

# GRIMWILD

## COMMUNITY EDITION

### AUTHOR'S NOTE

Grimwild: Community Edition is a refinement of the original game. We wanted to expand the rules text, clarifying and simplifying where we could to make the game easier for newcomers. We've addressed consistent friction points and FAQs that have come up since the game's original release in January 2025. The game is now in the community's hands. Use it, change it, or build off of it, and tell exciting stories!

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# CHAPTER 1 GAMEPLAY

## WHAT IS GRIMWILD?

**Grimwild is a game of cinematic fantasy adventure.** You go on quests, delve into dungeons, navigate cities, and explore the wilderness. It's set in a world of your choosing, or one you create together—the key being it's a world in need of adventurers. Grimwild isn't a setting. That's up to you. This game gives you the rules, monsters, and adventurers to play a campaign in that setting that feels like a fun, ensemble cast TV series, each session a new episode.

**Gameplay flows smoothly.** The rules resolve actions quickly, favoring the dramatic over the realistic. They provide a strong framework to pace the game, manage tension, and create great scenes. They also give players the ability to add elements to the story beyond their character, letting them influence the world their character lives in, while keeping the narrative moving forward. Common sense is prioritized over detailed tracking, moving the game away from pure simulation.

**The story is character-driven.** As players, you work together to decide your adventuring party's identity, then make characters that fit well within it. You set your group arcs, then choose your own character arcs, broad themes that give you experience when you bring them into play and help steer the story.

**Characters are revealed through play.** You start with a clear concept that fits well within your party, but you don't necessarily need all of the details upfront—focus on what sounds fun to bring into play. You can always use the tools the game gives you to add details about your past and connect the dots as they come up, leaving plenty of space to grow together into a cohesive, colorful party.

**Things get dramatic.** You're rewarded for playing into your traits in ways that complicate the situation, giving good reason to think in-character and sometimes picking the less than optimal path. Inevitably, sparks fly, leading to in-fighting between protagonists, just like any great story with characters driven by their own motivations. This is all cleanly resolved with quarrels—a simple roll to move things forward, encouraging and providing a release valve for this friction!

**The story is a maelstrom of dice rolls and fun ideas.** From all this pushing and pulling on the narrative, storylines and side plots emerge. In spite of the tension, the choices you make about your party's arcs and the characters growing together over time give compelling reason to stay together and focused. It's a TV show that you're the main characters of, messy and fun and full of surprises.

# GETTING STARTED

Grimwild's a tabletop roleplaying game, which this book assumes you're familiar with. The basics aren't covered here, but there are plenty of resources online, and you can join our Discord community to ask questions: <https://discord.gg/bsfFh2dd6r>

**Thematically**, Grimwild draws heavily on the heroic fantasy of *Dungeons & Dragons*, from the first editions (and the Old-School community which continues those traditions), to the modern, from 3rd edition onward. Inspiration was also taken from *Dungeon World* and its many descendants, like *Unlimited Dungeons*, *Chasing Adventure*, *Homebrew World*, and *Stonetop*.

**Mechanically**, the Moxie system that Grimwild is built on draws from a variety of character-driven games, with the biggest influences being *Burning Wheel*, *Cortex Prime*, *Blades in the Dark*, and *Fate*.

## TO PLAY, YOU NEED:

- ◆ **Players:** You need one person as the game master (GM) and some players, ideally three or four. Guidelines for solo and duet play are in Ch. 9: Extras.
- ◆ **Time:** Sessions work best at 3 hours. For longer sessions, consider using downtime (pg. XX) to break them up and reset per-session rules.
- ◆ **Rules:** All players should know the core rules. It makes play go more smoothly.
- ◆ **Dice:** Each player needs 4-6 d6s, notated as d (e.g., 2d, 4d), and 2-4 d8s, called thorns and notated as t (e.g., 1t, 3t). The GM needs 8 d6s.
- ◆ **Sheets:** To track characters, and story notes. GM sheets for quick reference.
- ◆ **Safety:** To help everyone feel comfortable with the themes within your campaigns, use the TTRPG Safety Toolkit: [bit.ly/ttrpgsafetytoolkit](http://bit.ly/ttrpgsafetytoolkit).

## CONVENTIONS IN THIS BOOK

- ◆ **Format:** Emphasis is shown in *italics* or **bold**. System terms are **bold italics** when first shown, or when important. Examples are often after the rule, in a *lighter colored italics*. Additional context and help are throughout in green and purple colored squares.
- ◆ **Pools:** In Grimwild, "pool" always refers to diminishing pools (pg. XX).
- ◆ **Crucibles:** These are tables that provide a few words to use for inspiration. Interpret them literally or figuratively. Re-roll or pick if needed. For d66 tables, roll 2d6: one die for the column, the other for the row—or switch them. Look at the results and choose which one grabs you. Smaller tables may use 1-3/4-6 (two columns), or 1-2/3-4/5-6 (three columns).

# PLAY WITH MOXIE

Grimwild is built with the Moxie ruleset and designed for cinematic gameplay. The heart of that is narrative collaboration. It's all about creating a shared imagination space, managing the spotlight, and diving into narration. The rules will get you halfway there—they're all pointing towards keeping the pace flowing quickly and the action dramatic. The other half is in your hands, the players at the table, and the attitude you all approach the game with.

## PLAY CINEMATICALLY

**Trust in the collaborative process.** Everyone at the table adds details into the story. You have to work together and play off of each other or the game, and the story you're telling, will fall flat.

**Use the camera, your shared imagination.** Each player has two perspectives, from your character and as the audience watching this TV show. Use the camera and vivid description to paint a cool scene in everyone's mind.

**Tell us what it looks like, before and after your rolls.** Give details about what you do, don't just leave it at broad statements. Zoom in and out. Use the camera to show things outside of your own character as well—pan around, cut to other scenes, and describe NPCs. Invoke cinematic vibes and create great scenes.

## PLAY IN GOOD FAITH

**Don't be a weasel.** Do what your character would do, then let the GM map it back to the rules. Don't overdo it trying to work your way into better rolls. The fun is letting the story flow naturally. When you ask the rules what happens next, follow where it points with enthusiasm.

**Separate player and character knowledge.** It's more fun when everyone knows what's going on in the game. Don't keep secrets from each other, keep them from characters. As a player, be aware of what your character knows and doesn't know and play towards both.

**Know the rules.** Everyone can get a copy of the game PDF (it's free!). The rules say a lot about the types of stories to be told with the game, and the less time you spend talking about the rules, the more time you have for roleplaying.

**Trust the GM to work with you.** They're playing the game as much as anyone else, and want to make a good story. The GM isn't out to punish players for taking entertaining but sub-optimal choices. Take chances and know they will have your back.

## PLAY TO TELL A STORY

**Think of the game as a series of improv prompts, posed by yourselves and the rules.**

When you respond to them, consider the following:

- ◆ What would my character do?
- ◆ What would move the story forward?
- ◆ What would make for a cool scene?
- ◆ What would get others involved?

**Don't talk yourself out of fun.** The first idea that jumps into your head is often the one you should go with. Don't overthink or rationalize yourself out of it. Like any great TV show character, go where the fun lies. Great stories involve excitement, danger, and hard choices.

**Open doors and step through them.** The best scenes involve characters playing off of each other, so make chances for others to get involved. When someone invites you into a scene, step through that door—even if it means a bit of mental gymnastics to justify your character's actions. And as long as you step through the door at times, remember that it can be just as interesting to close the door instead.

**Work the spotlight.** There's no turn order of any kind, but there is screen time. Strive to make sure everyone gets their fair share, including yourself.

- ◆ Grab the spotlight when there's a lull or you have a great idea.
- ◆ Share the spotlight by opening doors or following up on another PC's actions.
- ◆ Pass the spotlight when you've been holding it too long.
- ◆ Point the spotlight to see another PC's response or what they've been up to.
- ◆ Never steal the spotlight. Everyone works hard to set up their moment.

**Don't play to win, play to tell stories.** Work towards the same goal—to tell a great story where everyone's character has a chance to grow. Failure isn't losing, it's just another opportunity to have a great scene. Of course, your character wants to succeed! However, your goal as a player is keeping the story interesting. Play into the bad luck just as you do the good to help ensure you craft compelling stories.



## PLAY CHARACTERS THAT GROW

**Leave lots of blank space.** Your PC starts with a past and connections to the world, but it's best as latticework. Learn who they are through play. Leave space for the other PCs and story to fit in.

**Don't be afraid to change.** PCs often go through hell. Any dramatic story has adversity. Let what happens change who they are. Announce what your PC's thinking, especially big shifts. If nobody else at the table knows, it's not really happening in that shared imagination.

**Don't be afraid to stay the same.** Some aspects of your character might be immutable. That's also part of what makes a great character. There can be those things they will stick to, even to the bitter end. Just make sure it's worth it, and fun. Don't die on small hills—die on entertaining ones.

**Make time for smaller moments.** Quiet time, a conversation about nothing, introspection, reflection—these make for great scenes to flesh out your characters and the world. Don't just rush from action scene to action scene.

**Most importantly, do stuff!** Find reasons to get into the spotlight, push story arcs forward, and make fun scenes. When there's no opportunity, add some details to the story to create one.



# EXAMPLE CHARACTER SHEET

## GRIMWILD COMMUNITY EDITION

NAME  
*Gibbletibble "Tibbs"*

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES  
*shock of brown hair, cane*

BRAWN	AGILITY	WITS	PRESENCE
1	3	2	2
BLOODED		RATTLED	
DESPERATE			

MARK: +1 TO STAT, THEN CLEAR | HARM: +1 CONNECTED STATS

CRITICAL: GREATER EFFECT—SECONDARY EFFECT—SETUP—SPARK

### CONDITIONS +1 RELATED

daunted    strained    unsteady  
winded    battered    confused

*4d confused*

VEK: FIGHT—FLIGHT—FREEZE—BREAKOUT

### BACKGROUNDS & WISES

*Gnome of the frostlands*  
*strange snacks, local folklore*  
*arcane theory*

*Charlatan*  
*trade goods (scrimshaw trinkets!)*  
*spotting marks, social graces*

### WEAPON STYLE

*Hidden*  
*Quick*

### SPARK (+1d)

#### TAKE SPARK:

- ◆ roll a disaster (grimcut by thorn)
- ◆ introduce a tangle
- ◆ resolve or move on from story arc
- ◆ quarrel with an ally
- ◆ ally changes bond with you

### BONDS

*Lillylux*                      *lowkey affection*  
*Gravel Wyrmhide*        *playful doubts*  
*Magmorton*                *deep rivalry*

### STORY

#### SPEND STORY:

Establish a character, setting, or scene detail within your vantage.

Doubtful details may require a story roll.

### VANTAGE

CERTAIN	it's on this sheet
REASONABLE	it's implied
DOUBTFUL	it's a stretch
IMPOSSIBLE	too far outside

The left side of the character sheet (pictured) is the same for all paths, with background information, quick references, stats, and damage. The right side has a core talent for each path, a collection of thematic path talents available to everyone, story arcs, and xp.

# CORE RULES

## ACTION ROLLS

When you attempt to pull off something risky, clearly describe your goal (why you're doing it) and approach (how you're doing it). The GM will pick which stat the action falls under, and you roll that many d6, looking to the highest for your result.

 <b>PERFECT</b> You <b>succeed</b> , and avoid any trouble.	 <b>MESSY</b> You <b>succeed</b> , but there's also trouble.	 <b>GRIM</b> You <b>fail</b> , and there's trouble.
<i>This prompts an <b>impact move</b>.</i>		

The GM makes an **impact move** (pg. XX) to introduce consequences. Remember: the characters are competent, you're not rolling to see how you do, you're rolling to see how it goes. The consequences may not even directly relate to the action taken.

## CRITICALS

A **critical** happens when you roll more than one 6. These ignore **thorns** (difficulty, next page), and let you choose a critical bonus:



**Greater Effect:** The action is more impactful. If a **task pool** (pg. XX) would be rolled because of the action, remove 1d from it before rolling. *The knife gets plunged between the dragon's scales. | Your quick-witted remark infuriates him.*

**Secondary Effect:** Gain the effects of another related perfect action. *With a flick, your attack also disarms the pirate. | The baroness is charmed, and she also lets slip a secret.*

**Setup:** Give a benefit to a follow-up roll, usually as an **assist** without risk (pg. XX). *Your rain of arrows gives your ally a chance to rush through their lines. | You draw the orc's full attention.*

➔ *If nothing comes to mind, take **spark** and keep moving.*

### Reader Lens: D&D

There are no rounds, and no initiative. PCs act by making action rolls, and the world reacts through impact moves from the GM, usually prompted by player rolls. This means PCs can take action in whatever order makes sense, even acting more than once, as long as the spotlight is shared between everyone. In Grimwild, the players play a more active role, while the GM reacts.

## RISK

What counts as **risky** shifts with the moment and tone of the game. Most often this is when there is an immediate threat or time is of the essence. **Assume the characters are competent and only roll when it pushes the story forward**, when meaningful results come about no matter the outcome. Damage can sometimes make things risky that otherwise wouldn't be. If there's no risk, give the PC the **spotlight** (pg. XX) to narrate their success. If failing to do something isn't an interesting consequence, focus on what it costs for them to get what they want.

*The Thief is picking the lock to a warehouse on the dock (no risk), but city patrols are making rounds in the area (now the action is risky).*

*The Healer needs to administer an antidote to their ally (no risk), but they have to act quickly, and get there from across the city (now the action is risky).*

## THORNS

When an action would involve one or more significant difficulty factors, the GM can add eight-sided dice, called **thorns** (t), to the player's pool to represent these factors. **Rolling 1–6 on a thorn has no effect, but a 7 or 8 lowers the result one step** (perfect→messy→grim→disaster), called a **cut**. If multiple thorns come up 7 or 8, each one **cuts** the roll, lowering it multiple steps.



Each thorn represents a challenging aspect of the task, either external to the character (*outnumbered, wrong tool for the job, intense winds*), or internal (*no training, you used to be friends, oh no he's hot*) to the character. Usually a GM assigns a total number of thorns to a roll using their gut feel to keep the game flowing. Typical play aims for a range of 0–2 total thorns. There's no cap on the number of thorns that can be added to a roll, but the odds of success start to drop significantly at 3 or more.

## DISASTERS

A disaster means you don't get what you want, and things take a sharp turn for the worst. The GM can turn whatever would have happened into the worst case scenario. When a PC rolls a disaster, they take spark.

**PERFECT → MESSY → GRIM → DISASTER**

### Why d8?

They're visibly different than d6s, and only cut on a 7 and 8—both of which make parsing them that much quicker. Four-sided dice could be used as well, but d4s are often annoying to pick up, and don't roll well. Beyond all that, using numbers that would normally contribute to roll results would slow the game down—and that's not the Moxie style.

## SPARK

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Pure protagonist energy, useful when there's a pivotal task you want to succeed. You can spend **spark** before any type of roll you make to add +1d per spark spent. Characters can have up to 2 spark at a time, and it carries over across sessions. Take **spark** when you introduce your own complication (a **tangle**), roll a **disaster**, resolve a **story arc**, **quarrel** with an ally, or an ally changes their **bond** with you.

## VANTAGE

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This is the character's frame of reference, and their place in the current fiction. Vantage plays a vital role in deciding what rolls can be made, how difficult they are, and what is impossible. This is something that you're already thinking about intuitively, we're just giving it a name to define how it works with other parts of the game, and to help answer questions like:

- ◆ What **knowledge** could they have?
- ◆ What **actions** could they attempt?
- ◆ What **people** could they know?
- ◆ What **gear** could they be carrying?

To answer these questions, we can build up a picture of the fiction from several layers of details:

**First** we consider what's directly on their character sheet. The path name is simply a label for organizing talents thematically. On its own, it doesn't expand vantage.

*background, core and selected talents, conditions, stats, arcana, etc...*

**Next** we add a bit of room for reasonable interpretation. These are things implied by what's on your sheet.

*experience in picking locks, knows a few people at the mage's college, etc...*

**Finally**, we layer on the current details of the scene affecting your character. These are the current opportunities, obstacles, and overall situation.

*it's only lit by moonlight, the guard hasn't slept in two days, etc...*

Together, these create a character's vantage: their frame of reference for what's plausible for them in the current moment. Once you understand the idea of **vantage**, you usually assess it by feeling rather than calculation.

### Reader Lens: Forged in the Dark

You'll recognize this as fictional positioning. Grimwild bypasses the position and effect conversation, instead letting GMs decide what is risky, impossible, and how many thorns to add—all based on their gut feeling on the situation.

## THE VANTAGE SCALE

When deciding how plausible something is, use the scale below to guide your judgment. Does this feel *certain*, *reasonable*, *doubtful*, or *impossible*?

**Certain.** This is directly stated on your character sheet or clearly implied by the fiction. A certain action is an automatic success without a roll. *A doctor suturing a wound in a calm moment. A thief carrying lockpicks.*

**Reasonable.** This fits your character and the situation, but isn't guaranteed. Actions require a roll—often with no **thorns**, sometimes with one **thorn**—but the character has a solid chance of success. *A scholar knowing obscure history. A ranger finding a safe path.*

**Doubtful.** This is possible, but unlikely—stretching the bounds of your vantage. Actions are possible, but difficult, adding several **thorns** or higher **stakes** (pg. XX). *A sage lifting a heavy portcullis. A courtier knowing forbidden lore.*

**Impossible.** This is beyond your current vantage, and very hard to believe. An impossible action can't be attempted—try proposing something simpler. Some actions are just beyond your normal limits (see potency, pg. XX), while others are too absurd to ever be possible. *A farmer recalling lost arcane rituals. A commoner convincing the king to hand over the royal treasure. A child leaping over a house.*

## USING VANTAGE

Having proper vantage allows you to add relevant story details (like having gear, knowledge, connections) or make an action more certain. Lacking proper vantage makes an action more doubtful, or even impossible. Action and defense rolls use vantage by adding thorns, or determining a roll is automatically successful, or impossible. Character knowledge is given by the GM or established by the player, though a story roll may be used if there's gray area. Perception is handled by **vigilance** (pg. XX).

As a *player*, it's your job to advocate for your character when you think a part of their vantage might be relevant.

As a *GM*, it's your job to use a character's vantage to determine where their action falls on the vantage scale, then to set an action's thorns, clarifying effect and stakes as needed.

## THE TOOLS OF THE TRADE

You're assumed to have the gear and skills that are a given for your **vantage**. This avoids detailed tracking and ensures PCs are competent where it makes sense.

# WORKING TOGETHER

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## ASSIST

Characters can help allies on their rolls, giving them a better chance at success. Describe how you **assist**, then roll 1d when the ally rolls, including your results with theirs for the final outcome. Rolling your assist die separately lets the table see the impact of your help.

When you assist, you share the risk and consequences. The GM makes an impact move for everyone involved, including the original PC and everyone who assisted. The GM can hit everyone with the same impact move, use different moves for each PC, take suspense for each PC, or any combination thereof. *The Paladin assists the Fighter in forcing open a door. The Fighter makes their roll as normal, and the Paladin rolls 1d. The Fighter's highest is a 3, but the Paladin rolls a 4—the end result is a messy. The help paid off, but the GM rolls a timer pool (an impact move) and takes 1 suspense.*

## OUTSIDE HELP

Assistance can also come from an element outside the party, such as an NPC or the environment. The GM rolls 1d to represent the help, and includes the result with the character's for the final outcome.

## TEAMWORK

When a larger group of characters work together, only one PC rolls for the action while others can assist, as long as it makes narrative sense. The GM decides who rolls—sometimes the most skilled when success more important, and sometimes the least when failure has greater impact. The entire group shares the consequences, but the scale of the action increase as well. *The group works together to lift a boulder (strongest rolls). | Group sneaks around a guard patrol (least sneaky rolls). | Group finds information on criminal local faction (most street savvy rolls).*

## SETUP

When a previous action gives you an upper hand in your task, you take +1d. **Setups** handle more impactful, but temporary fiction changes, lasting between a single follow up action, to the rest of the scene depending on the fiction. *The city watch is distracted, the queen is caught off-guard, the wizard is invisible.*

## PROTECTING OTHERS

When an ally is targeted by an impact move *from their own action roll*, you can choose to put yourself in harm's way to protect them. **Make a 1d defense roll and share the risk.** With a perfect you both avoid the trouble. On a grim, you both get hit with it. On a messy, the GM can lighten the consequences for you both, or hit only you with the impact move.

## OTHER ROLLS

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### DEFENSE ROLL

When a character reflexively tries to avoid trouble **not caused by their own action roll**, they make a **defense roll**. Characters don't get defense rolls against impact moves prompted by their own action rolls—avoiding danger is already factored into the roll. Defense rolls usually come into play when the GM spends **suspense** on an impact move. The GM decides which stat should be rolled based on the danger, and the character's likely reaction.

(6) **PERFECT**. You avoid the incoming trouble.

(4-5) **MESSY**. You avoid some of the trouble. The GM lessens the consequences.

(1-3) **GRIM**. You're hit with the trouble, and take the full consequences of it.

Defense is cinematic—a reaction, out of your hands. The GM picks the stat to fit the danger, your PC's likely reaction, vulnerabilities, and what feels right for the moment. This keeps it varied—you can't always use a strong stat. See the examples below:

**Brawn:** *Block or absorb a punch. Hold your breath through poison fog.*

**Agility:** *Dodge a warhammer. Keep your footing on the crumbling wall.*

**Wits:** *See the archer nock an arrow. Catch the flaw in the courtesan's argument.*

**Presence:** *Keep your nerve. Push the enchantment from your mind.*

With time and warning, spellcasters may use magic to defend themselves, as long as it fits their spellcasting. This is *set dressing*, and doesn't require resources.

#### Reader Lens: Forged in the Dark

Remember that defense rolls are different from resistance rolls. They are similar, but defense rolls measure how well a character defends themselves in the moment. These are prompted by the GM—and can fail.

## MONTAGE ROLL

Not all scenes need to be played out in detail, if you want to zoom out on the fiction and accordion in a few beats while still leaving the outcome up to dice, make a **montage roll**. Each participating player makes a 2d action roll, collaborating on the results. Take the highest result as the final outcome for the scene. Zoom back in to key moments on unlikely or interesting results.

### Montage Example

*You look up to see the peak of the mountain, snow lightly drifting down onto your faces. It's a six-hour climb to get to the top, where the cultist sanctum is said to hide. We're going to do a montage roll to see how the trek goes.*

*Ranger: I try to find the safest path, keeping us away from unstable ledges. I got 5, a messy.*

*Fighter: I use my climbing gear, and see if I can find any shortcuts. Ope, got a grim. 3.*

*Wizard: I cast a spell to ward away the cold and keep us dry on the way up. Perfect! I rolled a 6!*

*Overall, you got a perfect, but let's zoom in on Fighter—as you climb, one of your pitons breaks and you're about to fall. Who saves you?*

*Wizard: Oh! I cast a spell to make him as light as a cloud for a moment, so he drifts safely to the ground.*

*Fighter: I quickly get up and lie, "I could have handled it!" and walk off in a huff.*

*Great—The camera looks out over an edge at the top of the mountain. We see the ranger's hand grab the ledge and pull herself up, followed by Wizard and Fighter. You're tired, and a little sore, but ready for a fight.*

## STORY ROLLS

Some rolls (such as certain magic items and wild surges) can be made to determine the effect of something outside of your PC, but aren't directly related to a stat.

Roll dice based on the odds of a favorable outcome for your character, usually 2d. The GM may drop the roll to 1d for bad odds, or boost it to 3d for good odds.

**If the roll is replacing an action roll**, usually when the character is personally involved, story rolls can prompt impact moves. *I flip the switch for the old trap, as the goblin runs down the hall toward me. | I poisoned the keg before rejoining the royal dinner.*

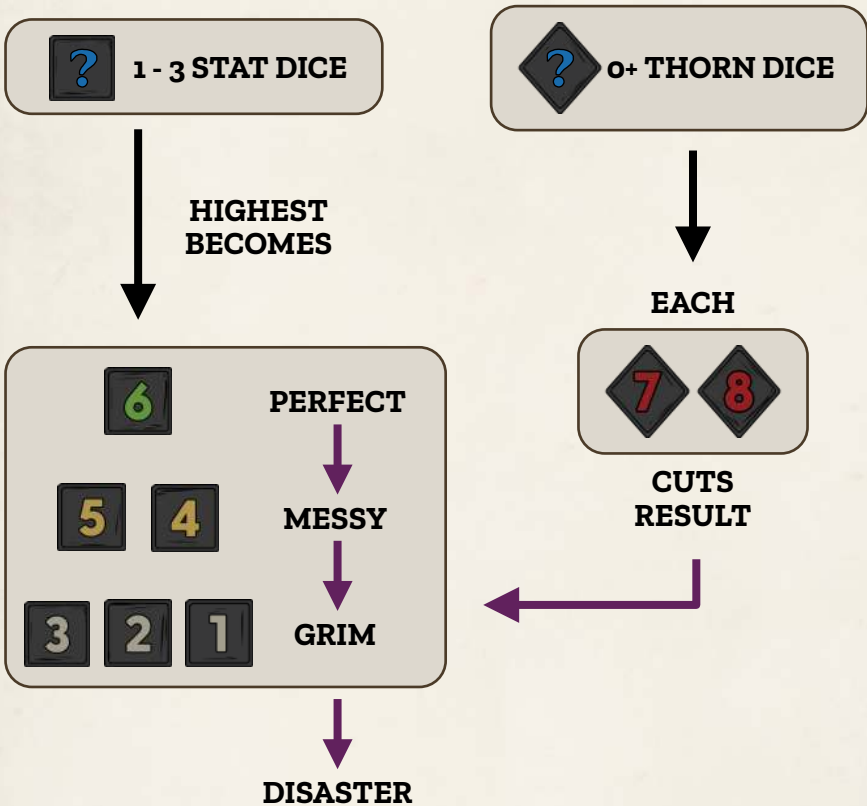
**If the roll only tests your luck**, it's used to determine the general answer to a question—from positive to negative. *Does my magical Robe of Pockets have anything useful for this? | I look down the hallway, do I see any guards?*

## FAIL FORWARD

If a grim threatens to grind the story to a halt, the GM can keep things moving—you get what you want, but in a way that makes things worse, or has an unintended effect. If a roll somehow turns out to have no effect (*the guard was already dead*), you learn new info or **setup** a follow-up.

## DICE RULES SUMMARY

Roll a number of d6 equal to your **stat**, adding any extra dice from **spark**, **talents**, and **assists**. Roll a number of **thorns**, d8s, based on the situation. Look at the highest d6 for your result. Each 7 and 8 on thorns **cuts** the roll, lowering it one step.



### Reader Lens: "Mixed Success" Games

There are no partial successes in Grimwild. If it helps, think of a perfect as a full success, a grim as a full problem, and a messy as full success with a full problem.

## DIMINISHING POOLS

A group of d6s used to track progression towards a narrative event, like completing a task, encountering a threat, depleting a resource, or passing time. When the pool is triggered, roll all dice in the pool and remove those that land with a 1-3 result. Once the pool drops to 0d, its event comes to pass and the pool is discarded.

Pools usually start at 2d/short, 4d/medium, or 8d/long. Make sure to reflect the fiction—if a pool and the fiction don't match up, adjust or scrap the pool.

- ◆ If no dice are dropped from a task pool, pick one:
  - ▶ **push yourself** (take a mark) to drop 1d anyway. This has much greater effect on small pools. *Through gritted teeth, you break the blade lock and leave a fresh cut on his cheek.*
  - ▶ **pivot** to gain a **secondary effect**, the effects of a perfect on a different, but related roll, instead. *You see at the last moment that he's prepared for a cross cut, so instead you go low, and twist the saber from his grasp.*
- ◆ Similarly, if no dice drop from any other pool, the GM can spend suspense (pg. XX) to drop 1d anyway.
- ◆ The greater effect critical bonus, **potency**, and some talents call for dropping 1d before rolling. This stacks, and has a greater mechanical effect on small pools.

Pools can be flexibly applied in many situations, usually by the GM. The types of pools can be found below.

*Note: Pools are always notated with the size of the pool in front of it, written in italics.*

### The Math Behind Pools

Larger pools require slightly more rolls to clear, but there are diminishing returns (2d clear in ~2.7 rolls, 4d clear in ~3.5 rolls, 8d clear in ~4.4 rolls). Adding any dice past 8d doesn't change the average number of rolls needed to drop it to zero by much. To track an event with more complexity, consider linked pools instead. A linked 4d+4d pool is about the same as a 51d pool (~7 rolls).

## TASK POOLS

This tracks the effort to overcome complicated tasks.

**Roll this pool** when action rolls bring the task closer to completion, or it makes sense in the fiction. *4d Barroom Brawl, 6d Tracking Quarry, 8d Escape the Guards.*

## PRESSURE POOLS

This tracks imminent threats getting closer.

**Roll this pool** often as an impact move to show threats getting closer. *6d Lookouts Spot You, 8d Reinforcements Arrive.*

## TIMER POOLS

This tracks events unfolding in the background.

**Roll this pool** as the occasional impact move, for key moments, time passing, or after a few PCs take action. *8d Sunrise, 6d Corruption Grows, 4d Patrol Returns.*

## RESOURCE POOLS

This tracks the quantity of something precious and important.

**Roll this pool** after the resource sees significant usage, or as an occasional impact move, when losing it makes sense. You must be able to roll the pool to use it; dropping the last die (such as from talents) before rolling means it can't be used. *4d Food Supplies, 8d Manpower Left, 6d Looted Treasures.*

## POWER POOLS

This is a special kind of resource pool that tracks an ability which diminishes with use. If the use of this pool isn't **risky**, the action is always successful, but the pool is still rolled to remove dice. If you add bonus dice (such as spark) to a power pool roll, roll and track these separately so they don't join the power pool.

**Roll this pool as an action roll** in place of a stat: take the highest die as the action's result, then remove dice with a 1–3 result as normal. *8d Blasting Wand, 6d Blessing Rite, 4d Clever Disguise.*

## LINKED POOLS

These are a linked sequence of two or more of any kind of pools to extend them with extra "phases". The next pool isn't unlocked until the previous reaches 0d. Pools can be linked linearly in a sequence, or in other creative ways. *8d Magic Shielding + 4d Wizard, 4d Claws + 4d Tail + 4d Body.*

## CAMPAIGN POOLS

Covered more extensively in the GM Toolkit Chapter (pg. XX), these are timer pools used to track multi-session and long term events such as faction goals, seasons, and adversarial actions. *8d Bilgewater Leader Assassinated, 6d Bounty Hunters Find Party, 4d Winter Becomes Spring.*

### GM Advice

Pools are meant to follow the fiction, but occasionally they can end up leading the fiction instead—especially for task pools. When you make a pool roll and drop far more or fewer dice than expected, consider describing the surprising opportunity or setback that arose in the story. But if a pool is ever leading the fiction in a way that's not dramatic, interesting, or fun for the table, you can always adjust the pool to better align with the fiction, or even clear it completely and move on.

# CHARACTER DETAILS

## BACKGROUNDS

Your heritage, upbringing, profession—the core of your **vantage**. You choose any two that most influences who you are now. This book contains 18 **backgrounds**, use these to make a character quickly, or mix and match **wises** to create your own. The ragamuffin background means you learned a lot from the streets; without it, your upbringing is just set dressing.

## WISES

Each background has a set of three wises, though you can also create your own for a more personalized backstory. These are evocative key phrases that clearly expand your **vantage**. They can cover niche knowledge, key insights you've picked up, or neat tricks you've grown accustomed to using. Wises are most often used when adding details to the story, and determining thorns.

## TRAITS AND DESIRES

Traits describe the PC's personality, while Desires describe what drives them. Choose 2 that strongly describe your character, and 1 that doesn't. These are included in your **vantage**, can often be used to introduce **tangles**, complications stemming from your character (pg. XX). *I am brave and rash, but not quiet. I want love and thrills, but not wealth.*

## WEAPON STYLE

Your weapon has 2 descriptors, clear ways to differentiate it from others of its kind. A dagger may have *hidden* and *quick*, while a battleaxe has *huge* and *sweeping*. These are a reminder of how the weapon might affect the fiction—make sure to describe making use of these, as your **vantage** impacts difficulty. Shields, bare knuckles, and even capes can be considered weapons. These descriptors can be split between multiple pieces of equipment if that fits the PC's fighting style. Use any of the following, or come up with your own:

*The ogre's strong, especially putting his weight behind that maul, so I dash around him with my **quick** short sword, and aim for his calf (+2t→+1t).*

*They search everyone entering the estate for weapons, but my **concealable** dagger should be easy to hide (+2t→0t).*

### Example Weapon Styles

precise	quick	bashing
quiet	sweeping	piercing
vicious	entangling	sapping
disarming	heavy	balanced
dazing	nimble	concealable
ornate	brutal	long

## DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Detail your 3 most distinctive, outward features that others quickly notice. This may include clothes, hair, markings, or how they hold themselves. Consider other features that some may notice after spending time traveling with you.

## TALENTS

Special advantages and abilities that set your PC apart. At character creation, you choose a path (rogue, wizard, fighter, etc), which gives you its **core talent**. The path talents listed below the core align thematically, though any talent from any path may be taken as you level.

Remember, Paths on their own don't expand vantage, but talents (and especially the core talent) do. Being a "rogue" doesn't mean you're automatically good at stealth, but the Expertise core talent expands your vantage which could include stealth.

### Interrupt

Make an **action roll** to try to stop an **impact move**. This requires a specific talent. If not already involved, you now share the risk. On a messy, the GM keeps (or takes) their suspense instead of finishing the impact move. On a grim, the GM makes the impact move as normal.

### Push Yourself

Expend extra effort to activate certain talents that require it. After using the talent, **mark** a related stat (your choice). When task pools drop Od, you can choose to **push yourself** to drop 1d instead.

### Bonus Dice

Talents that add **bonus dice** will also say if you decide to add the additional dice before rolling, or if you can add them after, potentially raising the result.

### Always

If you have the ability to always succeed or receive a benefit, it holds true unless the GM uses the Counter impact move, a strong NPC trait is in play, or other extenuating circumstances arise. This should be used sparingly to emphasize the impact of an exceptional adversary. As a general rule, do it no more than 5% of the time.

### Potency

Having **potency**, or pulling off **potent feats** expands your **vantage** to allow you to do something incredible. Full rules can be found on pg. XX.

## STATS

Your core capabilities rated 1/poor, 2/average, or 3/great, used for action and defense rolls. These four stats are an abstraction of your baseline ability. Each character starts with 1 in each stat, then assigns 4 more points between them. Brawn and Agility are considered physical stats, while Wits and Presence are mental.



**Brawn** is your power, menace, and toughness.



**Agility** is your precision, athletics, and reflexes.



**Wits** is your smarts, trickery, and ability to read situations.



**Presence** is your influence, willpower, and ability to read people.

### Reader Lens: Other Games

Grimwild only has 4 stats, while other games have many more actions, moves, or skills. The personalization that these provide are handled with vantage in Grimwild. A character with vantage that includes pickpocketing will be able to make rolls with fewer thorns, or may even automatically succeed, while the action might be considered impossible for a character without that vantage.

## BONDS

Your dynamic with each PC. Match an intensity (left) and a nature (right) below, or write your own. **Bonds** are your strongest view of the other PC, and not necessarily reciprocal (your tense doubts is their playful rivalry). When first established, use your collective past and details to interpret the bonds in a way that makes sense.

You can change a bond anytime, such as in response to something they've done or something new you've learned about them. When it changes, give a short vignette (better if together!). The other PC takes **spark**.

### BONDS

deep	affection
complex	camaraderie
growing	curiosity
lowkey	doubts
playful	respect
tense	rivalry

+

*I can't justify what the Rogue is doing, this is too dangerous.*

(complex camaraderie → growing doubts + Rogue takes spark)

*The Sorcerer stuck up for me in front of the Queen.*

(playful rivalry → playful respect + Sorcerer takes spark)

### Other Example Natures

ambivalence, annoyance, apprehension, awe, cynicism, devotion, envy, fascination, fear, indifference, kinship, loyalty, obligation, obsession, pity, resentment, reverence, scorn, solidarity, spite, trust.

## QUARRELS

Conflicts between PCs—arguments, competitions, or even violence. When two PCs are at odds, the story needs a resolution to keep moving forward. Both players may see their character as being right, and would never back down, but in practice, this grinds the game to a halt. Some players are better at convincing others and being assertive, while others would rather quietly avoid conflict. Quarrels address both of these problems, with the story following what one character (or player) wants, while the other has the last word—setting the tone for how things might play out moving forward.

First, make sure all players agree to the quarrel. Clearly state the stakes for winning and losing, erring on the side of dramatic (bruises, not bloodied; hurt feelings, not vex). Each player rolls 2d and the highest wins (5 beats 4). No talents can be used, it's assumed both characters are doing everything they can to succeed. Others can assist, or they can join at 2d with their own agenda. On a tie, compromise or keep quarreling.

The winner narrates how they won. Then, the loser narrates how they handle it. The results of the quarrel are final—it's okay for the PC that lost to be bitter, but the story moves in the winner's direction. Both PCs take **spark**.

### Quarrel Example

*The party just found out that the Thieves' Guild plans on assassinating the unjust king, but if they keep the secret, they'll be paid for their silence.*

*The paladin and rogue are on board, one for the justice, and the other for the money. The wizard thinks that even the unjust should have a trial, and should be warned.*

*The players decide a quarrel will solve the issue. The paladin, assisted by the rogue, will roll against the wizard.*

*The paladin and rogue roll (1, 4, 5), while the wizard rolls (6)!*

*The wizard wins the quarrel—their argument is enough to have the party follow their lead. Time to warn the king! I'm sure this will end well...*

# POTENCY

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The ability to pull off jaw-dropping feats. **Potency** is outside what is normally possible for an adventurer, and requires a talent or other source that explicitly grants potency on a specific kind of task (potent spell, a potent feat of...). When you have potency on a task, your **vantage** temporarily expands to allow you to attempt something incredible, such as:

**Group action:** Something a team of people could accomplish with an action. *Lifting a boulder, a volley of arrows, inciting mutiny.*

**Stretching limits:** Something just beyond normal human limitations. *Leap a massive gap, endure fire, tell ridiculous lies.*

**Mystical:** Feats that don't fit in with the above, but have similar narrative impact. *Befriend a wild tiger, use echoes to create a rockslide.*

Potency can move an action one or more steps on the Vantage Scale towards being certain, such as making an impossible action doubtful/reasonable, or making a doubtful action reasonable/certain.

Compared to a normal action, a potent action can be more intense or broad, create dramatic opportunities, bend the rules, or do anything else that feels incredible—within reason. At its simplest, a potent action can act like a normal action with a critical bonus. Either way, take care that a potent action's effect and risk create an exciting, pivotal moment.

## Potent Action Examples

A Ranger wishes to track a wild boar through the forest. Normally, this could be reasonable (0t–1t), but with a potent action she immediately spots a tusk mark in a nearby tree, making this certain (automatic success).

A Barbarian wishes to challenge an ogre to arm wrestling. Normally, her succeeding would be doubtful (2t), but with a potent action she manages it more easily (0t), slamming the ogre's arm down with a crash that also draws cheers from the tavern (secondary effect).

A Monk wishes to evade some guards by running across a pond. Normally this would be impossible to attempt, but with a potent action he manages to run across the surface of the pond with mystical grace (0t).

A Cleric wishes to show a band of raucous goblins the glory of his god. The goblins have little concern for religion, so this would normally be impossible to attempt. With a potent action, though, the Cleric's impassioned sermon convinces them to see the light (1t).

# CREATIVE FREEDOM

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## SET DRESSING

You can add minor, common sense details freely. Make assumptions and add set dressing to scenes to play off of to keep things flowing dynamically. There's no need to check in with the GM—they'll step in if a detail goes beyond set dressing. Anything that's certain within your vantage, like knowing someone or having equipment that makes sense, is set dressing.

## TANGLES

These are character-driven complications you introduce into a scene and have to follow-up on. In return, you take **spark**. **Tangles** must stem from your vantage often from story arcs, or traits and desires. These always have an immediate impact, like an action roll, an option closing off, or forcing inaction at an important moment—similar in weight to an **impact move**. Tangles can be things like:

- ◆ Unwise decisions your PC would likely make. *You toss aside your sword to keep things fair.*
- ◆ Personal motivations over group goals. *You poison the allied general's wine, getting your revenge.*
- ◆ Complications from beliefs or backstory. *You forgot to tell everyone you dated the baron, and it was messy. It totally wasn't your fault though, you swear.*

## STORY

Pure cinematic momentum. Each session, you have 2 **story**. Spend it to add story details that go beyond set dressing, creating new opportunities or shifting the scene in your favor. Details that are a stretch may also need a **story roll**. Added details must fit your **vantage**, at least as something *doubtful*, or tie to a **story arc**. Example details:

**Character:** Gear, contacts, backstory. *You had magical training in this city → The wizard was your mentor. You have the herbalism talent → you have the cure for a basic ailment.*

**Scene:** NPC actions, objects, atmospherics. *You have a wise in 'hidden paths' → There's a secret door. Your story arc is about indulging your gambling vice → your target is in a card game.*

**Setting:** History, geography, factions. *You've traveled this area before → there's a town over those hills. You've lived here your whole life → the city watch is known to be lazy.*

Added details can't override rolls or contradict the established story. If your detail affects another PC, get permission. Details that are doubtful, or more impactful may require a story roll to see how true or beneficial it is, or there may be nuance added. The GM can also veto details to keep things coherent. There are gray zones between set dressing, story details, and details simply too impactful to add. Set boundaries with your group.

## STORY ARCS

Evocative phrases that give your PC and group a thematic direction. Find out where they lead through play—they're a starting direction, not the destination. This is not your ultimate goal, it's the next step in your journey.

Pick a **group arc** together, then a **character arc**. Pick an examples from below, detailing it so it fits your game, or write your own. Keep it short.

Take **spark** by resolving an arc with a meaningful moment, however big or small it is. This could mean achieving your goal, adjusting it for the next step, or moving on from it entirely. PCs should gain spark from story arcs around every 2-3 games. *You shrug your shoulders and let the knight ride off—you have more to worry about than your revenge. You see a wanted poster with your face on it; it's not the kind of fame you wanted, but it'll do...*

AMBITIONS	STRUGGLES	GROWTH
<i>build a reputation</i>	<i>come unraveled</i>	<i>embrace change</i>
<i>explore the world</i>	<i>doubt convictions</i>	<i>escape my past</i>
<i>finish the mission</i>	<i>feed my vices</i>	<i>find belonging</i>
<i>make things right</i>	<i>flirt with betrayal</i>	<i>just enjoy life</i>
<i>satisfy desires</i>	<i>keep a secret</i>	<i>prove myself</i>
<i>uncover the truth</i>	<i>survive the storm</i>	<i>settle debts</i>
<i>spread the word</i>	<i>ignore the problem</i>	<i>make something new</i>
<i>expand power</i>	<i>burn at both ends</i>	<i>take charge</i>

Group arcs unite players around a theme, while character arcs help you express your own story. Most importantly, they give you authorial power—**you can use story or tangles to add story details tied to your arcs to bring them into play!**

Story arcs signal to the GM that you want drama, dilemmas, and opportunities to arise around them. For struggles (flirt with betrayal), get group permission—limiting them to a few sessions and involving everyone makes it more fun.



# DAMAGE AND RECOVERY

## MARKS

Light damage, a temporary hindrance to a stat (*out of breath, confused*). Take +1t on the next roll with that stat, then clear the **mark**.

If a stat is already marked, you take **harm** (below) instead. As long as a stat is unmarked, even if you have its related harm, you can take a mark to it.

Marks are often combined with another mark or other consequences when inflicted directly (Agility mark + thrown off your horse) as an alternative to harm. You also take a mark when you **push yourself**. If a mark is reduced (such as by a messy defense roll), it becomes set dressing.

## HARM

Damage to your mind or body, a lingering hindrance. **Harm** is the standard weight of an impact move—though it's not the default impact move by any means (even in a conflict!). Harm is often split into a couple marks or other consequences.

**Bloodied:** Pressing physical damage or stacked marks to Brawn or Agility.

**Rattled:** Pressing mental damage or stacked marks to Wits or Presence.

**Desperate:** Damage taking you to the edge, only taken as harm upon a second bloodied or rattled. Any harm taken after Desperate leaves you dropped.

Bloodied and rattled inflict +1t on their related stats, while desperate inflicts +1t on all rolls. Harm should be doled out as dramatic events—these are urgent matters in the scene and can lead to being dropped. Damage should also match the tone of the scene—**low stakes** might inflict a mark, while **high stakes** could inflict two harm at once.

Remember, any impact move can make sense, even in in combat. Leaving evidence, alerting guards, losing gear, and running out of arrows can all make combat more dramatic, and less outright deadly.

### Deadliness

Deadliness and control over PC death vary from table to table, make sure everyone is on the same page when it comes to the tone of your game. Check out the optional rules (pg. XX) for ideas and alterations to strike the feeling you want.

### Example "Damage"

- ◆ Mark + small narrative consequence (*mark Agility + drop your weapon, mark Wits + take vex*)
- ◆ Two marks (*mark Agility + Wits as you're shaken, mark Wits + Presence as you're scarred*)
- ◆ Harm (*take bloodied as they leave a gash, take rattled as you're terrified by what you see*)
- ◆ Condition (*take 3d Blinded as they throw sand in your eyes, take Watched as they're suspicious*)

## DROPPED

Taking harm while Desperate leaves you dropped—you're out of the scene. Make a **story roll** (usually 2d): on a perfect, you're merely out until the scene ends. On a messy, things get even worse, like also taking on a temporary **condition** (*4d bleeding, broken leg, trauma*). On a grim, things get far worse, like dying or taking on a permanent condition (*blind, cursed*).

You have the final say on long-term and permanent changes to your character—including death. When your character would face a severe personal consequence, work with the GM to find a good fit for your PC and the situation. If it feels like it's time for your story to end, choose **sacrifice, retirement**, or craft **another end** together.

### Sacrifice

When you're ready, you take one more action in the scene, then you die. Your action is an automatic success with whatever effect feels appropriate. Work with the GM to describe a dramatic and satisfying ending for your character.

### Retirement

You're dropped from the scene, alive but deeply scarred somehow. Work with the GM to find an opportunity in the near future for your character to retire from the adventure. The sooner the better: if you're dropped again, you'll perish.

### Another End

Not everyone dies a hero or finds peace. Some reach an ignoble demise, an ambiguous fate, a turn to antagonist, or some other conclusion.



#### On Pacing

Resolving a dropped character's fate takes time and discussion. One way to keep things moving is to remove a dropped character immediately from the scene, but leave their roll and resolution until the scene's end. Keep in mind that the player can still decide to resolve their fate at any point in between if it feels appropriate, either with a roll or a decision like sacrifice.

## VEX

This is an intense flash of emotion like anger, fear, or confusion. **Vex** is inflicted as a consequence, either on its own or in addition to a mark or harm. Vex prompts an immediate, instinctive response. Choose one of the following, then interpret the response, which usually lasts a beat or two.

**Fight:** Lash out recklessly at the subject of your fear or hate.

**Flight:** Run from the subject, taking whatever path nearest.

**Freeze:** Stop in your tracks, with the emotion taking over your mind.

**Freakout:** Do something else to put yourself, others, or your surroundings in harm's way.

Your PC is driven by emotion, but you decide how it plays out. Aim to balance what's fun, what fits the story, and what flows from the emotion.

