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**Author's Note:** Table-top role playing games (RPGs) are unique among game forms. Generations of people discovered how playing catapults their creative minds into different realms, while assuming adventurers' lives not yet imagined. But what really makes these games unique? I believe it's the social aspect. Not even video games can compete with the fun of friends sitting together to spin collaborative stories.

Unfortunately, too many gamers today miss out on the true RPG experience, seemingly glued permanently to their computer chairs, their alter-egos running around in binary realms of imagining. One can only assume these poor souls yearn for a place of limitless creative immersion, but lost their way in Massively Multi-Player Dungeons.

Luckily, you hold in your hands a game that celebrates a long tradition of games played with polyhedral dice, paper and pencils in actual 3-D space. The authors honor the roots of the hobby without reinventing the wheel (or digging up the carcasses of sacred cows). Herein, you'll find fun rules of play and an open-ended invitation to explore high fantasy worlds anew, whether veterans of the game form or refugees from online tourist traps.

The Eldritch Role Playing (or ERP for short) system is written for gamers who enjoy having myriad character options, exciting and diverse action scenes, without losing a narrative focus. Adventuring campaigns are about the development of characters into true world-shaking heroes, supported by the rules described below in a nutshell:

**Combat :** Attacker rolls dice to determine "Potential Harm", opponent chooses defense type; any exceeding "threat points" affect armor, then the body. There is no traditional, somewhat boring hit-or-miss "attack roll".

**Action resolution:** The challenge for many actions is determined by a random roll, the difficulty of actions represented by a basic system which plays very quickly, allowing for instant results that do not interrupt the flow of the story. No heroic act is impossible.

**Character Concept:** You will play exactly the character you want, with plenty of room for development and diversity. New characters are created through a point-buy method, granting full flexibility of design. Characters advance by levels of experience without being tied to specific occupational classes.

**Magic:** There are different sources of power; mystic study, supernatural awareness, primordial connection, and psychogenic ability. Magic is powerful and flexible, while unified and streamlined rules prevent ludicrous effects. Fighter and thief types are just as viable at any level as those schooled in magic, and "multi-classing" is not restricted. ERP Characters can specialize in one area or dabble in many.

Most importantly, the game is not difficult to play or learn, whether by young adults or big kids like the authors.

-Dan Cross



# Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>The Action System</b>	<b>9</b>
		Multiple Attacks	10
		Order of Defense in Battle	10
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>		
<b>Why another Fantasy RPG?</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Designing Monsters and NPCs in Eldritch Role Playing</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Dice conventions</b>	<b>4</b>		
<b>Abilities</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Magic in Eldritch</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Sample Character Creation</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>The Magic System</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Equipment</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>A Brief Description of Play</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Defense</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Sample Adventure</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Armor</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Spells Known list</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Potential-Harm and Threat Points</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>The Adventure</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>The Attack Action</b>	<b>9</b>		
Basic martial ability and Weapon Statistics	9		

Visit the Eldritch forums at [www.goodman-games.com/forums](http://www.goodman-games.com/forums) to connect with other fans, talk to the designers, and post stories from your games!



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# Introduction

*“The hero may refuse the adventure or deny the ability to move beyond the status quo. The heralded event may even be ignored – All of these constitute the ‘Refusal of the Call.’” -Joseph Campbell, the Hero with a Thousand Faces*

To all intrepid Masters of the Game:

This Quickstart guide to the Eldritch Role Playing (ERP) RPG enables you and your gaming group to travel far beyond the threshold of the familiar into a fascinating realm of new role-playing challenges and experiences.

## Why another Fantasy RPG?

As a seasoned Game Master, you might scoff at the notion of yet another fantasy role-playing system (FRPG). Who needs another “elves, dwarves, and dragons” game, when so many continue to utilize tired tropes and game mechanics? I feel your pain; I felt the same way. And yet I was excited when my friend Randall Petras offered to collaborate on a new epic fantasy game. Like most aficionados of tabletop gaming, we had developed our own preferences over the years, and had a very good idea of how we felt an epic fantasy RPG should be designed. The trick was creating a game that translates our preferences into an effective theme and style, while differentiating itself from the competition. There is no guarantee that anybody’s vision will be particularly marketable in our small industry. Nevertheless, after an arduous journey in design and playtest, we think we created something special. And Goodman Games ultimately agreed; there is indeed room for another iteration of the epic fantasy game.

With that said, let us start our journey...

## Dice conventions

This game rates character abilities on a scale of D4 through D12: The higher the polyhedral die size, the better the proficiency level. For any single ability, die type corresponds to “rank”; the more sides on the die, the higher the rank. Ability ranks normally progress from D4 through D12. This is the “**die-rank**.” Note that most abilities in the game default to an untrained score of D4. Some abilities require more training, requiring the

purchase of rank D4 with character points. Many in-game calculations require the highest possible number rolled on a die-rank. This number is the Maximum Rank Value, abbreviated **MRV**.

TABLE 1.1 DIE-RANKS HIERARCHY

Character Skill	Die Rank
Average	D4 (Average human rank)
Respectable	D6
Good	D8
Great	D10
Superb	D12 (Highest Player Character rank)
*Superhuman	D16 (Roll D20, re-rolling values greater than 16)
*Extreme	D20

\* Generally reserved for special monsters or powerful magic items granting such ability.

A single ability can branch off into several narrower focuses; each branch represented by up to two additional dice, with each die representing successive tiers of ability. There are up to three tiers of ability in any one branch, beginning with the root ability, called *basic*. Next is *specialization*, and *mastery*, respectively.

These tiers are often separated by an “>” sign wherever listed in the rules. For example, *Weapons (basic) > Swords (specialization) > Long Sword (mastery)*. The basic rank plus all of its branches constitutes an **ability tree**. A Specialization is a refinement of a basic ability. As a rule of thumb, any skill Specialization should be applicable to roughly 10% to 20% of the situations that apply to a base ability. Likewise, Mastery is a refinement of a Specialization, and should be applicable to about 10% to 20% of the uses of the Specialization. The GM might allow the roll of additional dice if he deems a Specialization or Mastery relevant to the task or attempted feat. For instance, if one creature is shadowing another in the city, and one character happens to be specialized in *City Stealth*, he would add his Specialization to the roll. If he had mastered *Shadowing* under the same branch as “City Stealth,” then he would add that die as well.



# Sample Character Creation

In the Eldritch Role Playing game, you can play any sort of character imaginable. However, to better illustrate how the game works this Quickguide provides pregenerated characters. Note that all pregenerated characters in this Quickstart guide are simplified characters, for purposes of illustration, and do not reflect all choices in the core rules.

In this instance, imagine that you are a young adventurer, preparing to embark on a life-threatening mission. Now we will walk you through a significantly condensed character sheet.

Name: You, A Young Adventurer
<p><b>Melee:</b> D10 (basic) + D8 in Swords (specialization) + D4 Long Sword (mastery)  <i>Weapon specifics:</i> Long Sword +3 threat point, 2 max-split, +2 initiative. Only characters specialized in a weapon group enjoy specific weapon bonuses.</p> <p><b>Ranged Attack:</b> D4 (basic, a default automatically granted).</p> <p><b>Unarmed Attack:</b> D4 (basic, a default automatically granted).</p> <p><b>Distinguishing Abilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Agility D4</li> <li>*Arcanum D4 (basic) &gt; Supernatural D4 (specialization)</li> <li>*Reflexes D4 (5<sup>th</sup> in initiative order)</li> <li>*Resistance D4</li> <li>*Scouting D8 &gt; Underground D4 (or Outdoors D4)</li> <li>*Speed D4</li> <li>*Willpower D4</li> </ul> <p><b>Racial Features (human):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Willpower D6</li> <li>*Endurance D6.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Active Defense Pools (hit points)</b></p> <p>Weaponry (Weapons + Specializations + Masteries): 22</p> <p>Evade (Reflexes + Agility): 8</p> <p>Dodge (Speed + Agility): 8</p> <p>Deflect (Base Melee MRV + Shield + Magic): 10</p> <p><b>Passive Defense Pools (hit points)</b></p> <p>Toughness (Endurance x2 + Resistance): 28</p> <p>Resilience (Resistance x2 + Willpower + Arcanum tree): 20</p> <p>Armor</p> <p>Armor: Studded leather 1d6</p> <p>Shield: does not hold a shield. No damage reduction.</p>
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## Abilities

Abilities are at the heart of ERP, and describe any skill or capacity known by a creature. Note that you, the player, choose the level of your character's intellect, wisdom, and charisma. There are no rules in ERP to restrict these abstract attributes. Nor are there rules to dictate whether the character relies more on brute strength versus adroitness and speed in battle. You have full freedom to interpret such attributes within the scope of your desired **character concept**. The rules do not force an interpretation of ability. The die-ranks measure levels of knowledge and proficiency, not the exact *type* of proficiency or capacity. The player or GM fills in those details.

Your sample character's abilities reflect that you are a highly skilled adventurer. For example, your proficiency with melee weapons is great, meaning a basic die-rank of D10.

You are not only generally proficient with melee weapons, but are adept with swords as well, specialized at a rank of D8. Finally, you are a master of the long sword—although, among masters, considered only average—with a rank of D4. You would write this logical succession of ability as Melee D10 > Swords D8 > Long sword D4. Whenever you wield a long sword and attack





an enemy, you roll all three dice simultaneously; the dice roll constituting an “**Ability-Dice-Chain**,” a concept abbreviated **ADC**.

An ADC is a single branch of an Ability Tree linked together by some logical succession. No ability check can incorporate more than a single roll of the root ability, plus one of its Specializations, and one of the Specialization’s Masteries. This does not preclude several Specializations under the root ability, or several Masteries under any one Specialization.

There are many types of skills, knowledge, and capacities to choose from in the game, and characters may attempt most of those abilities without formal training. Such “unrestricted abilities” default to an *average* ranking of D4. Also, all races have minimum Die-Rank requirements in specific abilities, purchased with character points at the time of creation. The common fantasy races are represented in Eldritch Role Playing; elf, half-elf, dwarf, half-orc, halfling, and gnome. Racial ability “packages” are simply bundles of abilities. Like most humans, you possess respectable Willpower and Endurance, meaning a die-rank of D6 in both abilities.

You are also is good in Scouting (D8), underground as well as outdoors (both specialized at D4), an ability you learned from training with rangers. Lastly, you have some basic knowledge of the Arcane (D4), a restricted art due to reading through your late father’s library. You even learned to tap a bit into the supernatural realm as a primary source of magical power (magic will be explained further later). For action in any story, the most important abilities are Agility, Endurance, Reflexes, Resistance, Speed, and Willpower. Because this is a game of heroes, no ability can fall beneath “average” (rank D4) at character creation (unless, for some reason, the player wishes it so). Thus, our adventurer has a default D4 in all of those abilities.

#### **Sample Ability-Dice-Chains**

Below is a sample list of some basic abilities, specializations, and related masteries: A \* by the skill indicates that the Ability Tree (basic skill, plus all of its branches) are added up cumulatively, using MRV of dice-ranks, then applied to some corresponding Defense Pool (or DP). A ‡ indicates that the Ability can or always contributes to Potential-Harm.

