

ZWEIHÄNDER

A GRIM & PERILOUS RPG

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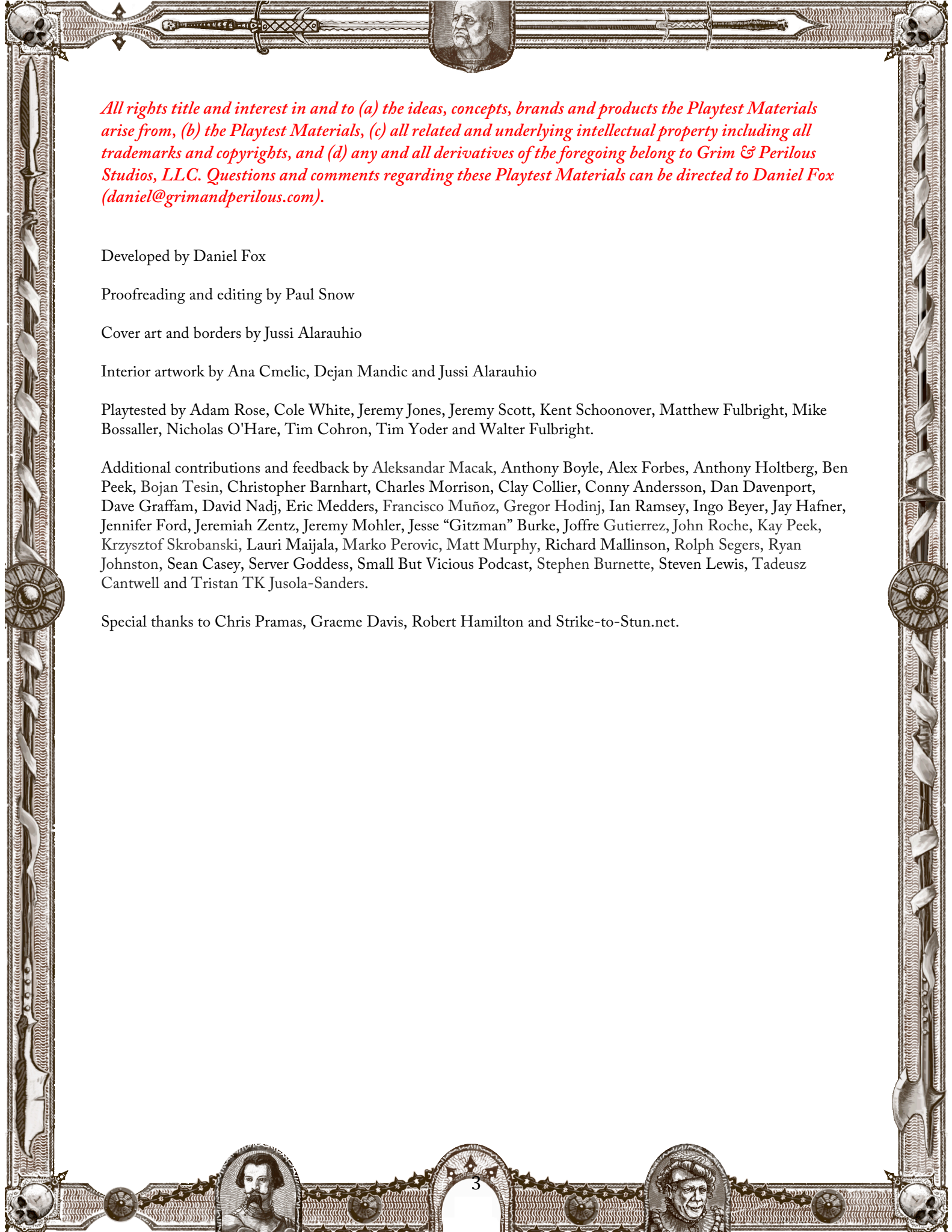
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INTRODUCTION

My name is Wilhelm, and I used to be a lot like you: a model citizen, a dutiful son, a stalwart soldier, a devoted husband and a loving father. But that was a long time ago. I'll tell you something right now: life has many hard truths to teach a man, and most of them have been beaten into me. And with each lesson, the feeble trappings of "civilized" life grow dimmer before my sight, revealing their pathetic, contrived nature. Now if you'll keep your mouth shut, I'll tell you the three most important things in life.

The first thing you have to know is this: you can't earn anything in this world. I spent my life in obedience, following all the rules, doing my duty to my country. As a soldier, sometimes that means doing terrible things. Make no mistake, war is not some noble pursuit; when some poor bastard is spitted on your blade, spewing blood and piss... well, you're not thinking about your ideals, your country, or your gods. You're just trying to survive. But I'm not telling you this so you'll feel sorry for me. The point is that at one time, I would have done anything for my country. I was a patriot, committed to the causes of our land. I gave everything to them, sure that they would value my service. But the time came when it was convenient for someone in power to use me, to dispose of me. And that's exactly what they did. Someone gave the word, and they cast me into hell. I don't even know his name; sometimes I wonder if he ever knew mine.

Lesson two: a man will do anything he can to survive. I've spent almost half my life in a prison pit with the insane, the bloodthirsty, and the depraved. And in those years crawling about in the dark, drenched in my own filth, I should have died. I gave up every night, let myself go, closed my eyes and prayed that the gods would take my broken life from me. And yet every morning I would awaken, and some spark within refused to let me die. I have seen the black truth that hides itself in the soul of every man, the root of all that is vile and horrible in this world. In the deeps of those dungeons, I did things you couldn't imagine... things best left unspoken. And as I did these things, I would tell myself every time that I was only doing what was necessary to survive. I had convinced myself that someday I would be a free man, that there were still things in life worth fighting for, worth living for. The whole time, somewhere deep down, I must have known it was a lie and that each vicious act was eating at my precious humanity bit by bit. But my delusions continued, and one day, after all the blood and the savagery, I was set free.

And it was only then that I learned the third and most important lesson: life is pain and death. We spend all our days acting out some charade of an orderly life. We play out our roles, we say our prayers and we make our plans. We trust in others: our families, our neighbors, our superiors, our priests. We put our faith in the gods, we try to live good lives and we trick ourselves into believing that somehow all of this will safeguard us against the oncoming storm. We think we have some control over this life, but we don't. And we never will. Life isn't some children's story, with heroic deeds and some tidy moral lesson and a happy ending. Life is cruel. Life is callous. Life will take everything from you, and then it will kill you. The most you can hope for is that you have something to believe in, some last bit of hope you can use to deceive yourself before the end. But in the meantime we will all root in our own filth and betray each other, and worse... oh, so much worse... because a man will do anything he can to survive.

Now you'd save yourself a lot of wasted effort if you start living by those three rules. But I know you won't. You want to run and hide behind your values and false hope. Well, mark my words. Pain is coming. Death is coming. And there's nothing you can do about it. Now get out of my sight before I kill you myself.

- Wilhelm Eckhardt, soldier and ex-convict

WELCOME TO GRIM & PERILOUS GAMING

ZWEIHÄNDER (pronounced “*tsfai benda*” or as we prefer it “*tsfai bander*”) is a tabletop role-playing system designed to support “grim & perilous” adventures. This book is nearly five years in the making, adopted from pages and pages (and pages) of personal notes, scribbles in sketchbooks, house rules and the private wiki we use around our gaming table. In November of 2011, your author decided to get serious and produce what was first dubbed *Project Corehammer*. It was originally intended to be released as a rules hack for the world’s second oldest grim and gritty role-playing game. However, it became clear that the project was evolving into a wholly unique gaming system. We scrapped the title. We rewrote our own rules with a “new school” flavor. We hired artists. We brought two of our playtesters onboard to help co-author and edit. And, after many months of work, it became the product you now hold in your hands. This system has been revised and rebuilt through multiple iterations with the invaluable feedback our playtest group provided during the entire process. We consider **ZWEIHÄNDER** our love letter to everything we enjoy about literature and tabletop gaming - uncompromising realism, wanton violence, political conspiracy, weird horror and dark humor presented beneath a veneer of Renaissance-inspired low fantasy.

A word of caution - the themes presented in this book are mature, but perfectly suitable for teens and all adults. Although we may make mention of other authors in this book, it is not meant to present a challenge towards others’ intellectual property, copyright or trademarks.

Welcome to grim & perilous gaming.

- Daniel Fox
Lead designer of **ZWEIHÄNDER**

WHAT IS ZWEIHÄNDER?

ZWEIHÄNDER is a pastiche of many familiar themes found throughout low fantasy literature, the gritty portrayal of a society replete with clandestine conflict, political intrigues, vicious reprisals and terrifying supernatural elements. The Gamemaster will impose dramatic, tense scenes upon players with

what are the three pillars of a role-playing game: Combat, Social Intrigue and Wilderness Travel. These are the foundation of this book, as any one of them can prove lethal in very different ways. These challenges frame the drama of how your Characters interact during adventures. As the Gamemaster calls upon you to mold the flow of events, you roll the dice to determine success or failure.

But a role-playing game is much more than just a series of arbitrations between numbers on a sheet of paper, or a puzzle of arithmetic to be plotted out and solved. The lifeblood of your game will be expressed through humanity, subtlety, and complexity, for which dice alone are woefully inadequate. Characters will be comprised of moral strengths and flaws; in most other styles of game, the rewards for success are based on successfully manipulating situations confronted towards the former and away from the latter. The strength of your game will not be in the overcoming of obstacles, but frequently in the act of simply facing them. Your Characters’ spirit is as crucial as the dread they face; after all, the darkest recess is always found just outside the range of the flickering candle.

In short, **ZWEIHÄNDER** is a bloodier, grimmer and grittier version of the world’s oldest role-playing game. The tabletop gaming community commonly calls it the “pathetic aesthetic”, but we simply call it grim & perilous gaming.

ZWEIHÄNDER AS A THEME

There are many dark themes you’ll find within these pages. The system and its game mechanics are written to describe a motif of brutal violence, political intrigue, profane sorcery and unimaginable horrors from beyond. Disease runs rampant throughout cities. Towering asylums upon the edge of civilization ring with the howls of the demented and damned. Tales of twisted monstrosities are whispered into firelight, talk of an all-consuming chaos that rests below the earth and beyond the stars. It slumbers until stirred by intrepid fools... or waits lurking in the deepening shadows of a nearby alley, biding its time. Villainy lies within the hearts of men, who engage in all manner of violence and deceit in the name of progress. It is a world where the upright perish, the unjust linger and grim attitudes rule. People live in a state of decay and paranoia, scrambling to keep what little has been afforded them by the higher social classes. The gods are petty and quick to anger; their fickle gifts bestowed upon a vexing few. Those who

call themselves priests are often venal charlatans, consumed by the very sins they preach against. Far from the prying eyes of others, sorcerers risk their sanity and their souls to harness the mysterious power of cosmic disorder by striking Faustian bargains with gods, daemons, diabolical servants and other less palatable entities.

Finally, the **ZWEIHÄNDER** system is “world-agnostic”, easily adaptable for any number of home brewed or published worlds. The system is ideal for role-playing games inspired by or emulating a darker version of Germanic and European Renaissance. It can also be adapted to support many different published games, such as the dark fantasy novels of Polish author Andrzej Sapkowski, the politically-driven stories of George R.R. Martin, medieval-styled horror adventures inspired by H.P. Lovecraft and even the chaos-laden Renaissance authored by Chris Pramas, Graeme Davis and Richard Halliwell amongst a host of others.

WHAT ZWEIHÄNDER IS NOT

This system isn’t really designed for the traditional role-playing game dungeon romp. While these rules can mildly support that style of play, death is almost a certainty. Injuries sustained in **ZWEIHÄNDER** often have nasty consequences, requiring prolonged periods of recovery and care. Creatures are incredibly dangerous and rarely taken down without mortal injuries. In a grim & perilous world, common peasant rabble, when gathered into large enough groups, can drag a veteran knight off his steed and beat him to a bloody pulp. We don’t wish to thwart this style of play, but you have been warned!

ZWEIHÄNDER IS A ROLE-PLAYING GAME

Most readers will already be familiar with tabletop role-playing games and how they work. For the uninitiated, a role-playing game is basically a story or adventure, otherwise an organized, cooperative game of pretend called a “Game Session”. In essence, you and your friends share an interactive story where your choices drive the action, drama and suspense by taking on the role of someone else.

THE CHARACTER’S ROLE

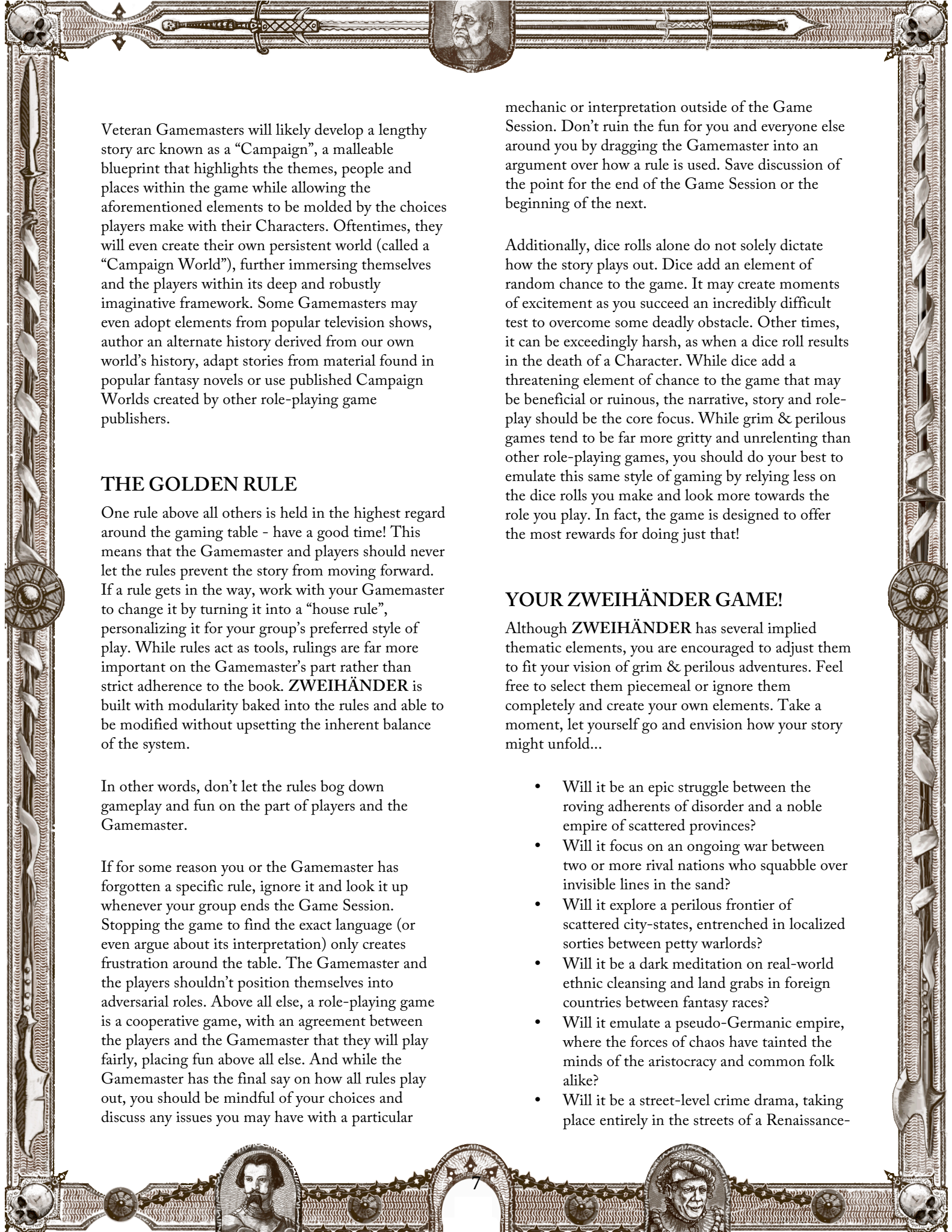
You and your friends will share an interactive story where you drive the action, drama and suspense by taking on the role of someone else. To start, a group of people use the book you’re holding in your hands right now to create alternate personalities called “Characters”. Players are actors within the shared story, portraying the Character using first and third person perspectives during a Game Session. They can change the outcome of the story by making decisions “In-Character”, using the persona they’ve created. Players portraying their Character’s personality using “active” or “descriptive” role-playing perspectives during a Game Session. Active roleplaying means a player declaring things as if they were their Character, such as *“I march across the chamber to skewer the highwayman, declaring loudly FIE!”*. Descriptive role-playing means a player describe the actions their Character is engaging in, such as *“Wilhelm marches across the chamber to attack the highwayman, shouting a battlecry”*. Both are appropriate ways to role-play in **ZWEIHÄNDER**. These decisions drive the challenges, resolved by using dice to test success and failure.

THE GAMEMASTER’S ROLE

The “Gamemaster” (sometimes referred to as a *GM*) presents the world Characters live within. They act as the narrator of this world, keeping things organized, authoring the challenges within the adventure, providing exposition and portraying the other personas (commonly known as “non-players Characters”). Additionally, the Gamemaster makes up details and information about the setting and those within it. They also serve as referee to the decisions players make as their Characters, promoting fairness and fun in equal measure. The Gamemaster will adjudicate the results of dice rolls and produce a narrative that encapsulates what the players’ Characters are experiencing. And when the arbitration of rules is called under question, the Gamemaster is responsible for making the final decision.

GENDER NEUTRALITY

Throughout this book, you’ll note that we use the singular “they” (along with its inflected forms like *them* or *their*) for indeterminate gender. This is so we can avoid the headache of using gender pronouns throughout the book. It may seem a bit foreign, but trust us - it’s semantically and grammatically correct. However, our play examples will reference the gendered pronoun appropriate to the players or Character’s gender.



Veteran Gamemasters will likely develop a lengthy story arc known as a “Campaign”, a malleable blueprint that highlights the themes, people and places within the game while allowing the aforementioned elements to be molded by the choices players make with their Characters. Oftentimes, they will even create their own persistent world (called a “Campaign World”), further immersing themselves and the players within its deep and robustly imaginative framework. Some Gamemasters may even adopt elements from popular television shows, author an alternate history derived from our own world’s history, adapt stories from material found in popular fantasy novels or use published Campaign Worlds created by other role-playing game publishers.

THE GOLDEN RULE

One rule above all others is held in the highest regard around the gaming table - have a good time! This means that the Gamemaster and players should never let the rules prevent the story from moving forward. If a rule gets in the way, work with your Gamemaster to change it by turning it into a “house rule”, personalizing it for your group’s preferred style of play. While rules act as tools, rulings are far more important on the Gamemaster’s part rather than strict adherence to the book. **ZWEIHÄNDER** is built with modularity baked into the rules and able to be modified without upsetting the inherent balance of the system.

In other words, don’t let the rules bog down gameplay and fun on the part of players and the Gamemaster.

If for some reason you or the Gamemaster has forgotten a specific rule, ignore it and look it up whenever your group ends the Game Session. Stopping the game to find the exact language (or even argue about its interpretation) only creates frustration around the table. The Gamemaster and the players shouldn’t position themselves into adversarial roles. Above all else, a role-playing game is a cooperative game, with an agreement between the players and the Gamemaster that they will play fairly, placing fun above all else. And while the Gamemaster has the final say on how all rules play out, you should be mindful of your choices and discuss any issues you may have with a particular

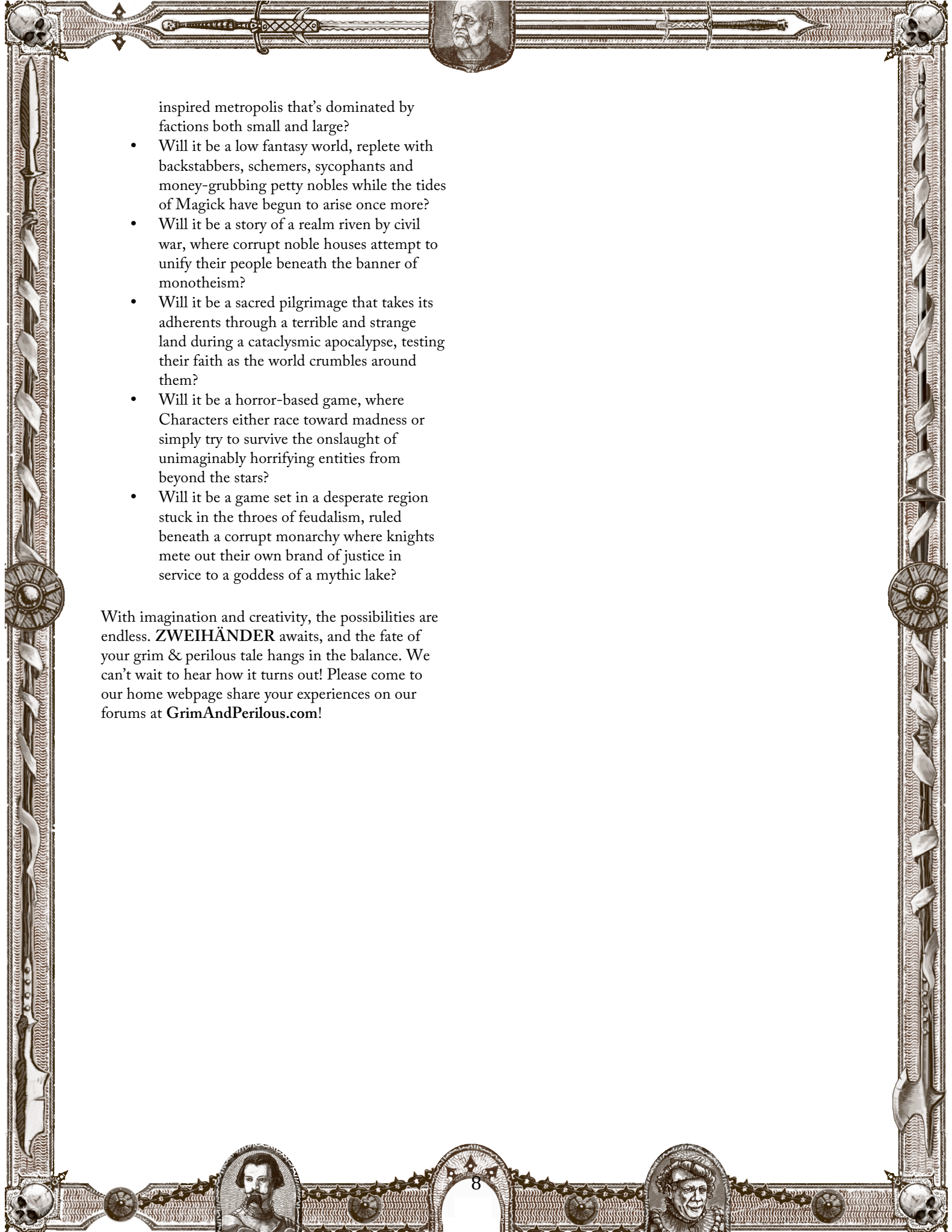
mechanic or interpretation outside of the Game Session. Don’t ruin the fun for you and everyone else around you by dragging the Gamemaster into an argument over how a rule is used. Save discussion of the point for the end of the Game Session or the beginning of the next.

Additionally, dice rolls alone do not solely dictate how the story plays out. Dice add an element of random chance to the game. It may create moments of excitement as you succeed an incredibly difficult test to overcome some deadly obstacle. Other times, it can be exceedingly harsh, as when a dice roll results in the death of a Character. While dice add a threatening element of chance to the game that may be beneficial or ruinous, the narrative, story and role-play should be the core focus. While grim & perilous games tend to be far more gritty and unrelenting than other role-playing games, you should do your best to emulate this same style of gaming by relying less on the dice rolls you make and look more towards the role you play. In fact, the game is designed to offer the most rewards for doing just that!

YOUR ZWEIHÄNDER GAME!

Although **ZWEIHÄNDER** has several implied thematic elements, you are encouraged to adjust them to fit your vision of grim & perilous adventures. Feel free to select them piecemeal or ignore them completely and create your own elements. Take a moment, let yourself go and envision how your story might unfold...

- Will it be an epic struggle between the roving adherents of disorder and a noble empire of scattered provinces?
- Will it focus on an ongoing war between two or more rival nations who squabble over invisible lines in the sand?
- Will it explore a perilous frontier of scattered city-states, entrenched in localized sorties between petty warlords?
- Will it be a dark meditation on real-world ethnic cleansing and land grabs in foreign countries between fantasy races?
- Will it emulate a pseudo-Germanic empire, where the forces of chaos have tainted the minds of the aristocracy and common folk alike?
- Will it be a street-level crime drama, taking place entirely in the streets of a Renaissance-



inspired metropolis that's dominated by factions both small and large?

- Will it be a low fantasy world, replete with backstabbers, schemers, sycophants and money-grubbing petty nobles while the tides of Magick have begun to arise once more?
- Will it be a story of a realm riven by civil war, where corrupt noble houses attempt to unify their people beneath the banner of monotheism?
- Will it be a sacred pilgrimage that takes its adherents through a terrible and strange land during a cataclysmic apocalypse, testing their faith as the world crumbles around them?
- Will it be a horror-based game, where Characters either race toward madness or simply try to survive the onslaught of unimaginably horrifying entities from beyond the stars?
- Will it be a game set in a desperate region stuck in the throes of feudalism, ruled beneath a corrupt monarchy where knights mete out their own brand of justice in service to a goddess of a mythic lake?

With imagination and creativity, the possibilities are endless. **ZWEIHÄNDER** awaits, and the fate of your grim & perilous tale hangs in the balance. We can't wait to hear how it turns out! Please come to our home webpage share your experiences on our forums at GrimAndPerilous.com!

HOW TO PLAY

In a grim & perilous world, you will find yourself engrossed in intense scenes as you face the machinations of socialites and their lackeys, lethal back-alley knife fights, adrenaline-pumped chases and horrific confrontations with aberrant creatures. You are able to overcome various challenges by calling upon raw abilities and some innate aptitudes, along with learnt proficiencies that rest upon the foundation of raw ability. Your Skills represent a specific command over situations that you have either grown accustomed to or over which you exhibit a natural command. And naturally, all challenges have their own measure of risk. The threat of failure is a constant reminder that no one, no matter how far along in age or experience, may avoid the turn of fortune's wheel.

THE CORE MECHANIC

Whenever you try to perform a task or action which has a dramatic or direct effect in the gaming world, your Gamemaster will ask you to make a Skill Test (sometimes simply called a "Test") to determine whether you succeed or fail. Additionally, Skill Tests can render Critical Successes (granting an additional positive effect) or a Critical Failure (incurring an additional negative effect). On the other hand, there may be some tasks that are outside the realm of possibility. Your Gamemaster will determine if some tasks are too difficult for Success to be a possibility.

ROLLING DICE

The Gamemaster will impose challenging situations upon you in various ways. These challenges vary widely, from Combat, Social Intrigue and Wilderness Travel. These are the foundation of **ZWEIHÄNDER**, as any one of them can have serious consequences.... or even prove lethal. These challenges form the drama of how your Character interacts with the Campaign World. Whenever the Gamemaster calls upon you to influence an outcome, you roll the dice to determine success or failure. Most rolls you make during a Game Session will be a Skill Test, generated using "Percentile Dice". You make Percentile Dice rolls using 2D10 Percentile Dice (two 10-sided dice). Before you roll, be sure to indicate to players and the Gamemaster which die represents the tens die and which represents the units die. If you rolled a "6" on the tens die and a "1" on

the units die, you generated a result of 61%. When you generate a result of "00", it is equal to 100%. Rolling equal to or under the "Total Chance" for success means you succeed your Skill Test. Rolling over the Total Chance for success indicates failure.

EXAMPLE

Wilhelm Eckhardt needs to make a Skill Test. His Total Chance for success is 65% or lower. Grabbing Percentile Dice, he[p1] rolls a 34% and succeeds! If he had rolled a 65%, he would still have been successful. However, rolling 66% or higher would have resulted in a failure.

SKILL TEST SUMMARY

Whenever you make a Skill Test, you'll reference these guidelines. You should commit these steps to memory, as you're going to be called upon to make a number of Skill Tests during a Game Session:

- First, you must determine the Skill that's being Tested. Generally, your Gamemaster will call upon you to Test a specific Skill as you interact within the Campaign World. However, you may also request to use a specific Skill to change events into your or another's favor. Each Skill is related to a Primary Attribute, which you can view on your Character Sheet.
- Once you've identified the Skill you're going to reference, determine the "Base Chance" to use that Skill. This will always be a number between 1 and 100. First, add the Primary Attribute number and bonuses from Skill Ranks. Then, add modifiers from Talents or Traits from your Character Sheet that only apply in the current situation. The sum of these determine your Base Chance.
- Other conditions of the environment or the situation will impact your ability for success or failure. These are ambient bonuses or penalties imposed upon you by the drama of the situation by your Gamemaster, called the "Difficulty Rating". The Gamemaster will tell you the final adjustment you must apply. You will learn more about these below.
- Finally, add all of the modifiers together to determine the "Total Chance" for success. While some modifiers may negate one another, your Gamemaster will always clarify these situations.
- Grab Percentile Dice, call out to the table what your Total Chance for success is and roll. If the rolled number is equal to or less than your Total Chance for success, you have succeeded at the Skill Test. If the results are greater than the Total Chance for success, you have failed the Skill Test.

We will speak more in upcoming chapters about using Skills. However, no matter what the circumstance is, you'll always reference these basic guidelines to make a Skill Test.

DIFFICULTY RATING

No two Skill Tests will hold the same level of difficulty; they are not created equal. Clambering over a manse's garden wall to abscond with riches may prove to be a relatively easy task with undergrowth to aid you, but scaling the sheer face of a tower to infiltrate the count's personal chambers is considerably more difficult. While both require an Athletics Test, it is clear that the second example is more difficult. But do you know what the level of difficulty is of the first example? This is where the Difficulty Rating comes into play.

Circumstances directly affect your ability to succeed or fail with a Skill Test. Your Gamemaster will always assign a Difficulty Rating to a particular task you wish to attempt. These bonuses help distinguish how easy it is to climb up the manse's wall, or perhaps how hard it is to scale the surface of a mountain. However, you may individually gain or be penalized by your Character's Racial Traits, Professional Traits, Talents or even equipment Qualities. In cases where there are unique modifiers, apply them to your Total Chance for success.

SITUATIONAL DIFFICULTY RATING

ZWEIHÄNDER does not provide a complete list of every single Difficulty Rating for situations your Character may be thrust in. Most of these decisions rely on the Gamemaster's adjudication of the rules, relying solely on contextual interpretation. Describe what you wish to attempt accurately as you can, so that the Gamemaster can assign an appropriate Difficulty Rating. The Difficulty Rating descriptor is not an arbitrary word. If you can explain why your Character would find the task easy to overcome then you may expect an Easy Difficulty Rating. While the Gamemaster will attempt to be fair, don't be surprised if your Tests are considerably harder if you're not fully describing in detail what you wish to do.

You'll note that there are several different steps along the Difficulty Rating path. Whenever your Gamemaster determines the difficulty of the task you're about to Test, consult the table below to

determine the final modifiers to this Skill Test. It will be helpful to commit to memory the names and their related bonuses or penalties. A Gamemaster will generally call out the Difficulty Rating for the Skill Test, instead of telling you the bonus or penalty.

Difficulty Rating	Test Modifier
Arduous	Apply a -30% penalty to your Base Chance
Hard	Apply a -20% penalty to your Base Chance
Challenging	Apply a -10% penalty to your Base Chance
Standard	Apply no penalties or bonuses to your Base Chance
Routine	Add a +10% bonus to your Base Chance
Easy	Add a +20% bonus to your Base Chance
Trivial	Add a +30% bonus to your Base Chance

Under special circumstances, there may be multiple situational modifiers at play when making a Skill Test. Your Gamemaster tallies these situational modifiers and gives you the Difficulty Rating. You should concern yourself only with your Character's immediate Base Chance to use a Skill, and let the Gamemaster worry about any other ambient modifiers. These modifiers are always the province of the Gamemaster.

EXAMPLE

Adam wants his character Ulysses to watch along the edge of the woods for signs that anyone followed the Party. It's nighttime, and hard to see anything. The Gamemaster considers the situation to determine the Difficulty Rating. It is dark outside and Ulysses has no light. Additionally, Ulysses is behind a number of buildings and can't see very far. After consideration, the Gamemaster tells Daniel that it is a Difficulty Rating (Hard -20%) Awareness Test, with a final adjustment of -20 to the Base Chance.

TOTAL CHANCE FOR SUCCESS

Whenever you call out to the Gamemaster that you wish to make a Skill Test, they will announce the Difficulty Rating. However, these results may not be encouraging. For instance, you may have a 55% Base Chance to use Skulduggery but because you're trying to lift someone's purse while surrounded by watchful eyes, the Gamemaster has determined that the

Difficulty Rating is (Arduous -30%). This reduces your Total Chance for success to 25%.

Under the individual Skills definitions, there are several examples and circumstances which may modify or ultimately determine the Difficulty Rating you face. Keep in mind the more descriptive you are with your actions, the more lenient the Gamemaster may be with the Difficulty Rating. Indicating that you wish to climb up a wall may be fine, but some Gamemasters may demand a more evocative explanation or ask for more details so that they may better judge the difficulty. This means, if your Character has rope and grapple, use these tools in your description of the action you're taking.

Despite whatever tools, help or other aids you may have, you can't change your decision mid-stream. Once the Gamemaster calls out the Difficulty Rating, you must commit to your actions. Pick up the Percentile Dice, call out your Total Chance for success and roll.

EXAMPLE

Leopold Coventry is perched atop a roof, and needs to get away from his pursuers. His player tells the Gamemaster that Leopold will jump from one rooftop to another, crossing the gap using his Athletics Skill. The Gamemaster tells him that it is an (Arduous -30%) Difficulty Rating. Knowing that this will drastically reduce his Total Chance of Success, the player tells the Gamemaster he doesn't want to do it. The Gamemaster reminds him that once he asks to do something and the Difficulty Rating is set, he must commit to his action. With an audible sigh, he picks up the dice to see what fate lay in store for Leopold...

One final note - providing your Character has enough time to "size up" the situation, a Gamemaster may allow you to make a Difficulty Rating (Standard +/-0) Scrutinize Test to determine the Difficulty Rating of your next Skill Test. This is always at the discretion of the Gamemaster, and may be modified by the time your Character has to take to determine how difficult it may be to complete the action.

MATCH - CRITICAL SUCCESS AND CRITICAL FAILURE

In certain cases, you may generate what is called a "Match" with your Percentile Dice. A Match is whenever you generate the same die result on each of the dice. These can have a dramatic impact on your

successes and failures. If you succeed your Skill Test and the dice Match, you incur a Critical Success. This may mean you dole out a terrible injury to your foe, gain a temporary beneficial effect, add a bonus to your ally's next roll or do a number of other things your Gamemaster will describe. These are generally contextual, and the Gamemaster will announce any additional benefits or penalties tied to a Match. Your Talents and Professional Traits may confer additional bonuses as well.

EXAMPLE

"Patches" has a 45% Total Chance for success. Rolling Percentile Dice, generates a 33% - a Match! Because it's below the Total Chance for success, it qualifies as a Critical Success. The player announces that Patches has Critically Succeeded the Skill Test.

However, should you fail your Skill Test and the dice Match, you incur a Critical Failure. The effects of Critical Failures are always terrible. Your Gamemaster will tell you what the effects of these sorts of Matches are as you play. Sometimes, they may not even describe the terrible effect until it really matters. Imagine what would happen if you attempted to use Guile on a local constable and you Critically Failed. They may just throw you into a dank cell for trying to "get smart" with them. These negative effects always dramatically enhance the story and your trials and tribulations.

EXAMPLE

Mercutio Salvatore has a 45% Total Chance for success. Rolling Percentile Dice generates a 55% - a Match! Because it's above his Total Chance for success and it's a Match, it qualifies as a Critical Failure. The Gamesmaster notes that it is a Critically Failed Skill Test and considers the resulting complications.

THE BENEFITS OF CRITICAL FAILURE

Critically Failing your Skill Test can be beneficial over the long term. To take the "sting" out of a potentially perilous result, any time you Critically Fails a Skill Test, you permanently increase the related Primary Attribute by +1%. Note that you can only increase one Primary Attribute in this way once per Game Session. However, you could potentially increase each Primary Attribute once per Game Session in this manner! Note that you can never increase any Primary Attribute above 50% in this fashion.

EXAMPLE

Mercutio's player announces that he has Critically Failed an Athletics Test. Athletics is tied to the Brawn Primary Attribute. As a result, he permanently increases Mercutio's Brawn Primary Attribute from 32% to a 33%. Later, a Drive Test is Critically Failed (like Athletics, is tied to Brawn Primary Attribute). It can't be increased again this Game Session. However, there is a Critical Fail for a Coordination Test later that same Game Session. Coordination is tied to the Agility Primary Attribute, so Mercutio's Agility is increased by +1%.

AUTOMATIC FAILURE OR AUTOMATIC SUCCESS

Technically, anytime an action is attempted you should roll a Skill Test. However, there are many mundane things you should never have to Test for. This would make for a very boring, drawn-out and unpleasant gaming experience for you and other players around you. Tasks without risk such as climbing up ladders, driving a cart along a well-traveled road, writing in your journal and the like require no Tests, and you should assume that they are passed automatically. The best guideline we can provide is that if there's no real dramatic consequence for failure, you shouldn't roll a Skill Test.

EXAMPLE

Edwin Mortani is riding his horse down a cobblestone road. Knowing that he has a Skill Rank in Ride, Paul, who is playing Edwin, asks the Gamemaster if he can make a Skill Test to see how well he is controlling his horse. Since Edwin's not on a rough road and there aren't any real drawback for failure, the Gamemaster simply rules that Edwin is riding very well, and allows him to show off his skills to his friends while they ride alongside him.

RE-ATTEMPTING A FAILED SKILL TEST

Failed Skill Tests may have other setbacks as a result. The Gamemaster may rule that a failed Athletics Test results in suffering fatigue. Similarly, Critically Failing an Athletics Test could result in a nasty fall. Yet, this is not to say every failed Skill Test necessarily results in immediate, inevitable failure. Some Tests can be reattempted, but generally at a cost the Gamemaster dictates.

If you fail a roll, there may be a legitimate reason to re-attempt a failed Skill Test. However, not all Tests

can necessarily be retried. For instance, if you fail a Tradecraft Test the result has already been determined - you failed to craft something effectively and it gains the Poor Quality. Another time, you may want to really, really get up that wall, despite the fact that you failed the first Athletics Test. Consider using an alternative skill or a more creative way to grant additional bonuses to your test. You may want to consider taking your time and make an Extended Test on your second try instead.

Whenever you re-attempt a failed Skill Test, the penalties rely on narrative changes or the imposition of other mitigating factors as determined by the Gamemaster. A narrative approach and adjudication suits best. For instance, you may have failed an Athletics Test to climb over a wall. Your Gamemaster may decide that a rope or other climbing implement would allow you to re-attempt the failed Skill Test. Other situations may not allow you to re-attempt the Skill Test until time has passed, particularly if you wouldn't know if the initial Skill Test had failed. For instance, you may have failed a check to cleanse and scrape off infection from a comrade's wounds, noted only because the patient's disposition hadn't improved. Some failures may even work against your mind, demoralizing you. Only by gaining help, finding better equipment, sacrificing from the Fortune Pool or increasing Skill Ranks allows you to re-attempt the failed Test.

EXAMPLE

Leopold Coventry is amongst a crowd, tailing a local magistrate through the market. He needs to pilfer a seal the magistrate has hidden on his person. Using the bustle of the crowd for cover, a Skulduggery Skill Test is rolled and failed. However, Leopold is determined to pick the magistrate's pocket. As the townsfolk swell around him in the market, it provides Leopold another opportune moment to try again.

There are some exceptions to these rules, particularly whenever you use melee or ranged weapons in a combat encounter. Every swing and shot against an active resisting enemy promotes a new set of circumstances. Whenever you're in combat and use Actions In Combat, you do not suffer penalties if you attempt the same action again. We'll talk more about how this works in **Chapter VI: Combat**.

EXTENDED TESTS

If you decide to double the amount of time required to succeed at a task, you may add an additional +10% Base Chance. For instance, mending an ally with the Heal Skill takes ten minutes. However, if you instead dedicated twenty minutes to clean and dress the wound more carefully by taking greater care, the chance of you succeeding increases. Spending additional time beyond that typically confers no additional bonus, unless the Gamemaster rules otherwise.

HASTY TESTS

Some Skill Tests may need to be made in a hurry, or under some duress. For instance, you may be racing against the clock to pick a lock from a door while the owner is approaching. Anytime you are beset by circumstances where you wish to rush through the Skill Test, your Gamemaster will impose a higher Difficulty Rating, based on narrative circumstances.

SKILL TESTS OVER 100%

In a few extremely rare cases, it is possible to have a chance for success in excess of 100%. Roll a Skill Test regardless. A result of 100% is always a Critical Failure. Your Total Chance for success can never be in excess of 99%.

SKILL TESTS LOWER THAN 1%

There are times when you may have less than a 1% chance to succeed a Skill Test. Roll a Skill Test regardless. A result of 1% is always a Critical Success. Your Total Chance for success can never be less than 1%.

OPPOSED TESTS: DEGREES OF SUCCESS

In ZWEIHÄNDER, most Skill Tests assess a binary outcome of success or failure; the wall is climbed or unclimbed. For instance, whenever you strike a foe with an attack, they may elect to defend themselves by Dodging or Parrying. They need not “beat” your results; the foe must only succeed their roll. The same can be said when using your Intimidate Skill to terrify your enemies. Although you may have succeeded, your enemies may make a Discipline Test on their Turn to shake off or simply ignore its effects. However, there are certain situations where these sorts of rolls may not do the trick, or both tests succeed and result in a tie.

Should there ever be a time where an Opposed Test is absolutely required (such as in a contest of strength or when gambling), not only should you succeed the Skill Test, you must also reference your Degrees Of Success. You determine Degrees Of Success by adding the tens die (a result between 1 to 10) and add the relevant “Primary Attribute Bonus” the Skill is derived from. For example, if your Character has a Primary Attribute of 45%, your Primary Attribute Bonus is “4”. Whoever succeeds their Skill Test and has the highest Degrees Of Success automatically wins the Opposed Test. If the Degrees Of Success match, make another Opposed Test until one side is declared the winner. However, should either participant roll a Critical Success, they automatically win the Opposed Test.

However, in some cases the Gamemaster may rule that the Opposed Test should play out in a tenser manner. These sort of Opposed Tests take place over several rolls. The Gamemaster will announce how many Degrees Of Success are required to win (called a “Target Number”), and each participant will make the relevant Skill Test, counting up their respective Degrees Of Success. The first to reach or exceed the Target Number with their Degrees Of Success wins.

EXAMPLE

Mercutio Salvatore bellies up to the bar, attempting to engage in an arm wrestling contest against the local champ, “Gutboy”. The Gamemaster says that the first to succeed their Athletics Tests and to reach the Target Number of 20 wins. Both Mercutio and Gutboy make opposed Athletics Tests. Both succeed their Athletics Test, so it’s time to compare Degrees Of Success. Mercutio rolled a 45% and adds his Brawn Bonus (BB) of 5. Mercutio’s total Degrees Of Success is 9 (4 + 5). Gutboy rolled a 35% and adds his Brawn Bonus (BB) of 7. Gutboy’s total Degrees Of Success is 10 (3 + 7). The Gamemaster makes a note of the current Degrees Of Success, and the match continues on. Mercutio rolls another Athletics Test; unfortunately, he fails his roll (and doesn’t generate any Degrees Of Success). Gutboy rolls his Athletics, and generates another 10 Degrees Of Success! Gutboy takes Mercutio over the top, winning the arm wrestling contest.

Any time a Skill Test in an Opposed Test results in Critical Success, that participant automatically wins the contest. If both participants roll a Critical Success, reference the Degrees Of Success to determine the winner. But, if the Opposed Test

results in a Critical Failure, the participant automatically loses the contest.

ASSISTING ALLY'S SKILL TESTS: ASSIST DIE

Fortunately, your Character is not alone in your adventures. Your allies can rely on one another to provide additional help while tackling the challenges presented to you by your Gamemaster. There are times in any grim & perilous Game Session where your own capabilities aren't enough; a physical challenge too demanding or a social situation too perplexing so that you must rely on your ally's help to succeed.

You should always endeavor to aid your allies when your Character can realistically apply their own knowledge to the situation. But, you must adhere to these few basic rules whenever you provide assistance to others' Skill Tests:

- An assisting ally must at least possess one Skill Rank in the relevant Skill to assist another, regardless if it is a Common or Special Skill. This means that if an ally doesn't have Skill Ranks in the Special Skill: Drive, but you're both trying to steer an out-of-control wagon, they can't assist you whatsoever. Similarly, if you're attempting a feat of strength using Athletics and an ally doesn't have at least one Skill Rank in Athletics, they can't assist you.
- Whenever an ally intends to assist your Skill Test, they must hand one of their Percentile Dice (one 10-sided die) to you. This die is called an "Assist Die", and can replace the tens die result of the next Skill Test you makes.
- Roll your Percentile Dice and the Assist Die. However, you may reference either the original tens die or the Assist Die with the results you prefer (typically the lowest result). This means that if you roll Percentile Dice that comes up with a "45%", and your Assist Die comes up as "3", your new derived result is "35%".
- Always assume the best result when gaining assistance with an Assist Die, unless it is a Critical Failure.

EXAMPLE

Leopold Coventry is going to lift the gate keys off the local constable, and Mercutio Salvatore is going to provide a distraction to assist his Skill Test. The Gamemaster determines that Leopold's Total Chance for success is 23%. Leopold rolls his Percentile Dice, coming up with a "13%" while his Assist Die comes up as "3". Typically, he would

succeed with a 13% but in this case, because the Assist Die derived a result of "33%", he Critically Fails the Test!

- Typically, only one ally can assist a Test unless the Gamemaster rules otherwise. This means no matter how many allies are assisting you, you cannot gain more than 1 Assist Die to a Skill Test.
- Assistance requires full attention and effort. A player can't simply announce that they're "assisting a Skill Test". The assisting player must be descriptive with their words to illustrate to the Gamemaster how they intend to help. Simply stating that you wish to assist a Charm Test likely won't garner a vote of support from the Gamemaster, but implying that you intend to smirk and subtly seduce the lady-in-waiting that your ally is engaged in conversation will.

EXAMPLE

"Patches" has crashed the group's coach into a low ravine. He and his friends are standing around, trying to figure out how to drag it out without harming the horses. Patches knows a little about the construction of coaches, given that he spent time piloting coaches in the "big city". He asks the Gamemaster if he can roll a Handle Animal Test to determine whether there's an easier way to unhitch the horses without causing any further injury. The Gamemaster announces that the Difficulty Rating of the Skill Test will be (Challenging -10%), which means Patches' Total Chance for success is 55%. Leopold Coventry immediately pipes up, indicating that he has raised horses his entire life and may be able to provide some assistance with the work. Leopold has Skill Rank: Journeyman in Handle Animal; the Gamemaster tells Leopold he can confer an Assist Die to Patches' Skill Test. Patches rolls a "63%" on his Percentile Dice, and a "3" on his Assist Die. Patches swaps the "6" for a "3", with his derived result now a "33%" - a Critical Success! Things are looking considerably better for the intrepid coachman and his allies.

SECRET TESTS

Sometimes, the Gamemaster may not want you to know whether you succeeded or not. Tests to find hidden foes (such as with Awareness), Tests to proficiently copy a document (using Counterfeit), Tests to holdout or secret away weapons on your person (using Skulduggery), Tests to change your appearance (such as with Disguise) and other kinds of Tests that the Gamemaster would rather secretly control falls underneath this kind of Test.

Generally, these are used to hide the mechanics beneath the narrative, making certain that you as a player don't make decisions based on the result of a die roll when your Character likely shouldn't know the immediate result. Under these circumstances, you'll already have described what your Character is doing. From there, the Gamemaster announces the Difficulty Rating. Should you possess a Talent or Trait which allows you to flip or otherwise modify the Skill, be sure to let the Gamemaster know. They will roll Percentile Dice hidden from the players' view, revealing only the die results of a Critical Success or Critical Failure. Otherwise, the Gamemaster will interpret the dice and explain in narrative terms what happens. It all boils down to perception - if the Gamemaster feels that you shouldn't know the exact details, they'll obfuscate the result within the narrative without directly revealing if you succeeded the Test or not.

EXAMPLE

Graf von Bek is attempting to use an ancient ritual to summon a Daemon to serve him. Although he has taken the proper precautions - a circle of protection, burning censers of incense and wards against evil - the minds of diabolical servants rarely bow to mortals. After successfully casting his Magick, the Daemon appears in all its wickedness and grotesquery from a thick plume of sulphurous smoke. The Gamemaster asks Graf what his Base Chance is to use the Discipline Skill, and makes a Secret Test in order to determine if Graf's force of will is enough to command the demon to do his bidding. Recording the result in secret, the Gamemaster will enact this as Graf attempts to bid the creature to bow to his wishes...

SOME SKILL TESTS TAKE TIME TO COMPLETE

Most Skill Tests require only mere moments of attention to succeed or fail at. However, some require a longer expenditure of time and energy. For Skill Tests that require longer lengths of time, your Gamemaster will indicate how long it takes to attempt it after they've announced the Difficulty Rating.

USING COMMON SKILLS WITHOUT SKILL RANKS

In ZWEIHÄNDER, it is impossible to have Skill Ranks in every Skill. This is entirely intentional; no

matter how you grow your Character, you will only possess a fraction of the total Skills made available. Common Skills can be roundly used, even by the novitiate, under most circumstances.

Even though you may not have any Skill Ranks in an Common Skill, reference only your Primary Attribute to determine your Base Chance.

USING SPECIAL SKILLS WITHOUT SKILL RANKS

Special Skills require a deeper understanding, requiring a more specific set of knowledge to effectively use them.

Even though you may not have any Skill Ranks in a Special Skill, you reference only your Primary Attribute to determine your Base Chance. However, you must flip the results to fail the Test once you've determined the Total Chance for success.

FLIP THE RESULTS TO FAIL

Sometimes, you may be called to "flip the results to fail" a Skill Test and take the worst result. This is generally the prerogative of the Gamemaster if they wish to introduce a different layer of hardship upon a player's Skill Test. Whenever the result of your Skill Test is a success, you swap the units and tens die with each other in order to check for a fail. When flipping the results to fail, you always accept the worst of the two results.

EXAMPLE

While listening in, Leopold Coventry decided to sneak out of his room to move into the hallway, so he may make out precisely what they're saying. Unfortunately, the floor is very creaky. The Gamemaster tells Leopold that he must roll a Stealth Test to not be heard while moving out of his room. But due to the floorboards, he must flip the results to fail his Test. Leopold rolls a 69%, which would be a success under normal circumstances. However, he must flip them to a 96% - utterly failing the Test!

FLIP THE RESULTS TO SUCCEED

Under some circumstances, such as the use of a Professional or Racial Trait, an ability may allow you to "flip the results to succeed" a Skill Test and take the better result. Whenever the result of your Skill Test is a failure, you also swap the units and tens die

with each other to determine if you succeeded. You always accept the better of the two results. If you have two or more traits that confer the ability to flip dice, you can only take advantage of one or the other.

EXAMPLE

Leopold Coventry is attempting to listen in on a conversation in a bedchamber next to his. Pressing a cup against the wall, he tries to discern what they're saying. Leopold knows this is an Awareness Test, and has a pretty good chance to succeed. However, he fails his Skill Test by rolling an 81%. Fortunately, Leopold also possesses a special Professional Talent, which allows him to flip the results of a failed Awareness Test. Leopold flips the dice, resulting in 18% instead – a success.

FINAL NOTE ON FLIPPED RESULTS

Finally, should you possess an ability that allows you to flip the results to succeed and it's opposed by another's ability or situation that forces you to flip to fail, they simply cancel each other out, as you attempt a normal Skill Test.

SKILL SYNERGY

Some Skills can be used to benefit one another in the right circumstances. These situations are always determined by the Gamemaster, but you should feel encouraged to think about how you can pair up Skills together to take advantage of this. In these cases, you may add a +10 Base Chance to your Total Chance for success.

EXAMPLE

Graf Von Bek has recovered a stolen painting. He wishes to evaluate whether it is a forgery or not with the Counterfeit Skill. Fortunate for Graf, he has a Skill Rank in Tradecraft – specifically, as an Artist. The Gamemaster decides to let Graf add a +10 Base Chance whenever he makes the Counterfeit Test, in order to determine whether or not the painting is legitimate.

CHAOS DIE

Throughout this work, you'll notice instances where you are instructed to roll a 1D6 Chaos Die. In all of these cases, should you generate a face "6" on the Chaos Die, add an additional 1D6 Chaos Die to your results. Every time a Chaos Die generates another face 6, it continues to "explode", generating additional 1D6 Chaos Die. There is no upper limit to the number of Chaos Dice that can be used,

guaranteeing each consecutive die lands on a face 6. Calculate all results together to determine the total.

EXAMPLE

Patches successfully strike with his shiv. Patches' Combat Bonus (CB) is 3. He rolled a 1D6 Damage Modifier, resulting in a face "6". He now adds 1D6 Chaos Die, generating another face "6". He rolls yet another Chaos Die, resulting in a face "1". Patches inflicts 16 Total Damage (3 + 6 + 6 + 1).

THE FORTUNE POOL

The tides of order and chaos are in a constant tug of war. All are bound to the wheel of fortune as it turns, turning treacherously for both the villainous and the chivalrous alike. When these forces are pitted against one another, it can resonate acutely with their chosen emissaries. Protagonists in **ZWEIHÄNDER** often face unexpected twists of fate and misfortune.

Whether it's being outflanked by their foes, stumbling upon a creature's den whilst heeding the call of nature, breaking a wagon axle while fording a river, making an offensive quip to a blue blooded lady of the court, accidentally dropping that handful of shillings you "found" in someone else's purse or even just being at the wrong place at the wrong time, skill alone won't necessarily remedy every situation. Even when you may be unaware that you're in immediate danger, fortune's wheel continues to spin as blind chance and dumb luck tends to favor the foolhardy and brave alike.

At the beginning of every Game Session, the Gamemaster places 1 token, plus a number of additional tokens equal to the number of players participating into a bowl. This means that if there are five players, a total of 6 tokens are contributed into the bowl at the beginning of the Game Session. The Gamemaster may use coins, marbles, wrapped caramel candies or any other sort of appropriate counter for players to remove from the bowl. These tokens are called "Fortune Points" and the bowl is referred to as the "Fortune Pool". Each Fortune Point represents a currency in which the players can spend to change the outcome of events. As the session progresses, the Fortune Pool will dwindle as players tap into it.

Sometimes, the Fortune Pool will grow with the use of certain traits, given as a reward for playing to your

Character's eccentricities or foibles or other situations the Gamemaster feels it appropriate to reward the group for excellent role-play. Generally, they will be added to the pool whenever you employ your Character's Order and Chaos Temperaments at critical moments to drive the story forward. These sorts of rewards should not be routinely expected from the Gamemaster, but the more often you play to your Character's Temperaments and personality, the better chance you have for the Gamemaster to grant bonus Fortune Points.

HOW TO USE THE FORTUNE POOL

You can use the Fortune Pool in a few distinct ways, moving the odds into your favor:

- After the Difficulty Rating of a Skill Test has been announced by the Gamemaster, spend a Fortune Point to gain a +30% Base Chance.
- During combat, spend a Fortune Point to temporarily gain 1 additional Action Point on your Turn.

MISFORTUNE POOL

Whenever you use a Fortune Point, it immediately turns into a Misfortune Point and contributed to the Gamemaster's Misfortune Pool. The Gamemaster may employ the Misfortune Pool to take advantage of the same two benefits as mentioned above for non-player Characters or other creatures they control. However, once Misfortune Points are spent by the Gamemaster, they are simply moved aside and do not circulate back into the game.

FINAL CONSIDERATION

It is important to note that Fortune Points do not accrue between Game Sessions. The Fortune Pool always "refreshes" at the beginning of a Game Session, regardless of any leftover Fortune Points from a previous session. Players should feel encouraged to sacrifice Fortune Points as needed, but judiciously weigh each situation all the same. One never knows when misfortune may strike!

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

Primary Attributes are the building blocks of creation, governing a Character's raw potential and capabilities. They represent physical and mental Characteristics, outlining some aspect of your Character and other foe's abilities. The higher the value, the better the raw ability. Generally, Primary Attributes will range from 30% to 50% (as 50% is the highest value a Character may ever hold).

Primary Attributes also have a related bonus. These Primary Attribute Bonuses are applied to Game Session mechanics in various ways. These bonuses are equal to the tens digit of the related Primary Attribute. For instance, if a Character has a Brawn of 37%, they would have a Brawn Bonus (BB) of 3. As you play your Character, these Attribute Bonuses will grow independently from your Primary Attributes. They may be modified with Bonus Advances you earn during Basic, Intermediate and Advanced Tiers. Additionally, all player Races have an intrinsic additive or penalty to the Primary Attribute Bonus.

Each Attribute Bonus is generally referenced by its abbreviated name throughout the book: Combat Bonus (CB), Brawn Bonus (BB), Agility Bonus (AB), Perception Bonus (PB), Intelligence Bonus (IB), Willpower Bonus (WB) and Fellowship Bonus (FB).