## CONDITIONS

These are specific injuries or maladies that impact only relevant situations and are often lasting. They often replace **harm**, making actions more difficult for the afflicted PC, but not bringing them closer to dropped. **Conditions** can be:

◆ **Urgent:** These conditions act as short-term timers for a worse fate.

*4d bleeding out → death*

*4d poisoned → harm*

*8d losing your mind → madness*

*6d losing consciousness → out cold*

◆ **Short-term:** These often wear off on their own, shortly.

*twisted ankle*

*6d thrown out back*

*drunk*

*4d pissed off*

◆ **Long-term:** These require treatment or intervention to heal, or last for extended periods of time. Timers are treated as campaign pools.

*broken arm*

*ruined reputation*

*deep hatred*

*8d witch's curse*

◆ **Permanent:** These conditions won't heal easily, if at all.

*gouged-out eye*

*burn scars*

*insanity*

*limp*

**Take +1t when a condition specifically hinders a roll.** Conditions can also reduce your **vantage**, which can prohibit rolls (*you can't jump with a broken leg*).

Conditions clear when it makes sense, like after a scene, with rest, or when a pool tracking them depletes. They may also require treatment or another specific method to clear them. As mentioned earlier, work with the GM to find a good fit when you'd take a lasting condition.

## HEALING

Damage can be healed with treatment, which requires *time*, *tools*, and *training*. Treatment can be difficult and healing certain injuries may always carry **risk**. Magic may replace some requirements, though only **potent spells** can heal harm directly. Treatment is almost always successful, **impact moves** from treatment bring other problems to the forefront, such as time pressure.

**Marks** are too minor to benefit from most healing.

**Harm** is cleared with treatment.

**Conditions** can be healed when it makes sense, which might need treatment, or require working towards a task pool or fulfilling specific requirements before it clears.

### Resting

Any significant stretch of time between action (a night's camp, a week's travel) clears all marks and harm. This natural healing is paced for drama, not realism.

### Healing Example

*The Berserker is Bloodied—luckily, the Rogue has the healer background, giving them vantage to provide treatment as needed. Guards are after the two, and they decide if they should risk stopping.*

#### Situation 1

*The Berserker and Rogue are both back at their hideout, successfully evading the guards. The GM decides treatment isn't risky, so the roll is an automatic success.*

#### Situation 2

*The Berserker and Rogue duck into an alley, hoping they have enough time to bandage the wounds. Treatment here carries risk, so the Rogue rolls and gets a Messy. Bloodied is clear, but there's a complication, such as...*

- ◆ *The stress starts to get to the Rogue. (mark Wits)*
- ◆ *The wound is worse than it looked, and leaves a scar. (short-term condition)*
- ◆ *The guard patrol happens across the alley, and the two are spotted.*
- ◆ *The Rogue does the best they can, but can't treat it completely. (mark Brawn)*

### Downtime

This is an extended break, such as a month or season. All PCs fully heal, including relevant conditions, and reset per-session talents. The GM rolls **faction pools**, then picks one and depletes it completely to move the story forward.

# SESSIONS

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## PRE-SESSION

Before each session (after the first), recall the previous session and share your PC's best moment. Each player takes **spark**, and resets **story** and all per session talents.

When all are finished, the GM takes **suspense** and recaps the main points of the previous session, tying all of these moments together into a proper "Previously on..." and starts the session.

## PER SESSION TALENTS

Many talents have a set number of uses per session, and are balanced around 3 hours of play. If you run longer games, the GM can choose to have talents refresh in the middle of a session, when it makes thematic sense.

## EXPERIENCE

After each session, take 1 XP and fill in its box. You start at level 1 and advance when you fill boxes equal to the next level (Level 4→5 = 5 more boxes).

The GM can award 1 bonus XP for a standout session (about 1 in 4). For a slower pace, slash each XP box before filling it.

## Levels

PCs start at level 1 and can go up to level 7. This takes about 6 months of weekly play. Reaching a new level lets you choose a new **talent**. At certain levels, your **core talent** is upgraded as well.

One-off games with experienced players tend to work best at level 3.

### Reader Lens - D&D

Levels don't translate well between this and d20 fantasy games. Levels in Grimwild would be closer to levels 4-11 in 5th edition D&D, but even then, most growth happens through versatility, not power and more hit points.

# SPELLCASTING

Spellcasting is the ability to harness magic, acquired through **talents** or **arcana**. While each style has its quirks, they all follow the same laws of magic. Spells are cast using **touchstones**—key terms like spell names, godly domains, or item descriptions. You interpret these on-the-fly, defining the permissions and limitations of your magic when you cast. Each source clearly defines its touchstones, casting methods, costs, and limitations. Spells cast without **risk** are automatically successful, and don't expend resources, unless **potent**.

Magic has three magnitudes: spells, potent spells, and rituals. Determine the magic's magnitude by comparing the impact of the action to what can be achieved with a non-magic action (or the narrative impact to the story if that's not possible). This is a judgment call set through play, so transparency and consistency are key.

**Spells** are similar to an action roll, impactful but not dominating a scene. They should feel *useful*.

**Potent spells** are similar to a group effort, effort over time, or a single potent effort. They bend the rules, and should feel *powerful*.

**Rituals** are plot-changing, similar to a large team over an extended period, or a massive collective effort. They break the rules, and should feel *miraculous*.

## SPELLS

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Spells have effects comparable to an action roll, results one person with the right training and tools can achieve while expanding vantage—allowing new possibilities through magic. These always use the stat referenced in the talent granting spellcasting. Spells are the baseline magnitude of spellcasting actions. For most paths, when spells are cast without risk, they are automatically successful and don't expend resources.

*Just like sticking an arrow in a bugbear, a spell can call lightning to strike them or enchant their ally to backstab them. [Result: The bugbear is dead.]*

*Just like picking a lock or smashing it apart, a spell can melt through it with acid or let you phase through the door. [Result: You get past the lock.]*

*You float harmlessly down from the burning airship in the sky. [New Possibility, similar in impact to an action.]*

The **vantage** from spellcasting also allows you to add trivial magical details as set dressing without making an action roll. *A fire touchstone lights a candle. The brooms sweep the room for you. You talk to a flower and it starts to bloom.*

# POTENT SPELLS

Potent spells accomplish more than a normal spell—they give **potency** and broaden **vantage**. As with other potent actions (pg. XX), you can attempt jaw-dropping effects that are normally impossible. Compared to potent actions, though, potent spells tend to have more dramatic effects that bend the rules even further, accomplishing tasks that couldn't be performed with a conventional tool. A more impactful effect should be balanced with higher thorns and stakes to keep the moment exciting and pivotal. If you cast a potent spell with an effect on the level of a normal spell, it also bestows another effect, such as:

**Critical effect:** add greater effect, secondary effect, or a setup.

**Lasting effect:** keep the spell for the scene or longer.

**Broad effect:** affect a group or area with the spell.

## Potent Spells Examples

*Picking off these armored goblin raiders one-by-one gives them time to rush you, but a potent spell **Fireball** could take a group out at once! (+1t → +0t, plus a broad effect)*

*This stone wall is too sturdy to knock down, but a potent spell **Thunderous Boom** could do the trick. (impossible → +0t).*

*The hideout is teeming with guards, and a few moments of invisibility won't get you far, but a potent spell **Invisibility** could keep you shrouded until you find the exit. (+0t → +0t, plus a lasting effect)*

*The rogue is bleeding, and fading in and out, but you can't stop for treatment while being chased by hobgoblins. You clutch the symbol of your god and ask for help, using your **Healing Rite** to cast a potent spell to heal them. (impossible → +1t, new possibility)*

*This ice elemental would normally be immune to cold magic, but as the daughter of a great ice dragon, you channel your **Glacial Fury** for a potent spell to show it the true meaning of cold. (impossible → +2t, bypass a trait)*

*The guard is suddenly suspicious, so you decide to use your **False Memory** spell to clear his mind of the last couple seconds, though you know the mind is a delicate thing. (impossible → +2t, new possibility)*

### Reader Lens - D&D

Gauging the difference between levels may be difficult starting out. Think of normal spells as cantrips, 1st, and 2nd level spells. Potent spells are similar to 3rd-6th level spells, and rituals covering anything more powerful.

# RITUALS

Rituals can accomplish magical effects far beyond what can be done with even **potent spells**, equal to the labor of an entire team of people over an extended period, effects that can have significant impact on the world, or push the very limits of implausibility. Casting a ritual consists of 3 parts:

**A source of magic**, with relevant touchstones. This can be a spellcasting talent or a scroll, potion, or other arcana. It might also be something creative like asking or tricking a monster into helping. Even a PC without magic ability can initiate a ritual as long as they have a source of magic.

**Anchors for the ritual**, binding the physical and metaphysical realms. These are chosen by the GM and players together. They should feel connected to the ritual's touchstones and intent, and match the intended impact of the ritual. Grander and more powerful rituals should require rarer and more unique anchors. Each ritual should have two or three, usually with at least one tangible and one intangible. Check out the crucibles below for anchor ideas.

**The invocation**, to finalize its casting. The invocation is the act of casting the ritual, a challenge that must be overcome, made far more difficult or even impossible if any of the anchors are missing. Nearly all rituals carry **risk**, while most require a task pool to complete the casting.

## TANGIBLES

<i>dangerous relic</i>	<i>circle of casters</i>	<i>leyline</i>
<i>home cooked meal</i>	<i>new moon</i>	<i>planar essence</i>
<i>exotic ingredients</i>	<i>spilled blood</i>	<i>planet's alignment</i>
<i>unbroken circle</i>	<i>holy grounds</i>	<i>light rain</i>
<i>lost key</i>	<i>gold and jewels</i>	<i>top of a mountain</i>
<i>predator's tooth</i>	<i>piece of art</i>	<i>murder weapon</i>

## INTANGIBLES

<i>ancient knowledge</i>	<i>deep chanting</i>	<i>unexpected betrayal</i>
<i>first light</i>	<i>sacred dance</i>	<i>fond memory</i>
<i>A true name</i>	<i>waking dream</i>	<i>child's laughter</i>
<i>divine guidance</i>	<i>true love</i>	<i>binding vow</i>
<i>shared secret</i>	<i>utter silence</i>	<i>fun melody</i>
<i>a place like home</i>	<i>festive holiday</i>	<i>indulged vice</i>

# TOUCHSTONES

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Spellcasting ability comes with touchstones and all magic effects must logically align with them, making sense and feeling natural. If it feels like a reach, it's beyond the touchstone's bounds.

**Flaming** can burn or illuminate, but can't calm someone.

**Dazzling** can blind or distract, but can't mend objects.

**Warding** can create barriers or protect, but can't attack.

*You cast Flaming Claw as a spell at the goblins, aiming for a huge claw to grab one, ignite it, and hurl it into the rest. This fits the touchstones, but your intent—harming multiple goblins at once—might work as a spell on a bunch of mooks, but these are some tough goblins. You'll have to choose to target just one or cast a potent spell to pull off the full effect.*

The GM can veto spells that don't align with your touchstones. They can also instead allow it, but inflict a thorn or collateral effects when it's pushing your touchstones, but not completely implausible.

**A Slime Wall spell** can slow enemies, but has trouble completely blocking them (+1t).

**A Dominion spell** can command someone to help, but can't cause wounds.

**A Wand of Invisibility** can make objects disappear, but can't make sounds vanish.

*You want to grab a treasure chest and haul it across the chasm and try to cast your Flaming Claw spell to do it. Discussing it with the GM, you both decide that the claw has a physical form, but since it's on fire, it'll scorch anything it touches. The GM says that the chest will be 4d On Fire. This is just a spell, since you could get across the chasm with an action.*

## TOUCHSTONE LIMITATIONS

When you take a magic talent, have a discussion with the GM about what your magic can and can't do. Clearly defining it in this way makes the magic more fun to play with—creativity thrives within limitations. If a PC's magic feels too broad during the campaign, consider discussing new limitations to keep it balanced and engaging. Most limitations arise naturally from their touchstones or source.

*A shadow sorcerer limits their magic so it can't be used in direct sunlight.*

*A scholarly wizard limits their magic by needing their spellbook in hand to cast spells.*

*A cleric of the god of thieves limits their magic so it requires a gold piece for their rites.*

# SPELLCASTING RULINGS

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Magic's a freeform system, built on flexibility and creative rulings from the GM, with the understanding that its freedom is meant to preserve the feeling of magic. While this system can be exploited in unfun ways aimed at "winning," it relies on you buying into your magic touchstones and the magnitudes of magic. Don't be a weasel—play in good faith and have fun with the freedom it gives you. With that in mind, here are some common rulings for various situations involving magic:

## MAGIC TRAPPINGS

Discuss with the GM how your casting appears, its visual style, movements you make, and tools you use. Casting magic is clear and evident—trying to hide it is, at best, extremely difficult, but usually impossible. Losing implements or being hindered can deny permission to cast or inflict thorns. *A cleric without the symbol of their god may have a harder time casting spells (+1t).*

## DETECTING MAGIC

With a relevant touchstone, you can easily recognize magic. Without one, it's harder, though magic ability counts as a factor. Without training, the magic must be very obvious to be noticed.

## DISPELLING MAGIC

Anyone aware that something is magic can try to dispel it. This does not require training—you can cast a spell with relevant touchstones that counters it, cause enough of a disturbance to it (*smashing the arcane shield with a battleaxe, shaking someone until they're no longer charmed*), or outsmarting the magic's logic in some way (*throwing water on a fire spell*). Creativity should be rewarded here.

## ASSISTING WITH MAGIC

Using magic to assist a roll is just set dressing with no cost—just keep the narration reasonable (the weaker end of a spell). Remember you're assisting. If you're making the action roll on a group level, cast as usual.

## MAGIC DURATION

As a rule of thumb, a spell lasts just a moment, maybe two, and a potent spell lasts for a scene. This is judged by the GM based on the intended effect, which you balance against the magnitude of the spell.

# MAGIC EFFECT EXAMPLES

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Magic acts as the fiction demands, and its effect is weighted against the narrative impact of non-magical actions and potent actions. Even so, it can be difficult to decide the exact mechanical effect in the moment. Consider these guidelines on different types of spells, but don't be afraid to move outside them.

## BUFFS & ENEMY DEBUFFS

Beneficial effects that expand vantage, ease tasks, make rolls unnecessary, or provide outside help.

**Spells:** Apply a critical effect or unique vantage. *Turn invisible for a few moments. Hex a foe to be clumsy.*

**Potent:** The spell lasts the scene, affects multiple targets, or allows a momentary talent or potent feat. If you give a buff to an ally that persists in your absence, you can assist relevant rolls without risk. *Fly for the scene. Fill an ally with strength.*

**Ritual:** Give a permanent trait, no more powerful than a talent, to an ally. *Remove an ability from a foe. Cut a wizard off from their most powerful magic. Grow wings on an ally.*

## DAMAGE

Spells that directly harm others.

**Spells:** This is similar to any other action to harm another, using your touchstones and casting stat. *Strike a foe with lightning. Enchant a weapon to animate an attack.*

**Potent:** The spell applies to an area, has an extra effect, or is otherwise more intense. *Cause a massive explosion of fire. Set a trap that saps the life from a foe. Cut through the scales of an ice dragon to harm it with intense cold.*

**Ritual:** Harm a foe anywhere in the world. *Cause the wicked king to fall ill.*

## DEFENSE

The GM chooses the stat for defense rolls, and can choose to let you use spellcasting to defend yourself (without spending resources). Spells require time—you may not be able to protect more than yourself, depending on the situation. Doing more than making a defense roll costs resources as normal.

**Spells:** Make a defense roll with your magic, or lessen the effects of an incoming threat. *Weave together magic shield to block the goblin's blade.*

**Potent:** Setup ally defense rolls with a protective ward. *Create a magical bubble that blocks some of the falling rocks.*

**Ritual:** Protect yourself and allies from a source of danger for a day. *Ward away the poisonous fog. Protect against the dragon's fire breath.*

## HEALING

These spells soothe the mind, body, and emotional states.

**Spells:** Clear marks, heal minor conditions, or calm a vex response. *Clear a terrified ally's mind. Ignore exhaustion and keep going.*

**Potent:** Heal harm instantly or cure major conditions, such as a broken bone. *Instantly mend a deep wound.*

**Ritual:** Regrow limbs, and cure other extreme conditions. Bringing back the dead is possible, but costly, and extremely risky—it may not be worth the price you'll surely have to pay. *Clear the madness from an ally's mind. Regrow a limb.*

## INFORMATION

This type of spell unveils secrets, and reveals new knowledge.

**Spells:** Learn information based on the reason you cast the spell. You should have a specific question in mind, and may only get surface level information in return. *Probe their mind for a vague surface answer.*

**Potent:** Learn specific information based on the reason you cast the spell, or learn vague unprompted details. *See visions of your foe from a distant place.*

**Ritual:** Learn the full details of your subject, or see clear unprompted details. *Scry on your foe to learn their secret battle plans. Witness the history and story of a powerful artifact.*

## SUMMONING

These spells create items or conjure creatures to the scene. Consider using a 2-3d power pool, or story rolls for newly summoned creatures.

**Spells:** Create a minor summon or single effect. *Conjure a wolf. Create a dagger from shadow.*

**Potent:** Conjure a creature that lasts the scene. *Summon a hellhound. Call a warhorse spirit.*

**Ritual:** Summon large and lasting items or creatures. *Grow a wall around a town. Create a carriage from nothing. Summon a demon.*

# TREASURE

Treasure is the currency of an adventurer, useful in trade with the powerful entities in the world to further your own aims. Your skills put you beyond worrying about the expenses of daily life and adventuring gear. You deal in treasures—**minor**, **major**, and **mythic**, anything from a stash of gold to a rare artifact or magical item. While the treasure's label gives some indication of its value and the examples below show what you might get for it in trade, a treasure is only truly as valuable as what someone will give you for it.

**Minor:** *trained horse, a few jewels, noble clothing, a few mercenaries, minor arcana.*

**Major:** *an estate, artistic masterpiece, help from a city, major arcana, sailing ship.*

**Mythic:** *castle, an army, complex ritual, the royal treasury, spirit bound to service.*

Treasures are shared by the party, unless chosen otherwise. With each adventure, it's assumed that you're gaining some coin to spend on your own. Treasures are the things beyond that, valuable resources the party can leverage. Hauling treasure isn't a problem unless the GM specifically makes it one. You can also assume that when a PC needs one of the party's treasures, they happen to have it on them if it makes sense. That is, unless the GM Complicates Things (pg. XX).

## FINDING TREASURES

When you gain treasure, the GM can either specify what it is or just give its tier and handwave it. If you want specifics on it later or it becomes important to the story, figure it out then. It's the GM's job to match up treasure and the nature of the adventure and campaign. When unsure about what exactly is found, use a **story roll** and the crucible below to help.

TREASURES CRUCIBLE		
<i>favor</i>	<i>gold</i>	<i>lucrative rumor</i>
<i>jewels</i>	<i>arcana</i>	<i>deed</i>
<i>gear</i>	<i>information</i>	<i>service</i>
<i>vehicle</i>	<i>spell cast</i>	<i>contact</i>
<i>rare reagent</i>	<i>art piece</i>	<i>title or rank</i>
<i>beast</i>	<i>trade goods</i>	<i>blessing</i>

## CAROUSING

Any time you're in a settlement, you can carouse by selling off a minor treasure, with each PC spending their leisure time as they like. Make a montage roll and narrate—or suffer—the results. After the scenes finish up, everyone takes **spark** regardless of the roll.

# ARCANA

Arcana are rare relics of power, magic imbued in them through ritual or other esoteric forces. They grant **vantage**, letting you do what's otherwise impossible. These items have specific functionalities, but can be used in creative ways as long as their use fits within their unique logic. Each arcana is defined by four parts:

**The description**, which defines its intended use and core ability. It explains what happens in the fiction, though not necessarily the rules mechanics.

**The tier**, which informs the magnitude of the item's magic. They have the same tiers as treasure: **minor**, **major**, and **mythic**.

**The touchstones**, which help to adjudicate any of its uses outside of its description. All touchstones must be applied when arcana is used.

## Tiers

- ◆ **Minor arcana:** Once per session, it can produce an effect on the same level as a spell using the touchstones.
- ◆ **Major arcana:** Acts as minor arcana, but can also be used once per session to produce a potent effect.
- ◆ **Mythic arcana:** Acts as major arcana, but counts as a source of magic and all anchors for ritual magic using its touchstones, needing just the ritual invocation to be completed.

## Expendable Arcana

Limited use items such as potions and scrolls can only be used once, and because of that limitation, have an effect one tier higher. Scrolls are highly sought-after arcana, used to learn theorems with the wizard's Spellcraft talent (pg. XX).

**Trivial arcana** is a special tier exclusive to expendable arcana, allowing a single effect on the same level as a spell using the touchstones.

**Mythic expendable arcana** still only has a single use, allowing the PC to pick between a potent effect in the moment, or a ritual with time and preparation.

## Passive Arcana

This covers anything that grants a constant benefit or limitless casting, and has an effect one tier lower. This includes any magical items that are "always on".

Effects with the same impact as a spell, but that would be a potent spell if lasting for the scene (*ethereal wings*, *invisibility*) are considered potent using these rules—meaning they would be of mythic tier.

**Minor passive arcana** offers a passive effect less than the impact of a single spell, giving set dressing effects.

## USING ARCANA

Most arcana produce effects similar to spellcasting. These are specific spells, more narrow than wizard theorems. When arcana is used, the GM will pick whatever stat makes the most sense based on the form and how it's being used. If the stat is not obvious, use Wits or leave the result to a story roll. Remember, only rolls that are risky are made—without **risk**, the action (or story roll) counts as an automatic success, if possible at all. *A flaming sword uses Brawn, a robe of pockets uses a story roll.*

## OBTAINING ARCANA

The act of binding magic to items, crafting arcana, requires a ritual and a source of magic. PCs may need to find ritual anchors and hire enchanting experts to create their own arcana.

Finding and buying arcana for sale is much more difficult. Prices depend entirely on the seller's desires, usually something other than coin.

## ARTIFACTS

These arcana are more meaningful and unique—the basis of quests and layered with history, or possibly cursed. These strange relics act differently than standard arcana.

- ◆ Each session, they have a **6d power pool**. The tier determines the magical impact, as with ordinary arcana.
- ◆ They count as having **all functions**, instead having any 3 (or more!) touchstones. When used, pick any two touchstones for the effect.
- ◆ They may have **extra qualities and limitations**, such as those below.

### Optional Additions

**Cost:** The artifact has an upfront cost to use, such as spending spark, pushing yourself, taking harm, vex, or a temporary condition.

**Unique Reset:** The power pool doesn't reset every session, instead requiring an act, event, or resource.

**Dangerous:** Using the arcana always carries **risk**, and may trigger a **magical surge** (see Sorcerer, pg. XX).

**Ritual ability:** The arcana can produce a ritual level effect after an 8d timer pool. This may be once only, or have special recharge conditions.

**Sentient:** It can communicate, and has its own thoughts, goals, and wishes.

**Curse:** The item has a secret dark drawback, ranging from making it very costly to use, to being an outright trap without benefit. Using the artifact could bestow a condition, give the GM suspense, or twist its the user's wishes.

## DESIGNING ARCANA

- 1. Start with an idea of the magic item.** Where does it come from, and what themes should go along with it?
- 2. Pick a function from the list below.** This describes the general effect, and acts as a touchstone.

**Attack:** lash out to deal direct harm or destruction.

**Enhance:** temporarily boost senses, ability, or bestow something new.

**Hinder:** impede or debilitate others or areas.

**Influence:** alter thoughts, emotions, or perceptions.

**Protect:** defend yourself and others from outside harm or influence.

**Restore:** heal wounds, cleanse maladies, and mend materials.

**Reveal:** sense and reveal the hidden, and uncover new information.

**Summon:** manifest objects, creatures, or forces themselves.

**Transform:** change the nature or form of the subject.

**Traverse:** move across space, through barriers, or in a new way.

- 3. Decide on the two remaining touchstones.** These should be thematic and focused, evoking the magic ability of the arcana. Use the crucibles to the right for inspiration, or to randomize touchstones.
- 4. Decide the tier, based on the magical impact.** Remember that the effect is one tier higher if it's expendable, and one lower for unlimited use arcana.
- 5. Pick a fitting form for the item.** Consider the magic and function, and pick items that make thematic sense, such as a pair of boots using *traverse*, or a dagger using *attack*. It's okay to subvert expectations, too!
- 6. Write the description,** giving an idea as to how the magic manifests and what it does in the fiction. Keep this focused on the fiction, the mechanics may change depending on the situation and use.

*If you have a clear idea of what you want the arcana to do, start with the description, picking touchstones that summarize the overall intent of the item.*

# ARCANA CRUCIBLES

Use the following crucibles for touchstone inspiration, or pick 1 or 2 tables and roll randomly to generate arcana of a specific theme.

## ARCANE

<b>adapt</b>	curiosity	unstable	mind	water	rune
plane	<b>memory</b>	bubble	ethereal	phase	emotion
force	scribe	<b>blink</b>	focus	hand	explosion
flame	echo	rift	<b>acid</b>	word	float
identity	lore	attune	dazzle	<b>thought</b>	sight
phantom	vortex	vanish	air	gate	<b>color</b>

## DIVINE

<b>soothe</b>	melody	eternal	plague	justice	heal
life	<b>bind</b>	sun	shield	vigor	halo
luck	truth	<b>sentinel</b>	rainbow	moon	spirit
virtue	sacrifice	wrath	<b>purify</b>	pierce	dead
blood	stars	light	blind	<b>reflect</b>	fate
beauty	ward	bravery	sorrow	renew	<b>radiant</b>

## ELDRITCH

<b>shred</b>	lock	warp	scream	tendrils	mask
charm	<b>shift</b>	skull	trick	figment	darkness
bind	false	<b>cold</b>	void	enthrall	chain
impulse	curse	shadow	<b>steal</b>	whisper	drain
dream	sick	confuse	desire	<b>eye</b>	shroud
face	grasp	flesh	silence	madness	<b>lurk</b>

## PRIMAL

<b>lush</b>	claw	grow	breeze	shell	ember
storm	<b>stone</b>	rot	stone	thorn	blight
river	fragrant	<b>frenzy</b>	howl	freeze	beast
thunder	horn	flight	<b>tail</b>	lightning	spore
poison	swarm	root	bloom	<b>earth</b>	death
wither	rain	bone	sting	tree	<b>gust</b>

## TECHNOLOGY

<b>fuse</b>	disk	creativity	song	oil	stasis
crystal	<b>cog</b>	keen	smoke	mirror	servant
ornate	stitch	<b>slime</b>	pressure	quick	gravity
gold	shrapnel	wall	<b>spark</b>	bind	message
haven	duty	clock	command	<b>glass</b>	greed
dance	ring	guide	shatter	plasma	<b>beacon</b>

# CHAPTER 2

# ADVENTURERS

## STARTING A CAMPAIGN

Start each campaign with a session zero, a campaign brainstorming and character creation session where you get everyone on the same page about themes, setting, and the kind of game you want to play. Remember, think about it like a TV series!

- 1. Choose a Theme & Setting:** The GM leads the discussion on what campaign themes and settings sound fun. Choose a setting or build one together.
- 2. Form the Party:** The players form their adventuring party, following the prompts below. The party is made before the characters to ensure they fit well.
- 3. Set Group Arc:** The players choose a group arc, a goal or theme they're interested in playing out as a group. You'll figure out what it means in play. (pg. XX)
- 4. Make Characters:** Follow the character creation flow and make PCs together. Prioritize fitting in with the theme, setting, party, and group arc. (pg. XX)

## ADVENTURING PARTY

Your group of adventurers already know each other and have adventured together, at least for some time. Answer the prompts below together to get a sense of your party's concept to ensure that you build characters that fit well within that type of party.

**CONCEPTS:** Choose 2 that you see your party as and 1 that you definitely aren't.

- |                                  |                                   |                                 |                                  |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Conquerors | <input type="radio"/> Heroes      | <input type="radio"/> Mystics   | <input type="radio"/> Scholars   |
| <input type="radio"/> Disciples  | <input type="radio"/> Mercenaries | <input type="radio"/> Outsiders | <input type="radio"/> Scoundrels |
| <input type="radio"/> Explorers  | <input type="radio"/> Merchants   | <input type="radio"/> Renegades | <input type="radio"/> Wardens    |

To help whittle down choices, each player and the GM can individually write down one group concept they want to play as and one they won't play as, then reveal them.

# ADVENTURER PATHS

Paths are collections of talents grouped by common adventuring themes. Each has a core talent and core growth—your core talent gets stronger as you gain levels. Remember, paths cannot be used to establish story details—backgrounds and talents can. Talents are meant to be re-skinned to fit your concept! Each path is covered in detail later in this chapter.

<b>BARD</b>	<i>Stirring the soul with song or deed.</i>
Spend <b>inspiration</b> to bolster your allies, and influence foes to turn the tide.	
<b>BERSERKER</b>	<i>Blood, mettle, and the sounds of battle.</i>
Fly into a <b>frenzy</b> to wade through foes and lay waste to your enemies.	
<b>CLERIC</b>	<i>Faith is stronger than any blade.</i>
Use your <b>rites</b> pools to call upon your god, wielding their divine magic.	
<b>DRUID</b>	<i>The fury of nature—untamed and relentless.</i>
Use your <b>wild shape</b> pool to take bestial forms and learn their abilities.	
<b>FIGHTER</b>	<i>Resolve honed with every strike.</i>
Spend <b>mastery</b> to fight with unparalleled expertise in your chosen style.	
<b>MONK</b>	<i>Perfection is a journey, not a destination.</i>
Spend <b>flow</b> to act with mystical grace and stop foes in their tracks.	
<b>PALADIN</b>	<i>An Oath taken, a burden willingly carried.</i>
Spend <b>smite</b> to overcome challenges with the power of your conviction.	
<b>RANGER</b>	<i>No escape, no mercy, only the chase.</i>
Tag a foe as your <b>quarry</b> to learn about, track, and slay your chosen enemy.	
<b>ROGUE</b>	<i>A whisper in the dark, then a quiet end.</i>
Use your <b>competence</b> pool to grasp victory from the jaws of defeat.	
<b>SORCERER</b>	<i>Magic flows like blood, powerful and wild.</i>
Use your magic in near infinite ways, but be careful of <b>magical twists</b> .	
<b>WARLOCK</b>	<i>Power always demands a hefty price.</i>
Bargain with your patron for <b>Eldritch Talents</b> , but beware their fickle nature.	
<b>WIZARD</b>	<i>Arcane knowledge, wielded with precision.</i>
Use the <b>spell theorems</b> you've learned to call precise magic to your hands.	

If none of these paths fit the fantasy you want to play, check out the additional paths in the Player Options chapter (pg. XX). These alternatives only fit certain settings and themes—make sure to ask your GM ahead of time what is available.

# CHARACTER CREATION

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Follow the steps below to create your character. This order is often the simplest, but you should begin where your imagination takes you. Character sheets for each path are available wherever you found this.

- 1. Backgrounds:** Choose two backgrounds, each with three wishes, that detail your heritage or professions, covering your tools of the trade and story details. (next page)
- 2. Traits:** Choose 2 you very much are and 1 you definitely aren't: brave, caring, confident, curious, gentle, honest, honorable, persistent, protective, quiet, rash, stubborn.
- 3. Desires:** Choose 2 you truly desire and 1 you definitely don't: belonging, glory, harmony, honor, justice, knowledge, love, power, renown, thrills, wealth, wisdom.
- 4. Features:** Write down three distinctive features, words or short phrases that others soon notice about you, like strong hands, kind eyes, or a gravelly voice.
- 5. Path:** Choose a path, gain its core talent, and pick either another talent from your path's list or a non-core talent from another path. (pg. XX)
- 6. Stats:** Begin with 1 in each stat, then assign 4 more points amongst them as you like, to a max of 3 in any single stat. (pg. XX)
- 7. Weapon Style:** Choose your weapon(s), then split two descriptors between them. (pg. XX)
- 8. Arcs:** Choose one or two character arcs to explore. Don't get too detailed—these will get fleshed out during play and can be changed anytime. (pg. XX)
- 9. Bonds:** Describe your characters in detail. As you listen, choose one bond you have towards each PC, matching together an intensity and a nature of the bond. (pg. XX)
- 10. Review:** Revisit the campaign theme, setting, party identity, and group arcs you set. Make sure everything matches up well and make any adjustments.
- 11. Montage:** Finish off with a montage of the last adventure you went on together. The GM gives a basic overview of the scenario, then you roll a group montage (2d each) to see how the whole adventure went. (pg. XX) Collaborate to narrate your outcomes, working in bonds and other details.

# BACKGROUNDS

Backgrounds are the pillars of your backstory, revealing key aspects of who you are. They determine what counts as set dressing—tools of the trade and the story details you can add. Start with a simple word or phrase, leaving room for growth as your backstory is revealed during play. They're just dots to connect later.

Backgrounds include your heritage (pg. XX), social class, or profession. Each background comes with three **wises**—evocative phrases that highlight areas of knowledge, experience, or awareness from that background (wises, pg. XX). They're especially useful for declaring story details, providing prompts and ideas to bring into play. Backgrounds serve as a clear sign of the important aspects of who you are.

You have two backgrounds. You can choose from the list (next page), use the Heritage crucible (pg. XX), or use either of those as guidelines to create your own. Backgrounds and their wises should fit the campaign world and be approved by the GM. A heritage background isn't required if you prefer it as just set dressing. If you need more ideas for wises, check out the Savant's expanded wises! (pg. XX)

*You might have grown up poor on the streets, but if you have the Ragamuffin background, you learned a lot from that experience, and it's a core part of who you are.*

*You might be a dwarf, but having the Dwarf of the Iron Hills background lets you set the scope of what it means to be a person from that heritage.*

*A fighter with the Warrior and Noble backgrounds feels substantially different than one with the Scoundrel and Eccentric backgrounds.*

<b>Charlatan</b>
<b>AKA Spy, Swindler</b>
social graces
spotting marks
timely misdirects

Each common background has a name, and other "Also known as" names. Personalize this to fit the setting—you're not just a Charlatan, or even a Spy, you're a Scarlet Agent of the Crown.

Common backgrounds also come with three wises. Mix and replace these to fit the character. It makes sense for your Scarlet Agent to have social graces and timely misdirects, but maybe luxuries makes more sense than spotting marks.

<b>Scarlet Agent of the Crown</b>
social graces
timely misdirects
luxuries

## COMMON BACKGROUNDS

### Charlatan

**AKA Spy, Swindler**

social graces  
spotting marks  
timely misdirects

### Clergy

**AKA Cultist, Priest**

allegories  
signs of sin  
faiths of the world

### Commoner

**AKA Farmer, Villager**

local customs  
practical wisdom  
superstitions

### Crafter

**AKA Artisan, Smith**

crafting quality  
trade contracts  
wear and tear

### Drifter

**AKA Explorer, Vagabond**

chance meetings  
faraway tales  
lay of the land

### Eccentric

**AKA Hermit, Recluse**

hard truths  
random facts  
strange snacks

### Entertainer

**AKA Storyteller, Minstrel**

legends & tales  
crowd behaviors  
stage presence

### Healer

**AKA Herbalist, Physicker**

comfort foods  
signs of ailment  
herbal properties

### Hunter

**AKA Pathfinder, Trapper**

survival  
tracks  
wildlife behavior

### Investigator

**AKA Guard, Gumshoe**

seedy areas  
connecting the dots  
body language

### Mariner

**AKA Pirate, Sailor**

nautical lore  
seafaring  
weather patterns

### Mystic

**AKA Occultist, Seer**

ancient prophecies  
leylines  
symbology

### Noble

**AKA Aristocrat, Diplomat**

diplomacy  
influential contacts  
luxuries

### Ragamuffin

**AKA Cutpurse, Urchin**

hidden paths  
rumors  
street smarts

### Sage

**AKA Lorekeeper, Scholar**

ancient histories  
peoples of the world  
philosophy

### Scoundrel

**AKA Brigand, Thief**

escape routes  
signs of weakness  
shady connections

### Trader

**AKA Merchant, Peddler**

cultural tastes  
people's desires  
rare goods

### Warrior

**AKA Sellsword, Soldier**

battle plans  
improvised weapons  
war stories

Backgrounds can evolve as the story unfolds. Start with a simple name and leave room for growth as your backstory is revealed. Don't corner your character growth before starting. You might start as a Mariner, refine it to Pirate, then expand on it to Blackthorn Reaver or First Mate under Captain Stormclaw as it comes up in the story. Or you can just keep it simple!

## HERITAGE

Heritage reflects your culture, ancestry, and homeland. Use the Heritage Crucible below for inspiration: roll three words, pick two, and combine them. You can interpret these words literally or figuratively, or use them as they are.

Once you set your heritage, give it three wises. The backgrounds (previous page) can serve as inspiration. These wises reflect traits commonly shared by most people from your heritage. This continues throughout the game as you figure out more about your people through play. In short, you know what the Orcs of the Verdant Boglands are like because you are one!

### Heritage Talent

Some heritages have innate capabilities beyond their wises. You can link the second talent at character creation to your heritage, or work with the GM to create one. This makes it a common trait amongst your people. If something isn't strong enough to warrant a talent, work with the GM to add it in as set dressing—a bit of flavor, but can't be relied upon to impact scenes.

#### SUGGESTED TALENTS FOR COMMON HERITAGES:

**Human:** Jack of All Trades (pg. XX)

**Elf:** Keen Senses (pg. XX)

**Dwarf:** Dauntless (pg. XX)

**Halfling:** Lucky (pg. XX)

**Gnome:** Arcane Training (pg. XX)

**Orc:** Flesh Wounds (pg. XX)

**Dragonkin:** Eldritch Affinity (pg. XX)

**Tiefling:** Eldritch Growth (pg. XX)

**Aasimar:** Healing Hands (pg. XX)

**Satyr:** Crowd Favorite (pg. XX)

**Genasi:** Eldritch Affinity (pg. XX)

**Goliath:** Mighty (pg. XX)

**Tortle:** Bulwark (pg. XX)

**Lizardfolk:** Poisoner (pg. XX)

**Merfolk:** Aquatic (pg. XX)

**Kobold:** Deadly Trapping (pg. XX)

**Goblin:** Opportunist (pg. XX)

**Aarakocra:** Flight (pg. XX)

**Firbolg:** Kindred Spirits (pg. XX)

**Forged:** Artificial Parts (pg. XX)

## HERITAGE CRUCIBLE

Roll 1 of each, choose 2-3, then interpret

<b>FOLK</b>	<b>Vagrants</b>	Birdfolk	Wayfarers	Goblins	Islanders	Fisherfolk
	Riders	<b>Clans</b>	Seafarers	Tribes	Keepers	Settlers
	Gnomes	Pilgrims	<b>Turtlefolk</b>	Citizens	Marauders	Carvers
	Dwarves	Tieflings	Giants	<b>Dragonborn</b>	Tradesfolk	Valleyfolk
	Nomads	Cityfolk	Humans	Halflings	<b>Merchants</b>	Skywatchers
	Elves	Orcs	Forestfolk	Cavefolk	Raiders	<b>Outcasts</b>
	<b>MOOD</b>	<b>Twisted</b>	Steel	Verdant	Golden	Emerald
Lush	<b>Floating</b>	Crimson	Shattered	Haunted	Enchanted	Enchanted
Scorched	Echoing	<b>Misty</b>	Glimmering	Distant	Silent	Silent
Rolling	Bountiful	Great	<b>Sunken</b>	Coastal	Gloomy	Gloomy
Abyssal	Desolate	Rocky	Wildswept	<b>Howling</b>	Eternal	Eternal
Feral	Serene	Whispering	Grim	Prosperous	<b>Restless</b>	<b>Restless</b>
<b>LAND</b>	<b>Peaks</b>	Confederacy	Fjords	Coast	Badlands	Boglands
	Kingdom	<b>Wilds</b>	Marsh	Isles	Thickets	Jungletown
	Desert	Canyons	<b>Highlands</b>	Caverns	Fenlands	Borderlands
	Plains	North	Moors	<b>Ruins</b>	Hollows	Underworld
	Sea	Meadows	Outposts	Cliffs	<b>Boomtown</b>	Riverlands
	Glaciers	Sands	Wastelands	Coalition	Blightlands	<b>Groves</b>

## BACKGROUND TALENTS

These talents fit more thematically with backgrounds and heritages, but are otherwise available to all paths.

**AQUATIC:** You can breathe and move freely in water, and have no other issues that aquatic environments bring.

**CLOUT:** Your name carries weight in the right circles. Each session, you have a **3d Favor** resource pool. You can ask as for a reasonable favor from those in power and roll the pool to have it granted. If it drops to 0d, you've asked too much. You can get what you want anyway by *burning that bridge*.

**CROWD FAVORITE:** When given time and space to entertain a crowd, you and participating allies can **take spark** for the performance. Give a *vignette*, then make a story roll to see how it goes.

**CULTURAL WEAPON:** While using the iconic weapon of your society, you can **push yourself** to pull off a **potent feat of prowess** using one of the style descriptors. These weapons are often highly coveted outside of your ancestral lands.

**FLIGHT:** You have the ability to fly. Choose two of the following benefits that define this ability: *Agile—Strong—Swift—Tireless*. Be mindful of what you carry; most fliers can't bring much with them.

**REGENERATION:** When a scene ends while you are **bloodied** or **desperate**, make a 2d story roll as a defense against the harm. On a messy, reduce it to a **mark**. On a perfect, clear it. Choose a weakness that accompanies this power, such as: *fire—iron—sunlight*.

**SALT OF THE EARTH:** You have the air of someone with humble beginnings. The GM judges an NPC's response, or you can spend story to set it: *disdain—underestimation—kindred—pity*. When you go out of your way to help the common folk, **take spark**.

**SELF-RELIANT:** A lonely lifestyle has hardened you. On a *grim without assistance*, you can **push yourself** to add 1 to one of your dice.

**SIMPLE DEDUCTION:** Once per session when trying to solve a question or puzzle to give a specific guess. The GM will tell you: *something right about it—something wrong about it—a detail you missed*. Use a story roll if the answer is unclear.

**TEAMWORK:** Time in a squad or crew taught you to work well with others. When you **assist** a roll and share the risk, your **5s count as 6s**. When taking part in a group montage roll, your 6 result counts towards a critical success.

**THIEVES' CANT:** You and those you teach can communicate subtly in company, silently over distances, and through signs and markings. When you get a perfect deceiving others, you also **setup** an ally following your lead.

# PATHS & TALENTS

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The remainder of this chapter details the 12 adventurer paths available in the game. Below, you'll find explanations of common options and terms used throughout the paths. These clarifications help you better understand how to customize your character and make use of talents.

If you would like more ideas, check out the Player Options chapter (pg. XX) for more paths and talents!

## Core Growth

Your core talent powers up as you level. Some paths gain bonuses every 2 levels, at 2, 4, and 6, while others gain them every 3 levels, at 3 and 6. Remember, the max level a character can get to is 7.

## Poaching Talents

Every path talent is available to every other path. Those under each specific path are collected around their loose theme, but by no means fit every character in that path. You are encouraged to check out all the talents and pick which ones fit your character best.

## Re-Skin Talents

To avoid redundancy, similar talents across paths have been avoided. Instead, you're encouraged to "re-skin" talents to fit your character's theme. For example, the Bulwark (armor) talent could be reflavored by a wizard as a magical shield.

### Reader Lens - D&D

Grimwild works off flavor and descriptions in the moment. If you're trying to remake a character in this system, don't get caught on capturing each small mechanical bit. Make the character with broad strokes, and fill in the rest with flavor.



## Push Yourself

Some talents require you to **push yourself**. You put in extra effort, marking a relevant stat to activate the talent. Choose your moments wisely.

## "Given Time"

This phrase, included in several talents means you need time to do what the talent lets you, but how long that is leaves room for interpretation. Go with what makes sense, but at the very least it's a narrative beat, a PC action, or some time unhindered by disruptive forces. Use story rolls or group consensus to decide what counts.

## Choices

Italicized words separated by em dashes represent lists of choices, like: *one— two— three*. These represent a limited number of options you must choose from. If instead a talent suggests a type of choice, saying "you can do things **such as** A and B", then you can extrapolate that out into other similar actions.

## On a Perfect/Grim

Any talent that allows you to do something on a perfect also triggers on a critical. Those that trigger on a Grim also happen on a Disaster.

## Bonus Dice

Talents that add **bonus dice** will also say if you decide to add the additional dice before rolling, or if you can add them after, potentially raising the result.

## Always

If you have the ability to always succeed or receive a benefit, it holds true unless the GM uses the Counter impact move, a strong NPC trait is in play, or other extenuating circumstances arise. This should be used sparingly to emphasize the impact of an exceptional adversary. As a general rule, do it no more than 5% of the time.

## Optional Character Building

Some paths include additional character-building features, marked with an [Optional] tag. If they're not relevant to your character, you can pass them up.

## Roleplaying Advice

Some paths include advice on roleplaying that character path, especially on parts that might be somewhat unfamiliar. It's entirely optional, but if they resonate with you, lean into them to make those aspects important in the game.

# PATH OF THE BARD

**AKA** the orator, warlord, chronicler

You spin tales and songs that stir emotions, inspire bravery, and turn simple deeds into legends.



## INSPIRATION

Core Talent

Each session, you have **3 inspiration** you can use to magically bolster the spirits of those around you, and influence your foes.

You can spend **inspiration** to: *increase an ally's die result by 1 (3→4)—calm or intensify a vex response—clear a **mark** from an ally.*

You can also spend **inspiration** and roll Presence to: *pull off a **potent feat of emotional influence**—interrupt an impact move—clear **rattled** from an ally.*

**GROWTH:** At levels 2, 4, and 6, gain +1 inspiration per session.

## INSPIRATION METHOD

(Optional)

Where does your power to influence others come from? Choose any 2 from the following that you know, and 1 that you're learning.

- ◆ Violin
- ◆ Oratory
- ◆ Martial Ability
- ◆ Panpipes
- ◆ Flute
- ◆ Cutting Wit
- ◆ Lyre
- ◆ Ocarina
- ◆ Accordion
- ◆ Limericks
- ◆ Proverbs
- ◆ Dance
- ◆ Aesops
- ◆ Lute
- ◆ Style
- ◆ Singing
- ◆ Harmonica
- ◆ Drums

## SONG COMPOSITION

(Optional)

Many bards use music to channel their innate power to inspire and influence others. Use the crucible on the right to build the bardic songs you know.

**Style:** This is how you feel when you're performing the song.

**Tune:** This is the familiar form that anyone will recognize.

**Impact:** This is how the song magically influences others.

STYLE	TUNE	OF	IMPACT
chaotic	anthem		affection
dire	aria		awe
fiery	ballad		calm
gentle	chant		despair
haunting	ditty		fear
playful	hymn		fury
nostalgic	ode		hope
rousing	requiem		joy
vicious	rhapsody		mockery
whimsical	serenade		wonder

# BARD PATH TALENTS

**BARDIC LORE:** You gain any 3 wises and 1 extra **story** per session. You take +1d on any story rolls pertaining to what you know or story details you add.

