

THE WORLD BETWEEN

FOR

FICTIVE
HACK

BY ANDREW SHIELDS

BASED ON A SETTING DESIGNED BY JACK SHEAR

<http://fictivefantasies.wordpress.com/>

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FOREWORD BY KIRIN ROBINSON

CREATOR OF OLD SCHOOL HACK

I am a huge believer in projects that are a labor of love. There's this wonderful thing about being in the roleplaying game hobby, which is how easily it can turn you into a designer. This hobby can open an appetite you never realized you had for all the shared ideas out there to put in the Cuisinart of your own inspiration, blend it into something beautiful, and then turn around and share it with others, whether it's just your group or the whole world.

Andrew's an inspiration. He's taken my minimalist little twentysome page system and Jack's delightfully gothic muskets-and-werewolves setting blogposts and turned it into a gorgeously realized game. It's all here: character building, rules, setting, example of play—far more than anything I've ever produced, and wonderfully encapsulated. And it's pick-apartable, too, reflecting what I like best about the do-it-yourself RPG blogger movement: this great attitude of “take whatever you need” without embarrassment or presumption. I hope that attitude continues to spread.

I'm inclined to believe that rules should reflect and influence setting and vice versa. Attempts to separate the two are rarely as engaging as clever ways that they can integrate and feedback off each other. Of course, any presentation of setting and world carries its own tricky balance: you want to evoke and inspire without constricting too much.

I think Andrew cares about this a lot and I think it shows in his work - every bit of setting he presents is a jumping-off point. This is indicative, to me, of a designer not afraid to *be* inspired, which is the mark of a good player, too.

Be inspired. Make the game your own. And go places! Why not start with the World Between?

KIRIN ROBINSON



FOREWORD BY JACK SHEAR

CREATOR OF THE WORLD BETWEEN SETTING

Watching someone else reinterpret your work tends to go one of two ways. Reinterpretation can engender feelings of deep-rooted horror, if that person tramples all over your hard work and your unique spirit of creation. Or, reinterpretation can be deeply rewarding, if that person shows you new ways to think and dream within the context of your own creation. Andrew Shields's version of my World Between setting is most assuredly of the latter type.



I have no idea how familiar Andrew is with the Gothic literature that informs my role-playing game setting, but his additions ring true to the influences I've always coupled to the familiar fantasy mode. For example, Andrew added a few well-chosen elements to my list of typical Gothic conventions. The power of the sublime and the tenuousness of sanity are two common Gothic elements that stick out as being absolutely true to the literature and also as perfect fodder for creating the particular atmosphere I associate with my own games set in the World Between.

While many of Andrew's variations on my setting elaborate on the themes and mood that I had already established, he also carved-out large swaths of detail that I would never have come up with on my own. I generally prefer to keep large sections of my campaign world undocumented and unconsidered until I have a need to fill in those blanks. Andrew's version of the setting is far more nuanced and comprehensive at the level of specific setting detail. Though *his* World Between is not *my* World Between—cities such as Glasslin and Levanti are alien to my conception of the setting—I would play in Andrew's games in a heartbeat.

As Andrew has made me privy to his drafts of the work he has done on the setting and its accompanying rule-set in this book, it has been truly interesting to see an alternate World Between emerge and take shape. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, I am duly flattered. But there is more than just imitation here; Andrew's vision of the World Between is different, yet just as strong and idiosyncratic as mine. I like to think of both my vision of Gothic Fantasy and his existing side by side as parts of a darkly-hued Gothic multiverse. (Perhaps they're even just the first two uncovered Worlds Between in a long chain of uncharted Gothic Fantasy worlds.) Indeed, there is a spirit of cross-over at work here; I like many of Andrew's innovations enough to now use them in my games. I'd wager that you will also find much to love in the pages that follow as well.

JACK W. SHEAR

CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to Kirin Robinson! He made a genius game with Old School Hack, and it is my privilege and honor to rebuild it to my own play style in Fictive Hack. He has been supportive every step of the way. I have been truly inspired by the simplicity, flexibility, and fun that Kirin codified in his game. I appreciate his permission to use the ideas taken from his game for this book.

My thanks to Jack Shear! He made a delightful Gothic fantasy setting in the World Between. What started as adapting some of his offerings to fit an Old School Hack system has bloomed into this book. His support and encouragement have been vital to my work. We need more people who can pull Warhammer, Gothic literature, over-the-top D&D fantasy, and wry humor together in one place. I appreciate his permission to use the ideas taken from his descriptions of the World Between.

My thanks to those who follow my work online at my blog and in other places. When you lend me your enthusiasm, I use it as fuel to propel work like this to new heights.

My thanks to Jack Logan, for putting such an incredible public domain art website up. I used it extensively for this book. <https://picasaweb.google.com/102628334940070915254>

My thanks to Dyson Logos! His work in the OSR (Old School Renaissance) gaming style and his evocative mapping pulled me into a blogosphere and offered me such value I really wanted to give back.

My thanks to Paul! He is a good friend, willing to listen to whatever crazed notion I want to show off for this system and for others. He has been there for my family in good times and in bad, and I can never repay the kindness he's shown us. If it was not for him, you wouldn't be reading this book.

My thanks to Kristy! Without the support of my loving wife, none of this madness would be possible. You really have no idea what she puts up with before I get to the point I can hand a book like this to you. Further, she aids and abets my effort with technical assistance and cartography. She is awesome.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THIS BOOK

This book is not a restaurant. You should not come in, sit down, and order a game off the menu. This book is more like a grocery store. You take the ingredients you want back to your game prep kitchen, and make something for your home table.

This book is concentrate, and you need to mix it with your own game style before you give it to your friends as a tasty beverage. This book is difficult to read like a novel. Every page is full of game ideas.

The basic rules are pretty simple. The play style is fast and flexible. Most of this book provides options, background, maps, magical traditions, monster-building, and other tools. The goal is to inspire and support a Gothic fantasy game unlike anything you've ever played before.

I take great pleasure in offering you this fusion. Kirin Robinson made a magnificent gonzo off-the-cuff system, Old School Hack. Jack Shear sketched out an inspirational Gothic fantasy setting in the World Between. I combined the two, fleshing both out to match my personal style. I believe the resulting game offers a version of Jack Shear's world with detail and depth, and proof of the stylistic flexibility of Kirin Robinson's game system, while showcasing my own creative talents. Now the game comes to you.

I hope you concoct a delicious game using these ingredients and recipes. Bon appetite.

WHAT YOU NEED TO START

- **Players.** A DM and at least 2 players for best results (though solo play is possible.)
- **Dice.** Everyone needs at least 2-3 d10, one of which looks different.
- **The Bowl.** Where everyone can reach it.
- **Awesome Points.** These can be poker chips, d6s, or other tokens. At least 15 per player.
- **Templates.** Have a copy of all available templates (if starting fresh) or all players should have a template for their existing characters.
- **Character Sheets.** Everyone gets one. Maybe have some extras on hand.

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

- **Quick Reference.** Everyone should be able to refer to the order of combat and basic rules.
- **Dry Erase Board (and marker and eraser).** It's a quick and simple way to sketch out arenas and keep track of where people and objects are, as well as tracking where characters are in the combat round and other details the DM may wish to note.

INTENDED PLAY STYLE

Fictive Hack is designed to be low-prep, improvisational, reactive, cinematic, and fast-paced. Character advancement is based on the kind of game the players and DM want, and how they reward each other for playing in that style. (The game can be silly and over-the-top, focused on tactics, serious with emphasis on character development, etc.) Decide what is awesome, and that decision drives the game. A few interlocked systems (Awesome Point economy, weapons and arenas, armor, inherent abilities and talents) express a wide variety of action.

WHY PLAY THIS GAME?

- This game is built on a permissive, bonus-over-balance, easily improvised mindset. *It is fun.*
- Preparation can be very fast, even improvisational. A few flexible rule sets accommodate a wide variety of cinematic and exciting action scenes and social interactions. Allies, foes, and monsters can be swiftly developed and dropped into play.
- Skills, feats, magic, and special abilities all combine under the “talent” umbrella to create a consistent but flexible system, tightly integrated with the Awesome Point economy.
- The Awesome Point economy (points awarded from the DM and also shared among players) encourages camaraderie and fun. It substitutes for many complex mini-systems by charging Awesome Points to adjust outcomes.
- A simple codification of weapon types combines with the concept of an “arena” as an area in a fight to create simple tactical variety that encourages movement and swashbuckling.
- Characters can access abilities they have not earned, within limits, and “multi-classing” or taking abilities from other areas is easy. Characters advance quickly and are extremely customizable. Character advancement is tied into the Awesome Point economy, and players choose the speed of their advancement.

1D5

Sometimes the rules call for “1d5.” To get that result, roll 1d10 and divide by 2, rounding up.

- 1: 1-2. 2: 3-4. 3: 5-6. 4: 7-8. 5: 9-10.

1D20

To get a result between 1 and 20, roll 2d10. The first d10 is the “10s” place; 1-5 is 0, 6-10 is 1. (A roll of 2 “10” results is 20.) The second d10 is the “1s” place. So, a roll of 4 and 6 would be 06.

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CHARACTER GENERATION

1. **Choose a Template.** You get the inherent ability on the template for your character. Limitations can help you understand the character, but most don't have penalties.
2. **Details for Awesome Points. *Optional.*** Randomize or choose an adventuring motive (simple list on page 17, detailed list on page 286), a dark secret (page 276), appearance and relationship (page 269), distinctive gear (page 273) and alignment (page 292). These details help connect your new character to a personality, and to the game world. *(Either now or later, your character will need a name.)*
3. **Assign Attributes.** You have 5 points to put into attributes. You can put all of them in a single attribute, or spread them out. *A character gets +1 to an attribute every level.*
 - You can take an attribute to -1 for 1 more point to spend on another attribute. **You can take up to 4 negative points, no more than 2 in any attribute. Maximum 8 in an attribute.**
 - Positive attributes give the character advantages.
 - *Awareness.* Each +1 is a proficiency in 1 extra spoken language (start with 1 language for free), 1 alphabet for literacy, 1 musical instrument, or 1 art. (Negative has no effect.) *Languages are on page 11.*
 - *Brawn.* Each +1 is 1 load the character can carry without penalty. Positive Brawn means the character knows how to swim. *Encumbrance is on page 16.*
 - *Charm, Cunning, Daring.* Add the total together for these three. Any positive number can be used to get backgrounds (page 12).
 - *Commitment.* Any bonus allows an optional code of honor (page 293).

ATTRIBUTE	Description	Extra Usefulness
Awareness	Alertness, perception, insight	Notice things. <i>Starting languages.</i>
Brawn	Size, physical intimidation	Carry heavy objects, wear armor.
Charm	Social aptitude, ability to inspire, persuasion	Persuasion, intimidation, leadership.
Commitment	Devotion, intensity, resisting magic & suggestion	Strength of will.
Cunning	Trickery, sneakiness, lying, stealth, theft	Stealth, deception, lock picking.
Daring	Courage, reflexes, managing risk	Reflexive dodging, boldness.

4. **Assign benefits.** Where your attributes give you extra advantages, choose what you want. Languages (page 11), musical skill, arts, backgrounds (page 12), and code of honor (page 193) can be selected.
5. **Choose a starting talent.** You get one of the talents listed on your starting template at first level. You can get a new talent each time you gain a level.
 - **Occupational Talent.** You can take an occupational talent as your first talent instead of a talent from your template. This costs you 1 of your starting attribute points. *Page 41.*
 - **Master Talent.** If you have an attribute at 5 or higher, you can take a master talent for it instead of a talent from your template. *Page 42.*
 - **Unusual Upbringing.** If you have a character who had an unusual upbringing, with DM permission you can take an open or restricted talent from another template as your first.
6. **Equipment.** The template has one or more signature items and randomized starting money. Then pick weapon, armor, and backpack (page 14).
 - Some of the supernatural templates don't have a "signature item" or starting cash. In that case, start with 3d10 silver and the normal starting equipment process.

Vulnerable. Your starting character only has 1 Wound. You can raise this as you level, or by taking a starting talent that grants more Wounds.

WORLD BETWEEN CHARACTER RECORD

NAME: _____ Player: _____
 Date Created: _____ Birthdate: _____ (Calendar p. 157)
 Description: _____
 Motive: _____
 Languages and Alphabets: *p. 11*
 Arts and Music: _____
 Relationships: _____
 Template(s): _____

INHERENT ABILITY: _____
INHERENT ABILITY: _____

ATTRIBUTES	WOUNDS ()	LEVEL:
AWARENESS	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	AP spent this level:
BRAWN	1-6 KO, 7-9 Dying 10-12 Cripple, 13+ dead	AP at session end:
CHARM	TREASURE	
COMMITMENT		Loads Carried: <i>p. 16</i>
CUNNING		
DARING		

TALENTS

NAME	TEMPLATE	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
		C A R	p.
		C A R	p.
		C A R	p.
		C A R	p.
		C A R	p.
		C A R	p.
		C A R	p.
		C A R	p.
		C A R	p.
		C A R	p.
		C A R	p.
		C A R	p.
		C A R	p.
		C A R	p.

C: Constant. A: Arena. R: Rested

BACKGROUNDS AND CODES OF HONOR OR BELIEF SYSTEMS

p. 12, 293

WEAPONS, ARMOR, STUFF: *p. 15 for weapons and armor, 294-5 gear and expenses.*

LANGUAGES

You start with one language in common with the other characters for free. Being literate requires you to take one language spot for "Literate in: " and an alphabet. One alphabet may support literacy for multiple languages. You can be literate in some of your languages and not others.

Example: If you had an Awareness of 2, you could take Harrovian (free) with the Cyronic alphabet (literate, 1 slot) and Baroque Logos (spoken but not literate, as it is the Draxive alphabet.)

Alphabet	Languages Supported	Notes
Cyronic	Harrovian (Harrowfaust) Reaverspeech (Scavenger Lands)	Based on demon glyphs.
Draxive	Midianese (Midian and Scarabae) Relmeenosian (Relmeenos) Baroque Logos (Church of the Lady) • Language of Law	Based on the Lady of the White Way's script.
Gray Letters	Shaen (Shae Isles, Druids) 7. Used when Fey speak to mortals	Founded in fey symbols. <i>Symbols of Neutrality and Balance.</i>
Northron	Ulvish (Ulverland) Throptic (Caligari, Iron Principalities) Tradespeak (Common language) Skaria (Frostreave)	Based on dwarf runes. <i>Tradespeak, the most common language, is spread by Caligarian merchants.</i>
Staviesque	Ghaelian (the Islands) Staevent (Mord-Stavian)	Cuneiform of the Hundred Death Gods.

Code Languages

These languages have a specific purpose. They are not used for everyday speech, but they have specific niches for communication. Taking the language includes literacy (where possible) and speaking (if applicable.)

- **Phranatian Battle Tongue.** Written conventions are terms of art for texts on war strategy and tactics. Phrases suggest pre-determined tactical plans, allowing rapid communication in the heat of battle. Scouts use written signs to give warnings and updates to armies that follow them.
- **Sly Patter.** This adapts to any other language, as it moves ideas and terms of art around. It is used by criminals and those who participate in criminal culture. Each organized group of criminals will develop a dialect based on their shared experience and stories and context, but general ideas travel across dialect barriers. Coded hand signals and simple symbols also get meaning across.
- **Vermillion Scrawl.** The Language of Chaos, or the Vile Tongue. It is the language of arcane magic. Wizards, mages, illusionists, and necromancers must put enough points in Awareness to start with this language. One language slot covers speaking and writing, as they are essentially the same...
- **Vistroi.** This spoken language has no true written form, but ideas from it can be written in any alphabet. It is the code-language of the Vistani.

BACKGROUNDS

At generation, add together Charm, Cunning, and Daring. If you have a positive number, those are your Background points. You can spend them to get advantages from the beginning. The DM can limit or expand these lists. You can take some of these more than once; like Celebrity 1 for several famous people, or “Contacts” for different spheres of influence.

Status	Celebrity
0. Unemployed or dead end job. 1. Access to authority or power, respectable. 2. In an authority position. Aristocracy. <i>Generates enough for a comfortable lifestyle, about 300 silver a month per rating.</i>	0. Unknown. 1. Related to, or good friends with, a celebrity. 2. Locally known in your circle of influence. 3. Locally famous/regionally known. 4. Regionally famous/internationally known.
Family	Possessions
0. Maybe some extended family elsewhere, basically alone. 1. Strong love in a nuclear family. 2. Wealthy relatives, good relationships. 3. Very influential relatives, good relationships.	0. No unusual possessions. 1. Familiar with buyers and sellers of supernatural objects, start with 1 for free. 2. Known in the market, start with 2 for free, can find or fence things others can't.
Contacts	Wealth
<i>Randomize or choose factions. (Next page)</i> 0. No connections. 1. Contacts in 1 city neighborhood/settlement. 2. Factional contacts citywide/regionally. 3. Personally know the movers and shakers for the city or nation. <i>Contacts can be raised upon leveling instead of taking an Attribute Point.</i>	<i>How much can you spend on short notice?</i> 0. Only income from employment. 1. Some extra, can live frugally. 3d10 silver. 2. Can live well, spend 3d10x10 silver. 3. Property owner, can spend 3d10x100 silver. 4. Independently wealthy. Own a mansion. 3d10x1,000 silver is available. <i>Generally extra cash generated per session/week beyond living expenses.</i>

Contacts Details

Contacts may be able to provide henchmen, equipment, transportation, shelter, and an introduction to meet someone shy or connected. To use the Contacts, the player rolls 1d10 +1 per Contacts rating.

- The player can add 25 silver to get +1 on the roll, before rolling, using some money to sweeten the deal for the existing relationship.
- After rolling, the character can insist and lean on relationships, weakening them; each 1 Contacts rating sacrificed after rolling adds +2 to the roll.

Here are the basic difficulties to get help from Contacts, based on what the character wants. (The DM can feed the bowl to increase the difficulty based on other circumstances.) Failure can mean inability to get in touch, or inability to get cooperation, interpreted by the DM.

- **3. No risk.** Common knowledge. Basic equipment and transportation. Overnight shelter for a small group.
- **6. Moderate risk.** Protected information. Could get someone's life ruined. Specialty equipment. Transportation through secured areas. Longer term or better accommodations. Harboring a person of interest.
- **9. Risky.** Costly information that could get someone killed. Rare equipment. Smuggling through high security (prison break.) Harboring a fugitive.

- **12. Dangerous.** Sharing this information will cause the contact to lose power and face danger.
- **15. Too hot.** Even talking to the character is life-threatening.

Add +3 difficulty each time after the first that Contacts are used within an adventure or a week.

Sample Backgrounds

If your DM has a list of factions in the city or region, then you can use that list of factions as options for contacts. Here are some examples. (You can also randomize.) If you randomize something and don't know what it is, ask the DM, who will either explain it and work it in, call for a re-roll, or suggest an alternative.

All contacts are subject to DM approval. They represent a connecting point between the character and the world, so they are best managed by the player and DM cooperating.

Status can also be randomized and/or chosen, finalized with DM input and approval.

Common Contacts (1d10)	Specific Groups for Contacts (3d10)
1. City Watch. 2. Criminals. 3. Guilders (leadership of guilds). 4. Merchants. 5. Military. 6. Monster Hunters. 7. Nobles. 8. Ruling Regime. 9. Scholars. 10. Vistani.	3. Brotherhood of the Yew. 4. Caligari Trade Guild. 5. Church of the Lady. 6. Dragonish/Dragon Cult. 7. Dwarves. 8. Eladrian. 9. Frostreave traders. 10. Ghael Isles nobility. 11. Ghael Isles shamen. 12. Halflings. 13. Inquisition/Purifiers of the Lady. 14. Iron Principalities ruler. 15. Killane cult. 16. Merrihel cult. 17. Midish Friars of the Lady. 18. Mordish subculture (Ghael Isles). 19. Mordish subculture (Midian). 20. Morgath cult, penangalan. 21. Necromancers. 22. Orxham Academy (Fall House). 23. Orxham Academy (Spring House). 24. Orxham Academy (Summer House). 25. Orxham Academy (Winter House). 26. Power Behind the Throne (local). 27. Samhat monastics. 28. Stormwatch Church. (Father and Family) 29. Thanalia cult. 30. Vampire lords of Harrowfaust.
Status 1: Sample Positions	
1. Castellan. 2. Cleric/Representative of an established religion. 3. Heir, member of important house/group. 4. Knight. 5. Leader of a merchant company. 6. Minor nobility. 7. Practicing Spellcaster, Known. 8. Officer in the military. 9. Officer in the Watch. 10. Respected scholar.	
Status 2: Sample Positions	
1. Leader of a church. 2. Court spellcaster. 3. Powerful Noble and/or Duke level. 4. General. 5. Head of an academy or scholarly order.	

STARTING EQUIPMENT

What Starting Characters Have

- **Signature Items.** Most templates list a signature item the character starts with. (If not, that's fine.)
- **Starting Coins.** Everyone gets 3d10 coins, the template notes type and possibly multiplier.
- **Weapon.** Start with a light, hand, reach, heavy, range, or very heavy weapon. Describe it.
 - **Light, Hand, Reach, Heavy, Very Heavy.** A light weapon may be a wizard's wand, or a very heavy weapon could be an enormous tree branch. Feel free to be creative with hand-to-hand weaponry, or not; a sword could fit in any of the categories (knife to claymore).
 - **Light.** These weapons are small, like daggers, gaff hooks, and broken bottles.
 - **Hand.** Normal one-handed weaponry. Lots of sword types, maces, battle axes.
 - **Reach.** One or two hands, long. Staff, chain mace, spear.
 - **Heavy.** Hand-and-a-half or two handed. Bastard sword, heavy mace, claymore.
 - **Very Heavy.** Enormous, needs two hands. Huge club, armored foe's body.
 - **Ranged bow weapons** (whether they are longbows, crossbows, etc.) have a default 20 shots each, and cost 1 silver per additional shot.
 - A quiver counts as a weapon for calculating encumbrance. A quiver holds 20.
 - **Ranged thrown weapons** have 2 types: weapons that can be light or ranged, or weapons so small they can only be ranged.
 - Light/ranged: Less than 4 don't count for encumbrance, a group of 4 count as ½ load. (Throwing axes, knives)
 - Ranged only: Less than 20 don't count for encumbrance, a group of 20 count as ½ load. (Shuriken, throwing blades, sling stones)
 - **Firearms** can be blunderbusses, pistols, or muskets. They start with 20 shots in a powder bag that counts as ½ load. Reloads cost 10 silver per shot.
- 8. *Encumbrance Rule on Weapons:* What equals 1 load?
 - 8 light weapons are 1 load. 4 light weapons are half a load.
 - 2 hand weapons, shields, or reach weapons are a load. 1 is half a load.
 - Also quiver, short bow, crossbow, and pistol.
 - 1 heavy weapon, musket, or heavy shield is a load.
 - 1 very heavy weapon is 1.5 loads, round to 2 if you don't have another ½ load.
- **Armor.** Start with light or medium armor if desired, free of charge. Take a shield if you want.
 - Medium armor counts as 1 load.
 - A shield counts as ½ load. A heavy shield counts as a load.
- **Backpack or Home.** Characters may start with a stocked backpack if they wish, or a living space with some extra equipment in it. Carrying all this counts as a load, so it affects encumbrance. However, it has in it the normal sorts of supplies characters would want.
 - 10 yards of rope, 6 torches, a lantern, 1 flask oil, a bedroll, 1 change clothes, 1 week food, 3 days water, flint and steel, 12 iron spikes, small hammer, small cookpan.
 - *If they want other objects*, they can spend 1 Awesome Point to have it conveniently in the backpack during play. If it is bulky or not something that makes sense, 2 or more Awesome Points. The DM may deny a request to have an object handy.

WEAPONS, ARMOR, SHIELDS

MELEE WEAPONS

TYPE	DAMAGE	DESCRIPTION	+2 TO HIT IN THIS ARENA
Unarmed	1d10 to hit, add an attribute to the roll, do 0 Wounds, only KO target. (AP for damage.)		
Light	1	1d10 to hit, add an attribute to the roll, do 1 Wound.	Tight
Hand	1	To hit, roll 3d10 instead of 2d10, ignore the lowest.	
Reach	1	2d10 to hit. +2 to impede or prevent impeding.	Hazardous
Ranged	1	Attack earlier, and adjacent arenas also.	(target in) Open
Heavy	2	2d10 to hit. Big, so they do more damage.	Dense
Very Heavy	3	2d10 to hit. Huge, no shield, ignore the first Wound armor soaks.	

- **Light.** These weapons are small, like daggers, gaff hooks, and broken bottles.
- **Hand.** Normal one-handed weaponry. Lots of sword types, maces, battle axes.
- **Reach.** One or two hands, long. Staff, chain mace, spear.
- **Heavy.** Hand-and-a-half or two handed. Bastard sword, heavy mace, claymore.
- **Very Heavy.** Enormous, needs two hands. Huge club, armored foe's body.

RANGED WEAPONS All are +2 to hit targets in an open arena.

TYPE	DAMAGE	DESCRIPTION	RELOAD RATE
Light	1	Sling, knife, dart. Roll 1d10 to hit. Add an attribute to the roll. Max range is adjacent arena.	1 action to ready, load, shoot.
Hand	1	2d10 to hit. Axe, light crossbow, shortbow, javelin.	1 action to ready, load, shoot.
Heavy	2	2d10 to hit. Longbow, spear.	1 action to ready, load, shoot.
Very Heavy	3	2d10 to hit. Heavy crossbow, musket, pistol.	Focus action reload.
Blunderbuss	1	Cone effect; those in the way test Daring or get hit. Shooter's arena cone to an adjacent arena inclusive.	Focus action reload.

All ranged weapons can attack in the same arena or an adjacent arena.

- **Aimed.** Shooting as a focus action, a bow can shoot targets 1 arena away per Brawn. A musket (not a pistol) can hit a target 1 arena away per Awareness.
 - Shortbows have a maximum range of 4 arenas away, muskets a maximum range of 6 arenas away, and longbows a maximum of 8 arenas away.
- **Move and Shoot.** Spend 1 Awesome Point to do a ranged attack while moving. Roll 1d10 to hit.
 - This works with thrown weapons, guns, and crossbows, not with bows.
- **Hand to Hand.** Generally ranged weapons count as hand weapons in combat. A heavy crossbow and a musket may be heavy weapons. A longbow can be a reach weapon.
- **Gunpowder Criticals.** A hit "to the face" with a blackpowder shot does 6 Wounds.
- **Blackpowder Misfire.** Rolling doubles when firing a blackpowder weapon results in a misfire. Spend an Awesome Point to have the gun jam, needing repair until it fires again. Otherwise it blows up and does 3 Wounds to its shooter.
- **Interrupted Blackpowder Reload.** If the powder is wet or a reload action is interrupted, you must spend a focus action clearing the weapon before loading it again.

SHIELD

Fighting with a shield, you roll 1 fewer d10 to hit. However, once a round you can block 1 Wound. A light shield counts as ½ load, for encumbrance. A heavy shield counts as a load. You count as "armored" in combat when using a shield, so do not get 2 Awesome Points for surviving the fight.

- **Shield-Sacrificing Protection.** A light shield can reduce a single attack to 1 Wound, breaking the shield. A heavy shield can act as a light shield twice before breaking.

- **Shield Attack.** A shield can be used as a hand weapon (or heavy weapon, for a heavy shield) by itself, or with a hand weapon, a heavy weapon, or a reach weapon.
- **Shield Cover.** Using “Defend” the shield reduces attacker’s to-hit rolls by 2 (stacking with the -2 for defending, total -4). This works against ranged attacks. Also, can use the shield against each incoming attack instead of just one.

PARRYING WEAPONS

A parrying weapon must be light or a hand weapon, and it can be used with a light, hand, or heavy weapon in the other hand. When using a parrying weapon, you are -1d10 on your attack roll (so you roll 1d10 to hit with a heavy weapon and 2d10 with a hand weapon.)

- The weapon grants +2 to hit, -2 for a foe to hit, or +1 Wound to an attack. It can be used for one of these three things, once a round. Doesn’t stop ranged attacks. Cannot be used with a shield.

ARMOR

ATTACK ROLL	Super Heavy	Heavy	Medium	Light	No Armor
20+	Full Damage	Full Damage	Full Damage	Full Damage	Full Damage
17-19	-1 Wound		-1 Wound	-1 Wound	2 Awesome Points from Stack for surviving a fight unarmored
14-16	-2 Wounds				
11-13	-3 Wounds	-2 Wounds			
8-10	-4 Wounds	-3 Wounds	-2 Wounds	-1 Wound	
1-7	Miss	Miss	Miss	Miss	Miss
Cunning Penalty	-6	-4	-2		
Encumbrance	3 loads	2 loads	1 load		
Description	Full plate	Chain & plate	Chain	Leather	Clothes

Armor Reduces Damage. The [-X Wounds] on the table represents the number of Wounds that the armor deflects away from the character inside. This is damage reduction. The higher the roll to hit, the less effective armor is.

Fighting Without Armor. Characters who are in danger of being hit, who enter a fight without armor and survive, get 2 Awesome Points from the Stack after the fight.

ENCUMBRANCE

- Brawn is the number of heavy things (loads) you can carry without penalty.
- Carrying [Brawn +1] loads is encumbered; fail all rolls (including combat), stagger along.
 - At 0 Brawn or lower, 1 load counts as being encumbered.
 - A partial load beyond your limit does not count as being overloaded.
- Medium armor is 1 load, heavy armor is 2 loads, very heavy armor is 3 loads.
- 500 coins is 1 load.
- Child-sized person=2 loads. Normal person=3 loads. Person with over 5 Brawn=4 loads.
- Dragging something over normal ground halves its encumbrance.
- More than one person can share the weight, splitting the loads between them.
- *Encumbrance Rule on Weapons:* What equals 1 load?
 - 8 light weapons are 1 load. 4 light weapons are half a load.
 - 2 hand weapons or reach weapons are a load. 1 is half a load.
 - Also quiver, short bow, crossbow, and pistol.
 - 1 heavy weapon, musket, or heavy shield is a load.
 - 1 very heavy weapon is 1.5 loads, round to 2 if you don’t have another ½ load.

ADVENTURING MOTIVE

Your character needs a reason to go out into danger! Roll 2d10, pick one, or make one up. The motive should propel your character out into the world and give you something to do, either short-term or long-term. The DM will give you 3 Awesome Points for your adventuring motive, and may choose an overarching motive for the group.

2. Your whole life, grandpa told you stories of a legendary treasure he never found. Find it for him.
3. If you can get 1,000 silver, you can put your masterpiece before the critics and gain fame and fortune.
4. Your lover has a wasting disease, the doctors are helpless. Can you find a supernatural cure?
5. Your older sister, who is better at everything, killed a forest drake. Kill something bigger, display it.
6. You've heard of an oracle that will answer one question truthfully. Dare you ask who your father is?
7. Your comfortable life was over when your father remarried—an evil stepmother. Find a new home.
8. Kidnappers sold your child to slavers, and they went this way. Find them, get your child back.
9. Thieves were unable to fence their stolen art, so they used it to frame you instead. Clear your name.
10. Your nephew disappeared a week ago, you are the only one brave enough to look for him.
11. If you can get the tail-fat of a gillcuddy squirrel, Doc Albrecht will make a love potion for your crush.
12. Your mother was a famous adventurer. You are ready to go search for her at her last known location.
13. The necromancer that raided your home took half your family as shambling dead. Lay them to rest.
14. The House of Idris formerly ruled your area in peaceful times. Find their heir, and restore their rule.
15. You were pressed into service for the military, but you escaped. Don't get hanged as a deserter.
16. You have always wanted to browse the bookmarkets of Lizport. Can you travel that far and find them?
17. You had a whole life where everything went wrong. Now you want to be famous for being awesome.
18. Raised religious, you've always wondered how real and active the gods are. Go and find out.
19. Your ailing parents did everything for you in your youth; earn enough so they can retire comfortably.
20. Bandits wiped out your village. They think they can get away with anything. Show them they can't.



ARCHER (TEMPLATE)

The Archer has a lifetime of developing eye-hand coordination to strike with tools that magnify strength and collapse distance.

INHERENT—TRICK SHOT

Choose Brawn, Cunning, or Daring as a trick shooting style with a bow and crossbow. If you are not shooting to injure, shoot as an attribute test instead—so you can spend Awesome Points to boost the roll. (If you choose Brawn, you can add your Brawn to the 2d10 roll to hit, and also add Awesome Points to boost the roll if needed.) This kind of shooting can intimidate. Shooting to disarm has 12 difficulty, adjusted by the DM as needed. This does not work with ranged weapons that are not bows or crossbows.

LIMITATION—SPECIALIST

Seems like people want to take you into places with low ceilings, twisting corridors, forest canopy, deep water, and other inconvenient features. And they want to go when it is dark or foggy or raining or snowing. Also, they tend to assume you can't take care of yourself in hand to hand.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: 2 quivers of arrows, fletching kit. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver.

TALENTS

- **Compensation.** *Constant.* Reduce penalties to hit due to distraction, environment, or trick shooting by 1 per your level. (This stacks with Multiple Arrows and Rapid Shooting.)
- **Custom Fletching.*** *Rested.* By spending 10 minutes of work with a proper toolkit per arrow, you can customize your arrows to give you +1 to hit shooting. Each use of this talent works on up to 20 arrows, given the time and equipment.
- **Long Shot.*** *Arena.* You get the benefit of aiming (+1 arena per Brawn range, if conditions are right) when using a shoot action with a bow.
- **Multiple Arrows.*** *Arena. Focus.* You can fire 1 additional arrow per +2 Cunning *at once*. Roll once to hit, at -1 per additional arrow fired. That roll counts against all targets. The arrow targets must be in an area no more than 5 feet across. Multiple arrows hitting one target each count as a separate attack to the target.
- **Rapid Shooting.*** *Arena.* You can fire a bow (not a crossbow) more than once in the round. This takes a *lot* of strength. You can get up to 1 extra attack per 2 Brawn (upgrade to get +1 extra attack). Spend 1 Awesome Point for the second attack, 2 for the third attack, and 3 for the fourth attack (maximum). Upgrade to reduce the Awesome Point cost for each extra attack by 1.

ASSASSIN (TEMPLATE)

The Assassin makes a living by assuring that the target does not.

INHERENT—SILENT DEATH

If undetected (or unsuspected) by a target within arm's reach, you can make that target dead by rolling 1d10, difficulty [target's Wounds +1 per level of armor]. Otherwise, the target is not injured, and is now aware of you. Awesome Points cannot be spent on this roll. Take a focus action to use this in combat.

LIMITATION—RUTHLESS

You strike at others through their attachments. You don't want to be as vulnerable as they are.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Vial of poison, dose of weapon venom. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver x10.

TALENTS

- **Low Profile.*** *Constant.* Any thug can kill. You can get to the target, unsuspected. Attribute tests to avoid identification as an assassin, either socially or through stealth, are +2.
- **Poison and Venom.*** *Constant.* Can identify, harvest, handle, appraise, and brew dangerous substances for ingestion, skin contact, inhalation, or other unpleasant entry vectors. You can put venom or poison on one or more weapons. This takes a full minute, or a focus action for a single dose in a rush. You do not risk poisoning yourself.
- **Reach Target.*** *Arena.* If you successfully Push those defending a target, instead of moving them you get a free attack on the target instead.
- **Swift Kill.**** *Constant.* Gain +2 on "Silent Death" attempts, *or* a re-roll (decide after rolling). Upgrade to get both +2 *and* a re-roll. Use "Silent Death" with ranged weapons.
- **Targeted Strike.** *Arena.* Attack as a focus action to get +1 to hit per Cunning.

BARD (TEMPLATE)

The Bard is a student of legendry, song, lore, and the human heart. Also, a fine musician.

INHERENT ABILITY—STEEPED IN LORE

You know secret signs and lost languages, riddles and rhymes and stories and legends, myths and monsters and treasures and histories—a lesser person's head would burst with all the esoteric lore crammed in it. You automatically know one thing about any legendary, odd, treasure-related, historical, or monstrous question. With further thought and an Awareness test you may be able to recall more. You are also proficient with dead languages, old codes, and other esoteric trivia.

LIMITATION—INSCRUTABLE

Your order travels the land among the buskers and minstrels, but your deeper knowledge makes people suspicious of your hidden agenda. They should be. You do not always smile at your friends and frown at your enemies. Your motives follow contours of myth below history, no longer visible to the politician or the warrior.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Musical instrument, note folio. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver x10.

TALENTS

- **Compose.* *Rested.*** Once per level, you can create a song or poem about an event or an exploit. Crafting and sharing the work of art with other musicians in a process that takes at least 1 week. In a situation where fame would make a difference, the DM can call for a roll on a 1d10, modified only by the DM's sense of context. On a success, people have heard of those immortalized in song and verse. Only one song can be created for each adventure arc, but characters in multiple arcs can witness their legend's growth.
- **Counter Influence.* *Rested.*** Focus action. Make music that is counter to the influential effect acting on those in the same and adjacent arenas. All those listening can test Commitment at +2 to resist any mind control, persuasion, or magic effect currently influencing them.
- **Magnetic Charm.* *Rested.*** You can spend a few minutes with a person and make that person feel like the most important thing in the world. Make a Charm test resisted by the target's Commitment. If the target does not roll higher than you do, then the target believes you are a good friend. The target will risk unemployment, hazard, embarrassment, and discomfort to please you. However, your newfound friend will be jealous, and the weird compulsion seldom leaves targets neutral towards you when it eventually ends a day or a week later. If mistreated, the target gains another Commitment test at +2. The DM can warp the effect of the charm and give you Awesome Points for the inconvenience.
- **Mockery.** *Rested.*** Once per level, you can deliver a rhetorical, musical, or otherwise artistic presentation that delivers a devastating nickname or slur on someone's reputation. The target suffers -2 to all social interaction among those who have heard this mockery. People hum the catchy tune, let the nick-name slip, or wonder if the target could be so deviant. This cannot be undone, and it takes on a life of its own. If you do not use your Mockery, it is cumulative, not lost.
- **Suggestive Inspiration.* *Rested.*** Make appropriate music for at least 10 minutes, then suggest your listeners prepare to fight, sleep, or celebrate. Those listening must test Commitment difficulty 10 to resist the suggestion.

BERSERKER (TEMPLATE)

Anger management is hitting what you aim at.

INHERENT ABILITY—RAGE

Enter a rage, either as a focus action or as a free action after taking a Wound. You become immune to mind control, horror, or fear. You inflict +1 Wound with all melee attacks, and you are +2 to hit. You ignore the first Wound inflicted by any attack (unless you are wearing metal armor). When the rage is over, lose 1 Wound from the strain. You can stay enraged as long as you need to (up to a few minutes). You can fly into rage as often as you want. While enraged you cannot use any talent requiring clear thinking, analysis, patience, articulate speech, or teamwork.

LIMITATION—ANGRY

You aren't fun to be around. You are not trustworthy in relationships. After you experience the bitter intensity of fury, normal life seems deadly dull. Depression's dark waters always lap around you as you struggle to go through the motions.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Necklace with a rune on a stone medallion. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 copper.

TALENTS

- **Gruesome Kill.** **Arena.* Focus action. If you inflict at least 1 more Wound than you need to for defeating your foe, you can messily destroy your once-living target. Your allies face 1d10 Horror. Minions and toughs will flee from you unless something scarier compels them to stay; if in doubt, roll 2d10. If you roll higher than the number of Wounds arrayed against you, they flee. The DM can split Awesome Points between you and the Bowl to keep foes from running.
- **Battle Presence.** ** *Arena.* If you can look an attacking foe in the eye, you can take one die from the foe's attack. (A foe with a hand weapon would roll 2d10 instead of 3d10 to hit.) This works against one foe per use, maximum once per round. A minion or tough will automatically run unless the DM splits Awesome Points between you and the Bowl. Out of combat, you get +2 to your attempts to intimidate or resist intimidation.
- **Vicious Attack.** ** *Rested.* While in a rage, you can spend 1 Awesome Point per Brawn to boost your damage; every 2 points boost your damage by 1.
- **Unstoppable.** ** *Rested.* While in a rage, get +1 Wound per Brawn. When you are done raging, those extra Wounds go away (and you may die.) If you are at negative Wounds, take the damage as a critical hit, modifying the roll to see how badly you are dropped.
- **Purpose.** ** *Rested.* If you undertake a code of honor, and if you are fighting for what you believe in or to uphold your sworn duty, once a day you can get +1 Awesome Point per Commitment rating that must be spent while raging (they go away when the rage ends, if unspent).

DUELIST (TEMPLATE)

The Duelist's finely honed sensitivity to questions of honor has led to lethal skill with a blade.

INHERENT—HA HA!

Add your attribute to rolls to hit when using paired dueling blades. This bonus is -2 per level of armor you wear.

LIMITATION—FEISTY

In your culture, you answer insults with a challenge to duel, either on the spot or at an appointed time. Whether you win or lose, death is in the air. You have learned the hard way that even the most unpleasant people have someone, somewhere, who cares about them enough to mourn or avenge them.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Embroidered gloves, medallion to a saint, beautiful dueling blades.

Starting Coin: 3d10 silver x10.

TALENTS

- **Driving Attack.*** *Rested.* Attack up to all others in the same arena. Each attack after the first costs 1 Awesome Point.
- **Fancy Footwork.*** *Arena.* If someone impedes you, and you successfully strike during the Move phase, you can automatically push the target out of the arena instead of inflicting damage, and also move unimpeded.
- **Net of Steel.*** *Constant.* You can use your parrying weapon once per round per level.
- **Paired Weapons.** *Constant.* You are not minus one die when fighting with paired weapons.
- **Salute.** *Arena.* Salute a foe who fights like a tough or a monster, as a free action. For the duration of the fight, you are +2 to hit that foe.

FIGHTER (TEMPLATE)

The Fighter is skilled at weapons, armor, tactics, brutality, and their application to achieve success.

INHERENT—AWESOME VIOLENCE

Nobody hits like you do. You can spend Awesome Points to gain up to your level as a bonus to hit. Each Awesome Point grants +2 to hit. (If you are an odd level, you can spend an Awesome Point and get +1 to hit.)

LIMITATION—YOU LOOK LIKE A NAIL

To someone with a hammer, everything looks like a nail. It is not always easy to look for non-violent solutions when violence is a matter of such expertise.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Awesome decorated helmet. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver x10.

TALENTS

- **Charger.** *Arena.* You can act twice in a row to move and attack. You get a +2 bonus to hit or inflict +1 Wound, decide after rolling. To use the talent again, spend 1 Awesome Point or move to another arena first.
- **Combat Toughened.** *Constant.* You get +2 Wounds. Your confident experience with violence gives you a +2 on any Charm check when trying to talk someone out of fighting.
- **Expert Parry.*** *Rested.* As a free action before the opponent rolls to hit, reduce an incoming melee or unarmed attack by 1 die rolled to hit. This can be done a maximum of once per round. Upgrade this to use it *after* your attacker has rolled to hit, choosing 1d10 of your choice.
- **Fight Dirty.** *Constant.* Any time you roll a 1 on the Face Die, you have pulled a dirty trick on your target. Maybe you hit them somewhere sensitive *besides* the face, or threw sand in the eyes, etc. Add +2 to hit or inflict +1 Wound, decide after rolling. (You may choose not to use this talent if in a “fair fight” because it violates whatever code applies.)
- **Weapon of Choice.** *Constant.* As long as you are wielding a specific weapon, all your attack dice are Face Dice. If you take up a new weapon, a week of training will switch this talent advantage to the new weapon. (Used with “Fight Dirty” this talent allows use of a ten *and* a one result, but not more than one of either.) This can be a ranged weapon. If you have a talent that allows your unarmed attacks to imitate a weapon type, you can choose that unarmed style as your weapon of choice.

GAMBLER (TEMPLATE)

The Gambler understands that you take your chances if you want to get paid, and you don't play your cards—you play the other players.

INHERENT ABILITY—LEANING LUCK

Any time you roll, you can discard a single roll and reroll it by spending 1 Awesome Point that does not count towards leveling. You must live with the second result.

LIMITATION—DOUBLE OR NOTHING

You can get a bit...carried away. Lean on those lucky streaks. And when they vanish, you fall hard.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Dice, pack of brightly colored cards. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver x10.

TALENTS

- **Bluff.* Constant.** When you are lying or bluffing, roll Cunning and Charm and keep the better result. To detect a bluff, roll Cunning and Awareness and keep the better result.
- **Bookie.* Rested.** You can lay odds, take bets, hold money, and pay out. You can work the crowd and keep track of the chaotic tumble of shifting bets during a fight, race, or whatever. When it is over, your management gets you a share equal to your Cunning x 1d10 in copper, silver, or gold (as appropriate.) You can place your own bets too, of course.
- **Carousing.* Rested.** You know how to celebrate in a way that includes everyone nearby. You start rousing songs, make all jokes funny whether they are or not, and show people a genuinely good time. Easy come, easy go. You can buy 1 Awesome Point per 10 silver and create a low-risk environment where others can do the same. You can allow others or yourself to spend up to 1 Awesome Point per your level as part of the celebration by showing off, bragging, telling stories of humor and heroism, and so on (to help level.) This takes at least 6 hours.
- **Cheating.* Constant.** You know sleight of hand, dice gripping techniques, and counting cards. If you want to cheat, add Cunning to your roll. If Cunning is already part of the game, double it. Others detect the cheat on a Cunning or Awareness test difficulty 10.
- **Double-Dog Dare.* Constant.** You know how to use subtle or blunt techniques to question another person's courage, honor, and financial security in ways that motivate them to wager even when the wager is unwise. If you win an opposed roll with your Cunning against their Commitment or Cunning (target gets the higher), they place a bet or you get an Awesome Point from the Stack. The softer side of this talent is used to set up cons, losing until it gets "interesting" and then winning decisively.

GLADIATOR (TEMPLATE)

The Gladiator knows clashes are bloodsport—supposed to be entertaining and suspenseful, not just gory.

INHERENT ABILITY—BUILT

Years of hard living and constant combat toughened you. Gain +1 Wound per 2 Brawn. As your Brawn increases, increase your extra Wounds too. If you add a Wound as a talent upon leveling, you do not also lose the attribute slot.

LIMITATION—ATTENTION WHORE

Popularity is just as important as combat skill in an arena culture. Succeeding in the shadows is worthless. People must know. There must be glory.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Wooden sword with arena name and your name on it. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver x10.

TALENTS

- **Disarm.** *Arena.* If you successfully Push your target, you can disarm your opponent instead of moving your opponent. This can work against up to 1 target per your Cunning at once, *or* you can take a single target's weapon for yourself. If you lose the attempt, the target gets a free attack as though you were impeding the target. If trying to disarm multiple non-minions, they all get an attack.
- **Feint.** *Arena.* Roll simultaneously with someone in melee or unarmed combat with you. Activate this talent to trade rolls with one of them. (Upgrade to gain the ability to trade only one die roll with them, instead of the total result.)
- **Make It Look Good.*** *Arena.* Strike to disable instead of kill. Instead of doing Wounds, substitute a penalty of -2 on the target's to-hit and attribute rolls for each Wound you would have inflicted. This goes away at the rate of -1 per 30 minutes.
- **Roll With It.** *Arena.* Spend 3 Awesome Points to reduce 2 Wounds as they are inflicted.
- **Show Off.*** *Arena.* Focus action. Strut around and flex, working the crowd; there must be an appropriate audience (if no one cheers or quakes with fear, this won't work). Either heal 1 Wound or gain 2 Awesome Points.

HUNTER (TEMPLATE)

The Hunter has a gift for making living beings into corpses, then harvesting their skin and meat.

INHERENT—FORAGE

You can find food just about anywhere. You can spend 1 hour looking for food and automatically find enough servings for [1 meal per Awareness bonus]. You can also test Awareness, and if successful, find an additional serving. You can also use Awareness to identify what is edible and what is not in animal corpses, mushrooms, berries, clouded water, etc.

LIMITATION—CIVIC CLAUSTROPHOBIA

People sure like to pack in tight with each other. Then the vermin move in. All the noise, the body odor, sewage in the streets, crime, oppression, laws, taxes... Every time you go to town you can't wait to do your business and get out, back to the wilds where things make some sense.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Leather clothes. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver.

TALENTS

- **Breathless Shot.*** *Arena.* Focus action. You don't often get a second shot at prey, so you are trained to aim for the heart or throat. Shooting at an unaware or unmoving target in the same arena or an adjacent arena as a focus action, do an extra 1d5 Wounds on a successful hit.
- **Butchery.** *Constant.* Small animals can make 2 servings of meat and 3 silver of hide. Medium animals (half human size) can make 6 servings of meat and 10 silver of hide. Big animals (human size) can make 20 servings of meat and 50 silver of hide. Huge animals can make 60 servings of meat and 150 silver of hide. It takes about 5 minutes to extract a serving of meat from a corpse, and 5 minutes per silver piece to prepare the hide. Special elements like ivory, venom, and delicacies can be identified and removed. Adjust these guidelines as needed.
- **Canny Prey.*** *Constant.* Either a base Awareness test when none would be allowed, or +2 to a normal Awareness test, to detect traps and ambushes. You know how to set them, where they should be, and how they work.
- **Silent Step.*** *Constant.* Your stealth is practiced to surprise animals, but it works more generally too. Gain +2 on Cunning tests to move unseen and unheard. Double the bonus in the wilds.
- **Tracking.*** *Constant.* Identify who or what was present, and where they went. Add difficulty for elapsed time, rain, difficult terrain, and so on. Can test Awareness to know one important fact about what happened or the state of those making the tracks. Can be opposed with Cunning.

KNIGHT (TEMPLATE)

The Knight is part of a feudal system trading freedom for protection in a grand, violent pyramid scheme.

INHERENT—ELITE

You got the best combat training and experience available. For morale, you gain +2 to Commitment to keep fighting, and +2 to Charm to keep others fighting. For tricks in combat, you gain the ability to spend a single Awesome Point to raise a single combat roll by 2 once per arena (after rolling).

LIMITATION—OBLIGATION

You are meshed in a net of family alliances, feudal trades of services and funds for lands, and requirements that you protect those who generate your livelihood, the ones below you in the feudal structure. You cannot operate independently and have honor in the eyes of your peers, family, and culture.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Signet ring, tabard and shield with heraldry. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver x100.

TALENTS

- **Armor Skill.** *Constant.* Armor counts as 1 load lighter (minimum 0 loads.)
- **Logistician.*** *Constant.* You understand that wars may be affected by valor and strength, but they are won with supply lines, equipment, and efficient travel. On a personal level, you can pack your gear to reduce it by 1 load effectively. This works on carried armor, not worn armor. On a group level, you can increase a group's travel time by 1/5. On an army level, you can either increase a column's speed by 1/5 or increase its carrying capacity by 1/5.
- **Politician.*** *Constant.* You can see past the immediate consequences to the long-term implications of political and military decisions. You speak the special code of politics, understand and offer veiled threats and promises, and think one thing while saying another. Gain +2 to Awareness and Charm when understanding or dealing with political situations.
- **Shield Skill.** *Constant.* You are not -1d10 when fighting with a shield.
- **Titled.*** *Constant.* Your title opens doors for you. When purchasing backgrounds, get 2 instead of 1 each time you buy connections with nobility, military, or scholarly groups. If you gain wealth through an appointment or marry into family, double the advantage there also (unless the specific circumstances are already determined.) You cannot use this untrained.

MECHANIC (TEMPLATE)

The Mechanic has an uncanny gift for working with moving parts, schematics, and machines.

INHERENT—ENGINEERING

You can see how it works. A structure or a machine (anything constructed with moving parts) tells you how it is operated and repaired, somehow. A focus action for normal machines or structures, and a minute or an hour for more complex structures or puzzles. Either you just know, or if in doubt, test Awareness to understand how a machine or structure is built and used.

LIMITATION—MYSTERIOUS MEAT

People are machines too, in a way; cooling systems, joints that hinge, bone scaffolding and levers. But what's in the skull—well, that's a pile of squishy meat no one could be expected to figure out.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Toolkit, tough gloves, firestarter grip. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver x5.

TALENTS

- **Demolitions.*** *Rested.* Focus action. You can see load-bearing points and weaknesses in structures and machines. Test Awareness to make a plan to bolster or collapse the structure or machine. You may not *be able* to bolster or collapse it, but you *know how* to. This talent allows you to create or use explosives, siege engines, or forceful water.
- **Inventor.*** *Rested.* Every time you level, you can spend a week making a new and unique invention. You can make 1 invention per level; you don't have to make the invention immediately. The invention can grant +1 on a type of roll, or allow the user to spend Awesome Points up to the level you were when you built it to create a special effect once before being reset or reloaded. If the user rolls doubles while using the device, it breaks until you fix it. You can test Cunning to figure out how an unknown device works. To work out the bugs so the device can be duplicated in numbers, spend an attribute slot for it upon leveling. The DM is the final word in using this flexible talent.
- **Locksmith.** *Constant.* Locks have a complexity between 1 and 10. Each focus (can be upgraded to move) action you spend on the lock reduces its complexity by 1. When you decide to roll to open the lock, add +3 difficulty to the Cunning test for each remaining complexity. The base difficulty is 5. Lock and tool quality affect the difficulty. Each re-try is +3 difficulty.
- **Repair.*** *Rested.* You can fix it. Whether it is the great stone wheel that operates the ancient gate, or the broken serpentine on a pistol, or a mast snapped off a ship, or a wall fallen to sappers, you have the know-how to direct a work crew, delegating as needed. Scale determines time frame; a sailing ship or wall, 1 day per task. A gate or room, 12 hours. Wagon or door, 6 hours. Hinges or wheel hubs, 1 hour. Anything smaller, 30 minutes. Halve times with ideal conditions. Confronted with an unknown device, test Cunning to figure out how it works. (+2 with "Inventor" also.)
- **Trapmaster.*** *Constant.* You are +2 Awareness to see mechanical traps and features. You can disarm them with a successful Cunning test. The difficulty is based on the quality of the trap, from 3 to 15, in increments of 3. You can also create, repair, or activate traps.

MONK (TEMPLATE)

The Monk's detachment from desire has honed an ability to detach foes from their health.

INHERENT ABILITY—FIGHTING TECHNIQUES

You have a fighting style to copy light, hand, reach, and heavy weapon types unarmed. Using or switching combat styles is a free action once a round on your turn. Your unarmed attacks gain arena bonuses and do damage as that weapon type.

LIMITATION—DETACHMENT

You cannot own more than you carry, and you like to travel light.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Bowl, prayer beads, gi (combat pajamas), straw hat. **Starting Coin:** None.

TALENTS

- **Chi Block.** Arena.** When defending or protecting, you can stop or deflect a single incoming attack that is hand to hand, melee weapon, ranged weapon, or magic, with a successful Daring test difficulty [10 + attack Wounds]. The DM may feed the Bowl to add difficulty for especially dangerous attacks.
- **Hardened.* Constant.** Physical punishment and discipline have toughened your body. It costs 1 Awesome Point to add +1 Wound to an unarmed attack and 1 Awesome Point to take 1 less Wound from an attack.
- **Koan Discipline.** Constant.** Your mind is trained to engage riddles, ideas, and obstacles in a variety of ways. As you use non-linear thought, association, intuition, and re-framing, you see the world differently. The DM may charge you Awesome Points (up to 3) if you request insight, or agree to accept it. The DM can give you a fact that you could only know through intuition or a flash of wisdom. Also, mental attacks are at -2 against you, or you ignore their effects with a Commitment test, whichever is most appropriate.
- **Meditation.** Rested.** You can meditate for an hour and overcome a disadvantage. An hour of meditation counts as 2 hours of bed rest for healing purposes. If disadvantaged with poison (that will not kill you in an hour) or some other impediment, whether magical or psychological, you can purge one of those. Meditation can be used to reset the Wounds to heal daily. The DM may feed the Bowl to require a Commitment or Brawn test, or add other complications. This does not work against curses.
- **Zen Focus.** Rested.** You can substitute your Commitment for any other attribute for one roll.

MONSTER HUNTER (TEMPLATE)

Some monsters look like people, some are the size of buildings. The bigger they are, the more important it is to know exactly how to stop them.

INHERENT ABILITY—RESEARCHER

Monsters follow different rules. You know those rules, and how to find the weaknesses of the things you face. You have a background in monster types, strengths, and weaknesses. You also know how to interrogate people and dig through old records, sifting fact from rumor and finding patterns. Every session of appropriate research or interrogation, or every informative encounter with a target monster, gain either 1 useful fact or 2 Awesome Points from the Stack.

LIMITATION—NO HAPPY ENDING

You hunt monsters. That ends sad, or bloody. If your muscles don't give out, your sanity will. Or maybe your liver. Better make peace with that now.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Your mentor's journal, with room for your entries. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver.

TALENTS

- **Insanely Stubborn.** ** *Rested*. When resisting persuasion, intimidation, fear, terror, horror, or supernatural influence, combine Commitment and Daring.
- **Monster Lore.** * *Rested*. You know the "rules" (and habits) for common monster types, and may remember some obscure monster trivia with an Awareness test. You may recognize a monster's "tells" on a successful Awareness test even if it pretends to be something else.
- **Scholarly Familiarity.** * *Constant*. You have studied a lot of language roots, and ancient forms. You can't read clearly, but you can pick lore out of books, even if they are in dead or foreign languages. This takes 4 times as long as normal. You can also read rituals and incantations with enough accuracy, even if you don't understand all you're saying.
- **Self-Possessed.** * *Constant*. A tattoo over your heart, combined with some quick incantations you can silently recite in the back of your mind even while doing other things, renders you safe from supernatural possession. No demon can possess you unless it has more Wounds than you have Commitment. Spellcasters must have twice as many levels as you do for their magic to possess you.
- **Stunt.** ** You are usually outmatched by the things you hunt. To survive, you must occasionally be capable of succeeding in a difficult task against all odds. Once per level, you can add your level as a bonus to a to-hit roll or an attribute test. If you do not use this ability in a level, it is saved until you do use it. When you use the stunt, you get a bonus equal to your current level (so it is useful to save them if you can.) This talent cannot be used untrained, and as soon as it is taken you can use it once per level gained so far.

NOBLE (TEMPLATE)

The Noble was born to rule, educated to refinement, and prepared to lead. Hence, quite dangerous.

INHERENT—BLUE BLOOD

You get +2 to Charm when dealing with the better sort, bringing to bear your classical education and etiquette. You also know the basics of the intricacies of politics among the rulers of your context (usually broader than a single nation), and can check Awareness to recall the finer points of heraldry, bloodlines and genealogy, or gossip among the noble set. This sort of thing has been the background chatter of your whole life.

LIMITATION—STANDARDS

You grew up with certain expectations of comfort, education, and respect; when you don't get them, or half of them, or company that would even understand what you're talking about... it's hard.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Signet ring, diary, pomander for aromatherapy. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver x100.

TALENTS

- **Appraise.*** *Constant.* You know quality. Whether it is real estate, food, furniture, art, gems, or horseflesh, you can quickly assess its base value and determine the best market for it. Difficult cases or subtleties, or detecting forgeries, may require an Awareness test. You can often increase the value of an item when it is sold by 10% by going to the best market for it. Sometimes more.
- **Classical Education.*** *Rested.* You can know one important fact about a region, a person, a legend, or some other appropriate subject that may have been covered in your extensive education. If it is sufficiently obscure, or there is a backup question, test Awareness.
- **Connected.*** *Rested.* Your family has developed networks and friendships and enemies in a surprisingly broad context. Your signet ring and name may open doors for you. You may ask the DM for a sympathetic family ally in an appropriate situation. The DM should then prepare a family enemy for a future encounter.
- **Flattery.** *Constant.* You instinctively sense what they want to hear, and you have no trouble suppressing your gag reflex and saying it to them. Gain +4 to Charm attempts when you want to really turn on the flattery—but if you still fail, then they sense manipulation, and you are then -2 Charm until you get past the awkwardness somehow.
- **Threaten.** *Arena.* Managing the help and your peers requires a grasp of the subtleties of how to properly threaten them; violence is mundane. Threatening their freedom or reputation or comfort gets their attention more than offering to punch them in the face. You can even smile while doing it. Double the Charm bonus to intimidate.

NOMAD (TEMPLATE)

The Nomad's only standard of freedom left to exceed is the wind; when your horse is at full gallop, that's as close as mortals get.

INHERENT ABILITY—HORSE LORD

You and your horse are symbiotic. When you are mounted or leading your horse, as a focus action (once between periods of rest) you can both heal 1 Wound.

LIMITATION—CLOSE TO THE HORSES

You are bow-legged, you smell like horses and greasy campfires, and you have little in the way of civilization and table manners.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: A bridle you made yourself, and a distinctive saddle. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 copper.

TALENTS

- **Herdin**.* *Constant.* Combine your attribute bonus with your horse's attribute bonus (default +2) when impeding or avoiding being impeded. Counter-attacks are at -4 to hit either of you.
- **Horse Whisperer**.** *Constant.* Befriend the horse as a focus action (upgrades to Move action.) You can get the horse to do anything you ask. If the horse is unruly, the DM must give you 2 Awesome Points, and another round of soothing gets the horse under control again.
- **Mounted Combat**.* *Constant.* You can fight normally while your horse undertakes a Protect action, or vice versa. You can shoot from horseback without penalty.
- **Mounted Symbiosis**.** *Constant.* You can spend Awesome Points for your mount to succeed at difficult tasks, as long as you are in the same arena. This can involve getting around obstacles (jumping fences or chasms), and increasing or reducing Wounds inflicted.
- **Stunt Rider**.* *Constant.* As a free action, move around on horseback to face any direction, hang down on the side, dismount, stand up, transfer horses, or whatever. If unhorsed, take 1 less Wound from falling.

PROSTITUTE (TEMPLATE)

From desperate and sick guttersnipes to politically powerful and wealthy courtesans, some people make a living by exchanging physical pleasures for coin.

INHERENT ABILITY—SEDUCTION

You are skilled in offering physical and psychological inducements that lead others to forget their duties, vows, and better judgment. When persuading a target, gain +1 Charm per level.

LIMITATION—WHORE

Even customers tend to hold you in contempt, an objectified resource. It is easy to convince them to pay for your favors, but it is always difficult to convince them to take you seriously.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Perfume and makeup, provocative clothing. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver.

TALENTS

- **Code of Transaction.*** *Rested.* You know how to identify and approach potential clients and negotiate the conversation to minimize awkwardness. Per Charm, you can get 5 silver for something simple, 10 for a standard exchange, and 20 for something strange. Usually takes 1 hour.
- **Escape.** *Arena.* You know how to hurt someone who is trying to hinder your movement. If they grab you or spread themselves to block your way, automatically succeed on the counter-attack, striking a single impeding character as though you rolled 10 + your level. This talent does not stack with use of a shield or parrying weapon.
- **Pleading.*** *Rested.* As a Defend action, you can beg for your life, safety, and/or escape. Your attackers must succeed in a Commitment or Charm test vs. your Charm, or they spare you. (This can stack with Seduction, if relevant.)
- **Sensitive Spots.*** *Arena.* Striking unarmed or with a light weapon, gain +2 to hit or +1 Wound.
- **Streetwalking.** *Constant.* You know how to advertise and handle rapid sexual transactions. Every 3 points on a Charm test (including Seduction) are 5 silver. This generally takes 5-15 minutes per customer.

SCHOLAR (TEMPLATE)

The Scholar is interested in the “lore” side of loot—and can use it to get the shiny variety.

INHERENT—EXPERT LINGUIST

You know all the alphabets of the World Between. You get Awareness x2 starting languages, plus one for your default language. For difficult, dead, or unknown spoken or written language, a few minutes and an Awareness test may be able to communicate basic information. A few days with a new language is usually enough to learn basic communication with it even if you are not fluent.

LIMITATION—CURIOUS

Half-mad to go into dangerous situations for academic motivations, you are more interested in answers than in safety. This can sometimes cause problems.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Specimen containers, journal. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver x50.

TALENTS

- **Cartographer.*** *Constant.* You can accurately read and make maps. Upon studying a map, can draw one useful conclusion from it that others would miss.
- **Conversationalist.*** *Constant.* Widely read, you can engage just about anyone in conversation on something that interests them. Gain +2 on a Charm check.
- **Educated Poise.*** *Constant.* You relate to nobility and the educated with comfortable ease, gaining +2 to any attribute needed in social dealings with them.
- **Scholar of Note.*** About once per level, you gain enough insight to create a scholarly work that, if released into the academic community, gains you [100 silver per level when it was earned] and +1 to Charm when dealing with those who have heard of your work. It takes about a month with the proper resources to create a scholarly work.
- **Sketch Artist.** *Constant.* You can draw glyphs, portraits, statues, etc.— visual representation as needed given a few minutes to do so. Skilled enough for the accurate work to be useful.

SCOUT (TEMPLATE)

Somebody must risk being outnumbered, trapped, and murdered just so others know what's ahead.

INHERENT—MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

As a focus action, you can automatically get a rough count of everything you see. Also, you have a sense of the logistical consumption rate of individuals, armies, and communities, and travel time expectations.

LIMITATION—WARY

It's hard not to start feeling expendable when they keep sending you out up front all alone.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Compass, birdcall whistle, spyglass. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver.

TALENTS

- **Birdcall.*** *Constant.* You can imitate the calls of various local and exotic birds. These calls are generally used to communicate basic information and orders with a minimal risk of detection—those who are proficient detect the bird calls with an Awareness test difficulty 5, others with difficulty 10, and even then they don't understand it.
- **Elusive.*** *Arena.* Focus action. If you can get out of line of sight long enough, you disappear. Pursuers without special means (like scent ability or magic tracking) cannot detect you; they only get a roll if the DM feeds the bowl and gives you half.
- **Read Signs.*** *Rested.* You can connect rising flocks of birds with movement of foes, estimate forces based on dust columns from marching armies, and predict the weather for the next 12 hours. Test Awareness to gain a fact from signs in your surroundings.
- **Sprinter.** *Rested.* You can lose 1 Wound to cross +1 arena as a Move action.
- **Survivor.*** *Rested.* Focus action. You can shrug off 1 Wound (can be used with Sprinter). Also, the roll for when you are out of Wounds is (-1/2 your level). If the result is 0 or less, you still have 1 Wound.

THIEF (TEMPLATE)

You are the premier expert at taking other people's stuff. You'll practice, sweat, and focus as hard as you must to make sure you never have to work for a living.

INHERENT—GET PAID

You live for the involuntary transfer of wealth to your pockets. Every time you steal from an unwitting (or warned and hostile) target, you get 1 Awesome Point from the Stack. If you score big, every 100 silver equivalent you take from a protected environment as someone else's property (once safely outside the range of the defenses) gets you 1 Awesome Point from the Stack. If you are working with a group and split the take, you get Awesome Points for your share. The DM interprets this as needed.

LIMITATION—GREEDY

You steal things. Other people have things they want to keep. Having you around is a risk.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Three empty sacks, hooded lantern, grapple hook. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver.

TALENTS

- **Arsenal.*** *Constant.* You strap blades to your arms, legs, ribs, small of your back; you can carry as many knives as you want, and they do not count as weapons carried for encumbrance. If you carry enough knives to count as light armor, they count as 1 load.
- **Backstab.*** *Arena.* This attack only works with light weapons, hand weapons, or ranged weapons in the same arena. Attack an opponent who is not focused on you. If the opponent is aware of you, get +2 to hit or inflict +1 Wound, decide after rolling. If the opponent is *not* aware of you, get +2 to hit and +1 Wound.
- **Bash.*** *Arena.* Focus action. (Upgrades to Combat action.) If you are wielding a blunt weapon, you can knock a target unconscious. If you hit, do damage if you choose to (not required), then test Cunning. If you roll higher than [the target's remaining wounds x5, +5 per level of armor on the head], the target is knocked out for at least a minute. The DM can feed the bowl to increase the difficulty, or to make a target immune. You get half of those Awesome Points.
- **Pickpocket.*** *Constant.* Lift something from a target in melee range. Test Cunning against the target's Awareness to take the object without the target noticing. If you want the object and don't care if the target knows or not, add Cunning and Daring together. If the target is aware of your attempt, the target can resist with Daring or Cunning instead of Awareness. Difficulty may be increased by the object being tied in place, held, secured in layered clothing, etc. In combat, the attempt happens during the Shoot phase, and you may also Move.
- **Super Cunning.**** *Constant.* Any time you test Cunning, roll 2d10 and keep the higher result.

TUMBLER (TEMPLATE)

The Tumbler is a supple and charming entertainer; a juggler, acrobat, joke teller, and adventurer.

INHERENT—SHOWMANSHIP

Juggling, singing, and tumbling are good, but showmanship is what gets the laughs—and the coins. Get a +2 on Charm tests while performing, and gain 1d10 silver + natural Charm modifier (adjusted by DM for wealth of setting) per hour of busking. Those nearby the entertaining tumbler are -2 on Awareness tests to look at their surroundings.

LIMITATION—CRUSTY JUGGLER

Oh, everyone laughs, some toss coins. But no one trusts you to behave yourself around money, important people, or clean furniture.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Colorful outfit, extra hat for tips, tambourine. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 copper.

TALENTS

- **Balanced.*** *Constant.* Honed sense of spatial relationships grants +2 bonus to all movement related tests, including Impede and Push.
- **Dodge.*** *Arena.* When hit with a melee attack roll 1d10. If you get 7+, the attack misses. Take -1 from the roll for every load carried and every level of armor.
- **Flexible Truth.*** *Constant.* Years on the margins of society have gifted you with a talent for reframing a story (or generating one from scratch) in a very convincing way. Gain +2 to Cunning tests when lying or offering misleading truths. Gain an additional +1 per absolutely true fact included in the story. This talent is countered by the target's Awareness. You automatically keep your story straight.
- **Hey Rube!*** *Rested.* You can ask the DM to create a sympathetic busker (street entertainer) or Vistani NPC in a city environment or on a well-traveled route who may be able to help out somehow or offer shelter or supplies. However, the DM should also prepare a law enforcer, respectable citizen, or vagabond your character crossed in the past.
- **Juggling.*** *Constant.* You can juggle objects equal to your Daring x2 without needing to roll. Also, +1 to hit when throwing ranged weapons within the same arena. Juggling between more than one person, the group keeps a number of objects in the air equal to the lowest capacity juggler.

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

How Characters Level

Characters gain a level when their players spend 12 Awesome Points through them. The character can level in the middle of combat, or in a peaceful moment later (when the player has the time to figure out what benefits to add.) Spent Awesome Points and earned Awesome Points are recorded at the end of the session, the character gets those Awesome Points to start the next session (and benefits from points spent already towards leveling).

Benefits of Gaining a Level

Characters gain a new Talent when they gain a new level.

- Half their Talents must be from their base template.
- They do not need teachers to take Talents from their base template. They *do* need teachers to gain a Talent from another template.
 - They may choose to wait to gain a Talent until they can get a teacher. There is no time limit on this waiting—if they wait three levels, then at some point they can train to get three new Talents.
 - It takes at least 24 hours of training with a teacher to gain a new Talent.
 - If the character has been training in the background and preparing to level, the DM may decide the training has been completed in practice and allow the new Talent.
 - The DM may charge Awesome Points with no other benefit (including towards leveling) to intuitively develop a cross-template Talent on the spot.
 - The DM does not *have* to do this, but may choose to.
 - Open talents cost 3, restricted talents cost 5.

Characters gain +1 to an Attribute when they gain a new level.

- They may choose to learn a new language instead of taking +1 to an Attribute.
 - **Literacy.** You can *speak* a language you know, but you must know both the language and the alphabet it is based upon to be literate in that language. When you spend your attribute point, you can gain either the language or an alphabet.
- They may choose to learn to play a musical instrument proficiently, or be skilled in another artistic expression, instead.
- If the player decides to wait to gain a new talent, the player can still raise one of the character's Attributes by one.

Gaining a Wound.

- The player can give up both the talent and the attribute point to add 1 Wound to the character's capacity, writing "Tougher" as a constant ability Talent.
 - This can be done once per "Brawn" bonus. Add an asterisk to the talent for each additional purchase.
 - If "Brawn" goes up from increasing Attributes, then the capacity to gain "Tougher" multiple times increases too.
- These extra Wounds stack with Wounds granted by talents or Inherent Abilities.

DESCRIPTION OF TALENTS

Talents are abilities the character can use.

Difficulty to Learn. How widely available is the talent?

- **Base Template Talents.** You can gain talents from your base template without further training.
- **Open Talents.** Training for “open talents” is easily located, or spend 3 Awesome Points that do not count towards leveling to automatically “figure it out” somehow with DM permission. Training generally takes 24 hours of instruction.
- **Restricted Talents.*** Gaining “restricted talents” (with 1 asterisk) that are not on your base template is only possible if the DM agrees, and there are special circumstances and training (or if the DM allows you to spend 5 Awesome Points that do not count towards leveling.) Training generally takes 24 hours of instruction.
- **Exclusive Talents.**** Training for “exclusive talents” (with 2 asterisks) is not possible unless the talent is on the character’s base template, or the character is a spellcaster learning appropriate magic. The DM can make an exception for extraordinary circumstances, but isn’t required to. Training generally takes 24 hours of instruction minimum.
- **Master Talents.** You can only get a Master Talent if the attribute base for the talent is 5 or higher. However, if your attribute is 5+, you can gain the talent without instruction.
- **Occupational Talents.** These professions ideally take at least 6 months of training, but can be mastered in about 2 if the DM is generous. If connecting to the character’s background, it may be no further down-time training is needed. *They cost 1 talent slot AND 1 attribute slot.*

Frequency of Use. How often can the character use the talent?

- **Constant.** The character can always use this talent, it is available any time its use is appropriate.
- **Arena.** The character can use this talent once per arena. If the talent involves moving between arenas, the talent is reset when it enters a new arena. The talent is only exhausted in the arena if its use is successful. The talent can be “recharged” in the same arena by spending 1 Awesome Point as a free action. The talent automatically recharges when you move out of the arena where you used it.
- **Rested.** The character can use this talent successfully once between periods of rest and nourishment. The talent can be “recharged” between periods of rest by spending 2 Awesome Points outside combat, or 3 points during combat. Generally, rest is about 6 hours of sleep and a meal.

Time to Use. Different talents take different amounts of time to use.

- **Free action.** This takes no time. If in doubt about when it activates, it is used on the character’s turn.
- **Action.** This counts as a ranged attack action, move action, combat action, etc.
- **Focus action.** This starts in phase 3 and activates in phase 6 of the round if the character is not injured in that time. The talent is only exhausted if it is successful. If you are hit while doing a focus action, but not injured, you are not interrupted.
- **Longer.** Some talents specify they take a minute, or an hour, or some other time increment.

Character Building Advice on Talents

- **Unusual Upbringing.** If the character had an unusual upbringing that the player wants to emphasize, then the player may ask the DM for access to a restricted talent from another template at first level, to “get the foot in the door” and show how the character had access to unusual training. Adding a restricted talent from another template at first level is a nod to the years of life the character had before first being played.

IMPROVED TALENTS

Instead of taking a new talent upon gaining a level, a player character can improve a talent the character already has. Here are the available improvements. Areas that can be improved are underlined in the talent description.

- Upgrade one time frame—rested to arena, arena to constant.
- Add +1 Wound (damage) for an attack talent.
- Add +1 to hit for an attack talent.
- Add +2 to an attribute roll talent.
- Reduce Awesome Point cost by 1.
- Speed—change a focus action to a shorter action type (default to “move” if not explained).

Here are some specific guidelines for upgrading talents.

- A talent may be upgraded more than once, but only one of each upgrade type may be applied to a talent.
- Players must get DM approval before improving a talent, to make sure the interpretation works for the DM’s game and preferred play style.
- Spell talents may be improved.
- Every talent is not subject to improvement, and that’s fine.
- Improving a base template talent counts as taking a base template talent, when counting talents towards the cross-template requirement that half a character’s talents must be from the base template.

Improving talents generally cannot allow these possibilities.

- Adding a penalty to an opponent’s Attribute or combat test.
- Reduce incoming damage.
- Grant Awesome Points to the character through its use automatically (without player or DM involvement.)
- Increase a player character’s wounds, or improve healing.



If you see this makes a talent more powerful and cooler, and worry about balance, remember that the player character gave up a whole other talent to improve this one. And there are some really neat talents out there.

OCCUPATIONAL TALENTS

Civilization has division of labor. People have different jobs, and all contribute towards the well-being of the community. Most people the characters encounter will have 1 Wound and 1 talent and not be interested in adventuring; this list helps flesh out some of those occupational talents.

Characters can get an occupational talent with the DM's permission. An occupational talent costs 1 talent slot and 1 attribute slot upon leveling.

These templates allow a character to automatically do basic tasks related to the profession, and do more difficult tasks with an attribute test.



- **Animal Trainer.** Learn animal behavior, offer rewards and discouragements, teach commands.
- **Apothecary.** Identify chemicals, brew potions, make poison, blend healing salve, make blackpowder.
- **Armorer.** Repair and craft weapons and armor, both for all shapes of people, and for mounts.
- **Beggar.** Survives on coins offered by others. Judge when to push and when to shrink back.
- **Blacksmith.** Shoes horses, makes and fixes tools and cookpots, handles metal and fire.
- **Brewer.** Takes basic ingredients and makes intoxicating beverages.
- **Butler.** Runs a noble household, maintains the wine cellar, manages the servants.
- **Carpenter.** Uses wood to make furniture, barrels, wagons, buildings, ships. Skilled at repair.
- **Castellan.** Manages a castle; its rations, fortifications, military posture, army, and so on.
- **Cleric.** Offers rites and education from the perspective of a church, cares for those who need it.
- **Cook.** Takes basic ingredients on a broad spectrum and makes them into sustaining food.
- **Criminal.** Instinctively senses forces of law, shifty judge of character, knows fences and locks.
- **Doctor.** Skilled in bandaging injuries, diagnosing ailments, handling healing chemicals, and surgery.
- **Entertainer.** Singer, dancer, storyteller, general all-around source of amusement and good feelings.
- **Farmer.** Knows about seeds, crops, plant cycles, fertilization, animal care, and hard, thankless work.
- **Fisher.** Can handle small boats, mend and use nets and traps, and bait fish. Can turn fish into food.
- **Guard.** Used to standing for hours, patrolling, intimidating, keeping the peace, holding a poker face.
- **Gunsmith.** Skilled in building, repairing, maintaining, improving, and dealing with firearms.
- **Jailer.** Brutish, intimidating, dangerous, bullying, repairing locks, evaluating health, interrogation.
- **Laborer.** Long experience carrying heavy things and doing heavy work of various kinds.
- **Mason.** Skilled with tools, technique, and blueprints for building with stone, evaluating stonework.
- **Merchant.** Familiar with appraisal, bartering, managing servants and guards, charming customers.
- **Navigator.** Knows constellations and how to steer by the stars, as well as cartography.
- **Sailor.** Familiar with ship-board tasks all over a sailing ship, rowing, working sails, drinking, cursing.
- **Scribe.** Can read and write, often in several languages, and interpret law, manage correspondence.
- **Servant.** Patient and used to demanding masters, carrying out orders and maintaining tasks.
- **Shepherd.** Care for and diagnose ailments for herd animals, weather elements, shear wool, castration.
- **Soldier.** Endures hardships, is prepared to kill, march long miles, understands orders, sleeps outside.
- **Tanner.** Turns dead animals into leather, and leather into clothes, armor, decorations, and so on.
- **Weaver.** Knows how to spin thread or yarn and make various cloths and clothing or hangings.

MASTER TALENTS

Here are some boundaries for using master talents.

- These talents are available when the attribute rises to 5 or more.
 - You can take one master talent for each attribute for each point above 4 in the attribute, if you buy them as you level (instead of template talents, cross-template talents, occupational talents, additional Wounds, etc.)
 - You can take a master talent for your starting talent if you have an attribute at 5.
- They do not count as template or cross-template talents.
- They require no training to learn, only a high enough attribute.
- They cannot be improved.

AWARENESS

- **Anticipate Move.** *Constant.* You can read opponents, anticipating what they will do. Gain +2 to Initiative and Impede (whether impeding or escaping.)
- **Etherspark.** *Constant.* You have a hint of magic ability. You can gain 1 talent for a spell, if taught by a spellcaster. Spells after the first take both the talent and attribute point upon leveling. You cannot cast from scrolls or other sources.
- **Faces and Names.** *Constant.* You never forget a face or a name, and if you connect them, you can recall them both at once later on.
- **Lie Detector.** *Constant.* Only those with Cunning equal to or higher than your Awareness have a chance at successfully fooling you with a lie, without using magic. Others cannot spend Awesome Points to increase their ability to lie to you.
- **Light Sleeper.** *Constant.* If there is a chance you will wake up due to something happening in your arena or an unusual sound, you will wake. You do not have to pass a test. Because your system is used to light sleep, you are not more tired from being roused in this way; as long as the wakefulness is brief, your sleep is not disrupted.
- **Recall Expert.** *Rested.* You have an astonishing memory. If there is a follow-up Awareness roll to remember something due to a talent, you automatically pass it and get an additional follow-up roll for more. You can remember any information you've been exposed to (though your recall may not be complete, it will be helpful.) This includes smells, flavors, symbols, pictures, and text.
- **Spyreading.** *Constant.* You can read upside-down text, quickly hidden papers, and details in dim or fast-moving conditions. Your mind is trained to catch and hold information of this kind, and you automatically retain anything you see under these difficult conditions for at least an hour.

BRAWN

- **Bashmaster.** *Constant.* Take 1 less Wound from damage that is specifically bashing. This includes blunt weapons and attempts to batter down doors.
- **Dangerous Might.** *Constant.* You can spend an additional 2 Awesome Points to increase damage by 1. (You can improve damage by 2 Wounds with Awesome Points instead of maximum 1 Wound. Even if adding 1 Wound costs less Awesome Points due to another talent, the second Wound costs 2 Awesome Points.)
- **Deadly Attack.** *Constant.* You attack in hand to hand as though armed with a light weapon.



- **Healthy.** *Constant.* Gain +2 Wounds and immunity to normal sickness (unless the DM feeds the Bowl one point per your level.)
- **Heft.** *Constant.* You can carry 1 more load than your Brawn. If you are scantily clad, you get +2 to Charm tests with those who may be attracted to your muscular body.
- **Powerful Attack.** *Constant.* You attack in hand to hand as though armed with a heavy weapon.
- **Resilient.** *Constant.* You are always -2 on the 1d10 roll when you reach 0 Wounds. If you score a number less than 1, you still have 1 Wound.

CHARM

- **Bully.** *Constant.* If you use Charm to intimidate someone, gain 1 Awesome Point.
- **Confidante.** *Constant.* If you can get a target talking, the target will reveal things the target didn't mean to talk about. Every minute of conversation, test Charm against the target's Commitment, Charm, Cunning, or Daring. If you win, gain another useful statement or line of inquiry.
- **Deflect Anger.** *Constant.* If you are confronted by an angry person, pass an intimidation test using Charm. If you succeed, the angry person is not intimidated, but the rage is deflected to another target or a counter argument has made a convincing case for blaming the angry person.
- **Empathy.** *Constant.* If you have the same mood as your target (or pretend to have the same mood) get +2 on Charm tests. On a success, the target believes you understand their feelings.
- **Recruit.** *Rested.* Gain 1d10 Wounds of followers after an hour of appropriate activity with them. They will help out for up to 1 hour per your Charm with no payment, or agree to work for you if you offer them a deal that could be seen as fair.
- **Inspire Loyalty.** *Constant.* You attract henchmen who are loyal to you until death, regardless of pay or conditions (though abuse may drive them off or make them disloyal.) You may have 1 Wound or level (whichever is higher for those involved) per your level. When you level, you may level a henchman or attract a new one. If a henchman is lost to death or disloyalty, those "slots" are not available again, they are lost with the henchman. The DM chooses your henchmen, but you may make requests.
- **Humanize.** *Constant.* You are capable of rendering yourself or someone else human in the eyes of humans or near-humans. If they have been trained to think of you as an inhuman monster, you can forge a relationship to seem not so very unlike them after all. This requires conversation or exchange, and winning an intimidation test of your Charm against the attribute they choose (they are not intimidated, instead you are humanized). Succeeding on this intimidation test can also serve to forestall imminent violence, execution, and dismissal from authorities holding you.

COMMITMENT

- **Confident.** *Rested.* Faced with a difficult challenge, gain 1d5 Awesome Points from the Stack. This talent cannot be recharged with Awesome Points.
- **Defiant.** *Constant.* Each time you refuse to satisfy the demands of a greater power than yourself, gain 1 Awesome Point from the Stack.
- **Ignore Limits.** *Constant.* Add 1 Wound from sheer will.
- **Lend Confidence.** *Rested.* You may give another person up to ½ your Commitment in Awesome Points from your reserve as the climax of inspiring them with a speech or symbolic act. This counts as spending them unless the DM says otherwise.
- **Mental Peace.** *Rested.* Spend up to ½ your Commitment in Awesome Points while meditating for at least an hour. (This is used to speed leveling. The talent cannot be recharged with Awesome Points.)
- **Stubborn.** *Constant.* If you make a decision, no use of non-magic talents or attributes can change your mind.

- **Vow.** *Constant.* When you promise to do something, as long as you are doing your best to honor your vow you cannot be persuaded to abandon it, even by magic.

CUNNING

- **Alternate Identities.** *Constant.* You can maintain in your mind up to 1 other persona per your Cunning attribute. You keep straight what each persona knows, the plans each persona has, allies and foes, life history, and other critical information. You can switch between them at will.
- **Disguise Expert.** *Constant.* With a handful of props you can change your persona to a generic archetype (beggar, guard, merchant, etc.) You use voice tone, posture, gait, expression, and other acting skill. Only those with Cunning or Awareness equal to your Cunning can even attempt to see through your disguise.
- **Lend Idea.** *Constant.* You have a talent for conversing with people and giving them an idea, but leading them to it so they think it is their idea. For them to realize it was your idea, they must test above [your Cunning x2] with a Cunning or Awareness test. They don't have to act on the idea, but they will think it was theirs and they will consider it.
- **Lockskill.** *Constant.* All locks count as 1 difficulty less.
- **Long Reach.** *Constant.* You attack in hand to hand as though armed with a reach weapon.
- **Mimic.** *Constant.* You have skill in imitating body language and vocals of others. Those with Awareness or Cunning less than your Cunning are automatically fooled.
- **Resourceful.** *Constant.* When in danger from a worthy opponent, gain 1d5 Awesome Points from the Stack to help use unexpected methods or means to strike or escape. Unused Awesome Points are returned to the Stack at the end of the encounter (whether you succeeded or not.)

DARING

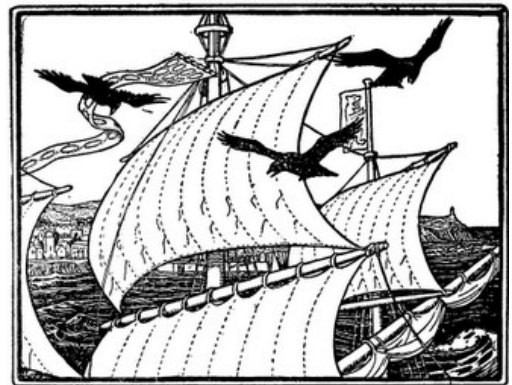
- **Counter-Attack.** *Constant.* You are +2 to hit or +1 Wound when counter-attacking.
- **Count Coup.** *Constant.* Each time you commit an act of defiance against a worthy target when there is significant risk, gain up to 3 Awesome Points from the Stack. DM decides.
- **Dare.** *Rested.* If you dare a target to do something, and the target does not, attempt to intimidate the target. If you succeed, the target is not intimidated, but you gain 1 Awesome Point per the target's Wounds or level, whichever is higher.
- **Fearless.** *Constant.* You are immune to non-magical intimidation, +2 against magical fear.
- **Honed Reflexes.** *Constant.* Add $\frac{1}{2}$ your level as a bonus to avoid taking damage when allowed a Daring test to get out of the way.
- **Inspire.** *Rested.* When you yell a battle cry, those on your side within hearing are +2 to their Daring tests in the face of the immediate danger, and they can re-roll if they failed a Daring test the same round or the round before. Your presence gives allies +1 attribute to resist terror and horror.
- **Unarmored.** *Constant.* Gain an additional Awesome Point (total 3) each time you fight in real danger without armor.



OTHER TALENTS

Some talents are useful, but not attached to a template. These are available as cross-template talents.

- **Battle Oath.* Rested.** Focus action. Make a solemn vow about a specific outcome in the current fight. (“I swear I will kill that man.” “She will leave with me, alive.” “You will not reach the door.”) Track all Awesome Points you spend in the fight. If you fulfill your vow, immediately get twice as many Awesome Points back. If you fail to fulfill your vow, you owe the DM that many Awesome Points, and you cannot spend any more until you pay that debt of shame. (Points repaying the debt do not count towards leveling, either.)
- **Book of Power.* Rested.** You have a magical tome that is filled with secrets, spells, and lore. You can spend a few minutes looking through it to find 1 important fact about any given subject. (Without taking the talent, it is much harder to coax the book to reveal its secrets if you aren’t bonded.)
- **Haggle. Constant.** Each exchange takes 1-10 minutes of discussion. Test Cunning + any appropriate attribute, opposed to the buyer or seller you’re targeting. (Some people will not haggle, and you know that automatically after the first attempt.) If you are successful, you can generally shift the price up to 30% lower (if buying) or higher (if selling.) If the DM bumps a roll with Awesome Points, you don’t get any of them.
- **Healing Touch.* Constant.** Spend a focus action on an unconscious ally (not dying or crippled) to give the ally a Wound and the capacity to rise and fight on next round. If treating a crippling injury right after the fight (less than 10 minutes after) allow another roll on the critical chart to possibly get less damaging result. Also, spending 1 hour tending the wounded counts as 6 hours of bed rest for the wounded, once between periods of rest.
- **Management. Constant.** You can automatically manage a number of people equal to your Charm + Cunning, and a business with monthly business up to 1,000 x Cunning gold. To manage more, you can test Cunning as the DM asks for it. You are +2 on all social interactions (intimidating, ordering, or inspiring) with your employees. You are familiar with researching trade laws and working with governments for permits.
- **Party Animal. Rested.** For one carousing session, you can add half your level to your Brawn for holding your alcohol (or whatever substance you use to alter your senses.)
- **Powdermaster. Constant.** Only misfire when rolling two “1” results to hit when shooting a blackpowder weapon.
- **Reckless. Arena.** When you attack in hand to hand or melee, inflict +1 Wound by taking 1 Wound of damage yourself as you tear into your target. Awesome Points and armor do not reduce this damage.
- **Sea Legs. Constant.** You suffer no penalty to compensate for the pitching decks of a ship, able to work and sleep and eat unhindered while at sea.
- **Sweeping Blow. Arena.** Do +1 Wound when spreading damage between minions or hitting a swarm.
- **Whack Swarm. Rested.** Do double damage when attacking a swarm.



MULTIPLE TEMPLATES

There are three ways for a character to have more than one template. None of them are recommended for players just starting out, but all of them can be useful and entertaining.

STARTING WITH TWO TEMPLATES

Adding a second template to the first makes the second an “overlay template.” This allows characters to play “noble scholar” or “archer thief” or “tumbler prostitute.”

These templates are designed to be used singly. Instead of adding one base template to overlay another, consider taking an unusual starting talent and gaining talents from other templates as the character levels.

If you start play with two templates, one is an overlay template, so this applies:

- **No Starting Talents.** You do not get a talent at level 1 or 2, but you do get Attribute Points from level 2 onward as normal. You get your first talent at level 3.
- **Inherent Abilities and Limitations.** Inherent abilities and limitations from both templates apply.
- **Talents.** You can spend 3 Awesome Points to access unpurchased talents from either template. Purchasing talents from either template counts as buying from the base template.
- **Awesome Points Spent to Level.** Leveling costs 3 more Awesome Points, so 15 instead of 12.

SUPERNATURAL INTERFERENCE

A supernatural power can gift a character with spell-like abilities—talents from the holy warrior, shaman, or wizard templates taken with DM permission (or insistence.) Rarely, a supernatural power will give a character access to the entire set of abilities. In that case, a supernatural template is added to the character.

From then on, the character must spend 15 Awesome Points to level, gains the inherent ability and limitation of both templates, can access unpurchased talents from either template as the base template, and counts talents bought from either template as talents bought from the base template.

CHANGING BASE TEMPLATE

When a character has 2 talents from another template, the player can decide to switch to that template as the new base template. This can be done when leveling and taking a second talent from the template, or any talent after the second.

From that point on, the character cannot *get* more talents from other templates than possessed for the base template (but the character may already *have* more talents from other templates. Those don’t count here.)

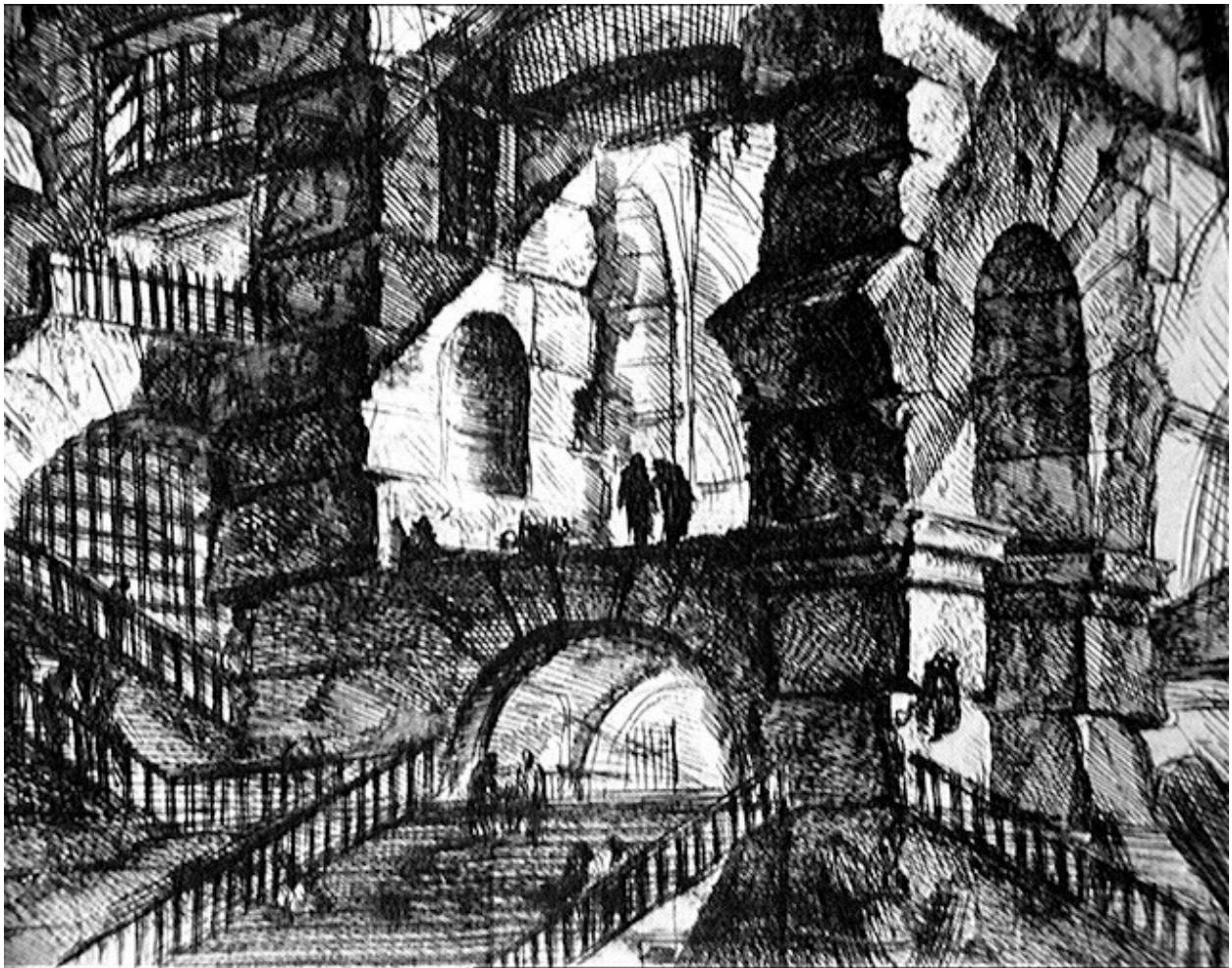
The character cannot use the inherent ability of the new base template, but can spend 3 Awesome Points to use any talents not yet purchased from the base template. The character can no longer spend 3 Awesome Points to use talents not purchased from the previous base template.

If a character gets all 5 talents from a new base template, then upon leveling the character can forfeit the talent and attribute point and gain instead the template’s inherent ability.

If there are too many exclusive talents for a character to get 2 talents to move to a new template, the DM is encouraged to have the character take 6 months to a year of down time to study in an isolated location, learning the basics as a normal person never could. Then allow the base template to switch.

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ARENAS

An arena is a place you might fight in that's different from the places around it. Characters can move around and maneuver within their arena without taking actions to do it. A move action transfers a character from one arena to another adjacent arena.

In play, this usually looks like a bunch of ovals, squares, L-shapes, and triangles that touch each other, ideally with some scribbled in scenery or an explanation to understand what is in each arena.

Having a variety of arenas means players can move their characters to places where they get an advantage from their weapon type, and variety helps combat be more cinematic and dynamic than standing toe to toe and gradually chewing through each other's hit points.

Arena Type	Description	Favored Weapon Type
Tight	Narrow corridors, stairs, balconies, alleys, tunnels	Light is +2 to hit
Hazardous	Rooftops, slick rocks, ledges, rope bridges, swamps	Reach is +2 to hit
Open	Courtyards, open water, gladiatorial arenas, fields	Range is +2 if <i>target</i> in open
Dense	Shops, thick forest, ship deck, crowd, hayloft	Heavy is +2 to hit
Neutral	If it isn't as open as open, but not one of the others.	None

An arena tends to be 15-20 vertical feet. On a cliff face, in the water, or with aerial combat, that's a helpful guideline. Some monsters have an arena on their back and head!

- If you want to do something cool, suggest arena possibilities next to the arenas the DM notes.
 - Example: a character in a marketplace is faced with a dense street and tight alleyways as the guards close in. Her player asks if she can treat the awnings of the shops as a hazardous arena to get up to the rooftops, which are open. The DM may draw it in!
- Arenas can change mid-fight. If you are in a hayloft and the barn catches fire, you may go from a dense arena to a hazardous arena. If you're in a crowd and they scatter, the arena goes from dense to neutral, then maybe a round later to open. Boundaries of arenas can change as the fighting space changes.
- The size of arenas varies dramatically. If you're in a house, arenas will be very small; if you are riding horses out on the plains, they'll be very big.

There are some circumstances that come up often, so here are some typical arrangements.

