

SCARLET HEROES



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**SWORD AND SORCERY ADVENTURES FOR A LONE HERO
BY KEVIN CRAWFORD**

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A WORLD IN NEED OF HEROES...

The cities of men are few in these accursed days. Ever since the demon-haunted mists of the Red Tide exiled a scattering of desperate survivors from their ancestral lands, all that remains of humanity are those peoples who cling to survival in the distant Sunset Isles. Their refuges remain perched upon wild shores, men and women gathered together in city-states grown fearful of their neighbors.

The Mandarin of Xian broods in his many-towered city as the blood sorcerers of Tien Lung scheme and the Shogun of Hell dreams the red dreams of his masters. The grim pikemen of Hohnberg turn away from their former allies in the east, and in the ancient halls of his Gate Citadel the dwarf-king dwells uneasily upon the change of days.

In the west, the Shou howl for vengeance. Driven from their lands by the human exiles, locked in never-ending war against the hated interlopers and their own rival neighbors, they lack only a leader to make an irresistible tide of their warriors. Even now their raiding parties harry the western borderlands and thrust deep into once-safe territories. Their savagery lights the midnight skies with the flames of burning villages and make pillars of smoke from the homes of men.

The decay festers even within the hearts of the people as the dreams of the Red Tide win fresh cultists to its alien cause. It forever seeks to open a way into the haven of the Isles, to draw closer to the shores that denied it the last and most delicious of its prey. These cultists trade their reason for auspicious madness and pleasing delusion, until their very flesh rebels against sanity and their rites bring in the red fog of their lords. How long can the ruling powers suppress knowledge of the cult's hideous spread?

No foul sorcery is needed to explain the pirates and the bandits and the rapacious border lords who are more brigand than protector. The common people groan under the troubles of these days, and many give up all hope of honest gain in favor of a sharp spear and the plunder of their neighbors. These bandits are a scourge upon honest men. Too many lords lack the strength to suppress them, even if they had the will.

Yet even in these dark days the hours are not without hope. Among the legions of the bitter, the resigned, and the desperate there are those with the potential for greater things. There are those with the iron thews or razor wits or unquenchable faith that is required for a greatness beyond ordinary men. These are the heroes of the Sunset Isles, the men and women destined to light legends with their deeds.

With courage, cunning and the dauntless fury of a soul born for glory these few chosen may yet be the salvation of a land that trembles on the brink of bloody ruin. Many will fall. Many will perish in nameless and terrible ways, brought down by the dooms they so often face. Yet not all will fail, and from these few heroes may come a new and better age.

...AND THE TALES TO MAKE THEM

Scarlet Heroes is an old-school RPG designed to support classic sword and sorcery adventuring by a single valiant hero. While many RPGs work best with a group of fearless adventurers, **Scarlet Heroes** allows a single player and a GM to play existing old-school adventure modules and use materials from their own favorite games in a session for just one or two players.

Scarlet Heroes is a stand-alone game with everything you need to build suitably heroic exploits for your daring freebooters, but it can also serve as a rules overlay for other old-school games. By using the mechanics provided here you can play your existing materials without changing character sheets or editing adventures to make them survivable by a lone hero or an adventuring pair.

Character creation is fast, play has the speed of classic old-school gaming, and the tools in this book are built to support the GM in creating the kind of adventures beloved of true sword & sorcery pulp heroes. The resources here focus on fast content generation, quick adjudication of heroic situations, and the tables, tags, and support material that you can use in your own home game, whether or not you play it with the mechanics given here.

Aside from all the parts you'd expect from a full-fledged S&S game, **Scarlet Heroes** also provides a solo adventure section for creating entirely single-player gaming sessions. Whether urban intrigues, exploring deep wilds, or plumbing the depths of some lost prehuman temple, the rules here let you play a GM-less adventure of your own.

Many of the hardy grognards reading this will be scoffing into their beards right now, insisting that you can already turn any old-school adventure into a single-player experience without using any special tools. And it's true. You can. But is it fun? Is it really a great use of your creativity? Wouldn't it be easier to just pull out **Scarlet Heroes**, grab your character sheets and modules, and just *play*?

Slide this slim game into your pack or load it onto your tablet and you're fully equipped to handle those nights when gaming turnout is low or those occasions when you want to show a friend the fun of old-school adventuring without the need to corral 4-5 other players. Play with your spouse, your kid, or your gaming buddy who has half an hour to kill waiting for something else. You can pack a lot of adventure into a short time when you only need to track one player.

And for those nights when you have a full house, you can use the tools here to fashion adventures and excitement for full parties, swapping in other old-school rules with seamless ease, without editing character sheets or tweaking adventures. You'll find a wide sweep of exotic new foes and ineffable sorcerous mysteries contained in these pages, and adventure tags to help you brew up excitement for a group of one or many.

Scarlet Heroes was made to help you play the game you want to play with the people you want to play it with. It's built to take the stress off the GM, and let both them and the player focus on the fun of the game. Now let's get started; I've got some things to show you....

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CREATING YOUR HERO	4	A BESTIARY OF FOES	54
ROLL YOUR ATTRIBUTES	5	MONSTERS OF THE ISLES	57
CHOOSE A RACE	6	ENCOUNTERS	78
CHOOSE A CLASS	7	ENCOUNTER TWISTS	79
CHOOSE TRAITS	10		
FINAL TOUCHES	11	TREASURES BEYOND PRICE	80
EQUIPMENT	12	TROVE TYPES	82
QUICK CHARACTER GENERATION	14	INDIVIDUAL TREASURE GENERATION	83
		MAGIC ITEMS	84
PLAYING THE GAME	16	POTIONS	86
CHECKS	17	SCROLLS	87
SAVING THROWS	17	WANDS	87
COMBAT	18	MAGICAL RINGS	88
DEFYING DEATH	19	MAGICAL ARMOR	89
INJURY, DEATH, HEALING, AND HAZARDS	20	MAGICAL WEAPONS	89
TURNING UNDEAD	20	MISCELLANEOUS MAGICAL ITEMS	90
TRAVEL AND ENCUMBRANCE	21		
SHIPS AND SEA COMBAT	21	CREATING ADVENTURES	92
ADVANCEMENT	22	ADVENTURE TAGS	96
CONVERTING EXISTING MATERIAL	24	MAPS	109
SCARLET HEROES QUICK REFERENCE	25	QUICK NPC CREATION	113
RED SORCERY	28	SOLO GAMING	114
SPELL PREPARATION PER DAY	29	GENERAL ORACLES	115
CLERIC SPELLS	30	ACTORS, RELATIONSHIPS, AND REACTIONS	116
MAGIC-USER SPELLS	35	URBAN ADVENTURES	118
		URBAN ADVENTURE SCENES	120
THE WORLD OF THE RED TIDE	42	WILDERNESS ADVENTURES	122
THE PEOPLES OF THE ISLES	44	WILDERNESS TERRAIN AND FEATURES	123
THE NATIONS OF THE ISLES	47	WILDERNESS EVENTS	124
THE MANDARINATE OF XIAN	48	DUNGEON ADVENTURES	125
THE SHOGUNATE OF THE NORTH	49	DUNGEON TYPES, SIZES, AND INHABITANTS	126
THE MAGOCRACY OF TIEN LUNG	50	DUNGEON PLACES, LOOT, AND DANGERS	127
THE HOHNBERG PACT	51	DUNGEON FEATURES	128
THE UNTAMED LANDS	52		
LAWS, RELIGIONS, AND CUSTOMS	53	INDEX	131

CREATING YOUR HERO

Your hero is no ordinary man or woman. Your hero is a legend in the making, a soul marked by destiny for something greater than the petty fates of those around them. Whether by steel or spell or silver word, your hero has the potential to leave a burning name in the annals of their chroniclers and the songs of the bards.

Every story has a beginning, however, and a freshly-fashioned hero still has a great deal of growing to do. In this chapter, you'll learn how to take the first steps toward your hero's ultimate glory, and lay out the outline of their early years and most notable talents.

THE PATH OF LEGEND

A hero starts by rolling *attributes*. These six scores depict a hero's basic strengths and weaknesses, separating the mighty-thewed from the pantherishly agile and the far-seeing from the luminously brilliant. All heroes are good at *something*, though some rely more on unbending determination than abundant gifts of nature.

Next, you choose the *race* of the hero. "Race" in this game doesn't refer to human ethnicity, but instead to the species of the hero, whether they are human or one of the demihuman species found in the forbidding world of the Red Tide.

After you choose your race, you define your hero's best talents by picking a *class*. There are four different classes: cleric, fighter, magic-user and thief. Each class grants your hero certain special abilities and talents suitable for deeds of fearless daring.

With your class chosen, you then pick *traits*. Traits are how you express your hero's individual talents and background, those things that your hero is especially good at doing. A hero might have the trait of "Escaped mine slave", with the skills and experience to be expected for one inured to brutal labor deep below the earth, or she might be a "Skilled translator" capable of speaking all the common tongues of the Sunset Isles and most of the more esoteric ones as well. You choose your own traits based on your hero's background rather than picking from a particular list.

With these four steps complete, all that's left are the final touches. You record your important statistics, note down your special class abilities or magical powers, and equip your hero with the trappings of their profession. Your hero is then ready to meet a world in dire need of their services, one rich with plunder for the taking and deeds that await their unquenchable ambitions.

WORDS TO REMEMBER

Scarlet Heroes is built to support a style of gaming commonly known as "sandbox gaming". For this style of game to work, your hero needs to have at least one goal. A gifted young swordswoman might have the makings of a legend in her, but that's not going to happen unless she has some reason to leave her mundane life behind and seek something better.

Your hero needs to have a purpose before he or she will be ready for adventure. This purpose may well change over time, of course, as a young hero's dreams are cruelly dashed by a foul nemesis or as their tireless labors bring glorious victory. Or he may just be smitten by a pretty barmaid's smile and find himself neck-deep in trouble for it. This purpose might be something as simple as "Become fabulously wealthy and enjoy every coin of it", or as complex as "Overthrow the Shogun Rai and redeem his accursed land". It might even change from adventure to adventure.

The GM needs to know this goal if they're to create situations that you'll find interesting. A hero will often find himself or herself faced with a wide variety of potential adventures or places worth exploring, and you'll need that goal to help direct your interest. A hero who simply sits back and waits for adventure to come to him is likely to have a tedious career of warming chairs, forever denied the opportunity to put his rump in a usurped and bright-jeweled throne.

If you're not sure what a good goal could be, just think about the kind of adventures you want to have. If you want to explore ruins and plunder the gold of dead kings, then a goal that revolves around pecuniary rewards or the unearthing of ancient secrets might serve. If you want to spar with courtiers in the palaces of perfumed nobles, then a goal focused on avenging some political slight might suit you. Don't hesitate to ask the GM for ideas or work with them to build a suitable ambition. For a single-player game, your goals become the focus of play. It's important to pick ones worthy of your deeds.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Most readers of *Scarlet Heroes* will have extensive familiarity with the usual terms found in old-school RPGs. On the off chance that you're a brave explorer of the unknown, here are a few important terms and ideas to know before we get too deep.

Adventure: A circumstance of danger or reward, a daring exploit fit for the attention of a hero. Adventures may run over several game sessions before finally culminating in success or bitter defeat.

GM: The game master. The GM is responsible for setting up the adventure and adjudicating the hero's valiant struggles. The player runs a single hero; the GM runs everyone else encountered.

NPC: Non-player character. Any monster, peasant, sorcerer, brigand, beast, or other creature not being played by a player. The GM runs all NPCs.

PC: Player character. A hero run by a player.

XdY: Roll X dice with Y sides and add; "3d6" means "Roll three six-sided dice", and "4d10+2" means "Roll four d10 dice and add 2 to one of them." A conventional set of RPG dice includes a d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20. You'll probably want several six-sided dice.

ROLL YOUR ATTRIBUTES

The first step in fashioning your hero is to generate their six *attribute scores*. Each score is measured in a range from 3 to 18, with high scores implying great talent or development, while low scores indicate a noticeable weakness. For each of the six attributes, roll 4d6, drop the lowest die, and add them together. You can swap these rolls around to different attributes if you have a particular sort of hero in mind. If no roll is 16 or better, pick an attribute and set it to 16. A hero is always remarkably good at *something*.

Each score results in an attribute modifier from -3 to +3. This number is used whenever the attribute modifies a roll. Strength modifies the damage done by melee weapons, for example, so if your character has a Strength of 13, you'd add +1 to your damage roll, along with any other rolls reliant on physical might.

Strength is the measure of your hero's physical might. Strength is important for melee combatants, and so high Strength is particularly useful for fighters.

Intelligence reflects your hero's education, native wit, and learning ability. Intelligence is used to remember obscure facts and perform other feats of mental acuity. Magic-users require a good Intelligence.

Dexterity denotes your hero's agility and reaction speed. It affects your character's dodging ability, use of missile weapons, and the performance of acrobatic maneuvers. Thieves have a particular need for a good Dexterity, though all the classes have use for it.

ATTRIBUTE MODIFIERS

SCORE	MODIFIER
3	-3
4-5	-2
6-8	-1
9-12	No Modifier
13-15	+1
16-17	+2
18	+3

Wisdom reflects not only the hero's common sense and will, but also their perceptiveness. Clerics have need of a good Wisdom score.

Constitution is valuable for every hero, as it influences the amount of punishment a hero can take before they are dead or incapacitated. It also influences the hero's toughness and ability to shake off wounds and resist foul poisons.

Charisma is also of broad usefulness to most heroes. It measures the character's force of personality and ability to influence others, whether or not they're particularly pleasing to the eye.





CHOOSE A RACE

Among the many intelligent species inhabiting the Sunset Isles, there are five that are most suitable for heroic adventures. Humans, elves, dwarves, halflings, and Shou-blooded heroes are all potentially viable characters, though even stranger beings might be allowed by a GM for some sorts of campaigns.

Humans are precisely what you might expect them to be. While the Imperials of Xian are the predominant type in the Sunset Isles, there are scores of different ethnicities and cultures crowded within the archipelago. The setting chapter discusses several of these cultures and communities, or you could make up your own with the permission of the GM. Humans are uniquely versatile among the Isle's inhabitants, with a cultural flexibility unknown to the other major races.

Dwarves are the people beneath the mountains, a race of subterranean humanoids that rarely exceed five feet in height. They spend their lives gathering gold in order to take its spiritual essence into the afterlife with them, and other races sometimes find it hard to distinguish this piety from simple greed. By ancient tradition, male dwarves are forbidden from craftwork and female dwarves are denied mining or military roles, though some rebels are willing to suffer the social shame of adopting an "improper" role. Dwarves can see even in complete darkness, though they light their halls for ritual reasons and to discourage their ancestral enemies who prowl dark ways.

Elves were human once, long ago, until the proud sorcerer-kings who led them conducted a great ritual that was to grant them immortality as gods. The ritual was flawed, and they and all their people were forever bound to the circles of the world. They do not grow old, and when an elf dies their spirit lingers for a time before reincarnating in an elven infant. Most of their memories fade with the process, but not all, and elves are sometimes possessed by the desire to complete

goals that their former incarnations never managed to achieve. They organize themselves in "Creeds" as groups of like-minded elves share similar philosophies or goals. Elves have very keen senses, and can see in starlight as well as a human can at midday.

Halflings are a small and modest folk, much like humans who grow only to four feet in height. Most dwell in simple, rustic villages under the protection of some human lord, though a few incurable thrill seekers love the chaos and excitement of human cities. Others are forced to leave their village when existing lands can no longer support them, venturing forth to establish a new home for their people. Halflings are unique in their absolute immunity to panic or terror. Even in the most chaotic situations a halfling will remain level-headed and will act quickly and decisively. This cold-blooded calm makes them dangerous combatants, and most soldiers would sooner face a tribe of howling Shou than charge a pike square of grim halfling farmers.

Shou are the hated natives of the Sunset Isles, the once-dominant race on the islands of the archipelago. With the coming of the human exiles three hundred years ago they have been steadily pushed back into the western wilderness, despite the occasional explosive border war and a resurgence two centuries ago that nearly drove humanity from the Isles. While "wild" Shou are hated among all the human lands, many of them appear nearly indistinguishable from well-formed humans, and a few are able to "pass" without drawing notice. Others are half-Shou, born of the brutal western fighting, the offspring of Shou slaves, or the product of those few villages where Shou-blooded communities eke out the best life they can. Shou have a natural gift for battling the Red Tide that encircles the Isles, and they have a strong resistance to its dark magics.

CHOOSE A CLASS

Now that you know what kind of hero you have, it's time to pick their *class*. A class grants your hero certain special abilities and determines their overall strengths and weaknesses. Not everybody has a class. Most ordinary men and women are no more than their profession would imply. Most soldiers aren't fighters, they're just soldiers, and they'll never ascend to the heights of fearsome prowess that a true fighter might someday scale.

Your hero's experience in a class is measured in *levels*. A new character starts at level 1 and advances upward through completing adventures, defeating foes, plundering treasures, and otherwise accomplishing those ends befitting a daring adventurer.

Classes are something for you, the player, rather than something for your character's self-conception. Characters don't walk around thinking of themselves as "a 3rd level fighter" or "a 5th level thief". They consider themselves an Eirengarder pikeman, for example, or a veteran Xianese swordswoman. A magic-user might have a self-conception as a forest witch or an urbane academy sorcerer. These characters might share similar game abilities, but they have very different styles of executing them.

As your character develops and gains in experience they might choose to dabble in a different class, gaining some new abilities at the cost of advancing in their other talents. For now, just decide what your character is best at doing, and choose that for your starting class.

OTHER CLASSES FOR HEROES

The four classes presented here are meant to provide catch-all categories that cover the great majority of classic heroic character concepts. It's not really necessary to have a "Samurai" class, or an "Alchemist" class when the Fighter and Magic-User cover the abilities fitting to such heroes. You should pick a class to fit your character's greatest strengths and use traits and other background qualities to add any further flavor.

Still, some GMs and players like to use more specific classes. You can use most classes from other OSR games with few or no changes in *Scarlet Heroes*, or invent your own classes to exactly suit a novel concept. The details of such a process are beyond the scope of this book, but most experienced GMs and players shouldn't have a hard time mixing and matching class abilities to fit.

GMs shouldn't feel too much stress about this process. If a campaign is being built around a single hero there's no worry that they might overshadow a more standard party-mate. Just cut the cloth to fit the concept, and if it turns out that the abilities don't work well for the game a GM can edit them between sessions.

CLASS LIMITS BY RACE

In the *Red Tide* campaign setting some classes are limited to certain races. In this world, there are simply no elven, dwarven, or halfling clerics, and no dwarven or halfling magic-users. Humans and Shou-blooded heroes can belong to any class.

Your GM may decide differently, however, and may choose to permit your hero to be something unusual among their people. It may also be that your GM is running a completely different world where these limits don't apply. When in doubt, check with them to see if there are any limits you should keep in mind.

THE FOUR CLASSES

There are four basic classes available in *Scarlet Heroes*. Your GM may include others built specifically for their campaign world, or if you're familiar with similar role-playing games you might include theirs.

Clerics are divinely-blessed minions of the gods, whether brave paladins of the celestial powers or tonsured shrine-priests of a more meditative bent. They are capable combatants, but also can wield the blessings of their god in the form of magical spells. Choose this class if you want to wield a sword or hammer for a holy cause.

Fighters are the classic warriors and swordsmen of fantasy fiction. They include not only the customary grizzled knights and hard-bitten mercenaries, but also well-born nobles, itinerant freebooters, pirates, bandits, aspiring peasant heroes, and all other characters that focus on combat skill and toughness rather than magic or special expertise. Choose this class if you want to be a fearsome warrior.

Magic-Users are wizards, witches, sorcerers of every description, scholars of the occult, and any other hero who relies upon magic as their foremost tool. While the powers of a novice are limited, they can grow to be fearsomely mighty wielders of the eldritch arts. Choose this class if you want to cast spells and hurl magical bolts.

Thieves are those heroes who rely on skill rather than magic. While capable combatants, they focus on a repertoire of mundane talents that they elevate to something near-supernatural. Thieves choose a particular archetype to describe their focus—“expert burglar”, for example, or “cunning woodsman”, or “learned ruin explorer”. While other characters can learn to do the same things they do, others are never as good at it as a thief. Choose this class if you want your hero to be incredibly talented at their chosen expertise.

WRITE DOWN YOUR CLASS ABILITIES

Once you've chosen your class, write down your class abilities on the character sheet given on page 15. To make it easy, just follow the steps given below.

- **Record your initial hit points.** For fighters, this is 8. For clerics, it's 6, and for magic-users and thieves it's 4. Modify this total by your Constitution attribute's modifier; thus, if you had a 13 Constitution score, you'd add 1 point to the total. Hit points reflect your character's health, stamina, and nearness to defeat. If they drop to zero, your luckless hero will probably die. Only heroes have hit points; monsters and normal people have hit *dice* instead.
- **Write down your starting attack bonus.** This is +1, except for magic-users, who have no initial bonus. The higher the bonus, the better your hero is at hitting a target when wielding bow or blade. As your hero advances in level, they'll get better; each time you advance, you'll add your class' advancement bonus to the score.
- **Record your Fray die.** Your character is a hero, and petty foes should be wary of getting too close. When fighting inferior enemies you can roll your Fray die to kill or injure them. The *Playing the Game* section has details on how your Fray die works. For now, just make a note of it on your character sheet.

Once you've picked your class, you're ready to customize your hero by deciding on the unique experiences and training they've received over the course of their past life. It's time to move on to *traits*.

CLERIC

Clerics are a special variety of priest, ones gifted with the particular favor of their deities. While common priests are capable of calling down miracles with lengthy prayer and temple rituals, a cleric can summon these marvels with no more than a short invocation. Novice clerics are capable of working some minor miracle once a day, while arch-clerics can invoke dozens of mighty wonders.

- **Clerics can wear any armor, bear shields, and wield any weapon.** They do not use them as skillfully as fighters or thieves do, however, and so their damage die is limited to 1d6. Thus, a cleric who swings a battle axe that normally rolls 1d8 damage would instead roll only 1d6.
- **Clerics can cast magical spells**, channeling the power of their god. These spells must be prepared daily through prayer and consecration, and once they are cast the priest must wait until the next day to refresh his powers.
- **Clerics can Turn Undead**, invoking the authority of their patron to end the violation of the natural cycle represented by undead entities.

A cleric must choose a particular religious faith, though the gods do not seem to especially care how their favored behave once their gifts have been bestowed. Even truly foul or spiritually-indifferent clerics experience no loss of their magical abilities. Most scholars blame the Red Tide for this spiritual distance, and say that the gods would have more care for the behavior of their chosen if they were better able to reach the world.

FIGHTER

Fighters are the red-handed warriors of the Isles. Whether a Kueh samurai, Xianese soldier, Skandr sea-raider or simple peasant hero, the fighter excels at battle. While they lack the magical gifts of the cleric or magic-user or the special talents of the thief, they hit harder, last longer, and endure what would kill most other heroes.

- **Fighters can wear any armor, bear shields, and wield any weapon.** Fighters are the best at direct combat, and can use any weapon to its full effect.
- **Fighters gain combat skill and hardiness more quickly than other classes.** Fighters gain a +1 bonus to their attack bonus every time they advance a level and gain more hit points than any other class. They can take more punishment than other heroes.
- **Fighters have the best Fray die.** Fighters are particularly dangerous to lesser foes that dare get too close. Their large Fray die makes it more likely that they will kill or incapacitate minor enemies that dare to face their blade.

A fighter doesn't cast spells or gain special skills unless they later choose to learn the talents of another class. Instead, they solve most of their problems with brute force, raw cunning, and unquenchable vitality. This is not to say that fighters are necessarily stupid or ill-educated, but their strengths are greatest in direct confrontations.

Even novice fighters are warriors of skill and fearsome prowess. A lone fighter can hack down a dozen lesser foes before being dragged down. Still, the tales of heroes include their tragic deaths as well as their great victories, and prudence will prolong any bladesman's life.



CLERIC CLASS ABILITIES

ARMOR ALLOWED	Any and shields
WEAPONS ALLOWED	Any, but limited to 1d6 damage
INITIAL HIT POINTS	6
HP GAINED	+3 per level
ATTACK BONUS	+1
ATTACK BONUS GAIN	+1/2 per level
FRAY DIE	1d6



FIGHTER CLASS ABILITIES

ARMOR ALLOWED	Any and shields
WEAPONS ALLOWED	Any
INITIAL HIT POINTS	8
HP GAINED	+4 per level
ATTACK BONUS	+1
ATTACK BONUS GAIN	+1 per level
FRAY DIE	1d8

MAGIC-USER

Magic-users are the sorcerers, witches, mystics, and hedge-wizards of this world. They trade conventional prowess for the mysteries of the arcane, and have the strongest magical powers of any class. A novice magic-user's powers are limited, however, and they must take care to survive the perils of gaining greater might. They can't withstand the punishment that a fighter or cleric can, but the wise never have to try.

- **Magic-users cannot wear armor or use shields and have little skill with weapons.** Armor interferes with their magical abilities, and they have little time to practice their swordplay. While they can use any weapon, their maximum damage die is 1d4. Thus, a wizard shooting a bow would roll only 1d4 for its damage die instead of the usual 1d8.
- **Magic-users can cast magical spells,** choosing from among the incantations in their spellbook. Magic-users start play knowing a number of spells equal to two plus their Intelligence modifier.
- **Magic-users can wield eldritch forces to harm a foe.** Their Fray die can affect any target, even one stronger than the wizard. Other classes can't use their Fray die to harm stronger foes.

Every magic-user has a spellbook to contain their lore, though this artifact may take the form of tablets, discs, knotted cords, or some other record. As they gain expertise and unearth lost secrets, they add new spells to their book and gain a greater range of occult abilities. A master sorcerer is capable of fantastic feats of magic, striking down dozens of foes at once or crossing a hundred leagues in a single step.

THIEF

Thieves are not only the common pickpockets and skulking burglars of the great cities, but also those heroes who rely more upon stealth, cunning, and well-placed blades than direct confrontation. Elusive foresters and adventurous scholars might both fall under the class just as readily as some black-cowled Kueh ninja. Thieves tend to be fairly skilled combatants and lethal ambushers, but they lack the training with heavy armor possessed by their fighter peers.

- **Thieves can use any weapon and can wear leather armor but cannot use shields.** Heavy armor and shields hinder a thief's abilities. They are skilled combatants, but not so much as a fighter. Their weapon's damage die is limited to 1d8. Thus, a two-handed sword snatched up by a desperate thief does only 1d8 damage.
- **Thieves are more greatly skilled than other classes, and gain a free 3-point trait in their archetype.** At high levels a thief's abilities are almost supernatural in their perfection. Each time they advance a level, this archetype trait increases by one point, even beyond the usual three-point limit for a trait. Master thieves often have seemingly impossible powers of stealth and infiltration.
- **Thieves can ambush unsuspecting foes.** A thief attacking an unsuspecting or unwary target gains a +4 bonus to his attack roll and inflicts triple damage with his weapon and Fray die.

Thieves should decide what kind of archetype best describes their talents. A "stealthy burglar" might be one kind of thief with a very different set of talents than a "fearless ruin explorer" or a "grizzled woodsman". Novice thieves start with 3 free points in this trait, and as they advance in experience they can increase this trait above the usual 3-point maximum.



MAGIC-USER CLASS ABILITIES

ARMOR ALLOWED	None
WEAPONS ALLOWED	Any, but limited to 1d4 damage
INITIAL HIT POINTS	4
HP GAINED	+2 per level
ATTACK BONUS	+0
ATTACK BONUS GAIN	+1/3 per level
FRAY DIE	1d4, but it affects any creature



THIEF CLASS ABILITIES

ARMOR ALLOWED	Leather, but no shields
WEAPONS ALLOWED	Any, but limited to 1d8 damage
INITIAL HIT POINTS	4
HP GAINED	+2 per level
ATTACK BONUS	+1
ATTACK BONUS GAIN	+1/2 per level
FRAY DIE	1d6

CHOOSE TRAITS

The next step in creating your hero is to choose their *traits*, those particular backgrounds, skills, and aptitudes that set them apart from others of the same profession. Most characters receive three points to spend on their traits, plus whatever their race or class may grant.

Traits are a few words to describe something the character has been or is good at doing. “Former city watchman”, for example, or “Mighty thews”, or “Erudite scholar”, or “Fleet-footed”. Almost any description can serve as a trait, though it’s up to the GM to limit those phrases that cover too much ground or imply a past that doesn’t fit with the game. “Noble-born daifu” would be a perfectly fine trait for some campaigns, while other GMs might find such a concept unsuitable.

You can add your highest relevant trait to any checks or saving throws your hero might make. Both checks and saving throws are rolled on 2d8, to which you add your relevant attribute modifier and your highest relevant trait. Saving throws also add your character’s level. If the total is equal or higher than the difficulty number determined by the GM you succeed in accomplishing the act or evading the danger.

Characters can spend up to three points in a single trait, and can spend points to increase a trait granted by their racial background. A Shou thief who was a former street urchin might have three points in her thief archetype trait of “Outcast Shou burglar”, and then put one point each into “Pitiful beggar”, “Streetwise information gatherer”, and “Keen danger sense” traits, while putting her racial bonus point into boosting her “Resist the Red Tide” trait. A human fighter who is a hardy Skandr pirate turned wandering chant-singer might take his three initial points and put two into “Pirate reaver” and one into “Iron constitution”, while putting his two bonus points into the trait of “Inspiring Skandr skald”.

The scope of each trait should be clear to both you and the GM. A pirate reaver might apply his trait when sailing, swimming, drinking bad liquor, climbing ropes, identifying ships, or dealing with other pirates, but he wouldn’t gain it when trying to trade an honest cargo or organizing a militia group on land.

Traits do not apply to combat rolls, such as to-hit or damage dice. Someone with the “veteran soldier” trait might know a great deal about weapons, military organization, dealing with fellow soldiers, and training recruits, but when their sword clears their scabbard they’re as reliant on their base attack bonus as anyone else.

As you advance in experience, you might pick up more traits that reflect your character’s adventures and history. Characters normally receive an additional trait point each time they advance a level, one related to some feat or accomplishment they performed on their way up. Thieves also get an additional trait point added to their specialty every level, even if it increases it beyond the usual three point cap.

TRAIT BONUSES FOR RACE AND CLASS

Certain races and classes get bonus points to spend on their traits, either in a specific way or on any trait that fits their character.

- **Humans** get two bonus points to spend as they wish.
- **Dwarves** get one trait point in “Dwarven senses”, which include their ability to see in perfect darkness, their sensitivity to dangerous underground areas, and their recognition of subterranean perils. They also get one trait point in the profession their clan intended them to carry on. For males, this is almost always mining, soldiering, or architecture. For females, it is usually some sort of craftwork, though anything is permitted to them except the trades exclusive to males. Rebellious dwarves may select a “wrong” occupation for their sex, but their home clan is doubtless horrified by their poor life choices.
- **Elves** get one bonus trait point in their “Elven senses”, reflecting their keen perceptions and their ability to see clearly even in very dim lighting. They also receive a bonus trait point in whatever profession their prior incarnation maintained, as they retain some fragmentary memories of their former lives.
- **Halflings** get one trait point in “Halfling stealth”, which reflects their quiet nature and unobtrusiveness. They can use this trait whenever they’re trying to hide, sneak, or otherwise pass unnoticed; halfling thieves may spend this point elsewhere if they wish. Halflings also get a free bonus point to spend as they desire.
- **Shou-blooded** get one bonus trait point to spend as they wish and one in “Resist the Red Tide”. While it is little-acknowledged among the humans of the Sunset Isles, the Shou have a remarkable talent for fighting off the dark sorceries of the Tide. They can apply this trait to all checks and saving throws involving Tidespawn or Tide cultists. Shou can never be permanently ensorcelled by the Tide; even if they fail a saving throw they snap out of any curse or transformation a few seconds later. Dead or injured Shou, however, will remain that way.
- **Thieves** get three bonus trait points in their chosen archetype. For many thieves, this will be something like “adventuring thief”, covering skills of stealth, lockpicking, pickpocketing, climbing, and disarming small traps. Other archetypes might be chosen if the GM finds them suitable. They should cover about the same scope of activities, perhaps trading out some for others that better fit the archetype. Using a shield or wearing armor heavier than leather hinders this special trait, however, and such a burdened thief cannot use it for any check involving movement or manual grace.

Characters of other races or those with unique classes may gain bonus points of their own at the GM’s discretion- usually two.

LANGUAGES AND TRAITS

Most humans in the Sunset Isles speak “Low Imperial”, the common tongue of the dominant Ninefold Celestial Empire before the coming of the Red Tide. Nobles and scholars are also versed in “High Imperial”, a much more complicated language that replaces the alphabetical brushmarks of Low Imperial with thousands of painted logograms that are believed to have subtle mystical powers. Elves, dwarves, and halflings all have their native tongues, and the ancient language of the Shou is not unknown in certain circles. Most humans also speak the native language of their particular ethnicity or culture, though this has died out in favor of Low Imperial in some places. Heroes are assumed to speak and read whichever languages are supported by their backgrounds and chosen traits. Heroes with traits as wanderers or scholars might know enough to get by in a wide variety of tongues, though they may not care to trust their knowledge for delicate diplomacy.

FINAL TOUCHES

Your hero is almost ready for play. Just a few final tweaks are needed before your freebooter is ready to set forth to find fame and glory in the savage world beyond their youthful home.

- **Buy your equipment.** Roll 3d6 and multiply it by 10 to find out how many gold coins your hero possesses at the start of the game. You can use this money to buy starting equipment from the tables on the following pages. Make sure to have a stout weapon, and everyone but magic-users should consider buying a sturdy suit of armor. Make sure your hero isn't carrying an unreasonable amount of gear on his back. Most adventurers can carry about 60 pounds of gear before they become encumbered, plus or minus 20 more for each point of Strength modifier or trait that involves porting heavy loads. Thus, if your hero has a Strength of 13 and a trait of "Former slave laborer: 2", she could carry 120 pounds on her mighty shoulders without being slowed.
- **Write down your armor class.** Your armor class is the measure of how hard it is to hurt your hero, with the lower the score the better. An ordinary unarmored person is AC 9, while that same man clad in plate armor and carrying a shield is AC 2. Your armor class is based on the armor you're wearing and modified by your hero's Dexterity modifier. If your hero is carrying a shield, subtract 1 more point from their AC. A hero's AC is never worse than 9.
- **Note down your weapon details.** Write down its damage die, the ranges of missile weapons, and record any ammunition you might be carrying. While you're at it, it's helpful to note down the total attack bonus for the weapon, which is equal to your character's attack bonus plus the modifier of the relevant attribute. Thus, if your thief has a Dexterity of 16 and buys a bow, his total attack bonus with it would be +3, the total of his +2 Dexterity modifier and +1 attack bonus.
- **Clerics and magic-users should pick their spells.** For clerics, this is simple. Just turn to the *Red Sorcery* section of this book and pick one first-level cleric spell to prepare. You can cast this spell once per day. You can change your choice each morning when you prepare spells. Magic-users should do the same, but their choices are more limited. They should pick a number of first-level magic-user spells from the list equal to two plus their Intelligence modifier. These spells are recorded in their spellbook, and they may choose one to prepare each day. To expand their choices a magic-user must advance in skill or find spells elsewhere.
- **Make sure you have an initial goal.** Heroes who sit around and wait for adventure to come to them tend to have long, profoundly tedious lives. Your newly-minted freebooter is of better stock. Make sure he or she has some immediate goal that will get them out into the world, even if it's something as simple as "Become fabulously wealthy" or "Gain renown as the greatest sorcerer in the world". It's fine if this goal should change during the course of play. The important thing is that your hero should always have a reason to go out and do something exciting. If you need help, work with your GM to pick something suitable for your hero.

Your hero is now ready to face the world, armed to duel the grim perils that await their flashing blades and thundering sorceries.

CHARACTER CREATION SUMMARY

Once you become more familiar with the character creation process, you can simply follow these steps to generate a new character.

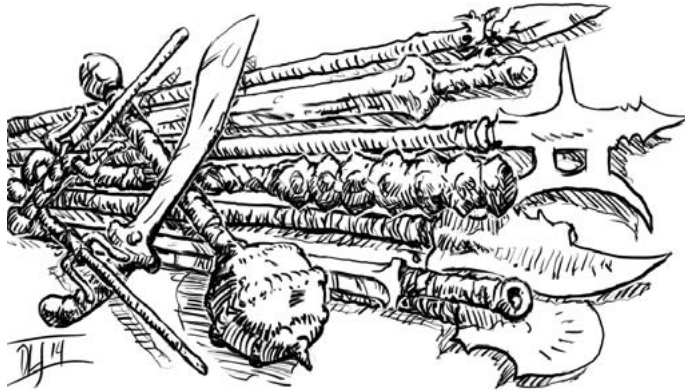
- **Roll your attributes.** Roll 4d6, drop the lowest die, and add them together. Do this six times and assign your rolls to your attributes. If no roll is 16 or better, put a 16 in an attribute.
- **Record your modifiers for each attribute.** Scores of 3 give a -3 modifier, 4-5 is -2, 6-8 is -1, 9-12 is no modifier, 13-15 is +1, 16-17 is +2 and 18 is +3.
- **Pick a race.** For most heroes, the choices should be from human, elf, dwarf, halfling, or Shou-blooded.
- **Pick a class.** Unless your GM decides otherwise the choices are cleric, fighter, magic-user, or thief.
- **Record class abilities.** Your hero's starting hit points are 8 for fighters, 6 for clerics, and 4 for thieves and magic-users. This total is modified by your Constitution score. Your starting attack bonus is +1, unless you're playing a magic-user, in which case it's +0. Note your Fray die, which is 1d8 for fighters, 1d4 for magic-users, and 1d6 for other classes.
- **Choose traits.** Divide three points up among backgrounds or special strengths of your character, such as "veteran mercenary", "friends with local officials", "peasant farmer", or the like. No trait can be higher than three points.
- **Apply bonus traits.** Thieves get three free points in their chosen class archetype. Humans get two bonus points to spend as they wish. Halflings get one point in "Halfling Stealth" and one free bonus point. Dwarves get one point in "Dwarven Senses" and one point in their clan-chosen profession. Elves get one point in "Elven Senses" and one point reflecting a prior incarnation's profession. Shou get one point in "Resist the Red Tide" and one bonus point to spend as they wish.
- **Buy equipment.** A new character has 3d6 x 10 gold pieces to spend on their gear from the following pages. Your hero can carry 60 pounds worth of gear before becoming encumbered, plus or minus 20 pounds for each point of Strength modifier and the highest of any applicable traits.
- **Choose spells if a cleric or magic-user.** Clerics should pick one first-level cleric spell to have ready. They can change this choice each morning when preparing their spells. Magic-users should pick a number of spells equal to two plus their Intelligence modifier to have in their initial spell book. Their single prepared spell must be selected from those in their spell book.
- **Record final touches.** Note down your hero's armor class. Unarmored heroes have a base AC of 9, while armored ones use the AC granted by their armor and shield. AC is improved by your hero's Dexterity, but can't be worse than AC 9. Write down your chosen weapon's damage die, ranges, and total attack and damage bonus, modified by your relevant ability modifier.
- **Make sure you have a goal.** Does your hero have a suitably intrepid goal, one that will provoke them to action?

And there you have it. Your hero is ready for play.

EQUIPMENT

Every hero has use for a sharp blade and a trustworthy shield. The tables below give the costs and particulars for common adventuring gear.

WEAPON TYPES	COST	DAMAGE	WEIGHT
Two-handed Weapon	30 gp	1d10	10 lb.
One-handed Weapon	15 gp	1d8	4 lb.
Light Weapon	10 gp	1d6	3 lb.
Small Weapon	2 gp	1d4	1 lb.
Unarmed Strike	-	1d2	-
Bow or Crossbow	40 gp	1d8/1d10	3 lb.
Sling	1 gp	1d4	-



Two-handed weapons include greatswords, pikes, polearms, huge axes, massive mauls, and other weapons that require both hands to wield. **One-handed weapons** include swords, battle axes, heavy spears, warhammers, morningstars, and other common weaponry. These weapons use Strength to determine hit and damage modifiers.

Light weapons include rapiers, light spears, short swords, and other implements of war that might require nimbleness as much as might. Users of light weapons can use the better of Strength or Dexterity for modifying hit and damage rolls. Light spears and other such weapons can be thrown up to 60 feet, though a -2 hit penalty applies to any targets more than 30' away.

Small weapons include knives, daggers, clubs, saps, and improvised weapons. They use the better of Strength or Dexterity for hit and damage rolls, and can often be thrown up to 30 feet away. Any targets more than 15' away give a -2 penalty to the hit roll. Entirely unarmed characters strike for 1d2 damage with their bare hands.

Bows have a maximum range of 210 feet, while **Slings** reach up to 160'. **Crossbows** roll 1d10 damage but require an extra round to reload them after firing, and have a range of 240'. For ranged weapons, shots at over half the maximum distance take a -2 hit penalty. All three types of weapons rely on Dexterity for roll modifiers.

Shields subtract one point from the bearer's armor class. Thieves using a shield lose the benefit of their special class trait and ambush attack bonus. Magic-users cannot cast spells while using a shield.

Leather armor is most often of boiled hides or layered leather, and can be used by thieves without hindering their arts. **Scale armor** is usually made of metal scales riveted to a backing. **Chain armor** is a mail of steel links worn over padding, while **banded armor** relies on horizontal overlapping plates of metal. **Plate armor** is a costly suit of formed steel with thick mail for the joints.

Most hirelings are self-explanatory, and are skilled professionals at their trade with a total bonus of +2 on any relevant skill checks. They will serve honestly but will not face the dangers of an adventure unless given drastically greater inducement- and perhaps not even then. Slaves can only be found for sale in the Shogunate, Tien Lung, and similar barbarous places.

Services are for ordinary exertions and provisions of their kind, and assume that the buyer can find a seller in the first place. Assassination fees are for ordinary commoners; fees for killing nobles or harder targets can be ten times as much or more. Minor bribes are for petty offenses, while major bribes are for more serious crimes and relaxations of the rules, and may scale dramatically for capital crimes. Item identification is the hire of a sage to identify a magical item, while spells can be bought from properly-staffed temples or competent local sorcerers, assuming either are to be found. Spell fees are charged by the level or hit dice of the caster, with minor spells being 1st or 2nd level and major ones being 3rd through 5th. Thus, to get a 7th level caster to cast a 4th level spell would cost 3,500 gp. For temples, the assumed level is the minimum necessary to cast the spell.

ARMOR TYPES	COST	AC	WEIGHT
Shield	5 gp	-1 bonus	10 lb.
Leather Armor	10 gp	7	10 lb.
Scale Armor	60 gp	6	40 lb.
Chain Armor	70 gp	5	30 lb.
Banded Armor	90 gp	4	40 lb.
Plate Armor	600 gp	3	50 lb.

HIRELINGS	COST	SERVICES	COST
Archer	7 sp/day	Assassination	1,000 gp
Architect	5 gp/day	Bribe, Major	400 gp
Armorer	1 gp/day	Bribe, Minor	5 gp
Guardsmen	3 sp/day	Inn Room, Cheap	2 sp/day
Guide	3 sp/day	Inn Room, Fine	1 gp/day
Harlot	2 sp/night	Item Identification	50 gp
Major Domo	2 gp/day	Letter Sent	1 gp
Physician	2 gp/day	Meal, Cheap	5 cp
Pikeman	1 gp/day	Meal, Fine	2 sp
Porter, Wilderness	2 sp/day	Rented House, City	10 gp/day
Slave, Ordinary	100 gp	Rented House, Rural	1 gp/day
Slave, Skilled	300 gp	Ship Passage	2 gp/day
Spy, Low Danger	1 gp/day	Spell, Major	500 gp/lvl
Unskilled Laborer	1 sp/day	Spell, Minor	100 gp/lvl

GEAR AND COMMODITIES	COST	WEIGHT
Artisan's Tools	10 gp	10 lb.
Backpack	2 gp	2 lb.
Bamboo pole, 10 ft.	5 cp	2 lb.
Book, Blank	15 gp	2 lb.
Bottle of rice wine, Cheap	1 sp	2 lb.
Bottle of rice wine, Good	10 gp	2 lb.
Camp gear, 1 person	5 gp	15 lb.
Chest with lock, 4 x 3 x 3 ft.	50 gp	50 lb.
Clothes, Common	1 gp	2 lb.
Clothes, Fine	50 gp	5 lb.
Clothes, Noble	500 gp	10 lb.
Compass, Lodestone	100 gp	1 lb.
Cow or Ox	25 gp	-
Crowbar	5 gp	5 lb.
Drug, Common	1 sp/dose	-
Drug, Rare	10 gp	-
Flask of oil	1 sp	1 lb.
Healer's Bag	10 gp	5 lb.
Horse, Riding	100 gp	-
Horse, War	300 gp	-
Iron Spike	5 sp	1 lb. ea.
Lantern	10 gp	3 lb.
Map, Local	10 gp	-
Quiver with 20 arrows	6 gp	4 lb.
Rations, Preserved, 1 day	3 sp	2 lb.
Rice beer, Gallon	1 sp	10 lbs.
Rope, Hemp, 50 ft.	2 gp	10 lb.
Rope, Silk, 50 ft.	20 gp	5 lb.
Scribe's Tools	10 gp	3 lb.
Sheep, Goat, or Pig	5 gp	-
Silk, 1 square yard	20 gp	3 lb.
Tent, 2 man	5 gp	10 lb.
Torches (10)	5 sp	1 lb. ea.
Wagon for two-ox team	50 gp	-
Waterskin, Gallon, Full	1 gp	10 lb.

Artisan's tools are the portable gear needed to pursue a handcraft or trade, with different tools often required for each trade.

Camp gear includes a bedroll, flint and steel, cooking utensils, a tarp for tenting, and other necessities for adequate comfort in the wilds.

Clothes don't count against encumbrance if worn. Some cities punish commoners that dare to don noble finery.

Cows, oxen, sheep, goats, pigs, and all the other common livestock of the Isles can be bought easily in most rural communities.

Drugs of various narcotic, stimulant, or aphrodisiac effect are available in most cities, often imported from Tien Lung. While not illegal, their overuse is considered vulgar and deplorable.

Healer's Bags are helpful in treating injuries and diseases, and may grant a small circumstantial bonus to such efforts.

A **local map** usually covers an area of up to 30 miles with relative accuracy, with further destinations progressively more vague.

Lanterns burn for 4 hours on a flask of oil, while **torches** burn for 1 hour. Both require a free hand or a loyal linkboy to bear them.

Oil flasks can also be lit and hurled as weapons, doing a 1d6 damage die to the target and all within 3 feet on a successful hit roll against AC 9. Flammable objects may also be set alight.

Rations vary in quality with price. At their cheapest, they're little more than rice and dried vegetables suitable for a camp pot, enough to hold back starvation but not malnutrition over a long period. More costly fare includes dried meat.

Rice beer and rice wine are by far the most common potables in the southern Isles, though grape wines and wheat beer are not unknown.

Scribe's Tools include an inkstone, writing brushes, a water vial, several dozen sheets of good mulberry paper, and the whole packed within a compact wooden lap desk sealed against water.

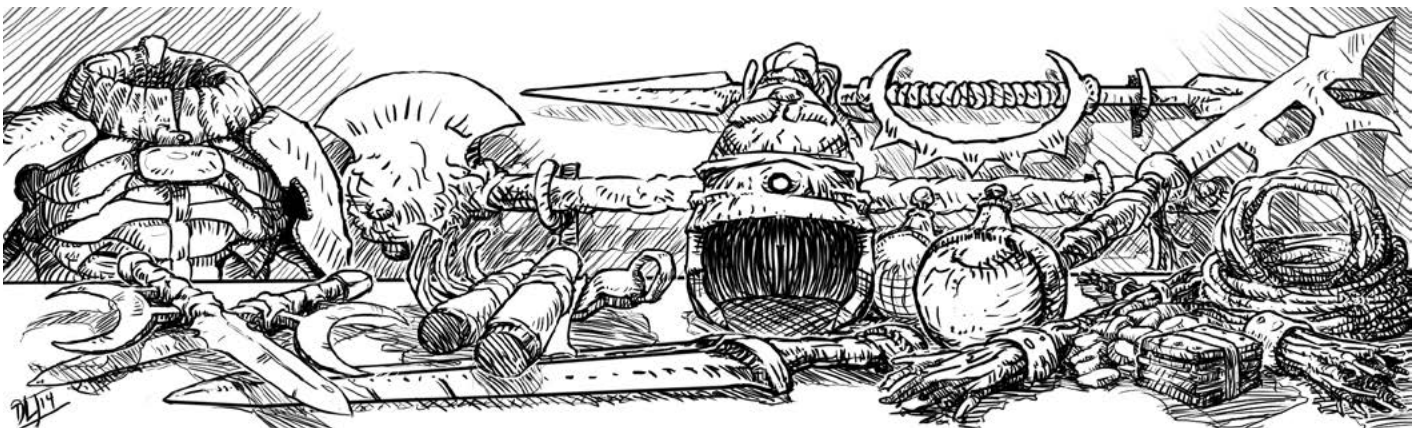
RATES OF EXCHANGE

1 platinum piece = 10 gold pieces

1 gold piece = 10 silver pieces

1 silver piece = 10 copper pieces

A common laborer usually earns no more than a silver piece a day, while even master artisans rarely make more than a gold piece for a day's work. Fifty coins average to about a pound in weight.



QUICK CHARACTER GENERATION

For those valiant souls who want quick ideas for their character's traits or a fast method of character generation, just use the tables on this page. You can either roll on them or just pick appealing choices.

Roll once to determine race, and once more to pick a class. Then roll once each on the appropriate tables below for class background, innate qualities, and relationships. Put one trait point into each and then split any bonus traits from class or race among the options you've rolled. Thieves might make their rolled background into their archetype, or might pick something different for a focus.

Note that the relationships trait is meant to be somewhat loose, and may not be fully developed until the hero actually calls on it in play—deciding that *this* noble, for example, is the one she saved from Shou.

Once you've chosen your traits, just roll and assign your attributes in whatever way best matches your class and qualities, and you're set.

THIS HERO IS...

1d20	RACE				
	1-11	12-15	16-17	18-19	20
CLASS	SHOU				
1d8	HUMAN	DWARF	HALFLING	BLOODED	ELF
1	Cleric	Fighter	Fighter	Cleric	Fighter
2	Cleric	Fighter	Fighter	Fighter	Fighter
3	Fighter	Fighter	Fighter	Fighter	Fighter
4	Fighter	Fighter	Fighter	Fighter	M-U
5	M-U	Fighter	Thief	M-U	M-U
6	M-U	Fighter	Thief	Thief	M-U
7	Thief	Thief	Thief	Thief	Thief
8	Thief	Thief	Thief	Thief	Thief

d100	CLERIC BGs	FIGHTER BGs	MAGIC-USER BGs	THIEF BGs	INNATE QUALITIES	RELATIONSHIPS
1-3	Abbot	Arms merchant	Academy student	Acrobat	Acute hearing	Aided a talented thief
4-6	Ascetic monk	Army officer	Academy teacher	Ascetic monk	An ear for lies	Associate to ninja clan
7-9	Charismatic prophet	Artilleryman	Alchemist	Assassin	Bursts of strength	Defender of a faith
10-12	Cloistered monk	Assassin	Apothecary	Bandit	Classically educated	Destroyer of a dark cult
13-15	Converted heretic	Bandit	Astrologer	Beggar	Compelling suasion	Friend to a bandit group
16-18	Crusader	Bodyguard	Bookseller	Bodyguard	Contempt for pain	Friend to a secret fence
19-21	Cult hunter	Bounty hunter	Charlatan	Bored noble	Easily overlooked	Friend to a secret society
22-24	Demon hunter	City tough	Court wizard	Bounty hunter	Eidetic memory	Friend to animals
25-27	Disinherited scion	City Watch	Cult hunter	Burglar	Emotionally controlled	Friend to Shou-blooded
29-30	Exiled noble	Duelist	Curio seller	Charlatan	Fleet-footed	Has a noble kinsman
31-33	Former charlatan	Escaped slave	Curse-lifter	City Watch	Hard to intoxicate	Has capable sibling
34-36	Former cultist	Fallen noble	Feng shui architect	Con man	Inured to harsh weather	Has far-flung family
37-39	Gifted cantor	Farmer	Former cultist	Dragoman	Iron determination	Has many ex-lovers
40-42	Guard leader	Forest hermit	Gifted burglar	Escaped slave	Keen vision	Has old military buddies
43-45	Heretic priest	Guardsmen	Gifted peasant	Fallen noble	Leader of men	Helped a foreign spy
46-48	Holy hermit	Hunter	Gutter mage	Gutter urchin	Light sleeper	Helped a skilled lawyer
49-51	Military chaplain	Military archer	Historian	Hired affection	Lightning reflexes	Knows a city magistrate
52-54	Military surgeon	Military scout	Lab freak	Hunter	Long-distance runner	Knows many harlots
55-57	Noble's chaplain	Monster slayer	Learned merchant	Information seller	Magnificent voice	Knows many thieves
58-60	Orthodox inquisitor	Peasant militia	Mage's slave	Investigator	Natural linguist	Knows noble servants
61-63	Peasant priest	Pirate	Market mage	Locksmith	Noble bearing	Knows ship captains
64-66	Physician	Robber	Military mage	Military scout	Passes for demihuman	Knows tong grandfather
67-69	Roving paladin	Sailor	Physician	Ninja clan	Precise hands	Member of a private club
70-72	Sage theologian	Sergeant	Ruin explorer	Peasant rebel	Skilled liar	Once a temple acolyte
73-75	Shrine slave	Slave gladiator	Rural witch	Pirate	Blends to any society	Once was a mercenary
76-78	Street missionary	Smith	Scholarly arcanist	Rebel leader	Strikingly attractive	Owed by many freed slaves
79-81	Temple archivist	Street thug	Scion of mages	Ruin explorer	Strong back	Reputation for valor
82-84	Temple artist	Temple knight	Scribe	Sailor	Superb balance	Saved a learned sage
85-87	Temple knight	Tong enforcer	Temple mage	Street "mage"	Swims like a fish	Saved a nobleman's child
88-90	Temple laborer	Wanderer	Tong sorcerer	Street ruffian	Terrifying mien	Secret agent for a merchant
91-93	Tong priest	Warrior monk	Village seer	Thief catcher	Tireless endurance	Spy for an official
94-96	Warrior monk	Weapon trainer	Wandering mage	Tong thug	Trustworthy face	Trusted by merchants
97-00	Worldly clerk	Wild man	Wise hermit	Wanderer	Vibrant health	Well-known to scholars

PLAYING THE GAME

The following eight pages cover the mechanics of performing the great majority of the daring deeds a classic sword-and-sorcery hero might be expected to contemplate. While the rules should cover most of the situations a hero might run into in the course of an adventure, a GM will inevitably need to make some spot calls.

Both players and GMs are advised to read over this section. A quick-reference sheet at the back of the chapter can be used in play.

THE FOUR MAIN MECHANICS

There are four major mechanics both players and GMs should understand before they start to play. Understanding these four mechanics gives a GM the tools to handle nine-tenths of all the things a hero might try to do during an adventure. Reading them closely is important, especially since some of these mechanics *look* like familiar old-school rules, but *act* very differently in play.

- **Checks** are rolled when a character is trying some feat of skill or personal prowess that might reasonably tax a hero. Checks are not rolled for ordinary actions or deeds well within the scope of a hero's traits and background. To roll a check, the hero rolls 2d8, adds their highest relevant trait and adds their relevant attribute modifier. If the total is equal or higher than the check's difficulty, it's a success. A natural roll of 2 is always a failure, and 16 is always a success, if success is at all possible.
- **Saving throws** are rolled to resist foul sorcery, evade random misfortune, and withstand other hazards. Saving throws are rolled exactly the same way checks are, except that the hero also adds their character level to their roll. The difficulty to beat is always 9 plus the hit dice or level of the creature forcing the saving throw, or the level of natural hazard or trap they are trying to overcome.
- **Attack rolls** determine whether or not a hero hits a target in combat. To make an attack roll, the hero rolls 1d20 and adds their attack bonus, relevant attribute modifier, and their target's armor class. If the total is 20 or more, the attack hits. Natural rolls of 1 always miss, and rolls of 20 always hit.
- **Damage rolls** work very differently than in most old-school games. When you roll damage from a weapon or spell, you count each die separately. Each die that comes up a 1 does no damage, 2-5 does one point, 6-9 does two points, and 10+ does four points of damage. Thus, a roll of 4d6 damage dice ends up doing from 0 to 8 points of damage, and a roll of 3d12 might do anything from 0 to 12 points. Damage done to heroes is subtracted from their hit points. Damage done to anyone else is done to their *hit dice*.

These are the basic four mechanics of *Scarlet Heroes*. While no rule is sacred in an RPG, it's advised that you run the game for a few sessions with these rules before you decide to make any adjustments.

USING THESE RULES IN PLAY

The quick-reference sheet at the back of the chapter covers all the critical points in the chapter on a single page. For most games, it should be all the GM or player needs to consult during play.

Other times, the GM might need to look up something more esoteric or make a ruling on some case that isn't covered by the rules. A GM shouldn't spend more than a minute or so looking for the rule or coming up with some spot decision. The important thing is to keep the game going, and a tolerable decision right now is better than a book-perfect decision after five minutes of study.

Some of these decisions may seem to cut against the hero, but any real discussion should be saved for the end of the session. Over the course of a campaign the GM is likely to make as many decisions that tilt in favor of the hero as ones that make it harder for them, and it's not worth rules-lawyering every one of them. Just let it ride; it'll all even out over time.

Some GMs might feel tempted to adjust die rolls and check results to "make a better story", or deliver suitably karmic results, or spare the fun of the player. For some players and some games, this is completely correct. Particularly if you're playing a long-running story about a particular hero, it may not make any sense to let them be felled by a chance misfortune or dragged down by a mob of petty foes.

Still, GMs are encouraged to resist this impulse unless it's an agreed part of the campaign. Half the fun of running a sandbox game is the pleasure of surprise. Even the GM can't be entirely sure how things will turn out. If you nudge the dice every time something unexpected happens, you'll rob yourself of a lot of your own fun. Aside from that, what kind of heroic tale is it if the valiant protagonist is never forced to come back from some crushing defeat?

GROGNARDS, READ THIS NOTE

Those readers who have a great deal of experience with other old-school games may be tempted to skim this chapter, trusting that they already know how most of these systems work. That would be an unfortunate mistake.

There are some very basic differences between the way *Scarlet Heroes* works and the way that most other old-school games operate. The statistics and rolls and numbers may *look* the same, but the way they are *used* is very different.

In particular, pay close attention to the combat section of this chapter and take note of the way in which damage dice are rolled. Damage dice in *Scarlet Heroes* may look the same as in other old-school games, but the way in which they are read is completely different. If you try to read the dice as if you were playing a more familiar game, the results will not be pretty for an aspiring hero.

CHECKS

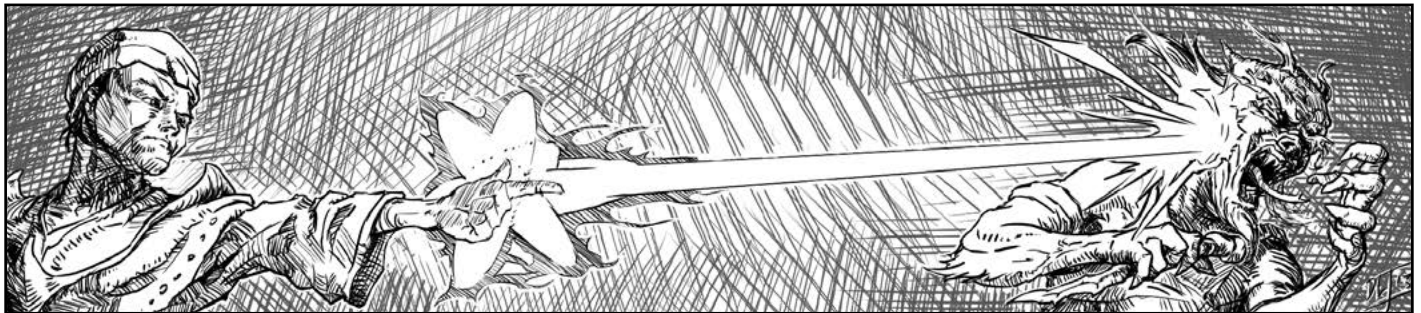
Heroes are capable of any of the ordinary feats and exertions to be expected of an intrepid adventurer, but there are times when the outcome is not so clear. Any hero worthy of the name can cross a slippery log or ride a horse, but can they leap a flaming chasm or force a plow horse into the thick of a screaming melee? When the outcome is uncertain, a GM can call for a *check*.

To make a check, the player rolls 2d8 and adds their most relevant attribute modifier and their most relevant trait. If multiple traits apply to the situation, apply only the highest of the traits.

If the total is equal or higher than the difficulty of the check, the hero succeeds. If it's lower, then something goes wrong. Heroes rarely outright fail in their efforts, but they often suffer new complications or strokes of bad luck. A roll of 2 on the dice is always a failure and a roll of 16 is always a success, assuming success is possible.

OPPOSING CHECKS

Sometimes two opponents are trying to accomplish mutually contradictory ends, such as a thief trying to sneak past a guard as the guard tries to notice any intruders. In such cases both characters make a check with the usual modifiers and the higher one wins. Ties are rerolled if necessary. NPCs may add their skill bonus to a check if it seems applicable and a skill bonus is given. In other cases, assume they have no attribute or trait modifiers.



SAVING THROWS

Saving throws are a particular type of check usually used to avert disaster or throw off malign effects. Not every misfortune allows a saving throw, but poisons, evil spells, traps, and other such sudden hazards often allow for a victim to avoid or lessen their effects.

Other saving throws reflect some test of a character's professional prowess against an opponent or challenging obstacle. Resisting the dark sorceries of a Tien Lungan blood sorcerer, for example, might owe as much to a hero's experience with these foul magics as to their own native reserve of willpower and luck.

Saving throws always use the character's full level; a multiclassed fighter-thief doesn't use just a few of his levels when resisting an effect, for example. A great hero who dabbles in sorcery may not have a wide variety of enchantments, but their natural prowess and experience ensure that their magic is more effective than that of an otherwise equally-trained novice.

To make a saving throw, a subject makes a check with 2d8 and adds their most relevant attribute, their highest relevant trait if any apply, and their character level or hit dice. If the total equals or exceeds the difficulty of the saving throw, then the attempt is a success. A natural 2 on the dice is always a failure and a natural 16 is always a success. Most monsters are assumed to have no attribute modifier.

CHECK DIFFICULTIES

-
- 9 **Simple.** A tricky feat for an unskilled hero, but no serious challenge for an experienced veteran. If a task is easier than this, it's probably not worth rolling.
 - 11 **Average.** A significant test of a hero's prowess. Even a trained hero might fail at a task like this now and again without impugning their skill.
 - 13 **Hard.** Only a hero with substantial expertise in this field can expect to succeed, though the less talented might get lucky.
 - 15 **Extreme.** Experts would marvel at the skill of the hero who executes such a feat.
 - 17 **Heroic.** The feat is theoretically possible, and this difficulty is more entertaining than simply forbidding the attempt.
-

OVERUSING CHECKS

Checks aren't meant to be constantly used in a game. If a character has a three point trait of "Grizzled Fisherman", then they should be superb at sailing, and the GM shouldn't bother to ask for most sailing-related checks. The GM might just allow automatic success with any Simple checks for which the character has some relevant trait. The characters of *Scarlet Heroes* are *heroes*, and while they may fail, it's usually because of mischance or the sudden appearance of fresh troubles rather than a lack of skill on their part.

The difficulty of a saving throw is 9 plus the hit dice or character level of the creature causing the throw. If it is a trap, poison, or some other non-sentient challenge, the difficulty is 9 plus the relative danger involved, from 1 for a weak and dried-out poisoned needle to 10 for a hideous death-curse laid by an ancient sorcerer.

For example, a 3 HD giant cobra bites a hero, injecting a lethal poison. The hero is 2nd level, with a Constitution modifier of +1 and no relevant traits. He rolls 2d8 and adds his modifier and his level. He needs to equal or beat a total of 12, 9 plus the cobra's hit dice.

Alternately, a 4th level magic-user hero casts a flaming bolt at a 3 HD Shou witch-priestess. The wizard has the two-point trait of "Adept of Flames", so the GM decides that this increases the puissance of the spell. The GM also decides that witch-priestess' monster skill bonus of +1 is applicable to fighting off hostile magic, so she must roll 2d8 +3 +1 to equal or exceed the difficulty of 15 set by the hero's ability.

The attribute used for the saving throw will depend on the particular situation. Throwing off a poison or disease is usually Constitution, dodging a physical hazard is normally Dexterity, and resisting magical spells that fit no other category is usually Wisdom. The GM should also be careful about allowing traits to modify saving throws and difficulties and reserve them for extremely apposite situations.

COMBAT

Heroes being who they are, it's extremely likely that they are going to end up locked in mortal combat. Even a novice hero is capable of taking down triple her weight in thugs and ruffians, and far-famed legends can harvest half an army before they're chopped down by the frenzied horde.

INITIATIVE AND THE COMBAT ROUND

When the blades come out or precise timing is critical, the game moves to *combat rounds*. Each combat round lasts about six seconds, enough for an exchange of blows, some repositioning, or possibly some other action. Each round, every participant may act once.

PC heroes always go first if they haven't been surprised or ambushed. Others roll 1d8 and add their Dexterity modifiers if they have any, acting in order from highest to lowest, assuming it makes a difference to the GM. Once everyone has acted, a new round begins and the sequence repeats. On a successful ambush, the attackers get a free round in which only they can act. Once that surprise round is finished, a new round starts with participants acting in normal order.

ACTIONS IN A ROUND

During their turn in a combat round, a hero can perform one action and also move up to 30 feet. This action could be making an attack, casting a spell, barring a door, climbing a wall, or anything else they could conceivably perform in six seconds. If a hero forgoes their action for the round they may move an additional 30 feet.

MORALE

Foes faced with a red-handed hero might flee rather than stand and fight. When confronted with the death of their comrades or some other terror, they must make a Morale check or flee, withdraw, or surrender. Details on Morale checks and the events that can force them are given in the Bestiary chapter.

MAKING AN ATTACK

To attack an enemy, the assailant rolls 1d20 and adds their class attack bonus, their relevant attribute modifier, and the enemy's armor class. If the total is 20 or more, the attack hits. A natural roll of 20 always hits and a natural roll of 1 always misses.

For most melee combat the relevant attribute is Strength, while thrown and other missile combat uses Dexterity. Weapons classified as "light" or "small" may use the better of the two, as may other weapons that are more reliant on speed and precision than raw force.

Special situations may apply bonuses or penalties to an attack. A thief unencumbered by heavy armor who ambushes an unsuspecting target gains a +4 bonus to hit, for example, while other classes might get +2 for a surprise attack. Shooting a bow at long range applies a -2 penalty to hit, while fighting with a spear in a closet might earn the warrior a -4 penalty for the awkwardness. It's up to the GM to decide when special circumstances might apply, but the total modifier shouldn't be more than four points either way.

A NOTE ON HIT DICE

Unlike in other old-school games, monster hit dice are not rolled for hit points. Damage is done *directly to a monster's hit dice*. If an adventure's text says a monster has 4 hit dice, ignore the hit point total- that beast can take 4 points of damage before it dies.

ROLLING DAMAGE

If an attack hits, the assailant then rolls the damage dice for their claws, teeth, weapon, or other implement. Bare-handed human assailants roll 1d2 for damage on a hit. Add the relevant attribute modifier to this total. Bonuses apply only to only *one* damage die of the attacker's choice, even if multiple dice are rolled.

For each die that comes up 1, no damage is done. For each die that rolls from 2 to 5, one point of damage is done. For each die that rolls 6 to 9, two points of damage are done, and for each result of 10+ four points of damage are inflicted. This counting method applies whenever damage is done, whether from spell, trap, misfortune or blade. Count each damage die individually; a 3d6 attack is three dice from 1 to 6, not one roll of 3 to 18.

DIE ROLL	DAMAGE
1	None
2-5	1 point
6-9	2 points
10+	4 points

Subtract these points of damage from the hit points of heroes or the hit dice of other creatures. If hit points or hit dice are reduced to zero the target is either dead, unconscious, or defeated depending on the type of attack and the circumstances. If a hero is engaged against a group of creatures any "overflow" damage from an attack beyond that necessary to down a foe can be delivered to another enemy within reach, provided the same attack roll could have hit them too.

Thieves have the special ability to inflict triple damage with their first hit against an unsuspecting enemy, including any damage done by their Fray die. Enemies in a combat situation or expecting battle are usually too alert to be struck this way. Ambush damage in excess of what is necessary to kill a foe cannot be spread over other enemies. This special ability applies to any hero who has at least one level of the thief class and is wearing armor no heavier than leather.

THE FRAY DIE

Every hero has a Fray die, and only heroes have them. A Fray die represents their lesser blows, passing strokes and incidental sorceries.. Every round they are engaged with an enemy of equal or fewer hit dice than they have character levels, they can roll the Fray die to do damage at any time during their action. No modifiers apply to a Fray die- just the lone die is rolled.

Thus, if a 1st level fighter was cornered in an alleyway by three 1 HD thugs and their 2 HD gang boss, he could roll his 1d8 Fray die in addition to his normal attack. He would read damage from the die as normal and could apply it to any of the 1 HD thugs, perhaps killing two if he rolls well. The 2 HD leader is too strong to affect.

Magic-users are special in that their Fray die applies to any enemy regardless of hit dice. Thus, they can always roll their 1d4 Fray die even if the target has more hit dice than they have character levels. They can even use the die when armored or out of spells.

Heroes can roll their Fray die even when they use their action to do other things, representing the casual strokes and incidental bolts they unleash as they concern themselves with some other task. Targets must be somehow within range of the character's wrath. For most characters, this means melee distance, though those with ranged weapons on their person can strike out to the weapon's maximum range, and sorcerous Fray bolts reach up to 60 feet away.



DEFYING DEATH

Sometimes a hero is left to face inexorable doom. Rather than succumb to the lethal poison of the centipede woman or fall prey to the psychic domination of the blood sorcerers of Tien Lung, a hero may Defy Death. A hero can Defy Death any time they wish to avoid the consequences of a failed saving throw or escape a situation of otherwise certain catastrophe. They may also Defy Death to overcome some insufficiency of skill.

For example, the adventure the GM is running might say that only a magic-user can decipher the glyphs that will restore the bindings of the Demon-Prince of the Iron City, while the hero is a decidedly unscholarly warrior. Assuming the hero can't come up with some other clever way to bypass the problem, the GM may allow the hero to Defy Death in order to win through by luck.

To Defy Death, the hero rolls a number of 1d4 damage dice equal to their character level, calculating the damage normally for *Scarlet Heroes*—no points on a 1 and one point on a result of 2-4. The damage done is applied to their hit points. If the character is reduced to zero hit points then they are left with one hit point and the attempt to Defy Death fails.

If they are able to endure the tax on their luck, they automatically resist the effects of whatever spell, poison, calamity, or trap obliged them to make the roll. If they are Defying Death to escape a fatal situation then some opportunity opens up for their successful flight.

If the hero is trying to bypass some obstacle or overcome some otherwise unbeatable hindrance to their plans, then the GM decides how circumstances conspire to let the hero succeed. These circumstances may not always be entirely unmixed good fortune, but they will at least solve the immediate problem.

Every time the hero Defies Death it gets more difficult. The second time a hero Defies Death in an adventure they roll 1d6s instead of 1d4s. Then 1d8s, then 1d10s, up to a maximum of 1d12s for each die if they continue to push their luck. This penalty keeps incrementing until they either succeed in their goal or admit defeat and try some other adventure.

Only heroes can Defy Death. Other beings are shackled to the bitter limits of their destinies and must abide by the remorseless decrees of an uncaring fate.

INJURY, DEATH, HEALING, AND HAZARDS

If a creature runs out of hit points or hit dice they are either dead or defeated. In a battle of blades and crackling sorcery any casualties are probably dead or mortally wounded, but fisticuffs, blunt weapons or wrestling might leave a victim merely unconscious, stunned, or helplessly pinned. Such victims revive a few minutes later with 1 hit point or hit die.

