Freebooters on the Frontier

HARDSCRABBLE ADVENTURE IN A FANTASTICAL WORLD

VOLUME I
Basic Rules

Survive against the odds

Freebooters on the Frontier is a game of fantasy adventure where the host (which we call the "Judge") narrates the story, and each player assume the role of a different character (or "freebooter") within the story. It's a game of make-believe, played out through conversation, with each player describing what their character does, and the Judge describing the world around them. If there's ever a question about what might happen—if it's not obvious within the logic of the story, or if the Judge has no clear idea—the players roll dice, and the results help determine where the story goes next.

The most important thing to know about *Freebooters on the Frontier* is that the main characters—the characters the players control—are not heroes. They might *become* heroes one day, but only after surviving and porving themselves in a harsh and unforgiving world. There's a good chance that any given character will die in the course of play, and everyone needs to understand that up front. The threat of "character death" makes their fictional lives more precious, and makes every failure and success more significant and exciting. That's part of the fun. Players just need to be prepared for the worst, and priortize smart decion-making. If you don't enjoy failing, you may want to steer clear of this game.

The second most important thing to know is that the characters, and much of the world where the story takes place, are generated randomly using die rolls. As a player, you should not come into the game with a particular vision for the sort of character you want to play. Every character starts as a blank slate, and nearly everything about them—from physical appearance to competency in their profession—gets filled in using die rolls. As a player, you'll get to make a few key decisions, but each character you make will be mostly random. Your job then becomes to play that character to the best of your ability, figuring out how their random qualities and physicals traits add up to a person, and how to sympathize with and enjoy playing that person for who they are. If you don't like your character, you won't enjoy playing them in the game, but the solution isn't to create a new character. The solution is to find a way to like them.

THIS IS A PLAYTEST DOCUMENT

As such it currently includes the essential rules, but not a lot of explanation about how they all work together. You will need at least a passing familiarity with "Powered by the Apocalypse" RPG—*Dungeon World* is the closest relative to *Freebooters*—to grasp how all of this stuff works in play.

LAY THE FOUNDATION

The first session of a *Freebooters* campaign consists of creating the setting collaboratively, rolling up characters. and embarking on your first adventure. Make sure you have the following on hand:

- Pencils
- Dice: plenty of d6 ond d12s, along with some d4s, d8s, and d10s
- Blank paper
- 1 copy of each playbook per player

Everyone should grab a pencil. Choose one person to take notes on one of the blank sheets of paper. Set another sheet in the middle of the table so everyone can reach it; this will be your map.

1 **Introduce the concept of the game.** Before you start the world creation process, make sure that everyone knows what they're getting into. Read the following introductory text, or—better yet—paraphrase it in your own words.

At the edge of civilized lands lies the wild frontier, a vast and perilous wilderness full of deadly monsters, ancient wonders, and—if the stories hold true—great wealth. You are a band of treasure hunters, misfits and outcasts considered unhinged by most folks because you seek to venture into that wilderness. They think you're crazy, but who wants a life of drudgery ordained by the ruling class? You're willing to risk everything for some of that legendary treasure, because with enough of it socked away, you'll be able to retire in comfort.

You're not heroes—not yet. You're hardscrabble adventurers. Just scraping by at the moment, but if you keep your tinderbox dry, your knife sharp, and your wits about you, there may be a manor house in your future. If you're not careful, though, your bones will join those of other foolhardy fortune-hunters who dared the wilds.

In other words, the tone of *Freebooters on the Frontier* is gritty and unforgiving, with character death a real possibility. Once everyone is on board with this basic premise, you're ready to lay the groundwork for the dangerous and wondrous world which your characters will call home.

2 **Determine the local climate.** Will your adventures begin in colder latitudes, under the scorching sun of equatorial deserts, or in some temperate zone between these extremes? Discuss the options listed in the **CLIMATE** table at right and choose one as a group, or let the dice decide by rolling 1d12. Knowing the local climate at this stage is useful because it'll inform other world-building decisions and help you begin to visualize your setting and local cultures.

CLIMATE

1d12	CLIMATE
1-2	*frigid*
3-4	*temperate* verging into *frigid*
5-8	*temperate*
9-10	*temperate* verging into *torrid*
11-12	*torrid*

3 **Determine playable species.** Most fantasy RPGs follow an established convention when it comes to types of people in the world: humans, dwarves, halflings, elves, orcs, goblins… you know the drill. Decide whether you'll abide by this standard or make up your own species. The advantages to using established conventions are that everyone starts with basic assumptions about the different species, and these rules were written taking those conventions into account. The advantages to making up your own are that you'll feel more invested in them, and the world will feel more special to your group. The only drawback is that it'll take a bit more work to develop the details of your invented species. Also note that, even if you go the conventional route, you'll have the opportunity to define the different species in ways unique to your world. [Rules for creating custom species to come]

4 **Establish naming conventions.** Next, agree upon a linguistic basis for proper nouns in your game. By default you can go with plain English for everything, but for more flavor you may wish to assign a different real-world language to each distinct culture in your setting. Using online name generators and translation tools, you'll be able to give names to characters and places that will have a consistent ring to them. When naming places, just start with a one- or two-word description in plain English before translating. Edit all results to suit your taste (see **EXAMPLE** at right).

EXAMPLE
My group decides that since dwarves in our world live in a mountainous, cold region, we'll use Finnish as the linguistic basis for proper nouns in dwarf culture. We then decide to use Hungarian for the main human and halfling tongues, and Yoruba for the elves. Using an online name generator, we get dwarf names like Jouni *and* Toivo*; human/halfling names like* Miksa *and* Sándor*; and elf names like* Omayeni *and* Dayo.

Then, using a translation tool, we find that the dwarf capital of "High Home" translates to Korkea Koti*; the halfling tradition of the "Summer Feast" translates to* Nyári Unnep*; and the "Moon Tower" in elven lands is called* Osupa Oso *in the elven tongue.*

5 **Set the tone.** As you know by now, *Freebooters on the Frontier* is designed to be gritty and unforgiving in its handling of character mortality. But there's still plenty of room to give your campaign a particular feel. This is the point at which everyone at the table has a conversation about the kind of game they want to play. Do you want to play in a high-fantasy setting, where chivalry is a noble virtue and the age of the elves is waning? Or perhaps in a gothic realm, where witch hunters prowl dark forests and church inquisitors seek to purge the civilized world of evil?

6 **Consider the big picture.** Ask everyone to think of things, from their own imagination or from favorite fantasy stories, which they'd like to see in the campaign. Discuss how those things might impact the world and play experience. Take your time, take notes as you go, and check to make sure everyone's on board with a given element before you commit to it as a group. If the conversation doesn't flow easily, roll once or twice on the **CAMPAIGN FEATURE** table (page) to get some ideas. Discuss and modify the results until everyone is satisfied.

CAMPAIGN FEATURE

1d100	FEATURE
01-02	A comet—harbinger of doom or great change—streaks slowly across the sky.
03-04	A great deluge has drowned the lowlands, leaving many settlements underwater.
05-06	A terrible plague sweeps the land, decimating centers of population.
07-08	A new mineral has been discovered which, when properly processed, extends life.
09-10	Long ago, terrible earthquakes created great chasms that divide the lands.
11-12	Islands drift across the sky, accessible only by winged or wizardly means.
13-14	The moon broke and fell to earth in pieces, leading to war over its celestial treasures.
15-16	The civilized lands are experiencing a golden age of chivalry.
17-18	A great war has broken out between the sorcerer-lords.
19-20	A demon-lord has wrested control of one of the great kingdoms.
21-22	A demigod rules the most populous city.
23-24	Outlander tribes, united under a new war chief, and have begun raiding in force.
25-26	A messianic figure has appeared in the outlands, promising immortality for all.
27-28	An ancient order protects the civilized world from the forces of chaos.
29-30	Magical portals connect the great cities of the world.
31-32	Due to recent events, tensions between certain species have reached a boiling point.
33-34	An enigmatic ruler demands the annual sacrifice of child from each community.
35-36	The first folk left long ago, passing beyond the nether-lands, but now they return.
37-38	The great merchant cities are ascendant.
39-40	Arcane tempests of unknown origin sweep across the land.
41-42	The world is pocked by zones, large and small, where magic does not work at all.
43-44	Planar rifts have begun to open in unexpected places.
45-46	The practice of unsanctioned magic is a criminal offense in most civilized settlements.
47-48	The spirits of departed ancestors have begun to appear with increasing frequency.
49-50	The dead will always rise unless appropriate precautions are taken.
51-52	A great conclave of witches is imminent, at which a new leader will be chosen.
53-54	There is a great arcane university is where all "legitimate" magic-users learn their art.
55-56	Strange crystals have begun to sprout and spread, but only under certain conditions.
57-58	An unknown force is replacing people with changelings.
59-60	The rulers of old have begun to rise from their tombs.
61-62	A vast empire seeks to expand further.
63-64	A dominant religion persecutes sages and philosophers as enemies of the church.
65-66	Primordial mystery-cults wage a secret war for the fate of the free lands.
67-68	Ancient constructs have begun to animate and emerge from their subterranean vaults.
69-70	A great lord is dying; without a strong leader, their realm has fallen to turmoil.
71-72	An alchemical concoction with explosive properties is changing the face of warfare.
73-74	Dark forces gather in the outlands, mustered under the banner of some fell master.
75-76	Open war has broken out between two dominant and opposing religions.
77-78	One of the civilized, non-human cultures has recently chosen to isolate itself.
79-80	The magical beacons that ward off the forces of darkness have begun to fail.
81-82	Feuds between the gods are fought out by titans in the mundane world.
83-84	An interculutral council of honorable rulers strives to maintain peace.
85-86	A dominant religious order has declared one of the great rulers a heretic.
87-88	The towering war-suits of the ancients litter the wilderness.
89-90	In the wake of a great cataclym, the survivors have begun to rebuild society.
91-92	Periodic meteor showers bring madness and mutation from beyond the stars.
93-94	Magic spells can only be cast by use of a certain gemstone.
95-96	The civilized species have at last united, but forgiveness does not come easily to all.
97-98	The undead are commonly exploited for economic or strategic gain.
99-100	Winter has not passed as it should have; the frost-roots are spreading.

ROLL UP A CHARACTER

To create a new character, follow these steps. When told to "choose or roll," go with the option that best suits the tone of your campaign, as established during setting creation.

1 **Choose or roll your CLASS** (see table at right), and grab a copy of the corresponding playbook.

2 **Choose or roll your HERITAGE**, according to your class, using the table below. Record the result along with the associated **HERITAGE MOVE** in the "Heritage" area on the first page of your playbook.

3 **Roll your ability scores.** Roll 3d6 for each ability listed in the right-hand column on the front of your playbook, in order: Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and Luck. Write the total for each score in the box labeled "**MAX**." Write lightly in pencil, because some numbers might get moved around.

4 **Swap ability scores.** Switch any one ability score with any one other score. You'll usually want to put your highest score in an ability that will be useful to your class (see **USEFUL ABILITIES** key, opposite).

5 **Apply your heritage bonus.** If you're human, increase any two different abilities by 1 point each. If you're not human, you may increase any two different favored abilities by 1 point each, or one favored ability by 2 points (see **FAVORED ABILITIES** key on the opposite page). No ability score may be raised above 18.

6 **Set your ability modifiers.** Consult the **ABILITY MODIFIER** table (opposite, and included on the front page of your playbook). Record each ability's modifier in the "**MODIFIER**" brackets running down the right side of the front page of your playbook.

CLASS

1d12	CLASS
1-6	fighter
7-9	thief
10-11	cleric
12	magic-user

7 **Roll your hit points.** The "Hit Die" area at the bottom of the front page of your playbook indicates which die you'll use for rolling hit points. Roll your hit die now and add your CON (the Constitution modifier you determined in step 6, not your full Constitution score) to the result. A total of less than 1 is treated as 1. Write the total in the box labeled "**MAX**" in the Hit Points area of your playbook. You may at this point burn 1 point of Luck (see page XX) to increase your HP by 1.

8 **Choose or roll your ALIGNMENT**, according to your class, using the table below. Record the result in the area provided on the front page of your playbook. In that same area, write down the **ALIGNMENT GOAL** associated with your alignment. Also note the number of **VIRTUES** and **VICES** assigned to you based on your alignment; these come into play on the next step.