**DYNAMIC ENTRANCE:** You can always appear in a scene exactly where and when you want, limited only by your physical capabilities. Make a 3d story roll to describe your entrance and its effect.

*The player sets the scene for their entrance, allowing extra details based on the result, almost as an action—even an interrupt, itself. The GM will step in if something doesn't fit.*

**FOLK HERO:** You can spend **inspiration** and **spark** interchangeably. If your **spark** die comes up as a 6, you regain it. Tales of your heroism are told throughout the area; track their spread with campaign pools.

*Note: this doesn't grant the inspiration core talent to non-bards.*

*For every free room and home-cooked meal, you're likely to have a plea for help, swindlers, starry-eyed followers, and those looking to pick a fight. Any of these would make great tangles.*

**FORKED TONGUE:** When given time, you can tell **potent lies**, such as telling the king you're their bastard or a prophecy foretelling the fall of the capital. You can **push yourself** to do it on the spot.

**FRIENDLY FACE:** In any new town or district of a city you go to, you can always: know someone useful—quickly make a friend—be recognized by a fan. They'll gladly do you a reasonable favor. **Take spark** if you promise to pay them back.

**JACK OF ALL TRADES:** You take +1d on montage rolls, and gain 1 extra **story** per session. You can spend **story** to gain a wise until the session ends. When the wise is used, describe how you got this experience.

*You don't know everything the wise suggests, it's only temporary. When you gain it, it's to show you know something about it, though we won't know what until it comes up narratively.*

**WORDPLAY:** On a perfect defense roll when the situation allows for verbal quips, you make them: embarrass yourself—let a secret slip—focus on or lose track of you. Once per session, you can goad the GM into spending **suspense** on conversation.

# PATH OF THE BERSERKER

AKA the juggernaut, reaver, warbringer



You don't just fight—you crush anything and everything in your path until nothing stands before you.

## FRENZY

## Core Talent

Once per session, or when you get **bloodied** or take **vex**, you can enter a frenzy for a scene. During the frenzy, you can only take aggressive actions. You also:

- ◆ take +1d for each **mark** you have and ignore all thorns from **harm** and **marks**.
- ◆ add **collateral damage**: *send something flying—smash mooks—throw insults—wreck something.*
- ◆ always get a final action when dropped. On a critical, ignore getting dropped.

You can only exit a frenzy when: *no challenger stands before you—get dropped—push yourself.*

**GROWTH:** At levels 3 and 6, gain 1 free activation of frenzy per session.

*Collateral damage acts as a narrow secondary effect, as a critical, and shouldn't be underestimated. Treat this as a perfect on a related roll against the environment or mooks.*

## FRENZY SOURCE

(Optional)

Where does your wild power and ability to withstand pain come from? Choose 2 and smash them together to form the source, and 1 that you have a disdain for.

- ◆ Ritualistic preparation
- ◆ Trained tolerance to pain
- ◆ Long consumption of strange substances
- ◆ Drawing power from ancestral spirits
- ◆ Drawing primal power from the wild
- ◆ Channeling memories you'll never forget
- ◆ Visions of horrific or heroic scenes
- ◆ Deep meditative focus
- ◆ Blood pact with a kindred force
- ◆ Countless battles, countless injuries
- ◆ Binding your spirit to a physical totem
- ◆ You really don't know why you're like this

## SCARS

(Optional)

Your ability to ignore pain has led you to take far more damage than most warriors. What scars do you bear that show your reckless nature? Choose 3 that you show off.

- ◆ Crookedly broken nose
- ◆ Wild, ripped hair
- ◆ Torn earlobe or ear tips
- ◆ Web of deep cut scars
- ◆ Muscles knotted like iron
- ◆ Deep, cauterized wound
- ◆ Permanently split knuckles
- ◆ Several missing fingers
- ◆ Cracked jawline
- ◆ Empty eye socket
- ◆ Jagged burn lines
- ◆ Crushed foot
- ◆ Smashed teeth
- ◆ Gouged claw marks
- ◆ Busted in skull
- ◆ Cauliflower ears
- ◆ Runic scarring from magic
- ◆ Not even a scratch on you

# BERSERKER PATH TALENTS

**FEARSOME:** Your presence instills fear in others. The GM judges an NPC's response, or you can spend story to set it: *hostile—nervous—respectful—scared*. You can **push yourself** to pull off a **potent feat of intimidation**, such as *staring down a dragon or demanding to see the king*.

*What exactly makes you so frightening to be around? This could merely be your appearance, but it could also be the way you talk, hold yourself, dress, reputation, or a combination thereof.*

**FLESH WOUNDS:** You can get **bloodied** multiple times, each time inflicting +1t on physical rolls. These extra thorns can never be ignored (e.g. *Frenzy and Oathsworn talents*) and apply to any attempt to heal you. When you are bloodied multiple times, only a **disaster** can drop you.

**INTO THE FRAY:** When you're the first into an intense situation, **5s count as 6s, but 4s count as 1s** on your first roll. You also **setup** the first person following you regardless of your roll outcome.

**JOYFUL WARRIOR:** On a critical or when **bloodied** in battle, you **take spark** and can: *clear one mark from each ally—bring a dropped (not dead) ally back into the scene*.

**MIGHTY:** When given time, you can pull off **potent feats of raw strength**. You can **push yourself** to do it on the spot.

**OVERKILL:** On a critical when bringing violence, threats, or destruction to bear, you can: *cause an extra secondary effect—roll the related task pool twice*.

**WARCRY:** Twice per session, you can bolster your allies or strike fear in your foes with an inspiring battle cry, letting you: *increase an ally's die result by 1 (3→4)—calm or intensify a vex response—clear a mark from an ally*. [Prohibited: Bard]

# PATH OF THE CLERIC

AKA *the priest, zealot, chosen*



You serve as a conduit for the divine, channeling holy power to safeguard the faithful and do your god's bidding.

## CHANNEL DIVINITY

### Core Talent

You can call upon your deity to channel their magic. You roll a **rite pool** to cast spells, and that pool and your **god's epithet**—their domain serve as touchstones. Your **major rite** is a **6d power pool**, and your 2 **minor rites** are **4d power pools**. They replenish each session. You can drop 1d and roll to cast a potent spell. Spells without risk require no roll, unless potent.

**GROWTH:** At levels 3 and 6, gain +1d to each rite pool.

## CREATE YOUR GOD

Create your god by naming them and giving them a thematic epithet (e.g. *Zerenda, Goddess of Storms*). Write down 3 tenets—the guidance from your god that you are expected to follow while spreading their word, then choose 1 of the following to create their domain, or choose your own.

- |           |            |            |          |             |            |
|-----------|------------|------------|----------|-------------|------------|
| ◆ Storms  | ◆ Justice  | ◆ Life     | ◆ Death  | ◆ Magic     | ◆ Nature   |
| ◆ Mercy   | ◆ Trickery | ◆ Radiance | ◆ Travel | ◆ Hunt      | ◆ Luck     |
| ◆ Revelry | ◆ Sea      | ◆ Moon     | ◆ War    | ◆ Knowledge | ◆ Crafting |

## LEARN YOUR RITES

Decide your place in your god's flock. What is your mission, and what rites have you learned to help you achieve your goal? Choose 1 major rite, and 2 minor rites from the following, or make your own.

### BLESSING

**Magic:** Bless a warhammer. Walk on water. Fill the forlorn duke's heart with hope.

### DIVINATION

**Magic:** Find a safe path. Reveal where the thief is hiding. Know tomorrow's weather.

### DOMINION

**Magic:** Convince someone to help. Make someone forget. Calm an angry mob.

### HEALING

**Magic:** Heal a broken bone. Relieve someone of stress. Stop the bleeding.

### WARDING

**Magic:** Shield an ally from harm. Block a doorway. Create sentries.

### WRATH

**Magic:** Shatter a foe's weapon. Blind a traitor. Curse a heretic with misfortune.

# CLERIC PATH TALENTS

**BLESSED:** Once per session, you can re-roll a roll you just made as your god attempts to intervene. The re-roll is made without any thorns on it. On a perfect, **take spark**.

**DEVOUT:** Intelligent creatures recognize you as a person of deep honesty and only your most hated enemies would treat you with a lack of respect or doubt your word. You are never seriously injured or killed by an enemy, unless they have no choice. Any creature with speech will always hear you out. This aura is upheld by your unwavering commitment—you must **push yourself** to act in bad faith.

*You stick to your principles unwaveringly, and even those acting against you know. How does this impact those around you? This is sure to cause **tangles**, perhaps even quarrels.*

**HEALER:** You take +1d when you heal someone, with magic or treatment. On a critical, both of you **take spark**. One time only, you can bring back the recently dead. Common sense takes precedent.

**IRON WILL:** Each session, you have a **2d Iron Will** resource pool. When you get **rattled** or take **vex**, roll the pool to ignore it. If the situation allows for it, you can also lash out at the cause or a bystander and: *instill dread in their heart—sow doubt in their mind.*

**RINGS FALSE:** You always know when someone is lying, though not necessarily the truth. You take +1d on a follow-up if you reveal you know they're lying.

*This could be seen through a darker lens, flavored as having been around criminal types and ne'er-do-wells for far too long.*

**SERMONS:** When given time, you can pull off **potent feats of persuasion** in the name of your beliefs, like *commanding a crowd to bring the duke for judgment* or *showing the goblins the glory of your god*. You can **push yourself** to do it on the spot. One time only, you can make this a ritual-level effect.

**SHEPHERD:** When you assist an ally on a defense roll that would leave them **rattled** or with **vex**, you can invoke your bond to take +1d on the roll. On a perfect, you both **take spark**.

# PATH OF THE DRUID

AKA *the shapeshifter, grovekeeper, wildling*

You embrace and embody the untamed power of the natural world, transforming into beasts and channeling the spirit of the wild.



## WILD SHAPE

## Core Talent

Shift into any familiar beast form by using a **2d Wild Shape** resource pool, replenishing each scene. You take on the form's physical qualities and feral instincts, moving stat points to represent this (min 1, max 3). You lose access to your own physical talents. Drop 1d before rolling for each **wild talent**, such as: *aquatic—smaller than a cat—bigger than a bear—flying—a thematic path talent.*

**GROWTH:** At levels 3 and 6, gain +1d to your Wild Shape pool.

## DRUIDIC TELLS

(Optional)

Druids often exhibit tells—sometimes several—that reflect their deep connection with nature, such as animalistic traits or plant-like appearances. Even in a fantasy world, someone so attuned to nature is bound to attract attention, offering potential new vantage, outside assistance, or even opportunities for tangles. Below are some ideas for features:

thorns	blossoming	feathered	bristled	roots	fluffy
moss	bark	earthen	hoofed	vibrant	silken
vines	glowing	translucent	tangled	crystalline	smoky
tusked	velvet	murky	speckled	verdant	willowy
shimmering	antlered	ashen	spiny	gnarled	fragrant
scaly	longtoothed	dewy	breezy	misty	petals

## WILD TALENTS

(Examples)

Below are some examples of beasts that have wild talents. Already existing talents are listed with a page number reference. Others are made for that beast.

- ◆ **Chimpanzee:** *Relentless* (Ranger, pg. XX)
- ◆ **Wolf:** *Keen Senses* (Ranger, pg. XX)
- ◆ **Spider:** *Wall climbing*
- ◆ **Turtle:** *Bulwark* (Fighter, pg. XX)
- ◆ **Octopus:** *Shape & color mimicking*
- ◆ **Cheetah:** *Incredibly fast sprinting*
- ◆ **Bear:** *Flesh Wounds* (Berserker, pg. XX)
- ◆ **Eagle:** *Flight*
- ◆ **Snake:** *Poisoner* (Rogue, pg. XX)
- ◆ **Lion:** *Fearsome* (Berserker, pg. XX)
- ◆ **Dolphin:** *Fast swimming*
- ◆ **Fox:** *Lurker* (Rogue, pg. XX)
- ◆ **Crocodile:** *Swamp camouflage*
- ◆ **Ape:** *Mighty* (Berserker, pg. XX)
- ◆ **Honey Badger:** *Iron Will* (Cleric, pg. XX)
- ◆ **Rhino:** *Bigger than a bear*

# DRUID PATH TALENTS

**AUGURY:** You can read the world around you and interpret its signs. Before each session, roll 2d and record the results. These are your **Omens**. During the session, you can replace any rolled d6 (by anyone) with an **omen** result, then erase it.

**AWAKEN:** Once per scene, you may awaken a living natural feature—plants, animals, fungi, or the like—within or nearby the scene. It gains awareness and purpose, forming a **3d power pool** you can direct, guided by its nature. One time only, you can make this a ritual-level effect.

**HERBALISM:** Before each session, use the herbalism crucible to make two herb names. Each session, you have **1 trivial** and **1 minor potion**, chosen when they're used. The name is the touchstone. One time only, you can have **1 major potion**.

<b>choke</b>	star	sun	dream	mist	zap	<b>cap</b>	lily	thistle	pod	stem	petal
sticky	<b>stone</b>	moon	feather	soot	blast	wort	<b>reed</b>	bell	bud	shoot	bean
wool	dust	<b>devil</b>	wild	freeze	blood	rose	flower	<b>leaf</b>	tongue	bark	tuber
smoke	snake	honey	<b>mirror</b>	sting	ink	bush	root	wood	<b>berry</b>	funnel	vine
shriek	mimic	goat	worm	<b>steel</b>	skunk	shroom	spine	grass	lace	<b>moss</b>	seed
giggle	needle	night	swell	faerie	<b>dragon</b>	sprout	shade	thorn	bane	branch	<b>weed</b>

Herbalism crucible by Juniper Bloom and used with permission.

**KINDRED SPIRITS:** You can speak with all manner of wild things—animals, plants, and spirits. When you meet, they know of you. Roll their bond with you or spend **story** to establish it. When you call, those nearby will answer. You always sense the presence of hidden dangers in places teeming with wildlife.

**PRIMORDIAL FORCES:** You have spellcasting ability, using an element as the touchstone, and casting spells with its connected stat (**Earth-Brawn**, **Air-Agility**, **Water-Wits**, **Fire-Presence**). On a critical using an element, charge it. Spend it to cast a potent spell with that element.

*If the elements are spirits in your setting, consider adding **bonds** for them. You may find alternative ways to charge an element, such as through great deeds or ritual.*

**TRUE SHAPE:** Choose 1 beast form. If it has no **wild talents**, you can shift into it without using a wild shape pool. If it has **wild talents**, you drop 1d less than normal when you shift into it.

**WINDCALLER:** Your voice carries on the winds over great distances. Once per session, you can **push yourself** to summon or dismiss, but not control: dense fog—diving temperatures—heavy rain—snowfall—strong winds—thunder. You can **push yourself** to do it again. You can perform weather rituals without ritual anchors.

# PATH OF THE FIGHTER

AKA the *blademaster, duelist, sergeant*

You become one with your weapon, and through it, you find your real purpose in this life.



## WEAPON MASTERY

Core Talent

Choose a **fighting style** you have mastered: *brawling—dual-wielding—one-handed—ranged—two-handed*. When you fight, defend, or assist in your style, take +1d. Each scene, you have **2 mastery** to spend when using this style to add a critical effect.

**GROWTH:** At levels 3 and 6, gain +1 mastery per scene.

## WEAPON ORIGIN

(Optional)

For many fighters, their weapon is an important part of their past. Give your weapon some character and it will become a character itself in the story. Roll d66 twice on the table below to give your weapon, or each of your weapons, its own small story. You can also choose, or make up your own.

<i>etched with words of loss</i>	<i>stolen from a family member</i>	<i>marked by a secret society</i>
<i>gift from a childhood mentor</i>	<i>covered in burn marks</i>	<i>with a hidden compartment</i>
<i>given to you by your father</i>	<i>carved with friend's initials</i>	<i>inscribed with a quote</i>
<i>taken from a dead body</i>	<i>with a faded family crest</i>	<i>give as a peace offering</i>
<i>marred with blade nicks</i>	<i>taken as spoils of war</i>	<i>belonged to a gambler</i>
<i>made from a rare material</i>	<i>scratched from fierce battle</i>	<i>patched many times</i>

## COMBAT MANEUVERS

(Advice)

Action rolls let you flavor combat however you like—don't just swing a sword or jab a spear. Lean into the dramatic flowing nature of combat. Use mastery for **setups** and **secondary effects** to remove thorns or shift the fight. Don't tunnel vision on the kill, either—use your actions to change the battle to end it faster! Of course, anyone can try these, but as a fighter, you should master them.

- ◆ **Blind:** Cloud their vision to leave them vulnerable.
- ◆ **Disarm:** Take their weapon to stop their advance.
- ◆ **Knockdown:** Put them on the ground to gain the upper hand.
- ◆ **Pin down:** Trap them in a position to keep them from acting or escaping.
- ◆ **Pull:** Drag them into danger or out of position.
- ◆ **Push:** Shove them away to protect allies or disrupt their own lines.
- ◆ **Sunder:** Break their gear to limit their options or get around their defenses.
- ◆ **Unnerve:** Leave them shaken and questioning their choices.

# FIGHTER PATH TALENTS

**ARCANE TRAINING:** You have spellcasting as the Spellcraft talent. You can cast 2 spells and 1 potent spell per session. You know **3 spell theorems**, created with the Spell Crucible, and can learn new spells from scrolls. [Prohibited: Wizard]

**BULWARK:** Each session, you have a **2d Bulwark** resource pool from armor or other defenses. When you take physical harm, you can roll the pool to ignore the damage.

**CONTROL:** Once per session, you can declare a zone that enemies cannot cross without dealing with you. If they attempt to move past you, you can **interrupt** them. On a perfect, **take spark**. You can **push yourself** to do it again.

*Some foes are too large to control. Even experienced, a warrior with control over an area won't stop a dragon—but they may get a parting shot (roll the pool), or move with them.*

**GOT YOUR BACK:** Once per session, you can assist an ally after they roll a grim. The ally can also roll 1d. On a perfect, you both **take spark**. You can **push yourself** to do it again.

**MEASURED TONES:** When you speak in measured tones, people always stop and listen—you can declare **low stakes** if desired. Unless completely surprised, you can **push yourself** to **interrupt** an impact move initiating aggression. If you change their mind, **take spark**.

**SWIFT RECOVERY:** On a perfect roll with an unmarked stat, clear a **mark** on another stat.

**TACTICIAN:** Once per session during an intense action sequence, you tag 3 scene elements right away, and 1 later in the sequence. When an ally interacts with a tagged element, you **assist** without risk on the roll. If no roll is needed, they **take spark**. You can **push yourself** to do it again.

*Scene elements may come from the GM's description, or they could be things that would logically be there. Establish details if needed, the GM will step in if it's too far.*

# PATH OF THE MONK

AKA *the martial artist, mystic, wanderer*

Your body is a vessel through which you channel your discipline into grace, precision, and the never-ending journey towards perfection.



## DISCIPLINE

## Core Talent

Never face a disadvantage due to a weapon matchup. Once per session, you can **interrupt** with a: *philosophical point*—quick reaction—stunning strike. Each scene, you have **4 flow**. Spend it to:

- ◆ Ignore thorns from: *being outnumbered*—a single imposing opponent.
- ◆ Attempt a fluid maneuver. Before rolling, declare you want to also: *disarm them*—redirect momentum—reposition you, them, or both. On a perfect or messy, it happens.
- ◆ Pull off a **potent feat of mystical grace**, like running across water or falling harmlessly from a great height. For 1 more **flow**, extend this to those you're touching.

**GROWTH:** At levels 3 and 6, gain +1 flow per scene and +1 interrupts per session.

## MARTIAL ARTS STYLE

(Optional)

It's based on the \_\_\_\_\_ concept of...

[choose 1 or 2]

Primal	Elemental	Powerful	Idealistic	Philosophical	Stylistic
tiger	fire	thunderstorm	harmony	foundation	ferocity
crane	water	avalanche	destruction	flourishing	deception
snake	air	tsunami	tranquility	refinement	grace
wolf	earth	whirlwind	justice	adaption	brutality
mantis	lightning	earthquake	chaos	endurance	precision
raven	heart	volcano	freedom	transformation	patience

It's features stances and moves like...

[choose 3]

open palm	elbow strike	circular step	high kick	crane stance	mantis grab
spinning kick	aerial leaps	knee strike	tiger claw	side kick	close punch
low stance	breath control	joint lock	heavy strike	swift parry	leaping elbow
finger jabs	redirecting grab	pressure point	dual strikes	rooted stance	snap kick
iron forearm	chop strike	whipping attack	jumps & rolls	soft redirect	wide sweep
flowing step	iron grip	steady gaze	palm heel	backfist strike	crescent kick

It often makes use of \_\_\_\_\_ weapons like...

[choose 2]

Blunt	Flexible	Edged	Reach	Thrown	Specialized
bo staff	chain whip	sai	monk spade	shuriken	tiger claws
three-part staff	rope dart	kama	spear	throwing spikes	spiked boots
half-staff	sickle & chain	butterfly sword	naginata	chakram	war fan
nunchaku	weight & chain	hook sword	longhandle blade	boomerang	iron knuckles
short sticks	whip blade	straight sword	trident	darts	crescent knives
batons	scarf	curved sword	scythe	throwing axes	backfist rings

# MONK PATH TALENTS

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**HEALING HANDS:** You can heal an ally that is **bloodied**. This automatically works, but you must make a Presence defense roll against being **bloodied**—you take their pain onto yourself and must fend it off.

**LIGHTNING REFLEXES:** You can always act first, unless completely surprised. You also ignore thorns on Agility defense rolls, except for those from damage.

**MIND OVER MATTER:** When you take a physical **mark**, you can instead choose to take a mental **mark**. When you clear a **mark** by rolling it, **take spark**.

**REDIRECT:** On a perfect defense against physical attack, you can **push yourself** to turn it back on your foe.

*Keep vantage in mind when redirecting attacks. If you're quick, you could very well deflect arrows and bolts. If you're also strong, you could catch and return spears and larger weapons.*

**RESONANCE:** When you would drop a foe, you can instead keep their lifeforce. They know you hold their fate. In the near future, you can decide to let go, and: *drop them instantly—take spark and release them.* One time only, you can immediately drop a foe you strike.

**TETHER:** Once per session, touch someone to link spirits. You can sense their feelings, speak in their mind, and know where they are. You can **push yourself** to: *assist them without risk—take mental damage for them—teleport to them.* If they get dropped, so do you.

*Linking spirits can give you new insight on an ally. Do either of you catch any fleeting memories or thoughts from the other? Consider changing your bond afterward.*

**THERE IS NO TRY:** When putting your life or something you hold equally dear on the line, **5s count as 6s, and 4s count as 1s**. This generally occurs with **high stakes** or after being **bloodied** in battle.

# PATH OF THE PALADIN

AKA the crusader, champion, justiciar

You have sworn an oath and your unwavering dedication gives you powerful conviction, which you can wield to shape the world.



## OATHSWORN

### Core Talent

You draw power from your three tenets. When you add a thorn from **bloodied**, **rattled**, or **desperate** you also take +1d. Each session, you have **3 smite**. When acting with total conviction, spend it 1-for-1 to drop dice from a task pool *after* rolling it.

**Affirmation:** Before each session, state your tenets and discuss how they came up last session. Give **spark** to one player who joined a scene involving your tenets. Take 1 less **smite** for each tenet in violation.

**GROWTH:** At levels 2, 4, and 6, gain +1 smite per session.

## SWEAR YOUR OATH

At character creation, or over the first few sessions, detail the **Three Tenets** that form the core of your oath. Write your own specific tenets (below), or use the table (next page) to create ones that you can explore through play. To write your own:

- ◆ **Choose a character detail or two**, such as a trait, bond, or background.
- ◆ **Link it to a short, actionable phrase.** It should naturally arise from the fiction occasionally and present you with dilemmas. Work with the GM to ensure this as you write it.

**Rank the tenets** in order of importance. If they ever conflict, following a higher one avoids violating a lower one. You must **uphold your tenets, or risk violation**. They are absolutes, but they can evolve as it makes sense or best serves the fiction (and game at the table). When you violate a tenet, slash its box. For a second or severe violation, fill in the box—it is in heavy violation.

**You break a tenet** when you violate it again while in heavy violation (filled box). You can no longer atone for that tenet. Breaking two tenets makes you an Oathbreaker (below). **Atonement** for tenets in violation require great deeds. The deed must outweigh the severity of the violation itself—ask the other players if unsure. Once completed, clear the box.

## OATHBREAKER

You lose the Oathsworn talent, but may choose a new non-core talent or the Warlock's Pact core talent in its place. Redemption requires an appropriate ritual or mythic deed. Success restores your core talent while allowing you to keep the talent gained from breaking your oath. **Redemption is possible only once.**

# PALADIN PATH TALENTS

**AEGIS:** You take +1d when making a defense roll to protect yourself from physical harm. On a perfect, you can also: *keep their attention on you—rekindle hope in an ally—inspire action in a bystander.*

**AUTHORITY:** Your presence fills the air with authority. The GM judges an NPC's response, or you can spend story to set it: *admiration—obedience—respect—defiance.* You can **push yourself** to pull off a **potent feat of righteous command**, such as *ordering a demon to kneel or silencing a riot with a word.*

**CHALLENGE:** Once per session you can challenge a foe, taking +1d on all rolls against them, but give them 1 **suspense**. If they do anything besides confront you, you can **interrupt** it. The challenge ends if an ally engages your foe, or your **interrupt** result is less than a perfect. You can **push yourself** to do it again.

**DAUNTLESS:** **Take spark** when your roll is cut. Take +1d on story rolls if dropped. On a perfect, you don't get dropped.

**DIVINE BLESSING:** You have spellcasting as the Channel Divinity talent. Detail your god and choose 1 **rite**, a **4d power pool** (per session). You can drop 1d and roll the pool to cast a potent spell. [Prohibited: Cleric]

**GUARDIAN:** Take +1d when you **assist** on a defense roll. You can also make a defense roll for an ally when they would be affected by an impact move, or **push yourself** to defend multiple nearby allies from a single attack, like blocking dragon fire.

When you "make a defense roll for an ally", you're not assisting—the impact move is instead now targeting you, and they're no longer at risk.

**REBUKE:** When the GM spends **suspense** to prompt an impact move, you take +1d on any follow-up action against the source. On a critical, **take spark**.

## TENET BUILDER

(Roll, then choose an option, rewrite for clarity.)

I SWEAR TO BRING	TO—FOR THE	DESPITE—BECAUSE OF
<i>honor—valor</i>	<i>forgotten—powerless</i>	<i>my desire for...</i>
<i>justice—revenge</i>	<i>redeemable—irredeemable</i>	<i>my trait ...</i>
<i>faith—doubt</i>	<i>reformers—traditionalists</i>	<i>my arc to...</i>
<i>mercy—judgment</i>	<i>devout—faithless</i>	<i>my background of...</i>
<i>strength—compassion</i>	<i>evil—defiled</i>	<i>my bond with...</i>
<i>truth—wisdom</i>	<i>leaders—people</i>	<i>my lack of...</i>

# PATH OF THE RANGER

AKA the *beastmaster, pathfinder, trapper*

You stalk relentlessly, moving unseen through the terrain, tracking your prey with deadly precision and striking them when they're weakest.



## QUARRY

## Core Talent

Twice per session, you can designate a target as your **Quarry**—the focus of your hunt. Until the end of the session, you have a **2d Quarry pool** rolled as bonus dice to research or locate them, and when *anyone* attacks or defends against them. When a **Quarry die** rolls a '6', that PC **takes spark**.

**Prowler:** You take +1d when using stealth, traversal, and traps in familiar terrain.

**GROWTH:** At levels 3 and 6, gain +1d to your Quarry pool.

## FAVORITE TRAPS

(Optional)

Combine and interpret an effect, trigger, and the word "trap" (poisonous bait trap) to make three traps you commonly use while hunting or scouting. These aren't limitations, just options ready to use when you need to lay a trap.

Effect	Trigger
stunning	tripwire
falling	pressure plate
noisy	+ snare loop
poisonous	bait
entangling	hidden
injuring	proximity

## TELL-TALE SIGNS OF WEAKNESS

(Advice)

When you tag a powerful quarry, use your resources to find a weakness, figure out how you can exploit it. These are some vulnerabilities you may discover:

- ◆ **Fire Sensitivity:** Flinches near flames, avoids heat, dry or cracked skin.
- ◆ **Bright Light Weakness:** Cloudy eyes, avoids light, panics near flashes.
- ◆ **Vulnerable Anatomy:** Exposed weak points, protects soft areas.
- ◆ **Poison Susceptibility:** Sluggish breathing, avoids carrion, soft or delicate skin.
- ◆ **Tunnel Vision:** Fixates on a target, oblivious to surroundings, struggles to adapt.
- ◆ **Poor Mobility:** Heavy tracks, slow movement, struggles on uneven terrain.
- ◆ **Sound Sensitivity:** Wince at noises, large twitching ears, avoids loud terrain.
- ◆ **Slow-minded:** Delayed reactions, struggles to recognize threats, easily tricked.
- ◆ **Predictable Instincts:** Easily baited or lured, overcommits.

# RANGER PATH TALENTS

**ANIMAL COMPANION:** You're accompanied by a fiercely loyal animal. Each PC adds a reciprocal bond with it. Choose **3 tricks** and **2 flaws**. You roll 3d for its **tricks** and 1d otherwise. It has only two damage boxes, marked (for any **mark**) and hurt (for any **harm**). It can always exit a scene when hurt. If lost, you can bond with a new animal.

## TRICKS

distract—fight—guard—perform—rescue—retrieve—scout—search—track—warn

## FLAWS

aggressive—clumsy—grumpy—insatiable—jumpy—noisy—overprotective—scary—unruly

**KEEN SENSES:** Your senses are twice as sharp as normal. You can pull off **potent feats of tracking** and you always notice the presence of living creatures near you, though details are unclear.

**RELENTLESS:** You can pull off **potent feats of traversal** and can always move at full speed, unhindered by what's in your way.

**SCOUT AHEAD:** You gain 1 **story** per session and can spend **story** to flashback to scouting ahead and: *sabotage something—set a trap—survey the area (ask 2 questions)—take out a danger—set up an interrupt*. Make a 3d montage roll. The GM always takes **suspense** in place of an impact move.

**SEASONED HUNTER:** You can **push yourself** to tell your allies to *Look Out!* and **goad** the GM into spending suspense on a move you declare to attack your party. Anyone involved takes +1d on a defense roll and follow-up action rolls.

**SHARPSHOOTER:** When given time, you can pull off **potent feats of ranged precision**, such as *shooting just beyond maximum range or into near complete cover*. You can **push yourself** to do it on the spot.

**TROPHIES:** When you play a key part in slaying a powerful monster, you can take a trophy from it. This acts as a **major expendable arcana**. Use the monster's name, ability, and a function as the touchstones. You also gain 1 major expendable arcana—detail it.

*Major expendable arcana can instantly produce the effect of a potent spell, or be used as a source of magic and all anchors for a ritual.*

# PATH OF THE ROGUE

AKA *the assassin, cutpurse, infiltrator*

You live and operate in the margins, striking unseen and disappearing before anyone knows you were there.



## EXPERTISE

## Core Talent

Choose three skills below as your **skill set**. Take +1d when using a chosen skill. Each session, you have a **4d Competence** pool to represent your focus under pressure. You can roll it as bonus dice after any of these skills.

**Above board:** *duel—evade—investigate—persuade—track—traverse.*

**Below table:** *ambush—forgery & disguise—lying—sabotage—sleight of hand—stealth.*

**GROWTH:** At levels 3 and 6, gain +1d Competence per session and +1 skill.

## THIEVES GUILD

(Optional)

Many rogues learned their trade from a thieves' guild, underground network or criminal ring. These are all one form of a guild or another, whether formal or not.

**THIEVES GUILD:** Choose 2 that describes your guild and 1 that really doesn't.

- |                                      |                                     |                                   |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> like family    | <input type="radio"/> turf-obsessed | <input type="radio"/> mystics     | <input type="radio"/> just business |
| <input type="radio"/> elite training | <input type="radio"/> heroes        | <input type="radio"/> outsiders   | <input type="radio"/> in the open   |
| <input type="radio"/> cultish        | <input type="radio"/> mercenaries   | <input type="radio"/> influential | <input type="radio"/> follows code  |

## CRIMINAL HISTORY

(Optional)

Given their skill set, a rogue either learned their trade by way of crime or possess the skills to make an excellent criminal, for which there's no lack of opportunities. As you start your adventuring career, it's likely you have some lingering criminal history, a past that can come back to haunt you in quite fun, dramatic ways. Create one or more past crimes by setting the **crime** (severity & nature), your **reputation** from it, and your own **reaction** about the crime.

Severity		Nature		Reputation
petty	<i>theft</i>	<i>vandalism</i>	<i>treason</i>	<i>barely remembered</i>
low-level	<i>fraud</i>	<i>gambling</i>	<i>robbery</i>	<i>small bounty</i>
moderate	<i>spying</i>	<i>bribery</i>	<i>assassination</i>	<i>known name</i>
serious	<i>smuggling</i>	<i>extortion</i>	<i>heist</i>	<i>hunted</i>
severe	<i>banditry</i>	<i>arms dealing</i>	<i>impersonation</i>	<i>infamous</i>
legendary	<i>kidnapping</i>	<i>arson</i>	<i>necromancy</i>	<i>most wanted</i>

**REACTION:** *I did what I had to do—I was set up—It was a misunderstanding—I'll do it again—I completely forgot I did that—I've made peace with it—Never again.*

# ROGUE PATH TALENTS

**ACCORDING TO PLAN:** You gain 1 **story** per session and can spend **story** to flashback, establishing how you planned for the current situation. Make a montage roll, taking +1d if it fell within your expertise. The GM must take **suspense** in place of an impact move.

*This can cover any kinds of planning. Consider your other talents and abilities as well, for example: if you have spellcasting, perhaps you prepared by using magic ahead of time.*

**DISTRACTION:** On a perfect, you can **setup** an ally and pass them the **spotlight**, even if the GM wants to spend suspense.

**ELDRITCH AFFINITY:** You have spellcasting, as the Sorcery talent. You roll Presence to cast and choose 3 from **magic paths** and **techniques**. You can't cast potent spells, nor do you risk a **magical twist**. [Prohibited: Sorcerer]

**LURKER:** On a perfect sneaking past or secretly observing sentient creatures, they: *let a secret slip—give you a golden opportunity*. If caught sneaking, you can **push yourself** to stay completely still and avoid detection, but must leave the area immediately after.

**OPPORTUNIST:** When someone nearby rolls defense, you take +1d on an immediate follow-up. On a critical by a nearby ally, you can **push yourself** to add a critical bonus.

**POISONER:** Each session, you have a **4d Poisons** resource pool. You have access to the following poisons: *hallucinations—knockout—memory loss—nausea—paralytic—truth serum*. They each take a bit of time to work and are most effective if ingested.

**WEASEL:** Once per session, if caught in a lie or red-handed, you can weasel your way out—for now. Make a story roll to see if they realize their mistake later. You can **push yourself** to do it again.

# PATH OF THE **SORCERER**

**AKA the channeler, elementalist, stormcaller**

You are a conduit for ancient and unpredictable forces, shaping spells out of the raw magic that flows through you.



## SORCERY

## Core Talent

You have spellcasting ability. You roll Presence to cast and your magic paths and techniques serve as touchstones. Your spells always carry **risk** and require a roll. You can **push yourself** to cast a potent spell. When casting, rolling two or more 1s (thorns included) triggers a **magical twist**. Choose any 4 of **Magic Paths** and **Techniques** (with at least 1 of each) and how your twists manifest below, or talk to the GM to make your own.

**Magical twists:** *wild surge (2d story roll for effect)—take vex—curse (+1 suspense).*

**Magic paths:** *blood—decay—flame—frost—lux—shadow—stone—tempest.*

**Techniques:** *attack—create—defend—enhance—hinder—influence—transform—traverse.*

**GROWTH:** At levels 2, 4, and 6, gain a new magic path or technique.

## WILD SURGE

(Optional)

As your chosen magical twist, or when the GM **Complicates Things** with your magic, you may trigger a wild surge—raw magic spirals out of your control. Make a story roll (usually 2d) to see what happens. Effects should complicate the scene, but usually don't reach the level of a full impact move. They might stem from your touchstones, raw magical essence, or something random. Use the crucible below or ask around your group for ideas.

### WILD SURGE CRUCIBLE

Roll 1 on each table, smash them together, and interpret

skin	temperature	icy	smoke	rain	lightning
gust	sparks	rattle	tremor	color	scent
ground	fire	<b>water</b>	light	debris	flicker
creatures	growth	boom	<b>effect</b>	steps	levitation
cloud	invisibility	gloom	distortion	<b>metal</b>	eye
shadow	clock	twist	laughter	breath	<b>hum</b>
<b>birds</b>	whispers	glowing	illusion	rapid	whirlwind
smell	<b>static</b>	hunger	image	emotion	glimmer
lifted	change	<b>phrase</b>	shock	sound	echo
shattering	scatter	feeling	<b>pop</b>	brief	shimmer
shift	size	surface	agitation	<b>apparition</b>	sparkle
notes	vision	voice	mark	glow	<b>dazzle</b>

# SORCERER PATH TALENTS

**ELDRITCH GROWTH:** The maelstrom of magic has twisted your body. You gain a permanent physical feature like metal-rendering claws, venomous fangs, leathery wings, or thrashing tentacles. In addition to its obvious benefits, it now serves as a touchstone.

**MAELSTROM:** You open yourself fully to the maelstrom of raw magic. When you cast a potent spell, **5s count as 6s, but 4s count as 1s**. When rolling two or more 1s (including these 4s), you trigger a **magical twist**, as Sorcery.

**MAGIC SENSE:** You always notice magical effects near you, and know a spell when you see it, though the purpose may not be clear. When you avoid or disrupt magic, **take spark**.

**METAMAGIC:** Twice per session, you can alter your magic as it flows through you, modifying the effect or casting by giving it an extra touchstone: *controlled—distant—intense—lasting—subtle—quick*.

*This makes the spell more powerful, but not quite potent. Adding a touchstone should give a clear answer to any question about it. Do you have time to cast a spell? It's quick; yes.*

**SPELLEATER:** Each session, you have a **2d Spelleater** resource pool. When you suffer from magic, you can roll the pool to ignore the effect and bank **essence** (max 2). Spend it to increase a spellcasting die result by 1, but it triggers a **magical twist**.

**WISPS:** Two small magical motes float around you. Give them 2 traits such as: *annoying—melancholic—mesmerizing—petty—troublesome—whimsical*. You can **sacrifice** one to have it act independently, making a story roll to see how it goes. They return each session.

*You could send one to assist an ally, distract a foe, light the way, or even pass a message to someone. The story roll here is about how effective they are, it doesn't prompt an impact move.*

**WRATH:** When a nearby ally takes **harm** or is dropped, you take +1d and potency on your next spell, if you immediately lash out.

## Other Magical Twists

These can be anything, acting similarly to an impact move when triggered. Tie it to your character's story, if possible. Use a timer to build up to a bigger consequence, such as being hunted down, or succumbing to a curse or deadly fate.

# PATH OF THE WARLOCK

AKA the magus, occultist, pactmaker

You have made a pact with a greater being—power in exchange for service, a pact that may prove to be a double-edged sword.



## PACT

## Core Talent

You have magic bestowed by a patron, allowing you to lash out and attack with their power using Presence, and gifting you an **Eldritch Talent**—a changeable path talent manifesting with your patron's trappings.

You also have an **8d Patience** pool, representing service to your fickle patron's desires. When you choose to change your **Eldritch Talents**, channel a **potent magical effect** from your patron, or otherwise displease them, roll the pool. At Od, your patron will give you a visit to *clear up the issue*, then the pool resets.

**GROWTH:** At levels 3 and 6, gain +1 Eldritch Talent.

## ELDRITCH MAGIC

You channel your patron's magic when lashing out and with Eldritch Talents. Make sure the chosen talents (and their options) align with their nature. Their trappings on both act as *set dressing*.

## PATRON CREATION

Roll or choose 2 natures and 2 desires below, then assign a distinct color or visual signature to your patron's influence. Decide how they communicate (visions, messenger, mind-speak) and how many followers they have (many, few, just you). These are their trappings. Give this powerful, otherworldly being a name and describe what you know of them. Establish your patron's bond with you and your bond with them. Work with the GM to create a faction for them and run it together.

## PATRON CRUCIBLE

Roll 2 on each table, smash them together, and interpret

<b>NATURE</b>	<b>cogs</b>	abyss	scourge	veil	shadow	hollow
	chimera	<b>serpent</b>	flame	outsider	green	balance
	void	forge	<b>phoenix</b>	trickster	whisper	fiend
	dead god	thorn	depths	<b>tempest</b>	reaper	storm
	eternal	harbinger	tide	leviathan	<b>prism</b>	dragon
	shroud	echo	starborn	light	dreamer	<b>oddy</b>
<b>DESIRES</b>	<b>chaos</b>	beauty	minds	wealth	rarities	destruction
	secrets	<b>fun</b>	control	magic	everything	monuments
	power	victory	<b>judgment</b>	unity	souls	biomass
	worshippers	adoration	fear	<b>fame</b>	revenge	knowledge
	promises	purity	progress	curios	<b>truth</b>	experiences
	influence	life	territory	perfection	order	<b>entropy</b>

# WARLOCK PATH TALENTS

**AFFLICTION:** Once a session, you can place your hands on another to heal your **harm** by transferring the injury. Allies can roll defense to resist this effect. Talk with your GM about transferring other maladies, such as **conditions**.

**ELDRITCH WEAPONRY:** Once per session on a perfect when lashing out with your patron's power, you can also inflict a spell-level effect with their trappings as the touchstone (this effect can't deal more damage). You can **push yourself** to do it again.

*When you lash out with your patron's power, their trappings only add set dressing. With Eldritch Weaponry, you can give those strikes an extra effect, as if also casting a spell on them.*

**KNOWING GAZE:** When given time, you can stare into someone's eyes and learn: *the price of their loyalty—their biggest fear—their greatest desire—their next move—what they're hiding—whom they serve*. This gaze only works on someone once. You can **push yourself** to do this on the spot.

**OTHERWORLDLY FORM:** You can turn into a floating, dispersed form, flavored after your patron's trappings. Choose three things you can do in this form: *appear barely visible—fly high in the sky—interact with objects—move swiftly—slip through small gaps—speak*.

**RITUALIST:** Take +1d on a ritual's invocation and replace any one of its anchors with yourself.

*This stacks. Make a coven with your fellow casters!*

**VISIONS:** You can open your mind to seek *forbidden knowledge*. Ask the GM a specific question. The answer may be cryptic or twisted, but it will never be a lie. Make a defense roll against **rattled** after the answer.

**WAYFARER:** You can **push yourself** to teleport. The further or less familiar, the less precise. Max range is two days' ride away. Make a story roll if you can't see the destination or take allies you touch with you.

## "Your Patron's Trappings"

Characters without a patron can still take these talents—consider your own source of power, and use those touchstones instead.

# PATH OF THE WIZARD

AKA the diviner, evoker, abjurer

You wield arcane power through precise knowledge, casting spells from an ever-expanding repertoire, your studies endless.



## SPELLCRAFT

Core Talent

You have spellcasting ability. You roll Wits to cast and the **spell theorem** you are casting serves as its touchstone. You know 4 spell theorems inscribed in your spellbook, created using the Spell Crucible (below). Each session, you can cast 4 spells and 2 potent spells. You choose which **spell theorem** to use when you cast, interpreting it as you see fit. Spells cast with no **risk** require no roll and don't count against your limited number per session, unless potent.

You can learn new **theorems** from studying and experimenting with scrolls, consuming them.

**GROWTH:** At levels 2, 4, and 6, gain +1 spell and potent spell per session, +1 theorem

## SCHOOLS OF MAGIC

**Abjuration:** Protects, blocks, dispels, or banishes.

**Conjuration:** Summons creatures, objects, and portals.

**Divination:** Reveals information, predicts the future, and reads minds.

**Enchantment:** Charms, influences, and curses sentient creatures.

**Evocation:** Creates and controls elemental and magical forces.

**Illusion:** Generates false images and sensory deceptions.

**Necromancy:** Manipulates life, death, and the undead.

**Transmutation:** Transforms matter and alters physical properties.

## SPELL CRUCIBLE

Roll 1 of each, choose 2, then add a school

<b>STYLE</b>	<b>binding</b>	soothing	grasping	shielding	curious	shadowy
	flaming	<b>slow</b>	dire	petrifying	ethereal	majestic
	alluring	silent	<b>dazzling</b>	piercing	sense	frenzied
	cryptic	withering	primal	<b>toxic</b>	thunderous	prismatic
	freezing	shredding	false	harmonic	<b>molten</b>	wild
	mesmerizing	unseen	expanding	swift	phantom	<b>whispering</b>
<b>ESSENCE</b>	<b>oil</b>	earth	lore	spirit	ash	barb
	crystal	<b>air</b>	fire	lightning	acid	memory
	slime	spore	<b>shroud</b>	stasis	sound	water
	light	star	trick	<b>siphon</b>	thought	rift
	gravity	smoke	sight	mist	<b>bloom</b>	poison
	echo	death	bone	mirror	emotion	<b>growth</b>
<b>FORM</b>	<b>beacon</b>	servant	vision	sentinel	ray	spray
	ring	<b>crown</b>	bond	shift	guide	embers
	chains	word	<b>step</b>	gate	wall	bolt
	eye	aura	gust	<b>tendrils</b>	wings	wave
	lock	shield	swarm	pillar	<b>claw</b>	dream
	bubble	hand	dance	explosion	anchor	<b>field</b>

# WIZARD PATH TALENTS

**ALCHEMIST:** Each session, you have a **4d Potions** resource pool. You can have a **trivial potion** (spell effect) by rolling the pool, or drop 1d and roll to make it a **minor potion** (potent spell effect). You know recipes for your **spell theorems**, plus two more. Learn new recipes by sacrificing potions you find.

*Trivial potions offer a single use spell effect, while minor potions bestow a single potent spell effect. Re flavor the container as an inscribed rune, carved twig, or even a delicious pastry!*

**ARCHIVIST:** You gain **2 minor**, and **1 major arcana** that you've either found or created. You can **push yourself** to activate used arcana again.

**COMPONENT POUCH:** Each session, you have a **2d Components** resource pool to help focus your magic. When you get a messy or grim on spellcasting, you can roll the pool to increase a die result by 1. Describe what reagent helped.

**COLLEAGUES:** In every city, some towns, and the occasional dungeon, you can find a *powerful, eccentric wizardly colleague* who owes you a favor—or maybe you owe them one. If you go out of your way to meet and catch up, **take spark**, and they may trade **theorem** research with you.

**FAMILIAR:** You manifest a small magical creature. You can communicate telepathically and send it on simple tasks, making a story roll to see how it goes. By entering a trance, you can use its senses. You can also **push yourself** to cast a spell through it. If your familiar takes damage, it vanishes and reappears at the start of the next scene.

**MASTERED THEOREM:** Choose one of your **spell theorems**. You take +1d when casting it and gain 1 extra potent spell casting of it per session. Your name becomes linked to it, and it begins to spread in popularity throughout wizardry—track it with campaign pools.

