13th Age

A fantasy roleplaying game by **Rob Heinsoo** & **Jonathan Tweet**

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Full credits will appear in future editions…
For now, let's call out…

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Word count of the playtester feedback we are working through: **more than triple this manuscript**

Contents

INTRODUCTION

STARTING *13TH AGE*

We have targeted the game toward experienced Gamemasters and players who may or may not be experienced roleplayers. Use the chapter summary and quick glossary below as a guide to the rules.

The roleplaying . . .

13th Age is an OGL d20 game that's built to help your campaign generate good stories. As a 13th Age Game Master (GM), use the icons and other story features presented in these rules to help set up and drive the campaign.

It used to be that if you wanted to play a game that intentionally engaged the players at the level of character and story, you had to play a non-d20 game. Other games had vampire clans or heroic cults to connect the characters to the campaign. Other games redefined dice rolling as not merely simulation but also as drama. Other games gave GMs the tools to customize their campaigns. They gave players creative flexibility and dramatic authority. With *13th Age*, you can play an OGL campaign that uses story-oriented tricks that other games have used for years.

The rollplaying . . .

Once your players take over driving the story by playing through their characters' unique features, take advantage of the game's relative ease of generating adventure content to give the player characters (PCs) the confrontations their stories demand. To customize new challenges, traps, and skill check obstacles, use Chapter 6: Running the Game and its guidelines for setting Difficulty Check (DC) targets at different levels as the PCs move between forgiving and unforgiving environments.

Chapter 7 has a mix of monsters and advice on creating new monsters. The *13th Age* Monster Stat Generator PDF will help, but it's not in the Escalation Edition yet. @

13th Age offers straightforward rules that make combat exciting and encounters balanced. The rules are designed to be a dramatic experience at the game table rather than an accurate simulation in theory.

Along these lines, a few character classes, including the fighter, bard, monk, and wizard, aim to capture the feel of what everyone knows these classes should be capable of via new mechanics. If you're new to d20, you might not notice anything that unusual about these characters. If you're an old hand with d20, you'll want to take a look at the fighter's flexible maneuvers that let you roll to hit first and then choose and narrate your attack, the bard's songs and ballads, the monk's sequential forms, and the wizard's spell-improvisation abilities with *cantrip mastery* and *Vance's polysyllabic verbalizations*.

ABOUT THAT ROLEPLAYING: WHAT ARE ICONS AND HOW CAN THEY BE USED?

Lots of fantasy campaigns have High Druids. In *13th Age*, she is an icon, one of the most powerful NPCs in the world. Chapter 1 introduces the thirteen icons of the game setting.

Chapter 2 explains how player characters establish relationships with icons like the High Druid. In addition, we have described each icon in dramatic opposition to the other icons, such as the Dragon Emperor and the Lich King. The dramatic tension among these icons defines the campaign. The icons also define the written setting, but more importantly they help define events played out in your campaign. The world is in motion, driven by the icons.

Icons work like the clans or factions in other roleplaying games. They give characters real grounding in the setting and help bring the setting to life.

Gamemaster: Use plots involving the icons or their agents to define specific story arcs within your campaign. Use your personal twists on the icons, or even your invention of a new icon, to

make your game different from any other campaign.

Players: Use your past and potential relationships with icons to help craft a character with an immediate stake in the world and many juicy hooks for the GM to hang presents on.

A CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: ICONS details the icons who are the heart of the *13th Age* story . . . at least until the PCs arrive with their own stories. It's a good introduction to the setting. For more on the story of the setting, go to CHAPTER 8: THE DRAGON EMPIRE.

CHAPTER 2: CHARACTER RULES tells you what you need to know to create a character. If you're new to d20 games, or feeling rusty, see the glossary at the end of this introduction and then look at Chapter 5 for the full rules of the game.

As a brief intro to the meat of this chapter, *13th Age* characters are more customizable than most.

Backgrounds: Character-defined skills. Players have always used skills to customize their characters. Backgrounds play this card to the max by allowing players to say whatever they like about their character's history and how that is relevant to what they'll be able to accomplish with skills during play.

Relationships: Each PC has relationships with one, two, or three icons. These relationships help define the character's place in the setting and their actions during the campaign. Players roll relationship dice for their icon connections when it's dramatically justified, giving them a free-form way of parlaying their relationships to personal advantage.

Unique Feature—Each character has some special trait or quality that sets him or her apart. These features aren't numeric bonuses. Interpret them in a free-form way.

CHAPTER 3: RACES contains background story and game mechanics for each of the game's races. And a few that appear at the GM's option or the player's demand.

CHAPTER 4: CLASSES provides all the information on each of the game's nine classes. The chapter starts with a list of which characters are easiest and hardest to play.

If you already know which class you want to play you won't need to read all the rest of the classes. You don't necessarily even need to read more than the options available to you at first level, since decisions made early in a character's career can be changed later.

CHAPTER 5: COMBAT RULES is our streamlined version of the d20 battle experience. If you can't feel comfortable processing character decisions without knowing the rules system, you'll want to read this and Chapter 6 before you dig through Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 6: RUNNING THE GAME is mostly for GMs.

CHAPTER 7: MONSTERS is another chapter for the GM. It starts with rules that apply to monsters and continues with monster examples, more of which will come in the next draft. The chapter ends with advice on *Do It Yourself* monster-building.

CHAPTER 8: THE DRAGON EMPIRE is an alphabetical guide to our magical land. It's designed with many deliberately gray areas you're supposed to customize as you choose.

CHAPTER 9: TREASURE is the loot. Magic items are alive in *13th Age*, with personalities of their own. A PC who gathers too many will literally be placed at the mercy of their magic items' quirks! The chapter also contains rules for the few magic items you can buy: potions, runes, and oils.

CHAPTER 10: INTRODUCTORY ADVENTURE. You don't have to play through our introductory fight against goblins, but it might be a simple way of getting to know the system. You don't have to use our somewhat free-form opening adventure, Blood & Lightning, but if you don't, you'll be making your own first adventure and we'll be curious to hear about it. @our revised adventure is en route, we know this phrasing of *Blood & Lightning* had problems making assumptions about what the PCs might intend or manage to accomplish

SO THE DESIGNERS WORKED ON 3E AND ON 4E. HOW DOES THIS COMPARE?

Critics complained that 3E weighed everything down with rules for everything, turning an open-ended roleplaying game into a complicated simulation, arithmetic on a grid. *13th Age* is a rules-light, free-form, gridless way to play a story-oriented campaign.

3rd Edition took the game forward in terms of player options and universal mechanics, and we have followed suit.

Critics compared 4E to a board game or miniatures game that distanced itself from its roots. *13th Age* is about story-oriented campaigns not minis, and it revisits its roots with its setting and rules.

4E took the game forward in terms of balance and game play, and so do we.

IF YOUR GROUP WON'T SWITCH TO A NEW SYSTEM . . .

Sometimes that's how it is. Luckily you can port some of the best ideas from *13th Age* to your own OGL campaign. Our unique feature, icon relationship, and background mechanics could fit in well in a typical campaign. The same goes for the campaign map, the icons, or the world description. Increments, the escalation die, recoveries, and full heal-ups are portable as well. Help yourselves.

YOU HAD ME AT "STORY"

Our previous OGL games were designed within initiatives organized to sell mass quantities of support products each and every month. Of course we hope to entertain you enough that you'll buy another *13th Age* book or three from Pelgrane someday. But our original intent was that you shouldn't *need* to.

Our previous OGL games required uniformity so that future books would fit everyone's campaign and that players could be organized in extended-play networks. This design doesn't have to stick close to a single agreed-upon format for organized play. Instead we're hoping you'll tweak the game to suit your group the way we tweak the system to suit our groups. Customize it to create your own stories.

GLOSSARY

[[@@Letting Escalation Edition users know: the plan for the final book is to have page numbers in brackets referring to where you can find more on each entry.]]

ability: Six character traits that figure into attacks, defenses, hit points, damage, skill checks, and other elements of play. Monsters don't have ability scores unless they really need them for some reason. [35]

advance: See incremental advance. [169]

adventurer: The adventurer tier is comprised of 1st through 4th levels. This tier is the kobolds and ogres phase of your career. A more general usage is that we sometimes call all PCs adventurers, but that refers to characters in general, not adventurer-tier PCs.

AC, Armor Class: A defense stat, the number that an attacker must roll to hit a target when using regular weapons. Technically it should be your "Armor Defense," but we love "Armor Class."

ally: One of your character's friends; or leaving friendship and affection out of the equation, one of the other members of your party or an NPC on your side. You are not your own ally; make of that what you will.

attack bonus: Your level, plus your ability bonus, plus your weapon's magic bonus, plus any other bonuses you can scrounge up, added to your attack roll. Player characters also add the escalation die bonus.

attack roll: A 20-sided die roll, to which you add your attack bonus. If the total is at least as high as the target's defense, the attack is a hit. If it's a natural 20, it's a critical hit.

at-will: You can reuse an at-will power freely. It never runs out.

background: A broad term or concept describing a character's suite of skills, talents, knowledge, and experience. You, the player, define your character's backgrounds in free-form game-world terms.

basic attack: One of a character's baseline attacks, as defined by class. Each class has a basic melee attack and a basic ranged attack, usually made with weapons. Opportunity attacks are basic melee attacks. Some classes deal miss damage when their basic attacks miss, other less combat-skilled classes don't.

battle: Many spells and powers last for one battle, a single fight scene. If you need to count the minutes, five or so should do. The important thing is that abilities that last for a battle are meant to force a choice: use the spell now? Or use it in a later battle?

chakra: A location on the body for a magic item. You can use only one magic item associated with a particular chakra.

champion: The champion tier is comprised of 5th through 7th level. Your adventures in this tier take you far afield and to the halls of power.

Cha, Charisma: An ability, your force of personality and social grace. Hard to define, hard to miss when it walks by.

class talents: Characteristics/abilities that make a class special. Choose three talents out of several available to your class to help define your character compared to other PCs from your class.

close-quarters spell: A spell that you can cast while engaged in battle, without drawing the usual attacks of opportunity.

Con, Constitution: An ability, your toughness and endurance. It's the one ability that every class needs.

crit, critical hit: If the 20-sided die comes up 20 on an attack roll, the attack is a crit and deals double damage. Some attacks and class talents do fun things with crits. If you get lucky and you manage to double the damage again, triple it instead. If you manage to double your triple damage, bump it up to quadruple, and so on.

crit range: If you can score critical hits on natural rolls other than 20, you have an expanded crit range. We're not the type of game that employs a shrunken crit range.

daily: Some class talents and powers are usable once per day. For better play balance, a day is defined loosely, and you get your used daily talents back when you heal up (see **full heal-up**).

damage: Attacks and special traits deal damage, which reduces the defender's hit points. Characters and stories are great and all, but it's also fun to reduce the bad guys' hit points.

defense: Armor Class, Mental Defense, and Physical Defense are defenses that define how hard you are to hit with various sorts of attacks.

Dex, Dexterity: An ability, your agility, reflexes, and handiness. It factors into Armor Class, Physical Defense, and Initiative, making it generally useful.

disengage: You have a chance to get away from an enemy your engaged with in battle without risking an opportunity attack.

echo spell: A spell that can be cast only as the next standard action after a spellcaster has cast a daily spell. In truth, that probably makes it less an echo than an aftershock, but wizards apparently see it differently.

engaged: Locked in battle. Engaged characters draw opportunity attacks if they use ranged attacks or spells. If they move away from enemies they are engaged with, they draw opportunity attacks unless they have successfully disengaged first.

environment: The difficulty level of the location/setting where the characters are adventuring. There are three levels of environment: adventurer-level, champion-level, and epic-level. More often than not, characters fight in environments of their own tier. The exceptions, higher or lower, tend to be interesting.

epic: The epic tier is comprised of 8th through 10th level. Characters in this tier are dealing with icons and battling really nasty critters.

escalation die: Starting on the second round of combat, the PCs get an attack bonus. It starts at +1 and increases by +1 each round until it maxes out at +6. This bonus offsets the fact that all the monsters have defenses 1 higher than they should be. The party starts each fight in the hole and fights its way up.

far away: Distant enough from a battle that you won't get caught in fireballs. Also, enemies will have to spend a round closing with you before they can engage you. The opposite of nearby.

feats: Characters gain one each level. They let you hand-pick your own bonuses and the boosts to your powers and talents. Make your favorite attack better, master your favorite spell. Feats are ranked adventurer, champion, and epic.

flexible attack: Instead of deciding which attack to use and then rolling, characters with flexible attacks roll first, then select an attack that the natural unmodified result of their attack roll can trigger. It suits the bard because the bard gets to tell the story properly after seeing their roll, it suits the fighter because of the fighter's many combat tricks.

free: When speaking of combat, a free character/monster is not engaged by an enemy. When speaking of recoveries, a free recovery doesn't subtract from the number of recoveries you have to use that day.

full heal-up: Your hit points rise to full. You get back all the spells cast, powers used up, recoveries used, and other limited-use features.

fumble: When you roll a 1 on an attack or skill check. For an attack, it has no effect, not even miss damage. If you're shooting into a battle or doing something else risky, it might be bad for you. For skill checks, the check fails, usually in some particularly bad way.

fun: What rules should help you have.

group, in a group: Spells and effects that target a number of enemies who are close together instead of being in opposite directions say that they target enemies who are in a group. It's a loose distinction from targeting anyone you like

without skipping over enemies. If you are not playing with minis, wing it.

gather power: A flashy sorcerer schtick in which the sorcerer spends their turn setting themselves up for a double-strength spell next turn while still getting a small random benefit as the power whirls about them.

hit: Succeed with an attack.

hit points, hp: A measure of how not dead you are. Damage reduces hit points. At 0 or lower, you're pretty close to dead. Hit points measure more than your physical capacity to suffer wounds; they also represent intangibles like your will to fight. Use your recoveries to get back hit points lost to damage.

huge monster: Bigger than large. Three times as much trouble as a regular monster, in hit points, damage per round, that sort of thing.

icon: Each character is related to two to four of the world's thirteen mightiest heroes and villains, who are known as icons. Ultimately, the icons and their followers drive the action in the campaign, especially when the followers are player characters.

incremental advance: In advance of your next level, you can gain some of that level's benefits. At the end of most sessions, you can choose one upcoming benefit and start using it during your next session. Pick the advancement that you think you need for upcoming challenges.

initiative: Highest initiative goes first, and so on.

Int, Intelligence: An ability, your capacity for analytical and abstract thought. It is not the same as bookishness, just correlated.

intercept: Blocking an enemy from racing past you, especially when they're trying to get to an ally behind you. Since the characters in the battle are not actually toy soldiers on a table, they can move to intercept enemies when it's not their turn, within reason.

large monster: Twice the threat of a regular monster. Some human-size monsters are extra tough, however, earning them large-style stats.

level: How extraordinary you are, from 1, promising beginner, to 10, world-renowned hero.

miss: When your attack roll isn't high enough, you don't get a hit, but you usually get miss damage or some other effect. An attack on the *13th Age*-scale is a serious threat, whether with a sword or a lightning bolt, so even a "miss" can deal some damage (but not if you fumble).

miss damage: Damage dealt on a miss. Big daily attacks often deal half damage. A player-character's at-will attacks typically deal miss damage equal to that character's level. It sucks to miss, but at least you move the battle forward.

Mental Defense: A defense stat, the number that an attacker must roll to hit a target with mental manipulation, psychic attacks, stealth, trickery, obfuscation, and the like.

mob: A group of identical mooks.

mod, modifier: Many d20 rolls add the modifier from one of your character's ability scores to the roll. The modifier for an ability score equals your ability score minus 10, divided by 2, round down. All that character attacks that say they add an ability to the attack or damage roll are actually adding the modifier from that ability, but we decided we didn't want to write mod or modifier thousands of times so we're explaining it as the default.

mook: The lowest scale of monster, equivalent to a fifth of a regular monster's threat. GMs use them by the dozen. The horde of mooks has a single pool of hit points, letting powerful attacks cleave through them in twos and threes.

move action: Usually moving to engage a nearby enemy, to get away from an enemy engaging you, to climb, or to do whatever you need to do short of attacking.

nearby: By default, all the participants in a battle are nearby each other. That means that they can get to each other with a move action, if they can navigate any obstacles in the way. If there's a reason for someone to be farther out, they are far away.

oil: Oils are special items that confer a magic bonus to a weapon, spellcasting item, or piece of armor. The bonus lasts for one battle.

opportunity attack: An attack you make when an enemy gives you a chance to hit it, usually by moving away from you without disengaging or by casting a spell when engaged with you.

per day: See daily and full heal-up.

per battle: Some character talents, powers, and spells can be used one time per battle, while others can be used a limited number of times. After using a per battle feature, you get it back with a quick rest or full heal-up.

Physical Defense: A defense stat, the number that an attacker must roll to hit a target with poison, a bull rush, a fireball, or other physical attacks without weapons.

pop free, pop off: When you pop free from an enemy, you're no longer engaged with them. Unlike disengage actions, this isn't an action, it's a change in your situation. When you pop an enemy off you, they're no longer engaged with you.

potion: Potions are special items that provide a magic effect to their drinker, especially healing.

power: Powers are things a character can do or abilities that a character has, usually attacks of some sort.

quick action: A quick action you can do once on your turn, like draw a sword.

quick rest: A short break after a battle allows you to regain your used per-battle talents, powers and spells. You also roll to recharge each used, rechargeable power. You can recover hit points as many times as you like, though a wounded character *must* use at least one recovery.

rally: You can rally during a fight to regain a few hit points. It usually takes the place of an attack and it usually costs you one of your recoveries.

recharge: After each battle, when you get a quick rest, you can roll for each of your used, rechargeable powers, including those used in an previous battle, to see if they recharge. They all recharge when you get a full heal-up.

recovery: Your ability to regain lost hit points. When you take a recovery, roll 1 die per level and add your Con bonus (x2 Con bonus at champion level, x3 at epic). That's how many hit points you regain. You can do that 8 times per day, more often if you're exceptional even for a player character hero.

recovery dice: Determines how many hit points you can regain when you spend a recovery. Depending on your class, your recovery dice are d6s, d8s, or d10s.

relationship: Each player character has relationships with two to four icons. When trying to gain a free-form advantage from one of

these relationships, you roll 1, 2, or 3 d6s (sometimes even 4d6), depending on the relationship's overall usefulness. If you get any 6s, you gain an advantage of some type. If you roll any 5s, you gain an advantage but also suffer interesting consequences.

resistance: If your target has resistance against your type of attack, you deal half damage unless you can beat the resistance rating with a d20 roll. Resistance is rated 6+, 11+, or 16+.

ritual magic: The ability for a practiced ritualist to use magic in a free-form way, if given time to concentrate and improvise.

round: A unit of time that's something between three and seven seconds, long enough for everyone to get to take a turn in initiative order. We're flexible thinking about how long each round might take because dramatic pacing fluctuates and we're not being precise about measuring distances.

rune: Magic glyphs that grant a magic bonus to a weapon, spellcasting item, or piece of armor. In addition, a rune provides a random magic ability. The effect lasts for one battle.

save: A roll to avoid some bad effect or to get out from under one that's already affecting you, usually made at the end of your turn. You have to roll 6+ (easy save), 11+ (normal), or 16+ (hard) with a d20 roll. If a save doesn't specify its type it's a normal save.

skill check: A d20 roll made to see how successful you are using a skill. Roll a d20, add the modifier bonus for the relevant ability, and add a bonus for any background that applies. The same background can be used with different abilities. Your "bodyguard" background, for example, can be used with your Wisdom to size up a dangerous situation or with Charisma to give effective orders to people you're protecting.

speed: Usually you move fast enough to get where you want to go in a battle. By default, any character is fast enough to close with anyone nearby, unless there are obstacles. If there's some real doubt as to whether you can cover a distance, instead of counting squares, the GM will call for a roll of some type, possibly a skill check (such as with an Athlete background) or maybe just a save.

standard action: An action you can do once per round, up to and including making an attack.

Str, Strength: An ability, your bodily power and capacity for force. It's good for more than hurting things (as if hurting things weren't enough).

spell: A magical attack or other effect. Spellcasting draws attacks of opportunity from engaged opponents, unless it's a close-quarters spell. Some powers and class features are magical without being spells.

teleport: Magically move from one spot to another without crossing the intervening space.

temporary hit points: Bonus hit points that are not added to your normal hit point total but are the first hit points you'll lose when you take damage. Temporary hit points always go away at the end of a battle.

turn: Each creature gets its own turn in initiative order during a round, its chance to shine or fumble.

unique feature: You invent a characteristic or story element specialized to your character, some advantageous trait that sets him or her apart. It doesn't give you a bonus on your rolls. Instead, it lets you make rolls that you otherwise wouldn't even be able to make.

vulnerable: a condition that gives you a –4 penalty to all your defenses.

vulnerability: Some monsters (and occasionally PCs) are vulnerable to a type of damage. After being hit by an attack dealing that type of damage, the creature takes a –4 penalty to all its defenses against attacks dealing that type of damage the rest of the battle.

Wisdom: An ability, your intuition, insight, and perceptiveness. Unfortunately, this trait seems to serve unholiness as well as it serves holiness—maybe even better.

wounded: Reduced to half maximum hit points. Sometimes you can only use a particular power when your *target is wounded*. Sometimes it's only if you yourself are wounded.

Chapter 1: ICONS

Most d20 games have powerful NPCs who shape the world behind the scenes. *13th Age* brings them forward, making these thirteen powerful NPCs into icons the PCs will aid or oppose over the course of each campaign.

The Archmage has preserved the Empire for centuries and created astonishing new lands. He has also threatened the fabric of reality with experiments you'd have to be brilliant or hugely arrogant to attempt.

The Crusader is the armored fist of the Dark Gods. So long as followers of the gods of light stay the hell out of his way, the Crusader turns his wrath against the demons that would destroy the world his own gods want to rule. Follow the Crusader if you must win at any cost.

The Diabolist controls fiends and tampers with forces even the Archmage avoids. She likes her victims screaming and her chaos pure while claiming that the demons she summons would otherwise overwhelm the Great Gold Wyrm who seals the Abyss. There are two differences between her and her demons: First, she likes keeping destruction personal rather than universal. Second, she's capable of kindness, so long as it comes as a great surprise.

The Dwarf King is lord of Forge, the dwarves' new homeland beneath the mountains. He'd love to reclaim the dwarven Underhome lost to war against the dark elves and the creatures of the deeps. But now that the Empire is stumbling, the dwarves find themselves manning the mountain walls that shield the Empire from the orcs and monsters of the north.

The Elf Queen rules the Court of Stars, the one place where wood elves, dark elves, and high elves come together as peers and allies instead of as rivals or enemies. Honed by centuries of experience, the Queen's innate magic at least equals the Archmage's spells.

The Emperor rules the world's greatest human kingdom, known as the Dragon Empire for the mounts of its mightiest warriors. All the signs suggest that the age is turning, but will the Empire fall or shift to a new balance?

The Great Gold Wyrm is the world's protector and the inspiration for holy orders of paladins and independent heroes. Although the Gold Wyrm's physical form seals the gap that prevents the Abyss from erupting into the world, his dreams and the agents it employs still move through the world, helping those who will fight and even die for what's right.

The High Druid is the champion of the resurgent Wild, and the spiritual and magical leader of spirits of nature and the elements that were chained by the Empire but are now working themselves free. She might be the great force that shakes the Empire to pieces or the hero who destroys the destroyers and points to a new way to live.

The Lich King is the lord of the undead, a fallen tyrant who intends to conquer the Dragon Empire and restore his ancient kingdom. He's not entirely insane and mostly understands that ruling a kingdom is not the same as destroying it.

The Orc Lord is a figure of legend. The last time he walked the land the Lich King fell, in part because of the Orc Lord's attack. Who will fall before his hordes this time? Who won't?

The Priestess hears all the Gods of Light and speaks for those who please her. She is part oracle, part mystic, and part metaphysical engineer, since she created the Cathedral, an ever-expanding temple with rooms or entire wings for each of the faiths she favors.

The Prince of Shadows is part thief, part trickster, and part assassin. To some he is a hero; to others a villain. He has squandered the riches of the dwarves, murdered the hopes of a dragon, and plundered the dreams of a god. His exploits have changed the world, but none can tell you his ultimate goals or motives.

The Three were among the first dragons to walk the world. The Red is a living engine of destruction. The Blue is a sorceress, perhaps

even the original mother of all sorcery. The Black is queen of shadows and assassins. Unlike the Great Gold Wyrm, who must fight alone, the Three have learned to join forces.

ARCHMAGE

The Archmage has preserved the Empire for centuries and created astonishing new lands. He has also threatened the fabric of reality with experiments you'd have to be brilliant or hugely arrogant to attempt.

Quote

"Your pardon, but this is the moment you burst into flames . . . *fireball* . . . and I go save civilization."

Usual Location

In Horizon, or (rumor has it) peering out through the eyes of one of his homunculi.

Common Knowledge

For hundreds of years, one man has held the Empire together—the Archmage. While an everyday wizard works magic that can astound or destroy a crowd, the Archmage casts spells that make the civilized world safe and prosperous. His magic quiets storms, enlivens crops, and staves off plague. The Empire has experienced a steady growth in order, security, and wealth, largely because the Archmage wards off chaos, peril, and calamity.

The Archmage's plans and projects are beyond the ken of normal people, but even normal people are part of his schemes. The Empire's farms plant different crops at different times, all coordinated by the Archmage's schedule. Merchants and travelers consult the Archmage's almanacs to find the best times to set sail. But the common people have little appreciation for what the Archmage does for them. People even complain about the Archmage's instructions, as if he were a capricious bureaucrat in the imperial offices.

The Archmage maintains the wards that protect the Empire through a series of magical nodes, placed at strategic points across the land. The nodes tap into ley lines, which occur naturally (although the imperial ley lines are better controlled and more powerful) and channel and direct arcane energy from them to the wards.

The Archmage oversees the School of Imperial Wizardry, though it is run day-to-day by one of his trusted inner circle members. Sometimes this school devotes itself to testing and training those with arcane potential. The imperial wizards are notorious for being tight-lipped about their true intentions, and they lie without compunction to cover their tracks. No one holds it against them; the Archmage knows best.

Adventurers & the Icon

Many adventurers long to be hired into the Archmage's service. His wizards provide powerful arcane support, and they reward adventurers well, but the Archmage's missions are notoriously obscure. Instead of killing monsters or rescuing damsels, adventurers hired by imperial wizards may find themselves burying ritual items in wastelands or painting sigils on the walls of ruins. Somehow, it's all very important to the empire.

The less-known truth is that the Archmage is losing his handle on the multitude of tasks he has taken responsibility for and is forced to trust more and more missions to adventurers and agents while he struggles to deal with the high arcana that only he can survive.

Allies

The Archmage swears undying fealty to the Dragon Emperor. There are legends of past Archmages who have betrayed their imperial

oaths, and those legends always end poorly for all concerned. The Archmage and the Priestess, as fellow champions of the Empire, are bound to work together toward common goals. Some say that high-order goals are all the two icons have in common and that they are never seen together at Imperial functions. Others say that they cooperate more than anyone knows and that the Archmage even helped the Priestess build the Cathedral.

Enemies

Nature, like the High Druid, chafes at the bit that the Archmage has jammed into its mouth. If the Archmage is the enemy of nature, he is careful not to raise the Elf Queen's ire. The Archmage respects the boundaries of the Elf Queen's territory, and for her part she has no particular sympathy for nature in the raw.

History

As often as not, no mortal is worthy to claim the title of Archmage. An Archmage's reign lasts for decades or centuries. Eras in which there is an Archmage tend to be times of growth and recovery, though sometimes an Archmage appears in order to prevent the lands from descending into chaos.

The current Archmage has been in power for centuries, overseeing a gradual increase in general security and prosperity.

The True Danger

Everything will be all right provided that no catastrophe brings down the Archmage's power nodes and plunges the Empire into a maelstrom of rampant elementals, natural forces, monsters from the Iron Sea, and demons from the Abyss.

CRUSADER

The Crusader is the armored fist of the Dark Gods. So long as followers of the gods of light stay the hell out of his way, the Crusader turns his wrath against the demons that would destroy the world that his gods want to rule. Follow the Crusader if you must win at any cost.

Quote

"I fear nothing, least of all doing what must be done."

Usual Location

First Triumph, a fortress in a conquered hellhole near Axis. Or out Crusading.

Common Knowledge

One way or another, it's a bad sign that the Crusader is accommodated within the Empire and sometimes even welcomed. It means either that the common people have lost their good sense or that times are so dire that the people will accept the help of a destroyer bound to the dark gods.

If the enemy of your enemy is your friend, then the Crusader is everybody's friend because demons are everybody's enemy. The Crusader, however, is the sort of friend who will burn your house to the ground if he finds it tactically necessary.

The mighty deeds of the Crusader include conquering hellholes and making them his own. The first hellhole he conquered was an especially large and perverted one near the Imperial capital, Axis. It was there that he established his headquarters, known as First Triumph. When he conquers a hellhole, he binds the defeated demons and forces them to garrison the fort he builds or claims at the location.

The Crusader leads an elite corps of ruthless warriors, spellcasters, and assassins. From him, they learn the lost ways of the Dark Gods, speaking oaths long forbidden to those who walk in the light of day. Critics of the Crusader say that the side effect of this training is to burn all pity and love from the hearts of the crusaders, and indeed a pitiless heart is not a side effect but the very point of the training. Many crusader initiates prove unworthy of the challenge. Those who die in training are perhaps luckier than those who live on, forever haunted by what they learned but failed to master.

Adventurers & the Icon

For an adventurer to have undertaken missions sponsored by the Crusader is a cause for bragging rights. Such missions are never mere cakewalks or uneventful garrison duty. The Crusader has stepped on certain toes, and his personal style is unacceptable to certain hosts, so he occasionally hires adventurers from outside his organization to undertake missions in "hostile" territory, such as the Priestess's Cathedral in Santa Cora or in the vicinity of the Golden Citadel.

Allies

The Crusader acknowledges the Emperor as the ruler of the land, though some suspect that he would just as soon acknowledge the Lich King as such. The bitter rivalry between the Crusader and the Great Gold Wyrm lacks any formal declaration, but it is as thick as ochre jelly.

Enemies

If the Diabolist fears the Crusader, and she probably should, then he's the only thing in all the worlds that she fears. The Priestess works to protect people from the excesses of the Crusader, to the point of hindering his efforts.

History

The history books include accounts of imperial champions, but never a hero as dark and forbidding as the Crusader. He might be a new icon, or a recurrent hero icon that has somehow woke up on the dark side of the banner.

The True Danger

Everything will be all right provided the demons keep the Crusader busy and he has no time to pay attention to second priorities, such as stomping on the face of goodness and light.

DIABOLIST

The Diabolist controls fiends and tampers with forces even the Archmage avoids. She likes her victims screaming and her chaos pure while claiming that the demons she summons would otherwise overwhelm the Great Gold Wyrm who seals the Abyss. There are two differences between her and her demons: First, she likes keeping destruction personal rather than universal; second, she's capable of kindness, so long as it comes as a great surprise.

Quote

"Why do you mortals take these blood feuds so seriously? Don't you see it's all just a game? Don't you realize that I've already won?"

Usual Location

She is known to live in Hell Marsh, purportedly in a hellhole rife with ungodly flowers.

Common Knowledge

The longer she lives, the more this Diabolist looks like one of her demons. The stories are that she was originally a human woman, but you'd be hard-pressed to prove it.

If the Diabolist has overarching goals, they are obscure. What's clear is the delight she takes in wielding power and unleashing chaos. Her enemies say that she may be nothing more than a slave to the vast powers she dares to command, but as long as she's smiling she seems to have the upper hand.

The Diabolist leads a scattered and half-mad crew of fiendish cultists. They adore her with respect that borders on worship. In turn, she alternately exalts them and brings them to ruin. With her help, they learn occult secrets, master unspeakable magic, and gloat over the destruction of their enemies. No cultist knows the extent of the cult or its ultimate goals. It is certainly more widespread than the imperial authorities admit to publicly.

The Diabolist lacks the focus and discipline that define the Crusader. She is in it for herself, and she indulges even her petty whims. If she remained on-task the way the Crusader does, things would doubtless be a lot worse. Unless indulging her whims is actually part of a subtle plot that none can guess at until it is too late.

Adventurers & the Icon

Too many adventurers accept missions on the Diabolist's behalf, often because they are reckless. If adventurers knew what was best for them, they would probably have chosen safer careers than adventuring. Still, a few lucky adventurers have profited mightily from her sponsorship, and they love to show off the remarkable weapons and talismans that they have acquired in consideration for their services.

Adventurers who work for the Diabolist for long suspect that her chaotic whims and petty vendettas are cover for howling insanity. There are ranks of fiendish cultists hidden behind the gloating cultists who are easy to spot and kill. The deeper you go the more disturbing and insane the experience becomes.

Allies

The Diabolist and the Prince of Shadows are said to work together. Everyone else hopes they're going to betray each other. They hope that a lot.

Enemies

The Crusader is the Diabolist's worst nightmare, and she's no big fan of the Great Gold Wyrm, either. The Priestess protects good people from corruption, making her a real annoyance.

History

It seems there's always a Diabolist or at least someone who claims the title. Each of these twisted villains has been different from the ones that came before them. Embracing chaos amplifies a mortal's personal traits, making each Diabolist unique. Usually a Diabolist is something of a rumor and a mystery, more a legend than a force to be reckoned with. Unfortunately, the current Diabolist has proven herself to be much more than a story to frighten children with.

The True Danger

Everything will be all right provided that the Diabolist remains unable to corrupt the Emperor or other icons.

DWARF KING

The Dwarf King is lord of Forge, the dwarves' new homeland beneath the mountains. He'd love to reclaim the dwarven Underhome lost to war against the dark elves and the creatures of the deeps. But now that the Empire is stumbling, the dwarves find themselves manning the mountain walls that shield the Empire from the orcs and monsters of the north.

Quote

"In the name of the Ancestors of Adamant, I accept the return of these stolen dwarf treasures."

Usual Location

Forge, the dwarves' underground throne city. In rare circumstances he's been reported seen outside the city.

Common Knowledge

The Dwarf King is the master of treasures, pressing a claim on all marvels pulled from the earth. His halls are filled with legendary marvels. As the Emperor rules the civilized lands above, the Dwarf King rules the civilized lands below.

Adventurers & the Icon

The Dwarf King has the means and the cause to hire mercenaries to represent his interests or retrieve items that the dwarves lay claim to, whether on the surface world or deep underground.

Allies

The Dwarf King works reliably with the Emperor, and he respects the ages-old truce with the Elf Queen.

Enemies

When the Elf Queen's dark elves get out of hand, they are the worst sort of enemy. The Dwarf King has offered a king's ransom for the head of the Prince of Shadows.

History

There is always a Dwarf King. This one has been in place for centuries, and no one would be surprised if he decided to end his reign fighting on the battlefield.

The True Danger

Everything will be all right provided the Dwarf King does not unseal the Hall of Vengeance and retrieve the legendary Axe of Seven Bloods.

ELF QUEEN

The Elf Queen rules the Court of Stars, the one place where wood elves, dark elves, and high elves come together as peers and allies instead of as rivals or enemies. Honed by centuries of experience, the Queen's innate magic at least equals the Archmage's spells.

Quote

"We accept your most gracious offer of an invitation, my dear cousin."

Usual Location

In the Court in Queen's Wood, north of Drakkenhall and Concord.

Common Knowledge

The Queen is mystically connected to every elf, and so every elf is mystically connected to every other elf.

Adventurers & the Icon

Elf adventurers consider it an honor to work for the Queen, and non-elf adventurers consider it something of a miracle. Elf adventurers may find themselves guided by the Queen's dream sendings to join the perilous adventures of other elves who need their help.

Allies

The High Druid is figuratively her half-sister of the woods. The blood truce with the Dwarf King has created a long and prosperous peace, but the truce is technically temporary. The Emperor is a trusted ally, but the Emperor's Priestess and Archmage can be wearisome.

Enemies

The Orc Lord is the elves' shame because they created the original. It may fall to the Queen to dispatch him. The Dwarf King should be her mortal enemy, but an ages-old truce has preserved the peace. The Three resent the Queen for imprisoning the Green.

History

There is always an Elf King or Queen, though sometimes they are hidden and unknown. The current Queen has ruled for most of the current age.

The True Danger

Everything will be all right so long as the dark elves remain out of favor in the Court, so that the Elf Queen sees little reason to exact bloody vengeances for ancient slights remembered only by the elves.

EMPEROR

The Emperor rules the world's greatest human kingdom, known as the Dragon Empire for the mounts of its mightiest warriors. All the signs suggest that the age is turning, but will the Empire fall or shift to a new balance?

Quote

"As long as I draw breath, the Empire is safe."

Usual Location

Axis, the capital of the Dragon Empire.

Common Knowledge

The Dragon Emperor hails from a long line of noble rulers. It is his nature to lead. To the civilized people, he is the champion of their safety and prosperity.

Adventurers & the Icon

Adventurers are routinely hired by imperial functionaries to carry out all manner of ad hoc missions. Adventurers who work exclusively for the Emperor are rewarded with increased pay and greater status, though other adventurers are likely to label them as imperial functionaries.

Allies

The Archmage and Priestess work closely with the Emperor. The Crusader and Great Gold Wyrm ostensibly are duty-bound to the Emperor, but they interpret that duty as they each see fit. The Dwarf King and Elf Queen are united with the Emperor in pursuit of peace and security.

Enemies

The Lich King explicitly claims continued authority over the Empire, a treasure he seeks to reclaim from the Dragon Emperors. The Orc Lord seems destined to face the Emperor, as the previous Orc Lord faced the Wizard King.

History

Ever since the first Dragon Emperor established the Imperial Seal, there has always been a Dragon Emperor. Elaborate and exacting ceremonies ensure that the power and authority of the original Emperor live on. The current Emperor is capable but essentially unproven.

The True Danger

Everything will be all right as long as the Emperor stands stalwart between civilization and chaos.

GREAT GOLD WYRM

The Great Gold Wyrm is the world's protector and the inspiration for holy orders of paladins and independent heroes. Although the Gold Wyrm's physical form seals the gap that prevents the Abyss from erupting into the world, his dreams and agents still move through the world, helping those who will fight and even die for what's right.

Quote

"If you fail me now, then my own sacrifice is also futile."

Usual Location

Centuries ago, the Great Gold Wyrm threw itself into the Abyss to prevent the demons of hell from pouring out into the world. The Wyrm's physical presence and its magical wards are still all that prevents the Abyss from ripping the world wide open.

Most often the Wyrm remains stationary near the worst of the tears in reality, other times it rampages through a portion of the Abyss slaying demons that have caught its eye. Paladins say that if true heroes can find a way to stop the gap, even for a night and a day, the GGW would be free to reinvigorate his followers, restore the Golden Citadel, and beat back the Three.

Common Knowledge

The best and bravest hear the Great Gold Wyrm's call or receive his visions. They enter into his service as an elite champion, usually but not always as a member of the Golden Order.

Adventurers & the Icon

Various orders of paladins and clerics draw inspiration and power from the Great Gold Wyrm, as do mystically chosen individual heroes. In turn, these orders have been known to hire adventuring bands for special purposes.

Allies

The Golden Order serves the Dragon Empire and its Emperor, albeit at their own discretion.

Enemies

The Wyrm's principal enemies are the Diabolist and The Three. Both conflicts have mythical overtones, and like all true myths, there are moments when the great enemies have worked together, such as when the Red Dragon eliminated the demons that had escaped the Abyss, an act of violence that created the Red Wastes.

History

There has only ever been one Great Gold Wyrm, from the days when the gods made all the worlds to this very day. And some would say that there's not much of the Great Gold Wyrm left.

The True Danger

Everything will be all right unless the Great Gold Wyrm finally loses its battle and the Abyss opens to swallow the world.

HIGH DRUID

The High Druid is the champion of the resurgent Wild, and the spiritual and magical leader of spirits of nature and the elements that were chained by the Empire but are now working themselves free. She might be the great force that shakes the Empire to pieces, or she might be the hero who destroys the destroyers and points to a new way to live.

Quote

"There's a place for your roads and your cities: hunched tight to the shores of that fangless thing you still call a sea."

Usual Location

For the first time in ages, the High Druid has established her environs within the bounds of the Empire, in the Wild Wood near New Port and Santa Cora.

Common Knowledge

The High Druid conducts sacred rituals from the age before the gods or the worlds. With these rituals, she calls up the mighty powers of nature. Druids everywhere, in turn, gain this power through allegiance to her.

It has been a long time since there was a High Druid who lived anywhere near the Empire. So far as anyone knows, the Druids have been strongest far to the North. But this new High Druid, a young half-elf woman, was born in the Empire and has turned the Wild Wood into her place of power. Her influence is being felt in all the other wild spaces, with effects ranging from increased growth of impassable forest to vastly increased amounts of game in the forests, schools of fish in the Midland Sea, and flocks of birds migrating across the land. Even Imperial officers admit that the High Druid's influence seems to make the Empire's lands in the region around Wild Wood healthier. Of course, they are also rightly concerned that it's a region that would not mind shaking off the Empire's cities, farms, and crowns.

Adventurers & the Icon

Many rangers and druids have a relationship, one way or the other, with the High Druid. The High Druid herself may or may not be sending agents into the field. Certainly various high-power druids who respect the High Druid are using resurgence in wild power to pursue their own conflicting agendas. Some of these powerful druids have hired adventurers, and others have responded by hiring adventurers to destroy their rivals' hirelings.

Allies

The High Druid is a force unto herself. She is figuratively half-sister of the Elf Queen, but there's more sibling rivalry than love.

Enemies

The High Druid challenges the Emperor's authority in the territory she has colonized. The Archmage has been restraining the tempestuous forces of nature to protect civilization, and the High Druid can feel it in her bones.

History

There usually is a High Druid. Sometimes there are two, but not for long. The High Druid's affairs mostly concern the wilds, and civilized people know little about them.

The True Danger

Everything will be all right unless the Emperor and the High Druid truly go to war.

LICH KING

The Lich King is the lord of the undead, a fallen tyrant who intends to conquer the Dragon Empire and restore his ancient kingdom. He's not entirely insane and sometimes understands that ruling a kingdom is not the same as destroying it.

Quote

"All may hate me, but none may deny me."

Usual Location

In the Necropolis, an island in the Midland Sea near Omen Island. Or teleporting into most any other ruin in "his" realm.

Common Knowledge

During the day, the Empire is a land of light and song. But at night, it is easy to look out one's window at the moon-touched land and see that it very nearly still belongs to the Lich King.

Ages ago, the Lich King was the Wizard King, and he ruled all the lands with magic and tyranny. The first Dragon Emperor, the elves, and the dwarves joined forces to defeat him. Ages later, however, the Wizard King returned as the undying Lich King.

The Lich King commands all undead, to some extent. His power grows when sacrifices to the dead are not maintained and graveyards are desecrated, but even when all rites are properly observed he schemes, betrays, and attacks.

"By the fist of the lich" is a common macho curse. The magic hand the Lich King wears to replace his missing hand is a fearsome artifact in its own right. Those who would rather not call the Lich King by name refer to him as the One-Eyed King.

Adventurers & the Icon

Evil clerics gain power through the Lich King. Wanted criminals have sometimes given their lives to the Lich King rather than to justice.

Allies

Who would betray life and ally with death?

Enemies

The Priestess, the Orc Lord, the Elf Queen, the Dwarf King, the Three, the Great Gold Wyrm, and everyone else.

History

There has only ever been one Lich King, the former Wizard King of an earlier age.

The True Danger

As long as the graveyards are maintained and the imperial rituals repeated, the Lich King will never retake his throne.

ORC LORD

For centuries, the Orc Lord has been nothing but an old story, sometimes forgotten. The previous Orc Lord helped bring down the Wizard King, who has now become the Lich King. Who will the Orc Lord bring down this time?

Quote

"I love cities. They burn."

Usual Location

On the outskirts of civilization, probably but not definitely in the North or the West.

Common Knowledge

Orcs have always been a problem for the Empire, but not like the plague they are now. The idea that there is a true icon leading the orcs now makes terrible sense, given the number of villages being lost on the frontier and the increasing dangers of the wilderness. Most people think there may have been an Orc Lord at some point in the past, but only elves, historians, and people who pay attention to the world's real problems are aware that the Orc Lord is a problem that has returned from the times of the war with the Wizard King.

Adventurers & the Icon

Adventurers who like plunder more than law have joined up with the Orc Lord. Lawful and good adventurers are making their way to face the Orc Lord, but without much enthusiasm, since so much of the loot the orcs take gets spoiled quickly.

Allies

The Orc Lord is a big unknown. This icon has shown up only once before, so it's hard to predict what he will do. Destruction is clearly in the cards, and the other icons are mostly sensible enough not to cozy up to the Orc Lord. That doesn't mean they won't try to use him to their advantage.

Enemies

The Orc Lord helped bring down the Lich King before, when he was the Wizard King, so there's bad karma between them. As a creation of the ancient elves, the Orc Lord has a special thirst for the Elf Queen's blood. It's the Emperor's duty to defend the Empire against the Orc Lord. And the Dwarf King takes the Orc Lord's claim on the mountains and the lands of the North as a personal affront.

History

The elves (or perhaps some rogue faction within the elves) seem to have created the original Orc Lord as part of a successful bid to take down the Wizard King. No Orc Lord has appeared in the ages since then until now.

The True Danger

Without allies, the Orc Lord will dash his army against the Empire and die before he sees Axis. With allies. . . .

PRIESTESS

The Priestess hears all the Gods of Light and speaks for those who please her. She is part oracle, part mystic, and part metaphysical engineer, since she created the Cathedral, an ever-expanding temple with rooms or entire wings for each of the faiths she favors.

Quote

"If you listen carefully, you can hear the world's song of hope."

Usual Location

The Cathedral, a towering edifice in Santa Cora, the City of Temples.

Common Knowledge

The Priestess and her followers could be the most approachable and humane of the icons. She clearly cares about most everyone, somehow managing to convert that emotion into action and organization that helps the world. She's giving religion a good name.

Adventurers & the Icon

When the Priestess selects heroes of great heart to brave the forces of evil for her, she sends them into danger with miraculous blessings.

Allies

The Priestess serves the Emperor, alongside the Archmage. The Great Gold Wyrm is on her side in the abstract, but her followers and his have a notorious tendency to rub each other the wrong way.

Enemies

Evil icons drive people to the Priestess, where she can protect them. But the Crusader draws people to darkness. His victories are her losses.

History

If the Priestess has come to the land in previous ages, it was in some other form, perhaps an oracle. Even so, she seems to be something new under the sun. Some say that she is this age's embodiment of the Fool.

The True Danger

As long as the Priestess's Cathedral unites the people of the Empire, civilization will surely stand.

PRINCE OF SHADOWS

The Prince of Shadows is a trickster whose exploits reshape the world nearly as often as they redistribute its wealth. He has squandered the riches of the dwarves, murdered the hopes of a dragon, and plundered the dreams of a god. His exploits have changed the world, but none can tell you his ultimate goals or motives. Your attitude toward the Prince of Shadows depends on how you feel about anarchy, and perhaps how you feel about anarchy happening to you.

Quote

'"Don't bother thanking me, I already thanked myself to your gold and your lover's heart."

Usual Location

Shadow Port, or anywhere else he cares to be.

Common Knowledge

Not everyone believes there is a Prince of Shadows. This works out extremely well for the Prince. He doesn't care about getting credit for his exploits. Consequently, there are places where he's blamed for every major theft, and other places where he's viewed as an invention of the Thieves' Guilds to cover their tracks.

Adventurers & the Icon

Adventurers sometimes work for the Prince of Shadows without ever knowing it. In some sense, anyone who accepts one of his gifts is doing the Prince's work. Other adventurers like the Prince's style and aim to further his schemes, but that's a shifty path and what works for an icon can often as not walk an adventurer into a wall of swords.

Allies

The Diabolist has profited from certain of the Prince's "transactions," but the Priestess, at least, believes that the Prince stole more from the Diabolist than the Diabolist suspects. Who can say?

Enemies

The Dwarf King has offered a king's-ransom in platinum for the Prince of Shadows' head, but no one knows why. The Archmage has tried to retrieve certain stolen artifacts from the Prince, but hasn't claimed success in the endeavor.

History

Shadowy figures appear on the margins of official histories. Some of these mysterious figures are previous incarnations of the Prince of Shadows in other guises with other names.

The True Danger

If the Prince of Shadows ever ends up leading the forces of evil, it's going to be bad news.

THE THREE

The Three were among the first dragons to walk the world. The Red is a living engine of destruction. The Blue is a sorceress, perhaps even the original mother of all sorcery. The Black is queen of shadows and assassins. Unlike the Great Gold Wyrm, who must fight alone, the Three have learned to join forces.

Quote

"If the gods didn't intend for us to eat you, why did they make you taste so good?"

Usual Location

The Blue is found in Drakkenhall, though she usually finds you first. The Black flits between marsh hunting grounds and evil monasteries in the mountains. The Red is too freaking large to move around the Empire without triggering all the Archmage's wards, so unless he feels like precipitating a confrontation, he lives where he pleases off the north, west, and east edges of the map.

Common Knowledge

The Three are the evil counterpoint to the Great Gold Wyrm. They're not as strong as the Wyrm but they're also not stuck in the Abyss. And one of the Three, the Blue Sorceress, has somehow forced an entry into the official hierarchy of the Dragon Empire, serving as the Imperial Governor of Drakkenhall under geas from the Emperor and the Archmage. So apparently The Three are only fully evil and dangerous outside of Drakkenhall, and in Drakkenhall they are considered "the establishment."

Adventurers & the Icon

Evil adventurers gain access to secret knowledge, training, or magic by allying themselves with the Three. True heroes make their name fighting against them. The lines are muddier in Drakkenhall.

Allies

Sometimes the Three hardly seem to be allied to each other, let alone to anyone else.

Enemies

As the Wizard King, the Lich King killed the White, and he takes inordinate pleasure in turning evil dragons into liches. The Elf Queen holds the Green as a captive, not that the Three or the Elf Queen openly admit it. And, of course, the Great Gold Wyrm is only going to be an enemy.

History

In most ages, only one or two of these monsters live up to their epic potential. In this age, all three of them have grown to epic proportions.

The True Danger

With the Blue suborned by the geas that gives it Drakkenhall, the Three cannot unite to destroy the Empire. Unless the plan is to somehow destroy the Empire from within. . . .

Chapter 2: Character Rules

CHARACTER CREATION OVERVIEW

Many elements of character creation in *13th Age* will be familiar to d20 players. *13th Age*'s additions to the d20 heritage include the following new ideas:

- Ability score bonuses come from both race and class, so you can match up any race with any class and still have a viable character.
- Instead of choosing specific skills, you put points into broad backgrounds that can be used to assist a variety of skill checks.
- Character creation involves indie-game style elements such as inventing one unique thing about your character and orienting your PC around relationships with the most powerful NPCs in the world, the demigod-like icons.

Character Creation Checklist

This is an overview of what's to come. Detailed treatment of each item on this checklist appears below.

Gamemaster Input: The setting is designed to be customized, so ask your GM if there's anything you need to know about it.

Race: Races work like normal, except that you have an option as to which ability gets your racial bonus.

Class: Every class gets special powers it can use, but the classes play very differently from each other. Your class gives you a bonus to your primary or secondary ability (a different ability from your racial bonus). Choose your class talents, and then select your 1st-level powers, which might be at-will, recharged, or daily.

Generate Abilities: Many groups think that rolling character ability scores is fun. Other groups that are more concerned about fairness prefer to use a standard d20 point-buy system with 28 points. Both methods work. We think either method is fine, and are okay with letting the player choose.

Combat Stats: Use powers, abilities, and base stats by class to calculate basic attack bonuses and damage, power/spell attack bonuses and damage, Armor Class, Physical Defense, Mental Defense, hit points, and Initiative.

Your One Unique Feature: Invent some non-mechanical trait that makes your character unique. If you want hard mechanical bonuses for the trait too, you'll need to "trade in" class or race features to balance those bonuses out, with the GM's approval, of course.

Icon Relationships: Define your character's relationships with one to three icons.

Backgrounds: Your class gives you six to twelve background points. Use them to define your character further.

1st Level Feat: You get a feat choice every level. To keep things simple, you could choose your 1st level feat at the end of the first session, but if you've got the time and the will to choose your feat before playing, go for it. (The short general feat list is located toward the end of this chapter on page XX; most feat descriptions are located in the class write-ups and are attached to specific talents, attacks, or spells.)

Gear: Specify the sort of weapons, armor, and other gear that your character has.

GAMEMASTER INPUT

Jonathan says: Hey players, you know how GMs are. They like to think they're in charge. Be sure to let your GM talk about what's "special and unique" about their world and how they're going to run the campaign. The more details you get from the GM, the more you'll be able to get away with when you create your character.

CHOOSE RACE

Choose your character's race from this list. *13th Age* is less restrictive than other d20 games, and

your racial choice won't limit your class selection.

Human
Dwarf
Drow
High Elf
Wood Elf
Gnome
Half-elf
Halfling
Half-orc

You get a +2 racial bonus to one of the two or more ability scores associated with your race. The bonus can't be applied to the same ability score that you choose for your class bonus. You also get racial features based on your race.

See Chapter 3: Races for stats and background details for these races, as well as shorter notes on four other common d20 racial options (holy ones, dragon guys, steelborn, and tieflings).

Nonstandard Races: Players can always come up with their own unique stories. The system is designed to be simple enough that gamers can improvise. If you want to play a different race from one listed here, pitch the idea to your GM. You might find your pitch easier to make if your new racial choice lines up closely to the mechanical features of a supported race even if its flavor is very different. For example, if you want to be a one-off, half-successful experiment in artificial life created by the Archmage, you can bolster your case if you say you'll take the racial features of a supported race. "Half-orc" would be an obvious choice, but it could be anything.

CHOOSE CLASS

Choose your character's class from this list.
Barbarian
Bard
Cleric
Fighter
Monk
Paladin

Ranger
Rogue
Sorcerer
Wizard

You gain a +2 class bonus to one of the two (or three in the rogue's case) ability scores associated with your class. The bonus can't be applied to the same ability score that you choose for your racial bonus. Go to *Chapter 4: Classes* to see which ability scores give a bonus for that class on each class page.

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Multiclassing: We recognize that fighter/wizards and barbarian/sorcerers are a staple of many fantasy campaigns but are not supporting multiclassing in this book. The multiclassing rules will appear in an expansion for the system. For now, a few classes have features and talents that let them borrow from closely associated classes, including the paladin's *cleric training* talent, two ranger talents that allow limited spellcasting from the cleric or sorcerer classes, and the sorcerer's limited access to wizard spells.

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GENERATE ABILITIES

The lead designers use different methods to create *13th Age* characters. Rob lets players roll their ability scores if they want to because he thinks it's fun and it suits the system's old-school spirit. Jonathan has players use the point-buy system to keep things fair. You can use whichever system or mix of options you prefer; we think it's fine if some players roll their ability scores while others use the point-buy system.

Roll 'em

Roll 4d6 for each of the six ability scores (Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma). Drop the low die in each roll. Then re-roll one ability score of your choice (using 4d6 and dropping the lowest die again).

Put the scores into any order to best fit the character you want to play.

Rob says: Players who roll their ability scores and then wish they had used the point-buy system are missing the point: roleplaying weird and *even* non-optimal characters is part of the appeal of rolling your scores. If the thought makes your teeth grind, don't use it.

When one or two characters end up with ability scores way below those rolled by the other PCs, I sometimes find story/background-related reasons for letting the PCs with crappy stats gain ability score bonuses quicker and no one in the group minds, since everyone knows those characters got shafted early on. Still, if your group gets touchy about some characters being better than others, you may be better off using Jonathan's preferred point-buy system.

Point Buy

Use 28 points to buy your abilities. Ability bonuses follow the standard system: subtract 10 from the ability score and divide by 2, rounding down. The chart below only covers the ability scores you can buy, but the bonus pattern continues above and below what's listed. Buying an 18 ability score and using a +2 modifier from race or class, a starting character can have an ability score of 20 and a +5 bonus, but you can't buy a 20 outright.

You will get bonuses to ability scores as you rise in level also, so it's not a waste of points to have an odd number.

Ability	Cost	Bonus
18	16	+4
17	13	+3
16	10	+3
15	8	+2
14	6	+2
13	5	+1
12	4	+1
11	3	0
10	2	0
9	1	-1
8	0	-1

COMBAT STATS

See Chapter 5: Combat Rules & Mechanics for the details on how combat works.

As you'll see below, although Armor Class, Physical Defense, and Mental Defense are based on a single ability score, which score each defense uses depends on the character. In each case, you look at three ability modifiers and use the middle value (not the highest or the lowest). If two or more modifiers are tied, you use one of those tied scores as the middle score. (For example, with modifiers of +3, +3, and +1, the middle score is +3.)

By using multiple ability scores to determine defenses, it keeps any one ability from becoming too important.

First-level hit points

1. Find the base value for your class (6, 7, or 8) in the *Starting Stats for First Level Characters* chart on page XX.
2. Add your Con modifierto get your "hit point value."
3. Multiply your hit point value by 3 to get your total hit points at 1st level.

Armor Class

1. Find the base AC value for your class (10 to 16) in the *Starting Stats for First Level Characters* chart on page XX.
2. Find the middle value among your Con modifier, Dex modifier, and Wis modifier. That value is your AC modifier.
3. Add the AC modifier to your base AC value.
4. Add +1 at first level.

For example, a character with a Con of 10 (modifier +0), Dex of 15 (modifier +2), and Int 14 (modifier +2) has a middle value modifier of +2 in the 3 abilities that determine AC. Their AC modifier is +2.

Physical Defense

1. Find the base PD for your class (10 to 12) in the *Starting Stats for First Level Characters* chart on page XX.

2. Find the middle value among your Str modifier, Con modifier, and Dex modifier. That value is your PD modifier.

3. Add the PD modifier to your base PD.

4. Add +1 at 1st level.

Mental Defense

1. Find the base MD for your class (10 to 12) in the *Starting Stats for First Level Characters* chart on page XX.

2. Find the middle value among your Int modifier, Wis modifier, and Cha modifier. That value is your MD modifier.

3. Add the MD modifier to your base MD.

4. Add +1 at 1st level.

Initiative

Your Initiative bonus is a d20 check, not a static value.

1. Start with your Dex modifier.

2. Add +1 at 1st level.

Recoveries & Recovery Dice

Most characters start the game with 8 recoveries. (See Chapter 5 for rules on how recoveries work.) Some classes and talent choices may give you more recoveries.

Each class also has a different recovery die, usually a d6, d8, or d10, as specified in the class write-up.

Attacks and Powers

You calculate attack and damage rolls based on the ability scores favored by your class or by the specific powers you choose within your class. Most classes use one specific ability score for most of their attacks, and a couple different scores for determining damage modifiers. See Chapter 4: Classes for more information.

YOUR ONE UNIQUE THING

Each character should have one unique feature you invent for him or her when you create the character... or alternatively after you have played the character a couple times and discovered the twist that will put the character over the top.

Your unique thing is an unusual trait that helps define your character and that can serve as a free-form resource. Ideally, the feature helps your character engage with the people, places, and things of the game world. The feature doesn't provide a bonus in combat, at least not directly.

Players: You may want to link your unique feature with the backgrounds that represent your character's past experience.

Gamemaster: If players don't want to come up with your their unique feature right away, or if they want to give the game a chance to develop, it's perfectly fine to let some players feel their way into what is unique about their characters after the first or second session.

This delay may come in especially handy if players want to figure out what the tone of the campaign is before settling on their big secret or special feature.

Here are some examples from our games:

- *A half-orc wizard that has an inhuman but strangely compelling voice. The character might be able to use the voice in conjunction with magecraft, social skills, performance, etc.*

- *The magnificent good looks of a human bastard son of the Emperor. His good looks get him into places where he normally wouldn't be allowed.*

- *A human child born of a zombie mother, who is caught up in a magical power struggle between the Priestess and the Lich King—and thus the center of more prophecies than you can shake a scroll at.*

- *A wood elf barbarian who was raised on one of the Archmage's magical floating islands. He rebelled against his family's arcane tradition by "going barbarian," but he can't help feeling most comfortable in hugely magical environments or surrounded by powerful arcane spells.*

- *A dwarf who is the chosen champion of his declining clan, and the figure upon which all hope for the future rests.*

- *A character associated with the Priestess who exudes a sort of holy aura or beatific presence. Sensitive people can feel it, as can animals. With a little concentration, the character can damp the aura down or let it shine. It can be impressive to the right audience, but it can also attract the wrong sort of attention, such as from the Diabolist.*
- *A wizard who is a reincarnation of a famous, powerful ancestor. She might run into friends or enemies from her past, either reincarnations themselves or immortals from long ago. She sometimes knows things she has no way of knowing and memories of things she never did.*
- *A monk is secretly a doppelganger permanently in human shape. This formerly evil creature killed a cleric of the Priestess and assumed his guise, only to be converted by the voice of the Priestess. The monster has sworn off shapeshifting and is, as far as the rules are concerned, a human (or whatever). Unfortunately, it can't cast cleric spells, and so it has become a monk. Now this former murderous monster does what it still likes to do, in the guise of an avenging cleric-turned-monk. Its past life as a doppelganger makes it familiar with all manner of criminal and evil organizations.*
- *A monk who began existence as a bear, and was transformed into a human by the magic of the High Druid. Cue snuffling, shuffling, eating with hands, and a savage approach to the martial arts.*
- *A halfling who is the "only halfling knight of the Dragon Emperor." (This was an example of the player redirecting the campaign with their character's story. In most* 13th Age *campaigns, there could be multiple warlike halflings serving the Emperor. But Sir Gilly Tallfather wanted to be the only one in this campaign and we weren't going to tell him no.)*

Unique features should be considered resources rather than attributes or descriptors, verbs rather adjectives. Unique features can help you gain NPCs' trust, find allies in a new city, recall obscure knowledge that provides an important clue, conduct a ritual that thwarts or enhances the power of an icon, sense the presence of enemies connected to a particular magical force, etc.

Sometimes your unique feature will have a practical effect on what your character can do in the world, but it's within the context of the story, not the rules, per se. For example, if your character was born from a virgin impregnated with the blood of the Blue (one of the Three), then you might be the only PC able to sense the growing power of a nearby sorcerer who is tied to the Blue.

Forbidden features: The GM shouldn't allow features that are going to wreck adventures. You might think it would be cool to read minds, but it's not cool for an RPG character to read minds. It ruins too many perfectly good plots where the players don't know who is lying to them. The same goes for mind control and seeing the future. These powers ruin more fun than they generate. Being persuasive or intuitive is fine. Those traits help you complete an adventure without breaking the adventure.

No combat bonus: A unique feature shouldn't provide general practical value in combat.

More practical unique feature: If you want a unique feature that's more practical, like a class or racial feature, you might be able to talk your GM into letting you swap out one of your existing class or racial features in exchange for the unique feature you invent. Naturally, the power level of the new feature should match the power level of the standard feature you're giving up. The better your story for who your character is, the more you can usually get away with in this case.

An example we've encountered twice already is the character who wants to be bizarrely well-read, able to recall information

38

from a wide variety of sources. Naturally, the written sources could be wrong in a variety of ways, but really, that's not what these players want; they want more information, all the time. We've handled this feature by giving them more or less what they want, asking them to spend background points appropriately, and complicating the plot with interwoven information streams that these PCs are clever or paranoid enough to notice.

ICON RELATIONSHIPS

Inventing your character's relationship to the mighty icons who rule or shape the world is key to engaging your character with the game world. RPGs about vampires have clans, RPGs about pagan highlanders have cults, and *13th Age* has icons.

If you haven't already, scan over the icons in Chapter 1 and read the full entry on any icon that intrigue you. As you decide on the relationship to the icons that suits your player character, remember that it's the nature of this magical world that even the most powerful figures need a lot of help to accomplish their goals. The icons have risen to power levels where they balance each other in an uneasy equilibrium. To advance their agendas further, the icons need heroes and champions to tip the balance in their favor. You should feel free to make your character central to big plot lines, if that's what suits you.

The fate of the icons is written in the stars. Your character's fate, however, is in your own hands.

Icon Relationships Master Chart

Icon	Positive Relationship	Conflicted Relationship	Negative Relationship
Heroic Icon *Usually:* Archmage Emperor Great Gold Wyrm Priestess *Possibly:* Dwarf King Elf Queen	**Spend 1, 2, or 3 points.** As far as this icon is concerned, you're one of the good guys, a white-hat hero. Authorities often help you, and civilians often trust you. On the down side, you may be called on to serve representatives of the icon even when you have other plans. You might also be a target of villainous icons or this heroic icon's rivals.	**Spend 1, 2, or 3 points.** You're probably one of the good guys, but for some reason you're suspect to the icon. Maybe you're a convict who has served his time, or an imperial soldier who was too good and got drummed out of his legion. You have insider knowledge and allies who are in good with the icon, but you also have enemies associated with the icon.	**Spend 1 point.** In the icon's eyes, you're a dissident, opponent, rival, or foe. You may have contacts or inside knowledge that you can use to your advantage, but some form of trouble waits for you wherever this heroic icon has influence.
Ambiguous Icon *Usually:* Crusader Dwarf King Elf Queen High Druid Prince of Shadows *Possibly:* Emperor The Three	**Spend 1, 2, or 3 points.** Thanks to your relationship with the icon, you are a hero to some, a villain to others, and possibly even a monster to a few. The enemies of your friends may turn out to be your friends, and vice versa. Advantages and complications will come from all sides.	**Spend 1, 2, or 3 points.** Your relationship with the icon is complex, an uneven relationship with an icon who's a hero to some and a villain to others. One way or another, you can find help or hostility anywhere. You don't just live in interesting times: you create them.	**Spend 1 or 2 points.** Your enmity with this icon makes you some enemies, but it also makes you some useful friends. You may be a dissenter, unwanted family member, or even a traitor in some way.
Villainous Icon *Usually:* Diabolist Lich King Orc Lord The Three *Possibly:* Crusader Prince of Shadows	**Spend 1 point.** You are able to gain secrets or secretive allies, but your connection to this icon brings trouble from people associated with the heroic icons who oppose the villain. Be prepared to justify why you're not imprisoned, interrogated, or otherwise harassed by the heroic icons and their representatives whenever they encounter you. Or for that matter, by the other PCs.	**Spend 1 or 2 points.** You mostly work against the icon, but you're also connected to the icon in a way you can't deny. Your connection sometimes gives you special knowledge or contacts, but it also makes you suspect in the eyes of many right-minded would-be heroes.	**Spend 1 or 2 points.** You are a special foe of this icon, perhaps because of your virtue or possibly for less happy motives. Your enmity wins you allies among right-thinking people, but some of the villainous icon's forces are out to get you in some way.

Relationship Points

At first level each character gets 3 relationship points. The number of points you spend on a relationship is a measure of its overall usefulness, since the relationship mechanic lets you roll one d6 per point invested in a relationship when you're trying to leverage your connection to the icon (see Using Relationships, on page XX).

The *Icons Relationship Master Chart* above summarizes the likely roleplaying and story-oriented consequences of positive, conflicted, or negative relationships with heroic, ambiguous, and conflicted icons. Our suggestions for which icons qualify as heroic, ambiguous, and villainous appear below, but you'll see that we expect each GM to tinker with the icon identities to suit the campaign's story arcs and player character's concepts.

13th Age assumes that you're playing as heroes. If you want to run a game about becoming arch villains, you'll want to flip the point maximums between the heroic and villainous icons.

Gamemaster Advice: Icons

Some GMs work out how all the icons are going to play out in their campaign. These GMs figure out the motivations of each icon, especially the ambiguous ones, and offer guidance when players are choosing icon relationships so that player choices work out well in the scope of the campaign.

Other GMs let the players take the first crack at the icons and build out their campaigns to suit what their players have in mind. These GMs are willing to work with a character's backstory that sounds far-fetched at first, adjusting the campaign background to incorporate elements of all the players' backstories.

We generally do a little pre-planning and offer guidance around the icon roles, followed by adjustment and retconning as the players create their characters.

The notes on relationships with the following heroic, ambiguous, and villainous icons supplement the master chart. This isn't new information since it's all in the chart, but the text phrasing may spark something for you that the chart didn't.

Heroic Icons

Usually Archmage, Emperor, Great Gold Wyrm, and Priestess. Possibly Dwarf King and Elf Queen.

Positive relationship with a heroic icon (max 3 points)

The icon is favorably inclined toward you, possibly based on your family history, your personal accomplishments, omens in the stars, etc. You can often parley this favor into personal advantage.

Conflicted relationship with a heroic icon (max 3 points)

The icon harbors both favorable and unfavorable inclinations toward you. The conflict is often between two different levels of social interaction: such as, you're from a family to which the icon is indebted but your personal behavior has caused real problems. You can usually manage it so that the connection benefits

you more than it sets you back, but sometimes it bites you on the ass. Occasionally, if you're a troublemaker, you might have the opportunity to cause problems for the icon that relates to your conflict.

Negative relationship with a heroic icon (max 1 point)

One way or another, you have gained the icon's wrath. Even so, the connection represents some sort of resource for you, such as insider knowledge associated with the icon or acquaintance with the icon's rivals, who may treat you as an occasional ally.

Ambiguous Icons

Usually Crusader, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, High Druid, and Prince of Shadows. Possibly Emperor and the Three.

Positive relationship with ambiguous icon (max 3 points)

As with a good icon, except that the relationship is more likely to provide you access to the dark side of power politics.

Conflicted relationship with ambiguous icon (max 3 points)

As with a good icon, except that you are more likely to find heroic allies siding with you against the icon. In most social circles, for example, one is expected to have no better than a conflicted relationship with the Prince of Shadows, and a character with a publically positive relationship to him would fall under suspicion.

Negative relationship with ambiguous icon (max 2 points)

As with the good icon, except that being at odds with the icon is much more socially acceptable.

Villainous Icons

Usually Diabolist, Lich King, Orc Lord, and the Three. Possibly Crusader and Prince of Shadows.

Positive relationship with villainous icon (max 1 point)

Any character who is in the good graces of a villainous icon has some explaining to do. One point of positive relationship is the maximum because villains and their henchlings aren't in business to help heroes.

Conflicted relationship with villainous icon (max 2 points)

The icon has reasons both to destroy you and to support you. This sort of relationship is a rich vein for personal drama. You might be an angst-driven former villain, a hero who is secretly drawn to a hidden dark streak, or a well-intentioned hero who is embroiled with a villain through no fault of your own.

Negative relationship with villainous icon (max 2 points)

The icon is out to get you, at least in the abstract or by implication. This relationship often implies some special knowledge you have about the icon or power against the icon.

Using relationships

Periodically, your character will face some sort of free-form challenge that could be overcome through their relationship to an icon.

As GMs, we use icon relationships once or thrice a session when the invocation of a connection with the world's most powerful NPCs (or pieces of the world they have influenced) feels dramatically justified. Sometimes we'll even pencil in a relationship check as an expected plot point. Other times, we use a check as opportunity to improvise when skill checks and roleplaying have drawn a bit of a blank and we're looking for unexpected methods of pushing the story forward.

As a player or as the GM, use icon relationships and relationship checks as opportunities to help move character storylines in interesting directions.

To use your relationship with an icon as a free-form resource to gain information or to move the story along, use this simple system.

- **If you like, roleplay or suggest how you might make a connection:** You

won't be stuck with the suggestion, but the idea should make sense in the flow of the story and give the GM something to work with. If you or the GM would rather roll first and then interpret the roll with roleplaying flavor, that also works.

- **Roll d6s equal to your relationship points with the icon:** You roll 1, 2, or 3 (or 4 at epic level) six-sided dice, the same number of dice as the points you spent for the relationship with that icon.
- **Hope for 6s:** If any die is a 6, you get some meaningful advantage from the relationship without having any complications. If two or three dice come up 6, that's even better.
- **Look out for 5s:** If any die is you're your connection to the icon is going to work out as well as a 6 would, but with some unexpected complication. If it's a good icon, you might be drawn into some obligation. If it's an evil icon, you might attract unwanted attention.
- **Both 5s and 6s:** Rolling 5s when you also rolled 6s should make life both *interesting* and *profitable*!

Ideally, player and GM cooperate to invent a benefit, bonus, or new information gained from the relationship. Since overcoming mystery is frequently what icon relationships are about, the burden of explanation most often lands on the GM, but excellent player suggestions can help.

To be clear, we don't use this free-form method as a substitute for standard skill checks and adventuring. The new information that arrives via relationship checks should usually have an in-world source, such as an NPC or magical creature, or come from interaction with the environment, rather than simply planting ideas in a PC's head. Just like there are situations where skill checks don't make sense as a response to a problem, there are situations that are pretty much irrelevant to the icons and no useful information or contacts can be gained. Likewise, there may be situations in which the

PCs must rely on their own powers instead of hoping for help from their iconic connections.

We don't stick to strict rules for how often PCs can try to draw on a relationships to an icon. Attempts need to make sense within the story, and that tends to limit overuse. Any PC trying to use icon relationships three times in one session is probably pushing it, unless the story makes good sense for repeated attempts.

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Why the d6? Yes, this is a d20-based game. Yes, most of the mechanics that matter use a d20. By using d6s for relationship rolls, we're singling them out. This is the moment when the story pivots on your possible connection to one of the beings who shape reality. Level, Charisma, a good head-chakra item, none of that helps. It's not just another roll of the d20.

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Icon relationships, rolling a 5

Getting a 5 on an icon relationship check moves the campaign forward, just like a 6 does, but it also generates a complication. If anything, complications should move the campaign further forward than getting a 6 does. Whatever you're looking for, you found it. Since a 5 means both good and bad results, the heavier you lay on the good stuff, the harder you can punch the party in the proverbial kidney with the bad stuff. The negative result might be secret, it might be delayed, and it might be nothing more than a promise until you figure out what it really means. When you're on the spot to invent a negative outcome, you can always decide to punt it and make a note to return to the point later. Alternatively, before the player picks up the dice, you can tell everyone exactly what's going to go wrong if a 5 comes up. The information is out of character, but it's a dramatic way to handle a roll.

Here are two examples of how to handle a complication, from one of Jonathan's campaigns. The campaign was called "Lethal Damage," so these are pretty extreme examples, but they offer a good idea of how to have fun at the PCs' expense.

