REALMS

POWERED BY

FATE

FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING
GAME
by Brett fitzpatrick

Starbright

Realms of Fate
A Fantasy Tabletop RPG

by
Brett Fitzpatrick

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Credits
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CHARACTER CREATION

Character creation is a good way to get to know a role-playing game. It teaches you about the rules and the setting before you actually start to play. The moment you all sit down to create characters, you're already playing Realms.

Character creation is collaborative and is best done as a group activity. Doing all of this together builds a strong foundation of communication between the players and GM.

Character creation can take a full session to do —this allows everyone to learn about the world and each other's characters. You and the other players will talk about your characters, make suggestions to each other, and establish some of the detail of the setting.

The Character Sheet

You'll want to keep good notes on the character creation process. You can use the character sheet in the back of this book. The character creation process is broken into the following steps.

Name: Name your character.
Backstory: Decide on concept and troubles.
Aspects: Choose and invent your character's aspects.
Equipment: Choose equipment.
Skills: Pick and rate your skills.
Stunts: Pick, or invent, three to five stunts.
Magic: determine the character's magical ability.
Refresh: Determine starting fate points.
Stress and Consequences: Determine how much of a beating your character can take.

Your Character Name

Few things will destroy a player's suspension of disbelief during a fantasy role-playing game more quickly than a poorly-chosen name for a character or location in the fantasy setting, so a few hints on choosing a good name are given here.

Mythology is a great source of names that can be used or adapted. Fantasy epics, such as The Lord of the Rings often have family trees that can be consulted for names.

Combining two real-world words can provide an interesting name, such as Darkraven, from dark and raven.

If all else fails, however, the Internet is full of name generators for fantasy characters that are a great source of inspiration.

Your Character Backstory

Your character doesn't just jump fully formed from the ground, at least not usually, and they will have a rich history of knowledge and experiences.

Create this history as you decide on your character's species, language, realm of origin, previous career, etc.

Character Species

Humans are not the only option for player characters when choosing a species. The types of humanoids to be found in Realms also include dwarves, elves and halflings. The various species of humanoid all get along well with each other, irrespective of stature, skin colour, pointyness of ears, or any other differences in physical characteristics.

A species provides a number of aspects; choose at least one but not more than two. You can make your own if you want to. Your species also gives you a species skill in a few different flavours. (See example below.)

Slot your species skill into whichever empty skill slot appeals to you and pick the flavour that most appeals to you; it'll tell you how you can use your species skill. You can take additional flavours of your species skill as if they were stunts.

Humans

Humans are the base standard against which everything else is judged, so we will start with them. Normal human abilities, such as two arms, ability to breath air, running speed of about 10 m/sec do not need to be written on the character sheet. It is only when a character goes above, or falls below these benchmarks that a note must be made.

Elves

Elves are taller than humans on average, and thinner than most humans. Depending on the elf this tends to make them look either graceful and beautiful, or gaunt and sinister to human eyes.

ASPECTS

The Experience of Centuries, I Know These Woods, The Long Game, Magic in the Blood, Perfection in Everything.

Elf skill

You may use the Elf skill to recognize useful flora and fauna, know your way through the woods, or notice hidden dangers. In addition, pick one of the following flavors; you may pick more at the cost of one stunt or refresh each.

Elven High Magic: You can use Elf to cast spells relating to nature or growth, even if you have no other magical ability.

Perfection in Battle: Choose Shoot or Fight. When you're using the traditional armaments of your people, you can use Elf instead of the chosen skill.

Halflings

Halflings may be the smallest of the peoples of the setting, but their muscle fibres are longer than human, which means that their strength is equal to that of a human, even though their muscles are less massive.

This means that there is no overall difference in strength, jumping and other physical feats between the two.

However the difference in height means they can go through gaps that big lumbering humans can't, and find it easier to hide and be stealthy. This advantage have led to halflings being prime recruits for gangs of thieves, and their employ by the great powers as assassins.

ASPECTS

Knows the Finer Things, Hale Fellow Well Met, Surprisingly Good with a Knife, Marked by Destiny.

Halfling skill

You may use the Halfling skill to pass stealthily and remain hidden. In addition, pick one of the following flavors; you may pick more at the cost of one stunt or refresh each.

Find Hidden Exit: You can use Halfling to locate an exit from a trap that is just big enough foe a halfling to escape through.

Low Blow: You can create an advantage representing the difficulty of an enemy fighting a nimble foe that seems to be able to dive between their legs and pop up behind them.

Dwarves

They live in the mountains mostly, and are renowned magical smiths. Their muscle fibres are long, as with halflings, making them the physical equal of the taller races, even if shorter. Their shoulders are wide however and often their bellies are big, making them no more stealthy than a human or elf.

ASPECTS

Blood and Glory, Knowledge of the Secrets of the Underdark, Pain Is for the Weak, Warrior of the Seven Clans.

Dwarf skill

You may use the 'Dwarf' skill to resist pain and

perform feats of brute strength. In addition, pick one of the following flavors; you can pick more at the cost of one stunt or refresh each.

Blood Rage: When you use Dwarf to create an advantage representing an overpowering battle-fury, you get an extra invocation on that aspect if you succeed or succeed with style.

Thick Skin: You may use Dwarf instead of Physique to determine your physical stress and consequences, and you get one additional minor physical consequence.

Language
The languages spoken by the character are a good opportunity to add a little colour to the character sheet. Everyone, unless their background is very unusual will speak Human, at least haltingly, as it is a trade language.

Characters can speak an additional 1D3 languages if they desire. There is no need to choose your languages yet. Fill in your language slots as you play the game, and it becomes apparent which languages are important.

Realm of Origin
The area that the character comes from. You can select one of the areas described later in this book, or you can design your own. You can be as specific as a single village, or a city street.

Career/Previous Career
Now that we are forming a clearer picture of the character, we can delve a little into their history. A good step in defining this history is to pick a career for the character. This can be a previous career if it is a way of life that the character is leaving behind as they become an adventurer.

This is noted on the character sheet as an aspect, even if it is a previous career. Write ex-thief, for example, if the character is leaving their previous career among the underworld behind to become an adventurer.

This career represents the things the character was doing before they started adventuring. Don't feel limited by the choices below. These are here to give a flavour of the sort of lives fantasy adventurers might have lived. It's even more fun to come up with your own idea for a previous career.

Barbarian
These are peoples that have little contact with city life. They are the subject of condescension and curiosity, they are also the keepers of knowledge that has been lost, or not yet discovered, by the civilised peoples of the tall cities.

Criminal
Crime is usually a brutish thing, fuelled by necessity, but for some it is the only option available. There are also a small number of people who enjoy the kick they get from committing a crime, but most criminals will leave their life of crime behind them when they go adventuring.

Explorer
Though much of the map of the world is filled in, even more of it remains blank or is simply wrong. On huge sections, all that can be written with any confidence is, 'Here be Monsters.' The explorer thrives on discovering who and what is in those unknown places.

Forester
The forester, also known as a forest ranger, or ranger, holds a position equal to a sheriff or local law enforcer. They are responsible for patrolling the woodlands on a lord or lady's property. Their duties included negotiating deals for the sale of lumber and timber and stopping poachers from illegally hunting. Many times wanted criminals hide in the forest. When this happens it is the duty of the forester to organize armed gangs to

capture the criminal. Often foresters hold titles of prominence in their local communities, and act as barristers and arbitrators. Their pay is usually above average, and often includes free accommodation in a forester's lodge.

Herbalist
A person whose life is dedicated to the economic or medicinal uses of plants. These are respected members of the local community with a status only a little below that of a doctor in the big cities, while out in the country the herbalist will probably have a higher status than a doctor.

Hunter
Even as agriculture and animal husbandry has become prevalent, hunting remains a part of Hyropean culture. Hunting is no longer necessary for subsistence, and is now aimed primarily at killing animals which prey upon domestic animals, and driving monsters away from the borders of inhabited lands.

Knight
This character is a member of the nobility, which in such a militarized and dangerous world means they must be able to fight and command. They must also be able to raise funds from their estates and keep their lands in good order. Even the best trained fighter is of no use to their liege if they can't afford armour and a horse.

Knights fallen on hard times, or whose estates are underperforming have been known to quest for treasure as an alternative source of income. Such knights are referred to as wandering knights, or knights errant.

Mage
The mage's power comes from learning and experiment. Some powerful magic users prefer to wear robes and carry nothing but a book and wand, to emphasise the fact that they can protect themselves by magical means, but there are just as many practical minded adventurers who see the advantage in wearing a good suit of armour and carrying a sword.

Miasma Doctor
A miasma doctor is a special medical physician who treats those who have diseases caused by the miasma. The miasma is an invisible cloud that collects around impure souls and causes them to have diseases. They are specifically hired by towns that have many miasma victims.

Since the city is paying their salary, they treat everyone: rich and poor. They are not normally professionally trained experienced physicians or surgeons, and are often second-rate doctors not able to otherwise run a successful medical business or young physicians trying to establish themselves. Plague doctors wear a special costume. The protective suit consisted of a heavy fabric overcoat that is waxed, a mask with glass eye openings and a cone nose shaped like a beak to hold scented substances and straw. The scented materials include ambergris, balm-mint leaves, camphor, cloves, laudanum, myrrh, rose petals and storax. This protects the doctor from miasmatic bad air (+2 to save rolls). The straw also provides a filter for the 'bad air'. A wooden cane pointer is used to help examine the patient without having to touch them.

Minstrel

Minstrels keep the legends alive, memorizing the works of others and adding to the traditional songs when legendary deeds are performed. Frequently they are retained by champions and royalty, keen to take their place among the legends of old.

Scribe

The work of the scribe involves copying books, including sacred texts, magical texts, and secretarial and administrative duties such as taking of dictation and the keeping of business, judicial and historical records for kings, nobility, temples and cities. Street corner letter-writers (and readers) are also to be found providing these services.

Spy

All the realms make use of assassins, spies and secret agents, and have thoroughly developed systems for the acquisition of intelligence. They all rely heavily on espionage in their conquests.

Wildcrafter

The wildcrafter is skilled at finding and collecting magical and medicinal herbs. They are every bit as at home in the monster infested wilds as hunters and rangers.

Enhancing the Setting

As you're making stuff up for your characters, you'll also make stuff up about the world around them. You'll end up talking about NPCs, organizations, places, things like that. That's fantastic! The GM will be very appreciative of all the help they can get in rounding out the game world and making it more real.

Troubles Are Compelling

In addition to a back story, every character has some sort of trouble that's a part of their life and story, but trouble is a good thing.

Trouble brings chaos into a character's life and drives them into interesting situations. Trouble aspects are broken up into two types: personal struggles and problematic relationships.

Personal struggles are about your darker side or impulses that are hard to control. If it's something that your character might be tempted to do or unconsciously do at the worst possible moment, it's this sort of trouble

Problematic relationships are about people or organizations that make your life hard. It could be a group of people who hate your guts and want you to suffer, folks you work for that don't make your job easy, or even your family or friends that too often get caught in the crossfire.

Your trouble shouldn't be easy to solve. If it was, your character would have done that already, and that's not interesting. But nor should it paralyse the character completely. If the trouble is constantly interfering with the character's day-to-day life, he's going to spend all his time dealing with it rather than other matters at hand. You shouldn't have to deal with your trouble at every turn—unless that's the core of one particular adventure in the story (and even then,

that's just one adventure).

Troubles also shouldn't be directly related to your high concept—if you decided you were a Criminal in your previous career, saying your trouble is The Criminal Underworld Hates Me is a dull trouble, because we already assume that with your high concept. (Of course, you can turn that up a notch to make it personal, like Don Machanto, Head of the Thieves Guild, Personally Hates Me, to make it work.)

Before you go any further, talk with the GM about your character's trouble. Make sure you're both on the same page in terms of what it means. Both of you may want to find one way this aspect might be invoked or compelled to make sure you're both seeing the same things— or to give each other ideas. The GM should come away from this conversation knowing what you want out of your trouble.

The Bright Side of Troubles
Since your trouble is an aspect, it's something you should also be able to invoke, right? Because we've been so focused on how this complicates your character's life, it's easy to miss how a trouble also helps your character.

In short, your experience with your trouble makes you a stronger person in that regard. Dealing with personal struggles leaves you vulnerable to being tempted or cajoled, but it can also give you a sense of inner strength, because you know the sort of person you want to be. Problematic relationships often cause trouble, but people do learn hard lessons from the troubles they deal with. They especially learn how to manoeuvre around many of the smaller issues their troubles present.

Aspects
Now create or choose two other aspects. The golden rule of making aspects in character creation: you can always change it later. If you're struggling to make an aspect, write out the idea

in as many words as you need to, in order to get it down on paper in the first place. If a specific phrase pops up after you write it down, great! If not, maybe someone else at the table can help you come up with an aspect. And if you're still stuck, leave it for now—you'll have plenty of time during play to refine it.

And if you really need to, it's okay to leave some blank. Look at Quick Character Creation for more on leaving parts of your character sheet blank.

Choosing Aspects
A lot of character creation focuses on coming up with aspects—some are related to your concept, some are related to your troubles, but they basically all work the same way. Aspects are one of the most important parts of your character, since they define who she is, and they provide ways for you to generate fate points and to spend those fate points on bonuses.

Aspects which don't help you tell a good story (by giving you success when you need it and by drawing you into danger and action when the story needs it) aren't doing their job. The aspects which push you into conflict—and help you excel once you're there—will be among your best and most-used.

Aspects need to be both useful and dangerous— allowing you to help shape the story and generating lots of fate points—and they should never be boring. The best aspect suggests both ways to use it and ways it can complicate your situation. Aspects that cannot be used for either of those are likely to be dull indeed.

Ultimately, it's much better to leave an aspect slot blank than to pick one that isn't inspiring and evocative to play. If you're picking aspects you're not invested in, they'll end up being noticeable drags on your fun.

Significant personality traits or beliefs make

good aspects. (Sucker for a Pretty Face, Never Leave a Man Behind).

An important possession or noticeable feature might be represented by an aspect. (My Mother's Bloodstained Longsword, Dressed as at Court at All Times, Sharp Eyed Veteran).

Relationships to people and organizations can be aspects. (Lookout for the Twisting Hand Criminal Gangt).

Titles, reputations, or obligations the character may have could also make nice aspects. (Self-Important City Guard Lieutenant, Silver-Tongued Scoundrel, Honor-Bound to Avenge My Brother).

The GM will use your aspects when they are creating scenarios, to generate the problems your PCs are going to solve.

Your aspects highlight what makes your character an individual, and you want to play that up, right? So when the opportunity comes up to make your character more awesome by invoking, go for it! When you see an opportunity to influence the story by suggesting a compel for your character, do it! The game will be much richer for it as a whole.

The best aspects are double-edged, say more than one thing, and keep the phrasing simple. Players, good aspects offer a clear benefit to your character while also providing opportunities to complicate their lives or be used to their detriment.

An aspect with a double-edge is going to come up in play more often than a mostly positive or negative one. You can use them frequently to be awesome, and you'll be able to accept more compels and gain more fate points.

Try this as a litmus test—list two ways you might invoke the aspect, and two ways someone else could invoke it or you could get a compel from it. If the examples come easily to mind, great! If not, add more context to make that aspect work or put that idea to the side and come up with a new aspect.

Let's look at an aspect like Photographic Memory. The benefits of having this aspect are pretty obvious—any time you're doing or remembering research, you could justify invoking it. But it doesn't seem like there's a lot of room for that aspect to work against you. So, let's think of a way we can spice that up a bit.

What if we change that aspect to Introverted Book Worm? That still carries the connotations that would allow you to take advantage of it while working with facts and books, but it adds a downside—you're awkward around people. This might mean that you could accept compels to mangle a social situation, or someone might invoke your aspect when a fascinating piece of research distracts you.

Invoking Aspects
The primary way you're going to use aspects in a game is to invoke them. If you're in a situation where an aspect is beneficial to your character somehow, you can invoke it.

In order to invoke an aspect, explain why the aspect is relevant, (spend a fate point if it's not a free invoke), and you can choose one of these benefits:

Take a +2 on your current skill roll after you've rolled the dice.
Reroll all your dice.
Pass a +2 benefit to another character's roll, if it's reasonable that the aspect you're invoking would be able to help.
Add +2 to any source of passive opposition, if it's reasonable that the aspect you're invoking could contribute to making things more difficult. You can also use this to create passive opposition at Fair (+2) if there wasn't going to be any.

Reroll or +2

Rerolling the dice is a little riskier than just getting the +2 bonus, but has the potential for greater benefit. We recommend you reserve this option for when you've rolled a –3 or a –4 on the dice, to maximize the chance that you'll get a beneficial result from rerolling. The odds are better that way.

It doesn't matter when you invoke the aspect, but usually it's best to wait until after you've rolled the dice to see if you're going to need the benefit. You can invoke multiple aspects on a single roll, but you cannot invoke the same aspect multiple times on a single roll. So if your reroll doesn't help you enough, you'll have to pick another aspect (and spend another fate point) for a second reroll or that +2.

The group has to buy into the relevance of a particular aspect when you invoke it; GMs, you're the final arbiter on this one. The use of an aspect should make sense, or you should be able to creatively narrate your way into ensuring it makes sense.

Precisely how you do this is up to you. Sometimes, it makes so much sense to use a particular aspect that you can just hold up the fate point and name it. Or you might need to embellish your character's action a little more so that everyone understands where you're coming from. (That's why we recommend making sure that you're on the same page with the group as to what each of your aspects means—it makes it easier to justify bringing it into play.)

If the aspect you invoke is on someone else's character sheet, including situation aspects attached to them, you give them the fate point you spent. They don't actually get to use it until after the end of the scene, though.

Free Invocations

You don't always have to pay a fate point to invoke an aspect—sometimes it's free.

When you succeed at creating an advantage, you "stick" a free invocation onto an aspect. If you succeed with style, you get two invocations. Some of the other actions also give you free boosts.

You also get to stick a free invocation on any consequences you inflict in a conflict.

Free invocations work like normal ones except in two ways: no fate points are exchanged, and you can stack them with a normal invocation for a better bonus. So you can use a free invocation and pay a fate point on the same aspect to get a +4 bonus instead of a +2, two rerolls instead of one, or you can add +4 to another character's roll or increase passive opposition by +4. Or you could split the benefits, getting a reroll and a +2 bonus. You can also stack multiple free invocations together.

After you've used your free invocation, if the aspect in question is still around, you can keep invoking it by spending fate points.

If you want, you can pass your free invocation to another character. That allows you to get some teamwork going between you and a buddy. This is really useful in a conflict if you want to set someone up for a big blow—have everyone create an advantage and pass their free invocations onto one person, then that person stacks all of them up at once for a huge bonus.

Compelling Aspects

The other way you use aspects in the game is called a compel. If you're in a situation where having or being around a certain aspect means your character's life is more dramatic or complicated, someone can compel the aspect. That aspect can be on your character, the scene, location, game, or anywhere else that's currently in play. We'll start with character aspects, and then talk about situation aspects in a bit.

In order to compel an aspect, explain why the aspect is relevant, and then make an offer as to what the complication is. You can negotiate the terms of the complication a bit, until you reach a reasonable consensus. Whoever is getting compelled then has two options:

Accept the complication and receive a fate point
Pay a fate point to prevent the complication from happening

The complication from a compel occurs regardless of anyone's efforts—once you've made a deal and taken the fate point, you can't use your skills or anything else to mitigate the situation. You have to deal with the new story developments that arise from the complication.

If you prevent the complication from happening, then you and the group describe how you avoid it. Sometimes it just means that you agree that the event never happened in the first place, and sometimes it means narrating your character doing something proactive. Whatever you need to do in order to make it make sense works fine, as long as the group is okay with it.

GMs, you're the final arbiter here, as always—not just on how the result of a compel plays out, but on whether or not a compel is valid in the first place. Use the same judgment you apply to an invocation—it should make instinctive sense, or require only a small amount of explanation, that a complication might arise from the aspect.

Finally, and this is very important: if a player wants to compel another character, it costs a fate point to propose the complication. The GM can always compel for free, and any player can propose a compel on his or her own character for free.

Players, if you need fate points, this is a really good way of getting them. If you propose a decision-based compel for your character to the

GM, then what you're basically asking is for something you're about to do to go wrong somehow. You don't even have to have a complication in mind—simply signalling the GM should be enough to start a conversation. GMs, as long as the compel isn't weak (as in, as long as there's a good, juicy complication), you should go with this. If the compel is weak, poll the rest of the group for ideas until something more substantial sticks.

If you offer a decision-based compel, and no one can agree on what the decision part should be, it shouldn't cost a fate point to counter—just drop it. Countering a decision-based compel should only mean that the "what goes wrong" part doesn't happen.

GMs, remember that a player is ultimately responsible for everything that the character says and does. You can offer decision-based compels, but if the player doesn't feel like the decision is one that the character would make, don't force the issue by charging a fate point. Instead, negotiate the terms of the compel until you find a decision the player is comfortable making, and a complication that chains from that decision instead. If you can't agree on something, drop it.

Retroactive Compels

Sometimes, you'll notice during the game that you've fulfilled the criteria for a compel without a fate point getting awarded. You've played your aspects to the hilt and gotten yourself into all kinds of trouble, or you've narrated crazy and dramatic stuff happening to a character related to their aspects just out of reflex.

Anyone who realizes this in play can mention it, and the fate point can be awarded retroactively, treating it like a compel after the fact. GMs, you're the final arbiter. It should be pretty obvious when something like this occurs, though —just look at the guidelines for event and decision compels above, and see if you can

summarize what happened in the game according to those guidelines. If you can, award a fate point.
Compelling with Situation Aspects

Just like with every other kind of aspect use, you can use situation aspects (and by extension, game aspects) for compels. Because situation aspects are usually external to characters, you're almost always looking at event-based compels rather than decision-based ones. The character or characters affected get a fate point for the compel.

Here is an example:
Because the warehouse is On Fire, and the player characters are trapped in the middle of it, it makes sense that, unfortunately, the ruffian they're chasing can get away in the confusion. Damn their luck.

Finally, aspects have a passive use that you can draw on in almost every instance of play. Players, you can use them as a guide to roleplaying your character. This may seem self-evident, but we figured we'd call it out anyway—the aspects on your character sheet are true of your character at all times, not just when they're invoked or compelled.

Removing or Changing an Aspect
Game and character aspects change through advancement. See the Milestones section in The Long Game for that.

If you want to get rid of a situation aspect, you can do it in one of two ways: roll an overcome action specifically for the purpose of getting rid of the aspect, or roll some other kind of action that would make the aspect make no sense if you succeed. (For example, if you're Grappled, you could try to sprint away. If you succeed, it wouldn't make sense for you to be Grappled any more, so you'd also get rid of that aspect.)

If a character can interfere with your action, they get to roll active opposition against you as per normal. Otherwise, GMs, it's your job to set passive opposition or just allow the player to get rid of the aspect without a roll, if there's nothing risky or interesting in the way.

Finally, if at any point it simply makes no sense for a situation aspect to be in play, get rid of it.

Gear
Choose starting gear for your character. Gear provides additional aspects that the character has access to when they have their gear with them. Usually there is also an extra aspect that represents an item's disadvantages. The character can have any gear their heart desires at the start of play.

The gear a character has at their disposal will constantly be changing. If a player wants to keep a particular piece of gear with them, a signature weapon or their trusted steed, it must be mentioned as part of one of the character's aspects. Otherwise the GM can take or destroy it at any time.

Gear can be chosen from the lists below, or the players can design their own gear, assigning one positive and one negative aspect if the gear is significant enough to warrant this.

Example Equipment
Here are some examples of the sort of equipment, with advantageous and disadvantageous aspect, where they seem necessary or desirable.

The gear is priced gold, silver or copper pieces; 1G (1 gold piece) = 10S (10 silver pieces) = 20C (20 copper pieces).

Animals
Animals are often the most valuable possessions that a Hyropean person will own. The stealing of animals is taken very seriously, and the

punishment if caught is often death.

Price List
Cat, 1S
Chicken, 1C
Cow, 6S
Dog, 1S
Draught horse, 1G
Goose, 6C
Mule, 4S
Ox, 12S
Pet Dragon, 100G
Pig, 2S
Riding horse, 10G
Sheep, 1S
War horse, 80G

Clothes
Both men and women often wear hoods, often attached to capes or jackets but sometimes standing alone. A common garment for men of the working classes is a hood attached to a short cape that covers just the shoulders.

Price List
Boots, 6C
Fashionable gown, 10-50G

Head covering (hat or hood), 10C
Linen jacket, 8C
Purse, 2C
Shoes, 4C
Woollen jacket, 3S

Food/Drink
Meat is expensive and therefore prestigious. It is common only on the tables of the nobility, and poachers and outlaws. Beef, which requires a huge investment in land, cleared of trees and kept safe from monsters, is very uncommon.

Wine is commonly drunk and is regarded as the most prestigious and healthy of drinks. Unlike water or beer, consumption of wine in moderation (especially red wine) is believed to aid digestion, generate good blood and brighten the mood.

Common folk usually have to settle for a cheap white wine from a second or even third pressing, meaning that it can be consumed in quite generous amounts without leading to heavy intoxication. For the very poorest, watered-down vinegar is often the only available choice. Human wine is bad quality, you have to drink it with your teeth clenched to filter out impurities, halfling wine is the best.

Price List
Cheese, 2C per wedge
Day's food for a king, 7C
Day's food for a knight, 4C
Day's food for a commoner, 1C
Dried fruit, 1C per lb
Salt fish, 6S each
Spices, 6S per lb

Miscellaneous
Useful equipment for an adventurer will include a mule with room in its baggage to hold two sets of armour. One set is wargear such as mail or plate, and the other is light brigandine, which is the only acceptable armour option within cities.

A selection of other odds and ends will also be useful, such as rope and lanterns, water bottles, bedding and rations.

Wands are used by teachers, orchestra conductors and magicians to emphasise their gestures. They are often a badge of rank that must be earned or a gift to show esteem, and it is considered 'bad form' to buy yourself a wand.

Barrel, 3C
Blank scroll, 1SP
Book (to buy), 5G
Book (to rent), 1S per month
Bottle, 4C
Bucket, 5C
Candles, 1C per 3 candles
Chair, 3C
Cooking pot, 2S
Ink, 1CP
King's bed, 200G
Pillow, 1C
Quill, 1CP
Scroll tubes, 1SP
Sheet, 4C
Table, 6C
Wand, 1GC

Rent
Ownership of property is very rare, as all property ultimately belongs to the ruler of the realm. Even huge castles, temples and colleges are often rented.

However, as it is almost impossible to learn spells when on the road, or crouched in the corner of a goblin's lair. The wizard must have a safe tower or castle to return to, equipped for magical research (just furnishing the tower with this equipment costs 40G). It is funding this base cum lab that sends many magicians of more limited means off on adventures in the first place.

Price List
Castle (large), 900G/year

Castle (medium), 700G/year
Castle (small), 300G/year
City guild hall, 140G/year
City shop, 10G/year
City tavern, 70G/year
Cottage, 5S/year
Craftsman's house (with workshop), 20G/year
Fortified college, 450G/year
Large barn, 8S/year
Stately home (with courtyard), 90G/year
Wizard's tower 60G/year

Tools
The tools of a trade are prized possessions, and they are built to last. Good quality tools can be handed down from generation to generation.

Price List
Anvil, 2G
Armourer's tools, 10G
Bellows, 3G
Carpenter's axe, 5C
Chisel, 4C
Hammer, 8C
Shovel, 3C
Spinning wheel, 1S

Transport
Carriages and wagons are some of the most often-encountered vehicles on the roads, but there are more unusual vehicles too.

A carriage is usually horse-drawn. Carriages normally have suspension using leaf springs or leather strapping. Wagons are pulled by animals such as horses, mules or oxen, and are used for transporting goods, agricultural materials or sometimes people. Wagons have four wheels. A wagon may be pulled by one animal or by several, often in pairs.

Longship
The longship is a type of ship that was developed over a period of centuries and perfected by its most famous user, the fierce

Northerners. The ships were clinker-built, utilizing overlapping wooden strakes.

Knarr

a type of cargo vessel. It differs from the longship in that it is larger and relies solely on its square rigged sail for propulsion.

Galley

Galleys have been in use for trade and warfare for millions of years. Rowing is the primary method of propulsion, which is well-suited for the often fickle winds of the equatorial seas, where they are primarily used. The galley is also used in the waters of the north, but to a lesser extent since its low freeboard and lack of stability in rough seas make it vulnerable.

Cog

The cog is a design which is believed to have evolved from (or at least been influenced by) the longship, and is in wide use. The cog is a wide and spacious transport ship. Primitive cogs have open hulls and can be rowed short distances. More advanced versions have become larger and received a deck, as well as a raised platform in the bow and stern.

Carrack

The largest ship in use on the planet, it is a three or four-masted sailing ship for use in the deep oceans. It has a high rounded stern with large aftcastle and forecastle. It is usually square-rigged on the foremast and mainmast and lateen-rigged on the mizzenmast.

Price List

Barge, 10G
Carriage, 8G
Carrack, 800G
Cart, 4S
Cog, 400 G
Ferry crossing, 1C
Galley 250G
Knarr, 230G

Longship, 180 G
Queenly carriage 400G
Sedan chair , 8S
Wagon, 8S

Weapons and Armour

It is mandatory for all citizens to own certain types of weapons and armour. These vary from realm to realm, but often include a mail shirt, a helmet, and a spear. All, including serfs, must own bows, and archery practice is compulsory at least once per week and holidays.

This is a double-edged sword for the rulers of the realms. It means they have huge armies of trained fighters at their disposal at a moment's notice, but it also means that any rebellion will be well equipped, armed and dangerous.

Weapon Restrictions

Mail, plate, longswords and war hammers are for military practice, protecting the village from monsters and warfare only. They are otherwise banned for public use within settlements of all sizes, though it is tolerated to wear these items in some frontier areas. Such equipment must usually be removed and stored in a locked chest.

Wearing such 'wargear' will attract the attention of the city guard. The heavy mob will be called in – usually a group of tough dwarves in war gear and an elven archer or two on roof tops. The characters caught so garbed and equipped will be engaged, and if possible arrested and interrogated, possibly using torture, to ascertain if they are attempting to incite rebellion. Rebellion is a constant worry all over the continent, where even a medium size irregular force often proves equal to or better than the government's own regular military in combat, due in part to their compulsory military training.

Brigandine and a rapier is acceptable for wear, by both men and women, and is even a mark of rank. A lady or gentleman adventurer, and those that style themselves as such, often wear

brigandine and rapier as they go about their business in town.

To defeat plate armour, the mace, for cavalry riding at head cracking hight, and the longsword for fighting on foot, are the weapons of choice. They are both expensive however, and most combatants are armed with cheaper alternatives such as pikes, mauls or warhammers.

Weapons

Arming Sword
Range: hand-to-hand
Damage type: slashing
The arming sword is often worn as a backup weapon by those wielding the two-handed longsword. It is a light, but not very versatile weapon capable only of doing slashing damage. They are typically used with a shield or buckler. When used as a primary weapon, arming sword combat is possible without the benefit of a shield. In the absence of a shield the empty (normally left) hand can be used for grappling opponents.

Battle Axe
Range: hand-to-hand
Damage type: slashing
Battle axes generally weigh far less than axes for splitting wood, because they are designed to cut legs and arms rather than wood; consequently, narrow slicing blades are the norm. This facilitates deep, grievous wounds. Moreover, a lighter weapon is much quicker to bring to bear in combat and manipulate for repeated strikes against an adversary.

Club
Range: hand-to-hand
Damage: clubbing
Description: A club (also known as cudgel, baton, truncheon, or bludgeon) is among the simplest of all weapons. A club is essentially a short staff, or stick, usually made of wood, and wielded as a weapon since prehistoric times.

Composite bow
Range: 425m
Rate of fire: miss 1 round between shots for reload and draw.
Damage type: low velocity projectile
The composite bow is the most advanced bow design, and can be easily used from horseback.

Cross Bow
Range: 400m
Damage type: high velocity projectile
Rate of fire: miss 3 rounds between shots for reload, and winding the mechanism.
These are more powerful than other bows, and more accurate, but much more expensive and very slow to reload. They can shoot an armour penetrating high velocity projectile, 'the bolt' which can be devastating to wearers of plate armour.

Flail
Range: hand-to-hand
Damage types: pummelling, and trapping
The military flail is an unusual hand weapon in which the handle is attached to the striking part of a weapon by a flexible chain or cord. It does pummelling damage like a mace, but is also very good at doing trapping damage, to catch and throw opponents and put them at a disadvantage. This leaves the opponent open to a thrusting strike at a weak point in their armour, often administered with a rondel (the knightly dagger).