Agility \* > Acrobatics > Falling, tumbling, evasion  
 Agility\* > Balance > Combat, climbing, performance  
 Animal Handling > Riding > Animal type

Appraisal > Coins > Counterfeit  
 Appraisal > Weapons > weapon group  
 Arcanum \*‡ > *See Magic section*  
 Artistry (R) > Acting > Emotion, comedy, drama  
 Artistry (R) > Musical Instrument > Lute  
 Augury > Astrology > Horoscopes, omens  
 Augury > Cards > Omens, personal readings  
 Coercion (R) > > Blackmail, bodily harm  
 Coercion (R) > Interrogation > Torture, inquisition  
 Climbing > Man-made Surface > Ropes, buildings  
 Climbing > Natural Surfaces > Rocks, trees  
 Endurance \* > Climate > Desert, mountains, etc.  
 Endurance \* > Pain > Physical, elemental, torture  
 Feats of Strength > Breaking & Bending > Break Doors  
 Feats of Strength > Lifting & Carrying > Lifting  
 Feats of Strength > Pushing & Pulling > Push, pull  
 Investigation > Court & Politics > Heraldry  
 Investigation > Investigation > Questioning  
 Investigation > Military > Arms, equipment  
 Investigation > Scholarly > Specific academic field  
 Investigation > Streetwise > Organizations  
 Handicraft > Cobbling > Boots, slippers, shoes  
 Handicraft > Weaving > Flax, wool  
 Handicraft > Woodworking > Boat making,  
 Healing (R) > Animals > Wound type  
 Healing (R) > Disease > Disease type  
 Healing (R) > Herbs > Function of herb  
 Knowledge > Anthropology > Specific race  
 Knowledge > Engineering > Architecture  
 Knowledge > History > By era or culture  
 Knowledge > Linguistics > Specific language  
 Knowledge > Mathematics > Astronomy  
 Knowledge > Religion > Specific pantheon  
 Melee Weapons \*‡ - *See Combat section.*  
 Perform (R) > Singing > Soprano, bass, etc.  
 Perform (R) > Story telling > Inspirational, tragic  
 Ranged Weapons ‡ - *See Combat section.*  
 Reflexes \* > Catching > Catching knives/weapons  
 Reflexes \* > Combat Reflexes > quick draw  
 Reflexes \* > Dodging > Missile weapons, traps  
 Resistance \* > Poison > Drinking, iocane powder  
 Resistance \* > Drinking > Beer & ale, wine, liquor  
 Scouting (R) > Tracking > Specific terrain  
 Scouting (R) > Surveillance > Urban versus  
 Scrutiny > Movement > Terrain type  
 Scrutiny > Read lips > Specific race  
 Scrutiny > Security > Timing  
 Scrutiny > Sense Mood > Anger  
 Scrutiny > Sense Motive > Guilt  
 Skullduggery > Disguise > Gender  
 Skullduggery > Forgery > Handwriting  
 Skullduggery > Lie > Bluff  
 Skullduggery > Sense Motive > Bluffs  
 Speed \* > Track, Marathon, Sprint > By terrain  
 Stealth > Ambush > By terrain type  
 Stealth > Hide > By terrain type  
 Stealth > Shadowing > By terrain type



Stealth > Walk Silently > By terrain type  
 Survival > By Terrain Type > Find water, fish  
 Thievery (R) > Disable Device > Mechanical  
 Thievery (R) > Filch > Pickpocket, cutpurse  
 Thievery (R) > Open Lock > Combination, key  
 Unarmed Combat \*‡ - See *Combat section*.  
 Willpower \* > Resist Control > Mind, body

### Equipment

Next, we inspect your equipment. All characters begin play with equipment appropriate to the life of an adventurer. This usually includes one month of travel rations, a simple mount, lantern or torches, rope, backpacks, sacks, coin purses, etc. Clothes and starting money can be whatever you and the GM deem appropriate. Because you are primarily a fighter, you begin play with one weapon of choice. And, of course, being a master, you choose the long sword. Lastly, the GM deemed your background story justified leather armor, nothing greater.

Note that the ERP game rules do not list mundane items in excruciating detail. After all, the stock-in-trade of adventurers is primarily weapons, magic items, and armor. Accordingly, the core rules cover these important items thoroughly. Normal treasure found during the course of an adventure takes many forms. However, players can usually find ways to convert loot into regular currency without an ordeal.

### Defense

Lastly, all full-fledged characters in the ERP game possess six different hit point pools, with scores designed to mitigate harm of many different types. The game categorizes these reservoirs of defense into Active Defenses (Weaponry, Evade, Deflect, Dodge) and Passive Defenses (Resilience and Toughness).

Active defenses cover defensive ability with weaponry, evasive maneuvering (versus close attacks), blocking with shields or other objects, and dodging ranged attacks. Passive Defense covers resilience to magical and unusual types of harm, and overall toughness of the body.

Our adventurer calculates his Active Defenses by adding the Maximum Rank Value (MRV) of all the listed abilities. For weaponry, you would add up the MRV of every die-rank in the Melee Ability Tree. For this adventurer, you are adding D10 (basic) + D8 in Swords (specialization) + D4 Long Sword (mastery), for 22. For Evade, your Reflexes and Agility are both at D4, so it adds up to 8 hit points. In addition, for Dodge, your Speed and Agility are at D4, so another 8 hit points.

Weaponry (Weapons + Specializations + Masteries): 22

Evade (Reflexes + Agility): 8

Dodge (Speed + Agility): 8

Deflect (Base Melee MRV + Shield + Magic): 10

**Active Defenses are fully refreshed, at 100%, after officially escaping a dangerous situation or ending combat.** Characters refresh their Active Defenses to full either after defeating a single opponent, or after ending a “whole room battle” involving multiple opponents. Calculate Passive Defenses in a similar fashion.

Resilience prevents many sorts of unusual effects (like being stunned, poisoned, beguiled, etc). Zero Resilience means the character is vulnerable to myriad unfortunate effects, including magic or psychogenic powers. Some magical attacks can bypass Active Defenses, and penetrate Resilience, and then exceeding that score, the remaining threat points directly affect Toughness. Most creatures recover Resilience hit points at a rate of 10% of their maximum hit points every hour of waking, or 20% each hour of sleep (always round up).

Toughness is your last line of defense before dropping unconscious or dead. Any threat points exceeding the chosen Active Defense affects Toughness. A negative Toughness score causes unconsciousness, then bleeding at a rate of 1 point per round until somebody successfully administers first aid using magic or the Heal skill. Toughness DP recovers 1 hit point per day of rest or 2 hit points per day of total bed rest, unless aided by magic or healing ability.

Toughness (Endurance  $\times 2$  + Resistance): 28

Resilience (Resistance  $\times 2$  + Willpower + Arcanum tree): 20

Do not worry about memorizing any formulas: The official ERP character sheet allows you to fill in all defense pool values before play.

### Armor

Luckily, armor can come into play every time an attack exceeds the maximum of the defender's Active Defense hit point score. Armor normally reduces penetrating threat points, helping to mitigate harm before Toughness drops to zero.

Armor protection uses the roll of a random die to reduce the Potential-Harm of an attack (see Potential-Harm, below). The higher the roll, the more points are subtracted from the threat points. Only make an armor check when threat points



exceed the Active Defense Pool chosen by the defender. A high roll either means that the armor afforded its wearer good protection or that the attacker's strike was less than perfect. A low roll means the attacker penetrated a vulnerable area of the armor, simulating the chaotic nature of battle. Alternatively, a poor roll may represent greater luck or a more precise strike on the part of the attacker...whichever interpretation works.

### Potential-Harm and Threat Points

Potential-Harm is representative of *possible* damage from a number of different attack forms, reducing an opponent's defenses. Rolling for Potential-Harm results in "threat points" which must be mitigated (meaning reduced or eliminated) by the defender's chosen **Defense Pool**. Threat points exceeding the target's chosen defenses can become "damage."







Part 2

# The Action System

Skill checks are very easy in this game. Each side rolls the dice, the higher result winning the contest, with the defender winning any ties. The challenge for a task is either an active opponent or static opposition. An active opponent provides opposition based on his abilities. Static opposition arises solely from the nature of the situation. An active opponent will use an ability to challenge the character's attempt. In such cases, the opponent rolls dice in whatever ability is relevant to oppose the character's ability check. Specializations and Masteries add to the difficulty of the opposed test, the combined dice constituting the character's Ability-Dice-Chain. Such rolls generally occur between a PC and an NPC or monster, but opposed rolls could also take place between two PCs. Static opposition happens when there is no active, living opponent, such as when a character is trying to climb a wall; obviously, the wall is not trying to push the character off. For ability checks of this type, the Game Master will assign an appropriate Challenge Rank. The challenge will correspond to a number of dice used in an opposition roll. The result of that roll is the "target number" that must be matched or exceeded with a roll of the PC's relevant ADC. See below for the levels of challenge and their corresponding ranks:

Challenge Rank	Opposition Dice
Easy	1D4
Moderate	2D4
Difficult	2D6
Demanding	2D8
Formidable	2D10
Extreme	2D12

Rolling random dice makes it easy for the GM to provide quick challenge without referring to charts, and heroes can indeed succeed against extreme odds, even by dumb luck at times.

In situations where dumb luck should not apply, the GM may want to forgo using random dice to determine challenge and set a target number. Of course, target numbers over 4 guarantees some characters will fail the action (if their relevant

ability is D4 or less). Of course, players don't have to be told their target numbers...which can be set at 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 16, 20, 24, or even higher.

### The Attack Action

A standard attempt to inflict Potential-Harm requires no "to-hit" roll. Instead, once the attacker determines the method of harm, the defender chooses an appropriate Active Defense Pool (ADP) to thwart the effectiveness of the impending attack. When a creature rolls for Potential-Harm, it will be effective and do harm unless the defender can avoid or mitigate the threat points (the result of the Potential-Harm ability roll). The defender then decides which Active Defense to use to defend against each attack.

For instance, he may parry with a weapon (Weaponry ADP), physically sidestep a close attack (Evade ADP), jump out of the way of a ranged attack (Dodge ADP), or block with his shield (Deflect ADP). A creature can choose only one form of defense against an individual strike, whether it be from a blade (where Weaponry, Evade, or Deflect would work) or a lightning bolt (where Dodge may work, and failing that, Resilience).

### Basic martial ability and Weapon Statistics

Basic rank of D4 is automatically granted for Melee, Ranged, and Unarmed attacks. This is because anybody can pick up a large stick and swing it, throw stones, or punch another creature. Additional dice represent levels of Specialization or Mastery during an attack, increasing the Potential-Harm against an opponent, or the odds in some other contest of skill.

Specialization in an entire group of weaponry allows harm bonuses for specific types of weapons brought into play, and Mastery in single, specific weapons grants the warrior even greater damage potential and defensive capabilities.

Making an attack using only basic Ranged rank is considered reckless (unless the creature is a beast using a natural weapon), and allows for no specific weapon bonuses. Monsters with only a basic rank



## WEAPONS

Name	Handedness	Harm bonus	Mastery Bonus to Weaponry DP	Max-Split
Combat Axe	1H	2	10	2
Club	1H	1	5	2
Military Hammer	1H	1	10	2
Short Sword	1H	2	10	3
Long Sword	1H	3	15	2
Long - used 2H	2H	3	20	2

in close or ranged attacks fall under this category. Weapons are listed with Handedness, Harm Bonus (either 0, +1, +2, +3, or +4), Mastery Defense Bonus (ranges from zero to twenty, measuring the weapon's defensive potential in the hands of a master), and Max-split with a specific weapon (how many times an ADC can be split to make separate attacks). See Above.

### Multiple Attacks

A character normally combines the dice of a combat related ADC into a single attack (like 1D4 Melee + 1D4 Bludgeons = 2D4 attack), but may also split the dice to make separate strikes (1D4 attack & another 1D4 attack). Why would a player want to split attacks? Splitting attacks allows the targeting of multiple enemies within range, and allows the application of a weapon-based harm bonus several times. The specific weapon type limits the number of times the wielder can split the dice pool (see "max split" equipment chapter).

While that may sound like a player would want to split all his attacks for the added bonuses, remember that the defender chooses a defense after the attacker rolls for *each separate strike*. Splitting attacks means that each attack will tend to result in lower threat points, making damage reducers like armor and shields more effective.

To restate, multiple attacks allowing one to apply a weapon's harm bonus to each separate die, and the option of choosing different targets within the weapon's range all counterbalances these disadvantages.

As mentioned in the section above, each weapon is listed with a statistic called "**Max-Split**", which denotes the maximum number of times an ability branch (ADC) can be split into multiple attacks, each independent die roll representing a separate strike. For example, Sir Hurtalot wields a Kris Knife, which has a "max-split" of 3. If Sir Hurtalot had an ability branch of Melee (D10) > Knife (D8) > Kris Knife (D4) he could split his ADC into as many as 3 separate die rolls, and add the knife's harm bonus of +1 to each attack.

### Order of Defense in Battle

ORDER of DEFENSES (versus a single attack)

1. Target chooses one Active Defense (weaponry, evade, dodge, or deflect). Reduce DP by threat points. However, if the chosen active defense is exceeded, go to step two.

2. Move on to Passive Defenses.

(a) Reduce Resilience DPs, if type of harm is magic, toxins, and extreme climatic conditions, natural forces such as fire and lightning, or disease. Otherwise, skip to steps b and c.

(b) Roll for Armor damage reduction, if the target wears any armor.

(c) Reduce Toughness DP by any threat points penetrating Resilience or armor.

### Combat Rounds and Battle Phases

The system divides combat into rounds, with each round further separated into battle phases. A battle phase is about 3 seconds, and corresponds to a rank of Reflexes Ability. This is how action order is determined in ERP. Because Reflexes ranks vary from *pitiful* to *extreme*, there are up to 9 such phases in a round, but ability is typically between D4 and D12 ranks, so the average round is 5 phases, or roughly 15 seconds long.

Actions occur in order of battle phase, from the highest Die-Rank to the lowest. The battle phase number ascends in accordance with descending ranks of Reflexes rank. Creatures generally get one action per round. Split weapon attacks occur within a single phase. Some monsters get extra attacks which are staggered one per phase (for example, a hydra). For the purpose of this Quickstart, if two opponents possess the same Reflexes rank, the GM can simply roll D10 for each side of the fight.

