



# HOME BASES



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# HOME BASES

## CORNERSTONES

In this issue of the *13<sup>th</sup> Age Monthly*, we're digging into mechanics for player characters who want to establish a semipermanent base that will play a significant role in their adventures. Unlike the details of character class talents, powers, and spells, our home base mechanics take their cue from the icon relationships system. Instead of detailed investigations of how much power you gain while defending your home castle, or how many magical items you might be able to coax your giant tree house into sprouting over the course of your adventuring career, these home base mechanics aim to create collaborative storytelling between the GM and one or more players whose characters have invested in the concept of home.

As storytelling mechanics based on the style of advantages and complications created by the icon relationship dice, these home base mechanics can be interpreted many different ways, much as the power level and interaction of icon advantages varies between campaigns, adventures, and moments during a campaign. Therefore we're using many examples to illustrate possible home base advantages, complications, and obligations (you'll see!). You'll want to filter our examples through your own campaigns' preferred play styles and the amount of impact you'd like the base to have on your current campaign.

## OUTLINE

In **Cornerstones**, we talk about how a PC or a group of PCs can acquire a base.

In **Base Mechanics**, we present all the mechanics for having a base, along with many examples.

**Gaming the Base** covers the possibly surprising ways that having a base can interact with the rest of the campaign.

Players, before you set up your own base, you'll want to take a look at the **Blueprints**, where we offer examples of how elements of most every campaign can be reinterpreted as a PC base.

**Honest Broker** introduces NPCs who can function as managers and stewards, since a PC who gives up adventuring to run a base full time is by definition a retired PC, which is to say, an NPC. We recommend using an actual NPC instead!

Finally we have **Furnishings**, magic items and a couple feats that could make bases a little easier to run, or in some cases just feel right to us as the type of things that PCs with a base might also be interested in.

Unlike most character benefits in our system, having a base doesn't necessarily cost you anything. Acquiring or creating a base is a storytelling event rather than something the PCs spend resources on.

We discussed making at least one character take a feat to qualify as the PC most responsible for a base, but instead we've opted for a system in which having a base isn't *entirely* to a player characters' advantage. Like icon relationships, having a base is usually great. But unlike icon relationships, sometimes having a base can force obligations that become real problems. We'll cover the full mechanics of obligations, advantages, and complications in the next section, Base Mechanics.

## GETTING A BASE

A player character acquiring a base is a joint decision between the player and the GM. In fact, the decision may involve more than one player and PC. We're suggesting that the player character who is most involved with a base should be the character who has the relationship point with that base, but when one character in a party has a base, the rest of the party is frequently drawn in. Partly that's because the obligations mechanic may require other PCs to help your base out of a jam. If the other PCs aren't interested in helping you keep your base intact, you might be losing your base soon after you get it.

Acquiring a base is also open to group discussion because adventuring parties probably shouldn't have more than one or two bases at a time. A party with many bases is going to be stretched in too many directions, and some of the bases will be lost. Maybe that's okay for the storytelling in your campaign, but the base mechanics probably make more sense if only one character brings a base into the story at a time, or at most two.

Creating a long-term base is a joint decision of the players and GM. There'll be some give and take just like during character creation, but the end goal is fun.

**Base timing:** We recommend saving base mechanics as something that characters grow into when they're at least 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> level. It's more fun to have a character's or adventuring party's base emerge during play, and the first few levels of a campaign have enough going on without worrying about a base. Even if a 1<sup>st</sup> level character seems to start out with a base as part of their backstory—it's not technically a base until they get a bit more experience and a stronger grip on power and responsibility.



## POLITICAL & SPIRITUAL BASES

Given our level of abstraction, these home base mechanics don't necessarily have to be limited to physical places. We're pretty sure that locations and places are the most satisfying, easy to understand, and likely uses of the home base mechanics. Most of our examples are written about castles and taverns and outposts and apothecaries. But the base mechanics could be applied to political groups or spiritual factions that a character identifies heavily with. Maybe your character's concept of a home base is strong association with a separatist faction in the Court of Stars, or responsibility for a sect of wandering monks who have been (temporarily?) exiled from the Cathedral. This type of association should work fine as a "base," and a few of our examples relate to groupings that have a personal or political center rather than a physical or geographic center.