ABILITY KEY

USEFUL ABILITIES

fighter	Strength, Constitution, Dexterity
thief	Dexterity, Intelligence, Luck
cleric	Wisdom, Charisma, Strength
magic-user	Intelligence, Constitution, Luck

FAVORED ABILITIES

human	Any
halfling	Dexterity, Constitution, Luck
dwarf	Strength, Constitution, Wisdom
elf	Dexterity, Intelligence, Charisma

ABILITY MODIFIERS

SCORE	MODIFIER
3	-3
4-5	-2
6-8	-1
9-12	0
13-15	+1
16-17	+2
18	+3

CHARACTER HERITAGE

FIGHTER/CLERIC

1d12	HERITAGE
1-7	human
8	halfling
9-11	dwarf
12	elf

THIEF

1d12	HERITAGE
1-7	human
8-10	halfling
11	dwarf
12	elf

MAGIC-USER

1d12	HERITAGE
1-8	human
9	halfling
10	dwarf
11-12	elf

HERITAGE MOVE

human	When you *Wrap Up*, mark 1 additional XP.
halfling	When you *eat an extra ration*, take +1 forward.
dwarf	When you *are underground*, take +1 ongoing to Perceive.
elf	When you *move*, you have perfect balance and a feather-light step.

CHARACTER ALIGNMENT

FIGHTER

1d12	ALIGNMENT
1-2	evil
3-5	chaotic
6-8	neutral
9-10	lawful
11-12	good

THIEF

1d12	ALIGNMENT
1-2	evil
3-6	chaotic
7-10	neutral
11-12	good

CLERIC

1d12	ALIGNMENT
1-2	evil
3-5	chaotic
6-7	neutral
8-10	lawful
11-12	good

MAGIC-USER

1d12	ALIGNMENT
1-3	evil
4-8	chaotic
9	neutral
10	lawful
11-12	good

ALIGNMENT GOAL & TRAIT ASSIGNMENT

ALIGNMENT	ALIGNMENT GOAL	VIRTUES	VICES
evil	Inflict harm on another for personal gain.	0	3
chaotic	Disrupt a prevailing order.	1	2
neutral	Correct an imbalance.	1	1
lawful	Impose or maintain order in the face of chaos.	2	1
good	Help those in need at your own expense.	3	0

TRAITS

1d100	VIRTUE	VICE
01-02	*ambitious*	*addict*
03-04	*benevolent*	*aggressive*
05-06	*bold*	*alcoholic*
07-08	*brave*	*antagonistic*
09-10	*charitable*	*arrogant*
11-12	*chaste*	*boastful*
13-14	*cautious*	*cheater*
15-16	*compassionate*	*covetous*
17-18	*confident*	*cowardly*
19-20	*considerate*	*cruel*
21-22	*cooperative*	*decadent*
23-24	*courteous*	*deceitful*
25-26	*creative*	*disloyal*
27-28	*curious*	*doubtful*
29-30	*daring*	*egotistical*
31-32	*defiant*	*envious*
33-34	*dependable*	*gluttonous*
35-36	*determined*	*greedy*
37-38	*disciplined*	*hasty*
39-40	*enthusiastic*	*hedonist*
41-42	*fair*	*impatient*
43-44	*focused*	*inflexible*
45-46	*forgiving*	*irritable*
47-48	*friendly*	*lazy*
49-50	*frugal*	*lewd*
51-52	*funny*	*liar*
53-54	*generous*	*lustful*
55-56	*gregarious*	*mad*
57-58	*helpful*	*malicious*
59-60	*honest*	*manipulative*
61-62	*honorable*	*merciless*
63-64	*hopeful*	*moody*
65-66	*humble*	*murderous*
67-68	*idealistic*	*obsessive*
69-70	*just*	*petulant*
71-72	*kind*	*prejudiced*
73-74	*loving*	*reckless*
75-76	*loyal*	*resentful*
77-78	*merciful*	*rude*
79-80	*orderly*	*ruthless*
81-82	*patient*	*self-pitying*
83-84	*persistent*	*selfish*
85-86	*pious*	*snobbish*
87-88	*resourceful*	*stingy*
89-90	*respectful*	*stubborn*
91-92	*responsible*	*vain*
93-94	*selfless*	*vengeful*
95-96	*steadfast*	*wasteful*
97-98	*tactful*	*wrathful*
99-100	*tolerant*	*zealous*

APPEARANCE

1d100	FIGHTER	THIEF	CLERIC	MAGIC-USER
01-02	big feet	broken nose	big feet	acid scars
03-04	big mouth	chin whiskers	blazing eyes	aged
05-06	braids	clean-shaven	bright eyes	bald
07-08	broad shoulders	clear-eyed	bushy eyebrows	black teeth
09-10	broken nose	crooked teeth	clean-shaven	booming voice
11-12	chiseled	curly hair	clear-eyed	burn scars
13-14	clear-eyed	dark skin	cleft chin	bushy eyebrows
15-16	cleft chin	deep voice	crooked teeth	chin whiskers
17-18	crooked teeth	disfigured	curly hair	crooked teeth
19-20	curly hair	disheveled	dandruff	curly hair
21-22	dark skin	gap-toothed	dark skin	dark skin
23-24	deep voice	gaunt	deep voice	discolored skin
25-26	gap-toothed	goatee	flagellant scars	disfigured
27-28	goatee	hirsute	gaunt	forked tongue
29-30	grubby	lazy eye	goatee	gaunt
31-32	high cheekbones	limp	gray hair	glowing eyes
33-34	hirsute	little mouth	heavyset	gnarled hands
35-36	lantern jaw	long fingers	haunted eyes	goatee
37-38	large ears	matted hair	high forehead	gray hair
39-40	large hands	missing eye	hirsute	haggard
41-42	large head	missing finger	large hands	hairless
43-44	long-legged	missing teeth	long beard	high forehead
45-46	matted hair	narrowed eyes	missing teeth	hooded eyes
47-48	missing ear	notable chin	notable nose	hunchback
49-50	missing eye	notable nose	notable smell	limp
51-52	missing finger	overbite	pale skin	long beard
53-54	missing teeth	pale skin	perfect posture	long fingernails
55-56	notable facial hair	pencil mustache	piercing gaze	long hair
57-58	notable nose	perfect posture	pockmarked	lumpy skull
59-60	notable smell	pockmarked	ragged	mismatched eyes
61-62	perfect posture	pointy chin	rosy cheeks	missing teeth
63-64	pockmarked	poor posture	scarred	no eyebrows
65-66	raspy voice	raspy voice	shaved head	oily skin
67-68	rosy cheeks	red-rimmed eyes	shining eyes	pale skin
69-70	scarred	scarred	smelly	piercing gaze
71-72	squinting gaze	scruffy	smiling	pockmarked
73-74	tattoos	shifty eyes	square chin	raspy voice
75-76	shaved head	small hands	square-shouldered	sallow
77-78	smelly	smelly	strange marks	scarred
79-80	smiling	squint	stubble	skeletal hands
81-82	squint	stubble	tattoos	smelly
83-84	steely gaze	stubby fingers	thundering voice	strange marks
85-86	stubble	tattoos	tonsure	striking nose
87-88	tattoos	twitchy	unblinking gaze	sunken eyes
89-90	unibrow	unsmiling	unwashed	tattoos
91-92	unsmiling	unwashed	warty	terrible posture
93-94	well-scrubbed	well-groomed	well-fed	warty
95-96	wild hair	whispery voice	well-scrubbed	white hair
97-98	youthful	widow's peak	wild-eyed	wild hair
99-100	roll on THIEF	roll on MAGIC-USER	roll on FIGHTER	widow's peak

illo of a crowd of diverse characters strretching across page spread, behind tables

9 **Roll your TRAITS.** Referring to the TRAIT table at right, roll a number of VIRTUES and VICES dictated by our align-ment. Record the results in the "Traits" area on the first page of your playbook. These adjectives encourage you to play your certain ways, but you're not required to do so. Each time you Level Up, you'll have the opportunity to change a trait.

10 **Roll your APPEARANCE.** Using the column for your class on the table on the opposite page, roll up 3 physical details for your character. You may choose your apparent gender or use the result of your first roll to determine it (even=female, odd=male, doubles=nonbinary/ambigu-ous). Then, drop 1 physical detail if you wish, and summarize your appearance in the appropriate area on the front page of your playbook. These are meant to get you thinking—embellish and add more details as you wish.

11 **Review your class moves.** Open your playbook and read over the left-hand page to familiarize yourself with the special things your class can do, and make any decisions required. If you're a fighter, choose your signature weapon from those listed in the melee weapon or ranged weapon sections of the Marketplace (pXX). If you're a wizard, roll up the names of your spells using the **SPELL NAME** table on page XX.

12 **Determine your capacity.** On the back page of your playbook, under the first box in the "Capacity" area, you'll see a notation that looks like "STR +X." Add your STR (Strength modifier) to the number indicated, and enter the result in the box. This is an abstract measure of how much weight you can carry before you are hindered.

13 **Take inventory.** To determine what stuff you start with, use the **STARTING GEAR** guide on page XX. Record your gear in the space provided on the back page of your playbook, noting any relevant details (weight, tags, etc.). Refer to the Marketplace list on page XX for item details.

14 **Go shopping.** Roll 2d6 and add the total to your Luck score (not LUC). If you're not a thief, you start with this many silver pieces (sp). If you are a thief, you start with twice this amount. Write the number down on the pouch on the back page of your playbook. Then, you may use these starting funds to purchase items from the Marketplace. This part may take a few minutes as you discuss plans with your fellow freebooters and consider what supplies you might need for your first foray into the unknown.

15 **Name thyself.** During setting creation, you and/or the Judge established what sort of naming conventions will be used for the campaign. Name your character according to that decision—make something up, use an online generator, or roll on the name tables provided on pages XX-XX. Then, fold an index card in half, write your character's name on one half, and "tent" the card on the table in front of you with the name facing out so that everyone can remember at a glance what to call you.

16 **Introduce thyself.** Take turns with the other players describing your characters. Ask the other players questions about the attitude and appearance of their characters so that you can build a mental image of each. If you feel inclined, draw a portrait of yours in the area provided on the front page of your playbook.

17 **See the frontier.** The cast of main characters is now complete; you should have a ragtag band of freebooters, hungry for treasure. The only thing left to do is invent the world laden with booty! Follow the directions in the "See the Frontier" section, starting on page XX.

illo of characters shopping, trying on gear, introducing themselves, etc.

SPELL NAME

Roll 1d12 for **SPELL NAME TEMPLATE**, then 1d100 for each part.

1d12	SPELL NAME TEMPLATE
1-2	[ELEMENT] [FORM]
3-4	[ADJECTIVE] [FORM]
5-6	[ADJECTIVE] [ELEMENT]
7	[FORM] of [ELEMENT]
8	[FORM] of [ADJECTIVE] [ELEMENT]

1d12	SPELL NAME TEMPLATE
9	[WIZARD'S NAME]'s [ADJECTIVE] [FORM]
10	[WIZARD'S NAME]'s [ADJECTIVE] [ELEMENT]
11	[WIZARD'S NAME]'s [FORM] of [ELEMENT]
12	[WIZARD'S NAME]'s [ELEMENT] [FORM]