By the usual rules, if a hero runs out of hit points they suffer the same grim fate as lesser men and women. Still, some GMs and players prefer to run campaigns where the player continues to play their hero until they're finished with them, and random mortality is unwelcome in their games. In these cases, a hero who hits zero hit points suffers defeat instead of death. While they may be left for dead, hurled into an "inescapable" prison or forcibly enlisted in an evil tyrant's schemes they retain their lives. Whatever they were trying to accomplish at the time of their fall is almost invariably lost, however.

Every hero can take a few minutes after battle or another injury to bandage their wounds and catch their breath. At these times the hero can heal up to 2 hit points of damage inflicted in their most recent fray or misadventure. This healing can't mend older wounds, damage inflicted by Defying Death or other taxes on their luck and vitality.

A hero who gets a full night's rest with adequate food will regain a number of hit points equal to their level. If the hero is in a safe, comfortable place and is aided by a physician or their own relevant medical traits they may heal double this amount by spending a full day recuperating. Depending on the hero, this healing benefit may also be gained by spending the day in riotous debauchery and wildly excessive drinking. Monsters and other characters normally heal one hit die per day of rest, when it matters to the adventure.

Heroes with less leisure for recuperation may be mended by magical spells of healing or vitalizing elixirs. These spells and potions heal as if they were "reversed" damage dice; a potion that heals 1d6+1 will heal one point on a result of 2-5, and two points on a result of 6 or more. One that heals 2d6+2 would roll two dice for the healing and add the bonus of +2 to one of them, for 1-4 total healing.

TURNING UNDEAD

Heroes blessed with the power of a cleric have the ability to *Turn Undead*, smiting restless spirits and animated corpses and forcing them to return to the natural cycle of life and death. A cleric can Turn Undead as often as once every five minutes.

A cleric attempting to Turn Undead may use their action to target any and all undead within 30 feet of the priest. The cleric rolls a 1d8 Fray die for each cleric level he has, dividing up the damage as they wish among any valid targets in the area. A cleric uses his full character level to determine what undead foes these Fray dice can harm.

Clerics who serve the infernal powers or other dark gods may command these accursed spirits rather than destroying them. Their Turning attempts do no damage; instead, undead that would otherwise be destroyed by a dark priest's Turning are enslaved and forced to obey their new master until they are destroyed or freed. A dark cleric can bind no more hit dice worth of undead than thrice their total levels or hit dice.

No cleric can both turn and command undead. PC heroes are assumed to turn undead unless decided otherwise when created.

Along with blades, beasts, and blood sorcerers a hero often encounters other hazards. The ones listed below are merely among the most common to the adventuring trade.

FALLING

A hero who pitches over a precipice suffers a 1d6 damage die for each ten feet fallen, with a Dexterity saving throw to halve the damage if there's any means for the hero to slow their fall. The saving throw's difficulty is 9 plus the number of dice of damage facing the hero.

POISONS

Unless specified otherwise, poison is lethal to those victims who fail their saving throw. A hero who falls prey to some foul venom may Defy Death to shake it off and escape this grim fate.

DISEASES

When exposed to a suitably contagious source of disease the hero must make a Constitution saving throw to resist infection. The difficulty equals 9 plus the general virulence of the disease, ranging from 1 for sicknesses with minimal contagion to 10 for some sorcerous plague meant to scythe across the land.

If infected, the negative effects of the disease usually show up within a day or two. Further Constitution saving throws can be made to throw off the sickness at appropriate intervals, but the more saves that are failed, the worse the disease grows.

Some sicknesses are never more than irritations that inflict penalties on checks, but others can lower the hero's maximum hit points until they are cured, or outright kill a victim who fails too many saves.

CURSES

Rooting around in ancient ruins and dueling the schemes of foul wizards are activities that are highly conducive to being cursed. Heroes afflicted by a curse suffer the consequences of the blight until they are able to find a priest or wizard able to lift the malison with an appropriate spell. Other curses might be lifted by particular quests or purification at some remote and perilous pilgrimage site.



TRAVEL AND ENCUMBRANCE

Much of the Sunset Isles remains untamed wilderness, and even travel between the major cities can be a test of courage and patience. The rules below can be used in conjunction with the map in the Setting chapter to plot out a hero's progress.

An unencumbered traveler can cover 3 miles per hour on flat land, while encumbered characters move at half that rate. Most healthy adventurers can get in ten hours of travel a day including time for cooking, the occasional rest break, and making camp.

Travelers can perform a forced march, picking up their pace and driving themselves without rest or halt. Their movement rate doubles for ten hours, but at the end of that all marchers must make a saving throw at a difficulty of 8 plus the number of days they've been forced-marching. Failure means that they are exhausted, can no longer forced march, and suffer a -2 penalty to all hit rolls and checks until they get a full day of rest.

Horses do not thrive in the Isles, but enough of them are bred to supply the wealthier and more successful adventurers. Horses can't better the ground-eating strides of a walking man over long distances, but riders value them for the short bursts of speed so valuable in avoiding dangers and for their strong backs as pack animals.

Mounts do not increase a traveler's movement rate but they allow him to carry more equipment and outrace enemies over short distances. Mounted heroes can usually evade wilderness encounters at will, provided they can avoid ambushes and equally-swift foes.

SHIPS AND SEA COMBAT

The Sunset Isles are an archipelago, and it is not uncommon for heroes to take ship for farther shores. The guidelines here cover means of managing such perilous journeys.

SHIP COMBAT

Ship combat works much like normal combat. Each ship's captain rolls initiative as normal, with PC captains always acting first. Movement and positioning are abstracted, so closing to board or fleeing a foe are matters of checks rather than movement rates.

A captain who wishes to board or ram an enemy ship must beat an opposed trait check against the target ship's captain, modified by the ship's Agility. Once a ship has been boarded the fight plays out each round until one ship's crew is defeated. Neither ship can do anything but fight each other while a boarding action is underway. When large crews are involved it can be most convenient to just group them into units of 5 or 10 like combatants and roll as if they were individuals.

Ships can fire their ballistas and catapults at any one target per turn. Ships are effectively AC 8. Shipboard archers can fire on enemy crew if their captain wins an opposed check.

Captains can flee combat by using an action to retreat and succeeding on an opposed check against their rivals. On a clear day, three such successful attempts are needed to flee. Reduce this number by one for nighttime flight, and one more for fog or rain.

TERRAIN SPEED MODIFIERS

TERRAIN	MODIFIER
Good Road	+50%
Plains / Desert	No Modifier
Light Forest / Hills	-25%
Heavy Forest / Jungle	-50%
Swamps	-50%
Mountains	-90%

ENCUMBRANCE

Scarlet Heroes is not the kind of game that pays close attention to encumbrance. Only a rough idea of carried weight is necessary in most cases, and the GM can simply estimate most gear.

A character can carry up to 60 pounds of weight without being encumbered. Characters can add or subtract an additional twenty pounds to that for every point of Strength modifier, and those with traits related to bearing burdens can add another twenty pounds for each point of their highest relevant trait.

Beyond this the character becomes encumbered and moves at only half rate, also suffering a +2 difficulty increase to any checks or saving throws involving nimbleness or agility. The absolute maximum a character can carry without being reduced to a crawl is usually up to the GM, but is usually about ten pounds per point of Strength.

SHIP STATISTICS

Ship hit points can only be harmed by ship weapons, ramming, explosive spells, and other large injuries. Speed gives the ship's rate of travel in miles per hour under normal winds. Agility modifies all checks made by the ship's captain, and Crew indicates the minimum and maximum normal crew. Cargo is measured in tons. The Weapons entry gives the maximum number of ship weapons that can be mounted, and Cost is the price of the ship in a port city.

SHIP WEAPONS

Ballistas roll 1d10 for ship damage, can fire once every two rounds, and cost 500 gp. Catapults roll 3d6 for ship damage, inflict the same amount divided among the crew, can fire once every three rounds and cost 500 gp. Rams inflict one-third the ship's maximum hit points on a hit, but also inflict a 1d8 damage die on the ramming ship. Adding a ram to a capable ship costs one-tenth the ship's price.

COMMON SHIPS OF THE SUNSET ISLES

SHIP	HP	SPEED	AGILITY	CREW	CARGO	WEAPONS	COST
River Barge	5	4 mph	-2	1/6	2 tons	None	4,000 gp
Fishing Boat	6	7 mph	+1	2/10	2 tons	None	5,000 gp
Junk, Small	20	10 mph	+1	12/50	20 tons	1	15,000 gp
Junk, Large	30	8 mph	0	70/400	50 tons	2 + Ram	30,000 gp
Junk, War	40	9 mph	-1	70/600	40 tons	4 + Ram	50,000 gp
Eshkanti Xebec	20	8 mph	+1	12/40	25 tons	2	20,000 gp
Skandr Longship	25	9 mph	+1	12/100	8 tons	2	15,000 gp
Elf-Rigged Clipper	30	17 mph	0	30/400	50 tons	3	60,000 gp

ADVANCEMENT

A hero's advancement toward the next level of ability is measured in *experience points*. Heroes usually receive one experience point after every session of gaming, assuming they at least tried to accomplish some suitably heroic feat. Even rank failure will teach a hero something- even if it's just that they need to be better prepared. The GM may choose to award additional experience points for other achievements, depending on the type of campaign they're running.

When a hero accumulates a sufficient number of experience points they will advance a level. The number of points required for each successive level increases, with the first levels coming quickly and later advancement requiring a greater collection of accomplishments. GMs may choose to tweak this progression to fit the pace they desire for their campaign.

Most heroes will choose to advance in their original class, but they can also "multiclass" into a different class if the GM finds it plausible that they have picked up those talents in the course of their adventures. Class levels are tracked separately, so a 7th level character might actually be a 5th level fighter and 2nd level magic-user, for example. The character is still treated as 7th level for purposes such as experience advancement, saving throws, using Fray dice, and other details based on their character level.

EXPERIENCE NEEDED FOR ADVANCEMENT

LEVEL	XP NEEDED
1	0
2	2
3	5
4	9
5	14
6	20
7	27
8	35
9	44
10	54
11+	+11 each level



EFFECTS OF GAINING A LEVEL

Advancing a level has different effects depending on the class chosen. The character always gains a sum of additional hit points based on their class, modified by their Constitution modifier. Even with a severe Constitution penalty a character always gains at least 1 hit point when advancing a level.

- **Fighters** add an additional point to their attack bonus and add 4 hit points to their maximum.
- **Clerics** add half a point to their attack bonus and 3 hit points to their maximum. They also record their new limits on spell preparation. Only cleric levels count for purposes of spells that can be cast or prepared; a 3rd level thief/2nd level cleric prepares spells as a 2nd level cleric, not a 5th level one. A caster's full level applies for determining saving throw difficulties and spell effects, however. For instance, resisting that same hero's clerical spells would require a saving throw against difficulty 14, nine plus their full level.
- **Thieves** add half a point to their attack bonus and 2 hit points to their maximum. They also gain a bonus trait point which they may either apply to their thief archetype trait or to another aptitude appropriate to their deeds. A thief's archetype trait can exceed the usual trait cap of three points, so it's quite possible for an experienced thief to build a truly huge trait score. Such talent would give them near-supernatural abilities in their field of focus, but if they spend their bonus point in a different trait it cannot normally exceed the three-point cap on individual traits. A character multiclassing into their first level of the thief class doesn't get a 1st level thief's initial 3 point trait bonus, but they do get the ambush attack ability and the free point added to their archetype.
- **Magic-users** add one-third of a point to their attack bonus and 2 hit points to their maximum. They may also add one spell to their spellbook from any spell level they are able to cast, representing their private research and studies. A character multiclassing into their first level of magic-user can piece together a spellbook with a single first level spell of their choice in it. Multiclassed magic-users are treated in the same way as clerics when it comes to preparing and casting spells; they use only their magic-user levels for learning and preparing spells, but they use their full level for determining spell effects and saving throw difficulties.

Advancement might leave your character with a fractional attack bonus. In such cases, round it to the nearest whole number before adding it to your hit roll.

A character also gains one additional trait point with each level, selecting it to memorialize some great deed or narrow escape the hero accomplished. The hero who cleanses a massacred borderland village of its unquiet dead might earn a point in the "Beloved in the Westmarch" to represent the gratitude of others in the province, while one who butchers a priest of the Hell Kings before his own red altar might get a point in "Demon Bane", adding to his saving throws against demonic powers and aiding in checks to oppose them.

This point might improve an existing trait up to the usual maximum of three points. The GM has the final call on whether or not a proposed trait played enough of a role in the character's deeds to justify the gain.



MULTICLASED CHARACTERS

As a general rule, multiclassed characters can use any ability of any of their classes so long as they abide by the restrictions of that class. Cleric spells can be cast in full armor, for example, but magic-user spells don't function when the caster is armored, whether or not they also have levels of the fighter class. The following are a few specific notes most likely to be important.

- Magic-user spells cannot be cast while wearing armor. They may use their Fray die's magical bursts and bolts even while armored, however, as these charms are simple enough to cast even through the interference of mundane harness.
- A thief's archetypal trait or ambush attack and damage bonuses cannot be used while wearing armor heavier than leather. This limit may be suspended for exertions that have nothing to do with careful movement, such as an intrepid adventuring scholar's ability to read ancient texts.
- Characters use the best weapon allowances of any of their classes. Thus, a magic-user who took a level of fighter could now use weapons at their full normal damage dice instead of being limited to 1d4.
- Characters use the Fray die of any of their classes, but they can only use one class' Fray die in any given round. A heroic fighter/magic-user can either use the fighter's 1d8 Fray die or the magic-user's 1d4 Fray die that affects any enemy- he can't mix them to use a 1d8 die that scourges any foe.

When there is some other ambiguity that comes from a multiclassed character the GM should simply make a decision on the spot. Lengthier consideration can be saved for after the game session.

LEGENDARY HEROES

The rules in *Scarlet Heroes* extend up to the 10th level, as few campaigns extend beyond that range. Still, it's not impossible to extend a hero's career beyond 10th level if you decide to carry on a campaign.

When characters advance beyond 10th level, they gain all the expected benefits of their class with the exception of additional hit points. Fighters and other strictly martial classes gain 2 hit points per level after 10th, while magic-users, clerics, and thieves gain 1 hit point. These gains are not adjusted by Constitution modifiers.

Spellcasters continue their spell progressions in the same pattern, gaining 6th level spells at 11th level, 7th level spells at 13th level, and so forth. While the spells included in this book only go up to fifth level, it's trivially easy to pull spells from other old-school games to fill out the possibilities beyond- assuming that a wizard of such might isn't compelled to devise his own sorceries to express his new degree of eldritch power.

Beyond 10th level, heroes start to bend the normal limits of mortal prowess. They need no longer abide by the three-point maximum on their traits, as their legendary might begins to surpass what ordinary humans can accomplish with their skills. The points they gain from advancement may be spent on any appropriate trait, even those that are already at a three-point level.

Heroes may come to gain other special powers after 10th level, if the GM finds it proper to give them these special abilities. These unique powers usually have a close relationship to their past heroics.

CONVERTING EXISTING MATERIAL

One of the purposes of *Scarlet Heroes* is to allow GMs to easily assimilate material originally intended for use with other games. Almost any game that uses the traditional concepts of hit dice, classes, hit rolls on 1d20 and attacks that inflict damage against hit points can be played with the *Scarlet Heroes* ruleset.

If you have an existing old-school module to hand, just run it using the *Scarlet Heroes* interpretations of damage dice, combat, and saving throws. When the module says that a monster's attack does 1d10, just roll the 1d10 and read it like a normal damage die. If the module gives both hit dice and hit points for a monster, ignore the hit point total and just use its hit dice. If the adventure says that a particular monster's sorceries inflict a -2 penalty on a target's saving throws, just apply that penalty to the *Scarlet Heroes* saving throw.

If an effect causes a flat amount of damage or healing, apply one point for every 4 full points in the original effect. Thus, if the adventure text says that the brazen statue vomits flame for 10 points of fire damage on any heathens who approach it, inflict 2 hit points of damage on a hero who gets too close, or 2 hit dice of injury on a foe lured in range.

In cases where the module hands out certain doom to an unlucky character, such as an inescapable death curse or a headlong plunge into a green devil face, use the Defy Death rules to give the hero a chance. In the same way, if the module requires that the hero have a particular set of skills that they don't possess, Defy Death can be used to provide a stroke of luck or handy NPC to get them past the obstacle, assuming they can't come up with their own clever ideas.

Many old-school games throw mobs of monsters at an adventurer, trusting that there will be five or six adventurers to handle the onslaught and spread out the damage. The way that *Scarlet Heroes* adjusts the damage to monsters and heroes makes these mobs much more survivable for a lone hero than they would be under standard assumptions, and the Fray die guarantees they're going to be automatically chopping down minor foes every round or two. Still, even an experienced hero can get mauled if they're mobbed by an entire tribe of orcs at once, or engaged by a dozen ogres when they've forgotten their armor at the tavern.

As a general rule, you shouldn't feel obligated to change these numbers. Just make sure that the hero is allowed to run for their life if they find discretion the better part of valor, with Defy Death allowing escape from even seemingly hopeless snares. There are plenty of foes a hero can take in most adventures, and it's not your job to make sure they can slaughter every enemy they encounter. Even Conan did his fair share of running away. Your heroes should heed his example.

Treasure and magic items can generally be left as described in the adventure, with arcane artifacts interpreted using the *Scarlet Heroes* systems for damage and saving throws. Magical troves meant to provide goodies to an entire party might be trimmed back a bit.

Additional spells for clerics and magic-users can be imported with few or no changes. If you're running in a more traditional setting than the included *Red Tide* capsule setting, you might choose to lift the spell list of another game wholesale, allowing clerics and magic-users to pick from those selections rather than the ones given in this book. Optionally, their choices might include spells from both lists, or leave one list to be acquired in the troves of lost lore they liberate from their deceased enemies.



CONVERTING TO OTHER SYSTEMS

It may be that the GM wants to use some of the material out of this book with a different old-school game. In such cases it can be lifted with few real changes. Traits are dropped, classes get a hit die equal to their starting hit points, and saving throws are taken from the target game's tables for the closest approximate class. A character's base roll to hit armor class zero equals twenty minus their attack bonus, rounded to the nearest whole number, while for those games that use ascending armor classes the attack bonus can be rounded and used just as it is.

Spellcasting and magic items should move over with no significant changes, though healing spells may require a slight tweak of their amount cured to match conventional hit point scaling. Unique cleric spells can be added into the common spell lists of the appropriate local gods, and new magic-user spells can turn up on scrolls or in the plundering of defeated wizards.

PLAYING WITH MULTIPLE PLAYERS

Scarlet Heroes is meant to be played with just one player character, but it's possible to enlist one or even two more PCs without seriously taxing the math. The addition of one more PC doesn't modify play much. A GM should be able to take them through a standard-issue module without it being too easy to be interesting; they'll just do significantly less running away from enemies.

If a third PC is added the GM may wish to increase enemy numbers by half to ensure a good fight. Four or more PCs isn't really recommended unless the GM intends to put them through a real meatgrinder of an adventure. Such a group is likely hacking down 4-8 mooks every round with Fray dice alone and their swords are enough to drop a hill giant in two rounds.

Still, even this abundance of heroism can be challenged if the GM dishes up enough perils both monstrous and circumstantial. The problems such heroes face are often the sort that cannot be fought with a sharp sword, and canny wits and keen diplomacy may be more useful than a pile of Fray dice.

SCARLET HEROES QUICK REFERENCE

CHECKS

To find out if your character can accomplish some daring feat, roll 2d8 and add your most relevant attribute's modifier and the highest of your relevant traits. If the final total is equal or greater to the difficulty of the check, you succeed. A natural roll of 2 always fails, and a natural roll of 16 always succeeds if such is even possible.

SAVING THROWS

To resist some foul curse, throw off a poison's effects, or dodge some other impending danger, make a check as above and add your character's level to it. Add your Constitution modifier to checks that test your physical stamina, Dexterity to checks that try your agility, and Wisdom to checks involving other, less tangible sorts of magic. At the GM's discretion some traits may also apply. If you equal or beat a difficulty of 9 plus the danger's level or caster's hit dice, you resist or minimize the effect, depending on the particular peril.

COMBAT AND DAMAGE

Heroes always act first in combat. Everyone else rolls 1d8 and adds their Dexterity modifier, acting in order of highest to lowest before starting over with the next round. A single round of actions takes about six seconds. When it's your turn, you may move up to 30 feet and take one action. An action could be an attack, casting a spell, climbing a barrier, or doing anything else that could be accomplished in six seconds. If you forgo this action you can move another 30 feet.

To attack someone, roll 1d20 and add your relevant attribute modifier, your target's Armor Class, and your attack bonus. If your attack bonus is fractional, round to the nearest whole number. The relevant attribute is usually either Strength or Dexterity, depending on whether the weapon is a melee or ranged weapon. If the total is 20 or more, you hit. A natural 1 always misses and a natural 20 always hits. Traits never add to combat or damage rolls.

If you hit, roll the damage dice for your weapon, adding your relevant attribute to the die. If you're rolling multiple dice, add any damage bonuses to only *one* die of your choice. For each die that comes up 1, you do no damage. For each die that returns 2-5, you do one point, each of 6-9 does two points, and each of 10+ does four points.

If the attack hits a hero, subtract the damage from their hit points. If the attack hits someone else, subtract the damage from their hit dice. Creatures reduced to zero hit points or hit dice are defeated, mortally wounded, or dead. If a blow does more damage to a target than is necessary to kill it, you may assign the rest of the damage to any other valid target in range with equal or worse Armor Class.

After a fight, you can pause for five minutes to bandage your wounds and rest, restoring up to 2 hit points of damage you lost in the fray.

THE FRAY DIE

Each round you're in combat you can roll your Fray die to harm a single enemy within reach of your weapons, provided they don't have more hit dice than you have character levels. You may do this even if you don't use your action to attack, as the Fray die represents the blows you deliver casually in passing. Roll the die and read its damage as given above in the Combat section. Apply this to any valid target in range, with excess damage overflowing to another valid target. You

may apply your Fray die at any point during your turn, before or after you act or move. The bolts and blights of a magic-user's Fray die can harm any foe, even one with more hit dice than the hero has levels.

CASTING SPELLS

To cast a spell in combat the caster must declare their intention at the start of the round. If they are hurt or jostled before their turn comes up, the spell is lost. If the situation changes such as to make a spell undesirable by the time their turn comes up, they can use their action to relax their will and abort the spell without losing it from memory.

The difficulty for a saving throw against a spell is equal to 9 plus the caster's hit dice or character level, plus the highest of any relevant traits. Multiclassed characters use the caster's full character level to determine the puissance of their spells, as with any spell effects such as damage dice or area of effect. Spells that do multiple dice of damage count them in the same way as weapon damage dice; a result of 1 is no damage, 2-5 is one point, 6-9 is two points, and 10+ is four.

TURNING UNDEAD

Heroes blessed with the power of a cleric have the ability to *Turn Undead*, smiting restless spirits and animated corpses and forcing them to return to the natural cycle of life and death. A cleric can Turn Undead as often as once every five minutes.

A cleric attempting to Turn Undead may use their action to target any and all undead within 30 feet of the priest. The cleric rolls a 1d8 Fray die for each cleric level he has, dividing up the damage as they wish among any valid targets in the area. A cleric uses his full character level to determine what undead foes these Fray dice can harm.

Clerics who serve the infernal powers or other dark gods may command these accursed spirits rather than destroying them. Their Turning attempts do no damage; instead, undead that would otherwise be destroyed by a dark priest's Turning are enslaved and forced to obey their new master until they are destroyed or freed. A dark cleric can bind no more hit dice worth of undead than thrice their total levels or hit dice.

DEFYING DEATH

When a hero is faced with a hopeless circumstance, impassable barrier, failed saving throw, or other grim fate, they may Defy Death, trading some of their vigor for a stroke of miraculous luck or deep inner resilience. To Defy Death, the hero rolls a 1d4 damage die for each of their character levels, counting damage as given in the Combat section. If it does enough to otherwise kill them, they struggle through with 1 hit point but are affected by whatever grim doom they were trying to evade. Otherwise they take the damage and a way past the problem or throw off the effect.

Each time a hero Defies Death during an adventure the die size rolled for the next attempt increases by one step- to d6, then d8, then d10, up to a maximum of d12. The die size resets when the hero succeeds in conquering the adventure or gives up and seeks glory elsewhere.

INJURY AND HEALING

Heroes at zero hit points will die. Heroes heal a number of hit points equal to their level after each night of rest. If the hero is in a safe, comfortable place and is aided by a physician or their own relevant medical traits they may heal double this amount by spending a full day recuperating. Depending on the hero, this bonus healing benefit may also be gained by debauchery and wildly excessive drinking.

AN EXAMPLE OF PLAY: THE TOWER OF IRON AND JADE

The grim-handed hero Golden Lao broods into his cups in a Tien Lung drinking house. His purse is flat and his spirits are sour; he must have gold. Fortunately, the painted dancing-boy he was with last night told him of the dread Tower of Iron and Jade and the fabulous golden treasure to be found within it. Its master, the blood sorcerer Hrothgar Bald-Skull, has not been seen in his favorite torment parlors in weeks. The tower is doubtless ripe for plundering.

Golden Lao is a mighty-thewed 1st level Fighter, with a Strength of 16 and above-average Dexterity and Constitution as well, if somewhat lacking in Wisdom. Combined with the chain hauberk he wears, his +1 Dexterity modifier gives him an armor class of 4; Lao scorns to bear a shield as he often needs a free hand. He has the traits of "Pantherish Grace: 2", "Savage Borderman:2", and "Alert to Peril: 1", and 9 hit points to account for his +1 Constitution modifier.

The curved saber at his belt does a base of 1d8 damage, with a +2 on the damage and hit rolls thanks to his mighty arm. Combined with his attack bonus as a 1st level Fighter, he rolls to hit at +3, and rolls a 1d8+2 damage die on a successful strike.

Skulking from the alehouse, Golden Lao scrabbles up the wall surrounding the tower's base. While the wall would be an obstacle to an ordinary intruder, the GM decides that Lao's Pantherish Grace is sufficient to conquer it without bothering with a check.

Lao prowls through the black-leafed gardens that surround the tower when suddenly he comes upon a guardsman and the trained leopard the myrmidon leads. The GM decides that neither are strictly surprised, but Lao gets to act first due to his status as a hero.

Knowing his peril should the guard be allowed to cry out, Lao rolls his Fray die, rolling a 5 for one point of damage. The leopard has 3 hit dice, and as that is greater than Lao's level, the Fray die cannot harm it. The guardsman is but a common soldier, however, with 1 hit die, and so Lao applies the damage to him and slays him with a casual flick of his glittering blade.

Lao then decides how to use his action. Rather than abandon his attempt in flight, he chooses to strike the leopard, rolling to hit its armor class of 4. He rolls 1d20, adds the beast's armor class of 4, and his hit bonus of 3. He rolls 11, and his modified roll of 18 isn't enough to hit the cat; it needs to be 20 or better to connect.

The savage beast lashes out at the warrior, rolling its three attacks at +3 for its hit bonus and +4 for Lao's armor class. Its unmodified rolls are 18, 4, and 14 for its three attacks, which is enough to hit with a claw and a bite. It rolls 1d3 damage for its claw- a 1d6 cut in half- and rolls a 1, for no damage at all. Its 1d6 bite lands a 6, however, inflicting 2 points of damage on the bloodied warrior.

Lao grits his teeth and levels another blow at the beast, his Fray die useless against it. This time he rolls a 13, which is a hit with his +7 total bonus. He rolls his 1d8+2 damage and comes up with a total of 10- which is 4 points of damage to the trained cat. As the beast only has 3 hit dice, its skull is cloven by the borderman and it falls limp.

Panting, Lao darts behind a tree to catch his breath and bind up his wounds, healing himself of 2 points of damage with a few minutes of work. He risks the extra time to recover despite the chance of discovery; had he pushed on immediately he would have lost the opportunity to repair a little damage from the engagement.

Lao reaches the base of the tower without further incident- yet when he lays hands upon the smooth metal surface, needles of black iron blossom from the tower to bloody his fingers before he can yank them away. Hrothgar has ensorcelled his home to defy all ordinary attempts to ascend it.

If Lao were a master thief, he might have the talents necessary to succeed on the superhuman skill check needed to climb this tower. If he had some magical artifact to dispel the effect or levitate him, he might bypass it that way. After racking his brains, Lao's player can think of no solution and is loathe to turn back. Instead, he asks the GM if he can Defy Death to climb the tower.

The GM reflects on this request. If this were a published adventure it would be fairly obvious if this were a puzzle or obstacle that the writer intended the adventuring party to overcome in order to progress. It's not a case of life or death, either, where Lao needs a chance to escape certain doom. But it is an obstacle to progressing on his adventure, and it would get him into amusing trouble if he were able to press onward. The GM decides to allow him to Defy Death.

Lao rolls a 1d4 for the cost; rolling a 3 to take 1 point of damage to represent the price in pushed luck and karmic balance. Unlike battle wounds or accidental injuries, he cannot attempt to treat this damage with first aid. The GM then provides a solution to his present trouble.

Just when Lao was about to give up in frustration, a soft hist from a nearby patch of bracken introduces him to the master thief Balbo, a cadaverously thin second-story man known to him. Balbo too seeks to plunder the tower, and has a canny means of ascent if Lao is willing to aid him in looting its interior. Knowing no better solution, Lao grudgingly consents to share the plunder.

Balbo promptly dons strange, long-fingered gloves of jointed brass and long-toed boots with narrow steel toe-spikes. He scrabbles up the tower, the iron needles too short to pierce his hands and feet, and lets down a rope from above so that Lao may follow after. Once both are at the top, they resolve to creep down through the trap-door at its crown into the depths below.

No sooner have they entered the tower than they are set upon by eight wary guardsmen who have come to check the tower roof. Balbo darts behind the muscular Lao, while the six guards cram the passageway in their haste to slay the intruders.

Lao acts first, and rolls his Fray die, getting a 7 for two points of damage. The guards are only 1 hit die foes, so two of them are chopped down before the borderman's fury. Driving forward, Lao attacks again, rolling to hit the leather-armored guardsmen's AC of 7. The roll hits, and his damage roll of 6 is enough to chop two more hit dice worth of the wretches, leaving only 4.

Stunned by the terrible ferocity of the barbarian's attack, the guardsmen are forced to check Morale. They are a brave lot, fortified by terror of Hrothgar's punishments, and so have a Morale score of 9. The GM rolls 2d6 and comes up with 7, so the guards continue to fight. The GM decides they'll check again when only one remains.

The four hack and stab at Lao, inflicting 3 more points of damage before the warrior manages to chop them all down, the last dying before he has a chance to plead for his life. Lao pauses to bind up 2 points worth of damage and goes onward with Balbo.



At the next landing, peril awaits the pair. A bloated spider-thing hangs in waiting above the stairway, a fat-bellied abomination with 4 hit dice and a +2 skill bonus. Will the intruders notice its presence before it leaps upon them?

Lao has a 1-point trait in Alert to Peril that applies to the check. Unfortunately, he also has a -1 Wisdom modifier. Together, they cancel out, leaving him to roll an unmodified 2d8 for a result of 14. Balbo is an NPC, but the GM decides that this is something he'd be good at, and that he's a talented man with a +2 skill bonus. His roll, however, is only 7. The spider is doing something it's good at, so its skill bonus applies and gives it a roll of 13. Lao beat the spider, but the spider beat Balbo.

The seasoned thief is oblivious to the peril as the spider silently lunges from above, yet some wild instinct alerts Lao to the danger. The warrior lashes out with his saber as the spider descends, clipping it for 1 point of damage. Then the spider acts, rolling to attack Balbo. It manages to sink its fangs into the thief, rolling 1d6 for damage and doing 1 point. Balbo is a veteran of many dangers and has 3 hit dice, so the damage is not enough to kill him- but the spider's bite also insinuates a terrible, burning poison.

Balbo must roll a saving throw to resist the toxin. To do so, he rolls 2d8 and adds his hit dice, plus his skill bonus if it is extremely apposite. It isn't, so he rolls just 2d8+3 and comes up with 11. The

difficulty is equal to 9 plus the spider's hit dice, for a total of 12. As his roll did not equal or beat the difficulty, the spider's poison takes effect and Balbo is doomed to die.

As the thin thief's heels beat out a dying tattoo against the flagstones Lao lashes out once again at the spider, but this time he misses. The spider lunges to bite the borderman and succeeds, inflicting 1 point of damage with its fangs and forcing Lao to save as well. Being a hero fighting off a toxin or other test of his mettle, Lao can add his Constitution modifier to the roll, and does so... yet he rolls a natural 2 on the dice. Such misfortune is always an automatic failure.

Is he doomed also to perish, swollen-faced and gurgling in the blood sorcerer's tower? Never! Lao chooses to Defy Death, and as this is obviously a mortal peril the GM allows it. This time the die is 1d6, and rolls a 6- so 2 points of damage are inflicted to Lao that first aid cannot mend. Luckily, his next turn sees his blade planted within the creature's bulging abdomen and its foul life spilled out over Balbo's cooling corpse.

Leaning on his blade, Lao bandages his wounds once more. Between his attempts to Defy Death and the leftover damage of his brawl with the guards, he has 5 hit points left. Had he a magical elixir of healing or some sorcery to mend his wounds he might use it now, but even so, he resolves to venture onward until the golden treasure is his. Will he succeed? That is for time and chance to tell...

RED SORCERY

The geomantic forces of the world and the divine blessings of the gods have long been employed by the people of the isles, Shou and human alike. Long before the coming of the Red Tide and the exile of humanity to this gloomy archipelago, the Ninefold Celestial Empire wrought marvels of arcane learning and mighty works of sorcery. The elves of the House of Peace devised their own strange wonders in their distant home, and the dwarves practiced their own breed of craft-sorcery deep beneath the earth. Magic has always been a thing known to the people of the world.

THE NATURE OF MAGIC

Magic comes both from below and from above. The favored of the gods are blessed with their marvels by the heavens, capable of calling up miracles in proof of their divine patron's power. Those with the gift for sorcery instead draw their powers from the terrestrial world, directing the currents of geomantic energy through the lens of their soul to produce the desired effects.

Divine magic the more rigid and subtle of the two. It is the nature of the gods to work through the world rather than in violent disregard for its laws. Their powers are suited to healing, augmenting, purifying and protecting its creatures. While the gods give many gifts to their priests, they are reluctant to reveal new secrets. A priest cannot develop new magics as easily as a wizard, nor can he turn his powers into mere obedient tools for his ends.

For all their particularity, however, the gods seem singularly unconcerned over the actual behavior of their clerics. They gift their powers for inexplicable reasons, to the pious and to the base, and all the mutterings of theologians and the sober ponderings of the wise cannot discern why one priest should be left unblessed while another should be gifted. Whole sects have sprouted up to justify the empowering of some particularly vile cleric, claiming that it is merely evidence of the subtlety and deep wisdom of the gods.

In the absence of a cleric to channel these powers, even ordinary priests can manage a miracle with sufficient ritual and appropriate surroundings. Shrines staffed by competent priests and sanctified by long practice can produce many of the same magical spells as a cleric, albeit with far more time and expense. These shrines provide most of the succor to be given to the ordinary believers. Such magical practices are laborious and slow compared to the easy fluency of a gifted cleric, but they are the best recourse that most people can hope to obtain- though most such hopes are in vain.

Geomantic sorcery is of a different kind. The gifted magic-user possesses a soul of the right nature, an inward spirit capable of focusing and directing the geomantic forces of the world in the rigid patterns of an arcane spell. The more potent the sorcerer's soul, the greater the powers they can wield. Adepts must spend their lives in focused study if they are to expand their innate powers.

The forces of the world are indifferent to their use. Good or wicked, they come when they are called and they act as the formulae bid them. Their powers are not as suitable for repairing the delicate work of the gods, and spells of healing and restoration are not well-suited to geomantic forces. More destructive summonings of flame, frost, and blasting ruin are more easily channeled by their arcane arts.

Unlike clerics, wizards often devise new patterns for their powers, creating new spells to serve particular purposes. Such work is expensive and time-consuming, but an experienced wizard can have a library of scores of spells to serve his special needs. Knowledge of these arts is guarded jealously, as great wizards are notorious for their endless feuding and strange, sorcerous quarrels.

LEARNING SPELLS

Clerics need no special efforts to learn their spells. Their religious training contains the seeds of their enlightenment, and as they advance and master more sophisticated rituals they have full access to all standard clerical spells of that level. Even so, some unique rituals or rare invocations may require a teacher or a suitable sacred text to instruct the cleric.

Magic-users have a heavier burden. To add a new spell to their spellbook they must learn it from another wizard, copy it from another sorcerer's spellbook, or inscribe it from a magical scroll. Scroll-copying is simplest but requires both one day and 100 gp worth of ingredients per level of the spell. It also expends the scroll.

Sorcerers are very reluctant to teach spells to strangers. Teaching a spell to another magic-user or allowing him to copy from your spellbook gives him many useful secrets regarding your personal techniques and rituals. Such knowledge gives the other wizard an automatic +2 bonus to save versus your spells and applies a -2 penalty to your saving throws versus his enchantments. Fortunately, such knowledge cannot be effectively communicated to other wizards, but it still leaves the teacher vulnerable to the spells of a treacherous pupil. Copying spells from another wizard's spellbook costs the same money and time as if scribing from a scroll.

Most magic-users will not teach others unless induced by great favors or even greater payment. This price is usually at least 1,000 gp per level of the teacher, as greater wizards have more to fear from rivals.

PREPARING SPELLS

Both clerics and magic-users must prepare their spells before they can cast them. For clerics, this involves a brief ritual of prayer and meditation, while magic-users must consult their spellbooks and perform certain rites of maintenance in order to refresh their powers. Casters must be well-rested and in relatively calm surroundings in order to prepare their spells, and they may prepare them only once on any given day.

Preparing a spell involves the performance of certain small rites, meditations, ritual purifications and propitiations necessary to prepare the caster for the spell's energies. A caster who does not prepare a spell is not ritually equipped to invoke it, and the powers that the spell requires simply will not obey him. Once the spell is triggered, the pact is completed and the ritual preparations are wiped away. Both must be renewed before the spell can be cast again.

Each caster has a number of available "slots" for spells, starting with one first level spell slot at their first character level and increasing as they grow in power. When a caster prepares their spells, they may fill each slot with a spell of the appropriate level. Clerics may prepare any spell of a level they are capable of casting, while magic-users are limited to preparing the spells they have inscribed in their spellbooks. Both clerics and magic-users use the table below to determine how many spells they may prepare during their daily rites. Casters may not fill slots with spells of other levels. The same spell may be prepared more than once if the character desires.

SPELL PREPARATION PER DAY

CASTER LEVEL	SPELL LEVEL				
	1	2	3	4	5
1	1	-	-	-	-
2	2	-	-	-	-
3	2	1	-	-	-
4	3	2	-	-	-
5	3	2	1	-	-
6	3	3	2	-	-
7	4	3	2	1	-
8	4	3	3	2	-
9	4	4	3	2	1
10	4	4	3	3	2

CASTING SPELLS

All spells require an incantation spoken in a loud, clear voice and a free hand to gesture the appropriate mudras. Invoking such powers requires intense concentration, and any damage or heavy jostling while casting the spell will cause it to fizzle uselessly and be wasted.

Casters must declare their intent to cast a particular spell at the start of a combat round, before other participants have acted. If a caster is hit in combat before their turn and the completion of the spell, it is lost without taking effect and their action for the turn is wasted. Such casters can still take their normal movement on their turn, however, and are perhaps best advised to do so. This jostling is rarely important to player characters, as they always act first in a round, but it can be significant for other casters when a hero wants to stop them.

Clerical spells can be cast regardless of the wearer's mode of dress, but magic-user spells cannot be cast in conventional armor. The base metals and inauspicious hides of most armor are disruptive to geomantic forces. Most magic-users use robes brocaded or marked with helpful sigils, regalia attuned to their tradition of magic, or little more than paint and portentous loincloths. There are certain occult varieties of armor but such exotic protection is rare in the isles.

Spells cannot be cast subtly unless noted in the spell description. Invoking eldritch power is loud, showy, and immediately obvious to those around the spellcaster- even if they can't tell *what* he's casting.

A WIZARD'S SPELLBOOK

While these tomes take many different forms, a wizard's spellbook is the focal point of his power. It is the tool by which he maintains his pacts, regulates his spiritual condition, and refreshes his memory of the thousand little details necessary for the execution of even the simplest spell's propitiatory rites. It is an arcane artifact in its own right.

A spellbook rarely weighs more than ten pounds, regardless of the shape it takes. Most are proof against drenching, ordinary flames, gnawing insects, humidity, and other typical hazards to a book. They are not impervious to directed violence, however, and a wizard who has his spellbook destroyed is a most unfortunate soul. Until the spellbook is recreated or restored, the caster cannot prepare any spells. He is left with whatever incantations he has at hand.

A wizard can recreate a destroyed spellbook with both one week of effort and 1,000 gp of expense per character level. Magic-users may do this from memory, and do not require their original notes to fabricate something serviceable. Wizards who wish to keep backup spellbooks can copy spells from their existing tome into a new book for half the usual time and cost of copying from another spellbook.

Of course, any rival who is able to capture such a book gains all the saving throw benefits of plumbing the wizard's secret techniques, so most magic-users are cautious about the indiscriminate creation of duplicates- or at least hide them well.

DEVISING NEW SPELLS

Clerics must dedicate an entirely new shrine to a particular appropriate divine aspect in order to research a new spell. Thus, if a spell to summon rain were desired, the cleric would have to build a shrine lauding the rain-giving aspect of their deity. While portfolios blur somewhat in the confused theological environment of the Sunset Isles, a spell must not be directly opposed to a god's purview. The more powerful the spell, the more elaborate the shrine, with a minimum of 1,000 gp per spell level invested into the shrine and its staffing. This base cost is doubled for spells of 3rd or 4th level and quadrupled for spells of 5th level.

Once the shrine is established, the cleric may use it to conduct the necessary rites and propitiations to search out the divine aspect necessary for the effect. Each week, such research requires one-half of the cost of the required shrine to conduct- so 500 gp for a 1st level spell and 10,000 gp for a fifth-level spell. The cleric may make a Wisdom saving throw each week against a difficulty of 11 plus twice the level of the spell. On a success, the spell is developed, while on a failure the difficulty decreases by one and the cleric must spend another week developing it to try again. A cleric may try to develop only one spell at a time, and must succeed or abandon the effort completely before trying something new. Each new spell requires its own new shrine to be established.

Magic-users have much the same expenses in development and labor, save that they must build libraries and laboratories for their research. Also, unlike clerics, such libraries can be reused for additional research. A new laboratory need not be developed for each new spell, and a single arcane library can be used to develop any allowed spell.

All spells are subject to GM approval, as some enchantments simply do not fit with a given campaign. A GM is also within their rights to disallow spells that prove excessive in play, though a kind GM might allow the designer to discover a trove to compensate their expenses.

CLERIC SPELLS

	FIRST LEVEL SPELLS	SECOND LEVEL SPELLS	THIRD LEVEL SPELLS	FOURTH LEVEL SPELLS	FIFTH LEVEL SPELLS
1	<i>Blessing of Gentle Fortune</i>	<i>Blessing of Righteous War</i>	<i>Cleanse the Afflicted Form</i>	<i>Beckon the Lesser Attendant</i>	<i>All Things As Smoke</i>
2	<i>Discern the Spirit Within</i>	<i>Fortunate Bounty of the Gods</i>	<i>Correction's Iron Staff</i>	<i>Centipede-Conquering Cure</i>	<i>Corpse-Fire Eruption</i>
3	<i>Funerary Rites</i>	<i>Passing Through the Hells</i>	<i>Nine Seething Plagues</i>	<i>Cinnabar Wind of Expurgation</i>	<i>Deliverance of the Faithful</i>
4	<i>Hand of Merciful Succor</i>	<i>Perfect Recollection of Ritual</i>	<i>Pure Mantle of Service</i>	<i>Defilement of the Unquiet Grave</i>	<i>Mandate of the One Above</i>
5	<i>Mien of Stern Wisdom</i>	<i>Refreshing Meditation</i>	<i>Radiance of Inward Purity</i>	<i>Golden Silkworm Curse</i>	<i>Opening the Hero's Road</i>
6	<i>The Priest's Scathing Rebuke</i>	<i>Serene Stillness of Instruction</i>	<i>Silver River Abjuration</i>	<i>Hero's Mighty Vigor, The</i>	<i>Path of Unbending Purity</i>
7	<i>Purification of the Offering</i>	<i>Ten Thousand Learned Tongues</i>	<i>Still the Restless Ghost</i>	<i>Inexorable Progress of the God</i>	<i>Revivification of the Mountain</i>
8	<i>Tongue of Hidden Conversing</i>	<i>The Transfixing Eye</i>	<i>Wayshrine Sanctification</i>	<i>Sweep the Temple Floor</i>	<i>Uttering the Divine Command</i>

ALL THINGS AS SMOKE LEVEL 5

Duration: 1 minute/level **Range:** Self

The priest transcends the created world, just as do the gods. For the duration of this spell they may become insubstantial at will, able to pass through any non-magical substance at their normal movement rate. They may freely move upward through empty air or downward through solid matter. A priest must choose whether to be substantial or intangible at the beginning of each round. While intangible he cannot cast spells, manipulate his belongings, or affect the material world, though he remains visible and faintly translucent. Intangible priests can be harmed only by magical weapons or sorcery.

BECKON THE LESSER ATTENDANT LEVEL 4

Duration: Special **Range:** 100'

The cleric summons forth a servitor of their god. While the shape of such entities varies, their statistics remain largely the same, at 7 HD, AC 5, Atk +7, Dmg 1d8/1d8, Move 20', and Morale 12. These entities can fly at the same rate as their ground movement speed and may travel beneath the sea without hindrance. If asked to simply fight or perform an action for the priest the spell lasts 1 round per caster level before the entity vanishes. If asked for a service that requires a larger amount of time to perform the entity must be appeased with at least 7,000 gp worth of appropriate offerings before it will consent, thereafter pursuing the purpose until the work is complete, it perishes, or 101 years have passed. These entities are most easily persuaded to guard shrines or perform acts in accordance with their god's portfolio. Other requests may cost far more.

BLESSING OF GENTLE FORTUNE LEVEL 1

Duration: 1 day **Range:** Touch

The cleric invokes the favor of his god upon a purpose, naming one particular goal as he blesses the target with his touch. One time during the duration of the spell the recipient may reroll a failed check, attack or saving throw made while pursuing that purpose.

BLESSING OF RIGHTEOUS WAR LEVEL 2

Duration: 1 minute/level **Range:** 30' radius

The cleric stiffens the resolve of his companions and encourages them with his divine blessing. All allies within the area of effect are bolstered, gaining +1 to hit rolls, +1 Morale, and a +1 bonus to saving throws during the spell's duration. Once cast, the recipients can leave the area of effect without losing the benefits of the spell.

CENTIPEDE-CONQUERING CURE LEVEL 4

Duration: Instant **Range:** Touch

The venomous centipede and the poisonous serpent cannot overcome the priest equipped with this sovereign incantation. This spell instantly removes any poison affecting the target, and is even sufficient to restore life to one killed by poison provided it is applied within five minutes of the death. This spell is so swift to cast that the cleric may cast it on himself immediately after failing a saving throw versus poison without costing himself an action or suffering the effects of the toxin.

CINNABAR WIND OF EXPURGATION LEVEL 4

Duration: Instant **Range:** 60' cone

Dark sorceries are blown away by the gust of this magical breeze. The spell instantly ends any magical effect in the area cast by a spellcaster of equal or lower level. Those effects cast by higher-level casters must be overcome by a successful saving throw from the priest against a difficulty equal to 9 plus the opposing caster's level. This spell cannot remove curses or other long-lasting magical effects or scourges.

CLEANSE THE AFFLICTED FORM LEVEL 3

Duration: Instant **Range:** Touch

The gods have mercy upon those who suffer, and the cleric is the vessel of that succor. This spell will cure all diseases in the subject and remedy any blindness not resulting from actual mutilation. Darker priests may prepare the reversed version known as the *Affliction of*

SPELL RANGES

Some spells are listed with a range of “touch”. In such cases, the caster must touch the target to trigger the spell. If the target is unwilling, a normal hit roll must be made to get a sufficiently solid contact. If the caster misses he can keep trying to touch the target each round until he connects, casts a different spell, or is injured and loses his concentration.

Other spells list a radius or cone effect. In such cases the caster is the center of the radius or the origination of the cone, which is as wide at its far end as it is long.

Some spells create an effect within the listed range, such as a 10’ radius burst anywhere within 100’ of the caster. The target point for the burst or spell effect may be any visible point within the listed range. Thus, a caster may target the spell at a point 100’ distant and have the burst strike everyone within 10 feet of that point.

Night that strikes the target blind until cured, inflicting a -4 penalty on all melee attacks and making ranged attacks impossible. A different reversed version, *The Purulent Hand of Torment*, inflicts a virulent rotting disease instead, inflicting a -2 penalty on all attacks and killing the victim within 2d6 days. Both reversed versions may be resisted with a successful saving throw.

CORPSE-FIRE ERUPTION **LEVEL 5**

Duration: Instant **Range:** 30’ radius

The gods have granted clerics dominion over the dead and the powers of the distant spheres. Every undead creature or otherworldly entity within range of this spell must save or be instantly destroyed or banished back to its place of origin, vanishing in an eruption of ghostly fire. Even those who do succeed in saving suffer 1d6 damage per level of the caster. The spell can also lift a curse from a place, person or object, dispelling it automatically unless the caster who placed it was of legendary power.

CORRECTION’S IRON STAFF **LEVEL 3**

Duration: 10 minutes/level **Range:** Touch

Favored especially by priests of the more martial gods, this prayer endows the priest’s wielded weapon with magical force. Every successful hit rolls an additional 1d6 damage die, a +1 bonus to hit is gained, and the weapon may harm even those creatures immune to non-magical weaponry. The spell will even imbue the arrows shot by a blessed bow, but it will end if the priest lets go of the weapon.

DEFILEMENT OF THE UNQUIET GRAVE **LEVEL 4**

Duration: Special **Range:** Touch

The followers of the Nine Immortals cherish the peaceful sleep of their ancestors. That does not prevent other priests from having different ideas on the topic. This spell may forcibly create undead from corpses that were not buried with the correct funerary rites. A number of hit dice worth of undead equal to the caster’s level may be created at once, most often hungry ghosts as per the Bestiary chapter. These undead are obedient to their creator, becoming uncontrolled upon his death. Each ritual costs 50 gp in expendable implements for each hit die of undead created, and the ritual can only be performed on a night of the new moon. Most clerics can command no more than ten hit dice of undead slaves for every level they possess.

DELIVERANCE OF THE FAITHFUL **LEVEL 5**

Duration: Instant **Range:** 30’ radius

The cleric may plead for succor with this spell, whisking himself and up to a half-dozen close companions back to his shrine’s altar. Allies need only be in range of the spell to be carried along, though they may refuse if they wish. The priest appears immediately before altar of his home temple. This spell requires that the priest actually have such a home shrine, costing at least 1,000 gp if he must build it himself. A cleric can be dedicated to only one home altar at a time.

DISCERN THE SPIRIT WITHIN **LEVEL 1**

Duration: 1 minute/level **Range:** 120’

The cleric studies an object carefully to discern the presence of magical force. For the duration of this spell the cleric can see auras of geomantic energy around magical items or enchanted objects. They may also see the outlines of a possessing spirit inside its host and gain a general idea of the type of creature it is, if it is known to the cleric.

FORTUNATE BOUNTY OF THE GODS **LEVEL 2**

Duration: 24 hours **Range:** Self

The gods equip their faithful with what is needed. After casting this spell, the cleric need only put out his hand to find a single mundane object of no more than forty pounds in weight there for his taking. This object cannot duplicate a specific other item, such as a key or seal, and it cannot be of great intrinsic value, but it is otherwise a perfectly serviceable example of its type. The single object may be a collection of a type such as is normally found together, such as a belt of carpenters’ tools. The object or its remains vanish 24 hours later, and it can provide no lasting nourishment or refreshment if it is an otherwise edible comestible.

FUNERARY RITES **LEVEL 1**

Duration: Special **Range:** 40’ radius

A ritual devoutly desired by both faithful believers and more fearful agnostics, funerary rites serve the vital purpose of protecting the newly-shed soul from the attentions of the Hell Kings and the fate of a wandering ghost. Once cast, all corpses within range become utterly useless for necromantic purposes, and will not rise as undead under any circumstances. Any mindless undead within range of the spell must also make a saving throw or be rendered calm and pacified for ten minutes per level of the caster, defending themselves if attacked but initiating no violence.

GOLDEN SILKWORM CURSE **LEVEL 4**

Duration: Special **Range:** Touch

A spiritual poison compounded from the shadows of centipedes, toads, and scorpions, the *Golden Silkworm Curse* can strike a victim dead with a touch, discharging the spell. If the victim fails a saving throw upon contact they may be forced to die at any time the cleric wishes, up to one day later per caster level.

If the cleric does not compel the victim’s death by then or if they receive a cure for the poison before then, then the curse falls away without effect. This spell is most sinister and subtle in its effect, and a poisoned victim will not know he is afflicted unless inspected by magical arts or a skilled physician.

HAND OF MERCIFUL SUCCOR **LEVEL 1**

Duration: Instant **Range:** Touch

The cleric's arts are useful in restoring the afflicted. When cast on a subject this will cure 2 points of damage plus the result of 2d6 healing dice. Healing dice are read exactly as if they were damage dice, but the result is applied as healing in hit points or hit dice. A reversed version exists, the *Fist of Burning Rebuke*, which will inflict 2d6 damage dice.

HERO'S MIGHTY VIGOR **LEVEL 4**

Duration: Instant **Range:** Touch

Some creatures are so gifted with life and vigor that ordinary healing arts are insufficient to restore them to full strength. When cast on a subject this will cure 4 points of damage plus the result of 4d6 healing dice. A reversed version exists, the *Scourge of Ashen Bones*, which will inflict 6d6 damage dice on the target.

INEXORABLE PROGRESS OF THE GOD **LEVEL 4**

Duration: 1 round/level **Range:** Self

None may hold back the progress of divinity or shut their doors from the presence of the gods. For the duration of this spell the priest may not be restrained by locks, chains, bars, or any other conventional binding. Even badly-stuck or locked doors will spring open before him, gates will roll open, and coffers and chests will yawn wide. The priest must continue moving at least 30 feet per round to maintain this effect. This spell may be cast even while bound and gagged.

MANDATE OF THE ONE ABOVE **LEVEL 5**

Duration: Instant **Range:** Self

The gods are enigmatic presences, and they do not communicate in ways that are clear to mortals. Still, when asked of strictly earthly affairs, they can sometimes give messages useful to the cleric. A cleric may ask up to three questions regarding present or past events. The gods answer such questions in only four ways "yes", "no", "auspicious", and "inauspicious". The gods cannot be provoked to answer questions regarding their will, the secrets of heaven, or the behaviors most pleasing to them, much to the bitter frustration of their theologians and arch-diviners.

MIEN OF STERN WISDOM **LEVEL 1**

Duration: 10 minutes/level **Range:** Self

While deplorable atheism and shameful disregard for the gods is all the more prevalent after the events of the Red Tide, the cleric can still call upon the ancient reverence due his office. This spell is cast very subtly, and requires no noticeable gestures or incantations. Once cast, the cleric appears much more imposing and impressive to those around him, and gains a +2 bonus on all checks to influence others. They may also choose to reroll any reaction check once.

NINE SEETHING PLAGUES **LEVEL 3**

Duration: Instant **Range:** 60'

Not every cleric is an emissary of mercy. This dreadful invocation blights the target with a specific terrible curse, or inflicts a seething disease on them. The chosen effect is largely the same either way: an attribute score is reduced to 3, the character is left with a -4 penalty to hit from trembling hands, the victim is struck impotent or infertile,

the victim can no longer restore hit points through rest, or some other curse or sickness of the same general degree. The effects of this spell cannot be cured through conventional medicine or spells of curing disease. It requires something like the *Silver River Abjuration* or the *Corpse-Fire Eruption* to cleanse the curse.

OPENING THE HERO'S ROAD **LEVEL 5**

Duration: Instant **Range:** Touch

This extravagantly potent spell grants a second measure of life to one fallen before their fate is done. The spell requires at least 10 pounds of the corpse's remains, a properly sanctified altar to the cleric's god costing at least 5,000 gp, and an hour of sonorous invocation requesting that the soul return to its shelter. If the subject has not been dead for more than a month, their soul is not currently ensnared by the Hell Kings or an unquiet undeath, and they have some potential that has not yet been fulfilled on earth, then they will rise again in a renewed and whole physical body.

Very few people are suitable subjects for this spell, and any cleric can tell at a glance whether or not a corpse is capable of being raised. Heroes always qualify for this spell, but any other character has only a 5% chance of having unfinished labor in the world unless the GM decides that they are somehow of greater consequence. No temple will court an heir's anger by raising a dead noble or ruler.

This spell invariably comes at a cost. A restored subject loses one point of Constitution permanently.

PASSING THROUGH THE HELLS **LEVEL 2**

Duration: 1 hour/level **Range:** Touch

The pious priest fears neither the hells of fire nor the hells of frost. The chosen recipient of this spell becomes immune to normal extremes of heat and cold, even that of an arctic blizzard or blazing forge-fire. Magical flames or frost will suffer a -2 penalty on each damage die they roll.

PATH OF UNBENDING PURITY **LEVEL 5**

Duration: 1 round/level **Range:** Self

Where the cleric strides, evil dares not follow. For the duration of this spell the priest's footsteps create a magical barrier visible only to supernatural entities and those capable of casting spells. This barrier cannot be crossed by undead or other supernatural creatures, nor may their powers or influence reach beyond it. So long as nothing on the far side of the barrier attacks them or invites them across, the bar is absolute. The priest may walk in a circle if he wishes, enfolding a place in his protection. The magical footsteps halt at the close of the spell's duration, but the barrier itself lasts until the next dawn or dusk, whichever comes first.

PERFECT RECOLLECTION OF RITUAL **LEVEL 2**

Duration: Special **Range:** Self

The details of ritual and theological refinement are manifold, and the consequences for error are grave. This spell allows a priest to perfectly memorize everything he senses for up to one hour per caster level. Once the spell ends, he cannot add to these perfect memories but he may consult them at will afterwards with perfect accuracy. Casting this spell again wipes away the prior magic to replace it with the new.



THE PRIEST'S SCATHING REBUKE **LEVEL 1**

Duration: 1 day/level **Range:** 30'

The displeasure of the gods can blight the surest effort. This spell can be cast very subtly, with no visible invocation. If the target then fails their saving throw, they will automatically fail the next check they attempt to make, regardless of how easy it is or how skilled they may be. The cleric may optionally define a particular type of activity to only curse the next attempt at that particular effort. If no check is made within the spell's duration, the curse evaporates.

PURE MANTLE OF SERVICE **LEVEL 3**

Duration: 1 day **Range:** Self

The gods armor their chosen in the radiance of their favor. This spell enchants the priest's armor or clothing to grant extra protection. Once cast, the armor will automatically absorb a number of incoming hit points of damage equal to the caster's level. The ward is exhausted once the damage has been absorbed or the duration expires.

PURIFICATION OF THE OFFERING **LEVEL 1**

Duration: Instant **Range:** Touch

The spirits require the very finest and purest of offerings, and this incantation ensures that the cleric is able to offer such. Up to ten pounds of matter per cleric level is purified of all filth, poison, decay, or uncleanness. Rotting food is made perfectly fresh by this spell, fouled water is made drinkable, and dirty clothing is made clean.

RADIANCE OF INWARD PURITY **LEVEL 3**

Duration: 10 minutes/level **Range:** 60' radius

The cleric ignites the inner light of her devotion to shine from within her mortal frame. For the duration of the spell the cleric may glow whenever she wills, the clear, luminous radiance extending up to 60 feet away from her. While glowing, undead and supernatural beings may not touch or trouble her unless she interacts with them- even a spoken word or light touch suffices. If she does break the protection for any entity, it is broken for the rest of the spell's duration.

REFRESHING MEDITATION **LEVEL 2**

Duration: Instant **Range:** Self

Mountain priests know the strength of the stones beneath them, and may emulate that ascetic indifference to refreshment through this meditation. Once cast, the cleric must remain calm and contemplative for ten minutes. At the end of this meditation the cleric is absolved of all need for food, water, or sleep for the next 24 hours.

REVIVIFICATION OF THE MOUNTAIN **LEVEL 5**

Duration: Instant **Range:** Touch

The greatest and most vital of creatures may be restored to full vigor by this spell. It even regrows lost limbs and restores levels lost to energy-draining effects. If this regeneration or restoration effect is not required by a subject, it will cure 8 points of damage plus 6d10 healing dice. A reversed version exists, the *Toppling Pillar of Severed Bone*, which will inflict 10d6 damage dice on the unfortunate target.

SERENE STILLNESS OF INSTRUCTION **LEVEL 2**

Duration: 1 minute/level **Range:** 15' radius

There are times when a certain degree of firmness is required if a priest is to be heard over the din of the world. When this spell is cast, all sound within 15 feet of the priest is snuffed. Only her voice can make any sound whatsoever within the area of effect, which moves along with the cleric for the duration of the spell.

This silence will disrupt any attempt at spellcasting within the spell's area of effect, but if the priest attempts to cast a spell the enchanted stillness will end.

SILVER RIVER ABJURATION **LEVEL 3**

Duration: Instant **Range:** 30'

The gods grant mercy to those scourged by sorcerous curses. This enchantment will lift any ordinary curse from a subject, including those of baleful weapons or those laid by an angry cleric or magic-user. Subjects possessed by ghosts or other foreign intelligences may also make a saving throw against their possessor to throw off the control. If they fail, this spell cannot be used again for another 24 hours.

STILL THE RESTLESS GHOST **LEVEL 3**

Duration: Instant **Range:** 30' radius

Troublesome spirits and angry dead are quelled by this terrible word of exorcism. When uttered, all undead or extraplanar creatures within range immediately suffer a 1d6 damage die for every level of the caster, with a saving throw allowed to take only half damage. This spell will affect even intangible or invisible undead.

SWEEP THE TEMPLE FLOOR **LEVEL 4**

Duration: 10 minutes/level **Range:** 10' radius

A sweeping gesture invokes this rite of purity and forbiddance that protects the cleric from the attentions of evil powers. Any undead or extraplanar creature may approach no closer than ten feet to the cleric while this spell is in effect, and may not assault any within the ward with spell or weapon so long as the magic holds. The barrier moves with the cleric, but if it is forced against a creature or if anyone within it attacks an entity on the other side, the spell instantly ends.

TEN THOUSAND LEARNED TONGUES**LEVEL 2****Duration:** 10 minutes/level **Range:** Self

As the gods made all things, so may their servants speak to all that was made. While this spell is in effect the cleric can converse freely with any living creature, including beasts and plants. Animals and other nonhuman creatures rarely have much to say of interest to a human listener, but they can answer simple questions about things they have seen or smelled, and may be persuaded to aid the priest.

TONGUE OF HIDDEN CONVERSING**LEVEL 1****Duration:** 10 minutes/level **Range:** Self

One of the most important duties of a cleric is to see to a community's unquiet dead and insure that troubled spirits are allowed to rest in peace. While under the effects of this spell the cleric is able to see invisible spirits and communicate with the unquiet dead. Even unintelligent undead will give the cleric some idea of why they are not at rest, even as they attack the priest.

THE TRANSFIXING EYE**LEVEL 2****Duration:** 1 round/level **Range:** 30'

The baleful eye of the righteous transfixes the guilty soul. This spell affects up to 1d6 living creatures within the area of effect, provided the priest keeps them within his field of view at all times. Subjects are allowed a saving throw to resist the spell, but if it fails they are left perfectly motionless so long as the cleric keeps an unblinking eye on them. In this helpless condition they may be killed without difficulty so long as none of their allies are around to interfere with the coup de grace. If the priest's gaze falters or he moves so as to exclude some from his sight the spell ends instantly for the unobserved.

UTTERING THE DIVINE COMMAND**LEVEL 5****Duration:** Special **Range:** 30'

What the gods ordain, mortals must abide. The cleric may utter a demand of an intelligent creature, one that neither imperils their life nor demands a service they cannot physically perform. If the subject fails a saving throw, the command takes effect. If the target refuses this demand or breaks the taboo laid down for them, they will begin to sicken until they are left a helpless, perpetually tormented invalid. The offending subject loses 1 point of Strength and Dexterity each day, and when either score drops below 3 they are unable to move and can only lie in painful misery. The cleric may lift this spell as they desire, but otherwise the only way to break the effect is through a reversed casting of this same spell.

WAYSHRINE SANCTIFICATION**LEVEL 3****Duration:** 12 hours/level **Range:** 30'

The gods go with their servants even into lonely and desolate places. This spell allows a cleric to raise a temporary shrine to their deity, a little shelter within which they may rest undisturbed. The conjured shrine is no more than ten feet square and ten feet tall, a small doorway allowing entrance and a few piercings for light and air. Both the shrine and anyone within it will pass unnoticed by animals and other beings unless they are specifically looking for the cleric or searching for intruders. The interior of the shrine is very spartan but it is warm, dry, and comfortable regardless of the weather outside. The shrine evaporates into nothingness at the spell's end.



MAGIC-USER SPELLS

	FIRST LEVEL SPELLS	SECOND LEVEL SPELLS	THIRD LEVEL SPELLS	FOURTH LEVEL SPELLS	FIFTH LEVEL SPELLS
1	<i>Amber Cloud of Somnolence</i>	<i>Assuming the Flesh of Mist</i>	<i>Calling Forth the Able Servant</i>	<i>Curse of Twisted Skin</i>	<i>Calling The Celestial Servitor</i>
2	<i>Apprehending the Imbalance</i>	<i>The Deceitful Vision</i>	<i>Crimson Rain of Deliquescence</i>	<i>Drive Forth the Unwanted Guest</i>	<i>Five Essence Splintering</i>
3	<i>Calling Forth the Spirit Slave</i>	<i>Golden Morning Grace</i>	<i>Envoy of Clouds and Rivers</i>	<i>Evasion of the Serpent's Skin</i>	<i>Furious Tempest of Flame</i>
4	<i>The Caul of Hidden Light</i>	<i>Luminous Jade of Purity</i>	<i>Expurgation of Golden Purity</i>	<i>Exquisite Purification of Renewal</i>	<i>The Great Alchemy of Forms</i>
5	<i>The Daifu's Bright Mantle</i>	<i>Master of the Antimony Gate</i>	<i>The Golden Pick of the Miner</i>	<i>Harmonization of Inner Force</i>	<i>Jade Body Purification</i>
6	<i>The Least Alchemy of Forms</i>	<i>Meditation Upon the Clouds</i>	<i>Grant the Lesser Shadow of Life</i>	<i>March of Clay Soldiers</i>	<i>Raising the Mountain Bones</i>
7	<i>Lens of the Enlightened Scribe</i>	<i>The River Reed Bridge</i>	<i>The Little Silver Window</i>	<i>Path of the Dry Season</i>	<i>Rescript to the Hidden Throne</i>
8	<i>Painted Vermillion Eyes</i>	<i>The Sovereign Sign against Evil</i>	<i>Remission of the Natural Path</i>	<i>Tireless Horse of Long Travel</i>	<i>The Road of Bright Jade</i>
9	<i>Seven Small Thunders</i>	<i>Victorious General's Shout</i>	<i>The Superior Alchemy of Forms</i>	<i>The Tumult of Banners and Horns</i>	<i>Slaves of Bone and Mist</i>
10	<i>The Silent Porter</i>	<i>Walking Among the Cowed</i>	<i>Torrent of Inner Force</i>	<i>Wall of the Raging Monsoon</i>	<i>Withering Defilement of Flesh</i>

AMBER CLOUD OF SOMNOLENCE		LEVEL 1	
Duration:	10 minutes	Range:	120'

A yellow cloud of slumber billows around the subjects of this spell, putting a full 2d4 hit dice of them into a drugged sleep should they fail their saving throw. The effect billows outward in a 10-foot burst from the central target point of the spell, first affecting those creatures who are nearest. Creatures of three or more hit dice or levels are immune to the spell. The sleep lasts for ten minutes, and the victims cannot be woken earlier by anything less than a sharp kick or slap.

APPREHENDING THE IMBALANCE		LEVEL 1	
Duration:	10 minutes/level	Range:	Self

The intricate harmonies of a living creature are susceptible to many unfortunate derangements. This spell allows the caster to study a target, immediately apprehending the presence of any diseases, poisons, curses, magical effects, or spiritual possession. Common diseases and poisons will be recognized on sight, but more esoteric plagues and curses give no information as to their exact effects.

ASSUMING THE FLESH OF MIST		LEVEL 2	
Duration:	10 minutes/level	Range:	Self

The sorcerer unweaves the coarse solidity of her flesh, fading into transparency. So long as the sorcerer maintains concentration on the spell they are entirely invisible and smell only of dew, though they remain tangibly solid. While concentrating on the spell the wizard may only move, and may not manipulate objects or perform other actions that involve interacting with the world.

The wizard may stop concentrating to perform other actions but they become translucently visible while so engaged. The wizard may begin and end concentration as they wish while this spell is in effect, but any spellcasting, attacking, or other violent motion will rip the spell's fabric and end it prematurely. Any damage suffered by the wizard will also spoil their concentration and end the spell.

CALLING FORTH THE ABLE SERVANT		LEVEL 3	
Duration:	Special	Range:	60'

The sorcerer beckons forth a spirit from the celestial spheres to serve her, the entity appearing as a humanoid creature of any particulars chosen by the wizard. While they may appear human, they have an eerie presence that betrays their unnatural nature to any observer. If a peaceful spirit is called, the spell lasts for up to one hour per caster level. Such entities have AC 9, 1 hit die, and are incapable of violence, but they can perform any other tasks that a strong human might. If a spirit of battle is beckoned the spell lasts only one round per level of the caster, but the entity will fight. The martial servant has the statistics of 4 HD, AC 5, Atk +4, Dmg 1d8, Move 20', and Morale 12.

CALLING THE CELESTIAL SERVITOR		LEVEL 5	
Duration:	1 round/level	Range:	60'

This spell summons an eidolon woven of geomantic force and animated by a spirit plucked from distant spheres. The entity is fearfully powerful and strong as an ogre, with 9 hit dice, AC 5, Atk +9, Dmg 1d10/1d10, Move 20', and Morale 12. Its outward appearance is as the sorcerer desires, from a figure as small as a goblin to a titan ten feet tall. The entity will remain for up to one round per level of the caster and will obey perfectly all commands the caster may give it. If the caster is slain or knocked unconscious while it lingers, however, it will rampage free for 1d6+1 more rounds, attacking all around it.

CALLING FORTH THE SPIRIT SLAVE		LEVEL 1	
Duration:	10 minutes/level	Range:	60'

A minor spirit is snared from some distant realm and embodied in a fragile shell of geomantic force. The entity has 1 HD, AC 9, Atk +0, Dmg 1d4, Move 20', and Morale 12. It appears in a humanlike shape of the caster's devising, and will obey intelligently the commands of its summoner for the duration of the spell. When the spell ends or it is slain, it will vanish back to the realms from which it came.

THE CAUL OF HIDDEN LIGHT **LEVEL 1**

Duration: 1 minute/level **Range:** 120'

The husk of geomantic energy that forms around a magical object is perceptible to a sorcerer under the influence of this spell. For its duration, the magic-user may visually detect magical auras around objects or people. By careful inspection of an object for the remaining duration of the spell, the magic-user can get a general idea of its main function or enhancement, though command words, curses, and other specific details are not perceptible through this spell.

CRIMSON RAIN OF DELIQUESCENCE **LEVEL 3**

Duration: Instant **Range:** 120'

A seething red rain of vitriol pelts all the victims within a 15-foot radius of this spell's central point, inflicting a 1d6 damage die for every level of the caster as flesh is made to melt away. At the caster's discretion, the spell may be made to affect only living flesh or to melt even inanimate objects; in the latter case, the possessions of those slain by it will be ruined unless magical or proof against acid.