### ROUTES TO A BASE

Acquiring a base is a story move. There's no end to the possible stories that could generate a PC's base. Here are a few examples to get you started.

**As an initial party concept:** Some campaigns start out with a common enterprise for all PCs, something like membership in a particular mercenary company or adventurers' guild. Using the mercenary company as an example, the PCs could become the key figures in the company as they rise in level, leading to the moment in which one of the PCs takes command and officially takes the mercenary company as their home base.

**As a consequence of a One Unique Thing:** A paladin devoted to the Great Gold Wyrms whose *unique* is that they are prophesied to be the hero to rebuild the Golden Citadel may end up with the Golden Citadel as their base, way before they've succeeded with the reconstruction.

**On player character initiative:** Sometimes a character discovers their true purpose midway through the campaign. Occasionally those moments are accompanied by changes in icon relationships, alignment, or in our games, even character class! So taking on a base as a sign of your character's newfound enthusiasm can change the campaign's dynamics without necessarily changing the character concept. Examples include a drow rogue noting that the Silver Folk are politically underserved outside the Court of Stars, and establishing a network of informants and agents to advance their concept of drow interests. Another rogue might get thrown out of their original thieves' guild and launch a competitor.

**As a natural consequence of being kick-butt adventurers:** In many games, the PCs just sort of acquire a base, often as a consequence of a hugely dramatic campaign event that everyone wants to keep track of as part of the group's identity.

You've cleared a hellhole, and a column under the Crusader's banner approaches with engineers and materials, and the captain makes an offer to build a keep for you, provided you swear fealty

to the Crusader. Whether you take the Crusader's banner or purify the hellhole yourself, you've now got a former demon lair as your center of power.

In another campaign, your PCs uncover evidence that some their ancestors maintained a powerful grove of sacred trees in the Wild Wood. So of course you're going to want to get the grove back up to its magical potential.

In yet another campaign, your investigations of a secret pact between the Diabolist and the Emperor put the PCs into contact with a nascent rebel cell that has heart and power but no brains. The rebel cell could use some direction and some advice on timing, and one of the PCs decides to take the rebels on as their base.

**Via an icon relationship advantage:** An icon relationship result might set a PC up with a base. This seems appropriate for a roll of a 5. The good news is that your icon's allies take you seriously enough to give you responsibility for something the icon cares about. The complicated news is that you've acquired responsibility the GM is going to be sure to use to complicate your life in future sessions.

**As a reward:** Maybe the new base isn't anything the PCs fought for or planned. Maybe it's a gift, or a reward, or an inheritance from someone who trusts the PC and their friends to handle it well. Maybe the Emperor has a secret list of former palaces and a shorter list of people who he would trust to maintain them, and you rate.

## CAN I JUST BUY A BASE?

Well, the economics of your setting may differ, but there's a great list of suggestions from Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan available at [pelgranepress.com/index.php/treasures-of-a-past-age-strongholds/](http://pelgranepress.com/index.php/treasures-of-a-past-age-strongholds/). Gareth's approach is much different than ours, so if it's gold pieces you want to use, check out that article.

## BASE MECHANICS

The primary mechanic for your base is a d6 roll similar to an icon relationship die. When you get a full heal-up, roll a d6 as your base die.

**On a 6,** you will gain a benefit similar to the advantage you'd gain from an icon relationship roll of 6, but this advantage is going to be from your base. The term we'll use to refer to an advantage from a base is a "success."

**On a 5,** you still gain a success, but the success also comes with a complication. GMs who like springing surprises can roll the base die behind the screen, but most players will want to roll the base die themselves.

**On a 1,** your base is going to hit you with an obligation! Obligations are setbacks that require action from the PC or even the entire party to remedy. The remedy might come through a small quest (a distraction from the campaign's main plotlines), through sacrificing something the player values (like a magic







treasure), through a surprise battle to defend the base, or perhaps by using an icon advantage, though when you use icon advantages to solve base problems, we recommend that there should always be story complications, worse if the icon roll was a 5!

