



SLAYERS

BY SPENCER CAMPBELL

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SLAYERS

What is Slayers?

Slayers is a tabletop RPG in which the players take on the role of Slayers: mercenaries and monster hunters for hire. The game takes place in a haunted ever-expanding city, set in a world just on the cusp of an industrial revolution. Slayers help clean out the city's dark secrets that make their way in from the wilds beyond the city limits, as well as from within.

The goal of Slayers is a rules-lite system for fast action, and exciting combat. In order to create interesting combat, the classes have been designed to be very asymmetrical from one another. At its core, this game uses a resolution mechanic called the Rule of 4+ for all actions, but how each class approaches this mechanic in combat is quite different.

Asymmetry?

What do I mean by asymmetrical? Asymmetry in an RPG to me means that each class *feels* different than the others. They approach the game with a different method, and the mechanics should then represent that difference.

For example, the Blade, is designed to simulate stylish and fast sword fighting, and so they use exploding dice to create huge combos of attacks. The Gunslinger however, has to manage a pool of 6 bullets during combat, deciding when and how many to spend on a given attack, and when is the right time to reload. Despite these being two different approaches, they both are resolved using the Rule of 4+.

The Setting

Slayers takes place in The City, a haunted urban sprawl that takes that idea very seriously. The City spreads on forever, with no obvious borders. Districts and neighborhoods emerge as if The City willed them into existence. As such, The City is a cosmopolitan place, filled with people of all backgrounds and creeds. Unfortunately, The City also has a monster problem. Whether these creatures existed beyond the walls and were absorbed in, were always here, or made manifest by the arcane foundation of The City is unknown. What is clear though, is that the Slayers have their work cut out for them. You can find more about the setting in The City sourcebook, which will be released on gilarpgs.itch.io.

What Do You Need?

To play Slayers, you're going to need at least two people to play. Some players will be Slayers, and one will be the GM. This book assumes you are familiar and comfortable with the concepts of player characters and Gms. Once you've got your players, time to gather the materials.

Someone will need to have read this book so they know the core rules. There is a rules reference sheet (page 39) that will be helpful for everyone to have handy. Each player will need a set of polyhedral dice (d4, d6, d8, d10, d12), and a character sheet of the class they've chosen.

Rules for each class, including character creation and advancement, can be found later in this book. You can find the character sheets online at gilarpgs.itch.io. Players should be familiar with their class's rules before sitting down to play. This is especially important given the asymmetry of Slayers!

Play Cycle of Slayers

Slayers takes place in cycles called Hunts. At the beginning of a Hunt, the GM will introduce the Slayers to what they have been hired to kill and where in The City the Hunt will take place. After successfully hunting their target, the Slayers will reflect, advance their characters, and prepare for their next job.

RULE OF 4+

In Slayers, there is one rule that applies no matter how many dice you are rolling or what size they are: **a roll of a 4+ is a Hit**. This rule applies for any roll, in or out of combat. Most actions require just 1 Hit in order to succeed, though more difficult situations may call for multiple hits. Conversely, any die that is less than 4 is a Miss.

Slayers takes place between two different modes: combat and non-combat. While not in combat, Slayers and the GM resolve actions and conflict through roleplaying. The dice are only picked up once a Slayer has decided they are attempting an action where there is a chance for failure, and the consequences of that failure have weight to them. Whenever a Slayer makes such an action, they make a roll.

Skills

If you aren't attacking something, you're probably making a skill roll. After determining what skill is appropriate for the action (see list below), roll the skill's assigned die. Slayers can assist one another with actions when appropriate, adding a die equal to the helping player's skill die size. The helping ally will suffer any consequences along with you. Whenever you roll more than one die for a skill roll, use the highest roll. A 4+ is a Hit, and the action succeeds. Anything else is a Miss; the intended action fails, and the GM introduces a complication or consequence.

Skills are also used during combat, and are resolved the same way as described above when used during a fight.

NPCs never make skill rolls. Instead, their actions and reactions are determined by the Slayer's rolls.

Weight

Failure with weight means that something in the fiction will happen if an action fails. When an action fails, move the story forward with the consequence, and provide a new opportunity for the Slayers to address. Just saying "It doesn't happen" isn't very fun or interesting!

SKILL LIST

Below is the list of skills each Slayer has, along with some examples of their use. The examples are by no means an exhaustive list. If there is ever a question of what skill is being used, discuss it as a table.

All Slayers have access to every skill, they are just better at some than others. This is reflected in the size of the die they have in that skill. More on skill dice and improving your skills can be found in character creation later in the book.

Agile: Dodging, leaping, even cart rolling.

Brawn: Physical work, powering through, intimidating.

Deceive: Lying, tricking, distracting.

Hunt: Hunting, tracking, monster knowledge.

Mend: Warding death, stabilizing wounds, medical training.

Negotiate: Persuading, diplomacy, compelling.

Stealth: Blending in, keeping quiet, sleight of hand.

Streets: Social circles, navigating the city, purchasing power.

Study: Perception, reading a scene or person, doing research.

Tactics: Strategic intel, preparing for a foe, reacting to a battle.

COMBAT

Theater of the Mind

Combat in Slayers uses the theater of the mind, meaning many decisions in combat are made based on what makes sense in terms of the fiction, rather than mechanically tracking things such as movement speed.

Relative Distance

Movement and distance aren't measured in detail. Instead, distance is determined abstractly.

- Engaged: Within melee range, an arm's length away.
- Near: A short sprint away.
- Far: Anything beyond Near.

If there is ever a question of how far two things are from one another, ask the GM.

Turn Order

When combat begins, all combatants must determine their place in the turn order. Each Slayer rolls their class's Speed die. Monsters have flat turn order values, and so don't roll. If a Slayer is tied with a monster, the Slayer acts first. If two Slayers are tied, they may decide who will go first. Combat in Slayers is made of rounds and turns.

