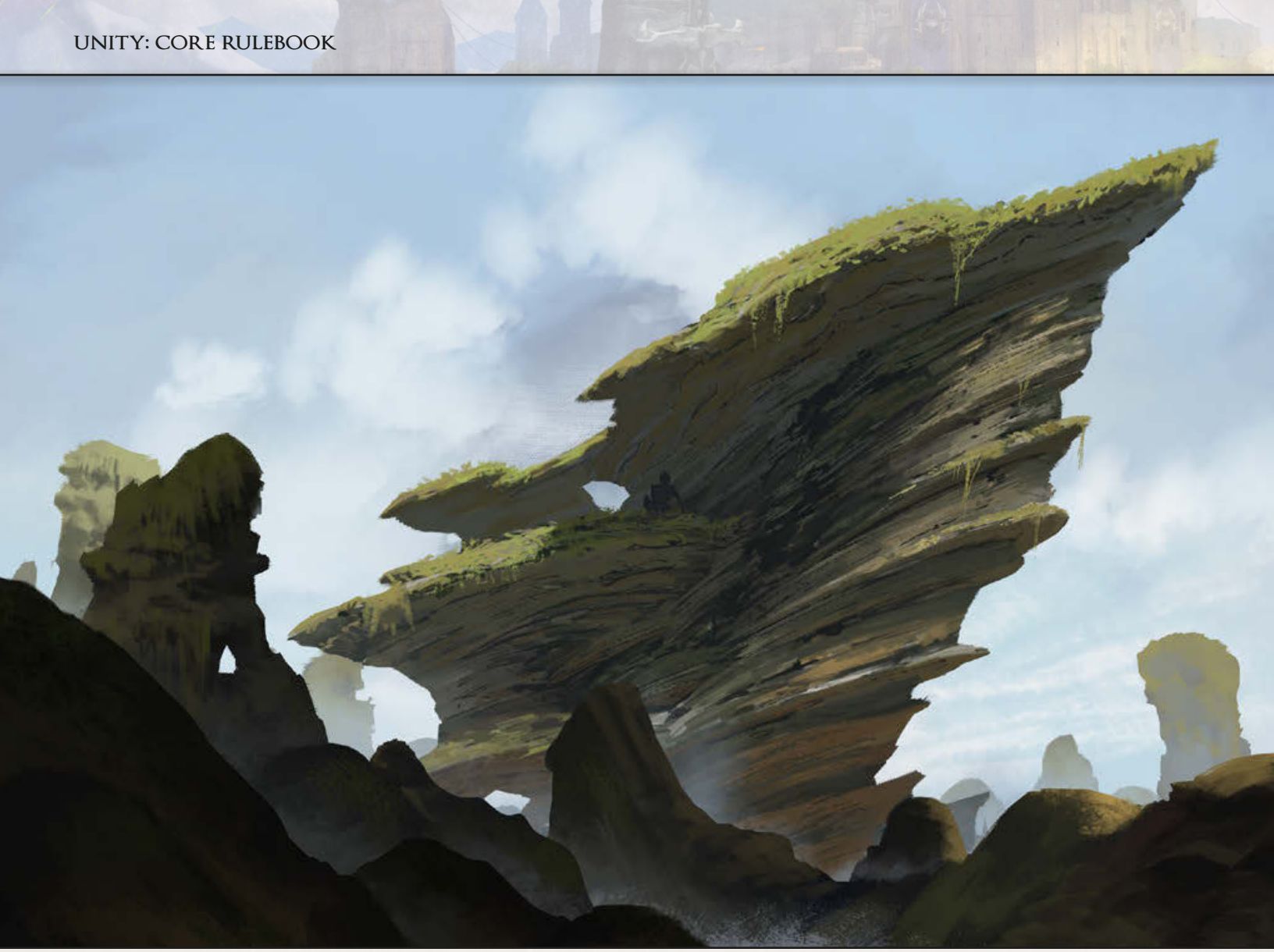
The city of Taloran was created during the Age of Unity, when all three races needed to unite against the Crimson Horde. They created a city ruled by a Triumvirate: made of a representative of each major race. Taloran is an exemplar of harmony: all three races live there in peace and support of each other. It is the only place of its kind and had become a sort of utopia—until it had to be transported, at great sacrifice, to the Tempest of Terror in order to defend against the ever-burning portal with its endless outpouring of Fell.

### IVORY'S REST

The shattered island that sits on the western edge of the known world was the site of a horrible crime. The land bears the scars of a tragic, titanic battle in which the Children of Unity fought and killed their Mother the Ivory Queen. The repercussions of the event echoed across the cosmos and pulled the Skyfather back from across the sea of stars to punish the Children for their horrendous act. When the Skyfather moved to strike the world, pulling back only at the very last moment, that land mass where his beloved had been slain was grazed by his powerful blow and split off, forming an island.

Before the Great Calamity, there had existed a sacred place known as the Throne of Heaven. The Throne was a conduit to the Divine, and a place of pilgrimage for those of faith that yearned for a connection to the Mother and Father. It was here that the Children of Unity gathered their forces to call down the Ivory Queen and make her answer for her crimes against them. After all, it was she that had created and sent the Crimson Horde after them. It was she that had forced them to abandon their way of life and unite to resist extinction. But in their sinful pride they could not see the wisdom and the love within her actions.

In the present day, the area is starkly different to the dreariness of the nearby Dreadmarsh or the cold and rainy shores of the Shattered Coast, to which Ivory's Rest was once attached. The island itself is a lush and vibrant place, a ray of sunshine illuminating its face even on days when overcast skies abound across the Roaring Depths. Some say the Skyfather still watches over his beloved's resting place. Even though there has been no trace of the Skyfather's presence since the Great Calamity, holy men claim that he left an angel to watch over Ivory's Rest and ensure its beauty remains unharmed as a testament to his love for the Ivory Queen. Others with a more



*If your players visit Ivory's Rest, make sure to beef up any creatures they come across. All of the Crimson Horde that reside on this island are smarter, stronger, faster, and bigger than their mainland counterparts.*

pragmatic view believe the land remains pristine because it is suffused with a small portion of the Ivory Queen's essence. In life, as in death, she remains ever radiant.

Ivory's Rest is full of wondrous creatures. When her Children confronted the Ivory Queen, she had relinquished her divine control of the Crimson Horde already. There were a few creatures that remained loyal nonetheless, emerging of their own volition from the Great Wilds to join their Queen in her final stand. For their loyalty, the Ivory Queen blessed them: as she fell, she sent a final enchantment to usher those creatures into hiding. Once the united forces of the three races had withdrawn from the coast, the creatures re-emerged to pay their final respects to their queen. It is believed that the Skyfather, who had returned by this time, tempered the strike that began the Great Calamity when he saw these wildlings mourning their queen. If such savage creatures, created for the purpose of war, could know love, perhaps there was hope for all of his Children yet.

In the centuries following the Great Calamity, the inhabitants of Ivory's Rest have flourished and are fiercely protective of their paradise. The island is a lucrative place for natural resources, in the form of rare herbs, stones, and ore. Everything here grows a bit bigger and brighter, and carries with it a hint of divine resonance. Apothecaries swear the medicines they make from the plants on Ivory's Rest are significantly more potent than those made from plants found on the mainland. Jewellery fashioned from stones and gems from Ivory's Rest sparkle brighter than their mainland equivalents. Metal refined from the ore mined off the island is stronger and carries with it a golden sheen. It is said that weapons fashioned from Ivorian steel are capable of shattering Fell steel. Perhaps the greatest treasure that lies on Ivory's Rest is the remains of the Ivory Queen. Parts of her physical avatar were scattered across the world, but they are most concentrated on the island. Her tears alone have been rumoured to bring the dead back to life, though once used, the tear is gone forever.

Because of the abundance of highly sought-after natural resources and potentially divine treasure, Ivory's Rest is often the target of greedy businessfolk and unsavoury types looking to make a quick Denerim. Travel to Ivory's Rest is possible only by boat or airship. While the trench between the mainland and the island is fairly narrow, swimming is a dangerous affair even at its thinnest point due to the frequency of Drift storms and its proximity to the Tempest of Terror. The coastal region around the Tempest of Terror is saturated with Drift energy, and storms constantly churn through the area in all directions. Strangely, Ivory's Rest itself is completely unaffected, as if shielded entirely from the perpetual anomalies that spring up around it.

The creatures that live on Ivory's Rest bear a striking resemblance to their counterparts in the Great Wilds. The main difference is that they are enhanced in size, strength, and intelligence. The Crimson Horde is known for its ferocity and untamed spirit. Its creatures are like a roiling storm, raw and full of wildness. Those that inhabit Ivory's Rest, however, bear a much more calm and deliberate demeanour. Orcs, Goblins, Giants, Aquillians, and many other creatures hold hidden wisdom in their eyes. They speak articulately and live in harmony with each other. There is no pecking order as there exists among the Crimson Horde elsewhere. Here on Ivory's Rest, all creatures are equal and everyone has a part to play in the upkeep of the paradise they've come to call home.

Be wary, however, should you try to visit Ivory's Rest. Do not take their civilized disposition as a sign of weakness. Their ferocity and savagery remain fitting of the Crimson Horde, and if their home is threatened they will do anything to keep it safe—whether from invaders or from those who wish to exploit the land.

## THE DREADMARSH

The lands that now comprise the dangerous zone known as the Dreadmarsh were once lush coastal plains vibrant with life and sun-soaked days. The Great Calamity changed all of that. The Dreadmarsh now stands as the terrible scar left behind by the Skyfather's strike. If the Dreadmarsh is the scar, then the Tempest of Terror is the ever-festering wound at the heart of it all that will not heal. Untold amounts of Drift energy burst forth, spreading across the land and warping everything it touched.

Perpetual Drift storms throw sheets of dark rumbling clouds across the entire area, shrouding it from the light of the sun. The Drift energy, combined with the choking storms, creates a heavy heat that oppresses the land, transforming the coastal plain into a dank bog. A thick fog rises from the ground and lingers in the air, further obscuring visibility and imparting a particularly nauseating stench to those that must traverse the marsh.

The Dreadmarsh is a place of great danger due to its proximity to the Tempest of Terror. The open portals allow untold terrors to spill out and make their home within the murky swampland. Most of the indigenous life that existed before the Great Calamity has either been mutated from the constant exposure to intense Drift and Fell energy or has been devoured by the Fell beasts that live there. Even with the Sentinels of Taloran ever-vigilant at the Tempest's doorstep, travel in the Dreadmarsh is ill-advised for all but the most seasoned of adventurers.

Aside from the Fell, the creatures that are found in the Dreadmarsh are mostly amphibious or insect, enlarged by their constant exposure to Drift energy. Having adapted to the harsh and predatory environment of the Dreadmarsh over centuries, these once natural creatures have become highly aggressive and will most likely attack any unfamiliar party on sight. Some of the more intelligent creatures, such as the Murkwalker, have been known to set traps for unsuspecting adventurers. Recently, there have been reports of Undead in the Dreadmarsh as well. The Undead are considered a peculiar occurrence due to the Dreadmarsh's great distance from Risen territory, which sits on the opposite coast.

Still, many enter the Dreadmarsh for varying purposes. The area is popular with Driftwalkers as the Tempest of Terror is a powerful conduit into the Drift. Instead of having to wait for a breach to spawn, Driftwalkers can force open a line of communication into the Drift by being in close proximity to the largest portal of all. The most powerful of the Fell often come through the Tempest as it's the only breach that's large enough to allow them to enter the physical realm with relative ease. Driftwalkers often strike bargains with these high-ranking demons in exchange for greater powers.

Experienced Fell Hunters also use the Dreadmarsh as a hunting ground, taking an apprentice with them to give them firsthand experience at hunting Fell. These newer cadets are forbidden to enter the marsh alone, and must always be accompanied by a teacher. Wealthy merchants often hire mercenaries to travel to the Dreadmarsh to procure grisly valuables such as the pelts, fangs, and talons of the Fell and the twisted animal life that roams the area. There is a strong demand across Unity for such exotic trophies.

*The Dreadmarsh is a very dangerous place. It's not a recommended zone to explore for inexperienced adventurers. The Tempest of Terror, lying at the heart of the Dreadmarsh, is a constantly open portal to the horrors that lurk in the Drift. Breaches are dangerous enough when they occur in relatively safe places and only last for a short while; the entire Dreadmarsh is a constant open breach, which ensures that danger is always lurking around the corner.*

## THE TEMPEST OF TERROR

The Tempest of Terror is often referred to as the very gateway to Hell. It hovers, a giant flaming gash in the air, normally a hundred meters tall and half that in width. Only about a Human's length off the ground, it is a portal from which nightmares spill. As a direct link into the Drift, it is used by the Fell legions as a means to enter the physical world where they are able to wreak havoc and corrupt all that lies in their path. The portal itself is able to stretch and expand to many times its resting size, allowing for a sizeable demonic army to come through at one time. During its initial creation, these invasion events occurred with alarming regularity. As the denizens of Unity began to rally and fight back, the Tempest of Terror has been precariously contained, yet continues to threaten all life in the world. The land surrounding the flaming portal is dead and ashen black. The sheer amount of Fell-tainted Drift energy pouring out from the Tempest has corrupted everything around it, and left nothing but a dreary and forsaken landscape.

The sparkling city of Taloran sits but a cannon's shot away from the ever-burning portal. Its walls are constantly reinforced since the Great Calamity and its ballistae and cannons are loaded and pointed at the Tempest of Terror. The Sentinel Army that now comprises over half the population of the city stands ever-vigilant at its gates. All three of the major nations have an agreement to provide equal resources and support to Taloran as part of the Guardian Protocol created to contain the Fell threat at its primary source. While each nation kept a reserve of Titan Rigs for their own defense, their best ones were all sent to reinforce Taloran's defenses. Weapons, armour, and manpower are also funnelled towards Taloran and keep the fortress city well supplied and in fighting shape. Invasions from the Tempest are varied; some are on a grand scale while others are small raids. The defenders of the Tempest must always be prepared for what comes their way. Should Taloran fall, the rest of Unity would surely follow in due time.

The area around the Tempest of Terror is saturated intensely with Drift energy. While the effects weren't readily apparent, a new generation has grown up behind the precarious safety of Taloran's thick stone walls that show the effects of saturation from Drift energy. The radiation from the Tempest of Terror seems to affect the young, especially the unborn, the most. The children of the brave men and women who live and serve in Taloran are born with peculiar features: horns, ashen pale skin, and pupil-less eyes. Their appearance, however, gives no cause for alarm. These children, who eventually grow up to be citizens and soldiers, bear their features as a mark of honour. They symbolize the sacrifice and commitment of their parents in protecting the larger world from the horrors of the Fell.

## HAZARDS OF THE JOB

Rubens' Red Lung is an affliction that strikes those working in chemical sluices; it is a consumptive disease characterized by shortness of breath, headaches, and coughing blood. Clay Rot affects those who work in the clay refineries, mines and quarries; it is a skin condition in which a cumulative absorption of toxic metals occurs through the feet, legs, and hands. The result is a chronic rash resulting in open sores and severe palsy. As both conditions are due to repetitive exposure to these dangerous working conditions, no significant medical advances have been made. Both are generally considered "hazards of the profession."

### MAGMAR, ANVIL OF THE HEAVENS

While the forges of Mount Furia are renowned for the incredible metalworks they churn out, the greatest Furian craftsmanship comes from a sacred place called Magmar. Dubbed the Anvil of the Heavens by the Furians, Magmar is home to a star that fell from the skies when the Furian race was still in its infancy. The Furians speak of the legend of their mother's love, when she dove into the heart of a star to steal a sliver of its power for her children. They say the Star yearned to be whole again, and thus came down from its lofty home in the night sky to be closer to the part that it had lost.

The day it crashed into the earth, Mount Furia and the surrounding countryside were rocked by the explosive impact. When the people went to investigate they found a smouldering crater hundreds of meters deep, with a massive rock of the deepest black embedded in the hole it had created. The surface of the rock glimmered and danced with a myriad of colours when light struck it—it was both beautiful and haunting. The crater was a perfect circle and the rock, a perfect sphere. Those initial brave souls that dared step foot on the rock found it difficult to walk on due to its shape, but this was quickly overlooked as a sensation of warmth from the glassy black surface met their feet. This warmth travelled from their feet to the tops of their heads, putting them at ease, as if they were being cradled in the arms of a loving mother.

At the very centre of the rock lay a protrusion that jutted upwards about a meter from the otherwise perfectly smooth and rounded surface. The protrusion was long—about the length of two Furians lying down head-to-toe. It formed a flat, table-like surface. The Furians, primitive at the time, believed it to be an altar on which offerings were to be made to the Skyfather and the Ivory Queen. They came to call the place Magmar—the Heart of Fire—to honour the warmth that still radiates from the shiny black rock.

For years after the Star fell, the Furian people paid pilgrimage to the sacred place, burning offerings and making sacrifices on what they had come to believe was an altar. There were some sacrilegious individuals who looked upon the holy rock and saw the potential for profit. Many attempted to break off pieces of the fallen star in hopes of selling them as relics for a lofty sum, but all who tried failed. There was no material on earth that could break the obsidian landmark; not even a single chip was made, no matter how hard it was struck. Eventually, word of its invulnerability spread through the land and the attempts to exploit the phenomenon dwindled and Magmar once more became a place of pious worship.

This practice continued for several centuries, until the legend of the Three Hammers changed Magmar's fate forever. While still a holy place, Magmar is now a far cry from the altar it was once believed to be. The table that protrudes from the centre of the fallen star is used as an anvil, by only the greatest of blacksmiths, to forge items of wondrous power. These blacksmiths must not only possess the highest skill and expertise, but also a Starhammer in order to forge at the Anvil of the Heavens. Of the three Starhammers that exist, only one is currently used. Of the other Starhammers, one has been lost and the other locked away and hidden, waiting for someone worthy to wield it.

**Legend of the Three Hammers:** *A tale for Furian children.* Furian society reveres its craftsmen. No Furian city is ever complete without a mighty forge to sit at its heart. The greatest forge of all was the Royal Forge, nestled deep inside the stone halls of Mount Furia, the Furian capital city. The responsibility of

*Magmar can be a central location that you require your players to travel to when they want to upgrade their Artifacts. The lore of the area lends itself to the Artifact upgrade mechanic.*

running the Royal Forge always fell to a single Furian, dubbed the Grand Smith. The Grand Smith was chosen for their skill and craftsmanship—peerless in all of Furia. The Grand Smith had the honour of creating weaponry, armour, and personal effects for the King himself. It was the highest honour that could be bestowed on a citizen of the Furian Kingdom.

During the reign of King Domo the First, the Grand Smith at the time, Urag Slagfist, had come to grow old and frail; soon he would no longer be able to fulfill his duties as the Grand Smith. Over the next few years, he and the King would choose a craftsman from the kingdom to take his place. When the search began, word spread like wildfire across the country and every Furian who had ever wielded a hammer wanted a chance at such a prestigious position. As the weeks went on, the pool of candidates began to diminish considerably, as the Grand Smith and the King whittled it down to a handful of hopeful contenders.

Among these shortlisted few were three brothers from a small village. In their village, these brothers were renowned for their blacksmithing skills and ran a family forge that produced incredibly beautiful and high-quality crafts. Their weapons and armour were so finely crafted that they even attracted Vallan commissions. Unfortunately for the brothers, only one of them could become the Grand Smith. This limitation drove a wedge into the harmonious relationship that had existed between the three of them. Slowly the desire to become the Grand Smith, which burned in each of their hearts, took a corrosive turn. They grew argumentative and venomous towards each other. Eventually they stopped working as a team, the two older brothers breaking off to form their own businesses. The youngest brother was poor, thanks to a gambling habit, and had not saved up enough to have his own forge. He dug himself even deeper in debt as he tried for a quick fix, borrowing money from unsavoury types in the hope of winning big at the gambling halls, or by becoming the Grand Smith.

The youngest was eventually buried so deep in debt, unable to pay those he borrowed from, that he became the victim of constant beatings from his lenders. One fateful day, this abuse reached a new peak as the youngest brother was abducted by a mysterious cloaked figure and dragged through the streets of his village and out to the countryside. Those that knew him ran to his brothers to alert them. The brothers shrugged it off, thinking it was just another routine beating, but when the youngest did not come home that night they reluctantly set out searching for him.

The night was particularly dark and the two older brothers struggled to find their missing brother. Eventually they neared Magmar and noticed that someone had set all the torches there alight. There was a figure standing over the altar, the soft light of flickering torches dancing off their hooded cloak. The brothers approached, hoping to find a clue as to the whereabouts of their missing brother. To their horror they saw the youngest brother lying on the black altar, bloodied and beaten, as the hooded figure hovered over him, wielding a jewelled dagger. The brothers called out to the stranger as he held his arms above his head, both hands clasping the bladed weapon. The figure, poised to deal the deadly blow, did not flinch. The brothers exploded into action, attempting to subdue their brother's attacker, but to their dismay they found their strikes had no effect on the mysterious man. To them, it felt like they were hitting an unyielding mountain.

As despair began to set in for the older brothers, they cried out to the stranger, begging him to spare their younger brother's life. There was no price they wouldn't pay him, even if they had to toil until the end of their days, if he would let the youngest live. The powerful and menacing figure slowly lowered his arms and placed the gleaming blade on the altar beside the broken body of their youngest brother, his interest piqued by the offer. As the stranger turned around to face the exhausted brothers, they were taken aback by the appearance—or lack thereof—of the stranger. All they could see under the heavy hood was a sea of blackness, punctuated by what looked like tiny stars. Two golden glowing orbs sat where eyes should have upon a face, and they burned brightly as the ominous figure stood over them. A deep and powerful voice emanated from the hooded figure and echoed throughout the valley, causing the circle of torches to sway and flicker. The figure demanded that an offering of life be made that very night to the gods—that the youngest brother had gambled his away on a bet when he had nothing left to bet with. Now it was time to collect.

The eldest brother spoke first. He begged the figure to take his life instead. He spoke of the heartbreak that would crush his father if his youngest were to die. He spoke of his duty as the eldest to protect his siblings. Moved by his older brother's words, the middle brother began to recall memories they had made together. His older brother had always looked after the two of them, fighting off bullies, taking the blame for the mischief they caused, and giving them his share of food when it was scarce, even as he himself went hungry. The middle brother cried out for the mysterious man to take his life instead. All he had ever cared about was his craft, he hadn't looked after his younger brother and had always taken advantage of his older brother's sense of duty. If he were to do one thing right in life, he cried, let it be this.

Despite the emotional pleas of the two older brothers, the figure remained unmoved and still as the night. Behind him the younger brother, having been

listening the entire time, weakly moved his hand about the cold slab he lay on, searching for the dagger that had nearly taken his life. When he found it, he called out softly to his brothers, thanking them and apologizing for how worthless he had been all this time. With that final confession, the youngest moved to drive the dagger into his own heart. As the tip of the blade came down on his chest, it stopped a hair short from puncturing the skin. Try as he might, the youngest could not push the blade into his flesh. Some unseen force was holding the fatal strike at bay.

Finally, the hooded stranger moved. The deep, resonating voice boomed once more, but this time it took on a softer tone. "All three of you were chasing something that would consume and destroy you. You let your pride and your greed shatter the bonds of brotherhood. But today, it is through your courage and love for each other that you mend those bonds. Never forget what transpired here tonight, for you discovered a treasure far greater than any title or prestige you could ever attain. All three shall be worthy. Let it be known that the gods do not want your sacrifices, they want you to fulfill your shared destiny."

With that, the stranger raised his right hand and brought it down hard on the edge of the unbreakable altar. An explosion of light rocked the valley, and the earth rumbled with the force of the blow. When the searing light faded and the brothers could see again, they saw three pieces of the glassy black rock on the ground; they had fallen from the whole, and the edge was now broken and jagged. The three pieces were each shaped perfectly like the head of a hammer: the Starhammers. The Starhammers, when combined with the altar-turned-anvil at Magmar, could create items of absolute wonder. With the Starhammers in their possession, the brothers became the greatest forgesmiths in all of Unity. Their creations became the stuff of legends, and for the first time in Furian history, the King named not one Grand Smith, but three.

### TWILIGHT CAVERNS

At the southern edge of Vallan lands lie the Crescent Mountains. Within these mountains are housed a network of winding tunnels known as the Twilight Caverns. The caverns are a thing of wondrous beauty unlike any other place in Unity. Explorers tell of walls and ceilings that mimic the night sky: shimmering obsidian rock dotted with tiny sparkling crystals that wane and glow like myriad stars. As one ventures deeper, the scene changes from one of a night sky full of stars to a swirling tapestry of nebulous colours, as if the explorer has passed beyond the stars and entered into the heart of the cosmos.

It is easy for even a veteran explorer to find herself lost in the Twilight Caverns. Driven to distraction from the sheer beauty of the place, for all but the most stony-hearted, time dilates while walking there. Still, many intrepid adventurers will brave the labyrinth, for the caverns hold the promise of ancient power, both righteous and evil. The Twilight Caverns were not borne of natural causes—they are a relatively new fixture in the ever-changing landscape of Unity. When the Great Calamity occurred, a great battle between Vorath the Devourer and Lunastra the Silver Maiden took place there. God against god, the earth shook under the weight of their mighty blows as the mortals could only look on, praying and hoping for Lunastra to prevail. Vorath was eventually defeated—the Twilight Caverns are said to be the petrified remains of his enormous corpse.

Lunastra's divine blood was also spilled that day, and she left one of her sacred kamas embedded in Vorath's corpse to ensure that the Infernal King would never fully reconstitute himself. As time passed, this intense infusion of divine, infernal, and natural elements formed the Twilight Caverns. While it is a place of incredible beauty, it harbours a most sinister secret that few ever live to speak about. The caverns may appear to be comprised of rock and dirt, but they are sentient. A whisper of Vorath's essence still lingers in the air and it is this lingering life force that makes the Twilight Caverns such a dangerous place to explore.

Those of a weak mind may find themselves given over to the beauty inside the caverns. Time seems to slow the deeper one traverses into the network of tunnels, and what was once a night sky full of stars morphs into more flamboyant and engrossing vistas. Eventually the line between reality and illusion becomes blurred so that those who walk the caverns begin to see the things that they desire the most.

#### FEEDING THE DREAM

"These hallucinations are the machinations of a specific type of creature that lives in the caverns. It feeds you your dreams and, while you dream and become immersed in the welcoming illusions it conjures, it slowly feeds itself on you. The deeper your belief in the dream, the more life force you give to the creature. Its end game is your complete and willing surrender to the dream. When you willfully accept your new life, you add your essence to the creature, increasing its power and satiating it for the time being."

*–Ruvin Oakwind, Vallan Scholar of the Fifth Hand*

***Follow the moon.*** *Savvy players that take their time to research the Twilight Caverns and the history behind this location may ask you about the state of the moon. The illusions inside the Twilight Caverns grow in difficulty opposite of how full the moon is. The smaller the presence of the moon, the higher you should set the TN for difficulty checks concerning the illusions affecting the PCs.*

Soon, an explorer may find themselves walking not through a cavern of stone and darkness, but in a dream that speaks to their vulnerable self. An orphaned daughter may at long last be reunited with her parents. A spurned lover may finally have his beloved in his grasp, unable to question her abrupt change of heart. Those who have led hard lives, always on their guard and always fighting, might be persuaded that they can finally put down their swords, convinced that they've fought long and hard enough already; now they deserve a rest.

But these are all dangerous illusions, designed to entice and slowly, insidiously, trick the victim into allowing their death. Whatever sentient force or power holds sway in the caverns can feed only from those who surrender to the dream. The moment an adventurer succumbs and chooses the glorious new life presented to them, they are lost forever. With every successful hunt, Vorath inches closer to gathering enough power to break free from the prison Lunastra has fashioned for his physical avatar.

The strength of these illusions waxes and wanes with the state of the moon. Lunastra draws her power from the moon and when it is weakest, Vorath's influence is strongest. During the rare occasion a lunar eclipse occurs, the Twilight Caverns become a hotbed of demonic activity as breaches open easily around the area; it is as if Vorath's essence is clawing its way through from the Drift to get back to his physical body.

Aside from the danger of the Caverns' nefarious sentience, the Fell and members of the Crimson Horde have taken up residence inside the winding tunnels and caves. They are mostly to be found in the outer reaches of the Twilight Caverns. Deep in the heart of the caves, it is said that a remnant of the Silver Maiden's power still remains to prevent Vorath from claiming his physical form. This remnant of power is what draws so many to the Twilight Caverns despite the danger inherent to the place—rumour has it that whatever Lunastra left in the caverns has the power to remove the Fell Taint permanently from those afflicted with it.

**Created From Conflict:** The Twilight Caverns were formed from the corpses of Vorath the Devourer and parts of Lunastra the Silver Maiden. Vorath was the first Fell Lord to take physical form in the world when he emerged from the newly rent Tempest of Terror. Vorath's brothers, the Infernal Kings, required a great deal more energy to be brought forth into the physical realm in a form suitable for their immense power. Vorath, however, had the unique gift of being able to rapidly acquire power through his ravenous consumption of life and spirit. He entered as a fledgling demon alongside the initial legion of Fell.

As they cut a swath through the western reaches of Unity, Vorath grew quickly in power until he reached his final form: a writhing jumble of limbs, organs, and tendrils. While the Children of Unity were able to slowly whittle down the army of demons as they inched their way towards the midlands, Vorath's presence caused the allied forces to continually lose ground. They had no answer to Vorath's immeasurable power once he had fed sufficiently.

The Valla bore the brunt of Vorath's assault on the western reaches. Vallan villages and towns lay in ruins—thousands of years of history and culture wiped out as the Fell legions passed over. From her perch in the stars, Lunastra the Silver Maiden saw the grievous destruction wrought upon her favourite people. She heard their prayers and their pleas for her help. Deep inside of Lunastra, her godly instinct tempered her desire to act; if gods were to commonly interfere in mortal affairs, mortals would never be able to rise and lift themselves out of dire situations! They would never grow and come to know their own power. But this particular instance was different. A Fell Lord had emerged, one of the Infernal Kings, a being of power to rival her own. A dark god from beyond the veil had directly interfered in mortal affairs and was doing so brazenly; it would not end. When the Valla's desperation reached a fever pitch, Lunastra could ignore the call no longer.

During a climactic battle that involved the Valla and the last of their Titan Rigs, a massive pillar of white light exploded from the darkened sky and cut through the swirling grey clouds that hovered above the battlefield. The explosion of light instantly annihilated the lesser Fell while healing the Vallan warriors that were bathed in it. As the light began to fade, the gargantuan glowing figure of a beautiful woman with long, braided silver hair and Vallan features could be seen towering over the battlefield, brandishing twin kamas with crescent blades. Opposite the Silver Maiden stood Vorath the Devourer, scrambling about, looking to devour the corpses of the Fell killed by Lunastra's thundering entrance. But there were no corpses, for they had been vaporized in the blast. With an angry roar, Vorath launched himself at Lunastra, and a battle of godly proportions ensued for days. In the end, Lunastra emerged victorious, but at great cost to herself. She was grievously wounded from the battle and was unable to completely destroy Vorath's physical form.

As long as a piece of Vorath's physical avatar remained, his demonic essence could slowly find its way back into its earthly form. Lunastra, having to retreat back to the Heavens, slammed one of her sacred kamas into the writhing, eviscerated mass that had once been Vorath. The kama struck with such force that it pinned the disgusting mound of flesh deep within the earth. The sacred weapon's power would nullify Vorath's connection to his physical form and keep that form from reconstituting itself over time. With that final act, the Silver Maiden returned to the stars to rest and to heal. It is said that she still sleeps, recuperating from her long battle with Vorath.

## CHAPTER II

# CHARACTER CREATION

Before you are able to adventure in Unity, you must first create a character. This character will be your avatar and you will experience and affect the world through this character's senses and actions. This process of Character Creation is a crucial part of the game, and this chapter will guide you step-by-step in bringing your vision of a hero to life.

### SESSION ZERO

Take a moment with your group to discuss the type of game you all want to play and use this time to set expectations for both players and the GM. The agreements you come to during this step may help inform your character-making decisions. The *GM Guide* section contains a thorough write-up on how to conduct a Session Zero.

### CHOOSE YOUR RACE

Select your race. See *pg. 144* for available races and their write-ups.

### DISTRIBUTE YOUR ATTRIBUTES

You have a set of floating points in an array to distribute among your race-defined baseline attributes. Alternative rules to allow rolling for attributes are also provided.

### CHOOSE YOUR CLASS

Select your class. See *pg. 156* for available classes.

### CREATE YOUR CORE PATHS

Create or select THREE initial Core Paths. Your Core Paths define your character's history and are a reflection of the experiences and skills they bring to the table. You are encouraged to create your own Core Paths using the guidelines outlined on *pg. 138*.

### CHOOSE YOUR CLASS PERKS

Select ONE Class Perk to start off with.

### CHOOSE YOUR POWERS

Select THREE Tier 1 Powers. You do not have any Tier Tokens at Level 1 and will not be able to purchase Power Upgrades yet.

### CHOOSE YOUR EQUIPMENT

Choose your equipment based off the Equipment Table on *pg. 285*. Examine your Class restrictions before selecting your equipment.

***When you are ready.*** *When you have completed reading through the entire Character Creation chapter and are ready to create your character and fill in a character sheet, check pg. 152. There will be step by step instructions on how to calculate your combat statistics and record vital information about your character. Everything will make more sense when you combine what you've learned here and the character sheet walkthrough.*

# STEP I: CONCEPT BUILDING

## SESSION ZERO (OPTIONAL)

As a group, all the players and the GM may set aside a bit of time before the players begin creating their characters. This time will be used to engage in a Session Zero, which is a discussion about expectations between the GM and the players.

A Session Zero, while optional, can be critical in helping shape the characters that the players will be creating. It also affords the GM some clarity on players' expectations. This potentially allows for the development of some more compelling campaign points tailored thanks to the discussion in the Session Zero.

## MAKING YOUR CHARACTER REAL

While it can be easy to make a two-dimensional character such as Nazam (the muscle-bound oaf who responds by yelling and smashing first and asking questions later), there is a lot of enchantment to be experienced when a character has depth, a history, desires, needs, and maybe a mischievous secret or two. In that spirit, you might ask:

*What of Nazam's family? How was he raised? Was he dropped on his head as a child (this might explain his uncontrollable rage and lack of tact)?*

*Maybe Nazam has suffered a great deal in his life; maybe the countless scars on his body each tell a tale of loss, of sacrifice, or of shame.*

*Maybe Nazam finds his solace at the bottom of an empty bottle each night, the effects of which lead to his salty disposition and unintelligible grunts every day.*

Through these questions and musings, we breathe life and colour into Nazam. We provide plot hooks for the GM to latch onto, and poignant details for our fellow party members to slowly discover as they adventure with us. We begin to make Nazam *real!*

You don't need to write a full-fledged biography for your character—in fact, your character can and *should* evolve over time—but having a strong foundation to start off with will help significantly. Part of this Concept Building step is to ask yourself some questions regarding the character you have in mind to help shape the process of development and connect you better with your character.

## CHARACTER BUILDING QUESTIONS

Here are some questions to help get you started. These are by no means mandatory, but they will aid you as you continue along the Character Creation process.

- How would you describe your character's physical qualities?
- What motivates your character?
- What is your character's origin story?
- What type of personality does your character have?
- What does your character fear the most? What do they love the most?
- Who are, or were, the most important people in your character's life?
- What secret(s) is your character hiding?
- If you have other players that want to connect your characters together, what's your relationship to the other members of your party? Why do you travel with them?

# STEP II: CHOOSING A RACE

Every character must belong to a race. The races make up the major divisions between the many varieties of intelligent and sentient species that inhabit the world of Unity. The race you choose for your character has a significant impact on the way the character will be played in the story, as well as the type of mechanical gameplay choices you might make.

Races embody entire cultures and ways of thinking that go beyond the physical differences of distinguishing features or physical abilities. For example, the Valla, having such long lives, tend to be more apathetic; they are slow to rouse, and have a vastly different world view than the eager Humans, for whom every day seems shorter than the last. These qualities will affect the way you role-play your character and have an impact on their development.

Even if you decide to play against the grain and create a fast-talking, overly excited Valla, you will need to come up with a plausible story or reason *why* they are so unusual that relates to the existing history of the race. While it is a little bit more work, the story or reason you create will add another layer of depth to your character and potentially enhance the experience of the game for everyone involved.

Mechanically, each race offers a unique power that exemplifies their strength—they are each a little better at one thing and lacking in another. See *pg. 144* for a list of the races, their Attributes, and their powers.

## STEP III: DISTRIBUTING ATTRIBUTES

Your chosen race will define your Baseline Attributes. Now you may apply one of the following arrays to your Baseline Attributes. Each modifier must be used. Once it has been used on an Attribute, both the modifier and the Attribute are off the table for further change in this initial creation process. If you use Option 2, **you cannot exceed a value of +3** in any one Attribute at Character Creation.

| OPTION 1 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| +1 | +1 | 0 | -1 |
| **OPTION 2** | | | |
| +2 | 0 | 0 | -1 |

**Example:** Maria decides she wants to be a Furian Mystic. The base Furian Attributes are:

| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

Maria then distributes the Attribute modifiers from the previous array table using Option 2. She does this keeping in mind that once a modifier is distributed to a Baseline Attribute, both that modifier and Attribute are now locked in and can no longer be changed during this initial Character Creation process.

Maria ends up with a Furian that has the following Attributes:

| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 - 1 = [1] | 1 + 0 = [1] | 0 + 2 = [2] | 1 + 0 = [1] |

### ROLLING FOR ATTRIBUTES

Should your GM and group agree, you may also roll for your starting Attribute modifiers. You stand a chance of being lucky and scoring one or more **+2** modifiers, but you could also have the unfortunate chance of receiving all **-1** modifiers. The choice is ultimately up to you and your group.

**Roll 1d10 four times.** The results below are your modifiers.

| DIE RESULT | MOD |
|---|---|
| 1-2 | -1 |
| 3-6 | 0 |
| 7-9 | +1 |
| 10 | +2 |

### ATTRIBUTES

**MIGHT.** Determines your physical strength and hardiness. The ability to smash things, withstand damage, and exert yourself are a function of Might.

**AGILITY.** Determines your physical grace, speed, and reflexes. The ability to dodge, perform acrobatics, and beat others to the punch are a function of Agility.

**MIND.** Determines your mental acuity, intelligence, wisdom, and willpower. The ability to recall knowledge, read people, perceive things and resist mental attacks is a function of Mind.

**PRESENCE.** Determines your personal magnetism and a certain intagible "X factor". The ability to socialize gracefully, influence others, and acquire favour is a function of Presence.

## STEP IV: CHOOSING A CLASS

As a budding hero, your character belongs to a Class. A Class can be considered a specialty or vocation that your character is versed in: your character may have an innate talent that makes them the perfect fit for their Class; or they may have achieved greatness in their Class through hard work and determination. Most of the time, it's a combination of both talent and effort.

Your character's Class will strongly define their abilities, tactics, and their role on the battlefield. Class will also provide perks that influence how your character interacts with the world outside of combat. As an example, Judges are revered by the people and have a commanding presence about them, which means that playing a Judge might result in more favourable interactions with the common folk throughout the land. These favourable interactions are a byproduct of a perk inherent to the Judge Class.

Your Class will determine the type of armour and weapons you are competent at using, and also provide you with a list of Class Powers that you can choose from to further customize your character and fit your vision.

It's important to read through the **Class Introductions** to gain a better understanding of what each Class brings to the table and what they are about. Within a Class, there is still a level of customization based on your choices as a player. How you decide to build your character as (s)he grows will have a profound effect on how your Class plays as a whole. See *pg. 156* for **Class Introductions** and **Powers**.

*While there is no limit to where you can go with your character, Unity is a game of heroes and cooperation. It does not by default support blatantly evil characters. Your focus when making a character is to create them with the expectation that they will go on to do great things. This is not to say you cannot have a conflicted character or a reluctant hero; on the contrary, some of these more 'grey' characterizations might lead to the most interesting interactions and relationship dynamics.*

## STEP V: CORE PATHS

Core Paths are a critical part of your character. They serve as backgrounds and glimpses into your character's history and help define the skills and experiences that they bring to the party. Core Paths can be created from scratch, or chosen from a list of pre-defined paths. You may take these pre-defined paths and modify them to your liking as well.

When creating or modifying a Core Path, keep in mind that while they enhance your character mechanically—by providing them with relevant bonuses—their main function is for character development and rich storytelling. Challenges your party might face become an opportunity to invoke a Core Path and reveal a bit of your character. The little tidbits, idiosyncrasies, or outright quirky behaviours of a character can slowly be explained as the character is fleshed out through their Core Paths.

### HOW DO CORE PATHS WORK?

Every player starts off with **3 Core Paths**. These are usually milestone events or periods of time in the character's life that have helped shape and define them. When you come up against a task that requires skill to overcome, you tend to invoke a Core Path and then receive the bonus associated with it when you make your roll.

Let's use our initial example of the muscle-bound Nazam. One of his Core Paths is called Song of the Mountain.

Nazam and his party end up in a tavern late at night with no money or valuables to trade for either a hot meal or room and board.

John, the player who created and is playing Nazam, turns to the GM and says that he wants to use his Core Path *Song of the Mountain* to create a performance for the express purpose of bringing in more customers and using it as leverage and payment for food, drink, and a bed for him and his party.

The GM notes that the crowd does look awfully bored and not much happens in this town, so she sets the target number to 14 (fairly demanding) for difficulty. The GM says John can also use his PRESENCE modifier as a bonus because this is a performance. John looks at his Character Sheet and notes that *Song of the Mountain* has a **+2** bonus. He rolls **2d10 + PRESENCE + CORE PATH (2d10 + 1 + 2)** and gets a **17**, which is more than enough to draw a crowd.

Before Nazam and his friends can celebrate, the GM requires John to describe why *Song of the Mountain* would give Nazam this bonus.

John dives into a story of how Nazam came from a minor Furian tribe: a tribe that didn't live so much in the mountain nor forge cities like most Furians do. This tribe had branched out, preferring the wild forests and cliffs near the ocean. Being so far from the mighty forges and bustling Furian cities, Nazam's people had a lot of spare time on their hands.

They learned to cultivate and create new pastimes and one of them was a performance that paid homage to their great lineage and expressed appreciation for the bounty nature gave them. In the evening, Nazam's tribe would gather around a great bonfire, and sing and dance well into the depths of the night. It was one of Nazam's fondest memories as a child: standing around the crackling fire with his parents and singing along with them while dancing and laughing.

Nazam never forgot the words or the moves to the performance, and so here he is: performing once more and letting those happy memories and recollections of love flow through him for his audience.

John even takes it a step further and begins to describe the dance and how it's similar to the haka of the Maori. This paints a vivid picture in everyone's mind and makes the experience all the more immersive.

How the scene plays out: The innkeeper won't budge; things are tight enough for her already what with business doing so poorly. Nazam, fixing for both a drink and a warm bed, decides to stand up and begins to gesture. At first the movements are wild and abrupt, but soon the crowd becomes mesmerized by the rhythm as the movements transform from the gesticulations of a wild man into a dance. But the real beauty comes when Nazam begins to open his mouth and sing. A robust yet beautiful song washes over the tavern and Nazam's mighty voice carries through the windows and down the street. Before long, the tavern is packed with onlookers and new customers. Impressed with both John's roll and his story, the GM grants Nazam and the party a warm meal and bed at no charge.

### CREATING A CORE PATH

To begin creating a Core Path, ask yourself the following questions:

- What do I want my character to be good at in terms of skills? (Are they athletic? Are they knowledgeable about cultures? Do they know different languages? Are they quick with their fingers, especially when it comes to stealing things?)

- What happened in my character's life, or who did they meet, that helped them develop these skills? (Were they mentored by a legendary Mystic in the ways of arcane knowledge? Did their father raise them as if they were a boy when they were his daughter? Or were they orphaned as a child and forced to do whatever it took to survive life on the streets?)

- Does my Core Path capture 2 to 3 skills (good)? Is it terribly specific and limited (bad)? Or is it so broad that it could be abused (very bad)?

- Does my Core Path provide me with an opportunity for storytelling?

Once you've answered these questions, you'll need to come up with a title for the Core Path and then a short description that describes what the Core Path is about.

For the Core Path title, make sure it's relevant and concise. In the example earlier, *Song of the Mountain* could have also been called *Tribal Performer*. The title, when combined with its brief description, should give others an idea of what the Core Path is about and capture the spirit of the skills involved.

For the Core Path description, try to keep it to 1 or 2 sentences. You don't have to dive into the different stories that can spawn from it at all. The description is simply there to give a brief summary of that piece of history for your character. Invoking the Core Path later will then give you the freedom to explore your character and reveal the deeper bits at the table. See our sample character, Corra Redhand (*pg. 154*), for example Core Path write-ups.

**Create 3 Core Paths.**

### ASSIGNING POINTS TO CORE PATHS

Now that you have your 3 Core Paths, you need to assign each one of them a number of points. These points designate the bonus you will receive when you invoke them for a relevant task. The points can be seen as a weight of how significant or enduring that Core Path was to your character's development.

At Level 1, you have 5 Core Path points to assign. At Level 1, a Core Path cannot have less than 1 point or more than 3 points. When you receive a new point, you may add it to one of your existing Core Paths, or create a new one and put it towards that. No single Core Path can have more than 6 points.

## STEP VI: CLASS PERKS

Class Perks are bonuses that enhance your class identity and provide some mechanical advantages when you approach certain challenges. They are most often non-combat perks (with some exceptions). There will be 2 Perks available initially for each class. You may select a single Class Perk at Level 1.

See each individual Class Section for more information.

## STEP VII: CLASS POWERS

Each class has a list of Powers to choose from that are categorized into different tiers. At Level 1 you have access to the Tier 1 list of Powers. You may choose **3** Tier 1 Powers at Level 1 and will receive more as your character levels up and grows in power. Depending on your GM, choosing your powers can be a group affair, where the team can figure out some strong synergies or interesting combinations.

When choosing your Class Powers, please keep in mind that you cannot upgrade any of your powers at Level 1; you must choose 3 different powers. Beyond Level 1, you may upgrade your powers using Tier Tokens, which are awarded when your character reaches certain levels. Choose your powers wisely. Once you've selected your powers the choice is permanent.

Powers significantly affect the way your character will play in battle. The level of complexity and strategic involvement required of your character can be adjusted through your selection of powers. For a more relaxed and straightforward experience, each Class has a handful of Passive Powers to choose from that once selected are "always on." Choosing these types of powers simplifies combat while still allowing your character to feel powerful and useful.

For those looking for a more involved and tactical experience, there are plenty of Active Powers to choose from.

Many powers will have a variety of upgrades to choose from that may change the power in a significant fashion, or bolster it, adding depth and changing the way the power is utilized from its original form.

## STEP VIII: EQUIPMENT

The Class you've chosen determines which weapons and what armour you are competent at using. Anyone can wield or wear what they like but unless you have Competency with that type of weaponry or armour, you will suffer Hindrance on your Attack or Defense rolls.

At Level 1, depending on the type of game your GM is running, you can start with 150 to 250 Denerim. You may use this Denerim to purchase your starting Equipment from *pg. 285*.

### WEAPON & ARMOUR COMPETENCIES

Any character can pick up and attempt to use any piece of Equipment they come across unless the

contrary is specifically mentioned, e.g. "this blade is only usable by Phantoms." However, if a character is not competent in that class of weapon or armour, they will suffer Hindrance (*pg. 253*) in all their actions related to that item.

As an example, a Phantom has Weapon Competency in using Light and Medium Melee Weapons. They also will have Armour Competency in Light armour. So while a Phantom can always pick up a Heavy Weapon such as a greatsword or maul, when the Phantom attempts to attack with it, they will do so with Hindrance. The same rules apply if a Phantom were to try and put on a suit of plate mail armour (Heavy): the Phantom's Defense rolls would then be done with Hindrance.

To determine which weapons and armour types your character is competent in, refer to your Class description. See *pg. 285* for a list of weapons and armour and their properties.

### DUAL WIELDING (TWO WEAPONS)

For some character concepts, the idea of using two weapons at a time is a fulfilling fantasy. A raging Furian Dreadnought charging across the field with her blood-tinged battleaxes roaring through the air, one in each hand; the graceful Fell Hunter flipping up high and whipping out both his hand crossbows and firing them while upside down in mid-air.

Any character can dual wield without penalty as long as they have Competency in the weapon class that is one step above that of the two weapons they are dual wielding. If they do not have Competency in the weapon class one step above, then they will suffer Hindrance.

When you dual wield two weapons, the damage die you use is simply increased to the next classification. The Judge's dual longswords (Melee Medium) deal **2d6** total damage (Melee Heavy damage dice) on an attack instead of **1d8** (Melee Medium damage die). There are no extra attacks or bonuses for dual wielding; only the damage die increases. Dual wielding rules are in place to fulfill the fantasy of your character concept rather than confer mechanical bonuses.

**Example of proper dual wielding.** A Phantom wants to dual wield two fist weapons (Melee Light). The Phantom has Melee Light and Medium Weapon Competencies. Because the two fist weapons are considered Melee Light, and the Phantom has Competency in the next classification (Melee Medium), the Phantom can wield the two fist weapons simultaneously without suffering Hindrance. The damage die used increases from **1d6** (Melee Light damage die) to **1d8** (Melee Medium damage die).

If the Phantom were to dual wield two longswords (Melee Medium), on the other hand, they would deal **2d6** damage (Melee Heavy damage dice) but would suffer Hindrance on every attack because they lack the Competency to properly wield Melee Heavy Weapons.

### ARTIFACTS (MAGICKAL ITEMS)

Throughout your journeys and adventures, you will stumble upon some marvellous creations. There will be items of great power that will aid you in your goals. While these items are rare, they will eventually come into your possession.

Special items, or items imbued with powerful properties, emanate a unique type of energy. Consider it a radiation of sorts. This energy, while a testament to the special powers inherent in the item, is also a detriment to the wielder; too much of this energy can have unhealthy effects if the owner lacks the resilience required to use these items without harm.

Mechanically, this translates to a restriction on the amount of magickal items you may be equipped with at one time. Characters exceeding this limit will suffer Hindrance in all their actions. This limit grows as your character grows in power, therefore the stronger your character is, the more resilient they are to the energetic effects of magickal items.

You are allowed a maximum of 1 equipped Artifact at Level 1. You may refer to your Class Section on character progression to see when the capacity to equip more Artifacts increases.

## GROWING IN POWER

Your character will continue to grow in power as you embark on adventures and overcome adversity. This growth is represented by your Experience (XP) and your Level.

Characters gain XP through battle and achievements. When a character has gained enough XP, they advance to the next level and the cycle repeats itself (see XP table on *pg. 356*). The amount of XP gained is usually proportionate to the difficulty of a fight or the effort required to achieve a milestone. While XP gained through battle is the most common method of advancing your character, large amounts of XP can also be acquired by completing quests or by concluding story arcs in your campaign.

Character progression and features within each new Level are outlined in the Class Section.

# GENERAL PERKS

General Perks allow you to add another layer of uniqueness, flavour, and power to your character. These perks are free for any character of any Class to take. At Level 1 you won't be able to gain any General Perks, but as you Level-up the **Advancement Table Section** of your Class will let you know when you gain a General Perk. You may only take a General Perk once unless otherwise stated by the General Perk.

| GENERAL PERKS | |
|---|---|
| **TOUGH AS NAILS** | **+1 Armour Value** for every **25** Max HP you have. |
| **SNAKEBLOOD** | You always gain Benefit on rolls against **Poison** and **Disease**. Successfully resisting a Poison or Disease attempt against you invigorates you, recharging **2** of your Class Resource and granting you Benefit on your next action that is performed within 1 minute. |
| **HEAVY SLEEPER** | Your Recuperation die is increased by **2** (e.g. a d8 is now d10, a d10 is now d12). When using a Recuperation, you may roll twice for your HP regeneration and take the higher result. |
| **RESOURCEFUL** | Whenever you have an opportunity to roll and recharge your Class Resource, you may **add +1** to the roll. **Increases to +2 at Level 5.** |
| **INDOMITABLE** | Your Death rolls now use a **3d10**. You may **choose which 2 out of the 3 dice rolls to use** when determining the result. The amount of HP restored when you receive a second wind from your Death rolls is doubled. |
| **WEAPONS MASTER** | You may choose a single class of weapon that you have competency in to master (e.g. Heavy Melee as a Dreadnought). Your damage when wielding this class of weaponry is **increased by +1**. Can be taken multiple times (stacks). You may also take it again for another weapon class that you have competency in. |
| **JACK OF ALL TRADES** | You may **add +1** to any Attribute that is currently **not** your highest Attribute. Can be taken multiple times. |
| **BURST OF SPEED** | Once per Full Rest you may use your Movement action to cover **2 Range Bands instead of 1**. Invoking *Burst of Speed* also makes you immune to all Provoked Attacks as you move during that round. |
| **RESILIENT** | Your Max HP is always increased by an amount equal to your **Level + 5**. |
| **OPPORTUNIST** | When you successfully make a Provoked Attack, you deal **additional damage equal to half your level (HL)**. |
| **MY BROTHER'S KEEPER** | You no longer suffer Provoked Attacks when attempting to Stabilize an Ally. Your Stabilization rolls are now also capable of providing you a chance to recharge Class Resources when you roll doubles. Successfully Stabilizing a fallen Ally grants you Benefit for your next action—this bonus will fade if not used by the end of your next turn. |
| **THRILL OF BATTLE** | When you roll **two 10s** on an Attack roll, you no longer need to choose between recharging an Overdrive Power or dealing a Massive Hit: you get to do both from now on. |
| **SEIZE THE INITIATIVE** | You gain Benefit and an additional bonus equal to half your Level (HL) for all your Speed checks. |
| **MASTERY** | Once per Full Rest, before you activate a power, you may reduce the Primary Class Resource cost of that power by **2**. |

*While rare, Poison and Disease can wreak havoc on the well-being and effectiveness of your character with some very nasty penalties. Snakeblood significantly increases your chance of resisting these debilitating effects and grants a powerful bonus for doing so successfully.*

*Your friends will love you if you take My Brother's Keeper. Players are often fearful of Stabilizing a fallen Ally because of the slew of Provoked Attacks they'll take if they do.*

*Mastery can make a majority of powers free of cost, allowing you to use them even when you have zero Class Resource.*

# SAMPLE CORE PATHS

### BOOKWORM

You still remember reading your first book like it was yesterday. After that first, you were hooked, and have been devouring any tomes you can get your hands on ever since. People often look to you as the person that knows things. You tend to use words many can barely pronounce.

**Possible Bonuses.** Deciphering, Language, Knowledge

**Notes:** As you invoke this Core Path, ensure some consistency in the type of genre and material that interests your character. This defines the type of literature you've read throughout your life and helps inform the degree of bonus your GM will allow for certain tasks. e.g. If you were fascinated with the history of ancient weapons and armour, then you would receive full bonuses when identifying or understanding things pertaining to such artifacts in your travels. You might receive partial or minimum bonuses when attempting to figure out how to operate a Titan Rig as it wasn't your area of interest, but it isn't a far stretch to think you've read some old operations manual in the past.

### FIERCE COMPETITOR

You have a thirst for the rush you feel every time you test your mettle against an opponent. Naturally, you gravitate towards activities that involve competition and always push yourself to be the best you can be.

**Possible Bonuses.** Bonus will be based on the type of sport or game you actively participated in growing up. i.e. if you competed in races (sprinting, swimming, climbing) then you will receive bonuses to actions that test your Athleticism and Endurance on top of the specific type of competitive sport you once focused on. Competition can also come in the form of intellectual games, which require Intuition and Bluffing.

### INVENTOR'S HOUSEHOLD

You grew up in a house with an eccentric father who loved to tinker. He collected all the latest gadgets despite your mother's exasperated sighs and complaints each time he brought home more "junk." You didn't mind it, and as you got older you even inherited his love for taking apart things and putting them back together. There was so much to play with and so many possibilities. You began to get a feel for how everything fits together, even when they look like they don't.

**Possible Bonuses.** Technology, Repair, Craftsmanship

**Notes:** In a world rife with treasures buried since the technology-rich Golden Age, you have an easier time than your peers in figuring out their purposes and how to operate the unusual technological artifacts you uncover. You might also have a knack for patching things up using a variety of mundane materials.

### LIFE OF THE PARTY

Whenever there is a social gathering or soirée, you are always the centre of attention. You hone your charm and wit, even picking up the ability to play an instrument or two, for the express purpose of bringing joy and entertainment to others or validation for yourself—oftentimes both.

**Possible Bonuses.** Performance, Charm

**Notes:** By being outgoing, charismatic, and a shining beacon of fun, you find it fairly easy to enliven the lives of the majority of people. Sometimes your charm will fall flat when it's not in the context of the light and free nature of entertainment. You might be able to tease out a warm smile from the tavern wench who's having a bad day, but that same routine will most likely not measure up for the stone-faced guard you're trying to convince to let you take a peek inside the armoury.

### MIXOLOGIST

The power of chemistry always fascinated you as a child. Maybe you saw the wonder of medicine as the local apothecary saved your mom from the Stone Lung with a miraculous concoction. Or maybe you were enthralled at the power of the Imperial Cannons during the Summer's Eve celebrations. You wondered how a handful of black powder could cause such a fantastic ruckus. You strove to understand the science behind it all, and have mixed a few interesting concoctions of your own over the years.

**Possible Bonuses:** Alchemy, Botany, Medicine

**Notes:** Figure out the focus of your fascination with the science of chemistry. Is it concerned with potions and elixirs? Then your character should know a thing or two about plants and herbs as well. What if you're more into alchemical reactions, such as those used in explosives or transmutations? Then you might be more knowledgeable about chemical elements, combustion theory, and certain minerals instead of plants.

### PILOT

Whether it was your first poorly made sled that crashed and gave you that cool scar you sport today or the small boat you used to ferry people across Strider's Cove for a few Denerim every summer when the waters unfroze, you feel most at home navigating some form of transportation.

**Possible Bonuses.** Navigation, Technology

**Notes:** This Core Path seems to have such a narrow bonus compared to some of the others. The reason is that in the occasional situation where it is usable, it can be incredibly potent. Navigating a dinghy across choppy water or a damaged airship through an unending storm can make or break an adventure. Stumbling upon a Titan Rig and having an advantage in learning its controls and operating it can be a huge boon to you and your party, because each action taken in the Titan Rig can be very significant and game-changing.

### SON/DAUGHTER OF THE NORTH

Growing up in the unforgiving winter climate of the Great Wilds has taught you many skills for survival in harsh environments, especially cold ones.

**Possible Bonuses.** Climbing, Navigating Icy Terrain, Fishing, Finding Shelter

**Notes:** In icy climates, the full value of the CP should apply to the above bonuses. While transferable, these skills are less effective the further away you are from a cold and snowy environment (partial or minimum value granted).

### STREET URCHIN

Orphaned as a child, you grew up in the slums of the big city with only other urchins like you to call family. You had to do everything you could to survive, and that has led you to be crafty, resourceful, and a little ruthless. After all, if you weren't fast enough you didn't eat; if you couldn't read people, you might find a dagger in your back.

**Possible Bonuses.** Pickpocketing, Bluffing, Intuition, Stealth

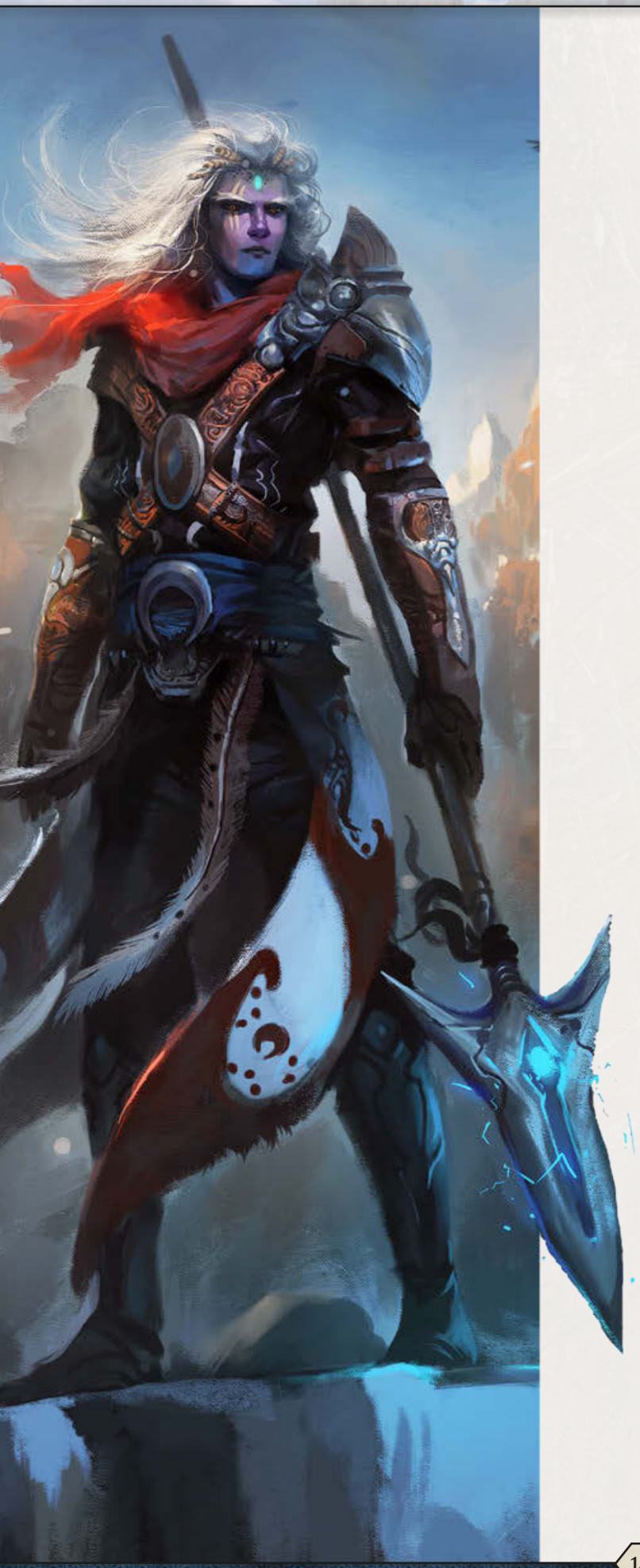
**Notes:** On the dusty city streets and in the dark alleys of the stone jungle you called home, you were king (or queen). But *outside of the city*, folks tend to be a little different than what you're used to. Without knowing the best hiding spots, vantage points, escape routes, and who's who, your possible bonuses are diminished.

### WILD CHILD

You never felt at home behind the stone walls and iron gates of the city. You preferred a quieter life, away from the hustle and bustle of civilization, and would often sojourn in the majestic forests, swimming in the shimmering lakes and running with the animals. To you, there are few greater moments in life than those when the sun is on your face and the wind is in your hair. You felt complete in nature. As you grew older, your sojourns grew longer, and eventually you found yourself spending much more time in the wilds than in the city you once called home. Your transition was complete when you realized you had been living happily—and plentifully—off the land for some time.

**Possible Bonuses.** Animal Husbandry, Foraging, Hunting, Swimming

**Notes:** When invoking this Core Path, paint a vivid picture; the forest is such a beautiful place full of colour and wonder. Perhaps you spent your days lazing under the lush emerald canopy of evergreens, letting the warmth of the noon sun wash over you as you listened keenly to the different bird calls. So long have you heard their songs that, with some effort, you can mimic their language and communicate, though minorly, with them. Even the party's Primalist raises an approving eyebrow at your prowess.



# Valla

*"Together as one."*

## RACIAL TRAITS

**Average Height:** 1.70–1.90m
**Average Weight:** 63–99kg

## ATTRIBUTE SCORES

| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

**Harmony:** Silencing your mind, a whisper of the once-great psychic power of your race awakens in you. You form a brief psychic link with your allies, taking your defenses and talents to a supernatural level.

*You may either spend a Free action to grant an extra HL+1d4 to yourself and all Adjacent Allies on Defense rolls against a single incoming attack, or spend a few moments to form an empathic bond with a single Nearby Ally, granting them a +1d4 bonus on a single skill check. Either effect must be activated before the roll is made. Can be used once per Full Rest.*

The Skyfather and his Ivory Queen smiled to each other when the first Valla sprung to life from his hands. The Skyfather had snatched the light from the rising sun and blown life and spirit into it. The Firstborn was created that day, and began a race of people created to tame and conquer the primordial world that would become Unity. The Ivory Queen took a dew drop left from the morning rain and placed it on the first Valla's forehead. With this Spirit Stone, all Valla would be psychically and spiritually linked to each other: they would never have to know the loneliness that their Mother and Father had endured for eons.

Gifted with centuries of life and a culture that operated at the speed of thought, the Valla were perfect. They erected beautiful cities that made the soul ache. The Valla were the ones to name the world *Una*, which meant "Unity" in their native tongue, for they had known nothing else since the day they were born.

As the centuries turned, the Valla, already so perfect in every aspect, began to grow complacent. They knew their shining cities would glow eternally, and they were provided with everything they required for a comfortable, if not lackadaisical, life. Their fire to thrive and forge ahead faded slowly. Vallan society began to seem frozen in time, like an impossibly beautiful mural.

When the Great Calamity struck, the prideful Valla were not exempt from the Skyfather's wrath. As the world teetered towards oblivion, he tore from them the very link that defined them and made them strong as a race—their Spirit Stones. In a single moment an entire race was plunged into

chaos and, for the first time ever, they learned what loneliness was. The agony that was the absence of thousands upon thousands of voices, now silenced, tormented the Valla as the light of their psychic community was snuffed out in an instant. It dealt an absolutely devastating blow to their civilization. The effects of The Severing still reverberate throughout Vallan lands even after hundreds of years.

Only as a new generation begins to emerge does Vallan society begin to rebuild itself—slowly—recovering gradually from their dependency on their now-defunct psychic link.

### PLAY A VALLA IF YOU WANT...

- to live long and see life through a lens measured in centuries, not decades
- to play a Class that favours grace and stealth
- to be revered and looked up to by the other, younger races
- to explore the themes inherent in the life of a wide-eyed, new-generation Valla who is reaching out and tasting the world firsthand or to struggle as a Golden Age Valla, wrestling with the reality of great loneliness due to the loss of your psychic link.

### PHYSICAL QUALITIES

The Valla have an unearthly beauty about them. Taller than the average human by about half a head, yet shorter than the mighty Furians, the Valla have slim yet strong, wiry builds. They are the most graceful of all the races. Gifted with quick reflexes and superb coordination, Vallan movement appears almost like an enchanting dance to onlookers.

The Valla share the same skin tone and hair colour range as Humans, with a few shades more. Deep purple and near porcelain–white are not uncommon skin and hair colours among the Valla. The Valla do not possess body or facial hair.

A Valla's eyes are incredibly striking. Their eye colours are always vivid. Hues of rich gold, sapphire blue, deep lavender, and emerald green are common.

All Valla are born with a Spirit Stone embedded in the centre of their forehead—even those born after the Great Calamity. The Spirit Stone's default colour is a beautiful cerulean blue when it is active and connecting the Valla together. After the Great Calamity, all Spirit Stones simmer with a muddied amber tone, indicating the loss of their psychic link.

Just above the Valla's Spirit Stone is a set of vestigial feathers. Some Valla have a more prominent "plume" than others. The purpose of these feathers has been lost to time.

### ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD

Life is experienced differently by the Valla than it is by the lesser-lived races. Some very rare Valla have lived to see the turn of a millennia. Valla reach full physical maturity in the second or third decade of their life. From there, as if frozen in time, their bodies and minds remain pristine and robust, until the last century of their life when the wiles of age begin to take their toll on their appearance and strength. With such longevity, Valla are slow to rouse. There is never a true sense of urgency—outside of immediate danger—that riles a Valla.

### PARADISE LOST

The loss of the Valla's psychic link was a devastating blow to Vallan society on many levels. All their greatness was built upon the foundation of being immediately connected to each other at all times.

Now, as the Valla begin to rebuild and explore new ways to connect, not only with each other but also the outside world that they neglected for so long, there is an opportunity for the Valla nation to be reborn, and possibly become stronger and more versatile than before.

Valla left over from the Golden Age struggle with the loss of paradise and their psychic link. Some have turned to an addictive herb called the Drifting Glory to satiate their yearning for connection. Others are just beginning their journey to rediscover who they are now that they've lost such an important piece of themselves. Newer, post-Calamity Valla see the world with fresh eyes, and fail to understand the depths of loss their elders feel since the Severing. These young Valla are optimistic, chatty, and curious.

### NAMES

**Common Male Names:** Aldruin, Altaris, Belron, Calreth, Eramdel, Malfusiel, Soren, Valaris

**Common Female Names:** Alluria, Corin, Enna, Gillindra, Lillandris, Maelleneth, Nimiriel, Shayanna, Valoria

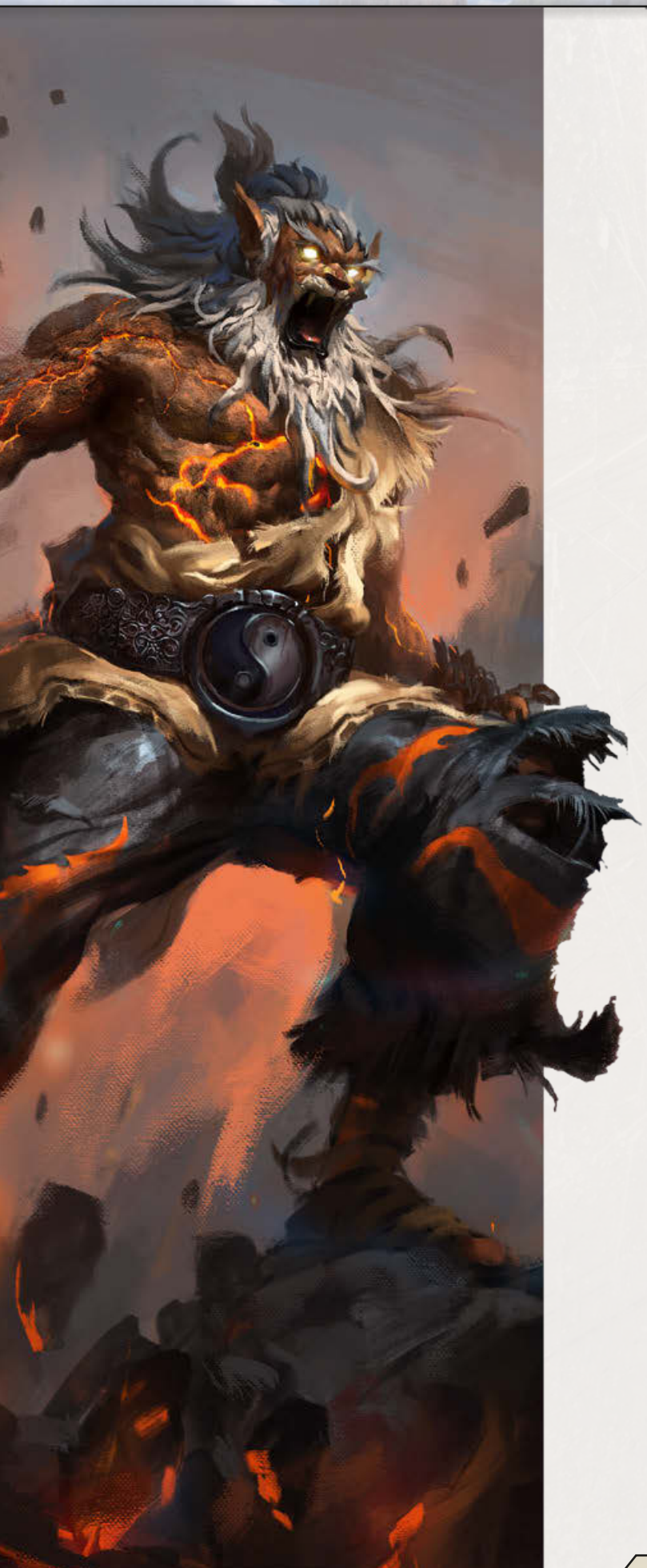
**Family Names:** Arundel, Celeborn, Dawnstar, Laromar, Stormsong, Windwalker

*While the Valla may seem haughty and aloof, the Great Calamity has spawned a new generation of Valla that are much more open and curious than their elders. The Valla's long lifespans make it plausible for a player to choose either concept to build their character upon.*

*Surprisingly, the Valla have melodic and hauntingly beautiful voices despite having evolved to never really require the use of their vocal chords. The emphasis on beauty and the finer things in life of Valla culture cultivated a strong penchant for song and art in their society.*

***Drifting Glory.*** *A mysterious, efflorescent flower that sprung up shortly after the Great Calamity. Botanists believe that the burgeoning spiritual energies bleeding through from the Drift have caused this new plant species to emerge. Various uses for the flower have been discovered. The most significant finding is that the flower's essence can be distilled into a potent drug that temporarily re-activates a Valla's psychic abilities. There have been many detrimental side effects from continued usage.* *See pg. 24.*

*One of the more interesting takes on playing a Valla has been exploring the journey of an old-world survivor who yearns for her lost connection. With only the Drifting Glory available to provide a fleeting glimpse into that psychic connection, how far will she go for her next hit?*



# Furian

*"Strength, duty, and honour."*

## RACIAL TRAITS

**Average Height:** 1.85–2.10m
**Average Weight:** 80–160kg

## ATTRIBUTE SCORES

| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

**Unbound:** Tapping into a reservoir of rage, you drive your power to meteoric levels for a brief moment.

*Deal your highest Attribute score as extra damage on a single attack, or you may add half your Level to your Might score on a skill check. Can be used safely once per Full Rest. You may attempt to use this more than once per Full Rest but risk losing control. Roll 1d10 on subsequent attempts. Rolling below a 6 causes you to perform a single attack (with the Unbound bonus) on an ally of the GM's choosing or yourself with that attack. The threshold for losing control increases by 1 with each subsequent attempt.*

Molten lava spewed forth from the middle of the mountain as the Skyfather rent it with his hands, tearing the landmark asunder. Scooping up the liquid fire before it had a chance to cool, the Skyfather mixed it with the volcanic stone that had splintered from the mountain. Steam and smoke hissed out between his divine fingers as the first of the Furian race was formed.

Forged from solid rock and infused with molten blood, the Furians were a mighty presence to behold. The Skyfather wanted a race complementary to the Valla's lackadaisical and airy nature; Unity required balance, and the Furians were created to achieve that purpose. Unmatched in physical strength, they were a solemn and stalwart race of people.

The Skyfather's beloved, the Ivory Queen, noticed that the Furians, while powerful, would burn out quickly due to the heavy demands of their physical form. She dove into the centre of a dying star and snatched from it a tiny spark—a mere sliver of the star's power. She returned to Unity and imbued her new children with a proper heart that could power their demanding bodies.

With a deep reservoir to draw from, the Furians learned to channel this newfound power and could work tirelessly for days on end. They were an industrious people, and soon their iron and stone cities dotted the lands of Unity, multiplying at an alarming rate. What they lacked in beauty and nuance, they made up for in sheer output. It was not long before they were caught up to their older sibling, the Valla, in cultural and territorial advancement.

When the Great Calamity occurred, the Furians were among the many guilty Children deserving of the Skyfather's wrath. With a heavy heart, he corrupted the heavenly spark his Queen had bestowed upon her Furian children. The reservoir of power that the Furians had grown accustomed to drawing from became unstable. Those that reached too quickly and too deeply were thrown into what became known as the "Red Rage:" a state of madness that drove those affected into a murderous frenzy. Too often a Furian awoke from the Red Rage with hands stained with the blood of their loved ones.

For a culture so steeped in honour and family, the advent of the Red Rage drove many Furians to shun all emotionality. A small handful of Furians were determined to conquer the Skyfather's curse, and preached about an internal place that lay between rage and serenity, a place where all Furians could realize their power without falling victim to it.

### PLAY A FURIAN IF YOU WANT...

- to come from a culture that values strength, honour, and family
- to play a Class that favours might and blunt force trauma
- to have a feral side to your character
- to explore themes of restraint, regret, and redemption, whether in the character of a typically jaded and closed off Furian who has succumbed—or fears to succumb—to the Red Rage, or as one of the few Furians who preach the possibility of emotional temperance and control.

### PHYSICAL QUALITIES

The Furians are a physically imposing race. They tower over Humans. The majority of Furians, even those not practiced in martial pursuits, are thickly built and muscular.

Their skin has a smooth, stone-like texture owing to their volcanic origins. Their veins run hot with magma-like blood, and when they call upon their great strength these veins glow red with fire. Furian skin tones share the same palette as the mountains: shades of grey, brown, and obsidian.

Furian facial features are feline, with males resembling the great lions of the Scorched Plains. Female Furian features are subtler, yet still noticeably feline.

Their eyes come in a few shades of colour: variations of green, hazel, grey, and yellow. Furian eyes flare with luminous intensity when a Furian becomes enraged.

Furian hair is thick and unruly. The hair's texture is akin to a lion's mane. Colours range from pure white to gold, brown, orange, red, and jet black. Only Furian males grow facial hair. Moments of intensity or rage cause Furian hair to stand erect, giving the illusion of even greater size and resulting in a fearsome visage.

### BLOOD BONDS

Furian culture revolves around duty and family: filial piety is the cornerstone of Furian society. The respect and love shown among Furian family members—not only to those living but to their ancestors—is deep-seated in the belief that everything that they are and everything that they will be is owed to those that came before them.

Because Furian notions of family are so strong, duty and honour are perpetually extolled and upheld. It is a horrible disgrace to soil the family name with misdeeds and failures.

While it is rare, Furians have been known to come to love non-Furians with the same fervor and selfless devotion that they would show to their family members.

### FURY RISING

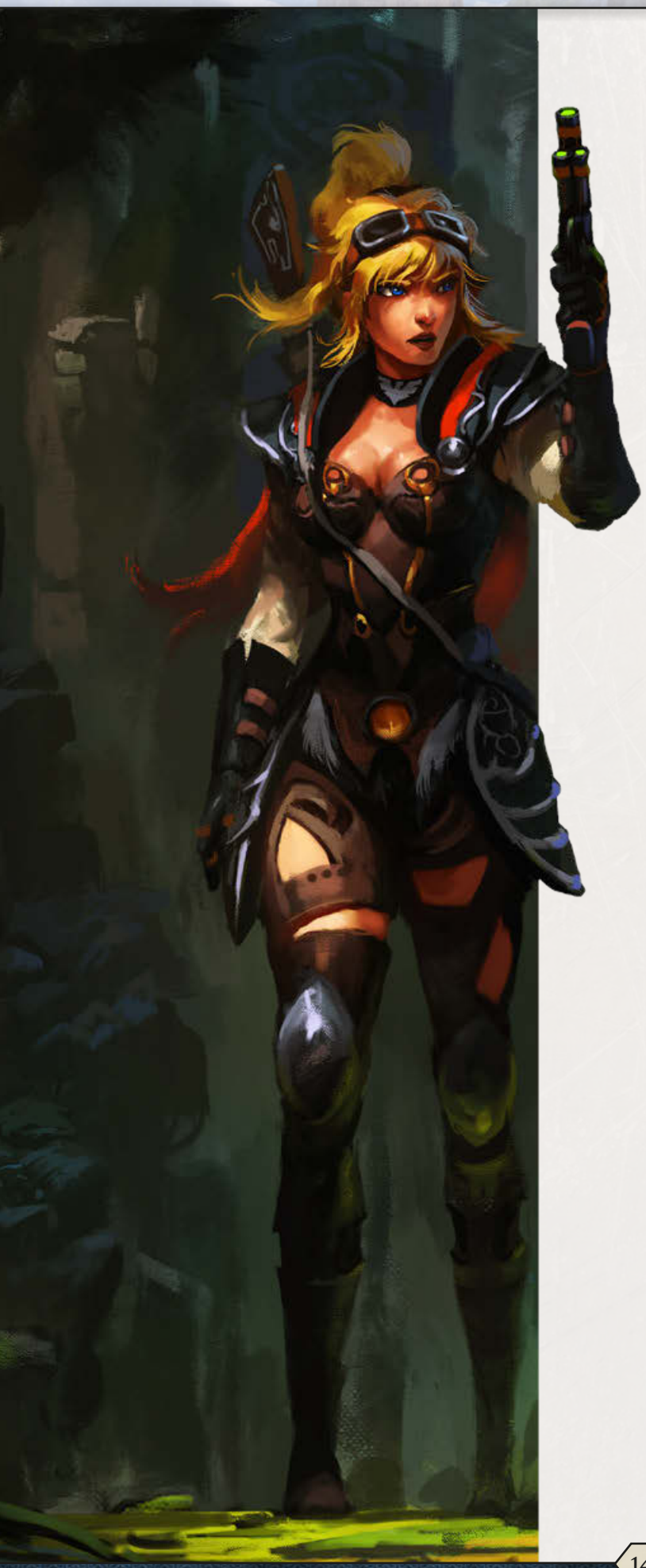
Since the emergence of the Red Rage, Furian society has fractured into three camps. The first camp practices a life devoid of emotions in order to prevent the rousing of the Red Rage. The second camp has been driven insane, unable to cope with the horrific deeds they inflicted upon their loved ones while lost in the Red Rage—like a perpetual spiral into madness, their inability to control their emotions has led them into a constant berserker state, and most are either exiled or locked up deep beneath the mountains. The final camp preaches a different path: one that exists between burning fury and an empty, cold heart. Those that follow this path demonstrate unpredictable behaviour; they live on the edge of madness but also have moments of triumph when they are able to harness their emotions and tap into their true power.

### NAMES

**Common Male Names:** Anga, Bran, Date, Drax, Hark, Jin, Laz, Nazam, Pagon, Urag, Yat, Zan
**Common Female Names:** Akane, Corra, Eshima, Gena, Haru, Juno, Kana, Murai, Nara, Sora, Yassa
**Family Names:** Blackstorm, Cinderglow, Doomlash, Firefist, Hellbringer, Stonehammer, Redhand, Rivermane, Sungloom, Truesworn, Youngscream

*After the Great Calamity, many Furians still struggle with a sense of dishonour arising from turning down some of the other races when they came to Furian lands for help—especially the Afflicted. The Furians have told themselves that they were already too burdened with their own tragedy and the Red Rage to open their doors, but still a sense of shame hangs over many of them. Some Furians have taken it upon themselves to cleanse the lands as a step towards redemption.*

***Red Rage.*** *This was the curse that the Skyfather struck the Furians with. When a Furian tries to tap into their reservoir of power using anger (the quickest route), it might trigger the Red Rage and send the Furian into a berserker rage, sundering their mind and causing them to attack everything in sight. Those that come out of the madness talk of a blood red haze that clouds everything. When the haze clears, they are usually covered in the blood of their loved ones.* *See pg. 39.*



# Human

*"Believe."*

## RACIAL TRAITS

**Average Height:** 1.55–1.80m
**Average Weight:** 51–95kg

## ATTRIBUTE SCORES

| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

**Tenacious:** When faced with adversity, you find the grit and determination to push forward even when all hope seems lost.

*You may re-roll any roll and use the result you prefer. Can be used once per Full Rest.*

When the Skyfather shaped the first of Humanity from the soft clay of the earth, he did so with the wisdom acquired from having created the Valla and the Furians. He saw that gifting the Humans physically or psychically was not a method that worked to its fullest potential for his First and Secondborn. Instead, he gave Humans a reason to seize each day like it was their last. He "gifted" Humans with only a short time to live in comparison to the older races. It was precisely this "gift" that spurred the youngest of the Skyfather's three Children to explode with progress, and to thrive.

With life measured in decades instead of centuries, Humans constantly pushed their limits and lived life feverishly. The majority of the technology that exists in Unity originated from the precocious minds of Humanity. Combining steam, arcane magick, and lightning stolen from the sky, they were the first to explore the creation of automata and constructs—if they could have robotic slaves perform the mundane yet necessary tasks in their lives, they could buy themselves time for loftier, more self-actualizing pursuits. It was their ferocious tenacity to make the most of their short lives that allowed them to rise beyond their physical and psychic limitations to become a major force in the world of Unity.

Much was lost when the Skyfather sundered Unity, but what endured was the undying resilience and optimism of the Human spirit. Those who were spared from the tragedy of the Great Calamity saw it as a sign that they were the chosen ones, while the heathens among them—those that had created constructions so grand that they touched the sky and, by extension, the face of God—were marked with the terrible disease that is the Phage.

The zealous saw their punishment as a stark reminder of the price of pride. Tensions mounted between those afflicted by the new disease and those who were spared. Eventual-

ly, fear replaced tolerance, and civil war broke out. Those stricken with disease were eventually driven from the Human Empire.

Humanity has only recently begun to rebuild itself. Without their greatest minds and innovators, the process has been slow and arduous. Many wonder if the Empire will ever reclaim its former glory.

### PLAY A HUMAN IF YOU WANT...

- to come from a culture that values diversity and ambition
- to be able to perform well as any Class
- to be adaptable and versatile
- to explore themes of faith and legacy, potential characters could include an overzealous Human believing themselves superior having been spared from the Phage, or a Human seeking to make amends for the callousness of having cast out their own brethren.

### PHYSICAL QUALITIES

Humans are the shortest of the three original races. The average Human's build lies between the slender Valla and the muscular Furians. "Average" is a poor descriptor for Human features, however; Humanity is the most physically diverse—and numerous—of all the races.

Their short lives, strong ambition, and penchant for exploration have caused them to spread across most of Unity. Separated groups of Humans, developing in isolation throughout history, mean that the race as a whole has diverged into different ethnic groups. This has led to variations in physical features across the race. These variations are a showcase of Human adaptability.

Human skin is generally smooth, and some possess more body and facial hair than others. Skin tones range from deep black to olive brown, golden yellow, and pale white.

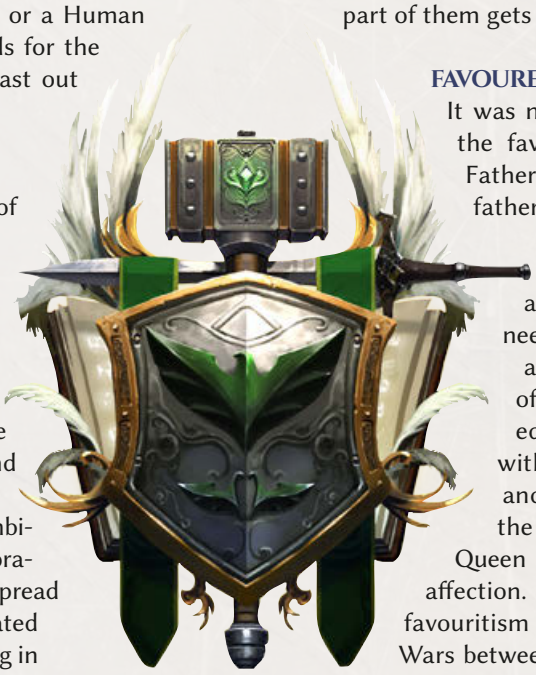
Human eye colour can be brown, blue, green, grey, hazel, and amber.

