

13TH PLANET GAMES PRESENTS



SWORD + SORCERY

— CODEx —



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SWORD+ SORCERY

— CODEx —

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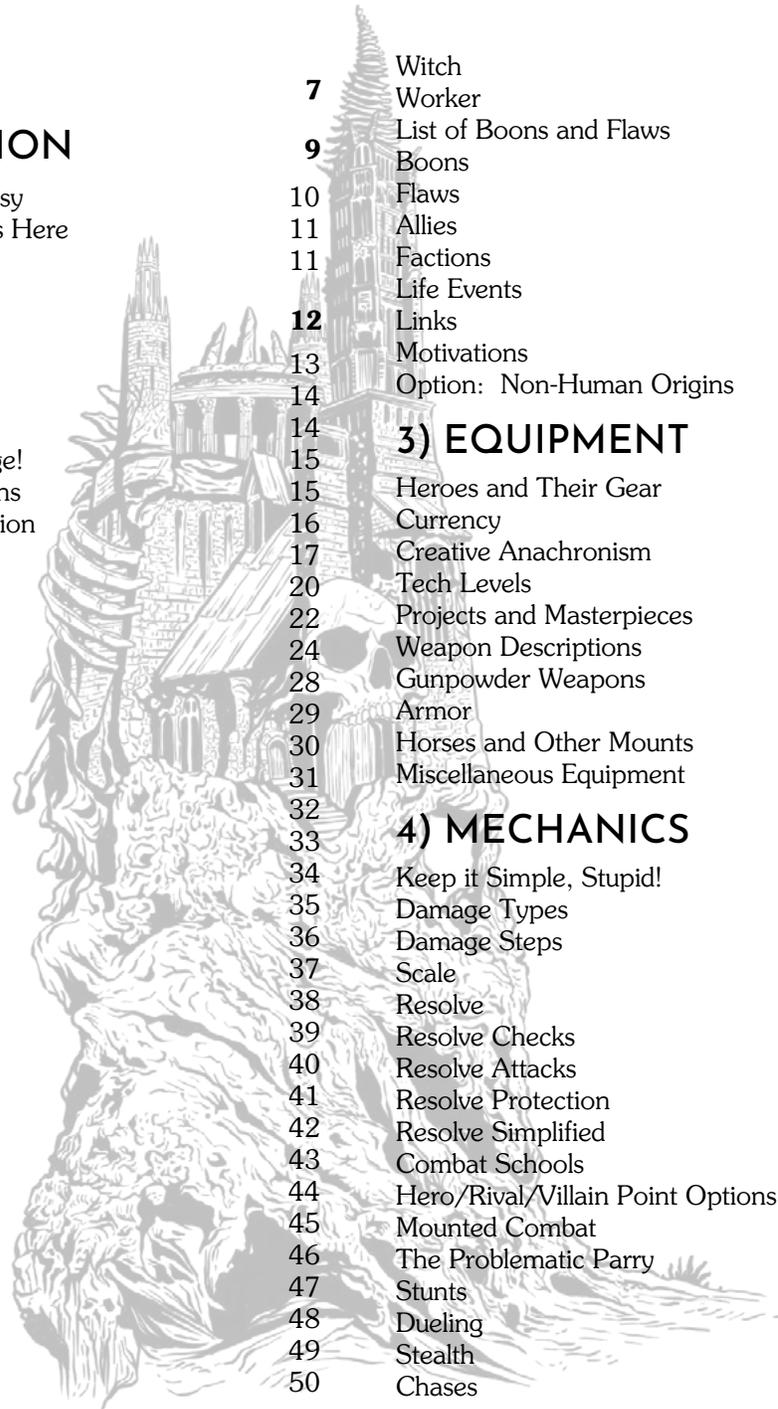
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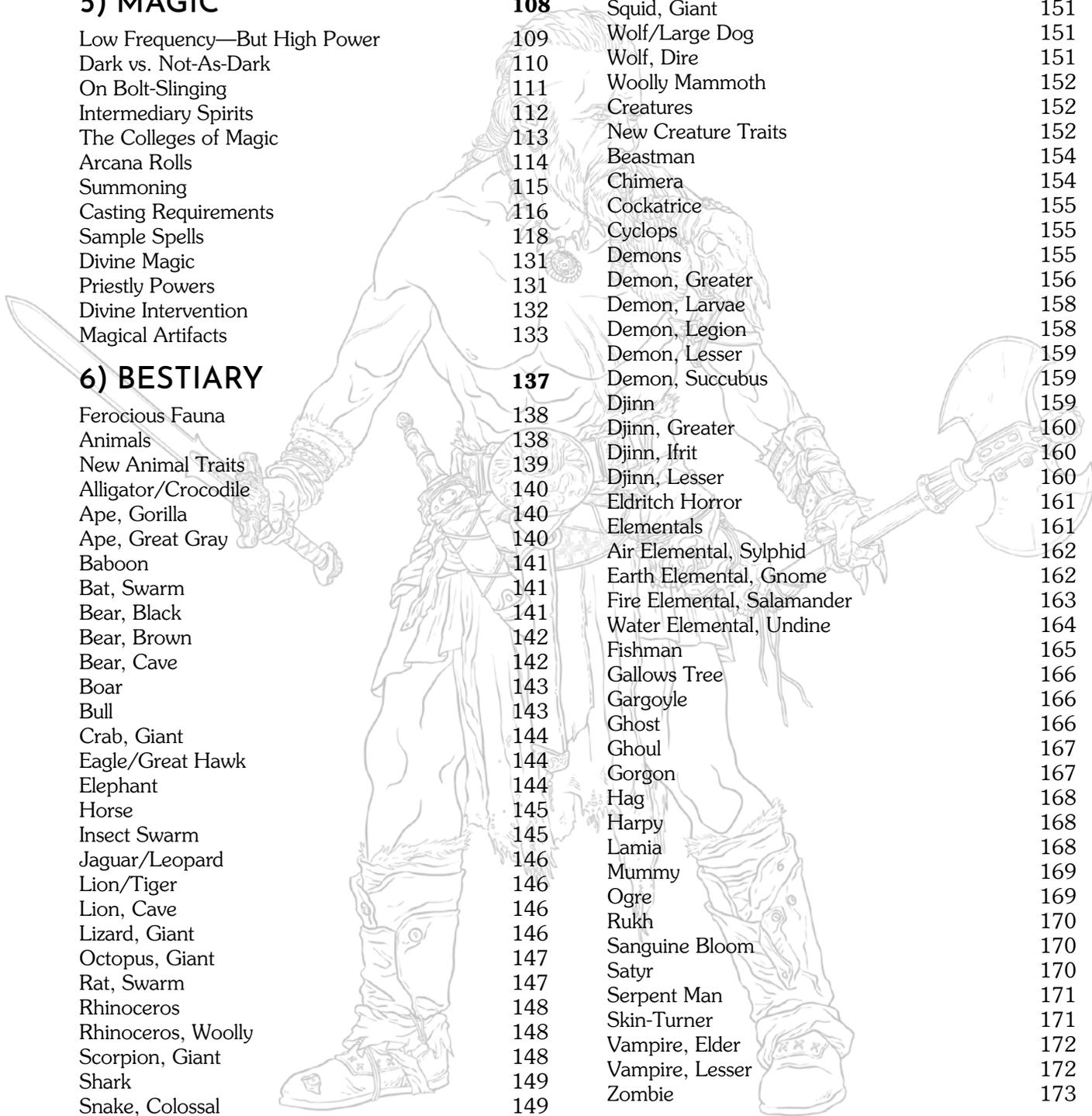
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SWORD + SORCERY

FOREWORD

If there was ever a genre that, in my youth, had me scouring the bookshops and libraries for ever more obscure authors and their (anti) heroes, sword & sorcery was it. It was this love that brought me into contact with D&D in the late 1970's. It was out of a sense of "trying to make the game even better" that I started tinkering with the rules from almost the day I read them—new monsters, new classes, new magic rules and so on.

From there, I got the "rpg writing bug"; first submitting material to various fanzines and then when I'd found my feet, to some of the "big boys" of the day—*Role Player Independent*, *Arcane* and *Valkyrie* (all now long defunct). However, it wasn't really until I published *Barbarians of Lemuria* for free online (still available) that I thought I might have some sort of hit on my hands and that I might even get into this self-publishing lark. Now, all these years later *BoL* (as it has become affectionately known) has become a massive hit and has been through many transformations. And although at its core the rules are eminently adaptable, it has consistently been about that most remarkable of genres—sword & sorcery.

All of this preamble brings me to Garnett. I'm not sure exactly when our paths first crossed but I know Garnett has been a big fan of *BoL* for very many years (to the extent that he gets a mention in the core rule book). Besides being a novelist in his own right, he's also written a number of well-received adventures for *BoL* so he certainly knows the genre well. So, when *Everywhen* passed from Filigree Forge to Garnett, I knew it was in safe hands. Now Garnett has put all of that knowledge and experience of sword & sorcery to good use with this *Sword & Sorcery Codex*. This book leans heavily on *Everywhen* but at its core you will see *BoL* in all its glory. It doesn't stop there – this book includes a corpus of complete rules for playing in any type of pulp universe that comes out of sword & sorcery/heroic fantasy. All in all, 255 pages of excellent advice and guidance, flavorful setting outlines, adventures, new monsters, gods and demons. As if that isn't enough, the book is full of excellent artwork from the talented Peter Frain and maps from Glynn Seal. Read on...you will not be disappointed.

Simon Washbourne
Beyond Belief Games
March 2023

The author would like to expressly acknowledge those two RPG stalwarts, Phil Garrad and Nick Riggs, for their passion and skill in writing the *Everywhen* core book. 'Standing on the shoulders of giants' indeed!





DEAN SPENCER



1 INTRODUCTION



ABBREVIATIONS

Sword and sorcery (as in the genre name) is often abbreviated as 'S&S' throughout the *Codex*. *Barbarians of Lemuria* is sometimes abbreviated as 'BoL.'

Both Arcane Points and Advancement Points (from *Barbarians of Lemuria*) are abbreviated as 'AP.' To avoid confusion, the latter is used in context with 'XP' (experience points, from *Everywhen*); see the sidebar at the bottom of pg. 11.

Ever since the original *Barbarians of Lemuria* came out, many gamers (author included) have been adapting the rules to different settings, including the classics created by such sword and sorcery icons as Robert E. Howard, Fritz Leiber, Karl Edward Wagner, and Clark Ashton Smith. Traditionally, the process required extra work by GMs and players to establish the right 'feel,' but no more! The *Codex* was written for just this purpose, using the rules engine most cited as perfect for running S&S adventures.

For example, say you want to:

- Return to the days of high adventure, treading across an antediluvian Earth to clash with scheming sorcerers, eldritch demons, and loot the treasures of lost civilizations? This is the *Codex's* default setting. Additionally, the adventure *Hellflower* (pg. 185) offers a surprise twist on what may seem like a familiar S&S tale.
- Comb the mean streets of a fog-shrouded metropolis, where jaded rogues pit their wits and dazzling swordplay against all-too-human villains? Check out *Wild Night in Ulthmar* (pg. 196), featuring the titular fleshpot of a city.
- Journey to a world where the forces of Entropy and Order wield doomed heroes as pawns in a game of cosmic dominance? See the section on **Divine Intervention** (pg. 132 in the **Magic** chapter), extended rules for summoning (pg. 115), the selection of demons and elementals in the **Bestiary**, and the adventure *A Plague of Swords* (pg. 213), where life-stealing hell-blades abound!
- Travel eons into the future to a dying Earth, where a swollen red sun hangs senescent in the sky, and the fruits of human technology have long since withered, thanks to a resurgence of sorcery? *The Seven-Sided Pyramid of Zahn* (pg. 226) has your number.

If that isn't enough, the **Settings** chapter of this book details a grimdark Europe where low power mercenaries scrap for survival and filthy coin, the sword and planet world of Tharak IV, and a *really* early Earth, predating Atlantis. There's something for every taste in the *Codex*!