1d100	FORM	ELEMENT	ADJECTIVE	WIZ. NAME 1	WIZ. NAME 2
01	Armor	Acid	All-Knowing	A-	-ak
02	Arrow	Aether	All-Seeing	Ab-	-alto
03	Aura	Air	Arcane	Aga-	-ana
04	Bane	Anger	Befuddling	Alha-	-anti
05	Beast	Ash	Binding	Appol-	-aris
06	Blade	Avarice	Black	Apu-	-ark
07	Blast	Balance	Blazing	Arne-	-asta
08	Blessing	Blight	Blinding	Asmo-	-balia
09	Blob	Blood	Bloody	Baha-	-bus
10	Blood	Bone	Bright	Bal-	-by
11	Bolt	Bones	Cacophonous	Barba-	-cas
12	Bond	Brimstone	Cerulean	Bol-	-ce
13	Boon	Clay	Concealing	By-	-derol
14	Brain	Cloud	Confusing	Can-	-deus
15	Burst	Copper	Consuming	Cinni-	-din
16	Call	Cosmos	Crimson	Cir-	-dok
17	Charm	Dark	Damnable	Cyn-	-dor
18	Circle	Death	Dark	Cyto-	-dred
19	Claw	Deceit	Deflecting	Dar-	-driar
20	Cloak	Despair	Delicate	Darg-	-dula
21	Cone	Destiny	Demonic	De-	-dun
22	Crown	Dimension	Devastating	Des-	-dustin
23	Cube	Doom	Devilish	Dra-	-er
24	Cup	Dust	Diminishing	Dul-	-fant
25	Curse	Earth	Draining	Elez-	-fia
26	Dagger	Ember	Eldritch	Ely-	-fonse
27	Dart	Energy	Empowering	Ez-	-gad
28	Demon	Envy	Enlightening	Fal-	-gax
29	Disturbance	Fear	Ensorcelling	Faral-	-glana
30	Door	Fire	Entangling	Flo-	-goria
31	Eye	Fog	Enveloping	Fol-	-goth
32	Eyes	Force	Erratic	Gaili-	-heer
33	Face	Fury	Evil	Garg-	-houlik
34	Fang	Glory	Excruciating	Gast-	-ia
35	Feast	Gluttony	Expanding	Gil-	-iala
36	Finger	Gold	Extra-Planar	Gy-	-iana
37	Fissure	Greed	Fearsome	Haz-	-ingar
38	Fist	Hate	Flaming	Heca-	-ista
39	Gate	Hatred	Floating	Her-	-jan
40	Gaze	Health	Freezing	Hog-	-jobulon
41	Glamer	Heat	Glittering	Hur-	-kan
42	Globe	History	Gyrating	I-	-kang
43	Golem	Hope	Helpful	Ik-	-konn
44	Guard	Ice	Hindering	Ilde-	-lah
45	Guide	Iron	Icy	In-	-leius
46	Guise	Justice	Illusory	Jas-	-leo
47	Halo	Knowledge	Incredible	Jir-	-leou
48	Hammer	Lead	Inescapable	Ju-	-lin
49	Hand	Lies	Ingenious	Krak-	-lonia
50	Heart	Life	Instant	Kul-	-lonius
51	Helm	Light	Invigorating	Laf-	-loo
52	Horn	Lightning	Invisible	Long-	-lume
53	Lock	Lore	Invulnerable	Ma-	-ma
54	Mantle	Love	Liberating	Mer-	-mas
55	Mark	Lust	Maddening	Mercu-	-mast
56	Memory	Metal	Magnificent	Mor-	-mia
57	Mind	Might	Many-Colored	Mune-	-miel
58	Mouth	Mist	Mighty	Munno	-motto
59	Noose	Moon	Most Excellent	Murz-	-moulian
60	Oath	Mud	Omnipotent	Naf-	-mut
61	Oracle	Nature	Oozing	O-	-nak
62	Pattern	Oil	Penultimate	Osh	-nia
63	Pet	Pain	Pestilential	Pande-	-nish
64	Pillar	Perception	Piercing	Pander-	-nob
65	Pocket	Plane	Poisonous	Par-	-o
66	Portal	Plant	Prismatic	Per-	-ol
67	Pyramid	Poison	Raging	Quel-	-ool
68	Ray	Quicksilver	Rejuvenating	Ra-	-pa
69	Rune	Revulsion	Restorative	Ragga-	-pheus
70	Scream	Rot	Screaming	Rhi-	-phim
71	Seal	Salt	Sensitive	Satan-	-por
72	Sentinel	Shadow	Shimmering	Satur-	-quint
73	Servant	Sight	Shining	Semi-	-ramis
74	Shaft	Silver	Silent	Sera-	-rezzin
75	Shield	Smoke	Sleeping	She-	-ro
76	Sigil	Soil	Slow	Shrue-	-rrak
77	Sign	Soul	Smoking	Sloo-	-ry
78	Song	Souls	Sorcerer's	Sol-	-sira
79	Spear	Sound	Strange	T'-	-sta
80	Spell	Spirit	Stupefying	Tcha-	-te
81	Sphere	Stars	Terrible	Tol-	-teria
82	Spray	Steam	Thirsty	Tub-	-thakk
83	Staff	Steel	Thundering	Tur-	-thalon
84	Storm	Stone	Trans-dimensional	U-	-tine
85	Strike	Storm	Transmuting	Vag-	-toomb
86	Sword	Sun	Ultimate	Val-	-torr
87	Tendril	Terror	Uncontrollable	Vance-	-troya
88	Tongue	Time	Unseen	Ver-	-tur
89	Tooth	Treasure	Unstoppable	Vish-	-tuva
90	Trap	Truth	Untiring	Wa-	-u
91	Veil	Vanity	Vengeful	Win-	-valva
92	Voice	Venom	Vexing	Xa-	-vance
93	Wall	Vermin	Violent	Yu-	-vilk
94	Ward	Void	Violet	Za-	-wink
95	Wave	Water	Viridian	Zal-	-xa
96	Weapon	Will	Voracious	Zan-	-yop
97	Weave	Wind	Weakening	Zili-	-zant
98	Whisper	Wisdom	White	Zim-	-zark
99	Wings	Wood	Wondrous	Zuur-	-zirian
100	Word	Youth	Yellow	Zza-	-zred

STARTING GEAR

Record each item and its listed weight (wt) as indicated by your class, below. Roll your **RANDOM ITEM** using the table opposite.

FIGHTER

You start with your **favored weapon** (as chosen in step 11; see the Marketplace on page X for its weight), 1 **RANDOM ITEM**, a **backpack** (wt 0), **waterskin** (wt 0), **rations** (1d6 uses, wt 1), a **knife** (wt 0), and 1 thing from each of the following tables:

1d6	GARB	WT	1d6	ARMOR	WT	1d6	OTHER ITEM	WT
1-3	poor clothes	0	1-2	leather armor	1	1-3	buckler	1
4-6	common clothes	0	3-4	scale armor	3	4-5	shield	2
			5-6	chainmail	2	6	adventuring gear	2

THIEF

You start with 1 **RANDOM ITEM**, a **backpack** (wt 0), **waterskin** (wt 0), **rations** (1d6 uses, wt 1), a **knife** (wt 0), and 1 thing from each of the following tables:

1d6	GARB	WT	1d6	WEAPON	WT	1d6	OTHER ITEM	WT
1	rags	0	1-2	dagger	0	1	flint & steel	0
2-3	poor clothes	0	3	blackjack/sap	0	2-3	lockpicks	0
4-5	common clothes	0	4	club/cudgel	1	4-5	leather armor	1
6	quality clothes	0	5	shortsword	1	6	adventuring gear	2
			6	sling	0			

CLERIC

You start with your **holy symbol** (as chosen in step 11; wt 0), 1 **RANDOM ITEM**, a **backpack** (wt 0), **waterskin** (wt 0), **rations** (1d6 uses, wt 1), and 1 thing from each of the following tables:

1d6	GARB	WT	1d6	WEAPON	WT	1d6	OTHER ITEM	WT
1	rags	0	1-2	knife or staff	0/1	1	collection cup, 1d6sp	0
2	hooded tunic	0	3-4	dagger or club/cudgel	0/1	2-3	holy book	1
3-5	cap & cassock	0	5	mace or warhammer	1	4-5	leather armor	1
6	priestly vestments	0	6	flail or spear	2	6	chainmail	2

MAGIC-USER

You start with your **spellbook** (wt 1), 1 **RANDOM ITEM**, a **shoulder bag** (wt 0), **waterskin** (wt 0), **rations** (1d6 uses, wt 1), and 1 thing from each of the following tables:

1d6	GARB	WT	1d6	WEAPON	WT	1d6	OTHER ITEM	WT
1-3	shabby robes	0	1-2	knife	0	1	antitoxin	0
3-5	common robes	0	3-5	staff	1	2-3	writing kit	0
6	quality robes	0	6	dagger	0	4-5	1d4 books	1 ea.
						6	1d6 uses of spell components	0

1d6	HEADGEAR	WT
1	turban	0
2	skullcap	0
3-4	hood	0
5-6	pointy hat	0

RANDOM ITEM

1d100	ITEM	1d100	ITEM
01	abacus (5 sp, 0 wt)	51	heirloom walking stick (1 wt)
02	bag of salt (5 sp, 1 wt)	52	herbs & poultices (10 sp, 1 wt)
03	battered helmet (2 sp, 0 wt)	53	hoe (2 sp, 1 wt)
04	battered shield (18 sp, 1 wt)	54	holy symbol (1d6 sp, 0 wt)
05	broken sword (1 wt)	55	hourglass (12 sp, 0 wt)
06	bestiary (5 sp, 1 wt)	56	hunting dog (15 sp)
07	bird cage & pet bird (4 sp, 1 wt)	57	huntsman's horn (2 sp, 0 wt)
08	book (8 sp, specify subject, 1 wt)	58	iron shackles (1 wt)
09	bottle of perfume (1d4 sp, 0 wt)	59	jar of pickled monster part (1 wt)
10	box of candles (2 sp, 0 wt)	60	jar of narcotic (10 sp, 0 wt)
11	bucket of pitch (1 sp, 1 wt)	61	lute (10 sp, 1 wt)
12	bundle of furs (1d6x10 sp, 3 wt)	62	music box (12 sp, 0 wt)
13	cask of grog (4 sp, 2 wt)	63	nautical chart (0 wt)
14	cast iron pot (2 sp, 1 wt)	64	notable cloak/robes (0 wt)
15	cheap jewelry/locket (1d4 sp, 0 wt)	65	notable gloves/gauntlets (0 wt)
16	child's doll (1 sp, 0 wt)	66	notable hat/cap/hood/helmet (0 wt)
17	clay jar of honey (3 sp, 0 wt)	67	notable shoes/boots/sandals (0 wt)
18	clay pipe & bag of tobacco (3 sp, 0 wt)	68	ocarina/flute (6 sp, 0 wt)
19	clay pot of lard (1 wt)	69	pet mouse/rat/cat/snake/crow (0 wt)
20	coded message (o wt)	70	piece of jewelry (1d6x5 sp, 0 wt)
21	coin pouch (holding 3d6sp, 0 wt)	71	pitchfork (2 sp, 1 wt)
22	copper lantern & lamp oil (21sp, 1 wt)	72	pouch of bandages (1 wt)
23	cow (30 sp)	73	pouch of gold dust (1d10 sp, 0 wt)
24	crate of wine (25 sp, 4 wt)	74	pouch of knucklebones (0 wt)
25	donkey (25 sp)	75	prayer book (0 wt)
26	eyepatch (0 wt)	76	preserved monster paw (0 wt)
27	fancy belt/girdle (5 sp, 0 wt)	77	promissory note (0 wt)
28	*fine* dwarven hammer & chisel (6 sp, 1 wt)	78	retainer/sidekick (roll NPC)
29	*fine* dwarven warhammer (24 sp, 1 wt)	79	rope (50') & grappling hook (2 wt)
30	*fine* elven quiver & arrows (16 sp, 0 wt)	80	riding horse (150 sp)
31	*fine* elven shortbow (32 sp, 1 wt)	81	rusty key (0 wt)
32	*fine* leather armor (60 sp, 1 wt)	82	sack of grain (2 wt)
33	*fine* whetstone (2 sp, 0 wt)	83	sack of jerky (1d6 rations, 1 wt)
34	fishing net (4 sp, 1 wt)	84	shiny stone (0 wt)
35	fishing pole & basket (4 sp, 1 wt)	85	signet ring (1d4x10 sp, 0 wt)
36	flask of home remedy (0 wt)	86	skeleton key (0 wt)
37	flawed gemstone (1d4x5 sp, 0 wt)	87	small drum (2 sp, 1 wt)
38	fur-lined cloak (6 sp, 0 wt)	88	small humanoid skull (0 wt)
39	gardening tools (5 sp, 1 wt)	89	soapstone idol (0 wt)
40	good luck charm (0 wt)	90	spell scroll (must be deciphered, 0 wt)
41	hand mirror (3 sp, 0 wt)	91	strange egg (0 wt)
42	hand of glory (8 sp, 0 wt)	92	taxidermied creature (1 wt)
43	handful of strange seeds (0 wt)	93	tinderbox & 1d6 torches (1 wt)
44	handsaw (3 sp, 1 wt)	94	tinker's kit (4 sp, 1 wt)
45	hatchet (10 sp, 1 wt)	95	traveling trunk (3 wt when full)
46	heirloom banner (2d6 sp, 1 wt)	96	treasure map (0 wt)
47	heirloom chalice (1d12 sp, 1 wt)	97	vial of strange fluid (0 wt)
48	heirloom healer's kit (24 sp, 1 wt)	98	wanted poster (0 wt)
49	heirloom shield (25 sp, 2 wt)	99	wooden figurine (0 wt)
50	heirloom sword (18 sp, 2 wt)	100	wooden mask (0 wt)

MARKETPLACE

All prices listed are silver pieces (sp). Generally speaking, you can sell things at market for half their listed value. If you want a better deal than that, you'll need to **Negotiate** (pX).