Round vs. Turn

A round begins with the character highest in the turn order, and ends after the character lowest in the order completes their turn. Slayers keep their turn order between rounds, unless an action by a Slayer or monster would change that order. A turn is when a character acts during the turn order.

Only one roll is used to create the turn order. However, some abilities and actions allow characters to change theirs or other combatant's place. The GM will keep track of the turn order throughout the combat.

Combat Actions

A Slayer may take up to two actions during their turn. They may make any combination of these actions, in any order they like, but may not do an action twice (unless an ability or advance says otherwise).

Move

Moving from one range distance from a target or location to another. This can mean moving closer (e.g. Near to Engaged) or further away (e.g. Near to Far).

Attack

When attacking a monster, a Slayer will use their class's unique attack action. No matter the class, when attacking, any dice that result in a 4+ are Hits. Misses don't create a consequence or complication, they just don't deal damage.

Quick

Each class has a quick action that is designed for that specific class.

Skill

A Slayer may use a skill to help change their position in the fight, or gain insight or an advantage. Before making such a roll, the Slayer should declare what they want, and the GM will let them know if it is feasible. In some instances this may afford them a bonus on a future roll based on the success of the skill roll. In others, they have positioned themselves to accomplish something they weren't able to before. Here are some examples of skill rolls being used in combat:

- Using a Brawn roll to push away a monster that is holding onto you or an ally.
- Tactics to gain insight in how the monster works, perhaps learning its HP or what some of its actions are.
- After Stealthily moving into shadows before launching an attack, the GM decides the Slayer should attack with advantage.
- Compel may convince a desperate foe to back down, but it might also fall on deaf ears.

Attacking, Advantage, & Disadvantage

If a character has positioned themselves in such a way that they have the edge on a combatant, they may roll with Advantage. Whenever a character has Advantage, roll each die in the attack twice, keeping the higher of the two. If a character is in a really bad position, they roll with Disadvantage. When a character has Disadvantage, roll each die in the attack twice, keeping the lower of the two.

Slayers and GMs should work together to decide when a character has Advantage or Disadvantage. Here are some examples of when you might have either:

Advantage

Ambushing someone

Target is distracted

Using Brawl to knock them down first

Disadvantage

Being ambushed

Immobilized, slowed, or distracted

Being attacked from a great distance away

Skills

Advantage and Disadvantage are only for combat. However, some GMs may want to include them as part of skill rolls outside of combat. If you do, the Slayers will be even more effective during their hunts. Decide what best fits the tone and style of your table!

Damage, Healing, & Death

Every attack action deals damage depending on the number of Hits. Damage is subtracted from the target's HP. When not in combat, a Slayer will heal back to full HP after resting a day. Slayers can also be healed using spells, gear, or negotiating healing services from someone.

If a monster's HP is reduced to 0, they are dead or defeated. When a Slayer's HP drops to 0, they are approaching death, and will die if not tended to. Slayers can be stabilized and saved from death, though this can only be attempted once. If it fails, they have died. A dying Slayer is stabilized with a successful Mend roll from an ally. Any spell or gear that would restore HP can be used to stabilize as well. A stabilized Slayer remains at 0 HP until the end of the fight, and then is restored to 1 HP.

Gear & Currency

Slayers don't keep a detailed inventory of everything they have on them. We assume they keep their weapons with them, and enough currency to last a day for food and shelter. Anything that they want beyond that, they will need to negotiate for. If there is a question on whether a Slayer can afford something, they can roll Streets.

There is no shopping for better equipment either. A Slayer is bound to their weapon, and would only get another if they lost theirs. As such, you won't find an extensive shopping table in this book. Below you will find some items that Slayers may bargain for, or try to acquire to help them with their job:

- Healing salves, ointments, and tinctures
- Climbing gear
- A spell from a local hedgemage
- Clothing that is fire-resistant
- Food or bait for a monster
- Service from a local, such as a courier, spy, or healer



CLASSES

Below you will find a brief description of each class followed by the rules for character creation. Also included in this book are character sheets for each class, and a list of advances that can be taken in order to improve your Slayer with time.

Blade

The Blade is an expert fighter who carves their way across the battlefield with graceful lethality. Moving at a near supernatural speed, Blades are able to hit their foes again and again, tearing them to shreds before they even have a chance to react. Blades change both their weapons and fighting technique on the fly to adapt to the ever-shifting battlefield.

Gunslinger

While most wield blades or flintlock pistols and rifles into battle, the Gunslinger has access to an incredibly rare weapon: the six-shooter revolver. These weapons are specially crafted, and each Gunslinger has a special connection with their six-shooter as they tinker and customize it to their liking. These dangerous weapons mean most keep their distance from Gunslingers, and many 'Slingers lead lives as drifters and Slayers.

Arcanist

The Arcanist is a spell casting Slayer, whose power comes from a source that is slowly destroying them. The Arcanist's mind and body are taxed as the corruption from their power source drains them. Use your spells too much though, and the corruption will create chaos in your plans.

Tactician

Tacticians read a battlefield like a scholar reads a book. They use their expertise in tactics and leadership to coordinate the efforts of Slayers. Without them, Slayers are just chaotic killers, or so the Tacticians believe. While their fighting days may be behind them, or never really began, the Tactician ensures that their allies move strategically while their enemies falter.

CHARACTER CREATION

Slayers go through many of the same steps during character creation. Here you will find the rules for creating your character.

1. Choose your class.
2. Set one skill as a d10, two skills as d8, and all other as d6.
3. Select two basic advances to start with.
 1. If you are an Arcanist, you cannot choose to add another Known Spell during character creation.
4. Record your starting stats based on your class and advances you have taken.
5. Name and describe yourself. Why did you become a Slayer? Where were you trained, if you were trained at all? How long have you been doing this? Will it ever end?