### Battle phases

Battle Phase **L** (Legendary Initiative) D20

Battle Phase **I** (Incredible Initiative) D16

Battle Phase **1** (Superb Initiative) D12



Battle Phase 2 (Great Initiative) D10  
 Battle Phase 3 (Good Initiative) D8  
 Battle Phase 4 (Fair Initiative) D6  
 Battle Phase 5 (Average Initiative) D4

Battle Phase **P** (Poor Initiative) D3  
 Battle Phase **T** (Terrible Initiative) D2

## Designing Monsters and NPCs in Eldritch Role Playing

Eldritch Role-Playing is a game about epic fantasy. Its uniquely narrative resolution system and flexible character creation allow players to play believable heroes in a classic milieu, unfettered by undue complexity. Monsters and Non-Player Characters ought to be easy to design and run in a fast-paced, epic fantasy game. Therefore, to best create fun encounters, the game provides GMs with simple tools and guidelines. Creating statistics for opponents is a snap...

There are four categories of creature significance in ERP: Fodder, Standard and Exceptional, and "Full-Fledged." Fodder, Standard and Exceptional creatures encourage quick battle resolution, while Full-Fledged are more fleshed out, their skills usually covering more than combat situations. This is because the first three types have few statistics for the GM to bother with. If an NPC is very important, the GM can make a Full-Fledged character.

Whether the NPC is a political mastermind, a demonic warlord, or a rampaging lizard, the opponents in the game can be as sketchy or detailed as the GM wishes.

"Fodder" monsters are not often the source of important or significant treasure. Examples of fodder include rapacious hordes of goblins or kobolds, ordinary rabble, inexperienced town militias, weaker sorts of undead minions like skeletons and zombies, and so on. *Standard* creatures are more of a threat, but still no match for a single full-fledged PC. Typical Standard creatures include town guards, ordinary soldiers, common criminals, experienced hirelings, and lesser monsters of all sorts. These foes can inflict significant damage on a hero when attacking in numbers, especially if there are eight or more. *Exceptional* creatures pose the greatest threat, short of Full-Fledged opponents, are of greater Potential-Harm, and have more hit points.

Legendary monsters like gorgons, chimeras, lesser dragons, golems, and werewolves easily fit into this category. Also, experienced warriors, assassins, or

any other sort of threat can be an exceptional foe. As stated above, all opponents except Full-Fledged possess only the most basic of statistics. Those statistics are Type, Threat rank (TR), Extra Attack (EA), Hit points (HP), Resilience (RS), Battle Phase (BP), and any notes specific to a monster type; including Armor, Weapons, spell points, magic items and other special treasures.

The GM determines regular treasure depending on the type of creature encountered and circumstance. Below is a brief look at the typical statistics of an ERP creature.

TY: (Type): The creature type is generalized, like "humanoid."

Threat Rank: (Close combat, Missile, and Magic attacks): Almost all creatures possess basic Potential-Harm, expressed as a 1D4 in close combat or ranged weapons. Not all creatures are able to threaten a hero with magic. Standard creatures may have up to two dice in a threat rank (e.g., 2D6 close combat), while exceptional creatures possess up to three dice (e.g. 3D8 Magic attack, of varying forms).

Extra Attacks: (Extra attacks, if applicable—different from multiple attacks via a split dice pool): Some creatures are capable of attacking many times in a single round. This score reflects those extra threat ranks.

Hit Points: (All physical active and Toughness): equals MRV (maximum-rank-value) of Primary attack form (usually the one with the highest Die-Rank), plus the MRV of each attack form *above* D4 in the other threat-ratings (Melee, Unarmed, Ranged, and Arcane). The total is multiplied by the sum of all creature modifiers.

For example, a creature with D6 Close combat, D4 Ranged, and D4 Arcane would have 4 hit points. If it had D6 Close Combat, D8 Ranged, and D4 Arcane, its primary attack would be ranged, and its hit points would be 14.

RS: (All magic resistance and fatigue): A creature's resilience is 50% of its primary attack (the highest single attack ADC), or 100% if the primary attack is magical (e.g. 2D6 attack equals either a 6 RS or 12 RS score).

BP: (Movement rank for initiative): Creatures move according to their Reflexes ability (all beings possess some basic rank). Thus, action in a round usually occurs in order of Reflexes Die-Rank, from highest to lowest (D12 to D10 to D8 to D6 to D4). There





are faster and slower ranks in the game, reserved for unusual creatures (a hummingbird might move in a phase corresponding to a D20).

For example, to create a simple opponent, the GM would throw together something like this:

Standard 2D6 humanoid, wielding a sword and wearing leather armor,

Threat Rank: 2D6 Melee. *Just roll 2D6 to determine Potential Harm.*

Hit points: 12 (2x6). Medium creature of mundane origin. No alternation to HP.

Resilience: 6 (half of HP, *which is the resistance to magic, poison and other means of indirect harm*).

Battle Phase: Fair - D6. *Initiative is resolved in order of descending die-size (D12 down to D4).*

Notes: Wields a hand axe (harm +1, init +2).

Armor: leather D6 (*rolled against every attack, or however often the GM feels appropriate*).

In stat block format, it would look like this:

TY: Standard humanoid.

TR: 2D6 Close, 1D4 Missile, 0 arcane.

EA: no extra attacks.

HP: 12.

RS: 6.

BP: D6-Fair.

Notes: Leather Armor D6, etc.

So, the simplicity involved in preparing antagonists, coupled with easy systems for surviving challenges and contests of skill, allows the GM to focus on the narrative action.





# The Magic System

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## Magic in Eldritch

In the ERP game, **Arcanum** is the powerful skill of wielding and shaping magical forces. Basic knowledge allows a mage to detect magic, identify spell effects, and grants an understanding of magical energy in myriad forms. Knowledge of Arcanum also covers the creation or history of magical items, and recognition of the differences in magical techniques. Specializations are in sources of power: mystical, supernatural, primordial, and psychogenic. Actual spellcasting requires specialization in one or more magical sources. Masteries are in the techniques of specific schools or colleges of magic, such as wizard, priest, druid, or psychic.

The arcanist can bend reality, but cannot break it. These rules known to all arcanists are the Effects. The Effects are axioms that define the use of magic, forming the foundation for all magic schools. These Effects are the basic templates for all spells in the game. Spells in the game are made up of six components: the magic source (Specialization), the underlying magic effect (Effect), a specific school of magic (Mastery), the form or appearance of the effect (matter or energy), the range (single subject or area), and what the spell affects, whether a specific ability, defense pools, free will, physical form, and so on.

An arcanist uses spell points to cast spells. The number of spell points a magic user has is determined by adding up the MRV of Arcanum plus all Specializations and Masteries. 10% of that value is regained every hour of waking, or 20% each hour of sleep (always round up). Spell cost equals either the ability roll (area-effects), or *the result minus lowest die roll*. A failed spell costs no spell points. *Example:* Nathal the half-elven mage has Arcanum D8, Mystic Specialization at D6, and Primordial Specialization at D4. His spell points are 18. He regains 4 spell points an hour while asleep, or 2 points during hours of waking.

### If an arcanist is out of spell points, he can dip into his Resilience Defense Pool at his own risk.

This is a common action in the eldritch game, simulating the fatiguing and dangerous nature of

spellcasting. Take note that in most cases, reaching zero in the Resilience Defense pool simply makes the character more vulnerable to magic and other non-standard attacks. However, an arcanist bringing himself to zero through casting falls unconscious, one round for every negative point.

An arcanist may lower the ranks of the dice rolled if desired to reduce spell point cost. Alternatively, to save on spell points, he may eliminate one or more dice (except for the basic rank) from the roll.

The Effects in the game include: Augment, Conjure/Banish, Curse, Fortify, Harm, Influence, Obscure, Perceive, Protect, Restore, Travel, and Transmute. Read below for brief explanations of each Effect, and refer to this when playing the pregen characters (whose individual spells are listed separately, in the sample adventure section).

Effects have one of two possible durations: **maintainable** and **instantaneous**. Maintainable spells activate immediately, or on the target's next action (whichever makes more sense), and can be maintained, paying ½ the spell point cost in the second and subsequent rounds of full effect, without need of re-rolling the ability check.

Instantaneous Duration: Conjure/Dismiss, Harm, Restore, Transmute.

Maintainable Duration: Augment, Conjure, Curse, Fortify, Obscure, Influence, Perceive, Protect, Travel.

**Augment:** This magic effect improves the result of the beneficiary's ability checks, using the sum of the caster's dice roll.

**Conjure:** This effect allows the arcanist to summon or banish a monster, and conjure or dismiss an object. The arcanist is able to conjure one specific object, or summon one creature type per round.

**Curse:** This effect is the exact opposite of Augment. It cannot drain hit points directly, which is the domain of the "Harm" effect, but it does affect ability rolls, using the sum of the dice roll. Unlike



Augment, the caster must penetrate the target's Resilience before the penalty to the target's Ability is applied. Once the effect causes enough threat points to deplete the target's Resilience, apply the penalty. Never apply excess points to the target's Toughness. Successfully decreasing Melee, Ranged, or Unarmed rolls subtracts from a target creature's threat points during an attack.

**Fortify:** An arcanist can increase a single Defense Pool with this effect, even above the maximum allowed, using the sum of the dice roll. The effect is temporary; the extra protection existing only so long as the caster maintains his spell. Fortify can be used to increase any Active or Passive Defense pool, the extra hit points lasting so long as the spell is maintained.

**Harm:** Harm Effects manifest as elemental or psychic energy, casting forth bolts of fire, ice, lightning, acid, wind, psychokinetic or necromantic force; or various elemental storms, including hailstorms or explosions of earth; or an enervation spell that saps the target creature's soul, or infiltrates to destroy the mind.

Harm spells deplete Resilience, and then Toughness, in that order, **with no difficulty roll required**. Instead, the caster uses his ADC to determine Potential-Harm, the result of the roll used as threat points against the targeted subject.

Harm spells can take three forms:

A **bolt** is no greater than 5' diameter, and the maximum distance the bolt travels is equal to  $MRV \times 2$  Power Source in feet, always in line-of sight. For **area** spells, the area-of-effect equals  $2 \times MRV$  of the relevant Power Source Specialization in diameter (add Mastery if applicable), with the point of origination at a distance of up to  $10 \times MRV$  of Power Source, in line of sight.

For **streams**, the width is no more than 2' wide, originating from the caster, and the length of the stream extends up to twice the MRV of the chosen sphere die(s).

**Influence:** This effect covers a wide range of magical spells, ranging from distracting a target, to the most debilitating results possible. Influencing means using magic to subdue, beguile, manipulate, or incapacitate the target. **The arcanist must penetrate the target's Resilience before the magical influence is applied.** Once the effect causes enough threat points to penetrate the target's Resilience, apply the spell's designated sub-effect (distract, stun, control body, control mind,

incapacitate. Do this even if the points exceeded Resilience by only one point. *Never apply excess points to the target's Toughness.*

Distract - instant (D4): reduce the target's battle phase by one category on next action.

Stun - instant (D6): Target loses next action due to temporary paralysis.

Control body – maintainable (D8): the target's body obeys caster's commands. The arcanist can command only the most basic of physical actions. If the spell lasts into a second round, the victim can attempt to break free of the effect by rolling Willpower versus the caster's Arcanum ADC.

Control mind - maintainable (D10): target obeys caster's commands, using any abilities at his disposal to obey. If the spell lasts into a second round, the victim can attempt to break free of the effect by rolling.

Incapacitate – maintainable (D12): target falls to the ground unconscious and helpless, losing all Active Defenses, remaining so until the caster stops paying the maintenance cost. Victims cannot break free of this Effect unless some agent disrupts the caster's continuous maintenance of the spell.

**Obscure:** This effect obscures the target, making it nearly invisible, or covers an area, making it murky, dim, or foggy, figuratively or literally. Obscure can mirror a Curse spell, reducing the Scrutiny checks of anybody in the area-of-effect. Alternatively, its penalties can apply to all creatures attacking the spell's single target, or to all attacks made within an area-of-effect, either way, using the sum of the ADC roll. The area-of-effect equals  $2 \times MRV$  of the relevant Specialization Power Source in diameter (add Mastery if applicable), with the point of origination at a distance of up to  $10 \times MRV$  of Power Source, in line of sight.

**Perceive:** A spell using the "Perceive" effect may allow the caster to add a bonus to Scrutiny, or the Specialization to sense another's motive, or even gather information. The GM must assign difficulty as circumstances demand.

**Protect:** The Protect effect adds temporary, magical armor to the target. It manifests in different ways, and deflects physical attacks, or magical attacks from a power source matching that of the spell. Either cast on oneself, or made to protect another creature, the effect creates a shield, or a force field made of mystic, supernatural, primordial, or psychogenic energy (depending on the spell).





Objects benefiting from this effect are more resistant to damage, gaining a protective benefit that works just like a standard, randomized armor roll. The arcanist pays for the level of protection by Die-Rank, but cannot exceed one die of additional armor per recipient. For example, the effect provides up to 1D12 magical protection to a single target, or up to 1D12 for all creatures in the area. D4 costs 4 Spell Points, D6 costs 6 SP, D8 costs 8 SP, and so on.

