

# Masters of the Strait



## Masters of the Strait

By Phlox of [Whose Measure God Could Not Take](#)

Efficiently: this is a glog game with a Traveller-style character creation system, a presumed overland (and oversea) travel focus, and a OG glog-style advancement.

It is a hard time for honest men on the eight great islands of Alba. After generations of in-fighting and feud, the formerly exiled Lord Thornhall won battles until he lost battles, and in his desperation did the unthinkable. Taking the pope for a captive, he enforced a general peace, with himself as its jailor. Now each lord of any regional power sends speculative trade missions and colonial vessels out to the farther islands, to outdo each other in splendor and power as well as to shovel ring after ring of coins at assassins, spies, and kidnappers.

Many warriors and administrators find themselves with no legitimate outlet for their skills. Instability and corruption has made outlaws of many, and it seems that those with a ship, a blade, and total tenacity may be the only ones who can pass through the strait between capture and catastrophe.

### What is a roleplaying game?

I hope you know by now.

# Making a PC

Roll ideals— 2d6 in order for Might, Dexterity, Skill, Authority, and Wisdom. Keep the full score of each, and note the modifier. An ideal of 2 has a modifier of -2, an ideal of 3-5 is -1, an ideal of 6-8 is +0, an ideal of 9-11 is +1, and an ideal of 12 is +2. If you somehow get an ideal to 0 or less it's -3, and 15 or higher is +3.

- Add your Might mod to damage with medium and heavy weapons, and to tests of strength or hardiness
- Add your Dexterity mod to damage with light weapons, and to rolls to move quickly and confidently.
- Add your Skill mod to to-hit rolls, and to tests of proficiency and training.
- Add your Authority mod to reaction rolls with people, and to tests of policy.
- Add your Wisdom mod to reaction rolls with animals, and to tests of attentiveness.

Generate the character's history.

Buy equipment.

Note other statistics:

- Your maximum HP is 8.
- Your Armor is 10 unless you're wearing armor or carrying a shield
- Your Save is 13
- Your Score is the minimum needed to achieve your level.
- You have 20 inventory slots.

Give them a name and vibe. Personal names are usually Spanishesque, Japanesey, or Frenchish.

- Those of noble lineage (generally Authority 9+, or of the Noble type) use Englishish surnames, and primary title-holders use the name of the land they rule. Noble surnames go before personal names.
- Those of spy lineage (simply, the Woman type) tend to use Dutchlike surnames, which go after their personal names. Spy lords therefore might have an English, then Japanese, then Dutch name like "Kirbeck Kenzo Aarden"

## Generating Character History

The DM may add modifiers and custom events to reflect the recent history of the corner of Alba or beyond where the story primarily takes place. To make the PCs' histories line up, they may oblige the players to predetermine how old their characters will be so they all suffer the same realm-spanning catastrophes at the same time.

### **Starting characters and Qualify Rolls**

Your character starts at a young and bold 16 years old. They try to seek their fortune as one of the character types— Wanderer, Woman, Noble, Picaroon, Priest, Spirit, and Commoner. Each of these has some leeway for interpretation, and may prompt you to establish the existence of some non-player characters or groups. Select a type, and roll to see if the PC qualifies. Roll 2d6

+ an ideal modifier. On a success, you proceed for a term of 4 years as that character type. On a failure, you must spend that term as a Spirit or Commoner.

When a character starts their first term, they gain their first level in that type, as well as anything listed in the "Start with" entry for that type. This will include notable NPC associates. Don't worry about giving them names and traits just yet. If you randomly roll a contact, ally, rival, or enemy, you can say it's one of these NPCs or a new one you make up. If the character lives a later term as another character type, they don't gain an extra level or anything from that class's "Start with" entry.

### **Survival and Event Rolls**

The first thing you do for a character in a term is make a survival roll— 2d6 + an ideal modifier. If you fail, roll 1d6 and consult the mishap table. The PC can no longer continue as this type of character, and must try to qualify for other types in future terms, if you choose to continue generating the PC. If the PC passes their survival roll, they roll 2d6 and consult the event table, resolving its effect.

### **Advancement and Benefit Rolls**

After resolving an event, make an advancement roll, rolling 2d6 + an ideal modifier. On a success, immediately gain enough XP to advance a level in the PC's character type. (Commoners skip this roll) Pass or fail, you are then entitled to roll 1d6 for a benefit. Before rolling, decide whether you are rolling for gold or for another benefit. On the first benefit roll for each type, you must choose to roll for gold. As a treat, if the PC has the gambling talent, they make gold benefit rolls at +1.

### **End of Term**

After finishing a term, the PC is 4 years older. You may decide they are ready to play, noting down their abilities and making decisions about their associated NPCs, ex chetera. Otherwise, you may continue to roll. After the fifth term, a character gets -1 to any one ideal. After the sixth term, they get -2 to any one ideal and may not take any more terms. Remember! In play, XP needed to advance levels increases quadratically, so for example a first-level character will soon catch up to a third-level character.

### **Talents**

Over a career, a character may gain certain talents. These add +1d6 to rolls to achieve the talent. So a PC with the silence talent trying to sneak up on someone might roll 1d20, plus their dexterity modifier, plus 1d6 if silence is the operative concern.

If a character has the same talent multiple times, add a d6 for each. If multiple talents apply all if they are redundant with each other (e.g. a mechanics talent and a lockpicking talent when picking a lock) but roll separate for them if they are separate factors (e.g. a breath-holding talent and a lockpicking talent when picking a lock underwater). There is no set list of talents. The DM should be careful not to introduce any that would be super boring if a PC managed to get three times.

# Wanderer

You were trained to administrate and oversee, and if called upon to fight and kill. But masters die, wars end, disgraces come, and frost tears down towards the deepest roots.

**Qualify roll:** Mig 7+

**Start with:** 1d3 family members, 1d6 colleagues, an extra language, an all-weather cloak of the color of your choice, a *grandenor* (a katana, sabre, or falcata; and a sash sword)

**Survival roll:** Wis 6+

**Advancement roll:** Mig 6+

## Mishap:

- 1: a well-organized foe from beyond the sea drives you from your remit, slaughtering and changing the land. Gain them as an enemy.
- 2: You went into the mountains, and now you don't know what happened to you. Gain an interesting scar and an unanswered question.
- 3: another Wanderer gains your confidence, then ambushes you. You barely escape with your life. Gain them as a rival and your choice of the following talents: falling, climbing, running
- 4: Following a botched campaign, you are led far off-course. On a long return journey, gain 1d6 contacts and 1d3 enemies.
- 5: you are caught out in bad terrain and suffer from extreme exhaustion or illness. Lose 1 dexterity.
- 6: a nameless monster jumps you and leaves you for dead. Gain a severe injury from the injury table, and make an Ally of the one who nursed you back to health.

## Event:

- 2: roll on the mishap table, but you may continue as this character type.
- 3: the lord of a borderland holding attempts to expand into the territory of an ancient spirit. Challenge them, and gain them as a rival. Aid them, and gain the spirit's children as a rival.
- 4: while hunting a dangerous predator, you come face to face with it when unprepared. Roll Wis 7+ to gain animal handling as a talent. On a failure, roll on the injury table.
- 5: strange spirits hire you to escort them through the realm. Gain gesture or law as a talent, or gain an extra language.
- 6: you are ambushed by men of no account. Roll Mig 8+ to drive them off, and on a failure lose your benefit roll for this term. Either way, make a contact of a person or group they also attacked.
- 7: Roll on life event table.
- 8: spend months at a time wandering lonely roads. Make a contact of someone who helped you survive.
- 9: Someone deeply wrongs you, and it takes a long time to find them and win reveng. Gain one of the following as a talent: riding, tracking, streetwise.
- 10: in quiet contemplation, you gain insight. Gain the friendship of a particular kind of animal, and add them as an ally.
- 11: Rough life suits you. Test Wis 7+ to increase your Might, Skill, or Dexterity by 1.

**12:** a patron recognizes your skills. Gain them as an ally and get +2 to your next benefit roll.

### Benefits

- 1: 200 gp or *magic rope*
- 2: 200 gp or tracking talent
- 3: 300 gp or riding talent
- 4: 300 gp or +1 Ski
- 5: 500 gp or +1 Wis
- 6: 500 gp or +1 *sash sword*
- 7+: 500 gp or 4 HD animal companion

### Templates

- A:** Sword-Drawing Art, Scholasticism
- B:** Ambidextrous
- C:** Far-Ranging
- D:** Cavalière

**Sword-Drawing Art:** as the first round of combat begins, you may declare that you have already drawn your weapon and attacked. Be careful how you use this when surprised or unsure.

**Scholasticism:** you have a 2-in-6 chance of knowing two facts (weaknesses, behaviors, desires, exc.) of the DM's choice about any type of creature you encounter. +1-in-6 chance for each additional template in Wanderer you possess. You can always tell what the weather is going to look like in the next 24 hours.

**Ambidextrous:** you are skilled at multitasking, and your hands can take separate actions, such as swinging a sword while using reins, or climbing while waving a wand, without penalty. If used to attack with two weapons in concert (such as your *grandenor*) make one attack roll using the best effects of both weapons (e.g. rolling the better damage die) and reroll all 1s for damage.

**Far-Ranging:** you can scavenge enough to keep yourself fed in any environment, and if you take an overland Turn to search have a 6-in-6 chance of finding hidden routes. At home in the wilderness and all that implies.

**Cavalière:** if you forge a connection with a creature of animal intelligence, it can serve as your hireling with the relative operational efficiency of a human; immune to Morale tests for animal fears like fire or loud noises, the ability to communicate as well as two humans who don't share a language, certainty that they won't mess things up if left alone. If the creature can serve as a mount, you can ride them without penalty for strangeness or lack of training, and can mount or dismount them once a turn in addition to normal actions as long as only one of you moves much that turn.

## Woman

You know how to attend to those in power. Spy families, who for historical reasons call themselves "revolts", cultivate nouveau riche ethics and clientele from among the true nobility, and they always have need for more agents.

Note: the Woman character type refers to a common euphemism for a spy. It is not restricted to female characters. Indeed, another term for a professional spy is a Man From Ningun.

**Qualify roll:** Dex 6+

**Start with:** 1d3 close relatives, 1d6 distant relatives, an employer clan, two extra languages, indistinct clothing.

**Survival roll:** Dex 7+

**Advancement roll:** Ski 5+

### Mishap:

- 1: you make the smallest mistake. Gain a severe injury from the injury table.
- 2: after you are caught, your captors offer clemency in exchange for information. If you accept, gain your old employers as an enemy and disguise or a civilian profession as a talent. If you refuse, wait 1d6 years until a prisoner exchange frees you.
- 3: your identity is revealed and you become a burned asset. Roll Aut 7+ to be discharged with honor and roll on the benefit table for this term.
- 4: you learn of a conspiracy to enrich a corrupt lord. Look the other way to gain nothing, or choose to oppose them. If you do, gain them as an enemy and one of the following as a talent: accounting, playing dead, or eavesdropping.
- 5: Someone sends a message. One of your allies, contacts, or family members is severely injured.
- 6: you narrowly escape a mission gone wrong, but not unscathed. Roll on the injury table.

### Event:

- 2: roll on the mishap table, but you may continue as this character type.
- 3: you and an opposed Woman play a long game of cat and mouse. Test Dex 8+. On a success, gain one of the following as a talent: stillness, trapmaking, or poison resistance. On a failure, roll a mishap and you are unable to advance as a Woman.
- 4: while on a mission, you find the opportunity to steal a treasure from your target. If you turn it over to your employers, you get nothing. If you keep it, get +2 to your next benefit roll.
- 5: you trade favors and gain leverage. Gain 1d3 contacts.
- 6: you participate in an elaborate operation. Roll Dex 8+ or Ski 8+. On a success, gain one of the following as a talent: mechanisms, cart-driving, flexibility, or pickpocketing.
- 7: Roll on life event table.
- 8: you undertake a long mission of deep disguise. Test Ski 8+. On a success, gain one of the following as a talent: etiquette, military science, or religious canon. On a failure, roll a mishap but you can still continue as a Woman.

**9:** you perform a mission so perfectly, rumors circulate that it was achieved by magic. Get +2 to your next advancement roll.

**10:** Enemies raid your stronghold or hideout, but you manage to slip away unharmed. Gain silence as a talent.

**11:** a mission takes you beyond the boundary of the mortal world, and you confront spirits and demons. Get +4 to your next advancement roll or gain an extra language or one of the following as a talent: ritualism, fairylore, or refined palate.

**12:** Your superior suffers an accident at a critical moment. Automatically succeed on your next advancement roll.

## Templates

**A:** Silence, Incapacitation

**B:** Ransack

**C:** Trade Tools

**D:** Attack of Opportunity

**Silence:** you gain silence as a talent.

**Incapacitation:** when grappling, you can attack with medium weapons and move away unless pinned. While in control of a grapple, your opponent can't speak.

**Ransack:** when taking an exploration Turn to search a piece of furniture or 20' area, you have a 6-in-6 chance to determine if there are any triggers or hidden spaces, and can assess the value of anything you find at a glance, as well as any failsafes or traps meant to destroy something before it falls into your hands.

**Trade Tools:** you can go to underground outfitters to purchase trade tools— objects that serve a normal function but can be used as a specific weapon or clandestine second item such climbing gear, lockpicks, or earhorn. They cost as much as both items combined, but only weigh as much as the apparent object (within reason). You can spend starting gold on Trade Tools.

**Attack of Opportunity:** when someone moves away from you and doesn't take an action to disengage carefully, you may make a free attack against them.

## Benefits

**1:** None or pickpocket talent

**2:** None or disguise talent

**3:** 100 GP or climb talent

**4:** 100 GP or +1 Aut

**5:** 500 GP or +1 Dex

**6:** 1,000 GP or +1 *dagger*

**7+:** 1,000 GP or never be surprised

## Noble

The greatest rulers, cruel or kind, know how to drape themselves in power. They understand that the raiments of authority defend them better than the shield, that the glory of the vanguard

vanquishes more than the foes of a single day, and that those who suffer deepest are highest-crowned.

**Qualify roll:** Aut 9+. Automatically qualify with Auth 10 or more

**Start with:** an elder with a lordship you wait in line for, and 1d4-1 people in line before you. 1d6 long-serving retainers to your house. 1d2-1 servants, handmaids, or valets who would never betray you; a sash sword, fine clothes, and a signet ring. If none of these people are your rival or enemy by the end of character creation, make a relative into a rival or a courtier into an enemy.

**Survival roll:** Mig 7+

**Advancement roll:** Aut 5+

### **Mishap:**

**1:** injured riding a horse, while inspecting a construction project, hunting, or in practice. Roll on the injury table.

**2:** scandal or slander forces you out of your position. Lose 1 Aut.

**3:** your family's seat of power is betrayed by treachery, or a rival in your family launches a coup. Roll Dex 7+ or Wis 7+. On a failure, roll on the injury table.

**4:** You are sent away on a fool's errand due to an ambitious princeling. Gain them as a rival and either law or military science as a talent.

**5:** an assassin comes for you. Test Mig 8+ or roll on the injury table.

**6:** you fall out of favor. Gain a contact in the nobility, and gain innuendo as a talent.

### **Event:**

**2:** roll on the mishap table, but you may continue as this character type.

**3:** You are challenged to a duel, or outraged to the point of challenging someone else. Backing out would lose you 1 Aut. If you go through with it, test Mig+[level] 9+. On a failure, roll on the injury table and lose 1 Aut. On success, gain 1 Aut. Gain dueling as a talent

**4:** you spend time learning from an ancient ally in a far-off land. Gain an extra language.

**5:** you are given an object that belonged to an important figure in your family line. Get +1 to your next benefit roll.

**6:** you are invited into a secret conspiracy. If you refuse, gain them as an enemy. If you accept, test Aut 8+. On a failure, roll a mishap and you cannot continue as a Noble. On a success, gain one of the following as a talent: gambling, tactics, or sneak attacks.

**7:** Roll on life event table.

**8:** your star rises, and others notice. Gain a rival and one of the following as a talent: riding, history, or administration.

**9:** you are trusted with a minor office. Gain an unhappy subject or subordinate as an enemy, and +2 to your next advancement roll.