ADVENTURES IN LOW FANTASY

As much ink has been spilled trying to pin down a definition of S&S as the blood shed by the genre's protagonists. For our purposes, we'll describe it as a subset of fantasy first appearing in 20's pulp magazines like *Weird Tales*, to later enjoy a resurgence of popularity in the 70's and 80's. The stakes in these episodic stories are generally smaller than in high fantasy, with a focus on personal survival rather than saving the world. Morality comes in shades of gray (though heroes are still generally likeable), and the supernatural often takes on horror elements.

Another point of comparison is the World's Most Popular Roleplaying Game. Though this originally enjoyed inspiration from classic S&S (listed in the famous 'Appendix N'), it has since evolved into its *own* genre, a sort of Tolkienesque blend of humanoid races, well-defined magic, and an incremental progression of 'zero-to-hero' power. As of this writing, several RPGs have repurposed this well-known system for S&S style settings.

To be clear: the *BoL* engine is *not* a retro-clone. There are no classes and levels, no power bloat, and no splat books to optimize character 'builds.' Heroes start out powerful, but don't accumulate enough hit points to dive off cliffs. Which brings up another important distinction . . .

WE DON'T COUNT TORCHES HERE

Or coins. Or rations. Or even arrows. You can track these things if you want, of course, though that isn't a focus of the game (see **Heroes and Their Gear**, pg. 73). Resource management comes up mostly in the spending of Hero and Arcane Points. Like most rules-lite games, however, the emphasis is on lightning-fast action, freely improvising during play, and interpreting die rolls in creative ways.

Despite this, there is a major similarity to the Old School Renaissance (OSR) style of gaming, which emphasizes imagination when figuring out what your hero can do. Instead of relying on pre-determined special abilities (also known as 'widgets' printed on a character sheet), players are encouraged to actually *think* through situations. The rules engine obligingly gets out of the way when resolving decisions.

A TALE OF TWO SYSTEMS

The *Codex* was written to be compatible with both *Barbarians of Lemuria* (especially the *Mythic* version) and *Everywhen*, so that gamers need only one core book. Though the two rulesets are very similar, *Everywhen* introduces some new mechanics used in the *Codex*. The **Mechanics** chapter of this book explains these systems for veteran *BoL* players.

The main differences between systems take the form of boons and flaws with different titles, and various statistics (like lifeblood) for animals and creatures. Additionally, the **Conversion Notes** sidebar in the **Bestiary** (pg. 139) explains some of the mechanics in adapting stats for different sized creatures.

Whenever a '/' appears, the term or value given before the slash is from *Everywhen*, and the one after is from *Barbarians of Lemuria*, *Mythic* edition.





2 HEROES

CUT FROM DARKER CLOTH

Unlike protagonists of high fantasy settings, S&S heroes tend towards a grim, opportunistic outlook. Survival motivates characters more than saving a kingdom. While there is wonder in the world (it's still fantasy, after all), there's a familiar sense of desperation, and outright horror. Such harsh conditions naturally breed harsh men and women. Even a younger, more optimistic character won't stay that way for long—if they expect to survive.

As often pointed out, S&S heroes follow their own moral code. While not (usually) evil, and likeable in their own rough way, they're not paragons of virtue. Just like in real life, what characters do is often dictated by the demands of a situation rather than principles. This makes a fixed idea like 'alignment' too restrictive. When heroes *do* act according to altruistic values it really means something—and like all good deeds, may end up punishing the character later. If this lack of moral guidelines sounds worrisome for GMs, don't despair. Players take to opportunism like fish to water!

Rather than 'race' or 'class,' S&S heroes are distinguished by their personalities and the cultures they hail from. Because the core rules used here are simple, game mechanics define a hero much less than in other systems. Players must fall back on the old standby of a character concept when creating heroes. Fortunately, the innovative career system makes this easy to do, and concepts in the S&S genre need not be complicated (see the **On Pulp and Pretensions** sidebar, opposite).

A key factor in defining a character's concept is motivation. Specifically, what motivates you to adventure? There are easier ways to make a living. Sometimes fate makes this decision for you, like when your tribal village is destroyed by raiders, or your scheming uncle tries to kill you to gain the throne. Or your sorcerer mentor grows careless and gets possessed by a demon. Or the old thief who taught you all the tricks is betrayed by your best friend. And so on. It's purely optional, but the **Motivations** on pg. 68 suggest some of the more common reasons adventurers take up such a dangerous life.

Finally, for players coming to *Everywhen* and *Barbarians of Lemuria* from other RPG systems, heroes of the S&S genre start out competent, even (appropriately) *heroic*. They're not fragile, and due to the episodic nature of S&S adventures, players don't have to worry about plotting an 'arc' for their hero's development. On the other hand, these characters aren't *super* heroic either. No levels mean no vast amounts of hit points, godlike special abilities, etc. Characters can still die, especially if they're out of Hero Points. If you want an even grittier approach, the **Grimdark** option on pg. 27 provides guidelines for creating more 'real world' heroes.



ON PULP AND PRETENSIONS

If all this talk about motivation sounds too highbrow for what's supposed to be escapist, pulpy entertainment, remember that a character's concept can be as simple as describing what they look like or what weapons they carry. Since being introduced in literary form, the S&S genre has also been shaped by comic books, movies, and yes, even videogames. It's perfectly acceptable to describe your character in reference to a well-established one. Fully nuanced concepts can be developed during play, if at all.



BREVITY VS. BACKSTORY

S&S characters are often described as being painted in broad strokes. Writing an 8-page backstory is not necessary when creating a hero, and may even run counter to the genre.

The backstory technique usually involves asking a series of questions about a character—what is your eye color? How many siblings do you have? What is your favorite food? And so on. The theory holds that answering all these minutiae sparks creativity and evokes some larger themes. In practice, however, the result is often an indulgent, tedious mess inflicted on GMs and other players, with no real meaningful content.

Distilling a character into one or two paragraphs can be difficult, but also worthwhile. Consider the ‘packaging’ of an old S&S novel as a model. Once the luridly painted cover has drawn a prospective reader’s eye, the action-packed blurb on the back finishes the job:

TO STEM THE TIDE OF CHAOS . . .

Cruaidh, last son of Clan Corraigh, scourge of the Scarlet Druids, forsakes his island home and sails south for the dreaded Cairn Shores. There, armed with only a sharp sword and his own brazen thews, he must challenge the unvanquishable champion of the Everdead Lords—and win!

FIRST TIME IN PAPERBACK!
A 13th PLANET ORIGINAL!

Bombastic, yes, but our little back-cover ditty gets to the point in under 50 words. Aside from outlining the novel, the blurb gives us some idea of who Cruaidh is, what he wants, and just as importantly, who (or what) is standing in his way. Try *that* with 8 pages of Q and A!

THE PERILS OF SORCERY

When S&S stories first appeared, the heroes were clean-limbed fighting men and women, pitted against evil wizards whose souls had shriveled from the practice of forbidden arts. The early 60’s saw the appearance of a certain albino anti-hero, arguably more sorcerer than swordsman. Flash forward to the present, where thanks to the influence of young adult novels and the world’s most popular RPG, magic-using heroes are now more common than mundane ones.

Many players will want to follow this trend, further reinforced by the idea arcane types are supposed to be rare in low magic S&S settings. When something is presented as *verboten*, people just want it more!

RPGs that focus on the S&S genre, including *Barbarians of Lemuria* and *Everywhen*, often use a corruption mechanic to simulate the hazards of delving into magic. Though wholly appropriate, corruption effects (especially those granted from random tables) can eventually transform sorcerers into shambling mutants, a consequence more suited for NPCs than heroes.

To address this, the *Codex* allows PCs to follow a ‘less dark’ path for sorcery (see *Everywhen*, pg. 81), though calling it ‘white magic’ implies a purity that doesn’t exist! This safer branch makes sorcery more palatable for players who want to use arcana without paying a heinous price. As magic is still unpredictable, rare, and potentially dangerous, the overall feel remains low fantasy rather than high.

Finally, the existence of ‘good’ or priestly magic granted by benign Divinities is a setting decision made by the GM (see **Magic**, pg. 131). This does not include instant healing spells in any case.





THE THIRD 'S': SUBTERFUGE!

S&S stories have often been likened as fantasy mingled with elements of horror. This seems appropriate, as both genres shared pages in pulp magazines like *Weird Tales*. Another popular genre of the pulp era was crime, and this, too, pairs well with fantasy.

Roguary emerges as a 'third force' to swords and sorcery. Heroes are often thieves, or fall back on thievery when other options aren't available. *Barbarians of Lemuria* and *Everywhen* makes this easy to simulate, by taking a rank or two of the rogue career. If desired, larcenous acts can be made more acceptable by choosing unsympathetic victims, such as filching valuables from the mansion of a cruel, money-grubbing merchant, or stealing a priceless gem from the tower of an evil sorcerer.

When heroes are dealing with obstacles, this third option shouldn't be overlooked; trickery can succeed where brute force or fickle magic fails. Clever players can glean information through silver-tongued flattery (or keen ears), stealthily recon dangerous areas, and bypass situations that would otherwise deplete resources like lifeblood, Hero Points, Arcane Power, etc. A devious plan can outclass even a Third Magnitude spell!

OPTIONS, OPTIONS, OPTIONS

Character creation presented in the *Codex* differs little from the original *Barbarians of Lemuria* and *Everywhen* approach. The primary changes are summarized below, but these should be considered options rather than canon. In fact, the whole **Heroes** chapter is essentially a buffet of options for GMs and players to freely use or discard as they see fit. After all, the *BoL* engine has been described as eminently hackable, and the *Codex* was written with this in mind.

Despite all the choices presented, character creation is intended to remain simple. If a player already has a concept in mind the process shouldn't take more than 5 minutes (and the hero can be summed up on a standard size index card!). Note also the **Life Events** option on pg. 61; these tables can help nudge a concept as well as suggest potential boons and flaws.



MAIN CHANGES TO CHARGEN

- The resolve mechanic is used (see pg. 92).
- Heroes get a base amount of 2 points for combat abilities, which can increase if martial-oriented careers are chosen (see pg. 25).
- Players have the option of creating origin cultures (homelands) for their heroes, subject to the GMs approval (see pg. 17).



STEPS IN CHARACTER CREATION

(1) Humans are the default 'race' for S&S settings. Non human options are possible with the GMs permission (see pg. 69 for some examples), but generally not recommended.

(2) Players have the option of creating an origin culture for their hero, subject to approval by the GM. See pg. 17 for details.

(3) If using the **Grimdark** option (see pg. 27), heroes get 2 points for attributes, or 3 if an attribute is bought down to -1. Buying down attributes otherwise is not recommended.

(4) One career slot can be left undefined at rank 0 or 1, to be determined during play (see **Mystery Careers**, pg. 26). Younger or older heroes are also possible, which modifies the number of careers available (see pg. 26). Grimdark heroes get 2 career slots with 2 points to spread among them.

(5) Careers are designated **Martial +1/+2**, **Martial +1**, or **Non-Martial**. This modifies the total points that can be distributed among combat abilities (see pg. 25).

(6) Players who want a creative nudge can roll once or more on the **Life Events** tables (pg. 61) to suggest potential boons and flaws.

(7) Heroes with pre-established **Links** (see pg. 68) who speak different languages have acquired enough fluency to communicate with each other.

(8) Resolve is used to track mental damage, 'sanity,' and reserves of willpower (see pg. 92). Additional uses for resolve are presented in the **Mechanics** chapter, pgs. 92-96.

START

1. Envision a general concept for your hero.
2. Select your hero's culture of origin (homeland).
3. Distribute 4 points among attributes as per standard rules.
4. Choose 4 careers with 4 points to spend among them as per standard rules. Your origin culture can suggest an initial career.
5. Assign 2 points among combat abilities. Martial careers can increase this amount to 3 or 4 points total.
6. Select boons and flaws as per standard rules. Your first boon comes from your origin culture, as does your first flaw. Your second boon usually comes from your origin or careers.
7. Select languages. You get one ('Common' or 'Trade Tongue'), +1 per point of Mind. Some boons and careers grant additional languages.
8. Determine lifeblood, Arcane Power, Hero Points, etc. as per standard rules. Calculate your resolve (10 + Mind).
9. Select equipment picks as per standard rules (1 relevant pick per rank in careers).
10. Name your character and determine their starting links (if any) with other PCs.