**SPECIALTY SCHOOL:** Choose the arcane school of your focus. All of your **spell theorems** now have it plus another school. When casting, choose which school to use. When you get a critical with this arcane school, **take spark**.

## Creating Spell Theorems:

Roll for style, essence, and form, then choose two of the words to form a phrase. Next, assign it a school of magic. You interpret these as the spell's touchstones when you cast.

**Roll:** *wild + fire + sentinel*. This gives us a some interesting options:

*wild fire* → This could blast the area with uncontrollable fire (*evocation*).

*fire sentinel* → This could turn your form to fire (*transmutation*).

*wild sentinel* → This could summon a bear to fight along side you (*conjuration*).

# CHAPTER 3

# GM TOOLKIT

## GM WITH MOXIE

**Map fiction to rules.** Encourage players to focus on the fiction and let you handle the rules. The more narratively important something is, the more mechanical weight you should give it.

*In a game of courtly intrigue, slaying a dragon might be a montage roll for a knight while an important dinner party is a complex linked challenge full of dire stakes.*

Get creative applying the rules, mixing them up in ways not explicitly laid out. Don't be afraid to tinker. Moxie is modular and you're not going to break it. Graft on rules from other systems you like, or hack Moxie and make it your own.

If the rules clash with what makes sense in the fiction, the fiction wins. Engage with the rules quickly, resolve them, and return to the story.

"What does that look like?" or "Give us a quick scene."

**Make rulings to fill gaps.** The rules are a flexible framework and designed not to cover every detail. When things fall through the cracks, try to interpret the rules' intent and make a ruling that fits the moment. If it's a judgment call, tell the players. If you're unsure of a rule, make a quick call now and check later. When in doubt, everything can collapse down to a single story roll—ask the players what they want to happen, then roll to see if that's how it goes down.

**Pace the game cinematically.** Keep the game flowing like a well-paced movie. Don't let scenes drag, wrap up scenes to move on to something more interesting. If players don't seem keen on an upcoming situation, suggest a montage. Skip long planning phases by cutting to the action, using a story roll to discover the players' situation if needed. Reward players buying into these techniques by giving them good odds.

**Follow the players' lead.** Keep tabs on story arcs and present drama, dilemmas, and opportunities related to them. Follow where the characters want to go. Present interesting situations related to it. When players hesitate or hit an impasse, spur them into action with danger timers, **quarrels**, **tangles**, or **Resolve** the situation and move on.

**Use the moves, or don't.** The GM moves can be explicit rules, merely guidelines, or somewhere in between. Some GMs will call them out by name, while others never bring them up at all. Either way, as long as your GMing aligns with their intent, you're doing it right.

**Make moves with impact.** Don't pull your punches—impact moves are called that for a reason. They shove the story forward. Players have a lot of tools at their disposal, so give the world teeth. It makes victory even sweeter.

**A single impact move is flexible.** You can, and often should split it up into a few lesser effects (inflict a mark as you break their sword), hit multiple PCs at once, or have a PC's action affect a totally different PC (giving a defense roll in that case).

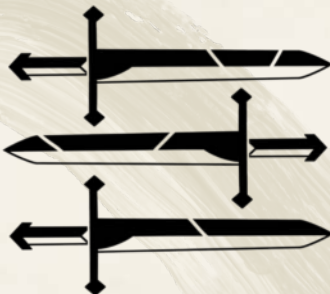
When an impact move doesn't naturally flow from what's happening on-screen (common with messy rolls), think off-screen instead and complicate their lives elsewhere or take **suspense** and hit later with better dramatic timing.

**Prompt player narration.** After a roll, make sure the players narrate how things play out—even, or *especially*, on a grim. Describing failure is a great way to express their character. Collaborate, but keep them narrating their actions.

Encourage them to play off of each other as well, especially with **assists** and montages. Ask for reaction shots as other PCs' scenes play out to gauge how they feel about it, or how their bond affects their reaction.

Most importantly, after the rules come into play, get right back to narration. Make sure that the flow remains **Fiction → Rules → Fiction**.

**Be endlessly curious.** Ask provocative questions about the PCs and their motivations to give players a chance to expand on their characters. *Why in the world would you do that? Okay, so who'd you steal that sword from? So are you pissed off or cool with it?*



# RUNNING GRIMWILD

As the GM, you play the game by a different set of rules, utilizing the tools laid out in this chapter to craft an engaging and dynamic game. You wield GM moves and suspense to drive the narrative forward, challenges to model difficult tasks, the combat kit to create thrilling battles, and story rolls along with the GM crucible for inspiration when the unexpected arises.

Your primary role is mapping fiction to mechanics, keeping the players immersed in the story while you seamlessly weave the rules into the narrative, and know when to instead ditch a rule and just let the narrative take over.

Above all, be creative. Use the mechanics as a springboard to manufacture drama, tension, and memorable moments.

## STORY ROLLS

Roll to disclaim decision-making, letting the dice decide story questions when you don't want to, like an NPC's reaction, off-screen action, or how good or bad something that just happened is. You can also collapse any rule back to a story roll when there's no specific mechanic to map it to.

Roll dice based on the odds of a favorable outcome for the chosen perspective. *Are you rolling for the fish or the fisherman?*

1d Bad Odds | 2d Even Odds | 3d Good Odds



- ◆ (6) **PERFECT.** It's the ideal situation.
- ◆ (4-5) **MESSY.** It's okay, but there's a catch.
- ◆ (1-3) **GRIM.** It's not good, and now it's a problem.

### **How does the weather look as the party reaches the cliffside?**

Perfect: *The clouds start to part as the rain stops, and it appears you have a clear day ahead of you.*

Messy: *The light drizzle holds steady. It'll be a little slick moving up the side of the mountain.*

Grim: *The wind begins to blow harder and the rain gets heavier. It's going to be tough to get to the top.*

# GM CRUCIBLE

A forge for inspiration, encouraging emergent, low-prep gameplay. Turn to the GM crucible, often along with a story roll, when you want the seed of an idea to expand upon to help answer questions about the story. Roll once on each table. Each roll gives two results (3, 1 = 31: precarious or 13: broken). Let your mind drift towards the most evocative, then drill down on it and interpret what it might mean.

GM CRUCIBLE						Roll 2, smash them together, and interpret
<b>tough</b>	quiet	precarious	wild	mysterious	rustic	
muffled	<b>aged</b>	romantic	menacing	puzzling	eerie	
broken	dwindling	<b>distant</b>	perilous	bleak	tense	
forgotten	abundant	hidden	<b>withered</b>	chaotic	looming	
festive	lost	immense	serene	<b>vibrant</b>	flickering	
rugged	splintered	sacred	relentless	tangled	<b>twisted</b>	
<b>journey</b>	juncture	rift	scheme	nexus	team	
tremor	<b>debris</b>	symbol	scar	archive	chasm	
sanctuary	betrayal	<b>trail</b>	wasteland	help	mystery	
peak	threshold	boundary	<b>beacon</b>	secret	wall	
territory	rumor	standoff	strife	<b>maze</b>	pact	
dilemma	tradition	jackpot	omen	deception	<b>illusion</b>	

## What's inside the temple?

Roll: aged + beacon

Interpret: A forgotten artifact

Roll: perilous + maze

Interpret: A dangerous trial

## Why is the village so quiet?

Roll: tense + scheme

Interpret: They're plotting rebellion

Roll: bleak + debris

Interpret: It was ransacked

## What caused the havoc?

Roll: flickering + rift

Interpret: Demonic portal opened

Roll: immense + betrayal

Interpret: A coup took place

## What is the farmer hiding?

Roll: tough + scar

Interpret: A wartorn past

Roll: lost + jackpot

Interpret: Secret rumored trove

## STARTING A CAMPAIGN

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When players describe their character, ask follow-up questions. They might have an idea, or might not yet, but thinking about it can help flesh out the character. The same goes for traits and desires.

*Why do they have **rough hands**?  
How did growing up as the small  
kid affect them?*

These kinds of questions are open-ended and a bit leading—hitting them with a question that doesn't fit can spur them into giving an answer that does fit. And if they don't really have an answer? Let it go. It's obviously not important to their character concept. As you walk through different characters, keep an eye out for connections—little dots we can use to draw lines between characters and drill deeper with questions. Maybe two of them both want power, but it's not the same kind of power. Or one avoids wealth, and the other craves it. These differences and similarities can help explain why they're adventuring together—or make you wonder why they would be.

*You want **power**, but not  
**wealth**. They're usually  
connected, why is this  
time different?*

Once everyone has a clear idea of their characters and each other, ask about their bonds. Some might've already written them out, but this is their chance to tweak or rethink them now that they've heard about the other characters in detail. It should be organic—bonds tend to pop up naturally during the conversation. Pick out one bond per player to dig a little bit deeper.

*How long's that **complex rivalry** been going on for?  
When did they recently get the better of you?*



## SPOTLIGHT

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Keep the narrative flowing, the action engaging, and get things moving when they stall out. Player actions drive the story, and putting the **spotlight** on them can nudge them forward, prompting them into action. Using the spotlight helps you direct the action and ensure no one is left out, putting focus where it's needed. While describing scenes, try mixing in cinematic language and using the camera to help frame your group's shared imagination space. Cut back and forth between PCs and scenes to build tension and avoid focusing on a single PC for too long. Definitely moving between characters and set pieces can help pace the story, while bringing in more passive players.

*We cut to the rogue, back against the crate as an unaware guard walks past.*

*The camera pans over to show the mage finishing a chalk circle on the ground. We'll move to the paladin. Your order just denied your plea. What do you do?*

When you move the spotlight, try asking a poignant question focused on the character's perspective. This stirs up drama and helps to flesh out the world. The character's inner thoughts can help drive the story, lighten your creative load, and show the kind of story the player is interested in telling.

*How do you feel about your ally killing the surrendered bandit? What do you say about the queen as you sit around the fire? As you polish your father's sword, what are you thinking about?*

## SCENES

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These are the continuous periods of action that make up the game, a few linked story beats, and nearly always start with the GM jumping to the engagement at the beginning. Skip detailed planning and cautious lead ups that often drag game play down. Instead, jump straight into the action, an in medias res shot of things already in motion! When you're unsure about the specifics of the current fiction, have the players make a montage roll, with the result setting the opening mood and **stakes** for the scene.

When a scene has served its purpose, grown stale, or feels like a foregone conclusion. Don't waste game time—instead, have the players make a montage roll to wrap it up and move on. Closing these scenes out decisively keeps the narrative tight and focuses on what's next. Keep the game flowing, the action engaging, and get things moving when they stall out.

# GM RULES

## GM MOVES

---

A framework for good GMing practices. While they can be called out specifically, they typically sit in the background, left unsaid, aligning naturally with what you do as GM. The players know actions have consequences, and the suspense you've earned can come back to bite them. It shows things aren't arbitrary—the GM is also playing the game, just by different rules.

**Suspense moves** help the players out in some way or escalate tension, earning or offering a way to take suspense when used. Make these moves with good timing.

**Impact moves** deal significant consequences, crank up the tension, and make the world feel powerful. Make these moves when prompted.

### PROMPT

This is a trigger for you to make an impact move. They can be caused by things like grim or messy action rolls, a relevant depleted pool, an unaddressed **foreshadow** move, or by spending **suspense**.

### SUSPENSE

Pure rising tension and cinematic timing. Gain **suspense** by skipping a prompted impact move or making certain suspense moves. Spend it to prompt an impact move at any time.

Skipping an impact move feels like the PCs got off lucky—something should have happened, but didn't. That lingering suspense builds tension, ready to strike later. Use this when no immediate move feels compelling or when you want to shift focus to other scenes.

#### Reader Lens - Games without GM Moves

The more comfortable you feel with the rules, and the more your table trusts you, the more you can bend, break, or toss out this framework. Most importantly, keep a general idea of your suspense and when you add complications (impact moves), as some talents affect them specifically. As long as everybody at the table is having a good time, you're doing it right.

## SUSPENSE MOVE SUMMARY

**BUILD UP** *Add a brief scene before, or as the intro to the challenge ahead.*

- ◆ Each PC adds a detail to the vignette, and takes spark.
- ◆ The GM introduces a challenge, or takes suspense.

**CLUE IN** *Cut away, or zoom out to show the forces acting against the PCs.*

- ◆ The players learn new details and see the direction of the story.
- ◆ The GM takes suspense.

**FORESHADOW** *Telegraph a danger, giving the PCs time to deal with it.*

- ◆ The players have a chance stop or avoid the danger.
- ◆ The GM can take the impact move if it goes unaddressed.

**RESOLVE** *Solve a problem for the PCs and move the story forward.*

- ◆ The players get a way out of a tough situation.
- ◆ The GM takes suspense.

## IMPACT MOVE SUMMARY

**COMPLICATE THINGS** *Add or develop a threat.*

- ◆ The new aspect adds difficulty or danger for PCs.
- ◆ Choose this move when things are too stable, or too easy.

**COUNTER** *Stop a PC action, or take away a permission.*

- ◆ Stop a successful action (usually refunding resources).
- ◆ Choose this move to show a threat's resilience. Be careful of overuse.

**HIT HARD** *Apply direct consequences.*

- ◆ Hit with marks, harm, vex, or conditions.
- ◆ Choose this move when injury is the most dramatic consequence.

**LOCK DOWN** *Declare a strict choice, or take an option away, permanently.*

- ◆ Take equipment, close opportunities, force them to choose.
- ◆ Choose this move to add cinematic edge.

# SUSPENSE MOVES

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## **Use these moves with cinematic timing**

Create familiar moments inspired by TV shows, incentivizing you mechanically to take the time to structure the story cinematically. You earn suspense (or introduce a way to prompt an impact move), so they reward you for handling some of the tedium of GMing and remind players to stay engaged. Suspense keeps the world active when things stall. When your supply of suspense runs dry, you can use these to jump start the action again. However, use them carefully—overuse can get frustrating for players, so pick your spots. But timely use makes good, cinematic sense.

## **BUILD UP**

Focus in on scenes with greater narrative importance, and create moments that set the stage for the challenge ahead. This may be a vignette of the PCs before the danger, their reaction to the incoming threat, or a brief scene showing the looming problem. Give players a chance to add depth and feeling to their characters that might get overlooked. Treat this like a cut scene before the action. After the vignette, each PC **takes spark**, and the GM takes **suspense** or introduces the **challenge** (pg. XX).

**Use this move to give each PC spark, and take suspense or add a challenge.**

**Use this move when you want to build up drama before a big scene.**

*The dragon roars, and rocks tumble from the ceiling. What does it look like when you dodge them? How are you dressed as you enter the masquerade? You sit around a campfire, knowing the battle to come in the morning.*

## **CLUE IN**

Give the players details on the bigger picture, like a TV show scene. Cut away to show villains plotting, armies marching, or even positive events. Zoom out to see the details the party doesn't know. When you reveal details with Clue In, take suspense. It's more fun when players know what's happening and they can steer their PCs' actions toward that drama, even if their characters don't explicitly know about it. Consider using this when you want to **strike** (see vigilance, pg. XX). After the reveal, take **suspense**.

**Use this move to give the players knowledge, but leave the PCs in the dark, then take suspense.**

**Use this move when you want to show the direction of the story.**

*We see the baron through the castle window, draining blood from his latest victim. As you trek through the forest, unaware, we see the glint of feline eyes behind you.*

## FORESHADOW

Signal upcoming threats and give the players a chance to react. This is a great way to introduce adversity when you don't have or want to spend **suspense**, and can be used to telegraph danger even in combat. Drop a detail for the PCs while describing a scene, or give a specific hint to one character. If they fail to deal with it or ignore the danger, it prompts an impact move, and the pace of the story picks up. **Vigilance** makes use of this move to give characters a chance to address the danger based on vantage, allowing a **hint** or **reveal**.

**Use this move to telegraph an incoming danger, using the impact move if ignored.**

**Use this move when you want to introduce adversity without spending suspense.**

*You hear hoofbeats coming, a 4d timer. The dragon takes a deep breath. You see thick spider webs on the ceiling. One of the tiles ahead of you is slightly raised and discolored.*

## RESOLVE

Fix a problem to provide a quick out and move the story forward. This can be used to connect dots with exposition or immediately de-escalate a situation. Normally, it would feel like an unearned freebie, but you earn one **suspense** to make it a fair trade. Never use it when players are engaged—save it for when it's needed.

**Use this move to help the characters, and get suspense in return.**

**Use this move when the players are stuck or cornered.**

*You hear from above, "Need some help down there?" The minotaur seems satisfied that it won and turns to walk away.*



# IMPACT MOVES

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## **Use these moves when prompted**

Deliver hard-hitting consequences that challenge PCs and push the action forward. They require prompting, so when you use them, they're sure to be justified and fair, codified into the rules. They've had fair warning and should have an idea of the risks. So when you make a move, make sure it has **impact** to ensure the choices leading to them matter and the world feels powerful.

When not prompted by their own roll, impact moves directly against a PC give them a defense roll. Some talents also give the ability to **interrupt** impact moves, possibly negating them. If the roll to interrupt is a messy, you take **suspense** or keep it if you spent it to prompt the move.

## COMPLICATE THINGS

Add a new obstacle, twist, or threat to a scene, or develop an existing one. When used, introduce a new aspect to the scene working against the characters, or make one worse. Mechanically, this may be an aspect that adds thorns to some rolls (more difficulty), or raises the **stakes** (more danger).

**Use this move to raise the stakes or add thorns to relevant rolls.**

**Use this move when things are too easy or stable.**

*A huge storm rolls in. The guard catches sight of you and rings the alarm bell. The ruffians in the tavern all draw their weapons. The fire spreads to the furniture.*

## COUNTER

Stop the PCs in their tracks, and show that the world won't just roll over. This can stop anything a character does, including successful action rolls and permissions they normally have. If they use a talent that costs them resources, they generally don't have to expend that resource (your call) but can't quickly use it again. However, this can never be used to stop defense rolls and criticals—don't steal their thunder. Be careful, this can get frustrating if used too much. Keep this move reserved for powerful enemies and serious trouble, and even then, it should be rare.

**Use this move to counter a PC's action or permissions.**

**Use this move when you want to showcase the resilience of a major threat.**

*The lich casts a quick protective spell, slowing your strike. The queen raises a hand, silencing everyone. Your punch lands square on his jaw, and he slowly grins.*

## HIT HARD

Inflict direct consequences to underscore the seriousness of the situation. It's a heavy reminder that the world pushes back against their actions. When you use it, you should be hitting them just as hard as they're trying to hit the world.

**Use this move to inflict marks, harm, vex, or conditions on someone.**

**Use this move when physical or mental injury is the most dramatic consequence.**

*The ceiling collapses, raining rocks down on you. She smirks wickedly at you—take vex, you're pissed. The bandit's arrow whistles through the air, embedding itself in your shoulder.*

## LOCK DOWN

Definitively bring consequences onto the characters by taking away options. Present stark decisions that they can't wiggle their way out of. Break or take something from them. Let the villain get away. When you use this, make sure to follow through without softening the impact—once done, it's done.

**Use this move to declare an unavoidable event to take chances, options, equipment, and allies away.**

**Use this move when you want to add cinematic edge, reflecting the dire consequences protagonists face.**

*The thief gets away, nowhere to be seen. The bridge behind you collapses. No going back. Your gold pouch and sword slide towards the lava, which do you go for?*



## CONSEQUENCES

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What happens when things go wrong—from failed rolls, timers, or impact moves. They should feel hard but fair, reflecting the stakes and severity of the situation. Every roll carries risk; otherwise, it shouldn't be rolled.

Damage is a solid baseline: in a fight, injuries could leave you hurt, such as with bloodied or marked. Other consequences, even narrative ones, should sting just as much. You can also split consequences by breaking a big one into smaller ones. Multiple effects can be just as effective and make more sense in the situation. You might break up **bloodied** into a few **marks**, or **rattled** becoming **vex** or rolling a pool instead. You can also spread out consequences, hitting multiple PCs, nearby NPCs, or even a PC who didn't prompt the move. Consequences can be identical, vary in severity, or differ entirely. If a PC other than the one prompting it is hit, they get a defense roll. Spreads make the impact feel broader and pull more people into a dynamic scene.

Split and spread consequences to increase the tension, and give the PCs **harm** during big moments to give the world teeth. If there's a roll, it's because something can go wrong.

## THINKING OFFSCREEN

Fallout can happen beyond the immediate action. Not all consequences need to occur in the **spotlight**. Hitting elsewhere builds tension, hastens incoming trouble, or creates missed opportunities. These unseen events make the world feel alive, adding depth beyond the present moment.

*The lich's ritual gets one step closer to completion. An innocent is blamed for something the PCs did. The caravan begins to run low on food supplies.*

## USING POOLS

Building pressure with danger or timer pools. Start or roll a pressure or timer pool as another outlet for consequences, often offscreen. These create looming threats and situations the PCs want to avoid or mitigate. They build pressure and offer a strong alternative to skipping the move and banking suspense.

*The goblin blows a warhorn before you skewer him (start 6d goblins arrive). The rushing waters break one of the bridge supports (roll 4d bridge destroyed).*

## STAKES

Stakes frame the danger of a scene, telling the table about the severity of trouble they should expect. This can be implied with storytelling cues as you set the scene, or stated explicitly using the categories of stakes below. The greater the stakes, the clearer this communication should be. Unless clearly otherwise, the scene has regular stakes.

**LOW STAKES.** Lighter territory. Impact moves have the weight of 1 mark, or softer consequences. *A barfight breaks out. Questioned by a friendly guard.*

**REGULAR STAKES.** Typical play and the assumed default. Impact moves have the weight of 1 harm. *Sneaking through a guarded warehouse. Tense negotiation.*

**HIGH STAKES.** Things are escalated. Impact moves give desperate harm. *Cornered by an angry ogre. Explaining your actions to the queen.*

**DIRE STAKES.** Death looms. Impact moves can instantly drop you. *Pushed off a cliff. Looking into the eyes of an elder horror.*

The above scale uses weights of harm as a reference, but you can always use any type of impact move (*setbacks, conditions, etc.*), or split up trouble into smaller consequences as you see fit.



## TAKING SUSPENSE

You can skip the impact move, and instead take **suspense**. This can be spent to make an impact move against the players anytime later, or spent right away to affect a different character or group (giving a defense roll against it).

# CHALLENGES

A framework to represent tasks, obstacles, enemies, and scenarios that have greater tenacity and complexity than a single action can accomplish. Challenges allow you to track progress towards them, but also proactively oppose the PCs. These are introduced with the **Build Up** suspense move, giving each player **spark**, while giving the GM 2 bonus **suspense** to be spent on moves relating to it. Each challenge has a task pool to represent its complexity or resilience. They can also have:

- \* **Traits:** Qualities they have with strong narrative impact, inflicting thorns, denying permissions, or changing vantage.
- **Moves:** Suggested impact moves they might make. These are examples, not limitations.
- ✕ **Fail State:** A trigger that signals the challenge failed, like a competing timer pool or a specific event. Fail states can be triggered with a **Lock Down** impact move, cutting off any chance of success for the PCs when it feels appropriate.

*Note: Challenges don't always have all three.*

**8d | NAVIGATE CHANNEL** ○○

- \* *shark-infested waters*
- \* *treacherous currents*

---

- **GRAZE REEF**
- **VIOLENT WINDS**
- **DENSE FOG**

---

✕ **6d Storm blows in**

**6d | ESCAPING THIEF** ○○

- **BLEND INTO CROWD**
- **NARROW ALLEYS**
- **STREET MUSICIANS**

---

**6d | STOP THE RITUAL** ○○

✕ **4d Ritual completed**

Interpret these short, evocative phrases to fit the situation. Keep your own created challenges similarly brief and flexible. Some uses:

**Create a dangerous enemy or exceptionally tough task.** *Navigate a mountain pass. Fight the rogue wizard. Make the mayor pay up.*

**Zoom in on pivotal moments.** *Disable a complex trap. Complete the ritual. Court the prince.*

**Zoom out to collapse related tasks into one objective.** *Evade castle guards. Track down the criminals. Organize a mutiny.*

**Turn a broad concept into an actionable objective.** *Restore the desecrated temple. Secure enough alliances. Atone for your sins.*

## BUILDING CHALLENGES

1. Assign a task pool (2d - 8d) for its tenacity.
2. Add traits (1 or 2) that shape the situation. Skip the obvious (storm is windy) and highlight what matters (strong winds are blinding). Keep them brief and evocative.
3. List short, punchy moves (2 or 3) with flexible interpretations. These are examples, not limits. You can spend bonus **suspense** on other moves, or trigger these when an impact move is prompted by something else.
4. Define a fail state, a specific trigger that prevents that challenge from being accomplished. Avoid obvious outcomes (dying in a fight) and focus on what creates tension (breaking a code of honor). Players should know the fail state unless mystery is part of the fun—and even then, make it clear one is in play.

## BATTLEGROUND

This is a special kind of combat **challenge**, where the location is important. Identify the environmental elements that play a proactive part of the scene. These can be broken down into:

**Features:** Elements likely to impact, usually complicating, the ongoing action. They have a strong effect on vantage and difficulty. *Strong winds, cluttered warehouse, angry onlookers.*

**Threats:** Hazards that present extra dangers. They either get 2 **suspense** of their own, or repeat on a timer. They have a strong proactive presence in the scene, able to prompt impact moves unless dealt with somehow. *4d heavy waves, ○○ aggressive spirits, 6d guard patrol.*

Enemies in the scene, as well as their tier and role (pg. XX)	<b>LAIR OF THE MAGMA SERPENT</b>	← Traits * for the scene, affecting advantage.
	<b>FEATURES</b> lava pools, unstable ground <b>THREATS</b> 4d lava eruptions 5 fire elementals (tough blasters) 8d   magma serpent (boss predator)	
	<b>BOARDING A PIRATE SHIP</b>	← External trouble, triggering when the timer expires, or when you spend the free suspense.
	<b>FEATURES</b> stormy waters, cramped decks <b>THREATS</b> 4d waves crashing ○○ kraken tentacles 4d deckhands (mook brutes) 4d rigging archers (mook marksmen) 3 Swashbucklers (tough brutes) 4d   pirate captain (elite overseer)	

Note: Enemies gathered into a single task pool are listed with dice in front (4d archers). Creatures acting as their own challenge (with suspense) are shown with a | after the pool. (8d | dragon).

## USING CHALLENGES

Challenges are for moments of narrative importance. They make whatever you assign them to a proactive element in the story. Use them to **spotlight** what's happening—not because it's harder, but because it deserves proper screen time and presence. Use **Build Up** to introduce a **challenge** (or linked challenge). They're pivotal scenes worthy of demanding attention from the characters, and will be a major focus of the session. *The sleeping dragon wakes up. You hear drumming from the deep. Arrows whiz by, it's an ambush!*

## LINKED CHALLENGES

Linked challenges are greater, more complex interactions, like epicly powerful enemies or unbelievably tense social situations. Each part of the whole has its own proactive presence in the scene. Give them traits that prompt impact moves, triggered by the fiction for dynamic interactions. *The dragon has 'protects the body' on its claws. If a PC attempts to strike the body, it will prompt a claw impact move!*

### NEGOTIATING PEACE IN A CIVIL WAR

#### 8d | DUCHESS LY SANDRA

\* lineal heir

● SHOW STRENGTH

✗ 4d leaves the table

#### 4d | BARON REYNARD

\* war weary

● CHALLENGE HONOR

✗ 4d leaves the table

#### 6d | COUNT LUCIAN

\* diplomatic

● REVEAL SECRET

✗ 4d leaves the table

Following the death of the Ember Queen, the realm descended into chaos sparking a long and bloody civil war. The PCs have managed to bring all three sides to the negotiating table, but the road to peace is rocky. They need each to sign off on splitting the realm.

### THE GREAT RED DRAGON

#### 6d | CLAWS

\* protect the body

● SNATCH

● SCRATCH

#### 6d | WINGS

● WIND BUFFET

#### 8d | BODY

\* frightful presence

\* impenetrable scales

● BREATHE FIRE

● CHOMP DOWN

● ROAR

✗ fly away

#### 6d | TAIL

\* protect the body

● TAIL SWEEP

● CRUSH

#### 4d | KOBOLD MINIONS

● DIE FOR MASTER!

The Great Red Dragon descends, lured into the PCs' trap by the goats as bait. They ready the barbed ballista, knowing they must prevent the beast from escaping into the sky. The dragon's kobold minions scurry down from its back, swarming the clearing. The battle commences.

### The Fiction of Linked Challenges

In many challenges (especially combat), beating one link doesn't necessarily mean it's destroyed—it just means it's defeated in the greater linked challenge. It may be hindered, weakened, or overcome some other way, but that doesn't mean it's gone completely.

# VIGILANCE

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The assumed alertness of the PCs, avoiding overly cautious gameplay to keep the focus on the action.

PCs are always considered to be as vigilant as their **vantage** allows when dealing with hidden dangers like traps, lies, or secret doors. However, this doesn't mean they are always aware of hidden threats. Instead, the GM **spotlights** the most relevant PC and uses a gut feeling to decide how much they perceive based on their vantage and the type of tension the GM wants to build.

Each of the three levels of vigilance creates a different dynamic in the scene, a different view of PC competence and the danger of the world. These three levels are: **reveal**, **hint**, and **strike**.

*Against a prowling panther, it's most likely that a farmer gets a hint, a hunter gets a reveal, and a scholar takes a strike. Against a duke lying about their lineage, a priest gets a hint, another noble gets a reveal, and a commoner takes a strike.*

## REVEAL

(Tests their skill)

**Foreshadow** with an obvious unveiling of an imminent threat. The PC that becomes aware has a chance to react before the danger strikes, potentially side-stepping the threat even without an action. Character competence guides the story forward.

*Spotting the assassin in hiding. A whirling of gears betraying the swinging scythe trap about to spring.*

## HINT

(Tests their intuition)

**Foreshadow** with a subtle clue about a hidden element. The player gets a single chance to interpret the situation. They're limited to just one to highlight the natural response of the PC and to keep things flowing. Intuition guides the story forward. A correct response leads to a **reveal**, letting the character take the initiative before danger strikes, or possibly bypass the situation entirely.

*That funny feeling of being watched. A blood trail down a hallway. Unnatural quiet.*

## STRIKE

(Tests their defenses)

Make an **impact move** as the danger immediately strikes them. The GM assumes the PCs were not vigilant enough to see the threat beforehand. The dangerous world guides the story forward. This costs **suspense** as any other impact move, though you can consider using **Clue In** to gain suspense and let the players in on the secret.

*The servant slips poison into your glass. A trapdoor opens beneath you.*

# VIGILANCE EXAMPLES

DANGER	REVEAL	HINT	STRIKE
<i>poisoned dart trap</i>	<i>dartgun spotted in wall</i>	<i>floor creaks unnaturally</i>	<i>darts fly from the walls</i>
<i>flammable gas trap</i>	<i>bit of gas ignites</i>	<i>faint smell lingers</i>	<i>area engulfed in flames</i>
<i>political intrigue</i>	<i>wax seal is clearly fake</i>	<i>inconsistencies in letter</i>	<i>forgery leads to crisis</i>
<i>hidden malice</i>	<i>threatens a PC</i>	<i>suspicious glances</i>	<i>calls the guards</i>
<i>fractured resolve</i>	<i>express doubts or fears</i>	<i>hesitates when speaking</i>	<i>act against plans</i>
<i>concealing illusion</i>	<i>reveals true form</i>	<i>shimmering distortion</i>	<i>causes a wrong move</i>
<i>shattered trust</i>	<i>lets intentions slip</i>	<i>avoids eye contact</i>	<i>betrays the party</i>
<i>crumbling ceiling</i>	<i>cracks spread visibly</i>	<i>dust falls lightly</i>	<i>debris crashes down</i>
<i>swarming insects</i>	<i>cloud of insects in sky</i>	<i>animals running away</i>	<i>swarm descends viciously</i>
<i>cursed relic</i>	<i>it speaks your name</i>	<i>air growing cold</i>	<i>it curses the handler</i>
<i>creeping spiders</i>	<i>see skittering</i>	<i>large webs above</i>	<i>descends from the sky</i>
<i>bandit ambush</i>	<i>form ducked in cover</i>	<i>crossbow behind tree</i>	<i>bandits threaten party</i>



## Optional Rule - Active Vigilance

If you want PC vigilance to be dependent on a roll of the dice, consider using the active vigilance option rule on page XX.

# COMBAT KIT

GM tools to create dynamic antagonists and combat scenarios quickly. Tier is an opponent's threat level. Role is a keyword used to guide its behavior in battle to vary its tactics. Use these together (Tier + Role) to inform how these combatants act in the heat of battle.

## TIERS



### MOOK

These are mostly just set dressing, especially if encountered alone. One action roll can take out several at once, though a large group can be treated as a task pool.

*drunken patrons (a few), 4d goblins (a bunch), annoying imp (one)*



### TOUGH

A typical, fairly dangerous enemy. One action roll can take one of them out of the scene, while a small group can be treated as a task pool.

*lizardfolk warrior (one), 4d bandits (a few), 8d zombies (a lot)*



### ELITE

A dangerous foe with strong scene presence, often leading a group of lesser enemies. These are typically a challenge themselves.

*6d minotaur (one), 4d treant (one), 6d pirate captain (one)*



### BOSS

These are grand foes that command the scene. They're powerful, often acting as a large or linked challenge alone.

*8d+4d lich (one), 4d+4d+6d+8d dragon (one), 6d+6d high devil (one)*

Roles on the next page →

## ROLES

Make sure each enemy role brings a unique dynamic to combat. To help, you can use the templates below as a simple basis for traits and moves, or even assign them alongside a monster entry (Chapter 4). The traits below contain two strengths and a weakness, while the moves have one offensive, one defensive, and one utility. Additionally, each role has a small table for ideas on how to spend **suspense** in response to common worst-case scenarios that role encounters.

### MOOK—TOUGH—ELITE—BOSS + ROLE

#### BLASTER

Ranged foes who unleash overwhelming power from afar, raining chaos on the battlefield. They crumble when the fight gets too close.

- \* devastating power    ● **BARRAGE**
- \* wide impact    ● **SHOCKWAVE**
- \* fragile under fire    ● **SHOCK AND AWE**

#### AS A LAST DITCH DEFENSE, IT...

- unleashes a sudden shockwave to clear space.*
- scrambles to higher ground.*
- detonates an explosives burst in all directions.*
- drags their enemy into mutual destruction.*
- goes all in with their full power in a final strike.*
- fires wildly to distract and disorient.*

#### LURKER

Stealthy stalkers who strike from concealment, waiting patiently for the perfect moment. They falter when exposed or when in prolonged fights.

- \* perfectly silent    ● **AMBUSH**
- \* watchful    ● **VANISH**
- \* fragile when revealed    ● **MISDIRECT**

#### WHEN THEIR COVER IS BLOWN, IT...

- strikes quickly to silence the nearest threat.*
- flees into the shadows, looking for new cover.*
- throws debris or objects to create a distraction.*
- slinks behind an ally or stronger creature.*
- unleashes a flurry of wild attacks.*
- abandons the fight entirely, escaping to safety.*

#### BRUTE

Brutal raiders who thrive in chaos, striking with sudden overwhelming strength. Each strike shakes the ground, leaving few standing.

- \* unstoppable force    ● **WILD SMASH**
- \* towering resilience    ● **MAD DASH**
- \* impulsive    ● **WREAK HAVOC**

#### WHEN CHALLENGED OR TAUNTED, IT...

- charges forward recklessly, ignoring safety.*
- lashes out at the closest enemy in frustration.*
- circles their foes, looking for a weak spot.*
- smashes the environment to create new chaos.*
- rallies allies with a furious roar.*
- hurls something with crushing force.*

#### MARKSMAN

Sharpshooters who excel at picking off targets from a distance. They are vulnerable when caught in melee, or forced to move quickly.

- \* lethal precision    ● **PIERCING SHOT**
- \* exceptional range    ● **TAKE COVER**
- \* panics close up    ● **SPOT WEAKNESS**

#### WHEN UNDER PRESSURE, IT...

- focuses on the closest threat for a critical shot.*
- dives into cover to avoid incoming attacks.*
- signals allies to draw enemy attention.*
- shifts to higher ground for a better vantage point.*
- takes a rapid, less accurate shot to disrupt foes.*
- retreats to reposition for the next attack.*

## PREDATOR

Persistent hunters who stalk their prey, waiting for the perfect moment to strike. They falter if their prey is tenacious.

- \* relentless pursuit      ● **AMBUSH**
- \* overwhelming strike      ● **EVASIVE LEAP**
- \* overcommits      ● **TRACK DOWN**

### WHEN PREY SLIPS AWAY, IT...

maneuvers to cut off the target's escape.  
refuses to give up no matter what.  
roars, forcing a mistake.  
circles, creating a trap to regain control.  
strikes wildly in frustration, hitting all around.  
vanishes, retreating to wait for another chance.

## SKIRMISHER

Agile combatants who excel at hit-and-run tactics, harassing foes and striking from unexpected angles. They falter when pinned down.

- \* great mobility      ● **STRIKE & MOVE**
- \* quick reflexes      ● **DODGING ROLL**
- \* fragile      ● **FORCE BACK**

### WHEN IT LOSES THE ADVANTAGE, IT...

retreats quickly to regroup and reassess.  
strikes recklessly, hoping to create an opening.  
dodges wildly to avoid being hit.  
circles, searching for a weak point to exploit.  
taunts, trying to bait enemies into a mistake.  
disengages, vanishing into the fray.

## TACTICIAN

Clever strategists who manipulate the battlefield, exploit every weakness they find, and command those around them. They struggled when their plan fails.

- \* always prepared      ● **FLANKING STRIKE**
- \* good under pressure      ● **TACTICAL RALLY**
- \* relies on allies      ● **CREATE WEAKNESS**

### WHEN ITS PLAN FAILS, IT...

redirects allies to regroup and recover.  
focuses on a single target to salvage the situation.  
orders a retreat to reevaluate the fight.  
shifts their attention to a new opportunity.  
sacrifices weaker assets to regain momentum.  
lashes out in frustration, acting recklessly.

## PROTECTOR

Unyielding guardians who shield allies and endure attacks meant for others. They struggle when separated from those they protect.

- \* grand resilience      ● **SETUP ALLY**
- \* exceptional tactics      ● **INTERPOSE**
- \* limited offense      ● **RALLY CRY**

### WHEN AN ALLY IS IN DANGER, IT...

steps in to block an incoming attack.  
draws enemy attention with a loud challenge.  
shoves the ally out of harm's way.  
counters with a heavy blow to create space.  
raises a protective barrier to buy time.  
sacrifices their position to shield an ally.

## SWARMER

Relentless attackers who overwhelm enemies with sheer numbers, striking from all sides to wear them down. They falter when isolated.

- \* never ending attacks      ● **SWARM, SWARM!**
- \* overwhelming      ● **SCATTER!**
- \* weak individually      ● **SURROUND 'EM!**

### WHEN THEIR NUMBERS THIN, THEY...

press harder, with reckless desperation.  
retreat momentarily to regroup.  
call for reinforcement with frantic signals.  
regroup, pulling forces into a defensive cluster.  
scatter, trying to avoid further losses.  
break, abandoning the fight entirely.

## TRICKSTER

Cunning deceivers who thrive on confusion, turning the tide of battle with guile. They crumble when their tricks are exposed or fail.

- \* master of deception      ● **DECEPTIVE STRIKE**
- \* unpredictable      ● **BAIT AND SWITCH**
- \* fragile      ● **SNATCH WEAPON**

### WHEN ITS TRICKS FAIL, IT...

feigns weakness, to lure enemies closer.  
dodges frantically, hoping to regain control.  
mocks enemies to draw attention away.  
escapes, leaving a decoy in its place.  
reverses their position, to surprise opponents.  
lashes out in desperation, to cover failure.

## RUNNING COMBAT

There's no turn order. The GM describes the impending danger in the current situation and asks how the PCs respond, or the PCs take action on their own. The **spotlight** is often on the PCs, and the world's actions flow from what they do. You make enemies more proactive by **Foreshadowing** events and following up after, or spending **suspense** to make impact moves. This results in a cinematic ebb and flow to combat.

Battles occur in the theater of the mind, using the group's shared imagination to keep track of each participant's fictional positioning to map fiction to rules. However, using battlemaps or sketching maps with minis or markers to track locations during a fight works well, too. This helps organize the chaotic situation, makes sure everyone gets time to shine, and keeps everyone's imagination aligned. Don't get caught up in detailed tracking—update the map with big changes.

## COMBAT RULINGS

You map the fiction to the rules just like any scene, making rulings to fill in gaps. However, in combat you'll often see the same scenarios come up, so for the sake of consistency, some common rulings:

**Movement:** Moving usually accompanies another action—the goal isn't just to get somewhere, but to get there and do something. If an interesting obstacle blocks the way, it needs an action roll.

**Melee:** Compare the weapons in play and use common sense to resolve any issues. Most weapons are evenly matched, but the roll might shift based on approach and goal. Most melee weapons use Brawn, while light, and fast weapons use Agility. Dirty tricks call for Wits, but rarely work more than once.

**Ranged:** Precision attacks roll Agility, while thrown weapons use Brawn or Agility based on weight and range. Charging an enemy with ranged weapons is reckless, adding +1t or requiring a separate action to close the gap.

Impact moves against ranged characters can be more difficult. Losing or breaking weapons, running out of ammo, getting charged by the enemy can always turn up the tension. Remember, you can also take **suspense** and use it to target their allies as well.

**Ranged and Casters in Melee:** Spellcasting and precise ranged attacks demand focus, which is tough with nearby threats. Inflict thorns or call these rolls impossible depending on the immediate danger.

**Defense Rolls:** The GM selects the stat to test. Melee attacks can be dodged with Agility, blocked with Brawn, or anticipated with Wits. Resisting mental and magical attacks is usually Wits, while defending your stance and reputation, and keeping your nerve is Presence. With warning and time to react, spellcasting can allow a defense roll with the connected stat (this counts as set dressing).

**Armor:** Heavy armor and shields can be represented by talents like Bulwark (pg. XX). Other armors remain as vantage and set dressing—impacting rolls and thorns. A breastplate may let a barbarian make a defense roll with one less thorn, but it may also add +1t when in a chase.

### Optional Rule - Armor

If you want armor choice to stand out a bit more, consider using the armor option rule on page XX.

**Vulnerabilities:** Exploiting a vulnerability can lower thorns, drop 1d before rolling a pool (as if with greater effect on a critical), or even bypass the need for a roll. In some cases, finding a vulnerability is required to attack, as all other rolls are deemed impossible.

**Enemy Magic:** Enemy magic doesn't follow the same rules as PC magic. It manifests through GM moves and is constrained only by the fiction.



# FACTIONS

Track off-screen developments of major forces, creating a feeling of a living world beyond the PCs. They have:

**Resources** that show their power and influence, like assets, traits, and relationships.

**Goals** that show their ambitions. Track them with a timer called a faction pool, rolled between sessions or when triggered by events in the story.

When a faction pool depletes, the goal is either accomplished or they make their move against another faction, with a story roll in their favor determining how it plays out. Keep 4-6 active factions, balancing major and minor ones, with competing goals. Replace factions that are no longer relevant to the story.

## CAMPAIGN POOLS

Timers that pace long-term events across sessions (*lunar eclipse, wyvern migration*). They work like faction pools but don't require faction details. Use them to signal upcoming events or remind you to reintroduce plotlines (*betrayed NPC seeking revenge*).

### VILLAGE OF ELLIT

elders (*wise, cautious*)  
fine archers

**4d ask baron for help**  
**8d build a wall**

### TWISTED FOREST

growing eldritch roots  
ancient spirits

**4d ask baron for help**  
**8d build a wall**

### WAR IN THE EAST

**4d war refugees arrive**  
**8d baron dies**

## PEMTOWN POWDERKEG

### BARON OF PEMTOWN

tax collectors (*corrupt*)  
paying off Shaz

**4d squander treasury**  
**6d discipline troops**

### BARON'S UNPAID TROOPS

veterans of goblin war  
Captain Morris (*charismatic*)

**4d abandon posts**  
**6d depose the baron**

### DRUIDS OF OLDGROVE

sworn to non-interference  
magical wards

**6d quiet the horrors**  
**8d parley with Shaz**

### GOBLIN HORDE

nomadic forest dwellers  
heavily trapped territory

**4d crown the goblin king**  
**6d march on Pemptown**

### SHAZ, ORC WARLORD

small, elite warband  
secret Pemptown tribute

**6d subjugate the goblins**  
**8d subjugate the druids**

### WOODLAND HORRORS

goblin war remnants  
ominous whispers

**4d troops disappear**  
**8d night of terror**

The air in Pemptown hums with tension. Baron Prog's coffers run dry, his troops grow restless, and whispers of rebellion stir in the ranks. Meanwhile, deep in the forest, alliances shift as Shaz's warband, the goblin horde, and the druids of the Oldgrove edge closer to explosive confrontation.

# EXAMPLES OF PLAY

## THE MINOTAUR KING

The cleric charges the Minotaur King. This minotaur is a powerful foe and the **thorns** it inflicts when fighting it must reflect that, so you make it +2t and call for a Brawn roll (2, 3, 5, and 7, 8 on thorns). The initial outcome is a messy, which drops to a grim for the first cut, then to a disaster for the second. You hadn't declared **dire stakes** on this roll, but you know that a **disaster** can cut past the need. You check in with the cleric, "You okay losing a limb here?" Leaning into the awfulness of the situation, they laugh it off and nod. You decide the Minotaur King **rips off their arm!** You toss the narration back to the player to let them describe how it all went down.

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## OUTNUMBERED BY BANDITS

The fighter stands off alone against 10 bandits. This one's borderline, but the bandits all have combat experience and there's an overwhelming number of them, so you make this **impossible**.

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The fighter thinks on it, then they take off running. They want to split the group up for better odds. You know this bunch is disorganized, so you decide a trick is relatively easy—no thorns, and you call for a Wits roll (4, 3). Messy! You let them know they pulled it off, but the impact move means they're still facing three bandits—fightable, but still +t. You also give them a **mark** to Agility as they stumble and twist their ankle. The fighter grabs the narration and works in that the stumble is how the bandits ended up catching up to them. Then they introduce a **tangle**—they'll start off on the ground, in a terrible position, if they can have spark. You give the thumbs up!

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## GNOLLS AT THE GATE

The **8d | Gnoll Marauders** begin their assault on the walled town. You spend suspense to make a move and hit the town gate with the battering ram. You roll the **6d Walls Breached** pool: (3, 4, 5, 1, 1, 6) 6d→3d. If the gate falls, chaos will reign. The Cleric casts a warding rite spell and gets a perfect! Without a specific rule, you make a quick ruling and add 2d to the Breached pool (3d→5d). The wizard steps up and launches a Frenzied Embers spell at the gnolls—a critical! You roll the marauders' pool, getting (3, 5, 4, 3, 6, 2, 1, 6) 8d→4d. For the critical, the wizard takes a **secondary effect**—they want that battering ram to catch fire. You think it'll probably take a while to burn, so you start a 4d Ram Burning pool and roll it: (2, 3, 3, 1) 4d→0d! Nevermind, it's engulfed in flames!

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# RED DRAGON CHALLENGE

By @zach.labounty on Discord, adapted for Community Edition and used with permission.