Example 1: *The heroic-level party had arrived in Drakkenhall to look for a black-dragon monk. By default, Jonathan determined that the PCs had no way of finding this guy and would have to use their unique features, backgrounds, or relationships to find him. One PC had formerly been part of the Archmage's bureaucracy, and he used his local Archmage contacts to get some information. To accommodate that character's personal fiction, the Archmage's organization in Jonathan's campaign was envisioned as a Brazil-like bureaucracy of mind-numbing protocol, endless meetings, and obscure acronyms. The player rolled a relationship check and got a 5, but no 6s, and the party got the information it needed. What did the 5 mean? Jonathan determined that rival agents also working with the Archmage (but with a different agenda) were alerted to the PCs' arrival in Drakkenhall. Their cover compromised, the PCs were later ambushed by their rivals, and they ended the session with a mad dash to safety—a recurring theme in the "Lethal Damage" campaign.*

Example 2: *Later in the campaign, at champion level, the Prince of Shadows stole the eye and hand of the Lich King from the Dragon Emperor. A PC rogue follower of the Prince received, as an anonymous "care package," the tip of the pinkie finger. Using her smooth tongue, she sought professional advice and talked her way into an audience with a long-lived lizardfolk sage associated with the Archmage. The sage explained what the finger was and how to use it in a ritual to channel great power. The player, unfortunately, rolled a 5 to get that information. Jonathan didn't tell anyone what that meant because he didn't know at that time, but it came to him later. The same rival agents from Drakkenhall found out about the PC's inquiries. The lizardfolk sage became not so long-lived any more, and the next anonymous care package for the rogue was not from the Prince. Instead it was the eye of the Lich King. The rival agents had duplicitously misdirected it from an agent of the Archmage to the PC rogue. It was only a matter of time before that too-powerful artifact slipped from the rogue's fingers, to the detriment of all creatures that draw breath.*

Relationship Points are about Utility, not Strength

The number of points you invest in a relationship with an icon doesn't necessarily correlate with the closeness of the connection or the strength of the relationship. It *does* correlate with the utility of the relationship. It's not necessarily about how well the icon knows you or how strong the icon feels about you. Instead, the points reflect the chance that your relationship will be helpful to you.

We have a PC in one campaign who is a bastard son of the Dragon Emperor who spent a good deal of time in the presence of the icon and in court. But the relationship is only a one-point relationship. The Emperor has a lot of bastards in this campaign, and although the connection is often recognized, not everyone in the Emperor's service is keen on helping out yet another of his bastards. The Emperor's personal feelings about his son aren't the point.

Therefore you don't necessarily need to stick to the numerical strength of the points when you get into the hopefully atypical situation in which your PCs are actually meeting and interacting with one of the icons. Storytelling and roleplaying demands could take over, so you aren't forced to roll icon relationships in a situation when the actual icon is making a personal appearance. As GM, you could choose to roll the relationship or opt for roleplaying and let the PC's story-based history with the icon shape the interaction.

To be clear, our games almost always treat the icons as off-stage characters, and we usually bring them in directly only at epic level. If you, as GM, want to bring an icon to center stage, make sure that NPC doesn't steal the spotlight from the player characters.

Using Negative Relationships in a Positive Way

The most straightforward way to use your relationship points is on positive or conflicted connections that generally provide you with outright assistance and useful information.

What, then, is the use of a negative relationship? Usually it provides inside

knowledge, special skills, opportunistic allies, and possibly some sort of supernatural advantage against a villain.

If you have a negative relationship with an icon, you have a definite connection with that NPC that can be exploited. It's the old adage about not being able to hate someone properly if you don't love them first. A negative relationship with an icon implies that you know enough about the icon to be a thorn in their side, or at least in their organization. Your knowledge might even amount to some form of destiny, a fated or seemingly "just-lucky" ability to thwart the icon's plans. Confronting the icon's efforts needs to be part of your character arc, and the information and opportunities that fall into your lap thanks to using your negative relationship need to help you have bigger and better confrontations with your enemy, rival, or jilted lover—however you choose to phrase the conflict!

Often you might find that enemies of your rival see you as an opportunity to strike against that mutual enemy. You might get help, wealth and resources, and even magic items from quite unexpected sources, some of which may not be entirely to your liking. If you are a renowned enemy of the Diabolist, for example, you might get help from the Crusader or the Great Gold Wyrm. Choosing a negative relationship with a good or ambiguous icon is tantamount to asking for dramatic and unexpected twists to be thrown into your life . . . often.

In addition to aid from others, icon relationships provide characters with special knowledge. For example, if the heroes are exploring an ancient graveyard, a player with any relationship to the Lich King, positive, conflicted, or negative, might be able to discern some important pattern or underlying structure of the tombs that the group wants to know more about, or that will help the group achieve their goal.

A negative relationship with a thoroughly villainous icon is more in keeping with the heroic lifestyle, but you should expect that the assistance you get from a negative relationship may end up being more directly confrontational than more conventional conflicted and positive relationships. If you are a player who likes to choose negative relationships with the icons, you must want conflict. And you'll get it.

Remember, when you assign dice to a relationship, you are the one deciding how useful this relationship is going to be. Back that up by being creative with how your relationship applies to events in the game. Negative relationships just require more work to make sense of.

Rob says: Sometimes it's a pretty big downer when all relationship rolls strike out. All you need is a perfect six or a problematic five and the table rolls low. You can play this a couple ways. Your first option is to stick to the facts: the dice model fortune, and fortune has spoken to admit that it has nothing interesting to add at the moment. Your second option is to invoke what I call the 'ambush twelve.' If the story calls for a stroke of fortune . . . if the action is going nowhere good because the PCs have floundered . . . if this is the moment in the movie where there would definitely be an event worth remembering, then I create one. And I make sure it relates to an icon. And in the interest of preserving the touch of fortune, I roll a twelve-sided die to generate one of the twelve icons that aren't the icon the PCs most recently expected to be involved. Nothing fancy, I use alphabetical order as run down the side of the map, skipping the icon who had the strikeout.

I treat this new icon involvement as even more problematic than events generated by rolling a 5. Sometimes consequences become clear right away and the roll is open, other times I keep the roll secret and the players aren't sure they've been hit by an ambush-twelve. Yes, my GM-style is open to completely unexpected plot events interrupting stories I only thought I'd understood. So if I end up with involvement by the Crusader or the High Druid in a story or setting that seemed to have nothing to do with those icons I basically use the ambush twelve event as a random encounter with agents or magical servitors of an icon… or perhaps even an encounter with refugees or survivors or other consequences of action by a rival icon that had nothing obvious to do with the present storyline.

45

I aim to make a few of these twelve-sided icon dice some day.

Changing Relationships

When your character achieves champion level (5th), you gain an extra relationship point. Use it to increase an existing relationship by one die or gain a 1-point relationship with a new icon to match your character's story thus far. You can't break the relationship point limit maximum (yet). Of course, you can save the extra relationship die and decide to apply it later, when there's a dramatic campaign event or a solid story reason for it.

At 5th level, or any time thereafter, you can switch an existing relationship point from one icon to another, including to a new icon. You owe the GM and other players an entertaining explanation of what this big change represents for your character personally, of course.

When you reach epic level (8th), you gain another relationship point, which you can use to increase an existing icon relationship by one die, including up to 1 point over maximum. As at 5th level, if switching a relationship point from one icon to another makes sense for your 8th level character, go for it.

Example from Play

John Son of Mary Jane is a human wizard associated with the Archmage. At 1st level, he chooses to put 3 points into a conflicted relationship with the heroic Archmage and the Archmage's impenetrable bureaucracy, corresponding to the player's own conflicted experience of corporate America. This 3-point relationship gives the player three d6s to roll whenever the character tries to gain an advantage from the Archmage. When rolling, the player hopes for 6s and the GM hopes for 5s!

At 5th level, John-son-of-MJ gains another point to spend on relationships. The relationship with the Archmage is maxed out for now, so John decides to have a 1-point negative relationship with the villainous Lich King, to play up the half-dozen times his *fireballs* have blown the Lich King's plans to dust. He also

could have chosen a 1-point positive or conflicted relationship with the Priestess, but that didn't appeal as much as gaining leverage against John's preferred enemy icon did.

At 8th level, John-son-of-MJ gains another relationship point. At epic level you can break the 3-point limit for conflicted relationships. If the campaign had developed differently, John might petition the GM to change his conflicted relationship with the Archmage to positive, but there are far too many incompetent tower-wizards in the Archmage's organization who need to be taught hard lessons, so John sticks with the conflicted relationship and adds a point. John finishes his adventuring career with a 4-point conflicted relationship with the Archmage, and a 1-point negative relationship with the Lich King.

Icons' Organizations

Of course, most of the time that you're interacting with an icon, you're actually interacting with his or her lower-level functionaries, acolytes, disciples, bureaucrats, lieutenants, barons, or priests. Functionaries are the GM's best friends, and they can be your worst enemies.

Keep in mind, however, that *any* level of relationship with an icon can be enough to get you noticed by other people who are connected to that icon.

BACKGROUNDS & SKILL CHECKS

Skill checks are basically ability checks, but with a bonus representing the character's training, special nature, or hard-won experience.

Selecting your backgrounds is one of the fun parts of character creation. Each background is a piece of your character's history that contributes to your PC's ability to succeed with non-combat skills. Instead of assigning points to skills as with other d20 games, in *13th Age* you assign a certain number of points (varying by class) to backgrounds.

Skill Check:

D20 + relevant ability modifier + level + the number of points in a relevant background

The base mechanic of our skill system will look familiar, but the actual rules are a departure from traditional d20 games.

You still choose how to allocate a certain number of points that function as bonuses to d20 skill rolls. For example, the fighter allocates 6 points, while the rogue allocates 12 points. But these points aren't pegged to individual skills. Instead you put them into backgrounds, which are broad categories of experience rather than specific implementations of that experience.

Backgrounds don't sync to a specific ability score, though some backgrounds obviously may get used more often with certain ability scores than others.

You can assign up to 5 points to a single background. When you roll a skill check to find out if you succeed at a task or trick, you (or in rare cases the GM) choose the background you think is relevant to the skill check. The GM then decides which ability score best applies to the check.

Add the points in your relevant background to the ability modifier and to your level bonus to determine your full bonus for the skill check. Technically we should probably call the checks you're making an ability check instead of a skill check, but legions of d20 game players have called this type of check a "skill check" for decades and we don't need to buck the trend. Call them skill checks.

Skill Check Example

Kasarak the half-orc wizard grew up in the wild mountains north of Axis and trained as an assassin in the service of the Three before breaking free of his masters' hold and making his way into the service of the Emperor.

As a wizard, Kasarak has 8 points to put into backgrounds. Kasarak's player decides to split the 8 points as follows:

- Imperial Mage +4

- Tooth of the Black Fang (assassin training in the service of the Black Wyrm) +3
- Wild Mountain Tribe +1

Kasarak is a 3rd-level adventurer, and he has to spend a night alone on top of a mountain waiting for a griffin courier from the Emperor. The GM decides that even repeated castings of light spells aren't going to help Imperial Mage make any difference, and asks Kasarak to make a Con skill check using his Wild Mountain Tribe background to avoid being damaged by a night of exposure on the cold slopes. Kasarak says, "Well, yeah, this is no big deal to my people, but I'm even better than you'd think at waiting in terrible conditions because that was part of my training with the Black Wyrm; the most important part of being an assassin is being able to wait until the moment to strike, and often you have to wait in the worst places where no one expects you."

The GM buys it and tells Kasarak's player that Kasarak can use his Black Fang background, so the player rolls a d20 and adds +3 for Black Fang, +3 for Kasarak's level bonus, and the half-orc's Con mod.

Most players choose backgrounds that help them make sense of their characters. The fun of roleplaying diverse characters is figuring out how your background might help in unexpected ways. GMs can interpret backgrounds benevolently or rule out cheesy ploys. *13th Age* isn't about min-maxing, so background and skill use is meant to be about fun in-character methods of attempting to advance the plot.

Some players will want to choose backgrounds that correspond to their character's class. The most boring way to do that is to say "Well, I'm a fighter, so I'll put 4 points into a fighter background." We don't allow that in our games, though you could, perhaps with a small penalty for being boring. Instead we ask players to figure out what type of fighting their characters did in the past. Did the fighter learn weapons as a gladiator? A bounty-hunter? A bodyguard? Or perhaps as a former sentient magic weapon turned into a dwarf as a reward

for long service (which would probably also involve the character's one unique feature!). So long as the GM agrees, you should feel free to create a background story about a group that the character was part of or perhaps a special magic or monastic style that's part of the character's past.

<insert sidebar>

Opposed Rolls? Other d20 games frequently use opposed d20 rolls that pit skill vs. skill. Our system doesn't do that much, partly because we're not tracking skills for our NPCs and monsters. We'd rather use DCs set by the environment the skill check is occurring in than have to figure out accurate backgrounds/ability scores/skill checks for all our creatures.

But of course Initiative is sort of an opposed skill check. And if two PCs are competing to see who is the first to do something, or who does it better, by all means, use opposing skill checks and award speed or quality to the character with the better result.

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Short List of Possible Backgrounds

We're not going to attempt an exhaustive list. It's more fun for you to come up with what works for your character, or even use the backgrounds from other roleplaying games you like. But here are some example backgrounds that have been used in our games. For more examples see each of the class write-ups.

Acrobat, alchemist, animal trainer, architect, aristocratic noble, assassin, Cathedral servitor, chef, con-woman, dinosaur hunter, former bear, goblin exterminator, hunted outlaw, knight errant, Legionnaire of the 17th [Legion], magecraft, priest, refugee, scout, shepherd, soldier, spy, temple acolyte, thief, torturer, traveling martial arts pupil, tribal healer, tunnel scout, wandering minstrel, warrior poet (which might be a cheesy maneuver to get two good things in one, and could therefore be interpreted literally, or not, depending on your style), Yellow Thorn Monastery, and so on.

Choose the Relevant Ability Score

For players, the point of this background/skill system to is to encourage roleplaying and creative solutions to problems. For the GM, it's the chance to make all of the ability scores matter at one time or another.

The wizard won't be able to solve all her problems with her high Intelligence when her attempt to run across the floor without stepping on fluctuating ley lines requires a Dexterity skill check using her Magecraft background. The same problem confronting the rogue might be a Dexterity check using his thief background.

A fighter might use his Wisdom in combination with his gladiator training or a tribal champion background to figure out which enemy is most dangerous while the conversation is still going on among the party and NPCs. A bard with a good line of patter might be able to learn the same thing with a Charisma check using her con woman background to get one of the enemies to point out who their strongest warrior is.

A monk might have to make an Intelligence check using Sun Fist Monastery as the relevant background to identify which style of evil monk martial arts was used on a group of murdered villagers. The party's paladin isn't likely to know anything much about eccentric monastic weapon styles, but a Wisdom skill check using her Former Cultist background might help her identify the attackers based on fearful eyewitness descriptions. And so on.

Gamemaster: We've opted to stick with traditional fantasy interpretations of the rogue as a high-skill character and the fighter as a low-skill character. The fact that fighters have half as many background points as rogues doesn't necessarily mean that fighters live dull lives. But we *are* ruling that rogues are twice as good at deriving skillful applications of their personal history.

In the past, d20 games have sometimes justified these decisions as a matter of balance, providing high skills to one class to balance combat abilities provided to another class. Given our loose-and-friendly approach to game

balance, we can't make that claim. Preserving traditional skill imbalances is a purely aesthetic choice.

So we won't pretend it's a bad idea to give all the characters the same 8 points of backgrounds. It won't hurt the game. In fact, if you and your players want all the classes to have equal access to backgrounds and skill success, *help* your game by playing that way. Our aesthetic choice need not be your aesthetic choice.

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Natural 20's and Fumbles with Ability Checks

When a PC rolls a natural 20 with a skill check, the GM should feel free to give that character a hell of a lot more success than the player expected.

When a PC rolls a 1 with a skill check, the skill check fumbles and fails, perhaps in a particularly bad way. But a failure isn't *always* entirely terrible. . . .

Fail Forward!

A simple but powerful improvement you can make to your game is to redefine failure as "things go wrong" instead of "the PC isn't good enough." Ron Edwards, Luke Crane, and other indie RPG designers have championed this idea, and they're exactly right. You can call it "fail forward" or "no whiffing."

The traditional way to interpret a failure is to see it as the character not being up to the task at hand. A low roll on the d20 implies some unexpectedly poor showing on the character's account. This interpretation is natural, and in practice we still use it quite often: occasionally we *want* failure to mean sheer failure and nothing but. That's particularly true when characters are attempting skill rolls as part of a battle; when the rogue tries to be stealthy in the middle of a fight and fails we're generally not failing them forward.

But outside of battle, true failure tends to slow action down rather than move the action along. A more constructive way to interpret failure is as a near-success or event that happens to carry unwanted consequences or side effects. The character probably still fails to achieve the desired goal, but that's because *something happens* on the way to the goal rather than because nothing happens.

Suppose a player makes a Charisma check to have his or her rogue rustle up some clues as to where a certain monk of the black dragon might be hiding. The player fails the check. Traditionally, the GM would rule that the character had failed to find any information. With *13th Age*, we encourage you to rule that the character does indeed find clues as to the monk's location, but with unexpectedly bad results. Most likely, word has gotten to the monk that the rogue is looking for him, and he either escapes before his lair is found, or prepares for the group, either setting up an ambush or leaving a trap. The failure means that interesting things happen.

Here's an example from Jonathan's campaign: *Honeybottom, the ambiguously gendered halfling rogue who is way too friendly with the Prince of Shadows for her allies' comfort, is sailing to Drakkenhall thanks to the Archmage's artificially channeled winds thrusting the ship efficiently forward. As an accomplished mingler and agent, Honeybottom attempts to befriend and impress one of the ship's officers. It's a Charisma check using Honeybottom's Entertainer background. It's not that hard a task, so it has DC 15, but Honeybottom rolls a 4 and her level bonus, Charisma modifier, and points in Entertainment don't get her anywhere near 15. Used to the old way of interpreting failure, the player offers this interpretation: "I try to make small talk with him, but then I throw up a little on myself." With "fail forward" as his mantra, Jonathan interprets the bad d20 roll quite differently. The suave PC does indeed make a good impression on the officer, but in private conversation the officer seems to be strongly hinting that he's a recreational cannibal of some stripe. Honeybottom hasn't exactly failed in winning the officer over, but she has failed in advancing her own agenda. If anything, the party's prospects became a bit dimmer now that one of them has drawn the attention of a sociopath.*

Here's another example from one of Rob's games: *Sir Gilly Tallfather makes an Intelligence check using his Heraldry background to loudly proclaim the likely result of the upcoming game of Cricket, a complex halfling sport in which two trained crickets alternately sing beautiful songs together or tear off each other's legs in gladiatorial combat. Gilly fails badly, but instead of making the wrong prediction, he correctly calls the result of the match, while costing a gang of gnome toughs who were controlling the betting a hefty chunk of change. Rob didn't know the toughs were involved in the match UNTIL Gilly failed.*

And one final example that almost happened in Rob's campaign but the action went elsewhere: *The party is climbing a set of cliffs to stage an ambush on agents of the Diabolist traveling in hot-air balloons kept aloft by demons. The Strength and Dexterity checks using various relevant backgrounds don't go very well, but ruling that the characters can't climb any further or that they fall to the bottom in a hail of boulders doesn't advance the story in a meaningful way. Instead, two of the PCs end up taking standard-level damage from short falls, hit points they have to use a recovery to heal from. Meanwhile, unknown to the PCs since their rolls were SO bad, the falling rocks wake an ill-tempered werebear that was trying to hibernate through the winter, and it begins stalking the group as they finish the ascent.*

Background/Skill Advancement

Many d20 games offer new skill points when you gain levels. We let all your skill checks increase by 1 when you level up. If you want even better skill checks, take the Further Backgrounding feat (page XX). You can match the story of your character by picking up a new background or improving a background you already have.

If you just want to move around the bonuses you already have to show how your character is changing, you can move one background point around among your current backgrounds each time you gain a level, or swap the point into an entirely new background, with the GM's permission.

Gamemaster: As an experienced roleplaying gamer, you may have found personality-crafting tools you love in other games. If you like, you can bring in just about any other roleplaying mechanic from character-oriented RPGs. We recommend the 3 by 3 alignment system from d20, the kick starter from *Sorcerer*, the important person from *Over the Edge*, and the personality traits from *Burning Wheel*.

Since this is a d20 game, many players will want to use the 3 by 3 alignment system from d20. Lawful Good, Lawful Neutral, NG, N, NE, CG, CN, CE—it's part of our culture. We like the 9-alignment system and it is language that many gamers feel comfortable with. But if you don't want to play with a tight alignment system, *13th Age* won't force you to.

If you choose to use the 9-alignment system *seriously*, you should probably decide on the alignment of the icons in your campaign. You can use the Good/Ambiguous/Villainous ratings in the icons section as your initial guide, or use the *Icon Alignment* Chart below.

FEATS

Characters choose a feat at first level, and at every subsequent level.

Feats appear in three tiers: adventurer feats, champion feats, and epic feats. Adventurer feats are available to any character between level 1 and level 10. Champion feats are available starting at level 5. Epic feats are available starting at level 8.

Feats per Level

Level	Single-Class Character
1	1 adventurer
2	2 adventurer
3	3 adventurer
4	4 adventurer
5	4 adventurer 1 champion
6	4 adventurer 2 champion
7	4 adventurer 3 champion
8	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic
9	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic
10	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic

As you'll see from digging through the character classes, most of the feats in the game are attached to specific character class talents, attacks, and spells. There are also a few champion feats in the Races chapter (page XX).

If a feat is attached to a talent, power, or spell, you must have that character trait to choose the feat. When there is more than one feat attached to a specific talent or power, you have to choose the lower tier feats before you pick up the higher tier feats. (If your GM approves an exception in a case where the feats aren't obviously building on each other, you must have done something right.)

General Feats

Here's the list of general feats available to any character. As usual, a character cannot take a specific feat more than once. A few general feats only have adventurer-tier versions; others also have champion- and epic-tier versions that can be added later in your career.

Further Backgrounding

Adventurer Tier: Add 3 points to backgrounds you already have, or choose 3 points of new backgrounds that make sense for your character. You still can't go over the 5-point-per-background maximum.

Improved Initiative

Adventurer Tier: Gain a +4 bonus to Initiative checks.

Precise Shot

Adventurer Tier: When your ranged attack targets an enemy who is engaged with an ally, you have no chance of hitting that ally.

Rapid Reload

Adventurer Tier: Reloading a heavy crossbow now takes only a quick action. Reloading a hand or light crossbow is a free action.

Reach Tricks

Adventurer Tier: We don't want to bother with ticky-tacky rules for reach and reach weapons as they exist in other games. But if you are the player who loves using halberds and longspears to get unexpected advantages in combat, and your character already knows how to use those weapons, take this feat.

Once per battle, tell the GM how you are using your weapon's reach to perform an unexpected stunt. To use the stunt, you must roll a 6+ on a d20. (Examples would include getting an opportunity attack against an enemy who disengaged and then moved, striking a nearby enemy you are not engaged with, etc.)

Ritual Casting

Adventurer Tier: You can cast any spells you know as rituals. Classes that are already ritual casters (cleric, @@druid, wizard) don't need this feat. (See page XX for the ritual casting rules.)

Skill Escalation

Adventurer Tier: Twice per day, you can add the escalation die to one of your skill checks. Choose after you roll the check.

Strong Recovery

Adventurer Tier: When you roll recovery dice, reroll one of the dice and use the higher result.

Toughness

Adventurer Tier: You get additional hit points equal to half your baseline class hit points (rounded down). For example, a ranger has a baseline hit points value of 7 and would gain 3 hp with this feat.

At 5th level, the total bonus hit points increases to your baseline hit points value.

At 8th level, the total bonus hit points increases to double your baseline hit points value.

Two-Weapon Slasher

Adventurer Tier: When you fight with two 1-handed melee weapons you can use without an attack penalty, increase the damage you deal with missed attacks by adding your level. For example, most basic attacks end up dealing double your level as miss damage. (See page XX for the normal rules for two-weapon fighting.)

GEAR

Gear means both more and less in *13th Age*. On one hand, we are amping up the story content for your character, so the technical, gear-oriented details get amped down. On the other hand, you have more freedom in deciding just what sort of gear your character has and what it means to you.

In traditional d20 games, your class modifies how much gold you start with, which determines the gear you can afford, and your gear determines your armor class, combat damage, attack bonuses, crit ranges, etc.

In *13th Age*, we cut to the chase and give you your combat stats based on your class. You have some creative freedom in determining what your weapons, armor, and other gear will be. Each class lists the type of gear a member of that class normally uses. You're free to equip your mundane (nonmagical) gear along the lines we suggest or somewhat differently, especially if your backgrounds and character history offer an explanation of why your gear would be different.

In our minds, it's more interesting to discover that your barbarian attaches a griffin feather to every axe he uses (until he fumbles too many times with it and the feather crumbles, forcing him to find a new feather) than to spend time shopping on item lists for gear that doesn't really matter.

That said, playtesters demanded an actual price list related to *13th Age*. We'll @soon have a representative price list at the end of this gear section and more entertaining price notes scattered in Chapter 8: The Dragon Empire. @

Armor Categories

The class write-ups in Chapter 4 categorize armor as either light or heavy. The notes below show examples of the armor types for clarity and inspiration.

Light Armor: Heavily padded vest, leather armor, studded leather, cured animal hide, a suit of quicksilver beetles, dragonhide, light chainmail shirt.

Heavy Armor: Heavy chainmail, ring armor, scale mail, half-plate, plate armor, most dragonscale armor.

Melee Weapon Categories

The class write-ups use a few categories for weapons. See the individual classes for the expected damage and the attack penalty if the class isn't proficient with the weapon.

Small, one-handed: baton, club, dagger, knife, sickle.

Small, two-handed: big club, scythe.

Light/simple, one-handed: hand axe, javelin, mace, shortsword, wicked big knife.
Light/simple, two-handed: spear.
Heavy/martial, one-handed: bastard sword battleaxe, flail, hammer, longsword, morningstar, scimitar.
Heavy/martial, two-handed: dire flail, dwarven double-axe, greataxe, greatsword, halberd, polearms, heavy warhammer.

Ranged Weapon Categories

Use these ranged weapon categories as a guideline for the great number of things that can be thrown or shot.
Small, thrown: baton, club, dagger, knife, sickle.
Small, crossbow: hand crossbow.
Light/simple, thrown: axe, javelin, spear.
Light/simple, crossbow: light crossbow.
Light/simple, bow: shortbow, sling.
Heavy/martial, crossbow: heavy crossbow.
Heavy/martial, bow: longbow.

Reloading: Ranged weapons like shortbows and longbows (and yes, slings) can be reloaded as part of the standard action in which they are used in an attack. Hand and light crossbows require a quick action to reload. Heavy crossbows usually require a standard action to reload.

Thanks to reload requirements, crossbows are often worse ranged weapons than shortbows and longbows for characters who want to attack at range often. But when you see class-by-class weapon use, you'll note that characters who aren't particularly skilled take lower attack penalties with heavy crossbows than they do with longbows. If you're not so skilled with ranged weapons and you're only firing one shot, the heavy crossbow beats the longbow.

If the crossbow is your chosen weapon, you'll want the *rapid reload* feat.

Rob says: *In my campaigns, magic crossbows are docile and helpful compared to magic long bows. Assassins and others who prefer to avoid arguing with their magic items use crossbows.*

Gamemaster: Most d20 games say that small characters like halflings and gnomes use smaller weapons that deal less damage. If your vision of the world requires that, go ahead, but we prefer to play that the halfling and gnome adventurers in our game are exemplary heroes who aren't held back by their size.

ADVICE FOR PLAYERS

That does it for the information you need to create your character. You'll want to know some of the basics of the combat system in chapter 5 and look through the character classes in chapter 4, but the rest is pleasure reading.

But before we turn you loose, here's a slice of advice on how to generate the most fun with your character. We give the GM all sorts of advice, but making the game enjoyable for everyone isn't just the GM's responsibility. Players can take active steps to set up a better game.

Create Dramatic Stories

The storyline should be a group effort between GM and players. In traditional roleplaying games, players often try to invent the smartest, best, or most efficient solutions to problems in the game world. This sort of problem solving can be satisfying, like solving a puzzle, but it doesn't usually lead to the most memorable drama. The worst approach is to come up with the safest solutions, the ones that least expose the characters to danger. These solutions are prudent in terms of the characters' world, but they tend to slow the action down and make the players' experience at the table less exciting. We encourage you to be exciting rather than prudent. When inventing a solution to an open-ended problem, approach the issue the way a good writer approaches a plot point. Don't just think about what would make sense. Think about what would generate fun.

For example, the smart thing to do when the party arrives at a new city might be to keep a low profile until the characters can get a read on the local scene. That's prudent. But what do your characters really want to do when they finish a long journey at a new city? Perhaps

something more interesting, such as seeking out a famous inn to see whether its desserts really live up to their reputation as the "best in the land." Or maybe the characters have distant relatives or old friends that they feel duty bound to check in on. You can probably think of something more interesting to do than whatever the most prudent course of action would be. This sort of open-ended activity is a good opportunity for you to expand your character's horizons or to reinforce their personality.

Don't take this advice as an excuse to hog the spotlight or derail the plot. Your fellow players are counting on you to help make the session more engaging, not to turn an open-ended roleplaying scene into a headache.

Will things go harder for your characters if they don't always do the smart and safe thing? Sure, but setbacks and trouble make for good drama.

Telegraph Your Intent

In traditional roleplaying games, the GM is a neutral arbiter, and when a player asks questions about the world or setting, it's the GM's job to discern the answer that makes the most sense in the world. The GM doesn't need to know the player's reason for asking because the GM's answer is based on the fiction of the world rather than on the needs of the drama. In some campaigns, the players are even careful not to let the GM know their intent so that the GM can't foresee the player's plan and block it. If the PC can talk to animals, for example, the player might ask a number of leading questions about the surroundings hoping to corner the GM into saying that there are animals around so that the player can spring a means of talking to animals on the unsuspecting GM. We encourage you to take just the opposite approach. Explain to the GM what you hope the answer will be and why so that they can take that into account when inventing an answer.

For example, you ask, "Just how far away is this enchanted glade where the magical boars were killed?" The GM might invent an answer based on what seems to fit the fictional world. Maybe the GM says, "A couple days' travel

inland." If, however, you first say, "I wish I could see the place where the boars were killed and try to glean some clues from the arcane signatures left behind by the killer," then the GM might invent an answer that helps your character do something interesting. Maybe the GM says, "The glade is actually just outside the city, but it's magically hidden so most people hardly know it's there. If you can persuade the local druids, you might be able to gain access."

Economy & Price Lists @@

@coinage notes to be joined with notes on coins from the cities in chapter 8

@The symbol of the Emperor on one side, and something from the city on the other.

Towers: Dwarven gold pieces are square with grooved edges. They get their name from the fact that they stack perfectly, though obviously not with anyone else's gold coins. To start a fight with a dwarf in a tavern, knock over the tower one of them has stacked beside their ale. Sometimes that takes some doing; dwarven coins seem to *want* to stay stacked instead of falling over. It's not unheard of to find ancient dwarven treasure troves where the coins are still stacked into perfect towers. Elves joke that it's not the fact that dragons steal dwarven gold that bothers the dwarves so much, but the fact that the dwarves' towers get knocked down and scattered throughout the hoard.

Trines: Elves often use beautiful coins that meld gold, silver, and platinum. They're almost universally accepted to have a value of 3 gp. You'll generally find more and more trines the closer you get to Concord and the Queen's Wood. Only the very wealthy and those looking to make a point carry nothing but trines.

One gold piece equals 10 silver pieces. One gold piece equals 100 copper pieces. Adventurers and nobles generally use gold pieces. Tradesmen, merchants, guardsmen, farmers, and the middle class are more likely to deal with silver pieces but don't find anything strange about using gold. Peasants generally get by with copper pieces, occasionally managing silvers.

The start of the deliberately idiosyncratic price list that follows should be read remembering that an adventurer tier healing potion generally costs about 50 gp…

Peasant's knife; 40 coppers [less than .5 gp]
Street-tough's dagger; 1 gp
Dungeon-ready combat dagger with rope-sawing edge; 4 gp

Slightly damaged gladiatorial longsword in Axis; 7 gp
Reknowned longsword of a twelve-kill gladiator in Axis; 110 gp

Serviceable battle-axe near Forge; 6 gp
Serviceable battle-axe near the Wild Wood; 27 gp, and maybe you shouldn't be showing that in public unless you're wearing the symbol of the High Druid

Solid mace; 5 gp
Crusader-blessed mace exported from First Triumph (no magic, just status); 230 gp

Utilitarian shortbow; 9 gp
Yew-wood longbow that does not suck; 14 gp
Longbow grown in the Queen's Wood; 65 gp

Candy; 1 copper
Good candy; 2 coppers
A good meal; 1 gp

Night's lodging in a reputable inn; 6 gp a room
Night's lodging for a party with a couple non-humans in Concord; 5 gp a room
Night's lodging in Concord for a purely human group; 10 gp a room
Night's lodging in Drakkenhall when there's a Koru Festival imminent at the Straits; 47 gp per room
Night's lodging in Horizon for poor saps who didn't book ahead using *message* and can't cast *rope trick*; 80 gp

Passage on a ship sailing one city away around the Midland Sea; 7 gp
Passage two cities away; 15 gp
Passage three cities away; 25 gp

Large tabby cat, 5 coppers
Large tabby cat in Horizon, guaranteed free of fleas and demonic possession; 20 gp

Ferry ride across the Grandfather; 2 silvers
Ferry ride across the Grandfather if the new Road Bridge is temporarily demolished; 5 gp

Set of four plausibly honest six-sided dice; 2 silvers
Set of extremely well-balanced ever-so-slightly cheaty dice; 35 gp

Fine for impeding Imperial officials in Axis; 100 of whichever coin you look like you can afford, at least
Fine for unnecessary violence in Santa Cora; double the above fine . . . or sincere regret

A good beer; 1 silver
An excellent dwarven ale; 1 gp
Fine wine; 5 gp
A drink of fresh, pure water on the Demon Coast; 20+ gp

Chapter 3: Races

You may have noticed that our art doesn't present all members of a race as sharing the same style of physical appearance. If the visual style we're using in the main illustrations doesn't appeal to your vision of your character's chosen race, don't worry. The world has room for people of different heights, elves with different eye shapes, hairy or non-hairy dwarves, and halflings with or without hair on their feet.

To use dwarves as an example, we're not telling you what all dwarves in 13th Age look like because there isn't necessarily a single dwarven style. Differences in body shape, facial hair, armor styles, and speech patterns can all be explained as clan traditions, geographic tendencies, the result of different underworld heritage, or as the consequence of powerful dwarven magic that mandates specific cultural and physical patterns. The story of your character is up to you, so if inventing a distinct visual style suits you better than incorporating the styles used by us, other fantasy roleplaying games, and your miniatures, by all means, make up something cool that will improve your group's game.

MAJOR RACES

The dominant races in our version of the Dragon Empire are humans, dwarves, elves, gnomes, half-elves, half-orcs, and halflings. These are the races that are part of our geopolitical background; they're in the game whether or not your players want to play them.

Of course, there may be characters of unusual races in your campaign. Options for a number of other PC races follow the Major Races section.

Race Ability Score Adjustments

Each race is associated with two ability scores. Choose one for your racial ability score bonus. Based on your class, you'll also get another bonus to a different ability. This means that every character gets a bonus to two abilities, and

it's a good idea to think about your class bonus when choosing your racial bonus.

Choose *one* ability score for a racial bonus.

Race	Str	Con	Dex	Int	Wis	Cha	Any
Human							+2
Dwarf		+2			+2		
Dark elf			+2			+2	
High elf				+2		+2	
Wood elf			+2		+2		
Gnome			+2	+2			
Half-elf		+2				+2	
Half-orc	+2		+2				
Halfling		+2	+2				

Race Powers

Each race option also provides a power that a character can use *once per battle*. You regain access to used racial abilities after a short rest.

Gamemaster: NPCs don't necessarily have these abilities. You should feel free to give an extraordinary NPC the same once-per-battle racial ability that the PCs enjoy, or even something better, but don't feel obligated. For example, not every high elf in the world is capable of teleporting, only the extraordinary ones. On the other hand, these racial abilities are much less extraordinary than being able to use the escalation die, so feel free to give them to your NPCs when you think the NPC deserves it.

HUMANS

+2 any ability score

Bonus Feat: First level human PCs start with two feats instead of one.

Quick to Fight: At the start of each battle, roll initiative twice and choose the result you want.

Champion Feat: If you roll a natural 20 for initiative, increase the escalation die by 1 (usually from 0 to 1 since it's the start of the fight).

As in most recent fantasy games, we like using humans of various ethnicities and styles. Some map to cultures in the game world, while others are part of the magical mixing pot.

Six of the major cities of the Dragon Empire are predominantly human (Concord being the exception). Even Drakkenhall, the City of Monsters, has a human majority, along with minorities of most everything else.

You can tweak the racial mix of your version of the Empire anyway you like, of course. Our assumption is that the Wizard King ran the first human empire in the area and the Dragon Empire is the second. So far all the Dragon Emperors have been human, though in a genealogical sense it would be possible to have a half-elven emperor.

DWARVES

+2 Con OR +2 Wis

That's Your Best Shot? Once per battle as a free action after you have been hit by an enemy attack, you can heal using a recovery. If the escalation die isn't 2+, you only get half the usual healing from the recovery. Unlike other recoveries that allow you to take an average result, you have to roll this one!

Note that you can't use this ability if the attack drops you to 0 hp or below. You've got to be on your feet to sneer at their attack and recover.

Champion Feat: If the escalation die is 4+ when you use this ability, the recovery is free.

See the entries on the mountain named Forge and the Dwarf King elsewhere in the playtest package for the basic history of the dwarves.

Dwarves are usually organized in extended clans. By extended we mean many members and many memories—dwarves love keeping track of the past and applying it to the present.

Dwarven traits from most any other fantasy source are welcome in our game. There are two we make use of frequently: ale and magic treasure.

Ale: Technically, you'd expect dwarves to be distilling liquor. That would work a lot easier underground. But dwarves love brewing ale and the quest for quality ingredients and dedicated brew masters motivates a significant portion of dwarven interactions with the far corners of the world.

Magic treasure: The Dwarf King claims to own a stake in every bit of treasure extracted from the ground. When you meet a dwarf and you're the type of person who possesses actual magic treasures (a rarity, to be sure), the first thing the dwarf will do is look over your treasure (at least the treasure you openly display), figuring out how well you are caring for it and how the treasure feels being owned by you. Obviously, most adventurers take excellent care of their magic gear, so in truth dwarves rarely have grounds for actual complaint. But that doesn't stop them from looking. And if they feel like starting trouble, they always have a pretext.

ELVES

Adventurer Tier Elf Feat (*Heritage of the Sword):* You can use swords with d6 damage dice without attack penalties.

Dark Elves

+2 Dex OR +2 Cha

Cruel: Once per battle, turn one of your natural even attack rolls that hits into a critical hit.

Champion Feat: One battle per day, you can instead use *cruel* to turn a natural even attack roll that misses into a critical hit.

High Elves

+2 Int OR +2 Cha

Highblood Teleport: Once per battle as a move action, place yourself in a location you can see that is nearby your current location.

Champion Feat: Deal damage equal to twice your level to one enemy engaged with you before or after you teleport.

Wood Elves

+2 Dex OR +2 Wis

Elven Grace: At the beginning of each of your turns, roll a die to see if you get an extra standard action. If your roll is equal to or lower than the escalation die, you get an extra standard action that turn.

At the start of battle, you roll a d6. Each time you successfully gain an extra action, the size of the die you roll increases by one step on the following progression: (d4), d6, d8, d10, d12, d20. If you get an extra action after rolling a d20, you can no longer get an extra action that battle.

Champion Feat: Start battles rolling a d4 for *elven grace* instead of a d6.

The Three Shards of the Elven People

The Elf Queen wears a crown of three parts: black amethyst and obsidian for the dark elves, green emerald and flowering plants for the wood elves, and diamond and *force* magic for the high elves. When the elves were truly unified, they referred to themselves as the three branches of the elves, but since the war with the dwarves it has become customary to refer to themselves as the three Shards of the Crown.

Even though her crown remains whole, the Queen herself uses the term. At first she used it sardonically, chiding her people for their animosities. But words used sarcastically have a way of sticking if they're true, and the shorthand method of referring to one of the three branches of the elves has become to call them shards.

Elven Woods

What outsiders think: Elven Woods are full of giant trees. Their coloration starts as normal brown on the fringe, but may be white, silver, red, or golden as you go deeper into the forest. Wood elves in the area will usually know if outsiders are present. High elves sometimes live among these woods, near the center of the forest, and dark elves can occasionally be found there as well.

What elves know: The perfect Elven Wood is a harmonious three-part city in the key of nature. Wood elves live in and among the great trees, in tents pitched around the trunks or in more permanent houses set high in the branches. The dark elves live in the giant caverns and twisting labyrinths carved out within and below the great trees' roots. The spiral towers of the high elves rear above the green canopy. The lives of the three Shards of the Crown are mostly separate, but together they weave magic that strengthens the wood and increases every elf's fortune.

That's the dream at least. In practice, the harmony between the three elven shards broke after the war with the dwarves. Elven Woods still have all three layers of elves, at least in sections of the woods. But few such woods are populated throughout, and if wood elves and high elves populate the trees and towers, it's unlikely that the dark elves will live beneath them. Conversely, where dark elves are prosperous, high elves may be able to live by keeping their distance in the high towers, but wood elves are likely to be scarce.

Without harmony between the three shards of the elves, their perfect woods are seldom perfectly maintained. High elves may perform astrological observations from their high towers, or, just as likely, gargoyles will be using the ruins of the towers as lookout perches for an evil cult. Wood elves may dwell within the trees' high branches, or the hunters that track their prey among the forest may be bugbears and dragons. Dark elves may cluster with their spiders in temples and arenas below the trees' roots, or the catacombs in those deep places may be populated by owlbears and ghosts.

Dark Elves

Within the Queen's Court, the dark elves are referred to by the name they use for themselves, the Silver Folk. Outside the Court, only use of the term Silver Folk is extremely polite, or ironic. Most surface dwellers refer to them as dark elves or drow, interchangeably.

Dark elves are not uniformly evil. Drow society varies from entirely evil to merely cruel.

That said, it's almost a point of pride among dark elves that some of the world's greatest villains have come from their race, to the point that even a goodly hearted drow may end up arguing that her race's despotic overlord was far more powerful than another race's former tyrant.

Use the flavor of evil you like best for dark elves and allow your players with drow characters to be part of groups from the fringe or isolated settlements that differ from the norm. Compared to the dark elves of some fantasy worlds, the Silver Folk can be trusted to the extent that they are mostly loyal, in some strange or disgusted way, to their Queen. The Queen's critics point out that it takes a twisted and capricious monarch to engage the affections of the dark elves—you can't win when you are Queen of three feuding races.

High Elves

The high elves are sometimes called light elves. Their term for themselves means both high and light. Humans hearing that description often supply "sky" as a better translation and are told "No, either high or light, not sky," which is apparently reserved for creatures of the Overworld.

High elves in your game might have markedly different eyes when they've been using magical power, and you can call them by whatever name works best for you.

Wood Elves

The wood elves are known as the gray elves in the oldest texts, but they grew out of the name, which appears to have been an early Elf King's idea of a logical transition between light and dark. Some humans call them the green elves. Wood elves resisted that name until recently, when some wood elves associated with the High Druid began using the term "green elf," or "wild elf," to distinguish themselves from elves who do not follow the High Druid. *Green* and *wild* are presently considered impolite terms at the Court of Stars.

GNOMES

+2 Dex OR +2 Int

Befuddling: Once per battle, when you roll a natural 16+ with an attack, your target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Minor Illusions: As a standard action, at-will, you can create a strong smell or a sound nearby. Nearby creatures that fail a normal save notice the smell or sound. Creatures that make the save may notice it but recognize it as not exactly real.

Small: Gnomes have a +2 AC bonus against opportunity attacks.

Champion Feat: Instead of being dazed, the target of your *befuddling* ability is weakened until the end of your next turn.

Gnomes are small people who live underground and have a remarkable facility for magic. Most live near the surface, usually in burrows near woodlands and forests, though others have left the burrows behind and moved into basement- or ground-floor dwellings in towns and cities.

A few gnomes live deeper underground somewhat above the realms the dwarves had to flee after the war with the drow. Some of these deep gnomes have come too close to the maddening effects of the deepest Underworld. PC gnomes can use this fact as they wish.

Gnomes enjoy magic, tricks, and surprising bigger people. A few gnome adventurers take the racial affection for surprises so far that they follow supremely eccentric paths, such as becoming barbarians or paladins.

HALF-ELVES

+2 Con or +2 Cha

Surprising: Once per battle, subtract one from the natural result of one of your own d20 rolls.

Champion Feat: Once per battle, you can subtract one from the natural result of a nearby ally's d20 roll.

As in other worlds, half-elves are often the result of a union between an elven and a human parent. But in the Dragon Empire, half-elves are also sometimes born to both humans and elves without contact with the other race.

Two hundred years ago the first Dragon Emperor and the Elf Queen allied to destroy the wizard who later became the Lich King. After their great victory, half the children born to both humans and elves for the next twelve years were half-elves. Neither the Emperor nor the Queen claimed responsibility for the event. They both said that it was a spontaneous magical consequence of the great victory the peoples had won together.

Since then, half-elves have served as a symbol of friendship between the races. Beyond symbolism, they are generally welcomed in both human and elven society. High elves, of course, are snootier about half-elves than are the wood elves, but nowhere near as snooty as they are about humans. Dark elves mistrust half-elves who have spent too much time with humans, but no more than they mistrust other dark elves who enjoy the company of humans and dwarves.

The Elf Queen sees half-elves as a means of extending her influence into the Empire. She's not wrong. The Dragon Emperor believes that so long as half-elves are spontaneously born throughout the Empire, the Elf Queen will not betray him, and so far he hasn't been entirely wrong either.

Players: If you are wondering why it would ever be a good idea to subtract one from the natural result of one of your own d20 rolls, you haven't read about the bard's battle cries, the fighter's flexible attacks, the ranger's double weapon talents, and the sorcerer's *lightning fork* spell. Not coincidentally, bard, fighter, ranger and sorcerer are the classes that half-elf adventurers traditionally prefer.

HALF-ORCS

+2 Str OR +2 Dex

Lethal: Once per battle, reroll a melee attack and use the roll you prefer as the result.

Champion Feat: If the rerolled attack is a natural 16+, you can use *lethal* again later this battle.

The name half-orc is misleading. There are cases of orcs and humans mating, but most such intercourse is barren or lethal. The common origin story for half-orcs is that they are a supernatural response to the existence of orcs. Orc breakouts appear as magically generated infections. Half-orc births are a slower response, apparently encouraged by the High Druid in the wildlands to strengthen human tribes. It may not be true that the High Druid is responsible for half-orc origins, but half-orcs are welcome in most all groups that recognize the Druid's leadership.

Half-orcs are most common outside the Empire in the barbaric wildlands. Until the last century or so, half-orcs were rare inside the Empire except on the frontier. But that has changed. One of the more warlike Dragon Emperors formed a unit of half-orc warriors and magicians as his personal bodyguard. In the process, he gave half-orcs official citizenship in the Empire, and they're now nearly as common as the other non-human races.

Many half-orcs don't take to urban life, but feel easily at home in Axis (the imperial city of war and gladiatorial games) and Drakkenhall (the Blue Dragon's half-ruined city of monsters). There are half-orcs in Concord, but they don't maintain a racial identity there, instead going with the flow of whoever their friends are.

HALFLINGS

+2 Con OR +2 Dex

Evasive: Once per battle, force an enemy that hits you with an attack to reroll the attack with a –2 penalty.

Small: Halflings have a +2 AC bonus against opportunity attacks.

Champion Feat: The enemy's reroll when you use *evasive* has a –5 penalty instead.

The Origins of Halflings

The curious thing about the halflings' origin is that so many humans, elves, gnomes, icons, and yes, halflings, seem to care about it. Races like the elves and dwarves, and even the humans, have their own creation myths, but they seldom come up in daily life and are generally regarded as extremely ancient history. Halfling origin stories, on the other hand, are both widespread and diverse. It's generally agreed that halflings are younger than the other races. But that's where agreement stops.

What the gnomes say: Some gnomes say that halflings were once a lost clan of gnomes who strayed to the surface, liked it there, and began to spread themselves across the world. You'll probably never meet a halfling who believes this story, or even thinks about it twice unless they are talking to a gnome. But there are gnomes who regard halflings as distant kin and speak wistfully of the "halfling-path" as if it were a possible alternative to the gnomes' strange underground existence.

What the wood elves say: Wood elves point to the halfling villages of Burrow, Old Town, and Twisp as the original homes of the halfling race. These villages sit in the calm center of the Empire's strongest amity ward. The elves say that the ward has nothing to do with the Archmage. They claim that it flows from a different magic than the Archmage's tradition, and that the earliest halflings lived within the ward's protections while being hardly noticed by anyone outside it.

The inhabitants of Burrow and its neighboring villages sometimes agree with the wood elf story, but they are generally too polite to bring it up themselves. Their own story is that they were nomads who found a good place to live and stuck with it, a story that gives them something in common with the rather more adventurous halflings who live outside the ancient amity ward.

What the river runners say: A few halflings live as nomads on the rivers, traveling in riverboats that take advantage of the Inner Sea's calm waters to dart along the coast and enter into different tributaries. Some of the river nomads say that the first halflings lived in the middle of the great sea and were pushed out of the ocean when the Dragon Emperor drove all the monsters from the Inner Sea. Depending on the speaker, this pronouncement could be a tongue-in-cheek jest or more or less earnest.

What the Priestess said: Once, and only once, the Priestess gave a sermon that told the story of how the Prince of Shadows broke into the minds of the gods and found a people there who were destined to save a future world. The Prince thought they showed promise and brought them back with him. The Priestess has never told the story again and says she doesn't remember telling it the first time. But the tale has gained life of its own, partly because urban halflings whose activities may safely be deemed "sketchy" like the idea that the Prince of Shadows has been on their side from the beginning.

The truth: . . . may not be out there. Divinations and scholarly research support each of the stories, a fact that may point to the Prince of Shadows' involvement in some fashion. Self-contradictory divinations are a trademark of the Prince when he wants to cover his trail.

Halflings generally aren't troubled by their contradictory origins. In fact, one of the common ways of drawing a long and implausible tale to a close is to say, "And that's the story of how halflings came into the world." Halflings always laugh.

OPTIONAL PC RACES

The races outlined in this section aren't necessarily part of the world. They will fit into any setting without problem, but they don't match all GMs' images of how they want their campaigns to work.

The point of *13th Age* is to set up the version of the game you want to play. If a player wants to play one of these races, they should have that right, but not necessarily at the expense of the GM's vision if the GM already knows how he or she wants to handle such characters.

We've provided two names for each of these races. We think the first name might be what they like to call themselves. They might or might not like the second name.

If the race you want to play or emphasize in your game isn't included here, we say bring it in. The four races below could be the most common minor races of the world, but there are many others. Some newcomers come in on flying realms, others surface in dungeons or are created by icons, and a few have been in the world all along but aren't as numerous as the major races.

Race Ability Score Adjustments

As with the major races, each optional race is associated with two ability scores. Choose *one* for your racial ability score boost.

Race	Str	Con	Dex	Int	Wis	Cha	Any
Dragonic / Dragonspawn	+2					+2	
Holy One / Aasimar					+2	+2	
Steelborn / Dwarf-forged	+2	+2					
Tiefling / Demontouched	+2			+2			

DRAGONIC / DRAGONSPAWN

+2 Str OR +2 Cha

Breath Weapon: Once per battle, make an attack as a quick action using your highest ability score against one nearby target's Physical Defense. On a hit, the attack deals 1d6 damage per your level of an energy type that makes sense for your character.

Champion Feat: Your *breath weapon* attack targets 1d3 enemies in a nearby group instead.

By any name, this race of dragon humanoids is torn between the influence of the Great Gold Wyrm, the Three, the Emperor, and the High Druid. If you like them, sprinkle this race all over the borders of the Empire, the Red Wastes,

Drakkenhall, Axis, and Sea Wall. If you don't like dragon guys running around on two legs, save them as a player character option for a PC who won't have any trouble coming up with their One Unique Feature. Perhaps they all died out in the wars between the Great Gold Wyrm and the Three . . . except for the *one* that surfaces in your campaign.

HOLY ONE / AASIMAR

+2 Wis OR +2 Cha

Halo: Once per battle as a free action on your turn, gain a +2 bonus to all defenses until you are hit by an attack (or until the battle ends).

Champion Feat: *Halo* also activates automatically any time you heal using a recovery.

Players: *Halo* doesn't stack with itself. Triggering the ability multiple times only provides +2 bonus.

This near-human race touched by the bright gods has risen to prominence since the Priestess built the Cathedral. Perhaps they existed elsewhere once in isolated monasteries and temples. What's certain is that they now live in and around the Cathedral in Santa Cora. If you or your GM desire, they can also be spreading into the wider world.

STEELBORN / DWARF-FORGED

+2 Str OR +2 Con

Never Say Die: Whenever you drop to 0 hp or below, roll a normal save if you have a recovery available. On an 11+, instead of falling unconscious, you stay on your feet and can heal using a recovery as a free action. Add the recovery hit points to 0 hp to determine your hp total.

Champion Feat: If you roll a 16+ on your *never say die* save, you gain an additional standard action during your next turn.

We phrase these popular mechanical beings as servitors of the dwarves. That way GMs that aren't fond of living constructs can keep them out of sight underground with the dwarves, and GMs that want to include them can feature free steelborn on the surface.

If you like, you can say that they don't breathe and then deal with all that living construct stuff. Or ignore most of it. If you do give them benefits connected to being constructs, you could give them a slight penalty to healing in return or just understand that they'll be frequent target of your GM's machinations and call it good.

TIEFLINGS / DEMONTOUCHED

+2 Str OR +2 Int

Curse of Chaos: Once per battle as a free action when a nearby enemy rolls a natural 1 –5 on an attack or a save, turn their roll into a natural 1 and improvise a further curse that shows how their attempt backfires horribly.

Start with the other racial once-per-battle abilities as a model of how big an impact this power should have . . . but feel free to go a little beyond, since the timing of the power is out of the tiefling's control.

A typical curse might lead to the cursed attacker dealing half damage to themselves with their fumbled attack and being dazed until the end of their next turn afterward. But the GM should reward storytelling flair that aims at effects that aren't just game mechanics and damage with significant outcomes.

If the GM thinks your suggestion is going too far, they can enforce a smaller version of your curse or call for an unmodified d20 roll on which you'd better roll high to get the curse result you've suggested.

Champion Feat: Whenever a nearby enemy rolls a natural 1 on an attack against you, you can use *curse of chaos* against them without expending it.

This race is touched by the Diabolist but mostly free of her influence (hopefully). They are found most commonly in the Red Wastes and along the Demon Coast. The race is curiously at home in Horizon, and less common in Santa Cora.

Players: You need to have a good relationship with your GM for curse of chaos to work in your favor. If that's not what you've got, expect some frustration to hone your method-acting roleplay of the world's most tormented race.

Chapter 4: Classes

EASE OF PLAY

From the simplest character class to the most complex, the classes go like so:

- The **barbarian** is designed for the player who wants to roll dice and slay without worrying too much about the rules.
- Like the barbarian, the **ranger** relies on base attacks augmented by class talents instead of a power list.
- The **paladin** also relies on a short list of class talents instead of powers. Like the ranger, it can be slightly more complex if you choose its more involved talents.
- The **fighter** is simple to play but asks you to make interesting choices between flexible attacks before and during combat.
- The **cleric** is probably the easiest of the spellcasters. It requires a touch of patience.
- The **sorcerer** is probably more complex than the cleric because of variant spells and the option to cast spells for double the effect in two rounds. Not a decision that new players may feel comfortable with.
- The **rogue** can be more complex than other classes because you are tracking whether or not you have momentum, constantly disengaging, and trying to use your sneak attack damage effectively.
- The **bard** has a variety of options that include commands, spells, and songs. Figuring out how to best use those options both in combat and during roleplaying is probably best for a confident player.
- The **wizard** is the most complex class if you choose all the options that allow improvisation and ad-libbing; without those freeform talents it's no more difficult than the sorcerer.

CUSTOMIZATION

Feel free to tinker towards what's fun and what best suits your character. If you have a sorcerer whose concept requires a familiar, which is listed as a class talent for the wizard, it's no big deal to customize your sorcerer with the talent from another class. Trying to *mini-max* talents from other classes isn't cool, but simple swaps that feel right in the GM's campaign don't hurt anyone.

Similarly, our players frequently rename their attacks and spells to suit their characters' personalities and icon connections.

STARTING STATS FOR FIRST LEVEL CHARACTERS

All information in this table is duplicated on the character sheets at the start of each of the class entries.

	HP (+ Con) per hp factor	Usual Base AC*	Base Physical Defense	Base Mental Defense	Background Points	Recovery Dice
Barbarian	7	12	11	10	6	d10/lvl
Bard	7	12	10	11	10	d8/lvl
Cleric	7	14	11	11	8	d8/lvl
Fighter	8	15	10	10	6	d10/lvl
Paladin	8	16	10	12	6	d10/lvl
Ranger	7	14	11	10	10	d8/lvl
Rogue	6	12	12	10	10	d8/lvl
Sorcerer	6	10	11	10	6	d6/lvl
Wizard	6	10	10	11	8	d6/lvl

*The base AC numbers assume that the PC is in the armor that suits them best; see the class write-ups for details. PCs who know how to fight using a shield get +1 AC when they have a shield in one hand.

BARBARIAN

Striding out of the wilderness come indomitable men and ferocious women, barbaric warriors who pit their sinew and will against everything that civilization and sorcery can throw at them. Some win glory and wealth, while others gain nothing but the grim satisfaction of beating down powerful and terrifying foes.

Overview

Play style: A barbarian character is straightforward and easy to play. A barbarian lacks the tricks and finesse of a more complicated character, but they are effective and fun. It's a good class for a new player or the player who wants to have fun without worrying much about rules getting in the way of awesome attacks.

Unlike most of the other classes, barbarians don't gain powers every level. Instead, most of their extra oomph comes from their class talents. We keep decisions to a minimum while allowing barbarians to contribute with mighty attacks and awesome bravado.

Ability Scores: Strength is the most important score for a barbarian. After Strength, Constitution is next in line, since you'll take damage often and a high Constitution might help your AC.

Races: Many barbaric cultures consist of orcs, half-orcs, humans, or half-elves. Barbarians of other races are rare but obviously plausible and interesting. Alternatively, the campaign you're in could include a barbaric subculture in some other race—hint, hint.

Backgrounds: Wolf clan champion, caravan outrider, fur trapper, mountain tribeswoman, wasteland survivalist, underworld refugee, gladiator, Iron Seacoast hunter.

Icons: Barbarians are often related one way or another to the Orc Lord, the High Druid, the Three (especially the Red), or the Diabolist. Sometimes a barbarian isn't from a fully barbaric culture, but is instead a powerful warrior with fewer tricks than a fighter but a lot more rage. These rowdy-but-civilized barbarians could readily be associated with most any icon.

Gear

The barbarians in *13th Age* generally aren't complete savages; even the wildest groups aren't cut off from outside contact unless they deeply want to be cut off. Therefore, barbarians' weapons and gear don't have to be entirely primitive and barbaric unless you want them to be.

Armor

Barbarians normally wear light armor, favoring hide, furs, and leather. Some barbarians put rings in their leather, but it's usually as much decorative as effective. Heavy armor doesn't work that well for barbarians, since they don't get much of a defensive benefit from it, and take attack penalties while wearing it.

Barbarian Armor

Armor Type	Base AC	Atk Penalty
None	10	—
Light	12	—
Heavy	13	–2
Shield	+1	—

Barbarian Melee Weapons

Your barbarian can use any melee weapon you want, even a sophisticated halberd or exotic dwarf ax, provided you have a good story about how you came by such a civilized weapon. More likely, the barbarian has a big, nasty, well-used blade of some kind, with clan totems bound to it by the sinews of defeated monsters.

Barbarian Ranged Weapons

Barbarians love throwing big, sharp, heavy things, especially weapons consecrated to victory in secret clan rituals. Some barbarians are decidedly good with heavy bows, whose quality rivals those of city-made bows. No self-respecting barbarian would be caught dead using a crossbow, relying on some gadget's strength instead of his or her own.

Barbarian Melee Weapons

	One-Handed	**Two-Handed**
Small	1d4 dagger	1d6 club
Light or Simple	1d6 hand-axe, warclub	1d8 spear
Heavy or Martial	1d8 longsword, battleaxe	1d10 greatsword, greataxe

Barbarian Ranged Weapons

	Thrown	**Crossbow**	**Bow**
Small	1d4 knife	1d4 (–5) hand xbow	—
Light or Simple	1d6 javelin, axe, spear	1d6 (–5) light xbow	1d6 shortbow
Heavy Martial	—	1d8 (–5) heavy xbow	1d8 longbow

Barbarian Level	Total Hit Points	Total # Feats	Class Talents	Level-up Ability Bonuses	Damage bonus from ability score
Level 1	7 + CON mod x **3**	1 adventurer	3 adventurer		Ability modifier
Level 2	7 + CON mod x **4**	2 adventurer	3 adventurer		Ability modifier
Level 3	7 + CON mod x **5**	3 adventurer	3 adventurer		Ability modifier
Level 4	7 + CON mod x **6**	4 adventurer	3 adventurer	+1 to 3 abilities	Ability modifier
Level 5	7 + CON mod x **8**	4 adventurer 1 champion	3 adventurer 1 champion		2 x ability modifier
Level 6	7 + CON mod x **10**	4 adventurer 2 champion	3 adventurer 1 champion		2 x ability modifier
Level 7	7 + CON mod x **12**	4 adventurer 3 champion	3 adventurer 1 champion	+1 to 3 abilities	2 x ability modifier
Level 8	7 + CON mod x **16**	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	3 adventurer 1 champion 1 epic		3 x ability modifier
Level 9	7 + CON mod) x **20**	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	3 adventurer 1 champion 1 epic		3 x ability modifier
Level 10	7 + CON mod x **24**	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	3 adventurer 1 champion 1 epic	+1 to 3 abilities	3 x ability modifier

Name:
Class: Barbarian
Race:
Level: 1

STR:
CON:
DEX:
INT:
WIS:
CHA:

Initiative:
(Level + Dex mod)

AC:
(12 + Level + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis)

Physical Defense:
(11+ Level + middle mod of Str/Dex/Con)

Mental Defense:
(10+ Level + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha)

HP:
3 x (7 + Con mod)

Recoveries (probably 8):
Recovery Dice: 1d10 per level + Con mod
:

Class Bonus to Ability Scores
As a barbarian, you can add +2 to your Strength or to your Constitution, as long as it's not the same ability that you increased with your +2 racial bonus.

One Unique Thing:

Icon Relationships (3 points):

Backgrounds (6 points):

Basic Attack
Unlike most other classes, barbarians use a basic attack for most every attack they make. Their class talents give them a couple options for striking harder.

Barbarian Basic Attacks
At-will melee attack
   Attack: Strength + Level vs. AC
   Hit: WEAPON + Strength damage
   Miss: Damage equal to level

At-will ranged attack
   Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
   Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage
   Miss: —

Barbarian Rage

All barbarians can rage once per day (or more than once, if they're lucky).

Once per day, use a quick action to start raging; a rage lasts until the end of battle (or around five minutes, if you decide to rage out of combat for dramatic roleplaying effect!).

While raging, you roll 2d20 to hit with your barbarian melee and thrown weapon attacks instead of 1d20. Use the higher roll for the attack. If you roll a natural 11+ with both dice and your highest attack roll is a hit, the attack is a critical hit!

While raging, multiclass barbarians cannot use powers from their other class.

Recharge 16+: After a battle when you rage, roll a d20; on a 16+, you can use the rage again later in the day.

Adventurer Feat: Each time you score a critical hit while raging, note the escalation die. Add the highest escalation die value noted to your recharge roll for rage after the battle.

Champion Feat: If you crit with a natural 20 attack roll while raging, your critical hit deals triple damage.

Epic Feat: The recharge roll for your *barbarian rage* is now 11+.

Adventurer Tier Talents

If you are a single-class barbarian, choose three of the following class talents.

If you are a multi-class barbarian, choose one of the following class talents.

Barbaric Cleave

Once per battle as a free action, make another barbarian melee attack after you have dropped a non-mook foe to 0 hp with a barbarian melee attack. (Dropping the last mook of a mook mob also qualifies you for *barbaric cleave*.)

Adventurer Feat: You gain a +2 attack bonus with *barbaric cleave* attacks. If the cleave attack hits, you can heal using a recovery.

Champion Feat: Once per day, use *barbaric cleave* as many times as you like in one battle. You can only use it once per round.

Epic Feat: If there is no foe engaged with you to use your *barbaric cleave* against, you can move to a nearby foe and make the attack.

Building Frenzy

One battle per day, as a free action after you have missed with an attack, add 1d4 damage to your melee attacks until the end of the battle. Add 1d4 additional damage each time one of your attacks misses, up to a maximum of +3d4.

Adventurer Feat: +5d4 maximum.

Champion Feat: The *building frenzy* damage dice are now d10s.

Epic Feat: You can use *building frenzy* twice a day.

Slayer

During your turn, when you attack a *wounded* (half hp) enemy you were not engaged with at the start of your turn, deal +1d6 damage per level to that target if you hit.

Adventurer Feat: You gain a +2 bonus to *slayer* attacks.

Champion Feat: Once per battle, when you miss with a *slayer* attack, deal the additional +1d6 per-level damage to the target instead of normal miss damage.

Epic Feat: Whenever one of your *slayer* attacks drops a non-mook enemy to 0 hp, you gain 20 temporary hit points.

Players: *Slayer* gives you incentives to charge around the battlefield. To take full advantage of it, sometimes you'll have to disengage from one foe to move and attack a different wounded foe, unless, of course, the rest of your party can do something to free you up.

Strongheart

Your recovery dice are d12s instead of d10s like other barbarians.

Adventurer Feat: Add 1 recovery to your total number of recoveries.

Champion Feat: When you heal using a recovery, you can roll a save against a save ends effect.

Epic Feat: Add another recovery to your total number of recoveries (making a total of +2 from this talent).

Unstoppable

Once per battle, declare you're using this talent before making a barbarian melee attack. If your attack hits at least one target, you can heal using a recovery.

Adventurer Feat: The *unstoppable* recovery is free.

Champion Feat: Add double your Con modifier to the healing the recovery provides.

Epic Feat: You can use *unstoppable* twice per battle.

Whirlwind

You can make a *whirlwind* attack as the first action of your turn when you are engaged by two or more enemies.

You take a –4 penalty to your AC and PD until the start of your next turn. Then roll a separate melee attack against each enemy you are engaged with. You deal no miss damage with these attacks.

Adventurer Feat: Deal normal miss damage with missed *whirlwind* attacks.

Champion Feat: The penalty to your AC and PD is reduced to –2. In addition, disengage attempts you make the same turn as using *whirlwind* automatically succeed.

Epic Feat: You can use *whirlwind* anytime during your turn, not just as the first action.

Champion Tier Talents

If you are a single-class barbarian, you can choose one of these class talents at 5th level. If you'd rather choose another adventurer-tier talent, that's okay too.

Natural Will

Start using *natural will* with a quick action.

One battle per day, add the *current* value of the escalation die to your Mental Defense. As the escalation die increases, so does your bonus.

Champion Feat: You can use *natural will* as a free action, even when you are about to be hit by an attack against your Mental Defense.

Epic Feat: You can use *natural will* in two battles per day.

Violence

Once per battle as a free action, add a +1d3 bonus to a barbarian melee attack roll after finding out whether you hit or missed.

Champion Feat: If the attack still misses, deal half damage.

Epic Feat: The bonus increases to +1d6.

Epic Tier Talents

If you are a single-class barbarian, you can choose one of these epic talents at 8th level. If you prefer humbler gestures, feel free to choose another adventurer-tier or champion-tier talent instead.

Ancestral Warband

One battle per day, the spirits of your ancestors fight alongside you. Explain the visuals any way you like; your ancestors roar in from the spirit world and can't be hurt or affected by the creatures of this world.

At the end of each of your turns, roll a d6 if you are conscious. If you roll less than or equal to the escalation die, a member of your spirit warband strikes from the spirit realm into the world. Make a melee attack against a nearby enemy as if you were making the attack yourself, using any talents/feats/magic items/etc. as you see fit.

Epic Feat: The ancestral warband continues to fight for a single round while you are unconscious.

Relentless

When raging, you have damage resistance 6+
(*enemies must roll a 6+ on a d20 or deal half damage
to you with each attack*).

Epic Feat: Even when not raging, you have
damage resistance 6+ until the start of your next
turn each time you score a critical hit.

BARD

If the gods didn't create the world with a song, that's sure what it sounds like when you hear a mighty bard sing. Bards travel the world, learning and teaching each other the ancient songs and arcane secrets of a hundred lands. They practice an intuitive and nimble sort of arcane magic, using not merely their minds to cast spells but their hearts. Their spells, their swordplay, and their romances all demonstrate not just skill but a certain poetry. The best bards bring out the best in others, inspiring them to overcome all obstacles and then spreading the story in a victory song. The worst bards are manipulative, seductive egomaniacs.

Overview

Play Style: Bards are flexible characters with many options in roleplaying situations and in combat. They're not the best character choice for beginning players, but can be a lot of fun for experienced and extroverted players who enjoy mastering different types of abilities and performing as jacks or jills of all trades.

Ability Scores: The bard's two most important ability scores are Charisma (used as the attack ability for spells) and either Strength or Dexterity (depending on which ability you choose to use for your melee basic attacks, since the bard gets a choice). But see the class talents for ways of tweaking that arrangement.

Races: Traditionally half-elves, high elves, and humans have the breadth and soul to ken the complexity of bardic knowledge. Half-elf, high elf, and human bards often claim that gnomes do *not* have what it takes to ken complexity of bardic knowledge. But the complaint goes unheard because the gnome bard is already entertaining the crowd.

Icons: The icons most commonly associated with bards are the Elf Queen and the Prince of Shadows. But bards thrive on surprises! Depending on character backstory and the campaign, bards could be connected to most any of the icons. In fact, *connected* is a good word for

the bard. Three of the bard's class talents are all about having better icon relationships: *balladeer*, *loremaster*, and *mythkenner* (though the last two are mutually exclusive).

Bard Powers

In combat, the bards of *13th Age* have three different types of powers to choose from as they advance in level: battle cries, spells, and bardic songs.

Battle Cries

Bards use battle cries to encourage, inspire, warn, and magically aid their allies. Battle cries are triggered by *flexible* melee attacks. The bard makes a melee attack and is able to use a battle cry that corresponds to the attack's natural result, sometimes whether or not the attack hits. See page XX for the full rules for flexible attacks.

As a rule, the bonuses provided by battle cries can help a bard's allies but *not* the bard.

Adventurer Feat: You can generate the effect of any battle cry you know as a standard action instead of making a basic melee attack to see which battle cry you are able to trigger. The upside is you get the effect you need as if you had made the triggering melee attack; the downside is that you don't actually get to make a melee attack.

Bardic Songs

Bardic songs are magical moments that last for one or more rounds and end with a final verse that carries an even bigger payoff (unless the bard chooses to abandon the song in the middle). Although magical, bardic songs don't count as spells. Unlike spells, they don't force the bard to suffer opportunity attacks from engaged enemies, and they can't be canceled by effects that can cancel spells. For that matter, bards can even cast spells while in the middle of singing a bardic song.

Each song specifies what type of action starts the song. On your next turn, if you want to sustain the song, spend the same type of action and roll a d20 against the song's sustain target. If you *succeed*, you can continue the song

with its sustained effect that round and attempt to continue it on your next turn as well.

If you attempt to sustain a song and *fail,* you get the song's final verse effect immediately, and then the song's power ends (but you can't start another song that round).

If you elect not to sustain a song at the start of your turn, its effects end immediately (in other words, you don't get the final verse effect if you simply stop the song mid-verse).

Some songs have an immediate effect that happens each time you start or sustain the song. Others have effects that continue throughout the entire round.

You can interpret the music you create with your bardic song any way you like. Some bards want to sing every stanza, others play harps or flutes, and others create music from magic that they accompany with their voice, instruments, or the percussion of their swords. The magic in a bard's song allows it to continue even if the bard takes short breaks to speak or cast spells.

On the other hand, most songs stop when a bard is knocked unconscious, stunned, or silenced.

You can only sing one bardic song at a time. If you are singing a song (or spend an action to try to sustain a song), you can't start another song that round.

And yes, as you'd expect, bardic songs are loud. Forget about stealth while you are singing.

Adventurer Feat: Your bardic songs don't stop immediately when you are knocked unconscious, stunned, or silenced. Your songs continue for one round, giving you the chance to sustain the song on your next turn.

Spells

Bard spells function like those of other spell-casting classes. Some spells are daily, some recharge, and others are at-will.

Unlike most character classes, bards use two different ability scores for their attacks. Their melee and ranged weapon attacks use Strength or Dexterity, while their spells use Charisma.

Gear

First level bards start with non-magical musical instruments, a melee weapon and a ranged weapon of their choice, some form of light armor, and any other minor elements of gear their backgrounds suggest.

Cautious bards can start with 25 gp in their purse. Bards who take a few more chances can start with 1d6 x 10 gp.

Armor

Bards wear light armor, good-looking padded vests, and form-hugging leather armor. Heavier armor like chainmail and plate cramps their style.

Bard Armor and AC

Type	Base AC	Atk Penalty
None	*10*	*—*
Light	*12*	*—*
Heavy	13	–2
Shield	+1	–1

Weapons

For a bard, weapons are all part of the show. They use nicely forged one-handed weapons, especially longswords and scimitars, while relying on fancy footwork and smart-alec trickery. For ranged weapons, a bard might have a modest shortbow or a nicely trimmed light crossbow.

Bard Melee Weapons

	One-Handed	Two-Handed
Small	1d4 dagger	1d6 club
Light or Simple	1d6 mace, shortsword	1d8 spear
Heavy or Martial	1d8 longsword, scimitar	1d10 (–2 atk) greatsword, dire flail

Bard Ranged Weapons

	Thrown	Crossbow	Bow
Small	1d4 knife	1d4 hand crossbow	—
Light or Simple	1d6 javelin, axe	1d6 light crossbow	1d6 shortbow
Heavy Martial	—	1d8 (–1 atk) heavy crossbow	1d8 (–2 atk) longbow

Bard Level	Total Hit Points	Total # Feats	Battle Cries	Spells & Songs, 1st level	Spells & Songs, 3rd level	Spells & Songs, 5th level	Spells & Songs, 7th level	Spells & Songs, 9th level	Level-up Ability Bonuses	Damage bonus from ability score
Level 1	(7 + CON mod) x **3**	1 adventurer	2	2	—	—	—	—		Ability modifier
Level 2	(7 + CON mod) x **4**	2 adventurer	2, up to 1st level	3	—	—	—	—		Ability modifier
Level 3	(7 + CON mod) x **5**	3 adventurer	3, up to 3rd level	1	2	—	—	—		Ability modifier
Level 4	(7 + CON mod) x **6**	4 adventurer	3, up to 3rd level	—	4	—	—	—	+1 to 3 abilities	Ability modifier
Level 5	(7 + CON mod) x **8**	4 adventurer 1 champion	3, up to 5th level	—	3	2	—	—		2 x ability modifier
Level 6	(7 + CON mod) x **10**	4 adventurer 2 champion	4, up to 5th level	—	—	5	—	—		2 x ability modifier
Level 7	(7 + CON mod) x **12**	4 adventurer 3 champion	4, up to 7th level	—	—	3	3	—	+1 to 3 abilities	2 x ability modifier
Level 8	(7 + CON mod) x **16**	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	5, up to 7th level	—	—	—	6	—		3 x ability modifier
Level 9	(7 + CON mod) x **20**	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	5, up to 9th level	—	—	—	4	3		3 x ability modifier
Level 10	(7 + CON mod) x **24**	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	6, up to 9th level	—	—	—	—	7	+1 to 3 abilities	3 x ability modifier

Bard Starting Stats

Base AC: 12
Base PD: 10
Base MD: 11
Backgrounds: 10 Points

Name:
Class: Bard
Race:
Level: 1

STR:
CON:
DEX:
INT:
WIS:
CHA:

Initiative:
(Level + Dex mod)

AC:
(12 + Level + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis)

Physical Defense:
(10+ Level + middle mod of Str/Dex/Con)

Mental Defense:
(11+ Level + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha)

HP:
3 x (7 + Con mod)

Recoveries (probably 8):
Recovery Dice: 1d8 per level + Con mod

Class Bonus to Ability Scores
As a bard, you can add +2 to your Dexterity or to your Charisma, as long as it's not the same ability that you increased with your +2 racial bonus.