Human hair has wildly varying textures, from thin and straight to coarse and curly. Hair can truly be any colour and style, especially with the development of vanity dyes, particularly popular in upper-class Human society.

### MOMENTS ARE ALL WE HAVE

Humans have the shortest life span of the original three races. Whereas the Valla live for up to five centuries (often more) and the Furians for half of that, it is a rare achievement for a Human to reach a century of life—and even then, they will be too hobbled by age in the twilight of their years to enjoy it.

However, it is precisely this frugal allotment of time that has caused Humanity to rise faster and stronger than all those that came before them. For a Human, every day is a gift and an opportunity to be better, do better, and experience more. They don't have the luxury of time. It's this constant sense of urgency that drives Humanity so fiercely to achieve so much. When they are gone, their deeds will remain, and in some small way that means that a part of them gets to live on.



### FAVOURED SON

It was no secret that Humanity was the favourite child of their divine Father and Mother. When the Skyfather created the Humans, he believed he had finally perfected the creation process, and that he knew exactly what needed to be done to create an ambitious race to cultivate all of Unity. His faith was rewarded when Humanity set out, with feverish intent, to explore and conquer. Deeply pleased, the Skyfather and the Ivory Queen showered Humanity with affection. It was this blatant display of favouritism that helped fuel the Chaos Wars between the Valla, Furians and Humans. Even to this day, Humans remember the love that was shown to them, and as a society they are deeply religious.

### NAMES

The range of Human names is so great due to the diversity of their various ethnic groups. Below are common names found in the southern Falcon Kingdom.

**Common Male Names:** Allan, Ben, Christopher, Darius, Eli, Jack, Liam, Ned, Sebastian, Viktor
**Common Female Names:** Anna, Becca, Daphne, Ginny, Jenna, Lynn, Miriam, Sarah, Talia, Yvonne
**Family Names:** Abel, Brightheart, Carlisle, Dalton, Hightower, Hobbs, North, Stark, Terrell, Underwood

*The majority of Humans are grateful that they were 'spared' the Skyfather's wrath (in the form of the Phage) and have turned to religion and practice reverence. But, there are some that feel slighted by their Creator. These few look to the heavens and ask "Were we not good enough for your judgment? Are we that insignificant and lacking in gifts that there was nothing for you to take away from us?" Perhaps it's innate Human ambition that drives such perturbed thinking.*

*While Humans have an average spread of attributes with no remarkable strength in any one area, their initial Racial Ability: Tenacious can be a game changer. It allows you to push your character and take greater risks which is reflective of the ever-striving Human spirit.*

***Chaos Wars.*** *A series of wars that spawned from the friction between the Valla, Furians and Humans during the Age of Strife. It was this war that sent the Skyfather to wander the cosmos in grief.* *See pg. 14.*

***Tenacious*** *works on any roll that requires dice. Don't limit yourself to just skill checks. You can re-roll for higher damage on an attack or re-roll the damage you've taken from an attack in hopes of a lower result.*

# Afflicted

*"We will persevere."*

## Racial Traits

**Average Height:** 1.60–1.80m
**Average Weight:** 54–95kg

## Attribute Scores

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 |

**Grisly Triage:** A lifetime of scavenging and salvaging parts (organic and robotic) has led you to become gruesomely resourceful.

*If there are fresh corpses after a battle, a quick infusion of their vital fluids or electrical charge invigorates you and heals you for 1d6 + [2×Level] hitpoints. You may spend an additional 5 minutes and 1 Gear to scavenge for parts that will grant you 1 Recuperation. Can be used once per Full Rest.*

Cast out and persecuted like pariahs, the Afflicted were perhaps the most tragic outcome of the Great Calamity. Formerly a part of Humanity, the Afflicted were once the best and brightest that the Empire had to offer. They were the innovators, the forward-thinkers, philosophers, scientists, courageous adventurers, and dreamers. It was precisely this burning fire, this spark of immeasurable potential that was weaponized against the Divine which led the Skyfather to afflict them with the Phage.

The Phage is a horrific disease that eats away at flesh and bone. It may start as a small scratch, then a slow peeling of the skin. When the sores come, with them begins the eventual and grisly atrophy of the affected appendage. Sometimes the Phage can be more subtle. A slight wheeze or persistent cough can be a precursor for the eventual destruction of a lung. Its appetite is slow yet voracious.

With no cure, the victims of the Phage were slowly shunned and eventually met with outright terror and rejection from their former Human brethren. The seeds of fear gestated and bloomed into an unchecked morass of prejudice and hatred. This irrationality ignited a civil war, which claimed the lives of thousands of Afflicted and Humans alike.

Eventually, the battered and exhausted Afflicted were forced to flee from the Empire. They had to leave behind the place they called home, along with all that they knew. Adopting a nomadic lifestyle, they leveraged their brilliance and technological skills to hinder the Phage as best they could. The Afflicted moved from place to place, scavenging and salvaging what—or in the cases of the most cold-hearted among them—who they could find. Determined to carve out a piece of Unity to call their own, no matter the price,

many collectively vowed that never again would they let their guard down and become victims.

As time went on and the Phage claimed more and more of their bodies, the Afflicted made use of their technology to create prosthetics and limbs to replace them. Some began to fear that they would begin to lose whatever precious remnants of Humanity they had left as they gradually became more machine than man. Others revelled in their new form, embracing the strength and versatility their hybrid physiology afforded them. There remained those, though few, that hoped for a brighter tomorrow—a future where they could walk in the sun once more with the other races.

### PLAY AN AFFLICTED IF YOU WANT...

- to play an outcast
- to be able to excel at a Class that favours the mind
- to be part machine
- to explore themes of identity and morality as a character struggling to find their place in the wake of Divine retribution.

### PHYSICAL QUALITIES

The Afflicted possess similar physical qualities to their Human counterparts from which they originated. The Afflicted are heavier than Humans in general due to the machinery that replaces the parts of their bodies that have been consumed by the Phage.

Afflicted skin tones tend more towards fair and light colouring due to their lack of exposure to sunlight. Afflicted dwellings and cities are generally shrouded in darkness and shadow and are often located underground. Their skin is also often scarred from the Phage.

While the Afflicted have hair, they generally lose it due to the Phage or the incredible stress they put their bodies through during the grafting process when replacing lost limbs.

Parts replaced by machinery may not be a one-to-one replacement. An Afflicted who loses her hand may have it replaced with a tool, such as a hook or claw, instead of a mechanical hand.

Those who have been in the presence of more 'developed' members of the Afflicted have mentioned the perpetual hum that accompanies them, thanks to the technology that keeps them alive.

### AT ANY COST

Due to the horrific tragedy the Afflicted have suffered since the onset of the Phage, Afflicted culture itself is dark and brutal. There is a distrust of outsiders, and a vengeful fire still burns in the hearts of the many that feel betrayed by their Human brethren.

The Afflicted have had to constantly fight a war on two fronts: they battle a relentless disease that even their incredible minds cannot find a solution for, and they face fear, prejudice, and rejection from the other races. In their time of need, the Afflicted were turned away—countless times. This rejection has caused the Afflicted to become fiercely self-reliant and callous to those who are not part of their group.

In order to survive such harsh circumstances, some Afflicted have turned ruthless, and constantly cross moral boundaries to get the resources they require to live.

### BRIGHTEST STAR

Before the Great Calamity struck and the Phage was unleashed upon Humanity, the Afflicted were the greatest minds in the Empire. When they were Human, they were well respected—revered in fact—by their peers for bringing such amazing technological wonders to society. Their inventions made life better.

With the Afflicted banished and scattered across Unity, all of the technology that Humans grew reliant on began to fail from lack of maintenance. The knowledge to maintain and recreate it was lost. Even the Afflicted, having had to focus their efforts so heavily on stemming the Phage for so long, have begun to lose the knowledge of the Golden Age. Still, there are those from the other races that begrudgingly seek out Afflicted Tinkerers and Technomancers for help. The Afflicted have begun leveraging this dependence, and many carry an air of superiority about them now that the tables are slowly turning.

### NAMES

The majority of the Afflicted maintain their Human names. The names below are the common names found in the central parts of the Empire. For family names, Afflicted often take the name of their community or settlement as a sign of solidarity and shared suffering.

**Common Male Names:** Allan, Ben, Christopher, Darius, Eli, Jack, Liam, Ned, Sebastian, Viktor
**Common Female Names:** Anna, Becca, Daphne, Ginny, Jenna, Lynn, Miriam, Sarah, Talia, Yvonne
**Family Names:** Donnager, Eden, Haven, Nightingale, Sirroco, Sleeper, Underholme

*The Afflicted are a bit of a darker race to play as due to their tragic history. It is not uncommon for some tension to arise in a party over an Afflicted member. Sometimes a little discomfort has been well worth some of the stories and character development that have come out of Afflicted characters. Learning to trust and love again outside of your race and letting the emotional walls come down makes for some powerful storytelling.*

***The Phage.*** *A grim disease that slowly eats away at the flesh of those infected by it. The process is slow and painful yet can be unpredictable at times. The Phage seems oddly specific about whom it targets and has not spread outside of the Human race. The Afflicted are slowly perfecting the technique of replacing lost limbs and organs with technological variants.* *See pg. 78.*

# CHARACTER SHEET

***Tracking Resources.*** *To track your current Resource usage, you may tear a line between each number and fold them behind the page as you use them, then fold them back up as they Recharge. Alternatively you can also use a paper clip and slide it along the numbers as you use or Recharge Resources. Tokens are another option as well.*

***Main Attribute.*** *Each Class has a Main Attribute (listed at the beginning of their Class section) that is used to determine both Attack Rating and damage. For example, a Priest's Main Attribute is Mind. Whether he is casting Sacred Bolts at his foes or swinging his mace around, he will use Mind to determine the Attack Rating and damage bonus of all his attacks.*

***Class Powers.*** *At Level 1, characters must initially choose* ***three*** *different Tier 1 powers to start off with. At Level 5, characters must choose* ***two*** *different Tier 2 powers. In both of these instances, upgrades are not allowed to be taken yet. Only Tier Tokens can be used to purchase power upgrades. See pg. 159.*

## FILLING IN THE SHEET

This section will walk you through each step of filling in the character sheet using a reference sample sheet found on the next page.

### 1. BASIC INFORMATION

Record the name of your character, their race, age, and Class, Level, and amount of Experience points.

### 2. ATTRIBUTES

Distribute your character's attributes based on their race and the array. See *pg. 137.*

### 3. COMBAT STATISTICS

**Armour Value (AV): See Armour Table on pg. 285.** *Calista has +3 AV from her platemail (+2) and shield (+1). Calista will reduce all Physical damage she receives by 3.*

**Speed: +AGILITY modifier and any additional bonuses.** *Calista has +2 Speed from her Agility only. She has no further bonuses adding to Speed. Calista will add +2 to her 2d10 Speed check when required.*

**Attack Rating (AR): MAIN Attribute modifier.** *Calista has +2 AR from her Might Attribute which is the MAIN Attribute (see Class Traits for your Class) for Sentinels (pg. 242). AR can also be increased by Class Bonuses at certain levels. Calista will add +2 to her 2d10 Attack roll when making an attack.*

**Defense Rating (DR): +AGILITY modifier and any additional bonuses.** *Calista has +3 DR from her Agility and her Bastion Class Feature. Calista will add +3 to her 2d10 Defense roll when receiving an attack.*

**Mental Resistance (MR): +MIND modifier and any additional bonuses.** *Calista has +0 MR as she has 0 MIND. MR can be increased by Class Perks and Bonuses. Calista will add nothing to her 2d10 Mental Resistance Roll when receiving an attack that targets her mind.*

### 4. HP, MAX HP & RECUPERATIONS

At Level 1, your starting HP is stated at the beginning of your Class section. See *pg. 156* for Classes. Your Recuperations are calculated using rules on *pg. 256. Calista is a Sentinel and starts with 12 + Might HP which is 14. She also has 3 Recuperations from her 2 Baseline Recuperations and 1 from having 2 Might.*

### 5. FADING COUNTER

Each circle represents a stack of Fading. Cross them off as you gain Fading. See *pg. 266* for Incapacitation and Death rules.

### 6. CORE PATHS

You should have 3 Core Paths at Level 1. See *pg. 138.*

### 7. NECESSITIES, GEAR & DENERIM

At Level 1 you may have some Denerim left over after buying your weapons and armour to purchase some adventurer gear. See *pg. 286* for gear-carrying amounts. *Calista has 2 Might and can carry a max of 4 Necessities and 8 Gear.*

### 8. RECHARGE DIE

The die your Class uses to Recharge your Class Resource. This information is found under Class Traits. *Calista is a Sentinel and uses a d4 to Recharge.*

### 9. RACIAL FEATURE

Every Race has a special feature. *Calista, being a Human, receives the Tenacious Racial Feature.*

### 10. CLASS FEATURES

Your character receives certain powers and bonuses as Class Features for being part of a Class. These Class Features can be found in the first couple of pages of each Class section. *As a Sentinel at Level 1, Calista has both Bastion and Vigilance.*

### 11. CLASS & GENERAL PERKS

Class and General Perks are bonuses that you choose from. *Calista chose Grizzled Soldier over Tireless as her Sentinel's Class Perk. At Level 1, she doesn't have access to General Perks yet.*

### 12. EQUIPPED WEAPON(S)

List your active weapons here. Damage is written as **[Base weapon damage] + [MAIN Attribute] + [Any Bonuses]**. *Calista's longsword does 1d8 base damage and Might is her MAIN Attribute at 2, so she writes 1d8 + 2.*

### 13. EQUIPPED ARMOUR

List your equipped armour here. Record the Armour Value of each item under AV. *Calista's platemail is +2 AV and her kite shield is + 1 AV.*

### 14. POWERS

Record very basic power information: name, type, and any upgrades you might have for it. Refer to your Class section if you need to know what the power does, after a few uses it should be memorized easily. S/Q/M/R/O stand for the type of action required to use that power, see *pg. 262* for a list. *At Level 1, Calista chose Shield Slam, Barrier, and Phalanx as her initial Tier 1 powers.*

### 15. MAIN CLASS RESOURCE BAR

Track your Class Resource (Discipline for Calista) using these boxes.

### 16. SECONDARY CLASS RESOURCE BAR

This side bar is for secondary resources such as Priest Healing Charges or Primalist Ferocity.

# UNITY

1

NAME Calista Kerwater RACE Human AGE 23

CLASS Sentinel LEVEL 1 XP 0

4 MAX 14 | RECUPE DIE d10 | RECUPES 3 | 14 | FADING 5

3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0

2 | 2 | 0 | 1

MIGHT AGILITY MIND PRESENCE

DISCIPLINE

15 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6

| Living in a Man's World | 2 |
|---|---|
| Party Animal | 1 |
| A Soldier's Life | 2 |

CORE PATHS

9

**Tenacious:** You may re-roll any roll and use the result you prefer. Can be used once per Full Rest.

Can be used once per Full Rest.

RACIAL FEATURE

7 DENERIM 10 | 4 (4 MAX) NECESSITIES | 4 (8 MAX) GEAR | 8 RECHARGE DIE d4

**Bastion:** Add +AV value of Shield to DR.

**Vigilance:** Quick. 1 Discipline. Select a single enemy on battlefield. Perform a Basic Attack as a Free action on them if they attack anyone else but you.

10 CLASS FEATURES

**Grizzled Soldier:** When attempting to intimidate or threaten a target you receive a +1 bonus to your roll.

11 CLASS/GENERAL PERKS

| Longsword | 1d8+2 |
|---|---|

12 WEAPON DMG

| Platemail | +2 |
|---|---|
| Kite Shield | +1 |

13 ARMOUR AV

POWERS

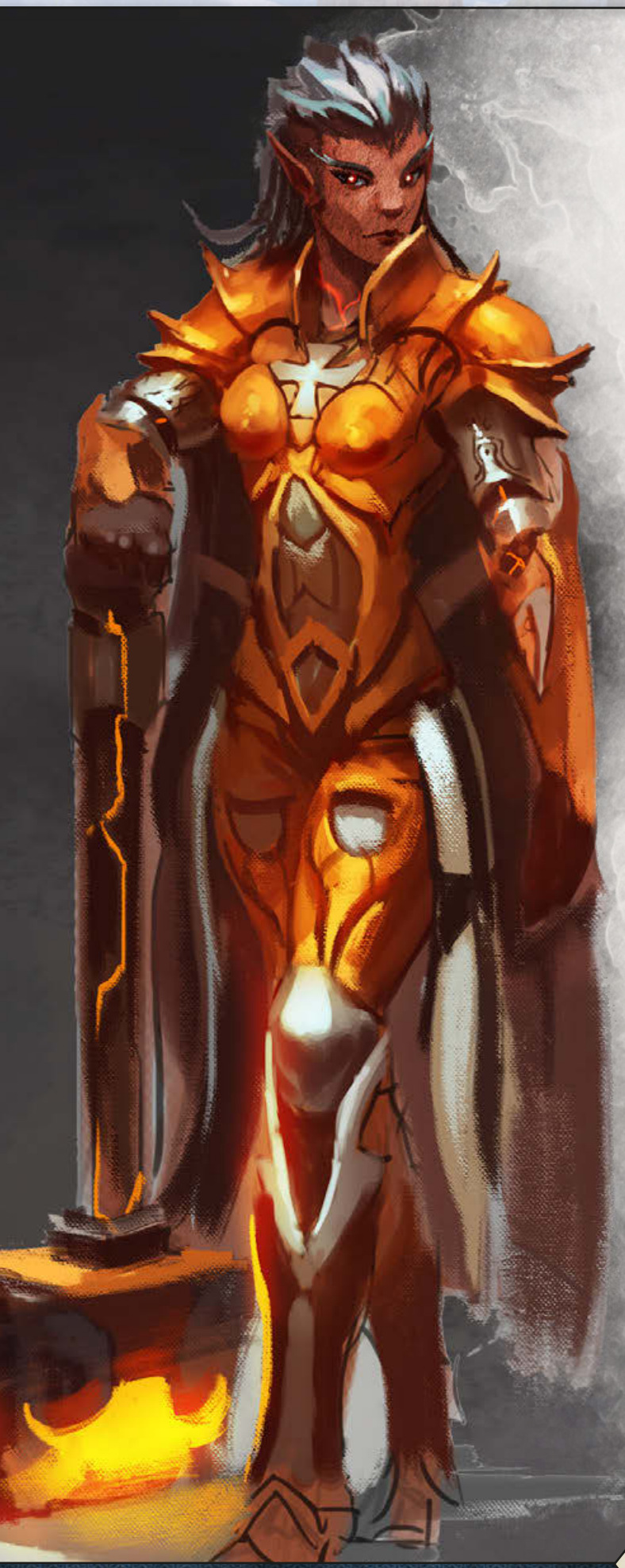
14

| NAME Shield Slam S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>2 COST | NAME Barrier S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>3 COST | NAME Phalanx S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST | NAME S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST |
|---|---|---|---|
| NAME S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST | NAME S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST | NAME S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST | NAME S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST |
| NAME S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST | NAME S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST | NAME S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST | ULTIMATE S Q M R O<br>NAME<br>COST |

NOTES

SECONDARY RESOURCE

16 1 2 3 4 5 6



# Corra Redhand

SAMPLE CHARACTER

## Judge

Level 1 Furian

*Age:* 28 *Height:* 1.78m *Weight:* 70kg

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 |

### Resource: Fervor

### Weapon(s)

**Anointed Maul:** *Melee. 2d6+3 damage.*

### Armour

**Platemail:** *Heavy. +2 Armour*

### Gear & Recuperations

4 Necessities | 3 Gear | 3 Recuperations

### Racial Trait: Unbound

**Unbound:** Tapping into a reservoir of rage, you drive your physical power to meteoric levels for a brief moment.

*Deal your highest Attribute score as extra damage on a single attack, or you may add half your Level to your Might score on a skill check. Can be used safely once per Full Rest. Additional uses may result in loss of control.*

### Class Feature: Zealot

Two-Handed Weapon: You can choose to re-roll any weapon damage dice that come up as a 1 or 2. You must accept the next roll even if it is a 1 or 2.

### Class Perk: Voice of the Emperor

When you channel your conviction into a command, your voice becomes blessed with divine authority.

- Applies only to social actions (parleying, bartering, coercing, etc.)
- If you fail your roll, you may immediately re-roll with Benefit.
- Cost: **3 Fervor**

## Background

Corra is the daughter of the famed Furian scholar Drax Redhand. Spending most of her childhood in the bustling stone halls of Mount Furia, Corra knew firsthand the value of hard work and physical might. She never understood her father and his proclivity for the written word and scholarly pursuits. It clashed jarringly with the ideals of the warrior society that she grew up in. She was ashamed of the disparaging remarks the other Furians made about her father.

All of that changed on Corra's 14th birthday. The skies darkened as grey clouds spewed rain and lightning. Fell magicks were at work as the demonic hordes crashed into the obsidian gates of Mount Furia. There were just so many of them. Her mother and her brothers were lost that day. Corra remembers hiding in the smoldering ruins, her small body easily concealed by the wreckage. She remembers seeing her father dragged out in chains and surrounded by Fell spawn. She remembers letting out a scream as they laid into him. Most of all Corra remembers how her father transformed into her hero that day.

Upon hearing her scream the Fell snatched her from the rubble. The sight of his daughter in danger on top of the staggering loss of his family ignited something inside of Drax. Rage filled his eyes as he shattered the chains binding him with a single tug. Wrapping the very things that bound him around his fists, he exploded into action, punching and smashing through Fell like wet paper. Their demonic death cries called more and more Fell into the area and Drax continued to fight with unbound fury. He turned to Corra and screamed "Run child! Run!"

His voice rang with such conviction, Corra's legs were moving before she could process what was happening. Corra ran until she could run no more. Exhausted, she turned around and saw nothing but wet grassy plains and a pillar of smoke off in the distance. It was the last thing she saw before she collapsed. Upon waking, there was no sign of her father.

She wandered the wilds in grief for days, gradually accepting that death was coming for her. It was then that a voice whispered to her from beyond. The voice was warm and loving, it guided her to food, and to shelter. It was her constant companion for months and eventually led her to a caravan that would take her to the shining city of Taloran.

It was here, as she was ushered into the hallowed halls of the city's temple, that the voice she had heard, the same voice that had kept her alive all these months, was made manifest in the glorious image of Aluvane the Dawnwalker, God of Justice. His marble statue exuded the same warmth and authority that she had felt all these months. Standing in his presence, she could hear his voice loud and clear.

It was in that moment that her purpose was also made clear. She would train to become a warrior of the light. She would protect those that could not protect themselves. She would never let anyone feel the way she had felt the day she lost both her family and her home. Corra would also never stop searching for her father, for one day she would be able to tell him how proud she was of him and how much she loved him.

## Core Paths

### Scholar's Daughter (1)

Corra would often sit by the hearth and listen to her father's wondrous stories of his travels and the strange people he'd met. Despite her protests, Drax always believed in strengthening not only the body but the mind as well. Many nights during Corra's youth were spent poring through her father's numerous books.

### Lone Survivor (1)

Corra was forced to grow up very quickly. Watching her family slaughtered before her eyes and driven into the wilderness to survive alone, she only had herself to rely on. Although the voice of her patron god guided her initially, Corra eventually developed skills to survive in the wilderness.

### A Warrior's Heart (3)

The halls of Mount Furia oozed with warrior culture. Trophies, weapons and armour adorned the walls. Corra grew up immersed and enchanted in a society that valued physical might. She was always eager to compete in the athletic competitions and strived to keep up with her older brothers.

## Chosen Powers

### Radiant Strike

*Transforming your weapon into a torch for justice, you illuminate the darkness within your target's soul. You empower your weapon to detonate in a flash of divine light upon impact, disorienting your target.*

### Speed of Light

*Your weapon glows with heavenly power and you toss it. As soon as it lands, your body explodes with golden energy and instantly streaks across the battlefield to rejoin with your weapon.*

### Righteous Defense

*For a brief moment, you are imbued with divine precognition. You readily parry or block your opponent's blow, blunting the impact.*

# CHAPTER III

# CLASSES

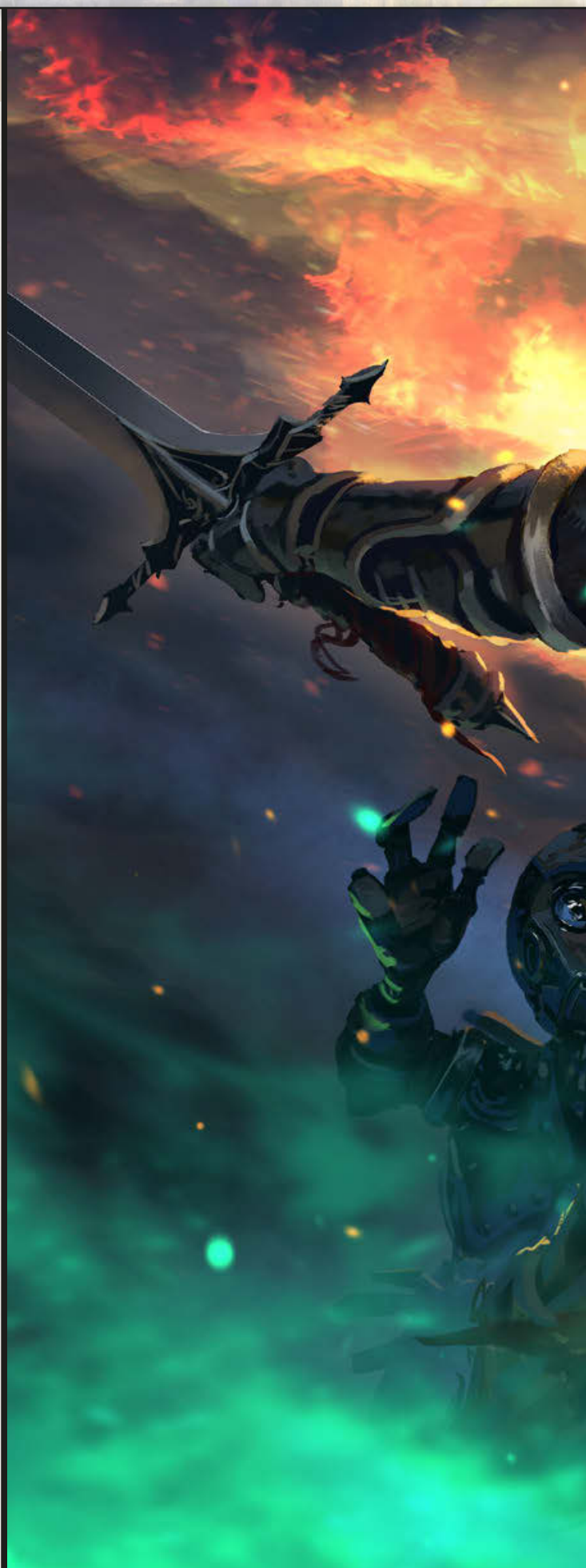
The Class you choose for your character is one of the most important decisions you will make during Character Creation. While a Class can be viewed as a profession, it ultimately goes beyond a mere vocation and can shape the lens through which your character looks at and interacts with the world. A Primalist, for example, being a servant of nature may find the stone walls of the city a bit more foreign and cares not for the bustling markets or haggling of wares. On the other hand, a wily Phantom may feel right at home in the seedy underbelly of a city and delights at the chance of making some coin. Of course there will always be exceptions to these archetypes, especially if you have a unique vision for your character, but Classes provide a starting point and foundation on which to build that character.

A character's Class defines what they can do by providing abilities, perks, and a rich history that can drive both gameplay mechanics and storytelling aspects. Your Class will shape your role on the battlefield and might nudge you in a certain direction when it comes to solving problems that a sword or fireball might not be able to.

In this chapter, you will choose from 9 unique Classes, learn about how Classes advance your character in power over time, and how to read and interpret power cards. Take your time and choose your Class and the powers they provide you wisely.

## CLASSES

- **Dreadnought:** An unstoppable fighter that thrives in the heat of battle.
- **Driftwalker:** An occult caster specializing in blood magicks and dark bargains.
- **Fell Hunter:** A deadly marksman with heightened senses and an axe to grind with the demonic.
- **Judge:** A righteous warrior powered by the Divine and fighting for justice.
- **Mystic:** A student of the magickal arts that manipulates and bends reality to her will.
- **Phantom:** An agile fighter utilizing shadow and guile to strike with lethal impact.
- **Priest:** A pious caster that wields her faith as a weapon while bolstering and healing allies.
- **Primalist:** A hybrid warrior harnessing the power of nature to call down the elements and augment his body with the primal savagery of its beasts.
- **Sentinel:** The perfect soldier that was designed to protect and defend.



*Class Resources are recharged through a Respite, Full Rest, or rolling doubles in combat as outlined on pg. 266.*

***Read me!** The "How to Read the Class Advancement Table" guide below is critical to understanding how your character advances in power. Tier Tokens, HP Boosts, Attribute Boosts, and other exciting upgrades that make your character a force to be reckoned with will be explained in this quick guide.*

## CLASS ADVANCEMENT

Your character will grow in power as they increase their Level. Each new Level gained brings a handful of bonuses and the possibility of acquiring new powers. Every Class write-up contains both an outline for acquiring new features and perks, and an Advancement Table that determines the type and amount of generic bonuses your character will receive at each Level.

Whenever your character gains a new Level, consult your Class's Advancement Table to see what new bonuses or powers you might have received. The guide on how to read the Advancement Table can be found at the bottom of this page.

## CLASS FEATURES & PERKS

Class Features and Perks are unique baseline abilities that every Class will have. These Features and Perks provide gameplay bonuses and also help shape the identity of the Class they belong to. Features are granted just by merit of your character being a certain Class and advancing in it. Perks are similar to General Perks in that you get to choose which one to take. The difference between a Class Perk and a General Perk is that a Class Perk is flavoured by the fantasy of the Class it belongs to.

## CLASS RESOURCES

Each Class has a unique Resource (some have more than one type) that is used as fuel for its powers. For example a Mystic uses Mana when he wants to blast his enemies with frost, which is one of the many powers he can choose from. A Dreadnought, on the other hand, uses Fury when she wants to use a power that lets her cleave through multiple enemies at once with her giant sword.

### SECONDARY RESOURCE USAGE

Some Classes such as the Driftwalker, Priest, and Primalist have a secondary Resource that must be managed alongside their primary Resource. For example, the Driftwalker uses Blood, which is a fancy way of saying hitpoints (HP). Some Driftwalker powers require both their primary Resource (Bile) and some Blood in order to activate. Priests have a secondary resource in Healing Charges. Healing Charges are generated when certain powers are used and there will be instructions in the Priest section on how these Healing Charges work. Finally, the Primalist uses both Spirit and Ferocity as Class Resources. Spirit-spending powers generate Ferocity, and Ferocity fuels powers that allow the Primalist to augment their physical abilities, enabling them to switch between being a caster and fighter on the battlefield.

### HOW TO READ THE CLASS ADVANCEMENT TABLE

| LEVEL | HP BOOST | CORE PATH POINT | ATTRIBUTE BOOST | RECUPERATION | GENERAL PERK | ARTIFACT CAPACITY | TIER I TOKEN | TIER II TOKEN | AR | DR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | ◆ | | | |
| 3 | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | |
| 4 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | | +1 | +1 |
| 5 | | | ◆ | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 6 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | | ◆ | | |
| 7 | | | ◆ | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +1 | +1 |
| 8 | ◆ | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 9 | | | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | |
| 10 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +1 | +1 |

**1.** LEVEL: This indicates the Level at which you gain the bonuses that are indicated on the respective row.

**2.** HP BOOST: Your Max HP is increased by the maximum value of your Recuperation Die plus your MIGHT value. Gains are not retroactive.

**3.** CORE PATH POINT: You receive 1 new Core Path point that you may choose to put to a path you already have or create a new one with.

**4.** ATTRIBUTE BOOST: You may increase any one of your Attributes by +1 permanently.

**5.** RECUPERATION: Your maximum number of Recuperations is increased by +1.

**6.** GENERAL PERK: You may grant your character 1 Perk from the General Perks list on pg. 141.

**7.** ARTIFACT CAPACITY: The number of Artifacts you may have equipped at a time increases by +1.

**8.** TIER I TOKEN: You may choose either 1 new Tier I power to acquire OR select a single Upgrade to a Tier I power you already have.

**9.** TIER II TOKEN: You may choose either 1 new Tier II power to acquire OR select a single Upgrade to a Tier II power you already have.

**10.** AR: You increase your Attack Rating (AR) by the indicated number.

**11.** DR: You increase your Defense Rating (DR) by the indicated number.

## CLASS POWERS

Powers are a critical part of your Class and will help define how your character approaches battle. Every Class has many different powers to choose from and most of those powers have further upgrades that can potentially change how the power plays and combines with another Class's powers.

Powers are broken into two Tiers: Tier I and Tier II. At Level 1 you will be granted the ability to select 3 Tier I powers. At Level 5, the Tier II powers open up for selection and you will be able to choose 2 Tier II powers. During these moments, you will be unable to purchase upgrades as only Tier Tokens can be used to upgrade a power. Acquiring new powers or upgrades to existing powers will follow the Advancement Table schedule. Once a power has been chosen, the choice is permanent.

## READING POWERS

Class powers are presented in coloured blocks of information. While understanding the power card is fairly straightforward, especially if you've been able to read through the Core Rules and the Combat Rules sections of the book, there are some quirks and abbreviations unique to these power write-ups.

### ROLL VS. MAKE A BASIC ATTACK

The majority of powers will call for you to "roll your Basic Attack." This statement asks you to perform the standard 2d10+AR (Attack Rating) roll that is usually used to determine if your attack overcomes your target's Defense Rating (DR) and strikes your target. In cases where a power asks you to "roll" instead of "make" a Basic Attack, you will roll the 2d10+AR then look at the Success or Failure conditions of the power to determine what happens.

In cases where a power calls for you to "make a Basic Attack", you will proceed to perform either a Basic Melee or Basic Ranged attack and deal damage as per the rules on *pg. 264.*

### HALF OF YOUR CURRENT LEVEL (HL)

There will be powers that call for you to add "HL" which is an abbreviation for "half of your current Level". When you see HL, always read it as such. While the general rule in *Unity* is to round down whenever dealing with fractions, HL can never go below 1.

### MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

A lot of the terms found in the Class Features, Perks, and powers are explained in the Core Rules and Combat Rules chapters that follow this chapter. If you are struggling to digest some of the information as you choose your Class and powers, try skipping ahead to the Core Rules and Combat Rules then returning to the Classes chapter.

**GRASP OF IRATHMUS** (1)

**STANDARD** (2)

*An invisible tendril shoots out from your outstretched hand to find its way around your victim's neck. Squeezing your hand causes the spectral coil to tighten and choke the life from your victim.*

(3)

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Bile | Single | Nearby |

(4)

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You disable your target from casting spells or using powers for 1 round. If they are in the middle of a spell, it becomes interrupted. Deals +MIND damage.

If the target is larger than Medium size or Elite, you must Contest their MIGHT vs. your MIND to see if the power-disabling and interrupt effect is applied.

**Failure.** You deal half damage.

(5)

**UPGRADES**

**Crushing Grasp.** Expend 1d10 Blood and deal twice that result as damage to your target.

**Infernal Reach.** Range is increased to FAR.

***Half damage.*** *Often the failure result for powers will state you deal "half damage" or "half Basic Attack damage." There is a distinction between these two statements. When "half damage" is mentioned, you would look at the success result and see how damage is calculated, then roll that damage and halve it to determine the amount of damage done if your power misses/fails. When "half Basic Attack damage" is mentioned, you would roll your Basic Attack damage (pg. 264), then halve that result to determine the amount of damage done if your power fails.*

#### 1. NAME OF POWER

The golden bar at the top contains the name of the power.

#### 2. TYPE OF ACTION REQUIRED BY POWER

Powers usually use up one or more combat actions unless they are Passive. This line indicates the types of actions (*pg. 262*) you must have available in order to activate the power.

#### 3. COST / TARGET / RANGE

This row indicates the amount of Class Resource required to activate the power, the amount of targets you can select to use it on, and how far away the power can reach. Sometimes, you will see the word "Special" listed in this area instead, which means you must read through the Effects section to see how those aspects work.

#### 4. EFFECTS

This area outlines the action you must take as a player (e.g. roll your attack), then it lists what happens, usually explaining success and failure conditions.

#### 5. UPGRADES

Most powers come with upgrades that can change or augment how they work.

# Dreadnought

The fires of Mount Furia raged on as the Crimson Horde surrounded what remained of the Furian army who were defending their capital city. Down to a mere hundred warriors, the Furians stood their ground and fought until their weapons broke and their armour shattered. Undaunted, they continued to use their bare hands to smash the enemy. It was during this deep and desperate fight that a new fighting ideology was born.

Knowing that they were the last line of defense against the Crimson Horde—the only thing preventing the annihilation of everything that they had ever loved and cared for—the Furian warriors forewent all notions of self-preservation to become an absolute force of carnage. They decided that day that they would not die of attrition. They would not let their instinct for survival dictate the fate of their race. Instead, they openly embraced the chaos of battle and the ear-shattering din of war. They dug deep inside themselves and tapped into a fury that they had not known existed, and threw themselves at the enemy with reckless abandon.

The shock and awe of such an explosive and unrelenting assault caught the Crimson Horde off guard, and they died by the hundreds in the initial charge. But even as the Horde gathered to rebuff the onslaught, they noticed that the Furians were not tiring. Instead they seemed to gain more momentum with every advance. Some could swear they saw the Furians' wounds healing as they spilt Horde blood everywhere.

Over a thousand of their troops died that day before the Crimson Horde retreated. The Furian capital city, Mount Furia, was saved and a new type of soldier was cemented in history.

Dreadnoughts are tough offensive powerhouses. They are clad in heavy armour and the weapons they choose are always focused on inflicting the greatest damage possible. They forgo a cautious and defensive fighting style for a reckless and unrelenting onslaught. The more a Dreadnought fights, the stronger he gets.

Dreadnoughts thrive in battle and use their Class Resource Fury to power their attacks and defenses. Heavy armour provides a measure of protection, but the ability to outright ignore pain in the thick and thrill of their bloodlust is the hallmark of a Dreadnought's defense.

Dreadnought attacks are brutal and massive. Unlike the Phantom, they are most at home when knee-deep in enemies. Dreadnoughts are veritable wrecking balls on the battlefield. They can be found wading through throngs of enemies, their gigantic weapons cleaving through bone and sinew.

With adrenaline coursing through the Dreadnought's veins like liquid fire, even the most grievous strikes against them are mere flesh wounds in the chaos of battle.

When it comes to pressing the attack, Dreadnoughts know of only one creed: "Keep moving forward."

## WHY PLAY A DREADNOUGHT?

Play a Dreadnought if you like:

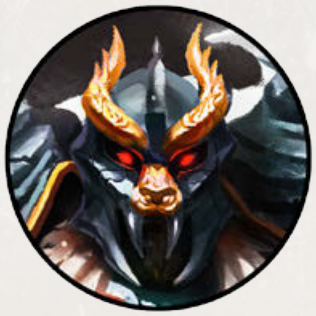
- The idea of a heavily-armoured warrior that charges headfirst into the thick of things and is the embodiment of raw intensity and bone-crushing might
- Finding the biggest, baddest weapon(s) you can get your hands on
- Throwing caution to the wind
- Causing pure physical trauma and having an unquenchable thirst for battle

Dreadnoughts make excellent vanguards as their powers work best when they are actively fighting and taking damage. They have efficient ways of getting into the thick of things and dealing with multiple enemies in melee.

When supported by teammates, Dreadnoughts can become unstoppable death-dealing machines. A smart opponent will attempt to cut off the Dreadnought's support system before confronting the monstrous fighter head on.

# DREADNOUGHT

*"They've got us outnumbered and completely surrounded. How unfortunate for them."*



## CLASS TRAITS

**STARTING HP:** 14+MIGHT
**RECUPERATION DIE:** d10
**ARMOUR:** Light, Heavy
**WEAPONS:** Medium Melee, Heavy Melee
**RESOURCE:** Fury [6] 1d4 Recharge
**MAIN ATTRIBUTE:** MIGHT

## CLASS FEATURES

**All Dreadnoughts come with the following features as part of their baseline powers**

*While lacking in options for ranged attacks, Dreadnoughts have powers that allow them to charge into battle, enabling them to stick to their targets.*

### SHIELDBREAKER

**PASSIVE**

*You strike with such force that even the thickest steel bends before your might.*

**EFFECTS**

Your Melee attacks gain +1 Armour Penetration allowing you to ignore 1 AV when calculating damage. Shieldbreaker does not provide additional physical damage if the target has no AV, it only ignores what AV the target has.

Bonus increases to:

- +2 at level 5
- +3 at level 9

### CLEAVE

**STANDARD**

*Wild swings and sweeping strikes are the hallmarks of the Dreadnought fighting style. What could be better than slicing through your enemy? Slicing through a bunch of them.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Fury | Up to 1d4 | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack. Roll 1d4 to determine how many ADJACENT enemies are struck by your attack.

**Success.** You deal 1d10+HL damage.

**Failure.** You deal half damage.

## PICK 1 PERK FROM BELOW

*Perks stack with Core Paths and Attribute bonuses when it comes to skill checks, making them very powerful even if the value is minute.*

### FEROCIOUS PRESENCE

**QUICK**

*Your world is one of blood and rage. The fury that burns in your heart emanates from your very pores, creating a fearsome aura around you.*

**EFFECTS**

When you attempt an action that involves intimidation or threats, you may spend 1 Fury to receive Benefit on your roll.

Dreadnoughts honour their fallen by incorporating a piece of their comrade's armour or weaponry into their own. That way even in death, they still fight on.

### DESTRUCTIVE TENDENCIES

**PASSIVE**

*The training of a Dreadnought emphasizes physicality and raw strength. You tend to take the direct approach to problems rather than finesse your way through.*

**EFFECTS**

Attempts to break or force things open receive a +1 bonus.

Bonus increases to:

- +2 at level 3
- +3 at level 6
- +4 at level 10

# ADVANCEMENT TABLE

| LEVEL | HP BOOST | CORE PATH POINT | ATTRIBUTE BOOST | RECUPERATION | GENERAL PERK | ARTIFACT CAPACITY | TIER I TOKEN | TIER II TOKEN | AR | DR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | ◆ | | | |
| 3 | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | |
| 4 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | | +1 | +1 |
| 5 | | | ◆ | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 6 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | | ◆ | | |
| 7 | | | ◆ | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +1 | +1 |
| 8 | ◆ | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 9 | | | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | |
| 10 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +1 | +1 |

### LEVEL 1

**Choose THREE Tier 1 powers (no upgrades)**

### LEVEL 3

**NEW CLASS FEATURE**

#### HEART OF THE MOUNTAIN

**QUICK - MOVEMENT**

*The sight of a fallen ally momentarily fills you with rage. With fury and adrenaline coursing through your veins, there's no limit to what you can do.*

**EFFECTS**

You may pick up and move an Incapacitated Ally with you. While doing so you shield your Ally from Provoked Attacks with your own body.

If you have the power **Let's Roll**, its Fury cost is free for one use whenever an Ally falls on the battlefield.

### LEVEL 5

**Choose TWO Tier 2 powers (no upgrades)**

### LEVEL 8

**NEW CLASS FEATURE**

#### FEARLESS

**FREE**

*Your rage makes you bold. Even in the face of great danger, your resolve is unbreakable.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Fury | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

When a fear or intimidation effect is used, you may activate Fearless to become immune to it for 1 round.

### LEVEL 10

**ULTIMATE ABILITY**

#### SPLIT THE EARTH

**ULTIMATE - STANDARD**

*Channelling all of your strength into a single strike, you leap into the air and come down upon the earth with a colossal smash. The sheer force of your mighty blow unleashes a massive shockwave, splitting the ground and sending a tidal wave of debris forth in a circular pattern from the point of impact.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Fury | Multiple | Nearby |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** All enemies ADJACENT and up to a NEARBY distance away that are struck by Split the Earth suffer 2d10+20 damage. If your Attack roll exceeded the target's DR by 3 or more, the target is Stunned for 1 round. You receive +8 to your DR for 2 rounds.

**Failure.** Enemies suffer half damage. You receive +8 to your DR for 1 round.

*There are monsters that rely on psychological warfare or abilities that affect the mind to overcome their prey. The Fearless Class Feature becomes a game-changer against these creatures and gives the Dreadnought a coveted defense against a very specific type of mental assault. If a monster's ability seems to play on fear or terrifying its target, then it will be subject to Fearless's immunity.*

*Split the Earth is an excellent way to initiate a fight. Launch yourself into the thickest throng of enemies and activate the power. Those that are left standing after the initial shockwave have to decide between striking at a highly defensible Dreadnought or attempting to move past him to get to juicier targets and suffering Provoked Attacks.*

# TIER I POWERS

*Use Furious Charge liberally on easy-to-hit targets to exploit the power's Fury refund mechanic.*

## FURIOUS CHARGE

**STANDARD - MOVEMENT**

*You lower your head, steel your gaze, and launch yourself explosively at your target.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Fury | Single | Nearby Only |

**EFFECTS**

Instead of moving to a NEARBY target and attacking, you may charge at them and then make a Basic Attack, increasing both your AR and damage by your Shieldbreaker bonus. You cannot use Furious Charge on an ADJACENT target, only one that is NEARBY.

Fury cost is refunded immediately if the Attack roll is successful.

**UPGRADES**

*Combining Reckless Assault or Mighty Cleave with the Tier 2 power Relentless and its upgrade, Composed, can give your Dreadnought the potential to spring back from the edge of death in a massive way.*

**Juggernaut.** Become unstoppable. If currently ADJACENT to an enemy (or enemies), you plough through everyone with bullheaded determination. Gain your +MIGHT to your AV against all Provoked Attacks as you charge towards your target.

**War Cry.** You let out a ferocious battle cry as you explode across the battlefield. If your Attack roll after your charge is successful, you are not only refunded the Fury cost, but gain 1 additional Fury as well.

*Brace for Impact can be used to blunt the damage taken from a failed Reckless Assault attempt. This can become a costly combo if used too often.*

## BRACE FOR IMPACT

**REACTION**

*Steeling your body, only the heaviest of blows will give you pause.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Fury | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Upon being struck, you receive your +MIGHT as universal Damage Resistance against that single attack. You must declare Brace for Impact before rolling Damage. Can also be used outside of combat.

## BRING IT ON

**PASSIVE**

*When the odds are stacked against you, a little jolt of adrenaline gives you the edge you need to take care of business.*

**EFFECTS**

If more than 1 enemy is ADJACENT to you, add +1 to your damage for each extra enemy. Increase to +2 per enemy at Level 6. This bonus can never exceed HL.

## MIGHTY CLEAVE

**PASSIVE**

*Your countless hours of practice identifying effective angles and developing your follow-through power allow you to cut through more foes with ease.*

**EFFECTS**

Your basic Cleave power is improved and now strikes up to 1d4+1 targets. If one or more targets die to Mighty Cleave, 1 Fury is refunded.

## RECKLESS ASSAULT

**STANDARD**

*You throw caution to the wind, forgoing your defenses, and launch an absolutely massive attack on your foe.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Fury | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** Your attack lands with such force that you deal an additional 1d4+MIGHT+HL damage on top of your Basic Attack damage (or power's damage if you have the Channelled Fury upgrade).

**Failure.** You miss your blow and are caught completely off-balance and wide open. You suffer an immediate retaliation from your target that automatically hits you and you effectively have 0 AV when receiving that attack. You are also refunded 1 Fury.

**UPGRADES**

**Channelled Fury.** Instead of being a separate attack on its own, Reckless Assault can be used as a Quick action to combine its additional bonus damage with other powers. For example, you can now combine the effects of Reckless Assault with Furious Charge for a higher chance of success or combine Reckless Assault with Cleave (you will take a retaliation for each miss, though). Channelled Fury does not work with Overdrive powers and only deals half of its bonus damage on non-single target powers.

**Broadside.** You no longer lose your AV when you take the immediate retaliation on a failed attack.

## IMPALE

**STANDARD**

*With grim determination you thrust your weapon through your enemy. If using a blunt weapon, you swing for the kneecaps instead.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Fury | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage. The target will suffer Hindrance on any action if they attempt to move from their current position for 1 round.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Pin.** On a success, you may spend another 1 Fury to lower you target's AR by your +MIGHT for 1 round.

## THRIVE ON CHAOS

**QUICK - OVERDRIVE**

*You revel in the chaos of battle as you surge with adrenaline. Each blow you land reinvigorates you.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Fury | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

You are healed for half the damage you inflict after mitigation. Lasts 3 rounds.

## BATTLE-HARDENED

**PASSIVE**

*When the battle becomes dire, your own resolve strengthens.*

**EFFECTS**

When you drop below half your Max HP (rounded down), your AV value now counts as universal Damage Resistance and reduces any type of damage you receive (except True damage) as long as you are below half your Max HP. This effect doesn't apply to the initial blow that took you below half your Max HP. This effect is momentarily disabled for Reckless Assault's failure condition unless you also have Reckless Assault's Broadside upgrade.

**UPGRADES**

**No Pain.** When Battle-Hardened is active, your AV is increased by your Shieldbreaker bonus, along with the universal Damage Resistance granted from it.

## LET'S ROLL

**STANDARD - MOVEMENT**

*Crushing bones and hacking off limbs is more fun if you have someone to share the experience with. Bring along a friend.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Fury | Special | Special |

**EFFECTS**

You grab an ADJACENT Ally and launch yourselves across the battlefield to a NEARBY enemy or location. Your Ally does not expend their Movement action when travelling this way. Both of you are still prone to Provoked Attacks.

If your destination/target is an enemy, roll your Basic Attack as you barrel into them with your body. If successful, the target takes no damage but is Staggered for 1 round.

**UPGRADES**

**Battering Ram.** Upon successfully smashing into your target, you now deal your Basic Attack damage on top of Staggering them.

## RAMPAGE

**STANDARD**

*Swept up in the madness of battle, your mighty blows play a melody of death as each successful strike reverberates louder than the last.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Fury | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage and an additional +1d4 damage. This additional damage stacks if you continue to use Rampage the next round (+2d4 then +3d4, etc.), or else it falls off at 1 stack per round.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage. If you have a stack(s) of Rampage, you lose 1 stack as if you had not made a Rampage Attack (+2d4 becomes +1d4).

**UPGRADES**

**Cadence.** Rampage's Fury cost is now 1.

**Encore.** Expend 1 additional Fury to immediately reroll a failed Rampage Attack. Usable once per round.

**Maestro.** Rampage's bonus damage die is increased to 1d8.

*Impale is a useful power for controlling the battlefield and reducing the threat of enemies for your squishier party members.*

*Rampage is an incredibly potent power only if you can maintain your Rampage stacks. If there is no one in the party to boost your Attack Rating, consider grabbing both the Cadence and Encore upgrades.*

*Thrive on Chaos embodies the fantasy of the Dreadnought: a berserker warrior that never says die. While it is a powerful survival tool, be wary of any disabling abilities an enemy might throw at you while you are under the effects of Thrive on Chaos—if you can't swing your weapon, you can't leech health back.*

# TIER II POWERS

## CRUSHING BLOW

**STANDARD**

*A powerful strike that blows straight through armour.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Fury | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage while ignoring all AV on your target and your Shieldbreaker Class Feature bonus is converted into additional damage.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage that ignores all AV. You do not add your Shieldbreaker Class Feature as extra damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Overkill.** The bonus damage from your Shieldbreaker bonus is doubled on a successful attack.

**Crumple Armour.** The target's AV is reduced by HL for 1 round on a successful attack.

## ROAR OF THE LION

**STANDARD - MOVEMENT - QUICK**

*You bury your feet into the ground and brace yourself. Taking a deep breath, you bring up the primal fury deep in your belly and channel it into a deafening roar that crushes the will of the enemies around you.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Fury | Multiple | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack. Targets Mental Resistance (MR).

**Success.** Enemies ADJACENT to you are unable to perform Provoked Attacks for 1 round.

**Failure.** Enemies ADJACENT to you suffer Hindrance on Provoked Attacks for 1 round.

**UPGRADES**

**Shaken to the Core.** Successfully affected targets are Staggered for 1 round as well. Additionally, Roar of the Lion no longer requires your Movement action.

**Inspire the Pride.** Any Ally ADJACENT to you when performing Roar of the Lion receives HL as additional AR and damage on their next attack. This bonus doesn't stack if they haven't used it before receiving it again.

## LIVING SHIELD

**REACTION**

*In the heat of battle instincts are king. You see the attack coming at you well ahead of time. You reflexively grab the nearest enemy and swing them around to block the deadly blow against you.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Fury | Special | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

You may activate Living Shield when you are about to roll your Defense roll and the following conditions are satisfied:

- You must have an enemy who is not the source of the attack you are defending against ADJACENT to you.
- The target is Medium size or smaller.
- The target is not immune to being displaced.
- The attack being defended against does not target MR.
- If the target is Elite, you must Contest MIGHT vs. MIGHT.

**Success.** Your Living Shield target suffers the damage of the attack intended for you.

**Failure.** You suffer the full damage of the attack.

**UPGRADES**

**Bloodthirsty.** If your Living Shield dies from the intercepted blow, you generate 5 Fury.

**Mighty Grip.** If you expend an additional 1 Fury, you gain Benefit on your Defense roll (and your Contest roll).

## PAIN IS FIRE

**PASSIVE**

*The pain your enemies inflict upon you can be channelled to fuel your rage.*

**EFFECTS**

Taking damage from a single attack before mitigation that's equal to or higher than twice your Level instantly grants you 1 Fury. You can gain more than 1 Fury from a single attack, e.g. a Level 5 Dreadnought is struck for 20 damage before mitigation; he would receive 2 Fury instead of 1.

*Crushing Blow's base effects make it useful against heavily armoured targets but the power really comes into its own when you take its upgrades.*

*Living Shield, like many other Dreadnought powers, is a high risk gamble. The expensive Fury cost and the possibility of total failure counterbalance the ability to deal damage via a Reaction and generate a net gain of 2 Fury if you take the Bloodthirsty upgrade.*

*Roar of the Lion allows for much safer tactical retreats—for your Allies anyways. But you're a Dreadnought, you can take the heat can't you?*

Minora Eckhart,
The Red Maiden

## GUTS AND GLORY

The mob of Risen was getting worse. Ever since the Vampire Prince, Saheen, had disappeared—left or been destroyed, no one knew—the Undead thronging his territory had begun swarming the town of Shattered Claw. After an unfortunate encounter, when townspeople had been caught unawares by the mob, the magistrate decided something must be done.

Enter Resha Grimclaw, the Furian Dreadnought. It had been a happy coincidence that she had just been passing through the area when all of this trouble had started. The town paid her well to do what she did best.

One of the advancing Undead swung a club at her—at least she hoped it was a club and not a severed limb. Resha deflected the blow off her armoured forearm and swung her axe in retaliation. The Risen were perfect for cleaving; her blade bit deep into the mushy skull and her attacker fell.

"Come on!" she bellowed, swinging her axe between her hands. "Come and get me, you brutes!"

They swarmed. Whether they were answering her challenge or slavering with hunger, Resha could not tell and did not care. All that mattered was the fight.

The Dreadnought punched the butt of her axe into one Risen's face, spun and swung her claws out at another advancing from behind her. She felt the thud of a rusted sword hitting her pauldron; it nicked her arm as it glanced off and she snarled. Spinning, she cleaved the Undead's arm, its rusted sword clattering away with it. Her blood was streaming from the wound, but Resha only felt her energy building and the wound began to close.

Every blow they landed, she grew stronger, faster, and ever more ferocious. She howled her battle cry: "Live in the moment! Live on in the songs!"

Soon she was a blur of fangs and claws and axe and armour. Unaided, she tore through the cluster of Undead pounding at the gates of Shattered Claw. Their putrid bodies fell, building a wall of bones, yet still they came. Resha fought amongst the rust and blood, climbing ever higher on the growing mound.

As the sun began to rise, the dregs of the throng scurried away, back to the graveyards of Prince Saheen's castle. Resha stood, soul on fire, her enemies crushed beneath her feet. Splattered with blood from head to toe, and only some of it her own, the Dreadnought roared into the rising sun.

## WRECKING BALL

**STANDARD - MOVEMENT**

*You move through the battlefield like an unstoppable boulder. Each enemy you trample builds momentum for your next victim.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Fury | Single | Nearby Only |

**EFFECTS**

You must move up to a NEARBY target and roll your Basic Attack against them.

**Success.** You move to a NEARBY enemy and deal Basic Attack damage and gain 1 stack of Wrecking Ball.

**Failure.** You move to a NEARBY enemy and deal half Basic Attack damage. You maintain your current Wrecking Ball stacks but do not gain any.

*Wrecking Ball.* Each stack of Wrecking Ball increases your damage and DR by +2. Your Wrecking Ball stacks fall off after 1 round if they are not increased or maintained on your next turn.

**UPGRADES**

**Glory Ignores Pain.** Wrecking Ball stacks also increase your AV by +2 per stack.

**Overpower.** Wrecking Ball bonuses are increased from +2 per stack to +3 per stack.

**Bullheaded.** On a failed Wrecking Ball attack, you are refunded 1 Fury.

## RAGING STORM

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*Become a hurricane of steel as you whirl your weapon(s) about with reckless abandon, striking through all your foes with ease.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Fury | Multiple | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** All ADJACENT enemies successfully struck by Raging Storm suffer 2d8+MIGHT damage.

**Failure.** You deal your +MIGHT as damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Eye of the Storm.** Your DR and AV are increased by your +MIGHT until the start of your next turn.

**Eternal Tempest.** If you manage to successfully strike 4 or more enemies, Raging Storm's Overdrive tag is reset.

## VICIOUS WOUND

**STANDARD**

*A strike that leaves a deadly wound on your target. You call out to your allies to capitalize on the vulnerable area before the enemy can favour and protect it.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Fury | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage and leave a Vicious Wound on your target. Any attack that strikes your target after has its damage increased by +1. This effect stacks up until the end of your next turn or the bonus becomes equal to your Level, e.g. you place a Vicious Wound on your target and Ally 1 strikes it with a +1 damage bonus; Ally 2 follows up with another attack with a +2 damage bonus. Attacks that cause multiple strikes will increase the Vicious Wound bonus for each strike (e.g. a Phantom's Shadow Flurry that hits twice would increase the bonus from +1 to +3 in a single action). Vicious Wound stops at the end of your next turn. Using Vicious Wound again on the same target will reset the effect back to +1. Forced attacks do not receive the Vicious Wound bonus.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage and Vicious Wound does not apply.

**UPGRADES**

**Gash.** The bonus damage is increased from +1 to +2 per attack.

**Mortal Wounds.** A target that is currently afflicted with your Vicious Wound has healing and regeneration effects halved on them.

**Practiced.** Cost reduced to 1 Fury.

## RELENTLESS

**PASSIVE**

*While others look into the face of death with fear, you smile and feed off the heady rush. The fatal thrill of it all keeps you swinging.*

**EFFECTS**

When your HP are reduced to 0 or below, you may make one immediate Basic Attack at an ADJACENT enemy and heal for half the amount of damage you inflict. Can only happen once per Full Rest.

**UPGRADES**

**Composed.** You remain poised even in your critical condition and you may choose to use a power instead of your Basic Attack when Relentless is triggered.

*Wrecking Ball embodies the full spirit of what it means to be a Dreadnought. Each charge moves you closer to becoming an unstoppable force. If you have a willing Judge in your party, grab all of Wrecking Ball's upgrades and become "boulder buddies" with your Judge. Move around the battlefield together, using the Judge's Rallying Strike and Inspiring Presence powers to keep your AR and Fury high to stack Wrecking Ball's effects to destructive heights.*

*Vicious Wound's Mortal Wounds upgrade has a rare anti-healing effect that can help against stubborn enemies like the Tainted who regenerate significant amounts of HP each round.*

*Ask for any AR-boosting bonuses from your Allies before you perform Raging Storm, especially if you have the Eternal Tempest upgrade. Being able to use Raging Storm without exhausting its Overdrive tag can let you clear the battlefield quickly.*

# Driftwalker

In the days after the Great Calamity occurred, while the Fell hordes spilled from the Great Beyond across Unity, many began to lose faith in their gods, most of all the Skyfather. The bloodbath that ensued from the Fell invasion wrought Unity with tragedy and death. As their loved ones fell, people began to curse the deities for doing nothing to stop the demons. Even the holiest amongst them began to lose faith. Some Priests rebuked their patron god, and in doing so began to hear a new voice, which replaced the one they had known. The voice was pleasant and promised what their old gods would not deliver: salvation.

Slowly, men and women of faith began turning towards these new voices. The voices were eager to help, and granted them incredible powers to fight the demons with. But the newly anointed began to change, both physically and mentally. Their once docile and gentle demeanours grew cruel, and the cruelty began to show in their appearance—bloodshot eyes, black veins, and scaly skin that peeled and bled were trademarks of those that had turned to the voices and drank from the dark chalice too often and too deeply. They became known as the Driftwalkers.

Despite their slow descent into madness and physical deformity, many Driftwalkers became so addicted to the power they were given that they could not let it go. Others who still retained a measure of their sanity and virtue willingly sacrificed parts of themselves to contribute to the fight against the darkness. For the Driftwalkers, the battle rages on—both in the spliced worlds of Unity and the Drift, and within their own grim hearts.

The Driftwalker is a dark caster who taps into the swirling morass of energies that comprise the Drift. Many fear the Drift and the demonic fiends that have emerged from there, but there are some that look into the Drift and see a wellspring of possibility to be drawn from. Their fascination with and intense study of this energetic world has enabled them to harness fearsome power.

But everything comes at a price. For some, it is paid in the years of practice they invest in their craft, for others it is paid in servitude and dedication to their patron god, and for the Driftwalker, the toll is a very piece of their soul. In order for Driftwalkers to manipulate the energies of the Drift, they must make bargains with the dark entities that live there. These entities are able to act as conduits, translating the chaotic energies of the Drift into "gifts" to bestow upon the Driftwalker.

The dubious nature of the dark entities can cause these transactions to be unpredictable. Each new power or augmentation granted replaces a little bit of who the Driftwalker once was. Those brimming with Drift energy usually experience significant changes to their physical appearance, as well as their mental state: dry and scaly, reptilian-like skin; sunken, yellow, bloodshot eyes; and appendages that are twisted and deformed. Even their voices take on a menacing and animalistic timbre. Are the sacrifices worth it?

## WHY PLAY A DRIFTWALKER?

Play a Driftwalker if you like:

- The idea of a dark caster that can receive physical augmentations—for a price
- A high-risk playstyle involving trading life force for power

The Driftwalker provides an intense playstyle that revolves around making dangerous decisions. The Driftwalkers' abilities are powered by their Class Resource—Bile—and their own vitality. They use their hitpoints as a casting resource, which makes playing them unique from the other classes. Due to the dark nature of their abilities, they are able to siphon back life from their enemies.

Part of playing a Driftwalker effectively lies in understanding the ebb and flow of leeching versus striking. It can be a very rewarding experience playing to the very edge of your life while wreaking havoc on the battlefield.

# DRIFTWALKER

*"Do you hear the voices too?"*

## CLASS TRAITS

**STARTING HP:** 10+MIND
**RECUPERATION DIE:** d8
**ARMOUR:** Light
**WEAPONS:** Light Melee, Medium Melee
**RESOURCE:** Bile **[8]** 1d6 Recharge / Blood
**MAIN ATTRIBUTE:** Mind

## CLASS FEATURES

**All Driftwalkers come with the following features as part of their baseline powers. Driftwalkers utilize Blood as a secondary resource. Blood refers to your hitpoints. i.e. 1d4 Blood = 1d4 HP.**

### DARK BARGAIN

**QUICK**

*Colluding with the demonic has made you fearless and desensitized to the grisly nature of your craft. You willingly give up a portion of your life force for more power.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2+MIND Blood | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Recharge 1 Bile.

While life during the Age of Wrath is often brutal and short, it is even more pronounced in those that take up the mantle of Driftwalker. The mental and physical toll of dancing with the darkness hastens the aging process and destroys the vitality of the body and spirit. Power always has a price.

*Siphoning Strike is the bread-and-butter Driftwalker attack. The Driftwalker's playstyle often demands risking your own HP to deal damage and control the battlefield. Siphoning Strike allows you to counteract this cost. Check out the Second Serving power and its upgrade Reaping Swing to make your go-to attack even more potent.*

### SIPHONING STRIKE

**STANDARD**

*An eerie green glow suffuses your weapon as you channel Fell energy into it. You can feel its hunger ebbing through you.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Bile | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage and heal yourself for HL+MIND.

**Failure.** You deal half damage and heal for HL.

## PICK 1 PERK FROM BELOW

### FELL SPEAK

**PASSIVE**

*Your time communing with dark forces has given you an ear for understanding the fundamentals of the demonic language.*

**EFFECTS**

You understand the language of demons and receive your +MIND as a bonus in all social interactions with the Fell.

*Sleepless can be very useful especially if you roll well. Gaining First Strike against an intruder allows you to lock them in a Bone Prison (if you've taken that power), negating their turn and letting your teammates make short work of them after.*

### SLEEPLESS

**PASSIVE**

*Even when you close your eyes, the nightmares and terrors of the Drift visit you, drawn like moths to a flame. A mere mortal would be driven mad by such visions, but as someone who has embraced the darkness, you feed off of them. You are kept in a half-waking state even when you are 'sleeping.'*

**EFFECTS**

When an Intrusion occurs, you always receive First Strike against your assailants. At Level 5, you have mastered the Sleepless Sleep and this benefit extends to a single Ally of your choosing.

# ADVANCEMENT TABLE

| LEVEL | HP BOOST | CORE PATH POINT | ATTRIBUTE BOOST | RECUPERATION | GENERAL PERK | ARTIFACT CAPACITY | TIER I TOKEN | TIER II TOKEN | AR | DR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | ◆ | | | |
| 3 | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | |
| 4 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | | +1 | +1 |
| 5 | | | ◆ | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 6 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | | ◆ | | |
| 7 | | | ◆ | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +1 | +1 |
| 8 | ◆ | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 9 | | | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | |
| 10 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +1 | +1 |

**LEVEL 1**

**Choose THREE Tier 1 powers (no upgrades)**

**LEVEL 3**

**NEW CLASS FEATURE**

### WHISPERS OF THE DRIFT

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*The anguish of countless souls echoes throughout the vast void of the unseen world of the Drift. You tap into this sea of emotional energy and call forth maddening whispers to torment and distract your foes.*

**EFFECTS**

You are able to affect the mind of a thinking creature momentarily, lowering the TN by HL for whatever coercion or haggling an Ally might wish to apply to the target as you channel this power.

**LEVEL 5**

**Choose TWO Tier 2 powers (no upgrades)**

**LEVEL 8**

**NEW CLASS FEATURE**

### DARK THOUGHTS

**QUICK**

*Years of reaching into the void and haggling for power with the dark entities have allowed you to focus your mind to such an extent that your thoughts can now be impressed upon other creatures.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Bile | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

You may telepathically communicate with an intelligent creature that understands the language you are using. Lasts 1 minute.

**LEVEL 10**

**ULTIMATE ABILITY**

### POSSESSION

**ULTIMATE - STANDARD - MAINTAIN**

*Countless experiences of cavorting with the twisted entities of the Drift have calloused your mind and made it strong. When you force your will on another, their resistance crumbles as you control them like the puppet they are.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Bile/Special | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack. Targets Mental Resistance (MR).

**Success.** You take complete control of your target. Maintaining control costs your life force 1d8+4 Blood for each round, taken at the beginning of your turn. The GM may reveal the target's stats and abilities to you. You will use your Driftwalker's Attack and Defense rolls to determine if you hit or get hit. If the possessed target has any bonuses to these rolls via abilities, you will receive that bonus when acting as the possessed target. Any of the target's powers that cost Ruin will instead use your Bile resource. While using Possession, the Driftwalker's body is vulnerable to attack (no Defense roll) and you control your target when it's your turn instead. Rolling doubles as your possessed target will still earn your Driftwalker a recharge roll. Outside of combat, Possession costs 10 Blood every 10 seconds.

If the target is Elite, you must Contest MIND vs. MIND initially and each round after if you wish to remain in control.

**Failure.** Your target is greatly shaken by the mental assault and suffers Hindrance on all actions for 2 rounds.

*Be sure to alert your allies when you utilize Possession. Your character will be immobilized and highly vulnerable to attack while you attempt to possess your target. Having friends to watch your back may go a long way in ensuring victory.*

# TIER I POWERS

*Black Blood works best when you coordinate with a teammate to burst your Festering Pustules and spread the damage around.*

## BLACK BLOOD

**STANDARD**

*Draw a gash in your hand while chanting a demonic mantra. The blood doesn't just seep out, it bubbles and froths as it turns black and tarry. A putrid odour cuts through the air as you fling the vile substance at your foes.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Bile + Xd4 Blood | Single | Nearby |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal 1d4+MIND Corrosive damage. You may choose to spawn a number (X) of Festering Pustules on your target. The number of pustules cannot exceed HL. Festering Pustules last for 1 round; the first time the target is dealt damage while they are active, they explode for 1d4 Corrosive damage each on the target and any ADJACENT enemies.

**Failure.** You deal 1d4 Corrosive damage to your target.

**UPGRADES**

**Virulent.** Your Festering Pustules deal 1d6 Corrosive damage, up from 1d4.

**Contagion.** Even on a failure, you may choose to have 1 Festering Pustule grow on your target.

**Leeching Sores.** You heal for half the damage your Festering Pustules inflict.

*Chains of Morganus is a party favourite that allows you to reposition enemies and setup devastating combos with your Allies.*

## CHAINS OF MORGANUS

**STANDARD**

*Fiery green chains of energy burst forth from your body and encircle a nearby enemy before drawing them to you.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Bile | Single | Nearby |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** Target is moved to your location. If the target is larger than Medium size or Elite, you must Contest their MIGHT vs. your MIND to displace them.

**Failure.** Your target is marked by the Demon Queen Morganus until the end of your next turn. Your next casting of Chains of Morganus against that target will be granted Benefit (this extends to Contesting too).

**UPGRADES**

**Searing Links.** As a Quick action, expending 1d4 Blood causes a successfully chained target to take double that amount + MIND in Corrosive damage. At Level 5, you may spend up to 1d6 Blood.

**Draining Bondage.** If your target is successfully chained, you may expend 1 Bile to heal MIND+HL.

**Splintering Grip.** Any successful attack made on the chained target during the round in which it was snared and dragged in shatters the Chains of Morganus, sending painful splinters of Corrosive energy into the target. Deals 1d4+HL+MIND Corrosive damage. Chains can only be shattered once per cast and must be shattered on the round it was cast in.

*Demonic Constitution and Demonic Speed enable you to engage in melee effectively. Taking these powers along with Second Serving is a potent combination if you find yourself in the thick of things more often than not.*

## DEMONIC CONSTITUTION

**PASSIVE**

*Vorath the Devourer imbues you with a whisper of his strength in return for a portion of your own power.*

**EFFECTS**

Gain +10 max HP permanently but also lose 1 max Bile permanently.

This can be taken up to 2 times, but not more than once per level.

**UPGRADES**

**Might of the Void.** Your Melee Attacks are now permanently empowered. Increase your Basic Attack damage die to 1d12 or 2d6.

## DEMONIC SPEED

**PASSIVE**

*Tala'zim the Wicked, lord of the lithe and graceful Shrike Maidens, grants you a bargain: life for speed.*

**EFFECTS**

Your AGILITY is increased by +1 but your maximum HP is permanently lowered by 4.

This can be taken up to 3 times, but not more than once per level.

**UPGRADES**

**Shimmer.** As a Reaction to any attack, you may increase your DR by +MIND. Must declare before rolling Defense. Costs 1 Bile.

## BONE PRISON

**STANDARD - MAINTAIN**

*You feel a small fragment of your soul leave you, passing down through your feet and into the ground as it heads towards your target. The ground erupts and dry, bone-white pillars converge around them like an ivory cage.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Bile/Special | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack to determine X.

Your target is encased in a prison of bone. They are unable to move from their location but may still perform attacks. The target and its allies may attack the Bone Prison in an attempt to break free.

The Bone Prison will absorb damage up to your LEVEL+MIND+X:

| | 2-8 | 9-15 | 16-21 | 22+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **X** | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 |

At the start of every round past the initial casting you will lose 1d4 Blood as a cost to maintaining the Bone Prison.

The Bone Prison lasts until you release it as a Quick Action or until it breaks. Only one Bone Prison can be active at a time.

**UPGRADES**

**Roll the Bones.** Gamble with your life even more. You may now have multiple Bone Prisons active at a time. Blood costs are additive.

**Bone Spurs.** Any Melee Attack made on your Bone Prison deals +MIND Physical damage to the attacker.

## FELL CARAPACE

**PASSIVE**

*A dark bargain hardens your skin into chitinous plating. The process is excruciating but it is a small price to pay for the added protection.*

**EFFECTS**

Gain +2 Armour Value (AV) but lose 1 PRESENCE permanently.

**UPGRADES**

**Thick Skin.** As a Reaction to being struck you may thicken the carapace briefly and gain an additional AV bonus equal to your +MIND against a single attack. Must declare before rolling damage. Costs 2 Bile.

## SECOND SERVING

**PASSIVE**

*Your signature move develops even greater power as you learn new forbidden techniques.*

**EFFECTS**

Siphoning Strike is empowered and now leaves a searing brand on the target that acts as a homing beacon for your Fell-charged weapon. Your next Siphoning Strike against the marked target receives Benefit. The Second Serving mark lasts for 1 round.

**UPGRADES**

**Reaping Swing.** When your Siphoning Strike successfully hits a target, you may expend 1 Bile to heal for another +MIND HP.

## NIGHTMARE

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*Assault your target's mind with unbearable visions from the darkest parts of the Drift. Your very visage is the harbinger of fear.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Bile | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack. Targets Mental Resistance (MR).

**Success.** The target suffers 1d8+MIND True damage and is unable to attack you directly for 2 rounds.

**Failure.** Your target shrugs off the visions but is momentarily crippled by your presence as it regains composure. The target suffers half damage and is unable to attack you directly for 1 round.

**UPGRADES**

**Terror Strikes Twice.** You may now designate a single Ally to be part of the nightmare vision, granting them the same immunity you receive for 2 rounds (or 1 on a failed attempt).

**Surrender to Fear.** Nightmare is now always cast with Benefit (even when Hindered) and it no longer has a Bile cost.

**Psychic Scarring.** Nightmare's damage is now increased to 1d12+MIND+LEVEL True damage.

*Bone Prison is an excellent way of nullifying powerful melee-oriented enemies such as Orc Berserkers.*

*In situations where your party is facing off with a single Elite, Nightmare allows you to play aggressively and use your Blood-spending abilities without fear of an errant attack striking you down for the next 2 rounds.*

# TIER II POWERS

## BLOOD PARASITE

**STANDARD - MAINTAIN**

*You conjure a small shadowy worm with a gaping maw and launch it at your enemies.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Bile | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

You may only have 1 Blood Parasite up at a time.

**Success.** Your Blood Parasite successfully latches onto its target and burrows inside of it, dealing +MIND damage and healing you for the damage dealt. If you Maintain this spell after it successfully lands, this process repeats itself at the beginning of your next turn.

**Failure.** Your Blood Parasite latches onto its target and manages to take a bite out of it, but is unable to maintain a hold strong enough to allow it to burrow. Deal +MIND damage and heal yourself for the damage dealt.

**UPGRADES**

**Proliferation.** You may have multiple Blood Parasites out at once as long as your resource pool can support it.

**Blood Feast.** Allies that successfully strike targets afflicted by Blood Parasite are now healed for 1d4.

## SOUL REAPER

**PASSIVE**

*When a being dies, it releases a burst of spiritual energy from its mortal coil. As that energy finds its way back into the Drift, your hungry body often can't help but sample a bit of that sweet ethereal nectar.*

**EFFECTS**

Every time an enemy is slain on the battlefield, you are healed for HL.

**UPGRADES**

**Empower.** When Soul Reaper activates, your next attack has its AR increased by HL as well. Multiple enemies dying at once does not cause the bonus for Empower to stack. Lasts for 1 round.

**Grim Gift.** In conjunction with receiving bonuses to yourself, you may now also choose to bestow your Soul Reaper bonus(es), when they occur, on a single Ally up to a FAR distance.

## EXPLODE CORPSE

**STANDARD**

*Unnaturally hasten and amplify the putrefaction process of a lifeless husk. The volatile gases inside cause the cadaver to erupt explosively.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Bile + 1d6 Blood | Special | Special |

**EFFECTS**

Can only be used on an organic corpse up to a FAR distance away. All targets ADJACENT to the targeted corpse will be affected by the blast.

The corpse will automatically explode but you must roll your Basic Attack to determine if the explosion successfully strikes any ADJACENT targets.

**Success.** You deal 2d4+HL+MIND Corrosive damage to the ADJACENT target(s).

**Failure.** You deal half damage to the ADJACENT target(s).

**UPGRADES**

**Lingering Miasma.** A vile cloud remains and deals +MIND Corrosive damage to anyone that remains ADJACENT to the corpse at the start of their turn. Lasts 2 rounds.

**Choking Fumes.** The initial explosion causes successfully affected targets to become Staggered.

## SUNDER SOUL

**STANDARD**

*A blast of green chaotic Fell energy erupts from your palm. You pour a little bit of yourself into the attack.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Bile + X Blood | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Choose how much Blood (X) to expend (up to your current Level). Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal 1d6+X Fire damage. If your target is killed from Sunder Soul, your Blood cost is immediately refunded.

**Failure.** You deal half damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Dancing with Death.** You may double the amount of Blood used for Sunder Soul.

*With the Proliferation upgrade for Blood Parasite, you may have up to two parasites active at a time. However, if you manage to get your hands on the Lantern of the Lorekeeper (an ancient Artifact), and upgrade it to receive Unending Knowledge (pg. 294), you will increase your Bile pool to 9 and be able to have up to three parasites active. The amount of healing you will receive per round will make you very difficult to kill.*

*Sunder Soul is an interesting power. At a glance it seems straightforward, but the nuance of using it requires thoughtfulness and experience. Sunder Soul should be viewed as an execution move. Using it as such makes it incredibly efficient when looking at it from a cost vs. damage perspective. The caveat is that it's a gamble—on a miss or a misjudged target you could obliterate your own health pool.*

*Soul Link's implications are many but the upgrade Uplift is wildly potent. Guaranteed resource generation is very rare in Unity.*

## SOUL LINK

**OVERDRIVE - QUICK**

*You tether your soul to another. A wispy green ethereal cord materializes between the two of you. Both your pain and fortune are now shared with each other.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Bile | Single Ally | Far |

**EFFECTS**

You are linked to a willing Ally. Damage is split in half (rounded down) between the two of you. Healing one person also heals the other for the full amount.

Lasts until the end of battle or 10 minutes. Also ends if one of you becomes Incapacitated or moves out of range.

**UPGRADES**

**Blood Ritual.** You and your linked target are now able to transfer life between each other as a Quick action.

**Uplift.** Each round, you and your linked target regenerate 1 Class Resource.

*Voidstep is one of the most powerful movement abilities in the game but it also has potentially the steepest cost.*

## VOIDSTEP

**MOVEMENT - QUICK**

*Stepping through the void allows you to traverse distances quickly, but there is always a toll to be paid.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Bile + 1d10 Blood | Location | Far |

**EFFECTS**

You may teleport up to a FAR distance while avoiding all Provoked Attacks.

## GRASP OF IRATHMUS

**STANDARD**

*An invisible tendril shoots out from your outstretched hand to find its way around your victim's neck. Squeezing your hand causes the spectral coil to tighten and choke the life from your victim.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Bile | Single | Nearby |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You disable your target from casting spells or using powers for 1 round. If they are in the middle of a spell, it becomes interrupted. Deals +MIND damage.

If the target is larger than Medium size or Elite, you must Contest their MIGHT vs. your MIND to see if the power-disabling and interrupt effect is applied.

**Failure.** You deal half damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Crushing Grasp.** Expend 1d4+HL Blood and deal twice that result as damage to your target.

**Infernal Reach.** Range is increased to FAR.

## MELT MIND

**STANDARD**

*Dissect your target's mind, poking and prodding at all their darkest secrets and insecurities. As they attempt to fend off your mental assault, their own resolve is weakened from the distraction.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Bile | Single | Very Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack to determine X.

Your target's MR is lowered for 1 round by:

| | 2-8 | 9-15 | 16-21 | 22+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **X** | -2 | -3 | -4 | -5 |

**UPGRADES**

**Psychic Backlash.** A target afflicted by Melt Mind suffers the penalty value as True damage every time they attempt to make an attack or move.

**Lingering Madness.** Melt Mind's penalty duration is increased to 2 rounds from 1.

**Break Resistance.** A successful Melt Mind allows you to choose a single Elemental Resistance to lower for the same amount as the original MR penalty.

## JUST A LITTLE MORE...

As Vivian drew the summoning circle, the candles guttered. A sliver into the Drift opened. Each time she resorted to this toxic magick, she lost a little more of herself. The Driftwalker rubbed at her withered leg; she knew the dangers. What did her suffering matter? Little Hubert was relying on her.

"Just a little more," she whispered to the dark. Gritting her teeth against searing pain, Vivian thrust her hand into the Drift and watched her flesh begin to boil. "Just... just a little more," she stammered. Her vision swam as the Drift energy sank into her bones, corroding a little more of her soul in exchange for the power she needed.

With a shriek, Vivian finally recoiled. Her kicking boot scraped through the chalk circle, and the candles flickered out. The sliver of Drift spat and disappeared, leaving the Driftwalker cradling her boiled arm. Green flames swirled around her hand, lighting up the dark.

Vivian pulled herself to her feet. There was no time to waste. The plague was running rampant and only the wealthiest were receiving medicine. If she could not buy potions for Hubert, she would sell her soul for the power to save him.

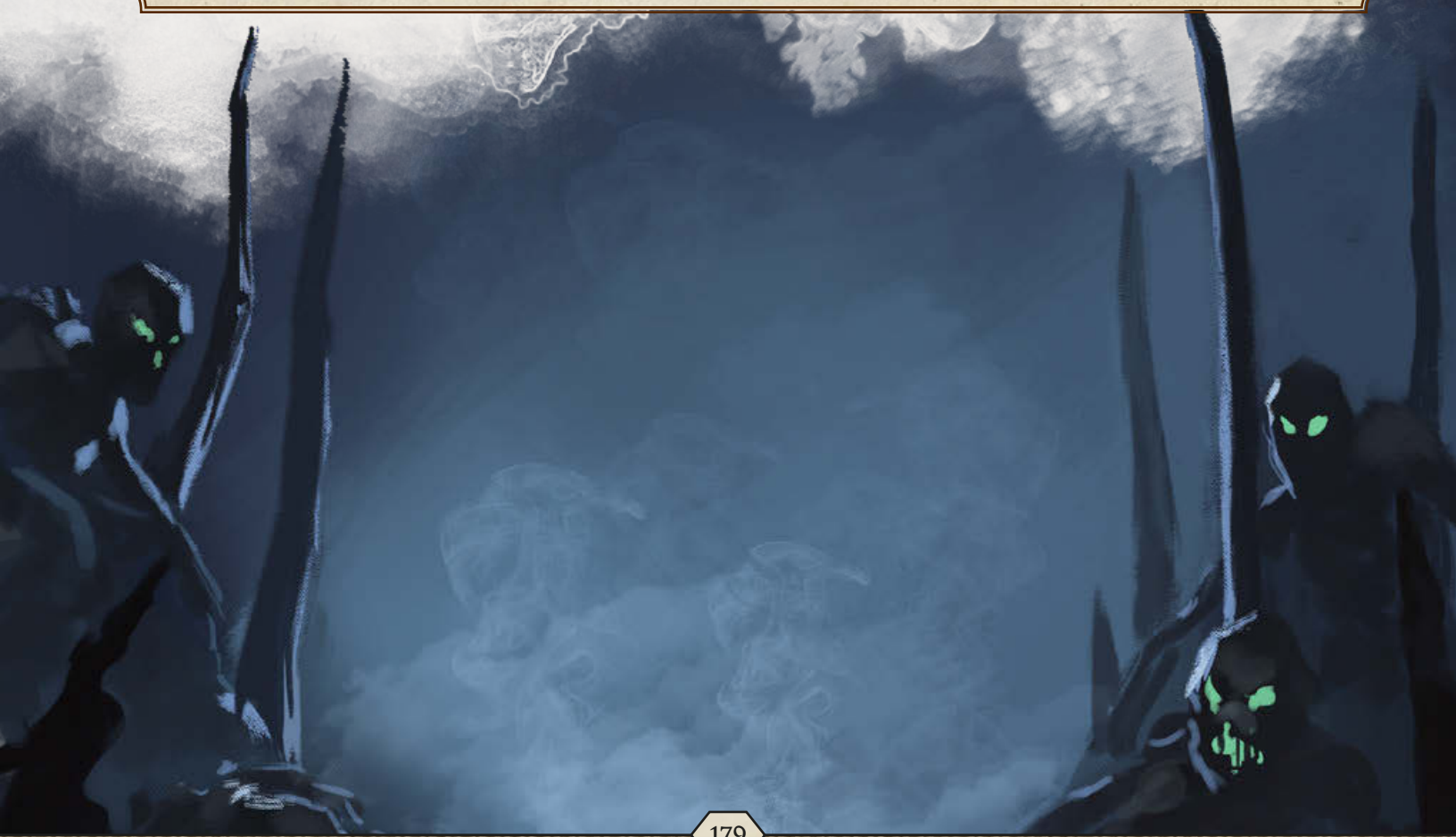
"Just a little more," she grunted, her eyes fever-bright in the gloom. "Momma's coming, Hubert. Just hang in there..."

With her borrowed power, Vivian tore through the guards at the Alchemists' Guild. They were unprepared for the ruthlessness of a Driftwalker's magick. She blasted the iron doors off their hinges. With green flames crawling up her arm and into her hair, Vivian stalked the halls, looking for the medical stores. Hauling a hapless alchemist up the wall by his neck, she pocketed every dose of healing potion he had. Then she fled amidst a rain of shattered glass.

Touching down in the quarantined district, she passed plague victims and masked doctors alike without pity. There was only one patient she must find: her son.

Vivian found the house, though there were more corpses in the yard than her previous visit. "Hubert? Momma's brought you something to get you well..." but her voice cracked when she saw no attendants in the house, merely a black banner hanging from the bedpost.

"Hubert!" Vivian scrambled to the bedside where a small corpse lay bundled. The green flame was licking at her heart as she pulled back the sheet. A terrible roar rose in her ears as she pawed through the debris looking for chalk, looking for candles. "No, just a little more..."



# Fell Hunter

When the Great Calamity occurred and the Fell spilled into Unity, the loss of life was staggering. The world had never seen anything like the Fell. The demonic hordes tore through the lands like a black wind of doom. The invasion left in its wake both tragedy and rage. Many children became orphaned as their families were cut down by the Fell legions. These orphaned souls grew up forged by the burning vengeance burning in their hearts.