THE GREAT RED DRAGON		
<b>6d   CLAWS</b> * protect the body ● SNATCH ● SCRATCH	<b>8d   BODY</b> * frightful presence * impenetrable scales ● BREATHE FIRE ● CHOMP DOWN ● ROAR	<b>6d   TAIL</b> * protect the body ● TAIL SWEEP ● CRUSH
<b>6d   WINGS</b> ● WIND BUFFET	<b>X fly away</b>	<b>4d   KOBOLD MINIONS</b> ● DIE FOR MASTER!

The party is The Bard, Fighter, Rogue, and Cleric.

The GM sets the scene and narrates the sound of wings flapping and the giant, red head popping up over the trees of the forest nearby town.

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The GM uses the **Build Up move to introduce the challenge**, and give the PCs spark.

The Bard says he's posted up high on a parapet with a ballista aimed and ready.

The Fighter narrates their stoicism as they stand at the town gate prepared to defend everyone with their life.

The Rogue says he's waiting at the edge of the treeline to come in from behind and try to mount the thing.

The Cleric says they've safely put everyone in town in a stone building with a fire trench built around it and they're going to protect the townsfolk and back everyone up.

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The dragon flies over the town once and as they do, the GM **spends one suspense** from the Body. It uses its breath weapon to ravage the town. GM decides that the Cleric and Bard are subject to the breath and need

page 12

to make **defense rolls** with no thorns because the dragon is still a bit high up. They both succeed, but now the town is ablaze.

page 15

The dragon does another fly over and as it does, the Bard shoots it with the ballista (they say they're aiming for the wings to down it). They get a messy and **the GM rolls the Wings pool** (6d → 3d), but they get an impact move in result. The GM decides to take suspense. The dragon descends a bit and a rain of kobolds fall from its back and begin causing mayhem in the city.

## RED DRAGON CHALLENGE, CONTINUED

The GM spends suspense from Kobold Minions and has them attempt to overwhelm the Cleric. Another defense roll and this time it's a Grim! The Cleric is caught off guard and takes **bloodied**.

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The dragon fully descends outside town face to face with the fighter and the fighter is the first to react! They go straight for its eye with a sick jumping strike. Messy! The GM rolls the Body pool (8d →6d), not very effective.

Now the GM gets their response and decides to go all out because the claws AND tail have the **Protect the Body traits**.

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The GM uses the impact move from the Messy to have the dragon roar and attempt to **vex** the entire party. The fighter normally wouldn't get a defense roll, but because the GM is aiming for more than a light consequence, the fighter gets to roll too. Some quick defense rolls and two perfects say the fighter and rogue are in it to win it. The bard gets a messy and takes a mark to Presence. The Cleric gets a Grim again and takes vex, opting for Flight as they narrate their character running away from the town's shelter and leaving it free to be attacked by the kobold minions, despite their desire to protect the townsfolk.

page 26

The GM then spends one suspense from Claws and has another suspense from Tail as the dragon makes two quick strikes at the fighter who just landed back on the ground. The fighter makes two defense rolls and gets a Grim on both! The first leaves him rattled as the claws come inches away from his head, and then he takes the full force of the tail, and gets bloodied as well!

The Rogue comes in with a sneak attack, runs up the tail, and attempts to use his **precise** dagger to stab it in the neck under some scales. They succeed! Perfect! The GM decides to roll the Body pool (6d→2d), it's pretty effective! But, it's time for all that Suspense to get spent again. The GM uses a suspense from Wings to have the dragon fly high into the air with the Rogue on its back, but just in time the bard uses an Inspiration to **interrupt** the impact move. They roll and get a Perfect, narrating a vicious, mocking taunt that keeps the dragon from running away. The GM spends another suspense from Tail to have it swing up and try to get the Rogue off its back. The Rogue gets a messy, and gets knocked off the dragon's back, but is otherwise okay.

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page 18

The party is in a pretty bad situation! Three PCs left, the fighter on his last leg, and lots of suspense!

## UNDEAD HORDES

The PCs have made a grave mistake, and the entire cemetery surrounding them is starting to come to unlife. You (the GM) tell them there are skeletons and zombies everywhere. They have a choice—they could run, and it would be an 8d | Escape challenge, but the town would be gone for sure. Or you can stay and fight, just wave after wave of undead. You remind the rogue of their **definitely not honorable trait**. The rest seem dead set on staying, but the rogue wavers. They **quarrel**, and finally the other three win out—they stay, and fight like the heroes most of them are.

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You think on what waves of zombies might look like. Each undead is weak individually, but the entire horde is epic. You set it up as waves, three linked **4d-6d-8d | Undead Horde challenges**.

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You then call for a **Build Up** move to introduce the challenge. Each player describes their character getting ready as the horde starts to claw its way out of the ground. They take spark from the quarrel earlier, and spark from the Build Up.

## KOBOLD TRIALS

The Wizard's brought before the kobold elders for her **4d | Trial by Ordeal**. The first trial is to lift a boulder, and she gets a perfect! You roll for progress (4d→4d), but none is made. The elders, unimpressed, call for a larger boulder, but the Wizard **pivots for a secondary effect**, and wins the chieftain over. With a wave of their hand, he silences them. She moves to the next trial, no progress, but in the chieftain's good graces.

page 7

Next, the Wizard must walk across a very narrow balance beam (+1t). She rolls (2, 6, thorn 7). Her perfect gets **cut** to a messy. As she makes it to the end, she stumbles off and smacks her head. You decide that Wits gets marked but the elders laugh and seem pleased (4d→1d). The final ordeal is a ridiculous riddle (+2t)—and ends up rolling a another messy. You decide the kobolds begin to argue over the correct answer, even as the chieftain declares the Wizard has passed (1d→0d). A fight breaks out, but the Wizard has earned the trust of the leader, so he unlocks the chains.

page 8

## TREACHEROUS CHANNEL

The Fighter takes the helm as they 8d | Navigate Channel. They roll Wits, but the thorn from the **treacherous currents** cuts their perfect to a messy.

page 89

You roll for their progress navigating (8d→4d), then make an **impact move—Graze Reef**. The rogue up in the lookout makes a Wits defense roll but gets a grim. They don't see it and the boat slams against the reef.

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You start a 6d Taking on Water pool, then roll it (6d→4d) alongside the **6d Storm Blows In pool** (6d→2d). Things are getting bad!

page 15

At the edge of catastrophe, the Fighter tries to right the course. They spend spark and the Rogue and Wizard jump in to **assist**. Before they roll, you make another impact move—the Violent Winds give the roll **dire stakes**. If this fails, the pools are rolled and one or more of the PCs is going overboard into shark-infested waters. Everyone grabs their dice.

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You (GM): "Your ship rams the pirate ship! You see the Pirate Captain pull out a horn, look terrified, and then blow it. Amidst the high waves surrounding both ships, the **Kraken's Tentacles** burst forth from the water. There are about 20 deckhands below and a group of 10 archers above, each a 4d **mook** pool. There are a few swashbucklers too, and the Captain's an **elite**."

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You put out some tokens representing all of this on the battlemap.

You: "Go ahead and put your tokens where they make the most sense. What do you do?"

Fighter: "I have my bow out and start launching arrows at the archers."

They roll Agility and get a grim. You give a mark to Brawn and Presence as an arrow slices their arm. You follow up by spending suspense. You have the Pirate Captain swing onto their boat and attack the fighter, who rolls a messy on their Brawn defense roll because of the mark. They mark Agility, then clear the **mark** on Brawn because it was rolled.

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### 8d | NAVIGATE CHANNEL

- \* shark-infested waters
- \* treacherous currents

- GRAZE REEF
- VIOLENT WINDS
- DENSE FOG

✕ 6d Storm blows in

### BOARDING A PIRATE SHIP

**FEATURES** stormy waters, cramped decks

**THREATS** 4d waves crashing  
●● kraken tentacles

4d deckhands (mook brutes)  
4d rigging archers (mook marksmen)  
3 Swashbucklers (tough brutes)  
4d | pirate captain (elite overseer)

# CHAPTER 4

# EXPLORATION

## EXPLORING THE GRIMWILD

Exploration is an adventure, and this pointcrawl system captures that spirit. It's about venturing into the unknown, both as your characters and as players, uncovering what lies ahead. As you explore, connections form naturally, and a narrative begins to emerge—one built from your experiences and the discoveries you yourselves have added to the region. It's discovery as PCs, but also as players, figuring out and creating a region together on the fly and finding the wonder and drama that lies within it.

### WHAT IS THE GRIMWILD?

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The Grimwild is a completely optional campaign setting or exploration system you can bolt onto your own setting. It's a chaotic wildland, a once sparsely populated borderland that was shattered by a cataclysm half a century ago. Within, three realities have collided—the original small towns and keeps, the ruins of a long-fallen empire, and a savage wilderness teeming with monsters. The Remnants, the Wilds, and the Ruins have fused into a surreal region that defies logic and strict canon, the three bleeding into each other across the Grimwild's expanse. Old settlements have either adapted or vanished, and survivors live in a tenuously strange existence where a dragon might nest beneath a town or farmers inhabit an ancient wizard's tower.

It's a long corridor spanning harsh terrain, a week's ride east to west and twice that north to south— if the way were clear. Such territory is rare in the Grimwild. Sheer cliffs line the stormy eastern coast, jagged mountains rise to the west, and dense forests and swamps choke the north and south. Surrounding the borders is the fog, impossibly dense.

To enter the fog and leave the Grimwild is to risk becoming lost forever, never knowing which of the three realities you will emerge into. Expeditions into and out of the region rarely returned. The borderland was written off as a cursed wasteland by those outside. Those inside have learned their present situation is better than the horrors of the other realms. The Grimwild is isolated, left to its own fate.

The Grimwild is a canon-less sandbox where you have the freedom to explore, discover, and make it all up as you go. Logical connections don't matter here, giving you the freedom to add whatever sounds fun to your party and let a storyline emerge through play. It is a land of discovery, one even its own inhabitants don't understand well.

# THE THREE REALITIES

---

Below are some basic truths about the three realities that make up the Grimwild, a set of pillars for you to start building within and around. You can hang your own fiction off of them, or topple them over and create something totally different. The point is to make a sandbox that's easy to play in.

## **THE REMNANTS**, *Forgotten People of the Borderlands*

**Fiercely Independent:** Long before the cataclysm, the borderlands thrived as a melting pot of cultures, blending traditions into something uniquely their own.

**Scattered Settlements:** Villages, homesteads, and the occasional keep dot the harsh landscape, home to survivors who endure isolation.

**Simple Monsters:** Orcs, goblins, and a few larger beasts lurk, but they're nothing compared to the horrors of the Ruins and Wilds.

**Blended Heritage:** A patchwork of languages, customs, and traditions born from centuries of border nations mingling.

## **THE WILDS**, *Untamed and Unforgiving Wilderness*

**Tribal Nomads:** Scattered tribes thrive where others perish. Each tribe has its own customs, some steeped in ancient magic, while others forge brutal pacts with the Wilds' predators.

**Raw Magic:** The land itself pulses with ancient, untamed power, twisting flora, fauna, and even the air into something alive and unpredictable.

**Deadly Terrain:** Shifting rivers, jagged cliffs, and choking forests make navigation a perilous gamble for outsiders.

**Primal Beasts:** Terrible creatures stalk the Wilds, from towering apex predators to grotesque hybrids warped by magic.

## **THE RUINS**, *A Fallen Empire*

**Shattered Greatness:** Once a realm of truly unmatched knowledge and power, now reduced to crumbling relics of its glory.

**Forgotten Relics:** Ancient artifacts of magic and technology linger, broken or lost, yet still brimming with untapped potential.

**Corrupted Wasteland:** Overgrown cities and desolate ruins seethe with decay, haunted by strange energies and whispers of the past.

**Eldritch Horrors:** Nightmarish creatures lurk in the shadows—aberrations, cursed beings, and the tortured echoes of those consumed by the empire's collapse.

# EXPLORATION SYSTEM

Exploration is played out with a token-based system that lets players and the GM work together to create and draw out the world. You gain exploration tokens, then spend them to add things to the map, giving each player equal opportunity to have an impact, while the spending of a resource adds weight to the contributions.

You're creating a pointcrawl to map out the meaningful locations (points) and the connections (paths) between them, focusing on what really matters. Everything outside those paths? Either it's tough to get through, or there's nothing worth finding there. This approach keeps the spotlight on the places and journeys that drive the story, cutting out the tedium and keeping exploration sharp, deliberate, and packed with interesting things to experience.

## EARNING TOKENS

**Expand the Map:** When the GM chooses to **expand the map** all players and the GM gain 3 exploration tokens.

**Significant Discoveries:** You can earn 1-3 tokens by discovering something meaningful when you actively explore or uncover key details of an area.

**Spend Story:** You can also spend story as an exploration token, as long as it is connected to a wise or story arc. After, explain how you knew about what you spent it on in-character.

## SPENDING TOKENS

Exploration tokens can be spent to add points and paths to the map. Points are locations of interest, with a few key words to describe them. Paths are drawn to connect points or lead off into unexplored territory. The token cost depends on the map type (region, settlement, site), covered in the next few pages.

## EXPAND THE MAP

When the GM wants to encourage and make time for exploration and mapping, they can call to **expand the map**. This can be done at any time, but must be used when:

- ◆ The adventuring party reaches the edge of the known map and cannot proceed without expanding it.
- ◆ There's a natural narrative progression requiring new points or paths to open up.
- ◆ Everyone's just excited to add more to the map, like at the start or end of a session.

When the GM calls to expand the map, everyone (GM included) takes **3 exploration tokens**. The map is pulled out, and everyone at the table goes around, in any order, adding points to the map until all tokens are spent. Tokens disappear once finished.

## THE JOY OF EXPLORATION

Take **spark** when you engage with the wonder of exploration as such:

**Pause and take in the world around you.** Let your roleplaying bring out a moment of beauty— what does your character notice, and how do they feel about it? Take spark when it creates a meaningful scene.

**Ask a question about the world** that nobody knows the answer to, sparking curiosity in yourself and others. Encourage wonder. Take spark when the table embraces it.

**Travel somewhere far off**, simply to see what's there. Everyone on the journey takes spark.

**Highlight the unique nature of a place**, even a seemingly mundane one. Make the scene about the location itself—exploration is at its heart. Take spark when you realize you'll never forget that place.

## SEASONS

Create custom months to add a fantastic touch to your world. Stick to a four-season cycle with three months per season, rolled on the tables below. Re-order the months as makes sense. For the first month, include three simple details like atmospheric, weather, or flora. When you reach another month, add three more for it. Add seasons as needed later in the campaign. Consider a 4d campaign pool to track months.

### SPRING → SUMMER → FALL → WINTER

green	bloom
petal	wind
moss	wave
eager +	dawn
fresh	shine
well	hope

ash	storm
flood	haze
sear	flare
lazy +	glow
gold	breeze
buzz	surge

husk	mist
wilt	moon
amber	dew
rust +	chill
bitter	flow
turn	smoke

storm	tide
bleak	gale
quiet	sheen
howl +	hush
frost	freeze
drift	morn

### Example Atmospherics

frost melts  
rivers swell  
buds bloom  
emerald fields  
humming bees  
light rainfalls  
velvet moss  
flower fields  
calm winds  
glowing fungi  
clear skies

endless downpours  
roaring rivers  
lightning skies  
heavy stillness  
rising heat  
warm winds  
rippling fields  
golden shimmer  
insect swarms  
pollen bursts  
blooming thistles

drifting embers  
ashen haze  
harvested fields  
pale fog  
rustling stalks  
crumbling leaves  
silver light  
creeping chill  
frosty mornings  
sharp scents  
stinging dew drops

whispering winds  
iced branches  
long nights  
dark silence  
frozen rivers  
pale starlight  
raging blizzards  
splintering ice  
howling skies  
eerie auroras  
endless drifts

## REGION MAPS

The Grimwild region map begins with squares along each border: the west is nearly impassible mountains, the east a long, cliffside coastline. The north is a heavy forest, and the south a dire swamp. And throughout each of these is the fog, which you dare not exit—entering the fog will take you to one of the three realities, with no way to know which one.

This creates a limited, but completely unknown sandbox to begin exploring. You enter on one side of this sandbox, drawing a path into it. From there, you begin your exploration. Here's what you can spend tokens on, and how much they cost:

### POINTS OF INTEREST

1-2

You can place minor (1 token) or major (2 tokens) points of any of the following.

**Settlement:** Places people live—towns, tribes, or villages.

**Site:** Places that hold rewards—dungeons, ruins, unique natural features.

**Danger:** Hostile monsters, hazardous nature, or enemies.

### PATHS

0-2

There are three different types of paths, for varying costs. When you place a path, you can add **Passes** such as bridges or tunnels for free along it, allowing it to travel over or through the terrain. **Waypoints** are added to the path by the GM. Each represents 1 day of travel on horseback.

**Major Path (2 tokens):** Well-maintained roadways or trade routes. Travel is quicker, less dangerous, and waypoints are more spread out.

**Minor Path (1 token):** Lesser trails—footpaths, forest tracks, game trails.

**Rough Path (free):** Difficult and dangerous terrain—overgrown paths, rocky trails, dry creek beds. These may not have waypoints, if travel time is unclear.

### SPECIAL LOCATIONS

3

These locations can be added by the GM for free to spice up the map, or as the story requires.

**Curiosity:** Unclear but intriguing signs or information waiting to be explored.

**Barrier:** Obstacles to travel—rivers, mountains, cliffs. Only crossable via dangerous rough paths or passes.

**Area:** Large, usually natural, spaces with a single theme—lakes, swamps, deserts.

## MAKING THE MAP

To start off mapping a region, begin on one border and **expand the map**. The GM draws a rough path into the region, then go through one or two rounds, until the map feels just detailed enough to venture into.

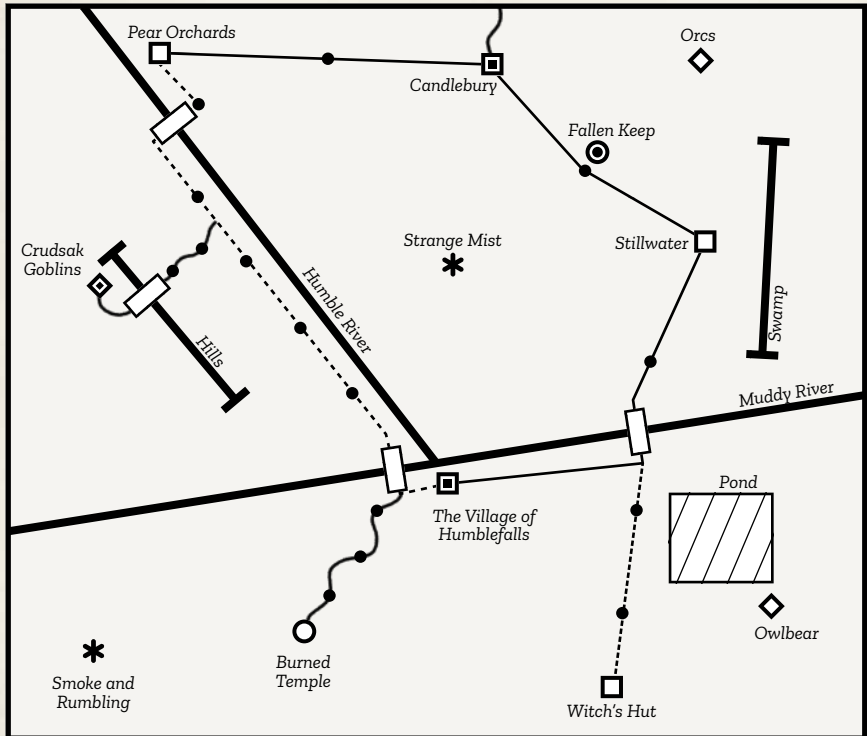
When you place something on the map, you always label it. This can be a simple evocative label of just a few keywords or even a name. If you aren't sure, you can consult the crucibles on pg. XX for ideas! You can also label it [Remnants] [Wilds] [Ruins], if you want to specify which reality it is mostly from.

You can add factions to the map and campaign as needed. There's a factions crucible on pg. XX to help.

## KEY

settlement			curiosity		rough path		pass	
site			barrier		minor path		waypoint	
danger			area		major path		(A DAY'S RIDE)	
	MINOR	MAJOR						

## EXAMPLE REGION



# SETTLEMENT MAPS

Settlement maps are built with Expand the Map, but with a different drawing style. The GM begins by drawing the town's outline, either as a vague border (a line, like a path) or as a wall (a barrier). You add roads and notable buildings following the rules below, and barriers, areas, curiosities, and passes as normal.

## ROAD

1

Draw a straight line between any two other lines on the map. These act as the main roads used throughout the settlement. Passes can be added to roads for free when placed, allowing them to cross **areas** and **barriers** as needed.

## BUILDINGS

2-3

Draw a notable building within an empty space between roads on the map, generally in small areas you've created. Detail it or use the crucible on the next page. Created buildings can be minor or major, the difference being the narrative impact.

**Minor Building (2 tokens):** When you add a minor building, write it on the map in lower case letters.

**Major Building (3 tokens):** Adding a these buildings tells the GM that you want the location to be more important in the setting or story. When you add a major building, write it on the map in capital letters.

## SPECIAL LOCATIONS

3

These locations can be added by the GM for free to spice up the map, or as the story requires.

**Curiosity:** Rumors or interesting locations and happenings that can be explored.

**Barrier:** Obstacles such as rivers, changes in elevation, and walls that prevent easy travel. These are only crossable via passes.

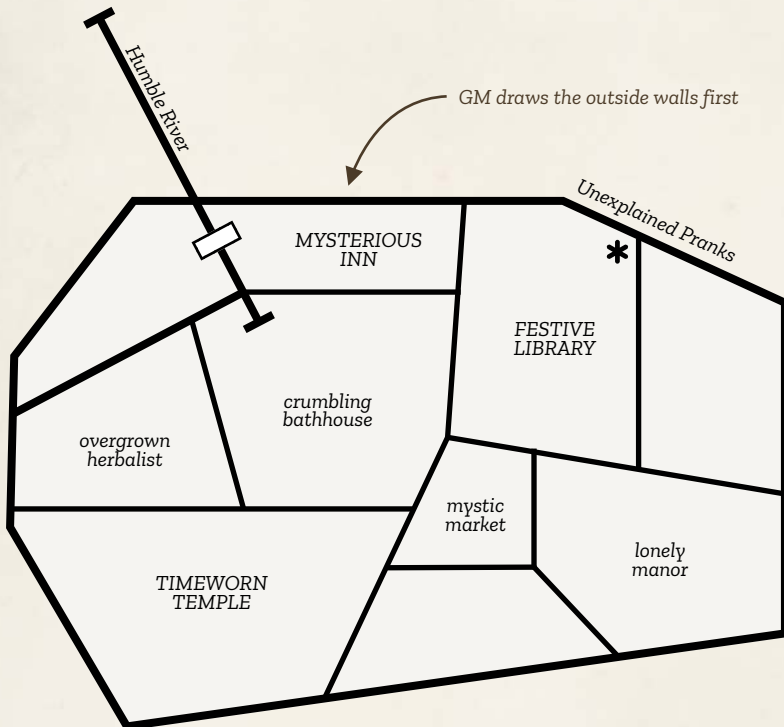
**Area:** Large spaces that are thematically distinct from the larger settlement. Natural areas could include lakes or indoor caverns, while artificial areas might include city districts.

## BUILDING CRUCIBLE

Roll 2 on each table, smash them together, and interpret

<b>ancient</b>	haunted	sacred	shadowy	festive	seedy
crumbling	<b>verdant</b>	sprawling	overgrown	gloomy	opulent
ornate	forgotten	<b>mysterious</b>	arcane	immaculate	lonely
weathered	sturdy	thriving	<b>bustling</b>	crude	grimy
enchanted	humble	dilapidated	secluded	<b>battered</b>	timeworn
gilded	hidden	majestic	somber	towering	<b>bleak</b>
<b>alchemist</b>	shrine	temple	watchtower	gemcutter	observatory
docks	<b>barracks</b>	armory	guild hall	scribe	graveyard
orphanage	stable	<b>tower</b>	market	library	brewery
baker	blacksmith	arena	<b>keep</b>	jail	teahouse
herbalist	tavern	inn	fletcher	<b>manor</b>	bathhouse
carpenter	fortune teller	weaver	glassblower	warehouse	<b>clocktower</b>

## EXAMPLE SETTLEMENT



*The Village of Humblefalls*

# SITE MAPS

The 5-Point Site technique, inspired by the 5-Room Dungeon concept, is used for mapping adventure locations. These can cover sites from warehouses and abandoned city districts, to temples and sunken ruins.

The GM begins by adding the Reward point on the map first, then everybody gains their 3 exploration tokens from **expand the map**, spending them on rooms, paths, and special locations. When you place one of the points, describe it with a two-word phrase—or use the settlements, sites, or dangers crucibles on page XX. Stop when you have all 5 points and the map is just detailed enough to enter. The GM decides the path, and what monsters, dangers, and challenges await within the site. Here are the points and paths that can be added:

## ROOMS

1-2

Minor rooms cost 1 token, while major rooms play a more impactful role, costing 2.

**Entrance:** The entrance to the site has a challenge that blocks the way—it may be trapped, hidden, require a key (word, ceremony, object), or has a guardian to overcome. *This point sets the tone and tests the adventurers' mettle.*

**Puzzle:** An encounter that requires clever thinking, roleplaying, or teamwork. Creativity should always be rewarded, as there should never be just one resolution to the challenge. *This is usually a non-combat encounter, adding variety to the narrative.*

**Hitch:** Something unexpected catches the party off-guard. This may be a betrayal, illusion, trap, dilemma, or hidden threat. If the site calls for it, this may be another puzzle or unique combat. *This point keeps everyone engaged and on edge.*

**Showdown:** The dungeon's central conflict—usually a big combat or intense encounter with high stakes. Incorporate the theme, location, and terrain to make this memory. *This point brings resolution and key rewards.*

**Reward:** The loot, or knowledge the party sought, sometimes with a twist or hook for future adventures. *This point ends with a memorable moment.*

## SPECIAL LOCATIONS

3

**Curiosity:** These are vague signs of something more to be explored. They might lead to new information, trouble, or both. *This point adds more context or a new hook.*

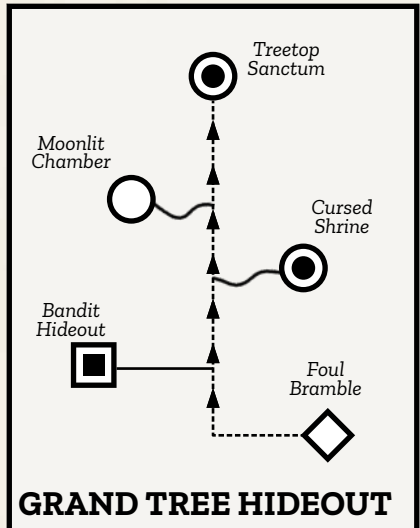
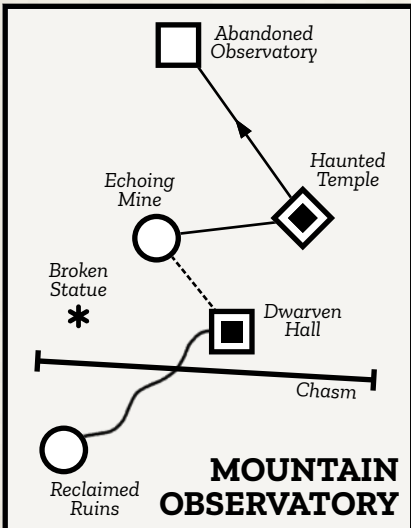
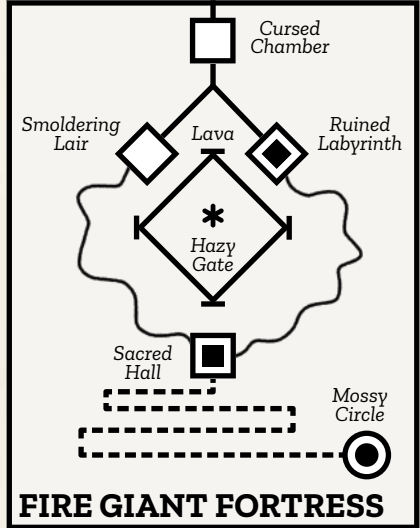
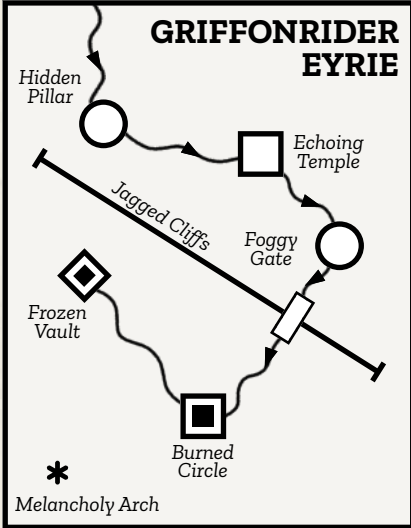
**Barrier:** Obstacles that make getting around the site more difficult, such as chasms, and flowing lava. *This point offers texture and the occasional challenge.*

**Area:** Spaces, usually natural, that cover some part or all of the site, such as a lake, or ruined debris. *This part of the map gives a backdrop, and ties it to the outside world.*

# KEY

structure			curiosity		rough path		pass	
nature			barrier		minor path		elevation change	
hazard			area		major path			
	MINOR	MAJOR						

## EXAMPLE SITES



# EXPLORATION CRUCIBLES

## SETTLEMENT CRUCIBLE Roll 2 on each table, smash them together, and interpret

<b>bustling</b>	prosperous	ancient	secluded	snowy	dusty
quiet	<b>deserted</b>	trade	forgotten	shady	windy
walled	fortified	<b>haunted</b>	peaceful	remote	coastal
hidden	overgrown	foggy	<b>hilly</b>	barren	flooded
sacred	thriving	nomadic	sunlit	<b>rocky</b>	mountainous
isolated	ruined	abandoned	forested	sprawling	<b>reclaimed</b>
<b>village</b>	camp	port	base	oasis	watch
outpost	<b>settlement</b>	market	stronghold	manor	hideout
town	colony	<b>watchtower</b>	ranch	harbor	den
encampment	fortress	crossroads	<b>grove</b>	cliffside	homestead
trading post	hamlet	sanctuary	plaza	<b>peak</b>	monastery
citadel	refuge	commune	farmstead	cavern	<b>bastion</b>

## SITES CRUCIBLE Roll 2 on each table, smash them together, and interpret

<b>ancient</b>	abandoned	cursed	frozen	charred	silent
forgotten	<b>lost</b>	enchanted	mossy	clear	secluded
sacred	mystic	<b>weird</b>	moonlit	foggy	collapsed
haunted	sunken	buried	<b>ruined</b>	sulfurous	smoldering
crumbling	shattered	burned	underground	<b>blessed</b>	windblown
hidden	overgrown	desolate	echoing	forgotten	<b>shaded</b>
<b>alter</b>	circle	well	chamber	labyrinth	archway
monument	<b>sanctuary</b>	tower	obelisk	fountain	sanctum
temple	catacombs	<b>crypt</b>	cairn	portal	hall
grove	shrine	spring	<b>pillar</b>	grotto	mine
ruins	cavern	mausoleum	pit	<b>cemetery</b>	lair
tomb	statue	gate	throne	dungeon	<b>vault</b>

## DANGERS CRUCIBLE Roll 2 on each table, smash them together, and interpret

<b>savage</b>	foul	vile	twisted	wailing	writhing
cursed	<b>haunted</b>	corrupted	reckless	hungry	shrieking
raging	chaotic	<b>maddening</b>	brutal	rampaging	vicious
hidden	shadowed	darkened	<b>lurking</b>	restless	silent
venomous	forbidden	bloodthirsty	forgotten	<b>seething</b>	stalking
relentless	feral	ancient	ensnaring	malevolent	<b>violent</b>
<b>beasts</b>	monsters	brigands	shadows	specters	demons
spirits	<b>bog</b>	cults	crypt	forest	cliffs
caverns	abyss	<b>behemoth</b>	fiends	serpents	warriors
ruins	wraiths	crevice	<b>wilds</b>	graveyard	shades
storm	marsh	gorge	tangle	<b>depths</b>	pathways
woods	swarm	mire	mists	crag	<b>fog</b>

## CURIOSITIES CRUCIBLE

Roll 2 on each table, smash them together, and interpret

<b>lingering</b>	mysterious	dancing	curious	singing	low
strange	<b>distant</b>	soft	melancholy	absurd	twinkling
faint	haunting	<b>glowing</b>	humming	pale	hazy
echoing	hidden	fading	<b>shadowy</b>	colorful	glittering
flickering	pulsing	whispering	radiant	<b>resonant</b>	rumbling
shimmering	ethereal	drifting	moving	enveloping	<b>floating</b>
<b>smoke</b>	glow	tree line	stone face	monolith	cloud
obelisk	<b>spire</b>	ray	silhouette	reflection	canopy
tower	waterfall	<b>statue</b>	bridge	bend	wall
bonfire	arch	tombstone	<b>gate</b>	light	ravine
pillar	ruin	monument	lights	<b>canyon</b>	crater
mist	campfire	cliff	spire	cave	<b>hilltop</b>

## BARRIER CRUCIBLE

Roll 2 on each table, smash them together, and interpret

<b>jagged</b>	deep	craggy	shadowy	barren	thick
steep	<b>narrow</b>	thorny	frozen	marshy	howling
muddy	overgrown	<b>dark</b>	misty	choked	sinking
twisting	slippery	broken	<b>winding</b>	tangled	rough
dense	windy	snow-covered	treacherous	<b>raging</b>	icy
rocky	uneven	swampy	shifting	stony	<b>rolling</b>
<b>ravine</b>	forest	hills	swamp	undergrowth	scree
cliffs	<b>ridge</b>	valley	crevasse	crag	mire
trail	pass	<b>canyon</b>	path	peaks	desert
thicket	marsh	river	<b>shale</b>	glacier	brush
bog	caves	brambles	mud flats	<b>shoals</b>	ice sheet
slopes	scrub	lava	trees	tundra	<b>underbrush</b>

## FACTIONS CRUCIBLE

Roll 2 on each table, smash them together, and interpret

<b>fierce</b>	noble	hidden	seeking	sacred	ragtag
warlike	<b>shadowed</b>	cunning	relentless	untamed	radiant
hostile	zealous	<b>forbidden</b>	guarded	loyal	defiant
peaceful	ruthless	honorable	<b>wise</b>	vengeful	forgotten
curious	ancient	silent	lost	<b>eternal</b>	secretive
mystic	wandering	restless	merciless	patient	<b>unseen</b>
<b>blades</b>	brotherhood	coven	seekers	cult	envoys
order	<b>legion</b>	sentinels	council	guardians	shapers
clan	syndicate	<b>alliance</b>	hunters	cadre	misfits
keepers	knights	scouts	<b>pilgrims</b>	raiders	brigade
guild	society	heralds	companions	<b>guard</b>	cabal
circle	band	tribe	wanderers	wardens	<b>watchers</b>

# CHAPTER 5

# MONSTERS

## PAINTING MONSTROUS SCENES

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This chapter features nearly 100 monster blocks designed to help you, the GM, create vivid and engaging encounters. Each block emphasizes color, sensory details, instincts, motivations, and adventure hooks over mechanical difficulty—in fact, there are no mechanics at all besides example traits and moves. As with all things in Grimwild, monsters map back to the core resolution mechanics. Monsters should be more than just something to carve through—they should feel integral to the story.

The bestiary offers advice, not rules: a collection of tropes and ideas for inspiration. It's not meant to be a comprehensive guide to these monsters, but instead a tool for quick reference and thinking outside the box with classic fantasy monsters. Some familiarity with them is assumed.

The monsters presented here blend tropes, personal twists, and efforts to make them more engaging than just "something that wants to eat you." However, keep in mind that nothing here is canon—every idea is flexible, ready to be replaced, reimagined, or repurposed. These are just one interpretation of what these monsters might be. Change whatever you like; it won't break a thing.

## MONSTER BLOCK BREAKDOWN

**Tier & Role:** The most common tier and role of this creature when encountered.

**Palette:** Colors associated with the creature or its surroundings.

**Details:** A short description of the monster and its lore.

**\* Traits:** These are certain aspects of the monster that can help the GM determine vantage, or unique abilities such as flying or speech.

**☉ Moves:** Suggest what a creature might do, especially in conflict, but are flexible and meant to inspire, even outside combat. Not all monsters are challenges.

**Goals:** A creature's drives, offering direction and ways for PCs to interact. Share them, especially with experienced PCs.

**Sensories:** A list of, sights, sounds, and smells encountered near the creature—sometimes describing the creature, other times the area or signs of its presence.

**Tables:** Inspire variants, introduce quest hooks, or define a purpose, adding depth to each.

## NOTES ON MONSTER BLOCKS

**Lack of Humanoids:** Common humanoid monsters like kobolds, orcs, and goblins are not listed. These can be added to your game with only a tier and role.

**Categories:** Blocks for demons, devils, dire animals, elementals, fey, hags, giants, and undead are grouped together.

**Expanded Entries:** Some monsters, like balors and vampires, have double-sized entries featuring quests, linked challenges, or extra tables. These provide ready-to-use scenarios and examples for building and expanding your own.

**Immunities & Weaknesses:** Few specific resistances or vulnerabilities are listed. Basic logic applies—like skeletons resisting weapons that pierce or cut—and you can tweak for difficulty by adding your own. These entries are starting points meant to inspire creative customization.

### Monster Block Use Example

You push through the tall grass, and the air seems thick with the **smell of jasmine and lavender (sensory)**. You hear **giggling** and catch a glimpse of something small, **petal pink (palette)** in color. The grass abruptly stops, and you realize you've walked into the middle of a small **circle of faintly glowing mushrooms (table)**.

Suddenly, the air shimmers and a **dozen tiny figures manifest out of thin air (traits)**. One zips by above you, glittering motes of pastel light falling on your head. Your vision gets blurry, and you have the **inexplicable urge to dance (impact move from FAIRY DUST)**.

You swish your **iron shortsword (player roll, messy)** at them as your wits begin to leave you, and the melodic singing around you turns to **high-pitched screams as they suddenly flee (goals)**. You look down, and **see you're holding a venomous snake (impact move from MINOR ILLUSIONS)**!

FEY, FAERY		TRICKSTER
PETAL PINK	SOFT LAVENDER	PALE BLUE
Tiny, winged creatures with a mischievous nature. They flit through meadows, casting illusions and playing tricks on wanderers for their own amusement.		
* Swarm together	● FAIRY DUST	
* Invisibility at-will	● DAZZLING LIGHTS	
* Speech	● MINOR ILLUSIONS	
Wants to play mostly harmless tricks on mortals.		
Doesn't want to be anywhere near iron.		
◉ glittering trails, darting figures, fleeting glimpses		
♪ airy giggling, fluttering of tiny wings, melodic chimes		
🌸 delicate nectar, lavender and jasmine, sugary aroma		
FAIRY CIRCLES		
1 Mushrooms glowing faintly in the dusk.		
2 Ring of sunflowers in a grassy field.		
3 Fallen leaves after a rain.		
4 Precarious pebble towers, defying gravity.		
5 Dancing fireflies in a glowing spiral.		
6 Ring of acorns around a sapling.		

## BASILISK

LURKER

SCALY GREEN MOSSY BROWN ROCKY GRAY

Spiny, eight-legged reptiles that lurk in forgotten, shadowy places. They patiently lay in wait to ambush prey, then feast on the petrified remains.

- \* *Sluggish stealth*      ● **PETRIFYING GAZE**
- \* *Spiny hide*      ● **BITE & THRASH**
- \* *Keen sense of smell*      ● **SLINK AWAY**

**Wants** to munch on a delicious statue, later.

**Doesn't want** light revealing its hiding place.

- 👁️ gleam of scales, slithering trails through dust
- 👂 silence, rasping hiss, crunching of chewed stone
- 👃 chalky scent of ground stone, desiccated air

### HIDING SPOTS

- 1 Beneath a crumbling, but still-used **bridge**.
- 2 Within the **rotting carcass** of a fallen dragon.
- 3 On the fifth floor of a **derelict watchtower**.
- 4 In a field full of half-eaten **bear statues**.
- 5 Within a maze of rusted, echoing **pipes**.
- 6 Among the **twisted roots** of a giant tree.

## CARCASS CRAWLER

BRUTE

ROTTEN BROWN DULL OLIVE VILE GREEN

Massive, slimy worms with dozens of grasping tentacles, lurking underground to feast on dead or paralyzed prey. They're drawn to the scent of death.

- \* *Paralytic touch*      ● **TENTACLE SLAPS**
- \* *Cling to walls*      ● **SPEW BILE**
- **BRIEF SCUTTLE**

**Wants** more flesh, always more flesh.

**Doesn't want** to suffer the sheer panic of hunger.

- 👁️ pristine bones, writhing tentacles, clouds of flies
- 👂 wet slithering, grotesque squelching, bone snaps
- 👃 rancid stench, sickly-sweet venom, mold and rot

### FEEDING GROUNDS

- 1 The remnants of a **horrific battle**.
- 2 The result of a successful **death cult**.
- 3 A recently thawed **graveyard**.
- 4 A **plague** that killed herds of farm animals.
- 5 A **fleet** of invasion ships dashed against rocks.
- 6 Mass **sacrifices** to it, worshiped as a god.

## BEHIR

PREDATOR

SCALY GRAY STORMY GRAY AZURE BLUE

Massive, solitary serpentine creatures with a dozen legs and brilliant azure scales. They live in dark, decaying places and rarely tolerate intruders.

- \* *Cling to walls*      ● **ELECTRIC BREATH**
- \* *Serpentine flexibility*      ● **BITE & CONSTRICT**
- \* *Speech*      ● **SWALLOW WHOLE**

**Wants** to expand its hunting grounds, to savor meals.

**Doesn't want** rival predators challenging its territory.

- 👁️ deep claw marks, static sparks, lightning strike marks
- 👂 sizzling electric snaps, sudden boom, shuffling legs
- 👃 metallic tang, faint acrid smell, scorched hide

### UNEARTHED BY...

- 1 **Landslide** during a massive thunderstorm.
- 2 **Generational flood** wiping out whole villages.
- 3 **Earthquake** toppling castle walls.
- 4 Collapse of a **silver mine**, forcing it to flee.
- 5 Lich's minions **dig** too deep.
- 6 Adventurers left an **almost** empty dungeon.

## CHIMERA

BRUTE

DARK BROWN BURNT UMBER FIERY RED

Violent, chaotic monstrous hybrids of a lion, goat, and dragon. They rarely stay in one place long, suffering relentless wanderlust.

- \* *Multi-headed*      ● **FIRE BREATH**
- \* *Unpredictable*      ● **FLYING POUNCE**
- \* *Understands language* ● **CLAW, BITE, HORNS**

**Wants** to keep wandering.

**Doesn't want** to face choices that its heads disagree on.

- 👁️ streaks of scorched earth, smoke from its nostrils
- 👂 growls, roars, and hisses, sudden whoosh and crackle
- 👃 acrid scent of sulfur and ash, musky wet fur

### HYBRID HEADS (Roll 3 times)

- |               |             |                |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1 wolverine   | 1 rhino     | 1 vampire bat  |
| 2 dingo       | 2 baboon    | 2 sloth        |
| 3 anteater    | 3 mantis    | 3 jackal       |
| 4 condor      | 4 alligator | 4 gila monster |
| 5 rattlesnake | 5 ostrich   | 5 pangolin     |
| 6 platypus    | 6 mongoose  | 6 cobra        |

CHUUL		PREDATOR
CRUSTACEAN BROWN	DEEP YELLOW	SWAMP GREEN
<p>Enormous, lobster-like aberrations with a mouthful of tentacles. They are drawn to magic and hoard the relics they find in their cluttered lairs.</p>		
* <i>Hardened shell</i>	● <b>STUNNING TENTACLE</b>	
* <i>Sense nearby magic</i>	● <b>CLAW LOCK</b>	
* <i>Speech</i>	● <b>DRAG UNDER</b>	
<p><b>Wants</b> to hoard sources of magic, instinctually.  <b>Doesn't want</b> to venture from the moistness of the swamp.</p>		
<p>👁️ <i>roiling water, slick tendrils</i>          🗣️ <i>bubbling groan of water, wet slap of tentacles</i>          🕸️ <i>cloying tang of magic, pungent crustacean odor</i></p>		
ELDRITCH MUTATIONS CRUCIBLE		
1 <i>acidic</i>	1 <i>shell</i>	
2 <i>spiked</i>	2 <i>eyestalks</i>	
3 <i>reflective</i>	3 <i>wings</i>	
4 <i>extendable</i>	4 <i>antennae</i>	
5 <i>glowing</i>	5 <i>tail</i>	
6 <i>magic-sensing</i>	6 <i>claws</i>	

COUATL		PROTECTOR
BRONZE GOLD	IRIDESCENT BLUE	EMERALD GREEN
<p>Celestial serpents with rainbow feathers that act as wise protectors and guardians of sacred places. They seek to preserve balance and impart wisdom.</p>		
* <i>Truthbound</i>	● <b>READ MINDS</b>	
* <i>Shapechanger</i>	● <b>CONSTRICT</b>	
* <i>Telepathy</i>	● <b>RADIANT MAGIC</b>	
<p><b>Wants</b> to ensure sacred sites stay hidden.  <b>Doesn't want</b> its wisdom being ignored.</p>		
<p>👁️ <i>iridescent scales, vivid feathers, trail of light</i>          🗣️ <i>otherworldly hum, gentle rustling, whispering winds</i>          🕸️ <i>clean, fresh breeze, soothing incense, hopeful magic</i></p>		
SACRED TASK		
1 <b>Retrieve</b> a sacred artifact, your sword.		
2 <b>Protect</b> a chosen one, your enemy.		
3 <b>Find</b> ancient knowledge, your secret.		
4 <b>Teach</b> you a forgotten language.		
5 <b>Stop</b> you from destroying the world.		
6 <b>Tricked</b> by a devil into destroying you.		

COCKATRICE		SWARMER
RUST ORANGE	FEATHERED BROWN	DUSKY GOLD
<p>Small, chicken-like creatures with reptilian features. They roam in flocks and their peck turns flesh to stone, which they use to mark their territory.</p>		
* <i>Flocking instinct</i>	● <b>PETRIFYING PECKS</b>	
* <i>Ferocious swarming</i>	● <b>WINGED RETREAT</b>	
	● <b>FLAPPY DISTRACTION</b>	
<p><b>Wants</b> to mark its territory with petrified victims.  <b>Doesn't want</b> to have its flock's authority challenged.</p>		
<p>👁️ <i>small petrified animals, mass of scattered feathers</i>          🗣️ <i>flurry of wings, chorus of shrill squawks, beak snaps</i>          🕸️ <i>mismatched smell of feathers and scales</i></p>		
MIGRATIONS		
1 Onto an <b>island</b> , home to a monastery.		
2 Into a small <b>hamlet</b> , everyone stuck indoors.		
3 Into a <b>valley</b> , an important trade crossroad.		
4 Throughout a <b>city</b> , absolute chaos ensuing.		
5 Down into <b>mines</b> , trapping miners inside.		
6 Aboard a large <b>ship</b> anchored in the bay.		