CURSE OF TWISTED SKIN **LEVEL 4**

Duration: Special **Range:** 60'

This incantation grants the wizard the power to alter his own shape or that of another. The subject may be twisted into the shape of any human or normal animal larger than a shrew or smaller than an ox. While in this shape the subject has all the normal powers of the creature, including flight, keen vision, and sharp fangs or claws. Their hit points or hit dice do not change, and neither does their attack bonus or attributes. A creature's possessions meld into the form they wear, and they get no benefit from them or any enchantments on them. If the spell is used by the caster, they may freely end the spell at any time. Others so cursed may make a saving throw to resist the spell, but if it fails, they are stuck in their animal form until death or the curse is lifted by the caster or a suitable abjuration.

THE DAIFU'S BRIGHT MANTLE **LEVEL 1**

Duration: 1 day **Range:** Touch

A sorcerer must never be seen at less than his best, and this spell ensures that his dignity is maintained. While under this spell's effect the subject, their dress and their belongings are perpetually clean, dry, and neat regardless of their activities and even if physically immersed in liquid. Burning oils or foulness will not stick to the subject, sliding away after one round. Even tousled hair recomposes itself in a few moments. Employment of this spell on patrons is a common minor duty for court wizards and house sorcerers.

THE DECEITFUL VISION **LEVEL 2**

Duration: 10 minutes/level **Range:** 120'

The magic-user dredges up vividly realistic phantasms to bedevil others. In casting this spell the wizard may create a single illusion capable of fitting within a 10 x 10 x 10 foot cube. The illusion has all the seeming of reality, down to heat, stench, and sound. Even light touch will find the semblance of solidity there. It can act and behave as if it were an independent phenomenon, provided its creator remains conscious. If any real weight or force is applied to the illusion, however, it crumbles away in a cloud of colored fragments. The magic-user may move the illusion freely within range during their round.

DRIVE FORTH THE UNWANTED GUEST **LEVEL 4**

Duration: Instant **Range:** 60'

Some sorcerers find it impractical to seek the assistance of priests when attempting to drive out an unwanted spiritual presence, and so this spell allows for a form of geomantic exorcism. It must be targeted at an undead creature or a being possessed by a spirit. If a possessing spirit fails a saving throw it is immediately forced from its host and cannot possess a new one for one minute per level of the caster. If directed at an undead entity, the creature suffers a 1d10 damage die for every level of the caster, with a saving throw for half damage.

ENVOY OF CLOUDS AND RIVERS **LEVEL 3**

Duration: Special **Range:** Touch

With this spell the target becomes as nimble upon empty air or crashing waves as he is upon solid ground. When the spell is cast, the magic-user must determine whether or not the subject is to move in the air or on the sea. If the former version is cast, the subject may move through the air at their full movement rate, running upward into the sky or walking out on empty air. They may pause as readily as if they were on a solid floor, and if killed or knocked unconscious they remain hanging in place until the spell ends. This version of the spell lasts for one minute per level of the caster. If used to allow travel on the sea, the subject becomes capable of walking on or under water at their full movement rate, breathing easily and with no hindrance to their vision or danger from cold or pressure. This latter version is easier to maintain and lasts for 24 hours. The benefits of the latter version may be extended to one person per caster level.

EVASION OF THE SERPENT'S SKIN **LEVEL 4**

Duration: Instant **Range:** 100'

The sorcerer vanishes from within their own skin, re-appearing at any location within 100 feet that is not sealed shut against entry. The wizard leaves behind a hollow shell that mimics their appearance, one that moves as if it were casting a spell. If struck, the shell collapses into scaly powder; otherwise it crumbles 2d6 rounds after appearing.

EXPURGATION OF GOLDEN PURITY **LEVEL 3**

Duration: Instant **Range:** 40' cone

The sorcerer triumphantly banishes the baleful influence of unwanted magics. When this spell is cast, all magical effects within the area of effect immediately end, provided they were not placed by a caster of higher level or hit dice. Those effects cast by higher-level casters must be overcome by a successful saving throw by the magic-user against a difficulty equal to 9 plus the opposing caster's level. This spell cannot remove curses or other deep-woven magical constructs.

EXQUISITE PURIFICATION OF RENEWAL **LEVEL 4**

Duration: Instant **Range:** Touch

The magic-user knows the inner alchemy of things and the means by which that which was ruined may be restored to its natural condition. This spell may be cast on any non-magical object no larger than a wagon. It will immediately repair all damage, decay or befouling the object may have suffered, even restoring things that have been burnt to ashes. If portions of the item have been carried away or otherwise abstracted, this spell will magically reclaim them from their present location and reintegrate them into the whole.



FIVE ESSENCE SPLINTERING **LEVEL 5**

Duration: 1 minute/level *Range:* Self

The wizard capable of this spell knows the innate unity of all things and intrinsic delusion of duality. Casting this spell will splinter the wizard and his equipment into five perfect duplicates, dividing his hit points among all of them. Each duplicate may act independently on the wizard's round, but only one of them may cast spells or trigger magical items, though all may use their Fray die. When the spell ends, one of the duplicates is chosen as the "real" wizard and the rest disappear, returning any unlost hit points to the wizard. The sorcerer is unable to cast spells for one round afterwards for each wizard killed during the spell's duration, though Fray die use is still allowed.

FURIOUS TEMPEST OF FLAME **LEVEL 5**

Duration: Instant *Range:* 240'

A billowing cloud of fire erupts in a thirty-foot radius around the target of this spell, lasting for half a heartbeat before vanishing. The flames kill all creatures of 1 or 2 hit dice. Those with 3 or more may make a saving throw to resist the scorching heat. If successful, they are unharmed, but those who fail suffer 5d6 damage.

GOLDEN MORNING GRACE **LEVEL 2**

Duration: 24 hours *Range:* Touch

A much-loved spell by the aging and worn, this enchantment alters a person to appear as a humanoid of their choice. Most users favor it to hide the ravages of age or sickness, but it can also be used to impersonate other beings or disguise the user as a different sex or race entirely. The changes are tangible and physically real, though they peel away under effects that dispel magic and they do not alter the subject's underlying attributes or abilities. The spell is capable of disguising the subject's clothing as well if that proves necessary.

THE GOLDEN PICK OF THE MINER **LEVEL 3**

Duration: Instant *Range:* 60'

Some departures do not allow for the discreet use of a doorway. This spell sends a golden lance of force against an unliving object or barrier. Artificial constructs and golems take 10d6 damage, while conventional walls are destroyed up to a depth of five feet for stone and ten feet for wood or earth. The hole made is large enough for a human to walk through. Most objects smaller than a human are utterly smashed by this spell, though it cannot target magical artifacts or objects being worn or handled by a person.

GRANT THE LESSER SHADOW OF LIFE **LEVEL 3**

Duration: 1 hour/level *Range:* 30'

The lesser spirits that animate golems and porcelain servitors may be briefly impressed into other objects as well. This spell targets a single object no larger than a tall human. While under its effect, the object is as flexible and mobile as a human being, and will obey the caster's orders flawlessly. The object is too ponderous to be an effective combatant, but it has all the qualities of hardness and strength that its underlying material might possess.

THE GREAT ALCHEMY OF FORMS **LEVEL 5**

Duration: Instant *Range:* 60'

All things are as one to the learned, and this spell allows a caster to transform matter from one state to another. Up to one 9 x 9 x 9 foot cube of matter may be affected for each level of the caster. Only non-magical matter may be altered, and it must be a generally cohesive whole. The spell will also fail if used to alter objects being held or carried by creatures. The caster may transform the substance into a solid, a liquid, or a gas at their discretion, though it retains its cohesiveness and general state unless disturbed. The caster may even transform the substance into a different basic material entirely, though the spiritual balance requires the expense of engraved jewels worth the total cost of the substance to be created. The spell's effects are instantaneous and permanent, and cannot be reversed with spells.

HARMONIZATION OF INNER FORCE **LEVEL 4**

Duration: Instant *Range:* Self

After much study of her inner balance, the wizard may use this incantation to purge in an instant all poisons, diseases, and curses that might afflict her. This spell does not function on other subjects, but it is so quick and easy to cast that the wizard may use it immediately after failing a saving throw without requiring an action to cast it.

JADE BODY PURIFICATION **LEVEL 5**

Duration: Up to one hour *Range:* Self

The inner refinement of the soul brings forth perfection in the wizard. For the duration of this spell the wizard is a physically perfect specimen, with scores of 18 in Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution and a 3-point bonus trait of "Unearthly beauty". They gain a +5 bonus to their attack bonus, a Dexterity-modified base armor class of 3 and regenerate 1 hit point every round from wounds incurred while under the effect of the spell. The wizard cannot cast other spells while under this enchantment's effects. The wizard decides how long this spell will last when he casts it, ranging from a few rounds to up to one hour, and it cannot be voluntarily ended before this time.

THE LEAST ALCHEMY OF FORMS		LEVEL 1	
<i>Duration:</i>	1 minute/level	<i>Range:</i>	30'

Even a novice sorcerer knows something of the inner secrets of base matter. By casting this spell, the adept can turn up to a one-foot cube per level of some cohesive inanimate matter into a solid, a liquid, or a gas. It will remain a coherent whole unless disturbed, even if liquid or gaseous. At the end of the spell's duration, it returns to its natural state, though it may be widely scattered by then. This spell does not function on magic items or on matter being held or carried.

LENS OF THE ENLIGHTENED SCRIBE		LEVEL 1	
<i>Duration:</i>	Special	<i>Range:</i>	Self

A sorcerer has need of reading many ancient things, and there is not always time to learn the languages involved. This spell allows the wizard to read any text, magical or otherwise, as if it were written in her native language. The spell lasts a minimum of ten minutes per level, but it will not end until the caster stops reading a text.

THE LITTLE SILVER WINDOW		LEVEL 3	
<i>Duration:</i>	10 minutes/level	<i>Range:</i>	Special

A ring of silvery light three feet in diameter forms before the caster when this spell is used. He may call forth visions of any place he has seen or visited while the mirror is in existence, scrying that location even from a great distance. The caster may move the focal point of the spell up to 60 feet per round once it is established and can hear and see all that goes on there. Heroes and other magically-sensitive entities may make a saving throw to realize that they are being spied-upon. If a spell of dispelling is cast in the area being viewed by a silver window, the ring bursts and inflicts 5d6 damage on the caster.

LUMINOUS PURITY OF JADE		LEVEL 2	
<i>Duration:</i>	Special	<i>Range:</i>	Touch

Just as base wood and coal may burn with mundane fire, so may finer substances blaze with better radiance. This spell allows a caster to ignite a gemstone. The flame will burn with unquenchable heatless light for one year for every 1 gp value of the jewel. The spell draws all the virtue of the stone into the flame, making it worthless glass.

MARCH OF CLAY SOLDIERS		LEVEL 4	
<i>Duration:</i>	10 minutes/level	<i>Range:</i>	60'

Coarse earth rises to obey the sorcerer when this spell is cast. Up to one clay soldier per caster level rises from the earth and obeys the bidding of the wizard. Each one has statistics of 1 HD, AC 7, Atk +1, Dmg 1d6, Move 10', and Morale 12. At the end of the spell's duration they crumble into earth once more.

MASTER OF THE ANTIMONY GATE		LEVEL 2	
<i>Duration:</i>	Instant	<i>Range:</i>	Touch

Long-dead wizards have a most distressing habit of sealing their wisdom behind many bars and sorcerous locks. This spell springs these locks, causing doors, chests, windows, gates, and any other portal that could theoretically be opened by a single person to spring wide. To open a portal sealed by magic the caster must make a successful saving throw versus a difficulty of 9 plus the level of the caster who set the seal.

MEDITATION UPON THE CLOUDS		LEVEL 2	
<i>Duration:</i>	10 minutes/level	<i>Range:</i>	Touch

This incantation allows the sorcerer to lighten his body or that of a willing ally, slowly rising into the air and levitating as the caster directs. While under the effects of this spell the caster may move the subject up to 30 feet in any direction, though such translation requires his action for the round as he concentrates on the effect. The wizard may instinctively trigger this spell as an instant action if in danger of falling. Such swift activation merely drifts the caster safely down from a height before ending.

PAINTED VERMILLION EYES		LEVEL 1	
<i>Duration:</i>	Indefinite	<i>Range:</i>	30'

The blandishments of a false friend can be overwhelming when imbued with sorcerous arts. The target of this spell must be an intelligent humanoid of natural origin- the spell does not work on undead, golems, or other supernatural entities. The target may make a saving throw to resist the spell, but on a failure they are struck by a sudden, overwhelming feeling of friendship toward the caster. Such friends will not attack their other allies, but will try to prevent hostilities or rescue the caster as needed. These friends will perform any other favors that do not threaten their life or imperil their fortune. Victims are allowed an additional saving throw to break the spell every day at dusk. The spell is quite subtle in its casting, and if the sorcerer makes no unusual demands the victim may not notice the enchantment.

PATH OF THE DRY SEASON		LEVEL 4	
<i>Duration:</i>	1 minute/level	<i>Range:</i>	240'

The desiccated air of the dry season's height is summoned into a wall of blazing heat and parched air. At least one end of the path must start somewhere within the allowed range, but the rest can extend beyond it, and the path can be curved or arranged as the caster desires up to a maximum size of 10' high, 5' wide, and 20' of length per caster level. It can be dropped on top of targets, but they are allowed a saving throw to get clear of it before it can harm them. Any other living creature who enters the path immediately suffers a 1d6 damage die for every two levels of the caster, with a saving throw for half damage. Water and other liquids in the path are immediately evaporated up to a maximum volume equal to the path itself. The path can be detected from its effects on the terrain and brush, but is otherwise invisible to ordinary sight. Unliving creatures are unaffected by the path.

RAISING THE MOUNTAIN BONES		LEVEL 5	
<i>Duration:</i>	Special	<i>Range:</i>	240'

The stones beneath the earth are summoned up into a wall of obdurate rock. The spell only functions where bedrock exists, and at least one end of the wall must start within the allowed range of the spell. The wall can flow around and against existing objects, but it cannot upset structures or cause upheavals. The caster can configure and shape the wall as they wish to a size of 10' high, 5' wide, and 20' of length per caster level, though fine details are not possible. The spell may be cast in one of two ways- quickly, or slowly. If the wall is summoned hastily it has all the strength of the underlying stone but crumbles away to powder after one minute per caster level. If the wall is summoned slowly over a half-hour, then the created wall is permanent in nature and cannot be dispelled by magic.



REMISSION OF THE NATURAL PATH

LEVEL 3

Duration: 2 days/level *Range:* Touch

The natural processes are subject to the will of the sorcerer, and this spell can temporarily halt some undesired progression of effect. If cast on a person, it immediately freezes the effects of any diseases, poisons, or bleeding, halting them for the duration of the spell. Such a subject cannot heal or recover until the spell is ended, however, barring magical curing. If cast on dead organic matter it will preserve up to a hundred pounds of the material per caster level from decay or vermin infestation.

RESCRIPT TO THE HIDDEN THRONE

LEVEL 5

Duration: Instant *Range:* Self

The caster sends forth his mind to the outer spheres to consult with strange powers of the void. The more that the wizard exposes his thoughts to these alien powers, the more the risk of bringing back an unwanted guest in his head. The wizard may ask any number of questions that can be answered with a yes or no reply. For each question, there is a cumulative 20% chance of mental infestation, which immediately ends the spell before the question can be answered. While infested, any spell the sorcerer casts has a 25% chance of being directed to perverse or harmful ends, regardless of their original intentions. The only cure is to starve the parasitic intelligence by shunning all magic use for a full month. The spell cannot be cast while the wizard is infested, and the cumulative chance of infestation does not reset until a full month has passed between uses of the spell.

THE RIVER REED BRIDGE

LEVEL 2

Duration: 10 minutes/level *Range:* Touch

Sorcery uplifts the subject's steps, leaving them so light-footed that they may run across the surface of a river without disturbing the water or up the side of a sheer obstacle without falling. When on such unstable surfaces the subject must keep moving each round; if he spends a full round unmoving he will fall from his perch or plunge through the surface of the liquid.

THE ROAD OF BRIGHT JADE

LEVEL 5

Duration: 1 round/level *Range:* Special

A harmonization of place is brought into being as the sorcerer opens a temporary gate between locations. The sorcerer can only open a path to a destination he has visited before at a maximum range of 500 miles. The gate is open at both ends, and for the duration of the spell's effect creatures may pass to and from the joined locations through the portal, which is roughly ten feet in diameter. A given creature can only pass once through any single portal, and the gate is opaque to onlookers. The spell ends as soon as the caster passes through.

Use of this spell loosens the wizard from the fabric of place, and repeated use during a short period of time is dangerous. For each casting of the spell after the first in a one-week period there is a cumulative 25% chance of any users of the gate being hurled to a random habitable location within 500 miles. If the gate malfunctions all its users will be sent to the same incorrect destination.

SEVEN SMALL THUNDERS

LEVEL 1

Duration: Instant *Range:* 240'

Aerial virtues of storm and light are compressed into small bolts of lightning and storm clouds. For each two levels of the caster, or fraction thereof, one bolt can be hurled at any target within range. The bolt strikes automatically and does a 1d6+1 damage die, inflicting 1 to 2 points of damage. Multiple bolts can be targeted at the same victim.

THE SILENT PORTER

LEVEL 1

Duration: 1 hour/level *Range:* 30'

A ghostly shard of force is animated by this incantation to labor for the sorcerer. The silent porter appears as a translucent human figure dressed and appearing as the caster desires. It cannot speak or think, but it can obey simple instructions and perform menial tasks without supervision with same strength and capacity as an ordinary laborer. Any attack or damage will disperse the force, and it cannot fight or defend itself.

SLAVES OF BONE AND MIST **LEVEL 5****Duration:** Indefinite **Range:** Touch

Necromancy is profoundly repugnant to most of the cultures of the isles, but some sorcerers are unconcerned with the respect due the ancestors. With a supply of corpses that have not received appropriate burial rites the wizard can call up a number of undead servants. A number of hit dice worth of undead equal to the caster's level may be created at once, most often hungry ghosts as per the Bestiary chapter.

These undead are obedient to their creator, becoming uncontrolled upon his death. Each ritual costs 50 gp in expendable implements for each hit die of undead created, and the ritual can only be performed on a night of the new moon. Other, more powerful or costly rites exist to conjure more numerous or potent undead slaves.

THE SOVEREIGN SIGN AGAINST EVIL **LEVEL 2****Duration:** Special **Range:** 10' radius

The wizard can hold back the attentions of the undead and other supernatural foes with the power of this sign. So long as the caster spends his action concentrating on the sigil, no undead being or other unnatural entity may strike them or use their powers against the caster. The protection extends to companions, provided they remain directly adjacent to the wizard.

The spell continues after the wizard stops concentrating, lasting an additional 1 round per character level. The spell ends instantly if the wizard or any of his companions performs a hostile act toward an affected creature. Exceptionally mighty entities may be able to break down the sigil's power, though usually at the cost of suffering a 1d6 damage die per caster level, with a saving throw for half.

THE SUPERIOR ALCHEMY OF FORMS **LEVEL 3****Duration:** 1 minute/level **Range:** 60'

This spell can perform any transformation allowed to the Least Alchemy of Forms, but may also purify or refine base matter in the area affected by the spell. Ores are refined instantly into ingots, plants into extracts, rotted food into wholesome provender, and filthy, damaged objects into cleaned mended ones. Such refinement is permanent, while changes of state last only so long as the spell's duration. Mending an object requires that the object fit within the volume affected and have all of its major parts present.

TIRELESS HORSE OF LONG TRAVEL **LEVEL 4****Duration:** 24 hours **Range:** Touch

Long journeys are made easier by a good steed, and the *Tireless Horse of Long Travel* will bear its master as far and as fast as he desires. One horse can be conjured for each level of the caster, and each horse will obey only its chosen master. The horse has the same armor class and statistics as does a normal riding horse, but can ride tirelessly over land, sea, and mountain without halting, moving up to ten miles an hour over every kind of terrain.

The chief limit on the horse's travel is the wizard's ability to endure it, and a Constitution check must be made against a difficulty of 10. On a success, the rider can ride up to fifteen hours before exhaustion forces a stop, while a failure means the rider can bear only eight before a full night's rest.

TORRENT OF INNER FORCE **LEVEL 3****Duration:** Instant **Range:** 240'

The inner force of the arcanist is purified and released in a torrent of lethal chi. The blaze streaks forth in a path ten feet long for every character level and five feet wide. Living and animated foes within this range are harmed for a 1d6 damage die for every character level of the wizard, with a saving throw for half damage. The torrent does no harm to inert matter.

THE TUMULT OF BANNERS AND HORNS **LEVEL 4****Duration:** 1 round/level **Range:** 40' cone

A great clamor of dissonant tones erupts in the area of effect, forcing each subject to make a saving throw to resist a maddening confusion. Whenever victims choose to make a hostile action, they have a 50% chance of actually seeking to harm a different subject, even an ally. If no other target is within range they will stand baffled for that round.

VICTORIOUS GENERAL'S SHOUT **LEVEL 2****Duration:** Instant **Range:** 40' cone

The ferocious inner force of the wizard is expressed in a shouted command which can be no more than two words in length. All intelligent enemies within the area of effect must make a saving throw or obey the command for one round per character level, provided the demand is not directly harmful to themselves. Affected entities who cannot understand the wizard's language do nothing but defend.

WALKING AMONG THE COWED **LEVEL 2****Duration:** 1 round/level **Range:** 240'

A paralyzing wave of terror bursts in a ten-foot radius at a chosen point within range. All those caught within the zone must make a saving throw to throw off the fright, and will otherwise remain frozen in terror for the duration of the spell. Victims are capable of cowering away from blows, but cannot move except to avoid certain doom.

WALL OF THE RAGING MONSOON **LEVEL 4****Duration:** 1 minute/level **Range:** 240'

The rains of the monsoon season form a wall of raging water as this spell summons the deluge out of season. The wall created must have one end within the spell's range, but the rest can snake in any configuration chosen by the caster up to 10' high, 5' wide, and 20' of length per caster level. The roaring waters of the wall make it impossible to fire projectiles through the barrier and no creature smaller than an ogre can push through the wall. If the wall is created on top of a creature it must make a saving throw or suffer 2d6 damage dice as it is thrown clear. Any flames within ten feet of the wall are drenched by its spray. At the spell's end the water vanishes.

WITHERING DEFILEMENT OF FLESH **LEVEL 5****Duration:** Instant **Range:** 240'

This mighty incantation scourges a single target, smiting it with occult force and tearing its fibers apart in a noisome spray of malignant geomantic force. If the subject makes a successful saving throw, it takes one point of damage for every two levels of the caster. On a failure, it suffers a 1d10 damage die per caster level. The spell has no effect upon inanimate objects.

MUNIFICENT PATRONS

The open-handed souls numbered on this page deserve the credit due to their generous support of *Scarlet Heroes*. Over a thousand people contributed to the Kickstarter that financed the production of this game, but the souls below were exceptionally generous in their offerings. Thanks to their aid and the help of hundreds of other backers, *Scarlet Heroes* became a reality.

Aside from their commemorative value, name lists like the ones below can come in handy for NPC names and other semi-random uses. Just pluck a first name from one and a surname from another and you have a suitable name for some nefarious villain or innocent bystander. With a trusty list of names to hand, your evil wizards and brutal tyrants need never go unspecified again.

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Michael Zacharias
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Sam Curry
Shawn Wood
Simon "Smescrater" Carter
Simon Ward
Sterling Brucks
Steven L. Cowan
Steven R Harris
The Sutherland Brothers
Wilhelm Fitzpatrick
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THE WORLD OF THE RED TIDE

Three hundred years ago, the world was consumed by a crimson mist. The Red Tide crept remorselessly from the eastern seas, slowly swallowing up the land in a fog that was filled with demons and worse creatures still. All the world was devoured at last, save for a flotilla led by the great diviner Lammach of the Ninefold Celestial Empire.

Lammach had foreseen the impending disaster, but the prophecy was ignored by those who could not bear to believe him, those who preferred to think him mad or mistaken. Frustrated in his warning, Lammach was able to prepare a great fleet to carry those survivors he could rescue to the Sunset Isles, a far western archipelago of wild, untamed islands that his vision told him would be a refuge against the Tide. He was right- even now, the red mist rolls and seethes a hundred miles from shore. It dares come no closer, though sinister tendrils of the mist sometime creep onto land to infect the minds of the weak or desperate with terrible promises.

The Isles were not uninhabited. The savage Shou swarmed on their shores, constantly at war with each other and with all outsiders. They had thrown back all attempts at colonization for millennia, but now, with no where else to go, the exiles knew they had to fight or be exterminated. Archmage Lammach died in the war but the disorganized Shou were driven back, with the great southern isle of Ektau half-claimed for humanity. In the Godbarrow mountains and western reaches of the isle, the Shou seethed and struggled amongst themselves when they were not raiding the hateful invaders.

For generations, there was peace on the isle. The great city of Xian that Lammach had raised became the foremost city of the Isles, its looming towers overseeing the trade of half a hundred smaller islands. In the north, the Archmage Rai sought to recreate the lost beauty of his people, the Kueh, in the city of Kitaminato. The hardy Eirengarders built the city of Hohnberg as a shield against the western mountains, and in the southwest, the sorcerers of Tien Lung performed rites that the circumspect wizards of Xian dared not enact. Humanity flourished, driving back the Shou and taking new lands.

A hundred and eighty years ago that peace ended in fire. The Witch-Queen Agrahti's horde nearly destroyed humanity, an endless legion of Shou pouring down from the mountains to shatter the border provinces and hammer the very walls of Xian. Were it not for her death through the courageous sacrifice of a band of adventurers, Xian would have fallen and the other cities of the Isles would have perished soon after. Hohnberg was hopelessly besieged, Tien Lung had slaughtered half its citizens to fuel the blood magic that defended it, and Archmage Rai had bargained with the Hell Kings themselves, swearing the service of his people in exchange for their lives.

In the end, the Ravaging left the first glory of the isles in ashes and smoke. Great wonders that had survived the Red Tide were shattered and carried away, and the survivors were left to struggle.

THE ISLES OF THE PRESENT DAY

The recovery from this Ravaging has been slow and piecemeal. Hohnberg still gives grudging obedience to Xian, but Tien Lung scorns its former master and the Shogun Rai even now conducts an undeclared border war in the north. The Shou have yet to raise another warlord like Agrahti, but their raids and attacks plunge deeper into eastern lands than they ever would have dared in better days. Much of the island's splendor was lost in the Ravaging, and even now brave souls struggle to reclaim the lore and artifacts it cost the east.

Still, the human numbers swell, and more and more are being forced west by lack of land or opportunity. They cut out hardscrabble rice-farming villages or clear jungle-crustured ruins for their new homes. Many die on Shou spears or under the blades of bandits, but enough live to press against lands that have been Shou grounds for generations. The pressure is growing in the western foothills, and the border provinces are growing too populous for the Shou to ignore.

Meanwhile, the Mandarinate of Xian is distracted with the petty affairs of politics and the division of their spoils. Corruption and cruel exploitation is growing more common on the frontier, far from the watchful eyes of the magistrates, and the common people are crying out for aid. Tien Lung's unholy sorceries demand the fuel of blood and lives, and a city would make a splendid sacrifice. Shogun Rai's masters are lashing him on to more vigorous action in the south, demanding a new tithe of souls from the soft Xianese.

And worst of all, the Red Tide's curse is hanging heavier on the land. More and more victims are finding themselves infected with the terrible dreams of the Tide, the whispered promises that vow every desire's fulfillment for the simplest, smallest acts of obedience. Just a little ritual, just a trifling prayer, and good fortune and success are theirs. Yet each step is never enough, and any who succumb in even the smallest way to this dream-plea are eventually left as helpless thralls of the Tide, committing unspeakable atrocities for the sake of wild, delusional rewards.

These cysts of evil are swelling in the hidden places of the isles, and inquisitors are finding some cults strong enough to open up gateways for the Tide, portals to allow in the demons of the crimson mist. The authorities have been able to hush such reports thus far. Still, if the people were to think that the isles themselves were no longer a secure refuge against the past then half the cities on Ektau would be ablaze with the pyres of suspected cultists and luckless innocents. The magistrates struggle to conceal the dangers that grow in the dark.

Yet some wonder if it must not come to this in the end, to a death of flames and purification, to a death of Shou spears and sharpened teeth, to a death of blood sorcery and infernal sacrifice. The people labor and are blind, but the wise see the darkness that is descending on the isles. They see, and they fear what is to come....

THE SUNSET ISLES



**K
E
Y**

- Grasslands
- Jungle
- Forest
- Mountains
- Evergreen Forest
- Scrubland

= 50 miles

THE PEOPLES OF THE ISLES

While the wild Shou doubtless outnumber them by five to one at least, humans are by far the most populous of the "civilized" races of the Isles. The tangled ships of the exile fleet brought refugees from all across the world to the shores of the Sunset Isles. Not all were human, either; dwarven strongholds have existed in the Isles for ages, and halfling and elven wayfarers joined with the fleet in tis flight. Those peoples described below are merely among the most common.

DWARVES

The human ancestors of the dwarves were stolen away at the dawn of the world by the dark goddess known as the Mother Below. For uncounted eons they slaved for her, digging a massive network of galleries, halls, and cruelly-wrought palaces deep below the surface of the earth. This House of Night Unending was their prison for ages before memory, until they discovered the spiritual power of gold to defeat the Mother Below.

Her hideous spawn and the traitorous collaborators among their own people were driven back and the goddess herself torn into a thousand maddened shards. The dwarves fled toward the surface, where even now they keep watch in the Gate Citadels, those ancient buried fortresses that guard the passages downward into the House below.

Dwarves labor all their lives to gather gold, so they may be buried with it and carry the spiritual power downward to join their ancestors below. There they fight against the shards of the Mother and her hateful servants, locked in eternal warfare with their ancient mistress. Once a dwarf has been dead for some decades the gold's spirit has safely departed and it may be recovered for trade. Such "spent gold" is of little interest to most dwarves as anything but ornament and decoration. Any dwarf can discern this spent gold on sight.

Dwarves live in clans, each in their own delve with nominal allegiance to the High King at Altgrimmr. The harsh needs of survival have divided roles greatly between males and females- men mine, fight, and build structures, while women craft, forge, and perform all other domestic duties. Dwarves who refuse this division of labor suffer shame and scorn, and cannot hope to win respect among their people without a great show of undeniable excellence at their work. Dwarves hate slavery in all its forms and all but the most broken and wretched will die before they accept a collar.

Dwarves are rarely more than five feet tall. Males are built broad and powerful in build, while females tend more to well-curved solidity. Beards are a point of pride to most male dwarves, while the women adorn their hair with the jewelry they or their mothers have made. All dwarves can see even in perfect darkness, though they light their halls lavishly in defiance of their ancient enemies below.

EIRENGARDERS

Big, blonde, muscular folk of the arid Eirengard ("EYE-ren-gard") plains, the Eirengarders are an oddity among the exiles for their devout monotheism. Almost all worship the Maker, the god revealed to them by the Iron Prophet centuries ago. While the faith has since splintered into scores of sects, most Makerites can agree on the basic principles of the faith: worship of the Maker alone, purity of body, hard labor, unflinching courage, compassion to the weak, and honesty in word and deed. Before the Red Tide their mercenary pikemen were hired by half a hundred kings to fight in foreign wars. Now on the Isles, they often serve as soldiers to the armies of the city-states.

Eirengarders are an orderly, stern, self-disciplined people as a general rule. Their history as mercenary soldiers has marked their culture; when a man dies, it is expected that one of his near kinsman will marry his wife and provide for his children. Still, not all wives are interested in becoming a minor wife to an existing household, and not all kinsmen can afford to support a dozen new children fostered on him by a particularly bloody battle. Some of these are forced out of their communities and onto the road, either to find their own support in the world or somehow earn gold enough to feed the mouths that depend on them now.

ELVES

Those demi-humans known as elves descend from an ancient race of sorcerer-kings who aspired to elevate their people to immortal divinity. The resultant ritual went catastrophically wrong, forever binding elven souls to the mundane world. While elves never grow old, their deaths merely cause them to reincarnate into an elven infant. Much of their past memory is lost, but not all, and elven "children" can be highly unsettling to humans.

Elves organize themselves by Creed, joining together in philosophical schools oriented toward particular goals and forms of personal excellence, the better to justify their current incarnation's existence. Some are bright and noble in their ambitions, while others are more selfish, and some act for reasons and rationales that make no sense to ordinary human reason.

Elves appear in the same variety as humans do, albeit with subtly "refined" features and slightly pointed ears. Some humans find them disquieting, their forms a little too perfect and a little too stylized to seem real. Their senses are unusually keen, and they can see on a moonlit evening as well as a human could at mid-day. Their numbers are very few in the Isles, and those that do not lead their lives among human cities are usually found in small academy-villages dedicated to a complementary group of Creeds.

ESHKANTI

People of the long journey and the cunning bargain, the Eshkanti ("esh-CAN-tee") have been traders and merchants for centuries. Their great city of Eshkant commanded the best strait between the Western Sea and the Sea of Pearls, and as Eshkant commanded nothing else of value they were obliged to make the most of their trading opportunities. Eshkanti merchants could be found venturing into the most perilous and untamed reaches of the world before the Red Tide, searching for the gold that would elevate them among their people and bring security to their families.

The Eshkanti are lean and hawk-featured as a general rule, with dark hair and bronze skin. They prize charm, quick wits, and cosmopolitan ease in strange circumstances. Eshkanti diplomats and mediators soothed many of the worst strains between peoples during the early years of the exile, smoothing over quarrels and forging the peace that trade requires to prosper.

With the maturing of the eastern markets, however, new opportunities for wealth are growing scarcer, and young men and women are being forced to range further afield if they are to accumulate the wealth and esteem that will get them a good marriage or honorable place among their people. Such young merchants often run caravans and trade supplies where even companies of armed men dare not go.

GADAAL

Archmage Lammach himself was of the Gadaal (“gah-DAL”), an astromancer transplanted far from his home. The Gadaal were dwellers in the high mountains of the south and a simple people of herds, hunting, scanty farming, and rich gem mines. While the Gadaal clans led a material life that was impoverished by the standards of the wealthy Ninefold Celestial Empire, they possessed a remarkable heritage of astronomic wisdom and oracular lore.

Their native astromancers were famed for the astonishingly clear, lucid, and apposite prophecies they provided. Here in the isles, true astromancers are far fewer in number, but the Gadaal still cherish rituals of foretelling and auspices to best guide their hard lives.

Gadaal are tall, slender, and very dark-skinned, with tightly curled locks and eyes that are often in gem-bright colors. They favor the borderlands and other less-settled places, where a clan may have freedom to live as it pleases and a soul may act as their choice and portents deem best. Many military scouts are Gadaal, and their trail-lore is prized in expeditions into dangerous Shou territories or the lands of a rival power.

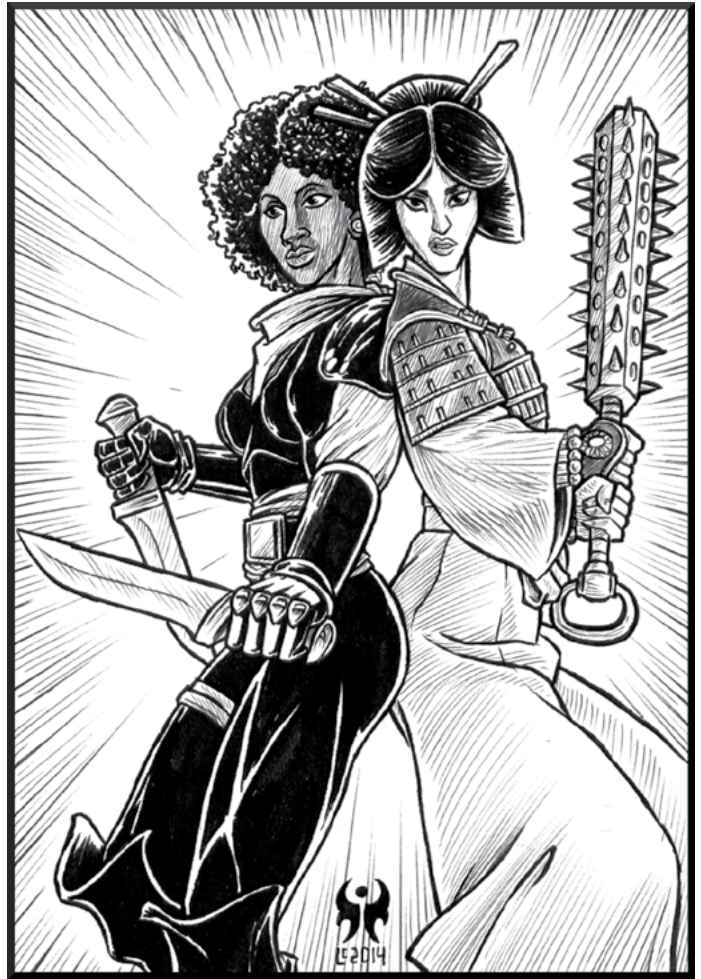
HALFLINGS

A small folk averaging no more than four feet of height, halflings are the heirs of humans who turned away from the gods, rejecting their worship in favor of their own “Quiet Way” of peace, calm, and comfortable smallness. They are a bucolic race of farmers, artisans, and villagers who largely shun the affairs of the outside world, paying tribute to the local lords and avoiding trouble whenever possible. This is the usual state of affairs, as halflings are also the most unflinchingly courageous soldiers on the Isles.

When the halflings refused to fear the gods, they also refused to fear anything else. While perfectly capable of respecting dangers and recognizing threats, a halfling never naturally feels fear, intimidation, or panic. They act calmly and decisively in moments of crisis and are perfectly capable of instant self-sacrifice if necessary for the good of their chosen group. A pike square of halfling farmers is enough to make a unit of elite Red Jade Templars pause- they know they’ll kill the runts, but every halfling in the square will try to take one of them to hell with him. Halflings retreat in the face of pointless losses, but they never rout in panic.

Those halflings found outside their villages are often exiles forced out by a lack of land, compelled to find a new home. The boldest accumulate enough wealth to found their own villages, while others are forced to ways of life that are not always entirely legal- a halfling might shun crime out of prudence or morals, but not because he’s afraid of the consequences. Most are upright and decent folk, but a small number among them are dangerously amoral, ruthless souls who think nothing of slicing a throat or stifling a human child if it’s useful to their ends.

While halflings have no unique senses, their small size and unobtrusiveness makes them very good at passing unnoticed. Despite their size, they also are possessed of a peculiar strength and solidity, allowing them to use any large weapon as readily as a human might without being spun about by the inertia of a greatsword’s swing or tipped over by the weight of a greataxe. Units of mercenary halfling pikemen can name their own wages for most employers, who prize their orderly behavior in camp and their ice-veined calm on the bloodiest battlefields.



IMPERIALS

Proud heirs of the Ninefold Celestial Empire that once was the foremost human nation of the old world, the Imperials are a slim people who stand a little shorter than most of their peers, with black hair, dark almond eyes, and skin that ranges from gold-tinted ivory to deep bronze. They and their children number perhaps half the humans in the Isles, though centuries of intermarriage have mixed them with many other peoples.

The culture and mores of the Imperials have colored many of the other peoples of the Isles, and the Imperial way of doing things is often considered the “normal way” for things to be managed. Not every other community welcomes this, and some nurse resentments over the “stifling” of their own traditional ways.

Imperials prize learning, as their empire was once a magocracy, and the “Low Imperial” speech and script of their common classes is the lingua franca of the Isles. Their clothing has also become the common standard in the hot, humid south, with laboring men and women rarely wearing more than a sarong wrapped about the waist. Nobles and the wealthy favor ornate robes for both genders, with tight-fitting dresses or wraps of leaf-chiffon for younger women.

Family ties are strong among Imperials, and it is expected that each member of a family should be useful to the others. While this occasionally leads to nepotism, it more often compels the young men and women to some sort of personal excellence or accomplishment, whether it be the snaring of a politically-valuable spouse or a sterling record in fighting off Shou border-raids. A “useless” man or woman can expect little respect in the family and few marriage prospects.

KUEH

Once a client people of the Ninefold Celestial Empire, the Kueh ("KOO-eh") are cousins of a sort to the Imperials. Their former rulers were conquered centuries ago, their samurai elites absorbed into the Imperial bureaucracy and the common people left to their fishing-boats and traditional ways. When the Red Tide came their mandarins died in their palaces while the fisherfolk were able to flee the encroaching mist. Those that survived have sought to preserve and restore their ancient culture, though many of them honestly have only a dim idea of what it is they are trying to revive.

Kueh are slightly taller and paler than most Imperials, and the robes their nobles favor use different patterns of brocade and dye. Their leaders and people of importance are often expected to excel at "Kueh culture", even though such culture was profoundly changed by centuries of Imperial hegemony. In practice, many social grandees are tacitly accepted on the strength of their excellence at *something* useful, whether or not superb horsemanship, exquisite archery, or magnificent weaponsmithing really was part of the Kueh tradition.

The Kueh are greatly divided. In the north, the Shogun Rai is pledged to the Hell Kings in repayment for the terrible salvation of his people from the Shou hordes. Dreaming of preserving his cherished society he has instead led it into a terrible perversion of true Kueh culture, trapping its citizens in a grimly beautiful land of delicate color, elegant form, and cold atrocity.

Many were able to flee his rule, and these Kueh hate him and all his works with the fury reserved for a kinsman. Many brave young Kueh feel an obligation to fight him, to defend the name of their people and the honor of their forebears from the evil the Shogun has created.

SHOU

The dreaded native peoples of the Sunset Isles, the Shou ("SHOO") are divided into four major types named by the early Eirengarder explorers. "Orcs" are tall, muscular, and tireless, the most common breed in the mountains and in the rough hills. "Goblins" are short, rarely exceeding five feet, and a nimble and agile race that favor the jungles and forests. "Bugbears" are the biggest of the Shou, some reaching seven feet in height, with massive physiques and surprising powers of stealth. "Hobgoblins" are sports sometimes birthed by goblin tribes, a taller, uncannily intelligent subspecies that has a natural gift for leadership and small unit tactics.

While the Shou favor scarification, piercings, tattoos, tooth-sharpening, and all manner of other savage display, most could actually could pass for handsome, well-formed humans were it not for their adornment. A few of them are also marked by unusual skin coloration, such as greens, oranges, or blues. Birth defects and other congenital illnesses are almost unknown among them.

Shou hate the invading exiles almost as much as they hate each other. Each tribe is perpetually at war with their neighbors, constantly stealing females, killing hunters, and ambushing small parties. Their witch-priestesses say their god Shakun decrees this so that only the mightiest of his children may live to await his return. Only at certain times appointed by their witch-priestesses is any peaceful engagement possible, save for when some mighty chieftain or canny negotiator is able to forge a collection of squabbling tribes into a single fearsome horde. The bordermen tremble at such a thought, and many adventurers die bringing down such warlords before they can wreak havoc on the human lands.

Shou never deal with humans; any such Shou "traitors" would be slaughtered by an alliance of their outraged neighbors, and the humans would respond in much the same fashion to their own kind. This does not stop some tribes and human communities from trying to reach a peace of necessity, but they must hide all such dealings from their neighbors. Other human merchants are willing to sell weapons and other tools to far-sighted Shou chieftains, heedless of the cost to their brethren- or of the gruesome lynching that might await their discovery by their peers.

Shou live largely in nomadic bands, as hunting and war are the only acceptable professions for a male. The most powerful settle down in the ruins of human villages to allow farming by human slave laborers or the captured Shou of other tribes. Females are considered chattel, with the exception of the witch-priestesses who are often the true powers behind the tribe- and who sometimes directly assume control. Even those males who show signs of magical powers are expected to socially adopt the role of a witch-priestess. Some tribes go so far as to demand surgical correction for such males by means of assorted decoctions and obsidian-edged knives.

Shou have an aggressive disposition and a great toleration for long periods of stress and privation, but they are fundamentally human-like in their thinking. Shou are perfectly capable of softer and more temperate emotions, and the bloody savagery of their current existence is not the only one possible for them. Those Shou leaders who try for some more peaceful way of existence can expect to be cut down by their shorter-sighted rivals or attacked by bitter human forces, however, and so the present state of bloodshed is unlikely to change without heroic interference with the status quo.

Unlike dwarves, elves, and halflings, Shou are interfertile with humans. The brutal warfare that has raged for centuries in the Isles has led to a not-inconsiderable number of Shou-blooded men and women in human society. Without tribal markings, these men and women usually appear simply as unusually comely and well-formed humans, though some are marked with the greens, blues, or oranges of more brightly-colored Shou ancestors. Most conceal this "tainted" blood as best they can, or live in isolated communities entirely composed of the Shou-blooded. Those of known Shou blood often suffer scorn and abuse for it, while full-blooded Shou cannot hope to live in human lands save as an enslaved laborer or closely-guarded odalisque. The Shou have less ambiguity in the matter, as the tribes slaughter all "halfbreeds" as insults to the purity of Shakun's blood.

SKANDR

Dark-haired and pale-eyed seafarers, reavers, and stonemasons, small bands of Skandr ("SKAN-der") pirates have dwelled in the Isles for centuries. Far from Skandrheim, their rocky home to the east, they have raised a settlement at Nordheim on the far northern isle of Aktau. The ancestors of the Skandr were taught great arts of stonemasonry by the ancient dwarves and they are esteemed as the greatest masons and stonewrights of the human peoples.

They are also esteemed as the greatest pirates and raiders. Skandr favor daring, boldness, and clear-eyed courage in their heroes, where success is the justification for much of dubious propriety. Trade is the most respectable means by which a Skandr might show their mettle, though more than one merchant ship is inclined to turn pirate when the opportunity arises. Their ships carry goods among the far isles of the archipelago and bring word from distant settlements.

THE NATIONS OF THE ISLES

In the three centuries since humanity first fled to the Sunset Isles a patchwork of city-states, petty domains, and hard-pressed polities has formed among the scattered islands. Most of them are small, encompassing no more than a single town and its outlying farming villages, or some half-desolate patch of wilderness with the crumbled tower that commands its emptiness.

Still, some polities have managed to build more than these fragile footholds in the Isles. The following pages discuss some of the larger and more important nations in the archipelago, including the preeminent power of the Mandarinate of Xian, its southern rivals in sorcerous Tien Lung, its diabolical foes in Kitaminato to the north, and their hard-pressed allies of Hohnberg in the west.

These four polities are the most important ones on the great southern isle of Ektau, but they are not the only ones. The dwarf-king in Deep Altgrimmr rules over the Gate Citadel his people reclaimed from its enigmatic emptiness, and a scattering of quiet halfling villages provide both food and fearless defenders to their liege-lords. In the mountains, forests, and deep jungle can be found elven sanctuaries where the adepts of the Creeds meditate upon the subtleties of their philosophies and hold apart from the world until the proper time should come to wake their ancient apotheons.

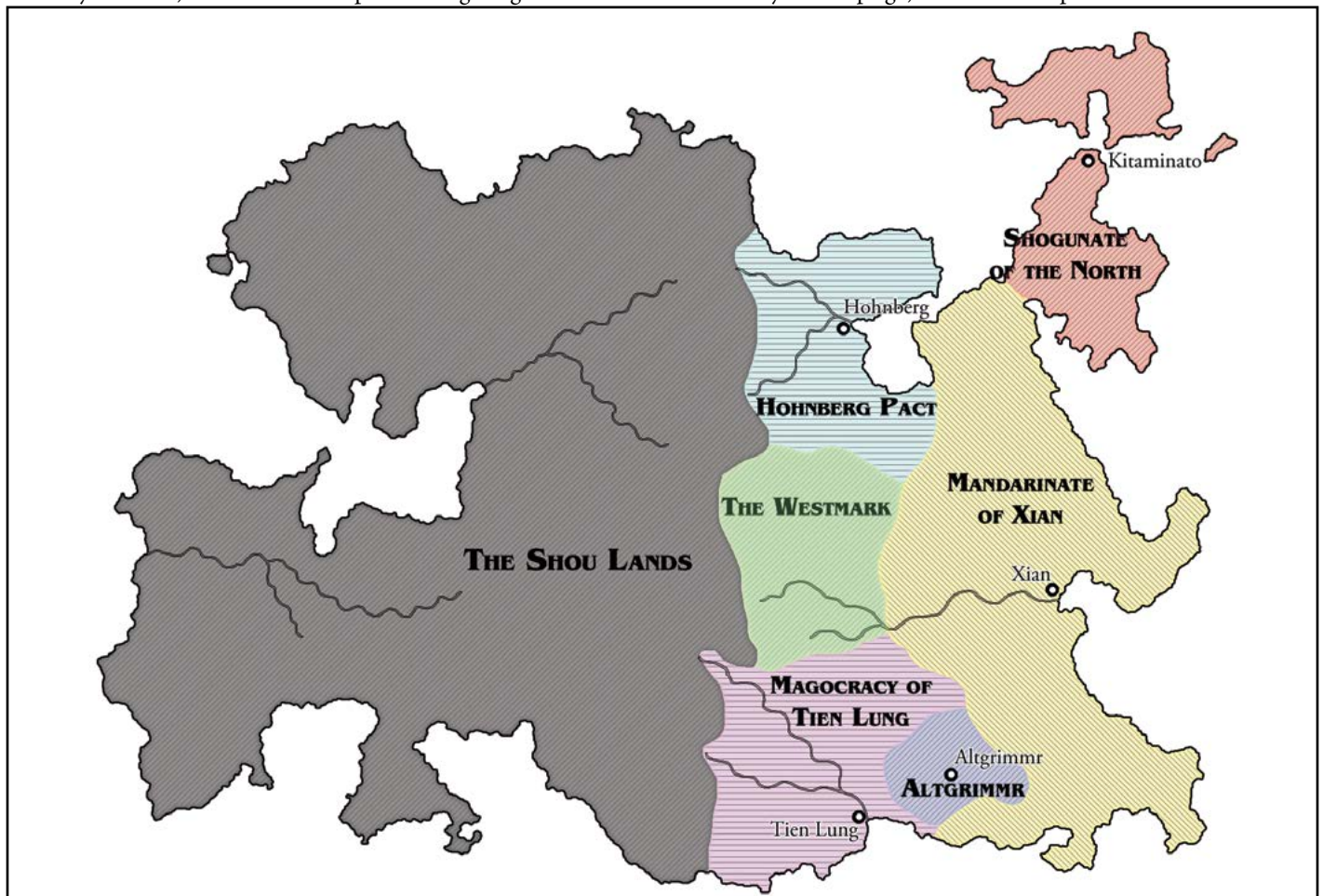
And there are petty statelets by the hundred to the west, where the writ of the great polities does not reach and where the spears of Shou raiders are a greater threat than any chastisement from some fat eastern daifu. Most of these small domains are doomed to be ground under by the Shou, but some live and promise to grow greater still.

The descriptions given here provide the flavor and character of these great polities. Specific details of population, military power, and other particulars are omitted; these details are best chosen by the GM to fit their own campaign needs. Xian might be a decadent, teeming metropolis of a hundred thousand souls, or it might be a hard-pressed port city with but twenty-five thousand warm bodies to hold back disaster. Choose the numbers that make the most interesting game. Just make sure to make a note of them once you pick your proportions among the cities, so you can keep things consistent.

THE FLAVOR OF THE ISLES

Most cultures in the Isles are strongly influenced by the Imperials who make up roughly half of the archipelago's human population. These heirs of the Ninefold Celestial Empire have the kind of clothing, cuisine, and social mores as you might find in pre-modern Southeast Asia. If you're not certain how to handle a particular setting element, you should just take a hint from that constellation of cultures and use whatever works best for your own game's needs.

While the Imperials are the most common cultural baseline, they are not the only ones with a presence in the Isles. Individual cities and regions can have their own distinct flavor, preserving folkways and customs from lands now long since vanished beneath the creeping mist. A valiant knight of a fallen empire can fight alongside a veteran samurai and a shrine-maiden versed in mountain sorceries, all to drive back the longboats of Skandr sea-raiders in defense of an Eshkanti caravanserai. If you want to make room for a particular style of hero in your campaign, the Isles have a place for them.



THE MANDARINATE OF XIAN

Once the unquestioned ruler of the great island of Ektau, the Mandarinate has dwindled since the Ravaging. Hohnberg still pays a distracted sort of fealty to it, obeying when it is not too inconvenient for the Thusendi and his people, but the blood sorcerers of Tien Lung mock their former masters and the Shogunate clearly counts Xian as meat for eventual conquest. The current Mandarin is, like all his predecessors, an heir to the Archmage Lammach. Even so, his own magical talents are held in contempt by the sorcerous Shogun Rai.

The mighty city of Xian remains the largest known human settlement in the isles, however, and its network of lesser market towns and farming villages fuels its great wealth. Its wealth and military security since the Ravaging have left its noble leaders more concerned with internal quarrels and machinations than the defense of the realm.

The Mandarin is weakened by his lack of an heir, and the great junzis who run the various ministries of the Mandarinate often stymie his will for the sake of contesting a rival. The Mandarin's preference for male company is unremarkable, but his neglect of his wife and concubines threatens to destabilize the entire domain.

The nobility of the Mandarinate is precarious. Junzis are appointed only at the pleasure of the Mandarin, and while their authority is unlimited in the ministry they oversee they must take care not to let a rival engineer their downfall. Daifus, the wider noble class, are granted the title for their great accomplishments and services to the state. While their immediate family and parents are also credited with the title, their children must prove their worthiness in turn or their noble standing will die out for the next generation.

While this ensures a steady flow of new talent into Xian's nobility, it also makes for cutthroat competition among them to ensure that enough bribes, blackmail, and favors are accumulated to ensure the continuing nobility of even the most mediocre heir. Some daifus are too poor or upright to participate in such chicanery, and their sons and daughters are forced to ensure their own childrens' title by actually earning the esteem.

Xian is not a wicked land, though it is a badly distracted one. Slavery is forbidden, even if forced penal labor is not uncommon, and the magistrates of the cities and towns usually give fair judgments so long as the complainants are both of the same social rank.

Still, the ongoing quarrels in the capital and distraction from affairs of state have left the provincial governors and border-town magistrates able to tax and oppress their people cruelly with little protest from their superiors. The common people seek relief from the Mandarin, but there are too many who profit by the hinterland's beggaring for their petitions to make it through the bureaucracy that surrounds the ruler with clerks and costly attendants.

In Xianese lands, villages are overseen by a headman chosen by the villagers, responsible to the magistrate of the nearest market town. These magistrates answer to a provincial governor, and these governors in turn obey the Junzi of the Ministry of Interior Affairs. Beneath the Ministry of the Upright Law a hundred magistrates serve as judges and adjudicators where they are needed. Meanwhile, the Xianese Army is often in the field, though these days the need to fortify the northern border has drawn many men from the west and left the border provinces vulnerable to Shou raids, rampaging bandits, and worse things still.



THE SHOGUNATE OF THE NORTH

The undying Shogun Rai rules over this accursed land from his pale palace in Kitaminato. His realm is a lovely domain of decorous beauty, harmonious restraint, and a deep aesthetic sympathy for the natural world. The fields are rich, the fishermen's nets bulge with their catch, and the artisans of his people are exquisite in their crafts. But all of these good things have come at a terrible price.

The Shogun Rai pledged his soul and the worship of his people to the Hell Kings in exchange for their aid during the Ravaging, and for almost two centuries since he has enforced that bargain upon the people of the Shogunate. Every law and precept in the domain is calculated to hurry a soul to Hell upon its owner's death. All the usual laws against violence and villainy are in place, but merely to provide a proper measure of when to "harvest" a life, one so properly blackened and befouled with voluntary evils that it is sure to go to its proper destination. The magistrates of the Shogunate often release first offenders and other petty criminals not out of mercy, but out of concern that they may not yet be sufficiently damned.

For all their dark power, the Hell Kings cannot claim a soul that has not voluntarily embraced the taint of evil. Souls forced into wickedness are shadowed, but might yet escape the talons of demons. To better ensure a universal condemnation the Shogun's hell-priests teach the universal doom of all mortal souls, and that the only way to escape everlasting torment in the afterlife is to so please the Hell Kings with one's evil that they elevate the worshiper to a glorious place in their service. Only by vigorous and enthusiastic evil can their favor be obtained- yet this service must be sufficiently subtle to avoid falling foul of the laws before they are accomplished in their wrongs.

As a consequence, Shogunate culture is cruel and brutal. Polished courtesy hides cold malice, and the spreading of evils and the infliction of wrongs is indulged in at every legal opportunity. The many-lanterned pleasure-houses of Kitaminato are unspeakable in their vileness, cruelty not even for the sake of hungers but only for

the sake of the suffering itself. Many citizens of the Shogunate quietly strive to resist this evil, trying to preserve their souls and retain some hope of escaping the Hell Kings in the afterlife. They conduct secret funerary rites for the departed and petition gods in hidden places, knowing that an unutterably hideous death awaits them should they be found venerating any but the lords of the Hells.

The dozen provinces of the Shogunate are ruled by daimyos who have the power of life and death over every commoner within their domain. Samurai warriors in service to their lords act as enforcers of his will, and those of that caste conduct all religious and governmental affairs. Beneath them are the farmers who strive to commit such infamies as might earn them elevation to the samurai class, and below them are the merchants who grasp and struggle under the contempt of their betters. At the very bottom are those outcasts, foreigners, and disfavored of the Shogun known only as "filth", consigned to the worst labors and regularly used as entertainment by the more favored classes. Each class may lawfully abuse their inferiors, and only the annoyance of greater powers keeps them from undue excess.

Outsiders must travel carefully in the Shogunate and remain aware of the dangers of offending one of its grantees or being suspected of revering "false gods". Enough desperate merchants or amoral slavers make their living in Shogunate lands to be a hazard to friendless wanderers without a travel permit. Still, the craftwork of the Shogunate is beautifully wrought and the granaries of the wicked are filled to overflowing. The Hell Kings ensure that the Shogun's land is blessed in many ways- and that every blessing is repaid in terrible fashion.

At present the Shogunate's junks raid Xianese commerce, scarcely pretending to be pirates. Shogunate soldiers skirmish along the Xianese border, testing defenses and seeking weak points for the bloodshed to come. All in the north know that there will be war soon, but the lords of Xian are careless of their old rival, and many wonder if they can endure the bloodshed that is soon to come.



THE MAGOCRACY OF TIEN LUNG

Once a colony-city of Xian, amber-walled Tien Lung now stands haughty and alone in its pride. It is a city of wizards and blood sorcerers ruled by the Academy of Refulgent Wisdom and the Enlightened Sage who leads that school. The red rites they practice are forbidden in decent lands, but with the blood of slaves and the torment of the helpless they infuse their arts with a power greater than that of cleaner wizardry. Such practices require a regular supply of wretched victims, and so Tien Lung is the largest center of slave-trading on Ektau. Even though neighboring Hohnberg and Xian both shun the practice, numerous petty border lords are less scrupulous about trading with the lords of Tien Lung.

The hot, swampy climate of the city and the jungles that surround it leave its inhabitants prey to sicknesses, some cultivated by the blood sorcerers to better keep the inhabitants docile beneath their rule. Vast coffles of slaves are sent out to the jungle plantations where many strange drugs are grown for medicinal, sorcerous, or hedonistic ends. The jungle eats countless victims each day, many among those wretches who are able to escape the plantation guardians. Not all find refuge in the jungle's hidden slave villages before they are overtaken by the beasts of the deep green or the spears of Shou raiders.

Those within the city walls face even worse fates. While a painted catamite or meek-eyed serving maid may not be compelled to the killing work of the fields, the sorcerers of Tien Lung never waste a servant. With age, or sickness, or vexing error they can expect only to be sold to some red-handed wizard who needs fuel to maintain his dark magics. The process of soul vivisection necessary to carve out the most useful portions of their spirit can last hours before death releases them from torment.

Wizards rule in the city, and even visiting sorcerers are viewed with a mix of terror and groveling supplication by the commoners. A wizard or cleric may do as he pleases with the ordinary people of the city, so most merchants and others of consequence arrange for client relationships with more important arcanists in the Academy. Those who harm them can expect the anger of a great wizard. Despite this, assault on a wizard is answered in a desultory fashion; if a wizard is murdered by a commoner he clearly was not much of a mage, and no punishment is inflicted upon his assailant. Duels between wizards are likewise beyond the remit of the city guard. The Academy itself punishes those who excessively disturb the smooth operation of the city, and few survive their judgment. Those who do often regret it.

Virtually anything can be had for a price in Tien Lung. While the markets of Xian are richer and more abundant, the reeking shops and hidden places of Tien Lung offer things that no decent soul would sell. Every vice and perversion can find a supplier within the yellow walls of the city, and everything that humanity would shrink from trading can find a willing buyer. People come to Tien Lung when they are desperate, when they require a forbidden ingredient or cankered sorcery that more scrupulous mages will not supply. Some come away with what they desire, while others vanish into the city.

Outsiders in Tien Lung can often find work, though not always of a kind that they are willing to accept. Still, there are many desperate souls in the city who need rescue or help, men and women who desire the freedom of a loved one or some cure for a sorcerous affliction. A hero who wishes to strike a blow against evil will not lack for targets in the city. Still, such noble ambitions are unlikely to make for a long life.



THE HOHNBERG PACT

A great gray city in the shadow of the Godbarrow peaks, Hohnberg is not quite so uniform in populace as the Kueh of the Shogunate. Still, the blond hair and big frames of Eirengarder men and women are more common here than anywhere else in the Isles. So too are their countless churches, chapels, and mighty temples to their patron god, the Maker. The bells of the faith ring out at each hour, and the Eirengarders pattern their daily rhythms on the chiming tones.

Hohnberg is a city of labor. The plains country around the city is rich, but requires much work to bring forth its crops. Fishermen set forth from the protected bay within the stone outcrop of the city, and ships from the east dare the dangers of the Shogunate coast to bring trade from Xian and farther shores. Even so, the dangerous sea lanes and long overland distances make Hohnberg the farthest and poorest of the great cities of Ektau. The boldest sons of Hohnberg set forth in the city's famous pike companies of Eirengarder mercenaries.

The two great troubles of Hohnberg are faith and the Shou. While unusually pious for the people of the isles, Hohnbergers tolerate the worship of other gods within the walls, excepting the foul worship of the Hell Kings. The difficulty rises from the dozens of different Makerite sects within the city, each one espousing a slightly different version of the Law of the Iron Prophet. Under most circumstances the various sects get along tolerably well, but every so often some band of zealots or decadent "reformers" comes up with some set of precepts intolerable to their neighbors. Sometimes this disagreement is on a vital point of theology, such as the Pantheistic Makerites who believe that it is acceptable for the devout to worship other gods. Other times, it is on a moral point, like the Radiant Law sect who insist that Makerites are commanded to enslave and convert all non-Radiant believers and to enjoy their possessions and persons as a reward. These heretics are driven out of the city, often becoming bandits or dangerous cults of zealots in the surrounding hills.

The Shou are the second trouble, as they have been for three hundred years. Hohnberg patrols and scouts have broken countless tribes of mountain Shou, killing warlords and slaying witch-priestesses before they could muster enough Shou to threaten the softer lands of the east. Yet with the new influx of colonists from the eastern cities back into border provinces that have been left abandoned since the Ravaging, more and more human settlements are within the easy reach of Shou spears. Hohnberg cannot protect them all, and their activities are stirring up more and more Shou tribes. Some voices in the city's council speak quietly of forcibly relocating the settlers before they bring down ruin upon the whole Pact.

Hohnberg is ruled by a Thusundi, currently the ex-mercenary captain Amalric Gram. The electors are the "Landser", those citizens rich enough to own land within the city walls. Also influential in the city are the "Companies", fraternal orders that blend together a mutual aid society and a militia company. Almost every adult Hohnberger belongs to a Company, and both great and small come together for their shared holy festivals and training days. In times of crisis the Companies muster their members as garrison troops and workers.

Those villages and towns that have pledged fealty to the Thusundi are counted as part of the Pact, and may send a certain number of Landser electors to speak in council and elect new Thusundis. In return, they pay a tribute of food or other wealth to the city and may expect the protection of its military or hired agents.



THE UNTAMED LANDS

Even on the great southern island of Ektau there remain great swaths of unconquered wilderness. Beyond its familiar shores lie unnumbered smaller islands and unexplored domains, rich with the relics of exiles, explorers, and lost civilizations that withered here beyond the eye of the civilized world. Even the bravest adventurer is apt to find peril enough for their purposes in the far reaches of the Sunset Isles.

ALTGRIMMR

The dwarves have guarded the buried Gate Citadel of Altgrimmr for centuries, long before the exiles came to Ektau. They were not the first dwarves on the island, however, and the current Underking's clan found Altgrimmr's halls desolate and empty- and disturbingly new-made. Most Gate Citadels are ancient beyond time, but this one had been carved mere millennia ago, and neither in it nor in the surrounding empty dwarf-delves was there any sign of the original inhabitants. The colonist dwarves laid their claim all the same, and ever since they have been holding back the Shou and keeping their clans well-guarded within the halls of their vanished forebears.

Their lot was greatly eased by the arrival of the exiles, and the dwarves have prospered in the past three centuries. Empty delves are filling up as old clans swell and split to form new settlements, clearing them of their old perils and making new homes in the Altgrimmr mountain ranges. Relations are reserved but civil with Xian, and something like friendship is felt for sober Hohnberg in the northwest, but the dwarves hate Tien Lung for its slaving ways and fear its long-term ambitions.

All the same, Altgrimmr would just as soon ignore the outside world as much as it can. Traders come overland to carry off the work of dwarven forgemistresses, and young axes go forth to sell their services to humans in need of dwarvish strength, but the Underking himself signs no bargains. There is enough to do in clearing the endless halls below and learning more of the hidden history of the place. The Gate itself at the settlement's heart leads down into the mazes of the House of Night Unending, and many long nights find the Underking brooding over what may be waiting below.

NORDHEIM

The chill northern currents at the northern end of the archipelago leave the islands cold and wet, much unlike the humid heat of the south. On Aktau, the greatest of these northern isles, can be found the human city-state of Nordheim, a pirate refuge turned haven for its Skandr people. The superb stonemasonry of their people made a massive fortress of their city, one fit to hold off the constant raids of the ice-Shou of the cold hills. Even now, the towered walls of Nordheim are the greatest work of human fortification in all the Isles.

Nordheim is not so populous as Xian, and its lands are too poor and cold to support the great numbers of people that are to be found in the southern isles. Still, their bold Skandr traders dare the savage tides of the archipelago to bring iron, salt, and other precious goods south to Xian's markets. Konung Hrothgar has something like friendship with the Mandarin of Xian, liking him better than the Shogun, though there is little he can do to aid Xian at such a distance.

Nordheim suffers its own troubles. The coming of the exiles and the food shipped north from their rice paddies has enabled the Skandr numbers to grow, and they press hard on the Shou tribes. Many fear that the natives will soon rise in a horde to sweep away the intruders.

THE SHOU LANDS

Everything west of the Godbarrow Mountains is deemed "Shou land" by the exiles. Known only dimly by the very bravest and luckiest of explorers, the Shou lands are a green hell of warring tribes, mysterious ancient ruins, and Shou warlords and witch-priestesses of a power unknown in the east. The Shou shun water travel save in dire need, and it is only this trait that protects the eastern coasts from an inundation of savage raiders. As it is, only the most foolhardy adventurers dare to plunge into the wilderness beyond the mountains. Still, rumors of lost treasures of the prehistoric Shou and tales of strange temples of black stone and bright gold still lure a certain number of freebooters each year. Few survive their curiosity.

THE WESTMARK

The desolate lands southwest of Hohnberg and northwest of Tien Lung are the long-ruined Westmark, a province that was once one of the richest and most productive of the human land. When the Ravaging rolled out of the west some two hundred years ago, the Shou razed most of the Westmark's cities and depopulated it of humanity in an orgy of slaughter. The Witch-Queen was impatient to strike the great cities of the east, however, and so the desolate ruins were left largely unlooted and untoppled by the rampaging Shou.

Now, ten generations later, men and women are pushing into the Westmark once more in search of unclaimed land and new fields. Some try to rebuild the ruined towns, while others strike new homesteads for fear of angry ghosts and restless Shou. Their caution avails them little; the lands teem with vengeful Shou tribes and terrible beasts, and many young villages perish in a welter of blood. Heroes do not lack for work in the west, for even the largest and strongest of the settlements are often beset by terrible foes or bandit ravagers.

THE UNCOUNTED ISLANDS

The colloquial name for the hundreds of small islands and barren stones that dot the archipelago, the uncounted islands vary wildly in their inhabitants and character. The northernmost are often icy wastes of stone and frost, while southern islets are usually thickly overgrown with jungles or lush grasses.

Despite the Shou reluctance to take to the seas, many of these islands are inhabited by their tribes, almost all as hostile to outsiders as their brethren of the south. Those without Shou inhabitants might sport human communities or settlements of stranger beings still. Over the millennia of the world's history many of these islands have hosted exiles, colonists, or strange local births that defy easy categorization. Few survived long, and their ruins and remnants are found often on the ten thousand isles.

Few of these islands are in ready communication with Xian and the civilized lands. The tides of the archipelago are treacherous and the winds cruel. Only the most canny and boldest sailors dare to go exploring among the lesser islets, and many end out their brief days cast upon strange shores when their ships are dashed against rocks or hidden corals. Still, a few islands receive traders and adventurers from the more settled lands, and are often glad for news from afar.

Other islands are self-contained domains of their own, lands raised by brave adventurer-kings or remnants that have survived since long before the Tide. Some such lands are inviting and generous to strangers. Others have redder uses for new blood.

LAWS, RELIGIONS, AND CUSTOMS

While the customs of the Isles cover virtually any possible social configuration in at least one pocket of its inhabitants, there are some laws and faiths that are prevalent enough to be common. A GM should always feel free to introduce new elements to suit particular places and people, but the details given here can be used as a baseline for both players and GMs.

LAWS

Heroes have a way of violating local laws with distressing regularity. Most of the laws of the polities are of no particular importance to an adventurer and can be ignored. A few rules are more likely to be of interest to a hero.

Most polities of the Isles forbid all the predictable things, and punish violations harshly. Murder, rape, large thefts, assaults upon officials and other grave crimes can expect the noose, the axe, or a less pleasant fate still in some locales. Less grievous sins are punished with slavery, mutilation, whipping, or fines in descending order of severity. Imprisonment is rare, save for state-owned slaves working off their crimes. Even in the fairest and most just-minded communities it is common for nobles to be immune to legal actions brought by commoners, restrained only by their own temperance and a concern that some rival family might use an indiscretion against them. The very greatest nobles of a polity almost always have the casual power of life and death over commoners.

Nobles are usually judged by greater nobles, and commoners are most often judged by magistrates. While lawyers and pleaders can be hired, it is the judge who determines innocence or guilt and sets the punishment accordingly. Trials range from reasonably fair efforts to discover the truth to mere kangaroo courts with no pretense of justice. As a special point, magical testimony from spells or artifacts is almost always dismissed by the judge. The Ninefold Celestial Empire pioneered numerous ways of faking these results, and so only mundane evidence is commonly accepted.

Most magistrates are surprisingly lenient with the foibles of an adventurer, as they find it much more useful to impress them to perform certain “favors” for a noble patron rather than waste them as fodder for the headsman’s axe.

RELIGIONS

The people of the Isles are not particularly zealous, with perhaps the exception of the Makerites of Hohnberg. Most of them give only desultory worship to the gods, with their chief concerns being luck in this life through duly-recompensed offerings and the security of a pious burial that will protect them from the Hell Kings’ hunger.

Still, the Nine Immortals worshiped by the Imperials make for the most common deities in the Isles, though they often appear as tulpas, avatars, saints, and the other local modifications of now-lost Imperial theological works.

The Nine Immortals are represented by traditional colors and attributes. Kusha, the Red Goddess, represents warfare and struggle. Fa Chia, the Yellow God, embodies the concept of law and integrity. Mimamsa, the Blue Goddess, represents learning and intellect. Sankhya, the Gray God, is a mystical deity revolving around being-as-such. Shinrai, the White God, is the principle of ending and negation. Kega, the Green Goddess, is the deity of becoming

and transformation. Tendai, the Black God, oversees distortions and corruptions. Hesika, the Vermillion Goddess, keeps charge of sensation and perception. Lastly, Inren the Purple God is the god of that-which-is-overlooked and the blank spaces within any theological schema. Unsurprisingly, Inren does not have many clergy.