(9) See the **Equipment** chapter (pg. 72).

(10) If indicated, a player can define any **Allies** (pg. 60), **Factions** (pg. 61), or select optional **Motivations** (pg. 68) for adventuring.



HEROIC ORIGINS

Heroes have to come from *somewhere*, even if it's only vaguely defined with a name or concept (e.g., "he's a barbarian from the frozen North."). Most S&S settings start with several potential homelands established by the GM. These are often analogs of real cultures from history; Viking-like, Mayan like, Egyptian-like, etc. Players can quickly grasp what these cultures are like based on their real-life inspirations.

The *S&S Codex* gives players the option to create their hero's origin culture, subject to the GM's approval. This means character creation can also involve world-building. In addition to saving work for the GM, players have the opportunity for an immediate 'buy-in' with the setting. Of course, this also introduces potential headaches for the GM's carefully designed world. The **Rule of Remoteness** described on pg. 22 makes incorporating player-created homelands less painful.

Creating origin cultures doesn't have to be time-consuming. Choosing a name is usually the most difficult part. There are two general approaches to the process—the **analog** method, or creating cultures out of **whole cloth**.

ANALOG

Famously employed by Robert E. Howard, this entails taking a historical culture and giving it a different, though similar-sounding name. Select a general Cultural Type from among the four categories of **Primal**, **Tribal**, **Civilized**, or **Waning** (see pgs. 18-19). Next, select 1 to 3 Cultural Traits listed on pages 20-21. For example, an early Roman analog could be Civilized, with the expansionist and militaristic Cultural Traits.

Cultural Type and Traits can suggest a starting career, as well as an initial boon and flaw.

Example

Player One wants to make an elite warrior similar to an Aztec jaguar knight. The GM doesn't have any cultures like that already, so the player creates an Aztec analog, the Azatl, which she describes as a centuries-old jungle empire constantly waging war to procure ritual sacrifices. This sounds like a Waning culture with the militaristic and religious Traits. Player One does a search of ancient Central American names and chooses Xochitl for her hero.



WHOLE CLOTH

This approach involves creating a unique culture, usually a blend of both historical elements and fantasy tropes. *Barbarians of Lemuria*, for example, presents several original homelands set in the far-distant future. Though the whole cloth method sounds like more work, the principle of broad strokes applies here as well. Select a Type and several Traits as per the analog approach.

Example

Player Two wants to create a homeland 'ported' from his last campaign. He envisions Celt-like tribes living on misty Green Isle, but adds Maori elements (the culture produces far-ranging sailors, practices facial tattooing, and employs an intimidation dance similar to the haka). They also follow a dualistic religion, pitting the forces of Order against all-destroying Entropy.

Player Two defines the culture as Tribal, with the maritime, mystic, and raider Traits. Since he doesn't have the time (or training) to create an original language, he opts to stick with Celtic naming conventions, and calls his hero Cruaidh.

PRIMAL

The culture ekes out a harsh existence with Stone Age tools. Language can be very limited, consisting mostly of grunts and gestures. Primal clans fight each other over scarce resources, with only the strongest prevailing. Agriculture doesn't exist and niceties like art are rare.

These are often the remnants of Waning cultures that have regressed to total savagery (see **The Circle of Life** sidebar, pg. 23). Some may no longer be human, having devolved into wretched beastmen (see pg. 69). These creatures usually inhabit the ruins of their once-mighty civilization, with some recognizable feature, like eye or hair color, linking them to their ancestors.

Common careers associated with this culture are barbarian, hunter, and shaman (witch). Common boons are *Disease Resistance*, *Keen Senses*, *Giant Strength*, and *Hard to Kill*. Common flaws are *Illiterate*, *Primitive*, *Savage*, and *Simple*.

Note: this is the S&S interpretation of Stone Age cultures, and not presented as historical reality.

TRIBAL

Organized around extended family clans, Tribal cultures are often semi-nomadic to nomadic, with their largest fixed settlements being villages—they don't build cities. Commerce is based on bartering rather than coinage. Though considered 'backwards' by Civilized cultures, Tribal technology can go as high as Iron Age, with sophisticated artisanship to match. Tribal cultures are (grudgingly) admired for their toughness, as they have not been enervated by luxuries or 'soft' living.

Tribal warfare favors single combat, prizing individual valor over tactics. Periodically a warlord emerges who can weld disparate tribes into a horde, capable of sacking cities or bringing down whole empires! Tribal cultures are, in fact, the chief killer of S&S civilizations.

Common careers associated with this culture are barbarian, herder (farmer), hunter, and nomad. Magic is based on the oral tradition and practiced by shamans and witches. Common boons include *Alert*, *Athletic/Born Athlete*, *Environment-Born*, and *Quick Recovery*. Common flaws include *Country Bumpkin*, *Fear of . . .*, *Illiterate*, and *Temper/Hot-Headed*.

CIVILIZED

These are cultures that live in large settlements, including city-states. A privileged aristocracy runs the show. Civilized cultures maintain professional armies for protection against barbarians and (especially) other civilizations. They squabble as often as Tribal cultures, though on a grander scale. Trade is an essential feature, with most civilizations minting their own money. Religions are organized and ministered by priests; in some cultures, these are tied to the power structure and form an early bureaucracy.

Large populations mean specialists, including artisans and craftsmen capable of truly sophisticated creations. Depending on the setting, technology can go to High Medieval, or even Renaissance in certain fields.

Common careers associated with this culture are craftsman, farmer, priest, and soldier. Magic is the province of scholarly sorcerers, though 'lowbrow' witches and warlocks exist. Common boons include *Brawler*, *Glib/Silver Tongue*, *Low-Born*, and *High-Born*. Common flaws include *Addicted/Drunkard*, *Arrogant*, *Greed*, and *Urbanite/City Dweller*.



WANING

These are civilized cultures rotting from within. Seeped in decadence, physical and moral decay permeates every level of society. Jaded citizens engage in all manner of sybaritic vices, some even dabbling in sorcery and faddish demon worship. The nobility has become swollen with worthless titles, currencies debased, armies dependent on foreign mercenaries, and crushing slave labor the norm. Gladiators sacrifice themselves for the amusement of blood-crazed spectators, while shadowy assassins carry out governmental ‘reform.’

Waning civilizations don’t necessarily *know* they’re waning—in fact, they may see themselves at the pinnacle of achievement. Younger, more vital cultures are always eager to exploit this arrogance, speeding up an inevitable downfall.

Common careers are assassin, gladiator, noble, and slave. Common boons include *Biting Comment*, *Carouser*, *Detect Deception*, and *Inured*. Common flaws are *Addicted/Cravings*, *Amorous/Lustful*, *Dissipated*, and *Untrustworthy*.

These last two Types represent the ‘end state’ of cultural progression (see **The Circle of Life** sidebar, pg. 23). As they’re intended to be rare, taking these as an origin culture requires the GMs permission.

ANCIENT

This culture has managed to avoid collapse, staving off disaster and achieving stability over the course of millennia. While the result *can* be a utopia, it’s just as likely gone in the opposite direction. Given the passage of deep time and the usual xenophobia exhibited by this Type, its members may no longer be wholly human.

These cultures often inhabit a single, vast city with bizarre architecture. Technology may have progressed to an astonishing degree in some fields, perhaps even Advanced (see pg. 75). However, these discoveries are isolated and won’t affect the larger setting—isolation is one of the reasons Ancient cultures have lasted so long! Population growth is kept stagnant, with citizens enjoying vast amounts of free time. Most simply want to be left alone, to pursue their own amusements or perhaps reflect on ancient glories long past.

Common careers are alchemist, craftsman (artist), noble, and sorcerer. Common boons include *Artistic*, *First-Rate Facilities/Excellent Laboratory or Library*, *Genius/Savant*, and *Knowledge/Learned*. Common flaws include *Absent-Minded*, *Combat Paralysis*, *Delicate*, and *Naivety/Gullible*.

VANISHED

A very rare Type. The culture has recently been destroyed. This could be the result of a natural cataclysm (like an entire continent slipping beneath the waves), ‘scorched earth’ invaders bent on genocide, plague, a sorcerous catastrophe, etc. Whatever the reason, there are only a handful of survivors left—maybe just the hero! Refugees are forced to wander in a diaspora, leaving their ruined homelands behind.

Common careers are associated with the Vanished culture’s Type (Tribal, Waning, etc.), as are boons and flaws. Characters who witnessed the destruction of their culture may also have the flaws *Haunted*, *Stressed*, and *Taciturn*.



CULTURAL TRAITS

The following Traits can suggest specific careers, boons, and flaws. A culture with the maritime Trait, for example, would have sailor as a common career, along with the *Born-on-Board* and *Master Mariner* boons. A mystic one could favor the sorcerer career, with the boons *Magical Affinity*, *Power of the Void*, etc. Creative interpretation is encouraged!

This list is not meant to be exhaustive. If a player comes up with a unique culture and associated Trait, the GM should consider allowing it. For example, a culture formerly held in thrall to a race of alien wizards might have the 'anti-magic' Trait; sorcerer is forbidden as a starting career and the *Ward* boon is common.

- **Agrarian**—The culture focuses on agriculture and likely produces a food surplus for export. Agrarian cultures can exist in unlikely terrain, with canals knifing through desert floodplains, terrace farms built along hills, etc.
- **Archer** The culture relies on bows (or slings) as a major part of its military. This includes specialized training in the more difficult aspects of archery, such as drawing powerful longbows or shooting from horseback. Archers from this culture are frequently employed as mercenaries.



- **Artistic**—The culture puts a premium on creativity. This can be anything from fine crafts to writing plays. Other cultures may borrow from the literary traditions established by this one (e.g., Rome incorporating the mythology of Greece).
- **Cavalry**—Horsemen, not infantry, form the base of this culture's armies. Even rank-and-file soldiers have mounts. Riding, wielding the lance, and horse breeding are fine arts. This can also include the use of chariots.
- **Complex**—This culture has evolved a complicated social structure, with rigid castes and roles. Protocols for addressing members of separate classes, etiquette, and 'correct' behavior are strictly observed.
- **Despotic**—Rulership in S&S settings is often harsh, but this culture's is particularly repressive. Crushing taxes, heavy-handed nobility, and indentured labor are all possible. Revolts don't seem to change anything for long.
- **Diplomatic**—The culture likes to resolve disputes through intrigue, charm, and bribery, rather than military force. Charismatic leaders are especially prized. On the darker side, the culture routinely uses spies and assassins.
- **Duplicitous**—The culture embraces a Machiavellian approach to truth and honorable behavior, abandoning either when not practical. Though not necessarily 'evil,' members of the culture aren't readily trusted, either.
- **Expansionist**—The culture is in the process of enlarging its territory, usually through warfare, though aggressive colonization or proxy rule are also possible. This trait is not usually associated with Waning cultures.
- **Fractious**—The culture has two (or more) disparate elements that are always in conflict, such as distinct ethnic groups, language speakers, social classes, etc. This prevents a true sense of unity among the populace.
- **Industrious**—The culture enjoys a strong work ethic, with a greater proportion of time spent engaged in productive activities. Impressive public works or grandiose architecture may be a result, as well as an array of specialized craftsmen.