CYCLOPS		BRUTE
WEATHERED BEIGE	EYEBALL WHITE	STONE BROWN
<p>Solitary, towering figures that value their personal territory above all else. They gather boulders and stones, treating them as symbols of power.</p>		
* <i>Singular, intense focus</i>	● <b>BOULDER TOSS</b>	
* <i>Immensely strong</i>	● <b>GROUND SLAM</b>	
* <i>Understands language</i>	● <b>FEARSOME BELLOW</b>	
<p><b>Wants</b> boulder caches, a symbol of territory and power.  <b>Doesn't want</b> to get distracted or feel like it's being tricked.</p>		
<p>👁️ <i>piles of boulders, massive cave entrance</i>          🗣️ <i>guttural rumbling, whoosh of a boulder flying</i>          🕸️ <i>unwashed skin, earthy cave, sharp stone dust</i></p>		
CYCLOPEAN CURSES		
1 It can only see at <b>night</b> .		
2 It can only venture outside in the <b>rain</b> .		
3 Its every footstep causes a <b>tremor</b> .		
4 It's terrified of <b>small mammals</b> .		
5 It can never stop <b>walking</b> .		
6 It's <b>lonely</b> , the last of its kind.		

# DEMON, BALOR

TACTICIAN

INFERNO RED

SMOKY BLACK

EMBER ORANGE

Towering embodiments of pure evil, with massive bat-like wings. They rule with chaos and destruction, and have an insatiable hunger for more power.

- \* Pierces deceptions      ● BURNING WHIP
- \* Fiery aura                ● CRACKLING SWORD
- \* Speech, telepathy      ● BOOMING TELEPORT

**Wants** to bask in its own greatness.

**Doesn't want** its absolute control to waver, even for a second.

- ☞ chaotic dancing flames, large smoking footprints
- ☞ whip cracks, crackling lightning, guttural chanting
- ☞ overwhelming brimstone, smothering ash

## DEATH THROES (Roll 2)

**1** Devastating **explosion**, reducing all to ash.

**2** Brilliant **flash**, blinding all that witness it.

**3** **Lava geysers** erupt from the ground.

**4** **Hellfire meteors** bombard the area.

**5** **Blazing cyclone** and **molten rain** wreak havoc.

**6** A **portal** to the abyss opens, compelling entrance.

## HELL TO PAY

The balor emerges from the shattered summoning circle as the cathedral erupts in flames around it. Those who disturbed it lie dead and now the capital will feel its fury.



# DEMON, GLABREZU

TRICKSTER

BLOOD RED

DEMONIC PURPLE

DEEP GRAY

Hulking fiends with four arms, two of which are claws. They tempt ambitious mortals, granting wishes and delighting as it all backfires.

- \* Devious schemer      ● CREATE DARKNESS
- \* Magic resistance      ● KNOW DESIRES
- \* Speech, telepathy      ● GRANT WISH

**Wants** to know what would make you happy.

**Doesn't want** for its offers to be turned down.

- ☞ stone gouged away, hulking silhouette, eerie glow
- ☞ faint whispers of magic, clicking claws, alluring voice
- ☞ bitter burnt incense, unknown sickly-sweet aromas

## WISHES GRANTED (with ruin soon to follow)

**1** **Love**, leading to the death of their beloved.

**2** **Wealth**, leading to never-satiated greed.

**3** **Wisdom**, leading to a descent into madness.

**4** **Victory**, leading to guilt on how it was won.

**5** **Beauty**, leading to horror as it fades even a little.

**6** **Fame**, leading to jealousy from those close.

# DEMON, VROCK

BRUTE

FEATHERED GRAY

SICKLY GREEN

BONE WHITE

A vulture-like fiend that is drawn to the mayhem of battlefields. They spread poisonous spores with each wingbeat, reveling in the chaos it brings below.

- \* Terrifying flight      ● DEAFENING SCREECH
- \* Disgusting plumage      ● SPORE CLOUD
- \* Understands language      ● SUMMON FLOCK

**Wants** to keep the battle going as long as possible.

**Doesn't want** to be drawn directly into the conflict itself.

- ☞ cloud of spores, dark shadow, ichor-covered feathers
- ☞ wet slapping of wings, rustle of diseased feathers
- ☞ rancid decay, spores clogging nostrils

## SPORE EFFECTS

**1** **Betrayal**, poisoning trust between allies.

**2** **Terror**, causing reckless desperation.

**3** **Visions**, twisting allies into horrors.

**4** **Rage**, swelling into extreme bloodlust.

**5** **Envy**, breeding treacherous ambition.

**6** **Heroism**, turning into self-sacrificial madness.

DEVIL, BARBED		LURKER
SOOT BLACK	EMBER RED	DARK GREEN
Horrific fiends covered in jagged barbs. They savor fear and torment, often stretching out the suffering as long as possible before delivering the final blow.		
* Hooked barbs	● BARBED EMBRACE	
* Horrifying presence	● THROW HELLFIRE	
* Speech, telepathy	● SLOW TAUNTING	
<b>Wants</b> to slowly savor the agony and pleas of mercy. <b>Doesn't want</b> to feel the pain it inflicts to be endured.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ shadows writhing unnaturally, barbs twitching</li> <li>☞ scratching of barbs along walls, tearing sound of flesh</li> <li>☞ coppery fresh blood and agony</li> </ul>		
<b>SUMMONED INTO...</b>		
1 <b>Royal wedding</b> , meant to seal a fragile peace.		
2 <b>Public execution</b> , meant to crush rebellion.		
3 <b>Temple consecration</b> , meant to ward off evil.		
4 <b>Feast</b> marking the end of a great famine.		
5 <b>Trial</b> of a beloved noble, accused of treason.		
6 <b>Coronation</b> of a hesitant ruler, full of doubt.		

DEVIL, HORNED		BRUTE
FIERY RED	BURNT ORANGE	DEEP BLACK
Fearsome, powerful fiends with towering horns, a spiked tail, and massive wings. They wield a flaming fork and rule with terror and cruelty.		
* Impenetrable hide	● FLAMING FORK	
* Speech, telepathy	● HELLFIRE BOLT	
	● FESTERING WOUND	
<b>Wants</b> to be both revered and feared. <b>Doesn't want</b> to be forced into any compromise.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ stretching horn shadows, gleaming fork, stab wounds</li> <li>☞ resonant telepathic voice, malevolent chuckles</li> <li>☞ acrid sulfur, suffocating smoke, brimstone</li> </ul>		
<b>BROKEN SUMMONING CIRCLES</b>		
1 In a <b>temple</b> by a priest who lost their faith.		
2 In a <b>farmhouse</b> by a grief-stricken mother.		
3 In a <b>tower</b> by a wizard consumed with jealousy.		
4 In the <b>study</b> of a hero haunted by failure.		
5 In a <b>tavern</b> by a minstrel obsessed with fame.		
6 In a <b>cobbler's cellar</b> , by a long-held prisoner.		

DEVIL, CHAIN		TACTICIAN
IRON GRAY	STEEL BLUE	CRIMSON
Sadistic fiends that manipulate chains like serpents to ensnare and flay their victims. They relish in the terror and struggle of their confined captives.		
* Animated chains aura	● SUMMON CHAINS	
* Serrated links	● CHAIN LASH	
* Speech, telepathy	● REEL IN	
<b>Wants</b> its victims to resist before breaking. <b>Doesn't want</b> to find itself confined by others.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ glinting metal, slow chain shadows, slow laughter</li> <li>☞ clinking and rattling, tightening snaps, clangs</li> <li>☞ rusty, reeking metal, pungent sweat and fear</li> </ul>		
<b>IMPRISONED WITHIN...</b>		
1 <b>Labyrinthine halls</b> of the mad queen.		
2 <b>Cursed portrait</b> in a lavish hall.		
3 <b>Steamy, opulent bathroom</b> in the capital.		
4 <b>Reliquary</b> of a respected temple.		
5 <b>Trade guild vault</b> , sealed with powerful runes.		
6 <b>Winding forest pathways</b> surrounding town.		

DEVIL, IMP		TRICKSTER
WICKED RED	TARNISHED GOLD	SMOKY GRAY
Tiny, winged fiends driven by trickery and chaos. They delight in sowing mischief and confusion, stinging with mind-warping venoms before vanishing.		
* Compulsive mischief	● VENOMOUS STING	
* Invisibility at-will	● VERMIN FORM	
* Speech, telepathy	● ENCHANT ITEM	
<b>Wants</b> to sew subtle seeds of chaos. <b>Doesn't want</b> to be confronted directly, ruining the surprise.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ quick flash of movement, clawed footprints</li> <li>☞ buzz of wings, eerie silence, lingering snickering</li> <li>☞ faint whiffs of venom and sulfur</li> </ul>		
<b>IMPISH SNARES</b>		
1 <b>Spoon</b> that makes food taste slightly rotten.		
2 <b>Quill</b> that weaves insults into messages.		
3 <b>Candle</b> that goes out at the worst time.		
4 <b>Map</b> that shifts landmarks and roads.		
5 <b>Compass</b> that always points towards fun.		
6 <b>Doll</b> that moves to a new spot each night.		

## DIRE BEAR

BRUTE

DEEP BROWN      FURRY BLACK      GRIZZLY BROWN

Fiercely territorial, colossal animals with thick fur and enormous claws. It responds viciously to any intrusion into its territory.

- \* Dense fur      ● TESTING CHARGE
- \* Surprising speed      ● BELLOWING ROAR
- MAULING GRAPPLE

**Wants** to foster the next generation of rulers.  
**Doesn't want** for its boundaries to be broken.

- 👁️ snapped trees, breath steaming in the cold air
- 👂 deafening roar echoing, pounding footsteps
- 👃 crisp pine, overturned earth, wet fur

### TERRITORY WOES

- 1 It has **far too many** cubs.
- 2 **Grand hunt** has been called for it.
- 3 Another **dire apex predator** has arrived.
- 4 **Civilization** encroaches on its borders.
- 5 **Totemic wards** restrict its roaming grounds.
- 6 Goblins **wage war** against orcs on its lands.

## DIRE CRAB

BRUTE

SHELL RED      CORAL PINK      FLESHY ORANGE

Towering crustaceans with enormous crushing claws, only vulnerable when they molt. They scuttle along coastal shallows, devouring anything in their path.

- \* Impenetrable shell      ● CLICK, CLACK
- \* Voracious appetites      ● SNIP, SNAP
- \*      ● RIP IN HALF

**Wants** its offspring to overrun the beaches.  
**Doesn't want** for anything to get under it.

- 👁️ boulders clipped in half, odd holes in the sand
- 👂 creak of its shell grinding, clicking of legs
- 👃 wet sand, seaweed, and decaying marine life

### DIRE HERMIT CRAB SHELLS

- 1 Sunken **pirate ship**, now haunted.
- 2 Fallen **castle turret**, filled with explosives.
- 3 **Giant's skull**, with a gleaming gold tooth.
- 4 **Whale ribcage**, covered in barnacles.
- 5 **Gnomish submarine**, still water-tight.
- 6 **Iron cauldron** once used by a giant.

## DIRE CENTIPEDE

SKIRMISHER

BURNT SIENNA      EARTHLY BROWN      CHITIN BLACK

Gigantic, armored insects with venomous pincers and countless legs. They skitter through dark tunnels, creating a labyrinthine network of hunting grounds.

- \* Cling to walls      ● WARNING HISS
- \* Terrifying speed      ● DROP DOWN
- SNIP OFF LIMBS

**Wants** to expand its labyrinth of tunnels.  
**Doesn't want** bright light or loud noises.

- 👁️ endlessly writhing legs, shining chitin, twitching pincers
- 👂 rhythmic clicking, sharp hiss, unsettling rustling
- 👃 nutty insect aroma, sour rotting wood

### HOME TUNNELS

- 1 Tunnels filled with **towering mushrooms**.
- 2 The ruins of a lavish **underground palace**.
- 3 Enormous cavern full of **bioluminescence**.
- 4 Through the **bones** of a buried giant.
- 5 **Flooded sea caves**, where it hunts for sharks.
- 6 Through **twisting roots** of colossal trees.

## DIRE CROCODILE

LURKER

SWAMP GREEN      MUDDY BROWN      SCALY BLACK

Enormous reptiles with iron-like scales and jagged maws. They lurk in wait in murky waters, virtually imperceptible until they move.

- \* Swampy camouflage      ● SNAPPING LUNGE
- DEATH ROLL
- DROWN PREY

**Wants** to eat anything that comes close.  
**Doesn't want** to move when unnecessary.

- 👁️ massive eyes above the waterline, still waters
- 👂 scraping of belly on ground, thrashing water
- 👃 mud and algae, stagnant swamp water

### WORSHIPERS (The croc's totally unaware)

- 1 **Local fishers**, who see it as the god of floods.
- 2 **Cultists**, who offer sacrifices.
- 3 **Water elementals**, believing it guards the river.
- 4 **Merfolk**, who live alongside it.
- 5 **Hill giants**, envious of its eternal hunger.
- 6 **Swamp hags**, believing it gives them magic.

DIRE EAGLE		PREDATOR
FEATHERY WHITE	EARTHY BROWN	STORMY GRAY
Vast raptors with massive wingspans and razor-sharp talons. They soar from high cliffs and dive with deadly precision and perfect timing to bring down prey.		
* Keen eyesight	● PLUNGING STRIKE	
* Extremely swift	● SWOOPING SNATCH	
	● PIERCING CRY	
<p><b>Wants</b> other predators to see and fear it.</p> <p><b>Doesn't want</b> anything coming near its nest.</p>		
<p>👁️ huge falling feather, talon gouges in the earth</p> <p>👂 whoosh of massive wings, rustling of feathers</p> <p>👃 crisp high-altitude air, faint carrion scent</p>		
UNIQUE EYRIES		
1 <b>Spire</b> of a still-occupied wizard's tower.		
2 <b>Atop a giant redwood tree</b> , the tallest in the world.		
3 Rocky outcrop above a foggy <b>elephant graveyard</b> .		
4 Desolate <b>mesatop</b> , bones surrounding the nest.		
5 <b>Between the stone arches of an ancient bridge</b> .		
6 <b>In the hand</b> of an enormous carved statue.		

DIRE SPIDER		TACTICIAN
VENOM GREEN	MIDNIGHT BLACK	DARK CRIMSON
Monstrously huge arachnids with legs like tree trunks and venomous fangs. They spin vast webs coating entire areas or drop from enormous heights on prey.		
* Vibration sense	● SURPRISE DROP	
* Complex webbing	● VENOMOUS BITE	
*	● WRAP PREY	
<p><b>Wants</b> to always have enough food for later.</p> <p><b>Doesn't want</b> to be anywhere near fire.</p>		
<p>👁️ thick silk strands, barely visible in shadow, thick hairs</p> <p>👂 unsettling skitter, eerie silence, soft thud, slurping</p> <p>👃 sickly-sweet venom, putrid wrapped bodies</p>		
DIRE SPIDER VARIETIES		
1 <b>Netcaster</b> , trapping from far away.		
2 <b>Jumping</b> , catching prey off-guard with a leap.		
3 <b>Longlegs</b> , moving quickly through foliage.		
4 <b>Pitdweller</b> , striking from well-hidden holes.		
5 <b>Waterglider</b> , skimming across marshes.		
6 <b>Divingbell</b> , living completely underwater.		

DIRE SHARK		PREDATOR
OCEAN GRAY	BONE WHITE	DEEP BLUE
Massive beasts of the ocean's depth, with rows of serrated teeth and a sleek, powerful body. They prowl the seas, always in search of sizable prey.		
* Blends into the depths	● FROM THE DEPTHS	
* Knows no fear	● FRENZIED THRASH	
	● BITE OFF A CHUNK	
<p><b>Wants</b> to instill deep fear long before it strikes.</p> <p><b>Doesn't want</b> for ships to operate in its waters.</p>		
<p>👁️ patch of red-stained ocean, ominous dorsal fin</p> <p>👂 heavy thud hitting the ship, eerie silence</p> <p>👃 briny saltwater, upturned seawater</p>		
DESTROYED SHIPS		
1 <b>Royal flagship</b> , crown jewels still aboard.		
2 <b>War galleon</b> , with the spoils of war.		
3 <b>Passenger liner</b> , still barely floating.		
4 <b>Submarine</b> , the survivors in a deep sea cave.		
5 <b>Ghost ship</b> , having cursed the waters for decades.		
6 <b>Orchish warship</b> , fused to its back by dark magic.		

DIRE WOLF		TACTICIAN
ASHEN GRAY	LIGHT BROWN	FROSTY GRAY
Hulking wolf with bristling fur and dagger-like fangs. They hunt with a pack of lesser wolves, using fearsome coordination to trap and bring down prey.		
* Relentless pursuer	● CALL PACK	
* Pack coordination	● TACKLE PREY	
*	● PACK ATTACK	
<p><b>Wants</b> to protect its pack.</p> <p><b>Doesn't want</b> anything that prevents it from roaming free.</p>		
<p>👁️ silhouette at edge of clearing, tracks in the mud</p> <p>👂 haunting howl, guttural growl, heavy breathing</p> <p>👃 fur mixed with fresh earth, sweat, mountain air</p>		
LUNAR BEHAVIORS		
1 <b>New moon</b> , restless border <b>patrols</b> .		
2 <b>Crescent</b> , young grow <b>unruly</b> .		
3 <b>Full moon</b> , deafening <b>howls</b> .		
4 <b>Gibbous</b> , pack <b>dominance</b> shifts.		
5 <b>Blood moon</b> , <b>rampage</b> outside their borders.		
6 <b>Blue moon</b> , dire wolf <b>litter</b> is born.		

## DISLOCATION BEAST

TRICKSTER

SHADOW BLACK MIDNIGHT BLUE MYSTIC PURPLE

Elusive, panther-like creatures with six legs and barbed tentacles. They warp reality to disorient and confuse, blending into their surroundings.

- \* Phantom forms      ● **TENTACLE SWIPES**
- \* Ethereal agility      ● **DISORIENTING BLURS**
- \*                              ● **SUDDEN POUNCE**

**Wants** to swiftly harness the chaos it creates.

**Doesn't want** to ever put itself in danger.

- 👁️ shifting blurs, disrupted reality, phantom images
- 👂 distorted growl, strange echoes, swish of movement
- 👃 spicy musk, sharply cut aromas, caustic undertone

### BIZARRE PHENOMENA

- 1 **Mundane sounds**, completely out of place.
- 2 **Fleeting reflections** from alternate worlds.
- 3 **Shadows** elongate unnaturally and linger.
- 4 **Echoes** ricochet unpredictably.
- 5 **Colors bleed** into neighboring hues.
- 6 **Invisible ripples** that distort vision.

## DOPPELGÄNGER

TRICKSTER

NEUTRAL GRAY

Shapeshifting figures with gray, featureless skin. They can perfectly mimic any humanoid, infiltrating societies to achieve their own mysterious goals.

- \* Shapechanger      ● **SHIFT APPEARANCE**
- \* Mindreader      ● **MENTAL PROBE**
- \* Speech, telepathy      ● **PSYCHIC SCREAM**

**Wants** to experience new lives.

**Doesn't want** its true form to be seen.

- 👁️ shifting facial features, subtle posture changes
- 👂 disconcerting silence, soft self-reprimanding
- 👃 a smell fully unexpected of that person

### IDENTITIES YOU KNOW

- 1 Noble's trusted **advisor**, met last winter.
- 2 The **second-to-last** person the PCs met.
- 3 Old **flame** of a PC, thought long dead.
- 4 Wandering **monk**, seen only days ago.
- 5 **Previous PC**, from this campaign or another.
- 6 Executed **thief**, now walking free.

## DRAGON

BLASTER

SCALE EMERALD

CRIMSON FLAME

GOLD ACCENT

Massive, scaled beasts with wings and elemental breath attacks. They hoard treasures and instill deep, instinctual fears as a top apex predator.

- \* Frightful presence      ● **ELEMENTAL BREATH**
- \* Ancient memories      ● **WING BUFFET**
- \* Speech      ● **CHOMP DOWN**

**Wants** to assert its supremacy over all.

**Doesn't want** to be humbled in any way.

- 👁️ massive features, self-important posture
- 👂 thunderous roar, wings beating, intake of breath
- 👃 faint scent of gold and ancient relics

### HOARDING INSTINCTS (besides gold)

- 1 **Scrolls** filled with lost languages.
- 2 **Crown jewels** of forgotten kingdoms.
- 3 **Gravestones** of great heroes.
- 4 **Maps** of the world.
- 5 **Weapons** forged in time of great need.
- 6 **Holy symbols** of fallen gods.

### DRAGON BREATH WEAPONS

A dragon's elemental breath is a potent weapon, as well as a versatile tool. Give elder dragons an extra 2 suspense that they can use on these breath weapon utility moves.

#### ACID

- **CAUSTIC POOLS**
- **CORRODE ARMOR**
- **EAT AWAY STONE**

#### COLD

- **ICE WALL**
- **FREEZE IN PLACE**
- **SLOW MOVEMENT**

#### FIRE

- **BURN BARRIERS**
- **MELT WEAPONS**
- **SMOKE SCREEN**

#### LIGHTNING

- **CHAINED STUN**
- **DISABLE MACHINE**
- **THUNDER ROAR**

#### POISON

- **CONFUSION**
- **FORCE WRETCHING**
- **LINGERING CLOUD**

#### NECROSIS

- **DEATHLY FEAR**
- **LIFE DRAIN**
- **WITHER PLANTS**

Also, reference the dragon linked challenge on pg. XX.

ELEMENTAL, AIR		TRICKSTER
CLOUD WHITE	SKY BLUE	WHISPER GRAY
Swirling masses of wind and cloud that can change shape. They represent the raw power of storms and wind, mercurial and unpredictable.		
* Cyclonic form	● GALE FORCE	
* Untouchable	● WHIRLWIND	
* Speech	● SUFFOCATE	
<p><b>Wants</b> to flow ever free.</p> <p><b>Doesn't want</b> to be ignored.</p>		
<p>☉ leaves and debris swirling, dust and sand kicked up</p> <p>☪ howling wind, rush of air, whistling gusts</p> <p>☁ high-altitude winds, rain and freshly turned earth</p>		
FORM & PERSONALITY		
1 <b>Swirling cyclone</b> , erratic and wild.		
2 <b>Floating cloud</b> , serene and evasive.		
3 <b>Tornado</b> , furious and unstoppable.		
4 <b>Dust devil</b> , sneaky and persistent.		
5 <b>Gusty winds</b> , playful and mischievous.		
6 <b>Zephyr</b> , kind but undependable.		

ELEMENTAL, FIRE		BRUTE
BLAZING RED	BURNT GOLD	MOLTEN ORANGE
Constantly shifting infernos that consume everything in their path. They blaze with insatiable hunger, leaving behind smoldering ash and molten ruin.		
* Blazing aura	● FLAME LASH	
* Insatiable hunger	● MELT METALS	
* Speech	● SUMMON FIRELINGS	
<p><b>Wants</b> to consume and move on.</p> <p><b>Doesn't want</b> to let embers die out.</p>		
<p>☉ roiling mass, flickering edges, glowing embers</p> <p>☪ crackle and pop, roaring, hum of molten metals</p> <p>☁ sulfur, brimstone, smoke, char, tang of metals</p>		
IGNITION & PERSONALITY		
1 <b>Lightning strike</b> , violent and ephemeral.		
2 <b>Ritual flame</b> , sacred and commanding.		
3 <b>Forge fire</b> , controlled and powerful.		
4 <b>Coal embers</b> , patient and smoldering.		
5 <b>Wildfire</b> , ravenous and unrestrained.		
6 <b>Funeral pyre</b> , solemn and determined.		

ELEMENTAL, EARTH		BRUTE
MOSSY GREEN	ROCKY BROWN	STONE GRAY
Massive, rock-like creatures embodying the raw strength of the earth. They're slow but nearly unstoppable, lumbering through anything in their way.		
* Rock-solid	● EARTHQUAKE	
* Tremor sense	● STONE SPIRES	
* Speech	● BOULDER TOSS	
<p><b>Wants</b> to endure beyond time.</p> <p><b>Doesn't want</b> for its form to be chipped away.</p>		
<p>☉ ground trembling, boulders rolling, spikes of stone</p> <p>☪ rumbling groans, deafening crack of rocks, thumps</p> <p>☁ loamy disturbed soil, moss, wet stone, mineral tang</p>		
BIOME & PERSONALITY		
1 <b>Forest</b> , rooted and protective.		
2 <b>Badlands</b> , harsh and unforgiving.		
3 <b>Mountains</b> , proud and resilient.		
4 <b>Caves</b> , brooding and watchful.		
5 <b>Mudflats</b> , slow but determined.		
6 <b>Grasslands</b> , patient and enduring.		

ELEMENTAL, WATER		BLASTER
OCEAN BLUE	WAVECREST WHITE	SEAFOAM GREEN
Fluid, amorphous entities resembling a wave or torrent. They represent the relentless and ever-changing nature of water, adaptable and hard to contain.		
* Turbulent shape	● UNDERTOW	
* Rushing flow	● SURGE	
* Speech	● WHIRPOOL	
<p><b>Wants</b> to flow along channels towards growth.</p> <p><b>Doesn't want</b> to lose touch with the ground.</p>		
<p>☉ crashing waters, churning currents, glistening tendrils</p> <p>☪ roar of waves, splashing, sloshing, bubbling, gurgling</p> <p>☁ briny ocean, soaked soil, sharp freshwater</p>		
WATER SOURCE & PERSONALITY		
1 <b>Tidal pool</b> , playful and fickle.		
2 <b>Raging rapids</b> , relentless and reckless.		
3 <b>Murky swamp</b> , deceptive and suffocating.		
4 <b>Rain</b> , gentle and melancholic.		
5 <b>Geyser</b> , frustrated and volatile.		
6 <b>Oasis</b> , welcoming and mysterious.		

# ETTIN

BRUTE

FLESHY GRAY

DARK LEATHER

ASHEN WHITE

Towering, two-headed figure with mismatched weapons. They lumber through the wilderness, both heads bickering endlessly about trivial matters.

## TWO HEADS ARE WORSE THAN ONE

To pass an ettin without a fight, you'll need to persuade both heads. Remember, they're dim and don't get along.

- \* Constantly bickering
- \* Clumsy stride
- \* Speech
- SWING WEAPONS
- HEADBUTTS
- DUAL SHOUTING

### 4d | STONEVOICE

- \* calm, rational
- \* seeks a good chat
- \* reacts to wordplay

### 6d | GOREBARK

- \* aggressive, loud
- \* seeks violence
- \* reacts to weakness

**Wants** simple pleasures both heads can agree on.

**Doesn't want** to do anything that requires precision.

### 6d | RUNEJAW

- \* cryptic, curious
- \* seeks to prophesize
- \* reacts to symbolism

### 6d | GOLDMAW

- \* sharp, greedy
- \* seeks material gain
- \* reacts to rare goods

- ☞ chaotic movements, dragging feet, frustrated glaring
- ☞ constant bickering, clumsy thuds, mismatched words
- ☞ sweaty musk, animal hides, unkempt hair

### UNLIKELY PROTECTOR OF...

- 1 **Three old witches**, who use it as a bodyguard.
- 2 **Ragtag group of orphans** that saved it.
- 3 **Goblins**, because they worship it as a god.
- 4 **Hamlet** of farmers, who feed it.
- 5 **Wandering circus**, using it as a bouncer.
- 6 **Hermit**, friends with both heads.

### 4d | HOOTFANG

- \* flamboyant, selfish
- \* seeks real praise
- \* reacts to boredom

### 8d | FOULHORN

- \* quiet, manipulative
- \* seeks to swindle
- \* reacts to confusion

# ETTERCAP

TACTICIAN

SPIDER GRAY

VENOM PURPLE

FOREST GREEN

Hunched, two-legged spider-like creature with web-spinning claws. They lurk within a maze of webbed traps and often control huge spider colonies.

## MASTERS OF THEIR WEBBED DOMAIN

The ettercap has enmeshed its lair in silken traps and shepherds a vast colony of monstrous spiders. It can detect even the faintest disturbance across the webbed expanse.

- \* Clever silk traps
- \* Clings to walls
- \* Speech (rarely)
- SLING WEBBING
- VENOMOUS BITE
- WEB SKITTER

**Wants** to never face danger directly.

**Doesn't want** for its hard work webbing to be destroyed.

- ☞ webs between trees, struggling victims, shiny fangs
- ☞ faint skitter of legs, whirr of web-spinning
- ☞ rotting wood, wet earth, decaying bodies

### WEBBED DOMAINS

- 1 **Bramble patch**, every inch covered in webs.
- 2 Long, narrow, winding **canyons**.
- 3 Massive, abandoned **library** in the capital.
- 4 **Granaries** abandoned during the famine.
- 5 Derelict **shipwreck**, sails webbed over.
- 6 Sunken **pitfall** in the middle of the woods.

### 4d | ALARM STRANDS

- \* nearly invisible

### 4d | HOLDING TRAPS

- \* incredibly sticky

### ● STARTLED SPIDER

### ● ANOTHER VICTIM

### ● ENSNARING PULL

### ● TANGLING WEBS

### 4d | DEADLY TRAPS

- \* serrated webbing

### 4d | COCOONS

- \* wriggling victims

### ● NECK SLICE

### ● CONSTRICTING WEB

### ● DESPERATE PLEAS

### ● HORRIFIC FEASTING

### 8d | SPIDER NEST

- \* rabbit-sized spiders

### 6d | ETTERCAP

- \* can appear anytime

### ● SPLIT UP PREY

### ● BITING FRENZY

### ● LETHAL BITE

### ● FLEE TO SAFETY

FEY, DRYAD		PROTECTOR
MOSSY GREEN	BARK BROWN	FOREST GREEN
<p>Mystical tree spirits that embody the essence of a specific tree, guarding it and the surrounding grove. They are fiercely protective of their home.</p>		
* Melds with trees	⊙ ENTANGLING ROOTS	
* One with nature	⊙ CHARM PERSON	
* Speech	⊙ BLOSSOMING BURST	
<p><b>Wants</b> to welcome those with good intentions.  <b>Doesn't want</b> any form of unnatural change.</p>		
<p>👁️ twisting vines, blooming flowers, swirling leaves            🗣️ soft rustling, melodic birdsong, crackle of twigs            🌿 earthy scent, woody aroma, crisp fresh leaves</p>		
ARBOREAL LINEAGE		
1 <i>Weeping willow</i> , shy but playful.		
2 <i>Oak</i> , stern and steadfast.		
3 <i>Maple</i> , sweet and protective.		
4 <i>Ash</i> , resilient and wise.		
5 <i>Elm</i> , mournful but warm-hearted.		
6 <i>Yew</i> , resilient and vengeful.		

FEY, REDCAP		SKIRMISHER
BLOOD RED	AGED LEATHER	THICKEST GREEN
<p>Malicious, bloodthirsty creatures with a blood-red cap, driven by violence and a love for carnage. They often manifest near murder sites.</p>		
* Bloodlust	⊙ SCYTHE SLASH	
* Grim cackling	⊙ BLOOD FRENZY	
* Speech	⊙ MAKE SKIN CRAWL	
<p><b>Wants</b> its hat to never fully dry.  <b>Doesn't want</b> to be shown its own weaknesses.</p>		
<p>👁️ bloodshot eyes, malevolent grin, shiny scythe            🗣️ sharp shing of a scythe, cackling laughter            🌿 thick coppery scent of fresh blood like a fog</p>		
WARBAND BOSSES		
1 <i>Goretooth</i> , feared even by its kin.		
2 <i>Bloodsoak</i> , who bathes in blood.		
3 <i>Rotfoot</i> , who would rule the fey.		
4 <i>Nocap</i> , the hatless one.		
5 <i>Redeyes</i> , born of a murder most foul.		
6 <i>Feybane</i> , who is called betrayer.		

FEY, FAERY		TRICKSTER
PETAL PINK	SOFT LAVENDER	PALE BLUE
<p>Tiny, winged creatures with a mischievous nature. They flit through meadows, casting illusions and playing tricks on wanderers for their own amusement.</p>		
* Swarm together	⊙ FAIRY DUST	
* Invisibility at-will	⊙ DAZZLING LIGHTS	
* Speech	⊙ MINOR ILLUSIONS	
<p><b>Wants</b> to play mostly harmless tricks on mortals.  <b>Doesn't want</b> to be anywhere near iron.</p>		
<p>👁️ glittering trails, darting figures, fleeting glimpses            🗣️ airy giggling, fluttering of tiny wings, melodic chimes            🌿 delicate nectar, lavender and jasmine, sugary aroma</p>		
FAIRY CIRCLES		
1 <i>Mushrooms</i> glowing faintly in the dusk.		
2 <i>Ring of sunflowers</i> in a grassy field.		
3 <i>Fallen leaves</i> after a rain.		
4 <i>Precarious pebble</i> towers, defying gravity.		
5 <i>Dancing fireflies</i> in a glowing spiral.		
6 <i>Ring of acorns</i> around a sapling.		

FEY, SATYR		BRUTE
EARTHY BROWN	AUTUMN TAWNY	GRASSY GREEN
<p>Merry, goat-legged tricksters with a love for wine, music, and revelry. They invite wanderers into their revelry, at times with a sense of maliciousness.</p>		
* Revelrous spirit	⊙ PAN PIPES	
* Enchanting tunes	⊙ HEADBUTT	
* Speech	⊙ JEERING CALLS	
<p><b>Wants</b> to loosen mortal ties.  <b>Doesn't want</b> mortals to try to resist its invitations.</p>		
<p>👁️ travelers into the woods, playfully malicious grin            🗣️ hypnotic melody of panpipes, dancing and revelry            🌿 rich scent of wine, wild berries, lingering sweetness</p>		
CONTESTS & REWARDS		
1 singing	1 rare liquor	
2 dance-off	2 gold key to nothing	
3 eating pies	3 deed to an inn	
4 duel of wits	4 curse to give someone	
5 tug-of-war	5 black eye	
6 archery	6 half a treasure map	

## GARGOYLE

PROTECTOR

STONE GRAY    ASH BLACK    MOSSY GREEN

Winged stone-like creatures that masquerade as part of buildings, serving as guardians. They can remain motionless for years until intruders approach.

- \* Stone camouflage    ● JUMP SCARE
- \* Eternal vigilance    ● SNATCH AND FLY
- \* Speech    ● STONE TALONS

**Wants** to let intruders go past the point of no return.  
**Doesn't want** to outlive its duty.

- 👁 nothing of interest, wings unfurling, eyes opening
- 👂 slow scrape of stone, soft whoosh of wings, heavy thud
- 👃 dusty earth, ancient stone, tang of rainwater

### ODD WARDS

- 1 **Door** that must remain opened.
- 2 **Throne** meant for a fallen king.
- 3 **Gate** that seemingly leads nowhere.
- 4 **Altar** long without its god.
- 5 **Bell tower**, never once chimed.
- 6 **Empty stepwell**, its community now dust.

GIANTS FOUND ON PAGE XX.

## GENIE

BLASTER

BURNISHED GOLD    SAPPHIRE BLUE    MYSTIC PURPLE

Powerful elemental spirits that command the forces of nature. They grant wishes, but often twist them to serve mysterious and unpredictable ends.

- \* Elemental mastery    ● TWISTED WISH
- \* Regal confidence    ● COMMAND ELEMENT
- \* Speech    ● WHIRLWIND

**Wants** its wishes to teach mortals a lesson.  
**Doesn't want** to be bound or controlled.

- 👁 flowing robes, runes and symbols etched in the air
- 👂 ethereal hum, whoosh of wind, crackle of magic
- 👃 crisp air, lingering jasmine and lotus, alluring spice

### GENIE TWISTS

- 1 Tries to **destroy itself** with the wish.
- 2 Tries too hard to **improve** the wish.
- 3 Makes the wish somehow achieve the **opposite**.
- 4 **Mishears**, changing one letter in the wish.
- 5 **Splits** the wish around unevenly.
- 6 **Can't** actually grant wishes, but will not admit it.

## GELATINOUS CUBE

BRUTE

ACIDIC GREEN    TRANSLUCENT BLUE    PALE LIME

Transparent, jelly-like masses big enough to fill the dungeon halls they slide through. They engulf anything they touch and dissolve it with acidic digestion.

- \* Nearly invisible    ● ABSORB PREY
- \* Very slow    ● CORROSIVE SPLASH
- QUICK DISSOLVE

**Wants** to keep moving forward.  
**Doesn't want** tenacious objects lingering inside it.

- 👁 faint shimmer, half-dissolved items suspended in air
- 👂 wet sloshing, soft acidic hiss, unsettling gurgling
- 👃 sour odor of acid, stinging scent of corroded metal

### ABERRATIONS

- 1 Hollow center filled with **flaming, sloshing gel**.
- 2 Charged with **crackling** electric arcs.
- 3 Constantly shifting in **prismatic** colors.
- 4 Packed with **razor-sharp** hunks of metal.
- 5 **Swarm** of dice-sized cubes.
- 6 Impossibly dense, slow, and **indestructible**.

## GIBBERING MOUTHER

BRUTE

PALE FLESH    MEATY RED    FLESHY PINK

Writhing masses of eyes and mouths, constantly babbling incoherently. They confuse and madden foes with the chaotic sounds and frenzied mayhem.

- \* Maddening babble    ● BLINDING SPITTLE
- \* Chaotic form    ● MIND HAZE
- SWALLOW WHOLE

**Wants** to add more eyes and mouths to itself.  
**Doesn't want** for its gibberish to be understood.

- 👁 droplets of saliva, bits of meat, bubbling flesh
- 👂 slurping, high-pitched screeches, moans, laughter
- 👃 sour odor of bile and rot, viscera, rancid meat

### VOICES IN THE CHAOS

- 1 **Familiar voices** calling your name.
- 2 **Fragments** of broken promises.
- 3 **Pleas** for help and forgiveness.
- 4 **Mocking tones** from an old enemy.
- 5 **Chants** from forgotten rituals.
- 6 **Your own voice**, screaming your thoughts.

GOLEM		BRUTE
CLAY BROWN	IRON RUST	STONE GRAY
Magically animated constructs forged from various materials. They fulfill their creator's commands with unwavering obedience.		
* Unyielding	● SMASHING FISTS	
* Immune to magic	● BOOMING STOMPS	
	● MINDLESS CHARGE	
<b>Wants</b> to obey its creator's commands to the exact letter. <b>Doesn't want</b> to be uncertain of what to do.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>👁 lumbering form, carved runes, glowing cracks</li> <li>👂 grinding joints, hollow thuds, faint buzz of magic</li> <li>👃 overwhelming scent of the material it was made of</li> </ul>		
GOLEM CONSTRUCTION		
1 <b>Clay</b> , with a malleable form.		
2 <b>Iron</b> , with a strong magnetic pull.		
3 <b>Crystal</b> , refracting light into dazzling shards.		
4 <b>Jade</b> , with a mind and will of its own.		
5 <b>Flesh</b> , forming tiny flesh or blood golems if cut.		
6 <b>Wood</b> , regrowing damaged parts quickly.		

GRICK		LURKER
SLATE GRAY	MAUVE GRAY	DARK OLIVE
Slithering, worm-like creatures with hooked tentacles and a beak. They hide in dark caverns, taking great care to ambush prey with precise strikes.		
* Rocky camouflage	● TENTACLE SWIPE	
* Extended reach	● BEAK SNAP	
	● HASTY RETREAT	
<b>Wants</b> to leave no trace of its hunt. <b>Doesn't want</b> to miss a chance at a meal.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>👁 squirming tentacles, intense gaze, faint movement</li> <li>👂 soft slithering, faint clicking, sudden snapping</li> <li>👃 musty earth, damp rock, faintly fishy scent</li> </ul>		
SIDE EFFECTS OF MAGICAL EXPERIMENTATION		
1 Cloaks the whole area in <b>darkness</b> .		
2 Bursts into <b>blinding light</b> when it strikes.		
3 Releases a cloud of <b>sleep gas</b> when struck.		
4 Lets out shrill, echoing <b>whistles</b> .		
5 Absorbs all sound into <b>utter silence</b> .		
6 Tentacles <b>stretch</b> three times normal length.		

GORGON		BRUTE
METALLIC GRAY	BRONZE HIGHLIGHTS	GASEOUS GREEN
Metal-plated bulls that snort out a cloud of petrifying gas. They charge through it and shatter the stone victim into a thousand pieces.		
* Thick metallic hide	● PETRIFYING BREATH	
	● BULL RUSH	
	● HORN TOSS	
<b>Wants</b> to charge anything that dares confront it. <b>Doesn't want</b> flashy distractions.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>👁 serpentine eyes, gas tendrils seeping from nostrils</li> <li>👂 sliding metal plates, mechanical snorts, hiss of steam</li> <li>👃 heavy metallic odor, slight staleness in the air</li> </ul>		
METALLIC VARIATION		
1 <b>Titanium</b> , light and incredibly fast.		
2 <b>Lead</b> , slow but nearly indestructible.		
3 <b>Steel</b> , covered in sharp spikes.		
4 <b>Silver</b> , blindingly reflecting light.		
5 <b>Brass</b> , emitting an unsettling hum.		
6 <b>Bronze</b> , resisting all magic.		

GRIFFON		PREDATOR
LION GOLD	FEATHERY WHITE	STORMY BLUE
Majestic creatures with the body of a lion and the wings of an eagle. They're fierce predators and highly territorial, often nesting on high mountain peaks.		
* Keen watch	● WARNING WHOOSH	
* Wild majesty	● BEAK SNAP	
	● RESONANT SCREECH	
<b>Wants</b> for its screeches to warn intruders away. <b>Doesn't want</b> any threat at all to its kin.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>👁 majestic soaring, flash of golden fur, knowing eyes</li> <li>👂 beak snap, flutter of feathers, scratching the ground</li> <li>👃 crisp mountain air, faint scent of wild prey</li> </ul>		
PEOPLE IT TERRORIZES		
1 <b>Satyrs</b> , drawn by their celebrations.		
2 <b>Hags</b> , which it hunts for sport.		
3 <b>Shepherds</b> , raiding their flocks.		
4 <b>Merchant caravans</b> , curious about their carts.		
5 <b>Hunters</b> , in revenge for killing kin.		
6 <b>Bandits</b> , scaring them out of its lands.		

## GIANT, FIRE

LURKER

BURNT EMBER

FIERY RED

COAL BLACK

Ironclad tyrants of flame and forge, valuing order and dominance above all. They shape kingdoms through fire, steel, and unyielding will.

- \* Magma-blooded
- \* Blazing aura
- **FLAMING HAMMER**
- **HURL MAGMA**
- **BLAZE WAVE**

**Wants** to haul plunder back to its volcanic fortress.  
**Doesn't want** to cross bodies of water.

- 👁️ huge swathes of scorched earth, trails of magma
- 🔊 roaring crackle, whoosh of fire, rumble of lava
- 👃 stifling smoky odor, charred earth, scorched stone

### SEAT OF POWER

- |                         |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 charred stone bastion | 1 island in a lava river   |
| 2 grand obsidian spire  | 2 sheer volcanic cliffside |
| 3 ash-choked estate     | 3 billowing caldera rim    |
| 4 steamy sulfur baths   | 4 center of a vast plain   |
| 5 basalt cathedral      | 5 beneath magma-falls      |
| 6 clanging forgeworks   | 6 sulfuric cave system     |

### DOUSE THE FLAMES OF WAR

You've reached the volcanic lair of the fire giant, bent on unleashing fire and war with its devil allies.

#### 8d | HEAD & MAGIC

- **COLLAPSE TUNNELS**
- **OFFER ALLIANCE**
- **SUMMON DEVILS**

#### 8d | BODY & PROWESS

- \* thick armor
- \* fiery spear
- **SPEAR SWEEP**
- **FOOT STOMP**
- **GRAB & THROW**

#### VOLCANIC LAIR

**FEATURES** lava pits, choking sulfuric clouds  
**THREATS** 6d Spew Magma

- 6d Firelings (mook blasters)
- 3 Hellhounds (tough brutes)
- 4d | Fire Elemental (elite blaster)

## GIANT, FROST

LURKER

ICY BLUE

FROSTY GRAY

STONE GRAY

Brutal lords of ice and stone, honoring strength and tradition above all. They seek to prove themselves worthy of the harsh, unforgiving frozen wastes.

- \* Icy footsteps
- \* Slowness aura
- \* Speech
- **FROST BREATH**
- **SUMMON BLIZZARD**
- **FROZEN HAMMER**

**Wants** to rule the sweeping vistas of the tundra.  
**Doesn't want** to feel the cold seep from its bones.

- 👁️ massive hanging icicles, clouds of snowflakes
- 🔊 crack of freezing, howling icy winds, crunch of frost
- 👃 biting cold, frigid air, pine trees, fresh snow

### UNEXPECTED LOCATIONS

- 1 Entire tower built around it, keeping it frozen.
- 2 Steps through a portal and onto a sandy beach.
- 3 Riding on a floating iceberg towards a port city.
- 4 In a grand wizard's laboratory.
- 5 Emerging from a bizarre mid-spring blizzard.
- 6 Tied down in the middle of a vast desert.

### BREAK THE EVERFROST CURSE

You see the palace ahead, but the ice starts cracking beneath you and you hear crystals shattering overhead.

#### OUTER COURTYARD

**FEATURES** cracked ice pillars and statues  
4d Iceling (mook swarmer)  
8d | Remorhaz (elite predator)

#### ICY HALLS

**FEATURES** labyrinthine halls  
**THREATS** 4d Terrifying Howling  
6d Winter Wolves (tough predators)  
6d | Dire Winter Wolf (elite tactician)

#### FROZEN THRONE ROOM

**FEATURES** intensely cold  
**THREATS** 4d Falling Icicles  
3 Ice Trolls (tough brutes)  
6d Air Elementals (elite blasters)  
8d + 8d | Frost Giant (boss blaster)

## GIANT, HILL

BRUTE

DUSTY TAN

EARTHY BROWN

MUDDY GREEN

Massive, dim-witted gluttons with big bellies and bulging muscles. They crush and consume all in their path, living only for the next feast.

- \* Bottomless appetite    ● SMASH IT
- \* Too dumb to trick        ● THROW IT
- \* Speech (limited)         ● EAT IT

**Wants** to force weaker creatures to bring it food.  
**Doesn't want** to be confronted with logic and reason.

- 👁 bulging muscles, bloated belly, ragged clothes
- 👂 guttural burps, dumb chuckles, heavy breathing
- 👃 overpowering stench of sweat, sour rotting food

### QUIRKS

- 1 Always brewing up a **brand new stew**.
- 2 **Hoards** small, shiny objects—like mirrors.
- 3 Roams with a large pack of **stray dogs**.
- 4 Exceptionally **rotund**, even for a hill giant.
- 5 Extremely **short**, for a hill giant.
- 6 Thinks even the slightest odd thing is **hilarious**.

### BRUTE DIPLOMACY

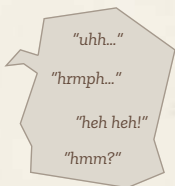
The Hill Giant has what you need, but you'd rather not fight. Convincing it, though, may be even harder.

