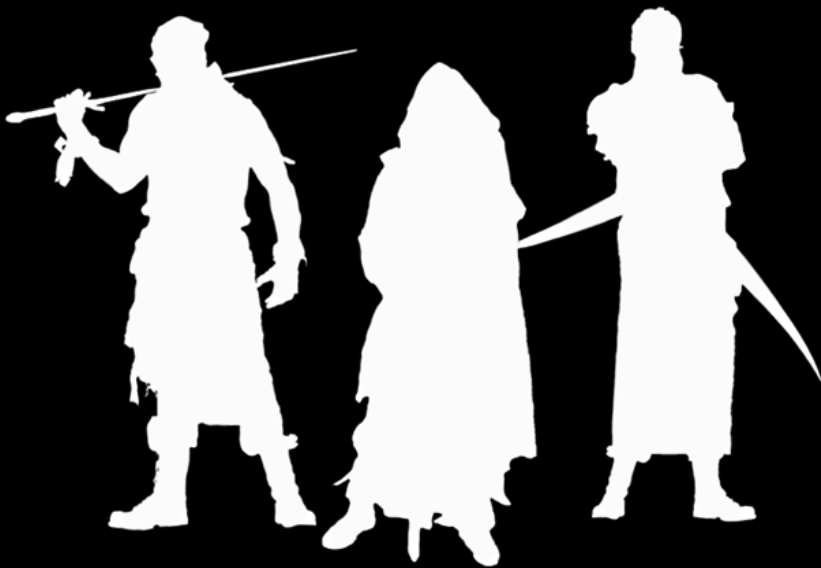


The City Of Judas

dark fantasy AW hack



THE CITY OF JUDAS

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Daide Pignedoli

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FOREWORD

The City Of Judas (TCOJ) is a dark fantasy hack of AW. Center of the game is the Brotherhood of the Iron Fist, a shady company of mercenaries, and drug merchants. They operate in the City Of Judas - an imaginary Jerusalem of the middle age.

The Iron Fist is involved both in drug traffics from the Holy Land to Europe and in the city protection: missions include fighting monsters and invaders, rescuing people, escorting merchants, trading goods and information, spying on the enemies and so on. The characters will begin as mercenaries, members of the Iron Fist, although you will not be constrained in play to remain within the boundaries of the regular missions for the company.

CONTACTS

This is the first release of the City of Judas manual; we know we've a long road ahead to further improve the product. Write us with your feedback and comments, and help us make this game even better!

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LICENSE

Copyright Davide Pignedoli

You are allowed to create and share, even commercially your own material (playbooks, adventures, new games) for City of Judas, or based on City of Judas, as long as you give the proper attribution.

MECHANICS

This game is perhaps rather heavy in the Moves usage. I am not anymore a fan of traditional, heavy mechanics, but I tried here to use - perhaps abuse? - the evocative power of the Moves by having quite a lot of them.

I hope they serve as a good reference for the Players and the GM alike, inspiring without generating too much constrains, and leaving the correct space for imagination.

DISCLAIMER

The City Of Judas is just a game, but it deals with subjects such as violence and religion in a way that could make some people uncomfortable. In other words: if you're the kind of person that is easily offended by blood and blasphemy, even if this is only a game, maybe it's not the game for you. I did what I did, here, to give color to the game.

Whatever your characters would do in the game, it's fictional. I invite you to reconsider playing this game if you are not willing to separate your personal opinions about violence and religion from those of the characters.

Browse the manual

If you're browsing the manual in PDF format, you can click on text boxes like this one, to navigate to another page that presents additional info on the same topic. At any moment, to return to the original page, press ALT+left arrow. While I cannot guarantee it'll work on your pdf-reader, it works on most of them.

CREDITS

This is an AW, dark fantasy hack; which means that the game is **powered by the Apocalypse World (AW) system, by Vincent Baker.**

When Vincent released the first drafts of Dark Age, his own dark fantasy hack of AW, I grew impatient between one version and the next one, and (very smart of me!) I thought I could put together a hack of my own. And to do it fast. It turned out that all the waiting for Dark Age was worth it, and that my own work did not proceed as fast as I hoped (what a surprise). Still, this manual is the result of almost one year of design and testing and I hope you'll enjoy it. Besides the obvious credit to Apocalypse World for the game engine, some additional precise credits are due, related to the game design. I might have left something or someone out, by mistake, and I apologize. These were the main sources of inspiration:

- * Apocalypse World: the amazing game from Vincent Baker, for inspiring most of what is in this game
- * Dungeon World for the fantasy adaptation of the AW engine
- * The 'Hood by James Mullen, another AW hack, for inspiring moves related to the Tainted condition
- * 13th Age for the Escalation Die, turned into the Advantage Die in here
- * Circle Of Hands by Ron Edwards for the fantasy task-force concept inspiration
- * Hyborian Saga (Gavinwulf's Conan Hack) for some inspiration on certain playbooks

ARTWORK

All silhouettes artwork at the start of every chapter of the manual and in the Playbooks, are from **M.A.W.** (with some manipulation). See M.A.W. DA page here: <http://mawstock.deviantart.com/>

The demons within the monsters section of the manual feature artwork from **ShadowPriest**: <http://shadowpriest.deviantart.com/>

Other illustrations in the manual are manipulations of various stock photos and images. All the silhouettes have been manipulated adding medieval art, prints, patterns, to add flavor to them.

Many thanks to **Tommy Rayburn** for his support for the editing and the layout, and for polishing several images for me; he did a great job to help me get this manual into shape!

SUPPORTERS

Since the early stages of designing the game, a few people really supported me with their positive feedbacks, encouragements, and with very useful insights and suggestions, so here are my thanks to them:

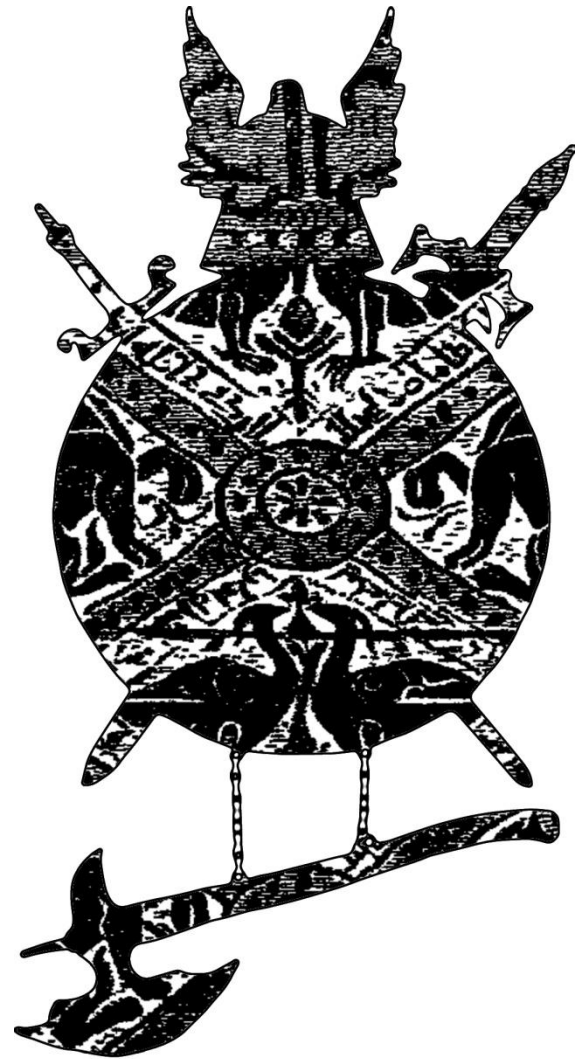
- * Paul Taliesin for inspiring the harm moves and other stuff
- * David Berg for comments about the various Counters
- * Tommy Rayburn (revel911 on story-games) for insisting to merge Equipment and Ammo, for his support while designing, and for believing in the project from the very beginning
- * Andrea Mognon aka Fealoro for his help with the Moves, and general design advice; Giuseppe Merigo and Antonio Caccioli for their suggestions
- * Shriyash U.'s DnD group for the inspiration of the Princes of Hell, evoked with Taint and with different levels of it
- * Marco Iotti (Judge) for his careful review of the manual and useful advice about several sections
- * John Harper for his precious advice on the Playbooks layout
- * **Anybody who downloaded the game beta**, and perhaps even donated a few dollars, for believing in this game!

EARLY PLAY-TESTERS

Gratitude goes also to those who playtested the various beta versions of the game:

- * Andrea Mognon aka Fealoro, Giuseppe Merigo aka Palin, Antonio Caccioli
- * Shriyash U.'s DnD group
- * Richard Sardinias, Ray and Fred and Adrian
- * Giuliano Gandolfi and Filippo Rosi
- * Tommaso Gallo and Andrea Marino; Chiara Ferretti, Vittoria Valente, Fabio Brunetto
- * Henry de Veuve, Delos Adamski, Richard Robertson, Piotr D

Introduction



THIS GAME

The City Of Judas is a Role Playing Game (RPG): if you don't already know what an RPG is, well, in a few words an RPG is a **collaborative storytelling game**. You can think of the final result of an RPG to be like a novel, or a collection of short stories - with recurring characters - or perhaps like a series of episodes of a tv show.

What's important, though, is how you do this. In a pen-and-paper RPG such as this one, you don't have a computer, a TV or a book guiding you and your friends through the adventures. What you have is a bunch of paper sheets, dice, pencils and a lot of imagination. But most of all, you have a conversation. You talk a lot, and what you say, with the appropriate filter of the game rules, becomes the fiction - the story you're all together building at the table and living in your imagination.

Everybody participates in the story, what the players - the real people at the table - say reflects in the fiction, affects the fictional characters, the events of the story.

Nobody has full control, complete authority over the story. Each one of you has authority on certain aspects - for example saying what their character is trying to do or what they feel at the moment - but nobody controls everything. There are always at least two sides in the conversation, if not more. A single person doesn't get to pose a problem and then declare the solution; a single person doesn't get to ask the question and then give the answer.

The crucial element of an RPG is what we can call the shared imaginative space of the table - the story you're telling with the characters you chose. This imagination is shared among all the participants: this is what makes the game fun. Accepting what other people say, building fiction together, creating drama or conflict, incorporating and working with the details provided by others, all this contributes to the creation of a great story. Sometimes you might feel like having control of everything - of your

character and their enemy, of a challenge and its resolution - would be the best for the fiction. This is not going to happen.

There are other people at the table and the point of the game is in the back and forth of the conversation; the beauty of the game is in the collaboration.

Having said all that, The City Of Judas relies on a typical framework for RPGs: there is a single Game Master (GM) who is in charge of the world, all the Non-Playing Characters (NPCs), the monsters and demons and so on. Everybody else - typically named Players - is going to have a Playing Character - or PC, or simply Character. Characters are the main protagonists of the story. Every Player will choose one of the Characters; create some details about them (like a short background story or mechanical elements such as score for statistics) and then, during the game, impersonate the Character.

*See more
about GM
and Players
from page 16*

WHY WE PLAY

The reason why we all sit at the table to play this game is to have fun. Fun comes in different shades: exploring the setting of the game, discovering places or people, overcoming obstacles, winning battles, completing missions and making your character stronger. But the real fun is in telling the story together.

So remember, play your Character not to win an imaginary contest, but to **fulfill its potential to the fullest**. Look at your Character as if it was the one of a book: you are together the main character and the reader. If the character always succeeded, always did only the right thing, in a book, the reader would be in for some boring time.

Instead, think of the possible trouble, and don't run away from it. It will feel natural to exploit every powerful bit of your Character, but try to embrace also its dark side, its weakness, and fuel the drama.

As the GM, do the same: look for occasions to offer to the characters to shine or anyway take a central role in the story. The story is not about some bigger events where characters are meaningless pawns. Characters might be just pawns, but in this case you'll be working with the Players to tell the story of such pawns, not others.

WHAT'S THE GAME ABOUT

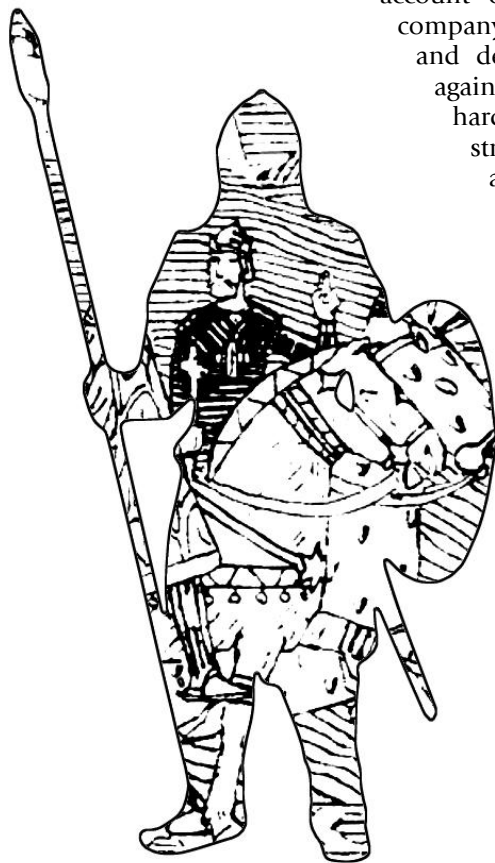
The City Of Judas is a fantasy Role Playing Game, set in an imaginary middle age, and as such will allow the Players to take the roles of powerful warriors, dark sorcerers, shady assassins, and so on. The game provides a default

setting, with a few crucial and fixed elements, such as the starting location, a certain take on religion and sorcery, a company of mercenaries which the characters are members of, and a bunch of monsters and demons that the characters could face as adversaries.

All these elements are available to the Game Master and the Players, together with a set of rules, which will regulate the fictional outcome of the conversation. The main purpose of the game, as already stated, is to have fun - and sometimes to experience a bit of anger, desperation, pain, fear and so on, as while watching a movie or reading a book, but remembering this is only a game, only a story, and trying not to appear ridiculous by taking it too seriously.

Regardless of the fact that you're going to play as the GM or as a player with a character, you're going to tell the stories of a group of medieval mercenaries, in a dark and wicked imaginary Jerusalem - the City of Judas. You will discover why your characters are in this city, you will perform missions on account of the Iron Fist - the mercenary company - you will fight against monsters and demons and probably enough also against other humans. You will make hard choices and sometimes just struggle to survive and get to see another day.

The game material and setting are provided as instruments to help you tell good stories about your characters, but besides applying the rules, what should you do? The game rules and procedures are like instructions and tools for creating scenes, but how do you make scenes and dice rolls into a story? To do this, you should embrace the game spirit: play as part of group, work together. You are part of a crew - even when your character fights against another, you're **working together** to tell a compelling story. Having different goals or fighting each other does not break the game: it's all part of the story.



SETTING

The City of Judas is Jerusalem, in a dark and imaginary middle age, populated by mysterious cults, invaders from Europe, and surrounded by demons and monsters and the evil forces of sorcery.

The adventures should take place within the city itself, in its palaces, fortresses and streets, or in the immediate surroundings, between villages, cities, untamed forests and deserts, in ports and seashores. Sometimes you can venture in the remote and mysterious regions to the east, to the forests in the north, to the desert in the south, perhaps even in Europe, but the key remains Jerusalem.

The Iron World is dark and hard; get rid of fancy fantasies, powerful heroes and noble stories that fill your head, and start fresh.

Think instead of poor villages, rocky deserts and scraggy animal, dirt and blood, swords and axes, soldiers and mercenaries.

Think of unwelcoming cities and closed communities, unsafe roads and villages plagued by war and poverty; think of long marches in unwelcoming territories, of fortified cities under siege, of sea ports busy with the traffic of ships bringing yet more warriors from Europe.

Think of cold castles in the north, of burning deserts in the south; think of brutal guards and soldiers following the orders of ambitious and greedy nobles.

Think of dark woods infested by mysterious and ferocious monsters, of wicked caves infested by demons barely kept at bay by broken sigils, and of obscure sorcerers at work to set free these forces of evil.

Knights are uncommon and chivalry code is out of the question when you're fighting for your life.

These are dark times; life is hard, both for warriors and peasants.

CHRIST AND JUDAS

When the Roman Empire collapsed, the majority of the population in Europe slowly converted to the new Christian religion. It was a slow process, and old pagan beliefs still survive in small remote enclaves or in the privacy of some noble houses. Most of the nobles and peasants in the various kingdoms in Western Europe, though, profess their loyalty to Rome and the Pope. Among all the five important Christian Patriarchates - Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinopolis, Rome and Jerusalem - the Roman Papacy is gaining importance, through the crusades and strong ties with the nobility.

*More about
Judas and
Judaists from
page 12*

In the meanwhile, through the centuries, a separate sect of Christians, the Judaists, gained importance in the Holy Land. They claim to follow the teaching of Judas, the apostle that raised an army against the Romans after Christ was crucified. Judas **became the symbol of a new era** - almost as powerful as the Christ - for the poor and the oppressed, for those who fight the current order and the power of the nobility.

Note that Judaists are not the same as Christians, but a separate religious entity; in fact, these two often clash, more or less openly, for the control of the Holy Land.

THE CRUSADES

Crusades are the reason for the characters to be in Jerusalem: they might be following the Pope's call for warriors of faith to conquer the Holy Land, they might be fighting in the name of Judas and for the oppressed, hoping to establish a new, fair social order far from Europe; they might just be there for the coin, the adventure, or seeking redemption, fame, revenge or a glorious death.

Now the Kingdom of Jerusalem is rising from the ashes of the last Crusade: the city walls are solid and it's time to tip the power balance in your favor, or to profit from these fast changing times. The city has two names: Jerusalem for the Christians, and the City of Judas for the Judaists; and it has two souls - or perhaps even more.

The scenario does not indicate against whom the Crusades are fought: the warriors from Europe might be marching against the followers of the Book of Q - a local empire similar to Islam if you wish - or the war could be between Christians and Judaists, or against dark, mysterious forces. It will be your decision.

This is something that the GM and the Players **will decide or discover** while playing the game. If you want to keep it simple, then you can assume that the Church of Christ fought against the followers of the Book of Q, to conquer

Jerusalem for the Christianity, while the Judaists were already in the area but not as a strong fighting force. This would be very much like "the real history".

But if you want to spice things up, then you can let the Players discover the truth about the crusades during the game - and even argue about it.

Think about this: the characters are warriors, and besides the Sorcerer, the Priest and perhaps the Leader, they have reasonably very little education. They are in the Holy Land to fight for a company of mercenaries - the characters themselves, though, are probably not crusaders - and they find themselves involved between two or three religions at war. Every faction in Jerusalem claims to be in charge and to have God on their side. In this case, the conflict about who has the right to rule over the City of Judas and the Holy Land would be part of the game itself.

THE IRON FIST

The Iron Fist is a mercenary company, a brotherhood and a guild, which connects people of different extractions and different trades: from merchants to warriors, from sea captains to nobles, and so on. Open to be hired by anyone, by commoners as much as nobles, the Iron Fist is a well known, and sometimes feared institution, but certainly not always respected nor beloved.

The characters **entered the Iron Fist** - the Brotherhood, as its members call it - just recently, each one with his own background and history, each one with his own motivation. At the start of the game, all characters somehow know each other; perhaps some better than others, perhaps just barely by name and reputation, but still: they're together in the Iron Fist.

The Brotherhood, whose main headquarters are in Europe, has recently established a fortress also in the heart of Jerusalem. A lot of its warriors played some part in the crusades and in the last siege of Jerusalem. The Brotherhood is renowned, although not always well respected, because it works with both the Cult of Judas and the Church of Christ, and hosts members of any religion or background.

THE BROTHERHOOD'S BUSINESS

Traditionally, the Brotherhood's main business had been done with the blade: hired by nobles and peasants alike, by rich and poor - either as sell-swords, or captains, escorts, monsters slayers and so on.

With the Cult of Judas on the rise, though, the company has established a new trade route between the Holy Land and Europe. Officially the Iron Fist is trading mostly sacred relics, but in reality the Brotherhood **trades opium** for the Church of Judas, moving the drug from the Holy Land to Europe.

The opium is then used by the rebellious Judaists in their ceremonies and rituals, and the high demand for this drug is a fruitful source of income for the Brotherhood.

Now the Iron Fist clearly follows two conflicting lines of business. On one hand, they're the main opium traders to Europe, and opium is used by the Cult of Judas that threatens the current political powers and aims to overthrow the order of society.

This trade, although not illegal yet, is clearly opposed by the Church of Christ and by the local nobility, which often directs pirates against the Iron Fist ships.

On the other hand, the Brotherhood is well established in Europe where they sell their services as protection to the nobles and the locals, often in accord with the Church of Christ. Perhaps there is a conflict even within the Iron Fist itself, about which line of business should be privileged.

These conflicts could provide important material to be explored in the game.

CHARACTERS' RELIGION

With the exception of the Priest - which is a Judaist by design - the characters can belong to **any ethnicity and any religion**: the Players will include this information in the character sheet in the appropriate place. Note that ethnicity, religion, or the social status prior to entering the Iron Fist, do not have a serious effect within the ranks of the Brotherhood.

The Brotherhood is all about business, favoring its own members in position of power, trying to control the city politics, extorting payments, enforcing its own law, offering sell-swords, not debating about land and blood rights or theology.

Still, such background elements will most likely arise during the game, as the source of personal arguments or conflicts, when the GM or the Players feel that they become relevant. The characters - or the GM through an NPC - can use religious faiths, ancestors, and blood rights and so on, as the key for alliances or rivalry, support or opposition.

While the Iron Fist will discourage this sort of conflict within its ranks, they're bound to happen anyway.

CHARACTERS' PLAYBOOKS

This is the reference of the available Playbooks; each Player will pick one, at the start of the game. The Playbooks are available at the end of the manual, and as a free download on the website, in a better layout for printing.

Playbooks are presented from page 147

The Barber: *this is the group's healer. Although he can fight, his main role is to support the others*



The Horseman: *he is the group's knight, he fight and acts at the best of his potential while on the saddle*

The Hunter: *this is the tracker of monsters, the one who knows wilderness and beasts*



The Priest - of Judas: *he is the moral counselor, the confessor, and the spiritual guide of the group*

The Leader: *this is the high-born member of the group, who aims to obtain a position of leadership*





The Raider: *his strength is in its war-gang, that moves with him. He's the one ready to get his hands - and soul - dirty*

The Scout: *he is the group's assassin and spy, at his best within city walls*



The Sellsword: *this is a strong and indomitable, but also a mysterious and lonely fighter*

The Veteran: *this is an expert and resourceful fighter, with plenty of experience on the battlefields*



The Sorcerer: *he is the group's expert in sorcery, with access to the mighty power of magic*

Remember that your group of characters can be composed by Judaists, Christians, and atheists, agnostics, animists and so on. Basically, with the exception of the Priest, any character can choose any religion and background whatsoever. This is clearly a recipe for potential conflict and fun at the table.

But although within the ranks of the Iron Fist you can find Christians and Judaists alike, the Priest playbook is clearly of a Judaist. The reason for this is that the Church of Christ is an element of stability in the fantasy world of the

game, while the Judaists, on the other hand, carry a revolutionary power that brings forward much more interesting inputs for the story at the table.

Moreover, the clergy of Church of Christ is strictly composed of males, while the Church of Judas makes no distinction between male and females in terms of roles they can assume within the Judaist Church hierarchy - thus making a **female Priest character** a viable solution only for Judaists.

THE METAL CHAIN

The Iron Fist uses a metal chain to represent the ranking within the Brotherhood; the longest the chain, the higher is the ranking within the company. After swearing fidelity to the Iron Fist, every recruit receives an iron ring. When assigned to a mission, a member receives another ring, and one more if completing it with success; all the rings are forged together in a chain, as they're gained.

Refusing a mission costs the member one ring and one ring is also the punishment for major insubordination or other incidents - for which trials are fast and not often fair. A member without rings is expelled forever from the brotherhood.

When a member has gained twenty or more rings, he obtains the rank of **Magister** (Maestro), the equivalent of an army's officer. All the Magisters are of the same importance, but again a longer chain implies a somehow higher ranking. From the moment that a member becomes a Magister, he can participate to the yearly vote to elect the nine Major Commanders, called **Caesars**, or run to be one.

Iron Fist members often travel and undertake minor missions without the presence of a Magister. In such cases, one of them is appointed with the task of **Mission Commander** - which gives him authority over his peers but limited to the group only. All members are bound to obedience to the Nine Caesars, then to the mission's assignment, then to Magisters in order of ranking (number of rings on the chain). The mission always takes precedence over the life of a single member.

MISSIONS

The Iron Fist mercenaries are hired through their Magister, and members cannot accept a job without the Magister's approval, nor negotiate a price, unless in extreme circumstances. Customers range from poor villagers putting their little money together, to very rich nobles and merchants.

Instructions for the GM about Missions from page 102

Payment is usually proportionate to what the hiring party can afford: nobles and merchants, for example, would pay more for the same service than what a commoner would. Still, the Iron Fist mercenaries don't come cheap, and that ensures that they would always strive to succeed. Payment for long missions or missions that require traveling is usually topped with food and lodging, for men and horses.

The missions can be of any sort, but often involve some dirty or risky business that other sellswords or lone warriors would not dare to accept; think for example of monsters and other supernatural threats, sorcery, invasions, rescue missions, treasure hunting, escorting, protection, deserted villages, dark forests, deserts and abandoned castles, and so on.

TWO RELIGIONS AT WAR

The game will have the two religions, the Church of Christ and the Judaists, as a very central, core element. Make these two religions important, but force your hand and make them imaginary, fantastic, so that everybody at the table will hopefully feel free to embrace them as fiction, without perceiving them as "too real" or historical.

Christians and Judaists represent **different, antithetic philosophies**; therefore you will have plenty of material for clash and adventures.

Of the two religions, Christians are the easier to portrait, because you have plenty of reference material: you just need to think about the middle age church and make it rougher, dark, and merciless.

Some guidelines of the Cult of Judas are provided in the next pages, but you're encouraged to make up details for this religion during the game: they might end up being an evil worse than the Christians, or instead a better alternative - or anything in the middle. Feel free to use your imagination, and the one of your Players, to customize this according to the events of your story, rather than sticking to a predefined template.

CHRIST AND STABILITY

In the difficult centuries that preceded and followed the end of the Western Roman Empire, the majority of the Roman citizens picked the Christ as their new God. The establishment of a new state religion somehow ensured a sort of continuity with the fallen Empire.

Where Judaists represent a rebellious and fierce religion, the Church of Christ mostly coexists with the local political powers, in a mutually legitimating exchange. This is a Church that represents stability; a lot of the unsteady monarchies and the nobility of the emerging feudal system, seek legitimation within this religion.

Of course, the strong connection between the Church of Christ and the nobility causes also a lot of friction, with both parties trying to gain the richest prize from their mutual support. Often nobles try to seize ecclesiastical important roles, and high prelates interfere with politics, with land assignments, up to the Pope who's often sitting among the Kings, and constantly plotting with and against them.

The priests of Christ wear often white or brown robes, with rich and symbolic decorations, more ornate and precious for high ranked prelates, such as Bishops, Cardinals, and Popes. The most common symbol is of

course the cross - that represents the sacrifice of Christ - but there are other holy symbols, often inherited from paganism and incorporated into Christianity, such as the sun, the stars, the eye, the triangle, and so on.



CHURCH AND CRUSADES

The Church is organized in multiple hierarchical ranks and in different orders, often in conflict one with the other, sometimes for theological reasons, other times purely for a race to power positions. Its complexity make it a stable, solid organization; but somehow slower to react and adapt, and equally threatened by its enemies on the outside, as much as by its internal power struggles.

The Crusades have been organized to obtain the control of the Holy Land and the Holy City, Jerusalem, to contrast the raising importance of the Judaists, and the expansion of the followers of the Book of Q. These Crusades have also marked the ascending of several fighting orders of monks, such as the Knights of Saint John.

THE SCHISM

Christians and Judaists were initially strongly connected: both cults marked a renovation from the previous Roman religion, both filled the void of the falling Empire, and in different ways respected the figure of Christ. But where Christians believe in the divine nature of Christ, the Judaists dispute it, calling Christ simply another prophet.

Instead, the Judaists turned their veneration to Judas himself, the man that fought against the Empire. It was a schism, and it became quickly an open war. Right now, both Churches have military strongholds and connections with the nobility in the Holy Land, and important interests in the crusades.

The core of the conflict seems to be clearly about the Holy Land; but there are smaller fights occurring also in Europe. Sometimes these fights are conducted openly, with priests of both religions encouraging the population to raise arms against the adversary. Still, the two cults confront each other more often through politics or in wars apparently fought for other reasons. None of the two have managed to gain a significant edge, yet, and the final outcome is still uncertain, especially now that the followers of the Book of Q present a threat to both Christians and Judaists.

While portraying these two religions, remember the fact that Judaists do not recognize the divine nature of Christ, and this is enough to mark them **as heretics** in the eyes of the Church of Christ. Christians do not want peace with the Judaists - they can settle for an armed truce, in case of need, but that's all.

Judaists on the other hand, fight the nobility and the Church of Christ as symbols of the oppression of their followers, so they also have little interest for peace, if peace means that the power balance remains as it is.

ABOUT JUDAS

Judas was one of those who followed the Christ, around a thousand years ago, when the prophet appeared in Palestine. The region was under Roman domination, and Christ was sentenced to death by the roman governor who feared a revolution.

When the prophet was crucified by the Romans, Judas raised an army against the invaders, in the name of Christ himself. He led his army against the governor palace and slaughtered the entire garrison and the governor's family. Pilatus, though, managed to escape and maintain control of the local Roman legions.

For years the war devastated the entire region and the Romans were almost driven out of Palestine. Judas was eventually defeated by the Empire, and hanged by Pilatus himself.

Despite the final defeat, though, Judas became the symbol of a new era, for the poor and the oppressed, for those who fought the Roman dominance. Through the centuries, the Cult of Judas included more and more of the commoners, the slaves, the poorest members of society.

Now, in medieval times, the Cult of Judas is the symbol of the revolution against the current social order and the power of the nobility.

THE SYMBOLS OF JUDAS

Judas priests wear mostly black robes, or sometimes brown or gray robes, and a thin rope around the neck, tied in a noose - symbol of the death of Judas, same as the Christians wearing a cross.

Their capes have large sleeves and hoods, and little or no decorations. Sometimes they are mistaken for Christian monks, and in fact, their fight against the nobles and the rich, corrupt Church of Christ, appeals to many young Christian monks eager for a return to the origins of a purer, simpler version of their faith.

Secret ceremonies of initiation are very common, and a lot of the followers of the cult make frequent use of opium, imported from the east.

The drug is believed to induce visions of angels and even of Judas himself. There is therefore a strong connection between this religion and the opium trade, which in turn binds this religion for the poor to rich merchants and traders.

When including the Judaists in the game, remember that they are not part of the official Church of Christ: they do not believe in the divine nature of Christ, and venerate Judas not as a god, but as an important prophet. The priests of Judas bring loud preaching of a new world-order; they move on the winds of rebellion, carry a scent of disorders and unrest.

Because of their beliefs, the members of the Cult of Judas are loosely organized and all are considered equal in the eyes of God and men. There is, though, a great respect within the cult for the elders and senior members, which proved their loyalty to the cause.

AN IRON WORLD

Start your game in Jerusalem: in the Holy Land, at the center of the clash between Christians and Judaists, where the Iron Fist new interests are at stake. Think of the City of Judas as the center of a region where Romans merged with the locals and Europeans are also moving in: the city is a hub for trade and war business.

You could as well play this game in Europe if you'd like, but the recommendation is to stick to the Middle East and move away from the usual fantasy clichés.

Imagine a Middle Age with dark sorcery and superstitions being real; with nightmares coming alive, where naming a beast might evoke it, and calling the name of a demon will reinforce its presence. Imagine a world where sorcery always carries a dark mark, and where heroes tainted by such powers are the only ones that stand against an even worse evil.

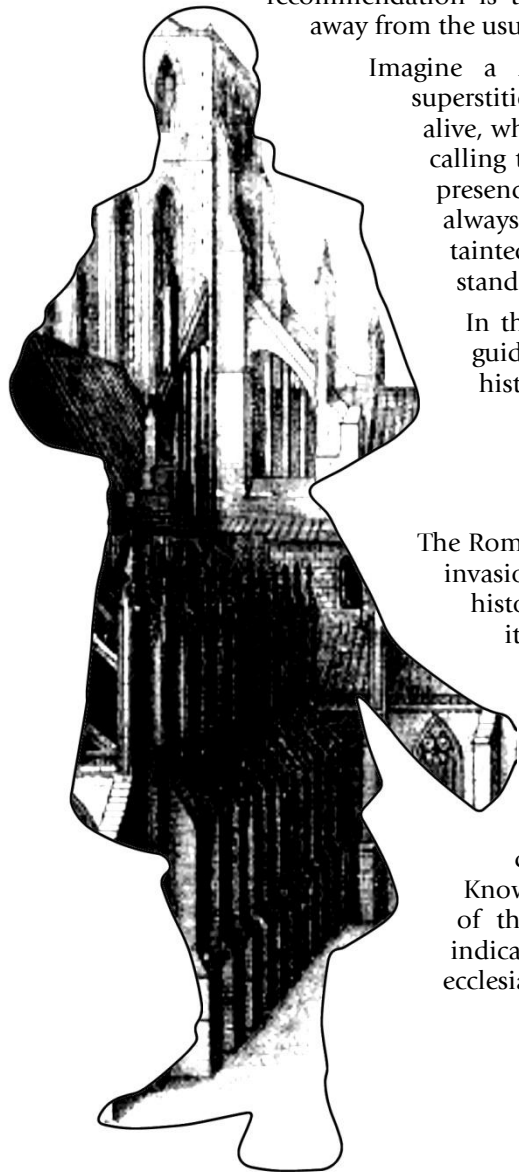
In the following pages you will find a few guidelines about the game's setting and history.

THE FALLEN EMPIRE

The Roman Empire has fallen, after the barbaric invasions, exactly as it happened in real history. Its legacy consists in the remains of its architecture and roads, some military techniques, nostalgia for the ancient splendors of its politic, and of course the vestigial of its once grand culture.

In fact, the knowledge of the Roman culture and of the Latin language is quite common across the nobility.

Knowledge of written and spoken Latin, and of the classics texts, is perhaps the main indication of a noble origin - or of an ecclesiastic career.



A STRUGGLE FOR POWER

Several different kingdoms have risen in Europe from the ashes of the Empire: some are ruled mostly by invaders or barbarians, others contain mixed populations, a few retain strong ties with the fallen Roman Empire, although in a sort of corrupted and deviated way.

The feudal system has emerged, starting on the former Empire's borders and in the more remote areas, as the most common political structure. In some cases the feudal system already became a hereditary institution, but in most of the kingdoms, lands and titles are assigned exclusively by the ruling of the king. Thus, a change of the royal family can bring major mutations also in the entire chain of power.

Almost every kingdom aspires to be the one that will revive the Empire ancient splendors; but none had yet gathered enough power to keep its borders really safe, let alone conquer and maintain new land. Kings' and nobles' concerns are usually about safety, food, and local wars, rather than expansion, with the Holy Land being the only notable exception.

The struggle to control Jerusalem and the Middle East trade routes is one of the crucial activities of nobles and high prelates; it seems that all those in power now have their eyes fixed on the City of Judas. Religion and political, military or economical powers are often so deeply mixed that is difficult to discern the exact reasons for a certain war; or to understand clearly who's allied with whom, and for how long will the alliance last. Still, in this age of wars, the people of Judas and Christ might be forced to find some sort of workable peaceful agreement, to oppose foreign invaders: Mongolic and Barbarian tribes are pressing on the northern borders, mysterious armies showing up on the eastern ones, while from the south come rumors of the rising Empire of the Book of Q that carries the storm of yet another religious conflict.

MAKE HISTORY

The details of the history of single kingdom or a specific region is left to your and the Players' imagination. Feel free to make up details and events, to bend the original history just a little or make drastic changes, especially if they involve a relatively small region.

Ask the Players to contribute with their own details: you can use their background as a starting point to get them talking, they can describe their characters' native lands or places they visited.

A good practice is to stick to real history and geography, then twist it a little, bend it and spice it up to suit your needs: work with divinities and calamities, monsters and demons, sorcery and astrology. Keep it simple so

that every Player can immerse in it, be familiar with it, without the need to study history manuals or hundreds of details.

You're just warned to make an effort to keep in mind the implications of your decisions and changes to real history, and to keep them consistent with the rest of the setting.

DARK AND ROUGH

The fall of the Empire took a toll on the everyday life of nobles and peasants alike. Generally speaking, technology and cultures are those of the medieval times, around year 1000, but whatever image you might have in your head, make it darker and rougher.

Nobles usually live in castles or manor houses, or palaces within fortified cities. Fortified cities, though, are not so common. The majority of the people in fact live in villages and farms, with little or no defenses, in simple and functional houses.

The major roads for travelers and merchants are those that remained since the Roman Empire: new roads are built with a quality nowhere near the one of the past. In general, new architecture is focused on survival or defense and there's very little for anything else, besides small churches. The first cathedrals only now begin to be built, and the first large monasteries; but again, as major cities, those are the exception rather than the norm.

Life is simple both in the villages and in the cities: farmers, artisans, traders, fishermen, all attend for the majority of the day to their jobs, with little time for entertainment or other activities. Children are considered adults between the age of fourteen to sixteen, depending on the case.

NOBLES AND COMMONERS

There is little space within the society for a middle class: low-born classes range from slavery to simple free citizens, from farmers or beggars at the door of starvation, to reasonably wealthy and decent artisans. Some merchants, some very skilled artisans, or strong warriors, somehow manage to raise themselves above others though, without reaching yet the status of nobles. But these are the exception, not the norm.

Nobility is a matter of blood: if you're high-born, you remain such for all your life, and your children inherit your status.

This means, usually, owning a large portion of land or receiving it from the king, and having the right to collect taxes from the free men that live within the domain and to call them to arms.

In turn, nobility owes to higher ranking nobles, and high nobility to the royals. Tributes and hospitality are common duties among nobles, but especially the obligation to provide knights and soldiers when called upon.

A bankrupt noble remains a noble as long as he retains military strength. Once both money and soldiers are lost, noble families quickly decay unless they find a way to regain their strength through alliances or marriage. A decayed noble family will turn into simple peasants within a generation or two, if they fail to regain strength quickly.

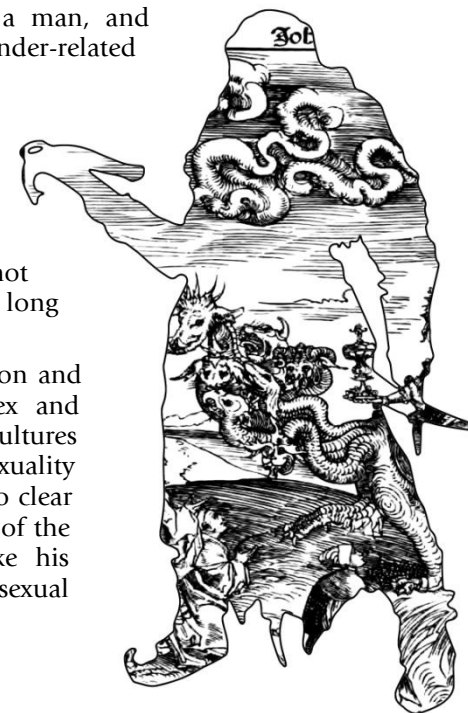
ABOUT GENDERS

Women and men are treated slightly differently among the various ethnic groups, but there is **substantial equality** between the two genders. In general, women warriors or independent women are less common than men, but not so uncommon to raise suspect or have to feel uncomfortable without a man escort.

This was perhaps not true back in the real Middle Age; but for the purpose of the game, gender equality is a fair distortion of history. It leaves room for female characters that won't just have to hide behind a man, and clears the table from possible gender-related violence.

If you believe the game should instead portrait a clear distinction between genders, discuss it with the Players and find a solution that everybody's comfortable with. It's a game and not a history book: do as you please as long as you all agree upon it.

The same goes for sexual orientation and in general for love, affection, sex and related topics: while different cultures have treated for example homosexuality in various ways, from acceptance to clear hate, do not make this the subject of the game - and let any Player make his decision about his own character's sexual orientation.



GM AND PLAYERS

A Role Playing Game is a cooperative story-telling exercise and works as a conversation, with the Game Master (GM) and the Players going through the adventure together, with different roles. The GM plays the world and NPCs, and while he retains the majority of the control over those elements, the Players impersonate the characters they chose, that are the key, the main protagonists of the story.

But more than everything an RPG - as the name says - it's a game: approach it with the purpose of having fun; work together with the others, accept how the dice roll, share your space at the table with all the others, contribute to the fiction.

COOPERATION AND ATTITUDE

Cooperation is an important component of the game: you should come at the table both as GM or Player, with the intent to have fun, and explore a fantastic world through the usage of your imagination and the interaction with the other participants.

*Moves are
described from
page 30*

A Player has full control about what happens to his own character, though there are limits to what he can do with the character itself: anything seriously special is usually covered **by a Move**, so the decisions about which direction the fiction will take, are mediated by a dice roll, to keep things interesting.

Troubles, difficulties, hard choices: this is why you're here. If you wanted to play the invincible hero you'd just say - to yourself, and nobody would probably listen: "I start my adventure, I kill whoever stands in my way, and I win."

If that doesn't sound fun, is because it isn't. Fun is when you overcome difficulties, when you get into trouble, when you make an effort or a sacrifice to obtain something.

WHAT PLAYERS DO

Players will impersonate mercenaries, within the Brotherhood of the Iron Fist. What's important is that they will come at the table with guts and determination, ready to fight monsters and villains, ready to seize what they want, even if it calls for steel or sorcery to obtain it.

What they will do is choose a playbook, make a character, and then listen while you, the GM, introduce the situation.

They will pick it from there: they will have to make their own decisions, and accept what the story - and fate - will deliver to them in response.

WHAT YOU, THE GM, DO

If you're going to be the GM, read the rules once or twice before you sit at the table. Try to be familiar with the basics: you should know when a rule triggers; then you can look them up in your manual, if you do not remember the details. As the GM, your first task is to orchestrate the overture of the game, basically setting the premises of the adventure and hooking characters into it.

*Instructions and
suggestions on
how to GM the
City of Judas are
presented from
page 66*

The simplest way to do it, of course, is plainly assigning a mission, using the Iron Fist Brotherhood as the tool to set things in motion. What you do, to prepare the adventure, is very simple and very little: you do not need to plan the adventure in details. The best is if you come at the table with a great opening, a strong hook, a compelling idea, an action scene already set up so you can throw the characters right in the middle of it, then see where the Players take you from there.

During the game, you retain the control over NPCs and monsters - and in general on every aspect of the Iron World that is not the characters themselves. Your main task is to offer Players chances to make decisions.

Do not plan ahead to much, do not prepare a better road to follow or plan for a best course of action for the characters; do not get too attached to your NPCs or monsters. For this to happen, you have to do your best - in an adventure as much as in a single scene - to setup the premises as open-ended.

GMING APPROACH

Everybody knows you're not GMing just for the sake of killing characters. Still, it doesn't hurt to tell that to the Players, before you start playing. If something bad happens to the characters, it's because the system says so, and the rules say so; not because you're being an asshole.

Now, the Iron World is harsh and sometimes unforgiving. Some of the characters will die, probably. Not every session, but sometimes they will. If they wouldn't, instead of having a Suffer Harm Move for the characters, the game would have an Unbeatable Move that said: "Whatever you rolled, you win."

That wouldn't be fun. Actually, there's an Unbeatable Move for one of the characters. But it doesn't work like that.

So, now that you've cleared the air with the Players, what should you do as the GM? First of all, **come at the table with questions**. Come at the table with an open approach, ready to let the game and the Players surprise you. When you start drafting an adventure in your head, make sure you leave lots of blanks for the Players to fill, and the best is if you can turn your adventure idea into a series of questions, something that will be up to the characters to answer.

Directing the game towards your own expectations, being pushy or manipulative against the Players, to railroad the adventure towards the results you have in mind, is a hard and unfair job, and it transforms the characters' actions into something meaningless. Instead, make scenes and adventures open-ended: setup the situations and watch how they evolve, play to find out what happens, second the Players in their decisions - it doesn't mean they always succeed, but that they always have a shot at it.

If you let them share with you the control of story, through their characters' actions, you'll find your job easier and more entertaining, because you allow yourself, as the GM, the chance to be surprised by where the story goes.

AT THE TABLE

At the table, the GM setups the baseline for the adventure, impersonates any non-playing character (NPC), monsters, and such, and controls what happens in the world around the characters. Note that in the AW framework, the work of the GM is regulated by Moves - actions he can perform to bring the narration forward. These Moves have the explicit intent to prioritize a compelling fiction, to bring action forward, and keep the game fair.

The Players, on the other hand, impersonate their characters and act and react within the scope defined by the GM. Whenever they say that their characters do something, if that falls within the scope of a Move, their will roll for the Move and apply the results.

I AM A CONFUSED PLAYER

If you never played a Role Playing Game before, you might be confused, already. Let's try to make it very simple. As a Player:

- ✦ Pick a character template (they're called Playbooks). Choose the one that inspires you the most and don't worry, once he's dead or done you will be free to experience a different one
- ✦ Create your character: all the necessary instructions are in the Character Creation Guide, and the GM will support you in the process
- ✦ Listen to the Game Master introducing the Iron World and the specific situation or mission
- ✦ You observe the world through the GM's descriptions. If something is not clear, ask questions
- ✦ Say what your character thinks or feels, but especially what he does and what he wants to accomplish with his actions. Make decisions, don't just sit there and wait for things to happen
- ✦ When you feel your character, because of his background or skills, might know something about a place or a person or a topic, say so: you will reasonably have to roll to obtain the right to establish these facts in fiction



- ✦ Look at your Moves (things the character - and only this character - can do) for inspiration
- ✦ Act to pursue your goals; don't be afraid to use the sword when needed, but remember your social skills also
- ✦ Some parts of the game are regulated by Moves: a Move is called by something that happens in the fiction, either when your character does something or when certain conditions occur
- ✦ When it's time for a Move, you roll 2D6+Something - usually a Stat. That tells you if your character did good or not
- ✦ The Move has certain outcomes: good on a total of 10 or more, decent but with complications on a 7 to 9 result, and typically bad - in different shades of bad - on a 6 or minus
- ✦ Face the consequences of your actions: see what happens to your character or to the others, see what happens to the story
- ✦ Sometimes there is the need to write stuff on your Playbook: adjust a score, mark a counter and so on: do it
- ✦ Then act again: feel free to run away, to keep fighting until they kill you, to be merciless and tough or compassionate and caring
- ✦ Your character is yours: you decide what he tries to do and what he wants, although the Iron World will place obstacles on your path: enjoy those obstacles, embrace the difficulties, they're what makes the game fun

I AM A CONFUSED GM

Maybe you have this job because you bought the book, or because you played other Role Playing Games before. If you played other games such as Apocalypse World or Dungeon World, you are most likely not confused, right now.

So the list below is important especially if you never acted as Game Master before, but a good reminder also if you're an experienced GM:

- ✦ Read this manual once, to get an idea of the terminology, the various rules and characters, and how Game Mastering works
- ✦ Read the manual again, probably now that you had a glimpse at all the components, many things will make much more sense
- ✦ You should know in general how the rules - all of them - work, and where to find them in the book for the exact details. At least, you should remember when a rule triggers and that you need to go to look for a specific mechanic

- ✦ Think about a few possible first adventures for your group, possibly in the City of Judas, that is described in the manual; don't overdo it, leave many blanks
- ✦ When you wonder if your prep would be enough for the game, and you're not sure, then it's enough. The best stuff will come up during play, not in prep
- ✦ Guide the Players in picking their Playbooks and creating their characters, respond to their questions
- ✦ Once you're ready, begin the adventure. You describe and control everything besides what the characters do - or try to do, but the more you share this control, the more you reincorporate their suggestions, the better the game will be
- ✦ Watch out for Moves: when a character does something that calls for a Move, make the Player to roll the Move and follow through with the fiction
- ✦ You are, by tradition, the arbiter of the game. But you don't do what you want: instead, you work according to the following:
 - ✦ Iron Rules - that tell you what are the main guidelines in depicting the Iron World, and what to say to the Players
 - ✦ Iron Principles - that tell you what should inspire your words, which direction to take, which path to follow
 - ✦ Iron Moves - that tell you what you can do, to the characters, the other people in the Iron World, within the events of the story
- ✦ Don't be afraid to tell your Players when you are in doubt: take the time to read again the page with the rule you need. Check the forums for advice, ask questions to other players, and always feel free to write me an email
- ✦ Remember to look at your papers (i.e. the Characters' Front, the Mission Front and so on) for inspiration. When you're in doubt, do your best to incorporate inputs from the Players
- ✦ And don't be afraid to push: push hard, make things harsh, put the characters to the test, put tension on the Players; this is what will forge interesting stories

*Iron Rules and Principles
from page 67*

*Iron Moves for the GM
from page 76*

SUMMARY ONE

- ✦ It was in the end defeated by the Romans, but a large cult emerged, that gained favor especially among the poor and the oppressed
- ✦ The cult originated in Jerusalem and spread substantially even in Europe, competing with Christianity
- ✦ The Church of Christ represents a strong factor of stability, while the cult of Judas is a clear symbol of renovation and revolution
- ✦ Crusades are what brought a lot of European soldiers to the Holy Land
- ✦ There is no fixed setting here: the last crusade might have been fought against the followers of the Book of Q, or against Judaists, or generically between Judaists and Christians, competing for supremacy in the Holy Land

How to approach the game:

- ✦ What you say, with the appropriate filter of the game rules, becomes the fiction
- ✦ Everybody participates in the story
- ✦ Nobody has full control, complete authority over the story
- ✦ There are always at least two sides in the conversation, if not more. A single person doesn't get to pose a problem and then declare the solution; a single person doesn't get to ask the question and then give the answer
- ✦ The reason why we all sit at the table to play this game is to have fun; the real fun is in telling the story together
- ✦ Play your Character not to win an imaginary contest, but to fulfill its potential to the fullest; don't just run away from trouble every time

About the setting:

- ✦ The City of Judas is Jerusalem, in a dark and imaginary middle age
- ✦ The Iron World is dark and hard; get rid of fancy fantasies, powerful heroes and noble stories
- ✦ The Church of Christ replaced the previous Roman religion as the current common, state religion
- ✦ The Papacy in Rome has strong ties with the nobility, and at the same time fights to obtain a predominant role against nobility
- ✦ Judas was an apostle of Christ that raised an army against the Romans after Christ was crucified

About the Iron Fist:

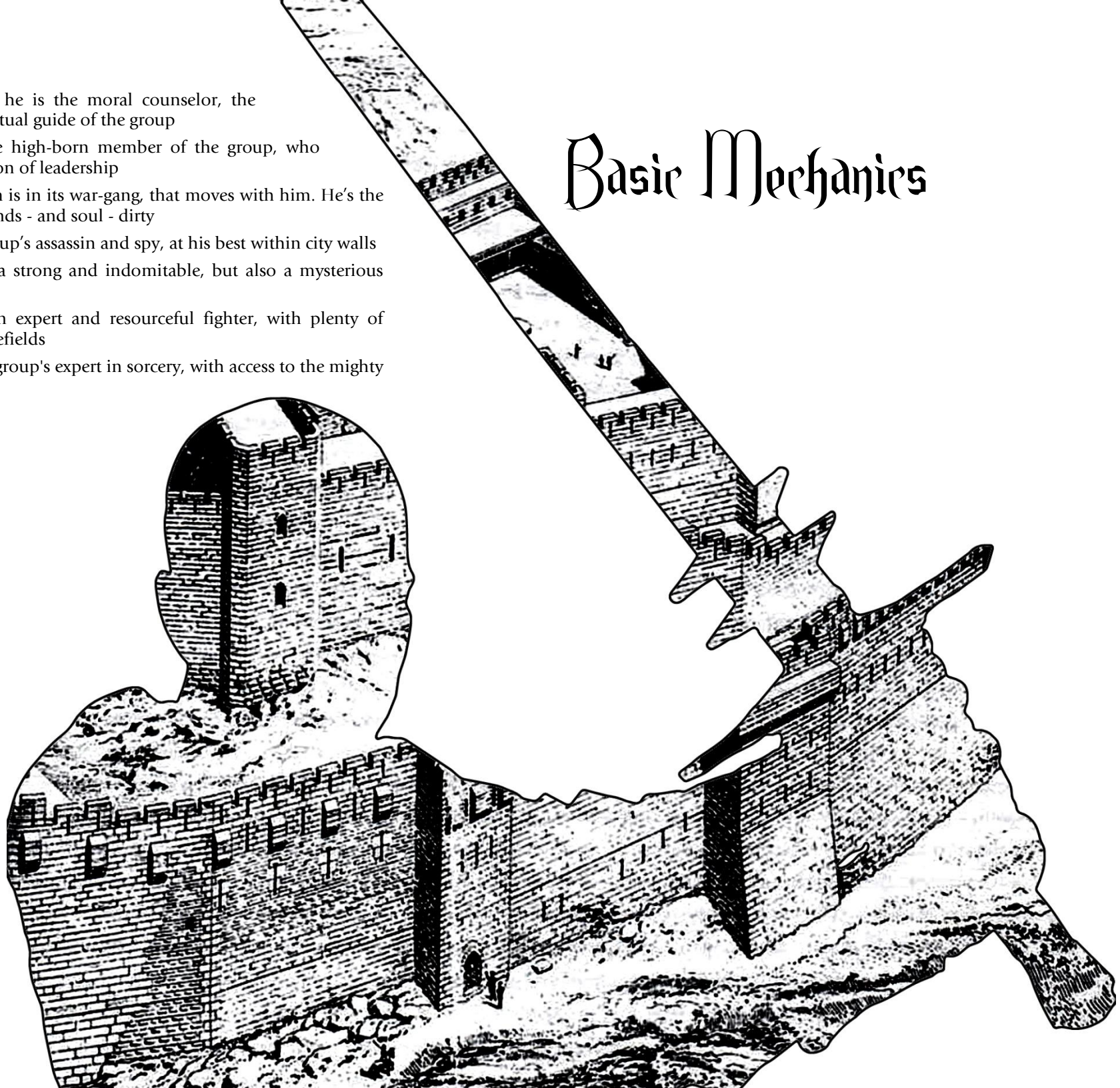
- ✦ The Iron Fist is a mercenary company, a brotherhood and a guild, open to be hired by anyone
- ✦ The characters entered the Iron Fist recently, each one with his own background and history
- ✦ At the start of the game, all characters somehow know each other
- ✦ The Iron Fist in the Holy Land supports the cult of Judas by protecting and participating in the opium trade towards Europe
- ✦ In Europe, where the Iron Fist main headquarter is, business is done instead more often on the side of the nobles and the Christian Church
- ✦ These conflicts could provide important material to be explored in the game
- ✦ The Iron Fist uses a metal chain to represent the ranking within the Brotherhood
- ✦ The Iron Fist mercenaries are hired through their Magister

Characters:

- ✦ With the exception of the Priest - which is a Judaist by design - the characters can belong to any ethnicity and any religion
- ✦ The Barber: this is the group's healer. Although he can fight, his main role is to support the others
- ✦ The Horseman: he is the group's knight, he fight and acts at the best of his potential while on the saddle
- ✦ The Hunter: this is the tracker of monsters, the one who knows wilderness and beasts

Basic Mechanics

- ✦ The Priest - of Judas: he is the moral counselor, the confessor, and the spiritual guide of the group
- ✦ The Leader: this is the high-born member of the group, who aims to obtain a position of leadership
- ✦ The Raider: his strength is in its war-gang, that moves with him. He's the one ready to get his hands - and soul - dirty
- ✦ The Scout: he is the group's assassin and spy, at his best within city walls
- ✦ The Sellsword: this is a strong and indomitable, but also a mysterious and lonely fighter
- ✦ The Veteran: this is an expert and resourceful fighter, with plenty of experience on the battlefields
- ✦ The Sorcerer: he is the group's expert in sorcery, with access to the mighty power of magic



THE CHARACTERS

Playbooks are presented from page 147

Each character is defined by the **choice of a Playbook** - that works as the character sheet for the Players - and describes the character's specialization.

Characters in the game are defined by some numeric Stats, other Counters, and a series of descriptive elements ranging from name to looks, from Moves to XP, Debilities and such.

The following are the basic information contained in each Playbook. Each of them is described with more details in the next pages.

- * **Player and Character Name:** the Player's real name and the character name
- * **Looks:** a brief outline of the character's appearance
- * **Background:** a couple of important elements from the past
- * **Brothers In Blood:** other Players characters
- * **Experience:** advancements and XP counter
- * **Statistics:** characters capabilities and attitudes
- * **Counters:** scores for Health, Spirit and Equipment
- * **Debilities And Conditions:** special conditions related to Counters
- * **Gear:** weapons, armor, equipment and such
- * **Playbook Moves:** special moves available to the given character

The Character Creation Guide, from page 94, contains all the info to make a new character

NAME AND LOOKS

You will find guidelines and examples to support the Players in filling the Name and Looks fields, in the Character Creation Guide.

Names and Looks provided in the Character Creation Guide are of course only examples, and Players can choose something different if they prefer. Try to maintain some consistence though, with the setting and the spirit of the game you're going to play.

BACKGROUND

The background of every character is composed by **two different elements**. When the Players will design the background, they should briefly describe each element by inserting **two out of four** from the list below:

- * Something related to **an NPC**
- * Something related to **another character**
- * Something that is a **pressing issue**
- * The **motivation** for joining the Iron Fist

More on background elements from page 97

When declining these into more specific background elements, a good strategy is to cross the above list with example like the below:

- * **Roots:** something related to the character's past or ethnicity, religious faith, family or personal history
- * **One Precious Thing:** a memory, a small object, a piece of gear symbolizing something greater, an emotion, a bond; the thing the character values the most
- * **One Serious Weakness:** a defect, a bad trait, some temptation some passion that causes troubles, or a strong, powerful issue or enemy

These elements provide the Player with guidelines about the character's interpretation and motivations, and you as the GM with useful fiction material to bring into the game.

Examples are available in the Character Creation Guide, for all of the listed elements. It will be possible, during the game, to change these.

BROTHERS IN BLOOD

Under Brothers In Blood, each Player should list the names of the other characters that are their companions within the Iron Fist.

For each one of them, the Player will have the chance to gain XP when interacting to help or oppose them.

EXPERIENCE

More about gaining XP on page 24

More details are provided in the dedicated section, but here the Players will track the number of experience points (XP) gained, and marks the Advancements (character's improvements).

Note that each one of the available Advancements is shown with one or more checkboxes next to it: mark a checkbox when taking the given Advancement. Once you run of checkboxes, the given Advancement **cannot be taken again**.

The Special Advancements are unlocked only after a while, when at least five of the regular Advancements have been taken.

STATISTICS

Statistics, or in short Stat(s), are the presentation of character's capabilities and preferred attitudes within different domains. Stats are used as modifiers when rolling for Moves.

All the Stats have a score between -3 and +3, but start between -1 and +2 at the beginning of the game.

The Stats are:

- * **Edge:** nerve, keeping it together, remaining calm and rational, able to face danger, dexterous
- * **Steel:** physically strong, tough, assertive and resistant, brutal and aggressive, martial and skilled in combat
- * **Charm:** beautiful, seductive, charming, attractive, but also charismatic, manipulative
- * **Shadow:** deceptive, cheating and tricky, able to lie, mask and conceal, complementary to Charm/Edge
- * **Brains:** skilled and capable, trained and clever, intuitive and wise, knowledgeable, perceptive

COUNTERS

More about Counters and their usage in the next pages

Together with the Stats, the characters have a set of counters which are used in a variety of situations. Each of the Counters has a value from -3 to +3, as the Stats, and as the Stats they influence various rolls. Contrary to the Stats, though, the Counters value changes often during the game.

The Counters are three:

- * **Health:** physical status and harm received; lost when harmed, recovered with rest and healing
- * **Spirit:** will power, moral strength, religious faith, courage and integrity, capacity to perform exceptional tasks. It influences both the character self-control and his reputation
- * **Equipment:** how well prepared the character is to face difficulties with gear and tools, including ammo, spell's materials and gold

DEBILITIES AND CONDITIONS

Debilities are special conditions acquired when fatal or nearly fatal harm is suffered by the character; characters take debilities to avoid death. When a character takes a debility, the score of the related Stat is reduce accordingly.

Other Conditions, such as **Unstable** (for Health), **Unprepared** or in **Debt** (for Equipment), **Tainted** or **Infamous** (for Spirit), are associated to the parent Counter. A condition is activated when the related Counter reaches the score of -1, or when taking -1 to the related Counter on an already negative score.

There are more information about the Conditions, their interaction with the Counters and the fiction, in the next pages.

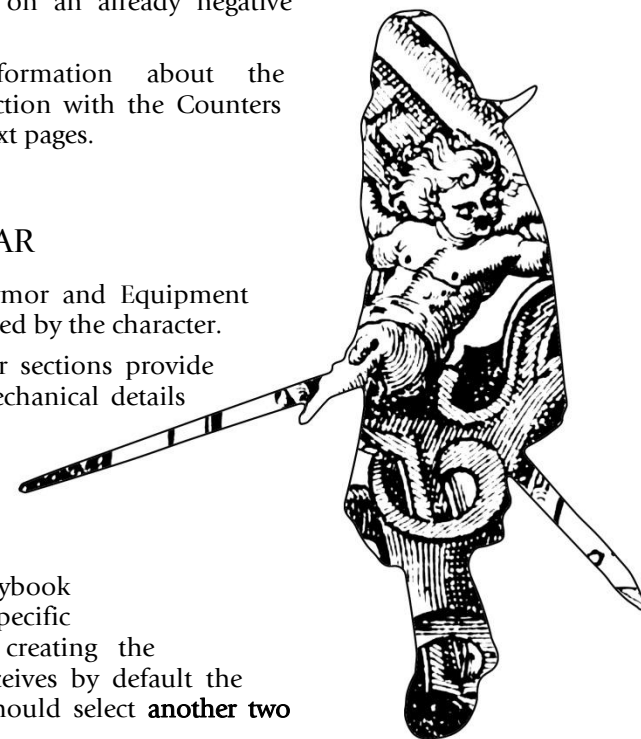
GEAR

List under Weapons, Armor and Equipment the various items possessed by the character.

The Weapon and Armor sections provide space to fill also the mechanical details of such equipment.

MOVES

Moves listed in each Playbook are dedicated to the specific character class. When creating the character, the Player receives by default the first move listed, and should select **another two**



moves. During the game, by taking Advancements, the character can obtain new Moves from the list. It is also possible to obtain a limited number of Moves from other Playbooks. The first Move of each Playbook is reserved to the owner of the Playbook only - **it cannot be taken as an Advancement** by others (with an exception for the Barber).

MORE ABOUT COUNTERS

Counters - Health, Spirit and Equipment - are used to track volatile situations that change often during the game. Counters are associated to Conditions, which are negative and affect the fiction and the GM Moves.

In details, the Conditions are the following:

- ✦ **Unstable** (associated to Health Counter): when the character is seriously harmed and will get worse with the time
- ✦ **Debt** (associated with Equipment Counter): when the character finances are low and he owes money to the wrong people
- ✦ **Unprepared** (associated with Equipment Counter): when the character does not have the proper equipment, including ammo or material for spells
- ✦ **Tainted** (associated with Spirit Counter): when the wicked mark of sorcery or the dark side of the character are strong, and the character's spirit is weakened
- ✦ **Infamous** (associated with Spirit Counter): when the darkness of the character becomes publicly known or visible, and the character has a reputation for not trustable, unworthy or dangerous

COUNTERS' SCORES

The Counters' scores are increased or decreased during the game depending on specific factors: **Health** is suffering harm or healing, **Equipment** is using stuff, gear, spending coin, or buying stuff, gaining coin, **Spirit** is detailed within the Playbook moves and characteristics. In any case, the Counters remain between +3 and -3.

Players cannot gain more than +3 (ignore anything that increases the score) nor reduce it to less than -3 (ignore anything that reduces further). Ignoring in this case means not to apply the mechanical change to the score; whatever happens in fiction, though, still happens. In other words, a positive event

that would give a +1 Spirit to a character who has already +3, still happens in fiction, but the score remains a +3.

It is also very important to note that if a certain Counter score is -3, then the character cannot perform a Move that would require taking a -1 to the given Counter.

ACTIVATE CONDITIONS

Every Condition tells where the character is in trouble: as a Player expect the GM to hit hard there, and as the GM take every opportunity to bring these Conditions into the game when they're active.