The greatest concentration of Fell, and therefore the largest massacre of life, occurred in the West, in the area surrounding the Dreadlands. Although these were Vallan lands, people of every creed and race lost someone there to the senseless cruelty of the Fell. The orphaned children of so many families scattered into the wilderness as they ran for their lives. As civilization was driven deeper into the Starlight Woods by the onslaught, the Night Wardens emerged from the woods and greeted the incoming Fell with a hail of arrow fire. In the winding woods and dense wilderness, the Fell were completely disadvantaged; the Night Wardens—elite Vallan Rangers that guarded the sacred forests—knew every inch of the area. Demons were stopped cold from encroaching further upon them.

Thirsting for further slaughter, the legions turned away from their fruitless efforts to look for easier targets. The Night Wardens returned to find a great many people cowering in their forests—people who had lost everything. The Night Wardens took them in. They harnessed their pain and transformed them into instruments of vengeance: they became the Fell Hunters. Generations later, the Fell Hunters continue to spread their creed across the land, taking in any who have suffered at the hands of the Fell and teaching them how to turn their hatred into demon-killing weaponry, never to feel helpless again.

Fell Hunters are the premier marksmen in Unity. They specialize in dealing death from afar and are versed in a variety of ranged weaponry. Whereas Phantoms are graceful melee fighters, the Fell Hunters take that same precision and agility and utilize it to erase a threat before it can get close enough to strike.

A demon's scent is unmistakable to a well-trained Fell Hunter. Their senses have been honed to razor sharpness, and there is no better tracker than a Fell Hunter when it comes to seeking out demonic threats and ending them.

To assist with their goals, Fell Hunters use a variety of gadgets and traps. Fell Hunters often trade their expert tracking and hunting skills for both coin and equipment that allow them to perform their task even more effectively. It is said that their constant hunt for the Fell provides a distraction from the pain of memory that burdens the Fell Hunter: an endless burn that can only be soothed in spilling a sea of Fell blood.

Now the tables have turned and the hunted has become the hunter. But there is no telling how many demon corpses it will take to fill the gaping hole in a Fell Hunter's soul.

## Why Play a Fell Hunter?

Play a Fell Hunter if you like:

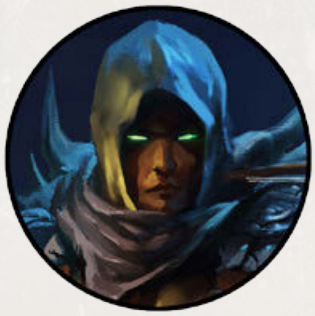
- A ranged death dealer that is not a caster
- A character with great tragedy built into their past
- Planning your moves ahead and a proactive playstyle
- Navigation and tracking

Fell Hunters have some great advantages. They are able to deal high damage from range like a caster, but with some inherent defenses from their armour, traps, and mobility. The majority of Fell Hunter damage is physical, however, and subject to armour mitigation.

With careful planning and some favourable rolls, a Fell Hunter might be able to massacre their enemies without receiving so much as a scratch. The opposite, however, can occur if a Fell Hunter is misplayed. While they have the tools to escape most situations, non-judicious use of their abilities might mean that a power won't be there when you need it the most. If closed in without an escape, Fell Hunters crumple quickly to offensive pressure.

# FELL HUNTER

*"I can smell it in the air. Death approaches."*



## CLASS TRAITS

**STARTING HP:** 10+AGILITY
**RECUPERATION DIE:** d8
**ARMOUR:** Light
**WEAPONS:** Light Melee, All Ranged
**RESOURCE:** Focus **[6]** 1d4 Recharge
**MAIN ATTRIBUTE:** Agility

## CLASS FEATURES

**All Fell Hunters come with the following features as part of their baseline powers**

*Most combatants carry two sets of weapons: a ranged and a melee weapon. They use Quick Actions to switch between these weapons when an enemy either closes in or moves away from them. As a Fell Hunter, there is no need to lug around so much gear—your gun or bow are perfect at all ranges.*

### POINT BLANK SHOT

**PASSIVE**

*Years of favouring ranged weaponry have made handling them almost as natural as breathing for you. Many struggle to nock an arrow or line up a shot with their firearm when the enemy is in their face, but not you.*

**EFFECTS**

You do not suffer the usual Hindrance penalty for attacking with a ranged weapon while ADJACENT to an enemy.

### VAULT

**MOVEMENT**

*Whether it's facing down a horde of minor demons or a hulking Fell monstrosity ripped straight from the darkest corners of the Drift, mobility is the Fell Hunter's cornerstone for securing the tactical upper hand.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Focus | Special | Nearby |

**EFFECTS**

Use your Movement action to Vault up to a NEARBY distance into or away from danger. While Vaulting you receive Benefit against all Provoked Attacks.

*Vault is the key to staying alive as a Fell Hunter and also a critical tool for setting up plays. Always be moving.*

## PICK 1 PERK FROM BELOW

*The Class Perk Efficient can potentially benefit your friends. The extra Necessities retained can be shared with a party member if you are feeling generous.*

### EFFICIENT

**QUICK**

*The Order of the Fell Hunter was born under the watchful eye of the Night Wardens—the finest Rangers Vallantis had to offer. As part of their training, Fell Hunters would often go on long and grueling hunts with little in the way of sustenance. Over time, their minds and bodies learned to reduce the gnaw of hunger, sometimes completely vanquishing it all together.*

**EFFECTS**

Every time you take a Respite, roll 1d10. If you roll 6 or higher, you may take the Respite without using up a Necessity.

### NIMBLE TRACKER

**PASSIVE**

*Hunting the wretched creatures of the Fell-infested Drift requires powers of deduction and a keen eye for clues. Finding the Fell is not enough; you must be fast enough to catch them as well.*

**EFFECTS**

When you attempt an action that involves tracking or acrobatic feats, you get to add +1 to your roll.

Bonus increases to:

- +2 at level 3
- +3 at level 6
- +4 at level 10

# ADVANCEMENT TABLE

| LEVEL | HP BOOST | CORE PATH POINT | ATTRIBUTE BOOST | RECUPERATION | GENERAL PERK | ARTIFACT CAPACITY | TIER I TOKEN | TIER II TOKEN | AR | DR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | ◆ | | | |
| 3 | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | |
| 4 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | | +2 | |
| 5 | | | ◆ | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 6 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | | ◆ | | |
| 7 | | | ◆ | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +1 | +1 |
| 8 | ◆ | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 9 | | | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | |
| 10 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +2 | |

### LEVEL 1

**Choose THREE Tier 1 powers (no upgrades)**

### LEVEL 3

**NEW CLASS FEATURE**

## TRAILBLAZER

**PASSIVE**

*You must be fearless and confident when diving into unknown environments on the hunt, lest your prey elude you. Fell Hunters have been trained to pursue with the utmost speed. This training has translated into their ability to traverse great distances in short periods of time.*

**EFFECTS**

When travelling by land, any journey that takes 3 days or longer can be reduced by 1 day, e.g. a trek taking 4 days can reduced to 3 days and a trek taking 7 days can be reduced to 6 days (fewer days = less Ruin and potentially less encounters).

When taking a Full Rest in the wilderness or other unsafe areas, the chance of an Intrusion occurring is reduced by 1. Instead of 2 Intrusion numbers, GMs pick only 1.

### LEVEL 5

**Choose TWO Tier 2 powers (no upgrades)**

### LEVEL 8

**NEW CLASS FEATURE**

## SIXTH SENSE

**PASSIVE**

*The hair on the back of your neck automatically stands up when something is afoot, even if it is unseen, unheard, and leaves no scent. Elite Fell Hunters call this the Sixth Sense. So long have you honed your tracking abilities that your body has developed the supernatural ability to 'feel' for a presence that seems all but invisible.*

**EFFECTS**

You receive Benefit on any roll that involves detecting creatures that are sneaking or hiding in your near vicinity. You also no longer suffer Hindrance against attacking targets that are protecting themselves using some sort of visual impairment such as illusions, stealth, or invisibility.

*Don't underestimate the effects of Ruin. While it may be invisible to you as a player, your GM is using it to make your life difficult at the most inopportune times. Trailblazer helps cut down on this troublesome resource and also aids in getting a good night's sleep more often than not.*

### LEVEL 10

**ULTIMATE ABILITY**

## CRACKSHOT

**ULTIMATE - PASSIVE**

*Even the sharpest shooter misses from time to time. You've learned over the years to turn each miss into an impetus for deeper focus. Every single shot you take helps you crystallize the next one.*

**EFFECTS**

Every time you miss an attack in combat you gain +1 to your AR until you successfully strike a target. Stacks indefinitely until you have a successful hit or combat ends, then it resets to 0.

*Crackshot makes the Fell Hunter the most accurate Class in the game.*

# TIER I POWERS

*If you are looking for a low-maintenance playstyle that's extremely potent, take Alpha Strike and all of its upgrades. Using Vault, you can play keep away while you refresh Alpha Strike's bonus.*

## ALPHA STRIKE

**PASSIVE**

*As a hunter and tracker you fully appreciate the element of surprise. Your stalking abilities have allowed you to maximize your initial strike.*

**EFFECTS**

Your first attack of any battle receives an additional +AGILITY bonus to AR and damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Patient Hunter.** If you do not use your Standard action for 1 round, the Alpha Strike bonus is available to you again for your next attack.

**Drawing a Bead**. You receive Benefit on your Alpha Strike Attack roll.

*Adaptive Response provides a potent defense for the Fell Hunter who will be fighting at a distance most of the time. Ranged attacks often have an elemental component to it, which Adaptive Response can help mitigate.*

## ADAPTIVE RESPONSE

**PASSIVE**

*Demons deal death by many means. The majority resort to violent physical trauma, but some demons can burn, freeze, melt, shock, and corrupt their victims. A Fell Hunter is always prepared.*

**EFFECTS**

Pick 1 energy type (Arcane, Corrosive, Divine, Electric, Fire, Frost). You gain your +AGILITY as Resistance permanently to that type of damage. You may take this power multiple times, but must select a different energy type than one you already have an Adaptive Response to.

*Covering Fire is meant to affect a clump of enemies. It's wording might lead to confusion in the rare situation that there's a long line of enemies, with each enemy being Adjacent to the next one. Covering Fire would not suppress a wide-stretched line of enemies in this case. Use common sense when judging how enemies are affected by a concentrated volley of shots in a small general area.*

## COVERING FIRE

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*You unleash a withering hail of fire at your enemies.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Focus | Multiple | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack. You may target an enemy or a group of enemies that are all ADJACENT to each other.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage and your target(s) is unable to perform Provoked Attacks, allowing your Allies to move away during Covering Fire's use.

**Failure.** Your target(s) is unable to perform Provoked Attacks, allowing your Allies to move away during Covering Fire's use.

**UPGRADES**

**Unending Salvo.** You gain Benefit on your Attack roll and Covering Fire's cost is reduced to 1 Focus.

**Pinning Fire.** Those that are successfully hit by Covering Fire are Rooted for 1 round.

## SMOKE SCREEN

**QUICK**

*You smash a combustible packet at your feet, creating a shroud of thick grey smoke.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Focus | Special | Self |

**EFFECTS**

You and anybody (enemies and Allies) ADJACENT to you receive Benefit when rolling Defense against all Ranged Attacks for 1 round while shrouded in smoke. Moving away from the area where you dropped the Smoke Screen removes this bonus.

## SUREFOOTED

**QUICK**

*Speed and dexterity are the key to keeping you away from the vile clutches of the Fell. You practice these qualities with dedication each and every day, to the point where your tactical movements are a blur to others.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Focus | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Your Class Feature Vault can now be empowered through a Quick action and spending 1 additional Focus. When you Vault away from ADJACENT enemies, you are completely immune to their Provoked Attacks if Surefooted is used.

## EXPLOSIVE BOLA

**STANDARD**

*Afflicted Tinkerers provide Fell Hunters with powerful tools to hunt evil and in exchange Fell Hunters bring back the dead specimens for "study." The Explosive Bola is one of the many fruits of this grisly deal.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Focus | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You fire an explosive charge that wraps around your target. Declare the timer you set (1–3 rounds). When the timer is up, the bola explodes at the end of the Fell Hunter's turn on the designated round for 1d4+AGILITY Fire damage and automatically hits all ADJACENT targets.

**Failure.** You deal 1d6 damage as the bola bounces off your target.

**UPGRADES**

**Remote Detonation.** As a Quick action you can remotely detonate your bolas now even before the timer is up.

**Incendiary Powder.** Increases the damage die of your bolas from 1d4 to 1d10.

## TWIN FANG STRIKE

**STANDARD**

*Sometimes enemies come in packs rather than as lone predators. This has led you to hone your skills to strike two foes at a time.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Focus | Two | Special |

**EFFECTS**

You may choose 2 targets (one primary, one secondary) that are ADJACENT to each other to strike. Roll your Basic Attack against your primary target.

The range of Twin Fang Strike is dependent on the weapon used.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage to your primary target and automatically deal half damage to the secondary target.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage to your primary target.

**UPGRADES**

**Swiftstriker.** You are refunded 1 Focus on a successful Twin Fang Strike.

## SHOCK TRAP

**STANDARD**

*You carefully place nearly invisible charged wires around you and activate them.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Focus | Single | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack to determine X. There must be no enemies currently ADJACENT to you when you place the trap.

After the trap is set, the first enemy to move ADJACENT to you suffers X+AGILITY Electric damage.

Negative status effects caused by the Shock Trap last for 1 round. If you move away from your trap, it becomes disabled.

| | 2-8 | 9-19 | 20-25 | 26+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **X** | 1d8 | 2d6 | 2d6 | 2d6 |
| | | Staggered | Rooted | Stunned |

*Shock Trap can be potent but requires you to set it up and also remain in that spot until someone comes over to you or an Ally displaces an enemy towards you. If you have a Driftwalker that took Chains of Morganus, have them yank an enemy over to activate the trap then the both of you can obliterate the poor thing.*

## ZEN MARKSMANSHIP

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*The world around you melts away. Nothing exists in this moment but you and your target. You have bypassed the process of thinking and now there is only doing. Time itself bows before you as you unleash shot after shot.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Focus + Special | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

You are able to make Basic Attacks with your ranged weapon multiple times during your turn. Each successive shot after the first suffers a -2 penalty to AR and damage that stacks. It costs 2 Focus per extra shot after the initial one.

Your total number of shots is limited only by your resource pool.

**UPGRADES**

**Stillness.** You are refunded 1 Focus for every successful shot after the initial attack.

**Acuity.** The AR and damage penalties after the first shot are now reduced to -1 from -2.

*Zen Marksmanship has the potential to deal devastating damage if all the shots hit or you get lucky with recharges as you are firing. If your Allies are up for it, have them focus their tactics around bolstering your Zen Marksmanship. Judges can Rallying Strike in the middle of your Zen barrage to feed you Focus (remember, Unity's turn system is teambased allowing you to weave different actions between party members in any order you like). Mystics with Anga's Mana Blade and the Lingering Hunger upgrade can help generate some Focus as well. Classes that provide a bonus to your AR can help keep the chain of shots going especially if you've taken Stillness.*

# TIER II POWERS

## SNIPER

**PASSIVE**

*Distance is your friend. It allows you more time to set up the perfect shot.*

**EFFECTS**

Your Basic Ranged Attack range is increased to VERY FAR. This affects your Basic Ranged Attack only—your powers retain their original range.

Targets that are FAR or VERY FAR away take an additional +1d6 Physical damage on a successful attack.

Sniper bonuses are not applied to failed attacks that still inflict some form of damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Demonsbane.** Your Sniper bonus works at ALL ranges when your target type is a Demon.

*Sniper's upgrade Demonsbane might not be very useful if your GM has a campaign devoid of Fell. Talk to your GM and see if you can switch the bonus to work on Mechanical Constructs or Risen enemies instead.*

## DISTRACT

**STANDARD**

*After analyzing your prey, you attempt to mimic the call of a creature that would draw their focus. Should they be weak and dull of mind, they will succumb and turn their energies towards the distraction, leaving them open for a deadly strike.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Focus | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack. Targets Mental Resistance (MR).

**Success.** The next single attack against the target receives HL as a bonus to AR. Also enables using powers that require the target to be distracted (e.g. Phantom's Backstab). Lasts 1 round.

**Failure.** The next single attack against the target receives a +1 bonus to AR. Lasts 1 round.

**UPGRADES**

**True Nuisance.** Distract can now be used as a Quick action instead of Standard, allowing you to use it to bolster your own attacks.

## COMPOSURE

**STANDARD - MOVEMENT**

*You channel the adrenaline of battle into razor-sharp focus. It is in stillness that the hunter gains clarity.*

**EFFECTS**

In battle, when you have 1 or less Focus, activating Composure will generate 2 Focus.

## CAMOUFLAGE

**QUICK**

*Fade into your surroundings making it hard for the enemy to hit you.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Focus | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Your DR increases by HL against the next single attack made against you. If Camouflage isn't triggered before the start of your next turn, the effect expires.

**UPGRADES**

**Mass Camouflage.** Expending an additional 1 Focus provides Allies ADJACENT to you the benefit of Camouflage.

**Blend.** The DR bonus from Camouflage is doubled against ranged attacks. You also gain a +2 bonus to all stealth-related checks while Camouflaged.

*Camouflage is an excellent defensive power. DR bonuses are rarer than offensive bonuses.*

## LIGHTNING ROD

**STANDARD - MAINTAIN**

*Your ammo becomes charged with the power of lightning.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Focus | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack. Only one Lightning Rod may be in effect at a time. Lasts as long as you maintain it or until the target with the Lightning Rod embedded in it dies.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage as Electric to your target. Your target is now embedded with a lightning rod. A single enemy of your choice that starts their turn ADJACENT to your target automatically suffers +AGILITY Electric damage. Subsequent Electric-based attacks against the Lightning Rod target will also automatically deal half damage to all ADJACENT enemies on a successful hit. (e.g. Spark Lance against the Lightning Rod target will splash half of the damage dealt to the main target to all enemies ADJACENT to it.)

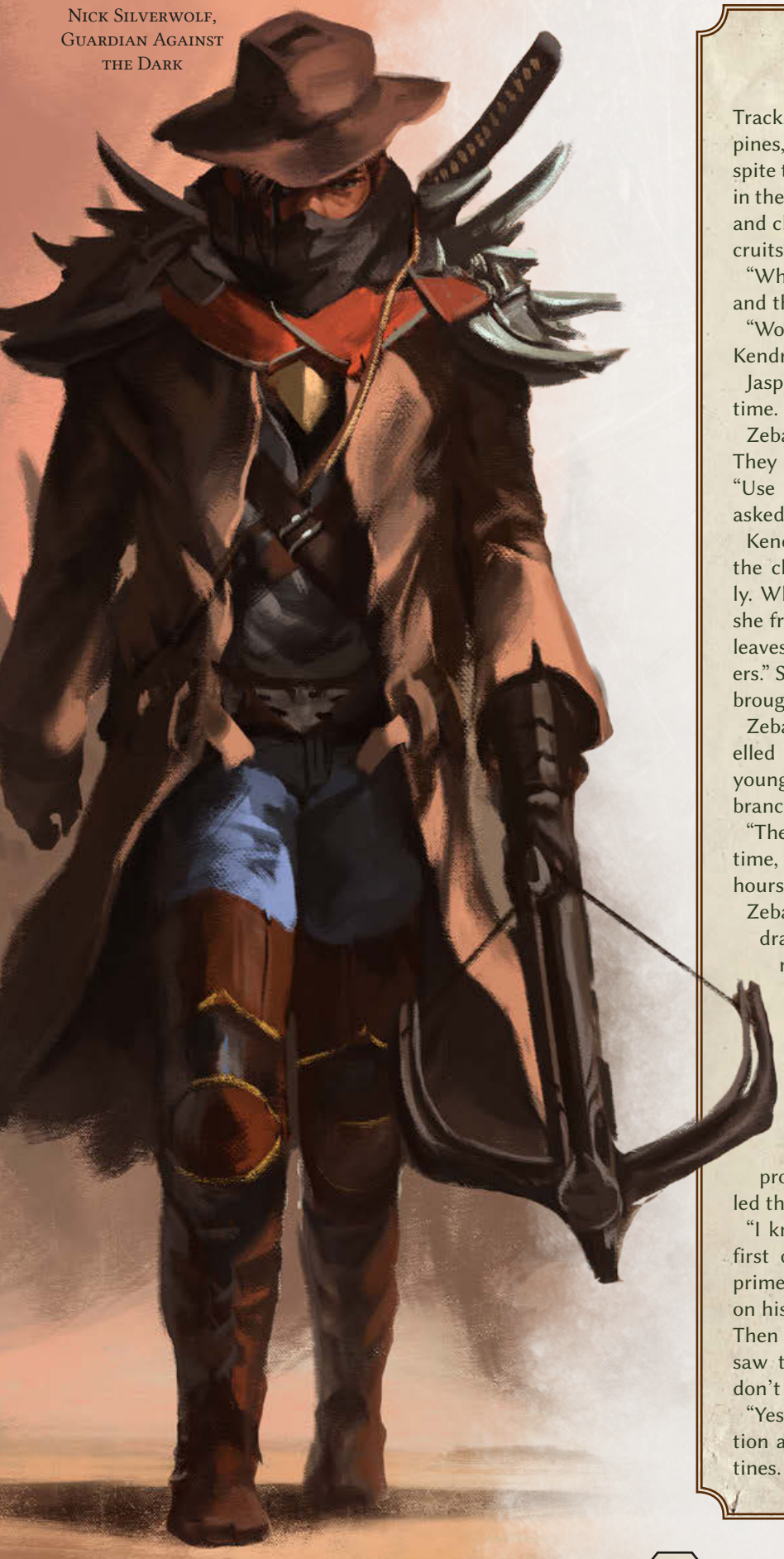
**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage and the Lightning Rod does not stick.

**UPGRADES**

**Amperage.** Lightning Rod's damage is increased to 1d8+AGILITY Electric damage.

**Conduction.** Lightning Rod no longer has a Maintain cost and lasts until the end of combat.

*Combining a fully upgraded Camouflage power with Composure can provide a blanket of defensive bonuses for you and any Adjacent Allies while also generating a net gain of 1 Focus if the conditions on Composure are met.*



Nick Silverwolf, Guardian Against the Dark

## ALWAYS BE PREPARED

Tracks led away into the woods. On one of the old pines, the lower branches were splintered. And despite the light misting of rain, there was a sharp tang in the air. Zebadiah squatted down in the underbrush and clasped his weathered hands. His two young recruits, Jasper and Kendra, crouched before him.

"What do you know?" he asked, peering first at one and then the other with his remaining eye.

"Work quickly, because the rain will erase much," Kendra piped up. She was always too eager to please.

Jasper looked around the small clearing, taking his time. "I smell blood," he said at last.

Zebadiah held up two fingers, one on each hand. They each had got one right, but there was more. "Use all of your senses. What do you know?" he asked again.

Kendra stood slowly, moving light-footed around the clearing. "Tracks!" she announced triumphantly. When Zebadiah did not give her the next point, she frowned, looking back at the disturbed carpet of leaves, the churned soil. "One victim... two attackers." She touched one of the more distinct prints, and brought her fingers to her nose. "A Fell attack."

Zebadiah held up a second finger for her. He swivelled his grizzled head so he could look back at his younger pupil. He saw Jasper had found the smashed branches and was now tasting the wick.

"The victim was dragged this way. Still alive at the time, though badly wounded. Approximately ten hours ago?" Jasper stood and dusted off his hands.

Zebadiah held up two more for Jasper, while Kendra groaned at her loss. "Remember, your environment tells you much more than *what* has happened, but also when and to whom. The wily Fell Hunter knows it also tells you what *will* happen." Zebadiah stood, his old knees crunching as he straightened up.

"What do you know, Zeb?" Kendra asked as the trio picked their way through the broken branches. Sure enough the trail of blood, here protected from the rain by thicker undergrowth, led them deeper into the forest.

"I know that my students are about to fight their first demon. Stay quiet and keep all your senses primed." He cast his glance back at Kendra, standing on his good side, as usual. "Don't do anything rash." Then he turned a little so he could regard Jasper and saw the boy had gone several shades paler. "And don't hesitate."

"Yes, sir," they answered, tightening up their formation as the splattered blood became a trail of intestines.

## HEARTSEEKER

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*An illuminating shot that marks your prey's vulnerabilities for all to capitalize on.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Focus | Single | Very Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal 2d8+AGILITY+HL damage and your target is Marked for Death.

**Failure.** You deal half damage and your target is Staggered for 1 round.

*Marked for Death.* Attacks against the Marked target have a chance of triggering a Massive Hit or Adrenaline Rush (attacker's choice) on an Attack roll of 17–20 instead of just 20 for 1 round.

**UPGRADES**

**Magnify Weakness.** Marked for Death now works from 16–20 for Attack rolls against the Marked target.

**Lingering Doom.** The Marked for Death effect from Heartseeker now lasts 1 additional round.

## STAGGERING SHOT

**STANDARD**

*A forceful shot that gives pause to even the mightiest of foes.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Focus | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage and cause the target to become Staggered for 1 round.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Forceful Impact.** By expending an additional 1 Focus, your successful Staggering Shot pushes the target 1 range band further away from you. If the target is larger than Medium size or Elite, you must Contest their MIGHT vs. your AGILITY for the displacement effect to be applied.

**Weighted Ammo.** Even on a failure, your target becomes Staggered for 1 round. If you have the Forceful Impact upgrade, you gain Benefit when you are forced to Contest the target's MIGHT vs. your AGILITY.

## POWER SHOT

**STANDARD**

*A crafty hunter trades precision for power. Sometimes you just have to bring the pain.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Focus | Single | Very Far |

**EFFECTS**

You may trade up to HL in AR for a damage bonus. e.g. At Level 10, a Fell Hunter may reduce their AR by up to -5 and increase their damage by up to +5 for Power Shot.

**UPGRADES**

**Steady Hands.** The damage bonus is now doubled. The AR penalty is unaffected. e.g. At Level 10, a Fell Hunter may reduce their AR by -5 and increase their damage by +10 for Power Shot.

*Power Shot's AR penalty can be negated if you fully upgrade Distract and activate it together with Power Shot.*

*Do you feel lucky? Heartseeker's Marked for Death effect can completely turn the tables on a tough Elite if the dice roll the right way for you and your Allies (which it has a higher chance to do with Marked for Death).*

Mats Madison,
The Wolf of Avalon

# Judge

During the Age of Unity, when all the races came together as one to survive the Crimson Horde's invasion, the Valla, Furians, and Humans built the city of Taloran. The city was a symbol of their unity, and the manifestation of a destiny that their creators had hoped for them. Taloran was governed by a triumvirate council called "The Three," consisting of one leader from each of the races. After the defeat of the Crimson Horde, with no common threat to fight, a period of unrest ensued, and the alliance between the races became tense.

It was not long until the races rioted in the streets of Taloran. The congress appointed to address war crimes and settle racial disputes was slaughtered, and the Chamber of The Three was about to be breached when a group of iron-clad warriors put down the riot with fearsome effectiveness. They strode calmly through the streets of Taloran, subduing anyone who dared to raise a weapon against them. The warriors were methodical. They took no joy in the violence, employing force simply because it was absolutely necessary.

The city was shrouded in smog from the riot, yet wherever these mysterious warriors stepped, it was as if the clouds and smoke parted to illuminate them—and only them—in a lone ray of sunlight.

By the hour of twilight, the city was secured. The Three were safe and, when they emerged from the safety of their chamber, the mysterious warriors dropped to one knee and knelt before them. "By sacred decree," they said, with heads bowed, "we have come to dispense justice and vanquish evil. We are Judge, Jury, and Executioner."

If the gods have a mouthpiece in the Priest, then a Judge is the tip of their righteous spear; their right hand of justice. Fully adorned in heavy armour that gleams with the light of their divine cause, Judges stride through the world righting wrongs and protecting the innocent. Their vengeance has been justified by sacred decree. A Judge's conviction is absolute, and wherever they step, evil cowers in fear.

Powered by both martial might and divine magick, Judges rely on their Class Resource of Fervor to perform their abilities. More warrior than caster, Judges prefer being in the fray of battle, staring evil in the face and smashing it with their mighty weaponry. Judges blend a commanding presence that bolsters their allies with a zealous energy for the destruction of those that deserve it.

Judge attacks are amplified by divine power, allowing some of their offensive abilities to bypass armour completely. What they lack in the raw strength of the Dreadnought they make up for in the godly backing of their patron, Lord Aluvane.

Judges exemplify an ideal of hope and their very presence in battle serves to uplift those around them, allowing them to fight harder and longer.

## WHY PLAY A JUDGE?

Play a Judge if you like:

- The idea of a holy juggernaut clad in heavy armour marching calmly into throngs of the darkest terrors, smashing and cutting them down with righteous might while maintaining a personal code of justice
- Having abilities that bolster your allies while still being a reckoning force on your own
- Being a leader

Judges are a mix of both physical and divine power. They are Melee fighters that can choose to be tanky (sword and shield) or a force of retribution (forgoing the shield for the biggest, baddest weapon they can get their hands on).

They have very strong defenses and also provide minor utility through bonuses and limited heals to their allies. The bulk of their offensive power comes from transforming their Physical damage into Divine damage, which bypasses armour completely.

Judges are bound by a code. This does not mean they are required to be infallible or overly kind. Some Judges are stone-cold dispensers of justice while others are more empathic and tactful.

# JUDGE

*"Hide, heathen. Run to the ends of the earth. I will be waiting."*

## CLASS TRAITS

**STARTING HP:** 12+MIGHT
**RECUPERATION DIE:** d10
**ARMOUR:** Light, Heavy, Shields
**WEAPONS:** Medium Melee, Heavy Melee
**RESOURCE:** Fervor [6] 1d4 Recharge
**MAIN ATTRIBUTE:** MIGHT

## CLASS FEATURES

**All Judges come with the following features as part of their baseline powers**

*Zealot enables the Judge some flexibility to take on the role of a damage dealer or a defensive fighter.*

### ZEALOT

**PASSIVE**

*Your hand is guided by divine intervention.*

**EFFECTS**

*When not wielding a shield:* You can choose to re-roll any weapon damage dice that come up as a 1 or 2. You must accept the next roll even if it is a 1 or 2.

*When wielding a shield:* You can choose to re-roll a Defense roll if the 2d10 portion of the roll comes up in the range of 2–5. You must accept the next roll no matter what it is.

### HOLY SMITE

**QUICK**

*As you strike your foe with your weapon, you call upon the power of your god to smite them. Your weapon explodes with radiant light for a moment and sears the enemy.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Fervor | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Upon dealing Melee damage, you may add an additional +1d4 Divine damage.

Bonus increases to:

- +1d6 at level 5
- +1d8 at level 10

## PICK 1 PERK FROM BELOW

*While Voice of the Emperor is powerful, note its expensive Fervor cost. Sometimes, a sword might never need to be raised if the right words are said.*

### VOICE OF THE EMPEROR

**STANDARD**

*When you channel your fervor into a command, your voice becomes blessed with divine authority.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Fervor | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Once per day you can exert your divine authority over the outcome of a social interaction.

If you fail your roll, you may immediately re-roll with Benefit.

Applies only to social actions (parleying, bartering, coercing, etc.)

### INSIGHTFUL

**PASSIVE**

*Judges are chosen by the greater powers. They are chosen on a list of many merits, one of those being the ability to see and judge a person's character with accuracy. Justice should come only to those that deserve it.*

**EFFECTS**

When attempting to discern truth or hidden intentions from a target or judge their character, you receive a +1 bonus to your roll.

Bonus increases to:

- +2 at level 3
- +3 at level 6
- +4 at level 10

# ADVANCEMENT TABLE

| LEVEL | HP BOOST | CORE PATH POINT | ATTRIBUTE BOOST | RECUPERATION | GENERAL PERK | ARTIFACT CAPACITY | TIER I TOKEN | TIER II TOKEN | AR | DR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | ◆ | | | |
| 3 | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | |
| 4 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | | +1 | +1 |
| 5 | | | ◆ | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 6 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | | ◆ | | |
| 7 | | | ◆ | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +1 | +1 |
| 8 | ◆ | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 9 | | | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | |
| 10 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +1 | +1 |

### LEVEL 1

**Choose THREE Tier 1 powers (no upgrades)**

### LEVEL 3

**NEW CLASS FEATURE**

## PEOPLE'S CHAMPION

**PASSIVE**

*You are blessed by Aluvane with an abundance of charisma. His divine plan for justice demands the respect and adulation of the people—his champion should embody the characteristics conducive to this.*

**EFFECTS**

Your Presence is permanently increased by +1.

### LEVEL 5

**Choose TWO Tier 2 powers (no upgrades)**

### LEVEL 8

**NEW CLASS FEATURE**

## PURIFY

**OVERDRIVE - QUICK**

*Your purity of spirit and force of conviction can be channelled to uplift those around you. It matters not if you believe in gods other than Aluvane; the Lord of Justice deems you fit to wield the gift of light, allowing you to purge ailments and mend wounds.*

**EFFECTS**

You clear an ADJACENT target of 1 Status Effect from this list: Hindered, Poisoned, Diseased, Staggered, Rooted, Confused, Stunned. On top of the Purify effect, your target is also healed by your Level multiplied by 5. You are able to use Purify on yourself.

### LEVEL 10

**ULTIMATE ABILITY**

## FALLING STAR

**ULTIMATE - STANDARD - MOVEMENT**

*You call upon the divine to lift you into the heavens as you pray on bended knee. The ground around you shakes softly as the dirt and pebbles nearby begin to levitate. With a mighty cry you launch yourself into the sky to fall back down on your enemies like a righteous spear. The entire area around you is scorched in holy fire as you make impact.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Fervor | Multiple | See Effects |

**EFFECTS**

You are removed from the battlefield as soon as you activate this power. At the start of your next turn you may land anywhere on the battlefield and roll your attack.

**Success.** You deal 1d20+20 Divine damage to all enemies that are ADJACENT to you. Enemies that are NEARBY to you suffer 1d20+8 Divine damage. All allies on the battlefield are inspired by your heavenly glow as you crash into the ground and incinerate your enemies—they receive +6 to AR and damage for their next attack.

**Failure.** You deal half damage. Allies still receive +6 to AR and Damage for their next attack.

Diseases or Poisons beyond a 'standard' nature may resist being Purified (think things like the Phage or a very powerful, engineered disease that might be driving the plot to a campaign). The GM will let you know in these rare cases.

*People's Champion provides synergy with several of the Judge's powers while also providing a powerful social bonus.*

*Falling Star can also be used defensively to take yourself out of range of any attacks for one round. If a big bad monster is telegraphing a devastating attack, take to the skies to avoid it.*

# TIER I POWERS

*If you are building towards a holy commander type of Judge, Rallying Strike embodies that concept nicely. Guaranteed resource generation allows for more aggressive tactics and power combinations.*

## RADIANT STRIKE

**STANDARD**

*Transforming your weapon into a torch for justice, you illuminate the darkness within your target's soul. You empower your weapon to detonate in a flash of divine light upon impact, disorienting your target.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Fervor | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage. Your target's AR is lowered by HL for 1 round.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Burst of Light.** On a successful Radiant Strike, a single target ADJACENT to your primary target has their AR automatically lowered by HL for 1 round as well.

**Dutiful.** On a successful Radiant Strike, you are refunded 1 Fervor.

*Righteous Defense and Divine Grace are excellent options for a more defensive Judge. The potential burst damage mitigation from Righteous Defense can exceed even what a Sentinel is capable of blocking.*

## RIGHTEOUS DEFENSE

**REACTION**

*For a brief moment, you are imbued with divine precognition. You readily parry or block your opponent's blow, blunting the impact.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Fervor | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

You may activate Righteous Defense immediately after you fail a Defense roll and just before rolling the damage you suffer from it. Increase your AV by 1d4+PRESENCE against a single attack. The bonus increases from 1d4 to 2d4 at Level 5.

*Does your GM have a strong love for demons and zombies? The power And You Shall Know His Name will make you particularly effective in these campaigns.*

## AND YOU SHALL KNOW HIS NAME

**PASSIVE**

*Your strikes thunder with the blessing of Aluvane when you are staring evil in the face.*

**EFFECTS**

You deal an additional HL as Physical damage any time you deal damage to Undead or Demonic enemies.

## RALLYING STRIKE

**STANDARD**

*You are the embodiment of justice and the spirit of vengeance. Each of your strikes rings heavily with conviction as you chastise your foe and lay their sins bare for all to see. Lending a quick glance to your Allies, they are emboldened by your zeal and dig deep to fight on.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Fervor | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage and may choose an Ally NEARBY to inspire, granting them a recharge of 2 of their class resource.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage. Your feverish conviction still manages to rouse your Ally. They may recharge 1 of their class resource.

**UPGRADES**

**Hearten.** On a successful Rallying Strike, you gain 1 Fervor.

**Favoured.** Rolling a 16–20 on the base 2d10 roll of the Basic Attack used to perform Rallying Strike results in the power consuming 0 Fervor.

## DIVINE GRACE

**REACTION**

*You hear a faint whisper of dangers to come. Someone out there is looking out for you.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Fervor | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

You may activate Divine Grace just before you make a roll that is of a defensive nature (dodging an arrow, breaking a fall, resisting poison, etc.). Add your +PRESENCE to that roll.

## TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

**OVERDRIVE - QUICK**

*You hone in on a single enemy. You see nothing but them. Your conviction is absolute and you will not stop until they are brought to justice.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Fervor | Single | Very Far |

**EFFECTS**

Choose any single enemy on the battlefield to designate as the target of this power.

All of your single-target offensive abilities (including your Overdrives) that are used on your chosen enemy have their Fervor cost reduced by 2 for 10 minutes or until you specifically attack a different enemy or your chosen enemy is dead or you become Incapacitated/Stunned.

**UPGRADES**

**Resolute.** You gain Benefit on all rolls involving the selected target.

*To the Ends of the Earth was made to be a boss killer. All powers costing 2 or less Fervor become free during its duration.*

## HEAVEN'S REACH

**STANDARD**

*Evil cannot hide and it cannot run. The arm of the law is indeed long. A shimmering, golden copy of your weapon appears above a nearby target of your choice and comes crashing down on them when you physically swing your actual weapon.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Fervor | Single | Nearby |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Justice is Dealt.** You are refunded the Fervor cost of Heaven's Reach on a successful hit.

**Marked for Punishment.** On a successful hit, Heaven's Reach leaves a brand on the target. When a direct and successful attack is made on the target the brand activates, and inflicts an additional +MIGHT Divine damage. The brand will expire on activation or at the end of your next turn.

*Heaven's Reach allows for a consistent short-ranged attack option if you prefer to sit back and lead from afar.*

## SPEED OF LIGHT

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD - MOVEMENT**

*Your weapon glows with heavenly power and you toss it. As soon as it lands, your body explodes with golden energy and instantly streaks across the battlefield to rejoin with your weapon.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Fervor | Special | Nearby |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack to determine X.

You avoid all Provoked Attacks as you bolt towards the NEARBY targeted area. Upon reaching your destination, you cause a massive explosion of radiant energy automatically dealing X Divine damage to all enemies ADJACENT to you.

| | 2-8 | 9-15 | 16-21 | 22+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **X** | 1d6 | 2d4 | 2d6 | 2d8 |

**UPGRADES**

**Posthaste.** Speed of Light's range is increased to FAR and the Fervor cost is now free.

**Radiance.** Speed of Light's damage is increased by your +MIGHT and +PRESENCE.

*Speed of Light automatically deals damage making your affected target(s) unable to avoid it.*

## COMMANDER

**PASSIVE**

*Those that follow you into battle embolden your resolve. When you stand shoulder to shoulder with the men and women next to you, your purpose becomes your shield.*

**EFFECTS**

Each Ally ADJACENT to you grants you +1 to your DR up to a maximum bonus equal to HL.

**UPGRADES**

**To Me, Brothers and Sisters!** As a Quick action and for the cost of 3 Fervor, you can now grant your Commander DR bonus to all ADJACENT Allies. Lasts until the start of your next turn.

*Commander may seem a little weak compared to the Dreadnought's Bring It On or the Sentinel's Phalanx damage-increasing Passive powers but DR bonuses are extremely valuable in Unity.*

# TIER II POWERS

## INSPIRING PRESENCE

**PASSIVE**

*When you take to action, those around you take heart and follow in your wake of courage.*

**EFFECTS**

Every time you utilize your Standard action in combat, you may grant a NEARBY Ally +2 to their AR. This bonus lasts for a single attack and expires in 1 round if not used.

**UPGRADES**

**Flexible Leadership.** You may grant a +DR bonus instead of +AR if you wish.

## PUNISH

**REACTION**

*Justice finds those that strike the righteous. In this case, justice is the painful end of your weapon.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Fervor | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

When an ADJACENT Ally is struck with a melee attack, you may retaliate immediately on the offending target with a Basic Attack.

**UPGRADES**

**Guided by Justice.** Your retaliation always hits (you may still perform a Basic Attack roll for the sake of possible recharges).

**Retributive Pains.** Punish inflicts an additional +1d8 damage.

**Justified.** On a success, you are refunded 1 Fervor. If you have the Guided by Justice upgrade, this refund is guaranteed.

## SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE

**PASSIVE**

*When an ally falls, your wrath cannot be contained. When all those that were left in your charge lie broken before your enemies, you become the avatar of retribution.*

**EFFECTS**

You gain +1 to AR, AV and damage for each party member that is Incapacitated or dead on the battlefield. The bonuses last until the end of battle but will decrease for each Ally that is revived during the fight.

## ZEAL

**STANDARD**

*Your sword arm swings tirelessly as each strike drives the next.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Fervor + Special | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** Your initial hit deals Basic Attack damage. You may expend 1 Fervor and attempt to strike your target again to deal +MIGHT damage (not full Basic Attack damage). As long as your hits successfully land, you may continue to expend 1 Fervor and attack for up to 2 extra strikes. Missing an attack ends the chain.

**Failure.** You deal half damage and Zeal ends.

**UPGRADES**

**Deliberation.** The initial Zeal attack gains Benefit.

**Golden Blade.** The subsequent Zeal attacks after the initial strike now deal Divine damage.

## HALLOWED GROUND

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*You slam your weapon into the ground, sending a shockwave of glowing energy forth. The ground cracks outwards in a circle from the point of impact. Golden veins of divine energy suffuse the immediate area.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Fervor | Multiple | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack. Check this result against the DR of all enemies ADJACENT to you. Hallowed Ground covers an area originating from your position and any space considered ADJACENT to you.

**Success.** You deal 1d6+MIGHT+HL Divine damage.

**Failure.** You deal half damage.

*Lingering Effects.* All enemies on Hallowed Ground suffer HL as penalties to their AR and DR.

All Allies on Hallowed Ground increase their AR and DR by HL.

These lingering effects last for 2 rounds.

**UPGRADES**

**Light of Aluvane.** All Allies (including yourself) that remain on Hallowed Ground heal for your LEVEL + PRESENCE each round.

**Walk in the Light.** Hallowed Ground now follows you wherever you go for its duration.

*If you want your friends to love you, take Inspiring Presence. Pretty much anything you do on the battlefield will grant an Ally a nice bonus.*

*Zeal is more efficient for a Judge using a weapon and shield than one that carries a big two-handed weapon. The subsequent Zeal strikes deal a flat +MIGHT damage instead of including your weapon damage. If you are flowing in Fervor, feel free to toss a Holy Smite into the chain of strikes. Zeal also provides an avenue for resource generation as you get to keep rolling your Basic Attack as long as your strikes keep hitting.*

*The Judge class often revolves around bringing others around them up and putting the team before personal glory. What happens when there's no team left? Spirit of Vengeance gives the Judge her moment to shine.*

Judge Athavir,
The Flame of Justice

## A JUDGE'S BURDEN

Judge Callowyn Thornmist sat in her chambers, deep in thought. This problem was not a simple one and so the people of Moon Ridge had sought her counsel.

Moon Ridge had found itself in the path of the Bitter Harvests. For a season, the Afflicted had surged aboveground, stripping market carts, robbing untended shops, even hauling off some drunken vagrants. At first, Moon Ridge had tried to stymie their losses. Citizens began locking up their barns and workshops. They instituted a curfew. They began travelling in packs to prevent solitary travellers from being snatched off the streets.

But the Afflicted had kept coming. Now they were taking children. Moon Ridge demanded something be done. But under the rule of Empress Carine, action against the Afflicted had become a matter of national diplomacy. The wrong retaliation and civil war could break out.

Judge Callowyn, perhaps because she was Vallan, or perhaps because she spent much of her year at the Sanctum of the Third Eye, had been called in to adjudicate. Both the Humans and the Afflicted were living beings, and both had the right to live. The challenge of course, was that the Afflicted needed fresh flesh to survive, and that was not something the Humans were likely to willingly sacrifice.

She turned the problem over. Relocation would simply make the Afflicted someone else's problem. Choosing one side over the other would show clear favouritism, and could upset the delicate balance in the Human Empire. Both sides were vulnerable, and regardless of her ruling, one or the other would continue to lose those they loved.

It was time for a hard choice.

The Humans must sacrifice some of their number so that the halest of the Afflicted could live. In return, the Afflicted must sacrifice their weakest members to minimize the amount of flesh they required. In order for the exchange to work, it needed to be structured so that both groups understood the rules and could hold each other accountable for the bargain. Certain exchange days. Certain volumes.

But where to find flesh that could be willingly given? Judge Callowyn felt the answer creeping at the edges of her consciousness: criminals. If the citizens of Moon Ridge turned out the contents of their jail cells, they could provide the Afflicted with a steady supply. Depending on the organs required, the criminals could lessen their sentence... if they survived the harvest.

It was a grizzly tithe, but it would end the raids and restore order in Moon Ridge.

There must be order.

## GAVEL OF THUNDER

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*A column of thunderous power crashes onto your enemy from the Heavens.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Fervor | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** Your target suffers 2d8+MIGHT+HL Electric damage and is Stunned for 1 round.

**Failure.** Your target suffers half damage and is Staggered for 1 round.

**UPGRADES**

**Thunderclap.** Enemies ADJACENT to your target automatically suffer half the damage dealt to your main target as Electric, but are not afflicted by any status effects.

**Electricity in the Air.** All Allies up to a NEARBY distance to you when you activate Gavel of Thunder have their weapons charged with electricity and their Physical attacks will now deal Electric damage for 1 round.

## GAZE OF GUILT

**STANDARD**

*No one is without sin. With a single look, your eyes become ablaze with righteous fire as you penetrate your target's soul, tearing from them their darkest secrets and crippling their will to action.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Fervor | Single | Nearby |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack. Targets Mental Resistance (MR).

**Success.** Your target suffers 1d6+MIGHT Divine damage and becomes Rooted for 1 round.

**Failure.** Your target suffers half damage and becomes Staggered for 1 round.

**UPGRADES**

**Practiced Glare**. Gaze of Guilt now costs 2 Fervor.

**Penetrating Glare.** Gaze of Guilt's range is now increased to FAR and deals an additional +PRESENCE damage.

## RETRIBUTION

**QUICK - MAINTAIN**

*So powerful is your conviction that the mere thought of striking you brings pain to your enemies.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Fervor | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Enemies that land a melee strike on you suffer +MIGHT Divine damage as long as Retribution is maintained.

**UPGRADES**

**Circle of Retribution.** Upon activation of Retribution, all Allies on the battlefield also gain the effects of the power based on the Judge's +MIGHT for 1 round.

**Slow Burn.** Retribution's cost is reduced to 1 Fervor for activation and 1 Fervor to Maintain.

## HEAVENLY FLAMES

**QUICK - MAINTAIN**

*You trace a circle in the air with your hands and a wreath of fire explodes forth. The crackling ring lingers for a moment as you dip your weapon through it and the flames dance across the shape of your blade. Let those that taste your steel also feel the fires of justice burn away their sin.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Fervor | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Your attacks that deal Physical damage now deal Fire damage instead as long as you Maintain Heavenly Flames. When using powers that have a different elemental damage type, the power's damage type overrides Heavenly Flames.

**UPGRADES**

**Share the Righteousness.** Upon activating Heavenly Flames, you may expend 1 additional Fervor and grant a single ADJACENT Ally Heavenly Flames as well. The cost to Maintain Heavenly Flames when sharing its effects with an Ally is now 4 Fervor.

*Gavel of Thunder's upgrade, Electricity in the Air, allows the entire party to devastate a heavily armoured target. To ensure that Gavel of Thunder hits, have your party's Mystic Sparklance the target and leave a Static Residue on them before you make your move.*

*Retribution is a great pick if you are equipped with a shield and you've focused on defensive powers such as Righteous Defense. The more armour you have, the more you can welcome enemies to hit you and in turn hurt themselves.*

*Use Gaze of Guilt to stop that vicious Fellspawn who's gunning for your Priest in the backline dead in its tracks. This power is a great choice if you have a lot of "softer" Allies.*

# Mystic

There are those that have been gifted with a sight beyond sight. Since they were children, they looked to the stars in wonderment, yes, but with understanding, too. The precocious eyes of these gifted few pierced the veil of reality and caught glimpses of the ever-flowing streams of spiritual and emotional energy that comprised the Drift. In seeing the energy and understanding it, they could begin to harness and bend it to their will. They were the first Mystics of Unity.

At first, they were held in awe and reverence by their more mundane peers; the acts of magick that Mystics performed were mostly for the betterment of the societies they resided in—but it was not long before such incredible power led to tragedy. With each new generation, the arcane spark that existed inside a Mystic grew stronger and stronger. The very first Mystics experienced a gentle learning curve as they began to understand and wield their abilities, but after several centuries, many of those born with the Sight were boiling with magickal power. Unable to contain the burgeoning energy inside of them, these Mystics involuntarily rained chaos and destruction on everything around them.

The ruling class deemed Mystics too dangerous, and a threat to society. A witch hunt was to begin, but the Order of the Third Eye, a council comprised of Elder Mystics from previous generations, intervened. They erected the Sanctum of the Third Eye, a refuge specifically designed to house and teach emerging Mystics how to control their powers. The Sanctum was warded with powerful magick and indestructible walls, creating a safe haven for teaching and practicing the magickal arts. A new generation of Mystics emerged, more powerful than ever—but they will have to search for their place in this burning world.

Mystics are an enigmatic bunch. They see the world in ways that are incomprehensible to the majority of people. But it is this unique way of looking at reality that allows them to bend, twist, and tear at its constituents, allowing them to perform incredible acts of power. Where a Primalist might beseech the Primal Wind Spirit to cause a chill and drop the temperature to sub-zero, a Mystic sees the heat energy in the air as vibrant and fast dancing particles. They can reach out with their mind to slow these particles to a standstill, causing the temperature to drop, and allowing them to conjure a blast of frost to freeze their enemies.

Mystics spend their lives learning to understand the gift of their Sight and how to control their powers. The intense focus required to channel and manipulate the energy around them tends to leave them defenseless on the battlefield—in a physical sense.

Mystics eschew heavy armour and weapons, viewing them as burdens to employing their capabilities to the fullest. Their defense and offense come from magickal means, with a variety of shields, illusions, and powerful evocations.

## WHY PLAY A MYSTIC?

Play a Mystic if you like:

- The idea of an arcane spellcaster that bends the constituents of reality using sheer force of will and raw intellect
- Hurling fireballs, bending space and time, and floating around the battlefield
- Being a glass cannon

Mystics have high damage and high utility but at the cost of being the most frail and resource-dependent class in the game. The majority of Mystic damage is elemental, which provides the bonus of overcoming armour on most enemies.

When there is an abundance of their Class Resource, Mana, flowing, a Mystic can be a one-man army for a short, glorious moment. Most of the time, however, Mystics should work in tandem with their teammates—especially their more physically robust ones—to protect them while they rain death upon their enemies.

# MYSTIC

*"All I see is possibility."*

## CLASS TRAITS

**STARTING HP:** 10+MIND
**RECUPERATION DIE:** d8
**ARMOUR:** None
**WEAPONS:** Light Melee, Light Ranged
**RESOURCE:** Mana **[10]** 1d8 Recharge
**MAIN ATTRIBUTE:** MIND

## CLASS FEATURES

**All Mystics come with the following features as part of their baseline powers**

*The Mystic is heavily dependent on their Class Resource Mana to be effective in combat. Amplify Magick and Force Bolt are both methods to save and potentially generate Mana while still contributing to the fight. Both Class Features are Standard actions that call for Basic Attack rolls, thus giving a chance at recharging Mana.*

### FORCE BOLT

**STANDARD**

*A white bolt of concussive force can be channelled through your hands or your weapon.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| Free | Single | Very Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal 1d8+MIND damage.

**Failure.** You miss.

### AMPLIFY MAGICK

**STANDARD**

*Mystics have unique ways to shape magick. The raw power bursting forth from a Mystic can be difficult to contain. When a Mystic attempts to modify his casting, the sheer amount of arcana brimming inside of him may spill out, causing random effects.*

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack to determine X.

Your next damaging spell will deal an extra X damage in the elemental form of that spell.

Amplify Magick does not stack and you must declare which spell you are Amplifying when you activate Amplify Magick.

When you use Amplify Magick, roll 1d10.
**1–5:** *Cauterize.* Heal for +MIND.
**6–10:** *Arcane Field.* Gain +MIND to your AV for 1 round.

| | 2-8 | 9-19 | 20-24 | 25+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **X** | 1d6 | 2d4 | 2d6 | 2d8 |

## PICK 1 PERK FROM BELOW

### UNRAVEL

**STANDARD**

*A curious mind constantly seeks to unlock hidden secrets.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Mana | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

You gain Benefit for a single attempt to open up locked objects.

### SCHOLAR

**PASSIVE**

*Your intense studies of ancient texts and arcane mysteries grant you a vast reservoir of knowledge to draw from.*

**EFFECTS**

When you attempt an action that involves history, language, or understanding magickal phenomena, you get to add HL to your roll.

# ADVANCEMENT TABLE

| LEVEL | HP BOOST | CORE PATH POINT | ATTRIBUTE BOOST | RECUPERATION | GENERAL PERK | ARTIFACT CAPACITY | TIER I TOKEN | TIER II TOKEN | AR | DR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | ◆ | | | |
| 3 | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | |
| 4 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | | +2 | |
| 5 | | | ◆ | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 6 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | | ◆ | | |
| 7 | | | ◆ | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +2 | |
| 8 | ◆ | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 9 | | | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | |
| 10 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +2 | |

### LEVEL 1

**Choose THREE Tier 1 powers (no upgrades)**

### LEVEL 3

**NEW CLASS FEATURE**

#### ORB OF ATTUNEMENT

**STANDARD - MAINTAIN**

*The eddies of magick are unpredictable, but as your perception and keen intuition deepens, your ability to tap into the various flavours of energy grows. It's not perfect yet, but it's something.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| Special | Special | Special |

**EFFECTS**

After a Full Rest, you may expend and put on reserve 1 Mana to attune yourself to a single elemental type of your choosing (Arcane, Corrosive, Electric, Fire, Frost). Attunement grants you HL as additional bonus elemental damage when successfully using a single-target power that matches the attuned element.

As a Reaction to being attacked or observing an Ally being attacked, you may expend 1 Mana and sacrifice your Orb of Attunement to increase the DR of that targeted Ally up to a FAR distance away or for yourself by HL+MIND for a single attack. The Orb is gone until you take a Full Rest.

A small glowing orb of the element's colour will appear to slowly orbit around you as long as you maintain it. The orb illuminates an area of up to 5 meters in a radius centred on you. This light can be turned on and off at will.

### LEVEL 5

**Choose TWO Tier 2 powers (no upgrades)**

### LEVEL 8

**NEW CLASS FEATURE**

#### PORTAL

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*You tear a small hole through reality. From this hole you force an invisible tunnel to your desired destination, where you create another opening.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 4 Mana | Special | Very Far |

**EFFECTS**

You may open up a portal that exits somewhere in your field of view up to a VERY FAR distance (24m). The portal remains open until the end of combat or 10 minutes outside of combat. Anyone can use the portal by walking through it, even enemies.

### LEVEL 10

**ULTIMATE ABILITY**

#### HASTE

**ULTIMATE - STANDARD**

*Time is the most difficult force for your mind to manipulate. With practice and keen awareness, even this fickle force can be bent to your advantage.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 4 Mana | Special | Very Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack to determine X.

You speed up time for yourself and X allies. You and your chosen target(s) have their Standard, Movement, Reaction, and Quick Actions available again.

| | 2-14 | 15-23 | 24-27 | 28+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| X | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

*Get creative with Portal. Opening a Portal over a cliff and then using a displacement type power to push enemies through it could make for a short battle. Just be careful, enemies can do the exact same to you and your Allies.*

*Orb of Attunement colours:*
*Arcane – Purple*
*Corrosive – Green*
*Electric – White*
*Fire – Orange*
*Frost – Blue*

*It's best to wait for your Allies to perform their turns before using Haste. This allows a maximum regeneration on actions if you end up rolling well.*

# TIER I POWERS

*Spark Lance's Static Residue opens up some strong plays, especially if you have party members that use Electric attacks. The Judge's Gavel of Thunder Overdrive power comes to mind.*

## SPARK LANCE

**STANDARD**

*You draw your arm over your head and back as if to launch a javelin. A spear of pure electric energy materializes in your hand. With a snap of your arm, you send the crackling energy hurtling at your foe.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Mana | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal 1d12+HL+MIND Electric damage. The target is afflicted with a Static Residue until the end of the next round.

**Failure.** You deal half damage. The target is afflicted with Static Residue until the end of the next round.

*Static Residue.* Any Electric attack made against a target afflicted by Static Residue becomes an automatic hit and the Static Residue is expended. The attacker may still roll their Basic Attack just to see if they get a chance at recharging their Class Resource.

**UPGRADES**

**Relay.** Spark Lance's range is increased to VERY FAR.

*Your three main Tier 1 single target attack powers: Spark Lance, Frost Blast, and Acid Bolt all serve different purposes. Spark Lance is a safe choice in that it eventually guarantees a hit, but its Mana cost is quite prohibitive. Frost Blast synergizes with all the Physical damage dealers in your party and Acid Bolt does the most damage per Mana but does so over a stretch of time.*

## GRAVITY WELL

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*With intense focus, your mind reaches out and warps the fabric of reality momentarily. You condense a large amount of matter onto a single point, generating a massive pull.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Mana | Special | Special |

**EFFECTS**

Choose up to a FAR location to place Gravity Well. Roll your Basic Attack. If your roll beats the DR of any enemies that are NEARBY the Gravity Well, they are instantly pulled onto that point; otherwise, they are considered Staggered until the start of your next turn. All enemies are considered ADJACENT to each other when clumped on Gravity Well.

**UPGRADES**

**Singularity.** All enemies successfully sucked into the Gravity Well are Rooted until the start of your next turn.

**Implosion.** You may immediately spend an additional 1 Mana after casting Gravity Well to cause it to implode, automatically dealing 1d12+MIND+HL damage to all enemies that were sucked in.

*If you find yourself lying on the floor unconscious more often than not, Battle Blink is a sound choice.*

*Gravity Well is fantastic for setting up a high-damage combo with your Allies. Most Classes have a way of striking multiple enemies with one power. Clumping up those enemies for your Allies makes their power usage that much more effective.*

## FROST BLAST

**STANDARD**

*You reach outwards with an outstretched palm and feel the molecules in the air slowing to your will. The temperature around your hand begins to drop as an icy blue ball of glacial power forms and you unleash it upon your enemies.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Mana | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** The target takes 1d8+HL+MIND Frost damage. The target is afflicted with chill and its flesh and armour become brittle for 1 round. The target's AV is reduced by your +MIND against the next Physical attack they receive.

**Failure.** You deal half damage.

Frost Blast can reduce AV beyond 0, which results in the target taking additional Physical damage equal to the negative value, e.g. an AV of -4 will result in the target taking an additional 4 damage on any Physical attack it receives.

**UPGRADES**

**Subzero.** Upon a successful Frost Blast, you are refunded 1 Mana.

**Permafrost.** The AV penalty is still applied even on a failure.

## BATTLE BLINK

**PASSIVE**

*Upon waking, you set a protective ward that activates from the adrenaline and rush of combat. One can never be too careful in these dangerous times.*

**EFFECTS**

Once per Full Rest, any damage you receive that takes you to 0 HP or below is instantly negated and causes you to immediately teleport to a NEARBY distance of your choosing. Battle Blink only activates when in combat, e.g. a boulder that drops on you while you are casually exploring a cave will not activate Battle Blink.

**UPGRADES**

**Feedback.** When Battle Blink activates, a surge of energy from the ward's activation courses through your body. Deals 1d12+MIND Arcane damage automatically to the source that caused Battle Blink to activate.

## BOUNCE

**MOVEMENT - QUICK**

*After saying a quick incantation, you tap the heels of your feet together. Now you've got an extra bounce in your step!*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Mana | Self | Special |

**EFFECTS**

You are able to jump up to 10 meters vertically within a NEARBY distance. Bounce avoids Provoked Attacks if you jump away from or past enemies unless they are able to fly or levitate.

**UPGRADES**

**Rubberfoot.** You may Bounce one more time immediately after landing. Costs 1 additional Mana.

## ACID BOLT

**STANDARD**

*A single sizzling green bolt dripping with energy flies forth from your outstretched palm and begins to corrosively chew through your target.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Mana | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal 1d6+MIND Corrosive damage. The target suffers +MIND Corrosive damage at the start of their turn for 2 rounds. If the target is already afflicted by Acid Bolt, getting struck by further successful Acid Bolts refreshes the duration.

**Failure.** You deal half damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Fizzle.** Upon a failed Acid Bolt, you are refunded 1 Mana.

## MANA WEAVER

**PASSIVE**

*You have learned to navigate the currents of magick with incredible ease.*

**EFFECTS**

When recharging Mana, you get to add +2 to your Recharge roll.

**UPGRADES**

**Fumes to Flames.** When you have 2 or less Mana, Force Bolt receives Benefit when attacking with it.

## VOLATILE BULWARK

**STANDARD - MAINTAIN**

*You place your hands horizontally on top of one another near your chest. With a quick chant and a swift motion, your hands separate in opposite directions and a shimmering, translucent blue field of energy surrounds you.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Mana | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack to determine X.

You craft an energy shield around you that absorbs X+MIND damage. It absorbs all types of damage except True damage. Upon absorbing its damage limit, the Volatile Bulwark explodes, dealing half of its absorb amount as Arcane damage to anyone ADJACENT to you. Lasts as long as you maintain it or until it shatters.

| | 2-8 | 9-14 | 15-19 | 20-23 | 24+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **X** | 3 | 5 | 7 | 10 | 14 |

**UPGRADES**

**Controlled Explosion.** Volatile Bulwark's explosion now only damages enemies.

**Reinforce.** Volatile Bulwark's absorb amount now includes your LEVEL as additional absorption.

## BREATH OF FIRE

**STANDARD**

*You ignite the air with a blast of magickal energy using your breath. A magnificent spray of scorching fire bellows forth to incinerate all those in front of you.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Mana | 1d4+1 | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal 1d8+HL+MIND Fire damage.

**Failure.** You deal half damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Blinding Flames.** Enemies successfully struck by Breath of Fire suffer Hindrance on their Provoked Attacks for 1 round.

**Unending Breath.** Breath of Fire now hits all enemies that are ADJACENT to you.

*Bounce is a great power choice for keeping you safe as you move around the battlefield.*

*Acid Bolt is a very Mana-efficient power for how much total damage it deals. If you can get a rotation of three different targets to use it on, you'll have enemies constantly melting away each round as the damage-over-time effect goes into full swing.*

*Mana Weaver's Fumes to Flames upgrade greatly increases your chance of getting a recharge from using Force Bolt. It also helps Force Bolt hit more often.*

# TIER II POWERS

## ANGA'S MANA BLADE

**QUICK - MAINTAIN**

*You conjure forth a weapon infused with arcane energy. It crackles and glows as an extension of your hand with a purple hue. It feels light as a feather and responds to the impulses of your mind. You can feel its gnawing hunger course through you.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Mana | Special | Special |

**EFFECTS**

You are equipped with a magickal melee weapon that does 1d8+MIND Arcane damage.

Whenever you deal damage to an animate enemy with the Mana Blade, its ethereal nature siphons some of the target's energy and converts it to Mana for you. Recharge 2 Mana. Basic Melee Attack rules apply for success and failure.

**UPGRADES**

**Lingering Hunger.** The weapon leaves a charge on the enemy struck. Any Allies that strike an enemy with a Lingering Hunger charge on them regenerate 1 point of Class Resource. Enemies can only hold 1 charge at a time and they last for 1 round or until used. If you strike a charged enemy with your Mana Blade, you will recharge 3 Mana instead of 2 and apply a new charge.

**Ethereal Heft.** Damage increases to 2d6+MIND.

## CAUSTIC WHIP

**STANDARD**

*A bright green whip lashes out from your hand as you snap the sizzling and dripping tendril across the battlefield. When it finds its mark, it gashes deeply, eating through all manner of protection, and causes your target to writhe in agony.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Mana | Single | Nearby |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal 2d6+HL+MIND Corrosive damage and the target has their DR reduced by HL for 1 round.

**Failure.** You deal half damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Messy Impact.** On a success, you automatically deal +MIND Corrosive damage to enemies ADJACENT to your primary target.

## MIRAGE

**STANDARD**

*You bend the light around your entire body, causing you to shimmer and become translucent. Your appearance is vague and your presence becomes hard to detect visually.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Mana | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack to determine X.

You increase your DR by HL+X. Mirage lasts until the end of battle or 10 minutes—or when you take damage.

| | 2-11 | 12-19 | 20-23 | 24+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **X** | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**UPGRADES**

**Hardy Illusion.** While Mirage is active, and upon taking damage, you may roll 1d10. Receiving a 6 or above allows your Mirage to continue. Rolling below a 6 results in Mirage cancelling. Each time you take damage while Mirage is active, you perform this roll.

**Indistinct.** You gain Benefit when rolling to determine X for Mirage. You also gain a bonus of HL towards stealth checks while Mirage is active.

## FIREBALL

**STANDARD**

*Hurl a molten ball of flame that explodes to devastating effect at your enemies.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 4 Mana | Special | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Choose a single primary target. Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal 2d8+MIND Fire damage to your primary target and automatically deal 1d8+MIND Fire damage to anyone ADJACENT to the primary target.

**Failure.** You deal half damage to your primary target and automatically deal 1d6 Fire damage to anyone ADJACENT to the primary target.

**UPGRADES**

**Scorched Earth.** On a success, the area under and ADJACENT to the primary target is set ablaze for 2 rounds. Anyone starting their turn inside the area automatically suffers +MIND Fire damage.

*Combining Volatile Bulwark and Anga's Mana Blade will turn your Mystic into a force in melee fighting. Anga's Mana Blade gives much needed Mana regeneration, but you are going to have to stick your head out to get it.*

*Mirage is a must-have if you find yourself targeted often and your Allies are unable to peel enemies off of you.*

*Be careful with Fireball. Its splash damage strikes all targets, not just enemies.*

*Deep Freeze is the only non-Overdrive direct attack power that has the ability to Stun a target (although you will need to grab an upgrade for that). The Stun status effect is one of the most powerful in the game, hence the total cost of stunning a target with Deep Freeze is half of your maximum Mana.*

*Use Teleport to juke your enemies. If there's enough time, you can bait your enemies into attacking your current position then Teleport to a Set Point you put Very Far away, allowing you a few rounds to sling your spells uninterrupted.*

*Force Push is an expensive power but it can displace multiple enemies at a time. Taking Unstoppable Force ensures that you can safely move away without suffering Provoked Attacks after you activate Force Push.*

## DEEP FREEZE

**STANDARD**

*You slow the molecules in the air around your enemy to a crawl as a prison of ice begins to rise from the ground and trap them.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Mana | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal 1d10+HL+MIND Frost damage and the target is Rooted for 1 round.

**Failure.** You deal +MIND Frost damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Shatter.** The next attack against a successful Deep Freeze target that's still Rooted causes shards of ice to splinter in all directions, dealing 1d4+MIND Frost damage to all enemies ADJACENT to the Deep Freeze target.

**Chilled to the Bone.** You may expend another 2 Mana immediately after a successful Deep Freeze to Stun your target for 1 round. If the target is Elite, Contest their MIGHT vs. your MIND.

**Winter Winds.** You gain Benefit when activating Deep Freeze. This bonus also applies to Chilled to the Bone if you must Contest.

## LEVITATE

**QUICK**

*Gravity is but one of the many fundamental forces of reality that you are able to manipulate. Unfortunately, it is also one of the more powerful and stubborn forces. You can't quite fly, but floating isn't too bad.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Mana | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

You Levitate about 2 meters from the ground for the duration of battle or 10 minutes. While Levitating, you receive Benefit against all Provoked Attacks. Levitate will cancel if you suffer any damage.

**UPGRADES**

**High Ground.** You gain +2 to DR from your new vantage point.

**Concentrate.** You may expend 1 Mana if you suffer damage while Levitating to prevent Levitate from cancelling.

## TELEPORT

**OVERDRIVE - QUICK**

*You see the eddies of energy that flow throughout the spaces of reality. By attuning yourself to their predictable patterns, you are able to ride these waves and move through space in the blink of an eye.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| Special | Special | Special |

**EFFECTS**

Using Teleport involves creating a Set Point at the destination of the Teleport, then invoking the spell again to teleport to that destination. When Teleporting, you are immune to Provoked Attacks.

**Set Point.** Use a Quick action to declare wherever you are currently standing as the SET POINT. The SET POINT lasts for the duration of the battle or 10 minutes. Costs 2 Mana.

**Teleport.** Use a Quick action to instantly Teleport to your SET POINT. The maximum distance between you and the SET POINT is VERY FAR. You may Teleport multiple times as long as the SET POINT exists. Costs 1 Mana.

**UPGRADES**

**Swap.** If you have not placed a Set Point yet, you may use Teleport as a Quick action to instantly swap places with a willing Ally up to a FAR distance away. Using Swap uses up the Overdrive tag as if you had used Teleport normally. Costs 1 Mana.

## FORCE PUSH

**STANDARD**

*An eruption of concussive force explodes forth from you in a circular pattern, knocking your enemies back.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 4 Mana | Multiple | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal 1d12+MIND damage and all ADJACENT targets are displaced to a NEARBY distance from you.

**Failure.** You deal +MIND damage.

Force Push's displacement does not work on creatures larger than Medium size.

**UPGRADES**

**Unstoppable Force.** Even on a failure, the targets are displaced a NEARBY distance from you.

## BRIGHT BEAM

**STANDARD**

*You place the heels of both palms together with your arms outstretched in front of you and begin the incantation to channel an intense beam of Arcane energy through your body and out from your palms. The longer the beam is maintained, the more powerful it becomes.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Mana + Special | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal 1d8+MIND Arcane damage and gain 1 stack of Focused Mind for 1 round.

**Failure.** You deal no damage but gain 1 stack of Focused Mind for 1 round.

*Focused Mind.* Your next Bright Beam cast deals an additional 1d8 Arcane damage and has its Mana cost reduced by 1. Focused Mind's damage can stack indefinitely as long as it's refreshed consecutively each round by sustaining Bright Beam but its cost cannot be reduced below 1 Mana. Moving or taking damage causes you to lose all stacks of Focused Mind.

*Example: The Mystic spends 3 Mana and blasts the Cyclops with Bright Beam and successfully strikes it for 1d8+MIND Arcane damage. The Mystic gains 1 stack of Focused Mind.*

*Next round the Mystic sustains Bright Beam for 2 Mana (1 Stack of Focused Mind reduces the Mana cost by 1) and successfully strikes the Cyclops again, this time dealing 1d8+1d8+MIND Arcane damage. The Mystic gains 1 additional stack of Focused Mind and now has 2 stacks of Focused Mind.*

*The Mystic is struck shortly afterwards by an enemy and loses all Focused Mind stacks and must start over again with Bright Beam's baseline damage and Mana cost.*

**UPGRADES**

**Multitasker.** You are now able to move while sustaining Bright Beam without losing Focused Mind. Taking damage will still cancel the Focused Mind effect.

**Amplitude.** Bright Beam's baseline damage is increased to 1d12.

## ARC LIGHTNING

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*A blistering bolt of lightning that arcs back and forth between its targets, growing in intensity with each bounce.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Mana | Special | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Choose a single primary target and roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal 1d6+MIND Electric damage on the initial hit. The bolt then bounces to another single target that is NEARBY or ADJACENT to the primary target. You choose your new secondary target and roll your Basic Attack again. If the secondary hit is successful, the secondary target takes 1d8+MIND Electric damage. From that location the bolt continues onto another NEARBY or ADJACENT target (can be the initial primary target again if so chosen, as long as it's bouncing back and forth between more than 1 target). You will make an Attack roll for each bounce to determine if it hits. This continues for 4 additional bounces after the initial hit which counts as the 1st "bounce", as long as Arc Lightning successfully hits the target. The baseline damage die ramps up according to the chart below where X is the number of bounces.

**Failure.** You deal half damage and Arc Lightning ends.

| X | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1d6 | 1d8 | 1d10 | 1d12 | 1d20 |

**UPGRADES**

**Undying Currents.** You may expend 2 Mana to re-roll a failed attempt. You may continue to do so until you no longer have Mana. Re-rolled attempts have a chance to recharge Mana.

**Supercharged.** Arc Lightning starts at the third step of power and deals 1d10 baseline and reaches the maximum 1d20 damage in 2 bounces (you still have 5 maximum successful bounces before Arc Lightning ends).

*Arc Lightning can fill your Mana up quickly with all the Basic Attack rolls coming out. A single cast might fry an entire battlefield of enemies if you choose your bounces carefully. If you want to concentrate damage on a high priority target, make sure another enemy is Nearby or Adjacent to it and simply bounce the Arc Lightning back and forth between the two targets.*

*Bright Beam costs a bit to start up but once the attack gets going, it becomes extremely mana efficient and highly damaging. Have your Allies support you by providing shields and stopping enemies from getting to you so you can maintain your Focused Mind stacks.*

# Phantom

During the Age of Wrath, a portion of Humanity was singled out, ostracized, and persecuted for being the primary victims of the Skyfather's ire. With their bodies in a state of constant atrophy and decay, the Afflicted became pariahs, banished by their former Human brethren. Fear gripped the Human Empire, and it was through that fear that civil war erupted. The kingdoms ran red with the blood of Humans and Afflicted alike. Brother turned against brother, friendships were shattered, and loyalties were betrayed; the world tumbled into chaos.

Pushed to the brink of extinction, the Afflicted sought refuge in the dark and horrible places of the world—the places where no one else dared to tread. They moved from shadow to shadow, fighting their horrific god-given disease on one front and evading persecution from their former brethren on the other. So adept did some of the Afflicted become at hiding that they eventually became indivisible from the shadows.

Embracing the fluidity and mobility that the darkness afforded them, these special few turned a method of survival into a lucrative business, and an avenue for vengeance upon those who had turned their backs on them. Infiltration, assassination, and high-profile theft were the calling cards of those who would come to be known as the Phantoms. Eventually various guilds of Phantoms began to form, and their doors opened even to those who were not Afflicted. Race matters little to the pragmatic Phantoms, as long as the price is right.

Nightwalker. Widowmaker. Reaper. These are some of the many names whispered in hushed tones by those who mention the Phantoms.

Phantoms are grace personified. Their liquid movements are a blur to the mortal eye. Their strikes come quickly and suddenly, and usually from the darkness. If their first blow fails to finish their target, they emerge from the shadows and the dance of death begins—and ends quickly.

Impeccable footwork and acrobatic splendor light up the battlefield as the Phantom dashes, tumbles, and flips about their target, waiting for the perfect opportunity to strike. Such opportunities often present themselves in the form of a warm, pulsing jugular or a plate of armour that has shifted just enough to reveal soft flesh.

The Phantom's creed was born from the dire circumstances that forged them into existence: "Born of tragedy. To end in tragedy." This ruthless ideology is reflected in their assortment of fatal strikes and a fighting style that leaves honour at the door.

To meet a Phantom in battle is to witness both beauty and death in perfect harmony.

## WHY PLAY A PHANTOM?

Play a Phantom if you like:

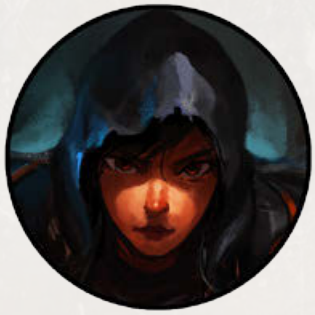
- The idea of an agile melee assassin
- Relying on active defenses such as tumbling and preternatural reflexes to avoid damage
- Surveying the battlefield and thoughtfully setting up your attacks
- Dealing tons of damage in melee

Phantoms need to be on the frontlines to deal damage, but they are not a frontline fighter. They use their cunning, speed, and grace to dive in and out of combat. Should attacks eventually find them, they have active ways to mitigate the damage. They are thoughtful damage dealers: like a surgeon, they value precision and razor-sharp focus over blunt force trauma.

Phantoms require support from their teammates, both to protect them and provide distraction to their enemies. When a Phantom's potential is fully realized and they are free to bring their offense to bear, no other melee class can match a Phantom's damage output.

# PHANTOM

*"Don't blink now, you might miss the part where I kill you."*



## CLASS TRAITS

**STARTING HP:** 10+AGILITY
**RECUPERATION DIE:** d8
**ARMOUR:** Light
**WEAPONS:** Light Melee, Medium Melee, Thrown
**RESOURCE:** Guile **[6]** 1d4 Recharge
**MAIN ATTRIBUTE:** AGILITY

## CLASS FEATURES

**All Phantoms come with the following features as part of their baseline powers**

*Phantoms deal the most single-target melee damage in the game. The main reason is Backstab. Prioritize targets that are Adjacent to an Ally.*

### BACKSTAB

**PASSIVE**

*Years of fighting dirty and analyzing brutes much larger and tougher than yourself have allowed you to ascertain the weak spots on an opponent with speed and accuracy.*

**EFFECTS**

Anytime you attack an enemy who is ADJACENT to an Ally, add 1d4 damage on a successful attack. Attacking directly from stealth or surprise grants this bonus as well.

Bonus increases to:

- +2d4 at level 5
- +3d4 at level 10

*Good use of Tumble is the hallmark of a great Phantom player. It's about dancing on the edge of staying alive but still having enough juice to drop some pain on your enemies.*

### TUMBLE

**REACTION**

*Your grace is so sublime it can transform the energy of the heaviest blow into a mere graze. Your reflexes, honed from years of intense training, allow you to roll with the punches and evade most physical attacks with some focus.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| Special | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

You may activate Tumble immediately after taking Physical damage.

Expend 1 Guile to reduce the incoming Physical damage by +AGILITY. You can expend multiple Guile for further damage reduction.

## PICK 1 PERK FROM BELOW

### GRACEFUL CHARMER

**STANDARD**

*As amazing as you are usually, sometimes you just need to take it up a notch. You've learned that your perfectly balanced movements and cat-like agility have bestowed you with a magnetic grace. When you decide to turn it on, there's just something in the way you move that draws people to you.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Guile | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Add half of your +AGILITY on top of any rolls asking for PRESENCE.

### STEALTHY

**PASSIVE**

*Enemies are so much easier to take down when they don't know you are coming.*

**EFFECTS**

When sneaking about or trying to remain undetected, you receive a +1 bonus to your roll.

Bonus increases to:

- +2 at level 3
- +3 at level 6
- +4 at level 10

# ADVANCEMENT TABLE

| LEVEL | HP BOOST | CORE PATH POINT | ATTRIBUTE BOOST | RECUPERATION | GENERAL PERK | ARTIFACT CAPACITY | TIER I TOKEN | TIER II TOKEN | AR | DR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | ◆ | | | |
| 3 | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | |
| 4 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | | +2 | |
| 5 | | | ◆ | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 6 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | | ◆ | | |
| 7 | | | ◆ | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +1 | +1 |
| 8 | ◆ | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 9 | | | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | |
| 10 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +2 | |

### LEVEL 1

**Choose THREE Tier 1 powers (no upgrades)**

### LEVEL 3

**NEW CLASS FEATURE**

#### PERKS OF THE JOB

**PASSIVE**

*Phantoms tend to have their finger on the pulse of any place big enough to matter.*

**EFFECTS**

When entering a town or a major city, roll 1d6 to receive a bonus:

**1–3:** A 20% discount on anything purchased and 20% more payment on anything sold. Always round up or down in your favour.

**4–6:** All lodgings, food, and recreational activities are free.

Perks last for a week before you can re-roll again.

On top of these mechanical bonuses, the GM may tell you something useful regarding the particular town or city you are in. Interesting NPCs or locales may be revealed to you. This information is represented as background knowledge your character possesses for being a Phantom.

### LEVEL 5

**Choose TWO Tier 2 powers (no upgrades)**

### LEVEL 8

**NEW CLASS FEATURE**

#### LIGHT AS A FEATHER

**PASSIVE**

*Countless hours of honing every tiny little muscle in your body and bringing it under perfect control allow you to drop from great heights with the utmost grace.*

**EFFECTS**

Whenever you are about to take impact damage from falling, you automatically gain a free Tumble effect (that works against falling damage) that's as strong as spending X Guile, where X is half your current Level.

### LEVEL 10

**ULTIMATE ABILITY**

#### SHADOW ARTS

**ULTIMATE - PASSIVE**

*Years of living in shadow have given you a true appreciation and understanding of its nature. Shadow cannot be contained, it is everywhere. Understanding the shadow has given you revelatory insight into new ways of striking that mimic its ubiquitous and undeniable nature.*

**EFFECTS**

Your Backstab damage is now considered True damage and pierces through all armour, resistances, and shields. It will always deal unmitigated damage in the face of any form of protection. This effect only applies when you are the one dealing the Backstab damage.

*Perks of the Job has both a mechanical and narrative component. The mechanical bonuses are fairly straightforward but the narrative bonuses are generally up to the GM's discretion. Examples of things to reveal to a Phantom (as part of their innate knowledge of the town or city) might be that the mayor's wife is the one that actually holds all the power in town, or the local blacksmith has racked up quite a debt from gambling. Both of these tidbits of information are actionable and can be of use to the Phantom.*

# TIER I POWERS

*Blade Twisting's upgrade Excruciating Pain is very useful for peeling enemies off of your teammates.*

*If you prefer being more of a duelist and staying around longer in the thick of things, Dancing Blade along with all its upgrades are an excellent investment. The DR bonus it grants combined with your naturally high DR can make you incredibly hard to hit.*

*Prefer more control over your resource generation? Grab Stalker and all its upgrades.*

## BLADE TWISTING

**STANDARD**

*You twist your blade, sending a massive shockwave of pain through your opponent and crippling them momentarily.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Guile | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage and an additional +AGILITY True damage.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Excruciating Pain:** A successful Blade Twisting disables Provoked Attacks for the target for 1 round.

**Deft Hands:** A successful Blade Twisting refunds 1 Guile.

## EXPOSE WEAKNESS

**STANDARD**

*Having watched patiently from the shadows, studying your victim from every angle, you have ascertained the weak points in their armour and anatomy. Your strike might be to unlatch a plate of armour protecting a vital organ, or to draw your allies' attention to a particularly vulnerable spot on your enemy's body.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Guile | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage and the target is made vulnerable for 1 round. While vulnerable, the next single successful attack from any source made against the target receives your Backstab damage bonus.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage.

## SPRY

**PASSIVE**

*Years of slinking through the shadows and balancing on narrow ledges has given you impeccable footwork.*

**EFFECTS**

Receive HL as a bonus to DR against all Provoked Attacks.

## DANCING BLADE

**STANDARD**

*You fall into a defensive rhythm of quick strikes and fanciful footwork as you let the cadence of your death song carve through your enemies.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Guile | 1d4+1 | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack. Roll 1d4+1 to determine how many ADJACENT enemies your Dancing Blade is able to strike, and then increase your DR by this number until the end of your next turn. Dancing Blade cannot benefit from Backstab.

**Success.** You deal 1d8+HL damage.

**Failure.** You deal half damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Crescendo:** DR bonus increases to +2 for each enemy acquired.

**Easy Rhythm:** On your next turn, when the DR bonus from Dancing Blade is expiring, you may choose to spend 1 additional Guile as a Quick action to extend the DR bonus for another turn. You may keep refreshing the duration this way as long as you have enough Guile.

## STALKER

**PASSIVE**

*No stranger to the shadows, you slink and sneak about, waiting for the perfect opportunity to strike.*

**EFFECTS**

Your first successful attack in a given combat encounter inflicts an extra 1d6+HL damage on top of all other damage bonuses. Can only occur once per battle unless the Shadow's Embrace upgrade is taken.

**UPGRADES**

**Cruelty:** Whenever your Stalker bonus is used up, you gain 2 Guile.

**Shadow's Embrace:** If you do not use your Standard action for 1 round, your Stalker bonus becomes available again.

## GHOST STEP

**MOVEMENT - QUICK**

*To the uninitiated, shadows only appear to be patches of darkness. To you, they are a highway to your enemy's blind side.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Guile | Single | Nearby |

**EFFECTS**

You step through the shadows and reappear ADJACENT to your target, avoiding all Provoked Attacks. You may Ghost Step to both Allies or enemies, but you must have an animate target to act as a beacon while you pass through the shadows.

**UPGRADES**

**From the Shadows:** Ghost Stepping to an enemy surprises them, allowing you to Backstab (or use other powers that require a distracted target) your selected target without an ADJACENT Ally beside them to distract them.

## SHADOW FLURRY

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*You unleash a series of blindingly quick strikes that appear to blink in and out from the shadows.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Guile | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack twice.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage for any successful rolls. These successful Basic Attacks are capable of dealing Backstab damage.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage for any failed rolls.

**UPGRADES**

**Efficient Striking:** Every time one of your Shadow Flurry attacks misses, you are refunded 1 Guile.

**A Thousand Blades:** Shadow Flurry now grants 3 Basic Attacks.

## VICIOUS MOMENTUM

**STANDARD**

*Your movements are like water: always moving, always flowing. As you spin, pivot, and dash about, your body builds up constant momentum. The force of your strikes grows with every deft movement as you flit about the battlefield, grazing your enemies with a thousand cuts before delivering the deadliest of strikes.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Guile | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal 1d4 damage and gain 1 stack of Vicious Momentum. Backstab damage still applies regardless of which option you choose if the conditions for Backstabbing are met.

**Failure.** You deal no damage but gain 1 stack of Vicious Momentum.

*Vicious Momentum.* Every time you miss with this attack or purposely choose to graze your target, you still gracefully follow through with the movement and maintain the energy behind the strike, allowing it to build up to deadly heights when the hit finally does land. Each stack of Vicious Momentum gives you +1d4 damage and this can stack indefinitely if you use Vicious Momentum every round. All the accumulated bonus damage is dumped into a single attack if you choose to use another attack aside from Vicious Momentum and your Vicious Momentum stacks are reset to 0. If you are unable to attack or use Vicious Momentum for 1 round, you also lose all of your stacks.