- **Roads.** Road arenas tend to be narrow (but include the shoulder) and 2 or 3 arenas long for the purposes of the encounter. They are open unless there is traffic, then they can be any arena type.
- **Walls.** If you can go over it or fight on it, the wall is hazardous. If the walls hem you in, the arena is tight. If the walls mean you can't go that way, the wall is impassible (and not an arena). If the wall seems flimsy, you can try to break it; if you do, the DM will tell you whether the rubble-strewn hole area is dense, tight, or hazardous!
- **Weather.** Rain, mud, snow and ice tend to shift terrain to hazardous.
- **Woods.** Brush and saplings are likely to be dense, stands of trees close together or with low branches tend to be tight, and old growth big forests with space between trunks may be neutral.

RAPID RANDOM BATTLEFIELDS

Do you need to quickly sketch out an environment? Do you tend to lapse into drawing in the same kinds of arenas, or only two arenas? Here is a method for quick generation of a more interesting scene of battle.

Plan to make your field of battle about 9 arenas (3 arenas across, three arenas down), with the characters in the center arena. Assume surroundings default to open or neutral (unless they are somewhere like a rope bridge and you know that already. Then maybe focus on what's on either end, etc.)

Set a default: probably open or neutral. Then roll 3d5 to see what is nearby *that is of interest*.

1. Open.
2. Dense.
3. Tight.
4. Hazardous.
5. Inaccessible.

Note the three other types besides your center arena to include, and then quickly draw the battle field.

- Do not draw a grid with 9 squares, but instead keep that grid in mind as you add in arenas.
- They can be bigger or smaller, longer or wider, even curved or other shapes.
- If two or three arenas next to each other seem to be one piece, make them all one arena.
- Scale it in your mind. Arenas can be any size. In close quarters like alleyways or shops, maybe lots of little arenas; if they are riding horses out on the plains, big arenas!
- *This process is to inspire you, you are not accountable to it.*



Description adds excitement. Once you've got your arenas, tell them what is there, based on the surroundings. In the woods, a dense arena is probably underbrush. In a slum, a dense arena might be a crowd of people around a performer, or a clutch of street vendors. On the beach, it could be a stand of bamboo. Try to describe something fun to interact with.

Stay flexible. That dense arena that is a crowd could scatter, making the arenas around it neutral instead of open. Fighters could leap up on the roof of the market stalls, creating a hazardous arena. Traffic could jam, creating an impassible or hazardous arena. This is not only okay, it's a feature of the system; encourage it! Do it yourself sometimes! Remind them they are in a dynamic world. Reward creativity.

AWESOME POINT ECONOMY

What is it? The Awesome Point “economy” is not about math. It is about rhythm, direction, and style. When lots of Awesome Points are being earned, awarded, and spent, a lot of awesome stuff is happening. If activity slows down, players forget about the Bowl, and Awesome Points are not awarded (or not spent) for a while. Those are signs that things may not be awesome enough.

What do we use to represent Awesome Points? Awesome Points are generally poker chips or d6 dice, or some other plentiful token durable enough to withstand enthusiastic play.

Where are the Awesome Points at the beginning of the game? The DM puts the Bowl out where everyone can reach it, and generally there’s at least 5 Awesome Points per player in the Bowl to start with. The rest of the Awesome Points are in the Stack, the Awesome Points controlled directly by the DM and used to refill the Bowl or reward individual players. If these characters have been played before, they may have Awesome Points left over from last time the DM will give the players at the beginning of the session.

How are Awesome Points distributed? Players can give each other Awesome Points out of the Bowl, but only the DM can put more Awesome Points in the Bowl. Players cannot give each other Awesome Points out of their own piles, only from the Bowl. Players cannot take Awesome Points from the Bowl for themselves, they can only give points to each other. Players get Awesome Points for doing awesome things.



What counts as “doing awesome things”? The question is not “What is awesome?” The question is, “What does your game group think is awesome?” Awesome Points focus in with laser-like intensity on what is fun about role playing your game around your table. You like movie quotes during the game?

Award each other Awesome Points for whipping out a good one. Want comedy? Award points for laughs. You want to play a serious Gothic game? Award each other Awesome Points for hitting highlights of the genre and getting into character, allowing characters to be scared by spooky, unsettling elements. Playing a mystery? Share Awesome Points around for having creative ideas, finding clues, and making deductive leaps. Mix and match all you want; whatever is awesome and enjoyable at the table should be rewarded by Awesome Points.

This game runs best in an atmosphere of delight and gratitude. Cool stuff is happening! Reward the people who are part of it! Don't forget about the Bowl. Hand those points out to your fellow players. If somebody is giving you points, don't forget to keep an eye out for what they're doing that's awesome too. Got a quiet player? Go out of your way to figure out how to explain why you're giving them Awesome Points.



If a character concept makes you laugh, or somebody is brave and plays with an accent, or they make a character based on some fiction you like, or maybe players get you a drink while they are up—give out an Awesome Point. This builds the sense of camaraderie and “team” and fun at the table.

Why not just empty the Bowl between the players every time the DM tosses points in? Well, the Bowl is how you reinforce play style at the table, rewarding good behavior and those who bring fun to the game. Give that away and the points become tasteless mechanical game benefits.

Stop and think about why you are playing. To have fun with your friends. To achieve goals in a fictional setting. To play as someone not yourself for a while. To give an awesome character concept a spin. There are lots of reasons. Giving Awesome Points is a way to say “thanks” or acknowledge a great moment or help the group achieve goals. There are no rules to prevent abuse of handing out Awesome Points, but if abuse becomes a problem, there's probably a different game out there the group would enjoy more.

REFILLING THE BOWL

There are a number of ways the DM can refill the Bowl with Awesome Points for the players to share with each other. Ideally, there are always some points in the Bowl, so when something awesome happens the players can celebrate. Good players will be handing out those Awesome Points all the time, so how does a DM get more in the Bowl?

- *Progress!* The DM may choose to put Awesome Points in the bowl at the conclusion of an encounter.
- *Evil Chuckle.* Any time the DM chuckles evilly, or laughs maniacally, or any other variation on the theme, the DM must feed the bowl 1-4 Awesome Points. (This is always available, and always entertaining, so use it! You can choose whether or not to chip in when an NPC laughs—the more it annoys the PCs, the more likely it is you should chip in.)
- *Monster Talents.* When monsters use talents, it's good form to pay for those talents by putting Awesome Points in the bowl. Many monster talents note they have a cost. If they do not have a cost, you don't need to feed the Bowl.
- *Pride.* You like how your players and their characters are handling things, you think they're cool, and you want them to know it. Toss in a handful of Awesome Points!
- *Picking on Characters.* When a target is hit and you spend 2 Awesome Points to ignore 1 Wound, one of those goes to the player whose character was "cheated" and the other goes to the Bowl. Same when the NPC inflicts an extra Wound. And if you are pulling some rude move in the game (like having a character lock himself out of his house) that's worth a sympathy point or two also.
- *Out-of-Game Contributions.* Want to reward a player for bringing snacks, or keeping the party's map up, or doing play reports, or whatever? Give the player Awesome Points that the character can start with next session.

Now that players have Awesome Points, how do they spend them? Here are basic uses.

SPENDING AWESOME POINTS (Always a free action)

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add +2 to any attribute roll. • Use a per-arena talent again in the same arena. • <i>Flexibility.</i> Change what you want to do in the round. This cannot allow you to act in a phase that is over, or to change your mind if you have already rolled dice on an action in the current round.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do +1 Wound after a successful attack. (But only one per attack.) • Ignore 1 incoming Wound. (But only one per attack.) • Recharge a rested Talent outside combat. • <i>Smite Fleeing Foes.</i> Hit a foe who was in melee with you, but flees before the attack phase.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a Talent you don't have, from your base template. • Recharge and use a rested Talent during combat.

- *No Help to Hit.* Awesome Points cannot be spent to boost the to-hit roll (unless your template says otherwise.)
- *Boosting.* You can spend as many Awesome Points as you want to boost an attribute roll—to the point where it is successful, and not beyond. (You can't spend more points just to level faster.)
- *Entitlement.* If a player should get Awesome Points for something (like fighting without armor), it is the player's responsibility to remind the DM. If the player does not remind the DM in a timely fashion, it is up to the DM whether or not to reimburse the player.

A Note on Leveling. Players can ask for lots of rolls (so they can spend Awesome Points boosting them) and shop for things they don't need using Awesome Points. There are lots of ways to finagle spending more Awesome Points to level faster. Sometimes this is fun and helpful. Sometimes it is not. Managing borderline cases of spending Awesome Points just to level is the shared responsibility of the DM and the players. The point is to have fun, not to wring character power out of the system as quickly as possible.

DM SPENDING AWESOME POINTS

- Spend 2 to reduce 1 Wound done to an NPC, or to increase an NPC's damage by 1. Half this cost goes to the bowl, the other half to the player character who is directly affected.

- Sending in reinforcements that weren't planned? Upgrading a minion to a guard suddenly? Adding a talent to a bad guy? Whisking the main enemy away before the heroes finish her off? All these things are things you can pay Awesome Points for, usually right to the Bowl.
- Attribute bidding war with PCs! They make a roll, you make it more difficult or have an NPC resist them with Awesome Points matching their own contribution, if you want to drive up the Awesome Point price or even make a target immune to their attempt.
- Many monster talents require Awesome Points to go to the bowl if they are used.

BRIBERY

If a player wants a degree of narrative control, the player can offer the DM a bribe of Awesome Points. If a PC wants to have an item that they could find or have on their person or in the area, or if the PC wants to create a new arena adjacent to existing arenas, or catch a lucky break by finding a friend, or noticing a door out of the blind alley, or whatever, the player can offer the DM Awesome Points.

The DM has the Stack, and all spent Awesome Points go to it, and the DM doesn't need the player's Awesome Points. How is this bribe effective? What do the points represent that the DM wants? Why would the DM agree to let the player's suggestion happen in the game?

1. Players come up with fun suggestions.
2. Players have a higher sense of buy-in to the world if they feel it is responsive to their desires.
3. Players may have too many Awesome Points; lightening the load makes them more vulnerable.
4. Players sometimes want to spend Awesome Points to get closer to leveling.
5. Players don't often see all the consequences of what they are asking for.
6. This game is about having fun, not reinforcing the utter realism of the game. If it makes a player happy to have something at hand or to meet a friend, especially if it leads to better character development or advancing the plot usefully, don't stand in the way.

Still, the DM has to agree to the request; it cannot be a demand. The DM is responsible for setting the tone of the game, and its challenge level. Player characters are cocky enough. If they face a werewolf and all of them reach into their socks and pull out silver daggers out of nowhere, or they go into an ancient castle and find the front door key under the doormat, that can ruin some of the challenge and fun of the game. If players get spoiled by getting everything they want, they're likely to be bored, and to pout when they get a "no." That is NOT awesome.



JUST ONE PLAYER

Give 3 starting Awesome Points for taking an adventuring motive, and 6 for taking a dark secret. Give more for character sketches, back story, bringing snacks, or whatever effort went into preparing. During play, any time the DM would normally put points in the Bowl, the DM gives points to the player. This is not as fun as having a group giving each other Awesome Points, but it allows for solo missions.

COMBAT

Combat has 6 parts to each round, and those parts are resolved in order. The DM assigns the NPCs to the parts where they will act, then the players say what their characters will do. Combat should be fast, cinematic, and awesome. It is a free action to move within an arena, and to draw or sheathe a weapon.

INITIATIVE

Initiative is only needed when multiple characters want to act in the same phase of the combat round. Every party rolls 1d10, highest roll goes first, and on through descending order. Those who are tied go simultaneously or dice it off again, DM choice.

- *The DM always declares what the NPCs will do before the PCs decide what they will do. This may be a description of their plan, or just noting what part of the round they'll use (shoot, move, attack, etc.)*
 - For example, a DM may tell players an NPC will defend or protect, but not say which, or who may be defended. Or the DM can share that information. It depends on how clearly the DM thinks the NPC is telegraphing the action.
 - If this inconveniences players to the point where they complain, the DM may put Awesome Points in the bowl to pay for secrecy.
- It is helpful to put 1-6 down the side of the dry erase board and mark in when everyone will act. Start by putting in the NPCs, then put in the PCs. (*See the combat example starting on page 209.*)

COMBAT ROUND

Choose one. Actions resolve in the order listed.

1. **Defend or Protect.** Both can counter-attack those that successfully hit you in melee combat.

Counter Attacking Minions. When a group of minions attack, they roll once to attack so the defender can roll once to counter-attack—not once for each minion in the group.

 - *Defend:* Foes are -2 to hit you. (-4 with a shield.)
 - *Protect:* Attacks in this round that target a chosen friend in your arena attack you instead.
2. **Ranged Attack.** Use a ranged weapon to attack someone in your arena or an adjacent arena. Can hold and aim to shoot later in the round, and most weapons can shoot further with a focus action.
3. **Focus or Impede.** Actions that take longer to manage.
 - *Focus:* Announce what you are starting to do for a focus action; if unharmed by 6, it happens.
 - *Impede.* Prevent someone from leaving the arena you are both in. Test your Brawn, Cunning, or Daring against their Brawn, Cunning, or Daring. (Both sides choose which attribute they'll use.)
4. **Move or Push.** Control the movement of yourself or others.
 - *Move.* Move from the arena you are in to an adjacent arena.
 - If someone Impeded you, attack them; if you inflict a Wound, you can move normally.
 - *Push.* Move one or more opponents to an adjacent arena. Use your Brawn, Cunning, or Daring, against their Brawn, Cunning, or Daring. Each target after the first reduces your roll by 1. Those you beat are hurled out of the arena.
5. **Attack or Assist.** Attack anyone in your arena.
 - *Attack.* Roll to hit, using any applicable talents or weapon bonuses.
 - *Assist.* Add 1d10 to the dice rolled by an ally in melee range; the ally keeps the top 2 rolls, so you are contributing as though you were a minion. You cannot use talents or weapon bonuses to help.
 - To shift your action to attack independently or protect your ally from another attack, spend 1 Awesome Point.
6. **Focused Events.** Focused actions go off if the focuser is still undamaged. A successfully impeded target is Cornered and cannot move next round either.

CRITICAL HIT

- **Face Dice.** One of the dice rolled to hit is the “face die” and if it comes up a 10 and the character also hits, then the attack does +1 Wound. (This may or may not be a hit to the face, it could be any kind of critical hit, but “Face Die” is funny.)

MELEE WEAPONS

TYPE	DMG	DESCRIPTION	+2 TO HIT IN ARENA
Light	1	1d10 to hit, add an attribute to the roll, do 1 Wound.	Tight
Hand	1	To hit, roll 3d10 instead of 2d10, ignore the lowest.	
Reach	1	2d10. Impeding or resisting impeding at +2.	Hazardous
Ranged	1	Attack earlier, and adjacent arenas also.	(target in) Open
Heavy	2	2d10. Big, so they do more damage.	Dense
V. Heavy	3	2d10. Huge, no shield, ignore the first Wound armor soaks.	
Unarmed	1d10 to hit, + an attribute, do 0 Wounds, only KO target. (AP for dmg.)		

Parrying Weapon. A light weapon or hand weapon used with a light weapon, hand weapon, or heavy weapon. 1 die fewer rolled to hit. (Light weapon just gets attribute bonus, hand weapon rolls 2d10 instead of 3d10. Reach and heavy weapons roll 1d10 to hit.) Once a round, get one advantage:

- +2 to hit. -2 to hit for foe targeting you. Inflict +1 Wound.

Shield. Use with hand, reach, or heavy weapon. 1 die fewer rolled to hit. Ignore 1 Wound per attack. Or, lose shield to ignore all but 1 Wound from an attack. Heavy shield can do that twice.

RANGED WEAPONS

All are +2 to hit targets in an open arena.

TYPE	DMG	DESCRIPTION	RELOAD RATE
Light	1	Sling, knife, dart. Roll 1d10 to hit, add 1 attribute. Max range: adjacent arena.	1 action: load, shoot.
Hand	1	Light crossbow, shortbow, javelin. 2d10 to hit.	
Heavy	2	Longbow, spear. 2d10 to hit.	
Very Heavy	3	Heavy crossbow, musket, pistol. 2d10 to hit.	Focus action reload.
Blunderbuss	1	Cone; in the way test Daring or get hit. Shooter's arena cone to adjacent arena.	Focus action reload.

ARMOR

ATTACK	++ Heavy	Heavy	Medium	Light	None	The “-X Wound” on the chart is the amount of incoming Wounds the armor allows its wearer to ignore.
20+	Full Dmg	Full Dmg	Full Dmg	Full Dmg	Full Dmg	
17-19	-1 Wound					
14-16	-2 Wounds					
11-13	-3 Wounds	-2 Wounds	-1 Wound	2 Stack AP for fighting unarmored		
8-10	-4 Wounds	-3 Wounds	-2 Wounds			
1-7	Miss	Miss	Miss			
Cunning	-6	-4	-2			
Loads	3 loads	2 loads	1 load			
Type	Full plate	Chain & plate	Chain	Leather	Clothes	

For monsters and talents that simulate armor, armor stacks. Wearing leather over hide like leather armor will stop 2 incoming Wounds.

WOUNDS AND RECOVERY

What is a Wound?

A “Wound” is the amount of injury needed make a normal person stop fighting.

For characters with more than one Wound, or characters who are knocked out, they can regain 1 Wound per 10 minutes of rest and attending to the injury.

Critical Chart

When characters lose their last Wound, roll 1d10, +1 per Wound beyond the character’s maximum. (If the character had 1 Wound and took 3, the roll is +2.)

- **1-6 KO.** Knocked out. At the end of the combat, get up and regain a Wound.
- **7-9 Dying.** Badly hurt, helpless, (maybe) unconscious. Without quick medical care, you’ll die.
- **10-12 Cripple.** As “Dying” and even if you do get medical help, there’s permanent handicap.
- **13+ Dead.** Bang, you’re dead.

Consequences of “Dying.”

- You get a cool scar (if you live.) Write it on your sheet.
- If you roll under your Brawn on 1d10, or get medical help, you can regain consciousness, limp, and manage basic movement. You can carry ½ your normal load capacity. Round up.
 - Anyone can render basic medical help as a focus action.
- You heal back to 1 Wound after 24 hours of complete rest; that may be in 4 increments of 6 hours each, but 24 hours of bed rest total.
- Negative Wounds are not tracked. Each time a character is hit for Wounds exceeding what the character has, you roll on the critical chart, negative Wounds are not cumulative.

Consequences of “Cripple.”

If the result of the roll when the character is downed comes up “Crippled,” roll 1d10 to see what permanent damage the character sustains. The DM can assign one if appropriate.

After each kind of crippling, a talent shows how the character can compensate at least in part for the maiming. These need not be trained, a character can practice to overcome the handicap. They do count as cross-template talents.

CRIPPLING (D10)

1. **Chronic Pain.** Take a -2 penalty to Charm and Brawn.
 - **High Pain Threshold.** *Constant.* Reduce penalties to 0 for 10 minutes by spending 1 Awesome Point.
2. **Lose a Hand.** You cannot use one of your hands.
 - **Hook Hand.** *Constant.* You can compensate with a prosthetic, so you are -2 to two handed tasks, but you can also attach a light weapon or manage many tasks unimpeded.
3. **Lose an Eye.** All range attacks and Awareness are -2.
 - **Gauge Depth.** *Constant.* You can spend 1 Awesome Point to gain +2 to range attacks.
4. **Lose an Ear.** Awareness is -2.
 - **Sharp Ear.** *Constant.* You are no longer -2 to Awareness.

5. **Lamed.** Cut movement to $\frac{1}{2}$, and Daring is -2.
 - **Hopalong.** *Constant.* Your movement is no longer $\frac{1}{2}$, as long as you have a prosthetic and/or a crutch. You are still -2 to movement over barriers.
6. **Smashed Teeth.** Charm is -2, breath stinks, must be slow and careful to speak clearly.
 - **Charming Slur.** *Constant.* You can compensate for your broken teeth, slurring understandably, chewing substances that kill the smell, and keeping your teeth out of sight. You are no longer -2 Charm.
7. **Head Wound.** Your thinking slows and moves sideways. Charm and Commitment -2.
 - **Whisper of the Gods.** *Constant.* You may not think like other people do, but you work with it, in your own weird brain damaged style. Spend 1 Awesome Point to ignore the penalties for 10 minutes.
8. **Broken Chest.** Breathing is hard. Brawn and Daring -2.
 - **Adrenaline Breath.** *Constant.* You have worked out to the point where you can spend 1 Awesome Point to ignore the penalties for 10 minutes.
9. **Confined.** Paralyzed from the waist down.
 - **Wheels.** *Constant.* In a wheelchair, can move at $\frac{1}{2}$ movement at -2 Daring (as “Lamed.”)
10. **Lose a Limb.** 1-3, right arm. 4-6, left arm. 7-9, right leg. 10-12, left leg. Counts as “lose a hand” or “lame.”



EVERYBODY ELSE

The characters are mighty and heroic, but they are not alone in the world. Here are the other broad types of people and creatures, friend and foe, that exist.

Type	Wounds	Description	Examples
Swarm	1-5	Little things that fight as a mass.	Rats, big bugs, bats, lap dogs
Minion	1	Normal people, soldiers, skirmishers.	Guards, soldiers, people
Tough	2+	Hardier person, leader, elite soldier.	Bandit leader, guard captain
Monster	3-30+	Any sort of beast or creature.	Lots of books on this topic...

Swarms

Swarms take a single Wound from weapon or bare-handed attacks, but spending 2 Awesome Points can allow more Wounds to apply to the swarm (especially with a good description of how.)

Minions

Minions aren't skilled or strong enough to get any kind of benefit from weapon types. They benefit from armor. If they are using shields, the whole mob is -1 die to hit, but all get to ignore 1 Wound.

- **How Minions Fight.** Each minion rolls 1d10 to hit; in a group of minions, keep the highest 2 to see what the mass's to-hit is instead of counting each roll individually. The mass, together, does 1 Wound unless the DM boosts it to 2 using Awesome Points. They also combine to do a Push action, or a Shoot action, etc. Minions can "mob up" into multiple groups for multiple dice pools.
- **Plowing Through Minions.** If you are fighting a bunch of minions, you can possibly hit more than one if you do more than one Wound. Each one after the first reduces your to-hit by 1 and requires +1 Awesome Point. You can kill as many in a round as you can manage.
 - The first kill costs 0 Awesome Points. The 2nd costs 1 and is -1 to hit. 3rd costs 2 and is -2 to hit. 4th costs 3 and is -3 to hit. 5th costs 4 and is -4 to hit.
 - You can spend 2 Awesome Points to increase damage by 1, and more Awesome Points to include another target.
 - When fighting defensively and gaining a counter attack, you get 1 strike against all the minions, since they all combine to one roll to hit you.
 - This only works with range attacks if they line up and the DM allows it.

Toughs

Toughs get the benefit of weapon types and usually have armor, same as characters. They sometimes have 1 Talent. Giving them shields helps them survive.

Monsters

The DM may throw any kind of monster at you, and the rules that apply to you don't apply to monsters... Be careful, anything could happen.

"Skinning" these creatures (how they are described) is important to the feel of the game, but less important to the mechanics. Minions may look different, but have the same game mechanics. The same stats for a monster could look and feel very different described differently. These rules help improvise foes quickly for pretty simple clashes. Armor also makes a big difference in their survivability.

Mix and Match. Mix and match types and you can have lots of different kinds of fights.

BASIC SYSTEMS FOR TASKS

The DM can decide how difficult something is on the spot, and call for an Attribute roll (which can be boosted by Awesome Points) or a blind luck roll (which can't) to see how the attempt turns out. These suggestions are for clarification, not to bind the DM to a single way of working these challenges out. The DM is encouraged to be consistent and creative.

COMPETITION AND UNCERTAINTY

When characters compete or the outcome is uncertain (outside of combat) roll 1d10. A tie is a win for the player character, or if between player characters, an uncertain outcome.

- *Opposed.* One attribute against an adversary attribute. Both roll 1d10 modified by attribute. Higher win, tie is inconclusive.
 - *Save vs. Magic.* Commitment is usually used to resist magic effects as an opposed roll.
- *Challenge.* One attribute against a difficulty assigned by the DM. Tie is inconclusive.

Difficulty	Description	
4	Simple.	Routine, normal, everyday. (Usually don't call for a roll.)
7	Standard.	Challenging, professional level.
10	Difficult.	Complex, unlikely, expert level.
13	Amazing.	Almost impossible, superhuman difficulty.
16	Epic.	Stories should be told about this feat.

Physical Tasks

- *Breaking Down a Door.* Those trying to break down a door by kicking it or bashing it with their shoulders take 1 Wound per effort; this can be soaked by metal armor.
- *Pickpocketing.* Cunning vs. Awareness. If Awareness beats Cunning by 4 or more, the lift is prevented. If Awareness beats or ties Cunning, the lift happens but is detected. The DM may make the lift more difficult for objects bigger than a palm.
- *Balance.* In a high place, test Daring to move. If Daring fails, test Brawn or Cunning not to fall. If successful, test Daring to move again.
- *Climbing.* Use Brawn, a success moves up or down 1 arena (generally about 20 feet or so.) If Brawn fails, test Daring or Cunning, player choice, not to fall. Every 10 feet of falling is 1 Wound.
- *Standing Watch.* Usually 3 shifts of 2-3 hours each. Test Brawn or Awareness. First shift difficulty 6, second shift difficulty 10, third shift difficulty 8. If not roused, wake for your shift at +2 difficulty.
- *Swimming.* Use Brawn, a success moves 1 arena. If Brawn fails, the character only moves ½ arena. A character can try to swim for 10 rounds, -1 per load, before needing to rest. Only characters with a Brawn bonus know how to swim; others move ½ arena on a success. On a failure, begin drowning.
 - *Drowning.* Test Brawn each round of drowning, starting at 5 difficulty, +1 difficulty a round. Each failure inflicts 1 Wound.



Social Tasks

- *Deception.* Test Cunning against the target's Cunning or Awareness. Success means the target will acknowledge the possibility, success by more than 5 means the target believes you are telling the

truth. The DM may add difficulty for outrageous or dangerous lies, and reduce difficulty for truth mixed artfully in with fiction (or calculated and edited to mislead.)

- *Inspiration.* As a minimum of a focus action, ideally about 10 minutes, one character can inspire another by testing Charm. If successful (DM sets the difficulty) the target gets +2 to a Commitment roll.
- *Intimidation.* If the character did something really cool, this could be a free action that takes place during the Defend/Protect phase. If the character must show off, intimidation can be a focus action. To scare someone, choose either Brawn, Charm, Commitment, or Daring to test against the target's Brawn, Charm, Commitment, or Daring (target choice). An intimidated target is -2 to all rolls until a focus action lets the target shake it off automatically. Either side may get a bonus for superior strength or numbers.

MORALE

A great way to shorten battles, rout a statistically superior force, and keep the action moving is to make the enemy's morale a factor. To keep it fast and simple, roll 1d10, and set the difficulty based on how the situation looks.

This is optional, and you can boost it by feeding Awesome Points to the Bowl (to encourage the characters and escalate the tension, and replenish their supply.) This is window dressing for your inspiration and amusement. Pick a number based on the situation or your whim, and roll it. Or, don't bother with the morale system at all, and decide morale issues.

Situation	Difficulty on 1d10
Feeling superior	Don't roll
Evenly matched	4+
Outmatched	8+

Events	Modifier
Lose a leader	+2 difficulty
Lose THE leader	+4 difficulty
First blood	+/- 1 difficulty

Troops	Modifier
Elites	-2 difficulty
Rabble	+2 difficulty

Who is Scarier?	Modifier
Troop Leaders	-2 difficulty
Foe Leaders	+2 difficulty

Why Roll Morale? Sometimes you want to let the players' estimation of the odds play out, being as impartial as you can be. Then it is helpful to let the dice ultimately decide (after you set the odds) how the NPCs will act. Also, this is a fun system to use for the *allies and henchmen* of the characters, to see if they are willing to fight on when the going gets tough.

Rallying Call. If the leader of wavering or fleeing troops can be seen and heard by them, the leader can try to intimidate them or the enemy that has broken them. If the intimidation succeeds, the troops rally as a focus action. Successful intimidation can call for a new morale roll, with +2 for being scary.

Gut Check. If the characters are facing a frightening situation, you can always call for a Daring check modeled on the difficulty of morale (except they add their attribute, and can boost it with Awesome Points.) The characters should pass no problem, but the roll can help heighten the tension as they realize that simply undertaking a course of action requires a success. Spending Awesome Points on the roll to decide to go on can contribute towards leveling.

Failed Nerves. This is where an inspirational speech by another character may be helpful.

STEALTH GUIDANCE

The purpose of this guidance is not to load the game up with a lot of rules, but instead to offer some guidance on ways of handling stealth in Fictive Hack—it is an important element of the genre, atmosphere, and specific objectives.

Stealth is Cunning vs. Awareness. The rest of this is commentary.

Detection Ranges

- Those with light sources will only see other light sources and silhouettes beyond the range of their light. Their night vision is spoiled by their light. However, they can hear just fine.
- In general, bright lights and loud voices are detectable from 5 arenas away. Conversation and muted lights, from 3 arenas away. Otherwise, adjacent arena.

How to Use Awareness

- Seeing lights does not require an Awareness test—there they are.
- Hearing sounds can allow an Awareness test to see if the origin of the sound is clear.
- The DM will often describe the presence of something, and players will want more information.
 - Looking at it more closely does not have to trigger an Awareness test, the DM can simply describe it better. Don't automatically default to dice.
 - If something is difficult to perceive due to lighting, distance, or other factors, Awareness may help determine how much the character can make out.
 - *Only roll to get more information if there is some question about whether the character's senses are sharp enough to get more information.*

Modifiers

- If the characters have some kind of advantage, give them up to +5. If they have some kind of disadvantage, give them up to -5. Do not consult a table. Stay fair, keep the numbers low, keep the action moving
- If characters look in the place where their quarry is hiding, don't make a roll—let them find the target. If the characters are hiding somewhere, it is poor form to arbitrarily let the searchers find them.

Sneaking

- Basically, sneaking opposes the stealthy character's Cunning to the searching character's Awareness.
- Don't call for rolls very often, unless they get positively brazen.
 - One roll should get them past an obstacle. If you call for a roll to approach, a roll to get around, and a roll to retreat, the dice will likely sooner or later betray the players and you'll have a chase instead. This discourages attempts at stealth—stealth is vulnerable.
- If the searching party is unaware of the presence of others, and unsuspecting, as long as the stealthy characters' Cunning is higher than the searchers' Awareness and there are hiding places, no roll is needed. If there is a tie, or if one is higher than the other, go ahead and roll.
- The DM can feed the Bowl to create circumstances that may interfere with stealth; a tickle in the nose, a snake nosing between boot heels, a spider down the neck, a guard has to take a leak, etc. This should lead to an opposed roll, not automatic discovery.
- If someone is hiding from the characters, and the characters state they are looking around, give them a roll. Reward good description of character actions by allowing them a chance to spot hidden danger.

Stealth is hard. Dicing for stealth is even harder—the more rolls, the more likely discovery. In general, err on the side of the players. Being stealthy and sneaking around is fun, and in most games you can't get away with it. Err on the side of deeper shadows here, and your players will greatly appreciate it.

EVASION AND PURSUIT

Eventually stealthy people get spotted, and a chase ensues. In Fictive Hack, the system is not granular enough to measure who is faster, or to account for varying speed because of loads carried. There's no accounting for getting winded by sprinting. Therefore, if one character flees in a straight line, and another character follows, the chase could dully proceed forever. No one wants that. Also, chase rules can get complicated, and no one wants that either. Here is some advice on running a chase.

Every arena separating quarry and pursuer adds +3 difficulty to Awareness tests to see the other party.

- **Transition Points.** If visibility is not good for any reason, when quarry moves from one arena to another, allow an opposed Cunning and Awareness test to see if the pursuer can keep the quarry in sight. Do not tell either party what the other party rolled.
 - **Hiding.** If the pursuer lost sight of the quarry, the quarry may be well served by immediately hiding if out of line of sight, so the pursuers chase on. If the pursuers did not lose sight of the quarry, the chase is over right there.
 - **Multiple Exits.** A pursuer who succeeds in Awareness vs. Cunning may see which way the quarry goes if there is more than one possible arena to escape through. If the pursuer does not succeed, then the pursuer loses an arena and gets another Awareness vs. Cunning test to re-acquire the trail (at -3, for adding an intervening arena).
 - **Arena Difficulties to Detection.** "Open" is +3 difficulty for the quarry. "Dense" is +3 difficulty for the pursuer.
- **Burst of Effort.** If one party wants to pour on the speed and is in the same arena, so it matters, the runner can spend 1 Wound to get the edge. The pursuer can spend 1 Wound to gain the opportunity to impede, attack, or throw. The pursued can spend 1 Wound to negate that opportunity.
 - **Bidding War.** If both parties spend a Wound, then the pursuer can spend one or more Awesome Points. If the pursuer out-spends the quarry, then the pursuer can attempt an action. Otherwise, the quarry remains frustratingly out-of-reach.
 - If a character is in a chase with an NPC, the player gets half the Points.
- **Obstacles.** By racing to hard-to-reach places, the quarry can be harder to pursue. Trying to climb, knock over a cart, start a brawl, or involve various other obstacles means the DM assigns a difficulty and the quarry tries to hit it. (Generally involves Daring, Brawn, or Cunning.)
 - If the quarry fails, the obstacle defeats the character, and the pursuers get an arena closer or get to interact with the quarry.
 - If the quarry succeeds and the pursuers fail, the quarry gains an arena's distance and the pursuers must try again or go around.
 - If the quarry succeeds and the pursuers succeed, the obstacle is overcome.
- **Range Attacks.** "Range" is before "Move" in the combat round, and it can end a chase. The pursuer or quarry can stop running for a round and use a range attack. To shoot on the run, spend 1 Awesome Point and use only 1d10 to hit. This only works with weapons that could be used while running; not bows or slings, but possibly guns or thrown weapons or crossbows.
- **Winded.** Generally minions can run for 5 rounds, and toughs for 10. Subtract 1 round per load carried. Don't bother winding player characters, let them run their hearts out. NPCs can run longer if you want them to.

TERROR, HORROR, AND MADNESS

Optional System, Without Dice

Characters are confronted with awful things in a Gothic fantasy game. Can their minds cope?

- **Terror.** Characters use Commitment to resist Terror, pitting their conviction in the world as they understand it against supernatural mind-bending threats and eldritch forces.
- **Horror.** Characters use Daring to resist Horror, drawing on their courage against disgusting, filthy, physically threatening or gruesome stimulants.

The DM sets a difficulty, starting at 6 and going up by increments of 3 as the stimulant intensifies. If the character has [the appropriate ability x3] then the character is fine; if not, the character loses control. Players can spend Awesome Points (1 Awesome Point to add +2 to their score, as though boosting a roll) to stay in control of their character.

LOSING CONTROL

If a player agrees to lose control of the character for a round, the player gets an Awesome Point from the Stack. If a player agrees to lose control of the character for a scene, the player gets 3 Awesome Points. An out-of-control character is freaked out by the situation and unable to think clearly. If the player suggests crazed things the character could do, the DM (and other players) can reward that creativity with further Awesome Points. The DM decides what the character does, and what happens to the character, while freaked out.

- Possibilities include an habitual swoon, screaming like a girl, dropping what is carried and jumping, taking a swing at whatever's moving, a little pantswetting, losing a grip and falling (if climbing), running away, shouting in anger, inflicting self-harm in an effort to escape, and so on.

MADNESS

If a character goes through an intensely traumatic situation, the player and the DM can cooperatively decide to add madness to the character (both player and DM must consent). This insanity can take various forms, and either the DM can accept the player's suggestion for madness, or choose one without the player's approval. When a character goes insane, the player gets 6 Awesome Points from the Stack.

The DM awards the player an Awesome Point from the Stack when the player role plays the madness for the character in a way that amuses the DM or improves the overall tone and flavor of the game. If the DM calls for the insane character to do something insane, and the player resists, that's fine and the player stays in control, but it costs the player 1 Awesome Point that does not count towards leveling. The DM can call for insane behavior at any time.

- Possibilities include an addictive personality, black melancholia, changed personality, fear of enclosed spaces, fear of the dark, compulsive theft, fixation on the occult, gluttony, rage, insane courage, nerves, odious quirks, nightmares, religious mania, self torture, catatonia, hearing voices, and so on.



TERROR, HORROR, AND MADNESS

Optional System, With Dice

Characters encounter things face-to-face that are viscerally, intellectually, and sensually overwhelming. It is not desirable or appropriate for the *player* to be faced with those things, but it is also not quite appropriate for the player to decide a character can shrug off the effects of overwhelming stimulus in the game. A middle ground to manage that distance is a system for terror, horror, and madness.

Managing Fear

What if there is something that invokes both terror and horror? If one is obviously more of a threat than the other, the DM can choose that one; otherwise, the player can choose, as the character focuses in on the more manageable source of distress. Often a character will favor Daring or Commitment.

At its foundation, this system is about adding Gothic spice to the game, and making it more awesome. It should not escalate to a punitive system; in fact, it can be ignored if the DM desires.

TERROR

Terror involves a feeling of expanding—hair rises on the neck, breathing quickens, the implications sink in, the hands start to shake as an impossible truth confronts a rational mind. Terror strikes at the sense of self's location in relation to the outside world. The sense of human significance is reframed and revised to be much smaller than civilization teaches, on an alien scale. When characters' reality bends, so should their minds.



Confronted with terror, the character tests Commitment. The difficulty is set by the scale of the terror, adjusted up or down a level or so by the DM (whose judgment on these matters is final, and sets the desired tone for the game—but should be consistent.) This roll can be adjusted with Awesome Points.

Difficulty	Description	Examples
3	Uneasy	Someone innocent is capable of dark acts. Your friend has a dark past.
6	Chilling	A mentor is corrupt. The dead do not leave. Confronted with magic.
9	Shocking	You can be a monster. Evidence of eternal torment. Assaulted by magic.
12	Blood Curdling	You are complicit in atrocity. You are possessed. Faced by demons.
15	World-Changing	You are damned. Trusted authorities are alien. Witness an alien god.
18	Unendurable	You have damned others. Aliens consumed your loved ones. No hope.
21	Insupportable	You ended all human future. Communion with an alien god.

If the roll fails, roll 1d10.

Roll	If 15+	Effect
1-2	1-2	Shaken. You are intimidated. -2 to all rolls until you shake it off. (p. 60)
3-4	3-4	Staggered. You reel backwards in terror, and lose 1 round.
5-6	5-6	Paralyzed. You lose 1d5 rounds, rooted to the spot, unable to process what confronts you.
7-8	7	Flee. Fear overtakes you. You must flee for 1d5 rounds.
9-10	8	Faint. Your mind gives way. You fall unconscious for 1d5 minutes or until roused.
	9	Shocked. Roll 1d10 x10, that's the percentage of your hair that turns stark pure white. You lose that many rounds to dizzying vertigo of the mind.
	10	Madness. Roll once on the madness table. That condition begins to afflict you next adventure.

HORROR

Horror involves the soul-shrinking impressions of disgust or revulsion. The mind tries to shut out or repress the implications of what you've just seen. These influences are more external to the sense of self, more visceral. Something encountered by the body and senses, rather than the mind and intellect. Corpses, blood, and slime; disgusting and corrupting. Horror reminds characters that they are mortal, vulnerable, subject to bodily disintegration or transformation. We are fallible, mutational, or unstable.

Confronted with horror, the character tests Daring. The difficulty is set by the scale of the horror, adjusted up or down a level or so by the DM (whose judgment on these matters is final, and sets the desired tone for the game—but should be consistent.) This roll can be adjusted with Awesome Points.

Difficulty	Description	Examples
3	Distasteful.	Stink of death. Significant blood. A corpse. Minor mutation. Parasite.
6	Queasy.	Mutilated corpse. Gory murder scene. Maggots. Cripple beggar.
9	Disgusting.	Handling viscera. Rotting wounds. Flyblown or waterlogged corpse.
12	Revolted.	Torture. Experience minor mutation or crippling. Handle dead. Infested.
15	Vile.	Rape. Crippling torture. Exposed to wasting disease. Cannibalism.
18	Utterly Corrupt.	Alien rape. Transformation to another form. Buried alive.

If the roll fails, roll 1d10.

Roll	Effect
1-2	Disgusted. Fight through your feelings of disgust, -2 to all actions in the presence of the horror.
3-4	Recoil. Drop what you are holding and recoil in fear, lose 1 action.
5-6	Sickened. Gag, vomit, lose 1d5 actions to the shakes and violent retching.
7	Flee. Fear overtakes you. You must flee for 1d5 rounds.
8	Faint. Your mind gives way. You fall unconscious for 1d5 minutes or until roused.
9	Rage. You attack as best you can, +2 to hit and +1 Wound. If no clear target, act out violently.
10	Madness. Roll once on the madness table. That condition begins to afflict you next adventure. <i>Re-roll if under 15 difficulty.</i>

MADNESS

The mind's desperate attempt to compensate as it is assaulted by awful influences can unbalance it. Every madness is +1 on all terror and horror chart roles, even if the madness is later "cured."

Any time the madness could affect a character, test Commitment. The difficulty is 9 to avoid falling into or avoid snapping out of an ongoing condition. The difficulty is 12 to avoid a specific action.

Madness can be cured with 6 months of religious help, and replacing a talent and 1 attribute point with “Cured Madness.”

2d10 Roll	Madness	Effects
2	Addictive Personality	Action. (12) Constantly in search of intoxication to stave off fear. If unable to get the it when in need, -4 to all rolls.
3	Black Melancholia	Ongoing. (9) If slipping into the melancholy, -6 to all rolls until it is over. Test Commitment once every 6 hours of encouragement, or 24 hours of being left alone.
4	Changed Personality	Ongoing. (9) Your old personality couldn't protect you. The new one can. But it isn't very nice. And, former friends and family seem a threat to the new you.
5	Fear of Enclosed Spaces	Action. (12) If you are in a tight fit, -4 to all rolls until you get out.
6	Fear of the Dark	Action. (12) If you are in the dark, -4 to all rolls until you get light.
7	Fingersmith	Action. (12) If you have the opportunity to steal something, test Commitment to resist.
8	Fixation on the Occult	Action and ongoing. (12) If you can master the occult, you can master your fear. Buy tomes and tutoring, apply occult solutions to all problems.
9	Gluttony	Ongoing. (9) Every 6 months test Commitment. Fail, and lose 1 Brawn and Daring and gain 50 pounds. If you reach 0 on either, you are bedridden.
10	Imp of the Perverse	Action. (12) You have an irrational urge to do and say the wrong thing in any given situation. Test Commitment to resist it.
11	Insane Bravery	Ongoing. (9) You can't bear the ambiguity of your danger and vulnerability, so you ignore it. Test Commitment to see if you can retreat from danger.
12	Murderous Rages	Ongoing. (9) You are freaked. Any provocation must be resisted or you attack whatever is bothering you. Also, you must pass a Commitment test to stop attacking before your target (and any allies) are downed.
13	Nervous Wreck	Ongoing. (9) You can't handle it anymore. You are -4 on Terror and Horror tests, and the results of failure are upgraded by 1d5.
14	Odious Quirks	Ongoing. (9) You talk to yourself, or choose some other socially unacceptable loony behavior. Test Commitment to avoid lapsing into that state, and to snap out of it.
15	Prone to Nightmares	Ongoing. (9) 50% chance your sleep will be wracked by nightmares; upon waking, lose 1d5 Awesome Points; if you don't have enough, owe the Stack.
16	Religious Mania	Ongoing. (9) Faith will protect you from fear. Spend all your income tithing to a church. You can take Zealot talents.
17	Self-Starvation	Ongoing. (9) Every 6 months you don't make a Commitment roll, lose 1 Brawn and Daring and lose 30 pounds. If you reach 0 on either, you are bedridden.
18	Self-Torture	Action. (12) About once after every stressful situation, you have the urge to cut yourself, doing 1 Wound of damage that only heals after 24 hours. Resist with Commitment.
19	Stupefied	Ongoing. (9) You go catatonic for 1d6 hours if you slip into this, only coming out of it if you make the roll. Resist with Commitment.
20	Hearing Voices	Ongoing. (9) Your Awareness and Commitment are -2 as you are constantly distracted by dark whispering.

DISEASE

Medical treatment in the World Between is not very advanced, and your best bet is to avoid getting sick.

Frost Fever. Contracted from cold, empty air or thick, polluted air. You alternate between raging fever and bone-shaking chills. You count the temperature as 20 degrees less comfortable than it is (either way). You are -2 to all actions. Any time you act strenuously you take a Wound. Cures involve wrapping the body in linens and poultices, repeatedly melting ice over the body while it is tied down; costs 250 silver.

Fumbling Shakes. Social disease. The DM can tell you your character drops something, and you have to spend an Awesome Point that does not count towards leveling to hold on. Fine detail actions are at -4. The only natural cure is to be bled of 3 Wounds of blood at once, then rest for a week; that is 60% effective and costs 200 silver.

Galloping Gurgles. Contracted from bad food or drink. Your guts squirm like snakes, and you gurgle and fart horrifically. Take -2 to all actions. You make bad noises when it is least convenient. Lasts 1d10 days.

Midianese Plague. Contracted by fleas and touch. You break out in black pustules. Test Brawn once a day, starting at 3 difficulty +2 each day. If you survive a difficulty 15 day, then the difficulty goes down at 2 a day until it reaches 3. Fail a test one day, and die horribly.

Mordish Rot. Contracted from touching the dead, or cursed treasures. Your skin continually peels off in itchy patches. You require 24 hours of bed rest to heal each Wound you take, and your critical rolls are +2. If you die, you are likely to rise as undead. The cure is quite exotic, and some components are illegal; a usual regimen takes a month of treatment and about 500 silver.

Ruinous Bloodthirst. Contracted from eating rotten meat. You fly into a murderous rage over nothing, gaining +2 to hit and dealing +1 Wound damage. You can recover when someone has taken 2 Wounds, including you.

Scarabaen Prance. Contracted through foul water. You spasm like a clumsy dancer any time you try to do anything physically strenuous. You are -6 to all actions while in the throes of a spasm. One spasm a week, roll as though reaching 0 Wounds and accept the results. Add +1 per week of infection. This lasts for 5 weeks or until cured in an unpleasant week-long process overseen by a doctor and alchemist (usually costing about 100 silver.)

Sputtering Hack. Contracted from night vapors and feverish waters. You cough blood. You lose 1 Brawn upon getting the sickness, and 1 more each week. When you reach -1, you die. Alchemists can create a poultice to plaster on the chest, and a variety of unpleasant things to drink, and leech out the bad blood; this process takes 1 week and costs about 150 silver, and has a 70% chance of working.

Ulverlandian Lament. Social disease. You feel like insects are scurrying around in your skull. You cannot concentrate; you are -4 on mental tasks, and casting magic is impossible. Once a week you forget a language or alphabet. You only lose a total of 1d5; when you run out of languages, you die. If you still know a language when the disease runs its course, you live.

Weeping Scabs. Social disease. Your body is covered in pus-leaking sores that grant you -2 Charm. You get crusts around your mouth and nose and your eyes turn yellow and leak. A strong alchemic regimen can cure this with a week of focused treatment that inflicts 2 Wounds on you and costs 50 silver.

HORSES

While there are many possible mounts in a fantastic setting, these rules cover horses specifically. They are the most common mount, and a good system for horses can be adapted to other mounts.

BASICS

A horse has 2 Wounds. The horse can attack as a heavy weapon, instead of the rider acting.

A horse can carry 2 normal riders, or 1 rider with up to 3 loads (total 6 loads.) The saddle is free.

Mounting or dismounting is a move action.

- Falling from a horse, take 1 Wound per speed.

Being on horseback is being in an arena within an arena; attacking a mounted foe, or from horseback, counts as being in a hazardous environment.

- Against a lower, unmounted foe, gain +2 to hit or inflict +1 Wound after rolling to hit.

A horse can move 1, 2, or 3 arenas in 1 move action.

- A horse can only move 3 if it is not fully loaded.
- Riders on a moving horse can declare they are riding, then act as they wish in the round, getting one action (out of order if desired) as the horse moves. Initiative still matters.
- Attacking in melee from horseback is +1 Wound to a melee attack and -2 to hit for all attacks per current speed of the horse.

Controlling your horse, roll 1d10 as a free action against a difficulty set by the DM. (Usually 6.)



Carrying capacity.

- A typical horse can carry 6 loads; as little as 3, and as much as 9, depending on horse quality.
 - A child is 2 loads, a typical character 3 loads, and a character with 5+ Brawn is 4 loads.

- Basic saddle, bridle, and tack costs no encumbrance.
 - Barding costs encumbrance like humanoid armor costs encumbrance; it is heavier, but as it is strapped to the horse, it encumbers the same.
- Loads worn or carried by riders apply against the mount too.
- A horse can only sprint if it is not fully loaded, and an overloaded horse can only walk and will fail any rolls. You can only overload a horse by 1 load.

Mounted combat.

- “Horseback” is an arena within an arena. This does not affect weapon ranges.
- Mounting or dismounting is a move action.
 - If there are exciting circumstances, require a Brawn or Daring test, base difficulty 6.

Attacking a mounted foe, or attacking from horseback, counts as being in a Hazardous arena.

Attacking from horseback grants either +2 to hit or +1 Wound, determined after the roll, against targets on foot (as long as they are lower).

Riders on a moving horse can declare they are riding, then act as they wish in the round, getting one action (out of order if desired) as the horse moves. Initiative still matters. If you declare an action after people in that phase have begun acting, you go last.

Fighting horse.

- Horses attack as a heavy weapon. Trained warhorses attack as a very heavy weapon.
 - The rider cannot attack in the same round as the horse.

Speed.

- A typical horse has a speed of 3.
 - Walking is speed 1.
 - Canter is speed 2.
 - Gallop is speed 3.
 - A horse can only gallop if it is not fully loaded.
- Attacking from horseback does +1 damage per horse’s current speed.
- The horse can cross 1 arena per current speed each round.
- A rider can act once while the horse is moving, even if that action is not in its normal place in the round.

Falling Off.

- Falling off a horse does 1 Wound per the horse’s current speed.
- Staying mounted under difficult circumstances takes a move action and a 1d10 test.
 - Difficulty 3; the horse maneuvers, up or down steep hills or turning.
 - Difficulty 6; the horse is startled and rears, or takes off.
 - +3 difficulty per Wound sustained by the rider or the horse.
 - If the character already acted before the horse requires a test, the test is +6 difficulty.

Controlling the horse.

- Roll above a 6 on a d10 to maintain control as a free action.
 - This is to control a startled mount, to get the mount to attack, to compel the mount to back up, go down stairs, pass something unsettling, or stop running wild.

BEASTS OF BURDEN

Adventurers need to travel, and traveling usually involves moving equipment and supplies. Beasts of burden become critically important. Here is a simple rule set for beasts of burden.

Size	Wounds	Loads Carried	Min/Max	Example
Small	1	2	1-3	Riding dog
Medium	2	4	2-6	Donkey
Large	2-4	6	3-9	Horse
Huge	4-10	9	5-14	Small Elephant

- Min/Max is what the weakest to the strongest specimens can carry; generally, they cost half or double the cost for the animal.
- Flying, swimming, and climbing beasts often have their carrying capacity halved because of their unusual movement methods.

Riders. Riders count as loads.

- 2 loads per small person. (No Brawn bonus.) Child.
- 3 loads per normal size person. (Brawn 0-4.)
- 4 loads per large person (Brawn 5+.)

Saddle and tack do not add to loads for the animal unless they are specialized.

- +1 load for a flying rig.
- +1 load for a large creature.
- +1 load for a specialized arrangement, like a jousting saddle.
- +2 loads for a howdah.

Loads the riders carry are loads the animals carry too. If a rider is 3 loads, and the rider has a heavy weapon and heavy armor, the rider counts as 5 loads.

- Animals can drag twice as many loads as they can carry.

VEHICLES

Wheeled vehicles add x3 to the carrying capacity with 2 wheels, and x6 for 4 wheels.

- The vehicles take 1-3 loads per multiplier. That's the weight of moving the vehicle while empty.
- Up to 4 animals can contribute to pulling the load; more animals just means rotating which ones are pulling and prolonging the time they can pull.
- For sleighs, use the wheel equivalent.

Basic Calculation

Type	Wheels	Load Multiplier	Load Weight	Wounds	Road Hazard Damage Diff.
Rickshaw	2	x3	Counts as 3 loads	3	3+
Cart	2	x3	Counts as 6 loads	3	6+
Wagon	4	x6	Counts as 6 loads	6	6+
Coach	4	x6	Counts as 12 loads	6	12+

Look at how many loads the one pulling the vehicle can carry, then multiply the Load Multiplier and subtract the Load Weight of the vehicle to see how many loads the vehicle can carry.

Road Hazard

The DM can add these to spice up a journey. They could be a tree branch in the road, or a chug-hole, or running over an unfortunate who fell under the wheels, or a crumbling edge of the road. When encountering these while moving, roll 1d10 for the vehicle; if it does not beat the difficulty, the vehicle takes 1 Wound.

The DM can feed to bowl to add to the difficulty, add to the damage, or add a special effect (like a wheel coming off.)

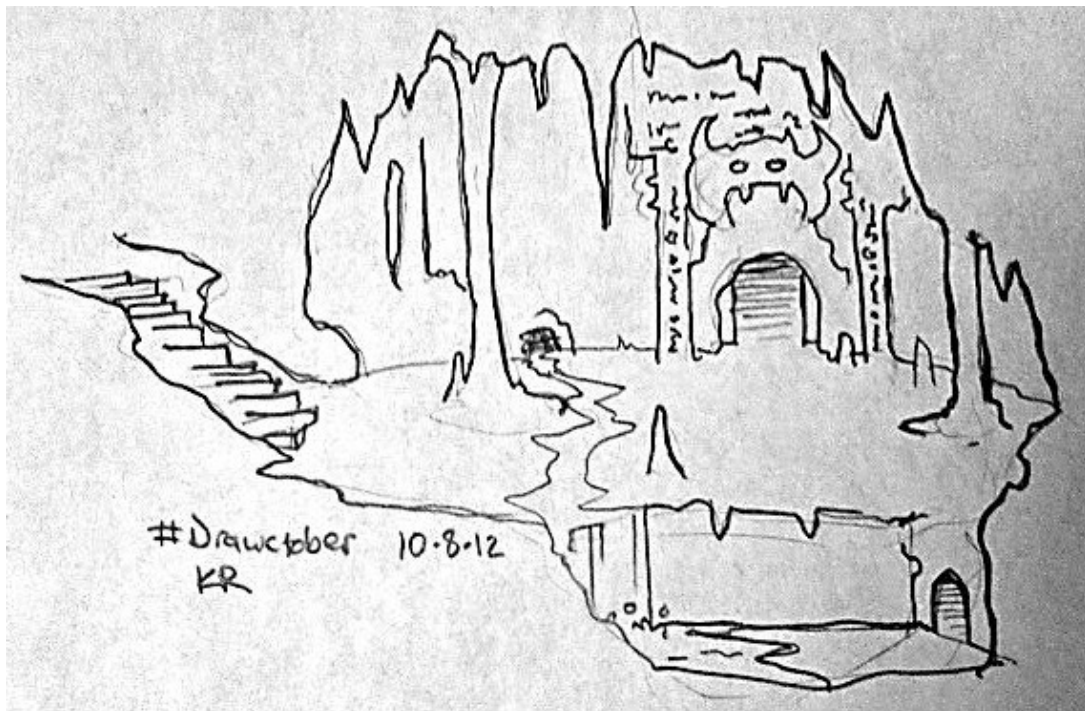
If the vehicle gets stuck as a result of a road hazard, then the vehicle counts as +1/2 loads for the vehicle and everything on it, and it must be shifted out of the hole or over the fallen tree or whatever. Wise characters will empty the vehicle before trying to shift it.

Loads the Vehicle Can Carry Besides Itself

Type	Donkey (4)	2 Donkeys (8)	1 Horse (6)	2 Horses (12)	Elephant (9)
Rickshaw	9	X	X	X	X
Cart	6	18	12	X	21
Wagon	18	34	30	66	48
Coach	X	28	24	60	38
Howdah	2	X	4	X	7

Pulled by Character Strength (Characters may combine strength, “loads” is how much they can carry)

Type	2 loads	3 loads	4 loads	5 loads	6 loads	7 loads	8 loads	9 loads	10 loads
Rickshaw	3	6	9	Rickshaws are too frail to carry more—get a cart.					
Cart	X	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24
Wagon	6	12	18	24	30	36	42	48	54
Coach	X	6	12	18	24	30	36	42	48
Howdah	X	1	2	3	4	5	X	X	X



HIRELINGS

Characters hire 3 kinds of employees: labor, guards, and experts.

Pay Rates. A laborer expects **3 silver** a day. A guard expects **5-10 silver** a day. An expert expects **10-25 silver** a day. These rates double for difficult or dangerous work. If an employee is expected to do the work of more than one kind of employee, then the pay should stack.

- Examples: If a guard must carry loads, the guard is paid as a guard and a laborer. If a fighter is hired, the fighter can command guard and expert pay.
 - Characters paid to go on a dangerous expedition where they carry their own gear, provide expertise, and expect to fight may command 35-60 silver a day.
 - Expected practice is to identify a beneficiary should you be killed. Your employees will do the same.
- The employer is expected to provide rations, weapons, armor, equipment, and transportation.

A character can command a number of “tough” level employees (henchmen) equal to the character’s Charm, or a relevant attribute. They should be paid 1 silver per [Wound + highest attribute] per day. That is also the rate characters should deserve for their services.

- Brawn. Warriors.
- Cunning. Thieves, rogues.
- Daring. Bandits, pirates, machismo types.
- Commitment. Acolytes.
- Charm. Anyone.
- Awareness. Scholars, wizards.

In a mixed group, only the Charm bonus determines the maximum number of henchmen.

A character can command a number of minions equal to the character’s Charm rating x5. The character can command more, because the minions can only handle pretty simple requests, and generally they operate in groups or are at the character’s elbow.

Leaving Employment. If mistreated, the hirelings test Commitment against the character’s Charm or appropriate attribute; if they succeed, they leave employment. (And that’s only if the character wants them to stay employed anyway.)

Porters. Expect to pay 1 silver per Brawn rating of porters; default is 1, but stronger porters may be available, costing (for example) 3 silver a day for a porter with a Brawn of 3. (Encumbrance, p. 16.)

Talent. All hirelings are expected to have a single Occupational Talent.

Leveling Henchmen. If the party has a really fun henchman and they want to level the henchman, then once per adventure the table can volunteer 6 Awesome Points from their supply (it can come from any number of players, it doesn’t have to be one person or everyone) that do not count towards leveling. The DM will then add a level to the henchman (as well as a talent and attribute slot.) Henchmen cannot be equal to the highest level in the party, or they are characters entitled to a share (not a payment.)

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CREATING MAGIC ITEMS

Magic items are a big part of most fantasy settings and games. Here are two systems for creating them.

LEGENDARY OBJECTS

Legendary objects represent daring adventurers putting part of their essence in a chosen object that has been through adventures with them.

At the end of a supernatural quest, you can give up +1 in an attribute, and give a piece of gear a mystical advantage. This doesn't work with any random item at hand. It must be something that is near and dear to you, with emotional and symbolic significance.

You can put any number of advantages into an object (maximum one at the end of each quest) but cannot put the same advantage on an object twice. Here is a list of advantages, subject to DM approval.

- +1 to hit.
- Conditional +2 to hit (against spellcasters, against reptiles, etc.)
- +1 Wound capacity to its user that goes away when the object is not on the user's person.
- Put one of your talents in the object.
 - If a constant talent the bearer also has, add 1 improvement when using it.
 - If arena or rested talent the bearer also has, add 1 use.
 - If someone who does not have that talent uses the object, they can use the talent.
- Recharge any 1 rested talent once per day.
- Reduce 1 Awesome Point cost for a favorite Awesome Point costing action.
- Protection from 1 special kind of attack, up to 1 Wound or +2 resistance.
- Summon a magical being once (if appropriate).

Good candidates include the weapon used to kill a dragon taking on some of its power, a good-luck charm from the character's deceased mother offering protection, a cleric's holy symbol being more profoundly blessed by the god, and so on.

ENCHANTING OBJECTS

For wizards, mages, necromancers, illusionists, and shamen, enchanting objects works the same way. First gain a talent, "Create x" (where "x" is the kind of enchantment you want to use.) Then each enchantment takes the time specified by the talent, and the materials, and any other processes. To infuse the magic into the object, the spellcasting character loses a point from 1 Attribute (specified by the talent.)

Different traditions of magic and different research from various areas of the world can create talents that end up making the same objects and enchantments, but use different methods. If the spellcaster does not take the creating talent, but tries to follow the instructions from a book, they will lack the familiarity, skill, and instinct to manage the process. Because of the flexibility here, mystic research can create variants of mystic objects that have more or fewer drawbacks, different parameters and abilities, and basically whatever the DM will allow. Here are some sample enchantment talents.

- **Create Ring of Darkvision.*** *Illusionist talent.* Carefully remove the cornea lenses of a deep-sea angler-fish and cure them in a formula that renders them tough as leather. Then slit them into strips and braid them into the shape of a ring, and cure them in a formula that renders them tough as steel,

and translucent. Lose 1 Daring, and the ring is complete; when worn, it is invisible and adjusts to fit the finger of the bearer (humanoid sizes only.) The wearer can constantly see 30 feet in the dark.

- **Create Ring of Darkvision.* *Mage talent.*** The ring must have been crafted by a dwarf, and it requires at least a sliver of darkstone embedded in it. It must be enchanted once a night for 10 nights, with dwarves intoning ancient rites for it 24 hours a day and no light coming into its presence. The final night, bathe it in your blood and lose 1 Awareness, and the ring is complete. The wearer can constantly see 30 feet in the dark.
- **Create Ring of Darkvision.* *Necromancer talent.*** Bind the spirit of a blind warrior to a vertebrae of an elven wizard from the base of the skull. Paint the vertebrae with special sigils in a tarry ink made from the corruption of a vat of 66 moles and some other special ingredients, including grave earth and the shedding of fine steel a thousand years old. Place in a dwarf skull sealed shut with steel plates, along with precisely 82 corpse beetles that have only tasted the flesh of those you killed with your necromancy. After a month, open the skull and remove the vertebrae, casting the final enchantment and losing 1 Charm. The bone will have been sculpted to a ring shape that will adjust to fit any humanoid finger. The wearer can constantly see 30 feet in the dark.
- **Create Ring of Darkvision.* *Shaman talent.*** Find the spirit of a bat, a mole, and a cave fish. Persuade or force them to enter a ring that includes a strand of your hair. Each spirit you put in (up to 1 per your level) will serve for 1 year and then depart, and when the last spirit departs the magic is gone. The wearer can constantly see 30 feet in the dark.
 - *Shamen generally only pay an attribute point when they create something “permanent,” trapping a spirit in an object until the object is broken.*
- **Create Ring of Darkvision.* *Wizard talent.*** Craft the ring of a precise formula of starmetal, mithril, and silver. Take it above the clouds to bask in the moon and starlight when the constellations of the Wyvern, the Ettin, and the Demagogue are in the western sky, for a full month. Compel a blind elf to swallow the ring, and when it has moved through the elf and been ritually cleansed, lose 1 Commitment and the ring is complete. The wearer can constantly see 30 feet in the dark.

CHARACTERS INVENTING ENCHANTMENT TALENTS

The more powerful the enchantment is, the more unique components and difficult timing issues should be required. Alternatively, talents could require spending more attribute points, losing talent slots, leveling during the process, human or monster sacrifice, or other powerful substitutes to fuel the magic.

This system is deliberately vague. The DM’s world is strongly affected by the type and number of magic items available. By using this system, the DM can motivate quests for components and circumstances, for wizards (possibly including characters) who want to make an item. Some enchantments might not be very utilitarian, they might instead open an ancient door or release a specific suffering spirit.

You can create magic items with this, and you can keep them magical instead of mechanical. Characters do not need to know how an object was enchanted in order to use it, but having this system in the background allows the DM to create rich histories for magic items at will, and limit their creation too.

SPELL TALENTS ACROSS TRADITIONS

Spell talents can be very tempting and exciting. A wizard may want to cast a mage spell, or a necromancer may be jealous of an illusionist spell. How can one spellcaster get a spell talent from another kind of magic?

WIZARDS, MAGES, ILLUSIONISTS, NECROMANCERS, SHAMEN

There are four factors to getting a spell from one of these traditions to work in another tradition.

1. Get a competent teacher or a method for learning the spell.
2. Get DM approval.
3. Upon leveling, spend the talent slot to gain a spell talent.
4. Accept the price of learning a different kind of magic.

Price to Learn a Spell of This Tradition

- **Wizard.** Must give up 1 point of Awareness for each Wizard spell taken. There is a lot of background noise and etheric energy that you learn to touch, but you lack the inherent skill to filter it properly.
- **Mage.** Must take “Read Magic” as the first spell talent and “Enchant Staff” (Orxham Elemental Wizard grimore) for the second. Must craft a staff that will serve as the component for all mage spells. Some spells will require other components as well.
- **Illusionist.** Must give up 1 point of Commitment for each Illusionist spell taken. Learning the ways of illusion shakes fundamental certainties.
- **Necromancer.** Must give up 1 point of Brawn for each Necromancer spell taken. Manipulating undead energy is hard on your health.
- **Shamen.** You must be chosen by a spirit guide, usually a totem animal or an ancestor. This figure becomes the gateway to learning further interaction with spirits.

HOLY WARRIORS, DRUIDS, SHAMEN, SERVANTS OF THE GODS

If your patron god grants you a spell, then you get that spell. There is no extra cost. However, most gods will require a sign of faith or a quest. Sometimes a special spell talent is granted as a reward for completing a quest. Cosmic powers can grant a talent immediately, so the character will not get a talent upon leveling.

Gods and cosmic powers can give spell talents to anyone they want. A faithful fighter could be given a spell talent by a grateful god in exchange for ongoing service; granted enough spells, the fighter could become a holy warrior.

Some gods only operate through handing out spell talents, like the Beast Gods. Instead of dedicated cadres and traditions of worshipers, they share supernatural abilities with champions, shamen, and those who quest.

MAGIC OF THE GODS, ARCANES PRAYERS

Gods may gift their followers with spells mortals could not get on their own, from any tradition. Faithful spellcasters might be able to sort out a magic way to replicate a divine effect—but to do so invites the wrath of the god. Ultimately this is up to the DM.

WIZARD (TEMPLATE)

The Wizard has a peculiar connection to the energy of the cosmos, able to bind and shape it at will.

INHERENT—MYSTIC

You see how others connect to mystical energy, and you can see where mystical energy has been used. You detect magic and spellcasting and spellcasters by seeing auras around them at will. You can leave your magical mark on anything, visible only to people whom you feel would need to see it.

LIMITATION—DELICIOUS

Lots of monsters like the spicy taste of wizard blood. Lots of powerful people want wizard servants as status symbols or slaves or artillery. Lots of ancient and bored powers enjoy recruiting pieces for their unknowable and twisted games. Finally, the shifting fates in the aether use those who use them. Magic is expensive power.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: 5 doses of flashpowder, a scroll case. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver x50.

You can take spells from wizard grimoires if you have 6 hours of study time per spell. If you want to be able to cast spells from a grimore untrained, and use the research feature of the book, you must take [X Grimore] as a talent.

TALENTS

- **Arcane Protection.**** Rested. Focus action (upgrades to move action). Foes are -3 to hit you for an hour. This protection can be sacrificed to reduce incoming damage by 1 Wound. This stacks with armor. This spell only works on the caster. When this spell is active, you do not get 2 Awesome Points for fighting without armor.
- **Counter-Spell.**** Rested. Cast during the defend/protect phase, this spell allows you to intercept any magic cast in your arena or an adjacent arena. Both the one you intercept and you roll 1d10 and add your level to the roll. On a tie, they cancel each other out. If you get a higher success, the spell is cancelled and the other spellcaster takes 1 Wound. If you lose, the spell works and you take 1 Wound.
- **Menace.**** Rested. Focus action (upgrades to defend action). Gain a flat +5 bonus to an Intimidate test; when overcoming being intimidated, this spell guarantees success in overcoming fear and also projects intimidation.
- **Mystic Attack.**** Arena. During the Shoot phase, attack any target you can see in your arena or an adjacent arena. Attack with 1d10+Level to hit, inflicting 1 Wound.
- **Rejuvenate.**** Rested. Focus action. Count all spell talents as being rested except this one. This does not rest or nourish the caster's body, only the caster's mystic reserves. Or, charge an item so it glows about as bright as a torch for 1 hour per Commitment.

THE MANUAL OF GASTROMANCY

(WIZARD GRIMORE)

The Manual of Gastromancy is a thin book bound in plain black leather. King Relan II, former ruler of Nalconia (in the Iron Principalities) kept his kingdom through guile and magic instead of military might. His rule ended in 6,042. His specialty was conjuring enchanted food. It is said that even the most bloodthirsty warlord might have his disposition changed at one of King Relan's great feasts.

LORE

The reader can automatically find one useful fact about the history of kings in the Iron Principalities during the Age of Roads, by looking in the book. The reader can also find recipes for roast meats, sauces, gravies, ales, and wines.

SPELL TALENTS (WIZARD)

- **Conjure Pheasant of Majestic Presence.** *Rested.* Focus action. A beautifully roasted pheasant appears on an elegantly carved wooden platter. The first person to eat a slice of pheasant is +4 Charm for 12 hours. No one else gains any magical benefit (though the pheasant is delicious, and can feed up to 4 people.) When the feast is over, the platter and leftovers vanish in a puff of savory woodsmoke.
- **Inspiring Feast for Captains.** *Rested.* Focus action. A table and chairs (enough for 1 person per caster level) appear at a table set to feed that many people. It takes about an hour to consume the magnificent feast, with invisible servants caring for the diners. The center of the table has a special treat (candied plums, deep-fried pastries rolled in sugar, etc.). There is 1 per caster level. Eating one of these grants 1 Awesome Point.
- **Purify Food.** *Rested.* Focus action. Cleanse food and drink for up to 1 person per level in the arena by bowing and focusing. This eliminates all poison (even magic poison) as well as dangers from undercooking, overspicing, or any other discomfort-inducing condition.
- **Rations.** *Rested.* The process to create enchanted rations takes a full day to make 3 weeks of rations, with a stocked kitchen and a hot oven. The cost for the raw materials is doubled. However, the rations will provide 1 day of nourishment (food and water) in a single serving, and also heal 1 Wound (no matter how grievous the injury, counting as 24 hours of rest for those who were dying). Only one of the enchanted rations works on a target in a day. It looks like a granola bar.
- **Taste of Betrayal.** *Rested.* Focus action. This spell affects 1 person's food laid out within the same arena or an adjacent arena. If the target has betrayed the caster, the target takes 1d5 Wounds about a minute after eating begins, choking and coughing. In addition, the target's tongue turns blue for 1 day per Wound inflicted (even if the damage was resisted).

THE RED BOOK OF NELANDRA KIR

(WIZARD GRIMORE)

The Red Book of Nelandra Kir is a thick, illuminated book bound in blood-hued leather. It is a must-read status symbol for the decadent and gleefully corrupt wizards of Scarabae that seek to thwart the Church (the Crimson League, about 4,682). Nelandra Kir was a beautiful mage alive during the Rise of States who was fascinated by spells that transfixed or paralyzed their targets. It is said that her lush garden was decorated by many a rival who had been turned to marble sculpture and that her preferred way to dispatch particularly meddlesome foes was to torture them while under the effects of a paralysis spell.

LORE

The reader can automatically find one useful fact about the history of Scarabae's rebel wizards who opposed the Church in previous ages, by looking in the book. The reader can also find recipes for various paralytic poisons.

SPELL TALENTS (WIZARD)

- **Brain Freeze.** *Rested.* Focus action (upgrades to shoot action). You can blank out thinking in 1 arena per casting. Each round of casting knocks out a cumulative 1d10 Commitment each round, focused against one or more targets. Those whose Commitment is reduced to -1 (if it is that bad to begin with they are affected for free) can't process information. They can't understand what others say, they can't formulate new ideas, or respond to stimulus (including pain or threat). This lasts as long as you cast, +1 round per your level (though no new Commitment is affected when you stop, those already affected remain so).
- **Paralysis.** *Rested.* Focus action (upgrades to shoot action). Each round, you can immobilize 1d5 of a single target's Wounds. The target is not affected until all Wounds are immobilized. Once immobilized, the target is frozen for 1 minute per your level. A minute-long ritual (no additional energy required) can extend this time to hours. Affected targets can still feel pain, and they can speak if you choose to allow it; they can even be freed from the neck up if it amuses you.
- **Scarlet Tendrils.** *Rested.* Focus action (upgrades to shoot action). Your arena, or an adjacent arena, sprouts otherworldly red tendrils. Create 1 tendril per level, each grants +2 to impede. Those successfully impeded take 1 Wound from constriction each round. This lasts as long as you cast, +1 round per your level. You must re-cast to resume if you allow the spell to lapse.
- **Stoneflesh Prison.** *Rested.* You turn a living target into marble, in suspended animation. A resisting target escapes if able to move; if held immobile, the target is transformed if you can spend 1 focus action per the target's Commitment (minimum 1) uninterrupted. Your target may consent, or be unconscious. The statue is ultra-realistic, and has no memory of time passing while stone. Casting the spell again can return the form to flesh; if the statue is damaged to the point of snapping limbs or features off, apply crippling damage. Statues ignore the first 2 Wounds from any attack.
- **Voice of the Marionette.** *Rested.* Focus action. If you beat the target on an opposed Commitment test, you control the target's voice for 1 minute per level. The target cannot speak without your permission, and the target will say anything you want the target to say. You must be within 100 feet per level, and have eye contact to cast the spell (but not to keep it up.) You also control the target's inflection, facial expressions, and gestures.

THE SCAVENGER MASTERS GRIMORE

(WIZARD GRIMORE)

The Masters of the Scavenger Lands include Gartheon Nack, Yelkar Truth, and Larmak Fermain. These mysterious robed figures meted justice out among the Vistani and Wastelanders, battling or unleashing monsters as they learned to manipulate the horrific energies gushing out of the Ruinous Scar. The greatest honor was survival; their magic tends to grow more potent as its wielder continues on unkilld.

This magic is most often learned from strange wandering masters, or from hermits deep in the Scavenger Lands, or from scarred mercenary spellcasters who spook the armies they serve.

LORE

The reader can automatically find one useful fact about a location in the Scavenger Lands, or one of its famous Scavenger Master wizards, by looking in the book. The reader can also find useful information on mutagens, catalyzing mystic radiation into spell effects, and disintegrating matter.

SPELL TALENTS (WIZARD)

- **Aspect of Stone.** *Rested.* *Focus* action (upgrades to defend action). Your skin calcifies and hardens. Your magic armor will absorb 1 incoming Wound of damage per your level. It will flake off after about 10 minutes.
- **Caustic Arrow.** *Rested.* *Focus* action (upgrades to range action). Fling magical acid as a range attack. It inflicts 1 Wound a round, and it burns for 1 round per your 3 levels. (1-3 1, 4-6 2, 7-9 3). If it hits an armored foe, 1 Wound will destroy 1 level of armor instead of wounding the target. If the target gets out of the armor before the armor is totally destroyed (generally a focus action), the target will not take damage from the acid.
- **Caustic Fog.** *Rested.* *Focus* action. Half an arena is fogged with hideous yellow acidic fog for 1 round per your level. Everything that is in that half arena or moves through it takes 1 Wound a round. You can focus on a target in the mist (you can feel their location viscerally, things with bodies can't sneak through without you knowing) and intensify the acid on them or an inanimate target, spending 1 Awesome Point for 1 additional Wound, up to 1 Wound a round per your level.
- **Globes of Flame.** *Rested.* *Focus* action (upgrades to move action). Gather energies into a globe held in the crook of one arm. You gain 1 Wound of energy per your level. You can then throw that energy as a range weapon with your free hand, putting as many Wounds into each attack as you want (up to all in one, or multiple shots until you run out.) You can move and keep the globe, but if you are wounded it dissipates. You can hold the globe for up to a minute.
- **Mutation Shield.** *Rested.* *Focus* action. You are safe from (further) mutation for 24 hours. You can cast this on yourself, or others, but you must touch them.

THE SPRING HOUSE GRIMORE

(WIZARD GRIMORE)

The Spring House of the Orxham Academy teaches magic to wizards who embrace life. At the best of times, this love works itself out as compassion, joy, and healing. Sometimes that enthusiasm gets sidetracked into sordid romances, inebriation, and various addictions. Senior members of the Spring House wear laurel crowns and pure white robes.

LORE

The reader can automatically find one blazingly useful romantic poem, historical romance, or biography of a leader in the Spring House by looking in the book. The reader can also find recipes for love philters, instructions for cloud reading, and analysis of tea leaves for seeing future omens.

SPELL TALENTS (WIZARD)

- **Charismatic.** *Constant.* Any time you must make a Charm test, you can add any other attribute that you are using appropriately. Brawn for flexing, Daring for a devil-may-care appeal, Commitment for burning intensity, Awareness to see the subject as no one else can, and Cunning for some sly wit.
- **Child of Nature.** *Constant.* You are immune to non-magical disease or illness. You can adjust the perceived temperature 30 degrees warmer or cooler for your personal comfort. You can spend 1 Awesome Point to dry yourself as a focus action if you are wet. Resisting plant and animal toxins, you count as rolling a 10. Normal animals like you automatically.
- **Enchant Object.** *Rested.* 1 hour ritual. You enchant an object. You can place up to 1 Awesome Point in an object per level. Every 3 Awesome Points grants +1 on an attribute roll. Every 5 Awesome Points can grant +\-1 to hit or +\-1 Wound. The enchantment lasts 1 year per your level. If you spend an attribute point on the enchantment, it can be made permanent. To create other enchantments (like animated toys, talking paintings, cunning locks, etc.) the DM will set a number of Awesome Points that must be spent on the enchantment for it to work.
- **Fire Whisperer.** *Arena.* Focus action (upgrades to shoot action.) You can light or extinguish the fire equivalent of 1 torch per level in your arena. You can bolster your power by adding +1 “level” per Awesome Point spent that does not count towards leveling. You can affect up to 6 candles per level, or 2 lanterns. It costs 3 levels to deal with a hearth fire, 6 for a campfire. Used as an attack, the flammable target takes 1 Wound per 3 levels of fire or +1 Wound from a flaming weapon. Once you dampen or create flame, you can maintain that state up to your level for free, but you must spend Awesome Points to keep up the power beyond your level.
- **Life Energy.** *Rested.* Focus action. Touch the target (including yourself) and regenerate the life energy there. The target immediately counts as rolling a 10 to resist poison, drugs, infections, or other harmful ongoing effects. If the target is injured, the target can instead get 1 Wound back.

NARLATHIAN SPELLCRAFT (WIZARD GRIMORE)

Narlathia is the fey goddess of enchantment, pain, and plunder, also known as the Goddess of Eyes. Spiders are the way the world itself worships her. They embody her intricate plans with their webs that glitter with beauty and complexity, then snare and kill. She weaves mystic energies as well as divine powers. Drow lavish her with love, and all the fey accord her respect.

Wizards willing to debase themselves and accept the shivering pleasure of her pain are wrapped in her etheric strands and paralyzed. Their spirits are partially consumed. After that, survivors can summon and manipulate arachnid energies. Usually, drow or intelligent spiders are the teachers. Very seldom do wizards survive this training unless they are drow. Maybe half the survivors mutate spider-like features. This is considered a sign of Narlathia's attention, whether favor or displeasure.

LORE

The reader can automatically find one useful fact about spiders or Narlathian worship. The reader can also find descriptions for harvesting and using venom, recipes for spider cooking with digestive acid catalyst, and knotwork. The book is also a manual teaching graceful movement for seductive dancing.

SPELL TALENTS

- **Compound Eyes.** *Rested*. *Focus* action (upgrades to move action). You can see in the dark in your arena, and all Awareness tests in your arena or an adjacent arena add your level as a bonus. This lasts about a minute per level.
- **Conjure Web.** *Rested*. *Focus* action per increment (upgrades to move action). You can generate 1 yard of rope equivalent per level. Each unit can tie a prisoner to be +3 difficulty to escape. Webbing something shut gives it the equivalent of +3 Brawn per unit. Two units can serve as a reach weapon. As you gesture in the ether, web coalesces around your hands and takes the shape you desire. Each increment of webbing lasts for 1 hour, 8 hours if you spend an Awesome Point.
- **Ethereal Venom.** *Rested*. *Focus* action (upgrades to move action). Conjure swirling etheric venom around you that flows into any target you can see or touch. The target is automatically hit for 1 Wound, and takes a -1 to all actions per your level. The venom wears off at the rate of -1 per minute. Targets with 0 Wounds who suffer from venom die. You can only use this against a target once a day, measured from dusk to dusk.
- **Spidermove.** *Rested*. Cast as a free action while moving. Mystical adhesion flows over and around you, so you can choose what to stick to and what is frictionless to you. You can move at full speed up or down walls, across ceilings, under walkways, and so on. You can also leap across an arena as a free move during the movement phase—so you can move twice if one move is a leap, or you can leap into an arena then engage in combat. This lasts for one use or minute per level.
- **Summon Spiders.** *Rested*. *Focus* action (upgrades to move action). Take 1 Wound and conjure up spiders in a swarm equal to 1 Wound per your *Commitment*. (Upgrade this talent to summon minion spiders. Upgrade it again to summon tough spiders up to 3 Wounds each. Upgrade it again to summon monster spiders. Upgraded, this spell allows mixing types, up to total Wounds.) The spiders are shadowy, and if light shines through their bodies it reveals a weird red tint.

WIZARD FAMILIARS

Overlay Template for Wizards, Mages, Necromancers, Illusionists, and Shamen

A magic user may either find a spell to cast to create a familiar, or gain one as a gift from a greater power the character has agreed to serve (usually a demon or a beast god).

INHERENT ABILITY—ATTUNED

While the familiar is touching you, you can pull energy from it to recharge one rested magic talent a day. You gain other advantages from the familiar, dependent on its type, while you are in contact. You can spend 2 Awesome Points to reduce damage to a familiar by 1 if it is in the same arena.

LIMITATION—INTERTWINED LIFE FORCE

If the familiar is killed, you permanently lose 1 Wound. This loss incapacitates you for about 1 minute per your level in agonizing pain as your life force unbraids from what is torn from the world. If that takes you to 0 Wounds, then you die painfully over the course of 1d10 days.

TALENTS

These talents may not be accessed untrained. However, they can be gained without further training. They do not count as template talents, or cross template talents.

- **Conduit.** *Rested. Focus* action (upgrades to move). You can speak to the power that gave you a familiar through the familiar, and it can speak to you. As long as it wants to, that is. And it can injure you automatically as much as it wants if you displease it during the conversation. (Sometimes a power will loan you this talent before you level, so you don't get one when you level. If you do not take this talent and the loaner demands you do, the loaner can kill the familiar...)
- **Extended Contact.** *Constant.* You count as touching your familiar as long as both of you are in the same arena. This can be upgraded to include +1 arena range per your Commitment.
- **Familiar Vision.** *Rested. Focus* action. You and your familiar can see through each other's eyes; both of you see the same thing, and you choose who is in charge of acting in which body. This can last as long as you want it to, up to when either of you are next unconscious.
- **Invincible.** *Constant.* If killed, the familiar is just banished until the eve of the next full moon, when it will return none the worse for wear. However, when it is killed, you take 1d2 Wounds. (If you use Soul Bearer and are merged with it when it is killed, you appear before the force that gave you the familiar, or return to the world somewhere amusing to the DM.) This talent overcomes the limitation.
- **Mystical Energies.** *Constant. Focus* action (upgrades to Protect). You can borrow 1 Awesome Point per your level from your familiar while you are in contact. You must pay the debt back to the Stack (not requiring contact) before you can receive further Awesome Points.
- **Soul Bearer.** *Rested. Focus* action (upgrades to Move). You can absorb your body and essence into your familiar, or your familiar's body and essence into yourself. It takes as long to separate as it does to merge. One of you must emerge from the other for at least an hour a day, or lose 1 Wound a day. While merged, you count as "in contact" and if one of you is killed the other dies as well.

WITCH (TEMPLATE)

This can be a character's only template, or it can be an overlay template. See page 46 for details.

When someone who is not a wizard gets a familiar, that person becomes a witch. The character gets magical power through a pact with a supernatural power symbolized by the familiar, instead of by talent and study. The usual cost is the character's soul, upon death.

The deal is usually sealed by sex, sometimes by a kiss; the pleasant or horrific nature of this act is really up to the demon or pagan god. By the end of the contract, it is *never* enjoyable for the witch, no matter how it began.

The witch is beholden to the power bestowing the familiar, and punishment for disobedience can be harsh. When a deal is sealed with a demon, a permanent mark appears on the witch; it may be a mole, or a scar, or a birthmark, but there will be some sign the alert can link to the pact.

INHERENT ABILITY--EMPOWERED

While the familiar is touching you, you can pull energy from it to cast magic talents made available to you by your patron. You can spend 3 Awesome Points to recharge any spell, even during combat. You can spend 2 Awesome Points to reduce damage to a familiar by 1.

LIMITATION—INTERTWINED LIFE FORCE

If the familiar is killed, you permanently lose 1 Wound. This loss incapacitates you for about 1 minute per your level in agonizing pain as your life force unbraids from what is torn from the world. If you only have 1 Wound, then you die horribly over the course of 1d10 days.

- Also, the death of the familiar may represent you failing to uphold your end of the bargain with your supernatural master, so you may be marked for extradition to the World Below sooner rather than later. That depends on the nature of your deal, the temperament of your demon, and the cause of death for the familiar.
- You lose all spellcasting ability from the demon upon the death of the familiar.

TALENTS

The entity can choose to give a witch access to 1 spell per level. The witch can take some of the spells as talents, all others must be cast as untrained talents from the base template, costing 3 Awesome Points. The nature of available spells depend upon the nature of the demon granting power, the spell list can change.

If a character starts as a witch, the character gains the “Conduit” talent immediately, and is -2 attribute points.

- **Conduit.** *Rested.* Focus action. You can speak to the power that gave you a familiar through the familiar, and it can speak to you. As long as it wants to, that is. And it can injure you automatically as much as it wants if you displease it during the conversation. (Sometimes a power will loan you this talent before you level, so you don't get one when you level. If you do not take this talent and the loaner demands you do, the loaner can kill the familiar.)

FAMILIAR TYPES

You gain the advantages in brackets when you are in contact with your familiar. Familiars have magical protection. Attackers are -2 to hit them. They have 1 Wound per your 2 levels. (1-3 is 1. 4-5 is 2. 6-7 is 3. Etc.) DMs can randomize a familiar with percentile, choose on behalf of the power-giving entity, or let the player choose. Appropriate attributes are assumed to be about +1 per Wound. Familiars benefit from the bonuses they grant.

1. **Air Elemental.** Breezy ball of turbulence the size of a head, can be kept in a jug. [Always provides a breeze, allows breathing in any environment for one person whose head is enveloped]
2. **All-Too-Human Cat.** Wears a dapper outfit, walks upright on hind legs. [+2 Awareness and Cunning, can speak]
3. **All-Too-Human Rat.** Three times the size of a normal rat, stands on its hind legs, likes to dress like a swashbuckler. [Can speak, attacks with 1d10 + [Wounds] to hit or as an independent parrying weapon for you]
4. **Armadillo.** It looks like a normal armadillo, but it has mystic runes etched in the pebbly texture of its shells. [Ignore negative effects of losing a counterspelling clash, counterspell at +2 levels]
5. **Bat.** Looks like a normal bat, but the wing membranes have mystic sigils etched in the leather. [Grants echolocation in an arena]



6. **Black Cat.** A normal looking black cat with a human tongue. [+2 Awareness and night vision in arena and adjacent arena]
7. **Black Goat.** Walks upright, plays pan pipes, is incredibly haughty. [Can carry you in a leap over 1 whole arena as a move action]
8. **Bomber Beetle.** The size of two fists, it dribbles acidic corrosion from its abdomen. Its carapace has the symbol of a comet across it. [Unrechargeable rested talent, it fires as a blunderbuss]
9. **Centipede.** About the length of your forearm, but it can coil tight the size of your fist. It has 1 segment for every year of your life, and it is marked with fractal iterations of your mystic sigil. [Its bite causes the target to relive one or more of the most awful moments of life so far, Terror 12; it automatically hits out of combat, in combat it rolls 1d10 +[Wounds], and the target is incapacitated for 3 rounds (in combat) or minutes (otherwise) after the bite whether the save is successful or not]
10. **Chain-Rattling Spirit.** Ghostly form clad in a death shroud weighted down with chains. [Terror test difficulty your level x2 (maximum 16) at will for everyone but you, incorporeal (hurt with magic or hit to the face)]

11. **Chameleon.** The size of your hand, a weird horned sticky-tongued tree gripper looks otherworldly. [It can shift to match any background as a focus action, +6 Cunning. You can add your level to your Cunning for stealth purposes]
12. **Chinchilla.** It looks like a normal fluffy handful of chinchilla, but if you pet it you cannot feel a body in the softness of its fur, even if you reach in up to your elbow while it stares at you with its beady black eyes. [+2 Charm, and against Terror tests]
13. **Cockatiel.** Scrappy pale bird with a remarkable crest, the size of your hand. [It can speak, you sense ambush 1 round before it happens; that crest pops up]
14. **Cricket.** The size of a thumb, iridescent, and primed for fiddling. [People who committed a wrongful act must test Commitment difficulty 12 not to confess if the cricket is placed on them for a minute]
15. **Crocodile.** About the size of your forearm, lazy, ruthless, smug. Several of its teeth are gold. It is always weeping. [Spend 2 more Awesome Points to ignore 1 more Wound, can spend an additional 2 Awesome Points to inflict a second additional Wound with a magic attack]
16. **Crow.** A normal looking black crow, but its head is smooth and eyeless. [+2 Awareness, long range vision, can speak]
17. **Dandyish Devil.** Tiny, wears a jaunty cap and smokes cigars, complains of ennui. [+2 Awareness, lend 2 Awesome Points (in addition to Mystical Energies talent)]
18. **Demon Grub.** Demons use their spawn as fuel for their great spell engines, now you can too. About the size of a newborn, it is segmented and leaking and hideous, colorless and almost translucent, unable to move, with the same face you had when you were born. You grow a nipple in your wrist that leaks a foul smelling fluid it eats, though whether it needs to or not is unclear. [Can speak, lets you to use 1 Awesome Point for free each round; counts as spent if you spend it, comes from the Stack]
19. **Devilgirl Dancer.** Tiny, wears provocative outfit, dances on your command. [+ level to your Charm]
20. **Dragonfly.** The size of a finger, plus wings, it is potent and lovely. [It can touch one minion per arena and disable it with magical discharge as a shoot action]
21. **Earth Elemental.** Handful of rocks that can form a body. [Can dig as well as 2 strong men with shovels, very minor alterations to stone]
22. **Fire Elemental.** Fist sized ball of flame, can be kept in a jug. [Flies, acts as a torch, attacks as a minion or adds +2 to hit or +1 Wound to your attack]
23. **Fire Lizard.** A tiny dragon the size of a winged kitten, it can spit little licks of fire, fly, and teleport up to 1 arena. [Unrechargeable rested talent, it can teleport with you up to 1 arena away]
24. **Floating Eye.** This is the eye of a demon, and you can tell upon close examination. However, some wizards are willing to lose an eye to give their familiar a roost (it can communicate with the brain like an eye), instead of allowing it to float along with them. This demon orb is sneaky and sadistic, a dangerous scout. [It can move one arena a round in any direction, and it can cast any spells the caster knows, up to 1 per Wound between rested periods—does not exhaust the caster or need components]

25. **Floating Pufflizard.** Like a blowfish, but instead of puffing up underwater, it siphons helium from another dimension and forms a spiky little dirigible the size of a head. It is usually on a leash, or at least a string. When it is not puffed up, it looks like a sleek lizard the size of a hand. [You can borrow double your level in Awesome Points from it, without the “Mystical Energies” talent]
26. **Fungaloid.** A mushroom the size of a hand, with little arms and legs and eyes. [Communicates by sneezing telepathic spores at the target, Brawn difficulty 10 to resist, Terror test generally follows.]
27. **Furry Biter.** A ball of fur the size of a head, 2/3 of it is a massive fanged mouth. [It attacks with 1d10 + [Wounds] and inflicts 1 Wound; you can throw it as a light range weapon]
28. **Gamecock.** Belligerent rooster, always appears coated with blood. [+2 Awareness and intimidation, your voice is audible at twice normal range with a crowing intonation at will]
29. **Giant Mosquito.** This horror’s body is the size of a forearm. [As a focus action, it can drain a Wound. It can hold up to its Wounds in additional Wounds. It can inject 2 doses of this blood into a humanoid target to restore 1 Wound; anyone but you punctured by this thing suffers from Horror 10]
30. **Glow Beetle.** The size of two fists, its carapace reveals an abdomen that glows like a firefly, only constant and at will. [Glows as a torch, magic can be read by its light]
31. **Hand of Glory.** This severed hand of a murderer normally holds a candle or hangs around your neck on a rope. It is dry, withered, mummified, and only barely stinks. [Unrechargeable rested, animate it (like Thing Addams) to find one target and touch it; the target loses 1 Wound a round and takes a penalty to all actions equal to your level while gripped; if the target is killed in this way, you get 1 Awesome Point per the target’s Wound capacity]
32. **Hawk.** A normal looking hawk with translucent feathers. [+2 Awareness, long range vision, +2 Initiative]
33. **Hellskito.** Bulbous head, nasty proboscis, the size of two fists, with bat wings and needle-sharp gripping claws. [It attacks as a focus action, rolling 1d10 + [Wounds]; if it hits, it drains 1 Wound from the target and gives you 1 Awesome Point when you connect next, stores up to 1 per your level]
34. **Hermit Crab.** It is the size of your palm, midnight black, and its shell does not reflect light—at least, not light from its physical location. [As a focus action, you can go into the hermit crab’s interdimensional shell space, about 5x5x3 ft. It’s big enough to sleep, or study, or rest]
35. **Hideous Mask.** Alien rubbery mask-like thing with 10 long fingers and a whip-like tail, scuttles like a grotesque spider, likes to spring onto a target’s face and latch on, gripping the head and wrapping the tail around the neck, feeding air to its target as it chooses. [Attacks as a shoot action, ignoring any armor but helmet; if a hit, the target is incapacitated until the face hugger is removed; trying to remove it without your consent (or hurt it) inflicts 1d5 Wounds to the victim it grips; this thing inspires Horror 10]
36. **Hop Toad.** Toad with pale skin and clumps of hair, croak sounds like human sobbing. [Telepathy with 1 target in the arena or adjacent arena as a focus action at will]
37. **Horned Serpent.** Viper with tiny horns, horribly human eyes, and blood red scales. It whispers in a hiss, urging you to commit terrible acts. [+2 Awareness, 1d10 + [Wounds] to hit, if it hits a target with under 10 wounds and does not hit armor, the target must test Brawn difficulty 10 or die]

38. **Horse.** Looks like a normal horse, except sometimes the eyes reflect light strangely so they seem lamps of balefire, and when backlit by a sunset sometimes you can see its bones. [As a normal horse]
39. **Hovering Skull.** Skull of any creature roughly humanoid size, hovers shoulder level default, can move at normal human speed up to 1 arena higher. Usually has an outrageous accent. [You can cast spells through it, telepathic contact up to adjacent arena]
40. **Hummingbird.** Like a tiny thumb-sized scintillating jewel hovering and alive, beautiful and delicate and too fast for the eye to follow. [Spend 2 Awesome Points to upgrade casting speed by 1, from a focus to a move to a shoot to a defend action]
41. **Hunting Spider.** The size of your open hand, it can crouch up small, but it can leap an entire arena in a bound. [+2 Awareness and Initiative, can automatically disrupt a focus action]
42. **Iguana.** Perches comfortably on your shoulder or the crook of your arm, usually it is pale or very dark, its eyes are always gold. [Unrechargeable rested focus action, either automatically succeed moving between arenas, or move two arenas in one move]
43. **Imp.** Dark blue-black, consistency of hard rubber, fist sized, venomous tail and fangs, lamp-like yellow eyes, bat wings; a nasty piece of work. [Night vision, it attacks as a minion and a hit does no damage, but the sting requires a Brawn test difficulty 10 or the target is paralyzed with seizures for about 10 minutes; very painful, and if it chews a paralyzed target, 1 Wound every 2 minutes]
44. **Koala.** Looks like a koala bear, about the size of a head. It is black, with red eyes. [Anything it watches for more than 10 seconds (that is not in combat or otherwise stimulated) must test Commitment at 10 difficulty once a minute; fail, and nod off to dream-haunted sleep]
45. **Lap Dog.** Fits in a purse or the crook of the arm, so ugly it's cute. Unnerving stare, never blinks. [+2 Charm, Commitment]
46. **Mandragora.** Animated root that looks like a baby the size of a hand. [Increasing Wounds damage by 1 with a magic attack only costs 1 Awesome Point]
47. **Mastiff.** Big scary dog, ghostly white with all-black eyes. [Has double Wounds, fights as a tough with heavy weapon, can move 2 arenas per round or move and attack]
48. **Mechanical Owl.** Made of brass and tin, makes whirring and chirping noises. [+2 Awareness, automatically picks a lock in 1 round]
49. **Meerkat.** Looks like a normal meerkat the size of your forearm, but its eyes are always bleeding. [+2 Awareness, hours of rest count as hours of sleep]
50. **Monkey.** Looks like a monkey, small enough to perch on your shoulder. All its teeth are razor sharp, and it has human eyes. [+2 Awareness and Cunning]
51. **Mouse.** Looks like a common mouse, except its tail is unnaturally prehensile. [+2 Awareness and Cunning]

52. **My Little Familiar.** Animated statue of a pony with strange rounded shapes, warm to the touch, of an unknown tough material like soft wood. Long false mane and tail, very cute. Your arcane symbol marks its rump. [+2 Charm, only pay 2 Awesome Points to recharge a rested spell in combat]
53. **Non-Euclidean Dog.** Looks like a normal dog, but something is off; it smells vaguely of sulfur. [Your attempts to intimidate inflict Terror of that difficulty, fights as a minion or gives you +2 to hit]
54. **Parrot.** Looks like a common parrot, with a slight metallic sheen to the feathers. [Can speak, +2 Charm]
55. **Peacock.** An especially beautiful specimen, with shifting designs like a kaleidoscope in its tail feather display. [+2 Charm, +2 vs. Terror]
56. **Phoenix.** Gorgeous bird the length of your forearm with a plumed tail twice that long, in every hue of fire. [Counts as "Invincible" or if you have Invincible, can return the next day. Ignore 2 Wounds a round from heat or fire]
57. **Pig.** Looks like a normal pig, except it glows very faintly. [+2 Commitment; it knows the future, and very occasionally shares an important insight about what will happen by drawing a picture]
58. **Porcelain Double (Life Size).** It cannot speak, it looks like you but with a blank for a face. Only you see its withering stare of hate. [Fights as a tough, can use weapons, armor, shields]
59. **Porcelain Double (Miniature).** Fits in your hand. It cannot speak, it looks like you but with a blank for a face. Only you see its withering stare of hate. [+2 Awareness, night vision]
60. **Pumpkin King.** Has a jack-o-lantern head, over a skeleton carved of wood and dressed like a dandy.