COMBAT

Combat represents your Character's overall proficiency while fighting with weapons in close quarters and from afar. It controls your ability to defend yourself and attack with close quarter weapons. It also determines your Base Chance for success with the Martial Melee, Martial Ranged, Simple Melee and Simple Ranged Skills. Your Combat Bonus (CB) is the first number of the Primary Attribute, which directly affects your Damage Modifier with melee and ranged weapons.

BRAWN

Brawn represents your Character's physical prowess, muscle, durability and overall endurance. It controls your ability to overpower others using might and force, to withstand pain and allows you to carry

equipment without being encumbered. It also determines your Base Chance to succeed Skill Tests with the Athletics, Drive, Intimidate and Toughness Skills. Your Brawn Bonus (BB) is the first number of the Primary Attribute, which directly affects your Damage Threshold and Encumbrance Limit.

AGILITY

Agility represents your Character's speed and nimbleness. It controls your ability to outmaneuver others and allows you to duck out of the way from falling hazards. It also determines your Base Chance to succeed Skill Tests with the Coordination, Pilot, Ride, Skulduggery and Stealth Skills. Your Agility Bonus (AB) is the first number of the Primary Attribute, which directly affects Combat Movement.

PERCEPTION

Perception represents your Character's mental acuity and insight. It controls your ability to observe the world around you. It also determines your Base Chance to succeed Skill Tests with the Awareness, Eavesdrop, Scrutinize and Survival Skills. Your Perception Bonus (PB) is the first number of the Primary Attribute, which directly affects Initiative Bonus and Distances for ranged weapons.

INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence represents your Character's ability to learn and memorize. It controls your ability to understand the written word and recall important facts. It also determines your Base Chance to succeed Skill Tests with the Alchemy, Counterfeit, Education, Folklore, Gamble, Heal, Navigation and Warfare Skills. Your Intelligence Bonus (IB) is the first number of the Primary Attribute, which directly affects the number of Magick spells you may learn and the number of Skill Focuses you may acquire.

WILLPOWER

Willpower represents your Character's resolve and fortitude. It controls your ability to apply yourself in the face of hardship and exercise self-control in dangerous or frightening situations. It also determines your Base Chance to succeed Skill Tests with the Discipline, Interrogation, Incantation and Tradecraft Skills. Your Willpower Bonus (WB) is the

first number of the Primary Attribute, which directly affects your Peril Threshold.

FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship represents your Character's charisma and social savvy. It controls your ability to use your personal magnetism to persuade others, your ability to adapt to social situations and your personal confidence. It also determines your Base Chance to succeed Skill Tests with the Bargain, Charm, Disguise, Guile, Handle Animal, Leadership and Rumor Skills. Your Fellowship Bonus (FB) is the first number of the Primary Attribute, which directly affects how many people you influence with Fellowship-based Skill Tests and how many languages they may speak.

Primary Attribute Tests?

In **ZWEIHÄNDER**, you will never Test your Primary Attributes. For these situations, your Gamemaster will pick a related Skill you will Test to determine success. Five of the most common Skill Tests you will make are Athletics (Brawn), Coordination (Agility), Discipline (Willpower), Scrutinize (Perception) and Toughness (Brawn). When in doubt how to Test your strengths or weaknesses, you may rely on the values of those five Skills to understand your Character's basic physical and mental prowess.

LET'S SIT IN ON A GAME SESSION...

We've included an example of a Game Session to help illustrate how Character dialogue and Tests work in **ZWEIHÄNDER**. Although it does not fully delve into the rules, it will illustrate the pacing of a grim & perilous scenario, showing how Skill Tests can be used. For Gamemasters, it also shows how a Game Session works when a party of Characters splits up through vignette-styled play. There may be some terms or Game Session mechanics you're not quite familiar with yet. But fear not - we'll provide all of the additional details as you continue throughout the book.

In our example, Adam is playing **Ulysses**, a local Reeve (sheriff) freshly returned from a rather troubling task - a merchant train went missing along the forest path a few days ago and has been deployed

to find any survivors. Accompanying him is Jeremy's Character **Credence**, a charming Thief on the run from bounty hunters (a fact unbeknownst to Ulysses). Additionally, Tim's Character **Chauncey** - a rangy veteran Sellsword - is riding with them. In the vanguard rides Mike's Character **Balbanese**, a young noble Man-at-Arms who is taking no joy in his adventures in the north. And finally, they have brought back the mysterious Druid **Otrygg** (Matt's Character), who was the only survivor of the merchant train. He's gravely injured and unable to walk on his own. His leg is throbbing, and he'll likely contract infection if he doesn't get help. All of the players, save Otrygg, are unaware that they've been pursued...

Gamemaster: Two days pass beneath the wood, with the midnight hour marking your return home. Beneath the blue and grey shadows of an impossibly-high mountain range, a pioneer settlement sprawls. It is a vast camp of stone buildings, crowned with thin tendrils of smoke. The Outskirts, as Ulysses called it. This camp sprung up some thirty years ago and has only grown in size and proportion since trade began with the southern lumber town of Hewn Ford.

Adam (Ulysses): "Come on, boys. The witchin' hour is upon us, and it's not safe out here at night." I would like to watch along the edges of the wood while we ride into town. My Character knows that wolves wander into the Outskirts in the evenings, and I want to make sure that there are none following in our wake at the stench of Otrygg's wounds.

Gamemaster: Go ahead and make an Awareness Test, but because it's dark outside, it will be an Arduous Test.

Adam (Ulysses): That's like a -30% Base Chance, right?

Gamemaster: Well, wolves don't tend to carry torches and you don't have lantern light. Also, the forest casts long and strange shadows over its edges. It's too far away to listen, so you'll have to rely on sight. So, yeah - it's going to be an Arduous Awareness Test.

Adam (Ulysses): OK, fair enough.

Adam rolls his Awareness Test and succeeds.

Adam (Ulysses): I made it!

Gamemaster: Perfect. Well, it was a good thing that you were paying attention. Although there's no wind, you can see movement in the underbrush. A few branches rattle, as if someone... or something is shuffling about. And whoever, and whatever, is out there - it isn't carrying a light source.

Jeremy (Credence): Did I see anything? If so, I want to head to the watchtower and alert the local constable...

Gamemaster: Hold on a moment, Jeremy. Ulysses, do you tell anyone about what you see?

Adam (Ulysses): Not yet. I am somewhat concerned, but I don't want to stir the others up. I know Otrygg is still grievously injured and I'm sure the ride back wasn't pleasant. Pulling them into a fight I know they can't handle would be dangerous. Plus, I know that wolves are easily scared by the sound of gunshot. "Get yourselves to the inn, and I'll meet you back there." I pull my broad-brimmed hat over my head and flip the edges of my mantle over to free my arms. I'll also strike a match off my badge and light the pistol's slow fuse.

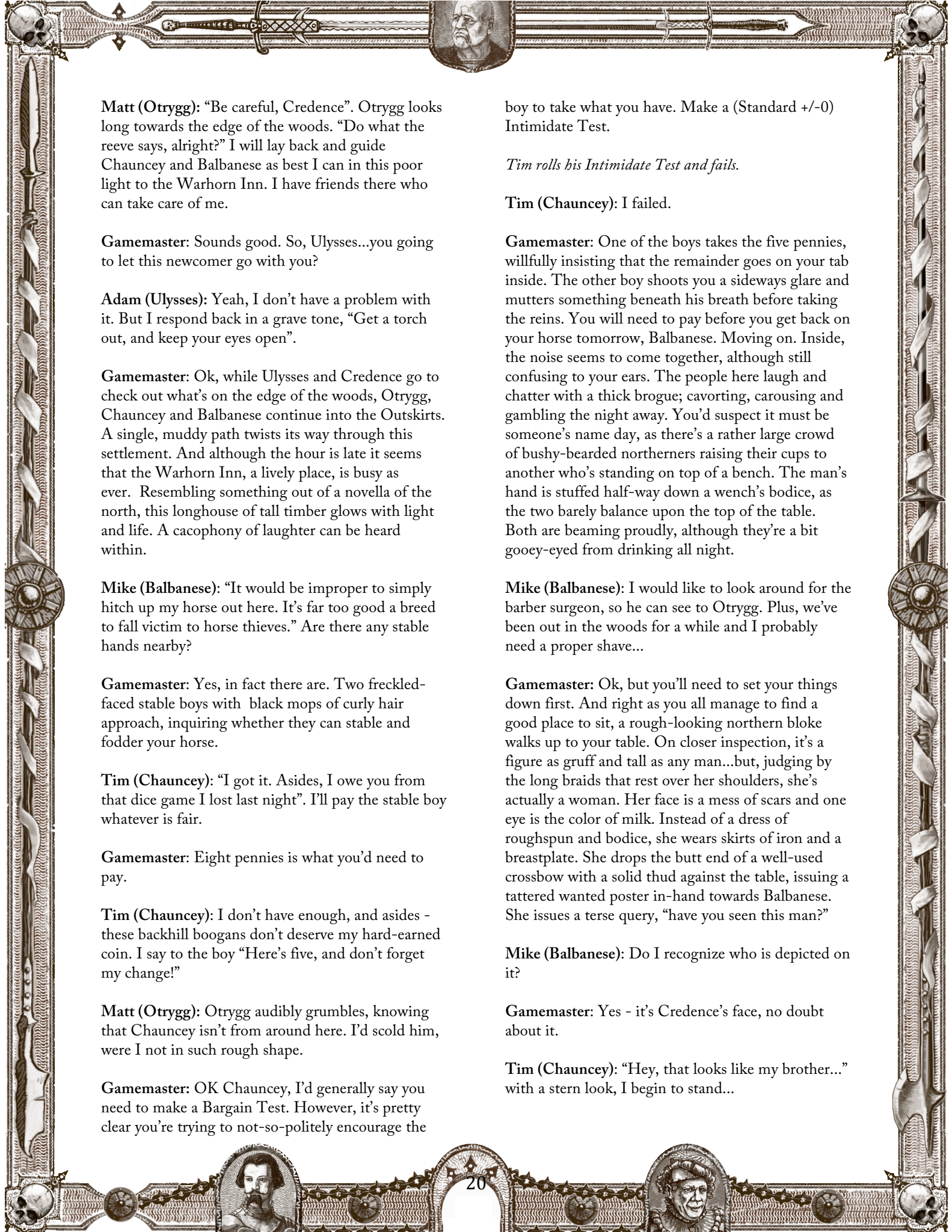
Adam passes a secret note over to the Gamemaster. The Gamemaster reads it and nods in approval.

Mike (Balbanese): Sounds good to me. After all, isn't Ulysses *THE* reeve of the Outskirts; isn't this his job? *Laughter erupts around the table.*

Jeremy (Credence): My Character likely remembers Ulysses' story about the wolves from a few nights earlier, and he's pretty insightful and clever, so I reply "I know these woods are full of all manner of brigands during the day, and I don't see any light out there. I know this is your job and all, but surely you wouldn't mind another swordhand? Not that wolves would really care whether you're wearing a badge or not."

Tim (Chauncey): "I'll get Otrygg to an animal mender, or surgeon, or whatever the hell you people call them up here. Be safe, brother - remember your 'dancing' lessons". I will walk alongside the cart with Otrygg, looking for this inn Ulysses spoke of.

Jeremy (Credence): Yeah, I'm still a bit winded from that one. Heh - I've been at -20 Peril Threshold the last two Game Sessions!



Matt (Otrygg): "Be careful, Credence". Otrygg looks long towards the edge of the woods. "Do what the reeve says, alright?" I will lay back and guide Chauncey and Balbanese as best I can in this poor light to the Warhorn Inn. I have friends there who can take care of me.

Gamemaster: Sounds good. So, Ulysses...you going to let this newcomer go with you?

Adam (Ulysses): Yeah, I don't have a problem with it. But I respond back in a grave tone, "Get a torch out, and keep your eyes open".

Gamemaster: Ok, while Ulysses and Credence go to check out what's on the edge of the woods, Otrygg, Chauncey and Balbanese continue into the Outskirts. A single, muddy path twists its way through this settlement. And although the hour is late it seems that the Warhorn Inn, a lively place, is busy as ever. Resembling something out of a novella of the north, this longhouse of tall timber glows with light and life. A cacophony of laughter can be heard within.

Mike (Balbanese): "It would be improper to simply hitch up my horse out here. It's far too good a breed to fall victim to horse thieves." Are there any stable hands nearby?

Gamemaster: Yes, in fact there are. Two freckled-faced stable boys with black mops of curly hair approach, inquiring whether they can stable and fodder your horse.

Tim (Chauncey): "I got it. Asides, I owe you from that dice game I lost last night". I'll pay the stable boy whatever is fair.

Gamemaster: Eight pennies is what you'd need to pay.

Tim (Chauncey): I don't have enough, and asides - these backhill boogans don't deserve my hard-earned coin. I say to the boy "Here's five, and don't forget my change!"

Matt (Otrygg): Otrygg audibly grumbles, knowing that Chauncey isn't from around here. I'd scold him, were I not in such rough shape.

Gamemaster: OK Chauncey, I'd generally say you need to make a Bargain Test. However, it's pretty clear you're trying to not-so-politely encourage the

boy to take what you have. Make a (Standard +/-0) Intimidate Test.

Tim rolls his Intimidate Test and fails.

Tim (Chauncey): I failed.

Gamemaster: One of the boys takes the five pennies, willfully insisting that the remainder goes on your tab inside. The other boy shoots you a sideways glare and mutters something beneath his breath before taking the reins. You will need to pay before you get back on your horse tomorrow, Balbanese. Moving on. Inside, the noise seems to come together, although still confusing to your ears. The people here laugh and chatter with a thick brogue; cavorting, carousing and gambling the night away. You'd suspect it must be someone's name day, as there's a rather large crowd of bushy-bearded northerners raising their cups to another who's standing on top of a bench. The man's hand is stuffed half-way down a wench's bodice, as the two barely balance upon the top of the table. Both are beaming proudly, although they're a bit goopy-eyed from drinking all night.

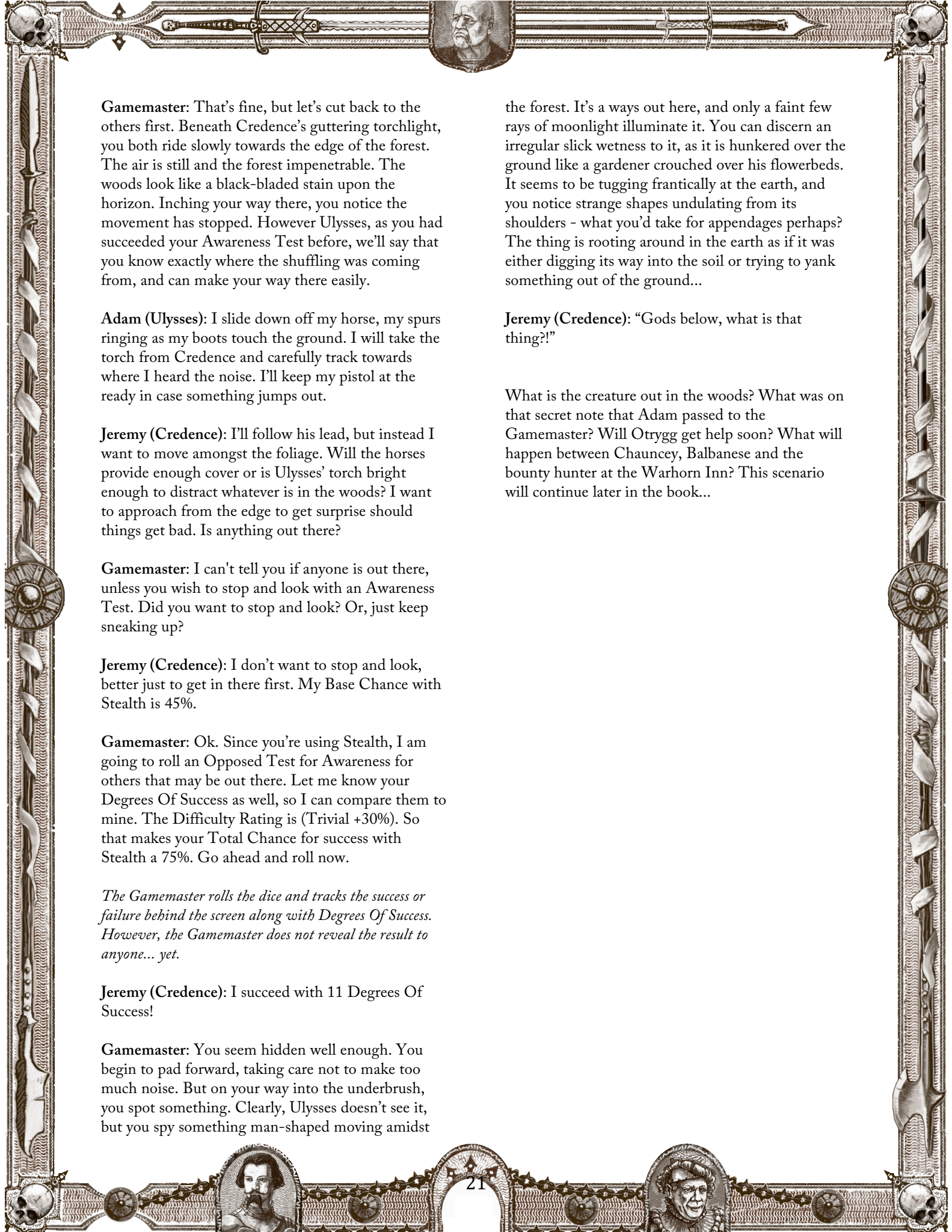
Mike (Balbanese): I would like to look around for the barber surgeon, so he can see to Otrygg. Plus, we've been out in the woods for a while and I probably need a proper shave...

Gamemaster: Ok, but you'll need to set your things down first. And right as you all manage to find a good place to sit, a rough-looking northern bloke walks up to your table. On closer inspection, it's a figure as gruff and tall as any man...but, judging by the long braids that rest over her shoulders, she's actually a woman. Her face is a mess of scars and one eye is the color of milk. Instead of a dress of roughspun and bodice, she wears skirts of iron and a breastplate. She drops the butt end of a well-used crossbow with a solid thud against the table, issuing a tattered wanted poster in-hand towards Balbanese. She issues a terse query, "have you seen this man?"

Mike (Balbanese): Do I recognize who is depicted on it?

Gamemaster: Yes - it's Credence's face, no doubt about it.

Tim (Chauncey): "Hey, that looks like my brother..." with a stern look, I begin to stand...



Gamemaster: That's fine, but let's cut back to the others first. Beneath Credence's guttering torchlight, you both ride slowly towards the edge of the forest. The air is still and the forest impenetrable. The woods look like a black-bladed stain upon the horizon. Inching your way there, you notice the movement has stopped. However Ulysses, as you had succeeded your Awareness Test before, we'll say that you know exactly where the shuffling was coming from, and can make your way there easily.

Adam (Ulysses): I slide down off my horse, my spurs ringing as my boots touch the ground. I will take the torch from Credence and carefully track towards where I heard the noise. I'll keep my pistol at the ready in case something jumps out.

Jeremy (Credence): I'll follow his lead, but instead I want to move amongst the foliage. Will the horses provide enough cover or is Ulysses' torch bright enough to distract whatever is in the woods? I want to approach from the edge to get surprise should things get bad. Is anything out there?

Gamemaster: I can't tell you if anyone is out there, unless you wish to stop and look with an Awareness Test. Did you want to stop and look? Or, just keep sneaking up?

Jeremy (Credence): I don't want to stop and look, better just to get in there first. My Base Chance with Stealth is 45%.

Gamemaster: Ok. Since you're using Stealth, I am going to roll an Opposed Test for Awareness for others that may be out there. Let me know your Degrees Of Success as well, so I can compare them to mine. The Difficulty Rating is (Trivial +30%). So that makes your Total Chance for success with Stealth a 75%. Go ahead and roll now.

The Gamemaster rolls the dice and tracks the success or failure behind the screen along with Degrees Of Success. However, the Gamemaster does not reveal the result to anyone... yet.

Jeremy (Credence): I succeed with 11 Degrees Of Success!

Gamemaster: You seem hidden well enough. You begin to pad forward, taking care not to make too much noise. But on your way into the underbrush, you spot something. Clearly, Ulysses doesn't see it, but you spy something man-shaped moving amidst

the forest. It's a ways out here, and only a faint few rays of moonlight illuminate it. You can discern an irregular slick wetness to it, as it is hunkered over the ground like a gardener crouched over his flowerbeds. It seems to be tugging frantically at the earth, and you notice strange shapes undulating from its shoulders - what you'd take for appendages perhaps? The thing is rooting around in the earth as if it was either digging its way into the soil or trying to yank something out of the ground...

Jeremy (Credence): "Gods below, what is that thing?!"

What is the creature out in the woods? What was on that secret note that Adam passed to the Gamemaster? Will Otrygg get help soon? What will happen between Chauncey, Balbanese and the bounty hunter at the Warhorn Inn? This scenario will continue later in the book...

CHARACTER CREATION

STORY THEMES AND CHARACTER CREATION

As a Player, you will create an alternate persona: a protagonist (or perhaps antagonist!) of the story, also known as your Character. Character Creation is relatively simple, but the choices you make during this process can have long-term implications. Several themes dominate a grim & perilous game:

- Dire circumstances recast your fate. You were a normal, everyday person (or as normal as you could be in a Renaissance-inspired low fantasy world). But something in your immediate past changed the path you were on. Now that your life has changed dramatically, you find yourself among others who are in similar circumstances.
- Come-uppance and violence are the hallmarks of your unfortunate birthright. The world you live in is largely uncaring, cruel and selfish. The fetid stink of the corrupt wafts from every cobbled street and echoing hillside. The people are bound to strict social strata, and rarely break free from the yoke of servitude. You likely know little of the world beyond where you were raised, but are accustomed to the grim nature of the world around you.
- Ethnic identity binds communities together. Sometimes, prejudice manifests in contradiction to one's own traditions and religion. In other cases, it is driven by social or economic issues. Rarely is it driven by the differences of race. Perhaps in your case, it's related to the caste you were born to and the envy of your betters.
- Superstition is the foundation of faith. People genuinely believe that wearing charms made from dried cat eyes will legitimately ward away riotous spirits and if one prays hard enough for rain, it will. Like everyone else, your Character likely believes these things. Beneath the myths lay a kernel of truth.
- Religious ceremony and pagan rites dominate every facet of society. You pray hard and sacrifice to your own gods so that

they may save your soul from damnation - for all are born unto sin and must absolve themselves before death.

- Medicine is truly esoteric; its practitioners few and far between. Quackery dominates the profession, where snake oil salesmen make up the bulk of the field. True physicians are generally at odds with the church, believed to be necromancers with their odd pursuit of vivisection in the name of scientific understanding. It may not be uncommon for your Character to imbibe unusual concoctions or other questionable remedies to maintain balance of the four humours. Some even pay the same level of "tithe" to a local barber-surgeon as they would for a preacher.
- Sorcery is reviled by all and those who would dare call themselves true wizards are oftentimes burned at the stake for heresy. Most have a damning opinion towards Magick in all its forms. But, should you pursue these higher mysteries yourself, these gifts must be hidden from the ignorant and stolen from others who are of your same ilk. One does not simply stumble across a grimoire or develop an understanding of sorcery. It is a well-hidden secret of the world, and those who can employ its use jealously guard this knowledge from each other and outsiders.
- Capricious and sometimes sinister forces vie for agency over the world's people. Behind the curtain, these dark powers play puppet master, pulling the strings of both cast-asides and the well-bred alike. They whisper into the ear of those chosen for a higher purpose. Perhaps, you have heard their whispers, too.

Grim & perilous role-playing is not a story about people who change the world. No, it is instead a story of a world that changes the people within it. Given these considerations, it's easy to believe that a nihilistic principle guides your Character's life. And it may be somewhat true. But, there is a glimmer of hope. Not all is lost, and fortune has smiled upon your Character for one reason or another. There is a greater role for you to play in the grand scheme of things. It may not result in changing the world as a whole, but a certain path has been set before you. Ultimately, you must ask yourself how these circumstances will change your Character's primary

motivation. Will they rage against the dying of the light as a glimmer of hope, knowing the considerable risks they levy likely breeds pain and helplessness? Perhaps instead, they struggle in the morass of grey, torn between justified violence, questionable intentions, and unyielding dogma? Or simply embrace these deviant times for their own opportunistic ends, building legacy and lucre for yourself off the suffering of those less fortunate and clever? The answer is not simple, but it is definition of what the ZWEIHÄNDER role-playing game is all about.

The Gamemaster will share ideas about what additional themes they wish to define the Campaign World, as well as the long-term story arc you will play. It is recommended that everyone understands these themes, along with any other Campaign expectations, before they create their Characters together. But keep in mind that not all of the Campaign's secrets need be revealed by the Gamemaster, as your story has yet to completely untold. In short, an idea of where you would like to go with your Character is helpful; an idea of where they've been is an absolute necessity.

CONSIDERATION AND CHOICES

When you imagine your Character, how do you see them? Are you a despicable cur who relies on their imposing nature to hide uncertainties? Perhaps you're a grifter in fool's clothing, using dopiness to conceal base intentions? Maybe you're a jaded protagonist who has been through the crucible and is haunted by a terrible past? Perhaps you want to play an ambassador who is terribly bigoted against those with whom he parlays? Maybe you want to create an all-knowing sage with crippling social anxiety? What if you want to be a streetwise rake who is charismatic and randy but will abandon his friends at the drop of a hat? There are limitless paths you can explore in the gritty and dark world of any ZWEIHÄNDER game.

Consider not your Character's strengths first, but instead your weaknesses. We encourage you to create a style of Character you've never played before or one that forces you to step outside of your comfort zone. Oftentimes in role-playing games, Players will select a personality type or allocate ability scores in a way that is already familiar or representative of a Character they have played in another role-playing game. Challenge yourself as a role-player, and think

about other options. It is important to approach any role-playing game with a fresh perspective, particularly for Players who also Gamemaster. It can help you create new and interesting personalities, drawing from these new experiences as a Player. Making these sort of decisions as a Gamemaster helps you become more well-rounded, whereas making these choices as a Player allows you to become a stronger role-player yourself - particularly if you want to Gamemaster your own ZWEIHÄNDER game!

Sidebar: Dice, Pencil, Paper, Character Sheet

You're going to be recording several notes during the Character Creation process. You will need two 10-sided dice (otherwise called Percentile Dice), a pencil and scratch paper for the Character Creation process. Everything you take down should be written in pencil, so any necessary changes can easily be made along the way during and after this process. You can use the Character Sheet presented in this book or download it directly from grimandperilous.com

CHARACTER CREATION OVERVIEW

Below is a quick guideline to follow whenever creating your Character:

You must have a character sheet handy to understand this chapter. Images are not included for Character Creation in the GRIMDARK Edition public beta.

[DOWNLOAD THE CHARACTER SHEET HERE AT DROPBOX.](#)

https://www.dropbox.com/s/a796rsrdgfy30a/Character_Sheet_Dec_9_2014.pdf?dl=0

STEP I: BEGIN YOUR BASIC TIER

Your Character has a humble beginning, starting play in the Basic Tier.

STEP II: DETERMINE PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

These are the seven basic ability scores your Character possesses, illustrating your raw physical and mental capabilities. They ultimately define how well you employ your Skills.

STEP III: DETERMINE YOUR GENDER & RACE

We've provided four basic Races here in this book for you to choose from. Once you've determined your race, it will inform which Racial Traits you gain.

STEP IV: ARCHETYPE AND STANDARD PROFESSION

Although you will grow and adapt to learn new things, these two items underpins your basic abilities, Primary Attribute Bonuses, Skills, Talents and other perks you'll carry throughout your Character's life. First, you'll select an Archetype, filling out your role. Once you've picked an Archetype, you'll roll dice to determine your Standard Profession.

STEP V: DERIVE SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

Secondary Attributes define how much you can carry, how fast you react in a fight, your overall stamina, how quickly you move during combat and your threshold against madness.

STEP VI: YOUR BACKGROUND

Here, you'll consider your Character's name, define their appearance, determine what part your Character plays in the social caste and select any hindrances your Character begins play with.

STEP VII: YOUR TEMPERAMENTS

This is the most personal step in the Character Creation process. Here you will define two strong emotional personality traits that motivate your Character throughout gameplay. One is called your Order Temperament; a strength of your persona. The other is called your Chaos Temperament; a weakness of personality and habit. By selecting these Temperaments, it will largely inform how your Character reacts in tense, grim situations.

STEP VIII: HAND OF FATE

Your Character, unwittingly or not, has been chosen - the die has been cast for a greater purpose. Here, you will learn how to tap into Fate, to fulfill a destiny yet untold in ZWEIHÄNDER.

STEP IX: ADOPT YOUR PROFESSION

Once you have finalized all of the steps above, move to the next chapter to spend all your Reward Points and begin play!

STEP I: BEGIN YOUR BASIC TIER

Before you begin the Character Creation process, it is important to understand the distinction between Tiers of play. A Tier is a measurement of competence, profiling a Character's experiences over the course of a Campaign. Each Tier represents a collection of choices you've made over the course of the story. In ZWEIHÄNDER, there are only three Tiers - Basic, Intermediate and Advanced Tier. Whenever you first create a Character, you begin in Basic Tier.

Each Tier has a certain number of Advances a Character must have before moving onto a new Tier. The Basic Tier limits you to spend Reward Points in a specific way, outlined in your Standard Profession's description. Characters gain promotion into the next Tier by fulfilling all of the required Advances from the previous Tier. As you move into both the Intermediate and Advanced Tier, you select a new Standard Profession or may qualify for an Elite Profession with the Gamemaster's approval.

Go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record Basic Tier. Additionally, write down 1,000 Reward Points on the third page of your Character Sheet. We'll talk more about how to spend Reward Points for purposes of Character Creation in **Chapter ???: Professions**.

STEP II: DETERMINE PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

This is the standard method for allocating the basic attributes your Character possesses; an inborn, natural set of seven characteristics which defines the basic pattern of all your successes. These are called Primary Attributes. As you determine your Primary Attributes, it will create compelling mix of strengths and flaws reflecting the bleak nature of the world your Character inhabits. Using a series of random rolls, it illustrates the fortune and misfortune of your birth.

Roll 2D10 and add the face values to 30 which generates a percentage result. This means if you roll 2D10 and the dice land on a face "4" and face "8", you end up with a 42% (4 + 8 + 30). As you generate each result, assign it in this specific order to your Primary Attributes: Combat, Brawn, Agility, Perception, Intelligence, Willpower and Fellowship. By the time you're finished, you will have seven separate total values.

EXAMPLE

Nick is ready to generate his Primary Attributes. Rolling the dice, he generates a 42, 32, 50, 43, 45, 47 and 37. This means he has a 42% Combat, 32% Brawn, 50% Agility, 43% Perception, 45% Intelligence, 47% Willpower and 37% Fellowship.

Alternatively, your Gamemaster may allow you to assign your result to the Primary Attributes in any order you desire. While we don't actively advocate this position, it allows you to better flesh out the idea you may have in your head for your Character.

EXAMPLE

Nick is ready to generate his Primary Attributes. Rolling the dice, he generates a 42%. He decides to assign this to

his Fellowship. The next result is a 32%. He places that in his Combat attribute. Continuing, he rolls a 50%, assigning it to Agility. Nick continues to generate his results, filling in the remainder of his Primary Attributes one-by-one until all seven are filled.

sidebar: Assigning Primary Attributes

The die has been cast equally by fate, favoring no woman nor man above another. In ZWEIHÄNDER, player Characters are bound to the same wheel of fortune and misfortune as the rest of the world. Player Characters are distinguished above non-player Characters with Fate Points; this is the advantage you'll gain against the merciless grim & perilous world.

Naturally, you may want to roll all seven values and assign them as you please. However, this does not capture the spirit of ZWEIHÄNDER. An enterprising player will find a way to take advantage of this, considering their chances for average rolls and assigning them to a Primary Attribute that they may not favor. However, merciful Gamemasters may allow you to assign the percentage values at their discretion, so that you may "min-max" Primary Attributes. However, we urge careful thought before using this option.

MERCY?

Adjust one Primary Attribute of your choosing to 50%. You may only take advantage of this benefit once.

PUNISH!

You may optionally reduce any one Primary Attribute to 32% in exchange for 1 additional Fate Point. Feel free to revisit this option at the end of the Character Creation process if you'd like.

STEP III: DETERMINE YOUR GENDER & RACE

You are now ready to determine what gender and species you wish to play. For the sake of familiarity, we will use the term "race" throughout the rest of this work in reference to the different species of Humanoids.

Fantasy role-playing games and novels tend to portray the fantasy Races with a homogenous culture, casting a familiar light over them: Dwarves are squat and dour alcoholics with axes; Elves are tall and androgynous dendrophiles with bows; Gnomes are relentless madmen tinkerers; Halflings are shoeless, voracious pacifists; Humans are greedy, self-righteous imperialists; Morlock are subterranean, rat-like vermin with opposable thumbs. While we've retained some of the popular portrayals of each race, we've added our own spin in hopes that it sparks some creativity to deviate from the fantasy norm. However, there are literally *hundreds* of different personality types, physical and psychological traits amongst our own species; the same should be said of any fantasy Race in **ZWEIHÄNDER**. Regional or cultural distinctions will be covered under Racial Traits within the chapter below.

sidebar: Humanocentric Campaign Worlds
Some Gamemasters may prefer their Campaign World to be humanocentric, while others may encourage Players to select other demihuman Races such as Dwarves, Elves and Halflings. As with other steps of the Character Creation process, it is recommended that you discuss your racial choice and its implications with your Gamemaster. They may have something very different in mind for the kind of story they wish to present.

DETERMINE YOUR GENDER

Your gender has no immediate impact on the mechanics of the game, and **ZWEIHÄNDER** makes no basic physical or intellectual distinctions between women and men of any Race. The same goes for transgendered Characters; despite whether they may have been born a man, they may sexually identify as a woman. Simply put - your Character faces no measure of discrimination within the rules for their gender identification. However, there may be social perceptions that persist in your Gamemaster's Campaign World regarding sexuality and gender. Any social inequalities should be addressed directly with the Gamemaster.

Randomly determine your identifying gender by rolling Percentile Dice, consulting the table below. Once determined, go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your gender.

Percentile Dice	Gender
1 to 50	Female
51 to 100	Male

DETERMINE YOUR RACE

Uncertain of which Race you'd wish to play in **ZWEIHÄNDER**? Let the hand of fate decide for you. Randomly determine your Race by rolling Percentile Dice, consulting the table below. Once determined, go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your Race.

Percentile Dice	Race
1 to 16	Dwarf
17 to 33	Elf
34 to 50	Gnome
51 to 67	Halfling
68 to 84	Human
85 to 100	Morlock

RACIAL MODIFIERS TO PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

Every Race in **ZWEIHÄNDER** has unique strengths within their physical and mental make-up. These edges may have been carried down from a common ancestral strength, bred within their family over the generations. Simply put, each Race receives a positive modifier to their Primary Attribute Bonuses.

During Character Creation, permanently adjust the referenced Primary Attribute Bonus. Every Race is distinct from one another in these changes to their attributes. The specific modifiers follows the description of each Race.

RACIAL TRAITS

Each Race has its own set of unique features called Racial Traits. These cultural distinctions help create distinct differences between the core Races and ethnic distinctions within their own species. They also distinguish between one another within the Race itself; not all Elves can see at night, and not every Dwarf necessarily is a good craftsman. Racial Traits may also inform the philosophies, values and general outlook your Character possesses. They speak of the prejudices and traditions kept within their culture. You may elect to play a Dwarf from a primitive clan of man-eaters or one who lived beneath the folds of the earth, compelled to chip stone and rock for a

millenia. Perhaps you want to play an Elf that jealously guards their sanctuary with violence, or calls the vast northern winter wasteland their home. What if you wanted to play a Halfling that has lived their life plying the riverways thieving or as a recluse within a xenophobic burg deep in the swamps? Maybe you want to play a Human who's lived in flea-ridden skins as a nomad or one who dwells within a labyrinthine, dirty urban sprawl. Even still, you may be a Morlock, an underdwelling murder-hobo thriving on others' misfortune or one that seeks penitence through good deeds. Each culture, despite their race, can be well-represented with Racial Traits in **ZWEIHÄNDER**.

You automatically gain one Racial Trait during Character Creation. Each have been designed to be equally attractive, granting different situational bonuses. Many Racial Traits include a measure of abstraction, and in these cases the Gamemaster will act as the final arbiter regarding their use. Keep an open mind, and try to apply these traits reasonably.

DWARF

Proud but clannish, Dwarves possess a dour mien and are an incredibly obstinate race. They possess a singular, compulsive need to understand the inner workings of all things. This desire extends far beyond love into an intense yearning for unbridled perfection. Because of this, Dwarves take great pains in their craftsmanship, laboring for weeks over the smallest of trinkets. It is because of this singular dedication that Dwarves often display a mercurial disposition. It also explains the tendency to binge drink when their work is complete as the frazzled Dwarf is momentarily freed from the hold of his inner muse. Forever consumed by complex tasks, Dwarves are also notoriously unhygienic, allowing their matted beards to grow to such great lengths that they must tuck them into their belts. Amongst the Dwarven clans, there is an auspicious fascination with the length of one's beard (beer-soaked as it may be), for it is a respected symbol of tireless dedication.

Dwarves are not warlike by nature, but their endless pursuit of perfection makes them ideal soldiers. Those Dwarves who feel compelled to pursue a life of warfare bear particularly contemptuous grudges against foes who exhibit a shameful lack of drive and focus. Their tireless concern over seemingly petty matters makes Dwarves the butt of many japes, thus

giving birth to many popular stereotypes concerning their lack of personality, dulled insight and austere resolve. Orange mohawks, tattoos that look akin to the scribbles of a madman and two massive axes to grind are amongst the most common of these images. Indeed, they hold some kernel of truth to them as Dwarven Slayers have a particular romanticism within song and story.

DWARVEN PRIMARY ATTRIBUTE MODIFIERS

Dwarves gain a +1 bonus modifier during Character Creation to both Brawn Bonus (BB) and Combat Bonus (CB).

DWARVEN RACIAL TRAITS

Select any one Dwarven Racial Trait from those presented below. It is strongly recommended that you work with your fellow Players during this process. You should strive to have different Racial Traits from other Players, even if you are playing the same race. If you're unsure which to choose, you can roll Percentile Dice to randomly determine which you start play with. Go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your Racial Traits and related benefits.

Percentile Dice	Racial Trait
1 to 8	Cavesight
9 to 16	Children of the Earth
17 to 25	Consume Alcohol
26 to 33	Dwarven Warfare
34 to 41	Grudgebearer
42 to 49	Ironclad
50 to 58	Oathkeeper
59 to 67	Physical Prowess
68 to 76	Rune-marked Glory
77 to 85	Stentorian Voice
86 to 92	Stoneheaded
93 to 100	Strength of the Mountain

CAVESIGHT

Dwarven senses are attuned to the earth below. Using a combination of sounds and acoustic wayfinding, they can see in complete darkness as if it were perfectly illuminated.

Effect: You can see completely in the dark below ground as if it were daylight, providing you are able to hear.

CHILDREN OF THE EARTH

Dwarves have an almost magnetic pull toward the earth. This, combined with a lower center of gravity, makes a Dwarf nigh impossible to topple. This obstinacy is unmatched, save for the fact that the mountain does not bend for the wishes of the wind.

Effect: You can never be forced off your feet or knocked Prone onto the ground by the elements, your enemies or even Magick.

CONSUME ALCOHOL

Dwarves possess an unusually high resistance to the poisonous effects of alcohol and tobacco. But the stink of these vices cling to their clothes and breath.

Effect: When Intoxicated, you never suffer from the negative effects associated with the condition. You can learn more about Intoxication in **Chapter XXX: Hazards and Healing**.

DWARVEN WARFARE

Dwarves use their lower center of gravity to drive cold steel into their opponent, crushing armor and shattering bones beneath its impact. Coupled with familiarity of stone-cutting and wood-splitting tools, it makes Dwarves incredibly efficient when defending themselves.

Effect: When wielding any melee weapon two-handed, add 3 to your Damage Threshold.

GRUDGEBEARER

Dwarves harbor ancestral hatred, bringing violence upon hated enemies. Perceived grievances – both real and imagined – and general bigotry fuel this rage.

Effect: Whenever you use a Chaos Die to determine Total Damage, they explode on a face “6” or face “1”. You can learn more about Chaos Die impacts Damage in **Chapter XXX: Combat**.

IRONCLAD

Dwarves have an incredibly stalwart physique, sleeping and eating daily in their armor. Rotund and ruddy-cheeked, they could easily pass for Yuletide’s bearer of gifts so their non-Dwarven comrades may demand they wear a fur-trimmed hat when the season comes

Effect: When wearing a suit of armor, ignore its Encumbrance Value.

OATHKEEPER

Like their forefathers before, Dwarves have become the bearer of ancient trade secrets, working the natural elements with ease. Renowned as master builders, their craft has been perfected over the ages. They jealously guard the secrets of their work, passing these ancient rituals to their children. But their fingers are the size of blood sausages and calloused, as most Dwarves find it difficult to work with things smaller than their hands. A rare few possess this gift, unlikely to share its secrets with others outside of their clan.

Effect: All armor, shields and weapons you forge with the Tradecraft Skill automatically gains the Castle-forged Quality. They are best-in-class, raising its resale value three times the listed price as in **Chapter XXX: Trappings**.

PHYSICAL PROWESS

Dwarves are naturally athletic, excelling at feats most normal people could never hope to achieve. Barrel-chested and powerfully muscled, they have an excellent physique and constantly train to maintain peak fitness. But when in private company, they enjoy binge eating on pies, sausages and blood pudding.

Effect: Reference either your Brawn Bonus (BB) or Agility Bonus (AB) for the purposes of Combat Movement. Additionally, you may substitute Athletics in place of any Combat-based Skill when Parrying attacks.

RUNE-MARKED GLORY

Sage and arcane, all Dwarves know their runes. They mark keepsakes, armor and weapons with chalk and ink, foretelling of an ancient, forgotten glory that came before them. Some even tattoo themselves from head to toe in these arcane symbols of might, evoking the age-old complaint by other warriors dubbed "naked dwarf syndrome". Yet, these runes speak to an eldritch power, girding their body against the cold touch of steel and their mind against the effects of sorcery.

Effect: Whenever you suffer Damage from Magick, spend a Fortune Point to ignore it entirely.

STENTORIAN VOICE

Dwarves have a loud and booming voice, and when they speak, others listen. They break out in song often, recounting tales of vendettas, unending turmoil and unresolved grievances towards other Races. It can become incredibly annoying to their non-Dwarven comrades, as they must put up with their inability to hold a tune.

Effect: Whenever you use Fellowship-based Skills, reference either your Brawn or Fellowship Primary Attribute (whichever is highest).

STONEHEADED

Dwarves are stern and taciturn, unyielding to magical manipulation. Born with an innate ability to see through magical deception and trickery, their mind is practically unyielding. Changing their perception is incredibly difficult, being stubborn in belief and pragmatic in nature.

Effect: You are immune to Magick which may control your mind and see through illusions without fail.

STRENGTH OF THE MOUNTAIN

While Dwarves stand upon the earth, they can perform incredible feats of stamina. They claim that even the smallest runt of their clans can haul a hogshead of mead without breaking a sweat. Are they tall tales, or is there a kernel of truth to them?

Effect: Any Skill Rank you acquire that relies on the Brawn Primary Attribute modifies your Base Chance by +20, instead of +10.

ELF

Fey and haughty, Elves believe they were created in the image of the gods and seek to isolate themselves from the company of other pitifully inferior Races in their communities called a "kindred". The feeling is often mutual among these other Races, who'd classify Elves in two distinct camps: louché and supercilious or edgy and dismissive. Avid connoisseurs, there is no doubt that Elves are particularly disdainful of those who do not apply the same exacting standards in their own choices. Standing in imperious opposition to the long-bearded folk who dwell below the earth, the Elves take to the magnificent beauty of the forest, a sanctuary far removed from other civilizations. Neither would admit to it, but Elves and Dwarves have a remarkably similar desire for perfection.

Perhaps there is some truth to the divine origin of Elves, for they uniformly appear ageless. There are many examples of Elves whose years span several Human lifetimes, and it is even believed that some have attained true immortality. Elves who have left their kindred by choice or forced exile often fall victim to an immortal grief, doomed to dwell among the crude masses of the lesser folk. Life is particularly cruel to these exiles, who oftentimes find themselves enslaved by pompous merchant-princes and paraded about as curiosities in some personal menagerie. But in others, it manifests into cold neutrality as these Elven outcasts strike out on their own as corsairs. These same Elven scoundrels are often provoked by even the simplest of informalities or inconveniences, flying into a maddening rage against all save their own. Not surprisingly, their immortal longevity is then stunted by the gripping reality of a merciless world.

ELVEN PRIMARY ATTRIBUTE MODIFIERS

Elves gain a +1 bonus modifier during Character Creation to both Perception Bonus (PB) and Willpower Bonus (WB).

ELVEN RACIAL TRAITS

Select any one Elven Racial Trait from those presented below. It is strongly recommended that you work with your fellow Players during this process. You should strive to have different Racial Traits from other Players, even if you are playing the same race. If you're unsure which to choose, you can roll Percentile Dice to randomly determine which you start play with. Go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your Racial Traits and related benefits.

Percentile Dice	Racial Trait
1 to 8	Bewitching
9 to 16	Beyond the Veil
17 to 25	Deadly Aim
26 to 33	Elven Immortality
34 to 41	Fey Treachery
42 to 49	Firstborn
50 to 58	Kindred Warband
59 to 67	Lament of the Ages
68 to 76	Meditative Healing
77 to 85	Nature's Own
86 to 92	Nighteyes
93 to 100	Warrior's Tattoo

BEWITCHING

Elves are striking to behold, and others have a difficult time concentrating on anything else but their beauty. Often fashion-forward, their clothing is striking and evocative, liberal with its use of lace and high of collar. But beneath this veneer lay an insidious and alien power to bend people to their whim.

Effect: Whenever you cast Magick, foes must flip their results to fail to Resist it.

BEYOND THE VEIL

Elves share significant link with powers beyond mortal kith and kin and can manipulate them to their will. But, they have slowly fallen prey to the mind-bending warp and weft of the world beyond.

Effect: Whenever you fail or Critically Fail an Incantation Test, spend one Fortune Point to turn it into a Critical Success.

DEADLY AIM

The world around Elves seems to fade to a blur as they fire their bows, striking between the chinks in their foe's armor with perfection. They may pridefully (and purposefully) blind one eye with a bandana to illustrate their skills...or should they grow insane, gouge it out entirely with a spoon to prove their unyielding dedication.

Effect: Whenever you make a Ranged Attack or Perilous Stunt using a ranged weapon, foes must flip the results to fail to Dodge or Parry it.

ELVEN IMMORTALITY

Although not all Elves are immortal, some still hold that flicker of divinity within their blood, passed down from their ancestors. Their features may change over these long decades, but some Elves appear neither aged nor ugly. Even horrid scars seem to accentuate their perfectly-chiseled features, youthful and vigorous. However, you may take upon more "noble" qualities in appearance, common amongst the elders of your kindred.

Effect: You never suffer the debilitating effects of disease, ageing or sickness - even by the hand of Magick. Additionally, when determining your age in the Background section, re-roll your Ageing Effects if they penalize your Primary Attributes.

FEY TREACHERY

Some Elven kindred are suspicious and deeply secretive. Like them, you can be capricious and sullen. You are always ready to spring upon interlopers without a second thought.

Effect: Your first successful Attack Action against a foe adds a 1D6 Chaos Die to Damage. This can be used against multiple foes during combat, taking advantage of your traitorous ways!

FIRSTBORN

The Elves came to this world first, the favored children of nameless gods. Their radiant perfection has been carefully

preserved in the histories of your kin through written and oral traditions. This age-long lineage has made your people distant and fickle, but it has also given them insight into the magical nature of the world around them.

Effect: Add your Intelligence Bonus (IB) to your Willpower Bonus (WB) to determine the number of Petty Magick spells you may ultimately learn.

KINDRED WARFAND

Elves can be perceived as being particularly aloof and coldly neutral, sticking to their own. Contemptible as their disdain towards others may be, it is this preternatural intuition that makes Elves incredibly dangerous when fighting side-by-side.

Effect: When fighting alongside other Elves, you gain a +10 Base Chance to strike with Attack Actions and Perilous Stunts.

LAMENT OF THE AGES

Elves live many decades beyond other Races, but this longevity comes at a cost. In time, the petty concerns of the mortal coil weigh too heavily upon many Elves, giving birth to a melancholy that gives way to bouts of unmitigated rage, even nihilism. Others react instinctively to this behavior with great trepidation.

Effect: Whenever combat begins, select one foe to provoke. If the foe can clearly see and hear you, they must reduce all Damage they do by your Fellowship Bonus (FB).

MEDITATIVE HEALING

Gifted with the kindred's ability to live between the weave of the world, you have learned how to harness an inner power to mend your own wounds.

Effect: Whenever you awaken from a good night's sleep, restore your Damage Condition Track by one step positively. This means that if you were Grievously Wounded, you are now Seriously Wounded instead.

NATURE'S OWN

Wild Elves have lived amongst the forest, beneath the jungle canopy, atop the highest mountain and even below the earth. With burrs, leaves, mud and the like tending to cling to their clothing, they emerge unwashed from the wilderness, acknowledging little reason to clean themselves up for civilized company. Some Elvish kindreds dismiss this frolicking as wasteful, but there is no denying the beautiful grace you exude when on the move.

Effect: When you hide or sneak about in natural surroundings above ground, you are completely invisible to others who attempt to find you. You leave no trace of your passing whatsoever.

NIGHTEYES

Although Elves are not able to see completely in the dark, they can see clearly in the dim light of stars. It's evident that you're an Elf when in these conditions, as your eyes tend to flash with their own light like an animal's. This is the first sign of chaos made manifest in the Elven race. It is enough to drive dim-witted peasants to demand that "the demon be hung by his neck until the lights go out".

Effect: You can see completely in the dark above ground as if it were full daylight, provided there is starlight or moonlight in the sky.

WARRIOR'S TATTOO

Intricate knots of indigo ink are painted or tattooed upon the bodies of Elven warriors, symbols of their might and prowess. Elves revel in this heritage, empowered by the victories they tell. But these same symbols make it incredibly difficult to get a job in a respectable winesink, as everyone knows the tattooed cannot be trusted with the cash till.

Effect: Add the Punishing Quality to any melee weapon you wield.

GNOME

Fetid in appearance and short-tempered in their mannerisms, Gnomes are a notoriously unsympathetic people. They seem to have a chip on both shoulders; one against their industrious Dwarven cousins for being absolute bores, and the

other against Elves for being supercilious “louchebags”. In fact, it is suggested - mostly in a derogatory way - that Gnomes are the byproduct of the two aforementioned Races. Gnomes won’t admit to it, and have been known to take to fisticuffs when such insinuations are made. By and large, Gnomes are not well-liked by any Race outside of their own. Even then, there’s some question as to whether they get along with anyone. Marriage is rare and their families are small. Offspring are often treated as chattel to be put to work, and love is never a factor when it comes to coupling. The only reason a Gnome may even wed would be to erase some great shame upon themselves, forced to make amends by marrying themselves into families they’ve greatly offended. It’s not to say that some couples have grown a certain fondness for one another, but mutual disgust rarely lends towards a productive relationship. Siblings are treated worse still, seen as bitter rivals or treacherous enemies.

Despite their mean-spirited tendencies and detestation for others, the Gnomes do have one particular knack. Sure, they focus less on their personal appearance but instead turn those energies towards tinkering, exhibit mastery over mechanics in a way that no other Race does. This insight is clearly inspired by the spark their Elven ancestors squirted into the bellies of Dwarven mothers who gave birth to the first Gnomes. But don’t tell them that to their face. You’re likely to set them off into a tirade of misery, self-loathing and abhorrence for all that is fair or acceptable.

GNOMISH PRIMARY ATTRIBUTE MODIFIERS

Gnomes gain a +1 bonus modifier during Character Creation to both Agility Bonus (AB) and Willpower Bonus (WB).

GNOMISH RACIAL TRAITS

Select any one Gnomish Racial Trait from those presented below. It is strongly recommended that you work with your fellow Players during this process. You should strive to have different Racial Traits from other Players, even if you are playing the same race. If you’re unsure which to choose, you can roll Percentile Dice to randomly determine which you start play

with. Go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your Racial Traits and related benefits.

Percentile Dice	Racial Trait
1 to 8	Clockworks of War
9 to 16	Crag Fighting
17 to 25	Denizen of Stone
26 to 33	Dungeons Deep
34 to 41	Escape Artist
42 to 49	Goldbergian
50 to 58	Hocus Pocus
59 to 67	Metrognome
68 to 76	Thieving Stunties!
77 to 85	Tunnel Vision
86 to 92	Underfoot
93 to 100	Wretched Prankster

CLOCKWORKS OF WAR

Telescoping muzzles, switchblade-style two-handed swords, cog-driven crossbows and folding axes are only the tip of the iceberg for the limits you can accomplish by modifying weapons of war.

Effect: Providing you have the appropriate tools, any two-handed weapon can be modified into a compact one-handed version (which only you can wield). Despite being one-handed, it retains its original function but now has an Encumbrance of 1. However, should you ever roll a Critical Failure with any Combat-related Skill Test when using this weapon, it breaks apart forever, unable to be repaired.

CRAG FIGHTING

Living amongst the hills and mountains, Gnomes have adopted a particular edge in combat. Using subterfuge and guile, you cleverly outpace foes using shark-like strike tactics.

Effect: You may Maneuver after a successful Melee Attack for 0 Action Points.

DENIZEN OF STONE

Whenever Gnomes go to sleep, it is whispered that they turn to stone. While this seems like a wild tale, there seems to be some truth to it. Their skin oft turns a shade of

grey as they rest, mistaken as if all the blood had been drained from their veins!

Effect: You are never left Helpless for any reason, thus cannot be made victim to a coup de grace.

DUNGEONS DEEP

Gnomes are not a prodigious people. In fact, finding a living, breathing Gnome below the earth is rare indeed. They pass soundlessly throughout the caverns below the earth, roaming the "underdark" in solitude. Besides, who would go looking after this much-maligned Race of people in the first place?

Effect: When you hide or sneak about below ground, you are completely invisible to others who attempt to find you. You leave no trace of your passing whatsoever.

ESCAPE ARTIST

Gnomes are weedy and conniving. So much, that they cannot easily be caught or detained by the law.

Effect: You can never be caught in a Chokehold and may flip the results to succeed Coordination Tests to slip through bonds and other situations which may detain you from moving.

GOLDBERGIAN

From devising mouse trap-styled childrens' games to the chain-reactive devices that oscillate endlessly in your workshop, you have created a number of deliberately over-engineered machines in your time. You appropriate this same mannerism towards many of the professional arts, albeit seen as a madman.

Effect: Any Skill Rank you gain in Alchemy, Counterfeit, Skulduggery and Tradecraft modifies your Base Chance by +20, instead of +10.

HOCUS POCUS

Knowing what specific psychological pressures to apply upon the unwitting, Gnomes have a penchant for telling lies and manifesting sorcerous falsehoods which cannot be ignored.

Effect: Whenever a foe fails to Resist your Magicks, they Critically Fail instead.

METROGNAME

You are downright obsessive, clockwork-like in mannerism. Little imperfections are simply unacceptable, so meticulous and measured are your hands whenever you craft.

Effect: All trappings you craft with the Tradecraft Skill - with exception to armor, shields and weapons - are always best-in-class, raising its resale value three times the listed price as in **Chapter XXX: Trappings**.

THIEVING STUNTIES!

These Gnomes are a hair shorter than their kin. They find it easy to hide in gardens, particularly because they have a propensity to wear red caps and fake white beards!

Effect: Foes must flip their results to fail all Attack Actions or Perilous Stunts made with ranged weapons to strike you. However, you cannot wield two-handed weapons, carry a shield and must reduce your Combat Movement by 2.

TUNNEL VISION

Like their Dwarven cousins, Gnomes have especially-attuned senses below the earth. Using a preternatural sense of touch, they can "feel" their way around the underworld with their strange affectations.

Effect: You can see completely in the dark below ground as if it were daylight, providing you are able to move your hands freely.

UNDERFOOT

Living below the world in a burrow has made Gnomes backs' crooked. Because of this, they hobble around like old men, not necessarily dawdling but quickly scurrying about, beneath the line of sight for most folk.

Effect: Add +3 to your Initiative.

WRETCHED PRANKSTER

Poking fun at their poor mannerisms and in their armor, you engender annoyance to the point of weakness in your foes.

Effect: You may use your Guile Skill to both Dodge and Parry, at your discretion.

HALFLING

Affable and friendly, these “little people” live in great pastoral communities amongst the vast beauty of the countryside. Spry and vigorous in appearance, the Halflings remind people of children - albeit grown and intelligent children - that choose to live in harmony with other Races. They act as stewards to the land, working to provide for the community first and the individual last. They have no qualms in dealing with outsiders, establishing coaching stations and eateries that cater exclusively to Humans and Elves. Halflings pride themselves upon a shrewd but fair mercantile nature, and this reputation has spread throughout the civilized world...but only at casual glance

But for all of their friendliness, Halflings are truly opportunistic, plying this trust into a life of conniving thievery and subsisting upon petty acts of larceny against those they deem easy marks. It is said that there is no better grifter than a Halfling, though this mischievous lot are oftentimes shunned by others within the community for their crimes. Beware the polite little urchin who claims to be a mere chimneysweep!