Grasping Glove
Range: hand-to-hand
Damage Type: trapping
Rapiers are quick and agile, but they can still be quickly seized and held tightly by even a bare hand. There is little chance of the hand being injured in doing this. Indeed, even wider cutting swords can be held by the blade or grabbed safely if done correctly. Several rapier treatises depict the empty hand being used to slap away or deflect rapier thrusts.

This is a common technique and if the special grasping glove, covered in mail or heavy leather, is worn then grabbing or swatting away a sword is even safer.

Halberd
Range: hand-to-hand
Damage Type: thrusting, slashing and trapping

damage
The halberd is a cheap and versatile weapon. It consists of an axe blade topped with a spike mounted on a long shaft. It also has a hook or thorn on the back of the axe blade for grappling mounted combatants.

The halberd is very versatile in battle. It is able to push back approaching horsemen and the hook opposite the axe head can be used to pull horsemen to the ground or pull them off balance. Additionally, halberds are reinforced with metal rims over the shaft, thus making effective weapons for blocking other weapons like swords. Expert halberdiers are as deadly as any other weapon masters on the battlefield.

It is often carried by lower-ranking officers in infantry units, used to ensure that infantrymen drawn up in ranks are standing correctly aligned with each other.

Heavy Cloak
Range: hand-to-hand
Damage Type: trapping
Gentlefolk typically wear a cloak or cape which can be easily unclasped and wound around their free hand to be used to parry sword strikes and trap the blade of opponents.

Javelin
Range: 30m
Damage type: low velocity projectile
A javelin is a light spear designed primarily for casting as a ranged weapon. Some elven nations have developed a military tactic to maximize the advantages of the combination between horse and javelin. In this tactic the horsemen ride around in circles, toward and away from the enemy, continually hurling javelins. The tactic is usually employed against heavy infantry. The constant movement of the horsemen gives them an advantage against slow infantry and makes them hard to target. The manoeuvre is designed to harass and taunt the enemy forces, disrupting close formations.

Lance
Range: hand-to-hand
Damage type: Thrusting
A Lance is a spear designed to be used by a mounted warrior. The lance is longer, stouter and heavier than an infantry spear, and unsuited for throwing, or for close-in fighting. They are often equipped with a vamplate, a small circular plate to prevent the hand sliding up the shaft upon impact. As a secondary weapon, lancers bare swords, maces or something else suited to close quarter battle, since the lance is basically a one-use-per-engagement weapon; after the initial charge, the weapon is far too long, heavy and slow to be effectively used against opponents in a melee.

Longsword
Range: hand-to-hand
Damage: slashing, thrusting, pummelling, or trapping
This weapon is also referred to as the two-handed sword, bastard sword and great sword. Longswords have long cruciform hilts with grips that provide room for two hands. Versions with short grips can also be held with two hands; one hand on the grip and one hand on the lower part of the blade.

They have straight double-edged blades, which are often over 1m in length, and are very heavy. The longsword is commonly held in combat with both hands, though they may also be used single-handed.

All parts of the sword are used for offensive purposes, including the, blade (slashing), point (thrusting), pommel (pummelling) and crossguard (trapping).

Longswords can therefore do whatever damage the user needs depending on their opponent's armour and other circumstances. Lightly armoured foes can be slashed causing swift and grievous wounds, while armoured opponents

can be pummelled to weaken them, then trapped and brought to the ground where a final thrust finishes them, all with a single weapon.

Mace
Range: hand-to-hand
Damage type: pummelling
A mace is a simple weapon that uses a heavy head on the end of a handle to deliver powerful blows. It differs from a hammer in that the head of a mace is radially symmetric so that a blow can be delivered just as effectively with any side of the weapon. A mace consists of a strong, heavy, wooden or metal shaft, often reinforced with metal, featuring a head made of stone, copper, bronze, iron, or steel.

The head of a military mace can be shaped with flanges or knobs to allow greater penetration of plate armour. The length of maces can vary considerably. The maces of foot soldiers are usually quite short. The maces of cavalrymen are longer and thus better suited for blows delivered from horseback.

Maces, being simple to make, relatively cheap, and straightforward in application, are quite common weapons.

Maul
Range: hand-to-hand
Damage: clubbing or thrusting (when equipped with a spike)
The maul is a long-handled hammer with a heavy metal head, either of lead or iron. It is similar in appearance and function to a sledgehammer but sometimes has a spear-like spike projecting from it. It is popular with archers, who use it to drive stakes into the ground, to deter cavalry charges, and then keep it handy as a melee weapon.

Pike
Range: special
Damage type: thrusting, slashing and trapping

Special: -2 at ranges less than 6ft, +1 at ranges between 10 and 25ft.
The pike is an extremely long weapon, varying considerably in size, from 3 to 7.5 metres (10 to 25 feet) long. The great length of these weapons allows a great concentration of spearheads to be presented to the enemy, with their wielders at a distance, but also makes pikes unwieldy in close combat.

This means that pikemen have to be equipped with a shorter weapon such as a sword, mace, or dagger in order to defend themselves should the fighting degenerate into a melee. In general, however, pikemen attempt to avoid such disorganized combat, at which they are at a disadvantage. To compound their difficulties in a melee, pikeman often do not have a shield to use in close-quarters fighting.

Rondel, or Knightly Dagger
Range: hand-to-hand
Damage type: thrusting
This dagger has a rounder cross-section than a normal dagger and is designed for winkling into armour and thrusting through chain and the small holes in face plates. It's the weapon of choice for threatening or finishing off a captured knight on the battle field. Almost all knights carry them for this purpose.

Quarterstaff
Range: hand-to-hand
Damage type: trapping and pummelling
A shaft of hardwood from 5 to 9 feet (1.5 to 2.7m) long, sometimes with a metal tip or spike at one or both ends. The quarterstaff is a versatile weapon that is taught as the first introduction to the arts martial. Some foresters consider it the noblest of weapons and value it above even the longsword.

Rapier
Range: hand-to-hand
Damage type: thrusting

A relatively long-bladed sword characterized by a complex hilt which is constructed to provide protection for the hand wielding it.

It allows for fast reactions, and has a long reach. The rapier is well suited to civilian combat, and as longswords have evolved to meet the needs of the battlefield, so the rapier has evolved to meet the needs of civilian combat and decorum. It is lighter, shorter and less cumbersome to wear than a longsword.

A rapier blade is by no means fragile nor vulnerable to being easily broken or cut by other swords (though its slender tip might on occasion snap). The rapier can be quite sturdy and capable of parrying the cuts of heavier swords, but only with the thicker section of its blade or hilt and (preferably) in a deflecting action to redirect the attacking point rather than a passive, rigid block. It is, however, better to avoid or dodge cuts from broader blades than to parry them with a slender sword.

Rapiers are capable of piercing soft armours but chain is a sufficient defence against them and is often worn under clothing for this very reason. If an opponent is wearing any portion of plate armour, for example on the battlefield or within urban militias, attacks must naturally be directed to other more vulnerable areas.

Self Bow (Long Bow)
Range: 180m
Rate of fire: miss 2 rounds between shots for reload and draw
Damage type: low velocity projectile
The self bow is the most basic bow design, and requires special flexible wood to work well.

Scimitar
Range: hand-to-hand
Damage type: Scimitars do thrusting and slashing damage
Scimitars are used in horse warfare because of their relatively light weight, compared to longswords, and their curved design. They are good for slashing lightly armoured opponents while riding on a horse.

Throwing Dagger
Range: hand-to-hand, or thrown (range 6m)
Damage Types: slashing, or low velocity projectile
A dagger is a small double-edged blade used for slashing and throwing. They often fulfil the role of a secondary defensive weapon in close combat.

War Hammer
Range: hand-to-hand
Damage type: trapping, slashing or pummelling
The war hammer is intended for close combat action. War hammers often have a spike on one side of the head, thus making it a more versatile weapon than a mace.

War hammers transmit the impact of a blow through even the thickest helmet and cause concussions. The spike is used against other parts of the body where the armour is thinner, and penetration easier.

The spike end can also be used for trapping the target's armour, reins, or shield and bringing them to the ground. Against mounted opponents, the weapon can be directed at the legs of the horse, toppling the foe to the ground where they can be more easily attacked.

Price List
Arming sword, 2G
Battle Axe, 1G
Bow, 2S
Club, 4C
Composite bow, 4S
Crossbow, 4G
Flail, 2G
Grasping Glove, 4S
Halberd, 1G
Heavy Cloak, 5S
Javelin, 5S
Lance, 3G
Longsword 10G
Mace, 2G
Maul, 2G
Pike, 8S
Rondel Dagger, 1G
Quarter Staff, 2S
Rapier, 8G
Self Bow, 2S
Scimitar, 8G
Throwing dagger, 8S
War hammer,

Armour
Armour is a common possession, with even lowly serfs being required by law to own a leather jerkin.

Armour Rating and Damage Type
Armour ratings tell you what the maximum number of shifts of stress you'll take from an attack is. Armour ratings start at 4 (for minimum protection) and go down to 1 (for the best protection). If the armour provides no protection, this is marked with N/A. It is possible for armour to make you more vulnerable to a certain type of

attack. Plate armour is famously vulnerable to being trapped, because of the many crevices a hook can find purchase. This is marked by a negative number indicating the extra stress this type of attack causes.

When the attacker succeeds with style, ignore the armour rating. The attacker does full damage.

There is no armour that provides protection against every damage type, however. Damage types include:

Clubbing; this is damage caused by blows from soft organic materials such as wood or human fists.

Constriction; this is the damage done by monsters that wind around targets and crush them.

Energy attacks; this is damage caused by heat, cold, electricity, etc.

High velocity projectile; this damage caused by fast projectiles travelling along straight lines, such as crossbow bolts.

Low velocity projectile; this is the damage caused by arrows, darts and rocks.

Pummelling; this is damage caused by blows from hard inorganic materials such as metal or stone.

Slashing; this is damage caused by cutting swipes with edged weapons.

Thrusting; this is damage caused by penetrating thrusts from pointed weapons.

Trapping ; this represents catching the opponent with a hook, net or grapple, or even the cross guard of a longsword, and pulling them to the ground, or otherwise immobilising them.

Brigandine

This is the most popular armour with urban civilians. It is a cloth jacket with metal plates inside, held in place with rivets – often arranged to make an attractive pattern on the outside of the cloth. It is just as effective as plate, but usually only the torso is covered.
Clubbing; this is damage caused by blows from soft organic materials such as wood or human fists.

Clubbing; 2
Constriction; N/A
Energy attacks; N/A
High velocity projectile; 3
Low velocity projectile; 3
Pummelling; 4
Slashing; 4
Thrusting; 2
Trapping; N/A

Chain Mail

The most expensive armour is chain mail (often simply called mail), due to the time consuming method of construction, where links are riveted together to make a garment of chains. It is a component of a suit of plate mail – or can be worn on its own. A mail shirt can even be worn concealed below clothing (with the same armour ratings as brigandine). The full mail hauberk, often worn under plate, can not be concealed below clothing.

Depending on his or her fitness, a fighter wearing a mail hauberk can run, lie, stand up, jump, do somersaults (or even cartwheels), and even swim wearing full armour.

Clubbing; 1
Constriction; N/A
Energy attacks; N/A
High velocity projectile; 1
Low velocity projectile; 1
Pummelling; 3

Slashing; 1
Thrusting; 1
Trapping; N/A

Leather Jerkin

This is a small leather vest that provides 10% protection from slashing, hand-to-hand, and thrusting/stabbing damage.

Clubbing; 3
Constriction; N/A
Energy attacks; N/A
High velocity projectile; 4
Low velocity projectile; 4
Pummelling; N/A
Slashing; 4
Thrusting; 4
Trapping; N/A

Plate

Plate armour, is personal armour made from large metal plates, worn on the chest and sometimes the entire body. It gives superior protection to mail. It has largely supplanted mail on the battlefield for those that can afford it. All plate armour is lined with cloth, to pad the wearer, quiet the armour, and reduce wear between the pieces. This, along with the necessary straps, is a significant amount of the expense.

A complete suit of plate armour made from well-tempered steel weighs around 15-20 kg (33-44 pounds). The wearer remains highly agile and can jump, run and otherwise move freely as the weight of the armour is spread evenly throughout the body.

The armour is articulated and covers the entire body completely from neck to toe. Large armies, numbering thousands or even more than ten thousand, (as many as 60% of any given army) fight on foot wearing full plate, accompanied by archers with a mix of bows and crossbows.

Clubbing; 1

Constriction; 4
Energy attacks; N/A
High velocity projectile; 1
Low velocity projectile; 1
Pummelling; 2
Slashing; 1
Thrusting; 1
Trapping; -2

Silk Shirt

A silk shirt worn below armour provides excellent arrow protection, as the arrow can be pulled out more easily. It is arrow removal after all, rather than arrow strikes that are most often fatal.

Clubbing; N/A
Constriction; N/A
Energy attacks; N/A
High velocity projectile; N/A
Low velocity projectile; 1
Pummelling; N/A
Slashing; N/A
Thrusting; N/A
Trapping; N/A

Spiked Armour

Spikes give protection against constrict and bite attacks, where the monster brings delicate parts of their body – the face, underbelly – close to the wearer.

Clubbing; N/A
Constriction; 2
Energy attacks; N/A
High velocity projectile; N/A
Low velocity projectile; N/A
Pummelling; N/A
Slashing; N/A
Thrusting; N/A
Trapping; N/A

Shields

These give varying amounts of protection from weapons and make the user more susceptible to trapping attacks to varying degrees. The shield user can use either the armour protection or shield protection against an attack, not both.

Fist shield

Damage type: pummelling
This is more of a weapon than a protection and can be used to do pummelling damage. It is sometimes confusingly called a buckler (it is not buckled to the forearm).

This is a small shield, 15 to 45 cm (6 in to 18 in) in diameter, gripped in the fist; it is generally used as a companion weapon in hand-to-hand combat, as its size makes it poor protection against missile weapons (e.g. arrows) but useful in deflecting the blow of an opponent's sword or mace.

There are two major forms of bucklers. The first is a simple round shield with the fist positioned directly behind the boss with a variety of shapes of face and depths of rim. The second major form is a corrugated rectangle.

A buckler can be used as a 'Metal fist' to directly attack an opponent by punching with either its flat face or its rim. Most shields are too big and unwieldy to be used this way. The buckler does not however give any protection against missile weapons.

Clubbing; 4
Constriction; N/A
Energy attacks; N/A
High velocity projectile; N/A
Low velocity projectile; N/A
Pummelling; N/A
Slashing; N/A
Thrusting; N/A
Trapping; N/A

Heraldic shield

This is smaller than the kite-shield, but is more manageable and can be used either mounted or on foot. They are typically made from thin wood

overlaid with leather. Some shields, incorporate additional layers of gesso, canvas, and/or parchment.
Smaller versions are available with a notch to support a lance, but these are really specialised jousting equipment, and of little use outside the tournament.

Clubbing; 2
Constriction; N/A
Energy attacks; N/A
High velocity projectile; 4
Low velocity projectile; 3
Pummelling; 4
Slashing; 2
Thrusting; 2
Trapping; N/A

Kite shield
This shield is rounded at the top and tapers to the bottom, it is cumbersome but gives some protection to the legs. It is often used by cavalry.

Clubbing; 2
Constriction; N/A
Energy attacks; N/A
High velocity projectile; 3
Low velocity projectile; 2
Pummelling; 4
Slashing; 2
Thrusting; 2
Trapping; N/A

Round shield
This is the typical, simple round shield made from wood. It is very effective and cheap to produce, which means there are an awful lot of them, hanging on walls, abandoned on battlefields and also actually in use.

Clubbing; 2
Constriction; N/A
Energy attacks; N/A
High velocity projectile; 4
Low velocity projectile; 4

Pummelling; 4
Slashing; 2
Thrusting; 3
Trapping; N/A

Price List
Brigandine, 30G
Chain mail, 10G
Expensive (gilded and engraved) plate, 340G
Leather, 5S
Plate mail, 80G
Shield, 8C

Skills
Once you have chosen aspects and gear, it's time to pick skills. You'll find descriptions and details for each skill in the Skills and Stunts chapter.

Your skills form a pyramid, with a single skill rated at Great (+4)—which we'll usually refer to as the peak skill—and more skills at each lower rating on the ladder going down to Average (+1):

One Great (+4) skill
Two Good (+3) skills
Three Fair (+2) skills
Four Average (+1) skills

THE SKILL CAP
By default, we make Great (+4) the highest rated skill PCs start with. As characters advance, they can improve beyond this cap, but it's more difficult than improving skills rated below the cap (see Major Milestones).

Mediocre (+0) is the default for any skill you do not take. Sometimes, a skill will state that it's unavailable if a character didn't take it; in those cases, it's not even at Mediocre.

Note: a few skills have special benefits, notably those skills that affect the number of stress boxes and consequences you have available. If you know you want a certain number of those,

put those skills on the pyramid first.

Stunts and Refresh

Pick or invent three to five stunts. Determine how many fate points you start play with.

Stunts change how skills work for your character. Picking and inventing stunts are covered in the Skills and Stunts chapter.

You get three stunts for free, and you can take up to two more stunts at the cost of lowering your refresh by one each. (The gist is this: the more cool tricks you can do, the more you'll need to accept compels to get fate points.) Figuring out stunts can take a while, so you may want to pick one for now and determine the rest of them during play.

A player character starts with a refresh of 3. That means he'll start each session off with at least 3 fate points.

If you pick four stunts, your refresh is 2. If you pick five stunts, your refresh is 1.

Stress and Consequences

Determine how much of a beating your character can take.

When Fate characters find themselves in harm's way—a fairly common occurrence when you're highly competent, proactive, and facing drama at every turn—they have two ways to stand their ground and stay on their feet: stress and consequences.

In brief, stress represents the ephemeral toll of participating in a conflict, whereas consequences are the lingering effects, and sometimes quite traumatic ones, of taking harm.

Every PC has two different stress tracks. The physical stress track deals with physical harm, and the mental stress track mitigates mental harm. The more boxes in a stress track, the

more resilient the character is in that regard. By default, a character has two boxes in each stress track.

Every PC also has three consequence slots. One is mild, one is moderate, and the last one is severe. Unlike stress, these aren't classified as either physical or mental—any of them can apply to any type of harm. As mentioned above, consequences are the injuries and traumas you can't just shake off after the dust settles.

Certain skills and some stunts can add to these defaults. See the Skills and Stunts chapter for more on that. For the sake of quick reference, these are the skills in Hearts of Steel that alter stress and consequences:

Physique helps with physical stress, and Will helps with mental stress. Either skill grants one more stress box of the respective type (physical or mental) if rated at Average (+1) or Fair (+2), or two more stress boxes if rated at Good (+3) or higher. At Superb (+5) or higher, they also grant an additional mild consequence slot. Unlike the standard three, this consequence slot is specifically restricted to either physical harm (Physique) or mental harm (Will).

The List of Skills

Here is a basic list of example skills for you to use in your Fate games along with example stunts tied to each. They're the ones we're using for all the examples in this book, and should give you a good foundation from which to tweak your own lists, adding and subtracting skills as best fits your setting.

Some of the skills, like Shoot and Crafts, imply the need for gear. We presume by default that if you have a skill, you also have the tools you need to use it, and that the effectiveness of those tools is built into the skill result.

Athletics

The Athletics skill represents your character's general level of physical fitness.

Overcome: Athletics allows you to overcome any obstacle that requires physical movement—jumping, running, climbing, swimming, etc. You use overcome actions with Athletics to move between zones in a conflict if there's a situation aspect or other obstacle in your way. You also roll Athletics to chase or race in any contests or challenges that rely on these types of activities.

Create an Advantage: When you're creating an advantage with Athletics, you're jumping to high ground, running faster than the opponent can keep up with, or performing dazzling acrobatic manoeuvres in order to confound your foes.

Attack: Athletics is not meant as an attack skill.

Defend: Athletics is rolled for defence in a physical conflict, against close-quarters and ranged attacks. It represents dodging out of the way of blows and diving for cover at just the right time. You can also use it to defend against characters trying to move past you, if you're in a position to physically interfere with whoever is making the attempt.

Athletics Stunts

Sprinter. You move two zones for free in a conflict without rolling, instead of one, provided there are no situation aspects restricting movement.

Hardcore Parkour. +2 to overcome actions with Athletics if you are in a chase across rooftops or a similarly precarious environment.

Dazing Counter. When you succeed with style on a defend action against an opponent's Fight roll, you automatically counter with some sort of nerve punch or stunning blow. You get to attach the Dazed situation aspect to your opponent with a free invoke, instead of just a boost.

Burglary

The Burglary skill covers your character's aptitude for stealing things and getting into places that are off-limits. This skill also includes a proficiency in the related tech, allowing the character to hack security systems, disable alarm systems, and whatnot.

Overcome: As stated above, Burglary allows you to overcome any obstacle related to theft or infiltration. Bypassing locks and traps, pickpocketing and filching, covering your tracks, and other such activities all fall under the purview of this skill.

Create an Advantage: You can case a location with Burglary, to determine how hard it will be to break into and what kind of security you're dealing with, as well as discover any vulnerabilities you might exploit. You can also examine the work of other burglars to determine how a particular heist was done, and create or discover aspects related to whatever evidence they may have left behind.

Attack: Burglary isn't used for attacks.

Defend: Same here. It's not really a conflict skill, so there's not a lot of opportunity to use it to defend

Burglary Stunts

Always a Way Out. +2 on Burglary rolls made to create an advantage whenever you're trying to escape from a location.

Security Specialist. You don't have to be present to provide active opposition to someone trying to overcome security measures you put in place or worked on. (Normally, a character would roll against passive opposition for that.)

Talk the Talk. You can use Burglary in place of Contacts whenever you're dealing specifically with other thieves and burglars.

Contacts

Contacts is the skill of knowing and making connections with people. It presumes proficiency with all means of networking available in the setting.

Overcome: You use Contacts to overcome any obstacle related to finding someone you need to find. Whether that's old-fashioned "man on the street" type of work, polling your information network, or searching archives and computer databases, you're able to hunt down people or somehow get access to them.

Create an Advantage: Contacts allows you to know who the perfect person to talk to is for anything you might need, or to decide that you know the perfect person already. It's likely that you'll create story details with this skill, represented by aspects. ("Hey, guys, my contacts tell me that Joe Steel is the Best Mechanic For A Thousand Miles—we should talk to him.")

You can also create an advantage that represents what the word on the street is about a particular individual, object, or location, based on what your contacts tell you. These aspects almost always deal with reputation more than fact, such as Known as a Mean Guy or Notorious Swindler. Whether that person lives up to their reputation is anybody's guess, though that doesn't invalidate the aspect—people often have misleading reputations that complicate their lives.

Contacts could also be used to create aspects that represent using your information network to plant or acquire information.

Attack: Contacts isn't used for attacks; it's hard to harm someone simply by knowing people.

Defend: Contacts can be used to defend against people creating social advantages against you, provided your information network can be brought to bear in the situation. You might also use it to keep someone from using Deceive or Contacts to go "off the grid", or to interfere with Investigate attempts to find you.

Contacts Stunts

Ear to the Ground. Whenever someone initiates a conflict against you in an area where you've built a network of contacts, you use Contacts instead of Notice to determine turn order, because you got tipped off in time.

Rumormonger. +2 to create an advantage when you plant vicious rumors about someone else.

The Weight of Reputation. You can use Contacts instead of Provoke to create advantages based on the fear generated by the sinister reputation you've cultivated for yourself and all the shady associates you have. You should have an appropriate aspect to pair with this stunt.

Deceive

Deceive is the skill about lying to and misdirecting people.

Overcome: Use Deceive to bluff your way past someone, or to get someone to believe a lie, or to get something out of someone because they believe in one of your lies. For nameless NPCs, this is just an overcome roll, but for PCs or named NPCs, it requires a contest, and the target opposes with Empathy. Winning this contest could justify placing a situation aspect on your target, if buying into your lie could help you in a future scene.

Deceive is the skill you use for determining if a disguise works, whether on yourself or others. You'll need to have the time and supplies to create the desired effect.

You can also use Deceive to do small tricks of sleight-of-hand and misdirection.

Create an Advantage: Use Deceive to create

momentary distractions, cover stories, or false impressions. You could feint in a swordfight, putting an opponent Off-Balance and setting you up for an attack. You could do the whole, "What's that over there!" trick to give you a Head Start when you run away. You could establish a Wealthy Corporate Cover Story for when you attend a board meeting. You could trick someone into revealing one of their aspects or other information.

Attack: Deceive is an indirect skill that creates a lot of opportunities you can capitalize on, but it doesn't do direct harm to an individual.

Defend: You can use Deceive to throw off Investigation attempts with false information and to defend against efforts made to discern your true motives with the Empathy skill.

Deceive Stunts
Lies upon Lies. +2 to create a Deceive advantage against someone who has believed one of your lies already during this session.

Mind Games. You can use Deceive in place of Provoke to make mental attacks, as long as you can make up a clever lie as part of the attack.

One Person, Many Faces. Whenever you meet someone new, you can spend a fate point to declare that you've met that person before, but under a different name and identity. Create a situation aspect to represent your cover story, and you can use Deceive in place of Rapport whenever interacting with that person.

Drive/Pilot/Ride/Sail
The Drive skill is all about operating vehicles and things that go fast.

Overcome: Drive is the equivalent of Athletics when you're in a vehicle—you use it to successfully accomplish movement in the face of difficult circumstances, like rough terrain, small amounts of clearance, or stunt driving. Obviously, Drive is also ripe for contests, especially chases and races.

Create an Advantage: You can use Drive to determine the best way to get somewhere in a vehicle, and a good enough roll might allow you to learn features of the route that get expressed as aspects, or declare that you know a Convenient Shortcut or something similar.

Attack: Drive isn't usually used as an attack skill (though stunts can certainly alter this). If you want to ram a vehicle, you can attack with Drive, but you take the same shifts of harm you inflict.

Defend: Avoiding damage to a vehicle in a physical conflict is one of the most common uses of Drive. You can also use it to defend against advantages being created against you or overcome actions of someone trying to move past you in a vehicle.

Drive Stunts
Hard to Shake.
+2 to Drive whenever you're pursuing another vehicle in a chase scene.

Don't Spare the Horses. You can coax more speed out of your vehicle than seems possible. Whenever you're engaged in any contest where speed is the primary factor (such as a chase or race of some kind) and you tie with your Drive roll, it's considered a success.

Ramming Speed! When ramming another vehicle, you ignore two shifts of damage. So if you ram and hit for four shifts, you only take two yourself.

Empathy
Empathy involves knowing and being able to spot changes in a person's mood or bearing. It's basically the emotional Notice skill.

Overcome: You don't really use Empathy to overcome obstacles directly—normally, you find out some information with it, and then use another skill to act. In some cases, though, you might use Empathy like you would Notice, to see if you catch a change in someone's attitude or

intent.

Create an Advantage: You can use Empathy to read a person's emotional state and get a general sense of who they are, presuming you have some kind of interpersonal contact with them. Most often, you'll use this to assess the aspects on another character's sheet, but sometimes you'll also be able to create new aspects, especially on NPCs. If the target has some reason to be aware that you're trying to read them, they can defend with Deceive or Rapport.

You can also use Empathy to discover what circumstances will allow you to make mental attacks on someone, figuring out their breaking points.

Attack: Empathy can't really be used in this capacity.

Defend: This is the skill to go to in order to defend against Deceive actions, allowing you to pierce through lies and see through to someone's true intent. You can also use it to defend against those creating social advantages against you in general.

Special: Empathy is the main skill you use to help others recover from consequences that are mental in nature.

Empathy Stunts
   Lie Whisperer. +2 to all Empathy rolls made to discern or discover lies, whether they're directed at you or someone else.
   Nose for Trouble. You can use Empathy instead of Notice to determine your turn order in a conflict, provided you've gotten a chance to observe or speak to those involved for at least a few minutes beforehand during this scene.
   Psychologist. Once per session you can reduce someone else's consequence by one level of severity (severe to moderate, moderate to mild, mild to nothing at all) by succeeding on

an Empathy roll with a difficulty of Fair (+2) for a mild consequence, Good (+3) for moderate, or Great (+4) for severe. You need to talk with the person you're treating for at least half an hour in order for them to receive the benefits of this stunt, and you can't use it on yourself. (Normally, this roll would only start the recovery process, instead of changing the consequence level.)

Engineering
Engineering is the skill of working with machinery, for good or ill.

Overcome: Engineering allows you to build, break, or fix machinery, presuming you have the time and tools you need.

Create an Advantage: You can use Engineering to create aspects representing features of a piece of machinery, pointing out useful features or strengths you can use to your advantage (Armor-Plated, Rugged Construction) or a vulnerability for you to exploit (Flaw in the Cross-Beam, Hasty Work).

Creating Engineering advantages can also take the form of quick and dirty sabotage or jury-rigging on mechanical objects in the scene. For example, you might create a Makeshift Pulley to help you get to the platform above you.

Attack: You probably won't use Engineering to attack in a conflict.

Defend: As with attacking, Engineering doesn't defend, unless you're somehow using it as the skill to control a piece of machinery that you block with.

Engineering Stunts
   Always Making Useful Things. You don't ever have to spend a fate point to declare that you have the proper tools for a particular job using Engineering, even in extreme situations (like being imprisoned and separated from all your stuff).

Better than New! Whenever you succeed with style on an overcome action to repair a piece of machinery, you can immediately give it a new situation aspect (with a free invoke) reflecting the improvements you've made, instead of just a boost.

Fight

The Fight skill covers all forms of close-quarters combat (in other words, within the same zone), both unarmed and using weapons. For the ranged weapons counterpart, see Shoot.

Overcome: Since you don't really use Fight outside of a conflict, it's not often used to overcome obstacles.

Create an Advantage: You'll probably use Fight for most of the advantages you create in a physical conflict. Any number of special moves can be covered with advantages: a targeted strike to stun, a "dirty move," disarming, and so on. You could even use Fight to assess another fighter's style, spotting weaknesses in his or her form that you can exploit.

Attack: This is self-explanatory. You make physical attacks with Fight. Remember, this is for close-in work, so you have to be in the same zone as your opponent

Defend: You use Fight to defend against any other attack or create an advantage attempt made with Fight, as well as pretty much any action where violently interposing yourself could prevent it from happening.

Fight Stunts

Heavy Hitter. When you succeed with style on a Fight attack and choose to reduce the result by one to gain a boost, you gain a full situation aspect with a free invocation instead.

Backup Weapon. Whenever someone's about to hit you with a Disarmed situation aspect or something similar, spend a fate point to declare you have a backup weapon. Instead of a situation aspect, your opponent gets a boost, representing the momentary distraction you suffer having to switch.

Killing Stroke. Once per scene, when you force an opponent to take a consequence, you can spend a fate point to increase the consequence's severity (so mild becomes moderate, moderate becomes severe). If your opponent was already going to take a severe consequence, he must either take a severe consequence and a second consequence or be taken out.

Investigate

Investigate is the skill you use to find things out. It's a counterpart to Notice—whereas Notice revolves around situational alertness and surface observation, Investigate revolves around concentrated effort and in-depth scrutiny.

Overcome: Investigate obstacles are all about

information that's hard to uncover for some reason. Analysing a crime scene for clues, searching a cluttered room for the item you need, even poring over a musty old tome to try and find the passage that makes everything make sense.

Racing against the clock to collect evidence before the cops show up or disaster occurs is a classic way to use Investigate in a challenge.

Create an Advantage: Investigate is probably one of the most versatile skills you can use to create an advantage. As long as you're willing to take the time, you can find out just about anything about anyone, discover nearly any detail about a place or object, or otherwise make up aspects about nearly anything in the game world that your character could reasonably unearth.

If that sounds broad, consider the following as just a few of the possibilities for using Investigate: eavesdropping on a conversation, looking for clues at a crime scene, examining records, verifying the truth of a piece of information, conducting surveillance, and researching a cover story.

Attack: Investigate isn't used to make attacks.

Defend: Same here.

Investigate Stunts
   Attention to Detail. You can use Investigate instead of Empathy to defend against Deceive attempts. What others discover through gut reactions and intuition, you learn through careful observation of microexpressions.
   Eavesdropper. On a successful Investigate roll to create an advantage by eavesdropping on a conversation, you can discover or create one additional aspect (though this doesn't give you an extra free invocation).
   The Power of Deduction. Once per scene you can spend a fate point (and a few minutes of

observation) to make a special Investigate roll representing your potent deductive faculties. For each shift you make on this roll you discover or create an aspect, on either the scene or the target of your observations, though you may only invoke one of them for free.

