

FAVORS

CORE EXPANSION



A favor is earned when a person or organization owes you something in return for a deed you have undertaken for their benefit. In Rassilon, favors come in two types—blood debts and honor debts.

A blood debt is gained when someone's life is saved. Naturally, the person must actually require saving. A player character cannot charge in, slay the last goblin harassing an otherwise uninjured NPC, and then claim he owes a blood debt to the hero because he saved his life. Blood debts are earned only when the NPC is in serious danger of death without the intervention of the player characters. It is common for the rescued individual to state that he owes the characters a blood debt.

Commonly an individual can grant a blood debt only for himself. If the individual is important enough, say a high priest or Lance Knight, he can swear that his organization owes the character a favor. Similarly, a noble may promise that "my household and subjects owe you a great deal." In this instance, the favor is good anywhere in the noble's lands, but only with regard people whom he personally lords over. A temple on his lands won't accept that they have a debt, for instance, but the local healer would.

Honor debts are earned when the favor does involve saving someone's life, but does warrant a reward. For instance, locating a noble's long-lost ancestral sword or supplying information about orc movements in the Icebarrier Mountains to the Hearth Knights are deeds worthy of an honor debt. Again, the aided party should clearly state their intention to grant the heroes a favor. The GM must always ensure the organization or individual aided truly required the characters help before the debt is granted.

Favors should be used to reward characters who role-play well and do the "right thing at the right time." They should not be demanded by the players as a reward for every action, nor should GM allow the spirit of the favor system to be manipulated. Sometimes a simple "thank you" is going to be the characters only recompense for their deeds.

Examples of admitting you owe a debt include, but are not limited to:

"We are in your debt."

"You saved my life. I shall not forget you."

"Were it not for you I would be dead. I am your servant."

"We owe you a debt of gratitude."

"If you need anything, I am at your disposal."

Not all are quite what they literally seem. "I am your servant" does not indenture the NPC to the heroes; it simply means he owes them a favor. Similarly, "I am at your disposal" doesn't mean the character will drop everything he is doing to repay the debt. In both instances they are flowery wording, not a true statement of exacting intent.

● REPAYING FAVORS ●

Repaying favors is handled through an existing game mechanic—the Connections Edge.

In return for whatever service the characters have performed the organization grants the party, not each individual member, a favor. Since the Connection Edge can cover a wide variety of assistance, it makes a great temporary benefit and serves as the basis for the entire favor system.

In theory there is no end to the number of favors the party can accrue, but each is a one-shot reward. Once the Edge is successfully used, the slate is wiped clean for that particular debt. It doesn't matter how trivial the heroes' request is, using the Connection Edge repays the favor.

GMs who feel the characters deed deserves extra reward should grant them multiple uses of the Edge (see below).

While individuals can often provide less assistance than an organization, their use should not be underestimated. The cult of Eira, for instance, may grant *greater healing* as a way of clearing its debt to the characters, but

being able to call upon a noble and his wealth, reputation, and social position is not to be sniffed at.

One important thing to consider is the location of the connection. A noble from Aslov can only be called upon if the party is present in the city or sends word to him—they won't be able to call into any settlement and invoke his favor. Similarly, information travels very slowly, especially in winter. While the entire church of Ertha may owe the characters a favor, it takes time for this news to reach distant shrines and temples.

A failed Streetwise roll is trying to reach the contact doesn't expend the favor. Rather, it simply means the contact isn't available at that time. The party thus retains the favor for future use. Similarly, a failed Persuasion roll could mean the contact cannot fulfill the favor due to a lack of supplies, or perhaps because he doesn't know information they seek. Again, the favor is not expended.

Since each Connection Edge relates to a specific organization or person, the reward should be clearly noted along with the number of uses remaining. Permanent uses, gained through taking the Edge during character generation or through advancements, doesn't have a value recorded. For instance, Connections (Hearth Knights) 1 means the party has a single favor with the Hearth Knight organization, while Connections (Clergy of Eira) is a standard Connections Edge. Typically, the character with the best social skills should record this, as it is likely he who will be calling in the favor.

ABUSING FAVORS

Claiming someone owes you a debt when it isn't true earns the guilty party a hefty -10 Glory penalty. It may also result in a Charisma penalty when dealing with the individual or organization you have falsely claimed owes you a favor. Debts and oaths are important parts of Rassilon's social system, and those who abuse them are heavily shunned.

IT WORKS BOTH WAYS

The vast majority of the civilized races always grant a debt when it is truly due, even if they dislike the characters for some reason. In Rassilon, honor overrides personal feelings. The characters are, of course, expected to do the same.

For instance, if the GM uses a patrol of Hearth Knights to pull the characters fat from the fire, they are expected to honor the Knights with a blood debt. At some point in the future, the Knights will come calling and the characters will be expected to assist them. Refusing to honor a debt for no good reason other than not wishing to incurs a -5 Glory penalty each time the request is turned down.

Thus, the favor system is also a GM tool for getting characters into adventures he has designed—"Exactly why are we entering the haunted Cairn Lands?" "Because Baron Terdig has called in the favor you owe him for rescuing you from that swollen river."

TRADING FAVORS

While an NPC may grant the heroes a favor, the debt can be traded with another individual or organization. Let's take a hypothetical example.

The characters owe the Hearth Knights a favor for aiding them. During an adventure the heroes are badly mauled and seek assistance at the local temple of Eira. Sadly, they are too poor to make a donation. The characters trade their favor owed the Hearth Knights for healing. Now the Hearth Knights owe a debt to the priestesses of Eira instead of the heroes.

Whenever a debt is being traded the GM has the final word on whether it is a valid swap. A blacksmith may readily accept a traded favor from the Hearth Knights in return for making the hero a mail shirt. The Knights are likely to consider this a fair trade, as the smith is probably going to demand less than the heroes. However, the Hearth Knights won't necessarily grant the heroes a favor in return if the characters owe the smith a blood debt and want to trade. Having the entire organization at the party's disposal because they aided one commoner isn't in their best interests.

For the sake of bookkeeping, the GM should assume that suitably traded favors are accepted immediately. Unless he wants to have the heroes wait several weeks while letters confirming the trade are passed back and forth, it simply allows the game to keep running smoothly.

Again, abuse of this system should be swiftly and harshly punished with a -10 Glory penalty.

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