The key to handling obligations is that they shouldn't net any benefit to the player characters. If there's a small quest, all the treasure gained in the quest should be required to deal with the base's problems. If sacrificing a magic treasure is the solution, don't just let the PC prune away a treasure the party has outgrown. If there's a battle, consider *not* counting it as one of the four battles they will fight in between full heal-ups!

Since adventuring parties are teams, it doesn't always have to be the PC with the base die who solves the obligation. Group dynamics get more interesting when PCs help solve each other's problems. Solve your ally's base obligations often enough, and maybe the base actually benefits you. . . .

**Unresolved obligations and base destruction:** Bases aren't forever! You won't always have the time, willpower, or magical power to solve an obligation gained from your base before you roll the base die again at your next full heal-up. Here's where things get risky.

If you've got an obligation outstanding and you roll a 6 with your base die, you can choose to find a story solution to your obligation that won't cost you all that much effort.

If you roll a 5 with your base die while you've got an outstanding obligation, you instead get a "normal" success from your base, but the original problem identified as an obligation gets worse, and will be much harder to deal with.

If you roll another 1 while you have an unresolved obligation, your base gets hit with a doom stick! Something truly awful hits your base in the next few minutes, hours, or (if you can handle roleplaying not knowing that things are about to go bad!) days.

Something awful is going to happen to your base. Saving the base from destruction is possible if you and your allies decide to make it the focus of the next session or two of adventure, but the odds of saving the base should only be about 50/50. If the players establish that they aren't going to make an all-out effort to save the base, the GM should milk its demise for as much drama as they can stand, and give the PCs some form of campaign loss related to the base's destruction. The PCs can avoid the campaign loss by trying to save the base, even if they're unsuccessful.

A destroyed base normally doesn't come back, at least not in the same shape and related to the same player character. If you've had a base destroyed on you because you didn't get around to dealing with obligations, a reconstructed version of the original base may not trust you as its main support.

**Only one roll per base:** Even if a base feels like an operation the entire party is involved with, only make one roll for the base per full heal-up. In cases like this, you might switch up who gets to make the roll, depending on who is most involved with the base at the time, but you still make just one roll.

## EXAMPLES OF THE BASE MECHANICS

Here are some examples of how GMs can use the base die rolls in their own games.

### SUCCESS

**Your tribe** has gained the fealty of the Red Koru people. They have sent their ancestral *totem kilt* in tribute. Given your position as the champion of the tribe, you get to wear it.

When the party is trying to gain audience with Axefang (one of the great silver dragons) in Axis, the majordomo recognizes the party's emblem as being of the **mercenary guild** that saved her brother's ranch from giants last season. So of course you can get an audience, so sorry for the earlier misunderstandings.

One of the captains in **your pirate armada** (well, okay, a couple ships to start, maybe) brings a goodwill present, a sheath of champion-tier runes she swears "fell off the deck" of a gnomish ship.

### SUCCESS WITH A COMPLICATION

A drunken dwarf wagered the command word for Forge's iron golems in an arm wrestling contest against **your tavern** bouncer. Here's hoping that the drunken dwarf didn't slur too much. You won't know it until you try out the command words, but their mushy syllables make it possible that the golems will switch sides every round if combat erupts.

**Your magical academy** has been gifted with the last known copy of the *Tome of Arcane Mysteries*, but it's under a curse that makes it read as nursery rhymes. Each chapter may require a difficult or ridiculously hard skill check to decode it or remove the illusion . . . or perhaps it would be quicker (and more entertaining) for the party's bard to re-enact the nursery rhyme tales to restore the true text?

Word reaches you that a nearby village has been overrun by demons, and their church holds the remains of a venerated saint, whose *holy three-fingered glove* would bring many faithful to **your chapel**. Well, demon-stomping might be fun for a quick combat, wouldn't it?

### OBLIGATION

Critical reagents for **your alchemy shop** were part of a caravan that fell into the remains of an until-recently-living dungeon. They need to be replaced or recovered. So delving into the corpse of a living dungeon to rescue the merchants would be fun, or there might be a nearby wizard who would be willing to give you the reagents, provided that you do her one tiny favor. . . .