Lore
The Lore skill is about knowledge and education.

Overcome: You can use Lore to overcome any obstacle that requires applying your character's knowledge to achieve a goal. For example, you might roll Lore to decipher some ancient language on a tomb wall, under the presumption that your character might have researched it at some point.

Frankly, you can use Lore as a go-to skill any time you need to know if your character can answer a difficult question, where some tension exists in not knowing the answer.

Create an Advantage: Like Investigate, Lore provides a lot of very flexible opportunities to create advantages, provided you can research the subject in question. More often than not, you'll be using Lore to get a story detail, some obscure bit of information that you uncover or know already, but if that information gives you an edge in a future scene, it might take the form of an aspect. Likewise, you can use Lore to create advantages based on any subject matter your character might have studied, which gives you a fun way to add details to the setting.

Attack: Lore isn't used in conflicts

Defend: Lore isn't used to defend

Lore Stunts
   I've Read about That! You've read hundreds—if not thousands—of books on a wide variety of topics. You can spend a fate point to use Lore in place of any other skill for one roll or exchange, provided you can justify having read about the

action you're attempting.

Shield of Reason. You can use Lore as a defence against Provoke attempts, provided you can justify your ability to overcome your fear through rational thought and reason.

Specialist. Choose a field of specialization, such as herbology, eldritch knowledge, criminology, or zoology. You get a +2 to all Lore rolls relating to that field of specialization.

Notice

The Notice skill involves just that—noticing things. It's a counterpart to Investigate, representing a character's overall perception, ability to pick out details at a glance, and other powers of observation. Usually, when you use Notice, it's very quick compared to Investigate, so the kinds of details you get from it are more superficial, but you also don't have to expend as much effort to find them.

Overcome: You don't really use Notice to overcome obstacles too often but when you do it's used in a reactive way: noticing something in a scene, hearing a faint sound, spotting the concealed gun in that guy's waistband.

Create an Advantage: You use Notice to create aspects based on direct observation—looking over a room for details that stand out, finding an escape route in a debris-filled building, noticing someone sticking out in a crowd, etc. When you're watching people, Notice can tell you what's going on with them externally; for internal changes, see Empathy. You might also use Notice to declare that your character spots something you can use to your advantage in a situation, such as a convenient Escape Route when you're trying to get out of a building, or a Subtle Weakness in the enemy's line of defence. For example, if you're in a brawl you could make a Notice roll to say that you spot a puddle on the floor, right next to your opponent's feet that could cause him to slip.

Attack: Notice isn't really used for attacks.

Defend: You can use Notice to defend against any uses of Stealth to get the drop on you or ambush you, or to discover that you're being observed.

Notice Stunts

Danger Sense. You have an almost preternatural capacity for detecting danger. Your Notice skill works unimpeded by conditions like total concealment, darkness, or other sensory impairments in situations where someone or something intends to harm you.

Body Language Reader. You can use Notice in place of Empathy to learn the aspects of a target through observation.

Reactive Shot. You can use Notice instead of Shoot to make quick, reactive shots that don't involve a lot of aiming. However, because you're having a knee-jerk reaction, you're not allowed to concretely identify your target before using this stunt. So, for example, you might be able to shoot at someone you see moving in the bushes with this stunt, but you won't be able to tell if it's friend or foe before you pull the trigger. Choose carefully!

Physique

The Physique skill is a counterpart to Athletics, representing the character's natural physical aptitudes, such as raw strength and endurance.

Overcome: You can use Physique to overcome any obstacles that require the application of brute force—most often to overcome a situation aspect on a zone—or any other physical impedance, like prison bars or locked gates. Of course, Physique is the classic skill for arm-wrestling matches and other contests of applied strength, as well as marathons or other endurance-based challenges.

Create an Advantage: Physique has a lot of potential for advantages in physical conflict, usually related to grappling and holding someone in place, making them Pinned or

Locked Down. You might also use it as a way of discovering physical impairments possessed by the target—grappling the old mercenary tells you that he has a Bum Leg or somesuch.

Attack: Physique is not used to harm people directly—see the Fight skill for that.

Defend: Though you don't generally use Physique to defend against attacks, you can use it to provide active opposition to someone else's movement, provided you're in a small enough space that you can effectively use your body to block access. You might also interpose something heavy and brace it to stop someone from getting through.

Special: The Physique skill gives you additional physical stress or consequence slots. Average (+1) or Fair (+2) gives you a 3-point stress box. Good (+3) or Great (+4) gives you a 3-point and a 4-point stress box. Superb (+5)and above give you an additional mild consequence slot along with the additional stress boxes. This slot can only be used for physical harm.

Physique Stunts
    Grappler. +2 to Physique rolls made to create advantages on an enemy by wrestling or grappling with them.
    Take the Blow. You can use Physique to defend against Fight attacks made with fists or blunt instruments, though you always take 1 shift of stress on a tie.
    Tough as Nails. Once per session, at the cost of a fate point, you can reduce the severity of a moderate consequence that's physical in nature to a mild consequence (if your mild consequence slot is free), or erase a mild consequence altogether.

Provoke
Provoke is the skill about getting someone's dander up and eliciting negative emotional response from them—fear, anger, shame, etc. It's the "being a jerk" skill.

To use Provoke, you need some kind of justification. That could come entirely from situation, or because you have an aspect that's appropriate, or because you've created an advantage with another skill (like Rapport or Deceive), or because you've assessed your target's aspects (see Empathy).

This skill requires that your target can feel emotions—robots and zombies typically can't be provoked.

Overcome: You can Provoke someone into doing what you want in a fit of emotional pique. You might intimidate them for information, piss them off so badly that they act out, or scare them into running away. This will often happen when you're going up against nameless NPCs or it isn't worthwhile to play out the particulars. Against PCs or important NPCs, you'll need to win a contest. They oppose with Will.

Create an Advantage: You can create advantages representing momentary emotional states, like Enraged, Shocked, or Hesitant. Your target opposes with Will.

Attack: You can make mental attacks with Provoke, to do emotional harm to an opponent. Your relationship with the target and the circumstances you're in figure a great deal into whether or not you can use this action.

Defend: Being good at provoking others doesn't make you better at avoiding it yourself. You need Will for that.

Provoke Stunts
    Armour of Fear. You can use Provoke to defend against Fight attacks, but only until the first time you're dealt stress in a conflict. You can make your opponents hesitate to attack, but when someone shows them that you're only human your advantage disappears.
    Provoke Violence. When you create an

advantage on an opponent using Provoke, you can use your free invocation to become the target of that character's next relevant action, drawing their attention away from another target.

Okay, Fine! You can use Provoke in place of Empathy to learn a target's aspects, by bullying them until they reveal one to you. The target defends against this with Will. (If the GM thinks the aspect is particularly vulnerable to your hostile approach, you get a +2 bonus.)

Rapport

The Rapport skill is all about making positive connections to people and eliciting positive emotion. It's the skill of being liked and trusted.

Overcome: Use Rapport to charm or inspire people to do what you want, or to establish a good connection with them. Charm your way past the guard, convince someone to take you into their confidence, or become the man of the hour at the local tavern. For nameless NPCs, this is just an overcome action, but you may have to enter a contest to sufficiently ingratiate yourself to a named NPC or PC.

Create an Advantage: Use Rapport to establish a positive mood on a target or in a scene or to get someone to confide in you out of a genuine sense of trust. You could pep talk someone into having Elevated Confidence, or stir a crowd into a Joyful Fervor, or simply make someone Talkative or Helpful.

Attack: Rapport doesn't cause harm, so you don't use it for attacks.

Defend: Rapport defends against any skill used to damage your reputation, sour a mood you've created, or make you look bad in front of other people. It does not, however, defend against mental attacks. That requires Will.

Rapport Stunts

Best Foot Forward. Twice per session, you may upgrade a boost you receive with Rapport into a full situation aspect with a free invocation.

Demagogue. +2 to Rapport when you're delivering an inspiring speech in front of a crowd. (If there are named NPCs or PCs in the scene, you may target them all simultaneously with one roll rather than dividing up your shifts.)

Popular. If you're in an area where you're popular and well-liked, you can use Rapport in place of Contacts. You may be able to establish your popularity by spending a fate point to declare a story detail, or because of prior justification.

Resources

Resources describes your character's general level of material wealth in the game world and ability to apply it. This skill is in the default list to give you a basic, easy way to handle wealth as an abstraction without getting into minutiae or bookkeeping.

Overcome: You can use Resources to get yourself out of or past any situation where throwing money at the problem will help, such as committing bribery or acquiring rare and expensive things. Challenges or contests might involve auctions or bidding wars.

Create an Advantage: You might use Resources to grease the wheels and make people more friendly, whether that represents an actual bribe (I Scratch Your Back...) or simply buying drinks for people (In Vino Veritas). You can also use Resources to declare that you have something you need on hand, or can quickly acquire it, which could give you an aspect representing the object.

Attack: Resources isn't used for attacks.

Defend: Resources isn't used to defend.

Resources Stunts

Money Talks. You can use Resources instead of Rapport in any situation where ostentatious displays of material wealth might aid your cause.

Savvy Investor. You get an additional free invoke when you create advantages with Resources, provided that they describe a monetary return on an investment you made in a previous session. (In other words, you can't retroactively declare that you did it, but if it happened in the course of play, you get higher returns.)

Trust Fund Baby. Twice per session, you may take a boost representing a windfall or influx of cash.

Shoot

The counterpart to Fight, Shoot is the skill of using ranged weaponry, either in a conflict or on targets that don't actively resist your attempts to shoot them (like a bull's-eye or the broad side of a barn).

Overcome: Unless, for some reason, you need to demonstrate your Shoot ability in a non-conflict situation, you probably won't be using this skill for normal obstacles much.

Create an Advantage: In physical conflicts, Shoot can be used to perform a wide variety of moves, like trick shots, keeping someone under heavy fire, and the like.

Attack: This skill makes physical attacks. You can make them from several zones away, unlike with Fight. Range is usually only truncated by line of sight obstacles, but the GM can decide that a target is at long range or out of range.

Defend: Shoot doesn't really have a defence component to it. You could use it to lay down some covering fire—which might act as a defence for your allies by creating an advantage (Covering Fire or Hail of Bullets, for example).

Shoot Stunts

Called Shot. During a Shoot attack, spend a fate point and declare a specific condition you want to inflict on a target, like Shot in the Hand. If you succeed, you place that as a situation aspect on them in addition to hitting them for stress.

Quick on the Draw. You can use Shoot instead of Notice to determine turn order in any physical conflict where shooting quickly would be useful.

Uncanny Accuracy. Once per conflict, stack an additional free invoke on an advantage you've created to represent the time you take to aim or line up a shot (like In My Sights).

Stealth

The Stealth skill allows you to avoid detection, both when hiding in place and trying to move about unseen. It pairs well with the Burglary skill.

Overcome: You can use Stealth to get past any situation that primarily depends on you not being seen. Sneaking past sentries and security, hiding from a pursuer, avoiding leaving evidence as you pass through a place, and any other such uses all fall under the purview of Stealth.

Create an Advantage: You'll mainly use Stealth to create aspects on yourself, setting yourself in an ideal position for an attack or ambush in a conflict. That way, you can be Well-Hidden when the guards pass by and take advantage of that, or Hard to Pin Down if you're fighting in the dark.

Attack: Stealth isn't used to make attacks.

Defend: You can use this to foil Notice attempts to pinpoint you or seek you out, as well as to try to throw off the scent of an Investigate attempt from someone trying to track you.

Stealth Stunts

Face in the Crowd. +2 to any Stealth roll to blend into a crowd. What a "crowd" means will depend on the environment—a subway station requires more people to be crowded than a small bar.

Ninja Vanish. Once per scene, you can vanish while in plain sight by spending a fate point, using a smoke pellet or other mysterious technique. This places the Vanished boost on

you. While you're vanished, no one can attack or create an advantage on you until after they've succeeded at an overcome roll with Notice to suss out where you went (basically meaning they have to give up an exchange to try). This aspect goes away as soon as you invoke it, or someone makes that overcome roll.

Slippery Target. Provided you're in darkness or shadow, you can use Stealth to defend against Shoot attacks from enemies that are at least one zone away.

Will

The Will skill represents your character's general level of mental fortitude, the same way that Physique represents your physical fortitude.

Overcome: You can use Will to pit yourself against obstacles that require mental effort. Puzzles and riddles can fall under this category, as well as any mentally absorbing task, like deciphering a code. Use Will when it's only a matter of time before you overcome the mental challenge, and Lore if it takes something more than brute mental force to get past it. Many of the obstacles that you go up against with Will might be made part of challenges, to reflect the effort involved.

Contests of Will might reflect particularly challenging games, like chess, or competing in a hard set of exams.

Create an Advantage: You can use Will to place aspects on yourself, representing a state of deep concentration or focus.

Attack: Will isn't really used for attacks.

Defend: Will is the main skill you use to defend against mental attacks, representing your control over your reactions.

Special: The Will skill gives you additional mental stress boxes or consequence slots. Average (+1) or Fair (+2) gives you a 3-point stress box. Good

(+3) or Great (+4) gives you a 3-point and a 4-point stress box. Superb (+5) and above give you an additional mild consequence slot along with the additional stress boxes. This slot can only be used for mental harm.

Will Stunts

Strength From Determination. Use Will instead of Physique on any overcome rolls representing feats of strength.

Hard Boiled. You can choose to ignore a mild or moderate consequence for the duration of the scene. It can't be compelled against you or invoked by your enemies. At the end of the scene it comes back worse, though; if it was a mild consequence it becomes a moderate consequence, and if it was already moderate, it becomes severe.

Indomitable. +2 to defend against Provoke attacks specifically related to intimidation and fear.

Magic

Magic is a special skill. It is the skill of placing blessings and curses upon a person or place. While the skill itself is generic, its specific manifestations are not. A practitioner must have a set of rules and trappings that they follow to use magic.

Those rules may be based on a real-world practice, be totally made up, or anywhere in between, but they must be consistent and they always demand time, effort, and ritual.

There are other limitations listed below.

Overcome: The most concrete use for overcome is to overcome the scepticism of others.

Create an Advantage: The primary activity with the Magic skill is creating an advantage. Assuming a single target—a person, or a thing perhaps as large as a house—about a round's time, and the appropriate ritual incantations and gestures, the roll is made against a difficulty of Average. So long as the character gets a success, then the target gains the aspect of the spell for three days and three nights.

Further modifications :
• If the target is not present, then the difficulty is increased from between +1 to +3. +3 if the target is merely named, +1 if a powerful symbolic tie to the target is present—their blood, a treasured possession—and if it's not clearly either, then a +2 is appropriate.
• If the target is large—a small group of less than a dozen or a large place like a castle or market—difficulty increases by +3. Some spells have a secondary target, such as a spell that makes the King mad at someone. The absence of that secondary target similarly impacts the difficulty—+0 if present, +3 if you only have a name, as above. The one qualifier is that if the secondary target can be made to accept some token of the spell—a potion, a trinket—then they

are effectively "present". Such tokens must be used within three days.
• Success with style extends the duration to a week.
• No target can be the subject of more than one spell at a time. The newest spell replaces the existing ones. This allows a mage to dispel magics by simply casting a new spell, such as a healing spell on the recipient.
• Some blessings and curses have their own additional modifiers.
• A spell on an area effectively creates a scene aspect that can be used normally by anyone in the location.

Attack: Magical attacks have all the power of physical attacks, but use the magic skill instead of combat.

Defend: Magic can also be used for defence, but in a similar way to 'Attack' the Magic skill is substituted for making defence rolls.

MAGIC STUNTS
By Rote: You may pick three spells that you know well enough that you don't need to consult your notes to cast.
Evil Eye: You can attempt to put Bad Luck on a target with nothing more than an obvious gesture. This lasts only a day.
Permanence: If you put a spell on a place or an item, the effect lasts for up to a season—or until someone dispels it.

SPELLS
Aspects put on a target are generally referred to as blessings or curses, depending on their intended effect, but collectively, they are all considered spells.

Spells are complicated enough that they are very difficult to commit to memory and still get exactly right, so they are kept in notebooks, on scrolls, and in other archives.

Poaching another magician's spellbook can be

informative, but even if they haven't actively obscured them, they can be very idiosyncratic to understand. And, of course, there's no real way to distinguish between a spell that's a dud and a real one.

Spells

Any character can cast spells by learning the Magic skill. Magic users and mages simply have advantages that give them access to more spells. They are literate meaning they have access to spells written in books, and they are members of magical orders meaning they have access to libraries of spells or a teacher to impart spells.

Even illiterate characters can be taught magic, however they are incapable of doing the research necessary to uncover spells for themselves, from ancient elven books.

Spell Results

Just make a Magic roll to create an advantage against the target of the spell, with special effects based on the spell description.

If the spell is not a directly targeted attack like the Fire Tongue spell, or does not pit the mage against a target, like the Telepathy and Mind Control spell, then the more abstract success roll described in 'Create Advantage' is required. In this case, remember look at your situation aspects in this scene to see if any of them justify some sort of obstacle, or consider the circumstances (like rough terrain, a complex lock, time running out, a situational complication, etc.) to provide passive resistance.

This is the case for example with the Unlock spell, where the quality of the lock, and especially something like elven provenance, might easily make it more difficult to cast the spell.

Sometimes you're going to run into edge cases, where something inanimate seems like it should

provide active opposition (like a dancing sword) or an NPC can't provide proactive resistance (like if they're unaware of what the PC is doing). Follow your gut and use the type of opposition that fits the circumstances or makes the scene more interesting.

Source

There are a multitude of types of magic-using characters, from wild talents at conjuring the elements, to those who have entered into pacts with supernatural beings, or even are supernatural beings themselves. Some get their magic power from their god, and others from the psionic power of their own mind. Characters can freely choose the source of their magic.

Sample Spells

This list can be extended by the gamemaster, and also players, with gamemaster approval.

Wall of Electricity

A wall of blue flame bursts into existence, either around the caster, or somewhere nearby. Passing through the wall subjects the target to an attack using the caster's Magic skill. It's possible to surround a target in a wall, entrapping them. It is also possible to tighten the wall around the victim too, doing either constricting or energy damage, at the casters choice. The wall can be used to do non-lethal damage.

Brave The Inferno

Ignore damage from any single type of attack (thrusting for example, or energy) for the duration of the spell. This allows walking around in a burning house for example, or passing through a wall of fire unharmed.

Create Golems

Golems are magical constructs that either are alive, or are a very clever simulation of life, even the magic users who create such creatures disagree about exactly how 'alive' they are.

A golem is an animated anthropomorphic being, created entirely from inanimate matter. The main disability of the golem is its inability to speak.

A golem master must study the Cifer Entstia (Book of Golem Creation) to attain the mystical ability to create and animate a golem. Golems are activated by an ecstatic experience induced by the ritualistic use of various letters of the old magical High Elvish language. This ceremony is pleasurable in itself, and there are mages who devote their life to doing nothing but designing and speaking life into golems.

Some golem masters regard all life as golems, and regard the gods as just very powerful golem masters.

The golem master must impose their will and control over the golem at least once per year, and every time the golem is required to carry out a task that will last more than one day. This is done using the magician's Magic skill vs the golem's highest attribute. The greater the magician's skill, the more powerful the golems they can create and control.

It is possible for a golem master to write the animating words onto paper rather than speak them when performing the ceremony to animate a golem, but the piece of paper must be attached to the golems forehead or placed in the golems mouth. This leaves the golem vulnerable to having the paper removed, which deactivates the golem.

A golem can not be ordered to remove its animating word, and it will fight anyone and anything who tries to remove it. The golem is fighting for its life in such a situation. There is a 10% chance of a golem falling into dust on deactivation. These golems animated by paper are regarded as lesser golems, while those animated by words spoken to them are known as greater golems as the words can not simply be taken away.

Golem masters often use the lesser method of words on paper to animate golems in order to build up an army of golems that can be stored and animated very quickly with the simple insertion of pieces of paper, rather then the usual long ceremony. Even a huge army of lesser golems could be brought to life in less than an hour this way. It would take a much longer time to perform the number of ceremonies that would be required for greater golems.

Dark Path Navigation
The dark paths are a network of magical secret paths used to travel around the realms. The chances of meeting wandering monsters and evildoers is much increased on these hidden roads. There are also many entrances to the underworld.

Superhuman Jumping
Allows jumps, whose distance is based on the skill level of the mage. They are quicker jumps than usual, and even jumps of very long distances are accomplished in a single round.

Move Object
Allows a mage to slowly lift and reposition something potentially very large. The item can alternatively be hurled for crushing damage.

Set Insides a'Boiling
This is a nasty energy weapon attack that doesn't appear to have any effect on the surface. It does internal energy damage.

Summon Energy Creatures
This imprints a life pattern on some magical force. This produces an ethereal and ghostly version of a real creature. The size of the creature that can be created is dependant of the skill of the mage. The creature is immune to non-magical weapons, and the mage must be reached and incapacitated for the creature to be

dispelled. The creature has a combat skill equal to the strength of will of the mage.

Mental Magnetism
This magnetism is powered by magic, the size of the metal objects that can be attracted and repelled are potentially large. The objects can be used to do crushing damage.

Understand Languages
This is a strange mystical force that allows the patterns of a language, including non human languages, to be understood directly.

Seeing the Future and the Past
The caster may seek information about events, no matter how remote in time and space.

Hammer Hands
The spell casters hands become like hammers, and can be used in combat like a war hammer, or used to hammer at an obstacle like a sledge hammer. The mage does pummelling damage with their hands, rather than the usual clubbing damage.

Healing
This is similar to normal healing, but it is powered by magic and is instant.

Telepathy and Mind Control
This pits the Magic skill of the mage against that of the target, in a battle for control over the target's body.

Weather Control
Weather can only be controlled in a limited area commensurate with the power of the mage. Lightning can be called down from the sky, 1 strike per round, using the mage's Magic skill and doing energy damage.

Danger Sense
The mage concentrates and may determine the rough distance and direction of a nearby danger.

Fire Tongue
An energy weapon, similar to dragon breath, that is literally spat by the magic user.

Glacier Walker
Freezes the floor at a rate of 1 square meter per round. All who do not have something like an ice skating skill must make an athletics roll to stay on their feet. Otherwise they become prone.

Invisibility
The caster of the invisibility spell is still present however and can take damage. They can also be given away by things such as stark shadows on a sunny day or an outline in the rain. They can be located by noises they make. The gamemaster should determine the awareness roll required from the mage's adversaries to locate the mage, based on how noisy what the mage is doing is.

Unlock
This spell is used to open doors that have been locked, and even barred shut.

Teleport
The location to be teleported to must have been visited previously. If you know this spell you can detect people who are teleporting to your location.

Underworld Ally
A creature from evil planes of existance is summoned and tamed, this must be done before the first time the spell is used in a stressful situation and takes 1d10 days.

The areas beyond the demonic underworld gates are so immense and varied that the creature can basically be designed by the gamemaster. Only one underworld ally can be had at a time. Underworld allies can be powerful

but they can also be super intelligent, deceitful and sly.

Make Water
Summons up 1 cubic meter of water a round. A real torrent can potentially be created and used to snuff out magical fires and drown victims.

Summon Void
Makes a small hole in reality. On the other side is some uncharted and far off region of deep space. This often leads to explosive decompression of the room, forest clearing or whatever location it is used in. Only areas that are already without an atmosphere will not decompress. It requires a mid difficulty roll every round to avoid being sucked through. This might seem like instant death, but there might be somewhere to hide from the void on the other side.

Summon Void Walker
Monstrous uncontrolled creatures of pure energy. They are impervious to anything but magic weapons, but can be disrupted by sound waves if there is still an atmosphere for them to propagate. There must be some void to summon them from, so use the summon void spell first.

Chasm
Opens up a chasm that starts as a crack 1 meter long and 1 meter deep and increases in depth, length and width by 1m each round. It can follow a twisting path and be targeted at people who must save at -80 to avoid falling in.

Summon Chasm Creatures
Devilish ape like creatures with tentacles for arms, which inhabit the edge of reality and will not leave the chasm. But they have long tentacles and can reach targets near the chasm.

Fly
Flight is possible with this spell. The flight is as agile and fast as that of an eagle.

Smoke Snake
The caster summons a snake made of smoke, that attacks with a venomous bite.

Summon Flying Creature
A flying creature which the spell caster has studied can be rode if summoned with this spell. The flying creature must be big enough to be rode, a griffin for example.

Binding Bands
The bands, which can look like snakes, metal rods or whatever the magician desires, shoot from the ground and try to restrain the victim, or victims.

Confounding Words
The mage becomes a trusted source of information for the victim. The victim gets a roll to resist this manipulation.

Power Symbol
Creatures who are bound or summoned by a magical force can sometimes be held at bay, or even turned and forced to flee by the power of a symbol used by someone who knows this spell. The creature pits its Magic skill against that of the mage to avoid fleeing.

Smoke Screen
A lot of smoke is created, that can be used to hide in, provide cover from archers, and other useful purposes.

Summon Tiny Creatures
Insects, rats, land shrimp or whatever is available in huge numbers are attracted, and there is always something. They also have tiny teeth or claws and fill up 1 square meter per round. Can cause damage. Only summoner and one square meter around them is immune.

Wake the Forest

This gives you control over an area of forest. The trees act as if they were animals under your control but rooted to the spot. They can bring information to you by passing along the information from one to another in whispers. You can pass back orders along the same whispered route.

Animate Objects
Objects are brought to life by this spell, to attack the magician's foes. Some objects, such as gardening equipment and kitchen knives are better at this job than others. The magician does not need to concentrate to maintain the spell for its full duration, but it is the only attack spell that can be used. Casting another, breaks this spell.

Freezing Touch
A touch that can freeze the very heart of an enemy. The enemy must be successfully hit in hand to hand combat using Magic rather than the Combat skill, for the effects to apply.

Detect Secret Doors
Reveals secret doors within the casters line of sight and the range.

Cloaking Disguise
The caster can look like another being. The effect may not fool those who know the other being well, but is good for being a generic wandering old man, and hiding your true power.

Dream World Hunting
The mage can enter the same dream world as a subject they have met. They can look for the subject in this dream world. It is possible to fight in the dream world, but causing death simply wakes the subject.

Earthquake
When earthquake is cast, a very localized tremor runs through the ground. The shock can knock creatures down, collapse structures, open cracks in the ground, etc.

Clarify Poison
Immunises the subject against poison, detoxifies venom in or on subject, and returns them to health.

Poison Finger
The caster infects the subject with a horrible poison, chosen from poisons the mage has knowledge of, by making a successful melee attack. The victim must save to avoid the effects of the poison.

Repel Creature
A creature failing to best the mage on strength of will is forced away from the spell caster. It will continue to retreat, unless attacked, when the effect is negated.

Paralyse Creature
A creature is paralysed. It will be unable to move, unless attacked, when the effect is negated.

Rust Finger
The mage's touch corrodes iron and alloys. In combat, a roll is required, but using the mage's Magic skill. Organic creatures receive no physical damage.

Sleep Command
A sleep spell causes a magical slumber to come upon the targeted creature, or creatures, who are close enough to hear the command.

Interrogate the Dead
The corpse will answer questions truthfully if bested by the mage, and simply remain silent otherwise.

Spell Mirror
Spells and spell-like effects targeted at the mage are automatically turned back upon the original caster. The original caster can try to best the

mage in a contest of Magic skill to prevent the spell being returned.

Lizard Feet
The mage can walk on vertical surfaces and ceilings as though they were level ground.

Rune Carving
Any spell can be carved as a rune. The magic user carves the rune into an appropriate surface, wood, stone and metal is best. The spell is activated once per day, if the rune is touched.

Mind Sharing
The caster creates a telepathic link between themselves and a number of willing creatures.

Transmutation
Placing your hands on a substance and concentrating will allow you to change it from one substance to another. Metal can be turned into stone, and coal into diamond. Organic material is unaffected, except that petrified characters can be returned to their original state using this spell.

Minute Prison
Imprisons the victim within a gem, lamp or other small space. The victim is shrunk to fit – if the spell caster wins a contest using Magic skill.

Impersonate Object
The caster can take the form of a roughly human size inanimate object, such as a grandfather clock or scarecrow.

Create Skeletons
Raw material in the form of mostly complete sets of bones must be at hand, and the magic user is assumed not to be one of the good guys.

Create Zombies
There is no chance of getting information from a person reanimated using this spell, they are simply a monster. The caster must have raw material close at hand, and zombies are capable of bursting out of graves under their own power. They require 1d10 rounds to accomplish this.

Vampire Strike
Your next successful attack will provide healing equal to the damage you do to your opponent. Inflicting an injury on your opponent will heal an injury that you are suffering from.

Earth Bones
This spell summons the rocks of the earth to the surface, in an amount according to the spell casters level. These can then be shaped and positioned as the caster wishes. Architectural features can even be added.

Vicious Hedge
The hedge's thorns damage anyone who tries to pass. The hedge takes 1d6 rounds to grow, and will last according to the mages wishes. The thorns do slashing damage.

Web Wall
Web Wall creates a thick and strong, mass of sticky ropes and strands. These trap those caught in them if they fail a contest of Magic skill with the mage.

Long Whisper
You send a message or sound by throwing your voice to a designated spot. The distance you can send the message depends on the range selected.

Shape Materials
This spell allows you to reshape materials to suit your purposes. Turn a sword into a scimitar or put an aperture in a wall, for example.

Command of Returning
Command of Returning teleports the mage instantly back to their castle, tower, hovel, or wherever they feel safe, when they give the word.

Silence Command
By commanding silence, you nullify sounds around you so that you and those within the spell's area can converse normally, but no one outside can hear your voices or any sounds you make.

Truth Tongue
Creatures within the effected area (or those who enter it) can't speak any deliberate and intentional lies. Each potentially affected creature is allowed a save to avoid the effects when the spell is cast or when the creature first enters the zone.

Fate Points
GMs and players, you both have a pool of points called fate points you can use to influence the game. You represent these with tokens, as we mentioned in The Basics. Players, you start with a certain number of points every scenario, equal to your character's refresh. You'll also reset to your refresh rate if you ended a mid-scenario session with fewer fate points than your rate. GMs, you get a budget of fate points to spend in every scene.

When your aspects come into play, you will usually spend or gain a fate point.

THE FATE POINT ECONOMY
For the most part, the use of aspects revolves around fate points. You indicate your supply of fate points by using tokens, such as poker chips, glass beads, or other markers.

Ideally, you want a consistent ebb and flow of fate points going on throughout your sessions. Players spend them in order to be awesome in a crucial moment, and they get them back when their lives get dramatic and complicated. So if your fate points are flowing the way they're supposed to, you'll end up with these cycles of triumphs and setbacks that make for a fun and interesting story.

Here's how that works.

Refresh
Each player gets a number of fate points to start each session off with. That total is called the

refresh rate. The refresh for a default, starting character is three fate points, but you can opt to spend up to two of your refresh to buy additional stunts.

You get additional refresh as your character achieves a major milestone (which we discuss in The Long Game), which you can spend on getting more stunts or keep in order to increase your starting fate point total. You can never have less than one refresh at any time.

You might end a session of play with more fate points than your actual refresh. If that happens, you don't lose the additional points when you start the next session, but you don't gain any either. At the start of a new scenario, you reset your fate points to your refresh rate no matter what.

STUNTS AND REFRESH

Three Stunts = Refresh of 3
Four Stunts = Refresh of 2
Five Stunts = Refresh of 1

Spending Fate Points
You spend fate points in any of the following ways:

Invoke an Aspect: Invoking an aspect costs you one fate point, unless the invocation is free.
Power a Stunt: Some stunts are very potent, and as such, cost a fate point in order to activate.
Refuse a Compel: Once a compel is proposed, you can pay a fate point to avoid the complication associated with it.
Declare a Story Detail: To add something to the narrative based on one of your aspects, spend a fate point.

Earning Fate Points
You earn fate points in any of the following ways:

Accept a Compel: You get a fate point when

you agree to the complication associated with a compel. As we said above, this may sometimes happen retroactively if the circumstances warrant.
Have Your Aspects Invoked Against You: If someone pays a fate point to invoke an aspect attached to your character, you gain their fate point at the end of the scene. This includes advantages created on your character, as well as consequences.
Concede in a Conflict: You receive one fate point for conceding in a conflict, as well as an additional fate point for each consequence that you've received in that conflict. (This isn't the same as being taken out in a conflict, by the way, but we'll get into that later.)

The GM and Fate Points
GMs, you also get to use fate points, but the rules are a little bit different than the rules for players.