- **Maritime**—The culture makes good use of waterways, for both trade and warfare. Settlements are primarily coastal, but can also be riverine or built around lakes. The population is more cosmopolitan and likely has a powerful navy.
- **Mercantile**—The culture focuses on trade and may have a monopoly on certain resources and/or access to routes (caravan or sea). Government can be oligarchic, based on wealth rather than noble bloodlines.
- **Militaristic**—The culture is warlike for war's sake, showering glory based on conquest. Rulership involves military elites with a strong nationalistic streak. Though admired for their bravery, these cultures are hated by neighbors.
- **Mystic**—This culture embraces rather than stigmatizes the arcane. Forms of magic forbidden elsewhere (i.e., diabolism and necromancy) might be formally encouraged. Noble families are rife with sorcerers and witches.
- **Raider**—The culture takes what it needs from others nearby. This can include piracy as well as traditional cattle-raids, looting, and stealing harvests. Raider armies are mobile, favoring hit-and-run tactics.
- **Religious**—The culture has a well-established religion which guides matters of state. Priests are part of the power structure and may make up the nobility. Tolerance of other religions is likely low or non-existent.
- **Remote**—The culture has always been isolated, perhaps because of geographical features (e.g., an island nation) or strict xenophobia. Lacking outside influences, the resulting society can have evolved into something quite bizarre.
- **Scholarly**—The culture puts an emphasis on learning and repositories of knowledge. In Tribal societies, this can be *living* repositories, such as an oral historian. Scholarly cultures might enjoy a higher level of technology.
- **Terrain**—The culture is located among an inhospitable environment. Examples could be desert, high elevations, marshlands, tundra, etc. The people here are well-adapted to these conditions.





STEPS IN CREATING A CULTURE

1. Choose one of the four general Types: **Primal**, **Tribal**, **Civilized**, or **Waning**. In rare instances the GM may allow **Ancient** or **Vanished** cultures as well.
2. Select from 1 to 3 Cultural Traits
3. Name your culture and affiliated hero.
4. Present the culture for the GMs approval.

Finally, consider any nuances that make the culture truly memorable. These can be inspired by classic S&S literature or movies, history, or ideas that arise during the creation process. Some examples:

- A Romani analog culture that travels along major rivers, living in brightly painted houseboats instead of wagons.
- An advanced mercantile culture that uses hot air balloons, allowing traders access to remote settlements while providing high-visibility advertising!
- A Tribal culture eking out an existence in harsh badlands. At night they enter a rich, consensual dream world of bountiful paradise with the help of a fungal drug.
- A decadent Waning culture devoted to endless feasting and orgies, ruled over by a virgin queen who must forego all luxuries.
- A raider culture living along an interdimensional border. When feeling brave (or desperate) they launch incursions against their alien neighbors.
- A city-state where all disputes, no matter how trivial, are settled by unarmed combat in arenas scattered throughout the metropolis.
- A formerly conquered people who, after successfully revolting against their oppressors, re-animates them through necromancy, to create a 'permanent' underclass of servants, soldiers, and labor.

FOOTPRINT

Once the culture has been defined, the GM determines its 'footprint' relative to the established setting. Smaller cultures that are easy to integrate have a correspondingly small footprint, while larger ones, or those that place constraints on the GM, have a big footprint. This suggests a general rule for player-created cultures:

THE RULE OF REMOTENESS: the *bigger* the footprint, the *farther* away the culture is from the initial campaign setting.

Example

Going back to our previous examples, the Azatl culture defined by Player One is a long-lived empire that has subjugated surrounding peoples. Given its size and influence, the GM determines the culture has a big footprint, and places the Azatl on the edge of the campaign map, in a 'New World' area previously left blank.

Player Two names his Celt/Maori fusion the Waiti. As this culture is Tribal and lives on an island, it is somewhat easier to bring into the established setting, and therefore has a smaller footprint. The GM places the Waiti homeland, Green Isle, closer on the map, amidst a northern archipelago.

*Now, exactly **how** these two wayward heroes wound up in the GMs proto-Mediterranean campaign is up to the players to figure out!*

Finally, though the concept of 'yes is better than no' generally holds true between GM and players, allowing goofy, over-the-top cultures can destroy the feel of a carefully crafted setting. This is particularly true in an S&S style world, where players less familiar with the genre may try to bring in a lot of high fantasy elements, such as a nation of dragon-riding elves. Also, more power-oriented types may create *uber* cultures to justify their superhuman heroes. In such cases, the GM is well within their rights to exercise veto power. Some compromise or negotiation might also be in order!





OPTION: CULTURE BY COMPASS POINT

If the GM wants to keep things *real* simple, the following 'generic' cultures based on region are a possibility. Players can come up with variations within this general template, i.e., a Primal culture living among the frozen Northern wastes. The *Cultural Weapon* boon is detailed on pg. 55.

North

A land of ice, snow, and mountains. People here are a hardy breed, slow to temper but ferocious fighters when it suits them—and it suits them often. They sometimes wander to more 'tame' lands as adventurers, but also trade via waterways in their slender wooden ships. Tribal, with the maritime, raider, and terrain Traits. *Cultural Weapon*: axe.

South

A sweltering land of river deltas and steaming jungles. People live in massive 'fleshpot' city-states, where quick wits and deceit are the rule of the day. The high population gives rise to rigid social classes, with thievery often the only option for advancement. Waning, with the complex, duplicitous, and mercantile Traits. *Cultural Weapon*: spear.

East

An ancient, remote land of vast deserts and rolling steppes. Though of disparate groups, a strong, monotheistic religion unites them in faith. Even further east lies a remote culture only whispered of, who export exotic goods like silk and tea via land routes through this region. Civilized or Tribal, with the cavalry, religious, and terrain traits. *Cultural Weapon*: bow.

West

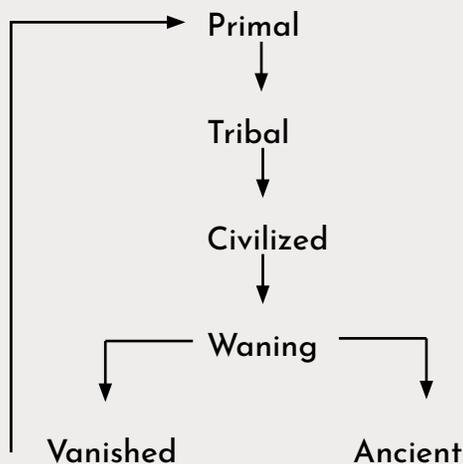
A temperate land of young kingdoms and former barbarian tribes who have (mostly) embraced civilization. Castles dot the landscape, and there is constant squabbling for power. Cities have lower populations compared to their Eastern and Southern counterparts. Civilized with the agrarian, expansionist, and militaristic Traits. *Cultural Weapon*: sword.



THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

Robert E. Howard's work posits the theory that cultures evolve through stages, similar to the life cycle of stars. They begin young and vital, claw their way up to become a great civilization, grow stagnant, and then die, often by some cataclysmic event or invasion. This either destroys the culture completely or sends it hurtling back to the Stone Age, where they must begin again.

This progression is illustrated below. The idea that the 'wild prevails' is just a theory (and a discredited one at that) but makes a good model for S&S settings!



OPTION: OUTSIDER HEROES

A staple in sword and planet settings, outsider heroes are people from modern eras who find themselves hurled through space and time to a fantasy world. This usually happens via a mad scientist's teleporter, rocket ship, mystical portal, rip in space-time (often appearing as a storm), transcendental meditation, or even an atavistic journey 'backwards' into the body of an ancient ancestor.

These heroes are often pilots, sailors, soldiers, astronauts, or rough-and-ready scientists who volunteered as test subjects. The character is built with 2 to 3 career slots of modern occupations (the *Dogs of W.A.R.* setting book is helpful here), with the remaining slots left blank as per the 'potential' option described in **Mystery Careers**, pg. 26. Modern careers aren't always useful in an S&S setting (e.g., a computer programmer), but the empty slots allow the hero to adapt quickly to their new environment. If the hero has any additional languages available, one of these should be set aside to pick up the *lingua franca* promptly.

On the plus side, outsider heroes get a modern equipment pick for each rank in their origin careers. These 'magic' items can go a long way towards impressing (or intimidating) the locals. However, bullets, lighter fluid, and batteries eventually run out. Also, any items lost or traded away can't be replaced.

Along these lines, outsider heroes can bring scientific knowledge with them as well (how to make black powder, distill alcohol, etc.). Converting this to actual working tech, however, requires the assistance of alchemists and specialized craftsmen, assuming appropriate materials can be sourced. The GM can require such heroes to take a career slot in inventor and use Project Points to simulate this process.

For an example of a sword and planet setting, see the Mars-like **Tharak IV** on pg. 236, as well as pilot Ray "Wrong Way" Gronski in the **Sample Heroes** chapter, pg. 183.

CAREERS

Twenty-five careers are presented in the *Codex* as representative of the S&S genre. Most of these come from *Barbarians of Lemuria*, with a few new ones added or folded in under a single heading. During character creation, players are sometimes tempted to create additional careers to better distinguish their heroes. This practice is not recommended, however. Instead, established careers can be seen as 'building blocks' that are combined, along with appropriate boons and flaws, to make new heroic archetypes. Some examples:

Takara Gozen is a female samurai in a Japanese analog setting. Rather than make a 'samurai' career, Takara's player takes noble at rank 1 to reflect her aristocratic upbringing, soldier at rank 2 for her extensive martial training, and scholar at rank 0 to represent her study of classic literature as befits an educated warrior. She takes the boons Battle Cry (her mighty kiai shout), and Heirloom Weapon for the Gozen clan's legendary Muramasa blade.

Stefan Von Bremen is a young European knight and member of a holy order, eager to go on crusade. Instead of a 'knight' career he takes noble at rank 0 (he comes from minor gentry), soldier at rank 1, and priest at rank 1. He's still a little green, and only recently taken his vows. To reflect Stefan's natural ability at riding and the tilt, his player takes the Horsemanship/Born-in-the-Saddle boon. He also takes Divine Blessing as a mark of his spiritual devotion.

Khamose of Nubia is a wandering mercenary archer, forced to flee his homeland after tangling with a dangerous cult. Rather than create an 'archer' career, his player takes 1 rank in hunter and 1 in mercenary (soldier), before assigning 3 points of Khamose's combat abilities to ranged. To further this specialization, he takes the boons Cultural Weapon (pitati bow) and Mighty Shot.

Nine-Fingers Nell supplements her magical abilities with trickery, duping well-heeled nobles out of their money with fake potions and divinations. Rather than create a 'charlatan' career, Nell's player takes 1 rank in witch and 2 in rogue, along with the boons Glib/Silver Tongue and Deft Hands to simulate her larcenous talents.



MARTIAL AND NON-MARTIAL CAREERS

Some careers are geared towards fighting, while others frequently involve violence as part of the job. Still others are strictly hands-off when it comes to bellicose matters. To simulate this, careers are rated as **Martial +1/+2**, **Martial +1**, or **Non-Martial**. These ratings determine a character's starting points for combat abilities, up to a maximum of 4.

- **Martial +1/+2** careers (barbarian, gladiator, nomad, and soldier) involve the most fighting. They grant +1 combat ability points for 1 rank and +2 points for 2 ranks. These careers always have a distinctive combat school (see **Mechanics**, pg. 97). At the GMs option, the highest rank of a Martial +1/+2 career can be added to priority rolls.
- **Martial +1** careers (assassin, hunter, noble, rogue, sailor, and torturer) can involve fighting, though not as frequently. These grant +1 combat ability points for the first rank only. Martial +1 careers may or may not have a combat school associated with them.
- **Non-Martial** careers (craftsman, merchant, sorcerer, etc.) don't grant any combat ability points.

Different careers can 'stack' to add combat ability points, though these can't exceed the starting cap of 4.

Examples

Merouac has 2 ranks in soldier and 1 in gladiator, which are both Martial +1/+2 careers. She gets +2 combat ability points for her 2 ranks in soldier, but the rank in gladiator can't increase this past the starting limit of 4.

Merouac's shady friend, Rokas the Razor, has 2 ranks in rogue and 1 in assassin, which are both Martial +1 careers. He gets +1 combat ability points for his initial rank in rogue (the second rank doesn't add anything) and another point for his rank in assassin, for 4 total.

Though they both start play with the same number of combat ability points, Merouac is arguably the better fighter. Because of her more martially oriented careers, she can add +2 to her priority rolls and use the Disciplined and Finesse combat schools interchangeably.





“WHY PLAY A SOLDIER . . . ?”

A frequent criticism of the *BoL* engine is that all heroes start with 4 combat ability points, regardless of their career choices. As such, some players might ignore the combat-related careers altogether, taking ranks in alchemist, sorcerer, etc., instead. Why settle for a narrower skillset and lack of special abilities if everyone fights the same? These rules were developed to address the issue, based on the non-combat option presented in *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*.