Loves scaring children and, if left alone, will sing to itself. [Can speak, fights as a tough, can inspire Terror 10, head provides equivalent of candle light at will]

61. **Pygmy Goat.** Unbearably cute, knee high, stubby horns. Hisses and croaks, spits tar. [+2 Charm and Commitment]

62. **Rabbit.** Pure black, gold hourglasses in black eyes. [+2 Cunning, un rechargeable rested move 2 arenas in 1 move action]

63. **Raccoon.** Daring masked thief of the natural world! Its shed hair forms runes that, properly read, reveal the resting places of legendary thieves. [+2 Daring and Cunning]

64. **Rat.** Looks like a common rat, except it has human shaped hands for its feet. [+2 Cunning, can chew through its body thickness of rope as a focus action]

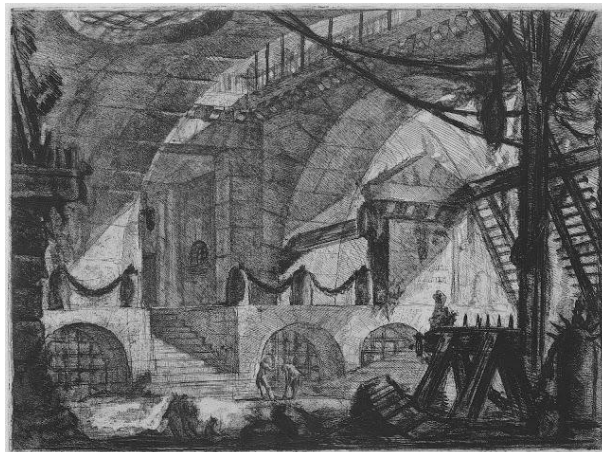
65. **Raven.** A normal looking raven, exposed bones

on undersides of wings. [+2 Awareness, it can drink the eyes of the dead and transmit the dying vision to you, normally at least 6 Terror or Horror to receive the last sight]

66. **Salamander.** Brilliant red, fits in your palm, eyes black as the Pit. [You can breathe water, and ignore the first Wound from fire damage]
67. **Sand Crab.** Its shell is about the size of your hand. Its coloration shifts to match whatever stones are nearby. When it pulls in, it looks like a local stone. [It ignores the first Wound from each attack, and is impossible to distinguish from a local rock when it is retracted; you don't need to breathe]
68. **Sand Devilfish.** Sandy colored octopus adapted for scuttling around on land, usually grips the headpiece of a staff (or pretends to be one.) [+2 to impede or attack an impeder, +2 Cunning]
69. **Scarecrow.** Made of straw and bone, has a profound hate for the living, and the patience of the devil. Likes to skin its victims and wear their leather. [Fights as a tough, can use sword, shield, armor, can inspire Terror 10]
70. **Screech Owl.** A normal looking owl. Instead of screeching, it unleashes hideous maniacal cackling or the death shrieks of children. [+2 Awareness, night vision, +2 to stealthy movement]
71. **Shadow.** Fits into your shadow, but commandeers it—your shadow may not act as you do. [+2 Cunning, it can disconnect and move through other shadows to spy]
72. **Shaggy Manthing.** Covered in hair, amorphous shape, limbed tribble the size of a fist. [+4 to Terror and Horror tests]
73. **Shocker Lizard.** Scaly bipedal lizard about the size of a cat. Often shrieks “pikaaaa!” when unleashing a charge. [Unrechargeable arena focus action, channels a shock into a target it touches or hits with 1d10 + [Wounds]; inflicts 1 Wound magic electrical damage, you can boost it with Awesome Points]
74. **Shoulder Angel.** Androgynous, beatific, and prone to whisper the filthiest things to you; the most disturbing part is that you really don't mind. Body the size of your index finger, plus glorious wings. [+2 vs Terror and Horror and Madness, can speak, fly]
75. **Skink.** Cute little lizard with iridescent stripes down the sides, the color of a precious metal, the size of your biggest finger. [-4 to critical roll, you can regrow any crippling you receive while bonded to it in a week]
76. **Slith.** Looks like a tyrannosaurus rex the size of a kitten. [+2 Daring and Intimidation, if it attacks as a focus action it rolls 1d10 +[Wounds] to hit and inflicts 1 Wound]
77. **Sloth Bag.** It is sloth-like, it grips its feet on your shoulder and forms a sling bag most of the time. It doesn't mind. It's not doing anything anyway. [+2 vs Madness tests, can carry up to 500 coins (only currency) in an interdimensional space for no encumbrance, that can't be found by a search]
78. **Snail.** Its shell is about the size of the last joint of thumb, it has the same color as your skin tone, and the shell is bone colored, etched with mystic scrimshaw; directions to the center of everything. It has no eye stalks, instead its eyes just hang above the body, or retreat into it when endangered. [Its mucus has restorative properties, granting +2 to a save against poison or venom; if it is allowed to crawl over a severe wound, 10 minutes count as 3 hours of bed rest]

79. **Songbird.** Looks like one of any number of normal songbirds, but the beak is always the color of bone. [Can talk, +2 Charm, can twitter to grant +4 to saves against sound attacks or persuasion]
80. **Sparrow.** Looks like a common sparrow, only it has no eyes, only tiny pinpoints of balefire in empty sockets. [+2 Awareness, +2 Initiative]
81. **Sprite.** Puckish, dressed in green finery, demands to be carried in a kettle, makes lewd jokes. [Can glow bright as a torch and fly, can cast feeble curses at will]
82. **Squirrel.** Looks like a normal squirrel, but with a metallic undertone. [+2 Daring and Charm]
83. **Starving Book.** Hefty tome about the size of a spellbook, bound in human skin and trimmed in bone. Inside, the pages are oddly textured—with tastebuds. [It bites; it can somehow slide/glide at human speed, and it attacks with 1d10 + [Wounds], doing 1 Wound]
84. **Strangling Snake.** Looks like a speckled band when it is constricting on a target's throat. Requires a focus action to attack it and not hit its target when it is attacking. It only attacks sleeping targets. [+2 Awareness and Cunning, drowns targets with strangulation, Brawn difficulty 10 to tear it off]
85. **Tiny Blue Elephant.** It is the size and weight of a bowling ball, and seems utterly useless; it can't even move around, only sit and grunt and waggle its eyebrows and stunted trunk. [Survive your death once through a miraculous circumstance; the elephant dies, but you suffer no ill side effect, even from the familiar limitation; this one can't have the Invincible talent; you get another familiar when it goes]
86. **Tiny Crawler.** This repulsive thing is the length of your hand, it looks like a sickly pale segmented cutworm with sucker feet and a head with compound eyes and a mess of undulating tentacles that are always moving. It smells like a midden heap. [Immune to paralysis, and anyone it caresses with its tentacles must test Brawn difficulty 10 or be frozen for 1 minute. It can inflict 1 Wound every minute burrowing into the frozen body]
87. **Tiny Flying Dolphin.** It looks like a normal dolphin, about the length of your hand, but it can fly as though swimming, about the speed of a human. It is playful, and will squirt ectoplasm out of its blowhole when amused. [+2 vs Terror, adding a spritz of ectoplasm to food or drink leads to about an hour of pleasant hallucinations involving the Astral Sea—unless it doesn't like you, then it's about an hour of Terror inducing visions of what's under the Astral Sea]
88. **Tiny Gargoyle.** Stoic, fist sized, likes to sit motionless and pretend to be a paperweight. [Rested and unchargeable (once between 6 hours of sleep), allows you to ignore 1 Wound per your level from a single hit]
89. **Toad.** A normal looking toad with retractable claws and teeth. [+2 Awareness, 360 vision, 1 automatic counterspell a day]
90. **Tommy Rawhead.** A rotting pig head on a human skeleton body, speaks in a low mumble, shouts obscenities. [Fights as a tough, can use weapons and shields, causes Terror or Horror difficulty 10]
91. **Tree Frog.** Nestles in the palm, brightly colored, adorable, sticky pad feet—prehensile tail. [Anything licking or biting you against your will must test Brawn difficulty 15 or die from poison]

92. **Turtle.** A box turtle with a shell about the size of your fist. It is shiny black like wet rubber, its eyes completely white with ivory iris stitching and no pupil. The shell feels like it is squirming when you touch it, but of course it is not. When it pulls into its shell, it goes somewhere else. [-2 more for foes to hit when Defending, and incredible patience; when waiting, you don't get hungry or thirsty or sleepy for at least 24 hours]
93. **Uncanny Marionette.** A walking, talking ventriloquist's dummy that likes murder. [Counts as a light weapon for you or a minion fighting on its own]
94. **Vulture.** Looks like a small vulture, the size of a hawk, can perch on your shoulder. Its head and neck are naked so they are not fouled by digging inside a carcass—and the eyes tell you that. [Foes reduced to 0 Wounds in its arena are always dying, anyone it watches is -1 to all rolls]
95. **Walking Stick Wand.** It looks like a magic wand, but it can unfold legs, and open slitty little eyes, and deliberately pace around on walls, ceilings, and floors. [Counts as a component for most mage spells]
96. **Water Elemental.** Tempest in a teakettle, fist sized ball of turbulent water, can be kept in a jug. [Can purify a serving of water per level once a day, control minor water movement, do 1 Wound a round from inside a target]
97. **Weasel.** A normal looking weasel with metal needle teeth. [Spend 1 Awesome Point to ignore up to 2 armor soak]
98. **Webspinning Spider.** The size of your fist, it can weave thin cable and fantastic orb webs. [If it weaves more than one web (an hour each) whispering in one allows the whisper to be heard in all the others, webs last about a week, it can weave messages in webs]
99. **White Rabbit.** Pure white, but not albino. Small, cute. [No real advantage—except once in a great while it flips out and kills everyone in the arena without warning. Roll 1d10 to see how many Wounds it does each round (no roll needed to hit, no counter-attack possible); witnesses must face Terror or Horror difficulty 10; it stops when its guardian duty or targets are finished]
100. **Wig.** From the lowly toupee to the luxurious barrister edition, the animate wig grips the head comfortably and bolsters confidence when it is not scuttling around on its own. [+2 Charm and Daring]



MAGE (TEMPLATE)

The Mage is a student of the arcane, taking on the red robes of their order from the Ghelbreth Citadel in the Iron Principalities.

INHERENT—ARCANES FUEL

Magic requires fuel. When you study your spellbook once between periods of at least six hours of rest, you get 1 Awesome Point per your level that can only be used for spellcasting that day (it does not accumulate over time). Also, if you run out of Awesome Points, as a focus action you can burn 1 Wound to gain 3 more.

LIMITATION—UNHAMPERED MOVEMENT

This limitation has an effect on the game rules! If you wear armor, it restricts the flow of energy through and around you for casting spells. Add 1 Awesome Point cost that does not count towards leveling, per maximum soak of your armor, for each spell cast.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Spell book with 5 spells (not including 5 base spells). **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver x50.

You can take spells from mage grimoires if you have 6 hours of study time per spell. If you want to be able to cast spells from a grimore untrained, and use the research feature of the book, you must take [X Grimore] as a talent.

TALENTS (The base 5 talents do not require components to cast.)

- **Arcane Protection.**** Rested. Focus action. Foes are -3 to hit you for an hour. This protection can be sacrificed to reduce incoming damage by 1 Wound. This stacks with armor. This spell only works on the caster. When this spell is active, you do not get 2 Awesome Points for fighting without armor.
- **Counter-Spell.**** Rested. Cast during the defend/protect phase, this spell allows you to intercept any magic cast in your arena or an adjacent arena. Both the one you intercept and you roll 1d10 and add your level to the roll. On a tie, they cancel each other out. If you get a higher success, the spell is cancelled and the other spellcaster takes 1 Wound. If you lose, the spell works and you take 1 Wound.
- **Detect Magic.**** Rested. Focus action. Detect any enchantments or magical influences in your arena. Get a general sense of the kind of enchantment; divine, arcane, innate, extradimensional, and so on. This spell gives no information on whether it is dangerous or helpful, or what the enchantment does. You can choose to reveal magic to your eyes only, or make the objects stand out to everyone.
- **Mystic Attack.**** Arena. During the Shoot phase, attack any target you can see in your arena or an adjacent arena. Attack with 1d10+Level to hit, inflicting 1 Wound.
- **Read Magic.**** Rested. Focus action. Read and/or use texts written in the language of magic. Lasts about an hour.

SPELL WORKINGS OF MAGES

Spellbook Capacity. Spells take up about 10 normal-size pages per spell. The paper must either be enchanted, high quality, or thick. Most spellbooks are about a foot across, and 9 inches or so wide, and 3 inches thick. They can be taller, wider, thicker, and so on as needed.

- Every 10 spells in a grimore count as a load for the book. A book with 5 spells counts as ½ a load, for encumbrance purposes.
 - A regular spellbook is bound with sturdy materials and metal-shod on corners and spine, and can be used as a light weapon.
 - Spellbooks are too awkward to be more than a light weapon, no matter how heavy they are.
- Creating a new spellbook costs about 50 silver per page, so about 500 silver per spell. This takes about 1 hour per page of writing with specialized ink, and it can only be done under the influence of the “Read Magic” spell.

Studying Magic. Spending an hour and using the “Read Magic” spell to peruse spells allows mystic power to suffuse the caster’s mind, reinforcing and reconnecting with arcane energies.

- Studying a spellbook allows the caster to be familiar with its contents, able to spend 3 Awesome Points and cast its spells even though they have not been internalized yet.
 - Casting unlearned spells takes longer and requires reading aloud from the book.
 - A focus action would expand to 2 focus actions, a move or shoot action would expand to a focus action.
- Spells can be studied without using “Read Magic” for the benefit of learning, but without using “Read Magic” the mage does not get any Awesome Points.

Spell Components. Some components are consumed, others are reusable; that’s noted in the description.

- Casting without components is +3 Awesome Points to the cost. It cannot be done with all spells.
 - Identify and Escape, for example, require components.
- Getting a component out and using it for casting, then returning it or letting it go, takes a focus action. For spells that don’t take that long, the component can be yanked out and used, but not replaced.
- Make a space for components off to the side, and mark how many you put aside for each spell you might cast. Mark them off as you cast spells.
- Learning spells from different sources may allow for different components needed.
- Enchanted or special components can reduce the Awesome Points needed to cast a spell, or increase its potency.

Enchanting Components. These generally cost a minimum of 500 silver for materials, and much more for creation labor. They can be created by giving up 1 attribute, by any mage that has the spell talent in question. Skill as a tattoo artist, weaponsmith, jewelry maker, and so on can be acquired as an artistic ability either at generation or by giving up +1 to an Attribute upon leveling.

Staves and wands can be infused as the component for multiple spells. A gem can generally be enchanted to be a component, and multiple gems can be set in a weapon or bracelet or necklace. Some wizards get the components for each spell they know tattooed onto their skin, others load up their staff, others sprinkle components among their jewelry. Wizards can use the enchanted components of other wizards to cast, except for tattoos.

ADDITIONAL MAGE SPELLS

2. **Control Portal.** *Rested.* *Focus* action. (Upgrades to “shoot” action.) You focus on a lock or barrier. You reduce its effectiveness by 1 difficulty per level, or count 5 successes on a Brawn test per level, or a combination of the two. Also, you can spend 1 Awesome Point for an additional level or +2 Brawn. This can be used to bolster or reduce a portal. If bolstering, the spell lasts 1 round per your level, +1 round per additional Awesome Point spent. *Component: a hinge.* REUSEABLE.
3. **Deadly Grip.** *Rested.* *Combat* action. (Upgrades to “shoot” action.) This can be used on targets in the same arena. The spell can manifest as fire or lightning. The spell has no default Wounds, but can inflict 1 Wound per Awesome Point you spend (up to $\frac{1}{2}$ your level.) These Wounds can be spread between targets as you please, as long as you have clear line of sight. If you inflict more Wounds than the target has, any extra Awesome Points spent past the target’s death do not count towards leveling. Your “to hit” roll is 10 + your level, for getting around armor. *Component: a smear of an enemy’s blood on your hand.*
4. **Enchanted Closet.** You must get this talent, and spend a week to cast the ritual, burning 1 attribute point for each point of access added. This spell continues to function after your death. You create an otherdimensional space that can weightlessly hold 1 load per your level. Upon leveling (usually the same level you acquire this spell) you infuse an object with access to this space. Generally, the maximum mouth of the object is equivalent to a handsbreadth per level. Upon leveling further, you can create more entrances to this otherdimensional space. (For example, you could infuse a bag, and infuse a chest in your chambers, instructing your servants to empty the space once a day into your secure quarters.) The space cannot be opened from inside. *Component: infused objects.* REUSEABLE.
5. **Escape.** *Rested.* *Defend* action. Vanish in a flash and puff, appearing in the presence of your Heart Gem. You can use this on the same dimension only (unless you upgrade the talent for multi-dimensional escape.) The gem must be worth 10,000 silver per your level; if it is not expensive enough, you take 1 Wound for each gap point upon returning. It takes a week of dedicated spellcasting to connect yourself to a Heart Gem. You can only connect to a new one if the old one is destroyed, or if you level past its capacity. Masters often gift outgrown Heart Gems to their favored pupils. *Component: a Heart Gem.* REUSEABLE.
6. **Fireball.** *Rested.* *Focus* action (upgrades to “shoot” action). Grow a ball of flame in your hand and throw it up to 3 arenas away. It then explodes, inflicting 1 Wound on everyone in that arena. You can increase the damage by up to $\frac{1}{2}$ your level at the cost of 2 Awesome Points per additional Wound. Those who can escape the arena can test Daring difficulty [10 + your level] to take $\frac{1}{2}$ damage (round down.) *Component: Tiny ball of bat guano and sulfur, genesis of the fire, consumed when thrown.*
7. **Flesh Armor.** *Rested.* *Focus* action (upgrades to “shoot” action). Arcane symbols suffuse your body. You ignore the first Wound inflicted by any attack. This lasts until you have ignored one Wound per your level, or for 1 hour. *Component: a shard of metal that pierces your skin.* REUSEABLE.
8. **Identify.** *Rested.* This ritual takes 1 hour to cast, and must be uninterrupted. Choose an effect to activate at the end of the spell. You can: learn the command word, discover whether the object is cursed or has an intellect or is merely a tool and who can use it, discover its basic powers, and check to see if there is something beyond basic powers. *Component: a gem of any kind. Its value decreases by 100 silver per use. Mages often charge 500 silver per use of the spell, for customers, and 200 for friends.*

9. **Invisibility.** *Rested.* Focus action (upgrades to “move” action.) The spell lasts 1 minute per your level. You can cast it on anyone you touch, or yourself. The target becomes invisible, but not inaudible or incorporeal. The target can still be smelled, still leaves footprints, and so on. Any objects held when the spell are cast are invisible, but objects picked up are visible. They can be put in clothes or pouches and then are invisible. Anything dropped or trailing outside the arena become visible. Light is visible, though its source is not. Attacking breaks the spell. Those attacking an invisible target have a penalty to hit, between -4 and -10. The target can spend 1 Awesome Point to add Cunning to as a difficulty for attackers to hit the target, through tricky moving while invisible. *Component: an eyelash in something sticky.*
10. **Knockout.** *Rested.* Focus action. Target creatures in your arena or an adjacent arena, but only one arena can be targeted. Knock out a number of Wounds equal to [your Level + Commitment]. You can start with the lowest Wounds and work your way up, or the highest Wounds down, but the DM picks the actual targets that succumb. Targets can shrug off the effects by testing Commitment, difficulty [10 + your level]. *Component: handful of sand. As you cast most of it dissolves, sifting down.*
11. **Light.** *Rested.* Focus action. Enchant an object to glow as bright as a torch, or a floating ball that stays within arm’s reach of a target. When casting, choose whether it will last for an hour, or as long as it is in your presence. You, or the one holding the light, can cause it to glow brighter for a round, or to dim down to candlelight. *Component: a pinch of luminescent lichen, or a candle stub.*
12. **Locate.** *Rested.* One minute ritual (upgrades to a focus action). Fix a specific person, object, or landmark in your mind. Or, you can focus on something generic, like a guard, stairwell, pool, and so on. Your mystic energies gush out in all directions (anyone in range who is sensitive to magic within 100 yards per your level can feel you looking, but won’t know where you are or what you’re looking for). You test Awareness to interpret the jumble of results. The spell will generally indicate distance from you, and direction, in vague terms. The spell limit is 100 yards per level for something generic, and 1 mile per level for something specific. If you have something that physically connects you to the target (like a lock of hair, a bloodstain, the scabbard the magic sword rested within, bit of stone from the landmark, etc.) the range can be much further. *Component: fine dust to sift down from your hand, interpreting its drift.*
13. **Menace.** *Rested.* Focus action (upgrade to defend action). Gain a flat +5 bonus to an Intimidate test; when overcoming being intimidated, this spell guarantees success in overcoming fear and also projects intimidation. *Component: a hint of physical pain, like nails in flesh or biting the inside of your cheek.*
14. **Mental Spell Construction.** *Rested.* Use this talent to build a spell entirely in your mind, with no speech or gestures. Others may not even realize you are casting, they must use Awareness against your Cunning to see what signs may be visible. You can cast while your hands are tied and you are gagged. *Component: mystic signs carved on one of your bones.*
15. **Mystic Language.** *Rested.* Focus action. For about an hour, you can speak and understand any language. This does not work for breaking codes, but it does work for allowing you to make noises your body cannot make (like insectoid clicks or basso rumbles). You can also read in those languages. This spell works on all languages, so if there are three people speaking 3 different languages, you understand them all and you are understood by them all. Because of this flexibility, you cannot write other languages under this influence unless you choose a single language upon casting. *Component: a preserved tongue of an outsider. It twitches and wiggles while this spell is active. REUSEABLE.*

16. **Mystic Movement.** Rested. Focus action (upgrades to “move” action.) The spell lasts 1 round per your level. You can move 1 arena further during a move, or add a move to any other kind of action in the round. Also, you can climb sheer surfaces, leap across up to 2 arenas, and negate up to 2 arenas of falling damage (slowing a fall to half speed safely.) *Component: consume a live spider.*
17. **Privacy.** Rested. One minute ritual (upgrades to a “focus” action). The ritual uses salt to encircle a private arena. All that is within the arena is immune to remote viewing of any kind, magical or otherwise, and sound within that arena stops at the border. Those looking into the arena will find their eyes veering away, and their minds will tell them the arena is normal. To see into the arena with Awareness, test against a difficulty of $[12 + \text{caster level}]$. If looking at the arena in person using Detect Magic, a mage can see it fine. The spell lasts up to 1 day per caster level, or until the ritual line is broken. *Component: enough salt to make a border.*
18. **Summon Monster.** Rested. Focus action. Either create constructs out of nothing, or bring contracted monsters from another dimension to your aid. They appear in your arena and can act normally in the next round. Each spell learned works for one specific monster. The monster summoned is built based on the caster level of the one who created the spell; one level can get 1 Wound, a level of intelligence, a weapon (held or natural), a level of armor, or a talent. Taking flaws can make them cheaper. *When the caster is high enough level to double the points needed for the creature, the caster can summon two of them. Triple, three, and so on.* Constructs will always be helpful and loyal; contracted monsters will react based on their long-term experience with you, but will usually have something they like you can give them to smooth over unpleasantness. Build the monster using guides on p. 245, or beastmen, or orcs. You can only have points equal to your level in existence at once. This lasts up to one hour per your level. *Component: a piece of a specimen you can summon; leather, bone, meat, hair, etc.* REUSEABLE.



19. **Web.** Rested. Focus action (upgrades to “shoot” action.) The spell lasts 1 minute per your level. It fills 1 arena (or 2 half arenas) with webbing (can be upgraded to fill 2 arenas or 4 half arenas). The webbing counts as an impede attempt for all within it, with a result of $[10 + \text{your level}]$ against their attempt to get free. The webbing counts as having heavy armor. Those who are impeded cannot make further attacks against the webbing, they are truly stuck until cut free or the spell elapses. The web is not flammable.

Component: a bit of spider web.

20. **Withstand Temperatures.** Rested. Focus action. Become immune to negative effects from temperature, feeling comfortable in extreme weather. Take 1 less Wound from fire, ice, or temperature-based weaponry or attacks. This lasts 1 hour per your level. *Component: a necklace or bracelet incorporating reptile skin and fur.*

REUSEABLE.

ELEMENTAL WARMAGIC OF ORXHAM

(MAGE GRIMORE)

The Summer House of the Orxham Academy produces some of the deadliest warmages in the World Between. These masters of the elements have earned the right to strut in their azure robes, carrying ornate staves. When Ulverland goes to war, the warmages of the Summer House go too.

LORE

The reader can automatically find one historical analysis of a natural disaster by looking in the book. The reader can also find complex weather prediction matrices, the locations of mass graves after Ulverland battles, and treatises on the best woods for staves.

SPELL TALENTS (MAGE)

Mages in this school must know Mental Spell Construction and have the material component before they can be accepted to learn the curriculum. The component for all these spells is a customized mage staff. If making an elemental warmage at generation, take -2 attribute points and "Enchant Staff."

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enchant Staff. <i>Rested.</i> Take this spell first. 1 week ritual. You can create a staff that serves as the component for all your spells. It thereafter works for almost all mage spells. It does not work for Enchanted Closet, Identify, Escape, and other spells as decided by the DM. |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
- **Elemental Immunity.** *Constant.* Defense action. You can ignore 1 Wound per level from any single element directed at you, magical or otherwise. You can ignore heat, cold, lightning, fire, drowning, and so on. Choose the element at the beginning of the round. You are protected against that element until you change it. The DM is the final word if there is a question.
 - **Gust of Death.** *Rested.* Focus action (upgrades to shoot action). Use any combination of elements to automatically inflict 2 Wounds in your arena or an adjacent arena per your Commitment. Metal armor absorbs 1 Wound for its target, unless the attack is lightning.
 - **Icewall.** *Rested.* Focus action. You can erect a barrier of ice that seals off 1 arena (along the border, not filling the whole arena) per focus action you spend on it. The wall gets 1 level of armor and 1 Wound every round you focus on it in one arena border, and you can shape its area to seal off more than one. You can spend 1 focus action on it per level.
 - **Tremor.** *Rested.* Focus action. You cause 1 arena per your Commitment to tremble violently. This may provoke a cave-in or avalanche. Those trying to keep their feet or move in the affected area must successfully impede you (and your magic gets a counter-attack as a hand weapon if they succeed.) Use of this spell is hard on morale and can give a bonus to intimidate. Buildings are hit for 10 Wounds per your level. If you spend Awesome Points that don't count towards leveling, you can open a chasm that is 1 yard across per Awesome Point you spend.

THE HUNDRED DEATH GODS

Before time began, the Hundred Death Gods sought to extinguish humanity's spark and drag everything into darkness. Now, the slaves of the Death Gods dominate Mord-Stavian (literally, “the living” and “transcended rulers.”) From its grim throne, the Necropolitan rules without mercy.

Outside Mord-Stavian, necromancers study their dark arts in the Scavenger Lands and the rest of the World Between. Necromancy is illegal in some places, but an acceptable pursuit in some academic centers, barbaric wastelands, or militaries. Here are the four most popular and widely known of the Hundred Death Gods.

Cultists of the Hundred Death Gods may be granted necromancer spell talents and death talents by their gods at the DM's discretion.

- **The Carrion Marquis.** Ascendant master of death in battle, he is outfitted as a general clotted with flies. The thunder of their wings shakes the ground more than any charge of heavy cavalry could. War necromancers revere his work, even if they do not worship him directly; he has a shrine in the Winter House of Orxham, in Ulverland.
- **The Dismembered One.** To say its true name is to be crippled, save for the rare few that have learned how to handle this vicious god's energies with greater care. Patron of those who seek revenge, this god has been known to trade wholeness of body for greatness of necromantic power. The pain turns outward, and each crippling wound becomes a weapon—helplessness transforms to power. This god is worshiped by war veterans who are injured and forgotten, and survivors of torture.
- **Flayed Maiden.** All that is ripe and luscious in life has been torn from her, including her skin. She is all that can go wrong when trading innocence for authority and power. Her compassion was stripped with her skin, but so was her weakness; her bare, screaming meat is flinty and hard. Her pain is so profound that no plea can move her—she cannot sense anyone else's pain over her own. She is revered by those put in untenable positions who must allow suffering to transform them if they are to survive. Slaves, prostitutes, rape victims, prisoners, and beggars revere her hardening might to get them through what is impossible to endure.
- **Merrihel.** Goddess of Death and Glorious Battle. Her shadowy Valkyries haunt the battlefields of Frostreave to collect the worthy slain. Merrihel was first a goddess of freedom, but then she was martyred in a conflict among the gods. Refusing to die, she ascended as a death goddess, and was accepted as one of the Hundred Death Gods. Refusing to accept their purge of the World Between, she adopted the Northron and protected them from the rest of the gods (much to their chagrin.) She also evicted the Father and Family from their previous holdings in Frostreave. Garm-Gorak was once her lover, but he grew furious when he could not control her. No one and no thing can. Her laughter is said to bring avalanches from the heights when they try. Those who appreciate or desire that kind of independence revere her.



NECROMANCER (TEMPLATE)

The Necromancer has found that good help is dead help.

INHERENT—MAGNIFICENT CORRUPTION

You can learn necromantic talents. Also, upon leveling, you can use your attribute point to buy a Death Talent for created undead. You can also choose to lose 1 point of Charm or Brawn per level to gain an additional attribute point or Death Talent as your corrupting power weakens your meaty frame and your humanity itself.

Commitment controls undead. You can control 5 Wounds of undead per Commitment rating at a time. Automatic for stupid or automated undead, opposed Commitment for others (who are +1 per Wound.)

LIMITATION—BLASPHEMOUS

You corrupt the natural order of life and death, introducing the energies of death into corpses or the spirits of the dead in a profoundly offensive and invasive manner. Your power comes at the expense of manners, good taste, decency, and in most cases, integration into society. Plus, you smell kind of rotten, and have to use perfumes even if you bathe frequently, just to get that spicy mummified smell.

You can take spells from necromantic grimoires if you have 6 hours of study time per spell. If you want to be able to cast spells from a grimore untrained, and use the research feature of the book, you must take [X Grimore] as a talent.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Perfume, dark robes. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver x10.

TALENTS

- **Incorporealize.**** *Rested.* Focus action. You can create undead out of lingering powerful emotions of someone who died, or from cremated ashes. You no longer need intact corpses. This talent modifies the “Raise” talents, it does not function on its own.
 - Incorporeal undead can only be struck by a blow “to the face” or magic, and can only be injured by magic weapons or spells. They can move through solid objects. When they strike, they do 1 Wound as death energy is infused into a living system. They can fly 2 arenas a round if they choose.
- **Life and Death.**** *Rested.* Focus action. Drain 1 Wound to replenish 1 Wound. The source of Wounds is any target that is touched, and the receiver of healing is any target that is touched. You can drain undead to heal yourself or others, or drain others to heal yourself or undead or another living target. You can also drain 1 Wound from a living sentient to erase 1 year of aging damage in yourself.
- **Raise Minion.**** *Constant.* Focus action. Raise a skeleton or corpse as a minion to serve you. It lasts until destroyed, but is stupid, incapable of independent action. Up to 5 minions per Commitment can be raised between periods of rest. Corpses must be in your arena for this talent to be used. By spending 1 Awesome Point for each after the first, multiples can be raised at once, up to 1 per your Commitment.
- **Raise Monster.**** *Rested.* Animation takes 10 minutes per Wound. Compile a golem of corpses (1 per Wound minimum) or a bigger carcass to serve as an undead monster. It can have a number of Wounds equal to your Commitment x3. The monster gets up to 1 Death Talent per your Commitment.
- **Raise Tough.**** *Arena.* Focus action. Raise a skeleton or corpse as a tough (2 Wounds, can use weapons, 2d10 to hit) to serve you. It lasts until destroyed, and has minimal intelligence. You can assign it 1 known Death Talent per Commitment.

GALLOW'S WIZARD'S GRIMORE

Malkith the Gallows Wizard was an obsessed necromancer who wore a grayscale jester's cap in the court of Ulverland. He founded the Winter School of Orxham. Studies in the Winter School can reveal these secrets, but learning any of the spells outside that elite tower is rare. Most Gallows Wizards serve the Ulverland military at some point, helping their nation feed the carrion birds they hold so dear.

LORE

The reader can find one useful fact regarding the necromantic history in Ulverland, or about a specific kind of undead creature, reading in the book. Also, the book contains death talents, spell research, and energy flow between the worlds of the living and the dead.

SPELL TALENTS (FOR NECROMANCERS)

- **Impeding Gaze.** *Rested.* Impede action. Make eye contact with a target up to 1 arena away per Awareness. Impede the target with your Commitment, the target can resist with Commitment or Daring. The target cannot counter-attack, and if pinned, the target remains pinned until something breaks eye contact.
- **Morbid Tidings.** *Rested.* Focus action. Summon a magical raven to carry a short message (four sentences or less) to any one recipient the caster knows personally. The raven finds the intended recipient instantly. The recipient automatically knows who sent the raven. The raven is only used to deliver bad news that provokes terror or horror, doubling the difficulty to resist it. The message must be true.
- **Paralytic Touch.** *Rested.* *Focus* action (upgrades to combat action). Attack unarmed. If you hit, instead of doing damage, you paralyze the target; the target must roll higher than 6 + your level on a Commitment test, or be frozen for 1d10 x 10 minutes.
- **Spectral Ensnarement.** *Rested.* *Focus* action (upgrades to move action). Summon a howling, amorphous mass of angry ghosts who latch onto the target with ectoplasmic hooks. They last for 1 round per level. They impede any target within your arena or an adjacent arena you identify; instead of rolling, they automatically get 6 + your level. Counter-attack is only effective against them if the attack can hit incorporeal creatures, through magic or through rolling 10 on the face die.
- **Wreath of Souls.** *Rested.* *Focus* action (upgrades to ranged attack). Make the sign of Gilthred the Vile, then a whirling mass of specters surround you. Incoming ranged attacks are -4 to hit, melee and unarmed attacks -2 to hit. This lasts for about 12 rounds, a minute.

BLACK WARLOCK (TEMPLATE)

They go masked, their voices dry and rasping, exuding menace as they stride the wastelands.

INHERENT ABILITY—DEATH COMMUNION

As a focus action, you can reach back through your interior connection to the world of the dead and find a mystic translator. You can understand, read, write, and speak any language living or dead. You can also learn necromantic spells.

LIMITATION—HALF DEAD

You are a terrifying abomination. You aren't really alive, and no one is sure whether you can truly die or not. Your unseen face is a mercy to the curious—you hide your face for the good of others. If they see it, that's generally a Horror 6 + your level experience.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Somber garb, ornate helmet obscuring your face. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver x100.

You can take spells from necromantic grimoires if you have 6 hours of study time per spell. If you want to be able to cast spells from a grimore untrained, and use the research feature of the book, you must take [X Grimore] as a talent.

TALENTS

- **Counter Energy.** Rested.** Cast during the defend/protect phase, this spell allows you to intercept any magic cast directly at you. Both the one you intercept and you roll 1d10 and add your level to the roll. On a tie, they cancel each other out. If you get a higher success, the spell is cancelled and the other spellcaster takes 1 Wound. If you lose, the spell works and you take 1 Wound. This can also counter holy energy. You are immune to the magic radiation of the Scavenger Lands and the Scar.
- **Live on Death.** Constant.** Finally, you have put the last vestiges of squishy life behind you. Your connection to death energies sustains your form. You do not need to eat, drink, or breathe. You take damage from clerics channeling holy energy at you, because you are now undead.
- **Master of the Living.** Constant.** Add your Commitment and Daring together to intimidate or resist intimidation. If intimidating, the total is the terror or horror inflicted on viewers.
- **Master of the Undead.** Constant.** Ignore attacks that drain wounds through infusing negative energy. Undead cannot be compelled to attack you for any reason; they must shy away and show respect, even if they do not obey you. (This profoundly annoys vampires.) You can telepathically communicate with undead in your arena or adjacent arenas.
- **Rouse the Dead.** Rested.** Focus action. You can spend up to 1 Awesome Point per your level, converting those points into Wounds or Death Talents for undead servitors. You can raise one or more corpses in your arena, infusing them with Wounds and Death Talents. Those with more than 1 Wound will have basic intelligence.

BLACK WARLOCK NECROMANCY

They come out of the howling storms of the Scavenger Lands, recognizable by their somber garb and ornate helmets that hide their faces. They pass teaching on to those who serve as their slaves for a few years, sometimes; those outside their tight-knit (and possibly alien) number usually get to use their spells because the magic has been infused in a talisman or weapon.

LORE

There are many guesses about what the Black Warlocks are. Maybe they are reptile people exiled from the Dreamlands. Maybe they are “survivors” of the Army of the Lady of the White Way who lost their way and now seek only to prolong their own existence and animate new armies. Maybe they are spies from Mord-Stavian working the fringes of the World Between. No one knows, but the fear the Black Warlocks generate keeps most of the curious away.

SPELL TALENTS (FOR NECROMANCERS)

- **Bolster Undead.** *Rested.* Focus action (upgrades to move). All undead in your arena and adjacent arenas ignore the first Wound they receive from any attack, even from blessed sources. You can affect up to 5 Wounds of undead per your Commitment.
- **Dead Teachers.** *Rested.* This ritual takes 12 hours and a secret narcotic mixture. The ingredients cost about 200 silver under normal circumstances. You go among the dead, find a teacher, and compel the teacher to infuse you with the knowledge of a talent that is open or restricted. (This only works when you have leveled and can buy a talent.) If you want an exclusive talent, you need the DM’s permission, and the talent takes both the talent and attribute slot for that level.
- **Dead Whisper Secrets.** *Rested.* This ritual takes 12 hours and a secret narcotic mixture. The ingredients cost about 100 silver under normal circumstances. You go among the dead, find a spirit that knows a secret, and torment the spirit until it surrenders that secret to you. You must succeed at a difficulty 10 test for any 3 attributes selected by the DM to complete this mission, and the DM may raise the difficulty with Awesome Points split between you and the Bowl. This cannot be done more than once a day.
- **Quicken Undead.** *Rested.* Focus action (upgrades to move). All undead in your arena and adjacent arenas (when casting—you do not need to stay close to them) get to act twice each round, and gain 1 Wound. This lasts for about ten minutes, and when the spell is over, all the affected undead lose 1 Wound (possibly destroying them.) You can affect up to 5 Wounds of undead per your Commitment.
- **Shrivel Soul.** *Arena.* Focus action (upgrades to range attack). Hit all targets in your arena with Horror, difficulty of 1d10 + your level. Mindless creatures, undead, and otherworldly beings are immune.

DEATH TALENTS

These talents are learned by the necromancer, but their only use is to infuse them into the raised undead. The necromancer can gain 1 instead of an Attribute point upon leveling, and upon leveling can lower Brawn or Charm by 1 to gain another.

Undead can also benefit from monster talents at the DM's discretion.

- **Compelled to Answer.** *Rested.* The undead will answer 1 question per the raising necromancer's Commitment. It can only lie if it beats the necromancer's Commitment with its Cunning roll, generally at no bonus. It can only answer questions that the corpse's owner knew in life. It can answer questions for 1 summoning per the raising necromancer's Commitment.
- **Disguised.** *Constant.* Appears to be alive, if distracted and withdrawn. An Awareness test in the same arena, or at -2 from an adjacent arena, identifies the ruse. This can only be cast on fresh corpses, less than a day dead, or incorporeal undead. They no longer decay, with this talent.
- **Life Drainer.** *Arena. Focus* action. If it gnaws at or punctures and drains or uses some other method to pull life out of a target, the target loses 2 Wounds and the undead gains 1.
- **Mighty.** *Constant.* Counts as +2 to Brawn, and does +1 Wound in combat.
- **Paralyzer.** *Arena.* If it touches a target with a hand or appendage, not a weapon, the target must test Commitment difficulty 10 or be immobilized for about a minute, unconscious and vulnerable.
- **Rest.** *Rested.* It can lay down and pretend to be dead, activating at a signal from the controller or when some set condition is met. If it rests more than 10 minutes, all Wounds are healed.
- **Stench.** *Constant.* Those in melee range must pass a Commitment test difficulty 10 or be -2 on all rolls while in proximity, and for a minute afterwards.
- **Terrifying.** *Arena.* Its horror is unveiled for a moment, and all living beings in the arena must test Commitment difficulty 10 or flee.
- **Tough.** *Constant.* It can ignore the first Wound dealt by any attack.
- **Weaponized.** *Constant.* Choose one appropriate weapon type, and the undead is physically modified to function as though armed with such a weapon.



ILLUSIONIST (TEMPLATE)

Change what they see, you change what they think. Change what they think, you change what they do. Change what they do, and you rule them.

INHERENT ABILITY—SHADOW TOUCH

You can sense active magic in your arena by spending a focus action in concentration. Also, you weave mystic forces around yourself with ease. As a focus action, give yourself +2 to Cunning for stealth by wreathing subtly in shadows, or +2 to Charm by improving your appearance. This lasts for at least a few minutes, up to an hour per use.

LIMITATION: REVISIONIST

You are accustomed to altering the way things appear. When faced with facts, you have a powerful tendency to adjust them too. You want to treat history and morality and reason with the same disregard you show to physical form, sound, and light.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Crystal sphere, silk blindfold, rings. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver x50.

You can take spells from illusionist grimoires if you have 6 hours of study time per spell. If you want to be able to cast spells from a grimore untrained, and research in the book, you must take [X Grimore] as a talent.

TALENTS

- **Disguise.**** *Rested.* Focus action (upgrades to move). You can appear to be someone else, either a generic type or a specific person. To convincingly copy a person, your Cunning must equal or exceed their highest attribute. This lasts for 1 hour per your Cunning. It covers voice, clothing, mannerisms, and other visual and tactile details. You can grow or shrink by ½ and change gender or race. You do not gain equipment, or the memories or abilities of the target. This only works to mimic sentient humanoid targets. The Awareness test to see through it is difficulty [your Cunning x2].
- **Illusory Menace.**** *Rested.* Focus action (upgrades to ranged). You can conjure up a menace up to 2 arenas away. It will cast a shadow, make noises (sometimes deafening noises), and be genuinely alarming. Those seeing the menace have a Terror test of up to your Cunning. (For stage shows, you may wish to tone it down.) The Awareness test to see through it is difficulty [your Cunning x2]. If the target realizes it may be an illusion, the difficulty drops to your Cunning rating.
- **Light Painting.**** *Rested.* What you see or imagine can be shaped in four dimensional sculpture with photographic and artistic quality. To print it on a surface, spend 1 Wound and 3 Awesome Points. This generally takes a full round of “painting” per detail included, often several minutes or an hour will be spent on a painting. The DM may charge more Awesome Points for exceptionally large or detailed scenes. *Awesome Points spent to capture light paintings do not count towards leveling. You can only capture 1 light painting per level.*
- **Misdirection Mastery.**** *Constant.* You think in terms of misdirection. When someone tries to pull a fast one on you (magical illusion, fast talking con men, lying prisoners) you add your Cunning and Awareness bonuses together to detect it.
- **Prestidigitation.**** *Constant.* Focus action (upgrades to move). You can make coins dance in the air, you can summon lights with the power of candles, or snuff them; you can manipulate kerchiefs, and create illusory animals or balls or glowing words. Parlor tricks, only more magical and creative. Gain +4 to Charm (in addition to inherent ability) when performing tricks for an audience that might be appreciative. Also, gain +2 to Cunning for pickpocketing. Effects last up to 1 round per your level.

SHADOWS OF ORXHAM

The Autumn House of the Orxham Academy trains gifted illusionists to craft beauty from imagination and magic alone. For the few who show promise of being gifted, clever, *and* ruthless, there is opportunity to become one of the Shadows of Orxham. Those who stay with the school are honored by carrying silver athames and dressing in black robes. The others have their names erased from the roles.

LORE

The reader can automatically find one useful suggestion for misdirection, disguise, or a cover story, by looking in the book. The reader can also find descriptions of the subtleties of chiaroscuro, the flavors of light, and other delightful essays on bending senses for the sake of art.

SPELL TALENTS (ILLUSIONIST)

- **Fake Death.** *Rested.* Focus action (upgrades to a move action). Cast this on yourself or someone else to appear dead. The target can ignore up to 1 Wound a round, numbed and chilled. The target is only dimly aware of what is being said in the current arena. This lasts up to 1 hour per caster level. No medical or folklore test can penetrate the illusion of death, only someone who can see magic. The corpse blurs with enchantment. The target needs a focus action to come out of the daze, then is -1 to all rolls per hour spent “dead.” This wears off at the rate of -1 per minute.
- **Placeholder.** *Rested.* Focus action (upgrades to a move action). Something you have on your person morphs to imitate something in your arena. This lasts for up to 1 hour per your level. However, information in a book or a bag’s contents will be strange enchanted stuffing rather than the real object, so opening a container or book to check the contents immediately reveals the switch. This spell does not make the switch, it creates a decoy object. The object reverts at the end of the spell.
- **Pursuit.** *Rested.* This spell can be cast as a focus action, or by spending 2 Awesome Points. When you are involved in a chase, those in your arena and adjacent arenas (up to several arenas away as appropriate) will see figures that look somewhat like you. If you are fleeing, then your image will be seen fleeing in every feasible direction. If you are pursuing, your image will be seen closing in from every feasible direction. Only those who can see magic can test Awareness at a 15 difficulty to see through the illusion. Images that look like you will be mounted or in boats as necessary to be plausible, mirroring your own method of moving. The images will appear to interact with their surroundings, but they are intangible. They dissipate if injured.
- **Sensory Assault.**** *Rested.* Focus action (upgrades to combat). Target must be in the same arena. You can either block a sense, or overload it with a cacophony of chaotic clamoring. The effect lasts for 1 round per your Cunning. If the sense is blocked, the target loses access to it. If the sense is overloaded, the target is faced with a Terror test, difficulty of your Commitment x2. Also, the target has a penalty on all actions equal to your Commitment.
- **Watched.**** *Rested.* Focus action. You must be able to see the target of the spell (otherwise distance does not matter.) The target will feel like someone is watching, or following. All Awareness tests will reinforce the impression, and the feeling is unshakeable for up to 1 day per your level. This may lead the target to Terror tests if they think they see someone in an impossible place, or someone must be in a place to watch them but when they check it no one is there.

FEY MAGIC

For their own inscrutable reasons, the fairies and fey of the Seelie and Unseelie Court sometimes impart some of their powers to mortals. The following talents can only be acquired as boons from the fey.

- **Curse.** *Rested.* Focus action. You can twist the skein of fate so that one thing that you say will come to pass—maybe not the way you think, but somehow it will come true. There must be a condition, however; some way that the curse can be broken. There are two ways to power a curse. One is to use a boon from a fey court. The other is to give up your life force. If the scope of the curse is too big, or the effect too awful, then the curse will somehow rebound and while you get what you want it will lead to your sorrow and the destruction of your own hopes. (You can mirror the effects of a Dire curse.)
- **Disguise.** *Rested.* Focus action. You can appear innocuous, take on the appearance of a stereotype, or furniture or a natural object, or imitate a person. (If you imitate a person, those who know the person may test Awareness against your Cunning to see through the deception.) This can add or subtract a foot of height, half again your weight, and change clothing and equipment (though the equipment will not function.) Voice is covered as well.
- **Geas.** *Rested.* Focus action. This compulsion can only be laid upon a willing mortal—either the mortal agreed to terms and broke them, or gambled, or accepted the compulsion willingly (whether or not the target was under duress is unimportant). The target cannot break the terms, or the target is whisked away to be a slave with an unpleasant form and unpleasant duties in the bowels of the Ardenwald. Scope is usually limited to a year and a day for extreme service, but can be for a hundred years and a day. Banishment, service, silence, and questing are all typical compulsions.
- **Object of Power.** *Rested.* Focus action. You can split your essence in two, putting half your Wounds in an object. (You must have at least 2 Wounds to do this.) You cannot die or be crippled as long as the object is safe (you rise somehow 1d10 minutes after being “killed”), but should the object be broken, your life force shatters. While the object exists, each Wound put into the object counts as a Commitment point as well. Your aging stops.
- **Transmogrify.** *Rested.* Focus action. Your target can have no more Wounds than $\frac{1}{2}$ your Commitment (upgrade for +1 Wound). The target is transformed into a harmless small animal that can be killed by 1 Wound of damage, and is limited in all forms but thought to its new form. Targets with Commitment of 2 or more can still speak in a very limited fashion. You can undo this enchantment by casting the spell again, or a fey noble (or someone with this talent) can do so.



THE VISTANI FATE TRADITION

The Vistani are nomadic gypsies who travel through the World Between. Lore suggests they are able to move through mists to other dimensions as well, their wanderlust able to penetrate barriers between worlds as easily as the barriers between nations.

This magic is most can only be learned by those with Vistani blood (which, if you believe legend, is mixed with the blood of demons). This magic is dangerous—but it is expensive too, and all the danger is not to the victim only.

LORE

This weird magic cannot be learned from books, but must be taught, passed from one Vistani to another. Central to the teaching is the concept of balance. Fate only made this power available to the haunted Vistani because they are preyed upon by criminals, monsters, civilization, and wilderness; they have no haven, no safe place. To help them survive a massively unfair situation, they have the gift of rebalancing the scales through cursing the powerful. Misused, flinging a curse that does not point towards balance, the power can rebound on the invoker. Maybe 1 in 500 Vistani have the Gift to learn this tradition.

FATE TALENTS

- **Scope and Scale.** *Rested.* The ritual takes a minute (though some powerful situations intrude on your consciousness unbidden or with a focus action.) You can sense a curse at work, or the hand of Fate on a life, situation, or object. You can sense protective powers, or malignant powers, and get a sense of what they might be, and how powerful. Using this talent is *not* safe. Usually, what you see, sees you (if you spy on something with awareness). Powers of the World Above and the World Below like their privacy.
- **Break Curse.** *Rested.* The ritual takes a minute for feeble curses, an hour for minor curses, a day for major curses (usually with conditions, like candles at midnight and special ingredients.) Dire curses, you must pit life energy or a soul against the curse, and even then, it is not guaranteed. Messing with curses provokes the powers of Fate or demons that power the curse. You must spend Awesome Points to make the attempt; 1 for feeble, 2 for minor, 4 for major, and 8 for dire. The DM determines what else is needed, based on the circumstances and balance and powers involved.
- **Charms and Hexes.** *Rested.* You can create a charm and put up to 1 Awesome Point per level into it. These automatically activate either to save the bearer's life, or to ward off a supernatural influence or attack. Also, you can make a sign as a focus action that helps ward off supernatural influence or attack, adding 1 to an ability test per level as applicable. Wearing more than one charm may attract hungry elements from the World Below that want the energy they bear.
- **Fortunetelling.** *Rested.* You are proficient in one method per level; card readings, casting bones, reading tea leaves, tossing things in the fire, interpreting entrails, and so on. You can do normal fortune telling using showmanship; test Charm against the target's Cunning to convincingly share messages from the Worlds Beyond. You can also do *real* fortunetelling. Doing so costs 1 Wound (painfully draining exhaustion, never more severe consequence than knocked out), but reveals one

important insight into the future, generally in a cryptic manner. Activating this talent is not always voluntary.

- **Curse. *Rested.*** This can be instant, or it can be a ritual that takes hours; it depends on the moment, where the balance fits best, and how much thought comes from you and how much is inspiration of Fate. In general, you can toss a feeble curse once a day to even the scales. Minor curses are for people who break bargains or injure you or your kin. Major curses are generally reserved for once-in-a-lifetime revenge; misused, there is danger of circumstantial rebound. Dire curses are only uttered by the dying, or by those trading their souls for power to strike back... If you throw a curse, it hits. Period. Abuse this power, and Fate will see to it that the misfortune you earn will find you in turn. You can break any curse you cast except Dire curses.

CURSES

There are many circumstances where curses come in handy. Cursed scrolls, enchanted objects, coins, and so on can all bring misfortune. The Vistani are also masters of managing Fate to your detriment if provoked. The DM will determine what the curse is, and only inform the player of the following results as they happen. In most cases, the results are more deliciously prolonged, and not immediately apparent.

LEVEL OF CURSE (D10)

- 1-4. Feeble Curse
- 5-7. Minor Curse
- 8-9. Major Curse
- 10. Dire Curse

FEEBLE CURSES (D10)

1. All your hair falls out. *All* of it. It will grow back normally.
2. Someone you will meet for the first time will, for no particular reason, intensely dislike you.
3. You are itchy! Every +2 from armor is -2 from your attack rolls.
4. In your next fight, the DM will spend Awesome Points to keep your foes up and fighting as long as possible.
5. Your next "in the face" hit will break your weapon; if a magic weapon, you take a Wound instead.
6. A minor item becomes your lucky piece; if lost, you lose 3 spent Awesome Points towards leveling.
7. You grow thick patchy red pubic hair somewhere unfortunate and visible. It constantly grows back even if shaved, for about a week.
8. The next time someone says your name, you fall asleep for 10 minutes and cannot be woken.
9. Your footgear shrinks violently, doing 2 Wounds to you and quartering your speed; your shoes or boots must be cut off.
10. Your next meal will make you violently ill, -5 to all rolls and -1 Wound to damage for 6 hours.

MINOR CURSES (D10)

1. The DM only spends ½ Awesome Points to inconvenience you; what you would get is not given to anyone, including the Bowl.
2. You no longer get arena bonuses for weapons.
3. Strangers don't like you. Your charm counts as 0 in dealing with them; if it is 0 or negative, they sometimes attack because they can't stand you.
4. Any time you roll a 1 on any d10 in combat, you automatically miss.

5. The DM does not give you Awesome Points from the Stack for any reason.
6. Any time you roll a 1 on any die, you drop what is in your hands or fall down.
7. If you tell a lie you writhe in unbearable pain for 1 minute.
8. If you tell the truth you writhe in unbearable pain for 1 minute.
9. Anything attacking the group focuses on you.
10. All your attacks are -1 Wound.

MAJOR CURSES (D10)

1. Next time you are alone, drop to 0 Wounds; roll to be knocked out, bleeding out, crippled, or dead.
2. Lose one talent and 1 ability point (determined randomly or chosen by the DM.) Bleed from your eyes, nose, and ears for several minutes.
3. Reduce your highest ability to 0.
4. Every time you wake up, lose 1d3 Awesome Points—you can owe the Stack.
5. You cannot sleep – therefore cannot heal naturally, or rest talents.
6. Lose the ability to use rested talents.
7. You are struck with a weird sensitivity; Horror and Terror tests are +1/2 difficulty.
8. Gain a relevant or random madness.
9. Struck deaf, blind and mute
10. Your right arm withers to a mummified stick of its former self, useless.



DIRE CURSES (D10)

1. Polymorph into a small, harmless animal; probably a frog.
2. Struck with vampirism.
3. Struck with lycanthropy.
4. When someone dies in your arena, test Commitment difficulty 12 or leave this world with them.
5. Wearing clothes (anything but nudity) inflicts 1 Wound a minute on you.
6. Your family line will die out before you do. Their legacy will also be tainted or destroyed.
7. Everyone you love will suffer a gruesome fate that is somehow your fault.
8. You will waste away and die, losing 1 Brawn a week until you die at -3.
9. All ability tests count as rolling a 1.
10. A demon gains your soul. You have a year left, and then you go to the World Below as a plaything for something monstrous. Better yet, a witch's soul is released as you take her place...

MAGICAL RADIATION MUTATIONS

When a character suffers prolonged exposure or a brief, high-level exposure to the mutating power of magical radiation, they gain a point of Charge. When a character has Charge equal to Brawn, test Brawn difficulty 15. If successful, the body rejects 1 Charge over several minutes of vomiting, weakness, and intense gut-stabbing pain. If unsuccessful, the Charge sinks in and causes mutation over the course of 2d6 days (and all current Charges are erased).

Cleansing

Resting in an environment with little or no radiation for 24 hours cleanses 1 Charge. Resting at a holy site cleanses 1 Charge, spending 24 hours there cleanses 2 Charges.

Rate of Charge

- *Intense Radiation.* 1 Charge per round. Touching a hole in the dimension.
- *Strong Radiation.* 1 Charge per minute. Near raw chaos, handling unrefined magic.
- *Medium Radiation.* 1 Charge per hour. Near a radioactive object, traveling in magic-blasted ruins surrounding the Ruinous Scar.
- *Weak Radiation.* 1 Charge per 12 hours. In an area of wide-spread fallout; more intense areas of the Scavenger Lands, outskirts of the Ruinous Scar.
- *Trace Radiation.* 1 Charge per day. Most of the Scavenger Lands, vaults that have held raw magic over time, demon prisons.

Discard Logic and Reason

This is magical radiation. Appearance and function may or may not be linked, and making a logical case for how something should change is irrelevant in this case. “My bird head should give me +2 Awareness, because of range of vision and quality of bird eyes!” is not a compelling argument. This chart of mutations is based in the weird unknown mystical realm grounded in “because I say so.”

Horror and Terror

The Terror level and/or Horror level for witnessing mutants is usually about a 9. Being mutated is a difficulty around 15-18 for each stage of the mutation; it usually drives people mad, dealing with this awful physical transformation. These are guidelines.

RANDOM MUTATIONS (D100)

1. Instead of legs your lower half is now one thick, slug-like appendage. Your movement rate is halved and you leave a trail of slime everywhere you go—you can automatically be tracked.
2. Your skin has turned to iron. You soak the first Wound of damage from any attack.
3. You have sprouted big, dangerous horns. Unarmed, you have a light weapon.
4. You now have cloven feet and goat's legs. You are +2 to move related rolls.
5. You have grown a vicious proboscis somewhere on your body. It can spit a venomous barb at a target in the same arena as a light ranged weapon. The target must test Brawn difficulty 10 or go limp and appear dead for 1d5 hours.
6. Your body is covered in dreaded rune tattoos. Anyone who strikes you must test Commitment difficulty 10 or suffer the effects of a random minor curse.
7. Your weapon has become inseparably bonded to your hand/arm. You gain the talent “Weapon of Choice” with it at no cost and with no training.
8. Your skin is now covered in a shaggy hide. It serves as light armor.
9. Your eyes glow with an eerie light. You now have perfect night vision and can see invisible creatures.
10. You have grown a second head. You get +2 Awareness. You are now prone to arguing with yourself.

11. You have grown an additional arm. It is usually useful, but the DM can have it attack your face or crotch, inflicting 1 Wound, as a rested talent. (If reloading it, 1 of the Awesome Points goes to you.)
12. You have grown a long, whip-like reptilian tail. You get +2 to impede or strike an impeding foe.
13. You have grown a functioning set of gills. You can now breathe as well in water as you can on land.
14. Your blood has turned to acid. Anyone wounding you in melee must test Daring difficulty 10 or acid ruins their weapon (2 Wounds to claws, jaws, etc.)
15. You can vomit a 30' cone of fire once per day for 4 Wounds, Daring difficulty 10 to only take 2.
16. Your body constantly emits steam and is hot to the touch. You are immune to fire-based attacks.
17. Your body is covered in frost and cold to the touch. You are immune to cold-based attacks.
18. Tiny arcs of electricity dance across your skin. You are immune to all electricity-based attacks and anyone striking you with a metal weapon takes 1 Wound.
19. You are an albino and being in direct sunlight causes you to take 1 Wound an hour. You are -2 to hit and to ability tests in direct sunlight.
20. You heal with unnatural speed. You can spend 2 Awesome Points to regenerate 1 Wound a round.
21. Your eyes are on stalks. You cannot be surprised or flanked.
22. You emit a horrible stench. Anyone in your arena must test Brawn difficulty 10 or take a -2 penalty to all actions until they leave your arena. You cannot sneak up on anything that can smell you coming.
23. You have vampiric fangs. You may drain blood from an immobile foe of your race. Every 2 Wounds you drain give you 1 Wound.

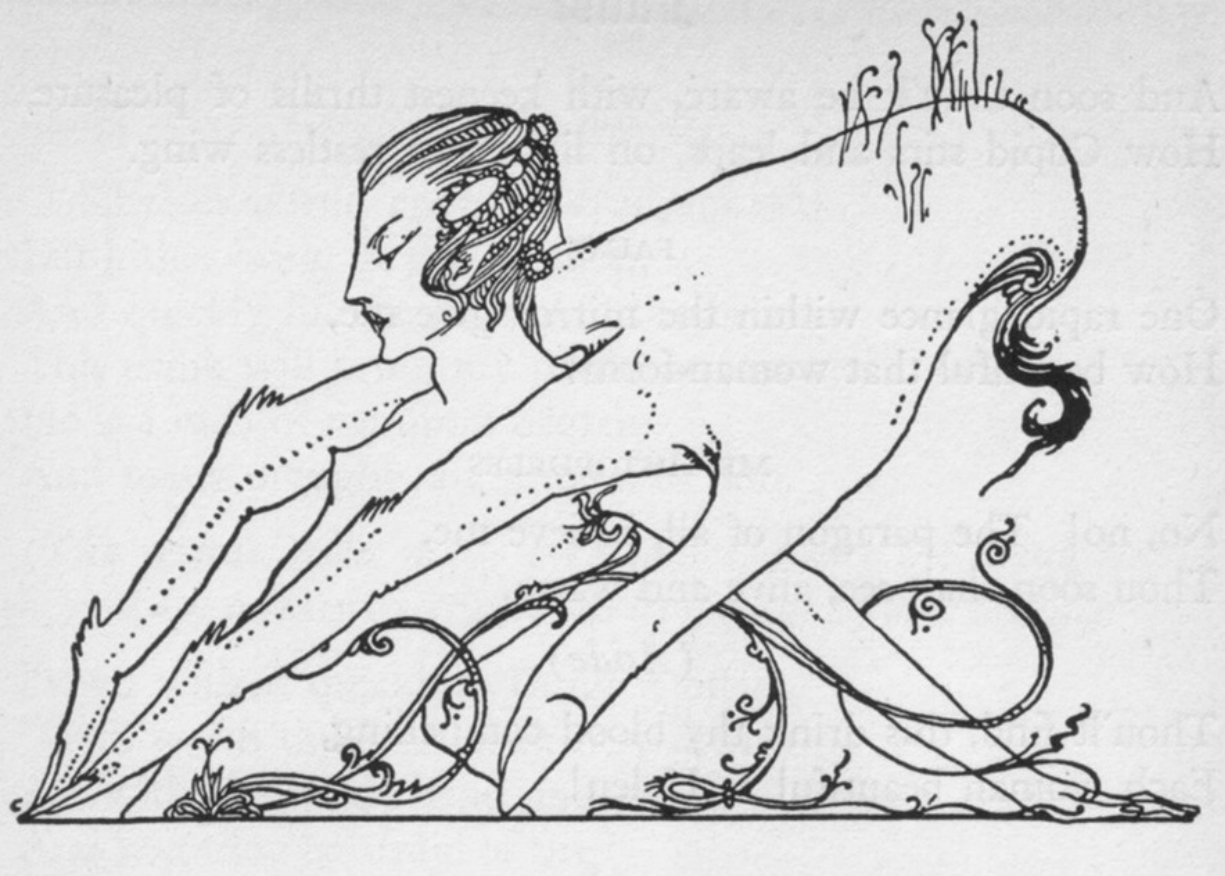


24. You have a mass of tentacles somewhere on your body. They can independently attack anyone in melee range, rolling 1d10 to hit and inflicting 1 Wound.
25. You have a pair of gigantic wings. You can now fly 2 arenas a round.
26. You have a third eye in the middle of your forehead. This eye has the supernatural ability to tell you when someone is lying to you.
27. Your blood hates you and seeks to leave your body at any opportunity. You cannot spend Awesome Points to reduce incoming Wounds.
28. Your fingernails are perpetually filthy talons. They count as light weapons, and anyone taking a Wound from them must test Brawn difficulty 10 or starting the next day the target will have a high

fever and hallucinations, giving them -1 per your level to all actions for 1d5 days. (Wears off -1 a day.)

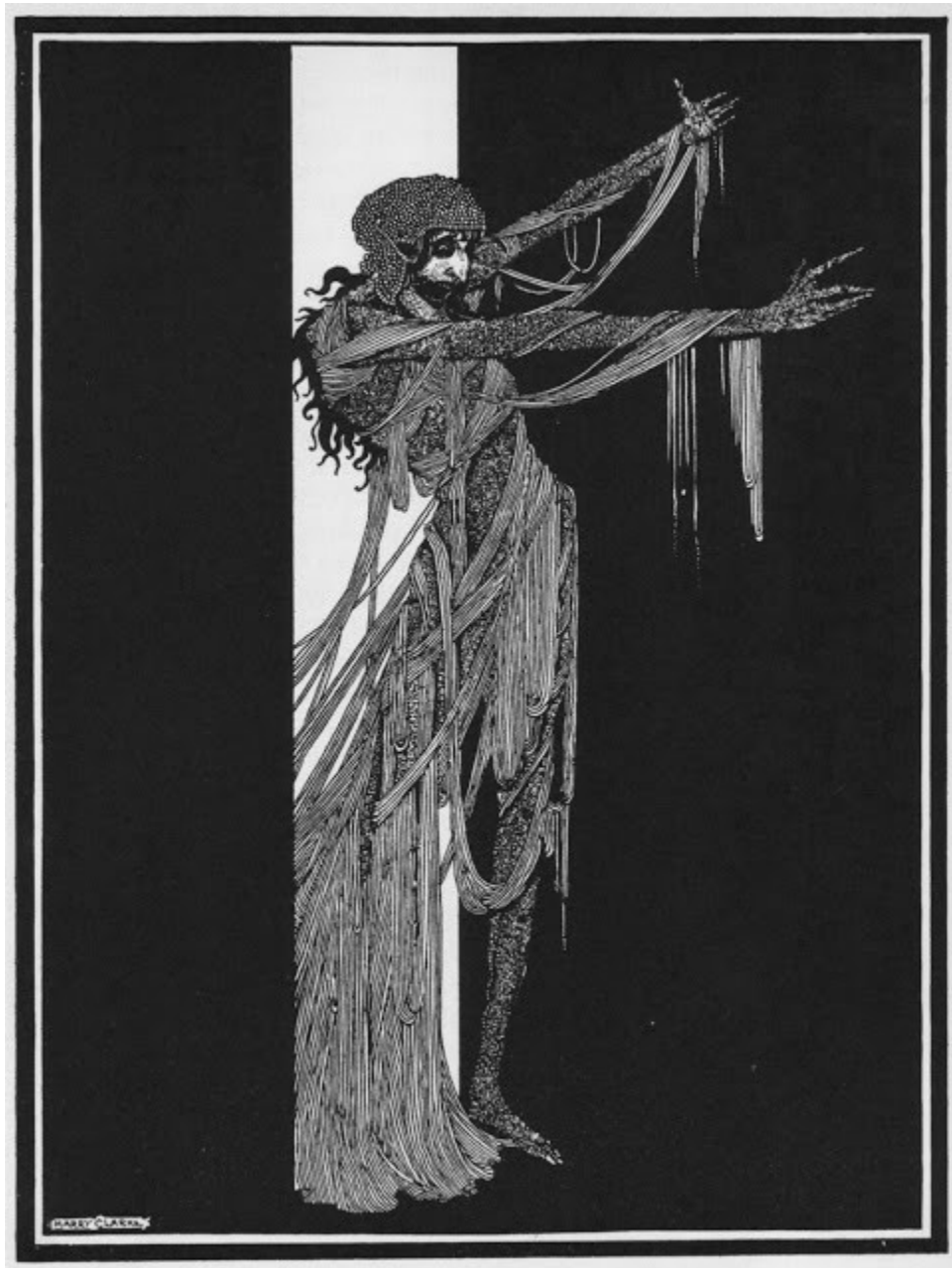
29. You emit an aura that withers any plants around you.
30. Your shadow is animate. If you pass a Charm test difficulty 15, you can persuade it to scout for you as an incorporeal tough. If slain, it grows back over 24 hours, showing you as a baby, child, teen, etc.
31. You have suddenly grown corpulent. You gain 1 Wound capacity.
32. You are gaunt. You lose 1 Wound capacity. If taken to 0, you die.
33. You have an extra leg, but it's always in your way. You can only move half speed.
34. Your skin is perpetually covered in snot-like slime. Any attempts to impede you automatically fail.
35. Your brain has atrophied. Your Awareness decreases by 2 points.
36. Your body has hulking proportions. Your Brawn increases by 2 points.
37. Your body is monkey-like. Your Cunning increases by 2 points.
38. You have a second heart. Anytime you drop to 0 Wounds and must test to bleed out, be knocked out, or be crippled, you may roll twice and take the best result.
39. You are insect-headed.
40. You are dog-headed. Kobolds will attack you last.
41. You are cat-headed. Kobolds will attack you first.
42. You are bear-headed.
43. You are sloth-headed.
44. You are elephant-headed.
45. Your face is gone. Oddly, doppelgangers will now take a perverse liking to you.
46. You are wolf-headed. You will likely be mistaken for a werewolf and hunted.
47. You are bug-eyed, but this decreases your normal range of vision by 50%.
48. You have a second brain. Your Awareness increases by 2 points.
49. You have a scorpion-like tail. Your tail attacks as a heavy weapon, and if you hit "in the face" with it, or spend 2 Awesome Points, you can inject venom; the target must test Brawn difficulty 10 or be paralyzed for 1d5 rounds. The tail has 2 Wounds.
50. When you die your body will explode like a Gas Spore. Everyone in your arena must test Brawn difficulty 10 or lose 1d5 Wounds and be -2 for about a minute after they escape the cloud.
51. You are boar-headed.
52. You float a foot above the ground at all times.
53. You have suckers on your hands and feet that allow you to flawlessly scale walls.
54. Your skin is an odd color.
55. You can control the color of your skin, giving you +2 Cunning to hide.
56. You are rat-headed.
57. You are horse-headed.
58. You have an enormous pair of fairy wings, but they are useless.
59. Your skin is a mirror-like reflecting surface. Any spell cast on you has a 50% chance of rebounding on the caster.
60. You are mushroom-headed.
61. You are snake-headed.
62. You are sphinx-headed. People will continually ask you for a riddle.
63. You are skull-headed. You get +4 to Intimidation attempts.
64. One of your hands is a crab-like claw. It counts as a light weapon.
65. Your body is unstable. You gain a rested talent to turn gelatinous for up to 10 minutes and crawl in that form.
66. Your body continually quivers, with a jelly-like spot on your gut. It can dissolve wood, leather, dirt, or meat over the course of an hour to heal 1 Wound even if badly hurt.
67. You are a hermaphrodite.
68. You now have a forked tongue. Oddly, you are now unable to tell lies.
69. Animals are drawn to your pheromones.

- 70. Animals are repulsed by your pheromones and will flee from you.
- 71. Your skin now appears to be perpetually necrotic and rotting.
- 72. Your skin appears to be perpetually crawling with insects.
- 73. Your head has disappeared; now your face appears on your chest.
- 74. Your neck is elongated, like a giraffe.
- 75. You are bird-headed.
- 76. You have snakes for hair. If you make eye contact with someone (including your reflection), the target must test Commitment difficulty 10 or turn to stone.
- 77. Your left palm grows an eye, and your hand can detach and scuttle around on its own.
- 78. You bleed ale or wine.
- 79. Your hands are hairy.



- 80. Your hands are reptilian.
- 81. You are 50% shorter than you were.
- 82. You are 50% taller than you were.
- 83. You are frog-headed.
- 84. You can vomit a 30' cone of acidic fish once a day for 2 Wounds, Daring test difficulty 10 for 1.
- 85. You are fish-headed.
- 86. Your flesh is sticky like fly-paper. Everything sticks to it; a weapon pulls free on a Brawn test difficulty 10.
- 87. You have a monstrosly elongated tongue. You can speak all languages.
- 88. The front of your body is now covered in eyes. You can read all languages.
- 89. You are spider-headed. Drow will prostrate themselves before you.
- 90. Your body is covered in thorns or small horns; anyone impeding you takes 1 Wound.
- 91. Your gender is switched.
- 92. You emit a pleasing aroma. Your Charm increases by 2 points.

93. You exude a disquieting aura. Your Charm is -2 and children rush to kick you in the shins.
94. You have a shrunk head. Your Commitment is -2.
95. Your head is egg-shaped. Your Commitment is +2.
96. Your body is hollow like a reed. Your Brawn is -2.
97. Every day, you suffer from a new feeble curse as your body bleeds chaos energy.
98. A major curse strikes you.
99. A dire curse strikes you.
100. You are now capable of casting magic if you were not; if you were, you transform into an energy being and are siphoned out of the dimension, lost forever.



QUESTING KNIGHT (TEMPLATE)

The Questing Knight of Scarabae is inspired to undertake journeys and dangers to gain strange wisdom and prizes. Diplomatic training helps rule in a land full of conflicting allegiances.

INHERENT—ATTUNE WEAPON

Choose a melee weapon significant to you because of something you achieved with it, or because it is a family heirloom. With this weapon, you can hit incorporeal creatures as though it was magical. You can also spend 4 Awesome Points to inflict 2 extra Wounds with it, or 4 Awesome Points to ignore 2 incoming Wounds while it is on your person. If the weapon is broken or lost, you can attune a new weapon (if it has meaning through your questing or through a family connection) with at least a week of meditation or by using it when you level.

LIMITATION—DIPLOMAT

Somehow you are never in a position to give all your loyalty wholeheartedly to a single person or cause. You are able to see more than one side to a situation, and you know that nothing is ever straight-forward and obvious. Your ingrained commitment to an amicable situation sometimes overrides your own sense of self-interest, and your instinct for justice can derail your victory.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Icon of a patron saint, token of a faraway lover. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver.

TALENTS

- **Heroic.**** *Constant.* Any time you become part of an adventure that would make a good supernatural story or stirring tale of battle, gain 1 Awesome Point. Any time you choose to pursue a dangerous course that will make a good story if you survive, gain 1 Awesome Point (DM is the final word.) You are worked into the mystical fabric of the surreal in the world. If anything exciting (especially supernatural) is happening in your area, you are likely to be drawn in.
- **Immortalized in Song.*** *Rested.* You are trained to perform Scarabean ballads, rimes, epics, and romances. When you perform for at least 10 minutes for an appreciative audience, your stirring and emotional tale can inspire those who are listening, granting them 1 Awesome Point.
- **Legendary.*** *Constant.* You have absorbed every story, every fragment of lore you could get. Asked about any legend of the fey or the Lady of the White Way, you know at least 1 thing, and most of the story if you succeed at an Awareness test. Awareness tests can also possibly reveal answers to follow-up questions.
- **Litany of Sight.**** *Rested.* Focus action. Murmur a prayer in Draxive (even if you don't know the language you can recite by rote), and if you are looking at a supernatural illusion you will be able to see through it while you pray. You can keep this up as a focus action each round for up to 1 round per your Commitment.
- **Mystic Protection.**** *Constant.* You are blessed. If you are attacked by something supernatural and you get a roll to resist the effect, count that roll as a 10. This protection works against monster area effects, mental attacks, supernatural persuasion, dodging, and so on. DM is the final word.

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HOLY WARRIOR (TEMPLATE)

The Holy Warrior serves the Father and Family—gods of the Storm Sovereign pantheon of Ulverland.

INHERENT—CHANNEL

Focus action. Channel divine energy through a holy symbol. This is usually used to affect a holy site or object sacred to the god, or to strike the god's enemies. The effect is equal to inflicting 1 Wound, healing 1 Wound, or 1 point of change per 2 Commitment of the cleric. The effect is up to the DM's ruling of what the god wants or what is holy or what is an enemy; none of the gods take a casual use of this ability lightly. This wounds undead, demons, and monsters from outside the World Between. One use tunes a holy symbol to function with you.

LIMITATION—HUMILITY

You are committed to living and teaching the Way of Strength. You are loyal to Ulverland, the Sleet People; betraying them is betraying your god. Your life's work is now the service of Ulverland.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Holy vestments, holy symbol, incense. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver x10.

Choose a god from the Storm Sovereign pantheon to serve. Take that god's name for your first talent. Then you can treat the 5 talents from that template, and these 5 talents, as template talents. If you have an overlay template, reduce starting attributes by 2.

TALENTS

- **Blessing.** Rested.** Focus action. Borrow up to 1 Awesome Point per level; the deity garnishes awesome wages until the debt is repaid. These borrowed Awesome Points can go to you, or to the Bowl, your choice—but you must pay them back to the deity either way. (Paying back this debt does not count as spending Awesome Points towards leveling.) You can give them to others you pray with.
- **Elemental.** Constant.** If you are acting in an environment affected by powerful weather, you gain an advantage. If weather makes the arena hazardous, you are +2 to hit. You are +2 on attribute tests in a howling storm. A thunderstorm or blizzard can replace a night's sleep and a meal for you. In Ulverland, you only need 4 hours of sleep and 1 meal a day to be sustained.
- **Grounded.** Constant.** You always know which way Ulverland is. If you are in Ulverland, you cannot get lost. Your knowledge of the Motherland and your place upon her is supernaturally keen.
- **Inspire the Faithful.** Rested.** Pray with those faithful to your god for 5 minutes, and all of you get 1 Awesome Point. Have a worship service for an hour, everyone gets 3 Awesome Points.
- **Revered.* Constant.** Ulverlanders who know you are a holy warrior will treat you with respect, give you gifts, and support you any way they can. This support may diminish if you abuse it or if you do not return their respect, but it will turn to fear before it goes away altogether. You are a mouthpiece for your god, an instrument of divine will. Ulverlanders have a reverence for your role (even if you are a jerk.)

FATHER AND FAMILY

THE STORM SOVEREIGN PANTHEON OF ULVERLAND

THE WAY OF STRENGTH

Each member of the Father and Family has profound lessons to teach about the Way of Strength, which is the perfect lifestyle an Ulverlander may aspire to live. When fathers teach their sons to be men, and mothers teach their daughters to be women, this is the model they use. The Father is the most primal and basic of all lessons, and the Indulged is the most rarified. Each of these ideas is taught to children in basic ways, teenagers in more complex ways, and adults with contextual nuance. Interpretations vary.

Garm-Gorak (Father and Founder)

Lord of Sleet, the Bloody Maw, Allfather. God of Wolves, Winter, and War.

- The first strength is to kill that which threatens.
- The first ruthlessness is willingness to silence all life but yours should the need arise.
- The first compassion is allowing yourself to survive at the expense of all else.
- The first lesson: choose to kill.

Hulmora (Mother and Homeland)

Goddess of Lightning, Lady of Winds, Motherland. Goddess of Elements, Ulverland, and Storms.

- The second strength is to outlast that which threatens.
- The second ruthlessness is willingness to silence your needs for the needs of others.
- The second compassion is surviving so those who depend on you can be protected.
- The second lesson: choose to live.

Charlak (Firstborn, Responsible)

Master of Chains, The Architect of Prisons, Mazelord. God of Imprisonment, Darkness, and Waters.

- The third strength is to restrain that which threatens.
- The third ruthlessness is willingness to endure the agony of others for your own sake.
- The third compassion is allowing enemies to live, however miserably.
- The third lesson: choose for others.

Maham (Second Son, Teacher)

Beast-Tamer, The Grim, Master of Lessons. God of Civilization, Self-Restraint, and Education.

- The fourth strength is to learn from that which threatens.
- The fourth ruthlessness is using pain to carve lessons in permanent scar tissue.
- The fourth compassion is preparing yourself and others to face a harsh world.
- The fourth lesson: choose to listen.

Liberiak (Indulged, Refined)

The Gaunt Gent, The Scribe, Allseer. God of Knowledge, Libraries, and Silence.

- The fifth strength is to outwit that which threatens.
- The fifth ruthlessness is to break, poison, or steal the meaning of others.
- The fifth compassion is drowning the fire of now in the flood of all time.
- The fifth lesson: choose to wait.

THE STORM SOVEREIGN STORY

The Beginning

The gods made war. We call it the Cosmic Event. The World Above clashed with the World Below. The wreckage of their battle created the turbulence of the World Between—claimed by neither, but both responsible. The gods left their broken and wounded on the field as they reeled away from the battle, spent. After a century of darkness, the Lost Hosts were still alive, wandering and stranded, stripped of their cosmic energy. The survivors were already forgetting the deeper mysteries.

Then came the Death Muster. The Hundred Death Gods breathed motion and purpose through the Ruinous Scar into the sea of corpses left behind. One column of the Lost Host retreated to a grim island and made their stand.

The First Crusade of the Legion of the Lady passed them by, marching to the Scar itself and building cities to restrain the death energies at their point of entry. Still, life was not easy.

Father and Family

The clans that settled on the huge island fought each other, and the reavers from the east, and the wild tribes of the west. They fought the storms, and the seas, and the rocks. They fought against their despair, and they fought against the lure of leisure.

The noise of their fighting woke the unconscious Lord of Sleet, Garm-Gorak. He claimed the people as his own. Seeing himself as a head of family for the first time, he summoned forth the essence of their land to be his bride. With Hulmora, the Ulverlandess, he had three sons to teach his people the way of the strong—Charlak, Maham, and Liberiak. He knew these gods would give his people things he could not give them. For a thousand years, the gods shaped the people.

The War of Storms

Then the Scar imploded, the Legion of the Lady was defeated, and all of the world readied itself for destruction. Forming avatars, the five gods marched on the Scar. Driving the dead past the shattered fortifications of the Warriors of the Lady, they joined forces with the Beast Gods in the Scavenger Lands. They each slew ten gods, then they stood upon the Ruinous Scar, and gave up their essence in the World Between to seal the Scar for all time.

However, Hulmora was made of our land itself. Because of her, we will never lose touch with our gods, nor will we forget what they did for us. Each one inspires holy warriors who will act for Ulverland, who will slay for the people of Garm-Gorak, and who will honor their mother.

The Age of Storms

Ulverland shared its prosperity with the World Between, overrunning petty tyrants and bandit kings to bring the unity of empire and the prosperity of loyalty to the world. The proud nation offered the world a unifying calendar, a rich culture, and strong military protection. However, as always, the world would not consent to be saved.

Jealous of Ulverland's loving Father and Family, others turned to forces in the World Below for aid. Armed with demonic power, small kings and robbers drove back the forces of Ulverland, attacking from

all sides. As the final betrayal, the Church of the Lady of the White Way declared the Father and Family no more holy than the demons that others crawled to in their desperation. Shocked and sorrowing, Ulverland withdrew from the World Between and cared for its own people for a time.

The Death Fleet

As nation states formed in the wake of alliances with demons and rebuke from the Lady of the White Way, Ulverland kept to itself. Isolation ended when a vast Deathfleet sailed from Mord-Stavian to destroy life in the World Between. Ulverland heroically put aside past differences and built fleets of ships, unleashing the Father's rage on the dead, driving them back to their desert and forcing their deathless masters to call off the attack.

The Fourth Crusade and the War Below

Even after all that, the Church of the Lady of the White Way mounted a crusade against Ulverland, claiming the Father and Family were just as demonic as the rest of the monsters worshiped by the deluded. Their war was deflected, and its failure shown clearly as demon factions tore at the World Between from below. Demonic agents sparred and looted unchecked. Once again it was time for Ulverland to save the world, with the help of the Father and Family.

King Balduran sent adventurers all across the world to find a way to stem the flow of unholy power into the World Between. Then the Queen of the Seelie Court came to him from the Shae Isle, and taught him a ritual to create "The Veil." They sacrificed a living dragon to seal the world so demonic energies could not penetrate easily, if at all. In so doing, they woke all the dragons.

The Inturning

King Balduran pleaded with the Father, that he share his prowess and rage with the world so they might survive the dragons. Garm-Gorak refused, for his gifts were for his people alone. Let those they worship aid them in the battle. Sure enough, the World Below belched up gunpowder that fought the dragons off.

That was a crucial lesson. The generous impulse had led the People of Sleet to share their guardian and culture with the world, but Garm-Gorak knew the hearts of the craven foreigners. He knew they would never submit to learn true strength. Instead, the people of the Father and Family now rule, battle, and survive on the Motherland. They alone inherit the Way of Strength.

STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCHES

None of the Father and Family gods have one monolithic church. The Ulverland culture reveres each, but individual cities, families, and clans have their own interpretations. The closest thing to a single unified structure is the Great Library in Lizport, a massive sprawling stone edifice dedicated to the Gaunt Gent.

Titles and structure, theological focus, and level of involvement in daily life vary. For a time during the Age of Storms it was fashionable for those in positions of power to experiment with how they wanted to worship, and that tradition set down roots that endure to the current day. From house shrines to the House of Charlak's Dusk (a noble confederacy that spans all of Ulverland) there is great diversity of power, wealth, and influence.

Officials who serve the church are known as clerics. The gods themselves also pick out servants and gift them with divine power. These individuals are called holy warriors, they are revered in all of Ulverland.

GARM-GORAK THE ALLFATHER

Garm-Gorak is the God of wolves, winter, and war. He is usually depicted as a berserk Northron, a rampant wolf, and a brooding but majestic king. He is known as the Bloody Maw, the Lord of Sleet, and the Allfather.

His holy symbol is a pointed “X” cross. His favored weapon is an axe; any size and shape will do. His followers wear the skin of wolves they have slain themselves.

He is pleased by survival against all odds, crushing threats to his people, and living close to the land. He is angered by civilization bringing softness, overreliance on tools (including other people), and cowardice.

GIFTS OF THE ALLFATHER

- **Blood Seal.** *Constant.* If it is cold enough for blood to steam in the air, then when you kill something warm-blooded with your axe and get the blood on you a Wound heals. Also, your flesh toughens in the cold, and you ignore the first Wound from any attack.
- **Cutting.** *Rested.* Take 1 full minute to sharpen an axe with a specially prepared whetstone, or on an Ulverland rock covered in ice. The blade will ignore 1 soak from armor per your level before the enchantment wears off. Anyone can use the weapon, but if it is used to strike at a holy warrior of Garm-Gorak, the wielder is struck by a dire curse.
- **Refuse Rest.** You can choose not to die, not to go to the Allfather with unfinished business. Gain 1 extra Wound per your level when you are dying or killed. You will be able to continue on for up to 1 day per your level before succumbing to death. You can no longer heal, and you will still die; nothing can stop that short of a true miracle. However, you have some time and energy to bring your legacy to a close.
- **Winter Thriving.** *Constant.* You can eat snow and gain food and water from it. You can eat raw meat—your teeth cut it and it nourishes you. The cold hardens your flesh but does not injure you, and your breath does not cloud in the chill. You sleep in the drifts and they shelter you.
- **Wolf Call.** *Rested.* Focus action. You can call as a wolf. You, and all those under your command within earshot count as rolling 10 on Brawn, Commitment, and Daring. The effect lasts for that round and for 1 round after per your Commitment.

HULMORA THE MOTHERLAND

Hulmora is the goddess of elements, Ulverland, and storms. She is usually depicted as a Northron battle maiden, a tree of lightning, and a cliff. She is known as the Goddess of Lightning, the Lady of Winds, and the Motherland.

Her holy symbol is a dagger of blued steel. Her favored weapon is a javelin. Her followers wear decorations of lightning patterns.

She is pleased by violent acts defending family, reveling in the power of dramatic natural events, and mounting successful rescues. She is angered by betrayal, architecture muting nature's power on her soil, and suicide.

She only accepts women as holy warriors. Her spell talents only work in Ulverland, or in coastal waters.

GIFTS OF THE MOTHERLAND

- **Bones of the Land.** *Constant.* You get +1 Wound for every 2 Commitment, while you are close enough to Ulverland for your goddess to affect you.
- **Chosen Child.** *Constant.* You cannot be hurt by weather or weather-related phenomenon (in Ulverland). You are safe from heat, cold, lightning, avalanche, brushfire, or drowning while in Ulverland. Weapons forged in Ulverland do 1 fewer Wound to you.
- **Mother's Madness.** *Constant.* Get 1 Awesome Point from the Stack for every attack you mount against someone threatening a person dear to you. While fighting for something or someone you are protecting, it only costs you 1 Awesome Point to add a Wound to your damage or take 1 less Wound from an attack.
- **Nurturing Goddess.** *Rested.* Focus action. You can touch someone and heal a Wound (even if they are dying), repair a crippling injury received less than a day ago, and negate any natural poison, venom, or illness. Your touch can provide the equivalent of 12 hours of rest. If you give up a permanent Wound, you can revive someone who has been dead less than 1 hour per your level. You can heal barrenness and leprosy (but these conditions may return if the target leaves Ulverland.)
- **Throw Lightning.** *Rested.* Focus action (upgrades to shoot action). Hurl 1 Wound of lightning in your arena or an adjacent arena per your level. The target must test Daring difficulty 10 to dodge. You can split your lightning among multiple targets.

CHARLAK THE FIRSTBORN

Charlak is the God of imprisonment, darkness, and waters. He is usually depicted as a brooding Northron prince, shackles, and a minotaur. He is known as the Master of Chains, the Architect of Prisons, and the Mazelord.

His holy symbol is a metal grid. His favored weapon is a cudgel. His followers wear striped gray.

He is pleased by leaders making practical but unpopular decisions, selfishness, and secure prisons. He is angered by courting popularity, self-sacrifice, and escapes.

GIFTS OF THE FIRSTBORN

- **Cage of the Firstborn.** *Rested.* 1 minute ritual. You can place your target on a stone surface in Ulverland, and cast the ritual. After 1 minute, the ground will open, and blind gray-skinned jailers will climb out and take your prisoner to your cell block in the Firstborn's dungeon below. You can retrieve a prisoner, or go down to your cell block, by casting this ritual. You have room for 1 prisoner to be cared for per your level. There is no escape, unless you allow it (and allowing it may bring consequences with an unamused god.)
- **Disorientation.** *Rested.* 1 hour ritual. In a prison (anywhere people are incarcerated) you can spend an hour and magically confuse the intersection. Those entering it will choose which way they leave, but the DM will randomize the direction they actually take. You can permanently affect 1 intersection per your level.
- **Meat Prison.** *Rested.* Focus action. Grip the target, who must be a living person or animal. Inflict one crippling of your choice from the list on the target. This spell may be cast multiple times on the same unfortunate target.
- **Pickproof.** *Rested.* 1 hour ritual. Render a lock magically impossible to breach without the proper key or your personal permission (or the one you designate.) You can permanently affect 1 lock per your level.
- **Walk Out.** *Rested.* 1 minute ritual. You do not need anything but the ability to think to use this ritual. One obstacle between you and an exit per your level will fall away. Guards will turn aside, locks will fall open, riddles will solve themselves, and so on. You instinctively know the way out.

MAHAM THE TEACHER

Maham is the God of civilization, self-restraint, and education. He is usually depicted as a one-eyed ogre, a stern professor, and a hot iron. He is known as the Beast-Tamer, The Grim, and Master of Lessons.

His holy symbol is an actual whip, or a specially-prepared leather eye-patch. His favored weapon is a cauterizing iron. His followers put out one eye.

He is pleased by scars, animal training, and psychological profiling. He is angered by willful ignorance, naiveté, and submitting the human will to nature and animals.

Characters who put out an eye so they can follow Maham get 6 Awesome Points from the Stack.

GIFTS OF THE TEACHER

- **Hard Lesson.** *Rested.* When a talent is used against you, that's all the training you need to learn it. The talent can be open or restricted; with DM permission you can magically learn an exclusive talent if it is appropriate. You can learn 1 talent this way per 3 levels. You gain the talent immediately, but do not gain a talent when you level. You cannot use this without buying it.
- **Heat Iron.** *Arena.* Focus action. You can heat iron red hot in seconds. This can be used to automatically cauterize a wound (with no chance of infection.) It can add +2 to an Intimidate attempt. It can add +1 Wound to an attack with the iron. It can scar a target, even one not down to 0 Wounds.
- **Iron Calm.** *Constant.* You cannot be intimidated or frightened by normal means. Supernatural attempts to affect you double your Wounds or count as rolling a 10 to resist. (The DM can improvise any other appropriate defense against unusual supernatural fear.)
- **Lessons Learned.** *Rested.* An hour. You touch each scar you have gained in your life, and reflect on what you learned from the situation or injury. (You can count 1d5 scars gained before play started, and then 1 per scar gained in play.) Each scar gives you 1 Awesome Point.
- **Master Beasts.** *Constant.* Normal animals refuse to attack you unless driven by a greater force. You automatically intimidate both natural and unnatural animals (including sentient monsters like dragons, but not constructs.) If it is bestial, you intimidate it. You can train domesticated animals swiftly, in an hour or so. You can domesticate a wild animal in a day or so. You can train a monster in a week. This power works against basic animals of any size and strength. If there is a question, the monster is obedient if it has fewer Wounds than your Commitment x2.

LIBERIAK THE INDULGED

Liberiak is the God of knowledge, libraries, and silence. He is usually depicted as a painfully thin old man in dark robes, a rune-scrimshawed skeleton with a jaunty cap, and an ink well. He is known as the Gaunt Gent, the Scribe, and Allseer.

His holy symbol is an ink well. His favored weapon is a bodyguard. His followers wear soft black robes.

He is pleased by seeing patterns, profiting from misinformation, and plans with long time frames. He is angered by destroying knowledge, insisting on simplistic perspectives, and despair.

Those who speak Liberiak's name may receive a feeble curse, DM's discretion. Refer to him by one of his titles, to honor the silence he reveres.

GIFTS OF THE GAUNT GENT

- **Booksafe.** *Rested.* You have a shelf of books that is partly in the Great Library in Lizport, and partly in the heart of the Gaunt Gent. You can meditate for an hour and go to this book nook (you get 1 shelf of space per level) to pick up, drop off, or study texts. The ritual is the equivalent of 12 hours of study. As a focus action, you can put a book in your robes and it vanishes, appearing in the booksafe. This only works with books. If you die, the booksafe is merged with the Great Library for good—but it must be found by anyone looking for the books in it. *Cannot be used untrained.*
- **Commune with Stacks.** *Rested.* This one hour ritual allows you to commune with the Holy Stacks of the Great Library in Lizport, no matter where you are. You get the equivalent of 12 hours of research there, a ghostly image of you flickering through the library touching books. When you rouse from your meditation, you have the benefit of that research. *Cannot be used untrained.*
- **Knowledge is Fuel.** *Rested.* You can use studying to sustain your body. You can read for up to 1 hour per level to gain benefit. Each hour can replace 1 meal and drink or 1 hour of sleep.
- **Silence.** *Rested.* Focus action (upgrades to defend action). This gift is very flexible. You can silence yourself so you make no noise as you move. You can silence another so they can make no noise. You can silence an entire arena so nothing is heard and no noise is made. Be creative in applying this silence, it is a gift from the Gaunt Gent. It generally lasts as long as you are present, and up to 1 round per your level after you go. Its range is current arena or an adjacent arena.
- **Unlock Knowledge.** *Constant.* You can read through your fingertips, even in the dark, at normal speed. Any written language renders itself understandable if you can touch it and run your finger across the symbols.

CODEx OF THE WHITE WAY

Where does the scripture of the Church come from? There are three broad eras of canon and scholarship.

First Writings

The first writings from the Army of the White Way originated with sketched out worship notes upon the First Landing, materials all long lost to legend. When the Army of the White Way began training reinforcements in the worship of the Lady, they prepared basics that formed the foundation of the Book of Teachings. Only fragments from this generation of works survive, enshrined at the Landing.

Over time, lore has been gleaned from the wrecked Cities by the Ruinous Scar, sifted by looters and sold to scholars and the Church. Visions from angels, teaching of prophets, and codified wisdom of saints and martyrs all made an impression. What started in most cases as oral tradition was written, and copied, and copied again, and sent around the World Between. Most communities managed to build and curate a solid collection of the core teachings, as adapted by the Church leaders and occasional otherworldly infusions of wisdom from the World Above in various forms.

The First Canon

When the Army of the Lady of the White Way landed for the Third Crusade in 4,540, *Alistathus* was an otherworldly scholar who was assigned to work with the Church to canonize scripture. The church officially maintains he was an angel, there is speculation as to what he really was. For ten years, he commissioned warriors and scholars to roam the Lands of the Lady and beyond, collecting the very best records and samples from various shrines, churches, and libraries, leaving in their place platinum tokens of the Codex with the promise that the platinum tokens could be exchanged for completed codexes at the conclusion of the project.



When the quest was more or less complete, *Alistathus* spent a few more years sifting the scholarly work, and was in the process of finishing the First Canon when he mysteriously vanished. After two years, the Pontiff shared the end result of the First Canon of the Library of Nine, authorizing a copy sent to each place that had a platinum token of the Codex (which was then returned to the Church.) Of course, treasure hunters dream that they missed a few (that could still be turned in for codexes of the First Canon...)

The Second Canon

Widespread unrest led up to the Fourth Crusade, riddled it, and blossomed after the failed war. Vocal reform-minded clergy challenged the conclusions of the First Canon, arguing that *Alistathus* did not finish his work, and the books would read very differently if he had completed the sifting process himself. This unrest climaxed in 6,700, when the Veil separated the World Between more thoroughly from the World Above, the World Below, and other destinations.

The shock of waking dragons was enough to discredit the corrupt and frightened incumbent leadership, and sweeping change rocked the church to its foundations. Part of that process was the reviving of the sifting process, pulling out all the ancient documents predating the First Canon and all that had been collected since, to this time have a more accurate, insightful, pure, and holy canon. *Calbrius the Light Seeker* led the process.

The sifting took a century, and that was at a break-neck pace. An army of scholars and fanatics engaged the mountains of scholarship and primary sources, and much blood was spilled as those assigned to the project challenged each other to duels over fine points of theology. The church organizations founded during the Age of Roads invested political and theological capitol in various outcomes of the sifting process; some were disbanded, some restructured, and some just disappeared. Others emerged strengthened and victorious. Codification of the Second Canon was a sore point that still aches through many of the Church's various structures hundreds of years later.

The Church sent out Purifiers to collect First Canon copies of the Library of Nine and the Library of Three, with platinum tokens of the Codex. Over the course of decades, many copies were traded in. The Purifiers became more and more aggressive in collecting copies of the First Canon, resorting to destruction where necessary; any remaining copies are either very well protected by powerful people, outside the Lands of the Lady, or underground—and therefore, very valuable indeed.

The collected copies were not destroyed, but instead built into a massive library under the Landing called the Repository. The various copies of the First Canon Libraries suffer from updates, glosses, integration with local records, and other various embroidering of lore and art that makes them sometimes useful in ongoing investigations and battles against the supernatural.

Library of Nine.

Here are the core books in order. They are sometimes bound in a single volume of cramped close text, and sometimes spread over nine separate volumes with gorgeous illuminated text in large script. Various combinations are bound for different purposes.

