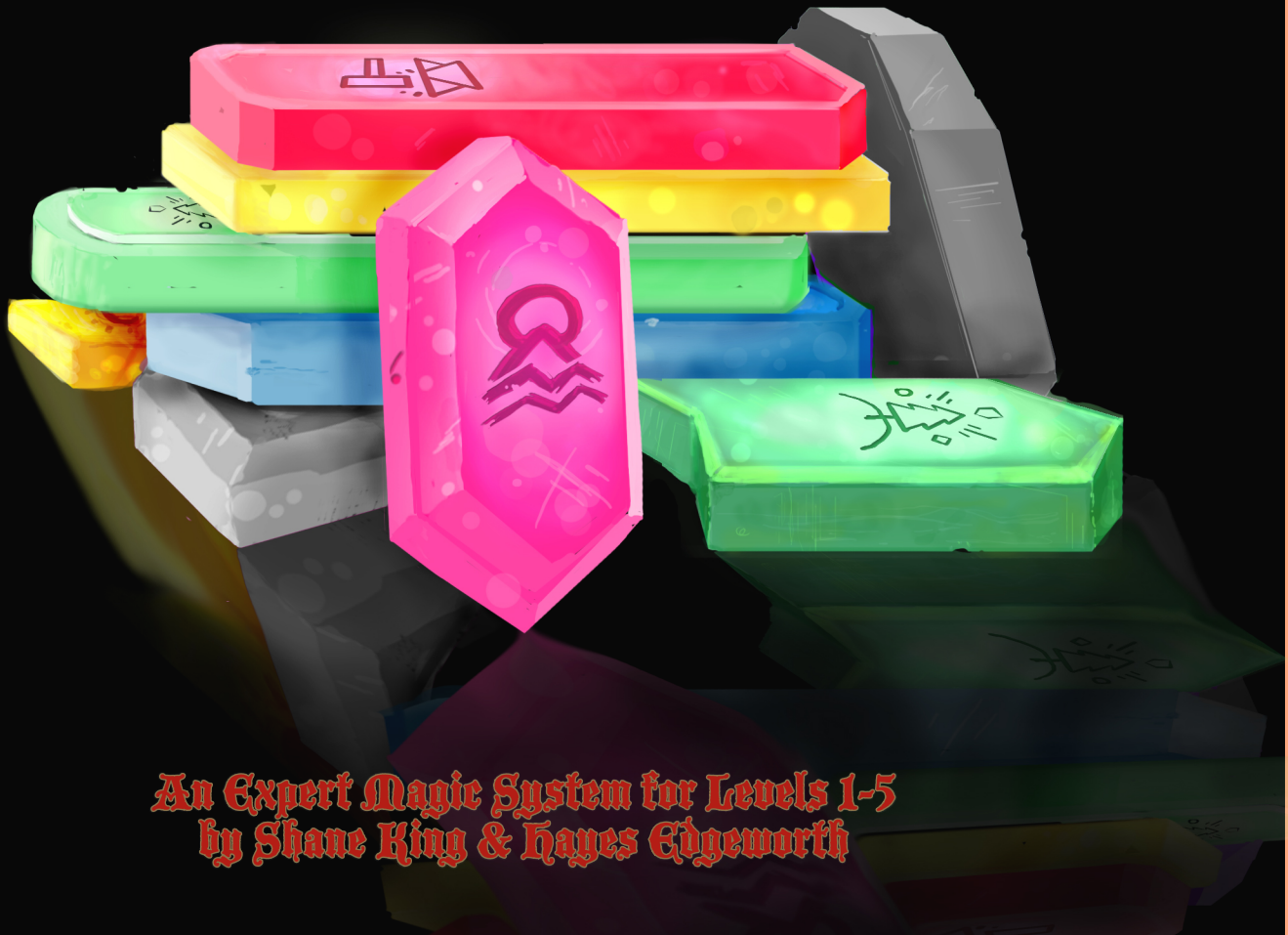


TORCHBEARER

 Sagas

Rune Casters



An Expert Magic System for Levels 1-5
by Shane King & Hayes Edgeworth



There are many tales to be told, too many for even one bard to recount. Sagas are third-party supplementary products and adventures for the Torchbearer RPG that have been reviewed and approved by Burning Wheel Headquarters.



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The Dwarf Wanderer



Wanderers are outcasts. They are misunderstood by their own kind, even dreaded for their erratic and unpredictable behavior. They walk the wilds in search of wisdom, hunting for the keys to understanding their own strange origins. But they are not entirely alone, for wanderers have sworn by blood and stone to unlock in others what they have unlocked within themselves: to make one's own path, to number the stones of the earth, and to uncover the deepest secrets of the rune.

<i>Dwarf Wanderer Class Overview</i>		<i>Dwarf Wanderer Class Starting Options</i>	
Class	Wanderer	Born of the Wind	A wanderer's heart guides them through even the most dire circumstances. But blind faith in chance and the kindness of strangers can be unnerving, leaving them bereft, grasping at straws.
Raw Abilities	Will 5, Health 3	Starting Weapon	Cudgel
Starting Nature	A starting wanderer should answer the Dwarf Nature Questions below.	Cudgel	As good a tool for walking as it is for settling disputes. +1D to Attack and Feint, -1D to Maneuver and Defend in kill, capture, and drive off conflicts. One-handed weapon.
Skills	Pathfinder 3, Arcanist 3, Mentor 3, Lore Master 2, Survivalist 2, Scavenger 2	Starting Armor	None
Starting Trait	Born of the Wind	Alignment	Must remain unaffiliated.