**Restore:** Restore heals any one chosen defense pool, active or passive, up to the maximum amount. Restoring limbs requires D10 rank in the spell's Power Source, and bringing a character back from the dead requires a D12 specifically in the Supernatural power source. Healing power equals the sum of the ability check. Excess points of healing are wasted.

**Travel:** Travel allows the magical and harmless transportation of creatures or objects. The maintainable travel spell allows safe travel through hostile environments, like water, fire, or other inhospitable places. If an arcanist uses Travel as an instantaneous spell, the effect transports the subject by whatever descriptive means desired to a maximum range of  $MRV \times 10$  in feet. This could be travel by means of telekinesis, shifting to gaseous form or shadow, or teleportation. Unwilling creatures cannot be transported—due to some magical law not yet understood by sages

**Transmute:** This effect changes the properties or essence of an object or creature. Changing oneself or a target creature into a different sort of creature requires a minimum rank in the spell's related power source, increasing with more dramatic changes.

D4 Creature: caster can alter hair color, hair texture, and skin. Adds 1D4 to Disguise checks. Object: Change an item from one thing into another, but must be of the same size and material (change a wooden desk into a chair).

D6 Creature: change height, weight, and gender within the norms of the caster or target. Adds 1D6 to Disguise checks. Object: Change the size or weight of an item by one category.

D8 Creature: can change size (tiny, small, medium). Alter type into goblinoid, animal, aquatic or vermin. Gain any racial abilities, and height, weight, and gender are under your control, but must fall within the norms for the new form. Equipment held or worn melds into form, reappearing when the effect ends. Object: change

the size or weight of an item by two categories. D10 Creature: can change size to large or huge. Change into giant or legendary beast. Object: Change the size, weight of an item, or change hardness or state (liquid, solid, or gas).

D12 Creature: able to change into elemental, incorporeal, or dragon. Caster gains all physical special attacks and defenses possessed by the form. Whatever elemental form is assumed conveys immunity to that element. If transmuted into an incorporeal creature, your form is immune to negative energy, but still susceptible to necromantic or psychic energy attacks. Object: change the size, weight of an item, hardness, state (liquid, solid, or gas), or composition of an object. Transmute lead into gold. Effect is temporary.

### A Brief Description of Play

Now imagine you are a young, stalwart adventurer living in the town of Blaenafon. Some of the townspeople view you with mistrust, because you are the progeny of a hated sorcerer, Cadarn. You never knew him well, fortunately. Long ago, when you were too young to remember, an angry mob of townspeople murdered your father. However, the mistrust has not deterred your daring career, because nobody questions the bravery of a youthful warrior, like yourself, who chooses a life of exploration and danger.

Not content to lead a mundane existence, you joined a group of well-armed wilderness scouts charged with patrolling the borders of the small town where you dwell. Recently, a group of goblinoids attacked your group during a training mission. Although your party quickly dispatched most of the creatures, one managed to escape; carrying with it a gold medallion belonging to your leader, Trevelyan, who perished in the fray.

When you returned home, three, large, ill-tempered brothers of your former leader advised you that, due to your reputation as the town's most skillful warrior, you are to recover the medallion in time for the funeral. If you succeed, the entire family will be in your debt. However, the brothers warned, if you return empty-handed, the price of failure will be death.

That ultimatum left little room for argument. Therefore, here you stand, at the mouth of the goblinoids cave, within a dark forest; assessing your skills and accounting for all your equipment...

Now, without further ado, into the cave!

You step into the dark recess of the cave with a resigned sigh. After a few paces, you realize you



are nearly blind in the darkness. Therefore, after digging through your sack, you produce a torch and light it. The light reveals an unnatural tunnel dug into the wall to your left; a passage made of hewed limestone. Otherwise, the cave ends in a small grotto ahead.

“It certainly looks like goblins work,” you mutter to yourself. Nevertheless, let us make sure. Using your scouting ability, you roll 1D8 for your basic score, and 1D4 for your specialization in scouting underground, add the results together, and compare the result with the GM’s target number.

Your scouting roll resulted in a 4. Not to worry: The GM deemed the task “easy,” rolled 1D4 and got a 2. In actual play, the GM will not reveal the result of his roll. Instead, the GM will simply tell you the result of your attempted action. Regardless, exceeding the target number by two is a decent margin of success. Your GM confirms that your hunch is correct. That poorly hewn tunnel is the work of goblins, and your destination, for good or ill.

Now, excited about finishing your quest, you stride quickly ahead, but too incautiously. The GM grimaces as he rolls some dice behind his screen. Suddenly, you duck as a large, rusty blade scythes from the ceiling, prompting use of your Evade Defense Pool. The trap has a Potential-Harm of 2D8, and the GM rolls a 10. You attempt to maneuver aside, but the blade exceeds your Evade hit point maximum (8), penetrating to your armor. You roll 1D6 to check the effectiveness of your armor, with a result of 2, which absorbs the rest of the damage. Still, the glancing blow knocked you off balance...

You stumble forward a few steps, only to find yourself stepping onto a pit trap! The GM decides you have not had time to refresh your Evade DP, and so, with a yell of surprise, you fall. Falling causes damage equal to 10 hit points for every 10’ fallen, and the pit trap is ten feet deep. Making matters worse, there are spikes at the bottom, with a Potential-Harm of 2D10 points! You lose 10 points from your Resilience from the fall, dropping down to 10. In descriptive terms, thanks to your Resilience, you managed to grip the edge of the pit before your fall, slowing your decent. You would have landed on your feet if not for the spikes.

However, with your Resilience at only 10, your luck could soon run out. The GM grins evilly, and rolls the dice, but the spikes only deliver 5 threat points. Resilience will not help you against spikes, so you roll your armor, getting a 4; thus, only

1 point out of 5 penetrates to your Toughness. Descriptively, a spike scratched across your leather armor, serving merely to scratch your bare forearm.

You attempt to climb out of the pit. The GM allows you a roll at the default D4 die-rank in Climbing, because it is an unrestricted ability. He sets the difficulty of the climb at “moderate” and rolls 2D4. You roll a 3, and he rolls a 2. Consequently, you win the contest and climb successfully out of the pit. Brushing off, you take a deep breath, light a new torch, and take a few cautious steps forward into the darkness, listening for would-be ambushes.

Nothing happens. You take a few more steps forward, testing the ground ahead with a stick. No traps are in evidence. Could it be? Gaining confidence, you stride forward; only the sound of your footsteps in your ears, the torchlight casting flickering shadows throughout the earthen corridor.

“Maybe all of the goblins have left to kill lunch,” you muse, turning the corner, hoping to find a mound of loot with the medallion you seek glittering on top of the pile.

It is not to be. Rather than finding a mound of treasure, you face an angry goblin, crouched down on one knee, one blood-red eye trained on your body. He has an arrow notched and ready to release from a short bow. You have only seconds to react.

#### **Goblin guard**

TY: Fodder, Humanoid.

TR Ranged 1D6, Melee 1D4, Arcane 0.

HP 6 .

RS 3.

BP: average phase (D4).

The GM asks you to roll a check against unrestricted Scrutiny ability (which defaults to die-rank D4), to determine surprise. But the goblin possesses D6 in Stealth, and further specialized in ambushing at die-rank D4 (Stealth D6 > Ambush D4). Creatures that succeed in an opposed roll of Stealth vs. Scrutiny win surprise over their foes, and in this case, you roll a mere 3 (from 1D4) against the goblins better result of 9 (from 1D6 + 1D4). Because you are surprised, you lose a full round of attacks, but can still defend yourself. The goblin cackles, spitting green bile, and looses an arrow, aimed straight for your heart.

The goblin’s basic Ranged Weapons ability of D6 represents his Potential-Harm with whatever missile weapons are used. The GM rolls the die and gets 5 threat points.



Luckily, although surprised by the attack, you are able to react, dodging around the corner before the arrow pierces your body. Your Dodge Defense Pool is 8 (MRV of D4 Speed + D4 Agility), so you moved your body out of the path of danger, with 3 hit points to spare. The arrow missed you entirely, hitting the wall.

Stepping back around the corner, you draw your long sword, the torchlight reflecting flames in its steel; a metaphor of your anger. The goblin, surprised you're still alive, drops his short bow, and picks up a rusty mace from the ground.

You are certain of one thing: This goblin is going to die.

You move in for the kill, rolling your ADC of Melee D10 > Swords D8 > long sword D4 to determine threat points. Your long sword grants a +1 to your attack, and you roll a 19, for a total of 20 threat points. The goblin was wearing no armor, and has only 6 hit points (a simple monster does not have multiple types of hit point defense). It drops dead, split nearly in half, blood everywhere.

Satisfied, you continue your trek.

### The Final Encounter

As you turn another corner, you see a single large, solid door. Out of pure whimsy, you knock three times and stand back, awaiting an answer whilst goblinoid blood drips from the tip of your sword. Sure enough, your knock receives an answer. The door opens, and soft lamp light emanates from the room, revealing a man wearing a tattered cloak over a broad chest. He stands in hard boots up to his mid-calf, and looks at you with an almost reptilian gaze...

You haven't seen your father in decades, but those cold eyes are unmistakable.

"I was told that the townspeople killed you," you say, stunned.

"They only thought they'd taken my life," replies Cadarn. "I was mortally injured, unconscious, and covered by blood, so they left me to rot. I managed to invoke help from the spirits of my ancestors, and crawl to a hiding place in the forest. After I recovered, I vowed to take revenge. That ranger friend of yours is merely the first to be murdered by my minions."

"Well, congratulations on your evil-doing, but I need to return that ranger's medallion to his brothers. Otherwise, it may never be safe for me to

return home. And, if necessary, father, I'll kill you to get it," you say. There never was any love lost between you and your progenitor.

"You can't have it, my son. I'll give nothing but a sword thrust to his brothers, who were among those who attacked me. Anyone who dares threaten me will soon take his last breath...and that includes you," Cadarn says. Then, without hesitation, he pulls a glowing dagger from under his cloak.

You're not surprised by this action, but he has better reflexes, and winning initiative, he attempts to stab you.

#### Cadarn, your father

TY: Extraordinary human sorcerer.  
TR Arcane 3D8 (Primary attack), Melee 1D12.  
Unarmed and Ranged both at 1D4.  
HP 36.  
RS 24 (Resilience score 100% of HP if strongest attack is Arcane, 50% if not).  
BP: D8.  
Notes: Cadarn's Arcane attack of 3D8 takes the form of a black, writhing tentacle erupting from the ground to strike at single, targeted opponent. It's a "Harm" effect spell, treated as a stream (see Harm Effect). He wields a magical dagger, which adds 1D6 threat points when his attack penetrates Active Defense and Armor (due to magical enervation).

Cadarn thrusts his dagger at you, rolling his basic Melee die-rank of 1D12, resulting in 5 threat points. Bad move on his part! You have great skill in the Melee ability tree, granting you a related Weaponry Defense Pool of 22 hit points (MRV of Melee Tree, except Shield ranks). You choose to parry. And, despite his attack, reducing you to 17 Weaponry points, you parry his blade with ease.

You counterattack fiercely, rolling your ADC of Melee D10 > Swords D8 > long sword D4, but resulting only in 8 threat points, reducing your father to 28 hit points. Perhaps your aim was a bit off this time: Descriptively, one could say he sidestepped the attack.

In the next round, Cadarn takes a step back and hurls his dagger at you, resulting in 6 threat points. Luckily, your Dodge DP was refreshed to the maximum 8 before battle. You dodge the thrown dagger, depleting your Dodge DP score to 2 points for the remainder of the combat.

Then, with one powerful swing of the sword, you inflict a devastating 22 threat points against your

### Called Shots

Note on "called shots" and critical damage: Attacks at specific body parts simply cannot succeed if a Defense Pool absorbs the threat points. In general, the spirits of the ERP rules do not support specific, gruesome damage results. Exceptions are up to the discretion and imagination of the GM. But note that no "hit-location" system is recommended.





father, leaving him with only six hit points. Cadarn staggers, his eyes wild, and falls backward through the door into the next room, bleeding profusely through his torn cloak.

Grimly, you slowly advance, stepping over debris, raising your sword to enact one final blow. “This is the end,” you intone...

But Cadarn’s eyes narrow into two snake-like slits, and a thin smile appears upon his face as he mutters words evoking the forces of the supernatural.

You acted too slowly, it seems. A large, black, slimy tentacle erupts from the stone ground, whipping around to bludgeon you, its Potential-Harm equivalent to Cadarn’s Arcane Threat Rank of 3D8. The attack unfortunately results in the maximum roll of 24. Your Resilience of 22 is exceeded, which means you now have no magical resistance whatsoever, and still 2 threat points remain...