TAGS & TERMS

awkward	difficult to use with grace and expediency
burn	inflicts 1d6 damage on its victim periodically until extinguished
close	target must be within a sword's reach
far	target must be within sight
fine	well-crafted and worth twice the amount of its common equivalent
forceful	can force a foe back
hand	target must be within arm's reach
near	target must be within a stone's throw
precise	roll +DEX instead of +STR to Fight
rare	hard to come by
reach	target must be just beyond a sword's reach
reload	takes time to reload after each use
slow	takes a while to take effect
small	cannot protect against all attacks
stun	may stun or knock out target when properly applied
throw	can be thrown effectively
worn	does not require hands to carry
2h	Two-handed: requires two hands to wield in combat
ammo	an abstracted quantity of ammunition
duration	an abstracted length of time, to be marked off at Judge's discretion
heal	the number of hit points restored by one use
pierce	amount of damage that ignores armor
power	amount of increase to casting power

WEAPONS · MELEE

TYPE	COST	DAMAGE	WT	TAGS/NOTES
punch/kick	-	1	-	*hand*
blackjack/sap	3	1	0	*hand*, *stun*
staff	6	1d4	1	*close*, 2h
knife	6	1d4	0	*precise*, *hand*
hatchet	10	1d4	1	*throw*, *close*, *near*
dagger	12	1d4	0	*hand*, *precise*, 1 pierce
club/cudgel	8	1d6	1	*close*, *stun*
mace	12	1d6	1	*close*, *forceful*, *stun*
shortsword	12	1d6	1	*close*
warhammer	12	1d6	1	*close*, 1 pierce
pick	18	1d6	1	*close*, *awkward*, 2 pierce
axe	16	1d8	2	*close*
sword	18	1d8	2	*close*
spear	16	1d8	2	*throw*, *reach*, *near*
flail	20	1d8	2	*close*, *forceful*
polearm	24	1d10	3	*reach*, *awkward*, 2h
great hammer	26	1d10	4	*close*, *forceful*, *rare*, 2h
great axe	30	1d10	3	*close*, *rare*, 2h
great sword	38	1d10	3	*close*, *reach*, *rare*, 2h

illo of various pieces of gear

WEAPONS · RANGED

TYPE	COST	DAMAGE	WT	TAGS/NOTES
throwing knife	8	1d4	0	*throw*, *and*, *near*, *precise*
sling	6	1d4	0	*near*, *far*
shortbow	16	1d6	1	*near*, *far*, 2h
light crossbow	20	1d6	1	*near*, *far*, *reload*, 1 pierce, 2h
longbow	24	1d8	1	*near*, *far*, 2h
heavy crossbow	30	1d8	1	*near*, *far*, *reload*, 2 pierce, 2h

AMMUNITION

TYPE	COST	WT	TAGS/NOTES
slingstones	1	0	3 ammo, ammunition, for sling
arrows	6	0	3 ammo, ammunition, for sling
bolts	16	1	3 ammo, ammunition, for sling

ARMOR & SHIELDS

TYPE	COST	WT	TAGS/NOTES
leather armor	30	1	1 armor
scale armor	60	3	2 armor
chainmail	90	2	2 armor
splint armor	120	4	*awkward*, 3 armor
plate armor	200	6	*awkward*, rare, 4 armor
buckler	15	1	*small*, +1 armor
shield	25	2	+1 armor

CLOTHING

TYPE	COST	WT	TAGS/NOTES
poor clothes	1	0	*worn*
common clothes	3	0	*worn*
quality clothes	10	0	*worn*
official vestment	20	0	*worn*
winter cloak	5	0	*worn*
exquisite clothes	50	0	*worn*

GEAR

TYPE	COST	WT	TAGS/NOTES
adventuring gear*	20	2	5 uses
rope	3	1	50 feet
animal snare	2	1	-
bedroll**	2	1	-
animal trap	4	1	-
finshing net	4	1	-
fishing pole	3	0	-
grappling hook	7	1	-
tent	7	3	-

CONTAINERS

TYPE	COST	WT	TAGS/NOTES
waterskin	1	0	-
belt pouch	1	0	-
large sack	1	0	-
shoulder bag	2	0	-
backpack	5	0	-
scrollcase	2	0	-
quiver	4	0	-
saddlebags	7	1	-

PROVISIONS

TYPE	COST	WT	TAGS/NOTES
rations	4	1	7 uses
spirits (1 pint)	15	0	-
grog (1 quart)	1	1	-
fine wine (1 pint)	10	0	-
poor meal	1	-	feeds 3
hearty meal	1	-	-
feast	12	-	feeds 6

* Each use of adventuring gear produces an item of situational utility worth 3sp or less.
** When you **Pass the Night** with a bedroll, heal 1 additional ability point or HP in the morning.

ILLUMINATION

TYPE	COST	WT	TAGS/NOTES
tinderbox	3	0	includes flint, steel, tinder
candles	2	0	*dim*, 3 duration, 5 uses
torches	3	1	3 duration, 3 uses
lantern	15	1	5 duration, needs oil
flask of lamp oil	5	1	*burn*, *fragile*, 2 uses

TOOLS

TYPE	COST	WT	TAGS/NOTES
whetstone	1	0	-
prybar or shovel	5	2	1d6 damage, *close*, *awkward*, 2h
pole	2	1	10' long
lockpicks	10	0	-
writing kit	10	0	-
crafting tools	20	1	specify craft
mapping tools	12	0	-

SPECIALTY ITEMS

TYPE	COST	WT	TAGS/NOTES
antitoxin	10	0	1 use
bandages	3	0	*slow*, heal 1, 3 uses
herbs & poultices	10	1	*slow*, heal 1d4, 2 uses
healer's kit	24	1	*slow*, heal 1d6, 2 uses
healing potion	50	0	*rare*, *fragile*, heal 1d8, 1 use
book*	12	1	6 uses
spellbook	*priceless*	1	magic-user starting gear
spell component**	2	0	1 use, grants +1 power

* Each book must be given a title (*Herbs & Berries of the Lowlands*, *Customs of the Nomads*, *Elemental Magic*, etc.), and grants the reader +1 to Know Something related to that subject.

** An ingredient or reagent (mandrake, owl feathers, toad slime, etc.) that is used up in the casting of spells, granting the magic-user +1 power for that spell.

CONCOCTIONS

To create a poison or other substance, name it and describe its form, application, effect and speed. Work with the Judge to determine the level of effect. The cost of 1 dose is determined by **effect** multiplied by **speed**:

Effect: *minor* (8sp) *moderate* (16sp), *major* (40sp), *fatal* (80sp)
Speed: *slow* (x1/2), *fast* (x1), *instant* (x3).

LODGING

TYPE	COST	TAGS/NOTES
camping/squatting	-	heal 2d4 +CON per week
poor inn	8 -CHA/week	meals included, heal 2d6 +CON per week
modest inn	16 -CHA/week	meals included, heal 2d8 +CON per week
comfortable inn	32 -CHA/week	meals included, heal 2d10 +CON per week

SERVICES & WAGES

TYPE	COST
reapairs	1/4 list cost of item
custom item	2x listed cost of item
hireling	1 share of the booty
porter	1/day
unskilled laborer	8/week
town watch	10/week*
soldier	12/week*
skilled laborer	14/week
healer	16/week
specialist	18/week
"companion"	10-CHA/night
entertainer	1-3/performance
armed escort	
safe route	2 per guard per day
unsafe route	4 per guard per day
dangerous route	8 per guard per day
perilous route	10 per guard per day
common murder	25
assassination	120

* Room and board included.

TRANSPORT

TYPE	COST	TAGS/NOTES
donkey/mule	25	cap. 12, 8 hp
packhorse	40	cap. 18, 12 hp
riding horse	150	cap. 14, 10 hp, *fast*
warhorse	300	cap. 22, 16 hp
cart	40	cap. 32
wagon	80	cap. 40
raft/sledge	30	cap. 16
barge	100	cap. 52
river boat	200	cap. 80
merchant ship	5,000	cap. 500
war ship	20,000	cap. 250
passage		
safe route	1/day	-
unsafe route	5/day	-
dangerous route	10/day	-
perilous route	20/day	-

REAL ESTATE

TYPE	COST	TAGS/NOTES
hovel	50	-
cottage	250	-
house	2,500	-
manse	10,000	-
keep/tower	75,000	-
castle/citadel	250,000	-
grand castle	500,000	-
upkeep	1% of cost per month	

illo of bustling town

SEE THE FRONTIER

This section is addressed to the Judge.

After the players have created their freebooters, the steps in this section will guide you through the creation of the world in which they will live, loot, (hopefully) retire, and possibly (okay, probably) die. As we saw earlier during setting creation, this process is largely collaborative, with you acting as a steward. Be prepared to take notes as you play, since environmental details and the seeds of future adventures will likely prove important to your campaign.

As you guide everyone at the table through this procedure, keep these principles in mind:

- **Ask questions** about anything that arouses your curiosity. This is particularly useful in the early stages of campaign, because it helps establish the flavor of your world. When someone adds something to the map, you can decide to let it stand without further inquiry, allowing details to be discovered during play, or you can ask the players for more information about it and take note of their responses.

- **Look for connections** between things as they are added to the world. Good world-building gives the various parts a sense of coherence and interconnection. Even though much of the material in *Freebooters* is generated randomly, we are pattern-seekers by nature, so it's usually pretty easy to find connections between random things.

- **Embrace the fantastic** when creating the environment. Magic and the gods are real in this world, so imagine the strange reality that implies. Perhaps that forest is comprised of crystalline trees, or that mountaintop stronghold belongs to a demigod, or the dinosaurs that roam the jungle can be domesticated and used as pack animals.

Before you proceed through the following steps, you might want to read the following introduction, which will give everyone a sense of what they're about to get into:

You have come here, to the utmost edge of civilized lands, to seek your fortune in the wild. Few have dared venture into that territory, and fewer still have returned, but those who live to speak of it tell great tales, indeed: of ancient, rubble-choked ruins; of terrible beasts; of great riches awaiting plunder.

Society offers order, with everyone in their proper place. The obedient enjoy duty, labor, and protection. You want none of these things. Nor do ancient ruins and terrible beasts interest you overmuch.

You seek only riches.

1 **Start with a blank map.** It can be a blank sheet of paper, or a map with terrain already on it; just make sure nothing's been named or labeled yet. Ask everyone to imagine a human homeland—a civilized kingdom or empire that is mostly off the map, and ask the player to your left to draw an outline of the small part of this realm that reaches onto it. This line is the border between civilized lands and the unexplored wilderness. A quarter to one-third of the map should be civilized land; the rest comprises the wilderness in which the characters will be starting their adventures.

2 **Define the homeland.** When you have time later, you can use the guidelines for culture creation in *Civilization & Savagery* to flesh out the homeland. For now, ask the players its prevailing alignment—*evil*, *chaotic*, *neutral*, *lawful*, or *good*—and give the homeland a name. As mentioned previously, one easy way to do this is to give it a descriptive name in English and then translate it into the relevant game language.

EXAMPLE
We've decided that Hausa is the equivalent of the common tongue in our world. After some discussion we name our kingdom "Golden Land," which translates to "Kasar Zinariya."

3 **Add their home settlement to the map.** Ask the next player in clockwise order to draw a settlement just inside the civilized border, and ask them whether it's a village, keep, or town. Perched on the frontier, this settlement will act as the party's home base between expeditions. Have that same player draw a dashed line from the steading to the nearest map edge: this is the road back to the capital city. Then, ask that same player to decide how many days or weeks of travel by foot it would take to reach the capital, and note that at the map edge.

4 **Define the settlement.** On pages XX-XX of *Civilization & Savagery* you will find tables for generating each of the settlement types. Find the table for the settlement type chosen in step 3, show it to the players, and tell them to take turns choosing or rolling **FEATURES** and **PROBLEMS** until the requisite number are generated.

Discuss the implications of the results, asking questions and taking notes as necessary (for instance, if the steading is built around a temple, what's the higher power to which the temple is devoted?). If the results indicate new things that would logically be added to the map, ask players to draw those things in. Ask more questions and encourage discussion about any other potentially interesting details or ideas. Finally, name the settlement, the same way you named the homeland.

EXAMPLE
Our home settlement is a keep, with the features "site of arrival of noble" and "resource (building material)," and the problem "disease." We decide that the keep was established by a relative of the ruling family because there was a source of white limestone nearby, and that all of the structures are built with that material. Someone suggests "White Stone" as the obvious name, which translates to "Dutse Fari," which we decide to shorten to "Tsefari."

full-bleed illo of someone looking out over the wilderness from the safety of town.

5 Define thir home base. Ask the next player where the party meets to plot their next excursion. Is it an inn, tavern, abandoned building, campsite, or some other place? This is where they'll regroup, recover, and recount their exploits and losses after returning from the wilderness. Ask some questions about their home base, and take note of the answers. Possible questions include:

• What about its appearance sets this place apart from its surroundings?
• If there's a proprietor, who are they, and what's noteworthy about them?
• What sort of folk frequent this place, if any?
• What are the signature sights, smells, and sounds of this place?

6 Look to the horizon. Ask all the players together what type of terrain dominates the frontier, stretching away from civilized lands as far as the eye can see. Is it dark forest? Misty wetlands? A crystalline waste? There will be pockets and regions of other types of terrain, but when people in this world think of the frontier, they think of this terrain. If the players can't reach consensus on this decision, you decide. Whatever is decided, make a note of it on the map.

7 Describe what was lost. Ask the next player to describe an ancient civilization that is said to have once flourished in the wilderness, or to roll on the **LOST CIVILI-ZATION** table (page XX) if they wish. Ask these questions about the result, and take notes:

• Who were the civilization's founders? Humans? Lizard people? Something else?
• Who or what ruled these people? A
• According to legend, how did their great society meet its end?
• What remnants of their existence now lie scattered throughout the wilderness?