Dwarf Nature Questions

If your kin are slain and their halls plundered, would you spend your life plotting and exacting revenge, or would you tally your losses and move on to greater challenges?

- ⊕ If you would take revenge at any cost, increase Nature by one.
- ⊕ If you would forgive these grudges, you may replace or increase your home trait with Honorable or Jaded.

Would you plunge ever deeper into the bones of the earth looking for treasures untold, or do you fear what you would uncover should you dig too deep?

- ⊕ If you would dig ever deeper, increase Nature by one and decrease Fighter by one if you have that skill, or Health if you do not.
- ⊕ If you fear what lies beneath, do not increase Nature or decrease your skill or ability.

Do you yearn to spend your days crafting wondrous objects from silver and gold or does the life of adventure call?

- ⊕ If you were born to craft wondrous objects, increase your Nature by one.
- ⊕ If the life of adventure calls, you may replace or increase your home trait with Fearless or Foolhardy.

Wanderer Level Benefits

Level 1

Wanderer

The wanderer may wear a helmet but may not equip any other armor or a shield. They can wield a dagger, cudgel, sling, or crossbow. Also, a wanderer's alignment must remain unaffiliated and they may not pray at a shrine of any alignment. If a wanderer's alignment should change through play, the player can choose to retire the character or become a dwarf adventurer of the same level.

Finally, a wanderer has taken the art of rune writing out of the halls of dwarves and away from the protected towers of learned scholars and lore masters—and at great risk to their reputation. At level 1 a wanderer may cast first circle rune magic.

Level 2

Cloaked

Best of friends, the wanderer may wear a cloak in a special, fourth inventory slot on the torso.

Curmudgeon

A surly dwarf is a commander of respect. Blunt objects wielded as improvised weapons use the stats of a cudgel as described in the dwarf wanderer class starting options.

Level 3

Prophet

By selecting this benefit, a wanderer may cast second circle phrases. In addition, they may choose a second circle phrase they wish to acquire and attempt to learn it as they approach the gates (for free).

Beastmaster

A wanderer may perform the rite of empathy (see the list of phrases) with denizens, monsters, familiars, and beasts, as long as they are capable of conducting the ritual uninterrupted.

Level 4

Know Thyself

Deep down, a wanderer recognizes who and what they are—any tax of one to current Nature may be ignored once per session. If Nature is taxed by two or more, the wanderer must take the full tax as normal.

Storyteller

Once per camp phase, the wanderer may tell a story about one of their companions, granting them a free recovery test. As an added benefit, while weaving their tale they may toss etched rune stones into the fire, their sparks flying high, creating an illusion of events long past, or even of events to come. Etched stones tossed into the fire this way are wiped of their etchings, and may be recovered as blank stones.

Level 5

Augur

By selecting this benefit, a wanderer may cast third circle phrases. In addition, roll 1d6 on the list of third circle phrases (number them in the order found in the phrase list). The wanderer may attempt to learn this phrase as they approach the gates (for free), and if they already know it they may choose a different third circle phrase to attempt to learn.

Commiserating

Misery loves company. If sharing a fourth nature descriptor with another, when tapping Nature within that descriptor the wanderer may spend an additional Persona point to add that person or creature's current Nature with their own for a single roll once per phase, as long as they agree to help in the test. If the test is failed and Nature taxed, the tax is doubled and applies to both characters.

Level	Fate	Persona	Wanderer Benefits	
1	0	0	Wanderer	
2	3	3	Cloaked	Curmudgeon
3	7	6	Prophet	Beastmaster
4	13	9	Know Thyself	Storyteller
5	19	12	Augur	Commiserating

The Fisk Gambler

Fisks are a hardy people with gills just under their ears, their upper bodies coated with fishlike scales. Called by the oceans since their beginnings, at some point in the past their sea was all at once taken from them, caught up in the tumult of god, beast, and man. Pushed out and maladjusted, they now either walk the path of the subservient, or roam the world as pirates, pariahs, and trouble-makers. To make a living, something in a fisk pushes them to games of chance. And they have special talent at them, for having concealed their identities among common folk for so long, a fisk's outward ways are naturally enigmatic.