One Unique Thing:

Icon Relationships (3 points):

Backgrounds (10 points):

Basic Attack

Bard Basic Attacks
At-will melee attack
   Attack: Strength *OR* Dexterity + Level vs. AC
   Hit: WEAPON + Strength *OR* Dexterity damage
   Miss: Damage equal to level

At-will ranged attack
   Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
   Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage
   Miss: —

Bard Class Talents

If you are a single-class bard, choose three of the following class talents.

If you are a multi-class bard, choose one of the following class talents.

Balladeer

At each level, including 1st level, you learn one of the following songs of your choice. Each day you can sing *one* of these great songs to give you a positive relationship you would not ordinarily have with an icon.

It takes at least a few rounds to sing a great ballad. Ideally you'll be singing out of combat to an appreciative audience. Each time you sing a great ballad, tell the GM what's special about the story you are telling.

Make a Charisma skill check using your best singing or musical background. If you succeed, you gain 2 points of positive relationship with the chosen icon for the rest of the day (until the next full heal-up). The DC depends on the environment:

DC 15: Adventurer environment
DC 20: Champion environment
DC 25: Epic environment

You can use these points to roll relationship dice the way you roll your normal icon relationships (see page XX). If you already have positive or conflicted dice with the icon you've sung about, add them to your new bonus dice. If you have negative dice with the icon you've sung a ballad to, they can be temporarily overruled by the ballad, but the GM should feel free to interpret any 5's rolled with a heavy hand.

Of course, when your great ballad magically compliments an icon, another icon takes a hit. As you explain the story of your ballad, you should account for at least one icon who is being mocked, vilified, or referred to in unflattering terms. You get an equal number of *cursed* dice for that icon. Cursed dice aren't like negative relationship dice—they never help you. At the GM's option, you'll have to roll these cursed dice at least once and interpret them as possible problems for you: rolls of 1 are a definite problem; rolls of 2 mean there are story complications connected to the temporary enemy icon.

Positive consequences of the ballad should surface often while you have the improved relationship with the icon. Cursed consequences should be risked less often, unless the bard enjoys ratcheting up the dramatic tension. And really, what great bard wouldn't?

Adventurer Feat: If you roll a natural 20 on the ballad Charisma check, you'll automatically succeed with 6s (all dice) the first time you use your ballad-created relationship.

Champion Feat: You can sing two great songs a day. You can't make nice with an icon you've already sung as an enemy earlier in the day.

Epic Feat: If you are willing to gain cursed relationship dice with *all* of the listed enemies, increase the positive bonus dice you gain from a successful ballad to 3. Or if the GM is willing, make it 4. Go ahead, have fun.

Gamemaster: Unleash hell! And as you do so, be sure to give special glowing recognition to the bard who sings the praises of the Prince of Shadows and makes all (or nearly all, depending on your campaign) the rest of the icons into temporary enemies.

Balladeer Song Choices

Archmage's Quatrain
Enemy Dice: Diabolist, Lich King, Orc Lord
Battle Hymn of the Crusader
Enemy Dice: Diabolist, Great Gold Wyrm, Priestess
Ear-Worm of the Diabolist
Enemy Dice: Crusader, Great Gold Wyrm, Priestess
Dwarf King's Drinking Song
Enemy Dice: Elf Queen, Orc Lord, Prince of Shadows
Air of the Elf Queen
Enemy Dice: Dwarf King, Orc Lord, The Three

Imperial Anthem of the Emperor
>Enemy Dice: High Druid, Lich King, Orc Lord

March of the Great Gold Wyrm
>Enemy Dice: Crusader, Diabolist, The Three

Chant of the High Druid
>Enemy Dice: Archmage, Diabolist, Orc Lord

Dirge of the Lich King
>Enemy Dice: Archmage, Emperor, Priestess

Throat-Destroying Tribute to the Orc Lord (a loose translation of the orcish)
>Enemy Dice: Dwarf King, Elf Queen, Emperor

Canticle of the Priestess
>Enemy Dice: Crusader, Diabolist, Lich King

A Round for the Prince of Shadows
>Enemy Dice: Any

Song of the Three
>Enemy Dice: Archmage, Elf Queen, Great Gold Wyrm

Battle Skald

You cannot take this talent if you have taken the Spellsinger talent.
Increase the number of battle cries you know by one. The bonus battle cry can be from your highest possible level.

Adventurer Feat: One battle per day, you can use your battle cries to help yourself.
Champion Feat: When you use a battle cry on yourself, it also helps an ally.
Epic Feat: Once per battle, reroll an attack that was meant to trigger a battle cry but didn't.

Jack of Spells

This talent is only available to single-class bards.
Choose another spell-casting character class. You can choose one spell from the spell list of that class, of your own level or lower, as a spell you know how to cast. This spell is a bonus spell, not included in your bard class count. You can't jack spells that come from class talents.

Adventurer Feat: If you choose to jack a spell from the wizard class, you gain two cantrips of your choice from the wizard. If you choose to jack a spell from the sorcerer class,

you also gain the sorcerer's dancing lights feature.
Champion Feat: Instead of using the normal attack ability of the spell you are jacking from another class, you can use your Charisma as the ability score that provides the attack bonus and the damage bonus (if any). Other ability score references in the spell remain unchanged.
Epic Feat: Choose a second spell-casting class. Jack a spell from that class as well.

Loremaster

You cannot take this talent if you have taken the Mythkenner talent.
Your bardic skills and magic are now based on your Intelligence rather than Charisma. Any time an element of the bard class refers to Charisma, you can replace that element with a reference to Intelligence.

In addition, choose one of the following two bonuses:

a) Take two additional points of backgrounds; you can use these additional points to raise a background that has something to do with history, bardic lore, or magical knowledge up to the usually impossible rating of +6.

b) Take a single point of relationship with the Archmage OR the Lich King. Add the point to a relationship you already have, or start a new one—positive, conflicted, or negative.

Mythkenner

You cannot take this talent if you have taken the Loremaster talent.
Your bardic skills and magic are now based on your Wisdom rather than Charisma. Any time an element of the bard class refers to Charisma, you can replace that element with a reference to Wisdom.

In addition, choose one of the following two bonuses:

a) Take two additional points of backgrounds; you can use these additional points to raise a background that has something to do with religion, mythology, or history up to the usually impossible rating of +6.

b) Take a single point of relationship with the Priestess OR the Great Gold Wyrm. Add the

point to a relationship you already have, or start a new one—positive, conflicted, or negative.

Songmaster

When you attempt to maintain a bardic song, if you describe it in a fashion that entertains the GM, or at least a couple of the players, you get a bonus of +1 to +3 to maintain the song.

Avoid this talent if you aren't big on table-patter or if you are not up to improvising themes and subjects of songs. If the table is pressed for time or people are tired of hearing you improvise, the GM can default to asking you to be quiet and handing you a +1 to +2 bonus that degrades to +0 to +1 if you are actually being annoying.

Spellsinger

You cannot take this talent if you have taken the Battle Skald talent.
You can choose an extra bardic song or bard spell at the highest level you know.

Storyteller

Once per scene when one of your allies rolls relationship dice for an icon, you can tell a one or two sentence story (usually related to the icon, but perhaps otherwise pivotal) that allows them to reroll the relationship check if they don't like the first result. Depending on the situation, your story might sway the opinion of people who are in a position to help your friend, or it might inspire that friend to achieve more. Perhaps you impress on people the urgency of the situation, or remind your friend of previous victories.

Treat this situation as a roleplaying opportunity that may or may not work out depending on the reroll of the relationship dice.

1st Level Battle Cries

Break Off!

Flexible melee attack
Triggering Roll: Natural even roll
Effect: One of your allies can attempt to disengage from all engaged foes as a free action.

Adventurer Feat: Each disengagement check gains a +2 bonus.
Champion Feat: The bonus increases to +5.

Pull It Together!

Flexible melee attack
Triggering Roll: Natural 11+; use only twice per battle
Effect: Nearby ally can heal using a recovery.

Adventurer Feat: The target adds +1d4 healing per point on the escalation die.
Champion Feat: The battle cry can now also trigger on any natural even roll; the extra healing is now +1d6 per point.
Epic Feat: Can now be used three times per battle; the extra healing is now +1d10 per point.

Stay Strong!

Flexible melee attack
Triggering Roll: Natural 16+
Effect: Give a nearby ally a +2 bonus to AC until the start of your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: Bonus also applies to PD.
Champion Feat: Bonus also applies to MD.

We Need You!

Flexible melee attack
Triggering Roll: Natural even hit
Effect: A nearby conscious ally can roll a save against a save ends effect.

Adventurer Feat: The save gains a +1 bonus.
Champion Feat: The bonus increases to +2.
Epic Feat: If the escalation die is 3+, two nearby allies can each roll a save (with bonuses).

1st Level Spells & Songs

Players: We expect you to name each of your songs because that's how you roll. Our names are placeholders meant to leave all available space for your spark.

Befuddle

Ranged spell

Recharge 11+ after battle

Target: One nearby creature with 40 hp or fewer

Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD

Hit: The target is confused until end of your next turn.

Natural Even Miss: The target is dazed until end of your next turn.

3rd level spell: A target with 64 hp or fewer.
5th level spell: A target with 96 hp or fewer.
7th level spell: A target with 160 hp or fewer.
9th level spell: A target with 266 hp or fewer.

Adventurer Feat: Recharge check is now 6+.

Champion Feat: The target doesn't have to be nearby, just in line of sight.

Epic Feat: On a hit, the confusion effect is now save ends.

Charm Person

Ranged spell

Daily

Target: One nearby creature with 40 hp or fewer
Special: This spell cannot be cast in combat or on a target that has rolled initiative to fight.

Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD

Hit: The target believes you are their friend until you or your allies take hostile action against them (attacking their normal allies is okay). Starting combat or ordering the target to attack their normal allies lets them roll a normal save to break the effect each round.

Special: On a miss, the spell is not detectible by most others unless you miss by 4+ or roll a natural 1, in which case the target and its allies knows what you tried to do and will usually be angry about it.

3rd level spell: A target with 64 hp or fewer.
5th level spell: A target with 96 hp or fewer.
7th level spell: A target with 160 hp or fewer.
9th level spell: A target with 266 hp or fewer.

Players: This is a spell that the wizard spell list and bard spell list share outright.

Song of Heroes

Bardic song

Recharge 11+ after battle

Quick action each turn; 11+ to sustain

Opening & Sustained Effect: You and your nearby allies gain a +1 attack bonus until the start of your next turn.

Final Verse: The effect ends immediately, but one ally of your choice gains a +2 bonus to their next attack.

3rd level song: The effect also provides a +1 bonus to saves.
5th level song: Sustain the song on a 9+.
7th level song: Recharge check is now 6+.
9th level song: The effect also provides a +1 bonus to Mental Defense.

Song of Spilt Blood

Bardic song

Daily

Quick action each turn; 6+ to sustain

Opening & Sustained Effect: Any attack against you takes a penalty equal to the number of your allies in the battle who have more hit points than you.

Final Verse: The effect ends immediately, and you or one ally of your choice can heal using a recovery.

3rd level song: Sustain the song on a 4+.
5th level song: Add +5 hp to the recovery.
7th level song: Add +10 hp to the recovery.
9th level song: Add +15 hp to the recovery.

Soundburst

Ranged spell

Daily

Targets: 1d3 nearby enemies in a group

Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD

Hit: 3d6 + Charisma thunder damage, and the target is dazed until end of your next turn.

*Natural Even Hit***:** Same damage but the target is now dazed (save ends).

Miss: Half damage.

    3rd level spell: 6d6 damage.
    5th level spell: 6d10 damage.
    7th level spell: 10d10 damage.
    9th level spell: 2d8 x 10 damage.

    Adventurer Feat: Add the escalation die to the number of targets affected.

3rd Level Battle Cries

Hang Tough!
Flexible melee attack
Triggering Roll: Natural odd roll
Effect: Give a nearby ally temporary hit points equal to your Charisma modifier.

    Adventurer Feat: If the ally is wounded, double the temporary hit points.
    Champion Feat: Add your level to the temporary hit points before any doubling.
    Epic Feat: You can choose yourself instead of an ally as the target of the battle cry.

It's All Yours!
Flexible melee attack
Triggering Roll: Natural even miss
Effect: Your next ally to attack the target you missed gains a +2 attack bonus with that attack.

    Adventurer Feat: Ally's attack also gains a +1d6 damage bonus.
    Champion Feat: The damage bonus increases to +3d6.
    Epic Feat: The damage bonus increases to +3d12.

Players: Obviously you'll be rephrasing this to suit your personality. Perhaps you'll say, "I set them up for you!" Or maybe you're the imperious but self-aware type: "Do as I say, not as I do!"

Take Heart!
Flexible melee attack
Triggering Roll: Any hit
Effect: Choose a nearby ally. That ally can roll a save against a save ends effect OR attempt a normal save against a condition that has a duration until the end or beginning of a turn.

3rd Level Songs & Spells

Song of Aid
Bardic song
Daily
Quick action each turn; 11+ to sustain
Opening & Sustained Effect: You or a nearby ally gains 3d6 temporary hit points.
Final Verse: One target that gained temporary hit points can also heal using a recovery.
    5th level song: 5d6 temporary hit points; sustain the song on a 9+.
    7th level song: 7d6 temporary hit points, and the recovery from the final verse is free.
    9th level song: 9d8 temporary hit points; sustain the song on a 7+.

Song of Thunder
Bardic song
Daily
Standard action each turn; 11+ to sustain
Opening & Sustained Effect: Make the following attack against 2d3 nearby enemies.
    Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
    Hit: 2d6 + Charisma damage.
        5th level song: 3d6 damage.
        7th level song: 3d10 damage.
        9th level song: 4d10 damage.
    Miss: —
Final Verse: Make the attack again, but this time it deals half damage on a miss.

Vicious Mockery
Ranged spell
Recharge 11+ after battle
Target: One nearby enemy

Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD

Hit: 2d6 + Charisma psychic damage, and whenever the target misses with one of its attacks, it takes half the damage its attack would have dealt (save ends).

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

> *5th level spell:* 5d6 damage.
> *7th level spell:* 7d6 damage.
> *9th level spell:* 7d10 damage.

> **Champion Feat:** Recharge check is now 6+.
> **Epic Feat:** A natural even miss does not expend the spell.

Wild Heal

Ranged spell

Daily

Targets: Two random nearby allies. Choose the targets randomly from all nearby allies (including you) who are damaged.

Effect: Each target can heal using a recovery.

> *5th level spell:* Add +5 hp to the recovery.
> *7th level spell:* Add +15 hp to the recovery.
> *9th level spell:* Add +25 hp to the recovery.

5th Level Battle Cries

Stay True!

Flexible melee attack

Triggering Roll: Natural 16+ if the escalation die is 3+; otherwise natural 20

Effect: A nearby ally regains the use of a once-per-battle racial ability that was expended this battle.

Victory Is Ours!

Flexible melee attack

Triggering Roll: Natural 16+ if the escalation die is 5+; otherwise natural 20

Effect: A nearby ally can heal using a recovery, and *three* nearby allies gain a +3d6 damage bonus to their next damage roll.

> **Champion Feat:** The battle cry can now trigger when the escalation die is at 4+.
> **Epic Feat:** The damage bonus is now +3d12.

5th Level Songs & Spells

Arrow of Verse

Ranged spell

Recharge 16+ after battle

Target: One nearby enemy

Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD

Hit: 8d8 + Charisma psychic damage + Xd6 bonus damage, where X = escalation die.

Miss: Xd6 psychic damage, where X = escalation die.

> *7th level spell:* 10d10 damage; recharge check is now 11+.
> *9th level spell:* 2d8 x 10 damage.

Battle Chant

Ranged spell

At-Will

> *Special:* When you use *battle chant*, you can use any battle cry you know as if you were making a basic melee attack, with the *battle chant* attack roll taking the place of the basic melee attack roll.

Target: One nearby enemy

Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD

Hit: 4d6 + Charisma thunder damage.

> *7th level spell:* 6d6 damage.
> *9th level spell:* 6d10 damage.

> **Champion Feat:** Once per day, you can expend one of your recoveries to reroll a *battle chant* attack.

Players: A *battle chant* attack deals less damage than you'll do by wading in hacking with your weapon, but if you're the type who likes to stay out of trouble, chanting while you swing your sword from a distance, this is your spell.

Discombobulate
Ranged spell
Daily
Target: One nearby creature with 100 hp or fewer
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD
Hit: The target is confused until it makes two successful saves.
Miss: The target is dazed until the end of your next turn.
> *7th level spell:* A target with 140 hp or fewer.
> *9th level spell:* A target with 240 hp or fewer.

Song of Magic
Bardic song
Daily
Quick action each turn; 16+ to sustain
Opening & Sustained Effect: You and your nearby allies who cast spells before the start of your next turn that are normally expended by being cast can roll a d20 after casting the spell; on a 16+, the spell is not expended.
Final Verse: All spells you and your allies cast before the start of your next turn gain a +2 attack bonus.
> *7th level song:* Gain a bonus to this song's sustain check equal to the escalation die.
> *9th level song:* Rolls to retain expended spells gain a bonus equal to the escalation die.

7th Level Battle Cries

They Fall Before Us!
Flexible melee attack
Special: You can use this battle cry only on your turn.
Triggering Roll: Natural 20
Effect: A nearby ally can make a basic attack as a free action.

> **Epic Feat:** The battle cry can also trigger on a natural 19+.

7th Level Songs & Spells

Song of Blood & Legends
Bardic song
Daily
Standard action each turn; 16+ to sustain
Opening & Sustained Effect: Any nearby ally who hits at least one enemy with an attack during their turn can heal using a recovery.
Final Verse: One nearby ally can make a basic attack as a free action and heal using a recovery if the attack hits at least one target.
> *9th level song:* The recovery granted by the final verse attack is free.

Song of Victory
Bardic song
Daily
Quick action each turn; 16+ to sustain
Opening & Sustained Effect: Each nearby enemy that has fewer hit points than you is dazed until the end of your next turn.
Final Verse: Each nearby enemy takes 3d6 + Charisma psychic damage.
> *9th level song:* 5d6 damage.

9th Level Battle Cries

The Time Is Now!
Flexible melee attack
Triggering Roll: Natural 19+
Effect: Choose one nearby ally. That ally can expend a recovery to regain a daily power or spell.

> **Epic Feat:** The battle cry triggers on natural 18+.

9th Level Songs & Spells

Song of Destinies
Bardic song
Daily

Quick action each turn; 6+ to sustain

Opening & Sustained Effect: Later this turn, you can add 1 to the *natural* result of one ally's die roll AND later separately subtract 1 from the *natural* result of an enemy's die roll.

Final Verse: The GM chooses an icon relevant to the situation; you choose the PC who will make an icon relationship check. That player makes the check and joins the GM in a duet of improvisation as to how the icon relationship roll has some impact on the current battle.

Players: Obviously you need to be careful about when you use this song on one of your friends. But an ally who achieves excellent results with an even natural roll should thank you unless you supply the 1-point penalty that makes them miss. Similarly, the GM is going to curse you when you prevent an epically cool monster power from triggering. And that's why you're only getting this destiny song at 9th level.

CLERIC

All mortals call on the gods, but when a cleric calls, the gods sometimes listen.

Overview

Clerics combine the rare gift of divine power with training in one religious tradition or another. Adventuring clerics learn to fight as a practical matter, if not as a sacred mission.

Some clerics are syncretists, happily blending their own prayers and rites with those of their neighbors. They would rather speak of "the gods" than of any particular god. Other clerics follow the secret ways of occult clerical schools, devoted to one god or a handful. Most clerics, as with most religious people in general, speak of "the gods" to outsiders and speak of their own gods by name with insiders. For all the ages, the gods have watched over their creation. Each cleric has a good idea of who these gods are and what they're about, though each cleric's answer may be different.

Play Style: The decisions necessary to play a cleric skillfully as well as the responsibility of tracking your allies' need for healing suggest that it is a better class for an experienced player. You can shape each battle using one of your invocations, but your choice of invocation won't always be clear.

The Justice, Trickery, and War domains require the most attention and should be chosen by players who love paying close attention to everyone else's turn.

Simple Faith: For the simplest possible 1st level cleric that gives you less things to keep track of on the fly, choose the Healing, Protection, and Strength domains as your class talents. The simplest spells are probably *bless*, *hammer of faith*, *heal*, and *shield of faith*, which gives you one at-will attack, one daily healing spell, and two spells that could recharge after you use them if you're lucky.

<end sidebar>

Ability Scores: Wisdom and Strength are your two most important abilities. You'll use Wisdom for most of your spells and Strength for most melee attacks and melee spells. Charisma can also be significant, particularly if you choose talents and spells that highlight your force of will and persuasiveness.

Races: Humans have a reputation as people who can believe in almost anything . . . with enough fervor to make it so. Half-elves, dwarves, and wood elves also make fine clerics.

Backgrounds: Running from the ordinary to the idiosyncratic, here are some backgrounds that more than one cleric might possess: village healer, archivist, military chaplain, temple guard, bartender, reformed thief, abyssal survivor, wasteland prophet, dwarven hierophant, initiate of the Stellar Chorus, bishop of Foothold, multiversal pantheist, Cathedral guide, tutored by angels.

Icons: The Priestess understands clerics. So does the Great Gold Wyrm, the Crusader, and the Dwarf King, though these icons might have narrower ranges of faith they are fully comfortable with than the Priestess.

All the icons can fit an individual cleric's story. The interplay between god and icon may even explain the icon relationship. For instance, an elven cleric's otherwise positive relationship with the Elf Queen might count as a conflicted relationship because of the elf's angst-freighted devotion to the dwarven god of the forge.

The Cleric's Gods

When players ask, "What god or pantheon can my cleric worship?" we usually say, "Any you like." Many fantasy worlds and games define themselves, at least in part, by their gods and religions and pantheons. By contrast, *13th Age* focuses on the icons as the great and immanent powers of the world, while the gods are distant.

The gods may have walked the world in the days of myth, but not in the more recent ages,

which are dominated by empires and icons. The empires may give allegiance to their gods. The icons are surely influenced by the gods. But the gods themselves do not walk the world or even talk directly with mortals, which is part of what makes the Priestess such a special case.

Our home campaigns have recruited deities from all over the multiverse, including gods from other d20 fantasy campaigns, earthly cultures, and fantasy authors including Robert E. Howard. Your campaigns don't have to use our multiversal approach; for a full discussion of the gods of *13th Age* and the different approaches used in Jonathan's and Rob's campaigns, see *About Gods* on page XX.

Players: As a cleric, the gods are part of your character's story. You should be free to use some artistic license choosing your god or your pantheon so long as you aren't screwing with the GM's campaign plans. When choosing your deity, remember that you will be able to choose three domains with your talent options. You might have a god who has a diverse portfolio or you may welcome the roleplaying experience of representing a pantheon of allied deities. At least two of the icons, the Priestess and the Crusader, encourage you to incorporate your chosen gods within a broader coalition of good or evil deities.

Gear

As a 1st level cleric, you will have a melee weapon, decent armor, a holy symbol, and other minor possessions suggested by your backgrounds. You might even have a crossbow.

If you're the solid cleric who devotes much of their wealth to their faith and keeps just a bit for yourself, start with 25 gp. If your finances are unpredictable, start with 1d6 x 10 gp.

Armor

Clerics generally wear heavy armor like chainmail, ringmail, and scale, and even wear plate armor, but aren't as skilled using armor as fighters and paladins. Clerics are trained with shields, and get +1 AC when using a shield.

Cleric Armor and AC

Type	Base AC
None	10
Light	12
Heavy	*14*
Shield	*+1*

Weapons

Just as various clerics worship all sorts of gods, they wield all sorts of weapons. A respectable mace is most common, since it requires relatively little martial training and traditionally represents authority. For ranged weapons, clerics favor crossbows, as do most adventurers with limited weapon training.

Cleric Melee Weapons

	One-Handed	Two-Handed
Small	1d4 dagger	1d6 club
Light or Simple	1d6 mace, shortsword	1d8 spear
Heavy or Martial	1d8 (–2 atk) longsword, warhammer	1d10 (–2 atk) greatsword, dire flail

Cleric Ranged Weapons

	Thrown	Crossbow	Bow
Small	1d4 knife	1d4 hand crossbow	—
Light or Simple	1d6 javelin, axe	1d6 light crossbow	1d6 (–2 atk) shortbow
Heavy Martial	—	1d8 (–1 atk) heavy crossbow	1d8 (–5 atk) longbow

Cleric Level Progression

Cleric Level	Total Hit Points	Total # Feats	1st level spell	3rd level spell	5th level spell	7th level spell	9th level spell	Level-up Ability Bonuses	Damage bonus from ability score
Level 1	(7 + CON mod) x **3**	1 adventurer	4	—	—	—	—	—	Ability modifier
Level 2	(7 + CON mod) x **4**	2 adventurer	5	—	—	—	—	—	Ability modifier
Level 3	(7 + CON mod) x **5**	3 adventurer	2	3	—	—	—	—	Ability modifier
Level 4	(7 + CON mod) x **6**	4 adventurer	1	5	—	—	—	+1 to 3 abilities	Ability modifier
Level 5	(7 + CON mod) x **8**	4 adventurer 1 champion	—	2	4	—	—	—	2 x ability modifier
Level 6	(7 + CON mod) x **10**	4 adventurer 2 champion	—	1	6	—	—	—	2 x ability modifier
Level 7	(7 + CON mod) x **12**	4 adventurer 3 champion	—	—	2	5	—	+1 to 3 abilities	2 x ability modifier
Level 8	(7 + CON mod) x **16**	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	—	—	1	7	—	—	3 x ability modifier
Level 9	(7 + CON mod) x **20**	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	—	—	—	2	6	—	3 x ability modifier
Level 10	(7 + CON mod) x **24**	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	—	—	—	1	8	+1 to 3 abilities	3 x ability modifier

Name:
Class: CLERIC
Race:
Level: 1
STR:
CON:
DEX:
INT:
WIS:
CHA:

Initiative:
(Level + Dex mod)

AC:
(14 + Level + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis)

Physical Defense:
(11+ Level + middle mod of Str/Dex/Con)

Mental Defense:
(11+ Level + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha)

HP:
3 x (7+Con mod)

Recoveries (probably 8):
Recovery Dice: 1d8 per level + Con mod

Class Bonus to Ability Scores
As a cleric, you can add +2 to your Strength or to your Wisdom, as long as it's not the same ability that you increased with your +2 racial bonus.

One Unique Thing:

Icon Relationships (3 points):

Backgrounds (8 points):

Cleric Basic Attack

At-will melee attack
   Attack: Strength + Level vs. AC
   Hit: WEAPON + Strength damage
   Miss: Damage equal to level

At-will ranged attack
   Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
   Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage
   Miss: —

89

Terms Used in Cleric Powers

cast for power/cast for broad effect: Cleric spells that give these two options can be used two different ways: either with a more powerful effect usually focused on one target (power), or a weaker effect cast on multiple targets (broad effect).

free recovery: Some powerful cleric spells let characters recover hit points as if they were using a recovery without actually spending a recovery.

heal using a recovery, gain a recovery: The character targeted with the healing effect uses one of their recoveries and rolls their own recovery dice.

Cleric Class Features

Bonus Spell: All clerics know the following bonus spell in addition to the spells they choose and memorize each day.

As a class feature, the spell isn't available to characters from other classes unless they multiclass as a cleric.

Heal

Close-quarters spell
Special: You can use this spell twice per battle.
Quick action to cast
Target: You or one ally you are touching
Effect: The target can heal using a recovery.

Adventurer Feat: The target can now be a *nearby* ally instead of an ally you are touching.
Champion Feat: If the target of your *heal* spell is an ally with 0 hp or below, that ally also adds hit points equal to 1d10 x your Charisma modifier to the recovery.
Epic Feat: When you cast *heal* on an ally you are *touching*, that ally adds +30 hp to the recovery.

Ritual Magic

Clerics can cast their spells as rituals (see page XX).

Cleric Class Talents

The cleric's class talents are phrased as divine domains, the spheres of power wielded by the god or gods the cleric worships. Explain your chosen domains any way that works for you. You might have a god with a diverse portfolio, you might worship more than one god, or your goddess may have lesser saints or avatars who provide blessings that differ from her usual interests. Feel free to give your domain choice a name that's more appropriate to the gods your cleric worships.

You can choose up to **three** cleric talents/domains if you are a single-class cleric. Each talent/domain provides an ability that can be improved by feats. It also provides an invocation you can use once per day.

On Invocations: Each cleric talent/domain comes with an invocation that you can use once per day as a quick action. Most invocations offer advantages you'll want to have from the start of a battle, so you should use an invocation on your first turn, if possible.

Domain: Death OR Life

You and your nearby allies gain a bonus to death saves equal to your Charisma modifier.

Champion Feat: Once per battle, when you slay an enemy, you or one of your nearby allies can roll a recovery.

Invocation of Death/Life: This battle, whenever you or one of your allies attacks and has more hit points than the target of the attack, add +2 to that attack roll.

Domain: Healing

When you cast a spell that lets you or an ally heal using a recovery, the target also adds hit points equal to twice your level to the recovery.

Adventurer Feat: When you cast a spell that allows an ally to heal using a recovery, you can let them use one of your recoveries instead.

Champion Feat: The *invocation of healing* gives you two additional uses of *heal* this battle instead of only one additional use.

Epic Feat: Increase the additional hit points to triple your level.

Invocation of Healing: This battle, you gain an additional use of the *heal* spell (page XX).

Domain: Justice OR Vengeance

Whenever an enemy scores a critical hit against you or one of your nearby allies *or* drops you or one of your nearby allies to 0 hp or below, you gain two attack-reroll blessings you can give to nearby allies. An ally with this blessing can use it to reroll an attack as a free action this battle. An ally can only have one such blessing on them at a time.

Champion Feat: The ally's rerolled attack gains a +4 bonus.

Invocation of Justice/Vengeance: This battle, add double your level to the miss damage of your attacks and the attacks of your nearby allies. (For example, your basic melee attack as a cleric will deal triple your level as miss damage while this invocation is active.)

Domain: Knowledge OR Lore

You gain 4 additional background points that must be used somehow in relation to knowledge or lore.

Champion Feat: Once per day, you can change one of your skill checks involving knowledge to a natural 20 instead. Interpret the word "knowledge" as loosely as your GM allows. GMs, be generous.

Invocation of Knowledge/Lore: You must use this invocation during your first round of a battle. When you do, you get a quick glimpse of the battle's future. Roll a d6; at any point after the escalation die equals the number you rolled, you can choose an enemy's attack and have it

automatically miss by warning the targets (even if it includes multiple attack rolls). Describe how your vision prepared you to thwart or warn the targets of the attack.

Domain: Love OR Beauty

Once per level, you can mystically generate a one-point conflicted relationship with a good or ambiguous icon you do not already have a relationship with. The relationship point remains with you until you gain a level. (It's the genius of your theology that it doesn't turn into a negative relationship.) Later in this level when it's story-appropriate, you'll probably be getting into another one-point relationship, won't you?

Champion Feat: You gain two points in the relationship instead. Two conflicted dice instead of one, baby. And if you have to ask why they are conflicted, stop playing a cleric of love.

Invocation of Love/Beauty: At some dramatic point during this battle, you or an ally of your choice can roll for one icon relationship that might have an effect on the battle. Rolls of 5 and 6 are beneficial as usual, though the GM will have to improvise what that means in the middle of combat. The GM also needs to agree on the dramatic timing. You don't get to make use of this invocation's advantage the moment you roll initiative; instead wait for a dramatic moment. At the GM's option, the drama-requirement can be waived *if* the table joins in a group hug.

Domain: Protection OR Community

Once per battle, you can affect an additional ally when you cast a spell *for broad effect*.

Adventurer Feat: Whenever you target one or more allies with a spell, one ally of your choice can roll a save against a save ends effect.

Invocation of Protection: This battle, critical hits against you and your nearby allies deal normal damage instead of critical damage.

Domain: Strength

You can wield heavy/martial weapons without an attack penalty.

Adventurer Feat: Once per battle, you can deal extra damage to one target you hit with a melee attack. The damage bonus is a number of d4 equal to your Strength modifier.

Champion Feat: Use d8s instead of d4s for the bonus damage dice.

Epic Feat: Once per day, use d20s instead of d8s for the bonus damage dice.

Invocation of Strength: This battle, you and your nearby allies deal triple damage instead of double damage on critical hits with melee attacks.

Domain: Sun OR Anti-Undead

Every attack you make deals holy damage in addition to other types of damage unless you choose otherwise. *Consequently you'll deal triple damage to undead and other creatures that are vulnerable to holy damage with your critical hits.*

Adventurer Feat: Your cleric attacks gain a +2 bonus against undead.

Champion Feat: You gain a +2 bonus to all defenses against attacks by undead.

Invocation of Sun/Anti-Undead: When you cast a daily cleric spell this battle, roll a d6. If you roll less than or equal to the escalation die, you regain the use of that daily spell after the battle.

Rob says: *Think of this invocation as if the cleric were the rising sun, shining brighter every round. If streams of sunlight have side effects during the battle, all the better for the glory of the sun.*

Domain: Trickery OR Illusion

Once per battle as a quick action when you are engaged with an enemy, roll a d20 that we'll refer to as your *trick die*.

As a free action before the start of your next turn, give your *trick die* to a nearby ally or enemy who is about to make an attack roll. The *trick die* result becomes the natural result of their roll instead.

Champion Feat: Your *trick die* can also be used for a save roll.

Invocation of Trickery: This battle, attacks against you by enemies that moved to engage you during their turn miss on natural odd rolls.

Rob says: *I'm fond of the trickster who is willing to play a trick on comrades. I'm even fonder of the trickster who knows the difference between a trick and an intrusion.*

Domain: War OR Leadership

When you attack an enemy, hit or miss, your allies gain a +1 attack bonus against that enemy until the start of your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: The attack bonus increases to +2.

Champion Feat: Allies now also deal +1d6 damage against that enemy.

Epic Feat: Damage bonus increases to +2d6.

Invocation of War: Increase the escalation die by 1.

1st Level Spells

Bless

Ranged spell

Daily

Quick action to cast

Effect: You can cast this spell for power or for broad effect.

Cast for power: One nearby ally gains a +2 attack bonus this battle, or a +3 bonus if the target ally is not the caster.

*Cast for broad effect***:** Three nearby allies gain a +1 attack bonus this battle.

3rd level spell: Each target also gains 1d10 hit points per point of the attack bonus.

5th level spell: Each target gains 2d10 hit points instead of 1d10 per point of the attack bonus.

7th level spell: All attack bonuses granted by the spell increase by +1.

9th level spell: Each target gains 3d10 hit points instead of 2d10 per point of the attack bonus.

Cure Wounds

Ranged spell
Daily
Quick action to cast
Effect: You or a nearby ally can heal using a free recovery.

3rd level spell: The target can also roll a save against each save ends effect.

5th level spell: The target can heal using two free recoveries instead of one.

7th level spell: This spell becomes a Recharge 16+ spell instead of a Daily spell.

9th level spell: The target can heal using three free recoveries instead of two.

Hammer of Faith

Close-quarters spell
Daily
Effect: Until the end of the battle, your basic melee attacks use d12s as their base weapon damage dice.

3rd level spell: The spell now requires only a quick action to cast.

5th spell: You deal half damage on misses with basic melee attacks.

7th level spell: Once during the battle, you can reroll a basic melee attack.

9th level spell: For the rest of the battle, change any of your basic melee attack damage dice rolls

that are less than the escalation die to the escalation die value.

Players: Yes, this plays hell with dice conventions. As a daily spell it should be worth it.

Javelin of Faith

Ranged spell
At-Will
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Wisdom + Level vs. PD
Hit: 1d6 + Wisdom holy damage.
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

3rd level spell: 4d6 damage.
5th level spell: 6d6 damage.
7th level spell: 6d10 damage.
9th level spell: 8d10 damage.

Adventurer Feat: The spell also deals +1d6 damage against an undamaged target.

Champion Feat: The damage against an undamaged target is now +2d6.

Epic Feat: The damage against an undamaged target is now +4d6.

Players: Mooks count as targets at full hit points, until one or more mooks have been slain.

Righteous Spirits

Ranged spell
Once per battle
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Wisdom + Level vs. MD
Hit: 3d6 + Wisdom holy damage, and a nearby ally with the fewest hit points (possibly you) gains a +4 bonus to AC until the end of your next turn.
Miss: A nearby ally with the fewest hit points gains a +2 bonus to AC until the end of your next turn.

3rd level spell: 6d6 damage.
5th level spell: 6d10 damage.
7th level spell: 10d10 damage.
9th level spell: 2d8 x 10 damage.

93

Shield of Faith

Ranged spell

Daily

Quick action to cast

Effect: You can cast this spell for power or for broad effect.

Cast for power: One nearby ally gains a +2 bonus to AC this battle.

Cast for broad effect: Three nearby allies gain a +1 bonus to AC this battle.

3rd level spell: The bonus also applies to PD.

5th level spell: The bonus increases by +1 while the target is wounded.

7th level spell: The bonus also applies to MD.

9th level spell: The bonus when *cast for power* increases to +3.

Turn Undead

Ranged spell

Daily

Targets: 1d3 nearby undead that are level 4 or lower

Attack: Wisdom + Charisma + Level vs. MD

Hit: The target is dazed until end of your next turn.

Hit by 4+: 1d10 x cleric's level holy damage, and the target is dazed until end of your next turn.

Hit by 8+: Holy damage equal to half the target's maximum hit points, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Hit by 12+ or Natural 20: The target is destroyed.

3rd level spell: Targets undead up to level 6.

5th level spell: Targets undead up to level 8.

7th level spell: Targets undead up to level 10.

9th level spell: Targets undead up to level 12.

Adventurer Feat: You can use *turn undead* as a close-quarters spell.

Champion Feat: You can choose to target either demons or undead with the spell (but not both with the same casting).

3rd Level Spells

Cause Fear

Ranged spell

Daily

Target: One nearby enemy with 75 hp or fewer (you know whether targets are legal as you cast the spell)

Attack: Wisdom + Level vs. MD

Hit: The target is weakened until the end of its next turn. On its next turn, if it's unengaged, it does not attack and moves away from you. If it's engaged, the target attempts to disengage from all enemies as its first action, and moves away if it succeeds. If it fails, it moves away as its second action (drawing attacks of opportunity). In either case, it will not attack unless it has no options for escape.

Miss: The target hates you for having tried to scare it, and it wants to hurt you most of all, but it won't be any stupider than usual in pursuing that goal.

5th level spell: Targets an enemy with 120 hp or fewer.

7th level spell: Targets an enemy with 190 hp or fewer.

9th level spell: Targets an enemy with 300 hp or fewer.

Combat Boon

Close-quarters spell

At-Will

Effect: Make a basic melee attack. If the attack hits, you or one conscious nearby ally can roll a save against a save ends effect.

5th level spell: The save gains a +1 bonus.

7th level spell: You and your nearby conscious allies can make a total of two saves (one apiece) if the attack hits.

9th level spell: The save bonus increases to +2.

Adventurer Feat: If your attack scores a critical hit, the subsequent save automatically succeeds.

94

Champion Feat: An ally can roll a save even if your attack misses.

Divine Endurance

Ranged spell
Daily
Quick action to cast
Effect: You can cast this spell for power or for broad effect.

Cast for power: One nearby ally gains 40 temporary hit points.

Cast for broad effect: Three nearby allies gain 20 temporary hit points.

5th level spell: Temporary hit points = 60/30.

7th level spell: Temporary hit points = 80/40.

9th level spell: Temporary hit points = 100/50.

Judgment

Ranged spell
Daily
Targets: All nearby wounded enemies
Attack: Wisdom + Level vs. MD
Hit: 4d10 + Wisdom holy damage.
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

5th level spell: 7d10 damage.

7th level spell: 10d10 damage.

9th level spell: 2d8 x 10 damage.

Epic Feat: The spell now deals half damage on a miss.

Mighty Healing

Ranged spell
Daily
Effect: You can cast this spell for power or for broad effect.

Cast for power: One nearby ally can heal using a single recovery and regain double the usual number of hit points.

Cast for broad effect: Three nearby allies can each heal using a recovery.

5th level: The spell is now a quick action to cast.

7th level spell: Power = triple the usual hit points per recovery; broad = 1.5 x the usual hit points per recovery.

9th level spell: This spell becomes a Recharge 16+ spell instead of a Daily spell.

Strength of the Gods

Ranged spell
Daily
Quick action to cast
Effect: You can cast this spell for power or for broad effect.

Cast for power: One nearby ally deals +2d8 damage with melee attacks this battle.

Cast for broad effect: Three nearby allies deal +1d8 damage with melee attacks this battle.

5th level spell: Power for +4d6; broad for +2d6.

7th level spell: Power for +4d10; broad for +2d10.

9th level spell: Power for +6d10; broad for +3d10.

5th Level Spells

Circle of Radiance

Close-quarters spell
Daily
Effect: You or one nearby ally can heal using a free recovery. Then make the following attack.

Targets: One or two nearby enemies
Attack: Wisdom + Level vs. MD
Hit: 6d6 + Charisma holy damage.
Miss: Half damage.
7th level spell: 7d10 damage.
9th level spell: 10d10 damage.

Commandment

Ranged spell
Daily
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Wisdom + Level vs. MD
Hit: The target is confused (save ends).
Miss: The target is dazed (save ends).

Always: Hit or miss, each failed save against the spell deals 6d10 + Wisdom holy damage to the target.

> *7th level spell:* 10d10 damage.
> *9th level spell:* 2d8 x 10 damage.

Crisis of Faith

Close-quarters spell
Daily
Quick action to cast
Effect: For the rest of this battle, all enemies near you with 100 hp or fewer gain a penalty to their Mental Defense equal to your Charisma modifier. Each such enemy that misses with an attack roll takes holy damage equal to your level.

> *7th level spell:* 160 hp or fewer.
> *9th level spell:* 250 hp or fewer.

Sanctuary

Close-quarters spell
Daily
Effect: Choose a nearby ally. Enemies with 100 hp or fewer cannot attack the chosen ally until that ally attacks or the escalation die reaches 6.

> *7th level spell:* 160 hp or fewer.
> *9th level spell:* 250 hp or fewer.

7th Level Spells

Circle of Protection

Close-quarters spell
Daily
Quick action to cast
Effect: For the rest of this battle, you and each nearby ally gains a +1 bonus to all defenses.

In addition, choose one monster type when you cast the spell: demons or undead. The defense bonus increases to +2 against that type of enemy.

> *9th level spell:* Add dragons to the monster types you can special protection against.

Resurrection

Ranged spell
Special: You can cast this spell only once per level (see below). You must have most of the corpse available to cast the spell.
Effect: You can bring a character or recently deceased NPC back to life in more or less normal condition. By more or less normal, we mean that you could cast your first resurrection in the middle of combat or during an adventure and we would advise something like the following drawbacks: expending half the resurrected character's recoveries, start them dazed (save ends), and flip a coin for each of their daily abilities—tails it's gone.

> *9th level spell:* You no longer need to have most of the corpse to perform the *resurrection*.

Special: The first time you use the spell you can accomplish it somewhat quickly, with a single standard action. Using the spell removes one of your spell slots until you gain a level.

The second time you cast the spell, it takes longer, at least three or four rounds, and costs you something like half your hit points and daily powers/spells. The person you are resurrecting comes back at something like one-quarter strength.

The third time you cast the spell it has to be as a ritual. The spell chews you up, then gnaws at the person you have resurrected, who takes days to recover well enough to qualify as an adventurer or combatant.

The fourth time you cast the spell it nearly kills you. Or maybe it does. The resurrection succeeds but the person you've resurrected is going to be a mess for a month or more, regardless of any other magic tricks ya'll got going.

The fifth time you resurrect someone, that's the end of your story. There's only a 50/50 chance that the resurrection spell works on the target. You've used up your quota of resurrection magic. You're not coming back via this spell.

Surprise: that was the good news. The bad news is that if the target of your resurrection

96

spell has been resurrected more times than you have cast the spell, there is a nasty 50/50 chance that the experience will play out using their higher number of resurrections instead of the number of times you have cast the spell.

Resurrection in the World: The icons don't live forever because there is always a limit to magic that can bring you back from the dead. What's true for icons is equally true for heroes. Even if you've become invaluable to an icon, it's unlikely that the icon will be able to resurrect you personally if things go horribly awry. It's safe to assume that most of the icons are well on their way to using up their resurrection quotas, particularly long-lived icons like the Archmage. The current Emperor? The Priestess? They might have a resurrection to give, but will your PC be able to prove that they are the being most deserving of a second chance in the 13th age?

There may be a few NPCs capable of performing *resurrections*. They would be wise not to advertise their power. Beings capable of performing *resurrections* are sometimes the victims of hostile takeover attempts, as powerful beings seek to assure themselves of a resurrection in reserve.

9th Level Spells

Overworld Travel

Close-quarters spell
Daily
Special: You must cast this spell outdoors. It enables you and a group of nearby allies to travel up to and through the overworld to most any location in the world that you can name. The method of travel may depend upon your god, your icon, or your will. Some overworld travel spells summon a flying land, while others harness an elder sky being or simply turn all the travelers into swiftly moving wind.

The trip through the overworld is magically warded by the spell. Travel takes between an hour and a day, depending on distance and the amount of effort the spell must exert to maintain the warding. Party members who go off-plot and skip off into the overworld for a side adventure are on their own.

The destination can be in the overworld or in the land. It can't be in the underworld—this is the wrong spell for destinations there.

In a pinch, the versions of this spell cast by icons have been known to move invading armies and refugees from doomed cities. It's possible that the player characters could manage something similar but not guaranteed.

Prayer for Readiness

Close-quarters spell
Daily
Targets: Up to 5 allies
Effect: You utter a powerful prayer upon your comrades, giving each a special blessing. At any point later this battle, each blessed ally can acknowledge the blessing by saying "thank you" to your god, gods, or pantheon as a free action to reroll a d20 roll. That ally must take the reroll result.

Note that you are giving the blessing and don't receive it yourself.

FIGHTER

The grit and guts it takes to be a true fighter may be as rare and magical as the brains and arcane spark it takes to be a wizard. Plenty of poor slobs all across the world get pressed into military duty, and some fighters start that way, but there's more to a true fighter than that: skill, discipline, toughness, and an uncanny ability to get in harm's way . . . with a double dose of harm for the other guy.

Overview

Play Style: A couple of your class talents can make your job more complicated, but overall, playing a fighter is simple. You decide who to attack, roll your attack, and then figure out which flexible attack you want to use.

Ability Scores: You need Strength for your attacks, and Constitution for hit points when the enemy attacks you.

Races: Wanna start a tavern brawl? Ask which race has the best fighters. Then suggest that it's not the race of the fighter you are speaking with.

Outside of tavern brawls, it's generally understood that half-orcs and dwarves make great fighters. So do humans. So do a few of the optional races.

Icons: We've seen many fighters devoted to the Dwarf King or to the Emperor. We imagine that there will be many fighters associated with the Crusader, but we haven't met them personally yet.

Fighter Talent Suggestions

As a fighter, you choose 3 fighter class talents. Many of the talents give you something you can do once per battle.

If you want to be the tank, the guy who jumps between his friends and the monsters . . .

. . . you'll definitely want the Intercept class talent. You might also want Armor and Tough as Iron. At 5th level, you'll also probably want the *sword master's anticipation* maneuver.

If you want to be an archer . . .

. . . take the Deadeye Archer class talent, the 1st level *second shot* maneuver, and the 3rd level *make 'em flinch* maneuver.

If you want to be the deadly warrior who gets tougher as the battle gets serious . . .

. . . take *deadly assault,* then *hack & slash* at 3rd level, and maybe *heavy blows* if you're also going to fight with a 2-handed weapon.

Fighter Maneuvers

Most of the fighter maneuvers are flexible attacks, meaning that you roll your attack and then choose which maneuver you want the attack to use. You only get to use one maneuver with each attack, so it's usually best to choose maneuvers with a few different triggering rolls.

Gear

First level fighters start with a melee weapon or two, a ranged weapon if they want it, armor, and standard nonmagical gear that is suggested by the character's backgrounds.

Stolid and reliable fighters start with 25 gp in savings. Fighters who'd rather gamble than save start with 1d6 x 10 gp in their coin-purse.

Armor

Fighters usually wear heavy armor: flexible chainmail, resilient scale armor, and sturdy steel plate. For our purposes it all provides about the same protection.

If you are the odd fighter who prefers to fight only in light armor, knock yourself out— you're better in light armor than most other heroes. But you're still more likely to get knocked out of the battle than if you were wearing heavier stuff.

Fighter Armor and AC

Type	Base AC
None	10
Light	13
Heavy	*15*
Shield	*+1*

Weapons

The typical fighter has a number of weapons, each demonstrating professional design, expert forging, and perhaps a little customization on the fighter's part. The fighter's relationship with their weapons may be obsessive, like a

carpenter's relationship with his tools. A fighter's go-to weapon may be a sword, but it may also be a more exotic weapon, such as a flail or a warhammer. Most fighters carry shields, which are customized to represent the wielder's status, personality, or history. Fighters who avoid shields are usually better with two-handed weapons, but some fight with a weapon in each hand. Fighters are familiar with all manner of ranged weapons, and sturdy longbows are common.

Fighter Melee Weapons

	One-Handed	Two-Handed
Small	1d4 dagger	1d6 club
Light or Simple	1d6 shortsword, hand axe	1d8 spear
Heavy or Martial	1d8 longsword, warhammer	1d10 greatsword, greataxe

Fighter Ranged Weapons

	Thrown	Crossbow	Bow
Small	1d4 knife	1d4 hand crossbow	—
Light or Simple	1d6 javelin, axe	1d6 light crossbow	1d6 shortbow
Heavy Martial	—	1d8 heavy crossbow	1d8 longbow

Fighter Starting Stats

Base AC: 15 in heavy armor
Base PD: 10
Base MD: 10
Backgrounds: 6 Points

Fighter Level Progression

Fighter weapon attack maneuvers deal damage based on the fighter's level. You also don't have to keep track of upgrading a 1st level maneuver into a 3rd level maneuver, because all the maneuvers function at your level. You can change which maneuvers you know and have ready every time you take a full heal-up.

Fighter Level	Total Hit Points	Total # Feats	Total # of Maneuvers Known	Maneuver Pool Available	Level-up Ability Bonuses	Damage bonus from ability score
Level 1	(8 + CON mod) x **3**	1 adventurer	3	1st level		Ability modifier
Level 2	(8 + CON mod) x **4**	2 adventurer	4	1st level		Ability modifier
Level 3	(8 + CON mod) x **5**	3 adventurer	4	3rd level		Ability modifier
Level 4	(8 + CON mod) x **6**	4 adventurer	5	3rd level	+1 to 3 abilities	Ability modifier
Level 5	(8 + CON mod) x **8**	4 adventurer 1 champion	5	5th level		2 x ability modifier
Level 6	(8 + CON mod) x **10**	4 adventurer 2 champion	6	5th level		2 x ability modifier
Level 7	(8 + CON mod) x **12**	4 adventurer 3 champion	6	7th level	+1 to 3 abilities	2 x ability modifier
Level 8	(8 + CON mod) x **16**	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	7	7th level		3 x ability modifier
Level 9	(8 + CON mod) x **20**	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	7	9th level		3 x ability modifier
Level 10	(8 + CON mod) x **24**	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	8	9th level	+1 to 3 abilities	3 x ability modifier

Name:
Class: Fighter
Race:
Level: 1

STR:
CON:
DEX:
INT:
WIS:
CHA:

Initiative:
(Level + Dex mod)

Class Bonus to Ability Scores
As a fighter, you can add +2 to your Strength or to your Constitution, as long as it's not the same ability that you increased with your +2 racial bonus.

One Unique Thing:

Icon Relationships (3 points):

Backgrounds (6 points):

Fighter Basic Attack

At-will melee attack
   Attack: Strength + Level vs. AC
   Hit: WEAPON + Strength damage
   Miss: Damage equal to level

At-will ranged attack
   Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
   Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage
   Miss: —

AC:
(15 + Level + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis)

Physical Defense:
(10+ Level + middle mod of Str/Dex/Con)

Mental Defense:
(10+ Level + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha)

HP:
3 x (8+Con mod)

Recoveries (probably 8):
Recovery Dice: 1d10 per level + Con mod

Fighter Class Talents

If you are a single-class fighter, choose three of the following class talents.

You get an additional class talent at 6th level.

Armor

Your AC bonus when using a shield is +2 instead of +1.

Once per battle, when you are hit by an attack that targets AC, you only take half damage from that attack if you are wielding a shield and wearing heavy armor.

Adventurer Feat: You can also use the ability against an attack that targets PD.

Champion Feat: Once per day, you can use *armor* twice in a battle (against different attacks).

Cleave

Once per battle, make a fighter melee attack as a quick action after one of your melee attacks drops a non-mook enemy to 0 hp.

Adventurer Feat: One battle per day, use *cleave* any number of times, but only once per round.

Champion Feat: You gain a +4 attack bonus with your *cleave* attacks.

Epic Feat: You can use *cleave* up to twice each battle, but only once per round.

Comeback Strike

Once per battle as a free action, make another attack with a –2 penalty after your first fighter attack during your turn misses.

Adventurer Feat: Once per day, you can use *comeback strike* twice in a battle.

Champion Feat*:* You no longer take the –2 penalty to your *comeback strike* attacks.

Counter-Attack

Once per day as a free action, interrupt the attack of an enemy you are engaged with by making a fighter melee attack against that enemy.

Champion Feat: You can use *counter attack* twice per day.

Epic Feat: You can use it thrice per day.

Deadeye Archer

Once per battle, expand your critical hit range with a fighter ranged attack by 4 (usually to 16+). Declare you're using this talent before you roll the attack.

Adventurer Feat: Once per day, use *deadeye archer* twice in a battle, even on the same attack if it's that important to you.

Intercept

Once per round as a free action, roll a normal save (11+) to intercept an enemy who is *moving* to attack one of your nearby allies. You can disengage freely from one enemy to move and intercept the attack (if you are engaged with more than one enemy, the others can take opportunity attacks against you).

The moving enemy makes its attack with you as a target instead. If you're wearing heavy armor and the attack hits, you only take half damage.

Adventurer Feat: You can disengage freely from up to 2 enemies when using *intercept*.

Champion Feat: You gain a bonus your *intercept* save equal to the escalation die.

Epic Feat: Damage you take from opportunity attacks while using *intercept* is also halved if you are wearing heavy armor.

Power Attack

Once per battle before you roll an attack, you can declare you're using *power attack* to deal additional damage with that attack roll. If the attack hits, you deal the following additional damage:

Deal 1d4 additional damage per level if you are using a 1-handed weapon.

Deal 1d6 additional damage per level if you are using a 2-handed weapon.

Adventurer Feat: You deal the additional damage even if the attack misses.

Champion Feat: One battle per day, you can use *power attack* twice in the battle.

Tough as Iron

Once per battle, you can rally using a quick action instead of a standard action.

Adventurer Feat: Once per day, you can rally twice during a battle using quick actions without needing to roll a save for the second rally.

Champion Feat: Increase your total number of recoveries by 1.

Fighter Maneuvers: 1st Level

Deadly Assault

Flexible melee attack

Triggering Roll: Any natural even hit, when the escalation die is 3+; otherwise natural 20

Effect: Roll damage twice and use the higher roll.

Adventurer Feat: Now triggers on a natural even hit, when the escalation die is 2+.

Champion Feat: Triggering roll now includes natural 17+ anytime.

Defensive Fighting

Flexible melee attack

Triggering Roll: Natural 16+; or if you fight with a shield, any natural even roll

Effect: Gain a +2 bonus to AC until the end of your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: You also gain the bonus to Physical Defense.

Champion Feat: The bonus increases to +3.

Epic Feat: You also gain the bonus to Mental Defense.

Heavy Blows

Flexible melee attack

Triggering Roll: Any natural even miss

Effect: You gain a bonus to your miss damage equal to the escalation die. If you attacked with a 2-handed weapon, the bonus equals twice the escalation die instead.

Champion Feat: The bonus instead equals twice the escalation die with a 1-handed weapon, or triple it with a 2-handed weapon.

Precision Attack

Flexible melee attack

Triggering Roll: Any hit with a natural 16+

Effect: You gain a bonus to the damage roll equal to your Dexterity modifier.

Adventurer Feat: The bonus is twice your Dexterity modifier instead.

Punish Them

Special: Use this maneuver only when you make an opportunity attack.

Triggering Roll: Any hit with a natural 16+

Effect: The target is also dazed until the end of its turn.

Adventurer Feat: Once per day, you can use *punish them* when you roll a natural 16+ with one of your regular attacks. If you hit, the target is also dazed until end of its next turn.

Champion Feat: The dazed effect is now save ends.

Second Shot

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: Natural 16+

Effect: After this attack, you can make a second ranged attack with the same weapon (as long as it's not a weapon that takes a quick action to reload or draw) with a –4 attack penalty.

Champion Feat: The attack penalty is –2 instead.

Shield Bash

Flexible melee attack

Special: You must be using a shield.
Triggering Roll: Any natural even roll
Effect: The target pops off you (does not allow opportunity attacks).

    Adventurer Feat: If the target is also engaged with any of your allies, you can pop it off them as well if you like.
    Champion Feat: Once per battle, you can also daze an enemy (save ends) that is *wounded* when you hit it with a *shield bash* attack.

Two-Weapon Assault

Flexible melee attack
Special: You must be using a weapon in each hand.
Triggering Roll: Any miss
Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you gain a +2 melee attack bonus against the target.

    Champion Feat: The bonus increases to +4.

Fighter Maneuvers: 3rd Level

Hack & Slash

Flexible melee attack
Special: You can use this maneuver only once per round.
Triggering Roll: Any natural even roll, when the escalation die is 3+
Effect: Make another melee weapon attack against a different target.

Make 'em Flinch

Flexible ranged attack
Triggering Roll: Any natural even miss
Effect: Deal damage equal to your level (as the target gets nicked while dodging).

Never Surrender

Flexible melee attack
Special: You can use this maneuver only once per day.

Triggering Roll: Any natural roll of 6+, when the escalation die is 3+
Effect: Turn a miss into a hit.

    Champion Feat: Turn a hit into a crit.
    Epic Feat: You can now use *never surrender* twice per day.

Steady Now

Flexible melee attack
Triggering Roll: Any natural even miss
Effect: You gain temporary hit points equal to your Constitution modifier.

    Champion Feat: The temporary hit points equal triple your Constitution modifier instead.

Fighter Maneuvers: 5th Level

A Dozen Cuts

Flexible melee attack
Triggering Roll: Any natural even hit
Effect: The target also takes ongoing damage equal to twice your Dexterity modifier (triple it at 8th level).

    Champion Feat: Once per day, you can trigger *a dozen cuts* with any attack roll.

Hero's Skill

Flexible melee or ranged attack
Triggering Roll: Any natural even roll
Effect: Add +4 to the attack roll, but halve any damage dealt by the attack.

Sword Master's Anticipation

Flexible melee attack
Special: You must have the *intercept* talent to use this maneuver.
Triggering Roll: Any natural even roll
Effect: The next time you use *intercept* this battle, your *intercept* save automatically succeeds.

Fighter Maneuvers: 7th Level

Spinning Charge

Flexible melee attack

Special: You must have moved before the attack.

Triggering Roll: Any natural even hit

Effect: After dealing damage, you can disengage from the target freely, move to a nearby enemy, and make a basic fighter attack against that enemy. On a hit, that attack only deals half damage.

    You can't use any maneuvers with the second attack.

Sword of Destiny

Flexible melee attack

Triggering Roll: Any hit with a natural 16+, when the escalation die is 5+; otherwise natural 20

Effect: You can heal using a free recovery.

Fighter Maneuvers: 9th Level

Combat Mastery

Flexible melee attack

Special: You can use this maneuver only once per battle.

Triggering Roll: Any natural even hit

Effect: Increase the escalation die by 1.

    Epic Feat: You can now use *combat mastery* twice per battle.

Set 'em Up

Flexible melee attack

Triggering Roll: Any hit with a natural 16+

Effect: Your attacks against the target have their crit range increased by 4 (generally 16+) until the end of the battle.

    Epic Feat: The crit range bonus is now 4 + your Intelligence modifier.

PALADIN

In every age, extraordinary men and women have stepped forward to carry the battle flag of justice. By the will of the gods, paladins are both protectors and avengers whose campaigns of awesome justice serve as warnings to any who threaten those under their protection. The people depend on them, lords celebrate them, and monsters hate them. People have never needed paladins more than they do in the 13th age.

Overview

Play Style: The paladin is a heavily armored and fanatically devoted warrior of the gods—or of causes so pure they don't require gods to make them holy.

Like the barbarian, the paladin is simple to play. Your choices during combat come from your talents since you don't choose new attacks or spells as you rise in level. Most every attack you make uses your basic melee attack, but you can augment it by smiting evil or using one of the other abilities from your talents.

Paladins who want a bit more complexity can choose talents that let them cast a cleric spell or use a cleric domain.

Ability Scores: Strength is your attack ability. Depending on your talents and feats, you might want to have a high Charisma. If you avoid the talents that depend on your magical impact, you'll probably opt for a high Constitution for the hit points.

Races: Humans and half-elves gravitate to the zeal required of paladins. Although more rare, some of the most fearsome paladins are dwarves, proving that stature is overrated, and half-orcs, proving that they despise evil.

Backgrounds: Paladins are usually highly disciplined warriors rather than untrained neophytes. They often have skills related to their previous assignments or duties.

From the somewhat standard to the quixotic, here's a short list of possible paladin backgrounds to get you started: city guardsman, combat medic, bodyguard, outlaw hunter, Sea Wall captain, Golden Citadel archeologist, Elf Queen's courtier, First Triumph Inquisitor, veteran of the orc wars, hellhole commando, ex-priest of the Diabolist.

Icons: Like most d20 games, we assume that most paladins are good, even lawful good. The Great Gold Wyrm is the patron of such paladins while the Priestess attracts paladins who value the good over the law. Paladins supremely devoted to virtue and the cause of good frequently take the Path of Universal Righteous Endeavor talent.

But paladins don't have to be good. The Crusader inspires many evil paladins—they share hatred of demons with the paladins of the Great Gold Wyrm without any of the compassion for the demons' victims. Even worse, from the Wyrm's perspective, the Blue's hold on Drakkenhall has given it a stable base to inspire and train paladins devoted to the Three. Paladins inordinately devoted to evil should consider the Way of Evil Bastards talent.

Gear

First level paladins start with a melee weapon or perhaps two, a ranged weapon if they want it, armor, a shield, and standard nonmagical gear that is suggested by the specific character's backgrounds.

Armor

Paladins usually wear heavy armor, at least chainmail or scale armor and most often plate. For our purposes, it all provides about the same protection. If you're in an odd situation where your paladin isn't wearing much armor, your AC will drop.

Paladin Armor and AC

Type	Base AC
None	10
Light	12
Heavy	*16*
Shield	*+1*

Paladin Weapons

By tradition and inclination, paladins fight with one-handed melee weapons in order to carry shields. A heavy, shining sword is the traditional weapon of great heroes, but some paladins wield unorthodox weapons that speak to their heart.

    While a fighter may have a number of weapons, each with different mechanical features or storytelling schticks, a paladin may have a single, beloved melee weapon, treated as a trusty companion.

    Though they relish face-to-face combat with their enemies, prudent paladins carry utilitarian ranged weapons. They are trained with all the best ones.

Paladin Starting Stats

Base AC: 16 (in heavy armor)
Base PD: 10
Base MD: 12
Backgrounds: 6 Points

Paladin Melee Weapons

	One-Handed	Two-Handed
Small	1d4 dagger	1d6 club
Light or Simple	1d6 scimitar, shortsword	1d8 spear
Heavy or Martial	1d8 longsword, battleaxe	1d10 greatsword, halberd

Paladin Ranged Weapons

	Thrown	Crossbow	Bow
Small	1d4 knife	1d4 hand crossbow	—
Light or Simple	1d6 javelin, axe	1d6 light crossbow	1d6 shortbow
Heavy Martial	—	1d8 heavy crossbow	1d8 longbow

Paladin Level Progression

Paladin	Total Hit Points	Total # Feats	Total # of Class Talents	Level-up Ability Bonuses	Damage bonus from ability score
Level 1	(8 + CON mod) x **3**	1 adventurer	3		Ability modifier
Level 2	(8 + CON mod) x **4**	2 adventurer	3		Ability modifier
Level 3	(8 + CON mod) x **5**	3 adventurer	3		Ability modifier
Level 4	(8 + CON mod) x **6**	4 adventurer	3	+1 to 3 abilities	Ability modifier
Level 5	(8 + CON mod) x **8**	4 adventurer 1 champion	4		2 x ability modifier
Level 6	(8 + CON mod) x **10**	4 adventurer 2 champion	4		2 x ability modifier
Level 7	(8 + CON mod) x **12**	4 adventurer 3 champion	4	+1 to 3 abilities	2 x ability modifier
Level 8	(8 + CON mod) x **16**	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	5		3 x ability modifier
Level 9	(8 + CON mod) x **20**	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	5		3 x ability modifier
Level 10	(8 + CON mod) x **24**	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	5	+1 to 3 abilities	3 x ability modifier

Name:
Class: Paladin
Race:
Level: 1

STR:
CON:
DEX:
INT:
WIS:
CHA:

Initiative:
(Level + Dex mod)

Class Bonus to Ability Scores
As a paladin, you can add +2 to your Strength or to your Charisma, as long as it's not the same ability that you increased with your +2 racial bonus.

One Unique Thing:

Icon Relationships (3 points):

Backgrounds (6 points):

Paladin Basic Attack

At-will melee attack
  Attack: Strength + Level vs. AC
  Hit: WEAPON + Strength damage
  Miss: Damage equal to level

At-will ranged attack
  Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
  Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage
  Miss: —

AC:
(16 + Level + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis)

Physical Defense:
(10+ Level + middle mod of Str/Dex/Con)

Mental Defense:
(12+ Level + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha)

HP:
3 x (8 + Con mod)

Recoveries (probably 8):
Recovery Dice: 1d10 per level + Con mod

Paladin Class Feature

All paladins have the *smite evil* feature.

Smite Evil

You can use this talent once per battle, plus an additional number of times per day equal to your Charisma modifier.

As a free action before you make a paladin melee attack roll, you can declare that you're using a *smite evil* attack. Add +1d12 to the damage roll AND deal half damage with the attack if it misses.

Adventurer Feat: Your *smite evil* attacks gain a +4 attack bonus.
Champion Feat: Add 2d12 to the damage roll instead of 1d12.
Epic Feat: Add 4d12 to the damage roll instead of 2d12.

Players: Like most class traits, *smite evil* works with paladin attacks rather than melee attacks from other classes acquired by multiclassing.
Gamemaster: We're not devoted to the idea that the target of a *smite evil* attack needs to be seriously evil. You can be if you wish.

Paladin Class Talents

If you are a single-class paladin, choose three of the following class talents.

You get an additional class talent at 5th level, and at 8th level.

Bastion

You gain +1 AC.

Once per battle when a nearby ally is hit by an attack, you can choose to lose hit points equal to half of that damage, and have your ally take half of the damage instead. You can't use temporary hit points, damage resistance, or any other tricks to avoid the damage.

Adventurer Feat: You gain an additional recovery.
Champion Feat: Once per day, you can use *bastion* twice in the same battle.

Epic Feat: If you wish, you can take all the damage instead of only half.

Cleric Training

Special: You can't take this talent if you are a multiclass character.

Choose one cleric spell of your level or lower. That spell is now part of your powers. (As usual, you can change the spell when you gain a level or an incremental advance.)

Players: Looking through all the cleric spells may be too much work the first time you play the game. Save this talent for your second paladin, or swap into it later.

Adventurer Feat: You can use your Charisma as the attack ability for the cleric spell.
Champion Feat: You can use the cleric's class bonus spell *heal* twice per day.
Epic Feat: Choose two cleric spells instead of one.

Divine Domain

Special: You can't take this talent if you are a multiclass character.

Choose one of the domains listed in the cleric's class list. You gain all the domain's advantages, including the ability to use the domain's invocation once per day.

If the domain you choose is designed to help cleric spells and attacks, reinterpret the talent to help your paladin powers. You can learn the domain's feats if you wish; reinterpret them similarly if necessary.

Fearless

You are immune to *fear* abilities and to any non-damage effects of attacks named or described as fear attacks.

In addition, you gain a +1 attack bonus with melee attacks against enemies that are not engaged by any of your allies. The bonus increases to +2 against enemies with *fear* abilities (for example, the dretch, red dragon, and especially nasty minotaurs).

Adventurer Feat: You gain a +1 bonus to death saves.

Champion Feat: You gain a +1 bonus to all other saves.

Epic Feat: Your nearby allies gain a +1 bonus to death saves.

Lay on Hands

Twice per day as a standard action, you can heal yourself or a nearby ally with a touch, and possibly gain other benefits. Roll a d20:

1–5: You can choose which character spends the recovery (of course, it must be yours if you are alone).

6–10: The recovery is free.

11–15: The recovery is free and so is the action for using *lay on hands*; you get your standard action back to use as you like this turn.

16–20: As the result for 11–15, but the character healing gets two free recoveries.

Adventurer Feat: Add your Charisma modifier to your *lay on hands* rolls.

Champion Feat: Add twice your Charisma modifier to the healing provided by *lay on hands*.

Epic Feat: You can use *lay on hands* an additional time each day.

Paladin's Challenge

Once per battle, after you resolve a melee attack against an enemy, challenge that enemy as a free action. Until the end of your next turn, provided that both you and the enemy you've challenged are conscious, you both take a –4 attack penalty against all other targets.

Gamemaster: If the paladin disengages or teleports away from the enemy, feel free to allow the enemy to ignore the challenge. The paladin should seek to confront the challenged creature rather than avoiding it. A paladin who uses *paladin's challenge* feats to have multiple enemies challenged at the same time can attack *any* of the challenged enemies without taking the -4 penalty.

Adventurer Feat: You can now use *paladin's challenge* twice per battle.

Champion Feat: Whenever you make a natural even melee attack roll, you can make a

free *paladin's challenge* against the target (one per turn)!

Epic Feat: The attack penalty for challenged enemies (but not for you) increases to –6.

Path of Universal Righteous Endeavor

Special: You can't take this talent if you take *way of evil bastards*.

You get a free use of *paladin's challenge* against a *different* nearby enemy each time you drop a non-mook enemy to 0 hp with a melee attack.

In effect, this offers another way to make a *paladin's challenge*. You don't need to have chosen the Paladin's Challenge talent to use *path of universal righteous endeavor*.

Adventurer Feat: Once per day, you can reroll your relationship dice with a good or ambiguous icon.

Champion Feat: All of your melee and ranged attacks deal holy damage.

Epic Feat: Gain an additional relationship point with a good or ambiguous icon.

Way of Evil Bastards

Special: You can't take this talent if you take *path of universal righteous endeavor*.

Twice per day (but only once per battle), you can *call a kill*. As a quick action before you make a melee attack against a non-mook enemy, *call the kill* by declaring that the attack will surely slay the target.

If you are correct and your attack slays it, intone the dark prayer or grim battle chant that sends that soul as a sacrifice to your gods, and choose whether you want to heal using a recovery as a free action OR increase your critical hit range until your next full heal-up by 1 point (generally to 19+ the first time).

Adventurer Feat: Once per day, you can reroll your relationship dice with an evil or ambiguous icon.

Champion Feat: You *call a kill* three times per day, but only once per battle.

Epic Feat: Gain an additional relationship point with an evil or ambiguous icon.

Players: You'll probably want this talent if you are dedicated to the Crusader. But *way of evil bastards* could also work if you have a conflicted relationship with an evil icon that somehow still enables you to be a functional member of the adventuring party. The fact that the talent opens doors to ambiguous icons increases its possible roleplaying range. Perhaps the ambiguous icon you're devoted to moderates your evil nature. Or perhaps you're not actually evil; you just feel more comfortable *looking* evil.

Gamemaster: You're under no obligation to allow truly evil player characters. Many tables can't handle the dysfunction. But some players can handle subtle or situational evil that allows them to function as a non-destructive part of a campaign.

Rob says: *If the names of the good'n'evil talents don't suit your character, create your own terrible acronym or earnest alternative to rename your talent.*

RANGER

Some rangers get their training in an official ranger corps, serving the Emperor or another legitimate authority. Others are initiates into half-wild gangs, resourceful nomads who know more ancient secrets than their rough manner might suggest. Rangers from different lands or traditions respect each other, though they can still be ruthless rivals. In the wilderness, rangers are held in awe, provided the common people even know they're there. In the city, rangers are notorious for complaining about the conditions of urban life, but they are renowned as outlandish party guests.

Overview

Play Style: Like the barbarian, the ranger is simple to play. Your choices in play come from your class talents since you don't choose new attacks or spells as you gain levels. Most every attack you make uses your basic melee or ranged attack. Unlike most other classes, you can choose to use your Strength or your Dexterity as your attack ability in melee.

Choosing to have an animal companion complicates matters slightly, since you'll have two creatures to act with each turn: your ranger and the animal you choose.

Ability Scores: Dexterity and Strength are your main ability scores. It's also likely that many of the skill checks you'll make in the wilderness will play off Wisdom.

Races: Tradition and natural inclination makes wood elves the prototypical rangers. The class's flexibility with Strength, Dexterity, and ranged and melee attacks means that everyone from humans to half-orcs and halflings can stride into the role if they choose.

Backgrounds: Rangers are trackers, bounty hunters, members of secret orders of frontier guardians, agents of druidic circles, survivors of distant massacres, beast slayers, tree dwellers, initiates of the golden bough, woodsy assassins, dwellers on the Sea Wall, Koru Behemoth tribefolk, orc slayers, wanderers, and occasionally even secret monarchs of vanished kingdoms.

Icons: The High Druid and the Elf Queen rule the green spaces. The Orc Lord and the Three lay claim to the wastes. And a few hooded rangers who keep their stories straight and their motives plausible may know something of the Prince of Shadows.