**10:** war comes and you lead soldiers in battle or ensure there is a home for them to come back to. Gain a rival and an ally, and one of the following as a talent: logistics, appraisal, or geography.

**11:** you forge a deep friendship with a peer. Gain them as an ally, and owe them a favor. Gain carousing as a talent or +2 to your next advancement roll thanks to their help.

**12:** you are in the right place at the right time. Automatically succeed on your next advancement roll.

### **Benefits**

- 1:** 100 GP or singing talent
- 2:** 100 GP or history talent
- 3:** 500 GP or +1 Mig
- 4:** 500 GP or +1 Aut
- 5:** 1,000 GP or squire
- 6:** 1,000 GP or +1 *family weapon*
- 7+:** 2,000 GP or +1 Aut, squire

### **Templates**

- A:** Smite, Heraldry
- B:** Command
- C:** Inspiring Example
- D:** Godchild

**Smite:** if a creature attacks you, the next time you damage them, deal an additional +1d6 damage.

**Heraldry:** you gain heraldry as a talent.

**Command:** when not in immediate conflict, you can issue a demand for some kind of accommodation or favor and it will be received favorably, met according to what the target thinks is reasonable. You can use this ability only up to [template] times on the same target (undifferentiated squads and staffs count as the same target) before they sneer at your impetuosity.

**Inspiring Example:** when allies, retainers, or hirelings are doing the same thing as you (attacking the same kind of foe with the same weapon, braving the save treacherous swamps, exc.) they get +2 to their roll. Followers never fail Morale rolls when following your example.

**Godchild:** A supernatural patron calls you their champion. You can only be permanently killed by a sword or a dragon (which some consider to be the equal and opposite of a sword.) Poison that would kill you instead deeply curses you.

## **Picaroon**

There are many robbers on the open sea. Few attain the art of true freedom, the flexibility to chase their name and their destiny. Many of this fellowship find their way to spells and charms, and in some inland circles it is said that all pirates are witches.

**Qualify roll:** Ski 7+

**Start with:** 1d6 relatives, 1d6 colleagues of the same class and station as you, a weapon of your choice, a stylish and practical outfit.

**Survival roll:** Ski 5+

**Advancement roll:** Dex 7+

**Mishap:**

- 1: you win a fight, at a cost. Roll on the injury table.
- 2: a small conspiracy of influential figures work together to ruin your life for selfish and personal reasons, and you spend 1d3 years slowly getting your revenge. Lose all benefits you've rolled as a Picaroon, and gain one enemy— the last name on your list.
- 3: sudden upheaval destroys your connection with your people. Gain riding or scavenging as a talent.
- 4: your home is destroyed by an army. Gain them as a rival and lose 1d3 relatives.
- 5: those in power decide there is no need for people of your talents and buy you out. You may gain a gold benefit roll for this term or automatically qualify for the Wanderer character type.
- 6: you glimpse a power beyond imagining or some spiritual horror, and find you can no longer exalt in your own potential. No one understands what you mean when you tell them.

**Event:**

- 2: roll on the mishap table, but you may continue as this character type.
- 3: you are invited to share in a forbidden fighting technique. Roll Ski 8+. On a success, gain 1 Wis. On a failure, lose 1 Wis.
- 4: you enjoy local celebrity. Gain a contact or one of the following as a talent: dancing, stewardship, or carousing.
- 5: adventure places opportunity in your path. Get +1 to your next benefit roll.
- 6: a mentor accepts you as a student. Gain them as an ally, and get +2 to your next advancement roll.
- 7: Roll on life event table.
- 8: you are asked to join in a struggle against a local power. If you join with the upstarts, gain an enemy and roll Dex 8+. On a success, gain a contact and get leaping, inspiration, or political science as a talent. On a failure, roll on the injury table and get escape artistry, wound treatment, or lock-picking as a talent.
- 9: you tour the land, exhibiting your skills. Gain 1d3 contacts.
- 10: something belonging to you is stolen, and it's a lot of blood and sweat before you get it back. Add rumor-mongering, tailing, or waiting as a talent.
- 11: you lead a charmed life. Roll a strange event on the life event table.
- 12: innovate and create a signature technique. Name it and automatically succeed on your next advancement roll.

**Benefits**

- 1: 20 GP or your choice of armor
- 2: 50 GP or breaking talent
- 3: 50 GP or tumbling talent
- 4: 100 GP or +1 Mig
- 5: 200 GP or +1 *weapon*
- 6: 300 GP or +2 Aut
- 7+: 400 GP or when an adjacent ally is attacked, you may make a Skill roll to grab some carried object from the attacker

## Templates

**A:** Panache, Sailor

**B:** Technique

**C:** Technique, Confident footing

**D:** Technique, Fleet

**Panache:** your hands, feet, knees, elbows, and forehead are weapons that deal 1d4 damage. You may make an extra attack or grapple per combat round. You get +1 to hit with all attacks.

**Sailor:** gain sailing as a talent.

**Technique:** Pick one from the following list. You cannot pick the same technique twice:

- Angel Blood: +1 MD and learn one spell. Poison burns you.
- Demon Blood: +1 MD and learn one spell. Sanctified objects burn you.
- Dragon Blood: +1 MD and learn one spell. Gold burns you.
- Cleave: +1 to hit, and when you lay a foe low, you may immediately attack another enemy.
- Precision: +1 to hit, and you get a critical hit on a 19 or 20.
- Quick Draw: +1 to hit, and when you roll initiative you may make an immediate attack.
- Parry: +1 to hit, and you may forgo an attack on your next turn to reduce an incoming melee attack's damage by 1d8.
- Juggling: +1 to hit, and you can catch an incoming missile with a free hand by making an attack roll and beating 14.
- Breathstealing: +1 to hit, and when you lay a foe low you regain 1d4 HP.
- In Measure: +1 to hit, and you get +3 to saves vs the last target you've struck.
- Sea Legs: +1 to hit, and reduce all weapon damage against you by 1.
- Fort Mayne: +1 to hit, and the minimum amount of damage you do is 2.

Spellcasting Picaroons can't cast from scrolls and can't gain bonus MD from magic items. They can only cast spells that enhance their capabilities— making a rock glow is impossible for them, but growing eyes that see in the dark is possible.

**Confident Footing:** You can run 10' up a wall or 30' along a wall.

**Fleet:** you can move up to double your normal move speed in combat, for up to a full exploration Turn.

## Priest

Never meet your heroes.

**Qualify roll:** Wis 8+

**Start with:** 1d6 relatives or those who see you as family, the friendship of a specific wild animal, an old or secret language, two other extra languages, parchment, ink, a quill, blotting paper, three empty vials, colorful robes.

**Survival roll:** Aut 5+

**Advancement roll:** Wis 7+

### **Mishap:**

- 1:** unseen creatures batter and strike you, and give your astral self a wedgie. Roll a severe injury on the injury table as you feel that some spiritual remit that had been yours is revoked.
- 2:** you become lost in study, your mind wandering far and long. Age 1d20 years, and reduce Mig or Dex by 1.
- 3:** despite your efforts, a black day comes. Test Wis 8+. If you succeed, you have fulfilled a great destiny and closed a chapter of your life. Make a benefit roll for this term. If you fail, there is no one left to blame you.
- 4:** you are blamed for an arcane mishap. If in your heart, you see a thread of destiny that leads from your previous actions to this disaster, gain warning as a talent. If you are blameless, gain the figure or group who most directly caused the mishap as an enemy, but keep your benefit roll from this term.
- 5:** in the councils of the wise, another Priest checks your ambition. Gain them as a rival.
- 6:** On a journey through a land on no map, you suffer a physical injury from a spiritual threat. Roll on the injury table.

### **Event:**

- 2:** roll on the mishap table, but you may continue as this character type.
- 3:** you have the chance to perform an austere and cruel experiment. If you choose to do so, gain an extra benefit roll, 1d3 enemies, and one of the following as a talent: apothecary, demonlore, or psychology.
- 4:** you work tirelessly and in secret. Gain one of the following as a talent: history, heraldry, geography.
- 5:** you win a boon after doing a favor for a powerful figure. Gain +1 to your next benefit roll.
- 6:** you study hoarded lore. Roll Wis 8+ to gain one of the following as a talent: biology, the trivium, alchemy, engineering, sociology, or spiritlore.
- 7:** Roll on life event table.
- 8:** after glimpsing a vision of future events, you must decide whether to act on it. If you choose to do so, roll Ski 8+. On a success, get +2 to your next benefit roll, gain an enemy, and gain one of the following as a talent: gambling, riding, or military science. If you fail, gain an enemy and lose your next benefit roll.
- 9:** you perfect a remarkable spell. Gain +2 to your next advancement roll.
- 10:** Politics and short-sighted policies intrude on your goals. Gain one of the following as a talent: administration, quick exits, or disguise.
- 11:** a supernatural mentor takes an interest in you, becoming an ally. Either gain an extra language or get +4 to your next advancement roll.
- 12:** you are counted wise. Automatically succeed at your next advancement roll.

### **Benefits**

- 1:** 50 GP or extra language
- 2:** 100 GP or library science talent
- 3:** 200 GP or +1 Wis
- 4:** 300 GP or +1 Aut
- 5:** 400 GP or *arcane object* containing 1 MD/day

**6:** 600 GP or *hat* that serves as a +1 shield  
**7+:** 1,000 GP or hear whenever your name is spoken

### Templates

**A:** Lore, +1 MD.  
**B:** Mind Palace, +1 MD.  
**C:** Insight, +1 MD.  
**D:** Revelation, +1 MD.

**Lore:** you have a 2-in-6 chance of knowing two facts (powers, events, associated personages, exc.) of the DM's choice about any obviously magical feature or major landmark you encounter. +1-in-6 chance for each additional template in Priest you possess. You know three spells, and can study to learn more. What would be coolest would be if you and the DM came up with them together, but if you're short on time steal them from a list somewhere.

**Mind Palace:** you get +3 to saves that affect your mind, such as charms, fear spells, or madneses. "Wizard folly" effects bypass this ability.

**Insight:** you see magic, hear the air displaced by invisible things, feel scrying eyes as heat, and taste words from someone whose words are not their own.

**Revelation:** gain a new talent. Work with the DM to invent one.

## Spirit

The word we use for all outside civilization, but not outside its protection. Spirits form part of the traditional apparatus, the papal family, the informal stewardship of untended lands, and the hosts beyond the nearest isles. Some humans attain the status of spirit by adoption, by strangifaction, or by purification. This character type is appropriate for human-like spirits and spirit-like humans. Work with your DM if you want to be more enfreaked.

**Qualify roll:** automatic

**Start with:** 2d4 relatives, 1d3 points of contact with broader society, 1d3 targets of a grudge, 1d2 extra languages, old-fashioned clothing.

**Survival roll:** Ski 4+

**Advancement roll:** Wis 8+

### Mishap:

**1:** roll a severe injury on the injury table.

**2:** roll an injury on the injury table.

**3:** human agents of a borderland authority single you out as a problem. Gain them as an enemy.

**4:** a life-threatening illness reduces your Mig by 1.

**5:** you are betrayed by a friend. A contact, ally, or relative becomes a rival or enemy.

**6:** you are sent out on a pointless or impossible mission, either as a rite of passage or an excuse to be rid of you.

### Event:

- 2: roll on the mishap table, but you may continue as this character type.
- 3: an elder offers you tutelage and purpose. If you accept, get +4 to your next qualification roll, but owe that elder a favor.
- 4: in your element, you develop your abilities. Gain survivalism, craft, or history as a talent.
- 5: you find a long-forgotten treasure. Gain +1 to your next benefit roll.
- 6: where few men go, there strange things are. Roll an unusual event on the life event table.
- 7: Roll on life event table.
- 8: you are raided by an adversary. Gain an enemy if you didn't have one already, and test either Mig 8+ or Dex 8+. On a failure, roll on the injury table.
- 9: conflict comes to your people. You may volunteer to help defend them. If you do, roll 1d6. On a 1 or 2, roll on the injury table. On a 5 or 6, get +4 to your next benefit roll.
- 10: you have a close encounter with a spirit. Gain one of the following as a talent: fairylore, apothecary, or survivalism.
- 11: it is a quiet life. If you continue after this term, roll your next term as a commoner.
- 12: in adversity you are set apart. Automatically succeed on your next advancement roll.

### Benefits

- 1: None or singing talent
- 2: None or extra language
- 3: 10 GP or Contact
- 4: 20 GP or Ally
- 5: 30 GP or +1 Ski
- 6: 40 GP or +1 Mig
- 7+: 80 GP or +1 *Weapon*

### Templates

- A: Stranger, +1 Custom
- B: Favored Terrain
- C: +1 Custom
- D: Grudge

**Stranger:** outside of the narrow bounds of your home, you are considered a foreign potentate. Though many may distrust you, you are afforded a great deal of leeway. Most humans cannot discern how dangerous, canny, or serious you are.

**Custom:** each people that serves as a source of Spirit-type characters has three Customs, folkways that distinguish them from the yokels of broader civilization. Any given Spirit from among that group of people will probably only have one or two. Examples include:

1. Amphibious: breath air and water equally well
2. Architects: break through stone as if it were wood
3. Castes: immune to magical charms.
4. Breath Watchers: can see air currents. 4-in-6 chance to notice seams of secret doors
5. Craftsmen: create magic items with enough time and resources
6. Dreamers: never surprised by random encounters

7. Elden: multiply length of terms and lifespan by any number. [template]-in-20 chance of having personally known historical figure from your lifetime prior to 50 years ago.
8. Grumblers: immune to fatigue from misery
9. Hopeful: +1 to saves
10. Koscheis: keep your soul in a talisman or vessel that gives you +2 HP as long as it's on your person
11. Joyful Choirs: immune to paralysis
12. Light-footed: when convenient, act as though you only weigh 30 pounds
13. Night Stalkers: see well in starlight and live nocturnally without penalty
14. Partisans: daggers score a critical hit on an 18-20
15. Saddle-born: may fire a bow while riding or running at full speed
16. Sulfurous: immune to inhaled poisons
17. Tomb Builders: [you can hear the difference between a dark room which is silent and a dark room in which someone is not making a sound](#)
18. Travellers: gain two extra languages
19. Troglodytes: immune to fatigue from discomfort
20. Vampires: may consume sugar or fresh blood in place of water

**Favored Terrain:** designate a terrain type, such as forest, underground, pastoral, Hell, exc. You never get lost in such terrain, automatically detect hidden routes, and are at home there and all it implies.

**Grudge:** take half weapon damage and make an extra attack against those who have directly harmed you, against those who have a feud against you, and against the targets of your starting grudges

## Commoner

You farm or shepherd, or perhaps sell or weave.

**Qualify roll:** automatic

**Start with:** 1d6 relatives, 1 local leader or lord, an implement of your profession, simple attire and a wide-brimmed hat

**Survival roll:** Ski 3+

**Advancement roll:** none

### Mishap:

**1:** injured, perhaps kicked by a horse or trampled by a plow. Roll on the injury table.

**2:** a local strongman harasses and drives you off.

**3:** hard times see you marginalized. Lose 1 Aut.

**4:** local powers struggle for control of your area. Cooperate with the newcomers and get +2 to your next qualification roll as a reward. Stick to the established leadership and gain them as an ally.

**5:** an uprising throws your life into chaos. Test Wis 8+. On a success, gain one of the following as a talent: endurance, scavenging, or jury-rigging.

**6:** a member of your community despises and sabotages you. Gain them as a rival.

**Event:**

**2:** roll on the mishap table, but you may continue as this character type.

**3:** upheaval! You are caught up in the revolution. Gain one of the following as a talent: trap-making, streetwise, law, or explosives. Roll Ski 8+. If you succeed, you're on the winning side, and get +2 to your next advancement or qualification roll. If you fail, get -2 to your next survival roll.

**4:** you get from place to place. Gain one of the following as a talent: riding, cartering, boating, or geography.

**5:** you manage to scrimp and save. Gain +1 to your next benefit roll.

**6:** by rushlight, you read and study for a better life. Test Wis 8+ to gain an extra language, or one of the following as a talent: mathematics, engineering, or heraldry.