Fisk Gambler Class Overview and Starting Options

Class	Gambler	Starting Weapon	Gaff
Raw Abilities	Distribute 8 points between Will and Health. Neither stat may have a rating lower than 3 or higher than 5.	Gaff	A long pole with a hooked beak on the end, normally used for fishing. May take -1s on a successful Feint action in kill, capture or drive off conflicts to Impede the opponent (-1D), or take -2s for an ally to Gain Position (+2D). One-handed weapon.
Starting Nature	Write Nature: Fisk on your character sheet. Your descriptors are <i>Bluffing</i> , <i>Obstructing Justice</i> , and <i>Regretting</i> . See below for the fisk Nature questions for determining your starting Nature (beginning with a rating of 3).	Hunted	The fisk gambler must take an enemy during character creation. This enemy is either a poacher coveting their prized scales, or someone they double-crossed somewhere along the line.
Starting Trait	Undrowned	Fisk Racial Benefits	Gilled and Scaled
Undrowned	Overwhelmed with hardship of unfathomable depths, the fisk survives. But their thick skin sometimes blinds them to the true terrors, and thus their brashness may get the best of them.	Gilled	A fisk may dive for any number of turns without penalty of drowning. However, fisks are known to work up a powerful thirst when deprived of water. When made Hungry & Thirsty during The Grind, if they do not relieve this Hungry & Thirsty condition with water they take on a special condition: Parched (see below).
Skills	Haggler 3, Steward 3, Sailor 3, Manipulator 2, Peasant 2, Laborer 1, Ritualist 1, Criminal 1	Special Condition: Parched	While Parched, a fisk may not recover taxed Nature, nor may they mark tests for advancing Nature. To relieve the Parched condition, a fisk must drink water. If they take on the Hungry & Thirsty condition while Parched, the conditions must be relieved separately.
Starting Wises	Choose a single Society-wise (either dwarf, elf, or human society) or choose Clean Water-wise. Additionally, take a second wise of your choice.	Scaled	Fisks exhibit scales on their upper body and in subtle webs between their fingers and toes. They take to water very well, and are not subject to any Evil GM Factors for actions while swimming or diving under water.

Fisk Nature Questions

Do you go on betting when the odds are against you, or do you fold and take with you what little you haven't already lost?

- ⊕ If you would push your luck, increase your Nature by one.
- ⊕ If you take your meager savings with you, you may replace or increase your home trait with Skeptical or Bitter.

When you've secretly cheated terrible men and are faced with coming clean, do you speak the truth, or go on bluffing?

- ⊕ If you would come clean, increase your Nature by one, but reduce Will or Manipulator by one.
- ⊕ If you deny everything and make them prove it, your Nature, Will and Manipulator remain unchanged.

When called by the wild mysteries of the ocean, do you go to it with open eyes, or do you shield yourself against the crashing waves?

- ⊕ If you would go to the ocean, increase Nature by one.
- ⊕ If you would cower, you may replace or increase your home trait with Stoic or Scarred.

Gambler Level Benefits

Level 1

Gambler

A fisk gambler may wear leather armor and use a shield, but may not wear any other armor. They may not wield any two handed weapons except for ranged weapons such as the bow or crossbow. They are also Gilled and Scaled (see fisk gambler class overview).

At some point in their history, whether by accident or picked up trading ambergris and blubber with dwarf merchants from far away, some enterprising fisks took up the art of rune casting. At level 1 the fisk gambler may receive a path and cast first circle phrases.

Level 2

Shiny

Fisk scales are said to have magical properties. The gambler knows the truth: ace in the hole. The fisk may shed scales once per town phase for lucky scales which provide a +1D advantage as supplies to any test made within their Nature descriptors (lucky scales, pack 1).

Smuggler

Always sly, the gambler may conceal a single item on the torso or belt which is hidden from sight and may only be detected through magical means. This item still takes up a slot on the torso, but may be concealed without making a Criminal or Manipulator test for sleight-of-hand. As an added benefit, if this gambler breaks a town law (not including the “resources 0 and no cash dice” clause for lifestyle test) he may slip away from pernicious authorities undetected once per town phase.

Level 3

Dervish

This fisk goes without, so that he may begin to look within. When Parched, the fisk receives a +1D to any Nature test made within his Nature descriptors.

Bilge Drinker

Muddy runoff, sewer & trough water, donkey spit—accustomed to overly strong drink and otherwise unsavory fare, this gambler may consume liquid that is otherwise not potable with no penalty.

Level 4

Eel

The fisk has learned to slip away from certain situations. In one lost convince crowd conflict per session (such as a trial), if the entire party is captured, taken away, or thrown behind bars, the fisk is left behind, alone but unhindered.

Fixer

Naturally, a fixer tends to spend time in the back alleys of town. When sleeping on the streets during any town phase, the gambler may take a single, free item randomly selected from the unplanned loot table.

Level 5

Thickened

The fisk’s scales on their upper arms and torso have hardened throughout their travails. Acts as leather armor.