Then, ask everyone else if there were any other lost civilizations in the area, and follow the same procedure. Two or three civilizations will give you a rich and varied treasure hunting.

8 Map the wilds. Ask the next player to name one region within the wilderness defined in the preceding step, and draw this region's outline on the map. If a prompt is needed, roll up a name using the **RANDOM REGION** table on page XX. For this region, ask that same player to do the following, and record the results:

• Choose the defining terrain of the region (forest, hills, alpine meadowland, etc.).
• Recount a fact or rumor about the region.

Go around the table and repeat this step at least once for each player. Then, if you feel like the map needs more stuff, keep going around until the playing field is rich with possibility, but still largely unknown. If the wilderness closest to their home settlement is undefined, ask players to flesh it out a little bit by adding regions there; the locals would naturally know more about these areas because of their proximity to civilization.

9 Note the landmarks. Ask each player to add a landmark to the map. It might be a ruined tower, dead tree, distinctive mountain—any relatively permanent feature that would be known and used as a reference point by the locals. If an idea is needed, roll one up using the **RANDOM PLACE** table on page XX. If you want more landmarks, go around the table again.

10 Share information. Describe the current scene at the player-characters' home base, how they're gathered, perhaps around a table, discussing what lies beyond the frontier. Then, ask at least one of the following questions of each person. If they feel like it, they can give their answer in character. Feel free to ask the same question of different people if you want to know more. Take notes about the answers, on the map or elsewhere.

• From whence do you hail, and what brings you to the frontier?
• Where is the nearest ruin, and who is said to have built it long ago?
• What creature, among those known or rumored to inhabit the nearby wilderness, do the locals speak of most fearfully? Where is the last place such a creature was sighted?
• What remarkable treasure was recently brought back by an expedition into the wilderness, and where is it said to have come from?

11 Make a plan and sally forth! Ask them about their plans for their first expedition, sit back, and let them sort out the details. If you feel like it's taking too long and no natural leader is emerging, ask them to elect a leader—who has the highest Charisma?—and look to that person for answers when you need to move things forward.

If you're out of time, the first expedition will need to wait until your next game session. Since you know where they're headed, you'll be able to prepare some things ahead of time and give a little more thought to the region before you sit down to play again. If you still have at least an hour of play time left, and you're comfortable improvising, you can just launch into the first expedition right away.

illo of a party setting off on an expedition

(sky/clouds/birds)

illo of a ancient ruins in jungle/mountains

LOST CIVILIZATION

Roll 1d12 once on each column and imagine the story that connects them.

1d12	FOUNDERS	RULER	CAUSE OF RUIN
1	humans	alien/extraplanar entity	decadence/corruption
2	humans	demigod	entropy/chaos
3	humans	demon-king/queen	exhaustion of resources
4	BEAST people	merchant-king/queen	extraplanar incursion
5	BEAST people	necromancer-king/queen	wrath of the gods
6	BEAST people	philosopher-king/queen	civil war/FACTION rebellion
7	dwarves/gnomes	priest-king/queen	invasion
8	dwarves/gnomes	seer/oracle	natural disaster
9	elves	sorcerer-king/queen	plague/disease
10	giants	warlord/chieftain	hubris
11	alien colonists	witch-king/queen	supernatural/arcane disaster
12	roll 1d10, add *high*	council of FACTION	war with LOST CIVILIZATION

BEAST

1-2	WATER-GOING	3-5	AIRBORNE	6-12	EARTHBOUND
1	whale	1	pteranadon	1	dinosaur/megafauna
2	squid/octopus	2	condor	2	elephant/mammoth
3	dolphin/shark	3	eagle/owl	3	ox/rhinoceros
4	alligator/crocodile	4	hawk/falcon	4	bear/ape/gorilla
5	turtle	5	crow/raven	5	deer/horse/camel
6	clam/crab/lobster	6	heron/crane/stork	6	cat/lion/panther
7	fish	7	gull/waterbird	7	dog/wolf/boar/pig
8	frog/toad	8	songbird/parrot	8	snake/lizard/armadillo
9	eel/snake	9	chicken/duck/goose	9	mouse/rat/weasel
10	clam/oyster/snail	10	bee/wasp/hornet	10	ant/centipede/scorpion
11	jelly/anemone	11	locust/dragonfly/moth	11	snail/slug/worm
12	insect/barnacle	12	gnat/mosquito/firefly	12	termite/tick/louse

FACTION

1d12	FACTION TYPE
1	commoner/peasant
2	criminal/corrupt
3	revolutionary/subversive
4	military/mercenary/security
5	religious/theological
6	craft/guild
7	trade/mercantile
8	labor/industrial
9	nationalist/loyalist
10	outsider/foreign
11	academic/arcane
12	roll 1d10+1 twice

RANDOM REGION

When you need to create a new region and need inspiration, roll one up. First, roll 1d12 for the **REGION NAME TEMPLATE**. Then, roll for each component of that template until you have a complete name. Rewrite or re-roll any result you don't like.

1d12	REGION NAME TEMPLATE
1-4	(The) [ADJECTIVE] [TERRAIN]
5-7	[TERRAIN] of (the) [NOUN]
8	The [TERRAIN] [ADJECTIVE]

1d12	REGION NAME TEMPLATE
9-10	(The) [NOUN] [TERRAIN]
11	(The) [NOUN]'s [ADJECTIVE] [TERRAIN]
12	[ADJECTIVE] [TERRAIN] of (the) [NOUN]

1d100	TERRAIN	ADJECTIVE	NOUN
01-02	Bay	Ageless	[Name]*
03-04	Bluffs	Ashen	Ash
05-06	Bog	Black	Bone
07-08	Cliffs	Blessed	Darkness
09-10	Desert	Blighted	Dead
11-12	Downs	Blue	Death
13-14	Dunes	Broken	Desolation
15-16	Expanse	Burning	Despair
17-18	Fells	Cold	Devil
19-20	Fen	Cursed	Doom
21-22	Flats	Dark	Dragon
23-24	Foothills	Dead	Fate
25-26	Forest	Deadly	Fear
27-28	Groves	Deep	Fire
29-30	Heath	Desolate	Fury
31-32	Heights	Diamond	Ghost
33-34	Hills	Dim	Giant
35-36	Hollows	Dismal	God
37-38	Jungle	Dun	Gold
39-40	Lake	Eerie	Heaven
41-42	Lowland	Endless	Hell
43-44	March	Fallen	Honor
45-46	Marsh	Far	Hope
47-48	Meadows	Fell	Horror
49-50	Moor	Flaming	King

1d100	TERRAIN	ADJECTIVE	NOUN
51-52	Morass	Forgotten	Life
53-54	Mounds	Forsaken	Light
55-56	Mountains	Frozen	Lord
57-58	Peaks	Glittering	Mist
59-60	Plains	Golden	Peril
61-62	Prairie	Green	Queen
63-64	Quagmire	Grim	Rain
65-66	Range	Holy	Refuge
67-68	Reach	Impassable	Regret
69-70	Sands	Jagged	Savior
71-72	Savanna	Light	Shadow
73-74	Scarps	Long	Silver
75-76	Sea	Misty	Skull
77-78	Slough	Perilous	Sky
79-80	Sound	Purple	Smoke
81-82	Steppe	Red	Snake
83-84	Swamp	Savage	Sorrow
85-86	Sweep	Shadowy	Storm
87-88	Teeth	Shattered	Sun
89-90	Thicket	Shifting	Thorn
91-92	Upland	Shining	Thunder
93-94	Wall	Silver	Traitor
95-96	Waste	White	Troll
97-98	Wasteland	Wicked	Victory
99-100	Woods	Yellow	Witch

* Choose a name appropriate to your setting; or, if you have a name list, roll one up.

RANDOM PLACE

When you need to create a new place and are at a loss, roll one up. First, roll 1d12 for the **PLACE NAME TEMPLATE**. Then, roll for each component of that template until you have a complete name. Rewrite or re-roll any result you don't like.

1d12	PLACE NAME TEMPLATE
1-2	The [PLACE]
3-4	The [ADJECTIVE] [PLACE]
5-6	The [PLACE] of (the) [NOUN]

1d12	PLACE NAME TEMPLATE
7-8	(The) [NOUN]'s [PLACE]
9-10	[PLACE] of the [ADJECTIVE] [NOUN]
11-12	The [ADJECTIVE] [NOUN]

1d100	PLACE	ADJECTIVE	NOUN
01-02	Barrier	Ancient	[Name]*
03-04	Beach	Ashen	Arm
05-06	Bowl	Black	Ash
07-08	Camp	Bloody	Blood
09-10	Cave	Blue	Child
11-12	Circle	Bright	Cinder
13-14	City	Broken	Corpse
15-16	Cliff	Burning	Crystal
17-18	Crater	Clouded	Dagger
19-20	Crossing	Copper	Death
21-22	Crypt	Cracked	Demon
23-24	Den	Dark	Devil
25-26	Ditch	Dead	Doom
27-28	Falls	Doomed	Eye
29-30	Fence	Endless	Fear
31-32	Field	Fallen	Finger
33-34	Fort	Far	Fire
35-36	Gate	Fearsome	Foot
37-38	Grove	Floating	Ghost
39-40	Hill	Forbidden	Giant
41-42	Hole	Frozen	Goblin
43-44	Hut	Ghostly	God
45-46	Keep	Gloomy	Gold
47-48	Lake	Golden	Hand
49-50	Marsh	Grim	Head

1d100	PLACE	ADJECTIVE	NOUN
51-52	Meadow	Hidden	Heart
53-54	Mountain	High	Hero
55-56	Pit	Iron	Hope
57-58	Post	Jagged	King
59-60	Ridge	Lonely	Knave
61-62	Ring	Lost	Knight
63-64	Rise	Low	Muck
65-66	Road	Near	Mud
67-68	Rock	Petrified	Priest
69-70	Ruin	Red	Queen
71-72	Shrine	Screaming	Sailor
73-74	Spire	Sharp	Silver
75-76	Spring	Shattered	Skull
77-78	Stone	Shifting	Smoke
79-80	Tangle	Shining	Souls
81-82	Temple	Shivering	Spear
83-84	Throne	Shrouded	Spirit
85-86	Tomb	Silver	Stone
87-88	Tower	Stalwart	Sword
89-90	Town	Stoney	Thief
91-92	Tree	Sunken	Troll
93-94	Vale	Thorny	Warrior
95-96	Valley	Thundering	Water
97-98	Village	White	Witch
99-100	Wall	Withered	Wizard

* Choose a name appropriate to your setting; or, if you have a name list, roll one up.

full bleed illo of panoramic landscape, peppered

BASIC MOVES

BURN LUCK

When you *have made ANY ROLL except a +LUC roll*, you may burn 1 Luck to raise or lower the result of that roll by 1.

GET LUCKY

When you *hope things will go your way*, roll +LUC: **on a 10+**, they do, at least for now; **on a 7-9**, they do, but there's a trade-off of the Judge's choosing; **on a 6-**, the Judge will say how your hopes are dashed.

When you *have the highest current Luck of everyone present and a windfall occurs*, you're the one who benefits most.

When you *have the lowest current Luck of everyone present and a misfortune occurs*, you're the one who bears the brunt.

HELP OR HINDER

When you *assist or interfere with someone*, explain how you do so. If the Judge agrees it'll work, the person takes +1 or -1 to their roll, your choice. You may mark bonds with the person to increase or decrease this modifier further, 1-for-1. If you're helping, you expose yourself to the same risk as them.

KNOW SOMETHING

When you *consult your knowledge on a given subject*, say how you came by that knowledge. If the Judge buys it, roll +INT: **on a 10+**, the Judge will answer any questions you have about the subject, within reason; **on a 7-9**, the Judge will tell you something useful about it; **on a 6-**, mark Intelligence, and the Judge makes a move.

SHOULDER BURDEN

When you *carry more weight than your Capacity but no more than twice your Capacity*, you suffer -1 ongoing until you lighten your load. You cannot carry more weight than twice your Capacity.

LEVEL UP

When you *have XP greater than 5+(5x your current level)*, and enough time to reflect on your experiences and hone your skills, do the following:

1) Increase your level by 1.
2) Regain 1 point of burned Luck.
3) If your new level is even (2, 4, 6, etc.):
   - Mark 2 different abilities of your choice (excluding Luck)
   - Increase your maximum hit points by one roll of your hit die, +CON (minimum 1 hit point).
4) If your new level is odd (3, 5, 7, etc.), choose a new **Advanced Move** from your playbook.

MAKE A SAVING THROW

When you *act in the face of danger*, roll...