One of the rebels in **your anti-Imperial cell** was caught after the group retreated from a failed assault and a confession from him would bring down the whole movement. But a 5 on your negative relationship with the Emperor means a crooked lieutenant might look the other way . . . for a price. So you either need to cover the lieutenant's gambling debts, or "convince" the loan sharks that the coin isn't worth it.







A cave-in at **your mithral mine** has left many dwarven workers injured. Healing potions are greatly needed, unless you can convince the party to go several days in the opposite direction of their current mission so that the party cleric can handle the problem in person. Clearing the rubble and healing the wounded would be a good skill challenge. Pooling the party's remaining healing potions and sending a courier provides good roleplaying opportunities, because you know one PC isn't going to want to part with them. Of course, you could always ask someone else for help, but help like this is never free.

Zealots of the Crusader started drinking at **your tavern**. They gambled poorly, lost a lot of gold, and have advanced the theory that several regulars in your tavern are cultists who need to be slain. It's probably not true, and your tavern is in the line of fiery vengeance.

### POTENTIAL DESTRUCTION

The **castle** you've established near the Orc Lord's lines has been asking for reinforcements for some time, but help never came, and the Orc Lord's assault is huge. If the PCs are otherwise engaged, the castle will be burned, its defenders routed or slain, and for a campaign loss, the Orc Lord's followers will have magical and morale advantages against the PCs in future battles. If the PCs fight to save the castle, they'll face a double-strength battle that will only count as one battle toward their next full heal-up. If they can't win the fight before the escalation die hits 6, the castle gets destroyed anyway, even if the PCs win the battle.

**Your refurbished monastery** in the mountains needed repairs, but before the dwarven engineers could arrive, the main chambers collapsed. Luckily, nobody was killed, but it will take weeks to clear the rubble, or perhaps years if the PCs don't show up to deal with a rampaging underground migration of bulettes that are shaking the monastery to pieces. Ignoring the monastery's plight might send some of the monks to the dark side, betraying the PCs to serve villainous icons.

You knew **your trading post** was having bandit problems. You didn't tackle them early on, so now the bandits have grown confident and recruited many allies. This is another big fight in the woods and if the PCs don't handle it right, their trading post might be destroyed anyway.

## GAMEMASTER

If you want to add obligations to your campaign as something that can also happen on player characters' icon relationship rolls, a natural 1 on a positive relationship could indicate that there is a service to be performed. A 1 on a negative relationship indicates a plot that should be thwarted. A 1 on a conflicted relationship could be either of the above, or something in between. Instead of using the potential-destruction rules from bases, play that a die that has rolled a 1 cannot be rerolled until the obligation is fulfilled. If the PC takes too long (at the GM's discretion), that PC's icon relationship changes. A positive relationship might become conflicted, or a die could be moved to a different icon.

## GAMING THE BASE

We're deliberately keeping the base mechanics abstract so that they don't have to get in the way of the campaign's other dramatic plotlines. But by their nature, many bases feel like they are places the PCs are going to want to hang out or groups that the PCs are going to want to interact with. Since you'll want to encourage such roleplaying, here are a couple guidelines for how to handle bases when the base mechanics aren't directly involved.

### THREATS

By taking something as a base, a player, or all the players, are saying that the base represents something important to them that they want to keep in the campaign. As GM, you're obligated to threaten the base when it incurs obligations and the potential for destruction thanks to bad rolls with the base die. But in-game events shouldn't easily lead to the base's destruction.

Since threats to the PCs' base can make for wonderfully dramatic stories, here's what we mean by saying that in-game events shouldn't *easily* lead to the base's destruction: if villainous plots or enemy icons mount assaults that require the PCs to defend their base (however that's defined!), the rewards the PCs should earn for winning such fights (or thwarting the threats) should be much greater than normal. Give them double treasure. Give them a campaign victory over that particular villain. Increase the power of the base so that from now, you'll interpret successes on the base die as much more favorable results. Do something that shows the PCs they have won a great victory, and that the forces of evil (or at least the forces of not-the-PCs) would maybe be better off avoiding screwing with the base!