HALFLING PRIMARY ATTRIBUTE MODIFIERS

Halflings gain a +1 bonus modifier during Character Creation to both Agility Bonus (AB) and Fellowship Bonus (FB).

HALFLING RACIAL TRAITS

Select any one Halfling Racial Trait from those presented below. It is strongly recommended that you work with your fellow Players during this process. You should strive to have different Racial Traits from other Players, even if you are playing the same race. If

you're unsure which to choose, you can roll Percentile Dice to randomly determine which you start play with. Go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your Racial Traits and related benefits.

Percentile Dice	Racial Trait
1 to 8	Beguiler
9 to 16	Cat-like Reflexes
17 to 25	Craven
26 to 33	Farsight
34 to 41	Fettered Chaos
42 to 49	Fieldwarden
50 to 58	Fleet-footed
59 to 67	Hijinks
68 to 76	Kleptomania
77 to 85	Low Blow
86 to 92	Memento
93 to 100	Pint-sized

BEGUILER

Halfling lies are hard to tell from truth, and they can use this to your advantage. This may be a product of low cunning, or simply good acting. With a string of insults and chiding, you throw your opponent's ability to strike you off-balance as your witticism serves your ability to roll with the punches.

Effect: Reference either your Fellowship Bonus (FB) or Brawn Bonus (BB) for the purposes of determining Damage Threshold. Additionally, you may substitute Guile in place of any Combat-based Skill when Parrying attacks.

CAT-LIKE REFLEXES

Some say that Halflings are watched over by Daemonic spirits. Those with this affectation are oftentimes shadowed by a black cat or have it as a beloved pet, “found” at their doorstep as a kitten.

Effect: Whenever you fall or are knocked Prone, you may spend one Fortune Point not suffer Damage from it. In this case, you instead land on your feet, apparently unharmed. You can learn more about falling in Chapter XXX: Hazards and Healing.

CRAVEN

Some Halflings are almost laughably faint-hearted, ready to bolt at a moment's notice. Cowardice has its place, particularly when a Halfling ne'er-do-well wishes to keep their hide intact.

Effect: You may flip the results to succeed Combat-based Skill Tests to Parry attacks made with melee weapons.

FARSIGHT

Whether Halflings are searching for something the size of a dormouse or making out the details of a coach laden with riches, they can clearly discern the smallest of details from half a mile away. But, should you try to exercise this ability without proper lighting, this sight become useless as perfumery to a hog.

Effect: When attempting to discern minute details, you always succeed Awareness Tests.

FETTERED CHAOS

The Halfling Race are an incredibly resilient race, but not in the ways of overall physique. They illustrate an inexorable resistance towards the lure of corruption and madness, a blessing given to them by their maker.

Effect: Whenever you move any amount of steps towards your Chaos Temperament, reduce the number of steps you move by one step. This means that if you move one step towards your Chaos Temperament, you instead do not move whatsoever.

FIELDWARDEN

Halfling women and men are taught at a very young age to wield an array of weapons to defend themselves and their homeland. When so armed, Halflings can unleash a devastating storm of death upon their enemies.

Effect: Ignore the Weak Quality of ranged weapons you wield.

FLEET-FOOTED

In tense situations, Halflings hop madly like rabbits, being remarkably fast on their feet. This is particularly fortunate when they need to tuck and roll when attacked, but does absolutely no good when a Halfling needs to hike from one end of the shire to the mouth of a far-flung volcano.

Effect: Add +3 yards to Combat Movement rate on foot.

HIJINKS

Sly in their ways, Halflings use their vexing mannerisms and general under-footedness to confound the tall folk. These pranks are meant to annoy, as Halflings love to make others an ass to their japes.

Effect: During combat, select one foe. You add +3 to Damage Threshold whenever struck by their Attack Actions until combat ends.

KLEPTOMANIA

Halflings are gifted with the ability to use illusion and sleight of hand tricks to make things disappear. Their hands may wander off on their own to nick things, only to realize later they find something stuffed in their pocket that wasn't there before!

Effect: Whenever you are in a pinch and need one object that could realistically fit into your pocket or pack, spend one Fortune Point to automatically find it within. For instance, you could use this to produce a gold piece from your pockets, but not several gold pieces without spending an equal number of Fortune Points.

LOW BLOW

When cornered, a Halfling will resort to dirty tricks to fell a foe. Menfolk are ought to gasp in horror whenever they bear witness to this heinous (and deliberately) painful tactic.

Effect: You may trigger a Stunning Blow after a successful Melee Attack for 0 Action Points.

MEMENTO

When a Halfling becomes an adult, they're given a precious keepsake to cherish. Typically this is a bauble, cameo, necklace or ring – something Halflings can hold close to their hearts. It also tends to be costly and pretty. This memento brings comfort and solace in the face of danger. But this treasure may attract the unwanted attentions of other Halfling pickpockets, seeking to steal and covet the valuable for themselves.

Effect: When carrying your memento, you are immune to the effects of the Intimidate Skill and never suffer Peril as a result of failed Madness Checks. You can learn more about Madness Checks in **Chapter XXX: Gamemaster**.

PINTSIZED

Some Halflings are born were born a head shorter than their kinfolk, mistaken for small children. They are sometimes dubbed as pygmies or “black halflings”; derogatory terms which seem to have little in common with their stature and more so born from ignorance.

Effect: Foes must flip their results to fail all Attack Actions or Perilous Stunts made with ranged weapons to strike you. However, you cannot wield two-handed weapons, carry a shield and must reduce your Combat Movement by 2.

HUMAN

A vast Race whose tribes have long splintered, Humans have evolved over an age from primal roots to become the most prodigious and adaptable civilization in the modern world. Humans are a varied lot, marked by differences in language, culture, art and many other distinct ways. They value reason and intellect, but also reward avarice and opportunism. If there is one shared trait amongst Humans, it is a burning desire to impose their will upon others using politics and religion to justify their vicious ideologies. In times of old, it is said that this vainglorious nature brought about a terrible age of suffering and exile when Humankind attempted to exert its power over the gods themselves.

Human society is adroit and intensely political, quickly assimilating the ways of others and providing advancement to the ambitious and the talented. Their societies are dominated by thinkers and tricksters, clerics and charlatans, politicians and even

dictators. They huddle together in walled cities, proclaiming themselves conquerors over the vast wilderness outside their gates. It is this brash tenacity that makes Humans the most populous race. It also makes them repugnant in the eyes of most Elves, who often kill Human perpetrators that enter their sanctuary on sight.

HUMAN PRIMARY ATTRIBUTE MODIFIERS

Humans gain a +1 bonus modifier during Character Creation to both Intelligence Bonus (IB) and Willpower Bonus (WB).

HUMAN RACIAL TRAITS

Select any one Human Racial Trait from those presented below. It is strongly recommended that you work with your fellow Players during this process. You should strive to have different Racial Traits from other Players, even if you are playing the same race. If you're unsure which to choose, you can roll Percentile Dice to randomly determine which you start play with. Go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your Racial Traits and related benefits.

Percentile Dice	Racial Trait
1 to 8	Blessing In Disguise
9 to 16	Danger Sense
17 to 25	Dauntless
26 to 33	Esoteric Memory
34 to 41	Exceptional Senses
42 to 49	Fortune's Wheel
50 to 58	Grim Resolve
59 to 67	Manifest Destiny
68 to 76	Mixed Blood
77 to 85	Mountain Amongst Men
86 to 92	Natural Resistance
93 to 100	Star Sign

BLESSING IN DISGUISE

It is said that Humans have been watched over by a god who favors them above all other races. But a blessing such as this may also be explained as the wanton attentions of Daemonic servants acting of their own accord, waiting to turn you into a thrall once your fate runs dry.

Effect: Whenever the time calls for you to suffer a debilitating Injury or face death, you may alternatively move three steps towards your Chaos Temperament (instead of spending a Fate Point) to ignore their effects entirely.

DANGER SENSE

A rare few Humans tend to get a "funny feeling" whenever a situation may turn dangerous. This danger sense also leads to some odd dreams, and plagues them with unusual visions and nightmares during the waking hour.

Effect: Whenever you are Surprised, spend one Fortune Point to avoid being Surprised and take your Turn as normal.

DAUNTLESS

Humans' sheer force of will helps them withstand the world they inhabit. Rarely do they cross through the threshold, as their grim demeanor shields them from the brutal horrors that surround them.

Effect: You are immune to the effects of the Intimidate Skill, and cannot be Stunned or Knocked Out!

ESOTERIC MEMORY

Some Humans have a mystical (and disturbing) ability for remembering details and subconsciously committing things to memory. This uncanny ability causes them to manifest odd rituals to remember things through repetition and rote. One could say that these Humans have an eidetic memory, recalling every detail with great clarity.

Effect: When attempting to recall a particular detail or remember a fact about what you saw, you always succeed Scrutinize Tests.

EXCEPTIONAL SENSES

Humans have one sense that is exceptionally keen. As a result, as they may be prone to allergies as the seasons change or sensitive to changes in light.

Effect: Choose either hearing or sight. With this sense, you always succeed Awareness Tests (unless you would be prohibited from using the sense under normal circumstances, such as total darkness).

FORTUNE'S WHEEL

Some Humans are favored by Lady Luck. In a sense, are her emissaries to the unkind and capricious world, made either victim to its accidents or beneficiary of its boons.

Effect: Anytime you generate a Critical Success using Percentile Dice, automatically add one Fortune Point into the Fortune Pool.

GRIM RESOLVE

Humans are extremely durable and their force of will unparalleled. When the chips are down, they manage to pull themselves up by the bootstraps to overcome any obstacle. After all, the protagonist always seems to survive at the end of stage plays... at least, until the sequel.

Effect: Immediately after you suffer Damage from a melee or ranged weapon, you may elect to use Grim Resolve to ignore it entirely, therefore negating both Damage and any Injuries you may have suffered. You may even use this after failing to Dodge or Parry. However, you can only use Grim Resolve once during combat.

MANIFEST DESTINY

Humans are a quick study and carry with them a wealth of experiences. Unlike other Races, their people are extremely adaptable and can use a number of techniques with a minimal level of understanding. This is particularly unique to Humans, as they conscript themselves to toil for their own endless self-interest.

Effect: When using a Skill you do not possess Skill Ranks in, add a +5 Base Chance.

MIXED BLOODLINE

One of your Human ancestors or parents coupled with another race, and passed elements of this bloodline down to their children.

Effect: Select another Race other than your own. Whichever you choose, consider any particular distinctions in your appearance and cultural values. Should you elect to share Dwarven heritage, you may have a mercurial disposition. If sharing Elven heritage, you may fly into fey rages when things don't go your way. If sharing Gnomish heritage, you may like to break things apart in hopes of learning how they work. If sharing Halfling heritage, you may exhibit an insatiable appetite for larceny. If sharing the Morlock heritage, you may live a hurly-burly life of intense xenophobia imminent violence.

As a result, you may select another Racial Trait outside of the Human's Mixed Bloodline. Regardless, track Mixed Bloodline under your Background instead.

MOUNTAIN AMONGST MEN

Some Humans are incredibly tall, towering over their own kind. Being a hulking brute may have negative social consequences, as they are oftentimes perceived as being a clumsy dunderhead. Are they right in this assertion? You decide.

Effect: You are able to wield any two-handed melee weapon with one hand. This also means you may freely take advantage of the Adaptable Quality for weapons using one hand. However, you must double the cost of clothing and armor to accommodate your hulking frame, and pay twice the normal amount to eat.

NATURAL RESISTANCE

Whether through purposeful training or accident, Humans have developed a natural resistance towards the elements.

Effect: You always succeed Toughness Tests to withstand Peril.

STAR SIGN

Favored above all others, Humans are the living instruments of gods beyond. A thankless few are granted a mere inkling of their might. To those born beneath the right stars, a great blessing may be bestowed upon them.

Effect: Roll a 1D10. Depending on the result, you will increase the related Primary Attribute to 50% If you already have a 50% in that Primary Attribute, re-roll until you generate a better result. Reference the table below for results:

Die Result	Primary Attribute
1	Combat
2 to 3	Brawn
4	Agility
5 to 6	Perception
7	Intelligence
8 to 9	Willpower
10	Fellowship

MORLOCK

Below the bowels of the world thrives a terrifying troglodyte society, dwelling within an endless labyrinthine complex riddled with riches and traps. Beyond the prying eyes of surface-dwellers, roving their warrens as the namesake suggests, are the Morlock. They are the stuff of urban legends and the ramblings of superstitious raconteurs. Stories say that a lone ratcatcher ensorcelled the most savage and intelligent of the rodents he'd tamed, creating a gross amalgamation of Humans and rats. Given the gift to walk upright, opposable thumbs and a noble tongue, they were also granted malicious intelligence, violence tendencies and unmatched arrogance. These stories point to one ultimate question: do the Morlock really exist?

The Morlock are real. Their civilization is real. And they are determined to rule the world above as they do below. However, cooperation is not something that comes easily to the Morlock. They indenture one another in a vicious cycle of servitude, absconding each others' weakest to punish and

enslave. Their culture thrives on tribal identity backed by cruel intentions and wanton, everlasting hunger. They live by tooth, claw and the knife - unwittingly corrupting all that they touch. The freakishly megalomaniacal rule the tribes (called mischiefs) as warlords, relegating their lessers as toadies and wannabes. Morlock take delight in tormenting the weak while worshipping the strong; it is an accepted way of their society. However confident they are in their successes, they crumble easily in the face of defeat. Thus is the nature of these disparate peoples, Human-like in their emotional range but mutated, they remain a foul mockery of the other noble races.

MORLOCK PRIMARY ATTRIBUTE MODIFIERS

Morlock gain a +1 bonus modifier during Character Creation to both Perception Bonus (PB) and Intelligence Bonus (IB).

MORLOCK RACIAL TRAITS

Select any one Morlock Racial Trait from those presented below. It is strongly recommended that you work with your fellow Players during this process. You should strive to have different Racial Traits from other Players, even if you are playing the same race. If you're unsure which to choose, you can roll Percentile Dice to randomly determine which you start play with. Go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your Racial Traits and related benefits.

Percentile Dice	Racial Trait
1 to 8	Blighted Invocation
9 to 16	Bred To Kill
17 to 25	Darksight
26 to 33	Do'Urden Syndrome
34 to 41	Enter the Morlock
42 to 49	Morlock Don't Exist
50 to 58	Nose for Danger
59 to 67	Ogre-Borne
68 to 76	Plague Bearer
77 to 85	Skittish
86 to 92	Slave's Desperation
93 to 100	Warren Runner

BLIGHTED INVOCATION

Chosen by a strange and blighted god, you have been imparted with their unearthly might. You may even bear a strange mark, denoting the number "13" upon your arm, which glows as you incant ancient spells of disorder.

Effect: Whenever you succeed an Incantation Test, spend one Fortune Point to provoke Fear upon enemies who bear witness to this infernal act. You can learn more about Fear in Chapter XXX: Madness.

BRED TO KILL

Might makes right, and Morlock with this Trait are the top brass amongst the mischiefs. Given to rigorous martial discipline, cruel displays of destruction and practices martial awareness, the "stormvermin" are the rank and file of Morlock armies.

Effect: All foes suffer a -10 Base Chance to Dodge, Parry and Resist your Attack Actions and Perilous Stunts.

DARKSIGHT

Attuned to live below the earth, the Morlock have developed an extrasensory perception to "see" in complete darkness using smell and the brush of their whiskers. However, when standing in any light they may nervously chitter, vastly preferring the cover of shadow.

Effect: You can see completely in the dark below ground as if it were daylight, providing you are able to smell.

DO'URDEN SYNDROME

Unlike your shadowy brethren, you have elected to live amongst surface dwellers. Considered a dishonorable traitor by mischiefs, you're not accepted by people above, either. As an edgy, gritty "antihero", your name may have inspired a number of false tales in testament to your greatness as a warrior (much to the chagrin of better-qualified swordsmen). But what they don't know is that you ARE the stuff made up in these tales.

Effect: When wielding any 2 one-handed melee weapons, add 3 to your Damage Threshold.

ENTER THE MORLOCK

Bred to be a deadly assassin, you use an array of throwing stars, poisons and gas bombs to debilitate and confuse your enemies. Donning all black, you are a faceless killer with a cruel cause. But with a snap of the fingers, you can disappear in plain sight with nary a trace of your presence.

Effect: With a successful Guile or Stealth Test, you can disappear entirely from sight, even if standing on front of onlookers.

NOSE FOR DANGER

The Morlock are horribly mutated, with protruding teeth, snouts and pale skin. However, this has granted them a keen sense of smell; not only for tasty treats, but also for opportunity.

Effect: Whenever combat begins, you always gain a Surprise Turn (unless you are Surprised yourself).

MORLOCK DON'T EXIST

"The Morlock don't exist", they say? Then, why are you standing plaintively right in front of them? Can't they see your snout, red eyes and tail? That's alright - you've got the drop on them. They just don't know it yet.

Effect: You may trigger Dirty Tricks after a successful Melee Attack for 0 Action Points.

OGRE-BORNE

Grossly crossed with some terrible monstrosity in their past, the notorious "rat ogre" towers over their Morlock kin (and most other races). Made up of sinewy muscles, viciously-large talons and filled with unrequited bloodlust, the Ogre-borne are formidable enough to give other Morlock warlords pause.

Effect: Any attacks you make bare-handed ignores the Weak Quality and adds the Punishing Quality. However, you must double the cost of clothing and armor to accommodate your hulking frame, and pay twice the normal amount to eat.

PLAGUE BEARER

With massively-bulging eyes and foaming mouths, these plague-bearing Morlock are afflicted with terrible diseases they must take pains to hide in polite company.

Effect: You are entirely immune to all diseases, but remain a carrier of Grey Plague. You inflict Grey Plague whenever you Injure a foe, Critically Fail a Heal Test when treating others or being treated as a patient. You can learn more about Grey Plague in Chapter XXX: Hazards and Healing.

SKITTISH

Nervous as a hen near a rooster, you're undeniably fidgety. While annoying to others, it is in fact a side effect of your quick mind, as you can almost see things before they happen. Your mind races a hundred yards a second, unrelenting...as does your mouth during conversation.

Effect: Whenever you suffer Damage from a ranged weapon, spend a Fortune Point to ignore it entirely.

SLAVE'S DESPERATION

Slaves in Morlock society are downtrodden, considered highly expendable. This carries forward throughout their entire lives, remembering the boot that sat upon their throat. In that, hard times call for desperate measures, as they draw from a wellspring of anguish and torment to inflict desperate attacks upon their enemies to survive.

Effect: Whenever you are Seriously or Grievously Wounded, you may use two Attack Actions during your Turn, spending twice the requisite amount of Action Points needed.

WARREN RUNNER

Equipped with nothing but a black cloak, Morlock run the gutters with unparalleled speed and agility.

Effect: Whenever you use any Movement Action during combat, your foes suffer a -10 Base Chance to

strike you with any Attack Action or Perilous Stunt until the beginning of your next Turn.

Character Sheet and record your Archetype under Background.

STEP IV: ARCHETYPE AND STANDARD PROFESSION

WHAT IS AN ARCHETYPE?

It's assumed that most Characters have lived a good part of their life toiling, working, spending and praying. Every Player Character begins their Basic Tier within an Archetype. This choice lays the foundation of how you begin the story and governs how you can grow your Character during the first handful of Game Sessions. Each of these Archetypes defines in loose terms what role you will play in the group, particularly when considering each other's strengths and weaknesses in Skill and Talent. Finally, it determines what Standard Profession you start out in during the Basic Tier and other Professions you may adopt during Intermediate and Advanced Tier.

SELECTING YOUR ARCHETYPE

Most Players will already have in mind what sort of role they wish to play. Perhaps you wish to play a Character who has been formally educated with a focus on intellect, such as the **Academic**. Filling a **Commoner** role may be more your style; given a sterner physique but less willful in mind. Perhaps you prefer to have a shady past as the **Knave**, quick of wit but a dullard when it comes to martial studies. A **Ranger** perfectly suits a wilderness role, wandering as a vagabond of some sort with nothing but their own proficiencies to live by. The **Socialite** may be a good fit for you if you want to be a talking head, information broker or even a leader of some sort. Lastly, you may want to focus more on a more traditional martially-aligned role, like the **Warrior**.

DETERMINING YOUR ARCHETYPE

Uncertain of which role you'd wish to play in **ZWEIHÄNDER**? Then let the hand of fate decide for you. Randomly determine your Archetype by rolling Percentile Dice, consulting the table below. Once determined, go to the first page of the

Percentile Dice	Archetype
1 to 14	Academic
15 to 31	Commoner
32 to 48	Knave
49 to 56	Ranger
57 to 75	Socialite
76 to 100	Warrior

WHAT IS A STANDARD PROFESSION?

Standard Professions are the hallmark of the **ZWEIHÄNDER** system. They represent people from all walks of life: amorous Troubadours, shrewd Cheapjacks, sweat-drenched Artisans, surly Watchmen, loquacious Courtiers, timid Servants, unctuous Valets, stoic Reeves, austere Adherents, indolent Beggars, swarthy Laborers, fey Seers, bumbling Scholars, wretched Footpads, indifferent Bounty Hunters, unscrupulous Sellswords, felonious Smugglers, corrupt Preachers, enigmatic Diabolists, vociferous Raconteurs and many, many others

Each Archetype has a list of Professions preceding it, offering many different options for Players. Once determined, it set the path your Character walks through the Basic Tier. As you continue to grow, you'll spend "Reward Points" (bonuses earned after the Game Session) to gain new Primary Attribute Bonuses, Professional Traits, Skills and Talents. When your Character reaches the end of Basic Tier, you'll move into a new Standard Profession within the same Archetype or may qualify for an Elite Profession.

DETERMINING YOUR STANDARD PROFESSION

Selecting a Standard Profession can prove daunting, as there are 72 to choose from. However, each is broadly categorized by a related Archetype. It is strongly recommended that you work with your fellow Players during this process. You should strive to have a different Standard Profession from other Players, so that each Player's Skill and Talent pool is different.

Sidebar: Unique Characters

At first glance, you may realize that your initial Primary Attribute placement may not match the typical vision of each Archetype. It may feel jarring playing an Academic who has a middling wit or a Socialite who's an uncharismatic dullard. This is intentional, as not every Character by Archetype in a grim & perilous world is built equally. It creates interesting role-play challenges, while further underscoring the uncaring and unwitting world that ZWEIHÄNDER supports. It's up to you to turn these perceived weaknesses into strengths. Some of the most interesting personalities in role-playing games are those born from disadvantage, where the odds are stacked against them.

ACADEMIC

Given the privilege of a formalized education, Academics possess formal training in some vocation or another. The tireless pursuit of scholarly or philosophical knowledge drives them. Their natural lust for knowledge leads to interesting adventures, placing these neophytes in dangerous situations which may demand they pick up a sword (or lean upon those more inclined barbarism) to uncover the hidden mysteries of the world. And in some cases, they may serve higher powers as a focus of their divine might, or even bend reality to their own devices using sorcery. An Academic may be a sniveling bureaucrat, a wan student of the black arts, a corrupted agent of the court or even a religious maniac.

DETERMINE YOUR STANDARD PROFESSION

Randomly determine your Standard Profession by rolling Percentile Dice, consulting the table below. Once determined, go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your starting Standard Profession.

NOTE THAT NOT ALL PROFESSIONS ARE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE FOR PLAY. CLICK THE "TABLE FOLLOWS" TO GOOGLE DOCS TO VIEW THE AVAILABLE PROFESSIONS

Percentile Dice Standard Profession

1 to 8	Adherent – AVAILABLE!
9 to 16	Anchorite
17 to 25	Apothecary – AVAILABLE!
26 to 33	Astrologer
42 to 49	Diabolist
50 to 58	Investigator – AVAILABLE!
68 to 76	Monk
59 to 67	Mystic
34 to 41	Preacher – AVAILABLE!
77 to 85	Runesmith
86 to 92	Student – AVAILABLE!
93 to 100	Theologian – AVAILABLE!

TABLE FOLLOWS

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AjBW3uJTeyydHFJZFJNSVF3TTIMS2FteWl5a0F5YVE&usp=sharing>

COMMONER

Commoners are “salt of the earth”, menial folk - the most populous of Archetypes in a grim & perilous world. They occupy a broad social division of people not given to reparations, although drudgery and tedium oftentimes make up the bulk of their work. Not entirely underprivileged, their trades have earned them an honest living in some fashion or another. Tenacity, marked with rank superstition, are aspects of the Commoner. They are the very backbone of society, from the wenches that populate winesinks, stevedores who work the docks, peddlers that sell their wares in the streets, gong farmers who toil in the sewers and crofters that work the farm and field.

DETERMINE YOUR STANDARD PROFESSION

Randomly determine your Standard Profession by rolling Percentile Dice, consulting the table below. Once determined, go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your starting Standard Profession.

Percentile Dice Standard Profession

1 to 8	Artisan – AVAILABLE!
9 to 16	Barber Surgeon – AVAILABLE!
17 to 25	Boatman – AVAILABLE!
26 to 33	Camp Follower – AVAILABLE!
34 to 41	Cheapjack – AVAILABLE!
42 to 49	Coachmaster – AVAILABLE!
50 to 58	Jailer – AVAILABLE!
59 to 67	Laborer – AVAILABLE!
68 to 76	Peasant – AVAILABLE!
77 to 85	Penitent – AVAILABLE!
86 to 92	Rat Catcher – AVAILABLE!
93 to 100	Servant – AVAILABLE!

TABLE FOLLOWS

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/cc?key=0AjBW3uJTeaydHFJZFJNSVF3TTIMS2FteW15a0F5YVE&usp=sharing>

KNAVE

Guttersnipes, scoundrels, the larcenous and other ne'er-do-wells fit this Archetype. The world is rife with their ilk, congregating like flies to dung in criminal associations to ply their illicit trades. Knaves may pass themselves off as viciously-armed thugs, but don't truly possess the same martial understanding as their Warrior counterparts. Others may be simple pickpockets, with the risk of running afoul of the law. Gypsies and roadside buskers fall into this same category as their line of work - although not inherently illegal, it requires some measure of guile to make an honest coin. Truthfully, they are the antithesis to civilized order, employing their own means to skirt the law to their own benefit. Maybe they lack the wherewithal to practice an honest trade, or perhaps they simply wish to remain unfettered by the law. Despite the risks, the rewards can be great should a Knave find his true niche. A Knave may be a care-free loner, rebellious scum, house robber, a snake oil salesman, a pimp or grifter.

DETERMINE YOUR STANDARD PROFESSION

Randomly determine your Standard Profession by rolling Percentile Dice, consulting the table below.

Once determined, go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your starting Standard Profession.

Percentile Dice	Standard Profession
1 to 8	Beggar – AVAILABLE!
9 to 16	Burglar – AVAILABLE!
17 to 25	Charlatan – AVAILABLE!
26 to 33	Cutthroat – AVAILABLE!
34 to 41	Footpad – AVAILABLE!
42 to 49	Gambler – AVAILABLE!
50 to 58	Graverobber – AVAILABLE!
59 to 67	Guttersnipe – AVAILABLE!
68 to 76	Highwayman – AVAILABLE!
77 to 85	Prostitute – AVAILABLE!
86 to 92	Smuggler – AVAILABLE!
93 to 100	Vagabond – AVAILABLE!

TABLE FOLLOWS

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/cc?key=0AjBW3uJTeaydHFJZFJNSVF3TTIMS2FteW15a0F5YVE&usp=sharing>

RANGER

Rangers tend to live outside of urban centers, living in the wilderness. Rangers tend to prefer the country life, far away from the squalor of cramped cities and the buzzing of the markets. City living is instead replaced by eking out a harsh existence outside of society, replete with exposure to the weather, contention with wild beasts while warding their lands from interlopers and thieves. However, there is freedom to be had once the trappings of civilized life are cast aside. Many of those who have lived in hermitage have found true enlightenment amidst the wilderness. Some have taken to the road to make their coin as traders. Others devolve to a more primal root, oftentimes appearing no different than the animals they live amongst. Rangers could be barbarians, trappers, muleskinners or even sheriffs that patrol the roads between settlements.

DETERMINE YOUR STANDARD PROFESSION

Randomly determine your Standard Profession by rolling Percentile Dice, consulting the table below. Once determined, go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your starting Standard Profession.

Percentile Dice	Standard Profession
1 to 8	Animal Tamer – AVAILABLE!
9 to 16	Bounty Hunter – AVAILABLE!
17 to 25	Forester
26 to 33	Hedgewise – AVAILABLE!
34 to 41	Nomad
42 to 49	Old Believer
50 to 58	Outrider – AVAILABLE!
59 to 67	Pilgrim – AVAILABLE!
68 to 76	Reeve – AVAILABLE!
77 to 85	Slayer – AVAILABLE!
86 to 92	Toll Keeper – AVAILABLE!
93 to 100	Trapper

TABLE FOLLOWS

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/cc?key=0AjBW3uJTeaydHFJZFJNSVF3TTIMS2FteW15a0F5YVE&usp=sharing>

SOCIALITE

The Socialite uses their self-import and notoriety to get ahead in this world. Should they lack reputation, they substitute by putting on airs, manipulating others with smooth words and trickery to get ahead in this world. Their shield of reputation, whether perceived or real, is most important to them. Garish costumes, foppish mannerisms and fey, lilting accents dominate their social circles. Graft, lies and subtlety are their watchwords, conniving with only those who possess (and may impart) real ultimate power. And when the chips are down? Most Socialites keep hired knives in their employ to take care of their dirty work...or simply do it themselves through seduction or poison. Socialites may be debutantes, political firebrands, minstrels, spies or even streetwise entertainers.

DETERMINE YOUR STANDARD PROFESSION

Randomly determine your Standard Profession by rolling Percentile Dice, consulting the table below. Once determined, go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your starting Standard Profession.

Percentile Dice	Standard Profession
1 to 8	Agitator – AVAILABLE!
9 to 16	Courtier – AVAILABLE!
17 to 25	Dilettante – AVAILABLE!
26 to 33	Entertainer
34 to 41	Envoy
42 to 49	Jester
50 to 58	Provocateur
59 to 67	Raconteur
68 to 76	Rake – AVAILABLE!
77 to 85	Rapscallion – AVAILABLE!
86 to 92	Troubadour
93 to 100	Valet – AVAILABLE!

TABLE FOLLOWS

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/cc?key=0AjBW3uJTeaydHFJZFJNSVF3TTIMS2FteW15a0F5YVE&usp=sharing>

WARRIOR

Occupying the military caste of society, the Warrior stands alone, world-weary while employing violence as a means to an end. Whether formally trained within a military academy, amongst a militia or even self-taught, Warriors are unparalleled in their practice in the art of war. They've been through the crucible and emerged victorious. While many graveyards are filled with middling swordsmen, rarely are Warriors used as fodder in war and left for crow's food. Standing above their peers, they are the makings of myth and legend, one swing of the axe at a time. Despite this, not all Warriors fight for what's just and true. Some make their living as hired swords, or even turn to brigandry. A life of violence tends to lead to great fortune in a grim & perilous world, and Warriors best fill this niche. Warriors may manifest

as an intrepid peasant hero, a loyal retainer, a professional mercenary-for-hire, a frightened soldier or even a doughty protector of the weak.

DETERMINE YOUR STANDARD PROFESSION

Randomly determine your Standard Profession by rolling Percentile Dice, consulting the table below. Once determined, go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your starting Standard Profession.

Percentile Dice	Standard Profession
1 to 8	Berserker – AVAILABLE!
9 to 16	Bravo
17 to 25	Buccaneer – AVAILABLE!
26 to 33	Dragoon
34 to 41	Hedge Knight – AVAILABLE!
42 to 49	Man-At-Arms – AVAILABLE!
50 to 58	Militiaman – AVAILABLE!
59 to 67	Pit Fighter – AVAILABLE!
68 to 76	Pugilist – AVAILABLE!
77 to 85	Sellsword – AVAILABLE!
86 to 92	Squire – AVAILABLE!
93 to 100	Watchman – AVAILABLE!

TABLE FOLLOWS

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/cc?key=0AjBW3uJTeyydHFJZFJNSVF3TTIMS2FteWl5a0F5YVE&usp=sharing>

MOLDING YOUR STANDARD PROFESSION

We strongly encourage you to interpret each Standard Profession specifically to meet the vision the Gamemaster has laid for the Campaign World with careful consideration towards how you wish to portray your Character. ZWEIHÄNDER does not impose any cultural or racial limits on what Professions you may select. These sorts of considerations are purely the province of the Gamemaster. Any limits on what Profession your Character may inhabit is left in their hands, with the Campaign World's story informing these decisions.

EXAMPLE

Adam's Character is of the Socialite Archetype and generates his Standard Profession: Rake. He has decided to further flesh out his Profession by making a few basic assumptions for his Character's beginnings. First, his Rake is a disenfranchised noble himself. While not truly an inheritor to his family's name, he still has to carry himself with some manner of dignity. Secondly, he's left the nest, so to speak. Spiraling downwards, the Rake landed amongst the wretches of society. Gambling, illegal fisticuff matches and cart racing became his vices. Street urchins and lickspittles now call him friend. He's enjoyed the "champion's buffet" of sleazy trollops nightly and has no idea how many bastards he's sired at this point. His Character whittled away his inheritance, until he was nearly penny-poor. Satisfied, Adam proposes these story ideas to the Gamemaster in consideration of his Character's history.

Sidebar: A Reeve, a Burglar and a Raconteur walk into a winesink...

With the vast number of Professions, sometimes your selection may seem at odds with other Player's choices. After all, why exactly would a lawfully-minded Reeve elect to rub shoulders with the criminal predilections of a Burglar? Shared hardship can sometimes make for strange bedfellows, cultivating camaraderie in the face of adversity (and diversity). These meta-plots are handled by the Gamemaster, cleverly devised to bring together a motley crew of miscreants and the honorific towards a shared goal. While the motivation to join forces during the Character Creation process may not be entirely clear, the reasons will become more apparent as the adventure unfolds for you and other Players. Keep an open mind, but don't cast aside the precepts of your Character's Profession to simply get along with the group. These subtle but sometimes obvious differences can lead to interesting developments with the relationships between Character. An odd mix of Professions creates powerful, lasting stories that will reverberate throughout the Campaign World beyond the game table.

STEP V: DERIVE SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

Each Character possesses Secondary Attributes. Secondary Attributes focus on in-combat statistics, relying on your Primary Attribute Bonuses as a baseline. A combination of these Characteristics determine how much you can haul comfortably in a fight, how quickly you react to danger, how fast you move during combat, how many hits you can take before dying and how much strain you can sustain before passing out.

ENCUMBRANCE LIMIT

Encumbrance Limit is a measure of how much equipment you can haul without having to toss it down during a fight. Should you haul more than you can sustain, you become encumbered.

Your Character has a starting value equal to 3 + Brawn Bonus (BB), which changes as your Brawn grows over your Basic, Intermediate and Advanced Tier. Additionally, there are Talents and Traits which allow you to grow your total Encumbrance Limit permanently. For every point beyond this initial value (otherwise called Overage), you suffer an ongoing, cumulative -1 to your Initiative and Combat Movement. Despite this, you can never haul more than 6 + Brawn Bonus (BB). We'll talk more about this in **Chapter ???: Trappings**. Go to the second page of the Character Sheet and record your Encumbrance Limit.

EXAMPLE

Leopold Coventry can carry a maximum of 7 Encumbrance. However, he insists on hauling enough equipment that puts him at 10 Encumbrance. As such, he suffers a -3 from Overage to both his Initiative and Combat Movement.

INITIATIVE

Initiative determines when you take your Turn during combat within the Initiative Order.

Your Character has a starting value equal to 3 + Perception Bonus, which changes as your Perception grows over your Basic, Intermediate and Advanced Tier. Additionally, there are Talents and Traits which allow you to grow your total Initiative permanently. We will speak more about the Initiative Order in **Chapter ???: Combat**. Go to the second page of the Character Sheet and record your Initiative.

COMBAT MOVEMENT

During battle, your ability to move about the field is wholly governed by Combat Movement. It reflects your ability to quickly traverse the battlefield while fighting, reflecting the number of yards you can move in combat on foot.

Your Character has a starting value equal to 3 + Agility Bonus (AB), which changes as your Agility grows over your Basic, Intermediate and Advanced Tier. Additionally, there are Talents and Traits which allow you to improve your Combat Movement permanently. We will speak more about Combat Movement in **Chapter ???: Combat**. Go to the second page of the Character Sheet and record your Combat Movement.

DAMAGE THRESHOLD

The ability to withstand pain is paramount in a fight. A combination of tenacity, grit, mental fortitude and a bit of luck makes up the Damage Threshold attribute. It represents a form of physical durability, governing the amount of bodily harm you can withstand before suffering from mortal Injuries or even death. The vast majority of the time, Damage is caused by wounds inflicted from weapons or nasty environmental effects. All Characters possess a tolerance for punishment, augmented by the strength of their armor.

Each step of the Damage Condition Track illustrates how wounded a Character is. Whenever a Character suffers Damage that exceeds Damage Threshold, they move down the Damage Condition Track. The further down the track a Character goes, the more likely they are to incur crippling injuries or face death. You can learn more about each step along the

Damage Condition Track in in Chapter XXX: Hazards and Healing.

Determine your starting Damage Threshold by adding Brawn Bonus (BB) and your armor's Damage Threshold Modifier. Damage Threshold changes as your Brawn grows over your Basic, Intermediate and Advanced Tier. It also changes if you wear heavier (or lighter) armor. Additionally, there are Talents and Traits which allow you to grow your total Damage Threshold permanently. Go to the second page of the Character Sheet and record your total Damage Threshold value.

PERIL THRESHOLD

Psychological stress, road fatigue, exposure to environmental elements, terror invoked by terrible creatures, intimidation, emotional fear, social shame and the effects of narcotics psychologically harm Characters with short-term effects. This temporary physical and mental trauma is called Peril. A Character's Peril Threshold represents how much anxiety and weariness they can withstand before suffering penalties to their Skill Tests. Typically, your enemies don't possess a Peril Threshold; it is mainly reserved for player Characters, unique creatures or other non-player Characters the Gamemaster has conceived as important or unique. Fortunately, the more willful and internally resolute a Character is, the better their resistance to Peril.

Each step of the Peril Condition Track illustrates how distracted a Character is. Whenever a Character suffers Peril that exceeds Peril Threshold, they move down the Peril Condition Track. The further down the track a Character goes, the more likely they are to incur penalties to Skill Tests. You can learn more about each step along the Peril Condition Track in in Chapter XXX: Hazards and Healing.

Determine your starting Peril Threshold by adding Willpower Bonus (WB) and any modifier a Talent, Trait or Magick may add. Peril Threshold changes as your Willpower grows over your Basic, Intermediate and Advanced Tier - it also changes with certain Magicks. Go to the second page of the Character Sheet and record your total Peril Threshold value.

STEP VI: YOUR BACKGROUND

Despite what Elves may prattle on about in private company, not all Dwarves, Halflings and Humans look alike. When you picture your Character, what do you see? How do they wear their hair? Are they grossly obese or rail thin? Do they look like just another face in the crowd, or does something else set them apart?

HOW OLD ARE YOU?

Consider some of the ideas you have about your Character's history, and let it inform your choice to play an older Character. Your Profession and Archetype may inform your decision to play as an older or younger Character. A Preacher may be Elderly, whereas a Student has just reached Adulthood. A Sellsword likely has some victories underneath their belt, so they may be Middle-Aged.

You will note that we've purposefully omitted specific years of age and instead use general terms for Age Groups, as a Gamemaster may have their own idea about how Age Groups may vary by Race. And, unlike other role-playing games, we have omitted overt penalties due to the age of the Character. In ZWEIHÄNDER, your Character stands out among the rest; it's not necessary to make these sorts of adjustments given their place in the grim & perilous world.

Roll Percentile Dice to randomly determine which Age Group your Character is in. Go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your age under Background.

Percentile Dice	Age Group
1 to 25	Youth
26 to 75	Adulthood
76 to 90	Middle-Aged
91 to 100	Elderly

YOUTH

Thrust into a role that others of your age have not faced, the world's grim reality rests heavily upon your trembling shoulders. Inexplicably, your youth has drawn the

attentions of lady luck. It's clear she has gifted you with her benefice. In exchange, a sordid - and perhaps violent - future awaits you.

Effect: You must roll one time on the Distinguishing Marks table. Record your age under Background.

ADULTHOOD

You are a full grown adult, along with all the responsibilities it entails. You are acutely aware of the realities of the world around you, pulled in different directions to fulfil your dreams, but prepared for them to be stomped upon by the unyielding weight of reality.

Effect: You must roll two times on the Distinguishing Marks table. Record your age under Background.

MIDDLE-AGED

You're just now beginning to suffer the effects of aging, growing wiser but weaker physically. Your experiences have taken a toll on your body, as you now suffer from morning pains and perhaps a rattling cough when the weather is poor. Unlike the younger generations, destiny has decreed a new beginning - or perilous end - for you. As such, you've been given a spark of luck; a second chance to attain these goals through whatever hardships you must suffer.

Effect: You must roll three times on the Distinguishing Marks table. Record your age under Background.

Percentile Dice	Distinguishing Marks	Effect
1	Abnormally white teeth	Gain +1% Fellowship
2	Abundance of freckles on face	Gain +1% Fellowship
3	Acne-scarred face	Suffer -1% Willpower
4	Additional toes or fingers	Gain +1% Agility
5	Almond-shaped eyes	Gain +1% Willpower
6	Asexual appearance	Suffer -1% Combat
7	Ashen complexion	Gain +1% Brawn
8	Balding	Gain +1% Intelligence
9	Beaded mustachio	Gain +1% Combat
10	Beady eyes	Suffer -1% Agility
11	Beauty mark on face	Gain +1%

ELDERLY

You are in the twilight years of your life, and most of your physical prowess has waned as decades have passed. You are wheezy, shaky and given to fits of memory loss...or even moments where you stop and do nothing but recount old memories of your youth. Despite this, fate has something in store for you, and will give you several chances at seeing its potentially grim outcomes realized.

Effect: You must roll four times on the Distinguishing Marks table. Record your age under Background.

DISTINGUISHING MARKS

Beyond simple appearance, all Characters have some sort of disfiguring or unusual mark on their body or affectation in outward personality. Most people have some oddity of birth or their life. People who are too comely are often viewed with suspicion. It is not to say that others wish to attain physical beauty! There's a whole market for tinctures, powders, elixirs of youth and other "beauty products" snake oil salesmen pawn off to the unwitting. But there's just a slight imbalance of ugliness to the world to the point where it's become the norm, and those who possess striking looks aren't well-trusted.

Depending on your Age Group, you must select a specific number of Distinguishing Marks to further flesh out your Character's appearance. Note that each Distinguishing Mark carries some positive or negative modifier to your Primary Attributes. Go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your Distinguishing Marks under Background.

		Fellowship
12	Big ears	Gain +1% Perception
13	Blood-shot eyes	Suffer -1% Perception
14	Bow-legged walk	Suffer -1% Agility
15	Branded with cattle iron	Gain +1% Brawn
16	Broken nose	Gain +1% Combat
17	Buck-toothed or snaggle-toothed	Suffer -1% Fellowship
18	Bulging eyes	Suffer -1% Willpower
19	Burn scars on face and arms	Gain +1% Brawn
20	Bushy eyebrows	Gain +1% Willpower
21	Carefully-groomed beard	Gain +1% Fellowship
22	Cherubic face	Suffer -1% Combat

23	Clammy hands	Gain +1% Willpower
24	Claw marks over face	Gain +1% Brawn
25	Covered in black moles	Suffer -1% Fellowship
26	Curly red locks of hair	Suffer -1% Fellowship
27	Devilish goatee	Gain +1% Intelligence
28	Different colored eyes	Gain +1% Perception
29	Dimpled cheeks	Suffer -1% Brawn
30	Drooping eye	Suffer -1% Perception
31	Dry, flaking skin	Suffer -1% Brawn
32	Ear half-missing	Suffer -1% Perception
33	Ebony complexion	Gain +1% Agility
34	Embarrassing tattoo on face	Gain +1% Combat
35	Excessive body hair	Gain +1% Brawn
36	Eye candy	Suffer -1% Intelligence
37	False finger	Suffer -1% Combat
38	Farmer's tan	Gain +1% Brawn
39	Glasgow smile	Gain +1% Combat
40	Golden locks of hair	Gain +1% Fellowship
41	Hare lip	Suffer -1% Fellowship
42	Hooked nose	Gain +1% Intelligence
43	Horse-faced	Suffer -1% Agility
44	Humpbacked	Gain +1% Brawn
45	Incredibly beautiful	Gain +1% Fellowship
46	Itchy scabies bites	Suffer -1% Brawn
47	Jaundiced complexion	Suffer -1% Brawn
48	Lanky hair	Suffer -1% Intelligence
49	Large and hairy mole	Gain +1% Fellowship
50	Large nose	Gain +1% Perception
51	Large red birthmark on arms	Suffer -1% Fellowship
52	Lazy eye	Suffer -1% Agility
53	Leathery complexion	Gain +1% Brawn
54	Lichtenburg scar	Gain +1% Agility
55	Long eyelashes	Gain +1% Fellowship
56	Long moustache	Gain +1% Willpower
57	Long sideburns	Gain +1% Willpower
58	Milky eye	Suffer -1% Perception
59	Mismatched eye color	Gain +1% Combat
60	Missing an eyebrow	Suffer -1% Perception
61	Missing fingers	Suffer -1% Perception
62	Nervous tic	Gain +1% Willpower

63	Olive complexion	Gain +1% Perception
64	Painted beard	Gain +1% Brawn
65	Pale white complexion	Suffer -1% Brawn
66	Patch of white hair	Gain +1% Intelligence
67	Perfect posture	Gain +1% Agility
68	Perpetual sneer	Gain +1% Willpower
69	Perpetually deep frown	Suffer -1% Agility
70	Piercing blue eyes	Gain +1% Fellowship
71	Pigeon-toed stance	Suffer -1% Combat
72	Pot belly	Gain +1% Brawn
73	Pox scars all over body	Gain +1% Brawn
74	Pronounced brow	Gain +1% Combat
75	Purple bags beneath eyes	Gain +1% Intelligence
76	Rancid breath	Suffer -1% Fellowship
77	Rash of pimples	Suffer -1% Fellowship
78	Rheumy eyes	Suffer -1% Perception
79	Rosy, doll-like complexion	Suffer -1% Brawn
80	Six-fingered hand	Gain +1% Agility
81	Slouchy posture	Suffer -1% Brawn
82	Spiked mohawk	Suffer -1% Intelligence
83	Squinting eyes or false eyepatch	Suffer -1% Fellowship
84	Steely gaze	Gain +1% Perception
85	Strong jaw	Gain +1% Brawn
86	Sunburnt complexion	Gain +1% Brawn
87	Sunken eyes	Suffer -1% Perception
88	Tanned, leathery skin	Gain +1% Brawn
89	Tarred and feathered	Suffer -1% Agility
90	Terribly crooked teeth	Suffer -1% Fellowship
91	Vacant expression	Suffer -1% Willpower
92	Veteran's nose	Gain +1% Combat
93	Vulgar tattoo	Gain +1% Combat
94	Weak chin	Suffer -1% Combat
95	Wears spectacles	Suffer -1% Perception
96	Webbed hands and feet	Gain +1% Agility
97	Widow's peak	Gain +1% Intelligence
98	Wind-chapped cheeks	Gain +1% Brawn
99	Yellow scum on teeth	Suffer -1% Fellowship
100	Yellowed fingernails and toenails	Suffer -1% Brawn

Sidebar: Role-playing Your Appearance

While at the table, if you're Character is exceptionally tall, grab a few pillows to sit on. If you're short, cop a squat on the floor when you interact with your fellow players or Gamemaster. If you have a nervous tick, odd way of talking or even a slouch, role-play these out around the table. Within your level of comfort, try your best mimic how your Character acts and looks using voice and posture. Additionally, think about the way the Character speaks. If you're comfortable mocking up a bad (or incredibly accurate) accent, do so when you speak in-Character! If your Character is stinky or has bad breath...well, that's a different story.

OTHER PHYSICAL FACTORS

Additionally, take the time to write down your Character's physical appearance and record these in the Background section on the first page of your Character Sheet. We recommend including height, weight, eye and hair color. We leave these decisions for you to make freely. You can even reference your Primary Attributes and Age Group to help shape your Character's physique. Don't be afraid to redefine the conventions of fantasy Races when determining what your Character looks like. When in doubt, consult your Gamemaster for further guidance or information about basic Racial assumptions in their Campaign World.

SOCIAL CLASS

Every society - no matter how small or large - recognizes a social caste system that all men and women are born into. Your Social Class is a measure of mannerisms, style of speaking, personal prosperity and social conventions, illustrating what part of society or stratum you occupy amongst your people. In a grim & perilous world, Social Class is an important consideration. Everywhere, people react to what you're wearing, the affectation in your speech and the way you carry yourself. The sum of these parts can make a lasting impression upon strangers, underpinned by your social verve. In a way, it's not a matter of what you are, so much as who you are. Despite what your Fellowship Primary Attribute may be, generally, someone with poor upbringing will likely never convince a duke to let you into their garden party. You have to play the part - or pretend at it, at least.

Your Social Class also reflects why your Character has chosen their specific career. With a cursory glance, it may not make any sense to select the Aristocracy Social Class if your Character's first Profession is a Peasant. However, in some cases it may be more interesting for the Character's history. For instance, someone that was a part of the Lowborn Social Class broke free one day, reinventing their life to become a Cheapjack. What about the person born to the Aristocracy Social Class but their family's fortunes was usurped by another rivaling house, now taking to the life of a lowly Monk? Perhaps your Character was of the Gentry Social Class, but escaped debtor's prison by enlisting as a Man-At-Arms. These interesting combinations create unique variants of Professions and ultimately help flesh out a backstory for your Character. They also provide an opportunity for you to create a colorful and unique interpretation of a Profession that may normally be unsuited for your Social Class.

DETERMINE YOUR SOCIAL CLASS

We encourage you to think of your Social Class as your past - your Character is living in the now, and they've likely left all of that behind them for one reason or another. However, it is hard to set aside the mannerisms, speech patterns and other indelible experiences of your upbringing. You'll carry these with you for life, which can invariably affect your social interactions. Each Social Class has been painted with a very broad brush, leaving them open to interpretation. They may be fundamental differences between them, varying from culture to culture. Your Gamemaster will provide any additional distinctions or considerations you should make before selecting one. If you're unsure which to choose, you can roll Percentile Dice to randomly determine which Social Class your Character is. Go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your Character's Social Class under Background.

Percentile Dice	Social Class
1 to 25	Lowborn
26 to 50	Burgher
51 to 75	Gentry
76 to 100	Aristocracy

LOWBORN

You were born poor and never found a way to raise yourself above your station. From morning to night, your days were spent in backbreaking labor beneath the sun, barely making enough to put food on the table. You likely worked six days a week with only the sabbath or other special holy days to step away from your labors.

The Lowborn live in constant deference, humble in spirit but hearty in lifeblood for what meager riches they may be able to gain. The Lowborn also tend to get around unnoticed, shying away from their betters. Being meek and small may work well when standing before lord such-and-such, but it also benefits those who's on the run from whatever serfdom to which were virtually enslaved. They are a simple, superstitious lot, unburdened by formal education or training. This rustic demeanor can be a solace among the like-minded, but others view it with bemusement or disdain.

LOWBORN ADVANTAGE

Whenever you use any Fellowship-based Skill to interact with others of your same Social Class, you gain a significant advantage over others outside of that Social Class. This is particularly relevant during Social Intrigue events, which is covered in **Chapter XXX: Game Mastery**.

BURGHER

You grew up amongst a family that broke free from the feudal order, a member of the burgeoning middle class called the Burgher. With the rise of commercial growth amongst townships and cities, this allowed you the one freedom those of the Lowborn don't possess - the freedom to make your own choices beholden to no man and to forge your own life without the parentage and protection of the Gentry.

Because they are not required to "play at court" with their betters, Burghers dedicate their spare time to crafts, hobbies and the world around them. Perhaps more so than any other Social Class, Burghers hold a unique opportunity to better themselves and rise above their station. However, not everyone appreciates the freedom that Burghers enjoy or the sweeping social changes that this freedom may herald.

BURGHER ADVANTAGE

Whenever you use any Fellowship-based Skill to interact with others of your same Social Class, you gain a significant advantage over others outside of that Social Class. This is particularly relevant during Social Intrigue events, which is covered in **Chapter XXX: Game Mastery**.

sidebar: Upward Mobility

It is all but impossible to break free of your Social Class. The social order is so rigid that your birth primarily determines what place you occupy within the castes of society. But, striking the right alliances with proper folk with graft and cunning may change that outcome. The Gamemaster may allow you to move between Social Classes as time progresses. However, you may suffer the indignation of others amongst your new Social Class. Merely calling yourself "Lord so-and-so" is not enough to command respect amongst those of your new social caste. Many people, particularly those of the Gentry and Aristocracy, are extremely jealous of their positions. You must learn the appropriate behaviors and etiquette that are standard with your new Social Class to gain its benefits.

GENTRY

You were born into or otherwise became part of a rising land-owning or professional Social Class called the Gentry. As landowners, Gentry are wealthy in their own right, mostly well-to-do merchants and businessmen who've made their fortunes without the privilege of having a lofty name. Lawyers, doctors and other academicians are often of the Gentry. Money isn't everything, but it can certainly grease the wheels, as it were, as the Gentry cannot socially afford the same network as their betters within the Aristocracy.

Woeful as they may be about not being born a true blue blood, the Gentry struggle to compete with their betters. Oftentimes, they will hold large tracts of land and raise expensive steeds as part of their income. The Gentry are envied by those of lesser means, but they are also not truly accepted by the Aristocracy.

GENTRY ADVANTAGE

Whenever you use any Fellowship-based Skill to interact with others of your same Social Class, you

gain a significant advantage over others outside of that Social Class. This is particularly relevant during Social Intrigue events, which is covered in **Chapter XXX: Game Mastery**.

ARISTOCRACY

You were born within a family whose name can be traced back to old nobility. The influential renown of your lineage can be a significant boon; you may be able to call upon powerful allies or even command subjects to assist you when needed. Your life has afforded you many luxuries: you are highly educated and are well-versed in the nuance of culture and high society. Patronage, ambition, climbing the social network and a suite of responsibilities define the differences between the Aristocracy and the nouveau riche Gentry.

The Aristocracy exercise certain freedoms others cannot afford. They dedicate themselves to understanding the sciences and literature, oftentimes beneath the sometimes knuckle-wrapping tutelage of their schoolmasters. Maintaining one's courtly appearance and expressing interest in the arts and hunting as a sport is paramount, and these pursuits require forming schools for girls and university teaching for boys. Aristocrats display a degree of eloquence and refinement that frequently inspires resentment or discomfort among those who did not share a similar upbringing.

ARISTOCRACY ADVANTAGE

Whenever you use any Fellowship-based Skill to interact with others of your same Social Class, you gain a significant advantage over others outside of that Social Class. This is particularly relevant during Social Intrigue events, which is covered in **Chapter XXX: Game Mastery**.

Sidebar: Rivaling Houses

Amongst the Aristocracy, there exists a complicated web of politics. These often manifest themselves into political wars fueled by petty jealousies and waged with sharp words, strategic alliances, one-upmanship and trickery. While many of these rivalries between houses are somewhat benign, others have devolved into deadly feuds. In these cases, you should work with your Gamemaster to flesh out your family's history and potential - or perceived - rivals.

LANGUAGES

You automatically begin play with your native language. This may be a racial language, a cultural language or regional common language. It is best to work with the Gamemaster to determine languages that fit with the theme of your Character's backstory and the Campaign World. When you know a language, this means you can Fellowship-based Skills to communicate with others in that language.

However, you may start off with other languages which are dialects, regional languages, foreign tongues and even the languages of other Races. Naturally, there may be imposed limits on how well you speak it, particularly if it's not your native language. Spending time in the foreign quarter drinking, fighting and rogering swarthy indigents may be the best way to pick up the colloquialisms of another language. Immersion, not smarts, drives your Character's ability to learn new spoken languages. Some cultures may not have a written language, instead communicating with a series of clicks, whistles and grunts! Regardless of the process, new languages are always awarded as a part of the story.

Record your language under Background on the first page of the Character Sheet. You may learn additional languages over the course of the Campaign's story, up to a number equal to your Fellowship Bonus (FB). And, should your Character possess the Education Skill, they can also read and write in any language you understand (providing that it has a written language).

DRAWBACKS

Some Players like to determine their Character's failings as they play through the game, using improv to let their Character's history come to light as they interact within the Campaign World. Others may prefer to have distinct pieces of their Character's life already fleshed out, which they can refer to whenever they make decisions in-Character and role-play with others. A Drawback tells something unique about you; something far more distinct than simply being "*Leopold Coventry, the Human Bounty Hunter*". It paints a better portrait about who your Character was before they walked away from their Profession in the story. Drawbacks make excellent tools to draw upon to further enhance role-play, illustrating your Character's place in the world. Fleshing out who your

Character is and where they come from creates a level of immersion often forgotten in other tabletop role-playing games. It helps shape Leopold Coventry as more than a mere Human Bounty Hunter. It may also be indicative of a past reputation or affiliation. For instance, Leopold Coventry spent many years within the city as an unlicensed street thug, so he may have a criminal history that's well-known amongst lawmen. This can work against him in many ways, even if he's left the city. Reputations have a tendency to follow in the wake of those who establish them. Perhaps what the Gamemaster knows, but Leopold doesn't, is that he has other notorious bounty hunters on his trail!