Advancing Your Slayer

After a successful Hunt, your character improves. Before that however, have each Slayer reflect on the experience and answer at least one of the following questions:

- What did you learn about yourself this Hunt?
- What did you learn about an ally this Hunt?
- Would you have done things differently?
- What about this Hunt will stick with you for quite some time?

Roll 1d6 and increase your total HP. Next, increase one skill from d6 to d8. If all of your skills are already at least d8, you may instead increase one skill to d10.

Finally, you may choose an advance. Basic advances may be taken at any time, and expert advances may only be taken after you have 5 basic advances.



BLADE



Starting Stats

HP: 10
Speed: d8
Weapon Dice: 1d6
Damage Per Hit: 2

Basic Advances

- The first roll of your attack is always with Advantage.
- Reroll the first 1 rolled during an attack.
- Parry applies to any allies within Engaged range of you.
- Increase both effects of Slay +1.
- Change Speed die to d10 and always roll it with Advantage.
- Always increase total HP by 5 when advancing, instead of rolling.
- If a monster attacks you, your next attack against them is made with advantage.

Expert Advances

- Increase Weapon Dice to 2d6.
- Make a free attack action using Flow.
- Hit on 3+ when attacking.
- When a monster has half HP or less, all of your attacks against them are with advantage.
- Hits from attacks with Advantage deal +1 damage each.

BLADE

HP
Speed
Weapon Dice
Damage

Name

Style

Agile	Brawn	Deceive	Hunt	Mend
Negotiate	Stealth	Streets	Study	Tactics

ATTACK ACTION - COMBO

Choose a monster at Engaged range and roll your Weapon Dice. Any dice that are a Hit trigger a combo, and you roll another attack die. You continue to combo until you no longer roll a Hit. Add up the number of Hits, and deal damage based on your weapon's damage.

QUICK ACTION - STANCE

You may change your fighting stance. Any effects from your stance will remain until you use another quick action to change your stance.

- Flow: After you kill a monster, you may take a free Move action.
- Parry: Monsters need a 5+ to Hit you instead of 4+.
- Slay: +1 damage per Hit, but take +1 damage from monster Hits.

BASIC ADVANCES

EXPERT ADVANCES

GUNSLINGER



Starting Stats

Starting HP: 8

Speed: d6

Trigger Limit: 4

Damage Per Hit: 1

Basic Advances

- Increase Trigger Limit +1. Can be taken 2 times.
- Carve a rune into your gun. Can be taken 3 times.
- Increase Speed to d8.
- First bullet fired from a fully loaded gun is rolled with Advantage.
- Last bullet in the gun deals +2 damage per Hit.

Expert Advances

- You can choose more than one target when you Sling Lead. Choose how many dice for each before rolling.
- Carve a rune into your gun. Can be taken 3 times.

Runes

When you carve a rune into your gun, choose a rune from the list below and write it on a chamber that doesn't have one yet. Any bullet fired from that chamber has the additional effect of the rune. A chamber can only hold one rune, and once a chamber has a rune, it cannot be undone.

- Hollowpoint: +2 damage on Hit.
- Blast: Target is pushed back from Near to Far.
- Tar: Deals no damage. Target takes 1 fewer action on their next turn.
- Snare: Deals no damage. Target makes their next action with disadvantage.
- Bleed: Deals no damage. Target loses 1 HP at the start of each of its turns until dead.
- Accurized: Hits on a 3+ instead of a 4+.

GUNSLINGER

HP

Speed

Trigger Limit

Damage

Name

Style

Agile

Brawn

Deceive

Hunt

Mend

Negotiate

Stealth

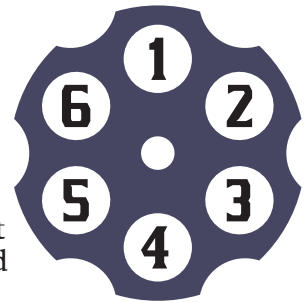
Streets

Study

Tactics

ATTACK ACTION - SPRAY LEAD

At the start of combat place 6d6 in front of you, representing the bullets in your gun. When you Spray Lead, choose a Near or Far monster and pick up as many bullets as you would like to fire, up to your Trigger Limit. You may use bullets from any chamber that you currently have loaded. Each bullet that Hits deals damage. Bullets that have been rolled are spent, and are not available until you reload.



QUICK ACTION - RELOAD

You may reload up to two bullets into any empty chambers.

RUNES

1	4
2	5
3	6

BASIC ADVANCES

EXPERT ADVANCES

ARCANIST

Starting Stats

HP: 6

Speed: d4

Known Spells: Choose 3

Basic Advances

- Add a spell to your Known Spells. Can be taken 2 times.
- Advance a spell. Can be taken 2 times.
- May reroll your Bane roll. Choose which result to keep.
- You can lose 1 HP instead of taking a point of Corruption.
- When you boost a spell, add 1d8 instead of 1d6.

Expert Advances

- Add a spell to your Known Spells. Can be taken 2 times.
- Advance a spell. Can be taken 2 times.
- Always roll 1d8 when casting a spell instead of 1d6.



ARCANIST

HP

Speed

Corruption

Name

Style

Agile

Brawn

Deceive

Hunt

Mend

Negotiate

Stealth

Streets

Study

Tactics

ATTACK ACTION - CAST SPELL

Choose a Known Spell and roll 1d6 to cast it, marking 1 point of corruption after resolving the spell's effect. You can boost a spell, adding d6 to the roll, but also increasing the corruption by 1. After resolving a spell, compare the highest rolled die to your current corruption. If you have more corruption, roll on the Bane table and reset your corruption. Corruption is reset at the end of combat.

QUICK ACTION - PURGE CORRUPTION

Roll 1d6. On a Hit, remove 1 corruption, on a Miss remove none.