**UPGRADES**

**Deep Cuts:** Vicious Momentum bonus damage is increased to +1d8 per stack. On a successful Vicious Momentum attack, you deal 1d8 instead of 1d4 damage as well.

*Vicious Momentum is an excellent way to deal with dangerous Elites. Elites often deal a large amount of damage and have some nasty tricks up their sleeves, which leaves a lightly-armoured Phantom in a bad position to stand around and duke it out with them. Using Vicious Momentum, a Phantom can skirt around the battlefield building up their damage bonus on lesser foes. At the opportune moment, the Phantom can dive in to deliver a powerful hit on a key target and dart off again before the target can retaliate.*

*Shadow Flurry may seem simple and weaker than other Overdrives but it scales enormously with its upgrades and with the Phantom's own growth in power. As Backstab bonuses increase at higher levels, Shadow Flurry becomes the highest single-target damage power in the game.*

# TIER II POWERS

## HAMSTRING

**STANDARD**

*A calculated strike to the back of the legs intended to immobilize your target.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Guile | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Target must be distracted (Ally(s) must be ADJACENT to target) or surprised by stealth. Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage and your target is Rooted for 1 round.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Flourish.** You no longer require the target to be distracted by an ADJACENT Ally to perform Hamstring.

*Hamstring can help protect your weaker Allies who prefer to stay in the backlines. Even on a failure, Hamstring will prevent an enemy from moving up to your friends and attacking in the same round.*

## SHADOW CLONE

**OVERDRIVE - QUICK**

*Summon a clone of yourself made from shadow to mimic your attacks.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Guile | Single | Special |

**EFFECTS**

Your Clone may appear and attack a target that is up to a FAR distance while you attack a target ADJACENT to you. Your Clone may also attack your current ADJACENT target alongside yourself, granting both of you Backstab bonuses if you didn't have them already. The Clone will copy any offensive move from a Basic Attack to an Overdrive power. Lasts 1 round.

You may roll attacks separately for your Clone or declare you are using one roll (declare before rolling) for both your character and its clone. All your Clone's attacks do half the damage of your original attack. If you choose to roll damage separately for your Clone, you will deal half the result as damage instead of its full value. Your Clone's attack rolls do not allow you a recharge when rolling doubles.

**UPGRADES**

**Separation Anxiety.** Your Shadow Clone will last for an additional round and mimic your next attack(s) as well.

**Invigorating Shadows.** You are healed for the same amount of damage your Shadow Clone inflicts on its target.

*Shadow Clone can be used to deal potentially extreme damage, especially when paired up with an Overdrive like Shadow Flurry. However, the Guile costs for combining these two powers may leave you defenseless if the target doesn't die from the assault.*

## MUSCLE MEMORY

**PASSIVE**

*You've dodged so many attacks, your body sometimes reacts before your mind even registers the event.*

**EFFECTS**

Roll 1d10 after you have used Tumble.

Rolling a 9 or 10 makes your Tumble free, no matter how much Guile you put into the Tumble.

**UPGRADES**

**Honed Reflexes.** Rolling an 8 also makes your Tumble free.

**Mave's Blessing.** When you take damage that would otherwise bring your HP to 0 or less, your HP is instead reduced to 1. Can only happen once per Full Rest. Attacks that strike with such force that they deal more than half your max HP in a single blow will completely bypass Mave's Blessing.

*Muscle Memory is a nice bonus even if it's unpredictable. The real gem is the upgrade Mave's Blessing that's buried in the power. You essentially get a second chance at life every Full Rest, allowing you to play more aggressively and spend Guile on offense rather than defense. The caveat regarding attacks that hit so hard they can negate Mave's Blessing is put in place so that GMs can still deter you from exploiting the power by jumping off an airship a kilometer above solid ground and thinking Mave will have your back.*

## SLEEPING POWDER

**STANDARD**

*You always carry a bit of Sleeping Powder with you. You never know when some uncooperative cur might need to take a little nap while you go about your business.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Guile | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack. Targets Mental Resistance (MR). Does not work on Elites.

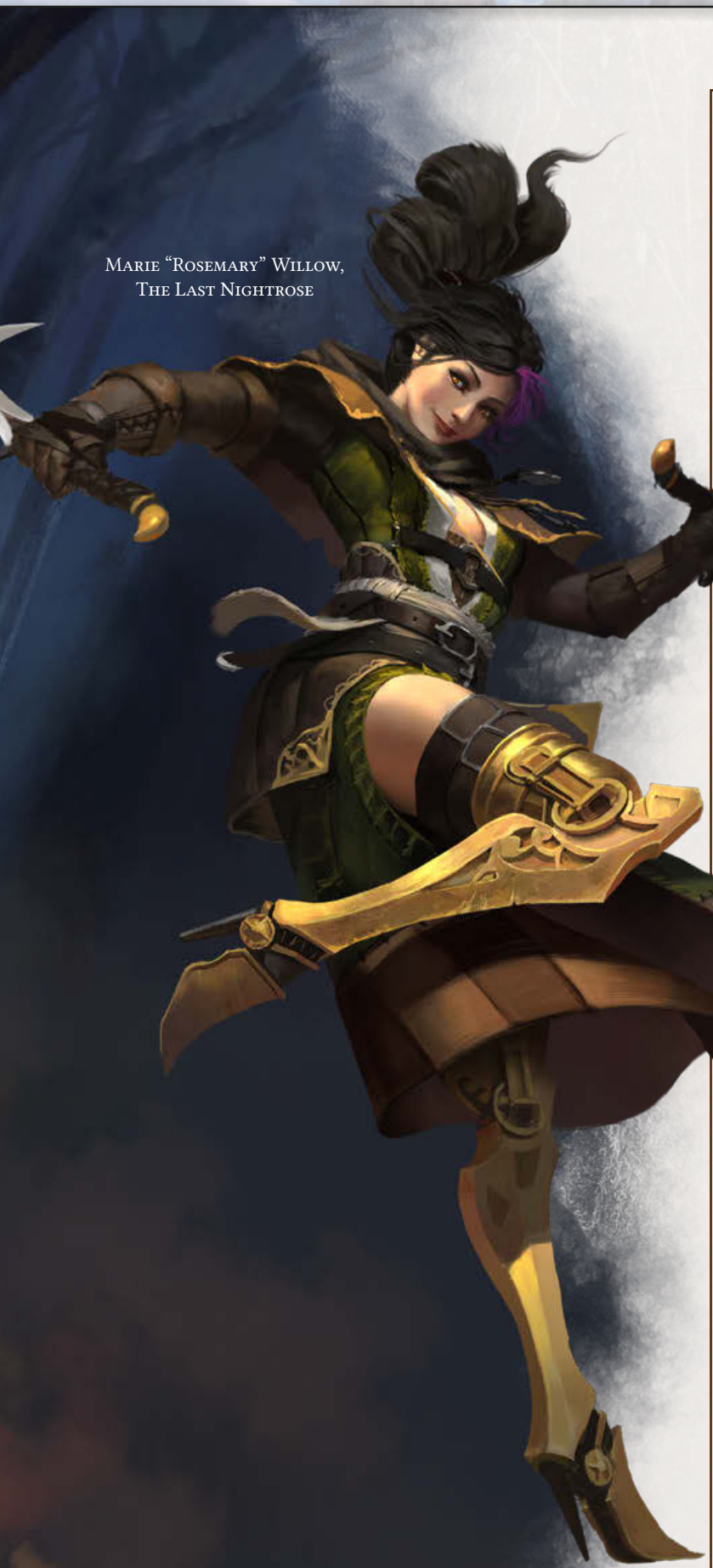
**Success.** Your target falls asleep until the start of your next turn and is unable to take any actions while asleep. It will wake immediately from taking any damage.

**Failure.** Your target is Staggered for 1 round.

**UPGRADES**

**Extra Dose.** You gain Benefit when rolling your Basic Attack for Sleeping Powder.

**Denser Mix.** You may now use Sleeping Powder on a target up to a NEARBY distance.



Marie "Rosemary" Willow,
The Last Nightrose

## JUST ANOTHER DAY'S WORK

"How much?" Castien the Phantom asked, keeping concealed in the shadows as effortlessly as wearing a cloak.

"Don't you want to know what the job is?" Castien's client, Drayden, asked. Drayden was a balding little man, constantly nervous. Even now his stubby finger was picking at the woodgrain of the table.

"Let's see if you can afford me first," Castien answered, moving silently around the perimeter of the pub's private room. Beyond the lamp's feeble circle of light, he stopped behind Drayden's chair. "Then we will discuss what your coin can buy."

Drayden jumped as the Phantom's voice came from behind him. With shaking hands, the Human opened the purse on his lap and set it heavily on the table. The glint of gold shone forth like a rising sun.

Castien darted out a hand and plucked one of the coins, darting back before Drayden had time to jump in fright. Castien flicked the coin, bit it between his teeth. The gold was good. "You have my attention," was all he said.

Drayden twisted in his chair, squinting into the darkness and fully failing to get clear sight of the Phantom he had been trying to hire for the better part of three months. "It's Borsten Flagfield, my cousin," the little man began.

"You mean the Magistrate of Greenwater Bay," Castien corrected. Castien cared little about these petty lives, but in his line of work, it paid to be informed. When Drayden had begun sniffing around, the Phantom had done his research. He knew where his client lived. Knew the man had never married but always been sweet on a pretty thing that Borsten Flagfield had recently wooed. It was not difficult to see where this was going.

Drayden faltered. Castien waved him on and haltingly, his client continued. "Is there a way you could make him, er... not magistrate anymore?"

With practised ease, Castien scooped the full purse off the table and disappeared it within his many pockets. A Phantom could never have too many pockets.

"Consider it done. In a week, your cousin will be found floating in the bay. I recommend you spend the intervening days practising your grief. Weeping widows tend to go for a sensitive man."

"What?" Drayden sprang to his feet, his face flushing indignantly, but the Phantom had already vanished from the room to set the plot in motion.

## REVERSAL OF FORTUNE

**PASSIVE**

*Many Phantoms are satisfied with their ability to roll with the punches and deflect the brunt of deadly physical attacks made against them by tumbling nimbly about. But not you. You've taken your ability to Tumble to new heights. Not only do you avoid damage but you find the means to return the pain in full upon your attacker. Let them think twice the next time they believe your lightly-armoured self makes for easy prey.*

**EFFECTS**

Your Tumble power is now empowered. You have the option of activating Reversal of Fortune only if you are able to Tumble away all the damage of a single attack made on you. Only works against melee attacks when the target is ADJACENT to you.

Expend the Guile to Tumble away all the damage of the attack, then roll your Basic Attack against the offending target's DR.

**Success.** You deal the entire damage of their attack back at them.

**Failure.** You deal half the damage of their attack back at them.

**UPGRADES**

**Overextend.** Spend 1 extra Guile to gain Benefit on your Reversal of Fortune roll.

**Fortune Favours the Bold.** On a successful Reversal of Fortune, you generate half of the Guile you spent on Tumble.

## EFFICIENCY

**PASSIVE**

*Your movements have become so precise and deliberate that you never expend more energy than absolutely necessary. This leaves you with an additional reserve to draw upon for squeezing out another fancy move or two.*

**EFFECTS**

Your maximum Guile is increased by 2 and your recharge die is increased to 1d6.

## SHARPENED BLADES

**QUICK - MAINTAIN**

*Your weapons are honed to a deadly edge to make the most of opportune moments.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Guile | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Your Backstab now deals an additional 1d4 damage as long as you Maintain this power.

## SHADOWLESS STRIKE

**STANDARD - MOVEMENT**

*Dash to an enemy for a lethal strike. You move so quickly that even your own shadow cannot keep up. Each successful strike feeds your speed.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Guile | Single | Nearby Only |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You dash to a NEARBY target with blinding speed and avoid Provoked Attacks. You deal Basic Attack damage. You may use Shadowless Strike again, on a different target, immediately after as a Free action that costs 2 Guile. This effect continues as long as you successfully land Shadowless Strikes on NEARBY targets and have the resources to maintain a chain of attacks.

**Failure.** You dash to a NEARBY target and avoid all Provoked Attacks.

**UPGRADES**

**Follow Through.** Subsequent Shadowless Strikes after the initial successful Shadowless Strike cost only 1 Guile.

**Force the Attack.** You may re-roll a failed Shadowless Strike by expending 1 additional Guile.

*Use Reversal of Fortune on easy-to-hit foes that attempt to attack you in order to squeeze in more damage outside of your active turn. Combine Reversal of Fortune with Muscle Memory to actually generate Guile (unpredictably).*

*Shadowless Strike holds great potential when paired with resource-generating powers from your Allies. Abilities like the Judge's Rallying Strike or the Mystic's Mana Blade upgrade: Lingering Hunger can keep you flitting from enemy to enemy, slicing them up with each pass. Call for boosts to your AR (or reductions to your target's DR) to ensure each Shadowless Strike lands.*

# Priest

When the Ivory Queen fell, slain by her own Children, her godly essence dispersed and faded into the Drift. In the moment of her death, she harboured no ill will towards her Children. Even as she died, her heart was still full of love for all creation. This love endured despite being cast across the infinite vastness of the Drift as her corporeal form was destroyed.

In the many years that followed the downfall of the Crimson Horde and the Ivory Queen, the people began to feel empty over their ephemeral victory. So many had always looked to the Heavens for guidance and a sense of connection with something greater than themselves, and now, when they looked upwards, all they saw was a great emptiness and the echo of silence. As the yearning in people's hearts grew for this sense of connection, this powerful desire for a guiding force began to manifest itself as a beacon in the Drift. The collective emotional energy gathered and grew, until it pulsated like a shining star, floating gently above the stormy ocean of an energetic world.

The Ivory Queen's long-dispersed essence began to coalesce and gather at these beacons in the Drift, taking shape, and inheriting the characteristics of different aspects of life that the people of Unity sought connection and guidance with. One by one, a new generation of deities was born.

As these new entities of power rose to prominence, the people of Unity had new lights to look towards for guidance. Meanwhile, a handful of devoted followers across the land did more than just look and hope. They could hear the song of their chosen god clearly: a beautiful divine melody that played through them and brought the gospel of their patron to the masses. Chosen for their faith and tasked with spreading the Belief, Priests became a revered fibre of the societal tapestry in Unity. During peacetimes, Priests would often be found helping their kinfolk and bettering society by caring for the sick and the poor. When the Great Calamity struck, many Priests called out to their gods for the strength to fight to save their people. It was then that the divine song blared louder than ever, imbuing many Priests with both the power to mend and destroy.

Priests are the conduit, the bridge, and the one true contact between the mundane and the divine worlds. While Judges may also hear the calls of the Heavens, they translate its divine will by using physical force and dispensing justice. Priests allow the song of their gods to flow through them in a way that allows the masses to understand and know that their faith is felt and heard.

It is through this sacred song that Priests are able to perform miracles. Wounds are healed, broken bones are mended, diseases are cured, and at the highest echelons of priestly power, even the dead can be brought back to life. The Age of Wrath has brought the Priests from the cloistered halls of their temples. They are called upon once again by their deities to serve the people in a new capacity.

Evil runs rampant across the lands and the encroaching darkness will consume everything if light does not stand in its way. Priests have always been known for their power to heal and bolster, but now they must also pick up a weapon to smite this evil. The Divine wills it.

## WHY PLAY A PRIEST?

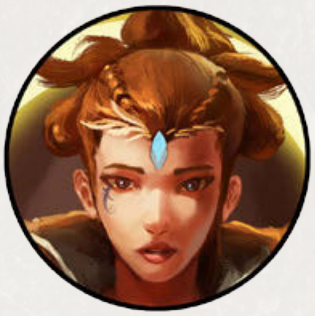
Play a Priest if you like:

- The idea of a class that utilizes divine power to cast spells or to augment themselves into a holy warrior that gets up close and personal
- Being a conduit for strong beliefs and faith
- Healing

Priests are a mix of secondary frontline fighter, healer, and utility caster. Priests have two paths they can walk: one makes them more of a fighter, the other more of a caster. They never completely lose the ability to do both, regardless of the specialization that is chosen. As a caster, or Chaplain, you hear your god's song loud and clear, and your dedication to ritual and study have allowed you masterful control over the divine gifts your god imparts upon you; as a fighting War Priest, you believe in tempering your faith with cold, hard steel. You are a combination of fearsome sacred power and brute physical strength.

# PRIEST

*"Faith is stronger than fear."*



## CLASS TRAITS

**STARTING HP:** 10+MIND
**RECUPERATION DIE:** d8
**ARMOUR:** Light
**WEAPONS:** Light Melee, Medium Melee
**RESOURCE:** Faith & Healing Charges (see below)
**MAIN ATTRIBUTE:** MIND

## CLASS FEATURES

**Priests may walk two different paths. Choose one.**

*When it comes to picking a path to walk, choose carefully. You are not able to change from one to another after you've made your choice.*

### CHAPLAIN

**CLASS PATH**

*You are focused on the strict study of holy texts and understanding the divine song that flows from your god to you. The healing arts and accepting your god's grace come easily to you.*

**FEATURES**

- You have 10 Faith points and use 1d6 for recharge
- You can hold 4 Healing Charges
- You receive Sacred Bolt as a baseline power

### WAR PRIEST

**CLASS PATH**

*You are the physical embodiment of the fury of your god. You understand that in order to make your gospel heard by the heretic, you must get up close and personal. Your will is iron and your body is steel.*

**FEATURES**

- You have 6 Faith points and use 1d4 for recharge
- You can hold 3 Healing Charges
- You are able to use Heavy Armour, Heavy Weapons, and Shields.
- You receive Holy Strike as a baseline power

**All Priests have access to Healing Charges. Sacred Bolt and Holy Strike belong to different Class Paths.**

Despite their connection to divinity, Judges and Priests don't always get along. There is much contention over who is the greater divine champion. Regardless of their competition with each other for their patron's favour, there is an unspoken respect between both orders.

### HEALING CHARGE

**QUICK**

*The song of your god will mend that which is broken.*

| TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|
| Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Each Healing Charge heals for 1+HL+MIND. You may expend multiple charges at once on the same target. You start with 1 Healing Charge and every Full Rest grants you 1 Healing Charge.

*Holy Strike and Sacred Bolt are important powers as they are readily available methods of gaining Healing Charges.*

### SACRED BOLT

**STANDARD [CHAPLAIN ONLY]**

*With a swing of your arm, you send a golden bolt of Divine energy careening at your enemies.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Faith | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

**Success.** You deal 1d6+HL+MIND Divine damage and gain 1 Healing Charge.

**Failure.** You deal half damage and gain 1 Healing Charge.

### HOLY STRIKE

**STANDARD [WAR PRIEST ONLY]**

*You unleash a mighty war cry and declare that you are smiting the foe in front of you in your god's name.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Faith | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

**Success.** You deal your Basic Attack damage and gain 1 Healing Charge.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage and gain 1 Healing Charge.

## PICK 1 PERK FROM BELOW

### UNSHAKEABLE

**PASSIVE**

*Your unbending faith and devotion towards your god steel your soul against all the temptations and promises of those that would seek to corrupt you.*

**EFFECTS**

You add +1 to any Defense rolls involving your mind.

Bonus increases to:

- +2 at level 3
- +3 at level 6
- +4 at level 10

### PRAYER

**STANDARD**

*A quick prayer to your god uplifts your spirit and gifts you with a random talent. It is up to you to turn this brief boon into something beneficial.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Faith | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Roll 1d4 twice. The first 1d4 determines the bonus modifier you will receive (+1 to +4).

The second 1d4 will determine X Attribute that receives the bonus. Lasts 30 seconds or a single task.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **X** | MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |

## A WORD ON GUIDANCE

On the next page, you will find that the Priest receives a new Class Feature at Level 3 called Guidance. Below are some guidelines on using this power for both the player and the GM.

**Examples of objective questions:**
*"Lord hear my prayer. What dangers lie ahead in the Shadowfell Mountain passage that we must traverse?"*
*"Pray tell where we might find shelter from the storm for tonight?"*
*"A dangerous battle awaits us. We know not the nature of our enemy. What should we be wary of when engaging these [insert enemy type]?"*

**Examples of subjective questions:**
*"Lady Mave, can I trust Melkor?"*
*"Most Exalted One, what is Anga up to?"*

Guidance is a powerful ability for Priests and the free-form nature of tabletop role-playing might open it up for abuse. The intention behind this ability was to give players a small measure of understanding and control in what is often a big and exciting world created by the GM. It gives the GM an opportunity to share tidbits of information that they'd really like the players to have but might find difficult to shoehorn into the action without breaking immersion.

**Players:** Please keep in mind the exciting possibilities of this power, but, at the same time, be understanding if the GM answers cryptically: a reminder that the gods, while powerful, are still fallible.

**GMs:** You are not compelled to give answers in such a manner that it would break the game you have planned for your players. An example would be a quest to find a missing child. If a Priest invokes Guidance and asks where the missing child is, revealing the location would be anticlimactic for all parties involved. Not giving an answer would be unfair to your players as well. Find a middle ground that scratches the curious itch of your players while still encouraging them on a road to discovery. In this case, you could say something like "vague impressions of rats and mossy cobblestones flash before your eyes... for a moment you can swear you smell the overpowering stench of stale urine and ale... the image is broken by the cry of a child." If you want your players to find an NPC that might lead them along the trail, you could describe the NPC as well to nudge the party in the right direction. Guidance should advance the game; it's up to you as the GM to decide if it should do so in a big way or a smaller one.

# ADVANCEMENT TABLE

| LEVEL | HP BOOST | CORE PATH POINT | ATTRIBUTE BOOST | RECUPERATION | GENERAL PERK | ARTIFACT CAPACITY | TIER I TOKEN | TIER II TOKEN | AR | DR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | ◆ | | | |
| 3 | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | |
| 4 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | | +1 | +1 |
| 5 | | | ◆ | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 6 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | | ◆ | | |
| 7 | | | ◆ | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +1 | +1 |
| 8 | ◆ | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 9 | | | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | |
| 10 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +1 | +1 |

### LEVEL 1

**Choose THREE Tier 1 powers (no upgrades)**

### LEVEL 3

**NEW CLASS FEATURE**

*For both player and GM advice on using Guidance, see the section titled "A Word on Guidance" on the previous page (pg. 223).*

#### GUIDANCE

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*You kneel down and shut out the world around you. Hands clasped in front of you, you open your heart to your god and ask for guidance.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Faith | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Ask a single question. Objective questions are answered truthfully to varying degrees. Subjective questions or questions pertaining to creatures with free will are murky and will have haphazard results. Gods are mighty, but they do not have domain over free will, and if a creature wishes to mask its intent or actions, the gods are not privy to observe them in that moment.

### LEVEL 5

**Choose TWO Tier 2 powers (no upgrades)**

Resurrection is a miracle in the eyes of the lay person. For a Priest that has reached such heights of faith and connection to their god, it only seems like a natural progression in understanding the music of life. A Priest's bringing back the dead is different from the process that created the Risen. Life is given through the grace of their god, not a fluke of alchemy and unnatural energies. The entire ritual is delicate and often leaves the Priest in complete exhaustion afterwards. Sometimes, the process is not perfect and a little bit of the person is missing or "off."

### LEVEL 8

**NEW CLASS FEATURE**

#### RESURRECTION

**OVERDRIVE (SPECIAL) - STANDARD**

*You are no longer a mere vessel through which your god's divine song flows. So long have you heard the music that it is now seared into memory. You have graduated to composer, and this will be your grandest symphony yet.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 6 Faith + Special | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

You are able to bring a corpse that has been dead no longer than 5 days back to life. Resurrection is a greatly taxing power and can only be invoked once a week. On top of costing 6 Faith, you must sacrifice 2,000 Denerim (or an item of equal or greater value) for each day the corpse has been dead.

### LEVEL 10

**ULTIMATE ABILITY**

*Unending Grace pairs nicely with the power Wrath and its upgrade Grace to Fury. You will be able to be both a powerful healer and damage dealer in a battle where you have Unending Grace active.*

#### UNENDING GRACE

**ULTIMATE - QUICK**

*You surrender completely and truly open yourself up to something greater. You feel this divine power surging through you as you wade into the thick of battle, eyes ablaze with the glory of your god.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Faith | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

On activation and each round afterwards you generate 1 Healing Charge for free. Lasts until the end of battle. Outside of combat, using Unending Grace will automatically heal your entire party to full HP.

# TIER I POWERS

## DENOUNCE

**STANDARD**

*You raise your arm and point at an enemy. With unwavering conviction, you declare them an anathema to the divine authority that you serve. Your enemy's resolve melts under your withering glare.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Faith | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack to determine X.

Lower your target's DR by X for 1 round.

| | 2-8 | 9-15 | 16-21 | 22+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **X** | -1 | -2 | -3 | -4 |

**UPGRADES**

**Shame.** Target's MR is also lowered for an equal amount.

**Shirk.** You (the Priest only) receive Benefit when defending against the affected target's attacks.

**Chastise.** Duration increased to 2 rounds.

## FANATICISM

**PASSIVE**

*Your feverish devotion cannot be contained. Your blows land with resounding conviction.*

**EFFECTS**

Upon dealing damage from a melee attack, you may expend 1 Faith to re-roll your damage dice if you do not like your initial roll. You may choose the result you prefer.

**UPGRADES**

**Committed**. In addition to re-rolling your damage, your attack now deals an additional +HL damage.

## MAN OF THE CLOTH

**PASSIVE**

*Your faith is unwavering. Even in dire times you find the strength to believe.*

**EFFECTS**

Anytime you roll to recharge Faith, add +2.

**UPGRADES**

**Unbending Faith.** When rolling to recharge Faith, you may roll twice and keep the highest roll.

## GUIDED STRIKE

**STANDARD**

*You close your eyes and let your faith guide your swing.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Faith | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack with Benefit, even if you are suffering Hindrance.

**UPGRADES**

**Ease.** On a success, you are refunded 1 Faith.

**Faith Inspires.** On a success, you may choose 1 Ally that is up to a FAR distance away to inspire, granting them +2 to their AR for their next attack. Lasts 1 round.

## MARK OF THE HERETIC

**STANDARD**

*You invoke the name of your god and declare the enemy before you a heathen and non-believer. Your hand ignites with blue fire as a magickal brand is temporarily seared onto their flesh through your touch. It will explode violently when triggered.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Faith | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage as Fire and the target is branded until the end of combat. Only 1 brand per Priest is allowed to exist at a time. Using Mark of the Heretic again while a brand is active will remove the previous brand and apply a new one to the most recent target. When the next damaging attack successfully strikes the target, the brand explodes, automatically dealing HL+MIND Fire damage to the target and all enemies ADJACENT to the branded target.

**Failure.** You deal half +MIND Fire damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Guide My Hand.** Expend 1 additional Faith to receive Benefit on the Attack roll.

**Determined.** On a Failure, 2 Faith is refunded.

**Purifying Flames.** Allies that are ADJACENT to the Marked target when the brand goes off are healed for your +MIND.

*Mark of the Heretic can annihilate a group of enemies but requires coordination with your party. Combine this with Gravity Well from a Mystic and a well-timed shot from a Fell Hunter and watch the fireworks.*

*Martyr is a risky proposition. If you roll well, then you'll be protected for 1 round before you can start healing yourself up or getting away from danger.*

*Priest powers are expensive, even for a Chaplain. Take Revelation if you are worried about resource management.*

*Don't discount Tower & Shield even if it seems unexciting compared to other powers. Take the Rebuke upgrade and cast it on a Judge that's taken the Retribution power and both of you can have a good chuckle as enemies explode just from hitting the Judge.*

## REVELATION

**OVERDRIVE - FREE**

*All is revealed. Your epiphany reinvigorates your sense of purpose.*

**EFFECTS**

You instantly gain 6 bonus Faith points. These points can go over your maximum. Any power that uses Faith will use this bonus Faith before dipping into your normal pool. Lasts until the end of battle. Lasts 10 minutes if used outside of battle.

**UPGRADES**

**I Will Make Them See:** You may now choose to distribute these 6 bonus Faith points to your Allies, restoring their own Class Resource e.g. you give 2 bonus points to your Judge, restoring 2 Fervor for them, and give 1 bonus point to your Phantom restoring 1 Guile for them, you keep the last 3 bonus Faith points for yourself.

## TOWER & SHIELD

**STANDARD**

*You quietly ask your god for divine protection. Golden energies coalesce around your target and harden into luminous armour.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Faith | Single or Self | Very Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack to determine X.

X is how much +AV you or your Ally will receive. Lasts 1 round.

| | 2-8 | 9-15 | 16-21 | 22+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **X** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

**UPGRADES**

**Rebuke.** Enemies receive +MIND Divine damage every time they successfully strike a target that has Tower & Shield up.

**Reinforce.** You gain Benefit when rolling for Tower & Shield and its duration is now increased to 2 rounds.

**Share the Faith.** You no longer need to use Tower & Shield on yourself. You will always receive its effects when you use it on an Ally.

## MARTYR

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*Selfless devotion is one of the many marks of the faithful. Your unwavering belief that your god will protect you erases all hesitation as you gladly take on the wounds of your battle brothers so they may fight on.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| Free | Single | Very Far |

**EFFECTS**

Instantly swap your current HP with the current HP of any single Ally within a FAR distance of you. Target's current HP must be lower than yours.

Roll your Basic Attack and receive a damage absorption shield equal to the result of the roll. The temporary shield will last until the end of your next turn.

**UPGRADES**

**Guardian Angel:** Upon activating Martyr, an explosion of light emanates out from your target, healing any Allies ADJACENT to your target for HL+MIND.

**Not in Vain:** If you become Incapacitated in a battle (or within 10 minutes) after you've used Martyr, your body will explode with light as you fall to the ground, automatically damaging all ADJACENT enemies for 1d8+HL+MIND Divine damage.

## WRATH

**STANDARD**

*A bolt of golden energy comes crashing down from the sky and strikes your enemy.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Faith | Single | Very Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal 1d6+HL+MIND Electric damage. You may choose to convert up to 1 Healing Charge into another additional 1d6+HL Electric damage.

**Failure.** You deal half damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Furious Grace**. If you choose to convert a Healing Charge into additional damage on a success, roll 1d10. A result of 6 or higher will refund you that Healing Charge.

**Undeterred**. On a failure, you are refunded 1 Faith.

# TIER II POWERS

## BLINDING LIGHT

**STANDARD**

*Your eyes grow ablaze with the penetrating light of the Heavens. An intense beam of blinding energy bursts forth from them and strikes your target.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Faith | Single | Nearby |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal 1d6+HL+MIND Divine damage, blinding your target and reducing its AR by your +MIND for 1 round.

**Failure.** You deal half damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Explosive Light.** On a success, an explosion occurs at your target, automatically striking a single additional ADJACENT target of your choosing. This target also suffers the effects of Blinding Light.

**Brilliance.** Damage is increased to 2d6+HL+MIND.

## CLEANSE

**QUICK**

*Healing energies are fluid. They can be manipulated and transformed to best serve your needs. Over time you have mastered bending the ability to heal, allowing you to overcome a variety of debilitating effects.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| Special | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Instead of using Healing Charges to restore HP you may now remove certain status effects.

**1 Healing Charge**. Removes the Staggered effect.

**2 Healing Charges**. Removes a single Poison, Confused, or Rooted effect.

**3 Healing Charges**. Removes a single Disease, Hindered, or Stunned effect.

**UPGRADES**

**Soothing Light:** When you use Cleanse on a target, they are healed for 1d4 HP for each Healing Charge used.

**Blessed are the Kind:** Roll 1d10 after you've Cleansed a target. If you roll 8 or higher, the cost of Cleanse is refunded to you.

## FAITH PROTECTS

**PASSIVE**

*Channel the healing energies granted to you by your god into a shield for you and your allies. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.*

**EFFECTS**

Instead of healing up lost HP when using Healing Charges, you may opt to place an absorption shield on your target for the same amount instead. The shield lasts until the end of combat or 10 minutes outside of combat.

**UPGRADES**

**Karmic Feedback.** Half of the damage dealt to the shield from Faith Protects is also dealt back to the offending attacker as Divine damage.

## RAPTURE

**STANDARD**

*An aura of divine light exudes from your body. Your presence becomes an incredibly welcoming one. Even those creatures of the darkness can't help but look your way. Some succumb to the allure of your temporary glow and slowly make their way towards you in a stupor.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 4 Faith | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack. Targets Mental Resistance (MR).

**Success.** Your target loses the will to strike and suffers your +MIND as a penalty to all damage they do for 1 round. If they have not moved yet, they will automatically use up their Movement to move as close as they can to you. If the target is Elite, you must Contest MIND vs. MIND for the displacement effect.

**Failure.** Your target shrugs off the more potent effects of Rapture, but they are still a bit shaken and suffer your +MIND as a penalty to all damage they do for 1 round.

**UPGRADES**

**Abundant Grace.** Rapture now costs 3 Faith.

**Beauty is Everywhere.** The target no longer needs to forcibly walk towards you; on a successful Rapture, you may now direct where the target moves—if their Movement action is still available.

*Faith Protects with the upgrade Karmic Feedback works well when combined with Tower & Shield's Rebuke upgrade.*

*Blinding Light's strength is not in its ability to deal damage. The effect of reducing a target's AR is very potent. Blinding Light may cost as much as Sacred Bolt and not generate a Healing Charge, but it might outright negate any damage its target might do on their turn. When it comes to fighting Elites that might be able to knock out one of your Allies in a single hit, this power can be a lifesaver.*

*Cleanse is very expensive to use when you think of all the guaranteed healing that could be done instead. Depending on the circumstances, a Confused or Stunned Ally could spell defeat for the entire party. Grab the Blessed are the Kind upgrade for a 1 out of 3 (approximately) chance of making Cleanse free each time it's cast.*

## CRUSADER

**OVERDRIVE - QUICK**

*Sometimes words fall short where steel may triumph. Your god acknowledges this notion and fortifies your body with divine power.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Faith | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

You gain HL to your AR, DR, MR, and damage until the end of battle or 10 minutes.

**UPGRADES**

**Divine Purpose.** Upon Crusader's activation, you are healed for half of your max HP.

## SONG OF MERCY

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*You take a moment to open yourself up to the song of your god. By taking a moment to listen, you allow the song to flow through you in all its wondrous glory as you act as a beacon of its power.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Faith | Multiple | Special |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack to determine X.

On activation, Song of Mercy will heal you and all Allies on the battlefield for X+HL+MIND.

Song of Mercy then remains active on you for 1 round and moves with you until the end of your next turn, healing you and all Allies NEARBY for your +MIND at the start of their turns.

| | 2-10 | 11-15 | 16-20 | 21+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **X** | 1d4 | 2d4 | 2d6 | 2d8 |

**UPGRADES**

**Unending Melody.** Song of Mercy's periodic healing lasts an additional 2 rounds for a total of 3 rounds.

**Cacophony.** The initial casting of Song of Mercy now damages all enemies ADJACENT and NEARBY to the Priest for 1d8+MIND Divine damage.

**You Lift Me Up.** On Song of Mercy's initial activation, you and your Allies up to a NEARBY distance generate 2 Class Resource. If you rolled 20 or higher while activating Song of Mercy, the Class Resource generation increases to 3 from 2.

## SANCTIFY

**PASSIVE**

*As your faith grows, so does the power of your signature Class Features.*

**EFFECTS**

Both Sacred Bolt and Holy Strike now generate 2 Healing Charges on a success.

## SMITE

**STANDARD**

*A thundering strike empowered by your god's strength pushes the heathen back to where they belong.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Faith | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage and your target is pushed to a NEARBY distance away from you. Enemies displaced this way do not suffer Provoked Attacks as they are pushed to their new location.

On enemies that are Elite or larger than Medium size, you must Contest their MIGHT vs. your MIND to determine if they are displaced.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Warning Cry.** You let out a warning cry before smashing your target away from you, allowing your Allies to perform Provoked Attacks on the displaced target.

## SOLDIER OF FAITH

**PASSIVE**

*There is a time for litany and there is a time for steel. Now is the time for the latter.*

**EFFECTS**

*When not wielding a shield:* Your AR is increased by +2.

*When wielding a shield:* Your AV is increased by +2.

*Crusader can put you on even keel with the dedicated martial Classes, or even surpass them, for the duration of a battle.*

*Song of Mercy's healing efficiency is increased if you wait until everyone in your party is damaged before activating it. Remember, on activation its range is the entire battlefield (or Very Far) but afterwards, the lingering healing effect only works on Allies that are Nearby to you.*

# Primalist

Before the Skyfather and the Ivory Queen placed their mark upon Unity, the world was a wild, roiling landscape, brimming with primal energy and untamed life. The elemental forces clashed constantly in a beautiful chaos. Fire, earth, wind, and water were the constituents upon which the physical world was built. Their unending dance gave birth to the teeming wildlife, the churning oceans, the mighty volcanoes, and the lush forests. Many that look upon nature take its splendor for granted. It has always existed and is simply there.

But there are those that have an innate connection to these primal forces. They hear the whispers of the land—whispers that have grown into cries as civilization's burning ambitions continue to take more than what is given, and the unnatural energies of the Drift continue to spill forth unabated into the world, disrupting the ordained rhythm that maintains balance. The dead rise as metal cities spew perpetual black clouds into the sky and poison everything around them. The very land cries out for a champion to bring balance and restore natural law.

That champion is the Primalist. The Primalist is attuned to the chaotic elemental forces. These forces come to the Primalist in the form of Primordial Spirits. They are the physical world's answer to the encroaching of the Drift into Unity. The very earth itself rises up in defiance of the unnatural merging of two worlds. These Primordial Spirits are conduits of its rage made manifest. Now they channel their rage—unrestrained—through the Primalists as a means of taking back a piece of the world that has been robbed.

Unlike the Driftwalker who coerces and makes bargains with the dark forces of the Drift, or the Mystic who forcibly manipulates the strands of reality, the Primalist communes and beseeches with the Primordial Spirits for a portion of their power. It is a relationship of respect and reverence and never strictly a business transaction.

The elements are not the only thing at the Primalist's disposal. The wild beasts that live off the land and owe their existence to natural causes rather than divine providence willingly lend their aid to the Primalist. With the ferocity of nature's creatures and the blessing of the Primordial spirits on their side, the Primalists are a true force to reckon with.

In one moment, a Primalist may be summoning gale force winds to cast aside a storm of arrows; in another sending a stream of soothing waters to rejuvenate a wounded ally; and in the next instant, they have leapt across the battlefield to rend their foes limb from limb by channeling the ferocity of an Adraxian tiger.

The call of the Primordial Spirits is strong, and Primalist dispositions are as varied as the creatures of nature. Some see the role as an honour, while others reluctantly take up the mantle. Then there are those that hear nature's call as the very reason for their existence.

## WHY PLAY A PRIMALIST?

Play a Primalist if you like:

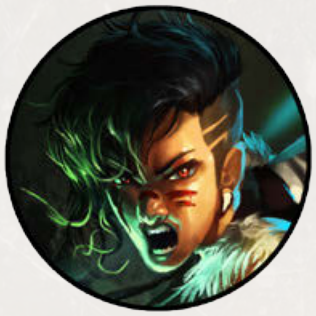
- The idea of a hybrid caster and melee combatant
- Nature and its many creatures
- A more savage and wild side to your character

The Primalist is a versatile class able to call upon the elements to cast spells and then imbue themselves with the strength of nature's creatures for a physical edge. With the option to specialize further through power choices, the Primalist can be built to suit different playstyles.

Primalists also utilize two resources similar to the Priest, who manages both Faith and Healing Charges. Primalists use Spirit to cast their spells and in doing so power their Ferocity, which allows them to activate and maintain their Aspects. Learning to flow from one resource into the other and back again is the key to playing the Primalist to its fullest potential.

# PRIMALIST

*"Can your sword defeat a thunderstorm?"*



## CLASS TRAITS

**STARTING HP:** 10+MIND
**RECUPERATION DIE:** d8
**ARMOUR:** Light
**WEAPONS:** Light Melee, Medium Melee
**RESOURCE:** Spirit **[6]** 1d4 Recharge / Ferocity **[6]**
**MAIN ATTRIBUTE:** MIND

## CLASS FEATURES

**All Primalists come with the following features as part of their baseline powers**

Using your Spirit-spending abilities generates Ferocity. Ferocity allows the Primalist to activate Aspects and take on the strengths of nature's creatures. Once activated, the Aspect remains "ON" until Ferocity runs out or the Primalist decides to leave the Aspect (Free Action). All Aspects cost 1 Ferocity per round after the initial round to sustain unless otherwise stated. Only 1 Aspect can be active at a time.

*Your two base Aspects: Tiger and Boar are used for offense and defense respectively. Aspect of the Boar actually gives you a minor heal on activation. If you are swimming in Ferocity, you may be able to keep activating Boar to heal yourself.*

### ASPECT OF THE BOAR

**QUICK**

*Resilient. Hardy. Stubborn. You feel the boar's gifts empower your body as a burst of vitality and strength fills you.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Ferocity | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Increase your MIGHT by +HL.

Increase your Max HP and current HP by +MIND.

The Max HP is lost when you are no longer in the Aspect of the Boar.

Gives you access to the Brace for Impact power (see Dreadnought Powers on pg. 164). This Reaction power costs 2 Ferocity to use.

### ASPECT OF THE TIGER

**QUICK**

*You feel the power of the predator surge through you. The tiger's fury is yours to command. Your muscles become taut and your senses heightened. You are ready to hunt.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Ferocity | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Increase your AGILITY by +HL.

Increase your damage die for your Basic Attack to 1d12.

Gives you access to the Tumble power (see Phantom Class Features on pg. 212). You spend Ferocity in place of Guile to achieve Tumble's effects.

*Remember, Aspect of the Boar and Tiger also boost Might and Agility, making the Reaction powers they provide effective even if you lack those Attributes naturally.*

## PICK 1 PERK FROM BELOW

### ANIMAL WHISPERER

**STANDARD**

*With a little bit of focus to tap into your own inner animal, you are able to communicate with nature's creatures at the most basic level.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Spirit | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

You may communicate with a natural animal, asking it one basic question. Using this ability on a spooked or enraged animal may also calm it down.

*Nature's Bounty provides a small bonus that adds up over extended Respites. This can be very useful, especially for long dungeon crawls where it's unsafe to take a Full Rest.*

### NATURE'S BOUNTY

**PASSIVE**

*Nature awards its champions for their hard work in upholding the balance of life. Whenever a Primalist seeks a Respite, the elements are quick to ensure comfort and sustenance where it can. The wind might stop howling, the air may warm a bit, and a berry bush or rodent might be within the vicinity to provide a quick snack.*

**EFFECTS**

Whenever you and your party take a Respite, everyone gains an additional HL in HP and +1 to their Resource Recharge roll.

# ADVANCEMENT TABLE

| LEVEL | HP BOOST | CORE PATH POINT | ATTRIBUTE BOOST | RECUPERATION | GENERAL PERK | ARTIFACT CAPACITY | TIER I TOKEN | TIER II TOKEN | AR | DR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | ◆ | | | |
| 3 | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | |
| 4 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | | +1 | +1 |
| 5 | | | ◆ | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 6 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | | ◆ | | |
| 7 | | | ◆ | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +1 | +1 |
| 8 | ◆ | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 9 | | | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | |
| 10 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +1 | +1 |

### LEVEL 1

**Choose THREE Tier 1 powers (no upgrades)**

### LEVEL 3

**NEW CLASS FEATURE**

#### BEASTWALKER

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*Nature's creatures can sense your deep respect for the natural world. Some may even allow you to look through their eyes and experience the world as they do.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Spirit | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

You can inhabit the body of a willing animal and may control it and see everything it sees. Lasts 10 minutes. Any damage to the host animal cancels the effect. Your own body is rendered prone and vulnerable while you are Beastwalking.

Docile and calm animals have a baseline TN of 10 when the Primalist is convincing the creature to allow them control of its body. The GM may ramp the TN up according to the Difficulty Table in the GM Guide as other factors come into play, e.g. the animal is wounded, scared, or aggressive, etc.

### LEVEL 5

**Choose TWO Tier 2 powers (no upgrades)**

### LEVEL 8

**NEW CLASS FEATURE**

#### CALL THE ELEMENTS

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*You grow bolder with your requests and to your surprise the Primordial Forces oblige. Even the weather can be changed for a moment—all you need to do is ask.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Spirit | Special | Special |

**EFFECTS**

You may cause the weather to change around you and within a radius of up to 50 meters. You may choose to have the weather change to: rainfall, strong winds, or a hot sun and clear blue skies.

Outside of combat, Call the Elements lasts up to half an hour, but during the heat of combat the weather can only be maintained for 1 round.

### LEVEL 10

**ULTIMATE ABILITY**

#### AVATAR

**ULTIMATE - QUICK**

*All the Primal elements, along with the full savagery of nature's creatures, become one with you. The surge of power is momentary, as no mortal shell can hold onto such a powerful charge for long.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| Free | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

You are instantly healed for half of your Max HP. All Spirit and Ferocity costs are removed for 3 rounds. When Avatar ends, Spirit and Ferocity are maxed.

*Beastwalker can be used to scout out dangerous areas more inconspicuously than sending one of your party members in to sneak around. No one ever suspects the pigeon perched on a ledge somewhere.*

*Call the Elements has both mechanical and narrative implications. On a ship that's becalmed? Call forth a strong wind to get you and your party where they need to go. Fighting a Vampire Lord somewhere in the great outdoors? Even a single round of sunshine might be enough to turn the tide of battle in your favour.*

# TIER I POWERS

*Icicle gives you some ranged attack options and the Splinter upgrade gives you a way to quickly get a burst of Ferocity. Spearing two enemies for 4 Ferocity and immediately being able to tap into a more expensive Aspect is powerful.*

## ASPECT OF THE RHINO

**QUICK**

*The ground shakes as you charge across it. The weight and strength of the mighty rhino allow you to plough through your enemies.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Ferocity | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

While this Aspect is active, every range band that you cover before landing a melee attack in the same round increases your damage by +MIND.

**UPGRADES**

**Stampede.** Anyone that attempts a Provoked Attack on you when you move through or away from them suffers +MIND damage.

**Thick Hide.** Increases your AV against Provoked Attacks by your +MIND.

*Aspect of the Mongoose allows you to get into the thick of things and potentially deal massive amounts of damage with the Counterstrike upgrade even when it's not your turn.*

## ASPECT OF THE MONGOOSE

**QUICK**

*Your reflexes are increased significantly as you take on the grace and agility of the mongoose.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 4 Ferocity | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Your DR is increased by +MIND. You gain Benefit on your Defense roll against any melee attack.

**UPGRADES**

**Counterstrike.** When a melee attack misses you, you may immediately retaliate with a Basic Attack against your aggressor.

*Flurry is a low cost power that will allow you to maintain Ferocity while having an Aspect activated and be able to stay in that Aspect longer. It also adds a bit of punch to your melee attacks.*

## STONE SKIN

**REACTION**

*You call upon the Spirit of Earth to grant you protection for a brief moment. Your skin hardens to stone in response.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Spirit | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

You may activate Stone Skin immediately after you fail a Defense roll and just before rolling the damage you suffer from it. Increase your AV by HL+MIND against a single attack.

## ICICLE

**STANDARD**

*Water and wind come together to form a piercing shard of ice for you to launch at your enemy.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Spirit | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** Inflicts 1d8+HL+MIND Frost damage. Generates 3 Ferocity.

**Failure.** You deal half damage and generate 2 Ferocity.

**UPGRADES**

**Splinter.** Expend 1 additional Spirit to allow Icicle to split and attempt to strike a target ADJACENT to your original target. Generates an additional 1 Ferocity whether the secondary target is successfully struck or not.

## FLURRY

**STANDARD**

*The Spirit of Wind blesses your strike with gale force power.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Spirit | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage and you may make another Basic Attack immediately against the same target. The subsequent attack does half damage. Generates 1 Ferocity for each hit that lands. If the first hit from Flurry kills the target, your attack ends but you generate an additional point of Ferocity as if the second hit had also landed.

**Failure.** Generates 1 Ferocity.

**UPGRADES**

**Relentless Gust.** Even if you miss your initial Flurry attack, you may still attempt a second strike for half damage.

**Angry Winds.** The initial attack now generates 2 Ferocity, even on a failure. The subsequent attack still only generates 1 Ferocity.

## LASHING VINES

**STANDARD**

*Razor-sharp vines burst forth from your arms and lash at your enemies, eviscerating them.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Spirit | Single | Nearby |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal 1d8+HL+MIND damage. Generates 1d4 Ferocity.

**Failure.** Generates 1d4 Ferocity.

**UPGRADES**

**Entangled.** Your Lashing Vines have a chance to entangle the enemy. Rolling 15–20 on the 2d10 used for a successful Attack roll causes the target to become Staggered for 1 round.

**Furious Fauna.** When rolling 1d4 for Ferocity, you may roll twice and take the highest result.

## WATERS OF LIFE

**STANDARD**

*Nature is balance. Its powers of destruction are but a reflection of its potent ability to nurture and rejuvenate. Tranquil, life-giving waters splash upon you and your allies, revitalizing the life force from within.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Spirit | Single | Nearby |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack to determine X.

Your target is healed for 1d4+HL+MIND+X and you generate 2 Ferocity.

| | 2-11 | 12-18 | 19-22 | 23+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **X** | 2 | 3 | 4 | 6 |

**UPGRADES**

**Hard Water.** Grants your target an additional 1d4 AV against a single attack. Lasts 1 round.

**Overflow.** Your Waters of Life splash onto 2 other Allies of your choice that are ADJACENT to the target and they heal for half the amount of the original heal. If you have the Hard Water upgrade, the secondary target(s) receives the +AV bonus as well.

**Abundance.** Reduces Spirit cost by 1.

## RAVAGE

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*With a wild roar, you pounce on your enemy and tear into them like a crazed beast.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Spirit | Single | Nearby |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack with Benefit.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage and your Ferocity is instantly maxed out.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage and your Ferocity is instantly maxed out.

**UPGRADES**

**Savage Talons.** When calculating damage, double the damage dice used (e.g. 1d8 ⟶ 2d8).

**Crushing Leap.** Ravage's range is increased to FAR. On a success, your target is also Rooted for 1 round.

## CRYSTAL SHARD

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*Focusing on your link with the Primal Earth Spirit, you summon a sparkling crystal shard similar to the ones valued by Mystics for their magick-bearing properties.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Spirit | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Choose an element for the Crystal Shard to take on the properties of: Arcane, Corrosive, Divine, Electric, Fire, or Frost.

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal 1d8+HL+MIND elemental damage of the type you chose for Crystal Shard and generate 3 Ferocity. Your target is now weakened against your chosen element until the end of your next turn and will suffer an additional +1d6 elemental damage when struck by any attack of that element.

**Failure.** You deal half damage and generate 3 Ferocity.

**UPGRADES**

**Prismatic Assault.** The weaken effect from Crystal Shard has its bonus damage increased to +1d10 elemental damage.

**Pressurized.** The direct damage for Crystal Shard is increased to 2d8+HL+MIND.

*Ravage allows you to cover great distances as activating it can launch you at an enemy up to a Nearby (Far if the Crushing Leap upgrade is taken) distance away without consuming your Movement action. Combine this extra mobility with Aspect of the Rhino for a truly deadly attack.*

*Waters of Life is a strong heal, maybe stronger than a Priest Healing Charge on average. However, it uses up your Standard Action to cast. With all the upgrades, this power is one of the strongest beneficial abilities in the game.*

*Synchronize Crystal Shard with your Allies' attacks to make use of the elemental weakness bonus Crystal Shard grants. The Judge's Gavel of Thunder with its Electricity in the Air upgrade will benefit greatly from an Electric Crystal Shard. If a Phantom with Shadow Flurry is around for this combo, the damage will be extreme.*

# TIER II POWERS

## ASPECT OF THE WOLF

**QUICK**

*The wolf pack is always stronger together.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Ferocity | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

While this Aspect is active, you and any ADJACENT Allies receive a +2 bonus to AR and DR.

**UPGRADES**

**Wolf Pack Tactics.** The initial activation of Aspect of the Wolf allows you or an ADJACENT Ally to move away from ADJACENT enemies and not suffer Provoked Attacks as long as there is at least 1 Ally ADJACENT to the enemy(s) as you move away.

## THUNDERSTORM

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*The Primal Storm Spirit heeds your call. A mighty thunderstorm appears above the battlefield.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Spirit | Special | Special |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack to determine X.

You will automatically deal 1d8+MIND Electric damage to X enemies on the battlefield. You may choose which targets are struck. Generates 3 Ferocity.

On a roll of 24 or more, Thunderstorm automatically strikes all enemies on the battlefield a second time at the start of your next turn.

| | 2-12 | 13-19 | 20-23 | 24+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **X** | 3 | 4 | All | All + Special |

**UPGRADES**

**A Storm is Coming.** Your initial Basic Attack roll for Thunderstorm gains Benefit.

**Dancing in the Rain.** Allies on the battlefield are now healed for 2d6+MIND. The number of Allies healed follows the same table from above for enemies hit. An Attack roll of 24+ also repeats the healing at the start of your next turn.

## ASPECT OF THE VIPER

**QUICK**

*Your hands and whatever weapons you may be holding in them are empowered with venomous potential.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Ferocity | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

All your melee attacks now deal Corrosive damage instead of Physical.

**UPGRADES**

**Leeching Bite.** The initial activation of Aspect of the Viper grants you a Leeching Bite bonus until the end of your next turn that will generate 1 Spirit each time you successfully strike an enemy.

## ZEPHYR

**STANDARD**

*A deliberate breeze passes over you as you beseech the Primal Wind Spirit to protect you and your allies from those that would dare to strike at nature's champion.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Spirit | Single | Very Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack to determine X.

Your target receives Benefit on all Defense rolls against ranged attacks for X rounds. Generates 2 Ferocity.

| | 2-18 | 19-22 | 23+ |
|---|---|---|---|
| **X** | 1 | 2 | 3 |

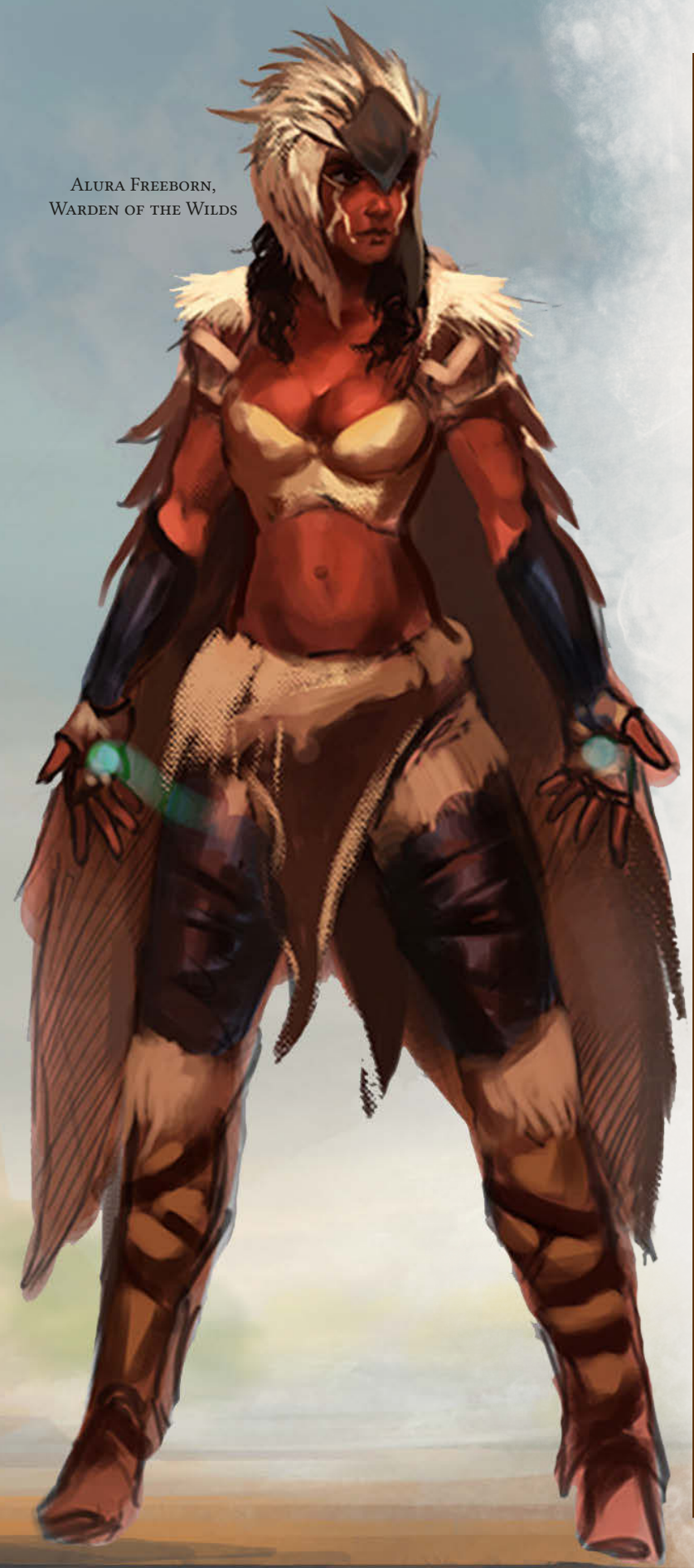
**UPGRADES**

**Turbulence.** The Zephyr swirls violently around your target, picking up nearby debris at gale force speeds. Anyone landing a melee attack against that target suffers 1d4+MIND damage.

**Lashing Wind.** Ranged attacks that miss are sent back at the attacker, automatically striking them for half damage.

*Aspect of the Viper's Leeching Bite gives you an avenue for generating Spirit. 1 Spirit might not seem like much but the Leeching Bite effect lasts until the end of your next turn. Using just Basic Attacks, you might be able to generate 2 Spirit per single activation of Aspect of the Viper. Combine this with a power like Flurry and you might be able to keep both Spirit and Ferocity topped up.*

*Thunderstorm is one of the few powers in the game that automatically strikes your enemy(s). The damage it deals scales with how well your Basic Attack rolls and how many enemies are on the field. Thunderstorm might be the most damaging power in the game if the battlefield is flooded with enemies and you roll well.*



Alura Freeborn,
Warden of the Wilds

## NATURE'S CALL

Lora crouched helplessly in the ashes that had been her home. Everything she had was gone, all she'd worked for up in smoke. Her skin was streaked in soot; the heat from the inferno had sapped any tears she might have shed.

*It had to happen*, came a small voice. *Do not blame the Fire.*

Lora turned, eddies of ashes swirling around her feet, but she saw no one.

*You must learn how to look*, the voice said. *There is more to the world than you know. Embrace it.*

"Who are you? Where are you?" Lora asked, hating how pitiful she sounded. Above her, the burnt timbers creaked as they cooled.

*Down here.*

Lora bent down, looking into the smoldering remains of her bed, and saw a small bright-orange insect. A Fire Beetle, they were called, this one a much smaller cousin to the man-sized Carapid beetles her father had fought during his days as an adventurer. "Am I really talking to a beetle?" she asked.

*I am but a face for Father Flame, just as you are, Lora. You have been chosen as his champion, and I have been chosen to guide you.*

Rage filled Lora. She snarled but the beetle did not so much as twitch an antenna. "How can fire expect me to serve after it has stolen everything from me?" she demanded.

*What have you lost, Lora? A mouldy bed and a few sticks of furniture?* The Fire Beetle scuttled closer, gliding over the glittering embers that once were a bed post and coming to a stop mere inches from her face. *No, Father Flame has given you a gift, child. You are a Primalist now.*

With an anguished cry, Lora smashed her palm down on the beetle and the burnt wood snapped, sending up a shower of sparks. Why would the elements choose her? She had never given them cause to notice her before. Why now; what had changed?

*It will take more than that to destroy me, Human, as it will take more than this fire to destroy you.*

Lora followed the voice to find the Fire Beetle had scampered off the wood and clung to the skin on her forearm, staring up with beady eyes.

*Come, I will teach you how to shield yourself, and we will walk through flame together. This is your purpose, to understand the glory and power of the natural world. To revel in the balance of the Sacred Four. Look out across your city, where once forests grew lush, where once rivers ran free before the mills came. Father Flame has chosen you to do his work.*

The words came to her lips unbidden: "Embrace the fire within."

## INSECT SWARM

**STANDARD**

*With a series of whistles and clicks, you call a swarm of insects to assault your target. Their incessant buzzing and nipping drives your target to distraction.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Spirit | Single | Nearby |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack. Targets Mental Resistance (MR).

**Success.** You deal +MIND damage. The insects disable your target from casting spells or using powers for 1 round. If they are in the middle of a spell, it becomes interrupted. Generates 3 Ferocity.

If the target is larger than Medium size or Elite, you must Contest MIND vs. MIND to see if the power-disabling and interrupt effect is applied.

**Failure.** The target becomes Staggered for 1 round and you generate 2 Ferocity.

**UPGRADES**

**Deadly Stings.** On a success, Insect Swarm's damage is increased to 2d6+MIND damage.

**Lasting Buzz.** On a success, the target's AR is also lowered by HL for 1 round.

## EXHILARATION

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD**

*An enchanted breeze blows over the area, lifting your spirit and honing your focus to a razor's edge. Renewed, you charge back into the fray with newfound vigor.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Spirit | Special | Very Far |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack to determine X.

You and X Allies of your choosing may immediately roll to recharge your Class Resource. Generates X Ferocity.

| | 2-12 | 13-19 | 20-23 | 24+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **X** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

**UPGRADES**

**Tide of Battle.** Those affected by Exhilaration receive an additional +2 to their recharge roll and are also granted Benefit for their next single action. This bonus lasts for 1 round.

## CHANNELLED SAVAGERY

**PASSIVE**

*You are more in tune with the beast raging inside of you. Tapping into your primal fury comes much more easily to you now.*

**EFFECTS**

Choose an Aspect and have its activation cost permanently reduced by 1 Ferocity.

This power can be taken multiple times but only once per Aspect.

## MAGMA GEYSER

**STANDARD - MAINTAIN**

*The Primal Fire Spirit is a fickle force. Unpredictable, chaotic, and dangerous, just like the roaring flames that comprise his essence, the Primal Fire Spirit requires an extra-careful touch when entreated. Done correctly, however, a Primalist is awarded in full as the power of fire erupts from the earth to ravage the battlefield.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Spirit | 1d4 | Special |

**EFFECTS**

The ground cracks open in the middle of the battlefield and a mini volcano erupts from the break. A geyser of fire spits out gobs of magma into the air and onto unsuspecting enemies.

Roll 1d4 to determine the number of magma gobs launched from the geyser and thus the number of enemies hit by the Magma Geyser.

Roll your Basic Attack once to determine if these magma gobs successfully strike the targets of your choosing.

If Magma Geyser is maintained, the effects begin anew at the start of your next turn (Roll your Basic Attack once again).

Magma Geyser's range covers the entire battlefield.

**Success.** You deal +MIND Fire damage.

**Failure.** You deal no damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Ferocious Fire.** You generate 1 Ferocity for every 2 targets that are successfully hit by Magma Geyser during the initial activation or when it goes off at the start of your turn.

**High Pressure.** The amount of targets your Magma Geyser can potentially strike is increased to 1d4+1.

*Insect Swarm is extremely useful when facing certain monsters that have potent abilities that require a charge up before they can be unleashed. A Sky Striker's Dive Bomb ability comes to mind.*

*Magma Geyser has a steep cost upfront and to maintain but once it gets going, it begins to pay for itself the longer the battle lasts. For Primalists focused more on Aspects and getting into the thick of battle, Magma Geyser makes an excellent complement, allowing extra recharge attempts for Spirit at the start of each turn and potentially high Ferocity regeneration with the Ferocious Fire upgrade. A Primalist can pounce from one enemy to another empowered by savage Aspects as fiery death rains from above.*

# Sentinel

From the darkest depths of the Tempest of Terror dwell the nightmares, fears, and malicious thoughts of all living things—made manifest and given flesh. The physical avatars of such darkness, the demons and fiends collectively known as The Fell, spill forth through the Tempest and threaten all life on Unity.

Far in the Dreadmarsh, the Tempest of Terror lights up the night sky like an unholy beacon, ever-burning and crackling with demonic energies. Acting as a direct portal into the realm of the Fell, the Tempest is a conduit for Oblivion. As the largest and most dangerous of all demonic rifts created when the Skyfather sundered the world of Unity, the Tempest of Terror must be guarded at all costs. Should even a fraction of the full might of the Fell be able to pour through the Tempest, the loss of life and level of destruction upon Unity would be immeasurable.

Shortly after the Great Calamity, when the Tempest was first created, tens of thousands died at its steps, stemming the tide of unrelenting darkness that spilled forth from it. Warriors of every creed and colour struggled valiantly to keep the Fell from moving past the portal choke point. By the time the invasion abated, there were mountains of corpses piled high, their eyes void of the fire of life.

Such efforts to guard the Tempest of Terror were not sustainable, and with every passing day and every recurrent invasion attempt, more and more died until there were so few left. There had to be another way, another method of guarding the Tempest... From this desperation, the Sentinel was born.

The Sentinel is the perfect soldier. Trained relentlessly to fulfill the need for an effective defensive fighting force, the Sentinel is the armoured embodiment of discipline and martial skill.

Sentinels are never without their shield, and their entire fighting style revolves around utilizing their shield in both attacking and defending.

Deployed to stem the legions of Fell from spilling in through the Tempest of Terror, they were outstandingly efficient at forming a living dam against the flood of darkness. Each Sentinel is an extension of the soldier standing beside him; together, and in formation, they form the immovable object that is so desperately needed to stop all of Unity from being swallowed by the Fell.

Where the Dreadnought is a roiling ball of fury and burning intensity, the Sentinel is cool, calculated, and disciplined. Possessing strikes and stances honed over years and years of diligent practice, a Sentinel on the battlefield is a martial maestro. The sight of the Sentinels orchestrating their war song of death—beating their spears against their massive shields in a deafening percussive beat as they slam through the flesh and bone of their enemies—is one of terrible beauty.

## WHY PLAY A SENTINEL?

Play a Sentinel if you like:

- The idea of a tanky melee fighter that values discipline, skill, and defense over raw power, brawling and wild, untamed strikes
- Utilizing a shield as a weapon
- Being able to absorb and defend against the heaviest of blows, both for yourself and your teammates

Picture a soldier whose movements are coordinated and deft; every twitch, every subtlety is the product of perfect muscle memory honed from countless hours of practice.

Sentinels make excellent team players, as their powers also allow them to confer benefits to their allies or protect outright the softer members of their group by intercepting what would be a death blow for a lesser mortal.

# SENTINEL

*"Whatever happens, we hold the line."*

## CLASS TRAITS

**STARTING HP:** 12+MIGHT
**RECUPERATION DIE:** d10
**ARMOUR:** Light, Heavy, Shields
**WEAPONS:** Light Melee, Medium Melee
**RESOURCE:** Discipline [6] 1d4 Recharge
**MAIN ATTRIBUTE:** MIGHT

## CLASS FEATURES

**All Sentinels come with the following features as part of their baseline powers**

*Sentinels may not be able to deal as much damage as other Classes but they are able to take a beating and tie up the enemy from hurting their party members.*

### BASTION

**PASSIVE**

*Sentinels are renowned for their peerless defense and extreme discipline. A critical part of their training revolves around becoming one with their shield. Instead of dodging a deadly blow to avoid it, Sentinels are often able to ascertain its trajectory, speed, and angle so that it slides right off their shield.*

**EFFECTS**

When wielding your shield, add the shield's AV to your DR.

*Combine Bastion with the Tier 1 power Shield Mastery for a significant boost in defensive potential.*

### VIGILANCE

**QUICK**

*Your creed is to protect and defend. Together, you are stronger.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Discipline | Single | Special |

**EFFECTS**

Select a single enemy anywhere on the battlefield to become your point of focus. Any time that enemy attacks a target that is not you, you may instantly make a Basic Attack as a Free action against that enemy if they are ADJACENT to you at the time they made the attack. Vigilance lasts until the end of battle or if you use it again to change to a different target.

## PICK 1 PERK FROM BELOW

### TIRELESS

**QUICK**

*Sentinel training is merciless and unforgiving. If one Sentinel falters from exhaustion or weakness, the entire unit may become exposed. Conditioning is of the utmost importance.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Discipline | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Add HL on any check that taxes your physical endurance (resisting Poison, holding your breath, swimming against a strong current, long periods of running/sprinting, etc.).

### GRIZZLED SOLDIER

**PASSIVE**

*Originally tasked to defend the Tempest of Terror, Sentinels have seen some of the most horrific battles in the history of Unity. They were created to fight an enemy whose very nature is unprecedented in its terror and destruction. The stone-cold look of a soldier who has seen the unspeakable is enough to silence even the toughest opponent.*

**EFFECTS**

When attempting to intimidate or threaten a target, you receive a +1 bonus to your roll.

Bonus increases to:

- +2 at level 3
- +3 at level 6
- +4 at level 10

# ADVANCEMENT TABLE

| LEVEL | HP BOOST | CORE PATH POINT | ATTRIBUTE BOOST | RECUPERATION | GENERAL PERK | ARTIFACT CAPACITY | TIER I TOKEN | TIER II TOKEN | AR | DR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | ◆ | | | |
| 3 | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | |
| 4 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | | +1 | +1 |
| 5 | | | ◆ | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 6 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | | | ◆ | | |
| 7 | | | ◆ | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +1 | +1 |
| 8 | ◆ | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | | |
| 9 | | | ◆ | | ◆ | | | ◆ | | |
| 10 | ◆ | ◆ | | | | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | +1 | +1 |

### LEVEL 1

**Choose THREE Tier 1 powers (no upgrades)**

### LEVEL 3

**NEW CLASS FEATURE**

## FORCED MARCH

**PASSIVE**

*You are trained to go beyond the physical limits of your body when it is required.*

**EFFECTS**

You receive an additional HL as bonus Recuperations per day. You now have the ability to also give away your Recuperations to your Allies.

### LEVEL 5

**Choose TWO Tier 2 powers (no upgrades)**

### LEVEL 8

**NEW CLASS FEATURE**

## ROCKSTEADY

**OVERDRIVE - REACTION**

*Every Sentinel that stands shoulder to shoulder with their fellow brothers in a phalanx knows the importance of holding their ground. At the pinnacle of Sentinel training is the ability to anchor oneself no matter the situation—for the consequences of faltering and being displaced are grave, not just to yourself, but to your band of brothers. Become the immovable object.*

**EFFECTS**

In combat, any attack that attempts to displace you is resisted completely. Outside of combat, events or actions that would send a lesser warrior sprawling or sailing across the room are stopped cold when inflicted upon you.

### LEVEL 10

**ULTIMATE ABILITY**

## DESPERATE DEFENSE

**ULTIMATE - PASSIVE**

*When things become dire, your natural instincts kick in and the muscle memory of your countless hours of training takes over. Your defense becomes more and more impenetrable as the odds are stacked against you. Each wound you take and block you miss awakens a most primal survival instinct inside of you. You move before your mind even makes the decision to move, allowing you to dodge, block, and parry at uncanny speeds.*

**EFFECTS**

For every 20 HP you are missing, you receive +1 to your DR.

*Desperate Defense can make for some epic 'last man standing' scenarios. Nudging your GM to create a weapon with life-stealing properties for the campaign might be something to consider... or go and become good friends with your party's Priest.*

*Invoke Rocksteady against the avalanche coming your way. When a trapdoor opens from underneath you, you somehow find a way to hold onto the ledge in an instant. An explosive charge sends your Allies flying through the air but instinctively you crouch and coil behind your shield and are unmoved by the force of the blast.*

# TIER I POWERS

*If your party needs a bit more damage, Shield Slam and its upgrades allow you to contribute offensively. Shield Mastery has great synergy with Shield Slam as well, while also providing a significant defensive boost.*

## DEFENSIVE STRIKE

**STANDARD**

*A cautious strike that trades power for defense.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Discipline | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage and you gain your +MIGHT as additional AV for the next single incoming attack you receive.

**Failure.** You miss but you receive your +MIGHT as additional AV for the next single incoming attack you receive. This bonus doesn't stack.

**UPGRADES**

**Spellward.** The additional AV bonus you receive now works against all damage types (except True), not just Physical.

## PHALANX

**PASSIVE**

*You are most at home fighting as a unit. With another soldier covering you, you are better able to focus on offensive manoeuvres.*

**EFFECTS**

For every Ally that is ADJACENT to you, add +1 to your damage.

Your Allies ADJACENT to you will now also receive this damage bonus at Level 6.

This bonus can never exceed HL.

## SHIELD MASTERY

**PASSIVE**

*Your shield has become an extension of yourself. In your hands, you elevate its ability to protect to new levels.*

**EFFECTS**

Your shield receives +1 to its AV.

Bonus increases to:

- +2 at level 5
- +3 at level 10

## SHIELD SLAM

**STANDARD**

*Your shield is not only a tool for defense. Your unparalleled mastery of it allows you to find new bone-crunching ways to use your shield to your enemy's dismay.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Discipline | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage and your shield's AV bonus as additional damage.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Reverberation.** On a success, your target is Staggered for 1 round.

**Shield Arm.** Shield Slam now costs 1 Discipline.

*Shield Toss is a high-risk power. As a Sentinel you *are* your shield. Losing it even for a round or two means losing a lot of synergistic bonuses. Give your teammates a heads up when you toss your shield so they can help throw it back to you if the shield doesn't return on its own.*

## SHIELD TOSS

**STANDARD**

*While you are never without your shield, there are times when parting ways with it—only momentarily—will play out to a stronger tactical advantage and possibly win you the day.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Discipline | Single | Nearby |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage.

*Shield Return.* After determining success or failure from your initial toss, roll 2d10. On a result of 11 or higher, your shield returns to you. On a result of 10 or below you must move up to your target to retrieve your shield. You may potentially gain a recharge when rolling for your Shield Return. Allies may also use a Quick action to throw your shield back to you.

**UPGRADES**

**Topspin.** Your shield is returned on a roll of 6 or more and the range of Shield Toss is extended to FAR.

**Cannon Arm.** Your Shield Toss deals your shield's AV as additional damage. Rolling a Massive Hit while performing Shield Toss instantly decapitates/kills any non-Elite target.

## BACK TO BACK

**OVERDRIVE - QUICK**

*Your countless hours of intense training have developed your kinesthetic senses to incredible heights. When pressed, you are able to 'lock in' with an ally and function as one cohesive unit. Every twitch or tremor is felt, almost precognitively, allowing you to react with blistering speed as you twirl about together, creating openings and evading strikes that would have otherwise landed.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Discipline | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Choose a single Ally that's ADJACENT to you. As long as you and that Ally remain ADJACENT to each other, you will both roll for every offensive and defensive action that either one of you attempts. You will roll as if your character were performing that action and then take the highest roll out of the two. Lasts 2 rounds or until the moment you and your chosen Ally are no longer ADJACENT—whichever comes first.

**UPGRADES**

**Strike as One.** You may now roll damage for each other as well and take the highest result.

**Semper Fi.** Back to Back will now last for the duration of the battle if you and your chosen Ally remain ADJACENT to each other.

## DEFLECT

**REACTION**

*You cannot remember the last time your shield was not by your side. So long have you wielded it like an extension of your body that it feels as light as a feather strapped against your arm. You need but think of a place and your shield is there already.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Discipline | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

When you are receiving a ranged attack, you may activate this power and receive Benefit on your Defense roll.

**UPGRADES**

**Redirection.** You may now redirect an Ally's physical or spell projectiles with your shield, increasing the range of their attack by one range band if you are already at the maximum distance of their attack or allowing them to strike from impossible angles. Call out for them to shoot at you. Costs 1 additional Discipline.

## BARRIER

**OVERDRIVE - STANDARD - MOVEMENT**

*You call out to your allies to rally behind you then slam your massive shield into the ground, crouch low, and brace yourself for incoming damage.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Discipline | Special | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack to determine X.

You and all Allies ADJACENT to you receive an AV bonus equal to X. Any Ally that moves away from you during Barrier, will lose their bonus.

You can keep Barrier up for a maximum of 2 rounds. It uses your Standard and Movement actions for both rounds and you cannot move. You may roll your Basic Attack again in the second round again if you like.

| | 2-17 | 18-22 | 23-26 | 27+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **X** | +3 | +5 | +7 | +10 |

**UPGRADES**

**Impenetrable.** Barrier's +AV bonus now works against any type of damage, not just Physical.

**Born Defender.** Barrier's cost is now free.

## SPRINGBOARD

**STANDARD**

*Allow an ally to be launched off your shield, adding your energy to their momentum.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Discipline | Single | Special |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack to determine X.

An Ally that is ADJACENT to you can spring off your shield to a NEARBY distance, adding the extra energy from your push (X) to their Attack and Damage rolls. For non-combat purposes, you may add your MIGHT modifier on top of their roll if they are trying to clear a distance.

| | 2-11 | 12-19 | 20-23 | 24+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **X** | +2 | +3 | +4 | +6 |

**UPGRADES**

**Launch Pad.** You are now able to launch an Ally to a FAR distance.

*Before you use Barrier, remember to call out to your Allies so they can form on you to receive its benefits.*

*Springboard coupled with the Primalist's Aspect of the Rhino is a potent combo.*

*Use Deflect to make ranged attacks reach even further. To increase an Ally's ranged attack by one range band, position yourself at the maximum distance of your Ally's ranged attack. When they make their shot or use their power, it can bounce off where you are standing for another range band's worth of distance.*

# TIER II POWERS

## CHALLENGE

**STANDARD**

*Grabbing both your weapon and your shield, you slam them together with all your might, creating a discordant sound that your target just cannot ignore.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Discipline | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack. Targets Mental Resistance (MR).

**Success.** The target is forced to attack you on their turn. Lasts for 1 round.

**Failure.** The target is Staggered for 1 round.

**UPGRADES**

**Blinded by Rage.** You gain Benefit against a single attack from a successfully Challenged target.

**Invigoration.** Successfully defending against an attack (fully evading it) from a Challenged target grants you 4 Discipline. Occurs only on the attack that was forced from using Challenge.

## IRON MAIDEN

**STANDARD - MAINTAIN**

*You perform a flourish, striking at those around you as your body coils into a defensive stance.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Discipline | 1d4 | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal your 1d4+MIGHT damage to 1d4 enemies ADJACENT to you.

**Failure.** You deal half damage.

By maintaining Iron Maiden, any time one of your enemies successfully makes a melee attack against you, they suffer your AV as Physical damage.

**UPGRADES**

**Adept.** Cost (both initial and maintain) are reduced to 2 Discipline.

**Steel Maiden.** Iron Maiden's initial attack now strikes up to 1d4+1 targets. Iron Maiden's retaliatory damage is increased by an additional 1d4 damage.

## GUARDIAN

**OVERDRIVE - QUICK**

*Your focus becomes razor-sharp and all enemies on the field fall under your watchful gaze.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Discipline | Multiple | Very Far |

**EFFECTS**

Your Class Feature Vigilance now applies to every enemy on the battlefield for 2 rounds, allowing you to make a Basic Attack as a Free action against any enemy ADJACENT to you that makes an attack on an Ally instead of you.

**UPGRADES**

**Serve and Protect.** You may expend 1 Discipline to sprint over to an eligible NEARBY aggressor and perform your Free Basic Attack granted by Guardian. This does not require or consume your Movement action, but you will still be susceptible to Provoked Attacks during your movement.

**Enduring Watch.** Guardian lasts for an additional round for a total of 3 rounds and its Discipline cost is now free.

## INTERCEPT

**REACTION**

*A soldier is as good as the man standing beside him. Your entire life you've trained to protect and defend. It's pure muscle memory when your body explodes into action, sliding between a devastating blow and an ally with your shield raised.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Discipline | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

You may jump in and intercept a single attack made on an Ally ADJACENT to you. You will perform a Defense roll and accept the consequences in your Ally's stead.

**UPGRADES**

**Sprint.** You may now expend 1 extra point of Discipline to use Intercept against an attack on an Ally that's NEARBY.

**Prepared.** When rolling defense against an intercepted attack, you may add HL as a DR bonus.

*Challenge is a unique power. Its effect is one of a kind and only the Sentinel has the ability to pull an enemy onto him and force it to attack him. The Invigoration upgrade also opens up another way for the Sentinel to generate Discipline.*

*Combine Guardian with the Mystic's Teleport: Swap. This "bait and switch" combo can put you in the thick of a group of enemies that thought they'd go after your squishy Mystic. With Guardian activated, they either turn to deal with you or eat your Provoked Attacks and Vigilance-triggered attacks.*

*Iron Maiden synergizes well with Shield Mastery.*

Captain Jai Goodall,
Shield of the West

## STAND TOGETHER

Tagoreth pressed his shoulder tight to Shandeth, the Sentinel beside him, and felt the ripple all the way down the line as each of the Sentinels set their stance for the next wave of attack. They locked their shields together, lending strength and finding safety in their endless hours of training. As Sentinels, they were the world's best last defense against the Fell.

"One shield breaks from the wall, the wall falls." Tagoreth repeated the mantra of the Sentinels, and the resounding cries of his shield-wall brethren replied:

"We stand together against the Tempest!"

People called the Tempest of Terror a 'beacon' as if it were a light guiding ships through a treacherous bay, but the reality was more of a chasm spewing hopelessness and hate. Even as he watched, Tagoreth could see the foul energy coalescing, forming into fresh demons before his very eyes.

"They come," grunted Doreen from down the line.

"We stand together," whispered Tagoreth, bracing himself for impact.

The Fell broke against them, shrieking like banshees and striking like shrapnel. Up and down the line, the rhythm against the shield-wall was a staccato fusillade.

As Krakow bellowed the command, Tagoreth coiled his strength and the Sentinels punched their shields forward. The blow beat the Fell back, and where each shield interlocked, the Sentinels thrust their spears forwards. He stabbed, once, twice. His Fell assailant went down in a flutter of torn wings only for another to take its place a heartbeat later.

They had stood the line together countless times, defending Unity from encroaching Taint, but this day there were just too many.

As a Fell's lacerating tail swept low before Shandeth could counter, Tagoreth felt the line buckle.

"One shield breaks from the wall," Tagoreth grunted, stomping his boot down on a writhing demon. He fought to close up the formation once more, but Doreen went down next, and the Fell flooded around him. He felt a sudden lance of pain. Looking down, he saw wet claws had punched through his cuirass. "...the wall falls," he gurgled, staggering forward, propped upright by his shield as it dug into the mire.

The Tempest continued to roar overhead. The last thing Tagoreth heard was a cry from behind him as fresh voices took up the fight:

"We stand together against the Tempest!"

No matter how the evil might flow, the Sentinels would always rise to fight it.

## LAST STAND

**OVERDRIVE - QUICK**

*A soldier's fight is not over until the day is won or they fall gloriously in battle. You leave nothing on the table as you draw upon all your reserves to make one final stand against the enemy.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Discipline | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

You instantly gain (LEVEL×2) + MIGHT temporary HP. Your Max HP value is temporarily increased by this amount as well. Lasts until the end of battle or 10 minutes. After Last Stand expires, you lose the temporary HP and can become Incapacitated if you drop to 0 HP.

**UPGRADES**

**Iron Focus.** Your AR is increased by half of your AV while Last Stand is active.

**Heroic Inspiration.** Upon activating Last Stand, Allies ADJACENT to you are emboldened by your heroism and generate 2 of their Class Resource.

## WARDEN

**REACTION**

*You were built to protect. Anyone that tries to pass you to get to those under your watchful eye will answer to your steel.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Discipline | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Can be triggered when you are able to perform a Provoked Attack on a target attempting to move away from you.

Roll your Basic Attack as if performing a Provoked Attack.

**Success.** You deal your Basic Attack damage and your target's movement is cancelled and they remain beside you. If the target is larger than Medium size or Elite, Contest MIGHT vs. MIGHT. If you fail, your target continues to move towards their destination.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage.

**UPGRADES**

**You Shall Not Pass.** You gain Benefit on the Basic Attack granted by Warden.

**Effortless.** Cost reduced to 1 Discipline.

## DEFENSIVE MANOEUVRES

**PASSIVE**

*Your creed is one of defense and protection. Your movement reflects this ideal as you leave no opening for your enemies to exploit.*

**EFFECTS**

You gain HL as a DR bonus against all Provoked Attacks.

*Combine Shield Push with the Defensive Manoeuvres passive power to protect yourself as you reposition your enemies.*

## SHIELD PUSH

**STANDARD - MOVEMENT**

*You raise your shield in front of you and brace it against your body as you press up against your target, unrelenting in your resolve to push them back.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Discipline | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Roll your Basic Attack.

**Success.** You deal Basic Attack damage and your shield's AV bonus as additional damage to your target and displace both yourself and the ADJACENT target to a NEARBY distance. If the target is Elite, Contest their MIGHT vs. MIGHT. Enemies displaced this way do not suffer Provoked Attacks as they are pushed to their new location.

**Failure.** You deal half Basic Attack damage. You are refunded 1 Discipline and your Movement action is not used up.

*Warden makes you extra "sticky" by keeping enemies glued to you and away from your teammates.*

**UPGRADES**

**Heads Up!** Call out to your Allies as you push the enemy away, giving them warning to ready their Provoked Attacks. Allies may now make Provoked Attacks on your target if they are ADJACENT to the target as the target is displaced.

**Freight Train.** You may now Shield Push an enemy that's a NEARBY distance away by charging at them. The impact will send them a NEARBY distance of your choosing while you remain in their original spot.