Gear

First level rangers start with armor, a melee weapon or two, a ranged weapon or two, and other mundane gear suggested by their backgrounds or a life in the wilds. That "or two" is a lot more important for them than most characters, since two-weapon fighting is one of the ranger's signatures. See the basic rules for two-weapon fighting on page XX.

Rangers who are careful with their gold start with 25 gp. Rangers who view gold and silver as a temporary event, meant to be used, start with 1d6 x 10 gp.

Armor

Rangers prefer leather armor, scuffed and camouflaged for the wilderness, scuffed or buffed for civilization. A touch of metal is alright, but nothing too heavy. Rangers fighting without armor lose a few points of AC. Rangers fighting in heavier armor take attack penalties.

Ranger Armor and AC

Type	Base AC	Atk Penalty
None	10	—
Light	*14*	*—*
Heavy	15	–2
Shield	+1	–2

Weapons

Rangers often wield two melee weapons at the same time, battering opponents with furious swings. They often use swords, but axes are also common. Less frequently, a ranger fights with two different weapons, such as a flail and ax.

Rangers are skilled with all manner of ranged weapons. With or without magic, personally crafting your own longbow may be a point of pride. Rangers' weapons are often tricked out with feathers, beast claws, or other natural adornments.

Ranger Melee Weapons

	One-Handed	**Two-Handed**
Small	1d4 dagger	1d6 club
Light or Simple	1d6 shortsword, hand axe	1d8 spear
Heavy or Martial	1d8 longsword, warhammer	1d10 greatsword, greataxe

Ranger Ranged Weapons

	Thrown	**Crossbow**	**Bow**
Small	1d4 knife	1d4 hand crossbow	—
Light or Simple	1d6 javelin, axe	1d6 light crossbow	1d6 shortbow
Heavy Martial	—	1d8 heavy crossbow	1d8 longbow

Ranger Level Progression

Ranger Level	Total Hit Points	Total # Feats	# of Class Talents	Level-up Ability Bonuses	Damage bonus from ability score
Level 1	(7 + CON mod) x **3**	1 adventurer	3		Ability modifier
Level 2	(7 + CON mod) x **4**	2 adventurer	3		Ability modifier
Level 3	(7 + CON mod) x **5**	3 adventurer	3		Ability modifier
Level 4	(7 + CON mod) x **6**	4 adventurer	3	+1 to 3 abilities	Ability modifier
Level 5	(7 + CON mod) x **8**	4 adventurer 1 champion	4		2 x ability modifier
Level 6	(7 + CON mod) x **10**	4 adventurer 2 champion	4		2 x ability modifier
Level 7	(7 + CON mod) x **12**	4 adventurer 3 champion	4	+1 to 3 abilities	2 x ability modifier
Level 8	(7 + CON mod) x **16**	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	5		3 x ability modifier
Level 9	(7 + CON mod) x **20**	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	5		3 x ability modifier
Level 10	(7 + CON mod) x **24**	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	5	+1 to 3 abilities	3 x ability modifier

Name:
Class: Ranger
Race:
Level: 1

STR:
CON:
DEX:
INT:
WIS:
CHA:

Initiative:
(Level + Dex mod)

Class Bonus to Ability Scores
As a ranger, you can add +2 to your Strength, Dexterity, or Wisdom, as long as it's not the same ability that you increased with your +2 racial bonus.

One Unique Thing:

Icon Relationships (3 points):

Backgrounds (10 points):

Ranger Basic Attack
At-will melee attack
   Attack: Strength OR Dexterity + Level vs. AC
   Hit: WEAPON + Strength damage
   Miss: Damage equal to level

At-will ranged attack
   Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
   Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage
   Miss: Damage equal to level

AC:
(14 + Level + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis)

Physical Defense:
(11+ Level + middle mod of Str/Dex/Con)

Mental Defense:
(10+ Level + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha)

HP:
3 x (7 + Con mod)

Recoveries (probably 8):
Recovery Dice: 1d8 per level + Con mod

Ranger Class Talents

As a single-class ranger, choose three ranger talents at first level. You'll get additional talent choices at 5th and 8th level.

Animal Companion/Beast Mastery

Special: Unlike most class talents, this talent takes up two ranger class talent slots.

See the Animal Companion rules at the end of this section for information on this talent.

Archery

Once per battle, reroll one of your missed ranged attacks.

Adventurer Feat: The reroll gains a +2 attack bonus.

Champion Feat: Once per day, you can use *archery* twice in the same battle.

Epic Feat: Once per day, you can turn a normal hit with a ranger ranged attack into a critical hit.

Double Melee Attack

When fighting with two melee weapons, you can make a second melee attack when your first attack roll is a natural even roll.

Adventurer Feat: Your second attack gains a +2 attack bonus if it is against a different target than the first.

Champion Feat: @@

Epic Feat: @@

Double Ranged Attack

When you attack with a ranged weapon that does not need to be reloaded, you can make a second ranged attack when your first attack roll is a natural even roll.

Adventurer Feat: Your second attack gains a +2 attack bonus if it is against a different target than the first.

Champion Feat: @@

Epic Feat: @@

Fey Queen's Enchantments

Choose one daily or recharge spell of your level or lower from the sorcerer class. You can cast this spell as if you were a sorcerer. You can change your chosen spell each time you take a full heal-up. Feel free to rename and reflavor the sorcerer spell to suit your wilderness backgrounds.

Adventurer Feat: You can use *gather power* like a sorcerer before casting your sorcerer spell (see page XX). (Gathering power won't do anything to help your ranger attacks.)

Champion Feat: You can now choose an at-will sorcerer spell of your level or lower instead of a daily or recharge spell, but you can only use that spell twice per battle instead of at-will.

Epic Feat: You gain an additional sorcerer spell of your choice that is your level or lower; a total of two from this talent.

Favored Enemy

Choose a specific monster type. Your ranger attacks against that type of enemy score critical hits on a natural roll of 17+. The monster types are part of each monster's stat block. Here's a current partial list: aberration, beast, construct, demon, dragon, giant, humanoid*, and undead.

Choosing humanoid: Your critical range against humanoids only improves to 19+ instead of 17+ like any other favored enemy.

Adventurer Feat: You can change your favored enemy by meditating when you take a full heal-up.

Champion Feat: @@

Epic Feat: @@

First Strike

The first time you attack an enemy during a battle, you can score a critical hit against that enemy with a natural attack roll of 17+. (A group of mooks counts as a single enemy.)

Adventurer Feat: Once per day, deal triple damage with a *first strike* critical instead of double damage.
Champion Feat: @@
Epic Feat: @@

Lethal Hunter

Once per battle as a free action, choose an enemy. You score critical hits against that enemy with natural attack rolls of 17+. (A group of mooks counts as a single enemy.)

Adventurer Feat: @@
Champion Feat: One battle per day, you can use *lethal hunter* against two different enemies.
Epic Feat: @@

Ranger ex Cathedral

Choose one daily or recharge spell of your level or lower from the cleric class. You can cast this spell as if you were a cleric. You can change your chosen spell each time you take a full heal-up. If you like, rename and reflavor the spell to suit your wilderness background.

Adventurer Feat: You can cast the cleric class feature *heal* spell (page XX) once per battle.
Champion Feat: You can now choose an at-will cleric spell of your level or lower instead of a daily or recharge spell, but you can only use that spell twice per battle instead of at-will.
Epic Feat: You gain an additional cleric spell of your choice that is your level or lower; a total of two from this talent.

Two Weapon Mastery

You gain a +1 attack bonus when fighting with a melee weapon in each hand.

Adventurer Feat: One battle per day, you also gain a +1 AC bonus when fighting with a melee weapon in each hand.
Champion Feat: @@
Epic Feat: @@

Animal Companion Rules

First, add two recoveries to your total recoveries. Since you'll be healing for two, you might need them.

You have a devoted animal companion who fights alongside you like a member of your adventuring party . . . and by "member of your adventuring party" we mean a dedicated ally who will never run out on you, recklessly catch you in a fireball, or steal the magic item you wanted from the dragon's horde.

Actions

Your animal companion acts on your initiative turn. Each type of animal companion specifies whether it acts before you or after you on your turn; we're cutting down on the amount of time you spend figuring out your turn by cutting out the choice of when to use your companion's turn.

Your animal companion moves and attacks like a PC; it gets a move action and a standard action. For everyone's sanity, you should generally avoid giving the animal a quick action. If you have abilities that care about the first time you attack an enemy, an attack by your animal companion counts as your attack.

Animal Harm

Your animal companion can be healed like an ally. If it gets healed without you being healed, it uses one of your recoveries. The better option is to use a recovery to heal yourself: when you use a recovery while touching your animal companion, your animal companion can also heal using a free recovery.

Your animal companion dies PC-style instead of dropping at 0 hp. If your animal companion dies, you can summon another one. If you're still on the same adventure, you can call a new animal companion the next day, but it will be one level lower than an animal companion would normally be. At the start of a new adventure, or when you gain a level, bump the companion up to its proper level.

Stats & Levels

For simplicity's sake, we play that each animal companion has roughly the same stats as listed

below. As you'll see, there's a touch of customization possible in each stat block, but if that's not enough for you, tinker it up.

Your animal companion is always one level lower than you. As a 1st level ranger, you'll have a level 0 animal companion. Once you gain a level, your animal companion rises to 1st level. A kind GM might allow you to raise your animal companion's level early by using an incremental advance.

On top of the base stats, each type of animal has a zoologically appropriate power or advantage. The animals on this list are the obvious candidates, but some rangers have a taste for the exotic.

Companion Bonuses

Each type of animal companion is a little different.

Bear (also Giant Badger, Wolverine)
Acts: After ranger
Advantage: The bear gains temporary hit points equal to its level each time it hits with an attack.

Champion Feat: The temporary hit points increase to double its level.

Boar (also Spiky Lizard)
Acts: Before ranger
Advantage: The boar gains a +1 attack bonus when it moves before its attack.

Eagle (also Falcon, Hawk, Owl, Vulture)
Acts: Before ranger
Advantage: Dude, it flies. So drop its melee damage die by one size (d6 at level 0).

Panther (also Lion, Tiger)
Acts: Before ranger
Advantage: The panther's attack scores a critical hit on a natural 18+ against enemies with lower initiative.

Snake (also Giant Spider, Poison Toad)

Acts: After ranger
Advantage: The snake also deals ongoing poison damage equal to twice *your* level on natural attack roll of 18+.

Champion Feat: The ongoing damage is three times your level instead.
Epic Feat: The ongoing damage is four times your level instead.

Wolf (also Big Dog, Coyote, Hyena, Jackal)
Acts: After ranger
Advantage: The wolf gains a +1 attack bonus against enemies its master attacked this turn, or against enemies engaged with its master.

Players: At high levels, your animal companion can become a large-sized dire creature if you want it to be. If it suits your ranger to have a giant wolf or snake as a companion, go for it.

Gamemaster: The stats and feats for high-level animal companions work fine whether the ranger is accompanied by a dire beast or the animal they've leveled up with. The choice to go dire is for flavor and story.

Baseline Stats

Use the following stats as the baseline for your animal companion. Remember that your companion stays a level lower than you. Generally your companion's Physical Defense should be higher than its Mental Defense, but you could flip that if you have a good explanation.

Level 0 Animal Companion
Attack +5 vs. AC
Damage d8
AC 16
PD (or MD) 14
MD (or PD) 10
HP 20 (10)

Level 1 Animal Companion
Attack +6 vs. AC

Damage d10
AC 17
PD (or MD) 15
MD (or PD) 11
HP 27 (13)

Level 2 Animal Companion
Attack +7 vs. AC
Normal Damage 2d6
AC 18
PD (or MD) 16
MD (or PD) 12
HP 36 (18)

Level 3 Animal Companion
Attack +9 vs. AC
Damage 3d6
AC 19
PD (or MD) 17
MD (or PD) 13
HP 45 (22)

Level 4 Animal Companion
Attack +10 vs. AC
Damage 4d6
AC 21
PD (or MD) 19
MD (or PD) 15
HP 54 (27)

Level 5 Animal Companion
Attack +11 vs. AC (or PD/MD)
Damage 5d6
AC 22
PD (or MD) 20
MD (or PD) 16
HP 72 (36)

Level 6 Animal Companion
Attack +13 vs. AC (or PD/MD)
Damage 6d6
AC 23
PD (or MD) 21
MD (or PD) 17
HP 90 (45)

Level 7 Animal Companion

Attack +14 vs. AC (or PD/MD)
Damage 7d6
AC 25
PD (or MD) 23
MD (or PD) 19
HP 108 (54)

Level 8 Animal Companion
Attack +15 vs. AC (or PD/MD)
Damage 8d6
AC 26
PD (or MD) 24
MD (or PD) 20
HP 144 (72)

Level 9 Animal Companion
Attack +17 vs. AC (or PD/MD)
Damage 9d6
AC 27
PD (or MD) 25
MD (or PD) 21
HP 180 (90)

Level 10 Animal Companion
Attack +18 vs. AC (or PD/MD)
Damage 10d6
AC 28
PD (or MD) 26
MD (or PD) 22
HP 216 (108)

Players: For now the level 10 animal companion is probably only available if your GM lets you improve your companion with an incremental advance.

Animal Companion Feats

Adventurer Feat: Once per day, your animal companion can attack twice in a round with a standard action.

Adventurer Feat: Once per battle, your animal companion can turn a disengage success by an enemy it is engaged with into a failure.

Adventurer Feat: Once per day, reroll one of your animal companion's missed attack rolls.

Champion Feat: Once per day, your animal companion can force an enemy to reroll an attack that hit it.

Champion Feat: Your *lethal hunter* talent also applies to your animal companion.

Champion Feat: Increase your animal companion's Physical Defense and Mental Defense by +1.

Epic Feat: Increase your animal companion's damage die by one size (for example, from d6s to d8s, or d8s to d10s)

Epic Feat: Increase your animal companion's AC by +1.

ROGUE

Rogues are a mixed bag. Some are thugs who have learned enough tricks to get a step ahead of the other thugs. A few are mad, driven by a reckless sense of adventure. Most are quick with a smile, a blade, and a getaway. They receive various sorts of training: from a spymaster's school, a thieves' guild, a cult of the Black dragon, an independent operator or an ambitious ogre magi. Rogues prefer never to be called assassins. And you know very well what will happen to you if do.

Overview

Play Style: Our rogue is a bit of a challenge to play thanks to sneak attack abilities that require the character to team up with allies and momentum abilities that depend heavily on whether you last hit an enemy or were hit yourself. If the newbie in the group plays the rogue, give them props for skilled play.

Ability Scores: Dexterity rules. Second-place goes to Charisma.

Races: Halflings love being rogues. So do wood elves and drow. Humans? Well, of course.

Backgrounds: Street thug, cat burglar, diplomat, professional gambler, Imperial customs agent, courtier.

Icons: The Prince of Shadows puts a touch on so many rogues that it might be harder to find rogues who don't have his shadow somewhere on them. The Elf Queen, Diabolist, and the Three have their reasons for knowing rogues, and rogues have reasons for knowing them. Thanks to the *smooth talk* talent, some rogues find themselves working with followers of most all the icons at least once in their career.

Gear

First level rogues start with the clothes on their back and the dice in their pockets. Also, various bladed weapons, a music box that certainly didn't belong to them yesterday, and leather armor. Plus various oddments suggested by their backgrounds.

Rogues taking it easy start with 25 gp. Rogues working their usual tricks start with 1d6 x 10 gp.

Armor

Rogues prefer leather armor when there is a chance that the pointy weapons will be pointing at them.

Rogue Armor and AC

Type	Base AC	Atk Penalty
None	11	—
Light	*12*	—
Heavy	13	–2
Shield	+1	–2

Weapons

A trained rogue is as deadly with a shortsword or wicked big knife as a fighter is with a longsword. Although rogues' weapons vary, they are virtually always light, allowing rogues to strike with speed and precision rather than raw force. A rogue may have a superstitious connection to a "lucky knife" or other favored weapon. For ranged weapons, rogues are skilled with shortbows, throwing axes, and other light weapons.

Note that we're not talking metaphorically in the first sentence above: rogues deal as much damage with daggers and shortswords as fighters deal with longswords.

Rogue Starting Stats

Base AC: 12 (in light armor)
Base PD: 12 (quick on their feet)
Base MD: 10
Backgrounds: 10 Points

Rogue Melee Weapons

	One-Handed	**Two-Handed**
Small	1d8 dagger	1d6 club
Light or Simple	1d8 shortsword, wicked knife	1d8 spear
Heavy or Martial	1d8 (–2 atk) longsword, scimitar	1d10 (–2 atk) greatsword

Rogue Ranged Weapons

	Thrown	**Crossbow**	**Bow**
Small	1d4 knife	1d4 hand crossbow	—
Light or Simple	1d6 javelin, axe	1d6 light crossbow	1d6 shortbow
Heavy Martial	—	1d8 (–1 atk) heavy crossbow	1d8 (–2 atk) longbow

Rogue Level	Total Hit Points	Total # Feats	Total # of Powers Known	Pool Available	Level-up Ability Bonuses	Damage bonus from ability score
Level 1	(6 + CON mod) x **3**	1 adventurer	4	1st level		Ability modifier
Level 2	(6 + CON mod) x **4**	2 adventurer	5	1st level		Ability modifier
Level 3	(6 + CON mod) x **5**	3 adventurer	5	3rd level		Ability modifier
Level 4	(6 + CON mod) x **6**	4 adventurer	6	3rd level	+1 to 3 abilities	Ability modifier
Level 5	(6 + CON mod) x **8**	4 adventurer 1 champion	6	5th level		2 x ability modifier
Level 6	(6 + CON mod) x **10**	4 adventurer 2 champion	7	5th level		2 x ability modifier
Level 7	(6 + CON mod) x **12**	4 adventurer 3 champion	7	7th level	+1 to 3 abilities	2 x ability modifier
Level 8	(6 + CON mod) x **16**	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	8	7th level		3 x ability modifier
Level 9	(6 + CON mod) x **20**	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	8	9th level		3 x ability modifier
Level 10	(6 + CON mod) x **24**	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	9	9th level	+1 to 3 abilities	3 x ability modifier

Name:
Class: Rogue
Race:
Level: 1

STR:
CON:
DEX:
INT:
WIS:
CHA:

Initiative:
(Level + Dex mod)

AC:
(12 + Level + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis)

Physical Defense:
(12+ Level + middle mod of Str/Dex/Con)

Mental Defense:
(10+ Level + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha)

HP:
3 x (6 + Con mod)

Recoveries (probably 8):
Recovery Dice: 1d8 per level+ Con mod

Class Bonus to Ability Scores
As a rogue, you can add +2 to your Dexterity or Charisma, as long as it's not the same ability that you increased with your +2 racial bonus.

One Unique Thing:

Icon Relationships (3 points):

Backgrounds (10 points):

Rogue Basic Attack
At-will melee attack
    Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
    Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage
    Miss: Damage equal to class level

At-will ranged attack
    Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
    Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage
    Miss: Damage equal to class level

Rogue Features

Momentum

Many of the rogue's powers function only when the rogue has momentum.

You gain momentum by hitting an enemy with an attack.

You lose momentum when you are hit by an attack.

The default is that momentum powers let you keep momentum, but a few specify that you must *spend your momentum* to use them.

Sneak Attack

Once per round when you make a rogue melee weapon attack against an enemy who is also engaged with one or more of your allies, you deal +1d8 damage if your attack hits.

> *2nd level:* +1d10 damage.
> *4th level:* +2d10 damage.
> *6th level:* +3d10 damage.
> *8th level:* +5d10 damage.
> *10th level:* +7d10 damage.

Adventurer Feat: Your *sneak attack* ability also works the first round of combat against enemies with a lower initiative than you.

Champion Feat: Your *sneak attack* ability also works against enemies who are confused, dazed, or weakened.

Epic Feat: Once per battle when you miss with an attack that would have dealt sneak attack damage, replace the normal miss damage with your full sneak attack damage.

Rogue Class Talents

If you are a single-class rogue, choose three of the following class talents.

Lethal

Your critical hit range with rogue attacks against *wounded* enemies is 18+.

Adventurer Feat: One battle per day, as a quick action, you can choose to gain a +2 attack bonus the entire battle against *wounded* enemies.

Champion Feat: Critical hit range against wounded enemies improves to 16+.

Epic Feat: Any wounded enemy that misses a melee attack against you is weakened until the end of its next turn. @@new weakened

Shadow Walk

You gain the following at-will ability:

As a move action *before* you have used your standard action this turn, make a stealth check against the highest Mental Defense of any nearby enemy. If you succeed, remove yourself from play. At the start of your next turn, return anywhere nearby that you could have moved to normally in on your turn , dealing double damage with your first rogue attack that turn. (No monkeying around with delaying and such here: return on your initiative and take your turn.)

If you fail the stealth check, you can move normally instead of disappearing into the shadows, but you can't attempt to *shadow walk* again until your next turn.

Champion Feat: Twice per day, you can reroll the rogue attack that follows your use of *shadow walk*.

Epic Feat: Twice per day you can reappear from your shadow walk in a nearby location you wouldn't have been able to reach unimpeded physically; for instance, on the other side of a portcullis or door or high up a wall.

Gamemaster: Given our take on how backgrounds intersect with skill checks, what we're calling a stealth check here can play out differently in different scenes. Usually the player will be able to use Dexterity with their best background for sneaking around, but maybe in an odd case you'll decide that the check will rely on Intelligence because the rogue has to remember which shadow to use from the falling light of the burning ruby. Vary the mechanics to highlight the action of the story.

Smooth Talk

Once per day, convince your GM with an amazing line of patter while you are using social skills to speak or interact with NPCs associated with a particular icon. If the GM is convinced by your patter, roll a normal save (11+). If you

succeed, for the rest of the day you can function as if you have a 2-point positive relationship with the icon who seems to be in play. Thanks to your amazing gift of gab, for a short time, it's more or less true. (Note that these points replace any points you normally have with the icon rather than adding to them.)

Failure on the *smooth talk* save generally arouses suspicions.

Adventurer Feat: Smooth talk now only requires an easy save to use (6+).

Champion Feat: Success gives you a 3-point positive relationship.

Epic Feat: Even if you fail the save, you get a 2-point conflicted relationship with the icon because the people you're speaking with can't be sure.

Improved Sneak Attack

Your *sneak attack* damage is slightly better than other rogues. Use the following *sneak attack* bonus damage progression instead.

2nd level: +1d12 damage.
4th level: +2d12 damage.
6th level: +3d12 damage.
8th level: +5d12 damage.
10th level: +7d12 damage.

Adventurer Feat: Once per day as a free action, you can add your *sneak attack* damage to any hit against one target that would not otherwise have qualified for the damage.

Thievery

You have the Thief background (by any name that feels fun and engaging) at its full possible bonus, +5, without having to spend your normal background points on it.

In addition, at 3rd level, you gain the bonus power *thief's strike* (see page XX) in addition to your normal number of powers.

Tumble

You gain a +5 bonus to disengage checks, and you can make one disengage roll per enemy as a free action when you become engaged while moving, but you must stop the first time you fail any of those disengage checks.

In addition, if you start your turn engaged and you fail to disengage, your attempt to move away only counts as a quick action.

Adventurer Feat: One battle per day, as a free action, you can declare that you're a tumbling fool and automatically succeed on your first disengage check each turn.

1st Level Rogue owers

@@need adv feats for 1st level, 3rd level, attacks/powers

Evasive Strike
Melee Attack
At-Will
Target: One enemy
Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage, you pop free of the target if you wish.
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Champion Feat: If you drop the target with *evasive strike*, you can pop free from *all* foes instead.

Deadly Thrust
Melee Attack
At-Will
Target: One wounded enemy
Attack: Dexterity + Strength + Level vs. AC
Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage.
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Champion Feat: Add your Strength modifier to the miss damage.

Flying Blade
Ranged attack
At-Will

Special: You must use a small bladed weapon with this attack.
Target: One nearby creature
Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage, and if your attack roll is even and one of your allies is engaged with the target, add your *sneak attack* damage.
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

    Adventurer Feat: Hitting with *flying blade* does not expend your single use of sneak attack damage this round.
    Champion Feat: If you score a crit with this power, the target is also dazed until end of your next turn.

Roll With It
Momentum power
At-Will (once per round)
Interrupt action; requires *momentum*
Trigger: An attack that targets AC or PD hits you.
Effect: You take half damage from that attack.

Sure Cut
Melee Attack
At-Will
Special: You must have *momentum* and be able to deal your *sneak attack* damage to the target.
Target: One enemy
Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage.
Miss: Deal your *sneak attack* damage + damage equal to your level to the target.

Tumbling Strike
Melee Attack
At-Will
Always: You gain a +5 bonus to all disengage checks you make this turn. You can also move up to an enemy, make an attack against it, and then attempt to disengage from it in place of your , instead of using other actions before or after using this attack.

@@fix
Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage.
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

3rd Level Rogue Powers
Bleeding Strike
Melee Attack
At-Will
Target: One enemy
Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage, and if your natural attack roll was even, the target takes 1d4 ongoing damage per rogue level you have.
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Slick Feint
Melee attack
At-Will
Effect: You must be engaged with two or more enemies to use this power.
First Target: One enemy engaged with you
    Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD
    Hit: The target is dazed until the end of your next turn, and you get to make an improved attack against a second target.
        Second Target: A different enemy from the first target that is engaged with you
            Attack: Dexterity + Level +2 vs. AC
            Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage.
            Miss: Damage equal to your level.
    First Target Miss: Your attack action is over; the feint was a screw-up.

Thief's Strike
Note: This is a bonus 3rd level power for rogues with the thievery *class talent; other rogues can choose it if they like.*
Melee attack
At-Will
Target: One enemy
Special: This attack never deals *sneak attack* damage, but if the attack would qualify for that damage, you gain a +2 attack bonus with it.

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. PD
Hit: Half damage, and roll a normal save. If you succeed you can pickpocket an item from the target that they are not holding in their hands.
Miss: —

5th Level Rogue Attacks & Powers

Spiky Bastard
Daily
Quick action
You go all-out to hurt anyone who tries to get a piece of you. This battle, while you're using at least one bladed weapon, the first time each turn a creature makes a melee attack against you, it takes 1d3 damage per point of your Dexterity modifier. The damage won't interrupt the creature's attack, but it will hurt them at the same time they might be hitting you.

Swift Dodge
Momentum power
At-Will (once per round)
Interrupt Action; requires *momentum*
Trigger: You are hit by an attack against AC.
Effect: The attacker must reroll the attack.

Champion Feat: The power also triggers on an attack against PD.
Epic Feat: The attack reroll takes a –2 penalty.

7th Level Rogue Powers

Swift Riposte
Momentum attack
At-Will
Interrupt action; requires *momentum*
Effect: Once per round when you are targeted by a melee attack, you can *spend your momentum* to make a basic attack in response against your attacker. If your attack roll at least equals your attacker's roll, resolve your basic attack against that enemy before their attack against you

resolves. If your attack roll is lower, your attack has no effect, regardless if it hits or misses.
Special: Hitting with swift riposte does not gain momentum.

Champion Feat: If your attack crits, the enemy's attack misses.

@@need a non-momentum power

9th Level Rogue Powers
@@ new momentum power
@@another one as well

SORCERER

When the Empire was young, there were no sorcerers. Today, it seems they're everywhere. In the earliest ages, each icon held dominion over their own magic power. Only servants of the Archmage, for example, could use an Archmage's arcane secrets. But that time was many ages ago, and things are different now. Age by age, arcane and divine power has slipped from the icons' hands into the spells of mortals who control it as best they can . . . or simply let fly. Sorcerers are notoriously reckless with their spells. Wizards say that a sorcerer doesn't so much cast a spell as uncork it. Elves say you never talk to the same sorcerer twice, and dwarves say not even once.

Overview

Play Style: Sorcerers are self-taught genius freaks with an intuitive mastery of magic and possibly some brain damage. They tap into the icons' power with or without the icons' permission. Some are aligned with an icon, such as the lickspittle eunuch slaves of the Three, trained since before birth to be dragon sorcerers. Some are outlaws, such as a secret cult devoted to occult rituals, including initiation ceremonies that grant deathless and infernal power. Some sorcerers are simply one-off flukes resulting from astrological mismatches, early exposure to otherworldly forces, and other supernatural happenstance.

Since sorcerers are so variable, players should personalize their sorcerers freely. Change the names and fiction for your character's powers. Adjust the details of your powers to make them fit your character fiction better. If your sorcerer was cursed at birth to wield the power of the Lich King, maybe your *breath of the white dragon* spell is called *breath of the grave*. Now instead of looking like a blast of ice, the breath weapon effect looks like creepy fog that freezes everything, accompanied by the sound of your own death rattle. Same effect, unique fiction.

A sorcerer isn't the simplest class to play, but choosing whether you want to gather power or cast something *right now* isn't all that tough. Players who can handle dice swinginess may enjoy the sorcerer more. If you're not that type, steer clear of the more chaotic powers.

Ability Scores: Charisma is your most important asset. You get to decide whether your high Charisma represents a forceful personality or a winning personality.

Constitution is your second-choice ability score because the raw magic of sorcery relies on your personal endurance—your spells deal damage based on your Constitution.

Races: Given the Elf Queen's pre-eminence as a source of sorcerous magic, it's no surprise that both dark elves and high elves are quick to dip their souls in sorcery. Half-elves and humans are the other most commonly encountered sorcerers.

Backgrounds: Here are a few sorcerer backgrounds to get you started: tribal shaman, former child avatar, pirate captain, spell-arena gladiator, failed wizard, Shadow Port city guard, sahuagin hunter.

Icons: The sorcerous heritage talents below detail the six icons who are most likely to have sorcerous devotees.

Gear

First level sorcerers usually have a simple melee weapon, a few changes of clothing, a wand or staff they might occasionally pretend is magical, and other paraphernalia suggested by their backgrounds.

Sorcerers who have recently been ill and unable to risk their earnings start with 25 gp. Sorcerers who have been spiritually in-synch start with 1d6 x 10 gp.

Armor

Sorcerer Armor and AC

Type	Base AC	Atk Penalty
None	10	—
Light	10	—
Heavy	11	–2
Shield	+1	–2

Sorcerer Weapons

Lacking any special training, sorcerers use more casual weapons, such as short spears and shortbows.

As sorcerers come from a variety of backgrounds, they likewise may wield a variety of weapons. The weapons often look impressive, tricked out with magical charms and customized to intimidate foes. Anyone distracted by a sorcerer's weapon is missing the truth that it's not the point of the weapon that's going to kill them, it's the swirling ball of chaos that hits you when you step outside the weapon's range.

Sorcerer Melee Weapons

	One-Handed	Two-Handed
Small	1d4 dagger	1d6 staff
Light or Simple	1d6 shortsword	1d8 spear
Heavy or Martial	1d8 (–2) longsword	1d10 (–2) greatsword*

Sorcerer Ranged Weapons

	Thrown	Crossbow	Bow
Small	1d4 knife	1d4 hand axe	—
Light or Simple	1d6 javelin	1d6 light crossbow*	1d6 shortbow*
Heavy Martial	—	1d8 (–1 atk) heavy crossbow*	1d8 (–2 atk) longbow*

* A sorcerer usually needs at least one free hand to cast spells. It's easy to get a hand free from a weapon you're good with like a staff or a spear for the time it takes to cast a spell, but if you take a penalty for using a two-handed weapon, the penalty applies to your spells also.

Name:

Class: Sorcerer
Race:
Level: 1

STR:
CON:
DEX:
INT:
WIS:
CHA:

Initiative:
(Level + Dex mod)

AC:
(10 + Level + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis)

Physical Defense:
(11+ Level + middle mod of Str/Dex/Con)

Mental Defense:
(10+ Level + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha)

HP:
3 x (6 + Con mod)

Recoveries (probably 8):
Recovery Dice: 1d6 per level + Con mod

Class Bonus to Ability Scores
As a sorcerer, you can add +2 to your Charisma or to your Constitution, as long as it's not the same ability that you increased with your +2 racial bonus.

One Unique Thing:

Icon Relationships (3 points):

Backgrounds (6 points):

Sorcerer Basic Attack

At-will melee attack
   Attack: Strength + Level vs. AC
   Hit: WEAPON + Strength damage
   Miss: Damage equal to level

At-will ranged attack
   Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
   Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage
   Miss: —

Sorcerer Level Progression

Remember that as you level up, you don't have to choose the new spells that are provided at 3rd and 5th level; if you like the spells you've got, most of them can be upgraded by being chosen as higher-level spells.

Sorcerer Level	Total Hit Points	Total # Feats	1st level spell	3rd level spell	5th level spell	7th level spell	9th level spell	Level-up Ability Bonuses	Damage bonus from ability score
Level 1	(6 + CON mod) x **3**	1 adventurer	4	—	—	—	—		Ability modifier
Level 2	(6 + CON mod) x **4**	2 adventurer	5	—	—	—	—		Ability modifier
Level 3	(6 + CON mod) x **5**	3 adventurer	3	3	—	—	—		Ability modifier
Level 4	(6 + CON mod) x **6**	3 adventurer 1 champion	—	6	—	—	—	+1 to 3 abilities	Ability modifier
Level 5	(6 + CON mod) x **8**	3 adventurer 2 champion	—	3	4	—	—		2 x ability modifier
Level 6	(6 + CON mod) x **10**	4 adventurer 2 champion	—	—	7	—	—		2 x ability modifier
Level 7	(6 + CON mod) x **12**	4 adventurer 3 champion	—	—	3	5	—	+1 to 3 abilities	2 x ability modifier
Level 8	(6 + CON mod) x **16**	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	—	—	—	8	—		3 x ability modifier
Level 9	(6 + CON mod) x **20**	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	—	—	—	3	6		3 x ability modifier
Level 10	(6 + CON mod) x **24**	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	—	—	—	—	9	+1 to 3 abilities	3 x ability modifier

Sorcerer Keywords

Sorcerer spells share a number of spell keywords.

Breath Weapon

When you cast a spell with the *breath weapon* keyword, there's a good chance you'll be able to re-use it later in the battle. Each *breath weapon* spell lists the chance of re-using it during the same battle (usually 16+). Make the re-use roll at the start of each of your turns: success indicates that you can use that spell again that round as a standard action, if you wish. You don't get to stockpile uses—whether you use the spell again or not, you must make the re-use roll during the next round of the battle.

Some sorcerers actually breathe like dragons when they use *breath weapon* spells. Others treat the breath-weapon shtick as a metaphor and allow the spell to do the blasting. As always with magic, the visuals are up to you.

Adventurer Feat: Add +2 to each of your *breath weapon* re-use rolls during a battle.

Chain

When you attack with a *chain* spell and get a natual even roll, you can roll another attack against a different enemy within range. Keep on rolling attacks as long as you get even rolls and don't run out of new targets (each enemy can be targeted only once).

Players: If you're the player who has ridiculously bad dice luck, these powers are not for you unless you're the masochist who treasures the moment you forge the chain-of-pain by missing all available targets.

Random Energy

Some sorcerer spells deal damage of a random type. If it matters mechanically, use a d4 to determine which type of damage the spell deals. If it doesn't matter, because none of the targets have resistances or vulnerabilities to any particular energy, feel free to state the energy that seems right for the story, or roll it if you wish and the players can spare the time.

1: Cold

2: Fire

3: Lightning

4: Thunder

Sorcerer Features

All sorcerers share four general class features: Access to Wizardry, Dancing Lights, Gather Power, and Sorcerous Heritage Talents.

Access to Wizardry

Starting at 3rd level, you can take a wizard spell in place of a sorcerer spell that is 2 levels higher than it. For example, you can take a 1st-level wizard spell in place of a 3rd-level sorcerer spell.

Dancing Lights

All sorcerers can cast the *dancing lights* spell as a standard action. Unlike the wizard's *light* cantrip, the sorcerer's *dancing lights* spell produces a number of varicolored light globes that bloom within 5 to 30 feet of the sorcerer every two to five seconds. The sorcerer has very little control over the exact location or illumination provided by the lights, meaning that they can occasionally be used for dramatic plot purposes.

Gather Power

A sorcerer can spend a standard action to gather magical power, preparing themselves for casting a double-strength spell with their next standard action. Gathering power is loud and flashy, involving crackling lightning, rumbling thunder, and the flicker of magical light.

Gather Power: When a sorcerer gathers power, it does not count as casting a spell; you can gather power without taking opportunity attacks, for example.

In addition, because you spend your standard action to gather power, you generate a small magical benefit. Like many of your powers, this benefit is chaotic rather than perfectly reliable, so you must make a random check to see what benefit you get. Roll a d6 and consult the appropriate chart below.

Chaotic Benefit, Adventurer Tier (levels 1–4)
1–2: You gain a + 1 bonus to AC until the start of your next turn.

3–4: Deal damage equal to your level to all nearby *wounded* enemies.
5–6: Deal damage equal to your level to one nearby enemy.

Chaotic Benefit, Champion Tier (levels 5–7)
1–2: You gain a +1 bonus to AC and Physical Defense until the start of your next turn.
3–4: Deal damage equal to your level + your Charisma modifier to all nearby *wounded* enemies.
5–6: Deal damage equal to your level + your Charisma modifier to one nearby enemy.

Chaotic Benefit, Epic Tier (levels 8–10)
1–2: You gain a +1 bonus to all defenses until the start of your next turn.
3–4: Deal damage equal to your level + twice your Charisma modifier to all nearby *wounded* enemies.
5–6: Deal damage equal to your level + twice your Charisma modifier to one nearby enemy.

Gamemaster: We place sorcerer minis on top of one or more markers to show that they have gathered power and are waiting to spend it. But your sorcerer players can come up with their own props or humming electronics to show that they have gathered power to prepare for empowered casting.

Spending Power on Empowered Casting: After you have gathered power, you can use your next standard action to cast an empowered sorcerer spell. Empowered sorcerer spells have double the effect of a normal sorcerer spell. Normally this means that you simply double the damage the spell deals *on a hit or a miss*; don't roll double dice, just double the results. Sorcerer spells that have mainly non-damage effects specify what happens when you cast them empowered in the "Empowered Bonus" line.

If you decide not to use your next standard action to cast a spell, you lose the power you've gathered. You can use your next standard action to gather power again, but there's no such thing as powering up spells for multiple turns.

You can spend your move actions and quick actions any way you like after you gather power and before casting your next empowered spell. Yes, it's possible to perform the magical firefight trick of gathering power while hiding to the side of the cave entrance, then jumping into the cave opening on your next turn and blasting with the empowered spell.

Breath weapon spells add an extra wrinkle. Of course you can gather power the first time you cast a *breath weapon* spell in a battle. Later in the fight it's a question of whether you gathered power the turn before a *breath weapon* spell roll goes your way. You can be all ready with gathered power but roll too low to use the *breath weapon* spell, forcing you to cast a different spell with the gathered power.

Players: Most of your sorcerer spells are daily, but a few are at-will. If you run the math, you can see that casting all your daily spells as empowered spells essentially doubles their impact. But you don't have to specify what spell you are planning to cast while you gather power, so you can empower an at-will spell instead of a daily one if you judge that the situation no longer requires heavy thunder.

In general, waiting for the escalation die to increase by 1 or more before casting a double-damage spell is a good thing. But there will be cases when you need speed, not power, and that's when you'll want to cast your spell using one action instead of waiting to empower it.

Adventurer Feat: Once per battle, you can choose the chaotic benefit you want instead of rolling for it.
Champion Feat: Once per battle when the escalation die is 4+, you can gather power as a quick action.
Epic Feat: When you gather power, if the escalation die is 2+, you can roll two chaotic benefits. The benefits stack if you roll the same result twice.

Sorcerous Heritage Talents
Sorcerers possess innate talent for magic that is impulsive and chaotic where wizardry is

measured and studied. Sorcerers' inborn talent may come from their ancestors, from exposure to powerful rituals, from being raised near powerful magical sites, or from unique circumstances of a player's creation.

After centuries of cross-pollination between rival magical systems, modern sorcery blends elements from the traditions and power sources of six of the icons: the Archmage, Diabolist, Elf Queen, Great Gold Wyrm, Lich King, and the Three. All sorcerers juggle spells that once belonged solely to one or the other of the icons. Most sorcerers have strong magical links to one icon. Many sorcerers have sorcerous heritage links with multiple icons.

If you want your sorcerer to have an even stronger link to an icon that provides part of your sorcerous heritage, choose the *blood link* talent.

Sorcerer Class Talents

As a single-class sorcerer, you choose three sorcerer talents.

Arcane Heritage (Archmage)

Although magic is in the blood of every sorcerer, you have a greater understanding of magic than most sorcerers and even some wizards.

You gain a +2 bonus to a background that involves or suggests magical knowledge or talent.

You can also use one of your sorcerer spell choices to choose any wizard spell of the same level. You get only one such equal-level wizard spell at a time; all others have to be purchased using the 2-level penalty in the *Access to Wizardry* ability described above.

Adventurer Feat: Use your Charisma as the attack ability for the wizard spell you choose with *arcane heritage*.

Champion Feat: You can cast your wizard spells empowered as if they were sorcerer powers. Generally, empowering wizard spells only helps by doubling the damage, since wizard spells don't have natural empowered

advantages like some sorcerer spells. @@more sorcerer empowerments coming

Blood Link

Choose one of your sorcerous heritage talents. You gain 2 relationship points with the icon associated with that heritage; you choose whether those points are positive, conflicted, or negative. These points can add to your normal relationship points but you can't exceed the normal relationship maximums with them. For example, if you want the full strength *blood link* with the Diabolist, you'll want 2 points of negative or conflicted relationship, since a positive relationship with these villainous icons is limited to 1 point.

Chromatic Destroyer Heritage (The Three)

Your rolls to re-use *breath weapon* spells during a fight gain a +2 bonus.

Adventurer Feat: As a quick action at the start of each battle, you can choose one energy type from the following list to which you gain resistance 6+: acid, fire, lightning, or thunder.

Champion Feat: Once per day, turn a natural even attack roll with a *breath weapon* spell into a critical hit.

Epic Feat: Gain resistance 11+ against all *dragon's breath* weapon attacks. @@ something cool and epic related to dragons

Fey Heritage (Elf Queen)

When you cast a beneficial sorcerer spell that has only one target, roll a d3. You can affect that many nearby targets instead, counting yourself as one of the targets if you wish.

Adventurer Feat: You gain a +1 attack bonus against elves and monsters in the Elf Queen's sphere of influence. Use the monster tiles in Chapter 7 as a guide to the monsters touched by the Queen. *[[@apologies: not helpful to Escalation Edition players yet]]*

Champion Feat: Roll 2d3 for the targets affected with beneficial sorcerer spells instead of the 1d3 normally provided by *fey heritage*.

Epic Feat: You gain the racial ability of one of the three elf races (one you don't have already): *cruel* (drow), *highblood teleport* (high elf), or *elven grace* (wood elf).

Infernal Heritage (Diabolist)

Once per day, you can reroll a single sorcerer spell attack roll. If you do, you lose 1d4 hit points per level of the spell.

Adventurer Feat: You gain resistance 6+ to fire and to one other type of energy chosen from the following: acid, cold, lightning, psychic, thunder.

Champion Feat: Increase one of your resistances to 11+.

Epic Feat: You can use your *infernal heritage* ability twice per day.

Metallic Protector Heritage (Great Gold Wyrm)

When you gather power and your chaotic benefit increases your defenses, you can choose one nearby ally to gain the same defense bonus.

Adventurer Feat: The defensive bonus you gain from chaotic benefits (a result of 1–2) increases to +2.

Champion Feat: Add 1d12 to the damage you deal to all nearby *wounded* enemies with your chaotic benefits (on a result of 3–4).

Epic Feat: Add 2d12 to the damage you deal to a single nearby enemy of your choice with your chaotic benefits (on a result of 5–6).

Spell Fist

You can use ranged spells while engaged without taking opportunity attacks.

Adventurer Feat: When you miss with a sorcerer spell against an enemy you are engaged with, add your Charisma modifier to the damage you deal. At 5th level, add double your Charisma modifier. At 8th level, add triple your Charisma modifier.

Champion Feat: Once per battle, you can include one enemy engaged with you as an additional target of any attack spell you cast that targets other enemies.

Epic Feat: Once per day when you cast an empowered spell, each enemy engaged with you becomes an additional target of that spell if it's not already targeted by the spell.

Undead Remnant Heritage (Lich King)

You have negative energy resistance 6+ and gain a +1 attack bonus against undead. If you wish, you can swap negative energy damage in as one of your random energy damage types.

Adventurer Feat: Subtract 1 from your number of recoveries; you gain a +2 bonus to death saves.

Champion Feat: The negative energy resistance increases to 11+, and the attack bonus against undead increases to +2.

Epic Feat: If you put out one of your eyes and cut off one of your hands, you gain a +1 bonus to all attacks.

Gamemaster: Severely punish a character who thinks it's okay to then regrow the eye and restore the hand.

If your campaign doesn't include a Lich King like ours, figure out another penalty flag your player will evidently be happy to fly.

Rob says: *We put this epic feat into the game to make fun of the people we know and/or play with who will do just about anything to get a +1 attack bonus. If your group is less obsessed with math and more interested in story, you'll want to load this feat with all manner of "I see dead people" storylines, Lich King complications, and obligatory quests into the over- and underworld realm of the ghost dragons.*

1st Level Spells

Breath of the White Dragon

Close-quarters spell
Daily
Targets: 1d2 nearby enemies in a group; *breath weapon*
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 2d6 + Constitution cold damage.

Miss: Half damage.

>*3rd level spell:* 4d6 damage.
>
>*5th level spell:* 4d10 damage.
>
>*7th level spell:* 7d10 damage.
>
>*9th level spell:* 10d12 damage.

Breath Weapon: For the rest of the battle, roll a d20 at the start of each of your turns; on a 16+, you can use *breath of the white dragon* that turn if you wish.

Burning Hands

Close-quarters spell

At-Will

Targets: Two nearby enemies in a group OR all enemies engaged with you

Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD

Hit: 1d8 + Constitution fire damage.

Miss: Damage equal to your level + any damage die that rolls an 8.

>*3rd level spell:* 2d8 damage.
>
>*5th level spell:* 3d8 damage.
>
>*7th level spell:* 5d8 damage.
>
>*9th level spell:* 9d8 damage.

>**Adventurer Feat:** If any *burning hands* natural attack roll is 16+, you can choose a third nearby target for the spell.
>
>**Champion Feat:** Increase each damage die by one size; d8s become d10s.

Chaos Bolt

Ranged spell

At-Will

Target: One nearby enemy OR one far away enemy, but with a –2 attack penalty

Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD

Hit: 1d8 + Constitution *random energy* damage, and if the attack roll was even, you gain a chaotic benefit as if you had *gathered power*.

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

>*3rd level spell:* 3d8 damage.
>
>*5th level spell:* 5d8 damage.
>
>*7th level spell:* 7d8 damage.
>
>*9th level spell:* 9d8 damage.

>**Adventurer Feat:** You don't take the –2 penalty for attacking a far away enemy.

Lightning Fork

Ranged spell

Recharge 16+ after battle

Target: One nearby enemy; *chain spell*

Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD

Hit: 3d6 + Constitution lightning damage.

Miss: Half damage.

>*3rd level spell:* 7d6 damage.
>
>*5th level spell:* 6d12 damage.
>
>*7th level spell:* 10d10 damage.
>
>*9th level spell:* 2d8 x 10 damage.

Chain Spell: Each time you make a natural even attack roll, you can attack a different target with the spell.

>**Adventurer Feat:** Once per battle, reroll one of your *lightning fork* attack rolls.
>
>**Champion Feat:** If you miss all targets with *lightning fork*, you don't expend it.
>
>**Epic Feat:** The recharge roll for *lightning fork* is now 11+.

Resist Energy

Ranged spell

Recharge 16+ after battle

Target: You or one nearby ally

>**Empowered Bonus:** Add an additional target.

Effect: Until the end of the battle, the target gains resist 6+ to the energy type of your choice: cold, fire, lightning, thunder.

>*3rd level spell:* Choose two types of energy the target gains resistance to.
>
>*5th level spell:* Resistance is now 11+.
>
>*7th level spell:* Affects two targets, or four when empowered.
>
>*9th level spell:* The recharge roll for *resist energy* is now 11+.

Scorching Ray

Ranged spell
At-Will
Target: One nearby or far away enemy
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 1d6 + Constitution fire damage, and if the natural attack roll is even, the target also takes 1d6 ongoing fire damage.
Miss: Fire damage equal to your level.

> *3rd level spell:* 3d6 damage, and 1d6 ongoing.
> *5th level spell:* 5d6 damage, and 2d6 ongoing.
> *7th level spell:* 7d6 damage, and 3d6 ongoing.
> *9th level spell:* 9d6 damage, and 4d6 ongoing.

3rd Level Spells

Breath of the Green

Close-quarters spell
Daily
Targets: 1d3 nearby enemies in a group; *breath weapon*
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 10 + Constitution ongoing poison damage.
Miss: 5 ongoing poison damage.

> *5th level spell:* 15 + Con ongoing poison damage; 10 ongoing on a miss.
> *7th level spell:* 25 + Con ongoing poison damage; 15 ongoing on a miss.
> *9th level spell:* 40 + Con ongoing poison damage; 20 ongoing on a miss.

Breath Weapon: For the rest of the battle, roll a d20 at the start of each of your turns; on a 16+, you can use *breath of the green* that turn if you wish.

Chaos Pulse

Ranged spell
At-Will
Target: One random nearby enemy
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 3d10 + Constitution *random energy* damage
Even Miss: Half damage.
Odd Miss: Damage equal to your level.

> *5th level spell:* 5d10 damage.
> *7th level spell:* 7d10 damage.
> *9th level spell:* 9d10 damage.

Echoing Thunder

Ranged spell
At-Will
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 3d6 + Constitution thunder damage, and the first enemy that hits you with a melee attack before the start of your next turn takes 2d6 thunder damage. (An empowered spell does not double this aftershock damage.)
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

> *5th level spell:* 5d6 damage, and 2d6 damage from aftershock.
> *7th level spell:* 7d6 damage, and 3d6 damage from aftershock.
> *9th level spell:* 9d6 damage, and 4d6 damage from aftershock.

> **Champion Feat:** Aftershock damage is now doubled when *echoing thunder* is empowered.

5th Level Spells

Breath of the Void

Close-quarters spell
Daily
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD
Hit: 10d6 + Constitution negative energy damage, and the target moves down 2d6 points in initiative order, to a minimum of 1.
Miss: Half damage.

> *7th level spell:* 10d10 damage.
> *9th level spell:* 2d8 x 10 damage.

Breath Weapon: For the rest of the battle, roll a d20 at the start of each of your turns; on a 16+, you can use *breath of the void* that turn if you wish.

Calling the Blood

Close-quarters spell

Daily

Effect: Roll a d6 to randomly select one of the six sorcerous-heritage icons:

> **1:** Archmage
>
> **2:** The Three
>
> **3:** Diabolist
>
> **4:** Elf Queen
>
> **5:** Great Gold Wyrm
>
> **6:** Lich King

You gain some surprising or bizarre magical effect associated with the power of that icon to assist you. The effect is entirely up to the GM, though the immediate impact of the spell should always be favorable for you. The long-term consequences of randomly invoking the power of an icon that may be an enemy might not be favorable for you, and should be played for narrative interest by the GM, particularly if the impact of the spell was huge for you. Since this is a daily spell, sizeable impact is fine, but don't award any extra effect for empowered casting, especially since the spell can be cast effectively out of combat.

The Queen's Shadows

Ranged spell

Daily

Special: Once you have cast this spell in a battle, you can cast it at-will for the rest of that battle.

Target: One nearby enemy

Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD

Hit: 8d6 + Charisma psychic damage, and if the natural attack roll is even, you can teleport a short distance to a location of your choice.

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

> *7th level spell:* 8d10 damage.
>
> *9th level spell:* 10d12 damage.

Three Dooms

Ranged spell

Recharge 16+ after battle

Target: One nearby enemy; *chain spell*

Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD

Hit: 2d4 x 10 *random energy* damage, and you take damage (of the same type) equal to the unmodified dice roll (2d4, 2d6, or 2d8).

Miss: Half damage, and you still take *random energy* damage equal to the unmodified dice roll.

> *7th level spell:* 2d6 x 10 damage.
>
> *9th level spell:* 2d8 x 10 damage.

Chain Spell: Each time you make a natural even attack roll, you can attack a different target.

Unearthly Glamour

Ranged spell

Daily

Special: No benefit for empowered casting.

Effect: You gain a +5 bonus to all Charisma skill checks for the next five minutes. If you fail a Charisma skill check during this time, however, anyone you were attempting to convince or influence with the check is freaked out or disgusted by the supernatural glamour attached to you and has extremely negative reactions to you.

> *7th level spell*: The effect lasts for 1 hour.
>
> *9th level spell:* The effects lasts for 4 hours.

7th Level Spells

Breath of the Black

Close-quarters spell

Daily

Target: One nearby enemy; *breath spell*

Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD

Hit: 10d6 + Constitution negative energy damage, and the target moves down 2d6 points in initiative order, to a minimum of 1.

Miss: Half damage.

> *7th level spell:* 10d10 damage.
>
> *9th level spell:* 2d8 x 10 damage.

Breath Spell: For the rest of the battle, roll a d20 at the start of each of your turns; on a 16+, you can use *breath of the black* this turn if you wish.

@@ADDITIONAL SPELLS

7th Breath of the Red, Imperial Purge

9th Breath of the Blue, Golden Dawn

WIZARD

Wizards are the masters of arcane energy. They use geometry, symbology, occult numerology, and a complex grammatical system to describe magic and thereby control it. They fill their heavy, locked spellbooks with crabbed writing, secret codes, and convoluted designs.

Each wizard belongs to a school or at least a lineage, traced back from student to master. Today, many wizard schools are aligned directly with the Archmage, but most are independent. Thanks to interlocking treaties among schools, most wizards from rival schools are sworn to respect to each other. This restriction, however, seems to stoke competition rather than quell it.

Many 'book-wizards' are more-or-less cowards who would rather study reality than experience it. The wizards that go adventuring are the rare sort who respond to mortal danger with greater focus rather than panic.

Play style: Our wizard is designed for experienced players who like a bit of improvisation. Most of the wizard's spells can only be used once day so timing matters. If you want to play the simplest possible wizard, choose from the Abjuration, Evocation, Familiar, and Empowered Wizardry talents. To play as the flexible spellcaster who finds unique and amusing answers to problems, choose Cantrip Mastery, Vance's Polysyllabic Verbalizations, and High Arcana.

Races: @

Ability scores: @

Backgrounds: @

Icons: @

Spells

Wizards usually learn their spells from books but we're not the type of game that wants to go into the details of getting hold of spell books. Feel free to enhance the flavor of your game by building plots around spellbooks.

However you want your wizard to learn spells, you can handle a certain number of spells each day. They don't have to be the same spells each day. Every time you get a full rest, you can go ahead and swap around your spells. Go ahead and assume that all the wizard spells are part of the basic spellbook package, swap them in and out as you will. But when there are other spells you want to learn your GM can figure out what adventures are required to track down the spellbooks that hold the new spells.

Unlike nearly all other characters' attacks, wizards' attack spells do not add an ability score modifier to damage. Wizards' spells power themselves. The magic that deals the damage is entirely in the spell. You'll still use your Intelligence as the ability score that determines whether you hit (unless you're casting an auto-hit spell like *magic missile*), but the damage comes entirely from the spell.

Wizard Level Progression

@As with other spellcasters, your new spells at 3rd and 5th level can be upgraded versions of spells you can learn at lower levels. Quite often they'll need to be, we aren't aiming to make you choose all-new spells as you rise in level, you'll often use more powerful versions of spells you already wield.

Gear

@@

Wizard Armor and AC

Type	Base AC	Atk Penalty
None	*10*	*-*
Light	*10*	*-*
Heavy	11	-2
Shield	+1	-2

Weapons

Wizards might prefer you to think that they never use weapons, but sometimes they're cornered and forced into it. In these tough situations, they resort to daggers, batons, staffs, and other relatively minor weapons. Often these weapons serve double duty as magical tools or ritual implements, which helps wizards maintain their reputation as too good for physical combat.

Wizard Melee Weapons

	One-Handed	**Two-Handed**
Small	1d4 dagger	1d6 staff
Light or Simple	1d6 (–2) shortsword	1d8 (–2) spear*
Heavy or Martial	1d8 (–5) longsword	1d10 (–5) greatsword*

Wizard Ranged Weapons

	Thrown	**Crossbow**	**Bow**
Small	1d4 knife	1d4 hand	--
Light or Simple	1d6 (–2) javelin	1d6 (–2 atk) light*	1d6 (–2 atk) shortbow*
Heavy Martial	--	1d8 (–4 atk) heavy*	1d8 (–5 atk) longbow*

* A wizard needs at least one free hand to cast spells. It's easy to get a hand free from a weapon you're good with like a staff for the time it takes to cast a spell, but if you take a penalty for using a two-handed weapon the penalty applies to your spells also.

Wizard Level	Total Hit Points	Total # Feats	1st level spell	3rd level spell	5th level spell	7th level spell	9th level spell	Level-up Ability Bonuses	Damage bonus from ability score
Level 1	(6 + CON mod) x **3**	1 adventurer	5	--	--				Ability modifier
Level 2	(6 + CON mod) x **4**	2 adventurer	6	--	--				Ability modifier
Level 3	(6 + CON mod) x **5**	3 adventurer	3	4					Ability modifier
Level 4	(6 + CON mod) x **6**	4 adventurer	2	6				+1 to 3 abilities	Ability modifier
Level 5	(6 + CON mod) x **8**	4 adventurer 1 champion	1	4	4				2 x ability modifier
Level 6	(6 + CON mod) x **10**	4 adventurer 2 champion		2	8				2 x ability modifier
Level 7	(6 + CON mod) x **12**	4 adventurer 3 champion		1	4	5		+1 to 3 abilities	2 x ability modifier
Level 8	(6 + CON mod) x **16**	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic			3	8			3 x ability modifier
Level 9	(6 + CON mod) x **20**	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic			1	5	6		3 x ability modifier
Level 10	(6 + CON mod) x **24**	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic				3	9	+1 to 3 abilities	3 x ability modifier

Name:

Class: Wizard

Race:

Level: 1

STR:
CON:
DEX:
INT:
WIS:
CHA:

Initiative:
(Level + Dex mod)

AC:
(10 + Level + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis)

Physical Defense:
(10+ Level + middle mod of Str/Dex/Con)

Mental Defense:
(12+ Level + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha)

HP:
3 x (6 + Con mod)

Recoveries (probably 8):
Recovery Dice: 1d6 per level+ Con mod

Class Bonus to Ability Scores
As a wizard, you can add +2 to your Intelligence or to your Wisdom, as long as it's not the same ability that you increased with your +2 racial bonus.

One Unique Thing:

Icon Relationships (3 points):

Backgrounds (8 points):

Wizard Basic Attack
At-will Melee Attack
Attack: Strength + Level vs. AC
Hit: WEAPON + Strength damage
Miss: --

Wizard Basic Ranged Attack
Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage
Miss: --

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Wizard Class Features

Cantrips

Every wizard can cast three of the following cantrips per day. You don't have to memorize or choose them beforehand, you just cast three on the fly. (Wizards with the Cantrip Mastery talent can cast ten, and may be able to get more bang out of a casting if the GM is amused.)

Each cantrip takes a standard action to cast as a ranged spell. (Taking the Cantrip Mastery talent allows you to cast cantrips as a quick action.)

As you can see from the shorthand descriptions, we're not hugely concerned with pinning down exactly what wizards are getting out of these minor spells. They're meant to capture the fact that wizards are the most skillful practitioners of magic in the world, capable of offhand effects anyone else would have to accomplish through hard work or not at all.

The flavor notes attached to the cantrips below are how Rob often phrases magic in his game, in which many magical effects are accomplished by supernatural servitors. If you're more comfortable with standard magical phrasings, by all means use those instead, each wizard gets to determine how their magic looks.

At the adventurer tier, levels 1-3, most cantrips last 10-60 minutes, plus ten minutes per wizard level. The GM rolls and the wizard becomes aware that their cantrip is about to end a couple minutes before it's done.

At the champion tier, levels 4-6, most cantrips last 1-6 hours.

At the epic tier, levels 7-10, cantrips last between 2-12 hours.

Alarm: Creates a minor watch-sprite that can be instructed to scream if someone comes through an area or touches an object. Watch-sprites are notoriously stupid and sleepy, but with the right talking-to they might stay focused for the duration of the spell. At higher levels you might get actual fanged little spirits buzzing back and forth serving as visual and actual deterrents.

Arcane Mark: Creates a magical sigil on an object or person that lasts for 1d6 hours. Wizards swear that all their arcane marks are visible to everyone, but people foolish enough to play cards with wizards should beware.

Ghost Sound: An exception to the duration rule, ghost sound creates false noises emanating from somewhere nearby. Like an exceptionally good version of throwing your voice, if your voice could create a wide variety of sounds. A favorite of tricksters. Guards and watchmen really should learn that you can't trust everything you hear, but really, what choice do they have? You can treat attempted distractions as DC 15 challenges or let them succeed automatically if they're truly imaginative.

Knock: Locked door? No problem. *Knock* like a wizard and magical servitor three to four times as big as your closed fist swarm around the door and punch or push it open, depending on whether you want to be quiet or announce your presence. But that's assuming you can roll succeed with Intelligence check of the environment's DC using an appropriate magical background.

Light: A fairly wide and consistent field of light, maybe as much as 30' in diameter. Could just be a glow from the wizard's staff, could be light elementals flitting in quick circles. Not bright enough to dazzle anyone or to send underworld dwellers into seizures.

Mage Hand: A small telekinetic effect. At the basic cantrip level it's a momentary effect lasting only a round. Sometimes referred to as mage-slap when higher level wizards deliver rebuffs to their underlings. At best it's about half as strong as the wizard's own best hand. At worst it's half as strong as the wizard when they're suffering from a bad fever.

Mending: Summons a variety of tiny (hand-sized and smaller) magical sprites who swarm over the broken object attempting to mend it for 1-6 rounds. Small-scale repairs like torn wineskins, muddy clothing, a broken handgrip on a sword, stuff that anyone could fix with two to four hours of devoted work, that gets handled in seconds. More elaborate repairs to

complicated objects, that's a more difficult task that the GM can feel free to make difficult and certainly only available to wizards who choose Cantrip Mastery.

Message: Sends a one or two sentence message to another person. Distance depends on the level of the sender. In the adventurer range, levels 1-4, it's not that far, a message can be sent to the other side of the courtyard, and by 4th level, perhaps the other side of the city. Levels 5-7 can handle the other side of the city and partway across the Midland Sea. Levels 7-10 can go all the way across the sea, farther with magical effort if the GM feels like the plot can handle rituals that power things up.

Prestidigitation: Magic tricks like cheaty-juggling, pulling coins out of ears, small illusions created by dancing sprites, the basic equipment of the stage-casting. One casting usually gives you a minute of fun. Nowhere near as much real world force as mage hand.

Echo Spells

Spells described as at-will *echo* spells have a different usage pattern than other at-will spells. You can only cast an echo spell with your next standard action after casting a daily spell. The mana generated by your daily spell helps power the echo spell. Your last daily spell is your last chance to use an echo spell, so it's wise to know at least one normal at-will spell.

Ritual Magic

Wizards can cast their spells as rituals (see page XX).

Feats for any Wizard

A few feats are available to any wizard regardless of their talent choices.

Champion Feat: *(Spell & Spell Again)* Two of the spells you've chosen can be the same spell. You can even choose to possess that spell at two different levels.

Wizard Talents

Single Class Wizard: Choose 3 of the following Wizard Talents.

Abjuration

Whenever you cast a daily wizard spell, you gain a +2 AC bonus until the end of your next turn. You can phrase the magical effect causing the protection as you like. Many abjurers create shimmering shields of magical force, others have swarming magical servitors blocking attacks.

(Adventurer Feat) The bonus also applies to your PD and MD.

(Champion Feat) If you are a multiclass character, the bonus also triggers when you cast a spell from your other class. @

Cantrip Mastery

You can cast up to ten cantrips a day, of fewer if your GM decides that you hog the spotlight too much with constant cantrip tricks. You've been warned. If you or your GM create new cantrips, you can probably learn them along with the standard cantrips mentioned above, assuming you can track down someone to teach you or a written version.

Unlike normal wizards, who use a standard action to cast a cantrip, you can cast a cantrip as a quick action.

If you want to do something particularly cunning or surprising with one of your cantrips and the GM isn't sure whether you could pull off that use of the spell, roll a normal save to cast the spell the way you envision it.

Additionally, if you feel like using one of your higher level spell slots (3r or higher), you can choose 1 cantrip per spell slot you've given up to have a once-per-day much greater related effect.

Vance's Polysyllabic Verbalizations

Most wizards use short incantations for their spells so they can mutter them quickly under the worst of circumstances. But some wizards glory in casting spells with elaborate titles and lofty vocabularies. If casting a mere "fireball" spell, isn't enough, if what you really want to cast is *Rodrigo's Scintillating Plasms*, this is the talent for you.

When you take this class talent, you need to rename each of your daily and recharge spells in

the most over-the-top and highfalutin' style you can muster. (You can also rename your at-will spells if you like, but they *generally* won't get any mechanical advantages from being renamed.) Better yet, write down two or three full-blown and appropriate names for each spell and use whichever one suits the occasion.

In order to use the talent, you *must* use an additional quick action to cast your spell. Then proclaim the spell's full name, loud and proud. What do you get out of this? Well, you can't be sure. Your GM will add some small bonus effect which fits the spell, or fits the way you enunciated its name this time around. Whatever they choose, they're aiming to add to the storytelling power of the situation. Normally the bonus effects aren't doing precisely what the spell normally accomplishes.

Ideally the extra effect suits the name of the spell. Ideally the GM never exactly repeats the same bonus effect. Ideally when you and the GM trust each other you eventually get to suggest bonus effects and the GM goes along. And finally, on rare occasions, particularly when your spell misses horribly, the extra effect might not be entirely to your advantage.

A couple examples, you say? *Charm person*, cast as *Ruba's Loquacious Salutation*, might cause the target to prattle incessantly to you as if you were their friend even if they were not hit by the spell. As well as affording you, the GM, with an opportunity to prattle willy-nilly at your players, you might be able to impart valuable information hidden within the blather.

Cast as *The Headmaster's Disciplinary Imperative*, the same *charm person* spell might cause the target to confess, albeit more reluctantly, to actions they may or may not regret and the PCs may or may not regret hearing.

Consider the humble first level utility spell, *hold portal*. Cast as *The Iron Sheik's Barred Sanctum*, the spell might spontaneously summon simulacrums of armed guards who harass and further slow down anyone attempting to force the door. The next time the spell is cast, by the same name, those attempting

to force the door might instead be taunted by sound effects of whatever they most want to obtain seeming to come through the portal.

Sleep, cast as Gorgon's Rocky Slumbers, might put someone hit by it into a most uncomfortable sleep, tossing and turning and twitching and rolling. Perhaps they'll roll off the ledge and dash themselves to the rocks below. Perhaps they'll wake up damaged or temporarily weakened by truly awful sleep.

Getting the most out of this class talent requires collaboration between GM and player. And perhaps some tolerance from the other players. Let us know how it goes.

For further examples of spell names, look up Jack Vance's Dying Earth books, Robin D. Laws's RPG *The Dying Earth*, or the RPG *Ars Magica*.

Evocation

Once per *round* you can reroll the damage from one of your spells that targets Physical Defense. Use the higher damage roll.

PLAYERS: This class talent only adds to the group's play experience if you use the dice conventions (see page XX) that whittle the number of dice you roll down to two or three. If you're the player who insists on rolling *all* the dice all the time, the Gamemaster will be forced to take this talent away from you to keep the game moving.

Familiar

Choose a familiar from the following short list of possible familiars… or work something out with your GM if you want to be special and unique and have a familiar that other people don't. As usual, the story could be partly in your control: if you really wanted to be the only wizard in the world with a cat familiar, the GM might be able to create an interesting story out of that fact…. But you should expect the other feline-loving wizards to be lining up for a shot at you.

Your familiar might be a natural animal or it might be a partially magical being. It's going to be about as intelligent as a normal person. Most of the time it sticks close to your body. Once per day/heal-up you can try to get your familiar to

roam around and scout for you or accomplish something separate from you that takes a few rounds, but once you've used your roaming familiar it sticks by you the rest of the day.

All familiars give their masters a +2 bonus on Wisdom checks to notice things, see enemies, and perceive danger and the like. Familiars keep their eyes open even if their masters are busy wizarding. Familiars also keep watch while their masters sleep, although they're famously unreliable when their master dozes too long.

Natural Familiars: Cat, Dog, Frog, Hawk, Raven, Serpent, Spider, Toad

Wild vs. Known: Our suggested flavor is that many familiars are animals associated with humans and cities. Creatures like raccoons and prairie dogs could be familiars, but might be more appropriate for wizards associated with the High Druid rather than just any wizard.

Spirit Familiars: Some wizards want small spirits or ghostlings or homunculi as familiars. Seems like a fine idea to us. Just remember that they can't get away with tricks like slipping through cracks in the ceiling more than once per day. And if you're a sadistic GM, feel free to use the Diabolist's or Lich King's magic to turn spirit familiars against their owners once or twice in a campaign.

High Arcana

@@high arcana has too many pieces and will have some broken out elsewhere

You have studied dimensions of magic that other wizards can't even perceive. You can cast rituals in rounds rather than hours, can cast *counter-magic* once per battle, and gain bonuses with a few sophisticated spells that are difficult for lesser wizards to master.

Fast Ritual Casting: Unlike lesser wizards who must spend hours casting rituals, you can cast full rituals (see page XX) in 1d3+1 rounds! As with standard rituals, your rituals are not meant to replace combat spells; they're a means of acquiring and improvising wondrous magical effects rather than a means of inflicting damage and conditions.

Counter-magic: Once per battle, as a free action when an enemy casts a spell OR uses a magical ability (GM, this one's up to you), you can attempt to cancel their spell by rolling a skill check using your best magical background; the GM gets to choose which ability score seems relevant if for some reason Intelligence doesn't seem right. If your check beats the enemy's first attack roll (or a d20 roll using the same bonus as their normal attacks if the spell/magic ability isn't associated with a new attack roll) your *counter-magic* has canceled their spell. The enemy loses the action they were using to cast the spell. If your foe's spell had a limited number of uses, the enemy regains use of the spell 1d4 rounds later.

High Arcana Improvements: The list of spells improved by your High Arcana talent includes *invisibility*, *shield*, *meteor swarm*, and *teleport*.

Mage of Echoes

Once per battle you can cast one of your at-will *echo* spells without having cast a daily spell first. @@revise

WIZARD SPELLS

We'll start by listing the oddity in the wizard's spell list, the utility spell slot that automatically gets new spells added to its possibilities as you memorize the utility spell at higher levels.

Utility Spell Slot: 1st Level

Memorizing the utility spell as one of of your spells for the day lets you choose from a number of spells. The variety of spells goes up as you rise in level, you have access to all the utility spells of the level you have memorized and below and can cast them all at the level of the spell slot you have used.

1st: disguise self

1st: feather fall

1st: hold portal

5th: rope trick

7th: scrying

9th: @@more coming

If you memorize this spell slot at 1st level, you can cast one of the following three spells: *disguise self, feather fall, hold portal*, useful spells

that wizards haven't quite been able to turn into cantrips. But they're sure trying. You don't have to decide ahead of time which one of the utility spells you will cast. If you wish you can memorize the utility spell slot more than once and cast more than one of the utility spells.

Players: By their nature, utility spells are not balanceable. They don't deal damage or increase your Armor Class. How much mileage can you make out of disguise self? Maybe a lot, it's partly up to you. Disguise self can let a 1st-level wizard do things that no amount of damage could accomplish. The beauty of a spell without stats is that it encourages you to be clever.

(Adventurer Feat) By memorizing the spell once you can cast a utility spell twice a day.

(Champion Feat) Ditto, but three times a day.

Utility: Disguise Self

1st level Daily

Close-quarters Spell

An extremely effective magical disguise. Handles only appearance to begin with. Doesn't make you bigger or smaller. Not so effective at impersonating a specific person but excellent for hiding your own features behind the bland features of another person or race.

Lasts ten minutes

3rd Level: Lasts an hour

5th Level: Also handles smell

7th Level: Also handles voice and rough mannerisms.

9th Level: Also handles voice.

Utility: Feather Fall

Daily

Close-quarters spell

Special: Free action

@@castable as free action while falling.

Arrests your fall, lets you glide down the ground for a round or two. If you're falling simply ridiculous distances the GM may decide that your feather is getting less and less fluffy, upping the tension until you plummet at normal speed unless you've done something about it. Higher level versions get rid of the problem of falling too far.

Utility: Hold Portal

Daily

Ranged Spell

Cast on a sturdy door.

For 10 minutes, adventurer-tier creatures can't get through the door without extraordinary resources. Champion creatures can batter it down, and epic creatures walk right through.

3rd Level: Lasts an hour. Adventurer-tier creatures are stymied, and even champion creatures generally require extensive effort to break through. Epic creatures notice that the now-busted door had magic on it.

5th Level: Champion tier creatures take a long time to force the door open. It takes actual effort for an epic creature to force it open, but they'll manage it in a few rounds.

7th level: Champion tier creatures are almost stymied. They'll have to get lucky to get through. It takes epic tier creatures a long time to get through.

9th level: Now epic-tier creatures curse and pry but can't the thing open for a long time, if at all.

Utility: Rope Trick

5th level daily

Ranged Spell

Requires several rounds to cast…

An out of combat spell that creates an interplanar pocket a few feet up in the air (usually at the end of a rope) that the entire party can climb up into to. Good when you're due for a long rest but don't have an obvious place to hide.

Technical details? Boring… Go with a PC party-sized space, usually undetectable, but not much good for spying out of. The effect ends when anyone climbs out or attacks or casts spells out of the pocket or after five or eight hours.

Higher level versions last longer or come with saunas, baths, excellent food and soft beds. A well-rested adventurer is a happy and efficient adventurer, so indulge yourself in a 7th level *rope trick*.

Utility: Scrying

7th level daily

Ranged Spell

This the trick wizards use to get information they shouldn't be able to get, peering in on other people's lives for a short period time, usually no more than ten minutes at a time. It's not infallible and there are areas that may be warded at the GM's discretion. The wizard has to have touched the person they wish to spy on in the last month. At 9th level that's extended to a year.

You'd like to protect yourself from scrying? Use this spell as a ritual.

Players: Yes, if someone is scrying on you, they got near enough to touch you. Pleasant dreams.

1st Level Spells

Acid Arrow

Daily Ranged Spell

Targets: 1 creature

Attack: Intelligence + *Spell Level* vs. PD

    Hit: 4d8 acid damage, and 5 ongoing acid damage.

    Miss: 5 ongoing acid damage, and you regain the spell with a short rest after the battle

3rd Level: 4d10 acid damage and 10 ongoing (hit or miss)

5th Level: 7d10 acid damage and 15 ongoing (hit or miss)

7th Level: 10d12 acid damage and 20 ongoing ""

9th Level: 3d6 x 10 acid and 25 ongoing ""

Blur

Daily

Ranged Spell

1 target

For the rest of this battle, attacks miss the target of this spell 20% of the time.