BASIC ADVANCES

EXPERT ADVANCES

KNOWN SPELLS

d6	BANE
1	-1 for next Skill roll
2	Next spell is with Disadvantage
3	Can't use Move action next turn
4	Can't use Quick action next turn
5	Only 1 action next turn
6	Take damage equal to corruption

ARCANIST SPELLS

CORRUPT

Range: Engaged

Effect: The target is affected by your corruption. Every time you cast a spell, the affected target takes 1 damage. Lasts until the target or you are dead.

Boost: Target takes damage equal to your current corruption instead.

Advance: When target dies, the spell jumps to another target of your choice within Near.

EXPLODE

Range: Engaged and Near

Effect: Everyone within Near of you, including allies, takes damage equal to your current corruption.

Boost: Damage is doubled.

Advance: Damage includes the corruption gained from casting this spell, and boosting if applicable.

ARCANIST SPELLS CONTINUED

HEX

Range: Any

Effect: Choose 1 effect. Effect lasts until the end of the target's next turn.

- Target must roll 5+ to Hit
- Target cannot Move
- Target attacks nearest ally

Boost: Effect lasts 2 turns.

Advance: Choose 2 effects instead.

SIPHON

Range: Engaged

Effect: The target loses 1 HP and you gain 1.

Boost: Gain all lost HP and target loses the same amount.

Advance: Increased to 2 HP at base effect instead of 1.

ENERGY BOLT

Range: Near and Far

Effect: Choose a target. 1 damage per Hit.

Boost: 3 damage per Hit

Advance: Now deals 2 damage per Hit instead of 1.

FEAR CLOUD

Range: Near

Effect: On a Hit, the target and anyone at Engaged range of them are temporarily afraid of you and Move away from you until the start of your next turn.

Boost: Those affected are paralyzed and cannot move or act instead of fleeing.

Advance: Target can now be at any range.

MEND

Range: Any

Effect: Roll 1d6 for each Hit. Target heals HP equal to total. This can also stabilize a dying character.

Boost: 2d6 HP per Hit.

Advance: If you heal for at least 4 HP, you may also remove one corruption from yourself.

TEMPORAL SHIFT

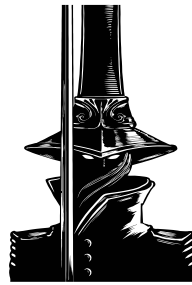
Range: Near and Far

Effect: If the target is a monster, they take 1 fewer action their next turn. If the target is a Slayer, they take 1 more action next turn.

Boost: Affects 2 actions normally instead of 1.

Advance: Slayers may do the same action twice when affected by Temporal Shift.

TACTICIAN



Starting Stats

HP: 8

Speed: d4

The Tactician has a unique type of action: the Combat Action. This is an action that can be taken anytime during combat, not during the Tactician's turn. This action represents the Tactician helping their allies fight more efficiently, and foil the actions of their enemies.

Basic Advances

- Add 1d6 to your Strategy Pool before rolling it. Can be taken 3 times.
- You may roll d4s in place of any number of d6s in your Strategy Pool.
- You may roll d8s in place of any number of d6s in your Strategy Pool.
- Instead of replacing a die, you may add or subtract a Strategy Pool dice for a roll.
- When a monster is killed, roll 1d6 and add it to the Pool.
- You and your allies all roll their Speed with Advantage.

Expert Advances

- When using Issue Command, ally Slayers may make an Attack action.
- Ally Gunslingers reload 3 bullets instead of 2.
- Ally Blades make their next attack after changing their stance with Advantage.
- Ally Arcanists Hit on a 3+ when using Purge Corruption.

TACTICIAN

HP

Speed

Name

Style

Agile

Brawn

Deceive

Hunt

Mend

Negotiate

Stealth

Streets

Study

Tactics

COMBAT ACTION - STRATEGY POOL

When combat is about to begin, the Tactician scans the battlefield and prepares to help their allies while hindering their foes. Before any actions are taken, the Tactician rolls a number of d6 equal to their Tactics skill die size. These form the Strategy Pool. During combat, the Tactician can replace a die rolled by either an ally or an enemy with any of their Strategy Pool dice. Once that die has been used, it is discarded for the remainder of combat. This does not count as an action and is done during other combatent's turns.

STRATEGY POOL

ATTACK ACTION - SLASH OR SHOOT

Roll 1d6 against an Engaged or Near target. On Hit, deal 1 damage.

BASIC ADVANCES

QUICK ACTION - ISSUE ORDERS

Choose another Slayer within Near. That Slayer may immediately make a Move or Quick action for free.

EXPERT ADVANCES

GM SECTION

A Note From the Designer

At its heart, Slayers is meant to create exciting combat, where each player feels like they are uniquely contributing to the fight.

In order to create that feeling, I'd like to talk about the Rule of 4+, asymmetry, and balance to best describe the goals and intentions of this game. After that, I'll give you some advice on monsters and running a session of Slayers, with an example adventure you can use as much or as little of as you'd like.

Honestly Slayers will likely rub against a number of assumptions traditional RPG players are used to. But those differences are what excite me about the game, and I hope inspire you to think about RPGs in a new way. I'll leave it in your hands, and know you'll make Slayers your own.

The City

The City, the setting of Slayers is city cursed to expand forever. The walls and borders shift with time as districts pop up with new ways of life, and new opportunities for Slayers. You will find a full description of The City, including lore, factions, and districts to use in The City sourcebook. In the meantime, if you're looking for touchstones, I would recommend Castlevania on Netflix, or the city of Doskvol in John Harper's Blades in the Dark RPG.

Rule of 4+

The intent behind the 4+ Hit System is to move the rolling part of roleplaying along quickly and easily. Whenever anyone needs to roll, they just need to count the number of 4+s to determine if they were successful, or how much damage they deal.