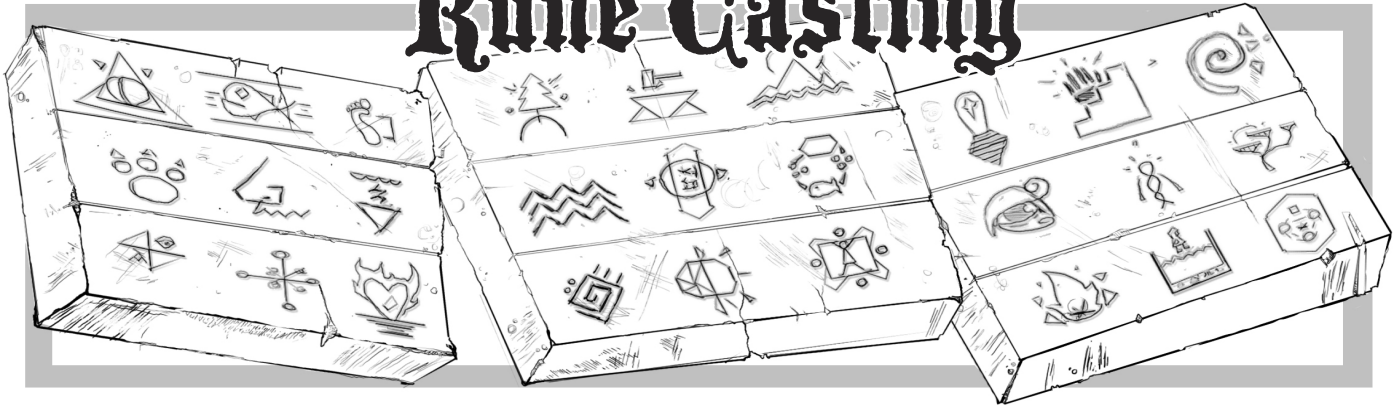
Calculator

Able to keep tab of this and that in an uncanny way, once per town phase a fisk gambler may reduce any character’s lifestyle cost by -1. Explaining how they covered the cost is up to them.

Level	Fate	Persona	Wanderer Benefits	
1	0	0	Gambler	
2	3	3	Shiny	Smuggler
3	7	6	Dervish	Bilge Drinker
4	13	9	Eel	Fixer
5	19	12	Thickened	Calculator



Rune Casting



Rune Casting

Rune casting in the world of Torchbearer is done by reciting incantations over rune stones and tossing them to the ground, tapping into the strange and secret magic of fate itself. Though runes have been used by dwarves, learned scholars, and lore masters throughout the ages, casting them like dice is considered a perverse act. Therefore, a rune caster should always be prepared to suffer persecution for their art.

When tapping into the power of the fates, rune casters draw upon their understanding of the arcane to recite phrases over etched rune stones, and after must be careful not to drop them until the right moment. For good or ill, once those stones are released from the hand and strike upon any surface, power will flow forth unrestrained.

To Cast

The rune caster must have the ability to toss prepared rune stones from the hand in order to unlock the phrase within.

Phrases

A phrase is the marriage of magic and words, which a rune caster recites over runes to imbue them with power. Once recited, the phrase is embedded in the stones, and their magic is only released when cast upon the ground or any other surface (see phrase list for the list of possible phrases).

Paths

Every phrase falls under one of three governing aspects, called paths: the mountain, the wind, and the ocean. These forces are hallowed by devotees of the fates, for whether they come or go, recede or ascend, they are ever present in the world.

Before etching for the first time the rune caster meditates, waiting until they are absolutely certain of which path the fates will allow them. The player rolls 1d3: one for the mountain, two for the wind, three for the ocean.

The corresponding result is the path the fates have whispered to the rune caster, and they should make note of it. Rune casters may only walk one path at a time, and any stones they etch may only contain phrases which are governed by that particular path while they are on it.

Once they receive a path, the rune caster marks the exhausted condition. If they are already exhausted, they must tax their current Nature by two. If they are dissatisfied with the path the fates have given them, they may consult the fates again as many times as they like, following the same process. If their maximum Nature reaches zero, however, they retire from the life and recede into obscurity as normal.

Receiving a path is not a test. It can only be done during the camp or town phases, but it does not cost a check, nor does it increase the difficulty of maintaining one's lifestyle.

Stones for Etching

Rune casters prefer to etch runes on sturdy, inch-thick pieces of durable rock, cut into various shapes. Whether found with the rune caster at the start of their journey, received as a gift, purchased, crafted, or acquired by some other means, a supply of these blank stones should be kept at hand, ready to be etched with runes at any time. Blank stones can be stacked in threes, and are either carried (hand/carried 1) or packed away (pack 1).

Keeping a Supply of Blank Stones

A rune caster may take as many blank stones as they can carry to start. They can be purchased as spell supplies, and they may also be crafted from good quality rock using the following factors:

Stonemason Factors (starts at 2): one blank stone, two blank stones, three blank stones.

Etching Runes

When the rune caster is ready to etch runes, they grab the number of blank stones they need—one stone for first circle, two stones for second circle, three stones for third circle.

Once they've gathered the proper number of stones, a rune caster makes note of their current path. Only then are they ready to begin etching.

Etching Runes Tests Nature

Etching runes for casting is considered a profane act, thus all rune casters must fight against their nature to do so. When etching, the rune caster tests Nature, using these factors:

Etching Runes Factors (starts at 3): first circle, second circle, third circle.

Successfully Etched Stones

Players should note the path and circle of etched stones once they are completed.

Failure to Etch

If the test to etch runes is failed, the GM can use the standard condition or twist rules for failure, or they may tax the rune caster's current Nature by the margin of failure, even if etching is within their Nature descriptors. With etching, taxing Nature is a special condition, so the player should get what they were after in addition to having their Nature taxed. No other conditions or twists are applied if Nature is taxed.

Etching and Advancement

Passes or fails for Nature when etching should be noted after any maximum Nature adjustments, if necessary, and not before.

Storing Etched Stones

Rune casters may store etched rune stones wherever they wish, provided they have the inventory or a companion willing to carry them. Etched stones may not be stacked with blank stones, nor any other stacks of etched stones, including etched stones with the same circle and path. No matter how many rune stones comprise a given circle (one, two, or three), they are always hand/carried 1 or pack 1.

Etching Runes Takes Time

A check must be spent to etch during camp. Etching runes for casting is frowned upon in town, but maybe folks will look the other way for an added factor to your lifestyle cost (+1).