More about how the GM can exploit the various Conditions from page 83

Conditions are activated automatically when the score of the related Counter reaches -1; or in alternative they can be activated by the GM when the related Counter receives a -1 and the score is already negative.

When Health is -1, activate Unstable; when Equipment is -1, activate Debt or Unprepared; when Spirit is -1 activate Tainted or Infamous.

For Equipment, since there's the possibility to pick between two different Conditions, **it's the GM call** to decide which one to activate, following through from the fiction. If the Equipment score gets to -1 or receives a -1 when already negative, if dealing with coin use Debt, if with gear use Unprepared.

For the **Spirit** counter, **it's the Player's call** to pick either Tainted or Infamous.

Once a Condition is active, **it can be cleared** when the Player gains a +1 to the related Counter; the Condition is cleared instead of increasing the score of +1.

For example, when healing 2 Health points, the Player can decide if to add 2 to the Health score, or 1 to the Health score and remove Unstable as a condition. If both the Conditions for Equipment or Spirit are marked, a +1 will remove one of them, chosen by the Player.

ADVANCEMENTS

Advancements are used to present the improvements and changes of the character over time. They are presented in the Playbook itself, and one Advancement is obtained every time the character has gained **a total of 7 XP**.

When the character has earned 7 XP in total, the Player should erase all of the XP marked until now, and take one Advancement.

Advancements are divided between basic and Special ones, with the Special Advancements that are unlocked only after at least five of the basic ones have been earned.

GAINING XP

The characters gain XP whenever they do something related to the items marked with "□ xp" on the playbook.

The most obvious triggers for gaining XP are the Moves, both for Stats and for Counters, and some of the special Moves of each Playbook. Also helping or conflicting with another character or having one background element brought into play in a relevant way, allow to mark XP.

The various items - all marked in the playbook - allow **gaining XP only once**, until the next Advancement.

Some additional guidelines and clarifications are provided below:

- There is a general counter for XP: mark here XP gained from acting in reaction to social moves for example, for which there is no other place where to mark
- Remember to mark XP in the total counter regardless of its source, so there is always a clear, visible total
- Moves, background items etc. allow to mark XP only once per advancement
- When the checkbox "□ xp" is marked - this same item will not give XP anymore until the next advancement
- When all the XP is erased upon taking an Advancement, all the items previously marked for XP will be able to grant XP again
- In some cases, two moves are listed together for the same "□ xp": in this case mark XP when either one of the two is used
- In some cases (help/conflict, and background) it is possible to gain XP for a move, and separately another XP point for the help/conflict or the background item that comes into play in the same occasion

- The same Advancement can be taken only a limited number of times; mark on the Playbook the corresponding checkbox, and when there's no available checkbox anymore, the same Advancement cannot be taken again
- When taking a Move from another Playbook, it is not allowed to select the first move, marked with Ø, which is exclusive to the given Playbook, nor the Special Advancement of another playbook, which again is reserved only to the playbook owner (with a special exception for the Barber as detailed in its playbook)

ADVANCEMENTS IN FICTION

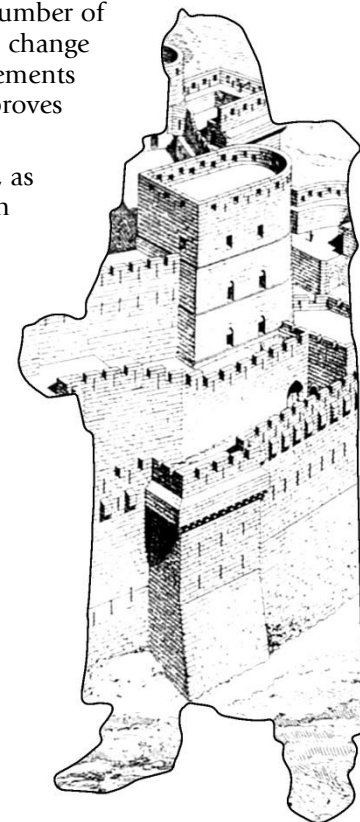
If your group plans to play for a long time with the same characters, you can make the Advancements to be a part of the adventures. This will slow down characters progression back to the old days when it took a while to level-up, if you like this sort of campaign pace.

On the other hand, if you plan a game that would be faster, either because you have a limited number of sessions, or you plan for Players to change character often, you can keep the Advancements to be simply a mechanical feature that improves the characters.

In other words: **for a fast progression game**, as soon as the Player reaches 7 XP, he takes an Advancement, without the need for an explanation in fiction. A new skill came up when convenient, or the character grew stronger and so on. This is suitable for games that progress slower like a PbF - play by forum - or at a convention, in a one-shot game, or with a group that wants to experience the system fully and complete a campaign within a few sessions.

For a slower progression, on the other hand, as the GM you should demand that the Players will justify the Advancements in fiction, with decently strong requirements.

Examples of such requirements would be that the Player will find a way to



Introduction	Basic Mechanics	Moves And Rolls	Combat Procedures	Mastering	GM Iron Moves	The First Session	Missions And Fronts	Monsters And Enemies	Playbooks Reference
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describe how to develop a certain ability or how a given experience is obtained, or finding the proper tutor, taking time to read or train for a new skill, obtain the necessary connections for social moves, and so on.

Without bending the story, try to favor this kind of opportunities for the Players - perhaps even demanding a little cost or sacrifice to obtain something new.

On the other hand, instruct the Players that they should also do some work of preparation themselves, to obtain these Advancements a bit faster. For example they can look for an instructor; they can begin the proper studies or training in advance, and then unlock the Advancement only when reaching the 7 XP.

Until the requirements for an Advancement are not met, the Player will mark the Advancement as pending and then unlock it when the requirements are met. Still, the Player erases the XP marks on the playbook and starts gaining XP again towards the next Advancement.

AVAILABLE ADVANCEMENTS

When the character earned 7 XP, the Player can choose any of the Basic Advancements listed in the Playbook. All the Playbooks share the same list of available Basic Advancements, divided among increasing Stats, obtaining new Moves, healing debilities or erasing debts.

Each one of the Advancements can be taken only a certain number of times, shown by the boxes next to it. The Player marks the box after taking the Advancement, and can only take Advancements with a free box.

When taking as Advancement a Move from another playbook, it is suggested to take moves from playbooks **that are not currently in play**. Common sense suggests taking something that otherwise would be unavailable rather than competing with another existing character.

Below is a clarification for each of the standard Advancements:

- * **Stat +1 increase** (for Edge, Steel, Charm, Shadow, Brains): each one of the Stats can be increased by one point. Plus one means adding one to the current Stat value - so if the character has already a +2 he goes to +3, while if he had -1 he can go to 0. Each Stat can be advanced only once
- * **A move of your playbook**: each character can take up to three new moves from his own playbook
- * **A move of another playbook**: each character can take up to two new moves from a different playbook, with the exception of the first move of each playbook that is marked with a: Ø, and the move reserved for the Special Advancement. These are exclusive for the playbook owners. If the

character takes a spell list as a non-sorcerer, they start with 3 spells instead of 5

- * **Heal a debility**: the character can heal one of the debilities he has, without the need for sorcery. This will require some rest in safety, but the wounds will heal completely or anyway become something that the character can cope with, without mechanical penalties. Therefore, erase the -1 to the related Stat
- * **Erase your debts**: remove all of the character's debts, in score and in fiction. Delete the marked for Debts (not for Unprepared), and return to Equipment score +1 if currently less

SPECIAL ADVANCEMENTS

Once the character has earned at least 5 Basic Advancements, it is possible to start selecting new Special Advancements, in the additional section of the playbook.

Some of the Special Advancements are customized by playbook, and others are common to all. Note that each playbook has a final move that can be unlocked only with Special Advancements.

Special Advancements are:

- * **Change Playbook**: keep the same character, with its Stats and other scores. Maintain one Move of the original playbook, but remove all other Moves, and start with another Playbook instead. On the new Playbook, start with all advancements available (including those for the Stats)
- * **Make a new Playbook**: start a new character, to play together with the first one. The new character could be an ally or an apprentice of the first character, for example, if the Player wants. He can play different characters in different sessions, or play them together. The two characters can help each other, conflict and so on, but none of the positive effects (gaining XP, Spirit and so on) can be obtained by the same Player doing one Move with one character against the other
- * **Return safely home**: the Player works out the details with the GM, but the character is gone from the game, and in a safe manner. The GM nor other characters can hunt him down nor hurt him. If another character is in conflict with the one that returns home, the retiring character still has his chance of going away, but unless he's facing his enemy, it is understood that he will have somehow to hide from him for the rest of his life. This advancement should be taken only in a moment of relative peace in fiction

- **Obtain the [various] move:** this unlocks the Special Advancement move, that is different for every character
- **Become a Magister:** having enough experience within the Iron Fist, the character is appointed the rank of Magister. It has no real mechanical effect, but will change how fiction revolves around missions
- **Compete to become Caesar:** to attempt this, the character must be already a Magister. Becoming an Iron Fist Caesar will require a dedicated session, if not an entire set of mission or adventures



ADVANTAGE DIE

In case of advantage or disadvantage, the original AW rules make use of a mechanic to assign Players a +1/-1 forward or ongoing. This is elegant and simple, and easy to forget at the table especially when modifiers accumulate or are used later on, so there is no such mechanic in The City Of Judas.

Instead, there is a personal **Advantage Die (AD)** for each Player.

Use a physical token - **a die of different size or color** - that is easy to notice at the table, and easier to remember and use.

The Advantage Die in some cases can make a really serious difference - turning perhaps a 6- even into a 10+. This is indeed how it should work: the Players will not accumulate small mechanical advantages, but instead will build up a sort of credit towards the fiction, a positive momentum that they will be able to use at their discretion, when they feel the roll they make is really critical.

USE THE ADVANTAGE DIE

Several conditions during the game, typically within moves, increase or decrease the value of the AD. All these conditions are defined mechanically within Moves; both characters Moves and GM Moves.

At the beginning of the game, the Advantage Die shows the value of one. When the value increases, the Player rotates it to show the number two, then the number three, and so on.

At any moment during the game, the Player can decide to **replace the value of a die he rolled**, with the value of the Advantage Die.

Doing so resets the Advantage Die to the value of one.

This can be done for any kind of roll: if the Player rolled one low die, and the AD shows a higher value, the Player can replace the low die with the score of the AD.

If the Advantage Die reached the value of six, ignore any following case when the value should be increased - the values are not saved to be used later: the Player has already gained all the advantage he can have.

REDUCE THE ADVANTAGE DIE

More about how the GM can reduce the Advantage Die on page 81

At any given moment, within one of his moves, the GM can reduce the value of the Advantage Die by one, using one of Moves; this occurs when the character ends up at disadvantage somehow.

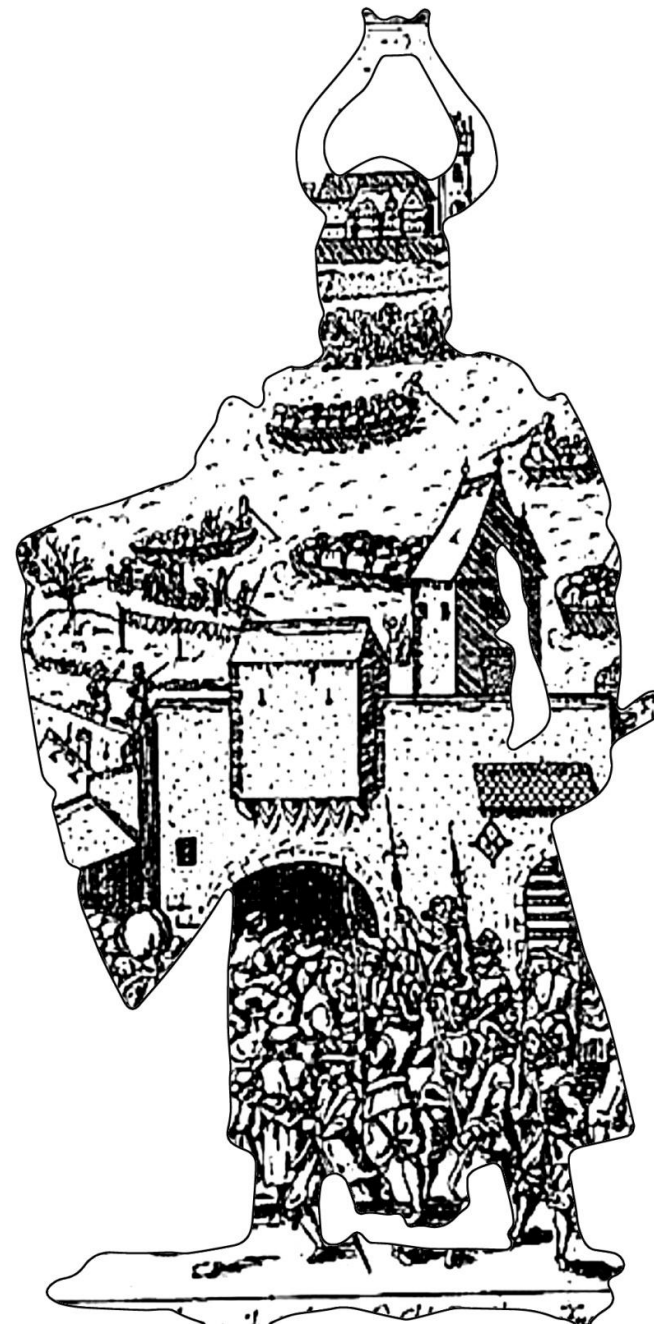
Also, the Advantage Die is reset to one after the Player uses it, **and at the end of every session.**

Players will naturally be encouraged to use it before the session ends, and whenever the value grows up to five or six, to avoid wasting possible future increases.

HACK THE ADVANTAGE DIE

Increasing the Advantage Die size to a D8 or reducing it to a D4, of course has a clear impact on the AD usage. A larger die allows Players to stack up bonuses towards a significant success, while a D4 somehow forces Players to use the Die more often, but for a milder effect.

Other possible hacks include: having two Advantage Dice instead of one; being able to influence other Players' results with the usage of your own AD; having the AD to swap value with the normal die. These are all valid and possible options - probably all fun in their own way, and also reasonably unnecessary, unless you need some mechanical twist to keep the Players' attention or the change has a clear impact on the fiction you want to narrate (for example epic heroes could use a D8 as Advantage Die; a game about conflicts between characters would benefit from the possibility to use the Advantage Die to hinder other characters' actions, and so on).



SUMMARY TWO

Characters are defined by:

- * Name and Looks; and then a couple of Elements for the Background
- * The background is built by picking two out of four between: something related to an NPC, something related to another character, a pressing issue, motivation for joining the Iron Fist
- * Brothers In Blood: the other characters; helping or entering in conflict with them will grant XP
- * XP and Advancements: gain XP mostly by using moves. When reaching 7 XP take an Advancement and improve the character
- * Statistics: a character's capabilities and attitudes. Stats are: Edge, Steel, Charm, Shadow and Brains. All the Stats have a score between -3 and +3, but start between -1 and +2 at the beginning of the game
- * Counters: represent the current status in Health, Spirit and Equipment. Counters has a value from -3 to +3 and their value changes often during the game
- * Conditions: they indicate when the character has reached a point, triggered by a counter, that indicates a serious problem. Conditions are Unstable (for Health), Unprepared or in Debt (for Equipment), Tainted or Infamous (for Spirit)
- * Debilities: special conditions acquired when fatal harm is suffered by the character, and are taken to avoid death
- * Gear: weapons, armors and other relevant items
- * Playbook Moves: every playbook has its own set of dedicated moves
- * The first Move of each Playbook is reserved to the owner of the Playbook only

The Stats are:

- * Edge: nerve, keep it together, remain calm, able to face danger, dexterous
- * Steel: physically strong, assertive, resistant, brutal, martial and skilled in combat
- * Charm: beautiful, seductive, charming, attractive, charismatic, manipulative
- * Shadow: deceptive, cheating and tricky, able to lie, mask and conceal
- * Brains: skilled and capable, trained and clever, intuitive and wise, knowledgeable, perceptive

The Counters are three:

- * Health: physical status and harm received; lost when harmed, recovered with rest and healing
- * Spirit: will power, moral strength, religious faith, courage and integrity. It influences both the character self-control and his reputation
- * Equipment: how well prepared the character is to face difficulties with gear and tools, including ammo, spell's materials and gold

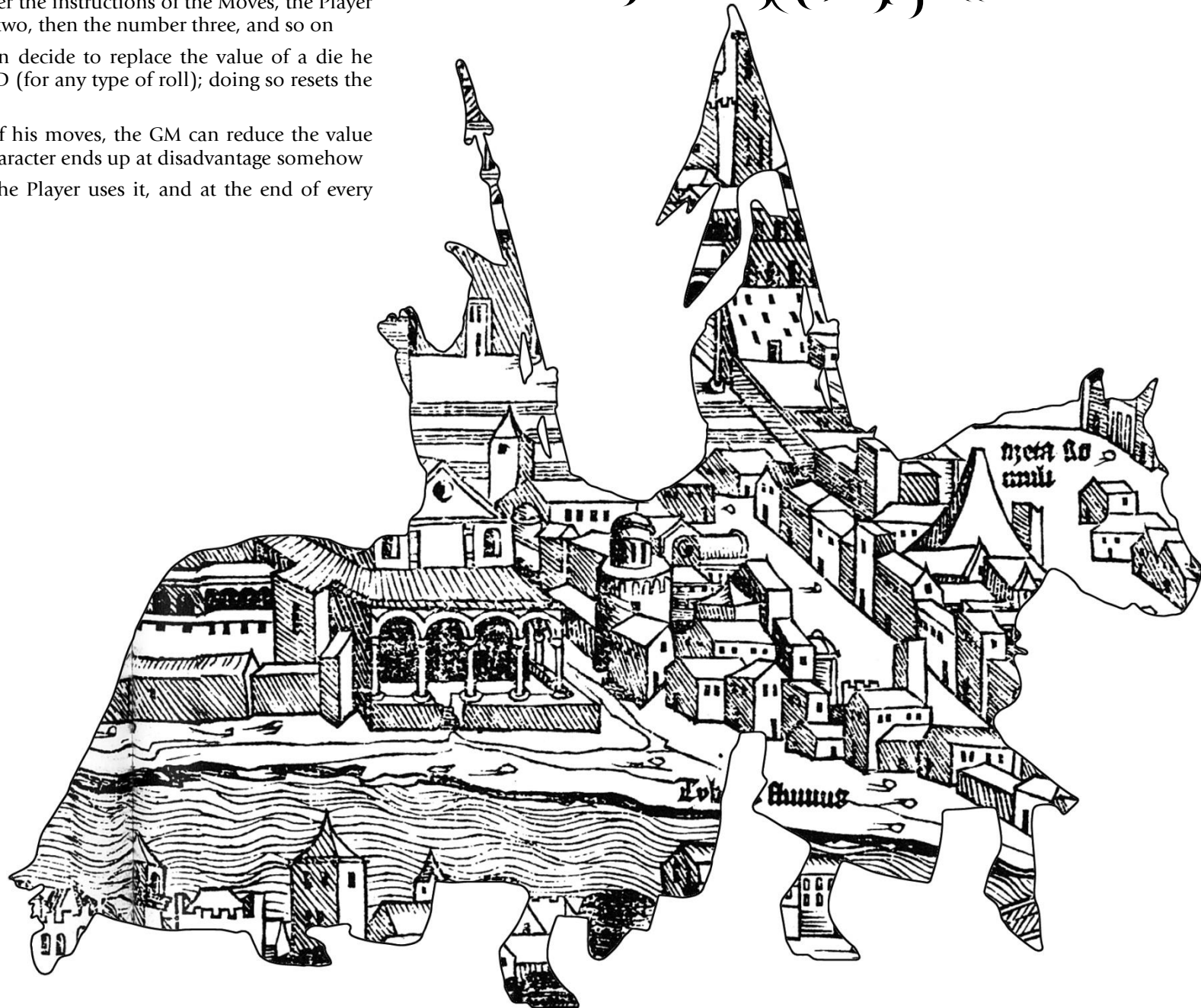
About Conditions:

- * A condition is activated when the related Counter reaches the score of -1, or when taking -1 to the related Counter on an already negative score
- * Once a Condition is active, it can be cleared when the Player gains a +1 to the related Counter; the Condition is cleared instead of increasing the score of +1
- * Unstable (associated to Health Counter): when the character is seriously harmed and will get worse with the time. When Health is -1, activate Unstable
- * Debt (Equipment Counter): when the character finances are low and he owes money to the wrong people. Unprepared (Equipment Counter): when the character does not have the proper equipment, including ammo or material for spells. It's the GM call to decide which one to activate, following through from the fiction
- * Tainted (Spirit Counter): when the wicked mark of sorcery or the dark side of the character are strong, and the character's spirit is weakened. Infamous (Spirit Counter): when the darkness of the character becomes publicly known or visible, and the character has a reputation for not trustable, unworthy or dangerous. It's the Player's call to pick either Tainted or Infamous

Advantage Die:

- Every character has a special, different color D6; it's called Advantage Die and replaces the -1/+1 forward and ongoing
- At the beginning of the game, the AD shows the value of one
- When the value increases, as per the instructions of the Moves, the Player rotates it to show the number two, then the number three, and so on
- At any moment the Player can decide to replace the value of a die he rolled, with the value of the AD (for any type of roll); doing so resets the AD to one
- At any moment, within one of his moves, the GM can reduce the value of the AD by one, when the character ends up at disadvantage somehow
- The AD is reset to one after the Player uses it, and at the end of every session

Moves And Rolls



THE MOVES

Moves are the core of the game, from the Players prospective. When a character does something interesting or dangerous or that can twist the plot, it's typically a Move. A Move is a template for an action.

As Vincent puts it in AW: "the rule for moves is **to do it, do it**". In other words, if the Player says that the character does something that resembles a Move's trigger, then roll for the Move. If the character wants to accomplish something within a Move's scope, then roll for the Move.

THE DICE AND THE MOVES

When rolling for a Move, the Player rolls 2D6+Stat or 2D6+Counter depending on the Move's instructions. Sum the 2D6 results to the Stat (or Counter) value - and the Player can replace once of the dice value with the Advantage Die if he wants to. If the result is:

- * 6- then it's a clear failure or a hard complication
- * 7-9 then it's a moderate success, or a success with a price or mild complication
- * 10+ then it's a clear success

The Moves texts contain instructions on what to do on a success or in case of complications; you and the Players just need to follow the instructions and use your imagination within the Move's defined scope.

More about how to make a GM Move from page 76

In general, the major trouble for the characters will arise with on a 6-, while on a 7-9 whatever the complication will be, it should be something that the characters will be able to react against.

Also, on a 6-, **you should make your own GM Move**,

following the guidelines of the GM Iron Rules and Principles. This is explained with more details in the GM section.

With a success (7-9, or 10+) the character **obtains what he wants**, with limitations by the Move scope and sometimes hard choices to make, when complications arise.

THE GM MOVES

As in AW, the GM has his own set of Moves. These are presented in a dedicated chapter, in the Mastering section. Note that the GM Moves address events and generate events in fiction, and do not require rolling the dice.

The work of the GM is regulated not by fortune, but by the Iron Rules and Iron Principles, which dictate clearly what to do, what is allowed and what not. By following them, the work of the GM becomes easier and fair. These Iron Moves, or GM Moves, indicate how to make stuff happen and how to carry the story forward. Remember that whenever a character botch a roll (6-) and in some cases on a 7-9, you - the GM - have your chance to make one of your own GM Moves, following the aforementioned guidelines.

MOVES ADDRESS THE PLAYERS

In the next pages, the text of the Moves **uses "you" addressing the Player**, not the GM. These Moves are rolled by the characters and only the characters.

BASIC MOVES

Basic Moves are available to all characters, to perform any kind of action.

The last few of them are clearly related to social interactions: use them to inspire Players to deal with other characters or NPCs in some way other than drawing swords. The City of Judas lies in a dangerous region, and death is everyday's business - but nobody goes around the city openly killing other human beings without reason or without expecting serious consequences.

The list of the Basic Moves, presented in the next pages, is the following:

- * **Face Danger**
- * **Help Someone**
- * **Conflict**
- * **Perception**
- * **Manipulate**
- * **Lie And Deceive**

OTHER MOVES

The Basic Moves are the most common, but not the only ones available in the game. In the next chapters you will find also Peripheral Moves - used with Counters instead of Stats - and Combat Moves, used when resorting to weapons.

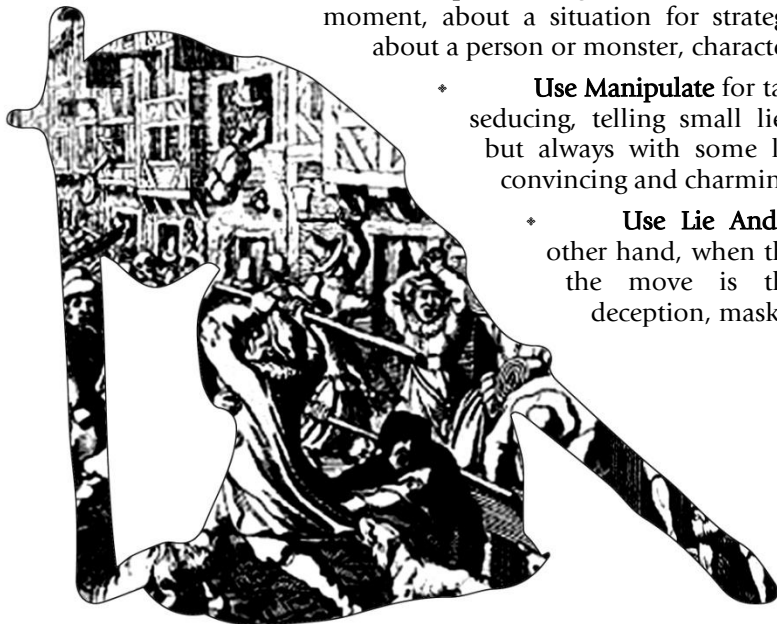
The GM should keep a list of Moves and the text of the Moves always in front of him and available to the Players. What's important is not to know by heart the text of each Move's options, but to remember what triggers each of Moves, to be able to remind a Player that the action his character performs triggers a given Move.

You can also generate Custom Moves, when needed, that address a specific case in fiction (i.e. a specific condition, location, event, danger, etc.).

BASIC MOVES GUIDELINES

As guidelines on when and how to use the Basic Moves:

- * **Use Face Danger** also when doing something generic and not covered by other moves. This moves covers generic reactions to danger, attempts to obtain a specific goal, resisting or opposing a threat, but also allows the Player to interact heavily with the fiction
- * **Use Help Someone or Conflict** when there is a clear intention to help or hinder one of the other characters; this often requires rolling another Move to see if the attempt to help or hinder is indeed successful
 - * **Use Perception** to gather information at any given moment, about a situation for strategy and tactics, or about a person or monster, character or NPC
 - * **Use Manipulate** for talking, interacting, seducing, telling small lies or negotiating, but always with some leverage, or some convincing and charming performance
 - * **Use Lie And Deceive**, on the other hand, when the clear trigger for the move is the use of lies, deception, masking or trickery



• FACE DANGER •

When you face a danger, or impose with force, or oppose or react, or when you declare your knowledge or influence in fiction, roll 2D6+Stat, if you do not have a more suitable Move.

On a 10+ you avoid danger, or obtain what you want, or resist or react as you desire, or know what you need, within reasonable limits, and take +1 to the AD.

If there is an NPC or a character as your opposition, they can decide to resist you, but at the price of suffering your harm or another major loss (their call).

On a 7-9 you still do it but your opposition chooses one, which cannot be in conflict with the main purpose of your Move:

- › *Give you -1 to the AD: you end up in a slightly worse position or lose a tempo*
- › *They keep you busy for a while or attract unwanted attention*
- › *They give in but threaten something else in return, or give in and then suddenly try to turn against you or call for help*
- › *They have a clear and safe escape route, a way to retreat with minor damage*
- › *You leave a clear trace that others might follow afterwards*

On a 6- you don't do it and the GM makes his move.

Note that the move triggers not only when you're reacting against a known and immediate danger, but as a generic move to cover any type of action related to any of the Stats. The danger, in this case, will manifest as a new threat through the GM's Move in case of failure.

Typically, the opposition is represented by the GM, for NPCs, monsters, and so on. The opposition is not necessarily an NPC or a monster; it could be an obstacle of any sort. In this case the outcome on a 7-9 should be tweaked accordingly in fiction; for example unwanted attention or a threat in return would come from another source. The opposition might be another Player when your actions are against - or as a reaction - to another Player.

Use Edge when in cold blood and dexterity, Steel when with force or brutality, Charm when it's about charisma and connections, Shadow when it's sneaky and deceptive, Brains when it's about intelligence or knowledge.

Example cases for using this Move with Edge: avoid an attack, escape from capture, climb or swim or run in difficult condition, perform other acrobatic maneuvers.

Example cases for Steel: parry with your weapon or block an attack with your shield, push someone away or break lose, destroy something robust, or win a force challenge, or perform other mighty feats. The Move contains several

outcomes that fall neatly into the domain of brutal actions, for example you roll with Steel to be aggressive, but without entering a battle yet. If you use the Move to be aggressive, you must be clearly in a position to make a threat and carry on with what you threatened and inflict harm; it cannot be just empty words - for that roll with Charm.

Example cases for Charm: respond to an inquiry from a guard, obtain a simple convenient bargain, obtain a positive response from an unknown NPC or group of NPCs, or determine their attitude when it is initially unknown; have enough connections to gather rumors or basic information, declare knowledge of a given social topic.

Example cases for Shadow: sneak up on someone, move away silently, steal something, try to pick a lock or pickpocket someone; anything that's about deception or masking or clearly cheating.

Example cases for Brains: to detect some important details, to know something about a given topic, to obtain the right to influence the fiction through your knowledge, to be aware of a certain danger, to read or decode languages, runes, signs and so on.

If a character is targeted by a spell (i.e. one similar to those available to the sorcerer), Face Danger with Brains is the classic choice to see if the character can resist or counter the spell (10+), if he suffers minor effects (7-9) or the full effects (6-).

Important: note that a positive roll with Charm or with Brains gives the Player the right to influence the fiction, for example making unknown NPCs to have a friendly attitude, or being able to declare his knowledge about a given topic. As the GM you can call for this Move **when you introduce a new element** in fiction, and you are uncertain how to side it (friendly or not), or when you want to give the Players the possibility to directly have an influence on the direction the fiction will take.

• HELP SOMEONE •

When you want to help another character, say what you're doing. Probably you'll need to roll a move; together with the move results, take also the below. If the GM says that your help is automatically successful, take the 10+.

On a 10+ you help them and increase their success of one step (i.e. their 7-9 becomes a 10+), or obtain what you want for them.

On a 7-9, you still help them and increase their success, but you're exposed to danger or retribution and the GM makes his move against you.

On a 6- you decide:

- › *You do not manage to help and the GM makes his move against you, or*
- › *You create even more trouble, decreasing their success of one step, but the GM makes his move against them rather than against you*

Of course, to help properly, a character must be in the position to do so, and have the adequate resources, skills or do something indeed helpful.

When you help another character, if you have XP to mark for it, mark it for the Move you used **and also for helping them**. You can gain double XP by doing something that helps someone. You don't get XP if you help someone by accident, without declaring it.

You can definitely help someone in combat: you make your move stating what you do to help them; your action can be offensive, but won't inflict any harm, just create a better opportunity for someone else.

On a 6- the failing character has still the option to turn the consequences against the other character; this will definitely cause some tension, and it's going to be fun.

• CONFLICT •

If you're opposing another character and there is a conflict of interests, if there is an active opposition of one against the other, each one of you rolls his appropriate Move. You might be rolling different moves, depending on the situation. The highest score prevails and all the choices within both of the Moves apply regularly if relevant. The winner also takes +1 to the AD (only once, ignore it if the other move also gives +1).

The winning side makes his choices first, within his Move's options; the losing side chooses afterwards, but cannot select an option that negates something chosen by the winner - this can reduce the number of options available to the loser, and the losing side can pick options only as long as they make sense.

In case of tie, it's a stall, but both sides pick their options anyway. There can be harm or action in fiction, but no winning side. Then either give up or escalate.

If you're opposing another character, and he is passive in his resistance, **roll Face Danger instead**, and he does not roll. In this case, if the conflict is physical, then you also have a chance to inflict harm.

When you enter in a conflict with another character, if you have XP to mark for it, mark it for the Move you used **and also for the conflict**. You can gain double XP by doing something in conflict with others.

When you obtain a tie or a stall, consider that anyway some time has passed and actions have been carried out. When stalling, both characters have the possibility to change their approach and change moves, back away - maybe with Face Danger - or raise the stakes and insist.

More on PvP on page 58

If you use Conflict to fight another character, roll the appropriate combat move(s). The winning side chooses first, then the losing side picks his options within his own Move, without contradicting the other. The losing side can still inflict his harm, though, if the move says so. Every round of combat is considered a Conflict, thus the winning side of each round takes +1 to the AD each time. More details about harm and armed conflicts between characters are presented in the Combat chapter.

● PERCEPTION ●

When you observe and ponder, when you need to decide your course in battle, when there's something to notice, roll 2D6+Brains to study the situation. When you speak or interact with someone, or you observe them for long enough, roll 2D6+Brains to study this person. Given more time, you can read also a gang or a crowd.

Against another character, roll and hold as usual: the other Player must answer truthfully, but at the end they take 1 XP. On a 6-, they also hold one against you and you must answer to them truthfully.

On a 10+ hold two and take +1 on the Advantage Die; or hold three.

On a 7-9 hold one.

On a 6- hold one but the GM makes his move.

Spend your holds when you want, to ask a question about the current situation or about them. They, or the GM, must answer truthfully. You can ask any question you want, as long as it makes sense. If it's answered it stands, otherwise change it. The sample questions below must always be answered.

For situations:

- › *What is the most solid way forward?*
- › *What is the best hideout or defense or escape route?*
- › *Where is my opposition most vulnerable?*
- › *Where is the most immediate threat, or a hidden one?*
- › *What can give me a significant advantage?*
- › *What or whom is my weakness?*
- › *What's important, but hidden or unnoticed?*

For persons:

- › *Are you telling the truth or are you hiding something?*
- › *What do you want to do about...? What is your feeling about...?*
- › *What are your intentions or your next move?*
- › *What do you expect from me or what do you offer?*
- › *If I do ... what will be your reaction?*

The target of this move is to obtain information otherwise unknown or uncertain, to be used to decide on a strategy or a course of action. In general, use it when you want to ask meaningful questions to the GM.

You can always ask questions during the game; when it's something related to basic perception, when it's something the character might very well know, and the GM will simply answer to you without the need for this move.

The move is usually very clear when it's about a situation or an enemy on the field of battle; moreover, answers about a situation can provide some insights also about a person, an NPC or a monster, especially in terms of what their actions or position give away. When asking questions about people, it gives mostly tactical and strategic insights, but not very personal information. To obtain very personal information, you will need to roll for more specific moves like Uncover Their Secrets (see the Scout playbook).

Some questions of course require a **spoken conversation** or require an **active interaction** with the situation, while others can give you clues even just through observation. As a general rule, the more you're exposed or active in your analysis, the more information you should receive.

Characters and NPCs **are bound to their answers**, unless something happens that can clearly make them feel or think differently than before. It's not fair to change stance once information are given as response to these questions. Both the GM and the Players should act according to the answers they provided.

When there is a fight, it is usually allowed to do a Perception roll to read the situation on the battlefield, before the exchange of blows begins. During the fight itself, it will be again possible to do a Perception roll, to ask more questions or see how the situation is evolving. Note that there is no need to lose a tempo; after a Perception roll the character **can also roll a Combat move** and attack. On a 6- in Perception, though, the character might be caught off-guard while trying to figure out the situation and therefore suffer harm or any other move from the GM.

• MANIPULATE •

When you have leverage to discuss or negotiate seduce or manipulate; when you try to lure someone into something again with some leverage, roll 2D6+Charm.

Against another character, roll and hold as usual: if they do what you want for your holds, they take 1 XP, otherwise you take +1 to the AD for every rejection.

On a 10+ hold two and take +1 on the Advantage Die; or hold three.

On a 7-9 hold one, but they might demand something as a requirement.

Spend your holds when needed, while you interact with them. Once your holds are spent, you lose your influence.

- › *They give you what you want (an object, an access, a free pass and so on), proportionate to the risk you're taking (select twice for significant requests)*
- › *They ask no proof, no reassurance, no token of good-will right now, about what you're saying or asking*
- › *They accept your story or your version of it, and basically side with you*
- › *They give you information or respond to your question, and see no harm in it*
- › *They change their attitude towards you in a more positive way, of one degree*
- › *They extend all the benefits of the move towards whoever you indicate*
- › *Nobody else will notice that you're manipulating them*

On a 6- hold none, and be prepared for the GM move.

This move applies when you talk and interact, seduce or tell small lies or conceal something minor, or negotiate. This covers negotiations, basically, and standard social interactions. The key of the move is to be able to offer something, **to have some leverage** (a positive relationship, some social pressure, some authority), to have something that can convince the other party (perhaps just your good looks, or a material offer), or have some minimal common ground.

Use Manipulate when the character is clearly active in the interaction and when the conversation can be interesting for the game. If the situation involves only a single question from a random guard, a simple Face Danger against Charm is faster and more appropriate.

When there is a manipulation in progress, the character(s) and the NPC(s) interact through the voices of the Player(s) and the GM; then the Player can spend his hold(s) to obtain something as listed. The first of the options is basically mandatory to gain exactly what the Player wants.

When the Player obtains something, it cannot be denied afterwards by the same NPCs, in the same conversation. Anything that is not obtained through holds, though, can backfire against the characters - in proportion to the risks and the situation. NPCs can become friendly but demand a proof or token to really believe the character; they can believe him but not side with him; they can believe him but give no information or nothing of what he requests, and so on. Usually, on a 7-9 you can expect one of those options that you didn't choose, to give you some trouble, but not all of them (i.e. they give you what you want but...).

Usually it is necessary to spend an additional hold to extend the benefits of the move - i.e. an access, some support, etc. - to all the other characters. Similarly, another hold must be spent to make sure nobody else notices what's going on.

As the GM, do not make the last two options (extend the benefit to others and keep the manipulation hidden) mandatory in each interaction: use these only in intense, critical situations, when it would be logical to argue against the character about his companions, or when someone else potentially adverse clearly hears the conversation or notices the interaction.

For basic manipulations, select the first option once to obtain what you want; if your request is **somehow very significant**, the GM can demand that you will pick this option twice. If you select it only once, you will satisfy your request in a somehow reduced or minor version.



• LIE AND DECEIVE •

When you clearly lie and they might suspect of you, when you have no leverage or fake it; when you misdirect, cheat or disguise or mask yourself, roll 2D+Shadow.

Against another character, roll and hold as usual. If they do what you want or believe you, they take 1 XP, otherwise you take +1 to the AD for every rejection.

On a 10+ hold two and take +1 on the Advantage Die; or hold three.

On a 7-9 hold one.

Spend your holds when needed. Once your holds are spent, you lose your influence on them.

- › *They will support you as you needed them to do*
- › *They will ignore something you tell them to ignore*
- › *They will give you access, or drop some information*
- › *They will treat someone (incl. you) as a friend or an enemy*
- › *They will proceed one step according to whatever is your plan*
- › *They will not see through your lies even at the end*

On a 6- hold none, and be prepared for the GM move.

This might look like Manipulate, but for Lie And Deceive you need no common ground with your opposition. **You are clearly bluffing**, that's the key; you can try this in almost any condition.

Lie And Deceive remains strictly in the realm of words: there is no need to bargain, to barter; it's all a lie. **As a lie, it is doomed to be discovered** sooner or later, unless you select the appropriate option.

To be able to deceive and lie properly, you do not need to be charming or liked by other people. The move is not about being liked, but about being able to direct your opponent as you wish; this allows you to play conversations where you say that you want one thing to obtain another, or you play the victim or the innocent in front of proof accusing you, and similar.

EXAMPLES OF BASIC MOVES

Some examples of Face Danger:

A character named Alair is held prisoner by a group of brigands and tries to free himself from the rope that ties him. David, the Player, rolls +Edge and on a 10+ Alair succeeds to get free and escape.

On a 7-9 Alair is free, but maybe it takes longer than expected and he runs into trouble. For example the rope kept him busy for a while; what happened in the meanwhile? Or a guard will see him getting away, or maybe someone will raise an alarm, or Alair's weapons and equipment have been moved away (threaten something else in return), or again someone will notice the rope and missing prisoner soon, starting a manhunt (leave a clear trace).

Tacitus is trying to force his way past a guard, with his imposing and threatening attitude. Tacitus says to the guard, while walking right to him: "Give way or I'll break your bones." James, the Player, rolls +Charm - because Tacitus is not yet in the position to carry forward with a real aggression. On a 10+ the guard either steps away, or somehow the GM must put the guard at disadvantage while trying to keep his position.

On a 7-9 the guard still must step away or concede an advantage to Tacitus if it comes to brawling, but the GM can also pick one from the list, for example struggle for a while, or attract attention, or give in but then call for help, or have Tacitus to leave a trail that other guards might follow later.

On a 6- the guard is free to keep Tacitus out of the door, and the GM makes his move, which might be of course in response to Tacitus's threat.

In the same situation, with a different approach, Saul, another character, grabs the guard's arm and twists it, whispering: "Give way or I'll break your arm." Hanna, the



Player, rolls +Steel because this would become a clear opportunity to inflict harm. Note that by going physical, the Player of course opens up to the possibility for a similar retaliation from the GM, perhaps with harm inflicted to the character in case of a bad roll.

On a 10+ the guard either gives way, or suffers harm - the GM can have Saul inflicting harm mechanically or simply declare the guard's arm is broken or give him a dislocated shoulder or similar.

On a 7-9 the guard again must step away or suffer the consequences of his resistance, but the GM can pick one from the Move's list for 7-9.

On a 6- the GM makes his move: Saul might still be able to push past the guard - or not - but the consequences will be anyway problematic.

The characters sneak inside a noble palace, and Alair leads the way. Behind a corner he notices a soldier; the soldier didn't see Alair yet. "I sneak behind him and knock him down with the hilt of my dagger," says David, the Player, rolling Face Danger +Shadow.

On a 10+ the soldier is taken down and the GM can mark the harm he suffered - if the soldier might come back into play later.

On a 7-9 the soldier goes down, but perhaps the noise alerts other guards: Alair and the other characters must act quickly, Alair also takes -1 to the AD. Or maybe the soldier lets out a scream and raises an alarm (unwanted attention) or there's no place or time to hide the body, and someone will probably find it soon (leave a trace).

A different example with Charm, where James, the Player, tries to influence the fiction: The characters have reached a small village and the Tacitus, the Priest, immediately walks to who looks like the mildly unfriendly elder of the village.

James claims that his character, Tacitus, has knowledge of this village and knows how to deal with the locals. So James rolls +Charm. On a 10+ indeed the locals will show a friendly attitude - within reasonable limits.

On a 7-9 they're still friendly but might keep the characters busy for longer than expected, or the activity of the characters might be noticed by enemy scouts (unwanted attention), or perhaps they are friendly except for a given NPC that turns against them (give in then try to turn against).

On a 6- the people of the village might be opposing Tacitus and the other characters; or if they're friendly still the GM gets to make his move which might trigger some unwelcome news.

Another example of influence over the fiction: the names of a couple of monks come up during an investigation, and Saul, a character, claims to know them.

Hanna, the Player, rolls +Brains; on a 10+ she knows them and can state who they are and something relevant about them - within reasonable limits.

On a 7-9, she still knows this but perhaps the monks know about the investigation, or Saul and the other characters have attracted the attention of someone else, or maybe the situation is worse than expected and one of the monks is known to travel with an armed escort, or the monks have already left the city (escape route).

On a 6- probably the characters will need to investigate some more about those monks: they do not know nearly enough. Otherwise, whatever Saul knows is pretty bad news, portrayed by the GM move against the characters.

Some examples of Help Someone:

Saul wants to push a heavy carriage that got stuck into the mud with his precious content, while the enemy's soldier are chasing after the characters. Hanna rolls Face Danger +Steel and gets a 7-9; Tacitus will manage to get the carriage out but it will take quite some time.

Alair, another character, steps in to help; the GM asks another Face Danger +Steel to David, the second Player. On a 10+ Alair manages to help, increasing the level of success of Saul to a 10+ as well, thus saving them time; they can free the carriage and get away in time.

On a 7-9 Saul's result is still increased up to 10+; the GM though can make a move against Alair, the second character, for example making him to get stuck in the mud instead.

On a 6- David, the second Player, needs to decide between two options offered by the GM. In one case Alair fails to help and Hanna keeps her 7-9, but Alair also suffers some consequences (for example the GM inflicts -1 to the AD).

Or instead, as a second option, Alair fails to help and actually gets in the way of Saul, Saul's result is downgraded to a 6-, a complete failure, and it's going to be Saul that will get stuck in mud, or suffer -1 to the AD or some other bad consequence.

Alair needs to sneak undetected out of a tavern; Tacitus, his comrade, wants to help him by attracting the attention of the other customers in the tavern, including a group of local soldiers. Tacitus makes a scene by pretending to recognize someone who stole from him and tries to get everybody's attention.

James, the Player, rolls Face Danger +Charm: on a 10+ he obtains what he wants, and the GM rules that Alair can even get away without the need for any additional roll (obtain what you want for them).

On a 7-9 Alair still manages to sneak away undetected: Tacitus got everybody's attention but perhaps not exactly as he hoped and he's now exposed to the GM move against him.

On a 6- James, the Player, is offered a choice by the GM: either Tacitus fails to get everybody's attention and decreases Alair's level of success by actually alerting the soldiers - but the GM's attention is now on Alair and he will make a move against him - or otherwise Tacitus fails to help and the GM makes a move against him, while David will have to make a roll for Alair to get away, without help.



And a few examples for Conflict:

Saul is trying to convince a merchant to assign to him the leadership of a caravan; Tacitus steps in and demands for himself the leadership role instead - it's a clear conflict. Since the two characters argue with the merchant rather than settling the matter between themselves, both Players, Hanna and James, roll Manipulate, with Charm.

Hanna obtains a higher result thus Saul gets the leadership. Since the episode doesn't carry additional weight in fiction other than for assigning the leadership, the GM decides that there is no need to pick options from the move.

Tacitus and Alair, two characters, are struggling claiming possession of a strong warhorse, obtained after killing an enemy knight. They don't draw weapons but still wrestle for it, and both Players, James and David, roll Face Danger with Steel.

James obtains a result in the range of 7-9, David has a 10+ and thus Alair wins the right to keep the horse.

The winning Player, David, has no options to choose from within the context of Face Danger, so the conflict ends here for him. James though has the right to pick an option from the list of the Face Danger move. He can decide for example to make David pay with a -1 to the AD, or to pick a safe escape route thus leaving the brawl unharmed and with his pride intact.

Saul and Alair are trying to manipulate a Magister of the Iron Fist by lying about a certain scouting expedition; both Players, Hanna and David, roll the Lie and Deceive Move with Shadow.

Hanna obtains a 10+ while David another 10+, but with a lower value; Hanna thus wins the conflict and the Magister believes Saul's words about the core of the argument. Hanna picks the first three options of the Lie and Deceive move, for example, to obtain the Magister's support (for instance some men will be assigned to Saul for additional scouting), to convince the Magister to ignore something (for example some other report contradicting the one of Saul) and finally to obtain access to some information (maybe the maps of the upcoming battle).

Alair has lost the argument, but David, the Player, can still pick options for Lie and Deceive, if they make sense. David can pick three (he also obtained a 10+) but nothing already taken or contradicting Hanna's choices. David asks that the Magister will treat the other character, Saul, as an enemy or at least with some suspicion from now on, and that Alair's lies will not be discovered. The third option (proceed according to your plan) makes no sense and it's discarded.

Some Examples of Perception:

Alair, David's character, was scouting for the group and ran into the brigands' camp. He managed to remain undetected with a success in Face Danger, and now studies the situation. David rolls Perception with Brains.

On a 10+ David can ask three questions: for example, taking from the Move's default list, what is a more solid plan, to attack now at night, or wait for the brigands to move camp and attack while on the move? What is the best escape route for the characters if they want to avoid the brigands? Where is the opponent most vulnerable? The GM must answer truthfully and the fiction will follow through: an attack towards the most vulnerable spot of the brigands' camp cannot meet a strong resistance right away, for example.

On a 7-9 David can ask one question.

On a 6- David can still ask a question, but the GM makes his move. Since Alair already managed to remain undetected in a previous Face Danger roll, it would be unfair to make him to be spotted now, so the GM will pick a different complication.

Tacitus stole Alair's warhorse and sold it to pay his debts; Alair confronts Tacitus, and David wants to read Tacitus' reaction to the questioning. David rolls Perception with Brains.

On a 10+ he can ask three questions; for example, first of all Alair wants to know if Tacitus is lying when claiming he had nothing to do with the warhorse. James, the Player, says that of course Tacitus is lying. David then asks what Tacitus' intentions are; James explains that Tacitus hoped to get away with it, but now he will try to repay his debt to Alair. The last question from David is: if Alair will attack Tacitus now, to give him a beating and punish him, will Tacitus fight back? James says yes, and Alair decides to settle for the promise of compensation in the future.

On a 7-9 David can ask one question.

On a 6- David can still ask one question but James can ask one in return; during the heated exchange Alair reveals something of himself to Tacitus. In this example, David decides to ask if Tacitus is lying, and once James says yes, that's all he knows, he has no more questions. James of course can say more, but he can lie as much as he wants now, about Tacitus' intentions. James then can ask a question to David in return. He asks what Alair's intentions are; David says that Alair is ready to draw his blade over the argument. So Tacitus calls upon Saul, another character, to mediate over the argument, and with Saul present, Alair decides not to resort to violence.

In all cases, at the end of the conversation, James gains 1 XP for answering truthfully the questions about Tacitus.

Some Examples of Manipulate:

Tacitus, James' character, needs to speak to a knight held prisoner by the Iron Fist, to gather information about a common enemy. The guards in front of the cell are giving him a hard time: they received clear orders and nobody is allowed to speak to the prisoner. Tacitus attempts to manipulate them using his authority, and the one of his Magister's, as leverage. James rolls Manipulate +Charm.

On a 10+ James can pick three: he obtains what he wants (to speak to the prisoner), the guards ask no reassurance about his authority, and since this is a delicate matter, James decides that nobody else will notice this as the third option.

On a 7-9 James could pick one only, for example to obtain to speak to the prisoner, or to keep the matter secret or to have no reassurance requested. If James decides that Tacitus will get to speak with the prisoner, the GM might use one of options that James couldn't select, to give him some trouble: for example ask for some reassurance (maybe a written order from the Magister) or that the guards will not keep this matter secret (maybe alerting involuntarily someone who has an opposing interest in this same matter).

On a 6- Tacitus will probably be denied his conversation with the prisoner and the GM will make a move. Besides just denying access, though, the GM might still allow Tacitus to speak with the prisoner, but use for example his GM move to announce really bad news during the interrogation, or have someone to enter the cell while Tacitus is having his conversation with the prisoner.

The characters get back to the camp of the crusaders and bring news of a group of rebels nearby; they present their report to the general and recommend an immediate attack. The general, interested more in taking no risks than in winning the war, is reluctant. Saul begins to argue with the general to force him into action, and Hanna rolls Manipulate +Charm. As leverage, Saul insists on the general's responsibility to take action, on the chance for an easy victory, on the threat that the rebels might pose in the future - all of this is true, thus the roll is for Manipulate. If all these were lies, and the characters were trying instead to lure the crusaders into an ambush, it would have been a Lie and Deceive roll.

On a 10+, Saul convinces the general with one of his holds, and for example Hanna can pick to improve the general's attitude towards Saul as more positive. Based on that, the general offers Saul the command of an entire unit. Hanna uses her last hold to also extend the benefit to Saul's companions.

On a 7-9, Saul can still manage to convince the general. The GM though, might still have the general request some proof the rebels presence, for

example, because Hanna couldn't choose that the counterpart will ask for no reassurance.

On a 6- the general will not move the army to attack the rebels and the GM will make his own move, or if the army will move, well, that will turn out to be real bad, rather than good for the characters' plans.

After stealing Alair's warhorse to pay his debts, Tacitus is again in trouble and goes to Saul to borrow some money, to pay another creditor. Tacitus begs Saul, reminding him of their common roots, of their past in the army of the crusaders, of their condition as brothers within the Iron Fist. All this carries a weight as valid leverage and James rolls Manipulate with Charm.

On a 10+ James gets three holds against Hanna, on a 7-9 he gets one.

For the first hold, James can select to get what he wants (the money). This does not guarantee that Saul must give the money to Tacitus. If Saul does, though, Hanna marks 1 XP, otherwise James gets a +1 to the AD instead.

If James has a second hold to spend, he can use it for example to keep this manipulation private; Saul will keep the secret about this with Alair, and Hanna gets another 1 XP, otherwise if Saul tells Alair, James gets +1 to the AD; and so on, until all holds are spent, or there is nothing relevant to discuss in the conversation.

Some Examples of Lie and Deceive:

Alair sneaks into the enemy camp to poison their food; he is found by the guards and they start questioning him. He pretends to be part of the enemy army - after all, he looks like any other mercenary: in this case the correct choice of a move is Face Danger +Shadow, rather than Lie and Deceive. The options of Lie and Deceive are far too complex for such a simple interaction.

In a similar situation, David, the Player, says that Alair walks into the enemy camp and sits at the fire with some guards, exchanging tales of past battles and sharing their wine. With lies and deception, he wants the guards to believe him to be one of them and walk him to where they store the food supplies. David rolls Lie and Deceive +Shadow.

On a 10+ David holds three options: he pick they treat you as a friend, give you access, and then that the guards will not see through the lies even at the end. Having the guards treating him as friend and not discovering his lies might prove useful in the future, if Alair ever has to go back to the enemy camp.

On a 7-9 David can still pick one option: he needs the access (or to proceed according to the plan), so the guards will let him walk into the camp unchallenged. A single option, though, is not a lot in this complex situation:

the guards might report about his presence afterwards, and start a manhunt, or he might get in trouble while still in the camp, after he poisoned the food.

On a 6- the guards will not believe Alair's words: they might try to arrest him, or catch him while he tries to poison the food and so on.

Tacitus is again running out of money, and his creditor is putting pressure on him. While Tacitus and his companions are on a mission to protect a merchant who was targeted by a couple of assassination attempts, Tacitus comes up with a convoluted plan to make it look like his creditor is involved in the assassination attempts.

First of all, James says that Tacitus lies to the merchant they're protecting, trying to convince him of his creditor's shady role in the assassination attempts. James rolls Lie and Deceive +Shadow and on a 10+ he picks: ignore the evidence that the creditor isn't involved, proceed according to your plan and that the merchant will not see through his lies even at the end.

Later on, while they are searching the house of one of the assassins, Tacitus steals a couple of letters of credit, with the sigil of who's really responsible for the assassination attempts. In secret, he tampers with the letters with a fake sigil of his creditor. When they capture the second assassin, Tacitus conveniently pretends to find these letters only now, which would frame his creditor.

Saul doesn't look convinced of the evidence, and Tacitus lies to him too: James rolls Lie and Deceive again, this time against another character and not an NPC. For every hold James gains by the roll, Tacitus can lie convincingly to Saul, for example telling his to support him with his lie, or ignore evidence of the creditor being innocent, or treat the creditor as an enemy, or proceed according to Tacitus' plan. Since Saul is under Hanna's responsibility - he's her character - it is up to Hanna to decide if Saul believes Tacitus' lies or not.

If Saul believes Tacitus, and this plot is discovered, Saul could get in trouble too; but if Saul believes Tacitus' lies, Hanna gains 1 XP for each one of James' holds used in the interaction. If Saul doesn't believe Tacitus, though, James gains +1 AD for every convincing lie that Saul won't believe.

PERIPHERAL MOVES

Counters were described on page 23

Peripheral moves make use of the Counters: Equipment and Spirit; and there are also two additional moves when completing a mission or an important step towards a personal goal. The Health counter is used in the Suffer Harm move described together with the Combat moves.

The list of the Peripheral Moves, presented in the next page, is as follows:

- ✦ **Gear And Ammo**
- ✦ **Test Your Spirit**
- ✦ **Milestone**
- ✦ **End Of A Mission**

PERIPHERAL MOVES GUIDELINES

As guidelines on when and how to use the moves:

- ✦ **Use the Gear And Ammo** move whenever the character needs to make use of gold or have some equipment ready, including ammunitions. The move grants holds to spend when needed
- ✦ **Use Test Your Spirit** when the character is facing a temptation, when doing something that puts his will to the test. This move is usually called by the GM
- ✦ **Use Milestone** as a competition tool between characters; who will claim first the milestone towards achieving a goal or completing a mission?
- ✦ **Use the End Of A Mission** move when the characters complete an Iron Fist mission, resolve a Front or anyway complete a relevant task assigned to them. Together with the milestone, this move grants points for Spirit and Equipment counters



• GEAR AND AMMO •

When you need to gain holds for money (buy something, obtain shelter or resupply, bribe someone, etc.), or for gear (food and water while traveling, ammo for ranged weapons, materials for spells, a useful piece of gear), roll 2D6+Equipment. Roll when it's relevant; you don't need to roll for food while in town for example. Regardless of the result, take -1 Equipment for the usage of your resources.

On a 10+ hold two and take +1 on the Advantage Die, or hold three.

On a 7-9 hold one.

On a 6- the GM can grant you something left, or direct you somewhere else or delay you to obtain it, but anyway makes a move.

Spend your holds one to one to:

- › *Have what you need while on the road: a piece of gear, ammo for the fight, material for the spell, food for the day*
- › *Have more than enough, so you can support your companions. You can spend one hold per person, but for things you'd reasonably have*
- › *Have enough coin for a small purchase or bribe*
- › *If you're bribing or buying, the counterpart remains in good terms with you*

Spend two holds at once to:

- › *Be in posses of something special that is not typical for your profile*
- › *Have enough coin for a very significant purchase or bribe*

When you enter a battle and want to use your ranged weapons, when you want to use material for a spell or anyway do something that requires gear, you must spend one hold. If you have no holds, roll now. Note that one hold corresponds to ammo for an entire fight, to the material for one spell or ritual, to enough money for the expense or bribery, and so on.

Every time you roll, you need to reduce the Equipment score by one.

When all the holds are used, it is time to roll again. The Player can roll immediately - taking stock of his resources - or wait for the moment when he will need to spend a hold. Roll when it's relevant means that you don't need to roll for example for food or water in the city, but only during a journey; you don't need to roll to have money for accommodation if you're in the Iron Fist headquarter and so on.

When you want to support other characters, you can do it basically **by giving them a hold**; you can do this only for things you reasonably would have. For example you cannot give spell materials to a Sorcerer unless there is a solid

reason for having that in your hands, if your playbook is something else entirely. In this case, spend two holds to give one.

When Equipment goes to -1, mark Unprepared or in Debt: try to decide together with the GM, but the GM has the last word over it. It is legitimate to claim that you're in debt for money you borrowed previously and you're spending only now.

When your Equipment has a negative score, you can still roll, of course: you are just not well prepared and more likely to fail. You can roll also at -3, and take no further -1 Equipment, though this will very likely expose you to GM's moves against you.

On a failed roll, the Player can roll again - after taking of course the -1 to Equipment, which will make the re-roll harder - but only by describing what he's doing to overcome the temporary lack of gear or equipment. Digging deeper into the saddle-bags is lame and allowed only every now and then, at the GM's whim. So unless the Player comes up with a proper explanation in fiction, he will have to deal with the lack of gear, money or ammunitions and such.

A small purchase or bribe for example are: a night of shelter in a decent common room, food for a day or two, a small bribe to a guard or a commoner, arrows or darts and knives, a basic set of gear and so on.

More significant ones (for two holds) are: a night in a very exclusive brothel or luxury accommodations, regular accommodations for a week, a new piece of gear (a better weapon, a better armor, a warhorse, etc.), elegant clothes for an event or a disguise, a significant bribery to gain attention from a noble or an officer.

Depending on the situation, a move with a positive result can allow the characters to resupply, for example in a village, in an Iron Fist stronghold, in a market and so on.

Also, when stealing or looting, usually characters have the right to obtain a +1 Equipment. As the GM, you can grant more for greater risks, or grant less (i.e. 2 Equipment to divide between 3 characters) for minor risks or complications.



• TEST YOUR SPIRIT •

When you do something out of the norm, when your background elements come into play, when you resist temptation or fear, roll 2D6+Spirit. This move can be called by the GM upon your character when appropriate. You can also tell the GM you're doing something that puts you to the test, but it's the GM to rule if to roll.

On a 10+ you resist, remain in control and do as you want, and take one:

- › +1 to the Advantage Die
- › +1 to Spirit itself

On a 7-9 the GM will pick one from the 6- list. If you don't do it, it requires a great deal of effort to control yourself, so take -1 Spirit.

On a 6- the GM can make a move, but also picks one of the below and your character must comply:

- › You give in to your urges or feelings, losing control
- › You show the worse of you (pride, anger, greed, fear, etc.)
- › You hear voices or have dreams that tell you to ...
- › If you are already Tainted, you show the marks of Taint on you: supernatural evil affects you in a visible way until you remove Tainted

Remember that you must comply with the GM's choice of the above on a 6-.

You can roll Test Your Spirit also when your Spirit score is -3; this just makes it much more likely that you will fail. In any case, do not take further -1 Spirit. If you obtain a 7-9 while you are at -3, you do not need to spend -1 Spirit to reject the GM's choice; you do it for free. When you are at -3 Spirit, though, you cannot perform any move that requires you to spend -1 Spirit.

You strengthen or weaken your Spirit as the consequence of some actions or Moves as described in your playbook. Note that Spirit is a mixture of **inner strength and reputation**. Doing certain Moves will require you to spend (take -1) Spirit; they do not make your character worse, but simply require a great effort, thus making it easier for him to break the next time.

Being weak in Spirit presents a clear opportunity for the GM to bring forward temptations or difficulties; fail the roll and your character will act poorly or even ruin his reputation.

On a 6-, the GM can request some action from the character or to keep a certain behavior; note that this is a temporary condition and the GM should not abuse it for long. The character might get in trouble, create interesting consequences, not pursue a suicidal behavior. The idea is to create compelling fiction and interesting events, not kill the character outright.

When Spirit goes to -1, mark Tainted or Infamous: **you, the player, decide**. If you choose Tainted, your character might keep his troubles to himself, if you choose Infamous your character's spirit is still strong, perhaps, but others (including other characters) would be looking at him badly, and clearly they would have a not very friendly attitude.

Being Tainted exposes you to the dark mark of the evil forces: at the same time, **it makes some of your Moves stronger**. You can keep Tainted even when you have the option to remove it, as long as you want, since it makes some of your Moves stronger.

● MILESTONE ●

When you achieve something important towards your mission target or something important for your character background, claim a Milestone; the GM will confirm if indeed this counts. At the end of the session/mission exchange each Milestone for:

- › One XP
- › A +1 consistent in fiction to Spirit or Equipment
- › A +1 (cumulative) for the related End Of A Mission move that you will roll

The same milestone can be claimed only by one character: the first one doing the decisive step should obtain the claim. If there is conflict about the claim, the GM will arbitrate the discussion to keep it short: all Players must agree on who takes the milestone. If a single Player is still in conflict, nobody gains it.

For personal Milestones, instead, the single Player claims it and the GM has to confirm or deny the milestone claim.

This move is of a **competitive nature**, and in purpose. As much as the characters work together, they might have conflicting goals or simply different priorities. Having a character or more, working towards their own goals, to achieve milestones - and personal milestones, so that nobody else can claim them - is fine. Moreover, it's interesting for the fiction and the social dynamics of the group.

Something important for the mission: i.e. a kill, a clear information, a clear progress.

Something important for the background: i.e. a revenge kill, retribution, a personal gain, important information about something you care about, a personal goal even in spite of the mission.

When a Player takes a +1 for the End Of A Mission, it is valid only when the accomplished Milestone is related to a mission or a task, and the +1 of course applies only to the related End Of A Mission roll.

When there is conflict regarding who can claim the Milestone, the simplest and more efficient way to rule is to favor the character **that completed the task**.