The other purpose is to have 1 Hit be enough to succeed on most tasks outside of combat. Success is likely for a number of actions, especially if the Slayers are using the skills they are especially good at and working together. This is good! You aren't looking for them to fail. Their lives are in enough danger fighting monsters. But when they do fail, use the opportunities of Misses to complicate their lives in meaningful and interesting ways.

Asymmetry

The inspiration behind Slayers is to allow players to truly feel different from one another when they choose their class. Each class approaches combat very differently, but they are all united by the Rule of 4+. Regardless of if a Slayer is using exploding dice, resource management, or push your luck, they all ultimately want to roll 4+.

It's important however, that the players are aware of the rules of their class, and how it works. When playing together as a table, it is possible that every Slayer is using different combat mechanics based on their class. To help keep the game running smoothly, remember the Rule of 4+, and impress upon the players that they need to know how their character works. You as the GM have enough to worry about making the world feel alive and frightening, let the players worry about the rules.

Balance

There are two aspects of balance to consider when playing Slayers. The Slayers vs. Monsters, and Slayers compared to one another. The first is relatively easy to handle: **There is no combat balancing in Slayers.** There are no magic numbers that tell you what a fair fight is, and what is going to be a bloodbath. That's because these are monster hunters doing very dangerous work. They will ultimately become quite powerful themselves, but there are big beasts out in the world that can crush them, and that's ok. That's not to say you should just kill them to prove a point. But if you signal to them the dangers of situations so they can make informed decisions, you will have more interesting monster hunts than recklessly running into situations that end in death.

Classes compared against one another is a whole other issue to consider. Are the classes in Slayers perfectly balanced against one another? Probably not. There are only so many combat simulations and dice math you can run to make sure that's the case. What is more important is perceived balance. If I did my job right, the players will feel like they embody their class in combat, and that's way more important.

MONSTERS

Monsters is a catchall term for anyone that the Slayers decide to fight. Usually these are beasts and creatures, but humans can be pretty monstrous too. In combat, Monsters function similarly to the Slayers, with some exceptions. See an example monster below:

Bandit

Wearing little more than rags and carrying small blades, they are dangerous in large numbers.

HP: 3

Turn: 3

Actions (1)

- **Slice:** (A). 1d6. 1 damage per Hit, +1 if they attack from behind.
- **Fight Dirty:** (A). 1d6. Attacks against target are at +1 until the end of their next turn.
- **Desperation:** (R). If brought to 1 HP, immediately Slice a Slayer that is at Engaged range.

Actions, Reactions, & Ongoing

Monsters may make a number of actions per turn equal to the number in the parentheses. They may also make one move action. Actions are specific to the monster, and noted with an (A). Some actions do not require a roll. If a roll is needed, the dice used will be the first thing listed, and the Rule of 4+ always applies: **actions of monsters count a roll of 4+ as a Hit.**

Some monsters have ongoing effects. These do not need to be activated, but instead are passive effects that are always present, or present when certain conditions are met. They are noted with a (O).

A monster may also have one or more reactions available to them. These are actions that they can take outside of their turn, though a monster may only use one reaction during a round. They are marked with an (R).

Creating Monsters

You will find a number of monsters to use at the back of this book. In addition, The City sourcebook will have an expanded list of monsters. But you also probably want to start making your own monsters. Consider these points when making a monster.

HP and Turn help set the stage of whether this monster is a grunt, or something with a bit more power. The average Slayer is going to have a turn order score of about 4, so decide where you want this monster to go in the order.

Most simple monsters will have low HP and Turn, and will only do one action on their turn. More dangerous foes will have larger HP, faster Turn, and can do multiple actions. Regardless of how many actions they can take, most monsters have around three actions they are able to choose from, including ongoing effects and reactions. Any more than that and combat starts to slow down as the GM considers all their options. If you are making a big showcase monster, like the boss in the arc of a campaign, then it is appropriate to add a few more specialty actions. See Drauzhal (page 29) in the example Hunt as an example of a boss monster that uses some special actions.

Ongoing effects can be particularly powerful, even on simpler monsters because they do not require the monster to use an action. This has a big impact on the action economy of a fight. Use them sparingly, and in ways that fit the theme or purpose of the monster, rather than as a way of buffing them and making things harder for the Slayers.

You might be tempted to use variable damage, especially if you come from a system that uses it. But I encourage you to use it sparingly. Combat in Slayers is meant to be quick, and an attack should just be represented with a roll for Hits, then flat damage per Hit. Rolling to Hit, then rolling for damage not only slows things down, but makes the damage of monsters unpredictable compared to the steady rate coming from the Slayers.

THE HUNT

Slayers is played in cycles known as Hunts. A Hunt begins with the GM introducing the district of The City that it will take place in.

Districts

The City is ever-expanding, and there doesn't seem to be any sign of it stopping any time soon. Districts crop up from time to time, as if The City willed them into existence. A district is an abstract unit of space, meant to describe an area of The City which shares a number of features. Think of the neighborhoods that make up where you live, and you've got an idea of what districts are. In The City source book, you will find more detailed rules for creating your own districts, as well as a number of existing districts in The City, and how to build your own version of The City with a hexmap.

In the meantime, if you want to make a district, keep in mind that each district is made up of the following parts:

- **Description:** Including appearance, it's role in The City, what is typically found there, and other important cultural pieces of information. Keep in mind that districts can be very different from one another, so don't worry if the tone of one district doesn't match its neighbor.
- **Key Locations:** Three or more locations that are important to the district. These don't necessarily have to be locations that the Hunt will take place in, but it is important to have them so that the theme of the district remains clear and present.
- **Rumors:** These are the opportunities that the Slayers can follow up on in the district. Typically, each rumor is the start of its own Hunt, though you may string multiple rumors together to demonstrate a sizable issue.