The GM decides you cannot use Weaponry to parry this supernatural monstrous tentacle, nor Dodge, because the tentacle is too close. You decide to forgo your active defense, saving your remaining Evade hit points for future attacks. The GM notes that supernatural creatures’ attacks ignore normal and preternatural armor, disallowing normal armor protection. Therefore, 2 threat points penetrates directly to Toughness. The attack reduces you to 10 Toughness points from your maximum of 12.

Cadarn, the sorcerer you face, used a spell incorporating a magical effect called “Harm,” appropriately enough, to attack you. You’d treat it just like any normal attack, with the creature’s magic Threat Rank rolled to determine Potential-Harm.

Drained but relatively unhurt, you attempt to intimidate Cadarn into surrendering. “Yield or die by my blade,” you command, unwittingly forfeiting your advantage. Actual coercion is a restricted ability, so your opponent smirks and responds only with a dire gesture—evoking yet another tentacle, this one erupting from the ceiling, casting stones and dust about the room. Frightened, you split your dice pool into multiple attacks to strike at Cadarn and the supernatural, writhing tentacle.

For the first strike of three this round, you combine two of the dice into a single attack against the tentacle, rolling your 1D10 + 1D8 together, and then adding 3 threat points because you are using a long sword (note that specializing in swords is a prerequisite to receiving this bonus). The strike results in maximum roll of 21, but the GM says it had no apparent effect on the tentacle. Then you target Cadarn, making your final split attack, rolling the remaining 1D4, for a measly result of 2 threat points. Even after the extra 3 threat points weapon bonus, Cadarn is only down to 1 hit point. Apparently, your aim was off and you scratched his arm—a pathetic blow considering he was already on the ground.

Recognizing the danger, Cadarn hoarsely shouts one word of command, maintaining his Harm spell, and causes the tentacle to lash out at you, this time rolling 21 threat points. Surprised, you decide to evade (Evade DP = MRV of Reflexes + Agility), lessening the threat points by 8, but again, it’s just too much damage to avoid. With your Evade points now exceeded, and your Resilience completely spent, and your armor useless against the spell’s effect, you face 13 threat points, and you only had 10 left...

The tentacle slams against you with horrifying force, hurling you like a broken marionette backward through the door with a crash, wood splinters flying. You pass out, wondering how you are ever to explain this scenario to the gods... By now, you should have a decent idea of how the ERP game works, in actual play. The full rules offers much in the way of details, as well as additional and contingent rules; all of which are designed to enable “artful” play, eventually making the system mechanics transparent to both GM and player.

In the next section, we provide five pregenerated characters for a short, somewhat generic, dungeon crawl, to give your players a taste of the game. Use the lessons you have learned above to arbitrate the basic rules. Each encounter in the sample adventure will provide instructions on mechanics; so you will not always need to refer to the first section. Note that encounter difficulty presupposes use of the pregenerated characters.

# Sample Adventure

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We list pregenerated characters below in a format cut down from a fully developed character sheet, simplified for the sake of introducing a new game system. They are listed one per page below, making it easy to print them out and distribute to your players.

The ERP ruleset contains full explanations for any abilities listed (For now, use common sense to interpret). In addition, Eldritch does incorporate a level based experience and advancement system but it is not necessary to learn that to understand the game.

## Spells Known list

*The following spells are known by Kristiana or Dannumara. First, the name of the spell is given. The power source describes the specialization allowing use of the spell. The school describes the mastery related to the spell, and if the character possesses said mastery, she may add that die-rank to the ability roll (incidentally, both characters do possess the necessary masteries). The Effect is the underlying power that defines the spell.*


The manifestation is how the spell appears, and listed for descriptive purposes only. Range is in general terms, but the spell descriptions provide the numbers derived from the character's stats (see core





# elritch

ROLE-PLAYING SYSTEM

<p><u>Name:</u> Ottomar the half-elf, level 5 (46 CPs)</p>	<p><b>Potential-Harm</b> <i>Roll the dice indicated to determine Po-Harm</i></p>
	<p><b>Melee:</b> D8 (basic) + D8 (specialization) + D4 (mastery) Rapier</p>
	<p><i>Weapon specifics:</i> Fencing Sword +1 threatpoint, +20 mastery bonus to DP, 3 max-split, +3 Init</p>
	<p><b>Ranged Attack:</b> D6 (basic) + D4 (specialization) Bows <i>Weapon:</i> Short Bow +2 Harm, max-split 3</p>
	<p><b>Unarmed Attack:</b> D6</p>
	<p><b>Distinguishing Abilities:</b>            Agility D8            Animal Handling D8            Endurance D8            Reflexes D6 (4<sup>th</sup> in initiative order)            Resistance D6            Skullduggery D10            Speed D8            Willpower D6.</p> <p><b>Racial Features (half-elf):</b>            Minimum D6 in Reflexes            Willpower            Endurance            Low-light vision.</p>
<p><b>Active Defense Pools (hitpoints)</b></p>	
<p>Weaponry (Weapons + Specializations + Masteries): 20 basic/40 with rapier due to mastery</p>	
<p>Evade (Reflexes + Agility): 14</p>	
<p>Dodge (Speed + Agility): 16</p>	
<p>Deflect (Base Melee MRV + Shield + Magic): 8</p>	
<p><b>Passive Defense Pools (hitpoints)</b></p>	
<p>Toughness (Endurance ×2 + Resistance): 22</p>	
<p>Resilience (Resistance ×2 + Willpower + Arcanum tree): 18</p>	
<p><b>Armor</b></p>	
<p>Armor: Magic Studded leather 1d6 (+1)</p>	
<p>Shield: no damage reduction.</p>	






<p><u>Name:</u> Adlar Gisel Level 5 Dwarf</p>	<p><b>Potential-Harm</b> <i>Roll the dice indicated to determine Po-Harm</i></p>
	<p><b>Melee:</b> D10 Melee (basic) + D8 Swords (specialization) + D6 short swords (mastery) <i>Weapon specifics:</i> Short sword +2 to harm, +10 Mastery bonus to DP, max-split 3, +3 to initiative</p>
	<p><b>Ranged Attack:</b> D4 basic <i>See weapon stats for modifiers</i></p>
	<p><b>Unarmed Attack:</b> D12 basic + D6 Brawling</p>
	<p><b>Distinguishing Abilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Agility D6</li> <li>*Endurance D6</li> <li>*Feat of Strength D6</li> <li>*Knowledge D4 &gt; Dungeon engineering D4</li> <li>*Reflexes D4</li> <li>*Resistance D12</li> <li>*Speed D6</li> <li>*Willpower D10</li> </ul> <p><b>Racial Features (dwarf):</b> Above average Endurance, Resistance, and Feats of Strength. Good or better melee ability. Nightvision.</p>
<p><b>Active Defense Pools (hitpoints)</b></p>	
<p>Weaponry (Weapons + Specializations + Masteries): 24/34 with short sword (mastery bonus)</p>	
<p>Evade (Reflexes + Agility): 10</p>	
<p>Dodge (Speed + Agility): 12</p>	
<p>Deflect (Base Melee MRV + Shield + Magic): 10 (15 with small shield)</p>	
<p><b>Passive Defense Pools (hitpoints)</b></p>	
<p>Toughness (Endurance ×2 + Resistance): 24</p>	
<p>Resilience (Resistance ×2 + Willpower + Arcanum tree): 16</p>	
<p><b>Armor</b></p>	
<p>Armor: chain 1D8+1 (mithral 2D4)</p>	
<p>Shield: Small, 0 passive. A <b>small shield</b> offers zero damage reduction, but grants a + 50% to Deflect DP</p>	



# eloritch

ROLE-PLAYING SYSTEM

<p><u>Name:</u> Kristiana, Priestess of Eria (Healing), level 5 Human:</p>	<p><b>Potential-Harm</b> <i>Roll the dice indicated to determine Po-Harm</i></p>
	<p><b>Melee:</b> D4 (basic) (+staff bonus if used)</p>
	<p><i>Weapon specifics:</i> Magic Staff , +1D4 threat points</p>
	<p><b>Ranged Attack:</b> D4 (basic) <i>See weapon stats for modifiers</i></p>
	<p><b>Unarmed Attack:</b> D4 (basic) Arcanum D12 &gt; Supernatural D12 &gt; Theurgy D10</p>
	<p><b>Spells:</b> Blinding Light, Heal, Mantle (see spell descriptions in next section...) <i>Spell points:</i> 34</p>
	<p><b>Distinguishing Abilities:</b>            *Agility D6            *Endurance D10            *Reflexes D10            *Resistance D8            *Speed D6            *Willpower D12</p>
<p><b>Racial Features (human):</b> Must possess at least D6 in Willpower and Endurance</p>	
<p><b>Active Defense Pools (hitpoints)</b></p>	
<p>Weaponry (Weapons + Specializations + Masteries): 4</p>	
<p>Evade (Reflexes + Agility): 16</p>	
<p>Dodge (Speed + Agility): 12</p>	
<p>Deflect (Base Melee MRV + Shield + Magic): 4</p>	
<p><b>Passive Defense Pools (hitpoints)</b></p>	
<p>Toughness (Endurance ×2 + Resistance): 28</p>	
<p>Resilience (Resistance ×2 + Willpower + Arcanum tree): 62</p>	
<p><b>Armor</b></p>	
<p>Armor: None (priestess robes)</p>	
<p>Shield: none</p>	




<p><u>Name:</u> Dannumara level 6 Elf</p>	<p><b>Potential-Harm</b> <i>Roll the dice indicated to determine Po-Harm</i></p>
	<p><b>Melee:</b> D6 (basic) + D8 Sword (specialization) + D6 Long Sword (mastery) <i>Weapon specifics:</i> Long sword +3 Harm, 2 attacks, +1 to init</p>
	<p><b>Ranged Attack:</b> D4 + D10 Bows <i>Long Bow +3 Harm, 2 max-split</i></p>
	<p><b>Unarmed Attack:</b> D4 (basic).</p>
	<p><b>Magic Attack:</b> Arcanum D12 &gt; Primordial D10 &gt; Elementalist D6 <b>Spells:</b> Fireball, Lifting Winds. <i>Spellpoints:</i> 28</p>
	<p><b>Distinguishing Abilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Agility D8 &gt; Tumble D6</li> <li>*Endurance D6</li> <li>*Reflexes D8</li> <li>*Resistance D4</li> <li>*Speed D10</li> <li>*Willpower D6</li> </ul> <p><b>Racial Features:</b> Respectable or better reflexes, speed, willpower, melee ability, and Arcanum. Low-light vision.</p>
<p><b>Active Defense Pools (hitpoints)</b></p>	
<p>Weaponry (Weapons + Specializations + Masteries): 20 + 15 if using long sword</p>	
<p>Evade (Reflexes + Agility): 22</p>	
<p>Dodge (Speed + Agility): 24</p>	
<p>Deflect (Base Melee MRV + Shield + Magic): 6</p>	
<p><b>Passive Defense Pools (hitpoints)</b></p>	
<p>Toughness (Endurance ×2 + Resistance):16</p>	
<p>Resilience (Resistance ×2 + Willpower + Arcanum tree): 42</p>	
<p><b>Armor</b></p>	
<p>Armor: Magic Studded leather 1d6 (+1)</p>	
<p>Shield: small, 0 passive protection</p>	





# elritch

ROLE-PLAYING SYSTEM

<p>Name: Félix the Rogue, level 9 Human</p>	<p><b>Potential-Harm</b> <i>Roll the dice indicated to determine Po-Harm</i></p>
	<p><b>Melee:</b> D6 + D8 (swords)</p>
	<p><i>Weapon specifics:</i> Long Sword, +3 harm, 2 max-split, +2 init</p>
	<p><b>Ranged Attack:</b> D10 + D6 (bows) <i>Weapon:</i> Short Bow +2 harm, 3 max-split.</p>
	<p><b>Unarmed Attack:</b> D6</p>
<p><b>Distinguishing Abilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Agility D10</li> <li>*Appraise D6</li> <li>*Endurance D10</li> <li>*Reflexes D12</li> <li>*Resistance D6</li> <li>*Scrutiny D10</li> <li>*Skullduggery D12</li> <li>*Speed D12</li> <li>*Stealth D12 &gt; D10 Hide</li> <li>*Tracking D6</li> <li>*Thievery D6</li> <li>*Willpower D8</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Racial Features (human):</b> Respectable or better Willpower and Endurance</p>	
<p><b>Active Defense Pools (hitpoints)</b></p>	
<p>Weaponry (Weapons + Specializations + Masteries): 14</p>	
<p>Evade (Reflexes + Agility): 22</p>	
<p>Dodge (Speed + Agility): 22</p>	
<p>Deflect (Base Melee MRV + Shield + Magic): 6 + 10 (magic robes)</p>	
<p><b>Passive Defense Pools (hitpoints)</b></p>	
<p>Toughness (Endurance ×2 + Resistance): 26</p>	
<p>Resilience (Resistance ×2 + Willpower + Arcanum tree): 20</p>	
<p><b>Armor</b></p>	
<p>Armor: Magic Robes 1D4 (+10 deflect bonus)</p>	
<p>Shield: none</p>	



rules for full explanations). The aspect of a spell describes what ability or subject is affected.