**7:** Roll on life event table.

**8:** Roll on life event table.

**9:** you learn someone's dark secret. If you choose to exploit it, gain +1 to your next benefit roll and a criminal contact. If you choose not to, gain nothing.

**10:** you are noticed for your cunning or strength. Gain +2 to your next advancement check.

**11:** you help a strange traveler through hard times, and learn from them. Gain one of the following as a talent: pickpocket, gesture, folklore, or singing.

**12:** your friend becomes someone of renown. Gain an ally, and either the talent etiquette or +4 to your next advancement roll in another character type.

**Benefits**

**1:** 10 GP or extra language

**2:** 50 GP or contact

**3:** 100 GP or labor talent

**4:** 100 GP or finance talent

**5:** 100 GP or +1 Ski

**6:** 500 GP or +1 Aut

**7+:** 1000 GP or you may make yourself the least prominent member of any group

**Templates**

None.

## Life event table

- 2: Sickness or injury. Roll on the injury table.
- 3: Birth or death. Someone close to the PC dies, or the PC becomes a parent, godparent, or similar.
- 4: Ending of relationship. The PC's romantic partnership explodes, or their beloved is killed, forced far away, or kidnapped.
- 5: Improved relationship. The PC's romantic relationship deepens, leading to marriage, years of unacknowledged mutual pining, an illicit affair, ex chetera.
- 6: New relationship. The PC begins a romantic relationship, either dating in the modern fashion, courting, questing in their beloved's name, or some other love-tie.
- 7: New contact. The PC gains a contact.
- 8: Betrayal. A contact, ally, or family member becomes a rival or an enemy.
- 9: Travel. +2 to next qualification roll.
- 10: Windfall. +2 to next benefit roll.
- 11: Crime: The PC is punished by an authority, or targeted by an unscrupulous scheme. They lose 1 Aut and skip their next benefit roll.
- 12: Unusual event. Roll 1d6:
  - 1: Occult heritage awakens. Describe the stressful or traumatic event that led to the awakening, then gain 1 MD.
  - 2: Lived among spirits. Gain a contact from among them and an extra language.
  - 3: Wondrous Item. A magic object of unknown capabilities finds its way to the PC. Describe what it looks like and the DM will determine its function.
  - 4: Stolen memory. Something happened to the PC that they don't recall. They gain the DM's choice of the following as a talent: swimming, memorization, interrogation, engineering, pain tolerance, heat resistance.
  - 5: Friends in high places. Gain a contact from among a royal court, the high-status clergy, or similar.
  - 6: True prophecy. A seer or an ancient scroll imparted a warning to you, some fact that will definitely, absolutely come to pass.

## Injury Table

- 1: Nearly killed! Reduce one of Ski, Dex, and Mig by 1d6, and the other two by 2.
- 2: Deeply wounded! Reduce Ski, Dex, or Mig by 1d6.
- 3: Dismembered! Lose an eye or limb, and reduce Dex or Mig by 2.
- 4: Deeply injured. Reduce Ski, Dex, or Mig by 2.
- 5: Injured. Reduce Ski, Dex, or Mig by 1.
- 6: Interesting scar. +1 reaction with barbarians, sailors, and others who find scars cool.

### Healing Injuries

Injuries can be partially compensated for by healing, magical poultices, and the intercession of spirits. If a PC wishes, the penalty from an injury can be halved (rounded up), but for each point

of loss of an ideal prevented, they owe a debt of 5,000 gp. This is usually not a crass bill but a debt of gratitude, the amount needed to repay those who helped the PC and thus prove that they can stand on their own two feet or that the expenditure of rare resources to heal them was worth it. Good works can reduce this debt just as well as payments.

## Languages

Each character starts with one. They are assumed to be able to read text in their languages within 100 miles of their home fluently, within 500 miles of their home with difficulty, and anything beyond that with a successful Heraldry test. Priests are an exception to this, being women of letters. If a character spends an overland Turn studying a local language, they may save, -1 for each language known, to get a +2-in-6 chance of understanding speech in that language.

- **Jerga**, a language born on the northmost island of Alba, and spoken also by forest-dwelling spirits and creatures.
- **Hato**, a language spoken in the west-central islands of Alba, and the most common speech of sailors.
- **Bavarder**, a language spoken in the east-central islands of Alba, and favored by miners and spirits of the mountains.
- **Tsusho**, a language of signs. Spoken with full-body movement and hand gestures, it is employed by traders and military envoys, and its spread is subsidized as a public good.
- **Donamente**, the scribal language found in temple records and spoken by the imperial family. Said to be the original language, children raised with no other tongue learn Donamente intuitively.
- **Mundeco**, a language with no formal written form. Originating outside Alba, it is said to have been a collaboration between a spirit and a human scholar, and in ancient days it was spread by conquest.
- **Ga**, the first written language of Alba. Resists being erased. Poetic and roundabout, it is difficult to understand in fragments, relying on the synthesis of an entire passage to relate a complete thought.
- **Wan Wan**, the dog tongue. Simple and straightforward, it is difficult to lie in Wan Wan. A derided speech, many speakers only use it among close friends.
- **Chat**, the cat tongue. Rough and full of dysphemism, it is favored for gossip and challenge.
- **Hohokekyo**, the bird tongue. Loved by sorcerers and other epistolary addicts.
- **Shu**, the snake tongue. Every message laden with a double meaning. It's a mystery who keeps teaching this to people, and if your character starts play knowing it, the person who taught them never said where they learned it from.
- **Skelteren**, the crab language. Roundabout. There is a sense of comity between all speakers of Skelteren, but swimming things seem to despise them, and to carry a speaker of Skelteren on a ship is considered a desperate thing.

# Equipment

Much. Use normal equipment tables for miscellaneous gear, but have a lot of it to pore over because that's fun. In general, some light objects can be bundled into the same inventory slot. You don't need to carry each sheet of paper in a separate slot, for example. But this game generously gives you 20 inventory slots, so the DM can afford to be miserly and disallow mixed bundles of disparate objects in the same slot.

Worn clothing, jewelry, packs, and the like don't take up inventory slots unless they are magical, in which case their burden exceeds their apparent weight. Therefore you can tell if a ring is magical by putting it on.

## Armor

- Helmets (20 gp) confer AC 12.
- Chest armor (20 gp), if worn with a helmet, confer AC 14.
- Arm- and leg-covering armor (20 gp), if worn with chest armor confers AC 12, or if worn with chest armor and a helmet gives AC 16.
- Shields (30 gp) give +1 AC. You can shatter a shield you're wielding to reduce the damage of an incoming blow by 1d10.

## Weapons

Light weapons take up one slot, medium weapons take up two, heavy weapons three.

- Axe (10 gp, medium) 1d6 damage, -2 to saves from inflicted ToC rolls.
- Bow (40 gp, medium) 1d8 damage, 150'
- Club (0 gp, medium) 1d6 damage
- Crossbow (50 gp, medium) 1d6 damage, 180', +2 to-hit chest armor, no Mig bonus to damage.
- Cutlass (10 gp, medium) 1d8. The first time it would be damaged, it gets a superfluous dent instead.
- Falcata (20 gp, medium) held in both hands, also counts as a shield
- Field Sword (15 gp, heavy) 1d10 damage
- Glaive (15 gp, heavy) 1d8 damage, +2 vs charging foes, can reach over an ally
- Hammer (7 gp, medium) 1d6 damage, +2 to-hit helmets
- Katana (20 gp, medium) held in both hands, also counts as a shield
- Lance (20 gp, heavy) 1d8 damage, attack during the ranged phase, those you don't hit get +2 to grapple you
- Matchlock Pistol (40 gp, medium) 2d6 damage, 30', takes a minute to reload, smoky, cannot fire in rain
- Matchlock Rifle (60 gp, heavy) 2d8 damage, 90', takes a minute to reload, smoky, cannot fire in rain

- Sabre (20 gp, medium) held in both hands, also counts as a shield
- Sash Sword (10 gp, light) 1d6 damage
- Staff (1 gp, medium) 1d6 damage, -2 to Might rolls to initiate a grapple with you
- Torch (1 gp, light) 1d4 damage
- Weighted Chain (8 gp, medium) 1d6 damage, +2 to-hit shields and bypass shield-shattering

## Levels and Score

The point of playing RPGs is to get the highest score possible. A character gets points when they get a cut of the treasure recovered from an adventure— that is, a hazardous episode. 1 gold coin = 1 point added to that character's lifetime score. They also get points added when they get some kind of power-up or extra life (750), gain citizenship by trial or undergo a dangerous rite of passage (1000), become king (2000) or other things which feel to the DM like they absolutely must contribute to a PC's score. Further, carousing and rare experiences can add XP in exchange for expenditures of gold according to what the DM thinks is appropriate for their milieu and campaign theme. Upon reaching certain score thresholds, a character levels up, gaining a new template (up to 4).

Level	Score Needed	Templates	Max HP
1	0	1	8
2	2,000	2	8
3	4,000	3	8
4	8,000	4	8
5	16,000	4	10
6	32,000	4	11
7	64,000	4	12
8	120,000	4	13

9	240,000	4	14
10	360,000	4	15
11	480,000	5	16
12	600,000	6	17
13	720,000	7	18
14	840,000	8	20

In addition to gaining power through leveling up, characters are encouraged to train, study, and undertake [quests for power](#). If their PCs inquire about good mentors and technique-havers willing to teach for coin and find there are none in a reasonable area, they get to help the DM make a d6 table of NPCs and the abilities they have the potential to teach.

## Combat

There is no initiative. Instead, combat rounds happen in phases. If someone is surprised, they miss a round of combat. Generally, a character can make an attack OR grapple OR cast a spell, and also move up to 30 feet OR do some other maneuver. If two events in the same phase need to happen at different times, compare the dexterity scores of the competing characters.

## Phases

1. Morale checks. Most people have Morale 7 and most animals have Morale 5.
2. Ranged attacks
3. Maneuvers (positioning, drawing or dropping, exc.)
4. Melee attacks
5. Wrestling
6. Running (including charges)
7. Spellcasting

To make an attack, roll and add any to-hit bonuses, including any Skill modifier. If it equals or exceeds the target's AC, they are hit. Deal damage (modified by Might or Dexterity), and if reduced to 0 or less HP, they must roll on the Table of Consequences, adding +1 for each previous roll they have made since they were last at full health.

## d6 Table of Consequences

- 1: Minor Wound. Either see your weapon shattered, or gain 1 fatigue.
- 2: Major Wound. Elect to go unconscious, or make a **save**. If you fail the roll, lose an extremity or feature (d6): 1. foot, 2. 1d4 fingers, 3. hand, 4. leg, 5. ear, 6. eye.
- 3: Unconscious. After receiving medical attention, make a **save** to wake up. On a failure, wake in 24 hours. Further damage while unconscious kills you.
- 4: Dying, Conscious. At the end of any turn in which you attack or make a **save**, **save** or perish. You will bleed out in five minutes unless someone else can stabilize you. After receiving medical attention, make a single save. You only get one chance.
- 5: Dying, Unconscious. You will bleed out in five minutes unless someone else can stabilize you. After receiving medical attention, make a single **save**. You only get one chance. Further damage while unconscious kills you.
- 6: **save** or die. Optionally, may have last words.
- 7+: instant death

Some attacks use alternate Tables of Consequences.

## Grappling

To grapple someone, make a Might roll. On a success, you are in control of the grapple. On a failure, they may take charge of the grapple or simply remained ungrabbed. Grappled characters can't use anything bigger than a light weapon unless it's part of their body.

When grappling, the combatants make a Might roll with a penalty equal the number of slots of armor they're wearing. The winner gets to disarm, shove, knock down, drag 20', or pin the loser. In future rounds, a pinned character who wins the grapple roll can reduce the pin to a normal grapple, then immediately roll again to seize control. A pinned character who loses another grapple roll can be totally subdued.

## Exploration

When exploring an "adventure location" like an underground complex, haunted boat, or mansion full of tigers, we often divide events into 10ish-minute-long Turns. You can carefully move from one room to another in a Turn, or have a fight, or batter down a stuck door, or poke every flagstone in a small area, or whatever.

I'm not going to go over how light works, or searching for secret doors. You know how it goes.

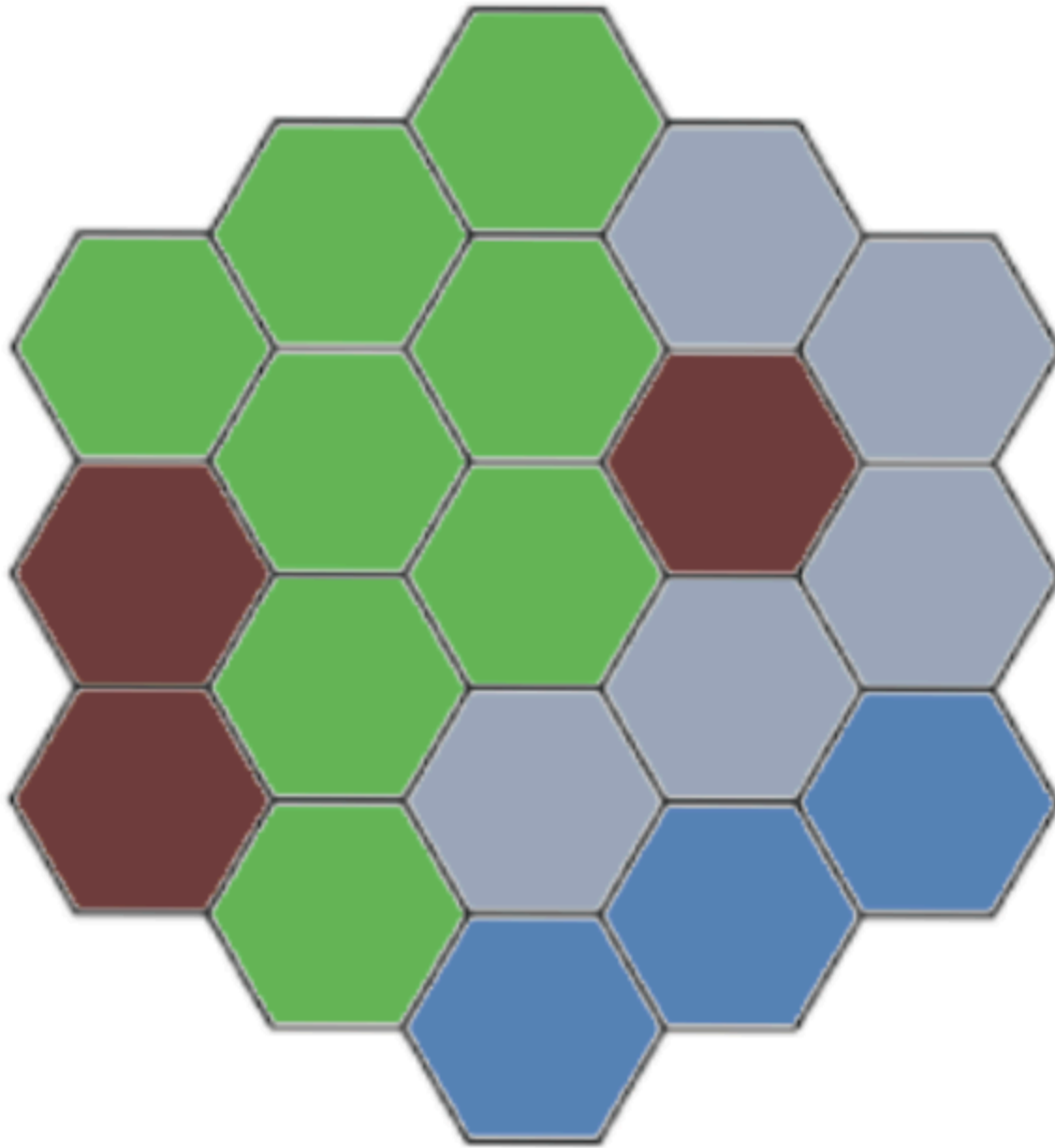
Reaction rolls are 1d12.

When traveling overland, we often divide a countryside into distinct connected zones. This is sort of like a pointcrawl if you know what that is, but the connections only represent the most sensible paths; if you're tenacious you can try to pathfind a new path, maybe seeking the advice of local guides or discovering a shortcut. For ease, we divide overland events into 5-ish-day-long Turns. You can discretely move from one region to another in a Turn, or start to heal injuries, or thoroughly search the countryside, or whatever.