After learning about the opportunities available to them, the Slayers will choose a rumor to follow up on, and the Hunt begins!

Designing a Hunt

At the very least, a Hunt needs something to be hunted. As the Slayers are monster hunters for hire, that thing is most likely a monster or monsters.

Monsters

Pick one of the monsters listed at the back of this book, or make your own! Whatever the Slayers are hunting, you will want to put some other monsters in their way. Intelligent monsters usually have some underlings protecting them. Even more primitive beasts will keep the company of others, either as protection, companions, or food. In order to come up with which monsters to use, consider the locations for the Hunt.

Locations

While a Hunt takes place in a district, that can be a pretty large area to cover. A list of locations that the Slayers will need to visit in order to either find, or learn about the will help keep the Hunt focused. You will need at least the location or lair of the target, and then consider other locations that are along the way to the lair. For example, the Slayers are hunting a particularly fierce Giant Spider down in the sewer system. The Giant Spider will definitely have a webbed nest as a location, but there will be rooms and corridors in the sewer that will need to be traversed. Plus, whoever hired them probably doesn't live in the sewers, so decide where they are getting the job and make that a location too!

Numbers

There is no way to balance this, plain and simple. The more Monsters you throw at the Slayers, the more likely they are to die. You will learn the limits of the Slayers through play, and that's why it is important to include multiple encounters at multiple locations. Start with some easy fights in the beginning to gauge the Slayer's power, then start to crank it up as the Hunt goes on.

EXAMPLE DISTRICT - SLAYER'S ROW

Slayer's Row is aptly named because it is where most Slayers end up between jobs. Rest and relaxation can be found, as well as leads for your next hunt.

Appearance: Crowded streets, cobblestone roads, mismatched buildings. There is little presence of City Guard here, as the Slayers are willing to keep the peace in return for having a district to call home.

Key Locations

- The Rat Catcher: Popular inn for Slayers. Go-to location for finding legitimate and illegitimate work.
- Fleshmarket: Traders of literal flesh of all kind, including monsters. Refine corpses down to their essential parts.
- Blade Academy: Largest independent training hall of sword fighters. Training grounds for most Blades.

Rumors

- Slayers have been appearing dead in the streets and alleys. Slayers die all the time in their line of work, but this is unusual because it's happening in Slayer's Row.
- Some Slayers have been flashing more coin than usual, most after leaving the Fleshmarket. Something to worry about, or to cash in on?
- There have been multiple reports of businesses in the Row being disrupted: deliveries never arriving, patrons no longer shopping. Who or what is trying to mess with the district?

EXAMPLE HUNT - LORD OF THE (UN)DEAD

The Barrows is a district of the City that has been quarantined for a couple weeks. Whoever made the order hasn't said anything, but there are good people who still live inside those walls. Interesting thing about this quarantine is that nobody seems to be trying to get out, but some people are trying to break in. Those who do, don't come back out. You've been hired to investigate the Barrows, get to the bottom of the source of the quarantine, and deal with it if possible.

Premise: A powerful arcanist, Drauzhal, has gotten his hands on a crown, now fused to his skull. The Black Crown promised great power, and gave it. Drauzhal can now control the undead. The Barrows has a number of graveyards in it (hence the name), and Drauzhal has begun to raise them. But he can't control them all, and now there are hordes of undead wandering the district. Drauzhal is sending out some of his most loyal wights to capture individuals with psychic abilities, and is funneling their power into a stone that will fit into the Black Crown and give him wider ranging control. Stop the wights from getting in, destroy the jewel, kill Drauzhal, anything to stop him before he smashes those quarantine walls down.



Act 1: Outside the Barrows

The Slayers will likely want to investigate a little before jumping the gates into the Barrows. Not many people know what is going on, but they can figure out the following with some questioning:

- The Barrows are a beautiful place and revered by many.
- Inquisitors are in charge of the quarantine as opposed to City Guard, which means the threat isn't mundane.
- People who are getting grabbed come from all walks of life.
- Enough questioning will reveal the psychic theme.

Conflict: One fight outside the walls is with an intelligent wight, taking back an unconscious psyker into the Barrows.

Wight

HP: 10

Turn: 5

Actions (2)

- **Slash:** (A) 2d8. 1 damage per Hit.
- **Poison Knives:** (A) 1d6. Slayer take 1 damage at the start of their turn until a successful Mend action is taken.
- **Adapt:** (O) After reaching half HP, increase all damage dealt by Wight +1.



Act 2: Exploring the Barrows

The streets of the Barrows are poorly lit. The lamp system hasn't been well-maintained since the quarantine started. Most streets are dark, though a number of homes still have light behind drawn curtains and shuttered windows. Nobody is likely to help the slayers, or even talk with them. There are roaming bands of undead, attacking anyone in sight. The Slayers need to figure out what Drauzhal is doing, and where to find him to get to Act 3.

Conflicts: Slayers are going to run into a number of hordes, some more dangerous than others. Who they choose to fight is up to them. They need leads to find Drauzhal one way or another. Use the Skeletons and Ghouls in this book, as well as the monsters below to create threats for the Slayers.

Corpse Giant

HP: 12

Turn: 2

Actions (2)

- **Smash:** (A) 1d10 to hit, 3 damage per Hit.
- **Devour:** (A) Opens its belly mouth and eats someone (including allies) with 5 HP or less. Gains that much HP.
- **Explode:** (R) When Corpse Giant dies, it will explode. Anyone Near will take 2 damage.

Psyker

HP: 5

Turn: 5

Actions (1)

- **Provoke:** (A) Choose a Near undead to make a free action.
- **Accelerate:** (A) All Near undead have +1 to their turn number. Lasts until Psyker's next turn.
- **Regain:** (A) Regain control over all Near feral undead.
- **Maintain:** (O) Whenever Psyker takes damage, they must roll 1d6. If they roll a Miss, the next undead in the order will go feral, attacking the nearest creature, undead included.