● END OF A MISSION ●

When you complete an Iron Fist mission, or complete a Front, or in general when you complete a task for someone, and report back to them, to obtain your compensation or reward, each of the characters (even if not present when reporting), does the following:

- › Assign a +1 or a -1 to one of the other characters, not yourself. This is your personal and confidential report to the Magister
- › If there are only 2 or 3 Players, also the GM assigns a +1 or a -1 to one of the Players
- › Take a +1 in case of success of the mission or the task, or a -1 in case of failure. In case of uncertain outcome, do not apply
- › Take a -1 if not present in person
- › Take any +1 from the Milestone goals you assigned to this move

All the participants (even if not present reporting) roll 2D6+modifier (as per the above).

On a 10+ your position is undisputable, take two of the below. You can also pick the same twice. On a 7-9 you take only one, you could have done better.

On a 6- you still take one but only if the mission was successful, and the Iron Fist Magister or the client (or a Front threat) clearly resents you for something.

- › Take 1 XP
- › Take +1 to Spirit
- › Take +1 Equipment (it might be just gold) as compensation
- › Your character learns about the reports given by others

The move depicts the reaction of the Iron Fist or the client: of course the success or failures of the mission or task are relevant, but here the personal feelings of the Magister or client come into play. An unlucky roll by a character that performed well during the mission, means they didn't make clear enough their key-role. Or that someone is working against them, behind their back.

You can give only one +1 or -1; either you punish someone with a negative report for the -1, or give a prize to someone you have a debt with, or to someone who performed very well, with the +1. As a Player you know the scores, **but your character does not**, unless you pick the option for that.

If your group always gives +1 because nobody wants to disappoint other players, you can work out a system (i.e. a folded paper note) where everybody delivers the report to the GM in secret.

EXAMPLES OF PERIPHERAL MOVES

Some examples of Gear and Ammo:

Alair is setting up an ambush against a couple of brigands, and he's planning to attack them from the top of the ruins of a tower, with his bow. Since Alair will need arrows for this attack, and David has no Gear And Ammo holds, David rolls the Gear and Ammo move with 2D6+Equipment.

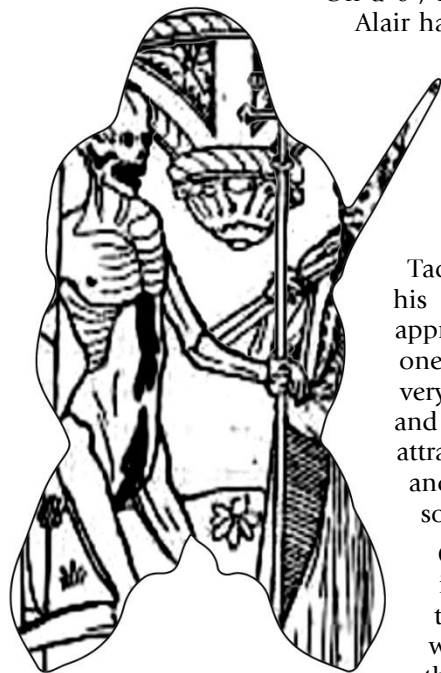
On a 10+ David holds three and immediately spends one to ensure Alair has enough arrows. He spends another one to give arrows also to Saul, who will participate in the attack, and can keep one hold for a future use. On a 7-9, David has only one hold, but can still spend it to have enough arrows.

On a 6-, for example, the GM can rule that Alair has just a couple of arrows so David can still roll a single, ranged attack, but nothing more.

In both cases, David will reduce the value of the Equipment counter of 1.

Tacitus as always is struggling to repay his debts and a couple of thugs approach him in the market, sent by one of his creditors. Tacitus is now very busy with an Iron Fist mission and doesn't want to waste time or attract any attention. James rolls Gear and Ammo +Equipment, to have some coins to bribe the thugs.

On a 10+ James hold three: he immediately spends one to bribe the thugs. This small sum of money won't stop the creditor, but the thugs will pretend that they didn't



manage to find him, this time. To make sure they will grant him another favor in the future - James knows he will need this - he spends an additional hold to make the bribe larger and keep in good terms with the two of them.

He has one hold left and will spend it in the very same night in a tavern, with some questionable companions - thus we understand how come Tacitus is always in debt.

After rolling the move, James will reduce the value of the Equipment counter of 1.

Some examples of Test Your Spirit:

Saul is facing the same assassin who killed his lover several years ago; Hanna believes that Saul should retreat because the assassin is now better armed and in company of a couple of additional soldiers. The GM, since this is a strong element of Saul's background, calls for a Test Your Spirit roll. Hanna rolls +Spirit.

On a 10+ Hanna remains in control; she can take +1 to the AD or to Spirit, and Saul retreats without getting into further trouble, delaying his revenge.

On a 7-9, the GM gets to pick one from the 6- list and rules that Saul of course gives away to his desire for revenge and will attack, in spite of all odds. If Hanna still wants to retreat, Saul will take -1 Spirit in the effort to restrain himself.

On a 6-, if the GM rules that Saul will attack, Hanna must comply and Saul must act accordingly; if things turn real bad, then of course he can retreat - the purpose of the move is getting into trouble, not to persist in some suicidal behavior.

Tacitus and his companions have reached a small village and took a table in the dirty tavern at the center of it. They're waiting for their target to appear, and drink a beer in the meanwhile; they had a long ride and Tacitus is clearly stressed, so the GM rules that James will have to roll for Test Your Spirit to resist the temptation of drinking way too much.

On a 10+ James has the right to say that Tacitus remains sober, and take +1 to the AD or Spirit.

On a 7-9 the GM proposes that (since Tacitus has already the Condition Infamous from Spirit dropping to -1 previously) not only the character will drink too much, but that in front of battle, he will retreat and refrain to take action until one of his friends will not be in serious danger. If James agrees, he doesn't take -1 Spirit, otherwise for Tacitus to jump into action when he's needed, he must take -1 Spirit.

On a 6-, James must just comply with the GM's request.

Alair is a brave fighter when it comes to regular adversaries, but has never faced a monster before. When the characters fall into the trap of a sand-worm, Alair manages to dig himself out, quickly, and wants now to help his companions. The GM, though, calls for a Test Your Spirit move, for Alair to manage to control his fear and remain close to the sand-worm hole, while every muscle in his body screams to him to run away. So David rolls +Spirit.

On a 10+ David can say that Alair remains, and tries to help his friends.

On a 7-9 the GM can propose that Alair will crawl away in fear, and come back only after a while. If David doesn't accept and wants Alair to stay and help the others, he must take -1 Spirit.

On a 6-, David must comply with the GM's request.

Some examples for the Milestone move:

Tacitus has finally collected enough money to pay his debt with an important merchant connected to the Church of Christ. By paying him back, he's finally free from all the blackmailing, death threats and troubles the merchant caused him. Reluctantly, the merchant accepts the payment and starts to plan how to keep Tacitus still in check.

Nevertheless, James feels that Tacitus has reached an important goal: Tacitus has no longer any significant debt - at least, in terms of money. He claims the Milestone and can ask the GM for a +1 XP or a +1 Spirit. Asking for Equipment or a +1 to End of a Mission seems inappropriate for the fiction.

Since this is a personal Milestone, it is up to the GM to indeed confirm this claim - which is indeed reasonable and should be accepted without problems.

Saul, Alair and Tacitus have fought to free a village from the terror of a dangerous monster living nearby; it took a while to track the beast down and find its weakness and finally setup a trap and kill it, but they completed the mission successfully.

Over the course of the mission, Saul has discovered the monster's weakness by speaking with an old and blind Wiseman that lived nearby, and claimed a Milestone for it. Since this is was related to the mission and clearly indicated a progress, all Players agreed that Saul should claim the Milestone, and the GM granted it.

During the final battle against the monster, exploiting the weakness that Saul discovered, the three characters managed to kill the monster. Saul and Alair inflicted most of the harm against the monster, but it was Tacitus who dealt the final blow. James, therefore, claims the Milestone for Tacitus.

If Hanna and David do not agree with this, the GM will arbitrate the situation and remind them that indeed Tacitus inflicted the final blow, thus the Milestone was indeed claimed appropriately. In case Hanna or David still oppose this (and they can) nobody will gain the Milestone and reasonably James will hold them accountable for this, in future similar cases.

Some Examples for the End of a Mission move:

After killing the monster and freeing the village, the three characters return to the Iron Fist headquarter to report to the Magister. It is time to roll for the End of a Mission move.

Each of the three Players - David, Hanna and James - assigns a +1 or -1 to the character of another Player. Since there are only three Players, also the GM casts his vote. Since the mission was a success, all of them also gain a +1.

When they reach the City of Judas to report, though, Alair does not show up to the meeting in time. He needed to attend some personal business, so David will roll with a -1 for Alair. Finally, Hanna will roll with an additional +1 because she called a Milestone for discovering the monster weakness, and used it to claim a +1 to the End of a Mission move.

Hanna rolls first and indeed Saul received enough +1s to boost the result to a 10+: Hanna can pick two of the options offered for the move.

Then James rolls and he obtains a 7-9: he can take only one from the list.

David rolls last, and obtains only a 6-. Since the mission was a success, he can still pick one from the list, but the Magister is displeased with something Alair did; perhaps one of the other characters complained about something or maybe the Magister resents Alair for not showing up to the meeting.

A Corruptor demon has been plaguing the city of Jerusalem and the GM created a Front for it; although this is not a mission assigned by the Iron Fist, the characters got to face the demon while performing their duties. When the Corruptor is finally killed, since it had its own Front, the Players will roll the End of a Mission.

With a 10+ or a 7-9, the material rewards such as +1 Equipment, can be described as looting for example.

If anyone rolls a 6-, instead of displeasure by the Iron Fist Magister, the GM can insert for example some resentment from other demons, or some tension within the city caused by the Corruptor, that is turned against the character, or similar.

SUMMARY THREE

Activate Moves:

- ✦ When a character does something interesting or dangerous or that can twist the plot, it's typically a Move
- ✦ If the Player says that the character does something that resembles a Move's trigger, then roll for the Move
- ✦ If the character wants to accomplish something within a Move's scope, then roll for the Move
- ✦ When rolling for a Move, the Player rolls 2D6+Stat or 2D6+Counter depending on the Move's instructions
- ✦ If the result is 6- then it's a clear failure; 7-9 then it's a success with a price or complication; 10+ then it's a clear success
- ✦ The Moves texts contain instructions on what to do on a success or in case of complications

The Basic Moves:

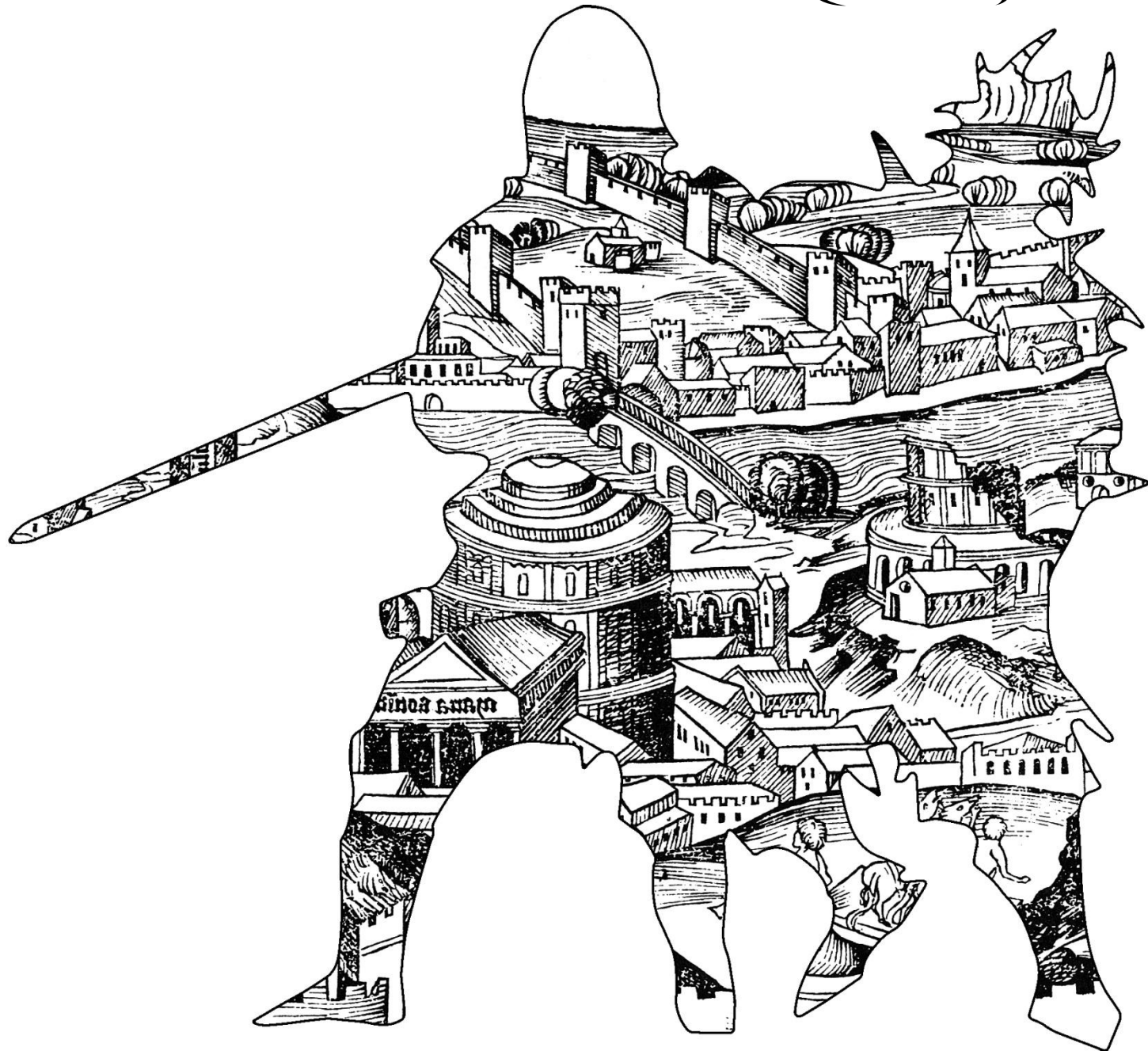
- ✦ Basic Moves are available to all characters, to perform any kind of action
- ✦ Use Face Danger when doing something generic and not covered by other moves; this move covers generic reactions to danger, attempts to obtain a specific goal, resisting or opposing a threat, but also allows the Player to interact heavily with the fiction
- ✦ Use Help Someone or Conflict when there is a clear intention to help/hinder one of the other characters; this often requires rolling another Move to see if the attempt to help or hinder is indeed successful
- ✦ Perception is appropriate to gather information at any given moment, about a situation for strategy and tactics, or about a person or monster, character or NPC

- ✦ Use Manipulate for talking, interacting, seducing, telling small lies or negotiating, but always with some leverage, or some convincing and charming performance
- ✦ Lie And Deceive, on the other hand, has as the clear key to trigger the move the use of lies, deception, masking or trickery

The Peripheral Moves:

- ✦ Use the Gear And Ammo move whenever the character needs to make use of gold or have some equipment ready, including ammunitions. The move grants holds to spend when needed
- ✦ Use Test Your Spirit when the character is facing a temptation, when doing something that puts his will to the test. This move is usually called by the GM
- ✦ Use Milestone as a competition tool between characters; who will claim first the milestone towards achieving a goal or completing a mission?
- ✦ Use the End Of A Mission move when the characters complete an Iron Fist mission, resolve a Front or anyway complete a relevant task assigned to them. Together with the milestone, this move grants points for Spirit and Equipment counters

Combat Procedures



COMBAT MECHANICS

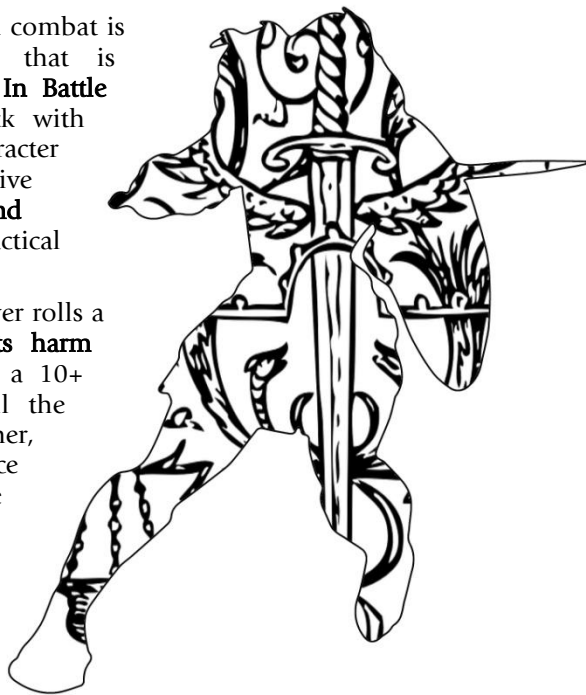
Combat is not a rare occurrence in the Iron World, although you should be warned that it might be pretty lethal, both for the NPCs and the characters - and mostly for the NPCs.

All the actions can be covered by the Combat Moves listed in the next pages, although characters can of course exploit also their own signature Moves, and often you might need to make use also of basic Moves, such as Face Danger to avoid some peril or Perception to read the situation on the battlefield.

The simplest interaction in combat is an exchange of blows that is presented by the **Engage In Battle move**, or a ranged attack with **Take Your Shot**. If the character is instead taking a defensive stance, then **Defend And Hold** is a better suited tactical choice.

In most cases, when a Player rolls a Combat move, he **inflicts harm** against the opponent on a 10+ and often on a 7-9. All the moves then have other, additional choices to spice up the fiction and improve the results of the fighting actions.

On a 7-9 and on a 6-, the GM always has a chance to make his



own move - it can be inflicting harm against the character, or something else.

Moves and harm on a 7-9, that often bring consequences for both parties, are considered to be happening **at the same time**; thus both opponents for example can inflict harm to each other, even if one of those is deadly, there is still the time for both harm to be calculated and moves rolled consequently.

And remember that combat is more than rolling just the same move over and over, inflicting harm until the fight reaches its end: additional moves are important because they provide variety and change the combat pace, rhythm and feeling at the table.

OTHER MOVES

So, since it's unlikely that everything will be resolved just by the standard Engage In Battle, what other moves come into play?

The Players can use other moves when they do something else rather than just swinging their weapons. They can use **Perception** to read the situation, or perhaps even to read a person, and decide their next action. This is a classic move that slows down the combat pace at the table, giving it a more tactical feeling.

Players can also be called to roll **Face Danger**, for example +Steel or +Edge, to resist against an attack or avoid an incoming danger from an opponent, or also to perform some difficult maneuver to gain some advantage in fiction. Players could also use Face Danger, for example +Shadow, if someone gives them an opening for backstabbing (in this case you can make all inflicted harm as armor piercing). Physical moves will give the fight a deeper sense of struggle.

Note that moves are not Rounds: a Player reading a situation can also roll his attack afterwards, if the fictional situation allows it. In other words, this is not a kind of fight where you need to track each single action and movement with counters, clocks and rulers. But if there is strong conflict or disagreement at the table, then yes, go roll by roll - each Player gets one or two before passing to the next.

GM'S MOVES

In combat, as the GM, you can alternate with the Players in declaring the actions of the enemies. What you do, though, is not again following a turn-based structure. Instead, you make your GM Moves - described in the mastering section of the manual - **when there is an opportunity**.

Opportunities are basically of the following kinds:

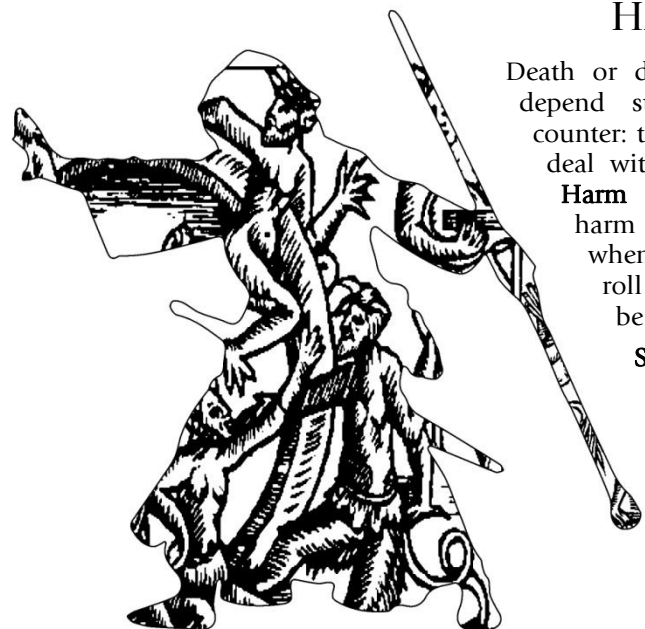
- ✦ **Mechanical:** when a Player rolls a 6- you usually hit them harder. When instead they roll a 7-9 you still get to make a move: you should initially stick to something softer (make a soft move instead of a hard one). Once in the middle of the combat, then use the 7-9 also for hard moves (i.e. inflict harm)
- ✦ **Fictional:** a Player ignoring a danger or deciding not to act against it; or a Player making a clearly poor decision and getting directly into trouble, in fiction

More about how to make a GM Move from page 76

All your Moves, following a mechanical trigger (a roll) or a fictional one (actions declared), will give you the opportunity to follow-up with the fiction: if you introduced a danger, use it to inflict the consequences (harm, or other).

Remember that your GM moves, in combat like in the rest of the game, should clearly be guided by fiction (what makes sense and what looks cool) and used to give pace to the fight.

Slow down for tactics (for example threaten them, show an incoming blow, let them read a situation with Perception, let them decide how to react), **or push for action** (inflict harm but not only: corner or separate them, take away their position, push them around), engage and retreat, use the Monsters' moves, and **do not hesitate** to inflict harm when appropriate and to demand Face Death, in front of powerful opponents.



HARM MOVES

Death or defeat in combat does not depend strictly from a numerical counter: there are dedicated Moves to deal with this and they are called **Harm Moves**. Whenever there is harm inflicted to a character, or when Players pick the choice to roll the harm move, there will be dedicated Moves to roll.

Suffer Harm is the move used when the characters are wounded, while **Inflict Harm** is the one to roll when damage is dealt against enemies, be them

human NPCs or monsters. These moves are rolled using two counters: the Health counter for the characters (and thus for Suffer Harm) and the **Harm Suffered (HS) counter** for NPCs and monsters (and therefore for Inflict Harm).

Harm Moves are presented from page 53

Inflict Harm and Suffer Harm moves are crucial to the combat procedure, because it's these moves (and not simply the total of harm suffered or inflicted) that can bring the fight to an end, in favor or against the characters. The counters (Health and Harm Suffered) though, are still important because they provide the modifier to the roll that makes it more or less probable to obtain a certain outcome, such as the death or defeat of an opponent.

To roll only once, you can try the Single harm roll on page 57

COMBAT MOVES

Combat Moves are divided essentially in two basic and two special moves. Still, remember that you will probably also need to make use of other basic moves for specific circumstances.

The list of the Combat Moves, which are presented in the next page, is as follows:

- ✦ **Engage In Battle**
- ✦ **Defend And Hold**
- ✦ **Take Your Shot**
- ✦ **Face Death**

COMBAT MOVES GUIDELINES

As guidelines on when and how to use the moves:

- ✦ **Engage In Battle** represents an exchange of blows or an attack. It is the basic move for melee, armed or unarmed
- ✦ **Take Your Shot** is the equivalent, but for ranged weapons. It can cover multiple shots at once, in fiction
- ✦ Use, on the other hand, the **Defend And Hold move** as a tactical tool, or when the purpose is to protect something or someone or gain time
- ✦ Finally, **Face Death** is the crucial move when meeting a monster or a much stronger opponent. It is important to remember to ask the Players to roll this whenever they face an uneven fight, regardless of other modifiers related to the group sizes or the monster's size

● ENGAGE IN BATTLE ●

When you fight in close quarters, roll 2D6+Steel. If you are on a warhorse, you additionally inflict +1 harm (unless you have a better move for it).

On a 10+ inflict your harm and take two.

On a 7-9 inflict your harm and take one. The GM makes a move, contemporary to yours, but he cannot contradict your choice.

- › *Superior tactics or position or weapon grant you an advantage, take +1 to the Advantage Die and describe*
- › *You outmaneuver them (push them back, or corner them, or charge past them) or your attack frightens or impresses or unsettles your opponent*
- › *Your attack is very powerful or fast and you can divide your harm against multiple opponents*
- › *Your attack is precise or hard and inflicts +1 harm ap*
- › *You want to try to end this fight: roll the Inflict Harm move*

On a 6- you miss and the GM makes his Move.

Use Engage In battle when the character, with a regular or improvised weapon, or unarmed, faces one or more opponents, which can harm him back or are anyway active to defend themselves. Sometimes a character can inflict harm with a different move, like Face Danger with Steel, but that's when the opponent cannot inflict harm back and cannot really defend himself.

Also, if an opponent is harmless, incapacitated or completely unaware of the attack, and it makes sense in fiction, the GM can simply rule that harm is inflicted without rolling or that the opponent is killed right away.

Any choice made by the character should have a clear consequence in fiction: gaining an advantage or outmaneuvering the opponent for example should clearly put the character **in a strong position**, perhaps out of range for a counterattack or setting up the premises for another move.

The effects of the move should be exploited immediately: they do not last very long, as they would not in a real combat. If other moves are called by the actions of the character, the fictional effects of previous moves will fade away.

Select to roll Inflict Harm to have a chance to end the fight.

● TAKE YOUR SHOT ●

When you throw a weapon or use a ranged weapon, you're taking a shot. Name your target(s) and roll 2D6+Edge. To Take Your Shot you need to use one Hold from your Gear and Ammo move. One hold is usually enough for the entire fight.

On a 10+ inflict your harm and take two.

On a 7-9 inflict your harm and take one. The GM makes a move, contemporary to yours, but he cannot contradict your choice.

- › *You keep them back or keep your distance for another shot*
- › *You are ready for melee, take +1 to the AD if you Engage In Battle next*
- › *You can take multiple shots and divide your harm against multiple opponents*
- › *You take cover and suffer -1 harm from possible counterattacks*
- › *Your shot is very precise and inflicts +1 harm ap*
- › *You want to try to end this fight: roll the Inflict Harm move*

On a 6- you miss and the GM makes his Move.

When you want to use this move, you need to have **at least one hold to spend** from the Gear And Ammo move.

If you don't want to take the risk to be caught without ammunitions at the start of a fight, roll the Gear And Ammo move **in advance**, while you are not in battle yet. But if you end up with a 6-, you suffer the GM's move, and of course you might have no arrows left.

If you have spent all your holds of Gear And Ammo during or before the fight, you can roll again, even in the middle of the fight itself. But if the fiction leads to the point when you have no arrows, then you cannot roll again, unless you or someone somehow have had a chance to resupply.

When the GM makes a move against a character that is using a ranged weapon, of course he can **choose to inflict harm in return**, but only if the opponents have also ranged weapons, or if they managed somehow to get close enough to engage the character in a close quarter fight. If the character is engaged in close quarter, reasonably he will not have the possibility to used ranged weapons again unless he somehow maneuvers to get himself into the right position again.

• DEFEND AND HOLD •

When you protect or defend something or someone in battle, or hold your position, roll 2D6+Steel. If you do it with a ranged weapon, spend one Hold from Gear and Ammo and roll 2D6+Edge.

On a 10+ take two from this list or from the 7-9 list:

- › *Inflict the weapon harm -2 (can become 0)*
- › *You want to try to end this fight: roll the Inflict Harm move*

On a 7-9 take one. The GM makes a move, contemporary to yours, but he cannot contradict your choice.

- › *Hold position for a while, they cannot go past, push you back, nor corner you*
- › *Maintain or make an escape route; make an ordinate retreat, or block someone*
- › *Open the enemy to a counterattack, take +1 to the AD or give it to an ally*
- › *Divert on you the enemy attacks or gain his attention for a while*
- › *Your defense is solid; take -1 harm or give it to an ally you're protecting*

On a 6- your position is weak, the GM makes his Move.

Use this move instead of Engage In Battle when the priority is holding the position or defending something or someone, or blocking someone from escaping.

As for any other combat move, but this is especially important here, when you make a move as the GM on a 7-9, you should **not take away the Player's legitimate victory**.

For example, if the Player is holding the position, you cannot take it away from him, or make an immediate threat against it, but you should rather build another threat for a different moment.

On a 6- of course the defense is weak, and therefore the position or the object of the protection will come under an immediate threat or harm.

• FACE DEATH •

When you face a large monster, a clearly much stronger opponent as indicated by the monster or NPC characteristics, or you are badly outnumbered, but still fight them weapon in hand against all odds, you must roll 2D6+Steel, first of all.

You might roll 2D6+Edge if you have an appropriate replacement move or you use ranged weapons and are subject to a counterattack. You might roll 2D6+Brains if the conflict is magical, and so on.

You must roll to Face Death as long as you remain engaged.

On a 10+ take one from this list or one from the 7-9 list:

- › *You create a good, safe opening for one of your allies, to attempt a valid attack without rolling Face Death themselves; and avoid for now harm directed to you*
- › *You have a chance to escape unharmed, but leaving everybody else behind*

On a 7-9 take one, but the GM will make a move contemporary to yours and harm will probably come your way, although the GM cannot contradict your choice.

- › *You hold the enemy back with your sacrifice, giving others time to escape*
- › *You can fight with a Combat Move of your choice, but the GM makes a move against you first, typically an opponent custom Move or inflicting some harm*

On a 6-, embrace the pain, and your move is interrupted.

If you're in such difficult situation, basically, **you risk suffering harm** as long you remain in battle, by this move, and then again when you roll your own combat move. This represents the difficulty of a fight against a much bigger or stronger opponent, such as a monster or a large group.

For example, against a big monster, the character cannot just Engage In Battle: he must roll and obtain either an opening for someone else, or an opening for himself, but the GM in this case makes a move - and he can inflict harm.

EXAMPLES OF COMBAT MOVES

Some examples for the Engage In Battle move:

Saul is confronting the bodyguard of a merchant; after a few heated words are exchanged, both draw their weapons and therefore Hanna rolls Engage In Battle.

On a 10+ Saul inflicts harm against the bodyguard and Hanna picks two options. For example she can take +1 AD and gain an advantage, and also choose to inflict +1 harm ap.

On a 7-9 Saul still inflicts harm and Hanna can still pick one; the GM though can also make one of his Moves without contradicting Hanna. If Hanna chooses for example to push the guard away and go after the merchant, then the GM perhaps can say that the guard inflicts harm against Saul before that, or make a softer move threatening for example that the bodyguard will raise an alarm.

On a 6- Saul inflicts no harm, and the GM can make his own move, either inflicting harm against Saul or cornering him for example, or giving a way for the merchant to escape.

Alair has chased a small demon through the dark streets of the city at night; the demon didn't manage to lose Alair and now turns to fight him. Since the demon is a small one, there is no need to roll Face Death and therefore David just says that Alair draws his sword and rolls for Engage In Battle.

On a 10+ Alair inflicts harm and David can pick two options; for example he can say the demon is now frightened and that he's cornered and cannot escape.

On a 7-9 Alair still inflicts harm and David can pick one option; then the GM will make his move without contracting David's choice. Alair was chasing the demon because the monster stole a precious stone, so David chooses to corner him and block any possible escape route. The GM therefore decides that the demon will inflict some harm back against Alair.

On a 6- Alair inflicts no damage and the GM can make his move; since this is a fight he can inflict harm against Alair, or decide for a soft move to allow the demon to attempt another escape, for example.

Some examples for the Take Your Shot move:

Tacitus is standing on the roof of a small house, in a village being raided by bandits. He's been separated from his companions, and two bandits are approaching the house to attack him. He prepares his bow and James rolls for Take Your Shot.

First of all he uses one hold of Gear And Ammo, since he has a couple left from a previous move. Then James rolls +Edge for the ranged combat move.

On a 10+ Tacitus inflicts harm and James takes two options; first he decides to keep the enemy at bay and gain time for another shot, and then to inflict +1 harm ap to the single bandit he targeted. James hopes to be able to take down at least one before they enter the house, so Tacitus will not be outnumbered.

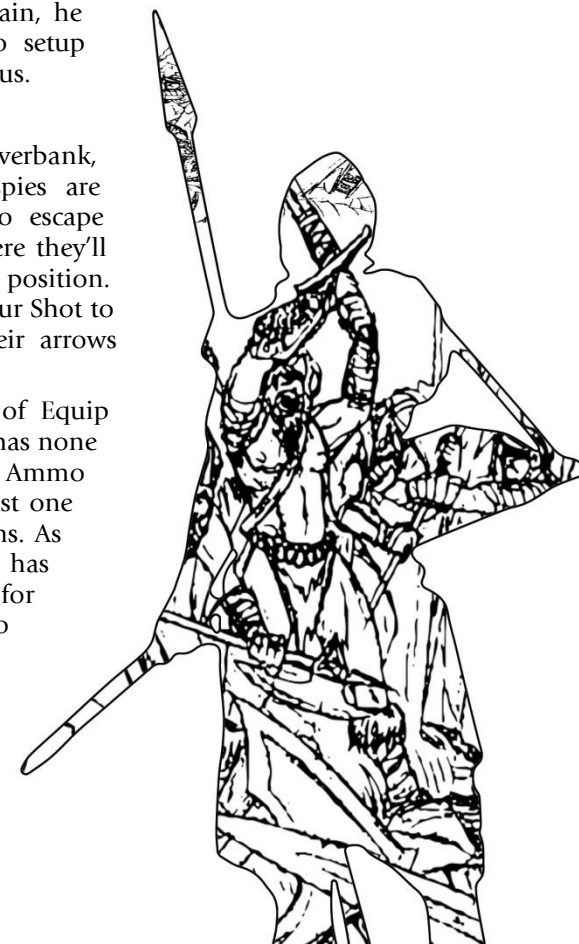
On a 7-9 Tacitus again inflicts harm and James can take one option. Since he hopes to be able to take down one enemy, he picks for example to keep them at distance. The GM, though, can make his move; for example he could make a soft move and announce that both bandits dive for cover and start aiming their own bows at him, or that one of them carries a torch and wants to try to set the house on fire. Since this is combat, there is no need to use first a soft move before inflicting harm, so if the GM wants he can also say that the bandits had already their bows ready, and that they shoot back at Tacitus, thus inflicting harm on the character as the GM move.

On a 6- Tacitus's arrow miss, and the GM gets to make a move; again, he can inflict harm, or work to setup something nastier against Tacitus.

Alair and Saul stand on a riverbank, while a couple of enemy spies are swimming across the river to escape and return to their army, where they'll report the characters' gang position. David and Hanna roll Take Your Shot to try to kill the spies with their arrows before they can flee.

Both need to use one hold of Equip And Ammo - but since David has none left, he should roll Gear And Ammo first to see if he can get at least one hold to spend for ammunitions. As an alternative, since Hanna has two hold, she can use one for Saul and give one to Alair, so that both characters will use Saul's arrows.

David rolls a 10+ for Alair, and chooses to keep them in range



for another shot, and to inflict +1 harm ap, plus the regular harm.

Hanna rolls a 7-9 and since the two spies are already slowed down by David's choice, she picks +1 harm ap as well - she can choose only one option plus inflicting regular harm.

The GM, though, gets to make a move against Saul, and since the spies are clearly not in position to attack back, he can choose for example for Saul to slip on the riverbank and fall in a difficult position for his next shot, thus giving a -1 to the Advantage Die.

Some examples for the Defend And Hold move:

Tacitus is escorting a noble, together with another couple of guards, and suddenly a couple of assassins attack them, striking in the direction of the noble. Since the noble possesses crucial information for the Iron Fist, Tacitus must defend him at all cost.

James therefore rolls for Defend And Hold instead of simply engaging the assassins in a regular fight: his target is to keep the noble safe while the other guards will also do their job.

On a 10+ Tacitus can pick two options, and for one of those he could inflict harm on one of the assassins, but with a -1. As other options, he could choose to hold the assassins and to make an escape route for the noble, or he could choose to get the enemy attack on him, diverting them from the noble, and take -1 harm or again give -1 harm to any wound suffered by the noble.

On a 7-9 Tacitus inflicts no harm, he has no such option available, but is still successful in his defense and James can pick one, for example to hold the assassins far from the noble, or to make them vulnerable for a counterattack from the guards.

On a 6- Tacitus position is weak; the GM gets to make a move and likely he can choose to have one assassin inflicting harm on Tacitus or perhaps on the noble himself.

Tacitus and Saul are holding a small bridge, to stop a group of bandits while Alair runs to get help. Instead of engaging the bandits, the two Players choose a more defendable stance and try to buy time rather than killing the bandits.

James rolls first for Defend And Hold: on a 10+ Tacitus has two options: James could for example pick to hold the position, or maybe to give +1 to the AD to Hanna for her counterattack, or again to inflict harm to one of the bandits, but with -1 harm.

Hanna can now roll for Defend And Hold, or she can roll to try to kill one of the bandits with a regular Engage in Battle. If James instead of obtaining a 10+ got a 6-, the GM could for example use his move to make the bandits

begin to push past the characters. At that point, since holding the bandits was still a critical tactical necessity, Hanna should have probably rolled for Defend And Hold.

In general, a single character on a 10+ or a 7-9 can successfully defend a person or a position, and give others in his group the possibility to counterattack. If the first character fails, others can keep trying, but the situation will keep getting worse and worse after each failed roll.

Some examples for the Face Death move:

Tacitus and Alair are facing a huge demon, big and fierce enough to be able to crash most of the regular soldiers without effort. This is a monster that demands the Face Death move.

James rolls first, for Tacitus, and since Tacitus is using his bow, he rolls +Edge. James rolls a 10+, and since the characters really need to stop this demon right now, James of course will not pick the option to escape unarmed.

So James needs to decide if Tacitus will keep out of danger and create an opening for Alair (that will attack without the need for Face Death), or if Tacitus will attempt Take Your Shot but also become target of a GM's Move.

James decides to give way to Alair, so for now Tacitus is safe - he will not suffer harm or be attacked right away - and David can roll for Alair, moving directly to Engage In Battle without Face Death.

After a few exchanges, the demon was hurt but is still far from being defeated. The characters again Face Death and this time Alair goes first, attacking the demon to try to distract it and give Tacitus the possibility to hit it with arrows.

David rolls Face Death +Steel; he obtains a 6- and thus the GM makes a move immediately, and Alair cannot continue his attack. The demon easily blocks Alair's sword and strikes back inflicting harm against the character.

David will now roll the Suffer Harm move for Alair (see the appropriate chapter) and cannot roll for now the Engage In Battle as he wanted.

It's time for Tacitus to act: James still goes for more arrows and rolls Face Death +Edge. He obtains a 7-9 and therefore James chooses to suffer the GM's move but obtain the right to roll for Take Your Shot.

First, though, the GM makes his move and the demon gets very close to Tacitus - he will not have a chance for more shots after this one, and will be soon forced into melee. So to continue: James proceeds to roll Take Your Shot, and with another 7-9 inflicts some more harm against the monster,

while the GM also has a chance to make a move, inflicting harm this time, as the demon got clearly close enough now.

The demon is badly hurt but still standing; again David goes first and says Alair strikes the demon from behind, while the monster is fighting against Tacitus. This time the Face Death roll is good, a 10+ and David decides to take some risk and go for Engage In Battle himself, rather than making an opening for his companion.

So he has now the right to roll his combat move and try to inflict harm on the monster, but first the GM gets to make his own move, for example making the demon to turn and grab Alair's shield, throwing it away, leaving the character less protected.

David rolls well, both in Engage In Battle and the subsequent Inflict Harm move against the demon, and the monster is almost defeated.

When it's time for Tacitus to act again, James says that the character struggles to put some distance between him and the monster, and uses again the bow. James rolls well in Face Death +Edge and obtains a 10+, and decides to give an opening to Alair.

In the following turn, David can roll for Engage In Battle without the need for Face Death, and luckily for the players, the demon is finally defeated, after his final bloody but vain struggle against Alair.

INFLICTING HARM

When there is harm suffered or inflicted, there are appropriate moves to roll. These Moves apply also for harm suffered outside of combat - but of course their main usage is in combat.

In other words, Players will inflict or suffer harm in a traditional fashion - with harm inflicted by weapons and reduced by armor, for a total to mark in a way that vaguely resembles hit points. **The combat outcome** though, either for the single exchange of blows or for the end of the fight itself, is determined by the Harm Moves.

There is a Move for harm suffered by characters, and a different one for harm suffered by adversaries. When a character hits an adversary, **use the Inflict Harm** move, and consequences will apply against the adversary. When a character receives a hit, **use the Suffer Harm** move, and consequences will apply to the character.

ESTABLISHED HARM

Harm is always intended **as Established Harm**, which is equal to the weapon harm or the circumstances harm plus possible bonuses, minus the armor and shield value, or other relevant protection, if they apply. When multiple harms are inflicted to the same target, subtract the armor **from each of them separately**.

The Established harm is what characters and NPCs suffer and mark on their sheets. In some cases harm, or a part of it, can be **armor piercing (ap)**; this type of harm ignores the armor value.

Zero or negative Established Harm **counts as no harm**, so characters will not roll the Suffer Harm; on the other hand the Players might still have the option to roll Inflict Harm if they pick the option to do so.

Various harm sources are described on page 60

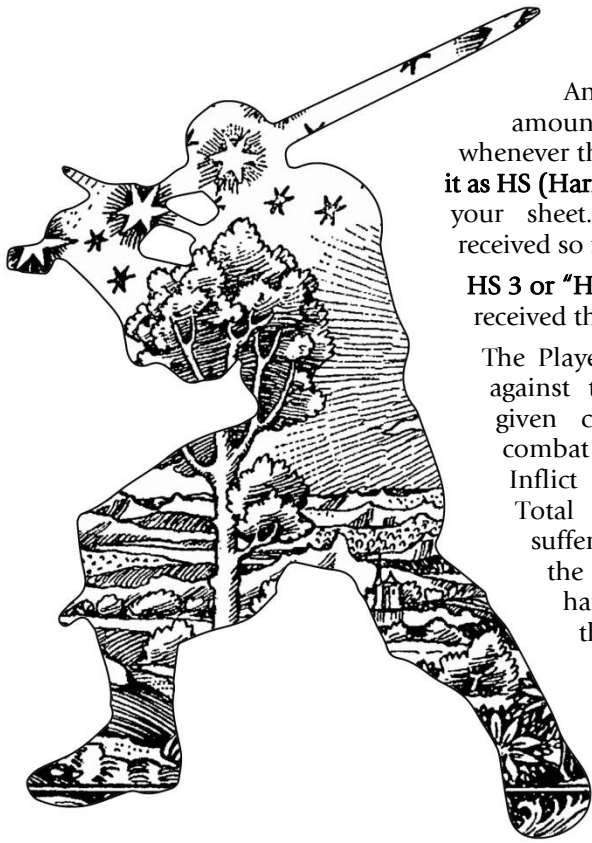
Weapons' harm and armors are presented on page 62

HARM FOR NPCs AND MONSTERS

When the character obtains a 10+ or a 7-9 in a combat move, the Player has the possibility to choose to roll the Inflict Harm move, to try to end the fight.

Note that the move can be chosen **also if the Established Harm is 0**: a 10+ or 7-9 on a combat move means some kind of blow landed on the target or some critical advantage was gained, thus there's a chance to end the fight, regardless of the numeric value of harm. **The Inflict Harm move is what can end a fight** in favor of the character - not the raw number of hits (harm) inflicted.

Also remember that the GM too can inflict harm to an NPC or a monster, with one of his moves, or other consequences derived from fiction. In such cases, the GM can ask the Player to roll Inflict Harm against an opponent even if there was no combat move rolled previously.



HARM SUFFERED (HS)

An opponent has no fixed amount of hit points or such: whenever the opponent suffers harm, **mark it as HS (Harm Suffered)** next to his name on your sheet. HS zero means no harm received so far.

HS 3 or "HS xxx" means that the opponent received three harm so far, in total.

The Player rolls the Inflict Harm move against the opponent every time the given choice is picked among the combat moves options: when rolling Inflict Harm the Player will add the Total HS (the total of all harm suffered so far by the opponent) to the roll. A higher number of HS - harm suffered - of course makes the opponent more likely to be defeated.

• INFLICT HARM •

When you select the option to roll the move, or when circumstances inflict harm against them, add the Established Harm to the value of Harm Suffered (HS) of the NPC, then roll 2D6+Total HS for minions, 1D6+Total HS (yes, one die only) for relevant NPCs and monsters and demons.

On a 10+ the Player picks one for the opponent:

- › *The opponent is killed or deadly wounded or badly maimed and incapacitated*
- › *The opponent is out of action or knocked out, or anyway defeated*
- › *Take instead two of the below*

On a 7-9 the opponent picks one for themselves, but then the GM makes a move:

- › *The wound is serious, the opponent takes +1 Harm ap*
- › *The character gains an advantage and +1 to the AD*
- › *The opponent is panicked, or disarmed or deprived of something*

On a 6- it was just painful: the fight goes on, and the GM makes a move first.

A 10+ can kill or anyway defeat an opponent with a single, well placed strike. This is perfectly appropriate for minions: for minions the Players will rolls 2D6 and likely defeat the adversary fast enough.

Stronger opponents are those crucial to the story, where the fight is likely to last a bit longer: these are relevant NPCs, strong adversaries, and all monsters and all demons. For those, **the Inflict Harm move is rolled with 1D6**. A 10+ is less likely with the first few rolls.

A Player can take 2 of the 7-9 list even if he rolled a 10+ and could instead just kill or defeat his opponent. Taking two from the 7-9 list allows the Player to gain for example +1 AD and delay the end of the fight. It might be cruel, but useful.

The fight ends when the Player rolls a 10+ and chooses the relevant option from the list. If you want, **as the GM, you can end it sooner**, for example if the NPC is disarmed and has no intention to fight to death.

If there are multiple opponents facing the character, of course then a 10+ against one of them indicates that this specific opponent is out of the fight, but others might continue the combat against the character.

EXAMPLES OF INFLICT HARM

A couple of examples of the Inflict Harm move:

While fighting the merchant's bodyguard, Saul inflicts harm against the opponent. Hanna rolls the Inflict Harm with 2D6 hoping to get the guard out of the way.

First of all the Established Harm is calculated as Saul's weapon minus the guard's armor, and added as Harm Suffered (HS) for the guard. Hanna rolls a 7-9 and the GM decides to disarm the guard and then makes a move in retaliation. Hanna did not end the fight right away, although Saul is now clearly in a position of advantage.

When the guard will suffer harm again, it will be added to HS and make it more and more likely for Hanna to roll 10+ and end the fight.

Tacitus has just shot an arrow against a giant, and James chose to roll the Inflict Harm move. The bow's harm minus the giant's armor, plus 1 harm ap chosen by James as option in Take Your Shot, constitutes the Established Harm.

This is marked as Harm Suffered for the giant and James rolls Inflict Harm +HS with 1D6 only - this is a monster, not a minion NPC.

On a 10+, James is free to declare that the giant is killed or anyway wounded so seriously that it will not fight anymore. Since the characters have an interest in capturing the monster, the latter is the option that James chooses.

On a 7-9, the GM could pick for example a piercing arrow inflicting +1 harm ap, or give +1 to James' Advantage Die, or disarm the giant for the moment - but for sure not to scare the monster. The GM gets to make his move, now.

Note that also on a 6-, the worse result, the Harm Suffered is marked and thus the fight is more likely to end in the next few rounds, as soon as HS becomes high enough that the opponent will be defeated with a 10+ on the Inflict Harm move.

Still, on a 6- the GM gets to make a move, for example showing an immediate danger or inflicting harm against the character.

CHARACTERS' HARM

The characters' suffered harm is presented **as the Health status Counter**, with a value between -3 to +3. Positive values indicate little and light harm suffered, negative values represent a dangerous condition.

When Health reaches -1, mark the Unstable box for this condition; when unstable, a character can suffer additional harm from time to time, when the GM makes his moves, to represent the unstable wounds getting worse.

When the game begins, the characters' Health counter has **no marks at all**: the first Established Harm suffered by a character brings the counter to the value of +3.

In other words, it's the same as if the character had an invisible value of +4 marked at the beginning.

Whenever a character suffers harm (marking a new value on the Health counter), the Player rolls the Suffer Harm move for his own character, using the positive or negative modifier of the Health counter.

HOW DOES A CHARACTER SUFFER HARM

A character can suffer harm as a consequence of a GM Move; this can happen either because of a mechanical trigger or a fictional one.

A mechanical trigger is when the GM makes a Move to inflict harm on the character, because the Player rolled a 6- in his own move, or perhaps a 7-9 in combat.

A fictional trigger is when the character clearly puts himself in the path of an incoming harm, or there is no valid reaction to a threat, and so on, and the GM inflicts harm as his Move, accordingly.



• SUFFER HARM •

When you suffer harm, subtract the Established Harm from the Health counter and roll 2D6+Health.

On a 10+ pick one for your character:

- › *It's not so bad: if you can take -1 AD, do it and take -1 harm*
- › *Ignore the pain and fight back; take +1 AD and keep whatever harm was suffered*

On a 7-9 pick one for your character:

- › *It really hurts: keep whatever harm was suffered marked on Health*
- › *The hit takes something away from you: make an offer to the GM, without negotiating. If he accepts you take 1 harm less (even going to zero). If the GM refuses, you keep whatever harm was inflicted, and take -1 AD*

On a 6- mark the harm on Health and take -1 to the AD, plus the GM (or your adversary) will pick one - he can go in order as below, or not:

- › *It's serious: you might lose something, be disarmed, pushed back, be knocked helpless to the ground*
- › *It's frightening: you might be trapped, panicked, put out of action for some moments, and suffer worse*
- › *It's bleeding badly or bone breaking or anyway critical: mark Unstable*
- › *It's deadly but only if you're at -3 Health: the wound is mortal unless you can take a debility instead*

Remember that the first harm brings you to the value of +3 Health: it's like if you started with Health at +4 when you're completely healed.

Usually, especially for less meaningful fights, on a 6- the GM is encouraged - but not forced - to go over an option or two of the 6- list before inflicting a deadly wound. Also, for the GM or another player to be allowed to inflict a deadly wound, the character **must be at Health -3 already**.

When the wound is deadly, it means death; the character might not die right away but will die **soon and inevitably**. This unless the character can take a debility instead of suffering the deadly wound, or someone can heal them right away.

See how to healing from harm works from page 59

If you suffer harm from another character, they do not roll Inflict Harm but instead you need to roll Suffer Harm. On a 6-, they are the ones deciding your fate among the given options.

DEBILITIES

At any moment, when marking harm on Health, or after rolling the Suffer Harm move, the Player can take a debility **instead of the consequences of harm** of that round. When the Player takes a debility for the character, he marks it, and takes the associated penalty to a Stat.

The same debility of course **can be taken only once**. The debilities are semi-permanent: there are ways to remove them and regain the full score for the given Stat, but not with regular healing.

If a debility is healed, remove the mark on the checkbox and the debility can be **taken again in the future**.

If the Player takes the debility **when he should mark harm on Health**, he does not mark the Established Harm, and he does not roll the Suffer Harm move.

If the Player takes the debility **after rolling the Suffer Harm move**, he keeps the harm marked, but ignores the Suffer Harm consequences.

There is an advantage in taking a debility when suffering harm: harm is not marked on Health and therefore there is no Suffer Harm move to roll; this is usually the case when the Health score is low already and the Player expects a bad roll.

If the Player tries his luck, though, and rolls Suffer Harm - for example because the Health score was high but it was just a bad roll - then in that case the harm remains marked. Taking the debility basically negates the result of the Suffer Harm roll.

EXAMPLES OF SUFFER HARM

A few examples of the Suffer Harm move:

A strong demon inflicts harm against Alair, as the consequence of a 6- on a Face Death move: the Established Harm is calculated as the demon's harm minus Alair's armor, and marked for example as a damage of 2 points on Health.

Since this is the first wound suffered by Alair, the counter goes down to +2: David rolls Suffer Harm +2 and obtains for example a 10+. David can choose to take -1 to the AD and take -1 harm (so 1 instead of 2, thus going to Health +3 and not +2) or leave the harm as 2 but take +1 to the AD instead.

For this example, let's assume David's Advantage Die is set to 1: he cannot take -1 to it, so he must leave the harm marked (Health counter remains at +2), but he takes +1 to the Advantage Die.

The same demon, having approached Tacitus with a previous GM move, hits the character with its monstrous fangs and claws while Tacitus is shooting his arrows at it. James calculates the Established Harm as the demon's harm minus Tacitus' armor, for example for 3 harm.

Tacitus had Health +3 (he suffered previously a minor wound) and therefore now the Health counter goes down to 0. James rolls Suffer Harm +0 and obtains a 7-9. James can try to make an offer to the GM, for example he knows the GM would reasonably accept if Tacitus would now loose his bow.

But since the bow is precious for Tacitus to continue his fight against the demon, and a lower offer would probably be rejected, James sticks to the second option: he leaves the harm marked, keeping the Health counter down at 0, and that's it.

James knows that the next harm will bring Tacitus' Health to at least a value of -1, thus marking Unstable, and the situation starts to look dangerous for him.

Alair is still fighting the same demon: he rolled Engage In Battle thanks to Tacitus maneuvers that kept the monster busy, and although he lost his shield, he stroke well with a 7-9. The GM uses his move, probably the last for this monster because it was previously harmed very badly, to attempt a final deadly attack against Alair. The demon inflicts harm for the GM Move and harm is calculated as usual, and this time Alair is without shield, and the result is 3 points to subtract from Health.

Alair had Health +2, now it goes down to Health -1; the GM tells David to mark also the Unstable condition and to proceed to roll the Suffer Harm move, with -1.

A very lucky roll could still give a 10+, and by taking -1 to the AD David could avoid this 3 harm and reduce it to 2 harm, but a 7-9 or a 6- are more likely. Unfortunately for Alair, David rolls a 6-. This gives David a -1 to the AD and the GM can pick one from the appropriate list (except for a deadly wound which requires Health to be at -3 already).

Since Alair is already Unstable, the GM goes for simply knocking the character to the ground, while the huge demon looms over him.

The situation looks critical, but since the Engage In Battle result was a 7-9, Alair can still inflict his harm against the demon, and since this harm comes as the consequence of a 7-9, the results apply at the same time as the ones decided by the GM. Luckily for Alair, the damage resulting by the last rolls against the demon is deadly and the terrible monster is dead, thus saving him from having to face it while knocked down on the ground.

ALTERNATIVE HARM ROLL

In a combat, Players need often to roll for a move like Engage In Combat, then again for Inflict Harm or Suffer Harm. Sometimes there might have been an additional roll before that, for example for Face Danger or Face Death.

Also, combat moves can result in both the character and the opponent suffering harm, on a 7-9, thus the Player might end up rolling both Inflict Harm and Suffer Harm. Moreover, the rolls might give some inconsistent results: for example a good Engage In Combat roll followed by a lame Inflict Harm or the other way around.

Rolling for the Move and then for the Inflict and Suffer Harm moves is like rolling to hit, and then rolling for damage; lots of Players love it and thus this is the default rule. It introduces an important element of surprise with the dice roll after each roll to hit; you cannot predict exactly how the fight will go until also the Harm moves are resolved.

On the other hand, to avoid rolling dice too much - if you're not a fan of it - and to keep the combat pace as very fast, you can use **the Single Roll rule**: carry the last Move roll result to the Harm roll, and apply the related modifier.

SINGLE ROLL RULE

If you apply the Single Roll Rule, take the value of the Combat move - or whatever move that caused harm, like a Face Danger or Death or Take Your Shot or whatever - towards the following Harm move(s).

If the Inflict Harm **requires to roll 1D6 only**, you carry forward your lowest die. Note that the +Stat and +Health or +HS modifiers are independent: the +Steel for example applies to the Engage In Battle, while the Health or HS modifiers apply to the Suffer or Inflict Harm move.

If you use this rule, make it clear with the Players from the start: this will speed up combat, and potentially make its outcome more extreme, for good and bad results: a good roll in a combat move will result more likely in a potentially deadly harm; a lame roll will also bring a low result to the Suffer Harm move. You're encouraged to try it out and stick to it, if it gives to the game a pace that you enjoy.

An example: if the Player rolled a 3 and a 6 on Engage in Combat with +2 for Steel, he will carry forward a 9 as the 2D6 result for Inflict Harm and Suffer Harm moves if he'd need to roll for any of them. The +2 for Steel of course does not carry forward; the Inflict Harm move will be +HS and the Suffer Harm will be +Health.

CHARACTER VS CHARACTER

It is possible that during the game two or more characters will fight each other, with weapons in hand – although hopefully characters can settle their differences also in other ways. When you face a fight between characters, use the rules for the Conflict Move and then each side picks options from their own moves, accordingly to the Conflict result.

See the Conflict move back on page 32

Note that the results of the Combat Moves rolled with the Conflict are still not conclusive with regard to damage or the end of the fight, but only the Suffer Harm moves are. A character could still be winning the conflict - and picking options at his advantage - but still then be taken out by an unlucky roll of Suffer Harm.

Remember that, according to Conflict:

- Both the fighters will roll their moves according to what they decided to do in fiction
- The winning side is the one that obtains the highest result, and gains +1 to the Advantage Die
- **The winner picks options first**, then the loser also pick his options but cannot contradict the ones of the winner
- In case of a stall (same result), options are considered to be applied at the same time and there are no restrictions
- **Nobody is rolling Inflict Harm**, thus there is no need to pick that option. Instead, if a character suffered harm (Established Harm) they will roll Suffer Harm **automatically**
- The opponent (the other Player) chooses options in case of a roll of 6-
- There is no explicit option to take out the adversary, except from the options on a 6-; rest assured than when harm starts to bring Health down enough, Players will seriously consider withdrawing from the fight

EXAMPLE OF CHARACTER VS CHARACTER

A couple of examples of the Character vs. Character conflict:

Saul and Alair draw swords over the ownership of a precious jewel, and both Players confirm that they're ready to fight. Since Saul and Alair use swords, both Players roll Engage In Battle.

Hanna obtains a 10+ and David a 7-9, therefore Hanna will pick her two choices first, from the list, and also obtains a +1 to the AD for the conflict. Also, both characters inflict harm one against the other.

Note that in this case, with the 7-9, the GM has the right to make a move, if he wants - not really to twist the course of the battle but perhaps to tune the narration or bring other elements into play, for example to have strangers try to separate them or make something to happen in the meanwhile.

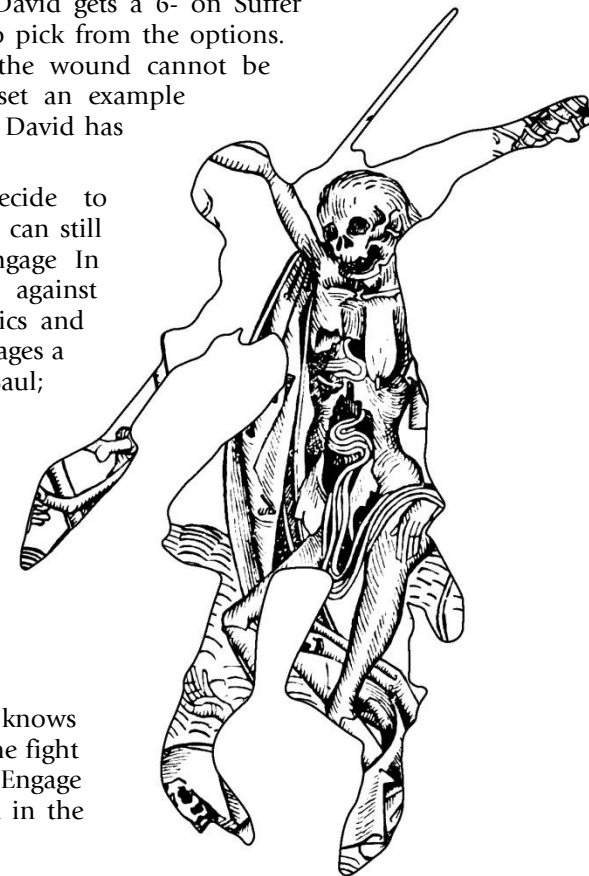
Hanna picks a +1 harm ap and outmaneuver the opponent, so Saul now is on higher ground than Alair.

The Established Harm for Alair is calculated, and the Suffer Harm move rolled by David. David gets a 6- on Suffer Harm: so it's Hanna's choice to pick from the options. Alair is not at -3 Health so the wound cannot be deadly, but Hanna wants to set an example here, and picks a critical hit, so David has to mark Unstable.

Still, before Alair might decide to withdraw from the fight, David can still take his one option from Engage In Battle and inflict Alair's harm against Saul. David picks superior tactics and says with a little trick Alair manages a strike, before being hit hard by Saul; so David takes +1 to the AD.

Since also Alair inflicted harm on Saul, Hanna rolls the Suffer Harm move; luckily for her, she gets a 10+ and since the harm was not so bad, she takes +1 to the AD and keeps whatever harm Alair inflicted.

Although he knows better and knows he should stop, David pushes the fight on, and he and Hanna roll for Engage In Battle once again. Note that in the



previous round, nobody rolled the Inflict Harm move, but only Suffer Harm.

Again Hanna obtains a higher result, this time a 7-9 for her and also for David, but with a lower result; Hanna therefore obtains +1 to the AD also in this round, and makes her choices first. Moreover, Alair was previously wounded so things look dire for him.

As her choice, again Hanna goes for a +1 harm ap, and David rolls the Suffer Harm move. He gets a 6- again and this time his Health counter was at -3 already. If she wants, Hanna can choose a mortal wound. Instead, she decides that Saul's blow will knock Alair helpless to the ground; and Saul growls to Alair that he's better stay the fuck down this time.

David rolled a 7-9 and should also inflict harm and they proceed to resolve also the subsequent Suffer Harm for Saul.

After that, the situation sees Saul bleeding from a couple of wounds, but Alair knocked helpless to the ground, with Health -3 and the Unstable condition marked. He will need help and appropriate treatment, right now, and Saul really taught him a lesson.



HARM AND HEALING

Health from 0 to +3 is a combination of exhaustion and small wounds, and heals in relatively short times of rest. Health in negative numbers, from -1 to -3, will not heal unless treated properly; these are serious wounds.

HOW TO HEAL

A period of rest of an hour or so will be enough to recover one point of Health, when the character is still at Health 0 or above. This is valid just once per day.

To recover more, the character needs at least a night or a day of sleep: this grants another point of Health, on the top of the one reasonably recovered with a one hour rest. Again, this is valid once per day. In other words, **characters gain 1 Health** with a short rest and another 1 Health with a night of sleep, **or 2 Health in total** with a night of sleep; but this is true only when Health was 0 or more to start with.

SERIOUS WOUNDS

Serious wounds, with Health at -1 or less, and perhaps the Unstable condition activated, require special and dedicated attention, and will not heal just by resting a short time. Note that regular recover **does not start** until the character returns with some healing to at least Health 0.

Special healing moves, and perhaps friendly NPCs with healing or medical skills, will count as proper treatment for this kind of wounds: the effects of healing moves are described in the playbooks. If there is no Barber or another Playbook with healing moves, it should be reasonably easy for Players to find an NPC that can treat their wounds - for a fair price. A fair

price is usually considered to be one hold of Gear And Ammo - in gold or goods to barter - for each single point of Health to recover through healing.

OTHER HARM

Most of the times you will be dealing Harm against the characters, or against the NPCs or monsters, during combat. There are other occasions, though, when you might want to use your Move to inflict harm.

Harm can occur in different cases when the character is in danger and fails his roll, and the GM decides to use his move to inflict harm.

Or otherwise, when the Player says that his character does something that implies suffering harm, or in other words when he takes an opportunity with a cost; for example he jumps from a high cliff into the water below, to escape a greater danger.

ADDITIONAL HARM SOURCES

The examples below will provide you with a guide to scale harm, when this occurs from different fictional sources other than just battle.

5 harm or more, potentially lethal damage:

- * A magic explosion or a dragon fire breath (ap)
- * Being tortured nearly to death (ap), being attacked by a mighty monster while helpless
- * Falling or jumping desperately from heights (ap), or drowning in deep waters (ap)

4 harm, very serious harm:

- * Being run over by a heard of wild animals
- * Being tortured (ap), being hit by a war weapon
- * Falling or jumping from the roof of a 3-story building (ap) or nearly drowning (ap)

3 harm, serious harm:

- * Being hit by human weapons
- * The attack of a regular monster or a large predator
- * Being hit or run over by a warhorse in battle
- * Falling or jumping from the roof of a house or farm (ap)

2 harm, medium harm:

- * Being beaten by a group of unarmed man
- * The attack of a medium-sized wild predator
- * Falling badly from the first floor of a building (ap)

1 harm, scratches and bruises:

- * Being beaten by an unarmed men, being hit with rocks and stones
- * Being seriously fatigued by a hard day and night of marching (ap), or by a full day without food and water (ap)
- * Jumping from the first floor of a building (ap)

See harm inflicted by weapons on page 62

DEALING WITH HARM

Traditionally characters die because of the harm taken, and this is especially true in a dangerous trade such as the one of the mercenary. So dealing with Harm is an important part of the GM's work.