...+STR to use sheer might
...+DEX to use speed, agility, or finesse
...+CON to resist or endure
...+INT to think fast, focus, or remember
...+WIS to use intuition or willpower
...+CHA to charm or impress

On a 10+, you do it, as well as one could hope; **on a 7-9**, you do it, but there's a catch—the Judge will offer you a worse outcome, hard bargain, or ugly choice; **on a 6-**, mark the ability used and the Judge makes a move.

If you feel the need for a +LUC saving throw, use **Get Lucky** instead.

MARK ABILITY

When you *mark an ability*, mark the next unmarked circle under that ability on your playbook. When you *mark an ability's last unmarked circle*, raise that ability's maximum by 1 (to a maximum of 18), adjust its modifier if necessary, and erase all of its marked circles.

NEGOTIATE

When you *ask someone to do something that goes against their better judgement*, roll...

... +STR to intimidate them
... +INT to appeal to their sense of reason
... +CHA to charm or deceive them

On a 10+, they'll do it; **on a 7-9**, they'll do it, but only if you concede something meaningful in return; **on a 6-**, mark the ability used, and they'll have none of it—time to try another approach.

PERCEIVE

When you *pay close attention*, roll +WIS: **on a 10+**, hold 2; **on a 7-9**, hold 1; **on a 6-**, mark Wisdom, and the Judge makes a move. Spend your hold 1-for-1 to ask the Judge questions about the object of your attention, either now or later. But ask carefully; if there's no way you could reasonably perceive the answer, the Judge will just say that you don't notice anything unusual.

RISE TO THE OCCASION

When you *assume the role of a follower and embrace the life of a freebooter*, choose a follower and fill in a new playbook for them. Follow the usual instructions for making a freebooter, but use the follower's name and what you know about them to choose (instead of roll) their appearance, alignment, and traits. You start with whatever gear the follower had and XP equal to their Luck.

CHECK REACTION

When you *encounter a person or creature that has no particular predisposition toward you*, roll +nothing: **on a 10+**, they react as positively to your presence as their alignment allows; **on a 7-9**, they react warily, waiting to see what you do first; **on a 6-**, they react with as much hostility as their alignment permits.

WRAP UP

When you *reach the end of a session*, do the following:

- *If you fulfilled your alignment goal at least once*, mark XP.
- *If you fulfilled at least one trait in a memorable way*, mark XP.
- *If you're a fighter,* mark XP if you solved a problem with violence.
- *If you're a thief*, mark XP if you solved a problem with stealth or trickery.
- *If you're a cleric*, mark XP if you fulfilled the tenet of your deity.
- *If you're a magic-user*, mark XP if you solved a problem with magic.

Then, answer the following questions as a group. For each "yes" answer, everyone marks XP.

- Did we make an exciting discovery?
- Did we overcome a difficult obstacle?
- Did we acquire some memorable booty?

Finally, you have the option to lose 1 trait, gain 1 trait, and possibly change alignment:

1) Choose 1 of your traits. If you did not act on it this session, and everyone agrees, you may erase that trait.
2) If you acted on a different trait listed on the **TRAIT** table, and everyone agrees, you may gain that trait.
3) In the end, you must have 2 or 3 traits; if you have only 2, 1 must be a vice and 1 must be a virtue.
4) Check to see if your new traits result in an alignment change. If so, record your new alignment and alignment goal.

ALIGNMENT	VIRTUES	VICES
evil	0	3
chaotic	1	2
neutral	1	1
lawful	2	1
good	3	0

BATTLE MOVES

FIGHT

When you *face a foe in hand-to-hand combat*, roll +STR: **on a 10+**, you deal your damage; **on a 7-9**, you deal damage but suffer the enemy's attack as well; **on a 6-**, mark Strength or Constitution (your choice), and the Judge makes a move.

SHOOT OR THROW

When you *attack a target with a ranged weapon*, roll +DEX: **on a 10+**, you inflict damage; **on a 7-9**, you inflict damage after choosing 1 from the list below; **on a 6-**, mark Dexterity, and the Judge makes a move.

* Mark off 1 ammo (a thrown weapon becomes irrecoverable)
* Bad angle—roll damage twice and use the lower roll
* You attract unwanted attention

CHECK MORALE

The first time you *reduce an enemy's headcount or hit point total to less than half its original value*, roll +nothing: **on a 10+**, they attempt to flee or surrender, whichever seems best to them; **on a 7-9**, they attempt to flee or surrender if they're *cautious*, but otherwise continue fighting; **on a 6-**, they will fight to the bitter end. *Fearless* and *mindless* enemies are immune to this move.

LEAD THE RETREAT

When you *urge your comrades to follow your example and run for their lives*, burn 1 Charisma and then roll +CHA: **on a 10+**, each person who runs (including you) takes +1 ongoing until they stop fleeing from the threat; **on a 7-9**, your allies take +1 forward to whatever they do next; **on a 6-**, mark Charisma, and the Judge makes a move.

BITE THE DUST

When you *have zero or fewer hit points*, you're incapacitated and probably dead, but if someone rolls you over to check within a few hours roll +LUC: **on a 10+**, it's a miracle!—you're alive with 1 HP, and choose 2 from the list below; **on a 7-9**, you're alive with 1 HP, and choose 3 from the list; **on a 6-**, you're gone. Which is also the case if no one rolls you over to check within a few hours.

* You're unconscious until you heal up to half your total HP
* You'll die within CON+1 hours (minimum 1) without proper treatment
* You've incurred a major, permanent injury of Judge's choice
* You suffer 1d6 ability score damage to each of 2 abilities (Judge's choice)

When you *die*, you may **Rise to the Occasion** now, or wait until you get back to town and **Sign Up** as a new character.

FOLLOWER MOVES

GIVE ORDERS

When you *demand or expect a follower to do something they really don't want to do*, roll +loyalty: **on a 10+**, they do it, now; **on a 7-9**, they do it, but Judge chooses 1 from the list below; **on a 6-**, mark XP, and the Judge makes a move.

* Decrease the follower's loyalty by 1
* They complain loudly, and demand something in return
* Caution, laziness, or fear makes them take a long time

DO THEIR THING

When you *have a follower do something chancy within the scope of their tags or moves*, roll +quality: **on a 10+**, they do it, as well as one could reasonably hope; **on a 7-9**, they do it, but there's an unforeseen cost, consequence, or limitation (ask the Judge what); **on a 6-**, the Judge makes a move.

CALL FOR ASSISTANCE

When you *make a move that calls for a roll and a follower helps with that move*, you take +1 to that roll, but that follower is exposed to any risks or consequences of the move.

When you *inflict damage with that aid of one or more followers*, roll their damage dice alongside yours and use the highest result. Then, increase the damage inflicted by 1 for each follower assisting.

PAY UP

When you *compensate a follower according to the agreement you made with them*, increase their Loyalty by 1 (to a maximum of +3). This move may only be made once per day.

RECRUIT

When you *go looking to hire help*, tell the Judge who you're looking for, phrased in one of the following ways:

* A group of _____ (porters, minstrels, angry farmers, etc.)
* A skilled _____ (guide, sage, burglar, bodyguard, etc.)

A group is a follower like any other, but with the *group* tag.

If the Judge says you can't find that hereabouts, look for different help or move on. Otherwise, roll +SIZE and take +1 if you have a good reputation in these parts: **on a 10+**, they're yours for the hiring; **on a 7-9**, the Judge chooses 1 from the list below; **on a 6-**, the Judge makes a move.

* They demand better compensation
* No one here fits the bill, but you learn of someone elsewhere who does
* They have a need that must be met first (permission, etc.)
* You can tell at a glance that they're less than ideal (ask the Judge how)

The Judge will choose or roll their specifics as needed (as per a normal NPC, plus COMPETENCE, BACKGROUND, and LOYALTY), to be discovered through play.

SETTLEMENT	SIZE
hamlet	-3
village	-2
keep	0
town	+1
city	+3

SAY GOODBYE

When you *have a follower with -3 Loyalty*, they betray or abandon you at the next opportunity.

TRAVEL & EXPLORATION MOVES

These moves become available whenever you travel a significant distance. Some reference the **safety** of the region, area, or route which you're traversing:

REGION TAG	SAFETY
safe	+2
unsafe	+1
dangerous	+0
perilous	-1

ORGANIZE THE PARTY

When you *are about to travel or explore as a group*, take a moment to decide how the party is organized: who's on lookout, who's bringing up the rear, what the watch order will be, how your gear is distributed, etc. This will be your default plan until the next time you Organize the Party.

SET OUT

When you *embark on a journey*, say where you're headed. The Judge will indicate 1-3 potential routes, their known advantages and drawbacks, and how many **legs** comprise each. Choose which route to take.

When you *start the next leg of a journey*, roll +safety:

ROLL	RESULT
10+	You complete the leg without incident, consume the expected amount of rations, and the Judge may offer someone the chance to **Keep Company**.
9	A MISHAP occurs.
8	You encounter a CREATURE.
7	You make a DISCOVERY.
6	You face a HAZARD.
5-	Your way is blocked by an OBSTACLE.

After you resolve any interruption, the current leg is considered complete.

STAY SHARP

When you *are on the lookout and something approaches*, roll +WIS: **on a 10+**, you get the drop on it, and are able to act before it notices you; **on a 7-9**, you've been spotted, but you have time to alert everyone and prepare; **on a 6-**, mark Wisdom, and the Judge makes a move.

FORAGE

When you *spend a day seeking food in the wild*, roll...

...+DEX to do it stealthily
...+INT to recall useful knowledge
...+WIS to intuit the best spots

On a 10+, gain 1d4 rations, (+1d4 rations if you have the gear to hunt or trap); **on a 7-9**, the 10+ result applies, but you must first deal with an INCIDENT; **on a 6-**, mark Wisdom, and the Judge makes a move.

MAKE CAMP

When you *take a break from your travels to eat and rest*, everyone must consume 1 ration. Anyone who doesn't must burn 1 Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution (their choice). Then, the Judge may offer someone the opportunity to **Keep Company**.

PASS THE NIGHT

When you *settle in to sleep*, take note of the watch order and roll +safety:

ROLL	RESULT
10+	The night passes without incident, and everyone gets restful sleep.
9	Someone may offer a song, story, exhortation, or words of wisdom; everyone who listens takes +1 forward to act on the offering, but their sleep will not be restful.
8	Someone of the Judge's choosing fails to get restful sleep.
7	A MISHAP occurs in the night.
6-	A CREATURE finds your camp.

When you *wake from at least a few hours of restful sleep*, and you ate and drank the night before, you heal 1 +CON points (minimum of 1), applicable to hit points and/or ability points of your choice, excluding Luck. If you have any injuries, check with the Judge to see if they've healed.

KEEP COMPANY

When you *spend time conversing with a party member*, say who it is and roll +bonds you have with that person: **on a 10+**, the conversation goes well—play it out or summarize it, and choose 2 from the list below; **on a 7-9**, play it our or summarize, and choose 1 from the list below; **on a 6-**, mark XP, and the other person describes how the conversation goes poorly; you must make amends on their terms before you can Keep Company with them again.

- You gain 1 bond with them (max. 3)
- They gain 1 bond with you (max. 3)
- Refresh all marked bonds each of you has with the other

When you *spend time alone with your thoughts*, share your internal monologue. If everyone agrees your thoughts are meaningful, take +1 forward to act upon them.

full bleed illo of wilderness/exploring/camping

SETTLEMENT MOVES

These moves become available whenever you spend time in a village, town, city, or other settled community.

ACQUIRE

When you *go looking for something specific and uncommon*, say who you ask about it and roll +CHA: **on a 10+**, they know where you can find it, and it can be had for a fair trade; **on a 7-9**, the Judge chooses 1 from the list below; **on a 6-**, mark Charisma, and the Judge makes a move.

- It'll cost more than expected
- You find a poor substitute
- You can get it, but only if you jump through some hoops first
- It was on hand until just recently, when someone else acquired it

FIND A BUYER

When you *seek to convert valuable objects into coin*, roll +size: **on a 10+**, someone will take it off your hands, but you'll need to **Negotiate** on price; **on a 7-9**, no one's buying today, but you can try again next week; **on a 6-**, the Judge makes a move.

SETTLEMENT	SIZE
hamlet	-3
village	-2
keep	0
town	+1
city	+3

SIGN UP

When you *start a new character from scratch after your previous character died*, roll them up as usual. Then, for each stash circle you had marked off on your previous character, gain 1 XP or 10 silver pieces (your choice). Finally, **Level Up** as many times as your XP dictates, and use your silver to purchase gear.

BANK IT

When you *stash booty*, for each 100 silver pieces worth of treasure you put away, mark 1 XP and 1 circle on your stash. Stashed booty may be retrieved, but loses half its value: each point of stash you erase converts back to 50sp. You may stash a valuable, even if you don't know how much it's worth; the Judge will tell you how many XP and stash circles to mark after you've socked it away.