If characters rest for a full overland Turn, they can regain 1d6 HP and one MD or 1 Fatigue (see below). Competent healers can increase this rate of recovery.

When characters or notable creatures the PCs may have met or heard of are encountered, a PC may be called upon to make a Heraldry roll, adding the level of the notable personage. On a success, the PC recognizes the personage, either from acquaintance or their description, and knows a bit about them. Conversely, if a personage is spotted at a distance, or covers their face, or otherwise may not be recognized, a failure of the Heraldry roll renders them anonymous. The DM has latitude in selecting the relevant PC, and should seldom let multiple players roll, giving very different alternate accounts if multiple succeed. Generally if a PC has the heraldry talent, they should be a good default choice.

## **Weather and Wind**



This is a weather hexflower for islands of the Alban Sea. At the start of each Turn, roll a d6 to randomly move the weather to an adjacent hex, wrapping around if it would go off the side. Any time you wrap around, the winds of fate blow past the party. Present them with a random encounter from the relevant region map.

- **Green** represents clear weather. Creatures tend to spread out from their lairs and settlements.
- **Red-brown** represents hot weather. Creatures tend to remain in their lairs and settlements. Ships are sped.
- **Grey** represents mist and fog. Humans stay home, but monsters and spirits are usually found abroad.
- **Blue** represents heavy rain. Travel is slowed. Creatures stay home.

Remember that wanderer characters can predict the weather, and try to give them a heads up if it really matters.

## Sailing

Sailing on a vessel generally uses the overland travel rules, but for water. A ship has a crew minimum and maximum, AC, HP, upkeep cost, and its crew has Morale and Skill. There are also practicalities about maximum loads and guns, somehow. Ships want to fall apart— failing to pay upkeep deals HP damage, but the DM doesn't tell you how much.

In pursuits, the captain of each vessel tests their Authority and the crew of each vessel tests their Skill. If the pursuing vessel beats the fleeing vessel in both, they catch up and force an engagement. If the fleeing vessel beats the pursuing in both, it gets away. Otherwise, they proceed to the region the fleeing vessel is heading to. Chases are grueling and often take days, you see.

When a ship is hit by a cannon, it takes 1d6 damage. If reduced to negative, roll a d4 to see where it strikes. If the ships are really close you get to pick.

- **Waterline.** Quartermaster checks Wisdom or the ship loses stove, supplies, magazine ignites, or exc. Succeed or fail, every Turn, get 1 point of water. When the amount of water reaches the amount of maximum HP, the ship has sunk. A team of 8 can test Skill each Turn to prevent 1 point of water from being added, and 1d6 chance of plugging the leak.
- **Gun deck.** Lose a random gun and 1d6-2 gunners.
- **Spar deck.** Boatswain checks authority or the ship loses wheel and capstan, damages mast, or exc. Succeed or fail, lose 2d6 crew on deck, +1d6 if a boarding part was present.
- **Rigging.** Ship checks AC or damages mast, spars, ropes, or sail. Maneuvering on ship is at -1d6. Succeed or fail, lose 1d6 crew on deck, +1d6 if a boarding part was present

Cannons require teams of four to operate at full speed. Come up with cool alternate weapons to the standard cannon. A ship's save is at +3 vs grapeshot, but it inflicts +2 casualties. Ramming makes both sides save or take 1d6 damage, and the rammed ship saves or suffers a waterline hit.

## Ships

Type	Crew	AC	HP	Upkeep	Max Guns	Notes
Bateau	4-20	10	4	4 gp/Turn	2	
Attirer	8-40	12	8	10 gp/Turn	6	+2 AC head-on
Efficace	4-60	11	8	10 gp/Turn	4	Corsair reputation

Lutin	12-50	13	12	20 gp/Turn	10	+2 to swift turns
Secondaire	8-80	14	12	25 gp/Turn	12	-2 rigging deaths
Flamant	20-65	16	16	50 gp/Turn	26	Spirit-built
Plus Grand	14-100	15	16	45 gp/Turn	20	-2 vs storms
Meduse	40-100	17	20	250 gp/Turn	60	Not sped in heat
Tortue	20-140	18	20	200 gp/Turn	40	Belong to the pope

## Fatigue and Recovery

Suffering and rough conditions can bring fatigue. This fills an inventory slot and gives -1 to all d20 rolls. An overland turn of rest away from the source of the fatigue can be used to reduce the amount of fatigue a character suffers by 1. If a character ever has 10 or more fatigue, they die wretchedly. Some things that bring fatigue:

- Agony
- Sleeplessness
- Forced marches
- An overland Turn without food
- Wearying work
- Sleeping in armor, without fire, or on rough terrain
- Disgusting deeds
- Poisons
- Cold
- Heat

## Society

If you have no class levels at all, you are of "low degree" and won't really be held to these rules except when people of high degree feel like being unfair.

One of the three great institutions of Alba is gender. Albans recognize two inescapable genders, male and female, with no exceptions. Except:

- In the Jerga and Hato languages, there is a formal way to refer to honored personages who are not present which replaces all gender-markers with respect-markers, and for private reasons some such personages carry that through as far as they can.
- People from the eastern islands are regarded as passionate and unmoored from their sex, and above their protest outsiders reckon you must play their gender by ear.
- Tradition affords a punishment for effeminate men, the severing of the earlobes and the puncture of the scrotum. Outraging the sensibilities of the lordly courts, certain young fraternities have taken up the practice willfully and take pride in it.

- Sailors, and in certain merciful provinces prisoners, find that some fluidity is desirable, and so are permitted to wear belts padded down with powder from their own umbilical cord, or some other simple magic that inverts them temporarily.
- In the capital province, anyone carrying a sabre is legally a man.

Men, especially lords, are society's designated escalators. They are supposed to answer threats with threats and eventually violence, to protect what they belong to, and make decisions for expanding enterprises. Male diplomats are not uncommon, but you know who they'll be in bad cop-good cop. Women, especially ladies, are society's designated de-escalators. They are supposed to neutralize threats with circumspection and courtesy, to intercede for indulgence, and to make decisions for disintegrating enterprises. Female warriors are not uncommon, but they're never chosen for the vanguard.

This duality, which many buck but few buck unpunished in high politics, has its many implications. Wandering errants had better have at least a few men and women, for when peace and threats are needed. Lords had better marry ladies and ladies had better marry lords, or else they can't plausibly have someone to seem to indulge when they offer terms or ultimatums.

# Thanks and Attributions

- The delineation of classes was inspired by Vulnavia of [the Lovely Dark's](#) Witch/Cowgirl/Spy/Princess/Sport Hero/Astronaut fantasy-fulfilment thoughts on the GLoG server.
- The character generation system, with its qualifying/surviving/advancing and other affectations, was lifted pretty directly from Traveller.
- The Wanderer's Scholasticism ability comes from Xenophon of Athens's [glog ranger](#).
- The noble's Godchild ability comes from Locheil's [rotless fighter](#).
- The Picaroon takes some inspiration from Vayra's [kung fu wizard](#) artist.
- The Spirit's tomb builder ability comes from [George Michael's Zouave](#).
- The excellent grappling rules come from his good gloghack [G24](#).
- Talents and the rules for fatigue come primarily from Hilander's [Lost Fable](#)
- Sailing notes taken in part from [Xenophon](#) on the glog server.

Tolkenor

# Introduction

Tolkenor is the northernmost of the eight great isles of Alba. Folk largely speak Jerga, with a prominent minority of sailors who speak Hato.

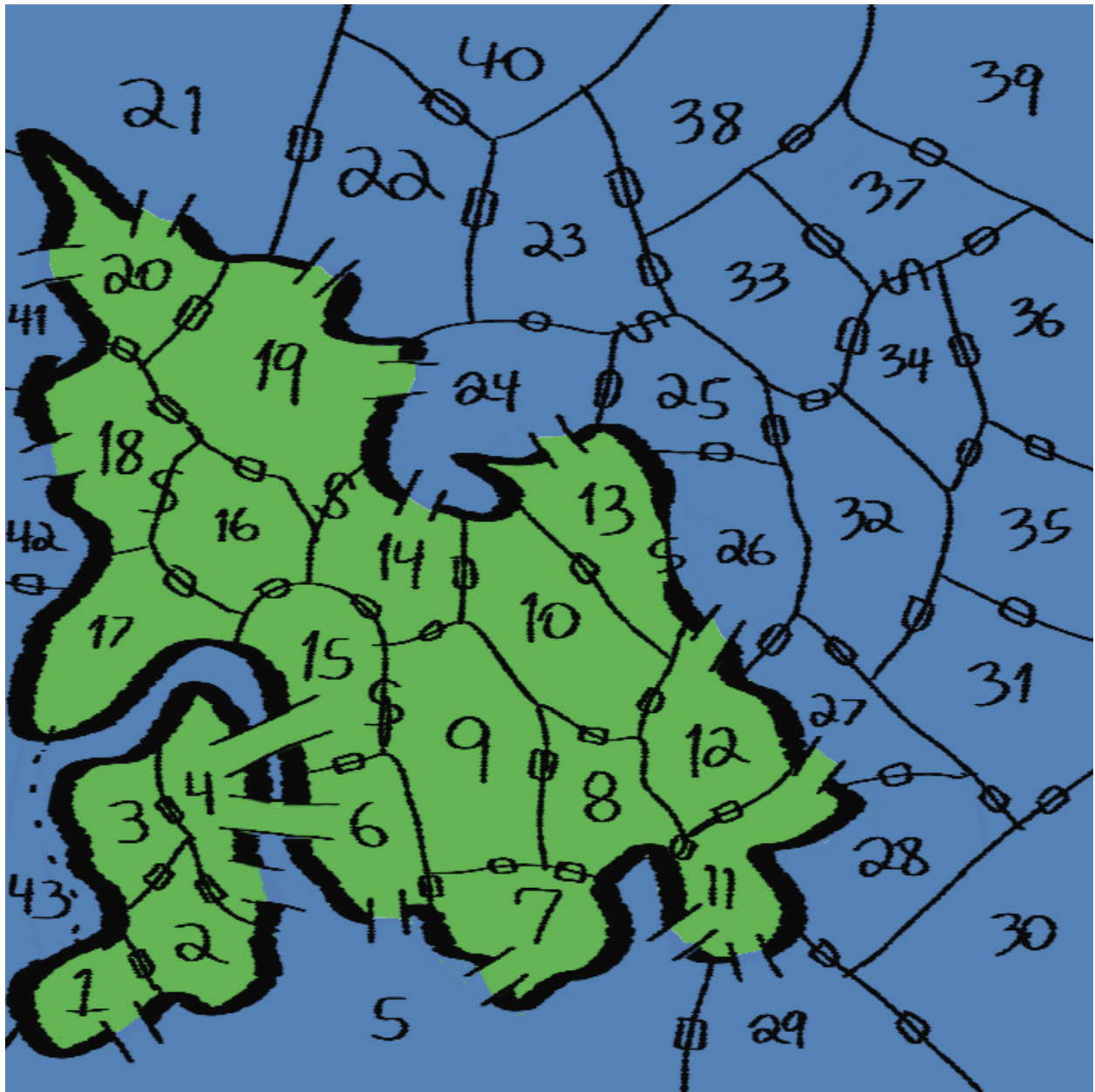
## Encounter table:

2d4	Overland Encounter	Sea Encounter
2	<b>Elder Spirit</b> (stats as mastodon, mood alters region's terrain and character)	<b>Domestic Kraken</b> (stats as giant squid)
3	<b>Platoon</b> of 1d20+10 soldiers led by a noble or wanderer.	1d3 <b>ships</b> (roll 1d6 for each on the ship table). Each has 50% chance of carrying treasure or resources. Secondaires or Flamants are armed escorts.
4	Feral <b>dogs, cats, or birds</b> (stats as insect swarm). Affect of listless bachelors, bored rowdies, or snooty robbers	Rocky waves, odd stillness, or jellyfish migration <b>slows travel</b> . Skill roll to avoid going off course (towards alternate exit or hidden feature)
5	<b>Familiar Face</b> (see table below) alone or in a group	<b>Familiar Face</b> (see table below) on some kind of ship/shipwrecked/captive/etc.
6	1d6 <b>Spies</b> (one level 1d3 Woman and the rest goons) May subtly attempt infiltration or challenge for a prize.	1d2 <b>pirate ships</b> (roll 1d4+1 for each on the ship table). 25% chance they're damaged, 25% chance they have booty and captives.
7	<b>Escort</b> of priest, wanderer, or noble.	<b>Ship</b> carrying priest, spirits, or noble.
8	<b>Young Immortal</b> (giant snake with 1d4 levels in priest). Very clever but very very stupid	The dragon <b>Unsate</b> (as red dragon, see area 1). Will extort vessels, take nobles down a notch.

## Familiar Face Table

d6+	Recurring Encounter
1	<b>Dimas</b> , picaroon 3. Marooned pirate on a quest for vengeance against the captain of the <i>Liberal Lady</i> . Wields <i>Devil's Kiss</i> , a +1 dueling cutlass that grows red-hot in battle.
2	<b>Dulce Dengremont</b> , woman 3. Possessed by the ghost of her spy family's ancestor and desperate to get him exorcised. He has 4 MD and can shoot blue fire out of her hands and eyes.
3	<b>Sayaka</b> , spirit 3. Charming brute seeking to right wrongs and find a spouse. Customs: Architects and Light-Footed.

4	<b>Souma</b> , noble 2. Exiled by an older brother. So it goes in this bitch age.
5	<b>Annette</b> , wanderer 3. Morose cringefail samurai. Accept her offer to duel and, win or lose, you have a friend for life. She carries a bluesteel katana, marking her as <a href="#">member of an ancient comitatus</a> .
6	<b>Nobuyuki</b> , priest 1. Amnesiac, but sure he recognizes you somehow. Too young to credibly claim to be a sage.



# Key

1. **Mojon.** Barren land, grotto lair of the dragon Unsate (stats as red dragon). Every year or so, a lord will seek to commission her with a letter of marque, but she always just extracts tribute from their envoys and goes back to sleeping. **2-in-6 chance** of encountering her here.
  - a. See the secret route note in area 17.
  - b. Deep within Unsate's grotto, sleeping atop a great mound of treasure, is her father Method-Turner. A great narcolepsy afflicts him, and he cannot stay awake for longer than an hour. Water from the Thousand-Year Spring would heal him, and it is for this that Unsate searches the many seas.
2. **Sellic.** A rice-growing colony built in the ruins of an ancient city, its name lost to time. Organized as a joint charter between the Sellic Isle Company and the priests of the All-Dust Shrine. When passing by, **1-in-6 chance** of encountering 1d2! zombies.
  - a. The Sellic Isle Company, in addition to extortionate control of its serfs, is getting into the pirate-hunting business. They will purchase any captured gunship no questions asked, and their chairman Aurelio Laken always has work for problem-solvers.
    - i. An attempted heist of his estate must brave many brutish guards and intricate fortification, but yields vast bullion, letters of marque, and the *Ratcatcher Bow*, a +1 black willow-wand bow, +3 vs pirates and privateers.
  - b. The Priests of the All-Dust Shrine maintain a flame in vigil for the spirits of those who lived in the city in ancient days. Their rites include burning offerings, capturing memories in clay vessels, and building and maintaining fortifications to encourage peace and discourage piracy. If their flame is ever extinguished, the dead men of the sewers (see below) will rise up as one to drag the whole colony into the sea.
  - c. The bodies of the long-dead (stats as zombies) still sometimes return to the ancient, open sewers beneath the city. By now, hundreds wait, dripping, for the impediments of their memory to fade so they may hoist the black sail and start cutting throats. The cleverest have begun attempting to bribe human intermediaries to carry out their will in the city above.
3. **Witford Field.** An old battlefield, the site of a devastating surprise attack by Ningunese arquebusiers on the bannermen of Thornhall, even after a hundred and one duels. Each lone tree is slowly dying, the bullets now overgrown still leeching poison into their flesh.
4. **Cliffs of Jacobo.** High, sheer walls of stone overlook the narrow strait. A pair of spindly bridges run off into the mist. Hanging from the center of the northern bridge is a skeleton, ten feet tall and with six arms, said to be the Devil himself, who was tricked and betrayed after building it.
5. **Black Strait.** Jealously guarded on the southern bank by the terrifying Burning Men of Martendale. Near the edge of their range, still burning at on a coral shelf 100 feet under the waves, is the ship *Impenetrable*, still laden with 3000 coins of bullion.