This doesn't mean that your focus should be about the single numbers and the mechanical aspects of death. For example, NPCs can virtually take a very large number of hits, increasing HS - Harm Suffered points - before dying on a 10+ of the Inflict Harm Move. Or otherwise, they might be suffering a deadly blow at the very start of a battle, with a single hit and a lucky roll.

Also for the Players' characters, death never comes as a mechanical reduction of Health points: the Health counter can go as low as -3 but only the Player rolling a 6- offers the possibility to the GM of inflicting a mortal wound on the character.

Your duty as the GM is to make sure the dice are rolled properly for the correct Moves, that the options are chosen correctly, **and then to follow up with the fiction** according to the results: describe bloody blows or lucky blocks and dodges, powerful strikes, skillful maneuvers, parries and tactical movements.

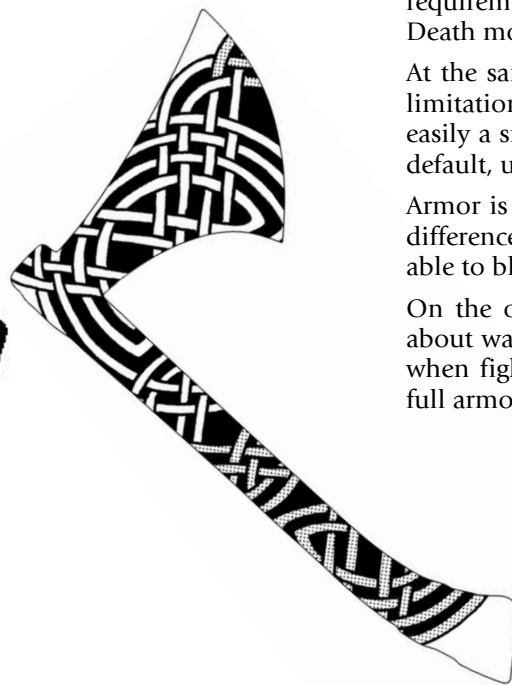
Include the Players' voices in your descriptions. Ask them questions: ask them how they strike or how they're hit, how they block or parry or miss, what they are doing, how they're doing it and what does it look like. Ask them what do they see from the small holes in the helm, what do they smell when they fall on the beast they struck, how does it feel when the claws of the monster find a hole in their armor and sink in their flesh.

Harm is a fictional condition as much as a numeric value. If the character suffers a couple of serious hits, he does not need to be dead, or to look at the -2 Health on the sheet, to feel the pain.

Ask the Player how the character feels; ask him to roll Face Danger with Edge or Steel just to drag himself out the battlefield.

Tell him how the other NPCs look at his wounds with concern, or how opponents look at him now as the weakest of the group and focus their attacks on him.

More than numbers, these are the things that make harm feel real.



ARMORY

Weapons and Armors are the few items of a character's equipment that have an exact set of scores and mechanical functionalities, so they are tracked separately on the character's sheet. Still, remember that in this game you should treat weapons and armors mostly as instruments - with very few basic stats.

They are first of all **fictional items**. Having a sword makes it possible to fight an armored opponent with regular moves like Engage In Battle, having a bow gives the Player the opportunity to Take Your Shot, etc. When the basic requirements for a fight are not met, the characters might end up rolling Face Death more often than what they'd like.

At the same time, consider your monsters and NPCs as subject to the same limitations: a character in armor and armed with a spear, perhaps can keep easily a small and single monster at bay, avoiding most or all of its harm by default, unless in unlucky circumstances.

Armor is also a crucial item in a mercenary's equipment: it often makes the difference between life and death, between taking a maiming blow or being able to block it.

On the other hand, armor is treated quite realistically: for example forget about walking around all day in full plate armor, which makes sense mostly when fighting on horseback and in a planned fight, with time to strap the full armor on.

TAGS

Tags are simple keywords that explain how the weapon or armor **interacts with the fiction** and the mechanics. All the weapons and armors are listed below with the related tags.

Range Tags:

- * **[hand]**: reaches within arm range approximately
- * **[close]**: reaches further thanks to its size
- * **[throw]**: reaches a few meters, for thrown weapons
- * **[ranged]**: reaches far, for ranged weapons
- * **[reload]**: requires a dedicated action to reload

Weapons Tags:

- * **[hide]**: can be concealed easily under regular clothing
- * **[2hands]**: require both hands to wield properly, use with a single hand for -1 harm and gaining the tag [hand] instead
- * **[ap]**: armor piercing damage (ignores armor)
- * **[+1 ap-close]**: +1 harm armor piercing when at close range

Armors Tags (Edge and Steel penalties are cumulative):

- * **[arm]**: should be on the arm to provide protection
- * **[worn]**: should be worn, of course, to provide protection
- * **[light]**: no significant penalty, you can do regular movements
- * **[clumsy]**: if worn or at arm, it gives -1 Edge
- * **[heavy]**: if worn gives -1 Edge and -1 Steel, unless on horseback

WEAPONS

Characters should always be able to replace their weapons with similar ones within the regular service for the Iron Fist, without the need to pay.

Obtaining different or better weapons might require them to negotiate, with the Iron Fist or with a merchant. You can carry a shield at arm with all weapons, except with 2-handed ones.

Small weapons:

- * Throwing Knives: 1 harm [hand, hide, throw]
- * Knife, Dagger: 2 harm [hand, hide, throw]
- * Shortsword, Wood Axe, Club: 2 harm [hand, throw]

Large Weapons:

- * Battleaxe, Sword, Mace, Morningstar: 3 harm [hand]
- * Longsword, Halberd: 4 harm [close, 2hands]
- * Greataxe, Spear: 4 harm [close, 2hands, throw]

Ranged Weapons:

- * Bow: 3 harm [ranged, 2hands]
- * Crossbows: 3 harm [ranged, 2hands, reload, +1 ap-close]

See other harm sources back on page 60

PROTECTIONS

As for the weapons, characters should always be able to replace their starting protections with new ones, while in contact with the Iron Fist. And as for weapons, to upgrade from the starting equipment, the characters will have to negotiate with the Iron Fist or acquire the equipment in a market.

All protections:

- * Chainmail, heavy leather, or partial metal: 1 armor [worn, light]
- * Shield: 1 armor [arm, clumsy]
- * Heavy chainmail or plate armor: 2 armor [worn, heavy]

When using a shield, a character is clumsy, as by the tag. There is a cumulative -1 Edge for that, but also pay attention to the fiction; with a shield at arm, for example, climbing is a problematic maneuver.

With heavy chainmail or full plate armor, besides taking the penalties for the heavy tag, the Players should also forget stunts like climbing trees or walls, or swimming. This kind of heavy armor, therefore, is made only to be worn when fighting on horseback and when having the time to plan for the fight so that the armor can be strapped on. Using heavy armor on horseback **cancels all penalties**.

COMBAT READINESS

Depending on the situation in fiction, the characters might sometimes be caught more or less **unprepared for battle**. In fact, for the purpose of the game, you should not assume that all characters are always suited up in full armor and with all weapons ready at hand. You might want to make sure the assumptions below are clear between you and the Players.

This is not to provide you, as the GM, with the opportunity to keep sneaking at the characters' back and stab them by surprise - you can do it when there's a fictional reason for it, though. But the point of this section is to clarify that in some cases the characters will not be in a full battle outfit, and there will be times when they will have to use smaller or improvised weapons or count on a lower protection.

During patrol or in clearly dangerous situations: you can assume the characters are in armor - if needed, ask them which armor they wear - with the shield ready - if they have one - and with the weapons equally ready - whatever their weapon of choice is. Ranged weapons such as bows will be ready with an arrow at hand, and crossbows loaded.

During travel in the wilderness: if in a potentially dangerous area, or if the Players specify that, the characters are armored up. Regular weapons such as swords or large weapons like spears or longwords will be ready at hand. Typically, bows and crossbows are not kept ready to fire for hours at the time, to avoid spoiling the ropes or letting a shot go by mistake. Still, some characters might be on the watch, protecting the group, thus they can have even ranged weapons ready.

In a city, in an urban situation, in a tavern or in a camp: they will have perhaps still the armor on - but ask them if and why they keep their armor on - but probably shields would be stored somewhere. Sometimes it might be clearly not allowed or extremely rude and inconvenient to wear armor; you don't show up at a banquet or at any important social event in plate armor, and not even in leather armor.

Regular weapons such as swords, knives, maces, and so on might be allowed, while ranged weapons are of course prohibited in most closed spaces. While traveling through a city or a market, weapons like bow have their strings undone, and crossbows are unloaded, by default. This means that ranged weapons would not be the first option in case the characters need to react to a sudden attack.

The point of the above guidelines is not to setup for you, as the GM, chance after chance to sneak on them with fully armored up evil NPCs. The point is to provide occasions within the adventure when it would be reasonable to have a different approach other than the usual "I speak with the sword", and to give enough opportunities to use different Moves, or even enjoy an unbalanced fight, a strategic retreat and so on.

SUMMARY FOUR

In combat:

- * Use Combat Moves for the traditional melee or fights, or for ranged weapons
- * Characters can of course exploit also their own signature Moves
- * You might need to make use of basic Moves, such as Face Danger to avoid some peril or Perception to read the situation on the battlefield
- * When a Player rolls a Combat move, he usually inflicts harm against the opponent on a 10+ and often on a 7-9
- * On a 7-9 and on a 6-, the GM always has a chance to make his own move - it can be inflicting harm against the character, or something else
- * Moves and harm on a 7-9, that often bring consequences for both parties, are considered to be happening at the same time

GM Moves in combat are triggered by:

- * Mechanical conditions: when a Player rolls a 6- you usually hit them harder
- * When instead they roll a 7-9 you still make a move: you should initially stick to something softer (make a soft move instead of a hard one). Once in the middle of the combat, then use the 7-9 also for hard moves (i.e. inflict harm)
- * Fictional conditions: a Player ignoring a danger or deciding not to act against it; or a Player making a clearly poor decision and getting directly into trouble, in fiction

Combat Moves:

- ✦ Engage In Battle represents an exchange of blows or an attack. It is the basic move for melee, armed or unarmed
- ✦ Take Your Shot is the equivalent, but for ranged weapons. It can cover multiple shots at once, in fiction
- ✦ Use, on the other hand, the Defend And Hold move as a tactical tool, or when the purpose is to protect something or someone or gain time
- ✦ Face Death is the crucial move when meeting a monster or a much stronger opponent. It is important to remember to ask the Players to roll this whenever they face an uneven fight, regardless of other modifiers related to the group sizes or the monster's size

Harm in combat:

- ✦ Established Harm is equal to the weapon or circumstances harm, minus the armor if it applies
- ✦ When multiple harms are inflicted to the same target, subtract the armor from each of them separately
- ✦ For characters, subtract the Established Harm (harm minus armor) from the Health counter score. The Health counter initially is the same as a +4
- ✦ For NPCs and monsters, Established Harm adds up as Harm Suffered (HS). Always add new harm to the HS, for a total HS to roll with Inflict Harm

Harm Moves:

- ✦ Death or defeat in combat does not depend strictly from a numerical counter: there are dedicated Moves
- ✦ Suffer Harm is the move used when the characters are wounded, while Inflict Harm is the one to roll when damage is dealt against enemies
- ✦ A Player can decide to roll Inflict Harm against an opponent by taking the appropriate option in a combat move (or the GM can rule to roll the move because of some harm suffered by the NPC or monster from another source)
- ✦ By taking the appropriate option a Player can try to end a fight with Inflict Harm also when Established Harm (harm minus armor) was zero
- ✦ When rolling Inflict Harm against an NPC or monster, always roll adding the total HS (Harm Suffered)
- ✦ Roll Inflict Harm with 2D6+HS for minions, and 1D6+HS for important or strong NPCs, and for all monsters and demons

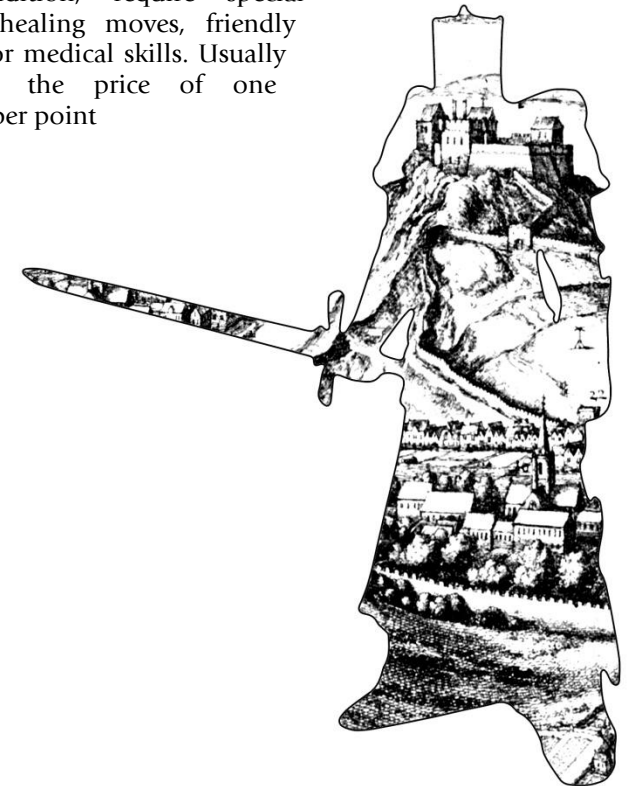
- ✦ When a character suffers harm (one or more Established Harm), the Player must roll the Suffer Harm move: roll 2D6+Health counter modifier

Character vs. Character:

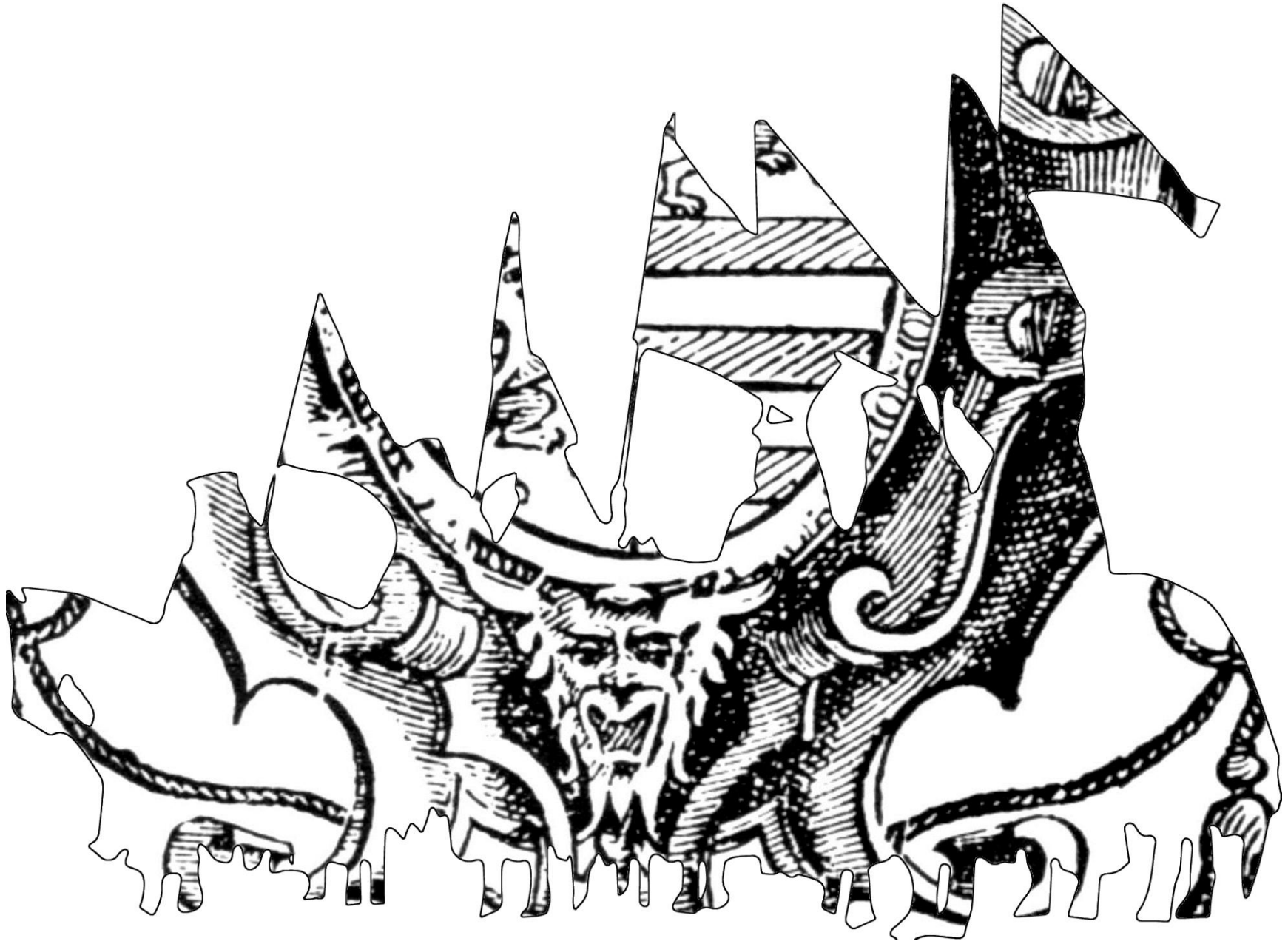
- ✦ Use the rules for Conflict: both roll their moves. The winning side gains also +1 AD every round, and picks options first from his move
- ✦ The loser picks options after, and cannot contradict the winner
- ✦ Nobody is rolling Inflict Harm: when a character suffers harm, the Player rolls the Suffer Harm move with the Health counter. On a 6- the other Player will pick options against the first

Healing:

- ✦ Health from 0 to +3 heals once per day of one point with one hour of rest. Recover one more point, again once per day, by sleeping at least a day or night
- ✦ Serious wounds, with Health at -1 or less, and the Unstable condition, require special attention such as healing moves, friendly NPCs with healing or medical skills. Usually healing comes at the price of one Equip&ammo hold per point



Mastering



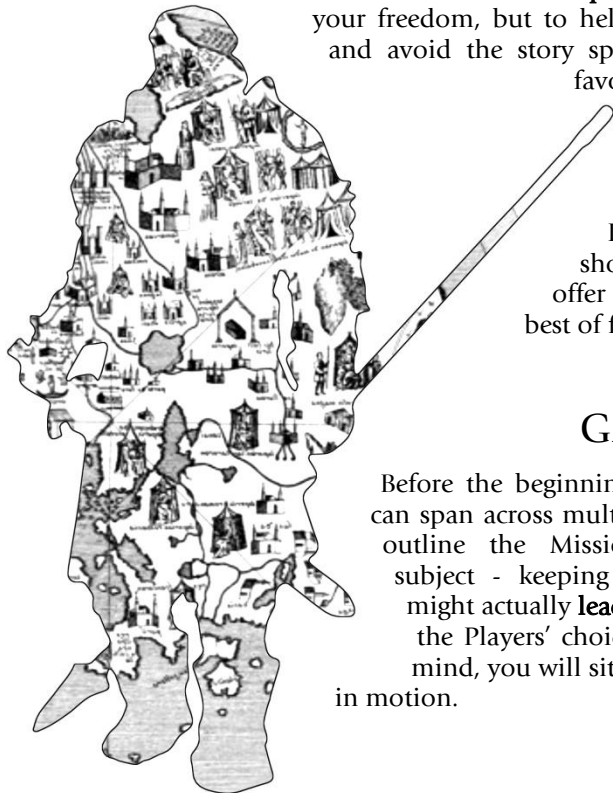
HOW TO GM

You are the Game Master, and as such you run the game for the Players and have a different role than them. To fulfill your role, you should approach the table with a decent knowledge of the mechanics of course, but most of all with a clear idea of how to run the story according to the Iron Rules and Principles.

The Iron Rules and Principles are declined not to limit your freedom, but to help you to remain on track and avoid the story spinning out of control, to favor the best fiction the game can provide and support you in your GM duties. If you follow the Iron Rules Principles your story should unfold properly and offer you and the Players the best of fun.

GM'S TASKS

Before the beginning of an adventure, which can span across multiple sessions, you will just outline the Mission's or the Adventure's subject - keeping in mind that the game might actually **lead you elsewhere**, because of the Players' choices. With that first seed in mind, you will sit at the table and put things in motion.



Moreover, before every session, you will review your sheets, study the characters and the story developments, and prepare perhaps a few ideas to bring into play. What's important is that both your adventure as a whole, and each single session, will be **open to changes** and unexpected developments.

GM'S ATTITUDE

The best thing to do is to sit at the table not as the one with all the answers and whom who knows all the secrets, but rather **as the one with most questions**. Your adventures and sessions will provide the answers through the Players' choices.

Your favorite quotes should be like: "I wonder what will happen next" and "I wonder how this will end" or "I really have no idea what's behind that door".

Play your NPCs, monsters, and each element in your story **as tools to present the Players with questions** to answer and choices to make; leave them the freedom to pursue any type of solution.

In exchange, the game offers you:

- * **Very little to no prep at all**, saving your precious time. You don't need to build the story in advance, to prepare for every possible event, and you do not need to drive Players through a predetermined series of actions. What you do not need to prepare, takes you no time and does not break
- * **The pleasure of watching the story unfold**, taking turns and directions you didn't expect, and surprising you as well as the Players. Discover the world and the events as they unfold, be surprised, thrilled

One of the main achievements of Baker's AW is to properly regulate the GM's work, helping him to remain fair and focused on the fiction, in such a way that adventures' content is generated together with the Players. If this sounds like something that as a GM you might not want, think again - either about playing this game or about your approach. Iron Rules are not meant to be broken.

This doesn't mean this game for sure is not for you, but it will be hard to play in the Iron World - as it would be to play AW - without you being open, as GM, to improvisation rather than railroading. And to make your improvisation fair and efficient, you should stick to rules and principles.

IRON RULES

The work of Game Mastering requires commitment: not the kind of commitment that makes you prepare and plan in advance, but then one that requires you to listen carefully and respond sharply during the game.

Iron Rules are here to help you in this role, they're not meant as a constraint, as a limitation of power, but rather **as guidelines for good play**, to support your work. Whatever you do, should fit into this plan - you can call it GM Master Plan - so that everything will in the end blend together nicely, in the story told by you and the Players together.

Your Iron Rules, as the GM, are:

- * **Make the world cold and sharp**
- * **Make the characters important**
- * **Follow the story, don't drive it**
- * **Stick to your principles, remember what to say**
- * **Stop, catch your breath**

MAKE THE WORLD COLD AND SHARP

Your major effort is, most of the times, not enforcing rules or making calculations about scores or harm suffered, but rather presenting and painting everything around the characters, **to make the Iron World real**.

They know what you tell them; see, hear, smell and taste only what you tell them. Engage the characters with your descriptions: the Iron World is a harsh place, so when in doubt, make it look bad.

But remember: your **descriptions should not be conclusive**, should leave space for the characters actions and reactions.

MAKE THE CHARACTERS IMPORTANT

You're all sitting at the table to play the story of the characters chosen by the Players. You're not there to watch your GM mastermind at work through the actions of NPCs, to witness powerless to someone else's victory or defeat, to assist impotent to a predetermined plot to unveil.

Instead, **characters are the focus of your game**.

They might be powerless in front of an army, not be able to change the results of single battle or a chain of events, if the story goes in that direction, but that's not the point. The point is that their actions are always important,

because the story you're telling is **their story**. Their choices should always bear weight, and the focus should be on the characters for the great majority of the time.

And since you don't have a predetermined adventure in mind, characters are not your adversaries nor your tools to tell that story: they are the ones you love to see in action, the ones you wonder how they will act and where they will take you.

Your story is there **to serve them**, not the other way around.

FOLLOW THE STORY, DON'T DRIVE IT

Follow the story, and most important, do not drive it. This is true for the adventure as a whole, and for each of its scenes: **when you setup a scene**, make it so that it can end in different ways - do not expect only a specific outcome, do not force it.

Let the Players' decisions drive the story.

This requires a bit of discipline, especially if other games suggested or forced you to prepare content in advance, to study adventure material, to direct along predefined roads. Because the characters are important, and you're on their side even when you harm them - then everything you do **springs from the characters' own actions**.

Follow the story, its fiction and its logic; then make your GM Moves as the NPCs and monsters demand. And following the story means that only the protagonists can lead the plot to an end, a good or a bad one. In a few words: always setup open ended, so that **fiction will resolve in play**, not in your head.

STICK TO YOUR PRINCIPLES, REMEMBER WHAT TO SAY

When it's time to act, as the GM, always remember the Iron Rules mentioned above: they are the keys of your master plan, the cornerstones of your building. The guidelines are there to inspire you.

Especially when you're in trouble coming up with a response to the Players, those constraints will help you rather than hinder you, addressing your imagination towards what really counts. You do not need to choose from an endless list of possibilities, but simply **stick to your principles**.

Remember, when it's your turn to speak, say:

- ✦ **What the Iron Principles demand** (see next chapter)
- ✦ **What the rules demand** (if there's a rule, use it)
- ✦ **What the fiction demands** (what comes naturally within the story)
- ✦ **What honesty demands** (what would be the consequence of this?)

STOP, CATCH YOUR BREATH

If you are unsure or you feel lost, stop and catch your breath. Say to the Player that you want to think it through, **take a few moments**.

Look at the list of your Iron Rules, and at the list that reminds you what to say; go over it, in order, and remember your principles.

Then ask yourself: can you make a Move? Resolve or connect to a previous Move? Is there a rule about this subject? Does this call for a Move?

Think about the story: did you prepare something about this, in the previous events? Is there something that demands resolution? Is there something that needs to go forward?

And really, if this were just a book or a movie, what would you expect? If there a way to let the characters actions answer this question, that's the right path to follow.

Don't be afraid to take a bit of time to think about how to proceed, look at your papers and look for something that catches your attention.

Don't forget to consult the Characters' Front sheet, look at moves, background elements, characters' conditions, and so on, to find inspiration.



IRON PRINCIPLES

The Iron Principles are the last section of more generic guidelines, before moving to the precise Iron Moves. These principles should drive your mastering as much as the Iron Rules. They aim to give you some precise instructions to make the Iron World compelling. Where the Iron Rules tell you how to approach the game, the Principles tell you **how to make the Iron Moves** - that are outlined in the next chapter - and how to choose between them. When you need to decide which of your moves to make, act based on these principles:

- ✦ **Forge The Iron World Real**
- ✦ **Speak The Characters Names**
- ✦ **Mask Your Moves**
- ✦ **An Unforgiving World**
- ✦ **Make Locations And NPCs Real**
- ✦ **Ask Questions, Build On Answers**
- ✦ **Play For The Characters**
- ✦ **Sometimes Spoil Their Plans**
- ✦ **Think "In The Meanwhile"**
- ✦ **Let The Story Decide**

FORGE THE IRON WORLD REAL

Forge a world of solid steel, ruthless and fierce; the Iron World is built on magic and mysteries, contradictions and betrayal, but most of all: steel. And remember to alternate between shades, mystery and moral ambiguity and fierce contrasts, clear separations between good and evil.

Introduction	Basic Mechanics	Moves And Rolls	Combat Procedures	Mastering	GM Iron Moves	The First Session	Missions And Fronts	Monsters And Enemies	Playbooks Reference
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Think of the Iron World, even off sessions, and imagine how it would look like. You don't need to plan exact details of the adventures, not even the specifics of a mission. You can even put the characters in a tough situation, and ask them how did they get there.

But you are the characters' eyes and ears and the Players rely on your descriptions to experience the Iron World. Make sure you give them enough material to immerse in the fantasy world of the game. One of the best tools is to **give them contrasts**. Let them feel the warmth and security of the castle, the city or the camp, so that the danger, the cold, the harsh life conditions on a mission will stand out by contrast.

SPEAK THE CHARACTERS NAMES

Don't address the Players, but the characters: this does wonders. This simply means calling the Players by their characters' names.

Call them **with the characters' name**, even if they describe their own characters in third person. This will improve the feeling of immersion at the table.

MASK YOUR MOVES

Whatever happens in the Iron Word is determined at the table through conversation and mechanics, but what you all care about is not the dice results; what you care about is what the dice results mean for the story. So when you make a move, make it always by the fiction.

The reason why you're making the GM's Move is maybe because a Player failed a roll, or a Player's move triggered your own, or because the Players decisions at the table influence the fiction in game, or again because you're using Taint or another condition, such as debts, as your trigger. But still, you should not present the GM's Move as the result of something that occurs at the table, out-of-fiction, but instead as strictly **consequential to the story**.

In other words, dice results and rules are the reason for your moves, but you should always describe your moves as **coming from the fiction**, the story, not the

mechanics of dice or rules. For example, you do not say that you inflict harm to the character because the Player rolled a 6- in combat. Instead, it's the adversary that finds an opening in the character's defense, when he failed to strike.

The same principle of making your Move consequential to the story, applies to the Move's description in the game. You do not tell the Players the name of your Move, but instead you **describe the Move's effect on the fiction**.

This integrates with the above, so you don't say that you're going to Inflict Harm on the character, you say that the adversary has struck, and you make the Player roll his own Suffer Harm move, and then continue the narration incorporating the appropriate description of the damage.

While you do this, follow the fiction, and try to favor Moves that will set you up for new ones; action first, don't stall.

AN UNFORGIVING WORLD

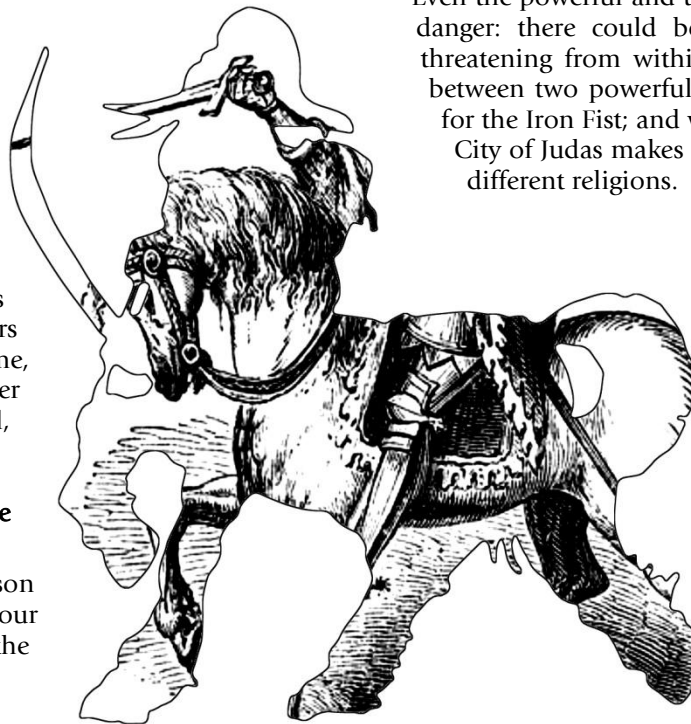
The Iron World is often harsh, brutally hot or unforgivably cold. Whenever you present a situation, an NPC, a location for the first time, consider the possibility to **add a clear sign** of how bad it looks. In the Iron World there is often something wrong or some threat.

Even the powerful and the nobles, living in their rich cities can be always in danger: there could be a natural threat like a monster, or something threatening from within, like a traitor, a group of rebels, a cult, a clash between two powerful families and so on. There is always work material for the Iron Fist; and where the Iron Fist works, **there's always trouble**. The City of Judas makes no exception, being so important and contended by different religions.

Even after the Iron Fist mission is completed, hopefully with success, the situation is perhaps just slightly better, just a bit more stable, and only for a while.

This is especially important for you when as the GM you bring the story back to a known situation, NPC or location.

Coming back, bringing back into the story an element previously established, is material for your fiction and a tool to depict the Iron World and make it harsh. You should always consider what bad could have happen, in the meanwhile. Coming back to something or someone is a great opportunity to have that



something or someone to look ruined or corrupted or wounded or distorted or completely destroyed or killed. War and violence, sorcery and mystery are always at work.

Sometimes, though, show a little mercy. **But just sometimes**, so that Players will always hope for it - but they can never count on it. Let them plan, have their plan follow through if they worked hard and they conquered, literally, their success.

Still, be on the lookout for something that still you can spoil, without robbing them of their success. The taste of victory is often sour.

MAKE LOCATIONS AND NPCs REAL

This is a good advice for every game, but how do you do that? When you introduce a location, if it's going to be an important element of the game, give it some unique feeling. Which impressions does it leave?

Places have a character, attitude, traits, even motivations and instincts, contradictions and conflicting impulses, exactly like people.

When you introduce an NPC, give it a name, and think about **a single and powerful drive** for him or her. Sketch a description of his appearances, and let his motivations show clearly, most of the times - unless this is clearly a threat that works by deception.

Try to play with contrast. Give them a motivation, an impulse, **and some contradiction**, either in their appearance or in their actions.

A couple of tricks from AW: the first is to think about **a single part as its key** - be it an NPC or a location - and make that key the driver for the NPC or the location.

For example: an NPC whose character is defined by his big hands, by his caring eyes, by his voluptuous forms, by his fast tongue or bitter mouth, and so on. You can extend this to the location: a place defined by its dark corners, by its warm fire, by its solid walls, by its colorful flags, by its holy water, by a mysterious stone that sweats blood.

The second trick is to make a consistent portrait and then **add something odd to it**, something that doesn't quite fit.

For example: the friendly host that hates dogs, a serious noble who laughs at brutal war jokes, the mysterious magus who talks for hours about his cats. Again, this is valid also for locations: the nice tavern with that mysterious stink, the solid castle with an unguarded backdoor, the poor peasants' house with the small bag of gold hidden under the bed.

Note that both of them - the single part that defines and that unique element that doesn't fit - are powerful narrating tools. What if the characters are in

contrast with the driving key? Do they need the services of that driving key, or do they need to shut it down in their mission? Is that thing that doesn't quite fit a problem, or an opportunity? Is it just odd, or is there something behind that unexpected behavior? What caused it?

ASK QUESTIONS, BUILD ON ANSWERS

Feel free to ask questions to your Players; you can assume that they know about their own native lands for example, better than you do. Ask them questions when you deal with a subject that their character is knowledgeable about, or cares about. Ask questions about important bits of their past, ask questions about the NPCs or location they know or visited, about what they care about the most and anything related, about their weaknesses and how they were exploited in the past or how they fear they could be exploited this time.

These answers are among **the most precious information** you can get about the Iron World and the characters themselves.

You don't need to stick to the answers literally. If you want to change or tune something, ask the Player, negotiate, find some common ground that allows you to merge his view of the world within the Iron World you imagined and presented in the game until now.

You should not plainly reject something though, without giving it proper consideration, and then, do it only if it clearly goes against the spirit of the Iron World and the aesthetics of other Players too. If you're in doubt, try to decide all together at the table. Moreover, if the topic of your question is open to different interpretations, and the answer is also ambiguous, **keep it that way**.

Perhaps the Player believes his family was rightfully fighting for a certain piece of land, and it will be up to him to prove his family's rights - fighting against an NPC or perhaps another character. A lot in the Iron World is conquered just by fighting for it.

Player's answers are important; they tell you **what they care about the most**. Ask questions, then, and use the answers, incorporate them into the adventures and in general in your view of the Iron World.

The Players will be more interested in a world that they contributed to forge. Moreover, asking questions gives a break to your imagination, allowing you to take a listening stance: you recharge your batteries and should use the occasion to really listen, look at the Players, understand what they're afraid of, what they're invested on, and so on.

PLAY FOR THE CHARACTERS

You should engage the Players and make sure they are - almost - always paying attention to the story. The way to do that is to remember that the characters are the center of the story. Every other piece of the game, the setting, the Moves, the NPCs and the locations and the monsters, are important as tools to probe the characters and see how they react.

It doesn't mean that the characters are necessarily heroes able to solve any type of problem or succeed in any mission; it means that the process, their striving for success or bare survival, will keep you all on edge, and interested in discovering what will happen next.

Think of **what makes the characters special**: give them a way to use their abilities and their unique Moves, look at their background elements, give them a chance to succeed in the way it feels more natural. Also, look at how the characters are portrayed by the Players: give the Players the possibility to do what they like more: be it fight, slaughter, or talk and manipulate. Build the story around the characters. Other events occur, but the focus remains on the characters.

On occasions, though, **give them a really hard time**: see what happens when you temporarily take away something important, something critical. What other resources do they have, besides their favorite weapon and Moves? Still, when you play like that, remember that you play to make things interesting and dangerous, rather than plainly deadly for the sake of it.

Make their relationships count: invest on the links between the various characters.

Ask the Players questions about the other characters' actions and how their own character feels about it, given that they have a certain relationship. And invest on the links to NPCs or other elements of the setting: this is the traditional AW triangle trick, which is great in creating interesting stories. What if two characters have different interests regarding the same NPC or the same piece of equipment or the same place?

SOMETIMES SPOIL THEIR PLANS

The characters will often have a plan, to solve a problem or to put the entire mission on a specific track. Your job is not to destroy their plans or make them look ridiculous. Your duty instead is to look at the plan, see them work on it, give the characters the opportunity to find what they need for a price, **let them bring the pieces together**.

Each step of the plan is a challenge: a defeat should make things harder but not impossible. You work for the story; to make the story itself interesting -

and a lot depends on your decisions about what to do with a success or with a failure.

Let the story drive you where it looks like there is potential, **in both success and failure**, for interesting developments.

And sometimes, spoil their plans, **for a reason**. It doesn't mean they didn't work right, or that they failed. It means that bad luck or an unfortunate coincidence got in their way, or even better, that something or someone else is at work against their goals - and rather than presenting a definitive failure, open a new path for a another, more challenging adventure.

Other times, let the Players enjoy the success that the characters deserved: an unwelcome twist, a new problem or complication, are interesting only as long as they do not frustrate the Players and rob them of what they legitimately have achieved.

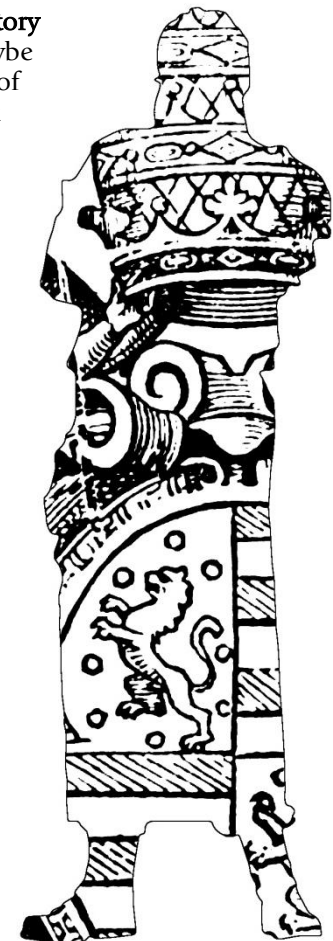
Instead of deferring the success, instead of twisting victories in defeats or more complications, think **how to move the story forward** thanks to that success. Maybe someone in the Iron Fist is now jealous of their success, maybe there are more difficult missions awaiting, maybe someone they've hurt is plotting a revenge, maybe new sceneries are now open because of they've achieved.

And remember you can always come back to a defeated NPC or a safe location, and find that in the meanwhile things have changed, and in a bad, bad way.

THINK "IN THE MEANWHILE"

Not everything happens in front of the characters, or where they are. When it's your time to make a Move, think about the hanging threads of your story: what are the NPCs doing? What is the monster doing?

Think of what happens in the rest of the city, of the world, because of characters' actions, or lack of it - or perhaps just because of some problem or



overcautious plan that delayed them.

Sometimes, **instead of hitting a character right here and there**, perhaps you can move forward something that is hidden from the characters.

If you have someone plotting, someone building, someone gathering men, or maybe someone ready to attack a different location, a monster ready to raid another village, a Front moving forward - see more in the appropriate chapter - then this can be your choice for a Move.

If an NPC is plotting to poison someone, for example, use a Move to hire the assassin and set the plan in motion, and another Move to get the job done. The characters will not see the first Move: you will simply write it down on your paper.

What they will see, though, is the moment when the poisoning is done. Perhaps this second Move will be to separate them (see the GM's Moves) from the victim of the poisoning. If he's dead, they're separated from him.

Or maybe the second Move will simply be to inflict harm (see again the GM's Moves): the victim of the poisoning will lie in bed, ill and unable to do anything, for some time. With the time, he will get worse, so you will again inflict harm, to the point of death. Will the characters help him? Do they have the interest, time and resources to do so?

Or maybe again, the whole point of the poisoning is not if to save or not the victim. Maybe the victim dies right away because of the poisoning, and he was the one who hired the Iron Fist in the first place. What about who is coming next? Will he retain the services of the Iron Fist? Will he chance the mission plans? And so on.

LET THE STORY DECIDE

You are the Game Master but you do not need to decide everything about the Iron World - and actually, you should not. Your job is mostly to put things in motion, avoid that the story will stall, and make sure events are consequential.

This means that you do not have to decide everything. For example, whenever you need to take a decision about an important element - an NPC, a monster, an ally or an enemy, a location or an institution - you have alternatives to simply making this decision on your own.

You can let the story decide by itself what will be the fate of the given element, as it happens in AW:

- * **Put it in the characters' hands:** do they help? Do they show interest? Are they ready to risk or sacrifice something for the fate of the given element? This usually requires an immediate, or prompt reaction from the Players

- * **Make it a part of the adventure:** if the characters are somehow involved, make this decision a part of the adventure. The actions of the characters will give you the response you're looking for, in the long term. Did they save it? Did they ignore it and let it go? Did they try to kill him or destroy it?
- * **Put it in the NPCs' hands:** ask yourself honestly what the NPC in power would do about such element. If the response is to kill, to destroy, that's fair. This is the Iron World

As also your principles say, don't try to drive the story - or the fate of a single component - to a predefined ending. Be careful also in your scenes setup, not just for the adventure as a whole. You must leave room for the characters' decisions to drive the fiction, and this requires that you setup scenes as open-ended - not as something that clearly states a fairly obvious and unique possible outcome.

This doesn't mean you don't get to make definitive Moves, making moves **that you cannot take back** is good because it drives the story forward, and clears ambiguity from the table. But everything should be first presented somehow to the characters, and only after their actions - success, failure, inaction, confusion - it should be made final.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Here are some important notes to remember when you setup a scene or you decide about a move to make.

DESCRIBE AT THE START

Verbose descriptions are important to set the mood and portrait the setting, but limit them to the scene setup when you can. Then follow the action, don't stall it with endless talk.

FOLLOW THE PLAYER'S PACE

Some Players are slower, others faster. Sometimes, force them to an uncomfortable rhythm: introduce urgency for the patient ones, and stalling for the impatient ones - then see how they react when they have to deal with a different pace than usual.

IF YOU SEPARATE CHARACTERS

You can separate the characters, but it is best never to have more than two groups at the time (one vs many, or some vs some). Having three or more groups of characters to follow (every character in a different location, or large groups divided into three or more smaller groups) is something that should be done with care. More than two separate groups of characters end up causing too much idle time for the inactive Players: remember that this is a game and not a show to watch; everybody wants to participate.

GET TO THE POINT

When necessary, skip bits of the story; accelerate to a different scene or a different time. Let the Players tell you where they want to go and let them have it: the locations and travels between them are important if there's action in it, not pointless obstacles.

BIND CHARACTERS TOGETHER

Support the kind of fictional actions and dialogues that help to build relationships, perhaps even contrast, between the various characters. Remember that you play a part too, as the GM: use NPCs and make triangles all the time, PC-NPC-PC.

USE THEIR FEEDBACK

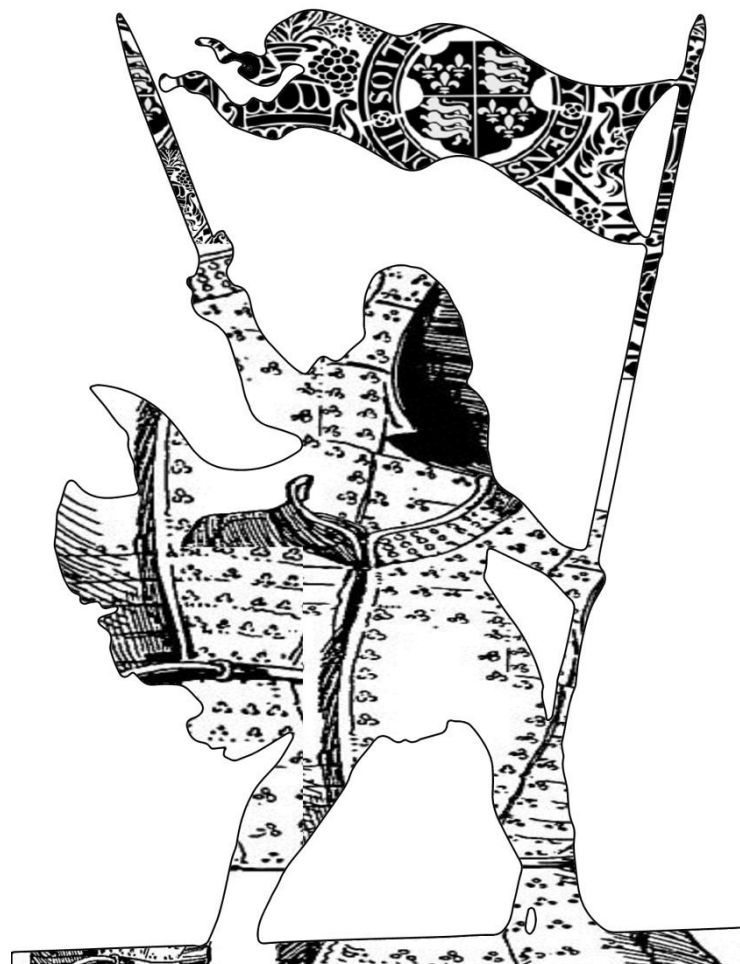
Incorporate Players' answers into your narration: bring forward their enemies, their fears, their ideas. They are much more likely to care for story elements that they introduced, than about your one-man-show.

HERE AND NOW

Keep an eye on your Fronts: advance a Front when it makes sense and lays the ground for future actions. But never forget the here and now: if there is a way to make things interesting immediately, don't turn it down, unless you're sure that postponing and following a more remote thread will pay back.

IF YOU STALL

Look for a Front ready to act, look for an impulse, a complication, urgency or even mystery. Look at their moves, at their Conditions; introduce pressure or betrayal, escalation. Look at their Background: perhaps it's now time to bring something into play.



SUMMARY FIVE

As the GM:

- * You should approach the table with a decent knowledge of the mechanics of course
- * Just outline the Mission's or the Adventure's subject - keeping in mind that the game might actually lead you elsewhere
- * Before every session, review your sheets, study the characters and the story developments, and prepare perhaps a few ideas to bring into play
- * Do not sit at the table as the one with all the answers; but rather as the one with most questions
- * You should think like: "I wonder what will happen next" and "I wonder how this will end" or "I really have no idea what's behind that door"

Your Iron Rules, act according to these:

- * Make the world cold and sharp
- * Make the characters important
- * Follow the story, don't drive it
- * Stick to your principles, remember what to say
- * Stop, catch your breath

Remember, when it's your turn to speak, say:

- * What the Iron Principles demand (see next chapter)
- * What the rules demand (if there's a rule, use it)
- * What the fiction demands (what comes naturally within the story)
- * What honesty demands (what would be the consequence of this?)

Iron Principles should drive your GMing, help decide on the best move to make:

- * Forge The Iron World Real
- * Speak The Characters Names
- * Mask Your Moves
- * An Unforgiving World
- * Make Locations And NPCs Real
- * Ask Questions, Build On Answers
- * Play For The Characters
- * Sometimes Spoil Their Plans
- * Think "In The Meanwhile"
- * Let The Story Decide

You can let the story decide by itself what will be the fate of a given element:

- * Put it in the characters' hands: do they help? Do they show interest? Are they ready to risk or sacrifice something for the fate of the given element? This usually requires an immediate, or prompt reaction from the Players
- * Make it a part of the adventure: if the characters are somehow involved, make this decision a part of the adventure. The actions of the characters will give you the response you're looking for, in the long term. Did they save it? Did they ignore it and let it go? Did they try to kill him or destroy it?
- * Put it in the NPCs' hands: ask yourself honestly what the NPC in power would do about such element. If the response is to kill, to destroy, that's fair. This is the Iron World

Last few suggestions:

- * Describe at the start - setup the scene then let the action make its course
- * Follow the Players pace - some prefer slower, others faster. And sometimes switch the pace
- * If you separate characters - be careful to try not to have more than two groups
- * Get to the point - no need to play meaningless scenes, go where the action is
- * Bind characters together - support scenes that build relationships or conflict; make triangles PC-NPC-PC

- ✦ Use their feedbacks - incorporate their answers as much as you can in the story
- ✦ Here and now - use and advance Fronts, but if you have a chance to make something interesting now, do it
- ✦ If you stall - look at a Front ready to act, look at opportunities for their moves, look at Conditions, at their Background

GM Iron Moves



YOUR MOVES

These are the Moves for the Iron GM: always make a move on a 6- and when characters' moves tell you to.

You can always make a move when it's triggered by a Condition (like Unstable, Debt, Tainted, Infamous, or Unprepared).

Use Soft Moves to give characters a chance to react - use Hard Moves when they fail to react, when they walk right into danger or they roll a 6-, when you act upon Conditions.

- * **Announce Immediate Peril**
- * **Show Remote Dangers**
- * **Separate Or Capture Them**
- * **Put Someone In A Spot**
- * **Offer Opportunities With A Cost**
- * **Show Their Weaknesses**
- * **Turn Their Moves Against Them**
- * **Into The City Of Judas**
- * **Into Civilization**
- * **Into The Wilderness**
- * **Make A Threat From A Front**
- * **Gain Tactical Positioning, Exploit Conditions**
- * **Inflict Harm Or Disadvantage, reduce the Advantage Die**

ANNOUNCE IMMEDIATE PERIL

Threaten an attack, show incoming danger, raise the stakes; usually leave some space for a reaction.

This is quite standard. The characters will often be in danger. With this move you threaten an attack, show an enemy closing up or ready to strike, show an NPC becoming suspicious against a manipulation attempt, or raising the stakes for whatever the characters are attempting.

Remember that this move leaves **space for a reaction** or perhaps for a retreat, although a passive and careful approach from the targets will give you the right to make another move, like advancing a Front that the characters didn't prevent from acting, or land the blow and inflict harm.

Say things like:

"You can hear your prey moving behind the trees."

"You can hear them closing the gap on you."

"They don't look convinced by your speech."

"They're looking everywhere, and they're about to find you."

"The big dark lion goes in circles around the old tower where you're hiding. Then it stops, smells the wind, and looks directly at the tower. He can't see you, but he definitely can smell your fear."

"The monster slammed you to the ground, and rips your sword from your hands."

"He's heading towards you with his sword ready to strike."

"The two guards move in a slow circle around you, ready to attack together from both sides."

SHOW REMOTE DANGERS

Danger is not always right here and now. With this move you can focus on remote NPCs or locations, and make something to happen far from the characters. Ask yourself if something might be going on, far from them, for a reason.

You must also ask yourself **if and how** the characters **learn of this remote event**: give an alarm, set the ground for emergencies or show the local consequences of that event, have a messenger carry the news. So ask yourself what happened in the remote location, and how do the characters get to know of this event.

You can give a bad omen, or begin to setup something larger, with consequences potentially spanning over a large area or for a long time.

Remember to keep scenes open-ended also in case of remote dangers, (unless you're making a hard move): the characters maybe cannot influence the remote event, but can start to plan or work against it.

Say things like:

"You hear the officer in the tower screaming orders to his men and awaking the guard; something's up."

"You can hear the messenger whispering to the guards that there's a large group of refugees directed towards the city."

"You wake up in the middle of the night. Something you dreamed has awakened you. But was it a dream? Or did you really hear screaming from the room next-door?"

"You have military training and you recognize immediately what's happening all through the villages: the Duke is calling his people to arms and preparing an army."

"The messenger struggles to put his words together; he's pale and shaking with fear. The army led by the black sorcerer is moving towards your little village."

"The noble explains that none of his messengers had made it through the enemy lines: someone must be intercepting and killing them."

SEPARATE OR CAPTURE THEM

With this move you separate the characters in smaller groups or separate one of the characters from the others. You can separate the characters with a soft move, by requesting someone to attend some different task or be in a different location, or with a hard move, for example during a fight or with a trap. Also capturing someone or taking a character hostage clearly separates him from the others - adding the captivity as additional threat.

When you separate, you can also separate them from something that they own - like a weapon, or an important message they need to deliver, or an important piece of equipment.

Consider also the possibilities of separating them from - or capturing - a location or maybe someone relevant like an NPC important for the adventure or to the characters.

To capture means also taking hostages: a ransom might be requested then, either in gold or something else again relevant to the mission.

Say things like:

"You must now reach the forts and alert the garrisons, before the enemy's army will move in. There are two forts, and the three of you."

"So, the guide says that it's probably better if it's only the two of you, hunter, following the tracks. He doesn't trust the others."

"The captain decides that he's retreating, with all of his men, now. You cannot hold the fortress alone, against the invading forces."

"If you want to enter the manor, says the Duke's captain, you must leave all your weapons out here."

"The barbarian chieftain signals to his warriors to stop, before they kill you. You're all disarmed, and tied. They put you on their horses and take you to their camp."

"The five guards are now leaving, taking with them the old woman that you wanted to interrogate."

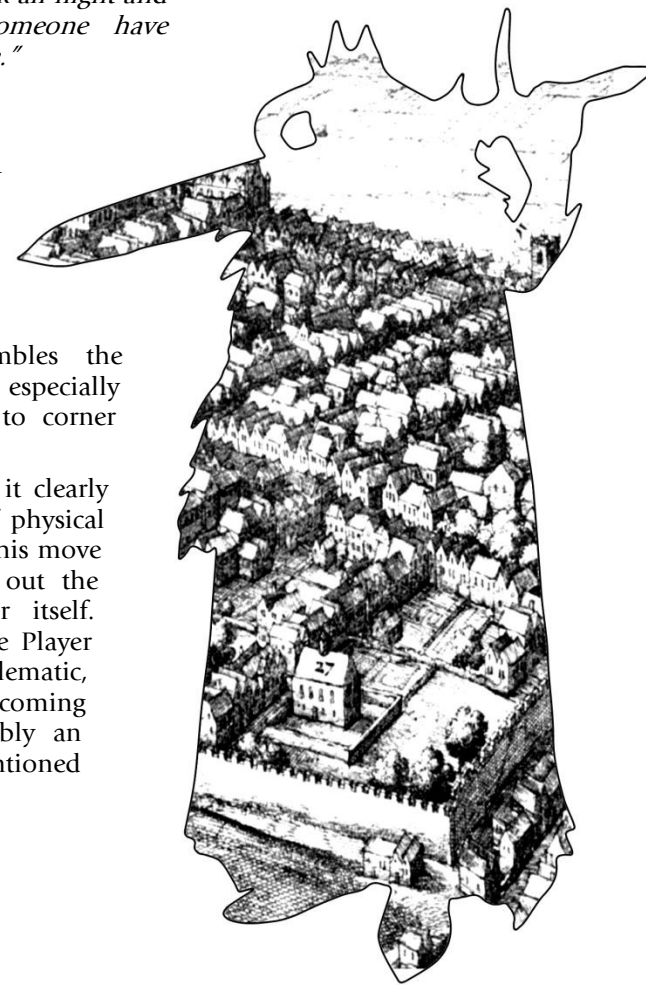
"The bridge in the north is lost, says the officer. Now the city cannot receive any more supplies. Unless you attempt a sortie and retake the bridge."

"The high prelate in charge of the negotiations did not leave his room this morning: he's been feeling sick all night and his secretary fears that someone have poisoned him to stop the talks."

PUT SOMEONE IN A SPOT

With this move you put them in a dangerous spot, in a bad or inconvenient position. This move resembles the Announce Immediate Peril - especially when you use for example to corner them in a fight, or such.

The key to the move is that it clearly extends beyond the realm of physical immediate danger, and with this move you're not bound to speak out the exact details of the danger itself. Somehow, this move tells the Player that his position is problematic, rather than showing an incoming danger that implies reasonably an attempt to divert the mentioned danger.



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You can put them at the center of the attention of the enemy, in a fight or in an argument, or you can make them attract too much attention, perhaps not from the enemy itself but some other NPC(s) that will therefore gain some role to play.

You can put them where they do not belong and make their differences stand out; you can make them have something that others want too, and so on.

Say things like:

"The guards are closing in on you, you turn into a small alley, and a few meters after you stop, looking at a solid wall of stones. You hear the first couple of guards entering the alley behind you."

"The enemy archers stopped firing towards the chariots, but now they look directly at you, and draw their bows again."

"While you leave the tavern dining room, one of the heavy armed guards looks up, glancing at all you guys, studying your armor and weapons."

"So you enter the Duke's castle, show your letter, and you're taken directly to see the Duke. You're all dirty from the long horse ride. The Duke meets you in the gardens, surrounded by his elegant courtesans."

"You bring the witch into the tower to interrogate her. But a few minutes later, half of the village is out of the door, demanding that you'll bring out the witch to be burned."

OFFER OPPORTUNITIES WITH A COST

With this move you can respond to their questions, or clarify a situation: you can offer them an opportunity, **with or without a cost**. More often with a cost.

It could be something they asked for, or even something you are suggesting.

What you do is to tell them the possible consequences, and ask them what they do - do they expose themselves to possible retaliation or not, and give up your offer?

Say things like:

"Yes, you can use your bow to hit them. But you will be exposed to their arrows too, though."

"Yes, you can travel the entire day to get to the tower before night, with the message. Note that the horses will be exhausted, afterwards. So you'll need to stay there for the night, or abandon your mounts."

"Sure, you can move the unit now, and attack the enemy by surprise. You'll be in the dark, though, and these monsters can see in the dark better than you guys."

"Good plan: you wait for them to enter the alley, and then while two of you engage the guard, the other will steal the letters from the courier."

"Sure, you can take out that guard with your bow before he strikes your companion, but the other guard will have the time to run away and alert the others."

SHOW THEIR WEAKNESSES

Make a good use of the background elements - these elements can be turned against them. When necessary, you can ask them to roll for Test Your Spirit if you feel they might be compelled to act in a certain way by their background.

Do not abuse this move; use it with care and when it can make up for a reasonable obstacle, or sometimes as the base for the adventure background, for example in a foreign land or in a very specific setting.

Activate their equipment downside, be it weapons or armors or lack of; or instead show the limit of their profiles, the weaknesses of certain moves they have in their playbooks.

Say things like:

"The noble looks annoyed by your talks about your faith. Do you feel insulted? Or do you want to move the talk in another direction?"

"Your long spear gets caught in the branches, while the rogue moves towards you with his knife."

"Now that you're not on that big horse of yours, you're not so brave anymore, aren't you?"

"How do you present this matter to the cult of Judas? They have a traitor among them, but if you have no proof you will spoil your good relationship with them."

TURN THEIR MOVES AGAINST THEM

With this move, according to the Sometimes Spoil Their Plans principle, you can turn a move around or spoil a victory, mess with a plan, threaten their preparation or lack of.

You still relay on the triggers as for other hard moves, but with this you can make their plan revealed or twisted against them; or you can ask for a price, a proof, a token of good-will before they can carry forward. You can ask for a

hostage or demand a ransom, or ask that something will be done in exchange of what they need.

Note that you can hand them a success even on a failed roll, but turn that success into **a source of trouble** or a burden.

Think of their successes: perhaps you can threaten something or someone in retribution, or even make their effort go far beyond the intended scope, causing larger consequences than what was intended. Carrying the consequences of their actions beyond of what was expected is also a good way to deal with a failure: give them what they want, or actually, some ruined or exaggerated version of it.

Say things like:

"The three of you reach the top of the hill, but before you can even draw your bows, you notice that the hill is taken by a few enemy scouts that immediately engage you."

"The Duke smiles, while you are still talking and trying to convince him that it's in his best interest to walk into your trap. The Duke says: Yes, we will attack tomorrow. And you will lead the attack in person."

"They agree to your plan, but their leader makes a gesture and a few warriors get close to your companions and snatch two of them, taking them hostages and holding blades at their throats."

"All right, says the knight, I will lead my warriors against the monsters. But before, I will need to see a signed order from the Duke."

"The crowd listens to your words, and releases the prisoner; you convinced them that he was sent by the King himself. Then they say: He will go back to the King, and demand help against the Shadows In The Woods. In the meanwhile, you will remain here to protect us."

INTO THE CITY OF JUDAS

Remember to use the City Front, with its factions, its NPCs, its locations and all of its political intrigue. Bring the city to life, let them browse a market or look for necessary equipment, weapons and such. In the City of Judas, the characters will also find shelter within the Iron Fist palace if needed. Otherwise, you can offer them alternative arrangements - in case they need privacy - but with a cost, and not necessarily in gold, but also in services, favors and so on.

You can use this Move when the characters enter or approach the city, or when they spend enough time within its walls. Not every time, though, the city itself will require a move: do it when there is something substantial at

stake, when relevant for the adventure of for the next one, of when play stalls and you want to use the City of Judas to pick up momentum once again.

Say things like:

"When you get back to Jerusalem, you receive an invitation from the Bishop of the Church of Christ, inquiring about your last mission."

"You spot a few merchants arguing with a couple of Priests of Judas; the merchants' guards are putting their hands on the hilts of their swords."

"The counsel of the Nobles of Roman Blood has raised a small army to march south, against the incursions of the raiders of the Book of Q, and the Iron Fist has accepted to perform logistic services for them."

"The Iron Fist quarters look in disarray; everything is even filthier and messier than usual. But you can probably get a room for free at the nice tavern down the road, if you just do the owner a small favor; he needs your help to get his money back from a certain decayed noble."

"The Iron Fist armory is running out of weapons; they shipped most of the swords and spears to garrison in Acre. But you can probably resort to the local smiths to obtain what you need."

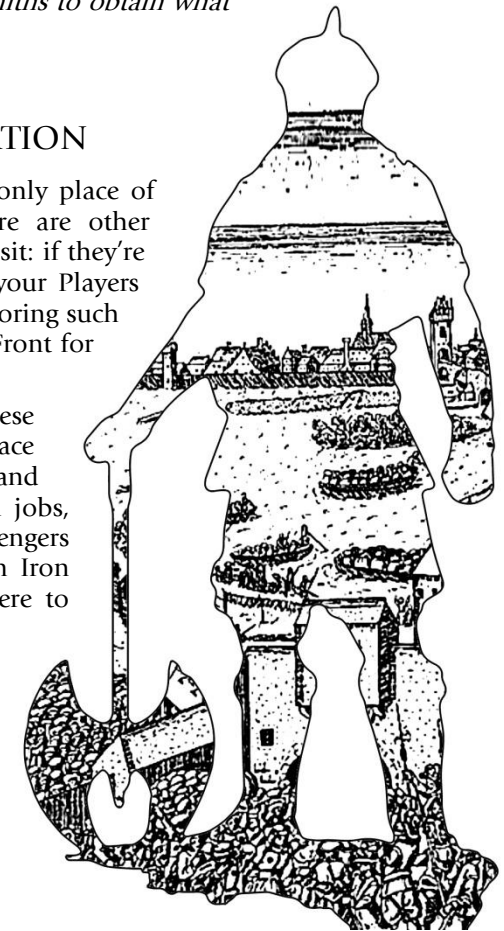
INTO CIVILIZATION

The City of Judas is not the only place of civilization in the area. There are other cities that the characters can visit: if they're the key of the adventure, or your Players really enjoy the feeling of exploring such places, you can even create a Front for the given city.

Otherwise, simply play these civilized locations as a place where to find shelter and protection, markets and small jobs, rumors and connections, messengers and couriers; perhaps even an Iron Fist fortification or office where to obtain support.

Say things like:

"Yes, you'd love to stay in a better inn than the filthy one under the city walls. But the



last rooms apparently were just given away to a caravan of foreign merchant."

"It looks like you finally found a decent armory and a stable. Are you looking for something in particular?"

"Yes, you can head to the Iron Fist garrison quarters, and find shelter there, and get some supplies: everybody gets one hold of Gear and Ammo for free."