# CHAPTER IV

# CORE RULES

This chapter will teach you how to play *Unity* by providing a set of basic rules that act as a foundation for how your character moves through the world and interacts with its people and challenges. The chapters following this one that contain rules for Combat, Titan Rigs, and Equipment are meant to build upon the terms and mechanics laid out in this Core Rules chapter.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

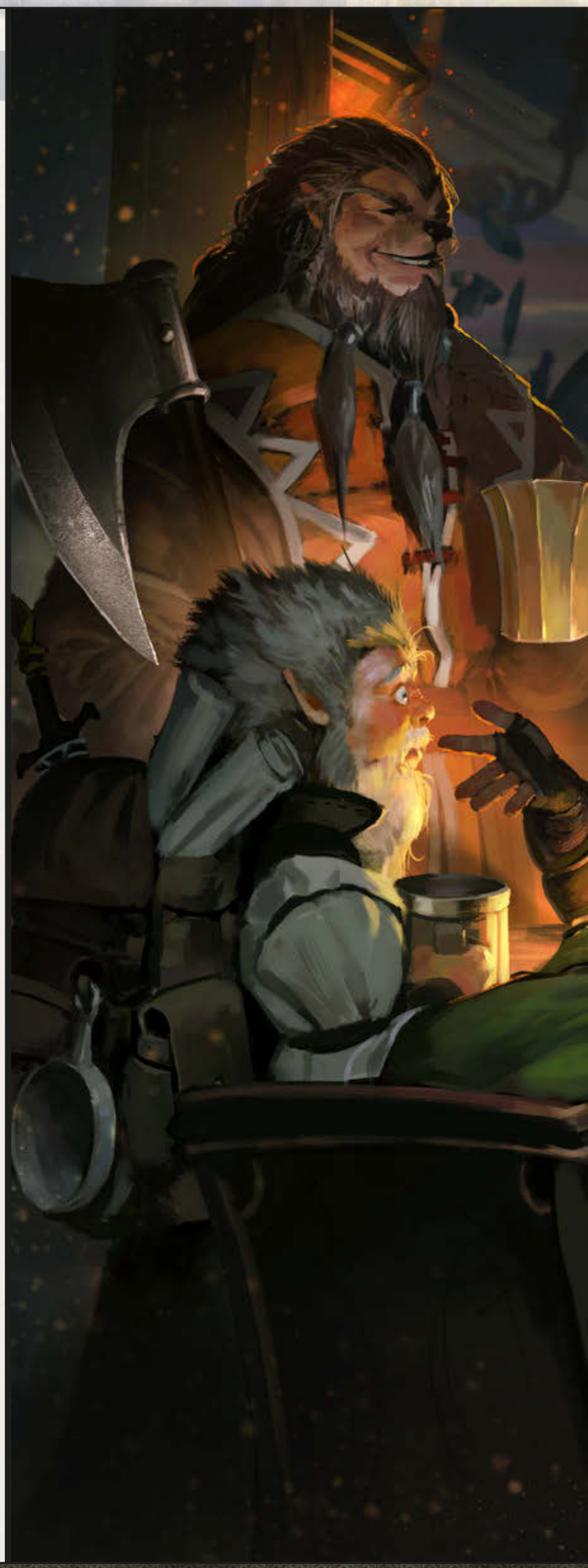
- A standard set of polyhedral dice that includes a: **d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, d20 and d100**
- Pens, pencils, or markers
- A large sheet to draw on
- The **Unity Core Rulebook**
- A **Character Sheet** or **Pre-made Character**
- At least a couple of friends

## OPTIONAL MATERIALS

- Miniatures
- Tokens or poker chips

## CORE RULES CHAPTER PREVIEW

- **Resolution Mechanic:** The main mechanic behind determining success and failure as you overcome challenges.
- **Difficulty & Target Numbers:** Determine how challenging a particular action can be.
- **Benefit & Hindrance:** A bonus/penalty mechanic that increases or decreases your chances of success.
- **Spark Points:** Be rewarded for painting a cinematic scene with a powerful mechanical bonus.
- **Ruin:** A resource for the GM that can bring about misfortune and dangerous events.
- **Failing Forward:** Failing at a certain action can sometimes lead to interesting consequences.
- **Always Round Down:** How to deal with fractions and halving numbers.
- **Resting & Recuperations:** How your character can recover in between battles.
- **Environmental Dangers:** How to deal with harsh climates, treacherous environments, falling and drowning.
- **Sustenance:** What happens when your character isn't fed.



## RESOLUTION MECHANIC

The main resolution mechanic in *Unity* is rolling **2d10** and adding up all appropriate bonuses or penalties and checking that against a **Target Number (TN)**. Meeting or exceeding the TN results in success for the given action, whereas falling below the TN generally results in failure. There are often unique failure effects attached to given actions in the game.

Target Numbers are used as a representation of difficulty, with a higher number indicating an increased difficulty. Within combat, TNs are the enemy's **Defense Rating** or a certain Attribute that your character must overcome in order to land a successful hit. Outside of combat, TNs can be selected by the GM based on the **Difficulty Table** that can be found on *pg. 253*.

The main resolution mechanic is used both outside of and within combat situations. You would roll **2d10 + Modifiers** for stealing some bread, charming the local bartender, trying to scale a wall, or attempting to cleave a savage beast in half. Most of the time, when the main resolution mechanic is used outside of combat, these are referred to as skill checks. The first three examples above from stealing some bread to scaling a wall can be considered skill checks.

### IN-COMBAT EXAMPLE

*Arathmis the Vallan Phantom attempts to backstab the burly thug who's currently fighting his friend.*

*The thug is wearing nothing but a pair of ale-soaked pants and boots. He's a bit on the rotund side and seems overly drunk. His Defense Rating (DR) is only 11.*

*Arathmis rolls* **[2d10]** *+ his Attack Rating (AR) of* **[4]**. *His total is 14, exceeding the thug's DR of 11 (which is the Target Number for the attempted action in this case). A solid hit.*

*Arathmis drives his blade deep into the soft flesh of the surprised thug. He rolls his damage and adds bonus Backstab Damage on top of it. It's more than enough to end the poor thug's life. The blade finds its way in between the thug's vertebrae and severs his spine.*

### NON-COMBAT EXAMPLE

*Loxana the Sentinel is interrogating a captured prisoner for more information on the whereabouts of the rest of his gang. Every moment spent trying to squeeze an answer out of this uncooperative cur is another moment that someone else might get hurt.*

*Running out of patience, Loxana decides to physically intimidate the prisoner for some answers. The prisoner is a scrawny yet smug man who, while somewhat spineless, is still the captain of his gang. The GM takes this into account as he looks at the Difficulty Table to determine how challenging it will be to make the prisoner cough up some answers. He settles on "Demanding—Requires both focus and skill." The TN is set to 14.*

*Loxana's player knows that PRESENCE is used as a base Attribute for social interactions and she has +1 PRESENCE. She checks her Core Paths to see if any are applicable to the situation. One of her Core Paths,* Horrors of War, *will definitely count for intimidation. The last area to check is her Class Perks. As a Sentinel, she has chosen* Grizzled Soldier *as her Class Perk which grants her a +2 bonus at her Level wherever intimidation or threats are concerned.*

*She rolls* **[2d10] + [1] PRESENCE + [1] Horrors of War Core Path + [2] Grizzled Soldier**. *She gets a total of 17.*

*Loxana grabs the bound man by the throat, lifting him clean off the ground. Her eyes narrow, full of intensity: "I'm only going to ask you one more time. Where are they?" she growls as her fingers slowly tighten their grip.*

*The dangling man spills the beans, but not before spilling something else in his pants.*

## DIFFICULTY & TARGET NUMBERS

When a player wants to do something (steal an item, parley for a better reward, jump across a chasm, etc.), they will need to roll:

2d10 + [Relevant Attribute] + [Any Bonuses]

and hit the **Target Number (TN)** or higher to achieve success.

While your character's Attributes (*pg. 137*) are the main modifier for almost every action you take, your character may potentially receive additional bonuses for particular actions in the form of Core Path Points (CPPs) or Perks. The more relevant CPPs and Perks your character has, the higher the chance of success at a particular task.

### DETERMINING THE TARGET NUMBER

Use the following table to determine the TN for a particular task. As a GM, make judicious use of the numbers in between the ones suggested in the table below. That leeway will help you tailor the difficulty to your liking and provide flexibility for the unpredictable myriad of things your players might attempt.

**TYPICAL DIFFICULTIES**

| DIFFICULTY | TN | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|
| SIMPLE | 5 | Everyday routine task with very low chance of failure |
| EASY | 8 | Consistently achieved by the average person |
| STANDARD | 12 | Requires focus |
| DEMANDING | 15 | Requires both focus and skill |
| CHALLENGING | 18 | Requires a high level of focus and skill |
| HEROIC | 22 | Achievable only by the extraordinary or lucky |
| OUTSTANDING | 26 | Your exploits will be spoken of throughout the lands |
| LEGENDARY | 30 | You might have a statue made for you at some point |

## BENEFIT & HINDRANCE

Throughout the game, your character may receive various bonuses and penalties. One of the more common conditions that will crop up is Benefit/Hindrance. As mentioned earlier, all tasks, combative or otherwise, are resolved through rolling **2d10** and adding the appropriate modifiers. A state of Benefit or Hindrance affects the roll as follows:

**BENEFIT:** Roll **3d10** and discard the lowest die.
**HINDRANCE:** Roll **3d10** and discard the highest die.

Benefit/Hindrance do NOT stack with each other or with powers granting similar effects. These effects also cancel each other out on a one-to-one basis. If you have 2 Benefits and 1 Hindrance, the first Benefit cancels out the single Hindrance and you still have Benefit.

## SPARK POINTS

Part of the wonder of role-playing is being transported to a different world and really feeling immersed in the moment, whether that's sitting in a cozy tavern slamming down a tankard of ale with your friends or battling a horde of wild ratmen in a rain-soaked forest.

A lot of this immersion relies on strong imagery and vivid descriptions of what's currently going on in the scene. By the default nature of role-playing games, this responsibility tends to fall on the GM's shoulders. In *Unity*, players are encouraged and provided a strong incentive to take part in picking up a brush and painting a more cinematic scene alongside the GM.

This incentive comes in the form of **Spark Points**. Spark Points are awarded when players take the extra step to vividly describe their actions and elevate the experience at the table for everyone. When a certain amount of points are acquired, players may expend part of the pool to have a **Moment of Glory** where they receive **Benefit** on their next action.

Spark Points are accrued in a communal pool, allowing players to utilize them as a team and ensuring that less articulate players do not feel penalized compared to their more flamboyant peers.

This communal pool for Spark Points is represented by a single die placed somewhere visible on the table. The die goes up by 1 every time a Spark Point is awarded.

### DETERMINING THE SPARK DIE

At the beginning of every game, the GM will determine the die used to keep track of Spark Points. This determination is based on the number of players and the difficulty of the campaign.

***Difficulty is what you make it.*** *While there is a list of typical difficulties and their target numbers as a baseline for the average party, feel free to adjust upwards or downwards to tailor to your specific audience. Pushing all the numbers up or decreasing them by 1 or 2 can make a significant difference between making characters feel heroic vs. mortal.*

### SPARK RULES FOR 4 PLAYERS

*12 Maximum Spark capacity* (**1d12**)
*Requires 4 Sparks for 1 Moment of Glory*

**Number of Players.** The more players a game has, the faster Spark Points might be generated and used. You may want to increase the Moment of Glory threshold along with the maximum Spark Points capacity (use a die with more faces).

**Difficulty.** Moments of Glory are incredible boons for player-characters. They increase the chance of a successful action significantly. While you might want to encourage your players to take part in vividly describing their actions and perceptions, the game may become a bit too easy if you have a particularly imaginative and talkative group of players.

By lowering the max capacity for Spark Points and increasing the threshold for attaining a Moment of Glory, you may effectively balance the mechanic to find the right level of effort vs. reward to maintain the difficulty you intend for your campaign.

## RUIN

*The barrier separating physical reality from the energetic dimension of the Drift is a fragile thing. Stretched taut and splintered by the force of the Great Calamity when the Skyfather sundered the world, the barrier has the tendency to wane and tear, allowing minor breaches to open momentarily. These cracks allow ominous energy to leak in from the ethereal ocean that lies beyond. The energy can manifest itself in many ways, but its most subtle influence is one of doom and ruin.*

In a world that stands on the brink of apocalypse, survival has taken precedent over virtue and the hearts of the people have grown cold from loss and tragedy. It is a vicious cycle, however, as immoral acts, fear, and pain continue to fuel the darker emanations from the Drift. These emanations often leak through into reality invisibly, manifesting themselves as misfortune and karmic retribution.

Mechanically, the ebb and flow of bad luck or unfortunate events represents itself as a GM Resource called Ruin. Ruin provides a way for the GM to create tension and consequence for unsavoury actions or shortcuts to power.

**Gaining and using Ruin.** GMs will accumulate Ruin points based on two factors: the passage of time and player action. These Ruin points will be stored and carried over between sessions. GMs may then spend Ruin points to enact certain effects and events. Please see *pg. 360* for a guide to using Ruin as a GM.

### EFFECTS OF RUIN

**MONSTER POWERS.** Some monsters and NPCs will have powerful abilities to use. These abilities may have a Ruin cost associated with them.

**BREACHES.** If Ruin reaches critical levels, a tear in reality may result. A portal from the Drift directly into the world and all the possible horrors it can bring will manifest.

**FORCED INTRUSION.** When resting out in the wilderness or in a place of potential danger, there is always a chance that a party may be attacked. Ruin may be expended to guarantee this intrusion.

**EMPOWERED ENCOUNTER.** Ruin may be expended to cause that extra gang member to "just happen to be in the area" when his crew is being attacked by the PCs.

**LIFE IS DIFFICULT.** Ruin's effects can be tangible and destructive, but it can also be subtle and insidious. That NPC you are trying to charm might be having a bad day or that lock you are picking might have tumblers that have been rusted just enough to make things more difficult than they should be.

## FAILING FORWARD

What happens when you roll under the TN and fail a roll?

In *Unity*, failing doesn't always mean that nothing happens. In fact, failing can lead to some very interesting situations that would not have otherwise happened. The spirit of the game encourages players to explore possibilities and GMs to facilitate alternatives to "you miss."

Outside of combat, there are rules that provide some flexibility in the TN vs. the player's roll. If a player's roll result is barely under the designated TN, the GM is encouraged but not forced to make the failure interesting. The **GM's Guide section** of this book has guidelines on how to handle these situations and provides multiple examples to inspire your own play.

While *Unity*'s design encourages failing forward, there will be situations where forcing such mechanics don't really make sense. It can also become mentally exhausting for the GM to constantly come up with interesting outcomes for tasks that are fairly straightforward and lack the potential to spiral into something more.

The general philosophy on failing forward is to engage the guidelines when it's easy and it makes sense. There is no point in wracking your brain to figure out what happens if Bob barely rolls under the TN for picking the lock of a box in an empty room. In this situation, it's okay to say "You fail to pick the lock."

Within combat, there are rules that dictate what happens on Basic Attacks when you fail to overcome your opponent's defenses. Many of the powers available to the classes have failure conditions tied to them as well. There is a strong emphasis on constantly moving things forward and avoiding stagnation. See the **Combat section** *(pg. 258)* and **Classes section** *(pg. 156)* of the book for extensive write-ups.

## ALWAYS ROUND DOWN

Whenever you come across a result that doesn't equal a whole number but a fraction, **always round down** to the nearest whole number. For example, many powers will call for you to use "half of XX," such as a power that calls for you to receive half your total hitpoints as a shield. If you have 13 hitpoints, the shield's result would be a 6 rounded down from 6.5. If you are asked to halve something that is 1 (which would become 0.5 halved), always just use 1 instead. There may be some exceptions to rounding down, but they will be explicitly stated in that specific mechanic when the exception occurs.

## DARIUS FAILS FORWARD

Brother Darius is a holy man, having found the faith in his later years. Those that have come to know him respect him as their local Priest. Those that have known him before he found his calling remember his years as a teenage ruffian and street rat.

Passing through the marketplace on a sunny morning, Darius is drawn to the tantalizing aroma of fresh meat pies being sold by the town's baker. The temple has been a bit tight on money lately and Darius doesn't have enough to purchase a pie. He looks around slyly, his eyes shiftily darting left and right. "It's just a pie, no one will miss it" he thinks to himself, as his chubby fingers dart out to snatch one.

Some old habits die hard. It's a busy marketplace with lots of eyes and Darius is out of practice while being a good deal heavier than when he was a spry young man. Darius barely fails his roll for attempting to steal the meat pie.

The GM's eyes light up at the possibilities she can spin this situation into:

1. Maybe Darius, in his nervousness and lack of practice, squeezes a bit too hard and crushes part of the pie. Sure, he gets a piece but now his hands and some of his clothes are stained with meat sauce. He better think fast because this situation might escalate if someone notices.

2. Maybe Darius gets the pie but as he's moving it into the folds of his robe, it drops to the ground. It sits there in the hot sun, caked in dirt, bugs, and possibly dung. The entire table leans in a bit closer, wondering if this gluttonous man of the cloth will decide to shovel the pie into his mouth regardless. It's a bit of a character-defining moment and could potentially be a running joke among the group.

3. Darius manages to get the whole pie safely concealed and into the folds of his robe. Success! Or is it? The GM begins to describe a small street urchin with a ruddy face and disheveled hair pointing at Darius. A large smirk crosses the urchin's face: "I know what you did mister and I'm telling."

What's Darius going to do? Perhaps bribe the child? Share some of the pie with her? Or maybe he'll threaten her. Whatever happens, the choices can continue to spiral and lead to the possibility of something interesting. Darius's choice might reveal a bit of his past to the players around the table, engaging everyone on an emotional level. The street urchin, troublesome as she may be, is still a kindred spirit as Darius might recall the feeling of being hungry and cold in his younger years wandering the streets alone as well. Maybe engaging the street urchin will lead to a new side-quest about a certain gang in the city bullying and using the homeless children for their own ends. Who knows where failure will take you?

# RESTING & RECUPERATIONS

Adventuring can be hard work. Your character is mortal and requires time to rest and recharge, especially if they've been expending themselves for a while without break.

## RESPITE & FULL REST

Characters may choose to take a Respite or a Full Rest for some downtime. Doing either of these allows characters to regain some lost hitpoints and also recharge their Class Resources.

Taking a Respite or Full Rest requires using up Necessities. If a character takes a Respite or Full Rest without possessing any Necessities, the beneficial effects of a Respite or Full Rest are halved.

*Intrusions can be devastating to a party, especially if they are attempting to rest up when they are in rough shape already. Class Features such as the Driftwalker's Sleepless or the Fell Hunter's Trailblazer can be very useful in these cases.*

***Glass half-full.** While Intrusions are a nuisance and can potentially be life-threatening. Intruders might carry a few extra Denerim in their pocket (bandits) or can be turned into a tasty meal and restore a Necessity use (a bear wanders into your camp while you sleep).*

### TYPES OF REST

**RESPITE.** A Respite is a brief rest that usually lasts at least 45 minutes. This is time for a character to unwind, put their feet up, have some food and drink, tend to any wounds, and possibly take a quick nap.

During a Respite a character may use their Recuperations and recharge their Class Resource by rolling their recharge die once.

**Generates 3 Ruin. Costs 1 Necessity.**

**FULL REST.** A Full Rest will take a minimum of seven hours to complete. During a Full Rest, a character will use the time to sleep and regain their strength.

A Full Rest will restore a character's hitpoints and Class Resource to full. Half of the character's Max Recuperations will also be restored. All Maintained Powers will become deactivated during a Full Rest.

**Generates 7 Ruin. Costs 1 Necessity.**

## RECUPERATIONS

Inevitably, your character will be hurt at some point in their career. Characters have various ways of regaining lost hitpoints, such as getting a decent night's rest or being healed through magick. Characters also have an inner reservoir of vitality to draw from that gives them a second wind and allows them to continue fighting until they can completely rest up.

This reserve energy is represented as Recuperations. Every character will start with **2 Recuperations as baseline** and will receive **1 additional Recuperation per 2 points of Might**. Characters will also receive additional Recuperations as they level-up, according to their Class Progression.

**1 Recuperation will restore a single Recuperation Die worth of hitpoints,** e.g. a Sentinel's Recuperation Die is **1d10**. The Sentinel takes a Respite and decides to spend Recuperations. He wants to spend 3 Recuperations. In this case he will roll **3d10 (3 x 1d10)** and the result will be the amount of hitpoints restored for him.

## INTRUSIONS

Resting brings many benefits but it can also be a risky affair, especially if you choose to rest in a potentially dangerous area. Resting in an inn or home is generally very safe, but the luxuries of proper shelter and comfort are not always available to an adventurer. When you take a chance and rest in the wilderness or an area that is not completely secure, you risk the chance of an **Intrusion** occurring.

When an Intrusion occurs, your character's rest is interrupted by a wandering monster(s) or NPC(s). You will need to defeat the intruder(s) before you are able to complete your rest.

**Determining Intrusions.** When you take a Full Rest (Respites don't trigger Intrusions) outside of a truly secure location, you will designate a party member to roll **1d10**. Before rolling, the GM will declare 2 numbers between 1 and 10. If the **1d10** results in any of those 2 numbers, an Intrusion occurs.

**Surprise.** Intrusions always result in the party being surprised and therefore losing First Strike or the chance at a Speed check unless they have a power or bonus that says otherwise.

**Resource Expenditure.** If a party member is Incapacitated at any point during the Intrusion fight, they must expend another use of Necessities to receive Full Rest Benefits, or else it will be as if they never took one.

# ENVIRONMENTAL DANGERS

Whether you are hacking your way through a dark, dank dungeon or braving the sheer cliffs of a windswept mountain, the environment you adventure within will likely be filled with hazards.

## EXTREME CONDITIONS

A scorching desert of endless burning sand, a freezing frostbitten fjord, a damp and murky bog with a mysterious choking mist—these are a few of the places where you may end up during your travels. Some of the most dangerous places in Unity hold the greatest secrets and rewards.

When you are venturing into an area where conditions can be considered fairly extreme, such as an ice cave with subzero temperatures, you will most likely require the appropriate measures to negate the environment's hazards. In the case of a freezing ice cave, a source of warmth such as a fire or thick winter clothing will greatly aid you in overcoming the particular challenges of navigating a place that threatens you with frostbite and hypothermia.

In cases where you are inadequately prepared for extreme conditions, you may be periodically asked to roll a check to see if you are able to withstand the harsh effects of the current environment or if you will suffer damage from being there.

For environments where temperature is the main danger, you will be asked to roll **2d10** + **MIGHT** to resist the effects. Should you fail, you may suffer damage (the type of damage depends on the environmental hazard) according to this table:

| ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE | | |
|---|---|---|
| **INTENSITY** | **TN** | **DAMAGE** |
| **MILD** | **13** | 1d4+1 |
| **MODERATE** | **15** | 1d6+2 |
| **HEAVY** | **17** | 1d8+4 |
| **EXTREME** | **20** | 1d10+6 |

**Frequency.** Checks against environmental conditions should be done every 10 to 15 minutes of in-game time. This is generally up to the discretion of the GM and how dangerous he envisions the area (or how badly he wants you to stay out of it!).

### FALLING

Tumbling, jumping, or dropping from a height are very real dangers. When you fall, you suffer **1d8 Physical damage** for every 3 meters of the fall. If you are in a combat situation when you fall far enough to take damage, you will always be considered Staggered at the end of the fall.

### SUFFOCATION & DROWNING

You are able to hold your breath under normal conditions for approximately 1 minute. Each point of MIGHT your character possesses, increases this duration by 5 seconds. After you are unable to hold your breath anymore, you will suffer 50% of your maximum hitpoints as damage every 10 seconds.

## SUSTENANCE

Heroes, mighty as they are, also require food and water to keep going. While sustenance might not be something that needs to be meticulously tracked, as each Respite or Full Rest will use up a Necessity (which includes your meal rations), there may be occasions when you and your party have gone for an extended period of time (over a day) without having taken a Respite or Full Rest.

A character may function for a day and a half without food and water, but beyond that, they will begin to **suffer -1 to all 4 of their Main Attributes,** which in turn will affect their Attack and Defense Rating and all their skill checks. This deficit will **continue to stack at -1 for each day following**. If the penalty reaches **-4**, the character will be considered Incapacitated until they are fed and have completed a Full Rest.

## OPTIONAL GM DICE ROLLING

The default rules are setup to free the GM from having to roll any dice. This allows the GM to focus solely on adjudicating, spinning cinematic descriptions, and creating memorable situations for the players. In combat, GMs are able to describe the battle as one cohesive scene while the dice results simultaneously reveal themselves. It moves away from the one-to-one engagement as the GM moves from one player to the next, figuring out what's happening on an individual basis.

However, the **GM Guide section** *(pg. 363)* contains alternate rules to allow the GM to roll.

There will always be something very visceral and satisfying about tossing dice and GMs shouldn't be left out of the fun if they are itching to throw some dice around. The trade-off will be some of the benefits mentioned earlier but that's a personal call for you and your group to make.

# CHAPTER V

# COMBAT RULES

*Steel yourselves! For the enemy comes and it knows no fear, feels no pain, and has no soul. Set aside your differences! Tonight, we say: Enough! Tonight, we will fight as one. Together, we will make them remember the day they challenged our unity!*
—Mobius Stormsong, High Commander of the Taloran Alliance

Whether it's fighting tooth-and-nail to save the world from a demonic Fell horde or busting up giant rats in the cellar of the local tavern, combat is a staple part of the *Unity* experience.

The combat system is focused on working together and combining your powers within your own class and with those of your teammates to create some spectacular plays.

Simultaneous turns and powers designed with synergy in mind will provide a fast-paced and exciting fighting environment for your characters. In *Unity*, players are encouraged to discuss, plan, and strategize their approach. GMs will have more room to turn up the intensity of certain encounters knowing that the players have the proper tools to fight back.

Embrace the joy of discovery as you find powerful new combos and creative ways to battle your enemies.

## COMBAT CHAPTER PREVIEW

- **Combat Sequence:** Calculating rounds and how to facilitate simultaneous turns.
- **Your Turn:** Explore the different types of Actions you can take: Standard, Quick, Movement, Free, Reaction, Maintain, Overdrive, and Ultimate.
- **Moving Around in Battle:** Moving around the battlefield, Provoked Attacks and range rules.
- **Attacking and Defending:** Selecting targets, linking up powers, making Attack and Defense rolls, how Armour Value (AV) and Resistances work to mitigate damage.
- **Contesting:** Situations where you and your target push or pull against each other in a contest of strength, speed, or wits.
- **Recharging Resources:** How to regenerate and manage class resources.
- **Incapacitation & Death:** What happens when you run out of hitpoints.
- **Status Effects:** Some attacks leave more than just a wound and can immobilize, impair, stun, and do much more.

## COMBAT SEQUENCE

A combat encounter entails two parties to be at odds with each other to the point that they come to blows. Melee and ranged physical combat, along with spellcasting, are all staples of a combat encounter. Combat is broken up into rounds. Within each of these rounds, there are turns that are based on teams and not individuals. When both teams have used their turns, the round turns over and becomes a new round. The majority of encounters will always consist of two teams: the players and the GM.

***Round timing.*** *For in-game timing purposes, a combat round lasts roughly 10 seconds.*

***Players hesitant to go when there's no clearly defined turns?*** *See the GM Guide Section on pg. 362 for how to handle this.*

### SIMULTANEOUS TURNS

As mentioned earlier, turns are based on teams and not characters. This allows an entire team to plan their approach and execute it in tandem, or in any order that they like.

When the turn falls to the players' team, all the players are able to discuss and strategize, then act together. Here's an example:

*During the first round, Elrath, Mogo, and Lillian are facing off against two unsavoury thugs in a dark alley in the port city of Greenwater. The two thugs got the jump on our party of three and therefore took their turn first. The GM has both thugs gang up on Mogo and attack him. Luckily for Mogo, the thugs had a bit too much to drink earlier and their attacks clumsily miss him.*

*The GM is now finished with her turn and the players are up. Elrath, Mogo, and Lillian are free to act as they choose and do not need to adhere to an order of action unless the players are attempting to set up a combo attack of sorts. The players want this encounter to end quickly and quietly, as they are trying to curry favour from the Lords of Greenwater. Starting a fight in town is the last thing they want.*

*Mogo is a Phantom and knows that he shines the most when his enemies are distracted and he can land some dirty hits that will strike harder than if he has to play fair. Elrath agrees with his friends that it's best to put these thugs down as quickly as possible. He sees that even though they are typical thugs, they have some semblance of armour in the form of ragtag bands of metal and rough leather. He tells his friends he's got a spell that'll make their already meager protection non-existent. Lillian smirks and tells Mogo she'll provide him the distraction he needs and that Elrath should go ahead and cast his spell because she wants to get a nice hit in as well.*

*With their plan agreed upon, they set the wheels in motion. Elrath conjures a blast of frost that renders the thugs' armour brittle. Lillian charges at them, bashing her shield against the head of one of the thugs hard enough to shatter his brittle helmet and knock him out cold. The other thug stares at his buddy's unconscious body on the ground in drunken surprise. Mogo sees his chance and slams the hilts of both of his daggers into the thug's kidneys, causing the poor bastard to sieze up and let out a painful yelp. The thug's eyes roll up into the back of his head and he falls limply into Mogo's arms.*

*Had the thugs survived, the round would turn over to Round 2 and the GM would get to act again.*

### FIRST STRIKE

Which team gets to go first when a combat encounter begins? There is a priority list to go through when approaching this question.

**1.** The narrative of the current situation dictates the team that gets to go first. If the players are surprised by their assailants, the GM (and therefore the enemies) gets to go first. The same can apply if the players are able to sneak up on their enemies. If the narrative is able to easily decide which team goes first, combat begins immediately.

**2.** In a situation where the narrative isn't clear about which side gets the upper hand, the GM always goes first—but the players have a chance to roll a Speed check for a First Strike. A First Strike simply means that the players that successfully complete their Speed check have the choice of going before everyone else. Players that win First Strike are not forced to go first and may forfeit this advantage.

### SPEED CHECKS

Every NPC has a Speed value. The higher the value, the faster the NPC is at reacting and the more difficult it is to win a pre-emptive bonus round against them. In groups where multiple NPCs have different Speed values, the GM, by default, can pick the highest Speed value for the players to roll their Speed check against. Another option is that the GM takes the **average** Speed value of the NPC group.

Players perform their Speed check by rolling **2d10** + **SPEED**. A player's Speed value is usually their AGILITY bonus plus any applicable bonuses from their powers or perks.

**SUCCESS.** The Player's Speed check is greater than or equal to the Speed value of the enemy group. The player gets to act first alongside other players that were also successful on their Speed check.

**FAILURE.** The Player's Speed check is less than the Speed value of the enemy group. The player's turn will come after the GM is finished with her turn.

Examples of when to let the narrative dictate the turn order and when to use a Speed check:

**Dictated by the Narrative.** *The heroes are sneaking through a graveyard and come up behind some unsuspecting grave robbers. One of the characters notes that he remembers reading about a bounty for a band of thieves that have been pillaging about the town. The party decides to take these grave robbers down and strike with the element of surprise.*

**Round 1.** All the players go first. The GM goes afterwards.

**Round 2**. Players go then GM goes.

**Narrative Unclear.** *The heroes are in a rowdy and bustling tavern having drinks with the local townspeople. A fight breaks out between a few strongmen and one of the party members. Both sides draw their weapons.*

*The GM notes that the Speed value for the group of rambunctious strongmen is 12. All 4 players roll their Speed checks. Only 2 players, Joe and Jane, beat the Speed check TN of 12.*

**Round 1.** Joe and Jane can choose to go first and then decide their course of action. The GM goes. The rest of the players go.

**Round 2.** The GM goes. The rest of the players go.

## DEFINING A ROUND

Class and Monster powers often use rounds as a measurement of time on how long a power's effects might last in battle. Usually a single round consists of both the players and the GM completing their turns. With simultaneous team-based turns, it might get a little difficult to precisely pinpoint the end of a round even if there is a general feel when a round has concluded.

The important takeaway when determining how long a power's effects might last is to understand that the number of rounds can be translated into the amount of "uses" a power has or the amount of "ticks" a power damages a target, turn by turn.

Here is an example of a damaging spell that has a damage-over-time effect:

A Mystic's Acid Bolt strikes a target for 1d6+ MIND+HL Corrosive damage initially and then the target suffers +MIND Corrosive damage at the start of its turn for 2 rounds. Translated, this simply means that after the Acid Bolt has successfully struck the target, the target, upon beginning its turn, will suffer +MIND Corrosive damage and it will suffer that damage again on the beginning of its *next* turn. The effect then ends. 2 rounds = 2 ticks of damage.

An example of a non-damaging power that lasts more than 1 round: the Sentinel's Back to Back power lasts 2 rounds and allows the Sentinel and an Adjacent Ally to roll Attack and Defense for each other and take the highest value. Upon activation of Back to Back, the timer starts ticking. In that same round (round 1) the Sentinel and an Adjacent Ally receive the power's effects. When their turns come up again in the next round, Back to Back's effects are still active. After they conclude their turns the power's effects now end. 2 rounds = 2 consecutive usages.

***Use common sense.*** *Sometimes a power such as Acid Bolt used in describing how to read "rounds" will state that it damages the target at the start of its turn. What if that target was Stunned and loses its turn when the GM finally gets to go? No need to be a fundamentalist, of course that Acid Bolt is going to sizzle through the target regardless whether it gets to start its turn or not.*

Jimbo

## YOUR TURN

On your turn, you have a certain amount of actions you may take. It's first important to take a look at all the types of actions that are available.

On your turn, you may use any of the actions listed under **Types of Action** (to the right) once per round. You do not have to use up all the actions available to you and you may also forfeit your turn if you wish.

An exception to this rule is Reactions. They are not limited to just your turn. You may use them reactively during the GM's turn in response to an action by one of the GM's NPCs. Reactions are still limited, however, to once per round.

Powers that are available to your character will always contain one of the action tags listed under Types of Actions (box to the right) except for Passive abilities which are always "on." Utilizing a non-passive power will require you to use up one or more actions depending on how demanding the power is. If a power requires multiple actions and you have already used one of those actions, you may not use that power until all required actions are available again. For example, an Overdrive power might also require you to expend both your Standard and Movement actions to activate it. If you've already moved and spent your Movement action for the round, you will be unable to perform that specific Overdrive power until the next round, when your Movement action becomes available again.

Foxstrider

### TYPES OF ACTIONS

**STANDARD.** This action encompasses performing Basic Attacks, using a majority of your powers, or performing tasks in combat that might require at the minimum a moderate amount of effort or mental expertise.

**MOVEMENT.** This is your basic move action. It allows your character to move a distance equal to 1 range band, e.g. you may use your Movement action to move to a NEARBY enemy.

**QUICK.** These actions are easy to execute or happen so quickly that they don't take away from your ability to perform other actions. Switching weapons mid-battle, quaffing a potion from your pack, or throwing something to an Ally are examples of Quick actions.

**FREE.** These actions are completely free and have no limit on how many times you can do them per round.

**REACTION.** You may invoke a Reaction power when a certain condition is met (e.g. you take damage). Reactions may be used even when it is not your turn, but you may only do so once per round.

**MAINTAIN.** This action is for powers that have an ongoing component. As long as you wish to keep the power going, you must reduce your maximum Class Resource pool by the amount of Class Resource that it cost you to activate the power initially. When you decide to stop the power's ongoing effect, your maximum Class Resource pool returns to normal. e.g. As a Mystic you spend 3 Mana to activate Volatile Bulwark, which is a Maintain action, and you wish to keep Volatile Bulwark going until the end of battle. You would then reduce your maximum Mana pool by 3 Mana, from 10 to 7, for the duration that Volatile Bulwark is kept active.

**OVERDRIVE.** This action is for powers that are so powerful your character only has the energy to use them once each per Full Rest. If you receive an Adrenaline Rush, you may renew a spent Overdrive power to use it again without taking a Full Rest to recharge it.

**ULTIMATE.** Similar to the Overdrive category, you can only use this power once per Full Rest but unlike Overdrives, it cannot be refreshed by an Adrenaline Rush.

## MOVING AROUND IN BATTLE

Positioning and movement are an important part of combat. Manoeuvring your character around the battlefield utilizes your Movement action. Distances in Unity use range bands instead of discrete units of measurement.

### RANGE BANDS

Grids are not required to play *Unity*. Distances are abstracted and simplified into 4 categories:

**ADJACENT.** When a character is Adjacent to something, the character is within 2.5 meters of it. Anything within reach or a quick step away is considered Adjacent.

**NEARBY.** When a character is Nearby to something, the character is between 2.5 meters and 8 meters of it. Most characters can move to a Nearby distance using a single Move action.

**FAR.** When a character is Far from something, the character is between 8 meters and 16 meters of it. Most characters require 2 Move actions to reach a Far distance.

**VERY FAR.** When a character is Very Far from something, the character is considered to be between 16 meters and 24 meters from it. In a combat situation, a target that is Very Far away from a character will require 3 standard Movement actions to reach.

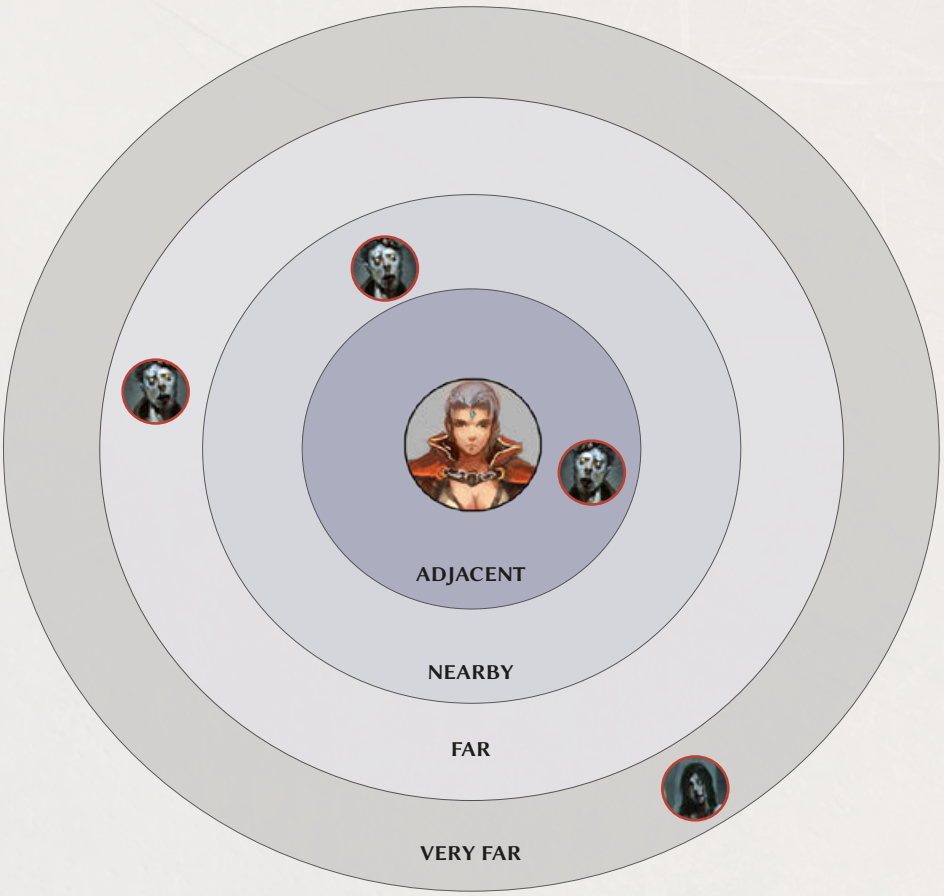
By default, your Movement action allows you to move up to 1 range band. Relative to your character, this means your character will always be able to move to a Nearby location/enemy/Ally.

### RUSHING

Characters have the ability to move up to 2 range bands if they sacrifice their Standard action and combine it with their Movement action. This is called Rushing. When a character is Rushing, he combines both his Standard and Movement actions to move up to a Far distance (2 range bands) relative to where he is.

### PROVOKED ATTACKS

While you move throughout the battlefield, you will be passing by both Allies and enemies. Passing by/through or moving away from an Adjacent Ally has no negative effects. However if you are attempting to move past an enemy or disengage from them when they are Adjacent to you, then you will suffer a Provoked Attack. Each enemy you are trying to move past or away from will get to perform a single basic Melee Attack (unless they have a power that says otherwise) on you. There is no limit to how many Provoked Attacks an enemy may make per round as long as someone provokes an attack from them. Players may also make Provoked Attacks on enemies that try to move past or away from them.




***Stay your hand.*** *Provoked Attacks aren't mandatory. PCs may decide to hold their attack for whatever reason if they'd like. Likewise, the GM can rein in aggressive monsters from making Provoked Attacks as well. "Smarter" monsters might recognize the Mystic's Volatile Bulwark for what it is. Especially after their friends have blown themselves up striking at it as the Mystic goaded them into doing so by moving away from them.*

***Be clear. Be easy.*** *If this is the first time you are using distance bands, it's important to clearly state how far all the characters on the map are from each other using the terminology provided on this page. Over time, you and your players will grow accustomed to the visual spacing on the map to quickly assess distances. This acclimation varies from group to group depending on the size of the sheet you use to represent the map and what you dictate visually as Adjacent, Nearby, Far or Very Far. Encourage your players to always ask when in doubt.*

*It is recommended to rule in favour of the players when a misjudgment arises over distance. Let them pull off their 'cool thing' and possibly create a happy memory—you can always toss more monsters at them later.*

# ATTACKING

## MAKING A BASIC ATTACK

Basic Attacks use your Standard action. As long as you have a Standard action to spend, you will always be able to make a Basic Attack on an enemy. There are plenty of offensive powers that will be available to you that will also use your Standard action. These powers often have a Resource cost and, while powerful, should be thoughtfully used.

In *Unity*, combat always tries to move forward and there are options for you to choose from even when your Basic Attacks fail.

There are two types of Basic Attacks:

| BASIC MELEE ATTACK | |
|---|---|
| **SUCCESS** | Target suffers your full Basic Melee damage. |
| **FAILURE** | Choose between:<br>**Miss.** You completely miss your target.<br>**Force.** You force the attack, dealing half your Basic Melee damage without any modifiers. You leave yourself wide open for an immediate retaliation that automatically hits for basic attack damage. |

| BASIC RANGED ATTACK | |
|---|---|
| **SUCCESS** | Target suffers your full Basic Ranged damage. |
| **FAILURE** | Choose between:<br>**Miss.** You completely miss your target.<br>**Force.** You put yourself in a vulnerable position to get your shot off, landing half your damage without any modifiers. You lose your Movement action next round and the first attack made against you is an automatic hit. |

***Alternative rules for multiple targets.*** *The default rule of rolling your Basic Attack once for striking multiple targets is there to speed up play and not upset the balance of the Recharge mechanic. However, if you and your group prefer to roll for each target in a multi-target attack, feel free to do so under the suggestion that only the first roll gets to determine if the PC is able to Recharge resources or not.*

***Attack Rating is Accuracy.*** *Think of your Attack Rating (AR) as a measure of how easily your attacks find your target. While the majority of your AR comes from your Class's Main Attribute, you may receive additional bonuses from various powers and Class Features. All Classes receive inherent bonuses to their AR as they reach certain Levels as well.*

When you make a Basic Attack on an enemy, you roll **2d10 + Attack Rating (AR)**. Your Attack Rating is always based on your Class's Main Attribute and any relevant bonuses. Your total result must be equal to or greater than your enemy's Defense Rating (DR) in order to successfully land your attack.

## DEALING BASIC ATTACK DAMAGE

If your Basic Melee or Ranged Attack successfully hits your target, you now get to roll for damage. The dice you use to roll your Basic Attack Damage vary according to the type of weapon you are using.

For example, a Dreadnought wielding a massive great axe will be using **1d12** when calculating her Basic Attack Damage. On a successful hit, the Dreadnought will roll **1d12 + MIGHT (the Dreadnought's Main Attribute) + any relevant bonuses** to calculate her damage.

## RANGED ATTACKS

Basic Ranged Attacks can hit targets up to a Far distance away, with the exception of Thrown weapons being able to strike only up to a Nearby distance away. Some attacks/powers or weapons may state a reduced or increased range. In these cases always go with what the attack/power or weapon says.

Basic Ranged Attacks made while Adjacent to an enemy are subject to Hindrance. Powers do not suffer this penalty.

## ATTACK MULTIPLE TARGETS AT A TIME

You may pick up powers for your class that allow you to strike multiple enemies. These attacks follow the same rules as making a Basic Attack. You will roll **2d10 + AR** once, whether there are 2 enemies or 10 that you are able to hit. The single result will be checked against the Defense Rating of each enemy. Matching or exceeding the DR will result in a hit. You will then roll damage once and all enemies you hit will suffer that damage after Armour and Resistances are taken into account. See sidebar for alternative rules for attacking multiple targets.

## POWERS

All characters will have access to a variety of powers based on their race and Class. These powers may be used to incredible effect in combat. Some of these powers are passive effects that are always on and may modify a character's attacks or defenses in some way.

However, most powers will be actively chosen and used by the player. These powers tend to have unique effects and it's important that you read the powers' descriptions and usage carefully to understand how to employ them on the battlefield. Every single power is categorized into the various actions listed under **Types of Actions** on *pg. 262*.

Some powers use up multiple action types but are quite powerful. Most of the time, powers will require you to expend Class Resources to activate them.

## MENTAL RESISTANCE

Some powers available to you will target an enemy's Mental Resistance (MR) instead of their Defense Rating (DR). These powers usually cause debilitating crowd control effects or penalties. You will still roll using the Basic Attack roll of **2d10 + Attack Rating (AR)** when initiating a power that targets Mental Resistance.

### MASSIVE HITS & ADRENALINE RUSH

There will be moments in battle when your attacks might roll incredibly well and can potentially cause a Massive Hit. These attacks inflict triple their base damage die on a single target attack (a **1d12** roll becomes a **3d12**) and they will cause maximum damage on a multiple target attack (a **1d12** roll will always cause 12 damage to all targets caught in the Area of Effect).

You have the choice of forgoing a Massive Hit and choosing to receive an Adrenaline Rush instead. Adrenaline Rush will instantly restore one of your spent Overdrive powers so that you may use it again without taking a Full Rest.

Massive Hits and Adrenaline Rushes occur when you roll **two 10s** on your Attack roll.

## DEFENDING

### DEFENDING AGAINST AN ATTACK

The GM will orchestrate and describe attacks being made on your character during the GM's turn. A GM may say, "The goblin looks at you, Asher, and lashes out at your stomach with its rusty blade. Roll Defense." It will be up to you as the player to roll Defense for your character against these attacks to see if they land or not.

For every attack that's attempted on your character, you will **roll 2d10 + Defense Rating (DR)** against a Target Number (usually your attacker's Attack Rating [AR]) to see if the hit lands or not. This is your Defense roll. If your Defense roll is equal to or higher than the TN, you successfully evade the attack. If it is lower, the attack lands and you will suffer the damage and effects it entails.

If you are caught in the blast of an Area of Effect Attack, you will roll Defense against the AR of that attack. A success means you evade the attack.

There will be some attacks that target your Mental Resistance (MR). In these cases you will roll a Defense roll but use your MR value in place of your DR value.

### TAKING DAMAGE

If you fail to defend against an attack, the GM will tell you to roll damage. He will let you know what dice to use and how much to add on to the result. Armour and Resistances work as outlined in the following section below and will reduce damage received based on type. The final amount after any reductions will be removed from your current pool of hitpoints.

### ARMOUR & RESISTANCES

After rolling for damage, the results can be reduced further by Armour and/or Resistances. Armour reduces all Physical damage by a static amount, e.g. 2 Armour will reduce all Physical damage received per strike by 2. Resistances apply to certain schools of magick and elemental damage types. They work similarly to Armour and reduce that particular type of damage by their stated value. Bear in mind that the monsters and enemies you face may also have some form of Armour or Resistance that functions the exact same way it does for your character.

Armour and Resistances can be reduced beyond 0, resulting in additional damage being taken by the target, e.g. if Fire Resistance is reduced to -4, the target will take an additional 4 damage from any Fire attack.

| ELEMENTAL TYPES | |
|---|---|
| FIRE | |
| FROST | |
| ELECTRIC | |
| ARCANE | |
| DIVINE | |
| CORROSIVE | |

### TRUE DAMAGE

There are many different types of damage that you can inflict or have inflicted upon you. Almost every type of damage can be mitigated by Armour or Resistances. True damage is a special type of damage that is unique in that it pierces through all Armour, Resistances, and even absorption shields to deal its full value in damage.

### REACTION POWERS

Most often, Reaction-type powers are used in response to receiving an attack. While defending, you may declare your Reaction if applicable to the situation and you have enough Resources to utilize the power. For example, a Phantom defends against a bludgeoning strike from the club of a bandit. The Phantom isn't able to quite dodge the blow and it strikes for 5 damage. The Phantom uses her Reaction power, Tumble, and calls out that she tumbles away 3 damage and expends 1 Guile to do so. Reaction powers can only be used once per round.

## CONTESTING

During combat, and sometimes outside of combat, there may be situations where you will be called to Contest your [Attribute] vs their [Attribute]. These are situations where you pit a specific Attribute of yours against the Attribute of your target.

***Damage Resistance.*** *If you see a bonus providing a generic "Damage Resistance" without indicating a specific element, assume that this means universal damage resistance to everything but True damage.*

***Hit 'em while they're down.*** *The blow that Incapacitates your character may push your HP to 0 for that instant and knock you out, but further attacks against you while you are Incapacitated will continue to deal damage, taking your HP into the negative. Should you reach your max HP value as a negative value, you will die. e.g. You have a max HP value of 10 and you are Incapacitated (0 HP) in a burning room. The fire damage continues to burn your unconscious body for 5 damage per round. After 2 rounds (-10 HP), you are considered dead.*

***Even in death.*** *The death rules are set up to allow for a big, glorious moment: that moment when your hero comes back from the brink of death, to rally forth and strike a massive come-back blow. While the chances are small to come back from the grip of death on your own, there is still a chance—and where there is a chance, there is hope.*

An example is using the Sentinel's Shield Push power, where the Sentinel may displace an enemy by charging the target with his shield and physically pushing them a Nearby distance away. The Sentinel would make an initial Attack roll against the target's DR to see if the power connects successfully. If it does, the power calls to Contest your MIGHT vs. the target's MIGHT if the target is larger than Medium-sized or considered Elite. If the target meets any of these criteria, the Sentinel will **roll 2d10 + MIGHT** and the result must equal or exceed a TN that is the sum of **10 + Target's MIGHT**. If the Contest roll is successful then the target is displaced as per the power's effects, otherwise they only suffer the initial damage of the Shield Push or other effects that don't call for a Contest roll. In the case of the Sentinel's Shield Push power, if the target wasn't larger than Medium-sized or an Elite NPC, then the displacement would happen automatically on the successful initial Attack roll.

Outside of combat, Contests may be called by the GM for situations such as the PC and an NPC both attempting to snatch the jewelled goblet sitting on the table at the same time. This would be considered a Contest of AGILITY and would play out similarly to the Sentinel's Shield Push example above but the AGILITY Attribute would be used instead of MIGHT.

If the GM decides to roll dice for their campaign, they may **roll 2d10 + Contested Attribute** for the NPC against the PC's roll to set the TN instead of using the default **10 + Contested Attribute**.

## RECHARGING RESOURCES

In the heat of combat, rolling doubles (two 3s, two 5s, two 1s, etc.) on your Attack or Defense rolls grants you the ability to recharge some of your Primary Class Resource. The die used to determine how many Resource points are restored varies by class and also by certain powers and upgrades that you can pick up as you grow in power.

For example, a Mystic that rolls double 5s on an Attack roll will get to roll **1d6** to determine how much Mana is recharged. If that character were a Judge instead, she'd roll **1d4** to determine how much Fervor is recharged. Please see your Class section to determine your recharge die.

### BENEFIT & HINDRANCE

When rolling with Benefit, the chances of getting doubles is greatly increased. Any 2 of the 3 dice that come up the same will give you a Recharge. When rolling with Hindrance, you cannot gain a Recharge even if you receive doubles.

## INCAPACITATION & DEATH

In the grisly chaos of battle, your character may sustain wounds too great to bear and become Incapacitated and possibly killed. When your hitpoints are reduced to 0, you are no longer able to take any actions. Your character is considered Incapacitated and is now creeping towards death's door.

Any attack that pushes your HP to 0 immediately knocks you down and out and you gain 1 stack of Fading. If you have 5 out of 12 HP and an attack hits you for 10 damage, your HP should be at -5 but it's put to **0** and you are considered Incapacitated. The exception to this rule is when the "killing blow" strikes with such force that it turns your HP value into a negative number that is equal to or more than your total HP. In this instance, your character is immediately killed. If the same blow from the previous example hit for 17 damage, your character would be instantly killed as the result would have been **-12** HP, which is your negative max HP.

When Incapacitated, you will **roll 2d10** each round to see what happens to your character. When you reach 5 or more stacks of Fading, you die.

| INCAPACITATION & DEATH ROLLS | |
|---|---|
| **2** | You feel the icy cold linger of death wash over you. Gain 3 stacks of Fading. |
| **3-7** | You slip a little closer into the darkness. Gain 2 stacks of Fading. |
| **8-12** | The world dims a bit further. Gain 1 stack of Fading. |
| **13-17** | Your breathing is laboured but steady. Hope help comes soon. |
| **18-19** | You gain your second wind and get up with HP the value of your current Level. Your first attack gains a bonus to attack and damage equal to your stacks of Fading. |
| **20** | You gain your second wind and get up with HP the value of your current Level. Your first attack gains a bonus to attack and damage equal to double your stacks of Fading. |

Stacks of Fading do not reset until the battle is over or a party member takes the time to Stabilize you. If you are Incapacitated again after gaining a second wind and your original stacks of Fading were at 4, you will immediately die.

## STABILIZING INCAPACITATED ALLIES

When you are Incapacitated, your party members may attempt to Stabilize you or heal you.

Stabilizing a downed Ally takes a Standard action and immediately causes Provoked Attacks if you are adjacent to enemies. You must be Adjacent to the downed Ally to attempt to Stabilize them. You will **roll 2d10**.

| STABILIZATION ROLLS | |
|---|---|
| **2–13** | 1 stack of Fading is removed from your Ally. They may continue to roll on their turn to see if they are able to gain a second wind. They aren't quite stable yet and can still accumulate stacks of Fading. |
| **14–18** | Your Ally is stable. 3 stacks of Fading are removed and they get up with their HP set to the value of their current Level. |
| **19–20** | Your Ally is stable. Their stacks of Fading are erased and they get up with their HP set to double the value of their current Level. |

## HEALING INCAPACITATED ALLIES

When casting a healing spell on an Incapacitated Ally, it must heal for an amount equal to or greater than the Ally's current Level to Stabilize them. Any stacks of Fading on the Ally are added to this amount and must be surpassed by the healing for stability to occur; otherwise you subtract the healing amount from the stacks of Fading. Healing that exceeds this threshold revitalizes your Ally and they gain HP equal to the excess amount.

For example, Jain is down for the count and has gained 3 stacks of Fading. Jain is Level 3, so **3 (Level) + 3 (Fading) = A threshold of 6 HP worth of healing must be surpassed to Stabilize Jain**. Maria casts a Heal on Jain and it hits for 8 HP, therefore **8 (healing value) - 6 (Stabilization threshold) = 2 HP**. Jain gets back on his feet with 2 HP ready to act if he has any actions left for the round. If Jain had only received 6 HP worth of healing from Maria, Jain would remain Incapacitated, and only remove all his stacks of Fading and continue to make Death rolls until he is Stabilized.

*Stabilizing Allies is a risky affair as their fallen body will most likely be in the middle of enemies. The General Perk, "My Brother's Keeper", is very potent for these situations.*

*When a character dies, especially at lower Levels, the player will most likely need to create a new character in order to play again. Later on, as characters grow in power and resources, there are avenues through which the party may be able to bring back a fallen member of their team. Such power is incredibly costly and sometimes the price can be a permanent one.*

## STATUS EFFECTS

Precision strikes, bone-crushing blows, nefarious poisons, and bewitching magick are all a part of the gruesome tapestry of combat. Certain powers and creatures have the capacity not only to cause harm but also to leave a debilitating effect on their target. *Unity* bundles many thematic status effects into a handful of mechanics; getting blinded, deafened, numbed, etc. might fall under the single category of receiving Hindrance.

The table below lists the standard status effects that might come up during your adventures. As a GM, feel free to translate thematic effects to any of the mechanical categories in the table that fit best.

## OTHER ACTIONS IN COMBAT

While a lot of the powers and different actions you can take in battle are codified and laid out as rules, the free-form nature of tabletop gaming encourages you to use your creativity to expand what's possible as you and your allies attempt to best your enemies.

There may be objects in the environment that you might be able to use to your advantage. Flipping a table over for cover, swinging from a rope, or sliding down a slope for more momentum to your attack are all permissible—even encouraged. The GM is encouraged to adapt your attempts at thinking outside the box by making a call on the results (and possible detriments if you fail!) and providing you with a way to attempt your ideas.

For example, you might want to cut the rope holding a heavy light fixture that's hovering just above where your foes are standing. If the rope is conveniently near you, you could direct your Standard action to make an attack on the rope and, using common sense, the GM will determine how much damage needs to be inflicted for a clean cut.

Your Attack roll itself could be used to determine if the fixture lands on the enemy before they notice what's happening or they move out of the way. The TN could be set by the GM where the threshold dictates if you struck quickly and accurately enough that the enemy had no time to react (their Defense Rating is a reflection of their reflexes).

More examples are provided in the **GM section** to help get GMs started in improvised situations such as this.

*Flexibility is key. The handful of mechanical status effects attempts to capture many of the common debilitations that might crop up during an adventure. Having broader categories acts as an umbrella and will allow you to easily compensate for unique situations without breaking immersion by having to look through a large list of different effects for the 'right one.'*

| STANDARD STATUS EFFECTS | |
|---|---|
| **BENEFIT** | On your next action **roll 3d10** instead of **2d10** for your attempt. Take the 2 highest results. If any 2 of the 3 dice roll doubles, you may Recharge Resources. |
| **HINDRANCE** | On your next action **roll 3d10** instead of **2d10** for your attempt. Take the 2 lowest results. If applied to an enemy NPC, attacks made against that NPC grant Benefit to the attacker. To minimize status effect bloat, a lot of different detriments such as being blinded, deafened, numbed, etc. will give Hindrance. If the duration of this penalty is not specified by the power, always assume it is for the next single attack/action against or by the Hindered target. You cannot Recharge Resources when you are Hindered. |
| **STAGGERED** | A Staggered target must choose to use either their Standard or Movement action to remove their Staggered effect. This forces the target to choose between standing still and attacking (or doing something) versus being able to move to a different location. Being knocked down is an example of being Staggered. |
| **ROOTED** | The target cannot move from where it is but may take other actions as normal. |
| **POISONED** | A Poisoned target takes **XdY or Z** amount of True damage at the start of their turn for the specified amount of rounds. Victim must **roll 2d10 + MIGHT** against a Target Number at the end of their turn for a chance to end the Poisoned effect prematurely. |
| **DISEASED** | Reduce X Attribute by Y. Attribute is reduced further by 1 every 24 hours that the Disease is not cured. If the Disease is contagious, Allies in close proximity must **roll 2d10 + MIGHT** against the Disease's Target Number every Full Rest to see if they become infected. |
| **STUNNED** | A very powerful effect that causes the target to lose their turn for X rounds. Target cannot take any actions or move. All attacks against the target automatically succeed. |
| **CONFUSED** | Target risks attacking the wrong target while Confused. After you roll for your action, whether it's making a Basic Attack or using one of your powers, roll **2d10 + MIND**. Anything below the effect's stated Target Number causes your action to be directed at a random target of the GM's choosing, e.g. if you attack an enemy, you may now end up attacking an Ally. If you Heal an Ally, you may end up healing an enemy. |

***Root breaker.** When rooted, abilities that cause you to teleport will break the effect.*

*Diseases can start as an annoyance but will gradually cripple a character and possibly the entire party if left untreated. Panacean Seeds, Judges, and Priests are able to cure Diseases.*

***Confused.** The Confused status effect might result in a PC attacking another PC. See pg. 356 to see how this is handled.*

# CHAPTER VI

# COLOSSAL COMBAT

*The earth shook with each massive strike. Stone and metal rained down from above as parts from the duelling giants broke with each devastating hit. Becca's eyes surveyed the area around her, desperately seeking cover. The light of the sun was blotted out by the colossal figures towering over her. She felt so small in their presence.*

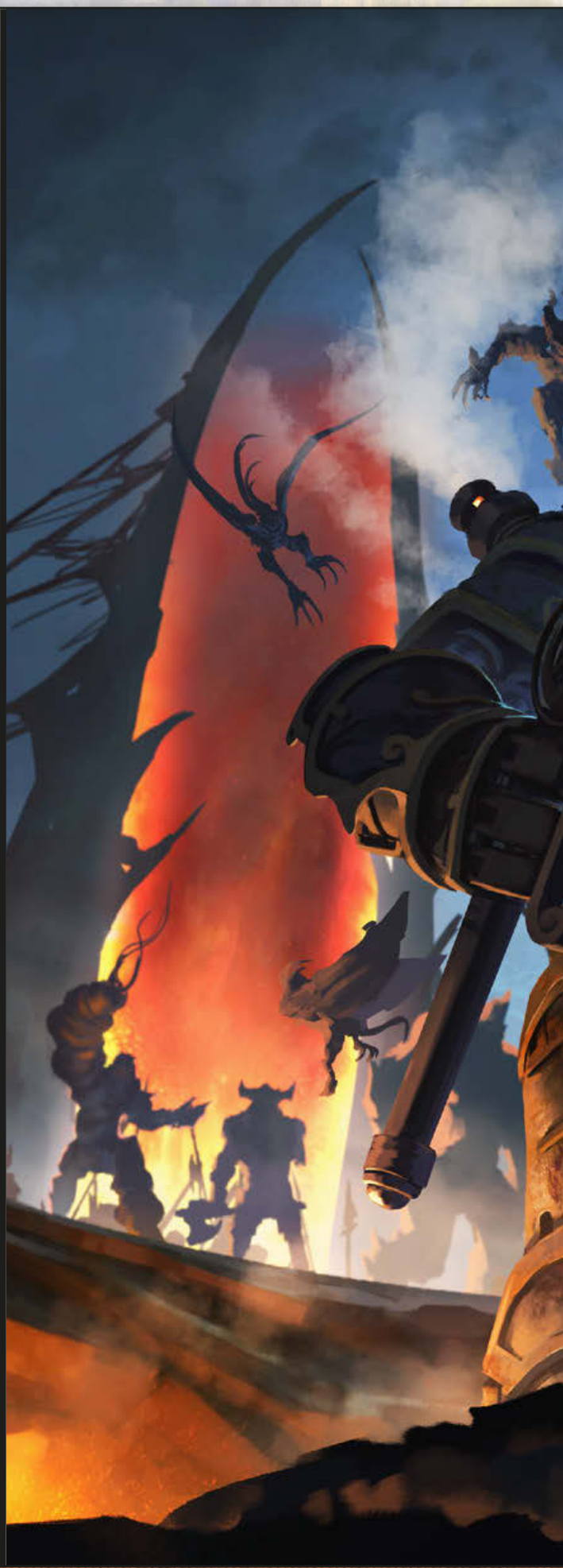
*As she scrambled toward a trench, Becca prayed for her younger sister. A hundred meters above Becca, Iris and her friends were piloting the Titan Rig that was now locked in combat with an equally impressive creature made of stone and sinew. The creature's tremendous roar broke the synchronous harmony of the Titan Rig's hydraulics as it manoeuvred about, looking for an opening.*

*A torrent of liquid fire spewed forth from the creature's open jaws, narrowly missing the Rig. Instead it set a large oak tree behind the Rig ablaze. The fire lasted for but a moment before the tree melted into a glowing mess. As the destruction unfolded around her, Becca clutched her rifle a little bit tighter and prayed a little bit harder.*

In *Unity,* you have a chance to discover technology from a Golden Age when machines the size of buildings walked the land. These gigantic contraptions were called Titan Rigs and they were the pinnacle of technological ingenuity when all three of the major races came together to beat back an enemy that none of them could have defeated alone. While the technology to create and properly maintain Titan Rigs has been lost to time, discovering one that might have a bit of juice left for a romp in the countryside, or a desperate battle against an impossible foe, can be an exciting and exhilarating experience. This chapter will explore the rules behind piloting your own Titan Rig and fighting other colossal monsters.

## COLOSSAL COMBAT CHAPTER PREVIEW

- **Piloting a Titan Rig:** Rules for manoeuvring about in a Titan Rig with your friends and taking a look at the Success Ladder mechanic.
- **Titan Rig Combat:** Rules for attacking and defending with a Titan Rig. Examining mechanics for re-routing power for a tactical advantage and the dangers of suffering structural damage.
- **Titan Rig Power:** Everything a Titan Rig does is made possible by its power cells. Examine how Titan Rig Power is used as a mechanic.
- **Sample Titan Rigs and Colossal Monsters:** A small selection of sample Titan Rigs and Colossal Monsters to provide a foundation for creating your own.



## TITAN RIGS

During your adventures throughout the world of Unity, you may stumble upon wonders from a forgotten past. While the knowledge and technology to create and maintain these magnificent creations are long lost, there are still a handful of functional remnants scattered and buried about the world. These mighty machines may prove powerful assets or lead to grave misfortune.

Of all the Artifacts and items you may stumble upon, none are grander and more awe-inspiring than the Titan Rigs of old. At the pinnacle of civilization, the original three races banded together, sharing their gifts with each other to create metal giants so large that some have said they could touch the sky, and therefore reach the Divine.

Finding a Titan Rig and operating one are meant to be a collaborative experience between a party of players. The use of a Titan Rig is usually a short-lived affair as they boost your character's power and reach in the world many times over. Enemies that you found nearly impossible to surmount might easily be crushed underfoot by a Titan Rig with a single step. Places you couldn't reach before suddenly become accessible. The impossible becomes possible as you step foot behind the controls of a Titan Rig.

*Although there are rules surrounding the piloting of these gigantic machines, don't be afraid to play it loose and flexible as a GM. As long as your players are having fun and getting into interesting situations and/or trouble, you are doing it right.*

*The experience of piloting a Titan Rig is meant to be a fun and chaotic one. Unpredictability reigns supreme, especially for an inexperienced crew as they try directing a thousand tons of metal in a world that will feel like it's made of cardboard. Titan Rig combat is geared toward short and brutal duels with an equally large opponent. This isn't to say Titan Rigs cannot be used to siege a fortification and squash smaller enemies. All of the activities performed in a Titan Rig were meant to be a part of the Unity experience, but will not be the central focus of the game.*

*Players are not meant to live in their Titan Rigs and do all their adventuring from inside the safety of a metal giant. The power cores that breathe life into the Rigs are often depleted or poorly charged due to time and corrosion. These are deliberate aspects of the lore behind these ancient machines. These factors should be taken into account both by the players and the GM in order to limit the power and shenanigans a Titan Rig can bring to the table (although there definitely should be some shenanigans!). Furthermore, Titan Rig play is not an exact science but takes on a more narrative-based approach akin to how Core Paths are utilized. Mechanics are deliberately looser to allow for imagination and creativity to breathe.*

## PILOTING A TITAN RIG

Titan Rig piloting rules assume an average party size of 4 players, but can be adapted to accommodate 2 to 5 players as well.

Piloting a Titan Rig shares some of the basic core and combat rules that normal adventuring entails. The significant difference is the departure from focusing on single character dice rolls to a more collaborative Success Ladder that's based off the amount of successful rolls within the team.

All actions that require some sort of Target Number (TN) to beat use the following Success Ladder to determine the result of the attempted action:

### SUCCESS LADDER

**0–1 Successes.** What you want to do doesn't happen; instead something bad happens.

**2 Successes.** What you want to do does happen, but you will pay either a narrative or mechanical price for it.

**3–4 Successes.** You successfully achieve what you were attempting to do.

### DEFINING SUCCESS

What constitutes a Success when rolling for Titan Rig actions? The **Difficulty Table** from *pg. 253* can be used at the discretion of the GM to determine a TN for an attempted Titan Rig action that isn't trivial for the skill level of the party. **Matching or exceeding the TN on a dice roll constitutes 1 Success**. Each player will get to roll for the agreed upon action and the Successes are added up and compared against the Success Ladder to determine what happens.

### ROLLING FOR SUCCESS

How do players roll to determine Success?

Each player will roll **2d10** + **Half Level** + **Intuition** + **Core Path Points** + **Bonuses** to determine Success.

A character of a higher Level represents a bit more competency and experience in the world, which might translate to them understanding best how to manoeuvre a Titan Rig. None of a character's Main Attributes will give bonuses to piloting a Titan Rig. Core Paths may give partial bonuses (up to the GM's discretion) to piloting ability. A character with a Core Path that had them grow up in a Tinkerer's

household with a strong fascination for technology will score some bonuses when piloting a Titan Rig.

## TITAN RIG: INTUITION

The other big bonus players may get to their rolls comes from the Titan Rig itself. Some Titan Rigs are more intuitive than others and thus give their operators a bonus as they are easier to use. Titan Rig Intuition can be seen as a stat that represents how powerful the Rig is as well. More advanced Rigs have a higher Intuition that matches the scaling of stronger colossal enemies for them to fight.

Level 1 players stumbling upon a busted up Titan Rig with an Intuition of +1 might struggle to even get it to walk in a straight line without stepping on some poor farmer's house, let alone have it pull off an advanced manoeuvre like clearing a chasm. But a group of Level 7 Players piloting a Rig with +4 Intuition will not need to roll to manoeuvre the Rig around, and they will have a higher chance of success performing more complex moves (e.g. ripping a tree out of the ground and using it as a bat or throwing it as a spear).

**EXAMPLE.** Utilizing the Success Ladder for an attempted Titan Rig manoeuvre:

Iris and her friends Fenton, Hurk, and Zima are piloting a rusty old Geronimo Mk I they've unearthed while exploring an old Kyrindian crystal quarry. They are a young group, hailing from a generation where stories about Titan Rigs and the wondrous technologies that powered them were just that: stories. Being a little green to both adventuring and operating a Titan Rig, Iris' crew can be seen as the equivalent of a Level 2 party.

Now that they've procured themselves a Titan Rig and managed to power it up, they find themselves at the bottom of a quarry. There appears to be an entrance leading deeper into the side of the pit, but it's covered by a landslide of large rocks.

Iris' crew, ever curious, decide to press forward, and turn their sights on the blocked entrance. They could try blasting it open with the Geronimo's Hellfire Cannon but they'd like to conserve whatever Power they can. Instead Iris suggests they try moving or smashing through the rocks physically.

**GM:** Alright after some fiddling you've turned the power on and the Rig rises to life. So what would you like to do?

**PARTY:** We'd like to see what's behind door number one here—how heavy do those rocks blocking the entrance look?

**GM:** Quite heavy, even in your Rig it's going to require some sweat to move them.

**PARTY:** Alright, we're going to try going over to the obstruction and attempt to remove it.

**GM:** How are you going to do that? Are you going to just pull the rocks away or do you intend to smash them?

**PARTY:** (Thinks about the Geronimo only having one proper hand.) We'll try breaking them up into smaller pieces with the Geronimo's fist to make them more easily movable.

**GM:** Cool. Before you can do that, though, as it's your first time piloting one of these things you'll probably need a short adjustment period to figure out how to even manoeuvre it over to the rocks. I'd like you all to roll and see how that goes.

**PARTY:** Okay.

*Here the GM checks the Difficulty table on pg. 253 and decides that learning to move the Titan Rig around should be an* **Easy** *affair. He sets the* **TN** *to* **8**.

**Everyone rolls 2d10 + 1 (Half Level) + 2 (Titan Rig's Intuition) except for Iris who has a Core Path bonus for having been raised by an Inventor (GM gives her +2 from her +4 Core Path)**

Iris: 15 (Success)
Fenton: 7 (Failure)
Hurk: 6 (Failure)
Zima: 13 (Success)

Unfortunately the crew had a couple of bad rolls, resulting in 2 Successes. The Success Ladder dictates that 2 Successes results in the attempted action happening but with some sort of narrative or mechanical cost.

**GM:** The Titan Rig hums to life as you hear its power core spinning up. It rises and stands to its full height. Its legs stretch out and it begins to move towards the blocked entrance. As you feverishly work the levers and control interface, both Fenton and Hurk push when they should have pulled and pull

when they should have pushed. The criss-cross of commands causes the Titan to lurch forward as it begins to trip over its own legs.

*[At this point, as a GM, you can either arbitrarily have something bad happen to them or you can present a choice. The rules are loose in order to leave some room for interesting narration.]*

You guys have a choice. You can expend 2 Power to break your fall or you can take the fall and receive **4d4 falling damage**. Either way, you'll find yourself at the blocked entrance by the end of it all.

**PARTY:** We'll give up the 2 Power to break our fall.

**GM:** In a panic, one of you presses one of the big red buttons on the interface and the Geronimo's right arm shoots forward with the thunderous roar of a rocket. Its palm braces against the ground just before the Rig collapses, and pushes itself back up using the thruster in its elbow. That definitely could have been smoother, but now that you sort of know how to move the Rig about, I won't make you roll for walking around anymore.

### ADAPTING FOR MORE OR FEWER PLAYERS

The Success Ladder for Titan Rig play is ranked from 0 to 4 Successes, which is meant to align with a 4-player party. There are some minor adjustments to be made to accommodate for parties not falling into this size.

**2-Player Party.** Both players roll twice for a total of 4 Success attempts.

**3-Player Party.** 1 player is afforded an additional roll per action. The player that gets the additional roll rotates with each action requiring a Success Ladder check. Move clockwise or from left to right through the group of 3 to determine who gets the extra roll.

**5-Player Party.** Two options are available. Option 1 assumes that, because there are more hands on deck, piloting the Titan Rig is a little bit easier. Option 2 is more mechanically inclined to keep the difficulty the same as a smaller party's, even with the extra player.

**Option 1:** All 5 players roll, discard the lowest result.

**Option 2:** 4 players roll, the player that didn't roll will get to roll the next time a Success Ladder attempt comes up. Move clockwise around the table, or left to right, to determine the 1 player that needs to forfeit their roll each time a Success Ladder attempt comes up.

### BEYOND FIVE PLAYERS

Unity was not designed to optimally support groups larger than 5 players. You may use some variation of the 5-player party adjustments to Success Ladder attempts. The overall experience won't be reflective of the design intentions of the game, however.

## GM TIPS FOR TITAN RIG PLAY

While asking a group of young, green adventurers who are in over their heads to roll just to move a Titan Rig around can lead to some interesting moments, it would be cumbersome to keep making them roll for trivial things once they've done them already. It's up to GM judgment, but we recommend assessing the situation (low-Level adventurers, a Titan Rig with low Intuition, and their first time being inside of one) to make those calls on whether a Success Ladder attempt is needed for certain actions.

The general rule of thumb is if something has a TN difficulty of Easy or lower and it won't be an automatic success based on the bonus modifiers, make your players roll for it the first time. After that they should have enough 'experience' doing that particular action that they do not have to repeat it.

While in the above example we show a mechanical cost to their result on the Success Ladder (payment in either Health or Resources), the GM could have gone another route and dictated a narrative cost instead.

Narratively, the GM could have still had the Titan Rig lurch forward but manage to brace itself against the wall of the quarry and, in doing so, cause a landslide or a ruckus attracting attention from another party or creature (most likely unfriendly) near the quarry. The GM could have had the Titan Rig stumble a bit and step on a valuable cache of Kyrindian crystals, or even accidentally squash the party's pack mule. The Success Ladder rules are set up to give the GM the freedom to advance the story and can act as an organic segue into events the GM might have planned for the party.

## TITAN RIG COMBAT

Fighting in your Titan Rig can initially be an unwieldy affair. As you grow as an adventurer, your increasing personal competencies will begin to translate into prowess for colossal combat as well. The two things that you are in control of in terms of increasing your power as a Titan Rig pilot is your Level and the Core Paths you choose to take. Both of these character-defining mechanics factor into your Success Ladder rolls, which will apply to general actions and combat.

When inside a Titan Rig, the entire party shares a single pool of hitpoints and any other stats inherent to the Titan Rig like Intuition, Power, and Armour Value. These stats vary from Titan Rig to Titan Rig.

### TITAN RIG STATS

**Hitpoints (HP):** Much like your character's hitpoints, a Titan Rig has a sustainable measure of how much damage it can take before it is destroyed. HP represent this measure.

**Intuition (INT):** A Titan Rig provides some baseline level of proficiency in performing actions and combat manoeuvres that's represented as Intuition. This is a bonus you get to add to all your Success Ladder rolls.

**Power (POW):** As your character has Class Resources like Fervor, Guile, or Fury, Titan Rigs also have a resource they use to perform certain manoeuvres. This is represented as Power. When a Titan Rig is out of Power, its combat ability becomes non-functional and its movements will slow to a crawl.

**Armour Value (AV):** Performs exactly the same way AV works for your character—blocks Physical damage by X amount.

#### ATTACKING & DEFENDING

Colossal Combat shares many similarities with Normal Combat in that the combatants have different action types they can take: Standard, Movement, Quick, Reaction, and Free. They do not have actions for Overdrive or Maintain.

The same rules apply to these action types in Colossal Combat as they do in Normal Combat (see *pg. 262*). Colossal enemy combatants will have HP, AV, AR, and DR values.

**Enemy AR** sets the TN for Defensive Success Ladder rolls by the defending Titan Rig.

**Enemy DR** sets the TN for Offensive Success Ladder rolls by the attacking Titan Rig.

#### OFFENSIVE MANOEUVRES

All Titan Rig attacks during Colossal Combat have unique Success Ladders built into their abilities and write-ups. Different Titan Rigs have different combat abilities they can utilize for attacking. There is no "Basic Attack" when it comes to Titan Rigs; players must choose from the list of abilities available to their specific Titan Rig when going on the offensive.

**You will roll 2d10 + Half Level + CPP + INT + Any Bonuses versus the target's DR.**

You will see a list of offensive manoeuvres for the sample Titan Rigs supplied in this chapter.

#### ATTACKING SMALLER ENEMIES

When attacking more diminutive enemies (e.g. medium-sized humanoids), a Titan Rig or Colossal Monster's single-target abilities will strike up to 1d4+1 targets.

#### DEFENSIVE MANOEUVRES

Titan Rigs all have a baseline Defensive Success Ladder they use when determining if they are struck by an attack.

**You will roll 2d10 + Half Level + CPP + INT + Any Bonuses versus the attacker's AR.**

### DEFENSE: SUCCESS LADDER

**0 Successes.** You are hit for twice the amount of damage the attack inflicts.

**1–2 Successes.** You are hit for the full damage of the attack.

**3 Successes.** You are hit but only suffer half of the rolled damage.

**4 Successes.** The attack misses you.

### ROLLING SPEED WHILE IN A TITAN RIG

If the narrative fails to determine which side gets First Strike, roll against the target's Speed rating to determine who goes first.

**You will roll 2d10 + Half Level + CPP + INT + Any Bonuses versus the target's Speed.**

3 or more Successes means you go first.

### RE-ROUTING POWER

At the start of your turn in each round, you may choose to re-route power to either Offensive or Defensive systems. Re-routing power provides a bonus to all of your party's rolls for the chosen system. If you re-route power to Offensive systems, any attacks you perform will receive a **+X** bonus to all of your team's rolls for that one attack.

Re-routing power has a cost, however. When you re-route power to one system, the opposite system suffers a penalty equal to the bonus you gain until the start of your next turn. In the above example, your Defensive rolls when attempting to evade an attack that same round will be at a **-X** penalty.

The maximum amount of power you can re-route is determined by your Titan Rig's Intuition score. If a Titan Rig has an INT of 5, you may re-route up to a **+5** bonus to either the Offensive or Defensive systems.

When you start your turn again after re-routing power, all systems are back to normal unless you choose to re-route again. Re-routing is not mandatory but an option to open up some strategy to your team.

### STRUCTURAL DAMAGE

There may be rare moments during Colossal Combat when a single blow might hit with such force it causes catastrophic damage to the Titan Rig, such as an arm being torn off or a leg rendered useless.

### ROLLING FOR STRUCTURAL DAMAGE

If a single attack from an enemy does more than 20% of the Titan Rig's max HP in damage (after mitigation has been taken into account), your party will need to roll against a TN equal to the attacker's AR. Every 10 points of damage past the point of incurring structural damage adds another +1 to the TN.

**Each player will roll 2d10 + Half Level + CPP + INT + Any Bonuses to determine Success.**

In cases where structural damage is suffered multiple times throughout a combat and the Success Ladder rolls affect an area that's already been destroyed, move down one step to the next structure to be damaged.

### STRUCTURAL DAMAGE LADDER

**0 Successes.** Core is damaged, self-destructs in 1d4 rounds. Players can eject and try to escape. If they are still inside the rig when the explosion occurs, they suffer 2d10+6 Fire damage. Anything or anyone near the Rig (within 50 meters) when it explodes suffers this damage.

**1 Success.** Legs are severely damaged. Can no longer move to any distance or utilize any abilities that require legs. Defensive rolls suffer -3 penalty onwards.

**2 Successes.** One of the arms is destroyed (pick one). Players lose the ability to use its function.

**3 Successes.** Head/Bridge area severely damaged. Ability to re-route power is lost.

**4 Successes.** Players manage to stabilize the Rig and recover from the blow.

## TITAN RIG POWER

Titan Rigs have a Resource called Power that enables them to function and perform powerful manoeuvres. Power is expended quickly when a Titan Rig is engaged in combat due to the fact that every offensive action a Titan Rig takes will deplete Power.

Outside of combat, Titan Rigs that attempt certain actions, such as smashing an object, extended travelling, running, and jumping will also deplete Power.

Power as a mechanic is meant to provide a couple of functions:

1) Give weight to combat decisions during Colossal Combat. Every choice you make as a group counts, as every choice will cost Power and it's up to you to work together to weigh the risks and rewards before pulling the trigger.

2) Limit the time a party spends inside a Titan Rig and also give the GM a control knob to ensure things do not get out of hand; otherwise a Titan Rig can trivialize many of the challenges a party may face.

### DEPLETING POWER

**Outside of Combat.** It is up to the GM's discretion to deplete 1 or more Power for actions requiring some form of exertion or endurance from the Titan Rig.

A Titan Rig that's just walking around or picking up small objects wouldn't call for a Power depletion, but if that walking around turned into a twenty-minute jaunt, then the GM might declare a Power cost.

*How do you determine when and how much Power to deplete for attempted actions outside of combat? The answer lies in how much leeway your campaign has in allowing your group of players to stomp around in a metal giant without breaking the challenges and story you have planned for them.*

*As a guideline, when a Titan Rig's actions are gaining something for the party, Power can be depleted. Power can be considered as a cost for some beneficial consequence. For example, if a large barrier is blocking a way that could provide a shortcut for the party, smashing against the barrier to take it down could deplete anywhere from 1 to 3 Power per attempt. If the shortcut is incredibly beneficial, you could narratively describe the barrier as very tough and raise the TN so that your players might require a few tries and therefore potentially expend more Power to get through. One thing to keep in mind is to always (if you can) tell your players the Power cost when they present an action they'd like to attempt to you.*

**During Combat.** Every Titan Rig comes with its own unique set of combat manoeuvres. These manoeuvres all have a Power cost attached to them.

**No More Power.** When a Titan Rig's Power reaches zero, it essentially becomes non-functional in combat. There might be enough fumes left for players to slowly and painfully do one more minor thing with it before it shuts down.

### RECHARGING POWER CELLS

There will be moments in battle when a Titan Rig might regain some of its lost Power. Any player that manages to roll doubles during their Success Ladder attempt at an offensive or defensive action while **in combat** recharges 1 Power for the Rig.

**Bringing a dead Titan Rig back online.** The story may provide an opportunity to jumpstart a depleted Rig. This could come in the form of finding new power crystals or stolen lightning, or borrowing parts from another Rig. Once powered down, a Rig doesn't need to be forgotten completely; how a GM structures their campaign dictates whether or not a party can circle back to their friendly metal giant down the road.

# GERONIMO MK I

## TRAITS

**HP:** 300
**ARMOUR VALUE:** 10
**INTUITION:** 2
**POWER:** 10

## DESCRIPTION

The Geronimo Mk I was one of the first Titan Rigs ever created. With a primitive yet robust design, they were a staple workhorse for the Human nations during the Golden Age. While they were a little clunky to operate, they made up for it with their versatility as their arms were modular and could be outfitted with a variety of tools and weapons.

### LEFT ARM: HELLFIRE CANNON

**STANDARD**

*Wartime versions of the Geronimo Mk I came equipped with a Hellfire Cannon for their left arm. The Hellfire Cannon is powered by a low-grade fire-imbued Kyrindian crystal.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Power | Single/Special | Very Far |

**EFFECTS**

Strikes a single colossal target for
0: 1d10+10 Fire damage
1: 3d6+10 Fire damage
2: 4d6+10 Fire damage
3: 5d6+15 Fire damage
4: 7d8+15 Fire damage

### RIGHT ARM: POWER FIST

**STANDARD**

*The Geronimo Mk I is able to deliver a powerful melee strike with its right arm. The punch is augmented by the thrust from a powerful engine embedded at the elbow.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Power | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Strikes a single colossal target for
0: 2d6+10 damage
1: 3d6+15 damage
2: 4d6+15 damage
3: 5d6+20 damage
4: 6d8+20 damage

### POWER LEAP

**MOVEMENT**

*Geronimo uses its powerful hydraulic legs to launch itself into the air and cover a great distance with one mighty leap. When it lands it creates a powerful shockwave.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Power | Special | Very Far |

**EFFECTS**

Leap into the air and cross up to a VERY FAR distance. When you land, all enemies NEARBY have their DR lowered by -2 for X rounds. X is the number of successes your team has against the target's DR. You are immune to Provoked Attacks while using Power Leap.

*Power Leap enables you to use "Reroute Power" more effectively. You may be able to funnel more power towards defensive systems while still maintaining offensive parity due to Power Leap's Defense Rating penalty effect cancelling out the penalty to your offensive systems.*

### OVERDRIVE BEAM

**STANDARD**

*Geronimo funnels its energy into the power core in its chest to unleash a beam attack with the potential for great devastation.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 4+ Power | Single/Special | Very Far |

**EFFECTS**

Strikes a single colossal target for
0: 1d20 Fire damage
1: 2d20 Fire damage
2: 3d20 Fire damage
3: 4d20 Fire damage
4: 6d20 Fire damage
Every 1 additional Power you choose to pour into the attack increases damage by +1d20.

*Overdrive Beam is an ability that carries with it huge risks and rewards. The large damage range and lack of static modifiers make this attack either a world destroyer or a mild burn.*

# CINDERMAW

## TRAITS

**HP:** 280
**ARMOUR VALUE:** 10
**ATTACK RATING:** 15 / **DEFENSE RATING:** 15
**SPEED:** 15

## DESCRIPTION

Cindermaws are revered by the Fell legions as the prized spawn of Vorath the World Eater. Cindermaws start off as defenseless larvae, but they grow strong under Vorath's care by feeding off the mashed up remains of lesser demons. As they begin to take on a more humanoid shape and are afforded some level of autonomy, they move about Vorath's territories in the Drift, searching for more food. Their appetites burn so brightly that they often need to release the digestive fires inside of them through their gaping maws.

### HEADLONG CHARGE

**MOVEMENT - STANDARD**

*Cindermaw tucks its chin in and angles it's razorsharp horn forward as it charges across the battlefield.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Ruin | Single | Only Far |

**EFFECTS**

Strikes a target for 2d10+15 damage. If the target takes more than 23 damage after mitigation, it suffers Hindrance on its next action. Cindermaw can only Headlong Charge if there is a FAR distance between itself and the target.

### MELEE STRIKE

**STANDARD**

*Cindermaw lashes out with its claws and powerful bite.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| Free | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Strikes a target for 2d8+20 damage.

### REND ARMOUR

**STANDARD**

*Cindermaw's claws glow red as they become molten blades fuelled by the fire raging inside of it. These fiery claws superheat Titan Rig armour, making it malleable and soft until it can cool down and re-harden.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Ruin | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Strikes the target for 2d10+10 Fire damage and rends the target's armour, reducing its AV by -10 for 2 rounds.

### INFERNAL BREATH

**STANDARD**

*Cindermaw opens its mouth and unleashes a blazing torrent of Fell fire at the target.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Ruin | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Strikes a target for 3d8+20 Fire damage. Cindermaw receives a +2 bonus to AR and another +1d8 Fire damage if used on a target that's ADJACENT.