While you are not required to select a Drawback, you may optionally select one now in return for one additional Racial Trait during Character Creation. You may be encouraged to select multiple Drawbacks, which can certainly lead to interesting story development! Yet no matter how many Drawbacks you select, you may only gain 1 additional Racial Trait by this method. For those who are unsure and wish to spin fortune's wheel, randomly determine your Drawback by rolling Percentile Dice, consulting the table below. Record it under the Background section on the first page of your Character Sheet.

CREATING A NEW DRAWBACK

While we've provided several Drawbacks you may choose from, we encourage you to work with your Gamemaster to create your own. They may describe what faith you prescribe to with its requirements, what loyalties you hold or previously held to, whether you're the inheritor to a family curse, motivations you may have which hinder you or a host of other options you can think of. You shouldn't be too broad with your descriptions; calling yourself "kind" doesn't really provide a good descriptor for this trait. However, something more distinct like "renowned kindness" may be more appropriate, as others within the Campaign World know you're someone who has a history with helping others out of sticky situations. It may also work against you, as others may take advantage of this. Drawbacks built in this way are the best ones to choose, as the Gamemaster can also apply them to help build a stronger story and sense of immersion.

Note that some Professions (particularly Elite Professions) gain a Drawback once adopted. In these cases, you never gain an additional Racial Trait.

Percentile Dice	Drawbacks
1 to 10	Bastard-born
11 to 20	Branded
21 to 30	Connoisseur
31 to 40	Cursed
41 to 50	Deaf
51 to 60	Debtor
61 to 70	Eunuch
71 to 80	Forbidden Knowledge
81 to 90	Nemesis
91 to 100	Weak Lungs

BASTARD-BORN

You are the progeny of a notable Aristocrat, but your mother was not his wife. The circumstances of your birth are scorned by the well-bred and simple born alike. However, you are exempt from the expectations of your father's house.

Effect: Whenever you interact with those who know you're a Bastard-born and hold you in contempt due to your station of birth, you suffer a -10 Base Chance with all Fellowship-based Skill Tests. However, you reap some form of minor reward up front, a prized item denoting your birthright. This reward is determined solely by the Gamemaster, after consideration of your suggestions for your Character's family.

BRANDED

You are one of the disenfranchised of society; the bonded, serfs, slaves and thralls of the world. You are looked upon poorly by most of society, treated with some manner of contempt or apprehension when they are acknowledged at all. Most Branded take great pains to hide the shame of their past. You should consider carefully why you are one of these people, as it may have serious ramifications in many social situations.

Effect: Whenever you interact with those who know you're Branded and hold you in contempt due to it, you suffer a -10 Base Chance with all Fellowship-based Skill Tests.

CONNOISSEUR

You have an inordinate appreciation for the finer things in life. Perhaps you are a collector of antiques and find it hard to pass on a great deal. Or you may be a conspicuous consumer, believing that how you look in public is more important than the substance of your personality.

Effect: You must always purchase the highest quality Trappings made available. This includes foodstuffs, supplies, weapons, armor and other wares.

CURSED

Some terrible twist of fate or dark Magick has cast some hex over you. Your curse may have originated from an act of cruelty served upon the innocent, born from mortal sin, a dreadful stigma that has afflicted your family or a terrible Magick that's been cast upon you. Curses of this magnitude oftentimes fetter individuals until their death. Only a major sacrifice can potentially lift the curse, and the cost is likely greater than you can levy. It may be that your Order or Chaos Temperament is somehow tied to the curse.

Effect: Whenever you sacrifice Fortune Points, you sacrifice two points instead of one.

DEAF

An unfortunate accident, a result of birth or disease has left you partially deaf. You are barely able to hear and must rely on your other senses to recognize the world around you. Speech is difficult, and you're often misunderstood or even ridiculed as you converse with others.

Effect: You must flip the results to fail all Skill Tests that rely on hearing.

DEBTOR

You have spent and spent and spent, borrowing far too much money without the promise of return to your creditors. You may have even been committed to a debtor's prison. It carries a social stigma, leaving a black stain upon your shield of reputation and conscious. As such, you find it exceedingly difficult – if not impossible – to come to any sort of middle ground with others given your history.

Effect: You must flip the results to fail all Bargain Tests.

EUNUCH

You were castrated for one reason or another. Your gelding has deeply impacted you, a harrowing memory you find difficult to suppress. Perhaps you were a monastic who became a eunuch after a spiritual awakening. Or, maybe you were gelded for acts of sexual indecency. Either way, you decide what lead you to this end.

Effect: You are immune to the charms and seduction by those who find you attractive, and unable to bear children. However, you begin play with three steps towards your Chaos Temperament.

FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

At the risk of persecution, you have studied prescribed texts and profane rituals. These dark forays allow you to gain an impression or understanding of that which is reviled and forbidden. But your obsession with the dark arts also makes you more susceptible to their effects, ignorant of ways to control the obsession.

Effect: You may use the Incantation Special Skill without first possessing Skill Ranks, treating it as an Common Skill. However, whenever you move any amount of steps towards your Chaos Temperament, increase the number of steps you move by one step. This means that if you moves three steps towards your Chaos Temperament, you instead move four steps.

NEMESIS

You have an implacable enemy that harries you at every opportunity. They may be a political rival who sabotages your ambitions or a foe who is destined to kill you. Perhaps your Nemesis may yet be unnamed, revealed at a much later date.

Effect: When confronted by your Nemesis, you cannot sacrifice Fate or Fortune Points, so confounded as you may be towards them. Your Nemesis is determined by the Gamemaster with

consideration to your suggestions of your Character's history or past rival.

WEAK LUNGS

You have suffered a terrible injury at some point, making it very difficult to breath. You may have fallen on a fencepost as a youth, and grown up with the use of only one lung. Perhaps you were stabbed by a vicious rival as a cuckold, now exhibiting an audible wheezing. Either way, you still suffer its effects.

Effect: Whenever you move down the Peril Condition Track, move down one additional step.

STEP VII: YOUR TEMPERAMENTS

A strong arm or a slow wit are not the measures which fully define a **ZWEIHÄNDER** Character, far from it. Weaknesses and strengths are not expressed by the same categorizations used for beasts of burden or slaves. Nor indeed, are they simply a general predictor of outward behavior, but rather a deep and personal pair of flaws and strengths which define your very existence. In this world, the true monster is not a scaled drake or a pack of faceless bandits for you to conquer and parade through the main thoroughfares, where you are showered with adoration and coin. Rather, it is your fellow man, whose words conceal their intentions until you run afoul of their cruel intentions.

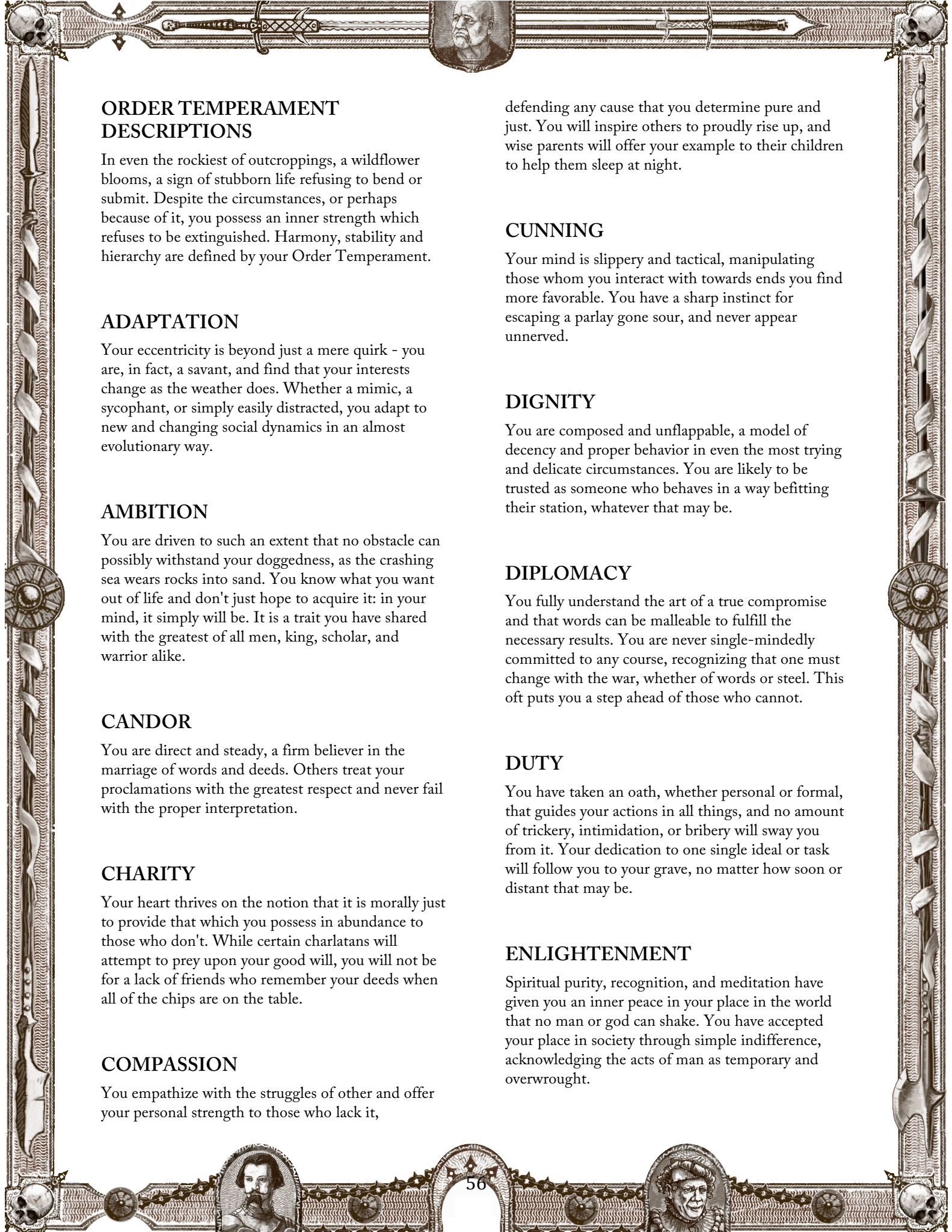
In this stage of creation, you will select one critical value which will largely determine your Character's personality for both good and ill. These Temperaments are role-playing tools, meant to aid you as you determine the choices and judgements your Character makes. In short, they are your weapons and weaknesses when engaging in tense social situations (such as during Social Intrigue). Put more simply and in broader terms, the first you select will likely be what keeps you alive, more than any well-drawn arrow. The latter is what will likely be your cause of demise. These two Temperaments are defined in the game as your Order and Chaos Temperaments.

DETERMINE YOUR TEMPERAMENTS

Note that all Temperaments are paired together; meaning, if you have Mystery as your Order Temperament, Exclusion is your Chaos Temperament. However, if you feel deviating from this formula will better round out the idea you have in your head for your Character's personality, you may select opposing Temperaments.

Determine your Temperaments by rolling Percentile Dice, consulting the table below. Alternatively, you may select your Order or Chaos Temperaments freely. Record it on the first page of your Character Sheet.

Percentile Dice	Order Temperament	Chaos Temperament
1 to 4	Adaptation	Incompetence
5 to 8	Ambition	Tyranny
9 to 12	Candor	Hatred
13 to 16	Charity	Scorn
17 to 20	Compassion	Martyrdom
21 to 24	Cunning	Deceit
25 to 28	Dignity	Melancholy
29 to 32	Diplomacy	Hypocrisy
33 to 36	Duty	Fatalism
37 to 40	Enlightenment	Detachment
41 to 44	Ferocity	Cruelty
45 to 48	Fervence	Fanaticism
49 to 52	Gentility	Cowardice
53 to 56	Gravitas	Vanity
57 to 60	Heroism	Mayhem
61 to 64	Humility	Pity
65 to 68	Impiety	Heresy
69 to 72	Independence	Rebellion
73 to 76	Mystery	Exclusion
77 to 80	Pride	Arrogance
81 to 84	Romanticism	Lechery
85 to 88	Skepticism	Cynicism
89 to 92	Sophistication	Gluttony
93 to 96	Wisdom	Vehemence
97 to 100	Wit	Rancor



ORDER TEMPERAMENT DESCRIPTIONS

In even the rockiest of outcroppings, a wildflower blooms, a sign of stubborn life refusing to bend or submit. Despite the circumstances, or perhaps because of it, you possess an inner strength which refuses to be extinguished. Harmony, stability and hierarchy are defined by your Order Temperament.

ADAPTATION

Your eccentricity is beyond just a mere quirk - you are, in fact, a savant, and find that your interests change as the weather does. Whether a mimic, a sycophant, or simply easily distracted, you adapt to new and changing social dynamics in an almost evolutionary way.

AMBITION

You are driven to such an extent that no obstacle can possibly withstand your doggedness, as the crashing sea wears rocks into sand. You know what you want out of life and don't just hope to acquire it: in your mind, it simply will be. It is a trait you have shared with the greatest of all men, king, scholar, and warrior alike.

CANDOR

You are direct and steady, a firm believer in the marriage of words and deeds. Others treat your proclamations with the greatest respect and never fail with the proper interpretation.

CHARITY

Your heart thrives on the notion that it is morally just to provide that which you possess in abundance to those who don't. While certain charlatans will attempt to prey upon your good will, you will not be for a lack of friends who remember your deeds when all of the chips are on the table.

COMPASSION

You empathize with the struggles of other and offer your personal strength to those who lack it,

defending any cause that you determine pure and just. You will inspire others to proudly rise up, and wise parents will offer your example to their children to help them sleep at night.

CUNNING

Your mind is slippery and tactical, manipulating those whom you interact with towards ends you find more favorable. You have a sharp instinct for escaping a parlay gone sour, and never appear unnerved.

DIGNITY

You are composed and unflappable, a model of decency and proper behavior in even the most trying and delicate circumstances. You are likely to be trusted as someone who behaves in a way befitting their station, whatever that may be.

DIPLOMACY

You fully understand the art of a true compromise and that words can be malleable to fulfill the necessary results. You are never single-mindedly committed to any course, recognizing that one must change with the war, whether of words or steel. This oft puts you a step ahead of those who cannot.

DUTY

You have taken an oath, whether personal or formal, that guides your actions in all things, and no amount of trickery, intimidation, or bribery will sway you from it. Your dedication to one single ideal or task will follow you to your grave, no matter how soon or distant that may be.

ENLIGHTENMENT

Spiritual purity, recognition, and meditation have given you an inner peace in your place in the world that no man or god can shake. You have accepted your place in society through simple indifference, acknowledging the acts of man as temporary and overwrought.

FEROCITY

The will you possess is capable of moving mountains, and comes with such a rush of passion and vigor that others are often forced into stunned awe. You are unlikely to break under torture or mental duress, possessing a well of emotional strength that at times seems unending.

FERVENCE

Your dedication to religious undertaking helps lead many a soul to greater understanding and provides the lost with a path to salvation and a sense of belonging. Others will be wary of crossing you, for it is believed that to cross you is to invite the wrath of higher judgment.

GENTILITY

Your simplicity is indicative of a pure heart, and never are your goals or desires second-guessed. You are most easily trusted, and never taken as a threat, often to the eventual chagrin of they who misjudge you.

GRAVITAS

You have an aura of charisma, depth of knowledge, and great competence, and your words carry weight as others fully put stock in your abilities. You can inspire men or terrify them, but either way, they will listen.

HEROISM

Willing and able to make the ultimate sacrifice in a world where it may not matter, you are unafraid of facing overwhelming odds, and indeed, perhaps draw a streak of inspiration and personal strength from it. You recognize well the value of the needs of the many.

HUMILITY

You are self-aware and cautious, aware of the limitations of your own abilities, or those of any man. Your quiet nature does not attract the attention of predators, either man or beast, and tends to find you

in situations more favorable to success than those who face you realize.

IMPIETY

No god has fed your belly, or filled your mug, nor will they make you stand on your feet or open your eyes in the morning. You are aggressively self-reliant and resistant to the manipulation of those who would have you bend your knee to an invisible man in the sky, pretty jewelry or nay.

INDEPENDENCE

Is it two scrapes and a bow or two ring kisses, a twirl, and a brown eye? You have no time for kings or princes or silly outfits and worshipping strips of cloth and walls of stone, knowing that one grey man is as good as another. As such, you're unlikely to get caught up in petty politics.

MYSTERY

You are an outsider, and a bemused misunderstanding of your ways and culture help you sidestep all sorts of inconveniences. Your social station is unclear, and therefore your path less muddled - an advantage afforded to very few.

PRIDE

That which you do is associated with the very quality of your name, and as such, is bound to perfection in your eyes, as nothing less will do. This dedication will serve you well in many respects, as such dedication is admirable and worthy of the greatest praise.

ROMANTICISM

You are amorous but dignified, a great pleasure to be around and viewed as charming and clever. You make excellent company at dinner parties and know great songs for bawdy taverns, and whether a harmless rake or a flattering lady, you are well liked in almost any company. Your imagination and lust for life flies in the face of contemporary social norms, and your company is highly sought after because of this.

SKEPTICISM

Nothing is as it seems, a lesson you've learned all too well and one that others seem too willing to repeatedly fail. You know better than to take anything at face value, believing in what your own eyes tell you and nothing more. Playing devil's advocate serves almost no risk, and potentially offers greater reward.

SOPHISTICATION

Your appreciation of the finer things is more than just a way to impress others. You are not a snob, as you appreciate pleasures of all kinds and class, acknowledging quality wherever it exists. In addition, your knowledge makes you well-rounded and culturally accepted.

WISDOM

You do not possess more knowledge than others; this simple realization is the very pillar upon which your advanced insight is perched. You simply know a way of patiently ruminating upon a greater number of contributing factors... and thinking first, speaking later.

WIT

There is both a science and an art to the way of words. Regardless of your proficiency with the former, you are a master of playfully manipulating the latter. Your cleverness can make mirth and stem the tide of an uncomfortable shift in a social engagement. Such mannerisms draw a willing audience to your charms.

CHAOS TEMPERAMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Regardless of whether it bleeds and festers, no one will come to pass to adulthood without a wound. The most serious of these is here, a personal failing that may be your undoing and undermine you whenever least opportune. Disorder, madness and unfiltered emotion are defined by your Chaos Temperament.

ARROGANCE

You are haughty and disliked, with your inflated sense of self-worth an insult to others. You are likely to view yourself as more capable than you are, and others will be more than willing to correct your mistake.

COWARDICE

You are passive and cautious to the point of being almost crippled with fear of conflict, unwilling to exert your meager will in even very favorable situations. Others will prey upon you, bullying their wills upon you, and you will never inspire more than pity among anyone else.

CRUELTY

Your willingness to act on your words is vicious, potentially even vile. For others, to follow you or know your presence is to invite pain you willingly impart.

CYNICISM

Your absolute lack of faith in any manner has led you to many misses in your life: opportunities, love, wealth, friendship. While others leave the ship of despair and strive for a shore not visible, you take sick comfort in that many of them will drown. You however, are guaranteed to.

DECEIT

Your trickery and lies make you untrustworthy and unsavory to others, and unlikely to be accepted as proper company. Friends are hard to come by, as your words have no face value, and if they find you no quarter, the aid of others is unlikely to provide a soft landing.

DETACHMENT

To the bulk of others, you are something of a mad hermit, too busy stargazing to notice or care for the suffering of others. Your thoughts are vague and muddled, and offer no comfort or benefit to those forced to survive in the here and now.

EXCLUSION

You are bizarre and exotic in a way most unsavory to those who expect a certain decorum, and even those of the lowest station will find you uncomfortable at best and an outright threat at worse. You are likely to run afoul of the law, and offend courts, and perhaps worst of all - you have a tendency to be noticed.

FANATICISM

Hand of either a just or cruel god, your unwavering dogma will cause the suffering and misfortune of many you come into contact with. You are the personification of the very foundation of oppression and will be viewed as a symbol of such. You shall be feared, but as a monster that must be hunted.

FATALISM

Your dedication to a single ideal has twisted your idea of free will into one you view as a fantasy and the purview of lesser men than yourself. As such, you almost believe that no course of action will change the course of events, and will resist any input that suggests otherwise.

GLUTTONY

You unbecomingly pursue creature comforts with a sick zeal unbecomingly, taking far more than your share and greedily hoarding from those who need so that you can fulfill any want. You are the target of many a guttersnipe who will want to fill your belly and head ... and empty your coin purse.

HATRED

The anger you barely contain explodes at inopportune times, burning all those close to you, friend and foe alike. As such, you are likely to inspire hatred in those who have felt your abuse, and situations under control will be lost to your impulse.

HERESY

Unclean and wicked thing! Your actions are irreverent to the point of blasphemy, and those who witness or know your nature will either be afraid of banishment to hell with you, or do their best to hasten that arrival.

HYPOCRACY

Others see you for what you are; a charlatan and a liar, unwilling or unable to be held to your words. Your judgments and insights are seen as false, and unlikely to be followed or trusted.

INCOMPETENCE

Foolish and without value is how others see you, your simple soft-spoken nature viewed as a failure of proper breeding, upbringing, or perhaps resulting from a nasty fall as a child. Either way, no one will view you as capable or trust you with anything but the most menial task.

LECHERY

Your lust is insatiable, and your predilections for physical, base needs tend to overwhelm even your best judgment. Perhaps worse, your taste in manners of the flesh can range from the unconventional to the unholy and even the sadistic.

MARTYRDOM

You are possessed with a dedication towards ending your life in a way that you view befits your destiny. You are not just willing to offer yourself as sacrifice, you pursue that day with a morbid zeal, eagerly anticipating the day you can turn yourself into a fable.

MAYHEM

You have a lack of focus and idiosyncrasy that practically invites chaos into the lives of all who come into contact with you. Worse still, you thrive off the social turmoil you cause. Not meant to necessarily imply the wanton spilling of blood, mayhem is a general whirlwind of confusion that follows your actions.

MELANCHOLY

Your empathy for the pain of others affects you too deeply, clouding your focus and stalling you from personal action. Your depression may manifest in many forms, whether from general social withdrawal to fear of even just conflict, or even bind you to your bed for days at a time.

PITY

What you view as kind and giving, others view as condescending and mocking. You will never be accepted by those to whom you offer your hand in aid, as it comes from generations of mistrust. What you naively view as good-hearted others view as manipulative and self-serving.

RANCOR

Regardless of a full head of hair or an upright back or smooth skin, at heart, you are old, cantankerous and cranky, set so firmly in your own knowledge and experiences that you snidely and openly dismiss others. You are viewed as a single minded codger, incapable and stodgy.

REBELLION

Alack, your intentions are valueless, traitor! You are an enemy to the crown and your actions are viewed as undermining to law and order and the established order of peace. Your chances of being put down in a particularly horrible manner, as an example to others, are quite great, I'm afraid.

SCORN

You are in love with the very sound of your own voice, and no one is more impressed with your wordy bon mots than you are. Your barbs are weapons and you employ them liberally. You had best hope that you save a particularly saucy one for your tombstone, because you well might need it!

TYRANNY

A natural leader, certainly, but towards all the wrong ends, you inspire those who listen to your words into

a hateful fervor and possess a paranoia and vindictive streak that can almost certainly be your undoing.

VANITY

Your dedication to your own self perfection is haughty and unseemly, and reflects your ugly judgment of those you see as lesser than you, which seems to be most everyone. The beautiful and accomplished will envy and hate you, the ugly and lazy will just skip straight to the hate.

VEHEMENCE

Your drive for personal gain will crush many beneath its bloated weight, friend, foe, and kin alike. You possess the strictest selfishness, where no means cannot be justified towards the conclusion you desire. In your mind, sacrifice is the price others pay to fulfill your vision.

TEMPERAMENT SCALE

Your Temperaments rest on a scale, with your Order Temperament at one end and your Chaos Temperament at the other. A value, or number, represents how closely you're aligned with either of these Temperaments. Through selfless acts which plays towards your Order Temperament (or lawfulness), the value changes positively. However, with destructive acts which plays towards your Chaos Temperament (or corruption), the value changes negatively. Once you reach either end of the scale, you are either rewarded or punished. Look at the top of the first page of the Character Sheet as an example.

During play, you will track your Character's Temperament Scale. The actions you take as the Character over the course of the Campaign changes the scale both positively and negatively, moving a certain number of steps. Think of it as a tug of war: as it is fluid, it moves both ways on the scale, an axiom representing the changing nature of your Character's moral choices.

There are many scenarios where you may change your Temperament Scale. Facing situations where intense fear and horror are at the forefront of the story, use of Racial Traits and Critically Failing some Skill Tests, may cause you to move the scale. These

situations are generally handled by the Gamemaster, falling beneath their purview. Overall, it will be as a result of your Character's personality flaring up at opportune (and inopportune) moments in the story.

Whenever a Character perform a selfish or immoral act, they move along the Temperament Scale towards their Chaos Temperament. Actions such as taking innocent lives or performing heinous criminal acts can lead a Character towards their Chaos Temperament. The number of steps you move is handled by the Gamemaster, influenced by the actions you take as your Character. Generally, you will move either one, two or three steps along the Scale at a time. Your Character will move at least once every other game session towards either direction, providing the pacing handled by the Gamemaster is set to underscore your Character's Temperaments during climactic moments.

EXAMPLE

Adam's Character has an Order Temperament of Mystery, and the Chaos Temperament of Exclusion. During the Game Session, the Gamemaster reveals a dangerous bit of information to Adam in secret. Adam's Character has the choice to reveal an important plot point to the other Player Characters or hold onto it. Unfortunately, knowledge of this information could prove potentially dangerous, putting Adam's Character to a point of mistrust with his comrades. Adam decides it may be best to hold onto this information, alienating himself from the others while shutting them out from the mysteries that only he understands. As the story led to this moment, not revealing the information taps into his Chaos Temperament of Exclusion. The Gamemaster, while satisfied that Adam was doing the right thing for his Character, requests he moves one step towards his Chaos Temperament.

On the other hand, whenever a Character performs an act which are considered to be selfless or good-natured - lending credence to order - they move along the Temperament Scale towards their Order Temperament. The number of steps you move is handled by the Gamemaster, influenced by the actions you take as your Character. Generally, you will move either one, two or three steps along the Scale at a time. Your Character will move at least once every other game session towards either direction, providing the pacing handled by the Gamemaster is set to underscore your Character's Temperaments during climactic moments.

EXAMPLE

As with the example above, Adam's Character learns an important clue which may drive the story in a very different direction. However, knowledge of this information may prove dangerous to others, carrying a risk that may incur harm upon those who know it. Yet, the answer to this conundrum may change the entire outcome of the adversity the player Characters have been facing. Without revealing everything, Adam decides to drop bits and pieces of the information to the other players indirectly, playing upon his mysterious ways while not outright revealing the full truth. As the story led to this moment, revealing bit of information taps into his Order Temperament of Mystery. The Gamemaster, while satisfied that Adam was doing the right thing for his Character, requests he moves one step towards his Order Temperament.

STARTING ON THE SCALE

Although your Character may have lived a life of excitement or even adventure before, it is assumed that all Character begin at a "neutral" position on the Temperament Scale immediately after Character Creation (unless a Drawback or Profession indicates otherwise).

REACHING CERTAIN THRESHOLDS

Whenever you reach 10 points in your Order Temperament, reward yourself with 1 Fate Point. This reflects the attentions certain gods - or even luck - has given in your favor.

However, when you reach 10 points in Chaos Temperament, you earn an Affliction. Your Affliction is always handled outside of the game, as you and the Gamemaster will work together to determine what may suit your Character best. Addiction, madness and mutation all convey what an Affliction can manifest as in **ZWEIHÄNDER**, and is handled strictly by the Gamemaster.

Despite passing beyond these thresholds, you always reset the Temperament Scale to neutral whenever you gain 10 points towards Chaos or Order. There is no upper limit to how many times the Temperament Scale can be reset or shifted, outside of the Gamemaster's discretion.

ROLE-PLAYING YOUR TEMPERAMENTS

Consider this axiom: the Order Temperaments are not intended for you to steer towards, nor the Chaos Temperaments to steer away from, to achieve some kind of nebulous success. You should think of longer-term development arcs where your strengths either overcome your failings or tragically do not. Consider the best books, movies, or video games you have experienced; you'll realize that this is how you can craft a memorable tale.

ORDER TEMPERAMENT

Take a moment after selecting to decide just how this quality came to be. Order Temperaments are more frequently the consequence of long term actions, perhaps the love and attention of a dedicated parent, or the mentoring of a wise journeyman or master, the positive teachings of a spiritual guide, or simply the result of a personal journey of self-awareness. These values, in short, define what has kept you sane in the harsh landscape.

It is vital that you frequently draw upon your Order Temperament when reacting to tense situations in-game. Role-playing your Order Temperament helps other Players understand the innate underpinnings of your Character's personality, and fashions an in-game reputation that carries beyond the table. It can forge alliances, build support amongst other non-player Characters and even create new avenues for your Character to follow.

CHAOS TEMPERAMENT

Unlike your Order Temperament, your Chaos Temperament is likely the result of a traumatic, quick and brutal event of some kind. What takes generations to build can be destroyed in a flash, and so is this particular part of your psyche. Consider what personal horror could have befallen you to give you these scars, and share them with your Gamemaster. In essence, your Chaos Temperament is your Order Temperament when fueled by anger, fear and unrelenting emotion.

It is vital that you to role-play your Chaos Temperament, just as much as your Order Temperament. **ZWEIHÄNDER** Characters are flawed; touched by the realities of the grim world around them. You should remember that your Character, no matter how new to the Campaign World that they may be, has been bruised (or even

deeply damaged) by life's experiences. Although a pious knight traditionally exemplifies valor and duty, there are visible chinks in their personality others notice. As before, don't be afraid to call out around the table when you're invoking your Chaos Temperament. It suggests that your Character is flawed, and calls upon your allies to make up for your Character's weakness by embracing their own Order Temperament.

FOR GOOD OR ILL?

The Temperaments make no judgments, that is left for the Players and the Gamemaster at their own discretion. To what ends these Order and Chaos Temperaments are deployed makes no moral supposition - for example, Heroism can easily be called upon in pursuit of a darker, nefarious purpose. Most importantly, don't consider the Order and Chaos Temperaments reversible in any strict "good" or "evil" paradigm, no matter how you choose to act upon them.

CALLING OUT TEMPERAMENTS

When confronted with tense situations where you're uncertain how your Character would act, look to their Temperaments. They provide a simple guide for how your Character perceives themselves and the world around them. However, if you're stumped, call out your Temperaments to the Gamemaster for guidance. They can help guide you on how to act, and provide incentives to help you find a desirable outcome. Don't be afraid to declare out-of-Character motives around the game table before your Character acts towards their Order Temperament! This is a helpful tool that can aid new role-players, particularly as they begin to understand what it means to extol upon the axiom of Temperaments.

The Gamemaster may even make the call that due to your Temperament that you'd succeed in certain social situations or even physical tasks where your Order Temperament would drive you towards success. All the same, they may also decide that your Chaos Temperament leads you towards failure or additional complication. Remember - your Character's Temperaments are merely a guide. They do not strictly bind you towards a specific outcome but they should define their general persona whom they portray outwardly and introspectively.

Sidebar: You Are Not A Caricature Of Your Temperaments

While your Temperaments are Intended as a Guideline towards the values that your Character holds most dear, you are not a puppet held up by only two strings. The sort of one switch, knee jerk reaction to every possible scenario doesn't realistically reflect how a fully fleshed individual would, or should, react. If you treat it as a simple gimmick, expect it to lose significance, and become something of a joke.

This applies both positively and negatively: if you consistently try to implausibly navigate your social interactions to where you can take advantage of your Order Temperament, despite how ludicrous the situation, expect the Gamemaster to disallow (or even suspend for a length of time) any benefit. By the same token, if you use your Chaos Temperament simply as a tool to harass or bicker with others, there are swifter and easier punishments that can come to bear: your growing reputation as a madman, a child, or a fool. In a grim & perilous world, that makes you low hanging fruit.

EVOLVING TEMPERAMENTS

Your Temperaments may change over the course of a Campaign. These sorts of changes are always the result of major events that transpire as you play your Character. Events that lead to such a shift in personality should be long in the making, rare or climactic enough to justify the change. Your Temperaments may change due to a traumatic experience where your Character is faced with the death of a loved one or friend, a particularly glorifying or unvirtuous choice you made, a frightening conclusion to a long story arc, the effect of madness or any other host of instances you and the Gamemaster feel appropriate.

While we provide no specific guidelines for how and when you should change your Temperaments, it is best to work with the Gamemaster to make those elections together as a result of completing larger story arcs or distinct changes in personality.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Players around the table will refer to you by this name during your in-Character conversations, so picking a name is very important to the Character Creation process. You likely have already thought about your Character's name by this point in the process. Others tend to find naming their Character one of the most difficult decisions to make. After all, you're going to have to live with it for some time!

There really aren't any strict naming conventions you should follow. However, it is best to consult your Gamemaster to pick a name that is appropriate to the Campaign setting. Selecting a name such as "Bobby II" may not fit within their vision of a Campaign set during the War of the Roses (but perhaps "Bold Robert" would). Similarly, silly fantasy names such as "Carlos the Dwarf" may not even be anywhere within the realm of acceptance. When in doubt, select something evocative that rolls off the tongue easily. Real-world names tend to work, particularly if they evoke the age of old antiquity (Germanic-sounding names work very well for those playing a Campaign set in the Old World). Informal names are fun as well, earned by your misdeeds or given by friends. Picking names with several consonants or otherwise unpronounceable names may be bothersome to other Players and the Gamemaster. But don't be afraid to get creative. Evocative names such as "Sebastian Bastian", "Blixia Killbride" or "Lars the Ninefinger" have a distinct ring to them; ones that aren't easily forgotten.

Consider the Campaign's milieu and other naming conventions that the Gamemaster may prefer before selecting a name. Once decided, go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your name. Alternatively, let the dice determine a suitable name, determined by your Character's sex and Social Class consulting the table below:

FEMALE NAMES

Percentile Dice	Lowborn	Burgher	Gentry	Aristocracy
1 to 5	Anne	Adele	Alexis	Anika
6 to 10	Blaire	Agnes	Annalyne	Calliope
11 to 15	Bree	Alma	Beatrix	Callista
16 to 20	Elle	Astrid	Constance	Cecilia
21 to 25	Eve	Blixia	Cordellia	Celeste
26 to 30	Gwen	Brigid	Dagmar	Eleanor
31 to 35	Jade	Chl��e	Elsa	Geneveve
36 to 40	Jeyne	Ester	Griselda	Imogene
41 to 45	June	Fiona	Helena	Iona

46 to 50	Kat	Greta	Johanna	Lucia
51 to 55	Kate	Gretel	Katherine	Madeline
56 to 60	Maude	Heidi	Klara	Margarette
61 to 65	Neve	Helen	Lenore	Matilda
66 to 70	Phinne	Ingrid	Magda	Melisandre
71 to 75	Pren	Lilly	Maxine	Nastasha
76 to 80	Raine	Meagan	Nadja	Nikita
81 to 85	Rose	Sorcia	Rosamund	Olivia
86 to 89	Rue	Svala	Saskia	Sadira
90 to 95	Shae	Willoe	Sophia	Ursula
96 to 100	Tate	Zilki	Veronika	Viktoria

MALE NAMES

Percentile Dice	Lowborn	Burgher	Gentry	Aristocracy
1 to 5	Boone	Caster	Abraham	Abernathy
6 to 10	Bröm	Chauncey	Brace	Balbanese
11 to 15	Ceol	Eustace	Brahms	Bannecker
16 to 20	Drake	Gaston	Cassius	Batista
21 to 25	Dutch	Hayden	Chesterfield	Carrington
26 to 30	Finn	Hugo	Eddard	Cassandra
31 to 35	Graf	Liam	Ephraim	Connifer
36 to 40	Hans	Lyndon	Frederich	Danziger
41 to 45	Jace	Manning	Hermann	Derrigan
46 to 50	Kard	Melmoth	Howland	Ellister
51 to 55	Kas	Nigel	Koenig	Gennedy
56 to 60	Lars	Orson	Laramie	Hamilton
61 to 65	Lem	Pavel	Luther	Hannibal
66 to 70	Lloyd	Quentin	Manning	Leopold
71 to 75	Miles	Roelun	Rickard	Levensly
76 to 80	Mose	Rutger	Royce	Reginald
81 to 85	Nial	Simon	Samuel	Sebatian
86 to 89	Pierce	Stanton	Ulrich	Splendrid
90 to 95	Rue	Weymar	Vancourt	Templeton
96 to 100	Vance	Wilhelm	Werner	Vessimir

STEP VIII: HAND OF FATE

Player Characters in **ZWEIHÄNDER** often face insurmountable odds. Your Character may stand wrongly accused with the threat of maiming by a corrupt bailiff, being wholly devoured by an inexplicable abomination within the depths of a lake, plummeting to their doom from the face of a cliff, succumbing to miasma an sickness amidst a plague, drink from a poisoned cup by the hand of a rival or accidentally blasting their own head off while reloading a blunderbuss.

Simply being at the wrong place at the wrong time can result in an unfortunate end, and skill alone won't remedy every situation. Chaos is a powerful force,

and misfortune awaits you at every turn. This is where Fate Points come into play. They represent some distant god's (or daemon's) advocacy for your well-being. Destiny, for whatever reason, has picked your Character above all others. Whether it is to be a martyr, dying an unsung death save by a few or a vainglorious hero, lording over all they have subjugated, is unknown to you. Wittingly or not, you and your fellow player's Characters have been selected for some greater, shared purpose. You're no mere cut-from-the-same-cloth citizen; you've been specially chosen. But likely, you don't know why or what purpose your Character is meant to serve... yet.

STARTING FATE POINTS

Whenever you first create your Character in the Basic Tier for a **ZWEIHÄNDER** game, you begin play with 3 Fate Points. Record your total Fate Points on the second page of your Character Sheet.

USING FATE POINTS

Fate Points can be sacrificed at any point during a Game Session to escape Damage, Injury and death. They are akin to "get out of jail for free cards", allowing your Character to rewrite their immediate past to change their future. We'll talk more about how Fate Points are spent in **Chapter ???: Combat**.

STEP IX: ADOPT YOUR PROFESSION

Now that you have the basics of the Character Creation completed, move to the next **Chapter XXX: Professions** to put the final touches on your grim & perilous Character. You'll adopt your Professional Trait and spend your starting Reward Points. Once completed, you'll be ready to play a game of **ZWEIHÄNDER**!

PROFESSIONS

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND REWARD POINTS

As the Campaign progresses, your Character will acquire new expertise. After surviving dangerous adventures, unraveling vast political conspiracies, surviving the wilds, driving away horrific abominations and defeating the machinations of the just and unjust alike, you begin to elicit mastery over your own abilities. Forged through the fires of adversity, the sum of these experiences cause your Character to improve in several different ways. In a grim & perilous world, loss means as much to the learning experience as victory. While losing can be cruel and harsh, those who live take away invaluable knowledge and improve upon their proficiencies to be better prepared for future challenges.

Killing fantastical monsters can be the assumed way to develop Characters with some role-playing games; this is not so with **ZWEIHÄNDER**. This system advocates that players be appropriately rewarded for staying In-Character around the game table and playing out your Character's Blessing and Curse in tense situations. To reflect this, you gain what are called Reward Points (sometimes called "RP") - a form of "currency" given as a benefit to spend on improving your Character's abilities. Reward Points are given by your Gamemaster to reflect your Character's ongoing journey, a mix of both failure and success in their endeavors and how they psychologically overcame these challenges.

You can generally assume that the Gamemaster will hand out around 50-100 Reward Points at the end of every Game Session, distributed equally to each player. Reward Points come from playing your Character's Blessing and Curse, participating in Social Intrigue, surviving conflict and mastering the world around you. Above all else, you are awarded Reward Points for role-playing and participation in the game around the table.

SPENDING REWARD POINTS

As you gain Reward Points, new doors open for your Character. You begin to pick up new aptitudes within and beyond what your starting Profession has taught you. The sum of these experiences is encapsulated through the Tier system.

All Characters start out in Basic Tier. This Tier requires you to improve certain characteristics, until you've completed all of your training and move into the next Tier. However, as you move into the Intermediate Tier and Advanced Tier, you may grow in ways more appropriate to the story and narrative, customizing your Character into someone truly unique.

There are four different types of Advances you may make by spending Reward Points:

- **PROFESSIONAL TRAITS** - You pick up the trait in your Profession. They vary wildly from Profession to Profession, always underscoring the primary area of expertise within the Profession. Each Profession, whether a Standard or Elite, possesses one Professional Trait.
- **SKILL RANKS** - You gain training and raw bonuses to your Skills, otherwise referred to by Apprentice, Journeyman and Master Skill Ranks. For each Skill Rank, you gain a +10 Base Chance to use that skill. Furthermore, Skill Ranks are cumulative; this means a Character who has purchased all Skill Ranks in a single Skill could have a +30 Base Chance to succeed a Skill Test.
- **BONUS ADVANCES** - You gain a raw bonus to your Primary Attribute Bonus, rewarding you with a +1 each time you purchase one. For instance, if you have a Combat Bonus (CB) of 4 and purchase a Bonus Advance in Combat, your new Combat Bonus (CB) is now 5.
- **TALENTS** - You gain knacks or special abilities which either augment a way a Skill can be used or provide a new option your Character may utilize. Talents, while diverse, help clarify some of the more distinct perks a Profession may employ.

In addition to the above four Advances, your Gamemaster may grant you the ability to spend Reward Points on Unique Advances. We'll talk more about this later.

WHAT IS A TIER?

A Tier is measurement of competence, profiling a Character's experiences over the course of a

Campaign. Each Tier represents a collection of choices you've made. In **ZWEIHÄNDER**, there are three Tiers - Basic, Intermediate and Advanced.

Each Tier has a certain number of required Advances a Character must have before moving onto a new Tier and Profession. The Basic Tier limits you to spend Reward Points in a few specific ways, outlined in your Profession's description. However, as you are promoted to the Intermediate Tier and Advanced Tier, these limitations are entirely removed as you develop your Character towards a new Profession. Characters will automatically gain promotion into the next Tier by fulfilling all of the required Advances from the previous Tier and making their first Reward Points expenditure into the Professional Trait of their new Profession.

AUTHORING YOUR PROFESSION

At this point in the Character creation process, you should already know what Standard Profession your Character begins in. It is assumed that your Character has spent most of their adult life in this Profession, but is approaching the beginning of a new path. You are able to completely customize your Character during the creation process - even if you and another Character share the same Profession:

- Record any trappings, weapons and armor your Profession gives you on the Character Sheet. You can visit **Chapter ???: Trappings** to copy their related attributes and Qualities later in the process.
- You had previously received 1,000 Reward Points during the Character creation process. These Reward Points are immediately spent during this process to customize your Character. This means you can mix and match Talents, Skill Ranks and Bonus Advances in any fashion you wish before you begin play.

STARTING OUT BASIC TIER

When you first start out in your Standard Profession during Character creation, you are already in your Basic Tier. You'll note that on each Profession's page there are several things you may purchase with Reward Points.

BUY YOUR FIRST PROFESSIONAL TRAIT

You must immediately spend 100 Reward Points to adopt your first Profession. Find the Professional Trait your Profession confers your Character in the pages ahead. Once purchased, go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your Professional Trait and its related benefits.

Mark the oval on the front page of your Character Sheet called Basic Tier.

SPEND REMAINING REWARD POINTS IN BASIC TIER

You should have 900 Reward Points remaining. Before you begin your first play session, immediately spend them however you'd like following the requirements below. Each of these Advances costs 100 Reward Points. You may purchase these in any order you may desire.

Note you must fulfill the following minimum requirements before moving into Intermediate Tier:

- Your new Profession has several Skills tied to it. You must spend Reward Points to purchase all ten of these Skills. Once purchased, you automatically gain Skill Rank: Apprentice in these Skills. This grants a +10 Base Chance to use that Skill. You'll note that some Skills possess Expertise. These are special perks which allows you to use your Skills in very distinct ways with an additional bonus. Any time you gain a Skill Rank in a Skill, you also gain a Expertise. Mark the ovals for each Skill Rank on the front page of your Character Sheet, and Expertise underneath your Background.
- Each Profession has a list of Bonus Advances tied to them. You must spend Reward Points to purchase all seven of these Bonus Advances. Each grants a cumulative +1 to your Primary Attribute Bonus. Once purchased, go to the first page of the Character Sheet and mark the oval that says Advances beside the related Primary Attribute. Adjust the related Primary Attribute Bonus.
- You must purchase three Talents listed in your new Profession's description. Once purchased, go the first page of the Character Sheet and record the Talent and related benefits.

Once you have purchased the Professional Trait, ten Skill Ranks, seven Bonus Advances and three Talents, you are almost ready to move into the Intermediate Tier.

INTERMEDIATE TIER

The Intermediate Tier represents a new chapter in your Character's life. While they've spent most of their lives in their Basic Tier and in their old Standard Profession, this new Tier represents a new perspective and vista for their life. While their experiences during their Basic Tier have given them a solid starting point, the Intermediate Tier is where you begin to be challenged in ways the Gamemaster sets out. During Intermediate Tier, you'll move into a new Profession and adopt some of its related techniques.

SELECT YOUR SECOND PROFESSION

The Intermediate Tier reflects what your Character is becoming, as opposed to who they had been. Take under consideration the sum of events - the story, adventures and experiences your Character has gone through - before selecting a new Profession. When moving into the new Profession, you continue to draw from your past and never lose your old abilities or traits. Before moving into Intermediate Tier, you should peruse the Standard Professions that are within your Archetype to get an idea which one you wish to adopt. Providing it is within your same Archetype, you may move freely into any other Standard Profession. For instance, perhaps you were a Sellsword who over time was decorated amongst the royal army, decorated for service. This would be a good opportunity to consider becoming a Man-at-Arms. Or maybe your Character was an unscrupulous Cheapjack, swindling and cheating others. Your Cheapjack may cast aside their gaudy copper-laden trappings of their previous career and take upon the mantle of a true Artisan. These examples spell out the importance of Gamemaster's story and how it should influence the choice you make for your next Profession.

You may select freely any other Standard Profession within the same Archetype. It is assumed that all Professions, while distinct from one another, shared a common bond of training and is a fairly trivial matter to move into. You may even qualify to move into an Elite Profession, providing you meet any related

listed prerequisites. Should you elect to move into an Elite Profession or another Standard Profession outside of your Archetype, the Gamemaster must sanction the switch.

BUY YOUR SECOND PROFESSIONAL TRAIT

You must spend 200 Reward Points to adopt your second Profession, regardless of whether its a Standard Profession or Elite Profession. Find the Professional Trait your Profession confers your Character in the pages ahead. Once purchased, go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your Professional Trait and its related benefits. Additionally, mark the oval on the front page of your Character Sheet called Intermediate Tier.

SPENDING REWARD POINTS IN INTERMEDIATE TIER

You must fulfill the following minimum requirements before moving into Advanced Tier. Each of these Advances costs 200 Reward Points. As before, you may purchase these in any order you may desire:

- Your new Profession has several Skills tied to it. You must spend Reward Points to purchase all ten of these Skills. Once purchased, you automatically gain a Skill Rank in these Skills (and any Expertise if the Skill grants one). If you already have Skill Rank: Apprentice from Basic Tier, instead mark Skill Rank: Journeyman. Each grants a cumulative +10 Base Chance to use that Skill. Mark the ovals for each Skill Rank on the front page of your Character Sheet, and Expertise underneath your Background.
- Each Profession has a list of Bonus Advances tied to them. You must spend Reward Points to purchase all seven of these Bonus Advances. Each grants a cumulative +1 to your Primary Attribute Bonus. Once purchased, go to the first page of the Character Sheet and mark the oval that says Advances beside the related Primary Attribute. Adjust the related Primary Attribute Bonus.
- You must purchase three Talents listed in your new Profession's description. If you already possess the Talent from your previous Profession, work with your Gamemaster to select an alternative one that

suits the feel of the Profession and your Character's experiences in the Campaign thus far. Once purchased, go the first page of the Character Sheet and record the Talent and related benefits.

Once you have purchased the Professional Trait, ten Skill Ranks, seven Bonus Advances and three Talents, you are almost ready to move into the Advanced Tier.

ADVANCED TIER

The Advanced Tier is the final chapter in your Character's adventuring life, representative of their total growth over the course of the Campaign. Challenges posed to your Character's Skills are likely easy overcome, as they've grown to such great heights that you can overcome obstacles in ways others cannot.

SELECT YOUR FINAL PROFESSION

You should take under consideration the sum of events - the story, adventures and experiences your Character has gone through - before selecting a new Profession. When moving into the new Profession, you continue to draw from your past and never lose your old abilities or traits. Before moving into Advanced Tier, you should peruse the Standard Professions that are within your Archetype to get an idea which one you wish to adopt. Providing it is within your same Archetype, you may move freely into any other Standard Profession. Perhaps the Sellsword who became a Man-at-Arms was disgraced and shamed, leaving their previous life behind to become a Hedge Knight. Maybe the greedy Cheapjack turned Artisan took to the road to sell their wares, becoming a Coachmaster. These examples spell out the importance of Gamemaster's story and how it should influence the choice you make for your next Profession.

You may select freely any other Standard Profession within the same Archetype. It is assumed that all Professions, while distinct from one another, shared a common bond of training and is a fairly trivial matter to move into. You may even qualify to move into an Elite Profession, providing you meet any related listed prerequisites. Should you elect to move into an Elite Profession or another Standard Profession outside of your Archetype, the Gamemaster must sanction the switch.

BUY YOUR FINAL PROFESSIONAL TRAIT

You must spend 300 Reward Points to adopt your third and final Profession, regardless of whether its a Standard Profession or an Elite Profession. Find the Professional Trait your Profession confers your Character in the pages ahead. Once purchased, go to the first page of the Character Sheet and record your Professional Trait and its related benefits. Additionally, mark the oval on the front page of your Character Sheet called Advanced Tier.

SPENDING REWARD POINTS IN ADVANCED TIER

You must fulfill these basic requirements before completing your Advanced Tier. Each of these Advances costs 300 Reward Points. As before, you may purchase these in any order you may desire:

- Your new Profession has several Skills tied to it. You must spend Reward Points to purchase all ten of these Skills. Once purchased, you automatically a Skill Rank in these Skills (and any Expertise if the Skill grants one). If you already have Skill Rank: Apprentice from Basic or Intermediate Tier, instead mark Skill Rank: Journeyman. If instead you already have Skill Rank: Journeyman from Intermediate Tier, instead mark Skill Rank: Mastery. Each grants a cumulative +10 Base Chance to use that Skill. Mark the ovals for each Skill Rank on the front page of your Character Sheet, and Expertise underneath your Background.
- Each Profession has a list of Bonus Advances tied to them. You must spend Reward Points to purchase all seven of these Bonus Advances. Each grants a cumulative +1 to your Primary Attribute Bonus. Once purchased, go to the first page of the Character Sheet and mark the oval that says Advances beside the related Primary Attribute. Adjust the related Primary Attribute Bonus.
- You must purchase three Talents listed in your new Profession's description. If you already possess the Talent from your previous Profession, work with your Gamemaster to select an alternative one that suits the feel of the Profession and your Character's experiences in the Campaign thus far. Once purchased, go the first page

of the Character Sheet and record the Talent and related benefits.

Once you have purchased the Professional Trait, ten Skill Ranks, seven Bonus Advances and three Talents, you have completed the Advanced Tier. Your Character has officially reached the upper limits of their potential in **ZWEIHÄNDER!** Your Gamemaster likely has in mind one last final session. Likely it will be a big blow-out game where all of your past trials and tribulations come to an end, resulting in either your death or retirement into the chronicles of the Campaign World. Or, perhaps Gamemaster may let the story continue as you play your Character as an epic representative of heroism.

UNIQUE ADVANCES

In select cases, the Gamemaster may feel your Character has earned a special reward, either from good role-playing or the completion of a major story arc. While there are normally other prerequisites set in place by the rules to govern how you can purchase Skills and Talents, your Gamemaster may override these requirements at their discretion.

EXAMPLE

The Characters have spent a number of months in the frigid north. They found most of their days and nights in the wilderness, exposed to the elements while having to rely off the land for sustenance. The Gamemaster decides to award each player with one free Skill Rank in Survival.

Similarly, you may have a very good justification to begin play with a Skill or Talent your Profession is barred from gaining during the Character creation process. Under these conditions, consult your Gamemaster and provide a logical, story-based justification to begin with an Unique Advance. The Gamemaster will make the final decision regarding whether you acquire it. You cannot begin play with more than one Unique Advance, and it is always at the approval of the Gamemaster. Be sure to indicate this Unique Advance under the Background section on the first page of your Character Sheet.

EXAMPLE

Your Character spent the majority of their youth lashed to the “wheel of pain”, grinding grain for years and years. The Gamemaster decided to let your Character begin play with the Long Winded Talent.

REMAINING IN THE SAME PROFESSION

Sometimes you may feel comfortable with the Profession your Character is already in. Instead of selecting a new Profession, you’ll copy down the same Skills and Bonus Advances onto the Character Sheet, following the same examples above with how you purchase them with Reward Points. However, you will not copy over Talents; instead, you’ll work with the Gamemaster to select three new Talents you can purchase with Reward Points. But the penalty for remaining in the same Profession is that you do not get a new Professional Trait.

FINAL WORD ABOUT ADVANCEMENT

ZWEIHÄNDER provides a vast number of options to players. This decision can be a bit overwhelming to players new to this system. We encourage you to make decisions to select your new Standard or Elite Profession based on the progress of the story and how it relates to your Archetype. While some players may wish to plot out their entire Character’s path of growth ahead of time, we actively discourage this sort of behavior. The decision for what Skills to gain Skill Ranks in, Talents to pick up, new Professions to move to and Primary Attributes Bonuses to advance in should evolve with your Character’s interactions and progress within the Campaign World. We openly advocate that you set aside any predetermined notions about the best build and other traditional role-playing game conventions for “min/maxing” your Character’s abilities. Let the story itself carry your Character in whichever direction the Campaign plays out!

WHAT ARE SKILLS?

When commandeering a runaway carriage, pilfering a ledger unnoticed from a workshop, menacing over others to persuade them to leave, haggling over the price of a sausage pie, fire a gunpowder weapon properly or focusing your mind to withstand the Corruption-blasting effects of terrors from beyond the stars, Characters are armed with proficiencies to overcome them. Skills encapsulate a particular kind of knowledge, distinct from one another but all equally important.

Skill Tests represent the core mechanic of the **ZWEIHÄNDER** system in action. The Gamemaster will call upon you to make Skill Tests as a reaction to a decision you made for your Character during Combat, Social Intrigue and Wilderness Travel. They are a response to challenges and events that transpire during the Game Session. Their use and outcome can vary wildly, far above and beyond simple success or failure. The Skill descriptions describe in general terms how they can be used. However, there are a number of ways Skills can be used above and beyond each entry.

SKILLS ARE DERIVED FROM PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

Each Skill is directly associated with a Primary Attribute. For instance, the Interrogate Skill is based on the Willpower Primary Attribute, as it relies on a force of personality to coerce others to tell the truth. In another example, Characters who possess high Brawn will naturally be better with physical-based Skills, whereas someone who possesses a high Perception will be better with observational-based Skills.

Sidebar: Substituting Primary Attributes

Every Skill references a Primary Attribute, as listed in its description. However, there are certain cases where your Gamemaster may allow you to substitute a different Primary Attribute. One particular case would be the substitution of Fellowship in place of Brawn for cases whenever someone attempts to use the Intimidate Skill through force of personality. The Gamemaster will always make these calls, should there be an exception to the rule.

SKILL RANKS

Skill Ranks represent a further focus within a Skill, providing mechanical bonuses beyond the fold of raw

ability. These are clarified as “Apprentice”, “Journeyman” and “Master”. Each of these Skill Ranks provides a cumulative bonus, added together whenever a Skill Test is made. Beyond their mechanical modifiers, they also inform the level of mastery a Character may possess. For instance, it is helpful to distinguish between one who’s merely an Apprentice or a Master of Tradecraft. When considering your Character’s capabilities and how to reference them in-Character, they provide a keyword to frame your Character’s level of experience.

You should immediately be able to identify these distinctions if you’re using the official Character sheet. The Apprentice Skill Rank confers a +10 Base Chance. Journeyman Skill grant an additional +10 Base Chance. Finally, the Master Skill Rank grants a final +10 Base Chance. All Skill Ranks are cumulative, so the most prodigious of Characters will gain a potential +30 Base Chance by Advanced Tier.

Sidebar: Why Is My Base Chance To Use Skills So Low?

It is easy to see that overall Base Chance to succeed Skill Tests are relatively low. Unlike other role-playing games, **ZWEIHÄNDER** assumes that the Gamemaster only calls for Skill Tests when your Character faces a measure of immediate duress or risk. Essentially, this means your Character doesn’t have to make a Ride or Drive Test to simply wind down the path, but may call upon you to make a Skill Test should you face a torrential downpour or forced to navigate a tightly-wound trail while being pursued by the city watch. Tough choices and evaluating risk versus reward is the backbone of any worthy grim & perilous game. Characters face uncertainty with all avenues.