MYSTERY CAREERS

Sometimes during character creation it’s difficult to fill *all* a hero’s slots with meaningful careers. The character’s concept might not be fully fleshed, or the player may purposefully want to leave aspects of their life vague, to define later during play. There are two approaches for this, both subject to the GMs approval.

First, a single career slot can be left blank and chosen spontaneously during play, at rank 0 or 1 only. The player should come up with a compelling reason that ‘fits’ with the rest of their backstory, especially if the career is an unusual one, like sorcerer or witch.

Example

A group of heroes are stymied by a locked iron door. The holy warrior Stefan Von Bremen blushes as he slides a set of picks from under his sword belt. “My youth, I’m afraid, was sadly misspent before I took the vows of my order.” Stefan’s player designates his blank slot as rogue at rank 1.

Another option is to allow for ‘potential,’ meaning a character starts play without their full complement of career slots but can gain them quickly at reduced XP/AP cost. This works particularly well with younger characters (see opposite). Up to 2 slots can be left blank; between adventures, the hero can spend 1 XP/AP to ‘unlock’ a career at rank 1. The GM can waive the XP/AP cost if the player can come up with a good explanation as to how this career was acquired, based on events during the adventure.

Example

Lysas, a street urchin, takes 1 rank in rogue and 1 in beggar, leaving his other 2 career slots blank. During an adventure, he stows away on a galley bound for the isle of Thaxos, where he saves a young witch from her two powerful sisters. While helping her recover, Lysas learns a couple incantations and discovers he has a strong aptitude for magic. The GM allows Lysas to take witch at rank 1 as one of his blank slots, without spending XP/AP.

YOUNGER AND OLDER HEROES

Players may want characters who are younger or older than the norm:

Younger PCs have to take *Young* as one of their flaws, but get an additional free boon. They have 2 career slots with 2 points to spend among them, with none greater than rank 1. The other 2 career slots can be acquired during play at reduced (or no) XP/AP cost, as per the ‘potential’ option.

Suggested flaws for younger PCs (besides *Young*) include *Bereft*, *Combat Paralysis*, *Country Bumpkin*, *Naivety/Gullible*, and *Timid*.

Older PCs receive an additional career slot with 1 point, or just an extra point to spend on existing careers. They must also take an additional flaw, however, to reflect the burdens of a longer life.

Suggested flaws for older PCs include *Absent Minded*, *Apprentice*, *Enemy*, *Frail*, *Haunted*, *Missing Eye or Ear*, *Missing Limb*, *Out of Shape/Elderly*, *Poor Eyesight/Hearing*, *Poor Recovery*, *Stressed*, and *Tedious*.



COMBAT SCHOOLS

Some careers are associated with a particular style, or ‘school’ of combat that can come into play during a fight. Combat schools are detailed in the **Mechanics** chapter on pg. 97. The five schools are Dirty, Disciplined, Ferocious, Finesse, and Mounted.



OPTION: GRIMDARK

Some gamers prefer a grittier, morally gray approach to adventuring, where very human protagonists (often *anti*-heroes) do what they must to survive in an uncaring world. This cynical, pessimistic tone pairs well with S&S; the grimdark subgenre is sometimes tagged as the antithesis of high fantasy. For an example of grimdark characters in a hellish world, see Carnifex Mundi in the **Settings** chapter, featuring a hard luck mercenary company.

This is lower-powered fantasy, where amazing feats of skill are still possible but much less frequent. PCs must depend on their wits and superior tactics to survive, which includes running away when necessary. Appropriately, a beginning hero's abilities are halved; 2 points for attributes, 2 slots for careers with 2 points to spend between them, 2 Hero Points, and 2 points for combat abilities. This last can be increased to 3 if the character has at least 1 rank in a +1/+2 martial career, but no higher. Lifeblood, Arcane Power, and resolve are derived as normal. Characters have to take a flaw for every boon (e.g., no 'freebies').

As grimdark heroes are often less-than-perfect, buying an attribute down to -1 and spending it elsewhere is more acceptable. The biggest offset in power level, however, is the reduction of Hero Points; players need to think carefully before spending them. Hero Points can be increased during play by accepting the consequences of Calamitous Failures or as a reward by the GM for good roleplaying.

Starting out less powerful and 'growing' into a hero incrementally fits many player's expectations, thanks to their experience with 'class and level' systems, making this approach more attractive.



ALCHEMIST

Alternative Names: *Natural Philosopher, Artificer, Tinkerer*

Non-Martial Career

Alchemists practice an obscure form of magic called ‘science,’ based on codified, repeatable principles rather than incantations. Though their ideas are sometimes centuries ahead of their time, actual, working inventions are limited by currently available technology. Most alchemists are obsessed with transforming base metals into gold or discovering a universal solvent—but in the process produce a slew of practical knowledge, like Greek fire (see **Equipment**, pg. 84), siege engines, and advances in metallurgy.

Despite their rational background, alchemists with ranks in the sorcery career can mix the two disciplines, creating magical potions and unguents. Creations like the Philosopher’s Stone and the Elixir of Life would be considered Mythic level projects (see *Everywhen*, pg. 105 and *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 139), but not impossible!

Alchemists are good at research, knowledge of the natural world, reading ciphers, and deductive reasoning. An alchemist cannot take the *Illiteracy* flaw. Used to poring over manuals from distant lands, they get an additional language pick at rank 1.

Attributes: Mind is primary

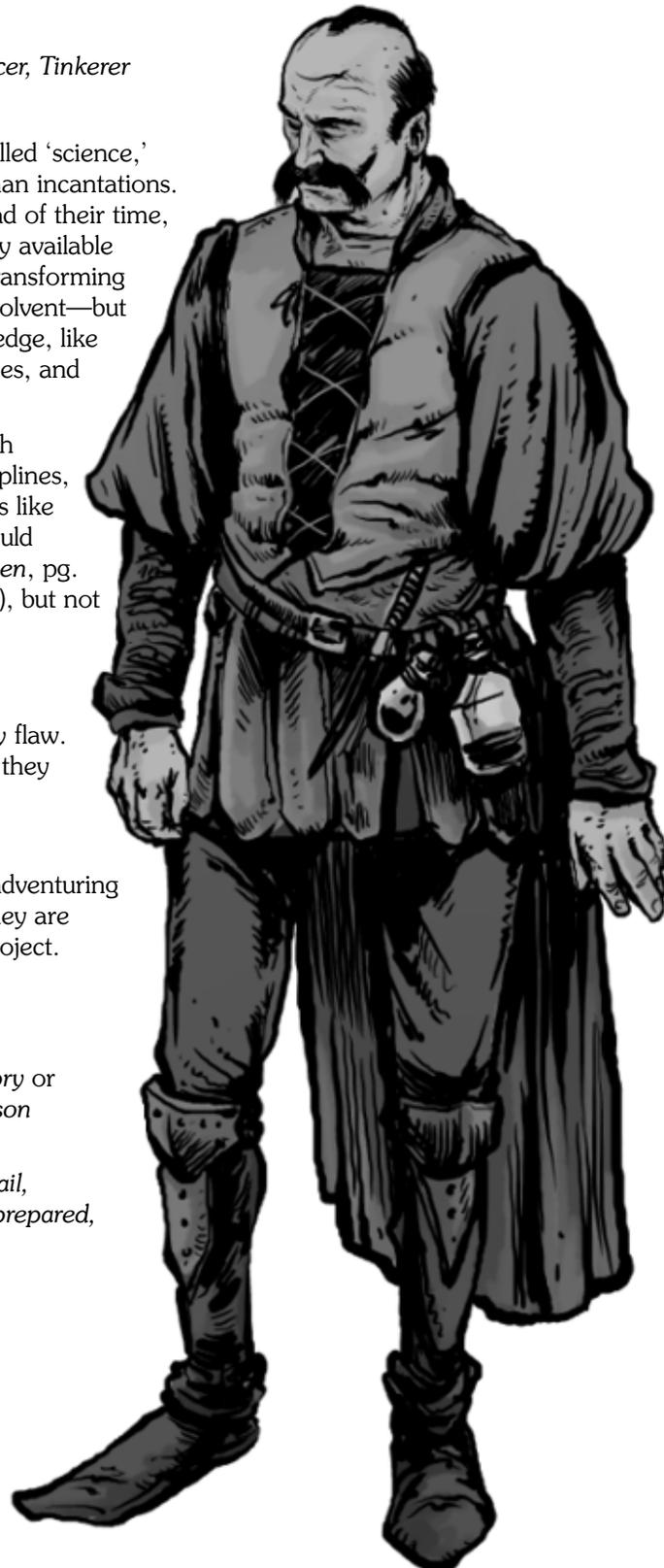
Adventuring: Practicing alchemists aren’t the adventuring type. If encountered outside their laboratories, they are usually in search of some rare ingredient for a project.

Favored Culture: Civilized

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Deft Hands, First-rate Facilities/Excellent Laboratory or Library, Genius/Savant, Knowledge/Learned, Poison Resistance, Poisoner, Tools of the Trade

Apprentice, Absent-Minded, Combat Paralysis, Frail, Obsession, Out of Shape/Elderly, Slow to Act/Unprepared, Tedious, Timid, Urbanite/City Dweller



ASSASSIN

Alternate Names: *Bravo, Enforcer, Spy*

Martial Career +1

Professional killers who use deception and stealth, assassins are hired (usually by nobles) to eliminate high-value targets. This distinguishes them from the common cutthroats lurking in every back alley of a typical S&S city. Not trained for extended combat, assassins favor a single decisive stroke to 'liquidate' their marks. This often involves poison, which, in the absence of forensic science, can kill without a trace.

Spies focus on collecting sensitive information rather than murder, though 'wetwork' occasionally becomes necessary. They often take a rank in courtier (noble) and/or temptress as cover.

Assassins are good at stealth, disguise, poison use, and concealing weapons. The skillset of spies has a more psychological aspect, with seduction, bluffing, persuasion, and observation. Assassins are trained to strike first and can add their rank to priority checks, which synergizes well with the Dirty combat school.

Attributes: Agility and Mind are paramount; spies often have some Appeal as well.

Adventuring: Assassins don't typically wander, so PCs with this career are likely 'between jobs' or currently less active in contract killing. However, this background makes a good hook for starting adventures, with the assassin being hired to eliminate a target in some far-off realm.