3rd Level: 25%

5th Level: 30%

7th Level: 33%

9th Level: 33%, and there is a 50% chance when you cast it that you can cast it on two targets.

Charm Person

Daily

Ranged Spell

Target: 1 nearby creature with 40 hp or less

Special: Cannot be cast in combat or on a target that has rolled initiative to fight

Attack: Intelligence + *Spell Level* vs. Mental Defense

Hit: Target believes you are their friend until you or your allies take hostile action against them (attacking their normal allies is OK). Starting combat or ordering the target to attack their usual friends give them a normal save to break out each round.

Miss: No effect; spell is not detectable by most others unless you miss by 4 or roll a 1, in which case everyone knows what you tried and will usually be angry about it.

(3rd level spell) Targets up to 64 hp

(5th level spell) Targets up to 96 hp

(7th level spell) Targets up to 160 hp

(9th level spell) Targets up to 266 hp

PLAYERS: This is a spell that the wizard spell list and bard spell list share outright.

Command

At-will *echo*

Ranged Spell

@

Target: one nearby enemy with 64 or fewer hp

Attack: Wisdom + *Spell Level* vs. MD

Hit: Target is weakened until end of your next turn.

Natural even miss: Target is dazed until end of your next turn.

(3rd level spell) Targets up to 96 hp

(5th level spell) Targets up to 160 hp

(7th level spell) Targets up to 266 hp

(9th level spell) Targets up to 400 hp

Energy Bolt

At-will

Ranged Spell

Target: One nearby enemy

Energy: Choose cold, fire, or lightning when you cast the spell.

Attack: Intelligence +*Spell Level* vs. PD

Hit: 3d6 force damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level

3rd Level: 4d8

5th Level: 6d8

7th Level: 8d10

9th Level: 10d10

   Adventurer Feat: Targets no longer need to be nearby; and add acid, negative energy, and thunder to the energy types you can use with the spell.

   Champion Feat: Once per battle you can reroll an *energy bolt* attack that misses.

   Epic Feat: Increase the damage dice to d12s.

Magic Missile

At-will

Ranged spell, auto-hit

Target: one nearby enemy

Always: 2d4 force damage

   3rd Level: 2d8 force damage

   5th Level: 4d6 force damage

   7th Level: 6d6

   9th Level: 10d6

   Adventurer Feat: If you wish, split the spell into two missiles, each dealing half damage (round down) to a target you pick before rolling the damage.

   Champion Feat: Targets no longer need to be nearby.

Shocking Grasp @@bad

At-will *echo*

Close-quarters spell

Target: One creature you are engaged with

Attack: Intelligence + *Spell Level* vs. PD

Hit: 3d6 + Intelligence lightning damage, and push enemy out of contact with you.

Miss: You and target both take half damage.

3rd Level: 6d6 damage

5th Level: 6d10 damage

7th Level: 10d10

9th Level: 2d8 x 10

Sleep

Daily

Ranged spell

Targets: Before rolling the attack, roll 2d20 + 25 to determine the ceiling for the number of hit points of monsters the spell will target. The spell starts by targeting the nearby monsters/enemies with the current lowest hit points and works up, you don't get to choose the exact targets. When adding a monster would exceed the target ceiling, that monster isn't a target.

Attack: Intelligence + *Spell Level* vs. MD

   Hit: Target falls unconscious (Difficult save ends; so does taking 10+ points of damage)

Miss: Dazed until end of your next turn

3rd Level: Targets 3d20 + 45 hp of enemies

5th Level: Targets 5d20 +50 hp of enemies

7th Level: Targets 7d20 + 100 hp

9th Level: 9d20 + 200 hp

3rd Level Spells

Confusion

Daily Ranged Spell

Targets: 1 nearby enemy with 70 or fewer hit points

Attack: Intelligence + *Spell Level* vs. MD

Hit: Target is confused (save ends).

Miss: If you miss all targets, you regain this spell after a short rest.

   3rd Level: Targets up to 100 hp

   5th Level: Targets up to 160 hp and target can be distant

   7th Level: Targets up to 250 hp, or two targets each no more than 125 hp.

   9th Level: Targets up to 500 hp, or two targets each no more than 250 hp.

Force Spikes

[*Daily*]

Think of it as pulling force from the ether, wrapping it into invisible spikes, and projecting the spikes into your foes.

Ranged Spell

Targets: Enemies in line of sight

…Roll 2 + Intelligence attacks vs. pre-selected targets

(So if you have an 18 Intelligence, an Int mod of +4, you'll choose the targets of 6 attacks; could be the same target 6 times, but choose before rolling any attacks)

Attack: Intelligence + *Spell Level* vs. PD

   Hit: 2d8 force damage

   Miss: --

As 5th Level spell: 4d6

7th Level: 7d6

9th Level: 7d10

Hold Monster

Daily

Ranged Spell

Target: one nearby enemy with 60 or fewer hit points.

Attack: Wisdom + *Spell Level* vs. MD

Hit: Target cannot use move or use move actions; hard save ends (16+).

Miss: Target is dazed until end of your next turn.

    As 5th level spell: Targets up to 100 hp

    As 7th level spell: Targets up to 160 hp

    As 9th level spell: Targets up to 250 hp

    (Adventurer Feat) Target up to 2 nearby enemies so long as their total hp don't exceed the targeting limit.

    (Champion Feat) Increase hp target by +50

Mana Burst

At-will *echo*

Ranged Spell

Target: one nearby enemy

Attack: Wisdom + *Spell Level* vs. PD

Hit: 4d10 force damage

Miss: Damage equal to twice your level

    (5th level spell) 8d8

    (7th level spell) 10d10

    (9th level spell) 2d8 x 10

Teleport Shield

[*Daily***]**

Close-quarters spell

Effect: For the rest of this battle, when an enemy moves and engages you, roll the following attack against them.

Intelligence + *Spell Level* vs. PD.

Hit: Teleport the enemy a short distance away. You can place them in combat with one of your allies but generally you can't place them in dangerous locations, lava pits or mid-air or other cheesy tricks; it's a defensive teleport rather than the perfect offensive tool.

    As 5th Level spell: Target hit and teleported also takes 4d10 damage.

As 7th level spell: 6d8

As 9th level spell: 8d10

Thunder Wave

[At-Will**]**

Close-quarters spell

Targets: All enemies engaged with wizard…

….but attacks take -2 penalty for two targets, -3 for three targets, and so on.

Attack: Intelligence + *Spell Level* vs. PD

    Hit: 4d6 thunder damage and target pops out of engagement with you.

    Miss: Damage equal to your level

    5th Level: 4d12 damage

    7th Level: 6d10 damage

    9th Level: 10d10

    Champion Feat: No attack penalty for multiple targets.

5th Level Spells

Fireball

[*Daily***]**

Choose when casting whether you are casting recklessly or carefully…

Targets: A nearby group of 1d3 enemies. If you cast recklessly, you can target an additional 1d3 creatures, but then all your allies engaged with any targets take some damage also.

Attack: Intelligence + *Spell Level* vs. PD

    Hit: 6d12 fire damage

    Miss: Half damage

    …If Cast Recklessly: Allies engaged with any of the targets take one-fourth damage.

    7th level: 8d12 fire damage

    9th level: 4d4 x 10 fire damage

Invisibility

[Daily**]**

Ranged Spell

Effect: One nearby target becomes invisible until it attacks or uses some ridiculously flashy magical action.

Duration: one battle (five minutes), or up to 1 hour out of combat if you have the High Arcana talent.

As 7th Level spell: Affects 1d3 targets

As 9th level spell: Invisible character has 25% chance of remaining invisible after the first time they attack or get flashy. Twice? You're visible.

Lightning Bolt

[[Daily]]

Close-quarters spell

Targets: a group of up to 4 nearby enemies roughly in some sort of line

Attack: Intelligence + *Spell Level* vs. PD

Hit: 6d8 lightning damage

Miss: Half damage.

> *7th level spell:* 7d10
>
> *9th level spell:* 10d10

Shield

Recharge 11+ after battle

…*This spell works better if you have the High Arcana class talent.*

Close-quarters spell

…*Cast as a free action when you are hit by a foe's attack against AC.*

Effect: Force the foe to reroll the attack but with your AC +4 higher. Abide by the reroll.

(High Arcana advantage) You can re-use this spell once later in the same battle the next time you're hit by a foe's attack against AC.

7th Level: Also effective against attacks vs. PD

9th Level: Your defense bonus on the reroll increases to +6

7th Level Spells

Overcome Resistance

 [*Daily]*

Ranged spell

Targets: 1d3 allies, possibly including yourself

Always: Creatures affected automatically overcome resistance until the end of this battle.

9th level: 1d6 allies

Flight

 [*Daily]*

Ranged spell

You or one nearby ally can fly the rest of this battle or for five minutes. Your speed doesn't increase appreciably but you can move in three-dimensions.

9th level: Choose whether you want the effect to last for an hour or whether you want the spell to affect 1d3 + 1 targets for the usual five minute period.

Invisibility Purge

 [*Daily]*

Ranged spell

Targets: Any nearby enemies who are invisible, whether you know they are there or not

Attacks: GM rolls Int + Spell Level vs. MD

Hit: Target turns visible and cannot become invisible again this battle

Miss: You know there is an invisible creature somewhere nearby that you failed to affect.

9th level spell: Can also be cast into an area that is not nearby, so that you can hurl the spell out to your line of sight and try to dispel invisibility you've been too scared to get near.

Psychic Hammer

[Daily]

Ranged spell

Targets: 1d3+1 nearby enemies in a group

Attack: Intelligence + *Spell Level* vs. MD

> *Hit:* 8d10 psychic damage, and target can only use at-will abilities and attacks until the end of your next turn.

> *Miss:* Half damage.

> *9th level spell:* 10d10

9th Level Spells

Disintegrate

[[Daily]]

Ranged spell

Targets: one nearby enemy

Attack: Intelligence + *Spell Level* vs. PD

Hit: 4d8 x 10 + Intelligence damage and if this slays the target they are gone, dusted.

Miss: Half damage, and weakened (save ends).

Meteor Swarm

[*Daily]*

Ranged spell

Special: You've summoned a meteor swarm. If you're underground, you get the ur-dark

stalactite equivalent! Oddly, nothing more happens this round.

But at the start of your next turn, even if you are unconscious or dead or just got out of the area, roll 1d3 (or 1d3+2) to determine how many meteors you have summoned. The meteors arrive one per turn, one now and one at the start of each of your subsequent turns, slamming into the vicinity of the combat until the last meteor has arrived.

Each meteor hits a group of 1d4 enemies with the following attack. If you wish, you can drop multiple meteors on the same group of enemies.

Any allies engaged or way too close to the monsters you are targeting (yes, it's a judgment call) take ¼ damage from each meteor that drops on their area.

Attack: Intelligence + Spell Level vs. PD
Hit: 9d12 cold or fire or lightning damage (you choose)
Miss: Half damage

Gamemaster: The way we think you should play this is that anyone who has not found some teleport / fly / hide in shadows trick for getting away from the targets should take *at least* 25% damage from at least one meteor. That seems fair. They're flipping meteors, someone should get winged. It's not like this spell is fair to the monsters.

Teleport
High Arcana
Daily
Ranged spell

You and up to four allies touching you can teleport to any location in the world, underworld, or overworld that you have previously visited. You choose.

Roll a d20. If you roll a 1, something weird happened and the GM is going to send you somewhere else interesting. Otherwise you and your allies arrive the next turn.

As a rule, magic spells cast on one side of a teleport are dispelled by the high arcana teleport spell and no longer function on arrival, so it's best to wait and use spells after you arrive.

(High Arcana Advantage) If you have High Arcana, your allies don't need to be touching you before you use the spell, just nearby. Alternately, if they are all touching you when you cast the spell, you can teleport to a location known to one of your allies.

Transfer Enchantment
At-will echo   @@needs high arcana advantage
Ranged spell
Requires that you or an ally you are touching is suffering from a condition caused by an enemy…
Target: one nearby enemy
Attack: Intelligence + *Spell Level* vs. MD
Hit: 2d8 x 10 psychic damage, and you may transfer one condition caused by your enemies from you or your ally to the target. If timing is weird, interpret the transferred condition as if you had just cast it with this spell
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

153

Chapter 5: Combat Rules

Combat works about the way you'd expect an indie version of a d20 game to work. You're making attack rolls against defense numbers and dealing damage against hit points. The system is streamlined so that it's faster and easier to improvise. There are a few added complications in combat, each one designed to improve the players' experience at the table and the campaign's story line.

COMBAT SUMMARY

Here is a summary of what each section of the combat chapter covers.

- **Combat Stats:** Initiative bonuses, attack bonuses, damage and weapons, other damage types, defenses, hit points, and speed.
- **Combat Sequence:** Cyclic initiative, actions during a round, and using the escalation die.
- **Combat Actions:** Types of actions, positioning on the battle field, movement options during combat, and special movement options.
- **Special Actions:** Fighting in spirit, fleeing the battle, and using recoveries to heal.
- **Attacks:** General attack rules, crits, fumbles, missed-attack damage, and flexible attacks.
- **Damage and Healing:** Damage rules, recoveries, becoming *wounded*, and falling unconscious.
- **Death and Dying:** Death rules, death saves, and optional death rules.
- **Rest and Recharge:** Quick rests and full heal-ups.

- **Combat Modifiers:** The general rules (but don't worry about them), shooting into melee, and invisibility.
- **Special Attacks and Effects:** Conditions, ongoing damage, saves, resistance, and temporary hit points.

COMBAT STATS

Initiative Bonus

Your initiative bonus is your Dex modifier + your level.

Attack Bonuses

For each attack, roll 1d20 + an ability bonus + your level. Depending on the attack, you might also get other bonuses. You compare your total to the target's defense, usually Armor Class but sometimes Physical Defense or Mental Defense. If you attack multiple targets, make multiple attack rolls. Your class defines which ability bonus you use on attack rolls, and the attack defines the effects of a hit or a miss.

Damage

For each attack, roll the specified amount of damage. You roll damage once, even if you attack multiple targets. Heroes deal more and more damage with their attacks as they become more experienced and deadly.

Most damage totals for PC attacks are calculated by adding one ability score modifier to the attack's damage roll, normally represented by saying + Ability. Don't add the raw ability score; instead add the ability modifier (obtained d20 style by subtracting 10 from the ability score, then halving that, rounding down). But if we kept the ability score modifier to damage the same through your PC's career, the ability score contribution would soon become irrelevant. So the ability modifier portion of damage increases based on PC level, like so . . .

Damage modification based on PC level:

At 5th level, PCs add double the ability score modifier to damage rolls for all attacks.

154

At 8th level, PCs add triple the ability score modifier to damage rolls for all attacks.

Spells indicate a specific number of dice to roll for damage. Weapon attacks work differently (see below).

Weapons

Weapons are rated by how much damage they deal. In the hands of player characters, each weapon attack deals 1 die of damage per character level + ability modifier, normally notated as WEAPON + [Ability]

For example:

- *A first level fighter attacking with a long sword will deal 1d8 + Strength damage.*
- *A 4th level fighter attacking with a long sword will deal 4d8 + Strength damage.*

The standard melee and ranged weapon charts below show the different damage categories and the types of weapons that fall into those categories. Each class has its own version of these weapon charts, showing how well members of the class use weapons of a given damage category and how well the class's combat maneuvers work with different sizes of weapons.

Distinctions between damage categories don't have to be rigid. With the GM's permission, there shouldn't be any problem saying that the big spiked club your barbarian uses counts as a 1d10 weapon, or that the halfling fighter's oversized carving knife counts as a 1d8 longsword. If you feel that we've misplaced a weapon or two, go with your sense of what's correct for medieval weaponry—the important thing is that it feels right.

Dice Rolling Conventions

Obviously rolling huge handfuls of dice as you rise in level can become a pain. Some players love that pain, but their friends and GMs are less keen on waiting for them to finish adding up six d12s and four d6s. Up to 4th or 5th level, we're happy rolling all the dice. But after that, we like to speed play by asking each player to choose one of the following dice conventions. Of course, if you or one of your players has another

suggestion that provides average results, go for it.

No roll, just average them all: Some of our players don't want to roll damage dice at high levels. They're happier just taking average damage and hoping for crits to give them a boost.

Average most dice, roll two or three of them: Rolling two or three dice for varied results preserves the experience of rolling damage. Roll between two and four dice, average the rest.

Average the normal stuff, roll the specials: Players with characters who have power attacks and sneak attacks frequently opt to average their normal damage rolls and roll the cool bonus damage that isn't always applicable.

Roll if it's cool to rule: If the drama of the situation calls for a full roll that everyone will pay attention to, go for it.

Epic level multipliers: You'll notice that some of the spells and attacks at epic levels deal damage that's expressed by a couple dice multiplied by 10. If you'd rather use a different damage convention that hits the same average, do so.

Rolling 1d3: Since people have asked…the best way to roll 1d3 is to roll a d6 and interpret the results. 1-2 = 1, 3-4 = 2, 5-6 = 3.

<end sidebar>

Other Damage Types

In the tradition of d20 games, *13th Age* includes various types of energy damage that different monsters and characters are better at resisting or are vulnerable to. Our less intrusive *vulnerability* and *resistance* mechanics may make these damage types a bit less important to the game, but they can still make a big difference in combat and to the narration of the action and special events that make d20 battles exciting.

We've decided to use the following energy types. You should describe them however you like if our default sensory info doesn't match your sense of what's going on. It's a fairly long list because it's a wide and beautiful world.

Acid: This is any type of corrosive liquid, gas, or magical substance that eats away at flesh. Drops of it cause pain, and vats of the stuff might not leave a trace of you.

Cold: You might call it ice, but it's not always solid and chunky, so we call it cold. If there are any unusual sound effects, it might be a surprising absence of sound as everything slows down.

Fire: Burn! Burn! Burn! Fire and its companion, scorching heat, are probably the most common magical ways of inflicting pain.

Force: Magical energy in a relatively pure and shimmering form. It's often accompanied by a background hum, and is most commonly encountered in wizard spells like *magic missile*.

Holy: Pure divine energy, most commonly encountered in cleric and paladin spells. It's potentially lethal to undead. Its smells and sound effects are dependent on the spell or on the GM's attitude toward the divine.

Lightning: Why? Because we think it's cooler to refer to lightning directly instead of using a scientific term like electricity. It smells like ozone and makes your fur stand on end.

Negative energy: Putrefaction energy associated with the undead. It has the smell of the grave.

Poison: Not energy, per se, but a damage type. It's frequently (but not always) associated with ongoing damage as the poison races through your veins.

Psychic: Anything that messes with a creature's mind and causes mental distress (often shown by nosebleeds, earbleeds, or a slight widening of the eyes right before they explode).

Thunder: Because we think it's cooler to refer to thunder than to use the more scientific-sounding term: sonic energy.

Defenses

There are three different defenses, Armor Class, Physical Defense, and Mental Defense. Each uses three ability scores as part of its calculation.

Armor Class (AC): AC is based on how tough, quick, and alert you are (Con, Dex, and Wis). Use the middle modifier, and disregard the highest and the lowest one. Rely on it to protect you from most weapon attacks.

Physical Defense (PD): PD is based on how strong, tough, and agile you are (Str, Con, and Dex). Use the middle modifier, and disregard the highest and the lowest one. Rely on it to protect you from dragon breath, fireballs, and poison.

Mental Defense (MD): MD is based on how smart, insightful, and forceful you are (Int, Wis, and Cha). Use the middle modifier, and disregard the highest and the lowest one. Rely on it to protect you against mental enchantments, illusions, psychic attacks, and mundane trickery.

Defenses Chart

Defense	Base Value	Middle modifier among	Level
AC	See class	Con, Dex, and Wis	+ level
PD	10	Str, Con, and Dex	+ level
MD	10	Int, Wis, and Cha	+ level

Hit Points

Hit points are based on class, Con modifier, and level. The total of those stats are multiplied against a "hit point factor" that starts at 3 at 1st level and rises to 24 by 10th level.

Speed

Speed, as is traditionally handled, is more tactical than the game needs. If it's important to know who covers ground faster, the GM can use common sense to make a ruling, or use stats and skills to set up a speed contest. A "speed check" could be as simple as new initiative checks to find out who moves first and fastest, or as complex as an Athletics check (using Dexterity) vs. a Path Finding check (using Wisdom); it's up to the GM and the unfolding story.

COMBAT SEQUENCE

At the start of combat, each player rolls initiative for his or her character and the GM rolls for their opponents, with higher-rolling characters or enemies acting earlier each round.

Cyclic Initiative

Roll once: Each creature rolls to determine its initiative at the start of its first turn in battle (d20 + initiative bonus). Use those results to determine who goes first each round.

Jonathan says: In my game, monsters win ties.

Delay, Ready, and Refocus: Use these special initiative rules from the standard d20 rules if you like, but don't feel obliged.

On Your Turn

Standard, Move, and Quick actions: Each turn you can take one of each action, in any order. See Combat Actions, below.

Make saves last: If you are subjected to an ongoing effect that requires a save, make that save at the end of your turn. If you are taking ongoing damage, therefore, you take the damage before you get a chance to end it.

Escalation Die

As the characters fight in a battle, they build up momentum and tactical advantages that help them defeat their opponents. This bonus to attacks that increases as the fight goes on is represented by the escalation die.

Start at +1 on the second round: At the start of the second round, the GM sets the escalation die at 1. Each PC gains a bonus to attack rolls equal to the current value on the escalation die.

Increase +1 per round to +6: Each round, the escalation die advances by +1, to a maximum of +6. You might want to hold onto your biggest attacks until a couple rounds into a battle so you're more likely to hit with them.

Heroes only: As a rule, monsters and NPCs do not add the escalation die bonus to their attacks. A few of them *do* use the escalation die, but they are typically the ones that you least want getting an attack bonus!

Losing momentum: The escalation die represents increasing momentum in the battle. If the GM judges that the characters are avoiding conflict rather than bringing the fight to the bad guys, the escalation die doesn't advance. If combat virtually ceases, the escalation die resets to 0.

Power triggers: Some character powers key off the escalation die, such as the skilled fighter attacks that only work when the escalation die is at 3+.

Gamemaster: To keep track of the escalation die, use the biggest d6 you can find. The escalation die helps to speed combat to a close when it goes on longer than normal. Players really hate monsters or magic effects that temporarily suspend the advancement of the escalation die. If you don't like the escalation die, you can skip it, but then subtract 1 from all monster defenses. But really, who doesn't like the escalation die?

If you can't find a ten-pound monster d6 like the one Rob uses, set the escalation die on top of an upturned cup or other small pedestal so everyone remembers to use it.

COMBAT ACTIONS

All the combat stuff you want to know about.

Actions

On your turn, you can take a standard action, a move action, and a quick action, in any order.

Standard actions: Usually these actions are attacks, or else spells so good that they're worth casting in place of an attack.

Move actions: Usually these actions involve moving from one part of the battle to another, or maybe just moving a couple steps to a new opponent.

Quick actions: These actions are quick acts like drawing weapons, opening unlocked doors, picking something light off the ground, and reloading a light crossbow.

Substitute downward: You can use a standard action to take a move action, and you can take a standard or move action to take a quick action.

Interrupt actions: You can use one interrupt action when it's not your turn. You can't use another one until the end of your next turn. (At the moment, only the rogue uses interrupt actions—no one else needs to worry about it.)

Other actions when it's not your turn: In certain circumstances (see below), characters can intercept foes moving past them, make attacks of opportunity, or otherwise act out of turn.

Position

A creature's position amounts to two things: the creature's whereabouts, and who it's contending with in melee.

Whereabouts: Each creature has a general position on the battlefield. Mostly you want to track relative position, such as who's in the front rank or which side an ambush is coming from. You can define your character's geographical location in any natural way, such as "standing behind the paladin" or "slinking along the wall while the rest of the party waits around the corner." It's understood that combat is dynamic and fluid, so miniatures can't really represent where a character "really is."

Nearby: Generally, all the heroes and their enemies in a battle are nearby. That means they can reach each other with a single move action. Sometimes, as an exception, heroes or enemies can be far away (see below).

Behind: Generally, if you're behind an unengaged ally, and an enemy moves past that ally to get to you, your ally has the option to move and intercept.

Intercepting: Intercepting is when you move to stop an enemy attempting to rush past you to attack someone else. You must be nearby the enemy and the person that enemy is trying to reach.

Far Away: Generally, the heroes and their enemies are near each other and you can use a single move action to reach any of them (provided no enemy intercepts you). If you want to be two moves away from the enemies, make that clear to the GM and make sure there's room for that maneuver. Wizards and other casters sometimes like to be far away.

Engaged: In a battle, each combatant is either engaged (locked in combat with one or more enemies) or unengaged (free).

Miniatures: We find that miniatures and markers help GM and players agree on where everyone is. We use them more as reminders of what you imagine in your head rather than as game pieces. If you happen to be using pretty maps with grids or hexes lined up on them, you'll probably want to avoid looking too closely at the markings on the map—we're advising fudging movement whenever possible—don't spend time being precise.

Movement and Melee

The combat system cares about movement and position, but only in simple/approximate terms. It emphasizes where people are and who's fighting whom, but it doesn't count squares. Miniatures are useful for keeping track of who's where and doing what, even if they're just bottle caps.

Free

By default, characters in a battle are free. They can move freely, use ranged attacks, engage in battle, etc. If they try to move past a free enemy, however, that foe usually has the option to intercept them (see below).

Engaged

Characters are engaged when they are in melee with foes. Usually you push the miniatures together to represents who's engaged with whom. Grognards call it "basing" your foe because your miniature's base contacts theirs. Characters who are engaged in battle have a hard time moving around without drawing attacks of opportunity. The point of this rule is to give the battlefield some texture so that characters don't run all over it attacking whomever they prefer.

Engaged creatures can use melee attacks against the creatures they engage. They can use ranged attacks but doing so draws opportunity attacks from the enemies that are engaging them, as does moving away from the enemies they're engaged with. They can use close-

quarters spells, however, without drawing attacks of opportunity.

Unengaged creatures have no particular limits on how they move. They can use only ranged attacks.

Engagement chart (what you can do)

When you are engaged:	When you are unengaged:
You draw attacks of opportunity if you move	You move freely
You can make melee attacks against enemies engaged with you	You can't make melee attacks
Your ranged attacks draw attacks of opportunity from enemies engaged with you that you don't target	You make ranged attacks normally
Your spells draw attacks of opportunity (except close-quarters spells)	You can cast spells freely
You can disengage safely as a move action by making a normal check (11+)	You can engage enemies by moving into melee with them
You can't intercept enemies	You can engage an enemy moving past you
You're considered nearby other combatants by default	You're considered nearby other combatants by default, but you can usually move far away if you want

Disengaging

You can always move away from the foes that engage you, but you draw an opportunity attack from each of those enemies when you do. If you don't want to risk an opportunity attack, you can use your move action to try to disengage. If you choose to disengage, roll a normal check (11+) for each foe engaging you.

If you succeed with at least one disengage check, you can choose to move without drawing an opportunity attack from that opponent, but still take opportunity attacks from any foes you failed the check against.

If you succeed with one or more disengage checks but fail with at least one, you can choose to remain engaged with all foes and not move, but you've still burned your move action. At this point, the safest choice is usually to just attack and end your turn.

If you fail all disengage checks, you don't move, lose your move action for that turn, and remain engaged, but at least you don't take opportunity attacks.

Move Action: Disengaging uses a move action. If you succeed, it's like getting a free disengage at the start of your move. If you fail, you use up the move action to no effect. Some rogues can disengage as a quick action, but then, rogues love to break the rules.

Intercepting

Generally, if you move past someone who is not already engaged, they have the option to engage you and make you stop where they are. The GM rules on what counts as moving "past" a defending character or enemy. In general, the more tactical the battle, the easier it is to intercept someone, and the GM should usually rule in favor of interception.

When someone intercepts you, you usually do not have the option of continuing your move and accepting an opportunity attack. The standard consequence of being intercepted is that you use your attack against the creature that intercepted you. On your next turn, if you're willing to provoke an opportunity attack, you can move to where you were headed in the first place.

The ability to intercept onrushing enemies isn't a license to take other actions when enemies are moving.

Targeting

InformationTransparency: We're not big on hiding game mechanic information from players during combat. If we were a skirmish miniatures game, we'd be one of the games that lets you measure instead of forcing you to estimate distances. When you need to know how many hit points an enemy has, especially in order to figure out if they are a legal target for one of your spells, the GM should tell you. The same goes for being able to tell mooks from normal monsters and monsters with stats like large and huge creatures from normal monsters. The game isn't about getting burned by a slight mismeasurement or a spell wasted on an illegal target.

Enemies in groups: As a general rule, a spell or area-style effect that targets multiple nearby enemies *in a group* can't skip over enemies. You pick one target and attack the rest in order; you don't skip all over the battlefield. Spells that say they target multiple nearby enemies but don't specify that they have to be in a group are capable of sending magical energy in different directions, allowing spellcasters to choose targets from where they like.

Special Cases

Here are rules for special situations involving movement and melee.

Charging: There is no standard charge rule as with most other OGL games that let you move twice and still make a melee attack. That's an example of the type of tactical minis maneuver that we're not using.

Dicey moves: Playing fast and free with positioning and terrain during combat works for most of our players. But sometimes we face entirely reasonable questions about whether a character could execute a particularly interesting move during combat; for example, running quickly on a ledge above a forge to grab a burning brand before it can be stamped upon a dragon egg, quick moves across mounds of corpses, and things like that.

If we think it's more interesting that the answer isn't clear, we ask the character to make a skill check. We ask what they're planning to

do and how they plan to do it, we tell them what ability score that action is going to use, and we ask if they have a background that's going to help. The DC depends on the current environment and the dice tell the tale.

If we're pressed for time to keep the action on pace and we think it's about 50/50 whether the hero could pull off a move or move as far as they want to, we just make it a 50/50 roll instead of using skills.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Fight in spirit

This is a special combat action that represents not what your character is doing right this moment but rather how your character has helped or inspired party members. You take this action when you are out of the fight altogether, which is rare. Perhaps your character is in another part of the dungeon, or has been paralyzed. If your character can't do anything, then once a round you can specify how your character is still there "fighting in spirit" alongside the other party members. It sucks to have to sit and watch a fight you can't be part of, and that's what this rule is for. To earn this bonus, however, you have to come up with some story about what your character has done that could boost party morale.

For example, an unconscious barbarian might say, "The fighter has watched me rage during all these fights, and now, with me down, he feels a little bit of my rage coming on. He gets +1 on his attacks."

+2 to a stat the first time each battle, +1 thereafter: In general, you should expect to be able to talk your GM into giving any ally a +1 bonus to attacks, Armor Class, Physical Defense, or Mental Defense. The first time each battle that someone fights in spirit is special, so that can be a +2.

One bonus per round: The bonus lasts one or two rounds. If the fight is still on and you have something else to add to the story, sell it to the GM. Obviously, it's more interesting if you make up new stories, so if you keep trying to

use the same story, you aren't following the spirit of this rule and you don't provide a bonus.

Out for the duration: If you're making death saves to recover or you're stunned for 1 round or you have a save to recover from an effect, then you can't fight in spirit. It's for players who would otherwise really be shut out of the fight.

Flee

Fleeing is a party action rather than an individual action. At any point, on any PC's turn, any player can propose that the fight is going so badly that the characters have to flee. If all of the other players agree, the heroes beat a hasty and successful retreat, carrying any fallen heroes away with them. In exchange for this extraordinarily generous retreating rule, the party suffers a campaign loss. At the GM's discretion, something that the party was trying to do fails in a way that going back and finishing off those enemies later won't fix. If the heroes were on their way to rescue a captive from unholy sacrifice, then naturally enough the captive gets sacrificed. Don't worry, overcoming setbacks is exactly what heroism is about. The point of this rule is to encourage daring attacks and to make retreating interesting on the level of story rather than tactics.

Note that this option is available at the GM's discretion. Some GM's don't allow fleeing in general, while others put limits on it.

Gamemaster: Players just *love* to get stuck in dire circumstances from which, as a special exception, fleeing isn't an option. Be sure to tell the players when they are in a situation where there is no escape, because the game improves when you find ways of increasing the players' fear without necessarily increasing the threat. Half the point of giving the players a useful option like fleeing is so you can take it from them now and then.

Rally; Rallying

Once a battle (and sometimes more often), every PC can use a standard action to rally, spending one of their recoveries and regaining hit points they've lost in combat (see Recoveries below).

Since rallying is all about digging deep into what makes you a hero, you should take a moment when you rally during combat to specify what gives your character the will to keep fighting after being knocked around so badly: is it honor, pride, the mission, vengeance, a chance to outshine your rival, or something unique to the situation and your character's spirit?

If you want to rally again later in the same battle, make a normal save (11+). If you succeed, you can rally again this round. If you fail the save, you can take your turn normally (without burning the action you would have used to recover), but you can't rally this round.

In other words: rallying once in a battle is always an option. But each time you want to rally again later in the same battle, you must succeed with a save.

Gamemaster: Theoretically, certain magical effects that sap a character's will to fight could prevent a character from rallying. But you would have to be cruel and abusive—or Jonathan Tweet—to set up a situation in which the heroes can't rally.

Old-school GMs sometimes flinch at the idea that anyone can heal themselves without using magic. We don't swing that way because we like the idea that heroes can recover themselves—it suits heroic drama, and we think it makes a better game. We also think of hit points as having something to do with morale and will-to-fight instead of only bone and blood. But if your picture of your world doesn't include characters pulling themselves together in the middle of combat, ignore the rally rule, find other abilities for the races and classes that rely on it most, and make your PCs work for other methods of healing.

ATTACKS

Both melee attacks and spell attacks follow the same general rules, except as indicated below.

General Attack Rules

Normally when you use an attack, you declare which attack you are using and pick its

target or targets, then roll the d20 for each one to find out if you hit.

Ranged attacks: A ranged attack with a weapon draws attacks of opportunity from enemies engaged with you that you don't target with the attack.

Spell attacks: Most spells draw attacks of opportunity from enemies engaged with you, even the enemies you target with the spell. Close-quarters spells are the exception; they don't draw opportunity attacks.

As a rule, spells add the spell's level to the attack roll instead of adding the PC's level.

Target hit points: Some spells and effects target creatures with a certain number of hit points or less. The hit point value you use is based on current hit points, not starting hit points. Do you want to hit the dragon with your *hold monster* spell? Beat it down first.

Gamemaster: We're not big on tormenting players by making them guess whether they hit before they decide whether to use abilities like rerolls. Keep the game moving by making hits and misses transparent. You can let players know the defense targets they're aiming for, if you wish, or keep the exact numbers secret but tell people right away whether they hit or missed.

Crits

Every attack roll that is natural 20 is a crit ("critical hit") for double damage. It's a simple rule, and it's enough damage to be frightening.

Crit Effects: Standard crits deal double damage. At the GM's discretion, rolling a 20 while you have some major advantage over an opponent (such as a clean shot at the villain's magic pendant) might entail some additional superior result (such as shooting the pendant off the villain's chest).

Gamemaster: We recommend doubling damage to speed play, but if you and your players love rolling lots of dice, feel free to roll double damage instead.

Crit Range: The standard crit range is 20. Some powers, spells, and events increase your crit range against a particular target. Each point of improvement in the crit range drops the number needed to score a crit by 1. For example, if the crit range increases by 3, you'll score a crit on a 17–20.

Vulnerable [X]: When a creature is vulnerable to a damage type, attacks that score a critical hit and deal that type of damage deal *triple* damage instead of double damage.

FYI, the most common vulnerability in the game is for Undead who are *vulnerable holy*. Normal hits from holy energy don't hurt them more than anyone else, but a crit with a holy attack will wipe out most undead.

Fumbles

Rolling a natural 1 has no effect on the target, not even miss damage if you are using an attack that deals damage on a miss. At the GM's discretion, rolling a 1 while in a precarious position (such as balancing on a narrow ledge) might entail some other bad result (such as slipping off said ledge). You might also hit an ally if you're shooting into melee.

Damage on Miss

Most character attacks deal a small amount of damage on a miss, often equivalent to the attacker's level. This damage might represent minor wounds, but it could also represent the opponent becoming distracted or off balance. Each attack specifies what happens if it misses. The characters are some of the most exceptional and talented people around, and they rarely launch an attack to no effect.

Most monsters deal no damage on a miss. Watch out for the ones that do.

Flexible Attacks

Attacks that are *flexible* are an exception to the normal decision-making sequence. When you decide to make a flexible attack, you choose your first target, make your attack roll, and then use the *natural* unmodified die result to determine which of your eligible flexible attacks to use. You still use the modified roll to determine whether or not you hit, but your flexible attacks trigger off the natural result on the die sitting in front of you.

You can only use one flexible attack at a time.

Most fighter attacks are flexible attacks. So are the bard's battle cry attacks. If you have some attacks that are flexible and some that are not, choose whether you are making a flexible attack or a specific non-flexible attack before you roll. If you are a multiclass character with two classes that have flexible attacks, you generally have to declare which class your intended flexible attack is coming from before you roll your attack.

Players: Flexible attacks work well if you like to describe the action as your character attacks. You can be certain the attack you're describing plays out the way you're telling it because you'll already know if you hit or missed.

Two-Weapon Fighting

Most anyone *can* use a melee weapon in each hand instead of fighting with a single weapon, a 2H weapon, or a weapon and shield . . . it's just that it's nowhere near as effective as doubling the skill you have with one weapon.

You fight as normal, generally using the weapon in your main hand to attack. If your attack roll is a natural 2, you can choose to reroll the attack and use the reroll. If it suits the story of how your character fights, go ahead and use your off-hand weapon for this rerolled attack, but you don't have to do that unless you want to.

Note that unlike some other d20 games, you do not get an extra attack for fighting with two weapons. If you want to be slightly better at fighting with two weapons, take the Two Weapon Slasher feat that improves your miss damage.

Some classes (and class talents) provide other advantages when fighting with two weapons. Those classes still get to use this basic two-weapon advantage in addition to whatever else they've got going.

Rob says: *Normally watching for one particular die result isn't all that much fun, but remembering*

the key-number 2 when you are fighting with two weapons is something the whole table can help you with.

DAMAGE & HEALING

In *13th Age*, damage works like other d20 games. Healing uses hit points, but also involves recoveries, which is how PCs heal to fight another day.

Damage

Damage works pretty much as normal in d20 games. Each creature has hit points. You slay enemies (or occasionally knock them out) at 0 hp. At 0 hp PCs begin using the Death and Dying rules (see next page).

Recoveries

Each PC starts the adventure with (at least) 8 recoveries, a stat that represents the PC's ability to heal or bounce back from damage. Many healing spells and healing potions require you to use up one of your recoveries. So does using a standard action to recover during a battle. (A few powerful true healing spells heal without requiring the use of a recovery.)

The basic mechanic when you use a recovery is always the same. You regain lost hit points by rolling recovery dice equal to your level and adding your Constitution modifier. Your class indicates which recovery die you will use (usually a d6, d8, or d10).

At 5th level, you double the bonus you get from your Con modifier. At 8th level, you triple it. For example, a 5th level barbarian with a Constitution of 14 (Con modifier +2) has been cut up pretty badly. She uses a standard action during the battle to heal, rolling 5d10 and adding double her Con modifier, in this case 5d10 + 4.

To avoid rolling so many dice at high levels, use your choice of the options listed in the *Dice Rolling Conventions* section.

Averaging Recovery Dice: We believe that players should be free to gain average hit points with a recovery instead of rolling. But anyone who rolls hoping to get lucky has to be ready to swallow the bitter alternative.

Gamemaster: If you don't want to slow the game down while people figure out whether they are going to take average hit points with a recovery or roll it, ask each player for his or her recovery option beforehand and enforce that method until the party gets to a full heal-up.

Healing NPCs: The GM isn't tracking recoveries for NPCs, and most NPCs and monsters aren't healing the way the PCs do. But if you do use a healing spell on an NPC, ask the GM to let it heal them 1d6 to 1d10 per level, depending on the nature of the NPC.

Wounded

When you are reduced to half your hit points or less, you're *wounded*. There aren't any special rules that will always apply to you when you're wounded, but there are a number of monsters that prey upon the wounded, as well as character powers and spells that function differently when they are used by wounded characters or target wounded creatures.

You'll notice that we don't specify the wounded value for monsters. In general, monsters become wounded when they take damage equal to half their hit points or more, but instead of cluttering the monster stats with another number, we leave it to the GM to rule whether a monster is wounded. If the PCs have fought heroically and the monster is a couple points above half, let the monster count as wounded if it plays better in the situation (or comes after a big hit). Or if the PCs have relinquished the momentum and the monster is just a bit below half hit points, maybe you don't want the monster to count as wounded.

If you'd rather not make that type of call, record each monster's wounded value (half its maximum hit points, rounded down) next to its HP stat.

Unconscious

When you drop to 0 hp or below, you go unconscious. You can't take any actions until you're conscious again, though as you'll see in the Death & Dying section below, you will be making a death save at the start of each of your turns that will give you a chance of getting back into the fray, so stay in initiative order.

Monsters Drop: When monsters drop to 0 hp, it usually means they've been slain, unless the characters' intent is to keep the monster alive and the attack seems like a potentially humane blow that could knock the monster unconscious instead. Some attacks, particularly when gruesomely narrated, don't feel like attacks that can leave the target unconscious, but we leave that mostly up to you and your table's sensibilities.

DEATH AND DYING

Traditional d20 games have characters fall unconscious at 0 hp, with that character's player rolling checks to avoid losing more hp each turn. We'd rather give you a chance of making a dramatic comeback while still risking death if your allies haven't found a way to get you on your feet.

Down at 0 hp: When you drop to 0 hp or below, you fall unconscious and can't take any actions. But you do get to make death saves (see below).

Dead at negative half: Keep track of how far below 0 hp you go. You also die when you reach negative hit points equal to half your maximum hit points.

Healing while you're down: If you're able to use one of your recoveries (or otherwise get healed) while you are dying, ignore your current negative hit points. Start from 0 and add the hit points you've regained.

Make death saves while down: At the start of your turn, roll a death save on a d20. Death saves are hard saves: 16+

If you roll 16+, use a recovery to return to consciousness and heal up to the number of hit points you rolled with your recovery. Tell everyone what form of courage, willpower, stubbornness or quest brought you back from the brink. But that is all you can do on your turn.

If you roll 15 or less, you take one step toward the grave. After the third failed death save in a single battle, you die.

If you roll a natural 20, you get to take your turn normally this turn after telling everyone what inspired or caused your heroic return.

Corner-case of no more recoveries: Normally you can't use any more recoveries when you've run out. A benevolent GM might allow a dying PC who is able to use a recovery to get a few hit points above 0, but that's a case where the story and the group's attitude to failure and death needs to trump our game mechanics.

Optional Lasting-Wound Rule

With this optional rule, there are consequences for being seriously injured and almost killed. If you're dropped to 0 hp or below one or more times during a fight, you take a lasting-wound.

Each lasting-wound you have reduces your maximum hit points by an amount equal to 2 + your level. Lasting-wounds are cumulative until you get a heal-up (but you normally don't take more than one lasting-wound each battle for dropping to 0 or below). You still won't count as wounded unless your current hit point total is half or less of your maximum hit points. A heal-up removes all lasting-wounds.

Rob says: *Jonathan doesn't use this rule. I only use it when exceptional circumstances make everyone at the table* want *to see some lingering consequence of a terrible mangling/crushing/burning near-death. (I can hear my players saying "What he meant was, 'Never.'")*

Optional Meaningful Death Rule:

Jonathan actually doesn't allow PCs to just die fighting nameless monsters. In fact, he likes the rule from *7th Sea*™ that PCs can only be fully slain by named villains. The bright side is that PCs who fail three death checks in his game don't die, they just fall into a coma and can't be brought back to consciousness during combat, only once they've been taken far away from danger. The dark side is that Jonathan's nameless NPCs are more than willing to take unconscious PCs to named villains for a proper ritual sacrifice.

REST AND RECHARGE

After each battle, you can use a quick rest to get ready for the next battle. After about four battles, you'll typically earn a full heal-up.

Quick Rests

The time spent on a quick rest isn't so much a true rest stop as it is clearing your head and catching your balance after a fight. Unless the GM is being a stick, you can always get a quick rest between battles.

Healing during a quick rest: When you take a quick rest, you can use as many recoveries as you want to heal yourself (or all the recoveries you've got if you don't have enough left to heal to maximum hp!). You might have access to healing potions or spells that will give you more healing per recovery, or maybe you'll be stuck with the flat rolls.

Required healing: If you are wounded when you take a quick rest, you *must* try to heal yourself, either using a recovery or getting the benefits of a spell that provides some true healing. If you're damaged but not yet wounded, it's up to you whether you choose to heal yourself.

Roll to recharge powers: For each recharge power that you used in the last battle, roll a d20 to see if you keep the power for your next battle or lose it until after your next battle. You have to roll the power's recharge value or higher to use it again.

Rob says: Jonathan and I disagree about how often you should roll to recharge powers. Jonathan says you should only get one recharge chance immediately after the battle in which you used the power. Mathematically he's right, and you shouldn't let players abuse the system; they should only get one recharge roll after each real battle. But I think it's more fun to let players use recharge powers, and then let them make recharge rolls for all used powers during a quick rest.

Jonathan disagrees with me. I quote his email on the topic:

Rob loves liberty and spontaneity. That's what your version offers. Jonathan loves limits and denial.

This seems to be a picky little rule that symbolizes our opposite spirits. Hard for us to agree.

Rob says: I now agree with Jonathan enough that I give PCs extra attempts to recharge powers after fights only when they've acquitted themselves extremely well and deserve a cookie.

Jonathan says: I now agree with Rob enough that I wrote the glossary entry for recharge and used Rob's rule.

Full Heal-ups

Fate, karma, or some other subtle and unseen force propels the heroes through their adventures. As heroes, they prevail when they press on, not when they retreat and lick their wounds. Once the characters have fought about four battles, they earn a full heal-up. Lots of times, the characters take their heal-up by resting or by celebrating back in town. The characters have earned the heal-up and should enjoy it. Sometimes, however, the heal-up occurs in the middle of an adventure rather than at the end. Sometimes a paladin says pithy words over the fallen foes, and with that single sentence the battle-weary party regains the spirit and the strength to fight on.

Roughly four battles: The GM determines when the party has earned a heal-up. Canonically, fighting four average battles gets you a heal-up. If the battles are tougher, you get the heal-up after fewer of them, and weaker battles means more of them between heal-ups. This rule helps the party manage its resources, because you know about how much opposition you're going to need to get through.

Reset hit points, recoveries, and powers: Your hit points reset to full. You regain any recoveries you've used. All used powers are regained or recharge (so that powers that are "daily" are actually "per heal-up").

This rule allows "per day" powers and spells to remain balanced relative to each other regardless of whether the party is fighting once per week or seven times a day. Another feature of this rule is that when the party has been beaten down, the best way to recover is to press on and win a few more battles.

Forced heal-up: It the party is short of a heal-up but is too beat up to press on, they can retreat, tails between their legs. Provided they can find some sort of safe place, they can get the heal-up that they haven't earned in battle. But taking the heal-up entails a campaign loss. At the GM's discretion, the party fails to achieve one of their goals, and they fail in some way that simply defeating the bad guys the next time around with your healed-up party won't fix. Don't worry; occasional setbacks make for a more engaging campaign.

COMBAT MODIFIERS

In general, if you can do without a modifier, you should. It's more important that combat proceed quickly around the table than that it proceed accurately according to mechanical correspondence with the imagined fantasy world.

The universal combat modifier is +2 when you have advantageous circumstances. You can often talk your way into a +2 bonus, but good luck getting anything better than that. The bonus should relate to some special circumstance of the battle, not just to something abstract or generic, such as flanking.

On the other hand, -1 is the right penalty for adverse situations. Firing a bow at a far away target? -1. The target has cover that matters? -1. That's if you care about the problem at all, because our advice would be. . . .

Don't Sweat Modifiers

In general, don't worry about modifiers for range, flanking, position, fighting across corners, etc.

Ganging up: There is no standard bonus for ganging up on an enemy. For some creatures (like rogues with their Sneak Attack ability), ganging up is its own reward. Some monsters have gang-up powers too.

Shooting into Melee

What's the easiest rule we can think of that also lets you shoot your friends in the back?

Here's our rule: There's no attack penalty when using a ranged attack to target an enemy

that is engaged with one or more of your allies. But if you get a fumble (roll a 1), reroll that attack considering an ally as the target. If there are multiple allies, the GM rules which ally is the target.

Of course the rule also applies to monsters and enemies.

Gamemaster (shooting into melee): If you don't want to run this type of game, feel free to ignore this rule.

Gamemaster (combat modifiers): If you want more combat modifiers than *13th Age* uses, feel free to port bonuses in from another system and use those. Another option, however, is to invent special and unique sources for combat bonuses. It's more interesting to get a +2 bonus to your attacks because you're a dwarf fighting in the ancient dwarven Hall of Blood, or because you have probed your enemy's weaknesses in its dreams than because you're flanking it. Also, make free use of the dazed and weakened conditions. If an effect is worth worrying about, it could be worth a 4-point swing in attacks or defenses.

Invisibility

There are a couple of types of invisibility effects in the game: a spell or two for the PCs, and a monster power or two for the GM. Our version of invisibility is a lot less fiddly than most d20 games. If you want to sneak around invisible outside combat, you get a big modifier to any sneaking around skill checks, +5 at least unless you're dealing with creatures who can smell or otherwise detect you as soon as look at you.

But once you start a battle, or once enemies know you are in the area, our invisibility powers aren't perfect. You're hidden, but once people know you are around, they are able to see disturbances in the air and in the aether, a sign that someone is roughly . . . about . . . there. . . .

So attacks against invisible enemies have a 50% chance to miss completely. Attacks that miss in this fashion don't deal any damage or have effects on the invisible creature, though other effects on a miss might occur.

SPECIAL ATTACKS AND EFFECTS

Unless you've somehow managed to bring the party of the bland into the land of the vanilla monsters, attacks, spells, and other effects come into play rather frequently during combat. Here are the rules for those situations.

Conditions

13th Age uses the following conditions. You can only be affected by a condition once at a time, for instance, if two effects would daze you, the worst one affects you and you ignore the daze portion of the lesser effect. Similarly, penalties from the conditions don't stack, if you're both vulnerable and stunned you only have a -4 penalty to your defenses.

Confused: You can't make opportunity attacks or use your powers. Your next attack action will be an at-will attack against at least one of your nearby allies, usually determined randomly.

Derro sages can use their psychic powers to confuse you.

Constrained: You can only make basic attacks. Fighter, that also means no flexible attacks.

When an owlbear grabs you, you're constrained.

Dazed: You have a –4 penalty to attacks.

Troglodyte stench dazes you, as do a lot of monster powers.

Fear: Fear dazes you and prevents you from using the escalation die.

Boar demons (nalfeshnees) cause fear.

Stunned: You have a –4 penalty to defenses and can't take any actions.

The goo exuded by gelatinous cubes stuns you.

Vulnerable: You have a -4 penalty to defenses.

Ghouls make you vulnerable.

Weakened: You have a –4 penalty to attacks and to defenses.

Vampires weaken you.

Ongoing Damage

A creature (including PCs) taking ongoing damage takes that damage at the end of its turn

immediately before it rolls its save (always 11+ unless otherwise specified) against that ongoing damage. Success with the save means it won't take the damage again; failure means the effect will be repeated at the end of the creature's next turn.

Unlike some earlier d20 games, the ongoing damage amounts in our game are calibrated to work well when they stack. For example, if the Efreet with the flaming sword has hit you twice with an attack that deals 10 ongoing fire damage, you'll take 20 fire damage at the end of your turn, and then roll a save against each of those ongoing damage effects (two total).

End of the fight: Once a fight is over, the PCs are presumed to make their next saves. A player is welcome to narrate how their character shakes off the attack.

Gamemaster: Rolling multiple saves against ongoing effects that deal the same type of damage is easier on PCs because they're likely to save against at least part of the damage. Combining all the damage into one big save is more dramatic, and if you want to speed things up, feel free to combine saves.

Saves

The save mechanic, a d20 roll with no standard modifiers, handles everything from power recharge to saves against power effects to death saves. There are three difficulty values for saves. If a save doesn't specify what type it is, it's a normal save, 11+.

Easy: Roll 6+ on a d20
Normal: Roll 11+ on a d20
Hard: Roll 16+ on a d20

About modifiers: There are no standard bonuses to saves; unlike most d20 rolls in the game, you don't add your level or an ability modifier. But there are occasional talents, feats, and magic items that provide small bonuses to saves.

End of turn: If you get to make a save to end an ongoing effect, such as shaking off the effects of a poison, make that save at the end of your turn.

Resistance

Resistance to energy types and to any other type of damage is rated as a number corresponding to a d20 result. The higher the number, the more resistance you have.

Failure to penetrate resistance halves the damage: When a creature would damage you with a damage type you are resistant to, it has to roll a d20 and equal or exceed your resistance number to deal full damage. If the roll is lower than your resistance, the attack only deals half damage.

For example, suppose a fire elemental has Resist Fire 16+. A wizard hitting the elemental with a *fireball* has to roll a 16 or better on a d20 to punch through the resistance and do full damage. If the wizard rolls 15 or less, she only does half damage with the *fireball*.

13th Age also uses resistance against ongoing damage, so it's possible that a character who has resistance to fire will only take half damage from ongoing fire damage before rolling their save.

Immunity to normal energy: Any creature with resistance to an energy type is immune to normal energy of that type. A fire elemental, or a PC using a *resist energy* spell, can walk through regular fire and crawl in lava without being hurt. But magical attacks, magical weapons, and spells are different: the damage they do can get past the resistance because of the will and magic behind them—they aren't normal/mundane elements of the world.

This resistance = immunity rule only applies to energy types, not to the creatures like zombies that have Resist Weapons 6+. They're not immune to non-magic weapons.

Temporary Hit Points

Temporary hit points are like a boost of courage or other beneficial effect that keeps a character from harm. When you gain temporary hit points, keep track of them separately from your regular hit points. When you take damage, subtract it from your temporary hit points first, and only apply damage to your regular hit

points after the temporary hit points are used up.

Temporary hit points can stack up during a fight, but they reset to 0 after a battle and drop to 0 when you roll initiative.

Chapter 6: Running the Game

This chapter covers what you need to know to run fun *13th Age* campaigns. The first section, leveling up, speaks more to players and introduces the incremental advance rules. The rest of the chapter is more directed to the GM and provide rules for setting DCs, creating traps, building balanced (and unbalanced!) encounters, and rituals. Along the way there's advice on how to handle party healing, how the icons and gods fit into the world, and how much loot to give PCs.

LEVELING UP

We both presided over editions of the d20 game that tracked experience using experience points. In practice, we think that XP systems are better left to computer games. We generally let the characters advance a level after three or four full heal-ups, or in other words, between 12 and 16 serious battles. The whole party levels up together. Characters that miss a level-up can level before the next session. But we fudge leveling speed all the time for dramatic purposes. Sometimes it takes longer to level up, sometimes shorter.

Happily, our players don't mind slow leveling as much as they previously did when we used XP systems. For one thing, each increase in level means a lot more. Also, our incremental advance system (see below) gives the characters measured benefits even when they're not leveling up.

Rob says: *The best level to get players through quickly is first level. Gaining second level is an initiation, a rite of passage: "Now we are real adventurers!" You'll almost always benefit your campaign by giving the players the thrill of gaining second level early rather than late.*

Benefits of Leveling Up

When you level up, you get these benefits:

- +1 to attacks, defenses, and skill checks.
- An additional die of damage with weapon attacks.
- More hit points (by class).
- An additional feat. Choose any feat whose prerequisites your character satisfies. Feats are classed as adventurer (can be chosen at any level), champion (can be chosen at level 5+), and epic (can be chosen at level 8+).
- The ability to wield an additional magic item (see page XX).
- At 4th level, 7th level, and 10th level, you add +1 to three different ability scores.
- Possibly more powers and spells, and possibly an increase in their strength. The rules for acquiring or improving powers and spells vary from class to class. See character classes in Chapter 4 for details. In general, characters have a moderate number of attacks and spells. All the classes have some, but no single class has a large selection—that's for multiclass characters, who have lots of powers and spells.

Incremental Advance

After each session that goes well, the GM awards the players an incremental advance. The GM has the option to withhold an incremental advance if PCs have slacked off, deliberately dawdled, horribly underperformed, or fled a battle and taken a campaign loss (page XX).

When you gain an incremental advance, choose one of the traits of your next level to receive immediately instead of waiting until you level up. You're not stuck with your choice, however, once you do level up: say you chose a spell mid-adventure because you knew you would really need it. We don't force you to stick with that choice once you actually level up; you can choose a different spell at that point.

Character sheets have an *Incremental Advances* section to track which advances you have chosen. You can take each incremental advance only once (except power/spell, see below). If you run out of advances to take, that's tough. The advancement choices are:

Ability Score Bonuses: As a 4th, 7th, or 10th level incremental advance, you can choose +1 in three of your ability scores. In other words, when you are a 3rd-, 6th-, or 9th-level character, this is an attractive advancement to choose.

Feat: Choose a feat. For the purposes of this feat, your level is 1 higher than normal. When you level up, you can switch this feat out for another feat of your choice. It's not cheating to pick a feat that's going to help you in upcoming battles and then swap it out when you level up. Just come up with a good story for how that happens.

Hit points: Your maximum hit points increase as if you were one level higher. If you're presently damaged while mid-adventure, your current hit points increase by the same amount.

Magic item: You can wield an additional magic item as if you were 1 level higher.

Power or spell: Choose a single power or spell that you could take at your next level. If you have a choice of multiple powers or spells, then you can take this increment multiple times to match.

Skills: Add +1 to all skill checks.

No attack or defense bonuses: You only get these bonuses when you level up.

Player Picks: Adding Recurring Elements to the Game

At the end of every game session that has gone well, the GM may ask you to pick an element of the session's fiction you'd like to see as a recurrent part of the campaign. You might choose an NPC, a city, a type of monster, a legend, a magic item that got away, an ambiguously aligned cult of ecstatic dancing, or any other engaging element of the campaign that appeared in the current session. As the campaign develops further, the GM should incorporate the players' picks into it. Some of these picks should recur once, with the session "resolving" that pick. For example, killing a recurrent villain resolves that pick. Other picks take central roles in the campaign.

If the campaign already has enough player picks that have not yet been resolved, the GM can stop adding new ones.

Extraordinary Experience: A Level-Up Story Rule

Whenever a character levels up, you should choose some extraordinary experience that helped your PC solidify their gains and acquire new capabilities. This experience could be outside information, special training, access to ancient tomes, a spiritual experience at a holy site, unexpected insight in the middle of a victorious (or losing) battle, etc.

In the 1980s, adventurers often had to pay thousands of gold pieces for training to level up. In *13th Age*, you don't have to pay gold, but you *do* have to entertain the table with a story, or at least a few lines, explaining what extraordinary experience your character had. If there is some event or experience that happened during play, you can often interpret the situation to serve as your extraordinary experience. For example, if your fighter had a near-death experience against a foe that seemed unbeatable, you might look back later when you're leveling up and explain that your fighter learned something new about combat from that experience, which they had never encountered before.

Here are two options for using this rule:

Transcendent Moments

Moments that seemed transcendent or special during play work splendidly. Everyone wants to be reminded of such moments anyway, and a quick retelling when you level up allows you to rephrase the moment in light of subsequent experience.

New History

If you prefer, you can invent an extraordinary experience that no one has heard about before rather than remembering or reinterpreting a previous event. For example, you might say, "Remember that ship we sailed on to get to Axis? On that trip, you all noticed me hanging out with an old man. He was a retired swordsman, and he inspired me with his stories of heroic battles." Throw in some details if you

like, such as why the man retired. Feel free to suggest details about the world, especially your character's place in it. The possibilities are wide open. Maybe your character took private training with a superior in their class, found an ancient scroll or talisman that increased their power, or underwent a ritual that granted them additional power.

If your GM is nice, he or she might tell you how long you have before the start of the next encounter so you can use that time for your invented extraordinary experience. You can also look for these experiences ahead of time. If your character spends some weeks in a metropolis, you can probably improvise a visit to some local library or epic-level NPC where your character could find training. Then when your next level-up comes around, it means that your training is sinking in and paying off.

Don't interpret this rule to mean that only one event is solely responsible for your character's advance in power. Rather, the character is constantly getting better in general through practice and experience. These extraordinary experiences represent crux points in a character's growth. And the rule gives the hoary old level-up mechanic a story-positive role to play.

Newly invented pivotal experiences often relate to your class. But they could also relate to an aspect of one of your character's backgrounds. They might also relate to an experience the PCs shared, or you might invent an event that took place entirely off-stage.

Gamemaster: If your campaign is based on faster-than-normal level advancement, you might prefer to make extraordinary experience an every-other level or entirely optional event. It works best when it feels special to everyone, and some groups don't want to be put on the spot too often.

Campaign Level-Up Variant: the 10-session Campaign

In this quick campaign, the players start at 1st level and gain one level each session. The campaign concludes on the 10th session in a climactic confrontation with the PCs' personal enemies.

Each session includes two battles. These are double-strength battles because there are only two of them. A session will also include a small number of other features: encounters with NPCs, places to explore, traps, hazards, challenges, etc. In general, give the party about two opportunities a session to use background skills or icon relationships to advance their goals within the campaign.

Forget about incremental advances. Advances provide players with modest bonuses while they wait for their next level to come up. In the 10-session campaign, there's no waiting, so you don't need the advances.

Reduce the PCs' recoveries to three per session.

The characters get a level's worth of treasure spread out among one session's encounters. They get a full heal-up and a level-up at the end of each session.

The action can bounce around the map from session to session. You've only got ten sessions for them to see the world, so don't have them stay in one place. You can make a checklist of locations on the map you want the campaign to go. At the start of each session, summarize what has happened in the days, weeks, or even months since the last session. Fast forward through the administrative stuff, like travel, and race to the action—important NPCs, exotic places to explore, and high-powered battles.

With just ten sessions, you need to stick pretty tightly to the core story line. The campaign world should be changing around the PCs as they gain levels. Eventually, they should face a climactic battle at 10th level. Their deeds in this battle and in the previous nine adventures may make a big difference in how the whole campaign world fares, or at least how the icons they're related to end up.

ENVIRONMENTS: RULES FOR THE THREE TIERS OF PLAY

Any place in the game world that a player might want to make a skill check is an environment, of

which there are three tiers: adventurer, champion, and epic.

Adventurer environments are city streets, wilderness areas, shallow dungeons, regular old ruins, and that sort of thing. They're basically anywhere a 1st-level adventuring party might go.

Champion environments are heavy duty locales. They are the deeper dungeons, the danker swamps, the guarded gates of the big cities, the secret redoubt of a blue dragon sorcerer (disguised as an inn), the unholy sanctum at the heart of an otherwise adventurer-tier dungeon, the depths of the dangerous woods, a warlord's camp, and those sorts of places.

Epic environments are typically related to icons, unique villains, deep underworld locations or creatures, the most forbidding peaks, the upper reaches of the world, and so on.

If you're having trouble remembering the order of the tiers, use the mnemonic ACE: Adventurer/Champion/Epic.

First-level characters usually spend time in adventurer-tier environments, unless they're pig-headed and barge into a champion-level area. After they gain a few levels, their skill checks get easier, but then they start adventuring in champion-tier environments, and suddenly hidden doors are harder to find, the traps harder to avoid, and the NPCs tougher to sway with a glib tongue. Soon enough, the characters master the champion level, but then they start getting pulled into epic environments, where once again they are in a little over their heads. By the end of the campaign, they are competent even in epic environments.

The GM determines the environs where the adventure takes place. When characters take an unexpected turn during an adventure, the GM can change the environment to match. The players should be aware, however, that if you try to sneak into an icon's palace or fortress, the going is likely to get rough.

Characters who are levels 1–3 nearly always interact with adventurer environments, though PCs who insist on going where they don't belong will surely find champion environments where a few mistakes can be deadly.

Characters who are levels 4–6 generally deal with champion environments, but some of their adventures still occur in adventurer environments (see the Adventure Environment chart below for most common environment at each level).

Characters who are level 7 and above transition from champion environments into epic environments.

Environment Chart by Level

Level	Type of Environment
1–3	Always adventurer
4	Mostly adventurer, some champion
5	Half adventurer, half champion
6	Mostly champion, some adventurer
7	Mostly champion, some epic
8	Half champion, half epic
9	Mostly epic, some champion
10	Always epic

Environment DCs for Skill Checks

The environment the PCs are in determines the DC of skill checks and other challenges they may face. Use the following charts as a guideline for setting the difficulty of those checks.

Adventurer-tier Skill Check DCs

Normal task: DC 15
Hard task: DC 20
Ridiculously hard task: DC 25

Champion Skill Check DCs

Normal task: DC 20
Hard task: DC 25
Ridiculously hard task: DC 30

Epic Skill Check DCs

Normal task: DC 25
Hard task: DC 30
Ridiculously hard task: DC 35

Of course, as GM you can tinker with the DCs a touch instead of making them all multiples of 5. You shouldn't *need* to tinker, but it won't hurt.

You can also rule that higher-tier characters don't ordinarily screw up normal tasks from a lower tier, so that PCs don't have to roll such checks hoping to avoid the dreaded natural 1. Make them roll when it's dramatic or logical that there's a chance of failure.

Impromptu Damage

When you need to determine how much damage some effect deals, base the damage on two things: the environment and whether the damage affects one character or many. Falling off a crumbling cliff wall in adventurer tier? Use the single target column and one of the three adventurer rows. Splashing hot oil over the entire party because of an "accident" on the Sea Wall during a champion tier monster-bash? Use the multiple targets column.

As GM, you can tell players of adventurer-tier PCs something like, "You wouldn't want to fall into that crevasse, it's a champion-tier environment. And if the demons in the crevasse happen to be off-gassing? Then it's epic tier." And if they get caught in the crevasse anyway, you've got the champion and epic tier DCs and damage numbers to draw on from the chart below.

These obstacles work best when used as one-shot additions to the flow of the game. A single nasty trap or difficult environment obstacle doesn't amount to as big a challenge as an entire battle with monsters. Our next phase of development is going to provide our answer to the question, "What is a trap worth, then?" Should it be something like two or three mooks of a level that depends on the degree of challenge? So that a normal challenge counts as mooks of a low level in the tier and a ridiculously hard trap counts as two or three mooks of the highest level in the tier? Answers pending. @@

Traps & Obstacles

As shown in the chart below, attack rolls for traps and other features of the environment follow the same mathematical model as DCs for skill checks.

Sample Traps & Obstacles

Here are example DCs for common traps and obstacles:

Adventurer-tier locked door: DC 15 to open, one way or another.

Adventurer-tier poison trap: DC 15 skill check to notice, +5 vs. PD, 3d6 poison damage and 5 ongoing poison.

Adventurer-tier ring of fire trap (passable but tricky): +5 attack vs. PD of target who crosses it; Hit: 2d6 fire damage; Miss: half damage.

Swinging pendulum blade trap: DC 17 skill check using Dexterity to move past the blade without risking getting hit by it; on a failure, +5 attack vs. AC; Hit: 5d6 damage.

Note: When you make a skill check to escape any type of negative consequences, the attack only happens if you blow the skill check.

Skill Check DCs, Trap/Obstacle Attacks & Impromptu Damage by Environment

Tier	Degree of Challenge	Skill Check DC	Trap or Obstacle Attack Roll vs. AC/PD/MD	Impromptu Damage (Single Target)	Impromptu Damage (Multiple Targets)
Adventurer	Normal	15	+5	2d6 or 3d6	1d10 or 1d12
Adventurer	Hard	20	+10	3d6	1d12
Adventurer	Ridiculously hard	25	+15	3d6 or 4d6	1d12 or 2d8
Champion	Normal	20	+10	4d6 or 4d8	2d10 or 2d12
Champion	Hard	25	+15	4d8	2d12
Champion	Ridiculously hard	30	+20	4d8 or 2d20	2d12 or 3d10
Epic	Normal	25	+15	2d20 or 3d20	3d12 or 4d10
Epic	Hard	30	+20	3d20	4d10
Epic	Ridiculously hard	35	+25	3d20 or 4d20	4d10 or 4d12

BUILDING BATTLE ENCOUNTERS

When you build a battle encounter for your players, start with the idea that you'll have one enemy creature per PC, with each creature being of the party's level. For example, if the party consists of four 2nd-level heroes, then four 2nd level enemy creatures will make a worthy fight.

But that's only how it works at adventurer tier, levels 1–4. When the PCs hit 5th level, battles get harder. Champion tier PCs, levels 5–7, should ideally fight one enemy creature per PC, with each creature being one level higher than the PCs. A party of four 6th level PCs should fight at least four 7th level monsters for a good battle.

You can see what's coming: at epic tier, levels 8–10, the monsters should weigh in at two levels above the PCs if they appear in equal numbers. Four 9th level PCs match up against four 11th level monsters!

Monster level: Of course, you don't want to always be using the same number of monsters at the same predictable levels. Lower-level monsters count as fractions of an adventurer-level monster, and higher-level monsters count as multiples. A group of four 5th level monsters, for example, is equivalent to six 4th level monsters, eight 3rd level monsters, three 6th level monsters, two 7th level monsters, or one 8th or 9th level monster (see chart below). If the monster is 1 level lower, it counts as (roughly) 2/3 of a monster of the PC's level. If it's 2 levels lower, it counts as half a monster of the PC's level. Conversely, monsters 1 level higher count as 1.5 monsters, 2 levels higher is 2 monsters, 3 levels higher is 3 monsters, and 4 levels higher is 4 monsters each.

Mooks: It takes 5 mooks to equal one standard creature.

Large monsters: A large monster counts as 2 standard monsters.

Huge monsters: A huge monster counts as 3 standard monsters.

Monster Equivalents

Monster Lvl Adv	Monster Lvl Champion	Monster Lvl Epic	Standard	Mook	Large	Huge
2 levels lower	1 level lower	same level	0.5	0.1	1	1.5
1 level lower	same level	1 level higher	0.7	0.15	1.5	2
same level	**1 level higher**	**2 levels higher**	**1**	**.2**	**2**	**3**
1 level higher	2 levels higher	3 levels higher	1.5	.3	3	4
2 levels higher	3 levels higher	4 levels higher	2	.4	4	6
3 levels higher	4 levels higher	5 levels higher	3	.6	6	8
4 levels higher	5 levels higher	6 levels higher	4	.8	8	

Monster Special Abilities: Each monster's level is the number used to generate its stats. The number corresponds roughly to the monster's overall threat level, but it doesn't take into account special abilities. That means that monsters with better special abilities are scarier than monsters with worse special abilities. When you use monsters with especially nasty special abilities, be aware of the increased threat that they represent. You might, for instance, hit the party with fewer such monsters than normal, or not. When you throw a bunch of nasty undead at the party, you can always shrug

your shoulders in feigned helplessness and say, "Sorry, this system doesn't take monster powers into account when balancing encounters. Roll initiative."

Unfair Encounters

The advice in the "Building Battle Encounters" section above is what you use to make your encounters fair.

But what's the fun of that?

The reason we've provided such balanced monsters is so that you can choose interesting ways to make most all battles unfair, one way or another. The monsters are balanced to give you room to get creative. In each encounter, the monsters should get some sort of advantage.

Potent powers: A monster's special abilities don't get factored into its level, so monsters with the best special abilities have an advantage.

Nastier Specials: Some monster write-ups specify powers that you can add to make a monster tougher or more interesting. You can add them to your monsters if the PCs are tearing through the opposition too easily, use them the second time the PCs fight the same monsters, or add them to higher level versions of a monster.

Weight of numbers: This is always an easy way to make things more fun. Throw in more monsters.

Reinforcements: This advantage is an easy way to make a battle fresh. Reinforcements that show up during the battle create a different dynamic from extra monsters that are in the battle from the beginning. Reinforcements keep the monsters kicking for a while without overwhelming the heroes all at once. If the reinforcements are significant, they swing the tide of battle toward the enemy, preventing the escalation die from advancing the round they arrive, or even setting it back. If the players have advance warning that reinforcements are on the way, it messes with their heads.

Advantageous terrain: Flying creatures might have an advantage over ground creatures fighting on uneven ground. Lizardfolk might have an advantage in knee-deep water, where they can use their tails to help them maneuver.

Undead could have an advantage in some sort of unholy tomb. A blood shaman's blessing would give orcs an advantage in battle. You get the idea. It's standard to grant monsters a +2 bonus to attacks to represent their relative advantage, but there are plenty of possibilities.

ADVICE ON HEAL-UPS

Normally, the party gets to take a full heal-up after about four battles. The point of the four-battle heal-up rule is to make players want to press on instead of holing up, which is what the traditional rules reward you for.

So what happens when the party has been weakened so badly that it would be madness and suicide to press on? If the party decides to heal-up ahead of time, assuming they are able to rest, they suffer a "campaign loss" (per page XX in Chapte 5). What does that mean? At your discretion, the situation in the campaign gets noticeably worse for the party. Ideally, the campaign loss can be traced to decision to take the heal-up. For example, maybe it turns out that someone in the party knows a forbidden prayer to the Diabolist that a desperate mortal can say to gain healing. The party gets a heal-up, but the Diabolist gets . . . something. It might also simply be that taking time to rest gives an advantage to the characters' enemies. The campaign-loss rule is key to making combat meaningful. We all know most GMs probably won't kill the PCs permanently, but if the PCs can't fight their way through four battles, the game world suffers.

Try to sync up a heal-up with some sort of event in the game world. For example, if the party gets a heal-up just before they reach a town, have them welcomed there and treated well, so that the mechanical effects of the heal-up (on the player level) correlate with the events in the game world (on the character level). Also, if the PCs find some special source of healing, you can give them some recoveries back and let them make extra recharge rolls, sort of like a partial heal-up.

Sticking with daily heal-ups: It's a big change to go from traditional "per day" healing

to our heal-up system. If it's too big a change for you, have players recover powers and hit points on a "per day" basis. If you've successfully run a previous d20 game, you've already dealt with the repercussions of "per day" attrition and recovery. If daily powers, frequent battles, and infrequent battles aren't balanced in a per-day system, at least it's an imbalance that you're used to. A previous d20 edition gave all classes the same array of daily powers, so even though daily powers were unbalanced, at least the classes were balanced against each other. Heal-ups are our way to balance daily powers and battles of any frequency.

Rob says: I combine our rules for full heal-ups after four battles with a nod to the advantages of getting a good night's rest in a comfy inn. Getting a great night of sleep in the middle of an adventure doesn't give characters in my games the benefit of a full heal-up, but I do let each character roll a single free die for recovered hit points. Then I ask the players to tell me which character got the best rest, and why, and the "winner" gets to roll a hard save to recover one daily power. Benevolence incarnate.

THE WORLD & ITS ICONS

The following material is a mix of background on our default setting, suggestions for ways you could put your own creative spin on it, and tools for running any *13th Age* campaign.

Our History

When the world contains at least thirteen ages, there's a lot of room for ancient kingdoms, catastrophes, and wars. Historically speaking, an "age" is a couple centuries or so. Accounts of these ancient times, and even more recent ages, often contradict each other. Our standard account follows, but your campaign might spin myth and history quite differently.