However, this should encourage you to think about how your Character should prepare for the worst and find opportunities as challenges arise. Push things into your Character’s favor and don’t be afraid to explore alternative solutions. For instance, should you have a poor Athletics Skill but need to climb the face of a garden manse’s wall, perhaps you should look around the environment to find something to give you a boost. Or, maybe you have a middling Stealth Skill but need to trail a city watchman; consider moving around when it is twilight, or trail them in disguise amongst a crowd during daylight. What if you need to find your way along a river but lack the Pilot Skill? Use your Bargain Skill to hire a boatman to do the work for you! Think outside the

box, but within the context of the situation your Character faces. Turning your own innate disadvantage into a more advantageous front is paramount.

But remember, ZWEIHÄNDER is about all player Characters, and not just yours alone. If all else fails, lean on your fellow players for guidance or help. After all, you're ALL just a step away from uncertain doom and have no one else but each other to rely upon.

GAINING NEW SKILLS

Characters will grow in strength with Skills they already possess, and develop new competencies as time goes on. Learning new Skills is not only important from a survivability perspective, but it also helps flesh out the direction your Character has gone in the story. You can learn new Skills and gain Skill Ranks by moving into new Professions. This is covered in the previous Chapter XXX: Professions.

SKILL FOCUS

Some Skills possess a "Focus", reflecting a particular knack or specialization in its use. For instance, the Skulduggery Skill has several Focuses, including Lock picking and Pickpocket. Whenever you acquire a new Skill Rank in a Skill, you may freely select a Focus.

You may possess more than one Focus in a Skill. This means that you may acquire up to three total Focuses in one Skill over the course of Basic, Intermediate and Advanced Tier. However, you can never have more Focuses in any number of Skills at excess of your Intelligence Bonus (IB).

EXAMPLE

Graf von Beck has an Intelligence Bonus (IB) of 4. Currently, he has Skill Ranks and the related Focuses: Charm (Singing), Education (Cartography) and Skulduggery (Lock picking). He gains a Skill Rank in Skulduggery again, and elects to gain Focus in Skulduggery again with Pickpocket. This is as many Focuses he can gain, unless his Intelligence Bonus (IB) increases over time.

BENEFITS OF SKILL FOCUS

Whenever you use a Skill with its Focus together, you may ignore any penalties your Character is currently suffering from due to your Peril Condition.

EXAMPLE

Graf von Beck is attempting to woo a number of ladies-in-waiting as an attendant in court. He knows it will require use of the Charm Skill. However, Graf had previously suffered humiliation before the court's attendants, currently suffering a -20% Base Chance to all Skill Tests due to his current Peril Condition. Drawing upon his Focus in Charm (Seduction), he indicates that his singing may come in handy, allowing him to overcome his current Peril Condition penalties.

SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

This section details all Skills in ZWEIHÄNDER, listed in alphabetical order. We've included a few common examples of how these Skills can be put to use. However, you may utilize them in unique or different ways other than illustrated here. While the descriptions provide a good guideline, we encourage you to be creative when explaining how you wish to use them or work with your Gamemaster to better understand how they can be employed.

FOCUSES ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE BETA

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTE

Each Skill is governed by a Primary Attribute. It provides the first raw value that you add to determine your Base Chance.

COMMON OR SPECIAL SKILL?

Following the Primary Attribute in parenthesis, you will be able to see whether the Skill is Common or Special. Common Skills can be used by anyone, meaning that they can be used without Skill Ranks. They represent a broad base of knowledge every character in ZWEIHÄNDER may attempt to use without having focus in it.

SPECIAL SKILLS

Special Skills are a cut above an Common Skill, as they require a greater level of study and proficiency to use. They are not commonly known, requiring a lot more forethought and planning to use. Therefore, those without a Skill Rank within them have an elevated difficulty to succeed using them. If your Character has a Skill Rank in a Special Skill, they possess something remarkably different than others.

Special Skills can be used by those without Skill Ranks in them, but you must flip the results to fail with them (as indicated in **Chapter XXX: How To Play**).

SPECIAL USES

Several Skills have entries for Special Uses of a Skill. These are suggested ways you can use Skills in a significant way, outside the fabric of how a Skill is traditionally put to use. While they aren't comprehensive, they give you a guideline to follow when considering how you wish to use your Skills in a game of ZWEIHÄNDER.

Skulduggery	Agility	Special
Stealth	Agility	Common
Survival	Perception	Common
Toughness	Brawn	Common
Tradecraft	Willpower	Special
Warfare	Intelligence	Special

SKILL LISTINGS INCOMPLETE

Skill	Primary Attribute	Type
Alchemy	Intelligence	Special
Athletics	Brawn	Common
Awareness	Perception	Common
Bargain	Fellowship	Common
Charm	Fellowship	Common
Coordination	Agility	Common
Counterfeit	Intelligence	Special
Discipline	Willpower	Common
Disguise	Fellowship	Special
Drive	Brawn	Common
Eavesdrop	Perception	Special
Education	Intelligence	Special
Folklore	Intelligence	Common
Gamble	Intelligence	Common
Guile	Fellowship	Common
Handle Animal	Fellowship	Special
Heal	Intelligence	Special
Incantation	Willpower	Special
Interrogation	Willpower	Special
Intimidate	Brawn	Common
Leadership	Fellowship	Special
Martial Melee	Combat	Special
Martial Ranged	Combat	Special
Navigation	Intelligence	Special
Pilot	Agility	Special
Ride	Agility	Common
Rumor	Fellowship	Common
Scrutinize	Perception	Common
Simple Melee	Combat	Common
Simple Ranged	Combat	Common

TALENTS

Life in a grim & perilous world can be incredibly harsh and dangerous. Daring feats can make the difference between life and death. While Characters are cut from the same cloth, Talents allows you to stand out from one another. These Talents are derived through practice, training and experience, learned from the harsh rigors your Characters struggle through. They can also be a refinement of natural aptitudes and capabilities, with a unique finesse unseen by others. Ultimately, Talents amplify Skills and allow you to express them in ways to “break” the standard rules of ZWEIHÄNDER.

All Professions possess three unique Talents. You will accumulate knowledge and invest Reward Points to learn additional Talents over the course of the Campaign. Whereas a Skill represents an innate sense of how to do something, a Talent illustrates a particular knack or focus within the Skill, allowing you to take particular advantage of your abilities. With the right combination of Talents, your chances of survival increases significantly.

HOW TO USE TALENTS

Unlike Skills, Talents do not require any thought to employ. They are innate abilities that act as “riders” to the actions your Character takes during play. Once a Character has gained a Talent, it becomes a part of them - akin to Primary Attributes, but they are instead learned over the course of their experience.

Unless specified otherwise, you may use Talents freely without having to dedicate Action Points to employ their use in combat.

As mentioned before, you cannot gain the same Talent more than once. If you’ve moved into a Profession which grants you the same Talent, work with your Gamemaster to find a more suitable one.

Sidebar: Talents With The Same Benefit?

There may be a few unique situations where the benefits derived from Talents are trumped by Professional Traits or Racial Traits. On the other hand, it is entirely possible that a Talent will be of greater use to you than another trait. In these specific cases, you may employ them however you wish, with your Gamemaster’s approval. While we don’t want the game to break the game down into a rules’ argument, we empower you as the Player to make

good, judicious choices and work with your Gamemaster when there is any confusion.

PREREQUISITES?

Not all Talents are made equal. Some may be more preferable than others, catering to a specific build or Character type you prefer. While we’ve used an underlying general guideline within their design, some may be perceived as potentially more powerful than others. Your Profession will state which Talents are made available to you.

TALENT DESCRIPTIONS

Listed below are each of the Talents with flavor text and a full description of their use. You can also reference the summary tables to determine what the prerequisites are and a brief explanation of its benefits.

AMBIDEXTERITY

You can use both hands with equal finesse.

Effect: You never suffer penalties when using tools or weapons in either hand. If you ever suffer an Injury where you cannot use your primary hand, you do not suffer penalties to use your off-hand. This applies for when you’ve been Disarmed as well.

APPALLING MIEN

People are disturbed by your presence. Providing you outnumber or outwit your opponents with a show of strength, you may invoke apprehension and terror in those who encounter you.

Effect: When you succeed a Intimidate Test against one foe, they will not attack you unless you threaten to harm them. You cannot use this Talent against someone you’ve already inflicted Damage or Peril to, or made an attempt to strike them.

ARBALEST’S SPEED

Expertly, you prime another shot, ready another arrow or reload another stone to strike your enemy expertly.

Effect: Whenever you begin to Load a ranged weapon, make a successful Coordination Test to

Load it without spending Action Points. If failed, try again on your next Turn.

AZIMUTH

You have an aptitude for not getting lost on a starry night.

Effect: When you can see the stars, you gain a +20 Base Chance to Navigation Tests. Additionally, you always know true north, even during inclement weather.

BAD AXX!

Armed with two insanely vicious weapons, you relentlessly cleave into the fray with both hands. This is a particular favorite of Dwarfven Slayers whose predilection for this particular fighting style cannot be denied.

Effect: Whenever you wield a melee weapon in either hand, you may roll twice to make a Melee Attack. If successful, use Damage from the weapon in your primary hand. However, if you do not possess Ambidexterity, you must flip the results to fail one of the rolls you make for a Melee Attack.

BEATDOWN

You are an unscrupulous cur, opting to strike joints and other vital areas instead of putting up a fair fight.

Effect: Whenever you spend all 3 Action Points to Take Aim and then make a successful Melee Attack, you may trigger a Takedown for 0 Action Points. You must attack with weapons possessing the Weak Quality to utilize this Talent.

BLOOD MAGICK

With great practice, you have learned to bend the powers of disorder to your whim. However, every dark gift requires a sacrifice in return.

Effect: After you have made an appropriate sacrifice (a beloved kitten or puppy for Petty Magick, a large farm animal like a cow or sheep for Lesser Magick or a living person for Greater Magick), you can cause any one foe to automatically fail to Resist your

Magicks within the next 24 hours. You can only make a sacrifice like this once per day.

BRICK HOUSE

You have great strength and strike foes with your fists like a ton of bricks.

Effect: Whenever you spend all 3 Action Points to Take Aim and then make a successful Melee Attack, you may trigger a Stunning Blow for 0 Action Points. You must attack with weapons possessing the Weak Quality to utilize this Talent.

CAROUSING

You're accustomed to staying out all night, and too often finding yourself drinking everyone else underneath the table. Whenever you are drunk, are you a friendly drunk or a mean drunk? You choose, but only after you've taken your first drink.

Effect: Whenever you are Intoxicated, will you be a friendly drunk or a mean drunk? If you're a friendly drunk, gain a +10 Base Chance to Charm Tests during this time. If you're a mean drunk, gain a +10 Base Chance to Intimidate Tests during this time. You may make this choice every time you choose to drink.

CHEAP SHOT

When an attacker is stupid enough to expose their groin when turning away your attack, you use that opportunity to kick them in the tender parts as a low blow.

Effect: If a foe successfully Parries your Melee Attack, immediately make a bare-handed Opportunity Attack.

CLINCH FIGHTER

You are a natural wrestler, using paralyzing grapples in bare-handed combat.

Effect: You penalize your foe's ability to Resist a Chokehold and Dirty Tricks, along with their chances to Shake It Off. It is now a (Hard -20%) Test. Additionally, whenever you use a Chokehold, you move your foe two steps down the Peril Condition Track, instead of one.

COOL HAND

You have a rock-steady hand, bearing your weapons with a calm grip.

Effect: Whenever you make an attack with a ranged weapon into an Engagement where you may accidentally hit one of your comrades, you ignore the penalties normally associated with it.

DASTARDLY MANEUVERS

Despite the unwieldiness of your weapon, you can lash out at foes at advantageous moments.

Effect: You may use weapons with the Reach Quality for purposes of Opportunity Attacks.

DEBILITATING SHOT

With great instinct, your shots fire true when attempting to wound a foe.

Effect: Whenever you use a Called Shot with ranged weapons, you gain a +10 Base Chance to strike.

DETERMINATION

Your doggedness tends to slow everyone down, but your considerable foresight grants you extraordinary ability.

Effect: Whenever you attempt an Extended Test to take your time, you gain a +20 Base Chance to your Skill Test, instead of the normal +10 Base Chance.

DIE HARD

Pain has come to mean little to you these days, as you heal quickly.

Effect: You reduce the number of days to Recuperate from Injuries by three, to a minimum of one day.

DOPPELGÄNGER

As an acute observer of others' habits, you're able to mimic their mannerisms with little chance of failure.

Effect: When masquerading as someone else of a Social Class other than your own, you gain a +20 Base Chance to Disguise Tests.

EAGLE EYES

You have exceedingly focused vision, targeting foes accurately over great distances.

Effect: You gain a +10 Base Chance to strike with ranged weapons at Medium and Long Distance.

ETHEREAL ALIGNMENT

The winds of Magick bend to your whim, as you've learned to control the emergent forces of chaos.

Effect: You may add +10 Base Chance to use the Incantation Skill, but only when casting Magick.

FENCER'S PANACHE

Your intense studies of warfare have made you into an expert swordsman.

Effect: Whenever you spend 3 Action Points to Take Aim and then make a successful Melee Attack, you may trigger a Disarm for 0 Action Points. You must attack with weapons possessing the Finesse Quality to utilize this Talent.

FORKED TONGUE

Lies simply spill out of your lips, but others are generally none the wiser.

Effect: Whenever you attempt to deceive those of the Lowborn or Burgher Social Classes, you gain a +20 Base Chance to Guile Tests.

GALLOW'S HUMOR

With a morbid sense of humor, you use witticisms to counter the bleak world you live in (and its grim outcomes).

Effect: At any time, you may substitute the Guile Skill in place of any Skill required for a Madness Check. You can learn more about Madness Checks in Chapter XXX: Game Mastery.

GAP SHOOTING

Using the tip of your instrument as a reference, you adjust your aim point to strike true within point blank range.

Effect: Whenever you make a Ranged Attack within 3 yards, you gain a +10 Base Chance to hit.

GATECRASHER

You've been trained amongst the martial elite, whose tutelage taught you how to break through a foe's defenses.

Effect: Whenever you spend all 3 Action Points to Take Aim and then make a successful Melee Attack, add 3 Damage.

GROUND AND POUND

When you've got a foe clinched up, you're practically unstoppable.

Effect: If a foe successfully Resists your Chokehold, immediately make a bare-handed Opportunity Attack.

GRUESOME SHOT

In one masterful stroke, you strike your target clean and accurately.

Effect: Whenever you spend all 3 Action Points to Take Aim and then make a successful Ranged Attack, add 3 Damage.

HANDSPRING

You get knocked down, but get up again.

Effect: You can Get Up during combat without spending Action Points.

HARD TO KILL

You are stubborn and tough, unable to be put down. With strength left within, you turn away blows with bitter resolve.

Effect: Whenever you are Grievously Wounded, add 3 to your Damage Threshold.

HIGHER MYSTERIES

A rare few dabble in the darkest of magicks. In its purest of forms, it is vile and destructive to others and soul-corrupting to the magician that wields it. You force the dark to kneel before you but only after appropriating a suitable sacrifice.

Effect: Reduce the number of Chaos Dice used for Lesser and Greater Magicks by 1, but only in exchange by voluntarily lowering your Peril Condition Track by one step.

HOLDOUT

You find it easy to hide items you've palmed in places where no one may find them.

Effect: You always succeed Skulduggery Tests to conceal objects no larger than a knife on your person.

HOUSEBREAKER

You've likely spent some time as a second story man or been paid to help mums locked out of their own cottages.

Effect: When trying to open locks, you gain a +20 Base Chance to Skulduggery Tests.

IMPENETRABLE WALL

Whenever you're surrounded, you manage to outmaneuver foes when flanked.

Effect: Opponents do not gain an advantage when they flank and surround you in combat.

IMPERVIOUS MIND

Your mind is incredibly resilient to events which lead towards madness.

Effect: Add +3 to your Peril Threshold.

INDIFFERENCE

You've grown accustomed to the battlefield, and the smell of rotting corpses doesn't bother you.

Effect: When viewing visceral scenes or corpses, you always succeed Madness Checks.

INCREDIBLE NUMERATION

You are a human calculator, and may determine odds with great speed.

Effect: When cheating or counting, you gain a +20 Base Chance to Gamble Tests.

INSTINCTS

You do not need to be able to see your enemies clearly in order to strike them.

Effect: While fighting in darkness, fog, mist and smoke, you ignore the normal penalties associated with making attacks.

KIDNEY SHOT

A well-placed shot to the vitals will cause your enemy to stagger.

Effect: You penalize your foe's ability to Resist a Knockout! and Stunning Blow, along with their chances to Shake It Off. It is now a (Hard -20%) Test. Additionally, whenever you use a Stunning Blow, your foe loses 2 Action Points, instead of 1 Action Point.

KNIFEWORK

You are incredibly adept at using cutting weapons, twisting the blade between the chinks of your enemy's armor.

Effect: Whenever a foe is threatened to be struck by Attack Actions made with melee weapons possessing the Fast Quality, they suffer a -20 Base Chance to Parry instead of the normal -10 Base Chance.

LARCENY

You engage in illegal activities and are a natural fit in the criminal underworld.

Effect: When fencing stolen goods or procuring illegal items, you gain a +20 Base Chance to Bargain Tests.

LEFT-HANDED PATH

You possess an inexorable command over the powers of chaos and disorder, resilient to their corrupting effects.

Effect: You never gain Corruption Points as a result of failed Incantation Tests.

LIGHTNING REACTION

You are unnaturally fast and able to assess the situation with lightning reflexes.

Effect: At the beginning of your Turn, you gain 1 additional Action Point. However, it must be used to Dodge or Parry.

LIGHT SLEEPER

You rest with one eye open, ever-watchful for danger.

Effect: Whenever you are sleeping, you cannot be Surprised.

LONG WINDED

You may exert yourself above and beyond normal limits.

Effect: Whenever your Peril Condition Track is reduced by two steps or more from a single effect, reduce it by one less step.

EXAMPLE

Leopold Coventry suffers 23 Peril, which normally would move him three steps down the Peril Condition Track. Because he has the Long Winded Talent, he moves two steps down instead.

MARINER

You ply the waterways with great ease, understanding headwinds, currents and favorable weather conditions that are conducive to a good voyage.

Effect: Whenever boating in waters where the shore can be seen, you gain a +20 Base Chance to Pilot Tests.

MENACING DEMEANOR

You are intimidating and tend to act in a prickly manner.

Effect: Whenever you succeed an Intimidate Test, you immediately lower your foe's Peril Condition Track by one step.

MEETING OF THE MINDS

Your words bring harmony and accord during an exchange, persuading the bitterest of rivals towards a covenant of terms in agreement.

Effect: When attempting to bring compromise between two extreme positions during Social Intrigue or other applicable situations, you gain a +20 Base Chance to Bargain Tests.

MILITARY FORMATION

Standing amongst your allies, you lead them towards victory as you occupy the van.

Effect: Whenever you successfully use Inspiring Words during combat, both you and the allies you inspire raise their Initiative by 3.

MINE CRAFT

You have an aptitude for not getting lost below ground, using the flow of water and the marks upon rocks to find your way.

Effect: When beneath the earth, you gain a +20 Base Chance to Navigation Tests. Additionally, you always find your way back to the point of entry without getting lost.

MOUNTED DEFENSE

You are an expert rider, and can duck and weave with ease to defend yourself.

Effect: When mounted, you may substitute your Drive or Ride Skill in place of any other Combat-related Skill in order to Dodge.

MULTILINGUAL

You have a high degree of proficiency with learning and speaking languages.

Effect: When communicating in foreign languages, you gain a +20 Base Chance to Rumor Tests.

NERVES OF STEEL

Your will alone is often enough to withstand the rigors of fatigue and strain.

Effect: When resting in unsafe places, you always recover your Peril Condition Track without having to make a Toughness Test.

NIMBLE FINGERS

You have an aptitude for swiping purses and nicking objects from merchants.

Effect: When attempting to pickpocket, you gain a +20 Base Chance to Skulduggery Tests.

NO MERCY

Your implacable nature grants no man mercy, whether he begs for it or otherwise.

Effect: Whenever you Injure a foe with a melee weapon, you inflict two Injuries instead of one.

OVERWHELMING FORCE

Arming yourself with a heavy weapon, you deliver crushing blows that splinter shields and shatter weapons.

Effect: If you roll a Critical Success with an Attack Action, select one of the following effects:

- Your foe's weapon gains the Damaged Quality
- Your foe's armor gains the Ruined Quality
- Your foe's shield gains the Splintered Quality

You cannot break weapons which possess the Castle-forged Quality.

PIKEMAN

The versatility of a polearm or spear can easily be set to skewer those foolish enough to move towards you.

Effect: Whenever holding a melee weapon in two hands and a foe Engages with you, immediately make an Opportunity Attack.

PISTOL WHIP

Even if you miss with your rifle, you'll not give up an opportunity to teach your enemies a lesson.

Effect: If a foe successfully Dodges or Parries your Ranged Attack, immediately make an Opportunity Attack using the pistol as an improvised weapon.

RUN AMOK

You plow through your enemies, driving the business end of your weapon home with terrible accuracy.

Effect: Whenever you Charge, you gain a +20 Base Chance to strike with a melee-based Attack Action or Perilous Stunt.

RURAL SENSIBILITY

You were born in the country, and know how to get around unnoticed.

Effect: Whenever you attempt to hide in rural environments, you gain a +20 Base Chance to Stealth Tests.

SADDLE-BORN

Hi-yo and away, you are an unstoppable juggernaut in the saddle

Effect: When fighting on horseback or atop a conveyance like a cart, coach or wagon, you gain a +10 Base Chance to strike with Simple and Martial Melee weapons.

SECOND SKIN

You've grown accustomed to the weight of armor and move around unimpeded.

Effect: You may ignore the Heavy Quality associated with mail, munitions plate and full plate armor but only with reference to the standard penalties to Agility-based and Perception-based Skill Tests.

SECRET SIGNS

Vagabonds, rural folk and rangers use a series of intricate patterns to leave short messages, and you have learned to read them.

Effect: Whenever you attempt to understand secret symbols, hand gestures or signs left behind by others as a warning, you gain a +10 Base Chance to Education and Folklore Tests.

SHIELD SLAM

You are a literal wall of defense, and brush aside even the most dangerous of foes with the swipe of the shield's boss.

Effect: Whenever you successfully Stun a foe when armed with a shield, your foe must also flip their results to fail all Attack Actions until they Shake It Off to escape.

SHOOT FROM THE HIP

You possess such prowess with guns that you need not line up the sights to fire.

Effect: Whenever armed with a ranged weapon, you may use it for purposes of Opportunity Attacks - even while Engaged.

SIEGECRAFT

Siege warfare and investiture are your forte, having spent time in the field perfecting the art of war.

Effect: Whenever you attempt to determine appropriate distances for siege engines and employ them to hit, you gain a +20 Base Chance to Warfare Tests.

SILVER TONGUE

You know how to move crowds and persuade them to act in your favor.

Effect: Whenever you attempt to persuade those of the Gentry or Aristocrat Social Classes, you gain a +20 Base Chance to Charm Tests.

SPIRITED CHARGE

Atop conveyance or horse, you ride like a hellion borne from the gates of hell.

Effect: Whenever you Drive or Ride in combat, you reduce the additional cost for Movement Subtypes by 1 Action Point.

SPRINT

When the time comes to pick up the pace, it is considerably more difficulty for others to get a bead on you.

Effect: Whenever you Run, add an additional +3 modifier to your Damage Threshold until the beginning of your next Turn.

STRANGLER'S UNION

You're a straight-up murderer, dealing death silently and effectively.

Effect: Whenever you make an Attack Action with a blackjack, garrote or bullwhip, your foe cannot Dodge or Parry this attack.

STREETWISE

You were born in the streets, and know how to get around unnoticed amongst the gutters and back alleys.

Effect: Whenever you attempt to hide in urban environments, you gain a +20 Base Chance to Stealth Tests.

STRONG JAW

Dizziness and debilitation doesn't really affect you, because you've learned to take your licks.

Effect: When attempting to Resist, you gain a +20 Base Chance to succeed.

STRONG AS AN OX

You have grown accustomed to hauling heavy loads around. Some may address you as "lackey" or "hireling", but the jokes on them; maybe you pocket their loose change or even pilfer the more valuable belongings while sharing the load!

Effect: Add 3 to your Encumbrance Limit.

SUPERNATURAL PARANOIA

Your encounters with the supernatural and the terrifying have made you extremely paranoid.

Effect: Add the ten's value of your Corruption Points to your Initiative.

SWORD AND BOARD

When armed with a shield and sword, you are a whirlwind of blows.

Effect: If a foe successfully Parries your Melee Attack, immediately make an Opportunity Attack using a shield as an improvised melee weapon.

TAKE 'EM DOWN

A perfect throw may bring down your quarry as they run away. With a carefully-placed shot, you can disarm any foe.

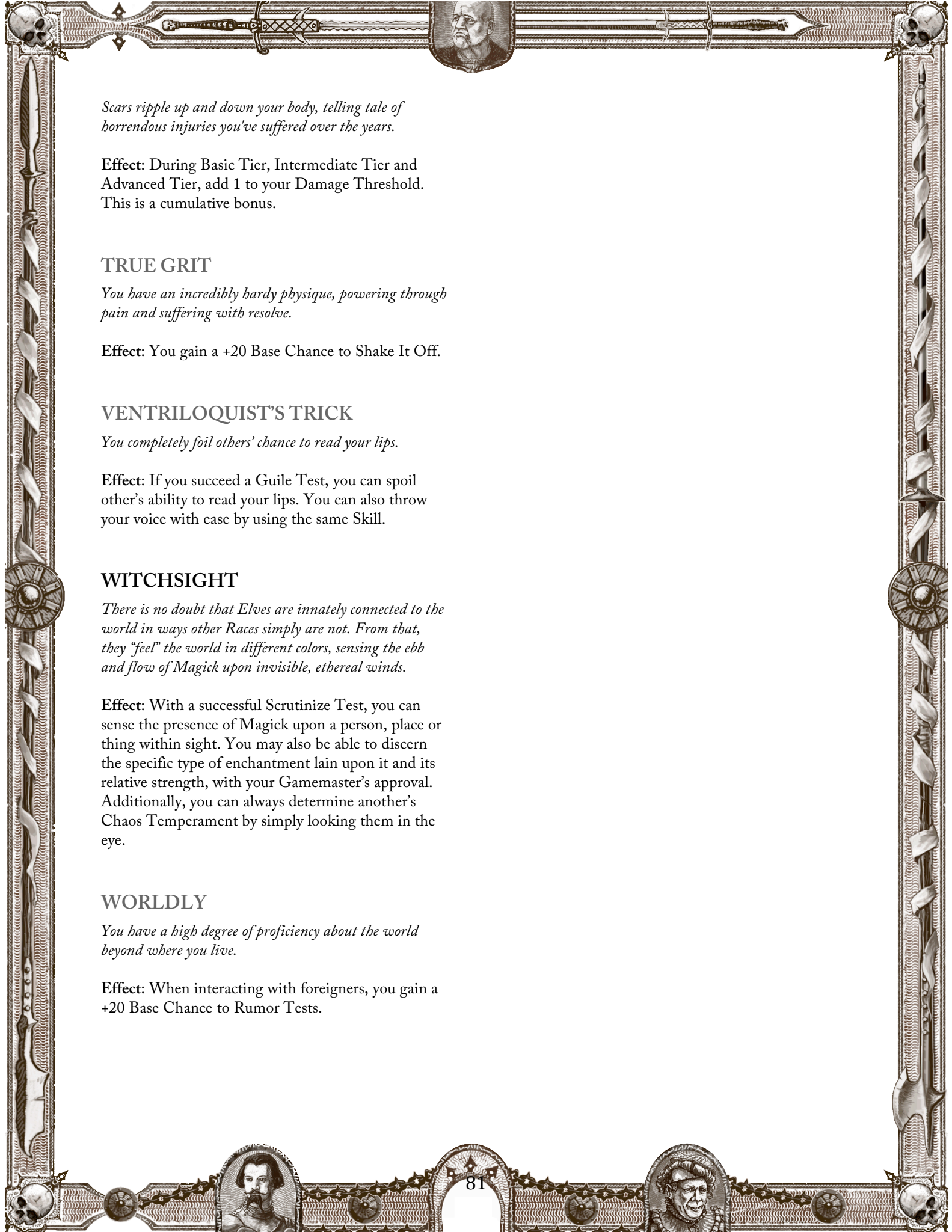
Effect: At Distance, you may substitute either Simple Ranged or Martial Ranged whenever you attempt to use Disarm, Stunning Blow or Takedown.

THERE WILL BE BLOOD

After dealing a fatal blow, blood-curdling screams and convulsions always follow from your enemy.

Effect: Your foes must roll an additional 1D6 Chaos Die to determine if your attacks Injure them.

TOUGH AS NAILS



Scars ripple up and down your body, telling tale of horrendous injuries you've suffered over the years.

Effect: During Basic Tier, Intermediate Tier and Advanced Tier, add 1 to your Damage Threshold. This is a cumulative bonus.

TRUE GRIT

You have an incredibly hardy physique, powering through pain and suffering with resolve.

Effect: You gain a +20 Base Chance to Shake It Off.

VENTRILOQUIST'S TRICK

You completely foil others' chance to read your lips.

Effect: If you succeed a Guile Test, you can spoil other's ability to read your lips. You can also throw your voice with ease by using the same Skill.

WITCHSIGHT

There is no doubt that Elves are innately connected to the world in ways other Races simply are not. From that, they "feel" the world in different colors, sensing the ebb and flow of Magick upon invisible, ethereal winds.

Effect: With a successful Scrutinize Test, you can sense the presence of Magick upon a person, place or thing within sight. You may also be able to discern the specific type of enchantment lain upon it and its relative strength, with your Gamemaster's approval. Additionally, you can always determine another's Chaos Temperament by simply looking them in the eye.

WORLDLY

You have a high degree of proficiency about the world beyond where you live.

Effect: When interacting with foreigners, you gain a +20 Base Chance to Rumor Tests.

TRAPPINGS INCOMPLETE

Only weapons, armor and shields are included in this update.

1 gold coin (g) is worth 100 silver coins (s)
is worth 2500 brass coins (b)

Simple Melee Weapons	Type	Skill	Load	Handling	Distance	Qualities	Encumbrance	Cost
Bare-handed	Brawling	Simple Melee	0	One-handed	Engaged	Pummeling, Weak	NONE	FREE
Blackjack	Brawling	Simple Melee	0	One-handed	Engaged	Powerful, Pummeling, Weak	1	1s
Bullwhip	Crushing	Simple Melee	0	One-handed	Engaged	Entangling, Ineffective, Reach	2	5s
Cudgel	Crushing	Simple Melee	0	One-handed	Engaged	Light, Powerful	1	15s
Dirk	Bladed	Simple Melee	0	One-handed	Engaged	Fast, Finesse, Light	1	10s
Fire-hardened spear	Bladed	Simple Melee	0	One or two-handed	Engaged	Adaptable, Reach	2	15s
Garrote	Brawling	Simple Melee	0	Two-handed	Engaged	Entangling, Pummeling, Weak	1	1s
Improvised hand weapon	Crushing or Bladed	Simple Melee	0	One-handed	Engaged	Slow, Weak	1	FREE
Knuckleduster	Brawling	Simple Melee	0	One-handed	Engaged	Light, Pummeling, Weak	1	5s
Staff	Crushing	Simple Melee	0	One or two-handed	Engaged	Adaptable, Powerful	2	FREE
Rapier	Bladed	Simple Melee	0	One-handed	Engaged	Fast, Finesse	1	90s
Shiv	Bladed	Simple Melee	0	One-handed	Engaged	Fast, Finesse, Weak	1	1s
Splitting maul	Bladed	Simple Melee	0	Two-handed	Engaged	Slow	3	
Stiletto	Bladed	Simple Melee	0	One-handed	Engaged	Fast, Finesse, Vicious	1	10s
Threshing flail	Crushing	Simple Melee	0	One or two-handed	Engaged	Adaptable, Powerful, Reach	2	15s
Woodsman's axe	Bladed	Simple Melee	0	One or two-handed	Engaged	Adaptable	2	15s
Martial Melee Weapons	Type	Skill	Load	Handling	Distance	Qualities	Encumbrance	Cost
Battle axe	Bladed	Martial Melee	0	One or two-handed	Engaged	Adaptable	2	60s
Cavalry savre	Bladed	Martial Melee	0	One-handed	Engaged	Protective	1	40s
Estoc sword	Bladed	Martial Melee	0	One or two-handed	Engaged	Fast, Finesse	2	60s
Flanged mace	Crushing	Martial Melee	0	One-handed	Engaged	Powerful	1	60s
Main gauche	Bladed	Martial Melee	0	One-handed	Engaged	Finesse, Light, Protective	1	35s
Misericorde	Bladed	Martial Melee	0	One-handed	Engaged	Fast, Finesse	1	35s
Morgenstern	Crushing	Martial Melee	0	One or two-handed	Engaged	Adaptable, Powerful, Vicious	2	90s

Mortuary sword	Bladed	Martial Melee	0	One-handed	Engaged	Vicious	1	60s
Pike	Bladed	Martial Melee	0	Two-handed	Engaged	Reach, Slow, Vicious	3	75s
Pole cleaver	Bladed	Martial Melee	0	Two-handed	Engaged	Punishing, Reach, Slow	3	75s
War hammer	Crushing	Martial Melee	0	Two-handed	Engaged	Powerful	3	1g
Zweihander	Bladed	Martial Melee	0	Two-handed	Engaged	Punishing, Reach, Slow	3	1g
Simple Ranged Weapons	Type	Skill	Load	Handling	Distance	Qualities	Encumbrance	Cost
Blunderbus	Gunpowder	Simple Ranged	4 AP	Two-handed	3 + PB yards	Gunpowder, Shrapnel, Volatile	3	2g
Bolas	Missile	Simple Ranged	0	One-handed	3 + PB yards	Entangling, Ineffective	1	1s
Francisca	Missile	Simple Ranged	0	One-handed	3 + PB yards	Light, Throwing	1	10s
Hunting bow	Missile	Simple Ranged	1 AP	Two-handed	9 + PB yards	Finesse	3	20s
Improvised thrown weapon	Missile	Simple Ranged	1 AP	One-handed	3 + PB yards	Slow, Throwing, Weak	1	FREE
Javelin	Missile	Simple Ranged	0	One-handed	6 + PB yards	Throwing	1	1s
Light crossbow	Missile	Simple Ranged	2 AP	Two-handed	6 + PB yards	Fast, Punishing	3	60s
Throwing knife	Missile	Simple Ranged	0	One-handed	3 + PB yards	Fast, Throwing	1	1s
Martial Ranged Weapons	Type	Skill	Load	Handling	Distance	Qualities	Encumbrance	Cost
Arbalest crossbow	Missile	Martial Ranged	2 AP	Two-handed	9 + PB yards	Fast, Punishing	3	80s
Arquebus	Gunpowder	Martial Ranged	4 AP	Two-handed	6 + PB yards	Gunpowder, Volatile	3	10g
Flintlock pistol	Gunpowder	Martial Ranged	3 AP	One-handed	3 + PB yards	Gunpowder, Volatile	2	5g
Longbow	Missile	Martial Ranged	1 AP	Two-handed	12 + PB yards	Finesse	3	40s
Musket	Gunpowder	Martial Ranged	4 AP	Two-handed	9 + PB yards	Gunpowder	3	15g
Pomegranate Grenade	Gunpowder	Martial Ranged	0	One-handed	3 + PB yards	Gunpowder, Punishing, Shrapnel	1	24s
Three-barrel pistol	Gunpowder	Martial Ranged	4 AP	One-handed	3 + PB yards	Gunpowder, Repeating, Volatile	2	16g
Ammunition	Type	Skill	Load	Handling	Distance	Qualities	Encumbrance	Cost
Arrows (10)	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	2	1s
Crossbow bolts (10)	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	2	2s
Gunpowder & shot (10)	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	1	12s

Armor	Damage Threshold Modifier	Quality	Encumbrance	Cost
UNARMORED	0	Natural	0	Varies

QUILTED	1	Natural	1	1s
LEATHER	2	Natural	2	5s
BRIGANDINE	3	Natural	3	20s
MAIL	4	Heavy	4	1g
MUNITIONS PLATE	5	Heavy	5	5g
FULL PLATE	6	Heavy	6	20g
Shield	Handling	Quality	Encumbrance	Cost
BUCKLER	One-handed	Defensive, Ineffective	1	20s
SPIKED BUCKLER	One-handed	Defensive, Ineffective, Light	1	25s
ROUND, KITE OR TOWER	One-handed	Ineffective, Defensive, Protective	3	60s

QUALITIES INCOMPLETE

Armor, weapons and shields possess Qualities. If you gain the same Quality twice from two different weapons, you can only take advantage once.

ADAPTABLE

Whenever weapons of this Quality are held in two hands instead of one for Attack Actions, add +1 to Damage.

CASTLE-FORGED

Armor, weapons and shields of this Quality cannot acquire the Qualities of Damaged, Ruined or Splintered. All Castle-forged trappings have an associated base cost of three times the listed price.

DAMAGED

Weapons of this Quality cannot be used to for Attack Actions or Perilous Stunts until repaired. Weapons which are Castle-forged cannot be Damaged in this manner. Fixing a Damaged weapon costs 50% of its listed value, and expenditure of a Repair kit.

DEFENSIVE

Shields of this Quality may be used to Parry any Attack Action made with a ranged weapon.

ENTANGLING

Immediately after striking a foe, weapons of this Quality can trigger a Chokehold or Takedown by spending 1 additional Action Points.

FAST

Whenever a foe is threatened to be struck by weapons of this Quality, they suffer a -10 Base Chance to Dodge or Parry.

FINESSE

Weapons of this Quality always reference Agility Bonus (AB) whenever inflicting Damage, instead of Combat Bonus (CB).

GUNPOWDER

Weapons of this Quality can be fired while standing in an Engagement. Furthermore, these weapons cannot be Dodged or Parried.

HEAVY

Armor of this Quality reduces Combat Movement and other movement subtypes by 3, regardless of any Overage. Additionally, it prohibits the use of the Incantation Skill in order to cast Magick and the use of Coordination in order to Dodge.

ILL-FITTED

Armor of this Quality increases its Encumbrance Value by 3 when worn. Most armor possesses this Quality if stripped off another and not properly

fitted, requiring an expenditure of +10% of the original cost to fit properly.

INEFFECTIVE

Shields and weapons of this Quality never deal Damage.

LIGHT

Whenever weapons of this Quality are held in your off-hand while making melee-based Attack Actions, add +1 to Damage.

NATURAL

Armor of this Quality add a +10 Base Chance to Dodge ranged weapons.

POWERFUL

Immediately after striking a foe, weapons of this Quality automatically shoves an opponent out of the Engagement by spending 1 additional Action Points.

PROTECTIVE

Shields and weapons of this Quality add a +1 to Damage Threshold.

PUMMELING

Weapons of this Quality always reference Brawn Bonus (BB) whenever inflicting Damage, instead of Combat Bonus (CB). Additionally, they can only Parry other weapons which also possess the Pummeling Quality.

PUNISHING

Immediately after striking a foe, weapons of this Quality adds a 1D6 Fury Die by spending 1 additional Action Points.

RUINED

Armor of this Quality does not add to Damage Threshold until repaired. Armors which are Castle-forged cannot be Ruined in this manner. Fixing Ruined armor costs 50% of its listed value, and expenditure of a Repair kit.

SPLINTERED

Shields of this Quality cannot be used to Parry melee or ranged attacks until repaired. Shields which are Castle-forged cannot be Splintered in this manner. Fixing a Splintered shield costs 50% of its listed value, and expenditure of a Repair kit.

REACH

Weapons of this Quality cannot be used for Opportunity Attacks. However, they may strike a foe up to 2 yards away from where you stand.

REPEATING

Ranged weapons of this Quality can be fired up to three times without having to spend Action Points to load. Repeating weapons have an associated base cost of three times the listed price.

SHRAPNEL

Whenever weapons of this Quality are fired, you strike a number of targets equal to your Combat Bonus (CB). All suffer the same amount of Damage, and it cannot be avoided.

SLOW

Whenever a foe is threatened to be struck by weapons of this Quality, they gain a +10 Base Chance to Dodge or Parry.

THROWING

Weapons of this Quality do not have a Medium or Long Distance increment for ranged weapons.

VICIOUS

Whenever weapons of this Quality inflict an Injury, it is always a Grievous Injury (despite the Damage Condition Track of the foe you struck).

VOLATILE

Whenever you Critically Fail an Attack Action or Perilous Stunt when using weapons of this Quality, roll a 1D6 Chaos Die. On a result of 1 to 5 the weapon misfires, requiring an hour to clean and repair. On a result of 6 it explodes, dealing 3D6+3 Damage to you and gives the weapon the Damaged Quality. This Damage cannot be Dodged, Parried or Resisted.

WEAK

Whenever weapons of this Quality inflict an Injury, it is always a Moderate Injury (despite the Damage Condition Track of the foe you struck).

COMBAT

"Man by nature is an animal; he can be cruel and callous. Where diplomacy fails, combat is the only choice left to resolve differences. Often swift and merciless, fighting is his way to establish dominance, or to simply terminate the opposition all together. By conscious decision and intent, man is able to assert himself against the world and face aggression in kind."

- Father Victor, monk

Tactical skirmishes amidst a torrential downpour, vicious back alley knife fights, honorific duels to the death and horrifying battles against dire abominations makes up several situations your Character will be drawn into. However, some may be more raucous and less deadly, such as with a barroom brawl or fisticuffs erupting between a swindling pedlar and his customer. Combat can be fun and entertaining, but in a grim & perilous Campaign World, death can come at the drop of a hat to Characters. While exciting and offering the opportunity for players to roll dice, the risk of death is always the foremost element within combat. No amount of planning can truly prepare the unwitting against the strategic leadership of those born within the crucible of combat. Even the most well-orchestrated plans can go terribly awry as combat is so fast paced. Combat is deadly and numbers frequently prevail.

Unlike other role-playing games, Characters in **ZWEIHÄNDER** aren't given a vast pool of "hit points", allowed to instantly recover from their wounds and get right back up. Combat is savage and unrelenting, handling confrontation with all the excitement you'd expect to have in a fantasy adventure - but not without danger to one's self and sanity.

STRUCTURED TIME AND COMBAT TURNS

For the most part, a Game Session is handled using a loose narrative by the Gamemaster called "Narrative Time". Interactions within the Campaign World can transpire over hours, days or even months of in-game time. If you tell the Gamemaster that you wish to book a coach between settlements, they may simply respond *"You pay a coachman and ride through the*

wilderness, arriving at your destination a few hours later". There aren't any hard and fast rules to handle these sorts of interactions.

However, when the story has led the players towards a fight, the game falls under a more structured way of handling the narrative. To frame these white-knuckled action scenes, the loose narrative is streamlined, made more uniform and iterative by using "Structured Time". Formalizing each stage of combat, the Gamemaster then breaks down segments of Structured Time for each participant, with each segment called a "Turn". This allows the Characters to take Action using their respective place in the Initiative Ladder.

Although Turns introduce a more uniform way to handle Actions, it should never stymie role-playing. Both the Gamemaster and player should feel encouraged to describe their Actions with flourish. Representing adrenaline-packed scenes of fierce attacks and daring stunts using your own personal descriptions is both exciting and enjoyable. Role-playing should never take a backseat during combat.

Below are a few common questions you may have about how fights are resolved in **ZWEIHÄNDER**:

WHAT IS A TURN?

Turns are an abstraction, reflecting each Character's time to catch their breath, pause, jockey for position and set themselves up to render decisive blows. A Turn is approximately equal to one minute of in-game time, playing out iteratively by all Characters. During a Turn, Characters can take a set number of Actions, dictated by their reserve of "Action Points" (also called AP). Even though each Character gains a Turn during Structured Time, all Actions are assumed to be taking place in the Game Session at the same time narratively.

WHAT IS THE INITIATIVE LADDER?

The Initiative Ladder decides the order of which all Characters resolve their Actions In Combat. Whenever the Gamemaster announces combat is about to unfold, all Characters will generate their own Initiative Ladder results by rolling 2D10 and adding their Initiative from their Character Sheet to the result. The end results are tracked from highest to lowest, displayed openly for everyone to reference.

WHAT IS AN ACTION?

Actions are formalized choices Character make to change the outcome of combat. Each Action possesses a relative cost in Action Points which must be expended before a specific Action may be taken. Providing a Character has enough Action Points, they can execute attacks against foes, move around the battlefield, hamper their enemy's ability to gain ground and set aside a reserve to defend against attacks. These "Actions In Combat" are described in further detail in the oncoming pages. All Characters in ZWEIHÄNDER have the same options for attacking, defending and the use of Actions In Combat, regardless if they're played by players or the Gamemaster.

WHEN DOES COMBAT END?

Once either side is defeated or yields, combat is over. Yet, not every fight needs to end in the wholesale slaughter of the other side. Most sapient creatures understand when they've been beaten, knowing when it's time to give up. Bargains can be struck, former enemies can be made allies, foes can be brought to heel and others can be made to flee at the first sign of danger. Animals or creatures defending their young may fight to the bitter end, but others may flee at the first sight of imminent danger. An enemy who may hold important intelligence or information may be more beneficial captured than simply spitted on the end of your spear. A politician (or Daemonic servant for that matter) may attempt to strike a bargain with his captors in exchange for release. While death is certainly the foregone conclusion in most fights, it should not be the only option. Sparing your enemies (particularly if you have a "heroic" reputation to uphold) can create interesting plot developments within the Campaign World.

Sidebar: Gamemaster Fiat

Because of the wild and varied nature of combat, there may be situations that crop up from time to time that aren't covered in these rules. Much like any other ruling in ZWEIHÄNDER, the Gamemaster will make the final call as arbiter and ultimate authority while running the game.

COMBAT OVERVIEW

Below is a quick guideline to follow whenever combat begins:

STEP I: SURPRISE TURN

Whenever combat is about to begin, the Gamemaster will individually determine whether players or their foes individually get the jump on one another. If either party manages to catch their enemies unaware they'll act first during a Surprise Turn.

STEP II: INITIATIVE LADDER

After a Surprise Turn has ended, Characters will determine the order in which they may take their Turn. Each Character will roll 2D10 and add their Initiative to the result.

STEP III: TAKE TURNS

Once a Character's Turn comes up in the Initiative Ladder, they may spend Action Points to select specific Actions In Combat. Characters receive 3 Action Points to dedicate to defend, move, attack or take other special actions as their Turn begins.

STEP I: SURPRISE TURN

A Surprise Turn affects the very beginning of combat. It allows Characters to gain advantage over one another and take a Turn before the Initiative Ladder proceeds. Ultimately, it is the province of the Gamemaster to determine if the players or their enemies gain a Surprise Turn. This call is based on specific sets of circumstances or special preparations Characters have made in order to ambush one another purposefully. Outlining these circumstances goes above and beyond the scope of this discussion, but the Gamemaster will use common sense when determining which sides gains the advantage of a Surprise Turn. Whether either side gains a Surprise Turn, the Gamemaster will always explain in narrative terms why. It's important to consider what sort of preparedness your Character may have elected to adopt, even before the fight begins. Kicking in the door and expecting your foes to simply fold before your might may be an acceptable option in some games, but in ZWEIHÄNDER it can get you killed.

DEFENSELESS DURING SURPRISE

Characters who are Surprised are temporarily left Defenseless to all attacks. They cannot Dodge ranged attacks, make Opportunity Attacks, Parry melee attacks, Resist Perilous Stunts or Resist Casted

Magick. Essentially, they cannot use any Reactions whatsoever.

Those who gain the advantage of Surprise may take a free Turn and all Attack Actions and Perilous Stunts change their Difficulty Rating to (Trivial +30%). Additionally, Attack Actions made with melee or ranged weapons add a 1D6 Chaos Die. Once a Surprise Turn finishes, combat proceeds as normal according to the Initiative Ladder, and all benefits for Surprise are lost.

STEP II: INITIATIVE ORDER

In any role-playing game, there must be a structure to the order of which events unfold - particularly in the case of combat. For every Character, each determines their Initiative individually. Using 2D10, every Character will roll and add their Initiative from their Character Sheet to the result. But those who burden themselves with equipment tend to react slower, as their senses are dulled beneath the weight of their harness. Overage from Encumbrance Limit always penalizes Initiative results, even if a Character decides to toss aside their equipment during combat. The result is then ranked from highest to lowest, displayed openly throughout combat on a marker board or piece of paper for both the player and Gamemaster's reference. Each name is written down, with the resulting Initiative Ladder indicated beside it with a hyphen. This determines the order that each Character will act in until the fight is resolved. It also allows players to help the Gamemaster keep everything straight during combat, as most veteran players can generally attest - things can become hectic. All in all, whoever goes first tends to get the upper hand - and speed can lead to a more favorable outcome.

EXAMPLE

It's time to roll Initiative. There are six players - Edwin Mortani, Graf von Bek, Leopold Coventry, Mercutio Salvatore, "Patches" and Wilhelm Eckhardt. The Gamemaster is controlling several enemies - a Thug, a Bounty Hunter and a Guttersnipe. Both the players and Gamemaster roll Initiative, placing their names on a marker board that can be referenced by everyone. The results follow, dictating the Initiative Ladder. Under this example, Wilhelm will go first, whereas the Thug will go last. Once everyone has taken their Turn, Initiative begins again with Wilhelm again until combat ends:

1. *Wilhelm Eckhardt* - 24
2. *Patches* - 23
3. *Bounty Hunter* - 21
4. *Edwin Mortani* - 20
5. *Guttersnipe* - 17
6. *Leopold Coventry* - 10
7. *Graf von Bek* - 9
8. *Mercutio Salvatore* - 8
9. *Thug* - 8

Remember, **ZWEIHÄNDER** is a cooperative game and while the Gamemaster will be controlling your enemies (potential allies), you should work to help keep things tracking right. Combat can sometimes grow confusing as you oscillate between each other's Turns. The Gamemaster has to worry about positioning, tactics, track conditions and plot out your enemy's strategies. All players should do their part to help track combat, working in concert with the Gamemaster to progress the Initiative Ladder correctly.

sidebar: Roll Initiative At The Start Of A Session

Some Gamemasters may prefer for players to determine Initiative Ladder at the beginning of the session. This enables the Gamemaster to change between loose narrative and the strict structure of combat smoothly. It keeps players focused on the events "In-Character", as opposed to breaking stride during the Game Session. It also allows the Gamemaster to transition into combat with ease, keeping players on their toes and out of the loop on the Initiative Ladder for their enemies. In these instances, the Gamemaster will determine foe's Initiative results secretly and place it onto the board once combat begins.

MATCHING INITIATIVE RESULTS

Should any Character generate the same Initiative result, compare their Perception Bonus (PB). The highest always trumps the other, displacing that Character down the Initiative Ladder directly below them. Should their Perception Bonus (PB) match, Characters should re-roll to determine who goes first.

EXAMPLE

Mercutio Salvatore and the Thug generated the same Initiative, both resulting in "8". Mercutio's Perception Bonus (PB) is 6, whereas the Thug has a Perception Bonus (PB) of 4. Mercutio goes first, displacing the Thug beneath him in the Initiative Ladder.

ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS

Sometimes the environment plays a role in combat. Detonated gunpowder explosions, roiling fires that threaten to collapse the floor, an impending rainstorm, the blinding threat of a blizzard, an out-of-control wagon barreling down the street, a stampede of wild horses ready to burst forth from their pen, the threat of an angry peasant mob and other hazards can also influence the battlefield. In these special cases, the Gamemaster will roll 3D10+3 to determine the event's Initiative. If this event is being kept in secret from the players, the Gamemaster may elect not to disclose the name of the event in the Initiative Ladder. Instead, they may track it with some other mark - an asterisk, question mark or other short phrases such as "DOOOOOM." will suffice. This leaves everyone guessing as to what may yet still unfold amidst the chaos of battle, for in battle there is no law. These secret events may be repetitive (such as the blazing of a fire) or a one-time event (such as the strike of lightning upon the top of a building).

EXAMPLE

A raging fire erupts around everyone, threatening to consume the floor of Tramp's Loft. The Gamemaster has secretly decided that it will take three Turns before the floor collapses from the Raging Fire. Rolling Initiative, the Gamemaster tells everyone to note that the Raging Fire goes on a "19", but does not disclose that the floor will collapse. Unwittingly or not, they better act quickly before the fire consumes everything around them.

1. Wilhelm Eckhardt - 24
2. Patches - 23
3. Bounty Hunter - 21
4. Edwin Mortani - 20
5. Raging Fire - 19 (the Gamemaster made the call for the fire to go before the Guttersnipe)
6. Guttersnipe - 17
7. Leopold Coventry - 10
8. Graf von Bek - 9
9. Mercutio Salvatore - 8
10. Thug - 7 (the Thug was displaced down the Initiative Ladder due to matching Initiative rolls)

NEW COMBATANTS

Particularly sneaky enemies may simply lay in wait, watching for favorable circumstances to avail themselves. The Gamemaster may decide that even before combat started that these same shadowy

assassins are quicker, more aware, or better prepared. This is one of the many tools the Gamemaster can employ to keep combat unpredictable. Should new Characters enter the fray, they must determine their own Initiative. Regardless if the new Character is an enemy or a potential ally, the Gamemaster indicates their Initiative with a miscellaneous mark, similar to the environmental events above. The Gamemaster may even dictate that the new combatant immediately gains a Surprise Turn.

EXAMPLE

An unscrupulous cutthroat has been hidden the whole time, watching the fight unfold. Announcing that there's another participant that they don't know about, the Gamemaster tracks the Cutthroat with a series of question marks "???" and indicates that this Character's Initiative is "18".

1. Wilhelm Eckhardt - 24
2. Patches - 23
3. Bounty Hunter - 21
4. Edwin Mortani - 20
5. ??? - 18 (this is the hidden Cutthroat)
6. Raging Fire - 19 (the Gamemaster made the call for the fire to go before the Guttersnipe)
7. Guttersnipe - 17
8. Leopold Coventry - 10
9. Graf von Bek - 9
10. Mercutio Salvatore - 8
11. Thug - 7 (the Thug was displaced down the Initiative Ladder due to matching Initiative rolls)

STEP III: TAKE TURNS

Suddenly, it's your Turn. What will you do? Will you boldly rush forward, invoking the name of count So-and-So? Will you elect to launch a litany of hate, seeking to unman your foes? Will you throw someone else in front of you to beat a hasty retreat? Whichever option you elect to take, they are always classified by one of many categories of Actions.

All Characters begin with 3 Action Points at the start of their Turn, which are then spent to commit to any of the Actions as their Turn comes up within the Initiative Ladder. You're not required to spend all of these Action Points on your Turn, and may hold onto them as to Dodge or Parry. By the same token, a Character cannot simply elect to save Action Points for their Turn, banking 6 Action Points. Whenever a Character's new Turn begins, all of their remaining

Action Points are considered to be spent and start with the normal allotment of 3 Action Points, unless they are suffering from a condition that reduces their starting Action Points. These are special cases we will speak of throughout this chapter.

Sidebar: Speaking During Combat

Players may elect to speak, using banter, jibes, insults or scream battle cries and obscenities whilst taking their Turn. This sort of communication is generally limited to short sentences or expressions, and must be done In-Character. Should they wish to exude a longer and more verbose speech or even stirring soliloquy to inspire your allies, they must dedicate Action Points to doing so.

While we encourage players to work together, it is best to let each make their own decisions as to what Actions to take. Lording over other players and telling them what Actions to use during a Game Session can create confusion, breaks down the barrier between In-Character and out of In-Character interaction, limits the ability of players to grow more familiar with ZWEIHÄNDER's rules and quickly erodes the suspension of disbelief. Creative players will make sure that if they do intend to issue orders to their fellow players, they'll do it using their In-Character voice.

TAKE TURNS, RINSE AND REPEAT

Combat may last for one or many Turns. Once Initiative is determined, it remains in play throughout combat until it ends. When the enemy is clearly decimated, gives up or some other mitigating condition arises, the Gamemaster will announce it.

ACTIONS IN COMBAT

Action Points represent the economy of Actions Characters may call upon during combat. It reflects a reserve pool that a Character taps into, spent in exchange for Actions. Readyng a weapon, setting up a defensive posture, demoralizing the enemy, swinging a sword, firing a gun, mounting a horse and reloading ranged weapons constitute examples of Actions taken during combat.

At the beginning of their Turn, a Character starts with 3 Action Points. This dictates how often a Character may act on their Turn, as the points are

spent over the course of the Character's Turn to use specific Actions. Whenever a Character elects to end their Turn, it is the next Character's Turn to act.

Actions always have a relative cost. Characters may spend 1, 2 or even 3 Action Points to use one Action - like shoving a sword through someone's stomach or barreling over their enemies. They may also break up these Action Points to take multiple Actions - such as moving over to the nearest enemy, shoving them over and cleaving them in twain while they're on the ground Prone. A few Actions have no cost whatsoever, able to be used without the Character having to spend time managing minor activities (talking and dropping items typically don't cost any Action Points to use). Other Actions can only be used outside of the Character's Turn - disruptive attacks and defensive actions as an example.