The possible exception to the rule that you shouldn't prejudicially screw with a PC's base could be campaign losses. Did the PCs flee a crucial battle during a session using the *Eyes of the Stone Thief* mega-dungeon? Then maybe it makes perfect sense to have the Stone Thief eat the halfling rogue's tavern base before the party could gather itself to fight again.

### WILLFUL OBLIGATIONS

On the other side of the coin, a PC who wants to take a calculated risk with their base might be able to spin a tale in which they acquire an unrolled success at the cost of an obligation. We recommend this as a once or twice in a campaign option, not as something that's always in play.

Leveraging your holdings is risky business, but you might decide it's worth it to help reduce a campaign loss, modify an unpalatable choice of poisons, or just get you some extra loot! Fit the story of how you're putting your base at risk into the campaign and be aware that you might be creating a problem that could affect all the PCs if the obligation isn't dealt with.



# BLUEPRINTS

Different parties will have their own idea of what they want in a base. Wait, let's rephrase that: different players in the same party are going to have different ideas. We know you'll come up with your own ideas, but we had fun coming up with some of our own. Players, you can use these as inspiration. GMs, you can either add a few of these to your campaign as NPC operations or use an idea that follows as a mini-adventure that could result in the PCs acquiring a base.

**Gain a tribe:** The Wyrmtooth people live on the edge of the Cairnwood and revere dragons and their power. Any who wish to join the tribe may, as long as they keep their ways. All must best a white wyrmling (medium white dragon) to become a full member, and those who have slain a "snow mother" (huge white) are respected and given the authority to form a small band of hunters under their command. The highest esteem is held for those who have vanquished stronger dragons. The current chief's name translates as Ebon-Fang for the massive tooth she brought back from the Hell Marsh. If one of her people returned with a greater prize, perhaps a test of might would determine the new chief.

**Acquire a mysterious tavern:** A hole in the wall of Glitterhaegen's southern quays, The Petite Efrete has been the best kept secret among bards as the premier place to hear great music and poetry and imbibe the most exotic of spirits. Anyone with true artistry stops in when in town. The current owner is a gnome named Silenna, and she's run this place for far longer than a gnome's normal lifetime. Vakos, the bouncer and fill-in drummer, has been known to mutter about the grotto underneath getting cleaned out and made useful, but Silenna will not hear a word about it.

**Start a temple:** New Port is a city of opportunity. Every facet of life is there, except the divine. In the pursuit of a better life and the creation of new trade routes, the other icons have jockeyed for primacy. But the faithful are everywhere, and the closed storefront near the city gate is perfect, visible to travelers and citizens alike. Your old friend Sister Wallis could be persuaded to come over from Santa Cora, and if her research on ancient relics comes up with anything interesting this could be a good home. Getting the relic is one thing, housing it is another, but you'll deal with that when the time comes.

**Fix a guild:** The dwarven lands hold many riches, and they are often the target of the Prince of Shadows. Whether or not the thieves are tied to the Prince is immaterial. Thus, the Iron Aegis guild was founded to act as a partner to the merchant caravans leaving Anvil. Things are in disarray of late, as two factions fight over the rightful leadership. "Breaker" Skarn was second-in-command to the previous guild master, and is a dwarf, which helps things with the locals. On the other side is Forn Gulbraith, who is the appointed successor, but his inexperience and half-dark elf heritage make him easy to dismiss. This impasse will take some work to remedy, or pieces to be picked up when it inevitably comes to blows.

**Maintain the shrines:** The Circle of the Lost maintains a vigil at the edge of the Red Wastes. Turning back the dark creatures from expanding into the less-despoiled lands and ensuring that

the Lost River is pure, and no harm comes to the Great Gold Wurm from its waters. They also guard a string of shrines along the Koru migration route, presumably to cleanse the passing behemoths from the horrid radiation of the Abyss. But lately, there have been organized attacks against these shrines, and incursions from the Wastes are becoming more frequent. How long can they hold, and at what cost?