According to most magicians and loremasters, the 1st Age began with the defeat of the Wizard King and the founding of the Dragon Empire, and it ended centuries later when giants sacked the Dwarf King and razed Axis.

The 2nd Age rose from the ashes of the first, prospered, and fell. Each age since then has likewise started with civilization rebuilding itself after a catastrophe, and each age has ended in catastrophe. Sometimes the elves or dwarves hang on better than the humans, and more of their civilizations survive the catastrophe. Most catastrophes big enough to take down the Empire, however, also undermine its allies, and some catastrophes are big enough to bring ruin to all the realms.

Records from the early ages are vague, contradictory, and scarce. Elves, dwarves, and humans tell different stories about what happened from the 3rd Age to the 9th, how each of those ages began, what happened during them, and how they ended. Even concerning the ages on which there is agreement, each historian teaches a slightly different history. If you want to invent ruins and mysteries that fall outside the world's known history, set them before the 1st Age or set them somewhere in the nebulous middle.

The 12th Age ended in a plague that may or may not have been the Diabolist's fault. According to popular wisdom, no single catastrophe ends two ages in a row, so no one's really worried about some horrible super-plague breaking out.

Each age is defined in large part by which icons are strongest, or at least most successful. The stories that survive catastrophe are mostly about the icons or their associated heroes and villains. In this 13th Age, the appearance of the Priestess is something new, and it probably portends something momentous. The return of an Orc Lord is also unprecedented, and no High Druid has made her home within the Imperial borders for ages. Civilization's icons are strong. Civilization's challengers are strong as well.

Icons by Other Names

Ordinarily one of our published campaign settings would choose names for key NPCs that evoke wonder and a sense of a specific individual history. But we didn't choose that route for *13th Age*. Instead we chose somewhat generic names for the icons to leave room for

you to customize icon identities in each of your campaigns.

If most of the icons keep their usual names, the changes you do make will clue the players in to what's different about your campaign. So if you hate referring to the Orc Lord and want to call him Bloodfang, do it, and then follow up with twists that exploit the move—vampiric orc lord, anyone?

In the Presence of the Icons

We keep the icons themselves off-stage while the characters are in the adventurer tier. Interactions with the icon go through the icon's organization or their other followers. Personal interactions with an icon become more likely at champion and epic tier. You'll want to think beforehand about how the icon might make people feel in their presence. Use this quick list as inspiration for what you might tell the PCs, unless, of course, your campaign's icons are different.

Archmage . . .

. . . to most anyone

You feel yourself not so much an individual person but rather an electric channel of force and information, connected to the past and future by eternal laws, as if everything you are now saying and thinking was put into motion eons ago.

Crusader . . .

. . . to a tough-guy fighter

Nothing would be more natural than for the Crusader to say, "We ride," and for you to jump on your horse and follow this badass son of a bitch into hell, or death, or wherever he leads.

Diabolist . . .

…to most anyone

You feel outdated and obsolete, a flesh and blood being in a new world made out of fear and cruelty, and the mortal world is like ripe grain before the scythe.

Dwarf King . . .

. . . to a nondwarf

You feel as though you have delved deep below the surface world and come face to face with the very being of all the lower world's might and majesty.

Elf Queen . . .

. . . to an elf

You have a momentary vision that stops you cold, as if you have instantly seen through the eyes of every elf in the world.

Emperor . . .

. . . to most anyone

When you look at him, you are looking not at a man but at a god. He seems to be the center of the world, and the Empire is his biography.

Great Gold Wyrm . . .

. . . to someone using prayer to contact him directly for the first time

You feel confident and safe as you never have before. You discern a symbol of golden energy surging at blinding speed along a course shaped like an infinity symbol, and you intuit that all apparent defeats are illusions, with ultimate and perfect victory already guaranteed.

High Druid . . .

. . . to a wizard

You are astonished to realize that the geometric mental images that you use to focus your magic have sprung to life. Now when you call up mental runes to meditate on, they swell and bulge with pregnant life, bursting within your focus into fertile swirls and flourishes.

Lich King . . .

. . . to most anyone

For each wound or heartache you have suffered, you feel an echo; each remembered pain is slight, but together they are a burden that only a hero could bear.

Orc Lord . . .

. . . to a non-orc

You have an uneasy awareness of your own flesh. Many parts are edible.

Priestess . . .

. . . to a nonbeliever

You feel at once both a horrid disgust at your own unworthiness and an uplifting gratitude for being nevertheless accepted by the Priestess.

Prince of Shadows . . .

. . . to someone who has just had something precious stolen by the Prince of Shadows and may not realize it yet

You look over your shoulder because you could swear there was someone behind you. There's no one there. Eh? What's that at your feet?

The Three, Red . . .

. . . to most anyone

You feel small and weak, as if you were a clumsy bug. The Red seems to be built out of victory, and you feel as if you were bred to be its victim.

Fighting the Icons

We're not presenting stats for the icons in this book. We know that campaigns that make it into the epic tier can pivot around the death of icons. We think it's cool when a campaign provides an awesome epic tier PC with a shot at becoming an icon, possibly at the expense of one of the current thirteen. So we plan to provide stats for the icons some day, probably accounting for a variety of approaches depending on different styles of campaign. But we want to be sure we thoroughly understand what we're doing before we bring these demi-gods in range of your d20s.

Alternative Icons

You can customize your campaign by treating some of your icons differently or knocking an icon out of your campaign and dealing with the consequences. Here are some alternative treatments to get you started.

Missing Archmage: It's been ages since there was a true Archmage. All there is today is the Imperial College of Arcanery, with its rotating roster of self-important deans and presidents. In this age, wizards work desperately to recover some of the great power that past Archmages wielded.

Different Archmage: If you and your players are using one or the other of the well-established d20 worlds, you may already be familiar with an ancient yet strangely spry wizard who is accustomed to serving as the patron of younger adventurers: Big E, for one, keeps the tides shifting and the wards strong.

Different Crusader: This Crusader is a dilettante. When he's committed to a crusade, he's the incarnation of vindictive judgment. But after his inevitable round of successes, he gets bored and chooses a new target. Yes, he succeeded in taking some hellholes from the Diabolist. But then he declared that particular crusade accomplished and turned his wrath against . . . well, pretty much anyone you want him to attack.

Missing Diabolist: The last Diabolist has been missing for decades, evidently devoured when she raised up something that she couldn't put back down. The Golden Paladins and the Dark Crusader are enthusiastically prosecuting their campaign against the Abyss, and some speak of ultimate victory over all demons. Is this good news for civilization? In the long run, yes, but not today. Without a powerful personality to control them toward some distant goal, demons have begun bubbling up here and there, wreaking havoc almost at random.

Different Dwarf King: The Dwarf King embodies not just the might of stone but also the forbidden mysteries of the endless deep as well. Lunatic derros count among his loyal subjects, and even the Zen-like wisdom of the dwarves is not strictly rational. Surface dwellers come to the Dwarf's throne to learn timeless secrets best left unheard.

Different Elf Queen: The Elf Queen lives in the realm of waking dreams, which she and all elves enter via trance. There, she contacts elves through the astral plane, fortifying and harmonizing them. Most elves simply feel her general presence as she brushes past the general population. Champion and epic elves dwell in her presence while in trance. How she reaches so many elves simultaneously is not well understood. (We prefer that you interpret this contact as a sort of mystical union, not a holographic projection or virtual reality, and not as a way to shunt information and psychic energy from elf to elf.)

For a campaign that includes elf PCs, or is all elf PCs, this contact provides a definitive mystical center. For a campaign that wants a new dramatic hook, the Elf Queen might be emerging from dreams into the Empire beyond, a birthing process that wouldn't be entirely easy for the elves and their lands.

Different Elf Queen: Instead of maintaining a single Court, the Elf Queen spends seven years at a time with each of the three elven kindred. The Queen changes to match her people. The "sevens" are different for each group: High elf sevens are magical and refined, wood elf sevens are joyful and fluid, and drow sevens are dark and sketchy.

Different Emperor: The Emperor seemed like a normal Emperor early in his reign, but now he is living up to the legends of his ancestors and harnessing power that recent Emperors have only dreamt of. He seems to have figured out how to control at least one Koru Behemoth (see page XX) and plans to send it stomping through Hell Marsh. He plans to destroy Omen (and perhaps even the Necropolis, if he's lucky) by "temporarily" allowing the full fury of the Iron Sea to fall upon those islands while leaving most of the rest of the land unscathed. An empowered Emperor could be more dangerous than a squad of evil icons.

Different Great Gold Wyrm: The Battle of the Last Age is upon us. The Great Gold Wyrm must live and rise again to defeat the Abyss or all of creation will be devoured. There is one chance to revive him, or face extinction.

Different High Druid: The invasion of the Empire by the Forces of the Wild has taken an unexpected form. Wherever the wilderness meets civilized lands, out of the wilds come friendly animals, amiable treants, playful satyrs, and all manner of unusual characters. They say they've come to make peace, and what a lively, high-spirited, lusty peace it is.

Different Lich King: The Lich King is amassing some sort of power or energy, but his plan is ages in the making. For now, he is a reasonable fellow, good to his word, and patient as the grave. As long as the proper rituals are conducted, the proper sacrifices made, the cemeteries cared for, and no taboos violated, the Lich King is a de facto ally of the Emperor. If the price is right, he may even send minions to aid the Empire in a time of need. A certain morbid fascination with the undead has even become fashionable among young elites.

Different Orc Lord: The Orc Lord has served the Emperor in several campaigns against barbarians and monsters, earning gold, weapons, and praise each time. The service has been mostly loyal but always messy. The Emperor's goal was to deplete the Orc's armies, but instead the armies have just gotten stronger. Now that the Orc Lord has handled the enemies of the Empire, he is licking his chops in anticipation of elf meat.

Different Priestess: The Priestess is pregnant, and the fate of all the worlds is said to be tied to the unborn child. Whoever learns who the father is (or really is), is sworn to secrecy.

Different Prince of Shadows: He's taken everything he wants, and now he only needs to do one more thing to feel like he's won—destroy everything that everybody else has. In one outrageous heist after another, the Prince snatches away the most powerful wards, protective seals, blessed abjurations, and everything else that holds good things together and bad things out. Almost inadvertently, the other icons lurch into war against each other, with every hope for peace stolen before it can be realized.

Different Three: Just as the Blue is a patron of sorcerers, the Black is a patron of monks, and the Red is a patron of a loose brotherhood of itinerant warriors (barbarians). The monks are deadly, but they are also renowned for their subtle calligraphy and exquisite flower arranging. The warriors are typically fugitives from justice, though some admire them as free spirits (like present-day bikers).

Oh the Insanity

We've kept our core setting somewhat sane so that individual campaigns can spiral into madness. Depending on your predilections, the 13th Age could be the age where one or more of the icons lose their freaking minds.

The Blue might be so wracked by magic that it's no longer sane in any language. The Diabolist might establish a secret cult whose members go progressively insane and who can spread insanity to others. The Orc Lord's advancing armies might spawn an echo-plague of homicidal insanity and cannibalism. The Archmage's grasp on what the little people call reality may become so Olympian that reality snaps as his wards enforce an "order" inherited from a higher beyond-Euclidean plane. Pile on with more of that action and the PCs may end up needing a Sanity stat.

Visitors from Other Worlds

It's a feature of freewheeling fantasy worlds that they want methods of drafting monsters, heroes, and visitors from other worlds. The Empire offers several obvious entry points for creatures from other worlds, if that's your GM pleasure.

Flying realms: Lands dropping out of the sky can come from any sky, not just the other side of the horizon. Most flying realms are connected to this world, but the masters of the High Arcane generally agree that lands cut free from their connection to the ground become somewhat more likely to fly free of the world they originally belonged to.

Dungeons rising: Dungeons rising from below the world bombard the surface with a steady stream of bizarre entities and fiendish creations. Many of them claim to have originated on other worlds.

Portals & similar transports: Have no shame about using portals to other worlds. It's a staple because it works. Just remember to ask who or what, if anything, is responsible for the opening, and for everyone's sake, try to make your portals unique: "Just like every portal you've seen in the movies, except . . ."

The Abyss: The fiends that assail the Empire from out of the Abyss are nearly all malevolent creatures from other worlds that are furious to have been trapped in corporeal form and locked within this world. What else have they brought with them?

ABOUT GODS

Commonly, a campaign is defined by its gods, but a *13th Age* campaign is defined by its icons. Like gods, the icons wield world-shaping power and define moral perspectives. We center on icons, however, because they are mortal. They are in the world with the PCs, and the PCs can affect them. The campaign is about the characters, so we prefer it when the most powerful entities in the campaign are in scale with the PCs. In other words, the world of *13th Age* does have gods, but unlike the icons, the gods don't define the campaign.

You could certainly change the focus in your campaign. If you make the gods immanent beings walking the land, they might function something like icons and PCs could have icon-style relations with such gods. But that's not the game as we've phrased it.

Many Campaigns, Many Gods

If you have been running other fantasy roleplaying games, you may already have a d20 pantheon or two you enjoy using. We think the pantheons in most every edition of the d20 roleplaying game are pretty good. We've used gods from each of the other d20 games in our campaigns, alongside gods we made up, gods from fantasy novels, and gods worshipped by many human cultures. Norse and Greek and Celtic and Egyptian gods resonate well with some players.

Our standard explanation for allowing bric-a-brac pantheons is that the Dragon Empire is a lot like many early fantasy roleplaying campaigns, containing interesting fragments of many intersecting worlds. Shipwrecked survivors of other oceans crash onto the beaches of the Iron Sea. Fragments of other realities surface in living dungeons and drift into the world on flying lands. Immigrants from any reality you want to use in your game could have come to the Empire in the near or distant past.

Gods are tenacious survivalists. Once they reach a world, they have a knack for surviving. Feel free to arrange any backstory you like for a deity or pantheon.

Your campaign's alternative: If you're not happy with the multiversal deity approach, use the pantheon you prefer or the pantheon your players are most comfortable with, or make up a pantheon that suits the campaign you are about to run.

New Gods for New Campaigns

Rob says: I'm making up new pantheons for one of my campaigns. The three gods below are examples of gods I want in my game and don't want to adopt from elsewhere. Jonathan definitely wouldn't do this. (It's not that Jonathan doesn't care about gods—Glorantha is one of our favorite fantasy worlds and it's all about its gods—but Jonathan wants to keep the focus on the icons.)

Dwella: A lonely goddess of the Underworld—lonely because the dwarves used to worship her, but only because they lived in her domain. When they left her domain she lost most of her worshipers. The poisoning of her domain didn't poison her. The few worshipers she has left tend to be dark elves whose mode of rebellion is to worship an untraditional deity and adventurers who appreciate that Dwella can sometimes warn of the passage of dungeons rising through her depths.

Iron: The original god of the wild ocean, Iron is now a nature god so out of control that the High Druid advises against propitiating him.

Szan, God of Necessary Murder: A vigilante deity better known for deadliness than good judgment. One of the Crusader's gods.

The Ungods

Jonathan says: In my campaign, you can worship whatever gods you like (though it hardly matters), and people talk about "the gods" almost abstractly. The gods are behind everything but distant from everyone. Who made the world? The gods. Who gives clerics their spells? The gods. Who sanctifies

marriage and enforces oaths? Who oversees the rise and fall of nations? The gods, that's who. While almighty, the gods are distant. Perhaps the evil or pathetic behavior of mortals has driven them far away.

The gods still heed some people: prophets, clerics, and congregations singing the sacred hymns. The people worship various gods, excluding few and fearing none. There are countless cults, traditions, holidays, and sacrifices devoted to particular gods, but all these things are mortal doings. Myths and traditions vary from city to city and age to age. The gods themselves never make any sort of direct appearance. Relegating the gods to a less direct role in the campaign allows the icons to rise in prominence.

Thinking of the Icons as Gods

The icons aren't gods. But that doesn't stop some people from more or less worshipping them.

The Blessed Emperor: The *first and original* Blessed Emperor receives worship as a god in parts of the Empire. None of the subsequent Emperors qualify. Clerics and paladins who are hugely devoted to the Dragon Empire frequently worship the Blessed Emperor, though most of the other gods think of the Blessed Emperor as more of a saint than an actual god. The Cathedral has a couple of shrines dedicated to the Blessed Emperor on its North and South extensions, but the Blessed Emperor does not speak to the Priestess, or for that matter, the current Emperor.

The Great Gold Wyrm: Technically the Great Gold Wyrm is not a god. But the Wyrm has clerics and paladins who worship the Good that reflects off each of the Wyrm's scales. So technicalities aside, if you want your cleric or paladin to be devoted to the Great Gold Wyrm, go ahead.

The Priestess: A character devoted to the Priestess is by definition devoted to all the gods of light who speak through her. As they say in the sitcoms, complications may ensue.

The Evil Icons: Other than the Crusader, the evil icons would be quite happy if their followers mistakenly worshipped them as gods. It doesn't happen often, and even the Diabolist's

cults usually pivot on her to worship or summon demons.

RITUALS

Most spells available to clerics, sorcerers, and wizards are either combat spells or useful in combat. But our vision of the world is that many spellcasters use magic outside of combat for varied effects that aren't properly handled by a literal reading of the spell lists.

Our solution is to allow ritual casting of *any* spell known by a character who can use ritual magic. Clerics and wizards learn ritual magic as part of their training. Other spellcasters can learn ritual magic by taking the Ritual Casting feat (page XX).

As a rule, ritual casting is an elaborate sequence of magical actions. The usual process and complication of a ritual comes across something like a combination of staging a puppet show (where the puppets are magical servitors) and cooking a five-course meal (where the final product is a desired magical effect).

To cast a spell as a ritual:

- Choose the spell that will be used and expended by the ritual.
- Tell the GM what you are trying to accomplish and gather ingredients for the ritual that feel right or that the GM tells you are necessary. This can turn into a mini-adventure in itself if the GM or player want to take the story in that direction.
- Spend 1d3 minutes/quarter-hours/hours preparing and casting the ritual. You can't cast other spells during this period. A PC taking damage won't necessarily end the ritual, but it will be ruined if a character falls unconscious or launches an attack of their own. Note that we're not telling you exactly which time period you should use because we think that pace varies greatly campaign-by-campaign. Some rituals feel right taking hours. Others seem like they could be accomplished in minutes. The important thing is that rituals ordinarily can't be

cast during combat, or if they are it's a very dicey proposition as enemies try to take out the caster before the ritual is complete.

- Make a skill check using one of your magical backgrounds and the ability score the GM deems appropriate. Use the standard DC targets (or a special DC set by the GM), depending on your tier and the results you're hoping for. The higher the level of the spell consumed by the ritual, the greater the effect.

Determining Results: Choose outcomes that seem like logical (or magical!) outgrowths of the spell's normal effects. The effects don't have to play within the usual constraints of the magic system, and they don't have to be taken as a precedent for future rituals. Performing a magic ritual once actually makes it less likely that the same caster can perform the same ritual for the same effect again, because the world builds resistance to being broken. That's how we play it, anyway, since we think that great magicians like the Archmage and Priestess are more limited in what they can accomplish with mighty magic than it would first appear. Examples of some ritual effects appear below.

Failure Means Life Gets Interesting: As usual, use the fail forward mechanic: most rituals "work," but failure may get you results you had not properly bargained for such as side effects that send the story careening in a direction no one intended, complications with spirits that aided in the ritual but fail to disperse when the ritual is done, and coming to the attention of enemy spellcasters who note the disturbance of a partially-botched ritual as a disturbance in the aether.

Rituals expend the spell: No matter what outcome the ritual has, ritual casting expends the spell until your next full heal-up.

Faster Rituals: The High Arcana talent of the wizard allows you to cast a ritual in a matter of rounds instead of minutes. The elaborate preparations of normal rituals aren't used during fast *high arcana* rituals, but they should still require some type of component and

unusual elaboration. Note that ritual casting in combat doesn't usually let you make a combat spell into an even better combat spell. Rituals aren't meant to be used to blast enemies into smithereens, though one could imagine a ritual aimed at a tower or a magic portal—destruction *is* an option. But not the type of destruction that occurs during a battle.

Summary: The key, then, is to use the spells already in the PCs' arsenals as the basis of a free-form magic system that's accomplishing noncombat effects. Part of the fun is setting the scene and explaining the ritual in the context of the world's magic; don't stint on your special effects budget.

Example Ritual 1: *The PCs acquire a fearsome bow created by the Diabolist. Simply carrying the bow threatens to overwhelm the rogue who has no intention of using it. No NPC with an ounce of good-intention is willing to take the risk of disposing of the bow. So the wizard improvises a magic item destruction ritual using acid arrow, the perfect spell for disintegrating a demonic bow.*

Example Ritual 2: *Two of the PCs have been thrown in irons and dragged into a gladiatorial pit that serves one of Axis' arenas. The PCs actually want to be there, but they need their weapons and armor, which will enable them to accomplish their mission in the arena instead of the gladiators' weapons that are designed to get them killed. So the group's wizard uses a* sleep *ritual on the guards watching their gear so that the rogue can sneak the PCs' real weapons to them, while the ritual casting bard executes a* glamor *ritual to hide the switch. The plan is a lot of trouble, perhaps, but when it's time to assassinate an archduke in the arena, two spells is a small price for creating such a set up.*

LOOT: TREASURE REWARDS

The magic item section at the back of this book is based on the idea that in a typical four-encounter section of an adventure, each PC may find loot equal to what's listed on the chart below. You shouldn't be predictable about handing out this treasure though. It could come in a steady stream of small scores, in one big

185

treasure trove defended by the worst monsters, or in a few scattered chests.

GP Per Level Chart

1st Level PCs: 100 gp per character
2nd Level PCs: 125 gp per character
3rd Level PCs: 175 gp per character
4th Level PCs: 210 gp per character
5th Level PCs: 250 gp per character
6th Level PCs: 325 gp per character
7th Level PCs: 425 gp per character
8th Level PCs: 500 gp per character
9th Level PCs: 650 gp per character
10th Level PCs: 850 gp per character

Chapter 7: Monsters

The monsters in this chapter hew closely to the traditions of dungeon-crawling fantasy with a few links to the icons and locations of *13th Age*. Our monstrous horizons will expand in future books.

When you want to create your own monsters, the tables and design text at the end of the chapter can guide your steps; designing monsters is intended to be quick and easy.

MONSTER RULES

The following rules for handling monsters are different than the rules for handling player characters.

Monster Stats

Only the heroes get to add the escalation die to their attacks (therefore monster defenses start 1 point higher than we would normally set them).

Monster damage: Most monster attacks deal a set amount of damage instead of being expressed as dice rolls like player character attacks. Monster abilities, triggered powers, critical hits, and the big difference between a hit and a miss vary the amount of damage the monsters deal. (See the sidebar "a discussion of rationale".)

Monsters' triggered powers: Instead of requiring a separate die roll to see which attack monsters use, use the natural result of the creature's d20 attack roll to see what other riders or attacks trigger. The standard default is 16+. Unpredictable monsters can have effects trigger on other rolls, such as odd/even, 5 or less, 6+, etc.

Rob says: *Monster Damage Rationale—Jonathan has always run 3e, 4e, and* 13th Age *using average results for monster damage instead of rolling the dice. I always stuck to rolling monster damage dice, claiming that Jonathan's version might make monsters somewhat predictable . . . while gradually realizing that wasn't true. I noticed that I had no interest in abilities that let monsters reroll damage,*

and I've learned that if a reroll isn't interesting the original roll isn't either. I started hating the swinginess of the dice roll system I'd created for damage and tried using Jonathan's system. Well wadda ya know. Less swingy, simpler for the GM, and offering an illusory iota of player control over hit point outcomes that's easily complicated by monster powers that trigger as surprises. The new system makes the attack roll more meaningful and preserves damage-dice rolling for a few dramatic occasions.

If you find that you can't abide the new flat-damage method, you could opt to roll damage dice that have an average close to the listed result. But I no longer recommend it and the monsters are retooled to be interesting using fixed damage.

Mooks

Mooks are obviously weaker monsters that you can cut down in large numbers. You track damage against the entire mob of mooks you're facing rather than against individual mooks.

Mook hit points: A mook's hit point value is one-fifth that of a regular monster. A 1st-level kobold mook has 7 hit points. The difference from a regular monster is that damage accrues to the mook mob, and for each chunk of 7 damage that the mob takes, it loses one mook.

For example, if the first attack against the kobold mooks dealt 5 damage, it wouldn't kill any mooks, but the GM would track the damage. If the second attack dealt 10 damage (15 total), that would kill two mooks (7 each) and leave 1 damage on the mooks.

Killing multiple mooks: Sometimes you deal a ton of damage with a melee attack against a mook and wind up killing mooks that weren't engaged with you. The GM should take pains to allow you all the kills you get, letting you narrate attacks that cleave multiple foes, sudden leaps, whirlwinds of blows, mooks that faint or turn and run, whatever it takes to make sure the mooks get their due. Storytelling unexpected mook kills is worth the table time.

It's even more likely that a spell that targets several mooks will end up blowing away mooks who weren't originally in the target zone, since each of the mooks will take their medicine separately. That's as it should be. If the best

thing the wizard can manage with a fireball is to blow away all the mooks in the battle, that's a) awesome; and b) a fair chunk of damage the real monsters didn't have to suffer.

Mook actions: Each mook moves and attacks on its own despite the fact that the mob takes damage en masse; that's why you want to kill mooks quickly, so you'll take fewer attacks. List most other monsters, mooks deal fixed damage with their attacks and deal double damage if they score a critical hit with a natural 20.

Mook status is apparent: Most of the time the PCs should know that mooks are mooks. In special cases, as ruled by the GM, it's not obvious.

Jonathan says: There are a lot of things we could call these crunchy little monsters. But we inherited them from *Feng Shui*, so let's just make it obvious.

Large and Huge Monsters

Large monsters generally have twice the hit points and can deal roughly double the damage of a normal-sized monster.* They also count as two monsters when you build a battle (see page XX). Huge monsters have triple the hit points, deal triple damage, and count as three normal-sized monsters when you're putting together a battle.

You don't have to worry about these large and huge monsters being unfairly affected by spells that could weaken them or daze them or put them to sleep: most such spells have hit point limits. Particularly at champion and epic tier, the PCs will have to beat monsters down a bit before their control spells work well.

*Sometimes the size of a monster isn't backed up by how tough it is. For example, judging by its size, the ankheg should count as a large monster. But an anhkheg? Twice as tough as a normal-sized monster its same level? No, that's not right. Feel free to occasionally use large monsters that aren't actually any tougher than normal monsters.

Group Abilities

A few monsters have abilities that are meant to be used a certain number of times in a battle by any one of the monsters in the group. For example, you don't have to keep track of whether a given hobgoblin has used the *well-armored* ability, just keep track of how many times the hobgoblins have used the ability during the battle.

Fear

Some monsters have a fear aura that will make it more difficult for PCs to attack them. Fear auras scale based on creature level, which determines the creature's fear threshold number rated by hit points. While enemies that have that amount of hit points or less are engaged with a creature that has a fear aura, they are dazed (–4 attack) *and* do not benefit from the escalation die.

Level	Fear threshold (hp)
0	7
1	9
2	12
3	15
4	18
5	24
6	30
7	36
8	48
9	60
10	72
11	96
12	120
13	144
14	192

Death Attacks & Last Gasp Saves

There are some monsters that are astonishingly deadly, including medusas, gorgons, and other creatures that can kill with a single attack (a death attack). "Kill" is used loosely here, in that

188

a few of these monsters petrify or paralyze or otherwise entirely remove a PC from a fight.

Such attacks will specify that they offer "last gasp saves." This means that a PC affected by such a power will slowly turn to stone, or slip into paralysis, etc., losing the ability to take any actions except attempting a hard save (16+) on their turn. The save functions like a death save—success means the PC has thrown off the condition and will act normally on their next turn, and rolling a 20 means they can take their turn normally that round. Failing three last gasp saves means you turn to stone, are paralyzed, are liquefied, or are adversely affected as indicated.

In addition, an ally next to you can use a standard action to help you try to shake off the effect, letting you roll a bonus last gasp save that does not count against your three total if you fail it. The first time each ally attempts to help you shake off the death attack, it only requires a normal save (11+) for you to recover.

KEY TO THE MONSTER ENTRIES

Here's a detailed explanation of the sections of the monster stat blocks that require some explanation. (We aren't going to bother explaining elements like AC and HP again.)

MONSTER NAME

Flavor text

[Size][X level] [Monster Role] [Type]

Initiative: +X

Attack +XX vs. AC/PD/MD (targets), XXX damage and effect (if any)

> *Miss:* if applicable
> *Limited use:* if applicable
> *Extra effect trigger:* extra effect

Special: text

Nastier Specials

Special: text

Special: text

AC #

PD #

MD #

HP #

Icons

Size and Level

These are the key stats that determine how tough a battle will be using the creature. See Chapter 6: Running the Game on page XX for details, but in general most battles pit the PCs against what amounts to the same number of monsters of the same level (with large monsters counting double, and huge monsters counting triple). If size isn't mentioned, the monster is normal size and we're not concerned with minor details like small goblins and tiny imps. You can run with those details on the table if you like, but they don't make any difference in our game stats.

Monster Roles

Dividing monsters into loose roles helps the GM set up fun battles with good mixes of opponents. You're more likely to run a fun monster battle if you pair a *caster* monster, for example, with some *troops* or *blockers* to run interference for it rather than throwing nothing but *casters* at the PCs.

Monsters with different roles still use the same stats. We mainly use monster roles as a guide to the type of powers they should have. It's perfectly possible that some monsters could qualify as more than one type, but we're not stressing over such identification given that there are no mechanical consequences of identification . . . aside from mooks.

Archers are ranged attackers who use weapons rather than spells.

Blockers have abilities that help them protect their allies.

Casters are magician-types who need space to cast their spells properly. They're capable of anything.

Leaders have abilities that help other monster allies fight better.

Mooks are minor monsters that are good cannon fodder. Five mooks are the equivalent of one normal monster.

Spoilers mess the PCs up with attacks that inflict harmful effects instead of or in addition to hit point damage.

Troops are the default monster type. They're nothing super-special, aiming to hurt PCs via hit point damage.

Wreckers really bring the pain. Sometimes they work alone. Enemy groups containing only wreckers will be very dangerous to the PCs.

Type

We don't use monster types much. But some spells and magic items care about monster type. And rangers with favored enemies definitely care about it. If you disagree about how we categorized a monster's type, go ahead and play it your way. Instead of piling type upon type like earlier d20 games, we prefer the simple path of saying that monsters have only one type. Many games will be able to ignore this stat completely.

So far, types include aberration, beast, construct, demon, dragon, giant, humanoid, and undead.

Attack +XX vs. AC/PD/MD (targets)

The default for attacks is that they are melee attacks against one target that require a standard action to use. If an attack can target more than one creature, that information follows the attack value.

When a monster makes an opportunity attack it uses one of its melee attacks; in other words, a monster that normally attacks twice as part of its standard action only makes one of those attacks as an opportunity attack.

The abbreviation **R:** indicates that an attack is a ranged attack instead of a melee attack. The default ranged attack assumes a single nearby target, but attacks like bows and many spells can hit far away targets as well with a -1 attack penalty.

The abbreviation **C:** refers to close-quarters attacks, attacks that can be used against nearby enemies that do not trigger opportunity attacks like ranged attacks.

Extra effect trigger

We prefer not to track many monster abilities. So instead of tracking them, we often let them trigger randomly based on the monster's attack roll. Not all attacks have possible triggers, but many do, and they can make two battles against the same type of monster quite different. Most extra effect triggers are natural even or odd attack rolls or other specific die rolls, but a few are more unusual.

Special: text

These are other attack and special abilities like *fear* or movement abilities like *flight*. Not all monsters have them.

Nastier Specials

These abilities help keep monsters interesting throughout the campaign. Use them as options whenever you like, especially if things seem too easy for the PCs.

Icons

Text about surprising or relevant icon relationships the monster might have.

ANIMAL

DIRE RAT

From age to age, dire rats vary in size. In this age, they're only half as big as they sometimes get, but they're also twice as vicious.

1st level mook [beast]
Initiative: +2

Infected bite +5 vs. AC, 4 ongoing damage

AC 15
PD 14
MD 10

HP 6 (kill one dire rat mook for every 6 damage you deal to the mob)

Nastier Specials
   Squealing pack attack: This creature gains a +1 attack bonus per other dire rat engaged with the target.

Wolf

Even the best prepared adventuring parties can be torn apart by something as simple as a pack of wolves.

1st level troop [beast]
Initiative: +3

Bite +5 vs. AC, 5 damage
   Pack attack: This creature gains a +2 bonus to attack and damage per other wolf engaged with the target (max +4).

AC 16
PD 15
MD 11

HP 24

BULETTE

Certain specialists claim to be able to attract or repel bulettes by creating rhythmic sounds transmitted into the ground through metal poles. Judging by results, the most effective type of metal pole is a hollow prosthetic worn in place of a missing leg.

Large 5th level wrecker [beast]
Initiative: +8

Gigantic claws +12 vs. AC (2 attacks), 15 damage
    Dual hit: If both claws hit, the bulette can use *terrible bite* on its next turn.

[Special trigger] **Terrible bite +14 vs. AC,** 45 damage
    Miss: 22 damage.

Blood frenzy: If the escalation die is 4+, the bulette's crit range expands to 16+.

Burrow (standard action to move when burrowing): Depending on the hardness of the ground, bulette need to roll an easy save (sand or dirt, most forests), normal save (hard dirt, loose rocks), or hard save (rock) to leave the surface and break down beneath the surface and begin burrowing through the earth. They move half the speed of a running man underground, perhaps a touch faster in loose soil.
    Breaking up onto the surface is easy, just a quick action and no die roll necessary, so bulette's are known for springing up from the earth in ambush.
    A badly injured bulette may try to burrow away into safety, since it's tough to dig through earth after it. But getting away through the earth is less likely when fighting on rock, so bulette's prefer hunting in forests and deserts.
    @@next draft moves this into a standard burrow entry

AC 22
PD 21

MD 15

HP 170

Nastier Specials
    Savage response: If the bulette survives taking a critical hit, it can immediately respond by using *terrible bite* as a free action against someone unlucky enough to be engaged with it.

Icons
People like the Archmage probably helped create the bulette, but if they did it happened in some previous forgotten age. People like the High Druid might have some chance of controlling a bulette, but most people associated with the High Druid focus on beasts that are less likely to incidentally cost them a limb.

CHIMERA

In illustrated bestiaries copied down through the ages, the three bodies of the chimera are merged neatly: lion, dragon, and goat. In reality, scales and hair, and hooves and claws all mingle in a chaotic form. No two chimeras are exactly alike, and most include modest portions of other beasts, as well as the standard three. Their distorted forms bring them pain. They take it out on everything else.

Large 9th level wrecker [beast]
Initiative: +15

Fangs, claws, and/or horns +14 vs. AC (3 attacks), 30 damage

Fiery breath +14 vs. PD (up to 3 nearby enemies in a group), 3d10 fire damage
    Miss: Half damage.
    Limited use: 3/battle, as a quick action once per round.

Bestial thresher: When a creature misses the chimera with a melee attack, the chimera's multiple sharp bits deal 3d10 damage to that attacker.

AC 24
PD 20
MD 16

HP 320

DEMON

@@Demons not worked through

BALOR

@@.

DESPOILER

@@.

@@Psychic attack that gives the target a terrible choice: confused (save ends) or an extremely large dose of damage; some circumstance ramps it up to be a difficult save

DRETCH

When a demon is killed and eaten in hell, it passes out of its devourer as a dretch. A dretch is a miserable and frightened creep. Its black-hearted fear is so great that it's virtually contagious.

3rd level mook [demon]
Initiative: +5

Claws +8 vs. AC, 6 damage

Fear: While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 15 hp or fewer are @@weakened and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

AC 17
PD 15
MD 11

HP 13 (kill one dretch mook for every 13 damage you deal to the mob)

FRENZY DEMON

Their chunky bodies and claws are red, but not quite blood-red. That's your only clue to where the frenzy demon's skin ends and the enemy's bloodstains begin.

5th level wrecker [demon]

Initiative: +10

Claw +8 vs. AC (2 attacks), 2d6 damage

Raging frenzy: Each time the frenzy demon misses with a melee attack, it gains a +1 attack bonus and deals +1d4 damage until the end of the battle (maximum bonus +5, +5d4).

AC 21
PD 17
MD 17

HP 76

Icons
The Diabolist loves frenzy demons because they're so uncomplicated: she points, they destroy.

Glabrezou

These grotesque monstrosities disdain physical labor. They devote their considerable mental talents to contemplating arcane secrets and exploiting their slaves, preferably without lifting a pincer. In battle, they use their spells to avoid and wear down their enemies. When forced to fight physically, they fly into a rage and dish out the pain.

Large 9th level caster [demon]
Initiative: +17

Pincer +14 vs. AC, 2d4 x 10 damage
   Natural 11+: The demon can grab the target, preventing it from disengaging or making non-basic attacks until the end of the target's next turn. If the glabrezou somehow makes another attack while holding a victim, it can wind up holding two creatures.

C: Hellfire + 14 vs. PD (up to three nearby enemies), 2d3 x 10 fire damage
   Special: Hellfire also targets any allies engaged with the targets.

R: Painbolt +14 vs. MD, 2d6 x 10 psychic damage

Special: This attack can target a nearby or distant creature.

Lesser teleport: At will, as a move action, a glabrezou can teleport itself about 50 feet. It has to see its destination or at least have a really good idea of where it's going to end up.

Mirror images: At will, as a move action, a glabrezou can create multiple images of itself that make it harder to target. The next time an attack would hit the glabrezou, the attacker has to roll 11+ or miss it instead, but at least the miss hits the images and dispels them.

Power word stun: Once per day as a free action, the glabrezou can utter a power word, cancelling a single action that a nearby creature has just taken, whether it was casting a spell, healing an ally, or whatever. The GM can see the results of the action, such as a die roll, before deciding whether to use the power word.

AC 22
PD 22
MD 18

HP 320

Nastier Specials
True Seeing: @@

Hezrou

A hezrou smells like your own body putrefying, or perhaps your mother's.

Large 7th level troop [demon]
Initiative: +11

Meaty, clawed hands +12 vs. AC (2 attacks), 4d10 damage

Grab: When a hezrou hits an enemy, it can grab that creature if it isn't already grabbing a target. The foe can't move or attempt to disengage until it hits the hezrou with an attack.

The hezrou's melee attacks automatically hit a grabbed enemy.

Demonic stench: While engaged with this creature, enemies with 84 hp or fewer are dazed (–4 attack).

AC 22
PD 16
MD 20

HP 210

Hooked Demon

Are the hooks to torture the demon or to torture its victims? Yes. And yes.

9th level mook [demon]
Initiative: +12

Hooks and barbs +14 vs. AC, 27 damage

Natural 16+: Make another attack with *hooks and barbs* (and yes, this can keep going . . .).

AC 23
PD 21
MD 17

HP 45

Nastier Specials
Bleeding wounds: Any creature hit by *hooks and barbs* takes 10 damage if it makes a non-basic attack (save ends).

IMP

A batwinged ball of chaos with a taste for torture where other demons would choose to slay.

3rd level spoiler [demon]

Initiative: +8

Festering claws +7 vs. AC, 1d6 damage, and 5 ongoing damage

R: Blight jet +7 vs. PD, 2d6 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends)
   Natural 16+: The imp can choose one: the target is weakened instead of dazed OR the imp can make a *blight jet* attack against a different target as a free action.

Curse aura: When a creature attacks the imp and rolls a natural 1–5, it takes 1d10 psychic damage.

Flight: Imps are hard to pin down because they fly. Not that fast or well, but you don't have to fly well to fly better than humans and elves.

AC 20
PD 13
MD 16

HP 40

MARILITH
@@.

NAFELSHNEE (BOAR DEMON)
@@.STATS NOT WORKED ON EITHER
Large 10th level caster [demon]
Initiative: +13

Musky claw or slimy hoof +15 vs. AC, 2d8 x 10 damage
   Miss: The nafelshnee gains a +4 attack bonus until it hits. Let it stack.

R: Accursed burst +15 vs. PD (up to 2 nearby enemies), 2d4 x 10 acid damage, and *abyssal curse…*
   Abyssal curse: **+15 vs. MD, (each target hit by accursed burst),** the target is weakened until the end of its next turn.

Flight: Nafelshnee are clumsy but powerful fliers with strangely small wings.

Lesser teleport: At will, as a move action, a nafelshnee can teleport itself about 50 feet. It has to see its destination or at least have a really good idea of where it's going to end up.

@@*True Seeing.*

Nastier Specials
@@Various useful spells.

AC 26
PD 24
MD 20

HP 400

VROCK (VULTURE DEMON)
Vulture demons embody contagion. The presence of a virulent disease can summon them from the Abyss. "Get better soon, or you'll summon a vulture demon," is a harsh exaggeration of the situation that is popular with half-orcs.

DERRO

Derro are dwarves who have mined too deep and come into contact with something that drives them insane rumored to abide at the center of the underworld. Contact with this force or entity has corrupted them, or "improved us," as the derro say.

Derro are Confused to Begin With: Confusion effects only affect derro if they secretly want to murder one of their own companions, a not uncommon condition.

Derro Maniac

4ᵗʰ level troop [humanoid]
Initiative: +8

Shortsword +9 vs. AC, 12 damage
Natural 16+: The derro can cast one of the following close-quarters spells as quick action.
Cloaking dark: All nearby derro gain a +1 bonus to attacks and defenses until end of the derro maniac's next turn (cumulative).
Sonic squeal: Two random nearby non-derro creatures take 2d4 thunder damage.

R: Light repeating crossbow +9 vs. AC, 10 damage
Natural 16+: The target also takes 5 ongoing poison damage.
Natural 19+: As above, and derro maniac can make another *light repeating crossbow* attack as a free action.

AC 19
PD 16
MD 18

HP 52

Derro Sage

4ᵗʰ level caster [humanoid]
Initiative: +7

Staff +7 vs. AC, 7 damage
Natural 16+: The derro can cast one of the following close-quarters spells as quick action.
Cloaking dark: All nearby derro gain a +1 bonus to attacks and defenses until end of the derro sage's next turn (cumulative).
Sonic squeal: Two random nearby non-derro creatures take 2d8 thunder damage.

R: Mind scream +9 vs. MD, 12 psychic damage, and the target is confused until the end of the derro sage's next turn *(confusion makes you use an at-will attack against an ally).*
Natural 16+: Repeat the attack against another nearby target as a free action.

Nastier Specials
Group gibbering: The derro sage starts a group of derro gibbering as a quick action. It can maintain the gibber as a free action at the start of each turn by taking 1 damage. Each nearby non-derro creature that hears the gibber must roll a d6 at the start of its turn, and takes psychic damage equal to the die roll or to the number of gibbering derro, whichever is lower.

AC 18
PD 15
MD 18

HP 40

Icons
When the Dwarf King and his people lived deep underground, derro frequently counted as Enemy #1. When the dwarves had to move toward the surface, the derro followed suit, but the dwarves have so many enemies now that the derro get counted as a screaming afterthought.

None of the known icons have much to do with the derro. Magicians report that the derro seem to have magical support in the deepest underworld, but that shouldn't have anything to do with the icons.

DRAGON

@@dragons not worked through

@@Use on a new dragon
Claw and bite, +9 vs. AC (2 attacks), xd6 damage, and @.

      Natural 16+: Can use breath

Medium Black Dragon

Black dragons are bitter and hateful. They consider vengeance to be the only true value in life and they're proud that one of the Three agrees with them.

4th level wrecker [dragon]
Initiative: +10

Claw +9 vs. AC, 2d6 damage, and the dragon pushes the target, popping it off the dragon. Then the dragon makes a *bite* attack as a free action.

Bite +8 vs. AC, 3d6 damage
    Natural 16+: The dragon can use *acid breath* on its next turn.

[Special Trigger] **Acid breath +9 vs PD (1d3 nearby enemies),** 1d6 acid damage, and 5 ongoing acid damage
    Miss: 1d6 acid damage.
    Bite triggers: The dragon can only use this attack the turn after rolling a natural 16+ with its *bite*.

Escalator: The medium black dragon adds the escalation die to its attack rolls.

AC 20
PD 18
MD 18

HP 58

Red Dragon

Breathing fire make a red dragon hungry. Eating makes a red dragon bloodthirsty. Bloodthirstiness gets a red dragon into fights, where it likes to use its fiery breath.

Large Red Dragon

@. Nastier Specials needed, not spells for the red

Large 10th level wrecker [dragon]
Initiative: +13

Fangs, claws, and/or tail +15 vs. AC (2 attacks), 1d8 x 10 damage

Fiery breath+15 vs. PD (up to 5 nearby enemies), 6d10 fire damage
    Miss: Half damage.
    Intermittent breath: The dragon can use *fiery breath* 1d3 times per battle, but never two turns in a row.

Escalator: The large red dragon adds the escalation die to its attack rolls.

Fear: While engaged with this creature, enemies with 72 hp or fewer are dazed (–4 attack).

AC 26
PD 24
MD 20

HP 430

DRIDER

A drider is a drow transformed into a centaur-like combination of elf and giant spider. Diverse curses have created driders, but in the 13th Age, most driders owe allegiance to dark gods, particularly a drow spider goddess whose name elves are loath to pronounce.

Large 6th level caster [aberration]
Initiative: +10

Sword or mace +9 vs. AC, 20 damage
Natural even hit: As a free action, the drider makes a *poison bite* melee attack against any target; **+9 vs. PD,** 10 poison damage, and 10 ongoing poison damage.

R: Lightning bolt spell +11 vs. PD, 30 lightning damage
Natural even hit: Use *lightning bolt* against a second nearby enemy, followed by a third and final different nearby enemy if the second attack is also a natural even hit.

C: Web attack +11 vs. PD (up to 2 nearby enemies in a group) Target is constrained (save ends)
Special use: Use as a standard action OR as a quick action if the escalation die is even.

AC 21
PD 15
MD 20

HP 88

Icons
The driders' gods often make common cause with the Diabolist. Or at least with her demons.

ETTIN

Ettins are smarter than most giants, but the two heads always disagree. Hampering each other in everything they set out to do, the two dueling personalities ensure that no ettin ever comes out "ahead."

Large 5th level troop [giant]
Initiative: +9

First big swing +10 vs. AC, 25 damage, and the target pops off the ettin. Then as a free action, the ettin can move (or choose not to move) and use its *second swing* against a different target.

Second swing +10 vs. AC, 15 damage
Must have a different target than the first big swing.

Two-headed save: If an ettin's first save against an effect fails, it can roll a second save.

Nastier Specials
Bully's courage: The ettin deals double damage until it has been hit in combat (so miss damage doesn't count).
Escalating agreement: If the escalation die is 3+, the ettin can target two engaged enemies with its *first big swing*.

AC 21
PD 18
MD 14

HP 160

Icons
If one of an ettin's heads has been swayed by the Orc Lord, it's a sure bet that the other head is enamored of the Three.

GARGOYLE

Gargoyles are either monstrous statues or creatures summoned from stone. Most must serve their creators for decades before they are free to lead their own lives.

5th level troop [construct]
Initiative: +4

Furious claws and fangs +9 vs. AC, 9 damage

Natural 11+: The gargoyle can make two more melee attacks as a free action (but never more than three total attacks per standard action, even if you roll another 11+).

Flight: Gargoyles can fly, but not very well. They would rather crawl or climb.

AC 27
PD 21
MD 11

HP 60

Icons
Gargoyles are monstrous thugs with bonus architectural value. Of the evil icons, only the Orc Lord has no use for gargoyle embellishments. Even good icons like the Archmage and Emperor use suitably crafted gargoyles wherever they think appropriate.

Gamemaster: Gargoyles are swingy. If they go off in a fury, they can do a lot of damage, but if they fight poorly they're so much rubble. They start slowly with low initiative, but a higher than normal AC means the PCs might need the escalation die's help to finish them off.

GHOUL

They hunger only for what they used to be.

3ʳᵈ level spoiler [undead]
Initiative: +8
Vulnerability: holy

Claws and bite +8 vs. AC, 8 damage
    Natural even hit: The target is vulnerable (–4 defenses) until the end of the ghoul's next turn.

Pound of flesh: The ghoul's crit range increases to 16+ against vulnerable targets. (Ghouls will take risks to attack such targets first, attempting to tear off a piece of tasty flesh.)

Infected bite: Any creature that is slain by a ghoul and not consumed will rise as a ghoul the next night.

Nastier Specials
    Paralyzing bite: When the ghoul hits an already dazed target with a natural even attack roll, the target is stunned (save ends).

AC 18
PD 16
MD 12

HP 36

Newly-risen Ghoul

Newly slain, barely conscious, terribly hungry.

2ⁿᵈ level mook [undead]
Initiative: +5
Vulnerability: holy

Scrabbling claws +7 vs. AC, 3 damage
    Natural 16+ The target is vulnerable (–4 defenses) until the end of the ghoul's next turn.

Pound of flesh: The ghoul's crit range increases to 16+ against vulnerable targets.

AC 17
PD 15
MD 11

HP 9 (kill one newly-risen ghoul mook for every 9 damage you deal to the mob)

Icons
If the Lich King cares about their obedience, few ghouls can resist. But the world is wide while graveyards, tombs, and battlefields are many. Most ghouls act as independent consumers-of-flesh or serve tougher monsters who can briefly enforce obedience. A few stumble briefly into the service of evil icons other than the Lich King.

GIANT

Giants are the original people, and the common races are their unworthy descendants, or so say the giants.

Cloud Giant

Cloud giants are the mighty lords of the upper air. They are everything the lesser giants are not: temperate, urbane, humane, subtle, law-abiding, sympathetic, artistic, pious, and gentle to their children. They take some interest in the "goings on" below, the way that educated people take interest in stories of fascinating animals in faraway lands. All is well between the cloud giants and earth creatures, provided no earth creature sets foot (or wing) in the cloud giants' portion of the overworld. They defend the overworld with fanatic determination. Cloud giants frequently offer lazy storm giants honest work as mercenaries.

[[Archmage tile]]

@@giants not worked through

Fire Giant

Fire giants are some of the most powerful mortal beings to walk the land, and they know it. They are not merely warlords and conquerors but also planners and builders. For about a century, they have been building great works high in the mountains. Their seers say that a war that will destroy all is on its way. With no hope of survival, fire giants are not much concerned about whose side they will fight on, so when the morning of battle comes, they will fight on the side of those who have bribed them the best.

@@[[diabolist tile]]

While you are engaged with a fire giant, if you take ongoing fire damage, that damage increases by X.

Frost Giant

Although destructive like most of their fellow giants, frost giants are also capable of hospitality toward visitors. Those who can impress frost giants with talents, stories, or courage may find themselves welcome and safe in a frost giants' hall.

@@[[dwarf enemy tile]]

Ancient cold: While battling frost giants, there is only a 50% chance that the escalation die increases at the start of the round.

Hill Giant

Hill giants carry their personal goods in massive sacks. The contents of such sacks—shiny rocks, interesting bones, broken keepsakes—bear a disturbing resemblance to the contents of a child's pockets.

Large 6th level troop [giant]
Initiative: +8

Massive gnarly club +8 vs. AC, 45 damage
  Miss, natural 6+: Half damage (sometimes close is good enough).

R: Two-handed boulder throw +6 vs. PD, 35 damage

<u>Nastier Specials</u>
  Bully's courage: The giant deals double damage until it has been hit in combat (so miss damage doesn't count).

AC 20
PD 19
MD 14

HP 200

Icons
Hill giants operate independently at least as often as they serve a greater master. They treasure the illusion that they swing the biggest

clubs around, so they prefer to avoid serving the Diabolist or the Lich King, icons whose preferred servants are prone to treating the giants as overgrown snacks.

GNOLL

According to some, gnolls ruled the land before the Wizard King established human civilization but forgot their noble past and now live as bloodthirsty barbarians and bandits. According to others, gnolls were created as pawns of demon lords and dark gods, and occasionally scramble to the status of barbarians and bandits.

Nastier Special for all gnolls

Blood Fury: +1d10 melee damage if the gnoll or its target is wounded.

Gnoll Ranger

3rd level archer [humanoid]
Initiative: +9

Hand axes +6 vs. AC (2 attacks), 6 damage
Pack ferocity: If more than one gnoll is engaged with the target, each gnoll melee attack that misses that target deals half damage.

R: Clunky longbow +8 vs. AC, 8 damage
Natural even hit or miss: Roll a second clunky longbow attack (no more).

Quick Shot: When the gnoll ranger is unengaged and an enemy moves to engage it, roll a d20. 11+ the gnoll ranger can take a clunky longbow shot at the enemy as a free action just before contact.

AC 18
PD 17
MD 13

HP 46

Gnoll Savage

3rd level troop [humanoid]
Initiative: +7

Spear +7 vs. AC, 10 damage

Pack ferocity: If more than one gnoll is engaged with the target, each gnoll melee attack that misses that target deals half damage.

R: Thrown spear +6 vs. AC, 8 damage

AC 18
PD 17
MD 13

HP 46

Gnoll War Leader

4th level leader [humanoid]
Initiative: +8

Heavy flail +9 vs. AC, 3d8 damage
Natural even roll (hit or miss): The target is marked for death, and until the end of the battle all gnoll attacks against the target gain an attack bonus equal to the escalation die.
Pack ferocity: If more than one gnoll is engaged with the target, each gnoll melee attack that misses that target deals half damage.

AC 20
PD 17
MD 14

HP 56

Icons
Most black-hearted gnolls serve the Diabolist if they serve anyone other than the pack. Gnolls with a touch of gray may pay attention to the High Druid or even the Prince of Shadows.

GOBLIN

Of all the labor and battle undertaken by evil slaves and minions, more is undertaken by goblins than by any other creep or fiend. Goblins may be uninspired and ill-tempered, but they are able to work, willing to fight, and prone to breeding at a bracing pace.

Bugbear

Bugbears are goblin giants. Their massive frames allow them to wield weapons that are almost comically large. It's not funny for long.

3rd level troop [humanoid]
Initiative: +6

Oversized weapon +8 vs. AC, 10 damage
  Natural even hit: 15 damage instead.

@@*Stealth attack:* If a bugbear attacks an enemy who wasn't aware of it OR if it moves to attack a foe that is engaged with another enemy, roll damage of any hit twice and use the higher roll.

AC 19
PD 17
MD 12

HP 55

Icons
Bugbears compete too much with orcs to work for the Orc Lord. Other evil icons are acceptable employers, so long as they don't try to turn the bugbears into undead and don't confuse them with normal goblins.

Goblin Grunt

1st level troop [humanoid]
Initiative: +3

Club +6 vs. AC, 6 damage if the monsters outnumber their enemies; 4 damage if they don't

R: Shortbow +6 vs. AC, 4 damage

Disengage +5: Goblins only need to roll a 6+ to disengage.

AC 16
PD 13
MD 12

HP 22

Goblin Scum

1st level mook [humanoid]
Initiative: +3

Club +6 vs. AC, 4 damage

R: Shortbow, +6 vs. AC, 3 damage

Disengage +5: Goblins only need to roll a 6+ to disengage.

AC 16
PD 14
MD 11

HP 5 (kill one goblin scum mook for every 5 damage you deal to the mob)

@@synchronize goblin stats with the adventure

Goblin Shaman

2nd level caster [humanoid]
Initiative: +6

Pointy spear +6 vs. AC, 5 damage

R: Shaking curse, +6 vs. PD, 8 damage, and until end of the shaman's next turn, the target takes 2 points of damage whenever an enemy engages it or disengages from it.
  Natural even roll: During its *next* turn, the shaman can target 2 nearby enemies with *shaking curse* instead of one.

Disengage +5: Goblins only need to roll a 6+ to disengage.

AC 17
PD 12
MD 16

HP 26

Icons

Goblins form the foundation of many evil organizations. Now that the Orc Lord is back, he acts as if all goblins are by rights his, but the thousands of goblins in the service of allies of the Diabolist, the Three, and even the Crusader prove that the boast is still hollow.

Hobgoblin Captain

Evil masterminds and warlords often rely on hobgoblins to serve as reliable lieutenants, captains of the guard, or even treasurers.

4th level leader [humanoid]
Initiative: +5

Longsword +10 vs. AC, 14 damage, and *willing-underling* triggers
    Willing-underling: Until the start of its next turn, the first time an attack would hit the hobgoblin captain, it can partially avoid that attack if it has a nearby goblin ally. It only takes half damage from the attack, and that ally takes the rest.

R: Throwing axe +8 vs. AC, 10 damage

Group tactics: For every two hobgoblins in the battle (round up), one of them can use *well-armored* once during the battle.

Well-armored (group): Ignore all damage from a hit (but not a crit) against AC.

AC 20
PD 17

MD 14

HP 50

Hobgoblin Warrior

Oh, you've got skills, adventurer. But let's see how you *do marching the Owl Barrens in a hobgoblin legion on a Wednesday night.*

2nd level troop [humanoid]
Initiative: +3

Longsword +7 vs. AC, 8 damage
    Natural even miss: 2 damage.

Group tactics: For every two hobgoblins in the battle (round up), one of them can use *well-armored* once during the battle.

Well-armored (group): Ignore all damage from a hit (but not a crit) against AC.

AC 19
PD 14
MD 14

HP 32

Hobgoblin Warmage

Hobgoblins with magical talent who manage to survive long in their warrior culture are even more vile, vicious, and deadly than the rest.

5th level caster [humanoid]
Initiative: +6

Warstaff +8 vs. AC, 15 damage

C: Concussive blast +10 vs. PD (all enemies engaged with the warmage), 10 force damage, and the target pops off the warmage
    Natural 20: The target is also dazed (save ends).

R: Fireblast + 10 vs. PD (up to 2 nearby enemies in a group), 10 fire damage (or 20 if used against a single target), and the target loses its next move action.

AC 20
PD 14
MD 19

HP 70

Icons

Hobgoblins should know better than to follow the Orc Lord, who views them as well-armored goblin fodder. Hobgoblins are most likely to be affiliated with the Three, the Diabolist, and yes, the Orc Lord. A few admire the strength and discipline of the Crusader. Depending on the campaign's view of the Lich King, they might or might not be willing to serve the undead.

GOLEM

Golems' occasional spontaneous rampages may come from half-forgotten command sequences from previous owners or ages. It's no accident that most of those capable of commanding golems like to issue their commands and go as far away as possible.

Nastier Specials (for all golems)

Regeneration: After the golem has taken damage, it has a 50% chance to regenerate 1d10 hit points per level at the start of its turn. It can regenerate three times per battle, but it stops regenerating when destroyed.

Clay Golem

The gods made people out of clay, and clay golems are made of the material they had left over. Rumor has it that dwarfs are immune to the clay golem's curse because the gods made dwarves out of stone, not clay.

Large 6th level spoiler [construct]
Initiative: +6

Bare brutal hands +9 vs. AC, 36 damage
Cursed wound: A creature damaged by a clay golem can't be healed to above half its maximum hit points until after the battle.

Immune to effects: Golems are immune to all effects, even ongoing damage. You can damage golems, but that's about it. Webs and acid slide off, and they can't be dazed, weakened, confused, made vulnerable, etc.

Resist attacks 11+: When an attack hits this creature, the attacker must roll an 11+ on a d20 or the attack misses instead. That's *all* attacks.

AC 20
PD 18
MD 14

HP 120

Gamemaster: Golems give players a tough obstacle that moots their favorite attacks, but it can also fall with delicious speed (low hp). High miss damage is the party's best bet.

Flesh Golem

A flesh golem is the bone, muscle, and sinew of many strong men combined into a humanlike form with little heart or brain.

Large 4th level blocker [construct]
Initiative: +@

@@golems not worked through

Attack, @ damage

Attack, @ damage
Miss: Half damage.
Limited use: @@

Ability: @@@

AC @@
PD @@
MD @@

HP @@

Nastier Specials
Special: @@more.

Icons
@@@.

Iron Golem
QUOTE.

Large 10th level blocker [construct]
Initiative: +@

Attack, @ damage

Attack, @ damage
   Miss: Half damage.
   Limited use: @@

Ability: @@@

AC @@
PD @@
MD @@

HP @@

Nastier Specials
   Special: @@more.

Icons
@@@.

Special: @@more.

Icons
@@@.

<u>Stone Golem</u>

Ages ago, these were idols brought to life by worship. Some of these godlike golems still wait patiently in hidden places. In more recent ages, the worship rituals have been refined into spells of binding, and they work just as well or better.

Large 8th level blocker [construct]
Initiative: +@

Attack, @ damage

Attack, @ damage
   Miss: Half damage.
   Limited use: @@

Ability: @@@

AC @@
PD @@
MD @@

HP @@

Nastier Specials

HELLHOUND

Hell hounds are intelligent creatures fully capable of appreciating the misery of their lives. They are prone to charging headlong into battle against impossible odds.

3rd level wrecker [beast]
Initiative: +5

Savage bite +9 vs. AC, 7 damage

    Natural even roll: The hellhound can make a close-quarters *fiery breath* attack as a free action; **+9 vs. PD (1d3 nearby enemies in a group),** 10 fire damage.

Fire resistance 11+: When a fire attack damages this creature, the attacker must roll an 11+ on a d20 or the attack only deals half damage.

Nastier Specials

    Fiery aura: Each creature engaged with a hell hound at the start of its turn takes 2d6 fire damage.

AC 18
PD 16
MD 11

HP 58

Icons
Hell hounds slink out of the Diabolist's hellholes to make everyone else's lives miserable. While they're killing things and burning people, they don't see any reason not to work for other evil icons.

HUMAN

Humans are the nicest and best-dressed people in the world, and it's almost unthinkable that you'd need stats for fighting them.

Human Thug

Except this guy. He's a real bastard.

1st level troop [humanoid]
Initiative: +4

Heavy mace +5 vs. AC, 4 damage
　　Natural even roll: The thug deals +6 damage with its *next* attack. (**GM:** be sure to let the PCs know this is coming, it's not a secret.)

AC 17
PD 14
MD 12

HP 27

Demon-touched Human Ranger

The magic bow this ranger is so proud of turns into a shrieking demonic bug in combat and swallows portions of his arm. The bow won't let him use any other weapons, so he'll shoot even if he is engaged in melee. In the unlikely event that he survives a real battle, the demon rebuilds his arm with the corpses of their victims.

5th level archer [humanoid]
Initiative: +10

R: Demon bow +10 vs. AC, 15 damage, and the target is dazed (–4 attack) until it pulls the arrow out using a quick action, which deals 10 ongoing damage.
　　Natural odd roll: The demon bow eats at the ranger's arm and the ranger takes 1d6 damage.

Bow teeth: When a creature hits the ranger with a melee attack, it takes 1d6 damage as the bow chews on it.

AC 21
PD 14
MD 19

HP 80

KOBOLD

Kobolds are the shameful spawn of corrupt dragons. Their indescribable religion brings them into union with dragons, whom they worship as gods. In this case, "union" eventually looks like getting eaten.

Kobold Archer

1st level mook [humanoid]
Initiative: +4

R: Tiny crossbow or javelin +7 vs. AC, 3 damage

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

Split off: When one of the kobold's allies engages a creature engaged with the kobold, the kobold can pop free as a free action.

AC 16
PD 14
MD 10

HP 6 (kill one kobold archer mook for every 6 damage you deal to the mob)

Kobold Hero

2nd level leader [humanoid]]
Initiative: +3

Shortsword +7 vs. AC, 6 damage and each nearby non-leader kobold deals +3 damage with if it hits with its next attack.
    Natural even miss: 3 damage

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

AC 18
PD 16
MD 12

HP 34

Kobold Warrior

1st level troop [humanoid]
Initiative: +4

Spear +8 vs. AC, 4 damage
    Natural even roll: The kobold warrior can pop free from the target.

Evasive: Kobolds take no damage from missed attacks.

Not brave: Kobold warriors with single digit hit points will run away the first chance they get.

AC 18
PD 15
MD 12

HP 22

Icons
The Three go through kobolds like chewing gum. For that matter, the Three go through kobolds *as* chewing gum.
    Other evil icons make use of kobolds, but aren't proud of it. Kobolds are just as likely to be working for lesser overlords or scrabbling to survive on their own.

MINOTAUR

Minotaurs are unholy monstrosities driven by bestial bloodlust. At their best, they prowl the underworld, seeking fresh blood. At their worst, they enthrall themselves into the service of unholy cults devoted to human sacrifice.

Large 4th level troop [humanoid]
Initiative: +8

Axe or Horns +9 vs. AC (+13 vs. wounded enemies), 27 damage, and one of the minotaur's allies can pop free from the target as a free action (or 40 damage if the minotaur first moves before attacking an enemy it was not engaged with at the start of its turn)

Blood Frenzy: Minotaurs gain a +4 melee attack bonus against wounded enemies.

Nastier Specials

Durable: The first time each round the minotaur takes damage, prevent 2d6 of it.

Fear: While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 24 hp or fewer are dazed (–4 attack).

AC 19
PD 17
MD 13

HP 94

Icons

Minotaurs are most commonly found in the service of the Diabolist, but any evil icon might employ minotaur guards, and even good icons might be tempted to do so under the right circumstances.

Minotaurs strongly influenced by the High Druid might be more wild than evil.

Rumors

Minotaurs have a keen sense of smell and can track their prey unerringly through the underworld.

Minotaurs wail in uncanny delight when they participate in human sacrifice, the chilling sound echoing far and wide.

Minotaurs sometimes mate with human women, creating offspring that range from the nearly human to the hideously deformed. Subterranean colonies of these offspring have established themselves here and there, and they hate minotaurs.

The first minotaur was the son of an ancient Empress and a sacred bull.

Variants

Chaotic minotaurs found near hellholes may have the heads of carnivorous goats rather than of bulls.

Stories

The PCs must attend a minotaur feast and convince the minotaurs that the icon the PCs represent is too powerful to resist. If they sway the minotaurs with their rhetoric and their demonstrations of power, then one of them will have the chance to kill the minotaur warlord in single combat to seal the other minotaurs' compliance.

OGRE

If laws of evolution ruled this world, ogres would be the missing link between orcs and hill giants. Laws of magic rule the world, and that makes ogres brute enforcers for the orcs or expendable minions for the giants.

Large 3rd level troop [giant]
Initiative: +5

Big honkin' club +7 vs. AC, 18 damage
    Miss: Half damage.

Nastier Specials
    Tough skin: Whenever the ogre takes weapon damage, reduce that damage by 1d8 points.
    Big shove: Instead of disengaging, an ogre can use a shove attack as a quick action; **+9 vs. PD (each enemy engaged with ogre),** 1d6 damage, and the ogre pops free from the target.

AC 19
PD 16
MD 12

HP 90

Icons
Ogres are stupid enough to work for just about any evil overlord, evil middle lord, or even evil bandit chief. The Orc Lord and the Crusader make the most use of ogres' willingness to smite.

OGRE MAGE

Ogre magi are the descendants of ogres who, several ages past, joined a Dragon Emperor under the tutelage and honor pact of the elves. They are capable of respecting the icons, but they harbor a grudge for being betrayed by the dark elves. Their outlandish style in clothing and weaponry evokes an exotic age long past.

Large 7th level wrecker [giant]
Initiative: +14

Naginata +12 vs. AC, 40 damage

Cone of cold + 12 vs. PD (up to 3 nearby enemies in a group), 30 cold damage
  Limited use: 1/day, and it will affect allies between enemy targets.

Aura of treachery: As a quick action once per battle, an ogre mage can activate its aura of treachery, a magical power that launches the following attack against any nearby foe who misses the ogre mage with an attack:
  Aura of treachery + 12 vs. MD, the target is confused until the end of the ogre mage's next turn.

Flight: The ogre mage flies using the sheer power of its superior mind.

Invisibility: If the ogre mage is not engaged, it can go invisible as an at-will standard action. It becomes visible when it attacks.

Resist exceptional attacks 6+: When a limited attack (not an at-will) hits this creature, the attacker must roll a 6+ on a d20 or the attack misses instead. (The crafty ogre mage can often dodge tricky attacks, but not the most reliable and dependable ones!)

Trollish regeneration 6d6: The ogre mage's uncanny flesh heals 6d6 hit points at the start of its turn. It can regenerate five times per battle. If it heals more hit points than its maximum, then that use of *regeneration* doesn't count against the five-use limit.

If the ogre mage is hit by an attack that deals fire or acid damage, it loses one use of its *regeneration*, and it can't regenerate during its next turn.

Dropping an ogre mage to 0 hp doesn't kill it if it has any uses of *regeneration* left.

AC 21
PD 17
MD 19

HP 190

ORC

Not all orcs are born. Some spring from the bones of ravaged mountains and the wreckage of shattered forests like an infection spread by destruction.

Orc Warrior

1st level troop [humanoid]
Initiative: +3

Greataxe +6 vs. AC, 6 damage
   Dangerous: Orcs have a melee crit range of 17+ unless they are *wounded*.

AC 16
PD 14
MD 10

HP 30

Orc Berserker

2nd level troop [humanoid]
Initiative: +5

Greataxe +7 vs. AC, 8 damage
   Dangerous: Orcs have a melee crit range of 17+ unless they are wounded.

Unstoppable: When an orc berserker is dropped to 0 hp, it does not immediately die. Ignore any damage in excess of 0 hp, roll 2d6, and give the berserker that many temporary hit points. No other healing can affect the berserker or give it more temporary hit points: when the temp hp are gone, the berserker dies.

AC 16
PD 15
MD 13

HP 40

Orc Shaman

2nd level leader [humanoid]
Initiative: +5

Spear +6 vs. AC, 6 damage

R: Battle curse +6 vs. MD (1d3 nearby targets), 4 psychic damage, and for the rest of the battle, melee attacks by orcs deal +1d4 damage against the target (cumulative).

Dangerous: Orcs have a melee crit range of 17+ unless they are wounded.

AC 18
PD 12
MD 16

HP 36

Orc Rager

7th level mook [humanoid]
Initiative: +12

Greataxe +12 vs. AC, 16 damage

Dying strike: When an orc rager drops, it can make a final attack as a free action. (**GM:** Since it isn't always important which mook dies, feel free to make extras the ones engaged with a PC.)

AC 22
PD 20
MD 16

HP 27 (kill one orc rager mook for every 27 damage you deal to the mob)

Icons

There are all manner of orcs: green-skinned orcs, great orcs, pig-snouted orcs, snake-eyed orcs, bandy-legged orcs, leather-faced orcs, cinder-skinned orcs from the volcano lands. Only the orcs themselves truly take note of the different

varieties; certainly not the evil icons who are happy to use any orc as sword fodder. But the Orc Lord unites them all beneath a single banner.

Great Fang Cadre

Among the countless cursed strains of orcs, there are many who grow into tall, fierce warriors when fed on the highest quality food. In particular, they thrive on the flesh of beautiful, talented, experienced, and powerful people.

10th level mook [humanoid]
Initiative: +13

Double axe +15 vs. AC, 25 damage
    Natural 11+: Make this attack again as a free action.

R: Big, black, creaking bow +15 vs. AC, 37 damage
  Natural even roll: The attack targets PD instead of AC.

Nastier Specials
    On the spot mutation: When an attack eliminates one or more members of the mob, there is a 50% chance that each survivor gains a mutation like a sudden new body part or temporary magical aura. GM chooses one of the following improvements, perhaps at random, and invents a new part or magic effect to explain it: extra melee attack, damage aura 1d20 vs. any enemy that starts it turn engaged with the orc, +4 bonus to AC.

AC 27
PD 25
MD 21

HP 50

OWLBEAR

Some wilderness tribes have an abnormal fear of both owls and bears, a testament to the savagery of this preposterous hybrid.

Large 4th level wrecker [beast]
Initiative: +8

Rip and grab +9 vs. AC (2 attacks whenever the escalation die is even), 15 damage, and until the end of the owlbear's next turn, the target is constrained *(it can use only basic attacks)* while engaged with the owlbear. (*Hint:* Disengage and run away!)

Feed the cubs: An owlbear that scores a critical hit against a constrained enemy tears a piece of the creature off (GM chooses a limb) and will subsequently attempt to retreat with the prize to feed its cubs. The torn-up enemy is stunned until the end of its next turn.

Silent hunter: Owlbears are nearly silent until they strike (the DC of ability checks to hear owlbears is one tier of difficulty higher; therefore DC 20 for a 4th level owlbear).

AC 19
PD 17
MD 13

HP 101

Icons
Areas the High Druid cares about tend to have higher than normal owlbear populations that the local High Druid followers know how to live around without violence. Strangers aren't so blessed.

The other icon with something of a claim on the owlbear is the Archmage; if only because the owlbear is the most durable example of the bizarre hybrids that wizards persist in creating despite evidence that it's not healthy for them or the world. The Dire Wood outside Horizon? Full of owlbears.

SKELETON

The most dangerous skeleton warriors are those of the Blackamber Legion. Before the first age they swore to serve their master, the Wizard King, forever. Whoops.

Decrepit Skeleton

1st level mook [undead]
Initiative: +6
Vulnerability: holy

Sword +6 vs. AC, 3 damage

Resist weapons 6+: When a weapon attack hits this creature, the attacker must roll a 6+ on a d20 or the attack deals only half damage instead.

AC 16
PD 14
MD 10

HP 7 (kill one decrepit skeleton mook for every 7 damage you deal to the mob)

Skeleton Archer

1st level archer [undead]
Initiative: +6
Vulnerability: holy

Jabby bones +5 vs. AC, 4 damage

R: Shortbow +7 vs. AC, 6 damage

Resist weapons 6+: When a weapon attack hits this creature, the attacker must roll a 6+ on a d20 or the attack deals only half damage instead.

AC 16
PD 14
MD 11

HP 26

Blackamber Skeletal Legionnaire

3rd level troop [undead]
Initiative: +8
Vulnerability: holy

Shortsword +9 vs. AC, 10 damage
   Natural 16+: The target moves down 1d3 points in initiative order.

R: Javelin +7 vs. AC, 7 damage

Press advantage: The legionnaire deals +1d6 damage against enemies with a lower initiative than it.

Resist weapons 6+: When a weapon attack hits this creature, the attacker must roll a 6+ on a d20 or the attack deals only half damage instead.

AC 20
PD 14
MD 16

HP 40

Skeletal Hound

1st level blocker [undead]
Initiative: +7
Vulnerability: holy

Bite +6, 5 damage

Chomp chomp chomp: Enemies with a lower initiative than the hound take a –5 penalty to disengage checks against it.

Resist weapons 6+: When a weapon attack hits this creature, the attacker must roll a 6+ on a d20 or the attack deals only half damage instead.

AC 16
PD 13
MD 13
HP 30

TROLL

Trolls live rich lives of symbolic meaning, as each individual relives the life of a legendary ancestor. They use ancient rituals in a forgotten tongue to mark their biographical and mythic milestones. Either that or they just wander around and eat things.

Large 4th level troop [giant]
Initiative: +9

Greedy wicked claw +8 vs. AC (2 attacks), 15 damage

Trollish regeneration 3d6: The troll's rubbery flesh heals 3d6 hit points at the start of its turn. It can regenerate five times per battle. If it heals more hit points than its maximum, then that use of *regeneration* doesn't count against the five-use limit.

If the troll is hit by an attack that deals fire or acid damage, it loses one use of its *regeneration*, and it can't regenerate during its next turn.