When you award players fate points for compels or concession, they come out of an unlimited pool you have for doing so—you don't have to worry about running out of fate points to award, and you always get to compel for free.

The NPCs under your control are not so lucky. They have a limited pool of fate points you get to use on their behalf. Whenever a scene starts, you get one fate point for every PC in that scene. You can use these points on behalf of any NPC you want, but you can get more in that scene if they take a compel, like PCs do.

You reset to your default total, one per PC, at the beginning of every scene.

There are two exceptions:

You accepted a compel that effectively ended the last scene or starts the next one. If that happens, take an extra fate point in the next scene.
You conceded a conflict to the PCs in the

previous scene. If that happens, take the fate points you'd normally get for the concession into the next scene and add them to the default total.

If the immediate next scene doesn't present a significant interaction with NPCs, you can save these extra points until the next scene that does.

You're All Set!
At the end of this process, you should have a character with:

    A name
    Four aspects, along with some backstory
    One Great, two Good, three Fair, and four Average skills
    Between three and five stunts
    A mental and physical stress track of 2–4 boxes each
    A refresh rate of 1–3 fate points

Now you're ready to play!

ACTIONS, OUTCOMES
You roll the dice when there's some kind of interesting opposition keeping you from achieving your goals. If there's no interesting opposition, you just accomplish whatever you say you're trying to do.

Whenever you take action, there's a good chance that something or someone is going to be in your way. It wouldn't be an interesting story if the bad guy just rolled over and handed you victory on a plate.

That's when it's time to take out the dice.

    Choose the character's skill that is appropriate to the action.
    Roll four Fate dice.

Rolling the Dice
When you need to roll dice in Fate, pick up four Fate dice and roll them. When you read the dice,

read every + as +1, every 0 as 0, and every - as –1. Add them all together. You'll get a result from –4 to +4, most often between –2 and +2.

Here are some sample dice totals:
-+0+ = +1
+-00 =
+++- = +2
-000 = −1

The result on the dice isn't your final total, however. If your character has a skill that's appropriate to the action, you get to add your character's rating in that skill to whatever you rolled.

So, once you've rolled the dice, how do you determine what a particular result means? Glad you asked.
The Ladder

In Fate, we use a ladder of adjectives and numbers to rate the dice results, a character's skills and the result of a roll.

Here's the ladder:
+8   Legendary
+7   Epic
+6   Fantastic
+5   Superb
+4   Great
+3   Good
+2   Fair
+1   Average
0   Mediocre
-1   Poor
-2   Terrible

Results can go below and above the ladder.

Interpreting Results
When you roll the dice, you're trying to get a high enough roll to match or beat your opposition. That opposition is going to come in one of two forms: active opposition, from someone rolling dice against you, or passive opposition, from an

obstacle that just has a set rating on the ladder for you to overcome. (GMs, you can also just decide your NPCs give passive opposition when you don't want to roll dice for them.)

Generally speaking, if you beat your opposition on the ladder, you succeed at your action. A tie creates some effect, but not to the extent your character was intending. If you win by a lot, something extra happens (like doing more harm to your opponent in a fight).

If you don't beat the opposition, either you don't succeed at your action, you succeed at a cost, or something else happens to complicate the outcome. Some game actions have special results when you fail at the roll.

When you beat a roll or a set obstacle, the difference between your opposition and your result is what we call shifts. When you roll equal to the opposition, you have zero shifts. Roll one over your opposition, and you have one shift. Two over means two shifts, and so on. Later in the book, we'll talk about different instances where getting shifts on a roll benefits you.

You use tokens to represent how many fate points you have at any given time during play. Fate points are one of your most important resources in Fate—they're a measure of how much influence you have to make the story go in your character's favour.

Whenever you roll the dice, you're comparing your roll to your opposition. Opposition is either active, meaning it's another person rolling dice against you, or passive, meaning that it's just a set rating on the ladder which represents the influence of the environment or situation you're in. GMs, it's your job to decide what the most reasonable source of opposition is.

The Four Outcomes

When you roll the dice, either you're going to fail, tie, succeed, or succeed with style.

Every roll you make in a Fate game results in one of four outcomes, generally speaking. The specifics may change a little depending on what kind of action you're taking, but all the game actions fit this general pattern.
Fail

If you roll lower than your opposition, you fail.

This means one of several things: you don't get what you want, you get what you want at a serious cost, or you suffer some negative mechanical consequence. Sometimes, it means more than one of those. It's the GM's job to determine an appropriate cost.

Tie
If you roll the same as your opposition, you tie.

This means you get what you want, but at a minor cost, or you get a lesser version of what you wanted.
Succeed

If you roll higher than your opposition by 1 or 2 shifts, you succeed.

This means you get what you want at no cost.
Succeed with Style

If you roll higher than your opposition by 3 or more shifts, you succeed with style.

This means that you get what you want, but you also get an added benefit on top of that.

FOR THE GM: SERIOUS COST VS. MINOR COST
When you're thinking about costs, think both about the story in play and the game mechanics to help you figure out what would be most appropriate.

A serious cost should make the current situation worse somehow, either by creating a new

problem or exacerbating an existing one. Bring in another source of opposition in this scene or the next one (such as a new opposing NPC or an obstacle to overcome), or ask the player to take a consequence at their lowest free level, or give someone who opposes the PC an advantage with a free invocation.

A minor cost should add a story detail that's problematic or bad for the PC, but doesn't necessarily endanger progress. You could also ask the PC to take stress or give someone who opposes the PCs a boost.

It's okay if the minor cost is mainly a narrative detail, showing how the PC just barely scratched by. We give more advice about dealing with costs on in Running the Game.

FOR THE GM
HOW HARD SHOULD SKILL ROLLS BE?
For active opposition, you don't really need to worry about how hard the roll is—just use the NPC's skill level and roll the dice like the players do, letting the chips fall where they may. We have guidelines about NPC skill levels in Running the Game.

For passive opposition, you have to decide what rank on the ladder the player has to beat. It's more an art than a science, but we have some guidelines to help you.

Anything that's two or more steps higher than the PC's skill level—Fair (+2) skill and Great (+4) opposition, for example— means that the player will probably fail or need to invoke aspects to succeed.

Anything that's two or more steps lower than the PC's skill level—Fair (+2) skill and Mediocre (+0) opposition, for example—means that the player will probably not need to invoke aspects and have a good chance of succeeding with style.

Between that range, there's a roughly equal chance that they'll tie or succeed, and a roughly equal chance that they will or won't need to invoke aspects to do so.

Therefore, low difficulties are best when you want to give the PCs a chance to show off and be awesome, difficulties near their skill levels are best when you want to provide tension but not overwhelm them, and high difficulties are best when you want to emphasize how dire or unusual the circumstances are and make them pull out all the stops.

Finally, a couple of quick axioms:

Average is called Average for a reason—if nothing about the opposition sticks out, then the difficulty doesn't need more than a +1.

If you can think of at least one reason why the opposition sticks out, but otherwise just can't decide what the difficulty should be, pick Fair (+2). It's in the middle of a PC's range of skills, so it provides a decent challenge for every skill level except Great (+4), and you want to give PCs a chance to show off their peak skill anyway.

The Four Actions
When you make a skill roll, you're taking one of four actions: overcome, create an advantage, attack, or defend.

There are four types of actions you can take in a game of Fate. When you make a skill roll, you have to decide which of these you're going to try. The skill descriptions tell you which actions are appropriate for that skill and under which circumstances. Usually, the action you need to take will be pretty obvious from the skill description, your intent, and the situation in play, but sometimes you might have to talk it over with the group to find out which is the most appropriate.

The four actions are: overcome, create

advantage, attack, and defend.

Overcome

Use the overcome action to achieve assorted goals appropriate to your skill.

Every skill has a certain niche of miscellaneous endeavours that fall under its purview, certain situations where it's an ideal choice. A character with Burglary tries to jimmy a window, a character with Empathy tries to calm the crowd, and a character with Crafts tries to fix the broken axle on his wagon after a desperate chase.

When your character's in one of these situations and there's something between her and her goals, you use the overcome action to deal with it. Look at it as the "catch-all" action for every skill—if it doesn't fall into any other category, it's probably an overcome action.

The opposition you have to beat might be active or passive, depending on the situation.

   When you fail an overcome action, you have two options. You can simply fail, which means you don't attain your goal or get what you were after, or you can succeed at a serious cost.
   When you tie an overcome action, you attain your goal or get what you were after, but at a minor cost.
   When you succeed at an overcome action, you attain your goal without any cost.
   When you succeed with style at an overcome action, you get a boost in addition to attaining your goal.

You may occasionally run into situations where it seems appropriate to provide a different benefit or penalty for a given action result than the one listed. It's okay to go back to the basic description of the four outcomes and sub in something that makes sense.

For example, on the overcome action it says you get a boost in addition to success when you succeed with style. But if that overcome roll is going to end the scene, or you can't think of a good boost, You may choose to offer a story detail as an extra benefit instead.

Create an Advantage

Use the create an advantage action to make a situation aspect that gives you a benefit, or to claim a benefit from any aspect you have access to.

The create an advantage action covers a broad range of endeavors, unified around the theme of using your skills to take advantage (hence the name) of the environment or situation you're in.

Sometimes, that means you're doing something to actively change your circumstances (like throwing sand in an opponent's eyes or setting something on fire), but it could also mean that you're discovering new information that helps you (like learning the weakness of a monster through research), or taking advantage of something you've previously observed (like your opponent's predisposition to a bad temper).

When you roll to create an advantage, you must specify whether you're creating a new situation aspect or taking advantage of an aspect that's already in place. If the former, are you attaching that situation aspect to a character or to the environment?

Opposition might be active or passive, depending on the circumstances. If your target is another character, their roll always counts as a defend action.

If you're using create an advantage to make a new aspect…

   When you fail, you either don't create the aspect, or you create it but someone else gets the free invoke—whatever you end up doing works to someone else's advantage instead. That could be your opponent in a conflict, or any

character who could tangibly benefit to your detriment. You may have to reword the aspect to show that the other character benefits instead—work it out with the recipient in whichever way makes the most sense.

When you tie, you get a boost instead of the situation aspect you were going for. This might mean you have to rename the aspect a bit to reflect its temporary nature (Rough Terrain becomes Rocks on the Path).

When you succeed, you create a situation aspect with a free invocation.

When you succeed with style, you get a situation aspect with two free invocations instead of one.

If you're using create an advantage on an existing aspect…

When you fail, you give a free invoke on that aspect to someone else instead. That could be your opponent in a conflict, or any character who could tangibly benefit to your detriment.

When you tie or succeed, you place a free invocation on the aspect.

When you succeed with style, you place two free invocations on the aspect.

Attack
Use the attack action to harm someone in a conflict or take them out of a scene.

The attack action is the most straightforward of the four actions—when you want to hurt someone in a conflict, it's an attack. An attack isn't always physical in nature; some skills allow you to hurt someone mentally as well.

Most of the time, your target will actively oppose your attack. Passive opposition on an attack means you've caught your target unaware or otherwise unable to make a full effort to resist you, or the NPC isn't important enough to bother with dice.

In addition, passive or not, the opposition always counts as a defend action so you can look at these two actions as being inexorably intertwined.

When you fail at an attack, you don't cause any harm to your target. (It also means that your target succeeded on the defend action, which could get you saddled with other effects.)

When you tie an attack, you don't cause any harm, but you gain a boost.

When you succeed on an attack, you inflict a hit on your target equal to the number of shifts you got. That forces the target to try and "buy off" the value of your hit by taking stress or consequences; if that's not possible, your target gets taken out of the conflict.

When you succeed with style on an attack, it works like a normal success, but you also have the option to reduce the value of your hit by one to gain a boost as well.

Defend
Use the defend action to avoid an attack or prevent someone from creating an advantage against you.

Whenever someone attacks you in a conflict or tries to create an advantage on you, you always get a chance to defend. As with attacks, this isn't always about avoiding physical sources of danger—some of the skills allow you to defend against attempts to harm your mind or damage your resolve.

Because you roll to defend as a reaction, your opposition is almost always active. If you're rolling a defend action against passive opposition, it's because the environment is hostile to you somehow (like a blazing fire), or the attacking NPC isn't important enough for the GM to bother with dice.

When you fail at a defense, you suffer the consequences of whatever you were trying to prevent. You might take a hit or have an advantage created on you.

When you tie a defense, you grant your opponent a boost.

When you succeed at a defense, you successfully avoid the attack or the attempt to gain an advantage on you.

When you succeed with style at a defense, it works like a normal success, but you also gain a boost as you turn the tables momentarily.

CAN I DEFEND AGAINST OVERCOME ACTIONS?
Technically, no. The defend action is there to stop you from taking stress, consequences, or situation aspects—basically, to protect you against all the bad stuff we represent with mechanics.

But! You can roll active opposition if you're in the way of any action, as per the guidelines. So if someone's doing an overcome action that might fail because you're in the way, you should speak up and say, "Hey, I'm in the way!" and roll to oppose it. You don't get any extra benefits like the defend action gives you, but you also don't have to worry about the aforementioned bad stuff if you lose.

NO STACKED EFFECTS!
You'll notice that the defend action has outcomes that mirror some of the outcomes in attack and create an advantage. For example, it says that when you tie a defence, you grant your opponent a boost. Under attack, it says that when you tie, you receive a boost.

That doesn't mean the attacker gets two boosts —it's the same result, just from two different points of view. We just wrote it that way so that the results were consistent when you looked up the rule, regardless of what action you took.

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Challenges and Contests
Most of the time, a single skill roll should be enough to decide how a particular situation in play resolves. You're not obligated to describe actions in a particular timeframe or level of detail when you use a skill. Therefore, you could use a single Athletics roll to find out whether you can safely navigate a rock face that will take days to climb, or use that same single skill roll to find out whether you can safely avoid a swiftly falling tree that's about to crush you.

Sometimes, however, you'll be in a situation where you're doing something really dramatic and interesting, like pivotal set pieces in a movie or a book. When that happens, it's a good idea to zoom in on the action and deal with it using multiple skill rolls, because the wide range of dice results will make things really dynamic and surprising. Most fight scenes fall into this category, but you can zoom in on anything that you consider sufficiently important—car chases, court trials, high-stakes poker games, and so on.

We have three ways for you to zoom in on the action in Fate:

Challenges, when one or more characters try to achieve something dynamic or complicated
Contests, when two or more characters are competing for a goal
Conflicts, when two or more characters are trying to directly harm each other

Challenges
A single overcome action is sufficient to deal with a straightforward goal or obstacle—the hero needs to pick this lock, disarm this bomb, sift out

a vital piece of information, and so on. It's also useful when the details of how something gets done aren't important or worth spending an intense amount of time on, when what you need to know is whether the character can get something done without any setbacks or costs.

Sometimes, however, things get complicated. It's not enough to pick the lock, because you also have to hold off the hordes of attacking zombies and set up the magical ward that's going to keep pursuers off your back. It's not enough to disarm the bomb, because you also have to land the crashing blimp and keep the unconscious scientist you're rescuing from getting hurt in said landing.

A challenge is a series of overcome actions that you use to resolve an especially complicated or dynamic situation. Each overcome action uses a different skill to deal with one task or part of the situation, and you take the individual results as a whole to figure out how the situation resolves.

GMs, when you're trying to figure out if it's appropriate to call for a challenge, ask yourself the following questions:

   Is each separate task something that can generate tension and drama independently of the other tasks? If all the tasks are really part of the same overall goal, like "detaching the detonator," "stopping the timer", and "disposing of the explosive material" when you're disarming a bomb, then that should be one overcome action, where you use those details to explain what happened if the roll goes wrong.
   Does the situation require different skills to deal with? Holding off the zombies (Fight) while pushing down a barricade (Physique) and fixing your broken wagon (Crafts) so that you can get away would be a good instance for a challenge.

To set up a challenge, simply identify the individual tasks or goals that make up the situation, and treat each one as a separate overcome roll. (Sometimes, only a certain sequence for the rolls will make sense to you; that's okay too.) Depending on the situation, one character may be required to make several rolls, or multiple characters may be able to participate.

To conduct a challenge, call for each overcome action in whichever order seems most interesting, but don't decide anything about how the situation turns out until after you've collected all the results—you want to have the freedom to sequence the events of each roll in the order that makes the most sense and is the most entertaining. Players, if you get a boost on one of your rolls, feel free to use it on another roll in the challenge, provided you can justify it.

GMs, after the rolls have been made, you'll consider the successes, failures, and costs of each action as you interpret how the scene proceeds. It could be that the results lead you into another challenge, a contest, or even a conflict.

If you have any boosts that went unused in the challenge, feel free to keep them for the rest of this scene or whatever scene you're transitioning to, if the events of the challenge connect directly to the next scene.

Advantages in a Challenge

You can try to create an advantage during a challenge, for yourself or to help someone else out. Creating an advantage doesn't count towards completing one of the challenge goals, but failing the roll could create a cost or problem that negatively impacts one of the other goals. Be careful using this tactic; advantages can help complete tasks more effectively and create momentum, but trying to create them is not without risk.

Attacks in a Challenge

Because you're always up against passive opposition in a challenge, you'll never use the attack action. If you're in a situation where it

seems reasonable to roll an attack, you should start setting up for a conflict.

Contests

Whenever two or more characters have mutually exclusive goals, but they aren't trying to harm each other directly, they're in a contest. Arm wrestling matches, races or other sports competitions, and public debates are all good examples of contests.

GMs, answer the following questions when you're setting up a contest:

What are the "sides"? Is every character in the contest in it for herself, or are there groups of people opposing other groups? If you have multiple characters on a side, they roll together using the Teamwork rules.

What environment does the contest take place in? Are there any significant or notable features of that environment you want to define as situation aspects?

How are the participants opposing each other? Are they rolling against each other directly (like in a straight sprint race or a poker match), or are they trying to overcome something in the environment (like an obstacle course or a panel of judges)?

What skills are appropriate for this contest? Does everyone have to roll the same one, or do several apply?

A contest proceeds in a series of exchanges. In an exchange, every participant gets to make one skill roll to determine how well they do in that leg of the contest. This is basically an overcome action.

Players, when you make a contest roll, compare your result to everyone else's.

If you got the highest result, you win the exchange. If you're rolling directly against the other participants, then that means you got the highest rank on the ladder out of everyone. If

you're all rolling against something in the environment, it means you got the most shifts out of everyone.

Winning the exchange means you score a victory (which you can just represent with a tally mark or check mark on scratch paper) and describe how you take the lead.

If you succeed with style and no one else does, then you get to mark two victories.

If there's a tie for the highest result, no one gets a victory, and an unexpected twist occurs. This could mean several things depending on the situation—the terrain or environment shifts somehow, the parameters of the contest change, or an unanticipated variable shows up and affects all the participants. GMs, you should create a new situation aspect reflecting this change.

The first participant to achieve three victories wins the contest.

During any exchange, you can try to create an advantage before you make your contest roll. If you're targeting another participant, they get to defend normally. If someone can interfere with your attempt, they provide active opposition as normal.

Doing this carries an additional risk—failing to create an advantage means you forfeit your contest roll, which means there's no way you can make progress in the current exchange. If you at least tie, you get to make your contest roll normally.

If you're providing a bonus via the Teamwork rules, failing to create an advantage means the lead character doesn't benefit from your help this exchange.

Attacks in a Contest

If someone tries to attack in a contest, then

they're doing direct harm, and it ceases to be a contest. You should immediately stop what you're doing and start setting up for a conflict instead.

CONFLICTS

In a conflict, characters are actively trying to harm one another. It could be a fist fight, a shootout, or a powersword duel. It could also be a tough interrogation, a psychic assault, or a shouting match with a loved one. As long as the characters involved have both the intent and the ability to harm one another, then you're in a conflict scene.

Conflicts are either physical or mental in nature, based on the kind of harm you're at risk of suffering. In physical conflicts, you suffer bruises, scrapes, cuts, and other injuries. In mental conflicts, you suffer loss of confidence and self-esteem, loss of composure, and other psychological trauma.

Setting up a conflict is a little more involved than setting up contests or challenges. Here are the steps:

Set the scene, describing the environment the conflict takes place in, creating situation aspects and zones, and establishing who's participating and what side they're on.
Determine the turn order.
Start the first exchange:
On your turn, take an action and then resolve it.
On other people's turns, defend or respond to their actions as necessary.
At the end of everyone's turn, start again with a new exchange.

You know the conflict is over when everyone on one of the sides has conceded or been taken out.
Setting the Scene

GMs, when you're setting the scene, keep an eye out for fun-sounding features of the environment to make into situation aspects, especially if you think someone might be able to take advantage of them in an interesting way in a conflict. Don't overload it—find three to five evocative things about your conflict location and make them into aspects.

Good options for situation aspects include:

Anything regarding the general mood, weather, or lighting—dark or badly lit, storming, creepy, crumbling, blindingly bright, etc.
Anything that might affect or restrict movement—filthy, mud everywhere, slippery, rough, etc.
Things to hide behind—vehicles, obstructions, large furniture, etc.
Things you can knock over, wreck, or use as improvised weapons—bookshelves, statues, etc.
Things that are flammable
Things that are toxic – for example in an abandoned genetics lab, where it was easier to start again than to clean up the mess.
Things that dazzle and blind – The streets of the sprawl are bathed in the light of a thousand displays, an animated crawl of commercial information
Autonomous things – Often a building AI has been 'taken over', extremely dangerous on a completely automated construction site. Such as site might be a giant robot ring rising into the sky and leaving a skyscraper behind. The lower floors of the building already occupied.
Things that are contagious – A deserted hospital, where the hospital has been cleared due to the danger posed by one of the patients/inmates
Things that are caged – a prison, only a few days away from riot and disorder
Deserted things – behind a police cordon, evacuated, and the power cut.
Jagged things – the scrapyards of Earth stretch for many kilometres and go deep, deep underground.
Insanitary things – Many slum districts have taken over or are built over or around nearby industrial districts. There is no sanitation, and the open sewers are full of industrial waste as well as human excrement.

Mental Conflicts

In a mental conflict, it might not always make sense to use situation aspects and zones to describe a physical space. It'd make sense in an interrogation, for example, where the physical features of the space create fear, but not in a really violent argument with a loved one. Also, when people are trying to hurt each other emotionally, usually they're using their target's own weaknesses against them—in other words, their own aspects.

So, you may not even need situation aspects or zones for a lot of mental conflicts. Don't feel obligated to include them.

Zones

GMs, if your conflict takes place over a large area, you may want to break it down into zones for easier reference.

A zone is an abstract representation of physical space. The best definition of a zone is that it's close enough that you can interact directly with someone (in other words, walk up to and punch them in the face).

Generally speaking, a conflict should rarely involve more than a handful of zones. Two to four is probably sufficient, save for really big conflicts. This isn't a miniatures board game—zones should give a tactile sense of the environment, but at the point where you need something more than a cocktail napkin to lay it out, you're getting too complicated.

   If you can describe the area as bigger than a house, you can probably divide it into two or more zones—think of a cathedral or a shopping center parking lot.
   If it's separated by stairs, a ladder, a fence, or a wall, it could be divided zones, like two floors of a house.
   "Above X" and "below X" can be different zones, especially if moving between them takes some doing—think of the airspace around something large, like a blimp.

When you're setting up your zones, note any situation aspects that could make moving between those zones problematic. They'll be important later, when people want to move from zone to zone. If that means you need more situation aspects, add them now.

Establishing Sides

It's important to know everyone's goal in a conflict before you start. People fight for a reason, and if they're willing to do harm, it's usually an urgent reason.

The normal assumption is that the player characters are on one side, fighting against NPCs who are in opposition. It doesn't always have to be that way, however—PCs can fight each other and be allied with NPCs against each other.

Make sure everyone agrees on the general goals of each side, who's on which side, and where everyone is situated in the scene (like who's occupying which zone) when the conflict begins.

It might also help, GMs, to decide how those groups are going to "divvy up" to face one another—is one character going to get mobbed by the bad guy's henchmen, or is the opposition going to spread itself around equally among the PCs? You might change your mind once the action starts, but if you have a basic idea, it gives you a good starting point to work from.

Turn Order

Your turn order in a conflict is based on your skills. In a physical conflict, compare your Notice skill to the other participants. In a mental conflict, compare your Empathy skill. Whoever has the highest gets to go first, and then everyone else in descending order.

If there's a tie, compare a secondary or tertiary skill. For physical conflicts, that's Athletics, then Physique. For mental conflicts, Rapport, then Will.

Exchanges in a conflict are a little more complicated than in contests. In an exchange, every character gets a turn to take an action. GMs, you get to go once for every NPC you control in the conflict.

Most of the time, you're going to be attacking another character or creating an advantage on your turn, because that's the point of a conflict—take your opponent out, or set things up to make it easier to take your opponent out.

GMs, if you have a lot of nameless NPCs in your scene, feel free to have them use passive opposition to keep your dice rolling down. Also, consider using mobs instead of individual NPCs to keep things simple.

However, if you have a secondary objective in the conflict scene, you might need to roll an overcome action instead. You'll encounter this most often if you want to move between zones but there's a situation aspect in place making that problematic.

Regardless, you only get to make one skill roll on your turn in an exchange, unless you're defending against someone else's action—you can do that as many times as you want. You can even make defend actions on behalf of others, so long as you fulfil two conditions: it has to be reasonable for you to interpose yourself between the attack and its target, and you have to suffer the effects of any failed rolls.

Full Defence

If you want, you can forgo your action for the exchange to concentrate on defence. You don't get to do anything proactive, but you do get to roll all defend actions for the exchange at a +2 bonus.

Resolving Attacks

A successful attack lands a hit equivalent to its shift value on a target. So if you get three shifts on an attack, you land a 3-shift hit.

If you get hit by an attack, one of two things happen: either you absorb the hit and stay in the fight, or you're taken out.

Fortunately, you have two options for absorbing hits to stay in the fight—you can take stress and/or consequences. You can also concede a conflict before you're taken out, in order to preserve some control over what happens to your character.

If, for whatever reason, you want to forego your defence and take a hit (like, say, to interpose yourself in the path of an arrow that's about to skewer your friend), you can.

Because you're not defending, the attacker's rolling against Mediocre (+0) opposition, which means you're probably going to take a bad hit. Stress

One of your options to mitigate the effect of a hit is to take stress.

The best way to understand stress is that it represents all the various reasons why you just barely avoid taking the full force of an attack. Maybe you twist away from the blow just right, or it looks bad but is really just a flesh wound, or you exhaust yourself diving out of the way at the last second.

Mentally, stress could mean that you just barely manage to ignore an insult, or clamp down on an instinctive emotional reaction, or something like that.

Stress boxes also represent a loss of momentum —you only have so many last-second saves in you before you've got to face the music.

On your character sheet, you have a number of stress boxes, each with a different shift value. By default, all characters get a 1-point and a 2-point box. You may get additional, higher-value stress boxes depending on some of your skills (usually Physique and Will).

When you take stress, check off a stress box with a value equal to the shift value of the hit. If that box is already checked, check off a higher value box. If there is no higher available box, and you can't take any consequences, you're taken out of the conflict.

You can only check off one stress box per hit.

Remember that you have two sets of stress boxes! One of these is for physical stress, the other for mental; you'll start with a 1-shift and a 2-shift box in each of these. If you take stress from a physical source, you check off a physical stress box. If it's a mental hit, check off a mental stress box.

After a conflict, when you get a minute to breathe, any stress boxes you checked off become available for your use again.

Boss Monster Onion Skins
Boss monsters, which are the bigger and more dangerous monsters, such as dragons and giants, often have one profile representing a healthy monster, and a second representing a wounded monster, and perhaps even a third representing a near death version. Effectively meaning that three monsters must be fought consecutively, instead of just one, because that creature just won't 'stay down'.

This process is like peeling an onion, where each skin must be removed before the last monster at the core can be engaged. It makes boss monsters even more powerful.

Vehicle Onion Skins
Being inside a vehicle is a huge advantage in combat. This is because some vehicles have stress boxes of their own. Before occupants can be targeted, all the vehicles stress boxes must be filled in, and the vehicle taken out.

The crew is usually safe from external fire however, and they must be extracted, or a boarding party must be sent in before the crew can be harmed. Any vehicle, such as a ship, that has stress boxes and a character sheet, rather than just providing aspects counts as a vehicle for this rule.

Affecting Multiple Targets
Explosions are a staple of physical conflict, but are by no means the only example—consider tear gas or stunners. You can extend this to mental conflict also. For example, you might use Provoke to establish dominance in a room with your presence, or Rapport to make an inspirational speech that affects everyone listening.

The easiest way to do this is to create an advantage on the scene, rather than on a specific target. A Gas-Filled Room has the potential to affect everyone in it, and it's not too much of a stretch to suggest that the Inspirational Mood in a room could be contagious. In this context, the aspect presents an excuse to call for a skill roll (using the overcome action) from anyone in the scene who attempts to get past it. Generally speaking, it won't cause damage, but it will make things more difficult for those affected.

Attacking a whole zone or everyone in a scene is something you're going to have to judge by circumstance, like any other stretch use of a skill. Depending on the circumstances of your setting, this might be a totally normal thing to do (for example, because everyone uses magic with an area effect attack), it might be impossible, or it might require a stunt. As long as you can

justify it, you don't need to apply any special rules—you roll for the attack, and everyone in the zone defends as normal. Depending on the circumstances, you may even have to defend against your own roll, if you're in the same zone as the attack!

COMPELS AND MULTIPLE TARGETS
Just a quick note: players who want to compel their way out of a conflict don't get a free lunch on affecting multiple targets, whether it's one aspect or several that justify the compel. A player must spend one fate point for each target they wish to compel. One fate point compels one individual, period.

Consequences

A consequence is more severe than stress—it represents some form of lasting injury or setback that you accrue from the conflict, something that's going to be a problem for your character after the conflict is over.

Consequences come in three levels of severity— mild, moderate, and severe. Each one has a different shift value: two, four, and six, respectively. On your character sheet, you have a number of available consequence slots, in this section.

When you use a consequence slot, you reduce the shift value of the attack by the shift value of the consequence. You can use more than one consequence at a time if they're available. Any of the hit's remaining shifts must be handled by a stress box to avoid being taken out.

However, there's a penalty. The consequence written in the slot is an aspect that represents the lasting effect incurred from the attack. The opponent who forced you to take a consequence gets a free invocation, and the aspect remains on your character sheet until you've recovered the consequence slot. While it's on your sheet, the consequence is treated like any other aspect, except because the slant on it is so

negative, it's far more likely to be used to your character's detriment.

Unlike stress, a consequence slot may take a long time to recover after the conflict is over. Also unlike stress, you only have one set of consequences; there aren't specific slots for physical versus mental consequences. This means that, if you have to take a mild consequence to reduce a mental hit and your mild consequence slot is already filled with a physical consequence, you're out of luck! You're going to have to use a moderate or severe consequence to absorb that hit (assuming you have one left). The exception to this is the extra consequence slot you would get from a Superb (+5) Physique or Will is reserved for physical or mental harm, respectively.

Still, it's better than being taken out, right?

Naming a Consequence

Here are some guidelines for choosing what to name a consequence:

Mild consequences don't require immediate medical attention. They hurt, and they may present an inconvenience, but they aren't going to force you into a lot of bed rest. On the mental side, mild consequences express things like small social gaffes or changes in your surface emotions. Examples: Black Eye, Bruised Hand, Winded, Flustered, Cranky, Temporarily Blinded.

Moderate consequences represent fairly serious impairments that require dedicated effort toward recovery (including medical attention). On the mental side, they express things like damage to your reputation or emotional problems that you can't just shrug off with an apology and a good night's sleep. Examples: Deep Cut, First Degree Burn, Exhausted, Drunk, Terrified.

Severe consequences go straight to the emergency room (or whatever the equivalent is

in your game)—they're extremely nasty and prevent you from doing a lot of things, and will lay you out for a while. On the mental side, they express things like serious trauma or relationship-changing harm. Examples: Second-Degree Burn, Compound Fracture, Guts Hanging Out, Crippling Shame, Trauma-Induced Phobia.

Recovery

Physical recovery can only happen through the use of a Lore stunt or a magical effect. This makes physical fights dangerous and is because advanced medical training is quite rare. For mental recovery, use the Empathy skill.

In order to regain the use of a consequence slot, you have to recover from the consequence. That requires two things—succeeding at an action that allows you to justify recovery, and then waiting an appropriate amount of game time for that recovery to take place.

The action in question is an overcome action; the obstacle is the consequence that you took. If it's a physical injury, then the action is some kind of medical treatment or first aid. For mental consequences, the action may involve therapy, counselling, or simply a night out with friends.