**Reclaim a powerful ruin:** The Gatehouse (translated from first age elven) was a citadel built during the struggle against the Wizard King, but was abandoned in ages since due to a change in threats. The location, at the base of a natural harbor near the northern edge of Oldwall was never much use due to the nearby Chuulfen making a city worthy of defending moot. The ruins have been a haven for smugglers and worse for generations. But the hellhole in the nearby swamp, as well as the advancing orcish horde changes everything. Now a race is on to see who will control this access point to the northern arm of the empire. Will it be a bastion of Imperial glory? A mighty bulwark of the Golden Order? A marshaling ground for the Orc Lord's vengeance? Or something completely different?

**Run a flying pirate base:** Skyharbor is something that the Archmage would like to forget. Originally created as a flying research station, it was taken over several years ago and is now a flying pirate sanctum. Mighty cranes salvaged from the ruins of Highrock hoist client vessels into protected dry dock, while teams of stevedores arrange for storage. The true genius of Skyharbor is the old magical research labs are now used to launder goods that would otherwise bear magical insignia. The current Sir Admiral Emperor Lord Officer and Regent (and yes, custom dictates saying the whole thing) has made some decrees that don't sit well with certain client captains. Rumors of a mutiny abound, but are they from the "honorable villains" or the real scum?

**Own an alchemy shop:** On the southern edge of the Dragon Wood lies the merchant village of Beyhill. In the town square is an alchemy shop run by an aging sorcerer named Grübel. Most of his trade comes from the hermits in the forest needing refined materials, as well as the very lucrative preserved Koru dung. He wants to retire, and maybe see his daughter in Concord, but has too much invested in his stock to abandon. If somebody would be willing to take it off his hands, he'd gladly make a deal.

## HONEST BROKER

*13<sup>th</sup> Age* is not usually a game of managing workers or procuring stocks of stone and lumber. In the unlikely event that player and GM decide that's what they want running a base to be about, well, we're not going to be able to help you out. But it makes sense that someone is thinking about such things.

Many successful bases have a steward or manager, an NPC who takes care of things when the PCs are not around. An NPC steward, or two, is almost always good for the game. NPC relationships put a face on the abstract mechanics. Successes, complications, and obligations can sometimes involve a manager. To be blunt: a base can survive even if a manager does not!

Ideally, a player or players who are thinking about setting up a base should let the GM know a bit ahead of time. That helps the



GM introduce NPCs who may turn out to be perfect managers later on. If that doesn't happen, introducing a manager as a base gets underway has its own roleplaying charms, as anyone who has inherited a mansion and the mansion's butler can attest.

Whoever is chosen to run the base, a method of communication should be established. *Message* spells might work. Or couriers. Or spirits. Something to ensure that PCs can be kept informed. If it's not a timely method, factor that into the threats the base faces, and slow the system down a little . . .

It's also a good idea to have your steward tied to an icon with whom you have a positive or conflicted relationship. Interweaving bases and icons helps keep stories dynamic.

Below are 13 examples of capable administrators with iconic connections. You can change the iconic connections if you like, or use them as NPCs the next time you need one in a hurry.

**Three-gor** the homunculus once served as butler for a retired wizard, but that was ages ago, literally. After his last master died in his sleep, Three-gor has maintained the tower in immaculate condition, except for the skeleton on the bed. We mustn't disturb the master, after all. Thankfully, the encrypted diary holds the command words for a new master to take possession of the tower and its laboratories.

**Sergeant Mordren** has devoted her life to stamping out the stigma most people have for her race. Eschewing the slander "demontouched," she joined the Crusader's army to clear the Abyss, and then maybe the provincial buffoons would give her some respect. After losing her left leg to a glabrezou's pincer, she left to find another purpose, and now she works training recruits in two-bit mercenary companies. Some whisper that she's just looking for enough coin to drink away the screams of lost comrades.

Mortals cannot pronounce his true name, but his mistress calls him "**Sparkles**." This thoroughly cunning imp has been gifted to several of his mistress' servants, but strangely, they never last long. The last was a wizard who got a very close look at a hezrou's gullet. Sparkles has one directive from her, "Bring back fun stories." What those stories are depends on her definition of "fun."