- **Book of First Truths.** Regarding the binding of the world. Chapters for each epoch.
- **Book of Prophets.** Each Prophet of the Lady has a chapter.
- **Book of Teachings.** Chapters for rules; covers sins, penance, purity, duty, and other subjects.
- **Book of Songs.** Ancient poetry for worshipping the Lady.
- **Book of Prayers.** Prayers for every occasion; historical events, theological needs, holy days, hours.
- **Book of the Pilgrim Road.** Allegory about the Glory Road and the struggle for personal salvation.
- **Book of Parables.** Stories from wise men and seers that contain riddles containing truths.
- **Book of Angels.** Chapters for angel types in the Host; avengers, guardians, warriors, seraphim, etc.
- **Book of End Times.** Regarding the unbinding of the world. Chapters for each seal to unlock it.

Library of Three

The Library of Nine is not easily portable. The three books usually prepared for a traveling preacher are the **Book of Teachings**, the **Book of Songs**, and the **Book of Prayers**. Indeed, that is all that most non-professionals know of the theology and writings of the Church.

OTHER THEOLOGICAL BOOKS

Apocrypha

Many fragments from the time of the First Writings were developed into theological texts deemed inaccurate, unhelpful, or otherwise unacceptable to be in the First Canon. Likewise, dubious texts or suspect lore accumulated around every era of Library organization. These fragments are collected into

books, or hidden in libraries, or variously formatted through the World Between. Sometimes they are more accurate, more graphic, more localized, or otherwise more useful for various purposes than the canonized versions. There is also some suspicion among the usual suspicious types that there are forces at work in the Church concealing truths about the Lady of the White Way that would repel her supporters... If you want to banish angels, summon demons, develop weird powers with magick of the World Above, learn True Names of the Forces of Air, and that sort of thing, sifting the vast Apocrypha is for you. Or, you could make a profit trading in these materials by selling them to scholars or the Church.

Specialist Books

There are a number of books used by scholars, church administrators, monster hunters, and other highly specialized individuals.

- **Hereteckkal.** This book documents all of the official heresies the Church has declared, with theological elucidation of both the perspective of the heretics and the Church's correct answer to them. The book, and documentation supporting it, fill shelves at the Landing. Access is heavily restricted.
 - **Heretecklesi.** Various copies have various foci on different eras or regions, and some detail personalities and events surrounding heresies, or are packed with illustrations, or offer counter perspectives to what can be found in the Hereteckkal. These books are often infused with power by demons who use them to lure mortals into bargains. They can contain rituals and rites with dangerous power. They should be in the care of the Church, or destroyed. They can only be written by priests of the Church with a solid scholastic background.
- **Adversarium.** This book documents all of the demons, monsters, gods, spirits, and other supernatural foes of the Church. It is now 208 volumes long, kept in the vaults deep beneath the Landing, updated by the Foe Hammers of the Church.
 - **Adversatia.** These books are field manuals for battling demons, ghosts, monsters, and so on. They are often themed along a region, a type of foe, or the exploits of a single monster hunter. Each chapter of the Foe Hammers has an Adversatia in their Sanctum that is updated and guided by the warrior scholar priests of the order.
- **Gratia Voxelia, Book of Saints and Martyrs.** This is not a book, but in fact a library, where the names are in a massive index (the Book of Souls) in the highest spire of the Landing. Each name has a book with all the information that the Church could glean on the individual.
 - **Exemplars.** This is the name for books that outline the lives of saints and/or martyrs, for the edification and instruction of the faithful. They are often rife with a mix of lore and history, and bear clues to riddles, lost treasures, ancient locks or keys, and the forces that tangled with the faithful. In the time before, during, and after the Fourth Crusade there were secret factions in the Church that used Exemplars to code information and messages in ornate illuminated manuscripts. Many of these Exemplars are still out in the wider world as objects of reverence, art pieces, scholarly collections, or treasure hunter fantasies.

SAINTS OF THE LADY

There are four dominant apostolic saints of the Lady of the White Way.

Bernus, the Stumbling Wayfarer. Patron of travelers, merchants, and penitents. Sacred to Sustantivo.

- He is depicted as a blind-folded pilgrim leaning on a shepherd's crook.
- *When?* 3,658. His monastery was taken by the forces of Ulverland. He blinded himself and walked towards the Ulverland rulers in penance. He was very popular. Rulers who had been bickering and scattered united to rescue him, and in their unity managed to protect Midian from invasion.
- **Favored Books:** *Book of Prayers*, *Book of the Pilgrim Road*

Coraline, the Voice of Doom. Patron of mystics, Templar, and purifiers. Sacred to Armandura.

- She is depicted as a gaunt woman with eyes that burn with divine radiance.
- *When?* 4,545. Third Crusade. She personally led a small group that drove the Northrons all the way to the mountains of Frostreave, saving the Army of the Lady that headed for the Scavenger Lands.
- **Favored Books:** *Book of End Times*, *Book of Parables*

Arianna, the Bloody Redeemer. Patron of crusaders, warriors, and the military. Sacred to Calrissia.

- She is depicted as a mighty warrior in plate with a bloody sword.
- *When?* 5,704. She led a rag-tag fleet that defeated an element of the Death Fleet where Calrissia is now, then led an armada south ten years later.
- **Favored Books:** *Book of Songs*, *Book of Prophets*

Calbrius, the Light Seeker. Patron of scholars, wizards, and theologians. Sacred to Arlona.

- He is depicted as a cowed, hunchbacked scribe laboring over ancient tomes.
- *When?* 6,701. He was the heart of the beginning of the Second Canon.
- **Favored Books:** *Book of Teachings*, *Book of Angels*

Faith, Luck, and Prayer

If a character has faith in the Lady of the White Way as a belief system, and prays to a saint then kisses the medallion, the character might get an Awesome Point from the Stack. Faith can be funny that way. This is not a mechanical benefit, but the DM may sometimes stand in for the divine, who may be pleased by a faithful gesture.



DAMSEL OF THE LADY (TEMPLATE)

The Damsel is a sorceress avatar of the Lady of the White Way coming out of a Scarabean tradition.

INHERENT—ANGELIC

You have an otherworldly charisma and grace. You always count as rolling a 10 on Charm and Commitment. Also, you can glow, lighting your arena with the equivalent of moonlight.

LIMITATION—A TALL PEDESTAL

You represent the one true goddess putting divine energy in a mortal. You reflect the Lady's light, as the moon reflects the sun. So everything you say and do is closely watched. Show your fallible humanity, and your greatest supporters may become your most dangerous enemies.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: A medallion of authority and authenticity from the Pontiff. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver x10.

Damsels of the Lady begin with crimson hair. Every 4 levels the hair color shifts; first to orange (5th level), then to gold (9th level), then to white (12th level). Starting at level 16, the hair glows, and by level 20 it is almost weightless, as though the Damsel was underwater.

TALENTS

- **Ethereal Authority.**** *Rested.* Focus action. You can counter any spell being cast. Your counterspell total is [level + Commitment + 10]. When you use this talent, all demons in your arena or an adjacent arena are flung back to the World Below unless they have more Wounds than your total. If they have enough Wounds individually or as a group, they ignore your Authority. Half demons take 1 Wound.
- **Guardian Angel.**** *Rested.* Focus action. *Once per level*, you can summon an angel. The angel can overawe mortals, transport you swiftly across the world, do battle with demons (only demons, twisted and evil monsters, or undead), or take the dead to rest safely. Angels are super-powerful, and should not be called upon lightly. Taking this talent means bonding with one angel, who may also sometimes bring guidance from the Lady. *You don't have to use this once each level, you can store up uses.*
- **Revivification.**** *Rested.* Focus action. Touch a person and heal 1 of their Wounds. Once per day, you can heal a single person up all the way. Once per your level, you can bring a person back from the dead if they have been dead less than 1 day per your Commitment; missing pieces will still be missing.
- **Sustenance.**** *Rested.* Focus action. Create strange pale wafers that count as a meal and a drink each. You can make 1 per your level + Commitment. It only lasts 6 hours if saved.
- **Transition Miracle.**** As you die, tell the DM what you are thinking about. The DM will conjure up a miracle from the World Above regarding your last thoughts. This may be whimsical, it may be a curse, it may be a blessing; the miracle will take on the character of your last wishes, but it is not something you can pick (though you are free to suggest possibilities to the DM.) *Cannot be used untrained.*

FRIAR (TEMPLATE)

The Friar travels or settles among the people, resisting the lures of wealth and fame to stay grounded in the teachings and desires of the Lady of the White Way.

INHERENT—BROTHER

You are literate in your starting language, and you know Draxive and the Baroque Logos. You get the occupational template for “Cleric.” Every time people are grateful for the Church of the Lady because of service you provide (not grateful to you, but to the Lady or the Church) you get an Awesome Point from the Stack.

LIMITATION—TEMPTED

You are bound by vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in service to community. To be clear, that means you cannot accept payment for your services or own more than you can carry. You are not allowed the pleasures of romance or any of its elements except the love of friendship. If the Church of the Lady gives you a command (though some hedge that it must come through their Order) you must obey.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Simple habit, cowl, walking stick. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 copper.

You must have at least 1 in Commitment to take this template. Take the Belief System “Consecrated Life” which covers the three vows: poverty, chastity, and obedience.

TALENTS

- **Conviction.** Constant.** You are living the life of a servant to a greater, benevolent power. Any time you intimidate or resist intimidation, or you are speaking from your faith or resisting those speaking against your faith, add Charm and Commitment together. This can stack with your Belief System as an additional bonus.
- **Inspire the Faithful.** Rested.** Pray with those faithful to the Lady for 5 minutes, and all of you get 1 Awesome Point. Have a worship service for an hour, everyone gets 3 Awesome Points.
- **Inured to Hardship.* Rested.** Each point of Commitment allows you to ignore the fatigue of 1 sleepless night or the hardship of a day without food. When you can sleep or eat again, you catch up 2 points each day you get +1/2 what you need.
- **Healer.** Constant.** Your extensive education and experience becoming a friar allow you to dabble in (if untrained) or master the occupational talents for doctor and alchemist. Gain +2 on relevant rolls.
- **Work of the Lady.** Rested.** Friars are not expected to follow the strict work of prayer required of monastics, but you have experienced it. When you pray at dawn, mid-morning, mid-day, afternoon, evening, and night for a full day of worship, you gain 1 Awesome Point per your level.

PURIFIER (TEMPLATE)

Purity comes from singularity. Not from many voices, many paths, many thoughts. If the doctrine of the Lady of the White Way is to have saving power, it must be pure.

INHERENT ABILITY—EXORCIST

You have purified yourself, prepared, and hardened your soul. You are ready to stand before demons filled with the holy wrath of the Lady of the White Way and cast them out of this world. You have memorized the Writ of Denial. Each round, spiritually wrestle with a demon in the same arena as a focus action. Pass a Commitment test, difficulty 6 the first round, +3 each round thereafter. If you pass a number of consecutive tests equal to the demon's Wounds, it is ejected to the World Below.

LIMITATION—INFLEXIBLE

The demands of purity are absolute. If matters of faith cannot be reduced to yes or no questions, then the things your sworn duty requires you to do lose their holy mandate, and you sacrifice yourself and others for nothing. You do not add complexity to create ambiguity when it comes to doctrine and heresy; the mind can twist any statement to sound reasonable eventually. You have too much power to betray those you serve by pitting your reason against their consensus.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Writ of Purification signed by the Pontiff. Broad brimmed black hat, long black coat. Silver dagger etched with the holy symbol of the Lady of the White Way. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver x50.

TALENTS

- **Chilling.** Constant.** You have seen things, done things; you know what humanity is capable of, and you've faced what comes from the World Below. The law allows you to torture and kill. Add your Commitment and Charm together to intimidate others or resist intimidation.
- **Circle of Protection.** Rested.** It takes 10 minutes per arena, or 1 minute for a circle big enough for about 3 people to stand. You also need salt and chalk as a minimum, ideally also candles and special ingredients (each extra potency adds +1 to your Commitment to power the protection). You can create a barrier that demons cannot cross. A demon with more Wounds than your Commitment can push through in 3 rounds, losing 1 Wound a round. This also works on door frames and window frames to seal a room or building.
- **Conviction.** Constant.** You know how to silence your own doubt and human weakness, to steel yourself to do what you must. Every Awesome Point you spend to resist Terror or Horror grants +4.
- **Sense the Supernatural.** Constant.** Focus action (upgrades to move). Test Awareness to detect supernatural power when it is active in your arena. This works on passive or active enchantments, as well as disguised supernatural creatures. The DM sets the difficulty.
- **Wrath.** Rested.** Focus action (upgrades to combat). When you smite an enemy of the faith (not animals, or the ignorant, unless they pursue a course to defile something holy to the Lady), when you hit you can force the target to roll as though they had 0 Wounds when you struck them. This works against orcs, monsters, and any creature abhorrent to the Lady.

You speak for the Church, with the power of the Law. In lands where the Lady of the White Way is worshipped as the one true Goddess, you may investigate anyone you choose. Only two Purifiers or a Cardinal can accuse you of crimes or incarcerate you—anyone else must endure your attention. You may kill anyone you choose (though your actions will be reviewed by your superiors if you anger powerful people.) You have the power to administer Last Rites to save the dying, to anoint, and to defrock clergy (three purifiers can defrock a cardinal.) You are versed in theology and ritual practice.

ZEALOT (TEMPLATE)

The Zealot knows the end is near. Atone! Rebuke sinners! Admonish the faithful! Soon, it will be too late.

INHERENT—UNSHAKEABLE

Don't roll Commitment. All Commitment tests assume you rolled a 10.

LIMITATION—RATTLED

All the things that matter to other people are meaningless. The end of the world is here. The only hope of safety is finding solace in the loving embrace of the Lady of the White Way. But the world is clearly damned—just look around.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Book of prayers, switch of thorns. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 copper.

TALENTS

- **Feel No Pain.**** *Constant.* Your frequent self-torture and your evident madness have dulled your sense of pain. You gain +2 Wounds and you can ignore up to -2 penalty from distraction or discomfort.
- **Glorious Death.**** *Rested.* If you go into battle with a Very Heavy Weapon and no armor, against foes of the Lady who are heretical, vile, or otherwise opposed to the church, you can enter a trance-like ecstatic state. You get 1 temporary Wound per Commitment. When the battle is over, those extra Wounds go away, and if you have 0 or fewer Wounds roll a critical.
- **Iron Will.*** *Constant.* When intimidating or resisting intimidation, combine your Commitment and your Charm bonuses, +10, instead of rolling.
- **Sacrifice.**** *Constant.* Every time you take down an unbeliever foe face-to-face in combat, gain 1 Awesome Point from the Stack.
- **War Chant.**** *Rested.* Attack as a focus action, screaming out scripture and catechism of the Lady or bellowing a battle hymn. While using this Talent in a fight, (attacking as a focus action each round,) you get 1 Awesome Point per level to use in the fight before you stop singing or get hurt (when unused points go away.) Use them fast!

TALENTS OF THE PAGAN GODS

Primal spirits in the World Between are powerful, and able to grant supernatural powers to their followers. Those who worship nature gods are called “pagans.” Druids worship in an organized way, with a specific culture and tradition. Beastmasters and shamen are gifted to deal with animals and spirits in their own unique ways. Tribes in the Scavenger Lands have totem spirits and traditions of worship.

Beast Gods can grant anyone who pleases them one or more of these talents. When you get a talent from a Beast God, that replaces the talent you would get when you level. These supernatural abilities are based in animal abilities, authority over animals, or authority over their environments. Once a talent is granted to you, no further training or permission is needed for you to improve it as you level if you want to.

Here are some of the most prominent pagan gods.

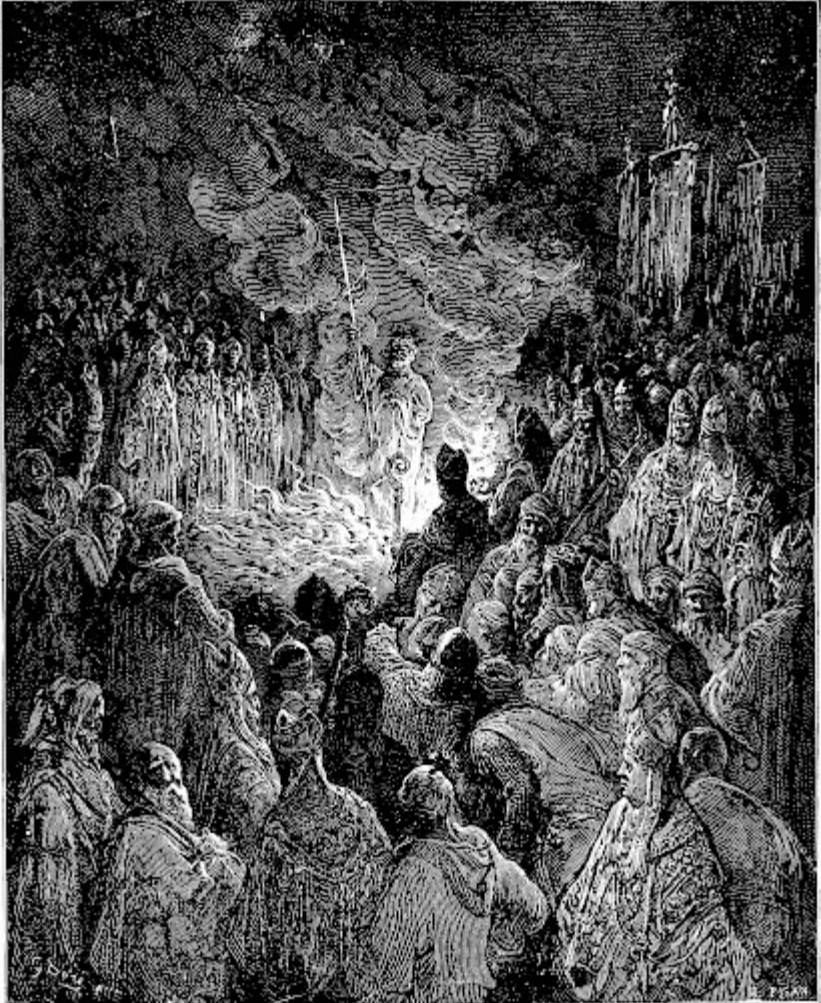
- **Crooked Moon.** Cruel nature god, hidden deep in forests, striking at civilization. Represents the insane brutality of a survival-oriented natural world with no room for compassion.
- **Father Sothak.** God of the Briny Depths, the Drowned King, Prince of the Kraken’s Maw. He is a grim sea god, his rites involve near-drowning baptisms. His grudging consort is the demon goddess Mother Lothak, the Tempest Queen, Our Lady of Sharks. Disruption in their uneasy peace draws the seas in their tides.
- **Forest Who Walks.** Cruel nature god of Ulverland. The Walker constantly groans like creaking wood, spills monsters out into the World Between to scour the woods and cleanse them of intruders. Only placated by blood sacrifices at consecrated and remote stone altars in the forest. Weird and monstrous, looks like a moving grove of trees (with the trunks as legs, and its growths as the foliage.)
- **Gods of the Grapes.** Powerful trickster satyrs in the forests of Relmeenos. They inspire greatness and depravity in humans, and ultimately they care little for the consequences of their inspirations. They are horny and tricky, musically inclined and lazy. They love to entertain at parties, but when roused they are vicious.
- **Golden Lion.** God of pride, honor, and martial prowess. One of the major totem spirits of the Scavenger Lands. Leonine tribes have a loose alliance and rivalry, and are widely considered the least depraved of the wasteland savages. The Lion hunts undead near the Ruinous Scar.
- **Kumo-Thlis.** The snake god, the One Who Slithers. This sinister god comes from Mord-Stavian’s blasted desert, and has a significant presence in Midian. Rites involve snake-handling, speaking in tongues, and rolling in the aisles. Focused on seduction and corruption, the Great Snake has targeted the Church of the Lady for destruction.
- **Lamenting Mother.** Goddess of all monsters, natural and supernatural. They worship her, and she punishes those who rise up against the tide of monsters that threatens to engulf the world. Slay her children, and you may be a local hero, but you also may attract Mother’s wrath. She is depicted as a swollen sac of meat and evil, usually with some spider features, deep beneath the Spine Mountains. She mostly causes trouble in Relmeenos.

- **Luminous Hawk.** The Hawk Tribes of the Scavenger Lands are the swiftest warriors. They believe the Hawk drags the sun into the sky each day. The energy of the sun destroys undead, and the Hawks have rituals of adulthood that involve single combat with powerful undead monsters.
- **Unconquered Badger.** The Badger Tribes in the Scavenger Lands are formidable in defense. The Badger protects hearth and home.

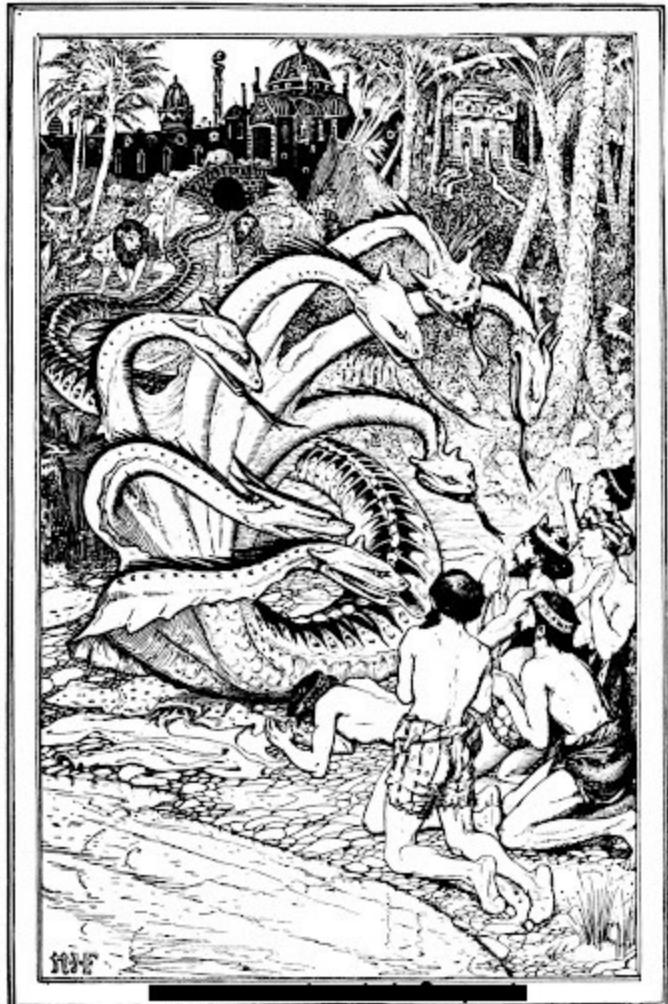
TALENTS

- **Attention!** *Rested*. As a focus action (upgrade to move action), draw every eye in the area; for a few seconds, everyone stops talking and looks at you. For the next few minutes, your voice will project up to 1 arena in every direction per Commitment rating.
- **Blend.** *Constant*. Focus action (upgrade to move action). You can add your Commitment to your Cunning to avoid notice in the dark or in a natural environment. This also allows blending into crowds.
- **Bounty of the Sea.** *Rested*. Focus action. You can summon food from the sea, and cleanse sea water to be potable. You can cleanse or summon 5 servings per Commitment rating per casting.
- **Cast Swarm.** *Rested*. Move action. Lose 1 Wound and fling a swarming mass of flying insects from under your skin. The swarm can automatically interrupt one target's focus action. The target must be in the same arena. You can interrupt up to 1 target per Wound spent creating and releasing bugs from your skin. The swarm is dispersed when the round ends.
- **Dark Kin.** *Constant*. Can see up to 10 yards in the dark, and sense where light disrupts it (even if not visible from current location.) Communicate telepathically with living things that cannot see that are in the same arena. +2 to Cunning to be stealthy where there are shadows.
- **Devour.** *Rested*. Focus action. Summon a mass of scarabs from the earth. The next round, as a focus action, the scarabs will devour up to 1 load of meat, supplies, leather, wood, or earth per your Commitment. Living meat takes 2 Wounds per load devoured, unless they make a Daring or Brawn test difficulty 10, so they only take 1 Wound per load devoured. You can keep them in existence for 1 Awesome Point per round after the first. They cannot leave your arena. When they are done, they burrow back down into the earth. This does not work if there is no earth to act as a summoning gateway.
- **Evade the Hunter.** *Rested*. Focus action. Automatically succeed in some improbable method of movement to escape being trapped, or to elude pursuers. Move through an entire arena in an unexpected way. This might be scrambling up a sheer wall, flipping over a spiked fence, diving through a hole that looks too small to pass through, etc.
- **Fearless.** *Constant*. You have seen the beauty in the world, and know it is worth fighting for. You are impossible to intimidate or drive to despair, even magically. You can also add your Commitment to your Daring.
- **Life Force.** *Constant*. If injured to 0 Wounds you are always knocked out, never bleeding out (unless hit again.) If you roll under your level on 1d10, you do not scar when badly hurt, and you only need to rest 12 hours. You can rest and regain Wounds (if not dying or crippled) as much as you want in a day with no cap.

- **Mark the Prey.** *Rested.* Focus action. Watch the target for a focus action. Until you choose a new target, you will be able to take a focus action to know the rough direction (within 90 degrees) and a vague sense of distance (in the room, less than a mile or so, less than 100 miles, more) for the target you have chosen.
- **Moonlight.** *Constant.* At will, you can cause your arena to be lit as with moonlight.
- **Natural Weapon.** *Rested.* Focus action (upgrades to move action). Grow or summon a weapon. Choose a type when taking the talent—light, hand, heavy, reach, or range. The weapon lasts until you lose consciousness.
- **Nourishing Earth.** *Rested.* Focus action. You can turn sand, rock, clay, or mud to food or water, creating 5 servings of food or water per Commitment rating.
- **Passage.** *Rested.* Focus action. You can open and close walls, floors, and ceilings made of stone or earth. You can move 5 cubic yards of material per Commitment rating, for creating or collapsing doors, pits, and tunnels. Those who would be caught can test Daring difficulty 7 to leap to safety, if it is possible.
- **Protection.** *Constant.* You ignore the first Wound from any attack.
- **Relief.** *Constant.* Focus action. Anyone touched (including self) is freed from fever, infection, rash, illness, bad dreams, emotional pain, and any other kind of suffering. Minor pain may be eliminated in this way. More serious pain creeps back after a period of time, but the target should be free of suffering for about half an hour per your Commitment.
- **Scuttle.** *Rested.* You can gain short-range flight (no more than 1 arena a round), ability to walk on ceilings and walls, and ability to jump 5 times normal distance, for 1 round per Commitment. You can automatically manage most unusual movement, and if a roll is necessary, add your Commitment to it, possibly in addition to another attribute.



- **Sea Kin.** *Constant.* You can breathe water or air. You can communicate telepathically with sea creatures within line of sight, earshot, or adjacent arenas. You ignore the first 4 penalty for moving in water or swimming.
- **Spatial Gifts.** *Constant.* You always know how deep you are and which way is north, when underground. You automatically memorize maps and remember where you've been.
- **Survival.** *Constant.* You can eat what insects eat to survive; carrion, small animals, insects, offal, slime, mold, etc. You can always heal with a short period of rest, even if you were dying or crippled. You are immune to sickness and disease that wouldn't affect an insect. In a week you heal crippling.
- **Treeflesh.** *Rested.* Focus action. Your flesh takes on the hardness of wood. Ignore the first wound from any attack. This lasts for an hour. You are +2 to Cunning to hide among trees, and others can see your condition with an Awareness difficulty 6 test. Instead of armor, you can choose to become a tree shape for up to 1 day per Commitment, minimally aware of your surroundings, but difficulty 14 to an Awareness test to detect. Upon taking damage, you return to human form. You can act the following round.
- **Unstoppable.** *Rested.* As a focus action (upgrade to defend action), add +1 Wound per Commitment to yourself. This can heal existing injuries. If you get more Wounds than your capacity, the extra Wounds do not refresh when you heal, and they are lost when you sleep next.
- **Watchful.** *Constant.* Add your Commitment to your Awareness. Your senses are honed, so whether you are hunting or being hunted, you are difficult to surprise or escape.
- **Windrider.** *Rested.* Focus action (upgrades to move action). Lasts for about an hour. The character cannot carry more weight than normal, but can move 3 dimensionally. In general, every 5 yards of height marks a new arena. The character can move through or over 2 arenas a round, seeming light on currents of wind.
- **Wolf Speed.** *Rested.* Move two arenas in one move action, or move and attack as one action.



BEASTMASTER (TEMPLATE)

The Beastmaster has a gift for communicating with animals, and securing their help.

INHERENT—MASTER OF BEASTS

You can communicate empathically with all animals and animalistic monsters. Also, you can exert a measure of control over any animal with equal to or fewer Wounds than your Commitment bonus. In case of a conflict, both you and the animal test Commitment, you with your bonus and the animal with +1 per current Wound. If you win, it obeys you.

LIMITATION—AWKWARD WORDS

You are spoiled by your ability to easily understand and communicate with animals. People, with their layered nuanced needs and communication methods, are too difficult—so few are worth the struggle to have clear communication, much less trust and friendship.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Jerky treats and sugar lumps. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 copper.

TALENTS

- **Animal Empathy.*** *Constant.* Upon seeing an animal, you can immediately tell its mood, the source of any distress or enthusiasm it is experiencing, what it wants, and its gender. In obscured, swift, indirect, or other difficult cases, an Awareness test may help uncover these facts.
- **Beastsight.**** *Rested.* Focus. You can settle into a trance, then see through the eyes of one of your animal companions (or test Commitment difficulty 10 to see through a sympathetic animal that is not one of your companions.) This lasts as long as it needs to, up to when you rest again. Breaking contact (including if the animal dies) disorients you for one round, then you can act normally.
- **Companionship.**** *Rested.* You can have sympathetic, helpful animal companion(s) with Wounds equal to or fewer than your Commitment. While they are sympathetic, helpful, and more clever than most of their kind, they will not react well to abuse or being exposed to extreme danger while you are safe (unless they volunteer.) Releasing an animal from service requires you to be with the animal. There are no hard feelings on the animal's part when it is released from service.
- **Restful Company.**** *Rested.* Resting for at least 10 minutes with all your animal companions counts as being Rested, by activating this ability, once between periods of actual rest.
- **Vitality.**** *Constant.* You can borrow up to 1 Awesome Point from the DM per Wound of animal companion in the same arena. When you gain more, the animal vitality is paid back first.

DRUID (TEMPLATE)

The Druid's commitment to the Beast Gods and the Wild Energies is a formidable counter to civilization.

INHERENT—DRUIDIC LORE

You know the desires and hates of the Beast Gods. You know what to do to make an area sacred to them. You know all plants and animals, what is normal for them and what gives away tampering or coercion of the natural order. You are a skilled healer and poisoner, gaining the apothecary occupational talent.

LIMITATION—ALIEN

You worship the Beast Gods in your way, and defend natural places from your own people. You will never be a plant, or an animal, but you'll never fit in with humans again either. You've chosen a lonely path of worshiping the ancients at the expense of living in the world your kind has made. Kind druids are vegetarian and focus on life and growth. Cruel druids are predators; they eat meat and they hunt for sport.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Deep cloak, woven belt and sandals. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 copper.

TALENTS

- **Beastfriend.**** *Constant.* You can empathically communicate with animals; not complex ideas, but basic feelings and images, like advanced nonverbal communication. Animals recognize you are a ruler in the natural order, chosen and empowered by Nature itself. If they are natural, they will assist and they will not attack you or those you protect.
- **Fertility.**** *Rested.* After about a minute of prayer, you make new life possible where it was not possible before. You can rejuvenate a field, affect a mammal's reproductive cycle, help roots crack solid stone, or whatever other miracle seems necessary. This prayer can also accelerate growth modestly.
- **Forest Kinship.**** *Constant.* You can move through arenas with plants as a focus action and leave no trace. You can mentally communicate with any plants that have a mind and are in the same arena at +2 Charm. You can spend an hour in contact with earth and water and sun, or any two of the three, and get a full day's nourishment.
- **Hungry Branches.**** *Rested.* Focus action. Cast this spell on a tree or bushes, anything that is both flexible and rigid and made of living or dead wood (but not shaped with tools.) You can create up to 1 Wound of branch beasts per Commitment. If they are minions, they fight as minions. If you make toughs or monsters with more wounds, then they can use 1 melee weapon type of your choosing. They last up to an hour before turning back into greenery.
- **Mark the Enemy.**** *Rested.* Focus action. Look at Nature's foe in the same arena and cast this highly dangerous spell. Any time the target is in contact with unshaped plants for more than a minute, or pushes through brush, or is swiped by a tree branch, or has other contact with plants, the target takes 1 Wound. If the target can endure 1 Wound without taking damage, the target takes 2 Wounds through the DM's use of Awesome Points. This lasts until the target makes peace with the Druids or dies.

SHAMAN (TEMPLATE)

The Shaman can speak to the spirits of the world and the spirits of the dead; the shaman is seldom lonely.

INHERENT ABILITY—ANIMIST

Choose one attribute besides Brawn or Awareness. That is your style of connecting to the spirit world. (If you can't use the tactics of your style, you get no bonus, but do get penalties if applicable.) Use Awareness to see spirits, as a focus action (against a difficulty set by the DM, default 7.) Then interact with them as though they were people. Your focus on the energy of the place compels energy to take form in a spirit shape that no one but the shaman can usually see. You and spirits can only hurt each other if Awesome Points are exchanged.

- Charm—Diplomat. Cunning—Trickster. Daring—Hero. Commitment—Commander.

LIMITATION—CRACKED

You do not see what other people see when you look at the same thing. The best shaman have given themselves permission to enjoy that difference, hamming it up.

SIGNATURE ITEMS: Pigments and chalk, a whistle, lucky amulet. **Starting Coin:** 3d10 silver.

TALENTS

- **Ancestors.** *Rested.*** In a ritual taking 1 hour and requiring the presence of the person to be affected (if not you) you can summon an ancestor from the past of the bloodline. This ancestor can mystically impart teaching for a talent, convey information the ancestor knows that helps the living character, or provide a blessing (generally about 1 Awesome Point per the ancestor's level.) The DM can make this happen in an emergency situation or in a "thin place" between worlds without the ritual.
- **Bind Elemental.** *Rested.*** Cast in a 12 hour ritual. Bind a chip of an element into something else, usually used to make elemental arrowheads.
- **Converse With the Dead.** *Rested.*** If you are in a haunted place, or have an object with powerful meaning for the departed, you may attempt to contact the spirit as a focus action. You mentally go to a misty in-between place, shaped by the one you are contacting, and you may meet there for a brief conversation. You cannot hurt one another. Ghosts are not always available at your whim.
- **Expand Style.** *Constant.*** You can add another Attribute to your style, and get the Attribute bonus on interacting with spirits in that way. This talent may be taken more than once.
- **Ghost Strike.** *Arena.*** You can strike ghosts and spirits as though they were physical. You can use this with a melee weapon or a thrown weapon. Improve this to ignore physical armor on targets.

CHIRESQUE (TEMPLATE)

These pagans can transform into leathern-wing bats, assassins for the forest.

INHERENT ABILITY—BATFORM

- To wizards, you appear faintly enchanted.
- As a focus action, transform into a bat. While in bat form:
 - You can fly up to 5 arenas a round.
 - If you hold still, others are -4 to hit you. If you are moving, -6 to hit you.
 - You cannot inflict injury in bat form, but if you successfully roll to hit during the Shoot phase, the target loses an action or is -4 on their next action (DM choice.)
 - Echolocation reveals what is within your arena and adjacent arenas (even when moving) without need for sight.

LIMITATIONS

- **Bat Awkwardness.** You cannot use combat talents, magic talents, or physical talents based on the human form while in the shape of a bat.
- **Hollow Bones.** You carry 1 less load than your Brawn. You gain no protection from armor heavier than leather; the impact passes right through into you.

TALENTS

- **Echolocation Boost.**** *Constant.* You gain echolocation in your arena and adjacent arenas in human form, and 1 arena in all directions per Awareness in bat form.
- **Impossible Dodge.**** *Constant.* You can buy off all Wounds of damage by spending Awesome Points, not just one. Each Wound must be paid off separately.
- **Mark Target.**** *Rested.* Beginning sometime after noon, spend a focus action (upgrade to move action) staring at your target. Until the next dawn, you will have a sense of direction and distance of the target, unless the target is protected by some kind of magic cast by someone higher level than you.
- **Piercing Fang.**** *Rested.* Beginning sometime after noon, you spend an hour (improve the talent for 10 minutes instead) meditating with a dagger or arrowhead, and touch it to your blood. Until sunrise, the point will ignore 1 Wound soaked by armor per your level. When the weapon has ignored as many Wounds from armor as your level, the enchantment ends. Anyone can use the dagger or arrow.
- **Twitch Reflex.**** *Constant.* You do not declare when you will act in the round before the round begins. Tell the DM when you are ready to act during the round. You do not need to roll initiative.

LUPINESQUE (TEMPLATE)

These pagans can transform into ferocious wolves, warriors for the forest.

INHERENT ABILITY—WOLF-FORM

- To wizards, you appear faintly enchanted.
- As a focus action, transform into a wolf. While in wolf form:
 - Ignore the first 2 Wounds from an attack that does not involve silver or fire.
 - Move 2 arenas as a move action, or move and attack.
 - Jaws count as a light weapon.
 - You can track by scent, and your senses are enhanced. Double your Awareness.
 - Ignore negative effects of weather or temperature for comfort or safety purposes (not for movement or detection.)

LIMITATIONS

- **Four Legged Awkwardness.** You cannot use combat talents, magic talents, or physical talents based on the human form while in the shape of a wolf.
- **Lunacy.** The three nights of the full moon, you transform to a wolf and have no control over your activities. You tend to act out your most repressed feelings at that time. You wake up around dawn, muzzy and fogged, with evidence of your escapade around you.
- **Silver Allergy.** Take 1 Wound from touching silver for up to a minute. Take 1 additional Wound from silvered weaponry. You cannot reduce damage done by silver by using Awesome Points.

TALENTS

- **Burst of Speed.** *Rested*.** Move 1 arena for free during the Move phase, in human or wolf form.
- **Full Moon Control.** *Constant*.** You remain in control during full moon. *You cannot spend Awesome Points to use this talent untrained. It generally involves a quest to discover inner resolve, set by one who already has this talent.*
- **Smell the Supernatural.** *Constant*.** Your sense of smell lets you sense mystical forces at work, spells in effect, or when they were cast in the last day or two. You can detect the nature of a supernatural creature or spellcaster (even disguised) with an Awareness test. You can leave your magical scent on any wall or object, visible to those who can detect supernatural energies—if you pee on it and want to leave your mark.
- **Wolf Senses.** *Constant*.** Use your wolf senses in human form.
- **Wolf Speech.** *Constant*.** You can talk to wolves (as human or wolf), and they will generally be respectful. Also, you can howl and call for help from all wolves within earshot, or roll to intimidate all within earshot.

RAVENESQUE (TEMPLATE)

These pagans can transform into iridescent black ravens, spies and messengers for the forest.

INHERENT ABILITY—RAVENFORM

- To wizards, you appear faintly enchanted.
- As a focus action, transform into a raven. While in raven form:
 - You can fly up to 4 arenas a round.
 - If you hold still, others are -2 to hit you. If you are moving, -4 to hit you.
 - You are able to manage croaking speech in raven form, and if you have any supernatural talents, you can use them.
 - You can roll 3d10 to hit, but only do 1 Wound, and then only if you spend 2 Awesome Points. You can also do 1 Wound with a hit to the face. If you successfully impede a target, you disrupt the target's focus action.

LIMITATIONS

- **Golden Pain.** The touch of gold does 1 Wound per touch or per minute of contact. Gold weapons do +1 Wound.
- **Distractable.** If confronted by shiny objects or plentiful stimulus, the DM may inform you that you've gotten distracted. You may have to pay 1-3 Awesome Points that do not count towards leveling to regain your focus.
- **Hollow Bones.** You carry 1 less load than your Brawn. You gain no protection from armor heavier than leather; the impact passes right through into you.
- **Avian Awkwardness.** You cannot use combat talents or physical talents based on the human form while in the shape of a bird.

TALENTS

- **Curse.** Rested.** You can curse someone in the same arena with a random feeble curse.
- **Drink Eye.** Rested.** You can drink the eyes of the dead. In so doing, you can either see their last sight, or have a brief conversation (no more than a few minutes) with their departed soul. This automatically works within 12 hours of death, and every 6 hours after that the talent gives less information.
- **Focus Bird.** Rested.** You can heighten the natural energies latent in a bird, so you can speak to them in their language and make them more intelligent for n hour. The bird is able to remember back an hour, with almost-human intelligence, to report on what it has seen. Or, the bird can become intelligent, willing to run errands or spy. You, and those who speak "bird" can understand the bird, but the bird understands all the languages you do when under this influence.
- **Messenger Mind.** Rested.** You can memorize verbatim text or conversations, to repeat back at will. You must activate this talent to capture the information. Memory lasts up to a month. You can have multiple messages captured at once. If confronted with a lot of information, spend Awesome Points to remember more.
- **Sense Secret.** Constant.** Focus action (upgrades to move action). You can automatically sense one secret in your arena. If the secret is hidden by magic, your difficulty on an Awareness test is equal to the (caster level x2). Each use will reveal 1 secret, starting with the most obvious. This detects coded text, hidden doors, false bottoms in containers, concealed switches, etc. It does not reveal people keeping secrets.

URSAESQUE (TEMPLATE)

These pagans can transform into towering bears, bent on defending the holy places of the forest.

INHERENT ABILITY—BEARFORM

- To wizards, you appear faintly enchanted.
- As a focus action, transform into a bear. While in bear form:
 - In bear form, ignore the first 2 Wounds from any attack involving a forged weapon.
 - Double height, and triple mass.
 - Gain 1 Wound per your Brawn or Commitment (choose one upon gaining this template.)
 - Claws count as heavy weapons.
 - You gain +4 Brawn.
 - Ignore negative effects of weather or temperature for comfort or safety purposes (not for movement or detection.)

LIMITATIONS

- **Dead Magic.** You cannot cast spells of any kind or use other supernatural abilities while in bear form.
- **Winter Sleep.** You must spend 1 Awesome Point that does not count towards leveling to do anything but sleep when the nights are longer than the days. You must spend 2 points if there is snow on the ground, or it is below freezing. Spend 1 for a scene, not each individual action.
- **Clumsy Bear.** Combat techniques designed for a human form do not work in bear form. Also, the bear form cannot speak.

TALENTS

- **Display.** Arena.** In bear form, you rise up, bare fangs, and roar, showing off. Minions automatically flee your arena. All those wishing to attack you must test Daring difficulty 7 to do so, and are -2 to attack this round.
- **Fury.** Constant.** Activate for free in the first phase of the round before anyone acts. You can get up to +4 to hit, but every point you take as a bonus is also added to attacks against you in melee.
- **Supertough.** Constant.** Gain either your Brawn or your Commitment bonus as extra Wounds in your human form, and *both* in your bear form.
- **Smack.** Arena.** In bear form, after hitting and doing damage, spend 1 Awesome Point to stun the target. The target cannot act this round (if the target has not yet gone) or next round (if the target acted this round.) Or, grants +4 to a push attack to move the target immediately into another adjacent arena.
- **Unstoppable.** Constant.** In bear form, automatically hit anyone who attempts to impede you as though you rolled your level +10.

OTHER GODS

Not every cosmic power in the World Between fits into a pantheon or classification. Here are ten other gods, and a description of the role they play in the World Between. There are hundreds of religions, pantheons, sects, and local deities. In general, these gods are more to be placated than adored. They mostly work out their will in the world through mortal servants.

- **Asthaeton.** God of civilization, virgins, and progress. He is depicted as a bald-pated patriarch with a cloud of hair around the sides of his head and a flowing beard, dressed in a spotless toga and always gripping an implement of science (with a dour look of concentration). He is worshiped in Relmeenos, and he is a driving force behind the idea that humanity has the power within it to succeed without resorting to supernatural alliances and powers. He focuses on study and concentrating your energies towards a goal, rather than dalliance, dissipation, and sloth. He is married to Astariax, but it is not a happy arrangement; they are revered in different countries for a reason. However, the temple to one usually has a shrine to the other.
- **Astariax.** Goddess of intrigue, stratagem, and mercantile prosperity. She is depicted as a haughty noblewoman in luxurious clothing, with cruel eyes. She is worshiped in the Iron Principalities, the goddess who can command worship in competition with demons. Demons offer power, and use cunning to manipulate their slaves. Astariax offers cunning, and uses the resulting power to manipulate her servants (and their enemies.) She is married to Asthaeton, an acknowledgement that a level of civilization is required to protect schemers and to provide luxuries. Oddly enough, while they do not compete with one another, those who worship one find that the stratagems of the other increase the overall potency of their efforts. Their relationship is a lesson that happiness and effectiveness need not go together.
- **Dragon Cults.** Humanity has a long tradition of venerating that which has the supernatural power to destroy it. Dragon cults are either generic worshipers of the Keepers of Magic and Scourge of the Skies, or they find a specific dragon to worship as a god in exchange for protection and purpose. Some dragons teach new magic to their slaves. Others grant supernatural abilities to those who please them. All dragons tend to eat some of their followers, and treat all with contempt. Still, for many humans, the opportunity to be near something so powerful and look into its eyes is worth their small, miserable lives. The rare cult that tries to manipulate dragons to their own end tends to fizzle out fast.



- **Junox the Ever Flowing.** When the Cosmic Event resulted in the death of a number of gods, theologians and scholars speculate that Junox came from the corpse-pile of the divine. Not undead energies, but spectacular cosmic rot and liquefaction from the decay of such mighty energy beings. As a result, this semi-sentient power squats on a throne of filth somewhere in the ether around the Ruinous Scar, still decomposing, with supernatural menaces like oozes and slimes flowing into the real world all around. There is further speculation about whether Junox is aware enough to have an opinion on being “married” to Skaylex the hen-pecking mushroom goddess.
- **Killane of the Road.** The Luck Lord, Prince of Coins, and the Keeper of the Crossroads. He is depicted as a one-eyed dandy with a slouch hat, a cowed beggar with a ring, and a coin with heads on both sides. Killane is the patron of gamblers, pirates, bandits, travelers, and the Vistani. He is a trickster god, opposed to any structure or power keeping its form unchanged for too long.
- **Mama Lazuul.** Lady of the Midnight Hour. She is the goddess of crimes committed under cover of darkness, and late-night rendezvous. She is the patron of thieves and love. She is depicted as a Mordish woman, shapely and seductive, dressed in shadow. A powerful gateway to spirits and secrets, she is mostly revered by the shamen of the Ghael Isles.
- **Narlathia.** Fey Goddess of Enchantment, Pain, and Plunder. She is worshiped by the fey, especially red-caps and drow (though all who respect cunning and beauty revere her.) She is depicted as having either black or white skin, with her hair the opposite, generating as many limbs as she needs to weave her plans. She has a gift for bending men to her will and then discarding them. The world created spiders as a primal way for all that is to worship her magnificence, and crushing spiders risks her wrath. She is equally offended by the notion of faithfulness and by any lapse in reverence from her people. Her favor and her displeasure both take the form of mutations in an arachnoid direction.
- **Papa Simett.** Lord of Secrets and Whispers. He is depicted as a thin but vital old man scarred by whips and hot irons, with a massive gray ‘fro in which are hidden a million secret thoughts. Anything that is whispered, he hears. He is married to Mama Lazuul in a somewhat open arrangement. He is revered by shamen, who use his name as a gateway to speak with the spirits of the Ghael Isles where he is worshiped. He is also the patron of the Mordish who long to flee Mord-Stavian and escape northward; he has an intensely passive-aggressive relationship with the Hundred Death Gods. He is mostly worshiped through singing simple hymns that are work songs and contain deeper meaning in code. None are written anywhere.
- **Skaylex.** Goddess of Fungi. She is the domineering spouse for Junox, growing from its pile of energies. She commands fungi in its varied forms, and rumors whisper of colonies of mushroom men who do her bidding. Scholars and theologians speculate that her goal is to slay the world, and grow her cosmic army on its rotting corpse.
- **Thanalia.** Goddess of forging, sailing, and cavorting. She is depicted as a beautiful olive-skinned woman with raven hair, loaded with jewelry and wearing thigh-high leather boots. She is associated with a spyglass and anvil symbol. She is worshiped across the south of the World Between, and the islands, unwilling to restrict her attentions to one area. She brims with celebratory energy and optimism. Her freedom is the freedom of invention and trade, creativity and sharing. She encourages those who worship her to overcome barriers and challenges and live bigger. She is revered by locksmiths, barkeepers, seafarers of all stripes, and humanists.

CONTEXT

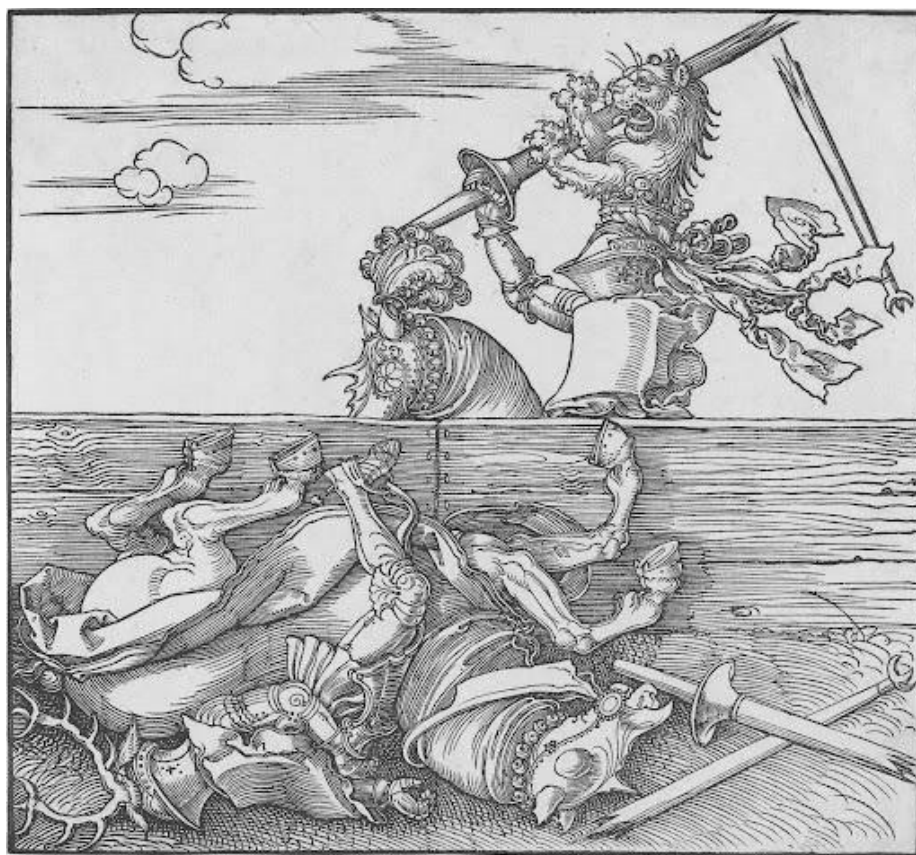
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GOthic FANTASY FLAVOR

The Core Choice: Enlightenment or Superstition?

The heart of Gothic conventions suggests there is a choice, both for those making the story and for the characters within it. What will you trust, what is true? Enlightenment, or superstition?

Enlightenment promises that the universe is orderly, if you can get close enough or far enough away to see the workings. Science will eventually have the answers. Human passions and thoughts can be schooled and ordered for productive life. All problems have solutions, adding knowledge and science to a situation automatically improves it, and humanity has progressed onwards and upwards from the morass of the past and its inferior ideas and practices. *There must be a reasonable explanation.*

Superstition tries to combat the random dangers of the world by manipulating the unseen forces beyond visible reality. You cannot understand *why* it works, but trial and error have led to some reliable ways to deflect bad luck, encourage good luck, and deal with supernatural forces. Thirsting for an explanation for why things happen, the superstitious mind is open to a wider range of possibilities than the rational mind. A wild array of creatures and monsters intermingle with spirits and ghosts for a varied cast of invisible characters. Superstition accepts instinct as knowledge, and is open to accepting intuition that comes without explanation. The explanation can come later—the intuition is critical. The rational mind is only open to part of the truth, and there is more truth out there, more ways to understand that truth than logic will admit. *There are things out there you can't understand.*



The tension comes from when one perspective trespasses on the territory of the other. In the movie “Sherlock Holmes” the detective applies deductive reasoning and psychology to the arcane ritual of the villain. In the novel “Thinner” a rational everyman is struck by a lethal gypsy curse. In “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” a teenybopper valley girl is drawn into the grim world of vampires and demons. In “Devil’s Advocate” a successful well-educated lawyer is seduced to sell his soul to Satan. In “Skeleton Key” a young woman is herded from one world view to another, with disastrous consequences.

If all you have is the supernatural or enlightenment, the tension fails to be Gothic. The Gothic threat comes from another world; whether the characters draw authority from superstition or enlightenment, they must face an opposing world view that threatens to destroy them.

You can have a great time with an enlightened group of characters against supernatural remnants of the past. You can also have a great time with a bunch of witches, monsters, and shamen making trouble for an orderly world plowing towards modernity.

I think it is most enjoyable if you swirl the nuance into both sides. Characters can have mixed allegiances; a gypsy woman gets a university education and is torn as she faces a threat, how best to combat it. A scientist is harnessing elementals to fuel constructs. And so on.

Staking Out the Spectrum on Television

Enlightenment. The adventures of the original Scooby-Doo team repeatedly demonstrate the victory of enlightenment over superstition. Where everyone else is willing to believe there are monsters and ghosts, with each outing the crew of the Mystery Machine proves that it is only an old man in a rubber mask. Their willing disbelief and courage in the face of the so-called supernatural allows them to thwart those who would take advantage of the gullible.

Superstition. The adventures of Sam and Dean Winchester (Supernatural) demonstrate that there is a wild world of monsters out there, and knowing the “lore” is the key to interacting with it. It is not important, the “why” of how it works. Their efforts are about technology over science; the “how” over the “why.” Pull out the symbols of superstition, because they have power over the darkness that the modern mind has forgotten. Those who accept the reality of the inexplicable are the protectors of those who are too blinded by the lies of modern life to see what is going on behind the scenes.

The Tension of the Question. The adventures of Mulder and Scully (X-Files) are more the ambition of Gothic Fantasy. Mulder draws from both his enlightenment modern tradition, and a willingness to be open to things he cannot prove or even explain. Scully is so determined to vindicate her rational background that she is willfully ignorant of the evidence of her senses if she cannot reproduce the result in a controlled environment. The ongoing story comes down on the side of the alien and inexplicable most of the time, but at its best it allows room for speculation as to the “how” and “why,” the origin and nature of the threat.

Why Gothic Fantasy Works.

You lose some of the tension about whether the world is ruled by the supernatural or logic when there are monsters and spellcasters in public view. However, the question only shifts. Instead of, “what is true?” the question becomes “what can save us?”

The world is intensely dangerous. Undead armies, dragon attacks, and demon wars drive that point home. The back story of the World Between is designed to give the human race a question for the first time ever. With the introduction of gunpowder, there is a non-magical way for a physically inferior specimen to destroy a monster.

This world is turning away from the gods and magic, towards gunpowder and independence. What if we can defend ourselves? What if we don’t need deals with demons, patronizing protection of indifferent gods, demeaning traditions that elevate spirits above humanity, and dehumanizing magic?

Led by Caligari, humanity is turning away from supernatural protection and trusting in firepower. Guns and cannon drove off the dragons, humanity’s first big win against monsters. This win has given humanity all the false confidence of a plucky teenager who successfully defied his parents.

Repurposing the answers to fit the questions: enlightenment promises that science and technology and reason will provide safety in the future. Superstition promises that the only true protection is in using supernatural energy against supernatural energy.

It is not a question of what is real and true. It is a question of where humanity's faith will lie. Will humanity rely on their own resources, or always require the resources of the supernatural?

The Church of the Lady of the White Way, and the Catholic Church

In the real world, the Catholic Church plays a dual role in the Gothic tension. On the one hand, trust in the supernatural in the form of the divine, angels, saints, and the Virgin Mary provides comfort and protection. On the other hand, the church is a center of learning and education, providing a framework for study that leads to the logical and rational worldview.

To increase the tension, the church also provides a stern, judgmental presence—while also providing hope for sanctuary and repulsion of evil aberration.

The Church of the Lady of the White Way serves a similar function in the World Between. On the one hand, the Church offers no tangible supernatural protection. The clergy of the Lady have no supernatural power, only their faith and trust that a supernatural force is looking out for them. On the other hand, the Church provides a framework of grimly determined defenders of humanity who can sometimes create blessings that will harm evil creatures. These are the mortals with the grit and know-how to defend humanity from monsters even without supernatural powers.

And, in the background, the Church is a stern and judgmental presence. Characters who cannot feel the weight of sin and sense the gaping chasm of damnation can't be properly Gothic.

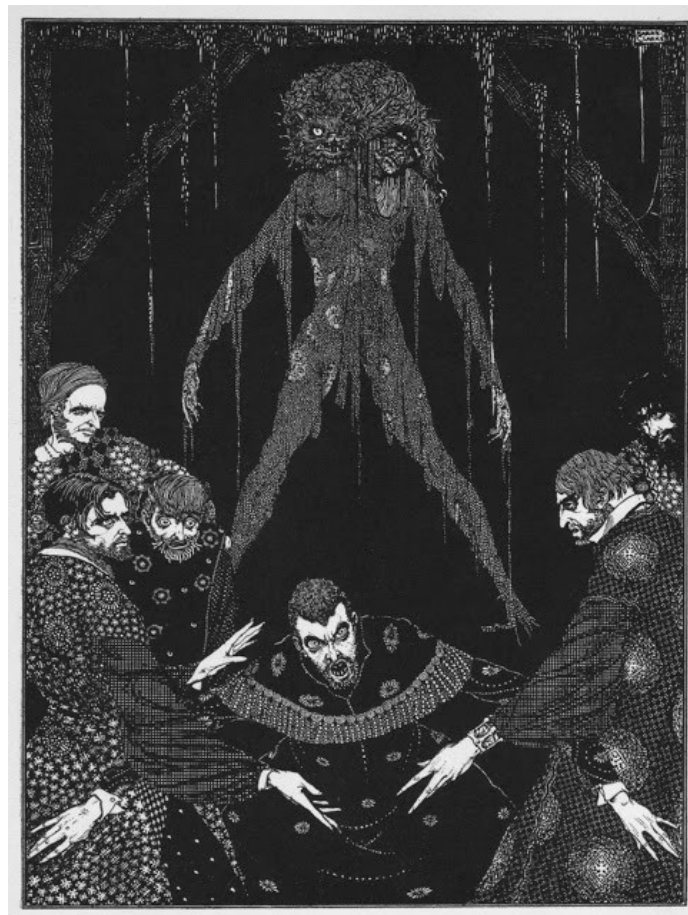
GOTHIC CONVENTIONS

If you are not sure you know how to focus in on Gothic elements in your scenario or character generation, here is a jump-start list of elements that weave together into the Gothic backdrop. The first 14 elements were in a list Jack Shear put in the introduction to his first compendium. I added a few more. Roll a few times on the chart to get some elements to work into your scenario.



If you roll a 3 (Catholic setting) and your adventure is in Harrowfaust, that's not a problem. Think about someone traveling from the Lands of the Lady to participate in the scenario, or refugees from the Lands of the Lady that settled here but brought their culture with them. Adapt, but put the flavor in.

2. An imperiled heroine who's life and/or virginity is at stake.
3. A Catholic setting (generally Spain or Italy).
4. Focus on terror (psychological fear) or horror (disgust) or both.
5. A long-buried secret from the past can no longer be repressed.
6. Monstrosity (human or inhuman) or villainy (often a patriarchal figure of power).
7. Violence and sexuality that passes beyond the border of the socially acceptable.
8. Incest.
9. Doubling (doppelgangers, mistaken identities, etc.)
10. A decrepit castle, monastery, fortress, dungeon, or other medieval structure as part of the setting.
11. The Inquisition and the misuse of religious authority.
12. Specters, ghosts, or phantasmal visions (remnants of the past that cannot be repressed).
13. Mysterious veiled women.
14. Fragmentary narratives (framed narrative, missing text, etc.)
15. Enclosure, premature burial, and imprisonment.
16. The sublime power of the elements.
17. Setting as character; buildings or landscapes are an active part of the story.
18. The tenuousness of sanity, its vulnerability.
19. Enlightenment as willful ignorance of folk wisdom, dismissed as superstition.
20. The authority of breeding and class in determining quality and values.



HISTORY OF THE WORLD BETWEEN

The Cosmic Event (Prehistory)

There was a war among god-like beings across the World Above and the World Below. Their clash formed a battleground, the World Between, and its umbilical cord was severed in the hideously warped devastation of the Gaping Wound (that later became the Ruinous Scar). Gods were born and slain in the conflagration. The whole earth was dark for a century. Then, the survivors withdrew, leaving tatters of their armies and energies spent upon the battlefield. Many of the lost armies wandered to the west, stranded on the World Between, stripped of their cosmic energy and knowledge of the deeper mysteries.

The Death Muster (Prehistory)

The first to recover were the Hundred Gods of Death. Pouring energy through the Gaping Wound, they breathed motion and purpose into the sea of corpses left behind, marching them in pursuit of the survivors of the Cosmic Event, to sacrifice them and open the World Between to be the plaything of the Gods of Death. They had free reign, drifting out in all directions, and the living retreated into the wild places and stayed ahead of the Muster as best they could.

The First Crusade (0-50)

The Legion of the Lady also survived the Cosmic Event, and they sailed to the shores of the beleaguered World Between on their white ships. Their landing marked the beginning of recorded time. They led the First Crusade, driving the Death Muster back. They built the great Ring Cities around the Gaping Wound, suppressing its connection to the Gods of Death.

The Age of Shaping (50-1,000)

Under the protection of the Lady of the White Way, the survivors used their dwindling cosmic connection to shape the lands into tributes to their lost masters. They discovered many creatures had been formed by the Cosmic Event, including dragons, and the fractured lands and seas held great desire for life, creative in their own way. Most were nomadic, but some tribes began to form, and settle in areas with rich resources.

The Second Crusade (1,000 to 2,000)

The Warriors of the Lady discovered an entire continent to the south had fallen to the Death Muster, serving the Hundred Gods of Death. They mustered armies, and marched south, over and over. Much of the magic and cosmic energy of the Early Times were lost in that sand-swept folly as wave after wave marched to the south over a thousand years.

The Scar War (2,000 to 2,080)

The suppressed forces of the Hundred Death Gods rose up in the Gaping Wound, fighting hard against the cities of the Lady of the White Way, throwing their fortresses down and slaughtering all who stood against them. After almost a century of fighting, their ever-replenished armies of the slain stood ready to flow across all of the World Between.

The War of Storms (2,080 to 3,500)

Meanwhile, the Age of Shaping had reconnected some of the Lost Host with their cosmic masters, albeit in a diminished way. The Storm Sovereign Gods ascended in unity to stand against the Hundred Gods of Death in epic battle that lay waste to everything east of the Storm Range (named for the saving pantheon). Marching to the center of the Ruinous Scar, the five Sovereign Gods sealed the Gaping Wound, ending the supremacy of the Gods of Death; this sealing act also ended their ability to manifest in the World Between, limiting their presence to acting through their worshipers.

The Age of Storms (3,500 to 4,293)

Worship of the Sovereign Gods strengthened them, and they sent their servants into the World Between to conquer all for them. The center of their rule was Ulverland. Worship spread, inspired by the sword (whether to protect them or to threaten them.) As far east as the Storm Range, the Sovereign Gods were ascendant; at the edges of that territory, and the Shae Isle, some remained stubborn and resistant. The power of the gods balked the dragons, sending most to sleep in the depths of the earth.

The Harrowfaust Corruption (4,294)

As the armies of the Sovereign Gods tightened their grip, King Harrowfaust was pushed all the way back to the Storm Range. He could not win by military might, but he was served by the first sorcerers. They gave him a way to search for other patrons in the World Above or the World Below. King Harrowfaust contacted the demon Morgath, Lord of Undeath. The King and his officers were given great gifts of vampiric undeath and necromancy, and they drove the armies of the Sovereign Gods back.

The Age of Compacts (4,294 to 4,540)

Others quickly followed suit as word of the new power spread. The Lord of Frostreave allied with a death goddess, Merrihel. The Caligari Council allied with Slithian Vor, a demon queen eager to gain traction in the World Between, and with Hakhan, demon lord of bestial bloodshed. The Shae Isle had long resisted by relying on nature gods (who could survive, so far from the destruction of the Ruinous Scar.) The armies of the Sovereign Gods were driven back, and corruption squirmed loose and spread rapidly through the World Between.

The Third Crusade (4,540 to 4,555)

Another army of the Lady of the White Way landed in the far West, sent from the World Above. They explained that the Lady of the White Way was the only true goddess, and all other compacts were with lesser forces, destructive and dangerous forces too alien to be worshiped. They quickly converted King Midian, and marched east, scything through Storm Sovereign armies. They cut through Harrowfaust on their way to the Ruinous Scar, and they vanished over the Storm Range, into what became known as the Scavenger Lands. Their fate remains unknown. However, the legacy of belief and mighty artifacts they left behind assured a profound legacy in the World Between.

Rise of States (4,555 to 5,700)

Cultures had taken on distinctly different patterns during the Age of Compacts and the Third Crusade. Priesthood and nobility had a chance to secure their positions in a more formal way, and for the first time in a long time the external pressures of weird alien monsters or vast waves of undead were much reduced. The people of the World Between started sparring with each other in earnest. Caligari was split by the Banishment War. The brutally violent followers of Hakhan halved Caligari, founding the Iron Principalities. The city states of Relmeenos briefly banded together in an abortive effort to conquer the World Between, boasting (rightly so) that they remained undefeated in their home territory. The Knights of the Lady of the White Way had been given lands to the east of Midian, and they rebelled over theological differences, separating from the rulers of Midian and founding Scarabae.

The Deathfleet (5,700 to 5,800)

A massive fleet of the dead and constructs launched from Mord-Stavian, crashing into Relmeenos, the Iron Principalities, Midian, and Harrowfaust. For a century, pitched war raged as the World Between scrambled to protect themselves from the startlingly powerful undead. Apparently it took Mord-Stavian about five thousand years to muster the forces to retaliate for the Second Crusade. Mord-Stavian would surely have won—a massive fleet with the Avatar of Marrow was sailing towards Harrowfaust. No one knows what happened, but legend is an extraordinarily clever captive tricked the Avatar into blaspheming against Father Sothak and Mother Lothack, who both manifested to express their displeasure; the

resulting battle is said to have stripped the coast all the way back to the Storm Range in a vicious unearthly storm that raged for fifty years.

The Desert War (5,800 to 5,850)

Frostreave, Ulverland, and Caligari shipyards produced ships to fortify the Isles of Unparalleled Liberty and the Ghael Isles, and counterattacks against Mord-Stavian began in earnest. The war climaxed with the sack of Alexandrotta and the burning of the necromantic libraries and laboratories there. The Necropolitan accepted an offer of peace, as neither side was thrilled about continuing the war in Mord-Stavian itself. The Betweeners pulled back and did not sack Levant; in exchange, the Necropolitan halted raids against the northern neighbors.

The Age of Roads (5,850 to 6,500)

Having worked together, the nation-states of the World Between knew more about each other than ever before in their history. As a relative peace settled in reinforced by recent war in common cause, trade increased. Mortals escaping from Mord-Stavian mingled with the leftover forts in the Ghael Isles, and veterans who could not find their way back to civilized life hid in the Isles of Unparalleled Liberty. Advances in naval technology spurred on by the war against Mord-Stavian created ships that could brave further distances and greater dangers, increasing trade with the ports in distant Ghael Isles, Relmeenos, the Iron Principalities, Scarabae, Ulverland, Calgari, and Midian. Spices cultivated by the strange nomads of the Scavenger Lands flowed along the same roads as Frostreave steel, and Scarabae tapestries. Violence shifted from national level to increased piracy and banditry. Attention on alien gods began to lapse in the mind of the general public.

The Fourth Crusade (6,500 to 6,548)

Pope Viala IV had a vision of demons preparing to invade. He was very charismatic, and he knew that the only way the World Between would survive was if it had a direct link to the Lady of the White Way that would only be possible if there was pure and powerful worship, the other gods banished, and demons worship eradicated all through the World Between. He launched a mighty war, allying with Scarabae. The crusade was a complete failure; they conquered Caligari before they got bogged down in the factitious mountains of the Iron Principalities, they faced a vampire army in Hallowfaust, and a pantheon full of “gods” in Ulverland. They were stymied. Frustrated, the Church determined their failure was from a lack of faithfulness within their own lands. The Order of Purifiers was founded to root out and crush unfaithful, heretical, and pagan influences in the White Lady’s lands.

The War Below (6,550 to 6,700)

Apparently, a war erupted in the World Below. Worshipers of demon nobility in the World Between were pulled into the conflict, motivated to strange intrigues and half-understood struggles for power. Raiders from Frostreave assaulted targets in the Iron Principalities as Slithian Vor motivated the passage of strange discriminatory laws in Caligari. The magnificent city of Karmodia sank under unknown daemonic powers in a climax of the struggle.

The Plague of Dragons (6,700 to 6,920)

The King of Ulverland feared that the entire World Between would be pulled into war by demon allies within the nation states. He sponsored a mighty quest to discover a way to reduce demonic influence in the world, to stem the flow of unholy power into the cults serving dark masters embroiled in the War Below. Heroes scoured the World Between in search of a solution, and in the mists of the Shae Isle they found a way to wake the World Between’s energies to make it more difficult for demons to interfere. They conducted the ritual taught them by the Queen of the Seelie Court. They created “the Veil,” fey protection making it more difficult for otherworldly forces to enter the world. The ritual did vastly weaken demons, making it nearly impossible for them to physically manifest for long, and reducing some of the power flowing to their servants. However, it also roused the dragons that drifted into slumber

thousands of years before. Focuses of activity were along the northern edge of the World Between, and along the Storm Range of mountains. As dragon attacks spanned a century, then more, the dragons began to realize they could not easily replenish their number, but the cunning and viciousness of humans was multiplied by their fertility. No matter how many they killed, more came. Magic and technology made them dangerous, as did their capacity for hate. However, the dragons were still mighty, and stubborn to bow before any threat.

The Age of Cannon (6,920 to 6,995)

No one knows how the secret of gunpowder made its way to Caligari, though there are many stories. However, Vorial the dragon menaced the Empress in Hiding, and a cannon broke his chest, slowing him enough for the army to kill him. The dragons soon faced cannon fire from sailing ships and castle walls. Shortly after, they faced muskets and black powder in the hands of infantry. This backed them off as magic had not, and most of the surviving dragons returned to their deep places with the spoils of centuries of theft, and once again slipped into slumber. Caligari became fantastically wealthy as other nations paid dearly for the secrets of gunpowder that they could not steal themselves, and in a matter of decades firearms could be found in most corners of the World Between. Notable exceptions were the Shae Isle (no need), Relmeenos (too poor and too proud), and Frostreave (too cold, warrior ethos).



Which brings us to the present.

- Apocalyptic cults ready themselves for Lucky Seven, as the millennium is commonly called. This may mean war in the World Above or the World Below overtaking the earth, the coming of the Lady of the White Way, the tilting of the world into the maw of the World Below, a resurgence of the Cosmic Event that shaped the World Between in the first place; legends vary, but anxiety is high. Everything matters, and nothing matters.
- The last major dragon attacks were over 60 years ago. Only the very oldest humans remember them first-hand. Occupied cities and so forth have rebuilt, so most of the damage is invisible, but there are many ruins destroyed by dragons that were abandoned and have had decades to fall further into ruin.
- Humanity is giddy on cold iron and gunpowder; magic is more in league with forces seeking to enslave humanity than a defense against them, and human determination, hot blood, and clever tools are enough to sort out any musty threat, fangly monster, demon, or alien god. A certain cockiness has settled in the wake of the retreat of dragons. It is not warranted.
- In the predictable pattern, external threats have faded into the background, so humans are gearing up to fight each other. Caligari is flush with wealth and pride, the Iron Kingdoms want more guns and powder and are willing to fight for and with them, Relmeenos is feeling its pride threatened, religious concerns mixed with concern over aggressive neighbors have Midian and Scarabae nervous, the rulers of Harrowfaust are not oblivious to Caligari's military thinking that finally they might have the tools to even the playing field against supernatural threats...

The current year is 6,995.

THE SOVEREIGN CALENDAR

#	Month	Patron	Season	(Modern Equivalent)
1	Hulmvas	Hulmora	Spring	March
2	Thavas	Asthaeton		April
3	Hakvas	Father Sothak		May
4	Garmvas	Garm-Gorak	Summer	June
5	Thanvas	Thanalia		July
6	Primalvas	The Beast Gods		August
7	Hamvas	Maham	Autumn	September
8	Lanevas	Killane of the Road		October
9	Helvas	Merrihel		November
10	Charvas	Charlak	Winter	December
11	Pathvas	Lady of the White Way		January
12	Gentvas	The Gaunt Gent		February
13	Tervas	The Death Gods		Still cold and/or rainy

Each month is four weeks of 7 days, 28 days total. There are 13 months, so 364 days in a year. Every 5 years there is a 7 day festival between the end of the year and the beginning of the next, balancing the calendar out (more or less.) It's close enough to inform planting crops and managing herds. The next Festival is on 6,998. The Festival's religious significance has been adapted, varying between cultures.

DAYS OF THE WEEK

The week has 7 days. Days can be abbreviated by dropping "kell," an archaic word for "day." These names existed before the formal calendar, dating back to the beginning of the relationship between Ulverland and its gods. Except Merriket, the names remained the same from when usage started to the present, even though in most places their original meanings are dimly remembered at best.

Name	Purpose	Patron
Morakell	Day of elements. For those who work outside.	Hulmora
Garmkell	Day of aggression. For warriors.	Garm-Gorak
Hamkell	Day of mastery. For rulers.	Maham
Lakell	Day of obligation. For prisoners.	Charlak
Gentkell	Day of study. For scholars.	Gaunt Gent
Waykell	Day of gratitude. For religious observances.	Lady of the White Way
Merriket	Day of transition. For healers.	Merrihel

SOLSTICE AND EQUINOX

What, are you an astronomer? Or a cultist planning a ritual? You need *exact* dates?

- Spring equinox is near Hulmvas 21.
- Summer solstice is near Garmvas 21.
- Autumn equinox is near Hamvas 21.
- Winter solstice is near Charlak 21.

ORIGIN OF THE CALENDAR

As the World Between approached the 4th millennium, there was considerable anxiety in the empire of Ulverland. While the Armies of the Lady had once dominated (and imposed their other-worldly measures of time), they were now overthrown. The avatars of the Storm Sovereign had sacrificed themselves to seal the gaping hole in reality far away in the Ruinous Scar. But with the year 4,000 fast approaching Emperor Helvsted of Ulverland determined it was time to make sense of history before it was over. Now that Ulverland was a giant empire, it was time to use that advantage to unite the way the world measured time.

YEAR ONE AND THE NEW YEAR

Spring had first come in the World Between on the heels of the Army of the Lady, and so the beginning of spring was determined as the beginning of the year. The first year of the calendar (as far back as time could be guessed) was the point when the Army of the Lady first landed to face the Death Muster. This point in the calendar was already fixed and traditional.

RATIONALE OF MONTHS

The Emperor's scholars filled in the first month of each season with their gods from the Storm Sovereign pantheon; spring led the way with Hulmora, goddess of the elements. Then summer belonged to Garm-Gorak, their grim and bloody leader, god of war and wolves (as the summer campaigns started up). Maham the Beast Tamer led the way into autumn, and Charlak imprisoned the world in cold for winter. In the deeps of winter, with little else to do, the world turned to study and reflection with the Gaunt Gent.

The calendar honored the gods of regions that submitted to Ulverland's rule. Asthaeton supported civilization in Relmeenos, and Thanalia was his counterpoint. This concession was the tipping point so Relmeenos grudgingly paid some tribute to Ulverland, and built some half-hearted temples to their gods. The beginning of spring education was connected to Asthaeton, and midsummer celebrations connected to Thanalia.

As an island, Ulverland found it was prudent to honor the sea god Father Sothak, and through him his consort Mother Lothak. The spring storms are fierce around Ulverland.

In the cosmic battles of the Scavenger Lands, the Beast Gods had made survival possible for the avatars, long enough for them to sacrifice themselves. As a group, the Beasts received the height of summer; the Golden Lion, the Luminous Hawk, and the Unconquered Badger. Lest they grow too proud, on their heels comes Maham, God of Beast Taming, to put away the excesses of late summer.

Some stories insist the avatars received help each step of the way from Killane, God of Crossroads; other stories suggest this god was included because of blackmail and poor gambling choices by the leaders of the scholarly effort. Still others suggest that no one knows how it happened, he just showed up on the calendar and refused to leave. No one knows the truth of the matter, and it doesn't make much difference.

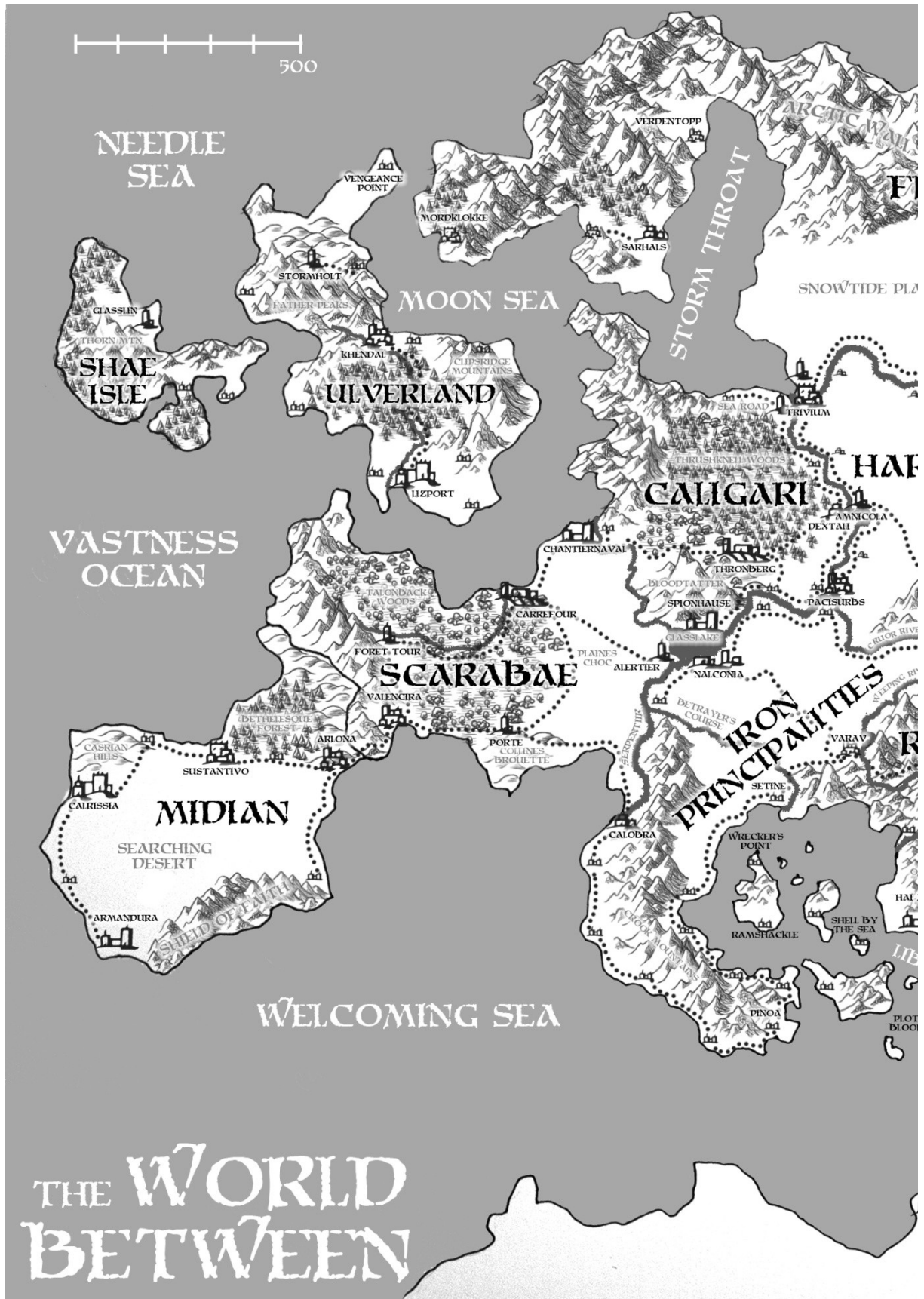
The Lady of the White Way was grudgingly included because theologians pointed out that the Storm Sovereign gods had not been strong enough to stop the Death Muster, and they only saved the world because of the breathing space afforded them by the Armies of the Lady. She was included, a sign of hope before the year truly died.

Tervas is a month honoring the Death Muster and the Hundred Death Gods; they aren't welcome, they aren't popular (publically), but they are a huge part of the supernatural influence on the World Between. As the supplies run out and winter thins people down to starving shadows, this is their month.

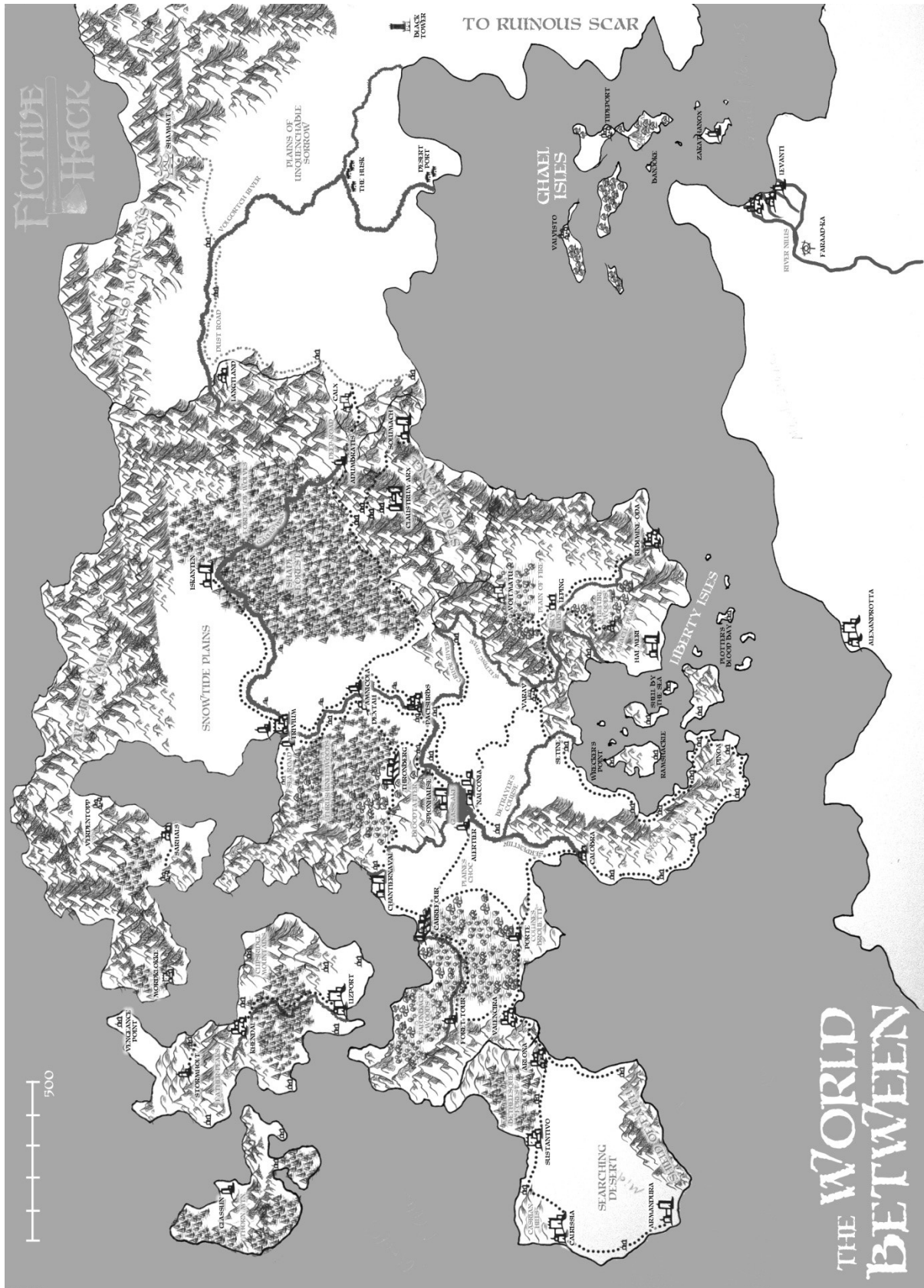
Finally, the last god on the calendar was Dulvistran, a god of transitions. He had been the go-between as the gods fought with the demons (and sometimes negotiated) and he had friends among the Death Gods. He eased the faithful to their final rest, and from beyond into the World Between.

Then came the Age of Compacts, and Merrihel was given fresh power in the World Between through her alliance with the Northrons of Frostreave. According to legend, she slew Dulvistran and took his power and his role for her own. According to history, the Northrons pounded the Ulverland coast mercilessly; then Ulverlanders discovered that the Northrons did not raid settlements that built and maintained a shrine to Merrihel. Over about 30 years, the tradition spread, and by the time the raids quieted, the governments had dealt with each other, and to purchase peace, the Ulverlanders replaced Dulvistran with Merrihel in their Sovereign Calendar, in the year 4,320.









CALIGARI

BASIC DESCRIPTION

Caligari is a trade empire in the heart of the World Between. Surrounded by strong nations, it has traditionally resorted to using diplomacy and wealth to keep the peace and its autonomy. It is the focal point for a philosophical movement to turn away from supernatural alliances for safety, and look instead to gunpowder and human ingenuity. It is the only nation in the World Between with a real middle class. Those outside the aristocracy have access to wealth, education, property rights, and business. The division between rich and poor does not automatically mirror the line between aristocrats and peasants.

STYLISTIC FEEL

Not-Germany. An oppressed underdog nation has had an influx of both power and wealth. They have rocketed to prosperity as the nation that brought gunpowder into the World Between as a practical weapon. Meanwhile, the soul of the country rots away; they gave up tremendous wealth and power, and suffered terribly in a civil war to drive demon worship from their lands. But now it is back, worse than ever, and the moral and lawful elements of the country are exhausted. Combine moral despair with unsteady new-found wealth and violence, and you have a country rife with crime, drug use, corruption, and marginalized religious institutions.

The Lands of the Lady (Midian and Scarabae) have tried to claim Caligari. They are resisted by people who do not want to be ruled by gods (as they were when occupied by Ulverland) and who envy the power and apparent freedom of their neighbors (Harrowfaust and Frostreave). The only elements of the Church that can get a foothold are corrupt clergy cashing in and living well, and roving friars preaching revolution to desperate peasants. The religious monuments and cathedrals built by the reformers who opposed demon worship loom on the skylines, but decay as they stand more or less empty.

RULING STRUCTURE

Caligari is ruled by Empress Christiana the Scarlet. The capitol city is Thronberg. She is supported by the Cabinet of Commerce, with the ten wealthiest aristocrat trader princes of the United Trade Guild represented.

STEREOTYPES

They are tall, with dark hair and eyes, square features, and a smarmy smile. All of them have a gift for trading. Bargains are either shrewd or cunning. They solve problems with money, using other people's blood and sweat. They have a love/hate relationship with aristocracy. They are hypocrites. With demons, Caligarians talk against them, but secretly embrace what they offer. With the church, Caligarians verbally embrace what they offer, but work against them. Betrayal comes naturally to them.

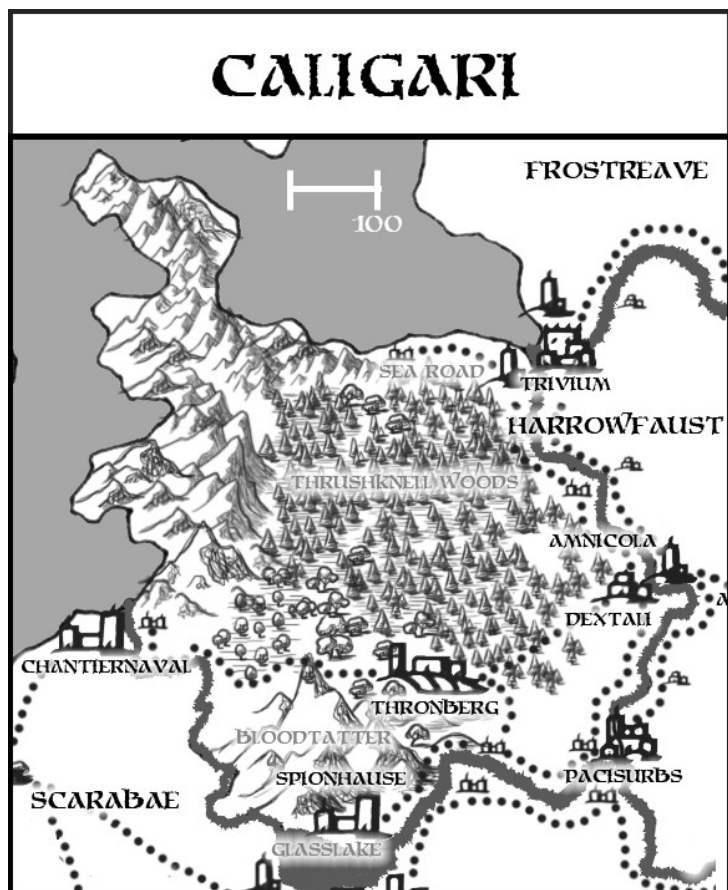
FAMOUS FOR:

Finest firearms in the World Between. Wonderful sausage and beer. Tall, dark forests. Diplomacy and trade. Strong middle class, pressure towards independent cities and marginalized aristocracy.

MAJOR CITIES

Thronberg. The capitol is nestled in the shadow of Bloodtatter Mountain, a dwarven forge. It is famous for fantastic architecture, drug dens, and cabarets. Cursed aristocratic families with demon blood running through their family trees dominate the legal and illegal trade empire of Caligari.

Spionhause. This trade city on Glasslake is notorious for its cavernous sewers backing into natural caves in the mountain. The entire aristocracy of the city was cursed once by a Saint of the Lady, all turned into rat-things. The port is famous for its drug dens, spy games, and Chiaroscuro District of professional illusionists.



Dextali. This trade city focuses on Harrowfaustian trade and the free city of Pacisurb, as well as communication to Trivium. It is generally accepted fact that supernatural forces rule the city from the shadows, though stories as to what those forces are vary.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Bloodtatter Mountain. This formidable peak houses a dwarven forge. The dwarves are traditionally allies of the emperor's house. They built much of the fantastic architecture of Caligari, including its churches and sewers. They make deals, trades for their services. Not all the terms of these deals are available to the public.

Shadow Cities. Caligari has cities in the shadow of Trivium, Pacisurbs, and Chantiarnaval. The cities across the water have the glory and the wealth, and the Caligarian cities serve as entry points to

those glittering worlds. No wonder smuggling and crime are widespread. They are Venksberg, Riverside, and Westenhouse (in order.)

Seafort. The Sea Road across the northern coast terminates in a fortress. The line is in place to stop Northron raids into Caligarian territory. The most ferocious veterans Caligari can produce come from Seafort and the Sea Road.

SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS

Angels and Demons. Caligari has traditionally been the battleground of the tug-of-war between the Lands of the Lady and the unapologetically demon-ruled eastern lands. Armies from the World Above have landed in Midian and swept across Caligari towards their objectives to the east. Hypocrisy is rampant in the Church of the Lady. The Chosen of the Lady, known as the High Elect, have expensive tastes while the people often starve.

The Banishment War. In resisting the demonic rule that was threatening to overtake Caligari, reformers organized and passed laws to force those who publically acknowledged worshiping demons out of Caligari. A brutal civil war followed, ending with Caligari shrunk to half its former size and the demoniacs creating the Iron Principalities to the south. Ironically, the reformers only won because of help from Slithian Vor cults, and after the war demon worship is rife on both sides of the bloody border.

The Secret War. Mind flayers (creatures the size of a fat chicken that suck themselves onto a person's head and control the person until they eat the brain) and dopplegangers (shape-shifting spies) vie for control of the trade routes and the access to the rest of the world that they represent. And possibly something else, too.

Thin Blood. When demonic traits wear thin in an aristocratic family, or when curses are flung too thick and fast, or when mutation in the newborn gets out of hand, lots of strange monsters are released into the woods. Experimenting wizards and summoning cults alike claim no responsibility in cleaning up after themselves. The results are thick, dark forests (The Thrushknell Woods) where agents of law shoot to kill and twisted creatures roam in search of fresh blood.

Aboreal Guard. Mystic yetis scour the woods hunting and slaying abominations. No one knows why, or what they plan to do with demon-tainted humans.

FROSTREAVE

BASIC DESCRIPTION.

Grim frozen northern land, populated by Northron warriors who survive in spite of ice and monsters. Too poor to subsist on its own, it is proud nation of raiders.

STYLISTIC FEEL

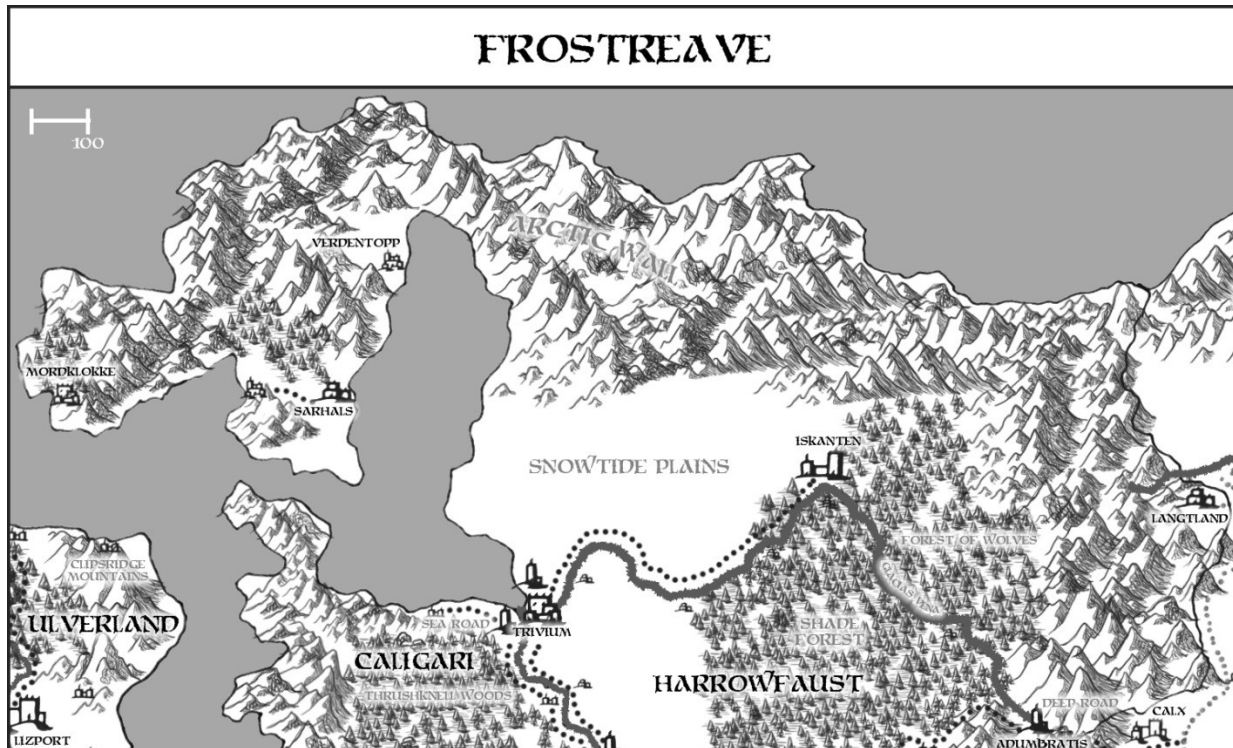
Not-Vikings. A dark land, full of depression and berserk rages. Life is short and hard, death is always in your shadow, and even if you cannot expect to win you must fight hard all the way down. They have dealt with their land of demons and monsters by becoming monsters themselves, escalating their own violence until they can credibly threaten what threatens them. This is a place of privation and grim fatalism, against a backdrop of breathtakingly beautiful scenery that can kill you.

RULING STRUCTURE

Katrina Rimehart, the Masked Queen of Iron and Ice, rules from the capitol Iskanten. Chieftains rule clans. The Council of Marches extends her rule through the country. Law is simple and violent.

STEREOTYPES

Giant, either tall or fat. Flaxen gold hair. Gigantic mirth and disabling depression. Impossibly blue eyes. Crude workmanship. Fatalistic. All of them are formidable warriors—men, women, children. They have no interest in civilization or history, or the art of other cultures. No loyalty outside the clan. No mercy. Slavish worship of Merrihel, death goddess, who urges them to die in combat as soon as possible. Desired by the fey for some reason.



FAMOUS FOR:

Mercenaries, especially marines. Long ships and sailing skill. Monster fighting tradition.

MAJOR CITIES

Iskanten. Backed up into the Forest of Wolves, the city is made of pale granite. It has never fallen to mortal siege, though it has been conquered three times by frost giants. The city is mythic in legend, in part because of the polar bear cavalry of its berserker army. They build ice ships that sail on the plains when the snow is deep enough. They specialize in survival against both supernatural and natural threats, and their land-locked position isolates them from the culture of the rest of Frostreave.

Mordklokke. This fortress overlooks the Moon Sea across from Vengeance Point in Ulverland. It is the most hostile port in Frostreave, the launching point for most of the raids that hit coastlines all around the World Between. This city is holy to Merrihel, the death goddess that goads her raiders on. They specialize in the raider culture, haunting the southern coastal waters and returning loaded with plunder. They hold monster hunters and land lubbers in contempt.

Sarhals. The primary trading port for Frostreave is not accessible by land. This city is the most open to outsiders in all of Frostreave, and a place where the goods of the frozen north find their way to trade caravans headed south.

Verdentopp. This weird city was founded by warriors looking to stop the raids from the Aether into Frostreave. Warriors train here to do battle with monsters from beyond space and time who stalk the skeletal forests; be they demons, aliens, or gods, the warriors of Verdentopp will have a go at killing anything that trespasses in the world where it doesn't belong. They worship dread stars as gods. The city

is considered safe as it is in a meteor crater from thousands of years ago, and nearby are mines rich with ghostsilver. They consider any plunder they get from other countries or the supernatural to be dues owed them for keeping the world from being overrun. They specialize in fatalism and rage.