Dropping a troll to 0 hp doesn't kill it if it has any uses of *regeneration* uses left.

Nastier Specials

Increased regeneration: Increase the troll's regeneration dice; the baseline amount a troll regenerates should run about 1/9 of its total hp but you can go higher to be nasty.

Mutant: Fire and acid don't screw with this troll's regeneration; lightning does instead.

Rending: If both *claw* attacks hit the same target, the target also takes 10 ongoing damage.

AC 17
PD 17
MD 13

HP 90

Icons

Trolls surprise you. You can never be sure who arranged for them to be under *that* bridge at that particular moment.

VAMPIRE

There are basically two sorts of vampires: a noble, confident, cruel, well-fed lieutenant in the Lich King's service, and a wretched, desperate, cruel, hungry fugitive formerly in the Lich King's service.

10th level spoiler [undead]
Initiative: +15
Vulnerability: holy

Deathly touch +15 vs. PD, 50 necrotic damage

Natural 11+: The target is weakened until the end of its next turn (–4 attacks and defenses). The target also expends one unused limited trait (a spell, power, or talent with a once-per-battle or daily use, but not magic item powers) of its choice.

Vampiric regeneration: The vampire regenerates 1 hit point per level at the start of each round indefinitely, but it turns to mist if dropped to 0 hp (see below).

Mist form: Unless it is slain in a manner appropriate for truly killing vampires in the campaign, a vampire dropped to 0 hp drifts away to return and fight some other day.

Nastier Specials
@@Attack…
C: Vampiric compulsion +15 vs. MD, the target is confused and vulnerable (save ends 16+).

AC 26
PD 20
MD 26

HP 220

WIGHT

Wights "go rogue" more often than other undead creatures. They have the cunning and instincts to survive in small bands, but they lack the capability for long-term planning or abject obedience that other undead often demonstrate.

4th level spoiler [undead]
Initiative: +7
Vulnerability: holy

Sword +9 vs. AC, 8 damage
 Natural even hit or miss: The attack also deals 8 ongoing negative energy damage.

AC 20
PD 17
MD 13

HP 48

<u>Nastier Specials</u>
 Barrow-touch: The wight's attacks against enemies taking ongoing negative energy damage are against PD instead of AC and crit on an 18+.

Icons
Icons other than the Lich King who employ wights are taking a jab at the Lich King's territory. That goes for evil wizards, evil priests, and rogue necromancers, too, but it doesn't seem to stop them.

WRAITH

Some wraiths recall their former life just enough to scream questions about places they used to know. They don't wait for the answers or stop draining your life, but they want you to know they remember.

@[[ART: tile named Spectre3.psd]]

5th level spoiler [undead]
Initiative: +10
Vulnerability: holy

Ice-cold ghost blade +7 vs. PD, 10 negative energy damage

Natural 18+: The target is weakened (save ends), and the escalation die decreases by 1 (minimum 0).

Flight: The wraith hovers and zooms about.

Ghostly: This creature has resistance 11+ to all damage except force damage. It can also move through solid objects every other turn.

AC 19
PD 14
MD 17

HP 70

Nastier Specials

Drain life: The wraith heals half the damage it deals when it hits with a *natural 18+* attack roll.

Scream and assault: Once per battle when the wraith's natural attack roll is even, as a free action it can move after the attack without taking opportunity attacks and make a *ghost blade* attack against one or two other nearby enemies.

ZOMBIE

Near the end of a past age, a Diabolist released a disease on the world that turned people into contagious zombies. Good thing that will never happen again.

DIY MONSTERS

Some d20 games aim to simulate all aspects of a monster's abilities. Our more abstract approach combines simple baseline stats with cool abilities that make each monster unique. Ideally, simple mechanics harness imagination rather than simulation and the GM focuses more on the story than the system.

The good news about making your own monsters is that you don't have to hit every design out of the park. If your game is tense and the story is compelling, your players won't have time to think "Wow, there wasn't a lot going on with that monster." When you do succeed with a flavorful monster ability that turns out to make an impact on a battle, that's when you've scored and notched a moment in the players' memories.

The three tables at the end of this chapter list default stats for normal monsters, large monsters, and mooks. If you compare the baseline numbers in the table to the monsters in this chapter, you'll see how we've tinkered with them in each design.

Of course, you don't have to look at these tables *during play* unless you want to. Use them to stat up familiar dungeon monsters we haven't created for you yet or when you want to create a new NPC or monster on the fly.

Initiative

Before we say more about the info on the monster tables, let's cover something they don't mention. We left initiative off the table because it can range widely. We establish a monster's initiative bonus by adding its level to a modifier between –1 and +9. Go with Level +3 if you can't decide.

Initiative Adjustment

–1: Super-slow (oozes) and utterly clumsy (zombies)
0: Slow and clumsy (animated statues)
+1: Awkward, slow, or too small to be effective (city guards, dire rats)
+2: Average

+3: Just above average
+4: Quick
+5: Fast
+6: Really fast @@add some examples
+7: Fast like a fast PC
+8: Blindingly fast
+9: Competing with the rogue

Attack Bonus

You can fudge a creature's attack bonus plus or minus 1 and it won't make any difference except to suit your idea of how accurate a monster is.

Strike Damage

You can mix things up as you please, just orient yourself around the average damage for a monster's attack at any given level. When it comes to large monsters, you don't have to put all their damage into one strike. Split damage up into smaller attacks as we did with the black dragon and the ettin. Or use conditional follow-up attacks as we did with the drider.

HP & AC

Baselines to tumble about as you like. In practice, we've often used the defense numbers as the top-end rather than the baseline because we're secretly soft on PCs. That could change.

Better Defense/Lesser Defense

We normally make either PD or MD better than the other. But some monsters are an exception and have roughly equal defenses.

Fear Threshold

If the monster has a fear ability, and that's a big if, since you can see that not many of ours do, this stat is the number of hit points where creatures are dazed (–4 attack) while engaged with the monster and can't use the escalation die (potentially an even bigger problem). It's based on level, so that higher-level monsters are more fearsome.

More Advice for On the Fly Monster Design

Choose your monster's level (using the encounter building advice in the "Running the Game" section if you need it). Adjust the

numbers as you like using your notion of what's right or use our advice (below), add a monster power, and you've got a new monster ready to roll.

Stat Adjustments

There are two styles of stat adjustment we use often when we're making up monsters. First there are ad hoc adjustments we throw in to suit our sense of a monster's character and abilities. Then there are more formal half-level and full-level adjustments to use when you want to make a monster that plays partially like a lower-level monster and partially like a higher-level monster.

Ad Hoc Monster-Stat Adjustments

Rob says: If you're anything like me as a GM, you enjoy making small mechanical adjustments on the fly to model your sense of how your world fits together. When it comes to monster design, adding a point or two to one stat and subtracting a point or two somewhere else can help monsters play differently than the monsters the PCs faced in their last encounter.

Ad hoc adjustments work fine when limited to adjustments of 1 or 2 points. If you raise a couple scores, drop a couple others.

For example, I typically bump AC up by a point if I think a monster qualifies as well-defended, shielded, or particularly evasive. But if I'm just messing around with ad hoc adjustments, I'm likely to drop that same monster's hit points a bit so that it doesn't end up as an impassable obstacle.

Level-Based Monster-Stat Adjustments

Jonathan says: If you're like me as a GM, you'd rather make systematic adjustments to your monsters along consistent structural lines. Use the following adjustments if you want to make significant changes that either alter a monster's level or change several of its stats dramatically.

If you want to add a full level to a monster:

. . . and you only want to boost its attack: Give the monster a +6 attack boost.

. . . and you only want to boost AC: Give the monster a +6 AC boost.

. . . and you only want to increase the monster's hit points: Double the monster's hit points.

. . . and you only want to increase the damage the monster deals: Add a second attack or ongoing damage.

. . . and you only want to increase every stat: Add +1 to attack, +1 to all defenses, multiply its damage output by 1.25, and multiply its hit points by 1.25.

Here are other adjustments Jonathan has experimented with, modifying a monster's stats but keeping its current level.

Scrapper—Sharp but thin: +3 to attack, 70% of normal hp

Offensive—Soft but strong: +3 to attack, –3 to all defenses

Oaf—Tough and clumsy: –3 to attack, +3 to AC OR +25% hp boost

Defensive—Tough but weak: +3 to AC, 70% of normal hp

Lunk—Big and squishy: –3 to all defenses, +40% hp boost

Brittle—Tough but thin: +3 to AC, 70% of normal hp

And here are some bad combinations Jonathan won't use.

Bonus to AC; penalty to attack: It slows the game down and bores everyone.

Bonus to attack; penalty to damage: Sound and fury signifying less than it should.

Penalty to attack; bonus to damage: Too swingy.

Penalty to all defenses; bonus to damage: Also too swingy.

Penalty to attack; bonus to hit points: Slow and sad.

Accounting for Monster Powers

Neither of these approaches handles the adjustments you might want to make to an upgraded monster's special abilities to reflect a higher level. In fact, we don't generally factor a monster's non-attack powers into its level rating. There are 2nd level monsters with weak

powers and 2nd level monsters with really strong powers, and they both count as 2nd level monsters. We figure that the PCs have enough advantages that they should be able to deal with most small mismatches.

In general, we try to keep the number of powers a single monster possesses down. That may feel odd to GMs who are used to fully simulating the monster. If that's you, feel free to add surprising moves on the spur of the moment as the story suggests, but in general, don't burden yourself or the game flow with more than two or three abilities per DIY monster.

Powers to Avoid

The number one category of power that GMs want to throw on their monsters but should be avoided is defensive power: things that make it harder for the monsters to be killed. When you give monsters defensive abilities, make sure there's an offense to unlock the defense.

We gave kobolds an evasion ability . . . but we didn't give it to any higher-level monsters.

Skeletons have resistance 6+ to weapon damage . . . but they can be killed just fine by spells and energy.

Trolls regenerate a lot, but they are the signature regenerator in the game and the PCs can turn it off using fire damage, which someone should have; otherwise you're in for a tough fight! But hey: it's the troll.

The easiest design mistake is to do something that feels right but turns out to make a monster too hard to kill. Subconsciously you might want your monster to survive. But don't let a slightly faulty design derail your game. When you realize that you've designed an overpowered regeneration mechanic or other defensive ability, change it on the fly to let the game flow.

Of course, the other side of this design problem is adding vulnerabilities. Making dragons vulnerable to an energy type or giving monsters a big Achilles heel can sometimes be a good idea. But just as often it creates something that feels arbitrary and mandatory. We made undead *vulnerable to holy* energy, but we haven't made other creatures *vulnerable to holy* yet. If you make use of it, be certain that's how you want characters in your world to think.

Baseline Stats for Normal Monsters

Monster Level	Attack Bonus	Strike Damage	HP	AC	Better Defense	Lesser Defense	Fear threshold (hp)
0	5	4 (d8)	20	16	14	10	7
1	6	5 (d10)	27	17	15	11	9
2	7	7 (2d6)	36	18	16	12	12
3	8	10 (3d6)	45	19	17	13	15
4	9	14 (4d6)	54	20	18	14	18
5	10	18 (5d6)	72	21	19	15	24
6	11	21 (6d6)	90	22	20	16	30
7	12	28 (8d6)	108	23	21	17	36
8	13	38 (7d10)	144	24	22	18	48
9	14	50 (8d10)	180	25	23	19	60
10	15	55 (10d10)	216	26	24	20	72
11	16	2d6x10	288	27	25	21	96
12	17	2d8 x 10	360	28	26	22	120
13	18	2d10 x 10	432	29	27	23	144
14	19	3d8 x 10	576	30	28	24	192

Baseline Stats for Mooks

Monster Level	Attack Bonus	Strike Damage	Damage to kill one (hp)	AC	Better Defense	Lesser Defense
0	5	3	5	16	14	10
1	6	4	7	17	15	11
2	7	5	9	18	16	12
3	8	6	11	19	17	13
4	9	7	14	20	18	14
5	10	9	18	21	19	15
6	11	12	23	22	20	16
7	12	18	27	23	21	17
8	13	23	36	24	22	18
9	14	31	45	25	23	19
10	15	37	54	26	24	20

Baseline Stats for Large Monsters (double the hp and damage of normal monsters)

Monster Level	Attack Bonus	Strike Damage	HP	AC	Better Defense	Lesser Defense	Fear threshold (hp)
0	5	2d8	41	16	14	10	7
1	6	3d6	54	17	15	11	9
2	7	4d6	72	18	16	12	12
3	8	6d6	90	19	17	13	15
4	9	8d6	108	20	18	14	18
5	10	7d10	144	21	19	15	24
6	11	8d10	180	22	20	16	30
7	12	10d10	216	23	21	17	36
8	13	2d6 x 10	288	24	22	18	48
9	14	2d8 x 10	360	25	23	19	60
10	15	2d10 x 10	432	26	24	20	72
11	16	4d6 x 10	576	27	25	21	96
12	17	5d6 x 10	720	28	26	22	120
13	18	6d6 x 10	864	29	27	23	144
14	19	7d6 x 10	1152	30	28	24	192
@@finish damage revision							

Chapter 8: The Dragon Empire

This chapter introduces the cities, forests, and bizarre magical locations of the Dragon Empire while leaving space for your campaigns' unique creations.

THE THREE WORLDS

The world has three great realms: the land, the underworld, and the overworld.

The Land

People live on the land, which is a big, flat disk surrounded on all sides by ocean. The most important and civilized part of the land, near the center, is the Dragon Empire and neighboring territories. On all sides there are terrors and dangers, but the Emperor, the Archmage, the Priestess, the Great Gold Wyrm, and the Crusader keep many of the people of the Empire safe most of the time. The Elf Queen protects her people in the woods and wilds, as well, as does the Dwarf King in the underworld.

The map of the Dragon Empire is a map of the land. Maps of the underworld and overworld look quite different.

The Underworld

Below the land are endless tunnels, chambers, rivers, and lakes—the homes of the dwarves, dark elves, and countless monsters. Portions of the underworld are under dwarf or drow control, and other portions are controlled by nefarious creatures, but most of it is wild. The Dwarf King claims to own all the areas of the underworld, but that's more a statement of intent than a statement of fact. Maps of the underworld can reliably locate a few definite features, such as the Throne Under the Mountain, but explorers are mostly on their own. The underworld changes constantly, with new passages opening up and others closing off. Occasionally, living dungeons roar up from the deeps; if they're not killed off, they eventually erupt onto the surface.

The Overworld

High above the land is the overworld, the realm of clouds. Clouds can support weight, and various creatures live in the overworld, all of them fearsome. Floating here and there amid the clouds are flying mountains, storm and cloud giants, dragons, and cloud cities. All mighty flying creatures travel to the overworld when traversing great distances. The Archmage's Tower and the Priestess's Cathedral both extend magically into the overworld, and adventurous mortals can access it by climbing certain mountains.

@@likely the new place for the notes on economy and coinage and the price list; @then scatter the curious price entries through the chapter as sidebars

A–Z GEOGRAPHY

Most of the alphabetical entries that follow correspond with map tags. Each tag indicates the page number of the entry covering that area. For a map unsullied by page numbers, use the book's end pages.

The Map is not Complete

If you decide to use our world instead of a world you've already got cooking, don't treat our map as restrictive. The apparently empty sections of our map don't have to be empty in your world. Our map is a view from a sizeable distance. The non-marked-up sections of the map are actually full of villages, towns, ruins, dungeons, ports, local kingdoms, baronies, abandoned mines, haunted battlefields, nomad tent villages, temples to obscure deities, bandit gangs, martial monasteries, and forgotten graveyards.

For example, one level of Rob's game played out just south of New Port and north of the Wild Wood. In that square half-inch of empty map, the PCs encountered a bandit gang aided by demons, two passable taverns, a village with an unscrupulous headman who was cheating the dead (a bad idea in a world with a Lich King), a farming community running the Archmage's

reap-the-future agricultural magic system, and a living dungeon burrowing through the hills toward an unmarked hellhole.

Inventing Your Own Cities: Each of the seven major cities of the Empire has its own unique schtick. But the cities don't come close to exhausting the urban stereotypes that could serve the dramatic needs of an engaging campaign. Do you need a city with a grasping king fighting off a rebellion incited by sorcerers from the wastes? Or a city based on music where the weather is accompanied by song? Or a city where cats talk and birds serve as eyes for demons? Drop your idea into one of the existing cities *or* invent a new city, give it a name that fits your campaign or the background of one of the player characters, and site it where you like.

Quick Guide . . .

Before we dive into the full geography, here's a quick guide to some of the most interesting adventuring locations.

The Seven Cities: For entries on the seven main cities of the Dragon Empire, skip to Axis, Concord, Drakkenhall, Glitterhaegen, Horizon, Newport, and Santa Cora.

You'll note that each of the Seven Cities is a port on the Midland Sea, allowing quick and easy travel between them. Each of the cities is at least nominally controlled by an imperial governor, though the exact nature and identity of the governance is a detail we're usually leaving up to individual campaigns.

The other thing the Seven Cities have in common is that each has the right to stamp its own platinum, gold, silver, and copper coins. Sometimes one of the cities will make special alloys and coins that are worth 5 gp or 10 gp apiece, though it's generally understood that one city's coin is as good as another's. Knowing what type of coinage someone is carrying can yield clues to where they've been or who they have been dealing with.

Mad, Bad, & Dangerous: For entries on some of the most dangerous places in the world,

skip to The Abyss, The Fangs, Gorogan's Maw, Hellholes, Hell Marsh, Iron Sea, Omen, Red Wastes, and Sea Wall. Many of these places are *champion* or *epic* areas, and not the type of place that beginning characters can expect to survive for long.

Weird and Wonderful: For a few of the entries on odd or magnificent locations, go to Cathedral, Cloudhome, The Court, High Dock, Koru Behemoths, Koru Straits, and Starport.

Icons' Home Locations: The icons' power bases include The Abyss, Axis, The Court, Drakkenhall, First Triumph, Forge, Glitterhaegen, Hell Marsh, Horizon, Necropolis, Santa Cora, Shadow Port, and Wild Wood. During play the icons are usually best kept off-screen; bring them out, if you like, for very special occasions. When you do, these are the areas they're most likely to be found, where their organizations are strongest and where you can be sure it won't be hard to find people allied with the icon even if you're not.

The Abyss

This two-hundred-mile-long rift opened in a previous age when the Diabolist's schemes allowed powerful fiends to tear through the walls of the world. Demons poured out through the Abyss until the Great Gold Wyrm fought its way to the bottom of the Abyssal rift and bound the gate with his body. The Gold Wyrm is now a living ward. His presence keeps the greatest fiends from entering the world. Lesser fiends who can sometimes slip in through smaller cracks remain trapped in the Abyss by the Wyrm's magic rather than by his physical presence. Occasionally a demon breaks through the Great Gold Wyrm's magic or a wizard or sorcerer works to pull one out.

The Abyss is two hundred miles long, between one and five miles wide, and reaches to unknown depths. Floating chunks of rock form islands within it, and these islands are used as anchors for the few bridges crossing it, and as the foundations for the communities there— both the fiend-halls in the depths and a few monasteries and watchtowers scattered around the top.

Deep Secret of the Abyss: The Diabolist does not presently work to destroy the Great Gold Wyrm. Occasionally the Diabolist may even act covertly to ensure the Wyrm's continued survival, because a near monopoly on demonic power suits the Diabolist more than releasing all demons to destroy the world.

Anvil

Anvil is a dwarven fort. In the past those living there were chiefly concerned with making sure that the giants didn't rampage north out the mountain range named for their kind. Now its location could help defend against a true eruption of fiends from the Hell Marsh or an orc invasion from the North. But for the moment that type of active defense isn't likely since the dwarves have all they can handle trying to keep the Undermarch open in the underworld between Anvil and Forge.

Axis, City of Swords

Capital of the Dragon Empire; one of the Seven Cities

The capital of the Dragon Empire sits inside the crater of an ancient volcano. The shards of the crater wall stand high above the city, carved into the likeness of great dragons and rife with troop tunnels and magical defenses. The topmost city spires and the magical clouds above them are the home of the three or four dozen dragons—the remaining members of the army of metallic dragons that the Great Gold Wyrm gifted to the first Emperor to help him defeat the Lich King.

Axis is a city of wonders, military power, and martial competition. Gladiatorial games, skirmishes between noble houses, and staged holy wars hone the fighting spirit of an empire built on conquest.

Arenas

The city's arenas stage all varieties of exhibitions, games, and blood-matches. The only entirely observed rule is that true dragons are not legal combatants, an ancient dictate whose origins are lost but one that seems wise enough that every Emperor has enforced it.

There are many gladiatorial games that cycle in and out of fashion in Axis. Here are three of the more interesting ones.

Kjess: An arena boardgame played with living pieces, *kjess* places numerous ranks of supposedly-lowly pawns in front of the more important pieces so that the audience can be assured of seeing many bloody battles before more elegant moves and elimination of key pieces begins to determine a winner. Promotion of pawns who win many fights in a row is a popular feature of the game, and for that matter, of Axis's stories about itself. The Fighting Pawn is one of the city's best-known taverns. The lowly pawn who turns out to be an Imperial bastard is a stock figure of bardic romance. *Kjess* is also a popular game with rogues of many varieties, perhaps because there are *so many* ways to bet on the *kjess*, and bloody betting scandals are nearly as entertaining as the game.

Stick-it: Two or more teams of semi-armored warriors with javelins protect their team's targets (aka wickets) with tiny shields and their own bodies. Combat lines start far apart. The long distances see to it that simply aiming at the enemy is usually not the best course; it's better to aim at the wickets, not all of which can simultaneously be covered by the opposing team, and then make a follow-up attack at your foes when they try to ward off your first throw. Surprisingly enough, the complex scoring system of *stick-it* doesn't boil down to who can still walk without the need for healing at the end of the match.

Tusk: Named after one of Axis's greatest past gladiators, Citizen Tusk, *tusk* is a somewhat racist but heartily appreciated celebration of the fact that one half-orc (carefully chosen, perhaps) can kick the ass of several less hearty warriors (possibly also carefully chosen). *Tusk* events are in no way staged, managed, scripted, or rehearsed, and repeated statements to the contrary are surely slanders perpetrated by the competition.

Palaces

Petitioners at the central Imperial palace of Thronehold do well to fly in through the great

archways. Anyone who has to walk up the twisty stairs from the under-level is assumed to be low-born and worth ignoring.

There are several Imperial Palaces hidden around the city. Those with connections to the Emperor are more likely to find them. The palaces range from the Palace of War (trophies and generals, mostly) to the Garden of Delight (as you would imagine). Some say that the identity and locations of the palaces change, but how would anyone know?

The early Emperors who understood that their people needed games of war to remain fit for true battle imagined that the war games would stop when the Empire charged into actual war. Which shows that Emperors know much of war but little of people.

—Kullis

Bloodwood

The forest that breaks away from the Wild Wood and presses up against the Sea Wall is named the Bloodwood. Although the Empire doesn't readily admit it, the creatures of the High Druid have been coming out of the Bloodwood to maintain an active defense against monsters from the Iron Sea along the coast line nearest the Bloodwood. Even though that section of the Sea Wall is in poor repair, and is not as heavily garrisoned, forces from the Wood strike against the monsters constantly and prevent them from slipping into the Empire.

Burrow, Old Town, and Twisp

Tucked away between Concord and the Queen's Wood are a series of bucolic little halfling villages. The great troubles of the rest of the world seem to pass them by. Nestled under their hills and safe behind their big round doors, the folk living in these villages have little interest in the outside world. Occasionally, a young halfling finds town life to be stifling and sets off for a life of adventure. Rumor has it that some sort of blessing or magic must be at work keeping these towns safe.

Gamemaster: The peaceful, simple lives of those living in the halfling towns are a tonal counterpoint to the high-energy setting. Keep

them preserved so long as the Empire's great wards hold. Threaten the villages with war and despair when things really fall apart.

Cathedral

The Priestess' sanctum in Santa Cora

In a land of ancient traditions and time-worn cities, there is one thing very new under the sun: the Priestess's Cathedral. This massive, multi-sided edifice rises into the sky seemingly out of sight, and the interior is a maze of passageways, sanctuaries, chapels, statuaries, inner sanctums, and occasional sunlit courtyards high above the ground. It dominates the skyline of Santa Cora, the City of Temples, and it serves as the Priestess's home and court.

The Cathedral represents in stone the Priestess's philosophy of spiritual union. The very shape and layout of the structure channel spiritual energy to generate greater harmony. She has built chapels and sanctuaries devoted to the many "spheres" of the Gods of Light, such as healing, life, truth, childbearing, harvest, strength, and fire. Priests of various gods convene there for shared rituals devoted to one or another of these virtues. The ceremonial unions achieved in the Cathedral echo spiritually through temples and shrines all across the Empire, enhancing the general feeling of solidarity. Powerful heroes are sometimes invited to partake in certain rituals, as their heroic deeds resonate with the ritual acts to create more powerful effects. Every follower of the Priestess hopes to pray in the Cathedral one day. The Cathedral is a bastion of hope and stability in a world beset on all sides by danger.

The Priestess is constantly adding to the Cathedral, incorporating more and more worthy ideals into its structure. She even has passageways that lead to the overworld and to other planes of existence.

Rumor has it that all the stone for the Cathedral comes from a single, secret, distant source, perhaps the body of a fallen god or goddess.

Gamemaster

The Cathedral is a massive effort, but it is only partly successful. Sometimes there are sharp differences of opinion among priests of different gods about the proper ways to worship gods associated with a particular sphere. The priests of Agni and of Hephaestus, for example, approach the "fire" sphere quite differently, while the priestesses of Brigid fall somewhere in between the other two camps.

Additionally, the passageways and chambers spontaneously shift and change, as if manifesting some implicit spiritual order. Some of the faithful have invented the art of "cathedromancy," an aspect of divination in which you seek guidance by wandering within the Cathedral at random and finding an answer in the voices of the divine you encounter during your wanderings. The Priestess approves of the practice even though she has no direct control over it.

It's easy enough to get the players to the Cathedral by inviting them to be part of an important ceremony. The Cathedral promises the players a safe place, but it does have problems of its own. Feel free to decide how big these problems are, since they basically define the fate of the Priestess. Perhaps the Priestess really is succeeding, and the problems are growing pains. Perhaps the Priestess is failing, and the internal rifts in her temple foretell the collapse of her career, with the Priestess herself dead, ruined, or depraved. In any event, the players deserve at least one "dungeon crawl" through the Cathedral, where shifting passages put spiritual roadblocks in their way.

For the PCs, it could be that reaching their destination means proving one's spiritual virtue to a gang of serious-minded monks, surviving the Walk of Abundant Flame, settling an escalating dispute between the priests of Thor and Zeus, or clearing one's heart of violence to get through a mystical labyrinth.

What does it mean that the Cathedral honors only the Gods of Light? Does it inadvertently generate a sort of negative pole of spiritual energy, something that the Crusader, Lich King, or Diabolist could exploit? Or does the Priestess secretly honor the spheres of the Dark Gods, too? Perhaps she'll have to learn to do just that if her Cathedral is to survive.

Cities, the Seven Cities

There are seven great cities on the shores of the Midland Sea. They each have a full entry elsewhere in this chapter. Here's a brief description of each city outlining its common name, key characteristics, and the icons with the most influence there.

Axis: City of Swords; fame, status, palaces, war; Emperor/Crusader/Great Gold Wyrm

Concord: City of Spires; demihumans; Elf Queen, Dwarf King

Drakkenhall: City of Monsters; monsters, ruins, intrigue; the Three

Glitterhaegen: City of Gold; commerce, crime, wealth; Prince of Shadows, Emperor, possibly the Dwarf King

Horizon: City of Wonders; magic, mystery; Archmage

New Port: City of Promise; opportunity, hope, change, possibilities; all icons in play . . .

Santa Cora: City of Gods; holiness, the Cathedral; Priestess

Cloudhome

Most of the castles and cities in the clouds of the overworld float along with the winds, but Cloudhome is different. The western peaks of the mountain range known as Giantwalk is perpetually wreathed in clouds and storms. Giants live in the many layers of clouds and hunt in the mountains below, naming the region Cloudhome. It's the largest stationary feature of the overworld.

Further west and south of Cloudhome are volcanoes whose ash plumes are winding stairs up to the clouds. Fire giants live there, but there is general disagreement about whether this area is part of Cloudhome, unless you're talking to a fire giant, in which case, it most definitely is.

Sometimes pieces of Cloudhome break off or are cut loose in battles among the giants. The cloud fragments drift free until they snag on a mountain or settle roughly to the earth and

eventually dissipate. Some cloudbreaks, as they are called, are populated by giants when the break free, but most are sparsely populated by opportunists like cults of the Three, Storm temples, and would-be sky pirates.

Rumor has it that the Orc Lord has an alliance with a growing army of storm giants, who are planning to attack the Empire from above once the Warlord launches his inevitable invasion.

Gamemaster: The giants are potentially an outside force that the PCs can recruit for some cause. It's easy enough for giants to have ancient secrets or artifacts entrusted only to them, and the PCs might need to earn the giants' trust. A good way to earn giants' trust, of course, might be to engage in some sort of battles with the giants' enemies.

Cloudbreaks are convenient places for isolated adventures. They float anywhere, no one can map them, no one knows how many there are, etc.

Concord: City of Spires

One of the Seven Cities
Concord is a blend of high elf spires, woodlands, carved dwarven rock, and halfling burrows—it's a garden city, and in places too wild to even count as a garden.

Elves, dwarves, and other nonhumans are familiar in all the cities of the human-dominated Dragon Empire. But in Concord, nonhumans predominate and have formed a society unlike anything else in the Empire or the kingdoms that would otherwise hold their citizen's allegiance. The Dragon Emperor, Elf Queen, and Dwarf King are not entirely comfortable with Concord's blend of citizens and diverse strengths, but so far the experiment has not caught on beyond Concord's walls. This racial co-existence may be due to the fact that the city itself has magic that enables alliances that would falter elsewhere.

As a human of precise judgment, I am grateful that the demihumans have created a city of badger holes, haunted needles, and pipeweed

catastrophes, which they have arranged for their comfort.

—Kullis

The Court

In Elven, the original name of the Elf Queen's court is something like "First Court of the Unified Elven Kindred." It's not a name that gets used much these days. Elves refer to their Queen's place of power as the Court. To the chagrin of the Dragon Emperor and the Dwarf King, the rest of the world follows the elves' lead, to the extent that the Dragon Empire refers to its own court as either "the Palace" or "the Assembly."

The Court can be found somewhere in the hills and valleys of the Queen's Wood, south of the northern mountains, east of the barbarian lands, and north of the Midland Sea. The nearest great city is Concord. The Court's location varies according to magical cycles that non-elves can't track. The Court's trappings change to keep up with fashion. And the Queen remains consistently unpredictable.

Dire Wood

Nobles from Axis travel to this wood to hunt bizarrely huge boars and other game that may or may not have been mutated by the wizards of Horizon, who have treated the forest like a battle-lab.

Drakkenhall, City of Monsters

One of the Seven Cities
Four hundred years ago the city's name was Highrock. The powerful magical defenses of its fortified walls pointed out toward the Koru Straights and repelled at least four serious invasions that might have slipped into the Empire by skirting the magic that protects the Midland Sea.

Four hundred years ago the city fell, either to monsters or to betrayal. For three hundred years the city lay in ruins. Then the Blue Dragon, the sorcerous plotter with quasi-legal status in the Empire, moved to make the city her own. From the ruins the Blue rebuilt a city that is open to both citizens of the Empire and to

monsters that ordinarily wouldn't be trusted to live in cities.

Monsters and other beings that cannot openly enter the other cities of the Empire are welcome in Blue City, as Drakkenhall is called, so long as they remember who rules. Some portion of the Blue's magic seems dedicated to keeping a lid on mass homicide within her city. The power the Blue spends on control doesn't seem to be diminishing her strength, possibly because she is siphoning power from the great storms that would otherwise break on the land north of Cape Thunder and the Koru Straits.

Most of the western part of the city is still ruined. It's not clear if the Blue wants those sections rebuilt. It's also not clear whether the Blue shares her vision for the city with the Black and the Red. They don't seem intent on the city's destruction, but they obviously have no compunction about eliminating some of its citizens.

In Drakkenhall, and to a lesser extent in the towns and enclaves north of Drakkenhall and south of the Queen's Wood, a few of the monstrous races function in roles monopolized by the civilized races in the rest of the Empire. The Goblin Market is famous for its deals, steals, and buyer's remorse. The head of the Blue's secret police is supposedly an ogre magi. In general, lawful evil monsters and some of the neutral evil monsters make homes in Drakkenhall, or at least can visit without being slain on sight.

Not so for orcs. The Blue has no problem with half-orcs and no illusions about orcs. Rumors say orcs are entirely unwelcome in Drakkenhall. It might even be true.

Unlike our customary human and half-elf overlords, the monsters who run the collection of ruins, dungeons, and bazaar tents known as Drakkenhall have the grace to look like monsters.

—Kullis

Dungeons

Some dungeons were built by mortal rulers. Others were constructed by the familiar spells and powers of wizards and demons.

Other special dungeons, known as "living dungeons," rise spontaneously from beneath the underworld, moving upward steadily toward the surface as they spiral across the map. Living dungeons don't follow any logic; they're bizarre expressions of malignant magic. If a living dungeon survives to break onto the surface of the world, it can become a permanent feature of the landscape, or at least as permanent as a dungeon is allowed to be in a world of heroes.

Adventurers, especially adventurers favoring the good icons, often attempt to slay living dungeons before they breach. Some living dungeons can be slain by eliminating all their monsters. Others have actual crystalline hearts, and can be slain by specific magic rituals whose components and clues can be found among their corridors and chests. More than one party of adventurers has observed that most living dungeons have some form of a death wish. But the servants of the evil icons attempt to locate living dungeons and get them to the surface alive where they will magnify the evil icon's power.

<<start sidebar>>

Gamemaster: Each campaign can start with mention of that campaign's three most dangerous dungeons, living or otherwise.

If you have played a d20 game before, and spent money on adventure material, you may already have a few pages or books of dungeons and dangerous locations. We contributed to such lists in earlier work, and we draft whatever makes us happy for our games, so we advise shameless and eclectic dungeon-grafting.

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The short list of dungeons that follows are just a few of the world's danger zones. Most of these dungeons are influenced by the geography and other story elements of *13th Age*. Generic sites work just as well, but you're not reading *this* list for generics.

Crash: Somewhere in one of the great forests, a flying realm involved in a magical war speared itself deep into the earth. The forest has partly grown over the tip of the realm, but a great stone bulk still protrudes. The survivors of the battles and the crash have mutated and spread out beneath the roots.

Hell-Well: This dungeon appears to be a failed hellhole, an area in which the demons who survived the initial struggles for supremacy were insane and concerned only with digging deeper into the earth. They may be down there still, digging ever deeper. What's certain is that dozens of other monsters have moved into the twisted architecture they left behind.

Koru Pots: Somewhere along the koru behemoths trail, the land collapsed beneath the Behemoth's feet. The resulting pot holes have become infested with an ecosystem of monsters and scavengers living off the strange material that was scraped off the normally impervious Koru's legs and bellies during the collapse.

Sahuagin Temple: Somewhere in the Fangs, a living dungeon full of arbitrary magical traps and aberrations partially surfaced in the midst of a riverine sahuagin hunting zone. The sahuagin more or less killed off the aberrations and now interpret the ever-renewing cycle of arbitrary magical traps as expressions of the will of their fanged deities.

Gamemaster: With the exception of absurdly large dungeons like Gorogan's Maw, we didn't put the "permanent" dungeons on our world map. That's another detail we leave up to you. Campaign Cartographer and other map software users will be able to sprinkle dungeons around their world map, albeit with somewhat less mobility than flying realms.

Dwarven Mines

In ancient times, the dwarves dug mines across the land. As each became tapped-out, they moved on to the next. In time, these abandoned mines were claimed by the Dragon Empire. As part of the alliance with the Empire, the dwarves regained title to their old mines, ownership that had been cut from them by the Wizard King. The Empire didn't consider ownership of the mines to be a big deal. After all, they were stripped bare, and the dwarves had moved on for a reason.

But the earth within the mines has now replenished itself. The most likely explanation seems to be the rise in power of the new High Druid. Primal earth has regenerated the rich veins, and while this poses problems for the Emperor, its immediate impact on the Dwarf King's fortunes has been dramatically positive. The mines can operate again and the dwarves are pushing their control of them. The Emperor's treasuries could use the wealth that the mines are producing, but war with the Dwarves seems like a bad idea. So the Empire is considering other schemes.

Like villages and dungeons, dwarven mines aren't indicated on the world map: you can insert one wherever you need it.

The Fangs

Some of the monsters compelled by the Blessed Emperor to leave the Midland Sea chose to flee into the rivers and marshes that feed into the sea instead of exiting to the Iron Sea. Many of the sahuagin of the shallows moved into a region riddled by a group of mid-size rivers that were previously collectively known as the Fingers. Now they're known as the Fangs.

The Midland Sea is supposed to be secure against sahuagin swimming beyond the shore, but a couple of ships have disappeared without any explanation, and to be on the safe side, most captains steer away from the shoreline along the Fangs.

On Rivers: When the Blessed Emperor healed the Midland Sea, the infection moved from the heart into the veins. If one could somehow avoid needing to drink, one could stay far from these networks of flowing evil.

—Kullis

First Triumph

[see Hellholes for additional background]
In the last few years, the Crusader has added three stars to his battle pennant, one for each hellhole he has conquered. Amazingly, the first

hellhole he conquered was also the biggest, and it is now home to the Crusader's own impregnable fortress, renamed First Triumph (shortened by those not beholden to the Crusader to "First Try").

Although the first conquest cost many paladins' lives, the Crusader has captured two more hellholes since, and maintains a fortress in each one as well. Apparently he has some magical means whereby conquering a hellhole actually gives him authority over it, allowing him to shape a fortress for himself out of the hellhole's raw creative power. Most likely, he transforms existing buildings into the structures he desires.

The victorious Crusader also takes command of the demons and devils that inhabited the hellhole. These wretches become loyal guards garrisoning his fortresses. The presence of the Crusader's divine power slowly leeches the life out of these creatures, but they seem determined to serve their new master to the end. More than one report has indicated that each fortress is being provisioned with supplies, as if in preparation for imminent war.

The former hellholes remain forbidding places, with alien landscapes that are often harmful to mortals. Each fort is constructed in the center of the hellhole and looks like some stony monster that has crawled its way out of the underworld, with countless pennants snapping this way and that in the twisty winds. The infernal guards are fearsome, but the handpicked paladins that run the fortresses are more fearsome still.

The Crusader lays claim to *all* the hellholes as his rightful domain. If heroes allied with other icons destroy a hellhole, the Crusader is unable to turn that hellhole into a fortress. His paladins have made threatening noises about preventing others from trying to destroy hellholes, and the Crusader's paladins never make empty threats.

The Diabolist claims she is unconcerned about the Crusader's conquests, reportedly saying, "There's plenty more hell where those came from." No one knows how the Crusader chooses which hellhole to strike next.

Rumor has it that the Crusader is going to launch an invasion of hell, with his fortresses serving as staging areas that guard the entrances. If so, he's going to open up what the Great Gold Wyrm, and everybody else, wants sealed off.

Gamemaster

The hellhole fortresses establish the Crusader as a bad-ass, but it is ambiguous as to what they say about whether he is more hero or villain. Yes, he's destroying hellholes, but he's also building hell fortresses. What does it say about a man if he seems more at home in hell than on earth? The details of what's going on at the fortresses and how it feels to visit one all depend on how you're treating the Crusader.

One obvious adventure hook for the PCs could include having them stumble across a weird demonic artifact, and the PCs get invited to bring it to a Crusader fortress for examination. It's unlikely that the fortress will be dangerous because the security is so good, but the PCs might get ambushed while crossing the hellhole terrain. Getting the PCs to a Crusader fortress lets them get a better read on whether the Crusader is a good guy or a bad guy. In addition to being a creepy enough place on looks alone, the whole area practically pulses with spiritual energy: the raw power of hell in the unbreakable chains of divine might. While under the influence of the fortress's energy, people feel anticipation, elation, and awe. It feels like glorious readiness for imminent battle. If the good/evil identity of the Crusader is going to be determined at some point in your campaign, it could happen when the PCs are at one of his fortresses. Alternatively, a visit to a hellhole fortress could foreshadow what is to be revealed later.

If you unleash some sort of catastrophe on the campaign, such as a zombie apocalypse, a Crusader fortress could be an excellent refuge, as literally the only safe place for miles and miles. Even a more localized danger, such as a whole army of ogres chasing the PCs, could

force the party take refuge at a Crusader fortress.

Flying Realms

At any moment there are between four and twenty flying realms moving somewhere through the overworld above the Dragon Empire. Some come from other worlds. Some come from areas off the map. Others are created by the Archmage, the Three, the Prince of Shadows, or by ambitious wizards in Horizon (with varying degrees of success).

Gamemaster: The short list below is meant to suggest that you can do nearly anything you want with a flying realm. Use them as sudden adventure-seeds, random flavor, prized experiences, and even gods-in-the-machine.

Battle Barge: One of the Crusader's fortresses disgorged this giant flying battleship, but it only partially survived an encounter with flying demons that are reputed to have laid eggs in the barge's bowels. The barge drifts erratically through the overworld now, dipping lower unpredictably. The Crusader's response to being asked about what went wrong on the battle barge is *very* predictable, and no one living has made the mistake.

Clock Land: This weird island is probably from another world. It's full of clockwork mechanical creatures that build themselves into a semblance of civilization and then fall apart. Their magic doesn't seem to translate well off the island.

Omenites: The observers at Vigil try to notice and track fragments of the island of Omen (see page XX) that take off. But they miss a few. The fragments, known as "omennites," are steadily degrading flying dungeons, somewhat prone to crash-skipping across the land before lurching skyward again. They can be killed.

The Swan: Graceful and fleet, this flying land is carved with a trace of wings and cloud cover that often resembles a swan's long neck and head. Is it the traveling home of the Elf Queen? Or a leftover remnant of a previous icon?

Wind Farm: These land masses are one of the Archmage's flying realms. Are the magic-rune-carved windmills on them keeping the *farms* aloft, generating magical power for the Archmage, helping control the weather of the Dragon Empire, or serving some other purpose?

Forge

Originally the dwarves lived all through the deep underworld. The riches of the earth were theirs to harvest and shape. In this world, when anyone uses the term "Golden Age," they are talking about the underworld hegemony and craftsmanship of the dwarves.

The war with the elves destroyed the dwarves' original homeland, and even the deepest realm was poisoned during underworld battles with the dark elves. It's not entirely clear that the poison was specifically the dark elves' fault; most dwarves and elves believe that the poison was released as an unexpected side effect of the war, during a rupture from below. But when peace eventually came between the dwarves and elves, it was drow renegades who were willing to move back into the poisoned deeps and pay the price: their sanity.

The dwarves who lived in the deeps had to move closer to the surface. The largest dwarven population now lives under the great mountain named Forge. The mountain is honeycombed with tunnels and halls that extend far below it and on all sides. The Dwarf King rules from the mountain's center.

Of course, a few dwarves are always trying to reclaim the deep underworld. It's possible to go there, but those who stay too long are driven crazy by the poison. So far the results of these would-be reconquests have been various hard-pressed settlements and scattered subspecies of insane dwarves.

One dramatic consequence of the poisoning of the deep underworld is that living dungeons have more time to gather speed as they rise. In the centuries before the dwarves were forced out of the deep underworld, they took care of most living dungeons before the places could get any speed. Now living dungeons gather more power and become more dangerous before those closer to the surface notices them.

Glitterhaegen, City of Coins

One of the Seven Cities

If everything has a price, Glitterhaegen is where you can find someone willing to take your money. It's the most mercantile of the seven Cities, the place where merchant guilds have more sway than the Imperial governor and the thieves guild thrives despite countless pogroms to squash it.

The human, half-elven, and gnome merchants of Glitterhaegen aren't quick to admit it, but part of the reason for the city's economic power is its proximity to Forge and the central kingdom of the dwarves. The dwarves do most of their trading through Glitterhaegen instead of inviting outsiders into their lands.

The merchants are even slower to acknowledge that the proximity of Shadow Port may be a gray blessing instead of a black curse. Shadow Port handles the merchandise that's too risky for people to get caught with in Glitterhaegen, and since the line between merchant and thief often blurs, especially over the course of an entire Glitterhaegen career, its proximity is convenient.

Despite its reputation, Glitterhaegen is the wrong place to sell your soul. Few of the inhabitants have a soul of their own to dissect, so they have been unable to settle on a price.

—Kullis

Golden Citadel

South of the Midland Sea, East of the Abyss

Located between Horizon and Santa Cora, the once-splendid golden dome that served as the stronghold of the Great Gold Wyrm lies in ruins, destroyed in the centuries since the current Great Gold Wyrm threw itself into the Abyss. Paladins of the Golden Order make holy-war pilgrimages to the ruins on the mountain, periodically clearing them of monsters and ensuring that no dungeon can rise up into the rubble. But attempts to fully rebuild the Citadel have failed, partly because of concerted attacks by the Three, and partly because the Great Gold Wyrm has ordered the Golden Paladins to

disperse through the world instead of remaining stationary near the Abyss.

Gorogan's Maw

The great fiend Gorogan clawed his way through the Abyss before the Great Gold Wyrm could seal the gap. Some combination of magic and luck wielded by the icons or by heroes petrified the demon before he could destroy the world. His body is buried but his mountain-sized head still juts partly above-ground. Demons come out of the eyes, mouth, and anywhere else they can find egress. Fools and adventurers in search of insanely powerful treasure go in through the same gaps.

Grey Towers

The Grey Towers are a series of ancient high-elf ruins claimed by the Iron Sea and other marauders. Supposedly there are magical ships in hidden cavities in the cliffs that the Iron Sea has yet to eat away at and reveal. At least one of those magical ships is rumored to have become a dungeon largely populated by the ghosts of elves killed at sea.

Magma Keeps

This region is a string of volcanoes and lava fields garrisoned by the fire giants and their minions. Every couple centuries, the Emperor and the fire giants more or less simultaneously decide that the other force needs to be taught a military lesson. Results vary, but so far the volcanoes haven't gotten close to spreading north past the Giantwalk. That could change.

Hellholes

Hellholes are village- or town-sized areas transformed by the Diabolist and her demons into literal hells-on-earth. What most ordinary people know about them is that they are hugely dangerous places best left alone and that even from a distance they glow orange and sickly purple in the night sky.

Most of the demons in the hellholes are more or less trapped within. A few can escape, briefly, but in general the surrounding areas are free of demonic influence. Demons can be sucked back into their hellhole prisons if they

remain nearby, so with the exception of Hell Marsh, areas adjacent to hellholes may suffer from indirect curses but seldom from outright demonic attack.

Gamemaster: Of course, this semi-comfortable status quo is the first thing that could change in your campaign when the Diabolist's threat increases.

Opinions vary on whether the Diabolist sets out to create hellholes or whether they're a consequence of demonic power partially escaping the Diabolist's control. According to the Priestess and the Archmage, the Diabolist often moves from hellhole to hellhole without crossing the intervening space, but just as often avoids hellholes for months at a time.

Most hellholes have convoluted and constantly changing architecture. They're usually not clear areas you can see across, instead being more like groups of twisted wasp nests or other bizarre structures. Instead of a single monolithic structure, there are usually a variety of features arranged in uneven circles or stacks.

Hellholes seldom have a single ruler. Most have competing groups of demons fighting bizarre turf wars. In some cases the demons may be more interested in recruiting adventurers to turn the tide of their internal battles than in slaying them on sight.

Getting In, Getting Out

Unlike some of the true Hells, most hellholes are not well-policed sites. Most hellhole inhabitants are chaotic demons who are trapped in the zone. Unable to escape their prison, they occupy themselves with their perverse and sadistic pleasures. Few demons get any pleasure out of playing border guard or running patrols, so most anyone who wants to sneak into a hellhole can generally get away with it. Getting out again? That's a problem. Part of the reason the demons make it easy to get in is that they welcome victims and are so seldom able to slip outside to gather their own.

Hellhole inhabitants' inherent disorganization partially explains the Crusader's success in conquering them. Most hellholes

aren't set up as military or social entities; they're more like areas where demons have free range and burrowing rights. From an adventurer's viewpoint, hellholes aren't that different from giant demonic dungeons that are harder to get out of than into.

Hellholes on the Map vs. Hellholes You Create

There are a number of hellhole locations indicated on the map but not identified by name. As the Gamemaster, you should feel free to create a new hellhole whenever you need one, or to drop one of the hellholes at the end of this section wherever you like. Since *13th Age*'s demons are by definition supernatural evil beings from other dimensions who are trapped in this world and eager to destroy it in order to get out, you can orient your new hellholes to any demonic imagery or world-flavor you desire.

Most hellholes are constantly mutating hellzones similar to a Where's Waldo comic painted by Hieronymous Bosch. Bizarre and ever-changing hellhole dynamics mean that you can improvise and embellish as you wish. But if you want to give your hellholes more stable identities, here are a couple examples that Rob and Jonathan have used in their campaigns. You'll note that we didn't peg them to a particular location on the map—use them wherever you wish, if at all.

The Hum: Insectoid demons of all varieties dominate this twisted blood-red hivenest on a fortified hill that is the size of a prosperous human town . . . which in fact it once was. Rather than the fearsome glow associated with other hellholes, the Hum makes its presence known with a ceaseless buzz. At apparently random intervals, demonic bugs pour out of the Hum obeying pre-programmed rampage paths.

Blackfort: Once this area was a relatively open-bordered plain of red rock dotted by torture palaces of demons owed a favor by the Diabolist. No one had ever named it. But after the Crusader made his first conquest, this hellhole grew black-carapace walls and gates fanged with the teeth of hellbeasts. The torture

palaces are still there, but someone appears to be daring the Crusader to try for a prize that would welcome an attack.

The Bubble: The Bubble may have started as a mockery of the Empire's capital, Axis. Axis sits in the bowl of a dead volcano. The Bubble rides atop a bubbling lava dome within an active volcano. Those without magical resistance to fire lose their souls as they die within the crater. Compared to other hellholes, the Bubble sees frequent visits from the Diabolist and her entourage.

Hell Marsh

This marshland west of Anvil is the Diabolist's territory. Some of the swampland between the hellholes is normal enough, but the hellholes are so plentiful that much of the swamp writhes with demonic energies. The deeper you go, the more dangerous it gets. The more often you visit, the weirder it gets, but that may just be you changing instead of the terrain.

Highdock

This small mountain range jutting off the Giantwalk both attracts and occasionally spawns flying realms. Flying realms created by the Archmage, flying realms that drift in from other realities, and flying realms that break off of other overworld regions—all such aerial landmasses eventually rest for a moment, a week, or a year somewhere in the peaks and valleys of the range known as Highdock.

There are no permanent settlements in the region, but small mining operations and refugee towns often sprout up where newcomers from other worlds collect themselves or gather to dig after portions of crashed realms.

Horizon, City of Wonders

One of the Seven Cities

Horizon is a magical city heavily influenced by the Archmage. It holds unparalleled libraries of arcane lore, wizards busy with mysterious tasks, rival arcane guilds competing in all ways, and, of course, many opportunities for the PCs to be recognized as exceptional individuals who can accomplish what the NPC wizards cannot.

While Concord has the high towers of the elves, Horizon depends much more on flying buildings and floating force ramps. Such constructs are probably a creation of the Archmage, and possibly channel tremendous magical energy once harnessed by the Wizard King.

Horizon. I can't think of a better place to keep a city of crazed arcanists. Far, far away on the horizon. What? You're going there? Procure a medium-sized container of grubworms. You'll need them when you've been turned into a toad.

—Kullis

The Iron Sea

The Iron Sea used to be a normal ocean. There are ruins of castles, cities, and fishing villages along its entire coastline. Now it's an impassable barrier populated by inhuman aberrations, demons, and monsters too vast to breach the surface. No cities dot the Iron Sea's shores, only the ruins of cities that have not already been eaten away or turned into offshore islands by the relentless waves.

No one fishes the Iron Sea; if you're a fisherman, you set up on the Midland Sea. The Iron Sea is a dark and terrifying void that throws tsunamis and giant monsters more devastating than tsunamis against the separate world of the land.

Gamemaster: Assuming you want to bring history into your campaign, there's a historical explanation for the ocean's condition. The Wizard King made a lot of mistakes, arguably including the final error of becoming a lich. But the Wizard King's greatest mistake was turning the Iron Sea into the enemy of the land.

If the Archmage, the Priestess, or the Dragon Emperor know exactly what the Wizard King did to turn the Iron Sea into the land's enemy, they aren't sharing. The usual belief is that some mighty spell backfired, perhaps even a pacification spell similar to what the Dragon Emperor used on the Midland Sea.

If you want your campaign to deal with the story of the Iron Sea, decide what the Wizard

King did wrong for yourself. We know that some GMs love games with undersea kingdoms, so if that's your idea of a good time, you'll want to portray the endless monster attacks on the Empire as being generated by a deeply offended magical kingdom somewhere beneath the waters. There are a multitude of stories that could drive interesting campaigns, a couple of which we've listed previously. Or you can stick to our base plan, which is to treat the Iron Sea as the monster-spawning edge of the world.

Islands

There are many bizarre and wild small islands in the Midland Sea, most of which are too small or magically ephemeral to appear on our World Map.

The fact that the sea itself is calm doesn't mean that the islands are calm. In fact, the monsters in the sea got squeezed out onto the land, so the islands can be extremely bizarre. Even in such cases, however, they don't exercise much influence out across the water.

Some islands, as isolated locations, are home to extremely powerful living dungeons that breached the land before anyone could notice or stop them. Other islands are the temporary kingdoms of monarchs-of-the-month—refugees from the Seven Cities who stake a claim on turf they believe they can control.

This island design is another geographical choice that is meant to give GMs license to do anything they darn well please.

The Isle of Fire

The elves call this volcanic island a name that means something like *The Makers*. It could be that its volcanoes are part of the Elf Queen's long-term pacification program for the northern ocean—creating land that will one day link up with the Empire and blunt the power of the ocean.

Jedna's Folly

The rapid straights running from Calamity into the Midland Sea are named after a female dwarf who navigated them in a ridiculous craft the dwarves are simultaneously embarrassed by

and proud of. The stories disagree on whether Jedna survived her attempt.

There's a semi-serious debate in dwarfdom over the type of barrel/raft/submersible/giant mechanical fish that Jedna used to "navigate" this essentially impassable series of rapids and falls. Otherwise pragmatic dwarves seem to think that because one of their cultural heroes tried something foolhardy there, it's okay for them to try something foolhardy there as well.

Once a year or so, a dwarf loses a bet or loses her mind and attempts to recreate Jedna's trip. Once a decade, such an expedition actually amounts to something, and a dwarf floats/rafts/dives/leaps partway down the Folly. Results vary, and the few attempts that become public merely add fuel to the debate.

KneeDeep

On the western edge of the central Giantwalks is the KneeDeep, a swamp on the high plateau. It gets its name from the fact that the giants in the region treat the swamp as a minor inconvenience, wading straight through. Everyone else has difficulty crossing it, particularly because the swamp's giant insects zero in on flyers.

Koru Behemoths; Migration Route of the Koru Behemoths

The koru behemoths are a widely scattered population of twelve to twenty enormous eight-legged creatures from the dawn of the world. They look something like a cross between an elephant and a turtle, but each Behemoth has grown in different ways and reshaped its shell carapace to suit itself, so no two look alike. The behemoths are so large that it's difficult to form an accurate opinion of what an entire behemoth looks like since you can only see one angle at a time.

For reasons no one understands, the Behemoths always travel their route counter-clockwise, entering the Empire just north of the Kneedeep and leaving it above the Frost Range. As they travel, they graze on springs of primal energy that are invisible to normal creatures.

243

Clans devoted to the High Druid and to other primal powers take up residence on the backs of koru behemoths. So long as its passengers don't practice too much annoying arcane or divine magic, the Behemoths generally tolerate hitchhikers. Passengers who set up a permanent residence on a Behemoth are usually smart enough to help clean and protect the Behemoth against pests while carving airy cavern homes into the creature's shell. The shell is nearly impervious to excavation, but those of the Behemoth clans know how to use rituals of friendship to carve out their homes.

The great taboo is that no one sane tries to guide a Behemoth's steps or to send it anywhere in particular. Behemoths walk where they wish, and stories suggest that they find ways to destroy those who try to use magic to interfere with them. (It's possible the High Druid is an exception . . . maybe that's how she'll complete her reintroduction to the Dragon Empire in your campaign. . . .)

Generally the Behemoths crisscross the high steppes to the north, occasionally dipping into the grasslands. Since hardly anyone is foolish enough to build or farm on the migration route, koru behemoth passage can be a festive event, depending on the Behemoth in question, the people (if any) who live on its back, and what else is going on.

You can use koru behemoths and the people or creatures who live or roost upon their backs to interject whatever your campaign needs as a temporarily passing experience. The examples that follow entertain us. You should entertain yourself and give the PCs an experience that their backgrounds and storylines suggest.

Dolphin: This Behemoth gets its name from its behavior after plunging into the Koru Straits. Unlike all the other Behemoths that churn across the water and march onto land as quickly as possible, Dolphin spends a day or two swimming and diving in the Iron Sea. Occasionally, bizarre Iron Sea predators that have grown to enormous size without knowing any better try to take a chunk out of Dolphin. Afterward, the red tide stains the docks all the

way to Newport, and Dolphin returns to the land, plodding past Drakkenhall and looking as smug as a Behemoth can look.

Dolphin occasionally tolerates temporary hitchhikers, but no one mistakes the Iron Sea bath for an invitation to make a permanent home.

Highclan: An essentially barbarian clan of humans, half-orcs, wood elves, and half-elves have figured out how to feed and entertain the behemoth that (at least temporarily) bears their name with ritually treated spoils of their hunts. Unusually, the behemoth does swim lightly through the Koru Straights, as if trying to preserve the homes of the clan on its back.

Highclan barbarians and druids seek wives and husbands from outside the clan. A few never return to their Behemoth, but over half eventually return along with families. Given that the population never grows too large and the people aboard are often different on different circuits, there's probably a Highclan homeland far to the north somewhere near the behemoth's path, but outsiders have never figured it out.

Stoneroost: This Behemoth's back, tusks, nails, and teeth seem to be made of stone. It serves as the roost for great swarms of gargoyles and other rocky monsters that surface or slumber according to the Behemoth's metabolic patterns, which the Dwarf King claims to understand.

Whitey: Over the years, the humanoid and dragonoid cultists who control the back of this Behemoth have tried to stain and paint its hide white in honor of their deceased patron, the White dragon slain by the Great Gold Wyrm in the early days of the world. Amusingly, the Behemoth does not suffer actual white dragons, or any other dragon for that matter, to enter its zone of control. But it doesn't seem to pay any attention to the antics of the cultists, who are free to indulge their fantasies of draconic icon worship without the embarrassment of actually having to deal with dragon overlords.

Players: Koru Behemoth Native is a great background no matter which way you play it!

Koru Straits

The point where the Iron Sea feeds in to the Midland Sea is notable as the location where the koru behemoths throw themselves into the channel and swim across. Pilgrims and sightseers from around the Empire try to time their visits to Drakkenhall to be there when a Behemoth shakes itself off as it comes out of the water. More adventurous souls ferry across to Cape Thunder to watch from the much more dangerous southern side of the straights. Watching the actual plunge into the water from the cliffs there is the biggest mostly survivable spectator event in the Empire.

Lost River

The area south and east of Horizon used to be wooded. The forest there burned up when the Abyss emerged, and finished burning when the Red Dragon took care of the demons that the Gold hadn't managed to contain. The river's old name is forgotten; now it's just called the Lost River, and the popular name for the series of survivable waterfalls that cascade deeper and deadlier into the Abyss has been termed on maps as Innocence Falls.

The Midland Sea

As long as an Emperor sits on the Great Dragon Throne, the sea in the middle of the Empire will be at peace. Long ago, an earlier Emperor tamed the sea, which was then called Stormmaker. Since then, people have called it the Midland Sea, simply the sea, or, in jest, the pond. The people of the Empire sail confidently across the waves, enriching the cities with fishing and trade. Recently, the Archmage has improved both the winds and the currents, making sea travel faster and more reliable.

Occasionally, a little bit of the sea's old storminess recurs. Great storms, when they appear, sweep the entire length of the sea, sending every ship scurrying into a port. These storms are always preceded by a day in which a giant black cloud grows over the center of the region. Only terrible sailors miss the signs, and only desperate travelers ignore them.

The High Druid hates to see Stormmaker "in chains," and he makes no secret that he thinks those chains will soon be sundered.

Gamemaster

The point of a tame sea in the middle of the map is to let you get the PCs from one city to another with a minimum of fuss. They can be in the Imperial Capital for one session and zip over to the City of Temples for the next adventure.

Sea travel has the added feature that you can speed up or slow down travel somewhat arbitrarily. Usually, you want to slow the PCs progress toward their destination. It's easy enough to say that there are headwinds or that there's a storm coming up and the ship has to stay in port. You can even roll a die first as if you're determining random travel conditions.

The tamed sea also gives you a big switch you can flip in the campaign. Part way through, something can go wrong, and suddenly Stormmaker is back with a vengeance. Overnight, ships are wrecked and coastal cities are smashed with titanic waves. Suddenly, life across the Empire just got a lot harder, and the PCs have to cope with greater travel difficulties than ever before.

Moonwreck

Some say that this mess of badlands and tundra is where the Great Gold Wyrm slew the White. Others say it is where the moon skipped on its way to its home in the sky. Some say that the two legends relate to the same battle. Lingering magic and tunnel realms make Moonwreck far more populated than it first appears. It's a hugely magical zone for sorcerers, but most wizards hate the place.

Necropolis

The former Wizard King's palace was built on the largest island of the sea that was then known as Stormmaker. After the Dragon Emperor slew the Witch King, razed his palaces, and built his capital of Axis on the sea's eastern shore, the island lay fallow for decades. As the power of the returned Lich King asserted itself, however, the island that had been his capital sprouted great mausoleums and rings of cemetery

catacombs. The wizards of Horizon say that the Lich King's magic brought the formerly loyal subjects of his kingdom back to unlife and consolidated their grave sites and memorials on his former island fortress.

Like the other ancient graveyards scattered across the world, the tombs of the island require maintenance and sacrifices to keep them from sending forth impossible hordes of undead. By trial and error, the Gravekeepers of the Empire have learned that the great island now known as Necropolis can be kept safely dormant so long as a steady procession of sacrifices is made around the island's outer ring. Venturing into the center of the island is too dangerous for all but servants of the Lich King and powerful adventurers.

If the sacrifices falter for any reason, history has taught the Empire that the undead swarm through the ocean and emerge onto land all around the Midland Sea.

New Port, City of Opportunity

One of the Seven Cities
New Port is the newest of the Seven Cities, which means that it's something like two or three hundred years old. Most historians claim that it was created by refugees when Drakkenhall was overrun by the monsters. New port is run by an Imperial Governor, but not with a firm hand.

So far, no single power has established itself in the city. There are opportunities for PCs to be involved in most any type of plot or power struggle.

I don't even hate this place yet. I hate all the eager newcomers hoping to finally make something of their lives. But New Port is alright.
            —*Kullis*

Nomad

This tent and canvas town sits roughly at the intersection of the trampled remnants of Old Wall and the koru behemoth trail. Nomad's residents pick up their town and move it out of the way whenever a Behemoth comes through.

Northern Colossus

Ten times larger than the biggest giant, a great marble and granite statue of a warrior sits on a mountain bordering one of the passes used by both the Empire and the barbarians for invasions into each other's territory.

"Northern Colossus" isn't a name that anyone uses unless they're speaking to someone outside their culture. Each culture has a claim on the Colossus and its own name for the statue. The dwarves name it the Hammer Guard, the elves say it is a star warden, and the Emperor says it was created by the first Dragon Emperor and it has a secret name that also controls it. Whatever the case, the magic that animates the Colossus is still at least partially active: a few decades ago it moved to a different ridgeline of a different valley and sat down again.

Oldwall

Oldwall is the remnant of a mighty defensive system that crisscrosses one of the mountain ranges of the north near North Wood. No one is certain who built the wall, or against what enemies. Although often partially buried by avalanches and snow, and battered by barbarians and the forces of the High Druid, the wall is still intact in places. Mapmakers have stopped trying to account for the wall, recognizing that it seems to rebuild itself.

Oldwall can never be mistaken for anything but a ruin of a once mighty fortification, but there's no way to predict what shape it will be in from year to year and decade to decade. Travelers use it as a rough landmark and occasional shelter. Bandits and monsters use it as shelter. Given that the High Druid has never managed to erase the wall entirely from the wilderness, it may serve her in some way to continue its existence.

Stone and mana-forged walls crisscross portions of the Empire in states of ruin. Every generation must learn for itself that enemies who can be kept on the other side of a wall are the enemies that don't matter.
            —*Kullis*

Omen

The giant island at the center of the Midland Sea was originally much smaller. It used to be the Wizard King's main administrative center, but it became overgrown with forest and jungle when the Dragon Emperor pacified the waters. Later, living dungeons freely popped to the surface, expanding the size of the island.

Omen looks green from a distance, but as you get closer you see that there's a profusion of ruins lurking beneath the green. Living dungeons are endlessly piling upon each other from below, causing the island to swell until a chunk of land breaks into the sea and it shrinks in size again. Omen started about twice the size of the landmass that the Necropolis is on, but over time, the endless influx of dungeons and magical power swelling it has sent it reaching out for the land. Hence the Vigil lighthouse on the peninsula to the south.

The magic of the Dragon Empire that pacifies the Midland Sea keeps the dungeon inhabitants trapped on the island, for the most part. Dungeon overlords rise every couple of years, but they tend to be overthrown by other powerful creatures that appear with the dungeons from below if they are not eliminated by adventurers first. The exceptions are great lords of evil who escape to the outside world. Some say that the Orc Lord came from Omen.

Before the Wizard King, a serpent race originally inhabited the island. They built endless tunnels made for people who have no legs, using ramps only with no stairways. Any stairs discovered among the ruins are either from the Wizard King's city or are naturally created from the impacts of dungeons rising from the center of the world.

The former Wizard King, now known as the Lich King, has no power in Omen. In fact, undead are the one type of monster not naturally found on the island. Any undead in the area are drawn or magically sucked to the Necropolis.

The Opals

The Opals is a name for a group of magical lakes scattered within the Queen's Wood. For visitors, sometimes they're heaven, and sometimes they're hell. Whichever the case, they're insanely beautiful.

Proudfort

Proudfort was an imperial outpost in the hills midway between the Abyss and the Seawall in the south. Two years ago the legion that manned the fort was almost entirely destroyed during a dragon attack that may have been led by the Red himself. There is disagreement within the Empire as to exactly what happened to Proudfort, and expeditions to its ruins have met with resistance of all types, not just dragons.

Queen's Wood

Queen's Wood is an elven wood that sprawls across the rivers and foothills north and east of the Midland Sea. Once it was all a functioning elven forest populated by the three races of the elves. In pockets, such harmony still prevails. But most of the wood is empty or populated by only one or two of the three branches of the elven people. Unlike most of the other elven woods, the Queen's Wood maintains all the original leaf and tree colors that represent elven unity, a riot of silver and gold and green and indigo.

Queen's Wood is the home of the Elven Court, which moves magically through the area. Finding it once is no guarantee that you'll find it easily the next time. But elves and those with a connection with the Elf Queen can read the signs and follow the spirals of power to the Court's current location most of the time.

The Red Wastes

Far to the south, beyond the Abyss, the land is a dusty red waste, testament to the awesome destructive power of the Red Dragon at the height of his powers.

That's what the Empire will tell you. The orcs and monsters that live in the Red Wastes thrive thanks to magic spilling into the area from the Abyss. It's a terrible place for humans, halflings, elves, and other civilized folk, but orcs, lizard folk, and dragons occupy the region in force.

Roads

The best roads in the Dragon Empire, the Imperial Highways, were built during the reign of the previous empire during the reign of the Wizard King (who returned from death as the even more evil Lich King). Most of the highways are raised stone paths linking the seven great cities, as well as many of the towns of the interior, to each other.

The highways have fared well in the west near the capital. Most of the great roads south of the Midland Sea, including the roads that once led to the Seawall, are lost or destroyed.

The highways were originally built as high-banked stone roads. In some places, the ancient highways have been destroyed and rebuilt to lesser standards. Imperial maps show the highways as unbroken ribbons of stone, but travelers will discover a different truth: that the passage of a koru behemoth has pounded the road's stones deep within the earth, or that the eruption of a lava elemental along the route now forces travelers onto a muddy side-track. The Archmage's High Arcana helps to repair the roads more quickly than would be possible without using magic, but there are still numerous magical and mundane disasters that can destroy or downgrade a section of the highway for a few weeks or a few years at a time.

Gamemaster: Feel free to determine the condition of any road by your plotline's needs.

High and mighty roads of stone running in powerful imperial curves between the cities that still stand and a few that don't. They're quite a testament to the power of the Empire, eh? Except that all but one of the Imperial Highways were built by the previous tenant of the throne, the old bastard who is still kicking around without his hand, his eye, and his soul. We don't build them like he used to.

—Kullis

[[Begin Sidebar]]

Builders' Dreams

Part of the magic of the great highways is that no one feels comfortable living too close to them. Inns, towns, and buildings of all sorts (other than temporary shelters from the weather) are almost always constructed at least 100 yards or more from the road.

Travelers who sleep too close to the highways often have problems with dreams. The dreams of the original road builders haunt the highway stones. The dreams wont' touch you if you're awake. But anyone who sleeps too near the road can count on nightmares, terrible sleep, and a gradual degradation of their faculties. Such dreams and disrupted sleep isn't something that has game mechanics effects after a night or a week, but the effects could be a problem after two weeks. People say that the Lich King has no power over these dreams. It might even be true.

The innkeepers near Horizon and Santa Cora show off the strength of their warding spells by setting up closer to the road than inns built in less magically skilled areas.

The New Road: Road-building has seldom been a priority of the Dragon Empire. The most powerful military forces of the Empire are generally capable of flight, so the lack of roads in certain areas serves as a barrier to invaders rather than to the Empire. For troops moving on the ground, the Imperial Highways left by the Wizard King serve well enough. Like most merchants and travelers, troops moving between the north and south, or the east and west, normally sail quickly across the Midland Sea instead of trekking overland.

But as a show of strength, the current grand Imperial project is to build a road measuring up to the standards of the Imperial Highways between Newport and Santa Cora. Unfortunately for the engineers, wizards, and laborers responsible for the New Road, part of its length cuts across Wild Wood. The road is built up to its proper specifications on either side of the Wild Wood, but cutting through the forest has been a nightmare. The track through the forest is continually submerged by earth elementals, smashed by falling trees, or overrun by monsters and followers of the High Druid that the Empire refers to as bandits.

Roadfall: Scattered chunks of stone similar to the rock used in the construction of the Imperial Highways crisscross some sections of the landscape. They're either badly mangled remnants of older roads or proof of the legends that some of the Wizard King's highways extended into the overworld! Few people entirely believe those stories, because that would imply that the Wizard King was even more powerful than the Archmage. But the legends are strong enough that everyone refers to these chunks of stone as "roadfall." Most of the roadfall is at least partially overgrown. In other places it's been plundered for building materials. In still other places roadfall might serve as the foundation walls for fortresses built by hobgoblins and orcs who could care less about *builders' dreams*.

Lesser Tracks: A myriad of smaller roads, trading routes, and tracks crisscross the Empire. Where the High Druid's power is strong, there are far fewer such tracks than you would expect. Where the Emperor is strong, the roads are slightly smoother and wider instead of falling apart.

[[end sidebar]]

Santa Cora, City of Temples

One of the Seven Cities

Santa Cora has always been the spiritual center of the Empire. Now that the Priestess has built her Cathedral there, it could be the spiritual center of the world. A few of the gods represented in the Cathedral also have temples outside its gates. Other temples and gods that aren't represented yet in the Cathedral have their shrines elsewhere in the city.

As proof of the gods' approval of Santa Cora, the city has the best fishing on the Midland Sea. The town spreads out along the shore, bay after bay of fishing boats each blazoned with the symbols of the god or gods who bless the boat.

So many priests. So many temples. What could they be worshipping? Only themselves.
—Kullis

Sea Wall

The Sea Wall exists because of the Iron Sea. For some reason, nearly all the kraken and tarrasque-sized monsters that climb out of the Iron Sea emerge on the southern shores of the land, never the north. Therefore the Empire maintains more or less heavily garrisoned defenses along this great wall running for hundreds of miles along the coast.

Contrary to what you might expect, the Sea Wall is actually twenty miles away from the ocean it screens from the rest of the Empire. Beyond the Sea Wall toward the Iron Sea is a No Man's Land with the ruins of previous walls cropping up every few miles. The current Sea Wall has stood for decades and seems to be far enough away from the typhoons, tsunamis, and titanic monsters that lash the southern coast to last. But it's pushed up against the koru behemoth track near Proud Fort and it can't move much further inland there.

In truth, the troops and magicians fighting along the wall couldn't succeed without accurate magical intelligence that guides them to giant monster attacks or small-scale incursions by sahuagin and aberrations. At various times the Archmage, Emperor, Priestess, and Great Gold Wyrm have contributed to the magic of the Sea Wall. As the Blood Wood entry indicates, the truth is that the High Druid is now picking up the Archmage's slack, a reality the Empire hasn't come to terms with.

Shadow Port

Shadow Port is the gray side of Glitterhaegen, and is well-suited as a smuggler's haven and pirate's resort. It's rumored to be the frequent home of the Prince of Shadows. Whether true or not, it's certainly a refuge for Thieves Guild types when Glitterhaegen gets too hot.

Starport

Starport reaches all the way up to the overworld. Stars dock there for rest and refitting. Details available on site.

Throne Point

Despite the best efforts of the Dragon Empire, the point of land south of Concord is still called

Throne Point. The throne in question belonged to the serpent rulers who preceded the Wizard King. The point itself is wild territory, probably due to the lurking ghosts of its original serpent rulers. As soon as you leave the point, the terrain settles into reasonably safe farmland and villages running along the coast to Concord.

Undermarch

It's a point of pride for dwarves to maintain the longest continuously accessible trade and security route through the underworld in the land. Or maybe there's something more serious going on, because pride couldn't be enough to explain the myriad magical and military efforts the dwarves have had to mount over the years to keep this wide stone path open. Could it?

Adventurers may be able to find employment cleaning or exploring side and lower channels that have a way of opening up at the least convenient places and times.

Vigil

The Seven Cities cooperate to run a lighthouse on the tip of the point. Mariners think of the lighthouse as a helpful navigational tool but there's more going on: the lighthouse beam sweeps far out over the Necropolis, Omen, and the waters between. The lighthouse is a magical surveillance station that keeps a scrying eye on the dangerous islands in the center of the sea.

Vigil is one of the few places where the Seven Cities fully cooperate as cities rather than as elements of the Empire.