Great-great-granddaughter of the architect of Foothold's mighty underwater harbor, **Filda Quakehelm** once tried to emulate Jedna's (in)famous expedition. The results were less than ideal, and the craft sank before it even reached Calamity. Even worse, a "borrowed" magic gem used to power the submersible was intended for the Dwarf King's pet project. She has spent the past decade working for an Axis builder and trying to get back in favor enough to be allowed home. Maybe if she proves useful to the King's allies, she'll get a provisional pardon.

Wary of his more orthodox cousins, **Aarthen Winth** has worked tirelessly to keep the Court of Stars from fracturing under the weight of political intrigue. Eschewing the tall towers and orreries of his kin, this high elf spends most of his time among the other shards, smoothing out old grievances and doing small favors to keep extremists in check. These habits have enabled him to have a network of contacts reaching from Forge to Drakkenhall, but political pressures are sidelining his family, and he may soon be looking for a new patron.

**Mikel Farnson** has spent his life in pursuit of power. Unfortunately, he isn't particularly strong or faithful, is rather

impolitic, and lacks even the basic talents for magic. What he is good at is logistics. Stifled for promotion within the Imperial bureaucracy, he tends to be shunted from backwater town to border garrison as an interim clerk until a permanent posting is made. Perhaps his newest posting will be more fruitful.

While admittedly once a hedonist of the highest sort, the argent dragonspawn known only as **Rime** has since become the most devoted of ascetics. Her hermitage in the northern Owl Barrens has been sought by those devoted to the Great Gold Wurm to meditate on the ideals of the Golden Order. Rumors abound that she is, in fact, a silver dragon stymied at the smallest size and chooses a humanoid form to hide her shame. Smart people don't mention this in her company, however. She might be getting a bit restless these days, and new challenges might be a welcome change.

**Nameless**, a formless wind, was once bound to a feckless mage who decided that he could handle getting his own owlbear bile for some vile ritual. Thankfully, the beast had more sense than the fool arcanist, and the elemental known as Nameless should have been freed to return to the plane from which it had been summoned. But the conjurer had bumbled from the beginning, performing an improper summoning, and now the spirit is stuck in the Wild Wood. A bluff overlooking the Grandfather seems to have some magical energy that feels right to Nameless. Occasionally druids will come and pay homage to the site, and since they do no harm, and do not disrespect the spirit, all is well. Perhaps the spirit will serve another, but it will be on its own terms.

Along the eastern docks of Shadow Port, there's an old stone warehouse dating back a couple of ages. Underneath, there lies a small hideout for the thief crew run by a pallid rogue known as **Vera**. A woman of appetites, she spends her nights roaming from tavern to tavern targeting traveling sailors for their gold, offered drinks, and companionship. She never chooses the same plaything twice—in fact, the bartenders can't recall seeing them again; but that's sailors for you, always on to another port. Little do they know that she's an agent for her master, a vampire lord close to the One-Eyed King.

Third son of the chief of the Storm Boar tribe, **Locknar** was only a child when an Imperial Legion destroyed his kin, leaving only the children and the infirm alive. This fate was crueler than any death in battle, but Locknar persevered. He hunted the hills at the base of the Frost Range until he was a man and sought out his best hope for vengeance. The Orc Lord. He spent years proving his strength, sparring with any who would test this human's might. Finally, it was his blood gift, bestowed to him after his fifth winter, which gave him the power to join the horde. Tusks like those of the orcs, hooves like the giants' fire cows, and bristly fur proved that he was boar-blooded. He would have his vengeance. If that's what the PCs are after, it can be their vengeance too.

Acolyte of the Temple of the Makers, a joint effort of the artisan gods, **Brother Maynard** was one of the caretakers of the *Book of Armaments*, an ancient tome of holy weapons. Last season saw its return to dwarven custody, and thus Maynard was reassigned to maintenance of the Cathedral's armory. A capable smith, but really an academic, Maynard has been asking for different duties, to no avail. Thus far.