The difficulty for this obstacle is based on the shift value of the consequence. Mild is Fair (+2), moderate is Great (+4), and severe is Fantastic (+6). If you are trying to perform the recovery action on yourself, increase the difficulty by two steps on the ladder.

Keep in mind that the circumstances have to be appropriately free of distraction and tension for you to make this roll in the first place—you're not going to clean and bandage a nasty cut while ogres are tramping through the caves looking for you. GMs, you've got the final judgement call.

If you succeed at the recovery action, or someone else succeeds on a recovery action for you, you get to rename the consequence aspect to show that it's in recovery. So, for example, Broken Leg could become Stuck in a Cast, Nearly Gutted aspect could be Bandaged, Scandalized could become Damage Control, and so on. This doesn't free up the consequence slot, but it serves as an indicator that you're recovering, and it changes the ways the aspect's going to be used while it remains.

Whether you change the consequence's name or not—and sometimes it might not make sense to do so—mark it with a star so that everyone remembers that recovery has started.

Then, you just have to wait the time.

For a mild consequence, you only have to wait one whole scene after the recovery action, and then you can remove the aspect and clear the slot.

For a moderate consequence, you have to wait one whole session after the recovery action (which means if you do the recovery action in the middle of a session, you should recover sometime in the middle of next session).

For a severe consequence, you have to wait one whole scenario after the recovery action.

Extreme Consequences

In addition to the normal set of mild, moderate, and severe consequences, every PC also gets one last-ditch option to stay in a fight—the extreme consequence. Between major milestones, you can only use this option once.

An extreme consequence will absorb up to 8-shifts of a hit, but at a very serious cost—you must replace one of your aspects (except the high concept, that's off limits) with the extreme consequence. That's right, an extreme consequence is so serious that taking it literally changes who you are.

Unlike other consequences, you can't make a recovery action to diminish an extreme consequence—you're stuck with it until your next major milestone. After that, you can rename the extreme consequence to reflect that you're no longer vulnerable to the worst of it, as long as you don't just switch it out for whatever your old aspect was. Taking an extreme consequence is a permanent character change; treat it as such.

Conceding the Conflict

When all else fails, you can also just give in. Maybe you're worried that you can't absorb another hit, or maybe you decide that continuing to fight is just not worth the punishment. Whatever the reason, you can interrupt any action at any time before the roll is made to declare that you concede the conflict. This is super-important—once dice hit the table, what happens happens, and you're either taking more stress, suffering more consequences, or getting taken out.

Concession gives the other person what they wanted from you, or in the case of more than two combatants, removes you as a concern for the opposing side. You're out of the conflict, period.

But it's not all bad. First of all, you get a fate point for choosing to concede. On top of that, if you've sustained any consequences in this conflict, you get an additional fate point for each consequence. These fate points may be used once this conflict is over.

Second of all, you get to avoid the worst parts of your fate. Yes, you lost, and the narration has to reflect that. But you can't use this privilege to undermine the opponent's victory, either—what you say happens has to pass muster with the group.

That can make the difference between, say, being mistakenly left for dead and ending up in the enemy's clutches, in shackles, without any of your stuff—the sort of thing that can happen if you're taken out instead. That's not nothing.

Getting Taken Out

If you don't have any stress or consequences left to buy off all the shifts of a hit, that means you're taken out.

Taken out is bad—it means not only that you can't fight any more, but that the person who took you out gets to decide what your loss looks

like and what happens to you after the conflict. Obviously, they can't narrate anything that's out of scope for the conflict (like having you die from shame), but that still gives someone else a lot of power over your character that you can't really do anything about.

Character Death

So, if you think about it, there's not a whole lot keeping someone from saying, after taking you out, that your character dies. If you're talking about a physical conflict where people are using nasty sharp weapons, it certainly seems reasonable that one possible outcome of defeat is your character getting killed.

In practice, though, this assumption might be pretty controversial depending on what kind of group you're in. Some people think that character death should always be on the table, if the rules allow it—if that's how the dice fall, then so be it.

Others are more circumspect, and consider it very damaging to their fun if they lose a character upon whom they've invested hours and hours of gameplay, just because someone spent a lot of fate points or their die rolls were particularly unlucky.

We recommend the latter approach, mainly for the following reason: most of the time, sudden character death is a pretty boring outcome when compared to putting the character through hell. On top of that, all the story threads that character was connected to just kind of stall with no resolution, and you have to expend a bunch of effort and time figuring out how to get a new character into play mid-stride.

That doesn't mean there's no room for character death in the game, however. We just recommend that you save that possibility for conflicts that are extremely pivotal, dramatic, and meaningful for that character—in other words, conflicts in which that character would knowingly and willingly risk

dying in order to win. Players and GMs, if you've got the feeling that you're in that kind of conflict, talk it out when you're setting the scene and see how people feel.

At the very least, even if you're in a hardcore group that invites the potential for character death on any taken out result, make sure that you telegraph the opponent's lethal intent. GMs, this is especially important for you, so the players will know which NPCs really mean business, and can concede to keep their characters alive if need be.

Movement

In a conflict, it's important to track where everyone is relative to one another, which is why we divide the environment where the conflict's taking place into zones. Where you have zones, you have people trying to move around in them in order to get at one another or at a certain objective.

Normally, it's no big deal to move from one zone to another—if there's nothing preventing you from doing so, you can move one zone in addition to your action for the exchange.

If you want to move more than one zone (up to anywhere else on the map), if a situation aspect suggests that it might be difficult to move freely, or if another character is in your way, then you must make an overcome action using Athletics to move. This counts as your action for the exchange.

GMs, just as with other overcome rolls, you'll set the difficulty. You might use the number of zones the character is moving or the situation aspects in the way as justification for how high you set passive opposition. If another character is impeding the path, roll active opposition and feel free to invoke obstructing situation aspects in aid of their defence.

If you fail that roll, whatever was impeding you

keeps you from moving. If you tie, you get to move, but your opponent takes a temporary advantage of some kind. If you succeed, you move without consequence. If you succeed with style, you can claim a boost in addition to your movement.

Vehicle/Monster Movement

Vehicles often become locked in combat, chasing each other around the Circus Maximus. The same is true of mounted beats such as dragons or riding wyverns. The combat may be moving forward at very high speed but that is not relevant to those involved.

The vehicles involved in the chase or the dogfight are stuck inside the same zone with each other, even as the world streaks past at high speed.

Moving out and away from the zone occupied by a dogfight or chase is the same mechanic as moving zones.

Tactical Map Movement

Tactical maps can be drawn by hand, created with GIMP or similar image processing software and printed out on the computer or purchased.

A map could represent anything from a small area around a castle, to a wide expanse of forest. Any map can be used and movement is determined freely in any direction.

Features that provide cover, impede movement, or impose any other kind of modifier are marked on the map. These include things like battlements and trees.

Advantages in a Conflict

Remember that aspects you create as advantages follow all the rules for situation aspects—the GM can use them to justify overcome actions, they last until they're made irrelevant or the scene is over, and in some

cases they represent as much a threat to you as an opponent.

When you create an advantage in a conflict, think about how long you want that aspect to stick around and whom you want to have access to it. It's difficult for anyone besides you and your friends to justify using an advantage you stick to a character, but it's also easier to justify getting rid of it—one overcome action could undo it. It's harder to justify getting rid of an aspect on the environment (seriously, who is going to move that Huge Bookcase you just knocked over?), but anyone in the scene could potentially find a reason to take advantage of it.

Covering Fire
When you're trying to prevent someone else from getting attacked, the main way to do it is by creating an advantage. You can pass your buddy the invocation and make it harder to hit them.

You could also put yourself directly between the attack and the intended target, such that the bad guy has to get through you to get to your buddy. Then you're just defending as normal and taking the stress and consequences yourself.

If you want to defend other people without directly interposing yourself between them and the attack, you'll need a stunt.

In terms of options for advantages, the sky's the limit. Pretty much any situational modifier you can think of can be expressed as an advantage. If you're stuck for an idea, here are some examples:

Temporary Blinding: Throwing sand or salt in the enemy's eyes is a classic action staple. This places a Blinded aspect on a target, which could require them to get rid of the aspect with an overcome action before doing anything dependent on sight. Blinded might also present opportunities for a compel, so keep in mind that your opponent can take advantage of this to

replenish fate points.

Disarming: You knock an opponent's weapon away, disarming them until they can recover it. The target will need an overcome action to recover their weapon.

Positioning: There are a lot of ways to use advantages to represent positioning, like High Ground or Cornered, which you can invoke to take advantage of that positioning as context demands.

Winded and Other Minor Hurts: Some strikes in a fight are debilitating because they're painful, rather than because they cause injury. Nerve hits, groin shots, and a lot of other "dirty fighting" tricks fall into this category. You can use an advantage to represent these, sticking your opponent with Pain-Blindness or Stunned or whatever, then following up with an attack that exploits the aspect to do more lasting harm.

Taking Cover: You can use advantages to represent positions of cover and invoke them for your defense. This can be as general as Found Some Cover or as specific as Behind the Big Oak Bar.

Altering the Environment: You can use advantages to alter the environment to your benefit, creating barriers to movement by scattering Loose Junk everywhere, or setting things On Fire.

Other Actions in a Conflict
As stated above, you may find yourself in a situation where you want to do something else while your friends are fighting. You might be disarming a death trap, searching for a piece of information, or checking for hidden assailants.

In order to do this, GMs, set the player up with a modified form of challenge. One of the tasks is likely "defend yourself"—in any exchange where someone attacks you or tries to create an

advantage on you, you must defend successfully in order to be able to take one of the other actions in the challenge. So long as no one has successfully attacked you or stuck an advantage on you, you can use your action to roll for one of the challenge goals.

Free Actions

Sometimes it just makes sense that your character is doing something else in conjunction with or as a step toward their action in an exchange. You quick-draw a weapon before you use it, you shout a warning before you kick in a door, or you quickly size up a room before you attack. These little bits of action are colourful description more than anything else, meant to add atmosphere to the scene.

Ending a Conflict

Under most circumstances, when all of the members of one side have either conceded the conflict or have been taken out, the conflict is over.

GMs, once you know a conflict has definitively ended, you can pass out all the fate points earned from concession. Players, take the fate points for when your aspects were invoked against you, make a note of whatever consequences you suffered in the fight, and erase any checks in your stress boxes.

Transitioning to a Contest or Challenge
You may find yourself in a conflict scene where the participants are no longer interested in or willing to harm one another, because of some change in the circumstances. If that happens, and there's still more to resolve, you can transition straight into a contest or challenge as you need. In that case, hold off on awarding the end-of-conflict fate points and whatnot until you've also resolved the contest or challenge.

As an example, a PC manages to get a vault door open so the three members of the party can escape an endless horde of temple guardians.

They all decide to run and try to lose them.

Now, the guardians and the PCs have mutually opposing goals but can't harm one another, so now it's a contest. Instead of running the next exchange, the GM just starts setting up for the chase.

Even though the PCs may have some consequences and are due some fate points, they won't get them until after we find out if they can get away, or if they get caught.

Teamwork

Characters can help each other out on actions. There are two versions of helping in Fate—combining skills, for when you are all putting the same kind of effort into an action (like using Physique together to push over a crumbling wall), and stacking advantages, for when the group is setting a single person up to do well (like causing multiple distractions so one person can use Stealth to get into a fortress).

When you combine skills, figure out who has the highest skill level among the participants. Each other participant who has at least an Average (+1) in the same skill adds a +1 to the highest person's skill level, and then only the lead character rolls. So if you have three helpers and you're the highest, you roll your skill level with a +3 bonus.

If you fail a roll to combine skills, all of the participants share in the potential costs—whatever complication affects one character affects all of them, or everyone has to take consequences. Alternatively, you can impose a cost that affects all the characters the same.

When you stack advantages, each person takes a create an advantage action as usual, and gives whatever free invocations they get to a single character. Remember that multiple free invocations from the same aspect can stack.
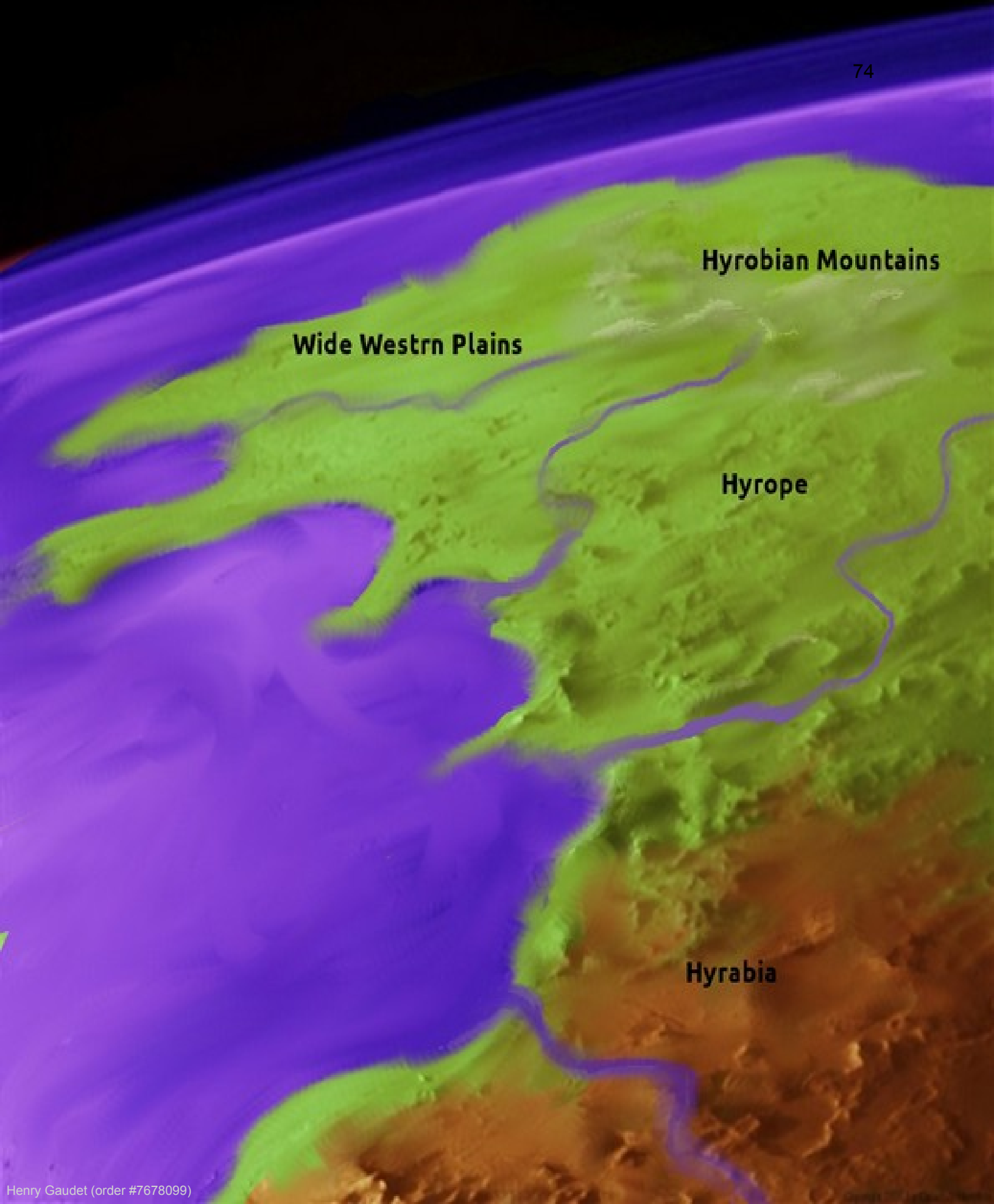
Hyrobian Mountains

Wide Westrn Plains

Hyrope

Hyrabia

World Guide

Now it's time to take a look at the world that the player characters will be adventuring in. Some gamemasters prefer to keep all of this information secret. The game master then dolls out the information as the players encounter it.

Let's start by exploring the continent of Hyrope, where the game is set. Looking at the realms in alphabetical order by species leads us to start with the dwarves.

Dwarven Kingdoms

The lands of the dwarves may not look very extensive when seen on maps of the surface of the Realms land mass, there seem to be just a handful of realms on high, rocky infertile and mountainous ground, all isolated from each other, landlocked and surrounded, but this impression is deceptive.

In fact, the dwarven realms extend far underground and some are so big that they actually have underground borders with each other. The food source for these underground kingdoms is giant fungi. There are huge underground caves full of huge fields of giant mushrooms underground, and they are the dwarves' most jealously guarded treasure. They are constantly under attack by the wild and gigantic creatures of the pits.

Dwarven architecture consists of strengthening the tunnels, left behind by the burrowing of the great worms, with columns and gantries of stone. They build defensive walls across the tunnels and excavating large complexes of corridors and rooms into the tunnel sides, some of them as big as, or bigger than human cities. Natural caverns are given over to mushroom cultivation, but the most precious chambers are lava pits, these are given a false floor with wells and plunge holes, and water is diverted here into pools, to make the famous dwarven smithies.

Dwarves do not have complete control of this subterranean realm however, there are chasms and crevasses down to deeper darker levels that the dwarves can not seal up or cover, no matter how hard they try.

From these cracks, terrible monsters come, orcs, kobolds, earth elements, and the giant kings and queens of the underworld, and their baleful titans.

There are also cracks that connect to the above ground world, but in undead and unholy places. These are shunned by the dwarves, and marked by signs in Dwarvish.

Rock Home

This is the powerful dwarven realm located below the Dragon's Teeth mountain range. It shares borders above ground with several human, elven, halfling and mixed lands. Under ground it borders Smithhammer, another equally powerful dwarven realm, and has well defended borders with other less wholesome undead, orc and baleful titan kingdoms.

Fairy Realms

The most powerful of the underworld peoples are the fairy, who although they have one name, are more than one people.

Fairy Queen's Realm

The realm of the fairy queen is the most enchanted in all of the fairy realms. Magic use is very common here, with everyone born within the realm's border having at least one innate magical power.

The entire surface fairy realm, small as it is, is forested. Although their real lands are below in the underworld. There is only one city, and that has many Parks. The court of the fairy queen however is not in the city, it is in a giant tree house in the deepest darkest centre of the realm.

The queen exercises her power in a very informal way, people contact her for advice, send her presents, and treat her as the ultimate authority in the realm, although she insists her position isn't formal. She claims her title of queen is more of a nickname, and says she could be replaced at any time, if anyone wanted the bother of doing what she does.

The Forest of the Fee

The fee are a type of fairy folk who have a reputation for being unpredictable and vindictive. They also prefer larger, more powerful manifestations than some of their more playful brethren.

Cloud City

This is a city using magic to hover above the landscape. It is ruled by the fairy folk, but humanoids also live there. It doesn't actually hover as high as the clouds, and can be reached via ladders and gantries from a settlement below.

Elven Kingdoms

The elves rule the areas away from the roads. Their domains are the hidden forest valleys and high grassy plains. These kingdoms are no less sophisticated because of their remote locations however.

Their cities are designed to be open, and have tall, vaulted architecture that is the true envy of Hyrope. Elves are long lived, compared to the other peoples of the world, and their kings and queens tend to stay in power for periods measured in centuries, and this lends a certain continuity and stability to elven politics and geographical borders. Treaties about land hold for longer and wars over resources are less frequent among the elves.

This stability brings prosperity with it and the elves are rich. They are the best customers for light and strong dwarven armour and weapons. They are virtually the only customers who can afford the very best military weapons and armour. Some say this stability and prosperity makes the elves a little conservative however, even boring. The last new elven poem was written hundreds of years ago for example.

The theatre groups of the elven woods are justly famous, and they set up in the woods just outside human towns, halfling mounds and dwarven mountains. The locals then come to see the shows for a week or so, before the elves move on.

After the fall of the Lizardeen, it was the elves who were first to create an empire across the surface of almost the entire planet. That empire is broken and fragmented now, overpowered in many places by younger human kingdoms. The eleven powers are still the richest and most rich in magic of the surface people though, and they can wait for the period of human expansion to pass.

Quanar

A powerful elven realm in a long valley leading right up to the Dragon's Teeth. This gives them a border with the dwarven realm of Rock Home, with who they trade food and timber for weapons.

The Elves or the Darkest Dell

These elves were once the predominant power on the continent. The whole land mass was ruled from one city, in a deep dark valley, in a deep dark wood. The influence of this mighty empire is still felt, for example in language. Although Human is starting to supplant Elvish across Hyrope as a lingua franca, it is still High Elvish that is used as a language of diplomacy, learning, religious thought, and the writing of magical formula.

The Silver Bark Elves

This nation is very numerous, for elves, and is one of the most welcoming to non elven members. Dwarven artisans provide their weapons and armour, humans negotiate good trade deals and charge into battle for them,

Halflings provide their wine and entertainment, and the elves of the nation provide their eerily accurate archery, convoluted strategies and deep, dark magics. They are a hungry nation, who want to stamp their unique camaraderie on the continent. Many are predicting that they will soon take over from the Central Empire as the most powerful force in Hyrope. Of course soon can mean thousands of years according to the glacial pace of change among elves.

Halfling Realms

Halfling powers are relatively small as a rule, few of them meriting titles more exalted than a dukedom or principality. There are a few exceptions though.

High Borealis

A realm in the far north, which is under halfling government, but has as many of the other peoples living within its borders too. The country is infested with giants. Giants and High Borealis are so well connected in the minds of the peoples of nearby countries that giants are sometimes called Borealans by common folk.

Mounds of Merriton

This is a very large halfling settlement. The largest mounds are as big as any human castle, dwarven chamber or elven tree hall.

Hyrope

Western Plains

High Borealis

Hyrobian Mountains

Cloud City

Forest of the Fee

Twin Empire

Mounds of Merriton

Maranay

Maranarian Sea

Stormharbour

Silver Bark Elves

Central Empire

Darkest Dell

Neokarnia

Quanar

Smithhammer

Rock Home

Lower Faringdon

Dragon's Teeth

The Badlands

Vinarea

Hyrabia

Haradad

Dragon's Claws

Gagazan

Human Realms
The realms of the humans are the most expansive and most populace of any species. They are also very cosmopolitan. One of the strengths of human culture is that it welcomes immigration.

The Central Empire
This is the most powerful force across Hyrope. It considers itself predominantly human, though the actual proportion of humans is nearer to fifty percent, but there is no xenophobia, or racism there, and members of other species can rise to positions of power and influence.

The Free City of Haradad
One of the major powers in the area around a feature called the Dragon's Claws. The free city has become very wealthy as a staging post for the distribution of gold taken from griffin nests.

Vinarea
This is a city located at the centre of a lagoon on the coast of Vinaremo. Vinaremo is a country providing one of the precious few safe harbours on the coastal circuit taken by the never-ending trade ships.

Lower Faringdon
This is a principality in southern Hyrope. It has a small sliver of coastline, and the rest of the country is like a long corridor stretching into the continent.

Stormharbour
A coastal city on the rough Tanamarian Sea. Though theoretically a free city, Stormharbour is in actuality a possession of Maranay, a small realm, but wealthy, and Stormharbour is the centre of Maranarian trade. A large proportion of the local exports and imports go through the docks here.

Borderlands
The borderlands are the countries along the mountains to the east, and the desert to the south that separates Hyrope from the other three corners of one giant continent.

The southern borderlands tend to be very hot and arid. The houses of the wealthy are built around fountains and have channels of water running through them to bring cooling and humidity.

These areas are plagued by skeletons bleached and become restless in the sun, the deserts are strewn with them, the relics of countless ancient battles. The great power in the area is Fortura. This country is very advanced, benefiting from the best Hyrope has to offer, and many advances brought by visitors from the south.

The eastern borderlands on the other hand tend to be cold and dark for most of the year. Snowfall is heavy and regular and there are also great problems with vampires and other undead, who love the long nights and lack of running water.

Summer is traditionally vampire hunting season, and winters are a time of fear. The most dominant power in the east is the Twin Empire, formed by the uniting of two already formidable empires over a thousand years ago. Their emblem is a two headed eagle and they are one of the great powers vying for control across Hyrope.
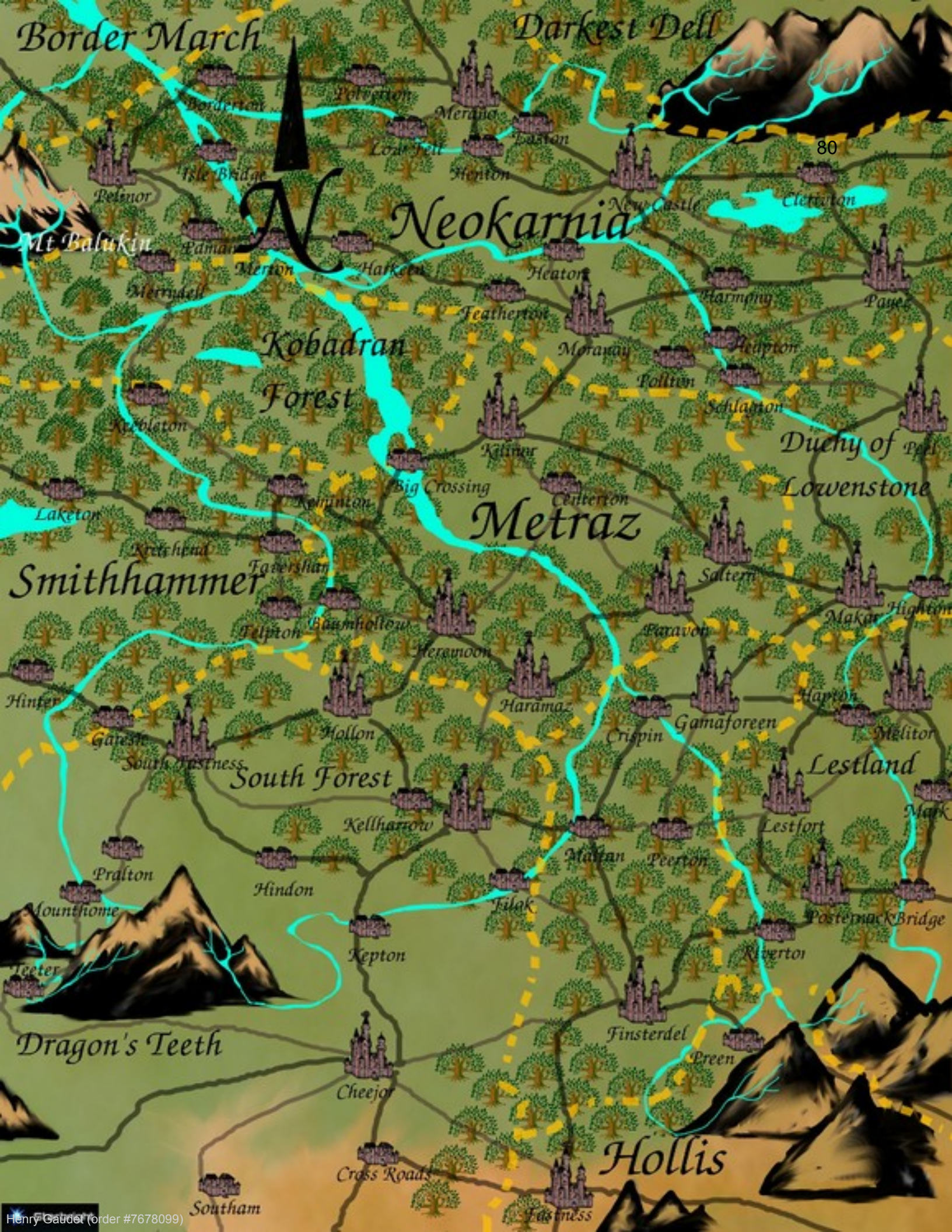
The Wilds

These are the areas that have not been subdued enough to have a border drawn around them by any humanoid species.

The Underworld

Below the lands trodden by most humanoids, even below the dwarven halls and the lands of the fee, are descending spheres, each controlled by a different form of life.

The first sphere is the hidden world of the undead. Then brave adventurers who manage to delve even deeper will find sphere after sphere of heat, flames and gateways to other realities. The creatures that come through these gateways and inhabit these spheres are often called demons and are thought of as evil.

The Badlands

This is a southern desert well known to be full of deserted cities and terrible monsters. It was once a hub of lizardeen society, bit the lizardeen caused some kind of environmental damage known to tales of prehistory as 'the scorching'. Their cities remained but the lizardeen themselves are just one band of desert nomads among many now.

Law Enforcement

Most of the continent is wilderness and dungeon, where the law of the jungle holds sway. Cities, on the other hand, are held together by a code of laws. Some laws and customs are somewhat universal.

Religion

It is common, in terms of religion, to adopt the local habits. So a human who lives in a predominantly dwarven community, for example, might well follow the local dwarven religion, especially if their family has been among that community for more than a generation. This means that although some gods are referred to as a god of a specific species, this does not mean that only members of that species will be found among the worshippers.

Set

The worship of some gods is a throwback to a primeval period, now long forgotten. These ancient, and often strange, gods are mostly inherited from the creatures who once shared the primeval swamps, and grassy plains with humans. These gods are brutal and jealous creatures, who are not above appearing in person (if you can say 'in person' about these gibbering inhuman things) to forward their aims.

These gods are usually savage and unthinking beasts, uninterested in the humans, whose energies they feed on. These ancient gods include a certain animal god called Set. Set is the focus of a snake worshipping cult that is growing in power as the other primitive animal cults decline. Set was always the most powerful of the animal cults and has now joined the big leagues. During this epoch it gains self awareness and starts organising its cultists to spread its worship and increase its power. It can't seem to wean itself off human sacrifice in the same way as some of the other gods however.

The Horned One

Another ancient god with a powerful body covered in horns, worshipped primarily by magician's apes. The God loves its ape worshippers and often grants them enormous powers to attack other species. It creates demi ape gods almost indiscriminately and also grows wild apes to enormous size.

Gnashing Teeth

This god is a physical entity within a pit in the largest and deepest orc warren. It is also the gateway to a pocket universe that it taps to provide its power. The god provides the warrens with defences of powerful earth elementals and tolerates the orcs that replaced its lizardperson

worshippers because they bring it tasty sacrifices.

Fee

The most powerful religion in the Fairy Realm is the worship of chaos, called Fee by the fairy folk. The realm's chaotic, but basically good, ruler encourages the religion, and discourages lawful religions, especially where a single god or goddess is worshipped according to a strict set of rules.

Many fairy folk, and some humanoid worshippers too, carry a deck of Fee cards, and no two decks are exactly alike. The decks are used for predicting the future, to help in making decisions, conflict resolution, agreeing the terms of a business deal, and many other purposes.

There is even a school of magic in the Fairy Realm that has found a way to bind powerful magic into a deck of cards. The card mage simply draws a card, to have that effect happen. The card that the mage draws is random, but his intent is not.

A card can be drawn with one of the following intents, or another intent entirely.

Hurting – The card is drawn to deal with an adversary, and the card will channel its power in this direction. Great care must be taken when doing this, because the cards can kill.

Healing – The card is drawn to help a person who is sick, wounded or otherwise not feeling Hale and hearty.

Moving – The card is drawn with the intention of moving personally, or moving an object nearby.

Entertaining – The card is drawn to provide entertainment, which is seen as one of the primary purposes by the fairy folk inventors of this style of magic.

For example if the thunder eagle card is drawn, it might hurt by calling down a lightning strike on the victim. It might heal by donating a feather to be brewed into a healing potion. It will offer a ride on its back as movement. And call up a great storm with lightning like fireworks to entertain.

Human Gods

With the humans in the ascendancy for the last few hundred years, worship of human gods has never been so popular, they are seen as strong gods at the moment, although the elven gods are also strong, and seen as their main rivals in the tiffs and falling outs that gods are prone to.

Dragon King of the Sea

The Dragon King of the Sea is an eastern god, who most often takes human form, but will become a dragon when riled.

Droo – God of the woods

Droo is thought of as the father of the pantheon of human gods, after all the land mass of Hyrope is still 80% forested.

The Lich King

The fist human to try to spite the gods was Alamaar Aneen. His challenge came many years ago when the numbers of the gods had been reduced after battling titans. He killed a god with his own hands, and seemed to take delight in it.

He was eventually defeated, but returned thousands of years later as a Lich King at the head of the greatest undead army that the Realms has ever seen. He was defeated again, but whether he was really killed is a subject of much theological debate. He has become both a god and a devil, worshipped and feared.

Raganaar – Goddess of Battle

Battle and war is a stressful experience for all involved and, although Raganaar is popular with warriors seeking to hide their fear and overcome it, she is also invoked by civilians, who are after

all often the ones who suffer the most during times of war. Raganaar must be placated with sacrifices, and kept contended and docile, because if she becomes displeased, war will stalk the land.