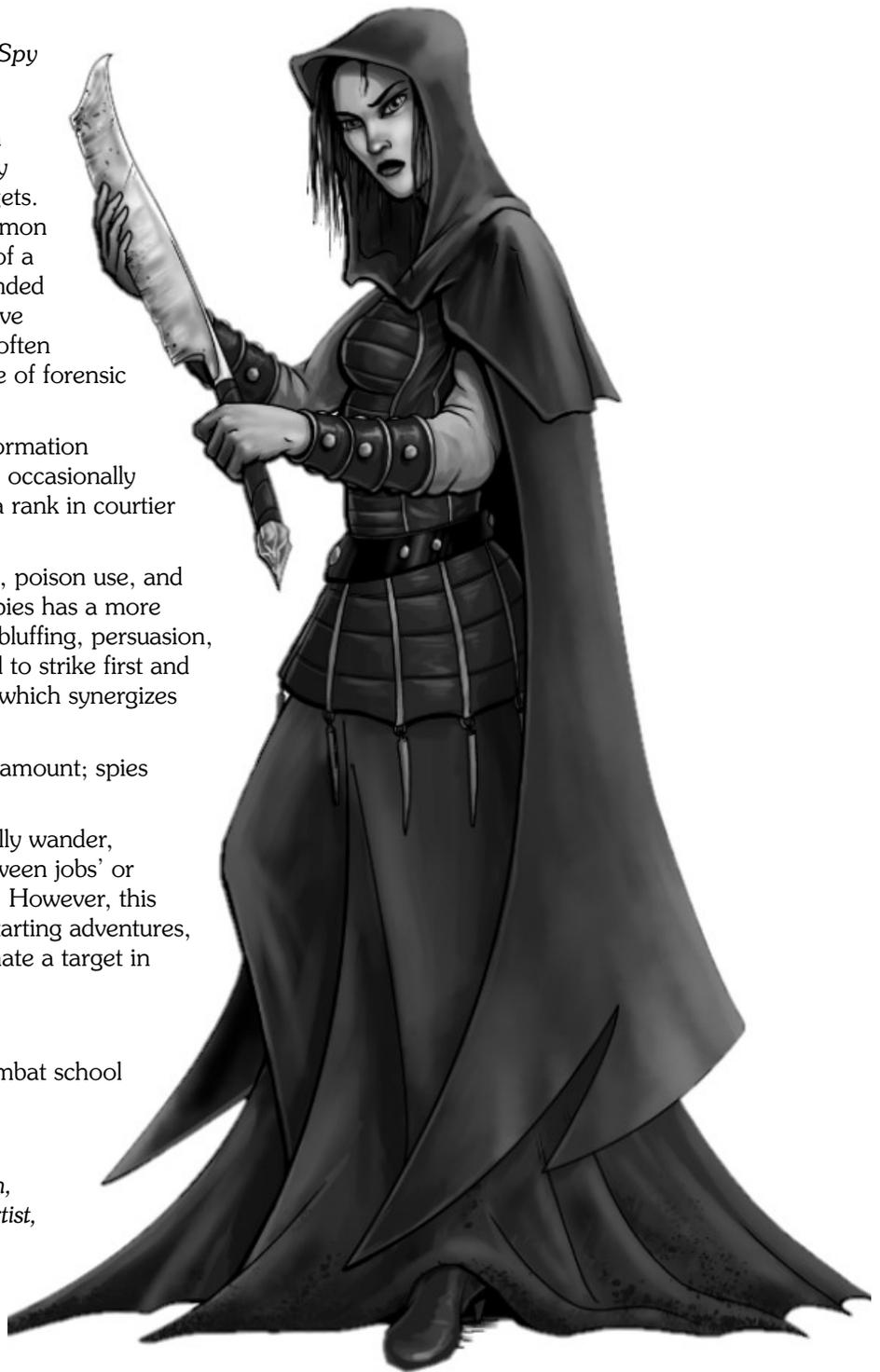
Favored Culture: Waning

Fighting: Assassins use the Dirty combat school (see pg. 97).

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Alert, Cat-like Agility, Detect Deception, Disguise/Master of Disguise, Escape Artist, Glib/Silver Tongue, Keen Hearing, Poisoner, Poison Resistance, Stealthy/Sneaky, Tools of the Trade

Arrogant, Bounty/Hunted, Enemy, Fanatic/Zealot, Hatred of . . . , Notorious/Infamous, Obsession, Urbanite/City Dweller



BARBARIAN

Alternate Names: Berserker, Savage, Tribesman

Martial Career +1/+2

Hailing from 'uncivilized' lands, these warriors excel at individual combat rather than fighting in massed formations. What they lack in drill and discipline, however, barbarians more than make up for with sheer ferocity. Their primal instincts plunge them into fits of red rage, where the only impulse is the urge to slay!

Hardened by a life in the wild, barbarians are well-adapted to their native terrain. Those reared in mountainous country, for example, are skilled at climbing, while barbarians born to dense jungle are adept at camouflage. All barbarians are good at stealth, sensing danger, survival in the wild, and intimidation.

Known for fearlessness, barbarians can add their rank when making Resolve Checks. At the GMs option, they can also add their rank to priority checks.

Attributes: Strength and Agility, with emphasis on the former.

Adventuring: Barbarians wander by default, drawn to the riches of softer, more civilized realms. The adventures they have along the way form the basis of S&S fiction.

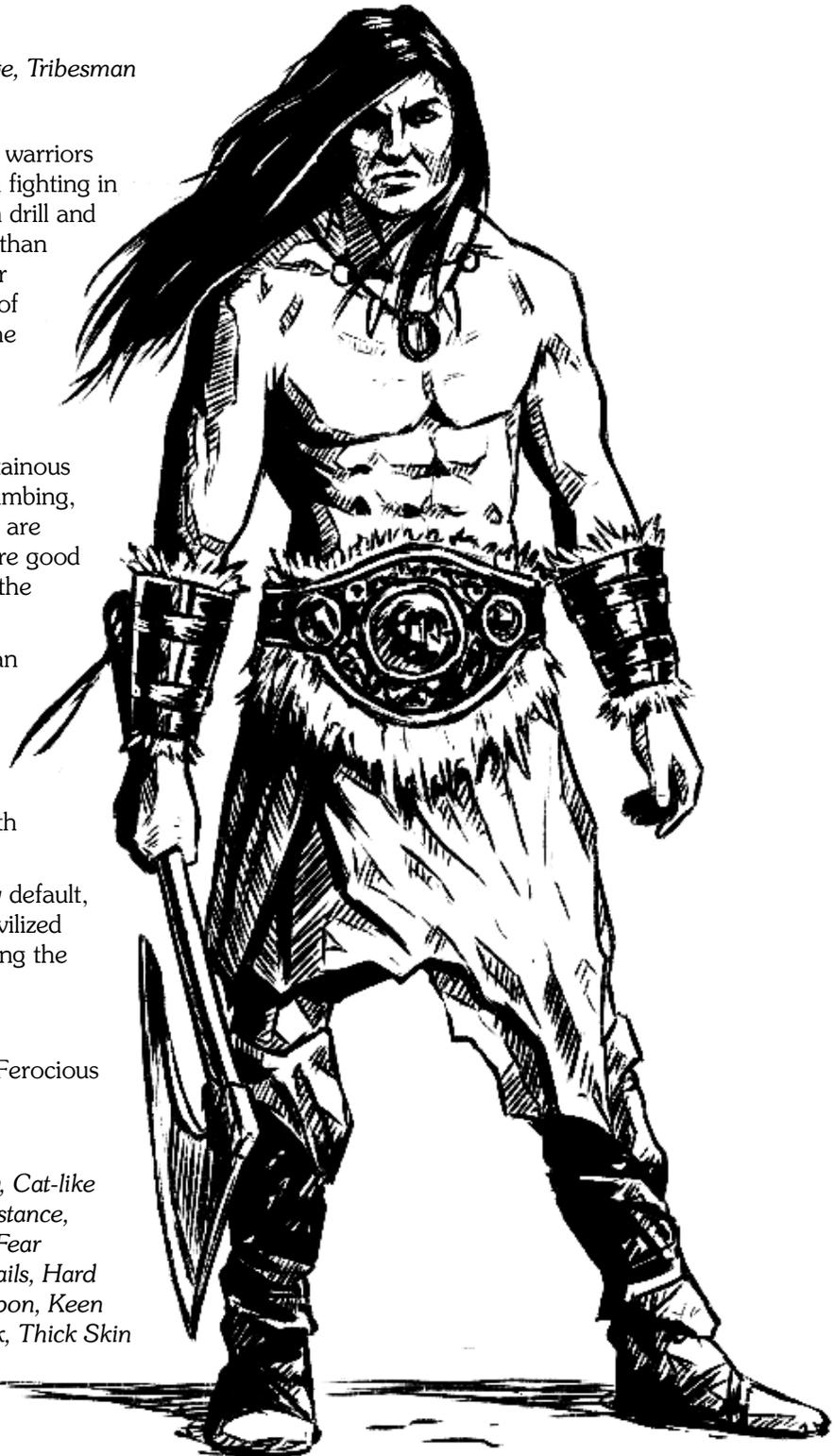
Favored Culture: Tribal

Fighting: Barbarians epitomize the Ferocious combat school (see pg. 98).

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Alert, Athletic/Born Athlete, Battle Cry, Cat-like Agility, Cultural Weapon, Disease Resistance, Environment-Born, Fearsome Looks, Fear Resistance, Giant Strength, Hard as Nails, Hard to Kill, Hard to Shake, Heirloom Weapon, Keen Sense, Strength Feat, Sweeping Attack, Thick Skin

Amorous/Lustful, Boastful/Braggart, Country Bumpkin, Code, Greed, Hatred of . . . , Illiterate, Landlubber, Memorable/Distinctive Appearance, Primitive, Savage, Taciturn, Temper/Hot-Headed



BEASTMASTER

Alternative Names: *Animal Handler, Wild Man/Woman, Feral Human*

Martial Career +1

This career represents people who share a nigh-supernatural bond with animals. This affinity can be a talent, nurtured as part of formal training, or the result of being born in the wild and raised by the beasts there. If the latter is chosen, this will be the character's first career with the cultural origin of Primal. The career also includes handlers who procure and train animals for gladiatorial combat.

A beastmaster's skillset can vary, depending on their subtype. Those born in the wild are adept at survival and stealth, while handler types know how to train animals for different tasks and treat their injuries. All beastmasters are good at animal lore, calming and befriending animals, and predicting their behavior.

At the GMs option, a beastmaster taking the *Companion* boon can have one 'pet' per rank in their career (e.g. they do not have to take *Companion* several times).

Attributes: Appeal is primary; wild types have Strength and Agility as well.

Adventuring: Beastmasters can be found wandering the wilderness, perhaps looking for new and exotic animals or even the 'parents' that raised them!

Favored Culture: Primal

Fighting: Feral beastmasters know the Ferocious combat school.

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Alert, Beast-Friend, Disease Resistance, Environment-Born, Keen Sense, Night Sight, Quick Recovery, Stealthy/Sneaky, Thick Skin

Country Bumpkin, Illiterate, Landlubber, Memorable/Distinctive Appearance, Mute, Naivety/Gullible, Savage



BEGGAR

Alternative Names: *Mendicant, Vagabond, Wanderer*

Non-Martial Career

Seldom a calling by choice, this career covers people who depend on the charity of others for their livelihood. The classic example is a street beggar, but this could include impoverished pilgrims and able-bodied mendicants, or rootless people who simply wander from place to place, trading their knowledge of far-off lands in exchange for hospitality. In quasi-medieval settings where few people stray from the confines of their village, this lifestyle is a bold (and dangerous) one.

Beggars often have an affliction to go with their status, such as missing a limb, leprosy, etc. Some may have once been soldiers before suffering a grievous wound. Of course, just as many are opportunistic types who fake such conditions for sympathy, or street-thieves who fall back on begging in lean times. Beggars are good at arousing sympathy, appearing unobtrusive, urban survival, and petty thievery.

Beggars who wander get an additional language pick at rank 2 or higher to reflect their travels.

Attributes: Mind to avoid danger, with perhaps Agility or Appeal when this fails.

Adventuring: Beggars make good adventurers, as their desperate situation means they have little to lose. Ubiquitous in any city, they are easy to work into scenarios.

Favored Culture: *Civilized*

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Deft Hands, Friends in Low Places, Inured, Low-Born, Stealthy/Sneaky

Addicted/Drunkard, Bereft, Clumsy, Illiterate, Lumbering, Missing Eye or Ear, Missing Limb, Taciturn, Ugly & Brutish, Urbanite/City Dweller, Untrustworthy



CRAFTSMAN

Alternative Names: *Artisan, Blacksmith, Weaver, etc.*

Non-Martial Career

This career covers all types of craftspeople, from silversmiths to leatherworkers and woodcarvers. Rather than compile an exhaustive list of all ancient and medieval era crafts, assume most skilled labor falls under this career. Craftsmen can be found in all types of settlements; in cities, they often appear grouped together by districts, with a Jeweler's Street, a Smith's Street, etc. Formal guilds promoting the common interests of specific craftsmen (e.g., the Wagoner's Guild) can appear as well.

In addition to their trade, craftsmen are good at judging the value of goods, haggling, and working long hours. Craftsmen accumulate downtime project points (DP) between adventures, similar to an alchemist's Craft Points (see *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 137). Blacksmiths can use these points to create exceptionally fine weapons and armor (see **Projects and Masterpieces**, pg. 76).

Attributes: Agility for most trades, with Strength or Mind depending on the nature of the work.