INTO THE WILDERNESS

Hic Sunt Leones - here are lions - and other wild, savage beasts, was written on ancient Latin maps. When the characters are traveling into wild areas, you can exploit any possible natural threat against them. They can be out in the wild because of a mission, a necessary travel, or because of some accident or escape.

Put them on the watch, make them struggle; tired, wet, thirsty, hungry; threaten to delay their march when time is crucial, think of what lies along the borders of the territory of the City of Judas, use the Border Threats within the City Front, ask them to use Equipment.

Say things like:

"So how do you divide the turns tonight? Because you're going to have someone on the watch all the time, aren't you?"

"Yes, you can push forward into the forest: but forget about staying on the horses. The branches are too low, you need to proceed on foot."

"Yes, you can make it to the camp before the night. But that means no stops to rest or to eat."

MAKE A THREAT FROM A FRONT

With this move, you advance one of your Fronts or use it to make a move, often against the characters, sometimes against relevant NPCs or locations.

Rules for Fronts are presented from page 108

Every Front has some specific threats related to its nature - for example a specific attack from a monster - and has a countdown - a progression of bad stuff that happens outside of the characters' direct control. When you make this move, you either make a threat to become real - it can be an attack, or some other GM move - or you advance the Front

countdown, **changing the fiction accordingly**. More often, you would advance a Front related to the Mission, or setup the premises for the next actions; sometimes have something larger advancing and moving, think of future adventures. Also, remember that you have the City Front and the map of the

City of Judas: add your own details, make sub-Fronts and factions, plan new threats, new events.

A threat made real, an attack from a Front - say things like:

"The group of brigands has attacked again: the priests of the monastery have lost a caravan bringing supplies and demand that you recover the chariots immediately."

"The Church of Christ seems determined to stop the trade of opium, and they've attacked a ship high at sea that was heading to Rome."

Advancing a Front - say things like:

"The monster that was hiding in the caves, that you failed to find in your last expedition, apparently was nesting, and now there are more of them."

"The Duke apparently is done waiting; he sent his secretary to inform the captains to start raising the army. He intends to attack soon, unless he receives compensation from the Baron."

Advancing a Front even further - say things like:

"Clearly the Baron has no intention to give in to the Duke's demands: he makes his own preparations for war, and you must return to the Duke to announce that the negotiations have failed."

GAIN TACTICAL POSITIONING, EXPLOIT CONDITIONS

Advance the enemy towards a strong position: if the characters have ranged weapons, show the enemy coming close for melee; setup the premises for an attack. Or have the enemy seizing the initiative for a maneuver, to threaten the characters' safe position or high ground, or to disengage and move or run away. Open or close escape routes or paths for the enemy or the characters; make your preparations for other moves.

Remember that you need to consult your Characters' Front: look at their Conditions and think if there's anything you can exploit. More details about this are available in the dedicated chapter, but remember that you can also offer a chance to the character to clear a Condition (getting better), in exchange of something or as consequence of a given action. The exchange can be also with a point of Equipment, or Spirit, for example.

How to exploit Conditions is described from page 83

Say things like:

"The group of archers takes the top of the hill and they're raining arrows on the infantry unit below."

"If you take a -1 Equipment, you can resupply for arrows in the village nearby."

"You and the soldiers with the crossbow shoot safely from the top of the roof. All of a sudden, a group of enemy soldiers breaks out from the trap-door on the roof."

"They are outnumbered, but quickly reform their ranks and begin an ordered retreat, holding the bride."

"You are Unprepared: you shot a couple of arrows into the advancing enemies, then put your hand on your quiver and find it empty."

"Yes, you can clear the Infamous tag by explaining everything in details to the Magister. He will believe you, but it's going to be a long and humiliating conversation, and you need to take another -1 Spirit."

"If you stop in the tavern for the night and resupply, the horse will rest and you can uncheck the Unprepared box."

INFLECT HARM OR DISADVANTAGE

As a clear consequence of a failure with 6-, and in combat also on a result of 7-9, you can inflict harm **as fiction demands**. Inflict harm according to the value of the enemy, and subtract the character's armor, to obtain the Established Harm. This is usually called inflicting harm (when only the opponent inflicts harm, on a 6-) or trading harm for harm (when both the character and the opponent inflict harm to one another, on a 7-9 result).

Remember that you can inflict harm also against friendly NPCs, or even against the characters' opponents, as fiction requires.

Also, look for Unstable wounds and worsen them.

You can also put the characters under a ranged counterattack, if the fiction allows it.

For the Advantage Die see back on page 26

Finally, you can inflict -1 to the Advantage Die when appropriate for a failure or a partial success, or instead of other damage.

Say things like:

"Your blade is parried, and with a fast counterattack, the guard puts his spear between your legs, cutting you with the blade's edges: you missed and suffer the guard's harm."

"While you strike with you long blade, you leave your side open for the beast to strike you back with its mighty claws. You both inflict harm to one another."

"Your charge is met by a solid shield block; you're pushed back hard and while you still try to regain your footing, your opponent strikes with his spear right at your companion, inflicting harm on the merchant you're supposed to protect."

"Your arrows fly high above your targets, and the enemy moves quickly towards you. You have the chance for another shot, but it means you will probably be caught off-guard if they close on you with their swords."

"You manage to strike your opponent, but in your maneuver you lose your footing. Inflict harm on your opponent, but take -1 to the AD."

SOFT AND HARD MOVES

GM Iron Moves are defined also as soft moves and hard moves: the main distinction is whether or not the character targeted by the move has a chance **to react or not**.

Be fair when using Hard Moves, because they are the ones that you clearly cannot take back; at the same time, **make sure to use them**, when it's time. You don't need to protect the character or shield them from harm or hard consequences: that's the Players' job.

SOFT MOVES

When the character targeted by a GM Move has a chance to react or oppose the threat, then it's a GM soft move.

Usually a **new situation** is announced with a soft move. Also, soft moves are great to **set the premises** for following up with a hard move. So make your first move as a soft move, usually giving the character a chance to react; only afterwards follow up with a hard move.

Examples of soft moves are: showing signs of a danger or an attack, putting someone in the position to be captured or wounded.

A hard move, in contrast, would be: bringing the danger to life and forcing a confrontation, hitting with the attack and inflicting harm, capturing someone.

HARD MOVES

When the character targeted by a GM Move does not have a chance to react, but must **first suffer the consequences** and then decide how to act, then it's a GM hard move. In other words, if the character's reaction is allowed **only after** the effects of the move have resolved in fiction, then the move it's considered to be a hard move.

A hard move is something that you can't take back: this is good because it forces you to be fair and not too kind to the characters - in case you're the kind of GM that tends to be too soft.

Hard moves typically are used as the consequence of the premises that were setup with one or more soft moves before.

You can **always use hard moves** in the following cases, without any regret:

- When the Players faced a soft move and **failed to prevent** its threat or decided to neglect it, handing you the opportunity to make a hard move
- When the Players **make poor decisions** and walk right into the path of a clear danger, handing you the opportunity for a hard move
- When the Players **roll a 6-**. When you can make a move on a 7-9, instead, at the start of a scene try to stick to soft moves, first, but then **escalate** to hard moves
- When you make a move **based on the characters' conditions**, like Unstable, Unprepared or in Debt, Tainted or Infamous

HOW TO PICK YOUR MOVE

When it's time for you to pick a Move to make against the characters, remember that besides the immediate chain of action-reaction, you have a clear master plan to follow. Your master plan is composed by the Iron Rules and Principles. Each one of your Moves should make the Iron World a little bit more real, should be addressed to the characters and should follow the story without driving it.

You have principles to follow and remember to mask your move as strictly depending on the story. If you have doubts about what to say, consider the possibility to introduce some contrast or problem, or to go back to some NPC or location already known.

You can spoil or ruin something, or instead look if you have an opportunity to offer to a character to shine and use his qualities. And don't forget the power of the questions you can ask to the Players.

Because you should Follow The Story, Don't Drive It, remember to leave the possibility of a reaction for every soft move, and in general, hand over the

story back to the Players; after your every move it is always good to ask: what do you do?

Also, always remember to look at your list of Iron Rules and Iron Principles; your moves should fit within this framework, and the more they do, the more they're likely to be a very good selection from your side.

And finally, look at your Characters' Front sheet: browse through the various items of the characters' backgrounds, their best or more recent moves, and look for something that you can connect to the fiction.

Remember to always check also the chance offered by the triggers for -1 Spirit and the Conditions: if there is a condition marked, there's probably a good cause for a move.

LIMITATIONS TO YOUR MOVES

When you make a Move, **you cannot take away** the characters' legitimate wins. Do not rob them of the success of a 10+ nor of a 7-9.

Your Move cannot contradict what they've secured with their actions and choices. There are plenty of other alternatives to keep things interesting, within the scope of your moves.

Remember also that you do not make moves out of thin air or just because you want to do so. Usually your moves will either be caused by the Players' actions - or lack of - or by the fiction itself, that demands that you would honestly make that move, like inflicting harm or advancing a threat or such.

But if the game stalls, if there's a pause and everybody looks at you: yes, go ahead and make your Move, following the fiction, without the need for a trigger.

When things stall, it is your right to make a soft move to get things in motion - and then a hard one if things still didn't get going and you didn't get reaction from the Players. **If this happens too often**, though, ask your Players if something's wrong: perhaps they're confused, or too unsecure to make their own choices, because they feel they don't know enough or that the situation is not clear.



ALWAYS USE MOVES?

The list of the available Moves should inspire you as the GM about what you do. It's a fairly complete list.

Still, as the GM you might find yourself with an idea, a piece of fiction that does not fall into those categories. Be very careful if you want to introduce something like that. It might easily turn out to be some kind of an abuse of your authority or perhaps it will sidetrack the adventure. Trust your own judgment, but in the end making a Move should always be your preferred course of action.

If in the end you proceed with something original, you should remember to make it logically consequential with what happened, as a Move would be, and to present it as a starting point, and not as a situation with a scripted ending.



EXPLOIT CONDITIONS

Conditions are critical to your work as the GM - they are the price the characters pay for using their stuff (Equipment) or draining their inner strength and reputation (Spirit), or their strength (Health).

When a character is Unstable (Health -1), in Debt or Unprepared (Equipment -1), Tainted or Infamous (Spirit -1), then the game is telling you that you have a crucial element for the fiction.

Conditions are first of all **fictional instruments** in your hands:

- * **If someone is Unstable**, his wounds hurt, are fresh and can open again, he looks badly beaten up
- * **If someone is Unprepared**, he is lacking something important, be it just ammunitions, or food, a warm cape for the night, whatever
- * **If someone is in Debt**, he owes money to someone and this person is not happy about not having this money back right now
- * **If someone is Tainted**, his soul is dark, the mark of demons in upon him, his will is weakened, his character is corrupted
- * **If someone is Infamous**, the rumors of his bad reputation have reached potentially the ears of some important NPC or a crowd - regardless of the fact that these rumors might be true or not

CONDITIONS, MECHANICALLY

From a strict mechanical point of view, you can use conditions as follows:

- * **Make a hard move** without the need to setup or give a chance to avoid it, just to react to it after the move has been played
- * Remember to make it **consequential** from a fictional point of view; look for the correct trigger

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Remember that a Condition is activated when the related Counter goes down to -1, and also when the Counter is already negative and takes an additional -1 (i.e. from -1 to -2, or from -2 to -3).

A Condition can be removed when taking +1 to the Counter, instead of marking +1. It is **not mandatory** to remove the Condition. If the Player prefers, he could reach up to +3 in the Counter and have a related Condition still active (this would probably happen for Tainted).

Also, a Condition can be cleared when the character, in fiction, accepts the cost you propose or does what you demand for it.

Use the next suggestions as ideas of how to make the Condition a heavy burden for the character. A Player should not take a Condition upon the character lightly.

UNSTABLE

When a character is Unstable, you can make hard moves such as:

- ✦ Inflict Harm Or Disadvantage: inflict 1 harm ap, every now and then, as long as the wounds are not stabilized, or -1 to the AD
- ✦ Gain Tactical Positioning, Exploit Conditions: have the wounded one slow down the group
- ✦ Into The Wilderness: if they are out of town and with no healer, have them look for one
- ✦ Into Civilization: if they have no healer, have them pay for one
- ✦ Turn Their Moves Against Them: when someone is Unstable, he is visibly wounded; have unfriendly NPCs abuse or exploit this condition
- ✦ Offer Opportunities With A Cost: inflict 1 harm ap when the character does something taxing, or -1 to the AD

UNPREPARED

When a character is Unprepared, you can make hard moves such as:

- ✦ Inflict Harm Or Disadvantage: inflict -1 to the AD for the lack of proper tools
- ✦ Gain Tactical Positioning, Exploit Conditions: tell the character he has no arrows, or have him run out in the middle of the fight in a critical moment
- ✦ Into The Wilderness: inflict -1 to the AD for the travel, inflict harm for the lack of food or shelter, delay their travel

- ✦ Into Civilization: make it hard to pay for anything, demand favors in exchange
- ✦ Turn Their Moves Against Them: make a plan fail at the last moment because of the equipment
- ✦ Offer Opportunities With A Cost: offer a chance to overcome the lack of tools at some price or risk
- ✦ Separate Or Capture Them: have the character fall behind or delay the entire group
- ✦ Show Remote Dangers: clearly announce that a given travel or task will be hard or taxing because of the lack of equipment
- ✦ Announce Immediate Peril: have a piece of gear, a weapon or armor break in a delicate moment, spoil an action that relays on equipment

IN DEBT

When a character is in Debt, you can make hard moves such as:

- ✦ Gain Tactical Positioning, Exploit Conditions: put pressure to accept a certain contract or demand a favor
- ✦ Make A Threat From A Front: have the debt sold to an enemy or a powerful NPC
- ✦ Into The Wilderness: put someone on the chase of the character in debt
- ✦ Into Civilization: demand immediate payment, refuse to perform services for the character
- ✦ Into The City Of Judas: demand immediate payment, have the Iron Fist inquire about the debt, clear the debt in exchange of something
- ✦ Show Their Weaknesses: look at the Background, is there anyone concerned or ashamed of this debt?
- ✦ Offer Opportunities With A Cost: clear the debt in exchange of some dirty service
- ✦ Separate Or Capture Them: put him in prison or put the guards on his track
- ✦ Show Remote Dangers: send a courier to the character with a threatening letter from the creditor

More about the Tainted Condition in the next page

TAINED

When a character is Tainted, make hard moves such as:

- ✦ **Inflict Harm Or Disadvantage:** inflict 1 harm ap more when hit by dark forces, or -1 to the AD
- ✦ **Gain Tactical Positioning, Exploit Conditions:** have the dark forces look at the character as the preferred target
- ✦ **Make A Threat From A Front:** advance a threat within a Front driven by dark forces
- ✦ **Into The Wilderness:** have dark forces tracking the character, always finding him even while he's hiding
- ✦ **Into Civilization:** make the character attract attention from a cult or a priest
- ✦ **Into The City Of Judas:** make the character attract attention from a certain faction
- ✦ **Turn Their Moves Against Them:** introduce an unexpected dark threat
- ✦ **Show Their Weaknesses:** look at the Background, is there anything turning against the character, a dark force from his past?
- ✦ **Offer Opportunities With A Cost:** offer a bargain or a deal with dark forces, put temptation in their path, demand to roll Test Your Spirit
- ✦ **Put Someone In A Spot:** put the character at the center of the (unwanted) attention of some religious faction or cult or some powerful, dark sorcerer NPC
- ✦ **Show Remote Dangers:** show dark forces gathering strength to attack or exploit the tainted character

INFAMOUS

When a character is Infamous, you can make hard moves such as:

- ✦ **Inflict Harm Or Disadvantage:** inflict -1 to the AD when trying to negotiate
- ✦ **Gain Tactical Positioning, Exploit Conditions:** put the character in the center of the attention of an angry crowd
- ✦ **Into Civilization:** make the character unwelcome or rejected, refuse services to him

- ✦ **Into The City Of Judas:** have the Iron Fist inquire about the character's reputation, demand to make amend
- ✦ **Turn Their Moves Against Them:** make a friendly NPC or faction turn against the character
- ✦ **Show Their Weaknesses:** look at the Background, is there anyone turning against the character?
- ✦ **Offer Opportunities With A Cost:** offer a bargain or a deal from some shady faction or NPC, or a chance to clear the character's reputation but at another cost
- ✦ **Put Someone In A Spot:** put the character at the center of attention of some religious faction or a righteous, aggressive NPC
- ✦ **Separate Or Capture Them:** put him in prison or put the guards on his track
- ✦ **Show Remote Dangers:** setup a manhunt against the character, put a price on his head
- ✦ **Announce Immediate Peril:** have someone seek revenge for something they blame the character for

HOW MUCH TO EXPLOIT A CONDITION

When a certain Condition is marked, it might come with a specific indication of what caused it, and what the problem is. For example, if the character needs gold to pay for something, then ask him to mark Debt if this got him to reach -1 Equipment. When the Condition is still undefined, the Player knows he can expect you as the GM to exploit the Condition at any given moment. Once you do it, you define more precisely the Condition in fiction.

Something that was just a mechanical checkbox, **becomes a fictional element**, with specific characteristics: it might be the description of a wound or an infection, a problem with a given piece of equipment or the lack of something, money owed to someone in particular, and so on.

Once the Condition is defined:

- ✦ You can exploit the Condition more than once, sometimes even hitting very hard and insisting on it, but only within the fictional boundaries defined by the details that came up
- ✦ You cannot exploit the Condition for something else: if you called Unprepared for no arrows, you cannot call it again for no food
- ✦ The fiction should usually allow the character to resolve his basic issues, such as Unprepared or in Debt: offer these chances, with a cost and if the deed is done, clear the Condition checkbox

TAINT AND MOVES

When a character is Tainted - and one of the quickest ways to reach that stage is using or benefiting from sorcery - you can exploit the Condition with your hard moves, as presented above.

But **Tainted is more than just a Condition**: it gives the character certain benefits within specific moves and at the same time would allow you, as the GM, to tax him even harder within fiction. First of all, remember that you can demand to roll Test Your Spirit in delicate cases, and in general, the character should feel the pressure of the dark forces on him: you could advance fronts, make him a target, cause trouble when he interacts with religious factions or even with the Iron Fist itself, and so on.

TAINT AND BACKGROUND

The character might lose his temper, or give in to his urges or fears, and these are great times to also bring up elements of the background.

Do something meaningful for the story, combining Tainted, Test Your Spirit and their roots, their precious thing or their serious weakness.



You can tempt the character into some bad actions, bad reactions or attitudes, towards also other characters or specific NPCs; you can show how he loses track of his own goals and act against his own interests, or how he alienates those close to him, or shows weakness.

These cases **do not need** necessarily to resolve for worse: a good roll should allow the character to strengthen up, to positively resolve the issue, and even regain Spirit or clear the Tainted score. The key is just that the fiction should be hard and intense.

All these occasions will set you up for more developments, either directing the character to a downward spiral of self-destruction, or on a path of redemption.

The only note is to be very loyal to the fiction and the character's

attitude so far: Test Your Spirit gives you the right to demand that the character will act in a certain way, and even if that's at the Players disadvantage, it should always be meaningful, poignant for the overall adventure or the personal story of the character.

TAINT TRACKER

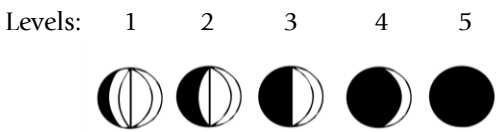
On the Characters' Front there is an overall Taint Tracker. Whenever a character takes a -1 to Spirit, you should **mark a section** in the Taint Tracker countdown. If you're playing a long campaign, and want the dark forces to act slowly, instead of making for every -1 Spirit, mark it every time a character gets the Tainted condition (note that this will make things very slow - but some people like it that way).

When the character gets +1 Spirit or removes the Tainted Condition, leave the Taint Tracker as it is; this tracker only goes up.

This Taint Tracker allows you to bring forward one of the Dark Princes or of his serving demons, with a soft move (announcing it first) or with a hard move (without warning). Dark Princes are the rulers of the Dark Underworld - or perhaps, they are just the servants of the real Dark Royalty of Hell.

Nobody knows; no one ever went that deep in Hell to come back and tell.

The Taint Tracker has 5 levels, and whenever a character takes -1 to Spirit, you should mark one. These are the five levels of the Taint Tracker, as follows:



TAINT TRACKER EVOCATIONS

The characters never reduce the Taint Tracker; only you, the GM, can reduce its counter. When you do it, **spend all of it at once**, to bring forward one of the dark creatures from Hell, or one of the Dark Princes themselves.

Depending on the Taint Tracker value, you can evoke in game the following:

- * **Level One:** one or more hell-hounds or other hunting demon(s), or one or more minor cultists
- * **Level Two:** one or more hell-knights or other fighting demon(s), or one or more relevant opponents
- * **Level Three:** one or more soul-sucking demons or some major demon, with advanced fighting or corruption skills
- * **Level Four:** a weak manifestation of a Prince of Hell, enough to create a dedicated Front to gather and rule dark forces
- * **Level Five:** a strong manifestation of a Prince of Hell, that would put things in motion up to the point of threatening the City of Judas itself

*You can find the
aforementioned
demons from
page 136*

When you evoke with the Taint Tracker, you need **no previous justification** in fiction: the demons are just there.

They might be going after the characters, or someone they love or need or value; they might attack a location or kidnap someone or corrupt, tempt, seduce or manipulate an important NPC, and so on.

Does it look like they were waiting for the characters? They did. How did they know the characters were there? They knew. Did they know in advance what the characters were planning? Yes. What do they want from the Characters, why do they keep attacking them or messing with their plans? Play to find out.

HACK THE EVOCATIONS

The above is just an example of what the game provides in terms of evocations. Of course, you're free to hack this part to suit whatever kind of adventure you and the Players want to undertake.

Just assign different kind of enemies and threats to the various levels; in this manual you will find a set of supernatural monsters that are related to Hell and the demons' realm, which fit the genre of the game. But if you pick a different setting, or want to make up your own monsters and such, just give them the appropriate Taint Tracker cost (how much to spend to bring them into the game), and there you go.

SUMMARY SIX

GM Iron Moves list:

- * Announce Immediate Peril
- * Show Remote Dangers
- * Separate Or Capture Them
- * Put Someone In A Spot
- * Offer Opportunities With A Cost
- * Show Their Weaknesses
- * Turn Their Moves Against Them
- * Into The City Of Judas
- * Into Civilization
- * Into The Wilderness
- * Make A Threat From A Front
- * Gain Tactical Positioning, Exploit Conditions
- * Inflict Harm Or Disadvantage, reduce the Advantage Die

Soft and Hard moves:

- * The main distinction is whether or not the character targeted by the move has a chance to react or not
- * Be fair when using Hard Moves, you clearly cannot take them back. But make sure to use them, when it's time
- * When the character targeted by a GM Move has a chance to react or oppose the threat, then it's a GM soft move
- * Usually a new situation is announced with a soft move

- ✦ When the character targeted by a GM Move does not have a chance to react, but must first suffer the consequences, then it's a GM hard move
- ✦ Hard moves typically are used as the consequence of the premises that were setup with one or more soft moves before

You can always use hard moves in the following cases, without any regret:

- ✦ When the Players faced a soft move and failed to prevent its threat or decided to neglect it, handing you the opportunity to make a hard move
- ✦ When the Players make poor decisions and walk right into the path of a clear danger, handing you the opportunity for a hard move
- ✦ When the Players roll a 6-. When you can make a move on a 7-9, instead, try to stick to soft moves, but not all the time
- ✦ When you make a move based on the characters' conditions, like Unstable, Unprepared or in Debt, Tainted or Infamous

Conditions are first of all fictional instruments in your hands:

- ✦ If someone is Unstable, his wounds hurt, are fresh and can open again, he looks badly beaten up
- ✦ If someone is Unprepared, he is lacking something important, be it just ammunitions, or food, a warm cape for the night, whatever
- ✦ If someone is in Debt, he owes money to someone and this person is not happy about not having this money back right now
- ✦ If someone is Tainted, his soul is dark, the mark of demons in upon him, his will is weakened, his character is corrupted
- ✦ If someone is Infamous, the rumors of his bad reputation have reached potentially the ears of some important NPC or a crowd - regardless of the fact that these rumors might be true or not

From a strict mechanical point of view, you can use conditions as follows:

- ✦ Make a hard move without the need to setup or give a chance to avoid it, just to react to it after the move has been played
- ✦ Remember to make it consequential from a fictional point of view; look for the correct trigger

Tainted, as a Condition:

- ✦ Tainted is more than just a Condition: it gives benefits within specific moves

- ✦ At the same time allows you, as the GM, to tax him even harder within fiction
- ✦ Remember that you can demand to roll Test Your Spirit in delicate cases, and the character should feel the pressure of the dark forces on him
- ✦ The character might lose his temper, or give in to his urges or fears, and these are great times to also bring up elements of the background.
- ✦ Do something meaningful for the story, combining Tainted, Test Your Spirit and the Roots, the One Precious Thing or the One Serious Weakness.
- ✦ On the Characters' Front there is an overall Taint Tracker. Whenever a character takes a -1 to Spirit, you should mark a section in the Taint Tracker countdown
- ✦ The characters never reduce the Taint Tracker; only you, the GM, can reduce its counter. When you do it, spend all of it at once, to bring forward one of the dark creatures from Hell, or one of the Dark Princes themselves



The First Session



RUN THE FIRST SESSION

Use the below checklist and instructions to run your first session. This chapter is important so that you will know exactly what to expect and how to run successfully your first game.

Your first session at Iron World requires a bit of preparation, so that the game can pick up momentum and result immediately compelling for the Players. The Players' job is easier: they have a playbook to choose and one character to create, according to the instructions.

BEFORE THE FIRST SESSION

Before the first session, make sure not to plan ahead, not to design the mission in details, not to prepare a defined set of events for the characters.

Think of a couple of possible missions, imagine how they could develop, but **do not commit** or prepare or write more than a single page in preparation, with high level concepts, doodles and bare ideas, rather than exact and exhaustive plans. If you have more than one idea, it's better: maybe the Players will aim to a more social than fighting game, or the other way around, and you might have a concept that will fit better one or the other.

If you have no ideas, that's fine too. Just do the character creation and go from there. The first mission is good for the characters to get to know each other and for everybody to get comfortable with the rules.

And since everybody will be looking at you as the arbiter for the rules, make sure that:

- You've read the manual once, and you're familiar with the terminology and the rules framework. You're read the manual again, and this second time things made much more sense

- You are at ease with the rules, you know when a rule is triggered and where you can find the exact reference in the book. You don't need to know the rules by heart, you need to know where to find them

MATERIAL TO PREPARE

Everything that you need **to print to play the game** is available for download together with the game. For reference, in this manual, you also have the complete copies of the playbooks.

The material available for download is ready to print on a larger paper size.

Before you sit to play, prepare the material listed below:

- Make sure you have **2D6 per Player, plus 1D6** of different size or color per Player, as the Advantage Die
- Print **all the Playbooks**, each Player will get one
- Print the **Players Handouts** (the moves reference sheets), to leave to the Players
- Print the **GM Guide** with GM rules, principles and moves
- Print the **Characters' Front**
- Print the **Front Sheets** provided, and refer to the manual for the fronts creation
- You can print the **Character Creation Guide** or otherwise refer to the manual
- Bring some more paper for notes, maps, and such. And pencils, and erasers and so on

THE FIRST MISSION

In general, it is best for the first couple of sessions to have a simple, focused mission to execute. Refer to the Missions chapter that follows, for more information on how to design the mission.

Instructions about Missions from page 102

This first mission will give the Players the time to familiarize with the game and their own characters, to know each other, make a couple of advancements, perhaps. After that first mission, you will also know your Players and characters better.

Think of your GM work here, as the one of an Iron Fist Magister: you have new recruits, and you know very little about them. You assign them

something easy, see how they perform, and then find missions suited to their skills and abilities.

As the only warning: try to make sure every character has a chance to do something specific, something related to his Playbook specialties, right from the very first session, to engage all the Players with their own characters.

INTRODUCTION CHECKLIST

The first session usually begins with some introduction to the game itself. It is up to you to provide the basic information that the Players need:

- * **Describe the setting:** introduce the concept of the Iron Fist, their missions, and the characters as members of the mercenary company
- * **Introduce the City of Judas**, where the story usually begins, with its two religions in conflict; spend a few words on the Judaists cult, and if you want the Players inputs on the setting, this is the time
- * **Explain the basic mechanics** of the game, in general terms: what are the Stats used for, and what are the Moves and how the roll of the 2D6+Stat works
- * Introduce very briefly **how to use the Advantage Die**, how to gain XP and make advancements, activate and deactivate Conditions

- * During the game, remind the Players that the AD will reset at the end of the session, so they should use it, and remind them to **claim Milestones**

- * Give a fair warning **from the start**: characters can die and the Iron World is an unforgiving, harsh place. Still, they are supposed to be tougher than regular folks

- * Combat can be **seriously deadly**, especially against monsters and powerful enemies. Only deserved and hard victories are a source of fun, so the fear of a bloody fight should not hold them back

- * Tell them from the beginning: you will **ask a lot of questions** and their answers will bear weight into shaping the setting, exploring the characters' past and



future, directing the mission. Tell them not to be afraid to steer the game towards what they like more

ADVANCED PLAYERS

There might be cases when your Players already know the rules of the game, or are at least familiar with AW or another similar game. And if you have the possibility to present the material before the first session, they might pick their Playbooks in advance and you'll know already which kind of characters they will play.

This would give you an advantage, because you will be able to come up with a couple of missions' concepts that might be a better fit the choices made by the Players about their playbooks, or even about their characters' backgrounds. In this case, you can start already to fill your Characters' Front.

If your Players want **to read some material** in advance, you can of course let them read all the Playbooks, so the character selection will be faster. Also, they might want to get familiar with the Moves, but most of all with the first 30 or so pages of this manual, that contain the Introduction with the setting, and the characters' description.

Game mechanics such as Moves and Combat can be explained also at the table; if your Players have time it would be better if they read the fake historical setting and its implications.

CHARACTERS' CREATION

Your Players will create the characters at the table, at the start of the first session. First of all, each one of them will choose a Playbook, a character type. The best would be for all Players to select a **different Playbook** - so that each character will be unique, with the exception perhaps of the Sorcerer. You can have two Sorcerers in the group: if they specialize in different disciplines each will bring something unique to the game; if they select some of the same spell lists, they can help each other.

Refer to the Characters Creation chapter for more details about this part of the first session. You will need the Character Creation Guide while they fill their playbooks; you can either use the manual itself (there is a dedicated chapter) or just print the condensed version from the pdf, to hand out to the Players.

Instructions on how to make new characters from page 94

ASK SOME QUESTIONS

Use this occasion to ask questions, to clarify or complete the picture about their background, weaknesses, motivations, specific events, etc. **Ask only what you really need** to know right now: otherwise try to find a way to ask questions in play, and even better let the fiction raise the questions.

Do not force the Players to give you too many answers, or very detailed ones. Keep some mystery about their characters to resolve during the game. If someone mentioned a lover as a background element, you need to know just if she's still alive, and close to the character, or if things ended badly for example.

Do not ask more than what you need. Leave margin for the Players to come up with details later, and even to change their mind a little bit, and to twist the meaning of something or maybe even to introduce something new, unexpected.

The point of asking questions is just that you will have a rough idea of what you can bring into the fiction, and how.

When you do it, be very careful and be fair: you can threaten and exploit their background information, but you do not have the right to twist it according to your whim.

A lover could become an enemy, if she was in play for a while and events turned that way. You do not have the right, though, to present a lover as an enemy right away - that would be abusive towards the Player. A former lover, though, holding a grudge, would be perfect to make an entrance and immediately present a threat.

Instructions on how to make and use the Characters' Front from page 116

CHARACTERS' FRONT

Fill the Characters' Front sheet while you work with the Players to make characters. Do not wait to complete the characters creation: if you do, you will postpone it and never do it!

Write down the names, and background elements for each playbook, and the triggers for -1 Spirit. Fill also the information about the most important moves: once they take new moves, remove the old ones and focus on the new ones.

You don't need to bring everything in play in the first session, or in every session, but keep an eye on the Characters' Front, and let it help you to maintain some balance and remind you what's important.

WATCH OUT FOR

During your first session, watch out especially for:

- * Triggers for the moves that indicate the need of a roll
- * Triggers for your own GM moves
- * Chances for a fight, especially not a deadly one

While you familiarize with the rules of the game, see if you manage to look also for:

- * What do the Players enjoy the most? Take a short break before the end of the session and ask them
- * Analyze your own mastering work: do you follow rules and principles and make your moves accordingly?

DEAL WITH MISTAKES

This is your first session: don't be afraid to let the Players know when you are in doubt and you need to review something in the manual.

Take your time to read the page with the rule you need, and ask even their advice. Perhaps one of them even knows the game already, or is familiar with the AW framework, and can help you out and give you a suggestion. But then, make your own decisions independently.

If you discover a mistake later, in their favor or against them, no problem: tell them, explain what you did wrong, and apologize. **But the result stands.**

Unless you catch your own mistake right while you're doing it and you can fix it quickly, do not rewind the fiction, do not change events, do not compensate. The resulting fiction remains, the story goes on, and that decision stands.

They've been favored or fouled by the fate and that's all. You'll do it right the next time.

AFTER THE FIRST SESSION

Unless you have plenty of time for your first session, and you really feel confident in what you're doing, you should probably not end the first mission within the first session. Instead, end the session before or after a meaningful scene, and save the end of the mission for the next session. If you end the session when tension is high, you will also ensure a strong, intense start of the second session. Then use the time between the first and second session to review the work you've done as the GM.

At the end of the First Session, and probably also at the end of the first mission, if it lasted more than one single session, it is good to take a bit of time to review how it went. It's an important process, to help you and the Players to obtain the best from the next session. Moreover, you do not need to have a positive answer for every single question; that would be nearly impossible.

But the checklist below will help you also in your decisions of how to run the next sessions: it will tell you what you need to study more, what you need to clarify with the Players about the mechanics; it will tell you how to improve the rhythm of your mastering, how to keep everybody engaged, how to balance focus on the characters, and especially it will inspire you about elements to bring forward in the next session(s).

Ask yourself, and ask the Players:

- * Were there any rules you felt unsecure or unsure about?
- * Were there any rules you felt were unclear or confusing?
- * Were there any rules or mechanics that were holding the Players back? Either in fear or because of confusion

About the game pace:

- * Did you give too many details, were you moving too slow?
- * Did you run too fast? Was something neglected?
- * Did Players react well to your pace? Or do you feel the need to change speed?
- * Can you tell in which occasions or with whom should you be faster/slower?
- * Were there any Players idle for too long? Why?

About the fiction at the table:

- * Are there too many unclear things about one or more characters?
- * Was there any character with too much or too little attention?
- * Was there anyone who was not given chances to use his Playbook specialties, and especially his chosen moves?
- * Was there any character that was not given any attention on their background elements?
- * Was the Iron Fist enough in your plot?
- * Was the City of Judas somehow in your story?
- * Do you have a Front, a hook for something greater?

START A CAMPAIGN

When you play the game the first times, focus on a single adventure, once or twice, rather than planning for a campaign that would last long. A campaign is something that should emerge only in a second stage, after a couple of successful (read: entertaining) adventures. Only then, if the GM and the Players want to stick to the game, you can turn your adventures' seeds into a campaign.

To do it: look for major unresolved threats, or minor ones that might be revealed as something bigger; look for possible patterns in the adversaries' actions that can give away the presence of a plan, look for important characters that came up.

The Players don't need to enter a campaign with their original characters: some maybe have already died; others might even have completed their cycle and be retired. Still, the group would be formed, and solid - with a good understanding of the game mechanics and scope. This would be a good time to enter a campaign.

To run a campaign you will need more than a single Mission, or adventure; therefore it's important that you will master the Fronts, described in the next chapters. While a single mission or adventure usually holds together thanks to a single, often focused threat and resolution, a series of complex Fronts will constitute the material for your campaign.



CHARACTERS' CREATION GUIDE

At the beginning of the first session, as the GM, you should support the Players in creating their own characters. All the instructions are available in the Characters Creation Guide, which is part of the GM's Material to print for the game. The same instructions are presented here, with more details.

IRON FIST RECRUITS

When guiding the Players through the creation process, remind them that their characters start the game as relatively new **members of the Iron Fist**, and that the game missions, at least at the start, will be within this framework. The characters will reasonably know each other from the training at least - you can ask them how well they know each other and if they were in contact even before.

Now they are barely anything more than recruits: they might even be specialist in their own fields, or have noble blood or somehow a renowned name; but they still have to prove their value to the Iron Fist Magisters. So they should not expect any special treatment, at the start.

CHECKLIST

For the characters creation, follow the checklist:

- ✦ **Name and Looks:** select from the example lists
- ✦ **Stats scores:** assign the values
- ✦ **Counters:** leave Health and XP blank (Health blank is the same as Health +4), no debilities, set the Spirit to +1

- ✦ **Moves:** each character has already one move selected with Ø. **Select another two**, except for the Sorcerer who has already two selected, plus the basic list of spells
- ✦ **Gear:** every character has some default equipment plus an additional two items from a dedicated list
- ✦ **Spirit:** besides setting score to +1, make sure that your and the Players know what will trigger a -1 to Spirit
- ✦ **Background:** define two according to the guidelines, either using the examples provided, or making up your own

NAMES

In selecting their characters' names, the Players have complete freedom. Some examples are provided below, divided for playbook. Still, Players are welcome to select a name from a different playbook not in use, or come up with their own variants, as long as they do not spoil the game color. If you're in doubt about a certain choice, ask the Player to reconsider, especially if their choices are not well accepted by the other members of the group.

The names list includes male (M) and female (F) examples:

- ✦ **Barber** (M): Abelardus, Herod, Paeon, Simon, Michael, Nava, Samer / (F): Eustella, Flora, Lucia, Agnes, Abigail, Rachel, Hilda
- ✦ **Horseman** (M): Acacius, Hadrian, Saul, Geoffrey, Semuel, Rafael, Maurice / (F): Daria, Iola, Undine, Jivete, Amaris, Sarah, Liecia
- ✦ **Hunter** (M): Acteon, Gaius, Timeus, Gilbert, Essua, Saul, Gladwin / (F): Claudia, Itala, Pax, Richenda, Anika, Shari, Roesia
- ✦ **Priest** (M): Chelbo, Gale, Sechok, Milon, Elazar, Uri, Nasam, Sulam / (F): Beila, Yeintil, Elise, Saris, Nance, Chana
- ✦ **Leader** (M): Albanus, Fulvius, Romanus, Ralf, Leon, Yakov, Osbert / (F): Calista, Jocasta, Silva, Rohese, Miriam, Xuna, Aldith
- ✦ **Raider** (M): Alair, Fabius, Zeno, Richard, Isaac, Sean, Thomas / (F): Claricia, Isebella, Tasia, Athalia, Bethel, Talia, Anabel
- ✦ **Scout** (M): Calix, Ernestus, Plato, Roger, Aiken, Uriel, Wimarc / (F): Agatha, Juturnia, Vita, Avice, Gilah, Orpah, Clarice
- ✦ **Sellsword** (M): Basilius, Nicon, Silvester, Hugh, Achim, Tobias, Ranulf / (F): Decima, Laelia, Pax, Emmot, Jael, Reba, Clotild
- ✦ **Veteran** (M): Alexis, Tacitus, Pontus, Henry, Juda, Yousef, Leofwin / (F): Electra, Junia, Urania, Herleve, Lilith, Yaffa, Edith
- ✦ **Sorcerer** (M): Dorus, Ennius, Paulus, Aymer, Eban, Efrain, Simeon, Ailwin / (F): Adelpia, Laetitia, Xanthe, Joan, Eden, Nediva, Gisela

LOOKS

As for the names, the characters' looks can be selected freely within the example lists, and also customized by the Players. Example looks:

- * **Sex:** man, woman, ambiguous, other
- * **Face:** kind, strong, hard, noble, scarred, pretty, friendly, pale, noble dark, serious, pointed, elegant
- * **Hair:** long, short, dark, blonde, gray, white, bold, oiled, untamed beard, savage beard, short beard, long beard
- * **Eyes:** serious, kind, caring, clear, cold, dark, savage, shining, scary, piercing, crazy, noble
- * **Body:** short, tall, strong, massive, fat, slender, thin, agile, robust, scarred
- * **Clothing:** casual, careless, military, comfortable, functional, exotic, expensive, dark, robust, extravagant, tunic, cape, hat

STATS

Every playbook has a different set of available choices, the Player must pick one from the four presented for his playbook.

Note that a Player is not allowed to select the Stats scores profile from a playbook different than the one he chose.

Barber

- * Edge +1; Steel -1; Charm 0; Shadow +1; Brains +2
- * Edge +1; Steel 0; Charm +1; Shadow -1; Brains +2
- * Edge +2; Steel -1; Charm 0; Shadow +1; Brains +1
- * Edge +2; Steel 0; Charm +1; Shadow -1; Brains +1

Horseman

- * Edge +1; Steel +2; Charm -1; Shadow 0; Brains +1
- * Edge +1; Steel +2; Charm 0; Shadow +1; Brains -1
- * Edge +1; Steel +2; Charm +1; Shadow 0; Brains -1
- * Edge 0; Steel +2; Charm +1; Shadow 0; Brains +1



Hunter

- * Edge +2; Steel +1; Charm -1; Shadow +1; Brains 0
- * Edge +2; Steel +1; Charm 0; Shadow +1; Brains -1
- * Edge +2; Steel 0; Charm 0; Shadow -1; Brains +1
- * Edge +2; Steel 0; Charm +1; Shadow -1; Brains +1

Priest

- * Edge 0; Steel -1; Charm +2; Shadow +1; Brains +1
- * Edge -1; Steel 0; Charm +2; Shadow +1; Brains +1
- * Edge -1; Steel 0; Charm +1; Shadow +1; Brains +2
- * Edge 0; Steel -1; Charm +1; Shadow +2; Brains +1

Leader

- * Edge 0; Steel +1; Charm +2; Shadow -1; Brains +1
- * Edge +1; Steel -1; Charm +2; Shadow +1; Brains 0
- * Edge +1; Steel 0; Charm +1; Shadow -1; Brains +2
- * Edge 0; Steel +1; Charm +1; Shadow -1; Brains +2

Raider

- * Edge +1; Steel +2; Charm -1; Shadow 0; Brains +1
- * Edge +1; Steel +2; Charm -1; Shadow +1; Brains 0
- * Edge 0; Steel +2; Charm +1; Shadow -1; Brains +1
- * Edge +2; Steel +1; Charm 0; Shadow -1; Brains +1

Scout

- * Edge +1; Steel -1; Charm 0; Shadow +2; Brains +1
- * Edge +1; Steel -1; Charm +1; Shadow +2; Brains 0
- * Edge +2; Steel 0; Charm -1; Shadow +1; Brains +1
- * Edge +2; Steel +1; Charm 0; Shadow +1; Brains -1



Sellsword

- * Edge +1; Steel +2; Charm -1; Shadow +1; Brains 0
- * Edge 0; Steel +2; Charm +1; Shadow -1; Brains +1
- * Edge +2; Steel +1; Charm +1; Shadow -1; Brains 0
- * Edge +2; Steel +1; Charm -1; Shadow +1; Brains 0

Veteran

- * Edge +1; Steel +2; Charm -1; Shadow +1; Brains 0
- * Edge +1; Steel +2; Charm 0; Shadow -1; Brains +1
- * Edge +1; Steel +2; Charm +1; Shadow -1; Brains 0
- * Edge +2; Steel +1; Charm -1; Shadow +1; Brains 0

Sorcerer

- * Edge 0; Steel -1; Charm +1; Shadow +1; Brains +2
- * Edge +1; Steel 0; Charm +1; Shadow 0; Brains +2
- * Edge +1; Steel -1; Charm 0; Shadow +1; Brains +2
- * Edge 0; Steel +1; Charm +1; Shadow -1; Brains +2

GEAR

By default, all characters receive the following:

- * Equipment score +1
- * Two weapons: each character chooses between small, large, or ranged ones
- * Armor worth 1 armor (light armor or shield), or 1 point of protection to cumulate with other protection points

In addition, every character can **pick two** from the gear list available to his specific playbook (they cannot pick the same option twice). Players cannot select an option other than those proposed for their specific playbooks. So, select two from the appropriate list.

Barber, Hunter, Priest, Scout and Sorcerer:

- * +1 Equipment
- * +1 Equipment again
- * 1 additional weapon
- * 1 additional protection point

Horseman, Leader, Raider, Sellsword and Veteran:

- * +1 Equipment
- * 1 additional weapon
- * 1 additional protection point
- * 1 protection point again

A couple of examples:

Nava the Barber starts with Equipment +1, a sword and a bow, and 1 point of protection for a leather armor. Then the Player can pick two from the Barber list, and for example he can bring Equipment to +2 and take a dagger. Otherwise he can just bring Equipment to +3, or again take a dagger and also a shield for an additional point of protection.

Yousef the Veteran starts with Equipment +1, a spear and a dagger, and 1 point of protection for a shield. Then the Player can pick two from the Veteran list, for example 2 point of protections for a full chainmail. Or 1 point of protection for a leather armor, and another weapon, like a bow. Or 1 point of protection for a leather armor and bring Equipment to +2.

SPIRIT

Each Player will find two triggers, in their playbook, with the label "Take -1 to Spirit when".

As the name says, when one of these two events occur, the character will take a -1 to Spirit, and as the GM you're allowed to put the character under some stress, perhaps with the Test Your Spirit move.

Players do **not** select these as options: **both are mandatory for their character.**

Barber

- * Ignore a human in need of healing
- * Fail with 6- any roll with Brains

Horseman

- * Your horse dies or you're thrown off the saddle
- * Fail with 6- any roll with Steel

Raider

- * One of yours dies or is left behind in danger
- * Fail with 6- any roll with Steel

Scout

- * Give something away, info about yourself or show emotions
- * Fail with 6- any roll with Shadow

Hunter

- * Have to give up a hunt or lose a track
- * Fail with 6- any roll with Edge

Priest

- * Fail your God, or Judas or your faith
- * Fail with 6- any roll with Charm

Leader

- * Accept orders from peers or low-born
- * Fail with 6- any roll with Charm

Sellsword

- * Refuse a martial challenge
- * Fail with 6- any roll in a combat move

Veteran

- * Leave any companion behind, in danger
- * Fail with 6- any roll in a combat move

Sorcerer

- * Reveal your sorcery except to enemies
- * Fail with 6- any roll with Brains (including magic)

In other words, Players should define each of their two background elements as something related to an NPC (making up the NPC), or to another character, or to some pressing issue or something about the motivation for joining the Iron Fist.

For example, a Player might decide to describe a mentor (an NPC) as first background element, and say that his character is in the Iron Fist - and in the Holy Land - mostly to become rich.

Another Player might decide to have a love and hate relationship towards another character: he respects the fighting skills of his companion, but deeply resents his whatever roots. As a second element the Player picks a pressing issue, and decides that several clerics of the Church of Christ are on his tracks for some heretical speeches they've heard from him.

You and the Players can give quite a loose interpretation of the list; but try to remember the following guidelines. Background elements should:

- * Tell something about the characters past, so we can imagine where they come from
- * Present perhaps some problem or potential problem, or anyway be something important enough - and not buried in the past
- * Provide the GM with ideas about what the Players feel that is important for their characters, outline their motivations, or ideals, or what they care about or fear
- * If possible contain some potential for future developments or to adapt and change once the first definition of the element will not be relevant anymore, because the character will have somehow resolved the issue

CHARACTERS' BACKGROUND

Every Player will define **two Background elements** for their characters. These background elements should contain from the start something that the GM will be able to work with, but remain vague enough. In other words, define the major characteristics of such background elements, without getting too much in details.

Players should be allowed to reveal more of these elements as the game progresses.

These two background elements are for you as the GM to exploit and bring into play: it will be up to you to decide when and how.

When deciding upon such background elements, **each Player should pick two** out of the list below:

- * **An NPC** (someone with influence, good or bad)
- * **Another character** (discuss it together if needed)
- * **A pressing issue** (something to face soon)
- * **The motivation** for joining the Iron Fist

A good background element is something that clearly addresses a couple of the above requirements. If the element is too recent and says nothing of the past, once the issue is dealt with, it will become pointless. If there is no potential for trouble, if the background element defines something already forever lost or virtually invulnerable, then it will be hard for the GM to bring it into play. If the element says nothing or too little about the character and his feelings, then again it is difficult for the GM to understand how to present in game, and difficult even for the Player himself to decide how to react to it.

Since the background elements can grant XP to the Players - when they come into the game in a significant or problematic way - then Players have all the interest in providing the GM with workable elements. The reason to present a narrow selection at the start is to favor a fast character creation process, without too much time wasted thinking about background details that might never come up in play and therefore would be irrelevant.

As already said, Players are not required to present a full account of the character's history - but quite the opposite, just provide a few generic inputs. As the GM, make sure that they respect this requirement: a background element which is too long and too complex will most likely be hard to bring into the game, and will probably have some sort of solution or ending already predefined into its description, while the purpose of the game is to actually play to see how these things evolve in the hands of the Players.

HELP DEFINING BACKGROUND ELEMENTS

To help the Players to decide upon their background elements, and to give some inspiration material to the GM in his support role in this process, consider the following.

These three options are powerful tools to give your imagination some focus and some boundaries:

- ✦ Roots
- ✦ One Precious Thing
- ✦ One Serious Weakness

This list contains nothing mandatory: the Players can define they background elements simply by making choices within the four presented before (something related to an NPC, to another character, a pressing issue, the motivation to join the Iron Fist).

The three mentioned here, though (Roots, One Precious Things, One Serious Weakness), can help you shape the characters background. Those are keys that - as the GM - you should find quite easy to fit into the story, and bring up in fiction when needed. They have the potential to trigger the Players' interest and responses, and should be still fairly simple for you to handle.

So if you need inspiration for the characters, consider that the examples are provided as divided into roots, precious things, serious weaknesses.

Something related to an NPC:

- ✦ Roots: A mentor, A spiritual guide, A moral debt with someone, A love, A strong family bond, Relatives, A tribe or a group
- ✦ One Precious Thing: An object received, A precious gift, A symbolic object, A letter of credit
- ✦ One Serious Weakness: A man-hunter, An inquisitor (although they didn't exist yet)

Something related to another Character:

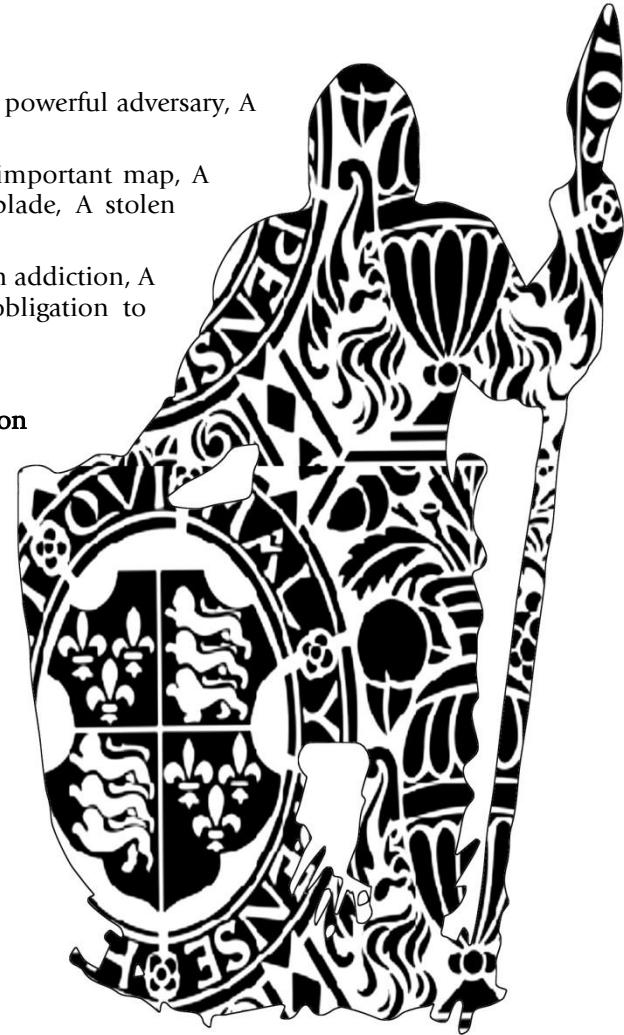
- ✦ Roots: A shared moment in the past, A strong friendship, An old hate
- ✦ One Precious Thing: Something stolen, A gift received, A precious weapon
- ✦ One Serious Weakness: A secret love, A moral debt, An oath, A secret revealed

Some pressing issue:

- ✦ Roots: The wrong faith, A powerful adversary, A revenge
- ✦ One Precious Thing: An important map, A sacred object, A cursed blade, A stolen ring
- ✦ One Serious Weakness: An addiction, A temptation, A fear, An obligation to someone or something

Motivations for joining the Iron Fist:

- ✦ Roots: Someone to find, Someone to rescue, A memento
- ✦ One Precious Thing: Become rich, Gather money to pay ransom for someone, Obtain some noble title
- ✦ One Serious Weakness: Something to find, Something to gain, Regain honor, Regain faith, Obtain power, Obtain a certain rank, Kill as many as possible



Introduction	Basic Mechanics	Moves And Rolls	Combat Procedures	Mastering	GM Iron Moves	The First Session	Missions And Fronts	Monsters And Enemies	Playbooks Reference
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ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

As additional clarifications, consider the following:

- * **Something related to an NPC:** the NPC must have some influence, good or bad, on the character, or be able to drive the fiction somehow with his actions. The NPC therefore must be within reach or with powerful or problematic emissaries in the Holy Land. He might be someone that the character loves or hates, someone to save or to kill, to fear or protect, a mentor, a guide, a traitor, etc.
- * **Something related to another character:** this must be a powerful bond, or a strong feeling or opinion (not necessarily reciprocated or proven to be true), or an important event in the past shared by the characters. A character can believe that another is an emissary of the devil, without this having to be true. It's best if this is discussed and agreed between Players, but not mandatory
- * **A pressing issue:** this must be a matter that the character needs to resolve soon, a problem that haunts him and perhaps the key to start a Front. It has to be something to do, or something done or suffered by the character, with consequences both in case the character will deal with it and in case he will do nothing about it. A pressing issue can be a revenge to obtain as much as a stolen jewel, a powerful enemy or an obsession. It doesn't mean that the character will have to deal with it during the first session or first mission: it might take a bit of time for that problem to enter the narration, but it should, and soon
- * **The motivation for joining the Iron Fist:** this can often be somehow overlapping with other traits, but needs to be quite focused on the Iron Fist itself or its position in Holy Land. The motivation for joining the brotherhood might be positive (seeking something) or negative (trying to fix something, trying to avoid something). But in any case, there has to be a strong motivation for the character to travel to the Holy Land, and fight and risk his own life for the Iron Fist

Note that several choices would be suitable for different listed items. The crucial point is to determine clearly the focus of the elements proposed by the Player. Your job is to ask questions to obtain enough information, so that the item can be properly filled as this or that.

Imagine that the Player brings up a younger brother for the character, as background: he could be an NPC, or a pressing issue or a motivation. All depends which kind of role the young brother will have in fiction.

If the Player says he wants a younger brother to save, then the young brother might be a pressing issue, or also the motivation for joining the Iron Fist

(was this the only way to travel to the Holy Land? Was the young brother also in the Iron Fist?).

For the young brother to be a valid NPC, though, he should have some means to influence the character. In this case, the young brother might be hiding or escaping or plotting against his own older brother, but cannot be just waiting to be rescued.

CHANGE BACKGROUND

It is possible, during the game, for a Player to change a background element. This change will not be very common, but tell the Players that **they have the right to do so**. The change costs nothing, but must be done either at the beginning or end of a session, or in moment of pause. It should be something that you and the Player can discuss briefly without bothering the other Players.

Of course, the change must be clearly **justified in fiction**, and should not contradict the fiction itself.

- * **Changing roots or elements of the past:** it makes sense only if the element is no longer relevant, or was drastically changed by something that happened in fiction. You will actually replace it with something else from the past, but more relevant right now. The previous events of course are still real
- * **Changing the type of connections to an NPC or to another character:** again it has to be justified in fiction, but this can be clearly triggered by a death, or a substantial change in the relationship, or by resolving the bond itself
- * **Pressing issues or motivations:** again they can be changed according to the fiction - resolving the issues or reaching a given target; you can also change them if they appear not longer relevant

The change is up to the Players; as the GM, you have the right to guide them to make sensible choices, and the Players are anyway still bound to follow the same rules as when creating the character.

Changing the element is not a strategic choice to gain more XP; it must be a consequence of a change in fiction, or of the lack of importance for a given element.

SUMMARY SEVEN

Everything that you need to print to play the game, is available for download on the game website. For reference, in this manual, you also have the complete copies of the playbooks.

The material available on the website is ready to print on a larger paper size. Some of the material available in PDF is not included in the manual to save some trees and because it makes sense only in a different paper format.

Before you sit to play, prepare the material listed below:

- ✦ Make sure you have 2D6 per Player, plus 1D6 of different size or color per Player, as the Advantage Die
- ✦ Print all the Playbooks, each Player will get one
- ✦ Print the Players Handouts (the moves reference sheets), to leave to the Players
- ✦ Print the GM Guide with GM rules, principles and moves
- ✦ You can print the Character Creation Guide or otherwise refer to the manual
- ✦ Print the Characters' Front
- ✦ Print the Front Sheets provided, and refer to the manual for the fronts creation
- ✦ Bring some more paper for notes, maps, and such. And pencils, and erasers and so on

At the start, before making characters, introduce the Players to the game:

- ✦ Describe the setting: introduce the concept of the Iron Fist, their missions, and the characters as members of the mercenary company

- ✦ Introduce the City of Judas, where the story usually begins, with its two religions in conflict; spend a few words on the Judaists cult, and if you want the Players inputs on the setting, this is the time
- ✦ Explain the basic mechanics of the game, in general terms: what are the Stats used for, and what are the Moves and how the roll of the 2D6+Stat works
- ✦ Introduce very briefly how to use the Advantage Die, how to gain XP and make advancements, activate and deactivate Conditions
- ✦ During the game, remind the Players that the AD will reset at the end of the session, so they should use it, and remind them to claim Milestones
- ✦ Give a fair warning from the start: characters can die and the Iron World is an unforgiving, harsh place. Still, they are supposed to be tougher than regular folks
- ✦ Combat can be seriously deadly, especially against monsters and powerful enemies. Only deserved and hard victories are a source of fun, so the fear of a bloody fight should not hold them back
- ✦ Tell them from the beginning: you will ask a lot of questions and their answers will bear weight into shaping the setting, exploring the characters' past and future, directing the mission. Tell them not to be afraid to steer the game towards what they like more

During your first session, watch out especially for:

- ✦ Triggers for the moves that indicate the need of a roll
- ✦ Triggers for your own GM moves
- ✦ Chances for a fight, especially not a deadly one

While you familiarize with the rules of the game, see if you manage to look also for:

- ✦ What do the Players enjoy the most? Take a short break before the end of the session and ask them
- ✦ Analyze your own mastering work: do you follow rules and principles and make your moves accordingly?

This is your first session: don't be afraid to let the Players know when you are in doubt and you need to review something in the manual. If you discover a mistake later, in their favor or against them, no problem: tell them, explain what you did wrong, and apologize. But the result stands.

At the end of the first session and first adventure, remember to review with the Players how the game is going, using the appropriate list of questions.

Missions And Fronts



IRON MISSIONS

Missions for the Iron Fist are a crucial component of the game and a great driver for the adventures, a powerful tool for the GM to keep the game together and avoid pointless wandering around. One of the most important aspects of a mission is that it makes it easy and immediate to bring characters together - both in the same location and with a shared goal.

Having the characters together doesn't mean that they should always have the same objectives nor start as friends or remain friends as events unfold: relationships can be difficult within the Iron Fist - and long terms goals can be conflicting. The point is that the mission gives the Players a strong and common starting focal point.

Of course there can be still disagreement and even open conflict about the methods to follow, or what would be the desired outcome of a given mission, or who should be the commander on the field. Also, remind the Players that their characters can pursue also their own personal goals, at their own risk.

Remember that the Iron Fist mercenaries are hired through their officers, and soldiers cannot accept a job without their Magister's approval, nor negotiate a price, unless in extreme circumstances.

GM'S PLAN FOR THE MISSIONS

Before you commit to an idea, a situation or a target, analyze the situation from **outside of the fiction**, from the point of view as the one who will run the game, but has to keep in mind also its logistics, constrains, and so on.

If your game needs something, a mission is a great tool to deal with it, because of its inevitable focus; so try to understand your needs and address them with a mission.

You should do these evaluations before you speak to the characters and outline the mission; once you get them rolling into something, it will be difficult to change the focus.

While pondering on the mission options, consider both what you need out of fiction (something practical, i.e. a game of a certain duration, accommodate a new player for a single session, etc.) and what you need in fiction (something related to the story, i.e. to respond to some questions about a certain NPC that came up lately).

Ask yourself the following questions:

- * Do you need something fast or long? Single session? Or a hook for a long campaign?
- * Is there any character - or Player - that for whatever reason needs more attention? Anyone who's missing for a session or two?
- * What is your need in fiction, as the GM? Do you need to analyze a certain Front or resolve it? Or even just advance it a little? How can you involve it?
- * Is there a preferred location for the mission? Do you need to clarify or explore a certain element of the setting? Do you need to stay in the City of Judas, or do you need to go out in the wilderness?
- * Which kind of Playbooks did the Players choose? What are these choices telling you? What kind of character do they want to play?

MISSION ELEMENTS

When you create a mission, you need to define the below elements, keeping in mind what you determined as your plan as the GM:

- * **A starting situation in fiction**, what triggers the mission. This can be something not linked to previous events, if there is no clear threat or these are new characters
- * **An assignment**: the main goal, the intended success criteria, which resolves the issue mentioned as starting situation. This is what is assigned by the Iron Fist as the official goal of the mission
- * **A main threat** or a basic idea of what the center of the action might be; what will be the hardest challenge for the characters. This should remain open to changes and tuning during the game

Also, in planning all your missions (and in general in every session) consider the chosen Playbooks, and their Moves. Give Players occasions to use their

specialties. Tailor the fiction, the target and adversaries, the various scenes, according to the characters you have on stage.

If someone picked the Leader for example, he's asking for someone to command - and for someone to challenge him for that command; a Hunter wants to be out in the wilderness to exploit his specialties, while a Scout wants to stay in the City of Judas or anyway another city, and so on.

STARTING SITUATION

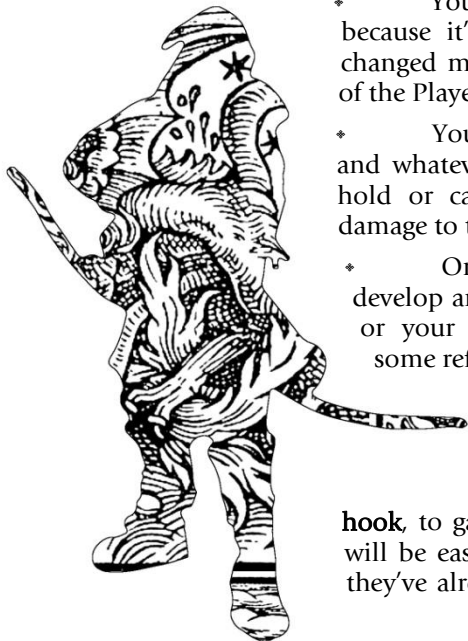
The starting situation is something that needs to be resolved somehow: an issue of some sort that the Iron Fist is paid to attend to, or something important for the Iron Fist itself, so that members are assigned to deal with it.

Think if there is something unresolved in your Fronts, something that emerged in fiction and drives the characters attention, something that would make for a perfect inspiration for the next mission. On the other hand, you can have a fresh start, whenever you want - make a new Front for the Mission, or use the Mission to bring characters to face something different than what they expected. Use your imagination or the examples in the next pages.

A **fresh start**, a Mission completely or mostly unrelated to the previous sessions, is most indicated when:

- * You have new characters at hand, either because it's your first game or because you changed most of the Players, or because most of the Players changed their characters
- * You have already a compelling idea, and whatever was left pending can be left on hold or can be postponed, without a clear damage to the fiction
- * One of your Fronts need time to develop and it's not at the center of attention, or your Players are experienced but need some refreshing

A fresh start grants you **absolute freedom** in your choices for a Mission, but on the other hand it will require a more **powerful hook**, to gain the Players' attention. In fact, it will be easier for them to feel involved when they've already invested on their characters or



they see developments in a world that they already know.