EXCESS ACTION POINTS AT END OF TURN

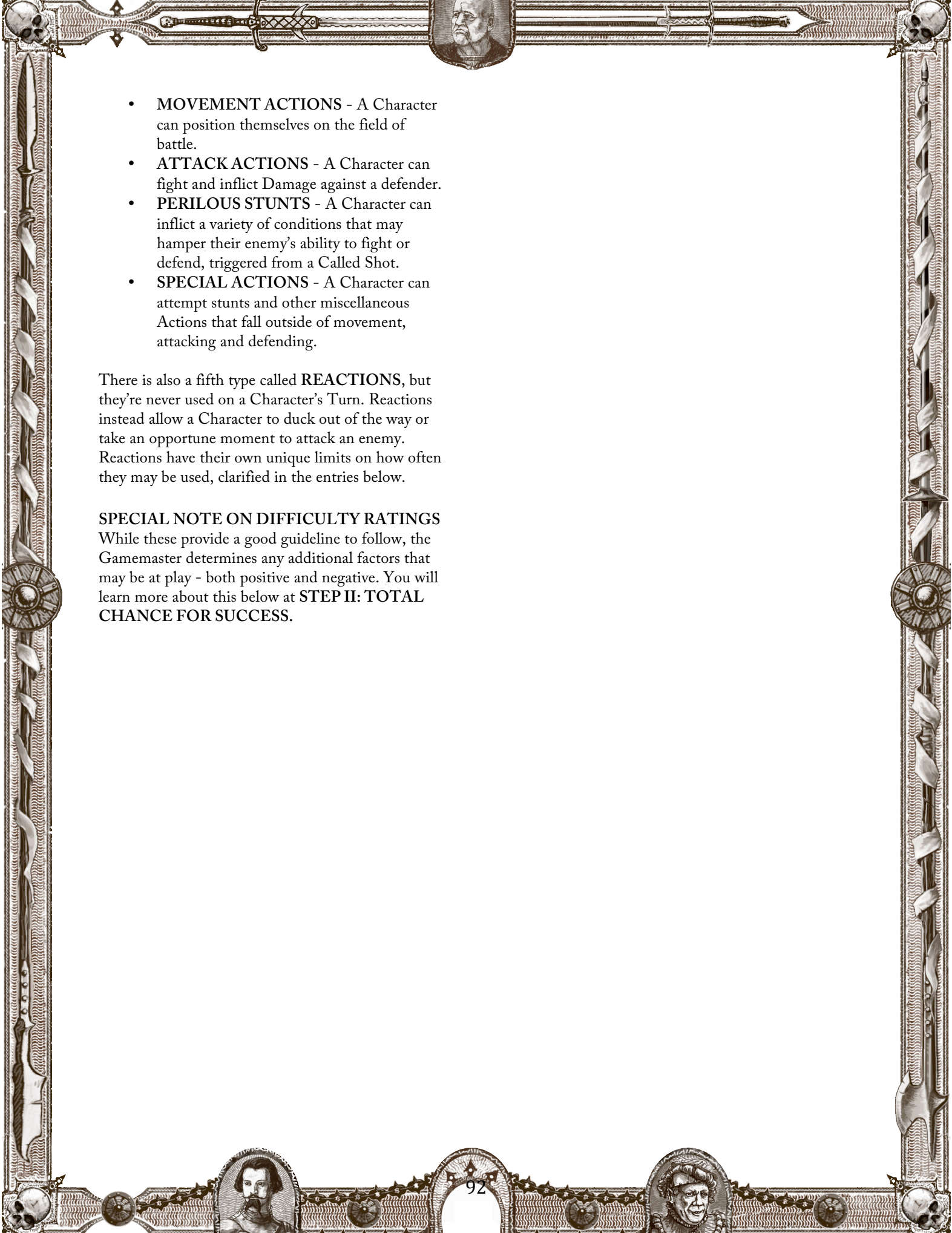
Should a Character end their Turn with an excess of Actions Points, they can hold onto them to use Reactions like Dodge and Parry. However, when their next Turn begins, they "refresh" their Action Points to 3. They do not carry over excess Action Points into their next Turn.

sidebar: Using Professional Traits, Racial Traits and Talents in Combat

Professional Traits, Racial Traits and Talents oftentimes act as "riders", working in coordination with Skill Tests. Some play a major role, allowing your Character to bend the system's rules in certain cases, provide a unique benefit or augment their abilities. Unless specifically indicated within its description, the use of these abilities cost 0 Action Points. Furthermore, they may be used in conjunction with one another. However, this may not always apply where two separate abilities supplement the same Skill. These cases are always adjudicated by the Gamemaster.

TYPES OF ACTIONS

There are four general categories of Actions Characters may use on their Turn. Within each category, there exist specific Actions a Character may use with a relative cost of Action Points to execute:

- 
- **MOVEMENT ACTIONS** - A Character can position themselves on the field of battle.
 - **ATTACK ACTIONS** - A Character can fight and inflict Damage against a defender.
 - **PERILOUS STUNTS** - A Character can inflict a variety of conditions that may hamper their enemy's ability to fight or defend, triggered from a Called Shot.
 - **SPECIAL ACTIONS** - A Character can attempt stunts and other miscellaneous Actions that fall outside of movement, attacking and defending.

There is also a fifth type called **REACTIONS**, but they're never used on a Character's Turn. Reactions instead allow a Character to duck out of the way or take an opportune moment to attack an enemy. Reactions have their own unique limits on how often they may be used, clarified in the entries below.

SPECIAL NOTE ON DIFFICULTY RATINGS

While these provide a good guideline to follow, the Gamemaster determines any additional factors that may be at play - both positive and negative. You will learn more about this below at **STEP II: TOTAL CHANCE FOR SUCCESS**.

MOVEMENT ACTIONS	AP Cost	Description
Charge	2	Charge at Combat Movement x2 and +1D6 Chaos Die to Damage.
Get Up	2	Move 1 yard to stand up from Prone, crouched, step into a vehicle or mount atop an animal. Invokes Opportunity Attack if moving out of Engagement.
Maneuver	2	Move 1 yard out of an Engagement, avoiding all Opportunity Attacks.
Move	1	Move at Combat Movement x1. Invokes Opportunity Attack if moving out of Engagement.
Run	3	Run at Combat Movement x3, gain +3 Damage Threshold. Invokes Opportunity Attack if moving out of Engagement.
Take Cover	1	Move 1 yard to take cover. Gain +1, +3 or +6 Damage Threshold, depending on height of cover. Invokes Opportunity Attack if moving out of Engagement.
ATTACK ACTIONS	AP Cost	Description
Called Shot	1	Attack body: Standard. Attack arms or legs: Challenging. Attack head: Hard.
Cast Magick	1, 2 or 3	1 AP, Routine to Cast Petty Magick. 2AP, Standard to Cast Lesser Magick. 3AP, Challenging to Cast Greater Magick. Cannot be Engaged by enemies to Cast Magick.
Melee Attack	1	Make Combat-based Test. Foe can Parry or suffer Damage.
Ranged Attack	1	Make Combat-based Test. Foe can Dodge or Parry with shield, or suffer Damage. Cannot be Engaged by enemies to make Ranged Attack.
PERILOUS STUNTS	AP Cost	Description
Chokehold	2	Make Athletics Test. Foe Resist Athletics or Choked. Drop one step on Peril Condition Track immediately, and on your Turn when maintained, until Shake It Off.
Dirty Tricks	2	Make Guile Test. Foe Resist Awareness or Blinded. Defenseless until Shake It Off.
Disarm	2	Make Combat-based Test. Foe Resist Coordination or Disarmed. Lose weapon and cannot use primary hand until Shake It Off.
Knockout!	2	When Surprised, make Athletics Test. Foe Resist Toughness or Knocked Out. Helpless for BB minutes.
Splinter Shield	2	Make Combat-based Test. Foe Resists Toughness or Splintered. Cannot be used to Parry melee or ranged afterwards.
Stunning Blow	2	Make Athletics Test. Foe Resists Toughness, or Stunned. Start with 1 less AP until Shake It Off.
Takedown	2	Make Athletics Test. Foe Resists Coordination, or Prone. Drops all weapons at feet, and attacks gain +1d6 Chaos Die.
SPECIAL ACTIONS	AP Cost	Description
Inspiring Words	1	Make Leadership Test, one ally adds +10 Base Chance all Skill Tests.
Litany of Hatred	1	Make Intimidate Test, one foe suffer -10 Base Chance all Skill Tests until Shake It Off.
Load	Varies	Load a ranged weapon.
Shake It Off	2	Make Discipline or Toughness Test to shake off all negative effects.
Take Aim	1 or 2	Spend 1 AP for +10 Base Chance to your next Attack Action or Perilous Stunt on this Turn. If you spend 2 AP, +20 Base Chance.
Use A Skill	Varies	Use a Skill in a special way or its Special Use.
Wait	0	Wait until later to take an action.
REACTIONS	AP Cost	Description
Dodge	1	Make Coordination Test to Dodge ranged attack for 1 AP deficit. Avoids all Damage.
Opportunity Attack	0	Make melee attack in specific situations, foe left Defenseless.
Parry	1	Make Combat-based Skill Test to Parry melee attacks for 1 AP deficit. Avoids all Damage.
Resist	0	Resist the effects of Triggered Actions, Special Actions and Cast Magick.

MOVEMENT ACTIONS

Movement Actions are used whenever a Character needs to jockey for position, bridge the gap between their foes or tactically move between opponent's swings to evade their attacks of opportunity:

CHARGE

You build up speed, using momentum to punch through your enemy's defenses.

Cost: 2 Action Points

Difficulty Rating: None (unless GM dictates otherwise)

Effect: Move a Distance equal to two times your Combat Movement. If you successfully strike with a melee weapon on the same Turn, you inflict an additional 1D6 Chaos Die. However, this provokes an Opportunity Attack if you leave an Engagement.

Sidebar: The Meaning of an Engagement
Sometimes you'll see the term "Engagement" or "Engaged" referenced at specific times in this chapter. The term has broad application, but should be applied very loosely. Inherently, an Engagement is when 2 or more Characters stand toe-to-toe against one another. They're standing within 1 yard of each other, close enough to strike with most melee weapons. However, many foes may be standing Engaged with one another. Typically, an Engagement consists of no more than 9 people. The Gamemaster may wish to further define what it means to be within an Engagement at their own option. If using miniatures and a gridded map, an Engagement is whenever each combatant stands in an adjacent "square" or "hex" on the map that touches.

GET UP

You saddle up on your mount, get into a vehicle, pull an ally up to their feet you're standing next to up or get up from lying on the ground.

Cost: 2 Action Points

Difficulty Rating: None (unless GM dictates otherwise)

Effect: Move a Distance of 1 yard to stand up from the ground from a Prone or crouched position, get into a carriage or mount atop an animal. However,

this provokes an Opportunity Attack if you leave an Engagement.

Sidebar: Provoking Multiple Opportunity Attacks
You will note that some Movement Actions provoke Opportunity Attacks. Additionally, some Talents or Traits may allow attackers to make Opportunity Attacks. Should a Character ever provoke multiple Opportunity Attacks from attackers with an action, only one attacker may take advantage of it. For instance, if a Character made a Move while surrounded by 5 attackers in an Engagement, only one attacker may make the Opportunity Attack. Generally, the Gamemaster will elect who makes the Opportunity Attack.

MANEUVER

You break away from combat, disengaging from your enemies while zig-zagging between them.

Cost: 2 Action Points

Difficulty Rating: None (unless GM dictates otherwise)

Effect: Move a Distance of 1 yard to move out of an Engagement, allowing you to avoid Opportunity Attacks.

MOVE

You hustle forward without fatiguing yourself.

Cost: 1 Action Point

Difficulty Rating: None (unless GM dictates otherwise)

Effect: Move a Distance equal to your Combat Movement in yards. However, this provokes an Opportunity Attack if you leave an Engagement.

You may also crawl on hands and knees. In these cases, you Move a number of yards equal to your Agility Bonus (AB), minus any Overage you are suffering from.

RUN

You sprint at a fast pace, making it more difficult for your enemies to target you.

Cost: 3 Action Points

Difficulty Rating: None (unless GM dictates otherwise)

Effect: Move a Distance equal to three times your Combat Movement. As a result, add 3 to your Damage Threshold until the beginning of your next Turn.

At the end of a Run action, with a successful Athletics Test, you may jump horizontally one yard for every 4 points of Brawn Bonus (BB) or leap one yard vertically for every 6 points of Brawn Bonus (BB).

EXAMPLE

Leopold Coventry has a Brawn Bonus (BB) of 11. This means he can jump two yards horizontally or leap one yard vertically at the end of the Run action.

TAKE COVER

You move behind cover, placing a barrier between you and your foes. This may grant you safety, and a barrier from which to attack behind.

Cost: 1 Action Point

Difficulty Rating: None (unless GM dictates otherwise)

Effect: Move a Distance of 1 yard to a waist-high wall or higher. The barrier or cover must come up to your mid-section and be made of wood, stone or metal to grant ample protection. Trees, a cart or low stone walls would qualify, but shrubs or thick grasses would not. If behind Low Cover (such as a crate or barrel), add 1 to your Damage Threshold when attacked by ranged weapons. If behind Medium Cover (such as a waist-high stone wall), add 3 to your Damage Threshold when attacked by ranged weapons. If behind High Cover (such as a tall pillar), add 6 to your Damage Threshold when attacked by ranged weapons. If behind cover that breaks the line of visibility, you cannot be targeted by ranged attacks. The Gamemaster will always determine how low or high the cover is for these purposes. However, this provokes an Opportunity Attack if you leave an Engagement.

MOVEMENT ACTIONS IN HARD TERRAIN

Mud, thick bushes, tangled undergrowth, creek beds, snowfall and clutter within interior spaces can create additional challenges during combat. Characters cannot Charge or Run through Hard Terrain.

MOVEMENT SUBTYPES

There are other Subtypes of Combat Movement, such as climbing, driving, riding, rowing, sneaking and swimming. These other types of Movement Actions act as “riders”, pairing on top other Movement Actions and increase the Action Point cost by 1 (although the Gamemaster has the final say). For instance, if you intend to Charge with Sneak, it costs 3 Action Points instead of 2.

In order to use a Movement Subtype, make a relevant Skill Test (Stealth to sneak, Ride to ride your horse, etc...) with a Difficulty Rating set by the Gamemaster. Once you succeed, you need not continue making the Skill Test every Turn thereafter, unless the circumstances change. For instance, if you were sneaking and walked out into the open, discovered by your enemies, you would need to roll another Stealth Test. These exceptions are handled by the Gamemaster.

EXAMPLE

Leopold Coventry wishes to sneak towards the enemy. Using the terrain, he asks the Gamemaster if his enemies are distracted enough to use his Stealth Skill. His Skill Test is (Hard -20%), and he succeeds the Skill Test. He then Moves, costing him 2 AP as Sneak is a rider onto any Movement Action. With one Action Point left, he banks it in case he needs to Parry or Dodge.

A few moments later, Leopold's Turn comes up again. Since he had already made his Stealth Test successfully, he Takes Cover again, but it costs him 2 AP as Sneaking is a rider for all Movement Actions until he no longer wishes to sneak around.

It is not necessary to track these on a Character Sheet, but you can derive these other types of Combat Movement below. Naturally, if Characters are suffering Overage from Encumbrance Limit, these other types of Movement are penalized the same:

- Climb: 3 + Brawn Bonus (BB) in yards
- Drive: 3 + Brawn Bonus (BB) in yards
- Ride: 3 + Agility Bonus (AB) in yards
- Row: 3 + Brawn Bonus (BB) in yards
- Sneak: 3 + Agility Bonus (AB) in yards
- Swim: 3 + Brawn Bonus (BB) in yards

ATTACK ACTIONS

Attack Actions are used whenever a Character needs to vanquish their enemies using melee and ranged weapons.

DRAWING WEAPONS TO ATTACK

You may draw any weapon either from your own body, grasp a weapon you dropped at your feet, swap weapons at your side, give a weapon to an ally or even take one from an ally. This requires no additional Action Point expenditure whatsoever.

CALLED SHOT

Lining up the perfect attack, you attempt to debilitate your enemy in some capacity with your blade or a carefully-placed arrow.

Cost: 1 Action Point

Difficulty Rating: Varies, see below

Reaction: Varies see below

Effect: Taking careful aim, you intend to target a specific body part with a relevant Combat-based Skill Test. If aiming at the body, the Test is (Standard +/-0%). If aiming at arms or legs, the Test is (Challenging -10%). If aiming at the head, the Test is (Hard -20). After successfully striking, add your Combat Bonus (CB) to a 1D6 Damage Modifier. If you generate a face "6" on the Damage Modifier, add an additional 1D6 Chaos Die to your results. Every time a Chaos Die generates another face 6, it continues to "explode", generating additional 1D6 Chaos Die. Calculate all results together to determine Total Damage.

If Total Damage exceeds the Damage Threshold of your foe, they move one step down the Damage Condition Track. If it exceeds 9 + their Damage Threshold, you move them two steps down the Damage Condition Track. If it exceeds 18 + their Damage Threshold, you move them three steps down the Damage Condition Track, at maximum.

A foe can attempt to Parry your Called Shot if made with a melee weapon, or Dodge it if made with a ranged weapon. You cannot make a Called Shot with a ranged weapon while in an Engagement with foes, unless using a weapon with the Gunpowder Quality. Once you've attempted a Called Shot, whether successful or not, you cannot use any other Attack Actions until your next Turn.

CAST MAGICK

MAGICK IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE BETA

Summoning powers beyond most kith, you draw forth raw and formless ethereal energies to take shape.

Cost: 1, 2 or 3 Action Points

Difficulty Rating: Varies, see below

Reaction: As indicated within the Magick's listing

Effect: Make an Incantation Test. If casting a Petty Magick spell, spend 1 Action Point to make a (Routine +10%) Incantation Test. If casting a Lesser Magick spell, spend 2 Action Points to make a (Standard +/-0%) Incantation Test. If casting a Greater Magick spell, spend 3 Actions Points to make a (Challenging -10%) Incantation Test. Each spell has its own description, as indicated in Chapter ???: Grimoire.

A foe can attempt to Resist your Casted Magick. You must have both hands free and be able to speak in order to Cast Magick. You cannot Cast Magick while in an Engagement with foes. Once you've attempted to Cast Magick, whether successful or not, you cannot use any other Attack Actions until your next Turn.

MELEE ATTACK

You focus your precision and might behind a series of strikes to slay your enemies.

Cost: 1 Action Point

Difficulty Rating: (Standard +/-0%) Combat-based Skill Test

Reaction: (Standard +/-0) Combat-based Skill Test to Parry

Effect: When Engaged with a foe, make a relevant Combat-based Skill Test, referencing the Skill required to use your melee weapon. After successfully striking, reference your Combat Bonus (CB) and add a 1D6 Damage Modifier. If you generate a face "6" on the Damage Modifier, add an additional 1D6 Chaos Die to your results. Every time a Chaos Die generates another face 6, it continues to "explode", generating additional 1D6 Chaos Die. Calculate all results together to determine Total Damage.

If Total Damage exceeds the Damage Threshold of your foe, they move one step down the Damage Condition Track. If it exceeds 9 + their Damage Threshold, you move them two steps down the Damage Condition Track. If it exceeds 18 + their Damage Threshold, you move them three steps down the Damage Condition Track, at maximum.

A foe can attempt to Parry your Melee Attack. Once you've attempted a Melee Attack, whether successful or not, you cannot use any other Attack Actions until your next Turn.

Sidebar: Multiple Attacks?

In ZWEIHÄNDER, combat is abstracted to a great degree. Rolling to strike and dealing Damage has been carefully balanced, designed to be swift and merciless. Because of this, multiple attack rolls on the same Turn are not a consideration of the system, even if you are wielding two melee weapons. However, some Professions or Talents may allow you to take advantage of two weapon fighting in different ways.

RANGED ATTACK

Lining up a shot, you target the chinks in their armor with a ranged shot.

Cost: 1 Action Point

Difficulty Rating: (Standard +/-0%) Combat-based Skill

Reaction: (Standard +/-0) Coordination Test to Parry

Effect: When at Distance with a foe, make a relevant Combat-based Skill Test, referencing the Skill required to use your ranged weapon. After successfully striking, reference your Combat Bonus (CB) and add a 1D6 Damage Modifier. If you generate a face "6" on the Damage Modifier, add an additional 1D6 Chaos Die to your results. Every time a Chaos Die generates another face 6, it continues to "explode", generating additional 1D6 Chaos Die. Calculate all results together to determine Total Damage.

If Total Damage exceeds the Damage Threshold of your foe, they move one step down the Damage Condition Track. If it exceeds 6 + their Damage Threshold, you move them two steps down the

Damage Condition Track. If it exceeds 12 + their Damage Threshold, you move them three steps down the Damage Condition Track, at maximum.

A foe can attempt to Dodge your Ranged Attack, or Parry it with a shield. You cannot make a Ranged Attack while in an Engagement with foes, unless using a weapon with the Gunpowder Quality. Once you've attempted a Ranged Attack, whether successful or not, you cannot use any other Attack Actions until your next Turn.

ATTACKING LARGER FOES

Some attacks may suffer additional penalties to attack or wrangle foes larger than an attacker. For instance, it may prove incredibly difficult to Chokehold a Troll if a measly Dwarf or easier to make a Melee Attack against a creature larger than a barn door. In these situations, the Gamemaster will change the Difficulty Rating based on factors which may determine the outcome.

HELPLESS FOES

Any time a Character is asleep, unconscious, pinned beneath a heavy object or otherwise unable to move on their own accord, they are rendered Helpless. When a foe is Helpless, you do not have to roll to strike successfully and immediately slay them with any blow. Additionally, they are entirely Defenseless to attacks and Magic.

PERILOUS STUNTS

Perilous Stunts qualify Actions that are above the fold of standard options. They lend an opportunity for Characters to shine in a cinematic way, inflicting crippling conditions on their foes. Some Talents or Traits may allow you to trigger them in unique ways. Perilous Stunts cannot be Dodged or Parried, only Resisted.

CHOKEHOLD

You tighten the grip around your enemy's neck, restricting their ability to move.

Cost: 2 Action Points

Difficulty Rating: (Standard +/-0) Athletics Test

Reaction: (Standard +/-0) Athletics Test to Resist

Effect: When Engaged with a foe, make an Athletics Test. If successful, your foe must Resist by making a successful Athletics Test or be Choked.

When Choked, your foe's Peril Condition Track immediately drops one step, and at the start of your Turns if you maintain the Chokehold. It costs 3 Action Points to maintain a Chokehold, requiring no additional Skill Tests to do as such. Your Choked foe cannot use any Actions but Shake It Off to escape.

You cannot use any other Actions while you maintain a Chokehold. However, you may release a Chokehold at any time.

Once you've attempted to Chokehold, whether successful or not, you cannot use any other Perilous Stunts until your next Turn.

DIRTY TRICKS

With a handful of sand, you throw it into your opponent's eyes to temporarily blind them.

Cost: 2 Action Points

Difficulty Rating: (Standard +/-0%) Guile Test

Reaction: (Standard +/-0%) Awareness Test to Resist

Effect: When Engaged with a foe, make a Guile Test. If successful, your foe must Resist by making a successful Awareness Test or be Blinded

While Blinded, your foe cannot use Reactions until they Shake It Off to escape.

Once you've attempted Dirty Tricks, whether successful or not, you cannot use any other Perilous Stunts until your next Turn.

Sidebar: Perilous Stunts Triggered From Talents or Traits

There are special cases in ZWEIHÄNDER when both Damage and a special effect from a Perilous Stunt may be triggered at the same time. In these cases, always consider the effects of the Perilous Stunts before determining Damage.

DISARM

With a weapon in-hand, you try to deprive your enemy of their only means of offense.

Cost: 2 Action Points

Difficulty Rating: (Standard +/-0%) Combat-based Skill Test

Reaction: (Standard +/-0%) Coordination Test to Resist

Effect: When Engaged with a foe, make a relevant Combat-based Skill Test, referencing the Skill required to use your melee weapon. If successful, your foe must Resist by making a successful Coordination Test or be Disarmed.

When Disarmed, your foe loses a weapon from either their primary hand or off-hand, thrown 3 yards away. After being Disarmed, they cannot use that hand for Attack Actions until they Shake It Off to escape.

Once you've attempted to Disarm, whether successful or not, you cannot use any other Perilous Stunts until your next Turn.

KNOCKOUT!

Using a sap or a square punch to the jaw, you try rendering one enemy unconscious.

Cost: 2 Action Points

Difficulty Rating: (Standard +/-0%) Athletics Test

Reaction: (Standard +/-0) Toughness Test to Resist

Effect: When Engaged with a foe, make an Athletics Test. If successful, your foe must Resist by making a successful Toughness Test or be made Helpless.

When Helpless, your foe immediately fall to the ground unconscious for a number of minutes equal to your Brawn Bonus (BB). Helpless foes cannot speak or move, and can be instantly Slain! with any weapon for 1 Action Point.

Only foes who are Surprised can be made victim to Knockout!, although unique Talents or Traits may allow an attacker to use this in other circumstances.

Once you've attempted to Knockout!, whether successful or not, you cannot use any other Perilous Stunts until your next Turn.

SPLINTER SHIELD

Putting everything you have into it, you attempt to break and shatter shields.

Cost: 2 Action Points

Difficulty Rating: (Standard +/-0%) Combat-based Skill Test

Reaction: (Standard +/-0) Toughness Test to Resist

Effect: When Engaged with a foe, make a relevant Combat-based Skill Test, referencing the Skill required to use your melee weapon. If successful, your foe must Resist by making a successful Toughness Test or have their shield Splintered.

When Splintered, your foe's shield cannot be used to Parry melee or ranged attacks until repaired. Shields which are Castle-forged cannot be Splintered in this manner. Fixing a Splintered shield costs 50% of its listed value.

You can only Splinter Shield when wielding a melee weapon in two hands. Once you've attempted to Splinter Shield, whether successful or not, you cannot use any other Perilous Stunts until your next Turn.

STUNNING BLOW

With a kidney punch or a solid bludgeoning instrument, you try to stun your enemy.

Cost: 2 Action Points

Difficulty Rating: (Standard +/-0%) Athletics Test

Reaction: (Standard +/-0) Toughness Test to Resist

Effect: When Engaged with a foe, make an Athletics Test. If successful, your foe must Resist by making a successful Toughness Test or be Stunned.

While Stunned, your foe begins their Turn with 1 less Action Point until they successfully Shake It Off to escape. A foe can only be made victim to this condition once. Meaning, they cannot be Stunned to the point where they don't have any Action Points whatsoever.

Once you've attempted a Stunning Blow, whether successful or not, you cannot use any other Perilous Stunts until your next Turn.

TAKEDOWN

You lurch forward to try dropping your foe to the ground with a throw or kicking their feet out from underneath them.

Cost: 2 Action Points

Difficulty Rating: (Standard +/-0%) Athletics Test

Reaction: (Standard +/-0) Coordination Test to Resist

Effect: When Engaged with a foe, make an Athletics Test. If successful, your foe must Resist by making a successful Coordination Test or be knocked Prone onto the ground.

While knocked Prone, your foe drops everything in their hands at their feet. Additionally, attackers add 1D6 Chaos Die to the results of successful strikes made with Called Shots, Melee Attacks and Ranged Attacks.

Once you've attempted a Takedown, whether successful or not, you cannot use any other Perilous Stunts until your next Turn.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Special Actions are used to complete miscellaneous Actions that do not hinge on movement or attacking. Interacting within the environment, shaking off the effects of Combat Conditions and boosting the moral of allies constitute these sort of Actions:

INSPIRING WORDS

You rally the morale of a comrade with a stirring speech.

Cost: 1 Action Point

Difficulty Rating: (Standard +/-0%) Leadership Test

Effect: You may attempt a Leadership Test. If successful, one ally who can clearly see and hear you is immediately Inspired.

While Inspired, that ally gains a +10 Base Chance to all Skill Tests.

An ally can only be made subject to Inspiring Words once during combat, and cannot be Inspired if already Intimidated.

LITANY OF HATRED

You break the morale of your enemy by spouting a litany of hatred, intimidating them.

Cost: 1 Action Point

Difficulty Rating: (Standard +/-0%) Intimidate Test

Effect: You may attempt an Intimidate Test. If successful, one foe who can clearly see and hear you is immediately Intimidated.

While Intimidated, that foe suffers a -10 Base Chance to all Skill Tests, until they Shake It Off to escape.

A foe can only be made subject to Litany of Hatred once during combat, and cannot be made subject to it if already Inspired.

Sidebar: Intimidating Animals & Creatures

In some cases, this can also be used against creatures to cause them to flee. The effect of creatures yielding before you varies, left to the Gamemaster to interpret. You could potentially scatter a pack of rats by stomping around wildly, swing lit torches towards a pack of wolves to cause them to cower, make loud noises to overawe a bear, chase away small animals by flapping your arms, smack a dog firmly on the nose or even raise a symbol of your faith, causing those with the Undead Creature Trait to recoil and turn away.

LOAD

With haste, you prepare another shot

Cost: 1, 2 or 3 Action Points

Effect: Before you fire a ranged weapon that is unloaded, you must Load it with ammunition. Spend the requisite amount of Action Points to Load, as indicated within the ranged weapon's listing in **Chapter XXX: Trappings**. However, you must have both hands free to Load a weapon and you cannot Load a weapon while Engaged with a foe.

SHAKE IT OFF

Focusing inwards, you try to rally from any number of ill-effects.

Cost: 2 Action Points

Difficulty Rating: (Standard +/-0%) Discipline or Toughness Test

Effect: You may attempt a Discipline or Toughness Test. If successful, the effects of Blinded, Choked, Disarmed, Intimidated and Stunned disappear immediately as you escape. If you fail, you may attempt to Shake It Off again on your next Turn.

TAKE AIM

Taking careful aim, you prepare to unleash an accurate shot!

Cost: 1 or 2 Action Points

Effect: Spend 1 Action Point to gain a +10 Base Chance to your next Attack Action or Perilous Stunt on this Turn. If you spend 2 Action Points, you gain a +20 Base Chance instead.

You cannot Take Aim to Cast Magick under any circumstances.

USE A SKILL

Drawing upon your expertise, you put your other special abilities to use during combat.

Cost: Varies

Effect: You can use your Skills in other creative ways, outside the fold of Actions in Combat. These are typically the examples as presented for Special Uses in **Chapter XXX: Skills**, but are by no means exhaustive. Once you've described what you wish to do, the Gamemaster will assign anywhere from 1 to 3 Action Points to commit to the action.

WAIT

You position yourself into a watchful position, waiting for condition to play out during a fight.

Cost: 0 Action Points

Effect: Whenever you Wait, you opt to wait to take a Turn while holding your Action Points in reserve. You must act before your next Turn comes up in the Initiative Ladder; otherwise, you are no longer waiting. Once you've acted, assume a new position within the Initiative Ladder.

You cannot Wait to take two Turns back to back. You must use your Turn, or lose it, before your next one comes around in the Initiative Ladder.

REACTIONS

Reactions are always used by Characters as a response to their enemy's attacks and movement or defending themselves against the onslaught. Note that if you are not already armed with a weapon, you cannot draw one in order to make an Opportunity Attack or Parry an attack.

DODGE

Using quick reflexes or out of desperation for lack of protection, you attempt to entirely avoid an oncoming attack by ducking out of the way.

Cost: 1 Action Point

Difficulty Rating: Varies, see below

Effect: Whenever you are successfully struck by a ranged weapon but before Damage is determined, attempt a Coordination Test. Your Test's Difficulty Rating receives either a penalty or a bonus, based on the Difficulty Rating of your foe's attack. It is always the opposite bonus or penalty. This means if your foe's attack has a Difficulty Rating of (Routine +10%), your Difficulty Rating to Dodge is (Challenging -10%).

If successful, you avoid all Damage. More details on Dodging can be found further in this chapter.

You cannot Dodge when left Defenseless or Helpless. Finally, you cannot Dodge the effects of Perilous Stunts.

OPPORTUNITY ATTACK

You lash out with a disruptive attack against an exposed foe.

Cost: 0 Action Points

Difficulty Rating: (Easy +20%) Combat-based Skill

Effect: In specific situations (such as a foe moving away from you when Engaged in combat with them), make a free Melee Attack. Your foe is left Defenseless to this attack.

You cannot make Opportunity Attacks when left Defenseless, Helpless, Prone, with ranged weapons or with melee weapons that possess the Reach Quality.

PARRY

Cost: 1 Action Point

Difficulty Rating: Varies, see below

Effect: Whenever you are successfully struck by a melee weapon but before Damage is determined, make a relevant Combat-based Skill Test, referencing the Skill required to use your melee weapon. Your Test's Difficulty Rating receives either a penalty or a bonus, based on the Difficulty Rating of your foe's attack. It is always the opposite bonus or penalty. This means if your foe's attack has a Difficulty Rating of (Hard -20%), your Difficulty Rating to Dodge is (Easy +20%).

If successful, you avoid all Damage. More details on Parrying can be found further in this chapter.

You cannot Parry when left Defenseless or Helpless. However, if you're armed with a shield or weapon possessing the Defensive Quality, you can Parry ranged-based Attack Actions and Perilous Stunts. Finally, you cannot Parry the effects of Perilous Stunts.

RESIST

You attempt to withstand the effects of a Called Shot, Special Action, Casted Magick or otherwise.

Cost: 0 Action Points

Effect: Whenever you are made victim to Perilous Stunts or other Talents and Traits that require a defender to withstand a special condition, make a relevant Skill Test, referencing the Skill indicated necessary to withstand the effects. If successful, you nullify the results entirely. If failed, you suffer them in kind (as per the description).

You cannot Resist when left Defenseless or Helpless.

PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

Below is an example of the way combat may play out. Gamemasters and players can use this as a quick reference to understand how to pull together the basics of a fight. Colorful descriptions were omitted on purpose, so that the focus is purely on the raw mechanics of Actions in Combat:

EXAMPLE

It is Wilhelm Eckhardt's Turn in the Initiative Ladder. He wants to position himself a bit closer to the Guttersnipe to attack. Wilhelm jogs forward with Move (1 AP). At the end of the Move, he Takes Aim (1 AP) and then swings his vicious mortuary sword with a Melee Attack (1 AP). It reduces the Guttersnipe's Damage Condition Track to DEAD! It's now the end of Wilhelm's Turn.

It's now Patches' Turn in the Initiative Ladder. He needs to disengage from combat, as Patches is wounded pretty badly and surrounded. He Manuevers (2 AP), avoiding an Opportunity Attack the Thug could have made. It's now the end of his Turn.

The Gamemaster is controlling the Bounty Hunter. She decides to attack with her crossbow with a Stunning Blow (2AP) and Patches fails to Resist. It's now the end of the Bounty Hunter's Turn.

Edwin Mortani's Turn is up in the Initiative Ladder. He storms towards the Bounty Hunter with a Charge (2 AP), terminating with a Melee Attack (1 AP). Edwin unfortunately rolls a Critical Failure with his Melee Attack. Edwin's Turn immediately ends.

It's the Gamemaster's Turn with a new Character – a Cutthroat. She's been hidden the entire time, unnoticed by all. The assassin leaps out from behind a table, lunging out at Wilhelm Eckhardt with a Called Shot (1AP). Because she was hidden and unseen the entire time, the Cutthroat's attack against Wilhelm gains a +30 Base Chance to strike. The Cutthroat ends her Turn, and the Gamemaster updates the Initiative Ladder with the Cutthroat at 18.

The Raging Fire continues to rage, slowly creeping up the supporting beams on the bottom floor of the Tramp's Loft. The Gamemaster updates the Initiative Ladder with one hash mark beside the number (ex. Raging Fire – 19 X). This indicates that there's some sort of time constraint, or

something will eventually unfold should the fire be left unchecked. The Raging Fire's Turn is now over.

The Guttersnipe was killed earlier by Wilhelm Eckhardt. In his dying breath, he curses Wilhelm and keels over dead. The Gamemaster removes the Guttersnipe entirely from the Initiative Ladder.

Leopold Coventry's Turn comes up in the Initiative Ladder. He Draws Weapons (1 AP) with a throwing knife, propelling it at the Cutthroat with a Ranged Attack (1 AP). He strikes the Cutthroat, and she attempts to Dodge (1 AP) in response. The Cutthroat fails, but doesn't suffer enough Damage to lower her Damage Condition Track. Leopold's Turn ends.

Graf von Bek's Turn comes up. Knowing that he and his allies outnumber their enemies, he grants words of encouragement to Patches with Inspiring Words (1 AP) and succeeds. Graf then Moves (1 AP) and Moves (1 AP) again, ending his Turn.

Mercutio Salvatore's Turn now begins. He feels confident that his friends can take on these ruffians, but the fire clearly presents a different sort of challenge. He asks the Gamemaster if there are any barrels of water in Tramp's Loft. Unfortunately, there's nothing he can see within the vicinity. Mercutio recalls that it's raining outside, and proposes to the Gamemaster that he wishes to Use A Skill (1 AP), describing into detail what he wishes to do. The Gamemaster OKs the request, requiring a successful Coordination Test. Mercutio succeeds! Mercutio carefully balances outside onto the window sill, and using his strength, breaks the rain gutter. Water begins to pour into Tramp's Loft, in hopes to douse the flames. His Turn now ends.

It's now the Gamemaster's Turn with a Thug. Giving careful consideration to the devastating blows Wilhelm Eckhardt is dealing out, the Thug makes a Called Shot (1 AP) and attempts to Disarm (2 AP) Wilhelm. Not only is his Disarm attempt successful, but he rolls a Critical Success. The Thug snatches away the sword and tosses it halfway across the room, directly into the source of the fire. His Turn ends.

Initiative begins again with Wilhelm Eckhardt, unfortunately left disarmed...

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO ATTACKING

This covers the most common Action in combat - the attack. Whenever a Character is armed with a melee or ranged weapon, the ability to strike and the Damage dealt is determined the same way. There are seven simple principles to resolving an Attack Action which results in Damage:

- Step I: Which Weapon?
- Step II: Total Chance For Success
- Step III: Make The Attack
- Step IV: Enemy Defends
- Step V: Roll Damage
- Step VI: Determine Damage Condition
- Step VII: Injuries

STEP I: WHICH WEAPON?

Whenever a Character wishes to fight, they must first decide what kind of weapon to use and whether their foe is close enough to strike. Melee weapons are useful for those who like to get up close and personal, while ranged weapons serve the purposes of more cowardly (or some may wiser) fighters. However, there are benefits and drawbacks, no matter the choice a Character makes when using a weapon. What fighting style a Character uses is generally reflective of their Archetype, Profession or Social Class, taught at a formative age when they first learned to defend themselves against an unforgiving world. Tutelage from a master swordsman is a relatively common practice amongst the Aristocracy and Warriors, whereas Knaves and the Lowborn may have taken their licks in the streets, fighting with clubs and rocks. No matter the instrument of death, all weapons confer general advantages and disadvantages, based on the type of weapon. Here are a few general distinctions:

- Two-handed melee weapons generally deal higher Damage. Unfortunately, should the weapon be dropped or disarmed, an attacker may be left without a way to fight. They typically cannot be used for Opportunity Attacks, due to their Reach Quality.
- Some two-handed weapons cannot be used when Engaged, requiring at least 1 yard of Distance between an attacker and foe.

Examples include an estoc, threshing flail and pole cleaver.

- One-handed melee weapons generally have lower Damage. However, 2 one-handed weapons may be held simultaneously, should an attacker wish to be more flexible with the type of attacks they're using.
- One-handed ranged weapons have lower Damage and poor Distance, but two-handed ranged weapons generally need to be Loaded between shots but possess supreme Distance rates.
- Two-handed ranged weapons always have the advantage of Distance, but force an attacker to fight without a shield. This can be a particularly dangerous prospect, since they are unable to take advantage of a shield's defense against ranged-based attacks for Parrying. However, two-handed ranged weapons deal better Damage when they strike true.
- Both one and two-handed ranged weapons cannot be used for purposes of Opportunity Attacks.
- Ranged weapons with the Gunpowder Quality deal out high Damage and can be used while Engaged with foes. Furthermore, foes cannot Parry them but may Dodge them. However, they are notoriously volatile should an attacker generate a Critical Failure.
- Shields allow you to Parry ranged attacks. They also can be used as an improvised weapon. With some shields, they add to your Base Chance to Parry or provide a bonus to your Damage Threshold. However, when used with another one-handed melee weapon, the amount of Damage an attacker can deal pales in comparison with an attacker armed with a two-handed melee weapon.
- Some weapons, like fighting bare-handed, using a blackjack, knuckledusters or bullwhip, possess the Weak Quality, which makes it more difficult to Injure foes. They also have the Pummeling Quality, which references Brawn Bonus (BB) for Damage instead.

MELEE WEAPONS

From a simple farmer's tool, to a poisoned dirk, a splitting maul or even a thin rapier, melee weapons are the most common stock of hand weapons.

They're typically cheap to purchase, easy to use and reliable even under the worst of conditions. With a melee weapon, the attacker will make either a Simple Melee or Martial Melee Test, depending on the type of weapon they're armed with. For most melee weapons, the attacker must be Engaged, otherwise standing next to their intended target, in order to attack. While most melee weapons can only be used while Engaged, some may be used to attack foes outside of an Engagement, up to 1 yard away.

Sidebar: Primary Hand And Off-Hand

While a favored option of many players, using two weapons in combat can be difficult for the Gamemaster to balance. We prefer a simpler method of application, taking under account the delicate balance of ZWEIHÄNDER'S game mechanics.

You can wield any 2 one-handed weapons in combat. However, you may wish to indicate on your Character Sheet under Background what your primary hand is. When attacking with a weapon held in your off-hand, you flip the results to fail with Attack Actions. However, you provoke no penalties to Parry in these cases if employing a shield. Should you possess the Ambidexterity Talent, you suffer no penalties to use your off-hand in combat whatsoever, using either weapon with equal finesse.

RANGED WEAPONS

Nothing like the "plunk" of lead shot blasting through plate armor is more satisfying to the ear, save perhaps the resounding "hum" of an arrow as it shivers within the target's breastplate. Thrown axes, yew wood bows cranequin-driven crossbows can be incredibly deadly, albeit taking time to Load between shots. With a ranged weapon, the attacker will make either a Simple Ranged or Martial Ranged Test, varying by the kind of weapon their wielding. Akin to melee weapons, the attacker must consider the range to their intended target when attacking with a ranged weapon. However, ranged weapons also possess further ranges to strike, called Distance. Distance is generally measured by the attacker's Perception Bonus (PB). It reflects the number of yards an attacker can accurately target a foe with their weapon:

- **Short Distance** is the minimum range an attacker may stand without suffering additional penalty to their attack. This means there is a bare minimum of 1 yard between the attacker and the intended target. Each

ranged weapon has a Short Distance tied to it within **Chapter XXX: Trappings**. While at Short Distance, the attacker does not suffer any additional penalties to their attack roll.

- **Medium Distance** is the sum of Short Distance, multiplied by 2. This means an attacker can stand even further away from their intended target and fire effectively. While at Medium Distance, the Difficulty Rating becomes worse by -10.
- **Long Distance** is the sum of Short Distance, multiplied by 3. At this range, firing a ranged weapon can be considerably difficult. While at Medium Distance, the Difficulty Rating becomes worse by -20.

There are some ranged weapons which possess the Throwing Quality. In these cases, these weapons can never be thrown further than the Distance listed; they always are at Short Distance, and do not have a Medium or Long Distance value.

One final note about ranged weapons - if an attacker is standing next to an enemy, this means they effectively Engaged, unable to use a ranged weapon (unless it is a Gunpowder weapon).

"UNARMED" ATTACKS

Not every fight necessarily has to boil down to outright murder. Underground pugilist's clubs sponsored by the aristocracy, the tried and true tavern brawl, "bridge wars" between rivaling guilds and sanctioned gladiatorial boxing matches are part and parcel within the context of a believable Campaign World. There are times when punishing someone for their transgressions with a solid smack to the jaw or the lashing of a whip is a better lesson to teach another, rather than spitting them on the end of your blade. Violence, while a very real threat, should not overshadow the more gentlemanly ways to settle a score. This style of fighting is an excellent way to take down an enemy without having to resort to a fight to the death. When Engaged in a fistfight, there are a few important rules Characters should consider:

- Fists, head butts and kicks function as a bare-handed weapon, as indicated in **Chapter ???: Trappings**.

- You cannot Parry with bare-handed attacks, unless Parrying another's bare-handed attack.

STEP II: TOTAL CHANCE FOR SUCCESS

There are several key factors that may influence a Character's ability to successfully strike a foe with their attacks or evade their incoming blows. Positioning, ambient modifiers by their abilities and types of Actions can rapidly change the difficulty to strike enemies. These modifiers are resultant of the Actions Characters use and personal conditions they may be suffering from.

BASE CHANCE

Reference first the Combat Primary Attribute, then add together total Skill Ranks for the relevant Combat-related Skill in order to determine Base Chance. Depending on the weapon used, it will ultimately influence Base Chance. For instance, an attacker cannot use the Martial Melee Skill for a ranged weapon. Additionally, some Talents or Traits may add a bonus to Base Chance. Similarly, an attacker may be suffering from an Injury or lower Peril Condition Track which further penalizes chances of success.

The maximum total bonus that can be applied is +30 Base Chance, while the maximum total penalty is -30 Base Chance. Should the bonuses or penalties exceed these two numbers, they are ignored.

EXAMPLE

Patches throws his knife at the Thug. Patches' Simple Ranged is 45%. Patches is currently at -10 All Skill Tests on his Peril Condition Track. Thus, his Base Chance to strike is 35% (45 - 10).

GAMEMASTER ADJUSTS DIFFICULTY RATING

All Attack Actions have a fixed Difficulty Rating, but the Gamemaster may change it when the situation dictates. These circumstances are always the result of outside influence, used by the Gamemaster to either negatively or positively influence the outcome. For instance, should one side outnumber another's within an Engagement, it plays into their favor. On the same token, should an attacker find themselves firing into an Engagement where their intended targets

stand amongst their own allies, it will work against them. The Gamemaster will impose these final bonuses or penalties, and the results of these determine the Total Chance for success the attacker will need to meet. Should you be the attacker, your Gamemaster will tell you the Difficulty Rating. Similarly, your Gamemaster will always announce the Difficulty Rating of their Character's attacks, adjudicated according to circumstances. Here are a few examples you may see:

- **Automatic Success:** Render the killing blow to a Helpless foe.
- **Trivial +30%:** Fire a shot at a person who's climbing a tree.
- **Easy +20%:** Use an Opportunity Attack against a foe who's moving away without Maneuvering.
- **Routine +10%:** Flank foes that are outnumbered in a melee engagement.
- **Standard +/-0%:** Fight someone toe-to-toe without any additional environmental modifiers to confuse or hamper their ability to attack.
- **Challenging -10%:** Attack someone in fog, mist or smoke or on horseback.
- **Hard -20%:** Fire a ranged weapon into an Engagement while your allies are standing toe-to-toe with their adversaries.
- **Arduous -30%:** Attack someone in darkness.
- **Automatic Failure:** Attempt to throw a zweihänder at a foe standing more than a few yards away.

TOTAL CHANCE FOR SUCCESS

Once these personal modifiers have been tallied by the attacker, the result determines the Total Chance for success to strike successfully.

EXAMPLE

Patches is ready to attack. Unfortunately, the Thug is standing amongst Patches' friends. This will make it particularly difficult to get a shot in, requiring extreme precision in Action. Should he Critically Fail, Patches may strike one of his own allies. The Gamemaster says that Patches' Difficulty Rating is (Hard -20%). Patches' Total Chance for success is 25% or below in order to attack the Thug (45 - 20 = 25).

STEP III: MAKE THE ATTACK

Although it may appear at first glance that combat is iterative in the game world, it is anything but that. While Turns adhere to a strict structure, your Character is constantly on the move - spinning this way to feint an attack, turning that way to position themselves for a better shot. It's that one attack, a final shot that makes all the difference as you make a decisive blow, finally rolling the dice. This is where the fun and excitement of combat comes in, as a good roll can turn the tide of the battle but a poor roll could result in extreme misfortune. Much like other Skill Tests, the attack is resolved using the same rules covered back in **Chapter I: How To Play**.

ROLL TO STRIKE

Once an attacker has considered what weapon they intend to use, what the Total Chance is, it's time to roll Percentile Dice. Should the result meet the Total Chance for success or result below it, the attack succeeds. Should the result exceed the Total Chance for success, the attack fails.

It is a good idea for players to announce the Total Chance for success rolling Percentile Dice. The confusion of a fight and all of its related modifiers can sometimes confuse even the most level-headed player. The Gamemaster likely won't announce the Total Chance for success, so it keeps players guessing and unaware of their foe's true capabilities.

EXAMPLE

Adding up all the modifiers, Patches' Total Chance for success is 25% or below. Rolling the dice, he comes up with a 24 - barely succeeding - but still strikes the Thug. If he had rolled a 26% or above, he would have failed.

MATCH - CRITICAL SUCCESS!

Some attacks allow an attacker to trigger a special effect whenever they roll a Critical Success with an Attack Action. In these cases, Talents, Professional and Racial Traits allow an attacker to incur a mechanical bonus or new effect, covered in its description. However, not all attacker gain these sort of abilities. In cases where the attacker doesn't gain a special effect that triggers on a Match with an attack, they are left Defenseless to it. This means that they cannot Parry melee Damage, Dodge ranged Damage, Resist Perilous Stunts or the effects of Casted Magick.

MATCH - CRITICAL FAILURE?

Rolling poorly with an attack has no immediate adverse effect. However, should an attacker roll a Critical Failure with any Attack Action, it causes combat fatigue from overexertion. They automatically move down the Peril Condition Track by one step in these cases.

STEP IV: ENEMY DEFENDS

Defenders in a fight are constantly on the move. They're maneuvering, side-stepping, bobbing and weaving around, jockeying for a better position. Should defender be aware and ready, they can attempt to turn away an attack.

DEFENDING AGAINST THE ATTACK: DODGE OR PARRY?

Should a defender wish to avoid an attack, they may try to avoid it by interposing their weapon or shield in front of them by Parrying, or duck out of the way by Dodging. Providing they are not Defenseless or Helpless, a defender has two options:

DODGE RANGED ATTACKS

Whenever a defender is successfully struck by a ranged weapon, they may attempt a Coordination Test. The Test's Difficulty Rating receives either a penalty or a bonus, based on the Difficulty Rating of the attacker's Attack Action. It is always the opposite bonus or penalty.

EXAMPLE

The Thug was instead hit by a ranged weapon, and wishes to Dodge out of the way. However, because the attacker's Difficulty Rating to attack was (Easy +20%), the Thug's Difficulty Rating to Dodge is (Hard -20%).

If successful, the defender avoids all Damage. A defender cannot re-attempt to Dodge the same attack they just failed to Dodge.

A defender cannot Dodge when left Defenseless or Helpless. Also, they cannot Dodge the effects of Perilous Stunts.

PARRY MELEE ATTACKS

Whenever a defender is successfully struck by a melee weapon, they make a relevant Combat-based Skill Test, referencing the Skill required to use the weapon used to Parry with. The Test's Difficulty Rating

receives either a penalty or a bonus, based on the Difficulty Rating of the attacker's Attack Action. It is always the opposite bonus or penalty.

EXAMPLE

The Thug was instead hit by Patches' melee weapon, and wishes to Parry. However, because Patches' Difficulty Rating was (Hard -20%), the Thug's Difficulty Rating to Parry is (Easy +20%).

If successful, the defender avoids all Damage. A defender cannot re-attempt to Parry the same attack they just failed to Parry.

A defender cannot Parry when left Defenseless or Helpless. Also, they cannot Parry the effects of Perilous Stunts. However, if the defender is armed with a shield, they can Parry attacks made with ranged weapons.

FINAL CONSIDERATION FOR DODGE AND PARRY

The size of a weapon or the form of the attack should be considered whenever a defender attempts to Parry. The Gamemaster may rule that Parrying a pole cleaver with a piddly shiv would warrant an (Arduous -20%) Difficulty Rating to Parry. Similarly, they may rule that a defender gets a better chance to Parry a mortuary sword with a zweihänder, changing the Difficulty Rating to (Routine +10%). In the case of Dodge, ducking out of the way from a flurry of arrows may be considerably more difficult than simply moving out of the way of a thrown bottle. The Gamemaster will always make these determinations on a case-by-case basis, changing the Difficulty Rating on the fly.

STEP V: ROLL DAMAGE

After you successfully strike and the foe fails to Dodge or Parry (or chooses not to defend), it's time to determine Damage. There are three specific considerations an attacker should make when determining how much Total Damage they deal:

- Every Character deals Combat Bonus (CB) in Damage.
- After determining Combat Bonus (CB), add a 1D6 Damage Modifier for the weapon (a property all weapons in ZWEIHÄNDER possess). The sum of Combat Bonus (CB)

and derived results of 1D6 Damage Modifier determines Total Damage.

- If the attacker generates a face "6" on the Damage Modifier (the die lands on the 6), it inflicts additional Damage. Roll a 1D6 Chaos Die, and add it to the Total Damage result. If the Chaos Die lands on a face "6", it continues to "explode", generating additional 1D6 Chaos Die. There is no upper limit to the number of Chaos Dice that can be used, guaranteeing each consecutive die lands on a face 6. Calculate all results together to determine Total Damage.

EXAMPLE

Patches successfully strike with his shiv. Patches' Combat Bonus (CB) is 3. He rolled a 1D6 Damage Modifier, resulting in a face "6". He now adds 1D6 Chaos Die, generating another face "6". He rolls yet another Chaos Die, resulting in a face "1". Patches inflicts 16 Total Damage (3 + 6 + 6 + 1).

CALCULATE DAMAGE THRESHOLD

A defender always takes under consideration their Damage Threshold as they suffer Damage. It is an ambient form of defense which protects them, regardless if they are aware of being attacks or not. Damage Threshold is a combination of the defender's armor's Damage Threshold Modifier and their Brawn Bonus (BB).

EXAMPLE

The Gamemaster considers the Thug's Damage Threshold. He's wearing quilted armor, which has a Damage Resistance of 1. He has a Brawn Bonus (BB) of 6. His total Damage Threshold is 7 (1 + 6).

Sidebar: Donning and Removing Armor

Armor play a significant role for consideration for Damage Threshold. It contributes anywhere from a 1 to 6 Damage Threshold Modifier. If a Character removes their armor or puts on a new set, the Damage Condition Track does not diminish. It merely changes their total Damage Threshold.

Whenever an attacker strikes their target and after Total Damage is considered, the defender must now compare it to their Damage Threshold:

BELOW DAMAGE THRESHOLD

If Total Damage is equal to or below the Damage Threshold, nothing happens. The defender is unhurt, and soldier onwards.

EXCEEDS DAMAGE THRESHOLD

If Total Damage exceeds the Damage Threshold of the defender, they move one step down the Damage Condition Track. If it exceeds their Damage Threshold + 9, they two steps down the Damage Condition Track. If it exceeds their Damage Threshold + 18, they move three steps down the Damage Condition Track, at maximum. A defender cannot be moved more than three steps down the Damage Track by normal means.

For instance, if Damage Threshold was 7, add 9 to determine the threat range for moving two steps down the Damage Condition Track. If you add 7 + 18, it determines the threat range for moving three steps down the Damage Condition Track. This can easily be expressed as 7/16/25.

EXAMPLE

Patches attacks the Thug and succeeds. Patches deals 4 Damage due to his Combat Bonus (CB). He then rolls a 1D6 Damage Modifier, and it results in a face 6. He is then awarded a 1D6 Chaos Die. Fortune seems to be in his favor, as he rolls yet another face 6 on the second Chaos Die! The next Chaos Die results in a face 1. Tallying his results, his Total Damage is 17 (4 + 6 + 6 + 1).

The Thug's Damage Threshold is 5. Adding 9 to this results in 14 (5 + 9), while adding 18 to the Damage Threshold equals 23 (5 + 18). Patches inflicted 17 Damage, thus the Thug two steps down the Damage Condition Track.

STEP VI: DETERMINE DAMAGE CONDITION

Any time a Character suffers Damage that exceeds their Damage Threshold, the Player or Gamemaster must announce to the group what their current Damage Condition is.

The closer a Character gets to the bottom of the Damage Condition Track, the riskier things become. Injuries can occur within a specific threat range at the whim of misfortune. And once they reach the bottom, death is assured.

STEP VII: INJURIES

RISK OF INJURY FROM DAMAGE

Whenever a defender's Damage Condition Track drops to Moderately Wounded, Seriously Wounded or Grievously Wounded, they are at risk of suffering an Injury. In some cases, particular Talents or other Traits may make said Injuries more (or less) severe. Note that you are never at risk to suffer Injuries if you move up the Damage Condition Track; only when you move down the Damage Condition Track.

Whenever a Character's Damage Condition track drops to Lightly Wounded, there is zero risk for Injury. Once the Condition Track drops to Moderately Wounded, they must roll a 1D6 Chaos Die. If the result is a face "6", they suffer a Moderate Injury. When the Damage Condition Track drops to Seriously Wounded, they must roll 2D6 Chaos Dice. If the result is one or more face "6", they suffer a Serious Injury. When the Damage Condition Track drops to Grievously Wounded, they must roll 3D6 Chaos Dice. If the result is one or more face "6", they suffer a Grievous Injury. And once they reach Slain!, they're dead.

WHEN INJURY OCCURS

The Gamemaster will roll Percentile Dice to determine the specific Injury while the defender should denote on their Character sheet it's name, severity and related negative effects.

Once Injured, it's likely a good idea for a Character take cover or simply run away. In combat, it is impossible to treat an Injury until later. However, if they're trapped, unable to run away or simply stupid enough to continue fighting, the poor sod is likely to end up in the dead book...but may choose to go down in a blaze of glory.