#### 4d | THE BASIC CONCEPT

\* hates big words

- SCRATCHES HEAD
- REPEATS WRONGLY
- LOSES TRACK

✗ 4d Gets Cranky



#### 6d | WHAT IT WANTS

- WANTS TOO MUCH
- BELLY RUMBLES
- WANTS PROOF

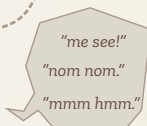
✗ Mention food



#### 6d | SEALING THE DEAL

- SUDDEN "GOOD" IDEA
- CHANGES THE DEAL
- REPEATS THE OBVIOUS

✗ Fickle (roll a grim)



## GIANT, STORM

BLASTER

ELECTRIC BLUE

CLOUDY SKY

STORMY GRAY

Regal rulers of sea and sky, embodying wisdom and natural order. They summon storms to enforce balance, driven to maintain the world's harmony.

- \* Crackling aura            ● THUNDERBOLT
- \* Commanding presence ● THUNDERCLAP
- \* Speech                     ● SUMMON STORM

**Wants** to enforce what it sees as the natural order.  
**Doesn't want** to see established order devolve into chaos.

- 👁 crackling arcs of lightning, regal figure on the horizon
- 👂 deafening boom, wind rushing, building static hum
- 👃 electrified air, rain-soaked earth, wet stone

### ARRIVES ALONGSIDE...

- 1 **Hurricane**, sweeping away defiance.
- 2 **Twin tornadoes**, ripping apart the unrepentant.
- 3 **Hailstorm**, battering the guilty into confession.
- 4 **Lightning storm**, searing away deceit.
- 5 **Torrential downpour**, washing away corruption.
- 6 **Waterspouts**, dragging wrongdoers to judgment.

### STORM OF THE CENTURY

The ritual complete, the king thought he had saved the city from famine—but he had defied nature's will.

#### 8d + 8d | TWIN TORNADES

- RIP THROUGH TOWN
- DEBRIS BARRAGE

#### 8d | HEAD & MAGIC

- ARCANE STATIC
- SUMMON ELEMENTALS
- SHEET LIGHTNING

#### 8d | BODY & PROWESS

- KICK OVER WALL
- THROW CASTLE TURRET
- SHAKE OFF CLIMBERS

✗ The king dies

**HAG, NIGHT**

TRICKSTER

MIDNIGHT BLUE SHADOW BLACK DEEP PURPLE

Sinister figures that embody nightmares, manipulating dreams to terrorize mortals. They're devious and deal in dark bargains.

- \* Was in your dreams    **○ NIGHTMARES**
- \* Shadowy teleport      **○ PHANTASMAL FORM**
- \* Speech                    **○ EERIE WHISPER**

**Wants** to explore the true depths of your fears.

**Doesn't want** to have its own fears exposed.

- ☉ shrouded in shadows, trail of purple mist
- ☾ eerie whispers, fluttering cloak, creak of unseen steps
- ☼ cool night air, hint of aged leather

**NIGHT SPELL CRUCIBLE (Make 3 spells)**

1 shrouded	1 gloom
2 shivering	2 touch
3 whispering	3 glimmer
4 muted	4 aura
5 bleak	5 breath
6 eerie	6 moan

**HAG, SEA**

TACTICIAN

SEAWEED GREEN DARK DRIFTWOOD SEA BLUE

Grotesque sea-dwellers whose gaze inspires terror. They lurk in coastal caves, cursing sailors and reveling in the fearful cries of the drowning.

- \* Knows your sins        **○ HIDEOUS GAZE**
- \* Watery teleport        **○ DROWNING CURSE**
- \* Speech                    **○ CALL CREATURES**

**Wants** to collect souls lost to the depths of the seas.

**Doesn't want** someone to make their fortune on the seas.

- ☉ slimy skin, kelp entangled hair, glassy eyes
- ☾ waves crashing, soft gurgles, echoing calls
- ☼ saltwater, fish rot, briny scent of seaweed

**SEA SPELL CRUCIBLE (Make 3 spells)**

1 swelling	1 shanty
2 rippling	2 groan
3 gurgling	3 grip
4 foamy	4 ebb
5 surging	5 wave
6 salty	6 current

**HAG, STORM**

BLASTER

ELECTRIC BLUE RAINY TEAL STORMY GRAY

Fierce figures that roam coastal cliffs, summoning winds and lightning. They unleash their wrath on settlements, making sure none grow too comfortable.

- \* Always stormy        **○ CONJURE TEMPESTS**
- \* Windrider              **○ LIGHTNING STRIKE**
- \* Speech                    **○ THUNDER BOOM**

**Wants** to wreak havoc where stability prevails.

**Doesn't want** the calm center of its own fury revealed.

- ☉ dark clouds swirling, crackling electricity
- ☾ howling winds, crackle of lightning, roaring thunder
- ☼ rain-soaked air, faint scent of wet earth

**STORM SPELL CRUCIBLE (Make 3 spells)**

1 tattered	1 torrent
2 crackling	2 clap
3 biting	3 arc
4 howling	4 boom
5 thunderous	5 flash
6 surging	6 chant

**HAG, SWAMP**

TRICKSTER

BOG GREEN DANK MOSS PEAT BROWN

Wicked figures lurking in fetid bogs, weaving illusions to torment travelers. They spread decay and poison with sadistic glee.

- \* Swampy camouflage    **○ ILLUSIONS**
- \* Decaying touch        **○ TOXIC CLOUD**
- \* Speech                    **○ ENSNARING VINES**

**Wants** to let the creatures of the swamp do all the work.

**Doesn't want** its swamp becoming someone's shortcut.

- ☉ gnarled branches, hanging moss, buzzing flies
- ☾ creaking of trees, croak of swamp creatures, cackling
- ☼ decaying leaves, putrid water, mud

**SWAMP SPELL CRUCIBLE (Make 3 spells)**

1 squelching	1 mire
2 oozing	2 leech
3 reeking	3 smother
4 rotting	4 swallow
5 sinking	5 pull
6 writhing	6 cloud

HELL HOUND		PREDATOR
EMBER RED	COAL BLACK	CHARCOAL GRAY
Fiery, vicious hounds with glowing eyes and smelling of brimstone. They hunt in packs and track down souls marked for damnation.		
* Pack hunter	● FLAME BREATH	
* Fiery tracks	● HOWLING CALL	
* Understands language	● WARNING GROWL	
<b>Wants</b> to make the guilty pay.		
<b>Doesn't want</b> being forced out into the stinging rains.		
☞ smoking nostrils, singed grass, bed of ashes		
☞ deep growls, crackling flames, claws scraping stone		
☞ sulfur and brimstone, charred flesh		
CALL TO HUNT		
1 Pursuing souls marked by <b>broken oaths</b> .		
2 Stalking souls <b>escaped</b> from the underworld.		
3 Hunting traitors who <b>betrayed</b> their own kin.		
4 Tracking those who spilled <b>innocent blood</b> .		
5 Hounding those who <b>flee from justice</b> .		
6 Wrongly on the trail of the <b>completely innocent</b> .		

HIPPOGRIFF		PROTECTOR
CHESTNUT BROWN	SOFT IVORY	GOLDEN TAWNY
Noble creatures with the body of a horse and wings of an eagle. They soar over plains and mountains, loyal and protective to those who earn their trust.		
* Noble presence	● TALON STRIKE	
* Elegant speed	● BEAK SNAP	
	● TAKE FLIGHT	
<b>Wants</b> for its young to grow strong and wild.		
<b>Doesn't want</b> those who confront others with aggression.		
☞ majestic wings, sharp beak, talons gripping the earth		
☞ rush of wind, shrill cries, gallop of hooves		
☞ earthy scent of open fields, fresh mountain air		
CHOSEN RIDERS		
1 <b>Legendary thief</b> who helped it escape.		
2 <b>Outcast noble</b> seeking redemption.		
3 <b>Ranger</b> who patrols distant borders.		
4 <b>Wicked hag</b> that it thinks is a hero.		
5 <b>Normal farmer</b> that it was raised by.		
6 <b>Gnoll</b> that nursed it back to health.		

HYDRA		BRUTE
MARSH GREEN	DUSKY BLUE	RUSTY RED
Massive, reptilian beasts with multiple heads that can regrow when severed, making them almost impossible to kill. They lurk in swamps and dark waters.		
* Incredibly vigilant	● PULL ARMS & LEGS	
* Regenerating heads	● FRENZIED BITING	
	● REGROW HEAD NOW	
<b>Wants</b> to keep threats in front of it.		
<b>Doesn't want</b> anything ever touching its body.		
☞ wide-open jaws, glistening scales		
☞ hissing, splash of water, snapping of giant jaws		
☞ rotting vegetation, stagnant muck water		
UNIQUE HEAD REGROWTHS		
1 <b>Sludge head</b> , which spews a poisonous fog.		
2 <b>Only the skull</b> , filled with necrotic energy.		
3 <b>Eyeless head</b> , which can read minds.		
4 <b>Beautiful head</b> with a hypnotic singsong.		
5 <b>Horned head</b> that can ram with force.		
6 The cut head rolls away to form a <b>new hydra</b> .		
<b>SEVERANCE PAY</b>		
A wizard's offering good coin for the heads of a hydra, each the size of a big soup pot. He swears he can brew the perfect regeneration potion—with some trial and error.		
2d   FIRST HEAD	2d   SECOND HEAD	
* protects the body	* protects the body	
* 3d Regrow Head	* 3d Regrow Head	
2d   THIRD HEAD	2d   FOURTH HEAD	
* protects the body	* protects the body	
* 3d Regrow Head	* 3d Regrow Head	
8d   BODY		
* mostly submerged		
2d   FIFTH HEAD		
* watches behind		
* 3d Regrow Head		

## LAMIA

TRICKSTER

DARK JADE

DESERT BROWN

SANDY GOLD

Decadent, lion-bodied enchantresses that lure victims with charm and illusion, seeking to corrupt and control them. They're driven by hedonistic desires.

- \* Graceful agility
- \* Illusory person form
- \* Speech
- **CURSED TOUCH**
- **ILLUSIONS**
- **ENCHANTMENT**

**Wants** to gather secrets and amusement from its victims.  
**Doesn't want** to think about the nature of its existence.

- 👁 golden adornments, graceful silhouette, soft ripples
- 👂 seductive laughter, sand rustling, chants on the wind
- 👃 desert breeze, faint jasmine, spicy myrrh

### FALSE RENOWN

- 1 **Whispers** that prophecies fall from their lips.
- 2 **Claimed** to show past secrets through dreams.
- 3 **Rumored** to bind with honeyed promises.
- 4 **Fabled** to recall lost souls from death's grasp.
- 5 **Promised** to reveal one's deepest purpose.
- 6 **Songs** tell of dreams woven into reality.

## MEDUSA

TRICKSTER

VIPER GREEN

BRONZE GOLD

ANCIENT STONE

Cursed figures with serpentine hair and a gaze that turns onlookers into stone. They hide in ancient ruins, haunted by past sorrow and bitterness.

- \* Vigilant serpent hair
- \* Unnatural beauty
- \* Speech
- **PETRIFYING GAZE**
- **SNAKE HAIR STRIKE**
- **HYPNOTIC CHARM**

**Wants** for you to just go away.  
**Doesn't want** to be reminded of its past.

- 👁 writhing serpent hair, statues of victims, angry eyes
- 👂 soft hissing, vengeful muttering, sudden snap of scales
- 👃 ancient rot, moss-covered stone, stagnant air

### CURSE ORIGINS

- 1 **Vanity**, punished by a mirror that never reflects.
- 2 **Lies**, broke a promise made in desperation
- 3 **Greed**, forced to forever protect the relic it stole.
- 4 **Paranoia**, having been betrayed countless times.
- 5 **Jealousy**, spawned from unfulfilled longing.
- 6 **Hubris**, having believed itself above the gods.

## MANTICORE

MARKSMAN

BURNT BROWN

DESERT OCHRE

DUSTY DAWN

Fierce beasts with a feline body and spiked tail. They prowl deserts and plains, driving prey into flight then pelting them with volleys of deadly tail spikes.

- \* Barbed hide
- \* Cautious
- \* Speech (crude)
- **CRUEL WORDS**
- **SPIKE VOLLEY**
- **TERRIFYING ROAR**

**Wants** to scare its prey into fleeing for an easy kill.  
**Doesn't want** to let fleeing prey get away.

- 👁 spikes in trees, dust clouds, long blood trails
- 👂 guttural roars, sharp cracking of spikes landing
- 👃 dry fur, acrid dust, musky feline scent

### SYMBIOTIC PAIRINGS

- 1 **Wyvern**, hunts down injured prey.
- 2 **Hill giant**, makes for a comfortable bed.
- 3 **Basilisk**, waits to petrify escaping targets.
- 4 **Minotaur**, lets it lair in the labyrinth.
- 5 **Chimera**, a tense hunting pact.
- 6 **Underscourge**, follows along from below.

## MIMIC

LURKER

CORRUPTED PURPLE

IRON BLACK

AGED OAK

Shapeshifting creature that disguises itself as objects to lure prey. They stretch to devour victims in one gulp, springing to life when a meal is assured.

- \* Shapeshifter
- \* Adhesive touch
- \* Understands language
- **RAISE CURIOSITY**
- **DEFLECT SUSPICION**
- **SWALLOW WHOLE**

**Wants** to be carried to places with tastier meals.  
**Doesn't want** to turn into the same thing twice.

- 👁 shifting surfaces like melting wax, texture rippling
- 👂 sticky slurps, sudden snaps, creaking of pressure
- 👃 sour decay of old adhesive, whiffs of trapped air

### OBJECT FORMS

- 1 **Simple**, like a barrel, rug, or bookshelf.
- 2 **Tricky**, like a door, book, or cupboard.
- 3 **Inviting**, like a plush chair, bed, or vanity table.
- 4 **Horrific**, like a doll, mask, or coffin.
- 5 **Nostalgic**, like a children's toy, old hat, or lute.
- 6 **Necessary**, like a toilet, staircase, or well.

MINOTAUR		BRUTE
DARK LEATHER	BULL BROWN	BESTIAL RED
Towering, bull-headed figures that guard labyrinths. They relentlessly stalk its passages, charging with savage force at the first sign of intruders.		
* Thick hide	⊙ MAZE AMBUSH	
* Labyrinth sense	⊙ BULL SNORTS	
* Speech	⊙ HORN TOSS	
<b>Wants</b> victims to enter its maze, to satisfy its bloodlust.		
<b>Doesn't want</b> to feel the sting of solitude yet again.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>👁 bulging muscles, hooves kicking up dust</li> <li>👂 angry snorts, thud of cloven hooves on stone</li> <li>👃 earthy musk, old blood and sweat</li> </ul>		
LABYRINTH LAYOUTS		
1 Intricate sewer system of the ancient capital.		
2 Thorn-choked paths hiding mischievous fey.		
3 Tunnels of a sea cave, half-filled with water.		
4 Stone paths lined with fragile mirrors.		
5 Deep stepwell with various paths cut off.		
6 Enchanted woods with shifting pathways.		

NIGHTMARE		BRUTE
HELLFIRE RED	SHADOW BLACK	EMBER GRAY
Flame-wreathed steeds that emerge from the underworld, galloping through the night. Their hooves leave scorched trails across the land.		
* Flame-wreathed	⊙ HELLFIRE BREATH	
* Slips between planes	⊙ SHADOWY TELEPORT	
* Understands language	⊙ REAR UP & NEIGH	
<b>Wants</b> to carry those who seek vengeance.		
<b>Doesn't want</b> to witness acts of mercy or kindness.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>👁 charred hoofprints, trail of smoke, glowing red eyes</li> <li>👂 crackle of flames, pounding of hooves, eerie neighs</li> <li>👃 burnt sulfur, smoldering ashes</li> </ul>		
WRATHFUL RIDERS		
1 Exiled knight, who did nothing wrong.		
2 Betrayed queen, who deserved what she got.		
3 Hanged poet, whose words rang too true.		
4 Wayward prince, who will never go home.		
5 Desperate rebel, the last one alive.		
6 Bitter seer, whose warnings were ignored.		

NAGA		BLASTER
SCALED GREEN	REPTILIAN BLUE	AGED GOLD
Malevolent serpentine figures, guarding ancient wisdom. They defend sacred groves and lost ruins with potent magic against any who dare trespass.		
* Serpentine grace	⊙ VENOMOUS FANGS	
* Ancient wisdom	⊙ CONSTRICT	
* Speech	⊙ HEX MAGIC	
<b>Wants</b> to keep its secrets for itself, no matter the cost.		
<b>Doesn't want</b> to be insulted with offers, as if it can be bought.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>👁 iridescent scales, gleaming eyes</li> <li>👂 hiss of scales sliding across stone, whispering</li> <li>👃 exotic incense, floral notes mixed with musk</li> </ul>		
FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE (Roll 3 & interpret)		
1 secret	1 scrolls of	1 immortality
2 twisted	2 visions of	2 soulbinding
3 false	3 rites of	3 necromancy
4 true	4 pacts of	4 teleportation
5 blasphemous	5 elixirs of	5 polymorphing
6 shattered	6 ciphers of	6 godhood

OCHRE JELLY		BRUTE
OCHRE	SICKLY YELLOW	MURKY BROWN
Pulsing, acidic oozes that dissolve anything they touch as they silently slither through dungeons. They split into smaller versions when struck.		
* Extremely sticky	⊙ SLURP FORWARD	
* Divides when struck	⊙ ABSORB	
	⊙ SLINK AWAY	
<b>Wants</b> to grow into the greatest of all jellies.		
<b>Doesn't want</b> to split into new rivals.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>👁 unsettling motion, remnants of absorbed creatures</li> <li>👂 wet sloshing, faint bubbling, the quiet pull of suction</li> <li>👃 sour decay, moldy dampness</li> </ul>		
NEWLY SPLIT JELLIES (It's not sticky)		
1 Azure jelly, with a freezing touch.		
2 Crimson jelly, shrieks and bleeds when it's struck.		
3 Verdant jelly, spreads carnivorous plant life.		
4 Mercury jelly, perfectly reflects its surroundings.		
5 Spectral jelly, shimmers like a mirage.		
6 Onyx jelly, leaves a trail of thick, bubbling tar.		

## OGRE

BRUTE

RUSTIC TAN DIRTY BROWN FOREST GREEN

Towering, brutish creatures with thick skin and crude weapons. They roam forests and caves, smashing anything in its path to keep itself amused.

- \* Overwhelming power    ● **GRAB & CRUSH**
- \* Slow & stubborn        ● **RAGING ROAR**
- \* Speech                      ● **BODY SLAM**

**Wants** to wander and destroy—a good life.

**Doesn't want** to be outwitted by smaller creatures.

- 👁 towering silhouette in the trees, gnarled club
- 👂 heavy footfalls, low growls
- 👃 stale sweat, dirt, lingering scent of raw meat

### CHOSEN LEADER OF THE...

- 1 **Trolls**, after marrying their chieftain.
- 2 **Hill goblins**, fearing its wrath.
- 3 **Swamp spirits**, bound to its will.
- 4 **Wild fey**, attracted by its savagery.
- 5 **Hill giants**, who think it's a genius.
- 6 **Other ogres**, a small army of them.

## OWLBEAR

BRUTE

TAWNY FEATHER FURRY BROWN TALON SLATE

Fiercely territorial, hulking beasts with the body of a bear and head of an owl. They hunt in forests, using their keen senses and raw power.

- \* Nocturnal hunter        ● **TERRITORIAL ROAR**
- \* Lumbering speed        ● **CRUSHING BEAK**
- **PIERCING SCREECH**

**Wants** to protect its territory.

**Doesn't want** any threat to its nesting cave.

- 👁 clawed tree bark, deep gouges in the ground
- 👂 rasping hoots, heavy thuds, trees shaking
- 👃 rank musk, trampled leaves, tang of blood

### VICTIMS, STILL FRESH

- 1 **Scholar**, face down, drawings strewn about.
- 2 **Cultist**, dead in a tree without a scratch on them.
- 3 **Messenger**, half-eaten scroll in hand.
- 4 **Farmer**, holding a wilted bouquet.
- 5 **Smuggler**, clutching a vial of purple poison.
- 6 **Performer**, in full costume, mask still on.

## OTYUGH

BRUTE

PUTRID BROWN SEWER GREEN ROTTEN FLESH

Grotesque, tentacled scavengers lurking in sewers and refuse heaps. They devour rotting carcasses and overwhelm any disturbance with diseased filth.

- \* Diseased touch        ● **SPRAY FILTH**
- \* Reeking stench        ● **PUTRID GULP**
- \* Understands, telepathy ● **SLUDGE TENTACLE**

**Wants** to strike simple truces for territory.

**Doesn't want** for its accumulated filth to be washed clean.

- 👁 slimy tentacles, rotting filth, scattered bones
- 👂 squishy movements, wet gurgles, buzzing flies
- 👃 putrid rot, decay, stagnant swamp water

### FILTHY ACCOMPLICES

- 1 Spewing animated **fungus swarms**.
- 2 Driven forward by a **cult of ruin**.
- 3 Controlled by city **sanitation workers**.
- 4 Followed by a horde of **plague-ridden rats**.
- 5 Ridden by a foul **goblin shaman**.
- 6 Possessed by a **fallen druid's spirit**.

## PEGASUS

PROTECTOR

SILVERY GRAY SKY BLUE CLOUD WHITE

Majestic, winged horses with a noble spirit. They soar through the skies, drawn to those with courage and kindness, appearing in moments of dire need.

- \* Graceful flier            ● **WINGED CHARGE**
- \* Pure-hearted            ● **WING BUFFET**
- \* Understands language ● **CELESTIAL WHINNY**

**Wants** to come to aid in dire moments.

**Doesn't want** to be ridden.

- 👁 shimmering feathers, graceful gait
- 👂 powerful wing beats, soft neighing, wind rushing
- 👃 fresh air, faint scent of wildflowers

### CARRIED MESSAGES

- 1 **Royal summons**, sealed with enchanted wax.
- 2 **Love letter** filled with terrible poetry.
- 3 **Battle plan** hastily scrawled.
- 4 **Desperate plea** from a sworn enemy.
- 5 **Ransom note** tied with black string.
- 6 **Official declaration of invasion**.

PHOENIX		BLASTER
INFERNO GOLD	FLAMING ORANGE	ASH GRAY
<p>Mythical birds of fire, emerging to bring both destruction and new beginnings. As they blaze across the sky, their embers spread cleansing infernos.</p>		
* Radiates intense heat	● FLAME BURST	
* Reborn upon death	● EMBER TRAIL	
* Speech	● CALL FIRESTORM	
<p><b>Wants</b> to only come when they're needed most.  <b>Doesn't want</b> to face the pain and horror of its rebirth.</p>		
<p>👁️ fiery wings, glowing ember trails, vibrant plumage            🗣️ crackling flames, occasional soft cooing            🕸️ warm ash, hints of sulfur, sweet smokiness</p>		
<p><b>ALCHEMICAL POWERS (Roll 2 per part secured)</b></p>		
1 Immunity to fire	1 Flaming touch	
2 Cure any disease	2 Slip between realities	
3 Massive, fiery wings	3 Fiery rebuke aura	
4 Resurrection	4 Cinder trail	
5 Telepathy	5 Flame divination	
6 Summon firelings	6 Blazing speed	

RAKSHASA		TRICKSTER
SILKEN GOLD	REGAL PURPLE	TIGER ORANGE
<p>Cunning, tiger-headed fiends with reversed hands that revel in wealth and opulence. They manipulate mortals with illusions and lies, gaining great power.</p>		
* Illusion magic	● ENCHANT PERSON	
* Elegant manipulator	● ILLUSIONS	
* Speech	● PERFECT LIES	
<p><b>Wants</b> to surround itself in luxury.  <b>Doesn't want</b> for crude company to sully its refined tastes.</p>		
<p>👁️ ornate clothing, well-groomed fur            🗣️ smooth voice, rustle of silk, faintly echoing footsteps            🕸️ incense, hints of expensive perfumes</p>		
<p><b>INFLUENCE NETWORKS</b></p>		
1 Thieves guild. Fits in perfectly.		
2 Merchant coalition. Sold their soul for it.		
3 Pirate fleet. Won it in a duel.		
4 Noble house. Happily married into it.		
5 Mercenary band. Controls it from afar.		
6 Spy ring. Works for four different sides.		

REMORHAZ		PREDATOR
SERPENTINE BLUE	MOLTEN RED	CHITIN GRAY
<p>Massive, heat-radiating worms with red-hot spines along their back. They burrow through frozen tundra, devouring all in their path with searing jaws.</p>		
* Radiates intense heat	● EMERGING STRIKE	
* Swift burrower	● HEAT WAVE	
* Powerful mandibles	● DEVOUR	
<p><b>Wants</b> to find hot springs or lava flows to lay its eggs.  <b>Doesn't want</b> to feel the cold seep under its carapace.</p>		
<p>👁️ glowing red-hot spines, icy blue eyes, sharp ridges            🗣️ hissing steam, grinding mandibles, cracking ice            🕸️ burnt metal, scorched earth, sulfur</p>		
<p><b>WORMS OF DARK PROPHECY</b></p>		
1 ROUSE THE SLUMBERING GODS ENTOMBED		
2 SEVER THE SACRED BONDS OF BLOOD AND ROOT		
3 DEVOUR THE HEART OF THE HERO FORETOLD		
4 UNSEAL THE CRYPT OF THE NAMELESS KING		
5 TORCH THE ROOTS OF THE WORLD TREE		
6 SILENCE THE BELLS OF THE ETERNAL CITY		
<p><b>WORM WRANGLING</b>            You grab its tail as it barrels past, chasing prey through icy canyons. The rope to sling around its neck will bewitch it, but you gotta get up there before it sees you and burrows.</p>		
8d   TAIL	● ●	<b>ICE CANYON THREATS</b>
* erratic, flicking tail		4d Gusting Winds
* few handholds		6d Collapsing Walls
● FLYING ICE SHARDS		4d   MIDSECTION
● TAIL HITS WALL	→	* red hot spines
✗ 8d It notices you		* few cool spots
(shared across next challenge)		● SHIMMERING HAZE
4d   FLARED HOOD	● ●	● SUDDEN TURN
* wide plates		✗ 8d It notices you
* loose scales		
● SWIFT HEAD TURN		
● SWALLOW PREY	→	You haven't planned this far. Now, how exactly do you get the rope around this thing's neck?

## ROC

BRUTE

FEATHERED SAND    DUSTY BROWN    STORMY BLUE

Colossal birds with wings that block out the sun. They appear in times of stagnation to bring change by carrying away that which no longer belongs.

- \* Blocks out the sun    ● **GALE FORCE WINDS**
- \* Impervious to damage    ● **TALON GRASP**
- **SWALLOW WHOLE**

**Wants** to return to its nest.

**Doesn't want** to be distracted from what it must do.

- ☉ as big as the clouds, vast silhouette on the horizon
- 👂 resonating wingbeats, massive gusts of wind
- 👃 overwhelming earthy musk, dry feathers

### POTENTIAL EGG BUYERS

- 1 **Dying empress**, who will feed on it to live.
- 2 **Dragon**, who will use it to barter for its life.
- 3 **Ancient lich**, who will create its greatest minion.
- 4 **Storm giant**, who will raise it as a mount.
- 5 **Infamous pirate**, who sees it as a future skyship.
- 6 **Druidic order**, who will unleash it on the world.

## RUSTMAW

SKIRMISHER

METAL DECAY    CORRODED UMBER    OXIDE RED

Chitinous creatures that feed on metal, rusting weapons and armor with a touch. Their twitching antennae guide them straight to their next metallic meal.

- \* Rusts metal it touches    ● **SKITTER AND HIDE**
- \* Hard carapace    ● **EAT WEAPON**
- **TWITCH ANTENNAE**

**Wants** to consume every last trace of metal.

**Doesn't want** to accidentally munch on wood or glass.

- ☉ twitching antennae, scattered rust crumbs
- 👂 scraping mandibles, rustling movement
- 👃 sharp metallic tang, faint odor of decay

### RESIDUAL EFFECTS OF EATING ARCANA

- 1 **Glow**s in the dark.
- 2 Leaves a **trail of sparks** behind it.
- 3 **Flo**ats slightly above the ground.
- 4 **Spe**aks in very basic terms.
- 5 **Vibr**ates like a tuning fork when struck.
- 6 Is completely **in**visible.

## ROPER

LURKER

CAVE EARTH    ROCKY GRAY    SLATE BROWN

Lurking predators in caverns, blending with stalagmites to ambush prey. Their tendrils drag victims in for a deadly bite, leaving escape nearly impossible.

- \* Cave camouflage    ● **SURVIVE SCRUTINY**
- \* Extended tendrils    ● **REEL IN**
- \* Speech    ● **CAUSE PARANOIA**

**Wants** to strike lone targets.

**Doesn't want** to be scrutinized and revealed.

- ☉ tendril shadows, unremarkable stalagmites
- 👂 low rumbling growl, rocky slithering
- 👃 earthy stone, dank moss, faint rotting flesh

### HOW IT SURVIVES SCRUTINY

- 1 **Mim**ics dripping water, distant echoes.
- 2 Moves incredibly **qu**ickly when not watched.
- 3 **M**akes you feel like you are **be**ing watched.
- 4 **A**bsorbs light, creating longer shadows.
- 5 Stays **de**athly still, even under attack.
- 6 Leaves **no** trace of its previous meals.

## SHAMBLING MOUND

BRUTE

VINE GREEN    MUCK BROWN    ROTTING GREEN

Hulking masses of vines and swamp muck lumbering through marshes. They engulf prey and grow larger with each and every victim.

- \* Absorbs and grows    ● **REGROWTH**
- \* Swampy camouflage    ● **VINE LASH**
- **ENGULF**

**Wants** to find and consume prosperity.

**Doesn't want** to consume desiccated creatures.

- ☉ mass of tangled vines, streaks in the muck
- 👂 wet sloshing, cracking branches, earthy groan
- 👃 rotting vegetation, swamp muck, wet earth

### BURIED WITHIN

- 1 **Grand druid**, sleeping within a cocoon.
- 2 **Ancient coffin**, sealing away a cursed vampire.
- 3 Nearly endless amount of **anim**ated skeletons.
- 4 **M**ask of twisted vines that whispers riddles.
- 5 **Fey gateway**, pulsing with otherworldly energy.
- 6 Warbanner of the **true queen**.

# SPHINX

TACTICIAN

ANCIENT GOLD

DUSKY BLUE

DESERT SAND

Majestic creatures with the body of a lion and head of a human. They guard secrets and grant wishes, testing people with riddles to prove their worth.

- \* Master of riddles      ● **WING BUFFET**
- \* Unfooled by deception      ● **DIVINATION SPELL**
- \* Speech      ● **TELEPORT**

**Wants** to allow the truly worthy to pass by.

**Doesn't want** to face trickery or deception of any kind.

- 👁️ golden fur, regal posture, watchful eyes
- 👂 resonant voice, wind sweeping by, distant roars
- 👃 warm sand, ancient incense, faint floral scents

### WISH CHOICES

- 1 Ask any **yes or no** question.
- 2 Ask for any **one item** and it is yours.
- 3 Ask to be any **age** you would like—forever?
- 4 Ask for any one being to **cease to be**.
- 5 Ask for any one being to be **brought back**.
- 6 Ask for a chance to correct a **single regret**.

### RIDDLE (Roll 3, choose 1 or 2, pose it as a riddle)

- 1 It flows but has no shape.
  - 2 It grows taller, then vanishes.
  - 3 It travels far but takes no steps.
  - 4 It burns but leaves no ashes.
  - 5 It counts the moments but has no hands.
  - 6 It falls but makes no sound.
- 1 It's cold but not frozen.
  - 2 It's bright but not hot.
  - 3 It hums when the world is still.
  - 4 It's full but never complete.
  - 5 It's fleeting but always returns.
  - 6 It's hidden in plain sight.
- 1 It grows when light dims.
  - 2 It follows you on sunny days.
  - 3 It stares back from still waters.
  - 4 It's buried but not dead.
  - 5 It's a silent companion.
  - 6 It's a path without end.

IF RELATIVELY CLOSE, ACCEPT THE ANSWER.

# TROLL

BRUTE

EARTHY BROWN

GRANITE GRAY

MUDDY GREEN

Regenerating creatures that lair in overlooked places, hoarding strange trophies. They make simple demands and usually negotiate before cracking skulls.

- \* Regenerates      ● **CONVINCING OFFER**
- \* Weak vs. fire, acid      ● **HURL ENEMY**
- \* Speech (grunts, gestures)      ● **TOPPLE TREES**

**Wants** its lair to be filled with bones and trophies.

**Doesn't want** to let on that it's more cunning than it looks.

- 👁️ an oddly shaped mound, glint of sharp claws
- 👂 low grumbling, crunch of bones, wet chewing
- 👃 stale swamp water, wet fur, strong musk of mold

### OVERLOOKED LAIRS

- 1 **Abandoned mill**, half-sunk in the swamp.
- 2 **Ruined bathhouse**, flooded with muck.
- 3 **Crumbling fort** lost in dense woods.
- 4 **Hollowed-out tree** astride a grain field.
- 5 **Ruined chapel** overtaken by brambles.
- 6 **Rocky cave** behind a waterfall.

# UNDERSOUGE

TACTICIAN

CHITIN BRONZE

EARTHEN OCHRE

STONE OCHRE

Burrowing creatures with chitin armor and hypnotic eyes. They strike from below, collapsing the ground to trap victims.

- \* Burrows effortlessly      ● **HYPNOTIC GAZE**
- \* Tough chitin      ● **RAPID BURROWING**
- \* Speech      ● **COLLAPSE GROUND**

**Wants** to feast on surface creatures.

**Doesn't want** to venture into the sunlight.

- 👁️ large burrow holes, cracked earth, glistening chitin
- 👂 distant rumbling, shifting soil, clicking mandibles
- 👃 fresh-turned earth, mineral-rich tang, earthy musk

### COLLAPSES...

- 1 **Farmer's pasture**, full of cows.
- 2 **Town square** during a festival.
- 3 **Noble's garden**, during a feast.
- 4 **Bustling mine**, just as they struck the motherlode.
- 5 **General's tent**, after a glorious victory.
- 6 **Royal cemetery**, as the king is laid to rest.

## UNDEAD, GHAST

BRUTE

WEATHERED FLESH    DECAYED GREEN    BLOODSTAIN RED

Rotting corpses driven by an ancient plague that wishes to spread once more. They're full of hunger and rage, and leave victims messily scattered about.

- \* Rotting Stench                      Ⓞ **PUTRID EXHALE**
- \* Plague carrier                        Ⓞ **FESTERING CLAWS**
- \* Speech (archaic)                    Ⓞ **NUMBING GRASP**

**Wants** to feed, inadvertently spreading the plague.  
**Doesn't want** to give up on a fleshy meal.

- 👁 pallid skin, jagged teeth, bloated and yellowed
- 👂 guttural snarls, heavy breathing, slap of bare feet
- 👃 decayed flesh, sour stench, mold

### BYGONE PLAGUES

- 1 The **Weeping Rot**, turning flesh to black ooze.
- 2 The **Crimson Blight**, causing veins to burst.
- 3 The **Ashen Grip**, hardening limbs into stone.
- 4 The **Vile Verdancy**, growing plants from wounds.
- 5 The **Choking Miasma**, filling lungs with sludge.
- 6 The **Thorned Decay**, sprouting barbs from skin.

## UNDEAD, GHOST

BLASTER

SPIRIT SILVER    PALE MIST    MISTY BLUE

Spectral entities bound to the mortal realm, haunting familiar places and reliving past moments. Their presence terrifies all who witness their sorrow.

- \* Ethereal form                        Ⓞ **SHARED MEMORIES**
- \* Anchored spirit                        Ⓞ **WAIL OF SORROW**
- \* Speech                                    Ⓞ **SPIRIT SIPHON**

**Wants** to do something, if only it could remember what.  
**Doesn't want** for its presence to go unnoticed.

- 👁 fading in and out, subtly shifting, drifting figure
- 👂 faint sobs, echoing footsteps, an occasional scream
- 👃 old books, lavender, childhood memories

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Roll 3, interpret)

- |            |              |             |
|------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 heirloom | 1 confession | 1 vendetta  |
| 2 estate   | 2 vow        | 2 guilt     |
| 3 portrait | 3 denial     | 3 betrayal  |
| 4 key      | 4 hidden     | 4 murder    |
| 5 diary    | 5 whisper    | 5 burden    |
| 6 relic    | 6 promise    | 6 obsession |

## UNDEAD, LICH

TACTICIAN

ANCIENT PURPLE

ROTTEN GREEN

BONE WHITE

Immortal magicians driven by a singular, dark purpose. They control hordes of undead from a well-defended lair, executing schemes with cold calculation.

- \* 8 Wizard spells (pg. XX)            Ⓞ **CAST SPELL**
- \* Two steps ahead                        Ⓞ **RAISE UNDEAD**
- \* Speech                                    Ⓞ **SOUL LEECH**

**Wants** to obtain the power it needs for its grand scheme.  
**Doesn't want** anything near its phylactery.

- 👁 tattered robes, skeletal hands, piercing eyes
- 👂 hoarse incantations, eerie silence between words
- 👃 ancient dust, burnt incense, sharp cloying decay

### OVERLY GRANDIOSE DARK RITUALS

- 1 **Enslave** every soul in the realm to its will.
- 2 **Steal** the life essence of the royal bloodline.
- 3 **Summon** the Bonegrinder, eater of legends.
- 4 **Sing** the song that will end the world.
- 5 **Raise** a necropolis from which to rule.
- 6 **Twist** the vast forests into a maze of undead trees.

### LICH SPELLBOOK

A lich knows 8 wizard spells. Choose a spellbook below, or make one. They gain 1 bonus suspense for each spell.

Slow Worm Transmutation	Mind Guide Divination
Pain Cascade Necromancy	Flesh Beacon Transmutation
Screaming Aura Enchantment	Oil Shield Abjuration
Mesmerising Mask Illusion	Bone Wall Conjuration

Expanding Flesh Transmutation	Slow Chains Transmutation
Hungry Wings Conjuration	Binding Word Enchantment
Dazzling Vine Illusion	Prismatic Smoke Evocation
Terrible Lore Divination	Hungry Terror Necromancy

# UNDEAD, VAMPIRE

SKIRMISHER

DEEP CRIMSON

MIDNIGHT BLACK

MOONLIT IVORY

Elegant, nocturnal hunters driven by a thirst for blood. They seamlessly integrate into society, all while avoiding daylight at all costs.

- \* Unnatural allure      ● **BLOOD DRAIN**
- \* Supernatural strength      ● **REGENERATION**
- \* Speech      ● **REVEAL TEETH**

**Wants** to pursue its desires, with no end-goal in mind.  
**Doesn't want** to be reminded of when it was mortal.

- 👁 flickering candlelight, blood-stained velvet
- 👂 soft whispers, the rustle of fabric
- 👃 old blood, faint rose perfume

## SIRING INTENTIONS

- 1 Punish them for **betraying your trust**.
- 2 Offer them a **twisted redemption**.
- 3 Teach them the **vanity** of mortal life.
- 4 Preserve their **forbidden love**.
- 5 Trap them in **unending regret**.
- 6 Use them to **control** those they once loved.

## FROM HERO TO VAMPIRE

Roll 2d6 (pick 1) for path/core. Roll 1d8 and count on their talent list (on 8, roll 2d8). Adapt as traits and moves. For every 50 years of unlife, roll a new power and weakness.

## PATH

- |             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| 1 Bard      | 1 Paladin  |
| 2 Berserker | 2 Ranger   |
| 3 Cleric    | 3 Rogue    |
| 4 Druid     | 4 Sorcerer |
| 5 Fighter   | 5 Warlock  |
| 6 Monk      | 6 Wizard   |

## POWER

- 1 Bat, mist, or wolf form
- 2 Mesmerising Gaze
- 3 Cling to walls
- 4 Preternatural speed
- 5 Lifesense
- 6 Call vermin

## WEAKNESS

- 1 Holy symbols
- 2 Garlic
- 3 Running water
- 4 Lacking reflection
- 5 Invitation only
- 6 Extreme thirst

# UNDEAD, WIGHT

BRUTE

VOID BLACK

GHOSTLY WHITE

DEATHLY GRAY

Risen corpses consumed by hatred, wielding cursed weapons to drain life from their foes. They defend their domains with unrelenting malice.

- \* Regenerative strikes      ● **DESTROY BONDS**
- \* Victims become wights      ● **RAISE UNDEAD**
- \* Speech (wheezes, gasps)      ● **SENSE LIFE**

**Wants** to forever defend its final resting place.  
**Doesn't want** to face that which caused its undying hatred.

- 👁 glowing red eyes, corroded armor
- 👂 groaning breaths, rusty clinking of ancient weapons
- 👃 damp earth, rot, stale air

## CURSED ARMAMENTS

- 1 **Heartstealer**, a blade that drains courage.
- 2 **Mindpiercer**, a spear that devours memories.
- 3 **Blackhelm**, a helm that compels obedience.
- 4 **Soulcrusher**, a mace that fills with dread.
- 5 **Rise**, a sword that raises new wights.
- 6 **Wailer**, a spiked chain that binds spirits to it.

# UNDEAD, WRAITH

BRUTE

SHADOWY PURPLE

FOGGY GRAY

GHASTLY BLUE

Shadowy, spectral figures formed of pure volatile lament. They glide silently through the darkness, draining warmth from everything they touch.

- \* Incorporeal form      ● **DRAINING TOUCH**
- \* Deathly cold aura      ● **SHADOW MELD**
- \* Speech      ● **WAIL OF DESPAIR**

**Wants** for others to feel the emotions that formed it.  
**Doesn't want** for true joy to cut through its malice.

- 👁 swirling mist, flickering blue light
- 👂 eerie wails, distant rustle of air, faint whispers
- 👃 frigid air, damp stone, metallic tang of fear

## HORRIFIC ORIGINS

- 1 Untold number of **dead from the war**.
- 2 Royal court and family massacred during a **coup**.
- 3 **Serial killer's** decades long reign of terror.
- 4 Massacre of innocent "**monstrous**" village.
- 5 **Plague** spread by one person jumping ship.
- 6 Community's **noble sacrifice** going unnoticed.

## UNICORN

PROTECTOR

DUSKY LAVENDER PALE ROSE VERDANT MINT

Graceful, magical horses with a single spiraling horn. They roam ancient forests, bestowing healing, light, and blessings to those with pure hearts.

- \* Pure spirit                      ● **HEALING TOUCH**
- \* Protected by nature        ● **BLESSING**
- \* Understands, telepathy    ● **LUMINOUS HORN**

**Wants** to keep the few true purities in the world unspoiled.  
**Doesn't want** to sense malevolence in a creature's heart.

- ☞ calming glow, pristine fur, faint sparkles
- ☞ soft clip-clop, soft whinny, soothing hum of magic
- ☞ whiff of lavender, morning dew, ancient woods

### BLESSINGS

- 1 Five more **healthy years** of old age.
- 2 **Sixth sense** for when you're being deceived.
- 3 **Immunity** to poisons and diseases.
- 4 You can **understand** any language.
- 5 **Cleanse** any water you touch of impurities.
- 6 Always know the **direction** to home.

## WYVERN

PREDATOR

DARK SLATE BRONZED EMBER SAVAGE GREEN

Fierce, winged reptiles with a venomous, barbed tail. They swoop from unseen heights, securing their prey with swift, brutal strikes.

- \* Relentless pursuer        ● **VENOMOUS STING**
- \* Hardened scales         ● **DIVING STRIKE**
- **SNATCH AND FLY**

**Wants** to teach its young the thrill of the hunt.  
**Doesn't want** to feel a bond with a creature outside its kin.

- ☞ darting between clouds, animals scurrying for cover
- ☞ screech from impossibly high, whoosh of its dive
- ☞ smell of their far off nesting location

### WYVERN MASTERS

- 1 **Gorrak**, infamous sky pirate.
- 2 **Laraen**, rogue mage bent on vengeance.
- 3 **Zurak**, black-market smuggler of wyvern eggs.
- 4 **Tylara**, a druid wielding the power of storms.
- 5 **Drazul**, assassin for the highest bidder.
- 6 **Serdrak**, mercenary lord of the skies.

## WILL-O'-WISP

TRICKSTER

HAUNTED GREEN PHANTOM VIOLET SPECTRAL BLUE

Glowing, flickering orbs that haunt swamps and bogs, luring travelers with eerie lights. They guide them to reveal secrets that only they understand.

- \* Ethereal form                ● **LURING LIGHT**
- \* Swift & elusive             ● **FLICKER VANISH**
- \* Understands language    ● **BEWILDER**

**Wants** to find out how far your curiosity will take you.  
**Doesn't want** for followers to actually reach its destination.

- ☞ faint flickering, eerie shadows, shifting colors
- ☞ faint whispers, low hum, far off footstep echoes
- ☞ fleeting yet familiar and nostalgic smells

### SECRETS TO REVEAL

- 1 **Final resting place** of a hero never mourned.
- 2 **Wooden mask** marked with a lost clan's sigil.
- 3 **Secret names** of the will-o'-wisps.
- 4 **Undying flame** hidden in the swamp's heart.
- 5 **Waterlogged diary** with half-legible confessions.
- 6 **Still-beating heart** buried within twisted roots.

## YETI

BRUTE

FROSTBITE GRAY GLACIAL WHITE ICY BLUE

Massive, furry beasts roaming between icy peaks, fiercely guarding the remote passes as if bound to the land by some unseen force.

- \* Frigid aura                    ● **FROST BREATH**
- \* Snowy camouflage        ● **HOWLING ROAR**
- \* Speech (roars, gestures) ● **ICICLE THROW**

**Wants** to maintain its lonesome vigil, instinctually.  
**Doesn't want** for the terrible secrets below to see light.

- ☞ the snow moving, steaming breath, pale blue eyes
- ☞ crunch of snow under massive feet, deep roars
- ☞ fresh snow cut by a wild tang

### UNDER THE ICE

- 1 **City** frozen in time, its bells still ringing.
- 2 **Souls** wandering, lost beneath the ice.
- 3 **Portal** to a realm of eternal winter.
- 4 **Cursed blade** locked in unmelting ice.
- 5 **Phoenix** stuck in a cycle of death and rebirth.
- 6 **Balor** shackled in ice-forged chains.



# CHAPTER 6

# PLAYER OPTIONS

## GROUP-BUILDING QUESTIONS

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During session zero, after you've introduced your characters, or at interesting moments in a campaign, ask one of the following questions to the person on your right and left. Keep the questions leading and juicy, to give something interesting for you both to latch onto. You can also use these questions to delve into details about their character that you're interested in hearing more about.

### QUESTIONS ABOUT SHARED HISTORY

- What **secret** did I tell you that you've never dared to share with anyone else?
- When we first met, what **mistake** did I make that still embarrasses me?
- What did we **steal** together, and how did it bring us closer?
- When did I **save** you from something, and what did it cost me?
- What moment made you decide you could **trust** me, even if you didn't want to?

### QUESTIONS ABOUT FEELINGS AND IMPRESSIONS

- What's something about me that **annoys** you, but you'd miss if I were gone?
- What's a time I **surprised** you by being braver or softer than you expected?
- What's a **rumor about me** you half believe, but you're too afraid to ask if it's true?
- When have I **pushed you away**, and how did it hurt?
- What do you **envy** about me, even if you'd never admit it out loud?