Halfling Gods
The halflings worship Silver Moon, the second moon in the sky over Hyrope.

Silver Moon
This deity is a quiet god that doesn't require much attention or bother, and worshipping it suits the relaxed ways of many halfling communities.

Dwarven Gods
Dwarven gods tend to be grim faced, and even their trickster god doesn't smile much.

Bearded Gaziantep
This god is a huge dwarf with a giant beard. He is the inventor of the special dwarven processes for embedding magic in the items they forge. His statue is in every forge across the planet.

Shroom
This is a trickster god, a tall thin being with leathery skin like a mushroom. This god must be appeased, or the edible fungus harvest will go hallucinogenic. Many adventurous dwarves value shroom's powers of deception and seek out his visions.

Elven Gods
Elven gods are complex, and the ways of their worship are sometimes hard to explain to outsiders. One saying goes that if you can explain how you are worshipping, then you aren't doing it right.

The Storyteller
Many elves believe that the world is not real, but that it is instead just a very good story. The storyteller is an ancient elf, whose sex name and whereabouts have become lost to remembering, but they must still be there telling their story.

The Red Elf
This is the elven devil, a very powerful demon who demands the sacrifice of thousands of barrels or red wine every year. Every barrel short, he will collect in blood.

Sport
Sport is an important part of life in the Realms of Hyrope.

Canes
This is a sport popular across Hyrope involving teams of horsemen who hurl javelins made of cane at one another. These are not lethal, and the aim is to dodge or deflected with the shield. Like many Magic Realms sports, it is also good training for battle.

Quarterstaves
The quarterstaff is seen as one of the noblest weapons by many of the people of Hyrope, and fighting techniques for all other melee weapons are said to derive from it. Gladiatorial 'prize playing' bouts between exponents of the quarterstaff can attract huge crowds, and skilled combatants are often local celebrities.

Societies and Orders
Organisations banding together for protection against the dangers of the world, are very common in the realms. Over the endless stretches of Hyropean history, a lot of different organisations have sprung up and although some die out again, some ancient ones have survived from various long-ago times.

Magic User's Organisations
Magic is everywhere, and although magicians tend to be jealous loners, some seem to be attracted to the security and support they can find by banding together.

The Universities

The primary organisation of magic users across Hyrope is the magical university system. There are universities in many great cities, and others tucked away in hidden corners and obscure towns, and they all try to stay on more or less friendly terms with each other.

The Druideen

A group of magic users, who have a deep respect for the forests of the great continent, and also see themselves as their guardians.

The Scholars

This is a warrior order dedicated to preserving the writing of the ancients. Their based are huge libraries of esoteric knowledge and they prefer to speak an obscure and ancient Elvish among themselves. They tend to be conservative, and are against newfangled devices like plate armour and longswords.

The Rangers

The rangers are an organisation that is doing a job too large to be funded by any one country alone. They are protecting the borders and trade routes used by humanoids, from the predations of monsters, dragons and the undead.

They are an egalitarian order who do not have any staff doing administrative tasks. They have only field agents who claim the resources they need directly from any nearby military or civilian settlement they can find, or they simply fend for themselves in the wilderness.

Although rangers do not have ranks like a conventional military, they do have a system of honorific titles. These include, 'giant killer', and 'dragon slayer' and are all based on activities actually accomplished in the field against the enemies of the humanoids.

These titles do not bestow authority, as they recognise that sometimes even the bravest giant slayer is not the ranger that should be making strategic decisions.

Instead they try to be as democratic as possible in small gatherings, and very occasionally large meetings.

The Weaponed

There is an organisation dedicated to vigilante activity against organised crime across the whole continent, not just in Hyrope. They employ magicians to help gather information, and many learn magic themselves, but primarily their focus is physically laying hands on bad guys and meeting out rough justice.

RUNNING THE GAME

If you're the gamemaster, then your job is a little different from everyone else's.

Judge the Use of the Rules

It's your job to make most of the moment-to-moment decisions about what's legit and what's not regarding the rules. Most often, you're going to decide when something in the game deserves a roll, what type of action that is (overcome, attack, etc.) and how difficult that roll is. In conflicts, this can get a little more complicated, like determining if a situation aspect should force someone to make an overcome action, or deciding whether or not a player can justify a particular advantage they're trying to create.

You also judge the appropriateness of any invocations or compels that come up during play, like we talked about in the Aspects and Fate Points chapter, and make sure that everyone at the table is clear on what's going on. With invocations, this is pretty easy—as long as the player can explain why the aspect is relevant, you're good to go. With compels, it can get a little more complicated, because you need to articulate precisely what complication the player is agreeing to.

Narrating the Action

There is a bubble of action around every player, and the gamemaster must make the action interesting for every player, and give each something significant to do.

Create Scenarios

You're also responsible for making all of the stuff that the PCs encounter and react to in the game. That not only includes NPCs with skills and aspects, but it also includes the aspects on scenes, environments, and objects, as well as the dilemmas and challenges that make up a scenario.

Types of Aspects

There are a few different kinds of aspects: game aspects, character aspects, situation aspects, consequences, and boosts. They mainly differ from one another in terms of what they're attached to and how long they last.

Game Aspects

Game aspects are permanent fixtures of the game, hence the name. While they might change over time, they're never going to go away. If you've already gone through game creation, you've already defined these—the current or impending issues that you came up with. They describe problems or threats that exist in the world, which are going to be the basis for your game's story.

Everyone can invoke, compel, or create an advantage on a game aspect at any time; they're always there and available for anyone's use.

Situation Aspects

A situation aspect is temporary, intended to last only for a single scene or until it no longer makes sense (but no longer than a session, at most). Situation aspects can be attached to the environment the scene takes place in—which affects everybody in the scene—but you can also attach them to specific characters by targeting them when you create an advantage.

Situation aspects describe significant features of the circumstances the characters are dealing with in a scene. That includes:

   Physical features of the environment (Dense Underbrush, Obscuring Snowdrifts).
   Positioning or placement (In the Trees, Backyard).
   Immediate obstacles (Burning Barn, Tricky Lock, Yawning Chasm).
   Contextual details that are likely to come into play (Disgruntled Townsfolk).
   Sudden changes in a character's status (Sand in the Eyes, Disarmed, Cornered, Covered in

Slime).

Who can use a situation aspect depends a lot on narrative context—sometimes it'll be very clear, and sometimes you'll need to justify how you're using the aspect to make sense based on what's happening in the scene. GMs, you're the final arbiter on what claims on an aspect are valid.

Sometimes situation aspects become obstacles that characters need to overcome. Other times they give you justification to provide active opposition against someone else's action.
Consequences

A consequence is more permanent than a situation aspect, but not quite as permanent as a character aspect. They're a special kind of aspect you take in order to avoid getting taken out in a conflict, and they describe lasting injuries or problems that you take away from a conflict (Dislocated Shoulder, Bloody Nose, Social Pariah).

Consequences stick around for a variable length of time, from a few scenes to a scenario or two, depending on how severe they are. Because of their negative phrasing, you're likely to get compelled a lot when you have them, and anyone who can justifiably benefit from the consequence can invoke it or create an advantage on it.
Boosts

Boosts are a super-transient kind of aspect. You get a boost when you're trying to create an advantage but don't succeed well enough, or as an added benefit to succeeding especially well at an action. You get to invoke them for free, but as soon as you do, the aspect goes away.

If you want, you can also allow another character to invoke your boost, if it's relevant and could help them out.

SITUATION ASPECTS ARE YOUR FRIEND

When you're trying to figure out if there's a good reason to ask the PCs to make an overcome roll, look at the aspects on your scene. If the existence of the aspect suggests some trouble or problem for the PC, call for an overcome roll. If not, and you can't think of an interesting consequence for failure, don't bother.

For example, if a character is trying to sprint quickly across a room, and you have a situation aspect like Cluttered Floors, it makes sense to ask for a roll before they can move. If there is no such aspect, just let them make the move and get on to something more interesting.

Difficulty Levels

Setting a difficulty low is mainly about showcasing a PC's awesomeness, letting them shine in a particular moment and reminding us why this character is in the spotlight. You can also set lower difficulties during periods when you know the PCs are low on fate points, giving them the chance to take compels in order to get more. You should also set lower difficulties on anything that's in the way of the PC's getting to the main action of a scene—you don't want them to get stalled at the evil overlord's drawbridge if the point of the scene is confronting the evil overlord!

Finally, some actions should take lower difficulties by default, especially if no one's contesting or resisting them. Unopposed efforts to create advantages in a conflict should never be harder than Average (+1) or Fair (+2), and neither should attempts to put an aspect on an object or location. Remember that opposition doesn't have to always take the form of an NPC getting in the way—if the evil mastermind has hidden the evidence in his office away from prying eyes, you might consider that a form of opposition, even though the mastermind might not be physically present.

If the PCs are overflowing in fate points, or it's a crucial moment in the story when someone's life

is on the line, or the fate of many is at stake, or they're finally going against foes that they've been building up to for a scenario or two, feel free to raise difficulties across the board. You should also raise difficulties to indicate when a particular opponent is extremely prepared for the PCs, or to reflect situations that aren't ideal—if the PC's are not prepared, or don't have the right tools for the job, or are in a time crunch, etc.

Setting the difficulty right at the PC's skill level is, as you might imagine, sort of a middle ground between these two extremes. Do this when you want some tension without turning things up to 11, or when the odds are slightly in the PC's favour but you want a tangible element of risk.

You might also try using "out of place" difficulties to indicate the presence of unanswered questions during the game—for some odd reason, the stable you're trying to break into has an Epic (+7) lock on the door. What could be so important in there that you don't know about?

Or maybe you're trying to finish the famed initiation test of the scholastic Amethyst Order, and the test is only a Fair (+2) Lore roll—what's the deal? Are they going easy on you? Is your appointment a political necessity? Who pulled the strings on that? Or is it just that the reputation of the Order's scholars is a fabrication?

Dealing with Extraordinary Success
Sometimes, a PC is going to roll far in excess of the difficulty, getting a lot of shifts on the roll. Some of the basic actions already have a built-in effect for rolling really well, like hitting harder on a good attack roll.

You want to make sure those extra shift results have some kind of meaning and reflect how competent the PC's are.

Here are a few choice options.
Go Gonzo with the Narration: It might seem superfluous, but it's important to celebrate a great roll with a suitable narration of over the top success. This is a great time to take the suggestions above for Making Failure Awesome and applying them here. Let the success affect something else, in addition to what the PC was going for, and bring the player into the process of selling it by prompting them to make up cool details. "Three extra shifts on that Burglary roll—tell me, is anyone ever going to be able to lock that crypt again?" "So you got five shifts on that Contacts roll—tell me, where does Nicky the Fink usually go when he's running out on his wife, and what do you say when you find him there?"

Add an Aspect: You can express additional effects of a good roll by placing an aspect on the PC or on the scene, essentially letting them create an advantage for free. "So your Resources roll to bribe the guard succeeded with four shifts. She'll let you through the gate all right, and she'll also act as Available Backup if you should need some help later."

Reducing Time: If it's important to get something done fast, then you can use extra shifts to decrease the time that it takes to do an action.

Discovery vs Creation
From the player's point of view, there's almost no way to know what you've made up beforehand and what you're inventing in the moment, especially if you're the kind of GM who doesn't display or consult any notes at the table. Thus, when a player tries to discover something you haven't made up yet, you can treat it as if they were making a new aspect or story detail. If they succeed, they find what they're looking for. If they fail, you can use what they were looking for as inspiration to help you come up with the real information.

If you're really comfortable with improvising, this means that you can come to the table with very

little prepared beforehand, and let the players' reactions and questions build everything for you. You may need to ask some prompting questions first, to narrow down the scope of what information the player's looking for, but after that, the sky's the limit.

Looking over the skill descriptions, you might notice that there are a few places where we give an abstraction for something that in real life depends on precise measurement. Physique and Resources are strong examples—many people who are into strength training have some idea of how much weight they can dead lift, and people spend specific amounts of money from a finite pool when they buy things.

So how much can a character with Great (+4) Physique bench press? How much can a character with Fair (+2) Resources spend before going broke?

The truth is, we have no idea, and we're reluctant to pursue a specific answer.

Though it may seem counter-intuitive, we find that creating minutiae like that detracts from the verisimilitude of the game in play. As soon as you establish a detail like, "Great Physique can dead lift a car for five seconds," then you're cutting out a lot of the variability that real life allows. Adrenaline and other factors allow people to reach beyond their normal physical limits or fall short of them—you can't factor every one of those things in without having it take up a large amount of focus at the table. It becomes a thing for people to discuss and even argue about, rather than participating in the scene.

It's also boring. If you decide that a Fair (+2) Resources can buy anything that's 200 gold pieces or less, then you've removed a great deal of potential for tension and drama. Suddenly, every time you have a Resources-based problem, it's going to hinge on the question of whether or not the cost is 200 gold pieces, rather than whatever the point of the scene is. It also turns everything into a simple pass/fail situation, which means you don't really have a good reason to roll the skill at all. And again, this is not realistic—when people spend money, it's not about the raw dollar amount as much as it is a question of what someone can presently afford.

Remember, a skill roll is a narrative tool, meant to answer the following question: "Can I solve X problem using Y means, right now?" When you get an unexpected result, use your sense of realism and drama to explain and justify it, using our guidelines above. "Oh, you failed that Resources roll to bribe the guard? Guess you spent just a bit more at the tavern last night than you thought... wait, why is your belt pouch gone? And who's that shady character walking a little too quickly just past the line of guards? Did he just wink at you? That bastard... now what do you do?"

NPCs

First of all, keep in mind that you're never obligated to give any NPC a full sheet like the ones the PCs have. Most of the time, you're not going to need to know that much information, because the NPCs aren't going to be the center of attention like the PCs are. It's better to focus on writing down exactly what you need for that NPC's encounter with the PCs, and then fill in the blanks on the fly (just like PCs can) if that NPC ends up becoming more important in the campaign.
The NPC Types

NPCs come in three different flavors: nameless NPCs, supporting NPCs, and main NPCs.

Nameless NPCs
The majority of the NPCs in your campaign world are nameless—people who are so insignificant to the story that the PCs interactions with them don't even require them to learn a name. The random shopkeeper they pass on the

street, the archivist at the library, the third patron from the left at the bar, the guards at the gate. Their role in the story is temporary and fleeting—the PCs will probably encounter them once and never see them again. In fact, most of the time, you'll create them simply out of reflex when you describe an environment. "The plaza is beautiful at midday, and full of shoppers milling about. There's a town crier with an extremely shrill, high-pitched voice barking out the local news."

On their own, nameless NPCs usually aren't meant to provide much of a challenge to the PCs. You use them like you use a low-difficulty skill roll, mainly as an opportunity to showcase the PCs' competence. In conflicts, they serve as a distraction or a delay, forcing the PCs to work a little harder to get what they want.
Action-adventure stories often feature master villains with an army of mooks. These are the mooks.

For a nameless NPC, all you really need is two or three skills based on their role in the scene. Your average security guard might have Fight and Shoot, while your average clerk might only have Lore. They never get more than one or two aspects, because they just aren't important enough. They only have one or two stress boxes, if any, to absorb both physical and mental hits. In other words, they're no match for a typical PC.

Nameless NPCs come in three varieties: Average, Fair, and Good.

Average
Competence: Rank-and-file order-takers, local conscripts, and the like. When in doubt, a nameless NPC is Average.
Purpose: Mostly there to make the PCs look more awesome.
Aspects: One or two.
Skills: One or two Average (+1).
Stress: No stress boxes—a one shift hit is enough to take them out.

Fair
Competence: Trained professionals, like soldiers and elite guards, or others whose role in the scene speaks to their experience, such as a sharp-tongued courtier or talented thief.
Purpose: Drain a few of the players' resources (one or two fate points, stress boxes, possibly a mild consequence).
Aspects: One or two.
Skills: One Fair (+2), and one or two Average (+1).
Stress: One stress box—a two shift hit is enough to take them out.

Good
Competence: Tough opposition, especially in numbers.
Purpose: Drain the players' resources—as Fair, but more so. Provide a decent stumbling block (in numbers) on the way to a more significant encounter.
Aspects: One or two.
Skills: One Good (+3), one Fair (+2), and one or two Average (+1).
Stress: Two stress boxes—a three shift hit is enough to take them out.

Nameless NPCs as Obstacles:
An easy way to handle nameless NPCs is simply to treat them as obstacles: Give a difficulty for the PC to overcome whatever threat the NPC presents, and just do it in one roll. You don't even have to write anything down, just set a difficulty according to the guidelines in this chapter and Actions and Outcomes, and assume that the PC gets past on a successful roll.

If the situation is more complicated than that, make it a challenge instead. This trick is useful when you want a group of nameless NPCs more as a feature of the scene than as individuals.

For example, to convince a group of research scientists that continuing their research into Nanotechnology Atomic Reactors will doom

them all, and possibly a good-size chunk of the sprawl. The steps of this challenge are: establish your bona fides (Lore), turn them against each other (Deceive), and cow them into submission by preaching doom and gloom (Provoke). The GM chooses a passive opposition of Great (+4) for the challenge.

NPC First, Name Later
Nameless NPCs don't have to remain nameless. If the players decide to get to know that barkeep or town crier or security chief or whatever, go ahead and make a real person out of them—but that doesn't mean that you need to make them any more mechanically complex. If you want to, of course, go ahead and promote them to a supporting NPC. But otherwise, simply giving that courtier a name and a motivation doesn't mean he can't go down in one punch.

Bar-Keeper (Average)
Aspects: I Don't Want No Trouble in My Place
Skills: Average (+1) Contacts

Trained Thug (Fair)
Aspects: The Ways of the Streets, Violent Criminal
Skills: Fair (+2) Fight, Average (+1) Athletics and Physique

Mage (Good)
Aspects: Haughty Demeanor, Devoted to the Arcane Arts
Skills: Good (+3) Magic, Fair (+2) Deceive, Average (+1) Will and Empathy

Supporting NPCs
Supporting NPCs have proper names and are a little more detailed than nameless NPCs, playing a supporting role in your scenarios (hence the name). They often display some kind of strong distinguishing trait that sets them apart from the crowd, because of their relationship to a PC or NPC, a particular competence or unique ability, or simply the fact that they tend to appear in the game a great deal. Many action-adventure stories feature a "lieutenant" character who is the right-hand man of the lead villain; that's a supporting NPC in game terms. The faces that you assign to the locations you make during game creation are supporting NPCs, as are any characters who are named in one of the PCs' aspects.

Supporting NPCs are a great source of interpersonal drama, because they're usually the people that the PCs have a relationship with, such as friends, sidekicks, family, contacts, and noteworthy opponents. While they may never be central to resolving the main dilemma of a scenario, they're a significant part of the journey, either because they provide aid, present a problem, or figure into a subplot.

Supporting NPCs are made much like nameless NPCs, except they get to have a few more of the standard character elements. These include a high concept, a trouble, one or more additional aspects, one stunt, and the standard two stress tracks with two boxes each. They should have a handful of skills (say four or five). If they have a skill that entitles them to bonus stress boxes, award those as well. They have one mild consequence and, if you want them to be especially tough, one moderate consequence.

Skills for a supporting NPC should follow a column distribution. Because you're only going to define four or five skills, just treat it as one column. If your NPC has a skill at Great, fill in one skill at each positive step below it—so one Good, one Fair, and one Average skill.

Skill Levels: A supporting NPC's top skill can exceed your best PC's by one or two levels, but only if their role in the game is to provide serious opposition—supporting NPCs who are allied with the PCs should be their rough peers in skill level. (Another action-adventure trope is to make the "lieutenant" character better than the main villain at combat, contrasting brawn to the villain's brain.)

Concessions: Supporting NPCs should not fight to the bitter end, given the option. Instead, have them concede conflicts often, especially early in a story, and especially if the concession is something like "They get away." Conceding like this serves a few purposes. For one, it foreshadows a future, more significant encounter with the NPC. Because conceding comes with a reward of one or more fate points, it also makes them more of a threat the next time they show up. What's more, it's virtually guaranteed to pay off for the players in a satisfying way the next time the NPC makes an appearance. "So, Landon, we meet again! But this time it shall not go so easily for you."

Finally, it implicitly demonstrates to the players that, when things are desperate, conceding a conflict is a viable course of action. A PC concession here and there can raise the stakes and introduce new complications organically, both of which make for a more dramatic, engaging story.

Finn
Aspects: Retired City Guard Captain, Too Old For This Shit, Character's Mentor
Skills: Great (+4) Shoot, Good (+3) Fight, Fair (+2) Will, Average (+1) Ride
Stunts: Battlefield Expert. Can use Fight to create advantages in large-scale tactical situations.

Teran the Swift, Thief Extraordinaire
Aspects: Cutpurse and Scoundrel, I Just Can't Help Myself
Skills: Superb (+5) Burglary, Great (+4) Stealth, Good (+3) Lore, Fair (+2) Fight, Average (+1) Physique [Note: 3 physical stress boxes]
Stunts: Inside Man. +2 to Stealth in an indoor, urban environment.

Og the Strong
Aspects: Og Smash!, Og Not Terribly Bright
Skills: Fantastic (+6) Fight, Superb (+5)

Physique [Note: 4 physical stress boxes, 1 extra mild consequence for physical conflicts], Great (+4) Athletics
Stunts: none

Main NPCs
Main NPCs are the closest you're ever going to get to playing a PC yourself. They have full character sheets just like a PC does, with five aspects, a full distribution of skills, and a selection of stunts. They are the most significant characters in your PCs' lives, because they represent pivotal forces of opposition or allies of crucial importance. Because they have a full spread of aspects, they also offer the most nuanced options for interaction, and they have the most options to invoke and be compelled. Your primary "bad guys" in a scenario or arc should always be main NPCs, as should any NPCs who are the most vital pieces of your stories.

Because they have all the same things on their sheet as PCs do, main NPCs will require a lot more of your time and attention than other characters. How you create one really depends on how much time you have—if you want, you can go through the whole character creation process and work out their whole backstory through phases, leaving only those slots for "guest starring" open.

Of course, if you want, you can also upgrade one of your current supporting NPCs to a main using this method. This is great for when a supporting NPC has suddenly or gradually become—usually because of the players—a major fixture in the story, despite your original plans for them.

You could also do things more on the fly if you need to, creating a partial sheet of the aspects you know for sure, those skills you definitely need them to have, and any stunts you want. Then fill in the rest as you go. This is almost like making a supporting NPC, except you can add

to the sheet during play.

Main NPCs will fight to the bitter end if need be, making the PCs work for every step.

Regarding skill levels, your main NPCs will come in one of two flavours—exact peers of the PCs who grow with them as the campaign progresses, or superiors to the PCs who remain static while the PCs grow to sufficient strength to oppose them. If it's the former, just give them the exact same skill distribution the PCs currently have. If it's the latter, give them enough skills to go at least two higher than whatever the current skill cap is for the game.

So, if the PCs are currently capped at Great (+4), your main NPC badass should be able to afford a couple of Fantastic (+6) columns or a pyramid that peaks at Fantastic.

Likewise, a particularly significant NPC might have more than five aspects to highlight their importance to the story.

Barathar, Pirate Queen:

> Remorse is For the Weak
> A Harem of Thugs
> I've Got the Law in My Pocket

Skills:

> Fantastic (+6) Deceive and Fight
> Superb (+5) Shoot and Burglary
> Great (+4) Resources and Will
> Good (+3) Contacts and Notice
> Fair (+2) Crafts and Stealth
> Average (+1) Lore and Physique

Stress: 3 physical boxes, 4 mental boxes
Stunts:

> Takes One to Know One. Use Deceive instead of Empathy to create an advantage in social

situations.
> Feint Master. +2 to use Deceive to create an advantage in a physical conflict.
> Riposte. If you succeed with style on a Fight defence, you can choose to inflict a 2-shift hit rather than take a boost.

Playing NPCs
Here are some tips for using the opposition characters you create in play.
Right-sizing

Remember, you want a balancing act between obliterating the PCs and letting them walk all over your opposition (unless it's a mook horde, in which case that's pretty much what they're there for). It's important to keep in mind not just the skill levels of the NPCs in your scenes, but their number and importance.

Right-sizing the opposition is more of an art than a science, but here are some strategies to help.

> Don't outnumber the PCs unless your NPCs have comparatively lower skills.
> If they're going to team up against one big opponent, make sure that opponent has a peak skill two levels higher than whatever the best PC can bring in that conflict.
> Limit yourself to one main NPC per scene, unless it's a big climactic conflict at the end of an arc. Remember, supporting NPCs can have skills as high as you want.
> Most of the opposition the PCs encounter in a session should be nameless NPCs, with one or two supporting NPCs and main NPCs along the way.
> Nameless and supporting NPCs means shorter conflicts because they give up or lose sooner; main NPCs mean longer conflicts.

Creating Advantages for NPCs
It's easy to fall into the default mode of using the opposition as a direct means to get in the PCs' way, drawing them into a series of conflict scenes until someone is defeated.

However, keep in mind that the NPCs can create advantages just like the PCs can. Feel free to use opposition characters to create scenes that aren't necessarily about stopping the PCs from achieving a goal, but scouting out information about them and stacking up free invocations. Let your bad guys and the PCs have tea together and then bring out the Empathy rolls. Or instead of having that fight scene take place in the dark alley, let your NPCs show up, gauge the PCs' abilities, and then flee.

Likewise, keep in mind that your NPCs have a home turf advantage in conflicts if the PCs go to them in order to resolve something. So, when you're setting up situation aspects, you can pre-load the NPC with some free invocations if it's reasonable that they've had time to place those aspects. Use this trick in good faith, though—two or three such aspects is probably pushing the limit.

Change Venues of Conflict

Your opposition will be way more interesting if they try to get at the PCs in multiple venues of conflict, rather than just going for the most direct route. Remember that there are a lot of ways to get at someone, and that mental conflict is just as valid as physical conflict as a means of doing so. If the opposition has a vastly different skill set than one or more of your PCs, leverage their strengths and choose a conflict strategy that gives them the best advantage.

SCENARIOS

By now, you and your group have created the PCs. Now you have a pile of aspects and NPCs, brimming with dramatic potential and waiting to come to life.

What do you do with them?

It's time to get into the real meat of the game: creating and playing through scenarios.

The GM plans out the plot of the story where the player characters will become heroes (or villains, or rich, or whatever); creating the setting, populating that region of space with villains and other NPCs, and assigning them any necessary backgrounds, motivations, plans and resources. It is the most creative part of the gamemaster's duties and many find it very rewarding. While authoring a session, it is important to remember a few points.

Give goals

If there is to be a huge battle in the streets between warring vigilante tribes, and the outcome is predetermined, allow the players some small victory that they can achieve. The battle was lost, but the vital plans were rescued from the galleon before it went below the waves.

Names are Important

Giving your characters, and non-player characters memorable names will make them more interesting to the players. It is an opportunity to enrich your world and story.

Reuse Previous Settings

Revisiting the ruined castle from the first adventure creates a sense of familiarity, and this time the characters may learn a strange new secret about it.

Characters Must Make Progress

Don't constantly move the party's goal further and further away, in case the players begin to get a sense that their accomplishments are meaningless. Players should feel that they are moving toward some sort of conclusion and that they are doing so because of their decisions.

Let the Setting Reveal Itself

The territory of the realms is huge. The backdrop to the characters' adventures is complex and fantastic. Luckily, you don't have to teach any of it to the players. As long as you are consistent about your setting, the players will gradually learn about it as they play. You don't need to explicitly explain anything. The characters will work it all out for themselves.

Plan for Success

If your plot requires that the villain will win, you're setting yourself up for a fall. Players are brilliant, especially when it comes to defeating your carefully planned scenes. When you're authoring a session, you're pitting your own mind against the combined minds of all of your players. Have backup plans, villains, and plot twists to handle unexpected player brilliance.

Plan Failure

If the players must make a check to continue on the plot, such as to uncover a stealthed assassin, they will probably fail. Have fall back plans. Can the characters call in a professional to help? Will another attack by the villain reveal them this time?

Have Mini-Encounters Ready

Players can be very unpredictable. Things you thought would take a while happen quickly, or the players just ignore them all together. It's good to have some small adventure ready at hand, to use to fill unexpected gaps when you run out of preplanned scenario to run. Build up a store of generic encounters which can be tossed in almost anywhere.

Hit Their Aspects

A good way to figure out the interesting action for

a scene is to turn to the PCs' aspects, and create a complication or an event-based compel based on them. This is especially good to do for those PCs whose aspects did not come into play when you made up your scenario problem, because it allows them to have some of the spotlight despite the fact that the overall story does not focus on them as much.

Scenarios Structure

Each game session will be based on a scenario. A very long game session might need more than one scenario. A scenario is usually written using technical jargon and tight, spare prose, like describing stage directions. Unlike a novel or short story, a scenario, also called an adventure, focuses on describing the literal, visual aspects of the story, rather than on the internal thoughts of its characters, except for the major characters and nemesis NPCs.

An adventure often has three parts. These are setup (of the location and characters), confrontation (with an obstacle), and resolution (culminating in a climax and a dénouement). This can also be thought of as before the action, during the action, and after the action.

This basic structure is fleshed out with plot points. Plot points are important structural functions that happen in approximately the same place, like the verses and choruses in a popular song. Plot points might include:

Opening Image
The first image in the screenplay should summarize the entire film, especially its tone. Often, writers go back and redo this as the last thing before submitting the script.

Inciting Incident
Also called the catalyst, this is the point in the story when the Protagonist encounters the problem that will change their life. This is where Boy meets Girl, and where the adventurer is assigned their task by their fat and untrustworthy patron.

Plot Point 1
The last scene in Act One, Turning Point One is a surprising development that radically changes the complexion of the adventure. Perhaps the characters discover that the item they have been sent to retrieve is not the beneficial technology they were led to believe, but something more sinister.

Pinch 1
The characters are confronted by a surprisingly tough force, intent on stopping them, and leading them to realise that this job is more important, and attracting more attention than is comfortable.

Pinch 2
Another tough encounter, that is somehow linked to Pinch 1 in reminding the characters of the importance of their mission.

Plot Point 2
A dramatic reversal that ends Act 2 and begins Act 3, which is about confrontation and resolution. Sometimes this is the moment when the hero has had enough and is finally going to face the opponent. Sometimes, it's the low-point for the hero, and they must bounce back to overcome the odds in Act 3.

Showdown
About midway through Act 3, the Protagonist will confront the main problem of the story and either overcome it, or come to a tragic end. In video gaming, this is the boss level.

Resolution
The issues of the story are resolved.

Tag
An epilogue, tying up the loose ends of the story, giving the audience closure. This is also known

as denouement. This is more important for a one off game than for an ongoing sequence of adventures using the same characters, where the characters will simply roll out of one adventure into the next. If you have been planning ahead, the new adventure may even have been foreshadowed in the action the characters just survived.

Example Scenario

Opening Image

The party is camping in the forest for another night, the sound of wolves clearly to be heard from the shadows beneath the trees. Then they hear the blowing of temple trumpets in the distance.

Inciting Incident

One of the PCs is approached by a high-ranking member of an organisation they belong to. For example; if one of the player characters is a magic user who is a researcher at a university of magic, they are approached by their head of department one day in a college corridor. The head of department is a man or woman that the PC has rarely seen and never met.

The head of department tells the PC that they should recruit a team of minions for an important job – the minions will be paid 5G at the start of the mission and 5G at the completion.

The head of department has ascertained from their researches that a powerful magic item might be found at a location described on a treasure map found in one of the university libraries.

If the PC has no idea where to go to hire minions, the head of department will suggest the Dreaming Dragon Inn.

Preparations

The PC must go to the Dreaming Dragon and recruit the team, consisting of the other PCs. The map will stay in the possession of the mission leader PC. It is hard to estimate distance from the map, so the group is advised to equip themselves with plenty of food and beasts of burden to carry wargear and supplies.

While they are going about town, each character gets the chance to roll Notice. If they succeed,

they become aware that they are being followed and observed.

It will be difficult to catch one of these observers, as they are content to watch from a distance, but if the PCs set a trap they can catch a man called Grimshultern. He is a minor NPC and will surrender almost as soon as captured, if it seems to him that there is little chance of escape.

He will not divulge his mission, except by magical means. If tortured he will make up a cock and bull story about a dark stranger on horseback camped outside town to the East. (Grimshultern knows that there is an abandoned bandit camp there that will make his story seem believable).