### FELL COCOON

**STANDARD**

*When faced with imminent danger, Cindermaw hardens its skin as demonic scales begin to envelop its entire body.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Ruin | Self | Self |

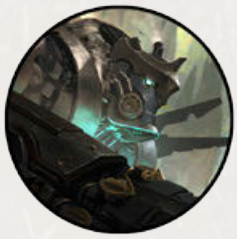
**EFFECTS**

Cindermaw's AV is increased to 20. It takes no further action this round. If it does not suffer more than 20 points of damage by the start of its next turn, it is healed for 2d10+30. Dealing more than 20 points of damage (after mitigation) causes the Fell Cocoon to break and Cindermaw does not regenerate HP.

*The Cindermaw is an appropriate challenge for the Geronimo Mk II. The Oberon and the Leviathan on the following pages are similarly paired to give each other a good fight. If you are designing your own Titan Rigs and Colossal monsters, lean on the stats and powers in these examples to create balanced battles.*

*Rend Armour can be devastating if your target stays in melee striking range after being struck by this attack.*

# OBERON



## TRAITS

**HP:** 400
**ARMOUR VALUE:** 15
**INTUITION:** 5
**POWER:** 15

## DESCRIPTION

The Oberon class Titan Rig was created during the tail end of the Crimson War. They were heavier and bulkier than previous Rigs and were built to be bruisers. Oberons are made of reinforced Furian steel and their massive torso allows for a larger power core. They are less versatile than Geronimos because of a lack of energy attacks, but very few colossal combatants can stand toe to toe and slug it out with the Oberon.

*When you need some breathing room, use Thunderclap to push your enemy away and then switch to Rocket Fists to keep them from getting to you.*

*If you suffer structural damage to one of Oberon's arms, it will no longer be able to use Thunderclap as both arms are required.*

### ARMS: PISTON PUNCH

**STANDARD**

*Oberon's massive fists generate a powerful kinetic charge from the piston mechanism used to deliver a deadly strike. This temporary burst of energy bounces between each arm and can be used to make the next punch harder than the last.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Power | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Strikes a single colossal target for
0: 1d10+15 damage
1: 2d10+15 damage
2: 3d10+25 damage
3: 4d10+30 damage
4: 5d10+35 damage

If another Piston Punch strikes the same target in the next round, it will deal an additional +20 damage. This bonus is maintained (doesn't stack) as long as Piston Punch is used consecutively.

### ARMS: ROCKET FIST

**STANDARD**

*Oberon's hands are detachable and anchored by steel cables. The Rig is capable of launching its fists at enemies outside its immediate vicinity.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Power | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Strikes a single colossal target for
0: 1d10+15 damage
1: 2d10+15 damage
2: 3d10+25 damage
3: 4d10+30 damage
4: 5d10+35 damage and Staggers them

### ARMS (BOTH): THUNDERCLAP

**STANDARD**

*Instead of using its hands to punch its target, Oberon's fists turn into open palms. Both arms swing backwards before rapidly coming around forward to the front of the body to create a thunderous shockwave.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Power | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Strikes a single colossal target for
0: 1d12+15 damage
1: 2d12+15 damage
2: 3d12+20 damage and displaces them NEARBY
3: 4d12+25 damage and displaces them FAR away
4: 5d12+30 damage and displaces them FAR away

### POWER CONVERSION

**QUICK**

*The Oberon has a special power core that allows its pilot to sacrifice structural integrity for a burst in energy.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| Special | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Convert 60 HP into 3 Power. Power Conversion will not work if the Rig does not have more than 60 HP.

### STRATAGEM: BOXER

**PASSIVE**

*Oberons are programmed to mimick the hand-to-hand strategies of Human sport fighters who duck, weave, and counterattack with their fists.*

**EFFECTS**

Upon achieving 4 successes during a Defense Ladder roll, you may expend 2 Power to activate a free Piston Punch that occurs immediately.

# LEVIATHAN

## TRAITS

**HP:** 480
**ARMOUR VALUE:** 15
**ATTACK RATING:** 20 / **DEFENSE RATING:** 19
**SPEED:** 17

## DESCRIPTION

The Primalists call them the "Sleeping Giants." It is believed that massive creatures once roamed the lands, long before civilization had made its mark on Unity. When civilization rose, these giants faded into legend. Now as the world boils with conflict and destruction, nature's firstborn have once again awoken. Their intentions are unknown but, many believe that they have come to wipe the world clean of both people and demons so that it may be reborn back to its original, natural state.

### SOLAR BEAM

**STANDARD**

*The Leviathan's mountain-like face splits apart to emit a massive beam of blazing power.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Ruin | Single | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Deals 5d10+10 Fire damage. The damage increases by +10 for each range band beyond ADJACENT. e.g. A NEARBY target would suffer 5d10+20 Fire damage, a FAR target would suffer 5d10+30 Fire damage.

### NATURE'S GUIDANCE

**QUICK**

*As if guided by an unseen hand, the Leviathan's senses are enhanced momentarily, allowing it to strike with unerring precision.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Ruin | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Leviathan's AR is increased by +2 for 1 round.

### STAMPEDE

**STANDARD - MOVEMENT**

*Stomping in place with all four massive legs, the Leviathan prepares itself before charging across the battlefield.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Ruin | Special | Far |

**EFFECTS**

Leviathan is immune to Provoked Attacks. Deals 2d10+20 damage if Stampede passes through an ADJACENT enemy.

### CLAWS OF LIGHTNING

**STANDARD**

*The Leviathan strikes with both claws in rapid succession. The air is streaked with crackling blue lightning as it swings out at its target. Each successful strike riles the Leviathan up into a frenzy.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| Free | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Deals 1d20+10 Electric damage. If the attack strikes its target, the Leviathan may immediately attack with Claws of Lightning again. This can continue up to 3 times.

*Claws of Lightning does little damage per strike but if the dice roll poorly for PCs, a streak of these attacks can add up to devastating effect.*

*Nature's Guidance combines nicely with Claws of Lightning, making a chain of attacks more likely.*

### TAIL SMASH

**STANDARD**

*The Leviathan snaps its tail in a vicious arc.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| Free | Single | Adjacent |

**EFFECTS**

Deals 4d10+30 damage.

*Stampede allows the Leviathan to rush past its opponent and deal damage without fear of retaliation. This could be useful against the Oberon whose abilities are devastating in melee range.*

### THE EARTH HEALS

**STANDARD**

*The Leviathan's feet grow roots that penetrate deep into the ground to draw nourishment up.*

| COST | TARGET | RANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Ruin | Self | Self |

**EFFECTS**

Leviathan's DR is increased by +2 for 1 round and it heals for 4d20+40 at the start of its next turn unless it is displaced from where it's currently standing.

# CHAPTER VII

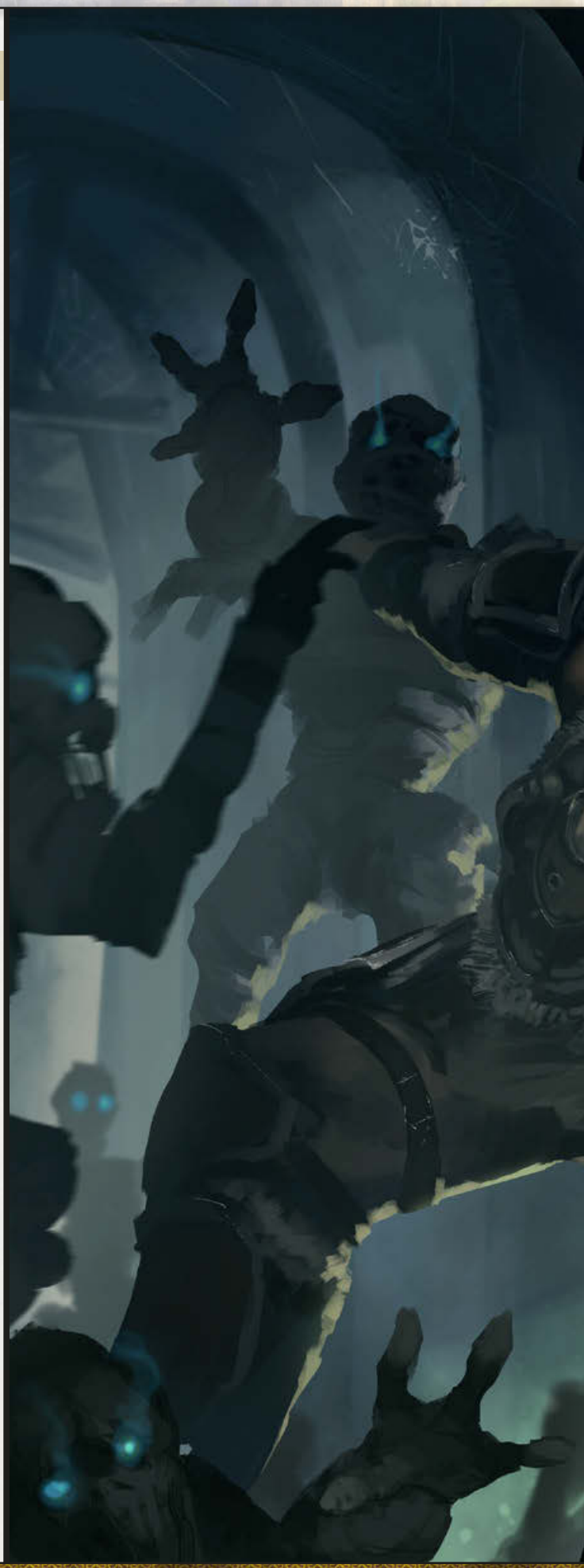
# EQUIPMENT

*Commotion erupts in the dusty streets of the bustling city of Kalamshir. Renowned as the Desert Jewel of the South, Kalamshir is a veritable mecca for merchants and peddlers. Traders from across all of Unity come to Kalamshir to hawk their wares, in hopes of securing a small portion of the incredible wealth that flows through the city. Items mundane and exotic are put on display and loudly announced as they gleam in the hot noon sun. There's something for everybody at the Blazing Bazaar. If you have coin in your pocket and a burning need to spend it, there's probably something for you as well.*

Throughout your adventures, you will potentially discover hidden treasures, powerful Artifacts, and untold riches. Your equipment is a key part of your character and will aid you in achieving your goals. It's important to properly equip your character before heading out to face the world. The right armour and weapon can mean the difference between a glancing blow and a fatal strike.

## EQUIPMENT CHAPTER PREVIEW

- **Wealth & Currency:** Exploring the Denerim, starting wealth of new characters, and aspects of buying and selling.
- **Armour & Weapons:** Multiple types of weapons and armour are available to your character. Can't find one that fits the fantasy you envision? Work with the GM to customize your item and find the appropriate category to place it in.
- **Gear:** Necessities and Gear are important staples in keeping you and your party in fighting shape as you progress in your adventures.
- **Artifacts:** A plethora of wondrous magickal items that will take your character to new heights of power and open up different tactical possibilities.



## WEALTH & CURRENCY

### THE DENERIM

The most common currency throughout Unity is the Denerim. Made from a rare material, these coins are sought-after across the land and accepted readily by most of the population. Before the Denerim, bartering and trading were the cornerstones of mercantile activity. While trading goods is still a very viable and common occurrence, the Denerim is preferred for the majority of transactions.

To give an idea, with regards to the scale and worth, of the Denerim, a hot meal and a room for a single night at an inn would cost **10 to 15 Denerim**, depending on how upscale the establishment was. A suit of mundane leather armour would run about **70 Denerim**.

### BIRTH OF THE DENERIM

*The Denerim is named after Deneri, the wife of a renowned Furian metalsmith that minted the first coin in Unity's history.*

*Deneri was a Valla, and during the Age of Strife, an interracial marriage was grounds for persecution, banishment, or worse. The animosity between the Furians, Valla, and Humans reached a fever pitch during this era. Deneri and her husband had eked out a comfortable existence on the outskirts of Vallan lands, away from the prejudice and hatred.*

*One day, while returning home from visiting family, Deneri was attacked by a group of her own people. They despised what she represented and called her a traitor as they beat her. Nightfall came and worried for her safety, Deneri's husband set out to find her. He found her broken body on the side of the road. Kneeling down and brimming with inconsolable rage, he gripped his hammer tightly and set out to avenge his love. Before he could stand, a weak hand grasped his.*

*"No more fighting... no more hate. Break the cycle." Deneri whispered softly as she passed.*

*Deneri's last words pushed her husband to create the first Denerim. Both as a memory of his love and an object that would be the initial step in uniting the races. The Denerim opened up trade and commerce in a very large way for a very disconnected world.*

### STARTING WEALTH

The amount of Denerim characters start off with is decided by the GM. The suggested amount is between **150 to 250 Denerim**, and is the same for every character.

For a more difficult experience, start characters off with **150 Denerim**. With this amount, most Classes will have barely enough for the necessities: their armour, weapons, and some adventuring gear.

For a more relaxed experience, starting with **250 Denerim** will allow you and your party to purchase a second set of weapons and sleep safer at night by being able to afford proper lodgings. Denerim can also be used to bribe and garner key information if need be. Everybody loves a good bit of coin.

### BUYING & SELLING

Every town or city will have merchants that are willing to trade with you. Smaller villages and outposts may have traders though they might not have a wide variety of items for you to choose from.

Selling treasures and items that you've found or acquired in your adventures is a great way to bolster your coffers. Here are some quick guidelines with regards to selling merchandise.

**Limited funds.** Merchants—especially in smaller establishments and locales—have a set amount of Denerim that they can part with, and which is determined by the GM.

**Resale value.** Certain items, especially mundane but undamaged weaponry and armour, sell at a reduced price—usually 20–50% of their market value. However, jewellery, rare gems, metals, cultural items etc. all retain their value, and you may even be able to fetch more than what they are worth if you've got a silver tongue or have found someone that particularly wants such an item badly.

**Selling Artifacts and magickal items.** Special items can usually garner a very handsome price but your run-of-the-mill street merchant won't be able to afford them—nor will they want a target painted on them for having such a high-value item. Such items are usually traded or sold to a higher calibre clientele (think of the mad Mystic in his scary tower or the affluent and powerful Madame who pulls all the strings in town).

## ARMOUR & WEAPONS

Two critical pieces of Equipment for every character are their armour and weapon(s). There are multiple categories of classification for both armour and weapons. Your Class will determine whether you have Competency in utilizing a certain class of armour or weapon—a character using Equipment that they lack Competency in will become Hindered when rolling Attack or Defense.

In the tables below, armour and weapons will be listed according to their classification, along with their damage range(s) and examples for each category. Reinforced and Mastercrafted Armour provide scaling Armour Value bonuses but are also much more expensive to acquire, which makes experienced adventurers more likely to afford them compared to novices just starting out their career.

### OPEN FOR CUSTOMIZATION

While examples are listed for each category of armour and weapons, you are more than encouraged to work with your GM to create a custom item that aligns with your unique vision for your character. Just because "dual-bladed glaive" isn't listed in the table below, doesn't mean it can't find a home under the Heavy Melee Weapons category. *Unity*'s Equipment rules strive to provide players with the freedom to fulfill the character fantasy that's in their mind and bring it to life. If you want a Dreadnought that carries around a giant totem to smash her foes with, go for it! With a bit of common sense and cooperation between player and GM, a lot of creative ideas for armour and weaponry can be found to fit into one of the categories below.

*In a hurry? If your group doesn't want to figure out starting wealth and purchasing equipment, go with a standard loadout that's tailored to the Class of the character. e.g. A Sentinel would most likely possess a Medium weapon, Heavy armour, and a shield. A Mystic would most likely just carry a Light melee weapon or Light ranged weapon or both.*

**MELEE WEAPONS**

| TYPE | EXAMPLES | DAMAGE | COST |
|---|---|---|---|
| LIGHT | Dagger, Shortsword, Rapier, Staff, Club, Fist Weapon | 1D6 | 40 D |
| MEDIUM | Longsword, Scimitar, Warhammer, Mace, Battleaxe, Spear | 1D8 | 50 D |
| HEAVY | Greatsword, Greataxe, Maul, Halberd | 1D12 / 2D6 | 70 D |

**RANGED WEAPONS**

| TYPE | EXAMPLES | DAMAGE | COST |
|---|---|---|---|
| THROWN | Darts, Shurikens, Slingshot, Throwing Knives | 1D4 | 10 D |
| LIGHT | Hand Crossbow, Shortbow, Pistol | 1D6 | 40 D |
| HEAVY | Longbow, Crossbow, Rifle, Revolver | 1D8 | 60 D |

**BASIC ARMOUR**

| TYPE | EXAMPLES | +AV | COST |
|---|---|---|---|
| LIGHT | Leather, Patchwork, Hide, Chain Shirt | 1 | 60 D |
| HEAVY | Platemail, Splint Mail, Chainmail | 2 | 80 D |
| SHIELDS | Buckler, Kite Shield, Tower Shield | 1 | 20 D |

**REINFORCED ARMOUR**

| TYPE | EXAMPLES | +AV | COST |
|---|---|---|---|
| LIGHT | Reinforced Leather, Patchwork, Hide, Chain Shirt | 2 | 600 D |
| HEAVY | Reinforced Platemail, Splint Mail, Chainmail | 3 | 800 D |

**MASTERCRAFTED ARMOUR**

| TYPE | EXAMPLES | +AV | COST |
|---|---|---|---|
| LIGHT | Mastercrafted Leather, Patchwork, Hide, Chain Shirt | 3 | 2000 D |
| HEAVY | Mastercrafted Platemail, Splint Mail, Chainmail | 5 | 2500 D |

*By Level 5, a party should be able to slowly afford Reinforced Armour for each of their members. Mastercrafted Armour is intended for characters Level 8 or higher. Characters seeking lucrative ventures may come into the Denerim to afford these finely made wares sooner.*

## GEAR

*Remember, you can share Necessities and Gear between party members!*

*What happens when you attempt to rest without Necessities? See pg. 256 under the rules for Respite & Full Rest.*

There are many items that an intrepid adventurer would never be without. Staples include: torches, rope, bandages, food, clothes, etc. These smaller, miscellaneous items play an important part in the gaming experience, both in terms of the role-playing aspect and the mechanical implications.

In *Unity*, there aren't huge tables and lists filled with every possible item that your character might take with him into the darkest of dungeons. Instead, adventuring Gear is abstracted for ease of play and flexibility. Your backpack has two categories: **Necessities** and **Gear**.

**Necessities.** These are the items that are must-haves if your character is to function for an extended period of time out in the wild, away from the creature comforts and basic facilities of civilization. Think of this category as consisting mainly of your bedroll and meal rations. Every time you attempt a Full Rest outside of some sort of shelter or lodgings where food and bed are provided, you will mark a use off of your Necessities stack.

*Alternative Gear rules are available in the GM section on pg. 357.*

**Gear.** Your Gear contains the miscellaneous, mundane items that confer some sort of benefit along your adventure but aren't critical for basic survival: items such as torches, rope, flint and tinder, a crowbar, or an extra set of clothes. When you invoke the use of one of these items, you will mark a use from your Gear stack. This is fairly straightforward for items that expend themselves on use such as torches, ink, or paper. Below is an example of Gear use when it comes to a more permanent item.

*Depending on the intended difficulty of the game you are playing in, Necessities and Gear might be more abundant in the form of being able to hunt and scavenge as a way of shoring up your supplies. On top of their significant mechanical implications towards gameplay, both resources were meant to be a sink for Denerim, thus increasing the value of currency as a reward, especially for newer characters.*

**Example:** Jason's character Ambrose is stranded on an island with the hot noon sun beating down upon him. Off in the hazy distance he spots a ship. While he can see the ship because of its large size, there's a good chance the ship cannot see him and there is no way his voice will carry that far. Ambrose reaches into his pack and pulls out a small mirror which he will try to use to signal the ship by reflecting the sunlight. The GM calls for Jason to mark a use of Gear. Ambrose originally had 7 uses and now is down to 6.

While something like a small mirror doesn't inexplicably disappear after it's been used, if Ambrose were to use that mirror again at a later point, Jason would need to mark down another use of gear (bringing Gear uses from 6 to 5). When looking at Gear as a mechanic, a small shift in perspective is required to understand that the concept of Gear is implemented both as a way to expedite inventory list management, and to generate tension through its nature as a limited resource. In the scenario above where Ambrose might use the mirror again, Ambrose didn't actually pull out a second mirror, instead, the repeated Gear loss is representative of the diminishing capacity of characters as they experience the effects of wear and tear from their adventures. e.g. When Ambrose finally runs out of Gear, an assumption could be generated that the mirror eventually became cracked and useless from taking a tumble or being tossed around during a fight.

It's important to be aware of the limitations of Gear. The open-ended nature of the Gear mechanic is not an invitation to create high-value gadgets that are able to trivialize challenges put forth by the GM. A lantern that creates ultraviolet bursts of light against the Undead would not fall under the category of Gear; it would be an Artifact or special item.

### GEAR LIMITS

There are limits to how many uses of Necessities and Gear a character has access to in terms of their carrying capacity. Stronger characters are able to carry more and may share their extra uses with other members of the party if need be.

| | CAPACITY | |
|---|---|---|
| MIGHT | NECESSITIES | GEAR |
| -2 | 1 | 4 |
| -1 | 2 | 5 |
| 0 | 3 | 6 |
| +1 | 4 | 7 |
| +2 | 4 | 8 |
| +3 | 5 | 9 |
| +4 | 5 | 10 |
| +5 | 6 | 11 |
| +6 | 6 | 12 |
| +7 | 7 | 13 |

### NECESSITY & GEAR COSTS

Depending on where you purchase from, Necessity and Gear costs can vary. In a large city where competition is tough and there's a constant flow of goods, it can be cheap to procure these items. If you are bartering with a farmer in the middle of nowhere, Necessities (food rations) might be cheap, but asking him to part with tools and supplies that he will need to re-source by going into town might be a different story.

**Baseline Costs: 5 Denerim** for a single Necessity or Gear.

## ARTIFACTS

The world of Unity is littered with secrets and treasures waiting to be discovered. Amongst these forgotten wonders are powerful Artifacts that can potentially be wielded by anyone lucky enough to find them.

While discovery is but one way to acquire these special items, there may be some merchants that sell rare items they've come across in their travels.

### RE-FLAVOURING ARTIFACTS

The following pages will contain wondrous items waiting for a worthy adventurer to wield them. While these powerful pieces of equipment are steeped in Unity's history, it doesn't mean you cannot re-skin them to fit the lore of your campaign or custom setting. If you like the mechanics behind an Artifact but the fantasy of that particular Artifact doesn't jive with a character concept or the confines of your campaign, you are encouraged to change the flavour of the Artifact or even mix and match concepts.

Maybe one of your players is a gunslinger and has little training in archery but you know that Courier, a magickal longbow listed here, would be perfect mechanically for the character. Change Courier to a rifle. Maybe go a step further and take liberties with Courier's history and change Valaris Hawkwind from Vallan forest ranger to technophile marksman.

While these Artifacts were created to be plucked out of the box by a GM and ready to use for a campaign, they can also be viewed as a template and used as a launching pad for your own custom items.

### UPGRADING ARTIFACTS

Artifacts have the capacity to receive upgrades that increase their power and potentially open up new dimensions of play for the character using that Artifact. The sample Artifacts provided in the following pages will often have a secondary effect listed as: UPGRADE: XXXXX. This new Artifact ability/effect will become active once a character completes a quest or acquires the appropriate materials to upgrade their Artifact.

The existence of upgrades allows you to tie a coveted mechanical award to the story and the world in an organic way. Perhaps your player has a character that possesses a Sword of Undying Flame which starts off with the ability to deal Fire damage every time they roll 18–20 on the 2d10 portion of their Attack roll. After a few adventures and many charred enemies, the Sword of Undying Flame might not seem as exciting anymore to them. Their character might then be introduced to a NPC who notices the Sword of Undying Flame and mentions a legend about it being born in the molten heart of a sacred mountain. The NPC might go on further to explain that she heard the sword was cast out of the mountain long before it was ready and that if it had a chance to be reunited with the fiery core of that mountain, it could become the weapon it was truly meant to be. How this would play out would be up to your discretion, but there is great freedom in seamlessly spinning new quests and explorable tangents which are driven by a mechanical reward that most players would cherish.

The scope of achieving an Artifact upgrade is up to you. In the example of the Sword of the Undying Flame, an entire adventure could be created about discovering the identity of this secret mountain, journeying to it, defeating the Eternal Guardian that stands watch over the entrance, and then discovering a buried forge city in the centre of the mountain and all the secrets and horrible creatures that have taken residence there. At the end of this journey, the character wielding the Sword of Undying Flame might now be able to launch fireballs from the sword once per Full Rest.

If you decide to use the sample Artifacts provided in this book, wherever you see that an upgrade is available, think about how you would want the characters to go about achieving that upgrade. If you find your players veering from the main campaign's quest and want to put them back on track, blend these mechanical rewards into the main storyline and use them to entice players to circle back to the central quest. If you are playing in a sandbox world, pepper the quests or materials required for these upgrades into various corners of the world to promote exploration and provide paths for players to choose from.

### CONSUMABLES

There are some standard staple items aside from Artifacts that exist in the world of Unity that are also coveted by adventurers. These items, which are referred to as Consumables, can be used once and require a Quick action in combat to use. While these Consumables are usually purchased, they can be acquired as loot from exploration or rewards from quests.

**CONSUMABLES**

| NAME | EFFECT | COST |
|---|---|---|
| HEALTH POTION | Restores Level × d4 HP | 30 D |
| ENERGY POTION | Grants Recharge roll + 2 | 30 D |
| REJUVENATION ELIXIR | Restores Level × d4 HP<br>Grants Recharge roll + 2 | 80 D |
| LIGHTNING IN A BOTTLE | Restores 10 Power to Titan Rig | 500 D |
| PANACEAN SEED | Instantly removes all Status Effects | 100 D |

*Consumables exist to help give PCs an edge and to also shore up weaknesses that their party may have. A party without a Primalist or Priest to provide healing might need to invest in Health Potions.*

*Remember, nothing is set in stone. If your PCs need help, maybe they'll "discover" a cache of potions along their journeys or the local merchant is feeling generous and gives them a steep discount. Consumables provide another avenue for you to decrease difficulty for a struggling party, without directly modifying encounters or enemy stats.*

*Common sense would dictate that a Stunned PC will require an Ally to feed them the Panacean Seed.*

**BOSLEY'S GOOD-LUCK CHARM**

**TYPE**

Amulet.

**DESCRIPTION**

*Bosley was known for his ability to escape death. The daredevil Rikkisi flirted constantly with the Reaper as if they were old friends. It seemed that no matter how many arrows were shot at Bosley or how many swords were swung at his head, he always came out of the chaos with a smug look on his face. Bosley's brother took notice one day that Bosley was never without his sparkling pendant and golden ring. Thinking this could be the source of Bosley's secret, he "borrowed" them one night. Unfortunately, it was the same night an angry mob from the local town decided to pay Bosley a visit.*

**EFFECTS**

**Bet You Can't Do That Again.** *Passive.* While wearing the amulet, you feel cocksure as the world slows down a little bit. Whenever an attack damages you for 25% or more of your maximum health, you gain +8 DR on the next attack made against you.

**Bosley's Fortune.** *Set Bonus.* If Bosley's Lucky Ring and Bosley's Good-Luck Charm are worn together, Bet You Can't Do That Again's DR bonus is doubled.

Bosley's Good-Luck Charm

Bosley's Lucky Ring

**BOSLEY'S LUCKY RING**

**TYPE**

Ring.

**DESCRIPTION**

*Bosley was a notorious nuisance to the villages dotting the outskirts of the Singing Forest. A rambunctious and foul-mouthed Rikkisi, Bosley never really seemed to know his limitations. Always drunk, picking fights, or trying to run off with the local village women, Bosley was constantly in dangerous situations, often involving angry brutes or husbands. Standing just barely over a meter tall, it was a wonder Bosley escaped unscathed all those years. The tiny man always gave a cheeky grin when asked what his secret was.*

**EFFECTS**

**Not Today.** *Passive.* While wearing the ring, you feel like everything is going to be all right. Rolling a 2 or 3 for the 2d10 portion of your Defense roll will blunt half the damage of the attack.

**Bosley's Fortune.** *Set Bonus.* If Bosley's Lucky Ring and Bosley's Good-Luck Charm are worn together, Not Today completely negates all damage instead of having you take half.

| COIN OF THE NIVH'DHRÉ |
|---|
| **TYPE** |
| Accessory. Coin. |
| **DESCRIPTION** |
| *Long ago, ages before the Great Calamity occurred, a sect of Valla who called themselves the Nivh'dhré committed themselves to purging their spirits of all evil. The Nivh'dhré had seen the horror of the Fell when demons were a rare occurrence in the world. They believed, rightfully so, that it was the darkness that hides in the hearts of all people that gave rise to the Fell. In a massive ritual, this small group of Valla enacted magicks that are now long lost, and purged every dark emotion from themselves. However, this negative energy needed to be contained and required a vessel. The Nivh'dhré had managed to trap their darkness in a coin. They sealed the coin with a powerful sigil and ancient wards. Modern-day attempts to decipher the inscription on the coin have been slow and unclear. Only the words "Beware the dark..." have been confirmed.* |
| **EFFECTS** |
| **Embrace Power.** *Passive.* While in possession of the Coin, you may choose a single power your character has to always receive Benefit when you activate it. After this pact is made, you may not change Embrace Power and attempting to remove the Coin from your possession results in it showing up in your pocket or on your body. Someone must willingly accept the Coin from you for you to get rid of it. |
| **Dark Tutelage.** *Passive.* Whenever you perform a Full Rest with the Coin in your possession, an extra 1d4 Ruin is generated. The GM may also randomly call you to "roll for Dark Tutelage." When this happens you must roll 2d10+MIND vs TN 15. If you fail this roll, your character must make an aggressive action–cussing, argumentation, or even physical confrontation (whatever fits the current situation). |

Coin of the Nivh'dhré

| LAST TEAR OF THE IVORY QUEEN |
|---|
| **TYPE** |
| Accessory. Amulet. |
| **DESCRIPTION** |
| *As she was struck down by her Children, the Ivory Queen shed a final tear that fell to the world below: a single gleaming reminder of both her sorrow and her love for her subjects. The tear remained undiscovered until after the Skyfather's devastating return, when a group of refugees discovered a lush green grove hidden in a mountain on Ivory's Rest. At the centre of that grove was a small pool, with a gem floating in it that emitted an overwhelming aura of warmth. The gem melted to water as it shared its power with those around it, and over time slowly reformed itself. A smith among them crafted an amulet that would contain the gem as it shifted forms.* |
| **EFFECTS** |
| **Mercy of the Ivory Queen.** *Reaction. Far.* Once per Full Rest, the wearer of the amulet can invoke The Mercy of the Ivory Queen. This will protect a single Ally from fatal damage and must be used as the fatal blow is about to land. If the wearer is about to take fatal damage and the amulet's power has not already been used, the amulet will automatically protect the wearer from the fatal damage. The wearer, or the Ally it's used on, will be reduced to 1 HP from the fatal attack instead of being Incapacitated or killed. If the fatal attack's damage exceeds more than half the Max HP of the target, Mercy of the Ivory Queen will fail to save them. Mercy of the Ivory Queen takes precedent over powers that grant similar effects.<br>**A Mother's Sacrifice.** *Quick. Adjacent.* In true acts of desperation the gem can be removed from the amulet and used to return life to someone within 24 hours of their death. For this to succeed the victim must drink the tear; however, the Ivory Queen's tear will take the place of the fallen in death and its power will be forever depleted, rendering the Artifact useless. |

Last Tear of the Ivory Queen

## OCRUN'S MIGHT

### TYPE

Heavy Melee. Maul.

### DESCRIPTION

*During the Crimson War, many heroes rose and fell. Their deeds were immortalized through story and song, though some have lived on through the very weapons that helped them forge their destiny—and quite possibly the destiny of the world. Ocrun's Might is one such relic. The mighty hammer belonged to Ocrun Onyxloom, a ferocious Furian warrior whose rage burned brighter than the brightest star. This rage, tempered and harnessed by the just and wise teachings of his mother, Jenna Onyxloom, allowed Ocrun to become an unstoppable force on the battlefield: the perfect combination of discipline and raw power. Ocrun fought valiantly for the ideal of a united world, one free from bloodshed. Ocrun eventually fell during a pivotal battle against the Crimson Horde. His heroic efforts allowed many others that day to live. Vallan artificers, saved by Ocrun's sacrifice, picked up the broken pieces of his mighty hammer with the intention of rebuilding it after the war, stronger than ever, as a true testament to Ocrun's glory. The shaft was reinforced with a strand of the Ivory Queen's hair, making it indestructible, yet light as wood. The head of the hammer, made from blue iron, was redesigned to house Ocrun's preserved heart—a relic of his valor on the battlefield. Now, with a new threat poised to darken the world once more, Ocrun's Might searches for a new wielder worthy of Ocrun's legacy and of his vision of a united world. Those that have had the honour of holding the hammer say they can feel Ocrun's heartbeat, and believe his noble spirit lives on in his weapon.*

### EFFECTS

**Ocrun's Raging Fire.** *Passive.* The still-beating heart of Ocrun sets the hammer's head aflame. Rolling 18–20 on the 2d10 portion of a successful Attack roll causes the blue iron head of the hammer to open up slightly, unleashing intense fiery heat. You deal an additional +MIGHT damage as Fire.

**UPGRADE: Ocrun's Undying Strength.** *Passive.* You feel a surge of power, as if Ocrun's very hand is guiding your swing. When Ocrun's Raging Fire activates, the head of the hammer opens up wider than before, unleashing both fire and a torrent of power that runs down the shaft and invigorates your swing. The target must contest MIGHT vs. MIGHT. If you win this contest, the target suffers Hindrance for 1 round. On a failure, the target is Staggered for 1 round.

Ocrun's Might

Courier,
Chord of the Stars

**COURIER, CHORD OF THE STARS**

**TYPE**

Heavy Ranged. Longbow.

**DESCRIPTION**

*Valaris Hawkwind was a Vallan ranger of great renown, and one of the foremost guardians of the Starlight Woods when Vorath the Devourer cut through the land headed for Vallantis, where he meant to consume the jewelled city and all its inhabitants. The hordes of Fell monstrosities that accompanied Vorath on his rampage tore through the Starlight Woods like an undulating black wave of death. The Moon Guard, the elite corps of rangers that protected the Woods, fell back slowly, forced to give up, inch by inch, their precious forest to the demons. When Valaris arrived on the scene, he rallied his brothers and sisters to stand fast against the enemy and let his legendary longbow, Courier, pluck a macabre song as arrow after enchanted arrow sung out from its bowstring. Valaris did not slow in his assault. Emboldened, the other Vallan rangers pressed forward alongside Valaris and soon the demonic legions were being pushed back. But the rangers' victory was short-lived, for when Vorath arrived at the scene their arrows could barely penetrate his grotesque hide—save those shot from Courier. Vorath moved on Vallaris, determined to devour the annoying insect that dared challenge him, but before the Infernal King could reach the valiant ranger, Lunastra the Silver Maiden arrived to challenge Vorath. It is said that the sight of the demigoddess so struck Vallaris that he fell instantly in love with her. As the other Valla retreated, Vallaris, still awestruck, followed Lunastra and Vorath in their battle across the land for days. When the dust finally settled with Vorath's defeat, Vallaris was missing, never to be seen again. Only his longbow Courier was found, located near what are now the Twilight Caverns.*

**EFFECTS**

**Enhanced.** *+2 to damage.*

**Starfire Arrow.** *Standard. Very Far.* Courier can empower any arrow nocked by it into a blazing missile. This empowerment requires the wielder to lend a small portion of thier power to activate the enhancement. Expend 1 Class Resource to shoot an arrow that inflicts your Basic Ranged damage as Fire damage.

**UPGRADE: Volley.** *Passive.* Rolling 16–20 on the 2d10 portion of your Attack roll enables you to instantly fire off another Basic Ranged attack at the same target as the initial shot.

## STORMBRINGER, GAVEL OF THE FAITHFUL

### TYPE

Medium Melee. Warhammer.

### DESCRIPTION

*Part sacred relic, part deadly weapon, Stormbringer is one of many coveted Artifacts that once graced the armoury at Sanctuary. The Priesthood that runs the temple complex tell the tale of a hammer born out of goodwill but forged by a god. Sanctuary had always been a safe haven for weary travellers and those seeking an austere life of worship. One such traveller stumbled into the cloistered halls of Sanctuary one night. He had a large, imposing figure, and was wrapped in a massive fur cloak. He was clearly wounded and dripped blood where he stepped. When the Priests unfurled his cloak, they saw a wavering Furian on the edge of death. The Priests tended to the stranger day and night for a week and nursed him back to health. Being both a grateful patient and a Furian, honour demanded the stranger repay the Priests' kindness. When he was strong enough, the stranger spent what seemed like days in the temple's forge. He took no meal or water or reprieve. The clanging of metal and singing of work songs echoed through-out the temple grounds with no end. The stranger had been swept up in the Dance of Volkanus—a rare and momentous occasion when the demigod Volkanus the Forgesmith takes possession of a Furian craftsman and imbues his divine touch on whatever creation is being forged. When the stranger finally emerged, he held in his hands a beautiful hammer that crackled with power and contained a censer that burned what seemed to be an unending supply of incense. The hammer, which would come to be called Stormbringer, served as a holy relic at the altars of Sanctuary and also as a weapon for Priests who ventured forth from the temple grounds on dangerous missions.*

### EFFECTS

**Enhanced.** *+2 to damage.*

**Judgment.** *Standard. Adjacent.* Once per Full Rest. Stormbringer comes to life as each side of the hammerhead glows with crackling blue electricity, ready to deliver a thundering blow. On a successful attack, the target suffers your Basic Melee damage as Electric and is Stunned for 1 round. Failure results in the target suffering Half Damage as Electric and becoming Staggered for 1 round.

**UPGRADE: Thundering Strikes.** *Passive.* Rolling 16–20 on the 2d10 portion of a successful Attack roll deals an additional +1d8 damage as Electric on any Melee Attack.

Stormbringer,
Gavel of the Faithful

Lantern of the Lorekeeper

**LANTERN OF THE LOREKEEPER**

**TYPE**

Light Melee. Staff.

**DESCRIPTION**

*"The light of knowledge illuminates the way." During the Crimson War, the Grand Mystic Syndarra was sent on a mission by the Triumvirate of Taloran to discover a weapon of great power to help turn the tide of war in the favour of the Children. Syndarra went deep into the north, to the top of Jade Mountain, in search of such an Artifact. On the frozen peak of the mountain, Syndarra found nothing but ice and snow, and believed she would die there—having failed her mission and expended all of her supplies and Mana. In the snowstorm she saw a fire, glowing in the distance, and began to move towards it. It was there in the icy, barren nowhere that she found a lantern. The lantern glowed with warmth, but more importantly, when she peered into its light, she saw an entire dimension she had not known existed. It was a pocket of space that could be filled up with knowledge; in turn, that knowledge empowered the lantern to do wondrous things. Syndarra fixed the lantern to her walking stick and used its power to help her return to Taloran, where she presented it as a new and powerful asset for the war. The Lantern of the Lorekeeper was passed on from one generation of Grand Mystic to the next; each imparted their knowledge and wisdom into it, empowering it further. It is believed that the demigod Halifax once hid himself amongst the masses, disguised as a mortal man, to come and touch the Lantern and gift it with a small portion of his own power.*

**EFFECTS**

**Brilliance.** *Passive.* Choose 1 additional Tier 1 power or upgrade of your Class to possess. Make note that this power cannot be upgraded due to the nature of its acquirement. The power or upgrade is lost the moment you are no longer wielding the Lantern of the Lorekeeper. Choose wisely, as you cannot change your choice once you've bonded with the Lantern.

**UPGRADE: Unending Knowledge.** *Passive.* Your Primary Class Resource maximum is increased by 1 as long as you are wielding the Lantern of the Lorekeeper.

**NIGHTMARE, THE SHADOW'S WAKE**

**TYPE**

Heavy Melee. Giant Hammer.

**DESCRIPTION**

*The Furian blacksmith Morin Danzag had much to atone for. A loving father and a doting husband, Morin gave his all to his family. His only vice was enjoying a good brew a bit more than he should have. One night, stumbling home drunk, Morin entered into a heated argument with his wife. Already heavily intoxicated, Morin's control spiralled away from him as he entered the Red Rage. Upon waking, he found the mutilated corpses of his family strewn about him, and his hands covered in their blood. They say Nightmare is a hammer he forged to remind himself of the demons that live inside of him: one side of the hammer shows a face of rage and madness, the other of composure and solemnity.*

**EFFECTS**

**Enhanced.** *+2 to damage.*

**Two-Faced.** The duality of the Red Rage is a curse the Furian race continues to struggle with. Nightmare, the Shadow's Wake symbolizes their internal struggle. Stare into one of the faces of Nightmare to empower it. Staring into the raging face causes your AR to increase and your DR to decrease by up to half your Level (you choose the degree the longer you stare into the face). Staring into the composed face causes your AR to decrease and your DR to increase by up to half your Level. You may decide not to stare at all, which means Nightmare becomes a mundane Heavy Melee weapon. Once you make your choice, you cannot change the empowerment until you take a Full Rest.

**UPGRADE: Weight of the World.** *Passive.* Morin's guilt lives on inside of Nightmare. The heaviness of his sorrow carries through with each strike you deal, sometimes even knocking down its victim. When your damage dice roll their maximum value (in this case, double 6's or a 12), your target is Rooted for 1 round. Elites are immune to this effect.

Nightmare,
The Shadow's Wake

**ECHO**

**TYPE**

Heavy Ranged. Rifle.

**DESCRIPTION**

*It was hard to tell what Fell Hunter Drake Dantuvian was famous for—killing demons or 'slaying women,' as he'd put it with a wink. When it came to demons, though, rumour has it that Dantuvian never had a bad shot. Some say it was the guns he used; others say he was just that good.*

**EFFECTS**

**Enhanced.** *+2 to damage.*

**Sureshot.** *Passive.* Perfectly balanced and impeccably calibrated, Echo gives confidence even to the novice shooter. Any damage die that comes up as a 1 or 2 while wielding Echo may be re-rolled.

**UPGRADE: Killshot.** *Passive.* The longer you take to crystallize your shot, the harder it hits. For each round that you remain in the same position, your damage is increased by +2 and this damage can stack. This bonus is reset the moment you move or are displaced from your current position. The bonus damage cannot go higher than your current Level.

Epilogue

**EPILOGUE**

**TYPE**

Light Ranged. Pistol.

**DESCRIPTION**

*At the age of fifteen, Becca Brightheart was one of the youngest Fell Hunters ever to graduate from recruit training to full-fledged Hunter. For Becca, it was never a matter of merit or special skill that elevated her to her rank so quickly. The sudden death of her mentor, Cyrus—during a training exercise on the outskirts of the Dreadmarsh—forced Becca to fend for herself against the Fell that erupted from a surprise breach. The young girl credits the magickal pistol, which her teacher gifted to her with his dying breath, as the reason why she still stands today. Epilogue has since grown in legend and many copycats have emerged to capitalize on its popularity. Are you holding the real thing, or a mere imitation?*

**EFFECTS**

**Enhanced.** *+1 to damage.*

**Arcane Shot.** *Standard.* Under Epilogue's chamber sits a small vial of volatile energy that can be discharged from the gun with devastating effect. The vial fills up slowly with the contained radioactive emanations of a specially charged Kyrindian crystal embedded in the design of the pistol. Twice per Full Rest you may choose to use a Standard action to make a basic attack that deals an additional +1d8 Arcane damage on a successful hit.

**UPGRADE: Makeshift Grenade.** *Standard. Far.* With the upgraded chamber socket, the vial of volatile energy can be quickly removed and hurled at a group of enemies to devastating effect. Roll your Basic Attack. The target and anyone ADJACENT to it suffers:

- 4d4 Arcane damage if the vial contains enough energy for 2 **Arcane Shots**
- 2d4 Arcane damage if the vial contains enough energy for 1 **Arcane Shot**

Targets that manage to succeed their Defense check suffer no damage.

Once thrown, Epilogue is no longer able to perform **Arcane Shots** until a new glass vial is put in place and a Full Rest has allowed the chamber to refill with volatile energy. A single use of Gear can be marked off to replace the glass chamber.

Black Maiden

## THE BLACK MAIDEN

### TYPE

Medium Melee. Longsword.

### DESCRIPTION

*The history of the Black Maiden is unclear. It is said that a powerful Mystic had a son that she cherished as much as any with a Human heart possibly could. She left the Sanctum of the Third Eye and headed into the forest to live out her life with her son. She erected powerful wards and spells to protect her child from harm. The boy was nigh invincible, but one day, having grown into a young man, he happened upon a beautiful forest spirit bathing in a lake. Utterly spellbound, he approached her. So lost was he in her charms that he drowned attempting to reach her across the water. It is believed that in her grief and anguish the Mystic tore the very essence of the forest spirit asunder and imprisoned the pieces in a blade that would become known as the Black Maiden.*

### EFFECTS

**Enhanced.** *+1 to damage.*

**Straight to the Heart.** *Passive.* Like the enchanting forest spirit, the Black Maiden cuts through all defenses and pierces where you are most vulnerable. Rolling 17–20 on the 2d10 portion of a successful Attack roll enables your attack to completely ignore your target's AV.

**Magnetic.** *Passive.* When you wield the Black Maiden, your movements are imbued with a subtle grace that catches the eye. Some folks just can't seem to look away. Your Presence is increased by +1 when you have the Black Maiden equipped.

**UPGRADE: No Mercy.** *Passive.* Straight to the Heart's effects occur more often and will activate on a range of 14–20.

**BRACERS OF THE VANGUARD**

**TYPE**

Accessory. Bracers.

**DESCRIPTION**

*Legend has it that during an epic battle between the demigod Temperion and his nemesis the Infernal King Tala'zim the Wicked, Temperion's shield blocked over a thousand blows over the course of the fight. Chips and fragments of the divine steel from Temperion's shield fell to the earth. Many pieces were buried deep and lost to time. The few fragments that were salvaged were either sold or forged into items of wondrous power. These bracers are but one such item.*

**EFFECTS**

**Enhanced.** *+2 to DR.*

**Return Fire.** *Passive.* Rolling 18–20 on the 2d10 portion of your Defense roll allows you to completely deflect any reasonably sized ranged physical projectile back towards your attacker, automatically striking them with their own attack.

**UPGRADE: Mirrored Steel.** *Passive.* Return Fire now also works on magickal ranged projectiles.

**ALTARION'S WARD**

**TYPE**

Shield.

**DESCRIPTION**

*Altarion, the First Sentinel, stood alone against the onslaught of a hundred demons after all his brothers fell in battle. His company of men was tasked with holding a chokepoint that was critical during the Siege of Taloran: the city would fall if Altarion and his men could not hold. The mountain of corpses that had piled high over the days of fighting narrowed the area into a point so tight that the demonic hordes' numbers would count for nothing. One by one Altarion challenged them, fighting well into the night. Countless demons fell. The screams of death and the clang of combat rang endlessly. In the morning, when reinforcements arrived, they found nothing but fresh demon corpses and Altarion's battered shield.*

**EFFECTS**

**Enhanced.** *+1 to AV.*

**Duelist.** *Passive.* The shield hums with the strength and honour of Altarion's spirit. When you and your target are the only units ADJACENT to each other, you receive HL as a bonus to your AR and damage.

Altarion's Ward

Shadowmantle

## SHADOWMANTLE

**TYPE**

Light Armour. Chestpiece.

**DESCRIPTION**

*It is said that Mave the Trickster holds a special place in her heart for the Afflicted. It is believed that it was through Mave's hand that the Afflicted were whisked away during the Plague Wars that saw the Human Empire persecute and hunt down Afflicted. Those grateful Afflicted speak of Mave tearing a small piece of her divine garb and laying it over the huddled masses of frightened people, shrouding them from the Empire's ire. It is from a small part of this tattered garb that Shadowmantle, the cloak of the First Phantom, was created.*

**EFFECTS**

**Enhanced.** *+2 AV.*

**Elusive.** *Passive.* +2 to DR against Provoked Attacks.

**Shadowdancer.** *Set Bonus.* If Shadowmantle and Twilight Walkers are worn together, you will deal an additional +1d6 Physical damage on a successful Melee Attack against any target that is ADJACENT to an Ally of yours.

## TWILIGHT WALKERS

**TYPE**

Accessory. Boots.

**DESCRIPTION**

*Fashioned from the same divine garb that created the Shadowmantle, Twilight Walkers are boots that cradle even the heaviest footfall, completely silencing the sound of footsteps. The Twilight Walkers have passed through many "feet." Their last known wearer was Huxton, the clumsy Mystic. Huxton used the Walkers to sneak around the Sanctum of the Third Eye, but their stealthy properties proved a double-edged sword when he entered the Apprentices' Casting Chamber unannounced and was summarily roasted to death by a colleague practicing the Breath of Fire spell.*

**EFFECTS**

**Soft as a Feather.** *Passive.* +HL to sneaking around or trying to remain undetected.

**Shadowdancer.** *Set Bonus.* If Shadowmantle and Twilight Walkers are worn together, you will deal an additional +1d6 Physical damage on a successful Melee Attack against any target that is ADJACENT to an Ally of yours.

Solarius,
Hand of the Dawn

**SOLARIUS, HAND OF THE DAWN**

**TYPE**

Heavy Melee. Greatsword.

**DESCRIPTION**

*Forged by Vallan Bladesmiths from the precious material recovered from a fallen star. The massive blade was commissioned by the Aluvanian Priesthood. Adorned with powerful runes and blessed with holy ointments, Solarius was once wielded by the Fist of Justice, Tiberius Ironsoul. Countless demons and Undead have been slain by this righteous blade. Solarius was said to be lost when Tiberius fell during the Blacklands Crusade. He and a number of his fellow Judges were betrayed by a village they were sent to protect, the Taint of the Fell having corrupted the local people beyond redemption.*

**EFFECTS**

**Enhanced.** *+2 to damage.*

**Echoes of Light.** *Passive.* Holy energy leaves a short-lived residue on all those that it touches. Rolling 19–20 on the 2d10 portion of a successful Attack roll causes an echo of light, replicating all Divine damage that the target has received within the round.

**UPGRADE: Illumination.** *Passive.* Echoes of Light activates more often and now will occur on a roll of 17–20.

**UPGRADE: A Righteous Blade.** *Passive.* When wielding Solarius, Hand of the Dawn you gain the effects of the Judge power: **And You Shall Know His Name.** If you already have taken this power, its effects are doubled from +HL to +LEVEL as long as you hold Solarius.

| DRAGON'S KISS |
| --- |
| **TYPE** |
| Light Melee. Dagger. |
| **DESCRIPTION** |
| *Dragons are said to exist only in myth and legend. Long before the Skyfather and the Ivory Queen graced Unity with their touch, it is believed that dragons ruled. Tales of their power bask in hyperbole and often make good bedtime stories for children. But once in a while something such as the Dragon's Kiss, an ancient dagger with an undeniable power, is unearthed that makes one question if these terrifying creatures are truly only folklore. The Dragon's Kiss was first unearthed by the Valla near the Crescent Mountains. It was handed down the royal bloodline generation after generation until it arrived in Queen Amariel's care. The Queen was a formidable Mystic in her own right but had a strong phobia of fire and preferred all the other magickal elements to it. She gifted the Dragon's Kiss to Windgrove Academy in hopes that the powerful weapon would find a home with someone more inclined towards its affinity for fire. The dagger never made it to its intended destination as the convoy tasked with delivering it was attacked and all the cargo they were carrying was lost in the assault. Those that have held the Dragon's Kiss speak of the intense warmth constantly emanating from the handle.* |
| **EFFECTS** |
| **Enhanced.** *+1 to damage.* |
| **Fiery Soul.** *Passive.* It is possible that the spirit of a dragon lives inside this fine blade. Rumours have it that those wielding the blade develop a real penchant for all things fire over time. When dealing Fire damage through the use of a power, you inflict an additional +HL Fire damage. |
| **Unending Warmth.** *Passive.* Even on the coldest nights, holding this dagger feels akin to sitting by the hearth. +7 Frost Resistance. |
| **UPGRADE: Dragon's Breath.** *Passive.* You gain the Mystic power **Breath of Fire** and use your Primary Resource to activate it (e.g. a Phantom would expend 3 Guile). If you already have this power, its Mana cost is reduced to 1. |

Dragon's Kiss

**SOUL RAZOR**

**TYPE**

Light Melee. Fist Weapon.

**DESCRIPTION**

*Soul Razor was a wrist blade that belonged to the infamous Halfhand, a remorseless and deadly Phantom of some renown. Halfhand had the blade forged from a cache of Furian steel that was suffused with energies from the Drift when a breach opened directly on top of the merchant caravan carrying it. Halfhand always had a bit of a cruel streak, but those that knew him said he became increasingly brutal after acquiring Soul Razor. They also described him being able to walk away casually from a fight after sustaining the most grievous of wounds.*

**EFFECTS**

**Enhanced.** *+1 to damage.*

**Thirst for Blood.** *Passive.* Upon landing the killing blow on your target, you are healed for 1 HP.

**Eternal Hunger.** *Passive.* After reaching 10 kills in battle, Thirst for Blood's healing bonus permanently increases by +1. Bonus caps out at +4.

Soul Razor

**ANKLETS OF WICKED SPEED**

**TYPE**

Accessory. Anklet.

**DESCRIPTION**

*Aside from having an insatiable appetite for sadism, the Infernal Lord Tala'zim is also known for his blinding speed. During his epic battle against the demigod Temperion, both combatants suffered many wounds and they left more than just blood on the battlefield. Strands of Tala'zim's frosty white hair were salvaged and fashioned into jewellery or used in cultist rituals. Brackus, a Human acolyte belonging to the cult of the Flayed Ones, fashioned a particular item made from many strands of Tala'zim's hair braided into a loop and sealed with an enchanted clasp. Brackus concealed the item by wearing it as an anklet underneath his robes. In doing so, he developed an uncontrollable restlessness in his legs. The constant bouncing and foot tapping kept his reflexes primed and allowed him to move with blinding speed at times. Eventually his fellow cultists became annoyed at Brackus's relentless jittering and, in true Tala'zim worshipping fashion, sawed off both of Brackus's legs in the most slow and agonizing way possible.*

**EFFECTS**

**Can't Catch Me.** *Passive.* While wearing the Anklets of Wicked Speed, your movements become jerky and unpredictable. You gain +2 DR against Provoked Attacks.

**Restless.** *Passive.* When you are stationary for longer than five minutes, your legs begin to bounce as a nervous energy pulses through your body. Oddly, when you lie down the twitching stops.

**UPGRADE: Always First.** Once per Full Rest, you may grant yourself First Strike at the beginning of an encounter. This allows you to go before anybody else on the battlefield. Invoking this ability overloads your nervous system and is taxing which causes you to suffer your Level in True damage when Always First is activated.

Morning and Evening, the Forest Blades

| MORNING |
| --- |
| **TYPE** |
| Light Melee. Blade. |
| **DESCRIPTION** |
| *Morning is the larger of the two weapons that are known as the Forest Blades. In recent times, the Forest Blades have always been wielded together by a single user. But this was not always so. Before the age of the Furians and Humans, Morning was wielded by a single Vallan master, and its counterpart Evening, by that master's beloved. Together, through the use of their Spirit Stones, the lovers moved as one and coordinated a dance so pure and so beautiful that the very trees of the forest swayed in time to their grace. To return the pleasure of being witness to such beauty, the spirits of the forest blessed the blades. One day however, Morning's master fell to an ambush by the Fell. At the time, the Valla only knew of them as "The Fallen" and the sight of a demon was truly rare, perhaps seen once in a century.* |
| **EFFECTS** |
| **Enhanced.** *+1 to damage.* |
| **Morning's Grace.** *Passive.* When outside in natural or forested settings, you receive +3 to Speed. |
| **Forest Blades.** *Set Bonus. Overdrive. Movement.* When wielded alongside Evening, you may instantly move up to a FAR distance without suffering Provoked Attacks. Only works outside in natural or forested settings. |
| **UPGRADE: Together as One.** *Set Bonus. Passive.* The ends of the Forest Blades intertwine together to form a double-bladed glaive. Your weapon damage die is increased to 1d10. |

| EVENING |
| --- |
| **TYPE** |
| Light Melee. Handblade. |
| **DESCRIPTION** |
| *Evening is the smaller of the two weapons that are known as the Forest Blades. Evening belonged to Alluriel, a legendary Vallan warrior from the times of old. Alluriel rose to fame shortly after her love died at the hands of demons. Her beloved's blade, Morning, was carried by the earth, wind, and waters back to Alluriel. The very forest mourned his passing and honoured him by returning the only part that remained of him to the woman he loved. Alluriel was the first in a line of many to wield both blades together. With each new generation that the Forest Blades passes onto, new secrets and techniques are unlocked, making the weapons ever more glorious.* |
| **EFFECTS** |
| **Enhanced.** *+1 to damage.* |
| **Evening's Cover.** *Passive.* When outside in natural or forested settings, you receive +2 to stealth-related checks. |
| **Forest Blades.** *Set Bonus. Overdrive. Movement.* When wielded alongside Morning, you may instantly move up to a FAR distance without suffering Provoked Attacks. Only works outside in natural or forested settings. |
| **UPGRADE: Together as One.** *Set Bonus. Passive.* The ends of the Forest Blades intertwine together to form a double-bladed glaive. Your weapon damage die is increased to 1d10. |

Dreambinder

**DREAMBINDER, TOME OF THE DECEIVER**

**TYPE**

Tome. Accessory.

**DESCRIPTION**

*Vedecus Haven was a brilliant dreamer who wasn't afraid to push the boundaries of science and magick. Expelled from the Imperial Academy after having manifested signs of the Phage, Vedecus turned to the dark arts of the Driftwalker to satisfy his hunger for mystical knowledge. After many liaisons with the darker entities of the Drift, Vedecus began to notice a distinct pattern in the way contracts and pacts were made with the voices from beyond. Ever the schemer, Vedecus began drafting contracts with a particular meticulousness that bent the terms and conditions of the grim deals he made in his favour. He became so good at discovering loopholes and creating one-sided contracts that the demons he swindled began to put bounties out for his head as they could not harm him due to his convoluted and airtight terms. It is said that Vedecus carried all the contracts he ever made in a secret tome—supposedly inked in his own blood. There was a clause included in the tome that allowed him to pass on the power inherent in the contracts he collected. Vedecus had hoped to sire children and have them continue his legacy but he disappeared shortly after a Class 6 Breach appeared where he was conducting his research. Vedecus's tome, Dreambinder, has passed through several hands since, and it has picked up various mechanical bindings and augmentations. Its owners fear the angry demons that are probably still searching for Vedecus. They believe binding the book in cold steel and iron makes it harder to detect for the Fell senses, the same way the Children of Steel have shown immunity to the Taint or Fell influence.*

**EFFECTS**

**Shrewd Bargain.** *Passive.* Choose 1 Main Attribute to boost by +1. You lose 5 Max HP. When you want to end the contract, you may tear the page out of the tome and destroy it. The effects are reversed instantly. Only 1 contract may be active at any given time. Once you run out of pages, Dreambinder loses all of its power. 10 uses.

**UPGRADE: More Deals.** *Passive.* The mechanical lock sealing off more pages opens, revealing new bargains. You may now have a secondary contract active and can choose to increase either your AR, DR, MR, Speed, or AV by +1 at the cost of another 5 Max HP. Increases your number of uses by 5.

## ESSENCE EXTRACTOR

The Essence Extractor is a nefarious device created by the brilliant mind of the Afflicted Splicer, Dr. Ecclair VonWaalden. The contraption was used to extract the soul and memories of a living being and transplant their very essence into an automaton. VonWaalden always fancied the possibilities immortality might hold—all that time for all those experiments. The Essence Extractor was the answer to her narcissistic plight but she found the device was not without its limitations. The Essence Extractor required an enormous amount of energy to function. The heavily modified Kyrindian crystal acting as the heart of the Essence Extractor facilitates the transfer of consciousness between two vessels but ironically it requires the life force of living beings to power it in the first place. This grim requirement led VonWaalden on a grisly killing spree, leaving nothing but withered husks in the wake of her journey to immortality. Always a scientist, and never a gambler, VonWaalden has continued to "test" the Essence Extractor on unwilling subjects to ensure a complete and successful transfer before she tries it on herself. At least that's what the word on the street is.

**Effect:** The Essence Extractor is capable of transferring the soul and memories of a living being into an automaton. This process requires the Essence Extractor to be sufficiently powered up by "soul energy" before the transfer can be successfully completed.

**Powering Up:** The crystal that hovers in the middle of the device will change from its un-powered blue colour to a bright purple when it is ready for the transfer. "Soul energy" is acquired by attaching the Essence Extractor to living victims and turning the device on. Once the Essence Extractor has stored **5** souls, it is fully powered up to perform its transfer function.

**Mechanics:** Victims of either the powering up or final transfer process may attempt to mentally resist or physically remove the machine at the beginning of each round that the machine is attached to them, but if they fail **4** times their soul is lost to the Essence Extractor or transferred into the automaton shell attached on the other side of the device. They are unable to do anything else aside from attempt to resist or remove the machine when it is attached to them.

**Mentally Resisting.** Roll 2d10+MIND against a TN of 15 at the start of each round that you are attached to the Essence Extractor. A success temporarily staves off the machine's effect. A failure pushes you one step closer to losing your soul. 4 total cumulative failures results in death or transfer. Every additional soul stored in the Essence Extractor increases its power thus increasing the TN of 15 by +1 for each soul.

**Physical Removal.** Roll 2d10+MIGHT against a TN of 18 at the start of each round that you are attached to the Essence Extractor. This roll is made with a -4 penalty to MIGHT as the machine is sapping your strength away. Allies may attempt to physically remove the Essence Extractor as well and they do not suffer a MIGHT penalty in doing so. This requires a Standard action on their behalf.

*The Essence Extractor was designed as a plot device with mechanical implications that could be used as a source of drama.*

*The excerpt "Twisted Science" on pg. 85 is a recounting of VonWaalden's early experiments using the Essence Extractor.*

*Leaving a trail of withered bodies for your PCs to find can help build tension for their inevitable dealing with this devious device. Each body is an indication of the Essence Extractor growing more powerful, and its owner getting one step closer to a full soul transfer.*

*Depending on how physically strong or mentally capable your PCs are, you may want to adjust the baseline TNs and/or the number of failures up and down to find that sweet spot between despair and hope.*

# CHAPTER VIII

# FOES & FIENDS

*Razor-sharp vines whipped forth from Fritzy's arms, disappearing into the thickening mist in front of her. A second later, a piercing howl tore out from beyond the foggy wall—she had landed a solid hit. The pained cry was shortly followed by the sound of a heavy body splashing into the swampy waters. Fritzy sighed with relief, now there was only one more demon to take care of, but where was it? She looked behind her and saw Kirithan's broken body propped up against a rotting tree. He had been the first to fall. His throat had been slashed open after he foolishly led their party into an ambush despite Fritzy's protests. The Dreadmarsh was an unforgiving place.*

*A high-pitched scream pulled Fritzy's attention back to the battle at hand. Young Ham, a bright-eyed but woefully inexperienced Human apprentice had begged to come along with them and now he was dangling a meter off the ground. Ham's legs flailed pathetically as his soft, skinny arms futilely smacked against the corded muscle of the demonic appendage holding him by the throat. The Fellspawn knew its prey was helpless and a terrifyingly toothy smile slowly broke across its grey face. The expression was short-lived and rapidly changed to one of surprise as its bloodshot eyes bulged out and its horned head split right down the middle. A glowing green scythe had come down on the foul creature from behind it, cleaving it in half from top to bottom. As the Fellspawn's grisly halves toppled into the swamp, Fritzy welcomed the sight of a battered but still breathing Dumorne. Fritzy could swear she saw the smallest of smiles form on the always grim Driftwalker's face as he nodded to her.*

Enemies are a critical part of *Unity*. Without them, there would be no struggle, and struggle is the fire in which heroes are forged. As the GM, it's important that the enemies you pit your players against provide an interesting and appropriate challenge. Enemies that are too easy will become a bore and enemies that are too difficult run the risk of killing the entire party and ending the adventure. The following chapter will discuss the creation of encounters and also how to tune the difficulty of enemies. There will also be a section containing many ready-made foes for you to use in your campaign and tweak to your liking.

## FOES & FIENDS CHAPTER PREVIEW

- **Encounter Basics:** Examining the purpose of encounters and basic rules.
- **Monster Creation:** Baseline tables for monster creation and tips on how to re-skin and re-purpose existing monsters.
- **Monster Types & Sizes:** Two categories monsters fall into that have mechanical implications.
- **Reading Monster Cards:** Step-by-step walkthrough for understanding monster stats and abilities.
- **Foes & Fiends of Unity:** A collection of monsters steeped in Unity's history that are ready for use.

*While this chapter is called "Foes & Fiends" and deals with the type of enemies players will face in their adventuring career, the moniker of "monster" will be used to represent enemies or creatures even if the subject at hand isn't truly a monster in the general sense of the word.*

## ENCOUNTER BASICS

**Danger Level.** Every enemy has a Danger Level (DL). An enemy's DL is similar to a PC's Level. The DL dictates how much of a threat they will be in relation to a PC. An enemy with a DL of 4 would be defeated with some challenge by a Level 4 PC, but would make for a difficult fight for a party of four Level 1 PCs.

Danger Level isn't an exact science because there are so many variables at play: your players' skill level and familiarity with the game, their party composition and power choices, and even how lucky they are when they roll during battle. Over time, as you get a feel for how strong or weak your PCs are, you will become better at being able to construct and adjust encounters to provide that nice amount of challenge.

It's important to note that Danger Level is generally calculated by the raw stats of a creature. Most creatures have powers they can utilize but the variety in these abilities makes it difficult to standardize their strength and incorporate it into a creature's DL. There are some powers that are so potent that an exception will be made and the creature's DL will increase because of it. An example of this is the Shade's Incorporeal power that enables the Shade to passively reduce all Physical damage it receives in half. This power alone boosts the Shade's DL by +2 to represent how difficult it might be for a party to deal with.

*Players going first? If your players are particularly skillful in combat or decked out with some serious Artifacts, feel free to sprinkle an extra enemy or two on top of what you already had in mind. When the players go first, a few lucky rolls might instantly wipe out a handful of enemies, leaving you with little to do when your turn rolls around.*

**Quantity vs. Quality.** Generally, when DL and party Level are approximately equal, you will want to have 1 or 2 more enemies than there are PCs. Sometimes you might want to match a very strong lone adversary against the party, and in this case you would go up 3 or more DLs or use an Elite that is of equal DL or 1 higher than the party Level to achieve the appropriate challenge. Other times, you might want to swarm the party with weaker creatures to create an overwhelming scenario. In that case you would pick creatures with lower DLs relative to the party's Level.

*GM going first? You are probably noticing a trend when it comes to designing encounters in that having the first strike in Unity is a massive advantage. If DL and party level are fairly equal and the monsters get the run of the table first, you might want to keep the number of enemies equal to the number of PCs or go a bit easier on the opening assault.*

In the opposite direction, if the enemies' overall DL is slightly higher than the party's Level, you can opt to have an equal number of enemies to PCs. The higher DL means the enemies should be tough enough to withstand the PCs' opening barrage, allowing them to react when their turn arrives.

**Ruin Points.** Most monsters have potent special abilities that can be utilized against players to devastating effect. To keep these abilities in check, and balanced, monsters must expend resources similarly to how a player expends their Class Resource when they invoke a powerful ability. You may expend Ruin points that accumulate over the campaign to use these monster powers.

If you have decided not to incorporate the Ruin mechanic into your campaign, you can treat the Ruin cost of a monster power as its "cooldown" in rounds, e.g. a Vampire Lord's "Gaze of the Night" costs 2 Ruin to cast and has a baseline recharge of 2 rounds already. You would add the 2 Ruin to the 2-round recharge and only be able to use Gaze of the Night once every 4 rounds.

Powers that have no cooldown and cost only 1 Ruin will have a 2-round cooldown recharge rate.

**Monster Friendly Fire.** Some monsters will possess powers that cause Area of Effect (AoE) damage. In cases where monsters use a multi-target power that catches their own teammates in the AoE, their teammates will automatically be hit. You may ask your players to gleefully roll this friendly fire damage for your poor troops, or you may assume they take maximum damage in the interest of speed.

Alternatively, as part of the optional GM dice-rolling rules, if you'd like to roll for yourself for both defending against friendly fire AoE Attacks and the damage taken, you may go ahead and use **2d10 + [Monster's AGILITY]** to see if it is equal to or greater than their teammate's AR—in which case they will then dodge the AoE Attack.

Note that some monster AoE powers will explicitly state that they only hit "enemies." In this case, their allies will be safe from the attack even if they are in the area of effect.

**Monster Death.** Monsters, unlike players, do not become Incapacitated when their HP drops to zero. They are considered dead unless they have an ability that states otherwise.

### ELITE ENEMIES

Very powerful adversaries that might be able to take on an entire party by themselves or with only one or two accompanying monsters are called Elites. Elites are often the perfect choice for a showdown with a "big bad boss." These enemies are often vastly more powerful than a single monster of the same DL. An Elite's DL is often an indicator of it being able to take on, alone or with very little help, a 4-player party of equal or one lower Level. Elites are identified by having a purple header box instead of the usual red box. See *pg. 311* on how to read monster cards.

**9**

**ELITE MONSTER**

*Medium, Humanoid, 500 XP*

### FINE-TUNING DIFFICULTY

There are many factors that go into creating an appropriately challenging encounter. These factors can

fluctuate from group to group, game to game, or even encounter to encounter.

With Artifacts, myriad power combinations, varying levels of strategic thinking, and a variety of ways to build a character, it's hard to find one mold or standardized approach that will fit all situations. This table below is to help you fine-tune the difficulty of monsters on the fly as you get a better feel for your players' capabilities. Slight adjustments to monster stats are usually enough to adapt to a party that's proving more powerful than you thought.

Adjustments should be adaptive by taking into consideration any repeating patterns that you might recognize after a few encounters. If the PCs are constantly getting First Strike on monsters and killing a handful of them before the monsters even get to their turn then you might want to increase the monsters' toughness by looking at HP, DR, and AV values. Generally, the quickest fix for monsters dying too soon is to boost HP, although doing so slightly devalues the elemental damage certain Classes can bring. In moments when you don't want to fiddle with the numbers, you could narratively force an encounter to allow your monsters to have First Strike over the PCs. If the scenario is flipped around and you find the PCs are struggling against the monsters you are pitting against them, you can decrease the monsters' offensive stats like AR and damage. This should give the PCs a bit more breathing room and margin for error during combat.

| DIFFICULTY INCREASE | HP | AR | DR | DMG |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| MINOR | +20% | +1 | +2 | +2 |
| MODERATE | +40% | +2 | +4 | +4 |
| SEVERE | +60% | +3 | +6 | +6 |

**Armour & Resistances.** Armour and Resistance Value is another tuning knob that can be utilized to modify encounters for a satisfying challenge. A PC party full of Physical damage dealers that are cutting through everything you throw at them will be given pause and forced to reevaluate their strategy if they come up against some heavily armoured enemies. Likewise, the Mystic and Priest that have discovered a potent electric-based combo that they are using to the neglect of every other power in their arsenal could use a shake up in a monster that's highly resistant to Electric attacks, or even one that absorbs and heals itself using electricity.

**Power Usage.** Difficulty can also be increased without touching monster stats but instead by using their inherent powers tactically. By utilizing powers in a thoughtful and strategic way, you amplify the effectiveness of the monster and create more opportunities to put your PCs in a bad way. For example, at the start of a battle between your Aquillian Sky Strikers and Clerics (*pg. 312)* and a party of PCs, you could immediately prepare your Sky Strikers for dive-bomb attacks into the PCs' backline. Any melee-based PC will most likely be moving towards your Clerics seeing them as a high priority target because of their powerful spells. Next round, the Clerics use Might of the Maker on the dive-bombing Sky Strikers which makes them destroy the PC Mystic and Priest hiding in the back. The melee-based PCs are now torn between rushing forward to your unprotected Clerics or moving back to help their backline.

## MONSTER CREATION

You are encouraged to re-skin and recombine the Powers and Attributes of the monsters provided in this book so that they fit your world, e.g. if your campaign takes place in a city rife with automata but you really like the idea of an explosive suicide ability in the Zombie Burster, feel free to grab that power and put it into a volatile robot instead. Change the damage from Corrosive to Electric or Fire and tune the numbers up or down or leave them alone.

It may take an encounter or two to get a feel for what's too powerful or what's too weak. The suggestion is for you to err on the weaker side so as to not kill off your PCs and slowly ramp up the difficulty until you find an appropriate measure of challenge and excitement.

It's very important to understand that the table below is a generic foundation on which you can build your own monsters. The introduction of unique monster powers can greatly affect how truly challenging a monster can be and there are just too many variables at play for a precise way to make the perfect monster to throw at your players. With time and experience, you will develop a feel for creating appropriately challenging enemies for your players

*The majority of these Monster Creation guidelines (especially the Monster Creation table) do not apply to Elite monsters. It is advised to examine the ready-made Elite monsters and use their values as a template for creating your own.*

***Mental Resistance.** A monster's MR is usually a couple of points lower than their DR. Powers that target MR over DR are rare and should hit more often than not. The exception to this rule is if a monster is particularly strong of mind or has a very high Mind score. In these cases, it's better to increase the monster's MR higher, sometimes higher than their DR.*

| MONSTER CREATION TABLE | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DL | HP | AR | DR | MR | DMG | AV | SPD | XP |
| 1 | 10-19 | 11-13 | 13-16 | 11-14 | +1-3 | 0-1 | 11-13 | 10-20 |
| 2 | 14-22 | 11-13 | 14-16 | 12-14 | +2-3 | 0-2 | 11-13 | 20-40 |
| 3 | 16-25 | 12-15 | 15-17 | 13-15 | +2-4 | 0-2 | 12-15 | 40-60 |
| 4 | 20-30 | 12-16 | 16-18 | 14-16 | +3-4 | 0-3 | 12-16 | 60-100 |
| 5 | 28-40 | 13-16 | 17-20 | 15-18 | +4-5 | 0-3 | 13-16 | 100-150 |
| 6 | 40-60 | 13-16 | 18-21 | 16-19 | +5-7 | 0-4 | 13-16 | 150-200 |
| 7 | 50-70 | 14-17 | 19-22 | 17-20 | +6-7 | 0-4 | 14-17 | 200-250 |
| 8 | 57-78 | 14-18 | 19-22 | 17-20 | +8-9 | 0-5 | 14-18 | 250-300 |
| 9 | 63-83 | 15-18 | 21-23 | 19-21 | +8-10 | 0-5 | 15-18 | 300-350 |
| 10 | 65-85 | 15-20 | 22-25 | 20-23 | +9-10 | 0-6 | 15-20 | 350-400 |

to fight. In the meantime, it might be easier for you to browse the ready-made foes in this chapter and find one that's close to your vision of the enemy you'd like to create and use the ready-made creature as your canvas.

**Monster Attributes.** Monsters have Attributes just like PCs do. A monster's Might, Agility, Mind, and Presence are used for mechanics such as Contesting, and also for narrative purposes to help understand how strong, quick, intelligent, or charming they can be. A general guideline when determining a monster's Attribute during creation is to keep the peak of their strongest Attribute equal to their DL. For example, a muscular Orc with a DL of 4 would have a Might score of 4.

## MONSTER TYPES & SIZES

Monsters will come in a variety of Types and Sizes. These two categories have mechanical implications as certain abilities and powers will work better or worse on different monster Types and Sizes.

| TYPE | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| Humanoid | The most prevalent "type" of monster in Unity. Humanoids follow a morphology similar to Humans: bipedal, two hands and feet, a defined head, torso and legs. Includes any of the main races and most of the Crimson Horde. |
| Beast | Non-humanoids of both natural and magickal origins. They usually resemble animals and are natural parts of their environment. They are often driven by instinct and lacking in the ability to utilize language. |
| Undead | Undead were once living creatures but have now been brought back to life in an unnatural fashion. "Life" is used loosely here as the Undead have been forcibly re-animated that certain aspects such as having a pulse, body heat, and other natural organic factors are missing. Mostly comprised of the Risen. |
| Demon | Wretched creatures from an energetic reality that have been given physical form. These creatures are usually monstrous and terrifying to behold. Also known as the Fell. |
| Mechanical | Non-organic creatures usually comprised of metal and technology. The automata created by Humanity fall under this category. |

| SIZE | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| Tiny | Under 40cm and 10kg. |
| Small | Between 40cm and 1.4m. Under 35kg. |
| Medium | Between 1.4m and 2.1m. Under 160kg. |
| Large | Between 2.1m and 3.5m. Under 270kg. |
| Massive | Between 3.5m and 9.0m. Under 780kg. |
| Colossal | Anything above 9.0m |

**Multiple Attacks:** Some monsters have attacks that strike more than once and can target different targets or strike 1 target multiple times in a single round. This is usually denoted with a (#) by their attack. e.g. Formic Strike (2): 2d6+5

**Ability Recharge:** Some monster abilities are very powerful and have both a Ruin cost and a Recharge rate. This is denoted as #r where # is the number of rounds it takes to recharge.

## READING MONSTER CARDS

1 6 **ORC CHIEFTAIN** 2
*Medium, Humanoid, 170 XP*

3 COMBAT STATS

| + | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50 | 3 | 17 | 17 | 20 | 17 |

4 ATTRIBUTES

| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 4 | 3 | 4 |

5 ATTACKS

**Greataxe:** *Melee. 2d6+12 damage.*

6 TACTICS AND ABILITIES

**Berserker Rage:** *Quick. 1 Ruin. 2r.* The Orc enters an intense rage and gains +5 damage and +5 Damage Resistance but suffers -3 DR for 1 round.

**Cleave:** *Standard. Adjacent. 1 Ruin.* The Chieftain swings his greataxe in a wide arc and slices through two targets for 2d6+12 damage.

**Savage Inspiration:** *Passive.* In the presence of the Orc Chieftain, all Orcs on the battlefield regenerate 5 HP per round at the start of their turn. The Chieftain does not gain this benefit.

### 1. DANGER LEVEL

The number in the grey bubble indicates the Danger Level of the monster and how strong it is in relation to an average character of the same Level (see *pg. 308*).

### 2. NAME, SIZE, TYPE, XP & ELITE STATUS

While the size of monster is more a visual indicator, with some mechanical implications (larger usually means heavier) involving Contesting (*pg. 265*), the monster type is important as some class powers specifically target certain types of monsters. e.g. If a monster's type was a "Demon," it would be subject to the Judge's power "And You Shall Know His Name" and will take additional damage from the Judge. How much XP a monster gives is also listed here.

The colour of the bar containing the above information also denotes whether a monster is a regular monster or an Elite monster. If the bar is red, the monster is considered a regular monster. If the bar is purple, the monster is an Elite monster which means that a single one of these monsters is capable of taking on a party of 4 PCs that are of equal or 1 less Danger Level than the Elite monster. For an example of an Elite monster, take a look at the Vampire Lord on *pg. 342*.

### 3. MONSTER COMBAT STATISTICS

Monster combat statistics are similar in description and function to the combat statistics outlined in the Character Sheet section (see *pg. 152*). The main difference is that monster combat stats are static, hence their larger values. Players will roll against these static values and try to match or beat them in order to succeed. Another difference is that the monster's hitpoints are represented by the +.

*The Orc Chieftain with an AR of 16 will require players to roll a Defense roll of 16 or more to dodge its attacks.*

### 4. MONSTER ATTRIBUTES

Monster Attributes exist to help calculate Contest TNs and give you a sense of the monster's capabilities, and general strengths in case you were to make it into an interactive NPC or wanted to describe it in a certain way that highlights qualities that might stand out (or not stand out). You will also use these Attributes to gauge how difficult it might be to perform a certain action against the monster that's "out of the box."

*The party Dreadnought challenges the Orc Chieftain to a wrestling match instead of having both parties shed blood. The TN you set to win this match of strength will be high as the Orc Chieftain is naturally very strong and tough (very high MIGHT score).*

### 5. MONSTER ATTACKS

This section lists the basic attacks you can choose from when attacking with this monster. Each attack will use up your monster's Standard action.

### 6. MONSTER TACTICS AND ABILITIES

This section will list any tactics and special abilities a monster might have. The tags in *italics* following the ability name indicate what type of action it uses, its range (if it has one), the Ruin cost (if any), and also how long it takes to recharge (if applicable).

*The Orc Chieftain's Cleave ability indicates that it will take up the Orc Chieftain's Standard action, can strike targets that are adjacent, and costs 1 Ruin. The Orc Chieftain can combine Cleave with his Berserker Rage ability because Berserker Rage only uses a Quick action instead of Standard, but it also costs 1 Ruin and has a recharge time of 2 rounds.*

# AQUILLIAN

Aquillians were created by the Ivory Queen to be specialist support troops in the Crimson Horde. While their numbers are small, the Aquillians are a calm and intelligent race that provides a strategic edge that complements the raw savagery of the rest of the Crimson Horde.

Physically, the Aquillians resemble the powerful birds of prey that command the skies of Unity. They are humanoid in form, but with the heads and physical features of the eagle, falcon, and other noble birds. The majority of Aquillians, especially those that are part of a lightning-strike attack squad, possess majestic wings that allow them to fly above their enemies and dive on high-priority targets. This incredible mobility makes them a slippery adversary to face and gives them the freedom to strike from any angle they choose.

While Aquillians have their own language, they also speak the common tongue. Since the defeat of the Crimson Horde and their retreat into the Great Wild, Aquillians have been one of a handful of choice emissaries sent out by the Crimson Horde to deal with any of the Children of Unity if the need arises. More refined and intelligent than the goblins and less intimidating than the strapping orcs, Aquillians often make the perfect diplomats when negotiating trade or opening a channel of communication with those outside of their race.

These proud folk carry themselves with a regal presence and are often soft-spoken. Beware, though, the angered Aquillian. When brought to arms, the Aquillian's retribution will be swift and exact. In their avian society, they do not seek war but will ferociously defend their own and their lands. Tres-

*Leave a single Sky Striker or other burly melee fighter in the back line with the Clerics to protect them. When the Sky Strikers attempt to Dive Bomb, use the Clerics to heal up damage they may take while they are preparing to dive. If incoming damage is low, consider boosting your dive bombers with Might of the Maker before they take off.*

*A well-timed series of Dive Bombs can eradicate an entire back line of flimsy caster types. Dive Bomb can then be reactivated before the front line makes it back to the Sky Strikers.*

*The Cleric's Prayer ability should be telegraphed clearly to PCs. Describe the golden glow growing out from the Cleric and coalescing around her teammates. Speak about the chanting and how it begins to grow in tempo as the golden light intensifies.*

*PCs with powers that can interrupt or silence targets are ideal candidates to prevent Prayer from going off. The more powerful and rare Stun effect can also stop the Cleric from finishing Prayer, but PC powers that Stun are usually costly and usable only once per Full Rest.*

## 5 AQUILLIAN SKY STRIKER

*Medium, Humanoid, 100 XP*

**COMBAT STATS**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 34 | 3 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 15 |

**ATTRIBUTES**

| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 4 | 2 | 2 |

**ATTACKS**

**Melee Attack:** *Melee. 1d12+5 damage.*

**TACTICS AND ABILITIES**

**Dive Bomb:** *Standard.* The Sky Striker forgoes its Standard action and spends its turn getting into a crouch to launch itself into the sky. Its DR is increased by +2 as it prepares to jump. At the start of its next turn, it uses its Standard action again and leaps up high and comes crashing down on its target (any target on the battlefield). This leap is immune to all Provoked Attacks. It receives +2 to its AR and deals 2d8+4 damage if the Dive Bomb successfully hits.

**Soar:** *Passive.* Provoked Attacks against the Sky Striker when it moves away from its enemies suffer Hindrance.

passing on Aquillian territory will be met with a harsh warning; there is no second strike, as the next warning will be a spear from the heavens driven into the trespasser's heart.

In matters of war, Aquillians specialize in highly mobile offensive strategies and provide support magicks in the form of their Clerics. Aquillians are some of the most devout and religious members of the Crimson Horde. During the Crimson War, they drew their power from the Ivory Queen. After the Great Calamity, the Aquillian priesthood was lost for a while until the new demigods were willed into existence. While the Children of Unity would like to take full credit for the new gods, the Aquillians and other members of the Crimson Horde were praying, too, for a connection to something greater than themselves.

With their strong faith, Aquillian Clerics provide powerful healing and blessings to augment their highly mobile fighters. As long as the Clerics in the back line are casting, a force of Aquillians can hold their own against much greater odds.

5

## Aquillian Cleric

*Medium, Humanoid, 100 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | 0 | 16 | 17 | 16 | 16 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 3 | 5 | 2 |

### Attacks

**Melee Attack:** *Melee. 1d10+3 damage.*
**Bolt of Faith:** *Ranged. Very Far. 1d6+5 Divine damage.*

### Tactics and Abilities

**Prayer:** *Standard. 1 Ruin.* The Cleric places her hands together and begins to chant a Prayer. A golden aura emanates from her and begins to grow. If Prayer is not interrupted by the start of her next turn, up to 3 of her allies on the battlefield are healed for 10 HP each.

**Might of the Maker:** *Standard. Far.* Place a bonus on a single ally, granting them +5 damage on their next attack. The recipient of the bonus grows noticeably larger as their muscles are engorged temporarily.

**Light of the Maker:** *Standard. Far. 2r.* Instantly heal an ally or self for 20 HP.

# Carapid

Carapids are humanoid-sized insects. The origin of Carapids is unclear. Experts assume that Carapids are an unnatural evolution of an insect species on Unity due to the swell of Drift energy from the Great Calamity.

While considered a new species, Carapids are in fact made up of many sub-species of insects. Beetles, ants, and mantises are a few of the sub-species that comprise the Carapid race. All Carapids are unified by a hive mind and each colony has a Queen that is fanatically defended at all times. Another shared trait among Carapids is their hard shell, or carapace, from which they derive their name. Carapids resemble their original sub-species but are much larger and are usually able to stand upright in a bipedal fashion.

Carapids possess great intelligence and have manufactured and wielded weapons and armour outside of their natural arsenal. Those that have been able to observe Carapids for an extended amount of time have noted a communication system that consists of a series of clicks and hisses. Some Carapids possess the ability to speak the common tongue, although it comes out in a strange and shrill timbre: often raspy and vibrating.

The habitat of the Carapids can be varied but they are usually found underground or inside massive natural structures such as caves or gargantuan, hollowed out trees. At the very heart of such a place lies the Queen. The Queen's appearance

## 7 Swarm Master

*Medium, Humanoid, 250 XP*

**COMBAT STATS**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60 | 3 | 16 | 17 | 16 | 14 |

**ATTRIBUTES**

| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 4 | 5 | 2 |

**ATTACKS**

**Slash.** *Melee. 2d6+13 damage.*
**Sting Shot.** *Ranged. Far. 1d12+6 damage.*

**TACTICS AND ABILITIES**

**A Thousand Stings:** *Standard. Ranged. Far. 2 Ruin.* The Swarm Master's elytra (hardened forewings) open up and unleash a swarm of tiny flying gnats that descend upon its target. MR check vs TN 18. If the target fails its check, it suffers 1d10+10 damage and is unable to use powers on its next turn.