As with other faiths, the Nine Immortals have countless village shrines and urban temples, few of which can entirely agree on their theological qualities. Some emphasize the harsh, violent aspects of the deities in these dark hours, while others embrace the gentler, nobler traits of their gods. With the silence of the heavens since the coming of the Tide, it is difficult to say which are more correct.

The Nine Immortals are by no means the only gods worshiped in the Isles. The Skandr still spill ale in offering to Anghad, mistress of mountains and fertile earth, and Hjald, the red-handed war god. Their sailors sing prayers to Sifr, the lord of the white-capped waves. Clan heroes and legendary beasts are also praised in hope of acquiring some portion of their virtues.

The Gadaal commoners worship personified Luck and Destiny, while their sages and astromancers have a more philosophical understanding of fate. Kueh usually worship the Nine Immortals, though often by other names, and the Eshkanti are proud of their wide-ranging polytheism, and will appease whatever god gives honest return on their prayers.

The demihumans have no gods. Elves shun them as being mere spirits unworthy of reverence, while halflings ignore them as pointless disturbances to the Quiet Way. The dwarves have the reddest relationship with the gods, for their dead remain locked in eternal struggle with the screaming fragments of the Mother Below. Certain heretical Repenters give offerings of self-torment and the hideous defilement of dwarven prisoners in hopes of winning the Mother’s mercy on their souls, but these monstrous traitors are hated by all decent and honorable dwarves.

CLOTHING, FOOD, AND RELATIONSHIPS

Ektau and the southern islands tend to be hot, humid, and fertile. The clothing and cuisine of the south are marked by this, with most laboring men and women wearing no more than a cloth wrap about their waist, and perhaps sandals if well-off. Nobles favor light robes, with some young women delighting in chiffon wraps and confections of jewel-bright silk. Different styles from far lands are often blended together in mixes that could only exist in the Isles.

Rice is the staff of life for most communities, brought to cities aboard river-barges or coast-hugging cargo ships. Rice balls, rice beer, steamed rice, pressed rice, and fish when an honest man can get it make for the ordinary diet. Pork is more common than beef or chicken, and the food is often heavily spiced with native plants.

Gender and marriage mores vary with the community, but most men and women are expected to be wed by their twenty-first year. Marriage among the poor is usually for love, but those with property or titles almost always wed as part of a familial alliance. Homosexuality is usually considered a mere personal foible, of no importance so long as vital heirs are produced and polite fictions are maintained. Both women and men are usually held to the same meritocratic standards in attaining office or social rank, though a few cultures remain sharply matriarchal or patriarchal.

A BESTIARY OF FOES

Every hero needs an appropriate supply of foes. This chapter includes a variety of monstrous creatures and fell-handed enemies to be found within the Sunset Isles, any of which can be added into existing adventures or used to flesh out your own creations. Those readers with access to other old-school games should find the monsters here perfectly cross-compatible with the vast majority of similar games. Enthusiasts should feel free to pull in their own favorite monsters and terrible abominations from these other games into the blood-stained world of the isles.

USING THIS CHAPTER

Each monster given in this section has an entry describing their most important statistics. All of these should be taken as representing an average example of the type- individual monsters might be significantly weaker or stronger than what the entry lists. Standard treasure entries are also provided for use with the Treasures chapter of the book. Treasure codes in parenthesis apply when the creature is found in its lair or as part of a group of the beasts.

Monsters are listed with a “Number Appearing” entry. When met as a random encounter or in a small group this number indicates how many creatures will be present. When a number in parenthesis is provided it indicates how many of the monsters will be found back in their lair or home camp. Established communities may be larger still.

Along with entries for the gruesome monstrosities of the Tide and the bestial horrors of the burning hells, this chapter also includes statistics for more ordinary people and animals. Most normal men and women are not adventurers and do not belong to an adventuring class. A hardened veteran is simply a 2 hit die “monster” with a slightly better attack bonus than most. A Shou witch-priestess isn’t normally a fully-fledged magic-user or cleric, she’s simply a “monster” who can cast certain spells. Even a human wizard might be created as a monster if it’s not important to worry about anything but the immediate spells he has memorized.

Individual monsters or people can be given a character class when it seems appropriate, which it sometimes is in the case of major figures or notable heroes. In most cases such details are more effort than the GM’s needs require, and it is simpler and easier to just treat them as monsters with certain abilities that match their nature and function.

THE SKILL BONUS

Aside from the self-explanatory parts of the stat block, each monster is also listed with a **skill bonus**, indicating how talented it is at the sorts of things that are appropriate to its nature. The skill bonus is applied to any relevant checks made by the creature, and may also apply to saving throws in some cases, at the GM’s discretion.

For example, a leopard would apply its skill bonus to checks involving stealth, climbing, hunting, and other activities important to a great cat, while an NPC wizard would apply it to tests of erudition and occult learning, and might also apply it to saving throws for spells he casts or tries to resist.

MORALE

Creatures are also listed with a **Morale** score representing their courage and willingness to fight on even in the face of defeat. When the monster has cause to think it’s losing a fight, the GM may choose to roll a Morale check. To do so, 2d6 are rolled and compared to the creature’s Morale. If the roll is higher, the creature breaks and will seek to escape the fray.

Brave creatures may make a fighting withdrawal, trying to reach some more defensible position to make a last stand. Others might simply turn and run, or throw down their weapons and beg for mercy. Most creatures will act according to their training even after their morale breaks. Soldiers may abandon their weapons and flee the field, but they’re more likely to retreat in something resembling disciplined order. Bandits, on the other hand, are apt to scatter to the winds as soon as they lose heart.

Undisciplined or uncommitted enemies usually must check morale after the first death on their side. Almost all foes must check morale after half or more of their comrades are down or dead. Optionally, the GM may also call for a morale check if the hero unleashes some terrifying power or demonstrates unstoppable violence against their allies. Enemies usually don’t make more than two Morale checks for any given fight. If they’re still standing after that, they’re either too frenzied, too stupid, or too desperate to stop fighting.

Heroes never need to check morale. Player characters make their own decisions on when to fight and when to run. Their allies and comrades may not be equally disciplined, however.

A FIT TEST FOR HEROES

It can often be tempting to “gate” challenges for a hero, ensuring that they only ever face enemies they have a reasonable chance of overcoming. The instinct here is that if a hero gets in a fight, it should be a fight they can win- for what’s the purpose of constantly throwing them into frays that they must flee from or die? If you’re running a storyline-based game where the hero progresses along a plot framework, this is a perfectly reasonable concern.

For a sandbox game, it’s different. If you’re running a sandbox game the hero is facing challenges they’ve chosen to face- and sometimes they choose... *poorly*. So long as they have the option of running, there’s no need to ensure that their fights are winnable. Give them the challenges they ask for, let them face the foes they’ve chosen to engage, and let the chips fall where they may. The world operates on its own logic, and it will not bend to save any man- not even a hero.



REACTION ROLLS

Not every encounter needs to degenerate into a bloodbath. While most Shou wouldn't consider parley with an "invader" and some beasts are simply blindly violent toward all they meet, most creatures are either reasonable or cautious enough to allow for different outcomes to an encounter. Even bandits or hungry wolves can reconsider the wisdom of attacking if presented with a sufficiently convincing argument. When PCs meet another creature or group in some lonesome place, it's time for a **reaction roll**.

To make a reaction roll, the PC makes a check that adds their Charisma and the highest relevant social traits. The higher the roll, the better. At a roll of 16+, the best plausible outcome from the meeting comes to pass. At a roll of 2 or less, the absolute worst response will be provoked. As with all checks, a natural 2 is always a botch and a natural 16 is always the best possible outcome. Rolls between those numbers will cant the results in the appropriate direction, with a result of 9 meaning that the most probable outcome comes to pass.

The "best case" and "worst case" of an encounter will depend on the PC and their interlocutors. Walking up to an illustrious junzi and insulting his hat is unlikely to end well for even the most silver-tongued hero, and a best-case result in that situation may simply be the noble lord taking it as an amusing joke. The worst case might amount to an attempt at summary execution by the junzi's guards. It's up to the GM to decide what outcomes are most plausible given the PC's chosen conversational gambit and the nature of the encounter.

MONSTER SPECIAL ABILITIES

Some monsters have special abilities that force saving throws. Saving throw difficulties are normally equal to 9 plus the creature's unwounded hit dice. Monster skill bonuses do not normally add to the saving throw difficulty, though the GM may make exceptions for beings particularly focused on a specific ability.

Some monsters are **immune to mundane weapons**. These creatures cannot be harmed by unenchanted blades or blows, though they are subject to damage from spells, environmental hazards such as flames or falling, and other sources of damage. A hero's Fray die always counts against these foes if it is otherwise applicable. The hero may lack an enchanted blade, but their buffets, fisticuffs, tricks, and deceptions can wear down even sorcerous foes in time.

Other creatures **drain energy levels** when they hit. Each level of energy drain siphons away one hit die or experience level from its victim. Victims do not get a save against this power, and those reduced to 0 levels or hit dice perish, sometimes to rise as the same type of creature that killed them. Each lost experience level lowers a hero's maximum hit points, decreases their spellcasting abilities, and penalizes their attack bonus based on the level lost. Heroes can Defy Death to avoid perishing to this fate, and recover lost experience levels at a rate of one per day of rest.

Many beasts have **multiple attacks**, allowing them to strike multiple times during a single attack action. Each attack gets a separate attack roll and may be directed at any creature within range.



CREATING MONSTERS

Every GM worth their dice will want to make their own monsters sooner or later. To do so, just imagine the hideous beast in question and follow the steps below.

Choose its hit dice. An ordinary man or competent soldier has 1 hit die. Humans rarely exceed 3 or 4 hit dice unless they're heroes of some kind. Other beasts and monsters have correspondingly higher totals, with the most awful dragons and demons sporting 15 or even more hit dice. Note that unlike traditional OSR games, *hit dice are not rolled for monster hit points*. Only heroes have hit points. Everyone else takes damage directly to hit dice.

Choose its attacks. For most humanoids, this will be a single weapon attack with an attack bonus equal to the creature's hit dice. Monsters with unusually keen martial skills might have bonuses a point or two higher than that. Some creatures, especially animals and magical beasts, have more than one attack in a round and can launch several blows in the same time it takes a human to attack once. These attacks may be spread around at any enemy within reach.

Set its damage. For weapon-users, the damage done is that of the weapon being used. For wild animals and other beasts, 1d4 is a good die for relatively small teeth and claws, 1d6 for serious bites, and 1d8 for very large or powerful entities. For monsters with freakish or supernatural attacks, the die might be even larger. Some monsters may also gain bonuses on their damage die roll, increasing the odds that they'll get multiple points of damage out of a blow, or even roll multiple damage dice for every successful hit.

Pick an armor class. Armor-wearing creatures can usually piece together an AC from 5 to 7 depending on their wealth and willingness to use a shield. Rich or powerful entities can afford better armor still. Wild beasts should usually have an AC around 7, though extremely agile or tough-skinned ones might have ACs as low as 3 or 4. Magical creatures and those blessed with supernatural qualities can have even lower armor classes.

Set its movement rate. Most humanoids will move at 30' per round. Animals are often faster, moving at 40', while small or short creatures might move no faster than 20'. Some creatures may have special movement modes, such as flight, swift swimming, or magical burrowing through the earth.

Set its skill bonus and morale. Most competent entities will have a +1 bonus on checks related to their nature or profession. Unusually skilled or naturally-gifted creatures will have +2, and paragons might have +3. Even higher scores are possible for supernatural creatures or beings that embody a particular trait. Morale is usually 6 for common folk and other noncombatants, with 7 being ordinary for bandits and other undisciplined warriors, 8 for trained soldiers, and 10 or more for zealots and other hardened killers. A score of 12 is suitable for fanatics and entities incapable of feeling panic, such as halflings and the undead.

Add special abilities. Many monsters have a signature ability, or might be able to cast certain spells. Add an extra power or two here if it seems appropriate, but try not to get carried away. Remember, you'll need to be able to keep all these details in mind when running the creature during an adventure.

And there you have it. Your abomination is ready to be bearded in its lair by some ferocious warrior or puissant hero-mage.

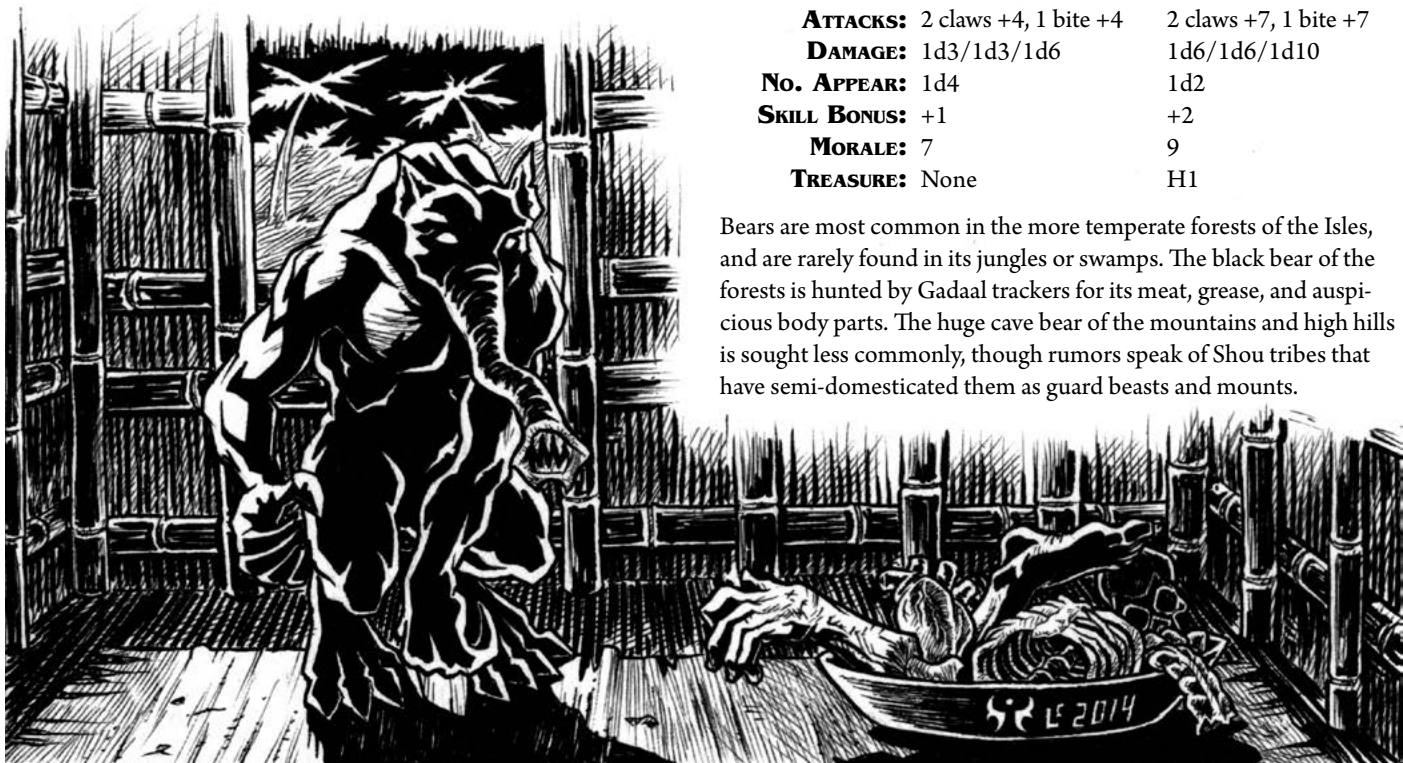
MONSTERS OF THE ISLES

ASWANG, THE HUNGRY DECEIVER

NO. APPEAR: 1	MORALE: 10
ARMOR CLASS: 5	HIT DICE: 7
ATTACKS: 2 claws +7 and 1 bite +8	
DAMAGE: 1d6/1d6/1d10	SKILL BONUS: +2
MOVE: 30'	TREASURE: H5

The aswang is a terrible shapeshifter that hides in and around human communities, feasting upon the weak or careless. In its true form it resembles a hulking, hairless, slick-skinned humanoid with canine features and digitigrade legs. Its mouth is elongated into a fanged proboscis like that of a toothed mosquito. It uses this snout to eat the soft parts from within a human body, especially favoring unborn children. When it wishes to go among humans it can adopt the form of a shy but well-favored man or woman, masquerading as a simple peasant or artisan. At least once a month, it creeps from its house by night to hunt for prey among its sleepy neighbors. Its slender proboscis allows it to conceal its depredations by thrusting it down the throat of a victim, leaving them dead in their beds as if some sickness took them in the night.

Some aswangs instead prefer to live in the wilderness, taking prey openly from travelers and the unwary. When these creatures wish to make more of their kind, they beguile some hapless wanderer into sharing a meal in their remote home, disguising its awful provender as pig flesh. A traveler who shares in one of these cannibal meals is cursed. For a week there is no perceptible effect, but for each week that follows the victim must make a saving throw to resist a gradual transformation into an aswang. After three saving throws are failed the victim is forever enslaved to their terrible hungers. The only way to keep this curse from coming to fruition is to kill the aswang responsible for the meal.



BABI NGEPET, THE PIG DEVIL

NO. APPEAR: 1	MORALE: 9
ARMOR CLASS: 6	HIT DICE: 5
ATTACKS: 1 weapon +6 or 1 gore +8	
DAMAGE: Weapon or 1d10	SKILL BONUS: +1
MOVE: 40'	TREASURE: G3

From time to time a man or woman grows so eager for riches that they draw the attention of one of the servitors of the Hell Kings. This infernal tempter offers them the opportunity for great wealth in exchange for their soul in the afterlife. Some are avaricious enough to accept, sacrificing their souls to become a shapeshifting "pig devil". A babi ngepet has the same statistics in both human and boar form, though they wield weapons as men.

Such a wretch can freely transform into a great demonic boar with a thick hide that shrugs away mundane weaponry. While in boar-form the creature can move with uncanny silence, opening any portal that is not magically sealed and stealing the contents of any container it can touch. Stolen items vanish, appearing on the pig devil's person when it resumes its human shape. Pig devils are often flushed with strange, loathsome hungers for human flesh and inexplicable perversions as a consequence of their infernal bargain. The tempters that empower a pig devil demand that the creature flaunt its wealth and enjoy all the pleasures of its thievery. Such behavior often draws attention, and if the avaricious creature is slain for its crimes, its soul will hasten all the sooner to the Hells.

BEAR

	BLACK	CAVE
ARMOR CLASS:	6	5
HIT DICE:	4	7
MOVE:	30'	30'
ATTACKS:	2 claws +4, 1 bite +4	2 claws +7, 1 bite +7
DAMAGE:	1d3/1d3/1d6	1d6/1d6/1d10
NO. APPEAR:	1d4	1d2
SKILL BONUS:	+1	+2
MORALE:	7	9
TREASURE:	None	H1

Bears are most common in the more temperate forests of the Isles, and are rarely found in its jungles or swamps. The black bear of the forests is hunted by Gadaal trackers for its meat, grease, and auspicious body parts. The huge cave bear of the mountains and high hills is sought less commonly, though rumors speak of Shou tribes that have semi-domesticated them as guard beasts and mounts.



BLACK AND WHITE GUARDS

NO. APPEAR: 1	MORALE: 12
ARMOR CLASS: 3	HIT DICE: 9
ATTACKS: 2 smites+9	SKILL BONUS: +3
DAMAGE: 1d10/1d10	TREASURE: None
MOVE: 40'	

These spirits appear as fearsome devil-faced warriors in brilliant martial panoply of many colors, though black or white always predominates. They are among the servants of the gods, dispatched to the mortal world to usher particularly wicked or righteous souls to their ultimate rewards. The Black Guards watch over the souls of the most wicked, barring them from troubling the living until the demons of the Hell Kings come to collect them- a thing which the demons sometimes delay so as to allow the damned to scourge the living a little longer. The White Guards act as escorts and protectors to the especially righteous dead, ensuring that the devils do not snatch them away on their journey to the paradises of the gods. Both sometimes have cause to contact mortal heroes when their charges are being threatened by some dark power.

As celestial spirits, the Black and White Guards may spend a round's action to turn invisible, pass intangibly through any mundane barrier, or force a living subject to save or obey some direct command that does not threaten their own life. They can sense other spirits with unfailing acuity and may communicate with them as they see fit. Their spiritual weapons can injure any entity, even insubstantial ghosts. They prefer to remain invisible to mortals, merely guarding the graves of their charges until their fate has been duly enforced.

CAT

	JAGUAR	LEOPARD	TIGER
ARMOR CLASS:	4	4	6
HIT DICE:	4	3	6
MOVE:	50'	50'	50'
ATTACKS:	2 claws, 1 bite, with hit dice as attack bonus		
DAMAGE:	1d4/1d4/1d8	1d3/1d3/1d6	1d6/1d6/1d10
NO. APPEAR:	1d2 (1d6)	1d2 (1d6)	1 (1d3)
SKILL BONUS:	+2	+2	+2
MORALE:	8	7	9
TREASURE:	None	None	None

The great cats are found throughout the Isles, especially in the hot jungles and temperate forests of the interior. Leopards and tigers are especial scourges of the forest villages, with hungry maneaters prowling into the very huts of peasants to drag away their prey from beside their sleeping spouses. Sometimes these beasts are possessed by the souls of the vicious dead, filling them with a cold and malicious intellect which they use to harvest men.

CENTPEDE WOMAN

NO. APPEAR: 1 (1d6)	MORALE: 9
ARMOR CLASS: 5	HIT DICE: 7 to 9
ATTACKS: 1 bite, with attack bonus equal to hit dice.	SKILL BONUS: +2
DAMAGE: 1d8+poison	TREASURE: H5 (H7)
MOVE: 40'	

Creatures of poison and terror, the centipede women dwell in desolate places far from human habitation, though the more powerful of them gather human cults to worship them and serve as vessels for their holy venom. These beings resemble a gigantic hybrid of woman and centipede, with the upper body of a beautiful maiden grafted upon the thick trunk of a ten-foot-long centipede. Their insectile portions are brilliantly colored in reds, yellows, oranges, and blues, while their human bodies are invariably exquisite exemplars of female beauty. They wear little save for stolen jewelry and scorn mundane weapons as unworthy of them. They are diabolically cunning and gifted at trickery and beguilement.

Centipede women have a terrifically potent venom. Those bitten by them must save or die in convulsions a round later. They can spit this poison as a ranged attack out to 60 feet, or exhale a conical spray twenty feet wide at the far end and twenty feet in length. Such spittle is less effective than a direct bite, though not by much; a failed save against it inflicts a 1d6 damage die for each hit die of the centipede woman. Centipede women gain status among their kind by the potency of their venom, and the elder ones learn to brew many strange poisons within their bodies to bewitch, palsy, plague, or hideously transform their victims. They are impervious to all known toxins.

Centipede women crave worship and adoration. When they capture a suitable cultist, they may choose to kiss the victim rather than devour them; a low dosage of poison acts as an addictive drug that numbs a human's will. A successful saving throw allows the victim to resist the beguiling poison, but those who fail are helplessly enthralled by the centipede woman, and can be freed of their slavery only by her death. Most such cultists serve until they are too weak to be of any further use to their mistress, whereupon they are devoured, or given to be cannibalized by their brethren, or used as a vessel for the eggs of their goddess. Such a death is slow, and if they can be rescued within a few weeks a healer can extract the unhatched eggs.

Newborn centipede women resemble both their mothers and the host that sustained their eggs. Hundreds of eggs are inserted into a still-living victim, but the small larvae devour first their host and then each other until only one remains to seek out a new lair. Centipede women usually dwell alone, but there are times when a cabal of them twine together for some especially nefarious scheme. Most such plans collapse in mutual treachery, but some thrive in their dark ends.

CONSTRUCTS

In the old days before the Tide, certain expert sorcerers and master enchanters experimented with the creation of new life out of inanimate matter. Some powerful nations such as the Ninefold Celestial Empire even went so far as to fashion small armies of these beings, the better to undertake work too tedious or dangerous for human labor. Still, after the first rush of creation many of the vital ingredients necessary for imbuing dead matter with life became scarce and difficult to acquire, and eventually it became cheaper to simply hire more ordinary men to do the work.

The remaining constructs were gradually forgotten, used only occasionally by those mandarins or great magi who wished to make a point of their wealth and power. Some were consigned to guard structures and places of no present interest to human wardens, while others were dispatched to aid Imperial colonization missions at the far corners of the earth. Many of those that still survive are stubbornly bound by commands that admit of no free will, but a few were last given orders that they have successfully subverted or reinterpreted into greater liberty than they were ever intended to possess.

All constructs are immune to magical sleep, paralysis, and charm effects, and need not breathe, eat, drink, or sleep.

CONSTRUCT, SERVITOR

	MAN OF CLAY AND JADE	PORCELAIN SERVITOR
ARMOR CLASS:	7	5
HIT DICE:	2	1
MOVE:	30'	30'
ATTACKS:	1 fist or weapon +2	1 fist or weapon +1
DAMAGE:	1d6 or by weapon	1d4 or by weapon
NO. APPEAR:	1 (1d6)	1 (1d6)
SKILL BONUS:	+1	+2
MORALE:	12	8
TREASURE:	None	None

Servitor constructs were designed with significantly more intelligence than ordinary golems, and some were capable of actual independent thought. The Men of Clay and Jade were originally mass-produced for agricultural labor and simple, repetitive tasks. Their earthenware bodies were animated through several carefully-positioned pieces of embedded jade, with the precious stone crumbling to dust with the "death" of the Man of Clay and Jade. These constructs are stupid by human standards, but can reason through basic obstacles to the completion of their tasks. Most speak only the language of their creators, and can answer only simple, concrete questions.

Porcelain Servitors have the appearance of beautiful maidens or handsome young men, and a subtle enchantment to give their fired porcelain shells the texture and softness of living flesh. Porcelain Servitors were intended for more sophisticated house service requiring delicacy and diplomatic nuance, and the intelligence required for such duties makes them among the constructs most likely to find holes in their master's commands. Some Porcelain Servitors have actually developed something akin to free will over the centuries since their creation, though few can imagine a different "life".

Both Men of Clay and Jade and Porcelain Servitors are capable of using armor or weaponry if given such by their creators, though Men of Clay and Jade have difficulty maintaining equipment in serviceable condition unless directed by an intelligent leader.

CONSTRUCTS, WAR

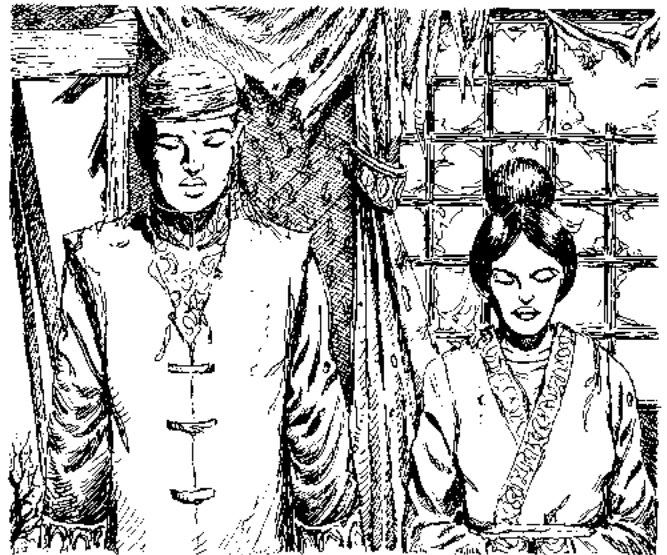
	ANCIENT WAR GOLEM	BLACK JADE JUGGERNAUT
ARMOR CLASS:	2	4
HIT DICE:	8	10
MOVE:	30'	40'
ATTACKS:	1 blade +8, 1 fist +8	2 blades +10, 1 bolt +10
DAMAGE:	1d12/1d12	2d6/2d6/2d10
NO. APPEAR:	1	1
SKILL BONUS:	+1	+1
MORALE:	12	12
TREASURE:	None	None

Whereas servitor constructs were intended for flexible employment as laborers and house servants, war constructs were only ever intended for killing. Their intelligence is quite limited compared to that of a Man of Clay and Jade, let alone a Porcelain Servitor, but they are quite capable of navigating difficult terrain and overcoming physical obstacles in their efforts to kill their appointed targets. Many were originally designed to launch the initial attacks on fortified positions and break open a path for human soldiers to follow. Those that survive to the present day are usually guardians of some long-abandoned outpost or wardens to a place that has been desolate for centuries.

Ancient war golems are usually fashioned in the shape of monstrous ogres wrought of bronze and polished steel. They cannot speak, but they can understand commands given in the language of their creator. With their original masters unable to authorize new owners, they are often locked into their old commands until someone should come along with the correct keywords or override wands to stop them.

Black Jade Juggernauts are not only possessed of multiple scything blades on their humanoid frames, but also a large black jade globe embedded in their chest that enables them to spray bolts of geomantic force at targets within 300'. The bolt attack can hit any number of targets within a 10' radius of the target point, with a separate attack roll against each.

Both Black Jade Juggernauts and war golems are immune to mundane weaponry. They also take half damage from all fire, electrical, cold, or acid attacks, and are immune to mind-affecting spells.



DEMON, INFERNAL

The Hells have always burned beneath the bottom of the world, and the Hell Kings have always ruled amid the flames. Priests and sages argue over the origins of these places of damnation, and half a hundred theories and legends have been advanced to explain the reason for the existence of such a terrible place. None have been conclusive, but no sage worth his writing brush would deny that the Hell Kings exist, and that they hunger for human souls.

Enemies of the gods from the dawn of the world, the Hell Kings rule their own burning realms beneath, insatiably hungry for the souls of men. Torment and despair are their meat and drink, and they draw down the souls of the dead who are weighted by the sins of their mortal lives. Hatred, bloodlust, avarice, treachery, deceit, and other vices make a soul vulnerable to the claws of demons, and even upright men and women dread the thought of death without the benefit of protective funerary rites offered by a trained priest. Even these rituals are sometimes not enough to save a soul sufficiently damned by its conduct in life.

Infernal demons are rarely summoned up into the living world. It requires an expert priest of the Hell Kings and a cult with devotion fierce and depraved enough to form a beacon to the powers below. The more powerful the demon, the more elaborate the rites that must be conducted to open a way for it. The cult activity necessary even to summon a lesser infernal demon is normally such as can only be conducted in hidden places in the wilderness, or in domains that embrace public worship of the powers of flame below. Even then, the sacrifices required for such propitiation discourage all but the most zealous worshippers.

Some demons can yet be found in old forgotten places, locked there by wizards long dead or trapped by some holy man. These demons are usually frantic with a mixture of bloodlust denied and terror at the prospect of facing their masters after so long away from their post. Some that escape will hide away in desolate places, hoping to avoid the summons of the iron bell below which will call them to their terrible punishment.

Infernal demons all share certain powers appropriate to their station. They can speak and understand all languages and can see perfectly well in darkness. They can detect magic or invisible beings at will. Even the least of them has the strength of an ogre and they need neither breathe, eat, drink, nor sleep. They are immune to all damage from fire, and take only half damage from cold or electrical attacks. They cannot be poisoned save by certain special, blessed toxins and they are immune to disease. Infernal demons cannot be injured by mundane, non-magical weapons.

All demons are highly intelligent, but prone to underestimating the threat that stout-hearted heroes can pose to them. Many are also subject to distraction, losing precious time in the corruption of innocents and torment of victims while their plans would otherwise profit from more direct attention. Demons crave elaborate rites of worship directed toward them, and the more perfectly such ceremonies ape the worship of the gods, the more pleasing they find them.



DEMON, HELL KING

NO. APPEAR: 1	MORALE: 9
ARMOR CLASS: -3	HIT DICE: 20
ATTACKS: 1 gaze +20	SKILL BONUS: +8
DAMAGE: 2d20	TREASURE: Endless
MOVE: 40', Fly 80'	

The everlasting lords of damnation, the Hell Kings include thirteen of the greatest princes of Hell. Their names vary with the cultures and cults that hate or revere them, but names that crop up regularly are Yinjian, Huokang, Kishin, Zugen, Charun, Kontilanak, Nequael, Shemyaza, Xaphan, Rangda, Raiju, Namahage, and Hannya. These demonic powers formerly never dared to enter the mundane world lest the gods be given an opportunity to strike at them. But in these fading centuries when worship of the gods is so weakened, some Hell Kings are said to consider making a new domain of the upper lands, and their servants are preparing the way for their ultimate arrival.

The Hell Kings are said to appear as beautiful human figures, male or female as their whim suggests. They are inevitably clad in the impossibly elaborate raiment of their rank, and their simple disapproving gaze can strike down all but the strongest foes with a single glance, forcing the victim's sins to manifest as vermin-like creatures that erupt from the subject's bleeding flesh. Genuinely pure creatures are said to be immune to the gaze of the Hell Kings, but their common pursuits rarely place them in a position to encounter such beings.

The Hell Kings are immune to any weapon of less than +3 magical enhancement and fail saving throws only on a roll of 2 or 3. They regenerate 5 hit dice every round and can cast any cleric or magic-user spell they choose once per round. The muttering of sages suggests that certain legendary weapons and sacred sorceries can direly injure these beings and suppress their powers of recuperation.

DEMON, LESSER

NO. APPEAR: 1 (1d3) **MORALE:** 11
ARMOR CLASS: 0 **HIT DICE:** 8
ATTACKS: 2 claws +8, 1 scourging +8
DAMAGE: 1d6/1d6/1d10 **SKILL BONUS:** +3
MOVE: 40' **TREASURE:** H4

The lesser servitors of the Hell Kings are fashioned from those mortals "fortunate" enough to have impressed those lords of the damned with the quality and quantity of their corruption and wrongdoing in life. After untold hideous torments, these favored souls are shaped and molded into beings capable of carrying out the Hell Kings' will among lesser entities. Most retain some memory of their former life, but any strength to defy their masters is usually long lost under the lash of unspeakable agonies.

Lesser infernal demons are capable of disguising themselves as they appeared in life, but in their natural form they are usually hulking, twisted parodies of their natural shape, bound about head to foot with shackles of red-hot iron or piercings of Stygian ice. The particular torments visible on a lesser demon's body are usually characteristic of the tastes of its Hell King master, and the demon always takes full damage from attacks of that same type. Hot iron shackles render the demon vulnerable to flame, icy needles leave it susceptible to cold, cruel piercings of black bronze leave it vulnerable to edged weapons, and so forth. If not specially susceptible to a type of weapon, infernal demons can be harmed only by magical weaponry.

Aside from their cruel claws and their ability to scourge a foe with their own smoking bindings, lesser infernal demons can use all the standard demonic spell-like powers. Most such demons are substantially more intelligent than the average human, but they are susceptible to distraction when summoned into the living world. Such a wealth of living souls to torment can delay a demon's obedience to its orders, even though such tardiness will surely be punished when they must finally return to the Hells.

Lesser demons can appeal to their masters for arcane knowledge, gaining the ability to cast a specific cleric or magic-user spell of third level or lower once before needing to petition a second time. Such petitions usually require extensive human sacrifice. The demon may optionally choose to teach this spell to an allied magic-user if given suitable inducement.

DEMON MANDARIN

NO. APPEAR: 1 **MORALE:** 11
ARMOR CLASS: -1 **HIT DICE:** 12
ATTACKS: 2 fists +12, 1 curse +12
DAMAGE: 1d8/1d8/1d12 **SKILL BONUS:** +4
MOVE: 40', Fly 50' **TREASURE:** G8

As the servitors of the Hell Kings advance in their obedience, some special few are elevated from the ranks of lesser servants and are accorded the title of demonic mandarins. The chains and violations of their flesh are removed and they are granted wings fashioned of defiled prayer flags and blasphemous ofudas. In their natural form, their faces are always those of the human they were in life, though the rest of their body remains huge and scarred with the marks of their former physical torment. Certain hierarchs insist that these demons are tortured even more horrifically than their lesser brethren, because the torments they suffer are those of the heart and mind rather than mere flesh. They are cursed with a more perfect understanding of the Hell Kings' purpose and their contribution to its ultimate victory.

Where lesser demons are sent to enforce the will of the Hell Kings and serve as leaders to important infernal temples, the demon mandarins are charged with more subtle, sophisticated work. They operate in conjunction with secret cells of worshipers hidden even from other infernal cultists, as the purposes they have for their less enlightened brethren are not always the sort that are survivable. They spin plans and purposes of diabolical cunning and explain nothing to their servants save the next step they must complete.

The huge fists of these demons can smash most mortal foes, and the dreadful curses they utter can strike down enemies 300' distant. Aside from the usual supernatural powers of demons, each mandarin knows three spells suitable to its nature, each usable once per day. Granted a full day in which to petition their masters they can cast any spell once before needing a new petition. Only magical weapons of +2 power or greater can injure a demon mandarin.



DEVIL, CELESTIAL

NO. APPEAR: 1	MORALE: 12
ARMOR CLASS: -1	HIT DICE: 15
ATTACKS: 2 wing buffets +15, 1 great weapon +15	
DAMAGE: 1d6/1d6/1d12	SKILL BONUS: +4
MOVE: 40', Fly 80'	TREASURE: None

The gods have their agents of punishment and correction, and celestial devils serve that purpose well. These beings represent the negative and destructive aspect of their deity and punish those beings that have defied the law. Such is their hunger to harm that even those who have committed no crime against their god's principles are at risk of a swift and terrible end. With the silence of the gods and their distancing from the world, the celestial devils have largely been left to their own devices, and some are growing more eager to punish than their patrons might desire.

Celestial devils appear in many forms, most commonly that of a ragged-winged figure wielding a great weapon. Other aspects suggest the nature of the god, such as Sifr's tormentors of black foam and white-clawed brine or the Immortal Tendai's enforcers of twisted black jade that blind all who look on them with a cloud of horrible and unnatural images.

The devils may use any clerical spell as a spell-like ability once per round. They may also teleport to any location in the mundane world and are immune to ordinary injury by weapons or physical matter, even magical varieties. Only a weapon specially consecrated to the killing of divine things can injure them. As part of their godslaying heritage, any dwarven hero can injure a celestial devil with any weapon he wields, and any fighter of 8th level or greater can do the same by virtue of their legendary prowess in war.



DIWATA, THE FOREST KEEPER

NO. APPEAR: 1	MORALE: 8
ARMOR CLASS: 4	HIT DICE: 6
ATTACKS: 2 claws +6, 1 vine attack +6	
DAMAGE: 1d8/1d8 / 1d10	SKILL BONUS: +2
MOVE: 40'	TREASURE: H3

Seducers and eidolons of natural power, diwata are beautiful and perilous creatures of the deep wilderness. They dwell in the forests and jungles far from human habitations, appearing to onlookers as the perfect image of the viewer's desires- though they may choose a specific face to present to all when they wish it. They exist as spiritual emanations of the hungers and marvels of the forest. They are not malicious creatures by nature but they are indifferent to all but the unspoiled beauty of their chosen territory and the pleasures to be had within it. Any who threaten to deface their lands can expect murderous violence in answer, though respectful hunting and careful fire-building will not offend them.

Most diwatas claim an area of at least a mile in diameter as their own, and are instantly aware of every creature within that range. They may adopt the form of any natural animal within their territory when they wish to go hunt or go unobserved, shifting with no more than a round's concentration. They may communicate with and command any natural animal within their territory, with unwilling creatures allowed a saving throw to resist the diwata's demands. If hunting or visiting violence on an enemy, they attack with the claws of their chosen shape and cause the natural plant life to lash out at any single foe within their sight. Diwatas cannot be harmed by mundane weapons. They can leave their chosen territory if they so desire, but if the land is despoiled they will sicken, and if it is greatly altered they will die.

DRAGON

NO. APPEAR: 1	MORALE: 10
ARMOR CLASS: 3	HIT DICE: 10 to 15
ATTACKS: 2 claws and 1 bite, at a bonus equal to hit dice	
DAMAGE: 1d8/1d8/1d12	SKILL BONUS: +3
MOVE: 30', Flying 50'	TREASURE: G9

Like celestial devils, dragons are servitors of the gods and creations of divine will. They act as officials in the heavenly order, overseeing portions of a god's portfolio and ensuring that it acts properly on the world. They remain in the celestial realm as a general habit, descending to earth only to correct some grave disorder or to enact the god's will. Lacking direct communication with the divine of late, many dragons are left to their own devices and compelled to interpret their god's wishes as best they can. The statistics given here are for a dragon of average rank and power, though they can vary significantly.

Dragons are huge, even the smallest being a good thirty feet from snout to tail, while the largest are as much as five times longer. All dragons can fly, though not all have physical wings. Dragons have a lethal breath that they can exhale in a cone as long as they are and as wide at the far end. This breath may be fire, lightning, withering age, or anything else appropriate to the dragon's duties. Victims take 1d8 damage for each current hit die of the dragon, with a saving throw to take only half damage. After a dragon uses this breath, it can roll 1d6 on each new round; a roll of 5+ means the breath weapon has recharged and can be used again. A dragon may breathe and use its other physical attacks in the same round.

Dragons are all accomplished spellcasters, and even the least skilled can use spells as a 3rd level magic-user or cleric- or both, in some cases. Most also have a selection of other magical abilities appropriate to their portfolio. Each dragon is unique in these abilities; there is no "standard dragon", as each one is its own specific divine creation.

Most dragons are celestial entities that appear only briefly in the world before returning to the heavens. Some, however, are "fallen dragons" who have abandoned their posts and sought refuge in the world below. Most such dragons remain concealed in wild places, hiding from their outraged brethren, plundering the works of men to fashion sad, mocking semblances of their lost heavenly palaces and golden gardens. A few even establish cults of human servitors made to worship them as tangible gods, but such things were rare in the former world. Now, with the gods silent and the heavenly orders in disarray, fallen dragons are becoming bolder in their ambitions, and more willing to risk open actions. They remain largely mythical in most of the lands of the isles, but on isolated islands and in the deep wilderness there linger tales of ancient scaled monsters,

DWARF

	WARRIOR	VETERAN
ARMOR CLASS:	4	2
HIT DICE:	1	2
MOVE:	30'	30'
ATTACKS:	1 weapon +1	1 weapon +3
DAMAGE:	by weapon	by weapon
NO. APPEAR:	1d4 (2d4)	1d4 (2d4)
SKILL BONUS:	+1	+2
MORALE:	9	10
TREASURE:	H2 (H3)	H2 (H3)

As described earlier in this book, dwarves are a tough, resilient race of demihumans that rarely exceed five feet in height, though both males and females are built sturdily. The statistics here are for common dwarven warriors and battle-hardened veterans. Female dwarves do not fight save at times of dire necessity. In such circumstance they will be armed and armored as males, albeit with no attack bonus to their hit roll. A few resolute war-maidens have defied their clan customs to make war as the males do; while disgraced within their clan, most such exceptional souls fight as veterans.



ELF

	ARTISAN	ZEALOT	SORCERER-LORD
ARMOR CLASS:	9	4	3
HIT DICE:	1	2	8
MOVE:	30'	30'	30'
ATTACKS:	1 weapon +1	1 weapon+2	1 weapon +9
DAMAGE:	by weapon	by weapon	by weapon
NO. APPEAR:	1 (1d6)	1 (1d6)	1
SKILL BONUS:	+2	+2	+3
MORALE:	8	9	10
TREASURE:	H2	H3	H4

Graceful, handsome, and somewhat otherworldly compared to coarse humanity, elves are unpredictable in their capabilities. One might be dedicated to a life of calm contemplation and exquisite craftsmanship, while another might be sworn to a bloody-handed Creed of war. Elves are too rare in the Isles to form large communities, and are they are most often found alone outside of the small villages and elven neighborhoods of their more populous neighbors.

The statistics here are for an ordinary elf with no more than his prior incarnations' experience of war, a Creed zealot skilled in bladecraft, and one of the feared sorcerer-lords who blend both magic and steel to serve their ends. Such arcanists usually have the spellcasting abilities of a 5th level magic-user when not wearing armor.

GHOUL

NO. APPEAR:	1d6 (2d8)	MORALE:	12
ARMOR CLASS:	6	HIT DICE:	2
ATTACKS:	2 claws +2 and 1 bite +2		
DAMAGE:	1d3/1d3/1d3	SKILL BONUS:	+1
MOVE:	30'	TREASURE:	H2 (H3)

Some hungry ghosts are touched by the ice of the Hells, animating their unburied corpse with an endless, unbearable hunger for human flesh to warm them. Most ghouls are feral and effectively mindless, haunting the place where they died in hope that food might come to them. If these undead feast on many corpses, they begin to grow more human-like in appearance as the carrion and man-flesh restores their withered corpse. Such a well-fed ghoul can sometimes masquerade as a human before attacking with their sharpened teeth and icy touch. If these ghouls are propitiated with worship and ceremonial offerings of human flesh, they can be calmed sufficiently to regain their human reason and ability to plan so long as the worship continues. The hunger for human flesh always remains, however.

The talons and teeth of a ghoul spread a hideous chill through a victim. Anyone clawed or bitten by a ghoul must make a saving throw or become paralyzed and unable to move, helpless as they are eaten alive by the ghoul. A hero may Defy Death to avoid this fate, and will otherwise regain their powers of movement ten minutes later.



GRIFFON

NO. APPEAR: 1 (1d4)	MORALE: 8
ARMOR CLASS: 5	HIT DICE: 7
ATTACKS: 2 claws + 7, 1 bite +7	
DAMAGE: 1d4/1d4/2d6	SKILL BONUS: +1
MOVE: 30, Fly 60'	TREASURE: H1

Predators of the high mountains and rocky hills, griffons are savage beasts with the forequarters and talons of an eagle with the hind-quarters of a lion. They are encountered most often as lone hunters, though a nest with a mated pair and 1d4 eggs or chicks may be found. Certain tribes of mountain Shou know how to "domesticate" a griffon provided it is raised from the egg, though even in such tribes only the mightiest warriors are strong enough to compel the beast's obedience. These griffon-riders are a scourge to those unwary humans who stray too close to their mountain homes.

HALFLING

	COMMONER	MERCENARY
ARMOR CLASS:	9	4
HIT DICE:	1	2
MOVE:	30'	30'
ATTACKS:	1 weapon +1	1 weapon +2
DAMAGE:	by weapon	by weapon
NO. APPEAR:	1d4 (2d6)	1d6 (2d6)
SKILL BONUS:	+1	+1
MORALE:	12	12
TREASURE:	H2 (H3)	H2 (H3)

A simple folk as described earlier in this book, halflings are not particularly martial by nature. Their perfect immunity to panic or fear makes them dangerous opponents, however, and even the humblest halfling farmer can meet a Shou warrior without flinching. They are also unusually strong for their size, with halfling warriors quite capable of using human-sized weapons to good effect. The statistics given here are for a common halfling peasant and for a grizzled halfling veteran such as might be found in a mercenary company.



HANTU RAYA, THE DOUBLE GHOST

NO. APPEAR: 1	MORALE: 12
ARMOR CLASS: 9 when tangible	HIT DICE: Special
ATTACKS: 1 weapon or touch with attack bonus as per HD	
DAMAGE: weapon or 1d6	SKILL BONUS: +2
MOVE: 30'	TREASURE: None

The enigmatic double ghost is a spirit-slave bound to a sorcerer who has mastered the complex arts of evoking and binding the ghost. An unhallowed corpse must be used as part of the process, with a blood relative of the caster serving best. On completion of the intricate rites, the corpse's spirit emerges as a hantu raya, compelled to obey its master however it might despise him. A hantu raya spends most of its time in a magical container, which may be a small box, pouch, or even hollow jewelry. If the container is opened, it may manifest, and if the item is destroyed the hantu raya itself will be freed to return to the grave.

When it manifests, it appears in a physical form that looks identical to its owner, including clothing and mundane trappings. While in this shape it may impersonate its master perfectly, even answering questions and displaying knowledge possessed only by its master. Magical attempts to discern the double ghost's unnatural state force the detector to make a saving throw against 9 plus the summoner's hit dice in order to get true information from their divinations.

The hantu raya maintains its own hit dice, statistics, and abilities regardless of the shape it adopts. Destruction of a hantu raya's manifestation will send it back to its container, where it must rest and reform for a lunar month before it can be called forth again. Double ghosts can dematerialize back to their container at will.

Aside from its powers of impersonation, the hantu raya is impervious to mundane weaponry. Double ghosts are used most often to allay suspicion with regards to a sorcerer's secret doings, providing a convenient alibi for wicked souls.

HORSE

	RIDING	WAR
ARMOR CLASS:	7	7 when unarmored
HIT DICE:	2	3
MOVE:	60'	60'
ATTACKS:	2 hooves +2	2 hooves +3
DAMAGE:	1d4/1d4	1d4/1d4
NO. APPEAR:	1d6 x 5 in wild	Never randomly found
SKILL BONUS:	+1	+1
MORALE:	7	9
TREASURE:	None	None

Horses are less common on the isles than they are in other lands, as the climate on Ektau does not suit them and the terrain is often wetter or more rugged than is good for cavalry. Still, most rich travelers can find passable horseflesh for sale in market towns and most polities maintain at least small wings of cavalry scouts and raiders. Riding horses are not trained for combat, and will fight only to defend themselves. If ridden into battle, a hero must make a check against difficulty 10 to keep them from panicking and fleeing in a random direction. War horses are trained for combat, and while they cannot attack independently of their rider their kicks and bites add a +2 bonus to the rider's melee attack roll. War horses may also wear protective barding at four times the cost of human armor.

HUMAN

	BANDIT	COMMONER	NOBLE	SOLDIER
ARMOR CLASS:	7	9	4	6
HIT DICE:	1	1	2	1
MOVE:	30'	30'	30'	30'
ATTACKS:	weapon+1	fist +0	weapon+2	weapon+1
DAMAGE:	weapon	weapon	weapon	weapon
NO. APPEAR:	1d6 (2d6)	1d6 (2d6)	1 (1d6)	1d6 (2d6)
SKILL BONUS:	+1	+1	+2	+1
MORALE:	7	6	9	8
TREASURE:	H2	H2	H3	H2

Humanity forms the great bulk of the “civilized” peoples of the isles. The statistics given here provide for some of the more common sorts of foes a hero might meet. The great majority of humankind never exceed 1 or 2 hit dice of martial prowess, though elite soldiers or hardened heroes might ascend to greater measures of might.

Human warriors in the Isles are usually footmen. Most prefer light armor in the humid conditions of the southern Isles, with soldiers most often bearing leather-faced bamboo shields and spears. Well-equipped mercenary groups and elite military units might be clad in chain hauberks, while only the richest and most inured to discomfort are willing to wear heavy plate armor. Calvary is not unknown in the human lands, particularly among the Kueh and Eshkanti, but it is hard to breed viable cavalry horses in the typical southern climes.

HUNGRY GHOST

NO. APPEAR:	1d6(2d6)	MORALE:	12
ARMOR CLASS:	7	HIT DICE:	1
ATTACKS:	1 bite +1 or 1 weapon +1		
DAMAGE:	1d6 or weapon	SKILL BONUS:	+1
MOVE:	30'	TREASURE:	H2

Some spirits fear to pass on to their ultimate reward or everlasting punishment. Others are unable to leave the living world, having become lost without the guidance of funeral rites or snared by the demands of unfinished business among the living. Without the help of a priest to calm them and guide them onward, these shades are doomed to become hungry ghosts, maddened and anguished undead entities that torment the living.

Hungry ghosts animate the remains of their corpse, which is often partially rotted or gnawed by vermin by the time the ghost's manifestation is complete. They attack living creatures with a frantic hunger for their warm, nourishing life force, though such food only sharpens the creature's anguish when the glow of it fades. A few hungry ghosts retain enough of their human reason to speak to strangers, often to demand the completion of some duty unfinished in life, but most are made completely feral by their agony. The destruction of an active ghost's physical or spiritual corpus forces its spirit into the afterlife, whether to be received by the merciful gods or stolen away by the talons of the Hell Kings.

Hungry ghosts are commonly found in the wake of mass slaughters, plagues, and famines. Even the complete burning of a corpse is not sufficient to prevent their manifestation should proper funeral rites be neglected; the hungry ghost will assemble a body from ash and dust if it must. Some necromancers also have the power to create or bind hungry ghosts, with the more adept among them torturing the maddened souls into new, more hideous forms of undead.



JIANGSHI, THE LEAPING VAMPIRE

NO. APPEAR:	1 (1d4)	MORALE:	10
ARMOR CLASS:	6	HIT DICE:	7 to 9
ATTACKS:	2 claws and 1 bite at bonus equal to Hit Dice		
DAMAGE:	1d6/1d6/1d8	SKILL BONUS:	+2
MOVE:	30'	TREASURE:	H4

The dreaded jiangshi are undead most often produced by a misfortunate death far from home, where an unburied victim's soul is left unable to find its way back to familiar places. Other jiangshi are the product of dark necromancy or a life of evil, when the soul is too fearful to face its fate in the afterlife. These undead vary in intelligence and self-awareness, some little more than beasts while others have the rationality of the living. Their instincts are always to kill and devour humans, however, as the sight of a living person fills them with unreasoning bitterness and fury. The most intelligent can restrain their hatred long enough to deal with necromancers and other traffickers.

In appearance they range from rotted corpses to coldly beautiful men and women- yet in all aspects, they are very stiff-limbed and rigid in their comportment. The most humanlike are merely stiff and abrupt in their movements, while the wretched among them remain half-frozen in the same contorted position in which death found them. Despite this stiffness, all jiangshi move with explosive speed, lurching and leaping as they claw at their prey with their stiffened limbs and ravenous teeth. A jiangshi can leap up to 40 feet in place of their usual movement. A successful bite attack from a jiangshi will inflict one level of *energy drain* on the victim.

KAPPA, THE WATER DWARF

NO. APPEAR: 1	MORALE: 10
ARMOR CLASS: 5	HIT DICE: 6
ATTACKS: 2 claws +6	
DAMAGE: 1d6/1d6	SKILL BONUS: +2
MOVE: 20'	TREASURE: H3

Dangerous and malevolent creatures of rivers and streams, a kappa resembles a scaled dwarf with the beak of a turtle and a deep concavity at the crown of their hairless head. This bowl is always filled with water from the creature's home stream, and should it be emptied the kappa will lose its magical powers and suffer a -2 penalty to all hit rolls and saving throws until it is refilled. The creature is so nimble that it can even fight without spilling the bowl, but a wrestler who succeeds in hitting with an unarmed attack and makes saving throws against it on two consecutive rounds can grapple and tip the creature. The kappa can attack such a grappler without penalty.

Kappa are thought to be a degenerate offshoot of lizard men, some cousin-race that has given itself over to magic and become more spirit than flesh. They are obsessed with bargains and pacts, and will not break their word even when facing certain death. It is the kappa who decides what is owed, however, and many wretched humans who dare to barter with them find that the river devil has a different understanding of their deal than the one they cherished.

Kappa hunger for warm blood, fine food, and women. They are known ravishers of village maidens and strike bargains with the wicked to serve in exchange for new victims. The offspring of such pairings are warped and monstrous, able from birth to flee their wretched mother and seek out a kappa to serve. These wretches have an almost-human intellect, but can think of nothing but serving their sire or some other kappa.

Kappa have the power to cure diseases, lift curses, and restore lost limbs or damaged organs. They can bring forth any object lost in their river within two miles of their lair, and can conjure visions of distant places as if they were standing somewhere along the riverbank within that same range. They can bid schools of fish within their territory to come to a net or their waiting talons, and they can curse a foe they strike to sink always like a stone, making it impossible for them to swim until the curse is lifted. Kappa and their spawn can all breathe underwater without difficulty and move as swiftly in water as they do on land. All of these powers are lost if the creature's bowl is spilled.

LANGSUYAR, THE HUNGRY MOTHER

NO. APPEAR: 1	MORALE: 10
ARMOR CLASS: 7	HIT DICE: 5
ATTACKS: 2 claws +6, 1 bite +6	
DAMAGE: 1d4/1d4/1d8	SKILL BONUS: +1
MOVE: 30'	TREASURE: None

These strange undead are the result of the childbirthing death of both a beautiful young mother and her child. Appropriate funerary rites usually prevent such creatures from manifesting, but every so often some poor woman or lonely mother perishes without the help of such rites, and thus leaves her soul vulnerable to the misfortune of this state. In darker cases, some bereaved husbands actually spoil the funerary rites so as to encourage the creation of a langsuyar, hoping only to regain their lost love.

A langsuyar appears just as it did in life, with long, luxuriant hair that conceals the fanged maw at the nape of their neck. Through this mouth they drink the blood of infants, which they crave, and this hunger for child-flesh animates their human cunning. Yet a langsuyar can be transformed back into a living woman if she can be restrained, her hair cut off and stuffed into the second mouth, and her razor-sharp nails cut down to the quick. If these steps are taken the curse will leave her and she will live again.

Langsuyar are strong, and any attempt to restrain them requires a successful unarmed hit to get an initial grip. Once grasped, the wrestler must make a successful saving throw at the start of each round to hold on. It takes a single wrestler five rounds of successful grappling to cure a langsuyar, or more assailants a comparatively fewer number of rounds. Each round the langsuyar can attack her would-be liberator normally, even while grappled.

Langsuyars fight with their sharp nails and hidden fangs. Their flesh is immune to mundane weapons, though their hair and nails can be cut normally by those who seek to rescue her from her curse.

LIZARDMAN

	WARRIOR	OLD SLEEPER
ARMOR CLASS:	6	5
HIT DICE:	2	7
MOVE:	30', Swim 50'	30', Swim 50'
ATTACKS:	1 weapon +2	1 weapon +7
DAMAGE:	by weapon+1	by weapon+1
NO. APPEAR:	2d4 (5d6)	1
SKILL BONUS:	+1	+3
MORALE:	8	10
TREASURE:	H2	H4

The lizardfolk of the Isles are a cold, serpentine race of beings somewhere between men and snakes. They dwell in jungles, swamps, and along warm sea-coasts, and generally keep away from human settlements. They are capable of interbreeding with humans, and some tribes strive to mix their kindred accordingly for reasons that are clear only to them.

Some appear like walking snakes with legs and arms, while others have only serpentine hindquarters and a man's torso. Some appear almost wholly human save for some little trait like a forked tongue or unusual hairlessness. All are ferociously strong, and do +1 damage with their weapons, or their bite if they have a serpentine head.

Most lizardfolk are content to live reclusive lives in their swamps and jungles, tending their egg-clutches and living by hunting and fishing. They are not friends of men, but they will rarely outright attack humans unless strangers trespass on their holy ground or they are goaded to attack by some charismatic chieftain or Old Sleeper.

The Old Sleepers are said to be great heroes of a forgotten lizardfolk empire that ruled "before the stars marched". These heroes fell into a deep slumber to await a time of need, and now their discovery can drive a lizardfolk tribe into dreams of red conquest. These Old Sleepers are humanoid, and while they are not as physically powerful as their descendants they have the arcane powers of a 7th level magic-user. Whatever the true nature of their past may be, the Old Sleepers can rarely remember anything more than vague images of cities of cyclopean stones and a burning hatred for the hairy mammals that usurped their people.

MA CA RONG, THE FILTH VAMPIRE

NO. APPEAR: 1 **MORALE:** 10
ARMOR CLASS: 5 **HIT DICE:** 7
ATTACKS: 1 weapon +7 or 1 viscera strangle +7
DAMAGE: weapon or 1d8 **SKILL BONUS:** +2
MOVE: 30', Fly 40' **TREASURE:** H3

These loathsome undead creatures are the remains of men and women who uttered ruinous lies and practiced terrible deceits in life. Fearing the punishment that awaits them beyond the grave, their spirit animates their restless corpse as a ma ca rong, tearing loose their viscera as their head separates from the rest of their body. This head and the tangled mass of putrescent organs can move by magical flight and manipulate objects with loops of iridescent gray intestine.

Ma ca rongs are voracious consumers of every kind of filth and foulness, and are found most often near cesspits and charnel places. They must bathe their viscera in cold clotted blood to prevent them from rotting away entirely, however, and so they regularly hunt human victims to steal their blood. A victim's head is often removed and their organs pulled out to decay for a later meal while the filth vampire forces its own innards into the disemboweled corpse. Such operations allow the ma ca rong to move about in the stolen body for as much as a week before the decay becomes too pronounced to conceal with perfumes and heavy clothing.

Ma ca rongs have the intelligence and cunning of a human long versed in deceit, but they have great difficulty resisting the urge to consume corruption in all forms. When wearing a human body they strike with weapons, but in their natural form they loop intestines to strangle and catch their prey and leave them vulnerable to their jagged teeth. Ma ca rongs may make a snaring attack each round against every foe within five feet. A victim struck by the snaring attack may use no weapon larger than a knife and may be automatically struck by the beast's fangs. Breaking loose from the stinking bonds requires the death of the ma ca rong or a successful saving throw.



MA LAI, THE PLAGUE VAMPIRE

NO. APPEAR: 1 **MORALE:** 9
ARMOR CLASS: 5 **HIT DICE:** 8
ATTACKS: 1 weapon +8 or 1 viscera strangle +8
DAMAGE: weapon or 1d8 **SKILL BONUS:** +2
MOVE: 30', Fly 40' **TREASURE:** H3

A relative of the ma ca rong, the ma lai also is an undead creature, one born of the plague-slain or fever-killed. To observers, it appears that whatever sickness claimed them grew very dire before receding; in truth, the plague killed them, but their restless spirits refused to leave their corpses. They appear to be hale and living men and women, but at night, their unnatural nature takes control.

At night, the ma lai separates out its head and viscera from its corpse and goes flying in search of a sick victim to attack. The creature may turn invisible at will, though it appears visible while attacking a victim and cannot vanish if it has been dusted with salt. Once it locates a sick human, it slips in a window and drinks the wretched victim's blood, closing the wound before it leaves so that none can tell it has come. A victim must make a saving throw or die from the ma lai's feeding, and even if they live, their talk of being attacked is often simply dismissed as a common fever-hallucination.

If caught in the act or confronted, the ma lai will attack. Its viscera can tangle as do those of a ma cai rong, and it infects all it hits with a terrible wasting disease. Victims must make a saving throw each day to avoid taking 2d6 damage that cannot be healed until the disease passes. A victim must make five saving throws to throw off the sickness inflicted by the creature.

MAMBABARANG, THE INSECT WITCH

NO. APPEAR: 1 **MORALE:** 10
ARMOR CLASS: 5 **HIT DICE:** 9
ATTACKS: 1 weapon +9, 1 biting swarm of beetles +9
DAMAGE: weapon/1d8 **SKILL BONUS:** +2
MOVE: 30' **TREASURE:** H4

A seemingly harmless hermit in the jungle, the "insect witch" is actually a hive of malevolent insects masquerading as a human being, sending forth parasitic insects to spread the control of the hive. They shun ordinary human contact, as it is impossible to conceal their true nature from close companions. Mambabarangs are produced when a hive of cursed insects manages to kill and fully colonize a human, burrowing beneath their skin and taking control of their brain and vital organs. Such hosts appear fully human but they bleed a thin yellow hemolymph in place of blood, and small winged beetles creep from their larger wounds. In combat, they strike both with a weapon and with a swarm of beetles vomited forth to bite a nearby foe.

A mambabarang can send insects to carry curses to a victim, creeping upon them to bite and burrow at night. Any victim within twenty miles of the mambabarang can be so cursed if a possession belonging to the target is brought to the creature. The only way to prevent the curse is to shield the victim from any insect larger than an ant. If not so protected, the victim must make a saving throw or be afflicted by a disease or infestation of the mambabarang's choosing, ranging from mere pain and discomfort to lethal diseases that will kill in 1d6 weeks. Only magic or the death of the mambabarang can cure this disease. If the victim resists the curse, the creature cannot try to plague them again for a lunar month.

Mambabarangs can suppress the effects of their curses, and can use the threat of death or torment to force others to obey. It acts subtly upon communities to encourage the waste of food in useless "offerings" to nonexistent deities, all with the intent of feeding its insects. When enough of its brood have multiplied and are ready to colonize a new host, a victim is selected and devoured from within during a special ritual, creating a new mambabarang who will leave to find a new host community.

Aside from their powers of insectile curses, mambabarangs usually possess the spellcasting powers of a 5th level magic-user, instinctively knowing a selection of useful spells. The distributed nature of their insectile controllers makes it impossible to disrupt their spellcasting with damage- a mambabarang's sorcery can be stopped only by killing it.

MANANANGGAL, THE HALF WITCH

NO. APPEAR: 1	MORALE: 9
ARMOR CLASS: 6	HIT DICE: 7
ATTACKS: 1 weapon +7, 1 touch +7	
DAMAGE: weapon/1d6	SKILL BONUS: +2
MOVE: 30', Fly 40'	TREASURE: H3

The foul "half witch" is the result of overuse of certain reckless arcane techniques for strengthening a human's life force. While the elderly are most likely to resort to such dark lore, some foolish young sorcerers fall prey to its effects at a much earlier age. These secrets do extend the life of their practitioner, but they come at a terrible price.

The imbalanced force granted by these practices centers in the head, heart, and lungs of the practitioner. They become strong and vital, yet the lower half of the adept is weaker and more feeble. So great is this disparity that the half witch's upper half physically detaches from the lower for at least six hours every day, for if it were connected longer their vital force would be lethally drained away. Liberated from its feeble hips and legs, this upper half can fly through the air on currents of vital force- yet if it cannot reunite with its lower half within 24 hours it must die.

The half witch sustains its life with the stolen vitality of others, slipping in silently through windows and waylaying sleeping innocents to drain their blood with a mere caress. This drain can be used as a weapon, but if done carefully it is painless and subtle, and will not kill a victim. Instead, it will leave them weak, sickly, and incapable of heavy labor for 1d6 days afterwards. Repeated draining can kill an ordinary human, or leave them vulnerable to death by other sicknesses. A manananggal that does not feed on a nightly basis will lose 1 hit die each night until it can make up the deficit.

Half witches are all accomplished sorcerers, with at least the powers of a 3rd level magic-user and a deep knowledge of elixirs, potions, and poisons. Among their many possible decoctions, they can brew an extract of human blood that will eliminate the physical ravages of age upon a person's strength or beauty for two weeks for each full hit die of victim used to create the potion. Certain people are willing to perform favors for these creatures in exchange for this precious brew- including the provision of the luckless wretches who are to be its main ingredient.



NAGAR, THE ASH BASILISK

NO. APPEAR: 1	MORALE: 9
ARMOR CLASS: 4	HIT DICE: 5
ATTACKS: 1 bite +6, 1 gaze that automatically hits	
DAMAGE: 1d8/save or die	SKILL BONUS: +1
MOVE: 30'	TREASURE: H3

The "ash basilisk" is a man-sized lizard with four clawed legs and burning eyes that glow through its scaly lids. The nagar can function perfectly well with its eyes closed, operating by its remarkably keen powers of scent and hearing. When it chooses to fix its terrible gaze upon a victim the subject must save or be parched instantly into cold ashes. The nagar feeds upon this ash, preferring the desiccated remains of large mammals but capable of surviving on plant ashes if it must. A nagar is subject to its own gaze if reflected, and thus it shuns watery places and other reflective surfaces.

NU GUI, THE VENGEFUL DECEIVER

NO. APPEAR: 1	MORALE: 12
ARMOR CLASS: 7	HIT DICE: 5
ATTACKS: 1 weapon or icy touch +5	
DAMAGE: by weapon or 1d8	SKILL BONUS: +2
MOVE: 30'	TREASURE: None

The nu gui is created when placatory funeral rites prove insufficient to calm an outraged spirit, and their vengeful purpose is clothed in the power of an undead form. While many types of undead are the product of such unsatisfied purposes, nu gui are unique for the insidiousness of their actions, for they manifest as the friends and loved ones of their target.

An immaterial nu gui is invisible to mundane senses and can be harmed only by magic or magical weapons, though it cannot physically interact with the world. It may tangibly manifest as any friend or relative of its chosen victim, perfectly mimicking their speech, dress, and appearance, though it is not gifted with any special knowledge that person may possess that it has not secretly spied out. The nu gui's statistics remain as given above regardless of its form, whether material or intangible. If slain in its manifested form, the nu gui's "corpse" will evaporate and it will be forced into immateriality for 1d6 weeks.

While so manifested, the nu gui will take such steps as will bring the most pain and suffering to its victim, rarely contenting itself with the mercy of a quick death. Only after the victim is utterly ruined and despised by all will it murder its enemy. Unfortunately, the trauma and confusion of death tends to disorient a nu gui, and it often makes mistakes in choosing its victims. Once it fixes its attention on a subject it cannot be persuaded to relent in its delusion. Only the destruction of its immaterial form can put a nu gui to rest—that, or presenting it with the true culprit responsible for its suffering, whom it will inevitably recognize.

NUE, THE CHIMERA

	DOG-SIZED	MAN-SIZED	BULL-SIZED
ARMOR CLASS:	7	6	5
HIT DICE:	1	4	7
MOVE:	30'	30'	40'
ATTACKS:	1 bite +1	2 claws +4	2 claws +7
DAMAGE:	1d4	1d6/1d6	1d10/1d10
NO. APPEAR:	1 (1d4)	1 (1d4)	1
SKILL BONUS:	+1	+1	+2
MORALE:	8	9	10
TREASURE:	H1	H1	H1

The nue are the result of tainted geomantic energies, the mad experiments of sorcerers, or the occasional ill-omened natural birth. A nue is a jumble of two, three, or more animals into a single mismatched whole. Small nue are dangerous for their blind ferocity, while larger beasts can ravage whole villages with their terrible fury. All nue are savage by nature, though some can be half-tamed by their makers or a suitably brutal trainer. The statistics above describe the “average” nue of dog, man, or bull size. Individual nue may possess other abilities, such as poison, flight, chitinous armor, stench glands, or any other ability possessed by a normal animal.

OGRE

NO. APPEAR:	1d6 (2d6)	MORALE:	9
ARMOR CLASS:	5	HIT DICE:	4
ATTACKS:	1 fist +4 or 1 weapon +4		
DAMAGE:	1d6 or by weapon	SKILL BONUS:	+2
MOVE:	30'	TREASURE:	H3 (H4)

The ogres of the isles are hulking, misshapen brutes that are born not from their own species, but from the hates and unclean cravings of human beings. Occasionally, some man or woman of hideous appetites and brutal nature attracts the attention of evil spirits. If the human continues in their appetites, committing greater and fouler crimes, the spirit finds an opening to infuse them with dark power and transform them into depraved monsters.

Ogres are hideous creatures with massive limbs and bodies stained by the gruesome marks of their depravities, but they can disguise themselves as the human being they once were with a round's concentration. This illusion is perfect in sound and appearance, but if the ogre is touched by a child the false seeming will vanish.

Ogres commonly lair with a cabal of their own kind in the wilderness not too far from human habitation. They crave a constant supply of victims to slake their unholy desires and can even be driven to attack each other when the supply vanishes for too long. When not too frustrated, however, ogres can demonstrate a diabolical cunning in luring and betraying innocents into the grasp of their fellows.

POLONG, THE BITTER SERVANT

NO. APPEAR:	1	MORALE:	12
ARMOR CLASS:	6	HIT DICE:	Special
ATTACKS:	1 weapon or icy touch at a bonus equal to hit dice		
DAMAGE:	by weapon or 1d8	SKILL BONUS:	+1
MOVE:	30'	TREASURE:	None

While most cultures of the isles honor their dead and seek only their dignified peace, some necromancers find the undead make excellent servants. A ghost slave is created from a victim sacrificed in a particular sorcerous fashion, one lingering and terrible. A single unbroken bone remains at the end of the process, most often a skull, and so long as the bone remains intact the polong is forced to obey its creator in all ways. If the bone is smashed, the polong is free to work its vengeance for one hour before it passes on to its eternal reward. Polongs can be harmed only by spells or magical weapons, and if their manifestations are destroyed they will reform in 1d6 days.

A weak polong can do little more than move light objects of fifteen pounds or less, perform simple household tasks, or fight poorly. Such shades appear as translucent echoes of their living appearance, and their minds and memories are likewise misty and indistinct.

Stronger polongs are fashioned from mightier subjects. The polong of a brave warrior, learned wizard, or other worthy takes a physically tangible form almost indistinguishable from that of a living being, save for the way that light shines through them at certain angles and their inability to cast a shadow. These polongs have as many hit dice as they did in life, though spellcasters are unable to wield magic in this undead form.