When you *die*, your final score is the number of boxes checked in your stash box.

When you *mark your last stash circle*, it's finally time to retire from the life of a free-booter. Tell everyone how you spend your stash and bow out with the satisfaction of having lived to tell the tale.

PASS TIME

When you and your companions *spend one week of downtime in a settlement*, each of you pays one week's cost of living, and a volunteer rolls +peace (see below): **on a 10+**, nothing unusual occurs, and you may each make any downtime move; **on a 7-9**, you may each make any downtime move, but a settlement event occurs at the end of the week; **on a 6-**, a settlement event occurs 1d6 days into the week. A settlement event always centers on the person who volunteered to roll.

FOOD & LODGING	COST
camping/squatting	0
poor inn	8 -CHA/week
modest inn	16 -CHA/week
comfortable inn	32 -CHA/week

SETTLEMENT	PEACE
hamlet	+2
village	+1
keep	0
town	-1
city	-2

DOWNTIME MOVES

These moves are available when you **Pass Time**.

CRAFT

When you *spend one week making something*, first convince the Judge you have the skills to do so. Then, gather the necessary supplies. Use the **Marketplace** price list to estimate the cost of supplies and set the **progress** total (rounding up in both cases):

Cost of 1 use of supplies = item cost/5
Progress total = item cost/10

Then, mark 1 use of supplies and roll...

...+STR if it requires brute strength
...+DEX if it requires a delicate touch
...+INT if it requires intense focus
...+WIS if it requires good intuition

On a 10+, mark 1 progress, and choose 1 from the list below; **on a 7-9**, mark 1 progress; **on a 6-**, mark the ability used, and the Judge makes a move.

- **Fast work:** mark 1 additional progress
- **No waste:** regain 1 use of supplies

When you *mark the last point of progress*, the item is finished; add it to your gear.

RECOVER

When you *rest for a week*, you heal hit points, ability points, and/or injuries (at the Judge's discretion) according to your lodging:

LODGING	POINTS HEALED
camping/squatting	2d4 +CON
poor inn	2d6 +CON
modest inn	2d8 +CON
comfortable inn	2d10 +CON

When you *Recover in the care of a skilled healer*, double the result of your roll.

RESEARCH

When you *spend one week of downtime gathering information*, roll...

...+INT to pore over written material
...+WIS to keep an ear to the ground
...+CHA to charm and cajole the locals

On a 10+, the Judge will tell you whatever you want to know, within the limitations of your approach and local resources; **on a 7-9**, the Judge will tell you something useful, and you choose 1 from the list below; **on a 6-**, mark the ability used, and the Judge makes a move.

- Your queries draw unwanted attention
- You also learn an unwelcome truth
- What you find is but a crumb in a longer trail—ask the Judge how you can go about learning more

TRAIN

When you *spend one week of downtime honing your skills*, mark 1 ability of your choice (excluding Luck).

WORK

When you *work a job*, choose the ability best suited to that job, and roll +that ability: **on a 10+**, you outperform expectations and earn bonus pay; **on a 7-9**, you earn the standard amount; **on a 6-**, mark that ability, and the Judge makes a move.

JOB	PAY	BONUS
unskilled labor	8/week	+1d4
skilled labor	12/week	+1d6
specialist	18/week	+1d8

Note that you'll need to find employment before you can work a job. Ask the Judge how you might go about doing that.

JUDGE MOVES

You make one of these moves when:

- Common sense dictates
- They look to you to see what happens
- They give you a golden opportunity
- A 6- result says to do so

MARK A THREAD

When no other move seems applicable, or whenever it makes sense, mark one of your active threads. If they would be aware of the event, describe what they know; otherwise, just let them know something happened offstage.

DELEGATE

When the situation warrants, make a move belonging to a relevant NPC, monster, location, or prop.

OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY

Think about the strengths and proclivities of the individual party members, and choose one as the basis for action. Make that character an offer. The fighter, a master of the longbow, notices one of the enemy is scurrying away; the cleric, faithful to the Goddess of Nature, senses a blight corrupting the local plant life.

PUT SOMEONE IN A SPOT

Force them to make a tough choice by putting them (or someone they care about) in in a dangerous or difficult position.

DEMONSTRATE A DOWNSIDE

Everything has a weakness. Identify one in a character, a piece of equipment, or a perfect plan—and then bring it to the fore.

USE UP THEIR RESOURCES

They need their stuff to survive, and their stuff is limited. You might break an *unreliable* piece of gear, decide that 1d4 rations have spoiled, or mark 1 duration on any active durations.

SAY THE CONSEQUENCES & ASK

Yes, they can do that thing, but there'll be a price to pay. Tell them what it is, and let them decide whether it's worth it.

SHOW SIGNS OF A THREAT

Things are about to go south. Big tracks in the underbrush, ominous drumming in the distance, the stone floor beginning to crack underfoot. What do you do?

REVEAL AN UNWELCOME TRUTH

To their dismay, something is not as it seemed. The gold is iron pyrite; that wound becomes infected; the prisoner is a demon in disguise.

ENDANGER THEM

When the time is right—or when it's all wrong—confront them with a Danger. Choose it based on established information, make up something new, or roll it up on the Danger tables.

TURN THINGS BACK ON THEM

Counter their move with a move made in kind. The fighter ambushes the goblin leader, but an NPC companion is captured; The thief steals a gem, but later the party discovers their campsite's been ransacked.

SEPARATE THEM

Things get confusing in the heat of battle. Difficult terrain or shifting dungeon architecture can break up the party.

DEAL DAMAGE

Inflict HP damage when someone suffers a physical blow, or ability damage when the wear and tear of adventuring takes its toll: a character might suffer 1 point of Constitution damage from an arduous journey, 1d4 points of Strength damage from sustained physical strain, or 1d6 Wisdom damage when confronted by a *terrifying* monster.

HIT POINTS, INJURY & ABILITY DAMAGE

Hit points (HP), **injuries**, and **ability damage** together measure kinds of harm that may be suffered by characters in the game. NPCs and other creatures may possess hit points and receive injuries, but only PCs suffer ability damage. Weapons always inflict HP damage, according to their listed stats; all other harm is inflicted at the discretion of the Judge.

Hit points represent as a character's capacity to withstand physical duress. Think of a character's hit points less as flesh and blood and more a measure of grit, defensive skill, and survivability. When describing a loss of hit points in battle, imagine the character getting worn down as they fend off blows or evade their opponent, suffering only minor injuries until their HP drops to zero or below. At that point, if the character is a PC, **Bite the Dust** gets triggered; if they're not a PC, they die outright.

An **injury** occurs when it makes sense in the fiction, and impacts the fiction accordingly. It might be accompanied by HP damage, but only if it's life-threatening.

EXAMPLE

Outnumbered by the Red Tooth gang, Veronika the fighter jumps out a third-floor window into the street below. I rule that she'll suffer 1d6 damage and needs to Make a Saving Throw with CON or DEX (whichever is better) to avoid breaking a leg; she rolls a 4 for damage and a 5 for the saving throw, so I tell her her leg gives out when she hits the cobblestones. The fictional impact of the broken leg is that it puts her in great pain and limits her mobility—if the Red Teeth manage to give pursuit, they'll be able to catch up with her easily.

Ability damage is a mechanical means of registering other physical and non-physical costs exacted by a life of hardscrabble adventure. Most commonly, PCs will suffer damage to their Constitution or Strength scores when undertaking particularly strenuous or exhausting tasks, but every ability score can be damaged (see table below). 1 point of ability damage is noticeable; 1d4 is serious; 1d6 is potentially debilitating.

ABILITY DAMAGE

Abilities can suffer damage from a variety of sources, as indicated by the DAMAGE SOURCE column. Things like poison, drugs, disease, magic, and divine power might damage any ability. 1 point of ability damage is noticeable; 1d4 is serious; 1d6 is potentially debilitating.

		SUGGESTED TAG BY ABILITY SCORE		
ABILITY	DAMAGE SOURCE	6-8 (-1)	4-5 (-2)	3 (-3)
Strength	fatigue, muscle strain	*weak*	*sapped*	*incapacitated*
Constitution	fatigue, lack of rest, illness	*tired*	*exhausted*	*bed-ridden*
Dexterity	stress, nerve damage	*clumsy*	*shaky*	*palsied*
Intelligence	head injury	*confused*	*stupid*	*mindless*
Wisdom	fear, trauma	*anxious*	*fearful*	*terrified*
Charisma	reputation, disfigurement	*off-putting*	*repellant*	*repulsive*
Luck	magic, divine power	*unlucky*	*cursed*	*doomed*

DISCOVERY

Roll 1d12 for general category, 1d12 for subcategory, 1d12 for specific discovery.

1 · UNNATURAL FEATURE

1	**DIVINE**	**2-3**	**PLANAR/INFERNAL**	**4-12**	**ARCANE**
1	presence	1	outpost	1-4	blight/mutation
2-3	protected place	2-4	portal/gate	5-6	enchantment
4-8	cursed/defiled place	5-8	rift/tear	7-11	taint/residue
9-12	blessed/marked place	9-12	distortion/warp	12	source/portal

2-6 · NATURAL FEATURE

1-2	**LAIR**	**3-5**	**TERRAIN CHANGE**	**6-8**	**WATER FEATURE**
1-4	RUINS	1-2	hollow/cleft/defile	1	sea/ocean
5-7	cave/tunnel	3-4	canyon/valley/vale/dale	2-3	river
8	hive/aerie	7	multilevel/tiered	4-6	lake/pond/pool/tarn
9-10	nest/den	8-9	pocket of TERRAIN	7-11	brook/stream/rill
11-12	burrow/warren	10-12	slope up/down	12	spring/hot spring

9-10	**LANDMARK**	**11-12**	**RESOURCE**		
1	ODDITY	1-4	game/fruit/vegetable		
2-5	earth/rock-based	5-7	timber/stone		
6-9	plant-based	8-9	herbs/spice/dye source		
10-11	striking landscape	10-11	copper/tin/iron		
12	water-based	12	gold/silver/gems		

7-9 · EVIDENCE

1-6	**TRACKS/SPOOR**	**7-10**	**REMAINS/DEBRIS**	**11-12**	**STASH/CACHE**
1-2	trail of blood/fluid	1-4	bones of CREATURE	1-4	owned BOOTY (1d4)
3-4	signs of violence	5-6	CREATURE corpse/carcass	5-7	owned BOOTY (1d6)
5-6	multiple/many signs	7-9	junk/refuse	8-10	owned BOOTY (1d8)
7-9	definite/recent/clear	10-11	1d6 ITEMS	11	owned BOOTY (1d10)
10-12	faint/old/unclear	12	lost TRADE GOOD	12	owned BOOTY (1d12)

10-12 · STRUCTURE

1	**ENIGMATIC**	**2-3**	**INFRASTRUCTURE**	**4-5**	**DWELLING**
1-4	ODDITY	1-3	signpost/marker	1-4	campsite/hovel/hut
5-7	mound/earthworks	4-5	bridge/aqueduct	5-8	farmstead
8	monument/megalith	6-11	track/path/trail/road	9-10	inn/toll house/mill
9-10	statue/idol/totem	12	mine/quarry	11-12	tower/keep/castle

6-7	**RELIGIOUS**	**8-11**	**RUIN**	**12**	**SETTLEMENT**
1-3	grave marker	1-4	DUNGEON	Roll on settlement tables	
4-6	graveyard/burial ground	5-6	STEADING		
7-9	tomb/crypt/barrow	7-8	RELIGIOUS (1d8+4)		
10-11	temple/monastery	9-10	DWELLING (1d8+4)		
12	great temple/sanctuary	11-12	INFRASTRUCTURE (1d8+4)		

INCIDENT

Something happens during the journey, at a point of the Judge's choosing. After it's resolved, the current leg of the journey is considered complete.

MISHAP

An inconvenience or complication that might deplete resources.

1d12	TYPE	EXAMPLES
1	accident	minor injury, sprain, concussion
2-3	navigational	time lost, disorientation
4-5	supplies	spoiled rations, tainted water
6	equipment	breakage (boot, strap, *fragile* item)
7-8	transportation	problem with mount/pack animal
9-10	animal	scavengers, pests, hangers-on
11-12	interpersonal	misunderstanding, argument

OBSTACLE

An obstruction to forward progress that must be overcome or circumnavigated.

1d12	TYPE	EXAMPLES
1	ODDITY	roll on table pX
2	vertical barrier	cliff face, wall, dropoff
3-5	deep water	river, lake
6-7	gap/void	gorge, ravine, chasm, crevasse
8	debris	rockfall, deadfall
9	animal	large herd traveling/grazing/resting
10	barren terrain	desert, swampland, volcanic waste
11-12	impediment	swampland, mud flats, deep snow

HAZARD

A potentially harmful problem that must be dealt with directly or avoided.