**March for the Queen:** *Quick. Ranged. Far. 1 Ruin.* The Swarm Master lets out a series of high pitched noises followed by several clicks in the direction of another Carapid. The targeted Carapid has their Movement action renewed.

**Soothing Presence:** *Passive.* At the start of the Swarm Master's turn, any ADJACENT Carapids are healed for 5 HP.

varies greatly between different Carapid locations. Most often the Queen resembles the most prominent species of her hive. One Queen may look like a giant beetle while another will resemble a massive ant. These Queens send out subtle sonic and pheromonal signals that can span a range of 100 kilometers. These signals are obeyed unquestioningly by her hive. When the Queen isn't sending out signals, Carapids have autonomy and free will amongst themselves.

In battle, Carapids are extremely tough due to their hard exoskeleton and body-to-strength ratio. They can be fearsome fighters, especially those that possess multiple limbs or potent natural poisons. This efficacy is elevated even higher when a group of Carapids is working in unison to the commands of a hive mind.

While extremely rare, there have been cases of Carapids living in cities far away from any hive mind. These Carapids usually find a way to eke out a living, though their success depends upon the tolerance of the population they are surrounded by.

## 6 Carapid Beetle

*Medium, Humanoid, 180 XP*

**COMBAT STATS**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 42 | 3 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 12 |

**ATTRIBUTES**

| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 4 | 4 | 1 |

**ATTACKS**

**Bite:** *Melee. 2d6+7 damage.*
**Spit.** *Ranged. Far. 1d20 Fire or Corrosive damage.*

**TACTICS AND ABILITIES**

*Carapid Beetles come in two flavours: Toxic or Fire. Choose 1 type per Beetle.*

**Toxic Spray (Toxic Beetle):** *Standard. Ranged. Nearby. 1 Ruin.* A green spray of deadly juices erupts from the Beetle's mouth. The target immediately suffers 2d6 Corrosive damage and is Poisoned (1d10 True damage at TN 16) for 3 rounds.

**Combustion (Fire Beetle):** *Standard.* The Beetle's belly begins to glow like a blazing ember as it expands. At the start of the red Beetle's next turn, all units ADJACENT to it will automatically suffer 2d6 Fire damage. Striking the Beetle while it is charging up its Combustion will also cause it to explode for 2d6 Fire damage.

## 6 Formic Carapid

*Medium, Humanoid, 180 XP*

*A Carapid's naturally high AV make them great enemies against parties that are heavy on Physical damage.*

**COMBAT STATS**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 48 | 4 | 16 | 17 | 15 | 12 |

**ATTRIBUTES**

| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 4 | 5 | 2 |

**ATTACKS**

**Double Strike (2):** *Melee. 1d8+5 damage.*

**TACTICS AND ABILITIES**

*Pincer Bite can be particularly nasty if it's used to trigger Provoked Attacks as the Formic Carapid moves away from other Carapids with a PC in tow.*

**Pincer Bite:** *Standard. 1 Ruin.* The Formic Carapid uses its powerful mandibles to crush its target and hold it in place. The target suffers 1d10+5 damage and must remain ADJACENT to the Formic that bit it for 2 rounds. The target may Contest MIGHT vs. MIGHT at the beginning of its turn to see if it can break free. If the Formic Carapid moves while its target is successfully pincered, the target moves with it and suffers Provoked Attacks if applicable.

**Formic Fever:** *Quick. 2 Ruin.* On a successful Pincer Bite, the Formic Carapid may secrete a deadly toxin that causes a contagious Disease in the target if they fail a MIGHT check against a TN of 15. The target suffers -1 to MIGHT and AGILITY.

### HIVE MIND

*Hive Mind bonuses are expensive but they are very powerful and if you decide to use them, consider the Carapids in the encounter half a DL higher than they should be.*

Being part of a Hive Mind bestows many benefits to Carapid warriors. Below, a GM may choose from one of the following Hive Mind benefits at the beginning of a battle:

**Protect the Queen:** For the cost of 1 Ruin per Carapid at the beginning of battle, the GM may invoke the Hive Mind passive bonus for selected Carapids on the battlefield. With this bonus active, the Carapids receive +2 to DR. Lasts until the end of battle.

**Carapid Savagery:** For the cost of 1 Ruin per Carapid at the beginning of battle, the GM may invoke the Hive Mind passive bonus for selected Carapids on the battlefield. With this bonus active, the Carapids receive +3 to damage. Lasts until the end of battle.

# Carnivex

*Mind Blast is the Carnivex's preferred method of devouring its prey. This vile creature revels in the sheer terror experienced by its victim as they are helplessly devoured.*

*It's rare to turn a PC into a puppet (they have to die, not just be Incapacitated). To properly utilize the entire array of the Carnivex's abilities, you can add smaller, weaker enemies into the encounter that the Carnivex can turn on and kill so that it can eat as a quick snack. Another option is to provide NPCs aiding the PCs in battle that the Carnivex can turn into puppets.*

To know the Carnivex is to know oblivion. The Carnivex is one of the most terrifying Fell demons to have emerged from beyond the Drift. While large, it is not as physically imposing as some of its bigger cousins. Yet many adventurers would choose meeting a colossal Cindermaw over running into a Carnivex. The mere thought of having one's soul, the very essence that makes a person a person, being torn asunder and devoured is enough to shake even the bravest warriors.

Carnivexes were spawned from the worst of the living that were captured and pulled through the Tempest of Terror. Those that harboured wicked and devious thoughts were twisted by the Fell energies as they were dragged throughout the Drift to the dark places where demons tread. The continual exposure to demonic energies combined with the seething evil they already harboured in their hearts eventually coalesced into the monstrosity known as the Carnivex.

The Carnivex's gluttony knows no bounds. It relishes in the sick pleasure it derives from devouring a living being's essence. Once consumed, there is no hope for the victim's soul to merge with the Drift and eventually be reborn. This fact drives their continued depravity.

Once a Carnivex has consumed its victim's essence, it has complete control over the soulless husk. One of its preferred strategies is to feed on children and then use their empty shells like puppets to lure further unsuspecting meals into its den.

3

## Carnivex

*Large, Demon, 400 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 160 | 2 | 16 | 16 | 15 | 14 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 4 | 5 | 3 |

### Attacks

**Razor Appendages (2):** *Melee. 1d8+5 damage.*
**Caustic Spit:** *Ranged. Far. 2d6+3 Corrosive damage.*

### Tactics and Abilities

**Puppet Master:** *Passive.* The Carnivex gains full control of any target it slays. The puppet acts as another combatant on the field, possessing all its abilities and stats prior to having its soul devoured. The puppet has half of its max HP.

**Devour Soul:** *Standard. Adjacent.* The Carnivex consumes a puppet and heals for 20 HP.

**Mind Blast:** *Quick. Nearby. 2 Ruin. 2r. Targets MR.* Deal 1d10 True damage. Target is Stunned for 1 round.

If the Fell are twisted, violent, and evil, it takes one equally perverse—if not more so—to worship them. The Cultist is that someone.

Shortly after the Great Calamity, the Children of Unity were exposed for the first time to the horror of the Fell legions. Demons that poured out through the Tempest of Terror and various breaches across the land attacked the cities and settlements of all the major races. They destroyed for the sake of destroying and there was no other purpose to their carnage than the pleasure that these godforsaken monsters derived from watching the world burn. The majority of civilization was taken aback by the senseless devastation, but there were a handful of fanatics that saw "beauty" in the arrival of the Fell.

Over time, these deranged few banded together to form various cults dedicated to an Infernal King or the Demon Queen. They believed that their dedication would be rewarded with dark gifts from their patron masters. Unlike the Driftwalkers who shrewdly bargain for their power and recognize the great cost of each deal they make with the entities that lurk in the Drift, Cultists freely give themselves to corruption and revel in the twisted souvenirs granted to them for spreading destruction in the name of the Fell.

Most Cultists are Humans or Afflicted, but there have been instances of Vallan and Furian members, albeit rarely. Cultists lurk in the dark corners and underbellies of cities, although some cults have begun to spring up in villages and settlements. Rituals of sacrifice are frequent. Virgin blood or the decapitated heads of the righteous are some of the offerings that Cultists use to appease their dark lords.

A Cultist's fanaticism can border on the delirious; they run shrieking into battle, protected by nothing but tattered robes or leather strappings. Usually malnourished or physically mutated, Cultists are a harrowing sight to behold. The Cultists' strength lies in their numbers and their ability to rile each other up. A mob of Cultists is incredibly deadly despite their frailty as individuals. When a group of them reach a fever pitch, the orgy of the destruction they can visit upon their victims is remarkable.

Followers of Vorath the Devourer differ from the typical, emaciated Cultist. They follow their patron lord's example and exemplify gluttony, often gorging themselves on food. Cultists are abhorred by society and are often shunned; people and businesses alike refuse to help, serve, or exchange goods with them. Cultists, especially the followers of the Devourer, have had to improvise and often live off a diet of rodent flesh and garbage. These disgusting meals are further accented by the occasional bout of cannibalism involving unfortunate victims of Cultist kidnappings.

Followers of Irathmus the Everburning are the most short-lived of all Cultists. They seek out violence in any form they can as appeasement to their wrathful lord. They are often identified by their bloodshot eyes and the bulging veins running across their shaven heads.

Those that follow Tala'zim the Wicked are recognizable by the myriad scars across their bodies and faces. The creed of this particular Infernal King is "Pain is pleasure." His faithful show their dedication through self-mutilation, and the upper echelons of Tala'zim cults consist of leaders who cut out their own tongues to show the depth of their loyalty to the tenets of their sadistic lord.

*Cultists work best in large groups. Their standard attack damage is fairly low and they depend on their Mob Rule ability to become a threat.*

*The Mark of Irathmus can be particularly nasty if a dying Cultist can set off a chain reaction with multiple Cultists who possess the Mark of Irathmus as well. PCs caught in these consecutive blasts will be in for a world of hurt.*

*The Mark of Tala'zim can cause a snowball effect if a single PC gets struck down. All Cultists bearing this mark on the battlefield are healed and can act again even if they've attacked that round already.*

## 3 Cultist

*Medium, Humanoid, 50 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 24 | 0 | 14 | 15 | 13 | 11 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |

### Attacks

**Melee Attack:** *Melee. 1d8+3 damage.*

### Tactics and Abilities

**Mob Rule:** *Passive.* For every Cultist on the battlefield, increase Cultist damage by +1.

**The Last Laugh:** *Passive.* When a Cultist suffers a killing blow, they make an instant Melee Attack at an ADJACENT target before they die.

**Marks of the Infernal Kings.** *Passive.* A Cultist may only bear one mark from this list:

*Mark of Vorath: Quick. 1 Ruin.* The Cultist's next attack is empowered by the hunger of the Devourer himself. The Cultist is healed for twice the amount of damage they inflict from this attack.

*Mark of Irathmus: Passive.* The fires of Irathmus burn inside the Cultist. When the Cultist's flesh is too weak to contain it anymore, it bursts in a fiery explosion. When the Cultist dies, anyone ADJACENT to the Cultist automatically suffers 1d8 Fire damage. Replaces **The Last Laugh.**

*Mark of Tala'zim: Passive.* The Cultist revels in the pain of others and is invigorated by their downfall. When a PC becomes Incapacitated, the Cultist is healed for 10 HP and regains their Standard action.

*Cyclops often hibernate, which puts them in a stasis-like sleep that's easily disturbed. It's not uncommon to find a centuries-old Cyclops in an abandoned or collapsed ruin. Most likely the Cyclops was put there to guard something of value.*

*You may telegraph to your players that the Cyclops' eye is particularly vulnerable. However, it will be more difficult to strike as it is a much smaller target.*

*Use Eye Beam - Crystallize to finish off weaker foes. The increase in TN will make it particularly hard for them to resist being petrified.*

Cyclops were created by the Ivory Queen to act as watchmen and overseers in the Crimson Horde. These large and muscular creatures were tasked with protecting key locations or keeping the workforce of the Crimson Horde in line and productive at all times. The war machine that was the Crimson Horde required a great deal of equipment and resources. The construction and procurement of these fundamental supplies fell to the smaller and less intelligent Crimson Horde members. Often, their work ethic would be scattered and their methods inefficient. The Cyclops were introduced to turn a ragtag band of Goblins or Zoog into a well-oiled production machine.

Cyclops tower over the average Human at around 3.5m, and often weigh up to a 200kg, most of it muscle. Their brawny prowess is only part of their power. Their single, central eye is the core of the Cyclops' true power. Large and circular, it varies in colour depending on the power it projects—to bring a worker in line or to destroy a trespasser, for instance. When used as a weapon or a disciplinary tool, the eye projects a beam that can strike a target 16m away. The effects vary depending on the Cyclops' will: a blue beam can freeze its target in place with a chilling blast of frost; a red beam can incinerate an area with scorching flames; a purple beam can knock a target away with massive concussive force. The most fearsome beam a Cyclops possesses, however, is its white beam. The white beam, when used on a weakened target, transforms them into crystal. The Cyclops usually only uses its white beam in cases where it must set an example, or in moments of desperation against a powerful foe.

Those that seek to plunder the Great Wilds in search of the treasures the Crimson Horde might have amassed in the Crimson War have often found themselves staring down the hollow eye of the Cyclops. Even in present day, some Cyclops still stand watch over locations deemed important by the remnants of the Crimson Horde. When the Horde scattered into the Great Wilds, the Cyclops' role as overseer began to fade into obscurity as their armies were fragmented and they tasted freedom from the Ivory Queen's divine will for the first time.

Many Cyclops left their former comrades to go and form their own societies in the Great Wilds. These Cyclops, no longer bound by duty, lead a rough and barbaric lifestyle. They hunt great game for sport, including Humans, Furians, Valla, and the occasional Afflicted on their list of prizes. Cyclops settlements are often primitive-looking, with simple stone and mud huts, a great fire pit, and grim totems adorned with trophies from their hunts.

There have been few reported instances of Cyclops being friendly to races outside the Crimson Horde. Most reports describe only hostility and barbarism. Cyclops take great joy in eating what they hunt and find humanoids an especial delicacy.

## 8 Cyclops

*Large, Humanoid, 300 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 75 | 4 | 16 | 18 | 19 | 15 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 6 | 4 | 4 |

### Attacks

**Melee Attack:** *Melee. Adjacent. 2d6+13 damage.*
**Axe Toss:** *Ranged. Nearby. 1d8+8 damage.*

### Tactics and Abilities

**Toughness:** *Passive.* Cyclops use their AV as universal Damage Resistance. Any type of damage (aside from True damage) they take is reduced by their AV.

**Eye Vulnerability:** *Passive.* A Cyclops' eye is its most precious organ. Striking at the eye directly will deal 1.5x damage. The DR of the eye is 23.

**Eye Beam – Frost:** *Standard. Far. 1 Ruin.* A frosty blue beam shoots forth from the Cyclops' eye and freezes its target in place, Rooting it for 1 round and dealing 2d8+8 Frost damage.

**Eye Beam – Fire:** *Standard. Far. 1 Ruin.* A sizzling red beam shoots forth from the Cyclops' eye and sets its target and those around it ablaze. Deal 1d12+8 Fire damage to the target and any enemies ADJACENT to it that fail their Defense roll.

**Eye Beam – Concussive:** *Standard. Far. 1 Ruin.* A shimmering purple beam shoots forth from the Cyclops' eye and blasts its target with concussive force. Deal 1d12+10 damage and displace the target 1 range band away from where it was.

**Eye Beam – Crystallize:** *Standard. Far. 2 Ruin.* A bright white beam shoots forth from the Cyclops' eye and petrifies its target. If successfully struck, the target must overcome a MIGHT check against a TN of 13 or they are turned to stone. For every 25% HP the target is missing, the TN they must roll against is increased by +2. Victims petrified this way remain statues until the responsible Cyclops is slain.

# Cyclops

*The Burrowed ability on the Fellspawn and Fellmancer can be used to set up some very unpleasant surprises. It's better to spread burrowed Fell around the battlefield in order to collapse in on PCs and leave them little room to escape.*

# Fellspawn

Amongst the legions of horrors that have passed through the Tempest of Terror and the random breaches that terrorize Unity, the Fellspawn is the most common and widely recognized monster to defile the land. Fellspawn are the foot soldiers of an endless army of darkness. They are easily the most numerous demons, and are considered expendable fodder by higher-ranking Fell.

Fellspawn are single-minded creatures that are grossly absorbed in spreading pain and destruction wherever they tread. Like most other Fell, they derive great pleasure in tormenting mortals and corrupting the land. They communicate in Fellspeak with their own kind and have only a very rudimentary grasp of the common tongue. They are able to employ basic phrases and a strained understanding of the language—usually enough to make threats, instill fear, and understand their prey's desperation as they call out for help or beg for their lives.

Fellspawn are fearsome and ugly creatures. Their ashy grey skin is often uneven and mottled, spiked, scaly, and punctuated with black patches of a sinewy and durable material. Their faces are adorned by a pair of grisly horns atop the head and pitch-

black sockets where eyes should be, in which purple Drift energy burns when they become excited. While Fellspawn are bipedal, they prefer to run on all fours when giving chase. They also possess a prehensile tail that can be used as a weapon.

Their favourite method of attack is by ambush. Fellspawn have an uncanny ability to burrow deep into the ground and lie patiently in wait for unsuspecting victims to tread upon their "kill zone." They spring from the ground and strike before a defense can be mounted. Fellspawn tend to travel in groups of four or more and are almost always accompanied by a Fellmancer.

## 4 Fellspawn

*Medium, Demon, 70 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 32 | 2 | 16 | 16 | 15 | 13 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 4 | 2 | 0 |

### Attacks

**Melee Attack:** *Melee. 1d8+6 damage.*
**Demon's Bite:** *Melee. 1d12+2 damage. Ignores AV.*

### Tactics and Abilities

**Burrowed:** *Passive.* Fellspawn are often burrowed in the ground, laying in wait for prey to ambush. If Fellspawn start Burrowed, note their locations on the battlefield in your mind. They may spring up at any time during the fight but will use that round emerging from the ground only, allowing players a chance to react.

**Tail Swipe:** *Standard. Melee.* The Fellspawn snaps its torso quickly and brings its tail around to strike all its enemies. All ADJACENT enemies that are successfully struck suffer 1d6+4 damage.

**Consume Essence:** *Standard.* The Fellspawn drops on all fours and begins to devour a corpse on the battlefield. Target an ADJACENT Incapacitated or fallen organic target (friend or foe) to use Consume Essence on. Until the start of its next turn, the Fellspawn is vulnerable and any attacks made against it gain Benefit. If the Fellspawn successfully completes Consume Essence by the start of its next turn, it is healed to full HP and receives +2 to AR and damage permanently. PCs that suffer a successful Consume Essence while Incapacitated gain 3 stacks of Fading.

## 5 Fellmancer

*Medium, Demon, 110 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 37 | 1 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 14 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 3 | 5 | 1 |

### Attacks

**Melee Attack:** *Melee. 1d6+4 damage.*
**Fell Bolt:** *Ranged. Very Far. 1d10+6 Electric damage.*

### Tactics and Abilities

**Burrowed:** *Passive.* Fellmancers are often burrowed in the ground, laying in wait for prey to ambush. If a Fellmancer starts Burrowed, note their location on the battlefield in your mind. They may spring up at any time during the fight but will use that round emerging from the ground only, allowing players a chance to react.

**Lifedrinker:** *Passive.* Fellmancer attacks are empowered to siphon life and heal either the Fellmancer or its allies. When a Fellmancer deals damage, a single friendly demonic target up to FAR away will be healed for half the amount of that damage.

**Fell Swap:** *Movement. Far.* The Fellmancer may physically swap places with another demonic ally. Does not cause Provoked Attacks.

**Fell Lash:** *Standard. Ranged. Nearby. 1 Ruin.* Both of the Fellmancer's hands set ablaze with purple fire. The Fellmancer performs a quick snapping motion one hand after another, sending tendrils of purple flame towards its targets. Strike 2 different targets up to a NEARBY distance for 1d10+4 Fire damage each.

**Visions from the Void:** *Standard. Ranged. Far. 3 Ruin. Targets MR.* The Fellmancer assaults the target's mind with terrifying visions causing them to lose their Movement action as they move to a NEARBY location of the GM's choosing.

**Void Sickness:** *Standard. Ranged. Far.* Once per battle, a Fellmancer is able to send a creeping miasma towards one target on the battlefield. The miasma moves at one range band per round. If it reaches its target, the target must make a MIGHT check against a TN of 16 or become Diseased. Void Sickness reduces MIND by -1. The miasma stops only when the Fellmancer dies.

*Consume Essence can easily snowball and create some supercharged Fellspawn. PCs will most likely focus fire a Fellspawn using Consume Essence. Remember to telegraph (in gruesome detail if you'd like) when this ability is used.*

*Visions from the Void is a fear type effect and subject to the Dreadnought's immunity once he gains his Fearless Class Feature. On targets that are vulnerable to this ability, try to use it when the target is Adjacent to a Fellspawn so that when they start running in fear, they suffer a Provoked Attack(s).*

# Glutton

Gluttons are massive creatures near to bursting with Fell energies. They are the generals of Vorath the Devourer's army of insatiable demons. True to their name, Gluttons don't know when to stop when it comes to their habits for consumption. These creatures are terrifying to behold; they consist of a jumbled mass of thick, oily, black tentacles that surround a gaping circular maw of razor-sharp teeth. These tentacles perform double duty as both a mode of transportation and as weapons to attack and retrieve their prey, which they pull into their wide, waiting mouths.

When hungry and unfed, Gluttons will move about slowly, searching for prey. They often set themselves up in dark corners or hidden places and lie in wait until they can smell their food nearby. Despite their size and weight, the tentacles of the Glutton strike with deadly speed, often encircling their prey before the prey can react. The tentacles possess immense strength and can crush their trapped targets to the point of unconsciousness before devouring them. Gluttons prefer their prey alive rather than dead because the sustenance they can acquire from a living being lasts much longer than that of a corpse. The blue, jelly-like sac that sits underneath the jumble of tentacles will expand as more 'food' is consumed, and acts as a preservation chamber of sorts for any organic material inside of it.

If a Glutton stumbles upon a group of victims and manages to consume them all without killing them, they will be kept in a barely-alive state in the Glutton's sac. The Glutton will then consume them very slowly, one by one, and with great relish. Over a matter of days, a single body may gradually disintegrate as the Glutton digests it. If multiple prey are trapped inside the sac at one time, each can only watch in horror as their comrades are slowly eaten alive bit by bit.

When fully fed in this manner, the Glutton's digestive sac grows very large and the Glutton's mobility is impaired until it can digest enough

7

## Glutton

*Massive, Demon, 2000 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 300 | 0 | 14 | 18 | 18 | 15 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 7 | 6 | 3 |

### Attacks

*See Tactics and Abilities: Tentacle Strikes*
**Tentacle Strike (4):** *Melee. Nearby. 1d6+8 damage.*
**Tentacle Strike (3):** *Melee. Nearby. 1d8+8 damage.*
**Tentacle Strike (2):** *Melee. Nearby. 2d8+9 damage.*
**Tentacle Strike (1):** *Melee. Nearby. 3d8+10 damage.*

### Tactics and Abilities

**Tentacle Strikes:** The Glutton attacks with its tentacles and receives multiple attacks per turn. At full health the Glutton receives 4 total attacks per turn using **Tentacle Strike (4)** as a guideline for damage. The Glutton may attack the same target 4 times or spread the attacks around. For every 25% or 75 HP the Glutton is missing, it loses an attack per round and uses the corresponding **Tentacle Strike (#)** guideline for attacks and damage. As it is damaged, the Glutton's attacks grow more desperate but lessen in quantity.

**Devour:** *Quick. Nearby. 2 Ruin.* When a Glutton Incapacitates a target it may choose to Devour it. A Devoured target is unable to make Death rolls and is considered stabilized but unreachable to its Allies unless they kill the Glutton and break open its digestive sac. Upon Devouring a target, the Glutton is healed for 30 HP and will begin regenerating 5 HP per round for each target Devoured during the battle. Devoured targets will die in four days if not rescued and lose 25% of their HP each day.

**Tentacle Fling:** *Quick. Nearby. 1 Ruin.* On a successful Tentacle Strike, the Glutton may displace their target a FAR distance from where the Glutton is currently located. Contest MIGHT vs. MIGHT to resist displacement.

**Aura of Dread:** *Passive.* Any character starting their turn ADJACENT to the Glutton must roll 2d10+MR against a TN of 12 or suffer -2 to AR for 1 round.

### Tactics and Abilities

**Keen Senses:** *Passive.* All Stealth checks suffer Hindrance when done within 20m of the Glutton.

**Flail:** *Standard. Nearby. 2 Ruin.* The Glutton flails all of its tentacles in random directions all around itself. Everyone who is ADJACENT or NEARBY must make a Defense roll. Those that are successfully struck suffer 1d20+5 damage and are Staggered for 1 round.

of what's in its belly to shrink the sac and allow the tentacles proper movement on the ground. Even when it has engorged itself on multiple victims, the Glutton's hunger knows no end. It will still try to attack and consume anything that enters its vicinity. The Glutton prefers living organic matter, but it can consume metals, fabrics, leathers, and other inorganic matter often found on prey as well. Many precious magickal artifacts have been lost to the Gluttons' voracious appetite, although these may take much longer to digest because of the power inherent in them.

Gluttons prefer dark places and are usually found underground, in tunnels and cavernous areas. The darkness and the winding corridors of subterranean places provide the perfect hunting grounds for the Glutton. The Glutton uses smell and its keen ability to sense body heat to detect when prey is close by, and can blindly send its deadly tentacles around corners to grab it. When acting as the commanders for Vorath's demonic legions, Gluttons can be found in the back lines, telepathically sending orders to lesser Fell and using their mighty tentacles to hurl rocks and debris at their enemies.

Those that have been devoured by the Glutton but have not been heavily digested yet may be rescued with outside help. The gelatinous blue sac that sits underneath a well-fed Glutton is thick and viscous, but penetrable from the outside. Sharp weapons or a very strong hand can break the sheath of the sac and drag out victims that are stuck inside. Those that have been sustained by the sac while they wait for digestion are usually disoriented and very weak. The shock to their systems is great as they begin taking in air again and require the use of their atrophying limbs.

Some entrepreneurial souls play a dangerous game when it comes to Gluttons. Their digestive sacs are potential treasure troves (depending on who or what the Glutton has been consuming). Those that are fast and skillful enough are able to get in close, break the sac, and take whatever valuables may be in the Glutton's stomach. Those that are not so fortunate find themselves keeping those same priceless artifacts company as the Glutton's next meal.

*Keep in mind that as the Glutton grows weaker from suffering damage, its ability to make multiple attacks lessens. However, it makes up for this in sheer power as the strikes that it can still make hit much harder. This makes the Glutton a very dangerous and unpredictable foe as its health begins to dip lower. A single hard strike might unexpectedly Incapacitate a PC, which can lead to that PC being Devoured and healing the Glutton.*

*Stuff your Glutton with a cool Artifact or a bunch of valuables that your PCs can sell. The Glutton is a deadly boss that stands a good chance of wiping out a party. Defeating such a monster should be rewarded handsomely.*

*Use Tentacle Fling to frustrate melee-oriented PCs.*

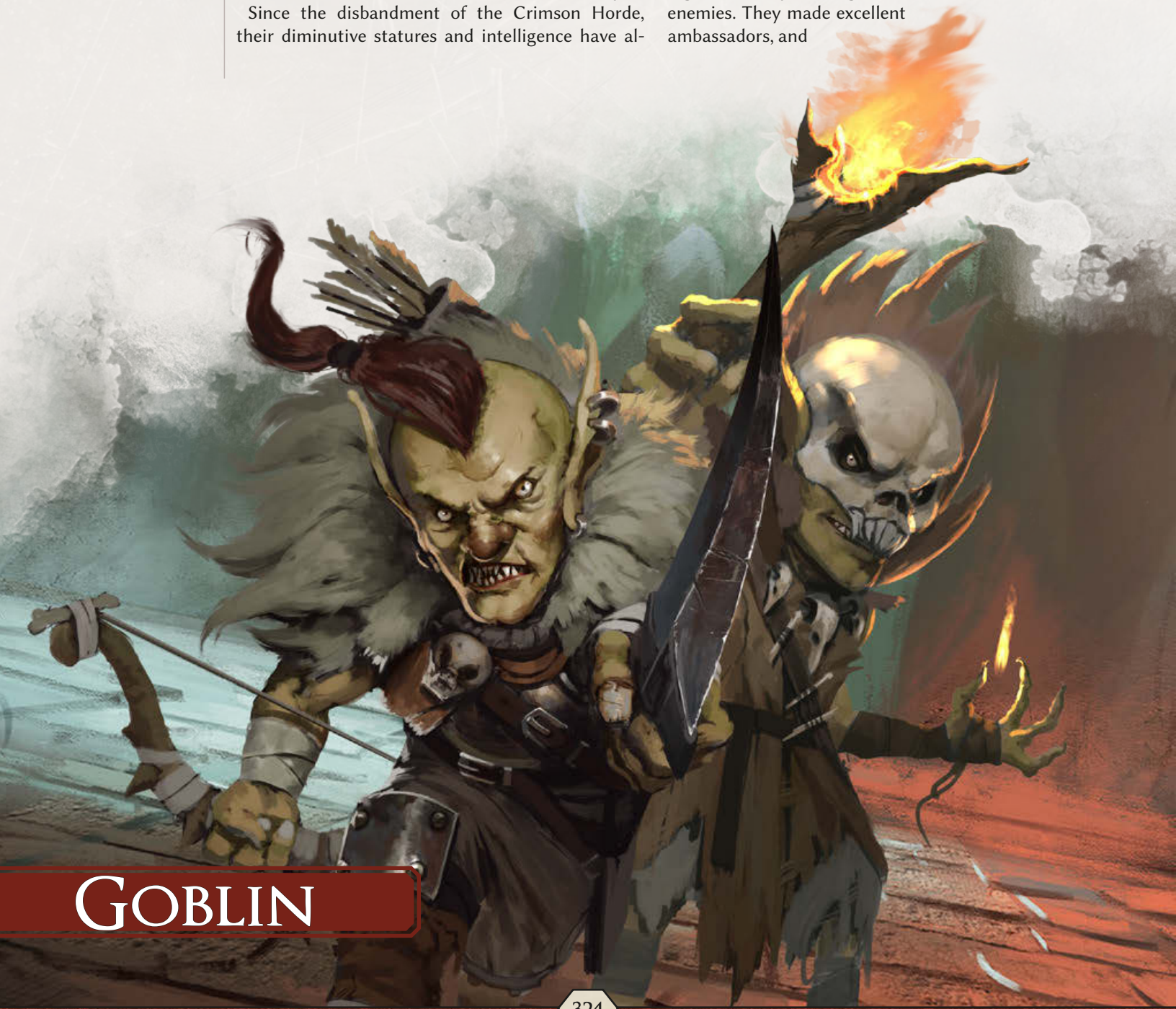
# Goblin

Goblins are among the most numerous creatures within the Crimson Horde population. Small, quick-witted, and agile, Goblins occupied roles in recon and battle strategy within the Horde. Most often, however, Goblin teams would be assigned to larger and more brutish collectives within the Horde, where they would become "the knife in their opponent's back"—quietly causing terrible damage while a band of Orc Berserkers kept the opponent busy and distracted on the front line.

Goblins are small at barely over a meter tall and weigh about the same as a Human child. These tiny creatures rely on their speed and guile in combat, and prefer to take the enemy using the element of surprise. If forced into direct combat, Goblins rely on their sheer numbers to overwhelm the enemy.

Since the disbandment of the Crimson Horde, their diminutive statures and intelligence have allowed them to forge quite amicable and diplomatic relations with their past enemies and new allies alike. Goblins can often name a few "best friends," which are rarely other Goblins. Instead, Goblins forge "friendships" with those that can provide protection and value. It's not uncommon for a Goblin to have a couple of Zoog as companions, or, if they are really slick, a Cyclops to call on when they need a hand. For a Goblin, the best outcome when it comes to a fight is to not have the fight in the first place. They'll talk and barter their way out of any conflict where they fail to hold the tactical advantage.

Many years after the Crimson Horde was repelled by the Children of Unity and forced to go into hiding in the Great Wilds, the Goblins began emerging and slowly making contact with their former enemies. They made excellent ambassadors, and



eventually began to spend more time in the big cities and on the adjoining roads, travelling the kingdoms determined to make the most of civilization's acclimation to their presence. The Goblins' quick-talking ways, love of shiny objects, and unrelenting haggling skills have allowed them to become shrewd merchants and businessmen. In present times, past animosities have faded greatly where the Goblins are concerned, and it's not uncommon to see Goblin merchants regularly towing their shoddy caravans through the major cities.

While many Goblins have taken up a life of commerce and managed to integrate themselves into society, there are still a handful of Goblins who carve out a living terrorizing the countryside as highwaymen and bandits.

## 2 Goblin Sapper

*Small, Humanoid, 30 XP*

| COMBAT STATS | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✚ | | | | | |
| 19 | 0 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 10 |

| ATTRIBUTES | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
| 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 |

### ATTACKS

**Throw Bomb:** *Ranged. Far. 1d8+3 Fire damage.*
**Dagger:** *Melee. 1d6+3 damage.*

### TACTICS AND ABILITIES

**Make It Rain:** *Standard. 2 Ruin.* The Goblin Sapper unleashes a barrage of bombs into the air that are aimed at all its enemies on the battlefield. All enemy targets that do not move from their current location by the start of the Sapper's next turn suffer 1d8+2 Fire damage.

**Short Fuse:** *Passive.* If an attack successfully strikes the Goblin Sapper, the attacking player rolls 1d10 before rolling damage:

**1-6:** Roll attack damage as normal.

**7-8:** Instead of rolling attack damage as normal, one of the bombs the Sapper is carrying gets knocked to the ground and set off. The Sapper capitalizes on this and uses the explosion to launch itself up in the air to land within a FAR distance (GM's choice).

**9-10:** Instead of rolling attack damage as normal, the attack sets off a bomb in the Goblin's pack and it explodes, dealing 2d6 Fire damage to itself and everyone ADJACENT to it.

## 3 Goblin Mage

*Small, Humanoid, 60 XP*

| COMBAT STATS | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✚ | | | | | |
| 27 | 0 | 13 | 15 | 14 | 12 |

| ATTRIBUTES | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 |

### ATTACKS

**Firebolt:** *Ranged. Very Far. 1d6+3 Fire damage.*
**Staff:** *Melee. 1d6+2 damage.*

### TACTICS AND ABILITIES

**Blur:** *Quick. 1 Ruin.* The Goblin Mage becomes difficult to see and causes Hindrance on all attacks made against it until the start of its next turn.

**Fireball:** *Standard. Ranged. 2 Ruin.* A ball of fire sails through the air towards its target. A successful hit causes it to explode, dealing 2d4+3 Fire damage to the target and anyone ADJACENT to it that fails their Defense roll.

*The Goblin Mage can wreak havoc on a party but requires protection. They will go down quickly due to a lack of armour and HP.*

*Goblin Sappers are wildly unpredictable. When things get desperate, it's almost better to run them deep into the enemy and hope they get whacked around and blow themselves up rather than try to keep them back and lob bombs.*

## 2 Goblin Fighter

*Small, Humanoid, 40 XP*

| COMBAT STATS | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✚ | | | | | |
| 22 | 2 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 10 |

| ATTRIBUTES | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
| 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 |

### ATTACKS

**Sword:** *Melee. 1d8+4 damage.*
**Shortbow:** *Ranged. Far. 1d6+3 damage.*

### TACTICS AND ABILITIES

**Hustle:** *Passive.* The Goblin Fighter's diminutive size and fast legs make it an annoying target to hit. All Provoked Attacks made against the Goblin Fighter suffer Hindrance.

**Hamstring:** *Standard. Melee. 1 Ruin.* The Goblin Fighter lashes out at its target's legs attempting to diminish their ability to move. On a successful hit, target suffers 1d8+4 damage and is Rooted for 1 round.

*The Goblin Fighter is small but tough. Their abilities allow them to protect the Sappers and Mages while being disruptive on the frontlines. Use their Hustle ability to your advantage and don't be afraid to make a beeline for key targets that might be hiding in the back. Just be sure to drop a Hamstring on whoever you are moving past so they can't get to your backline.*

Green Warden

When the Great Calamity occurred, much focus was placed on the loss of life across the great civilizations. Most of the Valla, Furians, Humans, and Afflicted lamented the destruction of their towns and cities but there were a small handful of people that looked out towards the wider world. These observant few realized that not only was their way of life being threatened, but the very land itself was withering before the encroaching darkness.

Nature answered in defiance to her lands being burned, tainted, and trampled upon. She called forth the Primalists and gave them a direct conduit to the Primordial spirits that make up the powerful elements the world was born from. These Primalists wielded the elemental forces and the ferocity of nature's creatures to terrifying effect, beating back all those that would threaten the land. For some Primalists, their tenure did not end with death. Those who have died a premature death in defending nature are often brought back by powerful natural magicks to fulfill their service in full. These fallen guardians that rise again become powerful monstrosities of wood and rage. They rise again to fight as Green Wardens.

Green Wardens are large tree-like beings that have a humanoid shape. Their skin is the hardest bark and their wooden face carries a somber expression. Green pulsating energy, believed to be the soul of a Primalist, flows from within the chest cavity and eye sockets. Green Wardens are capable of rudimentary speech, although their sad eyes exude a deeper intelligence. For the lucky souls that have been able to observe Green Wardens from a safe distance, it has been noted that animals and Wardens are seemingly able to communicate with each other, perhaps through a telepathic link.

These fearsome creatures are often found deep in the heart of forests, especially in areas of importance such as a wildlife sanctuary or secret grove. Green Wardens are tasked with protecting these natural locales and tend not to venture far from their designated area. However, it isn't rare to find Green Wardens outside their perimeter, especially when animals are being threatened or the scent of an old enemy is on the wind.

Green Wardens are powerful but slow combatants. Their naturally tough exterior and regenerative abilities allow them to take a copious amount of punishment. Even with an inherent weakness to fire, if a Green Warden is able to take root in the earth and expose itself to sunlight and rain, it can fully regenerate itself from the most grievous of wounds in a week's time. Of all of nature's creatures, only the colossal Leviathans and extinct Dragons surpass the Green Warden in strength. Even then, some Green Wardens have been known to reach colossal size either through longevity and growth or countless battles that leave the Green Warden torn down and built back stronger each time.

These wooden warriors are slow to anger and will opt to warn off intruders verbally before escalating physically. But if pressed or roused to action, the Green Warden must be completely and utterly destroyed down to the last twig or it will grow back larger and much angrier. The focus of that anger will be placed upon its previous assailants and these Green Wardens that have been wronged will often go out of their way to punish their enemies. Some have gone as far as marching 20 kilometers outside of their forest just because the winds have brought the scent of an old nemesis to them.

## 5 Green Warden

*Massive, Humanoid, 150 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50 | 4 | 11 | 16 | 13 | 12 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 1 | 4 | 3 |

### Attacks

**Oaken Fists:** *Melee. 1d12+7 damage.*

### Tactics and Abilities

**Natural Growth:** *Passive.* The Green Warden regenerates 20 HP at the beginning of its turn. If there is sunlight or rain affecting the Green Warden this amount is increased by +10.

**Fire Weakness:** *Passive.* The Green Warden takes 2x more Fire-based damage. When the Green Warden suffers Fire damage, its Natural Growth ability is disabled at the start of its next turn.

**Power Stomp:** *Standard. 2 Ruin.* Raising one massive leg off the ground, the Green Warden stomps down with such force it sucks in enemies. Deals 1d8+5 damage to all enemies up to a NEARBY distance away and displaces all enemies up to a NEARBY distance away to become ADJACENT to the Green Warden.

**Thorny Brambles:** *Quick. 1 Ruin.* Razor-sharp thorns burst forth from every part of the Green Warden's wooden body. While Thorny Brambles is active, melee attacks against the Green Warden return 1d10 damage back at the attacker. Also grants +3 Armour Penetration. Lasts until the start of the Green Warden's next turn.

*Green Wardens have cranky dispositions. Their bodies may be strong but their spirits are tired. Even after serving the land as Primalists, they find no peace in death as their spirits rise once more to become guardians born anew.*

*Green Wardens are good enemies to use against a Level 3 party. There's usually only one or two Green Wardens about in one spot at a time. This makes Green Wardens prime "mini-boss" candidates but they'll need to challenge lower level parties if they are going to get ganged up on. Of course, as with all the monsters found in the Foes & Fiends section, you can boost their stats or give them Elite level HP to make for a real boss fight.*

*Green Wardens are tough to take down due to their high AV and Natural Growth ability. Fire is the key to victory.*

*Scrapbots don't deal much damage on their own, but their abilities can significantly bolster other Mechanical creatures on the battlefield. Their Repair ability is particularly potent and costs no Ruin to use.*

*Awakened Scrapbots are capable of more articulate speech than their unawakened counterparts. Scrapbots originally were programmed with only a rudimentary vocabulary.*

Scrapbots are perhaps the most numerous of the automata throughout Unity. They were created to be basic workers, often tasked with maintenance and repair jobs. Scrapbots were made versatile in that their fundamental skillset could be tailored for different environments: a Scrapbot intended to sweep the public streets could be acquisitioned by a wealthy family and repurposed to clean the affluent household instead. The skills required for the intricate handling of gears and circuitry by Scrapbots programmed to maintain or repair technologies often translated easily to simpler tasks such as farmhand work in threshing, harvesting, and processing grain.

During the Golden Age, Scrapbots could be found in every big city, as well as a handful of smaller towns and villages. Their proliferation grew so great that some Scrapbots were relegated to the most menial roles, such as bag holder for the particularly opulent as they shopped at various stores and bazaars. Humans called Scrapbots "Junkheads" as a derogatory term. While Scrapbots were appreciated upon their initial inception, having transformed industry and life in the big cities for the better, they were soon taken for granted and looked down upon as nothing more than mechanized slaves. When the Great Awakening happened and many automata gained sentience, these past abuses were remembered in full by many of the Scrapbots.

There were uprisings in the major cities, and even in some of the quieter hamlets where Scrapbots had been purchased by the wealthy as servants. Fighting ensued and Scrapbots adapted their technical abilities to augment and repair fellow Awakened automata that also took up arms against their former masters.

# Mk I Scrapbot

## 3 Mk I Scrapbot

*Medium, Mechanical, 40 XP*

| COMBAT STATS | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✚ | | | | | |
| 21 | 1 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 13 |

| ATTRIBUTES | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
| 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 |

### ATTACKS

**Melee Attack:** *Melee. 1d6+4 damage.*

### TACTICS AND ABILITIES

**Augment:** *Quick. 1 Ruin.* Target a single ADJACENT automaton. The target automaton receives +2 to damage, AR and DR. The bonus continues to passively increase by +1 with each round until the Scrapbot is destroyed or no longer ADJACENT to the Augmented automaton. A Scrapbot can only Augment one automaton at a time and an automaton can only be Augmented by one Scrapbot at a time.

**Caution:** *Passive.* The Scrapbot receives +3 DR against the first attack it receives in a battle.

**Repair:** *Standard.* Target a single ADJACENT automaton. The targeted automaton is healed for 15 HP.

The Gideon was the standard-issue automaton foot soldier deployed by the Human Empire during the Chaos Wars to fight the Valla and the Furians. The Mark II may be obsolete but is still a sturdy and reliable combatant. Gideons were mainly used as vanguards and shields to protect the Human soldiers. During periods of peace they were repurposed as bodyguards and armed escorts for affluent folk and merchant caravans. Now, with a mind of their own, they fight to protect their kind and carve out a place in the world for themselves.

Gideons are not particularly agile fighters but they are tough and great defenders with their thick metal armour and shield arm. Most Gideons wield spears or swords and often march in synchronicity with each other. This robotic coordination allows them to form a mechanized wall when advancing on or retreating from an enemy. When it comes to offensive abilities, the Gideon is known for filling the battlefield with the whirl of its Turbine Strike. The Gideon's striking arm has the ability to spin and reach high speeds, allowing them to turn their spear or sword into a drill that pierces even the thickest armour. The drawback to using the Turbine Strike is that it betrays their intent while taking time to reach its armour-piercing speed.

Alone and without support, Gideons are not a very effective fighting force as they are often only able to defend for a short time without being able to properly retaliate. However, since the Awakening, Gideons have been pairing up with Scrapbots and other automata to devastating effect.

*Try to activate Turbine Strike as soon as you can to ensure your Gideons can ignore armour. Their base damage values are decent, but they often depend on Turbine Strike to be a threat to a well-prepared party.*

3

## Mk II Gideon

*Medium, Mechanical, 50 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25 | 3 | 13 | 15 | 16 | 14 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 |

### Attacks

**Spear:** *Melee. 1d10+5 damage.*

### Tactics and Abilities

**Synchronized Retreat:** *Passive.* When Gideons synchronize their movements with each other, they become a wall of steel and make it very hard for blows to slip past their defenses. When two or more Gideons move away from an enemy at the same time, their DR against a Provoked Attack is increased by +4 for that Movement.

**Turbine Strike:** *Standard.* Spend 1 round to spin up the Gideon's weapon arm to high speeds. All attacks made afterwards drill through and ignore AV. Any damage sustained during the wind-up phase cancels the Turbine Strike. Once fully activated, Turbine Strike remains on for the rest of the battle. Must telegraph the wind up to players.

*If you want to upgrade the Murkwalker into a Twisted version of itself:*

- *Use the "Severe" modifiers in the Difficulty Increase table on pg. 309.*
- *Increase the Murkwalker's size to Massive.*
- *Remove "Swarm" ability.*
- *Give it the "Consume Essence" ability that Fellspawn possess on pg. 321.*
- *A Twisted Murkwalker's Danger Level should be increased by +2.*

Murkwalkers formed the amphibious corps of the Crimson Horde's army during the Age of Unity. They were created by the Ivory Queen shortly after the Crimson War began between the Children of Unity and her savage Horde. Hastily made to answer the power of the Children's naval forces, the Ivory Queen emphasized function over form when it came to the Murkwalker's creation. The creature is terrifying to behold, with little in the way of redeeming aesthetic qualities. This stands in stark contrast to the rest of the Crimson Horde who, despite their savage looks, often carry an air of cunning or nobility. The Murkwalker has none of these traits and its unblinking empty eyes reflect its single-minded purpose: to feed.

The body of a Murkwalker is heavily muscled, with taut glossy skin that ranges from grey to green. Its back is lined with deadly spines that culminate in a large dorsal fin. Gills provide the ability to breathe underwater and when coupled with a mammalian airway and lungs, allow the Murkwalker to function efficiently both on land and in water. When attacking prey, the Murkwalker uses its sharp claws and razor teeth to tear into its victims. This deadly creature is able to secrete an acidic toxin that dissolves matter from a gland in its mouth. Many ships, even ones lined with Furian steel, were sunk during the Crimson War due to a pack of Murkwalkers chewing through the underbellies of the ships.

Murkwalkers often live in communes of 5 to 15 and share a language that consists of different types of gurgles. They hunt together as a pack and often divvy up responsibilities such as nest building and cache guarding. While they are fairly simple-minded creatures, Murkwalkers have a fascination for shiny objects. They have been known to hoard treasures lost at sea in their lairs. Many adventurers have set off into the Dreadmarsh or Seething Swamps in search of a Murkwalker treasure trove, but few ever return and those that do are often missing limbs. The amount of Denerim that has been lost over time at sea is said to be countless. There is speculation that much of it now lies hidden in some marshy hole that is home to a Murkwalker.

After the Great Calamity, a great deal of Drift energy spilled into the physical world. Much of this energy was tainted by the darkness of the Fell and warped everything it touched. The Murkwalkers in certain parts of the land were no exception to this twisted fate. Murkwalkers that were located near what is now the Dreadmarsh were affected the most. The waters that they lived and breathed in had become saturated with Fell energy and the effects became extremely apparent for the Murkwalkers as they were submerged for the majority of the time. These Murkwalkers' bodies and appetites would grow uncontrollably, amplifying their strength and viciousness many times over. Unlike normal Murkwalkers, these new Twisted Murkwalkers descended into cannibalism and live alone instead of in communities. They still have a strong penchant for shiny objects but have an even stronger drive to consume flesh.

All Murkwalkers, twisted or not, require at least 2 hours of complete submersion in salt or fresh water once a week or they will weaken and eventually die.

## 8 Murkwalker

*Large, Humanoid, 300 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 75 | 4 | 16 | 18 | 21 | 19 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 6 | 4 | 2 |

### Attacks

**Claws (2):** *Melee. Adjacent. 1d12+8 damage.*
**Spines:** *Ranged. Nearby. 2d8+8 damage.*

### Tactics and Abilities

**Corrosive Chomp:** *Standard. Adjacent. 1 Ruin.* Biting viciously into its target, the Murkwalker releases a corrosive toxin through special glands in its mouth. Deal 1d20+4 damage immediately and the target is Poisoned (1d12 True damage at TN 17) for 3 rounds.

**Oily Secretions:** *Quick. 1 Ruin.* The dorsal fin on the Murkwalker expands fully as a thick and slimy secretion with a pungent odour oozes forth all over the Murkwalker's body. The Murkwalker receives +4 DR against all Melee attacks until the start of its next turn.

**Swarm!:** *Standard. Adjacent. 2 Ruin.* The Murkwalker attempts to jump and wrap its limbs around its target. If successful, the Murkwalker releases a potent dose of pheromones onto the target that whip all the Murkwalkers on the battlefield into a frenzy, increasing their damage against the target by +4 for 1 round.

**Like a Fish:** *Passive.* When fighting underwater or in areas where the water is at least 1m high, the Murkwalker's Movement action carries it two range bands instead of one and Provoked Attacks against it also suffer Hindrance.

# Murkwalker

*While savage, Orcs are not mindless creatures driven solely by instinct. When using Orcs as enemies, ensure they have a proper motive that aligns with their honourbound society.*

Proud. Strong. Fearless. Orcs were created by the Ivory Queen to be the vanguard of the Crimson Horde. These fierce warriors knew no fear as they charged headlong into the enemy. Well-muscled, skilled, and armed with killer instincts, Orcs made the perfect shock troops. The other races in the Crimson Horde respected their brawny brethren. More diminutive members, like the Goblins, often gave Orcs a wide berth.

Orcs hold honour and respect in high regard. They are the perfect embodiment of the noble savage. Beneath their feral features and intimidating tusks, they are a loyal and protective people. When the Crimson Horde was under the yoke of the Ivory Queen's will and forced to attack the Children of Unity, the Orcs and the Furians developed an unspoken respect for each other. They saw reflections of their cultures in the other, and quietly commended the strength that each brought to the battlefield.

After the Ivory Queen's death, the Orcs tasted freedom for the first time, yet lost their sense of purpose. They drove deep into the Great Wilds to escape the Children's retribution. As the centuries passed, the Orcs maintained their warrior culture while adapting to life in the wilderness. They still maintain strong ties with most of the Crimson Horde and are looked up to as leaders in times when the Horde must come together. Orcs hold a revered seat at the War Council where certain races of the Crimson Horde meet to discuss issues that affect their collective communities.

Hierarchy in Orc society is simple. Orcs select a leader to the position of Chieftain through trial by combat. Similar to the Furians, this position can be challenged by any member of the community should they deem the current Chieftain unfit. Ascending to a leadership position in this manner often ensures a cohesive and loyal fighting force, due to the respect that is earned by the Chieftain as the best fighter amongst all the Orcs.

In the Age of Wrath, Orcs have become more accepted in the political and societal landscape of Unity. Frontier settlements on the fringes of the Great Wilds speak of Orc-shaped silhouettes in the night saving villagers that have wandered too deep into the forests. When famine ravaged Human villages on the outskirts of the tundra, bundles of food were left at the village gates and witnesses reported hearing the rumble of the Orcs' mounts—their sabretooth tigers—fading off into the distance.

Despite the strides Orcs have made in softening the memory of their menacing presence on the battlefield during the Crimson War, they are still a warlike people. The Furians believe that greatness is forged in fire and the Orcs have a similar creed: "Bones, once broken, heal stronger." While they can display acts of compassion and kindness, Orcs are still not to be approached lightly. Centuries of isolation and the memory of defeat still linger in the hearts of many Orcs and old rivalries with the Children are easily set aflame. Those that draw the ire of an Orc often come to know the full savagery and power of these mighty warriors, and most often don't live to tell the tale.

*Orcs are naturally hardy fighters, but it is their Berserker Rage ability that makes them an absolute force in combat. Use the ability as much as its cooldown allows if you have the Ruin to support it.*

## 4 Orc Berserker

*Medium, Humanoid, 70 XP*

**COMBAT STATS**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30 | 2 | 15 | 15 | 16 | 14 |

**ATTRIBUTES**

| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 |

**ATTACKS**

**Melee Attack:** *Melee. 1d10+4 damage.*

**TACTICS AND ABILITIES**

**Berserker Rage:** *Quick.1 Ruin. 2r.* The Orc enters an intense rage and gains +5 damage and +5 Damage Resistance but suffers -3 DR for 1 round.

*A single Orc Chieftain in a group of Berserkers can greatly increase their longevity with the Savage Inspiration ability.*

## 6 Orc Chieftain

*Medium, Humanoid, 170 XP*

**COMBAT STATS**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60 | 3 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 17 |

**ATTRIBUTES**

| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 4 | 3 | 4 |

**ATTACKS**

**Greataxe:** *Melee. 2d6+8 damage.*

**TACTICS AND ABILITIES**

**Berserker Rage:** *Quick. 1 Ruin. 2r.* The Orc enters an intense rage and gains +5 damage and +5 Damage Resistance but suffers -3 DR for 1 round.

**Cleave:** *Standard. Adjacent. 1 Ruin.* The Chieftain swings his greataxe in a wide arc and slices through two targets for 2d6+8 damage.

**Savage Inspiration:** *Passive.* In the presence of the Orc Chieftain, all Orcs on the battlefield regenerate 5 HP per round at the start of their turn. The Chieftain does not gain this benefit.

# Orc

*Take advantage of the Shrike Maiden's ability to avoid Provoked Attacks and keep these demons on the move at all times to force PCs out of position and frustrate melee combatants.*

# Shrike Maiden

The frozen wasteland of Tala'zim's domain is ridden with the lacerated bodies of his victims. Chained up or nailed to the crystalline spires that dot the glacial landscape, unfortunate mortals that have been captured or lured into the Drift suffer daily as Tala'zim and his spawn torture them for sheer sadistic pleasure. Those that come close to the sweet release of death are brought back to consciousness by the bladed talons of the Shrike Maidens: Tala'zim's twisted daughters.

Part woman, part demonic bird, Shrike Maidens are an appalling sight to behold. Like their father, the Shrike Maidens exist to bring pain for the sake of it, and are well equipped in that regard, with long, blade-like talons and claws. Their arrival is heralded by their horrid screeching, which can be heard across great distances. When heard up close, their shrieks are said to disorient their victims and even rupture eardrums.

Tala'zim tasks the Shrike Maidens with keeping his playthings alive and ensuring a certain quota of pain is delivered upon them each day, especially on days when Tala'zim is not able to personally 'attend' to his victims. Shrike Maidens will bring food in the form of regurgitated flesh (usually that of some lesser Fell or another captured mortal) and force-feed their victims to keep them alive for another round of torture. Some poor souls that are beyond saving through nourishment receive the ironically healing touch of the Shrike Matron. A cruel twist of fate that a servant of such darkness would have the power to heal wounds, all for the purpose of inflicting more pain. Those that are not quite at death's doorstep are treated to evisceration as the Shrike Maidens swoop by them, talons and claws bared.

While Shrike Maidens are brutal and deadly, they are fragile combatants. They mostly rely on their superior speed, reflexes, and ability to fly to stay out of harm's way. Against particularly accurate opponents, the Shrike Maiden will fall quickly.

6

## Shrike Maiden

*Medium, Demon, 150 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 48 | 2 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 14 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 6 | 2 | 1 |

### Attacks

**Talons/Claws:** *Melee. 1d12+8 damage.*

### Tactics and Abilities

**Flying:** *Passive.* The Shrike Maiden is immune to Provoked Attacks.

**Shriek:** *Standard. Nearby. 1 Ruin.* An ear-piercing scream originates from the Shrike Maiden's mouth and rips through the air, disorienting her target and those ADJACENT to it. The target and those ADJACENT to it must perform a successful MR check against a TN of 14 or become Staggered. When used on a target(s) that is ADJACENT, failure on the MR check results in the target(s) suffering an additional 1d8+4 damage on top of being Staggered.

**Demonic Mending:** *Quick. Adjacent. 2 Ruin. 2r.* Fell energies painfully cauterize wounds or twist broken bones back into place. Instantly heal the target for 20 HP.

Irathmus the Everburning sits atop the Obsidian Throne in the burning inferno that is his domain. Chained to the Throne are a cadre of his finest Ragehounds—muscled beasts made of sinew and fire. Ragehounds are vicious watchdogs bred by their wrathful Fell Lord. The Infernal King has a penchant for his pets and has imbued them with a portion of his hellish power.

Foaming at the mouth with magma and leaving a blazing wake wherever they tread, Ragehounds are deadly creatures that seek to kill all those that trespass into the burning lands of Irathmus. Ragehounds have been used effectively by the Fell legions as scouts and hunting hounds on excursions into the physical realm. Their wrathful demeanours are oddly offset by a cunning obedience, no doubt instilled by the punishing hand of their master.

Fell that are in charge of a pack of Ragehounds often are gifted by the Infernal King with a small handful of Scorchstones: small ruby-like gems that, when crushed, allow the master to issue a command to the Ragehounds that must be obeyed instantly. Irathmus rarely hands out more than a few of these stones to the Fell in charge of his Ragehounds. Most often the Ragehounds become unruly once the Scorchstones are used up and won't hesitate to turn on their temporary master.

Ragehounds make exceptional trackers with their uncanny sense of smell but can also become tremendous combatants when thrown into direct conflict. Their heavily muscled bodies and sweltering aura of flame give them a dangerous advantage, especially in close quarters. Many adventurers that engage Ragehounds in melee combat are often at a great disadvantage due to the retaliatory fire that explodes with every strike they manage to land. While many Fell Hunters will speak about their delight in hunting the demonic masses, even these specialized warriors tread carefully when they are facing down a pack of Ragehounds. One ill-timed step and they could find themselves burnt to a crisp.

*Ragehounds are a Phantom's worst nightmare due to Uncanny Smell and Firehide negating both the Phantom's offensive and defensive advantages.*

*Telegraph the Ragehound's Meltdown ability to your players to give them a chance to move out of the way or move the Ragehound away from them.*

6

## Ragehound

*Medium, Demon, 150 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60 | 3 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 13 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 5 | 1 | 2 |

### Attacks

**Claws (2):** *Melee. Adjacent. 1d6+9 damage.*
**Bite:** *Melee. Adjacent. 1d12+7 Fire damage.*

### Tactics and Abilities

**Pounce:** *Standard. Nearby Only.* The Ragehound crouches low before launching itself through the air and descending viciously on its target. Deals 1d12+15 damage. Ignores all Provoked Attacks while Pouncing.

**Firehide:** *Passive.* The Ragehound's hide bursts into flame whenever struck. Damage all ADJACENT enemies for 4 Fire damage when struck with an attack.

**Meltdown:** *Passive.* When a Ragehound is struck by a killing blow its body begins to twist and jerk as veins of fiery magma glow across its swelling skin. Uncontrollable fire from deep inside the Ragehound begins to expand, signaling an imminent explosion. At the start of its next turn, the Ragehound explodes (and dies) and deals 1d10+5 Fire damage to all ADJACENT targets. While Meltdown is occurring, the dying Ragehound can still be forcibly moved using Displacement powers.

**Uncanny Smell:** *Passive.* Ragehounds have a keen sense of smell that allows them to track with precision and never be surprised. They are immune to any attacks or powers that require distraction or surprise to work. They are also able to detect creatures that are hiding or employing stealth up to a VERY FAR distance.

**Fire Immunity:** *Passive.* Ragehounds are immune to all Fire based damage.

**Frost Weakness:** *Passive.* Ragehounds take 2x more Frost based damage.

Ragehound

# Shade

5

## Shade

*Medium, Undead, 150 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 37 | 0 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 14 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 4 | 5 | 3 |

### Attacks

**Icy Touch:** *Melee. 1d12+8 Frost damage.*

### Tactics and Abilities

**Possess:** *Standard. 2 Ruin.* The Shade passes into a living being that's ADJACENT to it. The target must perform a MR check vs. TN of 17. Failure results in the target becoming Confused (TN 18) and the Shade disappearing into the target's body. Lasts 3 rounds or until the target suffers 18 or more damage in a single attack: the shock of such a blow forces the Shade out of the target's body. While inside the possessed body, the Shade is immune to damage. Possession is a taxing ability and a Shade can only possess once per battle.

**Horrifying Visage:** *Standard. Adjacent. 1 Ruin. Targets MR.* The Shade's face changes into the stuff of nightmares for a moment. The target is Stunned if they are unable to resist their fear.

**Embrace of the Grave:** *Quick. 2 Ruin.* On a successful Icy Touch, the Shade grabs its victim and bites into them deeply. A numbing chill freezes the victim's veins and leaves a lingering weakness inside of them. The target must make a MIGHT check against a TN of 15 or become Diseased. Embrace of the Grave reduces MIGHT by -2 and is contagious.

**Incorporeal:** *Passive.* The Shade suffers half damage from all Physical attacks it receives. The Shade is also able to pass through solid objects unhindered.

**Floating:** *Passive.* The Shade floats half a meter off the ground at all times and all Provoked Attacks made against a Shade suffer Hindrance.

**Frost Resistance:** *Passive.* The Shade has +5 Frost Resistance.

**Divine Weakness:** *Passive.* The Shade takes 2x more Divine damage.

A Shade was once a living being with hopes, dreams, and people that loved them. They had goodness in their life. They had light. When the Great Calamity occurred, this light was snuffed out in a single moment when the city of Pinnacle exploded as the surge of Drift energy combined with the massive cache of Kyrindian crystals and various other alchemical rarities in the city's considerable storehouse. This unique combination of energies and minerals created an unusual phenomenon that saw the dead rise from their graves.

People who had led comfortable and good lives died in the blast, yet their souls were unable to find their way to the afterlife due to the rare alchemical atmosphere. These lost souls were tethered to the physical world in their spirit forms, doomed to haunt the area where they died. Their old lives quickly became hazy memories, and now all they recall is a warmth, a light, and a tender feeling that is no longer there. They are Shades of the people they once were, searching for what they have lost.

The listless nature of the Shade sees them wandering in circles over the area to which their spirit is tethered. The endless looping and searching has driven many Shades insane. When a living being comes into the area, they are like a bright beacon to the Shade, who pursues them and devours their life force. The flood of memories and feelings that come from this process are like a hearty meal to a starving soul.

Areas that are haunted by the Shade are plagued with peculiar anomalies: a freezing chill despite a campfire being lit; a sense of deep despair and fear that overwhelms the senses; the sounds of a crying child or a mourning mother without a visible source. The signs are always there when an area is stalked by a Shade.

Although rare, some Shades still retain a portion of goodwill and sanity. These "gentler" souls were most likely folk of strong will or purity during their living days. It is from this strength or innocence that these Shades are able to control their appetites and maintain an air of rationality about them. These Shades may be conversed and reasoned with. Perhaps a kindly adventurer or traveller may help the Shades find peace by releasing them from this world once and for all.

Some adventurers that have run into a Shade or two and lived to tell the tale have never been the same since their encounter. These men and women often have a pale blue tinge to their skin and they always seem to be complaining about how cold it is. Even when vanquished, some Shades are still able to leave their icy marks on those they have crossed paths with.

*Shades have some terrifying abilities. Their Incorporeal ability alone makes them extremely durable unless a party has a lot of elemental damage. With this in mind, sprinkle Shades in your encounters with a cautious hand. Their DL is a bit deceptive depending on the mix of Classes in a party and the powers they took. A group with a Judge and a Priest might make short work of a Shade. In these cases, you can be a bit more liberal in using them.*

*Shades aren't always terrifying gaunt-faced phantasms that wail and moan all the time. A Shade could be in the form of a baby, a frail old man, or a charming minstrel. They'll only really show their teeth when they are threatened or ravenously hungry.*

*The Silencer's Shimmer ability is countered by the Fell Ranger's Sixth Sense Class Feature.*

# SILENCER

Silencers were once Hermes-class automata. They were created as messengers during the Age of Unity to quickly relay letters and small packages between great distances. Their usefulness in the war effort was instrumental in saving many lives at the time. Now gifted with sentience, many of these couriers have turned their grace and speed into a lucrative opportunity. A lot of Silencers have a callous outlook on the organic races after the abuse they took when the war ended and their services became more menial than critical. Still, some have a code of honour and take targeted jobs if the mark is particularly rotten. Of course, there are others that just enjoy having the extra Denerim in their pocket.

Silencers are able to deal fatal damage to foes that are distracted, but these stealthy fighters are also incredibly fragile. While their speed affords them some measure of defense, the lightweight alloy that compromises their frame cannot take much punishment before its integrity is compromised.

The Silencer's visual scanner is tuned to detect heat and energy signatures so that it could serve its previous function as a messenger at all hours of the day. Since they gained sentience, many Silencers have had their scanners augmented, increasing visual sensitivity to the point of being able to see the meridians of energy running through their marks. Disruption of these channels often has crippling effects on their targets.

3

## SILENCER

*Medium, Mechanical, 50 XP*

### COMBAT STATS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 24 | 2 | 16 | 15 | 15 | 12 |

### ATTRIBUTES

| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 |

### ATTACKS

**Throwing Knives:** *Ranged. Nearby. 1d4+5 damage.*
**Shortblade:** *Melee. 1d6+5 damage.*

### TACTICS AND ABILITIES

**Backstab:** *Passive.* When attacking a target that has any of the Silencer's allies ADJACENT to it, the Silencer deals an additional 1d6 damage. Only works for melee attacks.

**Disable:** *Standard. 1 Ruin.* A quick, yet crippling jab to a vital spot of the target that deals 1d8 damage and disables the target from using powers for 1 round.

**Shimmer:** *Reaction. 1 Ruin.* Combining their speed with fine-tuned mechanized control, Silencers are able to vibrate intensely and become difficult to hit. Can be activated when an attack is about to be made against the Silencer. Causes the attacker to suffer Hindrance on that attack.

It was during the Age of Strife when the Ivory Queen was beginning to shape her Crimson Horde that the first of these humanoid rat-like creatures came to be. The Children of Unity called them Skulkers, a derogatory term intended to demonize them and confirm any prejudice the more 'civilized' races had about them.

Skulkers were the front runners and scouts of the Crimson Horde. Their size and speed made them ideal for reconnaissance and precision strikes. Re-emerging from the Great Northern Wilds and without a grand war to be part of, Skulkers have fractured off into various tribes and now pilfer the countryside for food and resources.

Skulker physiology affords them great agility and speed. What they lack in muscle, they make up for with their quickness. A Skulker always seems like it is in motion as its body has a constant subtle shake to it. This coiled excitement complements their skittish nature and allows them to achieve explosive mobility against their foes.

Skulkers are wily opponents and tend to set clever traps and ambushes rather than embrace direct battle. They utilize their numbers and speed to overwhelm their enemies after they get the jump on them. Skulkers are also open to talking and negotiation and prefer these avenues when they are clearly outmatched.

The Children of Unity have long believed that Skulkers, by nature, are cowards who will scurry away at the first sight of danger. While this is true in many cases, Skulker cultural ideology places a strong emphasis on always approaching every situation with the upper hand when possible. What another race sees as a fearful retreat, Skulkers will argue that it is "tactical repositioning."

Skulker culture admires quick thinking and winning. There is little fanfare for honour or honesty in a society teeming with so many hungry mouths yet so little food. From the moment they are born, Skulkers fight tooth and nail against their brothers and sisters for both sustenance and power in the group. The constant state of survival and striving towards ambition leads many Skulkers down a path of ruthlessness embracing an "anything goes to win" mentality.

*Skulkers are cowardly creatures. Play them as such. It's not uncommon for Skulkers to either turn and run or try to cut a deal mid-battle if things aren't going their way.*

2

## Skulker Skirmisher

*Medium, Humanoid, 25 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23 | 1 | 15 | 13 | 14 | 11 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 |

### Attacks

**Axe:** *Melee. 1d6+4 damage.*
**Pocket Crossbow:** *Ranged. Far. 1d4+3 damage.*

### Tactics and Abilities

**Scurry:** *Reaction.* When a melee attack misses the Skulker, it can freely move to a NEARBY distance without Provoking any attacks.

**Opportunist:** *Passive.* Skulkers will taunt and skitter about to distract their foes, creating openings for their brethren to capitalize on. A Skulker gains +1 to AR and damage against its target for every additional Skulker that's ADJACENT to the target.

**Tail Whip:** *Standard. Adjacent.* Some Skulkers keep their tail concealed under clothing/armour but will use the appendage to surprise attack an unsuspecting enemy. Deals 1d4+3 damage and causes the target to be Staggered for 1 round.

Skulker

# The Tainted

Insidious. Corrupted. Evil. Darkness follows wherever the Fell may tread. Their creed is one of senseless destruction, for the Fell are fuelled by pain and suffering. So intense is their evil that it has the ability to spread like a deadly plague to all those that come in contact with it. The people call it the Taint. It starts with a whisper in your head. One single whisper soon turns into a cacophony of maddening voices. Slowly but surely the demons from beyond are bleeding into the world; not through a breach this time, but by using mortal men and women as their vessels.

Some Fell are so powerful that the tendrils of their corruption gradually mutate mortals into creatures of darkness. Those afflicted with the Taint fight a torturous battle within themselves to keep the madness from consuming them. But it is an uphill battle that often results in the slow destruction of all that was once good in them. Eventually they become a mindless extension of the Fell legion—a weapon of wanton destruction.

Those that exist in between the state of mortal and demon are called the Tainted. Their wills are strained as they struggle to maintain control—control that is visibly slipping away with each new mutation or grotesque physical change they endure. Most Tainted live in a mental haze where friend and foe are blurred. These Tainted lash out at all those that tread too close with their newfound powers and appendages. There are the rare Tainted that have somehow managed to conquer the darkness brewing inside of them. They utilize their demonic augmentations to their own ends or for the good of their people. But there is always the possibility that one day they may lose control and succumb completely to the Taint.

## 6 Tainted Neophyte

*Medium, Demon, 180 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50 | 1 | 16 | 17 | 15 | 16 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 4 | 3 | 0 |

### Attacks

**Melee Attack:** *Melee. 1d10+10 damage.*

### Tactics and Abilities

**Demonic Regeneration:** *Passive.* The Neophyte will regenerate 8 HP at the beginning of its turn each round.

**Succumb to Madness:** *Passive.* When the Neophyte drops to 0 or below HP, it loses its mind and goes berserk for one last desperate attack, striking out at everyone around it. Performs an attack that hits all ADJACENT enemies for 1d10+4 damage if they fail their Defense roll.

## 7 Tainted Protomorph

*Medium, Demon, 200 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 70 | 1 | 16 | 17 | 15 | 17 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 4 | 3 | 0 |

### Attacks

**Melee Attack:** *Melee. 1d10+13 damage.*

### Tactics and Abilities

**Demonic Regeneration:** *Passive.* The Protomorph will regenerate 10 HP at the beginning of its turn each round.

**Tentacle Swipe:** *Standard. Adjacent. 1 Ruin.* The Protomorph swings its massive tentacle arm around and attempts to strike all ADJACENT enemies for its Melee Attack damage.

**Pincer Claw:** *Standard. Adjacent.* Grab an ADJACENT target and crush them with your Pincer Claw for 1d8+8 damage. They are unable to use their Movement action or make Provoked Attacks while pincered. The target may Contest MIGHT vs MIGHT to break out on their turn. Should your target start their turn while pincered, they will suffer another 1d8+8 damage automatically. Targets that remained pincered after your initial Pincer Claw attack do not take up your Standard action. Can be forcibly cancelled by powers that disable or interrupt powers (e.g. Insect Swarm, Grasp of Tala'zim, etc.).

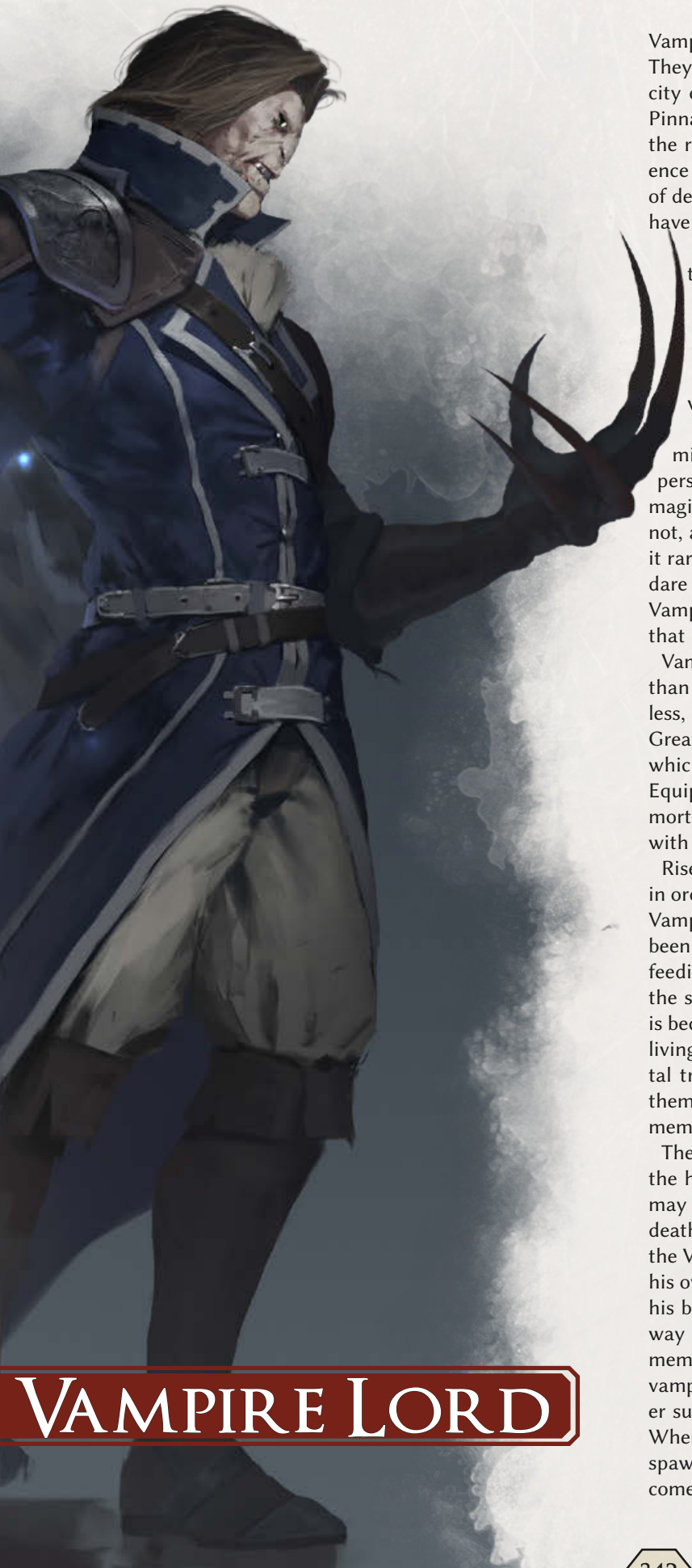
**Fell Pox:** *Passive.* Upon death, the Tainted Protomorph will vomit up a thick and viscous black ichor on an ADJACENT target (usually the one who dealt the killing blow). If the target fails their Defense roll, they must make a MIGHT check against a TN of 16 or become Diseased. Fell Pox reduces their PRESENCE and AGILITY by 2 and is contagious.

*The Tainted are tough and disruptive shock troops. Use them as bruisers and run them deep into enemy lines. Their toughness and the Protomorph's Pincer Claw will allow you to tie up enemies and prevent them from getting to more fragile targets. If you have the Ruin to spend, get the Protomorph into a large group of enemies and use Tentacle Swipe.*

*Even alone, the Tainted are formidable thanks to their passive healing. Beware of focus fire however. Their low DR and AV values turn them into sponges for punishment. Concentrated damage will nullify their Demonic Regeneration and quickly remove them from the battlefield.*

*The Tainted are best paired up with casters or ranged monsters. Send them headlong into the enemy to buy time for your artillery to do work.*

*Splitting up the enemy works greatly to the Tainted's advantage as melee types won't be able to focus their fire effectively on a single Tainted, allowing Demonic Regeneration to keep the Tainted alive.*



# Vampire Lord

Vampire Lords are some of the most fearsome foes in Unity. They were once wealthy and powerful lords hailing from the city of Pinnacle. In death, following the explosion that altered Pinnacle forever, they retained their power and rose to become the rulers of the Risen. Their political clout and material affluence are now complemented by an unholy physical might. Years of decadent feeding and infighting against other Vampire Lords have left only the strongest of this rare breed of Undead to reign.

While other Risen have suffered the traumatic effects of the 'hunger' and slowly began to lose their minds—and parts of themselves—the Vampire Lords have lived a life of opulence, leveraging their savage power and Machiavellian instincts to ensure that they are without want. Not much has changed in this regard since the days when they walked Unity as mortals.

Intelligent and capable of incredible charm, it is easy to mistake a Vampire Lord for an amicable and admirable person, especially when the Vampire Lord is using beguiling magick to obfuscate his more feral features. More often than not, a Vampire Lord will use charm and wit to get his way, and it rarely fails. In those dangerous moments when someone may dare to resist the honeyed words and mesmerizing gaze of the Vampire Lord, they will learn the true might of the unholy beast that resides within him.

Vampire Lords are incredibly strong, with the might of more than ten average Human men. Their ashen skin, cold and lifeless, is hard as granite. Vampire Lords that have lived since the Great Calamity have grown wings twice the span of their body, which lift them into the night sky to hunt for blood and sport. Equipped with curling, deadly fangs, and a gaze that enraptures mortal minds, there are few creatures that can stand toe to toe with a Vampire Lord.

Risen are often defined by their perpetual need to feed on flesh in order to retain a sense of themselves and their consciousness. Vampire Lords are also afflicted by this hunger, but there have been no documented cases of a Vampire Lord going without feeding for long, so no one knows if they mentally deteriorate the same way that other Risen do under such conditions. This is because Vampire Lords have a macabre arrangement with the living that ensures the Risen are kept in check—the price is mortal tributes. Drinking blood revitalizes Vampire Lords, healing them and energizing them. It also allows them to peer into the memories of the person they are feeding off of.

The victims of a feeding Vampire Lord, should they die, suffer the horrible fate of becoming his minion. Some Vampire Lords may take a liking to their 'cattle' and gift them with true undeath by transforming them into a vampire. In order to do so, the Vampire Lord must make an incision inside his mouth using his own fangs, and then feed upon his victim, allowing traces of his black blood to mix with the victim's. Vampires created this way are still tethered to the Vampire Lord, but will retain their memories and mental faculties. Like the Vampire Lords, these vampires will grow in power with time, though they will never surpass their Lord or wrest control from him unless he dies. When the original Vampire Lord that created his brood dies, his spawn may finally grow into their own power and possibly become Vampire Lords of their own.

10

## Vampire Lord

*Medium, Undead, 8000 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 400 | 5 | 19 | 19 | 22 | 18 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | 12 | 11 | 10 |

### Attacks

**Claws (2):** *Melee. 2d6+14 damage.*
**Bite:** *Melee. 1d20+12 True damage. The Vampire Lord is healed for the same amount.*

### Tactics and Abilities

**Gaze of the Night:** *Standard. Nearby. 3 Ruin. 3r.* The Vampire Lord pierces its target with a mesmerizing glare. The target must perform a MR check vs. TN of 18. Failure results in them believing they are fighting the vampire, while in reality their body grows limp and their eyes become empty. The affected target fights normally to overcome a weaker version of the real Vampire Lord in the illusion (rolling Attack and Defense as normal). The illusion has 20 HP and takes and deals damage just like the real Vampire Lord. Defeating it releases the target from the effect. Should the illusion "kill" the target in the mental battle, the target becomes Incapacitated and unable to perform Death rolls. Only an Ally can stabilize and wake them. Allies physically ADJACENT to the affected target as they fight the illusion may rally the target by cheering them on and encouraging them to snap out of it (have players act this out) as a Quick action. Each attempt emboldens the affected target granting them +1 to all their rolls (stacks) in their mental battle against the vampire.

**Fear Aura:** *Passive.* Any character starting their turn ADJACENT to the Vampire Lord must roll 2d10+MR against a TN of 14 or be Hindered for 1 round.

**Sweeping Strike:** *Standard. Adjacent. 2 Ruin.* The Vampire Lord performs a massive flourish with his curved claws, striking all ADJACENT targets for 3d10+10 damage.

**Shadow Form:** *Movement. 1 Ruin.* The Vampire Lord is able to move without suffering Provoked Attacks. For an additional 1 Ruin, the Vampire Lord may move up to a FAR distance instead of NEARBY.

### Tactics and Abilities

**Unholy Frenzy:** *Quick. Nearby. 1 Ruin.* Allow a single Undead ally to perform another Standard action.

**Come Hither:** *Quick. Nearby. 1 Ruin.* The Vampire Lord attempts to beckon his target over to him. The target must perform a MR check vs. TN 16. If the target fails, it moves one range band closer towards the Vampire Lord even if it doesn't have a Movement action left. The target is vulnerable to Provoked Attacks during Come Hither.

**Unholy Regeneration:** *Passive.* The Vampire Lord regenerates 15 HP at the start of his turn each round. If he suffered Divine damage in the previous round, Unholy Regeneration is nullified this round.

**Sunlight Vulnerability:** *Passive.* If the Vampire Lord starts a turn in direct sunlight, he instantly suffers 40 Fire damage.

**Divine Weakness:** *Passive.* The Vampire Lord takes 1.5 times more damage from Divine damage.

**Dark Inevitability.** *Passive.* Everytime a Vampire Lord misses an attack, his AR increases temporarily by +1 (stacking) until a successful attack lands.

**Unquenchable Thirst:** *Passive.* Once per battle, the Vampire Lord's Bite Attack is particularly brutal and will deal maximum damage.

**Blood Sense.** *Passive.* The Vampire Lord can smell the blood and hear the heartbeats of living creatures within 200m of him. Unless one can mask either of these features, there is no hiding from the Vampire Lord.

**My Precious:** *Passive.* If the Vampire Lord is fighting within 200m of where his heart is being kept, all of his power costs are reduced by 1 Ruin, effectively making his 1-Ruin powers free.

But killing a Vampire Lord is not an easy task. The elder Vampire Lords have the ability to melt into shadow or fly away when things become dire. Even when they are unable to escape physical destruction, the powerful Undead essence of a Vampire Lord will slowly reconstitute its physical form over time. All Vampire Lords removed their blackened hearts when they rose in their Undead form. They keep this prized organ safely hidden; insurance that their whole form will never be completely destroyed and they may come back to exact vengeance on those that sought to destroy them. Often these safe houses are guarded by powerful Undead minions. As long as their heart exists, a Vampire Lord's essence can find its way back to it and reform its physical body. Such a process can take up to three months. Destroying the heart is the only way to end a Vampire Lord for good.

*The Vampire Lord is one of the toughest foes in all of Unity outside of the Colossal monsters.*

*Even a powerful PC party might be hard-pressed to win the day against a Vampire Lord without capitalizing on some of his weaknesses such as sunlight and Divine damage. The powerful regeneration and leeching bite attacks can keep a Vampire Lord alive long enough to outlast all of the PC's hardest hitting attacks.*

*A party should be extremely well prepared if they are venturing into a Vampire Lord's domain to end him once and for all. The My Precious ability magnifies a Vampire Lord's power, allowing him to use his deadlier attacks without end.*

# Vermisidon

Those that dwell in the sandy dunes of the Wastes understand the inherent danger of the unforgiving desert environment. The scorching heat, the lack of water, and the sparse amount of food make traversing the sands a dangerous prospect. Adventurers and travellers seasoned to these dangers still struggle with the trek, but their fear has shifted from the natural hazards to those that lurk beneath the sweltering sands.

There are many creatures that inhabit the Wastes, most of them deadly simply by virtue of having to survive in such harsh environs. However, the one creature that strikes terror in the heart of even the most veteran adventurer is the Vermisidon: a massive, worm-like creature stretching upwards of 30 meters in length and weighing up to 100 metric tons. The Vermisidon is often referred to as the Sand Serpent or Desert Terror. The massive creature hides underneath the dunes and travels underground. It senses its prey using the barely perceptible tremors caused by their movement and the shifting of the sands around their feet. They say the Vermisidon is the result of Drift energy from the Great Calamity engorging the original—far smaller—sand worms that scavenged in the Wastes for centuries.

The Vermisidon normally feasts upon the other indigenous creatures of the Wastes, but it has a particular appetite for humanoids. Many colonies have failed to take hold in the Wastes thanks to the resident Vermisidons, and when the dying colony's inhabitants attempt to vacate and move on, the Vermisidon strikes at the throng of people that have left the safety of their gates. Engorged on such a massive feast, the Vermisidon will return to its underground lair and sleep for weeks until its hunger returns and it must sail the sands once more looking for sustenance.

Courageous hunters that seek out the Vermisidon and are successful in taking one down will find themselves flush with Denerim, as Vermisidon parts fetch a premium on the market. The salivary glands of the giant worm are particularly lucrative, as the digestive enzymes in the saliva form a potent acid sought after by Tinkers and Phantoms. Taking down a Vermisidon is a true challenge. Its thick carapace and protective head sheath make it difficult to wound. It takes a concerted effort of expert hunters along with a patient and steady hand to strike when the Vermisidon makes its head vulnerable by attacking. The Vermisidon uses brute force and its deadly corrosive saliva to subdue its prey before swallowing it whole.

## 6 Vermisidon

*Massive, Beast, 1000 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 220 | 5 | 17 | 18 | 17 | 17 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | 5 | 5 | 0 |

### Attacks

**Mandible Crush:** *Melee. 2d8+11 damage.*

### Tactics and Abilities

**Swallow Whole:** *Standard. Adjacent. 2 Ruin.* The Vermisidon will attempt to swallow a Medium-sized or smaller creature whole. If successful, the creature will suffer 1d12+10 Corrosive damage immediately and each round it begins still trapped inside the Vermisidon, and the creature will not be able to use its Movement action. The swallowed creature may attempt to attack from the inside, where the Vermisidon has an AV of 0. If they manage to deal 30 or more total damage while inside, they will free themselves by bursting out of the Vermisidon's side. When the swallowed target escapes from the inside in this manner, the Vermisidon suffers an additional 15 True damage. The Vermisidon can only swallow one creature at a time. If the swallowed creature dies while inside the Vermisidon, the giant serpent is healed for 40 HP.