Langtland. *See description in Scavenger Lands.*

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Storm Throat. This long, narrow sea requires tremendous skill to navigate; between the rocks, ice, uncooperative weather, and rocky shorelines, it is very dangerous.

Arctic Wall. This mountain range was full of dragon lairs. A thousand years ago the dragons poured out and burned their way across Frostreave. Only a few small white dragons are still awake, but killing one is a source of pride and assurance of a place in legend.

The Northern Gate. There is a semi-permanent gateway to the Ardenwald in the mountains, and a human(ish) city has grown up on the fey side of the border. Those who can manage to trade with the city can bring back remarkable goods and impossible stories.

Mushroom Forest of Khem. A vast forest of mushrooms the size of trees, loaded with all kinds of unpredictable spores. The forest is full of completely insane goblins. It is not always on the World Between, but in the northeastern mountains, it sometimes manifests.

SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS

Death Goddess. Merrihel, a death goddess of battle, is the patron god of Frostreave. The dread stars are also worshiped. Once, the people worshiped the Father and Family of Ulverland, but the cult of Merrihel put a stop to that. (Only Sarhals still has Father and Family worship.)

Dread Stars. Kairon's Belt, the Gibbering Maw, and the Crown of Embers watch over the Winterlands. They have unspeakable and inhuman avatars that sometimes become real in the icy deeps of winter, inimical to life and deadly in the extreme. They are apparently beyond description, according to the few who have survived meeting them.

Reparation Servitude. Harrowfaust retaliated after countless raids over centuries. They passed a law that any Northron causing trouble in Harrowfaust could be given to a noble (probably a vampire) as a slave. Frostreave lacks the focus to go to war over the issue, and bad things were happening to raiders who were caught anyway, so this is mostly a gesture that infuriates and insults Frostreave with little consequence.

Aethyric Raiders. Gaunt and almost mummified, these weird creatures scream out of the blackness of space and attack, raiding for slaves and riches. Only when it is darkest night, in deepest winter. The strange starmetal of their weapons has found its way into Northron hands, and the knotwork they are famed for comes from studies of these weapons.

Giants and Trolls. The fey seem to think they own Frostreave, and periodically frost giants will stir themselves from their mountain fortresses and try to kick humanity out. They've not yet succeeded. Where giants die on the field, trolls emerge some decades later. It is not understood why, but trolls are as much of a problem as giants are.

Dwarves. These squat fey artisans play both sides against the middle. They aid the humans against other elements of eldritch power, but they do so for their own ends. They are not to be trusted, but possessing one of their weapons is a sure path to power before meeting a grim fate.

THE GHAEL ISLES

BASIC DESCRIPTION.

These lush, sweaty islands are in the south east Sea of Sothak. This is as far as fugitives can run, bordering the World Between and Mord-Stavian and the Scavenger Lands, a place with no centralized authority—and therefore a population accustomed to taking matters into their own hands. There are six big islands, and countless smaller ones.

STYLISTIC FEEL

Not-Caribbean. Fear is pervasive, and shelter is far away. The Mordish (living) escaping from Mord-Stavian find their way to the Ghael Isles, but unless they are connected with an organization they are more likely to be pressed into service as living or dead labor than they are to escape. The folk magic of shamen is the most powerful force in the islands, followed by necromancy. The Isles had many fortresses built during the war with Mord-Stavian; some are now settlements, others are crumbling and abandoned. The jungle has many mysteries, including islands with dinosaurs, forbidden magic experiments, and cruel aristocracy far from the censure of more compassionate peers. Monsters and disease haunt the fecund deeps of the jungle and seas. Even pirates tread carefully here.

RULING STRUCTURE

The Ghael Isles have no centralized government. The closest thing are the Lords and Ladies, owners of vast plantations that band together for mutual defense and coordination as needed. Tribes and other organizations lurk in the jungle. Some are secret, others simply out of reach of civilization.

STEREOTYPES

Most thoroughly mixed blood in the World Between; Mordish escapees mingled extensively with armies fighting Mord-Stavian long ago. The most superstitious corner of a very superstitious world, they can't make decisions or take action without involving spirits. They are born knowing how to swim. They all have a gift for necromancy. Given any reason at all, they will paint themselves. All of them have a tattoo. They are legendary torturers who use drugs and spirits to unhinge their victims. Some are cannibals.

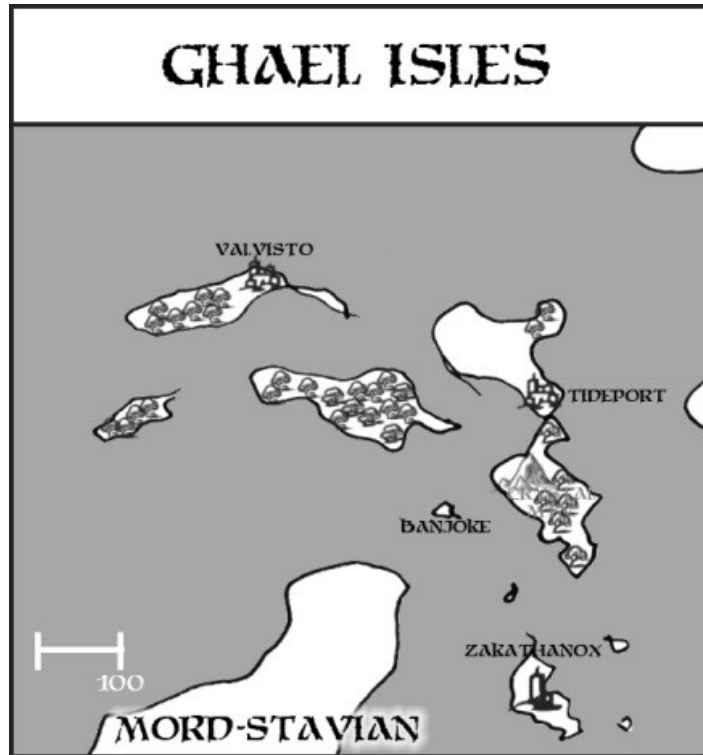
FAMOUS FOR:

Shamanistic tradition. Unique sea-side cuisine, including gumbo, dark bread, and sauces for meat. Smuggling skill honed by proximity to Mord-Stavian. Knowledge of the secretive and dangerous islands. Knowledge of the horrific secrets in Mord-Stavian.

MAJOR CITIES

Valvisto. This port is easy to find. It has a sheltered harbor backed up to a spur of defensive rock. It is an independent city-state that is the doorway to the Ghael Isles, a door that swings both ways. The city is strong enough to be indifferent to most threats, but not strong enough to consider conquest. It is ruled by an Exile of Masks, refugees from a lost city that made a new home in the Isles.

Banjoke. A drunken lord got in a banjo playing contest with a grubby little boggie, Nuffink. He promised his estate and island (most posh in the bayou) should he lose. He lost. Then he was furious when all the boggies and their houseboats choked his desirable island property. He ranted and raved and whipped up a militia. He disappeared, so did the militia; the neighbors shrugged and went about their business. Since then, the island (renamed Banjoke) has been infested with boggies and houseboats. They own the bayou.



Tideport. This port is on low-lying ground on a river delta. The richest plantations surround it, so it attracts the island aristocracy as well as the abject poor. Mord-Stavian has a slave auction house where they buy, sell, and trade humans. The marines from Tideport keep the savages in nearby islands in line so the glittering parties and elegant civilization doesn't have to get its hands dirty. Meanwhile, in the shadows, the underclass rely on aid from spirits and shamen just to survive.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Zakathanox. This formidable tower is an outpost of the Black Warlocks. For a price, they will animate a work force for a plantation or military. There are subscriptions available, for animation on an ongoing basis. They are cruel and deadly, but their only interest appears to be in trade. No one knows what they do with the exorbitant fees they collect.

Oracle Pools. The interior of the island has a deep crater full of pools. Some go to other places, like the Dreamlands. A temple there has captured masses of gibbering protoplasm that giggle and whisper hideous truths.

Crystal Mountain. It is a mountain, but it is not crystal; it is the fortress of the wealthy and exiled Crystalline Brotherhood of Admixers, alchemists with peerless skill. However, due to their unhealthy interest in vivisection and necromancy as elements of alchemy, they must practice far from civilized eyes. They are jovial, friendly, ruthless, and insane.

Isle of Domagio. This island is stuffed with monstrous reptilian beasts, reptile clans, and medicinal plants. Apparently, time does not move the same here as it does in the rest of the World Between.

SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS

Spirits. The Isles swarm with spirits. Ecstatic ceremonies of narcotics and possession ease the tension of the marginalized poor, and give them a sense of connection with some power in their hopeless lives. Meshing with the spirit world brings obligations and power; some use that to help people, others use it to punish their enemies.

Necromancy. The Black Warlocks are a powerful necromantic faction, but other necromancers are hired on as cheap “court wizards” for wealthy plantation lords and ladies, or consortiums (usually families.) Aristocracy are smug that they are too enlightened to be squeamish about the utility of using the dead once you’ve worked the life out of your slaves or soldiers.

Season of Scales. Most blame the Crystalline Brotherhood of Admixers for the reptilian population. People who look like lizards, or lizards who look like people. No matter how they came to be, they are well adapted for the tropical islands, and they have lairs both above and below the surface of the waves. No one knows what their goals are, or whether they serve a higher purpose, but there are accomplished shamen in their ranks.

Threat of Corruption. To the east, windswept deserts rife with mystic radiation. To the south, an inexorably powerful theocracy of the dead. To the north, a patchwork of crazed imperialists. The Isles have been in the middle of war before; that’s how civilization was born there. They don’t care to do it again. Still, it’s hard to pay attention to all these threats when life is so absorbing where you are.

HARROWFAUST

BASIC DESCRIPTION

The powers of the night are firmly in command of this country. Demons and vampires carry out intrigues against each other, casually maintaining the population to support them. The forests seem impossibly deep, the mountains impossibly tall. The past is more real in Harrowfaust than the present.

STYLISTIC FEEL

Not-Transylvania. Humans know their place—support infrastructure, cash cows, toys, and food. Peasants under decadent nobles feel that their disconnected rulers are monsters, and in this case, it is literally true. Vampire/noble/demons are longer-lived, pale from lives of leisure out of constant sunlight, rarified in tastes, without compassion, absorbed in intrigues that seem distant to the common folk, and surviving on an unhealthy reliance of the life blood of their subjects.

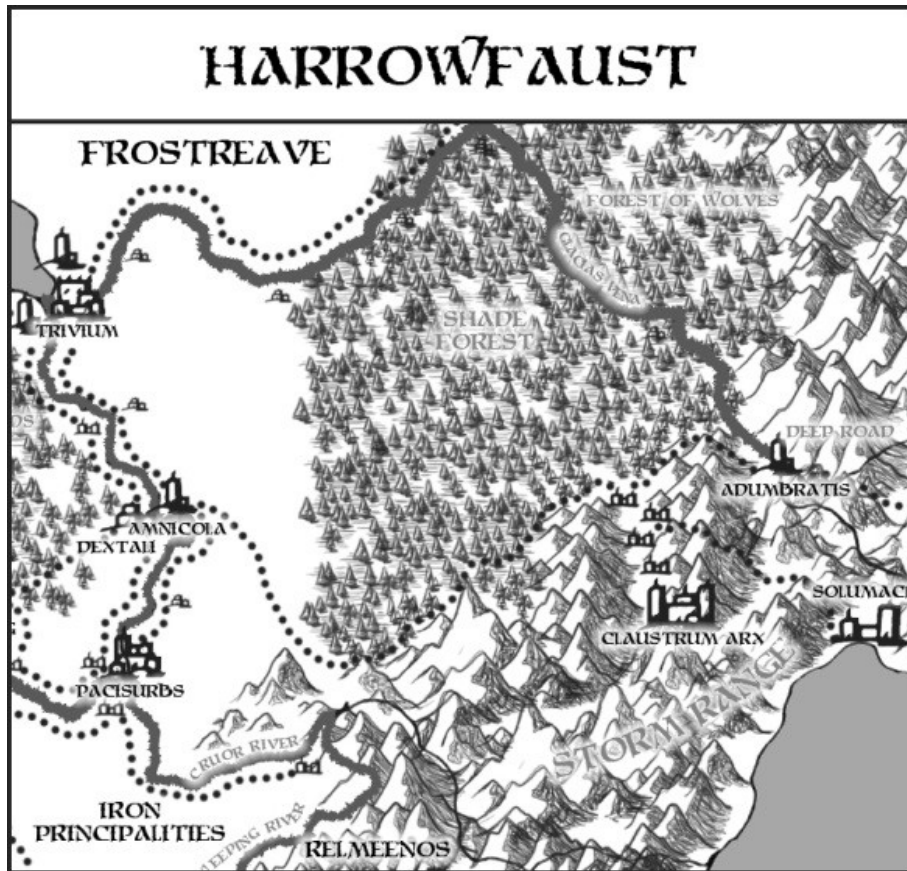
The jack-booted captains of the nobles can be escalated to werewolves. The outsider perspective and ancient culture of the gypsies can be escalated to Vistani with power over curses and divination. The lingering presence of past misdeeds influencing the present can be escalated to hauntings. The grim faceless oppression of armies can be escalated to ranks of the walking dead. The dangers of the elements and untamed nature can be escalated to packs of demon wolves racing through restless half-awake forests. The disinterest of rulers in the well-being of their people can escalate to crazed scholars and scientists taking up residence in lonely places to continue unwholesome experiments.

RULING STRUCTURE

Harrowfaust is torn between secular leadership and spiritual leadership. The king can only be crowned in the temple to Morgath beneath the Clastrum Arx, but the Clastrum Arx is the seat of power for the penangalan demons opposing the vampires. The penangalan cannot rule Harrowfaust on their own, and the vampires will not submit to them. So, Duke Maximilian von Karlock rules from Trivium, and Gabrielle Lorbek rules from the Clastrum Arx. A feudal system of nobility (most vampires, some not) handles secular rule, and the penangalan are the priestesses of Morgath, the state religion. Those who serve vampires wear red; those who wear red and do not serve vampires are made to.

STEREOTYPES

Medium height, mix of Caligarian, Northron, and Vistani blood. Servile wretches, they are looking for a strong master but ready to stab their master in the back if a better opportunity comes along. Or, arrogant ruler who thinks of people as mere cattle. Or, the hardest and scariest of monster hunters, blending wits and violence for continued survival. These people know the weaknesses and strengths of undead. They can summon and bind monsters. They worship a god of death when threatened, and the Lady when they think they have a chance for freedom. The spirit has been ground out of these people.



FAMOUS FOR:

Blood wine. Secrets for summoning and binding demons. Ancient treasures. Necromancy. Herbology.

MAJOR CITIES

Trivium. Named for the point where three nations meet, this mighty city is one of the most formidable in the World Between. Frostreave has a settlement to the north, and Caligari one to the west, but Harrowfaust rules the port and the vastness of the city that the port serves. Duke von Karlok rules from here and maintains the strength of his undead military.

Amnicola. This is the center of trade in Harrowfaust. It is not well defended, and it is sacked from time to time, but it is always rebuilt. It is too close to the outside world, so supernatural forces that rule Harrowfaust have a lighter touch here. The Brexton family has ruled Amnicola for centuries. They are

monster hunters, allowed to rule to keep them too busy for murder sprees. They are canny and ruthless researchers and fighters, fond of traps and intrigue. This helps them rule and also hunt monsters.

Pacisurbs. The ironically named “City of Peace” has changed hands many times, and ended up an independent city. Its main export is compromise. The city is one of the keys to Harrowfaust’s security, and it is rife with spies, diplomats, and trade.

Solumach. *See Scavenger Lands for description.*

Adumbratis. At the western end of the Deep Road under the Storm Range, this trading city is the connecting point between the Scavenger Lands and the rest of the World Between. It is a major stop for Vistani. Harrowfaust controls the settlement in wary truce with Frostreave.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Clastrum Arx. This massive fortress is less of a city than a fortification. Four mighty castles guard the approach to the vast monument to military paranoia. It has never been taken by force (only through trickery, by the penangalan.) Below is the Seat of Morgath, where the king of Harrowfaust must be crowned. Legend suggests that from time to time an undead army marches from the Clastrum Arx directly from the World Below.

Mother Mina’s Gardens. Deep in the Shade Forest, there is a cleared meadow that has been transformed into an incredible botanical garden. Mother Mina is reputed to be immortal, but she is hunched and she looks ancient. She tends her plants, and according to legend, if it can die then there is something in her garden that will kill it. She always has a price for assassins, but if you’re bold and if you have something she wants, you can walk out with the means to kill anything. Hers is a unique temple to Morgath.

SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS

The Corpulent Reaper. Morgath is not actually a god; he is a powerful demon lord. King Harrowfaust called upon him when the empire of Ulverland was ready to absorb the last of his territory. In exchange for worship and rulership in Harrowfaust, Morgath gave the king’s nobles vampirism (and necromancy). Bolstered with new dark power, the vampires carved out their territory and still maintain it. They also worship Morgath. So too do many of the common people; they want the power they see the undead wield, and undeath ironically symbolizes independence. This is a lie, as the undead are mastered by their hungers and by those more powerful than themselves, but those nuances are lost on people who are starving and subject to brutality. The penangalan are the priestesses of Morgath, which annoys the vampires to no end.

Penangalan. These demons are the heads of women who can rip loose of bodies, floating through the air with hanging intestines they can use to strangle their victims. They are powerful spellcasters, utterly devoted to intrigue and concealment. They would like to own and rule Harrowfaust, but they recognize the need for the might of the vampires, (and the vampires realize the priestesses of their patron god should not be exterminated) so their conflicts do not escalate beyond sparring.

The Nature of Evil is to Defeat Itself. The dark rulers of Harrowfaust have their hands full with internal intrigue and conflict. They participate in international espionage with glee, but they cannot realistically invade; their own conflicts would sabotage them. Should another army invade them, they band together and fend off the threat. The only army they have consistently failed to defeat is from the World Above,

and they'd have a good chance to win if they could stop bickering long enough. These practically immortal creatures have long memories for grudges centuries old.

Brotherhood of the Yew. These crazy hunters are trying to free Harrowfaust from its demonic and undead rulers. They have informants, scholars, priests, and warriors in their ranks. They are ignored when they pick off minor or annoying demons and vampires. When they attack someone who matters, that tends to launch a fresh investigation. Those connected to the Brotherhood die slowly, in great pain. When they dare, the Brotherhood identify themselves with a silvered half-moon pin on the lapel. In many places they have legitimate fronts as a society of folkloric and historic scholars.

Reparation Servitude. Northrons caught fighting are given as indentured servants to nobles. It is the only way Harrowfaust has found to get some good out of the constant raids from Frostreave.

Church of the Lady of the White Way. Some peasants turn to the church in hopes of a future without monsters. The rulers tend to indulge this as long as it doesn't get in their way.

Vistani. Harrowfaust is the main route between the Scavenger Lands and the rest of the World Between, and it is heavily traveled by gypsies. The locals use them as spies and gain news of lands nearby and far away, in exchange for relatively safe passage. Vistani influence has steeped the country; the nobles use the Vistani, and the common people admire and try to emulate their ability to survive. When things go wrong, both sides can be abrupt in using the Vistani as a scapegoat. That way they can send a message without getting on the wrong side of neighbors who will not simply move along.

IRON PRINCIPALITIES

BASIC DESCRIPTION

Petty kingdoms rule what they can reach. Dynasties rise and fall with dizzying speed. Rampant demon worship (especially of Hakhan, Demon Lord of Slaughter) combines with intrigue and competition to keep border wars a feature of the landscape. Against a dark and bloody backdrop, art flourishes. A bold talent can carve an aristocratic life out of the chaos.

STYLISTIC FEEL

Not-Italy. The land is beautiful. Azure oceans, mountains full of character, tended vineyards, and regal architecture dominate the landscape. Behind this façade, brutality is the driving force of the Principalities (whether in warfare, relationships, or politics). However, the Principalities are too fragmented to manage full-scale war, so they are constantly embroiled in petty border squabbles punctuated by insincere treaties. Morality and ethics are sidelined by chill practicality. Honor in defeat is an idea used to manipulate on-lookers or losers. Torn from their roots, the founders of the Iron Principalities serve nothing greater than themselves, except for those who are slaves to demons. They prefer to rule in Hell than serve in Heaven.

RULING STRUCTURE

During the civil war, the Prince of Hell (as Prince Damian von Schledgermeyer was known) drafted a charter signed by 66 of his supporters. The Southern Charter gave right of rule to the southern lands in Caligari, as well as the lands along the Crook Mountains. The Southern Charter is still held by the King of

Nalconia, with names added and subtracted as diplomats wrangle the byzantine process of getting recognized by the King of the Iron Principalities. Each king then manages a kingdom as the king sees fit. The landscape is a kaleidoscope of rulers, with few successful dynasties and lots of ousted schemers.

STEREOTYPES

Southrons are short and slender, with dark hair and big eyes. They have olive skin and flashing white teeth. They can be mistaken for Vistani, but they are more brutal. None are squeamish about killing, or poisoning, or cheating. They all know how to fight with the long and short blade, rapier and main-gauche. Lazy, they try to get out of work however they can; it is hot where they come from, so they like to nap all day and scheme all night. They dislike proper armor, preferring opulent velvet and embroidery and light weaponry for stabbing similarly unarmored opponents. All of them have demon blood in the family tree. All of them know how to play some instrument.

FAMOUS FOR:

High fashion. Gourmet wine. Oil paintings, especially portraits and landscapes. Exotic cooking, very spicy, lots of pasta. Orchestral work, manufacture of fine instruments. Pulp fiction of derring do, thievery, and dark monsters. Premium gunpowder, quality guns. Fine steel for blades, slender but exquisite weapons. Mercenaries who are blooded, ruthless veterans. Battle-tested spellcasters. Demon lore. Court necromancers. Orc armies.



MAJOR CITIES

Nalconia. This city is on the southern shore of Glasslake. It is called the “Banishment Vineyard” after a story told in Relmeenos, where a fox declares grapes are sour because the fox cannot have them. Once Nalconia was a center of art and culture in Caligari, but it became the capitol of the Iron Principalities when the dust settled from the Banishment War. It is the showcase of the Principalities, where its rulers grimly demonstrate their carefree ease and leisurely living to prove Caligari made a huge mistake over 2,000 years ago. In the meantime, it is a major center for the arts and for intrigue in the World Between, ruled by the Iron King.

Setine. Known as the White Rose, this port city is on the southern coast of the mainland. The city fell to the undead when the Deathfleet attacked, and centuries later an army marched from Midian and retook the city at the behest of the Masks, exiles of Setine (who wear silver masks.) The military was formed of a martial order called the Hammers. They worship the

Master Builder as a saint of the Lady of the White Way. Setine is unique in the Principalities, as demon worship and magic are forbidden and the Hammers punish lawbreakers harshly.

Pinoa. This major port on the south of the Crook Mountains is the biggest market and trading center outside Caligari, and it is a major stop on Caligarian trade routes. Here, politics are worked out through trade. The Principalities need not be friends with Midian, Scarabae, Caligari, and Relmeenos to trade with them. With almost no trading restrictions, wealth flows freely in this decadent city. It is the assumed hiring grounds for sailors and pirates. The finest dueling academy in the world, the du Masiline, is here. The Duke is of the Gerrardo family, as have been the dukes for a millennia. This city is the headquarters of the Knights of the Silent Wisteria, charged with protecting trade caravans to the Scavenger Lands and back. (These knights worship Astariax.)

Varav. The Free City is on the edge of Relmeenos, controlling trade to and from the country by land. After the Relmeenos army tried to conquer the world, Duke Boris von Kloffmakk was given the order and resources to build his kingdom at the entrance to Relmeenos. The city developed a strange history; whether it was attacked by one or more Princes, or by Relmeenos, the city shuts its gates and sends for help from the other side. The siege becomes a battle, and Varav is saved. Inter-marriage and mingling culture in the walls makes this place alien to both its neighbors.

Calobra. This western city is the launching point for offense and defense towards Scarabae. Also, it is a major port for trade with the Lands of the Lady. The Prince who rules maintains a hands-off religious policy, concealing his own allegiance; most of the trade is conducted by Midianite traders and Caligarian consortiums. The city is nearly impossible to take. It has an inner city and an outer city; one dug into rock, the other available for visitors and tourists.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Karmodia. This city sank beneath the waves during the War Below in the days of King Glavius, part of the climax of that war. Some say it is still visible beneath the waves, loaded with shimmering loot and the corpses of the damned. Others say it sank all the way to the World Below, and to swim towards it is to find damnation. A vast demon serpent (Amaloch) is rumored to have been responsible for its sinking.

Ghelbreth Citadel. A hidden fortress in the mountains, the Citadel trains red-robed illusionists to assist rulers in the Iron Principalities. Some suggest that they manage complex plots using the bush wars of the Principalities to accomplish some esoteric aim. They provide many court wizards and war mages.

SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS

The Root of Demon Worship in the Iron Principalities. Over 2,000 years ago, Caligari had a massive civil war, the Banishment War. Moralists banned demon worship, and the aristocracy steeped in a demonic tradition took exception. After long years of bloody fighting, Caligari was torn in half. Those who worshiped Hakhan, Demon Prince of Slaughter, founded kingdoms of their own in what was once southern Caligari, or further south. They signed the Southern Charter put forth by the Prince of Hell (Caligarian rebel leading the Iron Army.)

Demon Footsoldiers. The powers of the World Below appreciate chaos and warfare on the level of the civil war, and they made many kinds of demons available for the fighting. Even now, most of the killing and dying is done by orc armies commanded by humans with demonic ties.

Jaded. The people of the Iron Principalities are used to seeing demon footsoldiers as part of their defense, necromancers at court advising kings, and tainted aristocrats bragging about orgies with summoned succubae. It is difficult to sway them with arguments about good stopping the triumph of evil. Survival by any means is a greater good, especially considering the atrocities visited upon losers when the winners found the battle harder or costlier than they liked.

Weak Faith. Rulers and people of the Iron Principalities are not as demon-focused as their ancestors were. Raised greedy and selfish, they don't want to share anything with demons that they don't have to. Broken deals and lip service to demons is far more common than outsiders realize; the people of the Iron Principalities aren't much more faithful than worshippers elsewhere in the World Between. Demons seem to be lax in enforcement, probably because the overall environment of the country pleases them.

The Goddess and the Demon Lord. Astariax is the goddess of intrigue, stratagem, and mercantile prosperity. Hakhan is the Demon Prince of slaughter. Astariax is married to Asthaeton, prudish and boring god of civilization, but she's having a fierce affair with Hakhan as the bad boy. For mortal worshipers, this means that as Astariax's methods prove effective, she frustrates and taunts those using Hakhan's methods. However, in the final analysis, they need each other. Cunning eventually requires force, and force benefits greatly from cunning. Astariax is the bridge between using civilization and chaos to support schemers in luxury. This is a snapshot of the soul of the aristocratic culture.

The Victorious Remnant. The civil war with Caligari was eventually provoked by the actions of the Victorious Remnant. This movement believed that while earlier generations made deals with demons, the Remnant would be the humans strong enough to master demons and eventually invade and conquer the World Below. Symbolized by the black eagle on a white circle, these purists weeded all those with demon blood from their organization, then set to work summoning, binding, and exorcising. They lay the foundation for the orc armies of the Principalities, as they worked towards summoning the perfect orc soldier to serve them in conquering the world, consolidating power in the World Between to assault the World Below. The atrocities of this group outdid any force before their time as they delved deep into forbidden magic and lore. Alarmed, the moralists in Caligari united to evict them, and that was the spark needed to ignite the tensions that had simmered for millennia. Even now, madmen scheme and plot in secret on their inherited dream: a united World Between subjugated by the perfect orc army.

Blood Magic. Blood is the base component for most demon spells in the Principalities. Artists can paint with it, creating marvelous enchanted paintings. The Guild of the Red Hand uses their blood and the blood in their targets as weapons to end life. Nobles use blood to bind the enchantments of their weapons and armor to their line. Demonologists use it to raise orcs. The blood is the life and the death here.

ISLES OF UNPARALLELED LIBERTY

BASIC DESCRIPTION

Also known as the "Liberty Isles." These islands are difficult to navigate, with thousands of ready-made hiding places for a ship. They were fortified in the war with Mord-Stavian. Some of those fortresses crumble in the humid heat, others have been shored up and refurbished by pirates. A few settlements draw traffic, but most are designed not to. The liberty comes at the price of safety.

STYLISTIC FEEL

Not-Sicily/Mediterranean. Classic age-of-sail high seas treasure hunting piracy and trade ships, rife with letters of marque and reprisal for privateers and romance novel specimens of manhood and womanhood striding the rolling decks. The islands are stuffed with places to hide. Sometimes ships will drop anchor just to visit a settlement comprised mostly of taverns and houses of ill repute. Ghost ships rise from the depths, and also sail from the south. The law is fragmented between sparring nations in these waters, so lawlessness is mostly kept in check by well-armed traders.

RULING STRUCTURE

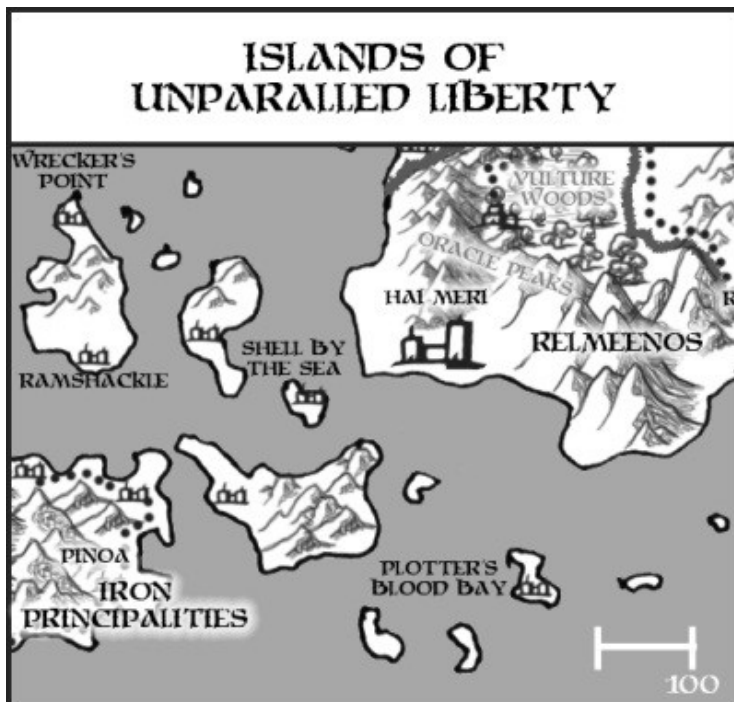
Pirate Countess Isolda Tarmapp rules in the sense that she adjudicates disputes and maintains treaties. The Pirate Count/Countess position was founded by a pact between King Vorhiac and Commodore Duhnell, sealed by Mother Lothak herself. Certain powers were granted the Pirate Count, so the position came to have the respect of all pirates (and others) who sail these waters. Outside of that, cutthroat rule of the strongest and most cunning is the standard order.

STEREOTYPES

Utterly lazy and without character, murdering thieves, almost sub-human degenerates that must be whipped into shape to do anything. The collected refuse of the rest of the World Between. Superstition has overtaken reason completely. They have no concept of honor, the only ones with education are the worst of the lot because they've fallen so far. However, no one can predict weather like they can, and they all have the ability to summon sea demons. Every pirate knows where at least one booby-trapped treasure is hidden, and any treasure a pirate gets will be hidden in its turn (or spent on women and wine.)

FAMOUS FOR:

Techniques for brutal punishment and torture. Finest techniques for streamlining and repairing ships with minimal facilities. Weather magic. Cheapest grog in the world. Most jaded prostitutes in the world.



MAJOR CITIES

Plotter's Blood Bay. Tucked out of the way, but not too out of the way, this port tends to harbor those on the wrong end of usurpation and betrayal in the Iron Principalities. Sometimes more exotic ousted nobles or royals will hide here. Everyone knows the Commodore and his line are of royal blood, but no one knows which throne they may someday claim. Commodore Bytslaan protects those seeking political asylum in Plotter's Blood Bay, as long as they sign the Refugee Blotter in his castle.

The Ramshackle. Spread across the wide mouth of a bay, there are literally hundreds of run-down public houses. They have houses of ill repute, taverns, markets, mercenary auctions, press

gangs, markets to buy and sell the dead (animate or otherwise), and every kind of debauchery that could abase you. “To the Ramshackle!” is a battle cry known across the sea. It means the crew demands shore leave, or the infamous pirate settlement is under attack and everyone should come to its aid.

Wrecker’s Point. The unpredictable rocks around this settlement have assured that no navy has successfully taken the city. The settlement got its name from rogues who set up false beacons, guiding ships onto the rocks, then killing any surviving crew and harvesting whatever floats from the shipwreck. These heartless criminals are called wreckers.

Hai Meri. No land routes connect to this city, all travel is by sea. The city was founded by a fanatical cult to Mother Lothak, Our Lady of Sharks. Its near-drowning baptism pools are famous across the World Between, as are its bestial marines who fight with clubs bristling with shark teeth (and some of the marines are whispered to be shark-men.) This is the true seat of power for the Liberty Isles, and from the turrets of the fortress the Pirate Countess of the Six Coins rules supreme. If she doesn’t like what you have to say, you won’t make it back to your ship. A court sprang up in the fortress; any politically aware pirate captain wants to know who is saying what to the Pirate Countess. A few spies from other factions are also tolerated for her amusement, granting her the ability to communicate with governments by passing intelligence (or counter-intelligence) as she sees fit. A shipyard builds pirate ships, and repairs ships that need suitable docking facilities for extensive damage. Only pirates trade here.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Shrine to Mother Finn. This temple to Sothak, Our Lady of Sharks, is on a crumbling promontory off Sharkbite Bay. It is occupied by sea witches, and guarded by shark men. Oracular pools there are said to be able to control weather and spy on anything touching the water in the Sea of Sothak. Rumor suggests they only accept payment in shipwreck treasure and human sacrifice.

The Shell by the Sea. After the Banishment War that tore Caligari in two, King Vorhiac came to rule a powerful port in the Crook Mountains. He desperately missed the high art of Caligari, especially opera. He found an acoustically perfect location on an island, and developed it into the Shell by the Sea, a fantastic opera house. To protect it, he made a deal with the most powerful pirate in the Isles, Commodore Duhnell. In exchange for protecting the Shell, the new Pirate Count would have some elemental authority to rule the other pirates and compel a degree of order. The opulent concert hall is strangely safe, and people of all kinds meet there to witness fantastic performances by performers from all around the Sea of Sothak and beyond.

Order of Consecrated Tenebriates. They are said to lair in the shadows in the center of four islands, moving through cracks in the stone to step in and out of their shadow lair. Their purpose is unknown. Legend suggests they gain their sustenance from drinking the shadows of their victims. They have a “diplomatic outpost” on the Black Lagoon, a small port where you’ll be found by their people if you ask around.

Tower of Zzorch. These towers can come and go in the mist and the night, bringing with them a faint red glow in the dark or the fog. Legend suggests the cultists and demons of Zzorch corrupted some towers of the Eladrian and now use them to move about the Isles. Zzorch is blamed for the spontaneous change to orc that is more common in the Isles than elsewhere. No one knows the purpose of the cult in the tower; not even its name. Those who investigate do not come back, or do not come back unchanged.

Sea of Turmoil. Some call the pirate-haunted waters the Sea of Turmoil in honor of Sothak’s struggles.

SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS

A Mother's Love. While Father Sothak rules the sea, Mother Lothak has adopted this island cluster as her own playground (according to legend.) Our Lady of Sharks rules the pirate roost, further diminishing chances of law being imposed in the islands. The Demon Queen hates humans who worship gods like the one that defeated and wed her, and she hates other demons, so it pleases her to disrupt shipping and spread pain and fear. Bitter souls seeking revenge are drawn here, and may find mutually agreeable terms with Our Lady of Sharks for darkening the world.

The Death Fleet. Thousands of years ago an undead navy engulfed these islands, and some remnants of that past remain. Pockets of undead power, lingering spirits, and shambling skeletons still carry out dark purposes. Their numbers have been bolstered by refugee necromancers, secret agents of Mord-Stavian, and the restlessness of the sea infecting the islands. Some undead rise spontaneously here, and in sufficient quantity, undead energies can raise whole ships.

Nest of Demons. Demonic influence is so powerful here that those involved in marauding, or breaking vows, or other evil acts sometimes spontaneously become orcs. Most are so far gone they don't care. Sometimes it happens to a whole ship's crew at a time, and they murder and eat anyone aboard who doesn't change with them.

The Code and the Vows. Making promises with pirates means giving them a bit of your essence. If you break a deal in the Isles, there is a good chance a curse will find you. Or a monster. Or you will change into something you'd rather not be. Still, rogues and miscreants risk it and break deals all the time. There are general guidelines for something like honor, but it is quite flexible as needed.

MIDIAN

BASIC DESCRIPTION

Hot and dusty, this country is the beating heart of the Lands of the Lady. The Church of the Lady of the White Way is based in Calrissia, and from there it spreads into the World Between. The country is defined by four proud city states in alliance with each other. They are proud and uncompromising, much like the land where they live.

STYLISTIC FEEL

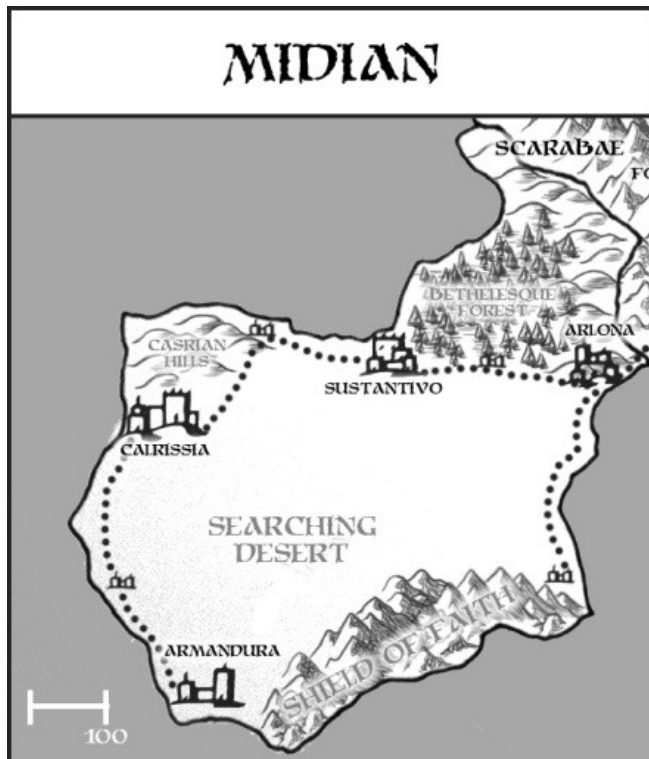
Not-Spain. Dangerous blinding pride leads to crusades and inquisitions, limiting the immigration from the rest of the World Between. The biggest cultural influence outside the Church of the Lady is from the south, where the Mordish escape oppression in Mord-Stavian and settle in Midian. They bring their own culture and art, and quietly slip in some of their religion too. Another great influence is the Vistani, who trade and entertain in Midian as in the rest of the World Between. The idea of demons manipulating the Church to further their schemes is too terrifying to consider—the Church must be above such things. Midian considers the Church and the Lady to be great gifts to the rest of the World Between.

RULING STRUCTURE

Rulership in Midian balances between two points. Spiritual matters overflow into the temporal world under the supervision of the Pontiff at the Landing in Calrissia, spiritual leader of the World Between. The nation is ruled by a King supported by the Council of Eight, noble advisors. From there, the system is feudal for both the secular and spiritual structures.

In the past, civil war was prevented by the Pontiff interceding as needed, or by the King stepping in to curb heresy that approached schism. Now, the Church and the State are pitted against each other. From Calrissia, Prince Eduardo Melrose II claims the throne to Midian based on his family's relationship with the Church through the millennia. He plans to unleash a purging inquisition to finally reach spiritual unity. From Arlona, Princess Saliani Avengelina claims the throne to Midian based on her backing with the Council of Eight. She would risk civil war to nationalize Church holdings and distribute them among her supporters.

STEREOTYPES



Midianites (or Midish) people are short and olive-skinned, with dark eyes and hair. Their educated speak with a lisp, and all of them talk very fast. They are all slavishly devoted to the Lady, and all of them cherish at least one silver pendant with a saint depicted on it. They are so proud they are willing to risk death to force you to retract an insult that stains their honor. They cannot accept defeat, and are very narrow-minded. They are bad sports, whether they are winning and gloating or losing and moaning. All are trained with sword-fighting and theology; the Church is not a religious choice, but a cultural background. All of them obsess about their sins, forgiveness, and inevitable damnation.

The Mordish are a sizeable sub-population. They have very dark skin that makes their eyes and teeth seem really white. They all prefer wearing curtains with belts, and head gear, and they fight with curved weapons. They had to raise so many monuments to the undead in

Mord-Stavian they only like art with abstract geometric patterns. They will eat anything. They like hot tea when it is blisteringly hot outside. There are two kinds; Mordish that are devoted to the Church of the Lady for protecting them, and Mordish that smuggle their snake cult into the country with them. Either way, they use their cultural trappings to adjust the culture where they arrive, creating hybrids that can be disturbing to locals.

FAMOUS FOR:

Scholars from their seminaries, all knowledge of the Lady of the White Way (including knowledge of the Ruinous Scar and Scavenger Lands connections with the Armies of the Lady), connections with the Church of the Lady, fine horses, fine steel, passionate dancing, meditative mystic hermits.

MAJOR CITIES

Calrissia. Armies of the Lady of the White Way have landed here twice. Once during the First Crusade that started recorded time about 7,000 years ago, and again for the Third Crusade in 4,540 to save the World Between from Ulverland's domination. The failed Fourth Crusade was launched from here in 6,500. The secular city calcified around the holy core of the Church's beating heart, to protect it. Pilgrims come here in a constant stream. Patron saint: Arianna, the Bloody Redeemer.

Arlona. The city defends the only viable land entry to Midian. It has the greatest trade markets in Midian. The Princess rules from here, with her all-female musketeers known as the Guns of Arlona. The city also has the Echoing Downs, a haven for the Vistani granted them for their heroics defending the city during the War of the Traitor Knights. (They defended a section of city wall, and it has never been repaired, so they have their own way in and the meadows around it.) Patron saint: Calbrius, the Light Seeker.

Sustantivo. This major port was built during the Deathfleet invasion in the 5th century. The arrogant culture is based on ship-building and famous high-spirited and powerful horses (Sustantine mounts). Patron saint: Bernus, the Stumbling Wayfarer.

Armandura. This city was shattered in the 5th century by the Deathfleet, and again by the dragons. The city is a center of culture and education for bounty hunters, monster hunters, and undead hunters. Bounty Square is a major city feature, with bounties on bandits constantly refreshed. The Order of Valenciar are the greatest vampire hunters in the World Between. Raids into Mord-Stavian are mounted from this ruined city with fair frequency. Patron saint: Coraline, the Voice of Doom.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Shield of Faith. To the south, a rugged range of mountains stands between the Welcoming Sea and Midian. Legend suggests the mountains were erected to protect Midian from Mord-Stavian. There are enough caves and canyons in the badlands and the mountains to hide numerous packs of desperate bandits, hermits, heretics, and other fugitives.

Searching Desert. The center of Midian is filled with an arid dust bowl, plains mixed with badlands. Those seeking a closer relationship with the Lady of the White Way go into this wilderness to test their bodies, minds, and spirits, to cleanse their souls of impurities.

Gray Reaches. This barren valley in the mountains between Midian and Scarabae can only be found by spellcasters who can see through the illusions that hide it. Here, wizards come to duel in the lifeless dust of a valley decimated by a ferocious mystic battle millennia ago. A few enigmatic wizards claim the title "Lord of the Gray Reach," and those outside mystic circles speculate that may mean they won significant duels there and/or they can serve as judges if need be.

SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS

The Church of the Lady of the White Way. This is the seat of power for the church, and it embodies all the best and the worst the Church has to offer. Those speaking for the Lady have stated that all demons and gods are powerful entities, yes, but not worthy of worship. They say the Lady is the only true divine and cosmic power. She does not see fit to grant them supernatural trickery; instead of giving them powers that seem like magic, she looks after the fate of the world, coincidence and guidance with the occasional unpredictable miracle. She is subtle and powerful (or imaginary, depending on your point of view.) Her saints have provided a tangible presence, and she inspires holy warriors and prophets to her service. Her

theology is at its most vulnerable when the Church is flush with temporal power and wealth, and it is at its best protecting the weak when it is underpowered with little practical reason for hope.

Kumo-Thlis (the Snake God, The One Who Slithers). All those raids into Mord-Stavian earned Midian special attention. A cult of Kumo-Thlis has begun manipulating the rulers of the Church and Midian with startling success, and the snake cult is suspected of supporting Princess Avengelina in opposing the Church. Their influence gained momentum before the Fourth Crusade, the disaster that weakened Midian to dangerous levels and precipitated the fiercest infighting the country ever endured.

The Faithless. The lawless places in Midian are haunted by tall, fur-covered subhumans with gleaming yellow eyes and fangs. These stealthy bandits eat human flesh and survive entirely on the proceeds from theft and mayhem. Their lives are illegal, so killing one is a service to Midian and they don't mingle in the cities. They are almost invisible in dust storms. According to legend, they are the cursed descendants of those who refused to worship the Lady, their bestial traits surfaced for all to see.

MORD-STAVIAN

BASIC DESCRIPTION

The northern edge of Mord-Stavian is badlands and desert; further south, there are lush jungles. The Hundred Death Gods rule Mord-Stavian ruthlessly, managing the human population as cattle, toys, and work force, compelling them to worship and feeding from their energy.

In their native tongue, "Mord" means "the living" and Stavian means "transcending, ruling." Mord-Stavian is ruled by those who transcend mere living, and are undead. Predictably enough, the Mords (the living) escape to Midian and other places in the World Between to escape their undead masters.

STYLISTIC FEEL

Not-Africa/Egypt. Rulers who are immune to age and death force their oppressed populations to build vast monuments in the deserts and jungles. Bestial jackal-headed creatures enforce the will of their undead masters. Clockworkian despots manage vast estates. Giant scarabs serve as mounts. A vast variety of undead and monsters and corrupted humans render this enormous continent deadly to visitors.

RULING STRUCTURE

The Necropolitan rules from its vast pyramid shrine outside Levanti, the capitol city on the River Nilus. Other extremely powerful undead or avatars of death gods rule as the Deathless Majesties, pharos or sheikh or khans. They are constantly at war, except for the Necropolitan, who rules with the authority of the Hundred Death Gods and controls a portal to the World Below that is more than enough fuel for all the Deathless Majesties.

STEREOTYPES

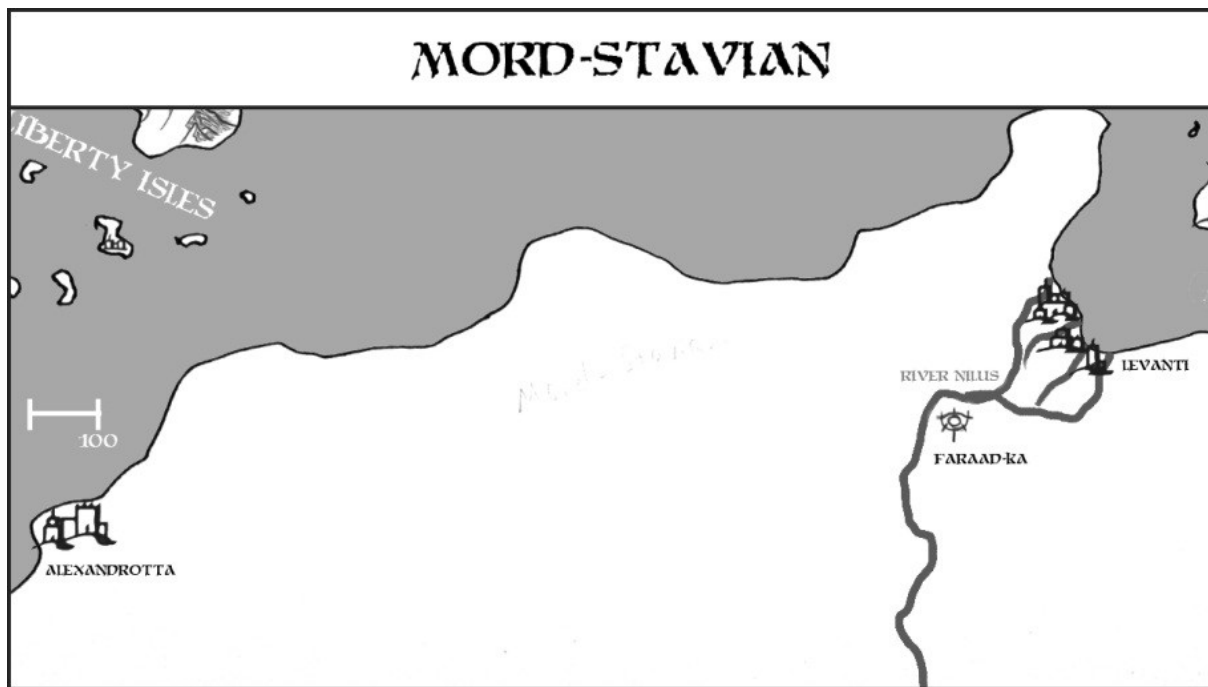
Mordish are all black-skinned, hard-muscled, superstitious, and inclined to wear as little clothing as possible. They all have brands, ritual scarring, or some sort of bloody decoration that tells the story of their lives. They like to wear strange things on their heads and put any kind of jewelry anywhere they can

pierce a hole, often deforming their flesh in the process. They are all polygamous and chauvinistic, and the women are always scheming for top position with their husband (to the point of killing babies from other wives.) Mordish can see in the dark, sense the presence of spirits or the undead, and hold their breath for a very long time.

Clockworkian undead despots have all adapted to eat human flesh whether they need it or not. They feed on pain. They are war machines built to subdue humanity, and they are all looking for a top spot to lead the next Deathfleet. They keep the Hundred Death Gods weak by constant infighting and jockeying for position; their unity would spell another world-wide war. Their egos are impossibly arrogant.

FAMOUS FOR:

Very strong workers and soldiers with high pain tolerance and few physical needs. Strange drugs grown under the influence of undead energies. Otherworldly architectural skills and magic. Fantastic locks and trap designs, with long-lasting lethality and reset capability. Stable beastman creation rituals. Unparalleled designs and rituals for making animated constructs.



MAJOR CITIES

Levanti. This sprawling city is built on the delta of the River Nilus where it flows into the Sea of Sothak. The Necropolitan's pyramid shrine is right outside the city and overshadows it with undying majesty. Anyone may visit, but if they are killed out of hand or imprisoned without cause, no one will rescue them. Explorers who were civil, lucky, and daring enough to survive a visit are few.

Alexandrotta. This port is the only city in Mord-Stavian that has significant traffic from the World Between. The city is open because of Nuvok-Tyre, one of the Death Gods that is obsessed with what knowledge is among the living and what is known among the dead. The vast libraries of Nuvok-Tyre are maintained by undead scholars, some with millennia of study within their experience. Those who bring knowledge not yet captured are welcome, and they may research (within bounds.) Those who bring

violence find themselves overcome and destroyed by vast waves of incorporeal undead. Also, some of the libraries are spectral, scholars must cross over to study there. The books and buildings are ghosts of what burned during the Desert War, in 5,849.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The Colossal Sepulcher of Faraad-Ka. Protected by necrotic sphinx guards, this vast necropolis is rumored to be the resting place of the first Necropolitan and founder of the Mordish culture. As he was the last ruler of Mord-Stavian to taste true death, his resting place is of major religious importance to current rulers because of his link to the Hundred Death Gods.

Forges of Creation. This holy complex is carefully hidden in the heart of Mord-Stavian. It is the birthing-place of the ruling elite. There is no proof it even exists outside legend.

SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS

Hundred Death Gods. When the Armies of the Lady came from the World Above and pushed the Death Muster out of the World Between when time began, they did not make it to Mord-Stavian. The Hundred Death Gods have ruled there for over 7,000 years. There is some speculation that conflicts between corporeal and incorporeal undead, and between various sentient varieties, saps the strength of Mord-Stavian and keeps it from invading. In particular, clashes between those who are mummified and those who are infected with vampirism are sharp. The three best-known Death Gods are the Carrion Marquis, the Dismembered One, and the Flayed Maiden.

Abstract Art. Mords are often spent in the hundreds or thousands as slaves building massive monuments to the ego of their undead rulers; those who escape refuse to make art that is representational, honoring the sacrifice of their brothers and sisters to the south. Instead, they focus on geometric patterns, mosaics, architecture, and other forms of decoration. These styles have really dressed up all the cities of Midian, and beyond. Scholars speculate that there may be foundational elements to inter-dimensional magics in the patterns; that some may possess the power to repel the undead.

Dervish. Mordish tribes with little or no control by undead tend to wander the edges of civilization. They go out in the desert for weird rituals, and they have an ecstatic tradition that gives them almost super-human combat ability. Little is known about these nomads; are they spies for the undead, or are they a kind of resistance force, or are they something else?

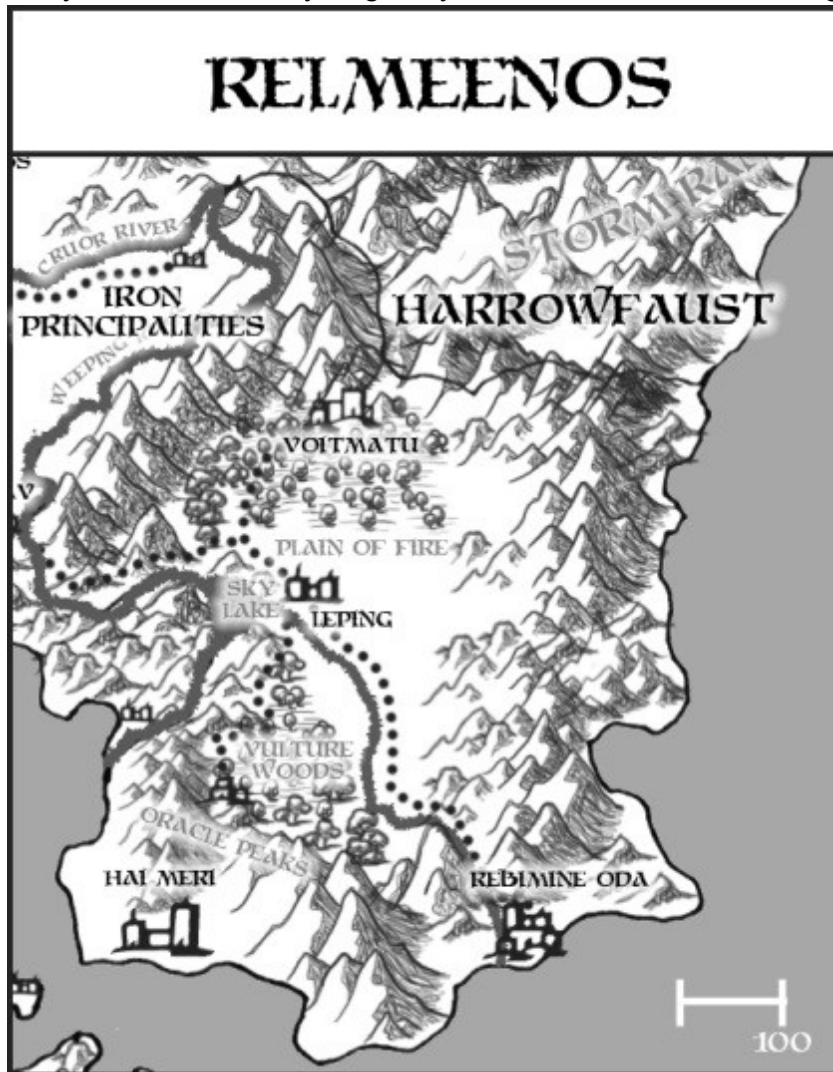
Scuttlers. Scholars piecing together the insane ravings of travelers returning from the depths of Mord-Stavian, and accounts of more mentally balanced scouts that survive, speak of scuttlers. These creatures seem to be blends of human and insect heritage, uniquely adapted for desert or jungle. They do not seem to answer to the Hundred Death Gods or to humanity, but they pursue their own inscrutable purposes, casually lethal as if they see no value in life. Scholars suspect that conflict with these scuttlers helps prevent the undead from building up another wave of invaders.

Guild of the Frayed Noose. An order of spies and assassins, their signature weapon is the kurki knife. They deal death as a meditation and an offering, and they only work for necromancers. They are based in Alexandrotta.

RELMEENOS

BASIC DESCRIPTION

They are the best at everything. They alone save the world from being overrun by monsters, they provide



the greatest thought and music, they produce the finest goods, and they have the most elite warrior traditions. They like fighting and they like sex. Hemmed in by mountains, these independent city states live and die for their bragging rights. They can't get along, so travel is dangerous and rife with monsters and bandits—but that's how they like it, to emphasize the safety of the city and to inspire heroic adventure.

STYLISTIC FEEL

Not-Greece/Rome. The underlying motive for everything is to be the best—better than everyone else. The independent city states are so absorbed with each other that internal strife limits the damage Relmeenos can do to the rest of the world. Attitudes feel like high school or college rivalries—over sports teams, quality of education, enrollment numbers, and so on. Monsters created by the Lamenting Mother, a corrupt nature goddess trapped under the

Storm Range, rampage through the country. This has inspired a rich tradition of story, song, and heroics. Close contact with nature gods has inspired a tradition of demi-god heroes and villains to further embroider history and rivalries.

RULING STRUCTURE

Each of the cities is ruled by a Poet King or Queen, chosen by the gods and often insane; this ruler is a figure-head. A Senate of wealthy land-owners decide issues for the good of all.

STEREOTYPES

Relminosans are short and slim, olive skinned, with dark hair and dark eyes. They go bald early, but all are capable of growing fantastic beards. They like to wear togas and sandals everywhere, and put leaves in their hair when they are dressing up or celebrating.

They drink wine all the time, for every occasion; if you go to Relmeenos, you won't even find ale, beer, whiskey, or maybe even water. All they talk about is their heroes, their exploits, and their superiority; if you edit out the bragging, all they do is demand more wine.

They are all lecherous, keen for sex with each other (any gender, often in groups) and supernatural creatures. They do have remarkable ability for monster-killing and endless skillful rhetoric. They all have "crab bucket pride" in that if someone looks like they are about to succeed, all the others will pull that one down so they can feel good about themselves even if they don't succeed.

FAMOUS FOR:

Excellent wine in many varieties. Rarified philosophy. Tough skirmishing warriors and monster hunters. Curious symmetrical architecture. Gladiatorial combat: arena design, combatant management, drama, and combat skill.

MAJOR CITIES

Voitmatu. "Maze City" is the birthplace of rhetoric as a discipline, and the architectural distinctiveness of Relmeenos. The city is the seat of Asthaeton, God of Civilization. The city is built blocking the Stygian Passage, a series of interconnected passages leading (eventually) down to where the Lamenting Mother wails and births monsters. The city was built to support military and heroes who came here to slay monsters before they could escape out into the countryside, and that is still the city's main function. Over the millennia, both monsters and humans have shaped and refined areas of this vast underground maze, learning from one another the better to do each other in. Minotaurs use mathematical magic to control access to the deep maze, and heroes have learned to counter and use their hideous tricks the better to bring death into the darkness. This is reflected in the architecture above, and the mental training of their warriors. Their elite are the Purple Helm'd Brethren, an order of celibate fighters with intimidating focus and discipline.

Leping. "Battle City" is ironically distant from borders, near the center of the country. Here the most magnificent four arenas in the World Between draw huge crowds, distracting from oppressive taxes, widespread poverty, and military rule. A powerful consortium of scholars has also grown up here, to study monsters (living and dead) at closer quarters than is possible elsewhere. The city was founded by deserters from other armies that clashed repeatedly in the Plain of Fire to the east, built on strong drink and easy virtue. They are defiant about their past, and they compare their prowess to that of any army in the Iron Principalities and their learning to any philosopher academy in Relmeenos. They host the annual contest of athletics, poetry, and philosophical debate called Wrestling with the Self and the Divine.

Rebimine Oda. "Sail City" is the seat of Thanalia, Goddess of Sailing. This bustling port is brimming with the optimistic energy of its patron goddess, and it is a key destination for sea-going trade. The city's defenders are a wild order of skirmishing marines, all female, known as the Sisterhood of the Rending Spear. They believe that success in battle and in life stems from passion and emotion; their fighting and carousing skill are equally renowned.

Hai Meri. *See the Isles of Unparalleled Liberty for the description.*

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Lake Lands. A wedge of lands between Skylake and the bay is thick with monsters. They are kept in that area by the natural barriers of the rivers, for the most part, but they emerge from under the Storm Range and seek refuge here. Adventurers seek glory, sport, and prizes by hunting this dangerous area.

Forest Oracle. This tower deep behind the Vulture Woods, in the Oracle Peaks, is perched on a crack in the earth. An oracle to each of the three gods of Relmeenos (Asthaeton, Astariax, and Thanalia) sit on the Oracular Focus and intone the insights of the gods. This is a powerful influence on decisions made by the city states, and efforts to subvert the prophecies always end badly.

SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS

Cosmic Domestic Troubles. Asthaeton is married to Astariax. While she is worshiped in Relmeenos as an extension of Asthaeton, her worship is far more pronounced in the Iron Principalities. There she is linked to Hakhan, the Demon Lord of Slaughter. Astariax is into intrigue, cunning, cruelty, and commerce. She plays her men off each other, and Asthaeton withdraws into his logic and reason to cope. Meanwhile, Asthaeton could have a chance with Thanalia, if he wasn't so stiff about everything and if he was able to shrug off the insult to his pride and let Astariax go. (Relminosians love their convoluted love tales.)

Nearby Gods. The Gods of the Grapes are nymphs and satyrs that are supposed to be the results of the gods sexing up each other, demons, and mortals. Diluted cosmic power flows down into demi-gods, then flows from there into mortal bloodlines. Gifts of the Beast Gods tend to crop up in special more-than-human heroes, and more-than-beast monsters. The beast gods and proper gods of Relmeenos have made the fey unwelcome, and demons must be cautious here (because pretty much everyone resents what Hakhan and Astariax are up to.)

Order and Chaos. Asthaeton represents order from his Mountain of Law. Mother Lothak represents chaos from the primordial sea. Asthaeton represents human courage and civilization's might. Mother Lothak represents monsters, fear of the dark, and evil pacts. This is deeply ingrained in the Relminosian mindset.

RUINOUS SCAR

BASIC DESCRIPTION

This wasteland is rife with shrieking winds and howling monsters. Life is twisted and torn by the resonant energies of a Cosmic Event over seven thousand years ago. The Gods made war, and everything was shattered into the World Above, the World Below, and the World Between. The Hundred Death Gods have never stopped trying to force the Scar open to be a Wound once more, so all might die. People don't go here; if they do, they don't come back. The rare exception is changed forever by what they experience.

STYLISTIC FEEL

Not-Post Apocalyptic Asia. Beyond the edge of the map, "There Be Dragons." The disaster was more intense than nuclear fallout, and mutation of vast monsters is possible in the deadly depths of the territory. The Death Gods have reached up through the Scar, the Armies of the Lady have built cities to ring it in, the Father and Family were protected by the Beast Gods long enough to sacrifice themselves in sealing

it... the Scar has shaped many cultures in the World Between, and their sense of self and place. It remains profoundly toxic but alluring in its mystery.

RULING STRUCTURE

Chaos rules. No human civilization survives in the tainted rubble of shredded reality.

STEREOTYPES

Anyone who has been there is a mutant and/or is protected personally by a god or demon. Mounting a successful expedition to one of the Ring Cities cements your reputation as a legendary scholar/treasure-hunter, and after such an expedition, many retire after selling their lore in Midian.

FAMOUS FOR:

Clues about the first Armies of the Lady that came to the World Between, more undiluted lore and history. Pools of the blood of gods. Powerful monsters.

MAJOR CITIES

The Ring Cities. The first Army of the Lady came to the World Between, chased off the Death Muster, and built cities around the Ruinous Scar to contain its energies. They used magic or technology long-since lost, and they could live very near the Scar as they kept it shut. These five cities were destroyed by the undead, and the Beast Gods ushered the Father and Family avatars past them to seal the Scar for good. Somewhere out there, in the drifting tainted dust, half-buried by millennia of shifting sands, those cities still stand. They lure many adventurers to their deaths in the haunted nothingness. The cities were Tellminga, Elydirin, Vothuria, Kagalias, and Sherebae.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Deep Ward. Scholars and theologians have pieced together a working theory that the extensive construction under the Ring Cities formed a vast three-dimensional runic barrier that contained the energies of the Scar. In any case, there are incredible labyrinths and tunnels under the cities, and elsewhere in the Scar. They are full of ancient lore and twisted monstrosities now.

Heartswell. There is supposed to be a magically hidden spring in the Scar that contains the ever-welling heart blood of the Lion, who was slain on that spot by five of the Death Gods working together. Those who dip into those waters are cleansed of mutation and rendered immune to radiation, as long as they honor the Lion and provide it with new life in the world.

Tomb of the Seven Swords. Each sword was carried by a paladin of the Army of the Lady. They did not want their efforts to cease when they died, so the Lady herself blessed each of their swords when they were buried together. The swords can be found and carried in the world for the lifetime of one owner, then they magically return to the tomb to be found again. The last sword disappeared over 200 years ago, and some doubt the tomb even exists.

Zzorchville. Mutants worshipping Zzorch can often find their way to a certain underground settlement in the Ruinous Scar, where only mutants live. They experiment and oppress and breed and do all the things normal people do, just with different numbers of organs and limbs. Some theologians rant that this settlement is a magnet for demonic energy, and that the city will eventually erupt and invade.

SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS

Junox and Skaylex. Junox is thought to be an avatar of the rotting corpses of the gods slain in the Cosmic Event, squatting at the heart of the Scar. Skaylex is thought to be the horrific mushroom goddess, growing on him and pushing him around. Junox's goal seems to be continued squishiness, sloughing off oozes, slimes, and so on. Skaylex's goal seems to be to slay the world and grow an army of cosmic mushrooms on its corpse.

Supernatural Architecture. The Armies of the Lady knew tricks for making secret buildings, hiding doors, bending time and space around the shape of stone, and other weird spatial tricks. Any lore, portable or experiential, is wildly valuable to scholars back in safer lands.

The Hundred Death Gods. They got sealed out, that makes them very angry, and they still try to force undead energy up through the plug to keep their already-animate servants active. Some of the strangest, deadliest undead in the world roam these haunted wastes.

Armies of the Lady of the White Way. Two separate movements of armies from the World Above came out to the Scar and left traces behind. Ancient magic and technology remain in the wreckage. Their legend resonates, sometimes corrupted and sometimes as a last note of hope.

SCARABAE

BASIC DESCRIPTION

There is a dream-like quality to Scarabae. Fey-touched nobles serve the Church of the Lady, and rule from manors overlooking the enchanted woods. Wicked aristocrats and spellcasters lurk in the shadows, striking at the Church and its followers. Vows bind nobles beyond death in protecting their lands. In Scarabae, nothing is as it seems, and making assumptions (especially assumptions that allow violence) is always the wrong move.

STYLISTIC FEEL

Not-France. This nation is carefully balanced between four powerful neighbors. The ruling class developed a gender-neutral knighthood founded in an ideal of respect, with balancing ties to the fey and to the Church of the Lady. Concerns of history, diplomacy, and supernatural pacts require Scarabeans to be diplomats to manage competing demands. Ability to use violence is necessary to gain traction at the bargaining table, but it is never the first choice. No culture here is dominant enough to be dismissive of the others, and the past is very present.

RULING STRUCTURE

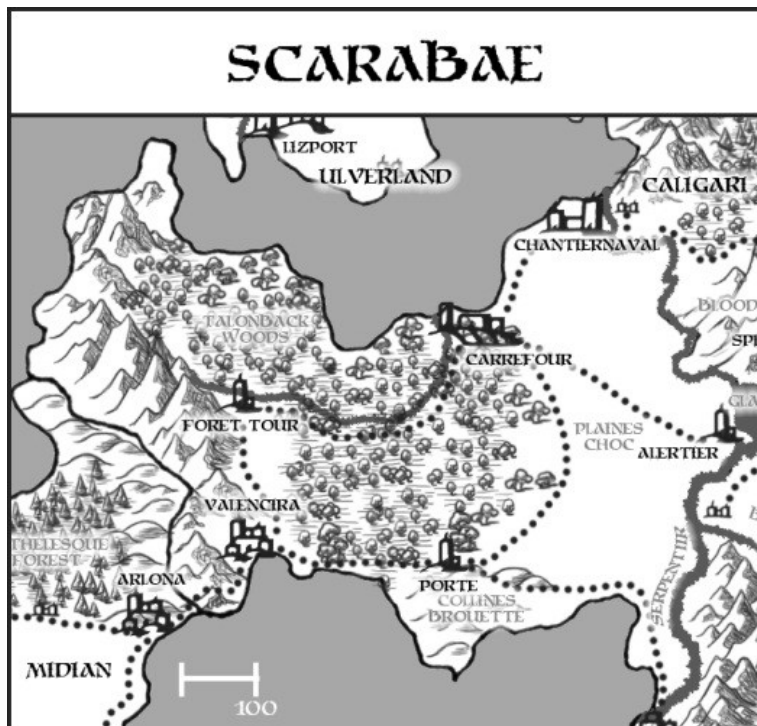
The Sun King or Sun Queen (currently Liza VI) rules a feudal network. The ruler is usually one who has quested for the Grail, found it, and returned it to the Lady by dropping it into the pool in the King's Cathedral in Foret Tour. Only nobility may make pacts involving their lands, so all legal agreements go through the ruler at whatever level is appropriate. This is a cautious result of millennia of tricky bargains.

STEREOTYPES

Scarabaens are tall, with straw-blond hair, big noses, weak chins, and blue or green eyes. They are wishy-washy, their promises full of caveats and wiggle words, but they are true to the letter of what they promised. They have an unnerving inability to be exclusively loyal, always entertaining other offers. They would rather read and sing than fight and rut. They take themselves and their honor and the honor of their families too seriously, but they are difficult to provoke. Once roused, they have an uncanny focus on punishing the offender, after which they tend to let grudges go. They tend to have a neutral or positive relationship with the dead and undead from their country, every old house has an ancestor or two floating around.

FAMOUS FOR:

Trade with the fey, quality broadswords and chain mail, romantic ballads and poetry, diplomacy, elite warriors, fine wine, heavy fabric and tapestries.



MAJOR CITIES

Carrefour. The capitol and trade center of Scarabae. The Sun Queen rules from this city, and it is famed for its diversity of architecture, its hundreds of museums, and its variety of foods.

Chantiernaual. This port is the center of Scarabae's naval strength. The shipyards produce vessels that ward away Frostreave raiders, and sail all the way around Midian to the Sea of Sothak for trade in the south.

Foret Tour. The Forest Gate is an ancient city, full of illusions and cryptic mysteries layered upon one another. It is the spiritual center of Scarabae. Legend has it that you can contact any otherworldly creature from someplace in Foret Tour.

Valencira. The Two-Faced City is known for being fortified to either protect against Midian or protect Midian from eastward threats. This city has many fine schools for diplomats, and it is as far out of Midian as many nobles there are willing to send their children. Valencira is the center of Scarabae's military tradition, from personal combat to army movements and command to naval engagements.

Porte. The Southern Shield is a fortress settlement designed to keep undead corralled to the south, suppress aggression from the west, stop raiders from the coast, and check demonic warbands from the Iron Principalities.

Alertier. This port on the western edge of Glasslake is the center of espionage between Scarabae and the rest of the World Between. Intrigues abound, diplomacy happens under the table, and there is the occasional stabbing. It is also a major trade city, getting goods from Midian and Scarabae to markets eastward.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Talonback Woods. These woods are the heart of Scarabae's supernatural allegiance. Here, the fey enforce their claims as promised by the Maron family of Foret Tour, centuries ago. Here, the demonologists, wizards, and witches of the Crimson League based in Carrefour unleash their monstrous summonings and smuggle demons and their masters (or slaves) from Caligari and the Iron Principalities. Here, the knights questing for the Grail seek adventure and clarity. The forest is deep and rugged, littered with shrines to the Lady, tiny villages, fairy circles, and dark altars. The Veil is thin here, allowing many supernatural energies to ebb and flow over the centuries. Were any one faction to gain supremacy here, the character of the whole nation would shift.

Collines Brouette. These rugged hills to the south are the traditional resting place for kings and war leaders of Scarabae, including warriors from the World Above. The practice of raising barrows ended in 5,710 when the Warmaster of Dust and his necromancers landed in the barrow hills and raised the Slain Kings. The bolstered army nearly enslaved all of Scarabae with the local honored dead leading a vast army of remains. When the army reached Carrefour, King Louis the Holy confronted the army. In a stirring passionate speech to the barrowdead, he reminded them of their allegiance, their oaths, and their honor. The Scarabian dead turned on the Warmaster of Dust. After the battle those that remained returned to their barrows in a ghostly tide. Now they defend the hills from other dead that seek to enter Scarabae from the south. Still, they are not happy or restful, and any adventurous warm-blooded soul venturing deep into the hills for an overnight stay is unlikely to return.

Plaines Choc. The "Clashing Plains" in eastern Scarabae are fertile for farming, and often serve as battlefields with Caligari or the Iron Principalities. Food grown on these plains helps feed Scarabae's neighbors; one of the greatest deterrents Scarabae has against war is to threaten to cut off the food supply. Any farmer who has been on the land for generations is able to recite the various significant military clashes that happened on fields he works.

SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS

Legend of the Wounded King. The Ulverland, Lady, and fey traditions all have variations on the legend of the Wounded King. The Sun King was wounded by evil, and could not recover without drinking from the divinely infused cup. So the knights sought the cup. Nobles who are confused or in emotional pain sometimes take leave of their responsibilities to seek the Grail. The few who find it can take it to the King's Cathedral in Foret Tour and drop it in the Well, where it heals all present; that rare individual is likely to be the next ruler. For most who survive, the quest teaches them something about themselves and their dilemmas, and brings a measure of peace. Those on the quest join the Solemn Order of Questing Knights for the duration of their quest, and then are released.

Ulverland Influence. Ulverland occupied Scarabae from 3,950 to 4,440. In that time, the traditions of the Father and Family religion were somewhat entrenched. Scarabae won its freedom by allying both with the fey of the Shae Isle and with the Church in Midian, both elements driving the invader out (and resulting in mixed loyalty.) Even now, Scarabae must maintain good relations with Ulverland to neutralize a neighboring threat, and to cooperate against Frostreave attacks on both their coastlines.

Midian Influence. Midian only has one border on land shared with a neighbor. They cannot understand why Scarabae is not slavishly loyal to the Church of the Lady and rejects all lesser alliances and beliefs. That is tiresome and frustrating for those in Scarabae. However, a strong cultural element is profoundly connected to the Lady of the White Way, and to the Church. Because of that, Midian and Scarabae will always have a common ground and they will be able to fight for common cause, even if egos and policies over the centuries cause their political interests to drift apart. In 5,212 the “Traitor Knights” of Scarabae rebelled against Midian’s rule, over taxation and theology and other issues. They rebuilt diplomatic relations quickly once they had independence. Scarabae needs Midian’s promise of military support to maintain other diplomatic relations, and Midian needs the food grown on Scarabae’s fertile plain to survive.

World Below Influence—the Scarlet League. During the Third Crusade, the righteous army from the World Above marched east. When they reached Scarabae, there were many tense situations where the forces of the Lady of the White Way decided whether or not Scarabae was still faithful (considering the pacts with fey and Ulverland occupation.) During this process, many powerful and influential people were executed, trying to make Scarabae’s nobility fall in line with Midian and the Church. A number of independent nobles, and some that were actually evil, banded together and formed a secret society called the Scarlet League. These free thinkers resist the church at every turn, working to minimize its influence among the influential of Scarabae, resenting the iron inflexibility of their neighbors to the southwest and the Church of the Lady. Targeted by inquisitions, rejected by those who define honor by the standards of the Church, these subversives have worked for centuries to turn Scarabae away from being a Land of the Lady. They harbor wizards, witches, anarchists (as long as the anarchists agree nobles should rule), rogue scholars, and all sorts of white collar heretics.

Fey Influence. During the Age of Compacts, the city of Foret Tour was ruled by the Maron family. The Maron Duke made a compact with the eldritch forces of the Seelie Court, giving them the Talonback Woods as a sphere of influence if they would help drive the Ulverlanders from Scarabae. Over the next decade, the necessary stones, lines, and circles were placed and enchanted. The resistance to Ulverland rule strengthened in the forest. With glamered stealth, the rebellion took Carrefour and Chantiernal, driving Ulverland’s forces back across the Moon Sea and forcing those trapped in Scarabae to flee into Caligari. Since then, the fey presence in the Talonback Woods has flavored the politics, culture, religion, and history of Scarabae.

Damsel of the Lady. This highly controversial tradition involves a girl born with bright red hair and remarkable mystical talent. No test can confirm whether her gifts are genuinely from the Lady of the White Way, or some eldritch fey trick. These women are revered as avatars of the Lady of the White Way by everyone but skeptics. They have tremendous powers, and often help knights who search for the Grail.

Knightly Orders. The Knights of the White Raven are based in Foret Tour. They were founded by the Army of the Lady on its way to fight the Third Crusade. Their purpose was to find all those who were pacted with demons or serving the World Below and put them to the sword. Some now suggest they have lost their way. The Knights of the Golden Rays were founded only a century ago, bound to the will of the monarch of Scarabae as an elite force loyal only to the ruler. They are not yet taken very seriously, as they tend to express their fervent patriotism while tipsy at all hours of the day and night. Some suggest they are trying *not* to be taken seriously, so they can do their real work more freely.

Thrice-Damned Brotherhood. A monastery deep in the Talonback Woods at the edge of the mountains has a secretive order of monks. If a person suffers from three curses simultaneously, they are rumored to be able to break the curses if the person will join their order, now immune to curse-work. They travel widely, protecting the world from danger by finding cursed items to seal in the mountain fortress.

SCAVENGER LANDS

BASIC DESCRIPTION

Three cultures coexist in the Scavenger Lands. Decadent civilizations live in ancient cities that have evolved their own religions and cultures in relative isolation. Nomadic barbarian tribes wander the wasteland between oasis points of life-giving resources. Evil forces shelter and plot far away from interference. Always in the background, winds loaded with mystic radiation scour the badlands bringing death and change in their wake. These lands belong to the survivors—survival requires them to be ruthless. These are the lands between the Ruinous Scar and the civilized world, and they bear some traits of each. The wandering Vistani are the thread that holds the cultures of the Scavenger Lands together and connects them to the World Between.

STYLISTIC FEEL

Not-Post Apocalyptic India/Near East. Very swords-and-sandals. A deadly desert, strange monsters and evil wizards, decadent civilizations, gypsy rovers and caravans, tribes and clans at various levels of degeneration, wasteland beasts and mutants. Also eastern flavor for silks, architecture, fantastic tales, and unique monsters.

RULING STRUCTURE

Each settlement has its own ruling structure. In general, barbarian tribes have a chieftain and a shaman to manage the tribe and balance each other. Then blooded warriors have a say, then those who have proven helpful (with crafts, or as allies, etc.) Other kinds of rule tend to be ad-hoc.

STEREOTYPES

Anybody from the Scavenger Lands is either a weird degenerate city-dweller, or a rock-hard killer from the wasteland, or a slave of evil. The only other people who travel out there are the Vistani, and they think they can go anywhere. The tantalizing bits of lore and artifacts of past times out there from the Armies of the Lady and such go to show how awesome they were before they were lost.

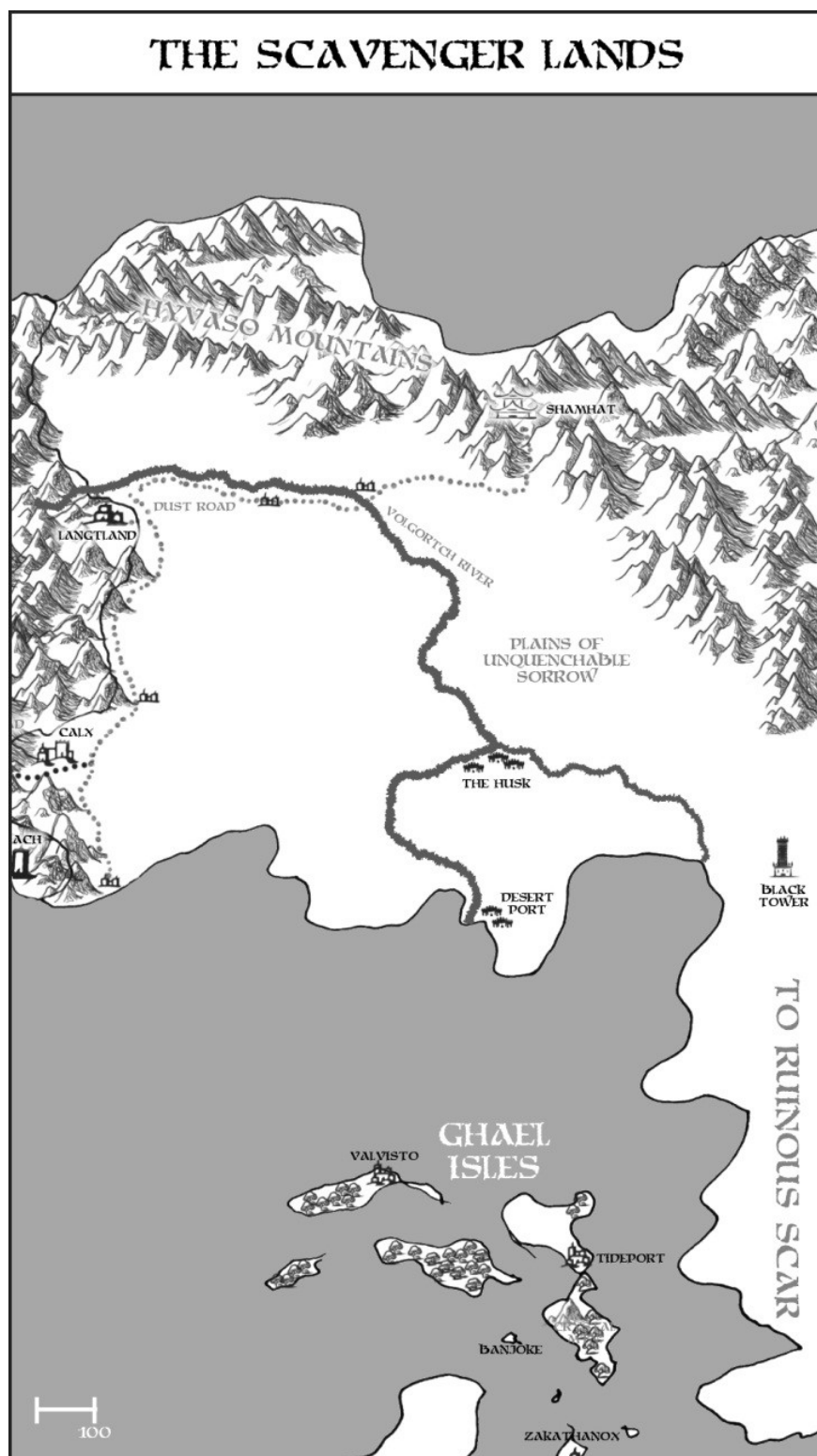
FAMOUS FOR:

Unique spices. Best, hardest mercenaries you can scare your foes with. Genuine artifacts thousands of years old. Powerful mutations and mutagens. Genuine true Vistani survive out there. Cool monsters and beastmen to use as guards or gladiators. Silk. Strange weaving patterns for clothes and carpets. Genuine barbarian goods for decoration or study.

MAJOR CITIES

Shamhat. Hidden up in the chilly mountains, this fortress city is dedicated to honing the mind and body with supernatural focus. Martial arts and meditation are key studies developed by a priest caste trying to combat the effects of mystic radiation. The city is a riddle and a mystery, absorbed in Eastern mysticism that has penetrated into the nature of knowing itself enough to make a western mind uncomfortable. If attacked, a combination of monsters and martial artist monks tends to discourage continued assault—as does the cadre of stone giants that live in the mountains, allied to the secret city.

Calx. This trading city is on the other side of the Deep Passage from Harrowfaust. Travel from the World Between and the Scavenger Lands mostly goes through the pass. The city allows a gentler transition, and a relatively safe place for each world to study the other.



Solumach. Once this city surveyed a broad, fertile coastline. During the Deathfleet assault, a 500 mile across storm stripped the land away and made the mountain city a port. The pass to reach it is open about 3 months a year, it is narrow and dangerous. Solumach is generally independent, but it rules its local interests with an iron fist.

Langtland. An improbable city of Frostreave, on the east side of the mountains. The wanderlust presses the Northron out over land as well as sea, and this is their trading post with the Scavenger Lands. It was founded by a banished prince, and the Volgortch River is named for him. Filled with violent Northrons, this is one of the safest places for outsiders to visit in the Scavenger Lands. They focus on the honor and venerable tradition of the noble caste.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Dust Road. This trade route is anchored in Calx and Shamhat. A leg goes south to Solumach. The road also curves past Langtland. Most trade in the Scavenger Lands moves along the Dust Road, so named for the poisonous radioactive dust that hisses endlessly across the lands.

Desertport. This ruin was a major city, far inland, before the massive storm that stripped thousands of miles of land from the coast during the Deathfleet Invasion. Now it is at the edge of the water, but it is not a port. This city was claimed by the handful of survivors from the Deathfleet Invasion, and they have never been dislodged from the ruins. Still, people mount expeditions to go there to harvest pre-Deathfleet lore and artifacts from the corpse of the city once known as Mindausaan.

The Husk. This city at the meeting of the rivers always had a tumultuous history of battle. It was the first great resistance where the rearguard met the Death Muster to buy others time to flee, before history began. It was traditionally a critical strategic point for the Armies of the Lady. It was annihilated during the Father and Family avatar march to the Ruinous Scar, and never rebuilt. When the dragons awoke, they claimed it as their tomb city, and no one argues with them. A great family of blue dragons rules all they care to rule from the shattered remains of a once-great city once known as Valdaaghur.

The Black Tower. It has no name, and people do not wish to speak of it. According to legend, the Black Warlocks are based from the Tower. It stands alone, impossibly tall on an impossibly vast desert known as the Plains of Unquenchable Sorrow. Some scholars speculate that the Black Warlocks are somehow priesthood of the Army of the Lady that were turned to the Hundred Death Gods, and that they persist in their betrayal waiting for the time to act. No one knows for sure, but the Black Warlocks go masked and enigmatic, chilling those that encounter them. The Black Warlocks tend to raise orc armies for their protection and to raid for their own inscrutable purposes.

Undercities. The foundations of cities built long ago when the land was clean still remain under the tainted sands. Many of these are occupied by cults, monsters, tribes of beastmen, and other unpleasantness. Within, there are treasures to be found.

SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS

The Ruinous Scar. The Cosmic Event 7,000 years ago created the world. Radiation from the “point of impact” still blows around the Scavenger Lands. As long as that is true, this will always be a tainted desert that is incapable of supporting large-scale settlement.

Sealing the Scar. The Father and Family pantheon sent avatars striding across the world to seal the Scar so the Hundred Death Gods could not get more avatars and power into the World Between. The Beast Gods guided them and sacrificed themselves along the way so their mission could be completed. The avatars sealed the Scar, so they can never rise as avatars in the World Between again. The Beast Gods also cannot rise as avatars, but they are still worshiped by barbarian tribes: the Hawk, the Badger, and the Lion are the biggest gods.

Narlathia. This goddess of the fey, of spiders and cruelty and pain, has a massive undercity settled by spidery types. From time to time, drow are escorted by spider mutants up to the surface, where they preach Narlathia’s words and invite converts to join them in the safety of the underground.

Rampant Mutation. All kinds of weirdness roams the plains and the dark under the surface. Beastmen are the tamest examples. Dragons prowl the waste, mostly immune to the radiation (though a few mutant dragons have been spectacular.)

Worship What is Bigger. Some human tribes and clans worship dragons. Others worship Narlathia. Others worship Beast Gods. The ancient cities tend to generate dozens of deities to worship, for some places believe that powerful and famous humans ascend to godhood upon death. The staggering variety does not clearly reflect faith traditions from the World Between, except a few demon cults and Narlathia.

SHAE ISLE

BASIC DESCRIPTION

This magical island has deep ties with supernatural creatures, so it has never been conquered by outsiders. The land is both profoundly primal and otherworldly, thick with nature spirits and the eldritch fey. The people of this island embrace its powers, rather than struggling to dominate them or destroy them. While this alliance makes a potent national defense, it also seems to make the people alien to their own kind.

STYLISTIC FEEL

Not-Ireland. The power of story and the power of fate are tied together; changing the story of a thing may change the thing itself. Reality is flexible under the influence of powerful supernatural forces. The island is riddled with portals to the fey realm of the Ardenwald, the Dreamlands, the Wailing Labyrinth of restless dead, and other places that are neither the World Above or the World Below. The land is impossibly green and vibrant with life. To enter the island is to enter a story, and anything can happen.

RULING STRUCTURE

The Chief of Clan Glasslin rules from Glasslin City. This appears to be the equivalent of a king, but in truth, the clan was given the heavy responsibility of managing relations with outsiders. They are admired for doing this job well, but they are not the human rulers of the isle. Each of the 14 clans has their own chieftain and druid hierophant. Few indeed are the leaders who would suggest humans are the rulers of the Shae Isle; they consider themselves more tenants who are tolerated by the island's masters.

STEREOTYPES

Shaelin have red hair, pale skin, green eyes, and freckles. They are slender and stealthy, with beautiful singing voices (because their lives sometimes depend on it when they confront the supernatural seeking amusement.) They have rude tools and shabby houses, their only real city is more of a town, and they are backwards superstitious rural folk. They rely on weird fairies deals and woodland spirits instead of human ingenuity and tools. They can curse you if they want to, because they're not fully human. Most of them don't realize there's a world outside their little island, and wouldn't care if they did.

FAMOUS FOR:

Amazing alcohol called "moonshine," henna and tattoo traditions, shamen with fey lore, pagan expertise.

MAJOR CITY

Glasslin. Ruled by the Clan Glasslin, this large town is the focal point of dealing with the world beyond the island. It has walls, and a large market, a shipyard, and services to handle trade and visitors. Beyond that, there are villages and small fortresses...

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The Verdant Tower. This tower atop Thorn Mountain seldom roams. Those seeking audience with the eladrian have a good chance of finding them there, if the fey warriors allow it. They also impart fey

abilities to some, for their own strange reasons. Both the Seelie and Unseelie courts have representatives in the tower. While the outside of the tower is in the real world, the inside is in the Ardenwald.



SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS

Pagan Gods. No speculation is necessary about whether these gods exist or affect humanity. On certain nights you can see them. The Forest Who Walks, the Lamenting Mother, and the Crooked Moon are the greatest of these gods. Druids manage the worship and maintain the tradition. The gods must be honored through life and through death, with blood sex magic and time-honored ritual. These gods are not human and do not think as humans do, they are unfathomable. These gods have survived since the Cosmic Event, the Death Muster and its energies did not flow this far to poison the land. Maybe this is what the whole world could have been like. Here, primordial energies endure. Their surging energies create forms of life in the woods that allow it to defend itself, and sometimes druids can borrow those powers.

The Fey. Forces from the Ardenwald hold court in the wilds of the Shae Isle. The Seelie Court and Unseelie Court both have elements that meet in the World Between. Their agents, the eladrian, have eldritch towers that roam the Shae Isle, and into Scarabae and sometimes Ulverland. No one really knows what they want. They make deals with mortals, from time to time. The bargains are not clearly fair or unfair; clever humans always get the sense they don't have the whole picture. The fey give gifts, strange gifts that bring sorrow and joy but affect the humanity of all who touch them. Sometimes, they take people—but why? Time moves differently in the Ardenwald, and the fey can copy people (or possess them.) Those who study the fey for any length of time risk madness. Some conclude this is all a game to them, a game with inscrutable rules that may not be possible to win or lose.

The Witches. Some desperate and power-hungry people go to pagan gods or to forces of the World Below and beg for supernatural might and assistance. They are given familiars, conduits for supernatural energies and abilities. Now slaves to the entity that empowers them, they act individually or in groups to pursue the will of their alien master. Even so, witches in contact with proper demons are rare in the Isle, and they are often hunted and killed by the other supernatural forces here. This is the least demon-haunted corner of the World Between.

ULVERLAND

BASIC DESCRIPTION

This grim, misty island is the shadow of a former empire. The gods of Ulverland, known as the Father and Family, grant powers to holy warriors who are ferocious in their defense of the Motherland. Ulverland balances a tradition of crazed warriors with a tradition as the center of elegant magical

instruction in the World Between. Their greatest influence on the world now is through their formidable navy and through the reputation of Orxham Academy of Mystical Arts.

STYLISTIC FEEL

Not-England. In the mists of early history, Ulverland conquered most of the World Between. They left religion, architecture, ideas, and people behind when they withdrew. Their current isolation is in part caused by sulking in the wake of successful revolutions thousands of years ago, magnified by a stoic culture and a focus on domestic issues. There are misty moors, ruthless gods who are very present with their followers, bustling port cities, and a press of history that hardly leaves room to breathe.

RULING STRUCTURE

The Glorious King rules (currently Barthon I) with the Council of High Wizardry. The Council is made up of a representative of each of the four colleges of magic at Orxham Academy. Sometimes representatives from the Father and Family in Stormholt will consult with the king, or the king will seek them out, for the religious perspective. This relationship is important, but not formal. There are six dukes that answer to the king, and a feudal structure below them. The dukes are more powerful than the king, as a group, but the king balances them with the wizards.

STEREOTYPES

Ulverlanders are tall and solidly built. Most look like Northrons, others look Caligarian. Their smiles are ironic, wry, sour, or grim, but seldom pleasant. Their sense of humor is dark and morbid, or focused on embarrassing situations, and even then they usually only allow a sardonic chuckle. None of them are really happy; at best, they take a determined satisfaction in their successes. They seem most alive and at ease when everything is going wrong. They are so besotted with the Father and Family pantheon that they refuse to make deals with any other supernatural power. They don't expect protection from their gods or their government, they see their safety as their own concern. They think their nation and its ways are the best in the world, and every country that refused to stay conquered was giving up what is best in life. They like awful food; it reinforces their dark view of the world. They love mighty storms.

FAMOUS FOR:

Longbows and their expert military use, elite skirmishers, disciplined ship crews, tough ships, secret navigation techniques, the best and most diverse magical education in the world, illusionist spies, elemental war wizards, incredible libraries of collected lore, really bad food.

MAJOR CITIES

Lizport. The capitol and seat of the king, and the home base of a powerful navy and trade armada. Once Lizport ruled an empire that stretched almost all the way to the Storm Range mountains and the Sea of Sothak. Traders from here have interests all over the World Between and beyond. Lizport also houses the Great Library of the Gaunt Gent, a true wonder of the world.

Khendal. This port has thrived and defined itself through constant warfare with the raiders of Frostreave. Their naval clashes are legendary, and the coastal defenses devised by Khendal have been exported to countless coastal areas hit by Northrons. Khendal manages the reserved national pride of Ulverland, with museums and architecture hailing back to the Age of Storms, keeping their heritage alive.

Stormholt. The holy city of the Father and Family, the Storm Sovereign Pantheon. All Ulverlanders romanticize this city, on the rolling moors. Since Hulmora is the goddess personifying their island, they see her natural beauty here. The massive thunderstorms that rake the highlands are the work of Garm-Gorak, their bloody chief god. All the children of the gods have their niche in Stormholt. The married high priest and high priestess live in the Temple of Storms and are sometimes taken up in oracular ecstasy. This city is the home base for an army of holy warriors gifted with supernatural powers by the gods themselves.



NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Vengeance Point. Those crazed by rage or grief, or looking to become toughened warriors (or dead) travel to Vengeance Point. The weather there is so hostile that it seems impossible people could survive there given the minimal trappings of civilization in the settlement. This is where warriors go to strike at Frostreave, outside the permission of governments or the logistics and chain of command that hamper the revenge these warriors crave. The warrior culture only acknowledges kills in battle and survival. Risk is something to be sought, not avoided. To be blooded and acknowledged in Vengeance Point is to be a respected warrior in all Ulverland territories and culture—and also in Frostreave.

Orxham Academy of Mystical Arts. They are the Spring House (wizards), the Summer House (mages), the Autumn House (illusionists), and the Winter House (necromancers.)

Graduates of Orxham are highly sought after. The elemental war mages have proven battlefield prowess, the illusionists are some of the finest spies in the world, and the necromancers are considered the least distasteful of their kind. Tuition tends to be about 1,000 silver per semester, with 8 semesters to graduate (plus expenses.) There are many other schools and colleges attached to the Academy, but the magical schools are the most impressive.

SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS

Father and Family. The Storm Sovereign Pantheon was inherited from Frostreave, but the chief god adopted Ulverland and this is their religion now. Garm-Gorak, the Bloody Maw, is a god of winter, wolves, and war. He was awakened by the fighting on the island, and he adopted these people as he admired their pluck. He created a goddess out of Ulverland's bones, Hulmora, Queen of Elements. Together they had three sons: Charlak, Maham, and the Gaunt Gent. These gods have come to define Ulverland culture, and each creates holy warriors to defend the Motherland.

Merrihel. This death goddess rules Frostreave, and she is possibly the sometime lover of Garm-Gorak. Independent and murderous, she has a foothold in Ulverland; around 3,000 years ago raiders stopped hitting settlements with a shrine to Merrihel. She even found her way into the Sovereign Calendar. She is not really worshiped in Ulverland, but regard and respect for her ebb and flow. When times are good, Ulverlanders thank Hulmora for protecting them. When times are bad, they look to Merrihel to get them out of their difficulties.

Sluurge. The Demon Lord of Pestilence, Famine, and Gallows Humor has a presence as an underground cult in Ulverland. For those who give up completely, Sluurge offers uncanny food for the starving. Whether that starvation is from hunter, need for revenge, or utter depression, Sluurge offers dark substitutes to meet those needs without relying on the outside world or other people. Newly self-sufficient cultists of Sluurge may have a new lease on life, but they become destabilizing influences as they undermine the culture and safety of Ulverland.



STARTER EXAMPLE

Lydia is going to run a game of Fictive Hack in the World Between. She talks to her group about it, and they decide they want to play a loosely affiliated crew of criminals in Thronburg, Caligari. Their one free language will be Throptic.

Thumphouser (Bill's character)

Bill is in a hurry. He picks a Fighter template (can't go wrong) and puts all 5 of his points in Brawn. He notes the date the character was created, scribbles in the character age 18, for Description he puts "Big."