If magic is used to find his secrets, he will tell that he is working for his usual paymaster, who he believes works for – insert name of PC nemesis, or nemesis organisation here. The nemesis knows the PCs are looking for something. He also knows they have a map.

A Long Journey

The former temple of Amak Raa is a long journey away, the state of local map making can provide the adventurers with no more exact estimate than that. This means that the GM can have fun making the characters trek through deep, dark forest, beset by monsters and encounters, one after another without worrying about exactly how much territory has been traversed, or how many days the characters will be trekking for.

The deep forests contain many dangers, and a short list of the horrible things that can happen to the characters can be found below, but the GM should not hesitate to add suitable encounters from their own imagination.

Lizard Patrol

A patrol of at least one lizardperson per player

character is encountered. The commander of the patrol is seated on the back of a sabre-toothed tiger.

The lizardpeople will attempt to capture the humans and take them to a coastal trading station to sell them as galley slaves or gladiators for the arena.

If the party fails to escape – they will eventually be sold and have to survive some bouts in the arena. This is a detour that would waste many months, and cause much displeasure to the patron who commissioned the adventure.

Damsel in Distress
A giant snake is wrapped around a rock and there are female halfling cries of terror from the summit. The giant snake (see bestiary) has the woman trapped and there doesn't seem to be anything keeping it from devouring its prey.

In fact the snake had no interest in her and was hypnotised by her to look as though it was threatening her.

When rescued the woman introduces herself as the Princess Camelia. She will ask to be taken back to her halfling realm, where the characters will be richly rewarded. A lore skill is required to realise that the halfling realm she mentions is a place believed only to exist in myth and fairytale.

The woman is a thief who has learned how to cast a spell that hypnotises creatures and humans.

She is a brave and daring thief, and has the following profile. She does not have any weapons and must steal weapons from sleeping characters to arm herself. She prefers to hypnotise than to fight.

Fight: 3 – using stolen daggers
Shoot: 4 – throwing stolen daggers
Magic: 3

Stress: 2
Spells: Hypnotise. A character failing a Magic save is under the control of the hypnotist, and must follow their verbal commands (for intelligent victims) and hand gestures (for animal intelligence victims) enthusiastically.

The first night that the party make camp on the way to her 'kingdom' she will steal a selection of their equipment and valuables, including the treasure map. If she is detected she will hypnotise a character to fight their friends while she makes her escape. She will hypnotise anyone who follows her, until the party is caught up in a battle among themselves, or they blindfold her.

The Former Temple
Most of the action of this adventure takes place here in the former temple of Amak Raa. It is a hill in a forest clearing, with sides steep enough to require a climb roll. Without the map, this place would not even be worth a second look, and even with the map it is not obvious that they have arrived at the right place.

When they climb the hill, they find a small mound with a depression in the top, hiding it from observation from below. In this depression, there is a blood stained alter with an entrance behind it.

The characters must climb the mound and enter at the top. As they are climbing however a group of magician's apes (see bestiary) rush from the entrance to defend their sacred site.

There are as many ape worshippers as there are characters and NPCs in the party.

Upper Chambers
Once inside, the dungeon has four levels.

The uppermost level is a temple with five chambers. There is no light in the temple, except what streams in from the single entrance in the

roof at the front end of chamber 1. The floors are of pounded earth with slabs of rock laid on top, and the walls are also of pounded earth, but with irregular stones embed on them.

The apes use this part of the temple for their sacrifices and other ceremonies.

The Old Temple
Upper Chambers · Chamber 3 · Chamber 2 · Ape Statue · Chamber 1 · Chamber 4 · Chamber 5

Chamber 1
This is the main gathering place and once held primitive human statues. These now lie about broken, replaced by three even more primitive ape statues.

Chamber 2
This is where an ape priest can commune with their god, the Horned One. There is a large statue of the god here. The ape high priest is cowering behind it, and he will attack if he is discovered. He has rigged the room with a pit trap that he can trigger if a character is standing on it. The pit trap leads down to the level below, the catacombs.

Chamber 3
This chamber contains captives who were scheduled to be sacrificed. They are a band of adventurers from a local human tribe and will be eternally grateful for being reprieved from their terrible fates. They will leave to go back to their tribal lands, stopping on the way out of the mound to equip themselves from the weapons chamber.

However once outside they will reconsider. They will rightly surmise that the characters are here in search of some treasure. They will return to the mound, follow the characters and attack them on the way-out, once they have their treasure. A character making a difficult -1 Notice (or similar) roll will notice that the party is being followed.

Chamber 4
This is the 'weapons' chamber, although it contains other clothes and equipment as well. It is all taken from the apes' victims. The apes have not been attacking difficult targets and so much of the clothes and equipment is simply mouldering animal skins and dirty jackets and trousers.

A search of the disturbingly large pile of stuff, at +1 to the search roll for ease, will allow a character to equip themselves with any desired basic equipment for a 'fighter' type. Warhammers and helmets are here a plenty.

Chamber 5
This chamber was once the room where the items used in rituals were kept, but is now in disuse. The apes prefer to bash in the heads of sacrifices with rocks rather than use the wicked-looking selection of knives contained in this room among the brightly coloured but mouldy robes former cult leaders.

Catacombs
Level 2 is the catacombs where the skeletal

remains of the countless human sacrifices are stored. The floor plan of these levels can be generated by the GM to house extra encounters – dungeon style – or generated randomly to reflect their relative vastness.

As the PCs explore they find room after room, full of skeletal remains, sometimes piled right up to the ceiling. These unfortunates almost exclusively went unwillingly to the sacrificial alter, and a spirit of vengeance has been gathering about the place.

This 'spirit' manifests as a skeletons, 1d4 per round for 1d4 rounds. The spirit is attracted by the sounds of battle or argument, or any loud noise the party makes. Once the spirit has animated a batch of skeletons, it dissipates for 1d10 rounds, and will only return if there are again loud noises.

This is a very extensive level of the dungeon. It is so extensive because it joins with the catacombs below a lizardperson city. The lizardperson city is little more than ruins, but the catacombs are in quite good condition.

There are cave ins and blocked passages, but fewer than would be expected. Characters with any architectural or engineering knowledge can be given a roll to notice that they have moved from the catacombs below the temple mound to catacombs of the lower levels of the ruined city. The architecture becomes more advanced, with wider corridors and higher ceilings.

The skeletons in the ruined city are different too. They are more massive lizardperson skeletons with a larger mouth full of teeth, still chisel sharp after all the centuries that have passed.

After at least one encounter, the party will find the stairs down to level 3.

level 3
Level three is almost identical, but after some

exploring the characters will find that it has a foul and stinking river running through it. The river bubbles up from deep beneath the earth, and sinks away underground after only a mile or so. The river is scalding hot and a tribe of goblins (see bestiary) live along its banks.

The only way to cross is via a strong wooden bridge, but the bridge is unfortunately not high enough above the water to be out of range of the goblins throwing rocks.

level 4
This level is also full of bone rooms, but the skeletons are more ancient even than lizard people. The skeletons have massive frog heads, and move by walking, but it is as much a shambling hop as a walk.

This level is where the treasure chamber is located. The party have finally reached the goal of their quest. But it is guarded by the most fearsome creature they will encounter over the course of this adventure. The treasure is watched over by one of the 'children' of Amak Raa. It becomes obvious to characters with the Lore skill that Amak Raa must be a name for the Horned One, an ancient primeval god that still has some followers among the most ancient species with the longest memories, such as lizardpeople and magician's apes. A horned one (see bestiary) stealthily approaches and tries to ambush the party.

The Treasure Vault
The treasure vault is revealed hidden behind a wall. The wall is melted away by acid spilling from the dead mound of the defeated horned one. Behind the wall is a vault where the party will find a jade sceptre.

The sceptre is a rod of quaking, causing huge earthquakes for 1d10 rounds when used. It also causes time quakes, although this is presently unknown to magical research on the item. It attracts the attention of extra-temporal beings

(beings from the far past and far future) whenever used.

All the PCs have to do now is get home, but of course on the way home they will be ambushed by the nemesis who was watching them so closely at the start of the adventure.

ADVANCEMENT

Your characters aren't going to remain static through the entire campaign. As their stories play out, they'll have the chance to grow and change in response to the events that happen in play. The conflicts they face and the complications they overcome will alter your sense of who they are and push them toward new challenges.

In addition to your characters, the game world will change also. You'll resolve threats as you play, or change the face of a location, or make such an impact on the world that one of the issues may need to change. We'll get more into world advancement later.

Character advancement in Fate comes in one of two flavours: either you can change something on your sheet to something else that's equivalent, or you can add new things to your sheet. The opportunities you get to do this are collectively called milestones.

Defining Milestones

A milestone is a moment during the game where you have the chance to change or advance your character. We call them milestones because they usually happen at significant "break points" in the action of a game—the end of a session, the end of a scenario, and the end of a story arc, respectively.

Obviously, things won't always line up that nicely, so GMs, you have some discretion in deciding when a certain level of milestone occurs. If it seems satisfying to give out a milestone in the middle of a session, go ahead, but stick to the guidelines here to keep from handing out too many advancement opportunities too often.

Milestones come in three levels of importance: minor, significant, and major.

Minor Milestones

Minor milestones usually occur at the end of a session of play, or when one piece of a story has been resolved. These kinds of milestones are more about changing your character rather than making him or her more powerful, about adjusting in response to whatever's going on in the story if you need to. Sometimes it won't really make sense to take advantage of a minor milestone, but you always have the opportunity if you should need to.

During a minor milestone, you can choose to do one (and only one) of the following:

   Switch the rank values of any two skills, or replace one Average (+1) skill with one that isn't on your sheet.
   Change any single stunt for another stunt.
   Purchase a new stunt, provided you have the refresh to do so. (Remember, you can't go below 1 refresh.)
   Rename one character aspect that isn't your high concept.

In addition, you can also rename any moderate consequences you have, so that you can start them on the road to recovery, presuming you have not already done so.

This is a good way to make slight character adjustments, if it seems like something on your character isn't quite right—you don't end up using that stunt as often as you thought, or you resolved the Blood Feud with Edmund that you had and thus it's no longer appropriate, or any of those changes that keep your character consistent with the events of play.

In fact, you should almost always be able to justify the change you're making in terms of the game's story. You shouldn't be able to change Hot Temper to Staunch Pacifist, for example, unless something happened in the story to inspire a serious change of heart—you met a holy man, or had a traumatic experience that

made you want to give up the sword, or whatever. GMs, you're the final arbiter on this, but don't be so much of a stickler that you sacrifice a player's fun for consistency.

Significant Milestones

Significant milestones usually occur at the end of a scenario or the conclusion of a big plot event (or, when in doubt, at the end of every two or three sessions). Unlike minor milestones, which are primarily about change, significant milestones are about learning new things— dealing with problems and challenges has made your character generally more capable at what they do.

In addition to the benefit of a minor milestone, you also gain both of the following:

One additional skill point, which you can spend to buy a new skill at Average (+1) or increase an existing skill by one rank.
    If you have any severe consequences, you can rename them to begin the recovery process, if you haven't already.

When you spend your skill point, it's worth one step on the ladder. You can use it to buy a new skill at Average (+1), or you can use it to increase an existing skill by one step on the ladder—say, from Good (+3) to Great (+4).
Skill Columns

During character creation, you organized your skills into a pyramid. You don't have to stick to that for character advancement.

However, there's still a limitation you have to deal with, skill columns. This means you can't have more skills at a certain rank than you have at the rank below it. So if you have three Good columns, you have at least three Average (+1) skills and at least three Fair (+2) skills to support your three Good (+3) skills.

The pyramid follows this rule already, but when

you're adding skills, you need to make sure you don't violate that limit. It's easy to forget that if you use a skill point to upgrade one of your own skills, you might suddenly not have enough skills to "support" it at the new rank.

So, let's say you have one Good (+3), two Fair (+2), and three Average (+1) skills.

At a milestone, you want to upgrade a Fair (+2) skill to Good (+3). That'd give you two Good (+3), one Fair (+2), and three Average (+1): You see how that doesn't work? You're now missing the second Fair skill you'd need to be square with the rules.

When this happens, you have one of two options. You can buy a new skill at the lowest possible rank—in this case, Average (+1)—and then upgrade it in subsequent milestones until you're in a position to bump the skill you want to the appropriate level. Or you can "bank" the skill point, not spend it now, and wait until you've accumulated enough to buy a skill at whatever rank you need to support the move.

So in the case above, you could buy an Average (+1) skill, promote one of your Average skills to a Fair (+2), then bump the original skill up to Good (+3). That would take three significant or major milestones to do. Or, you could wait, bank up three skill points, buy a new skill at Fair (+2), then bump the original skill up to Good (+3). It just depends on whether you want to put new stuff on your sheet or not in the interim.

GMs, strictly enforcing how the skills work can be a pain in the ass sometimes. If you and the players really want to be able to upgrade a certain skill in a way that breaks the rules now, simply ask that the player spend the next few milestones "correcting" their skill spread, rather than making them wait. It's okay. We won't come after you.

You might notice that this means that the further

you get up the ladder, the harder it is to quickly advance your skills. This is intentional—no one is going to be able to get to the point where they're awesome at everything, all the time. That's boring.

Major Milestones

A major milestone should only occur when something happens in the campaign that shakes it up a lot—the end of a story arc (or around three scenarios), the death of a main NPC villain, or any other large-scale change that reverberates around your game world.

These milestones are about gaining more power. The challenges of yesterday simply aren't sufficient to threaten these characters any more, and the threats of tomorrow will need to be more adept, organized, and determined to stand against them in the future.

Achieving a major milestone confers the benefits of a significant milestone and a minor milestone, and all of the following additional options:

    If you have an extreme consequence, rename it to reflect that you've moved past its most debilitating effects. This allows you to take another extreme consequence in the future, if you desire.
    Take an additional point of refresh, which allows you to immediately buy a new stunt or keep it in order to give yourself more fate points at the beginning of a session.
    Advance a skill beyond the campaign's current skill cap, if you're able to, thus increasing the skill cap.
    Rename your character's high concept if you desire.

Reaching a major milestone is a pretty big deal. Characters with more stunts are going to have a diverse range of bonuses, making their skills much more effective by default. Characters with higher refresh will have a much larger fountain of fate points to work with when sessions begin,

which means they'll be less reliant on compels for a while.

GMs, when the player characters go past the skill cap, it will necessarily change the way you make opposition NPCs, because you're going to need foes who can match the PCs in terms of base competence so as to provide a worthy challenge. It won't happen all at once, which will give you the chance to introduce more powerful enemies gradually, but if you play long enough, eventually you're going to have PCs who have Epic and Legendary skill ratings—that alone should give you a sense of what kind of villains you'll need to bring to get in their way.

Most of all, a major milestone should signal that lots of things in the world of your game have changed. Some of that will probably be reflected in world advancement, but given the number of chances the PCs have had to revise their aspects in response to the story, you could be looking at a group with a much different set of priorities and concerns than they had when they started.

Travelling

The world outside city gates is so dangerous and inhospitable that travel is a very serious business for the inhabitants of the realms.

Accommodation

When travelling, characters will not run into convenient inns very often. For the most part, they will have to camp on their own or seek shelter in people's homes.

Provided they are friendly and not wearing mail or plate and longswords or war hammers (rapiers and brigandine is acceptable), the latter option should be no trouble. A farmer can live in a single place all his life, and he will welcome news and stories of adventures, not to mention any money the heroes might offer.

Settlements

Settlements tend to cluster tightly along the arteries of travel between the cities. Between these clusters are relatively large gaps of wilderness in the middle, even along well travelled roads.

There are roughly five types of settlement that might be encountered as adventurers travel along the roads of Hyrope.

Village

Villages range from 50-300 people in size. Most realms will have thousands of them. Villages are agrarian communities with their houses usually huddled together for safety. They are much more open and healthy than cities and towns. The village usually has wide streets and a central green and pond.

Hamlet

This is usually a village that cultivates orchards (instead of grain fields or animals). These tend to be smaller than normal villages, and have populations of only 20-150.

Town

Towns typically have populations of two or three thousand. Towns tend to have walls and train and prepare for sieges. This siege training is additional to the military training expected of almost men and women judged able-bodied enough.

City

Cities tend to be tens of thousands of people in size. A typical large realm will have a few cities in this population range. Magic colleges can sometimes even be found in cities of this size.

Big City

Big Cities can be of any size from 100,000 people to millions of people. A city is able to grow particularly huge if it has a stable history and some magical source of food.

Cavern Complexes

These are often referred to simply as dungeons. Heroes entering these must navigate a labyrinthine environment, battling various monsters, and looting any treasure they may find.

These elaborate structures are very common across Hyrope and only a fraction have been investigated to any degree. They may have been designed and built by the fairy folk, as gateways to their underground realms, or survivals from the times when the lizardpeople ruled the planet.

These labyrinths are modified and added upon at various times, and used and reused again and again over the millennia .

Visual aids such as maps, models, or miniature figures are often used to represent the landscape of a dungeon.

Bridges

The association of ogres and trolls with bridges

has some basis in fact. The arches of rural bridges are often home to an ogre shunned by his pack, finding shelter in a place that must seem little different to a natural cavern, at least to the troll's minuscule brain.

Castle

Active castles are much more common than ruined ones, because ruins that are at all solid are constantly put back into service. The role of castles is something too various to be easily described. Most castles mark the landholdings of Barons and Dukes, but some may be local strong points, treasuries, prisons, even bandit strongholds, or the outposts of goblin warlords.

Farm

Farming dominated the lives of most of the people of Hyrope. It is very rare that an isolated farm is encountered though, the landscape is just too dangerous. Most people live in villages where they can help each other fight off threats.

Huge Castle

Huge castles may be founded by orders of knights to use as forward bases as they push back their enemies, or grow organically as the surrounding community that will need to flee there in time of trouble grows.

Huge castles are often the result of smaller castles being expanded several times to host growing number of knights as its importance increases. Huge castles may have 146,621 square meters of space contained within their walls. Crossing through tens of gates may be required to reach the central section, and a complex of sites may have been contained.

These sites might include a huge temple, a keep, barracks, armouries, smithies, stables, grain stores and many other structures. These castles often exhibit a mixture of architectural styles, as they are rebuilt after each sacking in the style of the new occupants, or according to the changed tastes of the surviving original occupants.

Mansion

These large walled structures are a cross between a large village and a small castle. The mansion is located very near outlying houses and is built for defence. Often having a moat wall and gatehouse.

Ranger Towers

The roads of Magic Realms are so dangerous that a special force has been established to keep them clear. The forest rangers also have the duty to regularly patrol the forests, on the lookout for large build ups of evil forces that might threaten the lives and lands of the peoples of Magic Realms. They are particularly watchful for unusually large orc forces, or necromancers, or liches building large undead armies.
They are based in fortresses that are often placed half way between settlements in the longer and more dangerous roads, but they range far and wide from there.

Ruins

The landscape is covered in overgrown ruined temples left by the lizardpeople and even more ancient inhabitants of the realms. They tend to open onto artificial cavern complexes beneath, and these in turn often open onto the underworld.

Simple House

Most houses are half-timbered and jettied, which is a building technique used in timber frame buildings in which an upper floor projects beyond the dimensions of the floor below. This has the advantage of increasing the available space in the building without obstructing the street.
In most cities on Orb houses are taxed according to ground-floor area (square footage) extensive jettying is employed to create higher storeys of greater area, and jettied houses seem to almost touch above the street. Jettying is even

used in villages, where space is abundant, because of the tax advantages.

Shop
A shop usually occupies the ground floor of a building, and one wall is often completely open, like an unglazed display window.

Temple
Temples are also a medium of disseminating news. Travelling priests and holy people bring news back, and it is spread among the populace. There are two or three temples on almost every street, providing information, small markets and hospitality. They are an excellent place to start, for an adventurer hunting their nemesis.

Worm Tunnels
These tunnels are big enough to accommodate any monster, even huge dragons. They criss cross the centre of the planet and connect the whole subterranean ecosystem of ancient dungeon complexes left by civilisations long dead, fairy underworld, demonic gates, realms of the giants and dwarven citadels together.

City Streets
Typical city streets are narrow and twisting, sometimes no broader than a person's shoulders. These glorified alley ways double as gutters, slaughterhouses, and latrines. Cities are noisy and smelly. Little light and air reaches the reeking streets. Streets are pitch-black at night (there is no light pollution), and watchmen and thieves patrol these arteries.

Cobblestones in good condition allow normal movement, but ones in poor repair and heavily rutted dirt streets can reduce speed significantly.

Crypt
A place of the dead, or the undead. These are often tunnel complex with numerous rooms with tombs and bone heaps, and sometimes treasure.

Hazards
There are any number of hazards that a traveller could face when they are out adventuring across the wild places. Many of them will have to be designed by the GM on the fly.

Is the hazard something that can harm a PC? Give it a skill and let it make attacks just like an opponent.
   Is it more of a distraction or harassment than a direct threat? Let it create aspects.
   Does it have sensors it can use to discover a PC's aspects? Give it a skill for that.

And in return, let the PCs use their skills against the threat just like they would an opponent. An automated security system might be vulnerable to "attacks" from a PC's Burglary skill, or they might escape a trap by winning an Athletics contest. If it makes sense for the hazard in question to take a good deal of effort to surpass, give it a stress track and let it take a mild consequence or two. In other words, cleave to whatever makes narrative sense—if a fire is too big for a PC to put out, the scene should focus on avoidance or escape, and work like a challenge.

There are some hazards that are so common, however, that we can go into a little more detail.

Disease
Disease is commonplace, and is very often fatal. Disease are not commonly infectious, but instead can be acquired at any time. They are caused by the Miasma. This is a diffuse poisonous cloud that sometimes thickens around a person, and infects them.

(This is the situation in the realms, and does not equate to the scientific realities of disease encountered in our reality)

Each disease has a severity and this is used to

attack in the same way as the combat skill. The best maps have areas of miasma marked, but good maps are unfortunately all too rare. The disease stops attacking if it fails to cause damage, but if damage is caused, it will attack again. If it causes a consequence, use the consequence listed below.

Apoplexy
Severity: 2 – Paralysis of the limbs.

Bilious fever
Severity: 3 – Intestinal pain and soreness.

Black Death
Severity: 4 – Coughing fits – death.

Bloody Flux
Severity: 5 – The same as flux, but involving a discharge of blood.

Break Bone Fever
Severity: 5 – Bones spontaneously break in a sudden noisy destruction of the sufferers skeleton.

Canker
Severity: 3 – A severe, ulcer of the cheek and lip. It is often fatal.

Dropsy
Severity: 1 – Swelling of part of the body due to a build-up of clear watery fluid.

Flux
Severity: 1 – Inflammation of the large intestine and attended by frequent stools containing blood and mucus.

Galloping Consumption
Severity: 2 – Massive tissue death begins, and quickly consumes the victim's flesh – and eventually life force.

Grocer's Itch
Severity: 2 – This is a skin disease caused by miasmas attracted to food. It is not fatal, but is so distracting that those suffering from the itch are at -1 to all rolls.

Horrors
Severity: 1 – The sufferer sees more and more realistic and horrible hallucinations, until eventually – driven mad – they expire shortly thereafter.

King's evil
Severity: 4 – It evolves into cold abscesses, multiple skin ulcers, and draining sinus tracts.

Mortification
Severity: 2 – Gradual rotting of the body, starting at the extremities.

Palsy
Severity: 4 – Paralysis or difficulty with muscle control.

Purples
Severity: 3 – This is a rash due with spontaneous bleeding from the skin. It is a severe illnesses that invariably results in – death.

Sweating Sickness
Severity: 5 – constant sweats – fatal sweats.

Becoming Lost
There will be many occasions where characters run the risk of getting lost. Trying to cross large forests, or following a small animal path in the fog, is an invitation to losing your way. The difficulty level is set by the gamemaster, based on the familiarity of the terrain.

The roll is made by the character with the best Notice. Negative circumstances include; unfamiliar terrain, fog, and darkness.

Characters get a second roll to realise they are lost every hour. If they fail this they will carry on in a random direction every hour until they do make a roll. If the characters see a famous landmark, or the fog lifts or the sun comes up, their roll to realise they are lost will improve.

They will then be allowed a roll to regain their bearings, with a difficulty based on factors such as how far the characters wandered from the original route.

Poison

There are various substances used to kill and harm in Hyrope. Many are naturally occurring and easily encountered by a traveller. The following list is a short selection. The potency is the number used by the poison to attack the character. The poison will continue to attack until it fails to cause damage.

Abassy Venom
Potency: 6
From demons that have teeth of iron. They look just like humans, or sometimes elves, but their metal teeth give them away as supernatural fiends. They dress as normal humans, and use swords or other melee weapons, but can also bite with their venomous teeth. It causes paralysis.

Akalon
Potency 10
A poison derived from a blood-red flower that grows in desert oases, it is odourless, tasteless, but red in colour - leading to its frequent use in red wine. It is almost immediately lethal, producing symptoms resembling those of heart disease. In small doses it can be used as a stimulant.

Grabberweed Sap
Potency: 9
Derived from the many-times boiled sap of a carnivorous plant. It is said the poison is most potent if the plant has recently been fed a human victim. The poison causes a speedy but painful death.

Gu
Potency: 7
The preparation of gu poison involves sealing several venomous creatures (e.g., centipede, snake, scorpion) into a closed box, where they devour one another and concentrate their toxins into a single survivor.

Harionago
Potency: 8
Derived from a monster that resembles a humanoid female with barbed, prehensile hair. The hair is coated with a deadly and waxy poison. The poison causes instant death if it takes effect.

Hebenon
Potency: 11
Description: It curdles the blood, producing stiffening and death in the victim.

Lich Dust
Potency: 5
Lich dust is a white powder which kills a victim within seconds of skin contact. The powder causes the skin of the victim's body to shrivel, tighten, bleach and fall away, while causing the hair to fall out. The poor victim soon resembles the skeletal creature used to take its life. .

Lye
Potency: 4
This is among the many different alkalis leached from hardwood ashes. Eye protection, chemical-resistant gloves, and adequate ventilation are required for the safe handling of lye. A face mask is also recommended. Handling lye without this protection can result in serious injuries. If the poison takes effect it causes internal burning that deprive the victim of

oxygen, and kill them slowly.

Opiates

Potency: 3
Derivatives of the poppy, these compounds have medicinal and recreational uses, but can also be used to kill.

Services

Most people across Hyrope are very self reliant, butchering their own meet, and making their own clothes. It takes a relatively large population to support any business, and so particular services are not always available in every location. The chances of finding particular services are listed below.

Business	Village	Town	City	Big City
Shoemakers	20%	30%	50%	70%
Bookbinders	20%	30%	50%	70%
Booksellers	20%	30%	50%	70%
Hatmakers	20%	50%	70%	90%
Harness-Makers	30%	50%	70%	90%
Bakers	30%	50%	70%	90%
Inns	30%	50%	70%	90%
Merchant	30%	50%	70%	90%
Ropemakers	5%	20%	50%	70%
Chandlers	5%	20%	50%	70%
Weavers	30%	50%	70%	90%
Locksmiths	30%	50%	70%	90%
Carpenters	50%	60%	70%	90%
Iluminators	20%	30%	50%	90%
Blacksmiths	50%	70%	80%	90%
College of Magic	2%	4%	20%	50%
Doctors	30%	40%	70%	90%
Masons	20%	30%	50%	90%
Roofers	20%	30%	50%	90%
Taverns	30%	50%	70%	90%
Spice Merchants	5%	20%	30%	50%
Barbers	30%	50%	70%	90%
Fishmongers	20%	30%	50%	90%
Butchers	30%	50%	70%	90%
Jewellers	5%	20%	30%	50%
Tailors	5%	20%	30%	50%

Trade

Coastal Trade

The main shipping trade route for the planet's super continent is a large circuit that is timed to pass the pole in summer, when there is less chance of the sea being frozen. Many of the boats do not have a home port, and have very cosmopolitan crews.

Pirate castles can be found all around the coasts of the single giant continent. They tend to be improvised structures, often a mix of rock, drift wood, salvage and other improvised materials. They are used ad bases by pirates, and some of the larger ones also become centres where trade is carried out.

Shipping on the coastal circuit often has to bribe the local pirate princes and princesses, fight them off,or try to sneak past each of the big well known fortresses.

Terrain

Realms that share borders can often have very different characters based purely on their terrain. A list of some terrains that can be encountered across Hyrope is included below.

Beach

The thin ribbons of sand between ocean and land are good places to haul a pirate ship ashore for repairs.

Caverns

The most important feature of caverns is the high probability that they will lead down to the underworld. They are shunned and avoided by travellers, who prefer to set up a lean to, even in the heaviest downpour, than shelter in a cavern where they might be accosted by the fee, the undead, or worse.

Gravel Flats

These are mostly stable, but there can be dangerous areas, where a thin covering of gravel covers deep crevasses.

Forest

These can be lush, sparse, or dark. The trees and bushes provide cover, but undergrowth slows movement.

It must also be remembered that a healthy covering of lush vegetation is no guarantee of the stability of the terrain below.

Pathways wind through some forests, allowing normal movement and providing neither cover nor concealment. These paths are not common in the forests of Hyrope, but even unexplored forests will have occasional game trails. All stealth rolls are at +1 in a forest.

Hedgerows

Hedgerows are tangles of low trees and thorny bushes. They provide cover, and take time to get through. A tool or weapon may be required to hack a way through a particularly thick hedgerow. Hedgerows are hugely common across the realms, and often contain goblins and other monsters.

Marsh Terrain

In these moors, swamps, and bogs, deep mud or standing water of at least 1 foot in depth, slows movement by half. Athletics is much harder in this type of terrain (-1 to athletics rolls) but the water and undergrowth in this terrain can provide cover.

Orchard

Orchards are rarely found alone, usually they are near other orchards, and there will often be a hamlet nearby containing the people who cultivate it and keep it free of monsters.

Quicksand

A character approaching a patch of quicksand at a normal pace is entitled to a Notice check to spot the danger before stepping in. Charging or running characters get the same roll, but at an increased difficulty level.

Characters in quicksand must be pulled out, or they will eventually be sucked under. They must make a swim roll each round, Each fail sucks them another 5% further into the hazard.

Pulling out a character trapped in quicksand can be difficult. A rescuer needs a branch, spear haft, rope, or similar tool that enables him to reach the victim with one end of it. The rescuer must make a successful strength check for every 5% the victim was pulled under to rescue them. A failed check results in them being sucked 5% further in.

Rock Blisters

These look like solid terrain, but are fragile, and will collapse on a failed roll. Below might be an ordinary crevasse, a dungeon complex, or even the underworld.

Sandy Dessert

This is a huge expanses of sand dunes, almost impossible to map, with rock islands poking up between them. They slow movement to a quarter of normal, or less.

Sea of Ooze

This has the same dangerous character as quicksand, but there is a huge expanse of it. It can only be navigated by flat-bottom barge, and even then there are many dangers.

Scree

An area of small unstable stones, characters must slow to one quarter speed to negotiate the scree or risk sliding, possibly towards a cliff edge.

Tundra (cold deserts)

Because snow and ice cover much of the tundra landscape, it's easy to find water. Cold is an ever present danger however.

Bestiary

The following bestiary of monsters that can be encountered by adventurers exploring the planet is far from exhaustive, and the game master should not hesitate to add to it.

Each monster has one monstrous aspect. This is like a normal aspect, but the monster may add +3 to their roll instead of +2 when they invoke it. Monsters are often singularly driven to obtain their goals, and the players will have to work to overcome these foes.

Zombies, for example, have the monstrous aspect Hungry for Brains. Anytime that a zombie invokes their aspect, they get a +3 to their roll.

Abassy
Size: human
Attack: +2 – crushing (constrict) or thrusting (fangs)
Defence: +2 – Agility and leather skin
Stress: 2
Senses: +1 on rolls to smell
Stealth: N/A
Poison: Potency 5, Delivery Bite
Monstrous aspect: Monstrous metal teeth. Demons that have teeth of iron. They look just like humans, or sometimes elves, but their metal teeth give them away as supernatural fiends. They dress as normal humans, and use swords or other melee weapons, but can also bite with their venomous teeth.

Amarok or Great Wolf
Size: Elephantine
Attack: +2 – thrusting (fangs)
Defence: +1 – Agility and fur
Stress: 4
Senses: +1 on rolls to smell
Stealth: +1
Poison: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Pack Animals
They tower over humans, and are roughly the size of elephants. They are intelligent and dangerous. They can however be subdued, tamed and made into steeds. Unlike normal wolves who hunt in packs, Amarok hunt alone, or in groups of two or three.