The sloop *Swordspray* is a common sight in the docks of Axis and Horizon. Her captain, one “Annie” Trill, is a jovial halfling, but her shipments are always rather small compared to the size of the ship. No matter how suspicious harbor masters get, no matter how many inspections, everything checks out. Good thing, too. Otherwise certain important buyers would be very, very angry. She tries to avoid violence, as it’s bad for business. And besides, smuggling cheese into Axis is rather profitable at the moment.

**Haduzh** is a bugbear born of Drakkenhall, and holds no love for the “Imps,” for they have no love of him or any other “monster” they deem unworthy of respect. He joined the Ministry of Order at a young age, but bristled under the Blue’s version of Imperial rule. He has since been raising a band on the edge of the Queen’s Wood, trying to find a way to free the Green and trigger the war that will free Drakkenhall from the grips of the Empire. Maybe the Blue is behind him after all. Maybe not.

## FURNISHINGS

You won’t need the magic items or feats that follow to keep your base running smoothly, but they may help. Some of the items are directly connected to base mechanics, others seem right for an article about running bases, maintaining organizations, and bossing people around.

These items and feats are all of champion tier or higher.

## TRUE MAGIC ITEMS

### BOOK, SCROLL, TOME, GRIMOIRE

**Default bonus:** None.

*Shady Ledgers* (once per day): This linked pair of books dictates the “official” accounts of an organization, but, with the right command words, shows the true figures and allows discreet written communication between the owners. Designate a particular icon relationship or your base when you begin using the book, and once per day, you may reroll one of those dice with a –1 penalty. You must take the second roll. **Quirk:** Hesitates before speaking any number.

### HELMET, CROWN, DIADEM, CIRCLET

**Default bonus:** *Mental defense:* +2 MD (champion); +3 MD (epic).

*Coronet of Office:* This simple brass ring is embossed with the crest of the Emperor, and is recognized by all civilized people to mean the wearer is an appointed servant of the Dragon Throne. When you roll a skill check to speak in an official capacity, you may reroll the die and take either result. **Quirk:** Phrases suggestions as orders.

## STAFF

**Default bonus:** Attack and damage with an arcane or divine spell or attack: +2 (champion); +3 (epic).

*Rod of Solidarity* (recharge 11+): These staves are precious few, emerging from Santa Cora by commission only. How you ended up with one is another thing entirely. When you use a power or spell that benefits an ally, you gain 3d10 temporary hit points (6d10 epic). **Quirk:** Boasts endlessly about allies’ achievements.

## WONDEROUS ITEMS

*Remittance Crate:* This small wood and iron box was designed for long-distance secure shipment of payments to the gnomish merchant lords, teleporting back to the owner upon receipt of payment. Its enchantment only allows paper, coins, and jewels, as per agreement with the Dwarf King. Previously agreed-upon passphrases will keep most sneak thieves and bandits from getting in, though a wizard worth her components could probably perform a ritual to get it open, given time to *knock*. **Quirk:** Frets over proper accounting of funds and property.

## CURSED MAGIC ITEMS

*Manacles of Ancient Burden* (glove chakra): These battered bronze bracers symbolize the power and responsibility of leading others. Runes on the right extol the fact that a group is stronger than any one of its members. The left reminds the owner that successes and failures are shared by all. They imbue power through whatever melee weapon, if any, with which the wielder strikes, gaining an additional +1 to melee attack rolls when an ally is nearby, but any 6 the wielder rolls on an icon relationship die or base die is considered a 5 instead! **Quirk:** Monologues about power and responsibility.

## FEATS

Here are three feats for characters who seem like people who know how to handle relationships with an ongoing base.

### COMRADES IN ARMS

*You can only take this feat if you are a commander.*

**Champion Tier:** You may use your Destined to Lead talent to affect base dice rolls.

### I KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN

*You can only take this feat if you are the occultist.*

**Champion Tier:** You may use your Icon Envoy talent to affect base dice rolls.

### I KNOW PEOPLE

*You can only take this feat if you are a bard.*

**Champion Tier:** You may use your Storyteller talent to affect base dice rolls.