### QUESTIONS ABOUT TENSIONS AND CHALLENGES

- What's a **lie** I told you that you're still pretending to believe?
- What's a **promise** I broke that you haven't forgiven me for?
- When have I **let you down**, and how did you learn to work around me?
- What's something **dangerous** you think I'm hiding from the group?
- What about me makes you feel like you're **walking on thin ice**?

### QUESTIONS ABOUT SHARED FUTURES

- What's a **dream** I have that you think is foolish, but still want to help me achieve?
- What do you **hope** I'll never find out about your plans?
- What do you think our **journey** will turn me into, and does that scare you?
- When this is all over, where do you **imagine** us going together?
- What's something you think we'll **regret**, but we'll do it anyway?

*Note: Try swapping "you" and "I" in these questions—flip it around if it's more interesting!*

## DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Choosing three very great distinctive features helps cement your character not only in your mind, but also in the shared imagination space at the table. You can come back to your features again and again during scenes to add them in to paint the scene. Be open to change as well over time.

### AGE

<b>upstart youth</b>	all grown up	gray	fresh faced	greenhorn	precocious
experienced	<b>brashful youth</b>	wizened	hale & hearty	vigorous	coming of age
sober	prime of life	<b>young pup</b>	over the hill	youthful	withered
grizzled	old & leathery	adult	<b>childlike</b>	timeworn	spry
eager youth	fledgling	cagey old-timer	seasoned	<b>ageless</b>	sage
near the end	on borrowed time	young & beautiful	distinguished	doddering	<b>wrinkled</b>

### CLOTHING

<b>ill-fitting</b>	pristine	tight	finely-tailored	frayed	ceremonial
loose-fitting	<b>dirty</b>	flowing	threadbare	coarse	fancy
outrageous	comfortable	<b>stained</b>	patched	fashionable	exotic
faded	patchwork	austere	<b>well-worn</b>	grass-stained	strange
plain	flamboyant	mottled	weathered	<b>dusty</b>	practical
elaborate	crumpled	out-of-place	rugged	billowing	<b>secondhand</b>

### VOICE

<b>lilting</b>	clear	gravelly	pleasant	commanding	piercing
melodious	<b>resonant</b>	hearty	sharp	raspy	murmuring
soft	rumbling	<b>measured</b>	well-spoken	soothing	shrill
crackling	calm	barking	<b>confident</b>	nasally	velvety
whispering	booming	growling	earnest	<b>pompous</b>	monotone
roaring	carries	sing-song	quiet	breathy	<b>hoarse</b>

### BODY

<b>curvy</b>	heavyset	thick	sturdy	well-fed	lanky
strapping	<b>gangly</b>	giant	lean	long-legged	flabby
rail-thin	broad	<b>ripped</b>	athletic	petite	muscular
solid	scrawny	stocky	<b>hard</b>	fit	ravaged
willowy	sinewy	wiry	bony	<b>thin</b>	gaunt
lithe	slender	compact	slim	towering	<b>sharp</b>

### VOICE

<b>tormented</b>	joyous	hard	glowing	stern	calculating
haunted	<b>kind</b>	dead	animal	piercing	brooding
questioning	sharp	<b>eager</b>	shifty	gentle	lifeless
shrouded	sad	smoldering	<b>cunning</b>	hollow	wearry
knowing	wise	warm	wild	<b>sparkling</b>	bright
fiery	haunting	searing	soulful	glassy	<b>unreadable</b>

# PATH OF THE ARTIFICER

AKA the enchanter, tinkerer, inventor

You shape the world with your creations, blending ingenuity, craftsmanship, and magic to forge and enchant wonders.



## INFUSION

## Core Talent

You harness the power of creativity. You know 6 **touchstones** from the arcana crucibles, and have created 2 **major arcana** using them. Anyone can use them with the most relevant stat (as arcana), though it always carries **risk** for those other than you. Given time, you can: *rebuild them using any other touchstones you know—pull off a **potent feat of mechanical ingenuity***. You can **push yourself** to do it on the spot.

**Engineer:** Take +1d at creating, repairing, or destroying mechanisms and arcana. You can also **deconstruct** arcana to learn their touchstones, destroying them in the process.

**GROWTH:** At levels 2, 4, and 6, you can create +1 major arcana, and learn 2 touchstones.

## EVERYTHING ARCANA

(Optional)

You can re flavor any of your path talents to actually be the effects of magical gizmos you've created. Toss in some magitech buzzwords that *almost* make sense, and use them to sound like you know what you're talking about—perfect for baffling the less inventive. You can teach others to use them, though doing so always carries **risk**. If any of these gizmos is ever lost, you can recreate them with some effort during any downtime.

## SCHEMA CRUCIBLE

<b>mask</b>	bone	status	whisper	fury	reduce
heart	<b>thorn</b>	song	growth	lore	light
trap	star	<b>wind</b>	iron	chill	memory
shadow	fire	dream	<b>siphon</b>	gravity	friend
poison	shroud	thread	mirror	<b>stone</b>	beast
servant	tempo	eye	root	spirit	<b>water</b>

### Functions

**Attack:** lash out and harm or destroy.

**Enhance:** boost or add new traits.

**Hinder:** impede movement or senses.

**Influence:** manipulate mind and emotion.

**Protect:** defend against harm or detection.

**Restore:** heal, mend, and cleanse.

**Reveal:** sense or uncover information.

**Summon:** call or create items and forces.

**Transform:** change or grow form.

**Traverse:** move elsewhere or in a new way.

# ARTIFICER PATH TALENTS

**ANIMATE OBJECTS:** Given time, you can bestow a semblance of life into objects, giving them a **2d Animated** power pool. They can only act within their nature or with simple one-word commands. They can roll 1d of their power pool to **assist** you. You can reliably command up to three of these at a time, with others following their nature.

**ARTIFICIAL PARTS:** You have enhanced replacement body parts. Choose 3 benefits for them: *built-in weapon—detachable—independent—keen sense—storage—strong*. Each perk can be activated once per session to take +1d on a related roll. They also have a drawback: *noisy—horrificing—unreliable—power source*.

**GRENADES:** Each session, you have a **3d Grenades** resource pool. You have access to the following bombs: *entangle—force—fiery—gravity—obscuring—stun*. These grenades affect multiple targets or an area.

**MISCHIEF MAKER:** You can overload arcana to create a potent effect with it. Make a 2d story roll as the magic goes haywire. Add +1t to the story roll each time you use this, clearing them each session.

**TINKERER:** You spend your time fiddling with arcana. During extended downtime, you create a **flawed mythic arcana**—pick an arcana crucible and roll two touchstones, then pick a function. When used, it only lasts for the scene. One time only, you can choose for it to be permanent.

**TRAP MAKING:** Given time, you can set potent traps, with an effect based on the style: *blade—collapse—entangle—fire—poison—alarm*. **Push yourself** to deploy a trap on the spot. On a perfect when triggered, **take spark**.

**WANDSLINGER:** You have a specialized wand and can use it to fire the following bolts of magic using Wits: *acid burst—force blast—ice shard—inferno bolt—static charge—stun beam*. Once per session, you can cause a **secondary effect** (as a critical) related to the type.

## Constructs and Homunculi

Looking for a magical companion you found or created? Use the Animal Companion talent from the ranger path (pg. XX), and pick from the tricks and flaws below.

### TRICKS

*distract—fight—guard—mount—rescue—scout—search—talk—trace—signal*

### FLAWS

*clumsy—defiant—dimwitted—noisy—overprotective—powered—scary—unreliable*

# PATH OF THE PSION

AKA the mentalist, seer, telepath

You unlock the limitless power of the mind, bending thought, will, and reality through focus and discipline.



## AWAKENED MIND

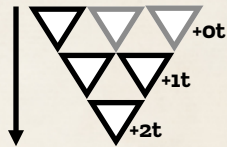
### Core Talent

You have spellcasting ability. Choose two bastions below which act as the touchstone for your psionic magic. You can cast spells using Wits, and can make them potent by adding instability, eventually adding increasing thorns to your future spellcasting rolls. You can't cast potent spells once adding +2t from instability. Thorns from instability can't be ignored and reset at the beginning of each session. You gain more slots that don't add instability with growth.

**GROWTH:** At levels 3, and 6, you gain +1 instability slot at Ot, and +1 bastion.

## INSTABILITY

Each potent spell pulls at the threads in your mind, making your magic harder to control. You add thorns to all psionic spellcasting based on your instability, tracked by looking at the thorns on the lowest line you have marked. Consider what this progressive unraveling of your psyche looks like.



## BASTIONS

Within your mind lie bastions of psionic power. As you grow stronger, you break down their walls, unlocking your true potential. These powers take shape as visions, psychic phenomena, and even physical manifestations in the form of **ectoplasm**—pure essence of creation.

**BIODYNAMICS** • Altering and enhancing your own body.

**Power:** Heal your broken arm. Hold your breath for hours. Run faster than a horse.

**CLAIRSENTIENCE** • Gaining knowledge from the collective unconscious.

**Power:** Sense a hidden truth. See into someone's dreams. Find the way home.

**METACREATION** • Creating objects from ectoplasm, pure mental energy.

**Power:** Forge a glowing sword. Build a bridge of thought. Shape armor from pure will.

**PSYCHOKINESIS** • Manipulating energy and force.

**Power:** Shatter a boulder. Push an enemy back. Lift a heavy object with your mind.

**TELEPATHY** • Mind-to-mind communication, manipulation, and control.

**Power:** Read someone's thoughts. Calm an angry mob. Implant a fleeting suggestion.

**TRANSPPOSITION** • Movement and manipulation of space.

**Power:** Teleport across a room. Switch places with an ally. Freeze someone in place.

# PSION PATH TALENTS

**ECHO:** Once per session, you can create a duplicate as a **3d power pool**. It is a second version of you, acting as you with shared knowledge, ability, and resources. You can drop 1d of its pool to have it: *assist you—trade places with you*.

**FORESIGHT:** You can catch small glimpses of the future. Once per session, you can describe a brief course of action while in a calm situation, and the GM will tell you the result. If there's **risk**, make a montage roll to see how it would play out. Afterward, you can decide whether to take the action.

**MIND BLAST:** On a critical on a bastion roll, you don't add instability, instead clearing one. This causes mental collateral damage around you: *confusion—hallucinations—headaches—panic*. One time only, you can make this a ritual-level effect, affecting all within miles.

**PSYCHIC WARRIOR:** You're able to turn your psychic volatility against others. You can create weapons made from pure willpower, using them with Wits. You take +1d to follow up with them when you: *take vex—increase your instability*.

*This talent can be poached by any spellcaster. Flavor the weapons with your magical trappings.*

**READER:** You gain 1 **story** per session and can spend **story** when you first meet someone to know their **foremost surface thought**—they are like an open book to you. If you follow-up on it, it counts as a **setup**.

**TUMULTUOUS MIND:** Your fractured mind bleeds into the consciousness of others. The GM judges an NPC's response, or you can spend **story** to set it: *agitated—confused—paranoid—forgetful*. Once per session, when you would take **vex**, a nearby creature must take it instead.

**SHIFT FORM:** Each session, you have a **2d Shifter** resource pool. You can roll the pool to alter your features and form, though you keep the same basic shape.

# PATH OF THE SUMMONER

AKA the caller, binder, planeswalker

portal with claw coming through

You can create creatures from the essence of other planes to protect yourself and bring ruin to your enemies.

## VASSAL

## Core Talent

You attune to a plane, creating a creature from its essence to command. Each time you call forth a creature in this way, decide the connected plane. You have spellcasting ability, using that plane as the touchstone, though you can only cast spells without **risk**. Your vassal has a **4d power pool** to act. It returns to its max once at Od, or when you **push yourself**.

**Example Planes:** *abyss—divine—earthen—fey—fire—mechanical—storm—void*

Your connection is **strained** when it is **harmed**, or when you command it to pull off a **potent feat within its planar nature**. It can be strained once, with any more causing your magical anchors to break. Make a 2d story roll to see the fallout before it disappears. Each scene, the strain resets, and you can replace your vassal.

**GROWTH:** At levels 3 and 6, you gain +1 strain.

## FEATURES

(Optional)

Your summons are from a different plane—a different reality, and their form shifts and shapes to conform to the material plane. Use these crucible to find what strange feature your vassal arrives with.

jagged	smooth	tentacles	plates
luminous	armored	maw	horns
crystalline	spindly	barbs	hooves
frilled	serrated	wings	scales
warped	spectral	hide	tail
metallic	slimy	appendages	talons

## BUILD-A-VASSAL

(Optional)

Use the crucible below to discover the basic form of your vassal, then flavor it with the trappings of the plane from which it was pulled.

It's a \_\_\_-like creature that I send \_\_\_ing toward my enemies.

squat	tall	frog	chicken	prowl	glide
gangly	angular	bull	snake	slither	dash
robust	bulky	turtle	insect	leap	skitter
lithe	rounded	squid	jellyfish	crawl	lumber
sleek	hunched	cat	ape	bound	charge
imposing	gaunt	spider	blob	gallop	float

# SUMMONER PATH TALENTS

**BINDING WORD:** Add *contracts* as a wise. If you're present for an agreement, you can make it binding. Both parties know if it's broken, with the defaulting party inflicted by a potent spell, using the contract details as touchstones. One time only, you can make this a ritual-level effect.

**CHOSEN EIDOLON:** You have a deep connection with a single vassal, and can only summon it. When your magical anchors break, take +1d on the story roll and **spark**.

**FIERCE PROTECTOR:** Once per session, a creature you control can **interrupt** an impact move against you. On a grim, they take the impact move instead. Either way, you take +1d on your follow-up against the attacker.

*This isn't limited to your vassal. Animal companions, and familiars can protect you just as well.*

**LEY MAGIC:** Once per session, you can temporarily alter the leylines in the area to: *draw or repel certain creatures—enhance or dampen magic*. When you alter a place like this, you know when others enter the area. You can **push yourself** to do it again.

**POCKET PLANE:** Given time, you can open a hole to a small pocket dimension about the size of a room. You can **push yourself** to open it on the spot. If dropped, make a story roll to see what happens inside as the plane collapses. You never require anchors for planar travel rituals.

**PORTAL NETWORK:** Given time, you can: *establish a waypoint in your network—open a portal from one waypoint to another*. You can **push yourself** to make a temporary link in the moment, but doing so carries **risk**. Those around you can use the portal as well. Define how you travel, such as by: *shadows—trees—doorways—dreams*.

**UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE:** You have spellcasting, as the Words of Power talent, and know 4 words of power from the words of power crucible. Once used, the words can't be used again until the next session. You can speak in a way that anything can understand you, though you won't necessarily understand them. [Prohibited: Witch]

# PATH OF THE SWASHBUCKLER

AKA *the fencer, duelist, buccaneer*

sabre and  
cape

You fight with swagger, skill, and a smile, turning every desperate clash into a daring performance with luck ever by your side.

## PANACHE

## Core Talent

You wield the spotlight as well as any blade, allowing great feats of charm and skill. Each scene, you have **2 panache** to fuel your derring-do. Before making a roll, you can spend panache to ignore the same number of thorns. If you now roll with Ot, add a special d8, a **panache die** to the roll, increasing the final result level on a 7 or 8. You may also spend it:

- ◆ as **story** including serendipity and strange luck in your vantage.
- ◆ to pull off a **potent feat of debonair charm**, provided you have an audience.
- ◆ to **interrupt** an impact move with a: *humorous quip—quick flourish—timely distraction*. (Once a session)

When one of your rolls is **cut** by a thorn, you regain 1 panache.

**GROWTH:** At levels 3 and 6, you gain +1 panache per scene.

## PAST ENTANGLEMENTS

(Optional)

A Swashbuckler is known by their past. Whose life is intertwined with the story of your deeds? Choose 2 people important in your tales by picking 1 from each side and smashing them together, and 1 more vital to your story that you don't know yet.

spurned	lifelong	patron	partner
obsessed	bitter	investigator	rival
vengeful	adoring	paramour	fan
treacherous	innocent	mentor	friend
jealous	ambitious	faction	muse
mysterious	secret	relative	protégé

## CREED

(Optional)

Many thrilling duelists have a code, a rule they never break, a line they will never cross, or a proverb they live their life by. How devoted to it are you? Choose up to 2 below, or create your own.

- ◆ *all's fair in love and war*
- ◆ *wield the sword of justice*
- ◆ *accept every challenge*
- ◆ *coin is meant to be spent*
- ◆ *infamous is still famous*
- ◆ *gentleman even in dire times*
- ◆ *honor is only for the dead*
- ◆ *a good story beats any reward*
- ◆ *never kill the helpless*
- ◆ *death before dishonor*
- ◆ *the best plan is no plan at all*
- ◆ *only a fair fight measures skill*

# SWASHBUCKLER PATH TALENTS

**AUDACITY:** When you act with pure reckless abandon, **5s count as 6s, but 4s count as 1s** on a follow-up. Regardless of the outcome, those around you are briefly struck by: *awe—bewilderment—panic—excitement.*

*These aren't your garden variety bad ideas, these are the kinds of ideas that leave bystanders frozen in place trying to figure out what just happened, and often a part of tangles.*

**NATURAL MOXIE:** Choose two skills from the Expertise talent (pg. XX). Take +1d when using these skills. [Prohibited: Rogue]

**FANCY FOOTWORK:** On a perfect when you fight to **setup** an advantage or otherwise improve your positioning, you can roll a related task pool by: *seizing an opening—unnerving your foe.*

**IMPROVISE:** You can **push yourself** and describe your creative use of your surroundings to take +1d. These improvised weapons and tools often stretch the bounds of reality with their use.

**LUCKY:** Each session you have a **1d Luck** pool. You can roll it as a bonus die after any roll you make and story rolls related to you. On a grim, **take spark.**

**PROVOKE:** Once per session, through insult, boast, or challenge, you can goad the GM into spending suspense on an impact move targeting only you. You take +1d on the defense roll, and on a perfect, they: *are compelled to keep lashing out—leave an opening—are utterly embarrassed.*

**THE LEGEND OF...:** Many recognize you as a hero, others as a cad and ne'er-do-well. Track tales of your exploits with campaign pools. When you play into it by: *leaving a calling card—saying your catchphrase in a dramatic moment—indulging a fan, take spark.* Use the crucible below to discover what people have taken to calling you.

Playful	Witty	Mysterious	Abstract	Animal	Trade
smiling	gallant	steel	phantom	robin	baron
red	artful	crimson	marvel	hawk	wanderer
infallible	sly	gray	one	butterfly	knight
dashing	silver	silent	justice	fox	rake
fantastic	azure	midnight	enigma	phoenix	thief
wondrous	gilded	masked	mirage	viper	avenger

# PATH OF THE WITCH

AKA the prophet, sibyl, oracle

You are blessed with power from the moon and stars, wielding the ability to speak the language of the universe.

moon, trinket  
dangling from  
top of  
crescent

## WORDS OF POWER

## Core Talent

You can use the tremendous magic granted by the words of power that you know. You have spellcasting ability, using magic based on the language of the universe, rolling Presence to cast, and using your **words of power** as the touchstones. When you use a word, mark it—you can't use it again until the next scene. You can mark a second word to: *cast a potent spell—take +1d on the roll—include it as an additional touchstone.* You begin with 3 words of power from the crucible. Spells without **risk** are automatically successful and don't mark words.

**GROWTH:** At levels 2, 4, and 6, you gain +1 word of power.

## AFFLICTIONS

(Optional)

Witches are odd and mysterious spellcasters, some with strange maladies. This affliction is something you've grown accustomed to, and while it can inflict thorns and introduce **tangles**, it shouldn't be debilitating. What is your strange afflictions and how did you get it? Choose 1 or make up your own.

- ◆ plagued by your own shadow
- ◆ empty eye sockets
- ◆ skeletal body wasting away
- ◆ special diet, such as only raw meat
- ◆ utter no lies or half-truths
- ◆ putrid smell that follows everywhere

## THE LANGUAGE

The language of the universe is more than words as we know them. Feelings, thoughts, and ritual also form the syllables. Use the crucible below or come up with your own Words of Power to fit your witch.

## WORDS OF POWER

<b>spirit</b>	grace	wither	path	star	color
wall	<b>sleep</b>	fire	gate	storm	wind
absorb	pain	<b>adapt</b>	break	dream	sun
ward	luck	shape	<b>reduce</b>	compel	silence
might	vigor	vex	open	<b>obscure</b>	cloud
blood	grave	time	move	ask	<b>ice</b>
<b>read</b>	puzzle	call	lost	plant	life
reveal	<b>guide</b>	shackle	bind	sea	hunt
secret	stone	<b>trick</b>	voice	growth	travel
message	fable	speak	<b>kindred</b>	weather	beast
memory	know	aid	sanctum	<b>food</b>	instinct
light	truth	rebuke	blend	bird	<b>poison</b>

# WITCH PATH TALENTS

**BAILIWICK:** You are known to other witches by a title and the power inherent in your magical domain—your Bailiwick. Choose 1 **word of power**. You can mark any other word to use it, and on a critical, you regain the use of all words.

**EVIL EYE:** You can roll Presence to hex someone with: *dread—clumsiness—confusion—forgetfulness—misfortune—sleepiness*. Decide when it takes effect: *now—soon—much later—specific trigger*. This magic only works on someone once.

**HOMELY HOVEL:** Given time, you can bless a homestead to overflow with power. You get **outside help** on all rolls while on its grounds. Choose two **wondrous traits** to give it such as: *traveling—ritual anchor—healing—caretaker*. You can only have one homestead like this at a time.

charming	castle
mysterious	cottage
rickety	glade
unsettling	manner
vibrant	shack
whimsical	temple

**KARMIC DEBT:** When someone you have offered no harm gives great offense, or hurts you or your allies, your next spell against them is potent, however distant in the future.

**PRIMAL GROWTH:** You can move through any natural terrain quickly and without issue. Once per session you can grow, wither, or shape: *crops—dense foliage—entangling vines—fungi—poisonous spores*. You can **push yourself** to do it again. You don't need anchors on plant or harvest rituals.

**SOOTHSAYER:** Once per session, you can tag a spirit in the local area. They offer a **3d Spirit** pool rolled as bonus dice when you or an ally invokes their domain. They may ask for aid in return. Spirit domains include things such as: *rivers—the night sky—art—furry critters*.

**WONDER MAGNET:** You can cause **wild surges** when spellcasting, as the magical twist in Sorcery. When it triggers, make a 3d story roll for the results. On a perfect, **take spark**. When strange things happen, they happen to you.

## LEGACY TALENTS

The following talents are from Grimwild v1.4, or earlier versions of the Community Edition. These were dropped for various reasons, from balance to theme. Ask your GM before taking any of the following.

### WEAPON MASTERY

#### Legacy Fighter Core Talent

Choose a fighting style that you have mastered: *brawling—dual-wielding—one-handed weapons—ranged weapons—thrown weapons—two-handed weapons*. You have a **mastery die**, a special d6. When you fight in your style, take +1d (the mastery die) on the roll. If the mastery die is a 6, it counts as a critical. If it's already a critical, **take spark**.

**GROWTH:** At levels 3 and 6, you gain +1d mastery die.

### AWAKENED MIND

#### Legacy Psion Core Talent

You have spellcasting ability. Your bastions act as touchstones for your magic. Each session, you have 8 power points. Spend 1 power point to cast a spell. You can augment it by spending 1 or more points to: *cast a potent spell—take +1d (max once) on the roll—ignore thorns from damage—add another bastion as a touchstone*.

**GROWTH:** At levels 2, 4, and 6, you gain +1 bastion, and 2 power points per session.

## PATH TALENTS

**FLURRY (CE Monk):** You can **push yourself** to attempt two distinct physical actions at once using one stat, and taking your highest two dice as the results. You can't prompt more than one impact move from this combined action.

**CUNNING ACTIONS (CE Rogue):** On a perfect in an intense scene, you can keep the **spotlight**, even if the GM wants to spend suspense. The GM must take **suspense** as an impact move on your follow-up. Afterward, move the **spotlight** to an ally.

**PRIMORDIAL FORCES (Monk):** Choose an element: **Air—Earth—Fire—Water**. You can lash out to attack with that element, and add it as set dressing. On a critical, charge the element (mark its box). Spend it to pull off a **potent feat of force or movement empowered by it**. You can take this again, gaining all elements and charging two on a critical.

**TRAP SENSE (Rogue):** You always notice traps near you. When you avoid or disable one, **take spark**.

**ANCHORSHOT (Artificer):** You have a hook, harpoon, and rope contraption that anchors large monsters to the ground. With it, you have **potency** to hinder the movement of anything elephant-sized or larger. When hit, the target becomes **4d Tethered**. It anchors to the ground so you can leave it.

**AUTOMATONS (Artificer):** You have three small helpers you created. Each has a different descriptor, an adjective that determines what tasks they can do. Each session, each has a **2d power pool** you roll to perform tasks. When **assisting**, they roll 1d of their pool. They can follow simple commands, without which they will simply search for you.

**DOUBLE-BARRELED BLUNDERBUSS (Artificer):** You have a firearm that fires specialized, crafted ammo. You get one shot of each per session. When you shoot, choose the ammo: *blast core—drill shot—inferno shot—scatter shot—shrapnel burst—tangler shot*. Each shot has a **secondary effect** related to the type. You can fire two ammo types at the same time for a **potent shot**.

**MECHANICAL MOUNT (Artificer):** You have a small mechanical vehicle, like a steamwork spider or smoke-belching cart. It has three features: *all-terrain—armored—burrowing—grappling hook—submergible—turbo boost*. You can activate each perk once per session to pull off a **potent feat of piloting**. It also has one drawback: *conspicuous—horrificing—slow—unreliable*.

**STEAMHAMMER (Artificer):** You have a large steam-infused warhammer. Each session, you have a **6d Steamhammer** power pool. You can roll the pool to pull off **potent feats of pulverizing force**. You can also not expend its steam to use it as a normal warhammer.

**SWIFTWING (Artificer):** You have highly maneuverable wings that allow you to glide (not fly). You gain a **3d resource pool** while aloft, or 4d if you have extreme height or speed. You must roll the pool as bonus dice with any physical roll made while aloft, including defenses. At 0d, you coast back to the ground.

**MIND SEED (Psion):** When you plant thoughts or alter memories in someone's head, you can always choose to have them take effect exactly when you want them to. You can decide this at any time later. Once per session, you can use this for an **interrupt**.

**DISTURBED MIND (Formerly Tumultuous Mind on Psion):** You can spend 2 power points to gain **potency** on any Wits or Presence defense roll. Regardless of the roll, if the attacker is sentient, you can **interrupt** their next impact move.

**WILDER (Psion):** Your powers are inherently chaotic, either by nature or nurture, and you struggle to control them. Take +1d, but also +1t, on all psionic bastion rolls. You can never ignore thorns from any source, including by using your core talent. On a critical, regain the power points you just spent.

# CHAPTER 7 GAME OPTIONS

## SETTING DIALS

### MAGIC

Fantasy settings sometimes feature magic in a limited way, as a rarity or an exclusively evil force. In others, the wonders are widespread and available to all, sourced from the whimsical world itself or as an industrialized and quantified resource. Base Grimwild takes the middle road, with magic available, but not ubiquitous.

#### Rare Magic

- ◆ Limit the party to one magic user, if any.
- ◆ Potent spells can't open new opportunities; they act only as normal spells with broader impact—often with more risk.
- ◆ Establish before your game if magical healing exists.

#### No Magic

- ◆ All magical paths are removed, as is arcana. Re flavor talents as skill and technology as needed.
- ◆ Consider also dialing down deadlines (next page) or using the Vigor Pool optional rule to make up for the lack of magical healing unless you're looking for a gritty tone.

#### Common Magic

- ◆ Make arcana more plentiful in the world, and re flavor more talents to be magical in nature.
- ◆ PCs should start with 1 minor arcana, and the story of where it came from.

#### Dangerous Magic

All spells can trigger a **magical twist** (as sorcerer) when two or more 1s are rolled. When triggered, pick one of the following:

*Wild Surge:* make a 1d story roll to see the collateral damage

*Dark Omen:* GM takes +1 suspense

*6d Corruption pool:* Od → change trait, desire, bond, or appearance negatively.

## SCALE

There is a vast difference in the scale of character impact between small village common folk and mythic heroes. Use these options to change the scope of the game.

### Smaller Scale

- ◆ More rolls have **risk**, and are judged as impossible.
- ◆ Mooks should be rare, with even common enemies posing a threat.
- ◆ The max level for PCs is 3, though the GM should allow talents to be switched out after in-game milestones.

### Larger Scale

- ◆ Fewer rolls have **risk** and are judged as impossible.
- ◆ Mooks should be waded through freely, as pure set dressing, while toughs can be taken a few at a time. Bosses should be epic in their own right, not just being linked challenges more often, but having an interesting 'catch' or 'secret' to overcoming them that provides the real test.
- ◆ PCs start at level 3.

## LETHALITY

In some stories, a single knife wound can end an adventurer's career, taking months to heal if it doesn't kill them outright. In others, pulp action heroes can jump off cliffs and grab blades with their bare hands, then laugh about it later in a tavern. Base Grimwild strikes a balance, with characters more durable than the commoners around them, but a few bad calls can still leave them on the ground.

### More Lethal

- ◆ Use high and dire stakes more often. When weapons appear, the players should know that death could happen at any moment.
- ◆ Healing often takes longer, and resurrection is impossible. When a PC is desperate, give them an urgent condition which will lead to dropped (4d bleeding out, 6d blacking out).
- ◆ When a PC is dropped, they make a 1d story roll, making death (or permanent injury) a coin flip.

### Less Lethal

- ◆ Use low stakes more often, even in combat if the heroes aren't against strong foes.
- ◆ PCs will rarely have permanent conditions, and resurrection is possible.
- ◆ When a PC is dropped, they make a 3d story roll, giving much better odds to stay in the fight.

# OPTIONAL RULES

## TOKEN INITIATIVE

### Gameplay

Use this rule to strike a balance between the normally free-flowing scenes of Moxie and a structured turn system. In this approach, there's no set turn order. Instead, players are given tokens to represent the "camera time" they have to act within a scene.

**At the start of an intense moment, give each player 2 tokens.** Players must spend a token before a story beat (usually an action roll). Play continues until all tokens are spent, after which all players regain their tokens, ensuring everyone gets the same screen time.

## VIGOR POOL

### Gameplay

This rule is intended for games without healing magic.

**Each PC has a 3d Vigor pool.** When the PCs have a moment to catch their breath, they can roll the pool to clear 1 harm. This pool refreshes after an extended period of rest. Lower or increase the pool to change the lethality.

## ARMOR

### Gear

Use this rule to give better definition between those who wear armor and those who don't. Protective gear comes in two basic types: **Light** and **Heavy**. Each session, they bestow an Armor resource pool. After taking a physical consequence, you can choose to roll the pool to lessen the consequence (as a Messy on a defense roll).

**Light armor gives a 1d Armor pool**, and also bestows the *Lightly Armored* condition, hindering movement—usually affecting spellcasting.

**Heavy armor gives a 2d Armor pool**, bestowing the *Heavily Armored* condition, restricting movement and your ability to be quiet—usually affecting spellcasting, speed, and stealth. Plus, any attempt to swim are likely impossible.

### **Bulwark (Fighter Path Talent Rework)**

Increase your Armor pool by +2d, regardless of the type you're wearing (if any). When you roll your armor pool, you avoid the consequence instead of reducing it.

## ENCUMBRANCE

Gear

Use this rule to establish carrying limits and keep what PCs have on hand more grounded. This option is often paired with the Supplies rule.

**Each PC has space for 2 + their Brawn stat in gear they can carry.** Main armor and weapons aren't counted towards this number. Additional weapons, kits, rations, and treasures take up space, however, based on size. Most gear takes up 1 slot, while small items fill one half. Large or bulky items fill two or more. Characters can declare gear (related to their vantage) throughout their adventures, filling slots as needed.

Small items



Most gear



Large or Bulky



Large & Bulky



## SUPPLIES

Gear

Use this rule if you want the threat of running out of essential supplies, such as torches and rations to matter.

**Each PC has a 4d Supplies resource pool for common items and rations.** Roll the pool with heavy use, and as time passes outside of civilization.

For finer detail, separate Rations (or other important goods) from Supplies and track each with a smaller pool.

## WEALTH

Gear

Adventurers (and some players) love shiny coins to spend. Grimwild normally abstracts away all treasures except the most valuable—if you want a bit more fine control, use this rule.

**Each PC has a 4d Coins power pool to represent the gold they carry on their travels.**

Characters are expected to be able to pay for their own drinks, rooms, and other trivial purchases, but other expenditures are uncertain. PCs roll the pool for larger purchases (*buying a round of drinks, bribing a guard, getting a horse, buying party wear*), or drop 1d then roll for huge expenses (*securing passage across the sea, hiring an assassin, buying a trained warhorse*). Impact moves may mean there's a hidden flaw or hitch in the buying process, though the deal may still happen. When carousing (or as the GM sees fit), add +2d to the pool. Treasure hordes may add more.

## ACTIVE VIGILANCE

GM Tools

Use this rule to allow for randomized vigilance—when you want the dice to tell you what you do and don't see.

**When the GM decides to use vigilance, they spotlight one of the PCs, and have them make a story roll affected by their vantage.** On a perfect, the player gets a reveal. On a messy, they get a hint. On a grim, the GM uses strike. Certain groups may prefer to have the reason for the story roll a secret, though Grimwild thrives when everybody is in the know. Discuss with your group beforehand to find out what they prefer.

## TICK POOLS

GM Tools

These are a predictable version of any kind of diminishing pool, usually 2d-4d. **When triggered, they drop exactly 1d, and are never rolled.** These are less dramatic and less dynamic, but are useful when GMs want pool progress to be non-random. Because of the smaller size, rules or talents that drop 1d are more impactful. If used, these are recommended to go alongside standard pools, not acting as a full replacement.

## FOCUSED GROWTH

Advancement

Use this rule if you want to narrow the focus of your game. Tying experience to the story can help incentivize more passive players to engage with the themes. Make use of slow progression rules, slashing xp boxes before filling them (effectively doubling the amount needed to level), but at the end of each session, give a chance for an additional xp based on what happened in the game. This can often be connected to the adventuring party concept.

*Themes about **social relationships** → bonus xp to those who changed their **bond**.*

*Theme about **personal flaws** → bonus xp to those who introduced **tangles**.*

*Party concept: **Disciples** → bonus xp to those who **convert** others.*

*Campaign focus: **Treasure Hunting** → bonus xp when **carousing**.*

## MILESTONE LEVELS

Advancement

Use this rule to eschew keeping track of experience altogether. Players don't add xp after each session. Instead, the party members level up after meaningful completion of a major **group story arc**. The group should talk about what counts as meaningful, but ultimately the choice is up to the GM.

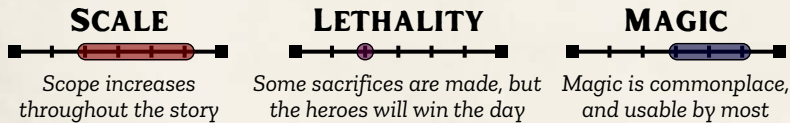
# FLAVORS OF FANTASY

Each of the following pages gives guidance, rules tweaks, and setting dials to shift the base assumptions of Grimwild over to other popular sub-genres of fantasy. Pick and choose what you want to use for your own setting, altering it as needed.

## HEROIC FANTASY

**Inspirational and adventurous**, with a focus on self-discovery and the hero's journey. Characters grow through challenge, forge bonds through hardship, and leave the world better than they found it, often through sacrifice. These stories are about becoming more than you were and choosing to act when it matters most.

**Use this flavor** when you want classic heroic journeys where courage, loyalty, and resolve are tested.



## GUIDANCE

- ◆ No rules tweaks. The default Grimwild rules are geared for Heroic Fantasy.
- ◆ Let characters be competent, capable, and proactive.
- ◆ Failure complicates the path but doesn't end the journey.
- ◆ Emphasize growth, relationships, and earned victories.
- ◆ Reward courage, but not recklessness.

## TYPICAL QUESTS

Protect an important route that has become too dangerous to travel.

Find and accept the burden of a strange relic, because it can turn the tide of the war.

Stay and join the battle, running or staying neutral helps no one.

## MEDIA TOUCHSTONES

**Literature:** *Mistborn*, *Water Outlaws*

**Visual:** *The Legend of Vox Machina*, *The Secret of NIMH*, *Adventure Time*

**Interactive:** *Dragon Age*, *Baldur's Gate*, *The Legend of Zelda*

# GRIMDARK

**Bleak, brutal, and unforgiving.** A world of moral ambiguity, harsh realities, and the constant threat of ruin. Any victories are costly, and hope is hard-won. In this world, doing the right thing hurts, but doing nothing hurts more. The point of some of these stories isn't the battle, but the nature of defeat.

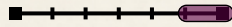
**Use this flavor** when you want stories of moral ambiguity and characters pushed to their limits by an uncaring world.

## SCALE



Wide range of conflict, usually on a personal scale

## LETHALITY



Danger around every corner, and death is lasting

## MAGIC



Magic is a dark, usually antagonistic force

## RULES TWEAKS

The effect of **potency** is scaled down.

**Magic healing** is incredibly rare or non-existent.

When **dropped**, make a 1d story roll. On a grim, they die, or worse.

**Marks** only clear on rest, not when rolled.

**Vex** responses are random—you never know how you'll react in the face of true fear.

**PC bonds** are rolled randomly, because you can't always pick who your allies are in a desperate world such as this.

**Supplies** (Optional Rule, pg. XX).

## GUIDANCE

- ◆ Scarcity and pressure push the characters.
- ◆ Violence is ugly and costly.
- ◆ Death isn't always meaningful.
- ◆ Hope is fragile.

## MEDIA TOUCHSTONES

**Literature:** *Second Apocalypse*, *The Black Company*, *First Law*, *The Locked Tomb*

**Visual:** *Berserk*

**Interactive:** *Dark Souls Series*

*John Grimwild, injured, lit by a single lantern, kneeling by a dead Jane riddled with arrows.*

## TYPICAL QUESTS

Escort civilians through a dangerous war zone.

Hold a falling stronghold just long enough for others to escape.

Cover a murder to uphold a shaky alliance.

Rally quarreling factions together against a dark, cataclysmic force.

Sneak past enemy lines on a one-way mission.

# LOW FANTASY

**Grounded and often more cynical or realistic.** This has small-scale conflicts with limited or no magic. These stories are about people scraping by in a world that largely doesn't care.

**Use this flavor** when you want tense, small-scale stories where preparation, vigilance, and relationships matter more than raw power.

## SCALE



*Smaller scope with personal struggles*

## LETHALITY



*Dangers are real, and death can be quick if unprepared*

## MAGIC



*Magic is rare, powerful, and dangerous*

## GUIDANCE

- ◆ *Magic is a rare and disruptive force.*
- ◆ *Leverage is more valuable than force.*
- ◆ *Winning usually has a cost.*
- ◆ *Gives a more 'historic' vibe.*

### MEDIA TOUCHSTONES

**Literature:** *A Song of Ice and Fire, The Lies of Locke Lemora, Sailing to Sarantium*

**Visual:** *Spice & Wolf, The 13<sup>th</sup> Warrior*

**Interactive:** *The Witcher, Kingdom*

## RULES TWEAKS

The effect of **potency** is scaled down.

Limited to 1 **magic user**, if any.

When **dropped**, make a 1d story roll. On a grim, they die, or worse.

**Vigilance** is more important, and is focused on hint more than strike or reveal.

The social fallout from **vex** is increased.

**Encumbrance** (Optional Rule, pg. XX).

**Wealth** (Optional Rule, pg. XX).

Slow **progression**, with a max level of 3.

**Consequences** stick around longer.

**Factions** play a major role.

## TYPICAL QUESTS

The mill won't turn. Find out what happened.

Research and prepare to take down an unusual monster that moved to the area.

Guard a caravan, and help folks survive with low supplies, dangerous roads, and bad weather.

Investigate the town and find out where the necromancer is hiding, then stop them.

*John and Jane Grimwild muddy, hiding under a rock ledge while bandits look for them above.*

# SWORDS & SORCERY

**Adventurous, action-packed, and often pulpy.** Heroes rely on wit, steel, and audacity in a world full of dangerous monsters and lost riches. The only way to live forever is to be a legend.

**Use this flavor** when you want high-action adventures driven by risk, greed, nerve, and luck.

## SCALE



Use your might and wits to overcome personal stakes

## LETHALITY



Danger abounds, but you are strong enough to meet it

## MAGIC



Magic corrupts the fools who seek it out

## RULES TWEAKS

No **magic**, or rare and dangerous magic (Setting dials, pg. XX)

Make a 1d story roll when **dropped**. Life is cheap.

Clear **marks** and **harm** after any intense scene.

**Vex** happens more often, but social fallout from vex responses is lessened.

Each PC has a **4d Renown** campaign timer, spreading their legend. Those in the greater world will come to know their names.

**Mooks** require no roll to take out.

Slow progression, but **carousing** earns +1 XP.

**Vigor Pool** (Optional Rule, pg. XX).

## GUIDANCE

- ◆ Keep scenes moving and decisive.
- ◆ Heroes have some moral ambiguity.
- ◆ Reward bold and reckless action.
- ◆ Keep stakes personal, with gold, freedom, and survival.

## MEDIA TOUCHSTONES

**Literature:** *Conan the Barbarian*, *Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser*

**Visual:** *Fire and Ice*, *Heavy Metal*

**Interactive:** *Thief the Dark Age*

*John Grimwild, with a greatsword on his back, standing on a hill, hair blowing in the wind, in a battle harness and scant cloth. Jane Grimwild in bikini mail with a sword, crouched next to him in an action pose.*

## TYPICAL QUESTS

Steal a relic from a ruin that lies half-buried in the desert as it collapses.

Slay a monster before a rival band claims the reward.

Fight in an arena after being captured. Make a spectacle and survive another day.

Pull off a heist for the King's jewels.

# NOBLEBRIGHT

**Both hopeful and dangerous.** Good almost always triumphs over evil. The world can be made better, and heroes are defined as much by mercy as by strength. This world is optimistic without being soft. Noblebright is about choosing light despite the dark forces in the world.

**Use this flavor** when you want hopeful stories where courage changes the course of events.

## SCALE



Threats are far reaching,  
but so are you

## LETHALITY



Both physical and moral  
victories matter

## MAGIC



Magic varies by area and  
faction, and is unaligned

## GUIDANCE

- ◆ *Redemption over punishment.*
- ◆ *Violence is the last resort.*
- ◆ *Let emotional victories matter as much as physical ones.*
- ◆ *Promote altruism and agency.*

### MEDIA TOUCHSTONES

**Literature:** *The Princess Bride, Discworld*

**Visual:** *The Last Airbender, She-Ra*

**Interactive:** *Kingdom Hearts, Dragon Quest*

## RULES TWEAKS

PCs begin at **2nd level** with 1 minor arcana.

Make a 3d story roll when **dropped**.

Should a PC die, the player has **full control** of the end of their story.

**Stakes** for physical combat are often lower, while those for social conflicts are higher.

**Rattled** clears after any intense scene.

Social fallout from **vex** responses heightened.

## TYPICAL QUESTS

Stay to protect a community despite the mounting danger.

Help an enemy who doesn't yet deserve a second chance.

Escort a symbolic artifact to safety while your foes want to break morale.

Resolve faction conflict to face a bigger threat.

*Jane Grimwild holding a shield up, protecting two villagers.*

# HIGH FANTASY

**Epic and grand, often with a sense of wonder.** Cosmic conflicts, destinies, and large-scale battles. Magic is powerful, heroes are exceptional, and conflicts are vast. These stories are about heroes standing at the center of myths, not just surviving, but becoming a part of them.

**Use this flavor** when you want grand stories of destiny, wonder, and world-shaping events.

## SCALE



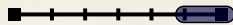
*The choices made will shape the future of the world*

## LETHALITY



*You're incredible, but up against ultimate power*

## MAGIC



*Magic, gods, and mysticism are everywhere*

## RULES TWEAKS

PCs begin at **3rd level** with 2 minor arcana or 1 major arcana, as well as a story about where they came from.

**Mooks** and toughs require no roll to take out.

**Bosses** are linked challenges, usually with a trick to overcoming them.

More rolls are automatic **successes**.

**Token Initiative** (Optional Rule, pg. XX).

## GUIDANCE

- ◆ *Increase the scale, think in terms of regions, factions, and eras.*
- ◆ *Victories reshape the setting.*
- ◆ *Keep personal stakes tied to cosmic ones.*
- ◆ *Lean into the lore and history of the world.*

## MEDIA TOUCHSTONES

**Literature:** *Stormlight Archive, The Wheel of Time, A Court of Thorns and Roses*

**Visual:** *The Dark Crystal, Kill 6 Billion Demons*

**Interactive:** *Final Fantasy*

*Jane Grimwild, glowing, striking down a huge demon, John in the background, cutting two lesser demons in half with many more rushing in*

## TYPICAL QUESTS

An ancient gate between planes has cracked open; seal it before the land is overwhelmed by evil.

A brood of elder dragons has moved to the region, force them to move elsewhere, or slay them if they won't.

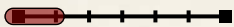
A celestial artifact that prevents catastrophe is failing; find out how to repair it as time starts to unravel.

# COZY FANTASY

**Wholesome, heartwarming, and low-stakes.** Stories are focused on friendship, personal growth, and the simple joys in a magical world. Conflict exists, but rarely with high stakes. Cozy fantasy is about finding comfort, connection, and meaning in small moments.

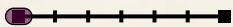
**Use this flavor** when you want warm, character-driven stories about belonging and growth.

## SCALE



Stories are personal, and low-stakes

## LETHALITY



True danger is rare, and with heart, you overcome

## MAGIC



The world is full of whimsy, arcane or not

## GUIDANCE

- ◆ Center relationships, routines, and emotional change.
- ◆ Tension comes from misunderstandings, not violence.
- ◆ Celebrate small victories.
- ◆ True antagonistic forces are mindless.

## RULES TWEAKS

**Low stakes** is the default. Normal stakes and higher must be declared.

PCs and allies **only die in meaningful ways** outside of conflict.

**Slow progression**, but changing a bond or completing a story arc in the session earns +1 XP.

## MEDIA TOUCHSTONES

**Literature:** *The Spellshop*

**Visual:** *Kiki's Delivery Service*,  
*Spirited Away*

**Interactive:** *Stardew Valley*

Characters can't progress past **level 3**.

## TYPICAL QUESTS

Help a small community prepare for a festival.

Mend a relationship strained by misunderstanding.

Cleanse the evil that has taken over the nearby woodlands.

Help a local spirit rekindle their magic.

Embark on a journey, meeting strange friends along the way and discovering what "home" really means.

*John and Jane Grimwild talk to a large, friendly nature spirit.*

## WHAT TO EXPECT FOR THE FULL RELEASE

Chapters 8-9 will include story kits, and extras. A full glossary/index, and bookmarks will be included with the final version.

This will be a free digital product available at [Moxietoolkit.com](http://Moxietoolkit.com), [itch.io](http://itch.io), and an at-cost priced print on demand book.

## HOW TO GIVE FEEDBACK

The easiest method is on our Discord (<https://discord.gg/bsfFh2dd6r>). We also have a small subreddit (<https://www.reddit.com/r/GrimwildRPG/>). You can reach me personally @astrogroov on Discord or [astrogroov@gmail.com](mailto:astrogroov@gmail.com).

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# GRIMWILD

## COMMUNITY EDITION