Appalling Yard Watchers
Size: human
Attack: +2 – slashing (scythe)
Defence: +0
Stress: 2
Senses: senses life within 10 miles
Stealth: N/A
Poison: Potency 5, Delivery Bite
Immunity: non magical weapons
Magic: 2
Spells: x2
Monstrous aspect: Hate Life as Unnatural

Skeletal grave lurkers with a lantern and a scythe. The yard watchers are the henchman of Death. They protect graveyards and the souls inside from necromancers, and are very suspicious of the living. They see life as an unnatural state, and attack to bring people to the more natural states of death or undeath. They are minor royalty among the undead and have subjects, mostly skeletons and zombies, who have their own particular paths along which their sacred processions move.

Asena, or Blue Wolf
Size: Wolf size
Attack: +2 – thrusting (fangs)
Ranged Attack: +1 – energy (frost bolt)
Defence: +1 – Agility and fur
Stress: 2
Senses: +1 on rolls to smell
Stealth: +1
Poison: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Pack Animals
The Asena, or blue wolf, is found mostly in cold northern territories. They hunt in packs and try to disable their prey with frost bolts before attacking. They are no bigger or cleverer than normal wolves, but their formidable ranged attack makes them much more dangerous.

Baleful Titans
Boss Monster 1
Size: 12m tall
Attack: +5 – trapping (whip) – pummelling (hammer)
Defence: +4
Stress: 5
Senses: 360 degree vision
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: non magical weapons
Magic: 5
Spells: x5
Monstrous aspect: Lords of the Underworlds
If their boss monster 1 incarnation is defeated they emerge from the ashes as

Boss Monster 2
Size: 6m tall
Attack: +3 – trapping (whip) – pummelling (hammer)
Defence: +0
Stress: 3
Senses: human
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: N/A
Magic: 2
Spells: x2
Monstrous aspect: Weakened Lord
These are giant 12 metre tall creatures, with skin like burning coal, hot enough to burn flesh, wood and fabric. They are the subjects of their ruler, in his fiery realm deep down in the underworld, but also rulers in their own right across many other realms and planes of existence.

They are immune to all but magical weapons and are powerful magic users. They are the reason the dwarves have become so good at forging magic weapons.

Basilisk
Size: 5 – 15m
Attack: +3 – bite
Ranged Attack: +2 breath weapon 4x1m cone
Defence: +2
Stress: 5
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: potency 4/delivery, breath
Immunity: non magical weapons
Magic: 5
Spells: x5
Monstrous aspect: All Wilts and Dies
This is a huge multi-limbed, venomous lizard. It is so venomous that it leaves a wide trail of deadly venom in its wake, and its gaze is likewise lethal. The basilisk's hole, (recognizable because all the surrounding shrubs and grass has been scorched by its presence), can be home to many hundreds of the creatures.

It destroys all vegetation, not only by its contact, but those even that it has breathed upon. It burns up all the grass too, and breaks stones and causes earthquakes, so tremendous is its noxious influence. If a knight kills one of these creatures while mounted, the poison will run up the weapon and may kill, not only the rider, but the horse as well. For this reason it is advisable to use ranged weapons against the basilisk.

Despite its killing glare and its poisonous breath, many are willing to hunt basilisk. Basilisk venom is highly prised, because a skilled magic user, with access to a lab, can use it to transform copper into gold.

Its ashes are less potent, only turning silver to gold, but are also much in demand. Caution is advised when hunting basilisk however, because the beast is capable of breathing fire and killing with the sound of its voice. It can kill not only by touch, but also by touching something that is touching the victim, like a sword held in their hand.

Bokken, or Rider Ghosts
Size: human
Attack: +2 – bite
Ranged Attack: N/A
Defence: +2
Stress: 2
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: non magical weapons
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Ride the Enemy Down
These are the ghosts of bandits, these bandits fell so in love with plundering travellers that they are unable now to stop, even in death. They can no longer spend their booty however, and it is often found among the ruins of their old bandit castles.

Bone Wolf
Size: human
Attacks: x2
Attack: +3 – slashing and thrusting (fangs) – pummelling (claws)
Ranged Attack: N/A
Defence: +2
Stress: 3
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: non magical weapons
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Guard Beast Created by Powerful Mage
A particularly terrible type of bone golem. They are usually encountered in packs and have found some way of reproducing. They are intelligent, and use tactics when hunting, such as using bait.

They will often keep one character alive from a group of victims, to use as bait to attract a new group. Their clawed forelimbs are clumsy, but with some time and effort, they can tie victims to

a tree, gag them and even set traps. They can both bite and claw in the same exchange, their hide is equivalent to plate armour and their skill in combat is Great.

Bronze Dragon
Size: 50-100m
Attacks: x3
Attack: +2 – thrusting and slashing (bite) – pummelling (claws)
Ranged Attack: +3 (energy) breath weapon
Defence: +2
Stress: 5
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: non magical weapons
Magic: 3
Spells: x3
Monstrous aspect: Love of the Horde of Treasure
These dragons breath molten bronze, and weapons made from this bronze are +1 magical items. They are capable of speech and magic, and are very highly skilled. They grow to a length of over 100 meters, which is about as long as a football pitch.

Centaur
Size: horse/human
Attack: +2 – as weapon
Ranged Attack: +2 – as weapon
Defence: +2 – as armour
Stress: 4
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: N/A
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Run Free or Charge
These are a composite folk, that are sometimes counted as humanoid, and sometimes as monsters, depending on what writer of bestiaries is doing the counting. They are part human and part horse. They have wild animal natures and refuse the constraints of civilisation. They prefer nomadic hunter gatherer lifestyles, but their culture is deep and complex, and their magic users are powerful. They are also very cunning. A hero of a human tribe they were fighting was found to have a magic spell cast on him that made him invulnerable to weapons, so he was beaten into the earth by Centaurs wielding rocks and the branches of trees.

Copper Golem
Size: human
Attack: +1 – pummelling (fists)
Ranged Attack: N/A
Defence: +2
Stress: 4
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: non magical weapons
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Absolutely Will Not Stop
The copper golem looks a little like an antiquated suit of copper armour. The armour has a beaten and hammered look.

Cyclops
Size: 3m tall
Attack: +2 – as weapon
Ranged Attack: +1 – pummelling (hurled rocks)
Defence: +2 – as armour
Stress: 4
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: N/A
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Artisans of the Giants
One-eyed giants, each with a single eye in the middle of their forehead. The Cyclopes are builders of near impregnable fortifications. To say the walls of a castle are 'Cyclopean' is a huge compliment, of which most humanoid fortifications are unworthy.

They also make magic weapons, jewellery and other artefacts, but all of course on such a giant scale that it is useless to humanoids. They often build their fortresses in the underworld, right down at the sources of some of the continent's mightiest volcanoes. The noises they make pounding on metal can be heard all the way up on the surface sometimes. The dwarfs look up to them for their prowess in shaping stone and metal.

Doppleganger
Size: human
Attack: +1 - as weapon
Ranged Attack: +1 – as weapon
Defence: +2 – as weapon
Stress: 2
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: N/A
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Completely Takes On the Character
Melted looking creature that can steal someone's identity, by stealing a mirror from them. As the original ages and they can no longer pass for their target, using their credit and rooming with their friends, they must steal another mirror and begin the process again.

Sometimes the double will impersonate the victim and go about ruining them, for instance through committing crimes or insulting the victim's friends. Sometimes, the double even tries to kill the original or use their fame to advance a nefarious political agenda, but these dopplegangers are rare, most just try to live at their victim's expense.

Fire Dragon, or Red Dragon
Size: 6 – 10m
Attacks: x3
Attack: +2 – slashing, pummelling (tail)

Ranged Attack: +2 – energy (fire breath)
Defence: +2
Stress: 5
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: non magical weapons
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Fierce in Loyalty and Emnity.
These are large creatures in the region of 8m in length, which makes them fearsome, but also a manageable size to use as a steed. They can breath fire and have a metal axe shaped like an arrowhead on the end of their tale which they can use on targets behind them, beside them or even in front of them, striking over their shoulder like a scorpion.

Fomorian
Size: 3m
Attack: +2 – pummelling (horns)
Ranged Attack: +2 – energy (eye rays)
Defence: +2 – as armour
Stress: 4
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: heat
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Ancient and Calm, but Deadly.
These have the body of a giant humanoid and the head of a goat. They can also shoot heat rays from their eyes. These rays are very powerful and can even be used to burn a hole for a well. The ray will continue beaming for 1d10 rounds, if the fomorian is decapitated while using it. The beam can then be used as a weapon by picking up and aiming the fomorian's head.

Forest Lurkers
Size: bear
Attack: +1 – pummelling (claws)

Ranged Attack: N/A
Defence: +2
Stress: 2
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: non magical weapons
Magic: 3
Spells: 1 (brain bolt)
Monstrous aspect: Shadow Lurkers
Lurkers are large fierce creatures, of animal intelligence, that nevertheless have an innate psionic ability that makes them very dangerous indeed. It is a raw spike of pure psionic energy directed at the brains of their prey. Lurkers hunt human through the forests with enormous relish.

Frost Giant

Size: 5m
Attack: +2 – as weapon
Ranged Attack: +2 – energy (breath weapon)
Defence: +1
Stress: 4
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: N/A
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Cold as Ice
They inhabit a world of mist, chill and ice, and its gate can be found in the lower levels of the underworld. Their skins are white and blue and they wear clothes fashioned from the hides of woolly mammoth and woolly rhinoceroses. They can breath a chill cloud of cold that instantly frostbites or even kills a humanoid. They find heat uncomfortable and are rarely encountered anywhere remotely warm. They rarely venture to the surface world at all, and if they do it is almost always in freezing northern latitudes that they have some errand to run.

Giant Snake

Size: 20-50ft long
Attack: +3 – crushing (constrict) or thrusting

(fangs)
Defence: +3 – Agility and leather skin
Stress: 5
Senses: +2 on rolls to smell
Stealth: +2 on rolls to hide and sneak
Poison: Potency 3, Delivery Bite
Giant snakes are common, both above and below ground.

Gnarly Face Ogre

Size: bear size
Attack: +2 – pummelling (fists)
Ranged Attack: N/A
Defence: +1
Stress: 3
Senses: N/A
Stealth: +3
Poison: N/A
Immunity: N/A
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: 'Almost' invisible.
Camouflage skin. Skin is as hard as plate mail.
This ogre is a large, cruel, and hideous humanoid monster. The gnarly face is found ugly and repellent even by other ogres. This creature has a face like the bark of an old and wizened tree. The rest of their skin is similarly gnarled, and they often go naked to take advantage of the camouflage it affords in a forest environment.

Goblin

Size: human child
Attack: +0 – as weapon or slashing (bite)
Ranged Attack: +0 – as weapon
Defence: +2
Stress: 1
Senses: N/A
Stealth: +3
Poison: N/A
Immunity: N/A
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Mischievous
Goblins are very common and numerous monsters. They have green reptilian skim, like

Kobolds, but they are small, weak, uncoordinated, and just a little below human intelligence.

Only about half of those encountered have weapons, and those that do have very poor quality weapons that have been allowed to fall into disrepair. When not armed, they attack with their mouths like a dog, leaping at the opponents and going for the jugular. Their strength is in numbers.

They also have a warrior class of 'hobgoblins' which can be given higher stats - if normal goblins are proving no challenge at all to the players. Goblins make their lairs wherever they can, but will only turn to actually digging a primitive tunnel complex if forced to by bad climate and a lack of other structures to appropriate.

Great Deep Worms
These stats are for a single zone – 1d6 zones must be destroyed to temporarily disable this monster.
Size: truly huge
Attack: +5 – pummelling (head bash)
Ranged Attack: N/A
Defence: +5 – super thick hide
Stress: 5
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: non magical weapons
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: A Force of Nature
Giant armoured worms that burrow through the crust of Magic Realms. They are the largest living creatures on the planet and many worship them as gods. They leave tunnels big enough for a giant to walk down. They are never encountered on the surface. The only times they have ever been seen there are legendary and have presaged cataclysmic events.

They are more usually encountered underground where they fill the tunnel and all that can be seen is a giant disk of iron and diamond teeth embedded in flesh as hard as ceramic. The worm, if attacked is likely to unleash a flood of acid from the giant vats in its body cavities, enough to fill the tunnel with a wall of liquid.

Even giants give the great deep worms a wide berth.

Griffin
Size: horse
Attack: +2 – thrusting and slashing (bite)
Ranged Attack: N/A
Defence: +2
Stress: 2
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: non magical weapons
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Elegant and powerful. This creature has the body of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle. As the lion is traditionally considered the king of the beasts and the eagle is the king of the birds, the griffin is thought to be an especially powerful and majestic creature.

The griffin is also thought of as king of the creatures. Griffins are known for guarding treasure and priceless possessions. They are a protector from evil, witchcraft and secret slander. Griffins not only mate for life, but also, if either partner dies, then the other would continue throughout the rest of its life alone, never to search for a new mate.

A griffin's claw has medicinal properties, it doubles healing for someone who drinks out of it that day. One of its feathers can also be used to restore sight to the blind.

Griffin feathers and goblets fashioned from griffin

claws are therefore highly prized in Hyropean courts. When flying, a griffin can move as fast as lightning from place to place within 100m.

Ghoul
Size: human
Attack: +2 – slashing (bite)
Ranged Attack: N/A
Defence: +0
Stress: 1
Senses: N/A
Stealth: +5
Poison: N/A
Immunity: N/A
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Hungry for Dead Flesh. Blubbery skin is like leather armour.
A monster associated with graveyards and consuming human flesh, often classified as undead. It dwells in burial grounds and other uninhabited places. They are unintelligent and are primarily driven by their instinct to feed. They are nocturnal because they prefer the night to disguise their cannibal activities. Ghouls are known to be deterred by sun and artificial light.

Hook Horrors
Size: human
Attacks: x2
Attack: +2 – trapping and slashing (hooked tentacles)
Ranged Attack: N/A
Defence: +0
Stress: 2
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: N/A
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Flailing Tentacles.
These are ugly green humanoids. These denizens of the underworld have long hooked tentacles for arms, and large circular mouths for grinding up whatever prey comes their way.

Horn-Face Ogre
Size: bear
Attack: +2 – thrusting (horn) or as weapon
Ranged Attack: N/A
Defence: +1 – as armour
Stress: 3
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: N/A
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Like Rhino's with Swords.
An ogre often found feeding on human beings. It has a large head, abundant hair, a voracious appetite, and a strong body. The horn face has the extra ugly feature of a giant horn sprouting from the centre of their elongated faces, like a rhino. They are surprisingly adept at finding weak points in plate mail armour with the razor sharp tip of their horn.

Horned One
Size: hippo size
Attack: +2 – thrusting (horn) or entangling (tongue)
Ranged Attack: +1 – corroding damage (acid spit)
Defence: +0
Stress: 5
Senses: N/A
Stealth: +2
Poison: N/A
Immunity: Immune to everything except fire and magic weapons
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Brainless and Devoid of Thoughts, Except Kill or Swallow Unbelievers.
This creature is not the Horned one itself, but merely a flesh avatar. The Horned One often creates one or two to infest temples and impress local worshippers.
This is a horribly mutated and lumpy creature that looks like a bit like a horned toad, the horns

are as big as those on a rhino nose. It spits acid like a snake spits venom and is savage and unintelligent. It is immune to all weapons except fire, which does not burn it, but shrivels it.

Jack-In-Irons, or Road Giants
Size: 5m
Attack: +3 – pummelling (giant club)
Ranged Attack: N/A
Defence: +2
Stress: 7
Senses: N/A
Stealth: +1
Poison: N/A
Immunity: N/A
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Silent – for a Giant.
Malevolent giants who haunt lonely roads. They sometimes wear a belt made of a drawbridge chain, and from it they hang the heads of their victims. They wield large, spiked or studded clubs.

Kobold
Size: human
Attack: +4 – pummelling (fist) or as weapon
Ranged Attack: +0 – as weapon
Defence: +2 – as armour
Stress: 4
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: N/A
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Ancient and knowledgeable
They are very similar to Dwarves, and share their love of dark underground habitats, but they are even stronger and their skin is thick and tough, and looks like rock. This is great camouflage underground. Many are naked, but some have been influenced by Dwarven culture and wear clothes and armour, and various weapons, although they do not need them.

Kraken
Boss Monster Incarnation 1
Size: vast - 1d6 zones
These stats are for a single zone, all zones must be destroyed to defeat this monster – unleashing the second incarnation.
Attacks: x8
Attack: +2 – slashing and pummelling (tentacles)
Ranged Attack: +2 – energy (electricity)
Defence: +2
Stress: 7
Senses: Knows all
Stealth: +6
Poison: N/A
Immunity: non magical weapons
Magic: 5
Spells: x3
Monstrous aspect: Cthonian Elder God

If the boss monster 1 incarnation is defeated, this monster splits into 1d6 boss monster 2 creatures per original zone.
Boss Monster Incarnation 2
Size: bear
Attack: +2 – pummelling and slashing (single tentacle)
Ranged Attack: +1 – energy (electricity)
Defence: +2
Stress: 2
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: non magical weapons
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Cthonian Entities.

These giant sea monsters are a cross between a whale and a squid, then monstrously mutated.

The Kraken has eight tentacles per zone and they are equipped with sharp hooks. Some swivel, others are three-pointed. The colossal kraken also has very large eyes. .

Lich
Size: human
Attack: +0 – as weapon
Ranged Attack: +0 as weapon

Defence: +0 as weapon
Stress: 2
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: non magical weapons
Magic: 9
Spells: 1d6+10
Monstrous aspect: Combat is for Undead Minions.
Liches have a natural commanding presence felt by other undead, they also know at least ten spells and usually have superior or magical equipment, including their wargear.

They are the result of a transformation, as a powerful magician, king or queen striving for eternal life uses spells or rituals to bind their intellect to their own animated corpse and thereby achieve a form of immortality. Liches are skeletal and have an innate power to command hordes of lesser undead creatures, using them as their soldiers and servants.

Unlike a zombie, which is often depicted as mindless and/or under the control of some magician, a lich retains its independent thought and is as intelligent as a living human - and often, far more so. They are necromancers who are unsatisfied with the level of power that they currently have, wish for longer lives, and seek to unburden themselves from the necessities of bodily functions (such as eating and sleeping) so that they might dedicate every moment of their existence to the attainment of knowledge and power.

Lizard People
Size: slightly larger than human
Attack: +2 – as weapon
Ranged Attack: +2 – as weapon
Defence: +2 – as armour
Stress: 4
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A

Immunity: N/A
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Cold blooded
The lizard people are huge and strong but also intelligent, in game terms their only disadvantage is that they are cold blooded. They are both literally cold blooded, and think in strange, cold-hearted, logical ways compared to the human characters of Magic Realms.
The lizardpeople are even more ancient than humans. Their empire used to have a higher technological development than it does at the present epoch.

Magician's Ape
Size: gorilla
Attack: +2 – thrusting or slashing (bite) or pummelling (fists)
Ranged Attack: N/A
Defence: +2
Stress: 4
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: N/A
Magic: 2
Spells: 1
Monstrous aspect: Malevolent but inquisitive
Magicians are often a solitary breed, and have no need of human contact. They are absorbed in the study of their terrible arts, but they do sometimes need helpers and minions. The magic users of the lizardpeople raised hulking apes to be their brutish helpers in their sorcery.

These apes overthrew the lizardpeople and returned to their trees, but didn't forget the magic they had picked up. Some human mages have started using the apes as helpers again, in foolish imitation of the ancient lizardeen ways.

Minotaur
Size: slightly larger than human
Attack: +2 – thrusting (horns)
Ranged Attack: N/A

Defence: +2 – as armour
Stress: 4
Senses: N/A
Stealth: +2
Poison: N/A
Immunity: N/A
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Stealthy Brutes found in Labyrinths.
This is a creature with the head and tail of a bull on the body of a man. They devour humanoids for sustenance, and construct gigantic labyrinths as strongholds. Each minotaur labyrinth can be home to hundreds, or even thousands of these creatures.

Orcs
Size: human
Attack: +2 – as weapon
Ranged Attack: +1 – as weapon
Defence: +2 – as weapon
Stress: 2
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: N/A
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Strength Comes from Numbers
Orcs are very human looking, though their skin is much paler and often has livid red scars from their many battles for rank and dominance. They also have smaller eyes, with strange colourless grey irises. Their lips are thin, making their mouths resemble an ugly red slit across the front of their faces. Their mouths are also very big, more like an animal's, with a collection of impressive teeth and tusks.

There are a few characteristics of orc society that set it apart. The orcs see themselves more as an army than a society, and their rulers - often liches or baleful titans - take advantage of this to more easily organise and control them.

Although rank and file orcs are poorly equipped and badly trained, their leaders, heroes and champions are a different matter altogether.

They are formidable opponents who rival the very best dwarf warriors for melee abilities, are as swift as humans, as stealthy as halflings and as accurate with the bow as elves.

Their equipment is the best and they have the mental discipline to use any magic item, weapon or armour. (They should be created as NPCs)

Their only real disadvantage is that they are opportunistic, untrustworthy and evil.
Leaders who rely on orcs for the majority of their forces must liberally distribute more trusted lieutenants to make sure that their army does not quickly destroy itself through, looting, corruption, dereliction of duty and bloody infighting between the various orc nationalities.

Razor Back Ogre
Size: bear
Attack: +3 – slashing and crushing (razor spine) or as weapon
Ranged Attack: N/A
Defence: +0 – as armour
Stress: 4
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: N/A
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Surprisingly Agile for such a Huge Brute
This ogre has a large head, abundant hair and beard, a voracious appetite, and a strong body. The razor back is a particularly nasty type, with a row of sharp plates protruding from its spine. With its curved spine, round fat body, and small bandy legs, the ogre is well designed to roll over small opponents, slashing and cutting them at the same time.

Skeleton
Size: human
Attack: +0 – as weapon
Ranged Attack: +0 – as weapon
Defence: +0 – as armour
Stress: 1
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: N/A
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Automaton Warriors
These are the remains of humanoids, reanimated as undead monsters. The skeletons do not usually spontaneously reanimate, although that is not impossible, and instead require a lich to force them back into the pretence of living. They have usually been so long dead that they retain little or no free will, and can be easily ordered around by their master.

Warg
Size: warhorse
Attack: +3 – slashing and thrusting (bite) or as weapon
Ranged Attack: N/A
Defence: +0
Stress: 3
Senses: N/A
Stealth: +2
Poison: N/A
Immunity: N/A
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Stealthy and Sly
These are giant wolves, about the size of a warhorse. They are used as mounts by many evil warriors and champions. These creatures are so debased and demonic that they will allow themselves even to be ridden by the undead, making them a favourite of liches.

Zombie
Size: human
Attack: +0 – slashing (bite)
Ranged Attack: N/A
Defence: +0
Stress: 1
Senses: N/A
Stealth: N/A
Poison: N/A
Immunity: N/A
Magic: N/A
Spells: N/A
Monstrous aspect: Hungry for Brains
These are often encountered in large numbers, and have an instinct to swarm, victims are at -1 to combat rolls per swarming zombie within 2m of them, from crowding stench etc.

These are very similar to skeletons, but have more of a memory of their lives, and, for the necromancer who created them, that makes them just a little harder to control.

Treasure
Magic Items
Magic items add wonder to a fantasy role-playing game. They keep things fresh and are a great reward for players who have overcome great odds.

The strange and secret places of Hyrope are littered with artefacts that are dangerous, super-powerful or sometimes just impossible to understand. Some of these items, either are weapons, or can be used that way.

Armour
Protection in combat has long been a goal of those exposed to this danger, and some of them are able to bring the powers of magic to bear on the problem. The following are items, or full suits of magical armour, created by wizards and dwarven smiths for the mighty heroes of old.

Arrow Turning Armour

This plate armour gives a +10 bonus to defence, but only against ranged weapons. Arrows, daggers and javelins can be seen to turn magically in the air as the approach the wearer, and sometimes this effect is enough to make the missiles miss their target entirely.

Dragon Plate

This plate is made of dragon scales and is totally silent. It is much easier to be stealthy in than normal plate, or even chain.

Ghost Armour

This powerful mail armour allows the wearer to become ghost-like, and float through walls and other obstacles. The wearer moves slowly in this state and can not attack opponents. They are also immune to non-magical weapons in this state.

Hidden Armour

This armour – it could be brigandine, mail, or plate – looks like normal clothing of the wearers choice. It can appear to be the most delicate lace garments, or a beggars rotting rags.

Scorpion Armour

This suit of plate has a pointed tail. The wearer gets an extra tail attack, with a skill level of 90. This armour is bound to excite mistrust and negative reactions in NPCs, as the tail is difficult to hide, and has a demonic look to it.

Weapons

One of the most popular uses of magic is, unfortunately, to cause damage and injury. Magical weapons are just that much better at intimidating and causing injury to enemies.

Autonomous Blade

Many bladed weapons, such as long swords and rapiers, can be found as magical autonomous blades. The wielder must fight an exchange with the intended target. The wielder can then let go of the blade and it will continue to fight with the same skill as the wielder until the target is taken out, or the blade itself is taken out, by being disarmed.

If the blade is taken out, it is slapped to the ground, and may then be picked up and used by anyone. It will once again become autonomous after a round.
If the target is taken out, the blade will return to its scabbard, where it can be drawn and used again.

Far Shot

This magical property can only be added to a ranged weapon. A weapon of far shooting has double the range of a comparable weapon and a +1 magic bonus to hit.

Fire Tongue

If the wielder desires, a fire tongue weapon bursts into flame. The fire does not harm the wielder. The effect remains until another command is given. The fire gives the weapon a +1 magical bonus and can be used to create fire based advantages.

Ice Brand

This magical blade is incredibly cold, giving the weapon +1 to attack, and has the Frozen Corpse aspect.

Severely Venomous Sword

This magical blade is incredibly venomous, giving the weapon +1 to attack, and an extra poison attack per round, potency 6.

Sword of Fierce Wounding

This magical blade is incredibly sharp, giving the weapon +1 to attack, and an extra slashing attack.

Sword of Stern Smiting

This magical blade hits with an incredible impact, giving the weapon +1 to attack, and an extra

pummelling attack.

Sword of Cleaving
This magical blade is vorpal, giving the weapon +1 to attack, and an extra slashing attack.

Returning
A returning weapon flies back to the creature that owns it, immediately after their attack. It is therefore ready to use again in the very next exchange. Returning javelins are often encountered, and every now and then even returning throwing daggers.

Searching
The weapon, usually a ranged weapon, searches out its target, negating any negative modifiers to the roll that would otherwise apply, such as from concealment and cover.

Speedy Strikes
The wielder of a speed weapon may make one extra attack with it.

Rune Weapon
A weapon with a spell stored in it. Any spell can be stored, and is activated when the weapon strikes either its target, or some other object.

Poison Barb
This +1 dagger has the ability to inject poison into its victim. Only one type of poison is available, chosen from the poison section.

Other Magic Items
Belt of Flying
A large metal belt that hums slightly when in operation. It allows the user to fly, the direction and speed is determined by mental command. The user is kept upright, feels no wind at speed, and can swing their arms in combat as though firmly planted on the ground.

Boots of Running
The character wearing these boots can run as fast as a horse, with the stamina of a horse.

Cloak of Shadows
Closing this cloak around the wearer gives them a +10 to hide rolls, due to the excellent camouflage it provides in dimly lit conditions. It is useless if there are no shadows nearby to take advantage of though, for example, at noon in the open desert.

Dragon Helm
These are available in Bronze and Silver. They give the wearer a breath weapon attack that can be used three times per day. The silver helmet gives the same breath weapon as a fell dragon, and the bronze helmet gives the same breath weapon as the bronze dragon.

Helmet of Mind Control
This device allows the user to dominate any one creature's mind. The wearer must best the target in a contest of their Strength of Will. If they win, the target is mentally dominated by the user, forced to do their bidding.

Ring of Shivaraj
Two extra ghostly arms grow from the wearer's torso, giving an extra attack each.

The Skeleton Key
A key that can open any lock.

Stave of Splitting
When this stave is struck against a wall, no roll is required for this, the wall splits in two. This creates a gap big enough for one size 4 creature at a time(such as a human) to squeeze through. The gap does not reseal and there is a small chance that real structural damage is done.

Undead Masters Helm
This is a helmet decorated with skulls, and gives

the wearer power over undead creatures. Zombies and Skeletons do not get a saving roll to avoid its effects, but other undead do. The wearer pits their best mental skill or characteristic against that of the undead target.

Staves and Wands

Staves are the traditional weapons of magicians. Many weapons masters rate the stave as the supreme weapon, and a quarter staff is the first weapon taught to students of the martial arts across Hyrope.

The quarter staff has been superseded in physical combat by more modern and versatile weapons such as the longsword and war hammer, but the trusty staff will never go out of fashion entirely. Especially ancient and magical examples like these.
All these magic items can also be found as wands, which are more concealable and easier to use in confined spaces.

Control Undead
The wielder can bend undead to their will, with almost irresistible power (+80). The undead get a roll to avoid this effect based on their strength of will.

Hurting Bolt Stave
A loud blast of energy projects a little fire ball at the target when the stave, or wand, is commanded to attack the enemy.

Invisible Bolt Stave
The user simply points, and mentally commands the stave, or wand to attack their opponent, and if their aim was good, using their combat skill, this device will magically make a small cauterised hole appear in their enemies. It is invisible and silent, and so can be used without giving away the user's position. There is no difference in power between a stave or wand, but a wand is easier to use in confined spaces.

Thunderbolts
This staff strikes with the power, and frightening noise, of a thunderbolt. It is +10 and forces less motivated opponents to roll against the wielders weapon skill with their strength of will, or similar, to avoid running away. It also attracts a lot of attention, from a wide radius, some of it undoubtedly unwanted.

Viper
If thrown to the ground this staff grows to become a giant viper, in a single round. It is ready to attack in the very next round.

POTIONS
A potion is a magic liquid that has an instant effect upon the drinker.

If there is no label on the bottle, or no linguist capable of reading the label, then there is no real way to know what the effect of the potion will be. Some examples of potions that might be found among the effects of a powerful mage are;

Healing Potion
If the character is dead, but still warm, they will come back to life when this potion is poured into their mouths. A live character drinking the potion is healed of all wounds injuries and other damage, and they feel revitalised too.

Strength Potion
This gives the drinker a Mighty .

RINGS
Rings bestow magical powers upon their wearers. Some are described below.

Elemental Command
An elemental lives in this ring and can be called forth at the wearers whim, a maximum of once per day.

Horn-Headed Ring
This ring induces two horns to grow on the wearers head, giving an extra clubbing attack, at the same level as the wearers combat skill.

Invisibility
This ring gives the character the power of invisibility. They may still be given away by such things as a shadow in strong sunlight and an outline in the rain.

Scrolls and Books
These are magicians recipe books, their study notes, observations and diaries. They are invaluable to another magic user. However to be useful the magic user must be able to

1 – read the language the writer used. This requires an intelligence roll against the obscurity of the language.

2 – They must be able to break any codes that were employed, (which requires a roll against the complexity of the code) and

3 – then understand the arcane secrets being written about. (this requires a roll against the intelligence of the magic user writing the scroll)

4 – The mage can then learn the new spell, which takes 1d6 days. Alternatively the spell can be cast from the page, which shrivels and scorches the page, making the spell unreadable.

Artefacts
Artefacts are devices that have awesome power. Visually, artefacts are rarely subtle – they are covered in arcane runes and mystical carvings, and their use is definitely likely to raise eyebrows.

Artefacts often have intelligence, alignment, and other aspects that give them a will and life of their own.

The Dreaming Sword
When it injures an opponent it forces them to roll to avoid being drawn into its dream world. If the victim fails their roll, they disappear from this world, to become one of the sword's playthings in its private prison dimension.

It is possible, occasionally, for beings to escape this dimension. They magically reappear near the sword, disorientated, and often driven half mad.

The sword is a malevolent presence, but ingratiates itself with its wielder. It can communicate telepathically with those within a five foot radius. It only whispers, never shouts.

Cursed Items
Not all magic items are always a boon for their finder. Some are a curse.

Arrow Attraction
The owner of this item becomes inexplicably attractive to enemy archers, and missile weapon users of all types.

Dancing
A dancing character becomes absorbed in the dance, and can do nothing else.

Poisoned
The handle of this magic item turns into a snake and administers a poisoned bite.

POWERED BY FATE

REALMS

Name

Description

Refresh

Aspects

Backstory

Skills

Superb (+5)

Great (+4)

Good (+3)

Fair (+2)

Average (+1)

Stunts

Gear

Consequences

2

4

6

Physical Stress

Mental Stress

Starbright