To cast a spell, the player rolls the character's Ability-Dice-Chain, and the GM rolls the difficulty dice listed in the spell description. Whichever roll is higher wins, but the player wins ties. A failed spell fizzles but expends no spell points. Direct damage spells that use the "Harm" effect do not require a difficulty roll.

Characters typically have more spells than the samples given on the pregenerated characters, but we kept the number of choices down here to keep things simplified.

### **Blinding Light**

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Theurgy

Effect: Obscure

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Area

Aspect: Scrutiny or Any Attack

Difficulty: roll ADC vs. 2D6

This spell creates a bright light, 24 feet in radius, which blinds everyone in the area. When using this spell, the player of Kristiana, Priestess of Eria, rolls 2D12 + 1D10 versus 2D6. If the spell succeeds, the result of the ability roll becomes the penalty all creatures in area of effect suffer to their Scrutiny ability checks, and attacks made within an area-of-effect. Also, subtract the full result if the roll from Kristiana's spell point pool. If Kristiana wants to maintain this spell into the next round, she must pay ½ the result of her dice roll in spell points. An arcanist may lower the ranks of the dice rolled if desired to reduce spell point cost. Alternatively, also to save on spell points, she may eliminate one or more dice (except for the basic rank) from the roll.

If Kristiana is out of spell points, she can dip into her Resilience Defense Pool at her own risk.

### **Heal**

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Theurgy

Effect: Restore

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Self or Creature

Aspect: Toughness

Difficulty: 1D4 if cast on self or 2D4 if cast on another creature.

Healing restores any one chosen defense pool, active or passive, up to the maximum amount. Kristiana rolls 2D12 + 1D10 versus 2D4 (or 1D4 if cast on self), and if the spell succeeds, the result

is the amount healed. Cost in spell points is the result minus the lowest die. An arcanist may lower the ranks of the dice rolled if desired, for the spell to cost less. Unfortunately, mages cannot heal themselves with Restore if they are out of spell points. Any healing spell cast on oneself fails if the power of the spell exceeds the number of spell points available.

### **Light** (cantrip)

Power Source: Supernatural

Manifestation: Fire

Range: Object

Difficulty: n/a

This spell creates a mobile light equal to torchlight, either centered on a targeted item or manifesting as a floating sphere.

### **Mantle**

Power Source: Supernatural

School: Theurgy

Effect: Fortify

Manifestation: Positive

Range: Creature

Aspect: Deflect

Difficulty: 2D4 or 1D4 if cast on self.

The theurgist fortifies the target against harm, creating a deflective holy energy shield. When using this spell, the player of Kristiana, Priestess of Eria, rolls 2D12 + 1D10 versus 2D4. If successful, the result grants the targeted creature (or herself) a temporary bonus to the Deflect Defense Pool. Also, subtract the result, *minus the lowest die*, from Kristiana's spell point pool. If the caster wishes to maintain this spell into the next round, she must pay ½ the result of her dice roll in spell points. An arcanist may lower the ranks of the dice rolled if desired to reduce spell point cost. Alternatively, also to save on spell points, she may eliminate one or more dice (except for the basic rank) from the roll. If she is out of spell points, she can dip into her Resilience Defense Pool at her own risk.

### **Fireball**

Power Source: Primordial

School: Elementalism

Effect: Harm

Manifestation: Fire

Range: Area

Aspect: Resilience and then Toughness

Difficulty: n/a

Dannumara, the elven fighter-mage rolls 1D12 + 1D10 + 1D6 to cast a large 10' radius fireball, using the result to determine threat points against all affected creatures. Harm spells deplete Resilience,



and then Toughness, in that order, **with no difficulty roll required**. Instead, the caster's uses her ADC to determine Potential-Harm, the result of the roll used as threat points against the targeted subject. The point of origination for the explosions is at a distance of up to 100 feet, in line of sight. An arcanist may lower the ranks of the dice rolled if desired to reduce spell point cost. Alternatively, also to save on spell points, she may eliminate one or more dice (except for the basic rank) from the roll. If she is out of spell points, she can dip into her Resilience Defense Pool at her own risk.

### **Lifting Winds**

Power Source: Primordial

School: Elementalism

Effect: Travel

Manifestation: Air

Range: Self or Creature

Aspect: Humanoid

Difficulty: 1D4 if cast on self or 2D4 if on another creature

This spell causes strong, localized updrafts allowing the caster to fly. Dannumara, the elven fighter-mage rolls 1D12 + 1D10 + 1D6 versus 1D4 to see if she can get off the ground, or versus 2D4 if casting the spell on another creature. If successful, she can fly up to 100 feet before landing.

### **The Adventure**

This adventure follows a simple map, based on the structure of a flowchart. This "flowmap" illustrates all areas of the adventure on a single page or less, thereby making the GM's job easier. A single hexagon represents any outdoor place, whether as expansive as a forest or as small as the description of a single, unusual tree. A single square represents any indoor place, and can illustrate anything from a vast cavern to a single room within a dwelling.

A pentagon represents any place within the assumed civilized town. Each hexagon or square has an associated letter and number, to simplify "navigation" through the adventure. The lines connecting the hexagons or squares may represent roads, tunnels, corridors, or other means of traveling back and forth. Connecting lines represent whatever measure of time or distance is appropriate, and can represent anything from a day's travel to a single minute on foot. You will find directional options explained in detail within the adventure text.

A line ending with an arrow, rather than connecting to another area shape, will indicate options by designated Letter Code and Geometric shapes on the map. Sometimes travels between

areas are restricted, or indicate one-way travel, allowing some linearity in the plot.

All Eldritch Role-Playing adventures use flowmaps, as befitting the spirit of the game, but this does not preclude the use of traditional RPG cartography. GMs, try it! Since these flowmaps are not to-scale, they are highly changeable. Moving from a large area to a small area can now fit on a single guide. However, if there is no more room on the page, then any single area can *subsume* other places, like an entire dungeon or the interior of a building in town, each with their own, separate flowmaps. Flowmaps can replace or supplement "traditional" RPG cartography for the story-driven GM, and make it easy for players to "map" out their progress. See page 27 for the adventure flow map.

### **Adventure Title: *Cadarn's Medallion***

#### **Background:**

In the not too distant past, the townsfolk of Blaenafon lynched an evil sorcerer named Cadarn. Leading the assault were two brothers named Odgar and Nerth, of the family Gremanded. The third brother, Trevelyan, was the eldest, and leader of the town's rangers. Long ago, their father gave Trevelyan a family heirloom, a medallion engraved with the family sigil, a wild boar. This medallion, the townsfolk have rumored, can catch the soul, allowing resurrection, if placed upon the breast of the fallen. Unbeknownst to the assailants, Cadarn survived the attempt on his life, slinking away into the shadows to gather minions, preparing for retribution. That day came quickly, when Cadarn sent his goblin raiders out to kill the town rangers; especially their leader, Trevelyan, whose medallion he coveted.

What Cardarn did not know was that his son traveled with the rangers, and was the only survivor of the brutal ambush. The brothers Gremanded ordered his son to hunt down the errant sorcerer, and retrieve their family heirloom, or face death. But now, a fortnight has passed, and no word has reached the town of Blaenafon concerning his fate. Most townsfolk assume that he met with doom.

#### **NPCs:**

Cadarn the Sorcerer.

The Brothers Gremanded, Nerth and Odgar.

Iowerth, Sergeant at Arms

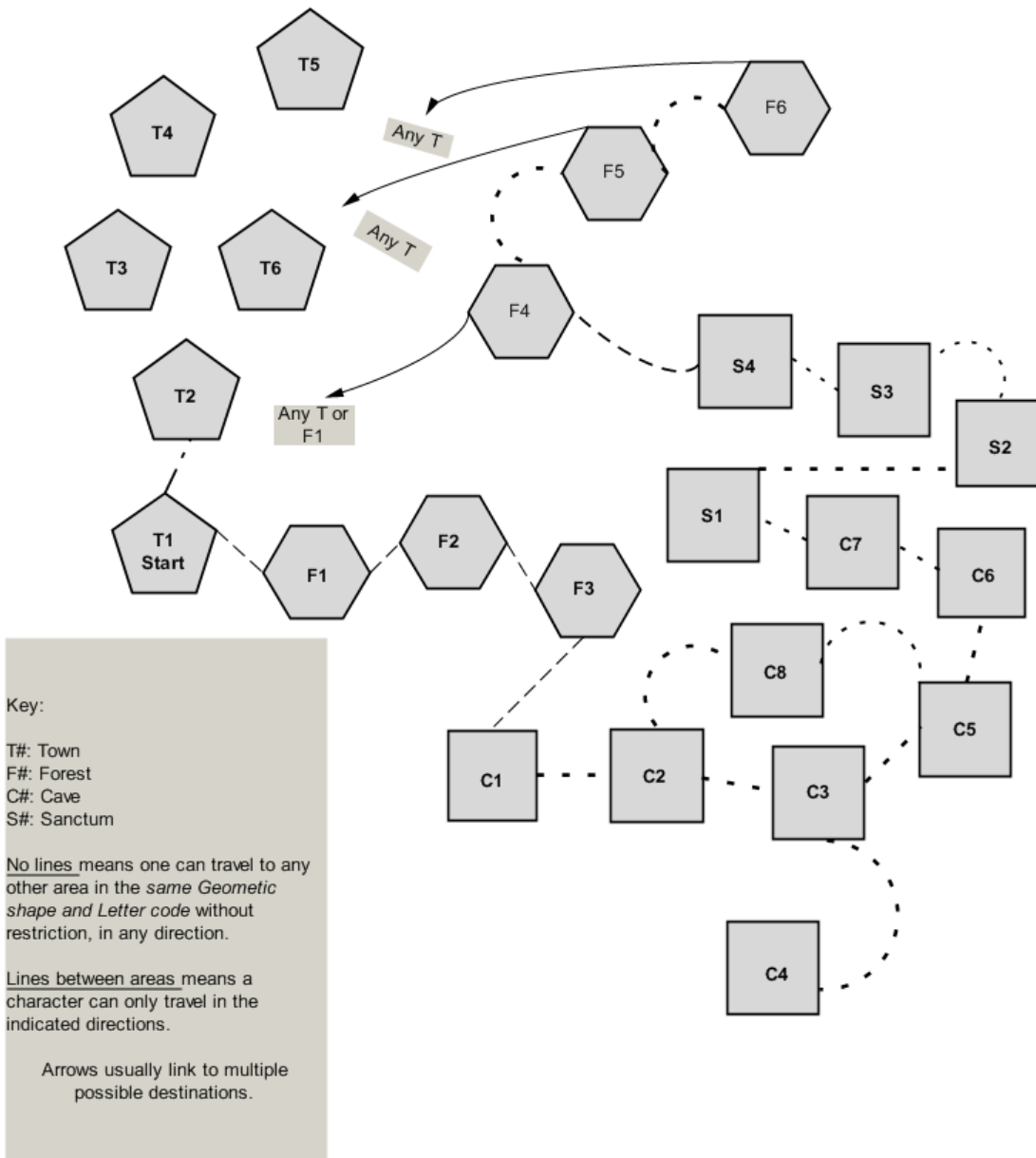
Yspadaden the guide

Priestess Aelwyd



# Eldritch Role-Playing Quickstart

## Adventure: Cadarn's Medallion





### Plot Points:

**Hook:** The Brothers Gremanded of **Blaenafon** offer a reward for the safe return of a magical medallion. The adventure plot is first organized by *location group*, all areas matching the flowmap. T for town places, F for forest areas, C for Cave rooms, and S for inner sanctum rooms.

Some encounters are listed by location group and letter priority (like T-A or F-C). Obviously, encounter A should usually happen before B. Some encounters happen after others, and if the prerequisite encounter is in a different area, the text indicates that in parenthesis, like T-A(F-E).

**Climax:** The heroes discover the sorcerer Cadarn uses the stolen medallion to torture Trevelyan Gremanded; raising him from the dead, then killing him again. A battle to defeat the wicked man surely ensues...

**Finale:** The heroes kill Cadarn, along with his goblinoid minions, and release his undead son from eternal bondage—by allowing him to die.