Percentile Dice	Moderate Injury	Description
1 to 8	Fortune' Mercy!	Ignore Injury, and continue fighting onwards!
9 to 16	Black Eye	Until fully Recuperated, you must flip the results to fail Skill Tests that rely on vision.
17 to 25	Broken Fingers	You immediately drop whatever you are holding. Until fully Recuperated, you must flip the results to fail all melee weapon attacks with your primary hand.
26 to 33	Bruised Rib	Until fully Recuperated, reduce your Encumbrance Limit by 3.
34 to 41	Dislocated Shoulder	Until fully Recuperated, you start your Turn with 1 less Action Point.
42 to 49	Head Trauma	Until fully Recuperated, reduce your Initiative by 3.
50 to 58	Pulled Muscle	Until fully Recuperated, you must flip the results to fail all Brawn-based Skill Tests.
59 to 67	Smashed Elbow	Until fully Recuperated, you must flip the results to fail all Actions in Combat that rely on ranged weapons.
68 to 76	Strained Groin	Until fully Recuperated, you cannot use any Movement Actions besides Move.
77 to 85	Twisted Ankle	Until fully Recuperated, reduce your Combat Movement by 3.
86 to 92	Wrist Fracture	Until fully Recuperated, you cannot hold anything in your primary hand, and must rely on your off-hand.
93 to 100	Misfortune!	Reference the Serious Injury table instead!
Percentile Dice	Serious Injury	Description
1 to 8	Fortune' Mercy!	Ignore Injury, and continue fighting onwards!
9 to 16	Broken Rib	Your armor gains the Ruined Quality. Until fully Recuperated, you cannot add Skill Ranks to your Skills.
17 to 25	Busted Kneecap	Until fully Recuperated, any time you fail a Skill Test that relies on Brawn or Agility, reduce your Peril Condition Track by one step.
26 to 33	Concussion	Until fully Recuperated, you remain unconscious and Helpless.
34 to 41	Fractured Larynx	Until fully Recuperated, you must succeed a Scrutinize Test to speak.
42 to 49	Rattled Brain	Until fully Recuperated, you cannot use Special Actions in combat.
50 to 58	Shell Shock	Until fully Recuperated, reduce all Damage you inflict by your Fellowship Bonus (FB).
59 to 67	Skull Fracture	Until fully Recuperated, you must flip the results to fail all Skill Tests.
68 to 76	Stress Fracture	Immediately drop your Peril Condition Track by two steps. Until fully Recuperated, you cannot Dodge or Parry.
77 to 85	Temporary Paralysis	You are knocked Prone. Until fully Recuperated, you cannot move your legs.
86 to 92	Torn Shoulder	Whatever you are holding in your primary hand is instantly destroyed. Until fully Recuperated, you start your Turn with 2 less Action Points.
93 to 100	Misfortune!	Reference the Grievous Injury table instead!
Percentile Dice	Grievous Injury	Description
1 to 8	Fortune' Mercy!	Ignore Injury, and continue fighting onwards!
9 to 16	Cerebral Contusion	Permanently reduce your Intelligence Primary Attribute by 3%. Until fully Recuperated, you cannot use any Skills that require more than a minute of concentration.
17 to 25	Disfiguring Scar	Permanently reduce your Fellowship Primary Attribute by 3%. Until fully Recuperated, you cannot speak properly as you're rendered mute.
26 to 33	Lacerated Muscle	Permanently reduce your Brawn Primary Attribute by 3%. Until fully Recuperated, you cannot move without the aid of crutches.

34 to 41	Mangled Grasp	Permanently reduce your Agility Primary Attribute by 3%. Until fully Recuperated, you cannot use your off-hand.
42 to 49	Mutilated Fingers	Permanently reduce your Combat Primary Attribute by 3%. Until fully Recuperated, you cannot use your primary hand.
50 to 58	Nerve Damage	Permanently reduce your Perception Primary Attribute by 3%. Until fully Recuperated, whenever you fail a Skill Test, you Critically Fail them instead.
59 to 67	Punctured Lung	Immediately drop your Peril Condition Track to Incapacitated!. Until fully Recuperated, you cannot recover your Peril Condition Track whatsoever.
68 to 76	Ruptured Muscle	Permanently reduce your Encumbrance Limit, Initiative and Combat Movement by 1. Until fully Recuperated, you suffer 9 Overage, in addition to any Overage you may be suffering from.
77 to 85	Skull Fracture	Permanently reduce your Intelligence Bonus (IB) and Perception Bonus (PB) by 1. Until fully Recuperated, you cannot see as you're blinded.
86 to 92	Vitreous Hemorrhage	Permanently reduce your Willpower Bonus (WB) and Brawn Bonus (BB) by 1. Until fully Recuperated, you cannot recover your Damage Condition Track.
93 to 100	Severed Artery	Sacrifice a Fate Point, or else you are instantly Slain!

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU'RE SLAIN!

Time is up, and your Character is dead. Likely it is a gruesome affair, as dying screams and moaning are accompanied by a loped-off limb, an arterial spray of blood and the stench of piss and blood. Depending

on the manner of which you were Slain!, the Gamemaster will roll on the relevant table to narrate how your death is seen by others, referenced by the weapon type.

Percentile Dice	BLADED
1 to 8	Your weapon carves an arc from your foe's temple through the jaw and deep into the shoulder, causing you to be showered by an arterial spray of blood.
17 to 25	Your weapon carves deeply into your foe's hip and pelvis, severing the rear leg from the body before burying itself into the far leg. They slide off your weapon slowly, dead before their body hits the ground.
26 to 33	Your weapon cleanly arcs through the belly of your foe, disemboweled. Fighting for air, the stomach cavity opens and closes with every breath, appearing like a grim smile as they fall face first to the ground.
34 to 41	Your weapon cleanly severs the head of your foe from their neck. The head lands and rolls a few yards away, madly working in a futile attempt to gasp for air.
42 to 49	Your weapon crashes into the shoulder of your foe, tearing a ragged arc through the chest cavity before emerging near the hip. The flesh slips away from the ribcage like an unzipped coat, revealing musculature and viscera within.
50 to 58	Your weapon drives deep into the chest of your foe, fracturing ribs, puncturing a lung, and finally severing the heart and aorta, showering both of you in a fountain of blood.
59 to 67	Your weapon drives into the inner thigh of your foe, lacerating the femoral artery. They collapse in a spray of blood, which continues to spurt rhythmically for a few moments until they expire.
68 to 76	Your weapon drives through your foe's shoulder and carries on into the chest cavity. Shocked, they slide slowly off your blade and onto the ground in an ever-widening pool of blood, where they remain twitching, until inevitable death occurs.
77 to 85	Your weapon drives through your foe's shoulder and fractures the end of their collarbone. A thin wheezing can be heard, as the bone penetrates into the lung. Gasping for air, they grasp at their chest until expiring, blood effervescently foaming from their nose and mouth.
86 to 92	Your weapon slices across and opens the abdomen, spilling entrails about your foe's feet. They desperately attempt to gather them into their hands and shove the entrails back inside. Instead, they collapse to the ground, slumping over with their hands buried wrist-deep into their belly.
9 to 16	Your weapon slices cleanly through your foe's lower jaw, as several teeth are immediately broken and the tongue lolls on the ground, twitching. Blood loss is significant as they expire within a few moments.
93 to 100	Your weapon slices deep into the side of your foe, fracturing the ribs and lacerating a kidney before finally lodging in the spine. Their knees buckle, as you kick them off the end of your blade.
Percentile Dice	CRUSHING
1 to 8	Your blow crashes into the meat of your foe's thigh, fracturing the femur and lacerating the femoral artery. Your opponent crumbles in a heap, as their leg turns purple and swells visibly, right before your eyes.

17 to 25	Your blow lands with a resounding crack against your foe's sternum, fracturing it and compressing the heart beneath. Unbeknownst to them, the shearing force has lacerated one of his coronary arteries. As blood fills the pericardial sac, they begin to convulse violently on the ground until death.
26 to 33	Your blow smashes into the chest of your foe, cracking the sternal plate and tearing through the tissue of the lungs. They stagger back, cough up a gout of frothy dark fluid and collapses.
34 to 41	Your blow smashes into your foe's hip, driving the femur from its socket with an audible SNAP! Collapsing to the ground, a large, slick white bone adorned with shredded tendons protrudes gracelessly from the ruins of his hip. The chest continues its ragged rise and fall in the midst of a rapidly expanding pool of blood until death occurs a few moments later.
42 to 49	Your foe twists to avoid your blow, but it crashes against their back, fracturing the spine. They fall to the ground, both legs folding upon themselves like a rag doll.
50 to 58	Your weapon caves in the side of your foe's skull with a nauseating crunch. Death is inevitable, but they continue to cling on for a few more moments, convulsing in small circles on the ground.
59 to 67	Your weapon crashes into your foe's shoulder, rending the humerus from its ligamentous insertions onto the scapula. The limb is useless, hanging loosely by a few shredded bands of sinew and muscle, as they keel over dead a few moments later.
68 to 76	Your weapon crushes the pelvis of your foe, driving large shards of bone into the descending aorta. Falling over into a heap, they die shortly after a brief, gurgling moan escapes their lips.
77 to 85	Your weapon crushes the skull of your foe like an eggshell, spattering both of you with blood and grey matter. Death is immediate!
86 to 92	Your weapon demolishes the shoulder joint, rending bone and sinew before crashing through the ribcage. They fall to the ground, convulses once and then never moves again.
9 to 16	Your weapon shatters your foe's arm and carries large shards of bone and tissue through the ribcage and into the lungs. Shocked, they cough up a torrent of bright red blood before finally slumping to the ground.
93 to 100	Your weapon smashes into the side of your foe's head, causing immediate hemorrhaging. Surprisingly, the only discernible result is a minor nosebleed. They stagger, confused for a moment, and then suddenly falls over dead.

**Percentile
Dice**

GUNPOWDER

1 to 8	Your shot shatters the clavicle of your target and carries through into the lung. Your foe staggers on their feet until toppling over. Paralyzed by pain, your foe is as rigid as a board, struck cartoonishly dead.
9 to 16	Your shot tears through the subclavian artery and vein just beneath the clavicle, causing blood to spurt rhythmically from the wound. Your foe collapses immediately and dies from shock.
17 to 25	Your shot passes through the arm and into the chest, where its passage is stopped by several vital organs. Death from internal hemorrhaging is instantaneous.
26 to 33	Your shot smashes through the jaw and blows open the vertebral artery, causing your foe to cough and choke against a torrent of blood. Slowly, your foe lowers themself to the ground and sits, glassy eyes staring off into the distance. Here they remain, dead.
34 to 41	Your shot drives through the bridge of the nose, carrying fragments of bone deep into the brain. Your foe collapses immediately, as death comes knocking.
42 to 49	Your shot penetrates the forehead, causing your foe to sway momentarily as a small rivulet of blood runs down their face. Moments later he collapses, dead before hitting the ground.
50 to 58	Your shot enters just beneath the sternal plate and tears through the aorta, the largest blood vessel in the body. Death from internal hemorrhaging is inevitable.
59 to 67	Your shot buries itself deep within the chest cavity of your foe, ripping through the ventricles of the heart. Death from massive blood loss is instantaneous.
68 to 76	Your shot shatters the kneecap and lodges in the joint of the knee, causing a nauseating grinding sensation as your foe feebly tries to walk forward. Suddenly, they pass out...but the grinding sound can still be heard as they work their legs back and forth like a dying animal.
77 to 85	Your shot tears through the internal iliac artery in the hip, causing rapid blood loss. Your foe collapses and dies almost instantly.
86 to 92	Your shot tears through the upper leg, opening the femoral artery and fracturing the neck of the femur. Death from massive blood loss is instantaneous.
93 to 100	Your shot instantaneously blasts the head off your foe, terribly ripped from their neck. The stump is a horrid, smoldering mess of burnt flesh and broken bones.

**Percentile
Dice**

MISSILE

1 to 8	Your missile drives deep into the leg, tearing artery, muscle, and bone. Blood pours in torrents from the wound and your foe staggers momentarily before falling face first into the ground.
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17 to 25	Your missile enters at the bridge of the nose and buries itself in your foe's skull. They fall backward, dead long before they strike the ground.
26 to 33	Your missile enters the eye socket and exits the back of the skull. Their eye is completely destroyed, and likely skewered upon the end of your ammunition. Screaming, they die grasping their socket.
34 to 41	Your missile enters the shoulder at an angle and exits at the back of the neck. Your foe sways for a moment, uncertain, before their legs buckle and collapses to the ground.
42 to 49	Your missile fractures a lower rib and tears through the diaphragm. Your foe's respiration is ragged and shallow as they attempts to breathe but fails.
50 to 58	Your missile fractures the clavicle of your foe and severs the subclavian artery before finally lodging itself in the meat of the shoulder. Massive blood loss occurs as they die a few moments later.
59 to 67	Your missile penetrates the sternal plate and transfixes the heart. Shocked, your foe looks down and coughs up a gout of blood before crumpling to the ground, dead.
68 to 76	Your missile plunges deep into the belly and emerges through the spine. Your foe falls to the ground and seizes for a few moments, and then vomits a bilious fluid before finally dying.
77 to 85	Your missile shatters the femur and lays open the femoral artery, which sprays a fountain of blood. Your foe falters and collapses to the ground.
86 to 92	Your missile shatters the teeth of your foe and lodges in the back of the neck, transfixing the spinal cord. They drop to the ground immediately in a heap.
9 to 16	Your missile sinks deep into the hip, shattering the pelvic bone. Blood loss is significant. They walk with an ungainly limp, pleading with you for mercy...until death comes.
93 to 100	Your missile strikes the area between the shoulder and the chest, burying itself down to the fletching and protruding between the ribs of your foe's back. Their knees buckle and they fall to the ground. A soft, sucking noise emanates from the wound in conjunction with a few brief, ragged respirations. Then, all is still.

SACRIFICING FATE POINTS

Gods be damned if you're going out like that! When facing certain death, you may (unconsciously) politely tap the shoulder of whatever god (or Daemonic servant) who watches over you to intervene on your behalf.

At any point in time when you feel its appropriate during the Game Session - even outside of combat - you may sacrifice 1 Fate Point to instantly remedy your Damage Condition Track to Unharmed. Additionally, you shrug off the effects of all Injuries you had recently sustained, as they are fully Recuperated.

EXAMPLE

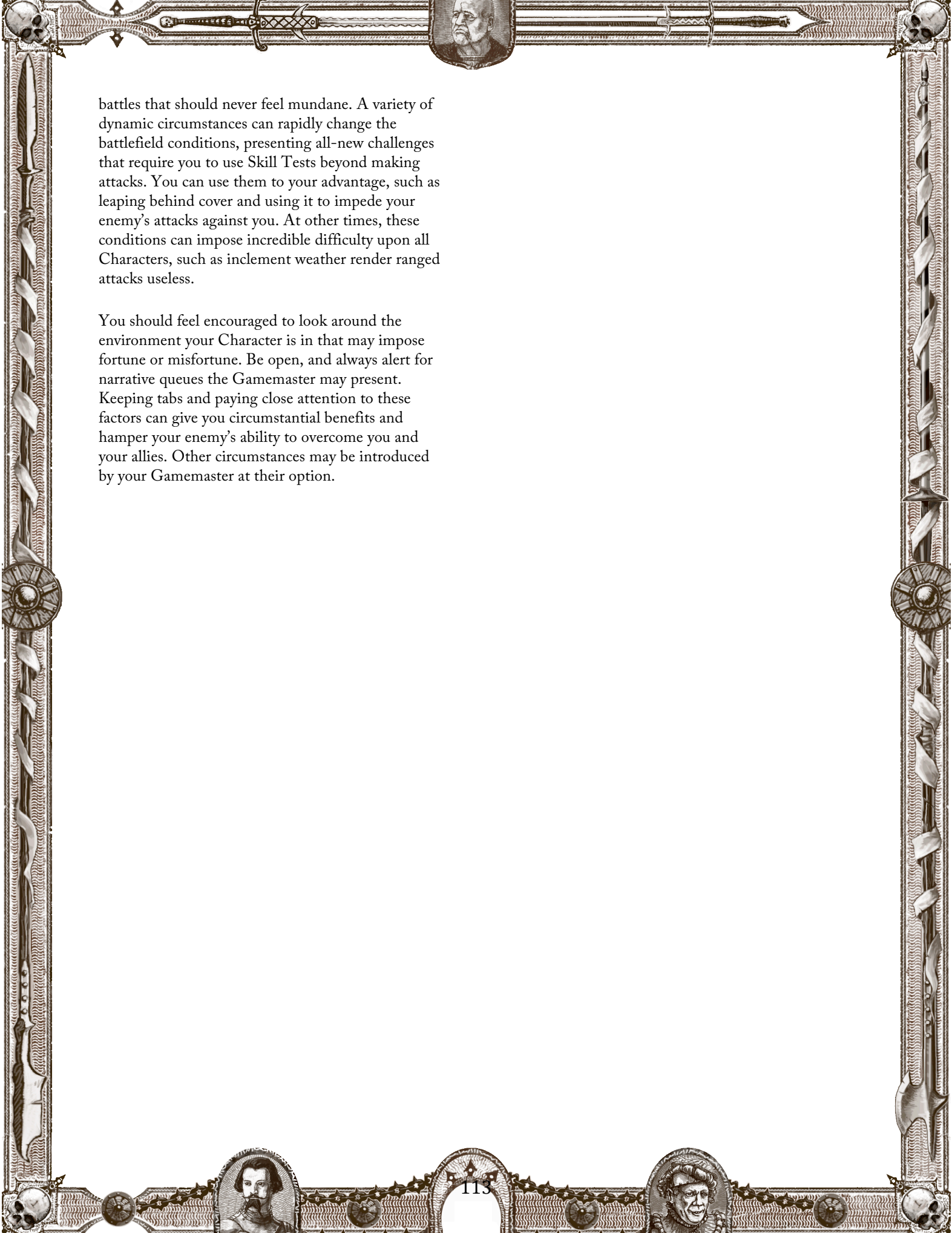
Patches has been suffering from a Fractured Larynx, and has been in Recuperation with 4 days left. He recently suffered a Smashed Groin, which has yet to be Treated by a healer. During combat, he is struck again, moved to Grievously Wounded and suffers yet another Injury - a Rattled Brain! The player decides to spend a Fate Point. As a result, he is immediately Unharmed while his Fractured Larynx, Smashed Groin and Rattled Brain immediately Recuperate, ailing him no more!

Sidebar: Soldiering Onwards

Permanent injuries can be particularly disheartening for any player, but creative players will find a way to turn these weaknesses into a strength. We urge you to soldier forward with your Injuries, even if it means your Character has to wear a gilded nose, veteran's hand or a false leg. Some of history's best and brightest suffered from handicaps, but they were no less formidable. These debilitations and the events which caused them provides your Character with a unique life experience, leading to interesting and robust story development. In the right circumstances, any weakness can be made a strength. Developing these into Distinguishing Marks that further your renown can have long-lasting effects on the campaign's ongoing story. Don't feel as if you need to immediately scrap your Character should you suffer from a lost limb. Work with your Gamemaster to find a way to turn this sudden loss into a positive strength for your Character. After all, what isn't potentially more sinister than a one-eyed, half-handed killer of men?

FINAL NOTE ABOUT COMBAT

Combat in ZWEIHÄNDER game will be exciting, riveting and brutal. Your Gamemaster will create interesting and dramatic situations, pushing your Characters to the very edge, presenting large set piece



battles that should never feel mundane. A variety of dynamic circumstances can rapidly change the battlefield conditions, presenting all-new challenges that require you to use Skill Tests beyond making attacks. You can use them to your advantage, such as leaping behind cover and using it to impede your enemy's attacks against you. At other times, these conditions can impose incredible difficulty upon all Characters, such as inclement weather render ranged attacks useless.

You should feel encouraged to look around the environment your Character is in that may impose fortune or misfortune. Be open, and always alert for narrative queues the Gamemaster may present. Keeping tabs and paying close attention to these factors can give you circumstantial benefits and hamper your enemy's ability to overcome you and your allies. Other circumstances may be introduced by your Gamemaster at their option.

HAZARDS AND HEALING

Characters in a grim & perilous world are fraught with danger from all sides. Beyond the sword blows of marauders and gunshot of highwaymen, there are other ways to perish. Raging infernos, drugged foods, exhaustion, plummeting from upon high and even the poisonous effects of alcohol can whittle down the weary. If it were not for enterprising barber surgeons and apothecaries, the lich yards would be overspilling with the bones of the dead!

Categorized below are several types of natural hazards you will face in a game of **ZWEIHÄNDER**. They include Disease, Falling, Fire, Intoxication, Poisons, Sleep Deprivation, Starvation and Suffocation. The following outlines these hazards and related effects.

DISEASE

Death by sickness is a given in a grim & perilous world. An outbreak of sickness can sweep across the land, wiping out the weak and elderly. Many believe that illness is borne from impiety, a cruel curse waged upon the people by uncaring Daemons or gods. The poor and unwashed beseech priests for benedictions, making petty sacrifices to please the gods. The middle class cling to barber surgeons, handing over whatever riches they have to alleviate themselves from pain. The rich look to physicians, academically-trained to lance boils, bleed sores and apply unguents. Universally, physicians are no more effective than barber surgeons when it comes to treating disease. Both produce quacks of all stripes, venal charlatans who are no different than buskers who roam the street. The only differences are the lack of funds in the case of a barber surgeon or a fancy certificate illustrating to would-be patients that their physician may be trusted. Priest simply believe both camps are apostates, as vivisection is widely regarded as bordering on heresy.

SPREAD OF DISEASE

Diseases can be spread in several ways. Each Disease has a specific case in how it can pass to a potential victim in several ways. While not wholly scientific, they may help give your Character a frame of reference for when they perceive the grim & perilous world (and all its superstitious ways) around them:

INGESTION

Eating befouled foods where a cook's wounds have wept openly into the stew can result in contaminated foods. Even though most adventurers take great pains to keep their foodstuffs from becoming moldy, it can produce parasitic illnesses. The most common disease spread through ingestion is **Bloody Flux**.

MIASMA

Disease can be spread through "night airs"; times of terrible pollution and the stench emitting from rotten trash and food. Passing through an area where miasma is present may precipitate Characters being exposed to disease. The most common disease spread by miasma is **Grey Plague** and **Filth Fever**.

TOUCH

Disease can also be spread by contact. Traditionally, it requires the exchange of bodily fluids with the infected through intercourse. However, some diseases are so aggressive that a mere touch could pass it to others. The most common disease spread by wounding is **Red Death** and **Venereal Disease**.

WOUNDING

The fetid and filthy claws of ghouls and other disgusting creatures can pass through infected cuts and wounds. Should a wound prove well-enough to Injure a Character, it has a chance of passing a disease onwards. The most common disease spread by wounding is **Tomb Rot**.

EXPOSURE TO DISEASE

When exposed to a Disease, a Character must initially make a successful Toughness Test - with the Difficulty Rating indicated below - or else contract its effects. Its effects take place after the onset period, and lasts over the course of its duration. However, if they Critically Fail the Toughness Test, they immediately suffer the effects, skipping the onset period.

While some diseases can undergo treatment, but not many can be cured. Treatment, and associated cures, are covered below.

BLOODY FLUX

Blood in your feces, dehydration, general weakness and inability to focus are symptomatic of the Bloody Flux. Your stool becomes watery, causing your bowels to cramp in a most uncomfortable manner. Living within the squalid quarters of the city and amongst soldiers' camps causes this uncomfortable Disease to spread from person to

person. Blood sausages, spicy foods and eel pies are oftentimes prescribed to ward away its effects.

Resist: (Routine +10%) Toughness Test

Onset: Immediately

Duration: 3 days

Effect: Over the duration, you awaken each day suffering 1D6+3 Peril from sickness.

Treatment: To have a chance at being treated, a caregiver must have Skill Rank: Journeyman in Heal, have an Aristocrat's meal to feed you (which are expended after use) and be left uninterrupted for at least ten minutes. In order to treat Bloody Flux, a healer must succeed a (Routine +10%) Heal Test, which can be attempted once per day. If successful, you suffer no loss of Peril the following day. A Critical Success cures you of Bloody Flux. Failure results in no recovery, whereas a Critical Failure causes you to lose 1D6+6 Peril the following day instead.

Cure: Bloody Flux cannot be cured, outside of a Critical Success with a Heal Test. It must simply run its course.

FILTH FEVER

A terribly disgusting disease, it quickly debilitates those who are exposed to it. Wading through a midden or traipsing through bogs and sewers can expose would-be adventurers to Filth Fever. It inhibits the body's ability to recover appropriately and causes wounds and other injuries to grow more severe.

Resist: (Challenging -10%) Toughness Test

Onset: Immediately

Duration: 9 days

Effect: Over the duration, you must succeed a (Challenging -10%) Toughness Test every day or all Moderate and Serious Injuries you suffer are treated as Grievous Injuries instead.

Treatment: To have a chance at being treated, a caregiver must have Skill Rank: Journeyman in Heal, have 4 bottles of rotgut to cleanse the wounds (which are expended after use) and be left uninterrupted for at least one hour. In order to treat Filth Fever, a healer must succeed a (Challenging -10%) Heal Test, which can be attempted once per day. If successful, all Moderate and Serious Injuries you suffer are treated as Serious Injuries instead. A Critical Success cures you of Filth Fever. Failure results in no recovery, whereas a Critical Failure causes you to be Slain! if you suffer any Injury until the following day.

Cure: Filth Fever cannot be cured, outside of a Critical Success with a Heal Test. It must simply run its course.

GREY PLAGUE

Sometimes also referred to as "greyscale", the Grey Plague is a relentless disease. It tends to take hold over those who live in damp conditions, affecting the very young or very old. The afflicted exhibit oddities upon their flesh, hardening their skin like thin scales – thus its namesake. It leaves limbs dead and atrophied, causes feverish episodes periodically and even moments of epilepsy before limbs must be removed. For all of its victims, it is a death sentence – albeit a slow, painful one.

Resist: (Challenging -10%) Toughness Test

Onset: 1D6+1 weeks

Duration: Until cured

Effect: Over the duration, you must succeed a (Challenging -10%) Toughness Test every day or lose 1% from your Agility Primary Attribute. Should your Agility ever reach 0%, you are dead!

Treatment: To have a chance at being treated, a caregiver must have Skill Rank: Journeyman in Heal, have a bottle of moisturizer with lye (which are expended after use) and be left uninterrupted for at least ten minutes. In order to treat Grey Plague, a healer must succeed a (Challenging -10%) Heal Test, which can be attempted once per day. If successful, change the Difficulty Rating for your Toughness Test to (Standard +/-0%) the following day. A Critical Success allows you to automatically succeed your Toughness Test the following day. Failure results in no recovery, whereas a Critical Failure causes you to automatically fail your Toughness Test the following day.

Cure: By sacrificing 1 Fate Point, you are immediately cured of this disease. As a result, you are also immune to Grey Plague in the future. In exchange, you gain a Drawback the Gamemaster feels appropriate.

RED DEATH

The Red Death propagates indiscriminately, a violent disease that sickens – and kills – all its infects. Unlike other diseases, it is more insidious and soul-corrupting than any other. It devours both the flesh and the mind, driving even the most level-headed insane with visions in their sleep. Nightmares eventually give way to physical symptoms. Over the course of a few short weeks, hemorrhaging erupts beneath the armpits, around the neck and below the eyes. The eyes and other open sores

begin to "weep" blood. Victims of the Red Death tend to take their own lives at this point, given the grotesquery they have become. Finally, the afflicted loses the ability to breath, with death a certainty afterwards.

Resist: (Challenging -10%) Toughness Test

Onset: 1D6+1 weeks

Duration: Until cured

Effect: Over the duration, you must succeed a (Challenging -10%) Toughness Test every day or suffer 1D6+9 Peril. Should you gain an Affliction during this time, your Character is instead Slain! and rises upon the new moon as one of the unliving.

Treatment: To have a chance at being treated, a caregiver must have Skill Rank: Journeyman in Heal, have a bottle of leeches (which are expended after use) and be left uninterrupted for at least ten minutes. In order to treat Red Death, a healer must succeed a (Challenging -10%) Heal Test, which can be attempted once per day. If successful, change the Difficulty Rating for your Toughness Test to (Routine +10%) the following day. A Critical Success allows you to automatically succeed your Toughness Test the following day. Failure results in no recovery, whereas a Critical Failure causes you to automatically fail your Toughness Test the following day.

Cure: By sacrificing 1 Fate Point, you are immediately cured of this disease. As a result, you are also immune to Red Death in the future. In exchange, you gain a Drawback the Gamemaster feels appropriate.

TOMB ROT

Only the foolhardy contract this illness. It is particularly found and spread by would-be adventurers and inexperienced grave robbers. Infection is a tell-tale sign to healers that their patient is likely a criminal, robbing the dead of their jewels and belongings. Worse still, Tomb Rot is also passed by the corruptive touch of the Supernatural, their filthy claws and nails harboring this Disease. It serves as a reminder that death's touch curses all, and that no one can escape her scythe.

Resist: (Standard +/-0%) Toughness Test

Onset: Immediately

Duration: 6 days

Effect: Over the duration, you must succeed a (Standard +/-0%) Toughness Test every day or you are unable to recover your Peril Condition Track and your wounds are Infected.

Treatment: To have a chance at being treated, a caregiver must have Skill Rank: Journeyman in Heal, have red cap mushrooms (which are expended after

use) and be left uninterrupted for at least one hour. In order to treat Tomb Rot, a healer must succeed a (Standard +/-0%) Heal Test, which can be attempted once per day. If successful, change the Difficulty Rating for your Toughness Test to (Routine +10%) the following day. A Critical Success cures you of Tomb Rot. Failure results in no recovery, whereas a Critical Failure causes you to automatically fail your Toughness Test the following day.

Cure: Tomb Rot cannot be cured, outside of a Critical Success with a Heal Test. It must simply run its course.

VENEREAL DISEASE

There are many names for these sort of illnesses - the clap, sailor's pain, the drip, great pox or hot piss - all evocative in their own way, but the resulting discomfort is generally the same. Its treatment involves an iron catheter while inserting mites and lice into the genitalia. Terribly embarrassing and potentially fatal, Venereal Diseases persist over a lifetime.

Resist: (Standard +/-0%) Toughness Test

Onset: 1D6+1 weeks

Duration: Until cured

Effect: Over the duration, you must succeed a (Standard +/-0%) Toughness Test every day or lose 1% from your Brawn Primary Attribute. Should your Brawn ever reach 0%, you are dead!

Treatment: To have a chance at being treated, a caregiver must have Skill Rank: Journeyman in Heal, have a dose of mandrake root (which are expended after use) and be left uninterrupted for at least ten minutes. In order to treat Venereal Disease, a healer must succeed a (Standard +/-0%) Heal Test, which can be attempted once per day. If successful, change the Difficulty Rating for your Toughness Test to (Routine +10%) the following day. A Critical Success allows you to automatically succeed your Toughness Test the following day. Failure results in no recovery, whereas a Critical Failure causes you to automatically fail your Toughness Test the following day.

Cure: By sacrificing 1 Fate Point, you are immediately cured of this disease. As a result, you are also immune to Venereal Disease in the future. In exchange, you gain a Drawback the Gamemaster feels appropriate.

FALLING

Clinging perilously to the edge of a tower, you climb further and further upwards. Ever-distant is the top-

most edge, rimmed with grotesque gargoyles watching you with malevolent grins. One small misstep and you'll be worm food...

WHEN YOU FALL

If you Critically Fail an Athletics Test while climbing or Critically Fail a Coordination Test while balancing, you plummet towards the ground with naught else to save you.

FALL ONTO A HARD SURFACE

Depending on the distance, you suffer Damage equal to 1D6 + the number of yards you fell. However, should you fall more than 50 yards, you are instantly Slain! Like other 1D6 dice rolls, if it lands on a natural "6", it explodes, adding to the total overall Damage suffered.

FALL INTO WATER

Sometimes, fortune is on your side. Lady luck just so happened to place that deep well right below where you fell, or you were pushed from the edge of a cliff to fall into the sea. This can be a boon, but only in certain cases.

If you fall into water that is at least half as deep as the distance you fell, change the Damage as if you'd fallen 9 less yards.

EXAMPLE

"Patches" Critically Failed an Athletics Test to climb up a nearly-sheer cliff, and plummets towards his doom. A large body of water is right below him, which may cushion his fall. He fell 15 yards, and the water is easily 6 yards or deeper. Normally, he would have suffered 1D6+15 Damage. Instead, the Gamemaster adjusts the Damage to 1D6+6 as if he fell 6 yards.

RISK OF INJURY FROM A FALL

Whenever a Character falls and their Damage Condition Track drops to Moderately Wounded, Seriously Wounded or Grievously Wounded, they are at risk of suffering an Injury. In some cases, particular Talents or other Traits may make said Injuries more (or less) severe. Note that you are never at risk to suffer Injuries if you move up the Damage Condition Track; only when you move down the Damage Condition Track.

Whenever a Character's Damage Condition track drops to Lightly Wounded, there is zero risk for Injury. Once the Condition Track drops to Moderately Wounded, they must roll a 1D6 Chaos Die. If the result is a face "6", they suffer a Moderate Injury. When the Damage Condition Track drops to Seriously Wounded, they must roll 2D6 Chaos Dice. If the result is one or more face "6", they suffer a Serious Injury. When the Damage Condition Track drops to Grievously Wounded, they must roll 3D6 Chaos Dice. If the result is one or more face "6", they suffer a Grievous Injury, And once they reach Slain!, they're dead.

WHEN INJURY OCCURS

The Gamemaster will roll Percentile Dice to determine the specific Injury while the defender should denote on their Character sheet it's name, severity and related negative effects. Reference the Injuries as denoted in **Chapter XXX: Combat** for their related effects.

FIRE

Fire ravages homes, razes settlements and is used to expel Daemons (or the truth) from its victims. Survivors end up mutilated and grotesque, their skin burned nearly down to the bone. Over time, the flesh may mend but the scars will always remain.

AVOIDING FLAMES

For every minute you are exposed to fire, you must attempt a Coordination Test. The ferocity of the fire sets the Difficulty Rating for Resisting its effects. If you succeed, you pat out the flames and move onwards. If you Critically Succeed, you may automatically succeed the next Coordination Test you make while avoiding flames. If you fail the Test, you are exposed to flames and suffer Damage. However, if you Critically Fail this Test, you are both exposed to flames and set On Fire. Damage caused by Fire doesn't inflict Injuries.

MILDLY DANGEROUS

Examples of mildly dangerous fires include candles, cooking oil, hot coals and lamps.

Resist: (Routine +10%) Coordination Test

Effect: You immediately suffer 1D6+3 Damage.

MODERATELY DANGEROUS

Examples of moderately dangerous fires include a camp fire, Molotov cocktail, a hearth or burning torch.

Resist: (Standard +/-0%) Coordination Test

Effect: You immediately suffer 1D6+6 Damage.

SERIOUSLY DANGEROUS

Examples of moderately dangerous flames include boiling oil used during a siege, a burning building, forest fires and massive conflagrations.

Resist: (Challenging -10%) Coordination Test

Effect: You immediately suffer 1D6+9 Damage.

RISK OF INJURY FROM FIRE

Whenever a Character is exposed to fire and their Damage Condition Track drops to Moderately Wounded, Seriously Wounded or Grievously Wounded, they are at risk of being set On Fire. In some cases, particular Talents or other Traits may make said Injuries more (or less) severe. Note that you are never at risk if On Fire when if you move up the Damage Condition Track; only when you move down the Damage Condition Track.

Whenever a Character's Damage Condition track drops to Lightly Wounded, there is zero risk for being set On Fire. Once the Condition Track drops to Moderately Wounded, they must roll a 1D6 Chaos Die. If the result is a face "6", they are On Fire. When the Damage Condition Track drops to Seriously Wounded, they must roll 2D6 Chaos Dice. If the result is one or more face "6", they are On Fire. When the Damage Condition Track drops to Grievously Wounded, they must roll 3D6 Chaos Dice. If the result is one or more face "6", they are On Fire. And once they reach Slain!, they're dead.

ON FIRE

As a result from being exposed to open flames you may be set On Fire. You are susceptible to being On Fire while wearing something flammable like clothing, armor with the Natural Quality or doused in oil (such as from a Molotov cocktail). Additionally, when moving down the Damage Condition Track, you risk being set On Fire as well.

Effect: Whenever you are On Fire, you suffer 1D6+9 Damage per minute. Immersing yourself in water, rolling around on the ground or smothering the fire with a heavy blanket immediately ends this condition.

INTOXICATION

In a grim & perilous world, it is not uncommon for Characters to drown their sorrows from the depths of a bottle. Some get stinking drunk, relieving themselves openly in public (or in their pants). Others grow increasingly belligerent, picking fights with anyone who looks at them the wrong way. The introspective may attempt to pontificate upon the mysteries of the world and philosophize openly with those nearby (much to the chagrin of friends and strangers). One thing is a certainty: few answers and many questions have been found at the bottom of a bottle. Why adventurers continue to subject themselves to the demon drink is hard to say. It may provide fleeting joy, but remains a poor excuse for a cure.

LIQUID COURAGE

No matter what a Character elects to drink, they must state what they choose to drink. It determines the inherent Difficulty Rating to resist the effects of alcohol with the Toughness Skill. For every hour they drink, they must make a related Toughness Test. Failure results in Intoxication, whereas a Critical Failure results in becoming Incapacitated! An imbibor may choose to automatically fail their Toughness Test to become Intoxicated.

- **Drink cheap wine or mead:** (Routine +10%) Toughness Test
- **Drink good wine or rotgut:** (Standard +/-0%) Toughness Test
- **Drink Dwarven beer or spirits:** (Challenging -10%) Toughness Test

Effect: While Intoxicated, you gain a +3 Damage Threshold but your Peril Condition Track immediately drops three steps. Intoxication lasts for six hours. If you are ever Incapacitated! while Intoxicated, you fall unconscious for six hours.

POISON

It is commonly said that Poison is the weapon of women, the craven and eunuchs. It's also the weapon of choice for sophisticated assassins who wish to silently kill their targets. Slayers even make use of Poisons, rendering creatures either paralyzed or dead. However, some Poisons can produce euphoric effects, enhancing the abilities of Characters but at the cost of potential addiction. While some Poisons can be cured with an antidote, others simply have no other way to expel their effects.

APOTHECARY'S MENAGERIE

Poison comes in many forms; it can be extracted from vegetable matter, it can be drawn from serpents or even boiled from the blood of rare beasts. Many Poisons are fatal if swallowed, although some can be spread through mere contact. Woe be to the apothecary who doesn't wear gloves when handling these dangerous concoctions! Their manufacture and possession carries stiff penalties, thus their rarity. There are three main families of Poisons, with many types of Poisons belonging to each. Unless otherwise noted, Poison can be placed into food or simply placed upon a weapon. However, Poisons evaporate within three hours when exposed to open air in this manner.

POISON TYPE: DELIRIANTS

Deliriant Poisons are made from plant material by apothecaries looking to make a quick shilling. Deliriants are notoriously hallucinogenic, and abused by those seeking to escape the world around them in a drug-induced haze. Unlike other street-level drugs like cannabis and tobacco, Deliriants are seriously habit-forming, mind-altering and potentially hazardous to one's health. However, most Deliriants provide a modicum of benefit, used by aspirants of strange cults, administered for treating the insane and taken by dervishes or other marauders to withstand pain. However, this comes at the cost of potentially maddening influence.

PREPARING DELIRIANTS

Deliriants can be rendered into doses, and may be inhaled, ingested or smoked by a user. Up to three doses can be ingested in this manner. The more doses you wish to prepare at once, the Difficulty Rating of the Alchemy Test worsens:

- **One dose:** (Routine +10%) Alchemy Test
- **Two doses:** (Standard +/-0%) Alchemy Test

- **Three doses:** (Challenging -10%) Alchemy Test

To have a chance at preparing a Deliriant, a preparer must have Skill Rank: Apprentice in Alchemy, armed with the appropriate alchemical instruments (aqua vitae, fire, mercury, bubbling bottles and pretzel-shaped glassware otherwise called tradecraft tools in **Chapter XXX: Trappings**) and be left uninterrupted for at least 1D6+1 hours.

With a successful Alchemy Test, you prepare one dose of the Deliriant you intended to make. A Critical Success prepares three doses instead. Failure results in expending the ingredients without success, whereas a Critical Failure causes you to immediately suffer the effects of one dose of the Deliriant you created.

DELIRIANT CURE?

There is no known cure to break the hold of a Deliriant. It must simply run its course. Note that Deliriants only affect living victims; creatures with the Daemonic or Supernatural Creature Traits are simply unaffected.

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING DELIRIANTS

The effects of a Deliriant immediately take hold within ten minutes of ingestion. Addiction may take hold if Deliriants are taken time-over-time, adjudicated by Gamemaster.

BLACK LOTUS

This deliriant is a powerful opiate, found deep in the jungles or forests of the world. It is either smoked or ingested, causing moderate hallucinations. It opens the mind and psyche to visions. If taken in large enough doses, it may prove fatal.

Effect: When affected by one dose, add a +5% to Willpower for one hour. When affected by two doses, add a +10% to Willpower for two hours. When affected by three doses, add a +15% to Willpower for three hours.

MANDRAKE ROOT

Though to be the only anthropomorphic root in the world, it has a notorious "scream" whenever it is plucked from faerie circles. Wilderness folk are careful to plug their ears with wax, as it is well known that when pulling it from the ground it can kill a man with this sound. The root is incredibly powerful, well-regarded by doctors to treat the

insane. It is also a powerful reagent used by occultists for their profane Magicks.

Effect: When affected by one dose, you can ignore an Affliction's drawbacks for a day but reduce your Peril Condition Track by one step. When affected by two doses, you can ignore an Affliction's drawbacks for two days but reduce your Peril Condition Track by two steps. When affected by three doses, you can ignore an Affliction's drawbacks for three days but reduce your Peril Condition Track by three steps.

RED CAP MUSHROOM

These hallucinogenic mushrooms are highly sought after by goblins, marauders and sportsmen alike. Ingesting these fungi can arouse frenzy, rendering pain impotent as the imbiber becomes "mad as a hatter".

Effect: When affected by one dose, add a +1 to Damage Threshold for one hour. When affected by two doses, add +3 Damage Threshold instead but left Defenseless for two hours. When affected by three doses, add +6 Damage Threshold instead, left Defenseless but add 1D6 Fury Die to all Damage for three hours.

POISON TYPE: TOXINS

Toxins are produced by combining rare chemicals and plant matter, carefully mixed in an alchemist's laboratory. While not as powerful as Venoms, this class of Poison is manufactured to effect specific creatures' physiology. Geared specifically for those creatures, they otherwise cause stomach pains with those they're not designed to affect. Hedgewise and Apothecaries produce Toxins, with Slayers as their primary clientele.

PREPARING TOXINS AND ANTITOXIN

Toxins can be rendered into a dose; a resin-like paste which can be applied directly to a weapon. However, up to three doses of the same Toxin can be coated onto a weapon. Additionally, you can prepare an Antitoxin in the same fashion. The more doses or Antitoxins you wish to prepare at once, the Difficulty Rating of the Alchemy Test worsens:

- **One dose:** (Routine +10%) Alchemy Test
- **Two doses:** (Standard +/-0%) Alchemy Test
- **Three doses:** (Challenging -10%) Alchemy Test

To have a chance at preparing a Toxin or Antitoxin, a preparer must have Skill Rank: Apprentice in Alchemy, armed with the appropriate alchemical instruments (aqua vitae, fire, mercury, burbling bottles and pretzel-shaped glassware otherwise called tradecraft tools in **Chapter XXX: Trappings**) and be left uninterrupted for at least 1D6+1 hours.

With a successful Alchemy Test, you prepare one dose of the Toxin or Antitoxin you intended to make. A Critical Success prepares three doses or Antitoxins instead. Failure results in expending the ingredients without success, whereas a Critical Failure causes you to immediately suffer the effects of one dose of the Toxin you created.

ANTITOXIN CURE

Toxins can be cured by rendering doses of Antitoxin to the victim, equal to the number of doses of Toxin suffered. It doesn't heal Damage or Peril sustained by the Toxin previously. If a Toxin ever causes death, an Antitoxin cannot save the victim. Only by sacrificing a Fate Point will a victim live.

WHEN EXPOSED TO TOXINS

When coming into contact with a Toxin, you must attempt to withstand being Poisoned for each dose suffered. If you come into contact with one dose, it requires a (Routine +10%) Toughness Test. If coming into contact with two doses, a (Standard +/-0%) Toughness Test. If in contact with three doses, it requires a (Challenging -10%) Toughness Test. Upon failure, they suffer the effects as outlined. However, should a victim ever Critically Fail their Toughness Test to withstand Toxins, they instead suffer as if they had come into contact with three doses.

ANIMALBANE

The most common of Toxins, it is used to drive away or subdue wild animals. When coupled with larger doses, it can calm an animal ready for the kill.

Special: Only affects creatures with the Animal Creature Trait

Effect: If subjected to one dose, it immediately causes the animal to flee for one minute. If subjected from two doses, it immediately causes the animal to reduce its Combat Movement by 6 and suffer the effects above. If subjected from three doses, the animal cannot use Movement Actions, is paralyzed for one minute and suffers the effects above. The effects last for six hours.

BEASTBANE

Ancient creatures stir in this world. While sword and gunshot may drive them away temporarily, this Toxin is used by Slayers to banish them permanently from this world. It inflicts crippling paralytics and rendering the beast immobile for the death blow.

Special: Only affects creatures with the Beast Creature Trait

Effect: If subjected to one dose, it immediately causes the beast to immediately suffer 1D6+3 Peril. If subjected from two doses, it causes the beast to immediately suffer 1D6+6 Peril and suffer the effects above. If subjected from three doses, the beast cannot use Movement Actions, is paralyzed and suffers the effects above. The effects last for six hours.

BLACKROOT

This Toxin is the hammer and shield against the mutant incursion. Much like Folkbane, it is attuned to attack the nervous system of goblins, ogres and orcs alike. Black as midnight and thick as molasses, it has the taste of buttery syrup to all other races. But for mutants, it is death in a bottle.

Special: Only affects creatures with the Mutant Creature Trait

Effect: If subjected to one dose, it immediately causes the mutant to reduce their Peril Condition Track to Incapacitated!. If subjected from two doses, it causes the mutant to go unconscious and suffer the effects above. If subjected from three doses, it causes the mutant to immediately die. The effects last for six hours.

DAEMONBANE

Daemonbane is one of the only ways to ward off creatures from beyond this world. With a pungent stench of rotten eggs and sulphur (much like the foes it seeks to ward away), it is secreted away by inquisitors and exorcists, as it is expensive and rare.

Special: Only affects creatures with the Daemonic Creature Trait

Effect: If subjected to one dose, it immediately causes the daemon to flee for one minute. If subjected to two doses, it causes the daemon to flee for two additional minute and suffer the effects above. If subjected to three doses, it causes the daemon to immediately suffer 3D6+3 Damage and suffer the effects above. Damage caused by Daemonbane doesn't inflict Injuries.

FOLKBANE

This particular Toxin arrests the nervous system of the major races. Arresting the limbs and nerves, it can almost instantly debilitate and kill with the right dosage.

Special: Only affects player Races like Dwarves, Elves, Gnomes, Halflings, Humans and Morlock

Effect: If subjected to one dose, it immediately causes the victim to reduce their Peril Condition Track to Incapacitated!. If subjected from two doses, it causes the victim to go unconscious for one minute and suffer the effects above. If subjected from three doses, it causes the victim to die immediately.

GRAVEROOT

Graveroot is yielded from a brew made from the roots of trees which have been planted at the head of a grave, wolfsbane and other rare herbs. It is an anathema to the unliving and the supernatural.

Special: Only affects creatures with the Supernatural Creature Trait

Effect: If subjected to one dose, it immediately causes the Supernatural to flee for one minute. If subjected to two doses, it causes the Supernatural to immediately suffer 3D6+3 Damage and suffer the effects above. If subjected to three doses, it causes the Supernatural to immediately suffer an additional 3D6+3 Damage and suffer effects above. Damage caused by Graveroot doesn't inflict Injuries.

POISON TYPE: VENOMS

Venoms are milked from creatures, carefully harvested by beast tamers who capture and raise these creatures for this singular purpose. Traditionally, venoms are used to debilitate or kill their victims. They are extremely potent, and costly to collect.

PREPARING VENOM AND ANTIVENOM

Venom can be rendered into a dose; a resin-like paste which can be applied directly to a weapon. However, up to three doses of the same Venom can be coated onto a weapon. Additionally, you can prepare an Antivenom in the same fashion. The more doses or Antivenoms you wish to prepare at once, the Difficulty Rating of the Alchemy Test worsens:

- **One dose:** (Routine +10%) Alchemy Test
- **Two doses:** (Standard +/-0%) Alchemy Test

- **Three doses:** (Challenging -10%) Alchemy Test

To have a chance at preparing a Venom or Antivenom, a preparer must have Skill Rank: Apprentice in Alchemy, armed with the appropriate alchemical instruments (aqua vitae, fire, mercury, burbling bottles and pretzel-shaped glassware otherwise called tradecraft tools in **Chapter XXX: Trappings**) and be left uninterrupted for at least 1D6+1 hours.

With a successful Alchemy Test, you prepare one dose of the Venom or Antivenom you intended to make. A Critical Success prepares three doses or Antivenoms instead. Failure results in expending the ingredients without success, whereas a Critical Failure causes you to immediately suffer the effects of one dose of the Venom you created.

ANTIVENOM CURE

Venom can be cured by administering doses of Antivenom to the victim. It doesn't heal Damage or Peril sustained by the Venom previously. If a Venom ever causes death, an Antivenom cannot save the victim. Only by sacrificing a Fate Point will the victim live.

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING VENOMS

Only one dose of Venom can be rendered at a time. When coming into contact with a Venom, the effects immediately take hold. However, if they Critically Fail to Resist the effects of Venom, they are immediately Slain!

SCORPION VENOM

This particular venom is milked from the stinger of nine scorpions. Handlers of these particular venoms must take great care to not be stung themselves, lest they alike suffer the effects in kind. The sting of this venom immediately paralyzes the nervous system of its victims, and can lead to death.

Resist: (Routine +10%) Toughness Test

Effect: When subjected to scorpion venom, the victim cannot use Movement Actions, paralyzed. If not given an Antivenom within a number of hours equal to the victim's Brawn Bonus (BB), death is imminent.

SNAKE VENOM

Snake venom is easy to come by, given the number of Poisonous snakes in swamps and fields. Pit vipers, cottonmouth and water moccasins are the most common species of snake captured for their venom. It leaves its victims in a fever dream, until they expire from pain.

Resist: (Challenging -10%) Toughness Test

Effect: If subjected to snake venom, the victim is left Incapacitated!. If not given an Antivenom within a number of hours equal to the victim's Brawn Bonus (BB), death is imminent.

SPIDER VENOM

Only the deadliest of spiders can yield this venom. Taken from the Poison glands, it must be harvested from at least fifty spiders to create one usable dose. Spider venom leaves its victims delirious, unable to protect themselves. Eventually, it can lead to death from delirium.

Resist: (Standard +/-0%) Toughness Test

Effect: When subjected to spider venom, the victim is left Defenseless. If not given an Antivenom within a number of hours equal to the victim's Brawn Bonus (BB), death is imminent.

SLEEP DEPRIVATION

All living, breathing creatures must sleep. It is the primary requirement to recover the Peril Condition Track.

Effect: You can stay awake for 24 hours. For every day thereafter that sleep is not caught up on, you suffer 1D6+9 Peril. During this time, you cannot recover from Damage or Peril until after you've slept six hours. Once reaching Incapacitated!, you fall unconscious until awakening 24 hours later.

STARVATION

Living creatures must eat and drink to survive.

Whether eating links of blood sausages, a head of cabbage with gravy, pork with beans or even a bowl of soup, all living creatures need sustenance. Food and water is not always easy to come by. In extreme circumstances, they may resort to eating despoiled fruit, tree bark, plant roots, their own belt or shoes. In the worst of cases, they may even turn on themselves, consuming the flesh of their own kind (or when all else fails, eat themselves).

Effect: You must eat at least one meal per day. For every day that a meal is not eaten, you suffer 1D6+9 Peril from hunger. During this time, you cannot recover from Damage or Peril until after you've eaten. Once reaching Incapacitated!, you suffer 2D6+2 Damage every day thereafter, until you eat. Damage caused by Starvation doesn't inflict Injuries.

SUFFOCATION

There are several cases where a person can suffer from asphyxiation. Choking in heavy smoke, being drowned in a shallow river by a foe or even inhaling dangerous gases; these all comprise the various ways suffocation can take hold.

Effect: You can hold your breath a number of minutes equal to your Brawn Bonus (BB). Afterwards, for every minute without breath, you suffer 1D6+9 Peril from suffocation until you can take a breath. Once reaching Incapacitated!, you fall unconscious and die if not rescued in three minutes.

RECOVERING PERIL AND HEALING DAMAGE

People within a grim & perilous world have a very archaic understanding of the human body. Germs and bacteria are unknown terminology, as most disease and ills are attributed to an excess of humors within the body, miasma or the influence of Daemonic spirits. Even the most renown physicians command a very ill-conceived purview of how the body truly works. Quacks, charlatans and other snake oil peddlers litter the medical field. Finding a legitimate doctor is a trial unto itself. Despite these misunderstandings, the Heal skill represents not only the knowledge of physiology, but of its interconnection to the spiritual world around it. That means you'd better pay and pray, because you're going to need all the help you can to get back on the mend.

Sidebar: Magical Healing?

In a grim & perilous game, healing potions and resurrection from the dead aren't easy options, nor readily available to any. Those who thrust themselves into the jaws of hell must rely on Barber Surgeons and trained Physicians to treat their Injuries. Fortune and Fate Points may help bridge the gap between bad dice rolls and circumstance, but don't throw yourself into a situation where you're counting

on it to save your hide. After all - who knows when you'll need that Fate Point next?

PERIL CONDITION TRACK

Unlike Damage, the Peril Condition Track is a temporary setback caused by excessive strain. It may be caused by a Chokehold, fatigue from Wilderness Travel, the stresses of a Social Intrigue event, the results of a horrifying situation or a myriad of other perilous conditions spelled out in **Chapter XXX: Game Mastery**. Depending on where you are at on the Peril Condition Track, it will decide what penalties you suffer for all Skill Tests until recovered. There are six distinct steps which make up the Peril Condition Track:

UNHINDERED

You are the very model of health and face no adversity whatsoever. You face no road weariness, anxiety or other mental states...yet.

SUFFER -5 BASE CHANCE

Although you're operating under a minimal amount of stress, you should consider all choices with more care.

SUFFER -10 BASE CHANCE

The pressure is on, and you can feel it. Your brow beads with sweat, and you are more ponderous and slower with all actions.

SUFFER -20 BASE CHANCE

You are toiling with every step you take, as your mind is filled with anxiety. Likely, you're suffering from intense anxiety, worn to a frazzle or a combination of both.

SUFFER -30 BASE CHANCE

You can barely hold on. You're facing a significantly reduced chance to succeed at any task, but hold on...help may be on the way!

INCAPACITATED!

Your body betrays you, dragging with every step. You're unable to succeed any Skill Test, no matter what Talents, Traits or special situations may normally play into your favor.

NATURAL RECOVERY

The Peril Condition Track can be recuperated through natural recovery. However, the safety of the place you're resting in (or inherent level of danger surrounding where you elect to kick up your feet) can influence your chances.

RESTING IN SAFETY

To recover, you must sleep in the lofty comforts of an inn, in a temple sanctuary, on the floor of a winesink or somewhere you can be left uninterrupted for at least six hours. After resting, your Peril Condition Track recovers all steps automatically as you are now Unhindered.

RESTING IN UNSAFE PLACES

If you are sleeping upon a cold donjon floor, deep in a midden, in a dangerous area outside or somewhere that there may be an inherent risk to your safety, you must be left uninterrupted for six hours. Upon awakening, you will make a Toughness Test with the Difficulty Rating based on one of three factors:

- **In a building or place which provides ample shelter:** (Routine +10%) Toughness Test
- **Outside with a tent, in a cave or some form of shelter:** (Standard +/-0%) Toughness Test
- **Outside without any shelter:** (Challenging -10%) Toughness Test

If you succeed your Toughness Test, your Peril Condition Track recovers positively all steps as you are now Unhindered. A Critical Success allows you to recover all steps positively of the Peril Condition Track to Unhindered, and you recover your Damage Condition Track by one step positively. causes you to immediately lower your Peril Condition Track by one step as you are exhausted.

USE SMELLING SALTS

After inhaling a perfume of Smelling Salts, you recover one step positively on the Peril Condition Track. This means if you were suffer a -30 Base Chance, you now suffer a -20 Base Chance. You can only recover your Peril Condition Track in this manner with one perfume within a 24 hour period. Inhaling more than one perfume during that period has the opposite intended effect.

PREPARE SMELLING SALTS

Smelling Salts can be rendered into a perfume; a colorless but incredibly acrid-smelling liquid. Up to three perfumes can be prepared at a time. The more perfumes of Smelling Salts you wish to prepare at once, the Difficulty Rating of the Alchemy Test worsens:

- **One perfume:** (Routine +10%) Alchemy Test
- **Two perfumes:** (Standard +/-0%) Alchemy Test
- **Three perfumes:** (Challenging -10%) Alchemy Test

To have a chance at preparing Smelling Salts, a preparer must have Skill Rank: Apprentice in Alchemy, armed with the appropriate alchemical instruments (aqua vitae, fire, mercury, burbling bottles and pretzel-shaped glassware otherwise called tradecraft tools in **Chapter XXX: Trappings**) and be left uninterrupted for at least 1D6+1 hours.