A powerful hook is not necessarily a grand plan, an adventure set to save the City of Judas from disaster, or the strongest monster of all. Actually, it makes sense that the first Iron Fist mission would not be too hard: the company wouldn't trust recruits with just a couple of rings with very important missions. But you can use a simpler mission to generate different kinds of hooks simply by keeping the mission very clear and placing those hooks as side-effects of the mission.

MISSION ASSIGNMENT

The mission assignment is a formal piece of the adventure, when the characters receive from the Iron Fist the instructions and **the exact goal** for the upcoming mission. Both failure and success should be relevant outcomes for the world they play in.

Remember that you should not determine all in advance. A mission will give **some focus**, but let the matter breathe and surprise you. If they need to kill someone, that's ok. You don't need to plan more than that.

What you need, though, to make the assignment clear enough:

- * What is the starting situation - or at least, known at the moment
- * What is the target - and if there is a precise target, or a vague one

The first clearly defines the second: it might be some situation where the Iron Fist is simply paid to intervene - like killing or attacking a target, defending or protecting people or places, obtain something, deliver something and so on - or it could be something worth of the Iron Fist interest - either paid or not.

In fact, you can assign missions without an external client, but triggered simply by the Iron Fist pursue of its own interest and benefit: there might be an investigation to carry on, a situation to defuse, an unknown threat to check out, political negotiations and peace-keeping missions, etc.

MISSION COMMANDER

When assigning the mission, usually the Iron Fist appoints **one of the members as Mission Commander**, and others are required to obey him. This will be fun. The only warning is to avoid someone with a clearly higher rank - a character who became a Magister, for example, or that is even trying to become a Caesar - subject to one less experienced and with lower rank, unless there is a real reason for this.

See about the Iron Fist ranking back on page 11

Once the mission commander is appointed, the other members of the party should obey him in his strategic and tactical decision, support him and offer consult. Violations against the mission commander count as violations against Magisters.

On the other hand, the mission commander has a greater responsibility than his peers regarding the mission's success. If the mission commander desires, he can renounce his command in favor of another party member, during the mission, and he can name his successor in case of death during the mission. It is rare, but sometimes the appointed mission commander might even politely refuse the assignment from the Magister. Usually though, failing to take such duty and responsibility, is source of scandal within the Iron Fist.

Write the mission commander name on your Characters' Front: there is a space for that in the sheet to remind you about it. If you forgot to name one, do it in the course of the mission: explain to the Players that you forgot, and who was chosen by the Magister for the role. If you cannot do this without spoiling the fiction, well, then it was the Magister's fault not to name one officially. And things might get messy when there is no clear chain of command.

MISSION THREAT

It is not always possible to determine in advance which one will be the main threat to the characters, during or at the end of the mission. In some cases, when the assignment is vague, you might want to leave this blank so that you can fill it later on; it's a good strategy to ensure you come up with something relevant.

But when the mission is focused and the threat known, for example a monster, then it's better if you prepare some basic material in advance, so you won't be caught off-guard. And since the missions are not all about monsters, again, you can draft in advance relevant information about the important adversaries (NPCs or Monsters), or the most critical nodal points of the adventure.

The recommendation is to **always make a Front**, even a simple one, for the ongoing mission. When you create this Mission Front, probably you don't need to fill the countdown tracker from the start, maybe just think of a single possible next event in case you want to advance this Front. The reason to keep this tracker open-ended, is that you should not plan the mission and its development from the start, but instead work with the Players feedback and actions to decide what to bring into the game.

Think about adversaries and crossroads along the story strictly **in terms of opportunities**. A mission gives some borders, guidelines to the adventure, but it should have space to breathe and surprise you and your Players alike.

Think of opportunities instead of restrictions or predefined paths, for example setting up a noble NPC which is an adversary of the Iron Fist and that must be killed. He does not sit on his throne, in a castle that you need to draw and the Players explore room by room. Thinking of opportunities means that instead the noble NPC has some characteristics and some drive towards something: can the characters exploit that? Will they find a way into the castle, through violence or disguise? Or will they attack him when he's out? Can they exploit his weaknesses? If they build for a good chance to kill him and succeed early on, where can this lead them? Is there someone else behind?

A final and important key about both the mission threat and the mission target, if you think of them in terms of opportunities, is to understand what would be the relevant outcome **both in case of success and failure**.

Missions are not always successful: this doesn't mean being expelled from the Iron Fist or that the characters are less important. It means instead they will be more eager to succeed the next time, to prove their value; they'll be ready to take more risks and suffer more, they'll maybe seek revenge or a way to obtain the success that they missed previously, or to rectify their mistakes.

Also, a failed Mission Front can evolve, in your hands, into a more powerful, stronger threat for the Iron Fist or the City of Judas, and set you up for a new adventure to propose to the characters.

REGULAR MISSION START

Depending on the group and GM's preferences, you might start the mission **in a traditional way**, with the characters conferring with the Magister and receiving the assignment, or directly in the middle of an action scene. This is something you can discuss with your Players, trying to accommodate their preferences, or that depends on the time you have at hand (i.e. for a one-shot you should probably start in the heat of the action without further delay).

Some Players prefer to have the time to plan and carefully review the situation before getting into action: in this case start the session within an Iron Fist headquarter or similar, with a Magister assigning the mission to the characters. Name a character as the mission commander, give to the characters the details of the target to accomplish, and any other necessary input; then let them pick up the mission at their own pace.

In this case, watch out and in case things slow down too much, use your moves to spice up the fiction. While the characters debate, discuss and hesitate, the mission threat and Front will advance and pressing issues will arise. Especially for the first mission, it's important that characters will be proactive and don't just hang around waiting for things to happen.

START IN MEDIA RES

As an alternative to this traditional start, other Players might enjoy a more aggressive and direct approach. If this is the case, put the characters **in the middle of some action scene**, and begin with a tense situation.

The characters might be in control or not, but should be ready to act quickly or things will immediately turn for the worse.

If you and the Players choose to start with an aggressive, tense scene, make sure that the characters anyway will know **how to act in their best interest**. If you present a fight, the characters should have an idea of who they're fighting against and why, and what's their first, immediate goal. They might be trying to acquire information, gain access to some place, defeat an enemy, escape from a certain threat; whatever you will choose to present them, don't setup hidden traps or unclear situations.

While you resolve this first scene, ask a lot of questions, especially about how they got here and why.

Use these inputs to outline the mission, to define or to reveal what was the starting situation (the problem to be resolved), and what is going to be the exact target (the mission objective) and clarify to the Players what will be the possible developments in case they commit to a certain line of actions. Since they did not plan for this, it's only fair that you will share plenty of information with them.

An advantage to a start in media res is that you need to define perhaps nothing about the mission: you can ask questions to the Players, for example let the first Player define what the problem was, the second Player what the Iron Fist mission objective is, and the third reveal what the main threat might be, who might be the main adversary.

Once the first scene is completed - and it does not need to last very long unless you really see your Players dwelling into action and it would be a shame to slow them down - you can relax and give them a break; let them make plans and answer their questions, so they can feel confident to proceed.

EXAMPLE MISSIONS

The below table contains some examples, and should not be treated as an exhaustive compendium. Roll 2D6 to find inspiration, if you don't know what to offer to the characters as their mission.

Number 12 is left intentionally blank, so you can fill it with anything that comes to your mind, and keep it for the future.

Focused Missions	Vaguer Missions
2: Kill someone because	2: Investigate a death
3: Kill something before	3: Face unknown threat
4: Protect someone from	4: Find someone
5: Defend something	5: Tense situation
6: Steal something from	6: Find something
7: Retrieve something	7: Investigate an object
8: Conquer a location	8: Check a location
9: Hold a location	9: Bring peace or make alliance
10: Protect convoy	10: Negotiate trade agreements
11: Religious mission	11: Political mission
12:	12:

Complementary to the Missions inspiration table, see next some possible opening scenes if you want to start in media res. The table presents generic scenes, and scenes focused according to the Playbooks that you will have in play.

You will not be able to use all of them at once, **pick what suits you** and strikes your imagination and fit the other characters reasonably into the action.

Generic Scenes

The characters have some prisoners that they're interrogating

One of the characters is a prisoner and the others are about to free him

While soldiers die all around, the characters protect the noble

The one they're supposed to protect is dragged into the woods by ...

Escort soldiers are killed by a terrible monster(s) while the characters ...

About to enter the lair of a monster that they must kill because ...

While one protects the reliquary, the other characters fight against ...

In the court of a noble house, while a heated argument develops between ...

On a mountain pass, being ambushed by ... or attacking by surprise on ...

Escaping right after they've stolen or retrieved ...

When they open the chest, find it empty and all of a sudden ... appears

Holding the bridge against ... while a certain prelate runs to safety from ...

Sealing the doors of the palace while outside an angry crowd ...

Right after they've read a mysterious scroll that says that ...

Playbooks

Barber: treating someone important or innocent badly hurt; or assisting while they inexorably die and ...

Horseman: charging right into an enemy to help another character, or trying to get back on the saddle after ...

Hunter: tracking alone in the wild, and finding ... or reporting back to the commander with bad, bad news about ...

Priest: comforting a dying one, or maybe carrying something sacred and precious, or revealing a confession that ...

Leader: in a tense situation with nobles, or opposing his own family, or in the heat of the action demanding obedience

Raider: using his gang to surround an enemy, or to spring an ambush, or lead them against something big that ...

Scout: tracking someone in the city, or reporting about certain movements, or just about to steal ... what?

Sellsword: facing head on the most dangerous enemy on the field, revealing the characters position to enemies

Veteran: arguing about strategy, or maybe cornered by the strongest enemy and still fighting while others ...

Sorcerer: about to cast one of his avail. spells, or right after casting, or revealing something dark about sorcery that ...

MISSION FOCUS

When you defined the target of the mission, or in other words what the Iron Fist demands the characters to accomplish, you need to consider how focused would you like the mission to be.

A very focused mission is based on a decent, if not a complete, setup of starting information, and has a very clear target.

On the other hand, a **vaguer mission** usually starts with questions rather than information, and with an unclear goal, that would be defined better during the mission itself, depending on circumstances unknown at the start. Diplomatic missions, protection missions, investigation missions are typical examples of less focused missions.

A vague mission might require that the characters will have to report back to the Iron Fist with the results of the investigation, or have clearance to act according to their own judgment. Perhaps they will receive orders that demand a report before taking action, and be forced to act anyway in spite of their orders, because of the urgency of the situation.

The focus of a Mission depends greatly by two factors:

- * What is known and established
- * How precise is the mission target

There is no better mission; focused and vaguer missions are both viable choices. The selection often depends on the kind of game the Players like, time constraints, desire for a given experience and so on.

A focused mission has less breathing space, but its focus is compelling. A vague mission includes more variables and factions, would easily become longer to complete and more complex, but on the other hand gives Players a larger margin for partial failures.

A focused mission is not necessarily easier, not for the characters, and not for the Players; it simply has a more direct path, usually, to follow from the start to the end. Still, this is usually a safer choice with beginners, inexperienced Players, or as the first mission of a new group of Players, or when planning for a shorter game.

INSPIRATION FOR MISSIONS

Some examples for focused missions:

- * Kill a noble, for revenge, because of a secret; kill a merchant that stole from a bank, kill a banker, kill the candidate to an important office
- * Kill a monster or a demon threatening a village or a road, a monster in the ranks of an enemy's army, a monster enslaved by a sorcerer

- ✦ Protect someone from assassins, from poisoning, from demons, from family or enemies; it could a noble, someone with power or money, or someone in a delicate position, or someone in credit of a favor
- ✦ Defend an access, a fortune; defend a house
- ✦ Steal for money, power, information; steal something very small, or very big, or something unknown
- ✦ Retrieve an object of power, a sacred object, a letter of credit, a chest of gold, an important message
- ✦ Conquer a military position
- ✦ Hold a location, a bridge, a village, a road, a pass, a well, access to a road
- ✦ Protect a caravan of merchants, a group of refugees, a diplomatic mission, escort a prisoner
- ✦ Bring messages, deliver opium, protect priests or monks, protect a high prelate

Some examples for vaguer missions:

- ✦ Investigate the death of a noble, of an heir, of a poor priest, of someone with a secret
- ✦ Receive a letter with vague warnings, investigate a missing caravan, a lost cargo, a land beyond the desert, an abandoned castle
- ✦ Find the one with the key, or the cipher, or the money, or the information; find the one with the power to approve, to stop, to unleash, to banish
- ✦ Missing food, missing water, isolation; during a siege, a long march, lost at sea, or in the desert
- ✦ Find a specific weapon, jewel, piece of art; a certain information
- ✦ Determine the power of an object or a remote location
- ✦ Find a location, determine its potential and threats, draw maps, make contacts
- ✦ Favor negotiations, stop a war, a conflict, a group of bandits; intercede between noble houses
- ✦ Negotiate a truce in war, a safe passage, hospitality for an exiled; negotiate trading agreements
- ✦ Obtain audience, refer messages, bring diplomatic offers, make negotiations, obtain peace, access, trade

NOT ONLY MISSIONS

The life of the Iron Fist mercenaries is not only composed by mission after mission. It would be good sometimes - and it will become more and more natural once the characters evolve and develop perhaps their own agendas - to steer the focus away from the Iron Fist for one or more sessions. In these cases, it is anyway important that the Players and the GM somehow share a common view of the single session or adventure scope.

If the adventure begins without a mission, and without any specific drive from the Players, play is going to stall. It doesn't mean that as the GM you should always be the one preparing the session's events: it is perfectly fine if the Players want to address their concerns regarding a certain Front, or if they have their own plans to develop and so on. Just make sure that **whatever the focus is** - a side-plan, something to address regarding a character's past or present issues, something to resolve in a character's roots or weakness, something necessary to unlock an Advancement or so on - that this focus is clear to all those present at the table.

For you as the GM, of course the characters' backgrounds are a great source of ideas for possible adventures that do not concern directly the Iron Fist, but your previous adventures and the open Fronts will also provide you with good material for this kind of sessions.

Play the game as you usually do: play adversaries, make your Moves, exploit Taint, and advance your Fronts and so on. Just try not to bring the Iron Fist back in play unless the characters really do something that might attract the brotherhood attention, or the characters themselves turn to the Iron Fist for help. The key of these sessions is indeed to step



away from the brotherhood; as the GM it is your duty to leave the characters free to pursue also their own personal goals, without pressuring them to go back to the Iron Fist.

Unless, of course, you see a compelling reason in fiction to ask them to make a hard choice: pursue your private interest at some cost for the Iron Fist or even in opposition to the brotherhood, or instead remain loyal to your brothers and give up something precious?

PLAY WITHOUT THE IRON FIST

As a corollary, you could have a group of Players that would like to play Iron World, but without the Iron Fist, from the start. This is also a viable option.

In terms of mechanics, the only change is to remove the Iron Fist as the source of missions, and the related Moves like Milestone and End Of A Mission will need to be reworked according to your needs. There might be a different organization or a powerful NPC directing the characters' missions - and so you just need to change the Iron Fist into a King, a Queen, a religious order like the Templar, or similar.

If instead you want to play more of an exploration, or sandbox style, note that the game will not generate this sort of content for you. You will reasonably need to integrate this system with something of your own, to avoid the game stalling for the lack of fictional drive. You can use map generating tools, random cards and such, to play in a sandbox style.

Think, together with the Players, about the situation and the adventures that they expect to play, without the Iron Fist acting as a strong focal point. In the Iron World, the Iron Fist brotherhood does something more than just assigning missions and giving or taking away Iron Rings. The brotherhood puts the characters together at the start, provides a valid and in-fiction motivation for them to know each other and to stay together. Moreover, thanks to its missions, the Iron Fist gives them a common goal, a strong focus for each adventure.

If you play without the Iron Fist from the start, think with your Players how to respond to the following questions:

- * Why are the characters together, and how do they know each other?
- * What is the reason for them to stay together and what is their common goal?
- * What is the session by session, adventure after adventure, main focus?

Other games address these topics in a variety of different ways, and you can reuse their techniques with little or no need for hacking, to bring them to the Iron World.

CREATE FRONTS

Fronts are structured threats that last **often more than a single session**, and can even span over multiple adventures. Fronts are never a passive threat - something that does not change unless the characters intervene. Instead, Fronts are **always an active threat**: this means that even if the characters do nothing, the Front will progress. Actually, having characters not actively opposing or fighting or anyway dealing with the Front is a golden opportunity to use your GM Move to advance the Front itself.

The Fronts are composed by several elements, and below you will find the description for each one of them, and instructions on how to generate your own Fronts for the game.

Note that sometimes a Front is basically the same thing as a Mission, and in fact you should always have one Front dedicated to the ongoing mission itself. But the real Fronts are more than a mission, they are game components, something you build as the GM, with your knowledge and control of the world and its elements, locations, NPCs, monsters and so on.

You can use a Front to track a mission, then, or a specific and important threat, but other Fronts will become something larger than a mission, a single monster or threat; they will have the potential to grow into a larger narration.

FRONTS STRUCTURE

To outline a Front, you use a known, familiar structure which is similar to a lot of other AW hacks, which is a combination of the following elements:

- * A major threat or danger
- * A Master Plan, a dark agenda, with a countdown
- * Some minor nested threats, dangers, issues

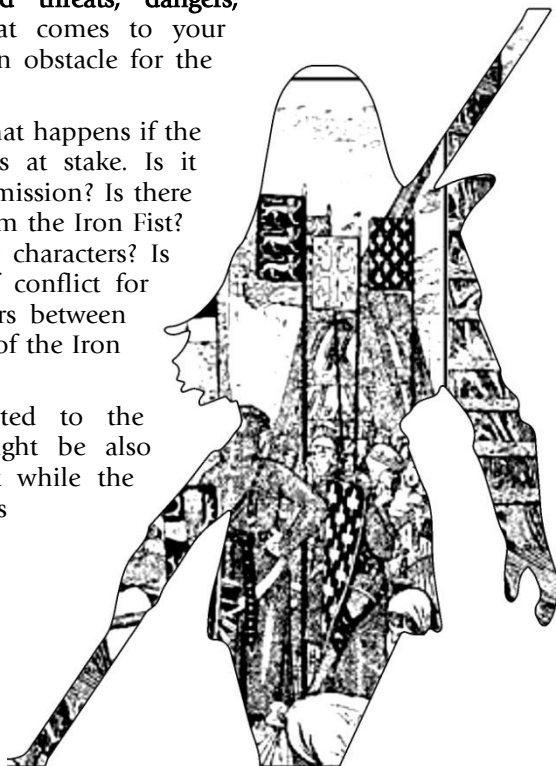
- * Stakes, questions (questions make it interesting)
- * Usually at least one important and compelling NPC
- * Iron Moves, and possibly Custom Moves, for the Front itself or for its threats

To make a Front you can start from any of the various components. Also, you do not need all of the components from the start; in some cases you would be adding details as the characters progress dealing with the Front, and in some other cases you wouldn't need all of them to keep the Front running. The first two, though, the major threat and its countdown, are basically fundamental.

A MISSION FRONT

When you build a Front from a Mission, the above elements are defined as follows:

- * **A major threat or danger:** what the mission is about, the mission target
- * **A Master Plan, a dark agenda, with a countdown:** what happens that complicates the mission while time passes, what happens at the end
- * **Some minor nested threats, dangers, issues:** anything that comes to your mind that can be an obstacle for the characters
- * **Stakes, questions:** what happens if the mission fails, what's at stake. Is it only another usual mission? Is there a deeper interest from the Iron Fist? Or from one of the characters? Is there some kind of conflict for one of the characters between his goals and those of the Iron Fist?
- * **NPCs:** usually related to the mission, but it might be also someone they meet while the mission is in progress



FRONT IDEAS

All the below questions are valid inputs to create a Front - or to see it emerge from elements that previously entered the game as standalone items:

- * Think of NPCs: do you have an interesting NPC? How do you bring it to the center of your game?
- * Does he have a plan, a major threat against the characters, the Iron Fist, the City of Judas or some other fictional element? Is there someone behind this NPC, perhaps another unknown NPC, a group or a gang, an organization? Can you make this group to be your major threat?
- * Think of events and adventure paths: do you have a master plan and you want to see if it works out? Who will be in charge of it? Who will execute it, and following orders from whom?
- * What will happen if the master plan is not stopped in time?
- * Look at the previous events in fiction: do you think that there might be a grander scheme or a more powerful NPC or monster behind a minor threat encountered by the characters?
- * Do you see a link between the events of the last few missions and their monsters or adversaries?
- * Think of the threat itself: do you have inspiration for a major threat, which can play an important role for more than a single mission?
- * It could be a monster, a supernatural menace, a dark sorcerer, an ambitious enemy, a group of them, or perhaps something more subtle: a political intrigue, someone who's lying to the characters, the long-lasting effects of a war or an invasion and so on
- * Do you have questions - important questions - to resolve? Which kind of adventures would address these questions? Who's the enemy, here, and who can be an ally?
- * What are they fighting for, what motivates them? What is really at stake here - besides the immediate, visible consequences of an evil plan?
- * Do you have a cursed location, a powerful organization, an army of invaders lingering at the borders? Mysterious ships attacking the merchants time after time? Or reports of issues in the port of Acre?

FRONT THREATS

To build a Front, you can start from any of the elements listed in the Front Structure. But typically you start with a major threat or danger, or an important NPC, which has some kind of a plan or drive which by itself constitutes a threat.

You can address a major threat directly as your mission target, but you can also let it emerge afterwards; plan the mission around a minor threat, with the real Front to discover afterwards. This is a powerful way to keep the Players interested in the rest of the world, not just on their mission targets.

In any case, you will find example threats in the next pages, to use in your Fronts.

FRONT COUNTDOWN

Every major threat in a Front - or the Front itself - has a countdown. You can have a single countdown for the Front, which addresses the main line of events, and a few other minor countdowns for relatively smaller events or threats.

A countdown indicates the advancement of the various threats of the Front.

The countdown is presented as a moon: every section of it is the presentation of an event, the realization of a threat, an attack or a move, something that becomes real.

Erase one piece at the time, from left to right, and for each piece you can set an event, a trigger and a reaction, or similar. When the moon is completely dark, the threat, the event is triggered in all of its power; which is usually bad for the characters.

There are five sections, so each countdown - be it for the Front itself, or for a minor threat - should be composed by five different steps, increasingly menacing and each one irreversible. When the moon countdown advances, whatever it symbolizes occurs. The characters can and should address the Front, as it progresses, to try to stop it from advancing forward. But whatever happened happened and cannot be undone.

See an example below of the various phases, as the Front advances:



When you design the countdown, in the best case you have already all your options clear to you and you can write exactly what each section means. Otherwise, you can start by defining the first couple of sections, and then define the intermediate and final steps **only later on**, as the adventure progresses and your ideas are shaping.

Remember that:

- ✦ You can advance the Front by making your corresponding GM move
- ✦ Or you advance the Front when the event that it represents, already happened in fiction

EXAMPLE COUNTDOWNS

Each countdown is unique and depends from the threat itself.

For example **a countdown for a siege** might be:

- 1 The threat of the siege, the enemy approaching*
- 2 The deployment of the enemy army around the city*
- 3 The full closure of all escape routes and exit paths*
- 4 The beginning of starvation within the city*
- 5 And finally the last attack against the city walls by the enemy army*

Each step represents a given event in fiction, and the event usually makes the situation worse or harder for the characters, or anyway for the victims of the Front itself. If an event marked by a countdown occurs in fiction, for example the characters try to escape the city, and fail, the front is automatically advanced to the event itself - in this example, to the third section where all exit paths are closed.

A countdown for a monster could present instead:

- 1 The first spotting of the monster with only animals falling victim of it*
- 2 Discover the first human victims*
- 3 An attack close to the village*
- 4 The last attack to the village*
- 5 With the destruction of the village itself as the last section*

As you can see by the examples, the countdown basically indicates how the situation **gets worse and worse**, with the time. The characters will have to deal with the subsequent steps, if they fail to stop or prevent the front from advancing.

But the Front countdown is not a railroaded adventure: if the characters kill the monster or break the siege, they've actually done what they're supposed to do: they opposed and defeated the Front, rendering it harmless, or anyway escaping its dangers. If this happens, you can discard the Front, or delete the single countdown - as it is no longer relevant for the Players. Do not cheat to try to keep a Front running when it was properly defeated.

FRONTS MATERIALS

When you make a Front, you can name it after its major threat. The threat usually defines also what the Front can do, in terms of moves or menaces, and what will be its agenda (its moon countdown).

In the lists of the following pages, you will find some examples of threats, and how you can use them to make a Front. Note that not always the Front revolves around a single monster or NPC: you can have groups or cults, or even special locations as the center of a Front, and define what happens around them as minor, nested threats, with their own countdowns.

Remember that the countdown with its triggered events, and the Front description itself, with its instinct, **its drive towards something**, will be the main key in determining how the Front will advance.

The examples of the following pages are divided in groups, showing major threats with a few keywords and sentences that will help you to define their impulses or their plans.

Also, each of them has some example moves - just defined as actions that they can reasonably perform in advancing their master plan(s) and attacks they can execute.

Note that these are not exhaustive lists: this section is free to be customized by the GM according to the specific adventure, the specific events of your campaign. Use the lists **to inspire you**, or to give you something predefined in case of need, but you're also encouraged to create your own material. Make adversaries, monsters, threats, Fronts, and share your creations online; make custom moves for monsters or NPCs or locations, and share those too.

The examples contain:

- * Monsters and Demons: Dragons or Huge Monsters, Demons or Angels or Minor Deities, Guardian Spirits
- * Cults: the Church of Christ, the Cult of Judas, the Book of Q, Other Obscure Cults
- * Various Powers: Military power, Nobility and Royals, Merchants, Traders and Guilds, Sorcerers
- * Other Groups: Pirates or Slavers, Barbarians or Invaders, Small Governments or Warbands
- * Locations: Marine locations, such as ports, ships, bridges, lakes, islands, rivers; Wild locations, such as mountains, hills forests, deserts; Human locations, such as roads, villages, castles
- * Events: keywords, and example countdowns for Siege, Pestilence, Prophecy, Travel



MONSTERS AND DEMONS

See how to make monsters from page 126

When you use any of these, be very careful: they are not simple monsters to dispatch easily, but rare and very powerful beings.

Dragons or Huge Monsters - a list of instincts:

- * To raid and attack
- * To amass treasures
- * To destroy
- * To seek revenge

Example GM Moves:

- * Attack suddenly
- * Accept ransom or tribute
- * Come from inland or sometimes from the sea
- * Be huge and unique
- * Pick a special victim
- * Have an inhuman appetite for gold and violence

Demons or Angels or Minor Deities - a list of instincts:

- * To obtain power
- * To demand worshipping
- * To manifest
- * To influence human politics

Example GM Moves:

- * Follow inhuman logic
- * Attack with supernatural powers
- * To issue orders, to judge
- * Pick a special victim or someone to trust
- * Be unique and scary
- * Accept tribute and worshipping
- * Prophesize
- * To bless, curse, infest a body, an artifact or a place

Guardian Spirits - a list of instincts:

- * To protect and curse
- * To awaken and fight

Example GM Moves:

- * Defend at all costs
- * Use supernatural powers
- * To command minions
- * Be bound to a location
- * To persecute thieves
- * Curse an artifact

CULTS

Read again about Judas and the Christ back on page 9

Cults are a great source of inspiration both for Missions and for Fronts. Even if the characters are not involved in the conflict between the Church of Christ and the Cult of Judas, the city of Jerusalem is the theater of this subtle, relentless war.

If the two cults don't come up in the Missions, therefore, make sure to configure a Front or two, to advance in the background: give hints about great events preparing for the future, and when the characters will be ready for it, let them take part in the conflict.

The Church of Christ - a list of instincts:

- * To preserve stability
- * To maintain power
- * To gain gold and influence
- * To increase their power

Example GM moves:

- * Show corruption
- * Show power
- * Invoke support of powerful friends
- * Show faith sometimes
- * Maintain order
- * Demand something or someone
- * Use intermediaries
- * Use threats and pressure
- * Act with force when necessary
- * Offer rewards
- * Corrupt if necessary
- * Obtain control of a location and its population

The Cult of Judas - a list of instincts:

- * To instigate rebellion
- * To consume opium
- * To overthrow powers
- * To fight Christians

Example GM Moves:

- * Condemn corruption
- * Antagonize power
- * Act with faith
- * Subvert order
- * Support the poor
- * Act directly
- * Attack only when necessary
- * Invoke support of the crowd
- * Challenge or insult
- * Release someone or something
- * Reject bribery
- * Obtain support of the local population

The Church of Christ and the Cult of Judas aren't the only religions in the area. Remember that this is an age of dark sorcery and demons are waiting, just beyond the thin veil that separates the world from Hell. Who better than some obscure cult can make the subject for a mission or two?

Also, you can use the followers of the Book of Q either to steer the fiction towards an "almost-real" history, threatening the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Or instead, use the Book of Q as an element of instability and surprise, in the struggle between the Church of Christ and the Cult of Judas.

Other Obscure Cults - a list of instincts:

- * To infiltrate
- * To corrupt
- * To evoke demons
- * To destroy

Example GM Moves:

- * Remain hidden
- * Corrupt those with power
- * Desire for power
- * Desire for destruction
- * Move cautiously
- * Gain unexpected allies
- * Offer sacrifices (animals, goods, even humans)
- * Advance a dark agenda
- * Attack suddenly
- * Offer dark powers
- * Reject bribery
- * Subvert order
- * Obtain more connections
- * Instill fear in the local population

The Book of Q - a list of instincts:

- * To invade
- * To threaten
- * To compete for supremacy
- * To convert the conquered

Example GM Moves:

- * Move cautiously
- * Show friendliness
- * Gain power
- * Gain stability
- * Negotiate trade routes
- * Hold hostages in good conditions
- * Threaten before attacking
- * Attack in forces
- * Offer money or goods
- * Invoke restitution of a favor
- * Convert people and places
- * Seize control of a location and maintain it

VARIOUS POWERS

If the Iron Fist is a military strong presence in the Holy Land, but between their engagements in various missions, and the work they do to protect the opium trade, they might always end up being vulnerable to other local powers that can deploy on the field tens if not hundreds of armed and armored soldiers.

Military powers - a list of instincts:

- * To control
- * To fortify
- * To attack and expand
- * To abuse force

Example GM moves:

- * Show discipline
- * Show force
- * Show mercy sometimes
- * Maintain order
- * Make a direct attack
- * Act with force without regret
- * Enforce military law
- * Demand something or someone
- * Threaten and follow through
- * Offer rewards or demand payment or bribery
- * Obey orders from higher ranks or nobles
- * Obtain control of a location and its population

Nobility and Royals - a list of instincts:

- * To preserve stability
- * To maintain power
- * To gain gold and influence
- * To increase their power

Example GM moves:

- * Show corruption
- * Learn secrets and plot
- * Invoke support of powerful friends
- * Listen to reason sometimes
- * Maintain order
- * Demand something or someone
- * Corrupt and bribe
- * Use intermediaries
- * Use threats and pressure
- * Act with force but almost never in person
- * Offer rewards, negotiate
- * Obtain control of a location and its population

*See how to use
Gangs for fights
from page 121*

Power does not always manifest in the form of a blade. There's one metal stronger than steel, they say: gold.

Merchants, Traders and Guilds - a list of instincts:

- ✦ To trade and travel
- ✦ To bring goods and news
- ✦ To expand their market
- ✦ To protect or favor their side

Example GM moves:

- ✦ Show pragmatism
- ✦ Show the power of gold
- ✦ Invoke support of powerful protectors, blackmail
- ✦ Gain stability
- ✦ Negotiate trade routes
- ✦ Plot to improve their gain and their markets
- ✦ Use commerce and goods to control nobles or militaries
- ✦ Use intermediaries
- ✦ Use rewards and bribery
- ✦ Rarely act with force, but favor patience, negotiations
- ✦ Use guards and corruption
- ✦ Keep secrets, spy someone
- ✦ Buy the favor of a location and its population
- ✦ Sail, travel to Europe, bring and ship opium

Sorcerers - a list of instincts:

- ✦ To preserve power
- ✦ To obtain influence
- ✦ To gain knowledge
- ✦ To discover a secret

Example GM moves:

- ✦ Show power and wonders
- ✦ Show corruption and taint
- ✦ Invoke support of powerful ally or another sorcerer
- ✦ Listen to reason sometimes
- ✦ Act to pursue knowledge or greater power
- ✦ Ignore military and political powers
- ✦ Use intermediaries
- ✦ Use sorcery and demons
- ✦ Act with force without hesitation when necessary
- ✦ Invoke restitution of a favor
- ✦ Use corruption, rewards, but also magical control
- ✦ Obtain control of a remote location

See how to use magical powers for NPCs from page 143

OTHER GROUPS

Pirates or Slavers - a list of instincts:

- ✦ To raid and attack at sea
- ✦ To enslave and ransom

Example GM Moves:

- ✦ Attack suddenly
- ✦ Gain money or goods
- ✦ Come from the sea or rarely from inland
- ✦ Hold hostages in poor conditions
- ✦ Attack in forces
- ✦ Choose their victims wisely
- ✦ Respond only to gold or brute force
- ✦ Seize control of a remote location and make camp

Barbarians or Invaders - a list of instincts:

- ✦ To attack and raid
- ✦ To obtain land and settle

Example GM Moves:

- ✦ Attack suddenly
- ✦ Loot and enslave
- ✦ Come from inland, with or without warning
- ✦ Hold hostages in poor conditions
- ✦ Attack in forces
- ✦ Move with families
- ✦ Respond only to gold or brute force
- ✦ Seize control of a rich location and settle

Small Governments or Warbands - a list of instincts:

- ✦ To attack and raid
- ✦ To seek power and gold

Example GM Moves:

- ✦ Attack suddenly
- ✦ Gain money or power
- ✦ Come from inland or from remote cities
- ✦ Hire mercenaries or be hired as mercenaries
- ✦ Attack in small forces
- ✦ Attack the weakest
- ✦ Respond positively to bribery or negotiations
- ✦ Improve their control on the local population

See how to use Gangs for fights from page 121

LOCATIONS

Marine locations, such as ports, ships, bridges, lakes, islands, rivers:

- * To facilitate trade
- * To facilitate traveling
- * To concentrate refugees
- * To feed or starve

Example GM Moves:

- * Show trades, commerce, interests
- * To demand tribute
- * To change
- * To separate and divide
- * To be guarded or to be conquered
- * To open or close the way
- * To resist
- * To block, to divert

Wild locations, such as mountains, hills forests, deserts:

- * To block
- * To divide
- * To protect
- * To surprise

Example GM Moves:

- * Show difficult routes
- * Demand a guide
- * To be conquered or to be guarded
- * Host a monster
- * To resist invasion
- * To demand sacrifice
- * To block or to separate travelers
- * Protect a secret

Human locations, such as roads, villages, castles:

- * To connect
- * To travel
- * To protect
- * To group

Example GM Moves:

- * Show multiple paths
- * Demand a tribute
- * Show intrigue and plots
- * Offer markets
- * Show protection
- * Show guards and leaders
- * Offer shelter
- * Offer troubles

EVENTS

Siege - keywords to the left, and example countdown on the right:

- * Isolation
- * Battles, spies
- * Disorder
- * Street fights
- * Escape, surrender
- 1. Besieged
- 2. Raids
- 3. Hunger and thirst
- 4. Revolt
- 5. End of the siege

Pestilence - keywords to the left, and example countdown on the right:

- * Weakness
- * Disease
- * Military law
- * Disorder and revolt
- * Plague and death
- 1. First victims
- 2. Contagion
- 3. Quarantine
- 4. Quarantine breach
- 5. Outbreak

Prophecy - keywords to the left, and example countdown on the right:

- * Ignorance
- * Cults, closed circles
- * Military reaction
- * Overthrowing
- * Sorcery
- 1. First words
- 2. Unintelligible prophecy
- 3. Dark signs
- 4. Interpretation of prophecy
- 5. Ruin and disaster

Travel - keywords to the left, and example countdown on the right:

- * Guide
- * Betrayal
- * Secret
- * Revolt
- * Return
- 1. Lack of preparation
- 2. Brigands or pirates
- 3. Discovery
- 4. Hunger and thirst
- 5. Lost road

MINOR HUMAN THREATS

See the basic NPCs stats for fighting on page 120

The minor threats are often disposable minions, but this doesn't mean they should pose no danger or appear as boring figures to chop in pieces. A minor threat is minor only in the sense that it is less likely to kill characters or stop them; maybe it will still cause a disturbance, delay the characters, cause trouble or attract unwelcome attention.

The best choice when coming to minor threats is to keep the number of these encounters to a minimum; the give better focus and more depth to the few that you decide to bring into the game.

Also simple monsters can be used as minor threats, but do not exceed in their usage. If an adventure features a major monster, then using minor monsters as minions should be done reasonably: a major demon is more likely to be connected to minor demons or elementals, than with brainless sand-worms.

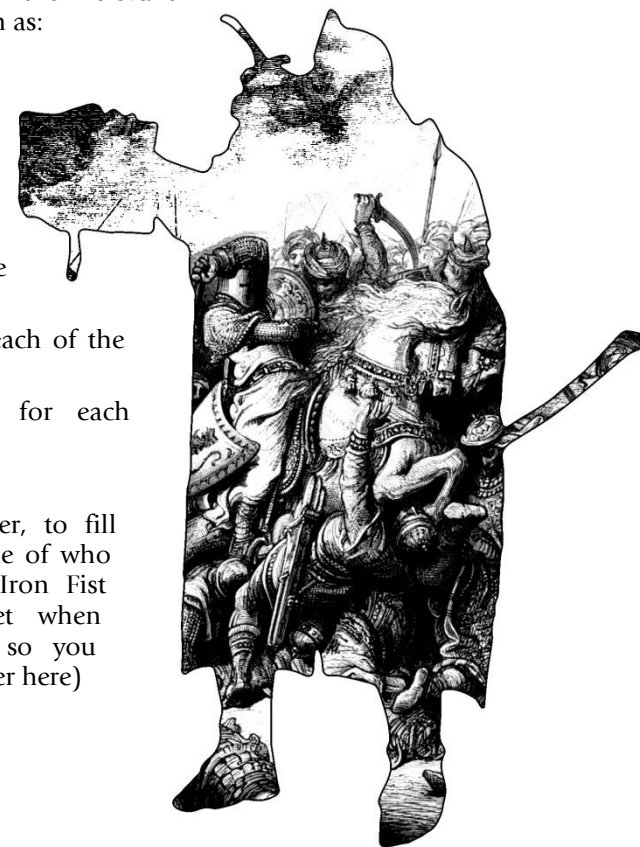
A list of minor human threats and basic instincts:

- ✦ **Priests** [lead, preach, preserve, betray]
- ✦ **Monks** [preach, hide, revolt, study, discover]
- ✦ **Soldiers** [march, fight, defend, attack, ambush]
- ✦ **Guards** [protect, guard, betray, harass]
- ✦ **Captains** [lead, negotiate, order, betray]
- ✦ **Minor merchants** [trade, negotiate, corrupt, travel]
- ✦ **Traders** [invest, lend, borrow, corrupt, influence]
- ✦ **Apprentices** [learn, trade, study, discover, protect]
- ✦ **Victims** [request help, suffer, revolt, rebel]
- ✦ **Sailors** [travel, discover, trade, revolt]
- ✦ **Warriors** [fight, defend, attack, revolt]
- ✦ **Lovers** [hide, protect, spy, betray, offer, demand]
- ✦ **Spies** [hide, betray, spy, steal, subtract]
- ✦ **Thieves** [hide, sneak, steal, bribe]
- ✦ **Brigands** [ambush, assault, steal, negotiate]
- ✦ **Peasants** [request help, produce, offer, demand]

CHARACTERS' FRONT

One of the sheets you need to print for the game is the Characters' Front. You need to fill it right away, during the characters creation process, with all the relevant information about them, such as:

- ✦ Name and playbook type
- ✦ Background items
- ✦ A list of important moves, and then later on in the game write down the moves recently acquired or the best moves they have
- ✦ What gives -1 Spirit to each of the characters, it's important!
- ✦ The active Conditions for each character
- ✦ The Taint Tracker
- ✦ The Mission Commander, to fill with the character's name of who was appointed by the Iron Fist (this is easy to forget when assigning the mission, so you have it listed as a reminder here)



FILL THE CHARACTERS' FRONT

Fill the Characters' Front with the important details about the characters, at the start of your game. You need to fill all the elements that the Front demands, as listed previously.

Some elements, such as Moves and active Conditions, will change during the game, so make sure to keep it up to date.

With regard to Moves, at the start of the game you will list whatever the Players will chose for their characters. Later on, characters will acquire new Moves and you won't have space for all of them: list the newest moves, their best moves, and maybe those you see that the Player is using less, so you will offer opportunities.

The purpose of the Characters' Front is to keep the game focused on all the elements that the Players consider important (their background, the Moves they choose) and similarly focused on their weaknesses (what gives them -1 Spirit, and their Conditions).

If a Player already brings a certain Move of his character often into play, you don't need to track it in the Front; you should instead focus **on the new ones** (that will remind you which new opportunities to offer) and those that the Player is using less often.

Every now and then, do a cleanup process: take a blank Characters' Front sheet, copy over the relevant information (names, backgrounds, Moves, Spirit -1 triggers, active Conditions) but clear all the circles. This can be done either at the end of a mission, or even after an intense session, or when the fiction clearly moves towards some sort of a fresh start.

USE THE CHARACTERS' FRONT

Once you've filled the Characters' Front with all the information, keep it next to your notes and the other Fronts sheets. Keep an eye on the various elements, and:

- * If a Condition is active (i.e. someone is Unstable) underline the related keyword
- * If you want to remind yourself to bring into play a certain element (i.e. a Move or a background), underline the related keyword
- * Remove the underlining when the Condition is not active anymore, or when the element is not relevant anymore to the current session or situation

Next to every element of the Characters' Front you have a series of circles:

- * When you bring something into play, in favor or against the characters it doesn't matter, mark one of the circles next to the related element (i.e. offer a chance for a move, exploit a condition, bring a background into the scene)
- * You don't need to maintain balance, but the number of circles serves you as a reference and a reminder: there will be elements that received enough attention, and others that were perhaps neglected until now
- * If you offer a chance and it's missed, mark the circle anyway; you've done your share if you brought a golden chance into play, even if it was missed, turned down, or some other choice was made instead

When you notice that something interesting is neglected, see if you can bring it up in play. Underline it to remind yourself to pay attention to it.

As a general rule, use underlining for elements you believe that you should do your best to bring into fiction, and mark the circles every time you used that element.



SUMMARY EIGHT

Before you commit to a specific mission, ask yourself the following questions:

- ✦ Do you need something fast or long? Single session? Or a hook for a long campaign?
- ✦ Is there any character - or Player - that for whatever reason needs more attention? Anyone who's missing for a session or two?
- ✦ What is your need in fiction, as the GM? Do you need to analyze a certain Front or resolve it? Or even just advance it a little? How can you involve it?
- ✦ Is there a preferred location for the mission? Do you need to clarify or explore a certain element of the setting? Do you need to stay in the City of Judas, or do you need to go out in the wilderness?
- ✦ Which kind of Playbooks did the Players choose? What are these choices telling you? What kind of character do they want to play?

When creating a mission, define the below elements:

- ✦ A starting situation in fiction, what triggers the mission. This can be something not linked to previous events, if there is no clear threat or these are new characters
- ✦ An assignment: the main goal, the intended success criteria, which resolves the issue mentioned as starting situation. This is what is assigned by the Iron Fist as the official goal of the mission
- ✦ A main threat or a basic idea of what the center of the action might be; what will be the hardest challenge for the characters. This should remain open to changes and tuning during the game

And remember to define the Mission Commander when you officially assign the mission to the Characters.

The focus of a Mission depends greatly by two factors:

- ✦ What is known and established
- ✦ How precise is the mission target

Fronts are structured threats that last often more than a single session, and can even span over multiple adventures, defined by:

- ✦ A major threat or danger
- ✦ A Master Plan, a dark agenda, with a countdown
- ✦ Some minor nested threats, dangers, issues
- ✦ Stakes, questions (questions make it interesting)
- ✦ Usually at least one important and compelling NPC
- ✦ Iron Moves, and possibly Custom Moves, for the Front itself or for its threats

For a Mission, build a Front considering:

- ✦ A major threat or danger: what the mission is about, the mission target
- ✦ A Master Plan, a dark agenda, with a countdown: what happens that complicates the mission while time passes, what happens at the end
- ✦ Some minor nested threats, dangers, issues: anything that comes to your mind that can be an obstacle for the characters
- ✦ Stakes, questions: what happens if the mission fails, what's at stake. Is it only another usual mission? Is there a deeper interest from the Iron Fist? Or from one of the characters? Is there some kind of conflict for one of the characters between his goals and those of the Iron Fist?
- ✦ NPCs: usually related to the mission, but it might be also someone they meet while the mission is in progress

Every major threat in a Front - or the Front itself - has a countdown. A countdown marks the advancement of threat of Front. Remember that:

- ✦ You can advance the Front by making your corresponding GM move
- ✦ Or you advance the Front when the event that it represents, already happened in fiction

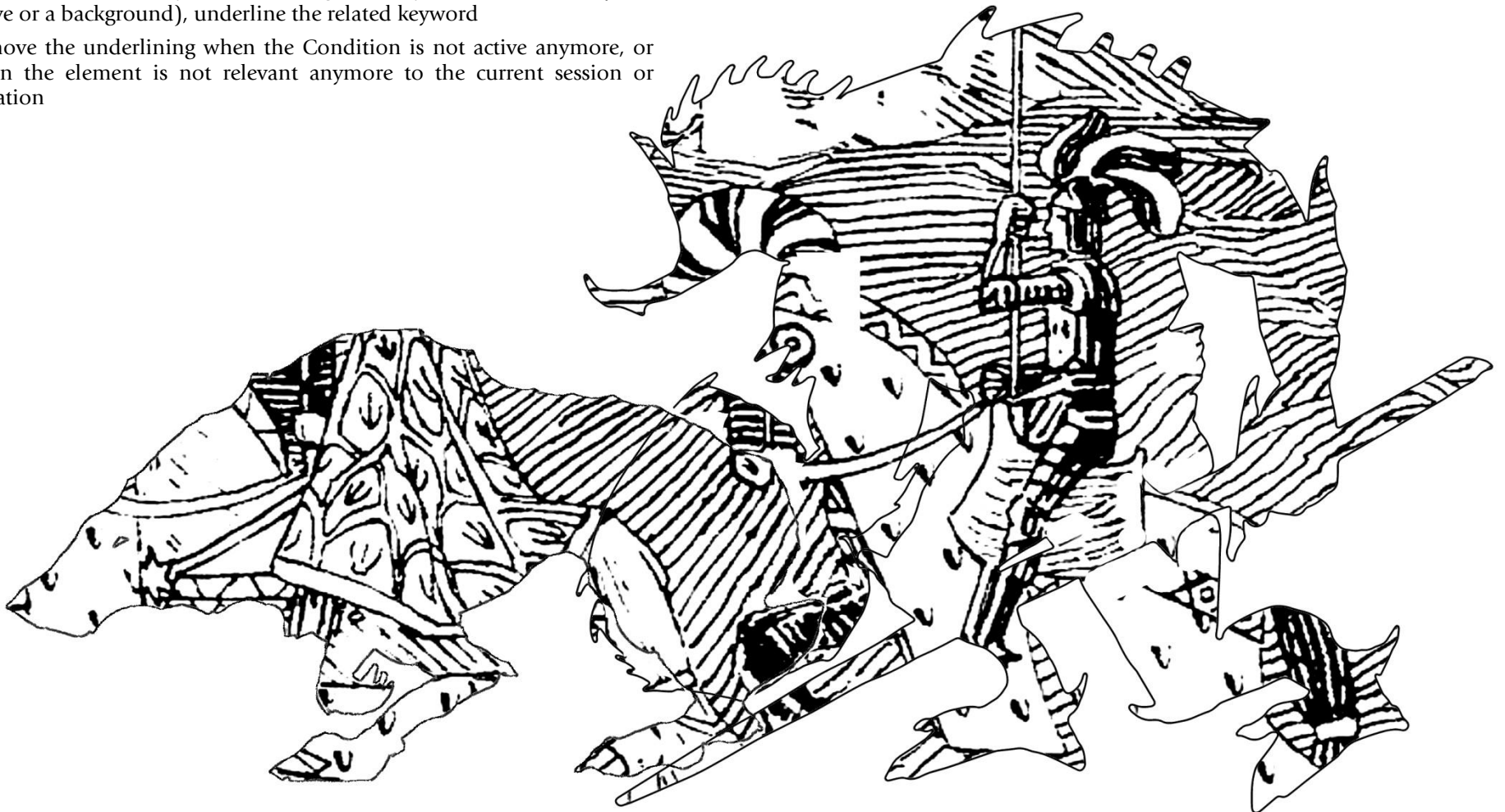
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Once you've filled the Characters' Front with all the information, keep it next to your notes and the other Fronts sheets. Keep an eye on the various elements, and:

- * If a Condition is active (i.e. someone is Unstable) underline the related keyword
- * If you want to remind yourself to bring into play a certain element (i.e. a Move or a background), underline the related keyword
- * Remove the underlining when the Condition is not active anymore, or when the element is not relevant anymore to the current session or situation

Monsters And Enemies



COMMON ENEMIES

Human enemies are by the far the most common that the characters will face: they might be simple commoners, farmers or merchants, hunters or sailors, and of course guards, soldiers, other mercenaries, or powerful knights.

Below are the generic guidelines to size and give scores to this kind of opponents.

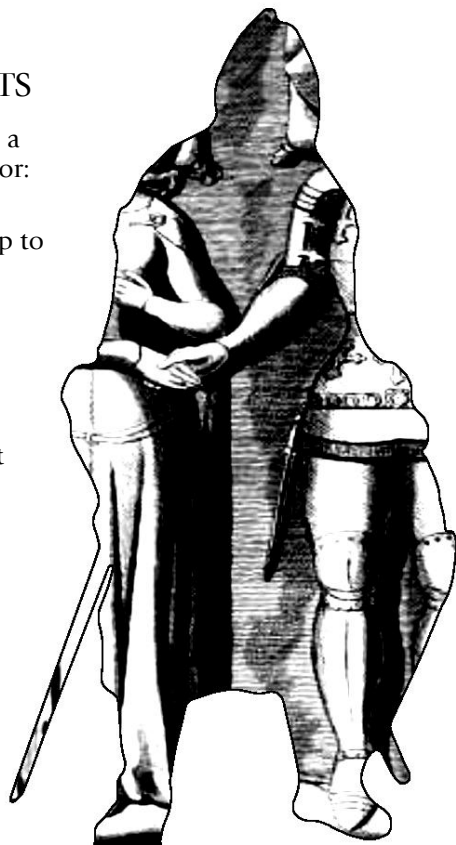
WEAK OPPONENTS

A weak opponent is a commoner, a farmer, a peasant, a burglar, a sailor:

- ✦ **Harm:** 2 harm (knife, dagger, woodaxe, club), sometimes up to 3 (battleaxe, sword, mace), perhaps for a minor leader
- ✦ **Armor:** 0 armor (none) or 1 (leather or partial metal)
- ✦ Roll Inflict Harm with 2D6

As a gang they might pose a threat only to lonely characters:

- ✦ Small gang
- ✦ Harm 2
- ✦ Armor 0 or 1
- ✦ Steel -1 if it applies



AVERAGE OPPONENTS

An average opponent is typically a hunter, a simple soldier, a guard, a sailor on a military ship, a brigand, a thug:

- ✦ **Harm:** 2 harm (knife, dagger, woodaxe, club) or better 3 harm (battleaxe, sword, mace), sometimes even up to 4 harm (spear, halberd)
- ✦ Often have even ranged weapons, harm 3 (bows, small crossbows)
- ✦ **Armor:** most likely 1 (leather or partial metal). Sometimes up to 2 (including a shield)
- ✦ Bring Armor up to 3 (chainmail and shield) for peculiar locations, such as a noble palace or an important temple
- ✦ Roll Inflict Harm with 2D6

As a gang they are:

- ✦ Usually a small gang, sometimes medium (25 or more) but it's unlikely that characters will want to attack a full unit
- ✦ Harm 3
- ✦ Armor 1 or 2 (rarely 3)
- ✦ Steel 0 if it applies

STRONG OPPONENTS

A strong opponent is usually a veteran a good soldier, a mercenary, a knight:

- ✦ **Harm:** 3 harm (battleaxe, sword, mace), often also up to 4 harm (longsword, greataxe, spear)
- ✦ Some might have ranged harm 3 (bows) or 4 (crossbows)
- ✦ Remember to add +1 harm if on warhorse!
- ✦ **Armor:** usually 2 (including the shields) or 3 (metal armors and shields)
- ✦ Roll Inflict Harm **with 1D6**

As a gang they are usually:

- ✦ Usually a small gang, sometimes medium (25 or more) but it's unlikely that characters will want to attack a full unit
- ✦ Harm 3, sometimes 4
- ✦ Armor 2 (half the times up to 3)
- ✦ Steel +1 if it applies

MOTIVATIONS FOR FIGHTING

Remember: a fight is much more interesting when there is something relevant at stake. During the first sessions, a simple battle against some guards protecting an important location, against brigands or pirates, will give the Players the opportunity to familiarize with the combat rules and their characters capabilities. Later on, though, you will have to do better than harass them with yet more soldiers or outlaws.

As a general guideline, remember that any fight - be it between a few soldiers or between armies - is proportionally interesting as its stakes and consequences.

Also, the motivation arming the opponents is crucial: a couple of guards on a bridge will likely surrender or flee - you don't need to keep every fight going on until the death of every single enemy. But a group of peasants, protecting their own village, will most likely keep fighting to death.

So remember to make fights interesting and not a boring slashing through powerless puppets. Look at your fronts: whenever a fight won or lost allows stopping, delaying, or advancing a countdown, it has more chances to be interesting.

And again, remember to think why the NPCs might pick a fight, and how do the characters relate to it - do they have a reason to fight? Do they have an interest in not getting involved?

Some examples of possible occasions for fights which are more interesting than a simple couple of guards standing in front of a door:

- * Peasants fighting: a small revolt for food, resistance against slavers, a revolt instigated by the Priests of Judas
- * Burglars: a conflict between local guilds, an attempt to distract the characters
- * Soldiers or guards: abusing power against peasants, fighting for religion, fighting a war to protect their land, fighting for money or for power
- * Pirates, slavers: the risk of being butchered, the risk of been sold as slaves
- * Officers, knights: fighting for honor, to prove their valor, fighting with no mercy, fighting with attitude, knowing their strength

GANGS AND BATTLES

Gangs are a mechanical tool that you can use to group together multiple opponents with similar characteristics. Typically, they are the characters' opponents, but the characters themselves can have NPCs fighting for them as a gang - think of the Raider, but also about peasants instigated for example by a Priest.

Each gang has **three or four main Stats**, very much like an NPC:

- * Harm
- * Armor
- * HS (harm suffered), which is used to roll Gang Suffer Harm
- * Steel (only when you need to roll for the gang itself)

A gang **can also have additional tags** (descriptors) that influence the fiction, but the three or four main Stats are the gang mechanical core, while tags are important to define what the gang does or can do. Note that Steel is not used every time, but only when you need to roll for the gang itself (i.e. a Raider's gang acting while the Raider is not present).

MODIFIER BY SIZE

The core rule when using a gang:

- * A gang larger than its opponent obtains **+1 Harm and +1 Armor** against it
- * For **each sizing step**, add +1

For example: a medium gang obtains +1 harm and +1 armor against a small gang, and +2 harm and +2 armor against a single character or a few characters that do not make it even to a small gang.

SIZING A GANG

Sizing a Gang is important because it defines if the gang itself outnumbered, or is outnumbered by an opposing gang. Therefore, its size is important both in absolute terms (small, medium, large, and number of members) and relatively to its opposition.

When you consider if to use a gang, remember that a small group of NPCs, opposing the characters, is worth considering as a small gang **when they outnumber the characters 2 to 1**, roughly. If that's the case, considering the NPCs as a gang will speed up things.

When sizing a gang in fiction, unless necessary, do not use numbers but instead use just the size adjective (small, medium, large), at least at the start. You will use numbers only if there is the need to really track the number of members for the possible future encounters and such.

Gang Size	Number Of Members
Not a gang	Alone or a few, 5 or less
Small	Up to a dozen, from 6 to 12
Medium	Up to two dozen, from 13 to 24
Large	From 25 members and more

GANG DEFAULT STATS

When it's time to assign Stats to a gang, refer to the guidelines below:

Weapons	Harm Stat	Protection	Armor Stat
Unarmed	1	No protection	0
Small weapons or improvised	2	Partial or improvised	1
Medium weapons	3	Solid or metal	2
Large weapons or war weapons	4	War fortifications	3

Characteristics	Steel Stat	Characteristics	Bonus
Improvised, mob, unprepared	-1	Regular gang, no special characteristic	0
Regular guards, minor training	0	Supernatural or magic protections	+1 Armor
Fully trained and well armed soldiers	+1	Exceptionally strong motivations	+1 Harm
Veterans	+2	Exceptional gang	+1 Harm or +1 Steel

So for example, a mob of angry peasants will likely have Harm 2 (improvised or small weapons), Armor 0 (none) or at most 1 (partial or improvised protections), and if need comes for Steel, it would be -1 (improvised mob). The angry peasants would not get additional bonuses, but if they fight to protect their village and families from certain death, then give +1 to Harm (for motivations).

USE GANGS

When it's time to use a gang for a fight, it can be in different cases:

- * Characters vs. NPCs' gang
- * Characters' gang vs. single NPC or monster
- * Characters' gang vs. NPCs' gang
- * NPCs' gang vs. NPCs' gang

As it is also described in the section related to the harm suffered by the gangs, if a character is part of a gang he **suffers the same harm**, but use the character's armor to calculate the Established Harm for the character, and roll the Suffer Harm move for him, independently.

CHARACTERS VS. NPCs' GANG

In this case you ask the Players to use their regular moves and everything follows from that, basically treating the combat as against a regular opponent.

Note that instead of rolling **Inflict Harm**, when they attack and manage to inflict damage, the Players will roll instead the **Gang Suffers Harm** against the NPCs' gang.

Also, every one of the characters acts independently, and the NPCs' gang takes the bonus for outnumbering the characters against each of them.

If the characters suffer harm, they roll the usual **Suffer Harm** move for the damage they receive.

An example:

Saul, Alair and Tacitus face ten angry peasants: the peasants count as a Small Gang (Harm 2, Armor 0) and take +1 to harm and armor, for a final stat of Harm 3, Armor 1. If there were more than 20 peasants, as a medium gang they would have had Harm 4, Armor 2.

When Saul attacks the peasants, Hanna rolls for example Engage In Battle, and uses the options as usual.

Depending on how the fiction goes, Saul could be facing a couple of peasants of the gang, or the majority of them while Alair and Tacitus give him support and so on - but this is not relevant from a mechanical point a view. A battle with a gang or between gangs is always chaotic.

If Saul inflicts harm against the mob, Hanna will roll the Gang Suffer Harm move - which is rolled with the Harm Suffered (HS), exactly like when a character inflicts harm against a single NPC or monster.

Within the Gang Suffer Harm move, there are options for example on a 10+ to defeat the gang, and explanations on how to count casualties, wounded, and so on.

So basically when the characters face a gang, use the gang as a single NPC with statistics according to the gang size, and use the gang appropriate harm move.

CHARACTERS' GANG VS. SINGLE

In this case, the characters should have enough allies to be considered a gang, against a single monster or a single NPC, or a few of them that still do not constitute an opposing gang themselves.

Note that it's very important that one - or some or all - of the characters have a **leader role for the gang**, like the Raider with its gang, or a character who's appointed the role of commander. Also, the opposition must be comprised of a single or a few opponents, not enough to be declared a gang.

For this case, the gang itself must have a **Steel stat score**, and this is used to roll for all the Combat Moves that the character, leader of the gang, will command. If the gang suffers harm from the NPC or monster, the leader will roll the Gang Suffer Harm move. Moreover, the leader will suffer the same harm as the gang if involved in combat, but will subtract his armor score (not the gang's) and roll Suffer Harm for the single character.

The gang also takes all the bonuses related to the size (i.e. +1 to harm and armor if the gang is small vs. a single opponent, +2 if the gang is medium and so on). When the gang inflicts harm against the opponent, pick and roll **the usual Inflict Harm** move, because it is against a single NPC or monster.

If some other characters are acting in the fight but independently - as it will reasonably be - they will roll their own moves against the opponent, using their normal stats, and if they suffer harm, they roll the standard Suffer Harm move.

An example:

Alair is leading a group of soldiers (a small gang, Harm 3, Armor 2, Steel +1) against a monster, while Tacitus is supporting them with his bow. The gang takes +1 to Harm and Armor for outnumbering the monster, for a total of Harm 4, Armor 2 and Steel +1 (this last one remains unchanged).

James will roll for Tacitus with the character's stats, for example for Take Your Shot. James will roll Inflict Harm if he makes any damage to the monster, and Suffer Harm if he's hit back by the monster. David, on the other hand, will roll Engage In Battle using the gang's Steel +1, and Inflict Harm if they deal damage to the monster.

If the monster inflicts harm, David will roll the Gang Suffer Harm move for the gang. But since Alair is the leader and is involved in the fight, he suffers the same harm as the gang; David will subtract Alair's armor from the harm, and roll Suffer Harm for Alair, separately. This means that the gang might suffer more or less harm than its leader, and that the gang might break while the leader is still unharmed, or the other way around, that a weak leader will be badly hurt when his gang is still strong and fighting.

CHARACTERS' GANG VS. NPCs' GANG

In this case the characters' are a gang, but instead of facing a single opponent, they face another group, which is also a gang. For this case, it is still very important that one of the characters will act **as the leader of the gang**.

The characters' gang will have a Steel stat score and this is used to roll for all the Combat Moves. If the characters' gang suffers harm, roll the **Gang Suffer Harm** move; the leader will receive the same harm - as in the previous case - and roll independently the Suffer Harm move. When the characters' gang inflicts harm against the NPCs' gang, the Player will roll again the **Gang Suffer Harm** move, but against them, to try to defeat the enemy.

An example:

Saul is leading several strong knights against a larger group of enemy soldiers, and acting as the leader of the knights.

The knights are a small band, with Harm 4, Armor 2 and Steel +1, while the opposing soldiers are a medium band, with scores of Harm 3 and Armor 1. The knights gain +1 Harm because they have warhorses, for a total of Harm 5, while the enemy soldiers gain +1 because they are a larger gang, for a total of Harm 4 and Armor 2 - this is going to be a very balanced fight.

Hanna rolls Engage In Battle with Steel +1 of the knights' gang; if they inflict harm against the enemy soldiers, Hanna will roll the Gang Suffer Harm against them.

If the soldiers inflict harm against the knights, Hanna will roll Gang Suffer Harm for her knights, then also Suffer Harm for Saul.

In case other characters are present, they can act independently and try to support the knights with their actions, to steer the battle in favor of Saul.

NPCs' GANG VS. NPC's GANG

In this final case, there are two gangs facing each other but none of the characters is the leader, or perhaps the characters are absent or supporting the first gang in individual actions. For example, the first gang might be the Raiders gang while the Raider is absent, or anyway not commanding.

Determine the Steel score for the first gang - the one the characters are allied with - using the usual rules, and then the Player who has the most interest with the gang's fate **will roll the dice**. When gangs suffer harm, roll for both the **Gang Suffer Harm** move.

This rule applies also with a gang of NPCs (again, for example the Raider's gang) vs. a single NPC or monster.

An example:

The Raider sent his gang against another group of soldiers or against a monster. Assume it's a small gang and has Harm 3, Armor 1 and Steel +1; the Raider's Player will roll with Steel +1 for Combat Moves for the gang, will roll Gang Suffer Harm for the gang, and for the opposing gang (or Inflict Harm if the opponent is a single NPC or monster).

HARM FOR GANGS

When a gang enters in battle, it can suffer harm like an NPC does, **with Harm Suffered (HS)** cumulating round after round.

The possible consequences for a gang suffering harm are:

- * Annihilation, or near annihilation, of course
- * Enough injured or dead members to cause the gang to disperse or to surrender

To determine the gang reaction or fate, **you have the Gang Suffer Harm move**. Roll the Gang Suffer Harm move every time a gang suffers harm in a battle; you roll the same move for a friendly gang or for the opponents' gang, as explained in the previous examples.