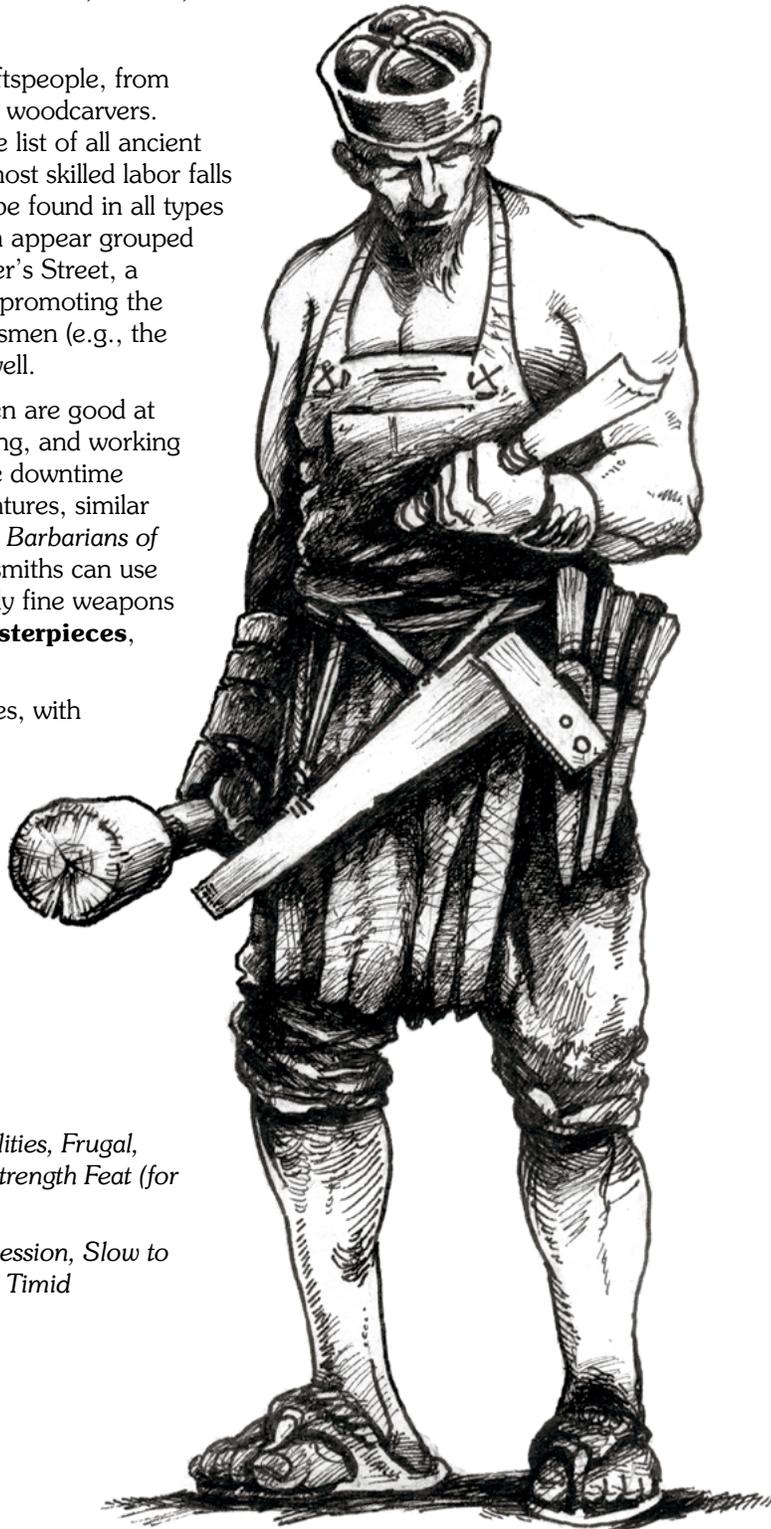
Adventuring: Beyond making necessary equipment, craftsmen are not associated with adventures. This could be a starting career for heroes, before they move on out of boredom.

Favored Culture: Civilized

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Artistic, Deft Hands, Excellent Facilities, Frugal, Giant Strength (for blacksmiths), Strength Feat (for blacksmiths), Tools of the Trade

Apprentice, Combat Paralysis, Obsession, Slow to Act/Unprepared, Taciturn, Tedious, Timid



ENTERTAINER

Alternative Names: Bard, Minstrel, Poet

Non-Martial Career

This career covers a broad group of people who eke a living through public performances; actors, acrobats, contortionists, dancers, jugglers, singers, storytellers, tumblers, etc. Most entertainers travel, plying their trade anywhere likely to draw a crowd. A select few are hired by nobles, and some even retained in their courts for private amusement. The career is considered lowbrow, however, and entertainers are often lumped with prostitutes and thieves—sometimes correctly.

Entertainers are good at their associated performance skill (e.g., acrobatics), bluffing, ‘reading’ a crowd, and emotional manipulation. Like gladiators, they are considered ‘famous’ at rank 3, and may have fans among NPCs. At the GMs option, chanting, singing, and heroic oratory can act as resolve protection (see **Mechanics**, pg. 96). Additionally, entertainers can heal resolve damage through their diversions, acting as a healer of the same rank.

Attributes: Appeal is paramount, though some forms of entertainment require Agility or Mind as well.

Adventuring: Wandering entertainers are a shoo-in for adventures, and the career makes a good side gig for heroes who need money as they travel.

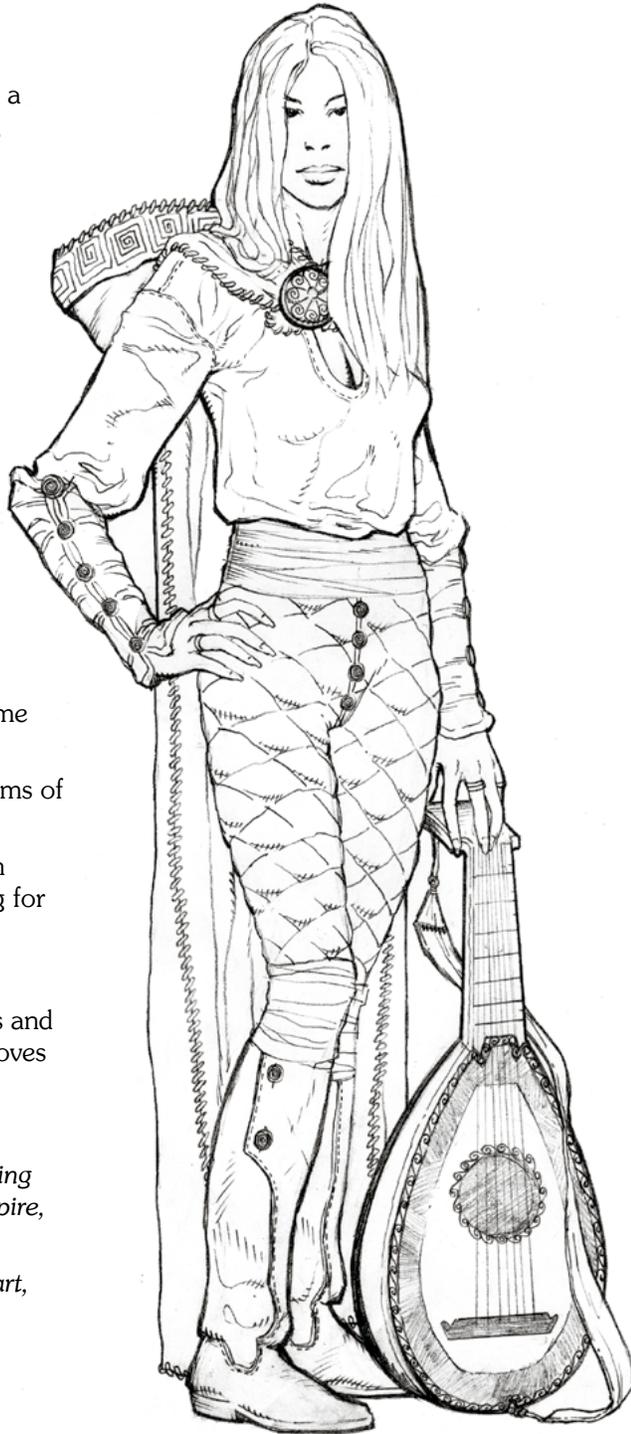
Favored Culture: Civilized

Fighting: Not generally applicable, though acrobats and tumblers might be able to pull off flashy defensive moves in combat.

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Artistic, Attractive, Carouser, Cat-like Agility, Comforting Words, Disguise/Master of Disguise, Escape Artist, Inspire, Glib/Silver Tongue, Striking Appeal

Addicted/Drunkard, Amorous/Lustful, Boastful/Braggart, Delicate, Greed, Memorable/Distinctive Appearance, Untrustworthy, Urbanite/City Dweller



FARMER

Alternative Names: Herder, Peasant, Fisherman

Non-Martial Career

The most prevalent career in any S&S setting, farmers grow crops for subsistence and profit. Herders and fisherman are also associated with food production, though the former can be found in nomadic societies and the latter among settlements that have access to water, salt or fresh. Farmer is likely to be the starting career for many PCs.

Subject to the whims of weather and disease, farmers are a tough lot. The epitome of self-sufficiency, they make most of the things they need rather than buying them. Aside from food production, farmers are good at animal husbandry, crafting, folk remedies, and bartering. This skillset can vary; fishermen, for example, are good at boating while herders may have extensive knowledge of terrain.

Attributes: Strength to work all day. Mind can be useful as well.

Adventuring: As noted above, this career is more likely to be part of an origin rather than ongoing. Farmers are not adventuring types—many have never left the boundaries of their own village. Note that the tedium of this career often presents a motive for adventuring in the first place!

Favored Culture: Civilized

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Athletic/Born Athlete, Beast-Friend, Disease Resistance, Environment-Born, Low-Born Combat Paralysis, Country Bumpkin, Fear of . . ., Illiterate, Landlubber, Naivety/Gullible, Overly Modest, Simple, Slow to Act/Unprepared, Taciturn



GLADIATOR

Alternate Names: *Champion, Duelist, Pit Fighter*

Martial Career +1/+2

Gladiators perform for the amusement of bloodthirsty crowds, while duelists and champions fight on behalf of noble patrons in formal bouts (e.g., trial by combat). These contests are almost always one-on-one and require arduous training under the watchful eye of a mentor. Gladiator is not usually taken as an initial career, but comes about as circumstance, such as a penniless barbarian becoming a gladiator to avoid starvation, a slave forcibly enrolled at a gladiator school, etc.

A gladiator's rank can indicate how well-known they are in a specified area, or a duelist's general reputation. Rank 3 or higher would be considered 'famous.'

In addition to their martial prowess, gladiators are good at bluffing during a fight (e.g., faking the severity of a wound), mock combat, and physical entertainment. They may know some acrobatic tricks and flourishes to impress allies while demoralizing foes.

Gladiators can add their rank when intimidating opponents in combat (see **Mechanics**, pg. 94). At the GMs option, they can also add their rank to priority checks.

Attributes: Strength and Agility. Appeal can help with showmanship, as well.

Adventuring: Adventuring gladiators are likely ex-gladiators, potentially on the run after escaping their patron. They bring their own distinctive style of fighting to groups composed of barbarians and soldiers.