The Family Jewels

Gems used instead of blank stones provide +1D per gem to etching tests. In addition they protect from Nature tax using the rules for cash dice from the core rulebook.

Etching and Help

Rune casters should warn that the act of etching and casting is profane, but help from Nature is certainly welcome. Anyone may help with etching by using Nature. If etching is failed and Nature taxed, however, each character who helped is subject to the same tax to their current Nature. If the tax is two, for instance, everyone's current Nature is taxed by two.

Reciting Phrases

Reciting a phrase consists of gripping etched rune stones in a single hand and speaking the proper incantation over them. The path and circle of the phrase recited must match that of the etched rune stones used to carry it, and the rune caster may only recite phrases from their current path.

When reciting a phrase, the player tests Arcanist against the obstacle listed with the phrase (see the list of phrases). If successful, the phrase is prepared—the stones glow with a pale light. If failed, preparation is subject to a twist or condition.

Once imbued with the power of a phrase, rune stones must remain in the hand (hand/carried 1) until the rune caster is ready to cast them, and the player should make note of the phrase they have prepared.

Recitation and Time

Reciting a phrase only takes a moment. It does not require a check to recite a phrase during camp, nor does it take a turn to do so during the adventure phase.

Recitation and Help

A rune caster may only receive help from other rune casters when reciting phrases.

Casting Stones

Once the rune caster has prepared a phrase, if the stones imbued with the phrase are thrown or dropped, even by accident, the phrase is cast and its power is released. Careful not to drop certain stones at the feet of your enemies, or others at the feet of your friends. They may never forgive you for it.

Recovering Stones

Stones are usually shattered when cast, however if an adventurer has a moment to reclaim them and wishes to do so, roll 1d6. On a 6 a single stone is left intact and may be reclaimed as a blank stone, devoid of power. If a gem was used during etching, it has strangely turned dull—just another blank stone like the rest.

Known Phrases

All rune casters start with the capability to etch and prepare stones that can bear phrases of the first circle, but they may not recite phrases they do not know. Rune casters may automatically learn up to three phrases when they ask for their first path (see *The First Whispers*), and their Mentor will teach them a new phrase for free every time they gain a new level.

Otherwise, rune casters are on their own, and will only encounter new phrases to learn on lost tablets and inscriptions

found in dungeons. Listed with each phrase is a Lore Master obstacle to learn that phrase.

The First Whispers

Rune casters start with no phrases committed to memory; however, when a rune caster asks for a path for the first time they may either choose one phrase from the path they find, or they may instead roll 2d6 three times and consult the table below each time. The rune caster automatically learns either the phrase of their choice from the first option or each phrase rolled if they choose to use the table below instead.

2d6	Rune Caster Starting Phrases
2	Warning Wave
3	Writ of Quickness
4	Rhyme of Bridges
5	Words of Withering
6	Make Mana
7	Winds and Sails
8	Soothing Lyric
9	Mercurial Verse
10	Ligature of Rock
11	Fragment of Rust
12	Glyph of Starlight

If a rune caster rolls a phrase they already know on the second or third roll, they may choose another phrase from the list above instead.

Ahead of Their Time

A rune caster may learn second and third circle phrases before they are capable of etching or reciting them.

A Pouch at Hand

A rune caster’s pouch contains their tools for etching and can still hold a pack 1 item as normal. Unlike other skill tools, which are tied to the backpack or satchel, a rune caster is guaranteed the tools for their art as long as they have a ranking in Arcanist and access to their pouch. If their pouch is lost, they no longer have access to their etching tools (except for dwarves).

Rune Casting in Conflicts

There are a number of phrases that are useful during conflicts.

- ⊕ Phrases may be cast during a conflict as described under effects in the listing for that phrase.
- ⊕ Once a conflict is initiated, it is too late to recite a phrase.
- ⊕ Phrases wielded during conflicts ignore armor and may not be disarmed by the Maneuver action.
- ⊕ Phrases that may affect or even prevent a conflict, like Horrifying Depths or Commanding Gale, should be cast before rolling for disposition unless they say otherwise.

Rune Casting in Brief

- ⊕ When taking a path, roll 1d3 (mountain, wind, ocean), and take the exhausted condition. If already exhausted, tax current Nature by -2. Does not cost a turn or check.
- ⊕ Before etching runes into blank stones, make note of your current path and select the circle you wish to prepare, then take the number of blank stones required (1 for first circle, 2 for second circle, 3 for third circle).
- ⊕ To etch, test Nature against the required obstacle (starts at 3): first circle, second circle, third circle. Costs one turn during adventure phase, a check during camp, or +1 to lifestyle cost in town.
- ⊕ In order to prepare a phrase, test Arcanist to recite it over etched stones that correspond to the path and circle of that phrase. Does not cost a turn or check.
- ⊕ Once etched stones are imbued with a phrase, all the rune caster must do is toss them from the hand to cast.



List of Phrases

The following is the list of phrases available to rune casters, in order of circle and path. Listed with each phrase is the Lore Master obstacle for learning it, the Arcanist obstacle for reciting it, and the special, fourth Nature descriptor that can be used as a supply for reciting that phrase (+1D). We recommend that rune casters keep a copy of this list and underline phrases they've learned as they go on their way.