With a successful Alchemy Test, you prepare one perfume of Smelling Salts. A Critical Success prepares three perfumes. Failure results in expending the ingredients without success, whereas a Critical Failure causes you to immediately lower your Peril Condition Track by one step as you expose yourself to the chemicals.

DAMAGE CONDITION TRACK

You'll find that the healing process in **ZWEIHÄNDER** is oftentimes a lengthy proposition, as Character carry their wounds over from session to session. Your Damage Condition Track paints a portrait of how wounded a Character may be while informing other players how the Party is holding up. It effectively acts to inform a Character's allies as to where to appoint support and focus. Cohesion amongst allies can make all the difference, resulting in a greater chance of success and survival rate.

It is a good idea whenever players begin combat or at the beginning of a Game Session to announce to everyone around the table where their Character is on the Damage Condition Track. The bottom line is that if your Character is hurt - tell everyone about it, so they'll throw someone else in front of those marauding chaos berserkers! There are six distinct steps which make up the Damage Condition Track:

UNHARMED

You may have old wounds that are scarred up and scabbed over, stitches and sutures that no longer threaten to open up or bandages that cover lacerations and bruises. Carouse with friends, cavort with strangers, “make it rain like m’lords do”, slum it up or go pick a fight - you’re the very picture of good health.

LIGHTLY WOUNDED

You have small cuts, light bruising and perhaps an itch or mild pain. You can shrug most of this off with a bit of bed rest and perhaps a visit to the local barber surgeon. You’ve been hurt at some point, but a bit of rest should help.

MODERATELY WOUNDED

You have moderate bruises, cuts that require sutures and lesions that may threaten infection. You’re not dead (yet). You’re suffering in pain, and likely won’t make it on your own without the aid of a physician.

SERIOUSLY WOUNDED

Your wounds worsen, as clothing begins to soak with blood. A black eye, busted nose, irregular gait and difficulty speaking complete sentences characterizes what’s happened to you. Should you play your cards right, you’ll live to talk about it.

GRIEVOUSLY WOUNDED

Splintered bones, hyperextended muscles, deep cuts and black bruising characterize your body. Your clothing is likely blood-soaked, as are the hands of your would-be killer.

SLAIN!

Sadly, you are dead and about to meet your maker. But will you heed death’s calling, or defy the gods to live another day? Sacrifice a Fate Point to live, or don’t. The choice is yours.

BIND WOUNDS

The Damage Condition Track can be healed by a healer with a successful Heal Test. You may only be healed in this manner once every 24 hours, no matter whether it is successful or not. Depending on where

you’re at on the Damage Condition Track, the Difficulty Rating of the Heal Test worsens:

- **Lightly Wounded:** Automatically succeed
- **Moderately Wounded:** (Routine +10%) Heal Test
- **Seriously Wounded:** (Standard +/-0%) Heal Test
- **Grievously Wounded:** (Challenging -10%) Heal Test

To have a chance at being healed, a caregiver must have Skill Rank: Apprentice in Heal, have bandages (which are expended after use) and be left uninterrupted for at least ten minutes. Additionally, all of your Injuries must have been treated and in Recuperation. If you have any untreated Injuries, they must be attended to first.

If you are healed with a successful Heal Test, you can recover one step positively on the Damage Condition Track. This means if you were Grievously Wounded, you are now Seriously Wounded. A Critical Success allows you to recover all steps of the Damage Condition Track to Unharmed. Failure results in no recovery. A Critical Failure indicates that your condition worsens by one step (unless already Slain!). When Slain!, you cannot recover in this manner - as you’re already dead!

USE LAUDANUM

After imbibing a draught of Laudanum, you recover one step positively on the Damage Condition Track. This means if you were Grievously Wounded, you are now Seriously Wounded. You can only recover your Damage Condition Track in this manner with one draught within a 24 hour period. Imbibing more than one draught during that period has the opposite intended effect.

PREPARE LAUDANUM

Laudanum can be rendered into a draught; a liquid possessing a characteristically bitter taste. Up to three draughts can be prepared at a time. The more draughts of Laudanum you wish to prepare at once, the Difficulty Rating of the Alchemy Test worsens:

- **One draught:** (Routine +10%) Alchemy Test
- **Two draughts:** (Standard +/-0%) Alchemy Test

- **Three draughts:** (Challenging -10%)
Alchemy Test

To have a chance at preparing Laudanum, a preparer must have Skill Rank: Apprentice in Alchemy, armed with the appropriate alchemical instruments (aqua vitae, fire, mercury, burbling bottles and pretzel-shaped glassware otherwise called tradecraft tools in **Chapter XXX: Trappings**) and be left uninterrupted for at least 1D6+1 hours.

With a successful Alchemy Test, you prepare one draught of Laudanum. A Critical Success prepares three draughts. Failure results in expending the ingredients without success, whereas a Critical Failure causes you to immediately lower your Damage Condition Track by one step as you expose yourself to the opiates.

Sidebar: Added Hardship For Recovery
Sometimes, the Gamemaster may adjust the Difficulty Rating for recovery with Heal Test, depending on the quality of the tools (or lack thereof), how sanitary (or flea-ridden) the conditions are where the procedure will take place (preferably not bleeding on a donjon's floor) and whether you were wounded by unclean creatures or rendered in an unsanitary environment (such as a bog, sewer or midden).

TREAT INJURY

Even though your Damage Condition Track may be partially or even fully recovered, it doesn't mean that your Injuries go away. They must be treated separately. Oftentimes nasty, Injuries can result in trauma, loss of a limb and can lead to an irrevocable end for Characters. They have lasting effects that persist far beyond combat. While some are temporary and require time to recuperate, others can haunt a Character for a lifetime. They manifest in many different ways - as a result of a fall, being shot, stabbed or attacked by predators and other wild creatures. Some Injuries may temporarily incapacitate the ability to function, whereas others result in broken ribs and a rare few can cause blindness, loss of limb, punctured lungs or worse. Injuries serve as a grave reminder of the brutal and violent nature of a grim & perilous world. In a fight, it is rare to walk away unscathed for those daring (or foolish) enough to draw their sword.

Note that unless mentioned otherwise, you only suffer Injury from being struck by a weapon. Falling, fire and other types of Damage generally don't cause Injuries.

PERFORM SURGERY

Injuries can be treated by a healer by with a successful Heal Test. You may only be treated in this manner once every 24 hours, no matter whether it is successful or not. However, multiple Injuries can be treated within that time period. The more serious your Injury, the Difficulty Rating of the Heal Test worsens:

- **Moderate Injury:** (Routine +10%) Heal Test
- **Serious Injury:** (Standard +/-0%) Heal Test
- **Grievous Injury:** (Challenging -10%) Heal Test
- **Slain!:** Injuries cannot be treated, as you're already dead

To have a chance at being healed, a caregiver must have Skill Rank: Journeyman in Heal, armed with appropriate medical instruments (a frightening array of bone saws, scissors, sutures and needles - otherwise called surgical tools in **Chapter XXX: Trappings**) and be left uninterrupted for at least one hour.

If you are treated with a successful Heal Test, your Injury is Treated and is ready to begin Recuperation. A Critical Success reduces the time to Recuperate by 3 days for Moderate Injuries, 6 days for Serious Injuries and 9 days for Grievous Injuries (for a minimum of 1 day to Recuperate). Failure results in no recovery, whereas a Critical Failure causes your wounds to suffer from Infection!

RECUPERATION TIME

Once Treated, you still suffer from any penalties your Injury conferred to you. During this, your Injury requires a certain number of days before the effects are lifted and the Injury disappears. However, some effects are permanent and can never be removed (as indicated in the Injury entry table). Complete recovery is based on the severity of the Injury:

- **Moderate Injury:** 1D6+3 days
- **Serious Injury:** 1D6+6 days
- **Grievous Injury:** 1D6+9 days

MULTIPLE INJURIES

It is said that there are no survivors in war, only living victims. During this time, you may be struck again as

your Damage Condition Track drops. You may gain new Injuries in this manner.

Should a Character ever be suffering from 3 Injuries, whether Untreated or in Recuperation, they are instantly Slain! (unless they spend a Fate Point to automatically recover an Injury).

INJURIES CAN CAUSE INFECTION

Should you continue to suffer from an untreated Injury for more than 24 hours or are made subject to a Critically Failed Heal Test to treat your Injury, your wounds are now suffering from Infection.

INFECTION

Infection causes your wounds to grow red and swollen, issuing bad pus and throbbing with pain as gnats gather around the sore. Infection can result from being thrust into a midden heap, thrown into a dungeon while suffering from Injury, falling victim to wounds dealt from an unclean creature, getting caught in a booby trap of feces on sharpened stakes, made victim to a quack's mishandling of unclean instruments or a number of other circumstances that may lead to further trauma.

Generally, a Critically Failed Heal Test to mend your wounds causes Infection. But other circumstances may mean you suffer Infection, which are dictated by the Gamemaster. Once suffering from Infection, you cannot recover either Damage or Peril Condition Tracks nor can Injuries be treated until Infection has been appropriately dealt with. Infection lasts until it has been properly treated.

BLOODLETTING

Infection can be treated by a healer with a successful Heal Test. You may only be treated in this manner once every 24 hours, no matter whether it is successful or not. The more severe your Damage Condition Track, the Difficulty Rating of the Heal Test worsens:

- **Lightly Wounded:** Automatically succeed
- **Moderately Wounded:** (Routine +10%) Heal Test
- **Seriously Wounded:** (Standard +/-0%) Heal Test
- **Grievously Wounded:** (Challenging -10%) Heal Test

To have a chance at being healed, a caregiver must have Skill Rank: Apprentice in Heal, have a bottle of leeches (which are expended after use), bandages and be left uninterrupted for at least ten minutes.

If you are treated with a successful Heal Test, your Infection goes away. A Critical Success causes your Infection to go away and you recover all steps of the Damage Condition Track to Unharmed. Failure results in no recovery, whereas a Critical Failure causes you to scream in pain, as you permanently reduce your Brawn by 1% from blood loss.

BLEEDING

Some attacks may cause you to begin Bleeding, such as being struck by a weapon while unarmored or as a result of a fall, an Injury, Parrying a melee weapon bare-handed or other perilous circumstances. Only the daft and foolish picks a fight with a swordsman wearing only their Sunday's best.

If you are not wearing armor and suffer Damage - even if your Damage Threshold is equal to or higher than the Damage you suffered - you begin to Bleed. Whenever you Bleed, you immediately drop your Damage Condition Track by one step and at the beginning of your subsequent Turns until you receive medical care.

STEM BLOOD LOSS

Blood loss can be stemmed by anyone trained in the medical arts. Providing the healer has at least Skill Rank: Apprentice in Heal, it doesn't require a Skill Test to stem Bleeding but requires bandages, which are expended after use. If you don't have a trained healer handy, you can always ask a nutter with a penchant for sadism to cauterize the wound for you with a hot poker or torch!

SUCCUMBING TO BLOOD LOSS

Should you continue to suffer from blood loss and reach Slain!, you bleed out to death. However, you may sacrifice a Fate Point at any time to immediately recover from Blood loss.

MADNESS AND CORRUPTION

"The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown."

- H.P. Lovecraft

From isolation, utter powerlessness, ambition denied, paranoid delusions, perversions of nature and nightmare-inducing terrors from beyond, madness and corruption punctuates all but the mildest of adventures in **ZWEIHÄNDER**. There are countless horrors waiting to prey upon the intrepid, foolish enough to blunder into their midsts. However, nothing is more insidious and treacherous than one's own mind. As the veil is pulled back upon reality, the unwary begin to realize the decrepit remnants of something far more insidious than merely the dark secrets men hide within their hearts. Nightmares are real, dwelling upon the threshold while seeking to consume or despoil those who wander too close to the wretched truth. Over time, these truths erode the mind of the sane. Tearing at the fabric of their reality, the slip towards madness races faster and faster until everything unravels. Insanity takes hold, and order gives way to chaos.

A GRIM & PERILOUS WORLD

What triggers madness may be cerebral at times (anticipation of something that may happen) and at others, more visceral (witnessing or committing heinous acts). Much of what it takes to create horror relies on player's investment into their Characters. A lot of this relies on the unwritten contract of a role-playing game between the Gamemaster and players. Ideally, the players should feel attachment to their Characters, the world the Characters live within must feel real and must be presented within the assumed reality of your Campaign World.

IMMERSING PLAYERS

Whereas you may be very desensitized by violence across other forms of media, it is important to distinguish between what players feel and what a Character experiences. Try to portray how the Character would feel in the situation, given the gravity of the world they live in. Assume Characters are already ignorant to the existence of zombies, vampires, aliens and the like. They likely have manifested their own anxieties, whether they be of

heights, deep waters, being left alone, of insects or even the alien horrors from beyond.

Characters should have only the faint semblance of disregard towards these nightmares, believing full well that there IS something creeping out there in the dark or hiding beneath the bed to gobble them up. While you, as a person, may handle fictional horror in a very casual way, you must help the player acclimate to the expectations laid down and approach it from a very different aspect. With a bit of emotional investment into the situation, you'll help support a mood of dread.

Many people have written extensively on how to use madness mechanics in role-playing games. Reliable tropes includes skeletons, demons, zombies and endless buckets of blood. They are the most common trappings of both movies and games, albeit inspiring little more than a laugh or two. While this approach is fine at times, it doesn't truly reach into the guts of **ZWEIHÄNDER**'s design principles. True insanity lay not just within the unanswered, but also fearing to uncover what may happen next. Madness does not lay within the moment, a simple "jump scare" used to inspire fear. Instead, it relies on the imagination run wild at what may be out there and revulsion at the improbable. Remember, when portraying the fantastical - particularly the horrific - use thin brush strokes to narrate madness. Carefully plan the moment, and let the player's collective imaginations run wild at what may be lurking out there. But all the same, don't be afraid to punctuate these same moments with moments of intense, deliberate acts to personify the scary world their Characters live within.

Admittedly, it is difficult to promote some of these situations in a role-playing game, but we've devised guidelines that you can look upon to help shape up your grim & perilous world of madness.

THREE BRANDS OF MADNESS

You will thrust Players into many horrific situations which will test their mental resolve. These trials can have a very acute effect on their Character's psyche, gradually eroding their ability to reason while at the same time desensitizing them to these same horrors. Eventually, it can affect productive and rational thought, manifesting into insanity.

From this, there are three distinct categories which plays upon the madness which can quickly overcome Characters:

STRESS

Stress is invoked by situations that cause unease or trepidation within the mind. Restlessness, anxiety caused by tedium while under a deadline and situations provoking impatience oftentimes cause Stress. Anticipation that something can go horribly awry is another common trigger for Stress. If Characters encounter a situation where they may be abandoned by friends, potentially lose hope in the face of danger or witness a heinous act of violence, it falls into this category.

Here are several examples of situations which may provoke Stress. They are by no means comprehensive, but provide a good framework to reference:

- A Character's lantern winks out in the oppressive darkness of a lightless cavern.
- A Character stays up all night without a wink of sleep and begins to see "tracers" from the corners of their eyes.
- A Character is forced to shoulder the burden of responsibility for something they don't inherently understand.
- A Character walks along a cliffside, where falling could spell their doom.
- A Character investigates the grisly scene of a murder victim.
- A Character discovers that the trusted town doctor who just performed surgery on them while unconscious may indeed be a sorcerer, instead of a surgeon.
- A Character is called to witness the execution of someone - regardless if they are guilty or innocent.
- A Character is thrown into a situation where their phobias can be piqued.
- A Character breaks a promise or knowingly tells a lie to someone of prominence.
- A Character is robbed at knifepoint with no means to protect themselves.
- A Character is lost within a forest, unsure which direction to get out.
- A Character is arrested and shackled in the middle of the night for a crime they didn't commit.

- A Character's reputation is called under question in a public forum, facing humiliation or worse.

FEAR

Unlike Stress, the effects of Fear are felt more acutely. It is an emotion aroused by impending danger or pain, regardless if the threat is real or imagined. Revulsion against the unclean and disgust can also trigger Fear. If Characters encounter a situation where they face mutilation, must combat a perversion of science or otherwise step into a situation where monsters prevail and men dare not tread, it falls into the category of Fear.

Here are several examples of situations which may provoke Fear. They are by no means comprehensive, but provide a good framework to reference:

- A Character is mutilated, brutalized sexually or tortured while helplessly tied up.
- A Character's close friend or other Character is tortured in front of their eyes.
- A Character is knowingly being stalked by someone else but unable to truly escape.
- A Character can hear the beating of a heart within the darkness of a hallway, without any way to discover where the sound truly originates.
- A Character is seduced by a woman with strange eyes, only to awaken the next day with deep claw marks on their back.
- A Character hears the unearthly chanting of the dead within a crypt.
- A Character knows that a council of aristocrats may have a hand in the disappearance of numerous innocent people.
- A Character stumbles across a bear protecting her cubs in the forest.
- A Character must hide beneath the rotting bodies of their peers to avoid notice by another army.
- A Character has a personal conversation with someone they know is dead.
- A Character discovers that they are the perpetrator in a string of killings, seemingly done while sleepwalking.
- A Character faces down a fearless predator or dangerous creature.
- A Character is the lone survivor of an onslaught that takes the lives of their comrades or other Characters.

- A Character discovers that a “clone” or doppelganger of themselves is out there and attempting to take their life over.
- A Character is being hunted by a foul creature of which there is no certain escape.
- A Character must defend themselves against a supernatural horror from beyond the grave.

TERROR

By far the most intense of emotions, Terror is provoked after situations where the grim realizations of the unnatural and unimaginable world come true. It is intense and harrowing, provoking the worst in some while shattering the minds of the weak-willed. It brings about feelings of prolonged danger; not easily shaken or broken. “Things that should not be” encapsulate situations which promote Terror. Revulsion is the most common of emotions which are provoked in these sort of situations. If Characters encounter a point in the story where they discover that the reality they perceived is entirely wrong, must speak with a Daemonic presence face-to-face or kill someone they trust, it falls into the category of Terror.

Here are several examples of situations which may provoke Terror. They are by no means comprehensive, but provide a good framework to reference:

- A Character is forced to brutalize or torture a loved one or other Character while possessed or forcibly coerced.
- A Character experiences endless nightmares from their youth, only to discover that it was real all along.
- A Character gains revelation that the death of a trusted friend or a loved one was their fault.
- A Character awakens one day to find that the sun rises in the west, and sets in the east.
- A Character is prepped to be consumed in a grotesque buffet by those that have been tainted by dark powers.
- A Character finds out that the world they live in is actually purgatory, where they’re condemned to relive the same experiences over and over until they correct whatever they’ve done wrong.
- A Character discovers that the god they worship is monstrous, an alien being from

beyond the stars who speaks in a gibbering voice.

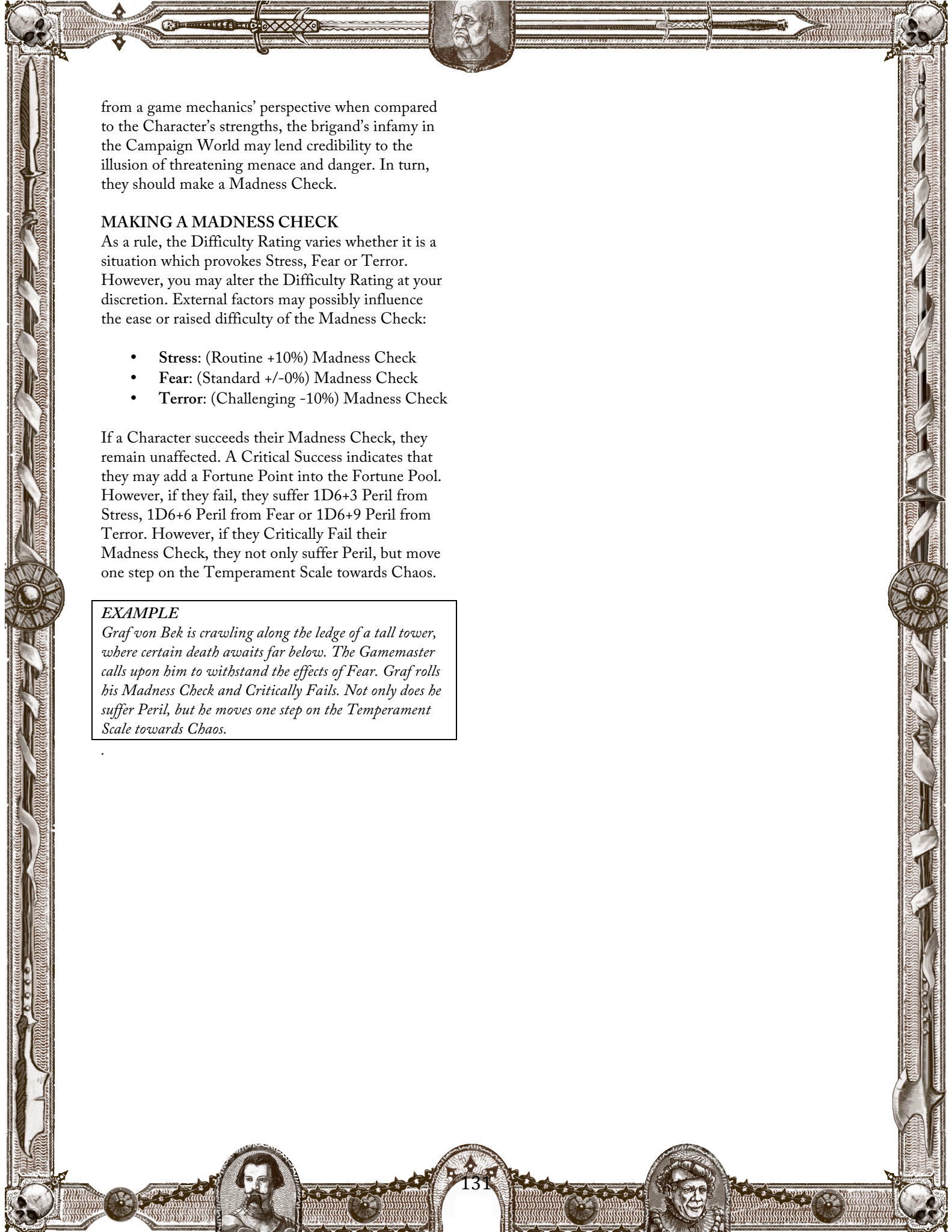
- A Character initially discovers that they’ve been made victim to a terminal illness or face amputation.
- A Character witnesses the emergence of a Daemonic creature into the material plane without the protections of Magick.
- A Character discovers they’ve committed an act of cannibalism, or forced to commit an act of auto-cannibalism!
- A Character witnesses a comrade or other Character transform into an unnatural creature.
- A Character witnesses a true miracle, where a Daemonic force actively advocates for another openly by its inhuman avatar.
- A Character sees something so inexplicable, but others bear witness to it at the same time. This could be something as terrifying as a dragon rising from a volcano or a strange ship falling from the sky.
- A Character walks through a scintillating portal to an “otherworld”, a dimension where the laws of science do not prevail.

MADNESS CHECK

You must make an initial judgement call to determine whether a situation would potentially provoke Stress, Fear or Terror upon Characters. Each of these categories inflicts different penalties, but the guidelines above should help guide you towards the right choice. Some creatures in **Chapter XXX: Bestiary** may provoke Stress, Fear or Terror.

Whenever a Character first stumbles into the situation which can provoke Stress, Fear or Terror, you’ll call upon them to make a Madness Check, using either Discipline or Scrutinize (player’s choice). However, other extenuating circumstances may lead you towards having a Character make additional Tests. For instance, walking in and out of the vicinity of a crime scene may not necessitate a Character to make multiple Madness Checks. However, revisiting the same scene of the crime where the victim stood upright from the dead and walked away may!

If the Character doesn’t perceive an active threat, they shouldn’t make another Madness Check. On the same token, perceived threats, whether real or not, should require a Madness Check. For instance, even though an armed brigand may not truly be a threat



from a game mechanics' perspective when compared to the Character's strengths, the brigand's infamy in the Campaign World may lend credibility to the illusion of threatening menace and danger. In turn, they should make a Madness Check.

MAKING A MADNESS CHECK

As a rule, the Difficulty Rating varies whether it is a situation which provokes Stress, Fear or Terror. However, you may alter the Difficulty Rating at your discretion. External factors may possibly influence the ease or raised difficulty of the Madness Check:

- **Stress:** (Routine +10%) Madness Check
- **Fear:** (Standard +/-0%) Madness Check
- **Terror:** (Challenging -10%) Madness Check

If a Character succeeds their Madness Check, they remain unaffected. A Critical Success indicates that they may add a Fortune Point into the Fortune Pool. However, if they fail, they suffer 1D6+3 Peril from Stress, 1D6+6 Peril from Fear or 1D6+9 Peril from Terror. However, if they Critically Fail their Madness Check, they not only suffer Peril, but move one step on the Temperament Scale towards Chaos.

EXAMPLE

Graf von Bek is crawling along the ledge of a tall tower, where certain death awaits far below. The Gamemaster calls upon him to withstand the effects of Fear. Graf rolls his Madness Check and Critically Fails. Not only does he suffer Peril, but he moves one step on the Temperament Scale towards Chaos.

GM: WILDERNESS TRAVEL

Despite the best attempts by reeves and other altruistic wardens of the road, the wilderness is largely left untamed beyond village borders. Ruthless bandits, foreign marauders and other creatures roam the wilds in search of plunder, food and fortune. The unforgiving weather, highland terrain and impenetrable forests are nearly as deadly as those merciless denizens. The untamed wilds are perhaps the last foothold of the chaotic and uncivilized. Woe be to the intrepid traveler who is not properly prepared; in the wilds, companions can make all the difference between life and death.

WHY WILDERNESS TRAVEL?

In a grim & perilous world, sometimes the fates will curse you but equally sometimes fortune favors the bold. In **ZWEIHÄNDER**, this is replicated by allowing the Gamesmaster to outline the relative threats for each leg of a journey, granting Characters a way out by testing their Skills. However, misfortune may intervene at times, which can exacerbate the dangers encountered. A Gamesmaster may wish to sculpt the story by letting the flow of the narrative drive it, but there is much to be said for triggered inspiration where the roll of the dice nudge the creativity of both the Gamemaster and players. The common folk rarely travel any great distance. Traveling far is commonly associated with those fated to band together for a cause; perhaps to strike out to demonstrate their heroism, or as a necessary evil in order to see wrongs righted. Together, the Characters form what's called a "Party".

THE PARTY

A Party consists of all player Characters participating in the Game Session. It may also include any non-player Characters of importance. It is critical that the Party is decided upon before you use the Wilderness Travel mechanics, as each member will be required not only to test their Skills, but play an active role in the survival of everyone around them. Inconsequential non-player Characters such as camp followers, hirelings and the like shouldn't be considered a part of the Party unless you intend to fully-flesh them out as active participants during the journey.

WHEN TO USE WILDERNESS TRAVEL

Traveling from town to town through harsh landscapes, over war-torn countryside, navigating thick forests and scaling high mountains are a common hallmark of any grim and perilous game. The rules presented for Wilderness Travel help frame the journey as a part of that story.

Any time a Party intends to travel for more than a day overland, the rules for Wilderness Travel are used. Without direct consideration of Primary Attributes or Combat Movement, it allows you as Gamemaster to track how fast the Party reaches their destination, to examine the hardships they face and to set the measure of danger assigned to each stretch of their journey. But many questions arise from this: how will they get there, and by what means? Will they go by horse or on foot? Perhaps they will book a coach, or otherwise ride in the back of a merchant's cart? Will it be a safe, quick journey, or will it be filled with hardship and adversity? All of these questions must be answered in order to shape the narrative into a cohesive story.

DANGERS IN THE WILDERNESS

Every journey carries some measure of danger to it. This means that a Party that is trekking over well-worn paths may still face the threat of violence from highwaymen, encounter a part of the road that's washed out from a storm flood, stumble into the middle of a war band on the move, be forced to negotiate with a corrupt bailiff demanding taxes or avoid a blazing fire at a nearby farmstead that threatens those within. Even with the best-laid plans, things can go wrong. The wilderness is truly a daunting place, requiring foresight, competence and the wherewithal to overcome the many challenges it presents.

NARRATIVE TIME

While undergoing Wilderness Travel, the Party is assumed to be in what's called "Narrative Time". In Narrative Time, you are highlighting the most important parts of the journey by summarizing the important parts of what would potentially be slow, cumbersome and awkward if handled in the way combat flows in Structured Time.

WILDERNESS TRAVEL OVERVIEW

Below is a quick guideline to follow whenever Wilderness Travel begins:

STEP I: CHART THE ROUTE

The players will tell you where they wish to go and discover how best to get there. Afterwards, you decide whether to allow the Party to quickly travel there without any hitch, or play out the journey in greater detail.

STEP II: DIVIDE THE ROUTE INTO STRETCHES

Each step of the journey is divided up into manageable legs called Stretches, delineated by you as the Gamemaster.

STEP III: ASSIGN TERRAIN BY STRETCH

Assigning terrain for each Stretch of the journey determines the inherent difficulty of various checks they'll make using their Skills.

STEP IV: DETERMINE THREAT LEVEL BY STRETCH

A level of inherent danger may lurk upon each Stretch of the journey. Here, you assign how dangerous the journey may be.

STEP V: DEFINE ROLES WITHIN THE PARTY

In order for a Party to strike out into the wilderness, they must take upon certain responsibilities to ensure safe, efficient travel. Here, you inquire with players to see how their Characters intend to help the Party by selecting one of three distinct positions.

STEP VI: THE JOURNEY BEGINS

The final step is when you begin to set Wilderness Travel into motion, using the rules provided above. Along the way, the Party will face adversity and strife, but eventually all journeys come to an end. Will it be a fortunate one, or will it result in the utter destruction of the Characters?

STEP I: CHART THE ROUTE

The Party must jointly agree where they're intending to travel. It's likely that the destination will be influenced by story hooks you've introduced into your Campaign World. Players will need to announce the destination to you, but feel free to suggest a destination if they are uncertain or haven't caught onto important clues. Ideally, all of this exchange will be handled In Character between the players as a part of the Game Session.

HOW TO GET THERE?

Generally speaking, a Party knows the area around where they spent the most time in their Profession. However, reaching destinations beyond a few days' travel can prove difficult.

If blazing a path through the wilderness to a remote mountain range, a lost settlement, a far-flung country or other landmark that's not well-known, the Party must inquire with locals or do independent research to find the way there. Sages and cartographers can come in handy in these cases. Roads and other paths are traveled by reeves, merchants and herdsmen, making a great resource for Characters to tap into. There are no specific rules to determine the best path. Encourage players to think together creatively, and react accordingly with their interactions with each other and non-player Characters. Don't simply tell them how to get there. Interpret what the Characters would realistically know about the world around them. Take under consideration their personal history, interactions, ethnic or racial backgrounds. And when in doubt, let them commit their own investigation to come up with ideas, drawn from their experiences in your Campaign World. They will come to learn that well-travelled routes by land, river or sea are usually less dangerous than following shortcuts through the wilderness. You can also make suggestions on how they may employ their Skills to determine the path.

EXAMPLE

The Party has decided to travel to a province in the east, to deliver an important message from their patron. They know the road will be fraught with peril, but the risk is well-worth the reward. However, finding the best path there will be difficult, given that merchants don't readily trade outside the known borders.

In order to determine few landmarks along the path, the Characters split up in town: "Patches" decides to pay a visit to an old gong farmer, originally from the eastern province, to speak about known roads. Leopold Coventry heads to a local bounty hunters' lodge, inquiring within about prison caravans that head east. Graf von Bek digs through his father's encyclopedias of adventure, seeking information about important way stations in the eastern province. Mercutio Salvatore goes to a local swill house and chats up a well-known raconteur to inquire if she's been that way (and perhaps if they can hitch a ride there with them). Wilhelm shakes down a local foreign thug to convince him to lead them there in exchange for his freedom. Exploring each of these different options, the Gamemaster then narrates the results.

FINAL CONSIDERATION

You may summarize Wilderness Travel by simply telling the players "you take a coach for three days from this town to next, encountering no danger", that's fine. Sometimes, it is important to the story arc to not bog down the Game Session in this way. If they're not actively leading the journey (such as if they chartered a coach or river ship), it's not necessary to continue with the next steps. However, if they are striking out on their own, whether by cart, coach, horse, wagon, ship or on foot, you need to make an important decision: will you quickly summarize their travels following the example above or will you play out the journey as a major part of the story?

Follow these guidelines below to begin framing it as a major part of the overall story arc.

STEP II: DIVIDE THE ROUTE INTO STRETCHES

Whether referencing a homemade map, a published Campaign World's local map or some other resource you've identified for locations in your Campaign World, indicate to the players what the route is and give a rough estimate of the overall distance from where they're starting and where they'll end up. This can be in miles, days or however you wish to track it. Naturally, the route likely won't all be on demarcated roads or well-worn paths. It could cross untreked forest, follow low hills and river valleys or even be by sea. But you must consider breaking up the trip into manageable legs, or Stretches. Each Stretch creates the itinerary of the overall journey, giving you the

opportunity to pace Wilderness Travel over several scenes. Game Sessions. It allows you to create clear milestones where the Party can begin and end each leg of their journey. It also gives the opportunity for Characters to recuperate, resupply, investigate, interact with one another and to meet new non-player Characters. But most importantly, it helps you determine how many Bushcraft Checks you should have the Party make over the route's course. Bushcraft Checks are required by each Party member to survive the hardships of the wild while not tiring from fatigue.

The length of the Stretch is abstract in some regard, but also distinct as it segments distance between waypoints, landmarks, cities, villages or other notable geographic points in your Campaign World. How long it takes the Party to cross each Stretch isn't all that important at this point, nor is the exact mileage. Simply consider the relative distance between these waypoints, regardless if they're ten, fifty or one hundred miles from one another. However, it is important to decide roughly how many days travel it will take to cover the Stretch. This will determine how many days' worth of provisions the Party must bring.

Dividing the route into Stretches is primarily the province of you as the Gamemaster. It is unnecessary to disclose the exact mileage to the players unless you feel it adds to the story. It allows you to consider plot points you wish to throw at the players during their trip. While you certainly don't want to bog down each Stretch with numerous side quests or story hooks, it can help you introduce rumors, new people, minor events or smaller plot points to reinforce the verisimilitude and believability of your Campaign World.

SHORT STRETCH

A Short Stretch may be the distance between villages, the distance from a township to a roadside coaching house or hunter's lodges near a backwater hamlet a day or so from civilization. You should call upon each member of the Party to make 1 Bushcraft Check during this time, immediately at the beginning of travel.

MEDIUM STRETCH

A Medium Stretch may be the distance crossed through a vast forest, over foothills leading to a mountainside or along the coasts of an uncharted

island. You should call upon each member of the Party to make 2 Bushcraft Checks; once at the beginning of travel, and a second time near its end.

LONG STRETCH

A Long Stretch may be the distances required to pass through mountain ranges into adjacent countries, explore the coasts of a lost continent or blaze through a great, unsettled plain. You should call upon each member of the Party to make 3 Bushcraft Checks during this time; once at the beginning, a second one at the middle and a third near the end.

EXAMPLE

The Gamemaster has charted the route from beginning to end. The Characters will start their journey in Minuet, landing somewhere along the Basque River to a riverside inn called Lloyd's Beacon. The players state they wish to go on foot through the woods, instead of rowing downriver. Normally, this would be Short Stretch when moving downriver, but their river barge was burned a week before. Instead, the Gamemaster converts it to a Medium Stretch. It will require one Bushcraft Check immediately, and one towards the end of the trip outside of Lloyd's Beacon.

The next leg of their journey starts at Lloyd's Beacon and ends in Swanzi, a town built alongside the mighty Basque River. As they have chartered a route on a broken-down riverboat without a captain (in exchange for rowing the entire way with several stops at fishing villages), this leg will be a Long Stretch. It will require three Bushcraft Checks; one at the beginning, middle and near the end of the as they reach Swanzi.

After disembarking in Swanzi, they must now reach a hamlet called Hobb's End. It is only a day or so away from Swanzi. The Gamemaster decides this will be a Short Stretch. It will require a Bushcraft Check as they leave Swanzi towards Hobb's End.

STEP III: ASSIGN TERRAIN TYPES BY STRETCH

Once you have divided the route into Stretches, you need to assign specific Terrain types. While these decisions may already have been made for you in the case of a published Campaign World, you may have

to think carefully about what sort of Terrain comprises each of your Stretches. This can lead to tough decisions, particularly if you know a Stretch may be divided between different environments. For instance, if a Stretch is comprised of a hunting path through the woods, leading into a vast pine forest the Party must explore without the aid of a path or map, it can create a number of fiddly considerations. A good rule of thumb to consider is that if the Stretch is comprised of multiple Terrain types; select the one which comprises half or more of the Stretch. For instance, if a mountainside passes through thick woodland and follows a hunting path, assume that most of the Terrain is mountainous.

As before, you need not disclose this to the players. Let it act as a story aid as you describe the wilderness. Narrate what they see during their travels; describe the sounds heard, what sort of plants grow, the coolness of the river, the fragrant smells of a pine wood, the distinct smell of a heavily-forested vale, the intense heat of the desert. We cannot provide rules to follow in these cases, as they go beyond this book. But approach the narration in the same way that your favorite storyteller or novelist writes it. Feel free to crib their descriptions, jotting them down as you read other books or make up your own along the way. These can be invaluable tools to put into your Gamemaster's toolbox. We freely encourage you to steal, reuse and appropriate when needed!

EFFECTS OF TERRAIN

Each Terrain type below describes not only the miles the Party may cover per day within it, but also the Difficulty Rating of all Bushcraft and Role Checks. Mark the Terrain type by Stretch in your notes, only disclosing the Difficulty Rating and miles traveled per day when absolutely necessary. By keeping the miles abstract, it allows you to narrate the journey without burying it in mathematical formulas on the player's side. By hiding the Difficulty Rating, it lends an air of mystery to the environment the Party is moving through, springing hardships as needed.

ARDUOUS TERRAIN

Arduous Terrain consists of rough seas and oceans, river rapids, blighted areas, impenetrable forests, mountains and deserts. While in Arduous Terrain, all Bushcraft and Role Checks are (Arduous -30%).

HARD TERRAIN

Hard Terrain consists of high hills, deep cave systems, badlands, tundra-like conditions and taiga. While in Hard Terrain, all Bushcraft and Role Checks are (Hard -20%).

CHALLENGING TERRAIN

Challenging Terrain consists of trackless forests, caverns, fast-flowing rivers, open seas, wastelands and foothills. While in Challenging Terrain, all Bushcraft and Role Checks are (Challenging -10%).

STANDARD TERRAIN

Standard Terrain consists of paths around large lakes, slow-moving rivers, marshes, and forests with little undergrowth. While in Standard Terrain, all Bushcraft and Role Checks are (Standard +/-0%).

Sidebar: Traveling Distance By Terrain Type

Generally, the number of miles covered per day isn't an important consideration of a ZWEIHÄNDER game. This sort of bookkeeping is unnecessary and tiresome for a Gamemaster. Most players aren't going to ask for you to tell them how many miles they cover per minute or per hour. However, you can make a few broad assumptions if you absolutely wish to track distinct overland distances. For our example, we will show the number of miles covered in Arduous Terrain. Assume that the Party is on the move for 8 hours of the day:

- 5 miles per day on foot
- 10 miles per day by coach, horse or wagon
- 15 miles per day by river
- 20 miles per day by sea

For every step forward, add 5 additional miles traveled per day in the related Terrain. In the example above, a Party who can move 5 miles on foot in Arduous Terrain can move 10 miles per day on foot through Hard Terrain.

ROUTINE TERRAIN

Routine Terrain consists of rolling hills, discernible trails through the wilderness and open badlands. While in Routine Terrain, all Bushcraft and Role Checks are (Routine +10%).

EASY TERRAIN

Easy terrain is generally well-worn paths for hunting, walking through open plains, a dirt path through open meadows or even travel upon a navigable river. While in Easy Terrain, all Bushcraft and Role Checks are (Easy +20%).

SIMPLE TERRAIN

Simple terrain consists of well-paved roads, graveled paths and other roadways that are marked or demarcated by signs and patrolled. While in Simple Terrain, all Bushcraft and Role Checks are (Simple +30%).

EXAMPLE

The Gamemaster begins to assign the Terrain Type by Stretch. Minuet to Lloyd's Beacon on foot through the woods will be Standard Terrain. For the next stretch from Lloyd's Beacon to Swanzi downriver, it will be Easy Terrain. Finally, from Swanzi through the well-ploughed fields in Hobb's End, it will be Simple Terrain.

STEP IV: DETERMINE THREAT LEVEL BY STRETCH

A Threat Level represents the possibility that an external situation may influence the Party's journey during a Stretch. Random chance plays a huge role here. Players aren't necessarily "causing" a Wilderness Challenge to come about from their Character's actions. Instead, you're letting random chance dictate if the Threat Level is high enough to warrant a challenge of some kind. In many ways, Wilderness Challenges are strings of events you can use to tell the story of what occurs to the Party as they travel. Using randomized results, these same events begin to flesh out the tale, removing some of the pre-planning it takes for you to plan a memorable adventure. It represents a way for you to communicate situations that frame a grim and perilous world, where danger can be found just around the corner.

Not all Wilderness Challenges are the same. Take the example presented before. Although the road may be patrolled, the weather may have washed out a large part of it, causing horses and wagons to become stuck. Perhaps a large tree has blocked the way for the Party's journey, and now they must think of a way around it. There may be a need to negotiate with a

band of slavers or dangerous marauders. Maybe a corrupted bailiff and his supporting sellswords intend to extort “tolls” from those who trespass upon their roads. Is it possible that the road forks unexpectedly, with one path leading to misfortune? Perhaps a throng of beggars, led by a particularly inflammatory rabble-rouser, is attempting to persuade the Party to cast aside all wealth and join them. A situation may arise where a rogue herd of elk are on the move, and need to be tamed lest they crash headlong through a village of the destitute and helpless. Maybe even a fistfight has broken out between two rivaling huckster, which the Party may be draw into. Essentially, the possibilities are endless. We will talk more about distinct Wilderness Challenges in this chapter.

Note that each Stretch has its own Threat Level. It is entirely up to you to determine how dangerous it is. Dastardly Gamemasters may wish to levy a continuous amount of danger upon the Party, whereas other ones may suggest no real threat of danger. The best answer may lie somewhere in the middle. Consider how populated the area is; it is likely that well-traveled roads aren’t particularly prone to having ancient creatures walking along them, but the presence of footpads, highwaymen or other bandits may be expected.

Use the guidelines below to assign an appropriate Threat Level by Stretch:

NO DANGER

No danger means just that; nothing will impose any sort of challenge whatsoever on the Party. Use this option whenever you wish for players to have an easy trip. Although they may face hardships in other ways, they shouldn’t face any external factors which may influence the safety of their journey.

MILDLY DANGEROUS

Stretches which are Mildly Dangerous indicates that some hazard or other hindrance exists, but only for those who go looking for it. Washed-out roads, fallen trees or areas that haven’t been well-traveled pose as Mildly Dangerous.

MODERATELY DANGEROUS

Moderately Dangerous areas are commonplace in the recesses of the wilderness. Creatures of all types may

hunt these areas and undergrowth may spread throughout these Stretches. Regions of land that aren’t tended to by farmer’s hands and paths which aren’t actively patrolled may become Moderately Dangerous. Locals know to stay away from these places, but intrepid explorers may venture out into them for a myriad of reasons.

HIGHLY DANGEROUS

Highly Dangerous areas are readily apparent (and advertised) to all, from ignorant nose-picking peasants to the ivory-tower dwelling louche gentry. High mountainsides with a risk of rockslides, overgrown forests where ancient creatures stir, wartime encampments of foreign armies and barbarian settlements would all qualify as Highly Dangerous.

A FINAL NOTE REGARDING THREAT LEVEL

Threat Levels are entirely mutable. They may change for a region at the whim of a headstrong knight who decides to settle a desolated land. It may evolve as pioneers tame the wilds, pushing the forests back. It may even change if a city is decimated, the crumbling remnants now home to voracious monsters. In short, don’t allow the players to assume the Threat Level is always the same across a journey’s Stretch. Ultimately, you are the one who makes that call after considering the story hook or changes to your Campaign World.

EXAMPLE

The Gamemaster has already made the determination that the Threat Level from Minuet to Lloyd’s Beacon will have No Danger. There is a generous amount of foot traffic between the two places, and roadwardens openly patrol the area. However, river pirates traffic openly between Lloyd’s Beacon to Swanzi, making it Moderately Dangerous Terrain. And despite the fact that Swanzi is well-patrolled, the lands to Hobb’s End will be Highly Dangerous, given to the rise of a peasant rebellion.

STEP V: DEFINE ROLES WITHIN THE PARTY

Combined sharing of hardship along the journey often separates the foolish from the well-prepared. One need look no further than the desolate ruins

alongside major routes to see how poor preparation can lead to becoming lost, suffering from exposure, drowning or even death by predators in the wilderness. By dividing the workload, an experienced Party can move assuredly from one destination to the next, barring misfortune encountered along the way. There are three specific Roles that must be filled by the Party. Each Role has its own responsibility during Wilderness Travel. A Character may only fill one Role, relying on other members of the Party to play their part. While each must be filled, they may be filled by more than one Character. When occupying a Role, a Character must make a related "Role Check" at the beginning of each Stretch. Also, if they have any of the recommended tools, they should gain a bonus to their Role Check (+20 Base Chance). Success indicates nothing goes awry, whereas failure can have varying results:

GUIDE

Role Check: Navigation (Intelligence)

Recommended Tools: astrolabe, compass, maps

The Guide plays the most critical Role during wilderness travel. They may use the position of stars, maps and tell-tale signs of other travelers to lead the way. A general knowledge of the world, the passing of heavenly bodies and wilderness expertise serves the Guide best. A Guide that does their job leads the Party successfully over a Stretch, whereas one that fails at the task can make the trip far more toilsome, taking the worse of routes over the easy ones.

EXAMPLE

The players deliberate amongst themselves to find the best mix of Characters to fill the Navigator's Role. Despite that none of them have a Skill Rank in Navigation, both Patches and Wilhelm Eckhardt possess relatively high Intelligence Primary Attributes. With both of them in the Role, it will lend an Assist Die when it comes time to make a Role Check. Additionally, they secure a local map for each Stretch, which will provide them a passive bonus to their Role Check during this time.

LOOKOUT

Role Check: Awareness (Perception)

Recommended Tools: telescope, watch dog

A Lookout is vigilant and watchful. They manage the watch cycle and determine the perimeter of safety. Perceptiveness and battle-readiness are the watchwords for a Lookout. A properly-trained Lookout can prevent any missteps along the way.

However, one that is not vigilant can keep the Party on edge, and land themselves into a sticky situation.

EXAMPLE

Fortunately, the Party has someone who will make an excellent Lookout amongst them. However, the Character is suffering from a crippling Injury, which requires them to flip to fail all Awareness Skill Tests. Despite this setback, it's the best option available. Without tools, they are resigned to put Leopold Coventry into this Role.

SCOUT

Role Check: Stealth (Agility)

Recommended Tools: camouflage

A Scout stays ahead of the Party, looking for immediate signs of danger. Bushcraft and furtiveness are the foremost prerequisites for a talented Scout. A successful Scout keeps the Party aware of danger, but failing to do so can result in being overly-cautious, taking more time than expected while raising the stakes.

EXAMPLE

Finally, it is time to fill the Scout's Role. Although the Party has the advantage of dense foliage and poor weather due to rain in their favor, none of the Characters have a Stealth Skill Rank or possess a good Agility. They decide to draw straws to see who will be resigned to this Role, forcing Mercutio Salvatore to act as Scout.

EVOLVING ROLES

Finally, Characters are not necessarily locked into their Role for the duration of the trip. The needs of the Party may evolve in the face of danger or the many miseries that may be levied upon their comrades. You should allow them to change the Role they play, but only at the end of a Stretch or after facing a Wilderness Challenge.

STEP VI: THE JOURNEY BEGINS

Once all of these considerations have been made, it is time for the Party to embark upon the first Stretch of their journey.

Wilderness Travel can be arduous, taking its toll evenly across the weakest to the strongest of explorers. Overburdening oneself with excessive supplies - fancy bedrolls, heavy blankets, large pavilion tents, spools of rope and the like - is best-

suited for pack animals, and not for travelers. Footing can become unsure, and not only does weariness set in but harm can occur from a misplaced step along the trail. First, you will call upon all players to make Role Checks as the Stretch begins.

MAKING ROLE CHECKS

First, one Character within each Role must make a Role Check. Only one Role Check is required, despite the length of the Stretch. Consider the Terrain Type to determine the related Difficulty Rating. If multiple members of the Party are filling the same Role, they may add an Assist Die to the Skill Test. Additionally, if they have the recommended tools to aid them, grant a +20 Base Chance to their Role Check.

GUIDE

A Guide must make a Navigation Test at the beginning of the Stretch. A successful Navigation Test decreases the difficulty of Terrain by one step during that particular Stretch. This means that if the Party was moving through Standard Terrain, treat it as Routine Terrain instead. A Critical Success yields the same result as above while decreasing the Threat Level by 1D6 Chaos Die.

On the other hand, a failed Navigation Test increases the difficulty of Terrain by one step during that particular Stretch. This means that if the Party was moving through Standard Terrain, treat it as Challenging Terrain instead. A Critical Failure yields the same result as above while increasing the Threat Level by 1D6 Chaos Die.

LOOKOUT

A Lookout must make an Awareness Test after the Guide at the beginning of the Stretch. A successful Awareness Test allows the Party to ignore one Bushcraft Check during that particular Stretch. This means that if a Long Stretch normally requires 3 Bushcraft Checks, it now requires 2 instead. A Critical Success yields the same result as above while decreasing the Threat Level by 1D6 Chaos Die.

On the other hand, a failed Awareness Test requires the Party to make one additional Bushcraft Check during that particular Stretch. This means that if a Long Stretch normally requires 3 Bushcraft Checks, it now requires 4 Instead. A Critical Failure yields the same result as above while increasing the Threat Level by 1D6 Chaos Die.

SCOUT

A Scout must make a Stealth Test after the Lookout at the beginning of the Stretch. A successful Stealth Test allows the Party to gain Surprise if a Wilderness Challenge results in combat during that particular Stretch. A Critical Success yields the same result as above while decreasing the Threat Level by 1D6 Chaos Die.

On the other hand, a failed Stealth Test allows the Party's enemies to gain Surprise if a Wilderness Challenge results in combat during that particular Stretch. A Critical Failure yields the same result as above while increasing the Threat Level by 1D6 Chaos Die.

MAKING BUSHCRAFT CHECKS

Amalgamate the Terrain Type and Stretch's length to determine the number of Bushcraft Checks necessary and the related Difficulty Rating. With this in mind, call upon each member of the Party to make a series of Bushcraft Checks using either their Survival or Toughness Skill. If the Character is atop a horse or within a cart, wagon or riding in a conveyance to keep them off their feet, they may add an Assist Die to their Skill Test.

ALL PARTY MEMBERS

Everyone in the Party must attempt Bushcraft Checks at intervals you assign. A successful Bushcraft Check indicates nothing goes awry, as the Character suffers no Peril from fatigue. A Critical Success yields the same result as above but allows the Character recover their Peril Condition Track to Unhindered from a good night's rest.

On the other hand, a failed Bushcraft Check indicates the Character suffers 1D6+9 Peril from fatigue. A Critical Failure indicates the Character reduces their Peril Condition Track to Incapacitated! from total exhaustion.

BREAKING UP BUSHCRAFT CHECKS

You may wish to consider the length of a Stretch, requiring all Bushcraft Checks to be resolved before moving onto the next step. Ideally, in situations that require multiple Bushcraft Checks, we recommend that you stage them out at specific times during a Stretch. For instance, a Long Stretch requires 3 total Bushcraft Checks.

While resolving all Bushcraft Checks prior to the Role Check may vastly simplify things, it may also create a situation where Characters are completely fatigued, having little or no chance for survival. Only experience with ZWEIHÄNDER will lead you to the right time for players to make Bushcraft Checks. We encourage you to consider both options.

Sidebar: Seasonal Extremes

Seasonal extremes can take a toll upon the weary. In fact, it can decimate even the stoutest of Parties. Taking shelter is not always an option, particularly in the dread heat of an open desert in summer or the bitter cold of winters when crossing the tundra. When appropriate, use 1D6+9 Peril for those failing Bushcraft Tests.

TRIGGERING WILDERNESS CHALLENGES

Secretly roll a number of D6 Chaos Dice. The number of Chaos Dice are first determined by Threat Level. If it is Mildly Dangerous, roll a 1D6 Chaos Die. If it is Moderately Dangerous, roll 2D6 Chaos Dice instead. But if it is Highly Dangerous, roll 3D6 Chaos Dice. Additional Chaos Dice may fall upon the Party if they failed their Role Checks.

EXAMPLE

While traveling through an area that is Highly Dangerous, both the Navigator and the Scout Critically Failed their Role Checks. The Gamemaster will roll 5D6 Chaos Dice to check for a Wilderness Encounter (3D6 due to Highly Dangerous Terrain, 1D6 from a Critically Failed Navigator's Role Check and 1D6 from a Critically Failed Scout's Role Check).

If the die results in a face "6", it triggers a Wilderness Challenge. Additionally, the number of face 6s may trigger a more formidable challenge. If one face 6 is generated, reference the Mildly Dangerous table. If two face 6s result, look at the Moderately Dangerous table. If three or more face 6s result, reference the Highly Dangerous table.

MILDLY DANGEROUS TABLE NOT READY

MODERATELY DANGEROUS TABLE NOT READY

HIGHLY DANGEROUS TABLE NOT READY

Sidebar: Wilderness Challenge Abstraction

We have left the Wilderness Challenges tables purposefully vague, without any sort of game mechanic for their effect and resolution. This loose approach works best, so you can custom tailor each encounter to your wishes. Likely, you have already been a Gamemaster or player in another role-playing game or already understand how to appropriately treat encounters with this book. If not, look at the examples presented throughout this work. We've provided a wealth of information on how you can apply the mechanics to match any Wilderness Challenge. Use this opportunity to flex your knowledge of the ZWEIHÄNDER system to create something fair, interesting and challenging. And if you don't like the result on the table, you can always re-roll or simply make up your own. Clever Gamemasters will even have charted out unique "random encounters" tables beforehand.

NATURAL RECOVERY AND HEAL SKILL IN THE WILDERNESS

During normal gameplay, Characters can simply get a good night's sleep at any number of shady inns (or on the floor of a winesink) to heal Peril with natural recovery or treat their wounds with the Heal Skill (as indicated at the end of Chapter XXX: Hazards and Healing).

However, an important distinction about Wilderness Travel is that once a Party has struck out, they cannot get a good night's sleep to recover their Peril Condition Track, Heal their Damage Condition Track or treat Injuries unless they make camp for an extended period of time or by reaching the end of the Stretch. No amount of comfort they attempt to provide themselves while on the move can help them shake off the wearing complications that a journey bears upon them. This helps impress a measure of danger upon a Party during Wilderness Travel.

WHEN THE PARTY MUST STOP

Sometimes, a Party may have no choice but to encamp for a day or more. This may mean they need to use the Heal Skill to recover from Damage, get a good night's sleep to recover from Peril, spend time

hunting for food with the Survival Skill or commit to other tasks which requires an extended amount of time and effort. However, they're still in a perilous place and may face some hardship.

Allow the Party to make this choice if needed, striking camp for no less than 24 hours. However, make certain they account for any supplies (provisions, bandages and the like) during this time. Also, reference the section "*Resting In Unsafe Places*" for Peril recovery in **Chapter XXX: Hazards and Healing**, but modify the Difficulty Rating of Bushcraft Checks according to the Terrain by Stretch above.

Once they strike camp to continue on their journey, Characters must immediately make one Bushcraft Check. This is their penalty for pausing in the middle of a Stretch.

CONCLUDING THE JOURNEY...

The wilderness is unforgiving, yet every bit as formidable as a vicious bandit's knife; unkind to the weak, but lenient to the wary who exploit the dangers of the wilderness in their favor.

Wilderness Travel comes to its conclusion once the Party reaches their destination. Naturally, it may be a cause for celebration! Should the journey had been a particularly difficult one, refresh the Fortune Pool with a number of Fortune Points equal to the number of surviving player Characters.

BESTIARY

Corsair Pirate

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hd6JuK KcI-T_8sJ660HJ6DRq9xhc2M4RmjDCC3-cobo/edit?usp=sharing

Ghoul

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mYdqRtkvZE1z_10R1tvkhZjKjmqg3t9Fi2LCO-KfNx0/edit?usp=sharing

Mastiff Hound

https://docs.google.com/document/d/16PNymQNeUD26jLeUelAbKVTJp_Gt5otunsjRKAwOEIc/edit?usp=sharing

Rebellious Peasant

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gyC_B-ZlteXX7Z0ILHLLsEsQLp7jxLcmDNrzO2H7VTA/edit?usp=sharing

Ruffian

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1I5LSBc oyB8PAVHXSf8hhkxqgxQKWdPkV5fpdR7hSpVU/edit?usp=sharing>

Templar Fanatic

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CGxJa3OEhvUBWvWrwxf4xbM0eOj67o846Cbcd6VVAo/edit?usp=sharing>