- a. If you can brave the Napalman Fire thrown by the Burning Men, you can force the DM to improvise a whole new region at least as large as Tolkenor and its near seas.
6. **Castle of the Convoluted Approach.** Rocky country. **2-in-6 chance** of encountering a pair of patrolling ogres. In the east, several switchbacks lead up to the fortified keep which is their home.
  - a. An attempted heist of the castle braves many switchbacks, stupid maze illusions, and twelve militaristic ogres, but yields sacks of gold, a *Wand of Tightropes*, several magic potions, and an important captive— Momoka, mistress of the regnal shrine in Tolkenor City.
7. **Tolkenor City.** A fortified and prosperous city, dealing in rice, potatoes, squash, wine, silks, and tobacco.
  - a. Attempts to find hirelings, charter ships, or chase rumors get a bonus here.
  - b. The palace is home to Lady Tolkenor Candide, and it is a deathtrap. An attempted heist of the palace jukes overing bodyguards corraling envoys away from pit traps, cricket floors, dart-throwing statues, and the like. A warmonger at heart but unable to pursue this without a figurehead husband, Candide's palace hides prototype hand-cannons, half-finished recipes for Napalman Fire, several demons in jugs, and a Thrice-Forbidden Sword Technique (its piercing strike cannot be healed, the souls of those it kills are marked for fairy conscription, and its use corrupts the blade used towards malice and wantonness.)
8. **Monte Fuego.** (Weather always hot here) In a rocky, mountainous region that **slows travel**, the largest is a conical volcano. Currently dormant, it forms the amphitheatre of an ancient and powerful spirit, Reizan. Timeless and isolated, she still mourns a breakup from over three hundred years ago as though it was an hour ago. Speaks only Bavarder, though she knows some Jerga.
  - a. If angered, she can make the mountain erupt, throw a fireball, or turn you into a desman until you perform a penance.
  - b. If gladdened, she can summon a hot wind for a journey, breathe holy smoke into your lungs (+1 Dex permanently), or bless a bond, ceremony, or birth.
9. **Bearhall.** The mirthless hall of Lord Mateo, whose retainers suffer nightly attacks by Blood Crow, a feathered demon with a long red nose, the son of Davy Jones (stats as lesser efreeti). The demon despises the shanties and chants of Bearhall's men, as it reminds him of how he is born to the curse of his father's morbid domain. In a nearby lake, Blood Crow has hidden his true skin, resembling that of a manatee, which he must return to every night or suffer horribly.
  - a. Bearhall's carters, secret Women of Harmere, maintain a secret byway, a route to area 15.
10. **Ashvale.** Serpentine paths between small mountains, leading through depopulated and broken towns. Overconscripted during the time of warring lords, the dregs of the people of the Ashvale left to live in other lands, or stayed and died.
11. **Thewkirk.** A prosperous trade town built around the Monastery of the Shrugging Brotherhood, an order dedicated to charity, teetotaling, and martial arts. Normally exclusive, if an Artist does them a good turn they may teach the artist the talent of

balance through form practice on the deck of a ship in choppy water, spinning boxing, and meditation on buoys.

12. **Torre Pena.** The roads here run through steep valleys, all eventually passing by a square cherrywood tower, impeccable and gay, where 106 spirits stand ready with bows to fire at anything that moves. Treat this more like a strangely intelligent dart trap than a full combat encounter.
13. **Dospool.** (Treat clear weather as fog) Fog-choked moors. In the center of the region glisters a perfect pool. Any who approach see mist rising from it, silently forming into duplicates of themselves. (stats as them, -1 reaction.) Pool duplicates desire to not have to look at their originals, learning about the geography of the island and the nature of memory, and to taste fine things their illusory bodies won't permit them to enjoy.
  - a. Obscured by the mist, an old stairwell leads to a small beach on the eastern shore, allowing for transit between Dospool and area 26.
14. **Vaciarsio.** Dead trees and sour grasses. See the sundered mound where once a wooden gate stood, the shrine to the Sharp-Eyed Lady. Her body, indistinct like bones half-brothed, still lies, fulminated.
  - a. Unpromising thickets lie between here and area 19. Careful study of the thickets show signs of deliberate cultivation, and from there one can find seams, hinges, and abandoned passages— a secret route thorough.
15. **Harmere.** Minor, wooded province. Woodcutters, hunters, workmen going to or from some site. **1-in-6 chance** of encountering a tiger.
  - a. The workmen are not workmen. They are Women, the guards and footmen of Lady Harmere Tora de Heyst, who can be sought out and hired for exorbitant fees. Her clan's signature move is to take on the casual violence of the tiger, gaining its silence, its camouflage, and in some cases its form.
  - b. See the note on the secret connection in area 9
16. **Bosque De Perdidos.** Dense forest **slows travel**.
  - a. A gentle, remote stream runs down from area 18 into the Bosque, providing a secret route between areas for those who follow it.
17. **Dragonholm.** Jutting cliffs on three sides, the towns of this province are sturdy and live free of fear from pirate or foreign landing. In the largest town, overseen by Daniel, a noble monkey from across the waves, they manufacture guns and gunpowder, an industry that is considered a matter of national security.
  - a. An attempted heist of the factory braves chemicals, fumes, and ninja guards, but yields valuable gunpowder, enchanted bullets, and Daniel's ornate two-shot pistol.
  - b. Some smugglers of Dragonholm know of a clever shortcut, a way down to the southern beach when the tide is right. At about 4 AM, a fierce wind blows south across the bay, and at about 10 PM, the wind blows back north again. A ship properly braced against this can cross between areas 1 and 17 in less than an hour.
18. **Rehensping.** Remote fairy hotspring in remote mountains that slow travel, with 20 cavorting fairies (stats as pixies), a jolly talking catfish, a *belt of levitation*, a +1 bug-mask helmet, and some ancient coins.

- a. See the note on the secret connection in area 16.
19. **Woolwell.** A prosperous province fed by shepherding, terrace farming, and noble sports. Unfortunately overseen by lord Woolwell Leopold, a halfway decent general and a cruel and unmerciful administrator. Evidence of unrest and mismanagement is everywhere in these lands, and he has driven more to piracy than he has hanged for it.
- a. See the note on the secret connection in area 14.
20. **Largo Camino.** Largely quiet countryside, notable only because its prominent wayshrines have a strangely intricate crescent-shaped ideogram above each door. (see area 37)
21. **Wool Coast.** Reliably winds, few islands. Adrift on the waves is the crewless Efficace *Bon Vivant*, a deeply cursed vessel. Stolen from Davy Jones's fleet, a storm follows closely wherever it is sailed. The ship is effectively immune to storms, but as a stormcrow it gives -2 reaction to those who would fear it.
22. **Nordaway.** Dense jungle isle.
- a. In sunrise, on a rise in the center of the isle can be see glimpses of what resembles a city of glittering gold. Those who attempt to cut in toward the island's interior must brave tree wolves, *sleep* mosquitoes, evil giant butterflies, evil springs, and caveman guardians. In truth, the rise is inhabited, but its golden appearance is only an illusion. Ruled by a barbarian sorceress, the cavemans form a clique of control, girlbossing, and indigo mining.
  - b. Spirit customs of Nordaway isle: Castes, Breath Watchers, Tomb Builders.
23. **Sea of smoke.** (Treat open weather as mist). **50% chance** that travel through the region takes no time at all. Otherwise, takes two turns. The subjective experience and ration consumption is of one turn.
- a. The trade winds towards area 25 quickly die off. A tenacious ship can coast off the winds, carry through on oar power, and pick up where the winds resume a few hours later, forming a secret connection between the two regions.
24. **Kame Isle.** A discrete and small settlement on a discrete and small island in Kame Bay. Frequently rifled by the soldiers of some lord or another, none can root out the Sea Rat Scene, the criminal underbelly that is the true power of Kame Isle. Any pirates encountered on the open seas of this region are bound to a **truce**, but there is a **2-in-6 chance** for every turn spent on the isle of getting caught up in a brawl with 2d6 pirates.
- a. The nominal governor of Kame is Ambre Dart, an appointment supported by Lady Tolkenor Candide. She is merely the mildest pirate and the point of contact between the Sea Rat Scene and royal life, and is related by blood to the Woman clan of Harmere.
  - b. The true power on Kame Isle is the Body Admiral, a council of seven captains, tavern-keepers, bookies, and rum-runners. An attempted heist of their ships braves corsairs, master pircaroons, and magical defenses, but yields dubloons unending, sundry wondrous objects, and blackmail material, treasure maps, and secrets.
25. **Desert Island.** Sandy and unpeopled, the island boasts dates, plums, citrons, and pineapples. With a turn of effort, about 1000 gp of fruit could be harvested. 1-in-3 chance per turn spent harvesting that the island is depleted for the season.

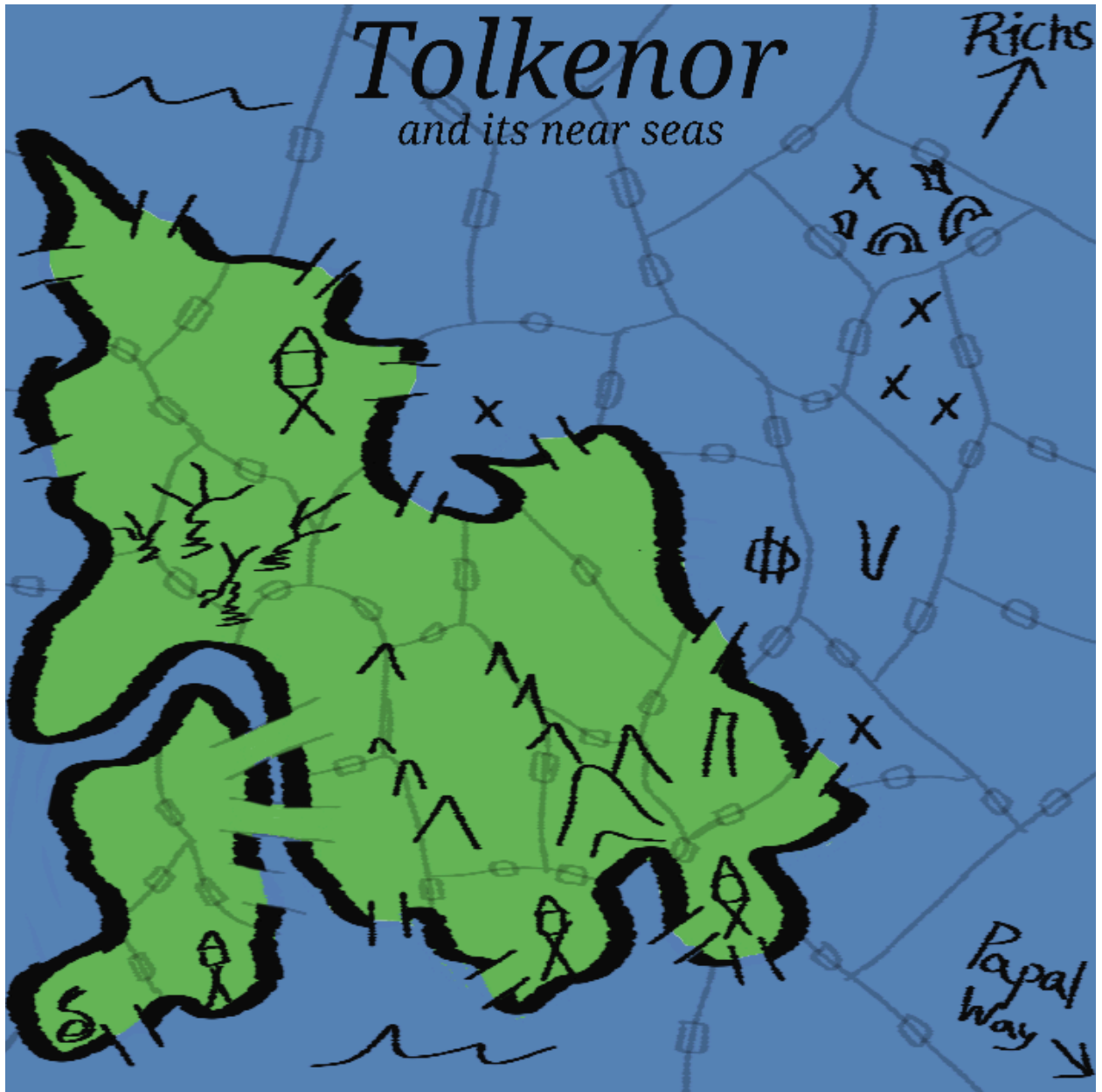
- a. See the note on the secret connection in area 14.
26. **Kogane No Koe.** On the beach of a white-sand isle, women stand invitingly, gesturing for a landing and offering platters of golden wares. Behind them, towers and huts of solid gold stand in haphazard array. Could this be El Dorado? Of course it is just 2d4 Sirens—the golden wares just the booty of predated crews, the golden buildings just glamored shipwrecks, the backs of their heads smooth like a porpoise's. If a team of wreckers is dispatched, there is about 1000 gp of true gold among them (and a 1-in-6 chance of a minor or cursed golden object), and one can hear a deep and joyful song coming from deeper in the isle. This is the Crab King of Many Friends, and you should hastily write a cool dungeon if PCs want to investigate.
- a. Obscured by mist, a small beach leads to an old stairwell on the western coast, allowing for transit between Kogane No Koe and area 13.
27. **Otanashi Isle.** inhabited by the proud Dog-Heads, in suzerainty to Lady Tolkenor. Tough and fatalistic, they fear to provide sanctuary to pirates or others who would ruin their arrangements that give them broad independence. Renowned for their foresight, the Dog Priests of the Low Tide Shrine can answer questions about the future in exchange for 1d3 points of Wisdom. Beware players, as it can be dangerous to ask the DM to establish things like the exact day your PC will die.
- a. Spirit customs of Otanashi Isle: Dreamers, Grumblers, Vampires.
28. **Ocean.** Open sea. +1-in-6 chance of random encounter.
29. **Ottergrave.** Coastal silkworm colony, where harsh Lord Ottergrave employs dozens of captives—outlaws, prisoners, galley slaves, and Dog-Heads— in the careful art of silk production.
- a. A heist of his estate braves drunken gaolers and high walls, but yields keys to the prisoners' bonds, fine bolts of fabric, and a *scarlet gown* with images of the crane in flight. It confers +1 MD and +1 AC, but prevents the wearing of arm- or leg-armor.
30. **Glass Sea.** A confluence of factors means the sea is especially clear, and you seem to float a hundred feet in the air as you sail.
- a. Hidden in a remote spot away from the main routes is Isla Vana, a desert island with a never-flooding cave, wherein the warlord Revelstoke laid his ill-gotten treasure twenty years ago. There is perhaps 20,000 gp of finery here, but by his black deeds every fragment of every coin is cursed. It provides no XP, and indeed anyone who has removed treasure from the cave cannot gain more XP or level up, and after 1d6 Turns nor can they enjoy food except that which is stolen, nor wine except that which sickens, nor any earthly pleasure but by blade-point, nor fully die, instead suffering agonies for 1d6 Turns before reforming beneath the waves. The gold they spend eventually calls to them, begging by some faint tug to be returned to Isla Vana.
31. **Batto Isle.** a desert island without much vegetation. If sailing by, **2-in-6 chance** of encountering ninja pirate ship.
- a. Hidden caves conceal a small society of thieves, heroes, and most especially Women, even ships finding easy stowage out of view. Warehouses of stolen swag are bartered and deals made, often facilitated by meetings in total darkness

to preserve anonymity. Among other treasures can be found a bone sword that curses anyone who kills with it, turning them into a Banished One (stats as ghoul); a manta ray-mask helmet that confers underwater breathing, a three-bladed throwing knife that always returns to its master, a fishbone staff that can direct the sea serpent of area 37, and a Spirit-Killing Poison.