The Rite of Empathy

To draw upon the fates of others is forbidden, but it is the curse of all rune casters that they must if they wish to thrive. When performing the rite of empathy, they simply lay a hand on friend or foe, and wait for the whispers.

This ritual is special. It is not etched on stones, and may always be performed. It does not cost a check during camp, however it does cost a turn during the adventure phase and may not be performed in a rush unless the rune caster has an applicable instinct.

Empathy Obstacle: When performing the rite of empathy, test Ritualist. The rune caster's obstacle is half of their target's current Nature, rounded up.

Empathy Effect: When the ritual is completed, number the target's Nature descriptors one through three, then roll 1d3 and select the corresponding descriptor. The rune caster must write this descriptor on their character sheet as a fourth, special Nature descriptor. There it will remain until the rune caster's maximum Nature advances, or if they use this fourth Nature descriptor as a supply for an appropriate phrase (+1D, see *The Right Tone* below). It may also be replaced if they perform the empathy ritual again.

The rite of empathy may only be performed on humans, halflings, elves, and dwarves.

The Right Tone

When reciting a phrase over stones, a rune caster may lean heavily on an appropriate, fourth Nature descriptor. They'll gain +1D to the preparation test, but they'll expend that descriptor in the process as if it were a supply (see Nature descriptor under each phrase).

The Gift Comes from Others

Rune casters may not seek empathy with themselves.

Empathy and Help

Rune casters may receive help from ritualists when performing the rite of empathy. Supplies such as incense and chimes are also welcome.

First Circle Rune Casting Phrases

Path of the Mountain

Make Mana

The stone is placed in the bowl and covered. When the cover is lifted, warm, chewy bread is ready, filling the room with a delicious smell.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 1
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 3
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: merrimaking

Make Mana Effect

During camp, enough fresh bread to feed: D6: 1-3, two adventurers; 4-5, an adventuring party; 6, a large gathering.

Ligature of Rock

Cast at the feet of a companion, binding their fate to the rune caster's, tried and true as deep, uncovered stone.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 2
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 2
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: avenging a grudge

Ligature of Rock Effect

When knocked out, the rune caster may continue to provide a helping die in any type of conflict when a certain action is scripted, even if brought back into the fight and knocked out again: D6: 1, Attack; 2-3, Defend; 4-5, Maneuver; 6, Feint.

Rhyme of Bridges

The rune stone is rolled over the gap, knitting together a temporary, stone bridge only wide enough for adventurers to walk single file. Helpful when fleeing from fire demons.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 2
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 2
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: crafting

Rhyme of Bridges Effect

A bridge suddenly extends over any gap for the duration of: D6: 1-4, 1 turn; 5, a phase; 6, a session.

Glyph of Starlight

The rune caster wishes for stars, lest the darkness overwhelm.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 4
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 3
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: singing

Glyph of Starlight Effect

Ceilings are lit with stars that follow the rune caster. Provides dim light for (1d3): 1 for 6 turns, 3 for 3 turns, 6 for 2 turns. This light may not be lost in a twist.

Path of the Wind

Mercurial Verse

Those who would oppose the rune caster are filled with doubt.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 5
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 4
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: sneaking

Mercurial Verse Effect

Opponents gain a sense of apprehension, which turns to fear. Apply the afraid condition to 1d3 foes for 1 turn.

Winds and Sails

Cast at the back of a friend, rebuffing them with a feeling of lightness and speed.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 1
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 2
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: boasting

Winds and Sails Effect

A number of companions may ignore the exhausted condition for 1 turn: D6: 1-3, 1 companion; 4-5, 2 companions; 6, 3 companions.

Writ of Quickness

Become swift like pebbles rolling downhill.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 3
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 2
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: running

Writ of Quickness Effect

May be cast at any moment during a flee conflict to receive a bonus to disposition of D6: 1, +0; 2-5, +1; 6, +2. These additional points are assigned to any single participant in the conflict, as long as they are still in the fight. Raise one's total maximum disposition by that number.

Scribble

Confusing riddles abound in the mind of the fool who receives this phrase.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 4
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 2
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: riddling

Scribble Effect

The victim of this phrase can only speak gibberish for a single turn or conflict and must pass an obstacle 1d3 Will test (Nature for monsters) or they may not participate in social conflicts or help in rolls where verbal communication is required. The victim may not pray or cast spells either, unless they've (wisely) prepared a ward against such a phrase.

Path of the Ocean

Soothing Lyric

The stone turns into a pile of smelling salts, easing hurts.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 2
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 3
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: singing

Soothing Lyric Effect

Alleviate a random condition from one companion (1d6): hungry & thirsty, angry, afraid, exhausted, injured, sick.

Warning Wave

The force of a wave comes under the control of the one who receives the power of this phrase.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 4
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 3
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: demanding

Warning Wave Effect

Must be cast when weapons are declared in a kill, capture, or drive off conflict. May be combined with a weapon. On a successful Maneuver or Feint, the one who wields this power adds (1d3): +0s, +1s, +2s to their result for one round.

Words of Withering

The body feels the weight of past and future hurts.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 2
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 3
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: remembering

Words of Withering Effect

Apply a random condition to a single foe (1d6): hungry & thirsty, angry, afraid, exhausted, injured, sick. If angry is the condition applied, it counts as a conflict twist as the victim engages the rune caster with all their ire. Victims immune to certain conditions are unaffected.