Fashioning a polong is costly, and even those necromancers who would not balk at the price are often leery of the risks of an uncontrolled ghost slave. Creating a polong requires ingredients worth 500 gp per hit die of the victim and a magic-user or cleric level no less than the victim's hit dice. A necromancer may have no more polongs bound to him than he has levels.



SARANGAY, THE BURNING BULL

NO. APPEAR: 1 **MORALE:** 11
ARMOR CLASS: 5 **HIT DICE:** 8
ATTACKS: 1 gore +8 and trample +8
DAMAGE: 1d8/1d10 **SKILL BONUS:** +2
MOVE: 40' **TREASURE:** None

A beast of the wild places of the isles, the Sarangay is an eidolon of geomantic energy, one that coalesces into a form like that of a flaming bull with a brilliant gemstone embedded in its forehead. When enraged- which is often- it bellows out great gouts of black smoke that blind and choke all within ten feet of it, applying a -4 penalty to all attacks against it and inflicting 1d4 damage per round to anyone within the cloud. If killed with weapons or other physical violence the jewel in its head has a 25% chance of being shattered in the fray. If intact, it will be worth 1d4 x 100 gp per hit die of the beast.

SHOU

The Shou of the isles have hated humans from their first arrival in the archipelago, fighting savagely to repel the intruders. Few colonies lasted so much as a decade under the steady, grinding attrition of Shou raids, and even now the exiles of the east are hard-pressed to hold back the tribes from their ancestral lands.

Shou live in hunter-gatherer tribes of their own kind, led by a chieftain who acquires his position by being the biggest, fiercest, most cunning member of the tribe. The witch-priestesses of the Shou act as advisors to the chieftain, and many of them are the actual powers behind the steady succession of expendable male chiefs. Lesser females are often treated as chattel, with the most beautiful taken by the chief and the others seized by whatever males can keep them. Shou children grow quickly, and by their tenth year have their full adult size. Shou remain strong and unmarked by age until somewhere around the age of fifty, after which they rapidly decline and die. Few Shou ever live long enough to concern themselves with such things.

Shou witch-priestesses teach that at the dawning of the world their god Shakun sacrificed himself to preserve his children from a great evil that threatened the world. It is the duty of the Shou to fight and become strong, that the strongest and greatest of the tribes should be ready to lead the others in a world-conquering horde when their god Shakun returns from the grave. The tribes have taken these teachings to heart, and it's rare that two Shou clans can stand to have civil dealings with each other outside of rare traditional convocations. Females and children are regularly stolen in raids, and when two tribes clash decisively the males of the losing side can expect nothing better than death or slavery. Were it not for this relentless internecine fighting, the Shou almost certainly would have wiped out the human refugees long ago.

There are four kinds of Shou found in the Isles. By their Eirengarder names, they are known more particularly as bugbears, goblins, orcs, and hobgoblins. The first three varieties breed true in their own tribes, while hobgoblins are rarer sub-breeds of goblins that can suddenly crop up in any goblin tribe. These sports have an uncanny degree of charisma and tactical acumen and often lead the goblin tribes that birthed them.

Shou tribes prefer to live by hunting and gathering, scorning agriculture and husbandry as "slave work". This does not prevent them from taking prisoners from other tribes and human lands in

SERPENT, GIANT

NO. APPEAR: 1 (1d4) **MORALE:** 8
ARMOR CLASS: 7 **HIT DICE:** 5
ATTACKS: Bite + 5
DAMAGE: 1d8 + poison **SKILL BONUS:** +2
MOVE: 30' **TREASURE:** None

The huge serpents of the jungle can easily grow larger than a man, with some breeds reaching a size sufficient to crush an ox in its coils. Some are poisonous, with each bite forcing a saving throw to avoid swift death. Others are constrictors, with a saving throw necessary to avoid being caught in its coils on a successful hit. Coiled enemies can use no weapon larger than a dagger and are automatically hit every round until they succeed on a saving throw to escape the beast.



order to conduct such labor if they find a good site for a settlement. These Shou villages are rare, and most often are found in ancient ruins built by long-lost peoples. They are prime targets not only for human attackers but for fellow Shou as well, and so only the strongest or most foolhardy tribes attempt such a settled existence.

Shou adorn themselves with elaborate brands, tattoos, piercings, ear-clippings and ornaments. Were it not for these savage markings, they might easily be taken for well-favored humans, save for the tribes that have unusual skin colors such as green or deep orange. They rarely have any metalwork that isn't stolen, and their natural ornaments are of bone, teeth, polished stones, and carved wood.

Shou are cross-fertile with each other and with humans. "Impure blood" is hated by the Shou, and any half-breeds are commonly killed out of hand at birth. Among humans, those born of Shou depredations are often feared and scorned by other humans in the cities and market towns. Those who dwell in the borderlands, however, tend to be marginally more accepting of the Shou-blooded, as these rough folk know that the Shou hate half-breeds even more than they hate ordinary humans. There are even rumors of half-breed witches who wield the powers of Shou sorcery against their own kindred.

SHOU, BUGBEAR

NO. APPEAR: 2d4 (5d4)	MORALE: 9
ARMOR CLASS: 5	HIT DICE: 3
ATTACKS: Weapon +4	
DAMAGE: By weapon +1	SKILL BONUS: +2
MOVE: 30'	TREASURE: H2 (H3)

Bugbears are the biggest of the Shou tribes, often reaching as much as seven feet in height. The males are exceptionally hairy and both sexes tend to pallor, with blonde, green, red or white hair common among them. Their physical strength is enormous, and even the females among them can crush an ordinary man with one blow of their fist. Bugbears are expert sneaks and hill stalkers, and gain a further +2 skill bonus when trying to ambush in forests or hills.

Bugbears are less fertile than other tribes of Shou, and are often the most reluctant to go raiding- not out of any innate peacefulness, but because they can seldom afford to lose the hunters that a bad raid would cost them. Their great size and physical power often provoke fear in other Shou tribes, and few will raid bugbear encampments unless they are confident that they vastly outnumber their hulking foes. This unusual equilibrium of relative peace has left many bugbear tribes in better condition to maintain and hand down the ancient lore of their people, and some scholars of the Shou say that bugbear witch-priestesses are privy to secrets long since lost to any other tribe.

SHOU, GOBLIN

NO. APPEAR: 2d4 (6d10)	MORALE: 7
ARMOR CLASS: 6	HIT DICE: 1
ATTACKS: Weapon +1	
DAMAGE: By weapon -1	SKILL BONUS: +1
MOVE: 20'	TREASURE: H2 (H3)

Smallest of the Shou tribes, goblins rarely clear five feet in height. They are slender, nimble folk that are most likely of the tribes to be born with exotic skin colorings such as green, blue, or deep orange. They are consummate survivors, able to subsist on far less food and water than humans and they have few qualms about where they get it. Goblins are found almost everywhere in the Isles, with even the harshest and most inhospitable lands giving up sustenance enough for at least one spindly tribe.

Goblins are even more nomadic than the usual run of Shou, often forced by more fearsome enemies to move on before their tribe suffers unacceptable losses. They are also least inclined of all the tribes to stand and fight in the face of a direct assault, and many tribes will prefer to give up even rich hunting grounds rather than be forced to defend it with their blood.

SHOU, HOBGOBLIN

NO. APPEAR: 1d6 (4d6)	MORALE: 11
ARMOR CLASS: 5	HIT DICE: 2
ATTACKS: Weapon +3	
DAMAGE: By weapon	SKILL BONUS: +2
MOVE: 30'	TREASURE: H2 (H3)

Every so often, a tribe of goblins will inexplicably begin to birth children of unusual height and strength. Hobgoblins are man-tall, whipcord-lean and muscular compared to their smaller brethren. Even branded and savage as they are, hobgoblins are invariably strikingly handsome or beautiful in their Shou fashion, and have

an almost instinctive grasp of leadership principles and small unit tactics. In the absence of strong leadership, young hobgoblins will often fight and kill each other, but under a strong chieftain they become superb unit leaders. The birthing phenomenon is sporadic, however, and goblin tribes never seem to have more than two or three years of hobgoblin births every twenty years. Hobgoblins born to different goblin tribes hate each other just as vigorously as they hate all other outsiders.

Hobgoblins leading fellow goblins of their own tribe increase their effective morale to 9 and substantially improve their combat tactics. Small groups of hobgoblins are occasionally found operating separately from the tribe, usually on some sort of commando operation or the targeted assassination of a troublesome human leader.

SHOU, ORC

NO. APPEAR: 2d5 (1d6 x 10)	MORALE: 8
ARMOR CLASS: 6	HIT DICE: 1
ATTACKS: Weapon +1	
DAMAGE: By weapon	SKILL BONUS: +1
MOVE: 30'	TREASURE: H2 (H3)

Shou orcs are man-sized, with the males built heavily and broad across the shoulders. Skin and hair color varies widely, from a pallor like that of the bugbears to skin only a little paler than a full-blooded Gadaal. Orc females are often quite handsome by human measure, beneath their fearsome tribal markings.

Orcs are among the most numerous of the Shou, as they are the most likely to settle down in human ruins or abandoned places and compel slave tribes to perform agricultural and herding work for them. Some of these orcish domains can grow to hundreds of skilled warriors keeping watch over a helot population of other Shou and human slaves. Fortunately for the other exiles, the more powerful a single orcish tribe becomes, the less inclined their neighbors are to maintain any kind of peace with it.



SHUI GUI, THE WATER TWIN

NO. APPEAR: 1 (1d6+1)	MORALE: 10
ARMOR CLASS: 5	HIT DICE: 6
ATTACKS: 1 drowning touch +7	
DAMAGE: 2d6	SKILL BONUS: +2
MOVE: 30', 60' swim	TREASURE: H2 (H3)

The water twin is an undead creature produced by the terror of drowning and the anguish of the unlamented dead. These creatures resemble rotted and sea-wracked corpses when submerged, though on dry land they appear just as any other human being. They lie in wait close to their place of death, seeking to catch and drown victims. Their simple touch is sufficient to drench and choke a victim in a sudden flood of filthy water.

If the water twin successfully drowns a victim, their prey is forced to take their place in the waters of their death, and the water twin may adopt its victim's face and seeming. The creature is quite intelligent, though it cannot help but let subtle aspects of its savage, brutal nature show in its actions. Still, their true nature remains obvious whenever their flesh is submerged in water, and so their imposture is likely to be discovered in time. The shui gui will cling to its false life even if discovered. It will stop at nothing to force those around it to act as if it were the true entity it claims to be, and will prefer to suffer final death rather than relinquish its stolen form.

SIYOKOY, THE FISH MAN

	MANFISHER	RAID CHIEF
ARMOR CLASS:	7, or 5 if shell-skinned	5
HIT DICE:	2	7
MOVE:	20', 60' swim	20', 60' swim
ATTACKS:	1 weapon +2	1 weapon +9
DAMAGE:	By weapon	By weapon +4
NO. APPEAR:	2d6 (3d12)	1 (1d4+1)
SKILL BONUS:	+1	+2
MORALE:	9	10
TREASURE:	H2 (H3)	H3 (H4)

The tentacled fish-men of the deep places, the siyokoys despise all mammals and harvest remote villages much as fishermen rake the deep seas. The siyokoy fear flame and avoid large concentrations of humans, but isolated coastal villages and unwary ships are their prey.

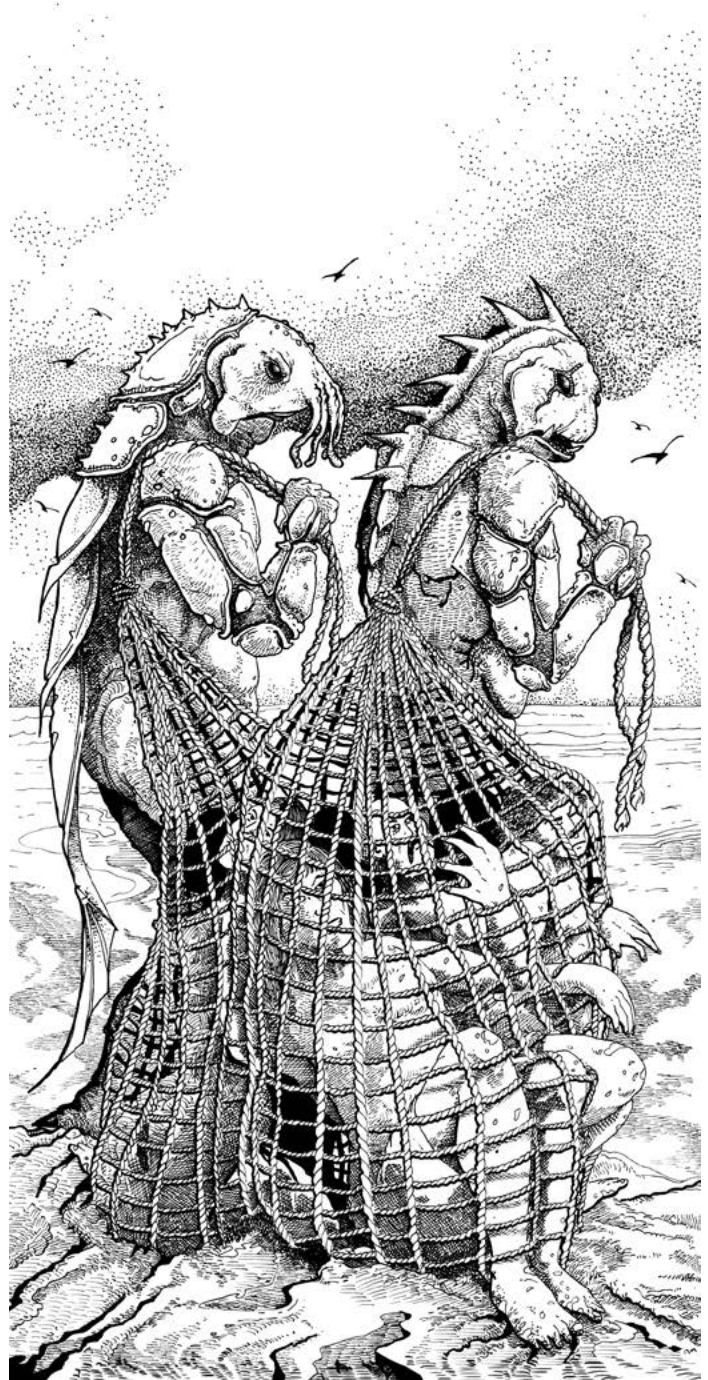
Siyokoys are humanoid in shape, albeit scaled and finned, and sport tentacles in replacement of random body parts. Tentacular arms and lower bodies are common, as are beaked and tentacle-fringed mouths. They do not wear armor, though they wield weapons of sharp coral. They prize gold from the surface, for it does not tarnish and is soft enough to be worked without fire. Siyokoys know many dark sorceries, and the wizards among them are strong in sea-magic and the shaping of scaled flesh.

While siyokoys are aquatic by nature, they can function on land for as much as a day before they must return to the water. Their usual use for humans is as food, but some miserable wretches are stolen for other, more terrible uses, made to survive the inky depths through the application of certain stinging urchins that keep them unbreathing and deathly still until they can be taken to the deep air-filled caves where these captives are imprisoned. Few ever return from those phosphorescent hells, and those who do bear evidence of unspeakable experiments and brutal defilements of flesh.

SKELETON

NO. APPEAR: 3d4 (3d10)	MORALE: 12
ARMOR CLASS: 7	HIT DICE: 1
ATTACKS: 1 weapon or claw +1	
DAMAGE: 1d6 or weapon	SKILL BONUS: +0
MOVE: 30'	TREASURE: None

One of the simplest forms of undead, a skeleton is simply a set of bones animated by the decaying remnants of a spirit's lower, animalistic soul. These dry bones instinctively seek to kill all living creatures larger than a rat, though they will not stir far from their place of death. They largely mindless, though they will sometimes pantomime the acts and roles they undertook in life.



SPIDER, GIANT

NO. APPEAR: 1 (2d6) **MORALE:** 10
ARMOR CLASS: 6 **HIT DICE:** 1 to 6
ATTACKS: 1 bite at a bonus equal to hit dice
DAMAGE: 1d8 + poison **SKILL BONUS:** +2
MOVE: 30' **TREASURE:** None

Hateful creatures of the far jungles and deep caves, giant spiders range in size from dog-sized crawlers to hideous beasts as large as a horse. Most are highly venomous, forcing those bitten to make a saving throw or die. Others are web-spinners, fabricating webs of silk so fine as to be almost invisible in dim torchlight, but snaring those who touch it. Webbed victims must spend an action to make a saving throw to pull free, and are automatically hit each round until they do so. Most giant spiders are solitary in nature, though rarely a "hunting pack" will be found with 2d6 of them working together.

SQUID, GIANT

NO. APPEAR: 1 **MORALE:** 9
ARMOR CLASS: 7 **HIT DICE:** 4 to 13
ATTACKS: 8 tentacles at a bonus equal to hit dice
DAMAGE: 1d6 per tentacle **SKILL BONUS:** +2
MOVE: 60' swimming **TREASURE:** None

Sometimes found in the company of siyokoys, the giant squid has an unwholesome degree of intelligence for a beast. Even the smallest of its kind are larger than an ox, and the true titans of the deep can coil whales in their barbed embrace. Giant squid can change color to blend more easily with their environment, and often lie in wait for ships. Rumors speak of squid clever enough to lay out a bait of treasure to attract the unwary within reach of their many arms.



TENGU

NO. APPEAR: 1 (2d4) **MORALE:** 9
ARMOR CLASS: 6 **HIT DICE:** 7
ATTACKS: 2 claws or 1 claw and weapon +5
DAMAGE: 1d8/1d8 **SKILL BONUS:** +3
MOVE: 20', 40' Flight **TREASURE:** H3 (H4)

A cruel, rapacious breed of avian humanoids, the tengus are also repositories of ancient wisdom. Tengu sages know many secrets of enchantment and sorcery, while other tengus have hidden arts of mundane craftsmanship. They give nothing for free, however, and demand a great price in wine, gold, and slaves for their knowledge. The tengus have great hungers, and slake them all upon those unfortunate enough to fall into their power.

A tengu appears very human in appearance save for possessing the head of a bird of prey and wings of matching kind sprouting from their back. Tengus can fly, and make their homes on isolated peaks beyond the easy reach of earthbound foes. Tengus prefer to live alone when not raiding as they quarrel easily with each other, though each has sufficient artistry and skill to provide for all their own necessities.

Most tengus are content to abuse strangers who wander too close to their lairs, but now and then one will be seized by dreams of grandeur, and claim a human village or settlement as its subjects, taxing them brutally and taking a toll of their comeliest youths until a hero comes to free them.

TIDESPAWN

The red mist roils a hundred miles off the shores of the Sunset Isles, keeping its distance from the godbone-infused earth of the islands. Still, there are times when long arms of red fog creep in at night to touch distant shores, and in hidden places petitioners send up prayers to powers they cannot name. The Tide's reach is long, and sometimes it reaches into the houses of men.

The Tidespawn are denizens formed within the red mist, usually fashioned out of the men, women, and children caught within the creeping Tide or captured by its devils. They are not undead, but are instead living creatures infused with hideous magic and a consuming, maddening purpose. Most have only ragged shreds of awareness left to them, and none are capable of resisting their new urges.

Tidespawn can be found not only where tenuous fingers of mist reach to touch the Isles' shores, but also deeper inland, where some reckless Tide Cult has opened a way for their masters. Most such cultists rapidly become prey to the mists, but some are occasionally permitted to retain their human identity, the better to gather in further prey. Tide cultists that have metastasized to such a stage are rarely capable of functioning in human society any more, however, and so such dire infestations are most common in the wilderness and borderlands where they can fester unconstrained.

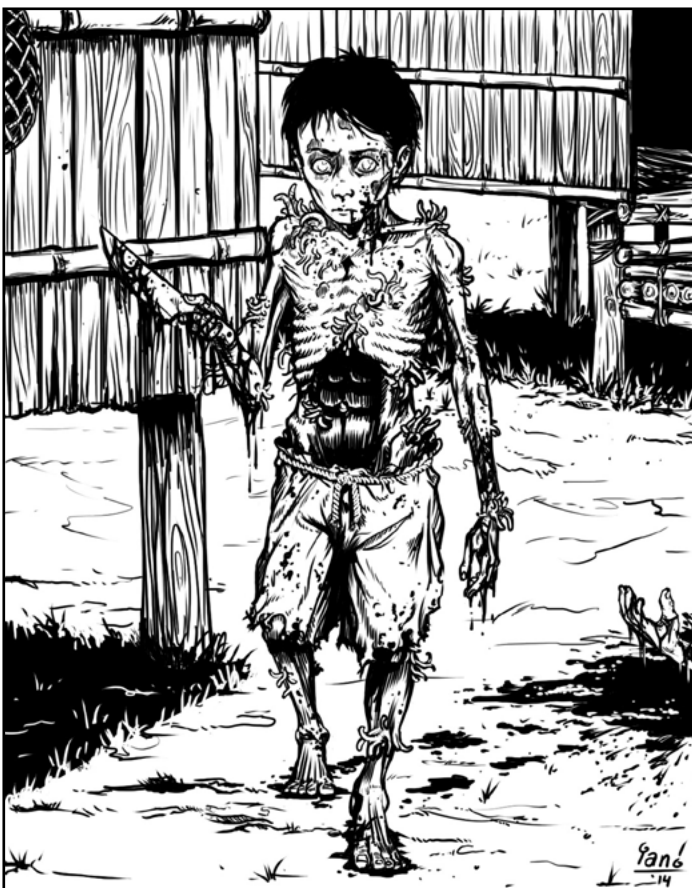
Perversely, the best defense against the Tide Cults of the wilderness are the tribes of the Shou. Shou have an instinctual and overpowering hatred for the Red Tide and all its creations, and are remarkably resistant to the blandishments of the mist. The Tide cannot permanently alter Shou or taint them with lasting corruption, and even temporary curses or blights have a hard time finding purchase on them. A Shou PC's "Resist the Red Tide" trait applies whenever making an opposing check or saving throw against a Tidespawn or Tide cultist.

In the days of the ancestors, Tidespawn were so rare as to be little more than a terrible old story. But in the past ten or twenty years the number of Tide Cults has steadily increased as more and more weak-willed men and women are tempted into red worship by poisonous dreams. These visions promise safety, hope, and abundance for those who perform small and trifling reverences, and the initial obeisances of such cultists are rewarded with a steadily-growing and delusive sense of happiness and good fortune. Even as the cultists begin to collapse into madness, the joy of the Tide within them keeps them faithful while their bodies twist and distort under the caress of the Tide. The lucky ones are caught and executed before the final stages of transformation and the sanity-shattering realization of what they finally have become.

TIDESPAWN, CREEPER

NO. APPEAR: 2d4 (6d10)	MORALE: 12
ARMOR CLASS: 7	HIT DICE: 1
ATTACKS: Weapon +1	
DAMAGE: By weapon -1	SKILL BONUS: +0
MOVE: 20'	TREASURE: None

These short, hideously misshapen creatures are the remains of children, halflings, and smaller humans who have fallen prey to the mists of the Red Tide. They possess a few shreds of intelligence barely superior to that of an animal, fighting in mad packs that swarm any living thing not tainted by the Tide. They are all but incapable of any tactics more sophisticated than a spear thrust or the swing of a club. Their simple proximity produces a dizzying distortion of thought and will in normal creatures; anyone in melee with a Creeper suffers a -1 penalty to hit rolls and a +1 penalty to Armor Class as they are forced to ignore creeping visions and strange urges. This penalty applies only once, regardless of how many Creepers surround a warrior.



TIDESPAWN, DREAM LORD

NO. APPEAR: 1	MORALE: 12
ARMOR CLASS: -3	HIT DICE: 25
ATTACKS: 1 vision that always hits	
DAMAGE: 1d20 + save or die	SKILL BONUS: +8
MOVE: 120' teleport	TREASURE: Endless

The Dream Lords are not so much individual entities as they are animate nodes of the Red Tide. Dream Lords manifest as dark echoes of a great nation's last ruler, focal points for the dread and panic of its countless Tidespawn-taken victims. They do not consciously act to expand the Tide, but simply emanate it by virtue of their presence. Only with their destruction can a land be liberated from the red mist.

Aside from their incredibly resilient exterior forms and their funhouse-mirror distortions of the land's last ruler before the Tide, Dream Lords have almost complete control over the environment in their presence. Reality warps and twists to suit their unguessable whim, and only heroes equipped with powerful enchantments are capable of avoiding near-instantaneous obliteration.

Even if the hero is able to avoid destruction beneath some suddenly-conjured devastation, they must render the Dream Lord vulnerable by proving that it is not the real ruler of the domain. Some sort of token must be presented to prove that the true lord of the land opposes them. In the case of the false Emperor of the Ninefold Celestial Empire, this might be the Tablet of Heaven that Archmage Lammach spirited away to the Isles during the exile. Unfortunately, the Tablet was lost during the chaos of the Ravaging and has yet to be rediscovered. Other similar regalia or ritual consecrations may be needed to gain the legitimate rulership of a Tide-stained land.

Once a Dream Lord has been robbed of its authority over the land, it can still fight back with terrible, killing visions hurled at its enemies and the ability to cast any spell it chooses once per round.

TIDESPAWN, MAGISTRATE OF ASHES

NO. APPEAR: 1	MORALE: 12
ARMOR CLASS: 0	HIT DICE: 10
ATTACKS: 2 burning claws +10, 1 flame strike always hits	
DAMAGE: 1d8/1d8/2d10	SKILL BONUS: +4
MOVE: 40' / 40' Teleport	TREASURE: HS

The Magistrate of Ashes is rarely seen by humans- or at least, few live to report any sightings. The figure bears a vague, distorted resemblance to an Imperial magistrate, yet it is wreathed in a perpetual cloud of burning embers and smoke. It speaks but rarely, and is always perfectly understood by those who hear it. What few reports exist of this creature suggests that it serves as a sort of intermediary between the Dream Lords of the Tide and their misshapen servitors, planning and organizing incursions into the Isles.

When it is forced into personal battle, it flickers like a malevolent will-o-wisp among its enemies, teleporting away from them and towards safety and leaving clouds of smoke and flame to scorch its foes. Any creature adjacent to it when it teleports takes a 1d6 die of fire damage. Aside from its blazing claws, it can also call down a bolt of flame on a single target within 60'. It is uncommonly vulnerable to the ice and snow of sorcerous cold, and takes double damage from such attacks.

TIDESPAWN, RED APOSTLE

NO. APPEAR: 1	MORALE: 12
ARMOR CLASS: 2	HIT DICE: 6
ATTACKS: 2 claws +6, 1 burning breath always hits	
DAMAGE: 1d4/1d4/1d12	SKILL BONUS: +2
MOVE: 30'	TREASURE: H4

The Red Apostle is the husk of a wretched devotee of one of the Tide cults. Some acolytes of the Tide prove unsuitable for the incomprehensible purposes of their masters, and rather than permitting them to be transformed into a mere Stretched One or Creeper by the mists, they are infested with a burning disease that racks them with unending pain. The only possible cessation of this suffering comes from exhaling shards of burning meat and bone and sharing the torment with those not graced by the Tide. The burning breath of a Red Apostle is a cone 10' long and 10' wide at the far end. All within it must save or take a 1d12 damage die.

Most Red Apostles retain a surprising amount of human awareness, and they are some of the more effective low-level leadership of the swarms. They can even share some of their agony with a "fortunate" subordinate, goading it on to slaughter the weak; a fellow Tidespawn with fewer hit dice immediately takes 1 hit die of damage but gains +4 to hit and doubled damage dice for the remainder of the combat.

TIDESPAWN, STRETCHED ONE

NO. APPEAR: 2 (1d10 x 2)	MORALE: 12
ARMOR CLASS: 6	HIT DICE: 1
ATTACKS: 2 claws at +2 or 1 vertebral lash at +2	
DAMAGE: 1d4/1d4 or 1d8	SKILL BONUS: +1
MOVE: 40'	TREASURE: None

The Stretched Ones were probably humans or demihumans at one point, until the forces of the Tide elongated their limbs and torsos to grotesque lengths. While hulking and powerful, their musculature is not enough to support this great height, and they shamle and creep at great speed in a hunched posture save when they rear up to rend a foe. They fight with claws or chains of vertebrae and sinew and love to work in pairs, flanking a victim and letting one force an opening that the other exploits to grab the luckless prey. They rarely show tactics more sophisticated than that, but their intelligence is almost human-like, and they can usually deduce who the most "interesting" enemy to stretch might be.

TIDESPAWN, WHITE CHANTER

NO. APPEAR: 1 (1d4)	MORALE: 12
ARMOR CLASS: 7	HIT DICE: 4
ATTACKS: 1 shriek +4 with a 60' range	
DAMAGE: 1d10	SKILL BONUS: +1
MOVE: 30'	TREASURE: H3

The White Chanters are a rarity among the Tidespawn in that they appear to maintain their native intelligence. While they almost never communicate with non-Tidespawn in any comprehensible manner, their combat tactics are effective and practical. While they do not command or lead other Tidespawn, they are most effective at helping their more intellectually limited brethren achieve their ends.

The haze of delirium around White Chanters is stronger than around most other Tidespawn, and they can produce murderously lethal delusions in their victims. Anyone standing adjacent to a White

Chanter must save or become disoriented; each round these victims must roll 4+ on 1d6 or else they can do nothing but defend themselves. This disorientation lasts as long as the Chanter is standing beside them. Those few who get a good look at the White Chanter and live to tell of it describe a gaunt, fever-thin creature twisted into strange angles. It drones a steady mutter of gibberish that can injure the reason of those that listen too closely.



TIDESPAWN, WORMWALKER

NO. APPEAR: 1 (2d4)	MORALE: 12
ARMOR CLASS: 5	HIT DICE: 3
ATTACKS: 3 worm tendrils at +3	
DAMAGE: 1d6/1d6/1d6	SKILL BONUS: +0
MOVE: 30'	TREASURE: None

The Wormwalker was once a man-sized creature, but its true size is sometimes difficult to discern under the halo of writhing, pallid worms that slide constantly through the creature's body. Occasionally the husk of the Wormwalker retains some consciousness of what and who it once was, but it is helpless to resist the will of the alien worms that infest it. Rumor has it that the humans captured by the Stretched Ones are often brought to a Wormwalker to be converted.

The worms break down any ordinary flesh that comes too close, and are driven into an especial frenzy by the scent of fresh blood. A wounded foe that gets too close to a Wormwalker is likely to be attacked by dozens of thirsting worms lunging for their open wounds, and automatically is attacked at the start of each round for 1d4 damage on a successful hit. The first time a wounded enemy comes adjacent to a Wormwalker, an exceptionally large worm will erupt in an attempt to impale them. On a successful hit, 1d6 damage is done each round until someone spends a round's action tearing the worm away. Damage done by this worm will not kill a victim, but any humanoid brought to 0 hit points by it will become a Wormwalker within an hour. There is no cure for this fate if a magical disease cure is not applied before the transformation is complete.



TIKBALANG, THE HORSE-HEADED DEMON

NO. APPEAR: 1	MORALE: 10
ARMOR CLASS: 4	HIT DICE: 9
ATTACKS: 2 kicks and 2 claws +10	
DAMAGE: 1d6 x4	SKILL BONUS: +3
MOVE: 40'	TREASURE: H4

Jealous lords of the wild places, Tikbalangs are roughly humanoid in shape but bear the head of an animal- most often a horse, though other beasts are not unknown. Their limbs are greatly elongated, and though their bodies are but little larger than those of a man, they stand ten feet tall at their full height and have a reach easily as long. They shun all adornment and tools save what their chosen domains might provide.

Tikbalangs are only ever found in the uninhabited wilderness, where they may claim miles of terrain as their own. They have the power to become invisible within their domain, appearing only when they attack a trespasser. They rarely engage in direct combat, instead preferring to use their powers of deception and trickery. They can confuse victims and make them mistake their path, leading them toward some hazard within their realm. Subjects can make a saving throw to resist the effect until they next sleep. The tikbalang can also create sounds and glimpsed images within their lands to lead the unwary astray. Tikbalangs are never hindered by the terrain of their chosen domain, and can cross rivers and climb trees as easily as if they were flat ground.

Tikbalangs despise human intruders and prefer to lead them back out of their lands or send persistent troublemakers into the lairs of wild beasts. Some villagers seek to propitiate these demons with sacrifices and offerings in order to be permitted to hunt or forage in the tikbalang's domain. A tikbalang's lair is always in some well-hidden portion of its domain, where it keeps the possessions of those who die within their realm. If this lair is profaned by a stranger the tikbalang will know it, and must kill the thief before twenty-four hours have passed or the demon will be forced to leave its former lands forever.

TINH, THE LIVING SPIRIT

NO. APPEAR: 1	MORALE: 9
ARMOR CLASS: 4	HIT DICE: 4-12
ATTACKS: 1 weapon or strike at a bonus equal to hit dice	
DAMAGE: 1d8 or by weapon	SKILL BONUS: +5
MOVE: 30'	TREASURE: H4 or None

The cycle of life and death is not so certain as it seems. Very rarely a living creature somehow escapes the final blow of age, living on and on past any normal limit for their kind. Deprived of the natural cession of their lives, they become something else entirely- a tinh. These spirits become more primal, quintessential expressions of their basic nature as the peripheral aspects of their former lives flake away. Tinh retain a material form and cannot be harmed save by magical weapons. If their bodies are destroyed they return to the natural cycle of life and may perish in truth.

Most tinh are the spirits of animals. In their refined spiritual form, they are larger, more noble-seeming and as intelligent as a human. They can speak in human tongues as spirits do and are sometimes willing to do favors for petitioners who serve the tinh's purposes. The tinh has the special traits of its species, yet raised to supernatural heights. A leopard-tinh is impossibly silent and elusive, a lion-tinh is overwhelming in its ferocity, a mouse-tinh can even creep through an unbroken wall, and so forth. The rare human tinh demonstrates superlative skill at the trait or skill which most characterized its life- a tinh swordsman's inhuman expertise, a tinh miser's power to steal gold from distant pockets, a tinh wizard's effortless use of their most famous incantations, and other similar traits.

Tinh have few desires. As their immortality becomes clear, they grow less interested in the world and more absorbed in expressing their particular qualities in some remote place, far from the distractions of the world. A lion-tinh would seek out some remote place in the wilderness and savage all who passed, while a mouse-tinh might occupy itself in gnawing through the roots of a mountain.

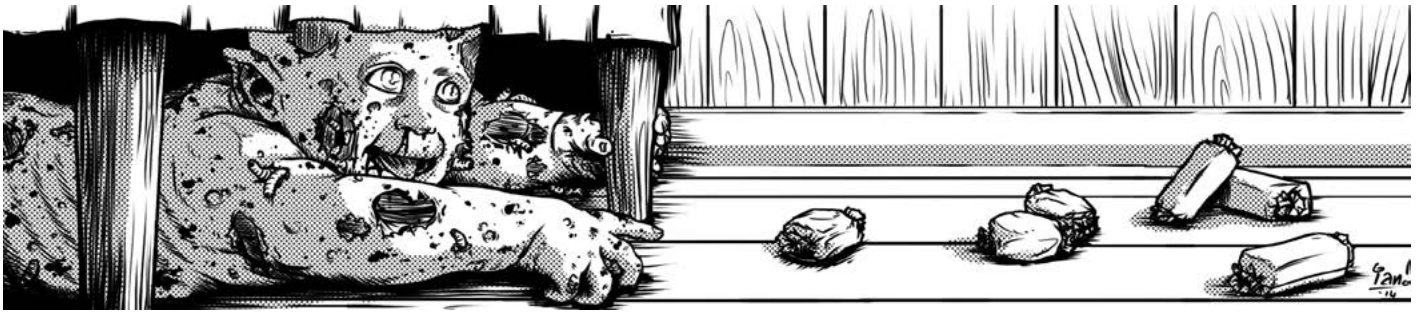
TOYOL, THE SMALL THIEF

NO. APPEAR: 1	MORALE: 8
ARMOR CLASS: 4	HIT DICE: 3
ATTACKS: None usually, otherwise claw +6	
DAMAGE: 1d6 for claw	SKILL BONUS: +3
MOVE: 20', 30' Climb	TREASURE: None

The toyol is a creation of dark necromantic rites, the product of arts favored by envious villagers and greedy townsmen. A creator must have some degree of magical training but the process is not complicated, and those who know the rituals may perform them whenever the raw materials are available.

A toyol is created from an aborted or miscarried fetus. The remains are cut apart, the flesh rendered down and the bones carved with mystical sigils before being soaked in the rendered fluids. The remains are then sealed within a small clay jar and offered propitiations of toys, sweets, and droplets of blood. If the ritual has been performed correctly, the toyol will manifest and obey its creator. If the remains are destroyed, the toyol is banished, and if its creator is killed the toyol will run free.

Toyols are used chiefly as thieves and troublemakers by their creators. While toyols cannot exert more force than a young child, they can



climb even sheer surfaces and ceilings and are perfectly silent in their movements. They understand even complex instructions, but can be distracted by toys and fear their own reflection. Creators who are able to find a woman willing to nurse the toyol on their own blood can empower the creature with greater strength and malevolence, adding an additional 3 hit dice, giving it the strength of a strong man, and allowing it to do 1d6 damage with its small, bony hands. This strength continues so long as a nursemaid remains available.

The toyol itself appears as a small child no more than two feet tall, with a grotesquely swollen head, needle-sharp teeth, and moldy green skin. A toyol can be harmed by non-magical weapons, but even if its body is destroyed, it will reform 1d6 weeks later so long as its remains are not buried or destroyed.

WHALE, KILLER

NO. APPEAR: 1 (1d6)	MORALE: 10
ARMOR CLASS: 6	HIT DICE: 6
ATTACKS: 1 bite +7	SKILL BONUS: +2
DAMAGE: 1d20	TREASURE: None
MOVE: 40' Swim	

These whales are uncommon in the southern reaches of the archipelago, but every so often one of these predators will come down from the colder northern reaches to feed on fish and unwary fishermen. Old tales say that the whales were largely harmless to men in ancient times, but the coming of the Tide seems to have maddened the beasts and now they are known for attacking small boats and any other human prey they can reach.

WOLF

	NORMAL	DIRE
ARMOR CLASS:	7	6
HIT DICE:	2	4
MOVE:	40'	40'
ATTACKS:	1 bite +2	1 bite +5
DAMAGE:	1d6	2d6
NO. APPEAR:	2d6 (3d6)	1d4 (2d4)
SKILL BONUS:	+1	+2
MORALE:	8	8
TREASURE:	None	None

Few wolves can be found in the jungles and swamps of the isles, but the higher hills and plains are known to support packs of these beasts. Hill villages must remain vigilant against them, and even more so against the spirit-tainted monsters known as "dire wolves". These creatures are as tall as a horse at the shoulder and are most often found alone or leading a pack of cowed lesser brethren. They have an almost human intelligence and a profound hatred of mankind, prowling around the edges of civilization to eat unwary travelers and the inhabitants of isolated farmsteads.

ZHI REN, THE PAPER SLAVE

	SERVANT	VALIANT GUARDIAN
ARMOR CLASS:	7	4
HIT DICE:	2	5
MOVE:	30'	30'
ATTACKS:	1 strike or weapon +2	1 weapon +6
DAMAGE:	1d6 or by weapon	By weapon +2
NO. APPEAR:	1d6 (3d6)	1d4 (2d6)
SKILL BONUS:	+1	+1
MORALE:	12	12
TREASURE:	None	None

Some cultures yet embrace the barbarous custom of human sacrifice on the death of a great person, but most who once practiced these rites now instead burn paper effigies of servants or bury clay statues to represent dutiful slaves in the afterlife. These zhi ren are not undead, but are instead a kind of ghostly golem created by exceptionally lavish burial rites and a deceased who is unwilling to go to their final reckoning.

When such a luminary refuses to depart for the afterlife their zhi ren may linger as well. These "paper slaves" manifest as ghostly men and women, well-favored, strong, and beautiful, albeit with expressions stylized as in their original paper depictions. They serve the ghost of their master with perfect loyalty, and will only vanish once their master is dispelled or convinced to enter the afterlife.

A zhi ren appears misty, but can manipulate objects and wield physical weapons. They are as intelligent as humans, but betray no personality save what their original painter was able to impart to their drawing. Zhi ren can be dispersed by normal weapons, but will reform in 1d6 days until their master is banished. They can become immaterial with a round's effort, thus able to pass through solid objects at the cost of being able to manipulate physical objects.

ZOMBIE

NO. APPEAR: 2d4 (4d6)	MORALE: 12
ARMOR CLASS: 8	HIT DICE: 2
ATTACKS: 1 smash or weapon +2	
DAMAGE: 1d8 or by weapon	SKILL BONUS: +0
MOVE: 20'	TREASURE: None

Sometimes enough of a decedent's lower soul remains entangled with their corpse to provide it with motive power and a resistance to decay. Most such entities wither away into skeletons, but some are strong enough to persist as zombies, clothed in rotting flesh and animated by the same blind hunger. Zombies are mindless creatures of base, animal desires. They can be distracted by food, drink, and other direct pleasures, but they cannot be satisfied by any amount of such things. They are drawn to the place of their death and can only be chivvied forth by necromancers who sacrifice to their appetites.

ENCOUNTERS

Use these encounter tables when you want a potentially perilous run-in with some local inhabitants. Where not listed otherwise, most creatures will be encountered as solitary roamers or small bands and have little treasure. Not all are necessarily hostile. As a general rule, there is a 1 in 6 chance of an encounter for every day's travel through semi-civilized lands. Careful exploration or dangerous terrain may increase this.

d20	FOREST	HILLS	JUNGLE	MOUNTAINS	PLAINS
1	Aswang	Bear, Cave	Aswang	Bear, Cave	Bear, Black
2	Bear, Black	Bear, Black	Cat, Leopard	Centipede Woman	Cat, Leopard
3	Cat, Tiger	Cat, Tiger	Cat, Tiger	Diwata	Halfling
4	Diwata	Griffon	Centipede Woman	Dwarf	Horse
5	Human, Bandit	Human, Bandit	Diwata	Griffon	Human, Bandit
6	Human, Bandit	Human, Bandit	Ghoul	Human, Bandit	Human, Commoner
7	Human, Commoner	Human, Commoner	Human, Bandit	Human, Commoner	Human, Commoner
8	Hungry Ghost	Hungry Ghost	Human, Commoner	Hungry Ghost	Human, Noble
9	Mambabarang	Nagar	Hungry Ghost	Jiangshi	Human, Soldier
10	Ogre	Ogre	Kappa	Lizardman	Hungry Ghost
11	Serpent, Giant	Sarangay	Lizardman	Nagar	Kappa
12	Shou, Bugbears	Shou, Bugbear	Mambabarang	Nue, bull-sized	Langsuyar
13	Shou, Goblins	Shou, Bugbear	Serpent, Giant	Serpent, Giant	Ma Lai
14	Shou, Goblins	Shou, Goblins	Shou, Goblins	Shou, Goblins	Ogre
15	Shou, Goblins	Shou, Orcs	Shou, Goblins	Shou, Goblins	Serpent, Giant
16	Shou, Orcs	Shou, Orcs	Shou, Orcs	Shou, Orcs	Shou, Goblins
17	Shou, Orcs	Shou, Orcs	Shou, Orcs	Shou, Orcs	Shou, Goblins
18	Spider, Giant	Tengu	Spider, Giant	Tengu	Shou, Orcs
19	Tikbalang	Wolf, Dire	Tikbalang	Tinh	Spider, Giant
20	Wolf, Normal	Wolf, Normal	Tinh	Zombie	Wolf, Normal

d20	ROAD	RUINS	SEA	SUB-ARCTIC	URBAN STREETS
1	Aswang	Aswang	Ghoul	Bear, Black	Begging monk
2	Babi Ngepet	Babi Ngepet	Human, Fishermen	Bear, Cave	Bored noblewoman
3	Human, Bandit	Centipede Woman	Human, Fishermen	Griffon	Brusque guardsmen
4	Human, Bandit	Construct, Man of Clay	Human, Merchant	Human, Bandit	Charlatan sorcerer
5	Human, Bandit	Construct, Porcelain Servitor	Human, Naval Forces	Human, Bandit	Corrupt petty official
6	Human, Commoner	Construct, War Golem	Human, Naval Forces	Human, Commoner	Endearing urchin
7	Human, Commoner	Ghoul	Human, Pirates	Hungry Ghost	Filthy beggar
8	Human, Noble	Human, Bandit	Human, Pirates	Nagar	Haughty noble
9	Human, Soldier	Hungry Ghost	Human, Pirates	Ogre	Impatient scholar
10	Human, Soldier	Jiangshi	Human, Shipwrecked	Sarangay	Nimble pickpocket
11	Hungry Ghost	Lizardman	Human, Shipwrecked	Shou, Bugbears	Persistent harlot
12	Jiangshi	Nue, bull-sized	Nue, bull-sized	Shou, Goblins	Press gangers
13	Langsuyar	Nue, man-sized	Shui Gui	Shou, Goblins	Pugnacious drunkard
14	Mambabarang	Shou, Goblin	Siyokoy	Shou, Orcs	Shrill fishwife
15	Manananggal	Shou, Orc	Siyokoy	Shou, Orcs	Skulking footpads
16	Ogre	Shou, Orc	Siyokoy	Tikbalang	Slumming noble scions
17	Shou, Goblins	Skeleton	Squid, Giant	Tinh	Street peddler
18	Shou, Goblins	Spider, Giant	Tinh	Wolf, Dire	Tipsy sailor
19	Shou, Orcs	Tengu	Whale, Killer	Wolf, Normal	Tong hatchetmen
20	Wolf, Normal	Zhi Ren	Whale, Killer	Zombie	Work-stained artisan

ENCOUNTER TWISTS

These tables can be used to put an extra twist on an encounter, either one rolled randomly from the opposite tables or one placed as part of an adventure. Some of the results may be inapplicable for unintelligent beasts or savage humanoids, but the rest can be used as flavoring to give more distinction to a given crop of bandits, group of sinister cultists, or dungeon room encounter.

THEIR CURRENT PURPOSE, GIVEN THEIR LOCATION, IS TO....

d20	WILDERNESS ENCOUNTER	URBAN ENCOUNTER	DUNGEON ENCOUNTER
1	Avenge a raid by neighboring enemies	Out on an errand of shady business	Lying in wait for suitable prey
2	Perform a religious ritual	Seeking an assignation with a lover	Cleaning their homes of filth
3	Gather a valuable plant or forest crop	Looking for strangers to waylay	Repairing a damaged fitting
4	Hunt the local wildlife	Seeking a victim to rob or cheat	Serving a local notable
5	Check a trapline they have in the area	Furiously chasing a thieving stranger	Patrolling the corridors for intruders
6	Patrol for intruders in their territory	Drunkenly reeling from a tavern visit	Checking and resetting the traps
7	Search for help with some present crisis	Going to or from a local brothel	Trying to enjoy some privacy
8	Flee a greater and more brutal foe	Visiting a merchant of bad repute	Lying in wait for one of their own
9	Escort an important figure elsewhere	Seeking help for a sudden crisis	Searching for overlooked plunder
10	Scout the area for potential threats	Collecting protection money from locals	Seeking privacy for an assignation
11	Track a dangerous beast or foe	On their way to a local temple	Lost or hiding from others
12	Visit a friendly neighboring community	Begging from the more fortunate	Privately eating a tasty morsel
13	Set traps for the snaring of intruders	Trying to get away from stress at home	Hiding from an angry leader
14	Pursuing thieves or raiders	Seeking a wayward family member	Overseeing slaves or prisoners
15	Take slaves or prisoners elsewhere	On their way to or from their labors	Studying or praying to their gods
16	Escort an exile to the edge of their lands	Sullenly seeking trouble or fights	Destroying or ruining a feature
17	Seek slaves or prisoners for local labor	Looking for a gullible stranger	Toiling at some necessary labor
18	Follow a rumor of treasure in the area	Trying to sell their wares or trifles	Lolling around and drinking
19	Seeking the weak to plunder	Hastening to attend a local noble	Enjoying suitable company
20	Trying to avoid a hunting local authority	Wandering aimlessly, lacking a home	Feasting raucously with their brethren

2d8 THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE HERO IS...

2	Furiously angry, blaming the hero for some recent crime
3	Bloodthirsty, spoiling for a fight
4	Violent, willing to fight if it seems at all profitable
5	Predacious, willing to take advantage of those weaker
6	Predacious, willing to take advantage of those weaker
7	Looking for an excuse to prey on the hero
8	The usual, but tinted with a note of suspicion
9	The usual, given the nature of the encounter
10	The usual, but they might parlay if that seems plausible
11	Disinclined to fight unless that seems necessary
12	Disinclined to fight unless that seems necessary
13	Will parley or ignore the hero if at all possible
14	Willing to talk and can be persuaded to friendliness
15	Friendly and peaceful if that's possible in the situation
16	Zealous friendliness, if that's at all plausible

2d8 THE GROUP'S SIZE AND CONDITION

2	An entire lair's worth of the creatures are here
3	Maximum normal encounter numbers or size
4	Roll encounter size twice and take the bigger total
5	The biggest one has double normal hit dice
6	1d10 x 10% of them have an extra hit die
7	At least one of them has half again normal hit dice
8	Full strength and with their usual degree of morale
9	Full strength and with their usual degree of morale
10	Full strength and with their usual degree of morale
11	They've been hard-pressed lately; Morale lowered by 1
12	One of them is too badly injured to fight
13	Half of them are wounded, losing half their hit dice
14	The group is small; roll its size twice and take the lesser
15	Half of them are gravely wounded; Morale lowered by 3
16	A lair's worth of them fleeing a horribly lost battle

TREASURES BEYOND PRICE

Some heroes are motivated by noble ideals of valor and courageous virtue. Others require more material compensation for their risks, and for these heroes the shine of bright gold and the glitter of precious gems are better arguments than any moralist can offer. Even those adventurers with less interest in a heavy purse can be beguiled by the thought of some potent magical blade or long-lost tome of arcane lore. In this section, a GM will learn how to create suitable hoards for their adventurers to discover and how to place a number of magical items for them to uncover.

THE ROLE OF TREASURE

Most GMs will find themselves in one of three situations when it comes time to think about treasures and magical rewards for their heroes. These situations have certain considerations in common.

One group of GMs is running existing adventures originally written for another old-school game system. These GMs have it easiest- they can just use the treasures as written, though they may need to convert silver pieces to gold pieces for some games. Most magic items and other artifacts discovered in other old-school games will work for *Scarlet Heroes* without requiring any adjustment. Note that there are a few complications that come from the sheer physical mass of coinage found in many old-school modules, and the copious flow of magical items originally intended to kit out an entire 4-8 person party. A GM might choose to selectively trim back some of the magic items just to avoid garlanding a hero with half a dozen different magical artifacts.

A second group of GMs are creating their own adventures, and want to determine a reasonable set of rewards appropriate to the adventure's situation. These GMs prefer to play things according to the classic model of plundering, where a canny adventurer can profit by small treasures as well as great ones, and a careful eye for hidden plunder and valuable furnishings can be rewarding. This chapter covers the necessary particulars for assigning such loot to monsters and hidden caches.

Another group of GMs are running campaigns that aim for the feel of classic pulp adventure, where a single hero seeks some fabulous treasure. These heroes don't spend their time rifling the pockets of the slain or breaking open barrels to find loose change. The only treasure that really matters in these games is the big macguffin they're pursuing, and they can usually be trusted to spend it all in an orgy of excess before the next adventure starts. This model of treasure is covered by a few optional rules provided on the next page.

Whichever situation might apply to you, you should feel free to mix and match elements to suit your particular needs. Old adventures can be excellent sources of pre-made treasure caches, and a game you thought was a coin-counting scavenging expedition can suddenly turn into an obsessive hunt for a grand treasure at a hero's whim.

WHO HAS TREASURE?

Treasure should usually fit its collector. In many cases, this collector will be a monster, villain, or other consequential figure who might be expected to have gathered some interesting belongings. In other cases this collector will be long dead or vanished, and have left their possessions behind in some hidden cache or sudden disarray. Creatures can be expected to gather what they find precious.

Treasures should not always be attached to monsters. If the only way to get plunder is to kill someone you're going to teach your players that the best way to get ahead is to attack early and often. A PC may be a hero, but even heroes can get in over their heads. Such misfortune is made all the more likely if they think that red murder is the only way to get their hands on valuable loot.

Instead, make sure that at least a quarter and probably a third of your treasure caches don't require any fighting at all to acquire. They might be hidden by their former owner, trapped to kill those who try to steal them, or wealth unrecognized by the other denizens of the area. Even those treasures owned by particular monsters might well be vulnerable to the nimble hands of an expert thief, or any other hero who can number stealth and cunning among their talents.

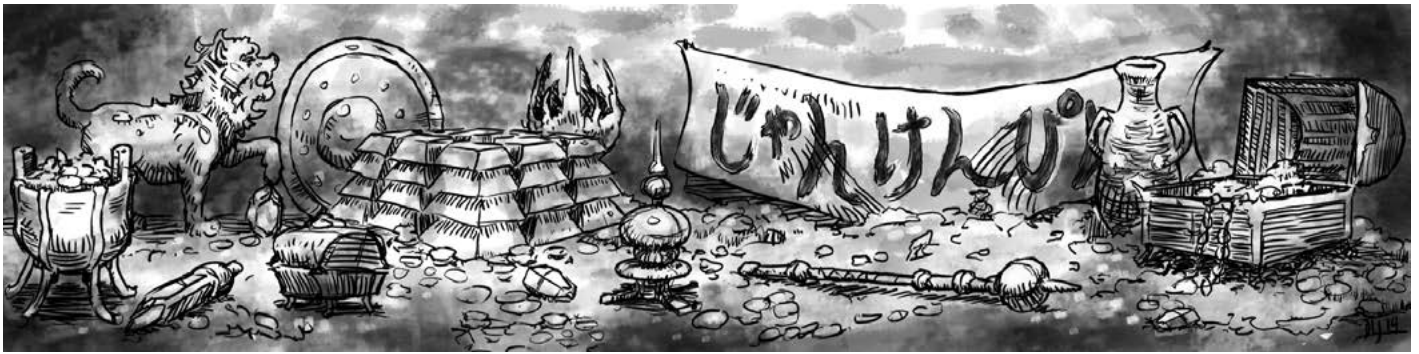
Treasure is not owed to a hero. If a titanic foe or massive challenge has no reason to be attached to some great wealth, then there is no cosmic balance which requires the GM to put plunder there. Just because it is hard to murder something doesn't mean that its pockets should be weighted with fist-sized jewels. Mighty heroes ensure their profits not simply by aiming at the biggest abomination in the province, but by learning where the plunder is kept, going there, and taking it. Scouting and information gathering is to be rewarded.

Monsters will use their treasure. Aside from the obvious case of wielding magical swords or drinking magical potions, this also means that they will buy, bribe, and lure with it as their intelligence and situation allows. A powerful necromancer with a black iron chest of gleaming golden coins isn't keeping it for the sake of the good feng shui, he keeps it to pay minions, bribe officials, and buy useful goods and services. A hero who makes problems for him can easily find themselves beleaguered by the very wealth they were trying to steal.

ROLLING AND PLACING TREASURES

The following tables provide overall total wealth appropriate to various kinds of encounters, ruins, lairs, palaces, and the like. When you need random treasure, simply pick the entry that best fits the situation and roll accordingly.

Some entries assume a given volume of inhabitants or a particular kind of owner. If the inhabitants are exceptionally numerous or powerful then the numbers given in the example might be doubled, while very poor or picked-over holdings might be only a tenth as



great. The long-lost villa of an ancient exile that has never known the touch of a looter's hands will have far better pickings than the crumbling buildings of a pillaged town.

The Bestiary chapter includes treasure codes for various creatures, both for individual and small-group encounters and for entire lairs of the beasts. These totals should be adjusted for the situation as necessary, and are usually rolled in addition to whatever baseline treasure might be chosen for the location. A Shou warband that lairs in a forgotten shrine would roll treasure for both the warband and the shrine, for example. The chieftain might have gathered both sums together, or the shrine's treasure might still be hidden in niches, beneath the profaned altar, or in the cold grip of the last priest.

Once you have a total amount of treasure for the site or encounter, divide it up among the various inhabitants who might be expected to collect it. One good mode of division is to parcel it out in quarters. One quarter goes with the strongest creature or group in the area. Another quarter is shared between the two next-most-powerful collectors. The third quarter is split up among all the other creatures in the area, and the fourth quarter is placed in unguarded caches or simply left lying around as uncollected plunder or valuable furnishings. If rolling treasure for a specific encounter or creature, the loot will likely be in its direct possession, though much might simply be cached away somewhere the creature thinks is safe.

Treasure values are given in gold pieces, but it's unlikely that most foes have loot that's quite so easy to collect, carry, and spend. Much wealth is going to be in bulky copper or silver coins or valuable goods that are nonetheless too burdensome for a single hero to carry away. Other items will be far more portable gems or pieces of jewelry, but these goods can be difficult to sell at their full price. In many cases, a hero simply won't be able to cart away more than the jewelry or gems of a treasure, leaving the rest to their allies or to the monstrous survivors of their expedition.

Most gems, jewelry, and other objects of value can be sold for no more than a quarter of their base price, assuming a wealthy buyer can be found on short notice. Skilled merchant-heroes or those with a knack for haggling might get as much as half the item's normal value. Full price can only be had by patiently awaiting an eager, rich buyer.

To give more flavor to the treasure, you can convert chunks of it into gems, jewelry, or furnishings with the tables on the following pages. If you've budgeted 10,000 gold to the cult leader in charge of the hidden shrine, you could decide to convert 8,000 of it into ceremonial jewelry, with one 5,000 gp piece, two 1,000 gp pieces, and the rest broken into four 250 gp altar vessels. The remaining 2,000 is placed in various types of coin offered up by the devotees and taken from the corpses of unbelievers.

OPTIONAL RULE: SINGULAR TREASURES

For some campaigns the GM and players may wish to largely omit the traditional looting behavior of old-school gaming. This may come from a disinterest in tracking the kind of small rewards that are often found from looting slain enemies or checking for small hidden caches or it may be a desire for a more cinematic, direct focus on a particular fabulous treasure.

For games like this, the GM shouldn't bother to divide treasures among the denizens of an encounter or area. The loot itself should take the form of a single fabulous trove, legendary gemstone, storied piece of jewelry, or precious relic. While its protectors might have a few possessions of their own, it's not necessary to pay attention to such trifling rewards. If the hero wins through the dangers of the place, they can claim their prize in a single, narratively-tidy package.

OPTIONAL RULE: WASTREL HEROES

Some groups like to recapitulate the flavor of classic sword & sorcery adventures wherein the hero is found penniless at the start of every new exploit, having wasted the proceeds of the last on wine, wantons, and riotous excess. More scholarly heroes might do essentially the same thing as they seek to buy ancient tomes, pay tutors, and hire the acquisition of long-lost lore. For these games GMs might choose to adopt these rules for wastrel heroes- or even allow them in other campaigns if the hero decides to indulge.

At the end of an adventure, if a wastrel hero spends, loses, or otherwise divests himself of every coin he has acquired during his adventures he earns one point of fortune. This fortune may be spent to instantly restore half his maximum hit points or to Defy Death with no hit point loss or increase of the die. Only one point of fortune may be spent each day.

Wastrels may keep magical items they find, non-movable property, or appropriate gear for their trade, but the start of every adventure must find them hard-up for money. A wastrel prince who won his throne through cunning might command a splendid palace, but each adventure session will start with his treasury empty, his larder scanty, and a pressing need for liquid funds.

Treasure may be spent during an adventure without penalty, such as for the bribing of pliable officials or the scattered bait to convince a band of pursuers to break off the chase.

The extravagant spending of a wastrel usually leaves no tangible traces behind, though a GM may choose to bring in an avaricious tavern dancer, grasping master thief, or a vengeful spouse into an adventure to tie into a past binge of revelry.

TROVE TYPES

The following list of trove types offers some idea of what an appropriate amount of plunder might be for particular groups, places, and types of foes. You should use this table as a general guideline rather than fitting everything rigidly into its parameters. If you decide that the bandit chief is a scruffy thug with nothing more than a few pieces of cheap jewelry on his arms and a nearly-empty purse, then you can simply put that in as his earthly treasure and call it fair.

The key point to remember is that the treasure to be had from a foe or situation should be reasonable and fitting to the circumstances. The trove types for families, nobles, and merchants are provided largely to give an idea of their current wealth available to hire heroes. They doubtless have more in non-fungible possessions. Coin totals are given in gold pieces, but may well appear as mounds of silver or as smaller amounts of ancient platinum coins.

TREASURE TROVES

TYPE	MANNER OF TROVE	CONTENTS
G1	<i>Peasant Family Savings</i>	1d6 x 10 gp worth of copper and a few silver coins, 1d6 Cheap Clothes, 1d3 Cheap Jewelry belonging to the wife
G2	<i>Prosperous Peasant Clan</i>	1d6 x 100 gp worth of silver, 1d6 Cheap Jewelry, 1 Costly Jewelry, 1d3 Costly Clothes, 1d3 Cheap Furnishings
G3	<i>Merchant Family Funds</i>	1d6+4 x 100 gp, 1d6 Cheap Gems, 1d3 Costly Gems, 1d6 Costly Jewelry, 25% chance of 1 Costly Furnishing
G4	<i>Village Shrine Possessions</i>	1d6 x 10 gp in mixed coins, 1d6 Costly Clothes, 1d6 Costly Furnishings, 1 Lesser Magic Item
G5	<i>Village Tax Treasury</i>	1d6 x 100 gp, 1d6 Cheap Gems, 1d6 Cheap Jewelry, 1d3 Costly Gems, 1d3 Costly Jewelry
G6	<i>Daifu Liquid Funds</i>	1d6 x 1,000 gp, 1d10 Costly Jewelry, 1d6 Precious Jewelry, 1d6+2 Precious Clothes, 1d6 Precious Furniture, 1d3 Lesser Magic Items
G7	<i>Merchant Prince Funds</i>	2d6+8 x 2,000 gp, 1d10 Precious Jewelry, 1d10 Precious Gems, 1d4 Priceless Gems, 1d4 Priceless Furniture, 2d6 Lesser Magic Items
G8	<i>Great Temple Funds</i>	1d6+4 x 1,000 gp, 1d6+4 Priceless Clothes, 2d6 Precious Furniture, 1d6 Priceless Furniture, 2d6 Lesser and 1d3 Greater Items
G9	<i>Junzi Liquid Funds</i>	1d6+4 x 2,000 gp, 1d6 Priceless Jewelry, 1d10 Priceless Furniture, 3d4 Priceless Clothes, 2d4 Greater Magic Items
G10	<i>Mandarin's Treasury</i>	1d10+10 x 10,000 gp, 1d10+10 Priceless Jewelry, 1d10+10 Priceless Gems, 1d10+10 Priceless Furniture, 2d8 Greater Magic Items
C1	<i>Minor Hidden Treasure</i>	1d6 x 10 gp, 50% chance of 1d6 Cheap Gems, 50% chance of 1d6 Cheap Jewelry, 10% chance of 1d6 Costly Gems or Jewelry
C2	<i>Mage's Concealed Cache</i>	1d6 Lesser Magic Items, 10% chance of a wand, 10% chance of a Greater Magic Item
C3	<i>Overlooked Trifle</i>	50% chance of 1d6x10 gp, 50% chance of Cheap Jewelry, 5% chance of Costly Gem or Jewelry
C4	<i>Minor Ruin's Wealth</i>	1d6+4 x 100 gp, 1d6+4 Cheap Jewelry, 1d4 Costly Jewelry, 25% for 1 Precious Jewelry, 1d3 Lesser and 25% for 1 Greater Magic Item
C5	<i>Major Ruin's Wealth</i>	1d6+4 x 1,000 gp, 1d6+4 Precious Jewelry, 1d6+4 Precious Gems, 1 Priceless Jewelry, 1d6 Lesser and 1d3 Greater Magic Items
C6	<i>Powerful Wizard's Lair</i>	1d6 x 100 gp, 1d6 Priceless Clothes, 1d4+2 Precious Furniture, 1d6+4 Precious Jewelry, 2d4 Lesser and 1d6 Greater Magic Items
C7	<i>Small Sinister Tomb</i>	1d6 x 500 gp, 1d6 Precious Furniture, 1d6 Costly Gems, 1d6 Costly Jewelry, 1d4 Lesser and 25% for one Greater Magic Item
C8	<i>Large Sinister Tomb</i>	1d6 x 1,000 gp, 1d6 Priceless Furniture, 1d6+4 Precious Jewelry, 1d4 Priceless Jewelry, 1d10 Lesser and 1d4 Greater Magic Items
C9	<i>Ruined Palace</i>	1d6 x 2,000 gp, 1d6 Priceless Jewelry, 1d8 Precious Jewelry, 1d10 Precious Gems, 1d6 Lesser and 1 Greater Magic Item
H1	<i>Shiny-loving Beast Nest</i>	1d6 x 5 gp among the bones, 1d6 Cheap Jewelry, 50% of 1 Costly Jewelry, 5% of 1 Precious Jewelry, 5% for 1 Lesser Magic Item
H2	<i>Scruffy Bandit's Purse</i>	1d6 gp, 25% of 1 Cheap Jewelry, 5% of 1 Costly Jewelry
H3	<i>Minor Intelligent Monster</i>	1d6 x 10 gp, 1d6 Cheap Jewelry, 1 Costly Jewelry
H4	<i>Major Intelligent Monster</i>	1d6 x 1,000 gp, 1d6 Precious Jewelry, 1d6 Precious Gems, 1d4 Priceless Gems, 1 Lesser and 25% for 1 Greater Magic Item
H5	<i>Petty Bandit Chieftain</i>	1d6 x 100 gp, 1d6 Costly Jewelry, 1d10 Cheap Gems, 1d6 Costly Gems, 1d6 Costly Clothing, 1 Lesser and 5% 1 Greater Magic Item
H6	<i>Strong Bandit Chieftain</i>	1d6 x 1,000 gp, 1d10 Precious Gems, 1d6 Precious Jewelry, 1 Priceless Gem, 1d4 Priceless Clothing, 1d4 Lesser and 50% Greater MI
H7	<i>Powerful Cult Leader</i>	1d6 x 1,000 gp, 1d6 Priceless Clothing, 1d6 Precious Jewelry, 1d6 Priceless Furniture, 1d4 Lesser and 1 Greater Magic Item
H8	<i>Mighty Wizard-Lord</i>	1d6 x 2,000 gp, 1d6 Precious Jewelry, 1d6 Priceless Furniture, 1d6 Lesser and 1d4 Greater Magic Items
H9	<i>Major Tong Leader Stash</i>	1d6 x 1,000 gp, 1d10 Precious Gems, 1d10 Precious Jewelry, 1d6 Priceless Gems, 1d4 Lesser and 1 Greater Magic Item
H10	<i>Ancient Ghost's Relics</i>	1d6 Precious Jewelry, 1d10 Precious Gems, 2d6 Lesser Magic Items, 1d4 Greater Magic Items
H11	<i>Junzi's Private Purse</i>	1d6 x 100 gp, 1d4 Precious Jewelry, 1d10 Precious Gems, 1d6 Priceless Clothing, 1d4 Lesser and 1 Greater Magic Item
M1	<i>Petty Cash Amount</i>	1d6 x 10 gp
M2	<i>Substantial Cash Amount</i>	2d4 x 100 gp
M3	<i>Splendid Treasure Trove</i>	1d6 x 1,000 gp
M4	<i>A Mandarin's Ransom</i>	2d4 x 10,000 gp

INDIVIDUAL TREASURE GENERATION

To use these generation tables, start with the type of item you want to create- a cheap piece of furniture, for example, or a precious gem. Roll on the Object Worth table to find out the base value of the item in gold pieces, though few buyers will pay more than a quarter of half of that if the item is to be sold on short notice. If you have a clear idea of what the item should be, that's all you need to do. If you want additional inspiration about the item, you can roll or pick from the tables below to flesh out the specifics of the object you've just created. The results of the tables can be mixed and matched to produce works of art or precious relics that fit the need at hand.

OBJECT WORTH

VALUE	FURNITURE	CLOTHING	JEWELRY	GEM
<i>Cheap</i>	1d6 x 10 gp	2d6 gp	1d10 x 10 gp	1d6 x 10 gp
<i>Costly</i>	1d4 x 100 gp	1d10 x 10 gp	1d6 x 100 gp	1d6 x 50 gp
<i>Precious</i>	3d6 x 100 gp	2d10 x 20 gp	1d6 x 1,000 gp	1d6 x 500 gp
<i>Priceless</i>	2d4 x 1,000 gp	2d6 x 100 gp	1d4 x 10,000 gp	1d4 x 5,000 gp

TYPES OF OBJECTS

1d12	FURNITURE	CLOTHES	JEWELRY
1	Basin	Boots	Amulet
2	Bed	Cloak	Anklet
3	Cabinet	Gloves	Armlet
4	Chair	Hat	Bangle
5	Hanging	Kimono	Belly chain
6	Headrest	Robe	Bracelet
7	Lamp	Sandals	Brooch
8	Mirror	Shirt	Earring
9	Screen	Shoes	Finger ring
10	Statuette	Skirt	Necklace
11	Stool	Trousers	Nose ring
12	Table	Sari	Toe ring

GEMSTONE VARIETIES

1d12	CHEAP	COSTLY	PRECIOUS	PRICELESS
1	Agate	Amber	Alexandrite	Black Sapphire
2	Blue Topaz	Amethyst	Aquamarine	Blue Diamond
3	Carnelian	Bloodstone	Black Opal	Imperial Topaz
4	Citrine	Chalcedony	Black Pearl	Jacinth
5	Clear Quartz	Coral	Emerald	Pink Diamond
6	Jasper	Green Garnet	Fire Opal	Purple Topaz
7	Lapis Lazuli	Onyx	Jadeite	Ruby
8	Malachite	Orange Topaz	Jet	Star Emerald
9	Obsidian	Rose Quartz	Peridot	Star Ruby
10	Red Garnet	Spinel	Pink Topaz	Star Sapphire
11	Sardonyx	Tourmaline	Purple Garnet	White Diamond
12	Turquoise	White Pearl	Sapphire	Yellow Diamond

CLOTHING AND FABRIC ART MATERIAL

1d6	CHEAP	COSTLY	PRECIOUS	PRICELESS
1-2	Dyed cotton	Finely-printed cotton	Silk	Brocaded silk
3-4	Leaf fiber	Leaf fiber chiffon	Brocaded cotton	Finely-printed silk
5-6	Worn fur	Fine fur	Great cat fur	Dire beast fur

FURNITURE MATERIAL

1d4	CHEAP	COSTLY	PRECIOUS	PRICELESS
1	Lacquered Bamboo	Inlaid Wood	Polished Ivory	Jeweled Ivory
2	Enameled Clay	Carved Marble	Colored Marble	Rock Crystal
3	Wrought Iron	Wrought Bronze	Inlaid Bronze	Jeweled Bronze
4	Carved Hardwood	Carved Mahogany	Carved Ebony	Jeweled Rare Material

THE ITEM IS...

1d6	ADORNMENT
1	Studded with...
2	Jeweled with...
3	Inlaid with...
4	Partly made of...
5	Wrapped or cased in...
6	Plated with...

VALUABLE METALS

1d6	METAL
1	Pewter
2	Copper
3	Bronze
4	Silver
5	Electrum
6	Gold

RARE MATERIALS

1d6	MATERIAL
1	Ivory
2	Ebony
3	Mahogany
4	Pink Ivorywood
5	Rosewood
6	Sandalwood

MAGIC ITEMS

While gold and jewels are appreciated by any hero, the most precious of plunder are the magical artifacts and enchanted war-harness that remain from the work of former empires and long-dead sorcerers. Even the least of these items are difficult and demanding in their creation, and the more potent artifacts are all but impossible to create with modern sorceries.

Magic items are of two kinds- lesser and greater. Lesser items are potions and magical spell scrolls. Greater items are magical wands, enchanted armor and weaponry, magical rings, and other unusual artifacts of lasting power. Most greater items are permanently enchanted, while lesser items are expended upon use.