Motive, he shrugs and writes "Get a steady job." For that he gets 3 Awesome Points for the first session. Language, he gets the default, Throptic, and he is illiterate. He puts "Fighter" in for Template, and jots the inherent ability "Awesome Violence" down on the sheet. (Spend 1 Awesome Point to get +2 to hit.)

For a first talent, he takes "Combat Toughened" so he will get 3 Wounds to start instead of 1. He rolls 3d10 and gets 7—x10, so he gets 70 silver. He picks a heavy weapon (bastard sword, 1 load) and a shield (1/2 load), medium armor (1 load), and a backpack with standard stuff in it (1 load). That's 3.5 loads.

All done but a name! Bill grins and decides his fighter is named Thumphouser. His character is done, and will start with 3 Awesome Points.

THUMPHAUSER



Ril Kunyer (Howard's character)

Howard really isn't sure what he wants to play. There are 20 base templates, so he rolls 2d10. The first d10, if it rolls low it is a 0 and if it rolls high it is a 1. Then the second die is the "ones" column. He rolls 8 and 4, so 14. That's a noble.



He uses the quick-roll random traits. Rolling a 24, he turns out to be 28 years old, slim, 6'1. His wife died. He has a penetrating voice and a distinctive chin.

He uses the quick-roll distinctive gear. He rolls a 91. He has boots that were a gift from a child. They have an odd symbol on them. They are ancient, but in good condition. They are pink and white. Howard decides his noble is an exile from Setine, and these boots were very fashionable there before the city fell. They have a white rose intricately worked on the back of the heel, and he wears them to remember the family pride. He is not sure how he got them, but he can figure that out later. ("From a child...") For this he gets 1 Awesome Point when he starts.

With this in mind, Howard looks up at his description. He decides his wife died, on the road to Setine, where he was going to catch up. Her family received his son, and will care for him; Howard's noble doesn't have the money or inclination to go to Setine right now.

Howard randomizes a motive from the long list in the back, specific to Caligari. He rolls an 8, so his motive is revealing the conspiracy of demonic rule. (For that he gets 3 Awesome Points.)

He decides a dark secret could be fun. He rolls a 1d100/2, rolling 72 (so that's 36.) He has a debt, so he has to stay out of the way of a gangster. He has since changed his identity. Howard figures his character has not gone to Setine because his enemy is watching his child waiting for him to make contact. He gets 6 Awesome Points for his dark secret.

After looking the template over, Howard puts 1 in every attribute but Commitment. With the 1 in Awareness he gets a language, so he decides he'll take Throptic for free, and be literate with the Northron alphabet. He can carry 1 load. He has a total of 3 in Charm, Cunning, and Daring, 1 each. He remembers they are playing criminals, so he decides he can be their fence. He takes Contacts 2—Criminal, and Wealth 1. He has fallen on hard times.

For a starting talent, he figures he's a better fence if he takes "Appraise." He also writes "Blue Blood" and information on his sheet as the inherent ability. He notes that he gets a signet ring, diary, and pomander. He generates his starting money as 18 silver x100, so 1,800 silver.

For equipment, he takes a hand weapon, a rapier. He doesn't bother with armor or a shield. He decides his character has a dingy apartment in the city, but it has a secret room where he keeps his ill-gotten gains.

Howard uses an online name generator, and picks out "Ril Kunyer" as his name. He uses the same generator to pick a previous name (because of his dark secret.) He gets Kos Hyz as his debt-riddled former identity. His background gains him 10 Awesome Points for when the first session starts.

Caylix Nifflegrek (Sue's character)

Sue is excited about playing a thief, so she takes that template. Sue knows all about her character! Her name is Caylix Nifflegrek, she is 5'6 with bright red hair and green eyes, slightly built but with pixie-like good looks. She wears black all the time, and a red cloak that is reversible black. She was raised by a blind master thief who was killed by an assassin who was coming after her, and she doesn't know why but she has sworn to avenge her master, Guildmaster Hicks. Caylix likes long walks on the beach, smart guys, and defeating traps. Turn-offs include jailors, facial hair, and nervous tics. She dreams of one day stealing the Seajewel from the tallest tower in the city.



The DM is pleased and amused at her enthusiasm, and gives her 10 Awesome Points. Lydia tells her to fill in her description, make a note of her dark secret (hounded by assassin, vengeful), and note her adventuring goals of avenging her master and stealing the Seajewel. Sue also notes her inherent ability, "Greedy" on the sheet.

Sue wants Caylix to be alert, sneaky, and fearless. She puts 2 in Awareness, 2 in Cunning, and 2 in Daring—so she needs a penalty somewhere. She takes -1 to Commitment. She has 2 languages and 4 background points. She takes Throptic for free, with the Northron alphabet to be literate, and Tradespeak (also literate since she already has the Northron alphabet).

For her 4 background points, she takes 2 in Celebrity (she is a famous rogue in the city's criminal circles), and 2 in Contacts—Criminals.

For her first talent, she wants to be a great criminal already. Rather than zeroing in on any specific criminal skill, she wants the occupational talent. She takes “Criminal. Instinctively senses forces of law, shifty judge of character, knows fences and locks.” However, that means she’ll need another penalty or take a point off an attribute. She decides to take Commitment to -2.

For equipment, she takes her signature items, and also a shortbow with quiver of 20 arrows (1 load) and light armor. She gets 3d10 silver, and rolls 10, so she spends that to buy a dagger too.

Sorsha Ascendant (Elsie’s Character)

Elsie only plays wizards. After pondering the spellcasting selections, she picks the Illusionist (as they are most popular in Caligari.) She writes the inherent ability, “Shadow Touch” and what it does on her sheet. She also picks the starting talent, “Shadows of Orxham” so she has access to 10 spells for the very first adventure. She prints out the Illusionist template on one side, and the Shadows of Orxham grimore on the other, keeping that reference sheet with her character sheet.

Spellcasters must be educated and alert, so she takes 3 in Awareness and puts the other 2 in Cunning. For languages, she gets Throptic for free and she is required to take Vermillion Scrawl. She takes Northron, to be literate, and Ulvish (since she studied in Ulverland at Orxham Academy.)

SORSCHA ASCENDANT



She gets 2 background points. She doesn’t just want to know her grimore, she wants a copy of the book. She puts both points in “Possessions” so she is known in the supernatural market, and she can find or fence things others can’t. For 1 possession, she takes the Shadows of Orxham grimore. For her other possession, she takes a ring of Protection, reducing all incoming attacks by 1 Wound.

She starts with a reach weapon, a wizard staff. She disdains armor and a pack (plus she has no Brawn, so even 1 load is too much.) Her signature items are a crystal sphere, silk blindfold, and rings (so you can’t tell which one is magical.) She starts with 22 x50 silver, 1,100. That is too much for her to carry, so she decides she has a loft in the seedy part of town where she throws parties now and then.

Elsie wants to start with some Awesome Points, so she digs into background possibilities. She imagines her character as a pretty blonde with a fairly revealing black robe and a rune-carved staff with a crystal on top gripped in a dragon claw. She is 24. (Elsie doesn’t want to roll on the quick-roll random traits.) She does roll on the Distinctive Gear quick-roll table, and she rolls 54. She has a baldric with inset gems and a holy symbol that saved her life once. It is purple and magenta. Elsie decides it was a gift from a high-ranking priest of Charlak, and it has the symbol of Charlak on it, and without his patronage she would have been flunked out of Orxham. She wears it to remember him and to stay grateful for how things turned out. That’s 1 Awesome Point.

She rolls 1d100/2 for a dark secret, rolling a 34 (halved is 17.) She was once a willing spy for the inquisition, but she turned in an innocent person. Elsie figures that must have been in her early days in Caligari, when she was still stunned that the Church of the Lady had a presence in this secular, hedonistic place. The DM can work out the details later. That’s 6 Awesome Points.

She rolls for an adventuring motive, choosing Criminal Mind. She rolls a 4, so she wants to show she can live well without hurting anyone. Elsie figures she’s driven to overcompensate on that point after hurting someone quite badly by ratting them out falsely to the inquisition... That’s 3 Awesome Points, total 10.

She names her character Sorsha Ascendant, just for fun.

Devlin Starhallas (Joshua's character)

With DM permission, Joshua is going to make a half-demon duelist.

He writes the inherent ability for Duelist ("Ha HA!") so he can add an attribute to rolls to hit when using paired dueling blades. As a half demon, he adds "Awesome Loan." He can borrow up to 1 Awesome Point per demon talent he has.

Since he has 2 starting templates, he will not get any talents until level 3. He will also spend 15 Awesome Points to level instead of 12. Joshua can access any Duelist talents for 3 Awesome Points each use, but no Half-Demon talents can be used untrained. However, Half-Demons can lose 2 starting attribute points to take a demon talent, and take 2 points of "demon sign" to take a demon talent. The DM allows it, so he drops to 3 attribute points.

DEVLIN STARHALLAS



Joshua takes Demon Strength, gaining +2 to Brawn and +1 Wound in hand to hand. Then he takes Hellish Speed, allowing him to move twice or move and attack as one action.

He must take 2 Demonsign to pay for one talent, so he takes Needless—Food and Needless—Sleep.

For a dark secret, he takes Inhuman—Demon for an easy 6 Awesome Points. He looks over the adventuring motives, and chooses one; his parents are desperate for him to get into the aristocracy. Another 3 Awesome Points. For distinctive gear, he chooses a scabbard from his teacher made of unusual leather (demon skin) that is valuable with fine workmanship, red and black. 1 Awesome Point. Total 10.

He has 3 attribute points left. He gives himself -2 Charm and -2 Commitment, so he has 7 points. He puts 6 in Awareness and 1 in Brawn. For languages, he gets Throptic for free, and takes Northron alphabet so he is literate. He takes Harrovian and the Cyronic alphabet, so he can read and write that too. He is proficient playing the harp. He takes the Draxive alphabet, and Baroque Logos, as an educated man. He will also use Awareness to assist him when fencing, with his inherent ability.

Duelist gives him embroidered gloves, a medallion to a saint, and beautiful dueling blades, along with 3d10 silver x10. He rolls 3d10 and gets 15, x10 is 150 silver. He takes medium armor, 1 load.

He names his character Devlin Starhallas.

PLANNING THE STARTING SESSION

Having seen all the characters, Lydia plans the first session. She jots some notes about motives and dark secrets. (You can plan the first session without seeing the characters, but it is more fun to base the session around the characters playing in it.)

- Thumphauser (fighter) wants a steady job.
- Ril Kunyer (noble) wants to prove there is a demon conspiracy behind everything.

- Former identity has lots of debt, child in Setine.
- Caylix Nifflegrek (thief) wants to get revenge on the assassin that killed her mentor and steal the Seajewel.
 - Hounded by an assassin, not sure why.
- Sorsha Ascendant (illusionist) wants to prove she can win without hurting anyone.
 - Once worked for the inquisition, surviving victim out there somewhere.
- Devlin Starhallas (duelist, half-demon) wants into the aristocracy.
 - Inhuman blood, half demon.

This crew has two fighters, a fence, a thief, and an illusionist. Lydia thinks that over for a minute, then decides to randomize once for a character goal and once for a dark secret, to drive the first session. She rolls 1d5, because she has 5 characters. She gets a 2 and 4. So, there is a demon conspiracy that needs unmasking (Kunyer). Also, the victim of the inquisition may come into play somehow (Ascendant).

Lydia kicks her creativity into high gear. She knows she wants to do a party, a masked ball, so she plans that for a creaking ancient Great House in Thronberg. The event will be hosted by the enigmatic Lord Marswell, who some years back was interrogated by the Purifiers for purported traffic in orc pearls. (Don't ask.) (I'll totally tell you. Look at the orcs, the Dark Pearls.) Marswell is also somewhat crippled, having lost most use of one arm and leg and a few fingers from his time in interrogation.

Kunyer has heard some chatter that Marswell will take a fall for smuggling again, but he doesn't believe it (as he is passingly good friends with the reclusive noble.)

Kunyer wants to hire some people to assist in flushing the fiend who is trying to set up his friend. To that end, he hires some muscle, a thief, and an illusionist to blend in at the party and look for the contraband and anyone who might be framing Marswell.

This is a bit awkward as Sorsha framed him before, but she can decide whether it will help her conscience to clear him, or help her breathe easy to put him away again. Devlin and Thumphauser can be bodyguards, Caylix is responsible for finding the stash, and Sorsha is on call in case of needed subterfuge.

Lydia sketches out a bad guy; a merchant who has been trying to buy the Great House to get that old-school street cred as a noble. Marswell wouldn't sell, so the merchant (Herr Vontel Schneider) has a small chest of orc pearls that will be stashed under Marswell's throne by a couple orc bodyguards. It's not elaborate, but it should do the trick; Schneider is friends with Herr Kardan, a Purifier authorized to operate in Thronberg. Kardan should haul Marswell off, and Schneider should buy the Great House cheap.

This plot is simple and sketchy, but the players will doubtless provide the rest of the meat of the event by doing unexpected things.

To round out her adventure and make sure she has Gothic elements, Lydia rolls three times on the list of elements to see what inspiration that can offer. She gets a 4, a 12, and an 18.

Focus on terror or horror or both. Specters, ghosts, or phantasmal visions (remnants of the past that cannot be repressed.) The tenuousness of sanity, its vulnerability.

Lydia decides to play it cool and use these themes for window dressing this time out. The big party is inspired by rumors that Marswell's suicide wife Marguirete is haunting the house. People (especially Kardan) want to take a look for themselves, rubbernecking of the most morbid kind. A number of servants have quit recently, fueling the rumors.

Meanwhile, Marswell is mentally vulnerable; if it looks like the Purifier will haul him off again, he'll snap and go completely mad. He sweats around people, he's nervous, looking for traitors, and in his mind he's still smelling the damp stone and blood, his stomach a starving knot barely eased by bread crusts and drippings, hearing the screams of despair and madness in the darkness of prison. Kind of pathetic, he will lean on Kunyer for support. He does not suspect Sorsha at all.

Lydia goes online for a good mansion floorplan. <http://www.victorianstation.com/hpbrickblock.htm>

She notes who is there.

- 20 servants for the night: 10 serving, 5 coachmen/greeters, 4 cooks, and the butler (Atkins.)
 - Light refreshment and wine only. Dancing is the main entertainment.
 - The other entertainment is the séance scheduled for midnight in the sitting room; that's what the Purifier is here to oversee.
 - Madame Lorbetia is a Vistani seer of some renown here to do a séance for the suicide wife Margurite. Nothing will come of it.
- There will be about 10 groups invited to the party, on average 4 each; married couples, with adult children, possibly indispensable experts, sycophants, entertainers, and bodyguards.
- A nice string quartet provides the dancing music in the hall upstairs.

Lydia makes herself a safety net, noting the bad guy plans and some random events to add color and opportunity.

Bad Guy Plan

- Herr Vontel Schneader, fat wicked merchant, will hobnob with Herr Kardan, a Purifier, all evening.
- Vex and Talbot, two compact shiny black battleborn orcs in Schneader's hire, will take a chest with 5 illegal pearls each the size of 2 fists, and hide it under Marswell's throne-like chair.
 - In case it comes up, Schneader is paying them 20 silver each for the job.
- Vex and Talbot will subdue Willis and Schmidt, Marswell's bodyguards, and replace them. In costume, no one should be able to tell. Then when the Purifier finds the pearls, they can swear they were hired by Marswell. After they do their part they'll be quietly released.
 - The orcs wheeze faintly, unable to breathe quietly. That could help catch them.
 - They have 2 Wounds each, and will always spend Awesome Points to do more damage.
- Kardan drags Marswell off in chains.
- Schnaeder buys the house cheap.

Other Events

1. Lady Havalaan's lapdog gets a snout of something and tears around barking madly, must be caught and subdued. It gets +5 to get out of being impeded, and it will bite; if it hits, Daring 10 or let go.
2. Lord Reginald Gusippe catches his wife, Lady Fran, in a tryst upstairs with his nephew, Lord Harold Adler (who is the same age as the aged lord's young wife.) He tries to kill the young man.
3. Six young rakes set up a fencing competition in a side gallery, with heavy betting starting at 100 marks. Naked blades, so spend Awesome Points to avoid the one Wound (and lose gracefully.) Shots to the face are bad form. The ringleaders are Jared Farnell and Argo Schmidt, long-time fencing rivals.

4. Lady Harkswell, a kindly lady in her 60s, has had too much to drink. She has slipped her handlers, spindly and worried girls, and she's singing lustily. If she gets any reaction, she tries to climb on a table and add some dance moves.
5. Young Lord Van Teluris is enjoying a cigarette in the corner, brimming with ennui, loudly telling stories about his jaded adventures in spiritualism while studying at Vilvaht Seminary (across town.) He is desperate to shock people while seeming blasé. He will only shut up if the Purifier comes within earshot.

That is plenty of prep, and Lydia looks forward to getting together with her players to run a great game.

EXAMPLES OF LEVELING UP

In this example each of the five players from the generation example will get to 4th level.

Thumphouser (Bill's character)

Level 2. He hits first level (reaches 12 spent Awesome Points) trying to charm his way into a kitchen. He figures since his illiteracy hasn't come up, he'll take his attribute slot and use it to buy the Northron alphabet. Now he is literate. For a talent, he looks at the Master Talents (since he has a Brawn of 5.) He takes "Healthy" so he now has 5 Wounds and an immunity to normal sickness.

Level 3. He spends his last Awesome Points not dying from falling off a racing horse in a rainstorm. He really likes his tough Brawn, so he puts another point in it (raising it to 6). He also got a cool bastard sword, so he takes the Fighter talent "Weapon of Choice" so all his attack dice with the sword are "face dice."

Level 4. Surprised to find himself the spokesman of the party, Thumphouser takes +1 to Charm and the Master Talent "Heft." Now if he's scantily clad, he gets +3 Charm with those who like muscles. If he is trying to talk people out of violence, that rises to +5 (because of "Combat Toughened," his first talent.) He can also carry 7 loads!

Ril Kunyer (Howard's character)

Level 2. He wants to be even better at navigating the city's underworld, so when he levels in the first session he raises Contacts: Criminal from 2 to 3, with friends in higher (lower?) places. For a talent, he takes "Threaten."

Level 3. Impressed by how Caylix is using her occupational talent "Criminal" he takes it too, giving up both the attribute slot and the talent slot for it. Since that was part of his character concept to begin with, the DM figures that's fine.

Level 4. Having hobnobbed around at the university with most of his free time, and developed some skill in fencing things for the scholars there, Ril takes "Educated Poise." It is a restricted talent, but the DM agrees that Ril has been role playing a good way to learn it. He raises "Charm" by 1 also.

Caylix Nifflegrek (Sue's character)

Level 2. Sue thinks the "Tumbler" template is super-cool, so she takes "Juggling" as a talent. She has not had much training, but the DM lets her take the restricted talent because she is willing to spend 5

Awesome points that do not count towards leveling to get it. (The other players think she is hilarious, so she's got the points to spare.) She puts her attribute point in Daring to be a better juggler.

Level 3. Caylix was in a traveling carnival that was attacked by flying wolves, and she leveled as she fought them. She takes the Thief talent "Super Cunning" and puts an attribute point in Daring. She wanted to take another Tumbler talent, but she has to take at least ½ her talents from her base template.

Level 4. Caylix is going to leave her life of crime! She takes "Dodge" from the Tumbler template, and does not have to pay extra as she has a teacher and she's been working on it. Now she has 2 Tumbler talents, so she decides to switch to the Tumbler as her base template. She cannot use the Tumbler inherent ability (and she keeps the Thief inherent ability) but she can now learn Tumbler talents without extra instruction. She can use Tumbler talents untrained for 3 Awesome Points, but no longer use Thief talents untrained for 3 Awesome Points. She puts her attribute point in Daring, raising it to 5.

Sorsha Ascendant (Elsie's character)

Level 2. Elsie likes how fast she levels using untrained talents, so she plans to not buy her most used talents (so she can keep paying 3 Awesome Points every time she uses them.) Instead she focuses on her art, taking "Light Painting" from the Illusionist template, and she raises her Commitment (as it helps with Sensory Assault, something she's been using untrained a lot.)

Level 3. Elsie upgrades "Light Painting" so it is Arena instead of Rested. She raises her Cunning (to help with "Illusory Menace," something she's having way too much fun using untrained.)

Level 4. Elsie upgrades "Light Painting" so it is a move action. She puts another point in Cunning. Now 4th level, she has access to ten talents but she's only bought (and upgraded) one besides the grimore.

Devlin Starhallas (Joshua's character)

Level 2. He can't get a talent until level 3, unless he takes another demon talent. (Also, he has to spend 15 Awesome Points to level, not just 12.) He puts his attribute point in Awareness, as it helps his to-hit roll.

Level 3. He survives a battle with a pack of hellhounds to level. He immediately spends his attribute point on Awareness, maxing it out at +8. He gets to buy a talent also, and he picks "Armorflesh" so he counts as being in light armor (and that stacks with worn armor.)

Level 4. Involved in a plot ducking Purifiers who want to kill him for being a demon, he decides he needs more power. He upgrades "Armorflesh" to count as medium armor. He gives up his attribute point and takes a point of demonsign ("Needless: Haircuts") so he can also get Terrifying (to inflict 7 terror!)

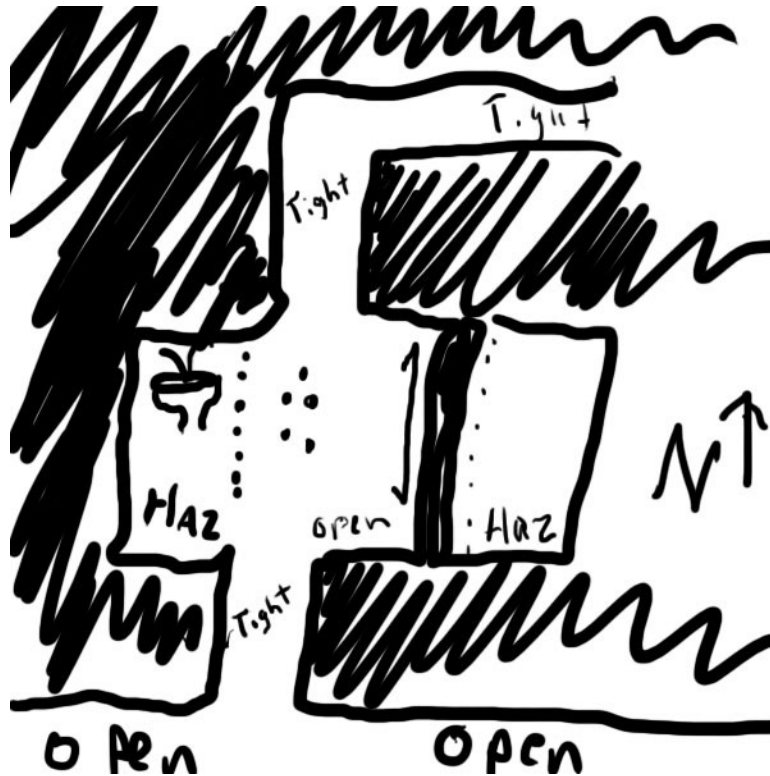
COMBAT EXAMPLE

Awesome Point Economy Update

There are 15 Awesome Points in the Bowl.

Name	Currently Has	Has Spent	Spend to Level	Total Received
Thumphouser	7	5	7	12
Ril	2	3	9	5
Caylix	4	1	11	5
Sorsha	9	6	6	15
Devlin	5	3	12 (needs 15)	8

This is not a table you'd track in game, because each player is responsible for tracking how many points the character has and how many have been spent towards leveling. The "total received" is to help us keep track as we go through the example.



Go Time!

The group of fourth level characters are walking down an alley towards where they expect to meet their contact, when they are attacked! The DM was in a hurry prepping for this session, so she grabbed the "Black Warlock's Entourage" from the "Warbands" section. The characters are trespassing too close to the Black Warlock's secrets, so he has decided to ambush and silence them.

First the DM sketches out the arenas so they can see where they are. Characters are the dots in the open in the middle of the map.

ROUND ONE

She tells them that four gaunt figures have stepped across the path ahead and the path behind, and the Black Warlock is visible on the roof to the east flanked by henchmen. The DM notes what the NPCs will do this round.

	NPC	PC
1 Defend/Protect	2 on roof	
2 Ranged		
3 Focus/Impede	Black Warlock	

4 Move/Push	Group of 4, Group of 4, Others	
5 Attack/Assist		
6 Focus Event		

The party is concerned by that “others” entry, and figures the Black Warlock is probably casting a spell. That’s a problem! They arrange their actions.

Thumphouser sees the groups of NPCs are moving, and figures they’re moving into melee range. Since they move before combat, he signs up for the combat phase. Ril wants to shoot his pistol at the Black Warlock, but since others are protecting the Warlock, it would probably be a wasted shot. He will shoot at people nearby.

Caylix figures she can be most helpful with a thrown weapon attack to clear some space down here, so she pulls out her knives for a range attack. Sorsha decides to climb up onto the roof where the Black Warlock is so she can use an illusion spell on him. Devlin will climb up with her to protect her.

	NPC	PC
1 Defend/Protect	2 on roof	
2 Ranged		Ril. Caylix.
3 Focus/Impede	Black Warlock	
4 Move/Push	Group of 4, Group of 4, Others	Sorsha. Devlin.
5 Attack/Assist		Thumphouser.
6 Focus Event		

First, the two gaunt figures move to protect the Black Warlock. Second, Ril and Caylix act. Since they don’t care who goes first, the DM calls on Ril, who fires his pistol at one of the approaching figures from the north.

Ril rolls 2d10 and gets a 4 and an 8, total 12. The DM notes that the Tough Undead target has medium armor, and with a 12, that takes -1 Wound from the 3 Wounds the pistol does. The undead also ignores 1 Wound, so it takes a total of 1 from the pistol shot.

Caylix is dismayed to see how little effect the gunshot had, but she squints and flings her knife anyway. She rolls 1d10 and adds her Daring of 5. She rolls a 6, total 11. She saw from Ril’s effort that the undead ignores 1 Wound, so even if she boosts the damage with Awesome Points she won’t get through that tough armor *and* the undead power. She marks the knife off her inventory.

The Black Warlock’s eerie chant echoes through the alley—spellcasting, as they suspected.

Devlin and Sorsha want to go before the NPCs, so they ask if they can roll initiative as a single unit against the NPC initiative as a single unit. The DM shrugs, sure. The characters roll 4, the NPCs roll 9.

So 4 from the north and 4 from the south move into the middle open arena, and a number of remains shuffle into view to the south. Not good!

Devlin wants to climb up to the roof. It is a single story, so the DM figures a Daring difficulty 10. Devlin rolls a 1. No worries; he has 5 Awesome Points, and he spends them all to turn his stumble into a cool series of flips, adding +10 to the roll. He’s on the roof with no Awesome Points left...

Sorsha rolls an 8. She spends 1 Awesome Point to get to 10, and she's on the roof too (with a lot less drama.) She is impressed by Devlin's efforts, so she tosses him an Awesome Point from the Bowl. Thumphauser agrees that was funny, he tosses a point from the Bowl to Devlin too.

Now for combat! Thumphauser looks at the 11 bad guys assembled in his somewhat crowded arena, and he takes a mighty swing at the injured one with his bastard sword, a heavy weapon that is his "Weapon of Choice." He rolls a 5 and a 1, total 6—a miss. However, he is a Fighter, so he can boost his to-hit roll by up to 4 (his level) which would cost 2 Awesome Points. He spends them without hesitation, so his new to-hit is 10. The target's medium armor soaks 2 Wounds with a 10, so even if he spends 2 Awesome Points he can't do damage at this point. He calls the undead thing an *extremely* rude name, and the other 4 players all give him an Awesome Point each.

At the end of the round, no one has injured the Black Warlock. The spell goes into effect, and the DM makes a note. Bolster Undead can affect 20 Wounds, and the 6 Toughs are affected (18) and 2 Remains that are bodyguarding on the roof. The DM does *not* tell the players what happened, except to describe a light show and a dim glow around some of the undead. Now the affected undead will ignore another Wound in combat.

Players groan, the DM cackles; she puts 5 Awesome Points in the Bowl to pay for the laugh.

ROUND TWO

The DM describes what the NPCs will do.

	NPC	PC
1 Defend/Protect	2 on roof	
2 Ranged		
3 Focus/Impede	Black Warlock	
4 Move/Push	Others	
5 Attack/Assist	Group of 4, Group of 4,	
6 Focus Event		

The heroes are worried. However, they'll give it another round for the dice to be kinder before they run away. Thumphauser figures they are all better off on the roof, as the Black Warlock is the real target and the undead are unlikely to be good climbers. Sorsha will try to get a spell off, and Devlin will try to clear the Warlock's protectors out of the way.

	NPC	PC
1 Defend/Protect	2 on roof	
2 Ranged		
3 Focus/Impede	Black Warlock	Sorsha.
4 Move/Push	Others	Thumphauser, Caylix, Ril.
5 Attack/Assist	Group of 4, Group of 4,	Devlin.
6 Focus Event		

So, the protectors still hover in the way. Both the Warlock and Sorsha are casting, their tones eerie and sonorous.

The DM tosses 3 Awesome Points into the Bowl, and says that 3 of the undead are changing their actions to Impede. One for each of the 3 characters trying to climb out.

First, Thumphauser. The undead rolls 4 +3 (default to max Wounds.) Thumphauser uses Brawn, and rolls 5+7, easily winning and thrusting the undead out of the way.

The undead trying to block Caylix rolls 8+3. Caylix uses her Daring and rolls 8+5, ducking around the rotten arm.

The undead trying to block Ril rolls 6+3. Ril sighs, and rolls 5+1. He got 6, against a 9, so he spends 2 Awesome Points to get the +4 he needs to push past. He whistles the Globetrotters theme, and the other laughing players give him an Awesome Point each from the Bowl.

Now the DM will offer group initiative against group initiative; the party accepts. They roll 6, the NPCs roll 4, so the party can climb before the remains move into their arena.

All 3 roll a 1d10 + Daring to climb the wall and get up to the hazardous roof with the others. Thumphauser rolls a 2, Caylix rolls a 9, and Rill rolls a 10. Muttering darkly, Thumphauser spends 4 Awesome Points to get the 10 he needs to climb. Caylix is fine, and surprisingly, so is Rill.

The attacking undead below that the DM did not spend Awesome Points to repurpose find that their quarry has scrambled away. Devlin grins, and lunges towards the Black Warlock, attacking. He only has 2 Awesome Points, but he has 4 demon talents, and he can borrow 1 Awesome Point for each because of his half-demon inherent ability. He spends 3 Awesome Points to use “Driving Attack” untrained, and 2 Awesome Points so he can attack 3 targets—both defenders and the Black Warlock himself!

The other players cheer and each gives him an Awesome Point. That pays off his debt, he still has 1 Awesome Point left. Devlin rolls his attacks, getting 8 on the first (and adding 8 for his inherent ability, as he is fighting with sword and parrying dagger). A hit, but the minion is bolstered! It has 2 Wounds! The players groan, but Devlin has “Demon Strength”—so he boosts his attack by 1 Wound, knocking the minion down. Enthused, the players each give Devlin another Awesome Point.

The second, 14 (+8), and the minion goes down. The third attack, on the Black Warlock, is 16 (+8). That’s over a 20; not a face die hit, but the Black Warlock’s armor is ignored. Devlin not only uses “Demon Strength,” but he also uses the parrying weapon +1 Wound in there. That takes the total to 3, and he spends another 2 Awesome Points to inflict +1 more Wound, total 4. (That is 15 Awesome Points! He will level when the fight is over.)

The DM notes that the Black Warlock’s casting is disrupted. She does spend 2 Awesome Points to negate 1 Wound, giving Devlin 1 and putting the other in the Bowl. Somehow the dastardly necromancer is still up.

Sorsha’s casting goes off without a hitch. She spends 3 Awesome Points and throws “Sensory Assault” at the Black Warlock, overloading his vision with blaring colors and flashes; the Black Warlock has a Terror test difficulty 10 (no problem) but also is -5 on all rolls...

ROUND THREE

The DM describes what the NPCs will do.

	NPC	PC
1 Defend/Protect		

2 Ranged		
3 Focus/Impede		
4 Move/Push	Group of 8, Remains, Black Warlock	
5 Attack/Assist		
6 Focus Event		

“He is *not* getting away!” Thumphauser thunders on behalf of the group. The hurried discussion forms a plan. Ril has another pistol, and Caylix has throwing knives. They’ll try to take the Black Warlock out, Thumphauser will impede him in case he does try to get away, and Devlin will defend Sorsha as she keeps up the sensory assault on the Warlock.

	NPC	PC
1 Defend/Protect		Devlin
2 Ranged		Ril, Caylix
3 Focus/Impede		Thumphauser, Sorsha
4 Move/Push	Group of 8, Remains, Black Warlock	
5 Attack/Assist		
6 Focus Event		

Devlin settles between Sorsha and the climbing undead.

Ril yanks out his other pistol and fires at the Black Warlock, rolling 12. The Warlock’s heavy armor stops 2 of the Wounds, but not the last. The DM cackles and gives Ril 1 Awesome Point, putting another in the Bowl; the Warlock stays up! Ril protests, and gives the DM 2 Awesome Points to add +1 Wound to the attack. The DM rolls to see how the Warlock took it. Oh, a 9! The Warlock is out of action.

While the characters cheer, the DM thinks quickly. This was an exciting battle, (even if it was only 3 rounds) and the characters played well, homing in on the leader and using their talents to take him out somewhat surgically. Would it be more fun to mop up, to have the undead just fall over, or to have them scatter and maybe come up again, or maybe not? Obviously, scattering is most fun.

The DM describes the move actions of the undead now a scattering into the streets and alleys rather than climbing the building. Elated, the characters decide not to give chase at this point. Better to search the Black Warlock’s body and see if he had any clues. But he’s not quite dead; they could revive him and keep him for questioning, or they could finish him off... That is up to the players! (And the DM has a pile of animated undead that could mount a rescue if they keep the necromancer alive.) The story continues.

Awesome Point Summary

Name	Currently Has	Has Spent	Spend to Level	Total Received
Thumphauser	5	11	1	16
Ril	3	7	5	10
Caylix	4	1	11	5
Sorsha	5	10	2	15
Devlin	4	15	0	19

Bowl: [15] -18, +7, total 4. (Need more Awesome Points in there right away!)

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DEMONS

People in the World Between have a long history of making deals with demons to get power. From witches to kings, many people have been asked to pay a gruesome price; sex with the demon in exchange for heart's desire. The blood of demons is well-mixed in some decadent human populations, like the aristocracy of Caligari or the rulers of the Iron Principalities.

A Selection of Demon Lords

- **Hakhan.** Demon Lord of Bestial Bloodshed. Once he was pretty much the state religion of Caligari, until the civil war between those who worshiped demons and those who did not want to. Hakhan is still the most prominently worshiped demon in the Iron Principalities. He is depicted as a massive minotaur covered in blood and decorated with skulls.
- **Matakhan.** Demon Queen of Assassins. She is into executions and poison. Purple-skinned and multi-armed, bloodthirsty. Some suggest she is nothing more than a female avatar of Hakhan, the more subtle side of making things dead.
- **Morgath.** The Corpulent Reaper. He is vast and fleshy, a scythe is his badge of office, and his face is too horrible to be depicted any single way; a decaying pig snout, bare human skull, swarm of darkness, and so on. Legend suggests there is a portal beneath the Claustum Arx in Harrowfaust that leads eventually down to his gory throne. His worship is the state religion of Harrowfaust. Vampires and penangalan worship him, as do the liches that hide in Harrowfaust to continue their studies. To Harrowfaust, he represents the lesser evil; their pacts with Morgath allow them the strength to be independent of would-be conquerors.
- **Mother Lothak.** Tempest Queen, Our Lady of Sharks; she is entrapped in a relationship with Father Sothak, the sea god that defeated and overbears her. Continuing struggle between them moves the seas in tides. Those who survive shark attacks are blessed by her.
- **Slithian Vor.** Demon Queen of Aestheticism and Carnality. She's the incestuous mother of succubi and incubi. If there is an unhealthy way to have sex, she's into it. She finds entities with principles irresistible right up until she has seduced them to betray everything they believe in. Her greatest worship is in Caligari, where her cults seduced the fervent crusaders that pushed most of the other daemonics out of Caligari in a brutal civil war.
- **Sluurge.** Demon Lord of Pestilence, Famine, and Gallows Humor. A diseased dandy in a top hat, he has the greatest presence in Ulverland, undermining the Father and Family.
- **Zzorch.** Demon Lord of Mutation and Magic. Everything that is was once something else, and will be again. Zzorch propels his slaves towards creating that change in unexpected ways, and revels in the resulting chaos. His most treasured tool is the illusion of control; by convincing his slaves and targets that they can manage the energies they unleash, he provokes them to pursue spectacular bad ideas.

HALF DEMON (TEMPLATE)

If you have demon blood, or if by some awful accident you *gain* demon blood, then you have dark power. The more you focus on your demonic blood to draw power from it, the more power it has over you and the more you risk changing.

At generation, you can get demon talents a number of ways.

- Take a demon talent as your first.
- Lose 2 starting attribute points to take a demon talent. (Get up to 4 this way.)
- Take 2 points of “demon sign” to take a demon talent. (DM limits how much, default 2 points.)

More Demon Power

- When you level, you can give up your attribute point and take a demon sign point to get an extra demon talent (in addition to a normal talent).

INHERENT—AWESOME LOAN

You can reach into your demonic heritage and borrow up to 1 Awesome Point per demon talent you have (including +1 per upgrade.) Once a day while resting you can spend up to 1 Awesome Point per demon talent you have, if you want to level faster.

LIMITATION—TOUCH OF EVIL

Blessed and holy weapons or energies do 1 Wound to you if you touch them. Blessed or holy weapons do +1 Wound to you. You cannot buy off Wounds from holy power with Awesome Points.

TALENTS

Instead of 5 base talents, demons can pull from a larger pool of talents but cannot use talents untrained.

DEMON TALENTS

Pure-blood demons have staggering variety. While varied, human/demon hybrids are tamer. Here are talents that can be chosen for characters that have demonic blood running through their veins, in whatever quantity.

With DM permission, you can also take talents from the Monster talent list. There are more possibilities, this is a selection to get you started. These cannot be used untrained.

1. **Armed.** *Constant.* Move action to unleash (upgrades to free action) only if it is concealed with “Hidden Deformity.” You have a natural weapon built in. This could be claws, a flame whip, distended maw, curving horns, sharp hooves, whatever. Choose a weapon type. Heavy weapons require 1 level of Demon Strength, very heavy weapons require 2. Ranged weapons are possible. This talent can be taken more than once. It can be upgraded to make the weapon +2 to hit or +1 Wound.
2. **Armorflesh.** *Constant.* Your flesh alone is as tough as armor. Its benefits stack with worn armor. Take this talent one time per level of armor—light, medium, heavy, super-heavy.
3. **Brainwash.** *Rested.* 1 day ritual. Restrain your target, and spend the day with the target, forcing the target to taste your blood each day. You must do this for one consecutive day per the target’s Commitment, +1. Once you have finished the process, the target will be loyal to you unless freed somehow. The target’s memories are intact, if hazy, but the personality will take a turn towards the demonic.
4. **Breathtaking Gaze.** *Constant.* Focus action. If you can look your target in the eye, then you can assume you roll a 10 on any Charm or Commitment test instead of rolling. In combat, a foe must beat a Daring test difficulty 10 to attack you if you are looking the foe in the eye.
5. **Charring Touch.** *Rested.* Focus action (upgrades to attack action). Touch a target, and the target takes 1 Wound of burning damage a round from the inside out. Armor does not help against this. You can increase it to 2 Wounds with Awesome Points. If the target is resisting, you must Impede the target to maintain the grip.
6. **Custom Orc.** *Rested.* As a 1 hour ritual, you can summon 1d5 Wounds of orc. You can build the orc type yourself, but once built, that’s the only kind of orc your summoning with this talent will bring. You can teach this talent to wizards, illusionists, necromancers, mages, and shamen.
7. **Deathblood.** *Constant.* You can take necromancer talents without training.



8. **Demon Strength.** *Constant.* You have +2 to all Brawn tests, and do +1 Wound in hand-to-hand or melee combat. You can take this talent up to 3 times.
9. **Flight.** *Rested. Focus* action (upgrades to move action). You can move 2 arenas a round through the air. You can upgrade this to make it 3 arenas. This can happen with wings (that have 2 Wounds each) or through gusts of hellfire or through eerie lordship of the air.
10. **Fireproof.** *Constant.* You are immune to damage from heat or fire, magical or otherwise.
11. **Hellish Speed.** *Constant.* You can move twice, or move and attack, as one action.
12. **Hellspeak.** *Rested.* 1 minute ritual involving your blood. You can speak to anyone you know who is in the World Below, for about 1 minute per Commitment (if they consent to speak to you). It is considered good manners to commit human (or at least animal) sacrifice with this ritual to send something to eat with your request for audience. Also, you and demons can communicate easily in person; you both know a language in common. (Add “Hellspeak” to your languages.)
13. **Hidden Deformity.** *Constant.* You can retract a weapon or conceal a demonic feature at will. You can upgrade this talent to cover an additional feature or weapon each time.
14. **Horrifying.** *Constant.* At will, inflict Horror rating 3+level to those in your arena. Spend an Awesome Point to affect those in an adjacent arena, or 2 Awesome Points to affect those in line of sight. This involves doing something gruesome and disgusting; vomiting clotted gore, tearing your face off, bursting wings through your hot back-meat to quiver in the night sky, etc.
15. **Invisible Thought.** *Constant.* You are immune to mind reading, charm effects, scrying, and intimidation.
16. **Magic Resistance.** *Rested. Focus* action (upgrades to move action). When magic is thrown in your arena, or targets you, you can try to counter it. You get your level + 1 per demon talent +1d10 against the caster. If you roll higher, the caster takes a Wound and the spell fails. If you tie, nothing happens; your energies cancel out for the round. If you fail, you take a Wound and the spell goes through.
17. **Shadowblood.** *Constant.* You can take illusionist talents without training.
18. **Stunning Blow.** *Rested. Focus* action (upgrades to attack action). When you strike a target in unarmed combat or melee, you can reduce the target’s attributes by 1 per Wound inflicted. When an attribute reaches 0, the target is unconscious. Points return at the rate of 1 per hour for each Attribute.
19. **Terrifying.** *Constant.* At will, inflict Terror rating 3+level to those in your arena. Spend an Awesome Point to affect those in an adjacent arena, or 2 Awesome Points to affect those in line of sight. This involves doing something alien and impossible; pulling the



target into your eyes through your gaze, manipulating your shadow on the wall behind yourself, touching the target from across the room, speaking words only the target hears as everyone else seems frozen, etc.

20. Wizardblood. *Constant.* You can take wizard talents without training.

DEMONSIGN

These signals reveal the demonic blood in a person. In some contexts, they are status symbols and preening daemonics show them off. In other contexts, if they are not hidden then the revealed daemonic will be killed brutally. Either way, each demonsign gives its bearer +1 to intimidate or resist intimidation.

To choose demonsign, the DM can either roll (and roll on any sub-table options), choose for the player, or let the player choose.

Holy Water. Water that is ritualistically purified by the Church of the Lady will make a daemonic -2 on all actions for a round while smoking if it is splashed on. If a quantity hits, the target loses 1 Wound also—this damage cannot be reduced by Awesome Points.

2. Charming Tail. You have a lashing tail about as long as your arm and as thick as your thumb.

3. Sleek Hide. You are smooth, like a dolphin's skin, or rubber.

4. Vibrant Color. Your skin is a wild color. Roll, choose, or make up something appropriate. 1-Red. 2-Green. 3-Black. 4-White. 5-Iridescent.

5. Pebbled Texture. Your skin resembles a crocodile or reptilian lizard.

6. Striking Eyes. Your eyes are a startling shade. Roll, choose, or make up something appropriate. 1-No iris or pupil—white, black, red, yellow, or mirrored. 2-Brilliant red tattoos etched in your irises that pulse when you have high emotion. 3-Slitted like a cat (vertical) or goat (horizontal). 4-Shaped like an hourglass, when you look into them you feel yourself decaying. 5-Shift color and intensity based on mood.

7. Hooves. Cloven hooves at the end of your ankles.

8. Pointed Ears. They can be dainty and fey, or more goat-like.

9. Prominent Fangs. On the top or the bottom, usually two to a side or two in the middle. No



impediment to speaking or eating.

- 10. Pointed Teeth.** *All* your teeth are pointed. No impediment to speaking or eating.
- 11. Remarkable Feature.** One of your facial features is either grossly prominent, or nearly absent. 1-nose. 2-ears. 3-mouth. 4-jaw. 5-webbing (hands or feet).
- 12. Unnatural Size.** You are the wrong size. 1-half as big. 2-twice as big. 3-grotesquely obese. 4-impossibly gaunt. 5-all your dimensions are subtly wrong.
- 13. Unusual Blood.** You don't bleed red. 1-tarry black. 2-pressurized kool-aid. 3-iridescent green. 4-dust. 5-sizzling hot, weak acid.
- 14. Strange Aura.** People sense you aren't quite right. 1-Too charming; people you charm feel sticky and gross afterwards. 2-Inspire lust; it's like a sickness with instant onset and lingering malaise. 3-Temper; people around you have trouble keeping their anger restrained. 4-People can immediately tell you're not fully human—every instinct says not to trust you. 5-Confidence—the longer people are around you, the more they think they can do anything.
- 15. Unruly Shadow.** Your shadow does not precisely mirror what you do. It has a sense of humor and it loves the taste of fear, uncertainty, terror, and horror. You can't compel it to behave. When it affects other peoples' shadows, sometimes they feel a hint of what's going on.
- 16. Remarkable Nails.** There is something different about your nails. 1-Long, sharp weapons. 2-gnarled and twisted; it is astonishing they don't impede you. 3-Peculiar dark coloration. 4-They are always perfect. 5-They always have charred human flesh and soot jammed up under them.
- 17. Odd Joint.** Some of your joints don't work like normal joints. 1-Recurve goat knees. 2-jointless elbows, arms can flex like snakes. 3-Your head can spin all the way around. 4-You have a thumb on both sides of each hand. 5-All your joints have doubles, you can slip them in and out at will.
- 18. Needless.** You don't need everything humans need, that can give you away. What don't you need? 1-Drink. 2-Food. 3-Sleep. 4-Air. 5-Haircuts.
- 19. Scent.** You smell unnatural. 1-Sulfur. 2-Blood and death. 3-Sensual perfume. 4-Hot stone. 5-Comforting smell of home.
- 20. Animal Reaction.** Animals are often more sensitive than people, when it comes to supernatural energies. How do they respond to you? 1-Cower away from your arena. 2-Desperate love, licking and snuggling, frantic not to leave. 3-Attack on sight. 4-Stay out of reach and stare. 5-Sicken; if in your presence long enough, fall over dead. (Roll once on taking this, not every time animals approach.)



DEMON EXAMPLES

Cambions

Aristocrats with demon blood are called Cambions. Those who worship demons are usually called daemoniacs. Common people with demon blood tend to just be called the Blooded. All are Fireproof.

- **Fireproof.** *Constant.* Immune to damage from heat or fire, magical or otherwise.
- **Conquerer.** 4 Wounds. Leaders, taking political and military action to secure ever-greater power.
 - **Demon Strength.** *Constant.* You have +2 to all Brawn tests, and do +1 Wound.
 - **Mage Blood.** Can take mage talents. (Has all 5.)
 - Can cast Elemental Warmagic from Ulverland.
- **Enigma.** 2 Wounds. Riddles, puzzles, quests, research, violence; all meld in plots for weird power.
 - **Demon Strength.** *Constant.* You have +2 to all Brawn tests, and do +1 Wound.
 - **Invisible Thought.** *Constant.* Immune to mind reading, charm, scrying, intimidation.
 - **Wizard Blood.** Can take wizard talents. (Has all 5.)
- **Hellknight.** 6 Wounds. Hideous and warped in appearance and soul, they live to slay and dominate.
 - **Charring Touch.** *Arena.* Attack action. Touch a target who takes 2 Wounds of burning damage, armor does not help. Impede target if need be to hold on.
 - **Demon Strength (2).** *Constant.* +4 to Brawn, +2 Wounds in hand-to-hand or melee.
 - **Stunning Blow.** *Arena.* Attack action. Strike a target in unarmed combat or melee, reduce target attributes by 1 per Wound inflicted. When an attribute reaches 0, the target is unconscious. Points return at the rate of 1 per hour for each Attribute.
 - **Terrifying.** *Constant.* Inflict Terror of 13 in adjacent arenas by doing something impossible.
- **Seducer.** 2 Wounds. Charming, cunning, they are thrilled by the act of seduction and corruption.
 - **Breathtaking Gaze.** *Constant.* Focus. Look target in the eye, count as rolling 10 on any Charm or Commitment test. In combat, a foe must beat a Daring test difficulty 10 to attack you if you are looking the foe in the eye.
 - **Invisible Thought.** *Constant.* Immune to mind reading, charm, scrying, and intimidation.
 - **Shadowblood.** Can cast Illusionist spells (has all 5.)

Deciever

Tiger headed, or in human illusion they appear to be from the Scavenger Lands and the mysterious East. Hands are jointed backwards, their palms are on the outside (this can be hidden by illusion). Their shadows misbehave, showing off and not matching the actions of the tiger demon. More than anything else, these wicked monsters like to crush trust and faith, corrupt, and send heroes to their deaths. To this end, they deal in information, and use it as best suits them. They offer poisonous favors to the desperate.

- 5 Wounds. When claws and jaws are revealed, they act as a light weapon. Flesh counts as medium armor. Does not wear armor, will use weapons.
- **Wizard Blood.** At least 5 levels in a spellcasting discipline, usually wizard or illusionist.
- **Magic Resistance.** Counter with 10+1d10 to counterspell as a move action.
- **Invisible Thought.** Immune to mind reading, charm, scrying, and intimidation.
- **Regenerate.** Heal 1 Wound a round.

Hag

Warped by rage and infernal dealings, these demons were once human women who were wronged. The hag takes on the nature of the dark hiding place that provides her shelter and hosts her twisted congress with demons. As the hag grows in power, her humanity withers. She always has pointed teeth, and normal animals fear her.

- 6 Wounds. Flesh counts as heavy armor. Nails count as hand weapons, +1 Wound damage. Brawn 8.

- **Stunning Blow.** *Rested. Focus* action (upgrades to attack action). When you strike a target in unarmed combat or melee, you can reduce the target's attributes by 1 per Wound inflicted. When an attribute reaches 0, the target is unconscious. Points return at the rate of 1 per hour for each Attribute.
- **Alchemist.** She can brew 1d5 potion types at will, one dose per day with her special equipment.

Mutatinator of Zzorch

Its bone joints are made of demonstone, and its very touch is corrupting. They all look different, but are generally twice the size of a human.

- 10 Wounds. Its meat counts as very heavy armor. It attacks with reach tendrils that do 2 Wounds.
- **Mutator.** *Constant.* Instead of Wounding, it can pump mutagenic energy into its target. Each Wound it would do counts as 6 difficulty for a Commitment test. Failing the test, the target screams and collapses, and over the next 12 hours the target receives a random mutation.

Penangalan

These hideous she-demons are flying heads trailing ropes of intestine and bundles of organs.

- 4 Wounds. Twitching loops of entrails attack as a reach weapon, she can bite as a light weapon. The body provides another 2 Wounds.
- **Simmering Magic.** Get a minimum of 5 caster levels in some spellcasting discipline.
- **Hidden Deformity.** She can hide by replacing the head on a body and appearing to have those features, using the body as a vehicle, undetectably hidden within and on top of it. As a move action, she can peel up out of the body. As long as she returns within an hour, it will still seem alive.
- **Flight.** She can fly up to 2 arenas a round 3 dimensionally when a detached head.

Succubus/Incubus (Children of Slithian Vor)

These tough seducers of the World Below are accomplished warriors, but they much prefer corruption. They inspire lust in those who are around them; not only for them, but for everything.

- 5 Wounds. Flesh counts as medium armor. +1 Wounds with melee weapons or unarmed attacks.
- **Breathtaking Gaze.** Focus action to look the target in the eye, assume 10 on Charm or Commitment roll (+5). In combat, Daring difficulty 10 for a foe to attack you if you are looking the foe in the eye.
- **Fireproof.** Immune to fire, magic or otherwise.
- **Hellish Speed.** Move twice or move and attack as one action.
- **Invisible Thought.** Immune to mind reading, charming, scrying, and intimidation.

War Demon of Hakhan

Violent impulses of Hakhan given physical form in the World Between are extraordinarily unpleasant. They are made of blood and screams and arterial spray, and the eye struggles to lock on to their shape.

- 10 Wounds. Flesh counts as very heavy armor. Its body shifts to always give it +2 arena bonus, and it does 4 Wounds in melee.
- **Custom Orc.** *Rested.* Each war demon has a favorite orc type it can create.
- **Flight.** *Arena.* It can move 2 arenas a round through the air.
- **Horrifying.** *Constant.* It can inflict horror 15 at will by doing something gross.
- **Magic Resistance.** Its very presence counts as counterspell 20 once per round.

ORCS OF THE IRON PRINCIPALITIES

The Banishment War in Caligari drove the most violent demon collaborators south. When battle on behalf of demons took on the scale of a war, the Lords Below provided more demonic energy through rituals and sacrifices. The wide variety of demonic footsoldiers (orcs) reflects a wide variety of sponsoring demons.

Roll once on each table below (or choose results) to build an orc type. Usually orcs prefer company of similar orcs, and different kinds of orcs are hostile to one another (given their factitious and quarrelsome masters, and their innate ferocity) but powerful leadership can unite them to kill a foe.

Orcs can supervise the process to make more orcs like themselves. Any spellcaster in communication with the World Below can take a talent “Make Orc” that allows them to have the ritual support and demonic communication to make a type of orc determined by the DM.

BASELINES FOR ORCS

Victims: Replace person-hood with that of a demonic footsoldier.

Volunteer Minions: Gain 1 Wound and replace person-hood with that of a demonic footsoldier.

Toughs: Gain 1 Wound and replace person-hood with that of a demonic footsoldier. Also, add 1 power from the chart below.

Tough Orc Power (1d5)

1. **Profound Vitality.** Add 1d5 Wounds.
2. **Savage.** DM will usually spend Awesome Points to boost Wounds by 1.
3. **Tough.** DM will usually spend Awesome Points to reduce Wounds by 1.
4. **Demonic Mutation.** Roll for 1 talent on the monster generator.
5. **Mystic.** Add the Wizard or Shaman template.

Orc default attribute bonuses are equal to their Wounds unless the DM alters them.

ORIGIN

1. **Slaves of Hakhan.** In an all-night ritual, those who paint themselves and slay a sacrifice in the name of Hakhan become orcs if they are kept out of the sun for a full day metamorphosis.
2. **Dark Pearls.** After a battle, the orcs are able to excrete concentrated death energy in an iridescent black sphere the size of two fists together. When this sphere comes in contact with a significant amount of demon blood, it hatches into a child-size orc that matures over the course of a month. This orc is born able to speak and kill. (Necromancers prize these objects for their own ends.)
3. **Fang Guardians.** When a Dumochite demon is summoned to the World Between, it has rows of fangs (much like a shark) and when one of the fangs is hurled to the ground, it explodes. From the puff of smoke leaps an orc with weapons made of black bone, ready for battle.
4. **The Corrupted.** When a human eats human flesh and thinks evil thoughts, the corruption manifests as demonic energy swells into the cannibal and twists the body to that of an orc. This can be helped and shaped with ritual so the corrupted human is an offering, but sometimes it is spontaneous.

5. **Fleshriders.** These orcs are incorporeal, but they can possess a physical host and alter its form. Once possessed, the victim is recognizable, but irrevocably gone. Fleshriders can use corpses, but don't like to; they can't use skeletons, meat of some kind must still be on the bones. The orc regenerates the corpse to look half-dead, half-orc.
6. **Cauldron Born.** Corpses steeped in a big enchanted and unholy cauldron for a few minutes are infused with demonic energy and climb out as orcs, altered and vicious.
7. **Battleborn.** These orcs have long tongues with ragged spines on the sides. They can stick the tongues into the chest of a corpse on the battlefield and hack up some weird goo into the body. Over 12 hours the body changes, and then rises as an orc.
8. **Drinkers.** A human is drowned in blood, then painted with blasphemous sigils and buried in blood-soaked earth. Six hours later, an orc digs free.
9. **Feasters.** Humans eat the flesh and drink the blood of demons. Depending on how much they eat and drink, and what kind of demon it was, and how much ritual support the process has, the feasters transform into orcs in a wrenching process that is most excruciating.
10. **Castaways.** Humans cursed by authorities of the Lady sometimes are cast so far out of Her favor that demons flow into their bodies with them, forcing them out (sometimes over time) as their features are twisted and corrupted.

APPEARANCE

1. Green, pig-like, pronounced jaws with tusks, round ears. Some have spots. None have hair.
2. Short, stocky, gray, bulging yellow cat eyes, lank hair like dead grass. Long floppy hands and feet.
3. Compact shiny black, weirdly graceful, luminescent green cat eyes. It hisses.
4. Albino white, almost translucent skin, pink eyes with glowing red pupils, fangs.
5. Gorilla-like thick fur and wrinkled face, long arms, squat, white tusks.
6. Wide mouth, chinless with a wattle, tufty gray fur, bull-like horns, red eyes, meatball shape.
7. Slick red, all kinds of body shapes, bright yellow eyes, black teeth, horns, and nails.
8. Jaw hinges out to the side, no chin, wicked tongue. Can pass for ugly slightly dead human.
9. Whimsical, almost cute. Wrinkled nose and crooked jaw like a quizzical pug.
10. Curling ram horns, recurve legs, hardened red scaly flesh with a lashing tail and cruel black eyes.

DECORATION

1. Flesh carved with sigils of demonic patron in blasphemous praise.
2. Likes to wear pieces of downed foes, especially skin and bone as masks and helmets.
3. Likes the feel of cloth, and will wear layers of it to hide all skin.
4. Likes the feel of metal, and will wear it with no gambeson or padding.
5. Prefers paint, ideally with blood in it, to make camouflage and wicked signs on skin and armor.
6. Likes matching uniforms or symbols, and banners—especially of flayed flesh.
7. Wants to look rich, bedecked in gaudy stuff (even if it isn't valuable.)
8. Wearing snakeskin or some kind of reptile skin is a little piece of home.
9. Blue is lucky.
10. Red goes faster.

WEAKNESS

1. Has a nagging cough. Doesn't like the air here, doesn't like exertion.
2. Breath has an odd whining wheeze, clearly audible. Not very stealthy at all.
3. Insatiably hungry. Presented with raw meat, requires intense danger or fear not to chow down.
4. Compulsive liar, unable to tell the truth straight.
5. Weak eyes and skin susceptible to sunburn; weary and disoriented in sunlight.
6. Alcohol is the neatest thing in the World Between!
7. Even in flesh, they can't bear holy energy; it repels them as though they were undead.
8. Must drink blood daily, or grow weak.
9. Passive-aggressive.
10. Energy follows a lunar cycle; insomnia maniac on full moon, lethargic depression on new moon.

ROWDINESS

1. If you appear weak they'll turn on you in a flash. 5 Commitment.
2. You summoned them; now, in the world, they've got business elsewhere. 5 Commitment.
3. They get impatient if you deviate from their demon lord's interests. 3 Commitment.
4. They are superior to mere humans. They don't like bossy monkeys. 3 Commitment.
5. Let them blow off steam now and then, and they aren't picky. 1 Commitment.
6. Low threshold of self-control; constant outbursts of glee or violence. 1 Commitment.
7. Not creative at all; it is a relief to be told what to do.
8. They approve of efforts to degrade this world and bring energy from Below. You must be okay!
9. Like automatons, they don't get bored. They follow orders, or stand motionless. -2 Commitment.
10. Fawning and affectionate, they'll do anything to make you happy. -2 Commitment.

FAVORITE ACTIVITY

1. Slaying, glorious slaying!
2. Recreational torture, prolonged and sadistic.
3. Cat and mouse hunting games (on either side).
4. Sexual assault.
5. Mass sacrifices to demonic lord.
6. Rebellion and power politics.
7. Defiling holy places.
8. Spreading fire, panic, and chaos.
9. Pursuing a hidden agenda.
10. Corrupting humans.



LONGEVITY

1. Up to a month.
2. Up to 5 years.
3. Up to 20 years.
4. Up to 80 years.
5. Live until killed.

ORC EXAMPLES

Magratch's Bodyguards

The wizard Magratch released a demon from a summoning circle years ago in exchange for knowledge of how to summon effective bodyguards. He can summon these orcs, and always has 1-5 with him. Magratch takes tough prisoners from the authorities to make these bodyguards.

Magratch's Orc Bodyguards. *Fleshriders.* The victim is recognizable but altered. The jaw hinges out to the sides, no chin, wicked tongue; can pass for ugly human. They like to make masks and helmets of skin and bone. They love alcohol. They approve of Magratch and are grateful to him for freeing their dark master. Their favorite hobby is prolonged torture. They last up to 20 years.

- Tough +1d5 Wounds (default 4). Medium armor. Heavy weapon and shield.

Tillvane's Army

A scion of the Tillvane House in the Iron Principalities was disinherited, so he became a witch and learned to make orcs. He used them to sack his family holdings, but he became an orc himself. The army rolled around the Iron Principalities for years. Some are still out there. They continue the War Below here, attacking the interests of other demon princes that are enemies to their patron.

Tilvanian Orc. *Feasters.* These orcs capture prisoners and force-feed them orc meat and blood. Then they conduct an all-night ritual that painfully transforms their victims to tilvanian orcs. They have curling ram horns, recurve legs, and hardened red scaly flesh. They have a lashing tail and black eyes. Their skin is scarred with sigils of Vorshuun, their patron Demon Prince. They last about 5 years.

- 2 Wounds. Light armor. Spear (reach) and shield. (Proficient, 2d10 to hit).
- Holy energy harms them as though they were undead.

Rusters

This warband has plagued the Dust Road for a century or more. They capture and domesticate massive boars to use as mounts, and they attack as cavalry. Those taken alive are turned into orcs, a dark baptism in a cauldron they hide in their mountain lair. Destroying the cauldron would put a stop to this threat.

Ruster Orc. *Cauldron Born.* They are short, stocky, gray, with bulging yellow cat eyes and lank hair. They have long, floppy hands and feet. They wear lucky blue warpaint. Their energy follows a lunar cycle, they are most dangerous at full moon. They constantly fight over leadership, sometimes doing serious damage to their viability as a warband with lethal combat. They love corrupting humans. They live until killed.

Mang the Chief. Level 5 Gladiator. (Built.) All gladiator talents. Usually spend AP to reduce Wounds. 7 Wounds. Medium armor. Defacer: axe (hand weapon), spend 1 Awesome Point to hit in the face.

The Maulers. His elite.

4 Wounds. Medium armor. Spear (reach, ranged). Usually spend 1 AP to increase Wounds.

The Brawlers. His troops.

2 Wounds. Light armor. Spear (reach, ranged).

Warpigs. Mounts. Move up to 3 arenas a round. Charge for +2 to hit or +1 Wound damage (attacks with heavy weapon, or gives bonus to rider). Usually spend 1 AP to reduce Wounds.

BEASTMEN

Some of the Beast Gods mix animal and human to create loyal footsoldiers. Some wizards get carried away with their experimentation. Mystic radiation can do funny things to people or creatures. Regardless what the source is, there are ways of mixing human and animal that are unpredictable and unpleasant.

MAKING BEASTMEN

Creating one type of beastman is a talent that can be given by cosmic powers or arcane research that is into that sort of thing. Make a beastman type for each talent, and the circumstances for creation.

- A pagan version might require a blood-sex-magic ritual in a consecrated glen, and the next full moon the ground will erupt with 1d10 Wounds of beastmen per person involved in the orgiastic rite.
- A mage version might require specially treated human flesh fed to certain animals on a certain schedule for a month per their eventual Wounds.
- A Vistani curse might turn a person into a beastman. And so on.



VARIOUS BEASTMEN

Roll 1d5 for results. You can roll on the chart once and read across, or (to make it weirder) you can roll once for each column. You can also choose results to best fit what you're going for.

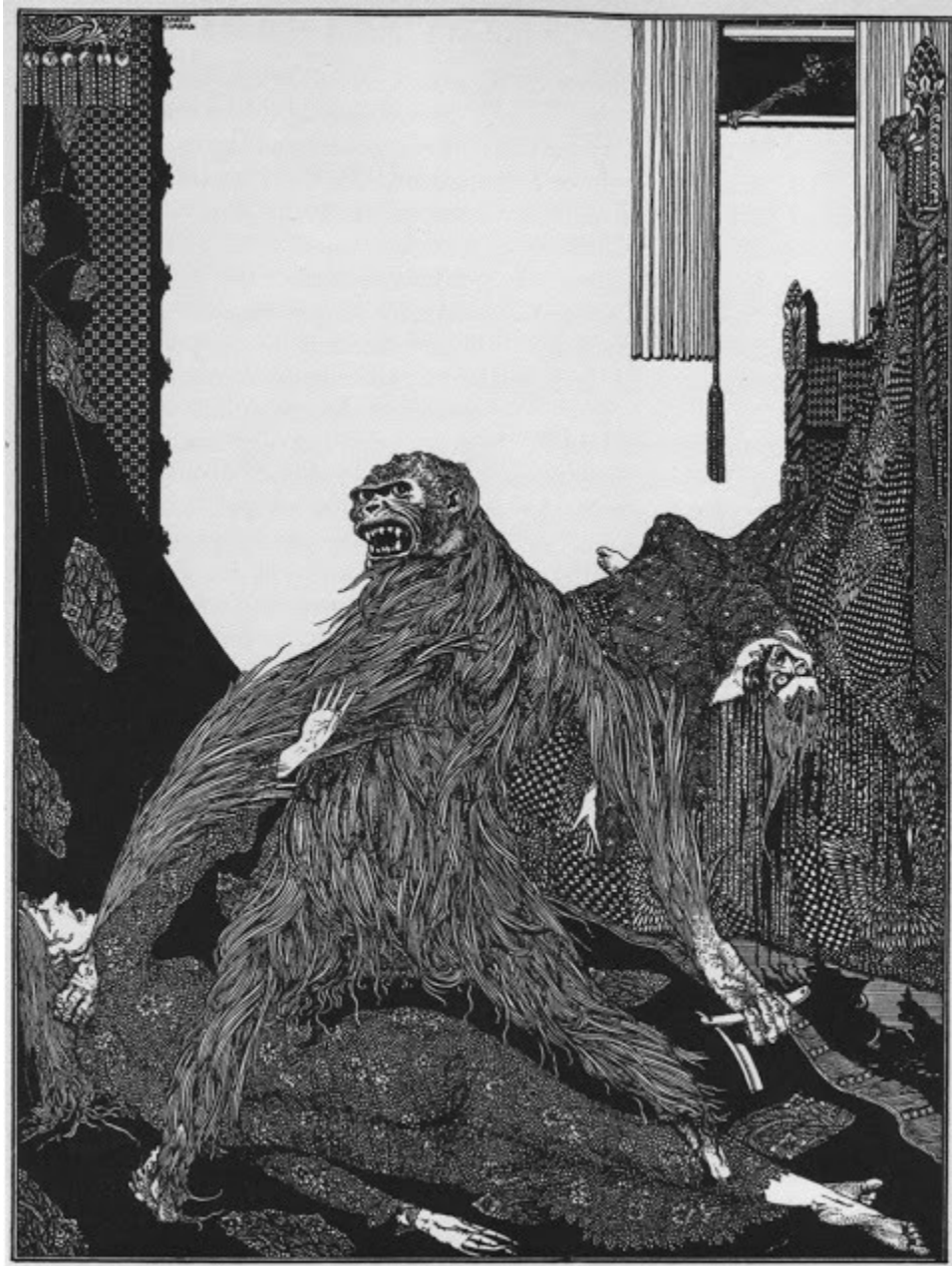
	Wounds	Mutation	Size	Intelligence
1	1 (minion)	Mostly the head.	½ human size	Wicked cunning.
2	2	Lower half.	Small human size	Smart human.
3	3	Mostly the limbs.	Large human size	Basic human.
4	4	Head and torso.	+1/2 human size	Halting speech, childish.
5	5	Full body blend.	x2 human size	Just above animal.

Roll 1d50 for results. You can roll once on the chart and read across for a fairly normal version. If you roll twice, you get something weirder. If you roll all three times, you get to enjoy making the pieces fit as you describe your strange new beastman. Feel free to substitute, expand, revise, or otherwise customize the chart.

For even more entertainment, roll more than once on one or more of the columns to make a more complex and terrifying beastman. Also, beastmen can have talents from the monster talent list.

	Animal	Benefit	Drawback
1	Ape	Climb up and down as normal movement.	Ceaselessly grooms.
2	Bat	See in the dark.	Squeaks and clicks a lot.
3	Bear	Unarmed attack does +2 Wounds.	Always sleepy.
4	Boar	Move and attack, 1 action, +2 to hit or +1 Wound.	Always angry.
5	Bumblebee	Light weapon, venom attack, Brawn difficulty 10 or die.	Puts out a constant low hum.
6	Cat	Dodge any attack on a 7+ on 1d10.	Always insolent.
7	Centipede	Light armor hide.	Always in motion, hypnotizing.
8	Chameleon	Gets +4 to Cunning attempts to hide.	Hide leaves big skin flakes everywhere.
9	Chicken	Murderous eyes give +4 to Intimidate.	Total coward.
10	Cow	Has +2 Wounds.	Stinking flatulence.
11	Crab	Natural weapon as a hand weapon or shield.	Pretty much ignores orders.
12	Deer	Add +2 to hit or +1 Wound from leaping and attacking.	Prefers eating your food to its food.
13	Duck	Can float and carry double loads while on the water.	Impossible to housebreak.
14	Fish	Amphibious, able to breathe air and water.	Rotten stench.
15	Fox	Bright, usually fights with decent tactics.	Unbearable snob.
16	Gator	Medium armor hide.	Tends to eat weaker allies.
17	Gecko	Gets +4 Initiative.	Impossible to motivate when it is cold.
18	Goat	Gets +4 Daring to climb and move.	Burps up meals to chew some more.
19	Hawk	Can fly 2 arenas a round.	Screams if annoyed. <i>Every time.</i>
20	Horse	Never gets tired.	Super-annoying laugh.
21	Horsefly	A flanking attack gets +2 to hit or +1 Wound.	Tells dirty jokes it doesn't understand
22	Lemur	Prehensile tail counts as a parrying or light weapon.	Really good at mocking impressions.
23	Lizard	Can run across 1 arena of water.	Assumes every comment hides an insult.
24	Mastiff	Always spends 2 Awesome Points to inflict +1 Wound.	Wants to lick the boss.
25	Mole	Twice as effective digging as a man with a shovel.	Painfully bad vision.
26	Monkey	Can pass for an ugly human.	Passive aggressive.
27	Moose	Natural weapon as a heavy weapon.	No regard for self-preservation.
28	Mosquito	Spend 1 Awesome point to make incoming attack -2 to hit.	Likes to hum like a kazoo all the time.
29	Octopus	Gets +4 to impede or avoid impeding.	Really touchy-feely, no personal space.
30	Owl	Impossible to surprise. +4 Awareness.	Tends to barf up inedibles.
31	Pig	Can eat anything that once lived (plant or animal) for food.	Noisy congestion.
32	Mantis	Heavy armor hide.	Always staring at you, never blinks.
33	Rabbit	Can move twice or move and attack at will.	Always nervous.
34	Raccoon	Masterful at picking locks and pockets, +4 Cunning.	Impossible to threaten credibly--brash.
35	Ram	Natural light weapon.	Hits stuff with head all the time for fun.
36	Rat	Automatically destroy 1 restraint a round on self or other.	Serious shedding problem.
37	Sloth	Ignore 1 soak when hitting armor.	Likes puns and knock-knock jokes.
38	Slug	Rubbery meat ignores 1 Wound from each attack.	Leaves slime on everything.
39	Snake	Venom: Brawn difficulty 12 or lose 1d5 additional Wounds.	Irritating lisp.
40	Squirrel	Can leap across an arena as a move action.	Never listens all the way through--
41	Steer	Automatically hits impeding characters.	Always trying to establish dominance.
42	Tick	Automatically does 1 Wound on pinned targets per round.	Utterly alien and unfriendly.

43	Toad	Natural weapon as a reach weapon.	Hallucinogens, Brawn 6 or 1 hour trip.
44	Tree frog	Adheres to any surface, can move normal speed.	Occasionally releases shattering belches.
45	Turkey	Delicious, counts as double food.	Next-level ugly. Horror 6.
46	Turtle	Very Heavy armor hide.	Needs to say and hear things 3 times.
47	Wasp	Free light weapon counterattack.	Always something snide to say.
48	Wolf	Noisy call tries to intimidate all in earshot.	Can't relax without others of its kind.
49	Woodpecker	Free extra light weapon attack with +2 to hit or +1 Wound.	Dumb as a sack of doorknobs.
50	Worm	Regenerates 1 Wound a round.	No conventional communication.



SAMPLE BEASTMEN

Beastial humans can be given character templates with inherent abilities. They can be given demon talents, if they are infernal. Mutants or special cases can get monster talents. This system is designed to provide a platform with a place to start, not to limit the possibilities you want to explore.

Arachnitaaur (Elf-Spider)

Torso up is elf, waist down is giant spider. 2 arms, 6 legs. +1/2 human size. Smart. Touched by Narlathia. Hateful.

- 3 Wounds. Natural light armor. Front 2 legs can serve as reach weapons. Can use armor, weapons.
- **Mobile.** Climb up and down as normal movement. Can leap across an arena as a move action.
- **Darksight.** Can see in the dark.

Chitintaur (Mantis-Centaur)

Appearance of human +1/2 chitin-encased mantis with 4 arms and 4 legs. Compound eyes, mandibles, antennae; it cannot pass for human. Does not care to communicate with humans, uses sign language.

- 3 Wounds. Natural medium armor. Natural light weapons. Can use armor, weapons.
- **Dodge.** Put 1 AP in the bowl to make an incoming attack -2 to hit at will.
- **Counterattack.** Free extra light weapon attack with +2 to hit or +1 Wound.
- **Mover.** +2 to impede or avoid impeding, can leap across an arena as a move action.

Crabbish (Crab-Human)

Human +1/2 size, lumbering and slow, but can swim as well as walk. Thick natural armor. Mentally slow, cannot speak, communicates with complex clicks. Intensely territorial.

- 2 Wounds. Natural heavy armor. Natural heavy weapon. Natural shield. Can't use armor or weapons.
- **Amphibious.** Can breathe in air or water, swims at normal movement speed.
- **Delicious.** Each crab man provides 12 servings of tasty crab meat.

Draconians (Dragon-Human)

Human size and intelligence, usually a dragon head and claws with scaled skin (but there are variations.) They can speak. Some can fly. They are arrogant bullies.

- 2 Wounds. Natural light armor. Natural light weapon. Can use armor and weapons.
- **Flight (optional)** Can fly up to 2 arenas a round 3 dimensionally.
- **Tail (optional)** Prehensile tail counts as parrying or light weapon.

Faithless (Debased Human)

Tall, fur-covered, baleful yellow slitty eyes. These raiders are addicted to sneaking up to scare people. They are cunning, if not terribly bright, and they can speak. They organize in tribes.

- 2 Wounds. Can use armor and weapons.
- **Eyes of Terror.** They can see in the dark. Murderous eyes give +4 to intimidate or resist.
- **Stealthy.** Gets +6 on Cunning tests to move about undetected.

Fish People (Fish-Human)

Hunched, heavy, squat, wrapped in fishy leather hide with luminous eyes and gaping fish mouths. They stink of fish. They can croak out speech. They live until killed.

- 2 Wounds. Hide counts as light armor. Claws are light weapons. Can use armor and weapons.
- **Amphibious.** Can breathe both air and water, and can move in water just like on land.

Froggish (Frog-Human)

Looks like a big bloated frog, hardly any human features. Human +1/2 size, childish intelligence. Can speak, has a booming croaking call it uses to communicate over distances with others of its kind.

- 2 Wounds. Hide counts as light armor. Can use weapons or armor.
- **Charger.** Can move and attack as a single action, with +2 to hit or +1 Wound. Can leap across an arena as a move action.
- **Tongue Lash.** Can use tongue as a ranged action on a target in same arena or adjacent arena; if the hit is successful, no damage, but immediately the froggish tries to impede; if it fails the target gets loose. If it is successful, the froggish can attack at +2 to hit and +1 Wound as the target is yanked close.

Harpy (Bird-Human)

Child-size, always women, humanoid torso, arms, and head with bird-like legs and wings. Savage, clever, brimming with hatred for humanity. Poop on everything, smell awful.

- 1 Wound. Can use weapons, light armor. Talons on legs count as light weapons.
- **Flight.** Can move 2 arenas a round 3 dimensionally.
- **Hypnotic Song.** Sing at targets in the same arena or an adjacent arena, and the targets must test Commitment difficulty 10 or be mind-controlled by the harpy. If they take a Wound or receive a sudden shock they get another test. Each harpy can affect up to 5 Commitment, and multiple harpies can pool their songs to control a bigger pool of Commitment.

Hyenish (Hyena-Human)

Head and torso of a hyena, human limbs, +1/2 human size. Human intelligence. Growling yipping speech.

- 2 Wounds. Capable of using armor and weapons. They are always angry.
- **Savage.** Always spends 2 Awesome Points to do +1 Wound.

Jackalwere (Jackal-Human)

Ebon black skin with a stylized jackal head, serving undead masters in Mord-Stavian. +1/2 human size, human intelligence, sibilant whispering speech.

- 2 Wounds. Capable of using armor and weapons. They are calculating and cruel.
- **Alert.** Impossible to surprise. Also, +4 Awareness.

Kenku (Raven-Human)

The size of a small human, with a raven head and wings and scaly clawed feet (but human shaped legs.) Very smart. Can speak, often is literate in multiple languages. Tends to talk too much and be rude.

- 1 Wound. Can peck as light weapon, most cannot use weapons. Custom-fit light armor.
- **Flight.** Can fly 2 arenas a round.
- **Cunning.** Masterful at picking locks and pockets, +4 Cunning.

Minotaur (Bull-Human)

This monster is at least three times the size of a human, a massive bristling wall of muscle and meat. Irritable and easily angered, it seems almost desperate to kill and devour humans. Capable of speech.

- 7 Wounds. Horn, fist, or hoof attack for heavy weapon. Hide is light armor. Can use weapons, armor.
- **Charger.** Move and attack for +2 to hit or +1 Wound.
- **Savage.** Always spends 2 Awesome Points to inflict +1 Wound.
- **Amazing.** Never gets lost, and can navigate any maze (even enchanted ones) flawlessly.

Rat People

The size of a small person, they have the claws, tails, and heads of rats as well as a thick coat of fur. Otherwise they appear as hunched humans.

- 1 Wound. Cumulative tooth and claw weaponry counts as light weapon. Can use weapons and armor.
- **Sneaky.** Always gets +4 Cunning to hide or move quietly.
- **Escape Artist.** Automatically eliminates 1 restraint a round on self or other.
- **Omnivorous.** Can eat anything that once lived (plant or animal) for nourishing food.

Reptilians (Lizard-Human)

Sullen and cunning, these sibilant whisperers of the marshes and swamps nurse ancient grudges against humanity. They are sleek and scaled, like snakes with limbs and torsos, and their eyes are flat and chilly.

- 1 Wound. Can wear armor and use weapons.
- **Fangs.** Light weapon, venom attack, Brawn difficulty 10 or die.
- **Gaze.** Murderous eyes give +4 to intimidate or resist.
- **Quick.** Always wins initiative. Can spend 1 Awesome Point to reduce incoming to-hit roll by 2.

Shark People (Shark-Human)

Rough skin, gaping maw, gills, and dead eyes—but the creature has humanoid arms and legs! Twice as big as a human. It is not very bright, easily bored, always hungry, and irritable. It's speaking parts are deep in its torso, flexing and gurgling, not connected to the moving of its killing mouth.

- 5 Wounds. Hide counts as light armor. Mouth counts as a very heavy weapon, but always +2 to hit.
- **Lethal Bite.** It can spend Awesome Points to increase its bite damage up to double.
- **Amphibious.** It can breathe air and water both equally well. It swims 2 arenas a round in water.
- **Horrifying.** Seeing this thing provokes Horror 4, witnessing an attack is 6, being attacked is 8.

Turtle People

Their green faces mix human and turtle features. They have humanoid arms and legs, but wrapped in green skin. Their torso is in a shell with a plastron, and they have short curled tails. They can talk.

- 4 Wounds. Medium armor shell/hide. Can use weapons.
- **Amphibious.** Can breathe and move equally well in air and water.

Yeti (Debased Human)

These wise forest guardians are on average 7' and draped in luxurious fur. They telepathically communicate with one or two chosen partners, while speaking with an animalistic set of grunts and calls. Many are capable shamen.

- 4 Wounds. Thick fur counts as light armor. Can use armor or weapons.
- **Claws.** Retractable claws count as hand weapons for these powerful fighters.
- **Strong.** They have 8 Brawn and can climb up and down terrain at normal movement speeds.



GHOSTS

In the natural order of things, a person dies and there is a shaft of white light visible in the ether. The spirit goes into the light, which then resolves into the World Above or the World Below; this is unknowable from the World Between.

Now and then, the trauma is too severe. The death is too fast or too slow. There is too much unresolved, and a powerful personality is involved. The latent energies of a place interfere. Whatever the reason, a ghost is created; the spirit does not go into the light, but lingers in the World Between.

These guidelines are not designed to be totally strict, all-inclusive, or boundaries for DM creativity. This framework creates a way to use ghosts for entertaining game play.

GHOST TRAITS

Ghost Strength. A ghost's default strength is 1 per Commitment in life. Sometimes this is amplified by circumstances, especially in places with powerful energies or when artifacts get involved.

Chill. The ghost's presence can make a cold spot. When a ghost of 4+ strength activates powers, the temperature drops so you can see your breath.

Unclean. The purity of iron and salt are a danger to ghosts. The touch of either forces them to disincorporate and vanish for at least 1d5 rounds. They cannot cross a line of salt or iron, or enter a room ritually sealed by them (no 3 dimensional shenanigans like phasing through the wall, ceiling, or floor.)

Movement. Ghosts are tied to a location, an object, or a person. These rules can be pretty loose and adaptable, but the DM should figure out a ghost's movement range and stick to it.

Destruction. Ghosts are dispelled by having fire and salt simultaneously applied to their bones, or to some other bit of their physical presence that remains (like a lock of hair, a flap of skin, a tooth, etc.) *Ghosts bond to part of their previous body, and that part must be destroyed to free the ghost.* They can also be exorcised by a purifier, banished by a shaman, or dealt with by a necromancer. Ghosts can also be destroyed by erasing their reason to remain; this can open a second chance for them to leave.

Warping Veil. Ghosts go insane. They lose their ability to frame issues, to see other points of view, to inform their decisions with logic. They have a need, all of them, and that need becomes consuming. Even good intentions are warped and twisted. Given time; maybe some benevolent forces that make it to the World Above can reach back to the World Between to help, but eventually all sentient ghosts trapped in the Veil of the World Between go mad and become dangerous.

GHOST TYPES

Echo. The ghost seldom has more than 3 power, and it is a non-interactive image that replays its final trauma and death. This could be visual, or audial, and it sometimes involves smell. Usually the echo projects a sense of foreboding and fear. These ghosts are harmless.

- They can manifest about once a year per strength, and each time they can create about 1 supernatural anomaly per strength.

Finisher. Unfinished business will not allow the spirit to rest. Some injustice needs righting, a message must be delivered, a murder must be punished, or some wrong forgiven. The ghost usually has 3-8 Commitment, same as in life.

- They can manifest about once a year per strength, and each time they can create about 1 supernatural anomaly per strength (or use multiple strength to power stronger actions).
- *Desperation.* The Finisher can gain an extra point of strength for immediate use when exhausted and frustrated, but each use of desperation reduces the finisher's maximum strength by 1.

Vengeful Spirit. The dead can be furious and hell-bent on revenge. The ghost usually has 4-8 Commitment, same as in life; only those with strong will become vengeful spirits.

- They can manifest about once a year per strength, and each time they can create about 1 supernatural anomaly per strength (or use multiple strength to power stronger actions).
- *Dangerous.* They "spend 1 Awesome Point" every time they kill someone, or injure the target of their wrath. After spending 12 they gain 1 point of strength.

Haunt. This can be any of the other types of spirit, expanding to include ghosts guarding something. Haunts are ghosts that were placed using necromantic power, which sets them apart from spontaneous occurrences of stranding.

GHOSTLY ABILITIES

Here are abilities that ghosts can learn and use. *In general*, ghosts have *up to* 1 ability per strength.

- **Jump Scare.** *2 strength.* The ghost can basically yell "boo" but usually with rotting face, bursting into flames, zooming at the victims, or other theatrics. The ghost may go for the scare, or affect the target's food, held objects, slam a door behind the target, and so on. Targets are hit for Terror, difficulty the ghost's base strength +1 per strength spent on the scare (including the 2 to use it.) Even if the event or sight is not that scary, there is a supernatural throb of vicious supernatural energy.
- **Killing Touch.** *4 strength.* The touch of the ghost inflicts 1 Wound a round that ignores armor, most talents, and Awesome Points spent to reduce it. The affected victim counts as pinned, unable to use a move action.
- **Move Object.** *1 strength.* Close a door, move a cup, knock on something, shift a curtain. Taken twice, objects can be moved fast enough to inflict 1 Wound or have 4 Brawn for a push. Each subsequent time this is taken, another Wound is possible, and the ability can move bigger objects. Each Wound or +1 size use takes +1 strength too.
- **Possession.** *4 strength +1 per Commitment of target.* The possession usually lasts 1 minute per strength, but it can be taken again to increase to 10 minutes per, and again to 1 hour per. The target can spend 1 Awesome Point to make the ghost spend 1 more strength, up to all Awesome Points.
- **Seal.** *8 strength.* A haunted location can be sealed. Doors and windows crash shut. If someone does somehow get out, they run only to find themselves back at the site of the haunting. This can last up to 6 hours per the ghost's strength; that's usually more than enough. It usually deactivates at dawn, but time can move oddly while a site is sealed.
- **Sensory Trace.** *1 strength.* A faint sound, a glimpse of movement, a touch, a smell. This lasts up to 10 seconds per use. Taken again, the sensory impression can be clear, and last up to a minute or so. Taken a third time, the sense can be overwhelming enough to make those in the arena -2 to rolls, or to

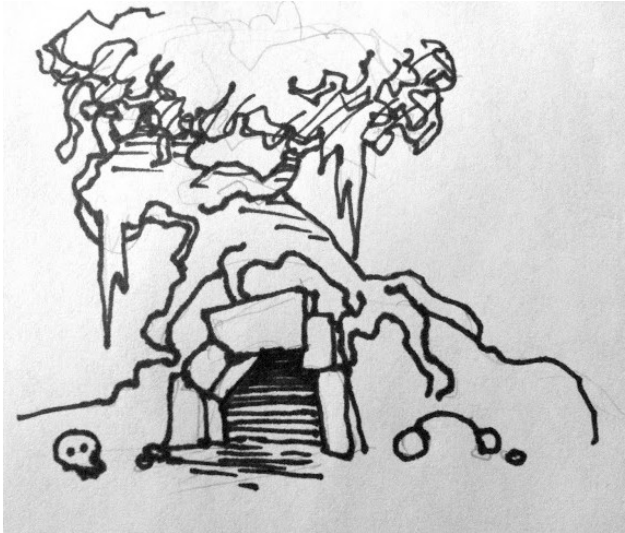
make a noise as loud as a scream or crashing thunder (or to pass as a living person). Or, each time this is taken it can encompass another sense.

- **Writing.** *1 strength per phrase/word.* The ghost can frost a surface for 2 strength, or write on a fogged window or in sand. For 2 strength, the ghost may generate blood or ectoplasm to write with.

MEDIUM

Some humans have a talent for interacting with ghosts. DMs can allow these talents to be taken at creation, or gift them to characters (who do not then get a talent when they level next.) These talents are usually triggered by near-death experiences, out-of-body experiences, infusions of necromantic energies, devotion to a death god, the death of a profoundly loved one, gaining the attention of powerful undead, and other unpleasant circumstances.

Some necromancers are born with one of these talents. To gain one of these talents, there are rituals they can undertake that kill them. They either come back with a talent for dealing with the undead, or stay dead.



- **Sensitive.** *Constant.*** As a focus action (upgrades to move action) you can sense the presence of ghostly or necromantic energy in your arena. This can be upgraded to allow you to see and hear ghosts if they are present, even if they are invisible and silent to others.
- **Medium.** *Rested.*** As a ritual taking a few minutes, you can link hands with others, or risk contacting the other side of the Veil alone. Give up 1 Commitment (points return at the rate of 1 per hour of sleep, upgrading grants 2 more available points). Any restless ghosts or spirits may draw from your Commitment instead of their strength to manifest signs of themselves or use supernatural energies. (Upgrade this talent to gain the ability to voluntarily end their use of your Commitment.) Those who do not know they are mediums may inadvertently strengthen ghostly activity. Ghosts may possess, but if hand contact is broken, the ghost is ejected.

USAGE EXAMPLES AND SUGGESTIONS

- **The Lady of Charlaek.** On the anniversary of the night of her death, she is rumored to walk the west parapet where she fell. Sometimes people go up to watch for her. Sometimes they freeze to death, or fall from the height; this is attributed to carelessness and drunkenness, but it fuels the legend.
 - **Strength 4.** She has Possession, Jump Scare, and Move Object. She was a Finisher, trying to get people to find her body down in the tumble of rocks and put her to rest. She already took care of her lover, who pushed her off the wall when he found she was pregnant. He was the first one she killed. When people stopped looking, she became a Vengeful Spirit.
 - She can manifest up to 4 times in a year, she does all that leading up to or the night of the anniversary. She wants to kill one person a year, to keep attention focused on her unresolved need. She possesses people to try to make them look for her body, but

through the Veil all she can do is quote her lover's love poetry at them and then make them dive off the wall. Now she's so angry all she does is kill.

- **Darbol's Laboratory.** The evil necromancer tortured people to death, then tortured their spirits. There are about 50 echoes down in his lab, with 1 or 2 strength each and Sensory Trace and/or Jump Scare. Anyone searching down there will have a rough time of it, as their life energy will attract the echoes and agitate them. The effort of sorting out blood stains and meat jerky remains of victims and putting ghosts to rest would be a major project.
- **Lord Farley's Mansion.** It was his, not his family's. He built it, died in it, and was buried in the basement under heavy-duty protections. The house will always be his. He brutally kills anyone who tries to take his house over.
 - **Strength 10.** He has Jump Scare, Move Object, Seal, and Killing Touch. He uses the traps in the house to kill intruders, screwing up attempts to delicately circumvent them (or re-activating disabled traps.) He is buried with a chunk of ghost rock that boosts his powers. He is confident nothing can get into his coffin to end him.
 - **Strength 3.** Valira, his wife, died here too. She is buried with him and wants to be released. She will use Move Object, Writing, and Sensory Trace to help them put her to rest.
- **Captain Urecht's Stash.** When the pirate captain buried the stash, he killed four of his men and left their bodies with it. His necromancer bound them to protect the treasure. They will kill to keep it hidden.
 - **Strength 2.** They all have Move Object twice, so they can animate their skeletons and fight. Those who think the fight is then over will take the treasure, but the ghosts are still bound to it and will continue trying to kill those who own it. They get about two chances a year each. Without their own skeletons, they'll have to get creative, but they can still inflict Wounds.

GHOST HUNTERS

Here are some sample reasons people might want to hunt ghosts.

- If a spirit is unquiet, it is suffering; compassion for the spirit and the relatives demands these agonized spirits be released to their final reward. I don't know why I have a talent for this, but I must use it.
- Justice is precious. A ghost is like rotting stench; both are useful for revealing the presence of a dead body. The ghost usually means something evil or unjust happened, so it is our friend for putting things right (even if it has gone insane in the meantime and must be destroyed.)
- I didn't believe they existed, but now I do. I still believe they *shouldn't* exist. The world has no room for things like this anymore. Every ghost that goes to its rest is a step away from a magic-drenched and supernaturally dependent past.
- Revenge. A ghost took away someone I cared about a great deal. I want to stop that from happening to others. More, I want the murderous dead to suffer the same fear and pain they caused my family and me. I want them to feel fear, to be torn to pieces screaming, and I want them to know I did it.
- People get attached to treasure. They kill for it, they die for it, and they resent each other for all that killing and dying. Ghosts are like big red flags, "thar be treasure." Wipe the ectoplasm and curses off it, and you can make a lot of money. Or, sell it caveat emptor as-is to your enemies and rivals.

VAMPIRE (TEMPLATE)

Called “the Damned” for a reason, these lost souls are shadows of people, now undead demonic monsters. Vampires are dead people, and they cannot return to life.

INHERENT ABILITIES

- **Bite and Drain.** As a focus action, bite the target, and drain up to 2 Wounds a round. Every 2 Wounds drained heal you 1 Wound. Once bitten, the target must pass a Commitment test difficulty 12 to act, otherwise enthralled until released.
- **Unholy Might.** Gain +2 to Brawn tests, and inflict an additional +1 Wounds in hand-to-hand or weapon combat (not ranged, unless throwing a weapon.) Ignore the first Wound from any attack that does not involve magic, blessed objects, fire, or sunlight.

LIMITATIONS

- **Holy Vulnerability.** Take 1 Wound touching a holy symbol (amulet, blessed water, carving on a door, etc); if on a weapon, +1 Wound.
- **Hunger.** Lose 1 Wound every 12 hours from hunger. Only blood feeds this unholy starvation.
- **Shadow.** Cast no reflection in mirrors, unable to cast any wizard or cleric spells or be a shaman; the only spellcasting open to a vampire is learning necromancy. Death is destruction; nothing waits. You have a waxy complexion, smell faintly of the grave, are chill to the touch, and you never blink.
- **Sunlight Allergy.** Take damage when exposed to sunlight. Take 1 Wound each round for each part exposed (head, torso, 1 per arm, 1 per leg, up to 6.) If not fully exposed (wearing heavy clothes, only beams of sunlight, etc.) take 1 Wound each minute. If completely covered, but still in sunlight, take 1 Wound per hour of exposure.

HOW TO STOP A VAMPIRE

- **Decapitation.** Strike as a focus action with a big enough blade and inflict a Wound.
- **Energy.** Sunlight, fire, massive crushing kinetic energy, divine energy.
- **Stake.** Pound a stake into a vampire’s heart by striking as a focus action against the target’s chest with an appropriate weapon and inflict a Wound. The wooden shaft piercing the heart will immobilize the vampire until the stake is removed—but it also disables the hunger, so the vampire does not take damage from starvation.

TALENTS (None can be used untrained.)

- **Create Vampire.** *Rested.* Focus action each session. Bite a target and drain 2 Wounds of blood for one session—this can take up to an hour, or be as swift as a focus action. Do this once per the target’s Commitment rating. If more than a week passes between bites, you must start over. Once you have had a draining session with the target once more than the target’s Commitment, the victim dies. Then 1d5 days later, the victim rises as a vampire at dusk.
- **Daywalker.** *Constant.* Counts as a level of coverage; direct sun does 1 Wound per minute; if partially covered, 1 per hour; if completely covered, no damage.
- **Hypnotic Gaze.** *Constant.* Focus action (upgrade to defend). Look into a target’s eyes—the target must be in the same or an adjacent arena. Test Charm, the result is a difficulty for the target’s Commitment test. If you succeed, you can implant a suggestion to be acted upon within the next 24

hours, that will not directly lead to injury or death for the target. The exception is the command to accept biting from the vampire and forget the incident—that can be deadly.

- **Strange Movement.** *Rested.* As a focus action (upgrade to move), activate this talent to defy physics to move three-dimensionally. This can be levitation, crawling on walls or ceilings, turning to mist, or shattering into a mass of vermin. Take a focus action up to 1 hour later to turn normal physics back on (and, if necessary, recorporate.)
- **Unreal Stealth.** *Constant.* Add your level to your Cunning bonus any time you want to be stealthy. If your bonus is double the target's Awareness, you can move in the open and among the targets without triggering an Awareness test to see you, unless you attack, shout, run, or attract attention.

Every 100 years of undeath, a vampire can develop a new talent based on how they have been using their undead curse. Other vampires who have made powers not on this list may share their learning with you.



WEREWOLF (TEMPLATE)

This is not a superpower—it is a curse. Those infected are doomed to hurt people they care about, kill the innocent, and lose control of their lives. They transform in a gristly horror show into an animal, or a hybrid monster. Ultimately they must be hunted down with silver and fire. A rare few learn control from mystics and sorcerers, or find magic talismans to help. The only hope for a cure is divine intervention.

INHERENT—POWER OF THE WOLF

In wolf or wolfman form, ignore the first 2 Wounds from any attack that does not involve silver or fire. As a focus action at night, you can transform to a wolf (slightly bigger than most) or a wolfman form (about +1/2 human size.) Wolf form can move 2 arenas as a move action, or move and attack as one action. Jaws count as a light weapon. Wolfman form can attack as a hand weapon with claws and jaws. Sunlight transforms you back to your human form. To wizards, you appear faintly enchanted.

LIMITATIONS

- **Dead Magic.** You cannot cast spells of any kind in wolf or wolfman form.
- **Lunacy.** The three nights of the full moon, as soon as the moon rises you turn into a wolf or wolfman form (DM choice) and rampage around howling and carrying on, muzzily regaining consciousness around dawn, remembering nothing and covered with evidence of your escapades.
- **Silver Allergy.** Attacks with silver do an additional 1d5 wounds and require 24 hours of rest to heal.
- **Temper.** If provoked, you may have to test Commitment to keep your cool and not let the inner beast show. The DM sets the difficulty; 6 for a minor frustration, 9 for successful taunting, 12 for actual danger or humiliation, and 15 for desperate circumstances like imminent deadly threat to your child.

TALENTS

- **Full Moon Control.** *Constant.* You retain your own mind and control during nights of the full moon. *This talent cannot be used unless it is trained and purchased.*
- **Transformation Control.** *Constant.* You can change forms at will, not relying on day, night, moon cycles, and so on. *This talent cannot be used unless it is trained and purchased.*
- **Wolf Senses.** *Constant.* Your sense of smell is so acute in any form that you can follow a trail by scent alone. Each scent barrier requires a test at a difficulty set by the DM. Also, your hearing and sight are enhanced, so you are +4 to Awareness tests, and your senses stretch out so adjacent arenas count as being your arena for purposes of noticing things. If confronted with a powerful stimulant (hot pepper flakes, undead stench, wolfsbane, intense garlic) you might have a penalty of up to -4 to rolls for attribute tests and hitting in combat until it is removed. You can instead turn your senses down, if not caught by surprise, to avoid the penalty.
- **Wolf Strength.** *Constant.* In wolf form, you get +2 Brawn and do +1 Wound to all attacks. In wolfman form, you get +4 Brawn and do +2 Wounds to all attacks.
- **Infectious.** *Rested.* Focus action. Attack a human target in wolf or wolfman form, and if you score a Wound, then the target is infected with lycanthropy. Next full moon, your target will become a werewolf.