Fragment of Rust

Shards burst from the stone and turn to fine powder, coating everyone embroiled in a conflict; hands become weak and arthritic for a moment.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 4
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 3
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: avenging a grudge

Fragment of Rust Effect

The caster chooses 1d6 foes in this kill, capture, or drive off conflict, and the GM chooses 1d3 of the caster's companions. Both the foes and companions chosen are considered disarmed for the remainder of this round. Their hands are too weak to wield weapons, even those that are improvised.

Second Circle Rune Casting Phrases

Path of the Mountain

Deep Roots

The power of this phrase makes those who are vulnerable feel as if they are unshakable.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 5
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 3
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: boasting

Deep Roots Effect

The receiver of this power may restore their own disposition by an amount up to the total margin between their current and maximum Nature in any conflict, minus (1d2): -1, -0. This phrase may not be used to regroup.

False Fissure

The stones erupt with power when cast, creating a temporary fissure, impeding foes.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 6
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 4
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: delving

False Fissure Effect

May be played alongside any action except Maneuver during a kill, capture, or drive off conflict. Versus an opponent, grants a free (1d3): impede, gain position, disarm.

World's Weight

The power to impart the weight of the world upon a foe.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 3
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 4
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: remembering

World's Weight Effect

Cast when a weapon is declared in a kill, capture, or drive off conflict to enchant it with the following effect (1d3): +0s, +1s, +2s to Feint and Attack. At the end of this conflict this weapon becomes impossibly heavy and cannot be reclaimed.

Path of the Wind

Whisper of Comprehension

The voice of the wind whispers words to all present in their own language.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 4
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 4
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: singing

Whisper of Comprehension Effect

All present may understand one another's speech for D6: 1-3, 1 turn; 4-5, a phase; 6, a session.

Appear with the Lightning

Wherever the stones are thrown, the rune caster appears with a strike of lightning.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 5
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 4
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: sneaking

Appear with the Lightning Effect

Wherever the stones land, the rune caster and 1d6 of his companions appear with a flash of lightning. If appearing with the intent to gain the element of surprise in a conflict, add +1D to the disposition roll for this conflict.

Writ of Warning

The trap is triggered, but the warning is heard in time.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 6
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 3
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: hiding

Writ of Warning Effect

If there is a trap or pitfall that triggers a reaction test for multiple characters individually and at the same time, for avoiding the danger, provide 1d6 companions implicated in the trap with a benefit of +1D to avoid the danger.

Path of the Ocean

Rhyme of the Abyss

A reflecting pool appears before the victims of this phrase, with the image of the rune caster staring back.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 4
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 4
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: riddling

Rhyme of the Abyss Effect

Copy all conditions the rune caster is suffering from to 2d6 -2 foes in a single location, except for those with immunities. The rune caster does not recover from these conditions.

Incomparable Bluster

A blast of icy winter waves comes under the command of the one who receives the power of this phrase.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 7
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 5
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: boasting

Incomparable Bluster Effect

The wielder of this power is able to blast foes with icy water, dousing flames and chilling bones to their core. Arcanist replaces the Fighter skill for the remaining duration of any kill, capture, or drive off conflict, with the following added effect (1d3): +1D, +1s, any 6's rolled explode as if the wielder spent a Fate point for luck.

Seeker of the Deep

The runes become finders of terrible things, hidden traps, and lost treasures.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 5
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 5
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: remembering

Seeker of the Deep Effect

The stone rolls in the general direction of: D6: 1-3, nearest creature; 4-5, nearest trap; 6, nearest treasure.

Third Circle Rune Casting Phrases

Path of the Mountain

Verse of Brightness

The light of the sun reaches even the depths of the earth, wherever the rune caster wanders.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 6
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 5
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: singing

Verse of Brightness Effect

A shaft of bright light follows the rune caster. Provides light for (1d3): 1 for 8 turns, 3 for 6 turns, 6 for 4 turns. May not be lost in a twist.

Blood of the Mighty

The blood of the mighty rests beneath the mountains.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 8
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 6
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: remembering

Blood of the Mighty Effect

Enough blood pools around the stones to smear on 1d6 adventurers, providing an armor benefit of -1s to any incoming Attack or Feint in a kill, capture, or drive off conflict, usable once per adventurer girded by such a power. Must be performed before any conflict is initiated.

Path of the Wind

Commanding Gale

This wind puts the fear of the rune caster in the mind of the dumb.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 7
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 5
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: demanding

Commanding Gale Effect

Up to 2d6 -2 automatons, constructs, or living statues in a given location (a single room keyed by the GM) come under

the command of the rune caster for the duration of a single turn or conflict. Use the henchmen rules.

Eye of Peace

A bright sphere radiates from the rune stones, and all at once, in the center of trouble, all is calm.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 7
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 5
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: merrymaking

Eye of Peace Effect

2d6 -2 adventurers are covered with a shield of warding and may not be harmed, nor may they move through or affect the environment around them or be engaged in any conflict whatsoever. They may also make camp if they have a check to spend, even in the center of a dire situation, as long as all adventurers present are protected by the shield. The spell is broken on the rune caster's command, or at the end of any camp phase while the spell lasts (do not roll on the camp events table if this phrase is active and all are shielded when camp is initiated). If this phrase is cast in the middle of a conflict, the conflict resumes where it left off after the spell is broken. If any actions during this reprieve invalidate the conflict, the conflict is considered a mutual loss on both sides as the fates always hold rune casters true to their promises.