32. **Swift Route.** **Travel is sped** here, at risk. **1-in-6 chance** of getting caught in a swirling vortex, with a strange inverted tower at the center. Absent a heroic sailing maneuver, the ship is sucked down to the bottom of the sea only to emerge, shuddering, in area 1d20+20.
33. **Ocean Gyre.** A underwater sargasso forest, dense with fish and other sea life.
34. **Samazamana.** An archipelago of dozens of small islands. 1-in-6 is inhabited by humanoid spirits, minor nobility, or stranger things.
  - a. Searching the islands will result in the discovery of a pair along the eastern chain with untapped veins of gold close to the surface. A full-scale operation could recover 30,000 gp in gold over time, though not without expense or interesting complications.
  - b. Though the winds between areas 34 and 37 are unpromising, the movement of the great serpent creates an irregular current under the water, allowing swift travel in a secret route between them.
  - c. Spirit customs of Samazamana: Hopeful, Troglodytes, Koscheis. This would also be a good region to put a people designed by a player for their Outsider PC.
35. **Battendown Coast.** Several ships of the Papal navy docked at minor islands, preparing to contend with the spirit navy in area 36. Keen for added firepower, they will press-gang any armed vessels that come across them, and may press-gang unarmed ones. Their leader is the steely-eyed, shark-toothed Admiral Ryuu, rough as a shark and twice as smooth. He speaks of protecting Tolkenor from invasion, but his heart is set on following the spirits back to El Dorado.
36. **Fee Mer.** Ten greenships, floating masses of seaweed and root made seaworthy with the insertion of masts, rudders, and rigging, form the punitive navy of the spirit league of Invioléa, on a mission of violent reproach against Alba's encroachment against islands they consider to be within their sphere. Led by a wedded duo, Arcane Storehouse Raymondin and Cruel Blow Denisot, they prepare to battle the ships in area 35. Their greenships are moved by Winds We Know Not, so they are waiting for the perfect confluence of weathers to ensure they can strike quickly while the human ships are lethargic.
  - a. Spirit customs of the League of Invioléa: Craftsmen, Elden, Joyful Choirs.
37. **Paru Sea.** Idyllic isle with old pillared stone ruins guarded tirelessly by a mountain-sized sea serpent (if you approach after seeing signs of its mass in the water, it's a Morale test to quiet panicking crewmate and a Skill test to successfully flee, or 2d10 damage per round as the ship is tossed, jostled, bitten, and squeezed).
  - a. Those who somehow make it to the isle will find the remnants of an ancient people who loved mosaics, sunsets, and intricate gowns. In a remote harbor, a trio of ancient ships are mostly ruined, except for the enchanted rigging that allows a ship to reverse course in an instant.

- b. Those familiar with the ideogram from Largo Camino will recognize it as matching the style and form of letters on Paru Island mosaics. If the old ideogram is treated as a map of this island, it implies the location of a point of interest which seems to be an empty field. Digging at that spot reveals a great treasure, exceeding the wealth of a dragon's hoard, as well as written well-wishes for those people in the distant future of the failing Paru civilization.
  - c. See the note on the secret connection in area 34.
- 38. **Far Waters.** Floating unmoored is a mostly-sunk treasure ship. It has been captured by a pod of eight mermaids (stats as giant piranha) trying to figure out how to most easily transport the 4,000 gp and sundry jewelry closer to their underwater cove.
- 39. **Whaleroads. 1-in-6 chance** of observing a giant shape deep under the water. This route leads on to islands further afield, stranger and more dangerous than Tolkenor's environs. The DM should write this quick or improvise with something like [this procedure](#)
  - a. Following the shape: In 1d3 Turns, the giant whale El Dorado surfaces, with a gleaming golden city on its back. Dense with treasure, ancient magics, and oversized crustacean parasites, the DM needs to dance monkey dance if they want to improvise the associated dungeon.
- 40. **Monte Milenio.** The occasional rocky isle, the largest of which is an oversized mountain.
  - a. Hidden in the depths of the mountain is a pleasant, cool spring with a small ideogram for "gratitude" carved above it. Those who drink from the spring heal 1d6 HP damage and become that many years younger.
- 41. This region left blank as an exercise to the DM, or to include a reasonable element from a PC's life history.
- 42. "
- 43. "

## Player-facing map



# His Master's Gate



## His Master's Gate

By Phlox of [Whose Measure God Could Not Take](#)

This is a roleplaying game and a thought experiment, mingling classic glog affectations, B/X D&D lessons, and the Traveller career generation system. It also feeds some curiosities and bugbears I've wanted to explore more in depth.

I'm not totally satisfied with this even as a thought experiment, but I think all it really needs is a setting. Perhaps you can imagine this is a game all about pirates and ninja in a nautical campaign about evading the law in a post warring-states setting where the fantasy pope is merely the captive of a succession of local lords, and greedy marquises extract wealth from further and further polities, hunting anyone who dares to live free, and furthermore imagine that in this setting you can write your name in the stars with enough gunpowder and aplomb.

### What is a roleplaying game?

I hope you know by now.

# Making a PC

Roll ideals— 2d6 in order for Might, Dexterity, Skill, Authority, and Wisdom. Keep the full score of each, and note the modifier. An ideal of 2 has a modifier of -2, an ideal of 3-5 is -1, an ideal of 6-8 is +0, an ideal of 9-11 is +1, and an ideal of 12 is +2. If you somehow get an ideal to 0 or less it's -3, and 15 or higher is +3.

- Add your Might mod to damage with medium and heavy weapons, and to tests of strength or hardiness
- Add your Dexterity mod to damage with light weapons, and to rolls to move quickly and confidently.
- Add your Skill mod to to-hit rolls, and to tests of proficiency and training.
- Add your Authority mod to reaction rolls with people, and to tests of policy.
- Add your Wisdom to reaction rolls with animals, and to tests of attentiveness.

Generate the character's history.

Buy equipment.

Note other statistics:

- Your maximum HP is 8.
- Your Armor is 10 unless you're wearing armor or carrying a shield
- Your Save is 13
- Your Score is the minimum needed to achieve your level.
- You have 20 inventory slots.

Give them a name and vibe.

## Generating Character History

The DM may (and probably should) add new character types or alternate tables as suits their campaign, and add modifiers and custom events to reflect the recent history of the campaign setting. To make the PCs' histories line up, they may oblige the players to predetermine how old their characters will be so they all suffer the same realm-spanning catastrophes at the same time.

### **Starting characters and Qualify Rolls**

Your character starts at a young and bold 16 years old. They try to seek their fortune as one of the character types— errant, spy, noble, Artist, sage, outsider, and commoner. Each of these has some leeway for interpretation, and may prompt you to establish the existence of some non-player characters or groups. Select a type, and roll to see if the PC qualifies. Roll 2d6 + an ideal modifier. On a success, you proceed for a term of 4 years as that character type. On a failure, you must spend that term as an Outsider or Commoner.

When a character starts their first term, they gain their first level in that type, as well as anything listed in the "Start with" entry for that type. This will include notable NPC associates. Don't worry about giving them names and traits just yet. If you randomly roll a contact, ally, rival, or enemy, you can say it's one of these NPCs or a new one you make up. If the character lives a later term

as another character type, they don't gain an extra level or anything from that class's "Start with" entry.

### **Survival and Event Rolls**

The first thing you do for a character in a term is make a survival roll— 2d6 + an ideal modifier. If you fail, roll 1d6 and consult the mishap table. The PC can no longer continue as this type of character, and must try to qualify for other types in future terms, if you choose to continue generating the PC. If the PC passes their survival roll, they roll 2d6 and consult the event table, resolving its effect.

### **Advancement and Benefit Rolls**

After resolving an event, make an advancement roll, rolling 2d6 + an ideal modifier. On a success, immediately gain enough XP to advance a level in the PC's character type. (Commoners skip this roll) Pass or fail, you are then entitled to roll 1d6 for a benefit. Before rolling, decide whether you are rolling for gold or for another benefit. On the first benefit roll for each type, you must choose to roll for gold. As a treat, if the PC has the gambling talent, they make gold benefit rolls at +1.

### **End of Term**

After finishing a term, the PC is 4 years older. You may decide they are ready to play, noting down their abilities and making decisions about their associated NPCs, ex chetera. Otherwise, you may continue to roll. After the fifth term, a character gets -1 to any one ideal. After the sixth term, they get -2 to any one ideal and may not take any more terms. Remember! In play, XP needed to advance levels increases quadratically, so for example a first-level character will soon catch up to a third-level character.

### **Talents**

Over a career, a character may gain certain talents. These add +1d6 to rolls to achieve the talent. So a PC with the silence talent trying to sneak up on someone might roll 1d20, plus their dexterity modifier, plus 1d6 if silence is the operative concern.

If a character has the same talent multiple times, add a d6 for each. If multiple talents apply all if they are redundant with each other (e.g. a mechanics talent and a lockpicking talent when picking a lock) but roll separate for them if they are separate factors (e.g. a breath-holding talent and a lockpicking talent when picking a lock underwater). There is no set list of talents. The DM should be careful not to introduce any that would be super boring if a PC managed to get three times.

## **Errant**

The realm of humanity is a narrow one, assailed by ancient hates and forgetful of old friends and wonders beyond imagining. There are those who wander, sure of their way, on the borders of man and marvel, in touch with both and capable of tipping or keeping the balance. Invariably they are warriors; sensitive rangers, masterless elites, wise cowpokes.

**Qualify roll:** Mig 7+

**Start with:** 1d3 family members, 1d6 colleagues, an extra language, an all-weather cloak of the color of your choice

**Survival roll:** Wis 6+

**Advancement roll:** Mig 6+

### **Mishap:**

**1:** a well-organized foe from beyond the wilderness drives you from your range, slaughtering and changing the land. Gain them as an enemy.

**2:** You don't know what happened to you. Gain an interesting scar and an unanswered question.

**3:** another errant gains your confidence, then ambushes you. You barely escape with your life. Gain them as a rival and your choice of the following talents: falling, climbing, running

**4:** Following a botched expedition, you are led far off-course. On a long return journey, gain 1d6 contacts and 1d3 enemies.

**5:** you are caught out in bad terrain and suffer from extreme exhaustion or illness. Lose 1 dexterity.

**6:** a nameless monster jumps you and leaves you for dead. Gain a severe injury from the injury table, and make an Ally of the one who nursed you back to health.

### **Event:**

**2:** roll on the mishap table, but you may continue as this character type.

**3:** the master of a borderland holding attempts to expand into the territory of an ancient creature. Challenge them, and gain them as a rival. Aid them, and gain the creature's spawn as a rival.

**4:** while hunting a dangerous predator, you come face to face with it when unprepared. Roll Wis 7+ to gain animal handling as a talent. On a failure, roll on the injury table.

**5:** strange humanoids hire you to escort them through the realm. Gain gesture or law as a talent, or gain an extra language.

**6:** you are ambushed by men of no account. Roll Mig 8+ to drive them off, and on a failure lose your benefit roll for this term. Either way, make a contact of a person or group they also attacked.

**7:** Roll on life event table.

**8:** spend months at a time wandering lonely roads. Make a contact of someone who helped you survive.

**9:** Someone deeply wrongs you, and it takes a long time to find them and bring them to account. Gain one of the following as a talent: riding, tracking, streetwise.

**10:** in quiet contemplation, you gain insight. Gain the friendship of a particular kind of animal, and add them as an ally.

**11:** Rough life suits you. Test Wis 7+ to increase your Might, Skill, or Dexterity by 1.

**12:** a patron recognizes your skills. Gain them as an ally and get +2 to your next benefit roll.

### **Benefits**

**1:** 200 gp or *magic rope*

- 2: 200 gp or tracking talent
- 3: 300 gp or riding talent
- 4: 300 gp or +1 Ski
- 5: 500 gp or +1 Wis
- 6: 500 gp or +1 *weapon*
- 7+: 500 gp or 4 HD animal companion

### Templates

- A: Quick Draw, Folk Knowledge
- B: Ambidextrous
- C: Far-Ranging
- D: Dragoon

**Quick Draw:** when you roll initiative, you may have already drawn your weapon and attacked. Be careful how you use this when surprised or unsure.

**Folk Knowledge:** you have a 2-in-6 chance of knowing two facts (weaknesses, behaviors, desires, exc.) of the DM's choice about any type of creature you encounter. +1-in-6 chance for each additional template in errant you possess. You can always tell what the weather is going to look like in the next 24 hours.

**Ambidextrous:** you are skilled at multitasking, and your hands can take separate actions, such as swinging a sword while using reins, or climbing while waving a wand, without penalty. If used to attack with two weapons in concert, make one attack roll using the best effects of both weapons (e.g. rolling the better damage die) and reroll all 1s for damage.

**Far-Ranging:** you can scavenge enough to keep yourself fed in any environment, and if you take an overland Turn to search have a 6-in-6 chance of finding hidden routes. At home in the wilderness and all that implies.

**Dragoon:** if you forge a connection with a creature of animal intelligence, it can serve as your hireling with the relative operational efficiency of a human; immune to Morale tests for animal fears like fire or loud noises, the ability to communicate as well as two humans who don't share a language, certainty that they won't mess things up if left alone. If the creature can serve as a mount, you can ride them without penalty for strangeness or lack of training, and can mount or dismount them once a turn in addition to normal actions as long as only one of you moves much that turn.

## Spy

The world is tied in a devilish knot. Through cautious, skillful work, the great system of everything can be subverted. A gem in a vault can be switched, a tyrant in his holdfast can fall, and the world can be untied in the work of a single night. Thus is the aspiration of the clever thief, the swift ninja, the divine agent.

**Qualify roll:** Dex 6+

**Start with:** 1d3 close relatives, 1d6 distant relatives, an employer, two extra languages, indistinct clothing.

**Survival roll:** Dex 7+

**Advancement roll:** Ski 5+

### **Mishap:**

- 1:** you make the smallest mistake. Gain a severe injury from the injury table.
- 2:** after you are caught, your captors offer clemency in exchange for information. If you accept, gain your old employers as an enemy and disguise or a civilian profession as a talent. If you refuse, wait 1d6 years until a prisoner exchange frees you.
- 3:** your identity is revealed and you become a burned asset. Roll Aut 7+ to be discharged with honor and roll on the benefit table for this term.
- 4:** you learn of a conspiracy to enrich a corrupt domestic ally of your cause or realm. Gain them as an enemy and one of the following as a talent: accounting, playing dead, or eavesdropping.
- 5:** Someone sends a message. One of your allies, contacts, or family members is severely injured.
- 6:** you narrowly escape a mission gone wrong, but not unscathed. Roll on the injury table.

### **Event:**

- 2:** roll on the mishap table, but you may continue as this character type.
- 3:** you and an opposed spy play a long game of cat and mouse. Test Dex 8+. On a success, gain one of the following as a talent: stillness, trapmaking, or poison resistance. On a failure, roll a mishap and you are unable to advance as a spy.
- 4:** while on a mission, you find the opportunity to steal a treasure from your target. If you turn it over to your employers, you get nothing. If you keep it, get +2 to your next benefit roll.
- 5:** you trade favors and gain leverage. Gain 1d3 contacts.
- 6:** you participate in an elaborate operation. Roll Dex 8+ or Ski 8+. On a success, gain one of the following as a talent: mechanisms, cart-driving, flexibility, or pickpocketing.
- 7:** Roll on life event table.
- 8:** you undertake a long mission of deep disguise. Test Ski 8+. On a success, gain one of the following as a talent: etiquette, military science, or religious canon. On a failure, roll a mishap but you can still continue as a spy.
- 9:** you perform a mission so perfectly, rumors circulate that it was achieved by magic. Get +2 to your next advancement roll.
- 10:** Enemies raid your stronghold or hideout, but you manage to slip away unharmed. Gain silence as a talent.
- 11:** a mission takes you beyond the boundary of the mortal world, and you confront spirits and demons. Get +4 to your next advancement roll or gain an extra language or one of the following as a talent: ritualism, fairylore, or refined palate.
- 12:** Your superior suffers an accident at a critical moment. Automatically succeed on your next advancement roll.