The Player leading the gang (i.e. the Raider) will roll when his own Gang suffers harm. The Player inflicting harm, or commanding the gang that inflicts harm on another gang, will roll the Gang Suffer Harm move against the NPCs' gang.

GANG CASUALTIES

The gang size can be decreased during the fight, but that is **not relevant** round by round. Only after the end of the fight or when things slow down and the situation needs to be assessed again, you look at how many survivors are left and how many are dead or seriously injured - **both for the winning size and the losing side**.

The defeat of the gang, very much like the defeat of an NPC, comes not by killing each single opponent, but instead by obtaining a 10+ on the harm move, and choosing disperse or surrender. You can still pick +2 harm, though, if you aim to seriously destroy the enemy gang.

Remember to do this evaluation also for the winning side if it suffered harm, and to limit this count to when the fight is over, after a retreat or when the situation on the battlefield changed enough to require a new assessment of gang sizes.

As a general rule, count every 1 Harm Suffered (HS) as a **10% of the Gang size** that is now unable to fight, thus decreasing the gang size; rounding numbers up.

If you need to further assess the damage to the gang and be more precise, consider the following, in average - and count each bullet as a 10% for each Harm Suffered (HS), in a cycle:

- ✦ **10% (1 HS) is injured lightly** and will recover in a short time
- ✦ **Another 10% (another 1 HS) is injured seriously** enough to prevent fighting for quite some time
- ✦ **Another 10% is dead** or dying

An example:

If a gang that was forced to surrender by the appropriate option within the move, after it had 4 Harm Suffered, the casualties count will be 40% of its original size.

If the gang had 10 members, 4 cannot fight anymore (the 40% derived from 4 HS). And for every point of HS you count them as follows: 1 (10%) is lightly injured, 1 is seriously injured, 1 is dead, and 1 more is again lightly injured (you cycle back counting from light injuries).



• GANG SUFFER HARM •

When a gang suffers harm, calculate the Established Harm. Mark the Established Harm on the Gang, as Harm Suffered (HS) then roll 2D6+Total HS.

On a 10+ the one inflicting harm (the Player against NPCs' gang - the GM against a Player's gang) picks one from this or the 7-9 list:

- › *The gang disperses in fear or surrenders (a PC can roll I Am The Leader Here or Banner Of Command, or use their holds if available, to prevent this)*
- › *The gang is hit very hard and takes another 2 harm ap, but continues fighting*

On a 7-9 the one inflicting harm picks one:

- › *The gang is cut in two by a tactical maneuver and counts as two smaller and separate gangs or no more as a gang*
- › *The gang is pushed back, or held back, or put at disadvantage, or driven out of its protection or cover, if possible, losing its position or armor*
- › *The gang is hit very hard and takes another 1 harm ap, but continues fighting*

On a 6- the Gang takes the blow, marks the HS, but the fight continues regularly.

If a character is part of a gang, he suffers the same harm as the gang did, but uses the character's armor to calculate the Established Harm for the character, and then roll the Suffer Harm move for him, independently.

WILD MONSTERS

Monsters are one of the keys of the game: they are among the most powerful adversaries that the characters can face. But do not think of a horde of minions, easily beaten in a fight. Think instead of a wild beast or a supernatural threat that can destroy a village or terrify merchants along a certain route, think about something that can threaten a fortress or weaken the morale even of a small army. This is why the Iron Fist is often called to deal with them, and why they're paid so well to take care of such problems.

Usually a monster is one for mission or adventure, or if more than one, there is a clear link between them. Perhaps they're a pack of sand-worms, or a few griffins unleashed by a dark sorcerer, or a few Cyclops lead by a Giant, or a pack of lion-men on the hunt.

WHAT ARE WILD MONSTERS

Wild Monsters are fundamentally beasts; savage animals of incredible strength, with special features that make them unique.

They are natural beings, **not supernatural creatures**: they have certain physical characteristics and can be killed exactly like any other beast - if you have the courage to face them.

Think of dragons: they can be large reptiles, and even if they do not fly, they can crash a castle wall with their massive tail; maybe they do not spit fire, but have a beak instead of teeth and spit acid on their preys to digest them before swallowing them. Wyverns, maybe, could fly: they're smaller and weaker, but make up with their speed and agility. Their wings are their strength and weak spot: they make them fast and dangerous, but are fragile and hinder them while on the ground.

You can use the materials of legends and ancient stories to come up with ideas for monsters: think of Cyclops, of harpies - hybrids of man and bird -



or Cerberus, a huge hound with three heads. Think simply of huge animals, of immense proportion, like lions or other predators. To make a monster you can take an already scary animal and add more heads, more legs, or some hybrid feature to make the monster more powerful.

Mixing lions, birds - especially eagles - and snakes seems to be the favorite choice in medieval and Middle Eastern classics.

Also, you can make a carnivore predator out of a classic herbivore:

think of elephants with claws, a spiked proboscis and a large mouth full of sharp teeth.

Finally, think of humanoids and how can you make them into monsters - when perhaps their only real monstrous feature is to be just different than humans, and therefore hated and hunted for that. You can have man with feline features, others with a poisonous tail, or with claws or reptilian skin, or vestigial wings, and so on.

MAKE A WILD MONSTER

When you make a monster, use the key elements below. To make your monster, remember that the key remains first of all your description. This is what can scare the Players, and what determines the Moves you'll be able to make.

- * **Monster name and concept** (Wild or Supernatural; in this case Wild)
- * **Description**; general presentation of habits, powers, threats; Custom Moves (only the necessary bits)
- * **Harm and Armor**
- * **Size** (if large enough to count as a gang) or perhaps the Gang statistics if it moves in packs or groups
- * **Roll Inflict Harm with 1D6** and list possible other difficulties to hit the bastard, and vulnerabilities if any

In terms of Stats, though, here is your Monster:

- * **Harm:** 2 for claws and fangs, 3 for big claws and fangs, spikes, horns, 4 for massive, 5 for huge. In general you might want to stop at huge
- * **Add 1 harm for:** incredibly sharp, multiple attacks, agility and speed, tactical advantages (like flying, or poison, or fire breathing and such). Tactical advantages might present alternative attacks or custom moves, and also count to increase harm
- * **If larger than huge,** it counts as a small gang, with harm and armor as by the description above
- * **Armor:** 1 for thick leather or partial metal, 2 for scales, bones, chainmail, 3 for incredibly heavy plate or bones
- * **Add 1 armor for things like:** special protections (mobile bones' shields?), agility and speed, or difficult to hit in a vital spot
- * **Roll Inflict Harm with 1D6,** unless they're meaningless minions

Huge or larger monsters will require Face Death to engage, others might require Face Danger i.e. to avoid a special attack (a poisonous tail?), an armor piercing attack (shatters shield or armor?) or to find a weak spot vulnerability in the neck, the back, the eyes, and so on.

EXAMPLE WILD MONSTERS

Feasible (wild) monsters in the Middle East are presented below, with some basic ideas of how to insert them into an adventure:

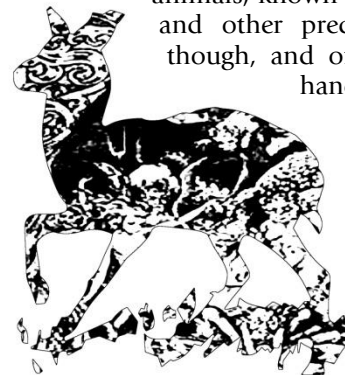
- * **Carnivorous gazelles and elephants** (yes!): attacking a group of hunters, threatening the farmers of a village, ambushing a caravan of travelers or merchants
- * **Reptiles** (living in water, or in caves, or in the desert): in a forest, or a cave, or in an oasis in the desert, or in an abandoned town and attacking who comes nearby; threatening a small village
- * **Poisonous and/or huge snakes:** falling in a hunter's trap or met on a dangerous roads; in abandoned ruins, next to a loot
- * **Sand-worms** (of any size): threatening an important bridge, a small village of innocent peasants; having to kill one to gain the trust of a bedouin tribe
- * **Lion-men:** a pack threatening a merchants' road, a pack infesting the ruins of an old temple, a small pack who regularly hunts in the land of a noble who wants them gone; trying to make contact with humans for their trade

- * **Scorpion-men:** a tribe guarding an ancient holy place, a group living in some caverns, a few wandering too close to a village, a small group trying to take control of some remote location
- * **Griffins:** feathers required to fertilize a land or to cure the sterility of a noble, threatening the stocks of a small village, a group of griffin hunters to be stopped
- * **Horned wild-cats:** threatening a village, a travel route, protecting a cave, attacking a lonely traveler

CARNIVOROUS GAZELLES

Legends say they were created by an ancient sorcerer, with the help of a powerful demon; the sorcerer made them to hunt lions and other wild-cats. Regardless of where they come from, these gazelles look perfectly similar to the regular ones, and only when they come close it is possible to see their slightly larger heads, and wide mouths armed with sharp teeth.

They usually hunt other carnivores, and typically do not attack animals or humans that do not feed on meat. They are quite smart animals, known to be hunting in groups and attacking lions and other predators with fury. They are quite fragile, though, and often a single lion will leave more than a handful dead on the ground, before succumbing to their overwhelming number.



Statistics:

- * **Harm:** 2 for fangs
- * **Armor:** none
- * Roll Inflict Harm with 2D6
- * Usually they move in packs of 10, 20 and count as a small gang with 0 Armor and 2 Harm

An example move:

If you face a pack of them, roll 2D6+Edge.

On a 10+ you keep them at bay: you can fight them or disengage.

On a 7-9 they surround you and there is no easy way out.

On a 6- you're trampled down and bitten by several of them: take 2 harm ap.

CARNIVOROUS ELEPHANTS

Similar looking to a regular elephant, but with a larger mouth full of sharp teeth and a voracious appetite, carnivorous elephants are lonely and rare hunters. They usually feed of small and medium preys that they hunt by simply walking into their packs and then attacking them by surprise.

Sometimes they attack bigger and slower animals, but tend to avoid humans that they recognize as a danger.

Statistics:

- * **Harm:** 3 for fangs, 4 for stampede
- * **Armor:** 1, even 2 for the bigger ones, since they're not easy to hit in a vital spot
- * Roll Inflict Harm **with 1D6**
- * A single one already counts as a small gang

An example move:

When you face the carnivorous elephant in battle, roll this instead of the Face Death move, rolling with Steel - to confront it - or Edge - to avoid it. If you avoid it, you cannot inflict harm this round. Roll as long as you remain engaged.

On a 10+, take one, from this list or one from the 7-9 list:

- › Avoid harm and create a chance for an ally
- › You can disengage unharmed

On a 7-9, take one:

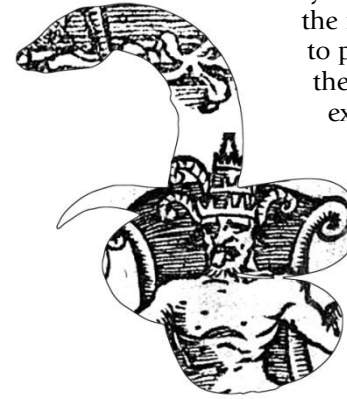
- › Suffer little harm from the elephant (fangs: 1 harm), then roll your next Move (fight or otherwise; in combat you might suffer harm again of course, as the elephant counterattacks)
- › Obtain the elephant full attention

On a 6- the elephant gets to you with 4 harm.



REPTILES AND SNAKES

Snakes can pose a threat to the characters either when used in a trap, for example, or during a march in the wild territories outside of the city. A random encounter is probably not going to make a great story by itself; use instead a poisonous snake as a twist during the narration, for example, or to block a certain road, or to put some danger on a meaningful path. Think also of the possibilities of having to face poisonous snakes to extract their venom.



Possibly, a challenging encounter would be with a snake that the characters do not recognize and therefore have no way to know if it is or not poisonous.

Besides poisonous snakes, you can also use huge reptiles in your adventure - with or without legs, and in any size: from small crocodiles to large, agile reptile predators of the size of a horse.

These are nothing more than wild animals, though: remember that they should fight, perhaps even as groups, but only as long as the chances are in their favor. Regardless of the fact that they might be hunting or defending their nest, they will rarely fight to death and it will take a few, well placed strikes or killing a few of them, to make the others escape.

Statistics:

- * **Harm:** 1 for small ones, 3 for bites or strangling from big ones
- * **Armor:** none, 1 for huge ones
- * Roll Inflict Harm with 2D6
- * For poisonous bites, see below

An example move:

If a snake or a fast reptile attacks you, roll 2D6+Edge.

On a 10+ you avoid the attack and have a clean opportunity for a counterattack.

On a 7-9, you can avoid the attack but pick one:

- › You have no chance of a counterattack
- › You counterattack but this puts you again in some danger, you will suffer harm even if you roll 10+ in combat

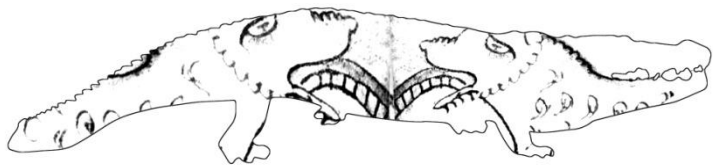
On a 6-, the GM can make a move, such as:

- › Inflict a poisonous bite; 1 harm ap and mark Unstable
- › Capture you in tight jaws or attempt to strangle you in a grasp, blocking you from using your weapons

Once a character was bitten by a poisonous snake or reptile, as by the move above he should mark Unstable. You can worsen his condition with hard moves later on, as the poison makes its job.

Also, if a character suffers enough harm during a fight with a poisonous snake and gets to mark Unstable because of Health -1, you can again determine that this was caused by poison. A healer will come handy.

If the snake or reptile attacks the characters in its natural habitat, it has most likely a good chance to escape, if the fight turns to the worse. Snakes will likely disappear between the grass, under rocks or on the trees, while crocodiles will try to swim away, for example.



SAND-WORMS

They're called Sand-worms but they're more like giant, monstrous snakes. The populations of the bedouins tribes of the south renamed them desert-leviathans, after they heard the priests preach about the biblical whales. Sand-worms are slow but implacable monsters, with a mouth so large it could swallow a small hut or a knight on the saddle, including the horse.

They live mostly in desert areas where the ground is softer; they seek shade and refreshment by keeping underground, and emerge only rarely, to hunt. They favorite habitat are the large underground caves hidden in the desert, better if with a fresh water spring.

The sand-worms or desert-leviathans hunt by following the sound of their preys. Typically they move in groups of three or four exemplars: a smaller

scouting worm - which is the youngest of the group - and then the largest ones, older and huge.

Once the target is identified, the big worms dig underneath the prey, creating a web of large tunnels ready to collapse. It can take days for the large worms to build their trap, but then when it springs, the ground collapses, in a range even of thirty or forty meters.

The weakest victims often die because of the fall or hit by falling rocks, or otherwise by suffocation caused by the sand. The worms then proceed to feed underground, slowly, for days.

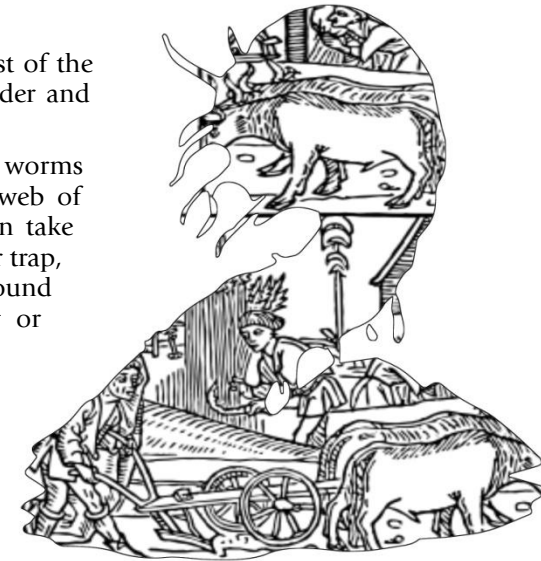
Sand-worms fear the sun and the direct light, and are vulnerable to heat. Their blind eyes and their inner ears, sensitive to vibrations, are precious to sorcerers for their spells, so when a sand-worm is killed, its monstrous body is looted for precious parts.

Because they're so big, and vital organs are not within easy reach, there are only two viable ways to kill a full grown sand-worm: pierce it trough the ears or eyes into their small brain, or trap it under the sun for at least a couple of hours, until the heat drains it of all its forces, then chop it to pieces.

Bedouins tribes practice sand-worms hunting as a tribe ritual, a few times a year: usually at least ten warriors would hunt together, because it takes as many to hold with spears, ropes and nets a single sand-worm in the sun for as long as necessary.

Statistics:

- ✦ **Harm:** 2 ap for falling into their holes. Up to 3 ap for an unlucky direct hit or bite - sand-worms are slow so this is quite uncommon. Usually harm comes by approaching them to try to hit or capture them in the sun
- ✦ **Armor:** 1 for regular ones, because of its size. Up to 2 for the bigger ones
- ✦ Roll Inflict Harm **with 1D6**
- ✦ **Size:** can reach up to 5 or 6 meters in length, over 1 meter in diameter; counts as a small gang



An example move:

If you enter the territory of a group of sandworms, or go near their trap tunnels, roll 2D6+Edge.

On a 10+ you spot the signs of their traps and can walk away unharmed.

On a 7-9 you see the signs of their traps but you must pick one:

- › *You trigger the trap by accident, although the sand-worms are not attacking you right away, you have time for your move*
- › *You avoid falling into the trap, but others around you do, and they are in immediate danger*

On a 6- you are all in big troubles, right now.

LION-MEN

Lion-men live usually far south of the City of Judas, approaching the border with Egypt. They are described in the tales of merchants and bedouins but were not seen in centuries by members of the Iron Fist. They've been hunted by the local nobles in the past as trophies and now they avoid contact with humans when possible.

There are different kinds of Lion-men: some have a human body and a feline head, and they lack the possibility to speak and communicate with humans, others have human heads but large claws in place of hands and strong, feline legs. All of them are covered by a brown, feline fur and have long, strong tails. Even those with human heads respond more to feline instincts than human reason.

The noblest specimens, though, have a complete, strong feline body, and instead of a feline head have a human torso, and human arms and



hands. These sort of Lion-man centaurs are said to be the most powerful and most important members of the Lion-man packs. They have a head which is a mixture of feline and human traits; it's not uncommon for these noble creatures to be able to speak and communicate with the humans. Some merchants' tales even mention some of these Lion-men that were able to perform sorcery.

They fight mostly with their feline claws or fangs, with great strength and speed, superior to that of most human warriors. Those who have hands, sometimes carry weapons. They do not forge nor make weapons and tools, but use the ones of their victims. Some even have pieces of armor on them, made to fit somehow their hybrid bodies.

Statistics:

- ✦ **Harm:** 3 for claws and fangs because of speed and agility. Up to 4 or 5 for the biggest exemplars or those who are armed with human weapons
- ✦ **Armor:** 1 for all, for speed and agility. Up to 2 if they wear partial armor
- ✦ Roll Inflict Harm **with 1D6**
- ✦ Size: slightly larger than humans, no mechanical advantage
- ✦ As a gang they always have Steel +1

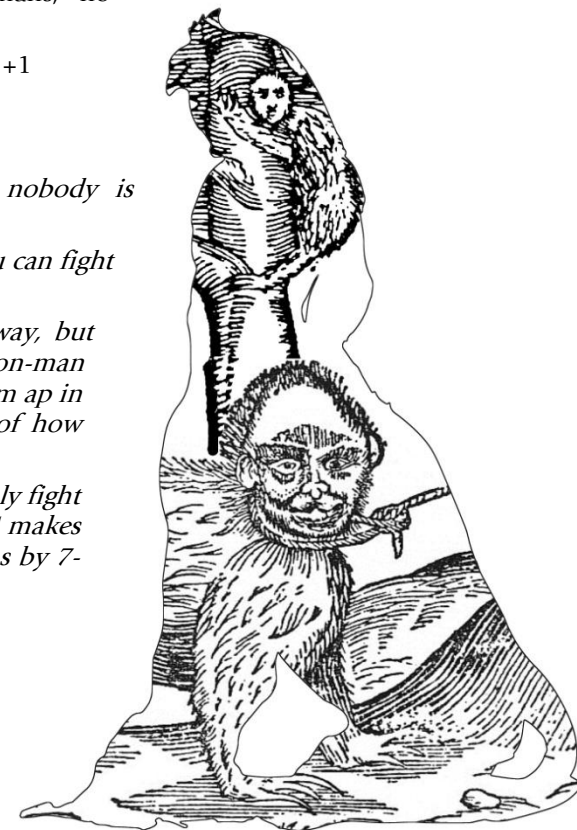
An example move:

If you face two or more while nobody is watching your back, roll 2D6+Edge.

On a 10+ you keep them at bay: you can fight them or run away easily.

On a 7-9 you cannot easily run away, but only fight. For every lion-man outnumbering you, you suffer 1 harm ap in every combat exchange regardless of how well you roll.

On a 6- you're cornered, you can only fight and things look very bad, so the GM makes his move first of all; then proceed as by 7-9.



SCORPION-MEN

Scorpion-men can be found in small groups anywhere in the region, although they are more common in desert or mountain areas. They have human features, but their bodies are covered in a mix of dark skin and exoskeleton; a long tail protrudes from the end of their spine and ends with a powerful sting.

They live in small tribes, with very simple hierarchies and social structures: they tend to be lead by the strongest warrior of the group, which is not rare to be a female, and although they do not usually look for conflict, they fear almost no one.



Some of the scorpion-men have an additional weapon in form of exoskeleton blades on their wrists, that grow in length to resemble big knives. These natural blades are used as a predator would use claws, but the tail remains usually their favored weapon, being stronger, faster, and of course with longer reach.

A minority of the scorpion-men are born with pincers, composed by one fixed claw and a movable claw. Pincers replace hands and these scorpion-men are therefore unable to perform a lot of regular tasks. They are anyway kept in high consideration within the tribe and often cover important roles in fighting.

The majority of the scorpion-men produce venom within their bodies: they have small glandular sacs protected by the carapace, and the venom that can be extracted from it is considered very precious, and very difficult to obtain on the market. This venom is rarely deadly for humans: scorpion-men usually hunt for smaller preys and their venom appears to be quite selective and more efficient towards smaller targets.

In any case, even if not deadly, the venom can cause quite a few problems if injected - or ingested - and a large dose would certainly be mortal. The typical effect of the venom, when not deadly, is a partial paralysis. Scorpion-men are immune to their own venom, and their strong metabolism in general is significantly less weak to poisoning attempts.

Scorpion-men are fast hunters, and fast thinkers: their reactions are often faster than those of the humans. They are strong and fierce warriors, but luckily prefer to keep far from inhabited areas, and do not usually fight men.

Sometimes they even establish trades with nearby humans, but mostly prefer to scavenge for whatever useful they can find, without the need to be in contact with humans. A few of them can speak enough of some local human dialect to be able to communicate with the characters or other NPCs.

Statistics:

- * **Harm:** 3 for exoskeleton blades, 4 for claws for the tail sting. Very big exemplars can inflict harm up to 5
- * **Armor:** 2 for all, for speed and agility, and the exoskeleton
- * Roll Inflict Harm **with 1D6**
- * Size: slightly shorter than humans
- * In a gang they count typically as small, 10 exemplars, with Armor 2 and Harm 4

An example move:

When fighting a Scorpion-man, it will counterattack with claws and blades and try to use its tail - and venom - only after it has been hurt at least once. When the Scorpion-man scores a hit with the tail for the first time, instead of suffering harm you just check your luck, with the below: roll 2D6+Health.

On a 10+ the poison does you basically nothing.

On a 7-9 the poison inflicts on you a weak paralysis: take 1 harm ap.

On a 6- the poison is potentially lethal: mark Unstable. Every round, the GM can make a move to inflict another 1 harm ap until someone treats your wound or you drink some antidote.

GRIFFINS

Griffins are rare in the Middle Eastern area; these powerful and legendary creatures were always considered sacred and protected by the locals, although the crusaders showed less mercy to these majestic beasts. The locals consider them a symbol of strength and intelligence, and a blessing from the gods for their beauty; crusaders on the other hand, still recognize the power of these monsters, but they did not refrain from fighting them, also to prove their own valor.

A typical griffin has body, tail, and back legs of a lion; the head, the wings, and the talons on its front feet, of an eagle. Other variants, less noble and more common, have the body of a lion, and only head and wings of an eagle.

Both are capable of flying, but their weight makes it difficult; therefore they prefer to hunt on the ground. Still, when in danger or fighting a large prey, the griffins will use their wings to gain an advantage on the opponent, to attack from above, or even lift the adversary and let it fall from heights, killing it or maiming it.

These are powerful and majestic monsters, and legends say they always have a treasure hidden in their nest. This is not true, though, as much as it's not true that these monsters possess a human intelligence, or magical features.

Still, they are venerated greatly by the locals, and even if while alive they possess no magical powers, their feathers are used in powerful fertility spells, both to affect sterile humans - a king without an heir might become a serious political issue - or a dry land.

The locals are the only ones knowing exactly how to use the feathers magic, but will not share this secret lightly because it would endanger griffins.



Statistics:

- * **Harm:** 4 for big claws and beak; increase to 5 for bigger exemplars
- * **Armor:** 1 for speed and agility
- * Roll Inflict Harm with 1D6
- * Size: slightly smaller than regular lions

An example move:

When you fail (6-) a combat roll against a griffin, it might try to lift you in the air and drop you. If the GM says it does, roll 2D6+Edge.

On a 10+ you avoid the risk and have a chance to counterattack against the griffin immediately, from a position of advantage.

On a 7-9, choose one:

- › *You suffer harm from the griffin but escape its grip*
- › *You avoid suffering harm, but the griffin lifted you already a few meters in the air. What do you do?*

On a 6- the griffin lifted you in the air and dropped you for 3 harm ap, and then dives towards you. What do you do?

HORNED WILD-CATS

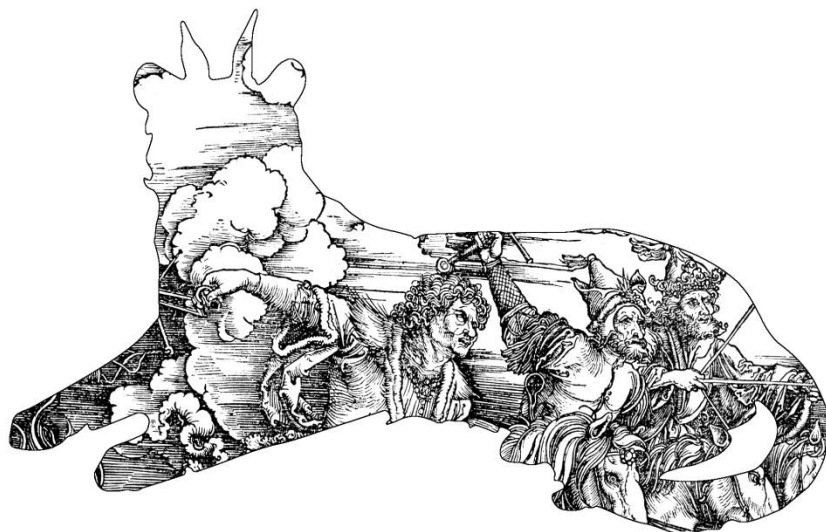
Wild-cats are found usually far from human settlements - either as a single male predator, or a group of females with their puppies. Even though wild-cats will avoid humans, especially if in group, they sometimes will become a threat either to small villages, or to lonely travelers.

A rare variant of the usual lions, are the horned wild-cats: they are larger and more aggressive than the traditional felines, and are known to attack even small groups of travelers by hunting in groups of their own.

Their horns are a precious sorcery ingredient and therefore very valuable on the market; but the wild-cats are not an easy prey, because of their speed and power. The horns themselves are extremely resistant and can even pierce armor. They cannot be removed from the wild-cat skull easily, so hunters usually bring to sorcerers the entire animal head, so horns can be extracted with alchemical potions and magical tools.

Statistics:

- **Harm:** 3 for claws and fangs because of speed and agility. Up to 4 or 5 for the biggest exemplars
- **Armor:** 2 for all, for speed and agility
- Roll Inflict Harm **with 1D6**
- Sometimes their horns will manage to pierce an armor inflicting a 2 harm ap, instead of the regular harm mentioned above



SUPERNATURAL MONSTERS

Supernatural monsters are even rarer than the Wild ones: these monsters are the offspring of sorcery, curses, black spells and rituals; they incorporate the very essence of darkness and give form to the essential nature of Taint.

They are born out of an eclipse, of the wrath of a god, of a prophecy or a curse; they are demons incarnated or fearful hybrids of beasts and man. They contradict every aspect of natural life and are kept alive by the power of sorcery; they are inanimate material brought to life by blasphemous magic.

When you build a supernatural monster, its Stats are probably not his most relevant feature. What counts, together with a description (is it fearsome? or incredibly beautiful? does it give away its supernatural nature from the start? or is it something discovered only later on?) are its supernatural powers. When you make a supernatural monster, **its description and its powers are its main features.**

Together with instructions on how to create supernatural monsters, in this section you will find also the description of those you can evoke by using the Taint Tracker Evocations.

BETWEEN STATS AND MOVES

The supernatural monsters (might) have a body too. Determine their Stats by using the same instructions for wild monsters, but you can add to the scores for special powers and abilities. Instructions are presented in the next pages.

Be careful, though, on how would you like to shape the supernatural powers of your monster: you can give for example a higher Armor score, or roll Inflict Harm with 1D6, to a Stone Golem - that's tuning the statistics. Or you can give the Stone Golem a custom move: for example restore 1 HS for every roll of 6- by a Player, in addition to your GM Move.

Depending on the approach you take, you will end up by just having a monster with higher scores (the Statistics approach) or with one or more custom mechanics (making custom Moves). Sometimes you will favor the Statistics approach: it's simpler, it works well even when you're tired and not at your best.

On the other hand, the Statistics approach will not feel as interesting as making custom moves. Be careful when you design the Moves: if you realize later that you made the monster too strong, though, let the characters escape and get away if they work for it (roll their moves), but do not change your monster. You simply open a threat for it in your Fronts, or even make it the major threat for a new Front. You're not here to play "Balanced Encounters RPG". Rarely, you could have a Statistics boost and one or more custom Moves: that's clearly for very powerful, important monsters.

VULNERABILITY

Remember that a supernatural monster might simply not be vulnerable to regular weapons: in that case, its Stats are far less important than the Players struggling to understand first of all how to inflict harm.

Still, if you give it some kind of invulnerability, you probably want to avoid adding also a lot of HS or a very high armor.

The point in fact will be for the characters not to score against HS or bypassing armor, but rather finding the vulnerability itself.

POWERS

A power is either something that just happens, or something that triggers a Move, either a regular one or a custom one. Supernatural attacks, like a rain of fire or a crushing soul grip, will easily trigger moves like Face Danger, with different Stats, to be rolled by the Players to resist.

Likewise other supernatural attacks can trigger Iron Moves from you, the GM (do not think just inflicting harm).

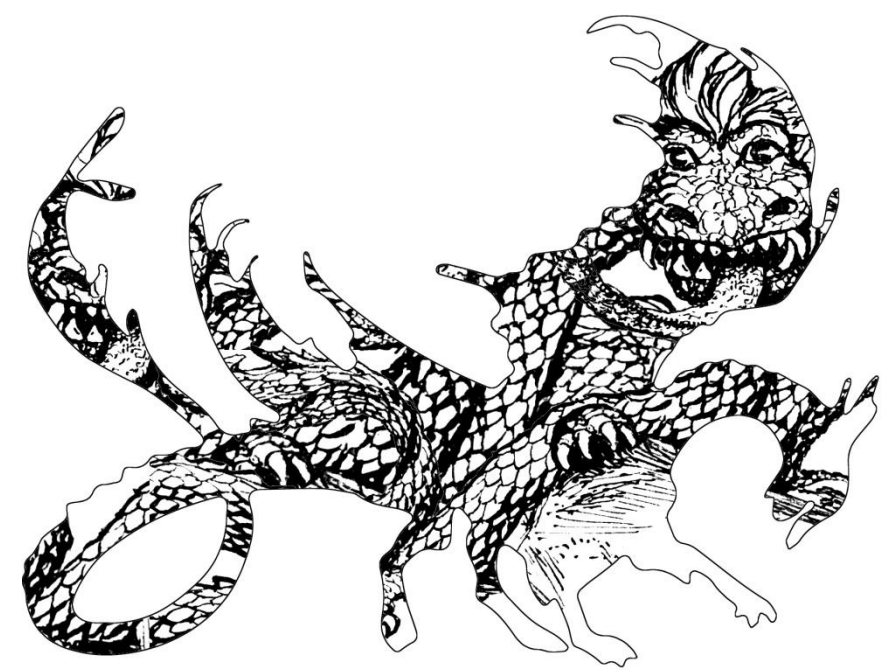
Think of Demons: a demon is not just there to destroy stuff and wave a flaming whip. A Demon will seduce or take control of someone, hide and mask or give trickery advice, corrupt and poison (wells as well as souls and dreams). These are all Custom Moves that you can design for the monster.

Usually, powers will initially manifest **as moves you make** (either soft or hard moves), but in the heat of the battle, or when really needed, you can just simply activate the power and say what it does, without waiting for the opportunity offered by one of your moves.

MAKE A SUPERNATURAL MONSTER

When you make a supernatural monster, use the elements below. Again, remember that the key remains first of all your description.

- * **Monster name** and concept
- * **Description**, appearance, general presentation
- * **Powers**: define the exact mechanical or fictional Powers and/or the necessary Custom Moves
- * **Roll Inflict Harm with 1D6**, always, for supernatural
- * **Vulnerability** (if any) or special protections
- * **Armor**
- * **Harm** it inflicts, and size with perhaps the Gang statistics if it moves in packs or groups, or if especially large



DEFINE THE STATS

Here is how to define the stats for your supernatural monster:

- ✦ Roll Inflict Harm with 1D6
- ✦ You can add some near invulnerability paired with a weakness if the fight is going to be a major turning point for the adventure
- ✦ **Armor:** 1 for thick leather or partial metal, 2 for scales, bones, chainmail, 3 for heavy plate or bones
- ✦ **Add 1 armor** for things like: special protections (mobile bone shields?), agility and speed, or difficult to hit in a vital spot
- ✦ **Add 1 more armor** for magical protections and wards, for some supernatural agility and speed, for magical life forces (think: golem)
- ✦ **Harm:** 2 for claws and fangs, 3 for big claws and fangs, spikes, horns, 4 for massive, 5 for huge. In general you might want to stop at huge
- ✦ **Use the regular weapons** harm table in case the monster uses regular weapons; add 1 harm to magical weapons
- ✦ **Add 1 harm** for: incredibly sharp, multiple attacks, agility and speed, tactical advantages (like flying, or poison, or fire breathing and such). Tactical advantages might present alternative attacks or custom moves, but count also to increase harm
- ✦ **Elemental attacks** (a flame, a freezing touch, a sandstorm, a powerful wave) can inflict even more than 5 harm, perhaps to multiple targets
- ✦ **If larger than huge**, it counts as a small gang, with harm and armor as by the description above

Demons and supernatural monsters will **require Face Death to engage**, and in some other cases might require Face Danger i.e. to avoid a special attack (a dark spell? an elemental attack?), to avoid an armor piercing attack (obscurer weapons that destroy shields or armors?) or to find a weak spot vulnerability.

EXAMPLE POWERS AND CUSTOM MOVES

Following are some examples for Powers or custom moves that can be used for a Supernatural Monster. These are quite powerful and meant to be so: use supernatural monsters as a main threat and not just as everyday adversaries.

The flames: *when the fire demon spits its wind of flames against you, roll+Steel.*

On a 10+ you escape unharmed, and have your chance to attack.

On a 7-9, pick one:

- › *Suffer 2 harm ap, but have your chance to counterattack*
- › *Suffer only 1 harm ap, but all you do is try to escape the fire, and have no other chance to act now*

On a 6- suffer 3 harm ap and then the GM makes his move.

The Soul-Whip: *when you are targeted by the Soul-Whip of the Dark Sorcerer, roll+Spirit.*

On a 10+ you block both the physical and spiritual attack, and you can go for your counterattack or act.

On a 7-9, pick one:

- › *Suffer 2 harm ap, but resist the spiritual whip*
- › *Suffer -1 Spirit and become 'bound' by the spiritual whip (see Soul Binder of the sorcerer character for inspiration)*

On a 6-, both of the above.

Once you're bound, the Dark Sorcerer can locate you, find your vulnerabilities, know your secret, interrogate you in your dreams, scare you from the shadows and give you a -1 Spirit, and even target you with his spells. All this, he can do from afar; to be free from the binding you must either travel to another nation, or destroy the Soul-Whip, or kill the Dark Sorcerer, or find a powerful wizard that can disperse this ritual.

The Colossus: *when the giant attacks a crowd of bystanders or a gang lead by a character, take the result of the first move that any of the characters roll, to determine what's happening to the crowd or the gang. If both a crowd and a gang are present, apply both results.*

On a 10+ a crowd disperses in fear but with minimal damage suffered; while a gang holds together to start fighting.

On a 7-9 a crowd panics and several are seriously injured and a few are killed; a gang on the other hand presents a choice for the leading character:

- › *The gang suffers 2 harm ap and then can engage the giant in combat*
- › *The gang suffers only 1 harm ap but is at risk of breaking up; the leader must roll a move to hold it together*

On a 6- a crowd is massacred, several are killed violently and a lot are injured, there's crying and screaming everywhere and regular folks will get in the middle of the fight posing trouble. A gang on the other hand suffers 2 harm ap and then the leader must roll a move to prevent it from breaking up in front of the giant.

Shape-shifting demon: *when the shape-shifter demon takes the appearances of an NPC you know, or of another character, roll+Brains.*

On a 10+ you see through his deception, you can pretend to be fooled to gain an advantage, or alert others.

On a 7-9 you see through his deception but pick one:

- › *Nobody else believes you; they think him real*
- › *You can alert others but the demon is faster and gains a tempo, the GM will make a move, before you can act*

On a 6- you are completely fooled and must act like it.

The Hand-Of-Fear: *when you face the Demon of Fear, you must Face Death but roll+Spirit instead of Steel.*

Pick your choices as in Face Death, but on a 6-, the GM decides if:

- › *To make his GM move, or*
- › *Have you run away, scared by dark visions of death, leaving your companions behind and taking a -1 Spirit*

The Invisible Blade: *when the assassin of the Invisible Blade targets one or more characters, the one with the highest Brains rolls for Perception.*

On a 10+ you identify the threat, you can alert your companions and also ask the questions you want from the Perception move. You have time to fight or attempt an escape.

On a 7-9 you identify the threat, alert your companions and again ask questions from Perception. You must fight your way out if you want to escape, but you also must pick one:

- › *The assassin was aiming for one of your friends, but you manage to get in the way; you save them from harm but suffer 2 harm ap*
- › *The assassin was aiming for you, but you dodge the attack and the assassin instead hits someone else chosen by the GM, for 3 harm ap since they didn't see it coming*
- › *If you're alone, take only 1 harm ap but you're locked in a fight and must fight your way out if you want to escape*

On a 6- the Invisible blade strikes you and someone else for a total of 3 harm ap - the GM will say who's hit. Also, you cannot ask questions now, and one of you lost something (a weapon, a mount, whatever), again determined by the mercy (really!) of your GM.

HELL-HOUNDS

Hell-hounds present usually in a couple of possible forms: either humanoid, with rotten skin and monstrous features, huge fangs, and often horns or spikes on their slender bodies, or as very large dogs. In this case, the Hell-hounds are dark in color, bigger, stronger and faster than normal dogs, and often hunt in small packs.

As the name says, they are mostly used by a Prince of Hell to track and hunt human preys, or sometimes as spies.

Hell-hounds are invoked by **spending 1 from the Taint Tracker**, for a pack of dog-like hounds, or a few in humanoid form. Evoke as many as the characters +1.



Statistics:

- ✦ **Harm:** 3 for claws and fangs because of speed and agility. Up to 4 for the biggest exemplars
- ✦ Sometimes their horns will manage to pierce an armor inflicting 1 harm ap, instead of the regular harm mentioned above
- ✦ **Armor:** 2 for all, for speed and agility
- ✦ Roll Inflict Harm **with 1D6**
- ✦ When in a pack, they count as small gang with 2 Armor, 3 Harm

An example move:

When the hell-hounds are tracking the characters, and characters are not fully aware of how to deal with the situation, the one with the highest Brains should roll 2D6+Brains.

On a 10+ the character manages to guide the group and lose them.

On a 7-9 a couple will catch up with the characters, but not all of them.

On a 6-, they will be in a number equal to the characters or more, with no easy way out.

Another example move:

When the hell-hounds attack the characters in a public place or where other humans will see the beasts from hell, at the end of the fight there will be some talking to do.

The one dealing with the witnesses will roll the appropriate move to talk with the NPCs, i.e. with Charm or Shadow, but take the result from the below.



On a 10+, pick one:

- › *You keep a low profile, dispatch the body of the monsters, and nobody asks more questions*
- › *You gain the support of the locals, and a certain notoriety as those opposing the forces of evil*

On a 7-9, pick one of the above, but they come with string attached:

- › *If you keep a low profile, there's someone to bribe or silence somehow*
- › *If you obtain the support of the locals, your notoriety might disturb someone or attract unwanted attention*

On a 6- the GM will pick one:

- › *The silence can be obtained only with force, otherwise the news will travel and cause you trouble for sure*
- › *The locals want to get rid of you, thinking you bring disgrace; it will be hard to remain in this place without receiving hostile opposition*
- › *Someone suspects that you might know more than what you say you do, and perhaps even claim you're of the same breed of those who sent the hounds*

HUNTING-DEMONS

Hunting demons are minor demons, evoked and controlled directly by a major demon or an Hell-Prince. They form by binding a demoniac soul into a corpse, or more often a collection of corpses of different species, or by animating an inanimate object like a statue or armor.

Despite their fearful features, these are by far the weakest demons: their bodies in fact are as fragile as the material that constitutes them, and they're missing any supernatural feature besides their unnatural life force.

They are often used as a replacement for Hell-hounds, especially because they can be evoked and activated with ease, and exactly where they are needed: an armor in the room of a king, a decapitated corpse on the battlefield merging with the head of his dead warhorse, an ancient mummy in a crypt within the walls of an otherwise well protected castle, the statue of an angel in a church, and so forth.

Sometimes Hunting-demons can be given also the possibility to speak and limited reasoning capabilities, so that they can deliver messages to human servants of the Hell-Prince, or to victims. In some cases, they can provide an interface to speak with the Hell-Prince directly.

Hunting-demons are invoked **by spending 1 from the Taint Tracker**, and they appear at least in a pair.

Statistics:

- ✦ **Harm:** usually 2 or 3 for claws, fangs, small or improvised weapons. Those with human weapons, use the related harm
- ✦ **Armor:** 0 for corpses, 1 or 2 for those made of inanimate material
- ✦ Roll Inflict Harm **with 1D6**

An example move:

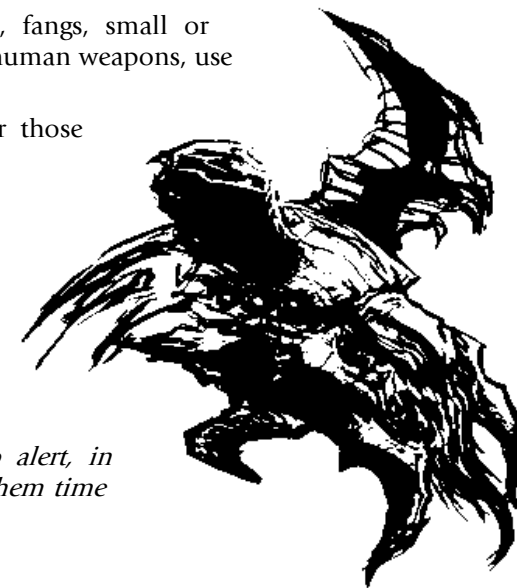
When the Hunting-demon is evoked to catch someone by surprise, the one with the highest Brains should roll 2D6+Brains.

On a 10+ the character manages to alert, in time, whoever he decides, and gives them time to organize a reaction.

On a 7-9 the Player should pick one:

- › *Alert other characters to protect them, but expose either himself or the intended victim (if not a character) to danger*
- › *React promptly, but without having time to alert the others*

On a 6- the hunting-demon strikes before the character can react.



Another example move:

When the hunting-demon inflicts harm it might use a poisonous weapon or might inflict wounds that will infect easily. If the GM goes for poison, roll this move instead of suffering the harm of the attack.

Roll 2D6 with your highest stat, and test your luck.

On a 10+ the poison does you basically nothing.

On a 7-9 the poison or infection is weakening only: take 1 harm ap.

On a 6- the poison or infection is potentially lethal: mark Unstable. Every round, the GM can make a move to inflict another 1 harm ap until someone treats your wound or you drink some antidote.

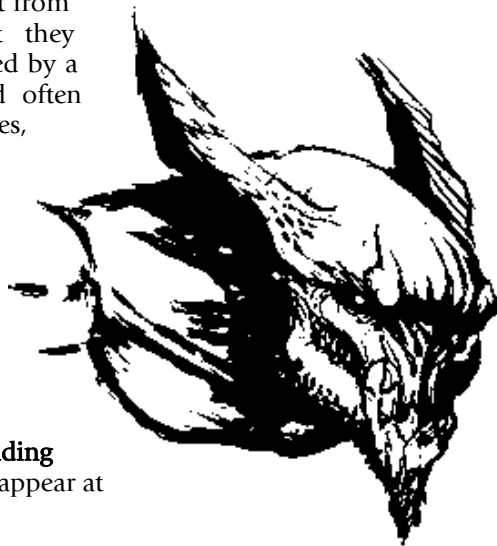
HELL-KNIGHTS

The Hell-knights are the standard fighting forces of the Hell-Princes: they usually have a humanoid form and are bigger and stronger than humans, although some of them can still mask to appear human, at least from a certain distance or as long as they keep their heads covered.

Most of the times the Hell-knights wear human armors and wield human weapons: they might obtain the equipment from cultists, or steal it from human knights or guards that they murdered. Their bodies are covered by a thick, leather-like grey skin, and often they have sharp, bones-like, spikes, claws or horns, protruding from the head, the shoulders, the hands or the joints, on the elbows or knees.

If needed, they can fight fiercely with those, but they're trained in the usage of weapons and they favor indeed weapons.

Hell-knights are invoked **by spending 2 from the Taint Tracker**, and they appear at least in a pair.



Statistics:

- * **Harm:** usually 2 or 3 for claws and horns, but **more** often 3 or 4 for human weapons, medium or large
- * When possible, they will steal from humans also war-horses, and in this case they inflict +1 harm
- * **Armor:** 1 for their thick skin if without armor, otherwise up to 2 or 3 depending on the armor and shield used.
- * Roll Inflict Harm **with 1D6**

An example move:

When the Hell-knight charges or fights and other humans are present, someone roll 2D6+Charm.

On a 10+ the character manages to keep everybody in control.

On a 7-9 the crowd starts to panic, the Player should pick one:

- › Give up his actions to restore order and keep innocents safe
- › Act normally (i.e. fight) but the crowd will either get in the way or some innocent will clearly get in danger

On a 6- some innocent, or a lot of them, are clearly in danger, right now, and saving them demands some risk or sacrifice.

Another example move:

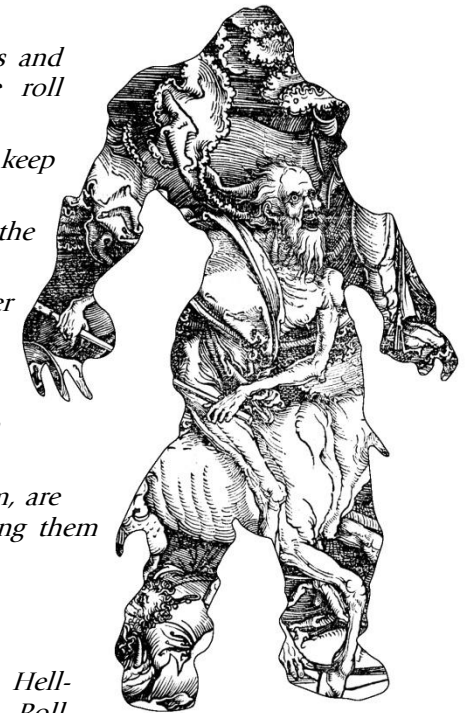
If you fail (6-) a combat roll against a Hell-knight, the monster grabs your weapon. Roll 2D6+Steel to regain control.

On a 10+ you free your weapon immediately to keep fighting.

On a 7-9 pick one:

- › Free your weapon, the monster grabs your face: what do you do?
- › You let go of your weapon: what do you do?

On a 6- the Hell-knight holds onto your weapon, and grabs your face or neck with his other hand and begins to strangle you or crush your head. You suffer 2 harm ap. What do you do?



SOUL-SUCKERS

A soul-sucker is an incredibly dangerous creature from hell, one of the best servants of the Hell-Princes, together with the Corruptors. As much as the Hell-Princes do not hesitate to use brute force when necessary, they know that greed, suspicion, ambition and distrust are an essential part of the human nature and use those as weapons.

A soul-sucker exploits those weaknesses, to use humans against other humans, thus saving the Hell-Princes the need to deploy warriors and act in the open. The soul-sucker, with its work, also weakens the human defenses by spreading additional distrust and by putting humans one against the other. The work of a soul-sucker is even more terrible when it infects an environment of power.

In its basic form, the soul-sucker resembles other demons, with grey skin, monstrous features, horns and fangs and so on. But the soul-sucker works primarily by disguising as a human: it can transform in an anonymous human being in a few minutes, losing all its monstrous features (although without clothes or tools or weapons, which it can acquire independently from the transformation). This type of transformation lasts around one hour during the day, two hours in the night, and it's broken at midday.

The soul-sucker with this transformation cannot take the appearances of any known NPC or important character. Also, it can be performed just once every 12 hours more or less.

But the soul-sucker does more than that: while in human form, he works to gain the trust or proximity of some important target, for example an officer, a noble or a high prelate or someone in a position of power. Once it has



gained the trust of his target, it can either slowly bend his target's will, to follow the Hell-Princes instructions, or even transform in an exact copy of its target.

To regulate the infection of an important target, use a countdown:

1) getting close; 2) gaining trust; 3) soul-whisper and create minor damage or side-effects; 4) soul-whisper and act as in charge of the target, able to take the target's appearances for short times 5) soul-whisper madness, able to take permanently the target's appearances, perhaps even kill and replace the target.

Soul-suckers are invoked **by spending 3 from the Taint Tracker**, and usually appears in couple, targeting different important NPCs.

Statistics:

- * **Harm:** usually 2 or 3 for claws and horns, sometimes 3 or 4 for human weapons, medium or large
- * **Armor:** 1 for their thick skin if without armor, otherwise up to 2 or 3 depending on the armor used
- * Roll **Inflict Harm with 1D6**



To recognize a soul-sucker, the Players will ask questions with Perception; use the Perception roll result also to determine the result of the move below:

On a 10+ they know it, they're sure, and can keep this secret for now.

On a 7-9 they know it, but the soul-sucker knows its cover is blown.

On a 6- they trust the soul-sucker as a normal NPC.

An example move:

If a soul-sucker, in human form and so far undetected by the characters, gains the trust of one of them, ask to roll+Spirit.

On a 10+ the character recognizes the soul-sucker.

On a 7-9 the character feels some awkwardness towards this human NPC; but the soul-sucker starts a countdown against the character.

On a 6- create a countdown for the character as a target, and then advance it with your moves during interactions with the soul-sucker.

CORRUPTORS

Corruptors are short-lived demons incarnations; their forms are usually very unstable, and in this unstable form they often mutate and decay, releasing poison and toxins. They need to regenerate their bodies by consuming human flesh and souls, and use parts of their victims to restore their bodies. When in need, they can resort also to the use of animals or monsters.

They have weak forms, but their strength is in the slow decay and infection they carry with them, which can even destroy a city or an army, if not stopped from spreading. The Hell-Princes will typically use the Corruptors to attack the base or headquarter of human adversaries, spreading disease and plague within cities or armies. When the corruptor is evoked it should usually come with a Countdown to track the spreading of the disease on the target.

When the infection is generated by a weak Corruptor, the infection will quickly disappear once the demon is killed, and the Corruptor will need to remain close to the target (i.e. within the city walls) to keep the infection alive. For very strong Corruptors, though, the infection might resist the death of the Corruptor itself, and need some alternative and powerful - perhaps magical - cure.

Corruptors are invoked **by spending 3 from the Taint Tracker**.



Statistics:

- * **Harm:** usually 2 or 3 for claws and horns, sometimes 3 or 4 for human weapons, medium or large
- * **Armor:** 1 for minor protections, otherwise up to 2 with minor regeneration powers
- * Roll Inflict Harm **with 1D6**

An example move:

When the corruptor inflicts harm, it is almost always poisonous or potentially carrying an infection.

Roll 2D6 with your lowest stat, instead of suffering the harm of the weapon.

On a 10+ the poison or infection does you basically nothing.

On a 7-9 the poison or infection is weakening only: take 1 harm ap, and take it again a little bit after the end of the fight, unless someone treats your wound promptly.

On a 6- the poison or infection is potentially lethal: mark Unstable or Tainted (GM's call). Every round, the GM can make a move to inflict another 1 harm ap or -1 Spirit, until someone treats your wound or you drink some antidote, or healing potion or similar.

Another example move:

When you've suffered an attack from a Corruptor, and rolled a 6- on the move above, you are tainted by the corruptor evil touch.

At the beginning of the next session, or when a few days have passed in fiction, the GM will ask you to roll 2D6+Steel if the harm was to the body (Unstable) or 2D6+Brains if the harm was to the Spirit (Tainted).

On a 10+ you shake it off.

On a 7-9, you suffer again 1 harm ap or -1 Spirit (as previously).

On a 6-, the evil touch won't leave you. Suffer again 1 harm ap or -1 Spirit (as previously) and Unstable or Tainted. You will need again someone to cure you.

GIANT-DEMONS

When nothing else works, when Hell-hounds lose the track, Hunting-demons fail, Hell-knights are defeated, Soul-suckers exposed, and Corruptors killed and infections cured - the Hell-Princes resort to the Giant-demons.

These are huge monsters vomited from Hell on earth, eager to pursue their objective, as commanded by the Hell-Princes. Giant-demons are not that smart, but understand simple commands, such as killing or attacking a certain target, and similar.

They are implacable, and their only strength is, indeed, a supernatural strength and resistance.

Giant-Demons are invoked by spending 3 from the Taint Tracker.

By spending 4, instead, you can invoke the Giant-Demon as a weak incarnation of an Hell-Prince. The Giant-Demon in this case will act with the cunning malice of a Hell-Prince, paired with the original strength of the demon. In this case, if the Giant-demon is killed, the Hell-Prince is released as a weak spirit, bound to answer one question from the characters - and only one, before disappearing promising vengeance.

When facing a Giant-demon, the characters must roll Face Death at every round, and if a character faces it alone, the demon counts as a small-gang (+1 harm, +1 armor). If two or more characters (or NPCs) are fighting the demon, it counts as a single, normal adversary and not as a gang anymore.

Statistics:

- ✦ **Harm:** usually 4 or 5 for claws and horns and hell-weapons, but sometimes up to 6 for single, well placed strikes of their large hell-swords and hell-axes
- ✦ **Armor:** 2 for their thick skin if without armor, otherwise up to 3 with a hell-armor
- ✦ Roll Inflict Harm with 1D6

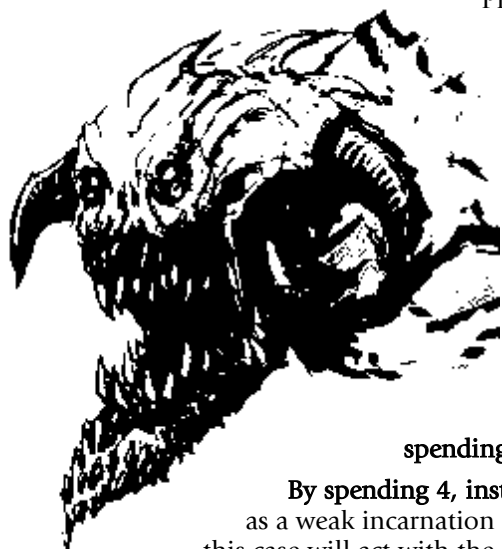
An example move:

When you complete your fight against the Giant-demon, winning or escaping it doesn't matter, if you suffered any physical harm from the demon, roll+Steel.

On a 10+ you will heal normally.

On a 7-9 all of your wounds, even previous ones, are bleeding badly: it will take you twice the normal time to heal.

On a 6- mark Unstable if don't have it already, or take 1 additional harm ap if you have Unstable already, and roll Suffer Harm; this can kill you even if the fight is over.



THE HELL-PRINCE

In the darkness, behind all the demons, and perhaps controlling the very source of tainted sorcery powers, is the Hell-Prince. Nobody has spoken his name in hundreds of years, and for a reason: naming is calling. The Hell-Prince is invoked **by spending 5 from the Taint Tracker**.

By spending 4 instead, you can invoke a minor manifestation, which is either incarnated into a Giant-demon or into a powerful human sorcerer or warrior; or perhaps an important NPC.

Statistics:

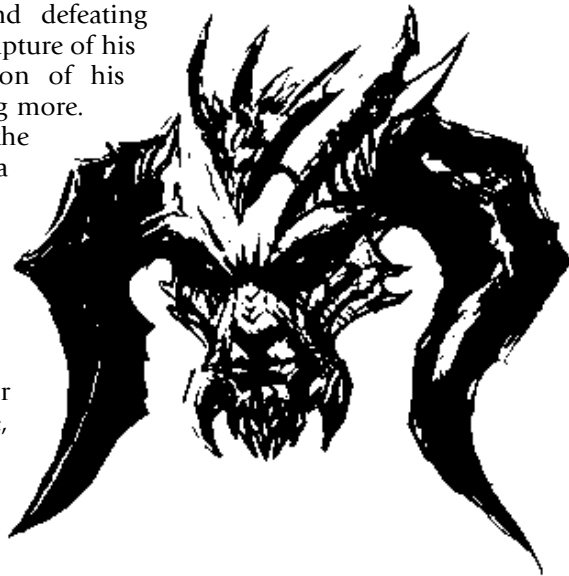
- * **Harm:** usually 4 or 5 for claws and horns and hell-weapons, but sometimes up to 6 for single, well placed strikes of its large and dark weapons
- * **Armor:** 2 for magic wards and magical shields
- * Roll Inflict Harm **with 1D6**

When the Hell-Prince is invoked, things get in motion for some grand, dark agenda. The Hell-Prince doesn't simply conquer a village or fight an army; the Hell-Prince aims to conquer the City of Judas itself, to destroy all the invaders, to annihilate any trace of faith and hope in the hearts of entire populations.

The Hell-Prince cannot be killed: fighting against him and defeating him can only cause the rupture of his plans and the destruction of his current form, but nothing more.

A sorcerer can banish the Hell Prince (treat it as a major demon) for a long time, but then he will be back, in a new form, in another 77 years, to pursue again his dark plans.

While fighting or opposing the Hell-Prince, the Players must roll Face Death, and this is true also when attacking the Hell-



Prince with sorcery, demonology and so on. Give to the Hell-Prince access to at least a single spell list, if not more.

An example move:

When the Hell-Prince harms a character on a 6-, he gains strength and removes a point of Harm Suffered (HS).

Another example move:

When the Hell-Prince harms a character on a 6-, instead of inflicting harm he can inflict directly a Debility, maiming the character permanently.

Another example move:

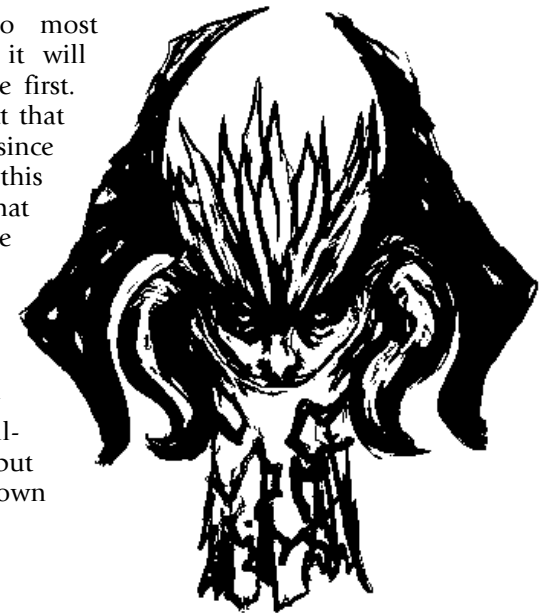
When the Hell Prince curses a character, it takes the character AD for itself, and resets the one of the character to 1. The Hell Prince will use the AD it stole, as harm to add to its next attack.

ANOTHER HELL-PRINCE

If the Players defeat the first Hell-Prince, or if the campaign last long enough to make things really messy, you can bring into play a second Hell-Prince. The new Hell-Prince is invoked **by spending 5 from the Taint Tracker**, or 4 for a weaker manifestation.

This Hell-Prince is unknown to most sorcerer and demonologists, but it will clearly appear in opposition to the first. This opposition mirrors the conflict that the two demons carry on, in hell, since several hundred years. Note that this conflict, though, doesn't mean that this Hell-Prince will favor the characters or help them.

On the contrary, this Hell-Prince will try to use and abuse the help or the work of the characters, of the Iron Fist or any other opposition to the previous Hell-Prince, just to gain an advantage, but will not hesitate to then attack his own presumed allies.



Moreover, dealing with a Hell-Prince to defeat another is a risky and shady business: the characters should understand that there will always be a high price to pay.

Statistics:

- * **Harm:** usually 4 or 5 for claws and horns and dark touch; this Hell Prince uses no weapons
- * **Armor:** 2 for magic wards and magical shields
- * Roll Inflict Harm **with 1D6**

Also this Hell-Prince cannot be killed while in his material form, but as the other, can be banished for long periods of time with sorcery or by defeating him. While fighting or opposing the Hell-Prince, the Players must roll Face Death, and this is true also when attacking the Hell-Prince with sorcery, demonology and so on.

Give to the Hell-Prince access to at least a single spell list, if not more.

An example move:

The dark touch of death of the Hell-Prince, on a 6-, drains the Spirit of his enemy: take -2 Spirit and mark Tainted if reaching -1 or less. You can use this only once against the same character; you can use it again only after some time.

Another example move:

When the Hell-Prince drinks the blood of his target, he can inflict him a strike of sudden and severe pain: take 1 harm ap and reset the Advantage Die to 1 - without taking any advantage a move might give you when resetting the AD.

Another example move:

When the Hell-Prince tries to convince you of the good of his plans, roll Test Your Spirit to resist the temptation to side with him and work for his dark plans, believing to act for a greater good.

Another example move:

When the Hell Prince inflicts harm on a 7-9 or 6-, it will also give a -1 to the AD of the target character.

NPCs AND MAGIC

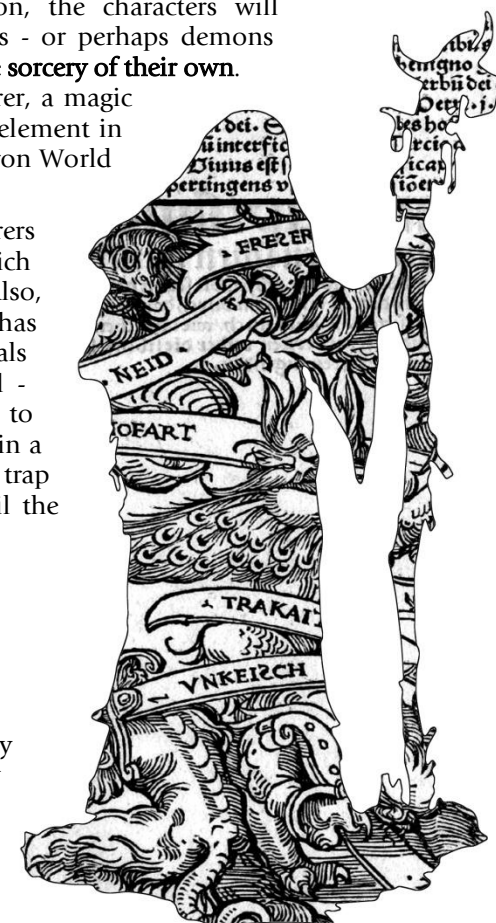
Although it will not be very common, the characters will sometimes find themselves facing NPCs - or perhaps demons and monsters - with the capability **to use sorcery of their own**. When you decide to insert a dark sorcerer, a magic cult, or some supernatural and magical element in the game, remember that magic in the Iron World is dark, grim and dangerous business.