Act 3: Confront Drauzhal

Drauzhal can be found in his home, a rather nice place in the center of the Barrows. He is currently feeding the energy of psykers into the Black Crown. The Slayers can kill Drauzhal, but what will they do with the Crown?

Conflict: The final fight in Drauzhal's estate will require multiple fronts to be addressed by the Slayers: the undead hordes attacking them, dealing with the psykers, and killing Drauzhal.

At the start of combat, Drauzhal's forces include the following:

- Drauzhal, Power Level 0.
- 10 Psykers to be sacrificed. 1 HP each, no actions during combat and any attack on them automatically succeeds.
- 4 Skeletons

After the first round, at the start of each round, the following occurs:

- 1 Skeleton will arrive.
- 1 Psyker is sacrificed, increasing Drauzhal's Power Level +1.

Drauzhal

HP: 20

Turn: 6

Power Level (PL): As Drauzhal sacrifices more psykers, his PL goes up. This directly affects his spells, and allows him to take more actions.

Actions: 1 + 1 for every 2 Power levels

- Energy Bolt: (A) 2d8. 1 damage per Hit.
- Age: (A) Target's turn order score decreases -1, then they age 1 year per PL.
- Ensorcel: (A) Slayer must roll Tactics. On a Miss, skip their next turn.
- Sap: (A) 1d3 HP drained from Near targets, including undead. Regains that much. Number of targets equal to PL.
- Reincarnate: (R) Requires 5 PL. When a Slayer dies, bring them back to life, under Drauzhal's control.



MONSTERS

Here is a small collection of Monsters to use in your Hunts. Future releases of Slayers will include more Monsters, including some based on specific Hunts. If you want to create your own, just make sure to include all the features noted earlier in the book!

Bandit

Wearing little more than rags and carrying small blades, they are dangerous in large numbers.

HP: 3

Turn: 3

Actions (1)

- **Slice:** (A). 1d6. 1 damage per Hit, +1 if they attack from behind.
- **Fight Dirty:** (A). 1d6. Attacks against target are with Advantage until the end of target's next turn.
- **Desperation:** (R). If brought to 1 HP, immediately Slice a Slayer that is at Engaged range.

Bandit Leader

Brandishing a real sword and hardened leather, these leaders aren't above sacrificing their underlings if there is money to be made.

HP: 6

Turn: 4

Actions (1)

- **Stab:** (A). 1d6. 2 damage per Hit.
- **Rally:** (A). Until the end of the Captain's next turn, increase either attack rolls or damage of all Near Bandits +1.
- **Order:** (R) When a Bandit dies, command another to immediately Slice a Slayer they are Engaged with.



Bone Priest

After making a pact with a powers beyond, these “priests” speak for their followers: the bones beneath our feet.

HP: 8

Turn: 5

Actions (1)

- **Summon:** (A) Raise a Skeleton from the ground. It may act this round.
- **Ache:** (A) Target Near Slayer's bones ache with pain. Any actions they take during their next turn are with Disadvantage.
- **Shatter:** (A) Target Near Skeleton explodes into pieces, dealing damage to any Engaged with it equal to current HP.

Corpse Giant

An abomination of corpses stitched together. Who would have made such a thing?

HP: 12

Turn: 2

Actions (2)

- **Smash:** (A) 1d10 to hit, 3 damage per Hit.
- **Devour:** (A) Opens its belly mouth and eats someone (including allies) with 5 HP or less. Gains that much HP.
- **Explode:** (R) When Corpse Giant dies, it will explode. Anyone Near will take 2 damage.



Doctor

The sound of flapping wings can always be heard before a Doctor arrives. They administer the latest treatments to a disease they believe everyone in The City has.

HP: 10

Turn: 6

Actions (1)

- **Fester:** (O) Anyone Near the Doctor at the start of their turn takes 1 damage.
- **Transfusion:** (A) 1d6. Deal 2 damage per Hit and gain that much HP.
- **Treat:** (A) Engaged target gets +1 to turn order and actions during their next turn are with Advantage.

Gargoyle

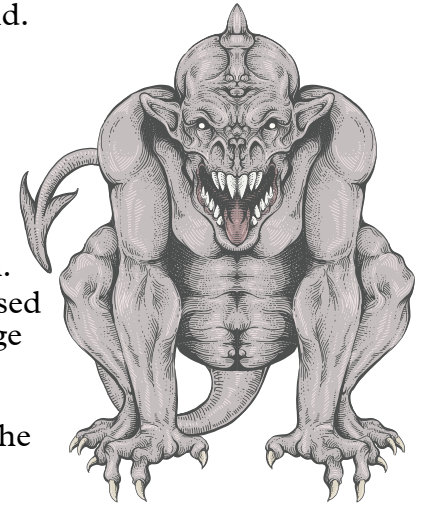
Said to be the natural guardians of The City as it continues its expansion across our world.

HP: 12

Turn: 4

Actions (2)

- **Swipe:** (A) 1d8. 2 damage per Hit.
- **Repair:** (A) Heal for 1d6 HP and take no other actions this round. This must be Gargoyle's first action.
- **Smash:** (R) When attacked and missed by an Engaged Slayer, deal 1 damage to them.
- **Enrage:** (R) When at 6 HP or less, increase Turn Order score to 6 for the rest of the combat.



Ghoul

Craven beasts that devour dead flesh, and whose poison can slow the quickest slayer.

HP: 8

Turn: 6

Actions (2)

- **Healing Gnaw:** (O) Whenever Ghoul damages a Slayer, heal 1 HP.
- **Poison Claw:** (A). 1d8. 2 damage per Hit, and the Slayer's next attack is made with Disadvantage.
- **Leap:** (A). Leap onto a Near Slayer. They make an Agile roll. 2 damage on a Miss, no damage on a Hit.