1d12	TYPE	EXAMPLES
1	ODDITY	roll on table pX
2	concealed	snare trap, pit trap, ambush
3	sudden	sinkhole, quicksand, mudslide
4-5	navigational	disoriented, lost
6	environmental	wildfire, swamp gas, avalanche
7	animal	stampede, mass migration
8	precarious	ledge, precipice
9-11	meteorological	rainstorm, sandstorm, blizzard
12	treacherous	icy/muddy ground, deadfall, scree

CREATURE

Roll 1d12 +safety for general category, 1d12 for subcategory, 1d12 for specific creature, ALIGNMENT according to the prevailing alignment of the region or culture, and other CREATURE DETAILS as desired. Nail down specifics using the **Create a Creature** procedure (*Beasts & Booty* pX). **Check Reaction** on any creature that does not have a known predisposition toward the party..

1-3 · MONSTER

1	LEGENDARY	2-3	SUPERNATURAL	4-12	FEARSOME
1-2	ODDITY + *huge*	1	divine/demonic lord	1-3	BEAST + ABILITY
3-4	dragon/titan + COLOR	2-3	elemental (ELEMENT)	4-5	BEAST + ODDITY
5-6	dragon/titan + BEAST	4-6	imp/demon	6-7	BEAST + *large*
7-9	dragon/titan	7-8	wight/wraith	8-10	slime/ooze
10-12	BEAST + *huge*	9-12	wisp/ghost/specter	11-12	plant/fungus

4-7 · BEAST

1-2	WATER-GOING	3-5	AIRBORNE	6-12	EARTHBOUND
1	whale	1	pteranadon	1	dinosaur/megafauna
2	squid/octopus	2	condor	2	elephant/mammoth
3	dolphin/shark	3	eagle/owl	3	ox/rhinoceros
4	alligator/crocodile	4	hawk/falcon	4	bear/ape/gorilla
5	turtle	5	crow/raven	5	deer/horse/camel
6	clam/crab/lobster	6	heron/crane/stork	6	cat/lion/panther
7	fish	7	gull/waterbird	7	dog/wolf/boar/pig
8	frog/toad	8	songbird/parrot	8	snake/lizard/armadillo
9	eel/snake	9	chicken/duck/goose	9	mouse/rat/weasel
10	clam/oyster/snail	10	bee/wasp/hornet	10	ant/centipede/scorpion
11	jelly/anemone	11	locust/dragonfly/moth	11	snail/slug/worm
12	insect/barnacle	12	gnat/mosquito/firefly	12	termite/tick/louse

8-9 · HUMANOID

If the dominant culture of the region is not human, substitute "human" for one of the asterisked (*) entries. Roll NPC OCCUPATON, MOTIVE, and TRAITS if time allows.

1-2	RARE	3-5	UNCOMMON	6-12	COMMON
1-2	human + MONSTER	1	cyclops/giant (*large*)	1-2	orc/hobgoblin/gnoll
3-4	major *undead*	2-3	ogre/troll (*large*)	3-5	goblin/kobold
5-6	wereBEAST	4-7	minor *undead*	6-7	half-elf/half-orc etc.
7-8	human + BEAST	8	lizardfolk/merfolk	8-9	halfling* (*small*)
9-10	fey/fairy	9	catfolk/birdfolk	10-12	mixed party (*group*)
11-12	elf*	10-12	dwarf/gnome* (*small*)		

10+ · HUMAN

If humans do not comprise the dominant culture of the region, substitute the species that is dominant. Roll NPC OCCUPATON, MOTIVE, and TRAITS if time allows.

DETAILS

Use whichever of these tables seem appropriate, whenever you need prompts for ideas and descriptions.

ABILITY

1	bless/curse
2	entrap/paralyze
3	levitate/fly/teleport
4	telepathy/mind control
5	mimic/camouflage
6	seduce/hypnotize
7	dissolve/disintegrate
8	based on ASPECT
9	based on ELEMENT
10	drain life/drain magic
11	MAGIC TYPE
12	roll 1d10+1 twice

ACTIVITY

1	laying trap/ambush
2	fighting/at war
3	prowling/on patrol
4	hunting/foraging
5	eating/resting
6	arguing/infighting
7	traveling/exploring
8	trading/negotiating
9	fleeing/running away
10	building/excavating
11	sleeping/unconscious
12	nursing injury/dying

ADJECTIVE

1	slick/slimy
2	rough/hard/sharp
3	smooth/soft/dull
4	corroded/rusty
5	rotten/decaying
6	broken/brittle
7	stinking/smelly
8	weak/thin/drained
9	strong/fat/full
10	pale/poor/shallow
11	dark/rich/deep
12	colorful

AGE

1	unborn/nascent
2	being born/budding
3	newborn/blossoming
4-6	young/green
7-9	mature/ripe
10	old/going soft
11	dead/withered/ancient
12	dust/pre-historic

ALIGNMENT

	PREVAILING ALIGNMENT				
	G	L	N	C	E
1	g	g	g	g	g
2	g	g	l	g	l
3	g	l	l	l	l
4	g	l	n	n	n
5	g	l	n	n	n
6	l	l	n	c	c
7	l	l	n	c	c
8	n	n	n	c	e
9	n	n	n	c	e
10	c	n	c	c	e
11	c	e	c	e	e
12	e	e	e	e	e

ASPECT

1	war/discord
2	hate/envy
3	power/strength
4	trickery/dexterity
5	time/constitution
6	lore/intelligence
7	nature/wisdom
8	culture/charisma
9	luck/fortune
10	love/admiration
11	peace/balance
12	glory/divinity

COLOR

1	white/bright/pale
2	red/pink/maroon
3	orange/peach
4	yellow/mustard/ochre
5	green/chartreuse/sage
6	blue/aquamarine/indigo
7	violet/purple
8	gray/slate
9	brown/beige/tan
10	black/dark
11	metallic/prismatic
12	transparent/clear

CONDITION

1	being built/born
2-4	intact/healthy
5-7	active/alert
8-9	weathered/tired/weak
10	vacant/lost
11	damaged/hurt/dying
12	broken/missing/dead

DESIGN

1	blank/plain
2	floral/organic
3	circular/curvilinear
4	geometric/triangular
5	asymmetrical
6	square/rectilinear
7	meandering/labyrinthine
8	oceanic/wavelike
9	astrological/cosmic
10	balanced/harmonious
11	erratic/chaotic/random
12	roll 1d10+1 twice

ELEMENT

1	void
2	death/darkness
3-4	fire/metal/smoke
5-6	earth/stone/vegetation
7-8	water/ice/mist
9-10	air/wind/storm
11	life/light
12	stars/cosmos

FACTION

1	commoner/peasant
2	criminal/corrupt
3	revolutionary/subversive
4	military/merc/security
5	religious/theological
6	craft/guild
7	trade/mercantile
8	labor/industrial
9	nationalist/loyalist
10	outsider/foreign
11	academic/arcane
12	roll 1d10+1 twice, combine

MAGIC TYPE

1	necromancy
2-3	evocation/destruction
4	conjuration/summoning
5	illusion/glamour
6	enchantment/artifice
7	transformation
8	warding/binding
9-10	ELEMENTAL
11	restoration/healing
12	divination/scrying

ODDITY

1	bright/garish/harsh
2	geometric/concentric
3	web/network
4	crystalline/glassy
5	fungal/slimy/moldy
6	gaseous/misty/smoky
7	mirage/illusion
8	volcanic/explosive
9	magnetic/repellant
10	multilevel/tiered
11	absurd/impossible
12	roll 1d10+1 twice

ORIENTATION

1-2	down/earthward
3	north
4	northeast
5	east
6	southeast
7	south
8	southwest
9	west
10	northwest
11-12	up/skyward

TERRAIN

1	sea/ocean
2	wasteland/desert
4-6	lowland/plains
6	wetland/swamp
7-8	woodland/jungle
9-10	highland/hills
11	mountains
12	roll 1d10+1, +ODDITY

VISIBILITY

1-2	buried/hidden/invisible
3-6	obscured/overgrown
7-9	obvious/in plain sight
10-11	visible at near distance
12	visible at far distance

THREADS

"Make the world come alive" is an important Principle. The players should feel like their characters are in a living, breathing place that can be affected by their actions, but that would continue on without them if they weren't around. This feeling emphasizes the struggle to survive and succeed at the core of the game, and heightens the sense of accomplishment with each new level a character achieves.

Maintaining a living fictional world might seem like a lot of work for the Judge, but that work can be organized and simplified to the point where it takes up very little prep time. In *Freebooters*, the tool used to that end is called a "thread."

A thread is a kind of countdown or timer that the Judge uses to keep track of things transpiring "offstage" or in the background of the fiction being played out by the PCs. A thread can be used to track everything from a budding romance between a PC and NPC to a kingdom mobilizing for war.

STARTING A THREAD

The Judge can make the Judge move "Start or mark a thread" like any other Judge move; all she needs is the right opportunity. An opportunity in this sense is any time the fiction suggests a sequence of background events that might eventually impact the PCs.

When you start a thread, write down a word or phrase that summarizes the content of the thread. While the fact that a thread is being started need not be withheld from the players, the nature and contents of a thread are often only known to the Judge until the PCs become aware of its effects by witnessing them in-game.

EXAMPLES

① *The party raids a swamp tomb and escapes with some booty. When they look to the Judge to see what happens next, the Judge sees an opportunity to start a thread, and decides that breaking the seal on the tomb awakened the dead within. Over time, the dead will slowly emerge and move toward the nearest settlement. She tells the players that she's starting a thread and decides to name it "The Tomb Curse," but chooses not to tell them the name or anything else about it, since the characters don't yet realize their actions have awakened the dead.*

② *During a jungle expedition, Jan the Fighter is bitten by a poisonous snake. He needs to Make Saving Throw to resist the effects of the poison, and Jan's player rolls a 5. The Judge makes a move by starting a thread that he calls "Jan Poisoned," and tells everyone as much, but does not reveal the contents of the thread. Jan knows he's been bitten, but the longterm effects of the bite will not be clear until enough time has passed.*

③ *In town, Matild the Thief saves Lazlo the NPC beggar from public humiliation and Lazlo is deeply grateful, asking Matild if there's anything he can do for her. Matild mumbles, "Sure—find enough silver to pay off my debt to Bognar," and looks to the Judge to see what happens next. The Judge decides that Lazlo takes Matild's throwaway comment to heart and starts a thread named "Marla's Debt," which will track Lazlo's progress in saving enough silver to eventually pay off Bognar. The Judge reveals nothing beyond saying, "Lazlo looks you hard in the eye before he squeezes your hand and disappears into the crowd."*

KNOTTING A THREAD

At some point after starting a thread by writing it down, you'll need to define it further, by giving it a length and choosing specific effects or events that will occur at different points along its length.

The length of a thread is an abstracted representation of how much time will pass before the thread ends, and is quantified by the number of steps, or "knots" in the thread. You can think of each knot as one tick of a countdown. A thread can be any length, but limiting your choice to 3 (short), 5 (medium), or 7 (long) knots makes things easier.

When you choose a length for a thread, draw the knots along a vertical line under the thread name.

EXAMPLE

① *The Judge decides that "The Tomb Curse" is a slow-burning Thread, but not super long, so she assigns it 5 knots:*

THE TOMB CURSE
○
○
○
○
○
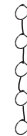
Write an event or effect next to the last knot—this is the thing that happens when the thread reaches its natural conclusion. The last knot should always be something that has a noticeable impact on the world and/or characters. It doesn't always need to be earth-shattering, but it should be meaningful. Write that last event with dramatic impact mind.

Then, if it seems appropriate, add events to some or all of the other knots. Each event you add should mark progress toward the thread's conclusion.

EXAMPLE

① *The Judge decides that the Tomb Curse will reach its conclusion when the arisen dead reach the settlement of Graybridge (the party's home base). Thinking about what might lead up to that event, she chooses a couple of other markers of their progress and writes each next to its own knot.*

THE TOMB CURSE
○ The dead leave the tomb
○
○ The dead cross the swamp
○
○ The dead attack Graybridge!

Once you've written in as many events as you feel necessary, your thread is ready to play out in the background until the PCs become aware of it and take action to change it, or until it runs its course.

MARKING A THREAD

The other part of the Judge move "Start or mark a thread" is the marking. When you mark a thread, you check off the next knot in the sequence. This means that the event attached to to that knot occurs, and that the thread is one step closer to its end.

When you mark a thread, and there's an event written next to the marked knot, that event takes place. If the PCs have any way of knowing about the event, tell them what they would know and play to find out what happens next; otherwise, just mark it and carry on with play. Keep in mind that although they may not witness a particular event first-hand, the PCs might encounter evidence or repercussions of its occurrence later on.

If the players are not privy to the contents of the thread, and don't have any way of knowing that a particular event just occurred, feel free to tell them you're marking a thread, but don't tell them what it means.