Wake Islands

The group of islands just south of the Queen's Wood and Drakkenhall are collectively referred to as the "Wakes." When the koru behemoths smash into the Koru Straits, the tsunami-size waves that result hit these islands most every time. People do camp among the islands, and some even settle there if they're desperate, though most in the area are hiding from their enemies. But one of these days it's likely that a koru behemoth will hit the water and the resulting wave will take out a good percentage of the islands and anyone unwise enough to be on them.

Luckily for the rest of the Midland Sea and its inhabitants, the Wakes protect them from the tsunami impacts.

Wild Woods

This forest is the most touched by the power of the High Druid. Giant trees including redwoods, ironoaks, and others that only have names in the languages of birds and bears can be found within.

Chapter 9: Magic Items

In *13th Age*, we use two types of magic items:

True Magic Items: Our core idea is that true magic items are amazing and rare. Therefore *permanent* magic items only come into adventurers' hands when they deserve them, as loot during adventures or rewards for success. We refer to these permanent and significant items simply, without all the qualifying adjectives, as magic items. For clarity we sometimes refer to them as true magic items.

One-Use Items: We also want you to be able to spend hard-won gold on worthwhile magical treasure. One-use items (mainly potions and runes) fill that need. (See Loot: Treasure Rewards on page XX for notes on the treasure successful characters earn each adventure.)

ONE-USE ITEMS

We're going to start with one-use items, partly because they're a bit less interesting, and partly because they're the piece of the pie that players get to control. The common types of one-use items include potions, oils, and runes.

Potions

Potions function the same as in most other fantasy games. You can generally buy potions that fall in the tier of the environment you're in. For example, adventurer environment NPCs aren't likely to sell potions that fall in the champion tier (at least not without interesting consequences . . .).

You can carry as many potions as you wish, unless the GM thinks you're abusing the privilege. Certainly there shouldn't be a problem for a PC to carry twenty potions at a time, they're small.

Drinking a potion takes a standard action. The standard action includes taking all the steps to get it ready if you don't have it in hand already. Feeding a potion to an unconscious ally is also a standard action.

You can only be under the effect of a single potion at a time. If you're using a potion that has a lingering effect, drinking another potion ends the first effect. Non-healing potions tend to have effects that last until the end of a battle, or around five minutes if you're prepping for a battle and drinking potions beforehand. (Certain character abilities can change this equation, of course.) The typical way this comes up during play is when someone benefits from a potion that's giving them an advantage and then needs to drink a healing potion. Getting the healing will come at the price of losing the other effect.

Healing Potions

A healing potion lets the creature drinking it heal using one of their recoveries. Potions provide bonus healing on top of what you'd generally get with a recovery, but there's a hit point cap for the maximum healing you can get from a potion. No matter how well you roll your recovery, the healing the potion provides won't exceed the cap—high level characters are going to want to use higher cost healing potions instead of loading up on the cheap stuff.

Tier/Level	Cost	Effect	HP Cap
Adventurer	50 gp	Recovery +1d8 hp	30
Champion	100 gp	Recovery +2d8 hp	60
Epic	200 gp	Recovery +3d8 hp	100
Iconic	300 gp	Recovery +4d8 hp	130

Potion of [Energy] Resistance

When you drink one of these potions, you gain resistance to a single specified energy type dealt by creatures or hazards of a specific tier for the rest of the battle or for 5 minutes. Resistance from a potion is always 11+. Attackers of the tier covered, or lower, must make a d20 check to overcome your resistance and do full damage, otherwise they deal half damage. Damage from a source that's a higher tier than your potion will blow through your resistance.

Gamemaster: Feel free to raise the cost of specific energy resistance potions if they are rare in your campaign, or they might not be available for purchase and only obtainable through dangerous quests.

Potion Costs

Tier	Resistance	Cost
Adventurer	Resist 11+	100 gp
Champion	Resist 11+	200 gp
Epic	Resist 11+	400 gp

Oils

While potions affect creatures, magic oils affect items. Oils provide temporary magical enhancement to weapons, armor, and even to spellcasters' implements (wands, staffs, holy symbols, etc.).

It's a standard action to pour magic oil on your weapon, implement, or armor. You're better off doing it before combat starts. The effect lasts until the end of a battle or for 5 minutes before fading.

Each oil confers a bonus of +1 (adventurer), +2 (champion), or +3 (epic). Used on a weapon or a spellcasting implement, the bonus applies to attack and damage rolls. Used on armor, the bonus applies to AC.

Bonuses from oils don't stack with magic items' inherent bonuses, but magic swords and armor enjoy being enhanced with magic oil. A few have reportedly gone "on strike" if not juiced up from time to time.

Oils can often be purchased from alchemists and magicians in cities, large towns, or wherever you happen to find such folk.

Oil Costs

Tier	Bonus	Cost
Adventurer	+1 Oil	100 gp
Champion	+2 Oil	200 gp
Epic	+3 Oil	400 gp

Runes

Runes are left-over pieces of creation. They function exactly like magical oils, providing the same type of bonus to items or weapons for a single battle (or for 5 minutes). But in addition to the expected +1/+2/+3 bonus, each rune also provides an additional random enhancement to the item it is applied to. Roll for the effect when the rune is applied to the item. An item can only have one rune applied to it at a time.

Rune Costs

Tier	Bonus	Cost
Adventurer	+1 Rune	125 gp
Champion	+2 Rune	250 gp
Epic	+3 Rune	500 gp

Random Rune Effect on Armor

01–20　The bonus also applies to PD
21–40　The bonus also applies to MD
41–60　The bonus also applies to both PD and MD
61–80　As 41–60, and you can reroll one failed save while the rune is active
81–100　You can take your first rally this battle with a quick action (if you can already rally with a quick action, the action is free)

Random Rune Effect on Weapon

01–20　+4 bonus to attacks of opportunity
21–40　Weapon gains an energy damage type such as fire, cold, etc., and deals +1d4 damage (champion: +2d6; epic: +5d6)
41–60　+4 attack bonus on first round of combat
61–80　Weapon deals +1d10 damage while escalation die is 3+ (champion: +3d6; epic: +3d12)
81–100　Reroll one missed attack roll

Random Rune Effect on Spellcasting Implement

01–20　+1 additional attack bonus if spell has only one target
21–40　Implement gains an energy damage type such as fire, necrotic, etc., and deals +1d4 damage (champion: +2d6; epic: +5d6)
41–60　+1 additional attack bonus with daily spells
61–80　+1 additional attack bonus if spell has more than one target

81–100   Reroll one missed attack roll

TRUE MAGIC ITEMS

Magic items are the permanently enchanted objects you're probably familiar with from playing other fantasy games. The magic items in *13th Age* are rarer than in other games. As a rule, magic items aren't for sale. You can find them during an adventure or receive them as gifts and rewards from NPCs, but you'll seldom find anyone willing to sell one. You could say that true magic items are priceless, since no one agrees on what the price should be.

Obviously some PCs are still going to want to be able to buy a magic item, and it wouldn't necessarily make a bad plotline for an adventure. But yes, that's how rare true magic items should be: succeed on a major adventure whose purpose is discovering who owns the item, spend most of your gold in the process, and finally gain a chance to buy the item you were hoping for, or something close to it.

What should PCs do with magic items they don't want? Curry favor with an icon by giving the item as a sign of respect. Or a bargaining chip.

Magic Item Personalities & Quirks: the Problem of "Too Much Treasure"

Donning magic armor in *13th Age* isn't as simple as strapping on regular armor. Wielding a magic sword isn't as simple as grabbing the hilt and holding on.

Every magic item in *13th Age* is alive, in a sense, and possesses a personality you have to interact with when you start using the item, establishing and maintaining a rapport with it. What that rapport means varies from item to item and is usually controlled by the GM. Some items talk with their user. Others communicate in bursts of emotion or slight motion.

Each item has a personality that is largely defined by its quirk. What you can count on as a default is that nearly all magic items want to be used and used well. But the quirks that make them unique are all over the psych-profile sheets.

As an adventuring hero, a highly powerful being in the world of *13th Age*, you can handle a number of true magic items equal to your level. If you are carrying and wielding a number of items that's equal to or lower than your current level, the magic item personality quirks will tug at you, giving you sudden urges and desires that will feel natural to give in to. But you'll be in charge. If the magic leather armor that the dwarves made wants you to drink beer whenever you come anywhere near civilization, that's just a quirk you can handle, so long as you're not overloaded.

But let's say you are a 3rd level character who can't help yourself and you take your fourth magical item. Now you've got issues. Now you are going to have that extra flagon of ale, even if your body isn't capable of handling it like the dwarves the armor expected to be working with would have been able to do. And your other three magical items? Their quirks are all going to be in full swing as well. You're no longer running the show; instead, the magic items are, to some extent, running you.

If you're some type of seriously trustworthy semi-masochistic method actor, the GM might be willing to leave this situation in your capable roleplaying hands, relying on you to punish yourself by roleplaying out-of-control magic items. But it's generally far more fun for the GM to assign themselves and each player at the table (and any observers, roommates, or temporarily interested significant others) one or more of your magic items to roleplay . . . to the hilt. The magic items are running the show, and the roleplaying challenge of punishing your greed with convincing escalations of quirks can be spread around the entire table. How serious should the problem be? Something like an out-of-control drug habit or demonic possession: it may be fun once (!), but if you make a habit of this problem, you or your friends shouldn't survive long.

So yes, there is such a thing as "too much treasure."

But most of the time you'll have a manageable number of items. The fun of having items with quirks is that when you are stuck for

253

how your character might respond to a situation, or just looking to liven things up, you can get the story moving by dealing with your items' personalities. They're like a cast of mostly silent supporting characters, speaking up when they're needed or when the plot is dragging. If you have a ton of items, you can just choose to deal with the quirks that are most interesting or dominant, so long as you're under the limit.

Rob says: *Don't be surprised if one player turns out to love playing with too many items a little too much. Getting everyone else to put your character on center stage and then kick you is a form of attention. Parties with that type of player-dynamic should feel no obligation to keep their over-quirked ally alive.*

CHAKRAS

When you acquire a magic item, it's yours in a personal way. You probably dream about it. Rest assured, you're a big deal to your magic items, too. For them to work their magic, they need you to believe in them and to trust them. That's why you can only study one book at a time, and why you can't carry two magic greatswords with different powers and use whichever one fits the current battle best. Think of each magic item as filling a circle or "chakra" in your soul, and you can't fit two wands in your wand chakra.

The same goes for other chakras. You can have one of each type of magic item, or a pair for boots and gloves. This limit doesn't simply mean you can wear only one pair of boots. It means that you can only give your heart (or chakra) to one pair of boots at a time. If they're not *your* favorite boots, they're not magical, at least not for you. Your magic items aren't just your gear. They're part of who you are, like your circle of friends.

Rings are like friends in two different cities; you get one for each hand. You can also have as many wondrous items as your overall capacity

for magic items allows. Wondrous items are not proud.

Item Chakras and Default Bonuses

Type of Magic Item, aka Chakra	Default bonus (Often +1 adventurer, +2 champion, +3 epic)
Armor, robe, shirt, tunic	Armor Class
Arrow, crossbow bolt, slingstone	No default bonus. The most common type of magic ammunition increases crit range by 1.
Belt, swordbelt, kilt, girdle	Hit points
Book, scroll, manual, grimoire	No default bonus. These items commonly confer knowledge or skill.
Boots, sandals, slippers, shoes	Disengage checks and other footwork
Cloak, mantle, cape	Physical Defense
Glove, gauntlet, mitt	No default bonus
Helmet, circlet, crown, cap	Mental Defense
Necklace	Save bonus
Ring x 2	No default bonus. Anything goes.
Shield	No default bonus. Commonly confer defensive benefits.
Staff	Operates as both a wand and a symbol; champion and epic tier only.
Symbol, holy relic, sacred sickle	Attack and damage (divine spell or attack); adventurer and champion tier only.
Wand	Attack and damage (arcane spell or attack); adventurer and champion tier only.
Weapon, melee	Attack and damage (using the weapon)
Weapon, ranged	Attack, damage, using

	the weapon
Wondrous item	No default. Anything goes.

Rogue	light weapon, light armor
Sorcerer	==wand/staff==, shirt (armor)
Wizard	wand/staff, shirt (armor)

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One Size Fits: Unless the GM has a special story or artifact in mind, there's no such thing as halfling-size magical items and human-size magical items. Magic items shape themselves to suit the person who has given them their chakra.

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MAGIC ITEM BASICS

Adventurer, Champion, and Epic Items: Some magic items are available at any level, with greater bonuses or other effects at champion and epic level. Others can be found only at champion or epic levels.

Magic Item Recharges

Our default assumption is that magic item powers are only used once before they need to recharge. Using magic power takes effort on the item's part, and sometimes doing so exhausts the item. If a magic item's special powers are limited, it will usually have a recharge number: 6, 11, or 16. After the battle in which you use the power, roll a d20. If your roll equals or exceeds the recharge number, you can use that item power again that day. If the roll fails, the item power is expended until you take a full heal-up.

Useful Magic Items by Class

Class	Magic Items of Particular Use
Barbarian	two-handed weapon, heavy armor
Bard	light weapon, light armor, wand/staff
Cleric	symbol/staff, heavy armor, simple one-handed weapon, shield
Fighter	one-handed martial weapon, heavy armor, shield
Monk	shirt (armor), monk weapons, lotus scroll (book)
Paladin	one-handed martial weapon, heavy armor, shield
Ranger	one-handed martial weapons, bow, arrows, possibly other ranged weapons, light armor

MAGIC ITEM DESCRIPTIONS

Use these magic items descriptions as a jumping off point and inspiration for your own items, and arrange with your GM to get your favorites into the campaign.

In general, items are formatted the following way: *name* (item type [if relevant] – action type [if other than standard] – usage [if other than always on—for example, recharge, one-use, etc.]): Description [if any]. Power. Quirk.

Quirks apply to the item's user, not the item itself. Read every quirk as if it said "Wielder is . . . "

Magic Armor, Gi, Robe, Shirt, Tunic

Most magic armor powers can apply to heavy armor, light armor, or even no armor (robes or other clothing).

Default bonus: +1 AC (adventurer), +2 AC (champion), +3 AC (epic).

Heedlessness: You gain a +4 bonus to all defenses during your first turn in battle. Quirk: Needlessly provocative.

Splendor: Enemies engaged with you take a –2 attack penalty against allies without *splendor*. Quirk: Fastidious about clothing and gear.

Warding: The AC bonus applies to Physical Defense and Mental Defense as well. Quirk: Stretches and meditates whenever inactive.

Stone Flesh: The AC bonus applies to Physical Defense as well. Quirk: Extremely stubborn.

Iron Will: The AC bonus applies to Mental Defense as well. Quirk: Prone to abstract speculation.

Magic Arrow, Crossbow Bolt, Slingstone

In general, ammunition is one-use, hit or miss. It also doesn't take up a chakra, and, like other one-use items, ammunition doesn't confer quirks on its user.

Default bonus: Increased crit range. Ammunition takes the bonus of the weapon that shoots it, just like mundane ammunition does.

Magic Arrow: Fighters and other specialists call them "keen arrows," but they're common enough that most people just call them magic arrows. When you make an attack with this ammunition, increase the crit range of that attack by 1.

Twin: When you fire twin ammunition , a second projectile materializes out of the first and targets the same or a different foe. Make a free basic ranged attack for it with a +8 attack bonus instead of your normal bonus (champion: +12; epic: +16).

Seeking: You deal +4 damage on a miss (champion: +10; epic: +25).

Lucky Stray: On the first miss, you can make a basic ranged attack against another foe that is near the target or along your line of sight to the target (between you and the original target or past the original target).

Lethal Strike: You deal +1d10 damage on a hit (champion: +2d10; epic: +4d10).

Champion

Flaming: Bursts into fire as it flies. You deal 8 extra ongoing fire damage on a hit (epic: 20 ongoing fire).

Epic

Death (one-use, but see below): When you hit with this ammunition and deal damage, if the target has 40 hp or fewer after the hit, the creature drops to 0 hp. If it hits but fails to drop its target, the ammunition is not used up. It must of course be retrieved.

Uncanny: Warps the forces of necessity and miracle as it flies. When you attack with this ammunition, use the target's lowest defense instead of the defense your attack would normally target.

Magic Belt, Swordbelt, Kilt, Skirt, Girdle, Sash

Default bonus: Increase your maximum hp by +4 (champion: +10 hp; epic: +25 hp).

Resurgence (recharge 16+): When you drop to 0 hit points, you can heal using a recovery as a free action. Quirk: From time to time, you burst forth with wildly optimistic comments.

Ungraspability: When you take ongoing damage, you can roll an immediate save to end the effect without taking damage first. Quirk: Fascinated by patterns.

Victory by Inches: You must carry a single magic melee weapon that you keep attached to this item for it to manifest its power. When using that weapon, apply the weapon's magic bonus to miss damage also. Quirk: Have a hard time taking no for an answer.

Champion

Sash of Suppleness (recharge 6+): *A silky sash worn as a belt*. Only +4 hit points (epic +10). When an attack hits your AC and deals 16 damage or less, you can change that hit into a miss (epic: 40 damage or less). Quirk: Always stretching, even when it would be more polite or sensible to not be doing so.

Epic

Totem Kilt: A hide-and-fur skirt bedecked with garish tribal charms, totemic symbols, and spirit knots. You can reroll the first death save you make each battle. Add +2 to the roll. Quirk: Sometimes speak with the voices of ancestors.

Kilt of the Mad Archmage (recharge 11+): When you drop one or more foes with a spell, you can heal using a recovery as a free action. If you do, you gain a +4 bonus to attack rolls with spells until the end of your next turn. Quirk: Roll eyes and giggle too often for comfort.

Magic Book, Scroll, Tome, Grimoire

Mastering a book requires a course of study and practice, usually accomplished over a day or more. The reader develops a connection to the book, and the book definitely gets in the reader's head. Sometimes a book will reject a reader, leaving them either confounded or disturbed. Every reader considers their own book the best, though most keep it to themselves.

Default bonus: None.

Lotus Scroll: When you master the uncanny riddles of this scroll, you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls with monk attacks (champion: +2; epic: +3). Each scroll is one-third

of an entire body of work, with one fragment at adventurer level, another at champion, and the third at epic. The original work was too mind-bending for mortals to ken, so ages ago it was split into segments that could only be mastered one at a time. Fighters have magic swords, and monks have lotus scrolls. Quirk: Obsession over flower arranging, calligraphy, short-form poetry, spiritual riddles, or some other refined and non-martial art.

Manual of Enlightened Flesh: This oddly worded tome spells out new ways of thinking about bodily motion, posture, reflexes, metabolism, and more. Those who can discern its true meaning learn to move and act physically with greater agility and precision. You gain a +4 bonus to all skill checks based on Str, Con, or Dex. Quirk: Take heightened satisfaction in your own physical prowess.

*Scroll of Seven Subtle Serpents (*recharge 6+): Those who master the obscure wording, intricate art, and mystic symbolism of this scroll find themselves exceptionally deft and adroit in melee. After rolling a melee attack based on Dexterity, Intelligence, or Wisdom, you can evoke a special ability of your choice as a free action. Pick the ability from one of the following seven after seeing whether the attack is a hit.

- Deal +1d6 damage on a hit (champion: +2d8; epic: +4d10).
- Deal +1d4 damage on a miss (champion: +2d6; epic: +4d8).
- Gain a +1 bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.
- Disengage freely from one enemy.
- Gain 1d10 temporary hit points (champion: 3d8; epic: 8d8).
- Roll a save against an ongoing save ends effect.

Quirk: Always in constant motion, or swaying gently when still.

*Tome of the Divinities and their Deeds (*recharge 6+): This tome's colorful, symbolic diagrams purport to survey the nature and motives of all the gods, summarizing them in vast lists and arranging them in complicated schemes that associate them with elements,

planets, passions, and destinies. Immediately after you cast a divine spell, you can heal using a recovery as a free action and add +1d6 hit points (champion: +2d8; epic: +4d10 hp) to the total. Quirk: Sees the hands of the gods operating subtly through the natural and social world, and makes others aware of it.

Champion

*Manual of Puissant Skill at Arms (*recharge 11+): This iron-bound book looks like you could kill someone with it, which isn't far from the truth. When you make a melee attack and miss, you can reroll it using +15 as your attack bonus instead of your own bonus (epic: +20). If an arcane spellcaster reads this manual, it hurts their brain and permanently reduces their maximum hit points by 4 (epic: by 10). Quirk: Constantly checking self out and flexing and seems to want to be caught doing that.

Epic

*Tome of Arcane Mysteries (*recharge 6+): This weighty volume is full of arcane sigils, half-mad poetry, impious philosophical assertions, and deep reflections into the nature of arcane power. When you make an attack roll with an arcane spell, after finding out whether the attack hits, you can change the attack roll to a 10 instead of the natural roll as a quick action. Quirk: Doodles insane geometrical designs.

Magic Boots, Shoes, Sandals, Slippers

Default bonus: Disengage checks and other checks involving fancy footwork; adventurer: +1, champion: +2, epic: +3.

Boots of Elvenkind: You gain a +5 bonus to skill checks to walk quietly. Quirk: Develops of love of elegant elven poetry.

Boots of the Ferocious Charge: When you move to engage a foe first and then make a melee attack against it that turn, you deal +1d6 damage, hit or miss, instead of the magic bonus damage from your melee weapon(champion: +2d8; epic: +4d10). Quirk: You like to start fights as much as you like to finish them.

Boots of Sure Feet: You can walk or run normally through terrain that would normally slow one down, such as rubble, undergrowth,

muck, etc. The boots don't protect you against damage or similar effects you would incur from inhospitable terrain. Quirk: Becomes exceptionally picky about diet.

Sandals of the Slippery Eel: Add your Dexterity modifier to your disengage checks. Quirk: Loves puns.

Magic Cloak, Mantle, Cape

Default bonus: Physical defense; adventurer: +1, champion +2, epic: +3.

Elven Cloak: Add +10 to checks to remain hidden in natural surroundings. Quirk: You prefer the finest things in life, of course they are elven.

*Evasion (*recharge 6+): When you take damage from an opportunity attack, you can take 20 less damage from it (champion: 40; epic: 100) Quirk: You can't answer a question directly even if you want to.

Recovery (quick action – recharge 16+): You can heal using a recovery and add +4 hp to the total (champion: +10 hp; epic: +25 hp). Quirk: Sometimes you grow small extra appendages that slowly wither away over days or weeks.

*Stalwart (*recharge 16+): When an attack against your Physical Defense hits, you can make the attacker reroll the attack and use a PD of 15 (champion: 20; epic 25). Quirk: Always the last to retreat or avoid danger.

Champion

*Guardian (*recharge 11+): When a foe you're engaged with makes an attack against an ally that doesn't include you, you can make that foe target you instead of that ally. Declare your choice before the attack is rolled. (epic: 6+). Quirk: Compelled to the defense of others, even those who might not need defending.

Epic

*Inviolability (*recharge 16+): When an attack against your Physical Defense hits, you can change that hit into a miss instead. Quirk: Attempts stunts of toughness and daring that a person less convinced of their invulnerability might be wise enough to avoid.

Magic Gloves, Gauntlets

Default bonus: none.

Ambidexterity: If you wield a weapon in your off-hand and you roll a natural 16+ on your first melee attack during your turn, you can also make a melee attack with the weapon in your off-hand as a free action, using +10 as your attack bonus (champion: +15; epic: +20). Quirk: Writes with both hands at the same time on different parts of the page. It freaks people out.

*Archer's Gauntlets (*recharge 16+): When you miss with a ranged weapon attack, you can reroll it using +10 as your attack bonus (champion: +15; epic: +20). Quirk: You're quiet. Too quiet. Say something. For the love of the Blessed Emperor, say something.

*Gloves of Mind Rot (*recharge 6+): When you hit one or more foes with an arcane spell or attack, you can deal 1d10 extra psychic damage to one target of the attack as a free action (champion: +2d10; epic: +5d10). Quirk: The texture of your skin seems wrong to everyone else, but you know it's all in their minds and sometimes explain that to them.

Gauntlets of Clobbering: When you wield a two-handed weapon, you deal +1d8 damage instead of the magic bonus damage for that weapon (champion: +2d8; epic: +4d10). Quirk: Clobber first, talk later.

*Jeweled Glove (*recharge 6+): When you cast a divine spell, you can use a free action to allow one nearby ally roll a save against one ongoing save ends effect. Quirk: Alternately paranoid that people are looking too closely at your precious jeweled glove and upset that people aren't paying enough attention to your amazing jeweled glove.

Magic Helmet, Crown, Diadem, Circlet

Default bonus: +1 MD (adventurer), +2 MD (champion), +3 MD (epic).

Circlet of Approachability: While wearing this circlet, in regular social situations, you appear to others as someone who belongs there. You easily fit in with new groups of people, unless there is some particular reason for others to be suspicious. The circlet has no power in unusual

social situations. Quirk: Peppers speech with needless foreign words.

*Helm of the Undaunted Hero (*recharge 6+, and see below): At the start of your turn, you can roll a save against one ongoing save ends effect as a free action. Make the recharge roll immediately after you use the power instead of during your next short rest. Quirk: Favors traditional battle hymns.

*Helm of Fortunate Dodging (*recharge 6+, and see below): You can turn a miss when someone attacks your AC or PD into a fumble (no damage or other effect). Make the recharge roll immediately after you use the power instead of during your next short rest. Quirk: Easily moved to dancing by rhythmic music, and taps the foot when there is no music.

Epic

*Crown of the Mighty Strike (*recharge 16+): This slim but elegant crown wants to share your glory and thus needs you to be glorious. It continually presses you to take bold actions. When the escalation die is 3+, you can use a daily attack power as a quick action. Quirk: Likely to make bold statements or undertake bold actions, especially by reflex.

Magic Rings

Default bonus: none.

Glory: This brilliant, gem-encrusted ring gives you an aura of status. Everyone can see it, even if they don't know why. Quirk: Becomes more and more obsessed with the idea that all their accomplishments are undeserved and that they themselves are frauds. This obsession often drives them to heroic acts.

Thief's-Eye: So long as the ring is on your fingers, if you shut both eyes and concentrate, you can see through the ring, allowing a clever adventurer to peer around corners and such. Quirk: You're always prying into things that should maybe be left shut; doors, topics of conversation, taboos . . . ..

*Defense (*recharge 6+): When you take damage from an attack, you can prevent 10 of that damage (champion: prevent 20; epic: prevent 40). Quirk: Stubborn.

Resilience (quick action – recharge 6+): You can heal using a recovery. Quirk: Eats an odd vegetarian diet and advocates it loudly.

Magic Shields

Default bonus: None.

*Resilience (*recharge 11+): When you make a basic melee attack, you can heal using a recovery as a free action. Quirk: Eats an odd vegetarian diet and advocates it loudly.

*Puissance (*recharge 6+): When you make a basic melee attack, you can make a recharge roll for one expended power. Quirk: Tremendous appetite for meat.

Termination: When you make a basic melee attack, roll a save against one ongoing damage effect. Quirk: Continually fails to finish sentences, stopping in mid-thought.

Adaptation: When an attack targets your Physical Defense or Mental Defense, you gain a +1 bonus to that defense until the start of your next turn. Quirk: Takes on mannerisms of those around them.

Aura of Protection: Enemies engaged with you take a –1 attack penalty against your allies. Quirk: Tends to others with too much familiarity.

Magic Staff

A staff counts as both a wand (arcane spells) and a symbol (divine spells). Staffs are champion or epic items, with a default magic bonus of +2 or +3. Epic staffs don't like to be around lesser staffs, and do not abide wands.

Default bonus: Attack and damage with an arcane or divine spell or attack.

Champion

*Diabolical Staff (*recharge: 16+, but see below): A stout staff made of several lengths of wood braided impossibly together. Each "cord" in the braid is carved to resemble a column of tortured souls. With a little inspection, those who wield these staffs can usually find themself represented as one of the naked, writhing figures. You can evoke the power of the staff to gain additional attention and power from the spirits of darkness. When you roll relationship dice with the Diabolist, you can treat a single 4

as a 5. If no 4 is rolled, the staff recharges automatically during your next short rest. Quirk: Exaggerates a chaotic or destructive trait that is already there.

*Staff of the Diffident Magician (*recharge 6+): The first time an enemy engages you, you can make an opportunity attack against that enemy. On a hit, you deal +2d8 damage with that attack (epic: +4d10), and daze the foe until the end of its turn, if the creature is large or smaller (epic: any size). Quirk: Doesn't like to be touched.

Staff of Health: You can add the staff's magical bonus to the total when you cast spells that heal or provide temporary hit points. Quirk: The diseased of nearly every population center somehow know to seek you out for healing.

*Staff of the Uncrowned King (*recharge 6+): You can automatically succeed at a save against created or forced by an undead enemy. Quirk: You see dead people . . . sometimes.

Epic

*Staff of Infinite Djinn (*recharge 16+): This staff allows a spellcaster to summon up useful djinn of nearly any variety, though usually at a cost. In combat, a summoned djinni is basically an 8th level monster, though the GM can set different stats for any particular djinni. Typically a djinni can fly in a whirlwind but not fight while flying. A djinni can attack the round it is summoned, but you must concentrate to keep the djinni in combat @@, and at the start of each of your turns you must make a normal save or the djinni returns to the place from which you summoned it. As there are countless sorts of djinn, you can usually summon one with a special ability needed for a challenge at hand. Such servants might be able to get you out of jams, find hidden things, carry something somewhere far away, etc.

Each time you use the staff, it costs one recovery. Once only, you can summon a more powerful djinn, whose particular stats or capabilities are hard to predict. Doing so costs three recoveries and transforms the staff into a generic magic staff, attack bonuses intact but djinni summoning extinguished. The GM is encouraged to interpret the djinni summoned

rather freely. Quirk: The caster gains a demeanor of power and otherness.

Magic Symbol, Holy Symbol, Relic, Sacred Branch

Sometimes a symbolic magic item is a gem or rune that can be attached to any of various holy symbols. Typically a divine spellcaster pries the gem or other adornment off a foreign holy symbol and affixes it to their own mundane holy symbol. Symbols are only appropriate for adventurer- and champion-level characters. For epic-level spellcasting items, get a staff.

Default bonus: Attack and damage with divine spell or attack.

*Divine Harmony, Knot of (*recharge 16+): Metal coils wrapped into an elaborate, Celtic-style knot. This knot allows its wielder to serve in a priestly function for nearly any god or ritual. You can use this power to meet a free-form challenge, at the GM's discretion. Quirk: Believes in everything.

*Dodging Doom, Symbol of (*recharge 6+): When you cast a divine spell on an ally, that ally can roll a save against one ongoing save ends effect. Quirk: Wildly optimistic.

*Gathered Power, Symbol of (*recharge with full heal-up): During a short rest, you can regain an expended daily adventurer-level spell (champion: champion-level spell). Quirk: One-track mind.

*The Gods and Goddesses, Gem of (*recharge 6+): When you cast a daily divine spell on an ally, that ally also heals 10 hit points. Quirk: Insists on courtesy even in situations where none should be required.

Magic Wands

Wands are only appropriate for adventurer- and champion-level characters. For epic-level spellcasting items, get a staff.

Default bonus: Attack and damage with arcane spells or attacks.

*Wand of the Unfettered Minion (*recharge: 11+): Arcane spellcasters can use these wands to give creatures greater ferocity in melee. When you use this wand as a quick action, a target who is at least somewhat subservient to you gains a +1

bonus to melee attacks and damage until the end of the battle (champion: +2 bonus). Presumably there may be long-term effects if the same minion is "unfettered" repeatedly, but high fatality rate among minions renders moot any concerns about long-term effects. Quirk: Switches unexpectedly into "evil mastermind" tone of voice.

*Wand of the Mage's Invisible Aegis (*recharge 16+): When you activate this wand, it works like the wizard's *shield* spell, with a level no higher than your level. (Champion: recharge 11+). Quirk: Hums tunelessly.

Champion

*Wand of Unerring Pain (*recharge 6+): When you miss with a spell that targets a single enemy, you can instantly fire a magical missile that automatically hits that creature for 4d10 force damage. Quirk: Stares intently, often at nothing.

Magic Weapons

@@ranged categories needed

Default bonus: Attacks and damage when using the weapon.

Protection (melee weapon – recharge 6+): Make a basic attack and gain a +4 bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn (champion: +5; epic: +6). Quirk: Has urges to watch over the helpless or innocent.

Liberation (melee weapon – quick action – recharge 6+): If you have made an attack with this weapon this turn, you can allow an ally to roll a save against an ongoing save ends effect. Quirk: Drones on about the Priestess and how her healing grace will save all the worlds.

Vengeance (melee weapon): While you are *wounded*, you deal +1d6 damage with attacks using this weapon. Quirk: Quick to take offense.

Reckless (melee weapon): You gain a +4 attack bonus with this weapon on your first attack each battle. Quirk: Blurts out obscenities. (For decorum's sake, use euphemisms when speaking in character.)

Abandon (melee weapon) You deal +2d6 damage with your first attack each battle using this weapon (champion: +4d6; epic: +4d12).

Quirk: Blurts out obscenities. (For decorum's sake, use euphemisms when speaking in character.)

Unstinting Virtue (melee weapon – recharge 11+):): When you make a basic attack with this weapon. Roll a save against an ongoing save ends effect. Quirk: Annoyingly fascinated with the Archmage.

Puissance (melee weapon – recharge 16+):): When you make a basic attack with this weapon. Make a recharge roll for one power. Quirk: Tremendous appetite for meat.

Vanity (melee weapon): Your hits with this weapon deal +1d6 damage if you are the only character engaged with the target of your attack (champion: +2d6; epic: +4d6). Quirk: Tells everyone their name.

Greater Striking (melee weapon): While the escalation die is 3+, you deal +1d8 damage when you hit with this weapon (champion: +2d8; epic: +4d8). Quirk: Favors iron and steel, seeing little beauty in gold or gems.

Dextrous Parry (one-handed melee weapon – recharge 6+): When an enemy you are engaged with hits you, you can make a Dexterity check against the attacker's MD. If you succeed, the attack misses instead. Quirk: Jumpy and suspicious.

Mighty Stunning (one-handed blunt 1d6 melee weapon – recharge 6+): When you hit an enemy using this weapon, you can make a Strength check against the target's PD. If you succeed, that creature is stunned until the end of its next turn. Quirk: Warns of impending doom.

Inimical (any weapon): When you hit an enemy using this weapon, you can deal +1d10 damage to it (champion: +2d10; epic: +4d10). If you do, you also take that extra damage. Quirk: Bites nails, or a similar darker habit.

Vampiric (any weapon): When you crit with a natural 20, you deal crit damage again if you hit again the next round. Quirk: Has taste for red meat.

Cruel (any weapon): If damage from this weapon leaves a foe with 20 hit points or fewer, you deal +5 damage to it (champion: 400 hp/+10

damage; epic 800 hp/+20 damage). Quirk: Tortures flies.

Haughty (any weapon): When you hit an enemy with this weapon, if it's the most dangerous foe in the battle (or tied for most dangerous, GM's assessment), you deal +1d3 damage per tier to it (champion: +1d8 per tier; epic: +2d10 per tier). Quirk: Challenges others to improvised contests.

Flurry (two-handed melee weapon – recharge 6+): When you make a basic attack you can make a second basic attack as a free action against a different enemy. Quirk: Fidgety.

Distraction (two-handed melee weapon – recharge 11+): When you hit an enemy with this weapon, you can allow one of your allies engaged with that foe to make a basic melee attack against it as a free action. Quirk: Intrudes on personal space.

Mighty Swing (two-handed melee weapon – move action): You deal +1d8 damage with your next melee attack with this weapon that hits this turn (champion: +2d8; epic: +4d8). If you miss, you take that damage instead. Quirk: Tends to break things.

Epic Magic Weapons

Greatsword of Utter Night (+3 weapon – recharge 6+): When you hit an enemy, you can spirit away that creature and yourself to an empty void beyond time where only the two of you face each other for a short time. Neither you nor your foe can move, but you can sure fight. Your enemy acts first, then you, and then you are both spirited back to the real world exactly where you were when the power triggered. Bystanders only see a flash of black . Quirk: Has disturbing dreams that can't be remembered, or at the very least must not be.

Incomparable Axe of Wyrm Chopping: In every age since it was first forged, this axe has resurfaced. Sometimes the Three find the axe and destroy it, but it nevertheless somehow appears again in the following age. In the 13th Age, the Incomparable Axe has yet to appear.

While wielding the axe, you deal +40 damage to dragons, hit or miss. The GM determines just how broadly the term "dragon"

applies. Quirk: Speaks in Draconic, first just curses, but then more and more elements of speech.

Wondrous Items

You can attune multiple wondrous items. They don't fill up a chakra.

Default bonus: none.

Lore Bottle: A bottle of translucent glass, sealed with lead, with a ghastly face that peers out at you. When you ask it questions, it answers in the form of vague hunches. For tough questions, the face might fade out for a while, apparently searching somewhere for an answer. Owning the bottle gives you +2 bonus to Intelligence-based skill checks, if you have the time (and privacy) to consult the *lore bottle*. Chances are, your particular lore bottle has some sort of specialty or bias, which you will discover only through use. Unlike most magic items, *lore bottles* can often be found for sale, but you probably don't want those. Quirk: The connection formed with the face in the bottle can be compelling and unsettling, as the spirit literally "gets in your head." Each bottle has a different effect on its owner. *Rope of Entangling:* Fifty feet of fine, spidersilk rope, woven so closely that it seems like a solid, flexible cable. Once you attune the rope, you can make it entangle things with standard action commands. In combat, it's not that useful, because it's slow compared to a living thing. If the target is stationary, however, the rope excels at reaching, climbing, snaking, coiling, and entangling. You might be able to get the rope to bind a ferocious monster, but the rope is likely to get destroyed in the process. Quirk: Speak in sentences for which "convoluted" is the only proper verbal.

Cursed Magic Items

Cursed items can be useful, though all of them have significant drawbacks. You can usually get a sense for what the item does, especially by using it in battle.

Sword of Relentless Glory (+2 weapon): If you don't make a melee attack with this weapon during your turn, it shuts down and the bonus

becomes +0 until the end of the battle. Quirk: Spouts furious curses in battle.

Blade of Unerring Panache (+2 weapon): . When you attack using the weapon and miss, you lose 4 hp (champion: 10 hp; epic: 25 hp). Quirk: Tells the same stories over and over.

Wand of the Bloodless Mage (+2 implement): When you attack using the wand, you lose 1 hp (champion: 3 hp; epic: 6 hp). Quirk: Laughs turn hollow or spectral.

Champion

Any adventurer cursed item bumped up, or . . .

Vulnerable Armor (+3 armor): When an attack against your AC crits you, the armor "goes quiet" and the bonus becomes +0 until the end of the battle. Quirk: Reminds everyone that they're going to die.

Axe of Bloody Vengeance (+3 weapon): You cannot rally during a battle. Quirk: Carves patterns into own skin with fingernails.

Epic

Any lower item bumped up, or . . .

Great Low Sickle (+5 weapon): This flint sickle was used to defeat and unman a High Druid of an earlier age, so it is as much a political symbol as a weapon. Although cursed for its impious use and stripped of its former powers, it remains a potent weapon. You deal +5 damage with missed attacks, but all of your defenses are 1.

Staff of Dark Karma (three times per day): When you hit with a spell, you can deal extra damage with it as a free action. If the spell targets one enemy, deal +4d10 damage. If the spell has more than one target, deal +2d10 damage. In addition, the first time you take damage each battle, you take 20 damage.

CREATING MAGIC ITEMS

We aren't providing rules for how your PCs can create magic items because we don't *use* rules for that. Your PC can make magic items the same way they make friends, allies, and plans—by roleplaying.

Your PC can make a magic item if the ability to do so is part of that character's story, if real effort is made to make the item, and if the GM judges that the value of the magic is about what a PC should expect to get as treasure for the efforts they make. If the GM thinks you're being greedy or silly, you'll have to wait until your skills are worthy.

If you want your PC to have a particular magic item, perhaps one of your own invention, create some story about how your character is fated to own such an item, and then suggest some horrible location where such an item might be found. Or maybe your PC has always heard stories about this type of special item because it symbolizes something mystical in your PC's heretical religion. Or maybe you saw such an item when you were young and would consider yourself a true hero if you got your hands on one. If your GM and your story are good, you might get what you want.

Chapter 10: Introductory Adventures

This introductory adventure is designed to introduce players to basic combat, while not neglecting the free-form nature of the game. Use this introductory adventure as a set up for the full free-form adventure that follows, *Blood & Lightning*.

Adventure Summary: This short adventure pits the PCs against a bunch of goblins in a quick fight. See the Introductory Battle chart in the Conclusion section to determine how many of each type of goblin will be in the battle. Stats for these creatures are provided on the next page.

SET UP

Establish the context of the battle with world details that you and the players make up. Before you roll initiative, work with the players to figure out creative character background answers to the first two plot points below. Then determine how you want to present points 3 and 4.

1. Why Us?: The reason (or reasons) the party is undertaking the mission.

2. A Blessing: A blessing is given to the party by a key NPC or group connected to one or more of the characters.

3. Battle Setting: The location of the goblins when the PCs catch up with them.

4. Goblin Luck: Foreshadow that the goblins will be extra lucky in the upcoming battle.

Why Us?

The players should work with you to come up with a reason why their party is tracking down a band of goblins. Ideally, the reason relates to an icon that one of the PCs is connected to, at least tangentially. If the players like the first idea they come up with, you could go with it or challenge them to come up with something with more hooks. This is your opportunity to address questions the players might have about the icons.

If nothing sensible suggests itself, this could be the traditional "first battle," where previously unrelated adventurers fight together for the first time, often for different reasons.

A Blessing

Before the PCs head off on their dangerous mission, an ally or patron blesses them to help them succeed. Arrange for the PCs to get some sort of blessing or general-purpose magical support, such as the ardent prayers of a local holy man or the arcane enhancement from the Archmage's wizards. The players know that they will gain some advantage, but they don't know what it will be (and really, neither does the NPC who provided the support).

Later, during play, this blessing will take the form of an extra standard action that one PC can take as soon as the escalation die hits +3, before the first combatant acts that round. The players will decide as a group who gets the action.

Gamemaster: As shown above, here's how we handle free-form blessings: some sort of blessing occurs in the fiction, and the PCs get some modest but welcome benefit in an upcoming battle or struggle.

Battle Setting

Come up with your own interesting location for the battle… or if you prefer, use this one:

The party is at a town near a major city, and the goblins are in a "ghost town" up in the hills. It's a ghost town both because it's abandoned and because it's haunted. The goblins will sneak away at nightfall, so the PCs are encouraged to make haste. They travel past the locals' orchards and pastures, and up the forgotten road to the ghost town. Add a detail or feature to the ghost town, something that interests you personally or connects to a PC's back story, so that your ghost

town is at least a little different from every other GM's ghost town.

Goblin Luck

Make it clear to the PCs in some way that the goblins have luck on their side. Some inside knowledge related to a PC's fiction is best. If nothing in the PCs' backgrounds and stories suggests a good angle, say that goblin luck runes are carved deeply into the trunks of trees in the ghost town, and one of the PCs can recognize them.

COMBAT

Once the background fiction is agreed on, elaborate it to your heart's content. Then summarize the party's travel to the location where the goblins can be found. Keep summarizing until you get to the battle with the goblins, then roll initiative. For example, you can just say, "You find crude runes carved into tree trunks, and it's easy to recognize that they are goblin good luck runes," rather than roleplaying out the scene where they find and figure out the runes.

Placement: The idea with this adventure is to practice combat, so set up the battle in a simple way—the goblins hear the PCs coming and roil out of their hiding places to attack.

Balance: The goblins are statistically balanced to be a tough encounter, so players should draw freely on their daily powers and spells. It's best if this battle occurs on its own and isn't reflected in the upcoming adventure, so feel free to give the characters a full heal-up after this battle.

Disengaging goblins: Goblins excel at scrambling loose from enemies. Whenever possible, the goblins will use their move action to try to disengage from enemies engaged with them in melee, so they can get away. Goblins only need to roll a 6+ to get away from each foe. If a goblin fails against any enemy, it will stay in melee, but it can still attack.

Goblin luck: In this battle, as a result of their good luck, the goblins can reroll any missed disengage checks. When goblins

disengage thanks to this blessing, narrate to the players that they seem to twist away at the last split second, almost as if everything were choreographed ahead of time.

Blessing: Don't forget to advance the escalation die by +1 at the end of every round. When the escalation die hits +3, explain to the players that their blessing kicks in, so you'll want to describe how it looks or feels to the PCs as the blessing arrives. One character of the group's choice can take one extra standard action this turn. In the fiction, this action feels like a lucky move or a brilliant shot. The PCs in the game world don't experience time stopping while they decide which of them takes the extra action. The action just seems like the result of a lucky break.

CONCLUSION

This encounter is intended as a training run, so there's no treasure. Give the PCs a full heal-up so they can be at full strength before the actual adventure starts.

Introductory Battle Chart

Number of PCs	Goblin Shamans	Hobgoblins	Goblin Scum
2	1	1	5
3	2	1	7
4	2	2	10
5	3	2	13
6	3	3	15
7	4	3	20

Goblin Shaman

1st level caster   Initiative: +5
[Goblin]

R: Shaking curse, targets nearby enemy
+6 vs. PD, 1d8 damage and until end of
shaman's next turn, target suffers 1 point of
damage whenever an enemy engages it or
disengages from it.

   Natural even roll: Next turn the shaman can
target 2 enemies with its *shaking curse* instead of
one.

OR
M: Pointy Spear +5, 1d6 damage

   Disengage +5: So goblins only need to roll a 6+
to disengage.

AC 17
PD 14
MD 13

HP 26

HOBGOBLIN

Evil masterminds and warlords often rely on
hobgoblins to serve as reliable lieutenants,
captains of the guard, or even treasurers.

2nd level troop   *Initiative*: +3
[Goblin]

Longsword +7 vs. AC, 2d6 damage
   Natural even miss: (Discipline) Deal 2 damage

GROUP ABILITY
   For every two hobgoblins in the fight (round
up), you get one use per fight of the *Well-
Armored* ability…

Well-Armored: Ignore all damage from a hit (but
not a crit) against AC.

AC 19
PD 14
MD 14

HP 32

Goblin Scum

1st level mook   Initiative: +3
[Goblin]

M: Club +6, 3 damage
OR
R: Shortbow, target nearby enemy
+6 vs. AC, 3 damage
Disengage +5: So goblins only need to roll a 6+ to
disengage.
AC 16
PD 14
MD 12
HP 7 (Every 7 points of damage kills another
goblin scum.)

Blood & Lightning

An adventure for 1st-level characters.
@@updated adventure coming soon in order to be less railroaded

OVERVIEW

Blood & Lightning is a loosely plotted and therefore somewhat free-form adventure for 1st-level player characters.

During the adventure, one PC is due to receive a magic weapon, Glaezentorg the Thirsty, currently owned by an NPC (a cousin/friend/colleague/storyline will determine!) working at an isolated Archmage node. At the node, an assistant, Zvegdar, betrays his colleagues and summons a dragon to wreak havoc. The dragon helps the traitorous Zvegdar escape with the stolen Glaezentorg. The PCs eventually track the traitor down in a strange, plant-infested ruin. A mid-level druid, Torrent, might help the PCs or hinder them, depending on how it plays out. In the dramatic conclusion, the characters think they have defeated Zvegdar, but he turns into a massive dragon-man for a climactic battle.

Running the Adventure

Follow these steps to run the adventure:

1. Ahead of time, read over the adventure and make notes about what details you want to add or change. The point of a more free-form system is to allow you greater personalization. Invent original details the way you would for a book or movie; don't limit yourself to material you've seen elsewhere in the rulebook. A free-form system can readily handle original material. Leave big questions open, such as who Zvegdar betrayed—you can answer those questions once you know who the PCs are, and invent answers that connect the PCs to the fiction.

2. When the game session starts, tell the players what your campaign is going to be about (theme, treatment of icons, most-likely enemies, special game rules, special slants or variants, etc.). If this adventure is a one-off, tell the players how you intend to run the session: hard-bitten adventure, mysterious encounters, cultural exploration, Vancian irony, Tolkienesque epic scope, or whatever.

3. Have the players create characters. Help them create characters that will fit your style of campaign and fit together as a party. Don't make players make every last decision about their characters. Let them leave room to invent more details later as they better understand the campaign and their own PCs.

4. Review the PCs' unique features, icon relationships, and background. Improvise connections between the characters and the adventure. Engage the players emotionally by inventing details that matter to them. At least one PC should be primed for gaining a strong personal reason to see Zvegdar dead. Definitely give one player the expectation that they'll end the adventure owning Glaezentorg.

5. Run the intro adventure. If you need to invent details to keep the game moving, think about the players' unique features and their icon relationships. That should give you raw material to invent details that players will care about. When in doubt, race to the climactic finish, with Zvegdar being defeated, only to transform into a dragon-man-monster-mutant.

Hooks

Look at the PCs' unique features and relationships. Invent connections between the basic plot and the details that are special about the PCs. For starters, fill in the blank in each of the following sentences.

- Glaezentorg belongs to one of the PCs, or will, as soon as the ritual of transfer is conducted. Which PC?
- What sort of weapon is it, and why is the PC coming into possession of the weapon just now? We'd recommend that you make this melee weapon match whatever melee weapon is used by the PC you expect to end up with it. If the PC isn't committed to a particular type

of weapon, make it a little different from the one they're using. Then, just like in the old days, the PC will switch weapon types in order to wield the latest, coolest magic weapon.

- Are any of the PCs connected to the Boltstrike Pillar, most likely through the Archmage?
- Torrent wants something that one of the PCs has. Which character is it, and what can they offer? Information, a service, an oath? Perhaps Torrent owes a moral or social debt to an icon or family that the PC is connected to, and the PC can absolve the debt. The point of this connection is to give the party some way to possibly win help from Torrent.
- The ruins into which Zvegdar escapes are especially familiar to one PC. Which one? This PC will have special information that allows the party to find Zvegdar, avoid pitfalls, or otherwise navigate the dungeon successfully.
- During the adventure, an intriguing clue will drop relating to one PC. Which one? This clue relates to that PC's personal history, and it will lead to a relevant adventure or encounter in the near future. At the minimum, figure out what the clue is. You can always figure out what the clue *means* later.

Use these ideas as a starting point, and invent other connections if you can.

THE BOLTSTRIKE PILLAR

The PCs travel to an isolated Archmage community centered on a magical pillar so one of them can receive the weapon Glaezentorg. But—surprise—the community comes under attack and Glaezentorg is stolen. The point of this encounter is to hook the players into wanting to find Zvegdar and reclaim Glaezentorg.

Perhaps one PC is traveling to the community to receive Glaezentorg as an honor, reward, or inheritance. All the players should be able to invent reasons why their characters are involved. Remember, in a free-form campaign, the players share the responsibility for engaging their PCs in the action. Players should think, "What's a cool reason I can invent for my PC to be involved?" not "Given what I've already decided about my PC, would my PC want to be involved or not?"

The Archmage community is in the wilderness, built into a massive, natural stone column known as the "Boltstrike Pillar" that twists and turns seven stories into the air. By "natural," we mean not made by humans, but this pillar has been a node of supernatural forces for ages. The pillar has been partially hollowed out and partially built out, and now helps to moderate the weather and related forces along several ley lines that cross at this point. The top of the pillar holds a shimmering silver flame, a magical beacon connected to the power of the Archmage and to controlling the weather. Around the pillar is a walled area with a few stone and timber dwellings and storage structures, a well, etc. Outside the walled area are gardens and small livestock pens kept by the assistants, holding mostly chickens and goats. Add any other details you like, for realism, drama, spectacle, or humor.

The wizards and assistants who work in the area keep the mana flowing correctly along the intersecting ley lines. They also tend several magical artifacts that are being enchanted there; the process takes at least a dozen years, and all the items are related to wind or weather in some way. Zvegdar is one of the assistants, and his imminent betrayal will bring down the node.

The characters arrive during the day and are welcomed by the arcane assistants. The PCs probably get to see Glaezentorg at that time, and maybe hold it. But the ritual to officially transfer the item is scheduled for the next day, because Glaezentorg's owner needs the weapon for his final tour of duty atop the pillar before he gives it up and heads to Horizon to pursue magical studies. (Alter this story as necessary. . . .)

Perhaps the PCs even see Zvegdar, but they might not learn his name or otherwise identify him as a "named NPC" unless you're really sly.

By default, Zvegdar is a two-faced half-elf, but he could be any race/gender/name that works for you and is most likely to piss off your players.

Setting Up the Action

The tower scene is built around at least two story tricks, *heroics* and *psych out*, with a third trick helping things along.

The *heroics* trick has two parts:

1. The PCs meet an impressive battle commander and her guards.

2. Later, in a sudden emergency, the battle commander calls on her guards, and they quail. The PCs now have the option to answer the commander's call and prove themselves heroes.

The *psych out* trick also has two parts:

1. The PCs get to see and hold a cool magic item, but its owner has to go on duty at the top of the pillar, so he takes it away.

2. A dragon appears, messes up the node, and flies away with the murderous traitor who summoned him. Soon enough it's clear that the traitor has also stolen Glaezentorg, and the players get the chance to get it back.

The third trick is a free-form discussion among NPCs and PCs. Let's call that a "palaver." You don't need it in this scene, but it helps set up the other two tricks, and you've gotta palaver some time.

You should pull these tricks off any way you like, but here's a default to start with.

The PCs are not originally welcome in the tower itself because its etheric vibrations gradually harm those exposed to them. Even from the outside, though, the PCs can tell that the Boltstrike Pillar and everything in it are out of their league. The massive doors, the impressive balconies, and even the way the pillar dominates the landscape all give the PCs a pretty clear impression that it's no place for beginners. If your players are the type who want to know what's going on with the mechanics of the game, tell them that because the pillar is a *champion* area (the type of place 4th–6th level characters are more accustomed to), the DCs for doors, traps, and everything else in the pillar are

5 higher than normal (basically everything is harder to do for adventurer-tier PCs in a champion area).

When the PCs arrive at the Boltstrike Pillar, you can play out the dialog as they meet a couple of key NPCs, or you can gloss over it. If the players are up for talking, then it's nice if the PCs get to know the Wizard Militant, who leads the pillar's guard, along with one of her assistant wizards. If the players want to get to the action, you can paraphrase the story up to the dragon attack.

Ameliefor, elf woman: Guarding the camp is a 5th-level elven fighter/wizard (female) with four 1st-level imperial troops assigned to her. She is a "Wizard Militant" for the Archmage, combining arcane power with melee competence. Ameliefor will end up giving the PCs orders and assistance, so portray her as someone that the PCs will want to impress.

Regivol, human man: This assistant wizard presents an opportunity for the characters to meet a more or less typical inhabitant of the pillar. He introduces himself to the PCs and asks them about their travels and so on. While the Wizard Militant is busy with other things, Regivol is eager to chat. He is smart and carries himself with a certain degree of personal power, but he is a "school wizard." He's good at attuning ley lines, and with time he can cast some big spells, but he wouldn't make it as an adventurer. He doesn't have what it takes to prevail under harrowing conditions, to instantly decide which spell to cast, or even to cast spells reliably in the heat of battle. Regivol is especially good with detection magic, however.

Dragon Attack

Once Glaezentorg's owner has been patrolling upon the Boltstrike Pillar for a while, Zvegdar murders the recruit, takes Glaezentorg, and summons a blue dragon. The summoning spell manifests as a mighty bolt of lightning hitting the pillar.

While the PCs are still busy chatting with the NPCs below, the lightning bolt interrupts them. They can see the blue dragon circling high above them. Weird waves of semi-visible, semi-

tangible energy start pouring out of the top of the tower. The Wizard Militant runs for the entrance to the pillar as she calls for the recruits in her guard. The recruits, however, hunch in fear of the dragon and drag their feet, making excuses and "running off to get their weapons," and so on.

Ask the players what they do. You can roll initiative now, but it's probably easier to skip it. Let the players say what their characters are doing in whatever order they like. They can each do basically one thing per round.

Hitting the dragon with ranged weapons is practically impossible because of the waves of energy rippling out from the top of the pillar. Magic spells are diverted or dispersed, and projectiles wobble and go off course. If someone uses a limited-use long-ranged power, warn them that the odds are stacked against them, but roll out the attack if they want. If they hit (AC 28, PD 26, MD 22), they get a little damage through, enough to impress the NPCs but probably not affect the battle. Other than damage, no ranged effects get through.

The PCs might be able to persuade or inspire the recruits to buck up, but it will take a couple of rounds. Since the NPCs are being asked to charge into a champion-level environment, it's a champion-level check: DC 20.

Inside the pillar is a wide, winding stairway—and pandemonium. Waves of energy similar to ball lightning roll down the stairs. Assume that the average PC is canny enough to judge that the wild energy is likely to hurt them but not kill them. The whole pillar vibrates and occasionally jerks, so footing is uncertain. The assistants are in disarray, if not in a panic. Rising above the din are occasional explosive blasts, as wild ley-line energy discharges in tremendous, semi-etheric sparks.

When the PCs enter the tower, the Wizard Militant yells, "Help me get to the top." That means charging up the stone spiral stairs against cascades of arcane energy while panicked assistants are stumbling and tumbling down those same stairs. Have each player state one

way their PC is going to help Ameliefor get to the top quickly and in one piece. Then adjudicate each action, with a default DC of 20. There are any number of ways a canny PC might be able to help the Wizard Militant: a strength-based skill check to bolster her, a constitution-based check to charge in front of her and block energy waves and assistants as they come, or a charisma-based check to yell at assistants to clear the way. The more the PCs successfully help her, the quicker she gets to the top and the better shape she is in when she gets there (and therefore the happier she will be with the PCs later).

Each PC climbing the Boltstrike Pillar will take 2d6 damage from the loose energy filling the area. This energy also weakens them to the point that they are unable to keep up with the Wizard Militant. They fall back one by one. Let the *players* decide which of them fades first. They can narrate their failure, too, for added drama.

While the PCs collect themselves on the stairs, the Wizard Militant reaches the top of the pillar. By this time, storm clouds are forming over the pillar, and the Archmage's silver flame is flickering out. Rather than face the Wizard Militant, the dragon flies off with Zvegdar. The Wizard Militant and dragon exchange spell for lightning bolt, but neither can really connect through the energy flux, and the dragon flies away. The Wizard Militant uses her arcane knowledge to reduce the amount of energy flowing through the node, and the powerful waves of energy cease. The PCs can now ascend the rest of the way up safely.

With the silver flame out, crazy weather is forming up and down the ley lines. The Wizard Militant needs people to help relight the silver flame, and any PC with magical training of some sort is welcome to assist. (Ad hoc magical rituals are a staple of free-form fantasy roleplaying.) Basically, a character who participates in the ritual has to make a Wisdom check, using any background plausibly associated with aligning oneself to magical energy, with a +2 bonus if the background is

specifically arcane. Characters who fail the check (DC 20) take 1d10 damage, but at least they don't mess anything up. The ritual successfully relights the silver flame, and the weather in the area gradually returns to calm.

MISSION TO GREENSTAND

The next scene of the adventure involves another trick, where the players think they're being sent on their way, only to be called back to Boltstrike Pillar because they're needed for a real mission.

After the crisis of the dragon attack is over, things settle down at the Boltstrike Pillar. There's time for NPCs to reflect on the heroics of the PCs, if any. If the PCs hung back and didn't help, someone is sure to mention that "this never would have happened if [the PCs] hadn't been distracting the Militant at the base of the pillar when she should have been up keeping watch." Maybe not true, but hurtful. If the PCs did respond bravely and tried to help, no one will say anything like that, or if they do they'll be slapped with a mage-hand and told to shut up and join the fight next time.

It's not that likely that the PCs will immediately figure out what was going on. But the Wizard Militant can figure out what happened and tell them, especially since she can call on Regivol's detection magic to gather clues.

The Militant tells the PCs that they're not powerful enough to follow and fight a dragon this big, especially because its purpose at the pillar was to supercharge its breath weapon with stolen storm magic. So the Wizard Militant decides to send the body of Zvegdar's victim, the original bearer of Glaezentorg, back with them to Horizon or wherever you've established the bearer was from. (If you're cool with resurrection in your world, you can use Rob's trick: resurrection magic is possible but it's much easier if you can get the body to the place where the person was born.)

But while the PCs are just beginning their trip with the body, a silverflame spirit summoned by the Wizard Militant flies to them with news. The dragon made a stop in the Greenstand ruins and then flew off in another direction but without Zvegdar. The implication is that the traitor split from the dragon and is somewhere in those weird overgrown ruins. The Militant wants the PCs to come back so that she can send them after Zvegdar while she deals with the dragon.

The Wizard Militant deputizes the PCs as agents of the Archmage and sends them to Greenstand to find Zvegdar. Being deputized into the service of an icon is a big deal, personally and socially. Ask the players how their characters react. The Militant issues them each a stable rune from the first tier (level 1–3) (see Chapter 9, Treasure). Each player can choose which type of rune their character gets.

FINDING GREENSTAND

Without some special advantage, the party is going to need a week or so to find its way through the trackless wilderness to the ruins where Zvegdar is holed up. Luckily, the heroes are unique, and might well have the special something that lets the party reach Greenstand in short order. Challenge the players to think up ways that their characters might have some such advantage. Ask them to focus on their unique features and on their relationships with the icons. Each PC can try to help in one way, or maybe two ways if both ideas match the situation perfectly. This action takes place over the two to three days that it will likely take the group to find the ruins. A hero takes just one action for the overall journey, not one per day or any other schedule.

Unique feature: Occasionally, a unique feature allows a player to make a check that otherwise would be impossible. For example, a highly educated sage might remember something about Greenstand from his studies (Int skill check, DC 20). A successful check is one success.

Icon: If any of the players can invent a plausible reason why their character's icon relationships can help the party with this challenge, have those players roll for that help. Here are some starting points. The ruins used to be owned by the Lich King, so someone related

to the Lich King might know about them. The ruins interfere with the natural order in the area (High Druid, possibly Elf Queen). Servants of the Three have been secretly meeting there. A successful relationship check counts as one success. Maybe there are stone markers in the woods that point the way, but only to those who know the runes. Or perhaps the players will think of something better.

Limited power: A PC who makes a good case for it can expend a limited power to help the party. If a PC expends a limited-use power this way, it counts as one success. In the game fiction, this option might represent the hero using the power multiple times, maybe even overdoing it. Expended powers don't recharge until the next heal-up.

Skill check: Without using some special trait, a character can gain a success by making a DC 25 Wisdom skill check to find a way through the wilderness and locate the ruins. Use backgrounds such as "tracker" or "nature empath" to help with this check.

Karma

This section refers to the consequences of the players' good or bad results in trying to find Greenstand. The more successes the party scores, the faster they find the ruins: two days at the least, and seven days at the very most. The longer it takes, the more draconic scumbags and kobolds will be present, so the tougher the battles are. If the party does really well or really poorly, when you start a combat let the players know that there are fewer or more monsters than normal because of their success or failure in finding the ruins. Zvegdar can even be weaker or stronger, depending on how long the dragon blood has been "baking."

BATTLES

All manner of events might befall the PCs in their journey. If you want to try a wilderness adventure side-excursion, here's your first chance. There are plenty of monsters you could spin into the PCs' path to give them a fight before they get into the battles with Zvegdar's lackeys at Greenstand. But the top of your wilderness encounter list should be occupied by the NPC druid named Torrent.

Torrent, Druid of the Driven Wind

Torrent is a mid-level NPC, and she could be an obstacle, a diversion, or an ally, depending on the PCs' attitudes and roleplaying. By default, she is a middle-aged human woman with black hair that flows away from her body as if there is always a wind blowing past her. Torrent wants to know what caused the recent bizarre and destructive weather, more or less along the dragon's flight path away from the pillar, and she might know something about how to find the Greenstand ruins and what the PCs can expect to find there.

Torrent looks primarily human, but when seen in peripheral vision she sometimes appears to be more like a tiger. When the viewer turns, startled, they see only a regular human woman. But she definitely gives off a "tiger vibe" in general. If there's a PC with some sort of heightened senses, play this up.

Torrent's druidic specialty is related to the driven wind. Play up this characteristic openly, and try to find connections to the PCs. The driven wind relates to wanderlust, blustery force, distant sounds and smells, chaotic destruction, fresh air, and hints of mighty things to come.

She is high enough level to be able to escape 1st-level PCs if they get rambunctious, but low enough level to care what 1st-level PCs are up to. She has her own reasons for investigating the magically powerful thunderstorm and the collapse of the Archmage's node. As far as Zvegdar is concerned, she's neutral. The PCs might be able to get her help, or she might turn against them.

If there's trouble, Torrent's signature escape move is *winds of change*, where she calls up a sudden whirlwind that tumbles everyone and everything around her in a chaotic swirl. Meanwhile, the same winds lift her and carry her away. The PCs take 1d10 damage each, and everything in the area is left in disarray.

Torrent is the most free-form NPC in the adventure. She can become a friend, a

begrudging ally, a rival, or even an opponent. It all depends on how the session plays out. If a fight breaks out, use the stats for her at the end of the adventure, but she's not interested in fighting and will escape as quickly as she can (using *winds of change*). Consequences will ensue, but down the road, not for this adventure.

Torrent is associated with the High Druid and is likely opposed to the Archmage, with his wind-controlling ways. So she's not thrilled about the people living at Boltstrike Pillar, although she's even less thrilled about dragon-aided storms. She's not really interested in hunting down a renegade follower of the Archmage, but is interested in tracking the dragon to make sure it doesn't use its supercharged lightning power to cause worse storms in places it shouldn't. (Yes, if you feel like it, this could later have plot implications creating a Wizard Militant / Torrent / blue dragon triangle.)

The *best* result that the PCs can get from Torrent is a "blessing of the driven wind." If she likes them or if they prove their worth to her, she bestows this blessing on them. For each PC, the next time they deal damage with an attack, increase the total damage by +5. If the PC is dealing damage to multiple targets, split the +5 damage up as evenly as possible among them. Don't let the players know exactly what the blessing does until the next combat starts. Sensitive PCs (Wisdom skill check; DC 20 in this case because she's 4th level) might be able to sense something about what the blessing provides.

If the PCs interact with Torrent and really mess it up, invent some ad hoc vengeance she gets, such as a curse that makes them all sickened (–2 to all attacks for one combat).

THE GREENSTAND RUINS

Zvegdar, a band of draconic scumbag henchthings who serve the Three, and some kobolds are holed up in the ancient, cursed ruins called Greenstand. Normal people steer clear of these ruins because they're bad luck, as Zvegdar is about to find out. Once, the ruins were a

glorious palace of the Wizard King (now the Lich King). The palace was long ago stripped of everything but its stones, although the stone structure itself is perfectly preserved, if completely overgrown by vines and trees. The vines, tree trunks, and branches wind intricately around the stone rather than bursting through it as they usually would. The inner chambers are dark and musty, with relatively little sunlight or plant growth, but with a thick floor of detritus. Animals larger than bugs are conspicuously absent, even birds.

As an adventure site, the palace provides discrete locations for exploring or fighting, like a typical dungeon does. But it's an atypical dungeon, with trees and vines for climbing up, hiding in, hacking down, tracking through, burning, etc.

Invent a way for at least one PC to have special inside knowledge of Greenstand. It's possible that the PC investigated it years ago, or knows how to read the ancient script on the walls that will lead to secret passageways, or had a family member who died there—use whatever seems cool. This special knowledge gives the PCs some advantage in scoping out the ruins and finding Zvegdar.

It's nice foreshadowing if the PCs can use some means to learn that Zvegdar has taken magical dragon blood in an attempt to gain great personal power. They can learn that from magical clues left behind or maybe gain it from the boasting or interrogation of the scumbags or kobolds.

Zvegdar's Rabble

Zvegdar has fled to Greenstand, a strange dungeon deep in the wilds, to hook up with a group of Three-friendly outlaws. The PCs can encounter these enemies together or separately, in large groups or small. The monsters could be patrols, guards, or denizens. It's possible that some of them could be enemies of Zvegdar, or at least rivals. You know how followers of the Three like to fight each other, and Zvegdar apparently already pissed off the blue dragon. It's even possible that the PCs will parley with

some of these scumbags and get some useful information.

Draconic Scumbags: As a good intro to the basic combat rules, use 1st-level humanoid warriors in the first battle. The scumbags are humanoids of various stripes who all have (or think they have) some sort of dragon blood, dragon taint, dragon plague, mark of the dragons, or some other dragon-something. Describe them as misbegotten, misanthropic, and misaligned miscegenations with bad attitudes. To keep the combat steady (with fewer surprises), the scumbags have high hit points but deal low damage. These dragon-men start combat with a distorted draconic battle cry that strikes fear into the mortal heart. Invent details that make particular scumbags personally revolting to particular PCs, such as "And that one bears a passing resemblance to a cruel teacher in the school you escaped from."

The draconic scumbags think they're a lot tougher than they really are. They should use ambush tactics, but they act like they can take anyone head on.

Skittery Kobolds: For a good intro to the monster mook rules, the skittery kobolds are 1st-level kobold mooks. They start combat by firing one-shot crossbow contraptions, each at a random PC. If you can scare the players with a lot of kobolds, go for it. Their special ability of evasion (no damage on a miss) helps highlight the miss-damage rules. Five skittery kobolds count as one 1st-level monster.

The kobolds have a more sensible understanding of their strengths. If they can get away with it (i.e., if they're not being forced to stand in front of the scumbags as blade barriers), they're excited about the possibilities of climbing up into the vines and foliage of the ruins to shoot from cover and concealment.

Zvegdar, Agent of the Three

Zvegdar is a low-level traitor who has betrayed the Archmage to steal Glaezentorg and give access to the node to a blue dragon (in exchange, as it will turn out, for magically treated "dragon blood," a creation of the Three.)

In betraying his former allies, Zvegdar got his hands on a magic weapon named Glaezentorg the Thirsty. The blue dragon also gave him some mysterious "dragon blood" that is supposed to give him great power.

Near the climax of the adventure, the PCs should find Zvegdar and defeat or get the better of him with relative ease. But then he transforms into a monstrous dragon man and attacks with renewed effort (see below).

When Zvegdar is in his normal half-elf form, use his regular 1st-level stats. He's wielding a magic weapon, which gives him +1 to attack and damage rolls and allows him to get in an extra basic attack immediately after hitting someone (once). He also has a *dirty trick* power: once per battle, if he misses an enemy in melee, he can make a distracting maneuver against that foe as a quick action. It's an attack against Mental Defense, and it dazes the target for one round.

Glaezentorg the Thirsty

Glaezentorg is a +1 weapon (of a type predetermined by the GM) of *blood frenzy* (Once per day as a free action, make a basic melee attack with this weapon; use this ability only when you have just damaged an enemy with this weapon). Glaezentorg tends to make its wielder a little more impulsive and bloodthirsty, with a taste for raw meat.

Zvegdar will use *blood frenzy* while he is in half-elf form before he transforms.

If Zvegdar manages to hold his own in the battle for a few rounds, go ahead and have him transform then. Otherwise, the transformation occurs *after* the PCs drop Zvegdar's normal humanoid form to 0 hp (or otherwise take him out). That's the horror-movie approach that works well for creations of the Three. . . .

When Zvegdar transforms to dragon form, he uses 3rd-level stats for a double-stat (large) monster (see those stats at the end of the adventure). That's the equivalent of about 4 regular, 1st-level monsters.

Zvegdar Summary: In dragon form, Zvegdar uses his *fangs & claws & spikes* power where he deals half normal damage (for his size; it's normal damage for a medium creature), but you roll three attack dice and take the best roll.

Visually, describe it as the monster having multiple ways to attack: spikes, claws, fangs, and a tail. If dragon-Zvegdar wants to hurt you, he usually succeeds. He gets a lot of crits, which you can visualize as the monster hitting the character with two attacks, such as bite and spike. He also has one defensive ability: he can negate the effect of one attack per battle, and he chooses whether to negate the attack after the effect is known. This defensive power keeps your nasty villain around even if the PCs bring down a big hammer on it. A 3rd-level double monster is big enough to fight an entire 1st-level party. Provide some backup for Zvegdar if the PCs are especially tough or if you want to see them bleed.

The transformation into dragon form should be dramatic. Describe it as visually powerful, like a transformation in an anime movie. Add sensory details you wouldn't get in the movies though: an ungodly stench, or a gust of sticky wind that leaves a filmy residue on the skin, or something like that. To ham it up, and explain what's going on, Zvegdar can rant about the power of the dragon blood, if that's your style.

Other Loot

One of the draconic scumbags has gamblers' dice and a bag full of Drakkenhall-stamped gold coins showing the image of the blue dragon. He kept them concealed in the bottom of his pack under his dice bag and his fake purse, which only has 5 coins in it. GM, this is the moment you get to decide how generous you are: you could give the PCs enough gold to buy another rune or two and some potions, or you could be stingy and make them get by with Glaezentorg and what they received from the Wizard Militant earlier.

Zvegdar seems to have completed his treachery spontaneously, because all he's carrying is a belt-pouch containing 15 gp, mostly Horizon coins with a couple of the now-incriminating Drakkenhall coins.

Torrent, Human Druid

Roughly 4th level caster   Initiative: +9

Humanoid

Once per battle….

Close-quarters spell vs. all nearby foes

Winds of Change +9 vs. PD, 1d10 damage

   If at least one target is hit, Torrent shoots into sky and away carried by the winds faster than first level characters can deal with.

   OR

M: vs. two engaged or nearby targets

Wind Claw +9 vs. PD, 3d6 damage

AC 20

PD 14

MD 19

HP 70 (35)

Draconic Scumbag

Special: The first time the draconic scumbags act, they howl a mutant draconic battlecry in unison as a quick action.

   Targets: All nearby enemies 3rd level and below.

   +6 vs. MD, *Hit:* dazed (save ends)

1st level troop   Initiative: +3

Humanoid

Jagged Sword +6 vs. AC, 1d6 damage

AC 17

PD 15

MD 10

HP 32 (16)

Skittery Kobold

1st level mook   *Initiative*: +4

R: Tiny one-shot crossbow +5, 4 damage

   Evasive: Kobold takes no damage from missed attacks.

   Split Off: When an ally charges a creature engaging the kobold, the kobold can pop free.

AC 17

PD 15

MD 11

HP 6 (Every 6 points of damage kills a skittery kobold mook)

Zvegdar the Traitor

1st level troop   Initiative: +6

Humanoid

Glaezentorg +7, 1d10 + 1 damage

   Glaezentorg Attack: Once per battle after hitting, Glaezentorg can attack again.

   Dirty Trick: Once per battle after missing, as a free action, +6 vs. MD of target that the earlier attack missed; hit: dazed until end of Zvegdar's next turn.

AC 16

PD 12

MD 15

HP 28 (14)

Zvegdar the Dragon-Thing

3rd level **large** wrecker   *Initiative: +8*

Dragon

[[Note: once transformed, Zvegdar ignores Glaezentorg. Maybe a PC can pick it up and use it!]]

Roll 3 d20 attack dice and use the highest roll for this attack…

…Fangs & Claws & Spikes +8, 3d6 damage

   Glaezentorg Attack: Once per battle, the Dragon-Thing can entirely negate the effects of one attack against it. Choose wisely, GM, and don't telegraph that this is possible.

AC 19

PD 17

MD 13

HP 90 (45)

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