Giant Spider

Spin their webs in the alleys and sewers of The City. Plenty of vermin to catch.

HP: 12

Turn: 4

Actions (1)

- **Venomous:** (O) Any Slayer damaged by Giant Spider takes 1 damage at the end of their turn. This effect is ended with a successful Mend roll.
- **Bite:** (A) 2d6. 1 damage per Hit.
- **Ensnare:** (A) Any Slayers within Near must succeed an Agile check or be ensnared. Ensnared Slayers must use one action on their turn to free themselves.
- **Leap:** (R) When taking more 3+ damage, reduce damage by 1. Then Giant Spider makes an immediate free Move action.

Lodestone

A squat stone of crystal. Its color changes based on the spells it has absorbed.

HP: 6

Turn: 0

Actions (0)

- **Absorb:** (O) Whenever a spell is successfully cast Near Lodestone, it absorbs the spell, nullifying the effect.
- **Explode:** (O) When Lodestone absorbs a spell, roll a d6. If the roll is equal to or less than the number of spells absorbed, Lodestone explodes, dealing damage equal to the number of Absorbed spells to everyone Near.

Militia

Makeshift protectors of a district, when the City Guard aren't around.

HP: 4

Turn: 3

Actions (1)

- **Flank:** (O) Soldiers deal +1 damage as long as there are two of them attacking the same target
- **Stab:** (A). 1d6. 1 damage per Hit.
- **Defensive Position:** (R) When a Soldier is killed, remaining Soldiers make a free move action.



Runebeast

Constructed by the runic engineers of the city. Typically a beast of burden, they can be used for more dangerous tasks as well.

HP: 18

Turn: 3

Actions (1)

- **Adapt:** (O) After taking damage, the next attack against Runebeast is with Disadvantage.
- **Gore:** (A) 1d8. 2 damage per Hit and target is knocked back to Near range.
- **Trample:** (A) Make a Move action. Anyone now Engaged with Runebeast makes an Agile roll. On a Hit, take 1 damage, on a Miss, take 3 damage.
- **Amplify:** (A) Runebeast sits still. Actions against it until its next turn are with Advantage. On its next turn, Runebeast takes 3 actions.

Strawman

Made of the weakest material, but frustrating to fight.

HP: 5

Turn: 3

Actions (1)

- **Peck:** (A) 1d6. 1 damage per Hit.
- **Glare:** (A) 1d6. On a Hit, target Near Strawman makes all actions with Disadvantage as long as Strawman can see them.
- **Flutter:** (R). After taking damage, Strawman makes an immediate Move action.



Skeleton

Appearing in hordes, skeletons are weak on their own but work together to swarm their living foes.

HP: 3

Turn: 2

Actions (1)

- **Swarm:** (O) When there are at least 3 Skeletons Engaged with a Slayer, they all roll with Advantage.
- **Horde:** (O) As long as at least 4 Skeletons remain, increase damage of Claw by +1.
- **Claw:** (A) 1d6. 1 damage per Hit.



Wight

Highly intelligent undead creatures. They have a sentience of their own, and typically work for those who will help them with their agendas.

HP: 10

Turn: 5

Actions (2)

- **Slash:** (A) 2d8. 1 damage per Hit.
- **Poison Knives:** (A) 1d6. Slayer take 1 damage at the start of their turn until a successful Mend action is taken.
- **Adapt:** (O) After reaching half HP, increase all damage dealt by Wight +1.



Wraith Mage

Some mages refuse death, instead cursing spirits to inhabit a set of armor, so that they may continue their arcane practices.

HP: 12

Turn: 3

Actions (2)

- **Bolt:** (A) 1d8. 1 damage per Hit.
- **Hex:** (A) 1d8. Choose 1 effect. Effect lasts until the end of the target's next turn.
 - Target must roll 5+ to Hit
 - Target cannot Move
 - Target attacks nearest ally
- **Sap:** (A) All skill rolls from Near enemies are made with Disadvantage.
- **Counter:** (R) 1d6. On a Hit, spell being cast from Near target is countered and there is no effect.



RULES REFERENCE

Rule of 4+: For all rolls, every die that is 4+ is a Hit, anything else is a Miss.

Skills

Roll skill die, adding the skill die of any assisting PCs. When rolling more than 1 die, keep the higher.

Agile: Dodging, leaping, even cart rolling.

Brawn: Physical work, powering through, intimidating.

Deceive: Lying, tricking, distracting.

Hunt: Hunting, tracking, monster knowledge.

Mend: Warding death, stabilizing wounds, medical training.

Negotiate: Persuading, diplomacy, compelling.

Stealth: Blending in, keeping quiet, sleight of hand.

Streets: Social circles, navigating the city, purchasing power.

Study: Perception, reading a scene or person, doing research.

Tactics: Strategic intel, preparing for a foe, reacting to a battle.

Combat

Turn Order: Each PC rolls their Speed. Monsters use flat scores.

Round: Begins with the highest turn order score and ends after the turn of the lowest score.

Turn: A PC may take up to two actions during their turn. They may make any combination of these actions, in any order they like, but may not do an action twice.

Move: Go from one relative distance to the next (e.g. Near to Far, Engaged to Near, etc.).

Attack: Unique to class.

Quick: Unique to class.

Skill: Works as a normal skill roll. May provide a bonus effect.

Advantage: Roll each attack die twice and keep the higher result.

Disadvantage: Roll each attack die twice and keep the lower result.

Death: If a PC is brought to 0 HP, they are dying. One attempt at stabilizing them is allowed. If successful, they remain at 0 HP until the end of the fight. If failed, they are dead.