

Bloodlines role playing game

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The world is old but humanity is young. As magic's influence ebbs, and the ancient races with it, the world's dark and dangerous places are bequeathed to a people with only a hint of their ancestors' power.

introduction

If legends are to be believed, magic was once vibrant in the world. Many different peoples lived together in greatness, if not always harmony. However, as the centuries passed and bloodlines blurred, the world changed.

The once-majestic cities of elves and dwarves have shut their gates; their populations dwindle. Angels and demons, who once appeared to manifest the will of the gods, no longer call on the mortal plane. All the while, humanity grows.

None can say if this child-race will survive its coming of age; even as sorcery leaves this world, danger remains. The fate of humanity may well rest on the shoulders of heroes, striking out into the unknown, wielding the last known whispers of the magics that sired them.

characters

Each player should write a **description** of their character; they should work with the game master (GM) and other players to tie their characters to the world and each other.

Character **wounds** are noted, and heal in dramatically appropriate time (usually a night or two of rest). Up to four wounds can be sustained at once; the fifth is fatal.

For each character, sixteen points must be divided between the four **attributes** (Brawn, Finesse, Heart, and Mind). At least one point must go to each attribute.

Brawn indicates a character's strength, stability, and endurance. It's rolled when a character wants to swing a sword, kick down a door, or stomach a poison.

Finesse is a measure of a character's sneakiness, agility, and fine motor skills. Rolls with Finesse can be made to disarm a trap, fire a bow, or quickly duck out of the way.

Heart represents social skills and willpower. It can be rolled to barter or deceive, as well as to sense deception or resist coercion.

Mind demonstrates a knowledge and perception. Tracking monsters, testing a character's knowledge of history, nobility, or languages, and catching wind of an impending ambush all require Mind rolls.

action resolution

An **active roll** is made when a character attempts an action – swinging a sword or telling a lie. A successful roll means the attempted action succeeds. A **reactive roll** is made to counter an action taken against the character – parrying a blow or sensing a falsehood. Again, success is in the character's favor. Only players roll dice.

Rolls are made by throwing a number of dice equal to the character's most relevant attribute score. If at least one die shows “1” the roll is a **success**. If not, it's a **failure**.

The type of die used depends on the difficulty of the roll, as judged by the GM. **Trivial** actions require no roll, **easy** actions use four-sided dice, **difficult** actions use eight-sided dice, and **heroic** actions use twelve-sided dice. Note that the difficulty of a roll should depend not only on the challenge but also on the approach – sometimes it's easier to pick the lock, while other times it's easier to kick down the door.

combat

Turn order during combat is clockwise around the table. The GM goes last, except in cases where they must go first (such as an ambush).

Each character can make a single active roll per round. On the GM's turn, the GM prompts reactive rolls on behalf of monsters. At the GM's discretion, a monster can prompt multiple reactive rolls per turn; for example, a hydra may attack with all seven of its heads! Actions that do not directly involve any character are not rolled for – the GM simply narrates what happens.

Each “1” on a successful active roll allows the character to create an **effect**. A failed reactive roll lets the GM create an effect. Other rolls do nothing. There are two possible effects from a roll: inflicting a wound or making a character (or monster) **unready**.

Unreadiness is a catchall term that indicates a momentary disadvantage; if using miniatures, unreadiness is indicated by laying the miniature on its side. A character can be made unready by grabbing them, exposing their hiding spot, taunting them, etc. An unready character skips their next roll to become ready.

character advancement

At the end of each session, each player permanently increases one of their character's attributes by one.

lineage

Humanity's mythical ancestry sometimes manifests in the form of magical powers – particularly in adventurers with a touch of destiny about them. These manifestations are subtle, only a shadow of what they descend from, but a clever character might still put them to good use.

At the end of a session, instead of incrementing an attribute, a player can choose to add a bloodline from below to their character's lineage, to a maximum of four.

Angels, if the legends are to be believed, fly on golden wings and wield golden swords in service to the gods. Humans of angelic blood speak in voices so beautiful that the wind will carry their words to anyone under the sun.

Changelings are a people without a culture, instead choosing to blend in with the other peoples around them. Humans with changeling ancestry can change their facial structure (though not skin color) at will.

Demons are agents of cruelty and manipulation. Humans of demonic descent can, with a word, summon or dismiss a tiny fire spirit that floats near them like a torch. The spirit can understand rudimentary directions, but becomes less obedient as it moves away from its master.

Dragons are lizards with tongues of flame and titanic intellects. Humans with dragon blood can make sparks fly up to an armspan in any direction from a flame. The sparks cause no damage, but can ignite objects.

Dwarves are a stout, gruff people. They live in great cities carved into the hearts of mountains. Humans of dwarven descent can see normally in even complete darkness.

Elves exhibit an almost otherworldly grace. They sculpt their cities from huge living redwoods. Humans with elven blood can talk to and understand animals.

Gargoyles, despite their fearsome stony appearance, are intelligent and solitary, often meditating for years on end. Humans with gargoyle blood can become statues at will, retaining an awareness of their surroundings. The statues are unbreakable but the transformation takes an hour.

Goblins are a race of small, bald jungle people with exaggerated features – oversized eyes, ears, and teeth. Mortals with goblin blood can change their skin color at will, even crudely imitating patterns.

Halflings are a short, agrarian folk with smooth cheeks and round bellies. They are said to be lucky. Humans with halfling blood can reroll any roll once per day.

Imps are the lesser cousins of demons, more mischievous than evil. A human with impish blood can blink instantly between any shadows large enough to contain them. Only short distances – a few armspans at a time – can be traversed in this way.

Mer are an amphibious people with webbed hands and needle teeth. They live in great pyramid cities under the sea. Humans with mer blood can breathe underwater.

Orcs are a nomadic desert people known by their bright blue-green skin. A human of orcish descent need not sleep (though they may choose to do so).

Sphinxes are wise and vain beings, content to contemplate riddles while their slaves build monuments to their glory. Once per day, a human with sphinx blood can ask the GM a yes-or-no question.

Vampires are cursed to subsist on the blood of the living. Humans of their lineage have not inherited this curse, but do have their transformative power: while in moonlight, they can transform with a word into a wolf or a bat.

Wraiths are semi-corporeal spirits bound to the mortal realm. Their human descendants can summon a pair of ghostly hands to do their bidding (within eyesight). The hands have the strength of a child, and do not feel pain.

Yeti are a tall, beastly folk who make their homes in the icy mountains. Humans of their line can freeze water with a touch, even forming it into crude solid objects.

monsters

Monsters have minimalist stat blocks: they are defined completely by their number of wounds. That is, the flavor of a monster comes from the GM's skillful description of its behavior. Below are examples of the sorts of monsters that might fall at each number of wounds.

1 Wound – Kobold, Skeleton, Wild Dog.

2 Wounds – Mummy, Small Elemental, Zombie.

3 Wounds – Giant Spider, Skeletal Knight.

4 Wounds – Minotaur, Pteranodon, Swarm of Rats.

5 Wounds – Ogre, Stegosaurus, Wyvern.

6 Wounds – Phoenix, Sea Serpent.

7 Wounds – Hydra, Living Statue.

8 Wounds – Kraken, Tyrannosaurus Rex.

character name

player name

Bloodlines

role playing game

description

attributes

BRAWN

finesse

heart

mind

lineage

wounds