FEY CREATURES

Fey Traits

- **Iron Allergy.** All fey feel intense pain if cold iron (not forged) touches them. A cold iron object can inflict up to 1 Wound with a touch. An attack with a cold iron object does +1 Wound to them.

Roll once on each of the following charts to custom-build a fey creature.

	Size (and Wounds)	Intelligence	Malice	Wealth (can offer)	Body Type
1	Fit in your hand	Animal	Friendly	None	Fungus
2	Long as your forearm	Child	Careless	Illusory	Cute, Chibi
3	Half human size	Human	Annoyed	Troublesome trinket*	Ugly, Warts
4	Human size	Genius	Holds a grudge	Treasure**	Alien Beauty
5	Human size +1/2	Idiot-savant****	Hates humans	Offers service***	Bestial

	Troublesome Trinket*	Treasure**
1	Mirror shows you your heart's desire	Crystal bottle, 1 drop from it heals any wound
2	Love potion, works for 1d10 days (or years)	Self-playing harp full of beautiful music
3	Bag that produces illusory coins, last 1 hour	Pouch always full of bland, nourishing pellets
4	Comb that, while worn, makes a woman pretty	Dagger on a cord, points towards your target
5	Pipe full of pleasant dreams while smoked	Hunting horn that always summons help
6	Stone that turns lead to gold—for a while	Quiver that always has arrows in it
7	Pebble you can place, immovable to all but you	Necklace doubles your Charm
8	Pearl, inspires everyone with desire to own it	Cloak, all under it is invisible
9	Book with an absorbing story, never ends	Ring, you land gracefully, no falling damage
10	Small rock, instantly kills those who kiss it.	Diamond worth 10,000 gold

	Offers Service***	Idiot Savant****
1	Will take you to Ardenwald now or later	Skilled killer (+1d5 Wounds per attack)
2	Until the sun next rises, will do anything	Connected with fey (1d5 Contacts)
3	Will give you a boon from the Court	Encyclopedic knowledge of lore
4	Service for a year and a day (or until released)	Counterspells 1 spell a round at will
5	Service for life, until released by you or Court	Instant counter/calculator

Motive (1d5) Why? Who knows. They don't think like we do.

1. On a mission for the Seelie Court, interrupted in transit.
2. On a mission for the Unseelie Court, interrupted in transit.
3. Assigned to an outpost for observing the local area.
4. Encountered while on vacation, hanging out looking for amusement.
5. Sent as a messenger to the characters, to manipulate them (rather than communicate).
 1. A more powerful fey interest wants to test them and has arranged a challenge to see how they respond to various influences—are they greedy? Heroic? Clever? Respectful?
 2. A more powerful fey interest wants someone rescued, and will use them to do it.
 3. A more powerful fey interest wants a threat quashed, and has chosen the character(s) to do it.



4. A more powerful fey interest has fallen in love with one of them, and wants to lure them in.
5. A more powerful fey is a parent to one of them, secretly, and has chosen to make contact.

Finishing Touches

Roll 2d10: the first die is 0 for 1-5, 1 for 6-10. The second die is the “ones” place. (So a roll of [1, 6] would be 06, and a roll of [6, 1] would be 11.)

For fastest results, roll once and take that result for each column. For more fun results, roll twice on each column. Choose or reroll to get the results that you want.

	Feature	Ability	Irritant
1	Kaleidoscopic color shifts	Blind you with eye contact	Eat anything, always eating
2	Delicate wings	Can fly 2 arenas a round	Wants to sit on you
3	Weird skin texture/condition	Create illusory wealth at will	Likes to copy what you say
4	Covered in fur	Create spectral mount for travel	Speaks in rhyme
5	Looks passably human	Invisible at will	Endless “pull my finger” jokes
6	Clearly elvish influence	Can grant 1d5 AP at will	Sheds glitter dust
7	Too thin, unsettling	Heal 1 Wound per touch	Hungers and thirsts for human
8	Impossible to see clearly	Shed light at will	Dies in sunlight
9	Dressed elegantly in lace	Sage and loremaster	Easily distracted, no memory
10	Skilled musician	Can protect from elements	Collects something avidly
11	Rimed with frost	Can make food and water	Snarky, sarcastic
12	Pitch black	Guide, or glamer confused trail	Addicted to gambling
13	Wrinkled and elderly	Big favor bank with fey	Lures humans to Ardenwald
14	Has interdimensional lair	Cast 5 fey talents	Always leaks/vomits/sneezes
15	Armed with moonsilver blades	Grant 1 genuine wish a year	Curses things to smell of poop
16	Answers questions with stories	Grant 3 pyrrhic wishes a year	Needs focus action to find gear
17	Pure white	Shapeshifter	Prankster with ventriloquism
18	Emits atonal pretty purring	Can grant water breathing	Wants impractical romances
19	Lives in a mirror, can step out	Can grant flight	Never ever shuts up
20	Animated liquid shape	Can lift curse	Bossy—in charge, or sulky



SOME FEY

Djinn

5 Wounds. No armor (but can wear armor.) Human size and intelligence. Its natural form is incorporeal, brilliant blue or red, with an Eastern cast to its features. It doesn't care about humanity, but it can pretend to if that's convenient.

- **Iron Allergy.** Feels intense pain if touched by cold iron (not forged). A cold iron object can inflict up to 1 Wound with a touch. An attack with a cold iron object does +1 Wound to them.
- **Flight.** Can fly up to 5 arenas a round in any direction, corporeally or not.
- **Incorporeal.** At will once per round, can shift in and out of solidity. When incorporeal, can only be touched by a 10 on the Face Die.
- **Wish.** Can grant 1 genuine wish a year, or 3 twisted wishes. (Offer 1 or 3 wishes, to punish greed.)

Doppelganger

4 Wounds. No armor (but can wear armor.) Human size and intelligence. Its natural form has an alien beauty in unnaturally smooth and featureless skin colored gray. They hate humanity.

- **Iron Allergy.** Feels intense pain if touched by cold iron (not forged). A cold iron object can inflict up to 1 Wound with a touch. An attack with a cold iron object does +1 Wound to them.
- **Shapeshifter.** It can take on any human appearance, complete with voice and clothes, at will as a focus action.

Dryad

2 Wounds. No armor. Human size and intelligence. All female. Her natural form is green skin with bark clothing and leafy hair. She usually finds humans amusing.

- **Iron Allergy.** Feels intense pain if touched by cold iron (not forged). A cold iron object can inflict up to 1 Wound with a touch. An attack with a cold iron object does +1 Wound to them.
- **Tree Connection.** She ignores the first Wound from any non-magic non-iron attack. So does her tree. The two of them share a pool of 10 Wounds between them, plus her 2. Both scream and bleed when struck for damage. She can merge with her tree. No mystic sight can reveal which tree is hers, but druids know.
- **Fey Treasure.** At DM discretion, she may have 1 troublesome trinket or fey treasure to offer.

Fairy of Healing

1 Wound. No armor. Fits in a palm. Flies up to 2 arenas a round. Natural form glows like a candle and sheds glittering dust. Usually finds humans amusing.

- **Iron Allergy.** Feels intense pain if touched by cold iron (not forged). A cold iron object can inflict up to 1 Wound with a touch. An attack with a cold iron object does +1 Wound to them.
- **Healing.** Can heal 1 Wound using a focus action.

Mound-Thing

5 Wounds. Medium armor. Twice human size. An energy being formed of gathering together rotting vegetation and plant life to form a body. Usually summoned/created as an assassin or guardian.

- **Animator.** 3 AP. Focus action. It can raise 2d5 wounds of constructs from greenery in its arena.
- **Grappler.** 1 AP. It impedes the target, gaining its Wounds as a bonus to the roll. As long as it successfully impedes the target, the target is -1 to all rolls per the grappler's Wounds.
- **Natural Weapons.** *Constant.* Reach and heavy both at once.
- **Natural Camo.** *Constant.* In forest or swamp it is almost invisible; Awareness difficulty 15 to spot it holding still, 12 if it is creeping, and 9 if it is running. (You can boost the difficulty with Awesome Points to the Bowl.)

Nymph

2 Wounds. No armor. Human size and intelligence. All female. Her natural form is water colors (a great variety) and flowing hair that appears as if underwater. She usually finds humans amusing.

- **Iron Allergy.** Feels intense pain if touched by cold iron (not forged). A cold iron object can inflict up to 1 Wound with a touch. An attack with a cold iron object does +1 Wound to them.
- **Water Kiss.** She can kiss a human as a focus action, and either grant the human the ability to breathe underwater for a few hours, or inflict 1d5 +1 Wounds of drowning.
- **Swimmer.** She can move up to 5 arenas a round through the water, and move others with her at will.
- **Fey Treasure.** At DM discretion, she may have 1 troublesome trinket or fey treasure to offer.

Redcap

2 Wounds. No armor. Half human size, human intelligence. Natural form is a gnarled figure like a tree root, the size of a child, with a red hat and a long pale knife. Hates humans, wants to kill them all.

- **Iron Allergy.** Feels intense pain if touched by cold iron (not forged). A cold iron object can inflict up to 1 Wound with a touch. An attack with a cold iron object does +1 Wound to them.
- **Sharp.** Ignores 1 soak, whether from armor or Awesome Points. The knife counts as a hand weapon.
- **Amazing Dodge.** It can dodge up to 2 Wounds inflicted by using Awesome Points.

Satyr

2 Wounds. No armor. Human size and intelligence. All male. His natural form is goat-colored (a great variety) and kinked hair in a mane around curling horns and tusks. Usually finds humans amusing and wants to mate with attractive women. Goat legs and cloven hooves, human torso and arms. Heads vary.

- **Iron Allergy.** Feels intense pain if touched by cold iron (not forged). A cold iron object can inflict up to 1 Wound with a touch. An attack with a cold iron object does +1 Wound to them.
- **Glamered Guide.** Can play pipes to reveal a hidden path and lead others (even in the dark.) The same talent allows a path to be confused and magically hidden so it takes an Awareness 15 test to see it through the glamer.

Sentient Tree

10 Wounds. Heavy armor. Double human size. Basic human intelligence. It looks like a tree that can develop anthropomorphic features. It is usually awake because it has to be, so tends to be grumpy.

- **Hulking.** *Constant.* Add 4 Brawn, and +2 extra Wounds of damage per attack.
- **Invulnerable Except Fire.** *Constant.* Ignore the first 5 Wounds from any attack that does not involve fire.

Will-o-Wisp

1 Wound. No armor. Head-size, low intelligence. Natural form looks like a lantern from a distance, and can move up to 2 arenas per round. Tremendous malice towards humans, wants to lead them to danger and watch them die.

- **Iron Allergy.** Feels intense pain if touched by cold iron (not forged). A cold iron object can inflict up to 1 Wound with a touch. An attack with a cold iron object does +1 Wound to them.
- **Hypnotic.** Test Commitment difficulty 6 not to follow it, and once following it, 10 to tear away (and 15 once the path is clearly dangerous.)

FEY-BASED DEMI-HUMANS

It is strongly recommended that all players make human characters. Here are some insights into alien fey-based creatures that can move among humans and pretend to be like them. This is a thematic description. All have 1 Wound to begin, and can wear armor and use weapons as appropriate for their size and shape.

Elementalists

Scholars think these elemental-powered fey creatures are the mixing of elementals, or fey nobles from distant realms in the Ardenwald, with humans. They have affinity for air, fire, water, earth, and shadow. Some cannot pass for humans, others can. None seem to stay in the World Between for very long. The elementalists taught humans mastery of the world, at the cost of a natural place in it.

Elf

They are alien, graceful, beautiful, and dispassionate. Their motives and thoughts are not human. They are capricious and untrustworthy by their very nature. They look more human than other fey, but they are not. Only the eladrian, their ruling caste of knights and spellcasters, take extra damage from iron. The drow are elves that have chosen evil, and revel in the results. (Drow look just like all other elves.) The elves first taught spellcasting to humans, and stole from them innate self-knowledge.

Dwarf

Squat and powerful, these warrior-artisans labor to twine matter and energy together in beautiful and functional ways. They have strange powers of creation, and strange appetites rooted in a powerful fusion of greed and vengefulness. They can give powerful gifts, but the cost is often more than it seems. The dwarves taught humans the art of architecture, and in so doing instilled jealousy within them.

Gnome

Slight as children and nimble as acrobats, all gnomes are capable of illusion magic. They are cheery masters of misdirection, delighted by the strange idea of individual ownership and the easy reaction it provokes in less fey targets. They also have a gift for creating objects that are not what they seem, and towards that end they have developed breathtaking craftsmanship. Vanishingly few in numbers, most publically visible gnomes are either inventors or stage performers. The gnomes taught humanity politics, with all its gifts and curses.

Goblin

Wildly diverse in appearance, goblins are the citizenry of Ardenwald. Some escape to the World Between. Goblins are the perverse innovators, pushing the boundaries between natural and supernatural with their wildly imaginative machinery. Goblins taught humanity mechanics, and science, with all its gifts and curses.

Halfling/Feydin/Boggies

They look like fat children, and scholars suspect they are the result of unions between fey and humanity. They inherit and magnify humanity's appetites for comfort, food, and material success. They appear a caricature of humanity as seen by the fey; short-sighted, grasping, overindulged liars. They call themselves the Feydin, but humans tend to call them halflings (to be respectful) or boggies (to be honest.) They all have curly hair and stubby tails the length of one of their fat fingers that wiggles when they are excited. They didn't teach anyone anything.

MONSTERS

Theme. Monsters have a visual and textural theme. Roll 1d10 or choose.

1. Reptilian.
2. Shadowy and amorphous, leaks darkness.
3. An element; roll 1d5. 1. Flame, 2. Water, 3. Earth, 4. Air, 5. Combine 2.
4. Hide and tusks, like an elephant or rhino.
5. Humanoid, with a shiny leather wrapping.
6. Undead.
7. Chitinous and insectoid.
8. Spider-like, with lots of extra limbs and eyes.
9. Essentially an energy being, a body pulled together out of victims and local material.
10. Built out of eye-stinging runes that arc with energy and hiss with smoke.

Wounds. Monsters have 6-15 [5+1d10] wounds. Roll or choose.

- **Size.** They stand about 1 foot tall (or long) per Wound. They weigh about 100 pounds per Wound.

Natural Weaponry. Monsters have 0-4 [1d5-1] weaponized appendage sets. Roll for each, or choose.

- 1-2. Light. (+1d5 to hit)
- 3-4. Hand.
5. Reach.
- 6-7. Heavy.
- 8-9. Very Heavy.
10. Ranged. Ranged type is 1d5.
 1. Spit acid.
 2. Fire spines.
 3. Throw stuff hard.
 4. Eject minions.
 5. Psychic pyrokinesis.

- Depending on the monster, note whether each weapon type gets an independent attack or whether the creature attacks all-out. An all-out attack gets the advantages of every weapon type for a single attack.
 - For example, a creature with light, hand, reach, and heavy weapons could get a +2 to hit for arena advantage if in any of the weapon types apply. The creature would roll the best dice (hand, 3d10) with the light weapon bonus (+1d5 determined at generation) and do 2 Wounds (heavy) and would be +2 to impede or escape impeding (reach).

Intellect. How smart is this thing? 1d5.

1. Not really responsive to normal stimulus.
2. Animal intelligence.
3. Monster cunning. (20% chance of speech.)
4. Human intelligence. (50% chance of speech.)
5. Genius. (80% chance of speech.)

Natural Armor. How good is its armor? 1d5.

1. None
2. Light
3. Medium
4. Heavy.
5. Super Heavy.

If there is a chance of speech, go ahead and determine whether or not your monster can talk or leave it as a chance per specimen encountered.

MONSTER TALENTS

Monsters have 1-5 Talents.

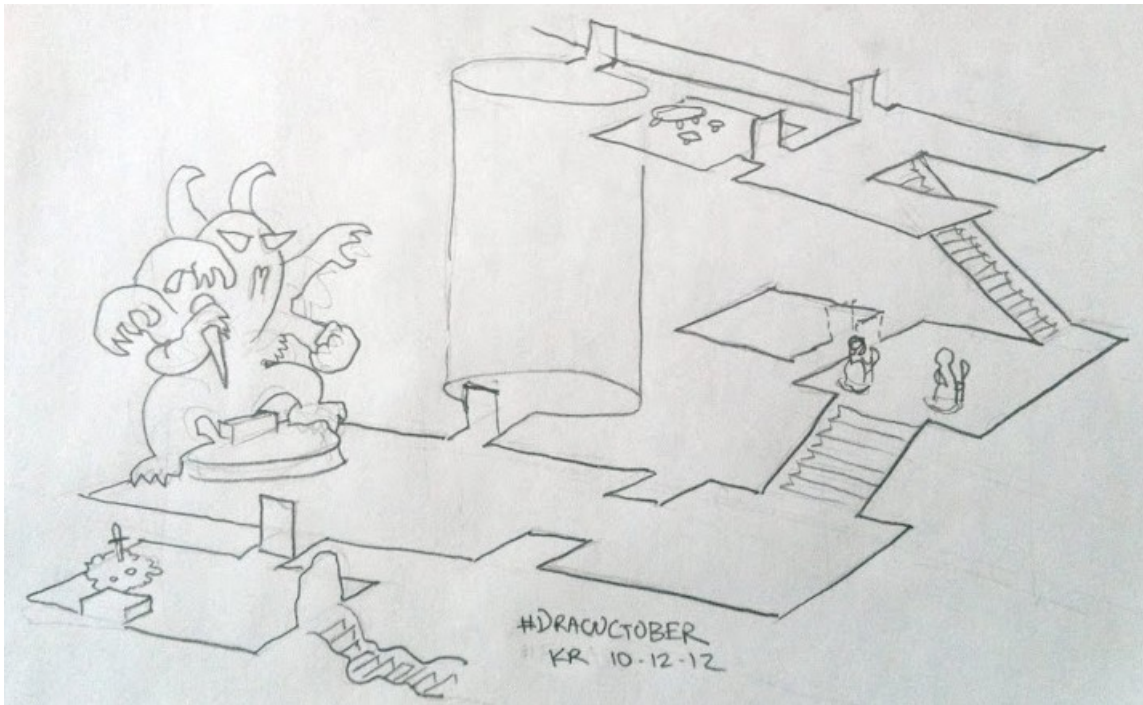
1. **Acidic.** *Constant.* When a weapon hits it, the weapon is rendered useless by its magical corrosion. The attacker can negate this effect with 2 Awesome Points. The monster can strike at a character and reduce the character's armor by 1 level per Wound the armor absorbs.
2. **Adhesive Grip.** *Constant.* It can walk on walls and upside down as easily as on the ground.
3. **Aging Assault.** *1 AP.* When it hits, the target ages 1d10 years and takes an additional Wound.
4. **Aquatic.** *Constant.* It can breathe water and is equipped to move unhindered in water.
5. **Armed.** *Constant.* Give the monster another set of natural weapons.
6. **Authoritative.** *Constant.* It can control a number of Wounds of creatures or toughs per its maximum Wounds, and any number of minions. These creatures will willingly die for the monster. Only those who agree to serve it are bound in this way, it is not an attack against enemies.
7. **Bargainer.** *Constant.* It can make a trade with a character, reducing Commitment and increasing another attribute. It keeps 1 of every 3 moved. If the target doesn't have enough Commitment, it can harvest permanent Wounds instead.
8. **Blinding.** *1 AP.* One attack type can blind the target, inflicting a -5 on Awareness and to-hit rolls per assault.
9. **Blinker.** *Constant.* If it rolls 7+ on 1d10 when it is hit, it blinks out of the way. It cannot avoid a 10 on the Face Die.
10. **Breathe Death.** *3 AP.* Focus action. Affects 3 half arenas adjacent to each other (in a row, or around it, etc; it is not harmed by its own attack.) All those in that space take 3 Wounds. Those who can reach cover and test Daring difficulty 10 take 1 Wound.
11. **Breathless Aura.** *Constant.* Those in its arena cannot breathe. They count as drowning for each round they are in its influence. (p. 59)
12. **Caress.** *2 AP.* As a focus action, it touches a target in melee. That target must pass a Commitment test difficulty 10 or be paralyzed for a minute.
13. **Carrionbelch.** *3 AP.* It can vomit out a mass of half-digested carrion (or equivalent) that inflicts 3 Wounds on those who do not dodge, 2 Wounds on those who



fail a Daring dodge, and 1 Wound to those who are splashed by the runoff. Any creature killed by this attack rises as the monster's minion.

14. **Chameleon.** *Constant.* It can activate this ability to become almost invisible; Awareness difficulty 15 to spot it holding still, 12 if it is creeping, and 9 if it is running. (You can boost the difficulty with Awesome Points to the Bowl.)
15. **Chosen and Blessed.** *1 AP.* Assign a spell list, it can cast 1d5 of that god's spells. For 3 AP, it can upgrade its speed of casting by 1 increment.
16. **Darkbreather.** *3 AP.* As a shoot action, it can fill its arena with pitch darkness. It can still see.
17. **Deathfarts.** *1 AP.* Any time it is hit, or takes a focus action (even to do something else), it can fill its arena with noxious gas. The gas lasts for the rest of the fight. Anyone in an arena with the gas must test Brawn or Commitment difficulty 10 to act and not gag, clutching at watering stinging eyes.
18. **Deathnode.** *3 AP.* Focus action. It can raise 2d5 Wounds of servitor undead from corpses in its arena.
19. **Deathtouch.** *2 AP.* If it hits a target and inflicts a Wound, it can choose to infuse it with death energy; Brawn or Commitment save difficulty 10 or drop dead.
20. **Disarm.** *Constant.* If it rolls a 10 on the Face Die, it knocks one of the target's weapons into an adjacent arena in addition to doing damage.
21. **Disorient.** *1 AP.* When it hits a target, whether it inflicts a Wound or not, the target loses an action.
22. **Displacer Field.** *Constant.* Always on unless it is voluntarily off, projecting a weird haze around the monster so it cannot be seen clearly. Attacks requiring sight are -4 to hit. A 10 on the Face Die allows the attacker to ignore the field, but does not do +1 Wound.
23. **Dodge.** *2 AP.* Split the AP between the bowl and the one attacking, allow the monster to automatically dodge one attack each round.
24. **Dominator.** *3 AP.* As a focus action, it stares at someone in its arena or an adjacent arena. The target must pass a Commitment test difficulty 10 or be the monster's slave for an hour.
25. **Eat Life.** *3 AP.* If it strikes a blow that takes the target to 0 or fewer Wounds, it can use this power to drain the last of the life into itself. It gains 1 Wound, and the target dies beyond recall. If the target has 5+ maximum wounds, the creature gains an extra permanent Wound.
26. **Enervating Venom.** *Constant.* Anyone hit with this attack loses 1d5 Brawn. Targets reduced to -3 go limp for 1d5 hours, but are still aware of pain and surroundings. Nothing can revive them faster (unless there is an antidote).
27. **Entombed.** *5 AP to the bowl only.* When it dies, it reforms in a specific place (its tomb, holy site, etc.) 2d10 hours later. The site must be desecrated/destroyed to end the creature for good.
28. **Exhaustive.** *1 AP.* As a free shoot action, it can target a character and exhaust all the target's talents. As a focus action, it can exhaust all talents of those in its arena.

29. **Explosive.** *Constant.* When it dies, everyone in the arena takes 3 Wounds; 2 Wounds for targets who attempt to dodge with a Daring test difficulty 10 and fail, 1 Wound for those who succeed.
30. **Extra Sense.** *Constant.* 1d5. 1, darkvision. 2, infravision. 3, echolocation. 4, psychic sensitivity. 5, taste the air.
31. **Fast.** *Constant.* It gets +2 on Initiative tests, and can move 2 arenas a round, or move and act.
32. **Filthy.** *Constant.* When it inflicts a Wound, the target must test Brawn difficulty 7 or be infected. Infected targets take cumulative -2 to all rolls each day, and -1 Wound a day, until magically healed or treated by a skilled healer. Reaching 0 Wounds means unconsciousness, and death the next day if untreated.



33. **Flight.** *Constant.* It can move 3 arenas per round, including up (5-6 yard vertical move is 1 arena.)
34. **Force Ring.** 3 AP. Everyone in melee is flung to an adjacent arena directly away from the monster; if thrown into something, take 0-4 (1d5-1) Wounds. This counts as a push move, difficulty to resist is 15 and successful resistance takes a Wound from pressure. It is a free action for the monster, up to once a round.
35. **Freezing.** *Constant.* It inflicts +1 Wound of cold or paralytic damage with its natural attacks. Those hit must pass a Brawn test difficulty 10 or lose their next action.
36. **Friendmask.** 3 AP. Focus action. The monster creates an illusion so any attacks on it are randomized between it and others in the arena. If the numbers don't divide easily, a greater chance is on the monster. It can use this before combat begins to appear as a friend to the characters, though this talent does not give it the ability to speak if it can't already (it can make noise in combat to be convincing.)

37. **Grappler.** *1 AP.* It impedes the target, gaining its Wounds as a bonus to the roll. As long as it successfully impedes the target, the target is -1 to all rolls per the grappler's Wounds.
38. **Gutmoss Lurcher.** *3 AP.* Focus action. It can vomit out a mossy mass of horrific slime that has half the monster's original Wounds, and counts as having light armor.
39. **Hallucinogens.** *Constant.* Anyone hit with this attack loses 1d5 Awareness. Targets reduced to -3 suffer from visions and are unable to tell them apart from reality. 1d5: 1, go catatonic. 2, frenzied attack of the nearest target, friend or foe. 3, sobbing and weeping. 4, powerful religious experience. 5, the brain or heart seizes up and the character keels over dead.
40. **Hard Skull.** *Constant.* Hits to its head (and face) cannot do more than 1 Wound.
41. **Howl.** *1 AP.* Howl as a focus action, all those in hearing are -2 to all rolls unless they pass a Commitment test difficulty 10. This stacks with intimidation.
42. **Hulking.** *Constant.* Add 2 Wounds and 4 Brawn and +2 extra Wounds of damage per attack.
43. **Humanshape.** *Constant.* As a focus action, it can appear to be human. As a free action during the move phase, it sheds its form and looks like a monster again.
44. **Hypnotic Draw.** *3 AP.* This activates as a shoot action. Those in the current arena must test Commitment difficulty 10 to act, or they walk up to the monster, limp for a round, changing their action to a move action. Those in adjacent arenas must pass a Commitment difficulty 6 test or change their action to move, approaching the monster. Anyone taking a Wound is snapped out of it.
45. **Illusion.** *Constant.* It appears to be something other than what it is.
46. **Implant.** *3 AP.* If the monster successfully impedes the target, the target is implanted with something like eggs. After 1d5 days, the eggs hatch, messily killing the target and allowing a swarm (1d5 Wounds for the birthing, hundreds of them) of monster spawn to scuttle in all directions.
47. **Inflict Feeble Curse.** *1 AP.* As a focus action, it hits a target with a feeble curse (random or assigned.) There is no defense.
48. **Inflict Major Curse.** *6 AP.* As a focus action, it hits a target with a major curse (random or assigned.) There is no defense.



49. **Inflict Minor Curse.** *3 AP.* As a focus action, it hits a target with a minor curse (random or assigned.) There is no defense.
50. **Invulnerable Except Acid.** *Constant.* Ignore the first 5 Wounds from any attack that does not involve acid.
51. **Invulnerable Except Blessed.** *Constant.* Ignore the first 5 Wounds from any attack that does not involve the blessing and energy of a god.
52. **Invulnerable Except Fire.** *Constant.* Ignore the first 5 Wounds from any attack that does not involve fire.
53. **Invulnerable Except Magic.** *Constant.* Ignore the first 5 Wounds from any attack that does not involve an enchanted weapon or wizard spell.
54. **Invulnerable Except Silver.** *Constant.* Ignore the first 5 Wounds from any attack that does not involve silver.
55. **Invulnerable Except Starmetal.** *Constant.* Ignore the first 5 Wounds from any attack that does not involve starmetal.
56. **Joined in Death.** *Constant.* When it dies, everyone in its arena must test Commitment difficulty 10 or they die with it.
57. **Lash.** *1 AP.* The target takes 2 Wounds and flies to an adjacent arena, taking a hit for 0-1 Wounds upon landing (depending on what it hits.)
58. **Lethal Venom.** *3 AP.* When it hits, it can choose to inject venom; the target's base difficulty on a Brawn test is equal to the creature's maximum wounds. Failure means death in 1d5 rounds.
59. **Lifedrain.** *3 AP.* When it strikes as a focus action, half the damage it inflicts heals its Wounds.
60. **Meatridder.** *3 AP.* Focus action. It can eject a cone of writhing grubs that burrow into any exposed flesh they touch; roll 1d10 per the monster's remaining wounds, take the top 2 to hit anyone in the area. Targets may test Daring difficulty 10 to get out of the way of the cone (if possible.) Those who are hit take 1 Wound at the end of each round; the only way to end the effect is to pass a Cunning or Daring test difficulty 12 as a Focus action (resolved before they take 1 Wound) to yank grubs off of and out of flesh. Others can help.
61. **Memory Drain.** *3 AP.* Focus action. The monster drains memory from the target; sometimes this is lethal, sometimes not. Sometimes the target is left a vegetable, sometimes only the memory of the assault is erased. The monster gets 1d5 useful facts a round from the process, and it inflicts 1 Wound a round.
62. **Mimic.** *Constant.* It can imitate sounds; specific people talking, a crying baby, whatever seems useful for putting prey off guard and luring them into the dark. The smarter the monster, the more dangerous this power. The imitation is perfect; only a flaw in how it is presented, or what the voice says, can reveal the trick.
63. **Mind Milk.** *Constant.* The "milk" takes different forms, but the monster exudes a substance that overwhelms up to 5 Commitment and grants the target +2 Wounds, +2 Brawn, and +1 Wound

inflicted with its hits. The target is mindless and obedient and can telepathically communicate with the monster. This lasts about 3 days per dose of “milk.” Accepting the substance is a focus action. (This is often used to increase the obedience and combat ability of a slave population.) Awareness can sometimes detect the influence if the subject is trying to pretend nothing is wrong.

64. **Mistform.** *3 AP.* It can assume an incorporeal form as a focus action, and move 1 arena a round as mist moves. It takes a focus action to reform.
65. **Multiple Heads/Limbs.** *Constant.* It has 2d5 heads. Half the heads will usually use protect actions for the body. Each head can take 2 Wounds before being too crippled to fight on; this does not count towards its Wounds.
66. **Nightmarish.** *Constant.* Those who encounter it are plagued with nightmares about the encounter. If they win a decisive victory against the monster, they can make a Commitment test difficulty 10 to end the dreams. Otherwise, not.
67. **Paralysis.** *3 AP.* When it strikes a target, the target must beat a Brawn or Commitment test difficulty 10 or be frozen for the rest of the fight. The monster can project this ability as a focus action, affecting everyone in the arena.
68. **Petrification.** *Constant.* When it dies, it turns to stone. The last weapon to strike it is locked in stone unless the attacker passes a Daring test difficulty 10 or the weapon was blunt.
69. **Phoenix.** *10 AP to the bowl only.* If slain, it rises again nearby in 2d10 hours, furious. It can only be destroyed if its ashes are mixed with blessed water (or some other hilarious method, up to the DM.)
70. **Pounce.** *3 AP.* It can land on its target(s) in a current or adjacent arena, doing 1 Wound per its maximum Wounds. This can be distributed among closely clustered targets. Aware targets who pass a Daring difficulty 10 test can get out of the way, and the Wounds assigned to them hit the ground instead.
71. **Psychic Chant.** *3 AP.* As a focus action, it can chant into the minds of all those in its arena and adjacent arenas. Those affected must pass a Commitment test difficulty 10 to act at all.
72. **Psychic Pin.** *1 AP a round to the Bowl per target.* Psychic force immobilizes a target in the same arena or an adjacent arena. Resisting the force and getting free requires a Commitment or Brawn test difficulty 15, and counts as the move action. The pin happens during the move phase and does not cost an action, but can be applied to up to 1 target per the monster’s 5 wounds each round.

73. **Pull.** *1 AP.* Make a range attack in the current or an adjacent arena. If successful, it does no damage, but instead yanks the target close enough for a melee attack. The target and the monster test initiative, the monster gets +2. If either of them hit, they inflict +1 Wound for pulling in the same arena, or +2 if pulling from an adjacent arena.

74. **Regeneration.** *1 AP per wound.* It can automatically regenerate 1 Wound during the defend/protect phase, and if it chooses to use a focus action, it can regenerate 5 Wounds.

75. **Restraints.** *Constant.* It can restrain targets, taking 1 focus action per their Brawn or Cunning rating. The target can only escape if assisted from the outside, or if possessed of a tiny blade near at hand and then making a Cunning test difficulty 12.

76. **Ring of Retribution.** *Constant.* Every character that scores a Wound on the creature in melee range is hit by an attack roll of 18 for 1 Wound. (If the retribution is magical or psychic and ignores defenses, it costs 1 AP per use but can be used as often as the DM wants.)

77. **Rotbite.** *Constant.* Anyone hit with this attack loses 1d5 Wounds. If taken to 0, the target is automatically bleeding out. Gangrene and putrescence sets in the moment the attack hits. Targets must rest for at least 6 hours with competent medical care before rotbite wounds heal. If taken to 0 Wounds, 30 hours.

78. **Rotbreath.** *6 AP.* As a focus action, it breathes in a 45 degree cone, at least 1 arena long. Everyone in the cone must pass a Brawn or Commitment save difficulty 10 or lose 2d5 Wounds; those that make the save take 1d5 Wounds.

79. **Scream.** *3 AP.* Shoot action. All those in the monster's arena, and adjacent arenas, test Brawn, Daring, or Commitment difficulty 10 or lose an action.

80. **Sensitive.** *Constant.* It can sense magic, see invisible items, and automatically detect the living.

81. **Slick.** *3 AP.* As a focus action, it can beslime an arena so it is a Brawn or Cunning difficulty 10 to successfully move across it and not fall down and wallow for a round.

82. **Snap.** *1 AP.* Destroy a shield with an attack, instead of injuring the target's Wounds or armor.



83. **Spelleater.** *3 AP.* When it hits a spellcaster, all the spellcaster's spells count as used.
84. **Spellproofed.** *Constant.* Runes carved into the monster deflect magic. If it is targeted by magic, and it rolls 5+ on 1d10, it ignores the magic effect.
85. **Starving Maw.** *3 AP.* When it rolls a critical to hit while biting, the jaws distend (supernaturally if necessary) and snatch the target into its guts, where the targets take 0-4 (1d5-1) wounds each round. Only light weapons can be used inside. If the monster is killed, the target can cut its way out in 1 more round.
86. **Stench.** *Constant.* Awareness is +5 to detect this monster, but all those in melee range suffer a -2 to hit and to all attribute tests because of the horrible stink; it digs into pores, into eyes, crawls into sinuses. It is not just a stink, it is a supernatural horror and it hates everything but its carrier.
87. **Strong.** *Constant.* It inflicts +1 Wound with a hit, and can double its damage at 1 AP per additional Wound (half to the Bowl, half to the target). It gets +4 Brawn and will feed the Bowl up to double its bonus.
88. **Swarmhide.** *Constant.* Its hide swarms with bugs, or something like bugs. Each time it is wounded, a swarm ejects into its arena that will spend itself automatically disrupting any focus action in that arena or an adjacent arena. It can eject 1d5 swarms as a focus action (even if it takes a Wound.)
89. **Tear Armor.** *1 AP.* When it hits, spend 2 AP to reduce the target's armor by 1 level in addition to damage. Up to all the target's armor can be ripped off with this attack. Half the points go to the victim.
90. **Telepathic Link.** *5 AP.* As a focus action on a cornered target, the monster can implant a psychic link that allows it to spy on the target's thoughts. The target can also manage to cull basic information from the link, one fact per day per Commitment. Each fact inflicts a Wound of strain on the victim. The monster can track the linked target.
91. **Teleportation.** *3 AP.* It can teleport up to 3 arenas through any obstacles as a focus action.
92. **Tentacle Cluster.** *Constant.* A protruding mass of tentacles can whip and attack of its own volition as a tough with a reach weapon.
93. **Tentacle Defense.** *Constant.* One attack a round near the tentacle mass rolls 1 fewer die to hit.
94. **Unerring Tracker.** *Constant.* Once it meets a creature, if it decides to, it can track that creature across dimensions for as long as the target lives.
95. **Vicious.** *Constant.* It can add 1 Wound per 2 AP spent, without limit. Half the Awesome Points go to the victim.
96. **Vine-ish Restraint.** *Constant.* Tendrils can restrain targets in the same arena or an adjacent arena. There are about 20 vine-equivalents, and each one offers 1d10 towards restraining the target; keep the top 2 for the result on an impede test. This is a free attack for the monster. Cornered targets are drawn towards the monster; a move action, or if in the same arena, an attack action.

97. **Webgush.** *3 AP.* It can spray out a mass of webbing that impedes everyone in an arena, or half an arena. The impeding strands have an impede score of 17 (instead of rolling) and 3 Wounds, -1 Wound a minute.
98. **Whispers.** *Constant.* At will, it releases psychic/audible whispers that haunt those in its arena with half-heard terrifying voices that seem familiar somehow. Targets must pass Commitment difficulty 10 tests to act.
99. **Wizard.** *1 AP.* Assign a grimore or base wizard talents, it can cast 1d5 of those spells. For 3 AP, it can cast one increment faster.
100. **Worry.** *1 AP.* If the monster successfully impedes, the target is one less die to hit and -4 to all rolls.

FLAWS

Monsters have 0-2 [1d5-3] flaws. Roll 2d10 for each.

2. **Cocky.** It overestimates itself and underestimates its foes. Goes for drama instead of quick victory.
3. **Delicious.** The monster's meat is savory, tender, and desirable to humans and other predators.
4. **Feeding Restriction.** 1d5. 1, little boys. 2, little girls. 3, women. 4, men. 5, religious types. Make up other categories if you like.
5. **Herbal Allergy.** It is -4 in the presence of a certain herb, visibly uncomfortable in the same arena and in pain within melee range.
6. **Highly Flammable.** If set ablaze, it loses 1d5 Wounds a round and thrashes around until it dies. Then it explodes the next round, doing 3 Wounds to those in melee range who don't dodge, 2 to those who try to, and 1 to those who leap out of the way on a Daring difficulty 10 test.
7. **Insecure.** At its core, it is worried that it isn't good enough, so it requires outside reinforcement; fawning minions, terrified foes, etc. It is easily provoked, and easily goaded into paranoia.
8. **Iron Allergy.** If it touches iron, it takes 1 Wound after a round, and another after a further minute of contact. Iron weapons do +1 Wound. It senses iron in its arena and in adjacent arenas.
9. **Light Allergy.** If exposed to the equivalent of daylight, it dies if it rolls above a 5 on 1d10. It can see fine in the dark.
10. **Light Sensitive.** In daylight or equivalent, it is -4 to all rolls. It can see fine in the dark.
11. **Obsessive/Compulsive.** Confronted with a riddle, maze, counting game, or other specific brain teaser (just one kind) it is compelled to solve the riddle before it can act further. This can take 1d5 rounds, minutes, or hours, depending on the puzzle's size and complexity.
12. **Popular Components.** Its fluids, bones, meat, organs, etc. provide spell components for some common and sought after magical effects.
13. **Purity.** If struck by a virgin, in addition to any damage, if it rolls above a 5 on 1d10 it dies. It will not attack virgins.

14. **Repelled by Salt.** It cannot cross a line of salt, and if struck with salt it takes 1 Wound.
15. **Running Water.** If it touches running water for an entire round, it takes 1 Wound it can't soak.
16. **Silver Allergy.** If touched by silver, it dies if it rolls above a 5 on 1d10. It can sense silver in its arena.
17. **Stake-able.** If struck for at least 1 Wound by a stake made of a certain kind of tree, it dies.
18. **Territorial.** It likes to stay in its comfort zone, in its territory. It is compelled to attack intruders, and if it is forced out of its territory it is -2 on all rolls until it finds or makes a new territory or gets home.
19. **Unreflective.** Its reflection shows its true form even if it appears to be something else. Or, if it does not use illusions and can't pass for human, it flees from its reflection in a mirror as big as its head.
20. **Well Known.** Weaknesses, powers, and habits are common knowledge locally.



SAMPLE MONSTERS

Here are some monsters that characters might need to hunt, escape, or fight. These baselines are a place to start; it is encouraged to adjust them to fit your needs with bigger or smaller, more or less skilled versions. The notes do not attempt to be exhaustive, describing all sensory capabilities and mating habits and capabilities. Here are some quick-start monsters—fill in the blanks as you need to.

In general, attribute bonuses are the same as Wounds. Improvise as needed.

- Add +2 for Awareness senses as appropriate.
- Add +2 to stability and movement for those with 4 legs.
- For monsters over 10 Wounds, halve the attribute bonus for everything but Brawn.

Babbler. Amorphous blob about twice the size of a human, covered in crazy eyes and babbling mouths.

- 6 Wounds. No armor. Can attack as any weapon type. Never fails a Commitment test.
 - **Crazy Talk.** It babbles all the time; those in the same arena must test Commitment every round, difficulty 10. Those who fail either run at least 2 arenas away or take 1 Wound. Ear protection does not help at all.
 - **Munch and Drain.** 1 AP. It gets 5 dice to attack that can be directed against up to 5 targets, each die like a minion. If it attacks as a focus action, it inflicts an additional 2 Wounds of blood loss.
 - **Amorphous.** It ignores the first Wound from any attack. Those in hand to hand range must test Daring difficulty 6 each round during the defend/protect phase or lose their footing and be unable to act in the round.

Bear Owl. Towering over 10 feet tall, it is heavily muscled and thickly furred. Its staring yellow eyes flank a killing beak that can snap a horse's head clean off in one bite.

- 12 Wounds. Medium armor. Claws and beak as heavy weapon, +1 Wound (3).
 - **Savage.** Always spends 2 AP to add 1 Wound to its damage.
 - **Tough.** Always spends 2 AP to ignore the first Wound from an attack, if necessary.

Blinkbeak. Hideous beaked biped made mostly of mouth. This thing exists in reality and in the energy next to reality.

- 6 Wounds. Light armor. Beak and claws as heavy weapons.
 - **Blinker.** 1 AP. If it is hit, it can flicker out of the way by rolling 7+ on 1d10. It cannot avoid hits "to the face."
 - **Half Real.** It is immune to being impeded, grappled, or pushed.

Blurbeast. Like a huge puma with two extra legs and two whip tendrils from its shoulders, all black.

- 6 Wounds. Light armor. Tentacles as reach weapons, claws and jaws as heavy weapons.
 - **Displacer Field.** Always on unless it is voluntarily off. A weird haze around the creature so it cannot be clearly seen, and a tooth-jarring buzz. Attacks requiring sight are -4 to hit.

Devilfish. Like an octopus, also capable of acting in marshes and freshwater. Amphibious.

- 5 Wounds. No armor.
 - **Tentacles.** It can use up to 6 of its 8 tentacles a round. A tentacle can attack as a minion (groups can cooperate), as a light shield, as +4 to move or resist moving, or +2 Brawn to a grapple test.
 - **Beak.** The beak bites grappled targets only, ignoring up to 2 armor soak and doing 2 Wounds.

Dragon. House-sized body with a 15 foot neck and massive bony skull weapon, packed with wicked intellect and greed and savagery. Four long legs end in gristly talons. Two leathern wings and a vicious whip of a tail 20 feet long. This is the king of monsters.

- 20 Wounds. Very heavy armor. Attacks as all weapon types but light (rolls 3d10 to hit and keeps highest 2, +2 to impede or prevent impeding, does 3 Wounds.)
 - **Back Arena.** Its back counts as a hazardous arena.
 - **Breathe Flame.** 3 APs. Affects 3 half-arenas adjacent to each other. Inflicts 5 Wounds to all in that space. Those who can test Daring difficulty 9 who can get to cover may take 3 Wounds instead.
 - **Flight.** It can fly up to 3 arenas a round.
 - **Lash.** 1 AP. Tail hit inflicts 3 Wounds and flings the target to an adjacent arena; if the target hits something dangerous, the target takes an additional 2 Wounds as a separate hit.
 - **Pounce.** 3 AP. Land on a target in the current or an adjacent arena, roll to hit once to hit up to 4 targets in a cluster for 4 Wounds each.
 - **Spellcaster.** 2 AP each. The dragon can be outfitted as spells that are cast as move actions, no focus actions needed.
 - **Weaponized Skull.** Takes no extra damage from a hit to the face. Adds 1 Wound to bite damage per AP put in the Bowl, no limit.

Drake. Coach-sized body with a 10 foot neck. Lots of fangs, not much brains. A 12 foot tail has a venomous stinger. 2 legs, 2 wings.

- 10 Wounds. Light armor. Claws and jaws as heavy weapons. Stinger as a reach weapon.
 - **Swoop.** 1 AP. During a move action, swoop past a target striking with feet at -2 to hit, doing 4 Wounds if successful.
 - **Tearing Bite.** 1 AP or a hit to the face. Ruin 1 level of armor instead of doing 1 Wound, do 2 Wounds (or 2 levels of ruined armor.) Does not cost an Awesome Point if scoring a hit to the face.
 - **Venom Barb.** 1 AP. The wyvern takes an extra reach weapon attack. If the stinger scores a Wound, the target is poisoned, losing 1 Brawn a round. When the target reaches -1 Brawn, the target dies.

Frost Giant. About 40 feet tall, about 2 arenas.

- 12 Wounds. Heavy armor. Axe is 12 foot long, does 6 Wounds.
 - **Snowsouls.** 1 AP each, up to 5. Can release souls from the axe to take shape in snow and ice, creating minions, as a focus action. They last about an hour. They do +1 Wound from cold.
 - **Stomp.** 1 AP. Stomp as a focus action on a target in the same arena. If the target does not dodge, the target dies. If the target tries to dodge (Daring difficulty 10) and fails, 4 Wounds. If passing, 2 Wounds.
 - **Wind Ally.** 1 AP. Attacks as reach, heavy, and very heavy weapon, can attack adjacent arenas with melee weapons. Can move up to 2 arenas 3 dimensionally if in wind colder than freezing.

Gargoyle. Looks like a demented carved statue with wings.

- 6 Wounds. Heavy armor. Claws and jaws count as hand weapon. It can fly 2 arenas a round.
 - **Stony.** Awareness difficulty 9 to realize it is alive, difficulty 6 in melee range. It ignores the first Wound from any attack.

Hellhound. Coal black, eyes and mouth glowing red-hot, terrifying.

- 2 Wounds. Light armor. Claws and jaws count as heavy weapon.
 - **Fast.** Move 2 arenas a round, or move and attack as 1 action.

- **Howl.** *1 AP.* Focus action. All those who can hear this howl are -2 on everything unless they pass a Commitment test difficulty 9.
- **Hotmouth.** *1 AP.* Do +2 Wounds from a bite attack in a gust of searing hellish heat.

Hellskitoes. Fist-sized black insectoid horrors with hummingbird wings and deep bloodlust.

- Killed by 1 Wound. Need 10 to hit.
 - **Blood Drain.** If it succeeds in a focus action attack with 1d10, it ignores armor and grips the target. If it is still attached the next round, it draws 1 Brawn. It can draw up to 3 Brawn before it is full, then it lets go and flies away as a wobbly move action. Brawn returns 1 per hour of bed rest.
 - **Horrible Buzz.** It can hover around a target's face, automatically disrupting focus actions and making all rolls -2 to hit. Up to 3 can do this per target.

Hydra. Cottage-sized body with necks 12 feet long, each capped with a befangled bone nightmare of a head. They like to back into an alcove to fight. Usually half the heads defend the body.

- 15 Wounds (+2 per head for the head itself.) Light armor. Bites as heavy weapon.
 - **Breathe Flame.** *2 AP per head.* Covers a full arena in any direction. Damage is 2 Wounds per head breathing fire in that direction. Dodging the flame is Daring difficulty 7, +2 per head contributing fire. If successful dodging, take half damage.

Mind Flayer. About the size of a fat chicken, these hideous wet leather things grip a skull and eat the brain, then use the body as a vehicle until it bores them.

- 1 Wound. No natural armor. Capable of leaping and floating, attaches to skull with successful impede (it is +3 to impede.)
 - **Brainride.** Once it is attached, it can inflict 1 Wound a round as it bores down towards and eventually into the brain. Once rooted, it inherits the body's Daring and Brawn. It prefers to sit on the skull in a conical hat or big wig, but it can push most of its organs down in the skull to ride with a low profile.
 - **Mindblast.** It can automatically disable 2d5 Commitment worth of thinking processes in its arena or an adjacent arena each round. Blasted Commitment returns at the rate of 1 per hour. Those reaching -1 are unconscious for an hour.

Ogre. About 12 feet tall, usually either gaunt and hard or fat and sloppy. Vicious, love eating humans.

- 10 Wounds. No natural armor, can wear armor. Hand weapon attack unarmed, can use weapons.
 - **Terrifying Bite.** If it hits "to the face" it can attempt to impede for free. If it succeeds, the target is stuffed into its supernaturally distended gullet and bit for 3 Wounds each round as a free action until killed and swallowed. Must succeed in a move action in a subsequent round to escape.
 - **Strong.** The ogre has 10 Brawn and does +2 to all attacks (also ranged, if using muscles.)

Sewer Dumpling. Disgusting leathery lump with three stubby legs and two abrasive whip tentacles. A third tentacle has two eyes so it can scout outside its pool of murk without exposing itself. It eats garbage, supplemented with incautious meat.

- 10 Wounds. Medium armor. Tentacles count as reach and heavy weapons, bite as very heavy.
 - **Filthy.** If it inflicts a Wound, the target must test Brawn difficulty 7. If the target succeeds, the target gets a fever and some discomfort for a few days. If not, the target is -2 to all dice rolls and loses 1 Wound every day. This Wound cannot be healed normally, but must be healed by magic or a skilled healer.

Tentacle Crawler. Like a caterpillar three feet thick and fifteen feet long, with sucker feet, compound eyes, and a writhing mass of tentacles over its mouth.

- 6 Wounds. Light armor. Crawls on ceilings and walls as easily as the ground.
 - **Caress.** Roll 1d10 to hit per tentacle committed to a target (up to 8.) Cannot inflict Wounds. Instead, when it hits, the target must test Commitment difficulty 9 or be frozen rigid for about a minute.
 - **Long Chew.** The crawler inflicts 1 Wound per minute of gnawing a target. Ignores armor.
 - **Tentacle Mass.** 2 AP. Reduce attacks near the head by 1 die to hit. Declare before the roll.

Troll. Looming at 12 feet, this monstrosity has greenish knobbled hide, bristling black hair, and soulless pits for eyes. It can see in the dark.

- 14 Wounds. Heavy armor. Claws and jaws count as heavy weapons.
 - **Brimming With Life.** Every round it can regenerate up to 3 Wounds at the cost of 1 AP each, all to the Bowl. It cannot regenerate from fire or acid, track those Wounds separately. It must roll 13+ on the critical chart to be truly killed.
 - **Savage.** It will always spend 2 Awesome Points to do +1 Wound.
 - **Tough.** It will always spend 2 Awesome Points to take 1 fewer Wounds.



WARBANDS

Here are some warbands already assembled so you can use them quickly and easily. Feel free to custom build your own NPCs and arrange your own warbands! Part of the nature of this game is to encourage rapid preparation and play, so sometimes it is helpful to have a grouping of opponents together so you can run them as-is, adjusting on the fly as necessary.

Attribute Bonuses. Make up whatever attribute bonuses you want, as long as they fit in appropriate limits. For a general guideline, NPCs get a bonus equal to their maximum Wounds for what they do well.

Balance. In general, you can probably have 2 minions per character, 1 tough per character, and a leader type without putting your characters in too much desperate danger. Double that every 5 levels or so. Adjust weapons, armor, and talents too.

- By those guidelines, a group of 4 players could face off with a warband of 8 minions, 4 toughs, and a leader type and still expect to win. For 6th level characters, 15 minions, 10 toughs, and 2 leaders might be a better challenge.

Balance is really not the most important element; clever tactical play, negotiation, and retreat are also important tools for characters.

UNDEAD

Vampire's Entourage

- **Vampire.** 4 Wounds. Medium armor. Heavy weapon and shield (with shield talent.)
 - **Daywalker.** Only takes damage if in the sun for a minute unshielded.
 - **Hypnotic Gaze.** *Constant.* Defend action. Test 1d10+4, generate difficulty for target Commitment. Can implant suggestions, nothing dangerous (except to accept a bite.)
 - **Unreal Stealth.** +8 to stealth rolls, can move quietly in plain view unseen unless viewers have 4+ Awareness.
- **Young Vampire.** 2 Wounds. No armor. Hand weapon.
 - **Hypnotic Gaze.** *Constant.* Defend action. Test 1d10+4, generate difficulty for target Commitment. Can implant suggestions, nothing dangerous (except to accept a bite.)
 - **Unreal Stealth.** +8 to stealth rolls, can move quietly in plain view unseen unless viewers have 4+ Awareness.

Vampire Traits. +2 Brawn. +1 Wound in hand to hand. Ignore 1 Wound from attacks not involving magic, blessed objects, fire, or sunlight. Focus action to bite and drain 2 Wounds, get 1 back, target must pass Commitment difficulty 12 to act.

Take +1 Wound touching holy things or being hit with blessed weapons. Lose 1 Wound every 12 hours. Cast no reflection. Young vampires take 1 Wound a round per part exposed to sun, or 1 a minute if covered.

Decapitate with focus action with big enough blade inflicting at least 1 Wound. Strike chest as focus action with appropriate weapon and inflict a Wound to stake the vampire, disabling hunger and movement.

- **Soldiers.** 2 Wounds. Medium armor. Hand weapon and shield.

Necromancer's Entourage

- **Necromancer.** 3 Wounds. No armor. Reach weapon.
 - **Raise Minion.** *Constant.* Raise up to 15 between periods of rest, 1 a round or up to 3 a round if feeding the bowl 1 Awesome Point for each. Need bodies in the arena.
 - **Raise Tough.** *Arena.* Focus action to raise remains as a tough, can have 3 Death Talents.
 - **Life and Death.** *Rested.* Focus. Drain 1 Wound from touched target, regain 1 Wound for self or touched undead.
- **Tough Undead.** 2 Wounds. Medium armor (ignores 1 Wound too). Heavy weapon, does 3 Wounds.
 - **Life Drainer.** *Arena.* Focus action, drain 2 Wounds, tough gets 1.
 - **Mighty.** +2 Brawn, +1 Wound in melee.
 - **Tough.** Ignores first Wound dealt by any attack.
- **Undead Hounds.** 1 Wound. No armor (ignores 1 Wound). Fight as a minion.
 - **Tough.** Ignores first Wound dealt by any attack.
 - **Fast.** Can move twice or move and attack as 1 action.
- **Undead Bird Scout.** Destroyed by 1 Wound of damage. No armor or weapon. Difficulty 12 to hit. Scouts and reports back to the necromancer.
- **Remains.** Minion. 1 Wound. No armor. No weapon modifiers.

Black Warlock's Entourage

- **Black Warlock.** 4 Wounds. Heavy armor. Heavy weapon (life-drinker, every 2 Wounds inflicted gives the wielder 1 back) and shield. Can speak any language.
 - **Bolster Undead.** *Rested.* Focus. All undead in arena and adjacent ignore first Wound, even from blessed sources; affect up to 20 Wounds.
 - **Counter Energy.** *Rested.* Defend/protect, intercept magic, 1d10+10 vs. caster's level +1d10. On a success, they take 1 Wound, spell is lost. On a failure, take 1 Wound, spell goes off.
 - **Master of the Living.** *Constant.* +8 to Intimidate or resist intimidation. Inflict 8 Horror.
 - **Master of the Undead.** *Constant.* Undead will not attack you, they show respect, telepathic communication with undead.
 - **Rouse the Dead.** *Rested.* Focus. Spend up to 10 Awesome Points, convert into Wounds or Death Talents to raise corpses. Those with more than 1 Wound have basic intelligence.
- **Tough Undead Interrogator.** 4 Wounds. Heavy armor. Heavy weapon and shield.
 - **Paralyzer.** *Arena.* Touch, target test Commitment difficulty 10 or be immobilized for 1 min.
- **Tough Undead.** 3 Wounds. Medium armor (ignores 1 Wound too). Heavy weapon, does 3 Wounds.
 - **Mighty.** +2 Brawn, +1 Wound in melee.
 - **Tough.** Ignores first Wound dealt by any attack.
- **Remains.** Minion. 1 Wound. No armor. No weapon modifiers.
- **Beetle Swarm.** *Swarm.* 5 Wounds. Each Wound is spent disrupting 1 focus action in the same or an adjacent arena. They are in the Black Warlock's cloak, they can fly.

Haunted Battlefield

- **Vengeful Phantom General.** Strength 6 ghost. (6 times a year, 6 strength per manifestation.)
 - **Jump Scare.** *2 Strength.* Target 8 Terror, +1 per further Strength spent.
 - **Possession.** *4 Strength +1 per Commitment of target.* About 1 minute per strength, can be made more expensive if target spends Awesome Points to resist (1 for 1 strength).
- **Undead Hero.** 4 Wounds. Heavy armor (ignores first Wound also). Heavy weapon (4 Wounds).
 - **Stench.** Those in melee range pass Commitment difficulty 10 or be -2 in range +1 minute.
 - **Terrifying.** Test Commitment difficulty 10 or flee.
 - **Tough, Strong.**
- **Finisher Wizard.** Strength 8 ghost. (8 times a year, 8 strength per manifestation.)
 - **Killing Touch.** *4 Strength.* 1 Wound a round ignoring armor and most talents, cannot be reduced with Awesome Points. Affected victim counts as pinned, can't use move action.
 - **Writing.** *1 Strength per word or phrase.*
 - **Sensory Trace.** *1 Strength.* Gives a hint or sign that it is present.
 - *Wants staff returned and remains found and laid to rest.*
- **Remains.** *Minions.* 1 Wound. Medium armor.
- **Echoes.** No stats. They march or battle as echoes of what they did in life, harmless and invulnerable.

Mord-Stavian Raiders

- **Undying Automaton War Leader.** 10 Wounds. Very heavy armor. Very heavy weapon.
 - **Unliving Construction.** Immune to intimidation. Ignores extra Wounds from spending APs.
 - **Gruesome Kill.** Inflict 1 more Wound than necessary killing foe, messily destroy target; inflict 8 Horror, those who can't handle it flee.
 - **Rebuilt.** Regain 1 Wound during the Defend phase of every round, until rolling 13+ on the roll after running out of Wounds.
- **Necromancer Advisor.** 4 Wounds. No armor. Hand weapon. Ring of Protection: ignore 1 Wound from every attack.
 - **Counter Energy.** 8+1d10 vs. caster level +1d10 to counterspell, win and inflict 1 Wound and stop spell; lose, take 1 Wound and spell goes off.
 - **Rouse the Dead.** *Rested.* Focus. Spend up to 10 Awesome Points, convert into Wounds or Death Talents to raise corpses. Those with more than 1 Wound have basic intelligence.
 - **Dodge.** *1 AP.* When hit with a melee attack roll 1d10. If you get 7+, the attack misses.
 - **Sensitive Medium.** Can feed up to 4 strength to ghosts. Can communicate with them.
- **Monstrosity.** 8 Wounds. Medium armor. Reach and heavy weapon (+2 Wounds inflicted). Free extra Life Drainer attack, inflict 2 Wounds as a focus action to get 1 back. If it rests 10 minutes, it is healed.
- **Undead Marines.** 2 Wounds. Light armor. Hand weapon.
- **Undead Troops.** *Minion.* 1 Wound. Medium armor.
- **Incorporeal Scout.** Bound to necromancer's pendant. Strength 4. Can manifest and spend up to 4 points per manifestation. Can refill strength from necromancer. Can use Sensory Trace to whisper.

RAIDERS

Bestial Raiders

- **Minotaur.** 7 Wounds. Heavy armor. Hide is light armor. Uses very heavy weapon with 3d10 to hit. Horn, fist, or hoof attack for heavy weapon.
 - **Charger.** Move and attack for +2 to hit or +1 Wound.
 - **Savage.** Always spends 2 Awesome Points to inflict +1 Wound.
 - **Amazing.** Never gets lost, and can navigate any maze (even enchanted ones) flawlessly.
- **Ram-Head Shaman.** 2 Wounds. No armor. Heavy weapon. Unarmed, light weapon.
 - **Ghost Strike.** Can strike ghosts and spirits as though they were physical. Use this with a melee weapon or a thrown weapon. Ignore physical armor on targets.
 - **Converse with Dead.** Can summon and speak to the dead.
- **Deer-Head Chiefs.** 4 Wounds. Medium armor. Use heavy weapon. Unarmed, light weapon.
 - **Alert.** Cannot be surprised, 8 Awareness.
- **Goat-Head Troops.** 2 Wounds. No armor. Hand weapon.

Orc Warband (Fang Guardians)

Thick black fur, gorilla faces, long arms, squat, white tusks. They like the feel of metal on their fur. They have a nagging cough. If they can blow off steam now and then, they can behave themselves. They like to take their time hunting prey. They last up to 20 years.

- **Orc Warboss.** *Gladiator 5.* 8 Wounds. Heavy armor. Paired hand weapons.
 - **Feint.** Roll simultaneously in combat, trade 1 or 2 dice with opponent.
 - **Make it Look Good.** Make target -2 to attributes instead of 1 Wound.
 - **Roll With It.** 3 APs to reduce 2 Wounds.
 - **Show Off.** Work the crowd, get 1 Wound back or get 2 APs.
- **Orc Wizard.** *Wizard 3.* 2 Wounds.
 - **Mystic.** Can see magic workings and leave magic marks.
 - **Counter-Spell.** Both roll 1d10 + level, winner chooses spell go or not, loser takes 1 Wound.
 - **Menace.** Focus. +5 bonus to Intimidate (7). Recover from intimidation.
- **Orc Elites.** 2 Wounds. Heavy armor. Heavy weapon.
- **Orc Grunts.** *Minion.* 1 Wound. Medium armor.
- **War Boar.** 2 Wounds. Ignore first Wound from any attack. Attack as heavy weapon.
 - **Mount.** Move 2 arenas a round. Use horse rules for mounted combat.

Faithless Bandits

- **Faithless Leader.** 4 Wounds. Medium armor. Heavy weapon. +8 Cunning for stealth.
 - **Eyes of Terror.** They can see in the dark, eyes give +4 (8) intimidate or resist intimidation.
- **Bandit Chief.** 3 Wounds. Light armor. Hand weapon.
 - **Double-Dog Dare.** *Constant.* Use subtle or blunt techniques to question another person's courage, honor, and financial security in ways that motivate them to wager even when the wager is unwise. If you win an opposed roll with Cunning against their Commitment or Cunning, they place a bet. The softer side of this talent is used to set up cons, losing until it gets "interesting" and then winning decisively.
- **Snake Shaman.** 1 Wound. No armor. Hand weapon.
 - **Passage.** *Rested.* Focus action. Open and close walls, floors, and ceilings made of stone or earth. Move 5 cubic yards of material, for creating or collapsing doors, pits, and tunnels. Those who would be caught can test Daring difficulty 7 to leap to safety, if it is possible.
- **Faithless Raiders.** 2 Wounds. Medium armor. Heavy weapon. +6 Cunning for stealth.
 - **Eyes of Terror.** They can see in the dark, eyes give +4 (6) intimidate or resist intimidation.
- **Bandit Raiders.** *Minion.* 1 Wound. Light armor.

Assassins

- **Expert Assassin.** *Assassin 10.* 3 Wounds. No armor. Hand weapon, light range weapon.
 - **Silent Death.** Roll 1d10 on unsuspecting target, diff Wounds +1 per armor level; success, the target is dead.
 - **Low Profile.** +2 difficulty to detect status as assassin, or +2 to stealth. (Cunning 6)
 - **Reach Target.** *Constant.* Push those defending a target to hit the target.
 - **Targeted Strike.** *Constant.* Focus action is +10 to hit.
- **Illusionist.** *Illusionist 5.* 3 Wounds. No armor. Reach weapon.
 - **Disguise.** *Rested.* Move action. Appear to be someone else, either a generic type or a specific person. To convincingly copy a person, Cunning (5) must equal or exceed their highest ability. This lasts for 1 hour per Cunning. It covers voice, clothing, mannerisms, and other visual and tactile details. Grow or shrink by ½ and change gender or race. Do not gain equipment, or the memories or abilities of the target. This only works to mimic sentient humanoid targets. The Awareness test to see through it is difficulty 10.
 - **Sensory Assault.** *Arena.* Combat action, target in same arena, block a sense or overload it, lasts 5 rounds. Overloaded, Terror difficulty 10. Target -5 on all actions.
- **Professional Assassin.** *Assassin 5.* 2 Wounds. Medium armor. Hand weapon, shortbow.
 - **Silent Death.** Roll 1d10 on unsuspecting target, diff Wounds +1 per armor level; success, the target is dead.
 - **Low Profile.** +2 difficulty to detect status as assassin, or +2 to stealth. (Cunning 6)
 - **Deadly Weapons, Poison and Venom.** Poisons weapons, can use poisons.
 - **Grizzlemouth.** 3 on weapon. 1d5 rounds onset, 3 Wounds (Brawn 12 for 1 Wound.)
 - **Heartkill.** Contact, injury. Instant. No save. Roll 1d10 per Wound remaining, survives if 1 rolls a 10.
- **Hired Killer.** 3 Wounds. Medium armor. Hand weapon, light weapon.
- **Thug.** *Minion.* 1 Wound. Light armor.

Pirates

- **Captain.** *Duelist 5.* 3 Wounds. No armor. Hand/parrying weapon (+5 to hit with it, 3d10 to hit).
 - **Salute.** For the rest of the fight, +2 to hit that foe.
 - **Driving Attack.** Attack up to all others in same arena, each after the first costs 1 AP.
- **First Mate.** *Scout 3.* 3 Wounds. No armor. Hand weapon, pistol.
 - **Military Intelligence.** Can count everything seen as a focus action. Logistics expertise.
 - **Read Signs.** Predict weather for the next 12 hours, gain facts from surroundings (+3).
- **Marine.** 2 Wounds. Light armor. Hand weapon.
- **Sailor.** *Minion.* 1 Wound. No armor.



Brigands

- **Dispossessed Noble.** *Noble 5.* 1 Wound. Light armor. Hand weapon.
 - **Blue Blood.** +2 Charm with the educated, knowledge of politics.
 - **Appraise.** Know the worth of goods.
 - **Classical Education.** Know facts about subjects.
 - **Threaten.** Charm 10 to intimidate.
- **Highwayman.** *Nomad 3.* 2 Wounds. Light armor. Hand weapon, pistol.
 - **Horse Lord.** With horse, as focus action, both heal 1 Wound.
 - **Mounted Combat.** Fight while horse protects, or protect while horse fights, shoot from horseback without penalty.
- **Sniper.** *Archer 4.* 2 Wounds. Light armor. Longbow, hand weapon.
 - **Trick Shot.** If shooting to impress spend AP on accuracy.
 - **Multiple Arrows.** Shoot 2 arrows, roll 1 against all targets, targets w/in 5 feet of each other.
- **Thug.** *Minion.* 1 Wound. Light armor.

Frostreave Raiders (All have Sailor occupational talent)

- **Captain.** *Fighter 5.* 3 Wounds. Medium armor. Hand weapon and shield (shield talent.)
 - **Awesome Violence.** Can spend 1 Awesome Point for +2 to hit, up to +5.
 - **Fight Dirty.** Do +1 Wound on a 1 on the face die also.
 - **Weapon of Choice.** His axe, all rolls are face dice.
- **Berserkers.** 3 Wounds. No armor. Hand weapon.
 - **Rage.** While enraged, +2 to hit, inflict +1 Wound, immune to fear, ignore 1 Wound from each attack. When it is over, lose 1 Wound from the strain. Get +3 Wounds while raging.
- **Raiders.** 2 Wounds. Medium armor. Hand weapon.

Vistani Caravan

- **Camp Leader.** 4 Wounds. No armor. Hand weapon, light weapon.
 - **Threaten.** Charm 8 to intimidate.
- **Fortune Teller.** 1 Wound. No armor. Light weapon.
 - **Charms and Hexes.** Put 3 Awesome Points in a charm for others.
 - **Fortune Telling. Curse.**
- **Acrobat Performer.** *Tumbler 4.* 1 Wound. Light weapons, hand to hand and throwing.
 - **Paired Weapons.** Not -1 die when using paired weapons.
 - **Dodge.** 7+ on 1d10, she dodges an attack.
 - **Juggling.** Juggle 8 objects without rolling, +1 to hit throwing in same arena.
- **Plucky Bravo.** 2 Wounds. No armor. Hand weapon. Charm (3 Awesome Points).
 - **Paired Weapons.** Not -1 die when using paired weapons.
- **Thug.** *Minion.* 1 Wound. No armor.

ANIMALS

Here are baselines for animals that characters might need to hunt, escape, or fight. These baselines are a place to start; adjust them to fit your needs with bigger or smaller, more or less skilled versions. The notes do not attempt to be exhaustive, describing all sensory capabilities and mating habits and capabilities.

Here are some quick-start animals—fill in the blanks as you need to.

In general, attribute bonuses are the same as Wounds. Add +2 for animal senses as appropriate, and +2 to stability and movement for those with 4 legs. Improvise as needed.

Alligator. Ridged and leathery, primordial and cruel and patient. Can hold breath for 30 minutes.

- 2 Wounds. Medium armor. Bite counts as heavy weapon.
 - **Snap.** 1 AP. Can target and destroy a shield instead of the character.
 - **Camo.** If it is hunting or resting, Awareness 9 to realize it is not a tree or sand bar.

Bear. Twice the bulk of a human, mostly interested in being left alone.

- 4 Wounds. Medium armor. Claws and jaws as heavy weapons.

Boar. Big, bristled, irritable pig with tusks.

- 2 Wounds. Light armor. Tusks count as light weapons, 1d10 +4 to hit.
 - **Charge.** Move and attack as one action, at +2 to hit or +1 Wound.

Deer. A major source of food for poachers, and sport for nobles.

- 2 Wounds. No armor. Antlers and hooves count as hand weapons.
 - **Fast.** Can move twice or move and attack as 1 action. Charging, +2 to hit or +1 Wound.

Dog. Used for companionship and home defense. Awareness +4.

- *Minion.* 1 Wound. No armor. Bites as light weapon, 1d10+1.

Great Cat. Lynx, mountain lion, other hunting cats of the wilderness. Lions and tigers are 4 Wounds.

- 2 Wounds. Light armor. Claws count as hand weapon.
 - **Quick.** +2 Initiative. 1 AP to the bowl for the cat to dodge 1 attack a round.

Horse. This is for a medium mount. War horses can have +2 Wounds, attack as very heavy weapons.

- 2 Wounds. No armor. Hooves count as heavy weapons.

Mastiff/War Dog. Specially trained and bred for fighting. Often trained to take commands. 5 Awareness.

- 3 Wounds. Light armor. Jaws count as hand weapon.
 - **Savage.** Will always spend 2 Awesome Points to do +1 Wound.
 - **Tough.** Will always spend 2 Awesome Points to ignore 1 Wound.

Polar Bear. Massive white-furred monster of the north, sometimes a mount for Frostreave berserkers.

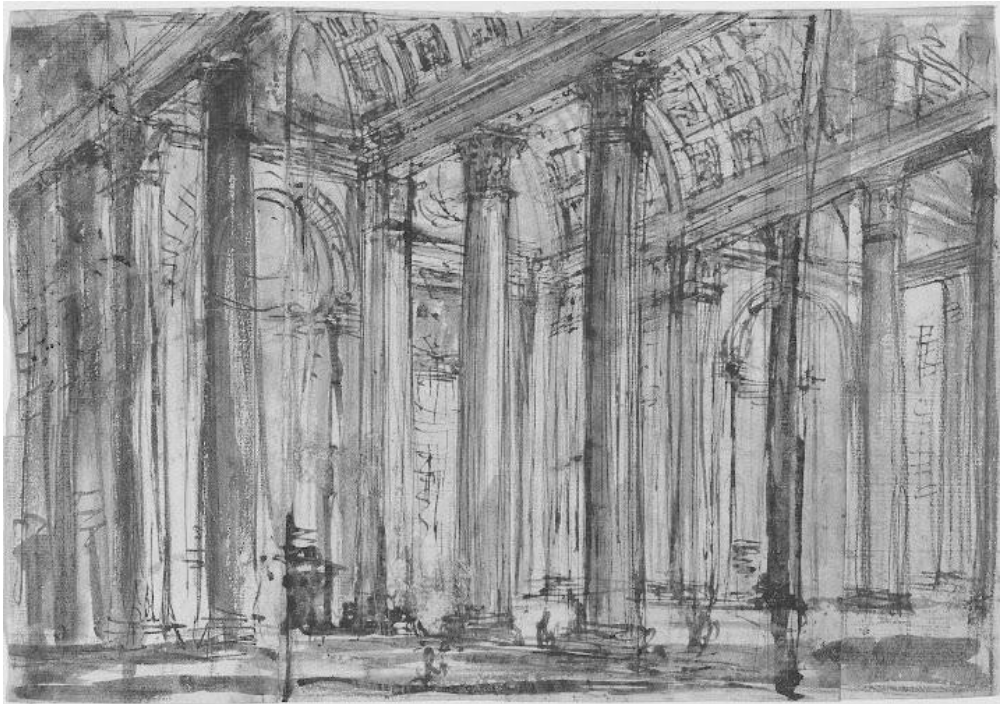
- 8 Wounds. Medium armor. Claws and jaws as heavy weapons.

Wolf. The size of a large dog, wilderness predator that often hunts in packs. Alpha will have 3 Wounds.

- 2 Wounds. No armor. Bites as light weapon, 1d10+2.
 - **Worry.** 1 AP. If the wolf impedes the target (+4), target is -1 die to attack and -4 to all rolls. More wolves worrying one target do not have cumulative effect.

OTHER CHARACTER INFORMATION

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OPTIONAL RANDOM TRAITS

If you want to quickly dice your way through making a distinctive character that you might not choose to play, these tables can help.

Age (Wealthy or Healthy)

1. **Teen.** (15-19) 14+1d5
- 2-4. **Young Adult.** (20-29) 19+1d10
- 5-7. **Adult.** (30-48) 28 +2d10
8. **Middle Age.** (49-59) 48 +1d10
9. **Old.** (60-78) 58 +2d10
10. **Elderly.** (79-97) 77+2d10

Roll on one of these charts to determine the age of your character based on your background.

Age (Poor or Sick)

- 1-2. **Teen.** (15-19) 14+1d5
- 3-6. **Adult.** (20-29) 19+1d10
- 7-8. **Middle Age.** (30-49) 29 +1d10
9. **Old.** (40-58) 38 +2d10
10. **Elderly.** (59-68) 58 +1d10

Shape

1. Rail Thin
2. Slim
3. Balanced
4. Meaty
5. Obese

Height

(Default: Male, 5'10. Female, 5'6)

1. 6 inches shorter.
2. About right, 3 inches shorter.
3. About baseline height.
4. About right, 3 inches taller.
5. 6 inches taller.

Starting Relationship

1. Incurably single.
2. Recovering from a bad breakup.
3. Promised in an arranged marriage.
4. Dating.
5. Going steady.
6. Paramour for a married lover.
7. Faithfully married.
8. Married with a paramour.
9. Open marriage. (Arranged, decadent, or both)
10. Spouse is dead. (Roll again if you want.)

Physical Traits. Roll twice to see what kind you get. 1: bad. 2-4: neutral. 5: good. Or, buy a good trait with a background point. You can spend a background point to buy off a bad trait too. No more than 2 traits of any kind. No mechanical effect, except to help explain how you are awesome spending Awesome Points, and why you fail if the roll is poor.

Bad Physical Traits

1. Acne.
2. Offensive smell.
3. Bad hair.
4. Off-center eye.
5. Awkward.
6. Crooked teeth.
7. Unpleasant body hair.
8. Warts.
9. Creepy stare.
10. Patchy balding.

Neutral Physical Traits

1. Left handed.
2. Unusual hair.
3. Mixed heritage.
4. Penetrating voice.
5. Memorable face.
6. Long hands and feet.
7. Distinctive nose.
8. Distinctive chin.
9. Otherworldly cast to features.
10. Scarred hands.

Good Physical Traits

1. Sexy.
2. Classically attractive.
3. Charming accent.
4. Singing voice.
5. Fashion sense.
6. Disarming smile.
7. Good skin.
8. Natural grace.
9. Attractive scent.
10. Intense eyes.

QUICK-ROLL RANDOM TRAITS

You can use the charts to randomize a number of traits for a starting character. This quick-reference reduces the charts to a single percentile roll, for when you are in a hurry. *Italics* traits are good, no emphasis for neutral traits, and **bold** traits are bad.

D100	Age	Shape	Height (M/F)	Relationship	Trait	Trait
1	15	Rail Thin	5'4/5'0	Open marriage	Bad hair	Acne
2	20	Rail Thin	5'7/5'3	Dead spouse	Offensive smell	Acne
3	21	Rail Thin	5'10/5'6	Incurably single	Acne	<i>Attractive scent</i>
4	22	Rail Thin	6'1/5'9	Recovering from breakup	Off-center eye	<i>Attractive scent</i>
5	30	Rail Thin	6'4/6'0	Promised, arranged marriage	Bad body hair	Awkward
6	31	Rail Thin	5'4/5'0	Dating	Crooked teeth	Awkward
7	32	Rail Thin	5'7/5'3	Courting	Awkward	Bad body hair
8	49	Rail Thin	5'10/5'6	Paramour for married lover	Warts	Bad body hair
9	60	Rail Thin	6'1/5'9	Faithfully married	Creepy stare	Bad hair
10	70	Rail Thin	6'4/6'0	Married with a paramour	Patchy balding	Bad hair
11	16	Rail Thin	5'4/5'0	Open marriage	Left handed	<i>Charming accent</i>
12	23	Rail Thin	5'7/5'3	Dead spouse	Unusual hair	<i>Charming accent</i>
13	24	Rail Thin	5'10/5'6	Open marriage	Mixed heritage	<i>Classically attractive</i>
14	25	Rail Thin	6'1/5'9	Dead spouse	Penetrating voice	<i>Classically attractive</i>
15	33	Rail Thin	6'4/6'0	Incurably single	Memorable face	Creepy stare
16	34	Rail Thin	5'4/5'0	Recovering from breakup	Long hands, feet	Creepy stare
17	35	Rail Thin	5'7/5'3	Promised, arranged marriage	Distinctive nose	Crooked teeth
18	50	Rail Thin	5'10/5'6	Dating	Distinctive chin	Crooked teeth
19	61	Rail Thin	6'1/5'9	Courting	Otherworldly looks	<i>Disarming smile</i>
20	71	Rail Thin	6'4/6'0	Paramour for married lover	Scarred hands	<i>Disarming smile</i>
21	17	Slim	5'4/5'0	Faithfully married	Left handed	Distinctive chin
22	26	Slim	5'7/5'3	Married with a paramour	Unusual hair	Distinctive chin
23	27	Slim	5'10/5'6	Open marriage	Mixed heritage	Distinctive chin
24	28	Slim	6'1/5'9	Dead spouse	Penetrating voice	Distinctive chin
25	36	Slim	6'4/6'0	Open marriage	Memorable face	Distinctive chin
26	37	Slim	5'4/5'0	Dead spouse	Long hands, feet	Distinctive chin
27	38	Slim	5'7/5'3	Incurably single	Otherworldly looks	Distinctive nose
28	51	Slim	5'10/5'6	Recovering from breakup	Distinctive chin	Distinctive nose
29	62	Slim	6'1/5'9	Promised, arranged marriage	Otherworldly looks	Distinctive nose
30	72	Slim	6'4/6'0	Dating	Scarred hands	Distinctive nose
31	18	Slim	5'4/5'0	Courting	Left handed	Distinctive nose
32	29	Slim	5'7/5'3	Paramour for married lover	Unusual hair	Distinctive nose
33	20	Slim	5'10/5'6	Faithfully married	Mixed heritage	<i>Fashion sense</i>
34	21	Slim	6'1/5'9	Married with a paramour	Penetrating voice	<i>Fashion sense</i>
35	39	Slim	6'4/6'0	Open marriage	Memorable face	<i>Good skin</i>
36	40	Slim	5'4/5'0	Dead spouse	Long hands, feet	<i>Good skin</i>

D100	Age	Shape	Height (M/F)	Relationship	Trait	Trait
37	41	Slim	5'7/5'3	Open marriage	Distinctive nose	<i>Intense eyes</i>
38	52	Slim	5'10/5'6	Dead spouse	Distinctive chin	<i>Intense eyes</i>
39	63	Slim	6'1/5'9	Incurably single	Otherworldly looks	Left handed
40	73	Slim	6'4/6'0	Recovering from breakup	Scarred hands	Left handed
41	19	Balanced	5'4/5'0	Promised, arranged marriage	<i>Sexy</i>	Left handed
42	22	Balanced	5'7/5'3	Dating	<i>Classically attractive</i>	Left handed
43	23	Balanced	5'10/5'6	Courting	<i>Charming accent</i>	Left handed
44	24	Balanced	6'1/5'9	Paramour for married lover	<i>Singing voice</i>	Left handed
45	42	Balanced	6'4/6'0	Faithfully married	<i>Fashion sense</i>	Long hands, feet
46	43	Balanced	5'4/5'0	Married with a paramour	<i>Disarming smile</i>	Long hands, feet
47	44	Balanced	5'7/5'3	Open marriage	<i>Good skin</i>	Long hands, feet
48	53	Balanced	5'10/5'6	Dead spouse	<i>Natural grace</i>	Long hands, feet
49	64	Balanced	6'1/5'9	Open marriage	<i>Attractive scent</i>	Long hands, feet
50	74	Balanced	6'4/6'0	Dead spouse	<i>Intense eyes</i>	Long hands, feet
51	15	Balanced	5'4/5'0	Incurably single	Acne	Memorable face
52	25	Balanced	5'7/5'3	Recovering from breakup	Offensive smell	Memorable face
53	26	Balanced	5'10/5'6	Promised, arranged marriage	Bad hair	Memorable face
54	27	Balanced	6'1/5'9	Dating	Off-center eye	Memorable face
55	45	Balanced	6'4/6'0	Courting	Awkward	Memorable face
56	46	Balanced	5'4/5'0	Paramour for married lover	Crooked teeth	Memorable face
57	47	Balanced	5'7/5'3	Faithfully married	Bad body hair	Mixed heritage
58	54	Balanced	5'10/5'6	Married with a paramour	Warts	Mixed heritage
59	65	Balanced	6'1/5'9	Open marriage	Creepy stare	Mixed heritage
60	75	Meaty	6'4/6'0	Dead spouse	Patchy balding	Mixed heritage
61	16	Meaty	5'4/5'0	Open marriage	Left handed	Mixed heritage
62	28	Meaty	5'7/5'3	Dead spouse	Unusual hair	Mixed heritage
63	29	Meaty	5'10/5'6	Incurably single	Mixed heritage	<i>Natural grace</i>
64	20	Meaty	6'1/5'9	Recovering from breakup	Penetrating voice	<i>Natural grace</i>
65	48	Meaty	6'4/6'0	Promised, arranged marriage	Memorable face	Off-center eye
66	30	Meaty	5'4/5'0	Dating	Long hands, feet	Off-center eye
67	31	Meaty	5'7/5'3	Courting	Distinctive nose	Offensive smell
68	55	Meaty	5'10/5'6	Paramour for married lover	Distinctive chin	Offensive smell
69	66	Meaty	6'1/5'9	Faithfully married	Distinctive nose	Otherworldly looks
70	76	Meaty	6'4/6'0	Married with a paramour	Scarred hands	Otherworldly looks
71	17	Meaty	5'4/5'0	Open marriage	Left handed	Otherworldly looks
72	21	Meaty	5'7/5'3	Dead spouse	Unusual hair	Otherworldly looks
73	22	Meaty	5'10/5'6	Open marriage	Mixed heritage	Otherworldly looks
74	23	Meaty	6'1/5'9	Dead spouse	Penetrating voice	Otherworldly looks
75	32	Meaty	6'4/6'0	Incurably single	Memorable face	Patchy balding
76	33	Meaty	5'4/5'0	Recovering from breakup	Long hands, feet	Patchy balding
77	34	Meaty	5'7/5'3	Promised, arranged marriage	Distinctive nose	Penetrating voice
78	56	Meaty	5'10/5'6	Dating	Distinctive chin	Penetrating voice

D100	Age	Shape	Height (M/F)	Relationship	Trait	Trait
79	67	Meaty	6'1/5'9	Courting	Otherworldly looks	Penetrating voice
80	77	Meaty	6'4/6'0	Paramour for married lover	Scarred hands	Penetrating voice
81	18	Obese	5'4/5'0	Faithfully married	Left handed	Penetrating voice
82	24	Obese	5'7/5'3	Married with a paramour	Unusual hair	Penetrating voice
83	25	Obese	5'10/5'6	Open marriage	Mixed heritage	Scarred hands
84	26	Obese	6'1/5'9	Dead spouse	Penetrating voice	Scarred hands
85	35	Obese	6'4/6'0	Open marriage	Memorable face	Scarred hands
86	36	Obese	5'4/5'0	Dead spouse	Long hands, feet	Scarred hands
87	37	Obese	5'7/5'3	Incurably single	Distinctive nose	Scarred hands
88	57	Obese	5'10/5'6	Recovering from breakup	Distinctive chin	Scarred hands
89	68	Obese	6'1/5'9	Promised, arranged marriage	Otherworldly looks	<i>Sexy</i>
90	78	Obese	6'4/6'0	Dating	Scarred hands	<i>Sexy</i>
91	19	Obese	5'4/5'0	Courting	<i>Sexy</i>	<i>Singing voice</i>
92	27	Obese	5'7/5'3	Paramour for married lover	<i>Classically attractive</i>	<i>Singing voice</i>
93	28	Obese	5'10/5'6	Faithfully married	<i>Charming accent</i>	Unusual hair
94	29	Obese	6'1/5'9	Married with a paramour	<i>Singing voice</i>	Unusual hair
95	38	Obese	6'4/6'0	Open marriage	<i>Fashion sense</i>	Unusual hair
96	39	Obese	5'4/5'0	Dead spouse	<i>Disarming smile</i>	Unusual hair
97	40	Obese	5'7/5'3	Open marriage	<i>Good skin</i>	Unusual hair
98	58	Obese	5'10/5'6	Dead spouse	<i>Natural grace</i>	Unusual hair
99	69	Obese	6'1/5'9	Incurably single	<i>Attractive scent</i>	Warts
100	79	Obese	6'4/6'0	Recovering from breakup	<i>Intense eyes</i>	Warts



DISTINCTIVE GEAR

If a character starts with a piece of distinctive gear, give the player an Awesome Point. This is just a bit of inspiration to go further into the character's back story and give the character another connection to the game world. Come up with a story behind each piece, either at generation or after playing for a while.

Item Type	Jewelry Type	Why is it special?	Eye-Catching Feature
1. Boots	1. <i>Ring</i>	1. Gift from your child.	1. Unusual leather
2. Scabbard	2. <i>Bracelet</i>	2. Gift from your lover.	2. Silver
3. Buckle	3. <i>Earring</i>	3. Gift from your parent.	3. Gold
4. Baldric	4. <i>Piercing Stud</i>	4. Gift from your teacher.	4. Bronze
5. Gloves	5. <i>Broach</i>	5. Souvenir of your first adventure.	5. Stone
6. Cloak	6. <i>Bracelet</i>	6. Religious significance.	6. Fine detail
7. <i>Jewelry</i>	7. <i>Necklace</i>	7. Reminds you of a failure.	7. Exotic design
8. Hat	8. <i>Pendant</i>	8. Reminds you of your hopes.	8. Unusual symbol
9. Tattoo	9. <i>Arm Band</i>	9. Saved your life once.	9. Inset gems
10. Book	10. <i>Neck Band</i>	10. Roll twice and use both results.	10. Calligraphy

First Impression of Quality

1. Fine workmanship, valuable.
2. Once fine, now worn.
3. Handmade and somewhat crude.
4. Exotic and foreign.
5. Religious symbols.

Color

Roll twice (or more) to mix

1. Red
2. Blue
3. Yellow
4. Black
5. White



Want a quick distinctive item? Roll d100 to get an item and an Awesome Point at generation.

D100	Type	Special Because:	Feature	1st Impression of Quality	Color	Color
1	Boots	Gift from child	Bronze	Fine, valuable	Red	Aqua
2	Scabbard	Gift from lover	Bronze	Fine, but worn	Blue	Aqua
3	Buckle	Gift from parent	Bronze	Crude, handmade	Yellow	Aqua
4	Baldric	Gift from teacher	Bronze	Exotic, foreign	Black	Aqua
5	Gloves	Souvenir, 1st adventure	Bronze	Religious symbols	White	Aqua
6	Cloak	Religious meaning	Bronze	Ancient, battered	Purple	Aqua
7	Ring	Reminder of failure	Bronze	Ancient, good condition	Green	Azure
8	Hat	Reminder of hope	Bronze	Fine, valuable	Orange	Azure
9	Tattoo	Saved your life once	Bronze	Fine, but worn	Brown	Azure
10	Book	Gift from child	Bronze	Crude, handmade	Magenta	Azure
11	Boots	Gift from lover	Calligraphy	Exotic, foreign	Pink	Azure
12	Scabbard	Gift from parent	Calligraphy	Religious symbols	Burgundy	Azure
13	Buckle	Gift from teacher	Calligraphy	Ancient, battered	Azure	Black
14	Baldric	Souvenir, 1st adventure	Calligraphy	Ancient, good condition	Aqua	Black
15	Gloves	Religious meaning	Calligraphy	Fine, valuable	Iridescent	Black
16	Cloak	Reminder of failure	Calligraphy	Fine, but worn	Plaid	Black

D100	Type	Special Because:	Feature	1st Impression of Quality	Color	Color
17	Bracelet	Reminder of hope	Calligraphy	Crude, handmade	Red	Black
18	Hat	Saved your life once	Calligraphy	Exotic, foreign	Blue	Black
19	Tattoo	Gift from child	Calligraphy	Religious symbols	Yellow	Blue
20	Book	Gift from lover	Calligraphy	Ancient, battered	Black	Blue
21	Boots	Gift from parent	Exotic design	Ancient, good condition	White	Blue
22	Scabbard	Gift from teacher	Exotic design	Fine, valuable	Purple	Blue
23	Buckle	Souvenir, 1st adventure	Exotic design	Fine, but worn	Green	Blue
24	Baldric	Religious meaning	Exotic design	Crude, handmade	Orange	Blue
25	Gloves	Reminder of failure	Exotic design	Exotic, foreign	Brown	Brown
26	Cloak	Reminder of hope	Exotic design	Religious symbols	Magenta	Brown
27	Earring	Saved your life once	Exotic design	Ancient, battered	Pink	Brown
28	Hat	Gift from child	Exotic design	Ancient, good condition	Burgundy	Brown
29	Tattoo	Gift from lover	Exotic design	Fine, valuable	Azure	Brown
30	Book	Gift from parent	Exotic design	Fine, but worn	Aqua	Brown
31	Boots	Gift from teacher	Fine detail	Crude, handmade	Iridescent	Burgundy
32	Scabbard	Souvenir, 1st adventure	Fine detail	Exotic, foreign	Plaid	Burgundy
33	Buckle	Religious meaning	Fine detail	Religious symbols	Red	Burgundy
34	Baldric	Reminder of failure	Fine detail	Ancient, battered	Blue	Burgundy
35	Gloves	Reminder of hope	Fine detail	Ancient, good condition	Yellow	Burgundy
36	Cloak	Saved your life once	Fine detail	Fine, valuable	Black	Burgundy
37	Piercing Stud	Gift from child	Fine detail	Fine, but worn	White	Green
38	Hat	Gift from lover	Fine detail	Crude, handmade	Purple	Green
39	Tattoo	Gift from parent	Fine detail	Exotic, foreign	Green	Green
40	Book	Gift from teacher	Fine detail	Religious symbols	Orange	Green
41	Boots	Souvenir, 1st adventure	Gold	Ancient, battered	Brown	Green
42	Scabbard	Religious meaning	Gold	Ancient, good condition	Magenta	Green
43	Buckle	Reminder of failure	Gold	Fine, valuable	Pink	Green
44	Baldric	Reminder of hope	Gold	Fine, but worn	Burgundy	Iridescent
45	Gloves	Saved your life once	Gold	Crude, handmade	Azure	Iridescent
46	Cloak	Gift from child	Gold	Exotic, foreign	Aqua	Iridescent
47	Broach	Gift from lover	Gold	Religious symbols	Iridescent	Iridescent
48	Hat	Gift from parent	Gold	Ancient, battered	Plaid	Iridescent
49	Tattoo	Gift from teacher	Gold	Ancient, good condition	Red	Iridescent
50	Book	Souvenir, 1st adventure	Gold	Fine, valuable	Blue	Magenta
51	Boots	Religious meaning	Inset gems	Fine, but worn	Yellow	Magenta
52	Scabbard	Reminder of failure	Inset gems	Crude, handmade	Black	Magenta
53	Buckle	Reminder of hope	Inset gems	Exotic, foreign	White	Magenta
54	Baldric	Saved your life once	Inset gems	Religious symbols	Purple	Magenta
55	Gloves	Gift from child	Inset gems	Ancient, battered	Green	Magenta
56	Cloak	Gift from lover	Inset gems	Ancient, good condition	Orange	Orange
57	Bracelet	Gift from parent	Inset gems	Fine, valuable	Brown	Orange
58	Hat	Gift from teacher	Inset gems	Fine, but worn	Magenta	Orange

D100	Type	Special Because:	Feature	1st Impression of Quality	Color	Color
59	Tattoo	Souvenir, 1st adventure	Inset gems	Crude, handmade	Pink	Orange
60	Book	Religious meaning	Inset gems	Exotic, foreign	Burgundy	Orange
61	Boots	Reminder of failure	Silver	Religious symbols	Azure	Orange
62	Scabbard	Reminder of hope	Silver	Ancient, battered	Aqua	Orange
63	Buckle	Saved your life once	Silver	Ancient, good condition	Iridescent	Pink
64	Baldric	Gift from child	Silver	Fine, valuable	Plaid	Pink
65	Gloves	Gift from lover	Silver	Fine, but worn	Red	Pink
66	Cloak	Gift from parent	Silver	Crude, handmade	Blue	Pink
67	Necklace	Gift from teacher	Silver	Exotic, foreign	Yellow	Pink
68	Hat	Souvenir, 1st adventure	Silver	Religious symbols	Black	Pink
69	Tattoo	Religious meaning	Silver	Ancient, battered	White	Plaid
70	Book	Reminder of failure	Silver	Ancient, good condition	Purple	Plaid
71	Boots	Reminder of hope	Stone	Fine, valuable	Green	Plaid
72	Scabbard	Saved your life once	Stone	Fine, but worn	Orange	Plaid
73	Buckle	Gift from child	Stone	Crude, handmade	Brown	Plaid
74	Baldric	Gift from lover	Stone	Exotic, foreign	Magenta	Plaid
75	Gloves	Gift from parent	Stone	Religious symbols	Pink	Purple
76	Cloak	Gift from teacher	Stone	Ancient, battered	Burgundy	Purple
77	Pendant	Souvenir, 1st adventure	Stone	Ancient, good condition	Azure	Purple
78	Hat	Religious meaning	Stone	Fine, valuable	Aqua	Purple
79	Tattoo	Reminder of failure	Stone	Fine, but worn	Iridescent	Purple
80	Book	Reminder of hope	Stone	Crude, handmade	Plaid	Purple
81	Boots	Saved your life once	Odd leather	Exotic, foreign	Red	Purple
82	Scabbard	Gift from child	Odd leather	Religious symbols	Blue	Red
83	Buckle	Gift from lover	Odd leather	Ancient, battered	Yellow	Red
84	Baldric	Gift from parent	Odd leather	Ancient, good condition	Black	Red
85	Gloves	Gift from teacher	Odd leather	Fine, valuable	White	Red
86	Cloak	Souvenir, 1st adventure	Odd leather	Fine, but worn	Purple	Red
87	Arm Band	Religious meaning	Odd leather	Crude, handmade	Green	Red
88	Hat	Reminder of failure	Odd leather	Exotic, foreign	Orange	White
89	Tattoo	Reminder of hope	Odd leather	Religious symbols	Brown	White
90	Book	Saved your life once	Odd leather	Ancient, battered	Magenta	White
91	Boots	Gift from child	Odd symbol	Ancient, good condition	Pink	White
92	Scabbard	Gift from lover	Odd symbol	Fine, valuable	Burgundy	White
93	Buckle	Gift from parent	Odd symbol	Fine, but worn	Azure	White
94	Baldric	Gift from teacher	Odd symbol	Crude, handmade	Aqua	White
95	Gloves	Souvenir, 1st adventure	Odd symbol	Exotic, foreign	Iridescent	Yellow
96	Cloak	Religious meaning	Odd symbol	Religious symbols	Plaid	Yellow
97	Neck Band	Reminder of failure	Odd symbol	Ancient, battered	Red	Yellow
98	Hat	Reminder of hope	Odd symbol	Ancient, good condition	Blue	Yellow
99	Tattoo	Saved your life once	Odd symbol	Fine, valuable	Yellow	Yellow
100	Book	Reminder of hope	Odd symbol	Fine, but worn	Black	Yellow

DARK SECRETS

Players with shiny innocent characters running around a dark, gritty world may be tempted to judge that world and its inhabitants as being morally inferior degenerates. A corrective to that problem is to dangle 6 starting Awesome Points in front of a player, if their character has a dark secret to conceal as well. Pick one for the player, or randomize with 1d50, or make up your own. Duplicates can connect characters.

The first thirty dark secrets are adapted from Jack Shear's list. Here is some further discussion of dark secrets by Mr. Shear himself.

In Gothic fiction, protagonists and antagonists alike tend to have horrible, repressed truths lurking in their pasts that threaten to reveal themselves; the revelation is usually apocalyptic on a personal scale or at least exposes the character to danger. And that's exactly what you should want for characters in your Gothic Fantasy games: personal apocalypses and a constant exposure to danger.

This isn't a table that generates anything of mechanical heft; rather, it's designed to add something that can inconveniently arise in play. In general I advise not to bring any of these elements fully into play too quickly. Hint to a player that someone may have a little dirt on their character, but don't make it explicit. Use their own paranoia to ratchet up the tension.