Town of Blaenafon

**T1:** *The town of Blaenafon.*

Description: *Your adventure begins in the town of Blaenafon, a sleepy place with a moderate size population living in dwellings of brick and timber, or in wattle and daub huts on the outskirts of town. In the center of town is a mansion (T5), where the town bailiff, Reeve Gavin, resides. Known for its steel making and coal mining, the town has recently run into trouble with marauding goblinoids, who ambush the town's scouts in the surrounding forest. Transportation is usually by foot; there are no carriages. The people here worship deities of a time and place forgotten, known as the People of Dea, from the lands of Lochlann. The local graveyard and shrine of Nicevenn (T4) is overseen by the local Priestess, Aelwyd. There is also a general store, horse trader, inn, and swordsmith.*

GM Notes: The adventuring party wandered into Blaenafon one day, deciding to stop by the town's inn after a long, arduous adventure where they had battled dangerous trolls in the distant hills. The stats for a typical town soldier are below, although the heroes ought not to start trouble in town. If, at some point, the adventurers decide to spoil the adventure and become rampaging murderers, keep in mind that it would require about 13 to 20 of the soldiers to really challenge the heroes.

Local authorities:

Soldiers

TY : Fodder / 8 .

TR Melee D8, Ranged D4.

HP 8.

RS 4.

BP: D4.

Notes: Leather armor D6. The soldiers carry whatever weapon the GM describes; but, as fodder, do not benefit from any specific bonuses based on type.

### Encounter T-A:

At some point, have the Brothers Gremanded, Nerth and Odgar, approach the Player Characters, explain to them their dilemma (based on the background provided above), and offer a hefty monetary reward for retrieving Trevelyan's medallion (\$10,000 in coin). Odgar does not talk much, just nods his head, so Nerth will speak in his gruff voice. *You may want to avoid using the dialog word for word, lest you kill spontaneous role-playing.* Nerth will say something along the lines of...

*“Greetings travelers. Allow me to introduce myself; my name is Nerth Gremanded, and I represent a town in dire straits. We need your help, and it matters not if you are mercenaries or heroes, we'll compensate you just the same”.*

What does he want the adventurers to do?

*“We need you to find the body of our dear brother, who has fallen in a recent ambush. Once found, you must retrieve a medallion he wore, engraved with the family sigil, a wild boar. It's a family heirloom. But first, you'll have to find the whereabouts of our enemy, an evil sorcerer and his goblin minions.”*

Who is responsible for the ambush?

*“Years ago, our family disposed of an evil sorcerer named Cadarn, leaving his body for dead. But he was not dead, and our dear brother Trevelyan has paid dearly for our mistake. He was the head of our perimeter guard, the rangers, and now all are dead, fallen victim to vicious attacks from Cadarn's goblins. Only one man survived the first strike; he brought us word that Trevelyan had fallen.*

Where do we start?

*“Come and speak with our father Iowerth, Sergeant at Arms. He can give you more information that will aid in your mission...”*



### **Travel:**

1 North to T2 (Chalet of Gremanded family), two minutes on foot.

*Leads to Scene 1: Encounter T-B (req T-A)*

2 East to F1 (Meathe Forest), 5 days march. The party will wander the forest for a long, long while if they head off in this direction without first gathering information.

### **T2: The Chalet of the Gremanded family.**

This is the house of the Gremanded's, a family of stout warriors. The father of the household is **Iowerth**, Sergeant at Arms.

Description: *This wooden house features decorative carvings of eagles and boars along the roof, a staircase leading up to the porch, and two balconies.*

Iowerth has headed up the town militia for decades, and his sons always guard the city or patrol the outskirts of town.

### Encounter T-B (req T-A):

If the PCs agree to speak to Iowerth, Nerth and Odgar will lead them into their home. There are several bedrooms, foyer, a scullery, kitchen, and a buttery. The brothers lead them into the main hall, where Iowerth sits in a tall-backed chair, smoking a pipe.

Iowerth says,

*“I am glad you’re here. I trust my sons spoke of their fallen brother, and of the family medallion created for us by the priests of Nicevenn. They granted that heirloom to us in thanks for saving the town multiple times from goblinoid raids. The artifact can raise the dead of our family, but only one of our bloodline. Otherwise, use on mortal remains raises the corpse as an undead creature. I tell you, if one of you falls in your mission, and you have the medallion, do not invoke its power”.*

**GM Note:** A successful roll of Skullduggery or Scrutiny versus 1D4 (easy) grants a character knowledge that Iowerth is not trying to be deceptive.

Question: How do we find the medallion?

*“I suggest you speak to the only surviving member of the sorcerer’s family, his brother Uacko. The man is ill, but under house arrest in the local Inn. So far, he’s been uncooperative in giving us information about his brother’s whereabouts, assuming he knows. Rumor has it he has a telepathic link to his brother, which drove him slightly mad. Otherwise, you’ll have to scout out*

*the forest and try to follow a goblin pack to their lair. Cadarn controls them all as slaves.”*

The stats of Iowerth and his two sons are below; for whatever reason the GM might deem them necessary.

### **Iowerth**

TY Standard / human

TR Melee 2D10 [Mace & Chain 1H +3 potential-harm, +1 initiative], Ranged D6 (but no bow in hand).

HP 26.

RS 10

BP: D6.

Notes: Armor, chain mail 1D8. Loot: 100 gold pieces.

### **Nerth Gremanded**

TY : Fodder / human

TR Melee D10, Unarmed D6. Ranged D4.

HP 10.

RS 5.

BP: D6.

### **Odgar Gremanded.**

TY : Fodder / human.

TR Melee D8, Unarmed D6. Ranged D4.

HP 8.

RS 4.

BP: D4.

### **Travel:**

South to T1 (town proper), about two minutes.

North to any T location, including T3, T4, T5, and T6. The characters simply walk the many dirt roads and byways to whatever building sought.

T3: General Store and horse trader.

In this area, the adventurers can buy whatever common goods desired. The general store is a small, wooden, rectangular building that closes at dusk. The horse trader operates out of an adjacent building. They may also trade in loot at the general store for more common sorts of local currency. The proprietor of the general store is an old lady named Hilda.

Hilda may be old, but she is feisty. In fact, she will relentlessly ask to get a kiss from the most handsome of the heroes (like Ottomar). If he is kind enough to comply (a peck on the cheek will do, really), then she gives them a magic wand of protection, with 10 charges. The wand, when used as a standard action by any character, will add 1D4 to the passive armor defense of the recipient of the magic. Each use expends 4 spell points, and the protection only lasts until the wielders next action,





and therefore must be activated each round to maintain.

The horse trader is having trouble with one ornery horse in particular. If Ottomar gets involved, and succeeds in a roll of Animal Handling D8 versus a difficulty of 2D4, he will calm the animal. The trader (a gnome named Quent) will be so grateful he'll give the party a pack mule, helping them with their travels.

*Travel: any direction, or back to T1.*

T4: Shrine of Nicevenn.

The shrine of Nicevenn is run by the Priestess Aelwyd. It is a small, domed building, the interior housing only the priestess and her few belongings. The town graveyard is behind the building, surrounded by an iron-wrought fence. If the adventuring party brings the body of Trevelyan here, the priestess knows how to raise him from the dead with the power of the medallion.

**GM's Note:** A roll of Arcanum D12 > Supernatural D12 > Theurgy D10 versus a difficulty of 2D8 (Demanding) reveals to Kristiana that the graveyard is located on a nexus of magical power, a powerful shrine built at the crossroads of magical lay lines. In fact, unbeknownst to Iowerth, only here can the Medallion raise the dead. Used elsewhere, it only creates zombies.

He believes it only works on his bloodline, but that's not true. Priestess Aelwyd knows this, but is afraid to admit it, because should somebody find the medallion, such knowledge would make it a frightful weapon. Nevertheless, a successful roll of Skullduggery could convince her that her "secret is out" (making her spill the beans, so to speak).

T5: Bailiff's mansion.

The mansion of the Bailiff stands in the middle of the town. There are many guards standing at the gate, and at various points along the palisade fencing. The guards are exceptional (TR 3D8 close, 3D6 Ranged, no arcane -- HP 24, RS 12, BP D6), and wear plate armor (1D10 damage reduction). The Bailiff, Reeve Gavin has no interest in helping the adventuring party.

He is a spoiled nobleman who's been content to allow Iowerth and his sons to protect the town. Any attempt to get by the guards with stealth requires a roll against their collective Scrutiny of 1D6. Any who actually gets to speak to Reeve Gavin will see a drunk who cares about nothing outside of self-indulgence.

T6: Inn and Swordsmith.

Encounter T-C (prereq T-B): The heroes speak to Uacko, who attacks them if threatened. Reeve Gavin may be bribed, such as with a gift from Priestess Aelwyd, whom he adores. If threatened, he says where his brother is without realizing it while in a rage ("I'll never tell you about the cave!"). Cursed he is, with a psychic link to all of his family members, which drives him nuts. He knows where all of them are, including his ancestors. He can tell the party what they need to know to find the cave where his brother Cadarn dwells.

Yspadaden the Halfling guide meets the party in the bar on the first floor of the Inn and offers to lead them to the cave that Uacko mentions. He used to be a member of the rangers before he lost a hand at a battle outside that very cave. He hates goblins, and will aid the PCs however he can to rid the forest of those foul monsters. Or if the PCs can't figure out how to get information out of Uacko, Yspadaden will tell them about Uacko's crush on Aelwyd the Priestess. That ought to give them some ideas...

**F1: Meathe Forest**

Description: ***You enter into a great forest, following a difficult path through the towering cedars, elms, and ancient oaks. The woods are alive with wild sounds, and the days and nights seem to pass quickly. One could very easily get lost, but the brothers sent with you a guide; a scout who knows the place where the rangers were ambushed a fortnight ago.***

GM Notes: The scout leads the heroes through the deep forest to the cave at C1, where the danger really begins. The scout's name is Yspadaden, and he will fight alongside the party, and follow them into the cave if asked.

Yspadaden the guide

TY Standard / 16.

TR Melee 1D6, Ranged 2D6 [*Short Bow +2 harm, 3 max-split*], Unarmed 1D4.

HP 18.

RS 6

BP: D6.

Notes: Armor, leader 1D6.

*Travel:*

Northeast to F2, about 2 days travel. Some ability in ranging is useful in navigating, but even if the guide were to die, the heroes will stumble on the cave (C1) eventually.

F2: The Troll.

After about two days travel, the adventurers might wonder if they're heading in the right direction.



Creature	HP	Current HP	RS	Current RS	Battle #
Troll	176		12		1
Troll	176		12		2
Troll	176		12		3
Troll	176		12		4

A successful roll of “knowledge” against 2D4 will grant any of the characters a general idea if they are following the directions to the cave well, or if Yspadaden the guide is on the right track. All characters have a default knowledge score of D4 (meaning a common education). A roll of Tracking (Felix has a D6 in that Ability), will also reveal they are on the right track through evidence of battles between rangers and goblins. Dannumara may detect the presence of a primordial creature in the forest (using her Arcanum D12 > Primordial D10 > Elemental D6 versus a difficulty of 2D12, or simply a target of 12, whichever the GM prefers).

This creature is a troll, and if Dannumara detects it, the adventuring party can get the drop on the monsters, perhaps neutralizing the threat before they even get a turn. Otherwise, at dusk, the trolls will stomp out of the forest and attack, hungry for living flesh. They will turn to stone in bright sunlight, and if Kristiana casts “Blinding Light” it doubles as a Harm Effect against the trolls, in addition to the normal consequences.

**Trolls** (encounter F-A)

TY/CS: Large, extraordinary, humanoid.

TR: 3D8 Close attacks (claws, bite, etc), 2D10

Missile attacks (thrown objects).

HP: 176

RS: 12

BP: D4

Notes: trolls have x4 to hit points due to their large size and thick skin.

**Travel:** Southeast to F3, or backtrack west toward town.

F3: The battle site

*You enter into a small clearing amid the trees, and discover a horrid site. The bodies of the rangers are all about the area, twisted, beheaded corpses on blood-stained grass. Crude eating forks stick out of hollowed-out faces in crushed skulls, their heads used as macabre bowls.*

Rolling Scrutiny or Investigation versus a target of 2D6 (or just a static target of 6), may allow the discovery of a crude map of a nearby cave. This will be instantly recognizable. Adlar could roll his Knowledge D4 > Dungeon engineering D4 versus a

target of 4 and know beyond a doubt that the place depicted on the map would be of typical goblin construction.

**Travel:** A worn trail can be seen leading from here to area C1 to the south, the entrance to the cave.

F4 to F5: trek to Cadarn’s Abode

Both of these areas follow the same description---wilderness, good to create the illusion of travel time and random encounters. After emerging into the forest from the underground tunnel in area S4, the adventurers will easily see signs of a well-traveled trail heading northeast. In addition, the GM can create other areas of interest along this route. However, a well-worn path through the woods is visible all the while, leading uphill through the woods to the abode of the sorcerer. It takes about a day and a half of traveling steadily northeast before one can see the abode through the trees.