### **Templates**

**A:** Silence, Incapacitation

**B:** Ransack

**C:** Trade Tools

## D: Attack of Opportunity

**Silence:** you gain silence as a talent.

**Incapacitation:** when grappling, you can attack with medium weapons and move away unless pinned. While in control of a grapple, your opponent can't speak.

**Ransack:** when taking an exploration Turn to search a piece of furniture or 20' area, you have a 6-in-6 chance to determine if there are any triggers or hidden spaces, and can assess the value of anything you find at a glance, as well as any failsafes or traps meant to destroy something before it falls into your hands.

**Trade Tools:** you can go to underground outfitters to purchase trade tools— objects that serve a normal function but can be used as a specific weapon or clandestine second item such climbing gear, lockpicks, or earhorn. They cost as much as both items combined, but only weigh as much as the apparent object (within reason). You can spend starting gold on Trade Tools.

**Attack of Opportunity:** when someone moves away from you and doesn't take an action to disengage carefully, you may make a free attack against them.

## Benefits

1: None or pickpocket talent

2: None or disguise talent

3: 100 GP or climb talent

4: 100 GP or +1 Aut

5: 500 GP or +1 Dex

6: 1,000 GP or +1 *dagger*

7+: 1,000 GP or never be surprised

## Noble

The greatest rulers, cruel or kind, know how to drape themselves in power. They understand that the raiments of authority defend them better than the shield, that the glory of the vanguard vanquishes more than the foes of a single day, and that those who suffer deepest are highest-crowned. Princess, paladin, and myrmidon earn the respect of those who follow them.

**Qualify roll:** Aut 9+. Automatically qualify with Auth 10 or more

**Start with:** an elder with a great responsibility you wait in line for, and 1d4-1 people in line before you. 1d6 long-serving courtiers to your house. 1d2-1 nurses, handmaids, or valets who would never betray you; a dueling sword, and a signet ring. If none of these people are your rival or enemy by the end of character creation, make a relative into a rival or a courtier into an enemy.

**Survival roll:** Mig 7+

**Advancement roll:** Aut 5+

## Mishap:

1: injured riding a horse, while inspecting a construction project, hunting, or in practice. Roll on the injury table.

- 2: scandal or slander forces you out of your position. Lose 1 Aut.
- 3: your family's seat of power is betrayed by treachery, or a rival in your family launches a coup. Roll Dex 7+ or Wis 7+. On a failure, roll on the injury table.
- 4: You are sent away on a fool's errand due to an ambitious princeling. Gain them as a rival and either law or military science as a talent.
- 5: an assassin comes for you. Test Mig 8+ or roll on the injury table.
- 6: you fall out of favor. Gain a contact in the nobility, and gain innuendo as a talent.

### Event:

- 2: roll on the mishap table, but you may continue as this character type.
- 3: You are challenged to a duel, or outraged to the point of challenging someone else. Backing out would lose you 1 Aut. If you go through with it, test Mig+[level] 9+. On a failure, roll on the injury table and lose 1 Aut. On success, gain 1 Aut. Gain dueling as a talent
- 4: you spend time learning from an ancient ally in a far-off land. Gain an extra language.
- 5: you are given an object that belonged to an important figure in your family line. Get +1 to your next benefit roll.
- 6: you are invited into a secret conspiracy. If you refuse, gain them as an enemy. If you accept, test Aut 8+. On a failure, roll a mishap and you cannot continue as a Noble. On a success, gain one of the following as a talent: gambling, tactics, or sneak attacks.
- 7: Roll on life event table.
- 8: your star rises, and others notice. Gain a rival and one of the following as a talent: riding, history, or administration.
- 9: you are trusted with a minor office. Gain an unhappy subject or subordinate as an enemy, and +2 to your next advancement roll.
- 10: war comes and you lead soldiers in battle or ensure there is a home for them to come back to. Gain a rival and an ally, and one of the following as a talent: logistics, appraisal, or geography.
- 11: you forge a deep friendship with a peer. Gain them as an ally, and owe them a favor. Gain carousing as a talent or +2 to your next advancement roll thanks to their help.
- 12: you are in the right place at the right time. Automatically succeed on your next advancement roll.

### Benefits

- 1: 100 GP or singing talent
- 2: 100 GP or history talent
- 3: 500 GP or +1 Mig
- 4: 500 GP or +1 Aut
- 5: 1,000 GP or squire
- 6: 1,000 GP or +1 *family weapon*
- 7+: 2,000 GP or +1 Aut, squire

### Templates

- A: Smite, Heraldry
- B: Command

**C:** Inspiring Example

**D:** Godchild

**Smite:** if a creature attacks you, the next time you damage them, deal an additional +1d6 damage.

**Heraldry:** you gain heraldry as a talent.

**Command:** when not in immediate conflict, you can issue a demand for some kind of accommodation or favor and it will be received favorably, met according to what the target thinks is reasonable. You can use this ability only up to [template] times on the same target (undifferentiated squads and staffs count as the same target) before they sneer at your impetuosity.

**Inspiring Example:** when allies, retainers, or hirelings are doing the same thing as you (attacking the same kind of foe with the same weapon, braving the save treacherous swamps, exc.) they get +2 to their roll. Followers never fail Morale rolls when following your example.

**Godchild:** A supernatural patron calls you their champion. You can only be permanently killed by a sword or a dragon, which some consider to be the equal and opposite of a sword. Poison that would kill you instead deeply curses you.

## Artist

In everyone is the seed of greatness, but in some is the potential to excel beyond imagining. Like the long-limbed swimmer and the genetic freak performer, some are set aside, chosen by fate to be exalted in their own possibility. The cultivated monk, the free-flying pirate, and the dutiful knight all share this hidden comitatus.

**Qualify roll:** Ski 7+

**Start with:** 1d6 relatives, 1d6 colleagues of the same class and station as you, a weapon of your choice, a stylish and practical outfit.

**Survival roll:** Ski 5+

**Advancement roll:** Dex 7+

### Mishap:

**1:** you win a fight, at a cost. Roll on the injury table.

**2:** a small conspiracy of influential figures work together to ruin your life for selfish and personal reasons, and you spend 1d3 years slowly getting your revenge. Lose all benefits you've rolled as an Artist, and gain one enemy— the last name on your list.

**3:** sudden upheaval destroys your connection with your people. Gain riding or scavenging as a talent.

**4:** your home is destroyed by an army. Gain them as a rival and lose 1d3 relatives.

**5:** those in power decide there is no need for people of your talents and buy you out. You may gain a gold benefit roll for this term or automatically qualify for the errant character type.

**6:** you glimpse a power beyond imagining or some spiritual horror, and find you cannot exalt in your own potential. No one understands what you mean when you tell them.

### **Event:**

- 2:** roll on the mishap table, but you may continue as this character type.
- 3:** you are invited to share in a forbidden fighting technique. Roll Ski 8+. On a success, gain 1 Wis. On a failure, lose 1 Wis.
- 4:** you enjoy local celebrity. Gain a contact or one of the following as a talent: dancing, stewardship, or carousing.
- 5:** adventure places opportunity in your path. Get +1 to your next benefit roll.
- 6:** a mentor accepts you as a student. Gain them as an ally, and get +2 to your next advancement roll.
- 7:** Roll on life event table.
- 8:** you are asked to join in a struggle against a local power. If you join with the upstarts, gain an enemy and roll Dex 8+. On a success, gain a contact and get leaping, inspiration, or political science as a talent. On a failure, roll on the injury table and get escape artistry, wound treatment, or lock-picking as a talent.
- 9:** you tour the land, exhibiting your skills. Gain 1d3 contacts.
- 10:** something belonging to you is stolen, and it's a lot of blood and sweat before you get it back. Add rumor-mongering, tailing, or waiting as a talent.
- 11:** you lead a charmed life. Roll a strange event on the life event table.
- 12:** innovate and create a signature technique. Name it and automatically succeed on your next advancement roll.

### **Benefits**

- 1:** 20 GP or your choice of armor
- 2:** 50 GP or breaking talent
- 3:** 50 GP or tumbling talent
- 4:** 100 GP or +1 Mig
- 5:** 200 GP or +1 *weapon*
- 6:** 300 GP or +2 Aut
- 7+:** 400 GP or when an adjacent ally is attacked, you may take the hit

### **Templates**

- A:** Body
- B:** Technique
- C:** Technique, Confident footing
- D:** Technique, Fleet

**Body:** your hands, feet, knees, elbows, and forehead are weapons that deal 1d4 damage. You may make an extra attack or grapple per combat round. You get +1 to hit with all attacks.

**Technique:** Pick one from the following list. You cannot pick the same technique twice:

- Angel Blood: +1 MD and learn one spell. Poison burns you.
- Demon Blood: +1 MD and learn one spell. Sanctified objects burn you.
- Dragon Blood: +1 MD and learn one spell. Gold burns you.
- Cleave: +1 to hit, and when you lay a foe low, you may immediately attack another enemy.

- Precision: +1 to hit, and you get a critical hit on a 19 or 20.
- Quick Draw: +1 to hit, and when you roll initiative you may make an immediate attack.
- Parry: +1 to hit, and you may forgo an attack on your next turn to reduce an incoming melee attack's damage by 1d8.
- Juggling: +1 to hit, and you can catch an incoming missile with a free hand by making an attack roll and beating 14.
- Breathstealing: +1 to hit, and when you lay a foe low you regain 1d4 HP.
- In Measure: +1 to hit, and you get +3 to saves vs the last target you've struck.
- Guard: +1 to hit, and reduce all weapon damage against you by 1.
- Fort Mayne: +1 to hit, and the minimum amount of damage you do is 2.

Spellcasting artists can't cast from scrolls and can't gain bonus MD from magic items. They can only cast spells that enhance their capabilities— making a rock glow is impossible for them, but growing eyes that see in the dark is possible.

**Confident Footing:** You can run 10' up a wall or 30' along a wall.

**Fleet:** you can move up to double your normal move speed in combat, for up to a full exploration Turn.

## Sage

There are hidden things, a world beyond the world, an order beyond the orderings of any mind within it. Those who have even a word of the hidden order are changed by it, and so changed they change others, stormcrows in their jeremiads or malefactors with minds of eyes and wheels. Call sage the overwise wizard, the witch wicked or warm, and the calm cosmonaut.

**Qualify roll:** Wis 8+

**Start with:** 1d6 relatives or those who see you as family, the friendship of a specific wild animal, an old or secret language, two other extra languages, parchment, ink, a quill, blotting paper, and three empty vials.

**Survival roll:** Aut 5+

**Advancement roll:** Wis 7+

### Mishap:

- 1: unseen creatures batter and strike you, and give your astral self a wedgie. Roll a severe injury on the injury table, and you feel that some spiritual remit that had been yours is revoked.
- 2: you become lost in study, your mind wandering far and long. Age 1d20 years, and reduce Mig or Dex by 1.
- 3: despite your efforts, a black day comes. Test Wis 8+. If you succeed, you have fulfilled a great destiny and closed a chapter of your life. Make a benefit roll for this term. If you fail, there is no one left to blame you.
- 4: you are blamed for an arcane mishap. If in your heart, you see a thread of destiny that leads from your previous actions to this disaster, gain warning as a talent. If you are blameless, gain the figure or group who most directly caused the mishap as an enemy, but keep your benefit roll from this term.
- 5: in the councils of the wise, another sage checks your ambition. Gain them as a rival.

**6:** On a journey through a land on no map, you suffer a natural injury from a supernatural threat. Roll on the injury table.

### **Event:**

**2:** roll on the mishap table, but you may continue as this character type.

**3:** you have the chance to perform an austere and cruel experiment. If you choose to do so, gain an extra benefit roll, 1d3 enemies, and one of the following as a talent: apothecary, demonlore, or psychology.

**4:** you work tirelessly and in secret. Gain one of the following as a talent: history, heraldry, geography.

**5:** you win a boon after doing a favor for a powerful figure. Gain +1 to your next benefit roll.

**6:** you study hoarded lore. Roll Wis 8+ to gain one of the following as a talent: biology, the trivium, alchemy, engineering, sociology, or spiritlore.

**7:** Roll on life event table.

**8:** after glimpsing a vision of future events, you must decide whether to act on it. If you choose to do so, roll Ski 8+. On a success, get +2 to your next benefit roll, gain an enemy, and gain one of the following as a talent: gambling, riding, or military science. If you fail, gain an enemy and lose your next benefit roll.

**9:** you perfect a remarkable spell. Gain +2 to your next advancement roll.

**10:** Politics and short-sighted policies intrude on your goals. Gain one of the following as a talent: administration, quick exits, or disguise.

**11:** a supernatural mentor takes an interest in you, becoming an ally. Either gain an extra language or get +4 to your next advancement roll.

**12:** you are counted wise. Automatically succeed at your next advancement roll.

### **Benefits**

**1:** 50 GP or extra language

**2:** 100 GP or library science talent

**3:** 200 GP or +1 Wis

**4:** 300 GP or +1 Aut

**5:** 400 GP or *arcane object* containing 1 MD/day

**6:** 600 GP or *hat* that serves as a +1 shield

**7+:** 1,000 GP or hear whenever your name is spoken

### **Templates**

**A:** Lore, +1 MD.

**B:** Mind Palace, +1 MD.

**C:** Insight, +1 MD.

**D:** Revelation, +1 MD.

**Lore:** you have a 2-in-6 chance of knowing two facts (powers, events, associated personages, exc.) of the DM's choice about any obviously magical feature or major landmark you encounter. +1-in-6 chance for each additional template in sage you possess. You know three spells, and

can study to learn more. What would be coolest would be if you and the DM came up with them together, but if you're short on time steal them from a list somewhere.

**Mind Palace:** you get +3 to saves that affect your mind, such as charms, fear spells, or madnesses. "Wizard folly" effects bypass this ability.

**Insight:** you see magic, hear the air displaced by invisible things, feel scrying eyes as heat, and taste words from someone whose words are not their own.

**Revelation:** gain a new talent. Work with the DM to invent one.

## Outsider

The realm of humanity is narrow, but there are those who live outside of it. Either the young race's elden forebears, or its exiled extensions, or its raging upstart siblings make up this band. Humans outside humanity are called barbarian or outlaw, for theirs is the way of the elf, the dwarf, the bogey, and the hundred hundred creatures only human-like in their aspect.

**Qualify roll:** automatic

**Start with:** 2d4 relatives, 1d3 points of contact with broader society, 1d3 targets of a grudge, 1d2 extra languages, distinctive clothing.

**Survival roll:** Ski 4+

**Advancement roll:** Wis 8+

### Mishap:

1: roll a severe injury on the injury table.

2: roll an injury on the injury table.

3: human agents of a borderland authority single you out as a problem. Gain them as an enemy.

4: a life-threatening illness reduces your Mig by 1.

5: you are betrayed by a friend. A contact, ally, or relative becomes a rival or enemy.

6: you are sent out on a pointless or impossible mission, either as a rite of passage or an excuse to be rid of you.

### Event:

2: roll on the mishap table, but you may continue as this character type.

3: an elder offers you tutelage and purpose. If you accept, get +4 to your next qualification roll, but owe that elder a favor.

4: in your element, you develop your abilities. Gain survivalism, craft, or history as a talent.

5: you find a long-forgotten treasure. Gain +1 to your next benefit roll.

6: where few men go, there strange things are. Roll an unusual event on the life event table.

7: Roll on life event table.

8: you are raided by an adversary. Gain an enemy if you didn't have one already, and test either Mig 8+ or Dex 8+. On a failure, roll on the injury table.

9: conflict comes to your people. You may volunteer to help defend them. If you do, roll 1d6. On a 1 or 2, roll on the injury table. On a 5 or 6, get +4 to your next benefit roll.

10: you have a close encounter with a spirit. Gain one of the following as a talent: fairylore, apothecary, or survivalism.

**11:** it is a quiet life. If you continue after this term, roll your next term as a commoner.

**12:** in adversity you are set apart. Automatically succeed on your next advancement roll.

### Benefits

**1:** None or singing talent

**2:** None or extra language

**3:** 10 GP or Contact

**4:** 20 GP or Ally

**5:** 30 GP or +1 Ski

**6:** 40 GP or +1 Mig

**7+:** 80 GP or +1 *Weapon*

### Templates

**A:** Stranger, +1 Custom

**B:** Favored Terrain

**C:** +1 Custom

**D:** Grudge

**Stranger:** outside of the narrow bounds of your home, you are considered an alien barbarian. Though many may distrust you, you are afforded a great deal of leeway. Most humans cannot discern how dangerous, canny, or serious you are.