Mr. Shear also shares literary inspirations for his dark secrets in his first Compendium.

These dark secrets can also be used to customize an aristocratic family, a back-woods rural clan, or a stranger met on the road. The DM can roll something on the chart and have some element of that dark secret come to light during an encounter. The DM can also roll on this chart to find a conflict that could involve the characters; maybe they protect the one keeping the secret, or they find evidence of it, or they are hired or tipped off to pursue it themselves.

1. **Fratricide/Matricide.** You killed one or both of your parents. Polite society would shun you if they knew. You may be pursued by one or more family members, or the law.
 1. Your parent was abusive, and you were trying to protect a family member.
 2. You stood to inherit a sizeable estate.
 3. Your aunt held a grudge, and supplied you with the poison. Only she knows.
 4. It was an accident, but you feel responsible, and by your silence assumed guilt were the truth to come out now.
 5. The worst of it is, you had no reason and you feel no remorse.
2. **Inhuman.** You have an ancestor who may have sexually consorted with a demon, a necromancer, a beastman, an orc, or some other monstrous creature. You have some subtle visible signs (that you can conceal) of your heritage. If you are revealed, you will probably be hunted as a monster or pursued as a specimen. When you take talents related to your heritage, signs of it grow more visible and pronounced as you push that door in your blood further open.
 1. **Demon/Orc.** You can take demon talents with DM permission.
 2. **Cosmic Monster.** You can take wizard talents with DM permission.
 3. **Necromancer/Dead Thing.** You can take necromancy talents with DM permission.
 4. **Beastman.** You have vague resemblances to the animal in your features. You may be able to take one or more appropriate beast or monster talents.
 5. **Avatar.** You can take divine talents from that god's offerings with DM permission.

3. **Plunderer.** You stole a treasure. However, you couldn't get away clean, so you had to hide it. If you are connected to the theft, the law will punish you harshly. That is, if they get to you before the treasure's original owner... Fenced, the item is worth 1d10 x 10,000 silver.
4. **Blasphemer.** You once followed a strict faith, but you violated the tenets of your religion in a spectacular way. Maybe you defiled a holy altar, or defaced a rare scripture. Whatever you did, it is bad enough that the authorities of your faith would hunt you down and burn you as a heretic if they connected you to the act.
5. **Grave Defiler.** You worked as a resurrectionist, digging up fresh corpses and selling them to medical schools for anatomical lessons. If you are found out, the families of the dead people you dug up would probably take vigilante action against you.
6. **Changeling.** You are not human. The family that raised you had their infant switched out for you. You have slightly pointed ears, red hair, and an aversion to cold iron. If your secret is discovered, your family (who never really took to you) will probably try to capture you and trade you to the fey for their naturalborn baby. You have an instinct that you probably don't want to go back.
7. **Haunted.** You murdered someone in the heat of passion. Their ghost haunts you. Your secret is mostly safe, but those with psychic sensitivity or occult knowledge may be able to see the ghost that pesters you. The ghost is enough evidence in some courts to have you executed for your crime.
8. **Debauched.** You are addicted to sensual pleasure. You have led other naïve youngsters down the heady path of the hedonist. If your role in their degeneracy and corruption is discovered, their families will seek you out and demand satisfaction.
 - You can take a madness, addictive personality, for 3 extra Awesome Points with DM permission.
9. **Consorter with Demons.** As a child you were taught to summon demons from the World Below. You can open a doorway to the World Between for demons (one at a time) through a magical ritual, but you can't control it. Still, if the authorities (pretty much anywhere) discover you have this power you will likely be burned as a witch or pressed into service for a dark army.
 - You can take the "Make Orc" talent one or more times with DM permission.
10. **Drug Fiend.** You are a drug addict. Whether your poison of choice is opium, rotgut, or lotus, you cannot resist plunging into sweet oblivion. You have lost your family's fortune to your vice and run away in shame. Your family would very much like to know where you are and see to it you are punished.



- You can take a madness, addictive personality, for 3 extra Awesome Points with DM permission.
11. **Institutionalized.** You once had a complete mental breakdown. Only you know why. If others find out you are mentally unstable, they will not trust you. You are not sure they *should* trust you.
- You can take a madness for 3 extra Awesome Points with DM permission.
12. **Shipwreck Survivor.** You were the only survivor of a terrible shipwreck. Only you know that you survived because you struck a deal with the supernatural cause of the ship's destruction. You were allowed to live because you agreed to some hideous price. If your secret were revealed, the families (and financial backers) of the ship would be interested in your whereabouts—as would religious authorities.
13. **Voices in Your Head.** Since childhood you have heard voices in your head urging you to do cruel, inhuman things. Sometimes you listen. More rarely, you obey. If others were to learn of this, you could be locked in an insane asylum, connected to past crimes, destroyed by religious authorities, or pressed into service as a dark oracle for the cult that worships the monster whispering to you.
- You can take a madness for 3 extra Awesome Points with DM permission.
14. **Expedition Survivor.** You were the only survivor of an expedition to a wild, unmapped place. Unfortunately, everything went wrong, and you were all on the edge of death. Of those who succumbed to cannibalism, you alone escaped. Sometimes you hunger for human flesh. Sometimes you are haunted by the thought of what might happen if you are not, in fact, the only survivor...
15. **Silent Witness.** You saw a serial murderer cutting up a young woman. You were too cowardly to intervene or step forward and stand witness with the authorities. You are haunted by the knowledge that the murderer saw you; you pretended you hadn't seen anything, and strolled away. What if the killer decides to ensure your silence? What if there was someone else there who saw? What if the dreams you have about the victim's death screams are more than just dreams?
16. **The Assistant.** You supported the work of a scholar scientist who was obsessed with expanding scientific understanding of "natural" to supplant the need for "supernatural." You were drawn deeper and deeper into crimes against law and nature as you helped him in his quest. Then it all went wrong, and his creation killed him and wrecked the lab, then escaped. If your role in the scandal were known, you'd be imprisoned at best. Worse yet, one or more of the scholar's creations escaped, and may be stalking you—his later experiments were quite cunning, patient, and sadistic, and the most dangerous one survived.



17. **Spy for the Inquisition.** You were once a willing spy for the Inquisition, turning in anyone suspected of witchcraft and heresy. However, you also turned in a rival who you knew was innocent. You are haunted by the knowledge that your rival was tortured upon your word. Should anyone find out your rival was innocent, the Church will not hesitate to turn on you. Also, your rival was eventually released, though terribly scarred. Could your rival suspect you?
18. **Arcane Meddler.** Your mentor had books you were forbidden to ever read or touch. You stole one so you could impress your friends, when you were prepubescent. You went to a circle of standing stones and read something impressive-sounding. Then the pressure soared, and the fear, and you saw—well, you don't remember clearly what you saw. But each of the 6 of you that were there have had... strange lives since then. You don't know enough about what you did to ask for help, but you did manage to steal the book. Maybe, someday, you can trust someone enough to confess. Before something irrevocable happens to you. Your greatest fear is that somehow you left a door open to the World Below. You try not to think about it.
19. **Uncanny Double.** There is something out there that looks exactly like you and sometimes pretends to be you long enough to commit awful crimes. You have moved across the World Between trying to stay ahead of the consequences of your doppelganger's foul acts. Somehow you know that in your heart you are responsible; when your rage, fear, or jealousy mount to a certain level, your double is summoned somehow. You are genuinely unsure of how innocent you are. The true horror is that when your contentment, love, or commitment grow to a certain level, that summons your double as well. You suspect you will only meet when you succumb to your darkest passions and embrace them.
20. **Catacombs Disturber.** You were hired to help an expedition that broke into catacombs in Mord-Stavian. The loot was fantastic, but you suspect it was cursed. You can't shake the feeling that something followed you back. The other members of the expedition lingered in Midian; they are dead now. You are the only one left. If you are connected to the evil artifacts fenced from that expedition, the Church will punish you. Severely. To death.
21. **Failed Exorcist.** A powerful Purifier in the Church identified you as touched by the Lady with a gift for unsettling demons. He took you along on a number of exorcisms; you weren't sure if you were any help or not, but you were like his mascot. You saw things... things you can't unsee. Most cases were mentally disturbed people. Not your last case. The little girl killed her family, and your mentor could not exorcise it. Then, it possessed him. You managed to escape, and you've never stopped running. Somewhere, there is a demon wearing a Purifier that would kill you to hide that secret.
22. **Gambling Debt.** You are addicted to gambling. You've racked up an impressive debt in one of the lowest (and most violent) sorts of gaming houses. There is no hope of squaring your debt now, except through the most magnificent of sums; even then, you are more valuable to your creditor as an example than as a fortune. If you are exposed, you are dead.
 - You can take a madness, addictive personality, for 3 extra Awesome Points with DM permission.
23. **Diseased.** You inherited a terrible disease passed down through your family. The disease represents a great sin perpetrated by an ancestor that you are doomed to repeat; the disease has a few tell-tale signs and the fear of physical degeneration constantly sets your nerves on end. If your disease (or its familial cause) is discovered, you will be shunned in polite society. Disreputable doctors may send their agents after you to retrieve a specimen.
 1. **Hauptmann's Syndrome.** If a human drinks vampire blood too much, then the human might contract Hauptmann's Syndrome. The blood turns blackish-green and stinks. From time to time, the victim falls sick and nerveless for a week or two at a time. Death comes a decade or

- two early. The condition is passed on to children. However, if the offspring never drink vampire blood, the condition never surfaces.
2. **Monarch's Curse.** Inbreeding leads to deformity and weakness. This is seen among nobility marrying into pure blood lines, and backwards rural networks without enough fresh blood. Come up with a creative deformity, or have the deformity result in something from the crippling chart due to genetics instead of injury. +3 *Awesome Points*.
 3. **Mortahlshike.** Contracted by intercourse with the dead while pregnant, and passed on to the unborn child. Breathing is difficult, fits of coughing require the victim to spit up ectoplasm. The victim's skin is always cool to the touch. The eyes gray out like massive cataracts have built up. Only drinking fresh human blood can alleviate the symptoms. Victims live three times longer than a normal lifespan and tend to have a talent for necromancy.
 4. **Togrok.** This venereal disease was unleashed as a curse on the army that lay siege to Bokormi, a boggie fort in the Ghael Isles. Roughly once a month, victims rise and sleepwalk, finding a target and committing rape, then returning to bed none the wiser. The only telltale sign of the disease is that the target's flatulence tends to stink of sulfur. It can take years, but the victim's mind deteriorates to madness; it starts with dreams of fire and screaming children (boggies). It escalates to reveal atrocities of that siege. There is no cure.
 5. **Slahldag (Slow Burn).** A venereal disease caught by intercourse with demons. It can only be caught after sex with more than one demon. It can be passed to children; in that case it manifests around puberty. Slahldag mixes the appetites, so the victim feels thirsty instead of bored, or starving instead of horny, or hungry instead of sleepy. Later, the senses are mixed, so the victim sees scents, hears colors, feels light. In the end, the victim is completely insane. The only thing that seems to stave off the symptoms (for years at first, then months, then weeks, then days) also accelerates the condition—more sex with demons. It usually takes about 20 years for this disease to finish off the victim's mind.
24. **Abandoner.** The pressures of respectable family life were too much. You abandoned your spouse and children, leaving them to fend for themselves. You married a person from a very conservative family that was scandalized and horrified by your flight. They are looking for you, and if they find you they will punish you for how you hurt their favorite child and grandchildren etc. Then you will never escape again. You have 1d5 children.



25. **Fraudulent Spiritualist.** You were part of an operation that pretended to contact spirits of the dearly departed—for a price. Your operation got too ambitious and cocky. They bilked a grieving baron's widow out of her entire savings—a great victory, except for her nephew's interference. He figured out the scam, took the money back, and killed everyone he could who was involved. Then the determined crusader started working your group's back trail, getting other marks in on it. So, there are a lot of angry people looking for the few of you that survived that initial purge.
26. **Blackmailer.** Never let anyone tell you that blackmail is easy work. You managed to get a prominent member of society, but unfortunately your target retrieved the evidence. Blackmail victims are, as a group, poor sports. Now your target wants to extract a painful revenge. The law can't and won't protect you; in fact, if you are connected to certain events, you are still a person of interest. Your best bet is to keep your new identity disconnected from your old identity.
27. **Family Cult.** You belong to a family that is deeply involved in demon worship. You may or may not be involved in the family faith, but your blood connection is enough. If your family's acts are discovered, you'll be implicated, and the Church is traditionally unconcerned about collateral damage when they go after demon worshippers.
28. **Sadist.** You are addicted to inflicting pain on others. You were once abusing a young servant and you went too far, killing your unfortunate plaything. If your secret is discovered, the law will take an interest, and it seems likely intimidated past victims and their families will come forward.
- You can take a madness, addictive personality, for 3 extra Awesome Points with DM permission.
29. **Prostitute.** Not just a whore—no, you were in demand. You had prominent clients. One of them helped you leave that life (before the heart attack) and you never looked back. However, if any of your past prominent clients were to connect you to that life, they would be obligated to silence you; they talked too much, and you saw their faces.
30. **Cursed.** You inherited a family curse. You are also the last of your family line. You can feel the curse working up a crescendo, a dramatic finish. There is no way out for you. You will meet a hideous end, and sweet death is the only release you can hope for. If your ancestors are any indication, anyone close to you will get pulled down too. You know of no way to break the curse, though your family has tried for two hundred years. You know what your fate will be. It is not pretty.
1. You will answer the Call of the Sea, become warty and amphibious, and swim into the ocean.
 2. You will go insane. Usually the result is a spectacular murder spree. You can hear your ancestors already restless in your spirit, itching to do it again. Some of them were not caught until they'd been at it for decades. They had time to get creative. You are horrified by the idea that some part of you admires their work.
 3. Everybody commits suicide by age 30. The ghosts of a Vistani camp inspire it; first you see glimpses of Vistani, then the occasional dead one; by the end, if the journals of your dead ancestors are any indication, it's a screaming, stinking, clawing mob of ghosts out for vengeance. You are not sure which of your ancestors is responsible, but somebody apparently murdered an entire Vistani campsite.
 4. You are a werewolf. Apply the overlay template (or use it for a base template.)
 5. A cult of Slithian Vor has a prophecy that your bloodline will unlock the end of the world. They've caught everyone else, so you must be the one their prophecy spoke of. You've dreamed of their Wheel of Pain and the chanting in the dark, and the cracking of the sky. If you commit suicide, then their god will intercept your soul. Don't let the cult catch you.

31. **A Breathless Gift.** You sense the dead. You can feel the restless energy squirming beneath the city, sometimes finding its way into corpses and ripping them from their rest. When you were a child, a dark man from the Breathless Order spoke with your parents, and as you eavesdropped, arranged to purchase you as an apprentice. You ran away. You see ghosts, you sense the motives of the unquiet, and you fear that necromancers will again try to recruit you to become one of them.
- You can take necromantic talents with DM permission.
32. **Heir Obfuscated.** You are the bastard child of Baron Lachmarsse. There are rumors among the powerful that you exist; assassins have gotten close in the past. Your nursemaid, and later your foster parents fell to assassin blades, probably after they were tortured. You are not sure how much the shadowy forces that hunt for you know. You do not know if the assassins were sent by the baron, or by the baron's rivals. Were your identity to become known, you'd stand to inherit considerable power, but you'd likely die before you could use it.
33. **The Whetstone.** Within the Church of the Lady's tangle of orders and chapters is a fearsome shadow, the Order of the Whetstone. These scary men are the intelligence arm for the Pontiff himself, watching friend and foe alike for signs of weakening or faithlessness. You were inducted into their order as a small child, but raised like others. You report to the Whetstone, and they have power—political, economic, superstitious, and mystical. Revealing their existence to others is worth your life, and speaking to Purifiers of it is exceedingly unwise. Report to your masters through the regular coded channels, and don't give them a reason to doubt your loyalty.
34. **Pleasure and Secrets.** As a child you were pimped out to debauched noble parties. There was horror in the lifestyle, but also pleasures of wealth and comfort, so you grew up a little twisted. On the edge of puberty, you went to the party of a powerful noble, and while you were with a masked priest, you overheard a conversation about a political secret worth your life. Realizing your danger, you managed to escape, fleeing your handlers and the lifestyle. But you know the voice of the priest you were with, and the face of his conspirator, and you know that's worth your life should you ever be found and connected to that night.
35. **Wanted for Murder.** It was a dark night outside the tavern, and two men were hassling a young woman who obviously didn't want to go with them. You intervened, knives were drawn, then one man was dead and the other fleeing. In a breathless moment, you recognized the girl, then she ran too. By the time you got out of there, the streets were crawling with the city guard, led by the wounded escapee, hunting for you—as it turns out, you knifed a nobleman's son. A year has passed, but you keep your ears open, and know that there's a bounty out for someone matching your description and known by your previous name, wanted by the law (which is bad) and the noble (which is worse.)



36. **Debt.** Your mother fell ill, and your father succumbed to the temptation of easy riches through crime to afford her doctors. He was sent off to prison, leaving you to handle the situation. You brashly negotiated with a local criminal, who generously loaned you funds. Your mother died anyway, and now you were in the pocket of the gangster, who wanted to sell your body to lechers. You welched on the debt, accidentally killing one of the enforcers in the process. Now, if your new cover is blown, you'll have a debt that has probably geometrically grown in the intervening time, and a criminal with an army of thugs to help collect it.

37. **Dealer.** You had connections among the pagans who would give you weirdroot, umber lotus, poppygum, whatever. You know people from various walks of life who will pay for these substances. For a while, you made a good living as a dealer. Then a Church supporter's son foolishly mixed drugs and overdosed to death; the same week, you had to dump a shipment because the city guards were patting everyone down, so you angered your supplier. Now you've tried to walk away from the whole mess, but if you get connected to your old life, you won't still have a new one.

38. **Hit and Run.** It was dark, and late, your coach was going fast, ran over some old woman in the road; as driver or passenger, you urged the coach on, and left the scene as quickly as possible. You heard some gossip later about how some holy woman among the Vistani had been run down, and the Vistani were positively furious. You think animals watch you. You think Vistani look into your shadow. You feel marked by your guilt. But you don't want to give yourself away; how could they know anything? No one else could put the pieces together. Still. You just don't feel safe.

39. **The Affair.** A powerful noble in the city liked to show off a ravishing companion. You and the companion had a desperately passionate fling, with the intensity of love at first sight. A number of white-hot trysts followed. The noble found out and had the companion stoned to death. The noble blames the mysterious lover (you) who stole away the companion's heart. So if your identity is found out, you will be considered the reason the noble lost the companion, and dealt with harshly and in private, probably for an extended period of time before receiving sweet death.

40. **Marriage Inheritance.** You were married at age 13, and lived in an estate far from the City. Years later, the Church investigation of your inlaws found evidence of pagan worship and seized their estate. Furious, your spouse (revealed as a pagan sympathizer) went native and joined a radical group bent on violence and mayhem. Your friends helped you escape Church punishment, but you still endure Purifier scrutiny. You were so convincing in denying involvement that you disgust the pagans, and the Church will never trust you again. You've done your best to put that incident behind you, and you sometimes wonder what your spouse is up to.

41. **Born Underground.** You were born in prison, your mother a prisoner. You were returned to your family, an innocent. At the age of 13, you had strange blackouts for hours at a time. As the news of gristly murders spread, and as your dreams of darkness, stone, screaming, and blood intensified, you realized the ghost of your mother was riding you to carry out revenge on those who destroyed her. Three church men, two informers, and a nobleman died at your hands. Then the visions stopped. Still, if you are connected to those crimes, you'll end your life where it began.

42. **The Loose Grip of the Dead.** When you were a child, you were loaned out to the Church for fetch and carry service. They trusted and/or ignored you. Then the bishop of the local church died. You assisted with preparing the body for burial. When he was clad in his burial garb, and gifted with treasures, you were almost spellbound by a crimson ruby pendant. When no one was looking, you snatched it and hid it. The priests involved in the burial were desperate and distraught to see it missing, but dared not tell others; they decided to entomb the body without the ruby, none the wiser.

You stopped going to the church after that, and fearful they made the connection, you avoid the Church altogether. You didn't dare to fence the gem, or to lose it. It is distinctive, and were it ever found and connected to you, the Purifiers would not hesitate to punish your thieving, no matter how long ago or how young you were. But now, in your dreams, you see the old bishop. Guilt, or haunting?

43. **Favor of the Woods.** Your features are a bit odd; your eyes a bit off in color and placement and focus, your face a slightly unusual shape, your hair a bit different in texture. Pagans seem respectful of you, though they don't appear to know why or even recognize it is happening. Your inner thigh has a strange crescent eye kind of birthmark that tingles when you touch it. Strange, that such small details are enough to get you killed should the Purifiers learn of them.
44. **Another's Burdensome Secret.** You were the only one there when the aged exorcist collapsed in an alley, struggling to breathe. He gripped you, terrifyingly strong, and glared at you out of rheumy eyes. He said you would be restless dead and damned forever if you did not help him, and he thrust into your hands a slender book sheathed in metal. He told you to hide it, to hide it well, and to tell no one where. Then he died. Something in his furious passion terrified you, so you hid the book. For weeks priests and agents combed the streets of the area, rough and angry, looking for the book but unwilling to admit what they were looking for. They finally gave up. You could not open the locked book, and weren't sure you wanted to. You hid it. You have tried to forget about it.
45. **The Fling.** You met a charming person, and had a passionate fling over the course of a weekend. Your new paramour had business, and vanished. While you were coming back from an errand, you saw your trysting apartment being torn apart by the baron's troops. Inquiring around, you found out an assassin tried to kill the baron, and anyone associated with the assassin was "wanted for questioning." You knew what that meant, and made yourself scarce. Then your paramour showed up, dripping from the river and wounded, needing help. You hid your lover, provided food and clothes and a little money, and aided in escaping the city. You really hope no one ever connects you to that difficult and unpleasant week.
46. **Poaching.** As a child, you were hunting rabbits and birds in the forest, alone. As it was getting dark, you headed back and got lost. You saw a pagan ritual, and were caught; the stag-headed priest spared you, but marked you with a burn from a carved stone, and said someday you'd repay the gift of life.
47. **Alone in the Dark.** You were young, part of an expedition through the Deep Road between the Scavenger Lands and Harrowfaust. Your group was attacked; they fended off the creatures, but could not travel. You were given all the money you could carry and sent for help. When you miraculously made it to daylight again, you rationalized. You ignored your cowardice and decided there was no reason for others to die, for the money to be wasted, for you to take the risk again. You left them in the dark, and reported them all dead. Only you know where they made their last stand. You've never had the courage to go back and count the bodies to make sure they all perished.
48. **Possessed.** You are a demon. You were dragged up from the World Below and bound to this body. Your powers and mobility were severely constrained so you would not give away your presence. You have a very specific job to do, and when your demon lord contacts you in dreams, you'll know it is time to carry that job out. In the meantime, stay away from holy water, divine power, Vistani fortune tellers, and that sort of thing; you can't have your cover blown before you act. Choose or randomize!
 1. When you get the signal, kill [a party member.]
 2. You must find a specific person, mate, and produce a special child to be raised in safety.
 3. Encourage your friends to help you find a certain holy site.

4. An oracle said if you make friends with these people, they will vouch for you and get you close to a powerful enemy of your lord at a key time in the future.
 5. Steal a piece of your lord from where enemies keep it as a trophy. Then conduct a blood sacrifice ritual to bring your lord back to the World Between.
49. **Best Friends Forever.** As a child you played with the baron's son and other children on the estate. The baron's son was an unhappy, unpopular kid; others sucked up to him to get the advantage of his wealth, but snubbed and teased him when they thought they could get away with it. Desperate for friendship and respect, he'd do outrageous things for peer pressure. It was supposed to be a joke; get him to go up in the ruined watchtower and leave him there overnight; after dark you couldn't see to climb down. Well, he tried, fell, and broke his neck. You tattled to the baron and blamed your friend—the baron believed you because, surprise, your friend was the bastard son and next in line. If your friend ever gets out of his prison on the baron's estate, he's unlikely to forgive and forget.
50. **Amnesia.** You remember nothing of your life before about a year ago. However, the DM will roll for another dark secret to see what you're forgetting. +3 *Awesome Points*.



ADVENTURING MOTIVES (EXPANDED)

Roll or choose a type of character (1d10), then randomize or choose a motive (or use your own.) You get 3 Awesome Points for taking an adventuring motive.

1. Lands of the Father and Family (Ulverland)

1. Shrines to Merrihel on Ulverland soil are blasphemy. Convince as many settlements as you can to reject the shrines to the demon goddess who wants to seduce Garm-Gorak.
2. Everybody but the hard-liners and the willfully ignorant knows that the Storm Sovereign pantheon was imported from the Northrons of Frostreave. It's time to reject the "gods."
3. You want to be chosen as a holy warrior. All your life you've worshiped one of the gods, and you know that if you can only prove yourself you'll be gifted with power and responsibility.
4. Growing up in the shadow of Orxham, you always wanted to be an educated type. If you can get the money and make enough friends, you can study and graduate and BE somebody.
5. Someday you want to make enough money to go back to your village and pay for a wall to be built around it, to protect it from raids like the one that killed your father.
6. Before you can have a life of luxury as a noble in Lizport, you have to get wealth, title, friends, lands, and that sort of thing. Secure your place as a future layabout and hobnobber!
7. Cleanse the land of cults to Slurge, demon lord of pestilence, gallows humor, and famine. This makes sense as a matter of principle, but when your aunt joined, that shamed the family.
8. There is a hidden library around the town where you grew up. You never could find it, but now you have a coded map that may give you clues you missed before.
9. If you can get a pet cockatrice and train it, then you'll be ready to fake being an aristocrat long enough to make contacts, score some loot, embarrass the ruling class, or get peerage.
10. Northrons from Frostreave killed your parents. You feel the rage of Garm-Gorak in your heart, and you want to kill as many of them as possible. But you can afford to be careful.



2. Lands of the Lady (Midian, Scarabae, Caligari)

1. Your family has traditionally been staunch in supporting the throne of Midian. The recent unrest has your people choosing sides. If one of the claimants to the throne dies, no war.
2. Scarabae should be loyal to the Church; they owe everything to the Lady. Hunt down people who argue otherwise and silence them. Especially those who advocate for aliens like the fey.
3. You couldn't do anything about it when the Purifiers came and put your father to death for decorating the clocks he sold with symbols from his homeland. But you want revenge.
4. The Fourth Crusade had the right idea, but it tried to wipe out demonic influence through military action. You know it has to happen more subtly, traitor by traitor. Kill them.
5. Are Damsels of the Lady truly gifted with divine grace, or are they aliens hiding in the Church? The riddle is thousands of years old, but you have a feeling you can solve it.
6. Your brother decided he was a prophet of the Lady and he went off preaching and teaching. Retrieve him and get him home before he embarrasses your family any further.
7. You sinned when you were young and foolish, but the weight of the sin still presses on your mind. Serve the Lady until you get a vision that you are finally forgiven.

8. You are nauseated by the idea that magic tricks and demon powers convince people that creatures from outside the World Between are “gods.” Help the deluded see the truth.
9. You eventually want to take the cloth, but the world is big and exciting. You want to go out and see everything, do everything, get all that out of the way so you can settle in as clergy.
10. You want to make a pilgrimage to each of the Saintly Cities of Midian, and by then you’ll have your purpose for the crusade the Lady has picked out for you.



3. Merchants and Iron (Caligari and the Iron Principalities)

1. You have always admired illusionists, even while you resented the truth that they could make your senses unreliable. Someday you want to fool people on a grand scale for that rush.
2. Your parents are desperate for you to get into the aristocracy before it is gone altogether, to give the family the credentials it feels it deserves. Marry in, buy it, whatever, but get it done.
3. Your uncle sold guns all over the World Between. He came home full of gold and stories about outwitting the superstitious and shooting the monsters. You want to live his stories.
4. Gunpowder is the future. It frees humanity from eldritch prices, costly demon deals, worship of petty gods, and fear of the dark. Take a gun and save humans from the supernatural.
5. Your mother was an elegant dancer. The reviews of her performances call them poetic. She was famous and beloved. Then a gaunt nobleman from Harrowfaust killed her. Get revenge.
6. Drugs flow in from the Scavenger Lands. They ensnare vulnerable people and make sure they cannot recover. People like your sister. Work your way up the tree and stop the drug trade.
7. Laughing merchants hide gunpowder and drugs in storage vaults under cathedrals. Truth-speakers are mocked and killed. Caligari is on thin ice. The Lady wants her land back.
8. The criminals and aristocracy are puppets that dance to their demonic master’s plan. The Church doesn’t know it is run by demons! They’re everywhere, man! Expose the conspiracy.
9. You were apprenticed to a painter, before the revolutionaries shot him. You have seen that art cannot flourish again until artists have a safe place to hone their art. Make such a place.
10. You were 15 when the artist paid you a hefty fee to sit for a painting. You never felt the same since. Sometimes you wonder about it. Why you sometimes dream you’re looking out of it.

4. Islander (Isles of Unparalleled Liberty, Ghael Isles)

1. The people who raised you pulled you out of a Northron dragon ship, from a cage affixed to the mast with a chain. Why put a baby in a cage? You have a bad feeling about your past.
2. You think of the people enslaved in Mord-Stavian and you get angry. You want to build an organization that dedicates itself to raiding the desert and freeing the oppressed people there.
3. You were undercover, then your handlers were killed. As far as your people know, you are a traitorous pirate. You want to clear your name and get back in their good graces.
4. As far as you know, you are the only one who realizes that the boggies of the Ghael Isles serve human flesh with most of their meals. Unmask the hideous cannibal conspiracy.
5. The wealthiest people in your neighborhood were dashing smugglers. You are bright and strong and lucky; surely you can build up contacts and run drugs out of Mord-Stavian too.
6. In an ecstatic ritual, you were ridden by a loa that slew the hounan of the tribe. You were banished. However, that loa still hovers around you—there is an injustice that needs righting.
7. A chaos beast prophesied that you would open the last door. Since then, cultists have been dogging your heels; stay ahead of them, or wipe them out, but don't let them catch you.
8. Your heart was broken in the Shell by the Sea when you heard the most beautiful aria in the world. The singer was snatched by cultists of Zzorch. Get some muscle and rescue her.
9. A shark bit you when you were small. The scar drew attention in your village. A wise woman of Mother Lothak said her mother had work for you when you were ready. You are ready.
10. Your father went insane when he saw your great-grandfather on the black, sodden decks of the Lady of Mists, a ship that sank 60 years ago. Rescue your ancestor to restore your dad.

5. Cold and Dark (Frostreave, Harrowfaust)

1. One summer you had a fling with a Vistani for the happiest months of your life. You can't get it out of your mind. Track down your former lover and see if the spark is still real.
2. Growing up in Harrowfaust, your best friend was an old Northron enduring reparation servitude to a wicked vampire. Now that you're grown, rescue and repatriate him.
3. You have what it takes to survive as a vampire. You want to find a vampire who can see that, enter service, and earn eternal undeath with its attendant fringe benefits—one way or another.
4. You grew up on a decrepit farm immersed in stories of the former nobility of your family. Someday you'll free your family's former lands from vampires. Humans will defeat demons.
5. Claimed by the cold northern winds, your father is out there somewhere, undead. He starves for bright blood. As long as he is cursed, your family is in danger. Find and destroy him.
6. A Vistani fortune teller with bleeding eyes told you your future: you would join with a god. Now you find you have a renewed interest in all things religious. What did she mean?
7. As a child, you watched a penangalan devour your mother. You were raised by a household loyal to vampires. You want the vampires to crush the penangalan and retake Harrowfaust.
8. You grew up in a village of raiders, in feast or famine. Then Ulverlanders wiped out your village and sold you to Harrowfaustian nobles, splitting up your family. Find your siblings.
9. You were raised by a friar of the Church of the Lady. He traveled Frostreave and Harrowfaust. You found out he carried coded messages for the Church. You want to help.
10. The Church of the Lady burned your family to death as heretics, you escaped. Someday you will return to your hometown and burn those priests to death where your family died.

6. Touched by Fey (Shae Isles, Scarabae, Frostreave)

1. Your father gave you to dwarves in exchange for a rune axe when you were an infant. The dwarves sold you to a barren couple for a meteor rock. Find your father and take the axe.
2. Everything your cousin touches turns to gold—but that gold melts in sunlight. Your family has tasked you with finding a hex-breaker powerful enough to return him to normal.
3. You were mutating, and an eladrian knight casually pulled the mutation from you and threw it away. Somehow, it grew into its own creature. You dream of it. Find it and kill it.
4. You resisted the charming song of a siren, and now all music is just noise to you. Find a way to restore your love of music and cleanse your ears of that infernal singing.
5. Your father was cursed for stealing something from the fey. Shortly afterwards he died with an axe wound. You suspect the curse encompassed his family line. You should keep moving.
6. You have heard that the fey are willing to teach their secrets to mortals, and impart some of their power. You believe you have an aptitude for the work, and you want a teacher.
7. A nymph melted your heart with her beauty. You cannot properly rest until you possess her. You ache down to the depths of your bones with need to touch her, but she laughs...
8. You were supposed to grow up in the druid tradition, but an Ulverland raid wiped out the local glade. You have traveled far to find someone who can train you as is your destiny.
9. One night you found your way into a wandering fey tower of the eladrian, and you saw something vitally important that everyone must know. Only now, you can't remember it.
10. You fell into the Wailing Labyrinth when you were exploring the woods with your brother as a child. Now your hair is bright silver, your skin is cool. You'd like to rescue your brother.



7. Soldier of Fortune

1. You know a small town in the Liberty Isles where you'd like to retire in style. It will take about 50,000 silver to do it right.
2. Your father, grandfather, uncles, and so on served in the [national] military. You served, you were doing well. Then a crooked officer framed you all. Can you clear your family name?
3. As he lay dying, your buddy told you about a score from his days as a wrecker, hidden in the rocky cliffs of the Iron Principalities. If you can get a crew together to claim it, you'll be rich.
4. You were present at the field execution of a rotten captain. Last year you saw him dressed in finery at a fancy event. If it is the same man, he deserves death or worse. Find out the truth.
5. You went on a secret mission with hand-picked mercenaries and stole an idol from a museum. Of the seven chosen for the job, four are dead and one is missing. What's going on?

6. Iron Kate was the finest captain you ever served. She got double-crossed and she's rotting in prison. Get some of your mates together and help her find her way out.
7. [Noble] hired you and your team for risky and bloody work, and you did it for him. Afterwards, he tried to have you all killed instead of paid. Get your payment from him.
8. You've been a hired sword long enough to know how this works. Get your own warband together and see about making some serious coin.
9. You soldiered for a legendary captain, and he died. You won't be whole until you find someone else who is worthy of your loyalty, and your service has meaning again.
10. If it isn't human, it should be dead. You've fought in the woods, in the rocks, underground. The things you've seen... tolerance is for the naïve. The aliens are a very real threat.



8. Studious Scholar

1. One night when he was tipsy, your over-qualified tutor mumbled something about the fifth mystic academy at Orxham. He furiously denied it the next day. Look into the mystery.
2. Master Souzinar wrote luminous prose, incisively summarizing the events of the Caligarian civil war in "One Stood Apart." Volume 8 and 12 are lost to scholars. Find copies.
3. You were one semester from gaining your Doctor degree when you succumbed to illness and were evicted in poverty. With 20,000 silver, you could graduate and get a title.
4. Your distant relatives fled to the Iron Principalities centuries ago. You heard a family story about a platinum Codex Tag your great-grandfather had. Go find your people and look for it.
5. Intriguing connections have surfaced as you studied apocryphal materials; could Merrihel have once been an angel of the Lady of the White Way? Can you prove this blasphemy?
6. There is an Exemplar book on Saint Vascuse of Valencira that is rumored to have evidence of the crime for which Melanthie Del-Rosa was burned. Prove it, your career is made.
7. Only a Lord of Books in the Great Library's structure can get into the Oubliette for dangerous texts. There you can find the name of the demon holding your mother's soul and save her.
8. They say the elven language is part magic, and beyond the reach of the human mind, ears, and mouth. Won't they be surprised when you are the first human to master it.
9. Why would the Trivium Library of Arts cover up your father's work? He was a doctor of architecture, and a brilliant teacher—but now all his books are gone, his name erased. Why?
10. Living shamen confirm what legends suggest—there is a great library in the Wailing Labyrinth full of the confessions of the dead. Can you get to it *and* bring knowledge back?

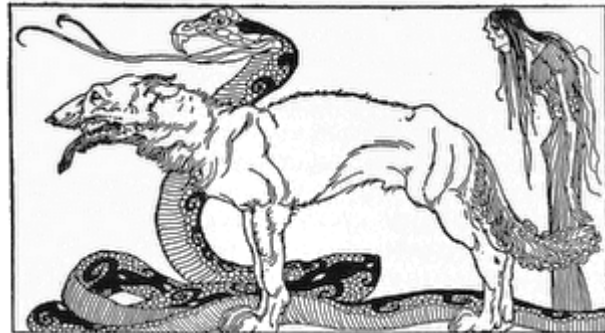
9. Criminal Mind

1. Someday you'll have enough skill and contacts to assume the identity of a noble and smoothly inherit everything you'll ever need. Work on that aristocratic cover.
2. Your mother abandoned you so she could be free to become a master criminal. Find her, infiltrate her gang, and compensate yourself for a miserable childhood.

3. Civilization means trusting paper more than people. Become a master forger.
4. Those in charge like to hurt people to get what they want. You can get what you want and only hurt their pride. Prove you can live well without hurting anyone.
5. You are smart. You are the smartest one. Smarter than the religious investigators, the city watch, the road wardens, the sellswords, the other criminals. Use your smarts to be in charge.
6. Your grandfather swears he once picked a Charlak tumbler lock. You will too.
7. Captain [name] threw your grandmother in prison because she wouldn't pay protection money. She drowned in her own phlegm and was buried in a pauper's grave. Avenge her.
8. It won't be easy framing your ex-lover as a diabolist, but it will be immensely rewarding.
9. You were an honest servant when you were thrown in prison for two years. Now you are an incorrigible criminal. Time to use your new skills and friends to punish your former master.
10. There is a rooftop footrace once a year, for the daring and foolhardy. You must win it once.

10. Monster Hunter

1. The nights were the worst, up in the rocks in the border skirmishes of Harrowfaust. That's when the vampires came. They didn't just kill, they laughed. You must end the laughter.
2. "Live and let live" does not work when they are contagious. Your sister was turned into a werewolf and killed your parents. She's still out there somewhere. Stop the infections.
3. She used magic to strip the skin off your uncle, and make your mother's bones explode. She killed without touching them, laughing all the while. Wizards... they aren't human anymore.
4. You were visited by the Lady of the White Way in a dream. It was more real than your waking life. She told you to hunt the predators. That's what you're going to do.
5. The streets of Caligari taught you all you know about why humans should never make deals with demons. Kill the traitors, plug the leaks that let energy up from the World Below.
6. Hunting monsters is a family tradition. Your worth as a person is measured solely by the monsters you kill and the people you save. Earn the respect of your family.
7. When you went after the necromancer, you found he had made your uncle his bodyguard. You killed them both. Necromancers respect nothing, and they must be stopped.
8. The tribe of cannibals almost got you. You were close enough to see the demon they worshiped, that twisted them. Stop demonic influence before it makes humans demons.
9. You were 7 when your sister was taken by the fey. Time moves differently there, and you hope to get her back before her innocence is lost altogether. You hope she is still your sister.
10. If we can study these monsters, we can develop chemicals, tools, armor, tactics, and weapons so we can beat the monsters and also the enemies of the state.



ALIGNMENT

This system has no mechanical impact on game play.

One way to get into the mindset of Gothic fantasy is to consider the spectrums on the “Gothic Virtues and Vices” chart below. Placing a mark on the spectrum to show where your character’s inclinations are can help you get a handle on some ways to think about the culture of Gothic fantasy.

The DM may choose to offer you Awesome Points to fill this out for your character.

GOTHIC VIRTUES AND VICES		
REASON LIGHT OF REASON	SUPERNATURAL	SUPERSTITION ANCIENT WAYS OF FOLK BELIEF
RESERVE CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS	EMOTION	PASSION GIVE IMPULSES FREE REIGN
RESTRAINT LIMIT YOUR CONDUCT	VICES	EXCESS INDULGE URGES PAST SATIATION
FAITHFULNESS ONE BELOVED	ROMANCE	LASCIVIOUSNESS MANY LUSTS
FORGIVENESS PASS OVER SLIGHTS	GRUDGES	VENGEANCE SWEAR TO EXACT REVENGE
AUTHORITY RESPECT CIVILIZED RESTRICTIONS	MORALITY	LIBERTY FREEDOM OF ACTION ABOVE ALL
LAWFULNESS FOLLOW THE LAWS	CIVICS	CRIMINALITY CRIMINAL MIND
PIETY FULFILLED BY SPIRITUAL BELIEF	WEALTH	WORLDLINESS FULFILLED BY GLITTERING RICHES
VALOR CONFRONT THE DARKNESS	COURAGE	FEARFULNESS COWER BEFORE DANGER
MERCY REDUCE OTHERS' PAIN	SPORTSMANSHIP	CRUELTY EXULT IN OTHERS' AGONY

MARK WHERE YOUR CHARACTER FALLS ON EACH SPECTRUM.

NAME: _____

BY JACK SHEAR
ADAPTED BY ANDREW SHIELDS

BELIEF SYSTEMS & CODES OF HONOR

Every point of Commitment can be used towards taking a belief system or a code of honor. These can be taken at generation or added during play for free—they carry their own cost.

Each point in a belief system or code of honor adds another +1 to a Commitment roll when resisting temptations or violations of that belief system or code of honor.

Players should suggest that they get the bonus any time it occurs to them and seems appropriate, understanding that the DM is the final interpreter of when the bonus applies and when it does not.

Beliefs and honor only provide this extra boost if they require structure and sacrifice. While they can be general, as described below, it can be entertaining to find or write up specific codes to follow.

The key is that the belief system or code of honor makes a character accountable to and willing to sacrifice for something bigger than self and self-interest.

Violating the Belief System or Code of Honor

Sometimes characters will fail to live up to the strictures of their beliefs, they will be dishonored. When this happens, they get *no bonus* to Commitment tests of any kind. The only way to restore the bonus is to atone, to sacrifice, to somehow symbolically restore the broken relationship. The player and DM can work together on what that looks like for the character's situation.

Sample Belief Systems and Codes of Honor

- **Chivalry.** The character believes the strong should protect the weak, that people should be treated with dignity (even foes), and that honor defines a person to the point where without it, wealth and victory and fame are hollow. Politeness symbolizes respect—give it, expect it from those with honor.
- **Duty.** The character has sworn to uphold a duty. This duty is taxing, and requires sacrifice, but it grants meaning and pride in exchange.
- **Family Honor.** The character values the honor of the family, and is horrified at the idea of tarnishing the family with personal misbehavior. The family's integrity and renown gives the character strength, through attachment to it.
- **Idealist.** The character has a vision for what the future should be. No inducement is more valuable than this dream of the future, of what should be—and could be. The character is willing to sacrifice now to draw the world closer to this dream of someday.
- **Religion.** Whether you believe in the Lady of the White Way, the Storm Sovereign Pantheon, the Beast Gods, or some other faith, religion can make you part of something bigger than yourself. You become accountable to the universe in a way that gives strength to your convictions.

STANDARD EQUIPMENT AND COST

The listed cost is for standard equipment. This is not meant to be exhaustive, only to provide a general sense of what is available and how much things cost. Feel free to adapt, improvise, and customize.

- *Shoddy Equipment.* Pay ½ price. The DM can have the equipment break by giving you 1 Awesome Point and putting 1 in the Bowl.
- *Masterwork Equipment.* Pay x5 the price.
 - *Weapons.* Adding 1 Wound only costs 1 Awesome Point.
 - *Armor.* Reducing 1 Wound only costs 1 Awesome Point.
 - *Equipment.* You are +2 on rolls using the equipment.

All listed prices are in silver coinage: marks, denarii, pounds, and drachma.

Melee Weapons

Light
Knife 5

Hand
Axe 10
Mace 10
Shortsword 20
Long/Broad Sword 30

Reach
Staff 5
Spear 10
Polearm 20
Chain Mace 30

Heavy
Heavy Mace 50
Bastard Sword 75
Battleaxe 75
2 Handed Sword 100

Very Heavy
War Club 100
Massive Cleaver 120

Armor

Leather (light) 30
Chain (medium) 100
Chain and Plate (heavy) 500
Full Plate (v. heavy)... 1,000

Light Shield 30
Heavy Shield 40

Range Weapons

Light
Sling 5
Knife 5
Dart 5

Hand
Javelin 5
Axe 10
Shortbow 15
Light Crossbow 20

Heavy
Spear 10
Longbow 40

Very Heavy
Heavy Crossbow 100
Pistol 250
Blunderbuss 300
Musket 350

Ammunition
Sling stones 1
Short arrows 2
Long arrows 5
Powder, shot (1 shot)..... 10
Bullet mold 10
Powder horn/bag 10
Fletching Kit 10
Quiver 15

Specialty Equipment

Warpaint (per dose) 3
Weaponblack (per dose).... 3
Bag of Caltrops 10
Mapping Kit 10
Writing Kit 10
Oilcan 10
Lockpicks 30

Common Equipment

10 Iron Spikes 5
30' rope 5
Backpack 10
Bedroll 5
Chalk, 1 stick 1
Crowbar 10
Grappling Hook 5
Lantern 15
• Hooded Lantern .. 20
Oil Flask (1 hour) 10
Sack 5
Skillet, Cook Kit 5
Spice Box 5
Tinderbox 5
Tent 15
Tool 10
• Hammer, pickaxe, shovel
Torch 1
Water/Wineskin 5
Week's Iron Rations 30
Week's Rations 15

HOUSING, TRAVEL, LIVING EXPENSES

The listed cost is for standard expenses. This is not meant to be exhaustive, only to provide a general sense of what is available and how much things cost. Feel free to adapt, improvise, and customize.

- *Shoddy Experience and Products.* Pay ½ price. The DM can have the equipment or experience inconvenience you by giving you 1 Awesome Point and putting 1 in the Bowl.
- *Masterwork Experience and Products.* Pay x5 the price, in general; this is flexible. Benefits vary.

All listed prices are in silver coinage: marks, denarii, pounds, and drachma.

Living Expenses

Full Set of Clothing.....	8
Winter Clothes	12
1 Meal (public house)	4
1 Meal (prepare at home)..	2
1 Session Carousing.....	50

Common room overnight..	4
Inn room overnight	10

Housing (by month)

Apartment for 1	30
Apartment for family	40
Farmstead.....	40

Housing (purchased)

Taxed at 5% a year average

Apartment for 1	500
Apartment for family	700
Small house.....	700
Family size house.....	1,000
Farmstead.....	1,500
Small manor	5,000
Watchtower	5,000

Entertainment

Play/Concert tickets	8
Drum	10
Recorder	10
Prostitute's Favors	15
Fiddle	15
Horn (with valves)	50
Shoulder harp	40

Animals

Chicken	6
Hunting dog.....	10
Guard dog.....	15
Goat, sheep.....	15
Exotic (monkey, bird)	20
Mule/Donkey	30
Riding horse	50
• Tack, Saddle.....	40
• Shoes	10
Plow horse.....	60
Milking cow	80
Bull.....	100
Warhorse	100

Travel Speeds (Estimated)

Good conditions add about +½, bad conditions cut speed to ½ or less. DM is the final say.

On Foot

Light Pack, Road.....	4 mph
Heavy Pack, Road	3 mph
Light Pack, Wilds.....	3 mph
Heavy Pack, Wilds....	2 mph

Horseback/Coach

Light Load.....	6 mph
Heavy Load/Difficult	4 mph

By Sea

Normal Conditions	3 mph
(traveling 24 hours, though)	

Travel Expenses

Leg Tax. Most civilized areas have about 1 toll road per leg of the journey, or about 3 a week (give or take.)

The going rate for road taxes is 1 silver per leg or wheel.

- 2 for a person
- 2 for a cart
- 4 for a mount or pack animal
- 4 for a carriage or wagon

Whether levied by a local lord, an independent state, or the Queen's tax agents, the rate is the most the market will bear.

Port fees tend to be about 5% of the value of the vessel and cargo.

By Sea

Working.....	Free
Steerage	5 a day
Cabin	20 a day

By Road

Working.....	Free
Shared Coach.....	10 a day
Hired Coach.....	75 a day

Coaches usually hire 2 workers: one to drive, one to add protection. Both handle harnessing morning and night.

CURRENCY

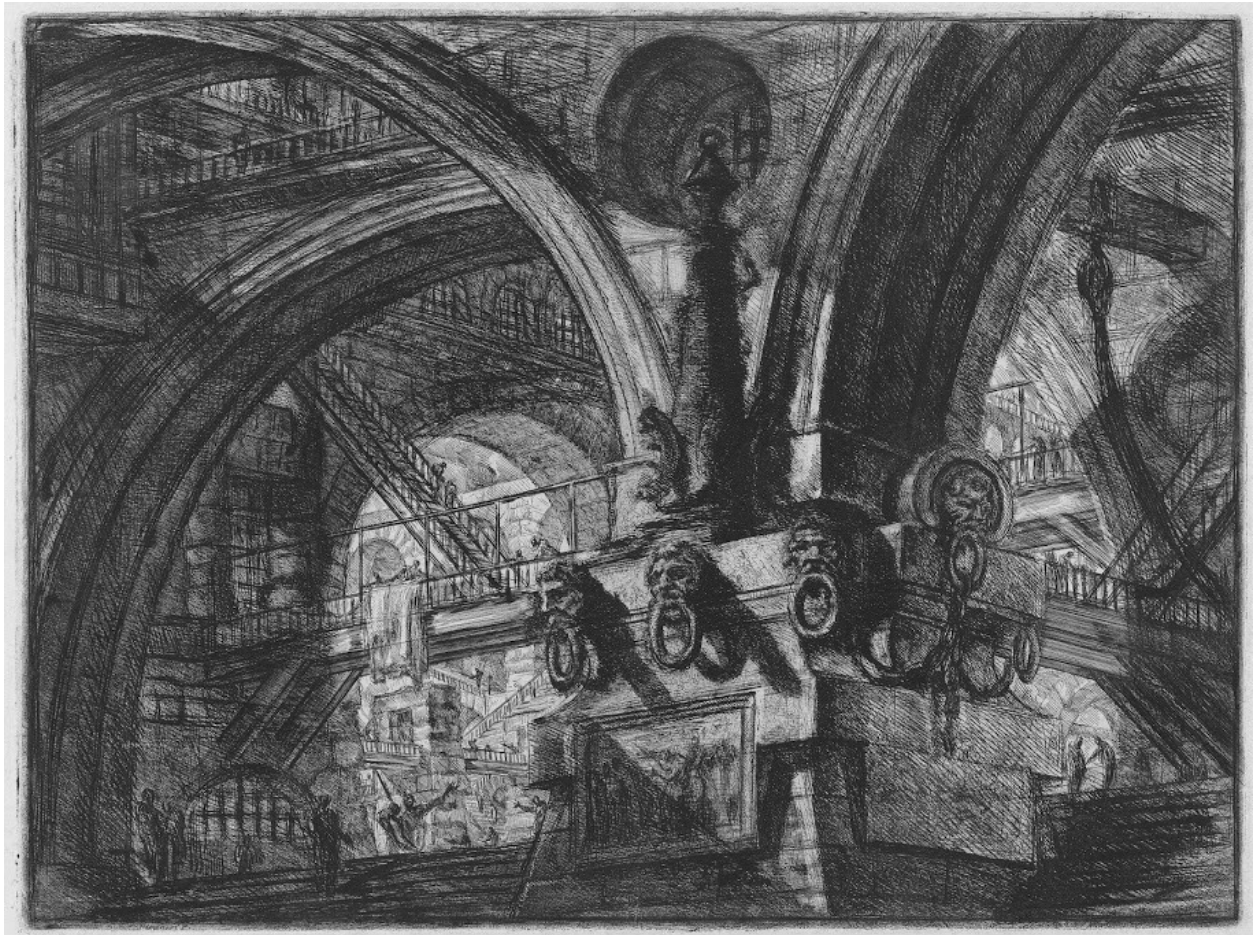
This system is designed to give the flavor of variety and stubborn nations asserting their independence. In an interconnected world, (and one where you don't want to drive your players mad,) there is general agreement that silver pieces are of equivalent value. Also, most transactions are in silver or copper.

Type	Lands of the Lady	Ulverland	Caligari	Mord-Stavian
Gold	Aureus (25 denarii)	Sovereign (10 pounds)	Crown (10 marks)	Decadrachm (10 d)
Silver	Denarius (16 sestis)	Pound (20 shillings)	Mark (10 pennies)	Drachma (10 Chalk)
Copper	Sester	Shilling (12 pence)	Pennies	Chalk (10 per Obloi)
Custom	Tarb, platinum tag (8 a)	Pence, copper coin	Cheque	Obloi-sticks of silver

- **Martial Scrip.** Sometimes mercenaries and soldiers are paid with a square of parchment listing the amount and the paymaster. This scrip can be gambled, stolen, salvaged, and otherwise moved around before finding its way to the paymaster—but the paymaster is obligated to make good on the debt.

Most places in the World Between accept Caligarian currency. Having different currencies lets the DM mess with the players by having an establishment not take their coin, then charge to convert it to local currency. Or they find a stash but they aren't sure the value of what they've got. Currency from a country may betray the origin of an employer when found on the body of an employee.

In general, a day's work for a laborer is worth about 3 silver coins.



ALCOHOL

The water isn't safe, painkillers are not readily available, life is short, and there is no television. Drinking is widespread and a cultural assumption in the World Between. *Every dose of alcohol in your system gives you +1 Commitment to resist Terror and Horror.*

Type	Dose, affects 1 Brawn	Default cost	Sobering Up. The effects of 1 dose of alcohol leave the system every half hour. Also, a shot of adrenaline gets rid of a dose. So does a dunking in water.
Lousy Beer	3 Pints	3 silver	
Good Beer	2 Pints	4 silver	
Fantastic Beer	1 Pint	5 silver	
Dwarven Beer	½ Pint	6 silver	
Lousy Wine	½ bottle (5 glasses)	10 silver per bottle	Hangover. If you drink as much water as alcohol, then you don't have a hangover. Otherwise, when you pass out you are -1 to all rolls per dose of alcohol still in your system. These go away 1 per hour upon waking in pain.
Good Wine	¼ bottle (3 glasses)	20 silver per bottle	
Fantastic Wine	1 glass	50 silver per bottle	
Elven Wine	½ glass	75 silver per bottle	
Lousy Whisky	5 shots	5 silver	
Decent Spirits	3 shots	6 silver	
The Good Stuff	1 shot	10 silver	

Overindulging. You are pleasantly buzzed with alcohol in your system, until you have more doses than you have Brawn. Your first overdose determines your default behavior when drunk. Roll 1d10.

Overindulging Roll

- 1-5. Default.
- 6-8. Roll a different behavior.
- 9-10. Nausea. You forget what you did.
- 11-13. Pass out.
- 14+. Roll as if reaching 0 Wounds, no modifier.

Behaviors

The first roll determines the character's default drunken behavior.

1. **Friendly.** Chatty, loudly proclaims love of everyone.
2. **Angry.** Pick fights, strike if provoked, simmering mad.
3. **Weepy.** Oh gods, the angst and misery and self-pity...
4. **Sing!** You want to sing! Even songs you don't know!
5. **Truthsome.** You get lucid and creepy and tell truths.
6. **Nostalgia.** This is when you open up about your past.
7. **Entitled.** You never get what you deserve. Passed over.
8. **Idea Time.** This is when you get your best ideas!
9. **Stripper.** Clothes are confining. Dancing is fun.
10. **Look What I Can Do!** You show off your prowess.



An apothecary setup costs at least 200 silver and requires some space (it is not particularly portable, and it is about 4 loads.) A field setup could cost 100 silver and be 1 load.

Generally, weapons have 3 “contacts” per dose (actual hits) except ranged weapons, which have 1. Targets get a modified Awareness test to detect substances lacing their food or water.

Name	Type	Onset	Detection Awareness difficulty	Save	Fail	Pass	Price (silver)
Adder's Milk	Ingest	1d2 rounds	8	Brawn 8	4 Wounds	2 Wounds	22
Symptoms:	Burning sensation throughout body.						
Bishop's Complaint	Inhale	2d5 rounds	4	Brawn 4	1 Wound	None	1
Symptoms:	Bodily discomfort, convulsions.						
Black Voluptua	Ingest	2d5 rounds	6	Brawn 8	Sleep 2d5 hours	None	4
Symptoms:	Anesthetic for surgery. Tea made from the nettles of the voluptua bush.						
Clouded Eye	Eye contact	Instant	-	-	-	-	5
Symptoms:	Target must spend 5 focus actions clearing vision, cannot see until then.						
Cryptmold	Inhale	Instant	12	Brawn 12	2 Wounds	1 Wound	15
Symptoms:	Sudden chill felt throughout the body.						
Drowsili	Ingest	1d5 rounds	10	Brawn 10	Sleep for an hour	None	5
Symptoms:	Only wakes if caused pain.						
Duskmilk	Ingest	1d2 rounds	8	Brawn 12	Vomit 2d5 rounds	None	2
Symptoms:	Made from thistles of a rare grassland bush.						
Dust of Lucius	Inhale	1d5 rounds	6	Brawn 6	-2 on rolls	None	5
Symptoms:	Itchiness throughout body.						
Everdream Tincture	Ingest	1 round	10	Brawn 10	Death	2 Wounds	52
Symptoms:	Sudden feeling of light-headedness.						
Fool's Folly	Inhale	1d5 rounds	4	Brawn 12	Paralyzing pain 1d5 rounds, then save or die.	None	4
Symptoms:	Made from fool's folly mushrooms.						

ENCHANTED GEAR

Generally there is no “magic store” to buy these items. In general, magical items sell for about 1,000 silver for persistent items and 400 silver for consumables like potions and scrolls. Buyers will not pay full price (as they will add their own mark-up.) In general, matching an item to a wealthy and interested buyer will be more rewarding than fencing goods quickly.

“Arena” powers can be recharged as though they were talents, for 1 Awesome Point. “Rested” powers cannot be recharged, the owner must wait.

Ring.

- **Critical Aim.** *Arena.* After rolling to hit, move the face die to “10.”
- **Darkvision.** *Constant.* See in the dark for 30 feet.
- **Energy.** *Rested.* Recharge a rested talent as a free action.
- **Healing.** *Arena.* Heal 1 Wound as a focus action, self or other.
- **Protection.** *Constant.* Reduces all incoming attacks by 1 Wound. (Counts as armor for awarding AP.)
- **Water Breathing.** *Constant.* Able to breathe water.

Shield. Shields can be light or heavy.

- **Armwall.** *Arena.* Spend 1 AP to bolster the shield so it takes a hit and passes no Wounds on to the wearer. The shield is not damaged when used in this way. Works 3 times between sunrises.
- **Dispillation.** *Arena.* Adds +6 to an effort to resist magic, or -6 to hit for a magic attack, or soaks 2 Wounds from a magic attack.
- **Lightshield.** *Constant.* Projects light as a torch at will.
- **Mirrored.** *Constant.* Allows the wearer to fight foes without looking directly at them. In bright conditions, can take action from another in same or adjacent arena as ranged impede (shine in eyes).
- **Sight.** *Arena.* Look over the top of the shield to see invisible or hidden objects, gaining +4 to Awareness tests.

Weapon. Weapons can be light, hand, reach, heavy, or very heavy.

- **Dancing.** *Arena.* It can animate and defend its owner for the duration of a fight. Attacks against the dancing weapon are -4 to hit, 2 Wounds deactivate it.
- **Deadly.** *Constant.* It does +1 Wound with each successful hit, and ignores 1 armor soak.
- **Doom Axe of Malrodian.** Very heavy weapon, serrated axe. When its command word is spoken, the bearer can regenerate 1 Wound a round for about a minute. This works once per day.
- **Extending.** *Arena.* It can also attack those in adjacent arenas.
- **Flaming.** *Constant.* It gives light as a torch and grants +1 Wound damage.
- **Morphing.** *Arena.* It can become any kind of melee weapon as a free action once per round.
- **Ravenblade.** An ornate black short sword etched with red enameled runes that smoke when the sword is in the presence of undead. It grants +2 to hit or +1 Wound with each attack. It grants both when attacking undead.
- **Sacrificial Dagger of Matakhan.** Light weapon. Each human killed with this blade grants its wielder 2 *spent* Awesome Points towards leveling.
- **Vampiric.** *Constant.* Every 2 Wounds it inflicts heals the user 1 Wound.
- **Warpsword.** *Constant.* This very heavy weapon ignores armor. However, each time it inflicts a Wound, the bearer must test Brawn difficulty 6 or take a Charge towards mutation (when bearer has 1 Charge per Brawn, Brawn test difficulty 15 or mutate.)

Armor. Armor can be light, medium, heavy, or very heavy.

- **Buoyant.** *Constant.* Does not hamper swimming at all, grants free movement underwater.
- **Disorientation.** *Constant.* Distorts perception so attackers are -2 to hit.
- **Healing.** *Arena.* Heals 1 Wound as a free action.
- **Kobold Warpaint.** Take 1 minute to apply the paint to face, neck, and arms. It only works on those wearing no armor. For the next hour, get +2 to hit or +1 Wound damage for each hand to hand or melee attack. At the end of the hour, take 1 Wound.
- **Mystic Fitting.** *Constant.* The armor is 1 load less heavy.
- **Stealthy.** *Constant.* Grants +2 to stealth attempts, stealth is not penalized by armor weight.
- **Sustaining.** *Rested.* Counts as resting the character, providing energy equivalent of food, water, and six hours of sleep and recharging all rested abilities.
- **Woodrot.** *Constant.* When a wooden weapon or plant-based creature hits this armor, the wood is disintegrated. Plant creatures take 3 Wounds.

Ranged.

- **Arrows of Her Dreaming Majesty.** When fired, the arrow splits into 1d5 arrows that all use the same attack roll, individually hitting up to 1 target each in the same arena (shooter chooses which.)
- **Bonearrow.** This arrow does +1 Wound. If it kills its target, the target rises the next round as a tough with 2 Wounds under the telepathic control of the shooter. It only works once.
- **Bonedry Cannon.** *Constant.* The powder in this pistol never gets wet.
- **Conflagration Shot.** When fired from a musket or pistol, this ball explodes in the target's arena, inflicting 2 Wounds on all targets in the arena. Those who are near enough an edge to leap clear may test Daring difficulty 10 to take 1 Wound.
- **Featherfaced Bow.** *Arena.* After rolling to hit, move the face die to "10."
- **Heavy Crossbow of Flaming Doom.** *Arena.* One bolt does 4 Wounds and sets aflame any flammable target.
- **Quickbow.** *Constant.* Spend 1 AP to get an extra ranged attack this round.
- **Self-Loading Heavy Crossbow.** *Constant.* The crossbow reloads itself every round as a free action.
- **Thunderhammer.** *Arena.* This heavy weapon can be flung to attack others in the same arena or an adjacent arena. It can be called back to hand with a focused action.



Objects.

- **Amulet of Mutational Protection.** The bearer is immune to magic radiation and mutation.
- **Amulet of Spikes.** *Arena.* For 1 round, all attacking minions fall after they attack the owner.
- **Bauble of Counterspelling.** Anyone can shatter this glass orb as a free action (or a move action to remove it from safety and smash it.) It counts as a total of 20 to Counterspell.
- **Casket of Seraph-Luun.** Stone sarcophagus from Mord-Stavian. Transforms human corpses sealed inside into a thick, honey-like fluid that smells of vinegar. Pass a Horror 9 test to drink the fluid, and gain knowledge of any hidden treasure the corpse knew about.

- **Cauldron of the Lamenting Mother.** This is a massive black cauldron with skulls of mutants and creatures bolted to it. Once per year, it may be filled with pure water from a rushing river and brought to a boil. The remains of a once-living creature must be put in at sundown, and at midnight, the creature will return to life. A person raised in this way must attend a midnight rite dedicated to the Lamenting Mother once per year. If they fail to attend, they die with no hope of resurrection.
- **Collar of the Shae Chieftans.** This gold, jeweled collar makes the bearer immune to fear, +3 against terror and horror, and +3 to any roll to resist a magic effect. They were gifts from arch-fey.
- **Cup of the Oathbreaker.** Anyone who drinks from this enchanted goblet once owned by the Betrayer Prince of Scarabae is freed from the effects of a geas or quest.
- **Evasion Boots.** *Arena.* Roll 7+ on 1d10 to avoid a successful hit in combat.
- **Frogbeast Eggs.** These can be thrown in the same or and adjacent arena. When they land, a frogbeast rolls out and rises as a focus action. In subsequent rounds, it will wander, or approach the nearest moving or living thing. When it detonates, it does 3 Wounds to what it touches, and 2 Wounds to anything within arm's reach.
- **Ghostsilver Lantern.** The baroque lantern traps a will 'o the wisp. When the hood is opened, the spectral light reveals hidden doors in the same arena, outlined in pale, flickering phosphorescence.
- **Glowstick.** Magic liquid in a silvery tube. Shake it as a focus action, it emits wan light equal to a lantern for 10 minutes, and a candle for 50 minutes before dimming out. The stick then requires an hour to recharge before it can be used again.
- **Horn of Terror.** *Arena.* Blow the horn, and foes must test Commitment difficulty 8 or flee. Toughest foes test first; each fleeing tier is -2 morale to lower tiers.
- **Implement of Casting.** *Constant.* Looks like a wand, rod, staff, orb, or athame. Any spellcaster can use this in exchange for normal spell components for mage spells (not including special components.)
- **Mask of the Blunt Myrmidon.** The cursed mask causes the bearer to do -1 Wound with bladed weapons. The bearer will refuse to take the mask off unless the mask is counterspelled, difficulty 12.
- **Multitool of the Dwarf Artificers.** It appears to be a rod of smelted iron. Hold it aloft and invoke the name of a dwarven craftmaster to change its shape: "By the Power of—" Narfi the Forger (hammer), Gnackli the Carver (chisel), Morgli the Bender (crowbar), Restnar the Splinterer (axe), Lorla the Mender (scissors), Terlak the Miner (pick). When not held, the multitool reverts to rod form. In combat it can be used as a light weapon or a hand weapon depending on the form.
- **Muscle Belt.** *Constant.* Do 1 extra Wound in unarmed or melee combat, gain +2 to Brawn tests.
- **Pipe of the Tobacco Mage.** This nondescript pipe has a mystical word etched on its stem. Once per day when it is smoked the owner may intone the mystic word and blow forth a cloud of smoke that fills the smoker's arena. Those in the smoke must test Brawn difficulty 10. If they fail, they must leave the arena or lose 1 Wound a round, and they are -2 on all rolls. If they succeed, they are -2 on all rolls.
- **Ravenous Pelt of the Wolfen Mother.** *Rested.* This wolf pelt may be cast on the ground, and the activation word said, during the defend phase. It becomes a massive wolf with 5 Wounds that attacks as a heavy weapon and accepts commands from its master until the fight is over or a minute passes.
- **Scamperclaws.** *Arena.* Ignore any penalty or difficulty to climb or drop from one arena to the other while empty-handed and wearing these climbing claws.
- **Shadowcloak.** Grants the wearer +2 Cunning to be stealthy. Can hold 1 hand weapon or smaller item in an interdimensional space that cannot be found by searching. Three times per day, allows the bearer to move into one deep shadow and emerge from another in an adjacent arena.
- **Slurgian Death Head.** *Rested.* Dessicated, gruesome trophies made from decapitated heads. As a focus action once per day, pry the mouth open. A thick cloud of flies will swarm out, disrupting all focus actions in that arena and adjacent arenas for 1d5 rounds, starting the round after it is opened.
- **Stonecloak.** *Arena.* Duck under the cloak, it stiffens to an appearance of stone. Awareness difficulty 10 to detect the fake. Seeing and hearing what goes on outside is -2 Awareness for the hiding character.

- **Twin Puzzle Boxes of Calim Yor.** The puzzle boxes are identical, made from rosewood. Each has a hidden button (Awareness or Cunning difficulty 15 to find.) When the button is pushed on one, the user is instantly transported to the second box.

Scrolls. (Labeled, worth 400 silver. Unlabeled, about 200.)

A scroll can contain a single spell from any school of magic.

- **Learning the Spell.** When a wizard finds a scroll, the wizard can spend 3 Awesome Points that do not count towards leveling, to learn the spell after at least 12 hours of study, as a talent when the wizard levels. This does not damage the scroll.
- **Casting From the Scroll.** A wizard can drain all magic from the scroll once and spend 3 Awesome Points, casting the spell as though it was an unlearned talent from the wizard's base template. The spell works normally, but the scroll then disintegrates.

Potions. (Labeled, worth 400 silver. Unlabeled, about 200.)

A potion takes a focus action to drink. Most also take a focus action to go into effect. Some potent potions fit in a smaller space, and can be downed like a shot glass as a Defend action. The effects can be adjusted by the DM for specific potions as desired—these are general categories.

- **Awesome Sauce.** This potion grants 2d5 Awesome Points to the drinker.
- **Cosmic Insight.** Gain a level immediately. Take 1 Wound for every 3 full Awesome Points you would have had to spend.
- **Liquid Rest.** This potion counts as 12 hours of rest, recharging all rested talents. Each one reduces the drinker by 1 Wound until the drinker sleeps for 6 hours.
- **Liquid Training.** Gain its talent immediately, replacing the talent you'll get when you next level. It can be common or restricted—rumors of a few that teach exclusive talents excite drinkers.
- **Healing Drink.** Drink as a focus action, then gain up to 2 Wounds back no matter how badly hurt; each one takes 1 focus action to return, and if interrupted, that Wound does not return. Wounds healed in this way leave no scar, not even if you were dying (though crippling endures).
- **Water Blessing.** (50 silver) Blessed water inflicts 3 Wounds on undead. Vials can be blessed and thrown like range weapons, or the damage spread among targets in melee range with a splash. Water arrows can be blessed. Any sufficiently holy source (like a font) can bless water in it as a focus action.
- **Reverse Potions.** They do the opposite of what they were meant to do; drain all rested talents, inflict 1d5 wounds, suck out 2d5 Awesome Points, yank 1 level away, "forget" a talent, and other horrors.

Elemental Arrows. These are usually found in groups of 1d5, worth about 500 silver each.

- **Fire Arrow.** +1 arena range and explodes on contact, doing 3 Wounds to the target and 2 Wounds to those in arm's reach. Projects the light of a lantern; useful for seeing the way, but not for hiding. Fire will ignite anything flammable, but not people.
- **Gas Arrow.** When it hits, the target and all those within arm's reach of the target must test Brawn difficulty 12 or collapse unconscious for about an hour.
- **Moss Arrow.** This arrow carpets an arena with deep moss, silencing footfalls. This may allow automatic success at stealth, or if there are other factors, up to +4 to Cunning.
- **Noisemaker Arrow.** The enchantment releases various sounds; sometimes coughs, or knocks, or clumsy movements, or crying babies, etc. depending on the whim of the creator. It lasts a minute.
- **Vine Arrow.** When it hits, as a focus action it extends a rope up to 2 arenas (12 yards) long. The arrow must inflict a Wound on the target to get enough traction to hold weight. It can hold up to 6 loads. If pulled lose as a protect action, it magically rewinds itself as a focus action.

- **Water Arrow.** Puts out fire (up to a small campfire size) with a hit within arm's reach. If hitting a target, the target must pass a Daring test (difficulty is [the roll to hit]) or lose an action, sputtering.

Enchanted Teas of Ulverland. The blends are worth about 100 silver each.

- **Strong Brown Cuppa.** Relieves drinker of fear effects, can cure a madness acquired since sleeping last.
- **Fiery Heart Blend.** Smokey tea grants immunity to effects of normal cold and soaks 1 Wound from magical cold, for about 12 hours.
- **Dreamless Slumber Brew.** Dreamless sleep for 2 hours or more, wake with a sense of clarity and 1d5 Awesome Points.
- **Jade Tea.** Mild blend. Detect any falsehood uttered in your presence for 5 hours. Also, cannot lie for that time.
- **Teapot of the Conscientious Butler.** (750 silver) Any sachet of tea served in this fine porcelain teapot will expand in volume so that 4 drinkers can enjoy its magic and flavor.
- **Tea-Ball of Spectral Steeping.** (500 silver.) The metal tea-ball transmutes tea brewed from it into an ectoplasmic beverage that can be enjoyed by ghosts, specters, and incorporeal undead. Must Ulverlandean spectral undead will cease their unwholesome activities if offered a cup of tea. Such an offering makes them immanently more reasonable and amenable to calm discussion.



Fey Items. These are generally not for sale, but are used as gifts.

Troublesome Trinket

- 1 Mirror shows you your heart's desire
- 2 Love potion, works for 1d10 days (or years)
- 3 Bag that produces illusory coins, last 1 hour
- 4 Comb that, while worn, makes a woman pretty
- 5 Pipe full of pleasant dreams while smoked
- 6 Stone that turns lead to gold—for a while
- 7 Pebble you can place, immovable to all but you
- 8 Pearl, inspires everyone with desire to own it
- 9 Book with an absorbing story, never ends
- 10 Small rock, instantly kills those who kiss it

Treasure

Crystal bottle, 1 drop from it heals any wound
 Self-playing harp full of beautiful music
 Pouch always full of bland, nourishing pellets
 Dagger on a cord, points towards your target
 Hunting horn that always summons help
 Quiver that always has arrows in it
 Necklace doubles your Charm
 Cloak, all under it is invisible
 Ring, you land gracefully, no falling damage
 Diamond worth 10,000 gold

EXPLOSIVES

Characters with the Mechanic talent “Demolitions” know how to make and use bombs. Other mechanics can do this also, spending 3 Awesome Points to use a talent in their template that they do not have.

- **Collapsing Charge.** Build time: 8 hours. Cost: 500 silver. Detonation method: fuse or timer (extra 20 or 100 silver.) Size: 50 gallon barrel, 3 Encumbrance (a little extra because it’s... delicate.)
 - Everything in the arena takes 20 Wounds. Everything in adjacent arenas takes 4 Wounds. A Daring test cuts the damage in half.
- **Flashpowder.** Build time: 2 hours for 5 doses. Cost: 30 silver per dose. Detonation method: exposure to flame or intentional magic. Size: 1 dose fits in a marble.
 - Can grant +2 to Charm test, or be aggressively flung at a target who must test Daring or be -4 to the target’s next action (ignored if the target does not act for 1 round.)
- **Grenade.** Build time: 2 hours. Cost: 150 silver. Detonation method: 10 second (2 round) fuse, detonates on the part of the round where it was lit. Size: fits in the hand.
 - Everything next to it takes 6 Wounds, everything within half an arena takes 2. A Daring test cuts the damage in half.
 - Lighting can be a free action if a torch etc. is nearby, or a focus action if the material must be readied, lighting the fuse, and putting material away. Usually throwing as a shooting action.
- **Flashbang/Smokebomb.** Build time: 1 hour. Cost: 30 silver. Detonation method: impact. Size: 1 dose fits in a marble.
 - Throw as a ranged action. Cover your eyes as a free action to avoid the negative effect. Any potential target can cover eyes if they know the flashbomb is coming, and be safe from its effect. All those in the same arena or looking at the flashbomb must test Daring (variable difficulty, usually 10) and if they fail they lose an action. If they succeed, they are -4 to all rolls for a round.

CANNONS

A cannon rolls 1d10 to hit. At short range, it needs 8. At medium range, it needs 9. At long range, 10. If a cannon rolls a 10 to hit, damage is doubled.

Type	Crew	Focus Actions to Reload	Range (8, 9, 10 to hit)	Loads	Wounds
Light	2	6 (3 each for crew)	100 ft., 300 ft., 500 ft.	4	6
Medium	3	9 (3 each)	200 ft., 500 ft., 800 ft.	8	8
Heavy	3	9 (3 each)	300 ft., 600 ft., 900 ft.	12	10
Mortar	2	6 (3 each)	300 ft., 600 ft., 900 ft.	8	8 to arena

If a shot fires at an unmoving target and misses, the crew can adjust the range as a focus action to get +1 to hit from then on. This is cumulative.

A human target hit by a cannonball and reduced to 0 Wounds is +8 on the critical roll (unless the cannon fired grapeshot or the target was hit by shrapnel or flying debris.)

A cannon fired into a group of targets can divide its Wounds in the group, taking out multiple targets. Damage can only be shared with a second target when the first is depleted, and so on.

Firing the cannon takes gunpowder loads equal to the base damage the cannon inflicts.

ART CREDITS

I am deeply grateful to Jack Logan, for putting such an incredible public domain art website up. I used it extensively for this book. <https://picasaweb.google.com/102628334940070915254> That web site's attribution for the artist for each piece is listed by the page number where the art is found. They are protected by the Creative Commons license found here. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>

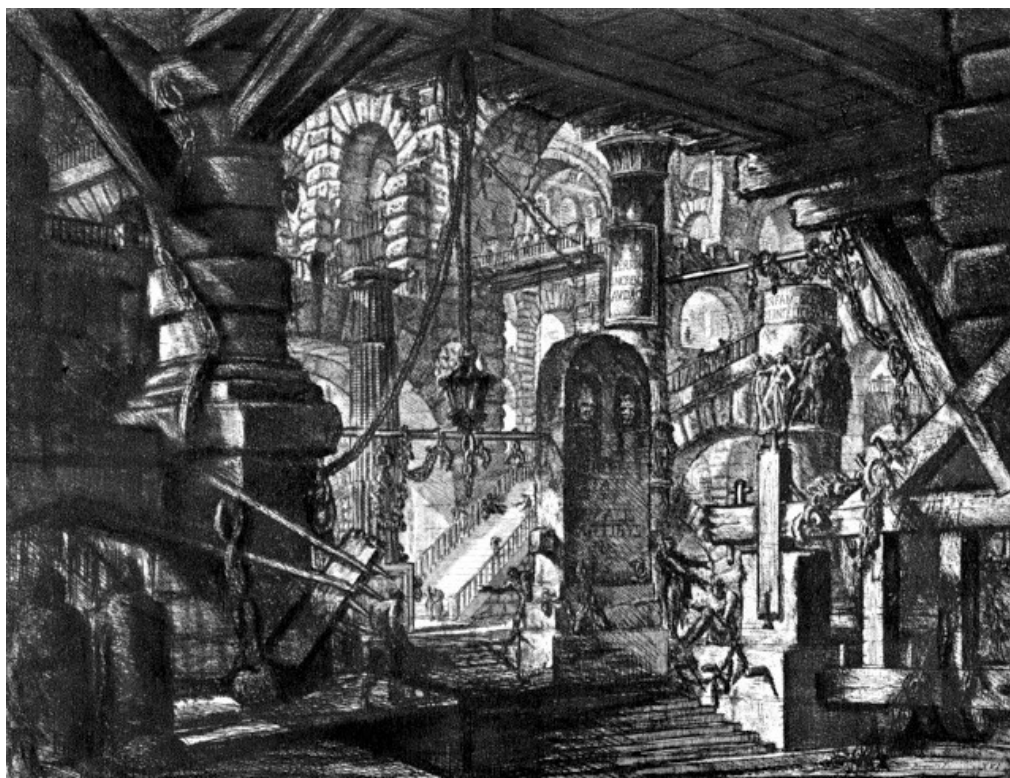
Cartography for the World Between is done by Kristy Shields working in collaboration with Andrew Shields. All versions of the world map and country maps are a result of their efforts. Map brushes by StarRaven. Andrew did the cover illustration, Kristy did the cover design.

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EXAMPLES FOR CLARIFICATION

These examples are intended to walk through some possibilities and decision-making processes to show how some of the game mechanics work in actual situations. An example can often illustrate how things work better than an elaborate description.

An Ogre Hits Tanya

The ogre has a very heavy weapon (3 Wounds) at +2 Wounds for its vast strength, so it does 5 Wounds with a hit. Tanya is wearing very heavy armor, and she has a shield. Tanya has 2 Wounds.

- If the ogre rolls 1-7 on 2d10, it misses her.
- If the ogre rolls 8-10, her armor absorbs 4 Wounds and her shield absorbs the 5th.
- If the ogre rolls 11-13, her armor absorbs 3 Wounds and her shield the 4th.
 - She could spend 2 Awesome Points and still not take any damage.
- If the ogre rolls 14-16, her armor absorbs 2 Wounds and her shield the 3rd.
 - She could spend 2 Awesome Points and take 1 Wound, but she's cutting it close.
- If the ogre rolls a 17-19, her armor absorbs 1 Wound.
 - If she uses her shield to reduce 1 more, and spends 2 Awesome points to reduce 1 more, she takes 2 Wounds and must roll on the critical chart to see what happens to her since she reaches 0 Wounds. That is not good.
 - She could sacrifice her shield, so all damage is absorbed save 1 Wound. Then she could spend 2 Awesome Points to negate that Wound, or just take it.

Tanya is well served by fighting defensively; that takes the ogre's to-hit roll down by 2, and with her shield she reduces his attack by 2 more, total -4 to hit. She then has a chance to counter-attack in a situation where even if the ogre hits her it is unlikely she'll be wounded. Even if the ogre rolls a 20, that counts as a 16 with +1 Wound damage for a hit to the face. Only a 20 on 2d10 would require her to sacrifice her shield to stay on her feet.

Raoul Chooses a Parrying Weapon

Raoul has a 7 Daring. He wants to fight with 2 weapons.

- With a light weapon he gets 1d10 +7 (Daring) to hit, so he can't miss—7+1 (minimum roll) is 8, a hit.
 - A second light weapon for parrying means he would not get to roll 1d10. He would get a flat 7 to hit (a miss) but the parrying weapon could give him +2 to hit automatically. However, that only works once a round. An armored foe, even with light armor, could ignore his base damage (though he could spend 2 Awesome Points for +1 Wound.)
- With a hand weapon he gets 3d10 to hit, keep the 2 highest rolls.
 - A second light weapon or hand weapon would reduce the roll to 2d10 to hit. He would also get either +2 to hit, -2 to hit for an incoming melee attack, or +1 Wound to his damage once a round. *Unless he gets some talents to help out, this is his best bet.*
- With a heavy weapon or a reach weapon he gets 2d10 to hit.
 - A light weapon or hand weapon for parrying would reduce the roll to 1d10 to hit. He would get +2 to hit once a round, but he would probably miss more than he wants to.

- A very heavy weapon requires 2 hands. It doesn't work with a parrying weapon.
- *Talents make a difference.*
 - "Paired Weapons," Duelist template: he would not be -1d using with paired weapons.
 - "Net of Steel," Duelist template: he would get to use the parrying weapon advantage once per round per level.
 - "Salute," Duelist template: he would get +2 to hit, which could make the difference in what weapon combination could consistently get 8 or higher.
 - "Sensitive Spots," Prostitute template: he could use a light weapon to get +2 to hit or +1 Wound, increasing the effectiveness of paired knives.
- Light weapons get a +2 arena bonus in a tight arena. Hand weapons don't get an arena bonus. Depending on control of surroundings, paired knives could be a good choice for very close combat.

George Gets Demolished

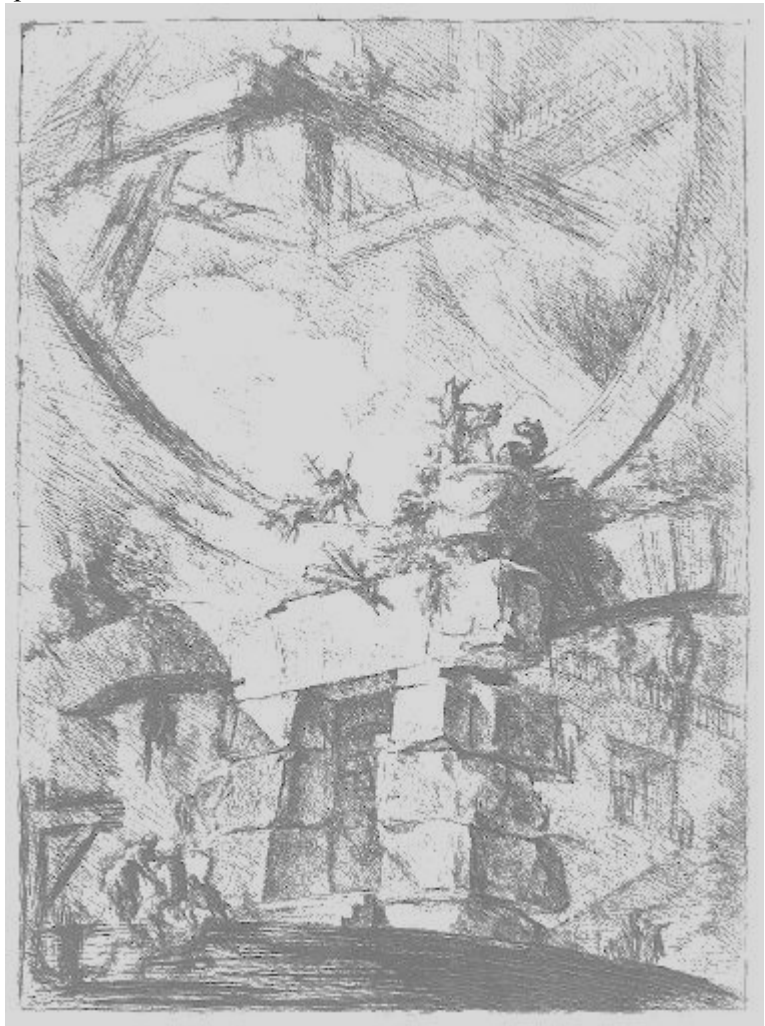
George had 2 Wounds and he is shot with a pistol—a 10 on the Face Die, so he takes 6 Wounds...

- George spends 2 Awesome Points to reduce the damage to 5.

George gets to roll on the critical chart on page 56. He had 2 Wounds, so he is +3 on the roll—that's the number of Wounds past 0 he received.

- If he rolls 4-6 he is knocked out. At the end of the combat he gets up and regains a Wound.
- If he rolls 7-9 he is dying; bleeding, badly hurt, helpless. Without medical care, he'll die.
- If he rolls 10-12, he is crippled AND dying. Even if he gets help, he'll never be the same. He rolls 1d10 on the Crippling chart. Or, the DM could rule that since he was shot in the head, it could be 3, 4, 6, or 7. For a nice even 5 slots, 40% it is 7. Or the DM could just assign the critical.
- If he rolls 13 (a roll of 10 +3), the shot killed him flat out.

Once the critical is rolled, the "negative Wounds" go away. If he is then hit for 1 Wound, he rolls again on the critical chart at +1. When the fight is over, he has 0 Wounds, not -3 Wounds.



Philippe Fights an Animated Statue

Philippe has a heavy weapon and a reach weapon. He is in a dense arena of trees and shrubbery, pursued by an animated stone statue that counts as having very heavy armor. What might he do?

- He might stand and fight.
 - His heavy weapon is +2 to hit in a dense arena, and it does 2 Wounds. That means he can hurt it if he rolls a 17 or better on 2d10. If he spends 2 Awesome Points to boost damage, he could injure it on a roll of 14 or better.
 - The down side to this plan is that the statue inflicts 3 Wounds per hit, and that will put Philippe out of the fight even if he spends 2 Awesome Points to reduce the damage to 2.
 - Philippe could defend, giving the statue -2 to hit him and getting a counter-attack if he is hit. If he was wearing armor or had a shield, he might consider that option.
 - He might get an improvised weapon, looking around for a tree branch big enough to be a very heavy weapon. That would give him a base 3 damage, and with Awesome Points he could boost it to 4. Especially if he could manage a hit to the face for +1 Wound. Not very bright, but he could get lucky.
- He might climb a tree. If he made his Daring test to climb, it is possible the animated statue could not follow, and he might escape. Or, he could attack after climbing a couple arenas up. His reach weapon would give him +2 to hit in a hazardous arena, like clinging to branches far above the ground. He could also use a push action to dislodge the statue so it fell—if he got up 2 or 3 arenas first, the fall could hurt it significantly and buy him time if it could not catch itself. (Technically the push would just move the target one arena, but being pushed down while climbing a tree, the DM would count that as being knocked loose, and the statue would have to catch itself with a Brawn test.)
 - The statue is strong, but Philippe figures he can spend Awesome Points to boost his effort to push the statue. He will use his Cunning, the statue will probably use Brawn to resist.
- He might try to squeeze through a space small enough the statue could not easily follow him.
 - The DM could call for an Awareness test to find such a spot.
 - Announcing a difficulty means such a spot exists if he rolls well enough or spends enough Awesome Points to boost the roll.
 - Not announcing a difficulty means there may or may not be such a space. Philippe could try bribing the DM by “raising the Awareness test” but there is no implied promise that such a passage exists.
 - If Philippe finds such a spot, he may have to squeeze through with Cunning. However, if he does, then the statue must either batter the obstacles out of the way or go around. That gives Philippe enough time to attempt to hide, or to get a better head start in escaping.

Henk Chooses a Shield

The only differences between a light shield and a heavy shield are that the heavy shield is a full load instead of a half load, and it can be sacrificed twice instead of once to stop all but 1 Wound of an attack.

A shield cannot be used with a light or very heavy weapon. It can be used with a hand weapon, heavy weapon, or reach weapon. With a hand weapon Henk would get 2d10 to hit, but with a heavy or reach weapon he would only get 1d10 to hit.

He doesn't have the Knight talent “Shield Skill” that gets rid of that -1 die on the to-hit roll, so he decides to use a hand weapon with the shield.

Helsa Carves a Red Ruin

Helsa is a 4th level Fighter with Weapon of Choice, a very heavy weapon shaped like a double-bitted axe. She also has Charger, Fight Dirty, and the Brawn master talent Dangerous Might. She has 14 Awesome Points, and she always wanted to level in a single orgy of killing. She faces 7 weedy unarmored bandit minions.

With a scream, she uses her Charger talent and moves, then attacks. She rolls an 11 to hit, with a 10 and a 1. That's a hit to the face, and also with Fight Dirty a really unsavory dirty trick.

- Looking ahead, she uses the Fighter inherent ability "Awesome Violence" to spend 2 Awesome Points for +4 to hit. That takes her to 15 to hit.
- Since she is fighting minions, she can spend 1 Awesome Point per minion to include in dishing out the damage. (p. 58) Her to-hit roll decreases by 1 with each one she hits.
 - She knocks one down. That counts as a to-hit roll of 14.
 - The second one, she spends 1 Awesome Point and he goes down to a to-hit roll of 13.
 - The third one goes down for 1 Awesome Point and a 12 roll to hit.
 - The fourth one goes down with the +1 Wound for a hit to the face, 1 Awesome Point, and an 11 roll to hit.
- Charger gives her +1 Wound, and Fight Dirty gives her +1 Wound.
 - The fifth one goes down with +1 Wound from Fight Dirty, 1 Awesome Point, and a 10.
 - The sixth one goes down when she uses Dangerous Might, spending 2 Awesome Points for 1 more Wound, 1 Awesome Point for another target, and hitting with a 9.
 - The seventh one goes down with +1 Wound from Charger, 1 Awesome Point, and an 8.

She spent 10 Awesome Points in one fantastic explosion of gore and mayhem.

Wayland Rides On

Wayland is mounted on a riding horse moving at a 2 speed.

- If he shoots a ranged weapon, he is -4 to hit.
- If he swings a melee weapon at someone on foot, he is -4 to hit. However, after he rolls, he can either add +2 to hit or +1 Wound for being mounted attacking someone on foot.
- If he falls off the horse, he takes 2 Wounds (1 per speed.)
- If he attacks with a reach weapon, he gets +2 to hit because he counts as being in a hazardous mini-arena (though the weapon range is not affected.) If people with reach weapons attack him, they get a +2 also. If he was mounted, in an open arena, both reach and range weapons would be +2 to hit him.

Kayla and Farnsworth Joust

Kayla and Farnsworth are riding at each other at speed 3, both in heavy armor with heavy shields. Both are using lances, reach weapons.

- The horses do move actions, the riders attack during the combat phase.
- Both are -6 to hit (3 speed x2) but each will do +6 damage (3 for each horse).
 - Shields will likely be splintered, reducing the hit to 1 Wound.
 - If one is hit, then roll 1d10 to stay seated, at 3 difficulty per Wound sustained.
 - Rising and re-mounting is a move action.

Darnell Uses the Cliff Edge

Darnell has a Brawn of 6 and a reach weapon. He squares off with 3 skeletons and a necromancer in a hazardous arena on the edge of a cliff. The skeletons have 2 Wounds each and hand weapons, and the necromancer has a Cunning of 3 and a hand weapon.

Darnell goes for a Push. He rolls a 4 + 6 Brawn, 10, +2 for his reach weapon (12). He is trying to herd 4 foes off the cliff, so he is -3, for a total of 9. Each target rolls; the skeletons are +2 each, and roll 2, 5, and 9 (4, 7, 11). The necromancer is +3, he rolls a 5 (8).

Darnell pushes 2 skeletons and the necromancer off the cliff, only one skeleton remains.

- The push tactic was smart because it got rid of most foes before the combat phase.

Punch and Judy Protect Gaston

The arena structure for combat is pretty flexible—it is open to DM interpretation.

- If Punch and Judy are trying to protect Gaston under normal circumstances, they can choose between them who intercepts any attack against Gaston in the round.
- If they are in a place where they could herd Gaston into an alcove or passageway, they could line up and attackers would have to deal with them in order, the second only threatened if the first fell.
- If they are in a tight arena passageway the width of one person, then they could only protect Gaston by getting between him and a threat. This could be described cinematically with a slide between his legs to get on the proper side, or clambering over him, or the DM could charge Awesome Points to do it, or an attribute roll. There is some flexibility.
- If they are in the open surrounded by archers, the DM might tell them they can protect a 90 degree angle each.

If Punch is protecting with paired weapons, he has some choices.

- Any time he is *hit* (even if he does not take a Wound) he gets to counter-attack.
- He can use his parrying weapon to make a single attack -2 to hit, or he can boost his counter attack by +2, or he can add +1 Wound to a successful hit. However, he can only do that once per round, so if several entities attack he must choose when best to use his parrying weapon.

If Judy is protecting with a shield, she has some choices.

- Attacks against her target (and therefore her) will all be reduced by 1 Wound for the shield (not just 1 Wound in the whole round.)
- She does not impose -4 to hit on all her foes, because she is protecting someone instead of going all defensive.
- As long as her foes only do 1 Wound, it is great for them to hit her; she can then hit them back for free, potentially getting lots more attacks than she would have otherwise as she holds up her shield and stabs around it.

The attack type matters.

- They don't get to counter-attack against ranged attacks.
- They cannot protect Gaston against an area attack, like dragon breath.
 - Players can suggest ways they shield their target, taking more damage themselves, or taking advantage of scenery. The DM can interpret the success of such efforts by either allowing it as requested, adjusting the request, denying the request, calling for an attribute roll, and/or charging Awesome Points.

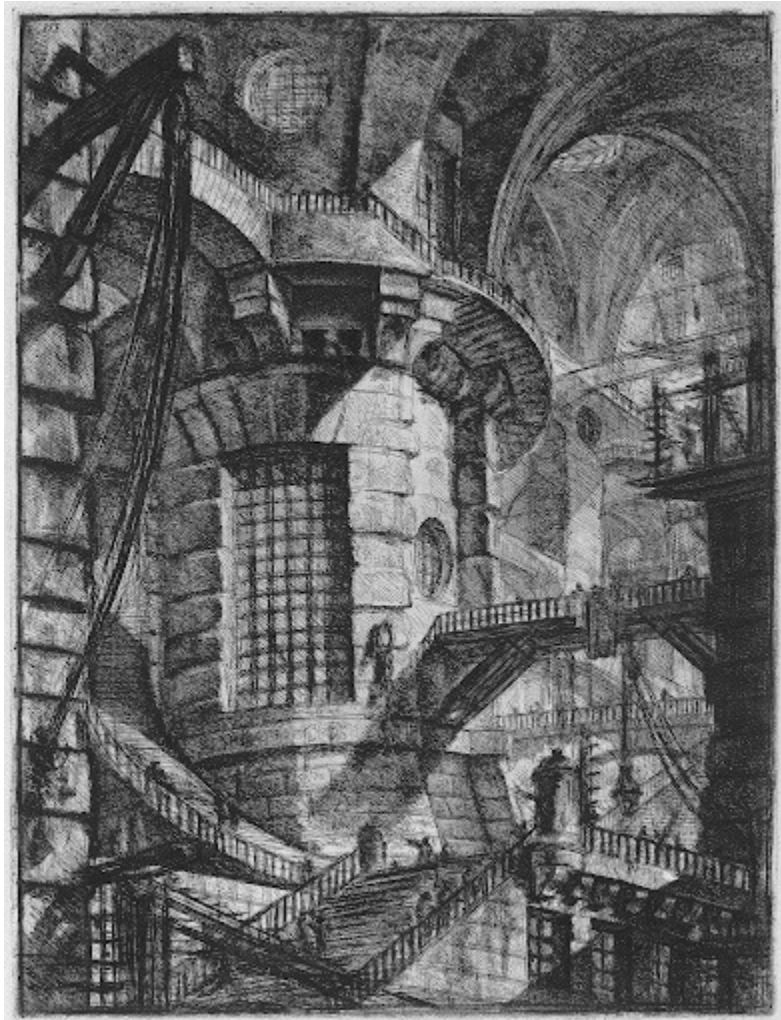
- If a crowd of minions attack, defenders only get 1 counter attack per attack rolled—if 10 minions attack, rolling 10d10 to hit, then only 1 counter attack is possible. However, if 2 groups of 5 attack, with 5d10 to hit each, then each group can be counter attacked.

If Punch was not well equipped for the fight for one reason or another, he could assist Judy instead of fighting independently. Instead of getting his own roll for a counter attack, any time Judy counter attacked he would add 1d10 to her roll. She would keep the highest 2 rolls.

- If she was using a hand weapon, rolling 3d10 to hit and keeping the top 2, instead she would roll 4d10 to hit and keep the top 2.
- If she was using paired knives, and got +5 to hit, then with his help she'd roll 1d10 +5 to hit.
- Those attacking Gaston would be forced to hit Judy instead. However, those attacking Punch could do so without Judy's interference.

Armoring Hard Targets

A gargoyle ignores the first Wound from any attack. Put a gargoyle in medium armor, and the gargoyle will ignore any Wounds that the armor soaks first, and then an additional Wound.



A bear owl counts as having natural medium armor. If a bear owl were to be dressed in light armor, then this is how a hit would work out.

- 1-7 miss.
- 8-10. -1 Wound for the light armor, -2 Wounds from the medium armor, total -3.
- 11-13. -1 Wound from the medium armor, total -1.
- 14-16. Full damage.
- *In addition, the bear owl would spend 2 Awesome Points to reduce any hits by 1 more Wound.*