Clerics, wizards, and characters with suitably appropriate traits can fashion lesser items with little more than a sufficient expenditure of coin for the necessary equipment and ingredients. These items can be bought and sold in large cities where skilled practitioners can be found. They are expensive, rare, and hard to come by, but a market does exist for them.

CREATING MAGIC ITEMS

Greater magic items cannot normally be created without heroic effort from an enchanter. The magical reagents and arcane conjunctions that aided in their creation are now depleted or over, and modern wizards struggle to replicate their effects. Sometimes a wizard will find a small cache of the precious ingredients to such items or happen upon a place of undespoiled geomantic power where they can be created, but a hero cannot ever count on being able to make items.

When a GM places such a trove of components, they are usually sufficient to create a modest item, such a wand, a +1 weapon or armor, or a miscellaneous item of simple function. Larger troves might have the reagents necessary to build more powerful items. A hero might intentionally seek out such troves, in which case the GM is apt to build adventures and situations that give them the chance to gather the components they need for their magic.

Once all the components are gathered, the wizard or cleric may begin the process of enchantment. The work usually takes at least a month, with other components costing anywhere from 5,000 gp, for a very simple item, to 100,000 gp or more for the mightiest works of arcane artifice. The price is apt to vary with the power of the caster, the amount of components gathered, and the judgment of the GM.

Creating lesser items is less difficult, and can be done by any cleric, wizard, or character with suitably focused traits. Brewing a simple potion, such as one of healing, disguise, or a love philtre costs 500 gp and a week of work. A more complex potion, such as invisibility, golden visage, or resistance costs 2,500 gp and two weeks of work. Very powerful potions, such as those of celestial step or geomantic power, cost 5,000 gp and a month of work. Potions of youth and similar fabulous decoctions cannot usually be created by modern wizards. Sorcerers with intimate knowledge of an area's geomantic resources and plant properties can sometimes do without these costs; thus, NPCs in a remote area might be able to create 1-4 potions a year simply by harvesting opportunities unknown to strangers.

Creating scrolls can be done by either clerics or wizards. These prepared parchments allow them to record and store one of the spells they are capable of casting. Scribing a scroll costs 250 gold pieces

times the level of the spell, times the minimum caster level needed to cast the spell. Thus, a scroll of a 1st level spell would cost 250 gp, and a scroll of a 5th level spell would cost 11,250 gold. Scribing a scroll takes one week per thousand gold pieces of its creation cost, with a minimum of one week required for the work.

BUYING AND SELLING MAGIC ITEMS

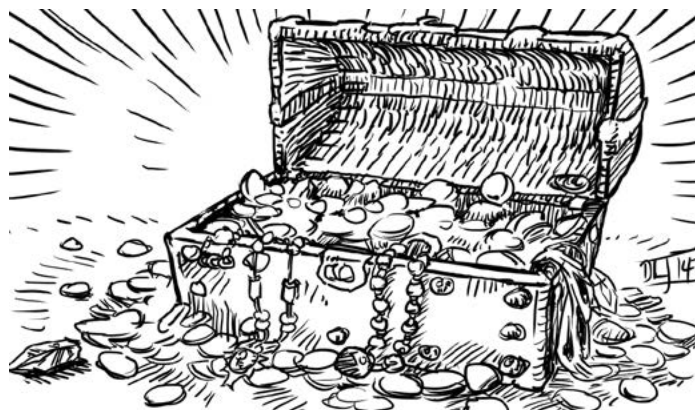
Greater items are almost impossible to buy or sell. Powerful rulers normally confiscate all such openly-advertised items "for the good of the state", while sellers in less autocratic realms find it very difficult to trade such things without being beset by thieves and cheats. Most rulers find it wisest to leave heroes and other important figures their plunder lest they incur the wrath of a mighty adventurer, but such consideration does not extend to the open sale of their finds.

Gifting of such items is more accepted, particularly the quiet exchange of valuable items in exchange for useful services. A hero who desires a particular magical item might have to search not only for the knowledge of some great personage who owns it, but also find some service valuable enough to persuade the owner to part with it. Such an arrangement is almost never as simple as an exchange of cash, as any figure so powerful likely has far more use for a hero's services than their coin.

Potions and scrolls are a different matter, and while they are difficult to find, they can be purchased by a buyer with the right connections. Charlatans and cheats clutter the markets of the great cities, but a truly competent alchemist or capable scroll-scribe can be found in most large cities and sometimes rusticating in some distant village, the better to avoid the constant bother of people trying to buy magical services from them.

Potions can generally be purchased for twice their creation cost- 1,000 gp for minor potions, 5,000 for more potent brews, and 10,000 for the most powerful elixirs. Urban, cosmopolitan alchemists will always hold out for the full price. Rural hedge mages and similar brewers who rely on native ingredients rather than costly purchased components can sometimes be convinced to sell at much cheaper prices, but they'll usually seek to take a rich hero for all they can get unless the hero is laboring on behalf of their community.

Scrolls can also be purchased for twice their creation cost, and are rarely available outside of large cities or magical academies. Sometimes a back-country witch or country mage can be convinced to prepare such a parchment, but they rarely have access to the necessary components unless they are provided by the patron.



TYPE OF MAGIC ITEM

1d10	LESSER	1d20	GREATER
1-7	Potion	1-7	Weapon
8-9	Scroll	8-13	Armor
10	Roll on Greater table	14-16	Wand
		17	Ring
		18-20	Miscellaneous



POTIONS

1d100	EFFECT	1d100	EFFECT
1-5	Airy Body	57-63	Ironhide
6-9	Bestial Form	64-66	Love Philtre
10-14	Celestial Step	67-71	Lungs of the Fish
15-18	Disguise	72-74	Poison
19-23	Furious Might	75-78	Purifying Oil
24-26	Geomantic Power	79-83	Rapture
27-31	Golden Visage	84-88	Resistance
32-46	Healing	89-95	Sovereign Antidote
47-49	Inexorable Truth	96-99	Transmutation
50-56	Invisibility	00	Youth

MAGIC WEAPON AND ARMOR TYPES

1d20	POWER	1d10	ARMOR	1d20	WEAPON
1-9	+1	1-4	Leather	1-3	Arrow
10-13	+1 Special	5	Scale	4-6	Small
14-16	+2	6-7	Chain	7-11	Light
17-18	+2 Special	8	Banded	12-16	1-Hand
19	+3	9	Plate	17-18	2-Hand
20	+3 Special	10	Shield	19-20	Bow

SCROLLS

1d8	SPELL LEVEL	1d8	SCROLL TYPE
1	First	1	Magic-User
2	First	2	Magic-User
3	Second	3	Magic-User
4	Second	4	Magic-User
5	Third	5	Magic-User
6	Third	6	Magic-User
7	Fourth	7	Cleric
8	Fifth	8	Cleric

WEAPON AND ARMOR SPECIAL ABILITIES

1d100	ARMOR	1d100	WEAPON
1-15	Auspicious Signs	1-5	Ancient
16-25	Burdens	6-15	Blazing
26-35	Ease	16-30	Dwarven
36-45	Haste	31-40	Elusive
46-55	Ogrebone	41-45	Elven
56-65	Roguary	46-55	Godbone
66-75	Salvation	56-65	Infernal
76-85	Sustenance	66-75	Righteous
86-90	Wind Shield	76-85	Spirit
91-95	Witch Steel	86-95	Thirsting
96-00	Cursed	96-00	Cursed

WANDS

1d100	EFFECT
1-10	Bridging
11-20	Celestial Wrath
21-30	Disharmony
31-40	Dolorous Delay
41-50	Expurgation
51-60	Gelid Wave
61-70	Opening the Way
71-80	Piercing Light
81-90	Stern Command
91-00	Unreasoning Dread

RINGS

1d100	EFFECT
1-10	Beckoning
11-22	Borrowed Life
23-34	Bubbling Breath
35-44	Flames
45-54	Forewarning
55-64	Invisibility
65-74	Light Step
75-79	Luck
80-84	Spell Devouring
85-86	Warding, AC4
87-90	Warding, AC6
91-00	Warding, AC8

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

1d100	ITEM	1d100	ITEM
1-5	Banishing Ofuda	57-63	Iron-Hooved Horse
6-9	Bottomless Sack	64-66	Jar of Storms
10-14	Brass Devil Bottle	67-71	Jewel of Breath
15-18	Clay of the Maker	72-74	Mirror of Crimson Visions
19-23	Clay Soldier	75-78	Powder of Green Purgation
24-26	Daifu's Name-Seal	79-83	Seven Luck Charm
27-31	Devil-Scourging Chime	84-88	Silk Serpent Rope
32-46	Fan of Winds	89-95	Soul Jade
47-49	Funerary Incense	96-99	Tree-Sailing Skiff
50-56	General's Red Mask	100	Yellow Jade Amulet

POTIONS

These magical brews are usually found in small glass bottles, though also as vials of carved stone, enchanted preserved fruits, or even bespelled flowers that are crushed or eaten. Drinking a potion counts a hero's action for the round. Some potions can be used to splash enemies; if opened and flung from within melee range, the attacker need only hit AC9 to splash a target. If a vial is thrown or launched from a sling, a normal attack roll is needed to apply a sufficient amount of the liquid.

Airy Body: The user's body and possessions turn insubstantial.

While they cannot affect the tangible world while so dispersed, they can pass through any barrier that is not air-tight and are immune to physical damage. The potion lasts 1d6+4 rounds.

Bestial Form: By touching a few hairs or feathers from a natural animal, the drinker of this potion may transform into a perfect replica of the beast. Any animal smaller than an elephant can be mimicked with this potion, granting the user the natural attacks and physical abilities of the creature. The user's hit points, attack bonus, and mental qualities do not change. If the user is not holding any animal parts when this potion is drunk, nothing will happen- but if they touch an animal within the next week, the potion will trigger instantly. The potion lasts for 1d4 hours.

Celestial Step: The drinker gains the ability to walk or run upon empty air as easily as on the solid ground. They may move freely in any direction for the potion's duration. If elevated when it ends, however, they will fall. The potion lasts for 1d6 x 10 minutes.

Disguise: By concentrating upon a particular humanoid no larger than seven feet tall the drinker of this potion may transform themselves and their clothing to perfectly imitate their target. The target need not be visible to be impersonated, though the user must have seen their appearance. The potion lasts for 2d6 hours.

Furious Might: A surge of frantic energy fills the drinker of this potion. They regain 1 lost hit point or hit die each round this potion is in effect, move at twice their normal movement rate, and may roll all their attack rolls twice, taking the better roll. The fury makes spellcasting or other complex thought impossible, however. They cannot stop fighting for the potion's duration, attacking even allies if no foes remain. The potion lasts 1d6+4 rounds. Ending it early requires a saving throw at difficulty 14.

Geomantic Power: Exotic compounds refresh the drinker's arcane energies, allowing a magic-user to recover their most recently-cast spell that day. The potion has no benefit for other classes and can aid a given magic-user only once per day.

Golden Visage: This valuable potion restores a seeming of youth and vibrant health to a user, however aged and decrepit they may be. It also adds a subtle aura of grace and attractiveness to the user, granting them a +1 bonus to their Charisma modifier for all purposes of charm or seduction, up to a maximum of +3. The appearance lasts for a full month, but the aura fades in 1d6 days.

Healing: This curative brew allows the drinker to roll a 1d6+1 healing die. On a roll of 2-5, one hit point or hit die is healed, while a roll of 6 or 7 heals two points.

Inexorable Truth: When drunk or splashed on a target they must immediately make a saving throw against difficulty 14. On a failure, they are incapable of speaking deceptively or untruthfully for the following hour. On a success, they may continue to lie- and it is impossible for an external observer to tell whether or not the potion worked.

Invisibility: Quaffing this potion turns the user and their possessions invisible for 1d6 x 10 minutes. Objects dropped become visible, and those picked up disappear. The subject can move carefully while under the effect of this potion, but violent motions or attacks will rip the veil and end the elixir's effects.

Ironhide: The drinker's skin becomes unusually tough while under the effect of this potion, becoming the equivalent of plate armor at AC 3. Those who are already wearing equivalent or better armor simply gain a -1 AC bonus. The potion lasts for 1d6 hours.

Love Philtre: A target who drinks this potion or has it splashed upon them must save versus difficulty 14 or immediately become infatuated with the first sexually compatible subject they see. The subject will do anything not wholly contrary to their nature in order to please the subject of their desire. The victim may make a new saving throw each day.

Lungs of the Fish: The drinker of this potion becomes capable of breathing water and enduring the cold depths of the sea for 24 hours. Their possessions will not be ruined by the water and they may move at their normal full movement rate. The potion may be divided up among a group, sharing the 24 hours out among several drinkers.

Poison: This brew may be used to stain a weapon, with one potion sufficient to poison one weapon. If struck with the weapon or if the potion is drunk or splashed on a target the victim must make a saving throw versus difficulty 14 or die. The poison wears away after one successful hit, but remains fresh for up to a week.

Purifying Oil: This unguent is meant to be spread on an item or a person. Once applied, it allows a cursed item to be removed or discarded or lifts malevolent sorceries from a living subject. Curses and spells laid by a caster with more than 6 levels or hit dice force the subject to make a saving throw against the caster in order to escape the enchantment.

Rapture: A costly extract compounded from the essences of numerous recreational drugs and sorcerous concoctions, a potion of rapture may be consumed by a user or splashed on a victim. If the subject submits to the drug, they spend the next hour in a helpless, oblivious state of ecstasy. If they fight the effects, the drug lasts only 2d4 rounds- but each round the subject must make a saving throw against difficulty 14 to perform any action.

Resistance: This potion hardens the user's body and possessions against dangerous energies. While under its effects, any fire, cold, acid, electrical, or other elemental damage source is halved and rounded down. The potion lasts 1d6 x 10 minutes.

Sovereign Antidote: This potion is an unfailing remedy for poisons, and can even bring back one slain by toxins provided it is applied within five minutes of death. Drinking this potion also renders the subject immune to poisons for the following hour.

Transmutation: This potion is applied to inanimate objects, and can affect up to a 3 x 3 foot cube of non-magical matter. While under the potion's effect the matter becomes soft and pliable, and may be reshaped or dug out easily. The matter returns to its usual hardness at the end of the effect, 1d6+4 rounds later.

Youth: A vanishingly rare and precious brew, the potion of youth removes 1d6+4 years of age from the person who drinks it, down to a minimum age of 21. Few are in a position to ever find more than one of these potions, but repeated use of a potion of youth is progressively less effective, each following potion removing one fewer year of age.

SCROLLS

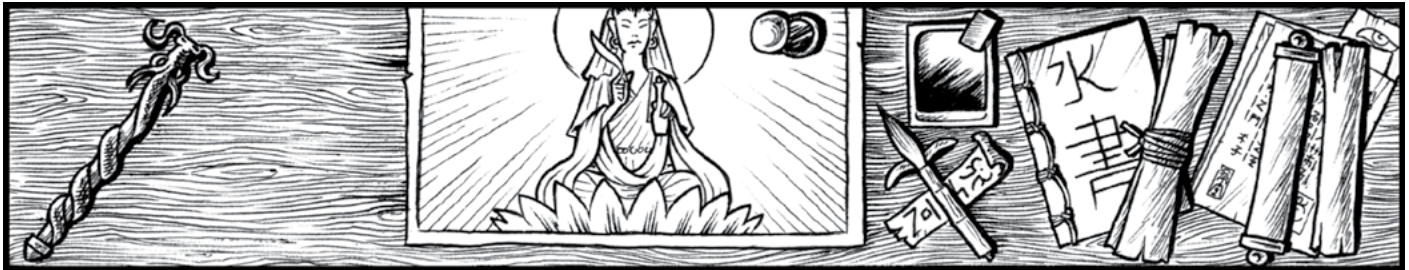
These magical parchments are impressed with occult power and allow a suitably-trained reader to invoke a magical spell. Normally, only clerics can use clerical scrolls and only magic-users can use magic-user scrolls. Characters without levels in either of those classes may be able to successfully trigger a scroll if they have relevant arcane traits that apply. To do so requires a check against a difficulty of 9 plus the level of spell on the scroll. Failure wastes the scroll.

Reading a scroll requires a character's action for the round and a suitable source of illumination. The spell is cast as if by a character of the minimum level necessary to cast the spell, after which the parchment crumbles away or vanishes in a burst of pale flame.

A few scrolls are cursed, the product of an error in their creation or the curdling of the magical forces trapped within their glyphs. This curse takes effect on the first person to examine the scroll, even if no attempt to is made to use it. The GM might pick some suitably dire consequence or roll on the table below. Curses usually allow no saving throw and require suitable magic to lift them.

CURSED SCROLLS

1d6	EFFECT
1	The reader is smitten with sudden weakness; an attribute is reduced to 3 until the curse is lifted.
2	The reader is cursed with a sickness that will kill them in 1d6 weeks unless the curse is lifted. Even disease-curing spells can only delay death by a week.
3	Gold and gemstones carried by the reader transform into lead and glass. The change is permanent and cannot be reversed.
4	The reader and their possessions are transformed into a dog, cat, or other brute beast. Their intellect, attributes, and other statistics remain unchanged.
5	The reader is suddenly struck blind.
6	The reader's magical powers are attenuated, leaving clerics and magic-users unable to refresh any expended spells until the curse is lifted.



WANDS

Usable only by heroes with at least one level of the magic-user class, wands are usually of wood, metal, or bone and are rarely longer than a man's forearm. Where a saving throw is needed against a wand's effect the difficulty is 14 regardless of the wielder's level. Wands have charges. A newly-discovered wand will have one to fifty remaining charges- 1d100 divided in half, rounded up. When the last charge is expended the wand will crumble away. Identifying a wand's effects will reveal the number of charges remaining.

Bridging: With a gesture, the hero may create a magical bridge, stair, or ladder between any two solid points that are both within 300 feet of the wand's wielder. This path can support up to a dozen horses and riders and can be climbed at a person's full movement rate. The path can be broken by inflicting 10 points of damage on it, and it will vanish 1d6 minutes after its creation.

Celestial Wrath: This wand functions only under the open sky, but can be used to call down a sleet of lightning on any point within 240 feet. The burst catches everyone within 20 feet of the target point, inflicting 5d6 damage with a saving throw for half.

Disharmony: Affecting all creatures in a cone 30 feet long and as wide at its far point, all victims must make a saving throw or be thrown into violent disagreement with all other affected creatures. No two creatures will agree to do the same thing, most obstinately doing nothing at all. Victims will still fight back if attacked. The disharmony lasts for 1d4+4 rounds.

Dolorous Delay: The wand affects all subjects in a 10 foot burst on a point within 120 feet. All targets in the area must make a saving throw or be panged with pains that distract and slow them. Victims may either move or act in a round, not both, though the

pains are not sharp enough to prevent spellcasting. The wand has no effect on undead and animate constructs.

Expurgation: This wand is targeted at a specific creature or effect within 120 feet, dispelling all temporary magical effects or manifestations. Long-lasting curses and other permanent magics are not affected, but those with a duration end immediately.

Gelid Wave: A blast of icy chill erupts in a cone 50 feet long and as wide on the far end. Any open liquids are frozen immediately to a depth of three feet and creatures in the area of effect suffer 5d6 damage, with a saving throw for half.

Opening the Way: Touching this wand against a mundane lock or fastened door will cause the lock or portal to open soundlessly. Magical bindings cannot be opened by this wand.

Piercing Light: A narrow beam of brilliant radiance lances from this wand out to a range of 120 feet. Any creatures directly in the path of the beam suffer 5d6 damage, with a saving throw for half.

Stern Command: This wand is directed at a single intelligent creature within 60 feet as the wizard speaks a simple command no more than two sentences in length. If the victim fails a saving throw they must immediately obey the command, carrying it out for as much as 24 hours before the compulsion fades. The creature can resist the command if it detests it sufficiently, but it suffers 5d6 damage in doing so with a saving throw for half.

Unreasoning Dread: A conical wave of horror rolls from this wand, reaching up to 60 feet in width and length at its far end. Victims who fail a saving throw respond as if they had immediately failed a Morale check, the horror lasting for at least ten minutes. Creatures with a Morale of 12 are immune to this wand.

MAGICAL RINGS

Enchanted rings don't always take the form of finger-rings, but also appear in the form of earrings or body jewelry depending on the era and nature of their creator.

Whatever their appearance or location worn, only two magical rings can be used at once. Any further rings simply do not function until their numbers are reduced.

Beckoning: By simply touching an object the wearer can magically anchor it to the ring, instantly summoning it to hand regardless of its distance from the wearer. A ring can be keyed to only one item at a time.

Borrowed Life: Daubing the ring with the lifeblood of an intelligent creature that died within the past minute allows the user to store the slain entity's waning vitality for later use. The ring absorbs hit dice equal to the creature's normal hit dice or level. If the wearer is reduced to zero hit points or hit dice, the stored life is immediately given to them as healing. The ring can store the life of only one entity at a time, and once it releases the force it cannot absorb fresh lives for 24 hours.

Bubbling Breath: Wearers of this ring may breathe freely underwater and are impervious to the perils of cold or pressure in the deep. Their belongings will not be damaged by water and they may move freely at their normal movement rate. Their vision is not impeded by the water or by the sub-surface darkness, and they may see normally regardless of the conditions below.

Flames: The wearer of this ring is impervious to damage from fire, both magical and mundane. They may also ignite a hand in a nimbus of flame, inflicting 1d6 fire damage as if wielding a light weapon, or hurl the fire as a ranged attack with a maximum range of 120 feet.

Forewarning: This ring gives a small shock to the wearer one round before an impending ambush, sufficient to wake them from a sound sleep or alert them of their danger.

Invisibility: This potent ring allows the wearer to become invisible once per day. While invisible the subject can move and act normally, but any violent motions such as running, combat, or spellcasting will tear the veil and end the effect. The invisibility lasts until the wearer ends it.

Light Step: The wearer's footfalls become impossibly light, allowing them to cross calm liquids without breaking the surface or tread easily on surfaces that could never support their weight. They take no damage from falling.

Luck: The ring grants uncanny luck to the wearer. Once per day they may reroll a failed saving throw, attack roll, or check.

Spell Devouring: This potent ring absorbs magic cast at the wearer. The first spell cast at the target each day is automatically drawn into the ring with no effect. This effect includes spells that merely include the wearer in their area of effect. The ring affects even beneficial spells, along with magical abilities that mimic spells. Other supernatural powers are not absorbed by the ring.

Warding: Appearing in several variants, these rings grant the wearer an invisible field of magical protection that provides a better base armor class, as if they were wearing physical armor. This magical protection does not interfere with a wizard's spellcasting or hinder a thief's talents, but it does not stack with existing armor worn. The benefits of a shield still apply.



MAGICAL ARMOR

The potent relics of long-dead heroes or the ensorcelled panoply of wizards and kings, magical armor automatically resizes itself to fit a humanoid wearer and is impervious to the rust, corrosion, and wear of lesser harness. Most such armor is obvious with its intricate craftsmanship and superb condition, though some suits masquerade as perfectly ordinary equipment.

Most magical armor has a bonus ranging from +1 to +3. This bonus is subtracted from its armor class—thus, *Plate Armor +3* has an AC of 0. While magical shields in some other games may also have a bonus, those found in *Scarlet Heroes* do not. Some armor may have a special power in addition to their base enchantment. Magical shields always have a special enchantment, but never have a bonus to their armor class. Special bonuses do not stack, should a hero wear both armor and shield with the same rare virtue.

Auspicious Signs: This “armor” actually consists of an amulet, woad-pot, charm, or other small item that is worn or painted on the wearer’s skin. While so marked or bearing the item the wearer has all the benefits of the armor. Thus *Plate Armor +1 of Auspicious Signs* gives an AC of 2, even if it’s nothing more than a blessed amulet. The subtle protection provided by the armor is weightless, but it will still interfere with magic-user spells, and thieves will still be hindered by painted armor heavier than leather.

Burdens: The armor greatly increases the wearer’s ability to carry heavy loads. The armor or shield is effectively weightless and adds 200 pounds to the wearer’s allowed encumbrance.

Cursed: The product of some magical curdling or restless spirit’s curse, this magical armor appears to all ordinary investigation to be a second, different kind rolled from the table. Once donned, however, it binds to the wearer and cannot be removed, while simultaneously inflicting an AC of 9 on them regardless of its apparent type. The only way to remove the armor is through some suitable curse-lifting spell.

MAGICAL WEAPONS

Magical weapons vary in nature, from simple blades imbued with spiritual force by the courageous life of their former bearer to delicate artifacts of sophisticated ancient sorcery. Some of them are not actually “magical”, but simply the product of artifice or materials so fine as to be as good as any wizard’s work. Whatever their exact origin, any such weapon can harm creatures vulnerable only to magical weapons.

Magic weapons have a bonus ranging from +1 to +3. This bonus is added to both hit and damage rolls; thus, a *Dagger +2* would grant a +2 bonus to attack rolls and roll 1d4+2 for damage. If the weapon is actually ammunition, such as magical sling stones or arrows, it adds to the bow’s bonus, if any. Thus, a *Bow +1* and *Arrows +2* would combine to be +3 to hit and damage. Ammunition loses its magical powers after being fired. Weapons meant to be thrown will retain their enchantment, and will automatically return to the hurler’s hand after each attack.

Some weapons have additional benefits to their manufacture. A hero who chooses to wield two weapons at once can gain the benefits of only one of them on any given round.

Ancient: A peculiar style of magical weapon fashioned of impossibly hard glass shards and prehistoric bone, an ancient weapon thirsts

Ease: This armor is remarkably comfortable and supple, being unusually thin, light, or well-designed. The wearer never suffers discomfort from temperatures between dry-season heat and glacial chill, and remains clean and neat regardless of their environment. They can even sleep in the armor without discomfort.

Haste: The bearer of the armor or shield can move at twice their normal movement rate.

Ogrebone: The armor or shield augments the wearer’s might, granting them a +1 bonus to their Strength modifier, up to a maximum of +3.

Roguary: This enchantment is never found on shields or on armor heavier than leather. It grants a +1 bonus to a thief wearer’s specialty trait. If the wearer is not a thief, it grants them a 1-point trait of “Adventuring thief”, with an instinctive sense of how to perform lockpicking, skulking, pickpocketing, and like abilities.

Salvation: This armor or shield will save its wearer from certain doom. If the wearer is killed or fails a saving throw against an effect that would result in their death, the armor will shatter and vanish, but the hero will survive and regain a quarter of their maximum hit points. The armor will reform slowly elsewhere over the course of several decades.

Sustenance: While wearing this armor or bearing this shield the wearer need not eat, sleep, drink, or breathe.

Wind Shield: While wearing this armor or bearing this shield the user subtracts one point of damage from all incoming missile attacks. This deflection does not protect against magical bolts or enchanted missiles.

Witch Steel: These armors and shields are strange and impractical in appearance, but function as armor of their given type. Magic-users can use witch steel harness without hindering their spellcasting, but their vanes of geomantic direction also catch enemy sorceries and force the wearer to take a -1 penalty on saving throws against hostile magical effects.

for blood, By allowing the weapon to inflict 1d6 damage on himself, the wielder can make a second attack that round. The ability can be used only once per round. Each time this ability is used in a fight, the damage die increases by one step, up to a maximum of 1d12. The weapon calms down after ten minutes of peace, when the step resets to 1d6.

Blazing: The weapon burns in a nimbus of flame, inflicting an additional 1d6 fire damage on any creature struck. Other varieties of this weapon may invoke other types of energy.

Cursed: This weapon appears to be a different sort of magical weapon, yet as soon as it is used in genuine, life-or-death battle, its true malevolence is made plain. Every attack with this weapon requires two hit rolls and two damage rolls, taking the worst of each. The wielder cannot be rid of the weapon without having the curse lifted. Even if he hurls it away, it will immediately appear in his hand during the next fight and must be used. Only death or a dispelling enchantment can end the curse.

Dwarven: More than an ordinary dwarf-made blade, the forgemistress who fashioned this weapon used secret arts to imbue it with incredible strength. The weapon cannot be broken by any mundane misuse and always does at least 1 point of damage on a hit, assuming it is capable of harming a target at all.

Elusive: The weapon is haloed with a strange aura of unobtrusiveness. Onlookers will never notice its presence on a bearer unless it is being used in battle or a careful search of the wielder beats a difficulty of 14. Even spells to detect magic will not automatically notice the weapon when it is being carried.

Elven: Granted a fraction of the strange obsessiveness of the elves by its ancient crafter, an elven weapon magnifies and channels the will of the wielder. They gain a +3 bonus to resist all mind-affecting saving throws while wielding the weapon, and may accept 2 points of damage in mental strain to reroll the weapon's hit or damage dice up to once per round.

Godbone: This hard, glossy black stone is sacred to the Shou as the tangible bone of their god Shakun, and their witch-priestesses fashion their mightiest weapons from it. Aside from its normal enchantment, it is devastating against the Tidespawn. Wielders roll twice for both attack and damage rolls when attacking the Tidespawn, taking the better of the two rolls. While bearing a godbone weapon the bearer cannot be corrupted by the Tide.

Infernal: Cursed weapons often inlaid with red jade, infernal weaponry is darkly blessed by the Hell Kings and their servitors. Once per hour, when used to slay an intelligent creature, the victim's life

force is dragged into the blade to heal the wielder and cure them of as many hit dice or hit points of damage as the victim originally had hit dice or levels. This ability is controlled by the wielder.

Righteous: Sanctified by one or more gods, a righteous weapon burns to correct violations of the cycles of life and death. It can harm even intangible undead, and inflicts an extra 1d6 damage die on undead when it hits. Righteous weapons usually glow or give some other sign when an undead creature is within 30 feet, even if the being is invisible or disguised.

Spirit: These weapons bond with the spirit of their wielder, becoming intrinsic parts of their soul. The wielder can cause the weapon to vanish or appear at will, and cannot be disarmed of the weapon against their will. They may summon the weapon instantly to hand over any distance. The bond lasts until they die or willingly give the weapon to another.

Thirsting: The weapon drinks the strength of those it harms. The wielder may siphon the strength from a victim the weapon has struck. That victim suffers a -2 penalty to hit for the rest of the fight, while the wielder gains a +2 bonus. The benefit lasts until fight ends or the target dies, after which the wielder can choose a different victim.

MISCELLANEOUS MAGICAL ITEMS

A wide variety of arcane artifacts do not fall into neat categories. These relics from better days or dead empires perform remarkable wonders, and are cherished by their more adventurous owners. Most of these items are permanently enchanted, but some are expended after their first use. A few modern wizards are capable of creating such devices if given the right ingredients or geomantic conjunctions, but even the least of these tokens is difficult to replicate in these wane, weaker days. The items listed here are but a small sampling of the wonders that might exist somewhere in the ruins and treasure-houses of the Isles.

Banishing Ofuda: This strip of silk is brushed with mighty words of holy abjuration. If stuck to an undead creature, demon, Tidespawn, or other entity of otherworldly evil it forces the creature to make a saving throw versus difficulty 16 or be instantly destroyed. Even if the creature saves, it takes 10d6 damage. Attaching it to a creature requires a successful melee hit roll, and the ofuda is destroyed when activated.

Bottomless Sack: Found as a bag, backpack, furoshiki, or other container, a bottomless sack can carry a remarkable amount of material without evident weight. The sack always weighs five pounds, no matter how much is inside it. Most examples can hold up to two hundred pounds of material.

Brass Devil Bottle: These intricately-glyphed brass bottles can be used to trap devils, undead, and other otherworldly beings. If an empty bottle is presented to such a creature, it must save versus a difficulty of 16 to avoid being sucked into the bottle, trapped there so long as the stopper is in place. If it saves, the creature is forever after immune to that bottle. If the bottle is opened, the creature within is poured out and must perform one service for the being that releases it before it regains its freedom. This service cannot be suicidal and can take no longer than seven days. "Go away and never bother me again" qualifies as a single service. The bottle may be reused.

Clay of the Maker: This peculiar, fist-sized lump of opalescent white clay has the power to be molded and shaped into any single

inanimate object no larger than a man. It responds swiftly to the will of its shaper, becoming the object in a single round. If the object is destroyed or the shaper wills it, it returns to its clay form. Any mundane object can be created, but precious metals and gemstones are mere gilt and glass, and other valuable components are mere semblances.

Clay Soldier: This fist-sized doll of enameled clay has the aspect of a stern warrior. If dropped on the ground, it springs up as a Man of Clay and Jade, as per the Bestiary chapter, and obeys its activator unfailingly until it is destroyed or deactivated. In both cases it then returns to its doll-shape for 12 hours before it can be summoned again.

Daifu's Name-Seal: This thumb-sized seal of lustrous jade bears the chop of some long-dead daifu of the Ninefold Celestial Empire. One who carries it is kept perpetually clean, neat, and comfortable regardless of the climate or weather. The seal will not protect against open flame or other natural hazards, but will allow the bearer to walk through a monsoon rainstorm without being wetted, or tolerate high winds without mussing their hair. It is most prudent to carry it in a pouch when in Xianese lands; there, only daifus are allowed to wear jade seals openly and imposture is punished severely.

Devil-Scourging Chime: This bronze chime is as long as a man's forearm and marked with auspicious glyphs. When hung up or held, it may be struck to send forth harsh, dissonant notes that pain undead and demons. Striking the chime requires an action, but it inflicts 1d6 damage on all such otherworldly creatures within 30 feet of the chime. At the end of each encounter in which the chime is used, there is a 5% chance that the beating has ruined it.

Fan of Winds: A painted silk fan such as is favored by nobles and well-off merchants, the fan of the winds may be used to strike up a brisk breeze sufficient to push a sailing ship along at its usual rate of speed even during a dead calm. Once per day, it can be used to send forth a blast of wind in a cone 60 feet long and as wide as the far end. All creatures within that area must save versus difficulty 16 or be knocked over, suffering a 1d4 damage die and needing

an action to get back on their feet. Simple wooden or thatch huts and other light construction is blown over by the gust.

Funerary Incense: This jewel-bright incense is found in bundles of 1d4 sticks, and gives forth a fragrance that soothes the restless dead. While lit, unintelligent undead will not harm the bearer unless attacked, and intelligent undead must save versus difficulty 16 to initiate hostilities. All undead within 30 feet of the burning incense are visible and tangible, even if normally they are but invisible ghosts, and their words and wishes can be understood by the living. A stick burns for 30 minutes and cannot be prematurely extinguished once it has been lit.

General's Red Mask: A fearsome mask bearing the face of an ogre, tengu, or other monstrous creature, it grants the wearer the power to induce terror in his foes. Once per day, the wearer can send forth a wave of panic that forms a cone 60 feet long and as wide at the far end. All foes within that area must immediately check Morale; on a failure, they will flee. Even those who succeed are temporarily frozen in horror, unable to act for one round. Heroes and other creatures with a Morale score of 12 are immune.

Iron-Hooved Horse: This small iron horse statuette is no larger than a man's palm. When dropped, it springs up as a metallic steed with iron hooves. It has all the statistics of a riding horse, save an AC of 0, and obeys its summoner with untiring loyalty. It can ride across both water and mountains, ignoring terrain penalties for travel. The horse can be ridden for up to 10 hours before it requires 12 hours of rest in statuette form. If killed, it returns to its statuette form for twelve hours.

Jar of Storms: These jars are usually of glyphed clay, carefully sealed with warnings against careless fingers. If shattered or opened, they immediately release a monsoon rainstorm on an area 40 feet in radius around the jar. The torrential rains make it impossible to see more than 5 feet through the downpour, and the rain is sufficient to utterly quench any flame. Enclosed areas may flood within 1d6+2 rounds. The storm lasts for one minute before dissipating. The water remains even after the storm vanishes.

Jewel of Breath: A small, carefully-carved jewel in the shape of a rounded pebble, this stone may be placed in a bearer's mouth to spare them the need to breathe. So long as they hold the jewel in their mouth, they cannot be suffocated. The terrestrial sympathies of the stone also render them immune to being buried alive, sparing them from crushing injury and allowing them to slowly rise from their stony tomb at a rate of one foot every minute.

Mirror of Crimson Visions: A disc of silver and jade, this mirror can be wetted with the possessor's blood to draw red thread-lines of images and visions of some distant place. The user must shed one hit point or hit die of blood for each minute of use, and this damage can only be cured by rest. So long as the mirror is active it can show the bearer any location they have personally visited, with a change in focus requiring one minute to effect.

Powder of Green Purgation: This jade-green powder can be dusted on the possessor or hurled at another target within 30 feet, requiring a hit roll against AC9 to connect. The subject dusted by

the powder immediately has all curses, spells, enchantments, and other magical effects removed from them, all but the mightiest malisons fading before the strength of the powder. If thrown at an animate construct or other creature of magic, the powder does 10d6 damage on a hit. The powder can only be used once, and is wasted if it misses.

Seven Luck Charm: The charm is an amulet or bracelet with 1d6+1 smaller rays, pendants, or sigils etched on it. Each time the bearer fails a saving throw one of the charms blackens and falls away, allowing the user to reroll the save. Only one reroll is possible per save. When all the luck has been used up, the charm crumbles.

Silk Serpent Rope: This length of silk rope is ten feet long and intricately knotted when first found, stitched with strange sigils in fine thread. A possessor can swiftly tie or untie knots in it, expanding it out to a hundred feet or shrinking it to a mere hank of one foot length in a single round. When an end is hurled at a target the rope strikes like a serpent, wrapping around the target and providing a secure hold for a climber. If thrown at a living creature the victim must make a saving throw versus difficulty 16 or be tangled for 1d4 rounds, unable to do more than defend themselves until they can get free of the rope. The rope can be cut by 2 points of damage delivered by an edged weapon against AC4. It bleeds a hot, red blood, and if cut, it cringes back into a ten-foot length and cannot be coaxed longer for an hour.

Soul Jade: These fist-sized cylinders of carved jade were the most important element of many animated constructs of the latter Ninefold Celestial Empire, and now and then an intact one is discovered. The long centuries have given the spirit within a remarkable ability to reason compared to most constructs. If provided with a body by a magic-user or other skilled scholar, the whole costing 1,000 gp, the soul jade may be used to animate the corpus with a loyal and intelligent servant. The creator may choose whether to make a Porcelain Servitor or a Man of Clay and Jade from the soul jade, though once chosen the choice cannot be changed. If the entity's body is destroyed, the soul jade will remain intact and may be placed in a new corpus. Many soul jades are privy to truths long since lost under the weight of ages.

Tree-Sailing Skiff: A small sailboat fifteen feet long and five feet broad, a tree-sailing skiff functions normally on water and can hold up to six passengers and their gear. The remarkable ability of the skiff is its power to sail over treetops and jungle canopies, crossing forest and jungle as if it were open sea. The skiff rises swiftly from the ground or sea to perch atop the trees, and remains there until its pilot chooses to land it. With an hour's work the tree-sailing skiff can be folded down into a bundle that weighs only thirty pounds, with the same amount of time needed to unfold it.

Yellow Jade Amulet: This pendant of luminous yellow jade turns hot and shades an angry red when in the presence of enemies or those who currently seek the wearer's harm. Those who are trying to conceal their malice must succeed on a saving throw against difficulty 16 to gull the amulet.



CREATING ADVENTURES

A particular tale of derring-do is an *adventure*, and a hero's progress in their career is measured out in the adventures they have successfully essayed. While lounging around spending their takings on brandy and bad company might be gratifying to a hero, such "downtime" is not an adventure- though it can become one should things take an unexpected turn. An adventure, properly speaking, is some difficult task, or daring exploration, or perilous challenge that the hero has taken up and plans to see through to the end. An adventure without risk or danger is no adventure at all.

A respectable number of GMs like to work with pre-made adventures, either the classic "modules" put out by gaming companies in the seventies, eighties, and nineties or more modern efforts made by a host of small publishers or homebrewers. *Scarlet Heroes* should work well with almost any of these that share the same basic "old-school" mechanical system. In fact, one of the main purposes of this game is to allow you to run these classic adventures when you can't find the 4-6 players normally needed to handle their challenges.

Still, one of the great pleasures of being a GM is in constructing your own adventures. This chapter will go over the necessary steps in creating and running an adventure for a solo hero and discuss some of the challenges inherent in a "sandbox" style of play. Gaming veterans might find some of it to be old hat, but even these grognards might benefit from a straightforward presentation of the basics.

THE ADVANTAGES OF SOLITUDE

There are certain unique qualities to running an adventure for a single player or a very small group. The group dynamics tend to be very different, unsurprisingly, and this has an effect on how adventures are constructed and played.

Solo adventures move quickly. In any decent-sized group of players there are inevitable lulls when the players stop to discuss their next actions or devise a plan. This back-and-forth can take a while to resolve and moderate the overall pace of the adventure. This does not generally happen with a solo player. They are moving forward *all the time*. Even for a combat encounter, a single player taking on a dozen orcs is going to move much faster than if it were four players each trying to decide how best to overcome the foe.

Solo adventures change direction rapidly. In a group, there's a certain inertia of choice. Any really drastic goal changes have to get at least the tacit agreement of three or four other people, and many players are reluctant to rock the boat by asking for a direction shift in the party's ambitions. A solo hero under no such obligation. If a situation looks bad or a new opportunity opens up, you can expect them to act accordingly. Some players might hesitate to upend a situation you've clearly spent a lot of time preparing, but that's more of a reason not to spend a lot of time preparing set-pieces.

Solo adventures get personal. With only a single PC to engage, a player is more likely to be willing to act on personal feelings and relationships, as they don't have to justify them to the rest of the party. If an NPC friend asks them to drop everything and help, they don't need to worry about convincing anyone else to agree. It's not necessary for an NPC to build a relationship with an entire party before the heroes can be persuaded to act on their behalf- or against their nefarious schemes.

When you prepare an adventure for a solo player, you need to be ready for things to move quickly and veer without warning. Fortunately, the rules-light framework behind the game is easy to use in ad-hoc ways. This chapter will provide some tools for streamlining the process of preparation and play.

SANDBOXES AND YOU

Many modern published adventures are built on a "story arc" model, where the PCs are presented with a series of situations and locales to experience. Each situation follows the next in a roughly predetermined order. The choices of the PCs may change the eventual outcome dramatically, but the adventures are fundamentally "about" the story. The players tacitly agree not to turn around and run in the opposite direction from events, and they can be expected to cooperate with the GM in exploring the plot. Adventures built on this model can involve very intricate situations and complex, interlocking series of pre-planned events because the GM can be reasonably confident that the players are going to play along with the plot.

A very different "sandbox" style of game was more common in the earlier years of the hobby. In these sort of adventures, the GM sets up a particular place or situation and then lets the PCs experience it as they choose, with no particular pre-arranged story arc involved. A sequence of events may be fated to occur if the players don't intervene, but it's not assumed that the players will actually do so. For example, in both a sandbox and a story arc game the Evil High Priest may be plotting to unleash an army of summoned demons onto the hapless town. The story arc assumes that the players will try to stop him and will outline a general path for doing so, while the sandbox simply puts him in as one more situation in which the players may or may not choose to involve themselves. If they don't then the town will probably be overrun by demons, but the players may never have discovered the plot, may have decided some other peril was more pressing, or may just not have liked that town very much.

Scarlet Heroes can be used for either style of gaming, but a single-player game pitched toward novice gamers is sometimes better suited by a modified sort of sandbox. Novice gamers often don't understand the kind of tacit social agreements involved in a story arc, and can sometimes decide that a particular story arc is just a bad idea for their hero, or fail to understand how to play along with the im-

PLICIT expectations of the form. A somewhat directed sort of sandbox is often the more helpful mode, as there are fewer expectations for them to master and more flexibility for the GM to dish up the kind of experience they find most entertaining.

THE CAMPAIGN FRAMEWORK

It's possible to run a sequence of adventures for a hero without ever really fleshing out the context of their deeds. You can string along a sequence of classic modules without ever thinking too hard about the world outside the adventure area, and for some players, this is perfectly good fun. It does, however, tend to make it harder on the GM. A clear context for adventures makes it easier to understand how they might affect the world around the hero and what sort of powers might dish up new challenges to such a troublemaker.

Scarlet Heroes includes the Red Tide campaign setting as an example and a default framework for your games. You can plant most classic modules somewhere in the Isles without much in the way of editing, and the campaign setting itself is designed to provide for a lot of built-in conflicts and adventure-worthy locales. The *Red Tide Campaign Setting and Sandbox Toolkit* book expands on the setting and provides more tools for the GM, as do *An Echo*, *Resounding*, and *The Crimson Pandect*. The contents of this book alone are plenty to serve as a basic backdrop, however, or a context for your own adventures.

Many GMs particularly enjoy making their own campaign settings, and you may already have a preferred world for your heroes. In that case you can simply drop your own preferred cosmos into the game and situate your creations therein. A full guide to the care and feeding of a custom universe is beyond the scope of this book, but there are many other resources available to help the aspiring demiurge.

PARTS OF THE ADVENTURE

An adventure starts with a **hook**. A hook is simply the means by which the hero becomes aware of the situation and is implicitly invited to get involved in its resolution. The hook may take the form of a letter, a rumor, a plea from a friend, an employment opportunity, an assassination attempt, or the discovery of the mangled wreckage of its wake. Experienced gamers will recognize hooks readily, but if you're running for a novice be ready to explicitly tell them, "This looks like an adventure." Don't hesitate to hold their hand a bit until they start to understand the conventions of the genre.

In a sandbox game not every hook will be accepted, which is one reason to use "static" adventures that can keep indefinitely if the player decides to ignore the hook. Two warring families can snipe and spite each other for years before the player finally decides to get involved, and an ancient tomb can moulder along happily for ages before being plumbed by reckless heroes. A wildfire that threatens a village or a sudden outbreak of plague is going to have to be answered immediately or else the situation will pass by. As a consequence, a GM can afford to put a lot more prep effort into static adventures than into time-sensitive ones, as the preparation for more transient situations might end up as wasted effort.

An adventure also needs at least one **location**. For some adventures, this location is extremely important. When exploring an ancient tomb, the tomb itself is the focus of the adventure and needs to be an interesting, exciting place even apart from whatever monsters or dwellers might lair within. A fairly detailed map is needed for explorers, along with a location key listing inhabitants and places of interest. Conversely, some adventures really aren't about the

THE GOLDEN RULE OF PREPARATION

When reading the rest of this chapter, you need to keep one basic rule in mind. It is a very simple rule and it applies well to both sandbox games and story arc campaigns. If you shun it, you run an excellent chance of exhausting your creative energies on trivia and minutiae and burning out before you ever really get to have fun. The rule is very simple.

Before you create something, ask yourself whether you'll need it for your next gaming session. If the answer is "no", ask yourself if you're having fun creating it. If the answer to that is also "no", stop working on it.

You have only so much time, so much energy, and so much creative strength. If you're not having fun with your hobby and you aren't going to need it for your next session, you're just inviting burnout and spoiling your own fun. *Let it go*. If you've got what you need for your next play session, you're fine. Don't worry about "what ifs" or mapping out everything to Survey Corps standards, or having a 47-page roster of NPCs unless the process of making those things actually makes you feel good and excited. This is a game, and it should be fun for both the player and you.

locations. Intrigue in a noble court might use a daifu's manor as nothing more than a backdrop for intense negotiations, with little interest in its exact details.

When choosing locations for your adventure, don't put more work into them than you need. It can be tempting to think "What if I need this?" and then feel obligated to work out all the details. Resist this urge. If it becomes necessary in play, just make something up and roll with it. So long as it's halfway plausible the player is unlikely to even know you're extemporizing. Only give full-dress map and key treatments to places that need to be entertaining in of themselves. If you're not expecting the player to be amused by time spent checking out rooms and stalking corridors, then the place doesn't need a full treatment. If it turns out later than it does require more development, just grab an unkeyed generic map and pencil in whatever seems likely to be there. A five-minute pause at the table to build something that you know you need is far cheaper than an hour spent drawing up details that will probably get wasted.

Aside from the location, your adventure might need one or more **actors**. Actors aren't just monsters, guardsmen, peasants, and other bit players, they're people or entities that have some active goal in the adventure and who can be expected to involve their affairs with the hero. A monster in a dungeon isn't necessarily an actor. It doubtless has its own plans and goals, but they're probably not anything a hero is likely to care about, or anything the GM should be tracking when they're "offscreen". An actor is different. They have plans, purposes, and goals, and you need to keep an eye on them even when they're not in the scene.

Whenever you make an actor, make sure that the hero is somehow relevant to their plans. Their plans should need the hero, or threaten the hero, or entice the hero somehow. An actor who has no reason to have any interest in the hero's activities is irrelevant to the adventure. They may form part of the background, and you might spare a thought for the ultimate outcome of their plans, but they're not anything you need to think about when the actual game is going on.

If you're going to go to the trouble of adding actors to the adventure, you want to make sure they actually provide some play value.

The last kind of element you often need to consider for an adventure are the **props**- the objects, enchantments, artifacts, macguffins, and other detritus that is likely to be of interest to a player. An ancestral curse laid on a family can be a prop, as can a set of magical pools in a dungeon, or a deed to a noble's family estate, or the enchanted blade of a fallen hero, or anything else that's likely to play a significant role in an adventure or be of notable interest to a hero. Adventures revolving around exploration tend to need a lot of props and gubbins for curious heroes to investigate, while those that focus largely on people can get away with fewer objects of note.

Props don't necessarily have to be useful or valuable, but they should say something about the adventure. If you put an oracular statue in an ancient temple, fit it into the shrine by giving it features that are repeated elsewhere in the complex, for example, or an activating prayer that is revealed in a mouldering tome in the temple library. If a hoard of coins is found in an abandoned settlement, you might describe them as odd hexagonal discs issued by an empire long since lost to the world, ones that hint at the settlement's original populace.

One thing an adventure does *not* need is a plot, not unless you're designing in the story arc style. What an adventure needs is a situation, something interesting, challenging, and intriguing going on that the hero will find engaging. So long as a hero has a steady supply of interesting situations, a story will naturally grow out of their choices and reactions. Looking back on their career, you'll see villains rise, enemies foiled, friends aided, and great ambitions achieved not because they were scripted into a pre-existing plot, but because they were the natural consequences of the situations the hero experienced.

ASSEMBLING AN ADVENTURE

Now that the necessary parts are labeled, it's time to sit down and make that adventure.

Start with the situation. What is going on that's going to interest the hero? Is there a lost fortress awaiting plunder? A feud between noble families? A plague sweeping from a cursed shrine? An old nemesis plotting revenge? A dear friend in need of aid? Adventures start with an adventure-worthy situation.

Next, pick the locations you know you'll need. You might need more of them once you start to play and the hero begins gallivanting off in all directions, but for now just deal with the places you know will be important to the situation.

Is the location to be interesting places to explore in of itself, such that you could spend a meaningful chunk of the evening's play just investigating the place? Then draw up a map and a key accordingly. It doesn't have to be architecturally precise. Even a rough sketch can be plenty, so long as you can tell which places are where. Not every room and sub-location within the place has to be fascinating, but at least half the keyed locations should have something interesting in them, some prop or monster or plunder or frob for the hero's interaction, and two-thirds is a better minimum.

Is the location meant mainly as a backdrop? Then all you need is a few notes on its flavor and style, with maybe a few lines of combat statistics for any guards or other types that are around should the hero suddenly break out an axe.

BUT CONTEXT HELPS!

Right now, some of you are shaking your head and thinking that all this seemingly "useless" prep helps equip a GM with an understanding of the setting. Even if you never actually use a piece of content you've created, the simple act of creation helps you think more clearly about the setting and the adventure context. In that sense, there is no such thing as wasted effort.

Such protests are right. Strictly speaking, any time spent seriously thinking about your adventure and your setting is going to help you extemporize with it and respond in a flexible, coherent way to unanticipated questions.

The problem is that all of us are mortal, and we have only so much time, energy, and inspiration. Things that help and *might* be needed are not as important as things that help and *will* be needed. The advice in this chapter is meant to deal with the gritty reality for most GMs who are staring at a blank sheet of graph paper with a game session starting in 24 hours. If you happen to be the unscheduled reincarnation of M. A. R. Barker back from the Isles of Teratane then you don't need to worry about running dry. The rest of us have to shepherd our powers of creation.

Next, flesh out the actors. Some adventures won't have any meaningful actors; a dungeon's denizens all have their ambitions, but they're not always relevant to the hero. Others will have several; the buried city might have several factions of mole-like underdwellers who are all willing to enlist the hero's help- assuming they don't eat the interloper first. Assign these actors goals, challenges, and likely outcomes, making sure that they are somehow relevant to the hero or seeking an outcome that the hero could influence.

Combat statistics are often needed for actors, but many nobles and other human grandees have physical stats no different from those of a common peasant. Their power doesn't lie in their hit dice, but in their control of human society.

Finally, set the hook. Decide how the hero will learn of this adventure possibility and think about what will happen if they decline it or leave it for later.

It's best to write adventures that "keep" well- ones that needn't be handled this very moment. Dungeon adventures are the epitome of this, as they can lie untouched for years without changing the prep work you've done. Feuds and conflicts can also be postponed for a lengthy time before final resolution. Disasters and enemy actions are the most perishable adventures, and it may be that some nemeses have no intention of taking "not now" for an answer. If the hero has managed to rile up an enemy enough to send assassins or other dark machinations after them, they're just going to have to deal with it or else rapidly depart for regions unknown.

Be parsimonious in your creations. If you don't use a location, or a map, or a situation for one adventure, save it for another. Content that the hero never sees can be whipped out on another occasion to fill in a similar blank. Change names, alter paint jobs, move doors and walls around, and you've suddenly turned an old location into something brand-new. As your campaign gets older and you get more practiced at this, you'll eventually accumulate such a library of spare content that you can deal with even the wildest heroic gyrations without running out of things to throw at the player.



RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

Once everything is in order, it's time to run the adventure. If your player is an experienced sandbox gamer, they won't need much prompting. They'll know the forms and practices, and all you need to do is throw them the hook and watch them go. Things are different with newbies to RPGs, or with those unfamiliar with the special tropes of sandbox gaming or the stylistic quirks of old-school roleplaying games. There are a few things you can do to make life easier for these people.

First, for veterans of other types of games, make sure they understand the basic ideas behind a sandbox game. Explain that you've got an adventure for them, but they shouldn't feel obligated to stick with it or respond in the "right" way to what you're offering. It's a single-player game; the GM only has to entertain one player, and with a system this simple it's not hard to generate content on the spot. They aren't going to spoil the game if they decide that the situation calls for retreat or they pick up the "wrong" hook for their evening's adventure. The game is fundamentally about their choices.

If the player has never played an RPG before, you have it easier. Give them the hook and make sure they understand it's an option, but if they turn around and head in a different direction just roll with it. If you don't imply that they're "doing it wrong", they'll have no reason to worry about it.

Second, for complete newbies to RPGs, remind them that they don't need to worry about the game mechanics. You'll tell them what to roll and give them an idea of how practical their ideas might be, but their only job is to tell you what they want their hero to do. They can be expected to pick up on the mechanics eventually. So long as you make sure they have a fairly accurate understanding of their hero's strengths and weaknesses, they'll be able to make sensible choices. Don't hesitate to weave risk assessments into your descriptions- i.e., "Four huge, muck-crusted ogres rear up from the mangrove swamp, a hundred feet away. They'll probably tear you to pieces if you try to fight them alone. What do you do?"

Third, don't hesitate to call short pauses to fabricate content. Calling a five minute time-out to create the smoldering ruins of a hamlet

pillaged by raiders is perfectly acceptable. Your adventure is going to move at an extremely fast clip compared to a full group's session and there will be times when you need a few minutes to get ahead of the player again. Take the time if you need it. As you continue the campaign and start building up a reserve of unkeyed maps, random encounters, unused NPCs, and other "spare parts" you'll eventually be able to generate this content on the fly by simply changing paint jobs and renaming actors.

Fourth, allow yourself to be surprised. Half the fun of running a sandbox game is in the pleasure of surprise. You don't know how this story ends any more than the player does, and just watching their actions and responding to their choices is as much excitement for you as it is for them. If you try to route them in safe directions or known angles you deprive yourself of the pleasure of genuine astonishment when they try something so hare-brained that only an adventurer could have thought of it.

Finally, once the adventure is wrapped up for the night, ask the player what they intend to try next time. By getting the gist of their plans at the end of one session, you have all the downtime before the next to prepare the content you'll need to support their plans. If you know their intended goal won't occupy an entire game session, you can use the extra time to prepare something immediate to engage them when their intended goal turns out to be quickly accomplished or not what they really wanted to do after all. If it turns out that you don't need the diversion, just save it for the next time you need fast content.

REWARDS AND ADVANCEMENT

The tables in the Treasure chapter describe appropriate troves for a given foe or lair. If you're using a different game system with *Scarlet Heroes* you might prefer to use the treasure tables of your own favorite system, and those should work without any special conversion.

The experience tables for *Scarlet Heroes* assume one experience point is gained for every session of adventure. Even if the hero is defeated or bereft of any more tangible reward, they get the benefit of their experience. GMs who want faster leveling might hand out more experience points for accomplishing particularly difficult feats or achieving fitting character goals set by the player.

ADVENTURE TAGS

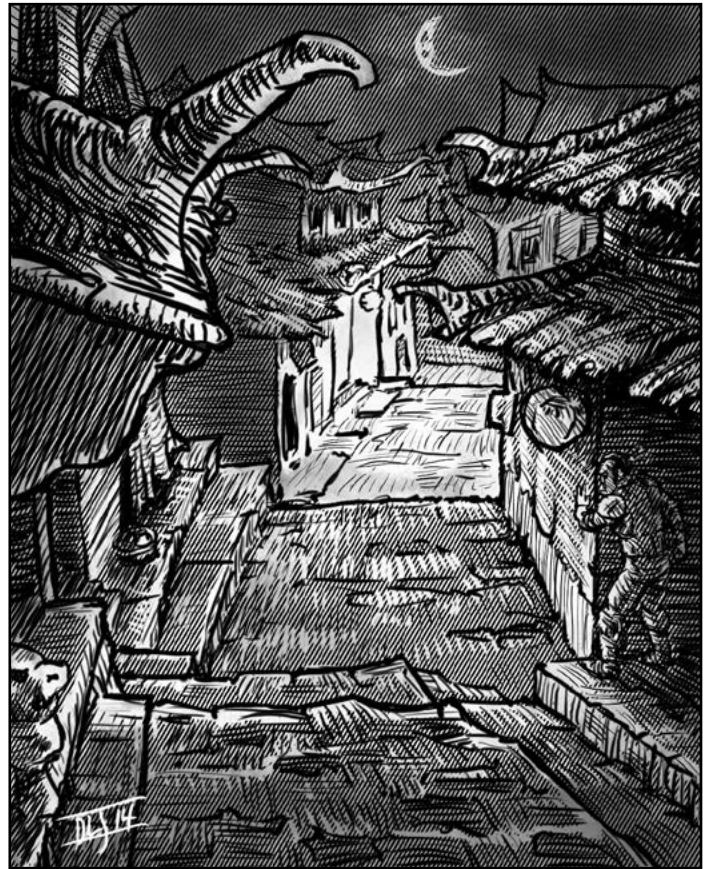
It can often be difficult to come up with material for a new adventure, particularly for new GMs who don't have a thick file of ideas to scavenge for fresh creations. Adventure tags are meant to make life easier for a GM by giving a few basic components for an adventure.

First, decide what kind of adventure you want to make. Is it an urban adventure, focused on a city, town, or village and its particular problems? Is it a wilderness adventure set in a patch of deep jungle or trackless waste? Is it a dungeon adventure, focused around a ruin or lost edifice of some vanished builder?

Next, roll on the table below. One roll is usually enough, but you might roll twice and blend the tags together for extra elaboration. Usually, you'll roll on the column relevant to your adventure type, though you might choose to mix and match as the mood takes you.

The tag you roll describes the basic problem, characteristic, or quality at the heart of the adventure. It's the thing that makes the adventure worth noticing for a hero, the situation that's meant to catch their attention and engage your creativity. Tags provide the basis for you to flesh out with your own ideas.

Each tag has a brief description and a list of elements afterwards—Enemies, Friends, Things, Complications, and Places. If you roll multiple tags, you can blend elements from both into synthesized villains and composite complications.



ADVENTURE TAGS

- **Enemies** are characteristic antagonists and hostile powers that might be expected in such a place. You can use them as “bosses”, or simply as evocative foes that point up the nature of the place.
- **Friends** are those characters most likely to be sympathetic or friendly figures for the hero to encounter. Use them to deliver hooks and motivate the PC to get involved with the situation.
- **Things** are macguffins that fit the tag's theme, objects that are likely to catch the hero's attention and be the object of the Enemy's hungry desires.
- **Complications** add a twist to the tag's standard trope, allowing you to freshen up material that might be a little too cliched for some players.
- **Places** are those locations that fit with the tag's theme, places you can use to emphasize the particular nature of the adventure and its environs.

Once you have these basic building blocks for your adventure, you can use your own ingenuity to fit them together into a situation worthy of a hero's keen attention. While you should feel free to rework and tweak results to better fit your situation, don't be afraid of taking a strange result straight. Figuring out why it actually makes sense can be excellent fun for a creative GM.

1d6		1-2		3-4		5-6	
1d20		URBAN		WILDERNESS		DUNGEON	
1	Angry Ghosts	1	Abandoned Traps	1	Aspiring Warlord		
2	Class Warfare	2	Beast Nests	2	Bad Feng Shui		
3	Corrupt Official	3	Brutal Terrain	3	Cursed Past		
4	Dueling Families	4	Changed Terrain	4	Disorienting Layout		
5	Ethnic Violence	5	Cursed Miasma	5	Dueling Explorers		
6	Foul Sorcery	6	Degenerate Tribe	6	False Facade		
7	Grasping Merchant	7	Dubious Hermit	7	Familiar Peril		
8	Marauding Thugs	8	Freakish Beasts	8	Holy Site		
9	Monstrous Predator	9	Good Location	9	Honey Trap		
10	Plundered Tribute	10	Hidden Riches	10	Multiple Layers		
11	Rebel Cell	11	Hostile Camp	11	Newly Discovered		
12	Renegade Ninja	12	Hunting Grounds	12	Plundered Recently		
13	Serial Killer	13	Isolationist Village	13	Preserved Fragment		
14	Sinister Religion	14	Lost Shrine	14	Recent Upheaval		
15	Stolen Authority	15	Massacre Site	15	Repurposed Ruin		
16	Sudden Privation	16	Mazey Paths	16	Slow Poison		
17	Tide Cult	17	Poisonous Land	17	Stronghold Site		
18	Tong Extortion	18	Ruined Settlement	18	Sympathetic Locals		
19	Troubled Festival	19	Trade Path	19	Unstable Structures		
20	Uncovered Depths	20	Vicious Flora	20	Watery Doom		

ABANDONED TRAPS

The wilderness or dungeon is crusted over with an abnormally large number of traps, the relics of some kind of internal struggle or an expected invasion that may never have come. Most of the traps are likely still functional, and the entire place might be a snare.

Enemies	Golem trap-maintainer, Confused undead guardian, Vicious scavenger of trap victims, Creature that is an animate peril
Friends	Curious engineer, Intrepid explorer, Intruder too frightened to escape, Sage who knows the secret of the traps
Things	Key to deactivate traps, Precious thing the traps guard, Map of trap placement, Magical protection from the traps
Complications	The traps keep something in, The traps are intelligent, The traps have been suborned, The “traps” were never meant to be
Places	Innocent room, “Obviously trapped statue” chamber, False treasure cave, Clearing littered with remains of victims

ANGRY GHOSTS

The locals have done something to provoke the dead, leaving them to be plagued by furious undead and restless ghosts. Only by destroying the undead or resolving the offense can these wraiths find peace.

Enemies	Meddlesome necromancer, Vengeful wraith, Negligent priest, Grasping tomb-robber
Friends	Ghost's surviving relative, Distressed cemetery keeper, Local priest, Inquiring magistrate
Things	Lost family heirloom, Plundered tomb goods, Treasure of disputed ownership, Ancestor tablet
Complications	The ghosts want something horrible, The ghosts are mistaken in their anger, The locals blame the wrong cause, Some worship the angry dead as gods or use them as tools
Places	Neglected temple, Desolate cemetery, Ancestral family dwelling, Site of a terrible crime

ASPIRING WARLORD

Some ambitious war leader runs the dungeon, using it as a base or recruiting center for his dreams of conquest. He may not control the entire structure, but he has a powerful force of more-or-less disciplined minions under his control as he prepares to attack neighboring lands.

Enemies	Embittered noble pretender, Zealous cult prophet, Cynical mercenary chief, Paid agent of an enemy foreign power
Friends	Spy from a nearby city, Dissatisfied underling, Wretched prisoner of the tyrant, Rival warlord or former dungeon chief
Things	Map of the warlord's strategy, Payroll treasure, Artifact that gives the warlord legitimacy, Key to the warlord's sanctum
Complications	The warlord is popular with rebels, He pretends to noble title, He is a puppet for a local noble, He's actually inhuman
Places	Chamber of barbaric splendor, Squalid barracks, Storehouse of plundered supplies, Armory of crude weapons

BAD FENG SHUI

The dungeon is cursed with supernatural misfortune or spiritual taint. Things there go badly, magic curdling and turning foul and the inhabitants suffering sickness and ill-luck. The original inhabitants may have fled the place, or been subject to awful transformation. Other forms of ill-luck are the product of dire curses or some catastrophic magical mishap.

Enemies	Undying original leader of the site, Sorcerer seeking to tap the foul energy, Misshapen abomination, Foolish conqueror
Friends	Victim of misfortune, Tragically warped innocent, Crusading purifier, Curious magical researcher
Things	Warped magical artifact, Object that is causing the misfortune, Cursed treasure, Book telling the secrets of the place
Complications	The curse takes the form of a warped blessing or invigoration, Local officials are somehow responsible for the curse, The curse is the result of recent actions, The misfortune is intelligent and targets for maximum chaos
Places	Desecrated shrine, Chamber of palpably oppressive ill-luck, Abandoned living quarters, Leprously decayed structures

BEAST NESTS

This stretch of wilderness is infested with a particular type of predator, some large or dangerous creature that finds it a compelling lair for some reason. These beasts might be normal pack predators such as wolves, or they might be supernatural entities attracted by some unique geomantic property of the area.

Enemies	Savage beast-tamer, Mad flesh-molding sorcerer, Brutish rural menagerie-owner, Lycanthropic pack leader
Friends	Intrepid hunter, Bewildered local, Wood-wise hermit, Shaman with the beast as a totem
Things	Beast-attracting magical artifact, Tools of flesh-molding, Prey-feeding phenomenon, Device that creates more beasts
Complications	The beasts are unnatural and have human intelligence, The beasts are tiny but lethal swarm creatures, The beasts are being used as a tool to some dark end, The beasts are possessed by some evil spiritual power
Places	Fetid cave lair, Site of bloody predation, Lonely darkness surrounded by howls, Reeking laboratory with cages and vivisection tables

BRUTAL TERRAIN

The terrain in this stretch of the wilderness is uncommonly savage, presenting natural hazards that make travel extremely dangerous. Boiling mudpots, volcanoes, jagged obsidian formations, jungle so thick as to be a living wall, or some other hazard exists that is often used as a tool by the local denizens to repulse intruders.

Enemies	Trapper of humans, Degenerate exiled noble, Refugee cult leader, Angry spirit of the land
Friends	Ensnared explorer, Desperate refugee seeking shelter, Priest of Kega, Treasure-hunter convinced of hidden plunder
Things	Precious medicinal plant, Costly mineral formation, Map to lost edifice in the terrain, Artifact to protect from conditions
Complications	The terrain is intelligent and malevolent, The terrain actually has a hidden danger that has killed those who discovered it, The terrain is a refuge for bandits or worse, The terrain produces some precious compound or substance
Places	Boiling swamp, Gash of earth seeping with lava, Caverns of half-toxic gases, Hills of steaming mudslides

CHANGED TERRAIN

This area has been drastically changed by some recent event, whether natural disaster or magical disruption. Suffocating clouds of carbon dioxide belched from a lake, gusts of superheated volcanic wind, an earthquake that topples a forest, or other blight may have struck.

Enemies	Released elemental monstrosity, Necromancer seeking parts, Looter plundering the dead, Cannibal survivor
Friends	Harried survivor, Struggling local official, Disoriented nature spirit, Outsider bringing aid from neighbors
Things	Large cache of food and supplies, Unearthed treasure, Abandoned wealth, Disaster-created magical reagent
Complications	The disaster was caused by a villain, Enemies seek to cut off relief, Someone important was lost in the area when it struck, Some edifice or precious object was revealed by the disaster, but will soon sink back into the depths
Places	Revealed ancient ruin, Forest of dead trees, Half-buried village, Perfectly silent desolation

CLASS WARFARE

The poor fight the rich, the fishermen fight the fishmongers, the Makerites fight the followers of the Nine Immortals, the natives fight the refugee settlers, or any number of other cleavages have sprung open. One interest group in the town is locked in a struggle with another, and it threatens to bring disaster on the whole community.

Enemies	Rabble-rousing demagogue, Cynical profiteer, Bigoted zealot, Foreign agent provocateur
Friends	Wretched victim, Desperate peacemaker, Struggling civil official, Child of both groups
Things	Charter of ancient rights, "Stolen" wealth, Proof of hidden crimes, Valuable commodity being fought over
Complications	Both sides have sympathetic arguments, One side is vital to the city but very unpopular, One side is sympathetic but wildly excessive in its wants, One side is repugnant but legally justified in their demands
Places	Now-empty tea house both once used, Angry public rally, Site of a recent street fight, Abandoned house of a class enemy

CORRUPT OFFICIAL

The official might be a grasping daifu, an easily-bribed magistrate, a venal lord, or any other authority figure who uses his position for personal power and pleasure. Such an official has likely just done something to outrage local feeling but is seemingly unassailable.

Enemies	Venal magistrate, Brutal watch captain, Ravaging military commander, Depraved daifu
Friends	Victim of the official, Investigating inquisitor, Righteous predecessor in office, Aspiring underling
Things	Proof of their crimes, Stolen plunder, Forbidden goods, Missing inquisitor's report
Complications	Their superior is complicit, He has many local collaborators, The locals are terrified of his men, He is a traitor in service to an enemy power
Places	Opulent mansion, Farcical courtroom, Burnt site of outspoken critic's home, Market groaning under "taxes"

CURSED MIASMA

A plague, foul mist, or aura of corruption has befallen this stretch of land. Some such clouds are the result of swampy exhalations or natural processes, while others are the product of dark sorcery or malign celestial conjunctions.

Enemies	Warped animal, Corruption-worshipping cultist, Twisted nature spirit, Crazy local leader
Friends	Investigating sage, Hard-pressed local, Desperate physician, Baffled hunter
Things	Cure for the plague, Dark artifact that created the curse, Possessions of victims, Costly reagent created by the miasma
Complications	The plague enrages wildlife, The miasma warps humans, The miasma is a magical bio-toxin, Evil cultists are gathering to take advantage of the dark conjunction
Places	Stinking swamp, Glade of twisted shadows, Meadow pocked with gas vents, Tent with sickened victims

CURSED PAST

The dungeon or location is scarred by some terrible tragedy or unspeakable atrocity that still lingers in its effects. Sometimes these results are spiritual, tainting the place with dark forces. Other tragedies give forth more prosaic consequences- though often just as bloody, and demanding an equally grim price from heirs of the present day.

Enemies	Undying author of the crime, Inheritor of the crime's fruits, Creature made by the evil, Vengeance-mad avenger
Friends	Survivor of the evil, Exorcist seeking purification, Distressed ghost, Investigator seeking the truth
Things	Bones of the restless dead, Treasure that caused grief, Maliciously cursed blade, Proof of the culprit's evil
Complications	The tragedy was the result of a terrible misunderstanding, The tragedy hasn't happened yet but is prophesied to, Someone continues to profit greatly by the atrocity, The author of the atrocity still is present or will return
Places	Charnel ground, Haunted locale, Hidden refuge long since lost, Palatial dwelling of the culprit

DEGENERATE TRIBE

The land is populated by some abjectly degraded and savage tribe, either humans who have long since lost the rudiments of civilization or a group of aesthetes so depraved that they have become worse than any cannibal. Such degenerates are usually human, though some elven Creeds can be spectacularly feral, and the heretical Repenters among the dwarves offer hideous torments to their Mother Below.