Don't think of wizards, think of sorcerers and witches, of dark arts, of a magic which provides a shortcut at a high price. Also, remember that as the Sorcerer character has spells and rituals available - with rituals taking longer but being more powerful - also the NPCs using magic might need to work for a long time on a ritual to obtain a powerful result. Try not to fall into the trap of instant magic tricks, which will spoil the dark and grim atmosphere of the game.

MAGICAL POWERS CHECKLIST

When you plan to generate an adversary that will use magical powers, follow these guidelines.

Define the magical power - the type of power:



- * **A unique power:** i.e. the capacity to control fire and use it as a weapon
- * **Or an extended power:** i.e. multiple spells and rituals available to a sorcerer or a major demon

Determine the power magnitude:

- * **A regular magic power:** i.e. a simple cultist or a minor demon
- * **Or very powerful, overwhelming:** a great sorcerer, a major demon

Determine custom moves and effects:

- * Draft perhaps **custom moves** for it
- * **Define soft and hard moves**, effects that apply without the need to roll dice

DEFINE THE MAGICAL POWERS

A unique magical power is a single - more or less powerful - version of a regular spell (i.e. the capability to control fire and use it as a weapon); while if the magical powers are extended it means that the NPC or monster has **multiple options** available.

For extended magical power you don't need to write down everything in advance; you can improvise in play but remember to stick to the tone you've set, to remain loyal to the spirit of your NPC. In other words, remember that you can pick different sorcery realms, but not a lot of sorcerers can master spells and rituals of multiple realms. Don't use a flashy combat spell for a dark, sneaky cultist: give him obscure, disgusting spells of corruption.

Another option for the extended powers is to pick one or more lists of spells from the Sorcerer playbook, and assume the NPC has access to all the spells, or perhaps to some variants of these. More often than not an NPC with the capability to use sorcery will be specialized, with access to one or two lists, and not more. Use the lists to inspire you, since as the GM you will actually not roll for the spells.

DETERMINE THE MAGNITUDE

This is an important decision: it is best if the first couple of times you will stick to regular powers, so that you will learn to master those before moving to very powerful sorcerers or major demons with overwhelming powers.

While supernatural monsters and sorcerers will have regular powers - nothing stronger than the Sorcerer character - it is very rare but possible for the characters to meet someone or something even stronger. A Hell Prince or a

major demon, a really great sorcerer, will have the possibility to use very powerful sorcery and powers.

The core difference between regular magic and very powerful one is of course in the magical force, range and flexibility and so on.

Mechanically speaking, you will differentiate them in **how you will use Moves** against the characters, and in how often such magic will be used in the game. More details follow in the next sections.

CUSTOM MOVES AND EFFECTS

NPCs' or monsters' magical powers are displayed in fiction through your descriptions, and have mechanical effects **in the form of Moves**, either Custom Moves or regular soft or hard moves that you will perform.

The difference is that a Custom Move requires more time to write, but can be tuned exactly to define a very specific effect. When you write a move for a spell, a ritual or a magical power, remember that it will be the Player that will **roll to resist the effects**. Thus the worst options for the character will be on a 6- result.

Instead, when you want to keep things simpler, you can simply resort to effects in fiction: **use the regular moves to activate the effects**, for example you can inflict harm caused by a fire spell. This happens when Players roll a 6- for instance, and it's your time to make a move. In other words, use your moves to inflict harm or else **according to the magic power effect**, without the need to roll dice.

TRIGGER MAGICAL POWERS

One of the keys, mechanically, for the GM to use the magical powers, is to try to remain fair in their usage, and to generate with them a fiction which will flow together with the rest of the game. So, when as the GM you need to trigger magic, use the following guidelines, depending on the power magnitude.

If the magical power is **regular**:

- * Remember to announce it with a Soft Move; show the spell getting ready to fire. In other words, give the characters the opportunity to react and stop or counter the spell
- * Bring the full effects of the magical power into fiction with an Hard Move when the characters fail with 6-

- When they obtain a partial success with 7-9, you can inflict minor consequences (i.e. a mitigated damage, or something that they can still act to stop)
- Use the above when introducing the given power: once you've acted slower once or twice, feel free to escalate and be more direct. This means **using Hard Moves** more and more (i.e. inflicting harm without the chance to avoid it)
- Sometimes, you could use a regular magic power directly as a Hard Move, for a 6- rolled by the Player, even if you didn't yet announce it with a soft move (i.e. for a surprise attack from the monster). This, though, should be the exception, not the norm
- When the magical power represents the core of the adversary, and its only weapon (or main weapon), **do not restrain yourself**. Use the magical power as much as needed; just remember that perhaps its magnitude might be limited in scope or in the damage it inflicts

If the magical power is overwhelming:

- You can announce it with a Soft Move, the first time, but then you are allowed to just **make mostly Hard Moves** with it, when appropriate. This is just representing how powerful is the adversary
- Bring the full effects of the magical power into fiction both on a 6- and also on a 7-9, when the 7-9 gives you the option to make one of your moves
- Yes, make **a lot of Hard Moves**: inflict the harm or other effects, and let them deal with the consequences. That's why the power is defined as overwhelming

LIMIT MAGICAL POWERS

While the characters' magic is regulated by exact prices to pay, that will limit the amount of spells that can be used; NPCs, demons and monsters do not have counters for example for Spirit or Equipment, to regulate the usage of spells. So how many times can you use magical powers against the characters when an NPC sorcerer is present, for example? This really depends on the nature of the power that you defined, and the type of adversary that they're facing.

A fire demon will have the chance to use fire to fight against the characters almost without limits, while a sorcerer using fire spells will be somehow restricted by the availability of ingredients and his spiritual power, as much as a Sorcerer character would.

As a general rule, consider that using sorcery will debilitate human NPCs - unless they clearly have, in fiction, some additional source of power like spell scrolls, victims to sacrifice, and so on.

For human sorcerers and witches:

- Using a spell will cost an NPC human sorcerer 1 point of HS every time a spell is used (that is, inflict 1 harm against the sorcerer, to use the spell), unless it's just minor magic
- If there are additional fictional elements (scrolls, books, sacrifice victims, ingredients, etc.) they can be used instead of HS but make them to be relevant in fiction: books and scrolls will be become loot, saved victims will show gratitude, and so on
- Most of the sorcerers and witches, unless caught out of their element and by surprise, will indeed have something available (i.e. scrolls or ingredients) to trigger the first couple of spells, before you will need to resort to HS or struggle to bring in fiction additional elements like books, sacrificial victims etc.
- An NPC sorcerer using additional sources of power like ingredients or objects of power, could be stopped by preventing him from tapping into the magical source, rather than attacking him directly.

When it comes to demons and monsters, you need to give them a limit by combining the type of power and type of monster, and the scope of its power:

- If the power is unique (i.e. only fighting with fire) and the monster is clearly defined by that power (i.e. a fire demon), give it unlimited access to the power
- If the monster or demon uses spells lists, and have a wide array of options available, make it pay a price as you would for a human sorcerer: 1 point of HS every time a spell is used, or otherwise use some sort of external power source for the magic
- When the power is overwhelming and triggers a lot of Hard Moves, again give it a limit by having the adversary to pay a price in 1 point of HS. You don't need to pay the price every time, though: do it every other time or once yes and twice no. The overwhelming power will take a long time to exhaust
- There can be very rare exceptions to these rules, with legendary adversaries, such as the Hell-Princes; in this case do not make them pay for the Hard Moves at all. They are not Hell-Princes for nothing

RESIST MAGICAL POWERS

Depending on the scope and effects of the spells or magical powers, remember that the characters can have a way to resist them, avoid them, or at least mitigate them:

- They can roll Face Danger i.e. +Edge or +Steel against spells with physical consequences
- They can roll Face Danger +Brains, or Test Your Spirit with Spirit, against other, more subtle, magical powers
- Remember that, **if you're making Hard Moves**, you don't need to give the Players a Face Danger to roll but they must instead suffer the consequences; and when you do ask a Face Danger then perhaps the option is between being hurt badly, or just hurt (i. e. against an evil demon's firestorm: on a 10+ take 2 harm ap, on a 7-9 take 3 harm ap and -1 to the AD, on a 6- take 4 harm ap)

On the other hand, also important NPCs, monsters and demons might have a way to resist sorcery used by the characters. While you can always assume that on a 10+ or a 7-9 a Sorcerer's spell always works against regular NPCs, Sorcerer NPCs, monsters and demons are tougher adversaries.

Depending on the importance of the spell or ritual, and the strength of the adversary, you can ask the Sorcerer character **to roll Face Danger to overcome the enemy's defenses** against magic, or otherwise diminish or delay the effects of the spell.

When casting a spell **against a Hell Prince**, a Sorcerer character is basically Facing Death with Brains - or maybe Spirit, instead of Steel.

DEMONOLOGY AND EVOCATIONS

One of the spell lists of the Sorcerer is Demonology: it contains spells to evoke minor and major demons, and to issue commands to them. When working with those demons, consider the following guidelines:

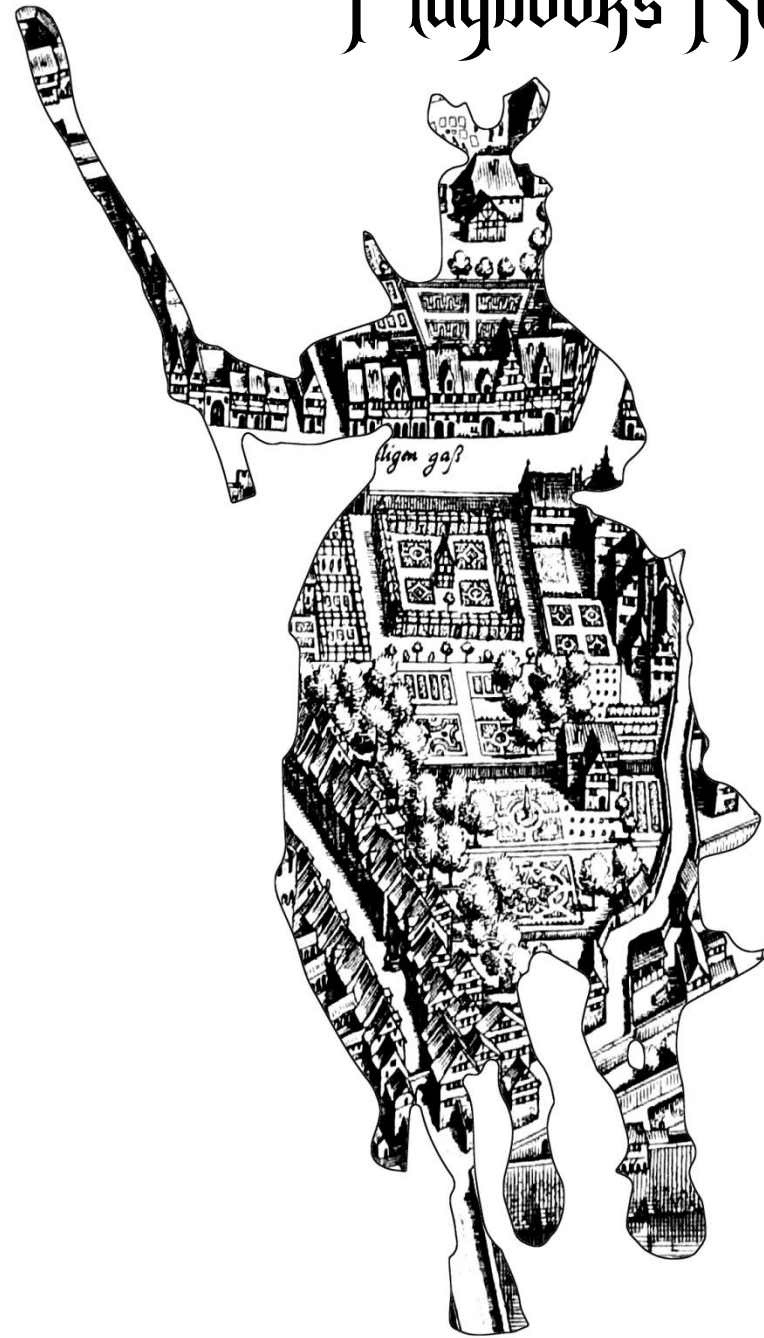
- A minor demon, if corporeal, has 3 harm, 2 armor
- A major demon, if corporeal, has 4 harm, 3 armor
- Both the minor demon and the major demon can have custom moves to the advantage or disadvantage of the character that performed the evocations
- If you make custom moves, keep them simple for the minor demons, and refer instead to the example moves of the Supernatural Monsters for the major demons

An important option of the Command Spells of the Demonology list is the possibility **to banish a minor demon**, and of weakening a major demon so that it can be banished. This applies also to the demons that you evoked, as the GM, with the Taint Tracker, as follows:

- Minor demons (can be banished with a Spell, once the demonologist took control with the appropriate Ritual): Hell-hounds, Hunting-demons, Hell-knights, Corruptors
- Soul-suckers: minor demon; but once the countdown is complete, they gain strength and become major demons
- Major demons: Giant-demons, Hell-Prince manifestations



Playbooks Reference



THE BARBER

You are the Barber, skilled with blades, be it a sword or a scalpel. You had a medical training, perhaps in a renowned school, but didn't become a medic. Instead, you took your tools to the battlefield. You attend to your enemies as any mercenary, with your weapon in hand, but your real work begins after the battle, stitching up, operating, cleaning wounds and working on your companions' bodies. You make no miracles: medicine is a tough business, but still you give a wounded man a shot to survive. If you could only convince them of how important hygiene is.



Take -1 to Fail with 6- any roll with Brains
Spirit when: Ignore a human in need of healing

BARBER MOVES

Ø KNIFES AND SCALPELS xp

You can take care of any wound, given enough time and material; spend one hold of Gear&ammo. You can work on yourself if you're not unstable. When you operate on someone, or diagnose, roll+Edge.

On a 10+ hold two. On a 7-9 hold one.

Spend one hold to remove Unstable or heal one Health point - or HS for NPCs. At Health 0 natural recovery begins. With a hit you can also diagnose conditions.

On a 6- take -1 Spirit, or give -1 Health to your patient.

O HEALING HANDS xp

When you impose your hands on a wounded, including yourself, and heal with magic, roll+Brains.

You don't need tools, it's magical, but it takes several minutes. You and the patient take -1 to Spirit.

On a 10+ hold two. On a 7-9 hold one. Spend holds like for Knives And Scalpels. If you're Tainted, you can heal 2 points of Health instead of 1 for the first hold.

On a 6- both you and the patient take -1 Health or -1 Spirit (your call), but both the same.

O VOICE OF REASON

When you reason with your counterpart, discuss patiently and rationally, roll+Brains instead of Charm, for social interactions (i.e. Manipulate). If you're Tainted, you can roll also Lie And Deceive or make poison with Brains instead of Shadow.

On a hit on the social move (10+ or 7-9), take +1 Spirit.

O CIRCLE OF LIFE

When you heal someone (not yourself) with medicine, but not magic, take +1 Spirit, or take +1 to the AD.

O POTION MASTER xp

When you have time and materials, you can prepare a healing potion; spend one hold of Gear&ammo.

Only when the potion is drunk, roll+Brains and mark xp.

Treat the roll result as a roll for Healing Hands.

If the drinker is someone else, you can use Circle Of Life, but only to gain +1 AD, not Spirit.

O POISON MASTER xp

With time and materials, you can prepare a dose of poison; spend one hold of Gear&ammo. When the poison is used roll+Shadow (find your way to use it: on weapons, food, etc...) mark xp, and take -1 to Spirit.

On a 10+ the poison does 1 to 3 harm ap (your call).

On a 7-9 the poison does 1 to 2 harm ap (your call) but will trigger a GM's move. If you're Tainted the poison does +1 more harm ap if you wish.

On a 6- the poison does only 1 harm ap and the GM makes a move.

O THE SAGE (Special Advancement)

Take a playbook that is not in play, and gain its first Move (the one marked with "Ø" that is otherwise unavailable to everybody else). When you make other advancements, you can pick from the other playbook as if it was your own. If you take a spell list, you take five spells at the start, as a Sorcerer, and gain more in the same way.

THE HORSEMAN

You are the Horseman: your strength is in your warhorse first of all. Anybody can ride a horse; a few can tame and control a mighty stallion. You can do that, and more: you're born to be natural rider of the most powerful of the warhorse and you can turn even the most coward steeds into fierce machines for battle. When you charge in battle your horse's hooves thunder on the ground, your heavy weapons shine threateningly, and in a heartbeat you're on them, spreading death and destruction. As long as you remain on the saddle, you're no easy prey even for the mightiest of these monsters.



Take -1 to Spirit when: Fail with 6- any roll with Steel
Your horse dies or you're thrown off the saddle

HORSEMAN MOVES

Ø BEST ON THE SADDLE

While riding a warhorse, add its relevant Stat to your rolls, if it even remotely makes sense. In combat, you (and anybody on a warhorse) inflict +1 harm; but you get +1 armor too. Your warhorse is either stronger or more agile than average. The Iron Fist will replace it if it dies. If it suffers harm, roll Inflict Harm as for NPCs.

Horse Name: Looks:
 O Strong (+1 Steel) Harm +1; Armor +1
 O Agile (+1 Edge) Harm Suffered:

O HORSE MASTER xp

To summon your nearest warhorse with a whistle or a call, if it is within hearing distance, roll+Steel.

On a 10+ it comes now, and take +1 AD if it saves you.
 On a 7-9 it's somehow blocked; but you can force it to reach you with some delay at the price of 1 harm (ap) to it. On a hit, take also +1 Spirit.

O BATTLE WINDS

When you use Perception in battle and from the saddle, you are one with your horse's instincts and roll+Steel (not Brains). Add the horse's Steel if any. Take -1 Spirit for your supernatural instincts
 If you're Tainted you can ask one question more, or take +1 to the AD.

O UNTOUCHABLE xp

When you fight on the saddle, your warhorse can suffer harm instead of you, once per fight; take -1 Spirit, though, when it does.
 If you're Tainted, when you do this, you gain to roll an immediate counterattack against the enemy.

O CHARGE xp

When you ride your warhorse into a battle against a small gang or a large monster, you count as their peer as long as you are on the saddle and Roll+Steel now.

On a 10+ take both, on a 7-9 take one:
 Ignore penalties for the size/number of the opponent
 Take penalties, but don't roll Face Death in the fight

For each battle where you charge to helps friends or victims, or against monsters, take +1 Spirit.

O SUPPORT CAVALRY

When you follow someone's lead and fight on your warhorse, every roll+Steel you make, on a hit take one:

Take +1 AD or give them +1 AD
 Select one more from the options of your move, or grant them one additional choice on their move

O GRAND STEED (Special Advancement)

You have a grand steed worth of a king. Add its stats to your rolls, when relevant. It's stronger, faster, and impressive. It gives you +1 harm, and +1 armor.

Spend one hold of Gear&ammo to maintain it, every session. The Iron Fist will replace it if it dies. If it suffers harm, roll Inflict Harm as for NPCs.

Steed Name: Looks:
 Strong (+1 Steel) Harm +1; Armor +1
 Agile (+1 Edge) Harm Suffered:
 Impressive (+1 Charm)

THE HUNTER

You are the Hunter, the master of the hounds, the unerring eye and the steady hands behind the bow. Your life is out there, in the wild; where most men feel lost, struggle and make noise like little children. When the trees branches are so thick to cover the sky, when the mountains climb steep up to the everlasting ice, when rivers turn into swamps, you're at home. You're the one they call for, to track a monster, an animal or a fugitive; to learn the secrets of the mighty beasts of the wild. Your arrows will find them and kill them swiftly, but the creatures of the wild earned all your respect.



Take -1 to Spirit when: Fail with 6- any roll with Edge Have to give up a hunt or lose a track

HUNTER MOVES

Ø MASTER OF HOUNDS

You own a couple of loyal hounds; when they work with you add their relevant Stat to your rolls. They're more ferocious or smarter and better trackers than regular dogs. If they help in combat, inflict +1 harm. The Iron Fist will replace them if they die. If they suffer harm (as one), roll Inflict Harm as for NPCs.

When they help you, take +1 Spirit.

Hounds Names:

Ø Ferocious (+1 Steel)

Ø Smarter (+1 Brains)

Looks:

Harm +1

Harm Suffered:

Ø GRAND FALCONER

You have a hawk that flies for you; add its Stats to your rolls. It gives you +1 Brains to tracking but it's much faster than any other tracking. The Iron Fist will replace it if it dies. If it suffers harm, roll Inflict Harm as for NPCs. When the hawk helps you, take +1 Spirit.

Hawk Names:

Tracker (+1 Brains)

Faster tracker

Looks:

Harm +1

Harm Suffered:

Ø THE TRACKER xp

When you study a monster or track something in the wilderness, roll+Brains, take -1 Spirit for following your animal instincts. If you're Tainted, you can always ask one question more.

On a 10+ ask two and take +1 on the AD. On a 7-9 ask one. On a 6- ask one, but the GM makes his Move. You receive answers beyond common knowledge.

What happened here? Who, what was here?

Where is it going, and where did it come from? How long ago did it pass here?

What's its typical behavior or expected actions? Is there something else behind it?

What's most valuable for it, or against it? How strong is it?

Ø ANIMAL REFLEXES xp

When you fight in light armor or no armor, by taking -1 Spirit you can avoid the first hit of the battle (full Established Harm of the first attack that would hit you).

Ø INVISIBLE

When you hide, sneak, steal or do something silent or secret in the wilderness, roll+Edge instead of Shadow.

If you're Tainted, you can hide or bring or favor others with you, but take -1 Spirit.

Ø ALWAYS PREPARED

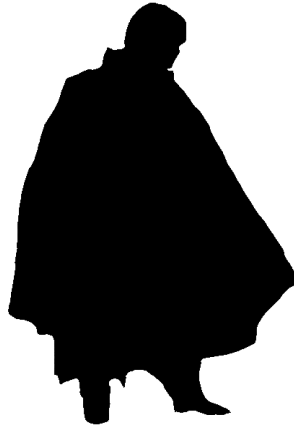
Once per session, if you are out in the wilderness, you can make a use of Gear&ammo without spending a hold, or instead you can take +1 to Equipment and resupply.

Ø ANIMAL SPIRIT (Special Advancement) xp

When you concentrate, you can briefly merge with your animals and see, hear, smell, feel as they do. For this demonic communion, take -1 Spirit. You cannot control the actions of your animals. If you are Tainted, then you can control your animals and make them do something. Or you can commune with another wild beast within a reasonable range, but not control it.

THE PRIEST

You are the hand of God on earth; you are the voice of Judas, the prophet and savior of the humble commoners and the victims of this unjust society. Your simple, plain robes should be feared by the nobles wearing rich capes and dresses; the small rope tied in a noose around your neck should hold more power than the golden necklace ornate with rubies of a king. Where others trust the steel of their weapons, their gold or powerful friends; where they rely on the dark power of sorcery or the faint comfort of so-called science, you stand strong in your faith. That's why in the end, they come to you.



Take -1 to Fail with 6- any roll with Charm Spirit when: Fail your God, Judas or your faith

PRIEST MOVES

Ø PRAY YOUR GOD

When you pray or meditate, and not more than once a day, draw strength from your faith and roll+Spirit.

On a 10+ hold two, on a 7-9 hold one; on a hit also take +1 Spirit. If someone else prays with you, hold one more, while they take +1 Spirit.

Spend your holds after any roll, to gain a +1 per hold spent.

On a 6- take -1 Spirit and the GM makes a move.

O MEMBER OF THE CHURCH □ xp

While you are in the graces of the Church of Judas, once per session you can roll+Charm to gain support. On a 10+ hold two, on a 7-9 hold one. Spend your holds when in contact with members of the church to get:

- › Information or direction; shelter or protection etc.
- › Extend shelter or protection to your companions
- › Moral comfort for +1 Spirit
- › A supply of opium (one hold of Gear&ammo) or basic gear or supplies for +1 Equipment

On a 6- the GM makes a move; maybe you incurred in the wrong branch of the Church or did something wrong.

O THE VOICE OF JUDAS □ xp

When you speak to someone or a crowd in the name of Judas, roll+Charm. On a 10+ hold two, on a 7-9 hold one. If you're Tainted, hold one more. Spend holds to:

Obtain immunity for you and your companions

- › Obtain immunity or forgiveness for someone else
- › Trigger the expression of a strong emotion from them: rage, fear, repentance, rebellion, peace, etc.
- › They side with you as the voice of God, so their leaders or nobles must pay attention to you
- › Have them fight in your protection, or against who you say (but lose all remaining holds)

O THE VOICE OF ANGELS □ xp

When another character comes to you for advice, you must set them on the path of glory of Judas. If they follow your advice they take +1 to their AD and also +1 Spirit, and you take +1 Spirit. If you're Tainted, you can give any kind of advice, honestly believing it's for the glory of God.

O HANDS OF GOD □ xp

When you impose your hands and pray on a wounded, including yourself, and heal with faith, roll+Spirit. You and the patient take -1 to Spirit.

On a 10+ hold two. On a 7-9 hold one. Spend one hold to remove Unstable or heal one Health point - or HS.

O BLADE OF JUDAS □ xp

You or someone you bless, gain +1 to the AD and +1 harm against whom you indicate as the enemy of Judas or monstrous abomination. If you're Tainted, you can name really anyone as the enemy.

O FUMES OF OPIUM (Special Advancement)

When you use your opium, you need a hold from Gear&ammo or from the Church. Then pick one:

- › Obtain another hold of Pray Your God
- › Take +1 Spirit or remove Tainted

If someone uses opium with you, you can use one social move hold against them; characters also take +1 Spirit with you

THE LEADER

You are a natural Leader; you are highborn and other's obedience is what you're used to. You've chosen the path of the sellsword, causing a major scandal within your family. Life as a mercenary is tough, not nearly as comfortable as it was within your family's castle, and far less romantic than how bards portrayed it in their songs about errant heroes. But you have something that your companions don't have: you're educated, trained in the arts of war by the best sword masters, and you have a way with them. They respect your charisma, your leadership, and you will rise one day to the place you deserve: the one of commander.



Take -1 to Spirit when: Fail with 6- any roll with Charm
Accept orders from peers or low-born

LEADER MOVES

Ø BORN LEADER

xp

When you take the lead in a situation, incl. combat, any other character that follows orders, marks XP once per situation, or takes +1 AD for each important action (their choice). At the end, you gain +1 Spirit if your leadership proved efficient (their choice).

O BANNER OF COMMAND xp

You have a family or personal banner; when you raise it on the battlefield and guide your group, roll+Charm.

On a 10+ hold three. On a 7-9 hold one. On a hit, also take +1 Spirit. When you spend holds in battle:

- › You gather friends and companions to you
- › You stop a gang from dispersing or surrendering
- › You're impressing your opponent, take +1 AD
- › You're hitting hard, inflict +1 harm
- › Their blades don't stop you, suffer -1 harm

- › You push through, skip rolling Suffer Harm once
 - › Give one of the above to one of your companions.
- On a 6- still take one, but the GM makes his Move.

O SCRUTINY

When you interact with authority against another character or an NPC, you can roll+Charm instead of Brains for Perception, and take -1 Spirit for this abuse.

If you're Tainted you can ask one question more.

O COMPANION

You have a loyal servant or companion from the days of your youth. Add his relevant Stats (choose two Stats and give +1 to both) to your rolls, if he helps you in your actions. He will never betray you. If they suffer harm, roll Inflict Harm as for NPCs. If they die, someone might take his place (your choice). Take -1 Spirit each time they suffer harm at your orders or at your service.

Name:	Looks:
+1 ...	Harm +1
+1 ...	Harm Suffered:

O WE GOT GOLD xp

When you need money, you can turn to your wealthy family, and roll+Charm.

On a 10+ you receive a significant sum, up to 3 Gear&ammo holds, within hours. On a 7-9 up to 2, but within days. Take -1 Spirit for each hold you get. On a 6- you take -1 Spirit, but receive no money.

O ONE OF NOBLE BLOOD

When you interact with nobles in the appropriate context, you can roll+Charm and take holds like for Uncover Their Secret (see the Scout move).

On a 10+ or 7-9, take also +1 Spirit.

If you're Tainted, you can also roll+Charm instead of Shadows, for Lie And Deceive against them.

O THE VASSAL (Special Advancement)

You obtain through your family, or in opposition to them, the right to rule over a small patch of land close to Jerusalem, with a small fortified hold. The land comes with a little income and prestige (gain +1 Equipment when you return to it, not more than once per session), but also can bring you troubles with the GM Moves, and becomes a new Front in itself.

THE RAIDER

You are the Raider: they call upon you and your small gang whenever there's blood to shed. You work with your small group, a brotherhood within the brotherhood; the other mercenaries might not like you that much nor trust you, but they know they can count on your lot when there is the need to scatter terror among the enemies' line, a revenge to obtain, a payment to demand. Your entire life has been about violence and you're familiar with most of the weapons, but more than anything you know that having someone watching your back is more important than a solid shield.



Take -1 to Spirit when: Fail with 6- any roll with Steel
One of yours dies or is left in danger

RAIDER MOVES

Ø YOUR GANG

You are part of a Small gang, of around 10 members; they have equipment similar to yours and they belong and are maintained by the Iron Fist. Give them a name, and a description (i.e. are they family, friends, just other mercenaries).

Gang Description:

Steel: +1

Gang harm: 3

Gang armor: 1

Members (number):

Harm Suffered:

○ I AM THE LEADER HERE xp

You are their leader: wherever you go, they follow. When you have to impose your status, roll+Steel.

On a 10+ hold two, on a 7-9 hold one, and spend holds when needed. On a hit, take +1 Spirit.

If you are Tainted hold another one.

- › They do what you want, even if basically suicidal
- › Prevent the gang from dispersing in combat
- › They'll do their best to bring or give you what you ask

On a 6- they'll dispute your position as leader, plus you take -1 Spirit.

○ SECOND IN COMMAND xp

You have a loyal second in command. Name him and describe him. You can rely on him to keep the gang together and lead them as if you were present - he's an NPC but he will never betray or threaten you.

While he leads the gang, the gang takes +1 Steel.

You can make plans and he will show up with the gang at the right moment, or give you the opportunity you need. He does not have Stats - just track Harm Suffered if needed, and if he dies, name a successor.

He expects the best from you: if you let him down, take -1 Spirit. Mark XP when he plays some role.

Name:

Harm Suffered:

Looks:

○ STEEL RIDERS

You and your gang all have warhorses. While on a warhorse, you and they deal +1 harm. Horses are replaced by the Iron Fist if they die.

If you're Tainted, the +1 harm becomes ap.

○ WALL OF STEEL

Your gang is disciplined and can regroup in a shield-wall on command, gaining +1 armor in battle as a gang. It does not apply if you're alone, too few or on horses.

○ RAIN OF STEEL

Your gang has bows or crossbows, or a mix of the two. They can attack from far and provide the tactical choices of Take Your Shot. They have the same ammo as you do, as the result of your Gear&ammo holds.

If you're Tainted, your arrows or darts inflict +1 harm.

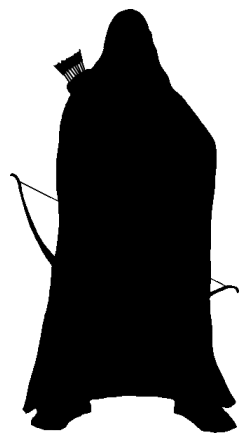
○ WARBAND WITH PURPOSE (Special Advancement)

When you swear your loyalty, together with your gang, to another character, or a powerful NPC, you can take Steel Riders or Wall Of Steel or Rain Of Steel or +1 Steel for the gang. You can do this only once.

When you honor your loyalty at a price, take 1 XP or +1 Spirit.

THE SCOUT

You are the Scout; that's the name they give you, so that they won't fear you for what you really are. Your movements are silent like those of a wildcat, your blades sharp, and your garments black and with mysterious, hidden pockets. You can find your way in the wild or in a foreign city, you can mix with a crowd of foreigners or sneak unseen behind the enemy lines: you are their spy, their eyes and ears, their saboteur and their assassin, their blade that reaches far and strikes from the shadows, unexpected and deadly.



Take -1 to Fail with 6- any roll with Shadow Spirit when: Give something away, info about yourself or show emotions

SCOUT MOVES

Ø UNCOVER THEIR SECRETS □ xp
 When you study or spy someone long enough or interact with them or their things, or with people close to them, roll+Shadow. The other Player or the GM must answer truthfully.
 On a 10+ hold two and take +1 on the AD. On a 7-9 hold one. If you are Tainted, hold another one.
 Spend your hold when you want, to ask a question:
 › What is their strength? Or their best ally?
 › What's their weakness or secret? Or their weakest link?
 › What is their greatest fear or worry?
 › What or whom do they care about the most?
 › How can I get in their graces or have their attention?
 › Pay one hold so that your scrutiny remains secret
 On a 6- you still hold one, but the GM makes his move.

O STREETWISE □ xp
 When you work your connections in a city or human-populated environment, roll+Shadow.

On a 10+ they have what you want, if reasonable, and you can have it or purchase it, or obtain info on it.
 On a 7-9 they have it (or have info), but it comes with strings attached, and you take -1 Spirit.
 On a 6- the GM makes his Move and something from your dark past comes back to hunt you; take -1 Spirit.

O MASTER OF MASKING
 When you use lies, costumes or other deception to interact, you can roll Manipulate with Shadow instead of Charm; take -1 Spirit. You need to make some work for it, it could require time and maybe one hold of Gear&ammo.

O JUST A SHADOW □ xp
 When you want to disappear, stand still or mix with a crowd, or put a costume to go unnoticed, roll+Shadow.
 On a 10+ you are hidden and hold three.
 On a 7-9 hold one. Take -1 Spirit when you holds are all spent. If you're Tainted, you always leave no traces.
 › You remain undetected as long as you do nothing excessive
 › You gain undetected access to places or resources
 › You can extend your hiding privileges to companions, paying one hold for each one
 › You leave no visible traces to be followed once you're done
 On a 6- you still hold one, but the GM makes his Move.

O SHADOW VS SHADOW
 When you roll+Shadow for your moves against monsters or to protect your friends take +1 Spirit.

O FAST AND SHARP BLADES
 When you fight with small weapons, you can Engage In Battle and roll+Edge instead of Steel, but you must be fighting in very close quarters, in the dark, or attack by surprise, or your advantage is lost after one roll.

O EVASION (Special Advancement) □ xp
 When you want to evade, say what's your escape route, or if you're prisoner, what's your plan, and roll+Edge.
 On a 10+ you escape successfully, on a 7-9 you can still make it, but leaving something behind, or with something on your tail. On a hit, take +1 Spirit.
 On a 6- you are caught vulnerable half in and half out

THE SELLSWORD

You are the Sellsword, the ultimate soldier of fortune, the master of arms and armors, the last man standing in the battlefield. You joined the brotherhood recently but the history of your life, with your fists clenched to your weapons, is written in scars on your skin, and tells a tale that scares the most. Once you're armored up and with your weapon in hand, few dare to cross your path, and those who do end up biting the dust, or choked in their own blood. You take your duty seriously: you named the price and the price has been paid; you have no time for regret or second thoughts.



Take -1 to Spirit when: Fail with 6- any Combat move Refuse a martial challenge

SELLSWORD MOVES

Ø STRENGTH AND STYLE

You can switch combat style: if you rolled+Steel for Engage In Battle at least once for this opponent, you can roll the next +Edge. Do this as many times as you want, preceding +Edge with a +Steel. If you hit, inflict +1 harm. If you're Tainted, +1 harm becomes ap.

O SLEEP WITH YOUR SWORD

Your weapon is your most valuable companion. You always have a hand on the hilt and cannot be surprised by an attack. You also have a supernatural bond with your weapon and if it's taken away, you will know where to find it. It can be a precious or peculiar weapon.

Weapon Name:

Looks:

O WASH IT WITH BLOOD □ xp

The purity of your killings is your salvation. When you kill a monster, or a human but only to protect innocents, you take +1 Spirit.

O INDOMITABLE

When you go below 0 Health, and you inflict harm to an opponent, you can add 1 harm to your hit and take -1 Spirit. If you're Tainted, the harm becomes ap.

O UNBEATABLE □ xp

When you use your AD in battle, you can restore 1 point of Health, but take -1 Spirit for this supernatural healing. You can do it even if your AD is low and it makes things worse for you, but not when the AD has the value of 1. You can do this only once per battle.

O RISK IT ALL □ xp

To risk all in a battle, you must be facing a worthy opponent or a clearly tough situation. You cannot retreat after this move; if you retreat, take -1 Spirit and you cannot use this move again until you gained somehow +1 Spirit.

When you risk all in a battle, before you continue roll+Steel.

On a 10+ hold three. On a 7-9 hold two. On a hit, also take +1 to Spirit.

Spend your holds when you need, during the battle, once per move, to:

- › Inflict +1 harm
- › Cancel 1 harm directed against you
- › Take +1 to the Advantage Die

On a 6-, you still hold one but take -1 Spirit, and the GM makes his move.

O A SWORD WITH PURPOSE □ xp

(Special Advancement)

When you swear your loyalty to the cause of another character or of an important NPC, or you swear to protect and defend them, but without demanding payment, if they accept your services then you immediately gain 1 XP; without marking it on this move.

When your oath is put to the test, take 1 XP on this move: if you are loyal at a price or risk take +1 Spirit; if you fail or betray them take -1 Spirit.

THE VETERAN

You are the Veteran: behind you is a life of dodging blades, parrying strikes, and hitting back. Behind you is a life of corpses of friends and enemies alike; but not yours, not your corpse. You are tougher, faster, more skilled and deadlier than the majority of your fellow mercenaries, have the reputation you deserve. The others might have their ways with animals and gangs, with nobles and thieves, with medicine or sorcery or any other bullshit. You know what really counts, in the end: a sharp blade and a solid hand to handle it. Yes, in the end it boils down to that: kill or be killed. It wouldn't surprise you if even after the end, even after your own death, you'll stand there grasping your sword.



Take -1 to Fail with 6- any Combat move
Spirit when: Leave a companion behind in danger

VETERAN MOVES

Ø MERCILESS

When you inflict harm in melee, you can decide to inflict +1 harm more. Take -1 Spirit if against humans, even evil ones; take +1 Spirit if against a monster.

If you're Tainted, you can make this +1 harm ap.

O BLOOD THIRST

Your instincts lead you to the best choices in battle: for Perception in a fight roll+Steel instead of Brains.

If you're Tainted you can ask one more question.

O THE TOUGHEST xp

You can recover at an insane, almost unnatural speed, from wounds. When you heal, with time, medicine or sorcery, you can heal 1 Health more and take -1 Spirit.

O THREATENING

When you use fear or brutality to obtain what you want, you can roll+Steel for Manipulate or Perception against a person, and take -1 Spirit.

When you roll the move, on a 10+ they fear you and you need nothing more than your threats

On a 7-9 you will need to inflict part of your harm or follow up on your threat, to obtain the holds of the move. If you do not follow up on your threat, then you lose your holds and cannot threaten them again, until you do not regain your credibility somehow.

O LAST STAND xp

When you are facing a small gang (not more) or a large monster, you fight like a monster yourself and count as their peer as long as you do no retreat. Roll+Steel for the battle and take +1 Spirit.

On a 10+ take both, on a 7-9 take one:

- › You count as their peer, take no penalties for size
- › You don't need to roll Face Death, it's just another fight

O LUCKY IN BATTLE xp

When you use your Advantage Die in battle, reset it to 2 instead of 1. If you're Tainted, reset it to 3.

O A LONG WAY HOME (Special Advancement)

When you decide to return home, announce your intentions, also in fiction. Do not mark the Return home advancement, but take this move instead.

The GM will put obstacles in your path and you must mark two Advancements more at least, before you can take the real Return home. Mark them here: O O

Whenever you let something or someone hold you back from returning home (some trouble, revenge, someone you care about and so on), you roll+Spirit.

On a 10, hold three, on a 7-9 hold two.

Spend your holds when needed to:

- › Gain +1 Spirit, strengthening your resolve to go back home once this is solved
- › Heal +1 Health, excluding the Unstable condition
- › Contact an old friend for help, obtain +1 Equipment
- › Obtain +1 AD when you enter a fight
- › If you receive a deadly and final wound, you can keep fighting for at least another three of your dice rolls, before being taken out for good

On a 6- take -1 Spirit and feel the hope of ever going back home slipping away from you.

THE SORCERER

You are the Sorcerer: the one who can speak with demons, who can gaze into their world, draw their power, and bind them to his will. You know well the power of a sword and the solidity of a shield: these are as strong as the man who wields them. But with sorcery, with your dark powers, you can be stronger than the mightiest warrior, because your strength comes from the ethereal force that feeds demons and angels, gods and devils. You are drawn to power as power is drawn to you, but you must be careful: your books contain powerful spells and horrible tales of sorcerers who lost their own souls, messing carelessly or with too much greed with powers greater than them.



Take -1 to Fail with 6- any roll with Brains
 Spirit when: Reveal sorcery, except to Iron Fist members, demons, or sorcerers

SORCERER MOVES

Ø BOUND TO THE STARS

You are bound to the magical forces and powers in the stars. At the beginning of every session, or when one day passed in fiction, you must roll+Brains.

On a 10+ hold three and take +1 Spirit as the alignment is favorable. On a 7-9 hold two.

On a 6- you still hold one but the stars are in opposition; the GM holds a hard move against you, now or later. If you're Tainted, hold two on a 6-.

Spend your holds to perform spells or rituals with the power of the sun, the moon and the stars.

Ø SPELLS AND RITUALS

You have the Book Of Spells and rituals and arcane knowledge (see next pages). At the start you know only five spells, later you will unlock access to more.

Each spell or ritual requires the roll below to cast and grants xp (mark it on the given spell).

Casting a Spell takes a relatively short amount of time, like a minute or two. When you cast roll+Brains.

On a 10+ pay one; on a 7-9 pay two; still pay only one if you're Tainted.

You can pay one more to make casting undetected except by another Sorcerer. Pay with:

- › A favorable alignment: 1 hold of Bound To The Stars
- › Connect directly with demons and take -1 Spirit
- › Read aloud and destroy a page of a spell book or scroll or ingredient; 1 hold of Gear&ammo
- › A self inflicted wound: 1 harm ap
- › A willing tribute in blood: 2 harm ap
- › An unwilling tribute in blood and fear: 1 harm ap
- › Cast in a pause, between sessions, or with no urgency

On a 6- you still pay two but the spell fails or works wrong; the GM makes a move. If you refuse to pay, you take 1 harm ap and -1 Spirit, as forced payment.

To perform a Ritual, you need few hours to prepare and execute. When you cast roll+Brains.

On a 10+ pay two; on a 7-9 pay three, pay only two if you're Tainted. You cannot make a ritual undetected by those who witness; you can try to mask it, though: explain how, perhaps roll a social move.

Select the price to pay from the list of Spells, or also:

- › Perform the ritual in a place of power, like a sacred place, a place where magic energy is concentrated, a place that you've properly setup
- › Offer a large material sacrifice, like a human life, a single precious animal, several other animals, precious objects or gold

On a 6- you still pay three but the ritual fails or works wrong; the GM makes a move.

If you refuse to pay, you take 1 harm ap and -1 Spirit, plus one more decided arbitrarily by the GM (can be again 1 harm ap or -1 Spirit, too).

Obtain access to additional lists of spells with the moves below. You need Spells And Rituals as pre-requisite.

○ SOUL BINDER

○ DARK ARTS MASTER

○ ELEMENTAL MAGIC

○ ALCHEMIST

○ DEMONOLOGY

○ MASTER CASTER (Special Advancement)

SORCERY

Spells and Rituals are the core move available to the Sorcerer:

- › **IMPORTANT:** Whenever a spell or a ritual is cast on another Character to his advantage, he takes -1 Spirit
- › If the spell or ritual demands another roll for another move, you need to roll separately and might mark XP
- › A spell or a ritual lasts until the next sunrise or sunset, unless otherwise specified, then the spell is dispersed
- › A sorcerer can prepare a spell or ritual in advance and hold it as ready to cast in an instant; say which one and roll only when actually releasing it, and pay its price
- › Sorcery should be about brain. If you find loopholes or smart ways to combine multiple spells, or want to improvise, bend the rules, go for it, unless you make it too powerful so that it become boring

Sorcery is a complex matter: there is no such a thing as an instant spell or a fireball. Instead, every spell is composed by a very specific ritual, very much like a sort of science. Below are some guidelines.

There are two sources of power: one is in the heavens, power descends from the Sun, the Moon and the Stars - while the other is in hell, or wherever demons and devils and monsters come from. Most people imagine hell being under the surface of the earth - so this magic energy rises to earth, while the one from the celestial bodies descends.

At the end though, it's all the same. Behind the curtain of our world, is a magical one populated by supernatural entities, granting sorcerers access to power, in exchange for something. There's always a price.

Astrology has a strong influence: the Sun, the Moon and the Stars in the skies are the gates for ethereal forces to descend on earth, and mimic the spheres of power in hell. A sorcerer is one who can see these lines of forces, from above and below, and channel them according to their inclination, and sometimes bend them to his will.

A very rare and positive alignment can improve a spell's magnitude by a hundred; a negative one can reduce the sorcerer powers to basically none.

Rituals are a fundamental component, and spoken words, or carefully written ones, are absolutely necessary. Think of the words like the needle used by sorcerers to channel the magic energy strings into the fabric of reality. Think of a ritual as a pattern, a design to follow with that needle, so that the spell will compose the desired image on the fabric of reality.

A long chant is more powerful than a short formula; a scroll inscribed in golden ink and decorated by tiny and meticulous scripts will overpower a note scribbled in the sand. When a ritual is attended by more people, the spell potential will be increased. Participants can be either one or more

fellow sorcerers (usually a few), or a large number of regular people focusing their will or hopes or emotions or religious faith into the spell, without proper training but guided by at least one sorcerer.

Materials are another key component of any sorcery; they represent the payment, the tradeoff with the ethereal world and are always destroyed or rendered useless by the casting, regardless of the success of the spell.

Sometimes the payment to the ethereal world can be done in advance: charging an item, and use that charge later on within a ritual (a small firestone for example can be charged with the power of a fire burning for the entire night). The number of the objects involved, and their power and pureness, clearly influences the scope and power of the spell.

Discipline and focus count more than pure will or emotions, with the latter being actually more of an obstacle, for most sorcerers. A spell is like a complex web of erratic strings of magical power, which the sorcerer will tie together and merge into the fabric of the real world.

It takes discipline and focus to learn a spell and to use its words correctly, so that the ethereal power is channeled into the worldly materials used by the sorcerer, and then its power is properly directed to the desired result.

☒ BOOK OF SPELLS

At the start of the game, select five spells. Add one more when you take an Advancement with xp, and have time to study.

Note that when you take an Advancement, you can add a spell on every list that you've unlocked. If you have three lists unlocked, a single Advancement grants you three new spells, each one in a different list.

☐ LIGHT SPELL ☐ xp

Make an item to glow, like a torch with the color you want. It can be your own hand. It makes no heat; you can dim the light but if you extinguish it, the spell is dispersed. If the light is ready, you can make it flash to confuse an adversary for a moment but then the spell is dispersed.

☐ MINOR TRICKS SPELL ☐ xp

You can perform a minor magic trick: clean something, make a small object move without touching it, light a small fire, create a simple illusion, disappear from sight for a few moments, hide something, see something hidden. Few small tricks of different nature can be combined, for a short duration, or a single one can last longer, before it's dispersed.

☐ DETECT MAGIC SPELL ☐ xp

You can analyze a place, a person or an object and obtain information about its magic power, a spell that was used here, and so on. Alternatively you can leave the spell hanging around you and be alerted when magic is used in proximity.

O DISPERSE MAGIC SPELL □ xp

You can disperse a spell cast by someone else and cancel its effects. You cannot disperse a ritual.

O SUPERNATURAL SENSES SPELL □ xp

Improve one of your or someone else's senses, for a while. It affects the fiction, and also give the subject one additional question to ask for Perception (for a situation or a person), and +1 AD when using those moves, once.

O CHARM SPELL □ xp

The single target of the spell gains an extremely favorable attitude towards you or whom you say.

O LUCKY SPELL □ xp

The single target of the spell gains +1 AD and can use the AD once without resetting it to 1.

O MESSAGE SPELL □ xp

The single target of the spell receives a supernatural message from you, in his mind, and can whisper a short response before the spell is dispersed.

O MAGIC WARD SPELL □ xp

Place a magic rune on your target, person or thing, and describe the conditions for the Ward to activate. When the condition occurs, the Ward gives you an alarm and the target gets +1 AD (if applicable) to react. It can be also a quite wide protection circle, but only one target benefits from the +1 AD.

O HEALING HANDS SPELL □ xp

Same as the Barber Move, but this spell can be taken only if there is no Barber in the group.

O POTION MASTER SPELL □ xp

Same as the Barber Move, but this spell can be taken only if there is no Barber in the group.

O TRACKING SPELL □ xp

Same as the Hunter Move, but this spell can be taken only if there is no Hunter in the group.

□ SOUL BINDER

When you unlock Soul Binder, select five. Add one more when you take an Advancement with xp, and have time to study.

Each option of Soul Whispers, to become available, must be acquired separately, as a different, specific spell.

O SOUL BINDING RITUAL □ xp

When you want to bind someone, you must swap blood: few drops will be enough. For instance, blood can be drunk or exchanged with ritual wounds. You can force the soul bind on someone unaware of it, if you prepare in advance and then find a way to exchange blood or get him to drink yours and manage to obtain a few drops of his.

Soul-binding will last until released by the caster or otherwise until the end of the entire adventure (a mission, a front, not just a single session).

If you personally inflict harm against your target, once bound, either with weapons or through a spell, the bond is broken and the ritual dispersed. Your allies can harm the target though, and the bond will remain.

When you're bound, you always know the general position of your target. You can bind only one person at the same time.

O SOUL WHISPERS SPELL □ xp

You can reach into the soul of someone bound to you. You can do this even when far from the target, but within a reasonable range, i.e. in the same city, or just outside of it.

You can use the spell to do one of the below, if you unlocked the option (for multiple effects, cast again a new spell). If your choice contains a move or spell, roll it separately, with your own Stat score, and mark xp if possible.

In his favor:

- You can roll Perception for him and he will know the answers, or he will suffer your failure
- You can roll a social Move for him and he'll know the answers, or he will suffer your failure
- Send him sweet or strengthening dreams or visions: give him +1 Spirit and take the shadow on yourself for -1 Spirit
- Open a channel to be able to have a magic conversation through the ether with your target

Against him:

- You can roll Perception as if you were there, but at his disadvantage, finding his vulnerabilities
- You can roll a social Move against him, to gather information about him
- Send him nightmares or dark dreams or visions: give him -1 Spirit, and take -1 yourself

O SOUL WHISPERS RITUAL □ xp

You can reach into the soul of someone bound to you. With the ritual, you can pick any option of the above spell, but across any distance.

Also, you can unlock the following, additional options:

- Open a channel to cast a favorable spell or ritual at his advantage: cast that spell regularly (roll and xp) and the effects apply as if you were there
- Open a channel to cast an adverse spell or ritual against him: cast that spell regularly (roll and xp) and the effects apply as if you were there

O SOUL PUPPETEER

You can cast the Soul Binding Ritual against a second person at the same time. You can select this Ritual multiple times with your Advancements, to have additional contemporary bound souls for each selection: O 2 (default); O 4; O 8; O 16; O 32; got the idea?

□ DARK ARTS

When you become a Dark Arts Master, select five. Add one more when you take an Advancement with xp, and have time to study.

All the dark arts spells, require the target to be within sight of the caster. Making the casting undetected, therefore, is often critical.

O DISPERSE LIGHT SPELL □ xp

Make a room or a place go dark, by killing all torches, fires, candles, etc. If there are windows or other light sources, they close shut, or appear as shut. The spell always works, even outdoor, including at sunrise or sunset, but not in the open and in broad daylight.

In the darkness you are blinded as others, but since you're the one casting the spell, you can use the confusion it generates to make a reasonable move as with a 10+ (i.e. attack someone) or to successfully escape, steal something, etc.

O CURSE SPELL □ xp

When a character is cursed, his Advantage Die is reset to 1 with no benefit. If you curse an NPC, the curse acts when you say so, and whoever is acting against the NPC can treat his own AD as showing a 6, use it and reset it to 1.

O HATE SPELL □ xp

The target of the spell becomes extremely unfavorable towards you or whom you say, ranging from simple dislike to clear suspicion, from contempt to hatred. If the target is a PC, every time he acts accordingly, he takes 1 XP.

O SOUL POISON SPELL □ xp

You can inflict a strong, negative emotion on a single target, like fear, desperation, pointless rage, and so on. You can then exploit these feelings, for example to roll+Brains in a social Move against the target. If the target is a PC, every time he acts accordingly, he takes 1 XP.

O SOUL SUCKER SPELL □ xp

You can swap the Advantage Die with the target of this spell, after you cast or at any time later on, whenever you're in his presence.

O SOUL SCRUTINY SPELL □ xp

The target of the spell must respond to your questions of Perception for a person, as if you rolled 10+. You don't need to speak with the target, but he must be within sight.

O VULNERABILITY SPELL □ xp

The target of the spell takes -1 armor, to subtract to whatever he has already, unless it's already 0. Lasts for the current fight, or for the next fight if cast in a quiet time.

O CONFUSION SPELL □ xp

The target is affected by serious troubles to one of his senses, up to the point of losing it completely after an hour or so. It can affect for example hearing or sight. If relevant in fiction (i.e. sight in a fight) the adversaries of the target take +1 AD, when acting against him, for each type of action. Once the sense is fully lost (i.e. the target becomes blind), some actions like fighting back are unavailable to the target.

O DARK TOUCH SPELL □ xp

You can target anyone in sight, and inflict 1 harm ap, and take -1 Spirit for this. If you rolled 10+ you can take another -1 to Spirit and inflict another 1 harm ap.

O POISON MASTER SPELL □ xp

Same as the Barber Move, but this spell can be taken only if there is no Barber in the group.

□ ELEMENTALIST

When you unlock Elementalist, select five. Add one more when you take an Advancement with xp, and have time to study.

O FLAME SPELL □ xp

Set an object on fire, even if it is not flammable, like a weapon's blade. A blade in flames inflicts +1 harm, but it is really burning: it cannot be sheeted, it is highly visible. The flames on the other hand will not ruin the object, unless it is flammable: if it is, it burns brighter and faster until consumed.

O CONTROL FIRE SPELL □ xp

Gives you complete control of an existing fire, even large ones (like a burning house). You can make it burn much faster, spread it, wave it around like a weapon or control it or extinguish it. You can use it as a weapon if it's big enough (like a campfire, the one in a fireplace, not the one of a simple torch), starting as 2 harm ap and at throw distance.

O WIND SPELL □ xp

Generates a strong, supernatural wind that will appear as exhaling from you. The wind is strong enough to confuse or hold a strong man for a few seconds, enough to place an attack or run away for example.

O CONTROL WIND SPELL □ xp

Gives you complete control of the existing winds around you. You can make them stronger, enough to block a group of man for a bit, or calm winds in a storm, for example, to give your group easier weather conditions. You cannot use them to seriously change the weather in a large area, though, and not for flying or such.

O STONE SPELL □ xp

Generates a strong, magic stone protection of a medium size, that can appear of any desired shape (like a shield, a wall, an obstruction in a door frame). If used as protection, it gives +1 armor to the character or the small gang behind it. The protection cannot be moved: it is as heavy as real stone.

O CONTROL STONE SPELL □ xp

Gives you complete control of an existing piece of ground or stone or metal or another material, solid and inanimate. You can change its shape, make it a wall or a small rough bridge, break it to pieces, make it crumble, reinforce it up to the point of giving +2 armor to a medium gang, and so on.

O WATER SPELL □ xp

Generates a small amount of water, extracting liquid from air and plants and natural materials. It is enough, in case of emergency, to provide for a small gang necessity of water for a day. But for more than a few days, people will get sick.

O CONTROL WATER SPELL □ xp

Gives you complete control of an existing quantity of water, like from the sea, a river, a lake. It can stop a man from drowning, or drag someone down (5 harm ap), or be used to slow down someone hitting him with a wave.

O ELEMENTAL RITUALS □ xp

Execute any of the above as a ritual, to increase its power, reach or duration, like start a fire big enough to quickly burn a house, control or extinguish a very large fire, control winds and weather of a few days, crumble a piece of a city wall, and such.

□ ALCHEMIST

When you become an Alchemist, select five. Add one more when you take an Advancement with xp, and have time to study.

All the alchemist rituals last until the end of the adventure or mission, unless stated otherwise.

O A PLACE OF POWER □ xp

With this ritual and enough preparation, the sorcerer can transform a place into his own place of power to facilitate other rituals. Once transformed, the place has a clear magical connotation and cannot be disguised as something else. The ritual always costs 1 more hold of Gear&ammo to setup.

O A PLACE OF RETURN □ xp

With this ritual and a Place Of Power, the sorcerer can create a bind with the place itself. Whenever he wants he can use the Spell Of Return to come back to the place. When bound to a place, regardless of the distance from it, the Sorcerer is vaguely aware of possible danger or peculiar situations in the place itself, but knows no details.

O SPELL OF RETURN □ xp

When the sorcerer casts this spell, he is instantaneously teleported back to the Place Of Return. The sorcerer can teleport other willing subjects and their animals: for each subject (person or animal) there is the need to pay -1 Spirit and +1 harm ap more than the basic cost of the ritual. The sorcerer decides how to distribute the payment for the spell.

It is possible to transport only a single unwilling subject, at the price of -1 Spirit and +1 harm ap to the sorcerer.

O AN OBJECT OF POWER □ xp

With this ritual and a valid object (a book, a scroll, a ring, a wand, etc...) the sorcerer can infuse the power of the stars into that object. At the beginning of every session roll Bound To The Stars and the object shares the result with the sorcerer, offering additional holds: O O O on a 10+, O O on a 7-9 or O on a 6-, to spend for magic.

No other effects of the move apply to the object. If the object goes to zero holds, it is destroyed. You do not carry unused holds to the next session.

O PROTECTION RITUAL □ xp

The object target of this ritual must be something to wear like clothes or armor. Once enchanted by the ritual, the object provides +1 armor more, to add to any other protection. If multiple enchanted objects are worn, only a +1 applies.

As an alternative the object has the power to negate entirely one full harm (the result of a hit), but only once; or again the object can turn the X harm suffered in a round in +X to the Advantage Die, but only once.

O ENCHANTED WEAPON □ xp

The weapon target of this ritual, once enchanted inflicts +1 harm. As an alternative the weapon can grant +1 AD every time the bearer enters a fight with it, or be blessed so that it can harm monsters and creatures invulnerable to regular weapons. Another alternative is to make the weapon very precise: 1 of its regular harm becomes ap. If the weapon is ranged, as the last alternative the ritual can increase its range.

O AN OBJECT OF MAGIC □ xp

The object target of this ritual, once enchanted, will contain the power of a spell known by the sorcerer or to another sorcerer participating in the ritual.

The spell can be triggered instantly, and only once, by anyone holding the object, at the cost of -1 Spirit.

□ DEMONOLOGY

When you unlock Demonology, select five. Add one more when you take an Advancement with xp, and have time to study.

Each option of the Command Spells, to become available, must be acquired separately, as a different, specific, spell.

All demons are incorporeal and invisible, after the evocation; you need the specific commands to make them tangible. All evoked demons cannot harm the sorcerer, as long as they are under his spells, nor lie to him, refuse to answer and so on.

O SOUL TRAP RITUAL *xp*

You can extract the soul from the corpse of a recently dead character or NPC. Take -1 Spirit or pay one price more for each sunrise since the time of death. The soul is bound as a minor demon to an object or a weapon; the demon is immortal as long as the object is not destroyed. The demon of a character is controlled by the original Player, by the GM for an NPC. You can interact with it as with any other minor demon, but you need to evoke it after the soul trap.

O MINOR EVOCATION RITUAL *xp*

You can evoke and take control of a minor demon. Once in your control, you can always communicate with him in your mind and you can use the Minor Command Spell to issue commands. You can take -1 Spirit more or pay a higher price for the ritual for each day you wish to extend the duration. If the demon is already present in the story, as long as you know his name, you can use this to take control.

O MAJOR EVOCATION RITUAL *xp*

You can evoke and take control of a major demon. Works as for minor demons, but for more powerful ones. Evoking and controlling a major demon always costs -1 Spirit more than a minor one. You can still take -1 Spirit more or pay a higher price if you wish the evocation to last longer than a day.

O MINOR COMMAND SPELL *xp*

You can issue a command to a minor demon under your control. You can use these minor commands also for a major demon. Use the spell to issue one command:

- o Send the demon instantly anywhere to spy for you: you can roll+Brains for Perception, or a social Move that lets you ask questions as if you were there
 - o Send the demon with a small item to deliver (like a message or a small weapon) that becomes incorporeal and is transferred immediately
 - o Send the demon and use him to channel an attack: roll any spell at your advantage as if you were there
 - o Make the demon visible and tangible for a while (3 harm, 2 armor) to fight for you or serve you until sunrise
 - o Upgrade him to Major for the duration of the entire adventure: you will need Major Evocation to call upon him again
 - o Banish him, for a very, very long time (like, 77 years?)
- In any case of any failure, you can have the demon take the fall and be dispersed (perhaps to be evoked again later).

O MAJOR COMMAND SPELL *xp*

You can issue a command to a major demon under your control. You cannot issue these commands to a minor demon. Use the spell to issue one command (cast again for more):

- o Make the demon visible and tangible for a while (4 harm, 3 armor) to fight for you or serve you until sunrise

- o Make the demon stronger (take -1 Spirit or pay one more price for each +1 harm and each +1 armor, and each +1 Ignore HS, for a maximum of 3)
- Make it weaker, becoming a minor demon, so you can banish him

MASTER CASTER

When you become a Master Caster, select five. Add one more when you take an Advancement with xp, and have time to study.

O DISPERSE RITUAL *xp*

You can disperse the effects of a ritual and stop its effects from progressing or cancel them altogether. If the ritual already had some effects, you need to disperse it twice: once to stop it, and again to reverse its effects.

O HOLD MAGIC RITUAL *xp*

You can hold more than a spell or ritual at once, ready to cast instantly. The first comes for free at the price for the ritual; for each one in advance, pay 1 more from the list of payments, but never the same payment twice. Pay for the spell(s) or the ritual(s) that you memorized only when you cast them.

O MESSAGE RUNE RITUAL *xp*

A rune is inscribed on the surface you decide. The rune will last until someone reads it; when someone does, he receives a message from you in his mind, and can send a short response back before the rune disappears. You can make the rune destined to someone in particular, or to whoever will read it; in this case you'll know the reader identity if you know him.

O RUNE OF PAIN RITUAL *xp*

A rune is inscribed on the surface you decide. The rune will last until someone reads it, and when someone does, he receives immediately a magic blow that causes 3 harm ap. You can place multiple runes, but only one at the time can be read, so damage cumulates only if the victim keeps reading.

O CHARM RITUAL *xp*

The target of the ritual gains an extremely favorable attitude towards you or whom you say. You can add more targets to influence more people, and include your companions to receive the favorable attitude, and extend it beyond the first day. Count targets x subjects x days: a ritual provides you up to a total of 20, up to 30 if you take -1 Spirit.

O UNNATURAL HEALING RITUAL *xp*

The target of the ritual is cured from a Debility, but he receives an additional -1 Spirit and Tainted, as a consequence.

O LUCKY RITUAL *xp*

The target can be the entire group of the characters. Everyone, including the sorcerer, gains a +1 to the AD, and only one of them can use the AD once without resetting to 1. The first to do it, cancels this option for the others.

O VISIONS RITUAL □ *xp*

The target of the ritual falls unconscious and will experience short visions, about another time (past or possible future) and/or another place (even unknown). The target must be willing or if not, the sorcerer must still be able to touch him to initiate the visions; the sorcerer can even delay the effect for up to a few hours.

O GRIMOIRE RITUAL □ *xp*

When you manage to acquire a grimoire or a scroll or an arcane knowledge source (buying or stealing from another sorcerer, buying in an obscure market, discovering in your adventures...), you can use the ritual to study it.

The study grants you the knowledge of a spell or ritual of your choosing, from any list (even one you do not own). You can use that spell or ritual once, when you want (for example, to cast it, or to infuse it in an object with alchemy).

If you use the ritual to prepare in advance, you maintain this knowledge for the entire adventure or until, of course, you cast the spell; then you'll need to study it again.



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