Random Encounters

01-25 Attacked by a bear (TR: 1D10 bite/claw, HP 40, RS 5, BP D8)

26-50 Finds a lost child, a “little girl”, actually a mischievous pixie in disguise.

51-75 If camping out, food is found by raccoons. A battle ensues...

76-00 Bad dreams of a man dying a horrible death only to be raised and killed again...

Weather

01-25 Lightning & Thunder Storm

26-50 Light Rain

51-75 Cold, crisp night

76-00 Sunny, breezy day

**Travel:** Area F4 leads out of the dungeon to area F5, which the GM can personalize as desired.

F5 leads in any direction, but unless the PCs specifically backtrack, they’ll end up at F6...

**F6:** The hut of Cadarn

Description: *You see a cottage, not too far ahead. The building looks somewhat lopsided and is atop a hill in a clearing. You can see smoke rising above the building: Somebody must be home.*

Encounter F-B: Here the heroes encounter Cadarn himself. The sorcerer has been busy torturing



Rank	HP	Current HP	RS	Current RS	Armor	Battle #
D4 <i>goblin</i>	4		2		n/a	1
D4 <i>goblin</i>	4		2		n/a	2
D4 <i>goblin</i>	4		2		n/a	3
D4 <i>goblin</i>	4		2		n/a	4
D4 <i>goblin</i>	4		2		n/a	5
D4 <i>goblin</i>	4		2		n/a	6
D4 <i>goblin</i>	4		2		n/a	7
D4 <i>goblin</i>	4		2		n/a	8
D4 <i>goblin</i>	4		2		n/a	9
D4 <i>goblin</i>	4		2		n/a	10

Rank (primary attack)	HP	Current HP	RS	Current RS	Armor	Battle #
D6 <i>Orc</i>	10		3		1D6	1
D6 <i>Orc</i>	10		3		n/a	2
D6 <i>Orc</i>	10		3		n/a	3
D6 <i>Orc</i>	10		3		1D6	4
D6 <i>Orc</i>	10		3		n/a	5
D6 <i>Orc</i>	10		3		n/a	6
D6 <i>Orc</i>	10		3		1D6	7
D6 <i>Orc</i>	10		3		n/a	8

Trevelyan Gremanded, killing him and raising him from the dead repeatedly by using the medallion. The sorcerer is not using the proper ritual, so Trevelyan revives each time pale and sick; his very soul in danger of fracturing.

When Cadarn sees the heroes, he tells them to leave in a most threatening manner. If they do not, he will summon dark energies to attack them; the spells usually taking the form of jet-black, leathery tentacles. The GM can come up with other forms of attack, using this base 3D8 Arcane Potential-Harm. Re-read the magic rules, and check out “Harm” effect specifically. Remember, Harm spells deplete Resilience, and then Toughness, in that order, **with no difficulty roll required**. Instead, the caster’s uses his ADC to determine Potential-Harm; the result of the roll used as threat points against the targeted subject.

Trevelyan, believed dead, is currently in a twilight state, between life and death. He will be of no help in the fight, but will have enough strength to explain what he needs. If the PCs take him to the shrine in town, and use the power of the medallion in a holy place, he will be fully raised. This works

whether Trevelyan is dead or just “mostly dead”. Doing this will “complete” the adventure and win the heroes 10,000 crowns when beginning the next session (if there is one).

#### Cadarn

TY: Extraordinary human sorcerer.  
 TR Arcane 3D8 (Primary attack), Melee 1D12.  
 Ranged D4.  
 HP 228.  
 EA: 1D8 x 5, extra tentacle attacks.  
 RS 24  
 BP: 1D8, determines initiative order.  
 Notes: Arcane attacks of 3D8 takes the form of a black, writhing tentacles erupting from the ground (don’t worry about tracking his spell points, it won’t matter). Targets may attempt to Evade the tentacle attacks (for close combat), but cannot Dodge (which is a defense primarily against missile attacks).

His magic is unique, as Cadarn is an “extraordinary” foe, he doesn’t follow normal rules. His spell conjures a total of six tentacles. His primary attack is most powerful at 3D8, but the remaining necromantic appendages (which can





Rank (primary attack)	HP	Current HP	RS	Current RS	Armor	Battle #
D12 <i>Undead Goblin</i>	12		5		1D6	1
D12 <i>Undead Goblin</i>	12		5		n/a	2
D12 <i>Undead Goblin</i>	12		5		n/a	3
D12 <i>Undead Goblin</i>	12		5		1D6	4
D12 <i>Undead Goblin</i>	12		5		n/a	5
D12 <i>Undead Goblin</i>	12		5		n/a	6
D12 <i>Undead Goblin</i>	12		5		1D6	7
D12 <i>Undead Goblin</i>	12		5		n/a	8

come from anywhere, the walls, the floor, etc) get 1D8 Potential-Harm each, and so he has six attacks in a round.

Having possession of the medallion for so long has increased his hit points well above the norm too, so he should prove a challenge for the party alone. He can maintain his Harm spell every round while wielding a dagger, which adds 1D6 threat points to penetrate Active Defense and Armor. He wears no armor.

*Adventure Directions:* From here, the PC can backtrack to the cave tunnel go back to down, or wander the forest. It is not possible to reach this place except by following the route of the goblin cave complex.

#### C1: *The cave*

Description: ***You stand before a limestone cave opening, yawning open in the hillside. As you approach, the cave descends into darkness, out of which peer glowing red eyes. You are being observed, and the watchers are not friendly...***

Encounter: Do not bother with surprise. The heroes are attacked by the minions of Cadarn, who are trying to prevent them from entering the cave. Use the stats given below, plus the charts provided to keep track of the enemies in the fray. All of the combatants are “fodder;” meaning that they should be easy to defeat. *Use the charts below to assign each player to a combatant, and tell the player to remember that number to smooth out the battle.* Roll a 1D10 to determine which side of the battle attacks first.

#### Goblin

TY Fodder / 8.

TR Melee 1D4.

HP 4.

RS 2

BP: D4.

Notes: Armor, none. These creatures carry whatever

weapon the GM describes, but as fodder, do not benefit from any specific bonuses based on type.

#### Orcs

TY Fodder / 10.

TR Melee 1D6. Ranged 1D4.

HP 10.

RS 3

BP: D6.

Notes: Armor, some have 1D6 leather or equivalent, and others have none. These creatures carry whatever weapon the GM describes, but as fodder, do not benefit from any specific bonuses based on type.

***Travel:*** This area (C1) includes the grove outside of the cave; the cave mouth in the hillside, the tunnel just inside the entrance, and several dead-ends. You, the GM, need not worry the players with precise mapping of this area. If the heroes follow a tunnel to the east, they will arrive (in about 10 minutes time) at an L-shaped corner (C2); a small area that continues northward into the darkness.

If they go toward C2, read the following:

***After descending into the darkness of the cave, you face a dead-end, so you turn to your left and follow a hewn, limestone tunnel toward the east...***

TRAP: Before they can reach C2, they must survive a spiked pit trap in the center of the floor. The tunnel is narrow and dark. But the goblinoids left the pit poorly concealed, so a simple opposed roll of Scrutiny ability (defaulting at D4 for those lacking ability above average) versus 1D4 (or target 4, GM’s choice) prevents taking a fall. Those failing the test immediately suffer 10 threat points. Characters may choose to “evade” this damage. Kristiana and Adlar would both face penetrating threat points in such an occurrence. Allow them a random armor roll for protection, and whatever points remain depletes their Toughness scores.



### C2: Corridor corner

Description: ***You proceed cautiously until you reach a sharp corner. A rotting goblin corpse lies there, its tattered clothes eaten by black-winged moths that still flutter about your torchlight. Its body fell next to a weapons rack and broken short bow. The corridor continues to the east into darkness. It looks like there was a scuffle here.***

On the ground, they will find a bag filled with some mundane items: Snuff box, pipe, bone jewelry, and a shirt button.

#### Travel:

The hewn limestone tunnel continues to the east to C3.

A hidden passage leads to C8. A roll of Scrutiny exceeding an opposing 1D4 (easy), reveals the hidden passage, created by optical illusion and viewing angle. The player then rolls in opposition, using the dice indicated by his character's ability rank, comparing the results. The character may roll multiple ranks in an ability check if she has a relevant Specialization and/or Mastery. In those situations, she adds the results of the rolled dice together, and uses the total in the resolution process. As mentioned above, the rules do not allow the use of more than three dice in a single ability check. If the player's roll is equal to or greater than the difficulty, the character succeeds. C3 through C7 : traps and goblinoids Here in the winding passageways of the goblin caves the adventurers will find themselves defending against constant attack and traps of various types.

01-20 Pit trap! The PCs roll Reflexes vs. target 8 or take 10 threat points

21-40 Darkness zone: The PCs can't see; allow only basic rank for abilities which require sight.

41-60 Spinner trap: Characters think they are heading one direction, but backtrack again.

61-80 Teleporter trap: characters get teleported to C1 failing a Resistance roll versus 2D4.

81-00 Goblinoid attack (use stats and charts from C1)!

#### S1 through S3:

Here in the rock hewn corridors of Cadarn's inner sanctum, adventurers will find themselves defending against constant attack and traps of various types. At one point they run into a guardian, summoned by Cadarn to keep any and all intruders out of his inner sanctum. It is a terrible necromantic creature, and advances to kill immediately:

#### *Cadarn's Guardian of the Sanctum*

TY: Extraordinary

TR: Melee 3D8 (+1 and +1D6 fire), Unarmed

1D4, Ranged D6, Arcane n/a

EA: 2D8 (+1 and +1D6 necromantic fire)

EA: 1D8 (+1 and +1D6 necromantic fire)

EA: 1D8 (+1 and +1D6 necromantic fire)

HP: 300

RS: 96

BP: D10 (13 with club, allow it to act in phase D12)

Notes: each club (+1 harm, max-split 2, init bonus +3) wielded is magical, granting an additional +1 to threat points, plus an extra 1D6 to Potential-Harm with every strike, treated as a Harm Effect spell.

#### S4: Loot Room and Secret Passage.

Description: ***This large cave has plaster walls over wooden boards set against the limestone, made into a symmetrical living space by intelligence hands. But it is damp and dark, now abandoned. This was a treasure room for a band of goblinoid. But, now, it is a mass grave. Scattered about the room are twisted corpses of the small, gnarled, grey-skinned humanoids. Strewn about the floor are knickknacks, various stolen property from the nearby town, and several sacks filled with coins.***

Encounter: The mindless progeny of the Sorcerer lurks in the shadows of a corner of the room, the result of magic of the medallion misused. Describe it as a zombie; a former human, now undead, wearing the tattered clothes with the insignia of the town's rangers. Determine surprise with an opposed roll: Use D10 versus the highest Scrutiny ability in the adventuring party. Defender wins ties. The loser may use any active defense, but loses a round of attacks. The creature no longer uses weapons, but attacks with its claws; a devastating supernatural attack that ignores supernatural armor.

#### Undead Progeny

TY Exceptional, Supernatural Undead / 36.

TR Unarmed 3D12

HP 144 (supernatural HP).

RS 72 (x2 to RS)

BP: D10.

Notes: Supernatural creatures' attacks ignore normal and preternatural armor.

In the second round, the goblins will rise from the ground, at the command of the zombie, and attack the PCs. These are animated corpses, but not truly supernatural. So they do not have increased Hit points or Resilience. And their Potential-Harm (1D12) is mitigated by armor. Assume that the heroes win initiative over the animated corpses every battle round (see the core rules sophisticated initiative rules). Their primary attack form is Unarmed.



Rank (primary attack)	HP	Current HP	RS	Current RS	Armor	Battle #
D12 <i>Undead Goblin</i>	12		6		1D6	1
D12 <i>Undead Goblin</i>	12		6		n/a	2
D12 <i>Undead Goblin</i>	12		6		n/a	3
D12 <i>Undead Goblin</i>	12		6		1D6	4
D12 <i>Undead Goblin</i>	12		6		n/a	5
D12 <i>Undead Goblin</i>	12		6		n/a	6
D12 <i>Undead Goblin</i>	12		6		1D6	7
D12 <i>Undead Goblin</i>	12		6		n/a	8

Animated Goblin Corpse  
 TY Fodder .  
 TR Unarmed 1D12  
 HP 12.  
 RS 6  
 BP: D3.  
 Notes: No armor.

Use the chart above to organize the battle:  
 Adventure Directions: The heroes may discover a secret door, behind the plaster and wood of the walls, leading to an underground tunnel.

Spotting this secret door requires a roll of Scrutiny versus a roll of 2D8 (Demanding).

If they travel this tunnel at a cautious pace, they will reach the forest in about 34 minutes. Once they exit the tunnel, they will be in area F2, and within sight of the sorcerer's cottage. Otherwise, they can backtrack to area C2, back into the dark of the cave, to the south of this room.

Note to GM: And yes, this creature is what became of your character from the first half of this QuickStart Guide.