Enemies	Cannibal chieftain, Tittering noble depravatus, Blood-crazed demihuman zealot, Coldly compelling prophet of sin
Friends	Tribal with a struggling conscience, Desperate escapee from the pot, Frightened local, Concerned forest hunter
Things	A holy totem of their former civilization, Treasures of their prey, Maddening drugs, Prehuman icon of dark magic
Complications	They appear normal to outsiders, They serve an inhuman horror against their will, They know no better, They recruit prey
Places	Filthy hut, Decaying structure of their ancestors, Parodic mockery of former construction, Den made opulent with loot

DISORIENTING LAYOUT

The dungeon or site has something unique about it that makes it very hard to navigate. It may have subtle short-range teleportation, silently rotating rooms, mind-fogging mists, or an environment so hostile that exploration is extremely difficult.

Enemies	Hidden master of the lair, Living mist-thing, Forever-trapped ghost, Furious original builder of the place
Friends	Trapped explorer, Frustrated heir to the place, Fascinated sorcerer, Bounty hunter after someone inside
Things	Key to escape, Secret control unit for the area, Artifact to detect confusing magic, Treasure at the area's heart
Complications	The area is alive and its changes are organic, Escape requires finding some sort of key, The inhabitants use the effect to defend themselves from invaders, The environment has had a dire influence on its denizens
Places	A maze of twisty passages all alike, A hall of identical rooms, Mist-shrouded pit-laced corridor, Rooms of one-way doors

DUBIOUS HERMIT

A hermit of questionable benignity dwells here, and for whatever reason he or she does not want visitors. Such hermits might be dangerous masters of their patch of desolation, or they might be helpful figures if persuaded to aid- perhaps through solving a pressing trouble.

Enemies	Mad outcast wizard, Prophet of a foul revelation, Notorious criminal laying low, Aswang eater of travelers
Friends	Pious holy hermit, Well-meaning outcast from society, Rebel against an evil ruler, Retired hero seeking solitude
Things	A relic of the hermit's old life, The hermit's treasure, The hermit's lost precious, The trove the hermit has long sought
Complications	The locals are convinced a kindly hermit is dangerous or vice-versa, The hermit guards a sleeping evil, The hermit has almost forgotten human language, The hermit is exquisitely cultured and lives in opulent ease
Places	Dank cave, Huge hollow tree trunk, Long-ruined villa returned to use, Hidden aerie among the cliffs

DUELING EXPLORERS

Someone else seeks to explore the dungeon at the same time as the hero, and they are not interested in sharing their finds. One or more groups compete with the hero to plunder the place or race them in search of the mighty relic rumored to be buried there. Some of them may be willing to negotiate with a hero, while others would sooner see their rivals dead.

Enemies	Gold-crazed freebooter, Ruthless tomb thief, Rapacious sage of lost treasures, Local lord with a lust for their "rightful due"
Friends	Patron backing the hero's efforts, Rival of an enemy group, Dungeon denizen wanting protection, The ruin's true owner
Things	The macguffin treasure, Notes on a rival's weakness, A fake treasure, Keys to an intruder-destroying defensive trap
Complications	A rival group actually has a sympathetic cause, Rivals seek to coerce the hero's failure through their friends or allies, The treasure is actually extremely dangerous to seize, A seeming ally to the hero is actually a secret rival
Places	A treasure vault with multiple entrances, Tavern full of rumors, Chasm with ledges on either side, Bloodstained arena

DUELING FAMILIES

Two or more local families have reason to hate each other and are doing all they can to ruin their rivals. The feud might have arisen from a jilted groom, sour business deal, "stealing" a "rightful" official post, suspected murder, notorious adultery, or any other suitably bitter cause.

Enemies	Venomous matriarch, Furious patriarch, Scheming young kinsman, Outside sower of discord
Friends	Hapless lovers, Fearful head of a client family, Peacemaking official, Related friend of a PC
Things	Proof of one side's culpability, The treasure they're fighting over, Evidence of outside agitation, Weapons to arm a side
Complications	Both families share in the wrong, Many in both clans want peace but the leaders don't, One clan has brute force while the other has money and social position, The feud is actually cover for someone's desire to completely exterminate their rivals
Places	Bloodstained wedding hall, Hostile community festival, Now-shuttered former joint business, Mysteriously burnt house

ETHNIC VIOLENCE

Most ethnic groups in the isles tolerate each other out of shared necessity. There are times when disputes flare hot, however, often among small groups who know that they alone preserve the traditions and memory of some people now lost to the mists.

Enemies	Ethnic supremacist, Brutal pogromchik, Cynical politician seeking scapegoats, Ruthless crusader for their interests
Friends	Oppressed victim, Struggling peacemaker, Frustrated official, Determined cultural innovator
Things	Cultural treasure, Evidence of a zealot's corruption, Proof of false accusations, Weapons to arm a violent group
Complications	The smaller group is led by paranoid and violent leaders, The larger group actually thinks they're the oppressed ones, Both groups are evenly matched in size or guilt, The smaller group has a powerful and crazed leader
Places	Cultural society meeting-house, Customary public ritual, Workshop full of slaving oppressed, Cemetery for one ethnicity

FALSE FACADE

This dungeon or other place of danger appears to be something else entirely. Even those who enter may not realize their danger until after it is far too late. Some such places are lairs of cunning deceivers, while others have dark purposes that just happen to appear harmless.

Enemies	Smiling "abbot", Mayor of secret cannibal village, Repenter dwarf clan leader, Murderous innkeeper
Friends	Hidden escapee, Suspicious official investigator, Survivor of slaughtered original inhabitants, Family of latest victim
Things	Proof of foul doings, Plunder of victims, Relic that twisted the inhabitants, Secret treasure they strive to protect
Complications	They really do perform their seeming service most of the time, They never prey on heroes but only the weak and friendless, They are forced to evil by an outsider, They profit by a former reputation for excellence
Places	Hidden abattoir, Secret gathering chamber, Trash-room with former necessities, Graves of former inhabitants

FAMILIAR PERIL

The hero has seen this trouble before. Some old nemesis, recurring villain, or persistent problem has infested this place and made it a stronghold of its cause. Old mistakes and familiar rivalries will confront the hero here, often with the fruits of their former choices.

Enemies	Maimed foe, Undead shade of an enemy, Embittered survivor of a former victory, Child or kindred of a dead rival
Friends	One the hero aided, Messenger seeking heroic aid, Local afflicted by the villain, Seeker of a former victor over the evil
Things	Secret weapon against the hero, The prize the villain has long sought, A prize the hero carelessly left behind, The remedy for a plague or evil unleashed by the hero
Complications	The enemy's vengeance seems justified to others, The enemy has made unclean bargains for power, The enemy is a former friend now embittered by how the hero's actions played out, The enemy is badly mistaken about the hero's acts
Places	Former place of victory, Once-mighty stronghold, Burned houses of allies, Massacre site meant to send a message

FOUL SORCERY

Some hideous magic taints the community. Foul curses might be striking down unlucky locals, or necromancers might be stealing unblessed corpses, or blood sorcerers might be feeding their sanguinary addiction with peasant victims, or any other magical misery might be at hand.

Enemies	Amoral necromancer, Power-mad blood sorcerer, Secretly vengeful wizard, Novice suddenly come into some dark power
Friends	Investigating official, Frustrated local wizard, Curse-raddled victim, Old rival of the antagonist
Things	Artifact of dark sorcerous might, Tome of forbidden lore, Item specially baneful to the antagonist, Proof of the true identity of the evildoer
Complications	The sorcerer's evil is accidental but uncontrollable, The sorcery was originally meant for a "good" cause, The sorcerer is working with officials, The sorcery is not what it seems to be
Places	Hidden unsanctified ossuary, Reeking tenement in the slums, Hidden cultic shrine, Secret room in a noble's palace

FREAKISH BEASTS

Something is terribly wrong with the animals in this part of the wilderness or within this buried lair. They may be the product of some mad sorcerer's unholy devisings, or they may be the sad consequence of tainted geomantic forces. Such creatures thirst for the blood of men.

Enemies	Flesh-warping wizard, Maddened beast-cult priest, Unnaturally intelligent animal, Trainer of these foul things
Friends	Desperate village leader, Worried hunter, Distressed forest diwata, Vengeful survivor of the beasts' attacks
Things	Object causing bad feng shui, Tome of dark biomantic lore, Magnificent furs or beast extracts, Item lost by a beast victim
Complications	Some of the beasts are not evil, The beasts have enslaved human cattle, The beasts were harmless until someone corrupted their nature, The beasts are a mixed curse with both benefits and costs to the locals- and some benefit more than others
Places	Tainted pool of geomantic energy, Bloodstained lab, Gory beast attack site, Animal lair with eerily intelligent decor

GOOD LOCATION

This patch of wilderness or long-lost site is exceptionally good for some purpose. It may have a remarkably defensible location, be near valuable mineral lodes, have auspicious geomantic energies, or otherwise be worth fighting over for those who would have it.

Enemies	Bandit chief lairing here, Paranoid mine owner, Savage Shou chieftain, Privacy-loving dark sorcerer
Friends	Aspiring colony leader, Wildcat prospector, Inquisitive magic-user, Eager explorer
Things	Hidden cache left behind by another, Map to the site's secret resources or treasures, Rich gold vein, Vital supply store
Complications	The site is a trap and only looks appealing, Someone else tried to settle here but perished terribly, Two strong local powers are fighting over possession of the site, The site could be good but something is interfering with its potential
Places	Subterranean spring, High vantage point overlooking the land, Old ruined colony building, Makeshift new construction

GRASPING MERCHANT

A local merchant is tormenting some weaker group with their demands of obedience, debt claims, forced labor, or compelled sales. Most such merchants have at least tacit arrangements with the government to allow them their exactions, or else they are too strong to stop.

Enemies	Avaricious usurer, Reckless mine owner, Heartless monopolist, Brutal keeper of debt slaves
Friends	Hard-pressed business owner, Desperate debtor, Ruined beggar, Honest competitor
Things	Vital contract document, Hidden cache of gold, The merchant's debt records, Store of precious commodities
Complications	The "victims" are actually trying to cheat the merchant, The merchant secretly trades in slaves, The merchant desperately needs money, The merchant is actually part of the government
Places	Opulent palace of the merchant, Dangerous workshop, Creaking slum tenement, Smoky back room of a shady tea house

HIDDEN RICHES

There is a treasure somewhere in this part of the wild or within this place. It may be natural, such as a vein of precious metal or a strike of gems, or it may be the remnants of some bandit's plunderings or the treasure of a long-dead sorcerer. Tales of it may have spread widely, but none know exactly where it is located- or at least, none have lived to announce it.

Enemies	Ruthless fellow seeker, The thing that has guarded the riches, Wraith of its original owner, Treacherous guide or patron
Friends	Heir to the original owner, New owner of the land, Aspiring treasure-hunter, Soul in desperate need of the riches
Things	Mound of uncut jewels, Key to unlock the hidden cache, Journal of a dead seeker, Protection from a warding trap
Complications	The riches are a lie to lure prey to an undying evil, The riches are in a very different form than tales say, The riches were plundered but signs remain of who took them, A villain seeks the riches to fund some awful purpose
Places	Glittering cavern, Camp of massacred treasure-hunters, Tunnel trapped to slay intruders, Foul lair of the treasure's guard

HOLY SITE

The dungeon or location is sacred to some religious sect, most likely one too foul to be tolerated in civilized lands. The zealots will guard it with fanatical fervor, and dark miracles can be expected there in line with the nature of their loathsome god.

Enemies	Scarred high priest, Treacherous seemingly-friendly abbot, Wild-eyed peasant prophet, Exiled urban heretic
Friends	Grim inquisitor, Relative of a sacrificed victim, Last survivor of an adventuring party, Original denizen of the site
Things	Unholy artifact of the god, Pile of golden tribute exacted from the contemptible unbelievers, Stolen holy text of the parent faith, Black relic of a martyred anti-saint
Complications	The cultists are wrong about which god sanctifies the site, The site is only potentially holy and needs a gory sanctification, Several religions fight for control of the site, The cult has broken into sects which compete for the site leadership
Places	Gaudily adorned shrine, Antediluvian temple hall, Austere cells of the cultists, Hideously defiled sanctum

HONEY TRAP

The dungeon or site is expressly designed to lure in prey with the promise of loot, the semblance of safety, or idealistic promises. The lure may be physical, in the form of treasure or magical plunder, or it may be false promises from a sinister recruiter. Once caught, few escape.

Enemies	Cynical rebel leader, Component-seeking necromancer, Curious newly-awakened tomb-lich, Monstrous Tide priest
Friends	Naive young ally, Desperate seeker of what the trap offers, Innocent young adventurer, Survivor of the trap
Things	False treasure, Fake temple ritual vessels, The corpse of the replaced ruler of the site, Journal telling the truth of the site
Complications	Most occupants really believe the trap is legitimate, The trap really does offer what it claims but slays all who seek it, The trap used to be legitimate but has been taken over by a deceiver, Locals hide the truth about the trap for some reason
Places	Room of smiling locals, Cruelly trapped treasure-room, Cell of rotting prey-corpses, Secret passages for spying

HOSTILE CAMP

A makeshift camp has formed here in the wilderness, and its occupants are unfriendly at the least. Poachers, claim jumpers, bandits, dangerous cultists, or other undesirables often form such camps, as do merchants willing to conduct trade with them or worse powers.

Enemies	Shou-trading weapons merchant, Foreign military scout leader, Feral cult priest, Amoral hunter of men
Friends	Concerned woodsman, Army patrol leader, Disturbed hermit-priest, Fleeing shepherd
Things	Shou gold for weapons, Scarred primeval altar, Hidden mineral lode, Cache of precious furs
Complications	The camp is selling something crucial to the hero, The camp is under the protection of a local grandee, The camp is only hostile due to its charismatic leader, The camp is extremely mobile and never the same place twice
Places	Hidden glade, Secret cave in the rocks, Cave hidden at high tide, Palisade adorned by the heads of intruders

HUNTING GROUNDS

This patch of wilderness contains some precious or abundant prey. Hunters might find a wealth of valuable furs or enough food to support a community. Conversely, this area might be the hunting ground of something else, with intruders its favored prey.

Enemies	Prowling abomination, Relentless poacher, Angry nature spirit, Animal tinn with human intellect
Friends	Wise hunter, Survivor of the hunting beast's attack, Mayor of hard-pressed village nearby, Desperately hungry colonist
Things	Valuable baby animals, Loot from slain hunters, Precious animal byproduct, Infallible beast lure
Complications	The animals are holy to a local faith, The locals sacrifice to the beast to avert its hunger from their village, The grounds curse those who kill certain ages or types of animal, The predator of the grounds masquerades as a harmless human
Places	Hidden beast lair, Noisome animal den, Quiet animal trail in the jungle, Site of great slaughter

ISOLATIONIST VILLAGE

There is a village here in the wilds, but it doesn't care for visitors. Few such villages are immediately violent, but they have some strong and rational reason to shun outsiders, or else carefully filter their contact with the outside world. Nosy investigators rarely last long among them.

Enemies	Secret cult leader, Stern ethnic supremacist, Smuggler chieftain, Monstrous being disguised as a human leader
Friends	Naive new outsider resident, Concerned wayfarer, Secretly sympathetic local, Official investigator
Things	Hidden proof of atrocities, Tokens of a nonhuman past, The treasure they guard so well, The goods they smuggle to Shou
Complications	The village is isolationist because its neighbors torment it, The village shuts itself away to contain some danger within it, The villagers seem friendly but ruthlessly silence investigators, The locals used to rule the surrounding lands
Places	Aggressively normal-seeming village square, Hidden cult shrine, Secret tunnels below the village, Hidden meeting place

LOST SHRINE

A temple, abbey, monastery, or simple wayside shrine was long ago lost here in the wilderness, only ruins and remnants to linger. Or alternatively, the shrine still endures far beyond the ordinary notice of the locals, who might have only rumors of it or tales from their grandfather of monks deep in the jungle. The inhabitants may have degenerated, or been supplanted by local denizens or stranger things.

Enemies	Mad abbot, Inhuman usurper, Ruthless treasure hunter, Degenerate priest-chief
Friends	Searching scholar-priest, Escapee from the shrine, Desperate preserver of the shrine's purpose, Mysterious sacred spirit
Things	Jeweled relic, Lost holy scrolls, Abundant tithe-tribute, Book of secret prophecy
Complications	The shrine's been seized by a rival faith, The shrine is targeted by an enemy of civilization, The inhabitants have degenerated into a grotesque parody of their former beliefs, The shrine holds a holy relic priceless to urban co-religionists
Places	Shattered altar-hall, Mouldering catacombs, Befouled meditation hall, Carefully-tended fields within the jungle

MARAUDING THUGS

Every city has its share of ruffians and unsavory tongs, but here a band of thugs and hooligans has practically conquered at least one of the neighborhoods. Whether through cowardice, weakness, bribery, or a selective desire to punish certain residents, the local authorities are unable to check their depredations.

Enemies	Vicious ethnic supremacist leader, Violent local pretender, Ambitious tong grandfather, Grizzled mercenary captain
Friends	Despairing city watch chief, Neighborhood elder, Thug-oppressed victim, Vengeful former gang member
Things	Hidden cache of weapons and armor, Payroll from enemy power bankrolling the thugs, Documents proving the thugs are bribing officials, Magical artifact that empowers the thug leader
Complications	The thugs used to be upstanding protectors and some still are, The officials want the neighborhood punished for something, Some local official only thinks he controls the group, The thugs have suddenly gained great power or backing
Places	Embers of an uncooperative victim's house, Rowdy drinking hall, Ineffectual civil court, Hidden or fortified headquarters

MASSACRE SITE

This patch of wilderness was the site of a bloody massacre, most likely of helpless noncombatants. Such grim deeds often give forth unquiet dead and lingering curses that foul the land and taint the life around it. Only through exorcism or just vengeance can such curses be lifted.

Enemies	Enraged undead revenant, Author of the slaughter, Grasping treasure hunter, Feaster upon the slain
Friends	Survivor of the killing, Avenger of the dead, Confused and sorrowful ghost, Investigator for the local rulers
Things	Loot of the slain, Precious thing the dead were guarding, Proof of the culprit's guilt, The secret they were killed to keep
Complications	The dead actually deserved it, The dead rise to attack the wrong people, No one admits the site's existence out of shame or fear, The culprits didn't get all their targets and are going to try again
Places	Gory shambles in the wilderness, Burnt-out home, Site of their last stand, Hidden mass grave

MAZEY PATHS

The wilderness or site is more than ordinarily confusing. Tunnel-like jungle paths, jagged rocks on every side, an overgrown hedge-maze of an abandoned villa, or actual spatial distortion from curdled magic may all be involved. A hero here is almost certain to get lost.

Enemies	The beast at the maze's heart, Cruel trap-springing sorcerer, Paranoid hermit, Mad architect of the place
Friends	Would-be escapee, Survivor dwelling within the maze, Kin of a maze-lost victim, Intrepid explorer
Things	Map of the maze, Key to the maze's defenses, Treasure the maze was to guard, Corpse of a long-starved victim
Complications	The maze itself is intelligent, The maze is to keep something in, The maze channels magical force through its architecture, The maze is the remnant of some ancient race's esoteric artistic or domestic structure
Places	Heart of the maze, Twisty passage, Several identical-looking locations, Site of frantic and useless attack on the maze

MONSTROUS PREDATOR

While terrible monsters most often infest the wilderness and plague the border villages, it is not impossible for some foul abomination to haunt even a great city. Things creep from the darkness below, or escape from menageries, or are wise enough to seek places of human prey.

Enemies	Powerful intelligent undead, Shapeshifting man-eater, Sewer-dwelling abomination, Lycanthropic local official
Friends	Grizzled city-hired hunter, Sole attack survivor, Repentant soul involved in its appearance, Hunted prey
Things	Poison or weapon to kill the monster, Hoard of victim's treasure, Thing the creature seeks, Tome containing its weaknesses
Complications	The predator is worth more alive than dead, The predator is an innocent victim of foul magic, The predator is only mostly killing people who deserve it, The predator is targeting a PC's friend or family
Places	Site of a bloody kill, Place where the thing was formerly imprisoned, Reeking animal lair, Disturbingly quiet ambush site

MULTIPLE LAYERS

The dungeon has at least one hidden layer to it, with the outermost section of it masquerading as a different sort of structure or one with no deeper secrets. The inhabitants may dwell secretly deeper in the site, coming out to prey on intruders, or they may be oblivious about it.

Enemies	Paranoid hermit, Undead guardian of secrets, Smilingly false proprietor, Hidden chief of the site
Friends	Sharp-eyed investigator, Scholar with books mentioning the truth, Tracker with suspicions, Kin of vanished investigator
Things	Trigger to open the secret, Map to the hidden areas, The treasure the layer guards, The hidden wealth of the chieftain
Complications	A layer is a deathtrap, Even the inhabitants don't know about the layer, The layer is collapsing, The hidden layer is a prison
Places	Room with a rotating wall, Secret passage in the walls, Place with hidden trapdoor in floor, Lightless tunnels below

NEWLY DISCOVERED

This ruin has been sealed for centuries or otherwise lost from the memory of men for a long period of time. It may be that the hero is the first to have discovered it in an age. Its inhabitants are likely either undead or somehow long-lived, secretive survivors of the original folk.

Enemies	Paranoid ruin chieftain, Greedy latecomer adventurer, Long-buried evil power, Guardian who wants it to stay lost
Friends	Curious ruin inhabitant, Explorer with an heirloom map, Trapped fellow adventurer, Long-shackled unquiet ghost
Things	Key to a buried evil, Relic describing the truth of the ruin, Map to a vault of a former age, Codex of lost wisdom
Complications	The site is easy to enter but near-impossible to escape, The ruin's location is infested by dangerous foes, Another group races to find the ruin and unlock its secrets, The inhabitants are convinced it is death for them to be discovered
Places	Untouched treasure chamber, Structure of ancient architectural style, A dusty furnished room, Unmarred dust on floors

PLUNDERED RECENTLY

The hero will be late to this particular ruin. Some power has already come through and slaughtered most of the dangerous locals, stolen their belongings, and ravaged their valuables. The survivors may be furious for vengeance or terrified of that power's return.

Enemies	The plunderer who is still there, Enraged heir to the local ruler, Greedy would-be ruin-picker, The thing the raider released
Friends	Innocent caught up in the fighting, Frightened local, Plunderer's henchman, Inquisitive local official
Things	The last unfound treasure, Relic fragment the plunderer missed but needs, Well-buried treasure, Worthless-looking prize
Complications	The treasure was vital to the site's stability, The hero is mistaken for the plunderer by the locals or taxman, The plunderer strangely sought some seemingly-worthless treasure, The locals fight savagely to replace their dead chief
Places	Body-strewn chamber, Corridor echoing with the wailing of survivors, Signs of great destruction, Ravaged treasure room

PLUNDERED TRIBUTE

Someone has stolen tribute due to or from the community. It may be taxes due the Mandarin's officials, or food supplies necessary to feed the soldiers at the nearby border fort, or it may be sacred offerings meant for the abbot of the nearby temple. Someone has taken these goods, and the locals are desperate to resolve the situation before the consequences come home to roost.

Enemies	Thieving merchant, Grasping local official, Malignant tong leader, Furious rebel chieftain
Friends	Embarrassed guard captain, Desperate tax collector, Repentant member of the thieving group, Inquiring local official
Things	Sacks of worn silver coin from taxes, Bales of valuable goods, Carefully-fashioned offering vessels, Key to a hiding place
Complications	The one demanding tribute has no real right to it, The locals are cooperating to deny the tribute-gatherer, The tribute-gatherer desperately needs that tribute for some reason, The tribute itself is actually somehow dangerous or cursed
Places	Secret cache in the mountains, Hidden cellar, Smuggler's cove, A hiding place in plain sight

POISONOUS LAND

Some patches of land are cursed with ill-fortune, others are harsh and brutal terrain, but this land is actively toxic to anyone unlucky enough to cross it. Something terrible has happened here to cause grim injury to intruders, though some locals may know secret means of avoidance.

Enemies	Crazed nature-spirit, Ruthless alchemist, Earth-corrupting cult leader, Abomination that thrives on poison
Friends	Nature-loving hermit, Refugee from the land, Worried surveyor, Owner of the currently-worthless deed to the land
Things	Protective device, Item causing the poison, Precious byproduct of the poison, Possession of one caught in the toxin
Complications	The poison is the direct consequence of some wealth-creating process, The poison is invisible and the land is thought magically cursed, The poison only affects certain beings, Certain monsters are attracted by the poison
Places	Vents of poison gas, Upwellings of live steam or magma, Zone of intense radioactivity, Flesh-meltingly bad feng shui site

PRESERVED FRAGMENT

Some ancient culture or exotic race of humanoids can be found here in a relatively preserved condition, with their same customs, culture, and way of life insofar as the site allows. These may be ancient exiles of the human lands, lizardfolk with the habits of their ruling ancestors, or even wholly artificial entities created to mimic the ways of their creators.

Enemies	Privacy-seeking local ruler, Aspiring conqueror, Local seeker of fresh parts, Outsider who seeks to use these locals as tools
Friends	Curious native, Excited historian, Local villager with a secret friendship with them, Native needing outsider help
Things	Book of lost wisdom, Relic of the ancients, Thing useless to them but precious to moderns, Ancient long-kept treasure
Complications	They <i>can't</i> change, They carry a terrible disease, They are bound to the site, They believe the world hasn't changed
Places	Temple to a dead god, Small sad mimicry of a lost glorious structure, Vast mausoleum, Library full of ancient lore

REBEL CELL

The settlement houses a secret cell of rebels against the local authorities. They may be disgruntled peasants, displaced nobles, zealous temple reformers, or any other band willing to make violent trouble on behalf of their patently righteous cause. Sometimes they're even justified.

Enemies	Cynical demagogue, Brutal pretender, Relentless official investigator, Local official seeking a scapegoat
Friends	Courageous young rebel, Upright local official, Survivor of rebel violence, Victim of official tyranny
Things	List of rebel names, Secret supply cache, Stolen tribute, Payroll for the government soldiers
Complications	The rebels were once justified but are now mere marauders, The government has put the place under martial law, The rebels are deluded as to the nature of their true leaders, The corrupt official the rebels hate is actually under investigation
Places	Musty slum meeting-room, Secret sewer lair, Hidden gathering place in a noble's house, Tavern of known rebel sympathies

RECENT UPHEAVAL

Things have recently and drastically changed at the site, and you might roll a tag or two to determine how it used to be and how it is now. Such changes usually come through violence or catastrophe, and survivors of the old regime may seek to reverse the new state of affairs.

Enemies	Furious former ruler, Brutal new chieftain stamping out trouble, Favor-currying toady, Newly-unleashed horror
Friends	Conniving political fixer, Outcast pretender, Foe seeking to strike in the confusion, Survivor of the bloody changeover
Things	The object that provoked the change, The old ruler's lost treasure, Regalia of true authority, The new wealth of new ways
Complications	The lost situation was much better for the surrounding communities, The hero is the first outsider to find out, The new order keeps a facade of the old situation, The new situation is not stable and is doomed to collapse catastrophically
Places	Bloodied throne room, Massacre site of the old order, Hidden refuge of die-hards, Freshly-constructed rooms

RENEGADE NINJA

Not all ninja clans are Kueh, as their arts and role as semi-legitimate spies, thieves, and assassins have spread to many communities. The ninjas here don't play by the unwritten rules, however, and are not content to be apolitical blades for hire by the local nobility. They seek a more active control, and their secretive ways and manifold disguises leave the locals dreading their hidden displeasures.

Enemies	Megalomaniacal clan leader, Crazed elder assassin, Official convinced the hero is a ninja, Amoral lord of the shadows
Friends	Traditionalist clan elder, Official investigator, Thief from a competing gang, Related clansman seeking to fix the problem
Things	Book of blackmail material, Priceless stolen treasures, List of ninja infiltrators, Vial of undetectable poison
Complications	The ninjas were provoked by some official excess, The ninjas are no longer led by their old elders, The ninjas have joined up with some darker power, The ninjas are convinced rightly or otherwise that they would be better lords
Places	Well-defended clan estate, Hidden sewer bolthole, Concealed teahouse meeting-room, Secret passage within a palace

REPURPOSED RUIN

The original purpose of this structure has been completely altered by its current inhabitants, with old rooms and buildings put to wholly new uses. This may be a matter of intentional destruction and effacement, or the new dwellers might just have a better plan for the place.

Enemies	Newly-arrived noble exile, Aspiring bandit warlord, Grandiose 'king' of a new site, Bitter guardian of the old ruin
Friends	Curious scholar, Scion of the original ruin dwellers, Avid architect, Official fearful of what is being raised
Things	Key to old sorceries, Treasure hidden by the rebuild, Old relic repurposed to new effect, Great treasure carelessly cast away
Complications	The new inhabitants destroyed the old, The place's old purpose still shows through in awkward ways, Old wards or magical effects were not completely undone, Part of the ruin is unknown and still intact as it originally was
Places	Monument half-hidden under new work, Unfinished room, Untouched hidden chamber, Place of broken walls

RUINED SETTLEMENT

This patch of wilderness has a ruined settlement located within it, one prey to Shou, bandits, plague, famine, earthquakes, wildfire, taxmen, sorcerers, bad feng shui, unfertile soil, or any one of a hundred other reasons to let a community die away. Some may still haunt its remains.

Enemies	Mad survivor-hermit, The thing that killed them, Bandit interloper, Degenerate cannibal chieftain
Friends	Hard-pressed survivor, Curious cartographer, Troubled local, Optimistic new colony founder
Things	Petty abandoned treasures, Tribute never sent, Precious byproduct of their deaths, Journal of their last days
Complications	The ruined settlement looks alive and safe until victims are too close to escape, The settlement was very recently ruined, Local neighbors had something to do with the destruction, Wretched locals are being forced to attempt recolonization
Places	Burnt hut, Rotting granary, Derelict rice paddy, Corral with livestock bones

SERIAL KILLER

The community is wracked by the attentions of a serial killer. The killer may simply be mad, or they may need sacrifices for dark rituals or the appeasement of terrible spirits. In small communities such a killer is usually careful to hide their murders as the work of natural hazards.

Enemies	Inhuman creature masquerading as a local, Bloody cult priest, Secret hater of an ethnicity, Methodical hired assassin
Friends	Bereaved widow, Frightened witness, The evidently next victim, Grizzled monster hunter
Things	Vital clue, Item to reveal a disguised monster, The thing the murderer seeks from his victims, List of victims due to die
Complications	The slain are political foes of a local grandee, The locals quietly think the victims needed killing, The locals somehow profit by the murders, The dead are being replaced and impersonated
Places	Desolate alleyway, Gory murder site, Blood-stained altar chamber, Tavern with locals huddling against the night

SINISTER RELIGION

The site is home to a dubious religious faith. These believers are rarely overtly evil in their rites or creed, but they believe or do something that is highly problematic for the hero, while not being the sort of zealots that can be readily slaughtered for their acts.

Enemies	Traditionalist elder, Persuasive priest, Spirit worshiped as a god, Mage turned high priest of an esoteric faith
Friends	Rival priest, Reformer of outmoded faiths, Local suspicious of the new creed, Cult member who doubts the faith
Things	Slowly-corrupting relic, Book of divine scripture, Repository of generations of offerings, Tribute to bribe local officials
Complications	The religion is vital to local prosperity, The religion is actually quite benign on the inside, The religion will get much worse unless the hero intervenes somehow, The religion is universal among the local elite
Places	Newly-erected shrine, Ancient traditional temple, Hidden fane in the wilderness, Secret urban meeting-house

SLOW POISON

The dungeon is tainted by some form of slow poison that gradually kills all outsiders who enter. It may be an unseen toxic gas, lethal radiation, a lingering curse, terrible feng shui, or pollen from local plants. The poison may not even be noticeable until its effects are dire.

Enemies	Poison-eating abomination, Sinister alchemist, Crafter careless of his pollution, Spirit of the toxin
Friends	Curious adapted local, Wary treasure-hunter, Scholar seeking the poison, Mage testing protection against the evil
Things	Poison cure or preventative, Relic that is the poison's source, Treasure that causes the poison, Prize lost long ago within
Complications	The poison empowers certain types of creatures, The toxin cannot be avoided by mundane means, The poison is holy to some dark cult, A clan of assassins or ninjas has laid claim to the poison's source
Places	Altar to a toxic god, Room with seemingly-untouched corpses, Bodies rimed over with accreted toxins, Hall of green mist

STOLEN AUTHORITY

Someone or something has just radically usurped the local authority structures. This may be a bloodless seizure of the old ruler's seat or it may be the work of savage raiders who want to seize land as well as gold. This new power structure is usually both brutal and paranoid.

Enemies	Usurping noble pretender, Successful peasant rebel, Exiled noble from a neighboring land, Secret power behind the lord
Friends	Former guard captain, Noble out of favor with the new lord, Cruelly-oppressed citizen, Agent of the old lord's suzerain
Things	Stash of rebel weaponry, Treasure of the old lord, Savagely extorted tribute shipment, Proof of a usurper's false lineage
Complications	The old ruler was hated but this one is even worse, The authority has been seized with no outwardly visible sign of it, The new lord is a catspaw of a foreign power, The new lord has a significant power base among a certain faith or organization
Places	Burnt noble estate, Gallows with dead partisans, Forced assembly to hear new proclamations, Hushed tavern room

STRONGHOLD SITE

The dungeon is a stronghold for some organization or community, a refuge against a hostile or dangerous world. The natives are heavily militarized and act with far more discipline than usual for their kind. The site has been well-fortified and procedures are in place for alarms.

Enemies	Rebel leader, Reclusive ethnic supremacist, Ideological elven warlord, Depraved dwarven Repenter priest
Friends	Aspiring infiltrator, Traitor within their ranks, Plotter seeking replacement of the current leader, Suspicious local lord
Things	Map of the site's defenses, Carefully-guarded treasure, Payroll for mercenaries, Key to the inner donjon
Complications	The presence of the site is also holding back a threat to the nearby villages, The natives still dread an enemy that has been gone for generations, The site's ruler sells his peoples' favor to the highest bidder among the local lords, The natives regularly venture out to raid the surrounding countryside and have for a long time
Places	Cavernous cistern, High tower overlook, Murder-holed corridor, Well-trod training ground

SUDDEN PRIVATION

The locals are experiencing a sudden dearth of a vital necessity; famine, drought, security, or some other needful thing. A people lacking unity are apt to break out in vicious infighting to control the remaining stores of this necessity, with the elite seizing the lion's share.

Enemies	Grain-hoarding noble, Crop-burning bandit lord, Cruel dwarven Repenter dam-builder, Cultist spreading crop disease
Friends	Grain-hauling merchant, Desperate local lord, Leader of a losing side in the resource scramble, Stifled tax collector
Things	Cache of the vital resource, New source for the lacking resource, Hoarded trove, Treasure to pay for the needed goods
Complications	There's plenty of it but it's more valuable elsewhere and being sent to sell there, The lord is using the privation to break the commoners, The privation is being used as an excuse to settle old scores, The locals blame innocents for causing privation
Places	Barren field, Dry riverbed, Market with extortionate prices, Empty granary

SYMPATHETIC LOCALS

The surrounding communities actually are cooperating with the dungeon's denizens for some reason, willingly coordinating with the inhabitants. They may profit from their raids, receive special services in exchange, or might need protection from other, worse dangers.

Enemies	Village headman keeping the secret, Monstrous ally, Gatherer of sacrifices, Secret master of the community
Friends	Troubled local, Investigating official, Betrayed ruin-clearer, Escaped sacrifice
Things	Treasure produced by denizens, Food tribute for dungeon, Written pact of cooperation, Loot from slain adventurers
Complications	The survival of the locals hinges on the dungeon's existence, The locals are related to the dungeon inhabitants, The community is actually a facade for the dungeon itself, The locals see the alliance as the best of several bad options
Places	Secret meeting place, Hidden cache of goods, Secret room comfortable for an inhuman creature, Shared hidden shrine

TIDE CULT

The community is plagued by a Tide Cult, a hidden sect of mad believers who perform foul rites to open a way for the Tidespawn. These delusional zealots imagine the rites give them luck and strength, but they only serve to corrupt their bodies and souls as gates for the mist.

Enemies	Depraved nobleman, Revenge-mad oppressed peasant, Corrupt clerical reformer, Decadent brothel madame
Friends	Azure Ministry inquisitor, Shou-blooded cult hunter, Suspicious local priest, Worried kin of a cultist
Things	Lovecraftian tome, Abominable relic, Treasure given in tribute, List of secret cult members
Complications	The cult has infiltrated the main local temple, The locals suspect the cult's existence but blame unpopular innocents, The cult is a major ally of the local ruler under a false organization, The locals would fly into mad panic if the truth were outed
Places	Escherian secret temple hall, Perverted shrine, Normal location made subtly hideous, Cloud of crimson mist

TONG EXTORTION

The tong brotherhoods of the common folk can be stout defenders of the interests of the small and a way for them to band together against noble oppression. They can also be glorified gangs that extort those within their territory and seek to incite every profitable vice and crime.

Enemies	Avaricious tong grandfather, Brutal hatchetman, Ruthless tong father seeking advancement, Grasping tong extortionist
Friends	Petty shopkeeper, Humble slum dweller, Frustrated city official, Secret reformer within the tong
Things	Shipment of forbidden drugs, "Work contract" of a prostitute, Jade ritual vessels, Collected protection payments
Complications	The tong actually does protect the locals from some oppressor, The tong was once nobler than it is now, The tong is dabbling with foul sorceries, The tong has been corrupted and its leaders secretly serve a cruel noble
Places	Shabby tong meeting hall, Elaborate home of a tong leader, Small shopkeeper's stall, Dark alleyway

TRADE PATH

This patch of wilderness is an important trade bottleneck between two or more communities. Almost all business of importance has to pass this area, and so it is a ripe hunting ground for bandits and worse. Alternately, this area might contain a heretofore-undiscovered shortcut between communities or a path around dangerous lands that could be of great value to a canny merchant.

Enemies	Heavily-taxing "lord" of the land, Bandit chieftain, Headman of a tariff-heavy hamlet, Secrecy-seeking caravan master
Friends	Merchant pathfinder, Wandering peddler, Overextended young trader, Bandit-tormented local
Things	Map through a perilous natural feature, Hidden cache of goods, Tariff payments, Goods "fallen off a wagon"
Complications	Two or more polities fight over control of the trade route, A merchant prince seeks to seize control for himself alone, The locals are getting rapaciously greedy with their tariffs, The ruthless "lord" hires bandits to plunder unforthcoming caravans
Places	Icy mountain pass, Hidden tunnel through a mountain, Secret path through swamp, Ancient prehuman tunnel-road

TROUBLED FESTIVAL

An important local ritual or festival is threatened by events. Failure of the festival means severe economic or spiritual consequences, yet the locals are unable to resolve the problem. Warring families, missing vital ingredients, official displeasure, or bandit pressure might trouble it.

Enemies	Disapproving priest, Envious headman of neighboring town, Dark spiritual power, Selfish hijacker of the festival
Friends	Desperate local leader, Merchant with all his money tied up in it, Tradition-minded elder, Hereditary ritual performer
Things	Crucial idol, Festival necessity imported from far away, Charter proving the festival's lawfulness, Money raised by it
Complications	Two families are fighting over control of the festival, The local priest finds the festival deplorable, A local ruler demands extortionate payment to permit the festival, A location vital to the festival has been rendered dangerous or defiled
Places	Hushed festival ground, Empty marketplace, Temple in disarray, Sadly under-occupied tea house

UNCOVERED DEPTHS

The community has tunnels, ruins, old sewers, or other ancient structures beneath it. They may have been known to the first settlers or just recently discovered, but most communities shun such places. Still dangers sometimes creep forth that demand a direct response.

Enemies	Furious disturbed ghost, Tong leader in hiding, Rebel chieftain hiding below, Abomination from beyond time
Friends	City engineer, Reeking sewer worker, Concerned builder of a new structure, Curious historian
Things	Original deed to an important building, Treasure of the past, Ancient artwork, Relic of the first inhabitants
Complications	It is strictly forbidden to enter the depths, The true rulers dwell below, The locals make sacrifices to the dwellers beneath them, Grasping officials force the natives to explore the depths for tribute and taxes
Places	Crypt of a near-forgotten hero, Rotting buried palace, Prehuman tunnel maze, Sewers of a long-ruined megalopolis

UNSTABLE STRUCTURES

The dungeon is prone to collapse or rearrangement. Some sites may be prone to magical transformations or massive engineering reconfigurations. Heroes who dare such depths run the risk of finding their way out suddenly unmade, leaving them to face the creators of the place.

Enemies	Golem engineer-master, Burrowing abomination, Scavenger chieftain, Spatially-deranged sorcerer
Friends	Ruin-plunderer, Victim trapped inside, Curious engineer, Avid sorcerous investigator
Things	Power core for the transformations, Key to escape, Portal control unit, The keystone holding the place together
Complications	The place is unstable in time rather than space, The place self-destructs after a certain thing happens, The site is caught halfway into some ancient transformation, The entrances are all somehow one-way
Places	A giant gear-room, A mirror-chamber of echoed forms, Ancient hall with a skeletal floor, High and tilted chamber

VICIOUS FLORA

This area has been infested by some dangerous plant life. It may be a massive, sprawling organism that carpets the area, or some form of mobile, intelligent plant-beast. It may be the product of cruel nature, mad sorcery, or the anger of a spirit of the land.

Enemies	Fungal abomination, Insidious pollen-zombie chief, Budded spiny plant-humanoid leader, Furious diwata queen
Friends	Local forester, Friendly flower-being, Wise old farmer, Uninfected village member
Things	Cure for the plant toxin, Powerful defoliant mixture, The relic empowering the plants, Precious plant extract
Complications	The flora is valuable and cultivated with no thought of the cost to the workers, The plant has powerful psychotropic effects, The parasitic plants can masquerade as humans, The plants are the first shoots of a more terrible seed
Places	Vine-wreathed village, Maze of unnatural bracken, Perfectly silent community of plant-things, Pit of corpse-fertilizer

WATERY DOOM

The dungeon is underwater, flooded, or otherwise uncomfortably damp. Exploring it without the ability to breathe water could prove fatal, and it likely teems with various forms of lizardfolk, siyokoy, or other aquatic creatures.

Enemies	Siyokoy sorcerer-priest, Lizardfolk Old Sleeper, Malevolent squid lord, Drowned undead lord
Friends	Local fisherman, Wary swamp native, Relative of siyokoy-kidnapped victim, Ambitious drainage engineer
Things	Elixir of waterbreathing, Magical pearls, Rare and enchanted salts, Long-lost hero's sarcophagus swallowed by the sea
Complications	The liquid isn't water but some magical or toxic brew, The structure was originally designed to cope with the water somehow but its facilities have decayed, The site is contaminating water needed by a nearby community, The dungeon actually is floating somehow and changes its position regularly
Places	Crumbling dam site, Room rapidly filling with water, Salt-crusting chamber, Hall with a fierce current down its length

MAPS

The following three pages include five unkeyed maps drawn by the talented Dyson Logos for use in your own adventures. If you're using the PDF version of this book, you can use the Adobe "Layers" tool to selectively turn maps on and off for printing purposes, or choose between the gridded and ungridded versions.

The maps do not have a specific scale given, as you may want to alter the scale for your own purposes. Most of them work well at 10 feet per square, though you might blow that up for more monumental structures or shrink it down for tight, cramped interiors.

You can also use just portions of these maps in order to gain more reusability. By swapping doorways around, clipping off extraneous cave passages, and re-orienting a few buildings you can turn a well-used map into something the players are unlikely to recognize.

Remember that the chief purpose of a map is to be interesting. An elaborate map to a banal location is of little use, while a few crude scratchings to indicate the relative spatial relationships of several fascinating locations can get good mileage during play. Worry about what's *in* your map before you worry about what's on it.

There are countless dungeon and location maps available online. If you're not feeling the inclination to do your own cartography, then *don't*. You have more important things to do with your time than sweat over a map you don't want to draw. Just look online, find something halfway serviceable, and scratch in any needed fixes.

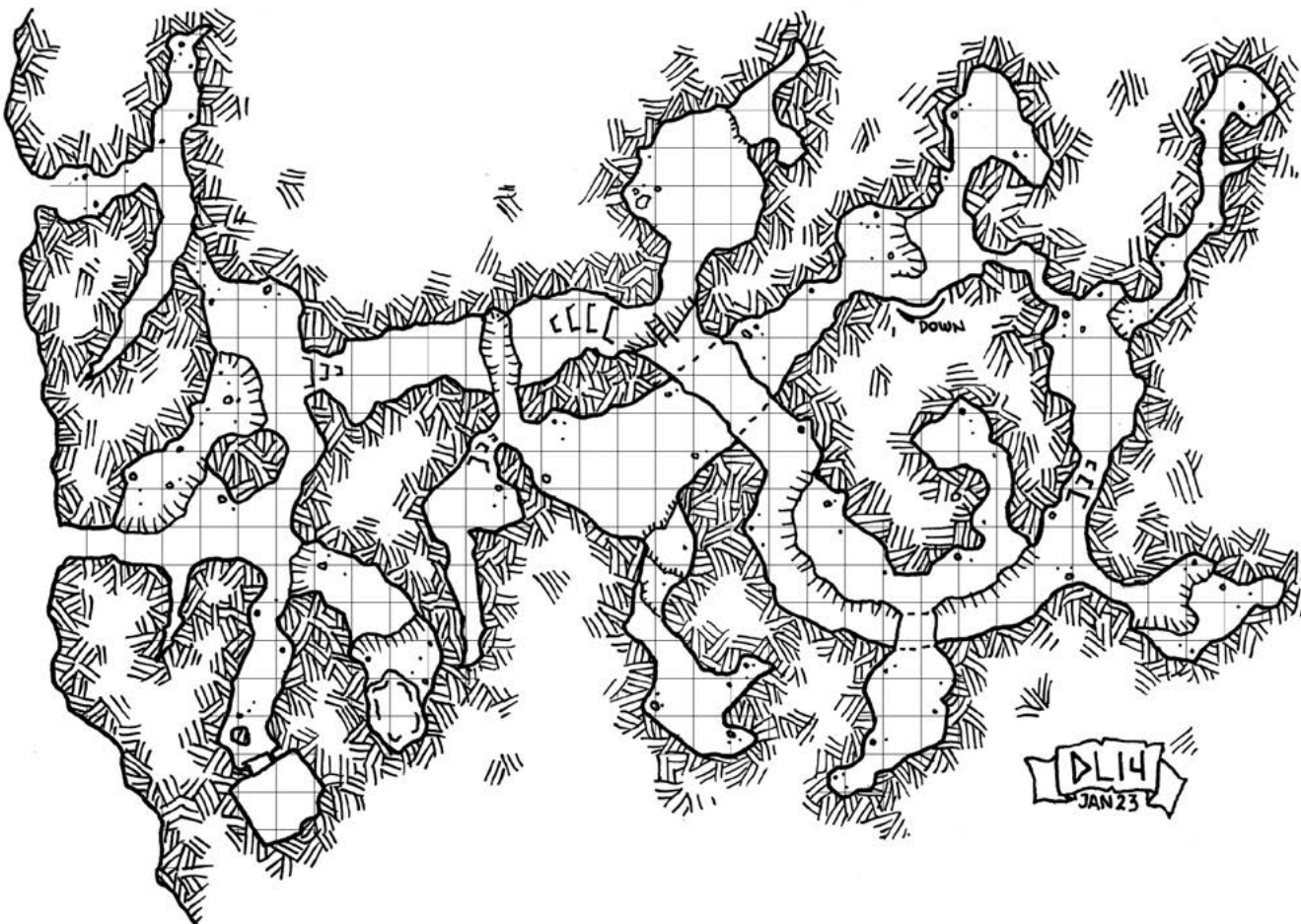
DIAGRAM DUNGEON MAPPING

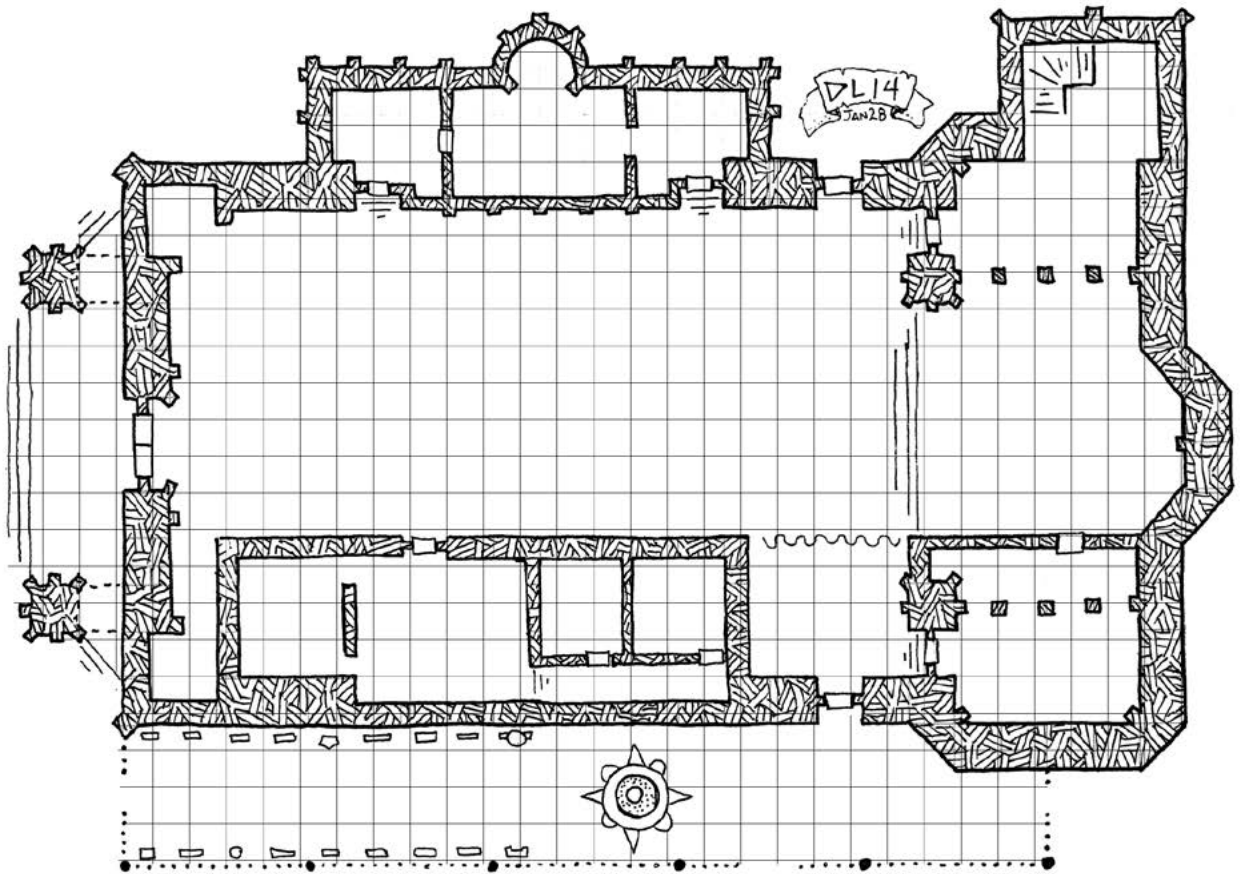
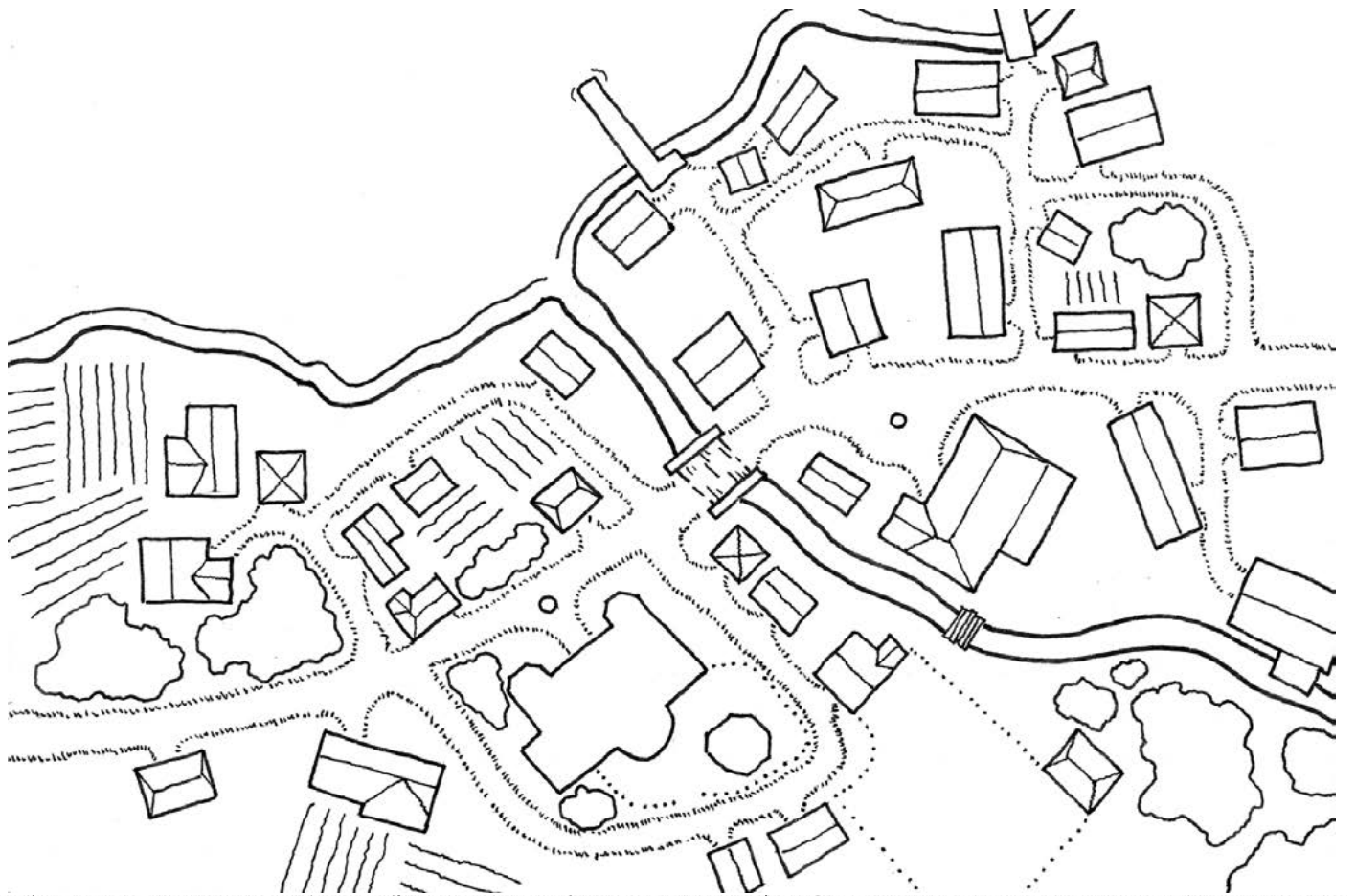
The classic photocopy-blue grid maps found in many old-school adventure modules were drawn that way for a reason. In their idealized mode of play, it actually was crucial for players to carefully understand all the particulars of their surroundings, the better to detect traps, forestall ambushes, and discern hidden features. If you're playing a style of game where the environment is trying to kill you then it's important that you understand that environment clearly.

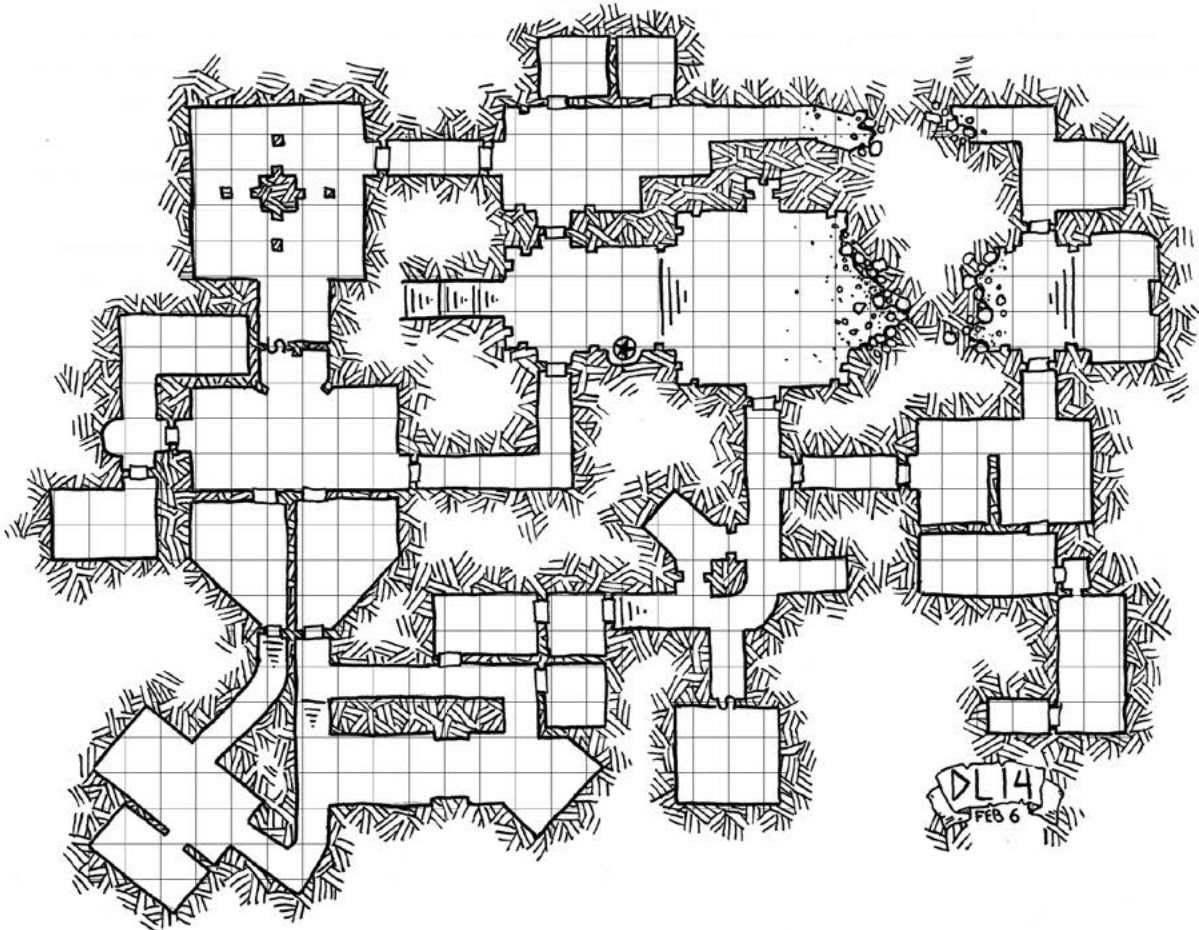
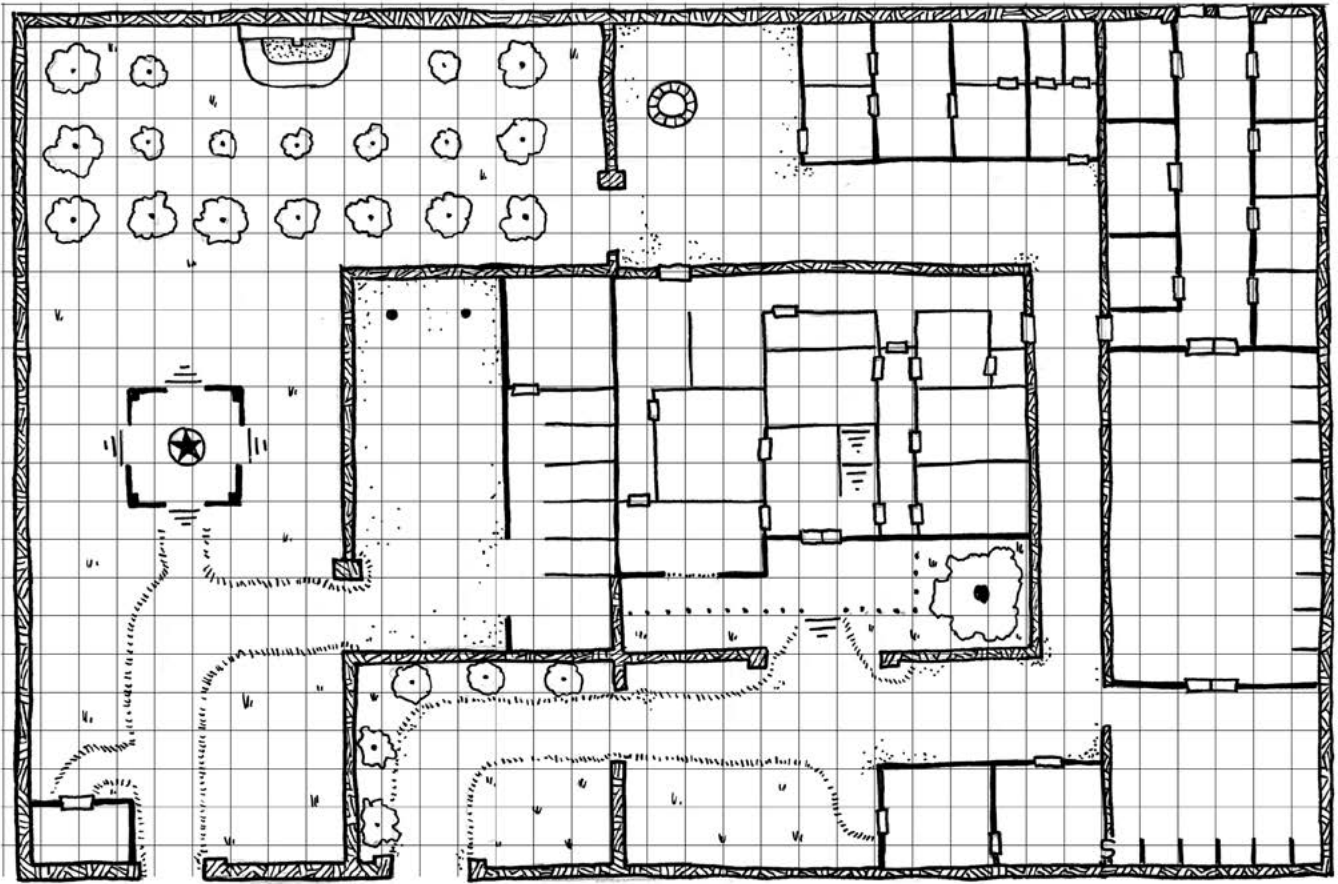
Scarlet Heroes can be played in that style but many GMs are likely to prefer a somewhat looser mode of engagement with their dungeons and sites. For these GMs, it's really not important to chart every hallway, corridor, and minor feature of a site. Their dungeons have certain locations of interest and the connective bits between aren't important or relevant to play at their table.

For these GMs, it can be most convenient to just draw a "diagram dungeon". Simply sketch boxes on a sheet of paper, label them with the appropriate map key number, and connect them with lines to indicate connecting passageways or spatial relationships. If the specific layout of a location is important, sketch it in nearby.

This diagram dungeon tacitly assumes that nothing important or consequential exists between the locations of interest. It's important you make that clear to the player, so they don't spend their time worrying about hallway traps or missing some crucial clue between rooms. Let them know that you won't penalize them.







CHARACTER NAMES

DWARVEN NAMES

D 10	MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME	PLACE
1	Arkadi	Agnessa	Blackshaft	Brassbarrow
2	Boris	Anja	Brassfist	Bronzecrest
3	Dimitry	Borbala	Breakblade	Coppercleft
4	Fyodor	Irina	Chimerock	Fardoor
5	Gorya	Karina	Copperhew	Grayhall
6	Kazimir	Nastasia	Greathammer	Highmine
7	Koldan	Oksana	Heavypick	Oldpit
8	Nikita	Raisa	Highdoor	Redshield
9	Semyon	Svetlana	Longburrow	Silverstone
10	Vasily	Valeriya	Orefinder	Truevow

EIRENGARDER NAMES

D 10	MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME	PLACE
1	Adalric	Adala	Altmann	Aethelinga
2	Ariaric	Bertine	Brandt	Bedaford
3	Beremud	Brunhild	Diederich	Butlinge
4	Donar	Dagma	Frey	Ceodre
5	Egon	Ermintrude	Himmelreich	Cirencaster
6	Heilgar	Haldisa	Maurer	Defenas
7	Hilt	Hildegard	Osterhagen	Egerlandt
8	Hrolf	Isold	Ritter	Englafeld
9	Reginhard	Malasinth	Strauss	Ethandun
10	Sigmar	Methilde	Unger	Freiberg

ELVEN NAMES

D 10	MALE	FEMALE	CREED NAME	PLACE
1	Chamant	Barahti	Bitter Moon	Beloved Faith
2	Chontak	Calai	Broken Stone	Bloody Hour
3	Daktan	Chael	Clean Book	False Coming
4	Getak	Dalah	Five Names	Fervent Wait
5	Jeddak	Ganna	Great Wall	Final Learning
6	Maganak	Jemai	Proven Road	First Hate
7	Mhek	Kalmi	Righteous Fire	Prideful Leaving
8	Rendak	Kishani	Seven Ways Out	Schismatic Day
9	Shekkad	Lachada	Still Water	Second Stand
10	Shom	Mora	That Within	Wise Rebuke

ESHKANTI NAMES

D 10	MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME	PLACE
1	Ali	Aminah	Aliyya	Andalus
2	Bakir	Chiklah	Aswari	Asqlan
3	Hisham	Ijliyah	Halali	Baytlahm
4	Jabir	Jaida	Jaludi	Burj
5	Mansur	Khalida	Misri	Gibuti
6	Rahim	Maridah	Naqit	Hajarah
7	Salim	Munisa	Raqashi	Harmah
8	Shahib	Rayya	Rumi	Hims
9	Umar	Sabiha	Sakhawi	Jabal
10	Yazid	Thana	Tabari	Karbala

GADAAL NAMES

D 10	MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME	PLACE
1	Aidan	Bradana	Bannatyne	Ardmore
2	Callum	Daracha	Dalmahoy	Arnisort
3	Eanraig	Iona	Imrie	Brochel
4	Gavin	Jinty	Jarvie	Brogaig
5	Jock	Mae	Lindoch	Caolas
6	Lammach	Morag	Mar	Clachnay
7	Morgan	Muriel	Niven	Coire
8	Murdoch	Rona	Pire	Conordon
9	Sawney	Senga	Reith	Cullaidh
10	Tearlach	Tavie	Tassie	Dungeary

IMPERIAL NAMES

D 10	MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME	PLACE
1	Bai	Daiyu	Chang	Baiwang
2	Dai	Jia	Guo	Bincaowa
3	Jian	Mingxia	Lai	Dawaju
4	Jing	Nuwa	Lei	Ebao
5	Minghua	Rou	Pan	Guanghe
6	On	Sulin	Shao	Haliang
7	Qiang	Ting	Song	Jianqiao
8	Shan	Xia	Wan	Jinan
9	Wang	Xiuli	Xiong	Linjiaping
10	Xue	Yanmei	Ye	Liuchan

KUEH NAMES

D 10	MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME	PLACE
1	Arata	Akiko	Asakuma	Ashiya
2	Daisuke	Asuka	Endo	Beppu
3	Ichiro	Hina	Ito	Fuchu
4	Jiro	Izumi	Kamei	Fujioka
5	Kiyoshi	Kasumi	Kitano	Goshogawara
6	Minoru	Mariko	Matsumoto	Hiratsuku
7	Nobu	Midori	Nakatomi	Ibaraki
8	Ren	Noriko	Sato	Ichinomiya
9	Shiro	Sakura	Suzuki	Imabari
10	Tetsuya	Ume	Tanaka	Izumo

SKANDR NAMES

D 10	MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME	PLACE
1	Bergfin	Birla	Birkeland	Aeblegarden
2	Dagr	Disa	Eide	Bregentved
3	Haruk	Inga	Hanevold	Dalstad
4	Ingimarr	Jutta	Ingstad	Dumazbakki
5	Lofrik	Maeva	Lindahl	Erikstad
6	Njall	Otkatla	Ramsfell	Eyinhelga
7	Ormulf	Runa	Skarsgard	Gareksey
8	Ragnbjorn	Spana	Tangvik	Haraldsson
9	Sigdan	Thyrna	Thules	Helgstad
10	Tyrfing	Ursula	Ulving	Holbaek

SOLO GAMING

This chapter provides a method for creating a solo adventure for a player- that is, an adventure that doesn't require a GM. These solo adventures are, by necessity, rather different from the ones that might be run by a separate GM, but they have the great advantage of being available whenever you want to play. Those seeking more solo RPG fun and advice are advised to check out the [Mythic Game Master Emulator](#) by Tom Pigeon.

THREE KINDS OF ADVENTURES

This chapter covers methods for three different kinds of solo adventures: urban, wilderness, and dungeon. Each uses somewhat different rules to better handle the different focuses of each kind of play, but you can stitch them together seamlessly in play. If you're exploring the trackless wilderness and come across a lost temple, for example, you can simply put the wilderness adventure on hold as you swap into a dungeon adventure and explore the place. Once you've finished plundering the dead priests, you can return to the wilderness adventure and pick up where you left off.

IMAGINATION AND ORACLES

The mechanics of each type of adventure provide the basic narrative bones of the session and some specifics for you to work with. You can and should add your own creativity into this situation, pulling in NPCs significant to your hero's background, playing up conflicts you've established in earlier adventures, and using locations and props that make sense for your hero. Each adventure scene is meant to be fleshed out with your own imagination. Aside from your own creativity, a set of general oracles is provided to help spark your ideas.

The "Yes or No?" oracle can be used to give an answer to a binary question- any question, really, so long as the answer can be boiled down to yes or no. Just decide how likely the answer is to be "Yes", and roll 1d20. Yes or no are self-evident answers, but if you get "yes, but" you should read it as generally positive but with some complication that makes it not exactly what you were looking for. "No, but" means that the answer is generally negative, but there's at least one element that mitigates the situation.

The "Oracular Adjectives" table can be used whenever you want to add flavor to a scene or describe the way in which a yes or no answer has been complicated. Just roll and apply the adjective or fact to the scene, describing some way in which it applies to the situation. The charts on the People and Relationship pages can be used to generate quick NPCs needed as actors in your plots, or describe relationships, personalities, or reactions from an NPC. The reaction tables can be used to determine whether or not the NPC is feeling cooperative about whatever prospect your hero just proposed.

You should feel free to mix and match charts from any section as the need suggests, using the results to inspire your own ideas and better flesh out individual scenes.

THREAT

Each adventure has a Threat score, starting at 1 for the easiest situations and ranging to 10 or more for truly epic deeds of blood and valor. Most adventures worthy of the name have a Threat equal to the hero's level, though you might randomize this by rolling 2d4, subtracting the second die from the first and adding the result to your PC's level, down to a minimum of 1.

Threat is represented on the tables as "T"- thus, if a trap does Td4 damage and the Threat of the adventure is 6, the trap does 6d4 damage. It also sometimes appears in the statistics of the foes you might face as their hit dice or attack bonus.

Threat should make sense for the situation, but if a die roll shows a seemingly-mundane adventure actually has a high Threat, you might choose to accept the situation. The pulps are full of adventures where the hero suddenly discovers that the petty crime or trifling intrigue they stepped into is actually just the tip of some darker mystery.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURES

When running these adventures, your hero can do anything naturally possible or plausible for their abilities. If presented with some puzzling situation, you can use your sorcerous abilities, cunning wit, or keen-edged blade to resolve your challenges in any way you see fit. Provided you can beat the skill checks involved or overcome the hostile forces, your hero will succeed. If you're not sure whether a particular course of action would be successful or helpful for your hero, just use the Yes or No oracle to get an answer.

Sometimes you'll be called upon to run NPCs, either other actors in the plot or nameless NPC foes who seek your hero's death. Just run them with as much intelligence and foresight as their nature recommends, using the oracle tables to give you answers to any questions you might have about their motivations or choice of actions in combat. Remember that very few villains will stand and die unless they have no choice in the matter- and one who gets away today can easily pop up again tomorrow.