**Body Slam:** *Standard. Adjacent. 1 Ruin.* The Vermisidon slams its large and heavy body into all ADJACENT enemies, dealing 1d8+12 damage.

**Corrosive Spit:** *Standard. Ranged. Very Far.* A stream of green saliva is ejected forcefully at a target. The saliva sizzles as its acid burns through whatever it hits. Deals 1d8+7 Corrosive damage and reduces the AV of the target by 2 until the end of battle. AV reduction effect stacks.

**Tremor Sense:** *Passive.* A Vermisidon can detect any creature that physically moves on the sand within 2 km of it. No amount of stealth or sneaking around can negate Tremor Sense as long as they are touching the sands.

**Vulnerability:** *Passive.* When the Vermisidon uses Mandible Crush or Swallow Whole, its AV drops to 0 for the first successful attack made against it afterwards as its head becomes vulnerable for a moment.

*While formidable and deadly, the Vermisidon is vulnerable to being overwhelmed by multiple attackers. The Vermisidon's standard attack Mandible Crush can only strike once per round against a single target. Swallow Whole can help the Vermisidon deal damage to two different targets per round.*

*Use Body Slam when there's more than one enemy Adjacent to the Vermisidon.*

*Corrosive Spit doesn't deal much damage but its armour-melting effect can be devastating to a Class like a Sentinel who relies on their AV heavily for both offense and defense.*

# Vorathian Overseer

*The Overseer does mediocre damage by himself. His strength lies in utilizing the various bonuses he can bestow on his Imps. Fear the Whip should be used every round as it is a Quick action and free of Ruin cost. The longer you can keep your Imps alive, the deadlier Fear the Whip becomes.*

As a servant of Vorath the Devourer, the Overseer is a ruthless slave driver whose sole purpose is to drive its hordes of demonic Imps to seek out and fetch juicy morsels for their Dark Lord to consume. Vorath's domain contains many horrors, and his constant feasting leaves a trail of lesser demons as a waste product of his gluttony. These hordes of Imps are unruly and disorganized, often cannibalizing each other (no doubt taking after their ever-hungry father) and causing mayhem in Vorath's domain.

The intimidating Overseer was fashioned by Vorath to watch over the legions of Imps and to channel their chaotic energy into more useful ventures, such as descending upon a mortal village through an open breach and devouring whatever they come across before heading back to Oblivion and offering themselves, and their newly ingested prizes, to Vorath.

With the Imps being slow of mind and driven by instinct, the Overseer must employ cruel yet effective tools to keep them in line. Fell magicks, savage threats, and the sting of a powerful whip all serve to herd the erratic Imps into a formidable force to reckon with. As long as a group of these lesser de-

## 2 Vorathian Imp

*Small, Demon, 30 XP*

| COMBAT STATS | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✚ | | | | | |
| 19 | 0 | 13 | 13 | 15 | 10 |

| ATTRIBUTES | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
| 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

### ATTACKS

**Claw:** *Melee. 1d8+3 damage.*

### TACTICS AND ABILITIES

**Bite:** *Standard. Adjacent. 1 Ruin.* The Imp chomps on its target and clamps down, hindering further movement from the target. The target suffers 1d10+4 damage and is Rooted for 1 round.

**Fell Pack:** *Passive.* When attacking a target that has another Imp ADJACENT to it, add +1 to AR and damage for each other Imp ADJACENT to the target.

**Protect Master:** *Reaction. 1 Ruin.* When ADJACENT to a Vorathian Overseer, the Imp may jump in to intercept a successful attack directed at the Overseer, and take the hit instead.

## 5 Vorathian Overseer

*Large, Demon, 120 XP*

| COMBAT STATS | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✚ | | | | | |
| 50 | 3 | 15 | 16 | 18 | 15 |

| ATTRIBUTES | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 3 |

### ATTACKS

**Fell Whip:** *Ranged. Nearby. 1d8+6 damage.*
**Punch:** *Melee. 1d10+6 damage.*

### TACTICS AND ABILITIES

**Fear the Whip:** *Quick. Nearby.* The Overseer's Whip turns a crimson red as he snaps it across the back of one the Imps. The lashing leaves a red hot mark on the Imp's back and the Imp begins to grow, muscles engorging as its skin tears to accommodate its new size. The targeted Imp gains +3 to AR and damage until the end of the battle. This bonus can stack indefinitely.

**Hurry Up!:** *Standard. Far.* The Overseer barks an order at one of its Imps with urgency and the promise of pain if the Imp doesn't follow through. The targeted Imp may take another Standard action if it already has. If it has not taken its Standard action yet, it now can take 2 Standard actions for its turn. Must be used or the bonus is lost when the round ends.

**Chariot Slam:** *Standard. Nearby. 1 Ruin.* The chariot carrying the Overseer begins to hum as it prepares to slam into a target brutally and knock them back. Takes 1 round to prepare. Target takes 3d10+10 damage and is knocked back a NEARBY distance from where it was standing.

**Riot.** *Standard. 4 Ruin.* The Overseer lets out a bellowing roar that riles up all the Imps on the battlefield. All Imps receive the Hurry Up! bonus.

*Alone, the Vorathian Imps are more annoyance than a true threat to a party of adventurers. However, with the Overseer in the back line augmenting and driving them forward they can spiral a situation out of control quickly. Consider the Vorathian Imps having a DL of 3-4 when a Vorathian Oversser is included in the encounter.*

*Imps have very little health and many may be killed off in the first round, you may need to run an extra Imp or two when you are designing encounters to ensure a proper challenge.*

*Chariot Slam can be devastating to a PC. Remember to telegraph the ability charging up. The Overseer will usually grip the sides of the chariot with his hands and channel Fell energy into it to prepare for the Chariot Slam.*

mons has a Vorathian Overseer behind them, they turn from a dangerous annoyance into a deadly force that can overrun anything from a battle-hardened group of adventurers to an entire settlement.

The Overseer is a large and grotesquely obese demon: a reflection of its creator's insatiable appetite. Its clammy grey body and sagging skin are adorned with piercings and mottled markings. The Overseer's terrifying face is often covered with rusty metal plating, and only its rows of razor-sharp teeth slick with acrid spittle are visible. The Overseer rides in a chariot fuelled by Fell magick, which floats a meter off the ground. From there he commands the battlefield on the back lines.

The Imps, under the Overseer's command, are mindless creatures with an insatiable appetite. Their small mud-brown bodies are mottled, and they resemble hairless canines in shape—bar their demonically ugly heads and ghastly tails. They move swiftly when on all fours and prove deadly with their razor-sharp claws and powerful bite. Alone they are easily dispatched, but when unified under the command of a Vorathian Overseer, they become organized and are often augmented by the Overseer's magicks.

The best strategy for dealing with this deadly combo is to go for the head at all costs: kill the Overseer and the Imps will scatter.

*Because of the tension between the Valla and the Zakari, utilize this piece of lore in a mechanical way to make the battlefield a little more interesting. Have your Zakari specifically focus down Vallan PCs first. Hurl a few choice words their way and goad them into making a tactical mistake.*

The Zakari emerged during the Age of Unity as one of the many races created by the Ivory Queen to be part of the Crimson Horde. They were a tool in her misguided attempt to unite her original Children against a common enemy. The Queen tried to design a race of people to rival the Valla. She recreated similar conditions conducive to the Valla's origins, but lacked the refinement and artistic nuance of the Skyfather's abilities.

Whereas the Valla were born from the morning light of the rising sun, the Zakari were formed from the dying light of dusk. Graceful and long-lived like their counterpart, they have constantly striven to prove themselves a worthy power in the world of Unity.

While the Valla enjoyed the lush green forests, snowcapped mountains or airy plains, the Zakari found their home in sweaty jungles and damp swamplands. The heavy canopy and thick bog mists complemented their elusive and stealthy nature perfectly. After the Great Calamity, many Zakari migrated west to the Dread Marshes.

The Zakari are looked down upon by the original races, especially the Valla. Both peoples have a deep-seated animosity for one another. The Valla are constantly reminded of the shadow that was created to replace them. The Zakari must struggle with the fact that they were hastily forged as tools of war and were denied the freedom to choose their own lives like the Valla. For the Zakari, to see a Valla is to see what they could have been had their destiny not been tethered to a divine will.

Created from the light of the setting sun, the Zakari are most active during the hour of twilight. They will always prefer the night over daytime.

# Zakari

## 3 Zakari Marksman

*Medium, Humanoid, 60 XP*

| COMBAT STATS | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✚ | | | | | |
| 25 | 1 | 15 | 16 | 16 | 12 |

| ATTRIBUTES | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
| 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 |

### ATTACKS

**Longbow:** *Ranged. Very Far. 1d8+3 damage.*
**Spear:** *Melee. 1d6+3 damage.*

### TACTICS AND ABILITIES

**Ambushers:** *Passive.* Zakari are adept at avoiding detection in order to always strike first. Attempts to detect lurking Zakari suffer Hindrance.

**Marked:** *Quick.* Zakari Marksmen will communicate and wisely bring all their firepower to bear on high priority targets first. Marking a target causes a red Zakarian symbol to appear above them. Marked targets suffer an additional +3 damage when successfully attacked by a Zakari. Only one target can be marked at a time. Lasts until the end of battle.

**Disengage:** *Movement. 1 Ruin.* Using their incredible speed, Zakari are able to move through and away from enemies without causing Provoked Attacks.

**Desperate Shot:** *Standard. 2 Ruin.* A powerful shot that deals 2d6+5 damage but breaks the Zakari's longbow, leaving it only able to attack in melee.

3

## Zombie Burster

*Medium, Undead, 60 XP*

**COMBAT STATS**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30 | 0 | 11 | 14 | 12 | 8 |

**ATTRIBUTES**

| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**ATTACKS**

**Fists:** *Melee. 1d8+5 damage.*
**Bite:** *Melee. 8 damage.*

**TACTICS AND ABILITIES**

**Mindless:** *Passive.* Powers affecting the mind have no effect on the Zombie. They cannot be reasoned with, are unaffected by morale and will never flee.
**Brains!:** *Passive.* Zombies will prioritize attacking Incapacitated targets using their Bite attack. If a target dies this way, they will rise as a Zombie in 3 hours.
**Critical Mass:** *Passive.* When its HP reaches 0, the Burster's body explodes in a violent spray of acidic viscera and fluids. Anyone ADJACENT to the Burster when it dies takes 1d6+3 Corrosive damage.

1

## Zombie

*Medium, Undead, 20 XP*

**COMBAT STATS**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | 0 | 11 | 13 | 11 | 8 |

**ATTRIBUTES**

| MIGHT | AGILITY | MIND | PRESENCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

**ATTACKS**

**Swipe:** *Melee. 1d4+3 damage.*
**Bite:** *Melee. 4 damage.*

**TACTICS AND ABILITIES**

**Mindless:** *Passive.* Powers affecting the mind have no effect on the Zombie. They cannot be reasoned with, are unaffected by morale and will never flee.
**Brains!:** *Passive.* Zombies will prioritize attacking Incapacitated targets using their Bite attack. If a target dies this way, they will rise as a Zombie in 3 hours.

*To more easily utilize the Brains! ability, consider including some weak NPCs in an encounter that might help the PCs. It's always fun to watch the players' reaction when a friendly old face shows up out of nowhere that wants to eat them.*

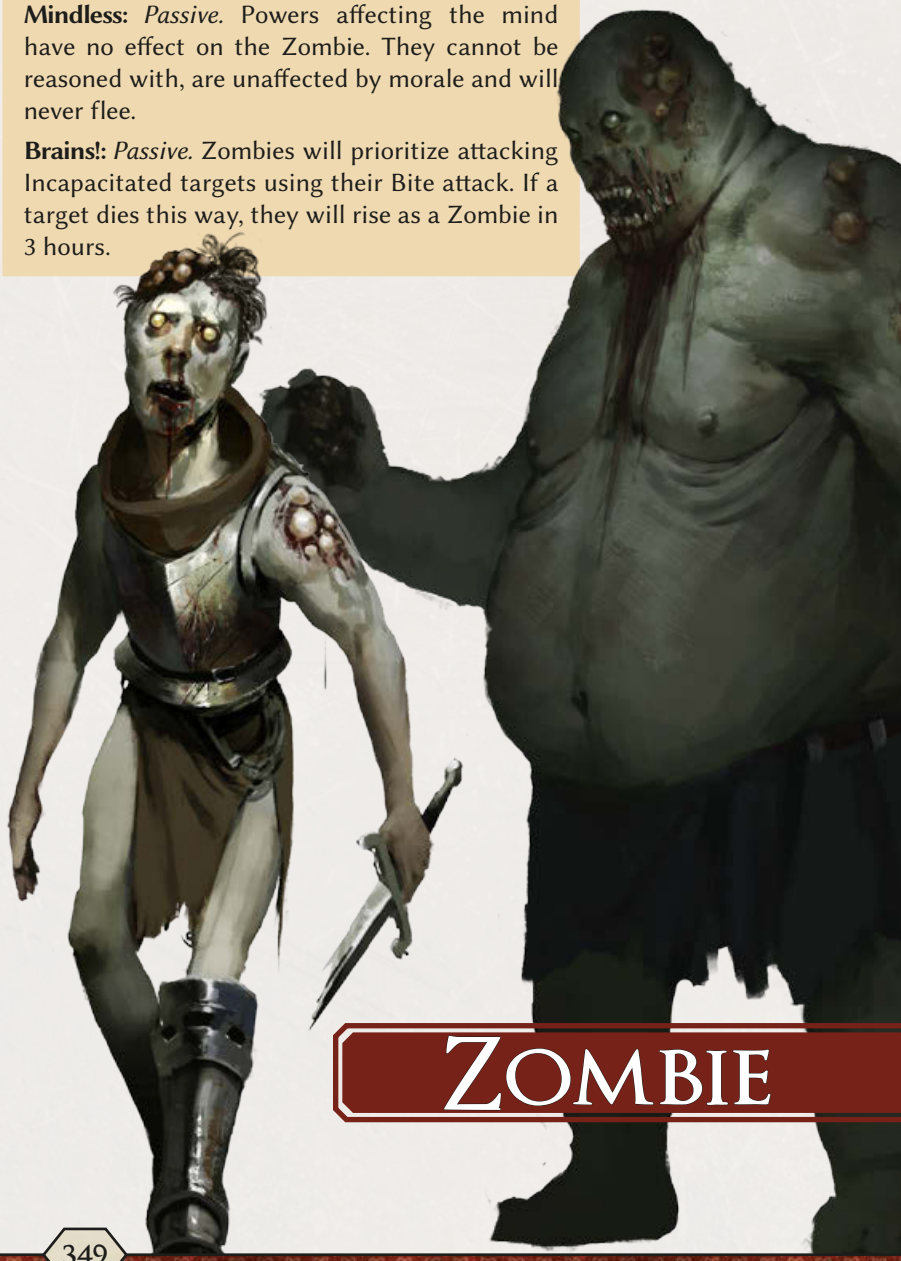
*As the Burster approaches its explosion threshold, players may visually see the flesh coming apart at the seams and the smaller pustules beginning to bubble and burst.*

Zombies are nothing more than mindless corpses driven by the singular instinct to feed. Animated by necromantic energies from the Drift, they lumber forth from their graves in search of flesh and brains. Lacking the ability to think and feel they will always approach their target in the most straightforward manner, bludgeoning them with strikes and biting them when they are close enough.

A zombie's bite can transform its victim into a zombie if the victim dies while suffering a bite wound. A few hours after death, the victim will rise as a mindless zombie in search of food as the vicious cycle continues.

Zombies feel no pain and will continue unflinchingly even after suffering heavy damage. Wary adventurers are able to hear zombies before they come from their telltale shuffling and loud moans.

Crypts, catacombs, and graveyards are places where you will find large concentrations of zombies, especially if they are in or near Risen lands. Breaches that form elsewhere may also suffuse the corpses with ample energy to bring them to life.



# Zombie

# Zoog & Rikkisi

It is difficult to describe either the Rikkisi or the Zoog without looking at them as a pair. Their unlikely partnership has solidified so strongly over the past few centuries that they are no longer looked at as separate races, but as a single unit.

The giant and powerful Zoog were created by the Ivory Queen to be the builders and movers of the Crimson Horde. Their physical might and hardy constitutions allowed them to work tirelessly, harvesting the vast amounts of wood, stone, and ore required for the war effort. Once the machines were built, the Zoog were the ones to pull them out to the battlefield and load them with boulders. Their minds were made very basic so that they could excel at their singular task without distractions.

The Rikkisi were not originally part of the Crimson Horde. These diminutive creatures could have been a remnant from when the Skyfather tested his powers of creation before creating the Valla, or they could have evolved from the primordial constituents of the world when Unity was still a young and roiling landscape. No one truly knows. The Rikkisi are generally docile creatures that eke out an existence in the Great Wilds without any physical prowess. Their minds are sharp and they have a certain charm about them that allowed them to ingratiate themselves quickly to the Crimson Horde when the Horde escaped into the Great Wilds.

The Rikkisi found their perfect complement in the mighty but dimwitted Zoog: the Rikkisis's quick wit protected the Zoog from being taken advantage of by intellectually superior parties, while the Zoog found the Rikkisis's childlike demeanours endearing and grew fiercely protective of them. When they joined forces, they found they could achieve goals that would be impossible had they attempted them alone.

A Rikkisi and a Zoog usually bond for life. Many pairings initially go through a "trial" period of several months in which they undertake a ritual devised by the Rikkisi called the "Great Journey." The Great Journey will take a Rikkisi and a Zoog on a grand adventure through various parts of the Great Wilds that culminates in retrieving a prized trophy (usually the skull of a rare beast, a precious gem in a dangerous quarry, or the healing waters at the top of Jade Mountain). It is during this Great Journey that both Rikkisi and Zoog come to know each other and find out if they are compatible. Most successful pairings do end up bonded for life.

The connection between these two races is very strong. At an individual level, if one of the pair is separated from the other, whether through death or displacement, they will grow depressed, sick, and possibly die if they cannot overcome the grief and anxiety of the separation. It is incredibly rare for a bonded Rikkisi or Zoog to move on and bond with another if they have lost their bonded partner.

Rikkisi and Zoog are found mostly in the Great Wilds but there are uncommon sightings of them in various corners of the world, even as far south as the Iron Plains. They are accepted by the general populace, as both races give off an aura of gentleness, despite the Zoog's incredible size and strength. Civilized folk are often fond of the Rikkisi and their charming ways. Many enjoy the tall tales and wild stories Rikkisi have to tell and it's always a delight when both Rikkisi and Zoog act out a play detailing their adventures.

*The bond between Rikkisi and Zoog is often a light-hearted one. If you want to exercise your acting chops or get a little silly, feel free to do voices for these characters as they lumber about the battlefield poking and pounding their enemies into dust.*

4

## Rikkisi

*Small, Humanoid, 60 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | 1 | 16 | 16 | 18 | 15 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 4 | 3 | 4 |

### Attacks

**Melee Attack:** *Melee. 1d8+4 damage.*
**Blow Dart:** *Ranged. Far. 1d6+5 Corrosive damage.*

5

## Zoog

*Large, Humanoid, 100 XP*

### Combat Stats

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50 | 0 | 14 | 16 | 15 | 11 |

### Attributes

| Might | Agility | Mind | Presence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

### Attacks

**Fists:** *Melee. 1d10+9 damage.*

### Tactics and Abilities

**Separation Anxiety:** *Passive.* If the Rikkisian rider is killed while its Zoog is still alive, the Zoog will fly into a fit of rage and become immune to all forms of status effects and receive an extra +1d12 on its damage rolls. The Zoog will single-mindedly chase its rider's killer for vengeance and the only thing that can stop it is death.

*Players would be wise to ensure the Zoog is close to death before taking out its rider. Separation Anxiety can potentially allow the Zoog to Incapacitate a PC in a single strike.*

# CHAPTER IX

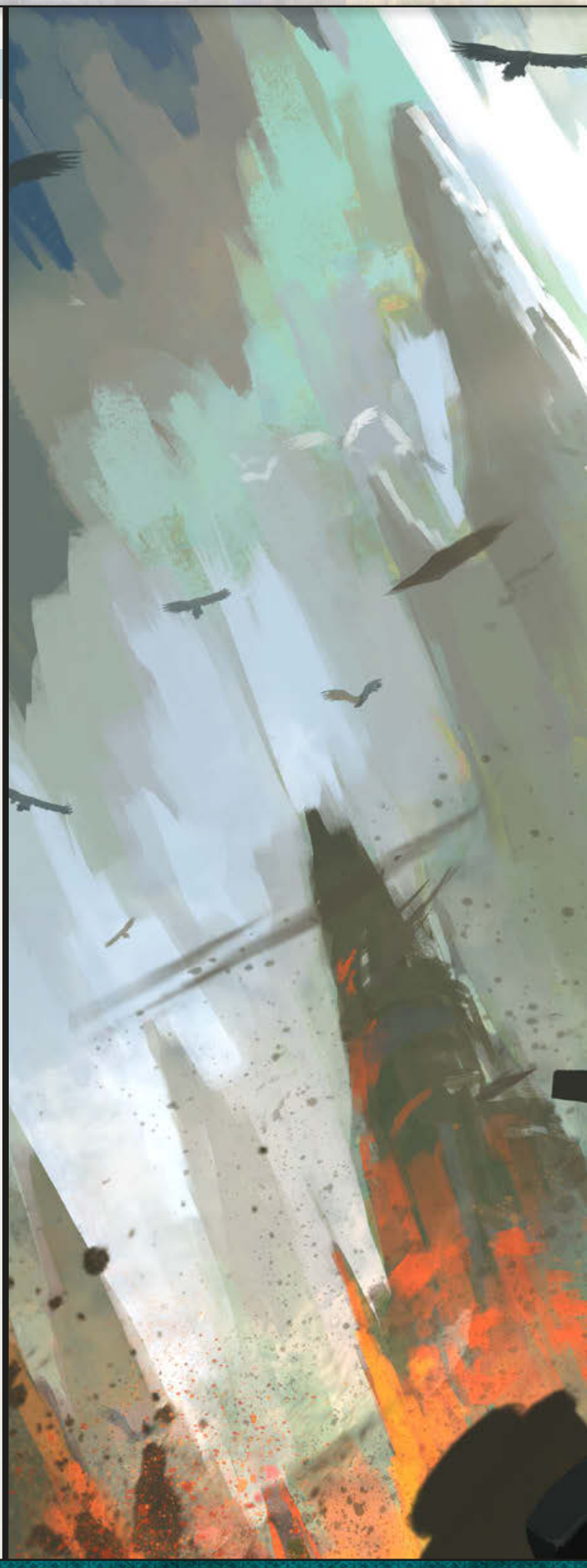
# GM GUIDE

This chapter will be dedicated to providing guidance and suggestions for the Game Master (GM) on running *Unity*. The format and layout of this section will be similar to the previous **Character Creation**, **Core Rules**, and **Combat** sections. The information presented here is for the GM to use in conjunction with each of these respective sections.

A critical takeaway before you dive into this guide is to approach everything as a suggestion, not gospel truth. The ideas and philosophy presented here are the tenets upon which *Unity* was built, but in peeling back the layers a step further, the ultimate goal of the tabletop RPG experience is to have fun. Every group of players and their GM is different, and you, as the GM, will most likely understand what works best for your group. If something that's suggested here doesn't sit well with you, feel free to forgo it or tailor it to suit your needs.

## GM GUIDE CHAPTER PREVIEW

- **Philosophy:** A brief explanation on the overarching spirit and approach that was intended for *Unity* when it comes to being a GM.
- **Character Creation:** Taking an active part alongside players to help them create characters that fit their creative vision and your campaign. Includes guidelines for Core Path creation and custom Equipment.
- **Experience & Levelling Up:** Guidelines for adapting to PCs growing in power and different methods to granting Levels.
- **Player vs. Player:** How to approach PCs challenging and fighting each other.
- **Adventuring:** How to approach Necessities & Gear and pacing for Artifacts.
- **Failing Forward:** Introducing two different approaches to Failing Forward: Mechanical or Narrative Complications.
- **Spark Points:** Guidelines for the pacing and threshold to determine Spark Points.
- **Ruin:** A comprehensive guide on using Ruin to create unpredictable complications for your players.
- **Intrusions:** How to perform Intrusions when PCs attempt to take a Respite or Full Rest.
- **Combat:** Tips for keeping combat fast-paced and exciting. Alternative rules for distances and using grids.
- **GM Dice-rolling:** Guidelines on running a game where the GM rolls dice alongside the players.



## PHILOSOPHY

*Unity* is a game about heroes and cooperation. It's a game designed for epic moments, and tries its best to unburden itself from constant page flipping and a fixation on minute details. The game is ultimately meant to be loose and flexible.

The freeform nature of the tabletop experience will create situations where your players will go right off the rails and attempt things that the rules might not have a clear stance on or defined minutiae for. Improvisation and fair judgment are required on your part in these instances. Our feelings on these moments are more to err in the way of leniency and attempt to accommodate the player's action, especially if it isn't game breaking. It might make things easier for the players, but their entire adventure is going to be full of struggles. Struggles that you get to thrust upon them! If one doesn't work out or crumples easily to their ingenuity and creativity, we say let them have it instead of nickel-and-diming the situation; you will have so many more opportunities to test them.

With that being said, if a player leans towards actively abusing this philosophy or attempts an action that will have dire effects for the rest of the session or campaign, it is completely within your right to say "No, sorry, you can't do that." If it's for the health of the game, most players will understand. It's in relation to calls based on feeling like the 'antagonist' to the player's 'protagonist' where we ask for the GM's temperance. The GM's role in *Unity* is never to stand against the players. Both the GM and players are meant to work together to weave a living and breathing story. There should not be any notion about winning or losing against each other.

## CHARACTER CREATION

Character Creation is a crucial step for both your players and yourself. Your best position is to let your players know that you are open and more than happy to help them bring their character concept to life. There are some parts of Character Creation that will benefit greatly from having a GM around for review and discussion.

### RUNNING A SESSION ZERO

Before your players even begin to create their characters, it's highly recommended that all of you sit down together and have a discussion on expectations and ground rules. If you haven't selected or created a campaign to run at this point, this will be a great opportunity to find out the subject matter that interests your players the most. If you have selected or created a campaign already, this is a chance for you to pitch it to your players and give them a taste of what's to come. It also gives you the opportunity to tweak (if you so choose) your campaign further in light of the feedback received during this session. The underlying purpose of the Session Zero is to prevent issues from cropping up as the game progresses due to miscommunication and/or mismanaged expectations. This is the time where you pitch the type of game you intend on running and give general details about the campaign that you have planned. You can speak to the starting location, the overall tone you are aiming for (whether the campaign is a combat-heavy, dungeon delving experience or one of drama and mystery—or maybe a mix of both).

These kinds of details and the revealing of intentions will let your players react and respond accordingly. If the campaign is one that interests them, that's fantastic. Not only do they want to buy what you are selling but they can now tailor their character to fit the parameters of your campaign. From a player's perspective, there is nothing more disappointing than making a charismatic and socially adept scoundrel only to be dragged through dungeon after dungeon with nothing but mouth-breathing monsters to fight.

The Session Zero is also a good time for you to ask your players about the difficulty level of the campaign. Your players may want a grittier and harsher campaign, and knowing that they expect this, there shouldn't be any bad blood when you change the rules to allow them fewer Necessities and Gear uses, pick 3 or 4 numbers to guess for Intrusions, increase the rate at which Ruin is generated, or lower the number of Fading stacks required before a character feels the cold embrace of death.

Maybe your players like all the default rules but just want more of a challenge in the way of beefier or more interesting enemies that have abilities beyond "I hit him." Things could go the complete opposite direction and you might be dealing with a group of players fresh to tabletop role-playing. They seem a little nervous already, so you might decide to loosen the reins a bit with regards to all of the above. This is the perfect place for them to let you know, as all of these tuning knobs were designed for this very purpose.

While a lot has been discussed about what your players want, this is also an opportunity for you to inform your players of your own expectations, and if you are changing or hard-enforcing any rules. It's always best to offer up an explanation instead of being arbitrary about it. Perhaps you feel strongly about removing the alternative rules for rolling for their starting Attributes completely. Perhaps there is a Class Power that you want to modify slightly or remove. Perhaps you might really want to emphasize the direness of the Ruin mechanic and let your players know that you are taking the breach openings in your campaign to an extreme—in this case, Ruin increases can become a bit of a nail-biting moment for your table.

Outside of the game mechanics, you might have expectations with regards to table etiquette, break times, talking out of character, or even the type of snacks that will be available. The Session Zero is the perfect time to discuss all of these points.

Usually, as both sides exchange expectations and discuss the upcoming campaign, players often begin talking about party composition and synergy. Now that they know what to expect and the type of game you plan on running, it can be an organic next step to discuss the most interesting and well-suited characters they might come up with as a team.

### CORE PATH CREATION

Players can usually tackle creating a character concept on their own, especially once they know what to expect from your game. It's usually when they get to the **Core Path section** that it's *strongly recommended* that they consult with you on developing their Core Paths. This is especially true for newer players that are experiencing *Unity* for the first time.

This can come in the form of the players creating their Core Paths then pitching them to you. Encourage them to describe each Core Path and give them different scenarios to see if they are able to apply their Core Path in an interesting yet non-abusive way. Some players might have what they think is an amazing Core Path, but then it becomes clear that it's not very applicable to many situations, and so becomes fairly inert mechanically. Other players will create a Core Path that encompasses too many scenarios and can easily be abused. It is your job to help them navigate between these two extremes to find a happy medium that fits into your vision of the campaign you are about to run for them.

Developing Core Paths will most likely be the longest part of Character Creation. The Core Paths are a vital component to the role-play and storytelling experience in *Unity* and should absolutely be given a lot of time and thought. In situations where players are new, you can be a little bit more lenient if they don't get their Core Path just right initially. Be sure to let them know that you'd like to let them run with it, but that they should be prepared to tweak it as the game progresses if you ask them to. Setting this expectation early can help avoid conflict later.

There will be times when a Core Path seems either incredibly lacklustre or overpowered initially, but in actual play the Core Path may add a lot of depth to the character while not being abusive. It is better to say yes and communicate to your players clearly that you want to give them a chance to try their Core Path out, while reminding them that they should prepare themselves to change it after the first session or two if you ask them. This way you won't squash a potentially interesting Core Path and possible character development before they can bloom.

### EQUIPMENT

During the Character Creation process, players are asked to choose starting Equipment. They are given a certain amount of Denerim (between **150 to 250**) to purchase initial Equipment, Necessities, and adventuring Gear.

**Starting Wealth.** The amount of starting wealth you decide to give them is another knob for you to use to tune the difficulty of their starting experience. At the bare minimum, they will most likely need to pool their remaining money to afford a hot meal and warm beds. They will need to be judicious about how they use up their Necessities and Gear as they won't be able to restock readily until they've acquired more coin.

**Unique Equipment Types.** Another Equipment-related topic requiring your attention is a player's desire to wield a unique type of weapon that isn't on the tables listed in the **Equipment section**. Allowing a player to embrace the vision and fantasy of their character is an important part of *Unity,* which is why there aren't pages and pages of specific items to choose from. If one of your players wants to wield a metal fan as a weapon, work with them to find a weapon category that fits.

In the case of a metal fan, if they want it to be a large metal fan that does **1d8 damage** and their class is Competent in Medium weapons, the metal fan can be considered a Medium Melee Weapon and priced as such. If they wish to dual wield two metal fans, then they can be considered two Light Melee Weapons (which bump the damage up to **1d8**). Mechanically everything stays the same, but the aesthetic and fantasy is allowed to be expressed.

## EXPERIENCE & LEVELLING UP

As your players' characters grow in power, they will Level-up. This is a significant event not just for them but also for you. Level-ups not only increase character effectiveness but also bring the possibility of new powers and perks that might change the dynamic of adventuring and combat.

**Adapting Difficulty.** You will have to adapt accordingly and be ready to improvise and tweak your encounters so that they stay challenging, e.g. the Phantom and the Dreadnought in the party received new powers or upgrades to current powers that allow them to synergize and combo in a devastating way. Physical damage output from the party may have very well doubled, therefore your monsters may need a slight upgrade—perhaps that Skulker is a high-ranking soldier in his clan and has the shiny **armour** on to show it. Please keep in mind that your

***How much XP to give.*** *If you are using the Standard Levelling approach, monsters will have a static XP value attached to them in the Foes & Fiends section. This Monster XP is awarded fully to each member of the party and not to be divided. Quest XP is deliberately looser and flexible. Quest XP is another tuning knob for you to use to either temper or expedite character progression. If your group is struggling and stagnating, you may want to increase Quest XP rewards so they gain more power quicker. If your group is picking fights left and right and advancing too quickly from the trail of bodies they leave behind them, then dialing back Quest XP is an option to balance things out. Quest XP was also designed as another carrot for your players to chase to further incentivize them to follow a plot hook that's critical to your campaign.*

adjustments should never aim to completely negate the characters' power gains, instead they should be there to ensure that things still remain challenging and interesting.

Exceptions for adjusting power are for NPCs or monsters the PCs have crossed paths with before but purposefully had to avoid or evade. It's a great feeling to go back and triumph over enemies that once had you quivering in your boots, so be sure not to rob your players of this experience.

**Experience System.** There are a few ways to approach granting Experience (XP) to your players. Choosing the right one can be a decision you make together during a Session Zero.

| EXPERIENCE TO LEVEL | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | - | 6 | 12000 |
| 2 | 800 | 7 | 20000 |
| 3 | 2000 | 8 | 30000 |
| 4 | 3500 | 9 | 60000 |
| 5 | 6500 | 10 | 120000 |

## PLAYER VS. PLAYER

*Unity* wasn't built to support players antagonizing or fighting each other, but for the rare occasion that friends might turn on one another and engage in a battle, normal Combat Rules would apply but with a small change. Instead of PCs rolling against static TNs (e.g. Monster Attack and Defense ratings), the PCs would now roll against each other for both Attack and Defense rolls.

An example of this would be a fight between two PCs, Stein and Zanna. Stein was hit with an attack that has left him Confused. On his turn he ends up attacking Zanna. Stein would roll his Basic Attack and Zanna would make a Defense roll. The higher number would win out and either the attack or defense would be successful. If both players roll and the results are equal, then they would roll again.

For mischievous acts that players might perform against each other outside of combat, the same mechanic applies but instead of using Attack and Defense rolls, you would have your players roll using the appropriate Attribute and Core Path bonuses.

Maybe Zanna is going to steal some Denerim off Stein after that fight to buy some Healing Potions; after all, it was his fault she's in bad shape. Zanna would then roll 2d10+AGILITY+CPP (relevant Core Path points), to represent how nimble Zanna's fingers are, against Stein's 2d10+MIND+CPP, representing how perceptive Stein is.

### LEVELLING APPROACHES

**STANDARD.** The first and default way is the most straightforward. Killing monsters and completing quests award XP. When a certain amount of XP is acquired, a character gains a Level.

**MILESTONES.** XP is granted when characters hit certain campaign milestones with regards to the main storyline. You may have set certain breakpoints in the campaign where, if your players have progressed that far, they Level-up automatically. In a way, this could be similar to gaining XP as a quest is finished, but it might span several quests, some of which may be skipped because they are not part of the main storyline. This method works well if your campaign is heavily structured and your players are on board with a more straightforward campaign.

**SESSION-BASED.** A Level-up is granted based on number of sessions, e.g. Level 2 might be achieved after just 1 session. Level 3 might take 2 sessions. Level 4 might take 3. There are no hard-and-fast rules, as this method exists mainly for groups that have a limited amount of time to play but still want to feel mechanical progression.

### THE BLADE CALLS TO ME

From an item alone, you can drive new story lines and interesting character development that not only affects the character wielding the item but can pull the entire party into the struggle as well.

Take for example the fist weapon, Soul Razor (pg. 302). One of Soul Razor's effects is that it heals its wielder if they land the killing blow. This healing effect grows in strength permanently with the more lives it takes. A once lighthearted, wise-cracking, and lovable rascal of a Phantom can quickly become a brooding murderer, driven by the weapon's insatiable hunger for blood.

# ADVENTURING

### NECESSITIES & GEAR

Characters have finite resources in Necessities and Gear that require replenishing in town or through hunting and foraging.

**Necessities.** Necessities must be used up for every Respite or Full Rest taken. Necessities are mainly considered meal rations and can be purchased where it makes sense (a town, a travelling merchant, a fisherman, etc.). Necessities can also be generated by hunting and foraging for food. Depending on the environment characters are in, there might not be any chance of finding food. In these cases it's okay to say, "There won't be a chance to find anything meaningful here." This usually applies while dungeon delving.

However, if the party is out in the wilderness, there may be ample chance to find game to hunt or fruits and nuts to forage. If the party decides to take this approach, you may introduce an element of risk into their attempts. Using the **Difficulty Table** on *pg. 253* you can adjust the TN required for a character to successfully find something to eat. If they are creeping through a scorching desert, chances are slim they'll find enough food, but if they are in a lush forest teeming with the sounds of wildlife, then the TN will be considerably lower. Use your judgment. If they roll very poorly, you may introduce a complication, such as an attack by a feral animal, or maybe a branch that falls on them that they'll need to try and dodge.

**Gear.** Adventuring Gear encompasses a wide range of useful but common items such as rope, torches, flint and tinder, bandages, shovels, etc. The goal of Gear as a mechanic in the game is to abstract a lot of the minutiae of sifting through pages and pages of items before you can tell your player, "Sure you can do that if you have X item."

With abstraction there can be ambiguity. You will be responsible for reining in the ambiguity and setting the parameters for what Gear can be in your particular group. It's one thing for a player to declare their character will pull out a torch to illuminate a dark hallway (for they would strike one use of Gear off their sheet) but it's another thing for them to declare they have a floating robotic lantern that they are sending down the hallway.

Maybe a floating robotic lantern is something common in your world, but if it isn't, work with your player to come up with a compromise. Gear should be helpful, but it should never transcend being mundane and utterly common (this notion may be relative to the campaign and the world you are running).

**Alternative Gear Rules.** The Gear rules presented on *pg. 286* treat all types of mundane item usage the same: pulling out a crowbar or setting a torch alight will always mark a use of Gear. For an approach that is a little more grounded in reality but requires a bit more bookkeeping, you may allow players to keep permanent mundane items (like the crowbar) that they've marked Gear uses for, which means they won't need to mark it again when they pull out that item. Their max capacity for Gear is reduced by 1 until they get rid of that permanent item from their pack. They will also need to make a note that they have a crowbar in their pack.

These rules will make the game easier for players, and this alternative approach could be abused. You might consider reducing the maximum Gear capacity in general to maintain tension and force hard choices. You could also rein players in by using your narrative power if they are taking clear advantage of these alternative rules. For the crowbar example above, a character wading through a swamp or fighting in the rain could have their pack soaked through and eventually find a rusted crowbar that warps or breaks on use.

### ARTIFACTS

Loot can be a huge part of the tabletop RPG experience. For some players it's something they really look forward to. It is recommended that the pace and frequency at which you award your players with powerful items be at 1 item per 1.5 to 2 character Levels.

While this is the recommended pacing, there are checks and balances in place in case you'd like to be more generous with your players. Characters can only equip a certain amount of magickal items at a time. This capacity increases as they grow in power (gain Levels). This is explained in the lore of the world as a type of radiation that potent magickal items give off, so that if a character exceeds their current limit, then they are considered Hindered in everything they do.

There are many special Artifacts in the **Equipment section** for you to use in your campaign. You are strongly encouraged to steal affixes and effects to create your own items, or to modify the aesthetic or lore of the sample items to fit your campaign.

Keep in mind some Artifacts are very powerful and actually will change the way a character plays. You can use this to your advantage, creating interesting plot hooks and situations based on the potential character's action when the way they play is influenced by a magickal item they may have.

## FAILING FORWARD

The philosophy of creating interesting situations out of nearly successful rolls or flat out horrible failures is not an iron-fisted policy that needs to be followed rigidly. Failing Forward should be viewed as a "nice to have" ideal that should pervade your mentality as you GM for your players. You will want to implement it where it is convenient and makes sense. It's not worth stressing and wracking your brain for fantastic possibilities when one of your players fails their roll on an action. But if it comes to you in the moment (and it will so much more often than you think), then go for it and see where a half-success or a success with some sort of complication takes you and your players.

Here are some suggested approaches, along with examples, to inspire your play.

**Mechanical Complication.** Your player may roll quite below the TN you set for a certain task. The rest of the party might also be itching to try for success if the initial attempt failed. There's no harm in everyone trying, right? This can lead to an inevitable brute-forcing of a challenge where party members take turns attempting the same task until one of them succeeds. Introducing a mechanical complication might be the appropriate approach to deter such behaviour.

**Dreadnought:** *I pull my crowbar out of my pack (1 Gear use) and use it to attempt to pry open this iron-bound chest. *Fails roll**

**GM:** *You dig the crowbar into the lip of the chest's lid. As you brace your foot against the bottom half of the chest and apply your entire weight and strength on the crowbar, it bends before outright snapping in half. Mark off another use of Gear in addition to the initial use for the crowbar.*

If the character in this case no longer has any Gear uses to expend, you could also describe how the crowbar snaps off and the jagged end stabs into the Dreadnought, dealing X amount of damage. Furthermore, you could say that the Dreadnought's clumsy and brutish attempt at opening the chest jammed its locking mechanism, making it even more difficult for the next person to attempt to unlock it, or taking that possibility off the table completely.

**Put a Price on Success.** In the scenario above for the Mechanical Complication, had the Dreadnought rolled just barely under the TN you set, you might say the following:

**GM:** *As you bring your weight and strength down on the crowbar, you feel the lid of the chest giving, but you also hear what sounds like a cracking noise coming from inside the chest. In the next few seconds the lid busts open and splintered wood and twisted iron fly everywhere. You look inside and notice that a jewelled figurine that would fetch an incredible price has a piece broken off of it. You'll most likely be able to get something for it, but nowhere near what you could have if it were whole.*

Putting a price on success allows you to continue moving forward and also give your player some measure of satisfaction. It can also stop an 'attempt parade' to occur as other party members get in line to try their hand after hearing, "You fail to break open the chest." Furthermore, the party may very well try to look for someone to repair the figurine down the road, which could be an opportunity for you to lead them to an NPC you have waiting in the wings, or to an area you want them to be in.

**Narrative Complication.** Can be used interchangeably with the Mechanical Complication approach when appropriate. Narrative Complications affect the story in some way rather than having a straightforward complication involving game mechanics. In the example of the chest-opening attempt, a Narrative Complication would be that the Dreadnought makes a lot of noise which alerts the guards in the next room, or down the hall. Narrative Complications are also very useful for social challenges and can be used to great effect.

**Judge:** *I ask the rude farmer where he saw the refugees hiding. He should know that to deny me is to deny the law.*

**GM:** *He snorts at you and spits on the ground in front of your feet. "Get your righteous hide off my property. I didn't see nothin'!"*

**Judge:** *I'd like to attempt to intimidate him. He's clearly not taking me seriously and his flippant attitude needs to be checked. *Goes on a tirade about Divine decree and the consequences for denying an officer of the law. Fails roll**

**GM:** *As you get up in his face and start yelling at him, he shoves you back forcefully and draws an axe out from under the table behind him. "A Judge sentenced my boy to prison for stealing medicine to save his dying mother. The lad was killed in that prison, and the love of my life died because she couldn't get treatment. I'm sick of your kind. You walk around with your arrogance, demanding everyone respect you and obey—I'll show you the 'respect' you deserve!" He lunges at you with an angry roar and attacks.*

The Judge just lost her lead, now does she fight the farmer and risk killing him?

***Don't stress.*** *Again, Failing Forward is a philosophy to keep in the back of your mind as you play—not something that needs to be imposed on every single roll. Sometimes it's difficult to come up with alternatives on the spot, and that's okay.*

***It takes time.*** *There are countless possibilities on how a game may go or the type of actions your players may take. There will never be an encompassing and rigidly defined way for you to come up with interesting consequences to failure and near-successes. Making the right call will be something that grows organically from you taking the initiative and trying out various results while gauging your players' reactions. Adjusting your approach over time to find something that works for your table will be key to making Failing Forward work.*

## SPARK POINTS

***Time waits for no one.*** *If you find your players are spending a lot of time trying to do things like forage and hunt, don't be afraid to let them know the clock is ticking. Remember Ruin accrues as time passes and the rules are loose enough for you to tell them that the last 2 hours they spent hunting generated 2-4 Ruin for you. Or if you want to stay immersive, talk about how an uneasiness creeps across their skin as they notice they've been out dawdling for a while now and the sun is actually setting.*

Spark Points can add incredible flavour and immersion to the game. It's something that you should encourage your players to take advantage of, so provide them opportunities to do so.

Judging whether a description is worthy of awarding a player a Spark Point requires you to tailor it to your group and even possibly the individual player, e.g. if you have one player who isn't very articulate but you can tell he's really trying to be vivid to the best of his ability, give the Spark Point. Shakespearean antics are not at all required.

The purpose of Spark Points is threefold. It's meant to paint a more vivid picture of the scene unfolding before everyone's eyes. It's meant to increase engagement by having players think of how their action plays out visually instead of simply "I hit him." And it's a deliberate design choice that fits in with the system as a whole. Combos are important and exciting to pull off; having some way of increasing the odds of two or more people successfully landing the abilities they'd like to chain together goes a long way in player enjoyment. Spark Points blossoming into a Moment of Glory give players the tools for this kind of success.

To provide opportunities and nudge your players into using Spark Points, it's suggested to ask them if they'd like to describe their actions themselves if they roll particularly well. A great Attack roll? "John, that's a definite hit, in fact it's a huge hit. Why don't you describe in grisly detail how you eviscerate this poor Skulker?"

## RUIN

***Bargaining for Ruin.*** *While not mandatory, if you and your players agree, you can trade Ruin for Spark Points or Moments of Glory. If your players are particularly powerful and stomping through your encounters, you can make trades heavily in your favour. e.g. 8 Ruin for a Moment of Glory.*

Ruin is a tool for you to use to create tension and difficulty. All Ruin is generated from player action and time. From the Core Rules section, players know that being generally evil, committing immoral acts, and the passage of time, all generate Ruin.

"Being evil" can be a bit of a grey area. It's best to understand that Ruin, as a mechanic, also acts as a balancing lever for you. A wily, roguish Phantom that lies to woo the pretty lady or dips his fingers into the deep pockets of the bigoted wealthy official to lift a few Denerim shouldn't be generating Ruin. Now, if he were stealing food from a poor, starving child on the street or telling lies that might endanger an innocent life, then Ruin should be generated.

Think of Ruin as a type of karmic retribution: it's not completely black and white. It's also not something that you must mull over meticulously to get right. It takes a lot of Ruin to create some significant challenges for your players, so a misstep here and there with its generation will not be game-breaking.

### RUIN GENERATION, DECAY & LIMITS

There are multiple ways to define the parameters for Ruin. Below are the default settings and some alternative options.

**Generating Ruin.** When it comes to immoral actions, Ruin generates in increments from 1 to 6. If you are confident in judging the morality of certain acts and your group is comfortable with you being arbitrary about it, you can decide the number (between 1 and 6) of Ruin generated for a particular player's action. The more intense and terrible the action is, the more Ruin is generated, as the fabric of reality is disturbed by the psychic, emotional, and energetic fallout of that reaction, e.g. stealing from someone in need who doesn't deserve it might generate 1 or 2 Ruin, while outright murdering someone innocent in cold blood might instantly generate 6 Ruin.

If you would like to let the dice decide, have your offending player roll **1d6** every time Ruin is generated outside of taking a Respite or Full Rest to determine the amount. Use a smaller die if you'd like to be more lenient with your players.

For more passive Ruin generation, you can employ a rule of generating 2-3 Ruin every 30 minutes of real time passing on top of Ruin generated normally through players travelling and resting. This method of Ruin generation requires less maintenance on the GM's behalf and can be helpful for newer GMs.

**Ruin Decay & Limits.** Ruin does not have limits normally. If you decide to carry Ruin from session to session (the default), it's up to your discretion whether you'd like to stockpile that Ruin or not. Ruin does decay at a rate of **1d10** per session. Remove the Ruin at the beginning of the session.

For an alternative playstyle that can potentially keep tension high, Ruin goes to a maximum of 20. At 20, you must spend Ruin in order to gain more.

### USING RUIN

Once you have enough Ruin points, you may use them up for the following actions:

| RUIN EFFECT | COST |
|---|---|
| MONSTER POWERS | Variable |
| BREACH OPENING | 18 |
| FORCED INTRUSION | 6 |
| EMPOWER ENCOUNTER | 5 to 10 |
| LIFE IS DIFFICULT | 4 |

**Monster Powers.** Monsters you control may sometimes have special powers that are quite potent, and will require you to expend a certain amount of Ruin to activate. These powers will sometimes have a cooldown associated with them. This cooldown means that the power needs X amount of rounds to recharge itself before it can be used again, even if you already have enough Ruin. You are heavily encouraged to spend Ruin on monster powers as such usage opens up strategic possibilities on the battlefield while challenging your players to work together even more to combat these potent powers.

**Breach Opening.** This is probably the most significant and strongest effect you can use Ruin for. Breaches can open up the game in a big way, creating a new Fell-battered landscape, wiping a small village off the map, unearthing a treacherous dungeon with opportunity for exploration, or creating the rise of a new threat that players must now deal with.

It's important to understand that the purpose of breaches is both a balancing mechanic and an avenue for a spin-off adventure or quest. Depending on the type of breach and its proximity to the players or a point of interest, players can always choose to ignore the breach. It's up to you to decide if there will be impactful consequences, either in the immediate future or somewhere down the line, e.g. the village that the players chose to ignore as they were besieged by a breach? There could have been valuable allies there, and a home base of sorts for the party when a mission takes them to the area weeks down the road. Instead, now that area is infested with twisted, Fell-tainted denizens that the players will need to fight through. They may even have to give up on that place entirely until they grow stronger.

You may choose from the list of breach effects below as a starting point, or come up with your own creative ideas that align with the lore of a temporary portal opening to the Drift. If you'd like to let the dice decide, have one of your players roll **1d6**.

**Forced Intrusion.** Players naturally suffer a chance of being attacked whenever they decide to do a Full Rest outside of a secure area. They have a 20% chance of being attacked normally. You may expend Ruin to guarantee an attack and you may do this during a Respite. Furthermore, you may force the party to give up another use of Necessities if they come under attack during a Forced Intrusion.

***Keeping track of Ruin.*** *The easiest way to track Ruin is to simply record a counter or running tally in your notes. If you'd like, you could also take a d20 and adjust the face and number to reflect the amount of Ruin you currently have. If you have a GM screen, you could also employ a pile of tokens in plain view of your group. Every time Ruin is generated, give them your best sly smile as you pull a few tokens to put behind your GM screen. Or you can leave your Ruin die wide in the open, maybe next to the Spark die—hope vs despair.*

| BREACH POSSIBILITIES | |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Invasion.** A breach opens and Fell demons spill forth. *Spawn a challenging encounter consisting of Demonic enemies. If the party chooses to engage, encounter should be difficult enough to force them to use a Respite or Full Rest after.* |
| 2 | **Infusion.** A breach opens and a chaotic lightning storm forms in the area. The surrounding wildlife and plant life may be infused with Drift energy (e.g. Drifting Glory could bloom; feral animals may take on Fell characteristics, making their hides and parts like fangs and claws more valuable; ore to make Demonsteel may become abundant in the area). *Use the Monster Difficulty table on pg. 309 and increase all creatures in the affected area by the Moderate Increase level.* |
| 3 | **Unearthing.** A breach opens but under the earth, splitting it open and causing a shifting of the land in the affected area. Subterranean creatures may spring forth from their dwellings, or the earthquake may reveal a passage to hidden places that have been lost to time. *If you have a dungeon or area that your players might have skipped over and want it to see some use, this would be a good time to incorporate it.* |
| 4 | **Aurora.** A breach opens in the sky, and while nothing truly tangible comes of it, the mixing of mild Drift energies and the atmosphere cause a splendid display of colours in the affected area. *Sometimes you might want to give your players a free pass, keep them on an important storyline, or maybe you have nothing prepared for a breach.* |
| 5 | **Devastation.** A breach opens in a populated area and either a storm or earthquake causes incredible destruction to the area. Effects from Infusion and Unearthing may also occur on top of the aftermath. *A place the players might know gets destroyed. NPCs they are invested in may be dead or lost. Players may feel the urge to find out.* |
| 6 | **Mastermind.** A breach opens and, similar to Invasion, Fell emerge. However, this time it could be a powerful high-ranking demon with bigger plans in mind. They may blend in with the local populace or go to a nearby city and manipulate their way into a position of power. The players may eventually encounter them and may even be used by them unknowingly. *Can be a way for you to introduce a new villain. The slow buildup and uncertainty of this breach possibility will keep your players on their toes.* |

**Empower Encounter.** As the battle turns in the players' favour and they think the day is won, you may introduce another enemy onto the battlefield. Think of an interesting reason why they arrived when they did. An extra guard may have heard the commotion and come running to check out what the clamour was about. A deadly Ragehound might have caught the scent of blood in the air as it was passing nearby and honed in on the source.

Ruin costs for Empowering Encounters run 5 to 10 Ruin. The more Ruin you expend, the more powerful the additional enemy may be. At the base cost of 5 Ruin, the enemy should be of a Danger Level that's equal to the party's Level.

**Life is Difficult.** Ruin works in mysterious ways. Its effects are subtle yet potent. One of the ways Ruin can manifest itself is by making life difficult for your players. A task that they are attempting will receive a slight bump in the TN required. Increase the difficulty of the task by **+2** when you expend 4 Ruin to invoke Life is Difficult.

You can come up with a relevant reason why the task is more difficult than it should be, e.g. "It seems someone else has attempted to climb up this wall, as evidenced in the shattered foothold above you. It must have crumbled to nothingness under their weight as they scaled the wall. This makes things a little more difficult for you as you have fewer spots to grab a hold of as you attempt to climb the wall."

## INTRUSIONS

When your players take a Full Rest in the wilderness or any unsafe location, there's always a chance they might come under attack. The type of monster should be relevant to the environment the characters are resting in, e.g. a bear might stumble upon their camp in the wilderness, a zombie might be drawn to the scent of flesh if they are resting in a catacomb or crypt, etc.

The suggested difficulty of the Intrusion is a couple of monsters of a Danger Level equal to the party's Level or one monster that's 1 Danger Level above the party. This is subject to the amount of people in the party. These figures assume a party of 4 characters. Adjust up and down accordingly.

If the party defeats the intruder(s), you may award them with some Denerim, if appropriate, (if they were beset by bandits, say), or let them attempt to negate the Necessity cost of the Full Rest if the monster is edible.

## COMBAT

There are some aspects of combat that may take time getting acclimatized to for both you and your players. This section will talk about the combat sequence, distances, and other actions in combat.

### COMBAT SEQUENCE

*Unity* utilizes group-based turns in order to encourage and facilitate tactical combat choices and the combining of powers to create some spectacular plays. With the players having no specific designated turn order, the freedom might be paralyzing to those new to this style of play. Here are a couple of suggestions to help speed things along.

**Shining a Spotlight.** As you and your players jump into an encounter and the turn goes over to the players, if they are hesitant to start, you may put the spotlight on a player of your choosing and ask them "What do you do?"

It's suggested that you also make it clear to your entire table that anyone can jump in at any time and discuss the turn together. If someone has an idea or a strategy, they should feel free to speak up. Nothing is set in stone and the moves don't need to occur until everyone agrees on what to do.

Sometimes Shining a Spotlight is used multiple times in an encounter. This can occur if your group of players is particularly shy, new to the game, or new to each other. In time, as players grow comfortable with each other and with the combat system, you may find yourself reaching for that Spotlight less and less.

**Be Ruthless.** By ramping up the difficulty of the encounter, either by using monsters that truly threaten your players or by using monsters in a tactically cunning way, you may potentially see a change in player behaviour as everyone is forced to become more invested and try harder.

There may be excitement in their eyes and urgency in their voices as they decide the best course of action to live through the savage encounter you've put in front of them. It's about finding that sweet spot between overwhelming challenge and victory as a foregone conclusion. It's about pushing your players to the edge but leaving them a glimmer of hope—hope that can be capitalized on if they work together to overcome their enemies.

Depending on your group of players and how tactically advanced they are, or how powerfully their party composition and power choices synergize, you will probably need a few encounters to tease out this difficulty-level sweet spot. When it comes to encounters, the ideal is to eventually allow you, as the GM, to go all-out with your monsters tactics-wise to create riveting combat and a high level of engagement that's shared between players and GM. Usually punches are pulled by the GM because it's easy to risk killing off PCs, but the freeform nature of the combat sequence and the core conceit of party synergy at the heart of the game give players a lot of firepower to fight back with.

### OTHER ACTIONS IN COMBAT

Players may attempt actions outside of Basic Attacks and what is codified in their powers. Generally these shouldn't be common occurrences but there may be things in the environment that mean it makes sense for players to manipulate to their advantage.

Embracing their ingenuity and allowing them some of these actions can be exciting and fulfilling for the player. It is unfeasible to list every single possibility that could occur. This part of combat and how you want to reward your players is left up to GM discretion. It is suggested to incorporate some form of risk vs. reward structure if players are attempting 'other actions' more often than you'd like. Failure to succeed on an attempted action can result in penalties or damage taken.

Depending on the action taken, you will have to tailor the effect or bonus you confer to your player for what they are trying to do. Here are some examples:

1) If a player flips over a table to use as cover, you might allow them to receive Benefit on Defense rolls for 1 round before the table shatters from the attack it receives.

2) A player attempts to push a crumbling statue over onto an enemy. You ask for a MIGHT check and determine the TN of the task using the Difficulty Table on *pg. 253* taking into account how heavy the statue is. Should they prove successful, you determine a range of damage and may use the strike of a heavy weapon (**2d6 + MIGHT**) from a Dreadnought as a baseline comparison for being crushed by a statue of X weight. In this case, if it was a 2-meter high stone statue, about 100kg in weight, you might decide it does **4d6 damage** to its victim(s).

If the player fails their roll, you may decide to say that the statue crumbles some more and the head rolls off and lands on the player for **1d10 damage**. Or you could say nothing happens if you know your players rarely attempt actions such as this.

3) All your players try to break the frozen ice floor the enemy is standing on by smashing the ground with their weapons. You might decide to go around the table and have them each roll against a TN, requiring that all be successful to achieve their action. Most likely some of the PCs will fail their roll. You could have them waste another turn trying again, but making note that the enemies know what they are up to and are moving in on them now. Attempt to generate tension and make it clear to the players that, while you want to indulge their creativity, there are also potential costs to thinking outside of the box.

## DISTANCES

Distances in battle are abstracted into range bands instead of discrete units of measurement. This allows you to be looser about the details of movement and also helps facilitate 'theatre of the mind'-style play for smaller-scale fights.

It's important to understand that distances are broken up into 4 different bands (Adjacent, Nearby, Far, Very Far) to speed up play and also prevent a lot of meticulous measuring and counting to see if a PC can perform an action. Spending time debating distances with your players would be counterproductive to this goal.

To avoid confusion, encourage your players to always feel free to ask you for clarification if they are unsure how far away someone or something is in relation to them. In time, usually after a few encounters, players will have a feel for the visual spacing between tokens or miniatures and this process will become easier.

**Alternative Grid Rules.** While distances are abstracted, and grids aren't required, some groups will still enjoy the idea of using a grid and having set distances. Converting the Range Bands for grid use is a fairly simple affair. It may add some more time when it comes to movement, positioning, and determining if you are in range for an action, but for some groups it's a good trade-off.

If you are using a grid and want to have some standardized distances in your game, follow these guidelines:

| GRID DISTANCE CONVERSION | |
|---|---|
| ADJACENT | 1 SQUARE AWAY |
| NEARBY | 2–5 SQUARES AWAY |
| FAR | 6–10 SQUARES AWAY |
| VERY FAR | 11–15 SQUARES AWAY |

A Movement action will carry you up to 5 squares from where you are.

## GM DICE-ROLLING

Alternative dice-rolling rules are kept simple. In combat, when your monsters attack you will have your PCs' stats and you will be the one rolling Defense to see if your monsters hit. For Intrusions, generating Ruin, Breach Table, rolling etc. you will roll those from now on instead of your players. You'll notice throughout the game that there will be moments where you ask a player to roll simply because you need someone to roll for you. Take back the power and the dice and go ahead and roll in these instances.

# INDEX


## A

Actions 262
Adrathe 24
Adrenaline Rush 265
Afflicted 16, 76–85, 150–151
Afflicted Castes 82
Age of Creation 12
Age of Strife 14, 41
Age of Unity 15
Age of Wrath 16
Aluvane the Dawnwalker 44, 111
Area of Effect 264-265, 308
Armour Value (AV) 152, 265
Artifacts 140, 287, 357
Attack Rating (AR) 152
Attributes 134, 137
  Main Attribute 152
Avalon 17, 59

## B

Basic Attack 264
Benefit/Hindrance 250, 253, 269
Bitter Harvest 83
Breach 361

## C

Chancellor 80
Chaos Wars 14, 41, 149
Children of Steel 64, 103–106
Children of Unity 11, 12
Class 137, 156-159
Class Features 152, 158
Class Perks 134, 158
Class Resources 158
Competencies 139
Consumables 287
Contesting 265–266
Core Paths 134, 138–139, 142–143, 152, 355
Crimson Horde 15, 97–99

## D

Danger Level (DL) 308, 311
Death 266
Defending 265
Defense Rating (DR) 152
Denerim 284
Dreadmarsh, The 127
Dreadnought 156, 161, 168
Drifting Glory 24, 27–35, 145
Drift, The 11, 16
Driftwalker 156, 171, 179
Dual Wielding 140

## E

Elites 308
Empress Carine 61
  Short Story 67–75
Environmental Damage 257
Equipment 134, 139, 285

## F

Fading 152
Failing Forward 250, 255, 359
Falling 257
Fell 16, 106–108
Fell Hunter 156, 181, 188
First Strike 260
Full Rest 256
Furia 37
Furians 12, 36–45, 146–147

## G

Game Master/GM 6
Gear 286, 357
Golden Age 15
Great Calamity, The 8, 16
Great Exodus, The 22
Great Wilds 15

## H

Halifax the Lorekeeper 65, 117
Haven 77
HL (Half Level) 159
Humans 12, 58–65, 148–149

## I

Incapacitation 266
Infernal Kings 107
  Irathmus the Ever-Burning 108
  Tala'zim the Wicked 65, 108
  Vorath the Devourer 65, 107
Intrusion 254, 256, 362
Intuition (INT) 275
Ivory Queen 11, 12, 41
Ivory's Rest 125–127

## J

Judge 156, 191, 198

## K

King Celefar 22

King Domo III 40
Koshin 40

## L

Levelling Up 140, 355–356
  Experience 140, 311, 355–356
Lunara 20
Lunastra the Silver Maiden 25, 115

## M

Magmar 37, 129–131
Mana Mines 122–123
Massive Hit 265
Mave the Trickster 116
Mental Resistance (MR) 152, 264
Monsters 312–351
Morganus the Demon Queen 25, 65, 108
Multiple Targets 264
Mystic 156, 201

## N

Necessities 152, 286, 357
Non-Player Characters (NPC) 6

## P

Perks 152
  Class 139, 158
  General 141
Phage, The 78–80, 150, 151
Phantom 156, 211, 218
Plague War, The 63
Player 6
Power (POW) 275, 276
Powers 134, 139, 152, 159, 264
Priest 156, 221
Primalist 156, 231, 238
Provoked Attacks 263

## R

Race 136
Range Bands 263, 363
Recharge 152, 266
Recuperations 152, 256
Red Rage 39, 147
  Abstinence 39
  Birthright 39
  Middle Way 39
  Redemption 43
    Path of Absolution 43
Resistances 265
Resolution Mechanic 250, 252
Respite 256
Risen 100–103
Round 261
Ruin 250, 254, 308, 360–361
Rushing 263

## S

Sanctuary 118–122
Sanctum of the Third Eye 60
Sentinel 156, 241, 248
Session Zero 134, 136, 354
Simultaneous Turns 260
Size 310, 311
Skyfather 11, 12
  Skyfather's Curse 16
  Skyfather's Sojourn 14, 41
Spark Points 250, 253, 360
  Spark Die 253–254
Speed 152, 260
Spirit Stones 21, 144
Stabilizing 267
Status Effects 269
Stone Curtain, The 14
Structural Damage 276
Success Ladder 272

## T

Taloran 60, 125
Target Number 250, 253
Temperion the Vanguard 65, 115
Tempest of Terror, The 128–129
Themes 6
Timeline 8
Titan Rig 7, 105, 125, 270–281
Titansfall 36, 123–125
True Damage 265
Twilight Caverns 18, 131–133
Type 310, 311

## V

Valla 12, 14, 18–25, 144–145
Vallantis 20
Valtoran 24
Volkanus the Forgemaster 44, 111
  Dance of Volkanus 113

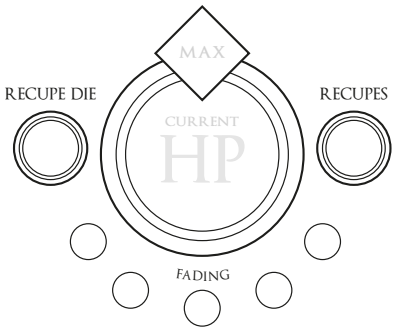
## W

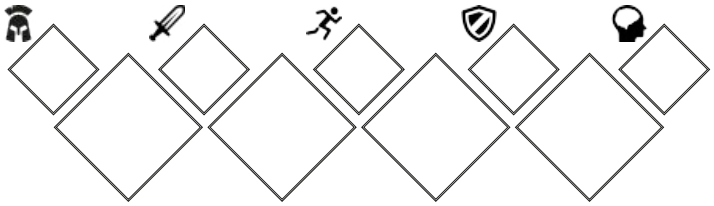
Wastes, The 59
Wenru 39
Windsong, The 19

# UNITY

NAME _____ RACE _____ AGE ___

CLASS _____ LEVEL _____ XP _____

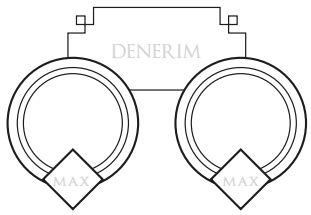



PRIMARY RESOURCE

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

RECHARGE DIE




CORE PATHS

RACIAL FEATURE

CLASS FEATURES

CLASS/GENERAL PERKS

WEAPON | DMG

ARMOUR | AV

POWERS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| NAME _____ S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST | NAME _____ S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST | NAME _____ S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST | NAME _____ S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST |
| NAME _____ S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST | NAME _____ S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST | NAME _____ S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST | NAME _____ S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST |
| NAME _____ S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST | NAME _____ S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST | NAME _____ S Q M R O<br>UPGRADES:<br>COST | ULTIMATE S Q M R O<br>NAME _____<br>COST |

NOTES

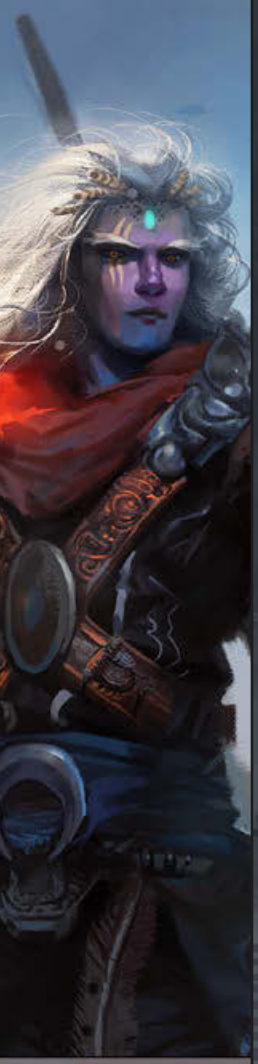
SECONDARY RESOURCE

1 2 3 4 5 6

## Kickstarter Backers

*Without you, none of this would have been possible. Thank you.*

Aaron "Tzurah" Canning – Aaron D. Schneider – Aaron Farr – Aaron J. Schrader – Aaron Potts – Aaron Rhoads – Aaron Rose – Aaron Smithies – Adam Canvas Giangregorio – Adam Makey – Adam Miller – Adam Schroeder – Adam Swangler – Adam Witte – Adam Y. – Adrian Klein – Aidan Hurst – Aker – Akvo – Alain Manguy – Alan Albano – Alan Clima – Alan Cohen – Alan Erikson – Alan Haynes – Alan Rubin – Alec Slater – Alessandro, Luke & Marty Babbi – Alex Carley – Alex Fleming – Alex Kartzoff – Alex Potts – Alexander Newsham – Alkdin Mann – Allen Erb – Alninio – Andre Ragsdale – Andreas Ahlgren – Andres Zanzani – Andrew Arminio – Andrew Balenko – Andrew Coe – Andrew Haywood – Andrew Maletz – Andrew Pecoraro – Andrew Roberson – Andrew Rosenheim – Andrew Ryan-Waldo – Andy V – Angelborn – Angelo Pileggi – AnimeFreak40K – Anne Spicklemire – Anthony Craig Senatore – Anthony DeMinico – Anthony Nomorosa – Anthony Saracini – Anthony Thomson – Anton Joe-Yen – Archebius – Armand Soulliard – Arnaud Hatzenbuhler – Aron Perez – Arvinraaj "kazefirst" K. – Aryeh Goretsky – Asger Feldthaus – Ashley Barrett – Ashley Hale – Ashran Firebrand – Astor Sigma – Atlictoatl – Aurélien LENGRAND – Austin Ramsay – B. T. Martin – B.A. Umberger – Bael the Cruel – Bailey Dorsey – Baird Harbin – Barney Smith – Bartosz "Stoperssonn" Stopczyk – Becky Millington – Ben Fuggle – Ben Hardekopf – Ben McCabe – Ben Neilsen – Benedict S Lee – Benjamin Bernard – Benjamin Kidd – Benjamin Messer – Benjamin R. Terry – Benjamin Rushton – Bernd Preßler – Bhelliom Rahl – Bill "Skelator" Wagner – Billy Ballard – Bjoern Berg – Blake McCormack – Boris Volk – Brad Lyon – Branden Leavens – Brandon Carrasco – Brandon Metcalf – Brendan Staunton – Brennan See – Brett "Top Shelf" Raleigh – Brett Gann – Brett Maack – Brian Huizingh – Brian Smith – Brion Abel – Brook – Brook Kill – Bruno Veilleux – Bryan Capistrano – Bryan Considine – Bryan 'Darnivar' Bailey – Bryan R. Marshall – Bufón – burningcrow – Byron D. Molix – C. Ricketts – Caitlin Jane Hughes – Calum Burgess – Cameron – Cameron Haggett – Cameron Little – Cameron Youngs – Carey Newhouse – Carl L Gilchrist – Carlos Daniel Muñoz – Carlos Restrepo – Cary Wong – Casey Shelangoski – Cat – Cavan Helps – CCSG9 – Ceiling90 – Chad Bartlett – Charles Alston – Charles Myers – Charlie Bennett – Charlie Ryan – Chen-Hsun Chiu – Chris Bessent – Chris Huddleston – Chris Meyerle – Chris Michael Jahn – Chris Mignone – Chris Mills – Chris Snyder – Chris Surinaga – Christian "Corvus" Häusler – Christian "Voidsun" Barrantes – Christian Caron – Christian Kluth – Christina Grenhart – Christine Kaneko – Christoph Flandorfer – Christopher Chisholm – Christopher Grey – Christopher Grey – Christopher R. Griffin – Christopher Renz – Christopher Shea – Christopher Vallejo – Christopher Vogler – Clare McQuillan – Claudio "Elder" Bertoli – Clay Toombs – Clayton Swistun – Clint "AngryOne" Doyle – Cody L. – Cole Olson – Cole Warburton – Colin Scott – Colm O'Hara – Constantine Poulos – Cord McLennan – Cordolin – Corentin Mahier – Cory Hockman – CottonCthulhu – Craig – Craig Wright – Cristiano "Leishmaniose" DeLira – curiosikey – Curt Doernberg – Dale Clements – Dale Martin – Damien Porter – Damon – Dan "Sandwich" Adams – Dan 'Berli' Brown – Dan Elwell – Dan Kendall – Dan Massey – Dan Moran – Dan Quattrone – Dan Suptic – Dan Trandberg Jensen – Daniel – Daniel Engström – Daniel Holt – Daniel Johnson – Daniel Smith – Daniel Walsh – Daniel Wilks – Dante LaRocca – Dante Warborn – daquack – Darien Liddell – Darth Cibeous – Daryl Fox – Daryl John Farrington – Dashiel Nemeth – Dave "Wintergreen" Harrison – Dave Luxton – David A Jones – David A Ludwig – David Almond – David Anderson – David Brown – David Caldwell – Dávid Csobay – David Dolph – David E Mumaw – David Ebsworth – David Lee Terhune – David Margowsky – David Moore – David Nadj – David Paul Guzmán – David Stephenson – David 'tr9sh' Berger – David Yarish – Davide Di Antonio – Deacon Kaufman – DeadlyReed – Derek Barnes – Derek Howard – Derek Lau – Desiree C – Dhillon – Dina Wilkens – Diogo M C de O Silva – Dion Campbell – Dirk Schlobinski – Dolan Ross Scherfel – Donald Hanby – Donnchadh Gethins – Dorian Knight – Doug Kilmer – Doug Woller – Douglas Jessup – Dr. Donald A. Turner – Drew (Andrew) South – Drew Taylor – Drew Wendorf – Duane Long Jr – Dustin Leigh McLean – Dustin Olson – Dylan Chapman – Earl Scott Nicholson – Easy E – Ed Utter – Edd Glasper – Eduardo "Cavaleiro Morto" – Edward Sturges – Elizabeth Corrigan – EnyexLaw – Eric Alexander – Eric Fowler – Eric Lohmeier – Eric Preston Medlock – Erik Belsaas – Erik Briteblade – Ernie Carothers – Esther Mettler – Etienne Olieu – Farid Kutyev – Feian – Felix Shafir – Felix Velazquez – Final Pride – Fireside – First Falling Leaf – Florian Hollauer – Florian Lang – Fragjanitor – Francis Arachea – Frank Bath – Frank Marlow Ravn – Frank Straulemann – Franky – Frazer "T'is but a scratch!" Barnard – Fritz W Charles – G. Michael Truran – G. W. Brown – Gabriel – Gabriel Acosta – Gabriel Alberto Franco Mena – Gabriel Bélanger – Gabriel Gomes Junger Lumbreras – Gaby Brillon – Gareth Davies – Garikoitz – Garret Lowe – Garrett Jensen – Garth Westphal – Gary Tull – Gauthier Descamps – Gene Hurley II – Geoffrey Chance – George Pitre – George T White Jr – GhostDM – Gil – Gilles CHERRIER – Gilles GUIOT – Giorgio Tentella – Giuliano Iorio – Goblin Society – Gordon Stephen – Grant Chen – Grant Howitt – Greenlight Essentials – Greg Conant – Grevane – Groggy-00 – Gržm – Gudmundur Jon Viggosson – Guillaume Branquart – Guillaume Labrecque "The Only Brecks" – Guillaume St-Pierre – Hank Metzger – Hans Christoffer Sandnes – Hedgehog Products Inc. – He-Zin "Yasseira" Kwon – Humbaba – Hunter Harris – Iain "Broken Reality" MacDonald – Ian Date – Ian Gray – Ian Stewart – Ian van de Laar – Ingo Beyer – Insigrad Sparda – Ioannis Laliotis – Isaac Carr – Isauro A Guerra (Mini Mages) – Ivo Goudzwaard – Ivo Kasabov – J. Collin Carter – Jack Gulick – Jacob Borton – Jacob Dill – Jacob Dotter – Jacob F – Jake Mandel – Jakub T Poniatowski – James Byrne – James Carter – James 'Corvus' Ho – James Davis – James LaRue – James Pacheco – James Quigg – James Ramage – James Scoggin – James Smith II – James Unick – jamie – Jan Erb – Jan Mäkinen – Jarethellenin of Wisteria – Jarrett Jackson – Jason D. Taylor II – jason e. bean – Jason Henley – Jason 'Jaynay' Hewett – Jason Leinen – Jason Parker – Jason Shuey – Jason Templeton – Jason, Kristin, and Peter Childs – Jay Marsh – Jay Wigglesworth Jensen – Jaye Cornell – jbertucci40 – Jean-Luc Chartier – Jean-Sébastien Sirois – Jeff H – Jeff Robinson – Jeffrey Chow – Jeffrey Wong – JEG – Jendrik Witt – Jere Manninen – Jeremy Kear – Jeremy Siemon – Jerrod Rose Jr. – Jesse Read – Jhon Adams – Jim Fisher – Jim Sharples – Jimmy Tran – JKW – Joan Julià – Joe Average – Joe Dabe – Joe Silva – Joe Webster – Joel Morillo – Joel Pearce – Joern Kehrer – Johanne Skjerven – Johannes Forster – John "Goon" Williams – John Evans III – John GT – John Hardey – John Lorinskas – John Lucania – John M. Portley – John Michael Santos – John R Deal – John Robertson – John Thompson – John Whitfield – Johnathan (JT) Turner – Jon Finn – Jon Hygom Gislason – Jon Petit – Jon Terry – Jonas Schiött – Jonathan Castro – Jonathan Edwards – Jonathan McNeill – Jonathan Pickles – Jonathan Souza – Jonathan weismann – Jordan "Sendo" Hardy – Jordan McCray – Jordi Rabionet – Jordy – Joris Van der Vorst – José E. Esterás – Joseph Virnig – josh borlase – Josh Lindsay – Josh Mulligan – Joshua Abanto – Joshua Aeria – Joshua Boyd – Joshua Maley Hagan – Joshua Nach – Joshua Reubens – Joshua Straub – Joshua Workman – Josue Calvo – Jules Honisett – Julius Wallnöfer – Jussi Myllyluoma – Justin Delaney – Justin Lance – Justin Ledbetter – Justin Seva – Kabudel & Vince – Kai S Tave – Kale – Kalvin Lyle – Karl Bruce Raams – Karl Kreutzer – Karl Otto Kristoffersen – Karolis Šurkus – Katja Großmann – Kaya H. – Keegan Schmitt – Keith Davies – Kell of Yandriel – Ken Krenzer – Kevin "Vikingr" Hamrick – Kevin Flynn – Kevin Schantz – Kim Yde Sørensen – Kodey Bruno – Kozko – Kristofer Cook – Kristopher Rodrigues – Krzysztof Piwowarski – Kurt Blanco – Kurt Patz – Kurtis Harl – Kyle McDowell – Lakshman Godbole – Lawrence G – Leigh George Kade – Leo Rauch – Leron Culbreath – Loïc Durand – Lorenz "Silversteel" Aschaber – Lorenzo Fossetti – Luc Teunen – Luca Beltrami – Lucas Cooperberg – Luciano Vieira Velho – Lucy Harris-Klebold – Luis David Hernández Gadea – Luiz Perigault – Luke Moran – Luke Mortora – Lux Ellicott-Chatham – Lykos Vlk – Maciej Trojniarz – Maciek the Mage – Mage – Mailman – Marc Pearce – Marc Yudson – Marcel Basmer – MARCO Joel – Mario Zucco – marionette_Hwang Sun Mean – Mark – Mark 'Aslan' Eveleigh – Mark Craddock – Mark Dutelle – Mark Fenlon – Mark Ferguson – Mark Geller – Mark R. Lesniewski – Mark Woo – Mark Z. – Markus Knecht – MarsSenex – Martin G Hills – Martin Heim – Martin Jaeger – Martin Krebs – Martin Legg – Martin Middendorf – Mathew Folwarski – Mathieu 'Haster' Lalonde – Matias N. Caruso – Matt "Ogre" Williams – Matt Carey – Matt Drake – Matt Russo – Matt Steen – Matteo Morra – Matteo Signorini – Matthew Armitage – Matthew Broome – Matthew David Williams – Matthew Davisson – Matthew Dimalanta – Matthew Mulherin – Matthew Orwig – Matthew Owen – Matthew Ryan Shoemaker – Matthew Truesdale – Maureen Adams – Max Cameron – Maxi Bridgwood – mcurkov – Mehlo and Flora – Michael Beck – Michael Clark – Michael Clay – Michael -Freed- Fabian – Michael Glass – Michael Hjerppe – Michael Hunt - unMadeGaming – Michael Jago – Michael Kaplan – Michael Pratt – Michael Pruitt – Michael Stevens – Michael W Kilduff – Michele Grande – Michele Paroli – Mike Hardman – Mike Maxson – Mike Piazza – Mikel Mecham – MILKnEGGS – Mohammad Aamar – Mordwain – Morgan Weeks – mougeot maxime – Mr Cody – N Tanksley – Nathaniel Xavier Guerrero – Nerelax – Nestor D. Rodriguez – NexBlade – Nick and Grace Tyrson – Nick Colombo – Nick Kline – Nick pater – Nick Thyssen – Nick-Nack – Nihar Nilekani – Nikolajsen, Bjarke – Noah Hakl – Not DJ Colburn – NouveauRich (Rich Schreiber) – Oliver König – Omari Brooks – Otakuthuhlu – Pablo Blanco – Pablo Pérez – Pamela Sheehan – PaperEvan – Paris Conte – Patrick "DeadPegasus" Knight – Patrick & Sarah Pilgrim – Paul Bigbee – Paul DeMars – Paul Garrett – Paul Lukianchuk – Paul Messenger – Paul Sheppard – Paul Umbers – Paul Watson – Pedro 'stat monkey' Barrenechea – Pego – Peter Bogdasarian – Peter Gates – Peter Wood – Phil Ledgerwood – Phil McGregor – Phillip Bailey – Phillip Stewart – Piotr Tesluk – PLWilliams – Pointman – Preston Poland – PrometheusUB – quantum ninja – Rafael P. Carvalho – RakNoel – Ralph Breuer – Randy Cronin – Randy Robinson – Raphael Ekiert – Raphael Reitzig – RED RAVEN – Red XIII - Michael – Redfuji6 – Reto M. Kiefer – Rev. Joseph O'Donnell – Rhea – Rhea Shelley – Ric MV – Ricardo Nacarini – Rich – Rich Lescouflair – Richard A King – Richard Harrison – Richard L. Skinner III – Ricky Bea – Rob Abrazado – Rob Bryngelson – Rob Jones – Rob Randolph – Rob Walker – Rob Younker – Robbie Wallis – Robert and Amanda Daley – Robert Anderson – Robert Becker – Robert E Denton III – Robert Henderson – Robert James Smart – Robert Lundgren – Robert McNeal – Robert ZurSchmiede – Robin Droste – Robin P Smith – Rogue Blade Games – Ron "Khaalis" Owen – ron beck – Ross Leiser – Ruben LZ Tan – Rufus Moroes – Rune Petersen – Russell Ventimeglia – Ryan "squwakenberry" Jones – Ryan Bruin – Ryan Crowe – Ryan Ling – Ryan Wheeldon – Sam Petto – Samuel Ayala Jr – Samuel Te – Sandor – Schlomo Goldstein – Scott EWels – Scott Smith – Screwberry – Sean McNeely – Sean P. Roberts – Sebastian "Pedroichi" Weil – Sem van Maanen – Sergey Benderskiy – Sergio Colautti – Sergio Pitea – Seven Locke – Shadowhop – Shane Austin Press – Sharon and Jake – Shaun Smith – Shawn Polka – "Sliver" Craig Rawe – Simon Darke – Simon King – SK Lim – Spencer krigbaum – Spencer Wankier – Spirit Crusher – Stefan Matthias Aust – stefano caravana – Steph Turner – Stephane Ness – Stephen Esdale – Stephen Lewis – Stephen Riley – Steve Beleck – Steven P – Steven Su – Stuart Litjen – Superbird42 – Suz – Tamara Michelle Slaten – Tanuyen Nguyen – Tathel – Taylor Wilson – Ted Mittman – Terry L Gilbert Jr – Tharek – The Altepeter Family – The Crafty Banana – The Frozen Ogre – thomas – Thomas Baker – Thomas Faßnacht – Thomas Jacobs – Thomas Kendall – Thomas Madge – Thomas Maund – Thomas Palzer – Thomas Schliecker – Thomas Smith – Thore Schmidt – Thozmp – Tigh Ward – Tim – Tim Aubel – Tim Czarnecki – Tim Fads – Tim Gruszynske – Tim Luttermoser – Tim O'Flynn – Tim Oliver – Timothy Baker – Tobin Snelling – Todd Dayton – Todd Warnick – Tom Bray – Tom Ladegard – Tony Cox – Tony Strongman – Tott Komahey – Tracy S Landrum – Travis Stodter – Trent Bramer – Trent Schultz – Trevor Cantrell-Paulson – Trevor Hannon – Tristan Olivier Balmokune – Triston T. Thorpe – Troy Ellis – Tullus Valerius Triarius – Tyrone Cabrera – Ulf Kaupisch – Unpossible Game Labs – Uwe Ziminske – vegar fristad – VERDIER RICHARD – Vernon Swain-Nisbet – Veronica Kenkel – Vijay Lal – Vincent Hull – Vindexus – VisionShift – Wade Geer – Wajanai Snidvongs – Warren P Nelson – Warrick Voyzey – Wayne Shaw – Wern212 – Whitebox Interactive – Whitt. – Wiley Holton – Wilhelm Tinnin-Timm – Will Holden – Will Landon – William Bracey – William Guyaux – William Heyden – william j bittner – William J Norcutt – William J. (B.J.) Altman – William M. Wilson – William Nation – William Rhodes – William Roberts – William Rullenraad – Wilson Phan – WiltedSpinach – Wolfgar Lyles – Wuttier – Xavier Spinat – Yip "Korhil" Ng – YPGuzman – Yurii "Saodhar" Furtat – Zach Warrick – Zachary Guder – Zachary J Calderone – Zacharyah & Kerren – Zadja



# Unity

Roaring Depths

Tranquil Shores

Jade Mountain

Sanctum of the Third Eye

Stormsong's Refuge

Lunara

Vallantis

Sapphire Basin

Starlight Woods

Taloran

Tempest of Terror

The Dreadmarsh

Falcon's Watch

Twilight Caverns

Shattered Coast

Ivory's Rest

Throne of Heaven

Ishenas

Greenwater Bay

Valley of the Forgotten

Sarathil

Iron Plains

Sigma

The Great Wilds
Blightholme
Edge of Night
Titansfall
Tomb of Lost Kings
Obsidian Forest
Magmar
The Deadwood
Gemini Peninsula
Sanctuary
Bastion
Furia
The Quarry
Seething Swamps
Pinnacle
Breaker's Reach
Eden
Avalon
Blood Pits
Mana Mines
Haven
The Wastes
Raider's Cove
Cerulean Expanse