**Custom:** each people that serves as a source of outsider-type characters has three Customs, folkways that distinguish them from the yokels of broader civilization. Any given outsider from among that group of people will probably only have one or two. Examples include:

1. Amphibious: breath air and water equally well
2. Architects: break through stone as if it were wood
3. Castes: immune to magical charms.
4. Breath Watchers: can see air currents. 4-in-6 chance to notice seams of secret doors
5. Craftsmen: create magic items with enough time and resources
6. Dreamers: never surprised by random encounters
7. Elden: multiply length of terms and lifespan by any number. [template]-in-20 chance of having personally known historical figure from your lifetime prior to 50 years ago.
8. Grumblers: immune to fatigue from misery
9. Hopeful: +1 to saves
10. Koscheis: keep your soul in a talisman or vessel that gives you +2 HP as long as it's on your person
11. Joyful Choirs: immune to paralysis
12. Light-footed: when convenient, act as though you only weigh 30 pounds
13. Night Stalkers: see well in starlight and live nocturnally without penalty
14. Partisans: daggers score a critical hit on an 18-20
15. Saddle-born: may fire a bow while riding or running at full speed
16. Sulfurous: immune to inhaled poisons
17. Tomb Builders: [you can hear the difference between a dark room which is silent and a dark room in which someone is not making a sound](#)

18. Travellers: gain two extra languages
19. Troglodytes: immune to fatigue from discomfort
20. Vampires: may consume sugar or fresh blood in place of water

**Favored Terrain:** designate a terrain type, such as forest, underground, pastoral, Hell, etc. You never get lost in such terrain, automatically detect hidden routes, and are at home there and all it implies.

**Grudge:** take half weapon damage and make an extra attack against those who have directly harmed you, against those who have a feud against you, and against the targets of your starting grudges

## Commoner

You farm or shepherd, or perhaps sell or weave.

**Qualify roll:** automatic

**Start with:** 1d6 relatives, 1 local leader or lord, an implement of your profession.

**Survival roll:** Ski 3+

**Advancement roll:** none

### Mishap:

- 1: injured, perhaps kicked by a horse or trampled by a plow. Roll on the injury table.
- 2: a local strongman harasses and drives you off.
- 3: hard times see you marginalized. Lose 1 Aut.
- 4: local powers struggle for control of your area. Cooperate with the newcomers and get +2 to your next qualification roll as a reward. Stick to the established leadership and gain them as an ally.
- 5: an uprising throws your life into chaos. Test Wis 8+. On a success, gain one of the following as a talent: endurance, scavenging, or jury-rigging.
- 6: a member of your community despises and sabotages you. Gain them as a rival.

### Event:

- 2: roll on the mishap table, but you may continue as this character type.
- 3: upheaval! You are caught up in the revolution. Gain one of the following as a talent: trap-making, streetwise, law, or explosives. Roll Ski 8+. If you succeed, you're on the winning side, and get +2 to your next advancement or qualification roll. If you fail, get -2 to your next survival roll.
- 4: you get from place to place. Gain one of the following as a talent: riding, carting, boating, or geography.
- 5: you manage to scrimp and save. Gain +1 to your next benefit roll.
- 6: by ruse, you read and study for a better life. Test Wis 8+ to gain an extra language, or one of the following as a talent: mathematics, engineering, or heraldry.
- 7: Roll on life event table.
- 8: Roll on life event table.

**9:** you learn someone's dark secret. If you choose to exploit it, gain +1 to your next benefit roll and a criminal contact. If you choose not to, gain nothing.

**10:** you are noticed for your cunning or strength. Gain +2 to your next advancement check.

**11:** you help a strange traveler through hard times, and learn from them. Gain one of the following as a talent: pickpocket, gesture, folklore, or singing.

**12:** your friend becomes someone of renown. Gain an ally, and either the talent etiquette or +4 to your next advancement roll in another character type.

### **Benefits**

**1:** 10 GP or extra language

**2:** 50 GP or contact

**3:** 100 GP or labor talent

**4:** 100 GP or finance talent

**5:** 100 GP or +1 Ski

**6:** 500 GP or +1 Aut

**7+:** 1000 GP or you may make yourself the least prominent member of any group

### **Templates**

None.

## Life event table

- 2: Sickness or injury. Roll on the injury table.
- 3: Birth or death. Someone close to the PC dies, or the PC becomes a parent, godparent, or similar.
- 4: Ending of relationship. The PC's romantic partnership explodes, or their beloved is killed, forced far away, or kidnapped.
- 5: Improved relationship. The PC's romantic relationship deepens, leading to marriage, years of unacknowledged mutual pining, an illicit affair, ex chetera.
- 6: New relationship. The PC begins a romantic relationship, either dating in the modern fashion, courting, questing in their beloved's name, or some other love-tie.
- 7: New contact. The PC gains a contact.
- 8: Betrayal. A contact, ally, or family member becomes a rival or an enemy.
- 9: Travel. +2 to next qualification roll.
- 10: Windfall. +2 to next benefit roll.
- 11: Crime: The PC is punished by an authority, or targeted by an unscrupulous scheme. They lose 1 Aut and skip their next benefit roll.
- 12: Unusual event. Roll 1d6:
  - 1: Occult heritage awakens. Describe the stressful or traumatic event that led to the awakening, then gain 1 MD.
  - 2: Lived among humanoids. Gain a contact from among them and an extra language.
  - 3: Wondrous Item. A magic object of unknown capabilities finds its way to the PC. Describe what it looks like and the DM will determine its function.
  - 4: Stolen memory. Something happened to the PC that they don't recall. They gain the DM's choice of the following as a talent: swimming, memorization, interrogation, engineering, pain tolerance, heat resistance.
  - 5: Friends in high places. Gain a contact from among a royal court, the high-status clergy, or similar.
  - 6: True prophecy. A seer or an ancient scroll imparted a warning to you, some fact that will definitely, absolutely come to pass.

## Injury Table

- 1: Nearly killed! Reduce one of Ski, Dex, and Mig by 1d6, and the other two by 2.
- 2: Deeply wounded! Reduce Ski, Dex, or Mig by 1d6.
- 3: Dismembered! Lose an eye or limb, and reduce Dex or Mig by 2.
- 4: Deeply injured. Reduce Ski, Dex, or Mig by 2.
- 5: Injured. Reduce Ski, Dex, or Mig by 1.
- 6: Interesting scar. +1 reaction with barbarians, sailors, and others who find scars cool.

## Healing Injuries

Injuries can be partially compensated for by healing, magical poultices, and the intercession of spirits. If a PC wishes, the penalty from an injury can be halved (rounded up), but for each point

of an ideal prevented, they owe a debt of 5,000 gp. This is usually not a crass bill but a debt of gratitude, the amount needed to repay those who helped the PC and thus prove that they can stand on their own two feet or that the expenditure of rare resources to heal them was worth it. Good works can reduce this debt just as well as payments.

## Languages

Each character starts with one. They are assumed to be able to read text in their languages within 100 miles of their home fluently, within 500 miles of their home with difficulty, and anything beyond that with a successful Heraldry test. Sages are an exception to this, being women of letters. If a character spends an overland Turn studying a local language, they may save, -1 for each language known, to get a +2-in-6 chance of understanding speech in that language.

- Common 1
- Common 2
- Common 3
- Trade argot
- Church latin
- Better church latin
- Archaicism
- Dog
- Cat
- Bird
- Snake
- Crab

## Equipment

Much. Use normal equipment tables for miscellaneous gear, but have a lot of it to pore over because that's fun. In general, some light objects can be bundled into the same inventory slot. You don't need to carry each sheet of paper in a separate slot, for example. But this game generously gives you 20 inventory slots, so the DM can afford to be miserly and disallow mixed bundles of disparate objects in the same slot.

Worn clothing, jewelry, packs, and the like don't take up inventory slots unless they are magical, in which case their burden exceeds their apparent weight. Therefore you can tell if a ring is magical by putting it on.

## Armor

- Helmets (20 gp) confer AC 12.

- Chest armor (20 gp), if worn with a helmet, confer AC 14.
- Arm- and leg-covering armor (20 gp), if worn with chest armor confers AC 12, or if worn with chest armor and a helmet gives AC 16.
- Shields (30 gp) give +1 AC. You can shatter a shield you're wielding to reduce the damage of an incoming blow by 1d10.

## Weapons

Light weapons take up one slot, medium weapons take up two, heavy weapons three.

- Arming Sword (10 gp, medium) 1d8 damage
- Axe (10 gp, medium) 1d6 damage, -2 to saves from inflicted ToC rolls.
- Bow (40 gp, medium) 1d8 damage, 150'
- Club (0 gp, medium) 1d6 damage
- Crossbow (50 gp, medium) 1d6 damage, 180', +2 to-hit chest armor, no Mig bonus to damage.
- Dagger (3 gp, light) 1d6 damage
- Flail (8 gp, medium) 1d6 damage, +2 to-hit shields and bypass shield-shattering
- Gonne (60 gp, heavy) 2d8 damage, 90', takes a minute to reload, smoky
- Greatsword (15 gp, heavy) 1d10 damage
- Halberd (15 gp, heavy) 1d8 damage, +2 vs charging foes, can reach over an ally
- Hammer (7 gp, medium) 1d6 damage, +2 to-hit helmets
- Lance (20 gp, heavy) 1d8 damage, attack during the ranged phase, those you don't hit get +2 to grapple you
- Sling (3 gp, heavy) 1d8 damage, 120'
- Staff (1 gp, medium) 1d6 damage, -2 to Might rolls to initiate a grapple with you
- Torch (1 gp, light) 1d4 damage

## Levels and Score

The point of playing RPGs is to get the highest score possible. A character gets points when they get a cut of the treasure recovered from an adventure— that is, a hazardous episode. 1 gold coin = 1 point added to that character's lifetime score. They also get points added when they get some kind of power-up or extra life (750), gain citizenship by trial or undergo a dangerous rite of passage (1000), become king (2000) or other things which feel to the DM like they absolutely must contribute to a PC's score. Further, carousing and rare experiences can add XP in exchange for expenditures of gold according to what the DM thinks is appropriate for their milieu and campaign theme. Upon reaching certain score thresholds, a character levels up, gaining a new template (up to 4).

Level	Score Needed	Templates	Max HP
1	0	1	8
2	2,000	2	8
3	4,000	3	8
4	8,000	4	8
5	16,000	4	10
6	32,000	4	11
7	64,000	4	12
8	120,000	4	13
9	240,000	4	14
10	360,000	4	15
11	480,000	5	16
12	600,000	6	17
13	720,000	7	18
14	840,000	8	20

In addition to gaining power through leveling up, characters are encouraged to train, study, and undertake [quests for power](#). If their PCs inquire about good mentors and technique-havers willing to teach for coin and find there are none in a reasonable area, they get to help the DM make a d6 table of NPCs and the abilities they have the potential to teach.

# Combat

There is no initiative. Instead, combat rounds happen in phases. If someone is surprised, they miss a round of combat. Generally, a character can make an attack OR grapple OR cast a spell, and also move up to 30 feet OR do some other maneuver. If two events in the same phase need to happen at different times, compare the dexterity scores of the competing characters.

## Phases

1. Morale checks. Most people have Morale 7 and most animals have Morale 5.
2. Ranged attacks
3. Maneuvers (positioning, drawing or dropping, exc.)
4. Melee attacks
5. Wrestling
6. Running (including charges)
7. Spellcasting

To make an attack, roll and add any to-hit bonuses, including any Skill modifier. If it equals or exceeds the target's AC, they are hit. Deal damage (modified by Might or Dexterity), and if reduced to 0 or less HP, they must roll on the Table of Consequences, adding +1 for each previous roll they have made since they were last at full health.

## d6 Table of Consequences

- 1:** Minor Wound. Either see your weapon shattered, or gain 1 fatigue.
- 2:** Major Wound. Elect to go unconscious, or make a **save**. If you fail the roll, lose an extremity or feature (d6): 1. foot, 2. 1d4 fingers, 3. hand, 4. leg, 5. ear, 6. eye.
- 3:** Unconscious. After receiving medical attention, make a **save** to wake up. On a failure, wake in 24 hours. Further damage while unconscious kills you.
- 4:** Dying, Conscious. At the end of any turn in which you attack or make a **save**, **save** or perish. You will bleed out in five minutes unless someone else can stabilize you. After receiving medical attention, make a single save. You only get one chance.
- 5:** Dying, Unconscious. You will bleed out in five minutes unless someone else can stabilize you. After receiving medical attention, make a single **save**. You only get one chance. Further damage while unconscious kills you.
- 6:** **save** or die. Optionally, may have last words.
- 7+:** instant death

Some attacks use alternate Tables of Consequences.

## Grappling

To grapple someone, make a Might roll. On a success, you are in control of the grapple. On a failure, they may take charge of the grapple or simply remained ungrabbed. Grappled characters can't use anything bigger than a light weapon unless it's part of their body.

When grappling, the combatants makes a Might roll. The winner gets to disarm, shove, knock down, drag 20', or pin the loser. In future rounds, a pinned character who wins the grapple roll can reduce the pin to a normal grapple, then immediately roll again to seize control. A pinned character who loses another grapple roll can be totally subdued.

## Exploration

When exploring an "adventure location" like an underground complex, haunted boat, or mansion full of tigers, we often divide events into 10ish-minute-long Turns. You can carefully move from one room to another in a Turn, or have a fight, or batter down a stuck door, or poke every flagstone in a small area, or whatever.

I'm not going to go over how light works, or random encounters or searching for secret doors. You know how it goes.

Reaction rolls are 1d12.

When traveling overland, we often divide a countryside into distinct connected zones. This is sort of like a pointcrawl if you know what that is, but the connections only represent the most sensible paths; if you're tenacious you can try to pathfind a new path, maybe seeking the advice of local guides or discovering a shortcut. For ease, we divide overland events into 5-ish-day-long Turns. You can discretely move from one region to another in a Turn, or start to heal injuries, or thoroughly search the countryside, or whatever.

If characters rest for a full overland Turn, they can regain 1d6 HP and one MD or 1 Fatigue (see below). Competent healers can increase this rate of recovery.

When characters or notable creatures the PCs may have met or heard of are encountered, a PC may be called upon to make a Heraldry roll, adding the level of the notable personage. On a success, the PC recognizes the personage, either from acquaintance or their description, and knows a bit about them. Conversely, if a personage is spotted at a distance, or covers their face, or otherwise may not be recognized, a failure of the Heraldry roll renders them anonymous. The DM has latitude in selecting the relevant PC, and should seldom let multiple players roll, giving very different alternate accounts if multiple succeed. Generally if a PC has the heraldry talent, they should be a good default choice.

## **Fatigue and Recovery**

Suffering and rough conditions can bring fatigue. This fills an inventory slot and gives -1 to all d20 rolls. An overland turn of rest away from the source of the fatigue can be used to reduce the amount of fatigue a character suffers by 1. If a character ever has 10 or more fatigue, they die wretchedly. Some things that bring fatigue:

- Agony
- Sleeplessness
- Forced marches
- An overland Turn without food
- Wearying work
- Sleeping in armor, without fire, or on rough terrain
- Disgusting deeds
- Poisons
- Cold
- Heat

# Thanks and Attributions

- The delineation of classes was inspired by Vulnavia of [the Lovely Dark's](#) Witch/Cowgirl/Spy/Princess/Sport Hero/Astronaut fantasy-fulfilment thoughts on the GLoG server.
- The character generation system, with its qualifying/surviving/advancing and other affectations, was lifted pretty directly from Traveller.
- The errant's folk knowledge ability comes from Xenophon of Athens's [glog ranger](#).
- The noble's Godchild ability comes from Locheil's [rotless fighter](#).
- The artist takes some inspiration from Vayra's [kung fu wizard](#) artist.
- The outsider's tomb builder ability comes from [George Michael's Zouave](#).
- The excellent grappling rules come from his good gloghack [G24](#).
- Talents and the rules for fatigue come primarily from Hilander's [Lost Fable](#)