The tables for running an adventure are all designed for random rolls, but there's no reason not to simply pick or edit entries if one of them seems to make particularly good sense. Still, you might find it entertaining to let the game run purely on random rolls, just for the sake of the surprise and novelty of the results.

AFTER THE ADVENTURE

If you're tracking your hero's advancement, each successful adventure adds 1 experience point. Adventures may have other lasting consequences, such as gaining new foes or friends among local NPCs, or even rendering a community too hot for the hero's continuing residence. Other consequences are up to your own good judgment, perhaps with some input from one of the oracular tables.

GENERAL ORACLES

YES OR NO?

LIKELIHOOD	NO	NO, BUT	YES, BUT	YES
ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE	1-17	18	19	20
VERY UNLIKELY	1-14	15-16	17-18	19-20
UNLIKELY	1-10	11-14	15-17	18-20
UNKNOWN	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20
LIKELY	1-3	4-6	7-10	11-20
VERY LIKELY	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-20
ALMOST CERTAIN	1	2	3	4-20

THE "BUT" IS RELATED TO...

1d6	COMPLICATION
1	A twist to the relationship between people in the situation.
2	An adjustment to the physical environment.
3	An error in an assumption some NPC is making.
4	A fact the hero thinks they know is actually wrong.
5	The failure of a piece of gear, either for the hero or an NPC.
6	Sublimely bad or good timing by a sudden event.

HOW FAR AWAY IS A THING?

2d4	FOR THE SAME PLACE	FOR DISTANT THINGS
2	Close enough to touch	The same building
3	Within melee range	The same neighborhood
4	A few paces away	The same community
5	The other side of the room	Within a day's ride
6	In the next room	Within a week's ride
7	A few rooms away	Within a month's journey
8	In the same structure	Far, far away

WHAT'S THE WEATHER LIKE?

2d4	WET SEASON	DRY SEASON
2	Cloudless skies	Steady rain
3	Cloudy but no rain	Cloudy skies
4	A light drizzle	Clear and windy
5	Steady rain	Clear, still, and humid
6	A heavy rain	Hot and damp
7	Concealing downpour	Hot, windy, and dry
8	Blinding deluge	Sizzling and bone-dry

ORACULAR ADJECTIVES AND MOTIVATIONS

1d20	1-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	17-20
1	Abuse	Desire	Habit	Love	Shame
2	Accident	Despair	Hatred	Loyalty	Skillfulness
3	Addiction	Disease	Hidden connection	Madness	Sorcery
4	Aging	Disowning	Hierarchy	Mistake	Speed
5	Alertness	Dominance	History	Mystery	Strength
6	Anger	Duty	Honor	Naiveté	Struggle
7	Avarice	Enamourment	Hunger	Offense	Stupidity
8	Beauty	Erudition	Ignorance	Panic	Submission
9	Blindness	Escape	Illegality	Perversion	Tardiness
10	Broken object	Exhaustion	Illusion	Planning	Temperance
11	Capture	Experience	Imprisonment	Poison	Thoughtlessness
12	Charity	Exploration	Incest	Pride	Tradition
13	Chastity	Fear	Incompetence	Promise	Treachery
14	Coins	Foolishness	Inheritance	Rapacity	Trickery
15	Compassion	Foresight	Innocence	Recklessness	Truth
16	Confusion	Forgery	Jewels	Regret	Ugliness
17	Courage	Forgetfulness	Journeying	Rot	Vengeance
18	Debauchery	Forgiveness	Kinship	Secrets	Weakness
19	Debt	Fury	Knowledge	Seizure	Wealth
20	Delusion	Guilt	Longing	Servitude	Wisdom

ACTORS, RELATIONSHIPS, AND REACTIONS

ACTORS AND NPCs				
D8	D10	COMMONER	UNDERWORLD	ELITE AND NOBLE
1-2	1	Ambitious scholar	Ambitious guttersnipe	Aged plutocrat
	2	Battered ex-adventurer	Amoral assassin	City magistrate
	3	Beautiful young mistress	Bitter pretender to rank	Cynical watch leader
	4	Bold ship captain	Black marketeer	Discreet banker
	5	Commercial moneylender	Callous blackmailer	Exiled pretender
	6	Cunning shipwright	Careworn priest	Famed courtesan
	7	Cynical investigator	Cheap legbreaker	Famous artist
	8	Doddering sage	Cheating merchant	Favored concubine
	9	Drunken sailor	Cretinous street thug	Feared court blackmailer
	10	Dubious spice merchant	Crippled beggar child	Foreign diplomat
3-4	1	Earthy construction boss	Cynical young whore	Foreign nobleman
	2	Elderly crafter	Deceitful footpad	Heartless noble matron
	3	Erudite bookseller	Degraded former noble	High military officer
	4	Exquisite dancer	Depraved slumming noble	High-ranking priest
	5	Grasping merchant	Desperate young mother	Instructor to nobles
	6	Grizzled border hunter	Diseased beggar	Master assassin
	7	Gross slave or labor trader	Disguised con artist	Mighty war hero
	8	Honest gravetender	Dissipated physician	Minister of taxes
	9	Humble day laborer	Drug den proprietor	Minister of trade
	10	Intrepid explorer	Earnest charity worker	Newlywed noble bride
5-6	1	Marriage-minded deb	Exiled foreigner	Ninja clan leader
	2	Minor government official	Expert forger	Official investigator
	3	Mistreated servant or slave	Grasping fence	Powerful sorcerer
	4	Pitiless tax collector	Hard-drinking labor boss	Provincial governor
	5	Polished tea house owner	Hardened burglar	Purveyor of rare sins
	6	Promising artist	Haughty ninja	Rich moneylender
	7	Puzzled foreigner	Impartial info broker	Riotous young heir
	8	Rakehell family heir	Impoverished ex-noble	Scheming daifu
	9	Relentless bounty hunter	Knife-slinging gambler	Scion of a noble lineage
	10	Reputable tong brother	Menacing tong enforcer	Scion of past rulers
7-8	1	Retired mercenary officer	Migrant farmer	Shipping fleet owner
	2	Rough caravan master	Naive country girl	Social club leader
	3	Sagacious alchemist	Press gang boss	Sorcerous "fixer"
	4	Sincere priest	Priest of a forbidden faith	Steward of family lands
	5	Skillful artisan	Ruthless moneylender	Tong grandfather
	6	Stern market magistrate	Scrawny pickpocket	Veteran adventurer
	7	Suspicious farm owner	Street-worn prostitute	Wealthy heir
	8	Veteran soldier	Suspicious urchin	Wealthy landowner
	9	Wealthy bachelor	World-weary madame	Wealthy merchant prince
	10	Weary physician	Wretched miser	Widely-sought maiden

1d20	RACE
1-13	Human
14-16	Dwarf
17	Halfling
18-19	Shou-Blooded
20	Elf

1d20	HUMAN ETHNICITY
1-6	Mix two or more
6-12	Imperial
13-14	Eshkanti
15	Gadaal
16-17	Eirengarder
18-19	Kueh
20	Skandr

ACTOR RELATIONSHIPS	
1d100	RELATION
1-4	Business partner
5-8	Child
9-12	Childhood friend
13-16	Co-workers
17-20	Cousin
21-24	Crime culprit
25-28	Crime partner
29-32	Crime victim
33-36	Ex-lover
37-40	Ex-spouse
41-44	Grandparent
45-48	Has blackmail
49-52	Heir to something
53-56	Inlaws
57-60	Lover
61-64	Old favor
65-68	Parent
69-72	Rival
73-76	Schoolmates
77-80	Sibling
81-84	Society fellows
85-88	Spouse
89-92	Subordinate
93-96	Superior
97-00	Uncle/Aunt

REACTIONS

2d6	FRIENDLY NPC	NPC STRANGER	UNFRIENDLY NPC	COMMON MODIFIERS
UNDER 2	Roll as an NPC Stranger	Roll as an Unfriendly NPC	Violence or direct harm	-3 for grave insults or risks to the life of self or loved ones
2	Sneering contempt	Anger	Anger/Violence	
3	Flat dismissal	Annoyance	Anger/Scorn	-2 for insults or risks to the NPC's wealth or standing
4	Reasoned refusal	Dismissal	Scorn	
5	Bribeable	Flat refusal	Dismissal	-1 for the risk of significant cost to their actions.
6	Persuadable	Qualified refusal	Flat rejection	
7	Hesitant Agreement	Bribeable	Considered refusal	+1 for a modest bribe or when a favor is owed to a PC
8	Quick consent	Qualified consent	Bribeable	
9	Pleased consent	Tentative agreement	Persuadable	+2 for a large bribe or significant service owed
10	Vigorous consent	Full agreement	Qualified consent	
11	Firm commitment	Helpful consent	Grudging agreement	+3 for a PC who saved their life or did similar service.
12+	Bold enthusiasm	Admiring consent	Tolerant consent	

MEMORABLE TRAITS

1d100	TRAIT
1-4	Always carries things
5-8	Always hurried
9-12	Asthmatic
13-16	Blind in an eye
17-20	Careless dresser
21-24	Constantly watchful
25-28	Dark, sober clothes
29-32	Deaf or hard of hearing
33-36	Elaborate tattoos
37-40	Emphatic speech
41-44	Facial scarring
45-48	Gaudy jewelry
49-52	Immaculate clothes
53-56	Laconic speaker
57-60	Magnificent hair
61-64	Missing an appendage
65-68	Numerous piercings
69-72	Often drunk
73-76	Out of shape
77-80	Precise hands
81-84	Shaven or balding
85-88	Stutters
89-92	Subtle fragrance
93-96	Tends work constantly
97-00	Twitches regularly

RULING TEMPERAMENT

1d100	TEMPERAMENT
1-4	Ambitious
5-8	Bigoted
9-12	Capricious
13-16	Cautious
17-20	Compassionate
21-24	Deceitful
25-28	Exhibitionistic
29-32	Fearful
33-36	Garrulous
37-40	Greedy
41-44	Indecisive
45-48	Inquisitive
49-52	Lazy
53-56	Loyal
57-60	Lustful
61-64	Merciful
65-68	Observant
69-72	Patient
73-76	Proud
77-80	Scornful
81-84	Shy
85-88	Stubborn
89-92	Valorous
93-96	Vicious
97-00	Wrathful

IMMEDIATE DESIRES

1d100	DESIRE
1-4	Aiding a friend
5-8	Avenging a slight
9-12	Bribing an official
13-16	Buying an object
17-20	Collecting a bribe
21-24	Collecting a debt
25-28	Commit a crime
29-32	Curing a sickness
33-36	Destroying evidence
37-40	Earning money
41-44	Funding a funeral
45-48	Getting a document
49-52	Getting drunk
53-56	Going home to rest
57-60	Having a man/woman
61-64	Helping a relative
65-68	Impressing a lover
69-72	Impressing the boss
73-76	Paying a debt
77-80	Recovering a lost item
81-84	Revealing a secret
85-88	Selling an object
89-92	Spreading a faith
93-96	Spying on a person
97-00	Stealing from the boss

URBAN ADVENTURES

These adventures are the catch-all heading for plots centering around urban intrigue, investigation, political machinations, and grim street justice. The “urban” area might be nothing bigger than a village, or even a remote rural villa, but the events that are going on revolve around people and their interactions rather than the exploration of unknown wilderness or the plumbing of ancient ruins. Run an urban adventure when you want your hero to deal with their fellow humans.

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

To play an urban adventure, follow this sequence of play. When it instructs you to “draw” an element, either roll or pick one from the appropriate table or choose something from your hero’s own past to fit your needs.

- Draw a Plot to find out what this adventure is all about. Perform the setup indicated by the Plot. Set the Victory points of your hero and their opponents to zero.
- Decide how your hero is drawn into the Plot, whether from one of the participants, a recurring NPC, or blind chance.
- Draw a scene. You can draw Investigation or Conflict scenes at any time, but you need to spend a Clue to draw an Action scene. You may choose to Rest in place of a scene, restoring any lost hit points or expended spells, but doing so automatically adds 1 Victory point to your opponent’s score.
- Resolve the scene’s Challenge. If you succeed, you win the scene and get the rewards it lists. If you fail, you suffer the unfortunate consequences. If you resolve the Challenge with magic or apply violence to socially-unacceptable targets, you may suffer Heat or other consequences. After each Investigation or Action scene, roll 1d10; if equal or less than the total number of Investigation and Action scenes so far, the foe gains 1 Victory point.
- Continue to draw scenes until either your hero or their opponent reaches 10 Victory points. If your opponent reaches 10 points first, they win. If your hero reaches 10 points, you immediately move into an Action scene without needing to spend a Clue. If you win this Action scene, you defeat your foe and win the adventure. If you fail, you suffer the usual consequences and must spend Clues to re-attempt an Action scene that will win the adventure.

After a winner is determined, subtract the opponent’s Victory points from the hero’s total. If the score is 5 or more, it is a Complete Victory. 1-4 points is a Partial Victory, -1 to -4 points is a Partial Loss, and -5 points or less is a Complete Loss. You can use this final margin of victory to decide on fallout from the event.

SCENES

Scenes come in three types: Investigative, Conflict, and Action. Investigative scenes equip a hero with Clues, Conflict scenes pit them against physical or social enemies, and Action scenes allow the hero to act vigorously on their own behalf, taking advantage of their Clues.

When you run a scene, roll or pick one from the desired list, furnishing it with Locations and Actors from the random tables or creating new ones as needed. Beat the Challenge of the scene and you gain its rewards as your hero’s efforts prove fruitful. Lose, and suffer the unfortunate consequences.

You can always choose to do an Investigative or Conflict scene, but performing an Action scene requires spending a Clue, representing your hero’s use of their information to discern some useful action or progress they can make toward their ultimate goal. If you run out of Clues, do more Investigation to spy out new and useful information.

CHALLENGES

Each scene has a Challenge. If you beat the Challenge, you win the scene and get the benefits that come with it—usually an additional Victory point, plus a Clue if it’s an Investigation scene, one more Victory point if it’s an Action scene, or subtracting an enemy Victory point for a Conflict scene. If you fail the Challenge, you fail the scene and are forced to retreat, regroup, or find another way to your goal. Failing a scene adds a Victory point to your opponent’s score.

Most Challenges are skill checks requiring unusual persuasiveness, stealth, erudition, or some other expertise. The difficulty of the check is usually 9 plus half the adventure’s Threat, rounded down. Some of these checks might be bypassed with properly-applied magical powers or the application of sharp steel.

Other Challenges are straight-up Fights, which you run just as you would a normal combat. You roll the foe’s combat attributes on the appropriate table, adding half the adventure’s Threat to the roll. The exact nature of the enemies can be rolled randomly on the Potential Foes table or chosen to best fit the situation.

A hero fails a combat challenge if forced to flee or reduced to zero hit points; in the latter case the hero does not die, but may find themselves left for dead at 1 hit point or hurled into durance vile with a mere half their maximum hit points, trapped there until they can perform an Action scene to escape.

TACTICAL CONSEQUENCES AND HEAT

Heat is the measure of how much unwanted attention you’re getting from the local community. A city starts at 0 Heat. After each adventure, roll 1d10. If the total is equal or less than the community’s Heat, your hero needs to either move on or run an adventure where the Plot revolves around coping with the consequences of your notoriety.

Heroes earn Heat by becoming either too problematic or too useful to the local powers. A cleric who’s constantly healing the sick with potent magic can find herself suddenly “invited” to be the permanent physician of the local magistrate while a regular head-breaker might find himself sought for punishment by the city watch captain. A hero who wins an adventure that revolves around dealing with their Heat can decrease it by 1d4+1 points.

Aside from Heat you might add to your total when it seems narratively appropriate, you can also gain Heat by choosing to solve Challenges in ways that could come back to haunt you.

If you beat a Challenge with magic in a way that others might hear about, roll 1d10. If the roll is less than the highest level of spell used in the Challenge, add 1 Heat. Strong magic makes rulers nervous.

If you beat a Challenge with violence and your opponents are not socially-acceptable targets for brutal disposal, add 1 Heat to the community. If they’re very sympathetic figures, add 2 Heat. Spells cast in combat might fall afoul of the prior rule as well.

URBAN ADVENTURE PLOTS AND CRIMES

1 AN ANTAGONIST SEEKS THE ASSASSINATION OF A TARGET

Draw or choose either the Antagonist or the Target, whichever your hero is most likely to care about. Draw the unknown actor only after a successful Investigation scene spent discovering their identity. Scenes revolve around identifying the assassins, learning when and how they are to strike, and protecting the Target from one or more attempts on their life.

2 AN ANTAGONIST SEEKS TO STEAL SOMETHING PRECIOUS TO A TARGET

Draw or choose either the Antagonist or the Target, whichever your hero is most likely to care about. Draw the unknown actor only after a successful Investigation scene spent discovering their identity. The object being stolen is the Target's most precious possession or something important to the Antagonist that the Target possesses. Scenes revolve around finding the thieves, guarding the object, and snatching it back if it is stolen.

3 A TARGET HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED BY AN ANTAGONIST AND IS IN NEED OF RESCUE

Draw both Target and Antagonist. Optionally, select an one of your hero's existing allies as the Target and do not draw the Antagonist until you spend a Investigation scene investigating the kidnapping. Scenes revolve around identifying the kidnappers, finding the victim, and extracting them from the snare.

4 A LOCATION IS STRUCK BY A FIRE, RIOT, BUILDING COLLAPSE, MONSTER OUTBREAK, OR THE LIKE

Draw the Location and choose a suitable disaster. Draw three Actors; they're somehow caught in the event and must be saved from it. Scenes revolve around saving Actors from the calamity. The last Actor cannot be saved until the concluding Action scene.

5 AN ANTAGONIST SCHEMES TO HARM A RIVAL TARGET, SUCH AS BY THEFT, BLACKMAIL, OR FRAMING

Draw either the Antagonist or the Target, depending on who the hero would likely most care about. Successful Investigation scenes are required to discovered both the other Actor in the event and the Crime which the Antagonist desires to inflict on them. Scenes revolve around discovering what crime is planned, identifying and stopping the criminals, and tracing it to the Antagonist.

6 A TARGET ASPIRES TO ADVANCE THEIR BUSINESS OR STATUS BUT AN ANTAGONIST OPPOSES THEM

Draw the Target and choose how they are trying to advance themselves. Either draw the Antagonist immediately or spend an Investigation scene discovering who is causing the obstacles. Scenes revolve either around trying to help the Target's goal or trying to prevent Antagonist sabotage.

7 A TARGET FACES A CALAMITY DUE TO A CRIME COMMITTED BY AN UNTOUCHABLE ANTAGONIST

Draw the Target and pick the Crime. If the Antagonist is not obvious, it requires a successful Investigation scenes to discover who was responsible, and the rest of the adventure to catch them, kill them, or expose them to legal consequences.

8 A TARGET BELONGS TO A GROUP OR ETHNICITY THAT IS SUFFERING PROBLEMS FROM AN ANTAGONIST

Draw the Target, the Antagonist, and a Crime. If the Antagonist is inside the group, they committed the Crime on an Actor, infuriating outsiders. If the Antagonist is outside the group, they want to hurt the Target with the Crime. Scenes revolve around calming tempers, preventing harm, and getting justice for the wronged.

SAMPLE CRIMES

D6	1-2	3-4	5-6
D8	FORCE	THEFT	CORRUPTION
1	Arson	"Legal" theft	Blackmail
2	Assault	Burglary	Dark worship
3	Forced Marriage	Deed theft	False accusation
4	Kidnapping	Embezzlement	Falsified will
5	Murder	Extortion	Foul magic
6	Mutilation	Pickpocketing	Impersonation
7	Rape	Robbery	Official corruption
8	Sabotage	Theft of secrets	Treason

CRIME DETAILS

D6	LOCATION	WITNESS	WHY NO ACTION?
1	Business	Concerned local	Culprit's status
2	Home	Culprit's minion	Evidence stolen
3	Isolated area	Frightened local	No witnesses
4	Public street	Hidden watcher	Officials bribed
5	Social hub	Random stranger	Victim is poor
6	Wilderness	Victim's companion	Witnesses silent

URBAN ADVENTURE SCENES

By default, each scene requires that your hero succeed on a trait check based on whatever kind of situation they are attempting to master. The difficulty for the check is 9 plus half the Threat of the adventure, rounded down. If you succeed, you win the scene and gain a Victory point. If you fail, your opponent receives a Victory point. If you succeed at an Investigation scene, you also get a Clue. If you succeed at a Conflict scene, your enemy's Victory point total decreases by one. If you succeed at an Action scene, you get two Victory points instead of one, but you need to spend a Clue to attempt such a scene.

Some scenes require Fights instead of checks. Roll or pick a type of combatant from the opposite table and roll for the fight's difficulty. For the Fight Difficulty table, roll 1d8 and add half the Threat value of the adventure, rounded down. When multiple antagonists are needed, just let the foe type indicate the most capable or characteristic enemy, and fill out the rest as fitting.

INVESTIGATION SCENES		CONFLICT SCENES		ACTION SCENES	
1d10	SCENE	1d10	SCENE	1d10	SCENE
1	Hunt up an Actor whom you have reason to suspect can give you a Clue.	1	Waylay a minion of the foe. Face a Fight instead of a check.	1	Convince an Actor ally of the foe to betray them. On a failure, face a Fight.
2	Infiltrate a Location where the activities relate to a Clue. On a check failure, face a Fight.	2	Intimidate or put social pressure on an associate of the foe.	2	Despoil or ruin a sanctum or safehouse belonging to the foe. Roll a die; on an odd result, face a Fight as well as the check.
3	Tail an Actor who might have a Clue. On a check failure, face a Fight.	3	Support an Actor who's working against the foe for their own reasons. Roll a die; on an odd result, face a Fight instead of a check.	3	Pass an incriminating or disgraceful Clue to an Actor who can make sure important people learn of the evidence.
4	Search a Location related to past events where a Clue can be found. Roll a die; on an odd result, you face a Fight whether or not you succeed on the check.	4	Sabotage or steal the foe's possessions that are important to the plot. Roll a die; on an odd result, face a Fight as well as a check.	4	Face the foe's best warrior- or the foe himself if this is a climactic battle and they're fit for combat. Face a Fight instead of a check.
5	Stake out an Actor or Location. Whether or not you win the check, your opponent gains a Victory point due to delay.	5	Fight through an ambush arranged by the foe at a Location. Face a Fight instead of a check.	5	Plunder resources necessary to the foe's plan. Either make a check at +2 difficulty or face a Fight instead of a check.
6	Ambush a dangerous Actor who holds a Clue. Face a Fight instead of a check.	6	Discredit or frame an Actor ally of the foe.	6	Destroy proof, evidence, or information necessary to the foe's plan. On a failure, face a Fight.
7	Trick an Actor into revealing a Clue. Roll a die; on an odd result you face a Fight whether or not you succeed on the check.	7	Suffer betrayal by an Actor; face a Fight as you try to escape or avenge yourself.	7	Rally an Actor and their comrades to oppose the foe.
8	An allied Actor can get you a Clue at personal risk. Roll a die; on an even number make a skill check to help them succeed. On an odd number, Fight to protect them.	8	Outmaneuver a local official suborned or bribed by the foe. Roll a die; on an odd result, add 1 Heat to the community.	8	Guide the Target or another important Actor out of the foe's reach for at least a temporary period. Roll a die; on an odd result, face a Fight to protect them as well as the check.
9	Bribe an Actor to give you a Clue. Roll a die; on an odd, immediately face a Conflict scene with them or on their behalf and win it to succeed. On an even, pay a reasonable bribe or fail the challenge.	9	Do a friendly Actor a favor that will advance them into a position to help you. Roll a die; on an odd result, face a Fight as the foe tries to stop you.	9	Bring in an outside authority or useful Actor to oppose the foe.
10	Be waylaid by a hostile Actor with a Clue. Face a Fight instead of a check.	10	Eliminate an outside Actor brought in to aid the foe. Face a Fight instead of a check.	10	Sabotage a tool, evidence, or ally of the foe so that it betrays their attempted use of it.

POTENTIAL FOES

D8	D10	TYPE	
1-2	1	Cruel footpad	C R I M I N A L S
	2	Dark cultist	
	3	Drunken brawler	
	4	Gutter mage	
	5	Pit fighter	
	6	Ruthless assassin	
	7	Scruffy tough	
	8	Tong hatchet man	
	9	Treacherous harlot	
	10	Vicious madman	
3-4	1	Aged veteran	C O M M O N E R S
	2	Angry mob	
	3	Armed bystander	
	4	Burly laborer	
	5	Disguised warrior	
	6	Mistaken local	
	7	Paid guardsman	
	8	Scarred bouncer	
	9	Vigilant bodyguard	
	10	Watchful neighbor	
5-6	1	City guard	O F F I C I A L S
	2	Cult inquisitor	
	3	Indentured mage	
	4	Military scout	
	5	Noble scion	
	6	Noble's guard	
	7	Secret agent	
	8	Tax collector	
	9	Trained soldier	
	10	Watch sorcerer	
7-8	1	Beast trainer	E L I T E S
	2	Expert assassin	
	3	Fanatical guard	
	4	Grizzled veteran	
	5	Inhuman thing	
	6	Mad zealot	
	7	Priest of war	
	8	Skilled sorcerer	
	9	Violent alchemist	
	10	Warrior monk	

URBAN LOCATIONS

D20	PUBLIC LOCATIONS	SLUM LOCATIONS	ELITE LOCATIONS
1	Bazaar	Abandoned building	Daifu's country retreat
2	Blacksmithy	Brothel	Discreet rendezvous
3	Cemetery	Dark alleyway	Discreet sanitarium
4	Guardpost	Decrepit shrine	Elite dueling academy
5	Guild hall	Drug den	Exclusive cult shrine
6	Inn	Fence's shop	Exclusive tea house
7	Local monument	Fetid waterway	Exotic brothel
8	Moneychanger	Fighting pit	Gilded shrine
9	Physician's home	Filthy streetcorner	Government office
10	Public plaza	Forbidden market	Guarded treasure house
11	Public well	Hidden opulent lair	Hidden love nest
12	Respectable home	Impoverished hospice	Merchant's palace
13	School of arts	Makeshift hovel	Rich mausoleum
14	Slave or labor market	Prison	Ruler's court
15	Tannery	Reeking sweatshop	School of magic
16	Tavern	Sewer passage	Sealed familial tower
17	Tea house	Sinister tavern	Social club
18	Temple	Tattered market	Splendid garden
19	Warehouse	Tenement	Stately public ritual
20	Wharf	Tong hall	Urban palace

FIGHT DIFFICULTY

D8	FOE	D8	FOE
1	1d6 Vermin	7	1 Sorcerer + 1d6+T Vermin
2-3	1d4+T Rabble	8	1 Brute + 1d4+T Thugs
4	1d4+T Rabble +1 Veteran	9	1 Tank + 1d4+T Thugs
5	1d4+T Soldiers	10	1 Swarm
6	1d6+T Thugs + 1 Veteran	11+	1 Elite Slayer

FOE STATISTICS

TYPE	HD	AC	+HIT	DMG	MORALE	+SKILL	MOVE
Vermin	1	9	+0	1d4	7	+0	20'
Rabble	1	9	+1	1d4	8	+1	30'
Thug	1	8	+1	1d6	8	+1	30'
Soldier	1	6	+1	1d6	8	+1	20'
Veteran	2	5	+2	1d8	9	+1	20'
Brute	T+2	6	+T+2	1d10	10	+2	20'
Sorcerer	T	8	+T	1d4	9	+2	30'
Tank	T+1	3	+T+1	1d8	10	+2	20'
Swarm	2xT	9	+T	1d6	9	+0	30'
Elite Slayer	T+3	5	+T+4	1d8+2	11	+3	30'

WILDERNESS ADVENTURES

It may be that your intrepid hero desires to strike off into the wilds and unearth its green-veiled secrets. To forge a suitable wilderness exploration adventure, just follow these steps.

THE MAP

Your wilderness adventure will take place on a hex map representing your exploration, with each hex averaging six miles in diameter. This section assumes that the terrain is essentially unknown. If you choose to use this system for area that already has been mapped, simply omit the step determining the nature of the terrain.

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

First, your hero moves into a new hex. If they remain where they are to rest and recuperate, they may heal as normal but will consume supplies. They need not check for encounters or events unless they search the area for Features.

Once in a new hex, roll on the table to determine its general terrain type. Optionally, pick a type that seems reasonable for the climate.

Once the terrain is set, check for encounters and events.

After events and encounters have played out, and assuming the hero isn't otherwise occupied, check for interesting Features.

Finally, subtract supplies. It takes about three pounds of supplies a day to feed a single hero, while most pack animals can graze. A gallon of water weighs eight pounds and suffices for one day.

MOVING INTO A NEW HEX

Exploration requires a far more leisurely pace than simple travel. A hero requires a full day in a hex to explore and map it properly once they have moved into it. If they are simply crossing the land as quickly as possible, they may move at their normal movement rate, but have only a 1 in 6 chance of being allowed to make a check to find any notable Features in the hex.

DETERMINING ITS TERRAIN TYPE

Roll 1d8. Starting from the hex immediately above the one the hero has just entered, count clockwise around the hex a number of steps equal to the die roll. Assign the new hex the same terrain type found in that space. If the rolled hex is unexplored or the die roll is greater than 6, roll on the Terrain Type table to randomly determine it.

CHECK FOR ENCOUNTERS AND EVENTS

Roll 1d6. If the result is a 1, your hero has run into an Encounter and should roll it on the relevant tables in the Bestiary chapter.

Roll 1d8. If the result is equal or less than the event threshold, you run into an Event. The event threshold starts at 1, and each time you roll over it, it increases by one. Once an Event occurs, the threshold resets to 1. Some Events call for checks, and if not specified otherwise, the check difficulty is 9 plus half the adventure's Threat, rounded down, while saving throw difficulties add the full Threat.

CHECK FOR FEATURES

Roll 1d8. If the result is equal or less than the feature threshold, you discover a Feature. The feature threshold starts at 1, and each time you roll over it, it increases by one. Once you find a Feature, the threshold resets to 1.

ADJUST SUPPLIES

Subtract a day's supplies from your available stocks. A character who has not eaten in a day suffers a -1 penalty to all checks and a -2 penalty to hit rolls. One who has braved the wilderness for a week without food is too weak to do more than travel at half their usual movement rate, and those who go two weeks without food cannot even do that. Four weeks without food will usually kill a wayfarer.

You may choose to spend a day hunting and gathering. Roll an appropriate check, usually Wisdom-based, against a difficulty ranging from 8 for typical jungles, forests, or coasts to 9 for hills and other uninviting lands and 10 for deserts and other hostile areas. On a success, 1d4 days worth of rations for one person are discovered. An Encounter check must be rolled for each day's hunt. Each day hunting in the same hex increases the difficulty by 1, with the overhunting penalty for a hex receding by one point for every day it is left fallow.

RESOLVING ENCOUNTERS

Roll on the Encounter tables in the Bestiary section to find out the nature of the entities encountered.

If the creatures are intelligent, roll on the Encounter Twists tables to determine the general motivation of the group, using the table that seems most likely for the type of encounter. Beasts are usually hungry and inclined to attack. With a positive interaction and a good Reaction, other creatures might be willing to trade, to tell the hero of the terrain and features of a nearby hex, or give the location of their home community. In the latter case, roll 1d6 and count hexes clockwise to get a direction. If the terrain in that direction is unexplored, roll 1d6 to find the distance in hexes to their community. If the terrain is explored but no plausible home base for the encounter is in that direction, work clockwise until a suitable direction is found.

Most wilderness encounters begin at a range of 2d6 x 50 feet in the day and 2d6 x 10 feet at night. If the time of the encounter is not obvious, roll 1d6; on a result of 1-4 it happens in the day time and on a 5-6 it happens at night. Roll opposed Wisdom checks to see which party notices the other first. Most wild animals and predatory wilderness-dwellers can apply their trait bonus to this check. If one side beats the other by 4 or more points, they notice the other far enough in advance to determine the range at which the encounter will occur- which may be an up-close melee ambush or it may result in a judicious decision to avoid engaging at all.

If a side wishes to flee the engagement, they grant their opponents a full round of actions before making a Constitution check to outdistance pursuit. If they and their pursuer move at different rates of speed, the faster of the two can roll twice and take the better result. On a failed check, the fleeing creature is caught or trapped and must stand and fight it out. If all attempts at flight fail the hero may Defy Death to escape an otherwise inevitable doom. When on an exploratory expedition, Defy Death dice don't reset until after the hero returns to civilization.

Most random encounters will not result in meaningful amounts of plunder. After each encounter, roll 1d8 for intelligent enemies and 1d12 for beasts. If a 1 is rolled, the creatures have some valuable possessions or the beast's nest contains something precious from a former victim. Roll on the appropriate entry in the Treasures chapter.

WILDERNESS TERRAIN AND FEATURES

Wilderness features might be a ruin, a natural formation, an abandoned structure, or an active settlement. Some rolls will lead to obvious conclusions about a place's form and function, but the details table below can be used to flesh out a site of interest with more local color. It's assumed that full-fledged cities and market towns are unlikely to be discovered in the wilderness, but small enclaves of humanity- or other creatures- might be located. Such places can produce a quick Urban Adventure interlude if the hero becomes involved in their affairs.

TERRAIN TYPES

D10	TROPICAL	TEMPERATE	COLD	DRY
1	Jungle	Plains	Plains	Plains
2	Jungle hills	Plains	Tundra	Desert
3	Swamp	Swamp	Cold marsh	Desert
4	Heavy forest	Light forest	Light taiga	Scrub
5	Plains	Heavy forest	Heavy taiga	Light forest
6	Forest hills	Forest hills	Taiga hills	Hills
7	Hills	Hills	Scrub hills	Scrub hills
8	Mountains	Mountains	Mountains	Mountains
9	The terrain is the same as the largest contiguous terrain type near this hex. If inapplicable, reroll on 1d8.			
10				

TYPES OF FEATURES

D8	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8
D10	RUIN	NATURAL	STRUCTURE	SETTLEMENT
1	City	Box canyon	Bridge	Ethnic enclave
2	Estate	Cave	Cemetery	Farm village
3	Fortress	Crevasse	Estate	Heretic refuge
4	Hideout	Lake	Mine	Hunting camp
5	Monastery	Minerals	Monument	Mining camp
6	Temple	Natural fort	Plantation	Ruin dwellers
7	Town	River ford	Road inn	Shrine hamlet
8	Village	Spring	Trade post	Slave hideout
9	Roll on the Dungeon Types table in the next section. Such a location is discovered in this hex.			
10				

FEATURE DETAILS

D12	FEATURE BUILDER	REASON TO BUILD	GREAT PAST EVENT	CURRENT STATE	CONTENTS?
1	Ancient Humans	Common dwelling	Massacre of locals	Broken and ruined	A dungeon trap
2	Cultists	Cultural or artistic	Landslide	Choked by vegetation	Corpses of inhabitants
3	Cultural Purists	Forge or crafting	Earthquake	Partially buried	Empty for ages
4	Dwarves	Meeting place	Plague	Partially destroyed	Encounter + Trove H2
5	Elves	Occult purpose	Outside conquest	Rebuilt elsewhere	Encounter + Trove H5
6	Exiles	Prison	Decadent collapse	Rebuilt by someone	Filthy animal leavings
7	Lizardfolk	Ruler's dwelling	Hideous rites	Riddled with burrows	Roll 2 Encounters
8	Modern Humans	School	Locals died out	Scorched by fire	Roll an Encounter
9	Prehuman Race	Show of wealth	Mysterious vanishing	Subsurface collapse	Signs of recent use
10	Rebels	Storehouse	Monsters overran it	Surface is in ruins	Trove type C1
11	Refugees	Stronghold	Civil strife destroyed it	Surprisingly well-kept	Trove type C1
12	Shou	Worship site	Locals fled something	Maintained, if long ago	Trove type C4

D10	WALLS	TOWERS	WALL ADORNMENTS	OTHER FEATURES	FAVORED COLORS
1	Clay bricks	Extremely slender	Elaborate paintings	Bridges twixt buildings	Bright jewel hues
2	Dressed stones	Interconnected	Featureless surface	Concealed entrances	Cold blue colors
3	Earth-cored stone	Inverted delvings	Geometric carvings	Hearths and fire pots	Delicate pastels
4	Earthen berms	Pagoda-style	Hideous gargoyles	Interconnected cellars	Greens and floral shade
5	Glass or stranger	Round-walled	Numerous lamps	Much flowing water	Hot red hues
6	Monolithic slabs	Skewed and tilted	Numerous windows	No ground windows	Monochromes
7	Mortared stones	Square	Statue niches	Frail partitions	Muted earth-tones
8	Only ceremonial	Strange substance	Tapestries or hangings	Planters and greenery	Only natural hues
9	Rough stones	Twisted in a helix	Vast bas-reliefs	Roofless rooms	Shades of a single color
10	Wooden palisades	Gigantic monoliths	Windowless	Thick rugs or carpets	Vivid unnatural neons

WILDERNESS EVENTS

Events in the wilderness can make a long journey dangerous for even the boldest hero. Event rolls are meant mainly for exploratory expeditions rather than relatively mundane journeys between places. If an Event occurs, roll 1d6 and use a Weather event if odd, and a Terrain event if even. Heroes may use their magic or skills to evade or negate the setback, if applicable. The usual difficulty of a skill check or saving throw is 9 plus half the Threat of the adventure, rounded down, as venturing into more hazardous lands is apt to produce greater perils for a hero.

WEATHER EVENTS

D12	WET SEASON	DRY SEASON	COLD SEASON
1	2d6 days food has rotted	1d6 days food has spoiled	Avalanche; take Td6 damage, lose mount
2	Blinding rain; can't move today	A mount or pack beast has died	Avoid thin ice; next move must be back
3	Flooded way; lose a mount or pack beast	An Encounter needs water badly	Fall through ice; take Td6 damage
4	Foot fungus; no move for 1d4 days	Escape disaster narrowly; no effect	Meet an Encounter seeking food
5	Get lost; next move is random direction	Get lost; next movement is random	Mount or pack beast dies of cold
6	Impassable mud; no move for 1d4 days	Heat exhaustion; can't move 1d4 days	No firewood; forage or suffer Td6 cold
7	Lose 1d6 days food to spoilage	Meet an Encounter of a hungry beast	Non-magic item of gear breaks in use
8	Meet an Encounter stranded in the mud	Out of water; forage or suffer thirst	Slip on ice; lose one non-magic item
9	Mudslide; lose important non-magic item	Rest 1d4 days or lose a mount	Slow going; no movement today
10	Raging torrent- must move back next turn	Storm-blown fall does Td6 damage	Snow ambush by an Encounter
11	Tree falls on you; take Td6 damage	Turned around; next move is back	Snow blind; can't see for one day
12	Vermin infestation; lose 1d8 days of food	Vermin eat 1d6 days food	Snowstorm; can't move 1d4 days

TERRAIN EVENTS

D12	DESERTS/ARID	FOREST/JUNGLE	PLAINS
1	All water lost; forage at -2 or suffer thirst	Ambush by an Encounter in the trees	A friendly Encounter in a hunting camp
2	Desert ambush by an Encounter	Dangerous beast; Encounter if you move	A non-magic piece of gear breaks in use
3	Feverish; can't move for 1d4 days	Deadfall falls for Td6 damage to you	Ambush from a hunting Encounter
4	Got lost; next 1d4 moves are random	Feverish; can't move for 1d4 days	Grass fire; take Td6 damage as you flee
5	Leaks in the casks; lose half your water	Got lost; next move is random	Hidden pit; lose one mount or pack beast
6	Mirage leads astray; next move is random	Mount / pack beast eats toxic root, dies	Narrowly avoid danger; no effect
7	Piece of non-magic gear ruined by sand	Non-magic gear item breaks or rots away	No water; forage or suffer from thirst
8	Sand makes 1d4 days food inedible	Poisonous vermin bite; Td4 damage	Sunstruck; can't move for 1d4 days
9	Sandslide buries a mount or pack beast	Thick foliage; can't move today	Toxic vermin bite; can't move today
10	Sandstorm; Td6 damage and can't move	Toxic pollen; can't move for 1d4 days	Trap in the grass does Td6 damage
11	Sun-blind; can't move today	Trackless waste; next 1d4 moves random	Turned around; next move is back
12	Torrid heat does Td4 damage	Vermin eat 1d4 days of food	Vermin spoil 1d6 days of food
	HILLS/MOUNTAINS	SEAS/LAKES	SWAMP
1	Rockslide; take Td6 damage	Strong currents; next move is random	2d6 days food lost to fungus and rot
2	Ambush from mountain Encounter	Water fouled; lose half of water supplies	An Encounter springs from the mud
3	Mount or pack animal falls to its death	Rats: 5% of cargo is ruined by vermin	Bad water; save or helpless for 1d4 days
4	Non-magic gear item breaks during use	Borers do Td6 damage dice to ship hull	Bogs swallow a mount or pack animal
5	No water; forage at -1 or suffer thirst	An Encounter rises from the depths	Floating hummock; next move is random
6	Blind canyon; next move must be back	Becalmed; no sail move for 1d6 days	Lost in the swamp; next move is random
7	Lost; next 1d4 moves are random	Rocks; check or take Td6 hull damage	Mold ruins 1d6 days food
8	Twisted ankle; can't move today	Bad omen; any crew suffer -1 Morale	Rot claims a non-magic gear item
9	Slip and fall for Td8 damage	Troublemaker; pacify or suffer -2 Morale	Rotten tree falls on you for Td6 damage
10	Exposed to weather; take Td4 damage	Cracked mast; repairs take 1d4 days	Swamp fever; save or stuck for 1d6 days
11	An Encounter traps you in a canyon	An Encounter with pirates or the like	Toxic mold; save or sick for 1d4 days
12	A winding tunnel leads to a Dungeon	A savage storm inflicts Td6 hull damage	Twisting paths; lost for 1d4 days

DUNGEON ADVENTURES

Dungeon adventures revolve around the exploration or cleansing of some perilous ruin or dangerous lair. As with the other types of adventures, you should always be ready to use the tables and oracles of the other sections to help answer questions and resolve details about the dungeon.

ENTERING A DUNGEON

When your hero is about to dare some unknown pit, you first roll a few specifics about the place. First, roll for its general dungeon type, assuming that's not already a given. Very large dungeons may be composed of more than one type, with locations split between them.

Next, roll for its size in rooms, indicating how many discrete places of interest are in the dungeon.

Next, roll for its inhabitants. Usually one roll will reveal its main occupants, but you might roll two or even three times for larger lairs, particularly those divided into different parts or regions.

Finally, roll for its Threat adjustment, as some lairs are more perilous than others. The base Threat of a dungeon is usually equal to the hero's level unless you've purposefully dared some more dangerous den of evil.

THE DUNGEON TURN

Each turn in the dungeon usually takes about ten minutes, given the careful pace of most exploration. Each turn, your hero may enter a new, unexplored room, retrace their path by up to two rooms, or do anything else that takes roughly ten minutes. First aid after a battle or trap, in particular, usually takes a full turn to complete.

When entering a new room, the hero rolls first to determine its general type. Next, roll on the table to determine its contents. If a creature is present, roll on the encounter table, filling in the results with the type of entities appropriate to the lair's inhabitants. If a treasure is to be found, roll on the treasure table. Such plunder may be obvious, or it might be hidden somewhere in the room and require a check to discover, with such checks being made once per turn. Lastly, a trap or natural hazard might be present in the room, with the details provided by the hazard table. Heroes must save versus the hazard's effects the first time they enter the room, but afterwards are assumed to know enough to avoid or disable it.

Most inhabitants of a dungeon are likely to be unfriendly and inclined to violence, but this is not a given. The Reaction table on page 117 can be used to sort out first meetings, as can the oracles when more detail is needed about their responses or desires. Likewise, the tables can be used to give more detail to the furnishings and purposes of a room, with the yes-or-no oracle giving answers to direct questions

Once a hero has navigated the perils of a particular room, you should determine the general direction of the next area of interest, until you finally generate as many rooms as the dungeon's size indicates. Roll 1d10. On a result of 1 to 8, the next room is in that direction, with 1 being read as northwest, 2 as north, 3 as northeast, 4 as east, and so forth. On a result of 9 or 10, the next direction is whatever would make for the most compact dungeon. If there is already an explored room in the direction you've rolled, draw in a passage to it and roll again, or add a stairway up or down.

Lastly, at the end of a turn you should check for wandering inhabitants. For active dungeons with vigorous or wary inhabitants, this check is made every turn. For quieter, more desolate places this check might be made every three or even every six turns. To make the check, roll 1d6; on a 1, a group of inhabitants come across the hero. Roll on the Encounter Found table to find out just who they might be. Wandering enemies almost never have meaningful treasure.

For monster statistics, pull appropriate ones from the Bestiary chapter, or else use the quick stats offered in this or the urban section.

DUNGEONS WITH GOALS

Some places are the known lairs of a villain or sinister power. Others hold some important prisoner, precious relic, or other macguffin the hero seeks. When creating such a dungeon, the deeper the hero penetrates into its depths, the more likely it is that they'll encounter the ruin's master or the object they seek

Whenever entering an unexplored room in the dungeon, roll 1d20. On a 20, the villain or macguffin is present along with the rest of the room's contents. If you've explored at least half the rooms in the dungeon, add a cumulative +1 to your roll for each room you search after the halfway point. If you reach the last room in the dungeon without finding the villain or macguffin, roll the 1d20 again; on a 1-10, they are not in the dungeon for some reason and you should consult the oracles for answers. On an 11-20, they are found in the final room of the dungeon.

DUNGEONS WITH ALARMS

Some "dungeons" are actually urban dwellings or other buildings in civilized lands, where violent intruders risk the fury of the local guard or protective neighbors. Other dungeons are occupied by such a vast number of foes that overt confrontation would be suicidal. Such situations are simulated with an alarm.

If hostile inhabitants are encountered the hero must roll 1d10 after every noisy combat round, adding the total number of rounds that the fight has lasted. On a result of 8 or more, the alarm has been raised. The alarm will also be raised if the hero retreats from combat or leaves hostile inhabitants alive and unbound behind them.

While the alarm is raised the hero will encounter guards equivalent to a wandering inhabitants result every turn unless they succeed on a check to stealthily avoid them. This check difficulty increases by 1 every turn. The guards will keep coming until the hero escapes, perishes under hordes, or murders every plausible inhabitant.

HEROIC RETREAT

A hero who finds it necessary to evade dungeon inhabitants can attempt to retreat. Usually, this offers the foes a free round of attacks before the hero makes an opposed check against them, one usually based on stealth or nimbleness if no better means of withdrawal is available. If successful, the hero ends up in a randomly-chosen adjacent room- one which might be unexplored. If unsuccessful, roll 1d6; on a 1-3 the hero remains locked in combat with the foes in that room, while on 4-6 the enemy chases them into an adjacent room. Evaded enemies may or may not stick to their post. If not, they'll probably make up the next wandering inhabitants encounter.

DUNGEON TYPES, SIZES, AND INHABITANTS

DUNGEON TYPES AND SIZES

1d10	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
1d12	CAVERN	HABITATION	FORTRESS	TEMPLE	ACADEMY	SIZE
1	Abandoned mine	Bandit camp	Abandoned army camp	Alien place of worship	Cabal of infernalists	1d6 locations
2	Bandit hideout	Crumbling villa	Brigand stronghold	Cursed temple	Demon-ruled school	2d6 locations
3	Beast lair	Dwarven clanhold	Broken keep	Forgotten fane	Fortified academy	3d6 locations
4	Cave village	Escaped slave camp	Crumbling watchtower	Fortified abbey	Foul breeding pit	1d10+10 locations
5	Geomantic nexus	Exile hamlet	Decaying toll keep	Heretic hideout	Inhuman wizard lair	1d10+5 locations
6	Hermit's haven	Farming village	Defensible tower	Holy natural feature	Lost library	Two parts of 3d6 locations
7	Massacre site	Hunter's camp	Fortified manor	Isolated monastery	Mad wizard's lab	1d20 locations
8	Prehistoric dwelling	Nonhuman settlement	Natural fortress	Pilgrimage temple	Necromancer cell	2d12 locations
9	Prehuman shrine	Pillaged village	Prehuman fort	Prehuman shrine	Plagued research lab	1d6 parts each of 1d20 places
10	Refugee shelter	Prehuman habitation	Remnant dungeon	Ruined nunnery	Prison for mages	1d12+10 locations
11	Shou refuge	Ruined manor	Ruined caravanserai	Sacred tomb	Ruined mage school	2d20 locations
12	Unquiet grave	Sacked town	Shattered outpost	Sectarian stronghold	Wizard tower	1d100 locations

COMMON DUNGEON INHABITANTS

1d20	BASIC TYPE	MINION	ELITE	BOSS	MAGE	CIVILIAN
1	Bandits	Brigand ruffian	Bandit scout	Brutal chieftain	Renegade mage	Hostage/camp follower
2	Deserters	Spearman	Thuggish sergeant	Deserter officer	Craven mage	Camp follower/slave
3	Dwarf Repenters	Repenter warrior	Scarred zealot	High priest	Torturer-priest	Dwarf victim/slave
4	Massacre	Hungry ghost	Ghoul	Jiangshi master	Ghoul mage	Confused ghost
5	Shou	Shou spearman	Grizzled warrior	Shou chieftain	Witch-priestess	Woman/child/slave
6	Elf zealots	Elven swordsman	Creed fanatic	Mage-swordsman	Philosopher-mage	Mates/prisoners/pupils
7	Lizardfolk	Lizardman	Hunting leader	Tribal chief	Scaled shaman	Mates/edible prisoners
8	Ogres	Slave wretch	Ogre warrior	Ogre chieftain	Ogre sorcerer	Victims/slave laborers
9	Wild beasts	Wolves	Dire wolf	Wolf tinh	Tainted wolf	Pups or whelps
10	Tidespawn	Creeper	Wormwalker	White Chanter	Red Apostle	Untransformed victim
11	Tide Cult	Deluded wretch	Twisted cultist	Cult priest	Mad sorcerer	Sacrificial victim
12	Centipede Women	Charmed slave	Centipede woman	Elder poisoner	Many-legged mage	Enthralled slaves/hosts
13	Necromancers	Skeleton	Ghoul slaves	Necromancer	Necromancer pupil	Components-to-be
14	Infernalists	Hell cultist	Red Jade Templar	Hell Cult Priest	Underpriests	Sacrifices and slaves
15	Rebels	Peasant warrior	Renegade soldier	Wild demagogue	Idealistic mage	Spouses/children/believers
16	Heretics	Armed acolyte	Temple champion	Heresiarch	Sorcerer-priest	Believer/Slave/Prisoner
17	Looters	Novice adventurer	Skilled freebooter	Expedition leader	Voracious mage	Porter/servant
18	Supremacists	Bitter purist	Hardened warrior	Ethnarch	Traditional mage	Family member
19	Abominations	Crawling vermin	Misshapen hulk	Living weapon	Beast-warper	Tenders/Lab victims
20	Degenerates	Savage cannibal	Huge man-eater	Cannibal chief	Unholy sorcerer	Prisoners/Meals-to-be

2d6

DUNGEON THREAT ADJUSTMENT

- 2** Roll 1d4 twice, subtracting the second die from the first. Add that to the PC's level to find the Threat, down to a minimum of 1.
- 3** Talk of its dangers is overblown; the Threat is equal to the PC's level minus 1, to a minimum of 1.
- 4** A dangerous power lurks within. The Threat is equal to the PC's level, but after half the rooms are explored, it jumps by 1d4.
- 5** They'll send for help. Your first expedition is at a Threat equal to the PC's level. Any further expeditions are at Threat + 1d4.
- 6-10** The danger is roughly as anticipated. The Threat is equal to the PC's level.
- 11-12** It's much worse than you expected in there; the threat is equal to the PC's level plus 1d4+2

DUNGEON PLACES, LOOT, AND DANGERS

LOCATIONS WITHIN A DUNGEON

d20	CAVERNS	HABITATIONS	FORTRESSES	TEMPLES	ACADEMIES
1	Caved-in cavern	Bathing room	Archery range	Acolyte's cells	Laboratory
2	Circular chamber	Cellar	Armory	Altar hall	Occult library
3	Crumbling dry cave	Courtyard	Barracks	Bathing room	Apprentice rooms
4	Dead end	Dining room	Cemetery	Cemetery	Master bedroom
5	Domed cavern	Garden	Cistern	Garden	Summoning room
6	Flowing water	Great hall	Commissary	Guardpost	Divination room
7	Narrow crevasse	Kennel or stable	Family quarters	Kitchen	Storeroom
8	Natural bridge	Kitchen	Gatehouse	Library	Kitchen
9	Pit ledge	Library	Guardpost	Meditation room	Study hall
10	Sloping gallery	Master bedroom	Kitchen	Minor shrine	Dining hall
11	Spiral tunnel	Pantry	Map and file room	Pilgrim quarters	Vault
12	Stalactite maze	Salon	Mess hall	Prayer hall	Secure cell
13	Strata pocket	Scullery	Officer's quarters	Priest's quarters	Servant's chambers
14	Stream bank	Servant's rooms	Prison cell	Relic chamber	Crafter's workroom
15	Tunnel intersection	Shrine	Sickroom	Ritual chamber	Academy archives
16	Twisted tunnel	Solar	Smithy	Sickroom	Memorial hall
17	Underground pool	Stairwell	Stables	Storeroom	Monument
18	Vertical shaft	Storeroom	Storeroom	Vault	Courtyard garden
19	Water-smoothed cave	Study	Training hall	Vestry	Stables
20	Wide gallery	Vault	Vault	Workroom	Lecture hall

LOCATION CONTENTS

1d10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
ENCOUNTER?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y	Y
If an encounter is present, add +3 to the treasure roll.										
TREASURE?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	H	H	Y
"H" is hidden. If treasure but no encounter, add +3 to hazard roll.										
HAZARD?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y
If no encounter, treasure, or hazard, add +1 to the Feature roll.										
FEATURE?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y

3d6 TREASURE FOUND

3	It only looks like a treasure, but is actually a Hazard. Roll to determine its type.
4-5	Trove type M1 worth of coins, furnishings, or items
6-8	No encounter treasure, but M2 worth of room contents.
9-12	Standard treasure trove for whatever encounter is present. If no encounter, trove M1 in room contents.
13-15	One tenth of the C-type trove appropriate to the place.
16-17	One quarter of the C-type trove that fits the dungeon type. If no encounter present, check for one again.
18	A full C-type trove is present appropriate to the type of dungeon. It will require 1d6 turns to fully catalogue and collect it from its repository, risking wandering foes.

3d6 ENCOUNTER FOUND

3	Minion or Civilian actually willing to help the hero.
4-5	Unusual foe; roll on a Bestiary chapter encounter table.
6-8	1d4+T hit dice worth of foes numbering several Minions or Civilians and possibly an Elite.
9-12	2d4+T hit dice worth of Minions and Elites.
13-15	1d6 + T hit dice worth of Minions and Elites, with a 50% chance of T hit dice worth of guard beasts or allies.
16-17	2d4 hit dice of Minions plus 2 * T hit dice worth of Elites, Mages, or Boss enemies.
18	A Boss with T+3 hit dice, with a 50% chance of a guard of 3d6 hit dice worth of Minions, Elites, and Mages.
When necessary, roll for novel foes on the Bestiary encounter tables on p. 78, or choose an enemy that fits the circumstances.	

1d8 HAZARD FOUND

1	Entry trap. As you enter, save or take Td4 damage.
2	Environmental danger. Save or take Td4 damage.
3	Decrepit structure. Save or Td6 damage and leave room.
4	Triggered danger. If Encounter there, save or Td6 dmg.
5	Dangerous object. Save or take Td6 damage.
6	Trapped container. If Treasure, save or take Td6 damage.
7	Trapped feature. If Feature, save or take Td6 damage.
8	Lethal trap or environmental quality. Save or perish.

DUNGEON FEATURES

Use these tables to formulate interesting features for dungeon rooms. Roll once on the Nature table to find out the basic type of feature and once more on the quality or motivation table as needed. You can use the Oracle tables or the specific features table for more detail as desired.

1d8	NATURE OF THE FEATURE
1	A noncombatant inhabitant of the dungeon.
2	An architectural feature of the original structure.
3	An unusual piece of movable furnishing.
4	A prisoner or victim of the dungeon inhabitants.
5	A dangerous intruder or beast who has entered the site.
6	An object stolen by the dungeon inhabitants.
7	A piece of artwork; even odds of original or stolen
8	An item of information, whether book, note, or talk

1d20	INANIMATE FEATURE QUALITY
1	Forces a reconsideration of the dungeon's real nature
2	Forewarns. Free surprise on next Boss encounter
3	Endangers investigator. Roll for it as a Hazard
4	Load-bearing. Destroy it and 1d6 locations collapse
5	Triggers a spell on investigator. Roll spell randomly
6	Poisonous to investigators. Save or perish
7	Map clue. Find treasure automatically in next room
8	Hiding place. A fitting Minion or beast lairs in it
9	Blocks an exit. Destroying it takes 1d4 turns of noise
10	Simply beautiful to behold. Valuable if portable
11	Worth Td6 x 100 gp. 50% chance it's really worthless
12	Contains a terrible truth about an important NPC
13	Hindering. Snares the PC here for 1d4 turns
14	Manipulate to open a secret door; check to open
15	Atrociously ugly or disturbing to look upon
16	Religious in iconography or purpose
17	Worth Td6 x 100 gp, but will encumber you
18	Known to be wanted by a local noble
19	An object of pious devotion by the locals
20	Despoiled by or a relic of the locals' atrocities

1d10	CREATURE MOTIVATION
1	Get out of the dungeon alive.
2	Kill a Boss. Cumulative 10% chance/room of locating.
3	Feed on the inhabitants or simply kill them.
4	Rescue another person within the site.
5	Retrieve a stolen treasure- possibly taken by PC.
6	Scout the site for an outside power.
7	Sabotage a vital feature 1d4 locations away.
8	Reclaim a seeming trifle of actual great importance.
9	Negotiate with the leader of the dungeon.
10	Roll again, but they've been badly hurt in the process.

d4	d10	EXAMPLE SPECIFIC FEATURES
1	1	A once-glorious furnishing now scarred and rotten
1	2	A furnishing infested with noxious vermin
1	3	Fire pit with cinders of once-valuable furnishings
1	4	Corpse adorning a table; tortured or half-eaten
1	5	Furnishing cherished by dungeon inhabitants
1	6	Elaborate lighting apparatus, possibly still working
1	7	Furnishings made of parts of human prey
1	8	Furnishings from the original site's creators
1	9	Obscenely defaced furniture
1	10	Chest. Room gets additional Treasure check roll.
2	1	Fountain or flowing liquid source
2	2	Bath or large pool, perhaps enchanted
2	3	Check to find a secret door to a random new room
2	4	Water-weakened floor. Check to avoid it or Td4 dmg
2	5	Large bed of mold or plant life growing here
2	6	Roots or growth that block a path
2	7	Deep crevasse; route to a new underground place
2	8	Drains that have been made vermin burrows
2	9	Signs of recent attempts at repair and furnishing
2	10	Scorch marks of recent destruction
3	1	Elaborately-illustrated book
3	2	Scrolls of something relevant to nearest community
3	3	Incongruously beautiful artwork, original or stolen
3	4	Note revealing location of a treasure
3	5	Ragged journal speaking of what happens here
3	6	Ancient scroll; 10% chance of being magical
3	7	Unusually well-drawn erotica of local denizens
3	8	Note recording a dark secret of the denizens' leader
3	9	Book written by the site's original creators
3	10	Half-burnt note; check to use it to find a treasure
4	1	A cowering resident from the nearest community
4	2	A traitor from the nearest village
4	3	A hapless civilian being held for ransom or sacrifice
4	4	A crippled, youthful, or elderly site inhabitant
4	5	A dangerous pet of the inhabitants
4	6	The corpse of an outsider, freshly killed
4	7	A hideously tormented victim of the inhabitants
4	8	An inhabitant being held for later punishment
4	9	An outsider made a crippled slave by the denizens
4	10	An intruder seeking something among the locals

DUNGEON INHABITANT DETAILS

You can use any or all of these tables to elaborate on a dungeon encounter. Either roll or pick something appropriate for the occasion. If you want more specific answers about a group of inhabitants, roll for inspiration on the Oracle table, or ask useful yes-or-no questions about them.

d4	THEIR ALLEGIANCE
1	Willingly obedient to the ruling inhabitants of the place.
2	Grudgingly submissive to the location's rulers.
3	Neutrals who may or may not cooperate with the rulers.
4	A rebel or hostile group opposed to the location's rulers.

d6	STATISTICS FOR UNIQUE OR UNSTATED FOES
1	<i>Vermin</i> : HD 1, AC 7, Atk +1, Dmg 1d4, MV 30', ML 7
2	<i>Minion</i> : HD 1, AC 7, Atk +1, Dmg 1d6, MV 30', ML 8
3	<i>Beast</i> : HD T, AC 6, Atk +T, Dmg 1d6/1d6, MV 40, ML 8
4	<i>Elite</i> : HD T, AC 5, Atk +T, Dmg 1d10, MV 30, ML 10
5	<i>Mage</i> : HD T, other stats as Minion, casts 1d4+1 spells
6	<i>Boss</i> : HD T+3, Atk +T+3, Dmg 2d8, otherwise as Elite.

Unique creatures or novel foes have a 1 in 6 chance of 1d6-2 special abilities from the table to the right. You might choose to give such an ability to a more common enemy to make it more interesting.

d8	COMBAT STYLE QUIRKS OF A FOE
1	Hates to attack a prepared foe; vastly prefers ambushes.
2	Will seek to flee if injured by an enemy.
3	Blood-crazed; never checks morale against a wounded foe.
4	Slow-witted; always effectively surprised in combat.
5	Blindingly fast; even heroes must roll initiative.
6	Will use special abilities even if tactically unsound.
7	Prefers to lure foes into snares or dangerous terrain.
8	Always sends underlings or minions in before engaging

d10	THEIR FIRST ROUND OF ACTION IN A FIGHT
1	Bewildered confusion; they lose the first round's action.
2	All-out attack, charging in heedlessly
3	Maneuver to a better position or more cohesive group
4	Fall back to a more defensible location
5	Fight individually, neglecting to coordinate with others
6	Unleash special abilities of any are had; if not, charge
7	Half maneuver to encircle, the others attack directly
8	Activate trap or environmental hazard; if none, charge
9	Half leap to attack, while the others mill in confusion
10	Try to trap the hero in with them before attacking

d12	IF FACING DISASTER, THEY...
1	Flee blindly, offering the hero a free attack as they turn
2	Try to bribe the hero with the location of a Treasure
3	Try to bribe the hero with the secret of the next Trap
4	Try to sound an alarm to bring an Encounter to help
5	Turn on each other as they settle scores in the chaos
6	Fall back in a disciplined way, seeking defensible ground
7	Offer 100 x T gp in treasure to buy their lives
8	Offer slavish obedience for being spared- possibly sincere
9	Offer prisoners or slaves as payment for being spared
10	Let a few sacrifice as rear guard while the others flee
11	Wildly hurl themselves into doomed battle
12	Think the hero's a better ruler than the one they have now

d20	SAMPLE MONSTROUS SPECIAL ABILITIES
1	Hits hard. +1 step to its damage die size.
2	Multiple attacks. +1 attack/round for each 4 HD, round up
3	Poisoned weapons or bite. Save or die on first hit of fight.
4	Has a spell-like special ability it can use once per fight.
5	Dies hard. First time it hits 0 hit dice, it regains 1.
6	Magic resistant. Can reroll failed saves versus magic.
7	Can masquerade as a human or harmless thing.
8	Can turn invisible or hide amazingly well.
9	Spreads disease. If touches or hits, save or die in 3d6 days.
10	Undead. Morale 12 and immune to living concerns.
11	Unholy. Can use one spell gifted it by its infernal masters.
12	Ruinous. Once a fight, save or ruin PC's weapon or armor
13	Lingering hurt. Its hits do 1d6 damage next round, too.
14	Armored. Its AC is 2 points better than usual.
15	Impervious. The creature applies a -2 penalty to Fray dice
16	Frenzied. Gains bonus to hit equal to HD it has lost.
17	Gilded. Crusted with 100 x T gp worth of precious matter.
18	Vanishing. Can teleport 1/round to twice normal move.
19	Warded. Immune to non-magical weapons, but not Fray.
20	Enslaving. As action, can force save or mental subjection.

AN EXAMPLE OF SOLO PLAY

An unlucky conjunction of complications finds Richard and Harold bowing out of the usual Saturday night game, so Thomas decides to run a solo adventure for a new PC. A few quick rolls conjure up Ragnar Wu, piratical scourge of the bloody seas. Ragnar's a first-level fighter with the traits of "Pirate: 3", "Friend to a Tong: 1" and "Adept Womanizer: 1". Tom decides to start Ragnar's adventuring career with an urban adventure set in the great port city of Xian. As his first adventure, Tom also decides that the Threat of the scenario is only 1.

Tom starts by rolling 1d8 for a basic adventure plot, getting 3; a Target has been kidnapped by an Antagonist and is in need of rescue. Tom reads the setup for the plot and decides to pick the Target as being most important to Ragnar. If Ragnar had more of a past, Tom might decide to pick an important NPC from his former adventures. Instead, he uses the tables on the "Actors, Relationships, and Reactions" page to roll Hakim Aziz, a dissipated Eshkanti physician who happens to be Ragnar's own grandfather. Even so bloodthirsty a raider as Ragnar Wu is not so unfilial as to allow his own grandfather to vanish without a trace!

At this point, Tom hasn't established any details about Hakim's disappearance. He doesn't know who kidnapped him, or why, or how. While he could set more details at this stage if he wished, it's more fun for him to explore these facts in play. Tom sets the Victory point totals for Ragnar and his unknown antagonist at 0 and decides to start out with an Investigation scene, one revolving around Ragnar's discovery that his grandfather has vanished.

Tom rolls on the "Investigation Scenes" table and gets a 6; "Ambush a dangerous Actor who holds a Clue. Face a Fight instead of a check." Where does this happen? Tom decides that Ragnar has gone to meet his grandfather at a shady location- and a roll on the Urban Locations table reveals that it's a decrepit shrine. Yet when he arrives there, he finds the moldering altar overturned in a struggle, and a foe seeking to silence any potential witnesses!

Tom rolls 1d8 on the Fight Difficulty table and finds that three Rabble-type enemies are there waiting for him. What kind of Rabble are they? Another roll on the Potential Foes table shows that they are... treacherous harlots? These painted Jezebels have had something to do with the disappearance of his grandfather Hakim! Or did they? Tom decides to consult the "Yes/No Oracle", deciding that the harlots probably did have something to do with it. A roll of 1d20 results in 10, which the table confirms as "Yes, But".

What part of Ragnar's assumption is wrong? Tom could roll on the complications table, but decides to roll on the Oracle table below, getting a result of "Vengeance". A moment's consideration makes it plain that while these girls helped to snare Hakim, they were perhaps more than slightly justified in their actions. They leap upon Hakim's grandson with their knives and painted nails, but the burly reaver buffets them into retreat, loath as he is to shed a woman's blood.

One of the defeated wantons groans curses upon Hakim and all his spawn, swearing that the old physician sold them all a false remedy for their poxes. Filial as Ragnar may be, he admits that such a dodge is exactly the sort of thing the old reprobate would do. But who is it that commissioned them for their treacherous-if-understandable lure?

Tom decides that the clue that Ragnar gets will be related to a place worth investigating, so he rolls another random slum location and finds it a Tong hall. The vengeful harlots swear to tell Ragnar nothing, warning him that they are under the protection of the Seven Pillars Tong and that his impudence will surely be upbraided by the hatchetmen of that fell brotherhood. Ragnar shrugs away their imprecations, confident that his friendship with the tong is enough for them to overlook this little dispute- and that it may also be enough to get information on recent associates of the three.

With the first scene done, Ragnar collects 1 victory point for a successful scene, as he overcame the Fight. He also collects a Clue which he can use to invoke an Action scene. Lastly, he rolls 1d10 to see if his opponent gains a Victory point as well; a 3 is rolled, and as it is not equal or less than the total number of Investigation and Action scenes so far, his antagonist gains nothing.

Ragnar decides to use the Clue immediately, following up what he learned from the harlots in an Action scene. He rolls on the Action Scene table and gets a 1- "Convince an Actor ally of the foe to betray them; otherwise face a Fight." Obviously, as Ragnar sits down to a cup of rice beer with Uncle Heinrich, the Tong veteran, he finds that the jovial old thug had rather more to do with Hakim's disappearance than the pirate might like. The hairs prickle on Ragnar's nape as he realizes that Heinrich had a direct hand in what happened. Can he convince the aging bruiser to turn on his employer?

Tom decides that a healthy purse of gold would help convince Heinrich to change loyalties, but Ragnar's money pouch is sadly empty. Nor does Heinrich particularly owe Ragnar any favors from a prior adventure. Instead, Tom falls back on a plain skill check, one involving Ragnar's +1 Charisma modifier and 1 point "Friend to a Tong" trait. The difficulty of the check is 9 plus half the adventure's Threat, rounded down- so 9, in this case. Tom rolls a 7 on the dice, which with his +2 bonus is just barely enough to convince the scarred hatchetman that he wasn't really being paid enough to buy complete discretion. Tom decides that Heinrich gives up the identity of the kidnapper, but doesn't know why he snatched Hakim, or where the old doctor is being kept. A quick roll on the Actors table reveals that the kidnapper is a foreign diplomat, Captain Theodoric from the Hohnberg Pact, and that Heinrich was hired to ensure that Hakim ended up in the hands of his henchmen.

With that scene closed, Tom adds 2 Victory points to Ragnar's total, as a consequence of a successful Action scene. He then rolls 1d10 to see if the antagonist advances, and rolls a 1; as that's less or equal than the total of Investigation and Action scenes so far, Theodoric gains 1 victory point on his side.

The solo game then continues in this vein, with Thomas choosing scenes, using the tables to answer specific questions he might have about them, and eventually accumulating 10 Victory points. Once he has that many, he can move instantly to an Action scene to confront Theodoric and rescue his unworthy grandsire from some disaster doubtless of the old rakehell's own making. Should he fail in the scene, Theodoric has thwarted him, and he must scramble to find another Clue and another Action scene to make a second attempt at victory before the diplomat gains 10 Victory points and succeeds in whatever foul plot he had planned.

INDEX

A

Advancement 22
 Multiclassed Characters 23
Adventures 92–109
 Tags 96–109
Altgrimmr 52
Armor Class 11
Attributes 5

B

Bestiary 54–77

C

Character Creation 4–15
 Quick Character Generation 14
 Summary 11
Character Races 6
Checks 17
Classes 7
Cleric 8
Cleric Spells 30–34
Coinage 13
Combat 18
 Naval 21
Converting Existing Material 24
Curses 20

D

Damage 18
Death 20
Defying Death 19
Diseases 20
Dwarves 6, 10, 44, 63

E

Eirengarders 44
Elves 6, 10, 44, 63
Encumbrance 21
Equipment 12
Eshkanti 44

F

Falling 20
Fighter 8
Fray Die 18

G

Gadaal 45
GM 4

H

Halflings 6, 10, 45, 64
Healing 20
Hit Dice 18, 56
Hohnberg Pact 51
Humans 6, 10, 65

I

Imperials 45
Initiative 18

K

Kitaminato 49
Kueh 46

L

Languages 10
Laws 53

M

Magic 28–40
 Casting Spells 29
 Devising New Spells 29
 Learning Spells 28
 Preparing Spells 28
 Wizard's Spellbook 29
Magic Items 84–91
Magic-User 9
Magic-User Spells 35–40
Magocracy of Tien Lung 50
Mandarin of Xian 48
Morale 18

N

Nations of the Isles 47
Nordheim 52
NPC 4

P

PC 4
Peoples of the Isles 44
Poisons 20

R

Religions 53
Repenters 53

S

Saving Throws 17
Ships and Sea Combat 21
Shogunate of the North 49
Shou 6, 10, 46, 70–71
Shou Lands 52
Spell Preparation per Day 29

T

Thief 9, 10
Tien Lung 50
Traits 10
Travel 21
Treasure 80–91
 Trove Types 82
Turning Undead 20

U

Uncounted Islands, The 52

W

Westmark 52

X

Xian 48

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