Path of the Ocean

Denunciation of the Storm

The cursed are seen through their storm safely.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 5
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 7
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: hiding

Denunciation of the Storm Effect

Remove any curses from all present when the stone is cast, with the following additional effect for each individual relieved of such malignancy: D6: 1-4, apply an appropriate condition; 5-6, remove all conditions and recover the fresh condition.

Horrifying Depths

The order of paths is what this phrase derives its power from, for all paths pale in comparison to the vastness of the ocean ever plunging.

- ⊕ Lore Master Ob to learn: 4
- ⊕ Arcanist Ob to recite: 5
- ⊕ Nature descriptor: boasting

Horrifying Depths Effect

Reduce foes' Might once for the duration of a single kill, capture, or drive off conflict by: 2d6: 2-4, 0; 5-11, 1; 12, 2. Must be cast before disposition is rolled.

Rune Caster Resources

General Advice

Rune casters are difficult to play. They rely heavily on luck, require detailed note-taking, and players who wish to play them well must be adept at using the rules for Nature to their advantage. A few bad etching rolls can easily bring any rune caster to the brink of retiring from the life, and those times can be dark for them.

Players who wish to play a rune caster should master the casting rules and the rules for Nature. As with the magician, ranger, and cleric, only players who understand their ruleset intimately and are willing to take painstaking risks will be able to get the most out of rune casting.

Notes for Game Masters

Players who wish to use rune casting will require some special attention from the GM. Quite simply, rune tablets and inscriptions must be placed in dungeons, along with other rune casting related loot. All of the phrases can easily fit in with and even amplify the theme of any dungeon, temple, or other adventuring site. Try placing a lost tablet of Soothing Lyric on the lip of a sanctifying pool or an inscription of Warning Wave on the altar of a temple by the ocean.

If the GM wishes, they may also use the following modifications to the planned and unplanned loot tables in the Torchbearer handbook for levels 1-5 to manage pacing for the rune caster's progress in their games:

Spell Supplies

When the spell supplies result is rolled (7 on the 2d6 Magic Subtable on page 146 of the core rule), roll on the following table if you wish to introduce supplies for a rune caster:

2d6	Rune Caster Spell Supplies
2	Cursed Stones (1d3+1, these appear to be blank stones but apply a curse to the rune caster once they've touched them).
3	Rune Pouch (holds 1 stack of etched stones in addition to any other pack 1 item)
4	Fine Quality Etching Tools (+1D to etching tests)
5	Etched Stones (1d3: first, second, or third circle; 1d3: mountain, wind, ocean)
6	Blank Stones (1d3+1)
7	Blank Stone(s) (1d2)
8	Blank Stones (D6: 1-4, 3; 5-6, 6)
9	Etched Stones (first circle, 1d3: mountain, wind, ocean)
10	Etched Stones (second circle, 1d3: mountain, wind, ocean)
11	Etched Stones (third circle, 1d3: mountain, wind, ocean)
12	1d2: Chime or Censer (+1D to empathy ritual)

Providing New Phrases

The rune caster can learn new phrases from inscriptions or from lost tablets found in dungeons. For inscriptions on walls, fonts, altars, doors, and other surfaces, a rubbing may be taken or a copy made for later study (pack 1). For lost tablets (first circle, pack 2; second circle, pack 3; third circle, pack 4), a rubbing may be taken or a copy made for later study as well (pack 1).

When rolling on the magic subtable on page 146 of the Torchbearer core rulebook, if the GM wishes to place items for the rune caster instead and the result is 8 the GM should place an inscription. If it is 9, the GM should place a lost tablet as follows: D6: first circle 1-4; second circle 5-6. If clerics and mages are present in the adventuring party, the GM may simply roll 1d3 if the result is an 8 or 9 to determine which kind of magic is discovered.

Third Circle Phrases

Rune casters may attempt to learn a single, random third circle phrase if they select the appropriate level benefit for their class. Their mentor cannot teach them such a phrase, and they must learn it on their own. If they fail to learn it on this first try, they may not reattempt to learn it until they encounter it again on a lost tablet or inscription. In addition, in order to learn any further third circle phrases they must specifically dig up leads and quest for them.

Full Hands

If a rune caster prepares two phrases and their hands are full, they must be held accountable for their boldness. Do not allow them to perform tasks requiring the use of their hands until they release the stones. If they are holding on to one phrase and are performing a task that requires the use of both hands, apply a +1ob Evil GM Factor. This includes etching, of course.

Custom Classes

The dwarf wanderer and fisk gambler classes provided with these rules for rune casting are only examples of classes that are capable of rune casting. GMs with a good handle on the rules for Torchbearer should certainly create their own classes that incorporate rune casting for their games. We'd love to see what you come up with.



TORCHBEARER

Sagas



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There are many tales to be told, too many for even one bard to recount. Sagas are third-party supplementary products and adventures for the Torchbearer RPG that have been reviewed and approved by Burning Wheel Headquarters.