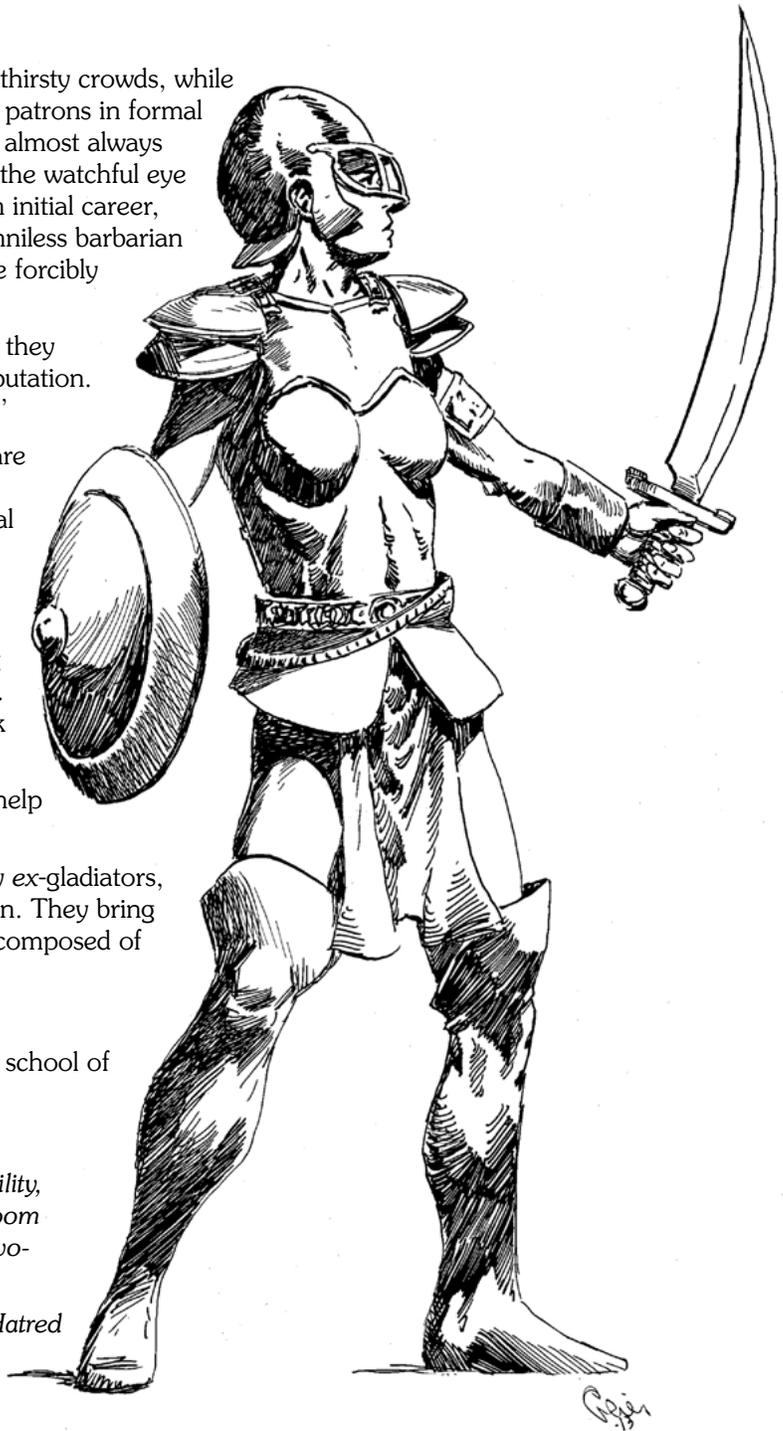
Favored Culture: Waning

Fighting: Gladiators are trained in the Finesse school of combat (see pg. 98).

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Alert, Athletic/Born Athlete, Brawler, Cat-like Agility, Fearsome Looks, Grappler, Hard as Nails, Heirloom Weapon, Inured, Quick Recovery, Thick Skin, Two-Weapon Fighter

Addicted/Drunkard, Boastful/Braggart, Enemy, Hatred of . . ., Illiterate, Missing Eye or Ear, Missing Limb, Notorious/Infamous, Savage, Taciturn



HEALER

Alternative Names: Barber, Physician, Wise Woman

Non-Martial Career

Healers put people back together after injury and cure the sick. In most settings, a fair amount of non-effective 'medicine' (e.g., putting warm dung on a wound) is interwoven with valid techniques, but this career assumes the healer has at least some accurate knowledge, such as the curative properties of certain plants, proven remedies, and (very basic) anatomy. Physicians take a more scholarly approach, with access to books and surgical tools like forceps. However, even this 'scientific' method endorses things like using leeches, cupping, and occasionally, poison.

Healers are good at making remedies, crude surgery, dressing wounds (including setting broken bones), midwifery, and have knowledge of common diseases. As per standard rules, they can immediately heal their rank in damage, add their rank to rolls for stabilizing the dying, and assist in long term recovery (see *Everywhen*, pg. 49, and *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 17). They can also comfort those in distress, healing resolve damage.

Attributes: Mind is primary.

Adventuring: Though not the 'healing spell machines' associated with priests in traditional fantasy RPGs, the healer's skills make them a welcome member of any adventuring group.

Favored Culture: Civilized

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Comforting Words, Deft Hands, Disease Resistance, First-rate Facilities/Excellent Laboratory or Library, Inured, Knowledge/Learned, Leech, Poison Resistance, Tools of the Trade

Apprentice, Arrogant, Combat Paralysis, Delicate, Frail, Obsession, Out of Shape/Elderly, Stressed, Timid



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HUNTER

Alternative Names: Scout, Warden, Tracker

Martial Career +1

Hunters are major food providers for Primal and Tribal cultures. They can be found in Civilized lands as well, usually in outlying villages or (as wardens) protecting a noble's estate against poachers. Scouts are employed by armies to recon wilderness in advance of the main force.

Hunters favor ranged weapons in their work. They are skilled in the ways ('craft') of specific terrain types, such as forest, jungle, desert, etc. All hunters are good at tracking, setting/spotting traps, stealth, and animal lore. At the GM's discretion, a rank 1 or higher hunter can have a trained Tough animal as an equipment pick, though this doesn't have the benefits of a *Companion* unless that boon is taken.

Attributes: Agility is prominent, with Mind and Strength helpful as well.

Adventuring: Hunters, who range far from their settlements, make good adventurers. They are particularly helpful in the wilderness.

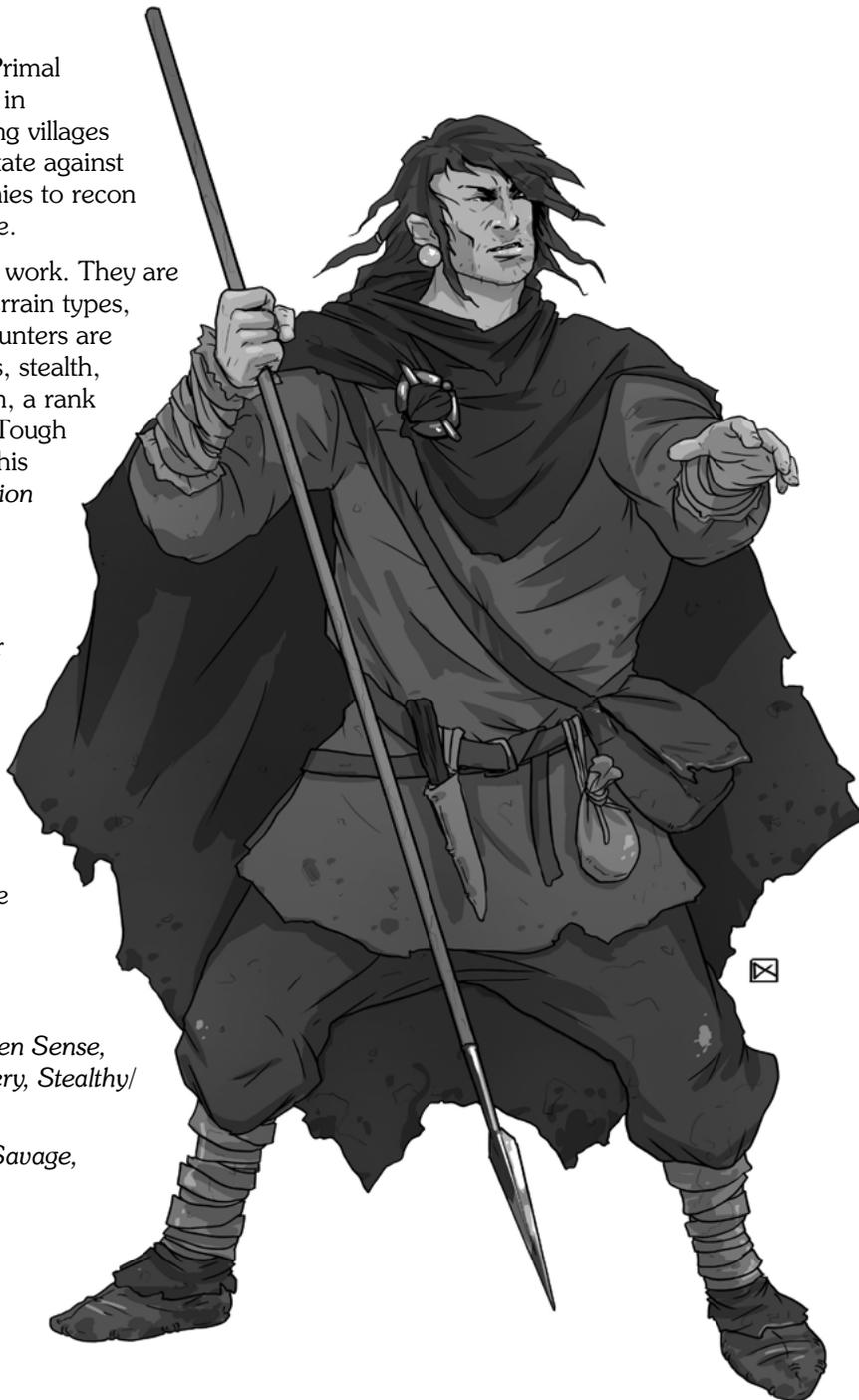
Favored Culture: Tribal

Fighting: Hunters don't have a combat school, but at the GMs discretion can add their rank in damage against game animals.

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Alert, Beast-Friend, Disease Resistance, Environment-Born, Fear Resistance, Keen Sense, Mighty Shot, Night Sight, Quick Recovery, Stealthy/Sneaky, Thick Skin

Boastful/Braggart, Missing Eye or Ear, Savage, Stressed, Taciturn, Temper/Hot-Headed



MERCHANT

Alternative Names: Moneylender, Shopkeeper, Trader

Non-Martial Career

Merchants are staple characters in S&S settings, often depicted as soft and money-grubbing. There's no reason heroes need to conform to this stereotype, however. Merchant PCs can be far-flung travelers, always on the lookout for new markets and new goods to sell. They may journey by caravan, ship, or along well-established routes. In some cultures, their social status is on the rise, perhaps one day rivaling the nobility.

Merchants are good at haggling, 'reading' people, evaluating the worth of goods, and bartering. They get an additional language pick at rank 1 to reflect their travels. Additionally, if the optional Resources rule (see *Everywhen*, pg. 59) is being used, this career gets a +1 bonus when calculating Credit Rating. Unlike other S&S heroes who blow all their hard-won loot between adventures, characters with this career are likely to retain at least *some* money—perhaps to sink back into their businesses.

Attributes: Mind and Appeal; the former for calculating costs, the latter for dealing with customers.

Adventuring: As noted above, merchant PCs make excellent adventurers as they have built-in motives to travel and seek money. They also make great NPC patrons, hiring heroes on as caravan guards or sponsoring expeditions to find lost cities teeming with treasure.

Favored Culture: Civilized

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Carouser, Contacts, Detect Deception, Frugal/Great Wealth, Glib/Silver Tongue, Knowledge, Linguist

Boastful/Braggart, Clumsy, Combat Paralysis, Greed, Obsession, Out of Shape/Elderly, Slow to Act/Unprepared, Tedious, Timid



NOBLE

Alternative Names: *Aristocrat, Chieftain, Courtier*

Martial Career +1

Nobles are the 'highborn' rulers, at least for cultures with a concept of hereditary titles. In Primal and Tribal societies these are chieftains, who achieved their status through deeds rather than birthright. Rank in the noble career gives a rough indication of status; a minor lord might be rank 1, while a king or emperor rank 4 or 5. In Civilized and Waning cultures, most nobles keep scrupulous track of their pedigree, which they proudly rattle off to anyone who will listen.

Nobles are good at etiquette, public speaking, fashion, and intimidation (by social standing rather than prowess). Chieftains are war-leaders and have a grasp of tactics rather than refinement. As they carry themselves with a certain dignity (which is difficult to hide), nobles can add their rank to social interaction rolls in most situations. Also, nobles are sometimes spared in combat because they can be ransomed off for large sums of money.

Attributes: Appeal is primary, though Mind also necessary for political maneuvering.

Adventuring: Heroes with this career are often rank 0 or 1; they stand to inherit little, or come from families whose fortunes were depleted long ago.

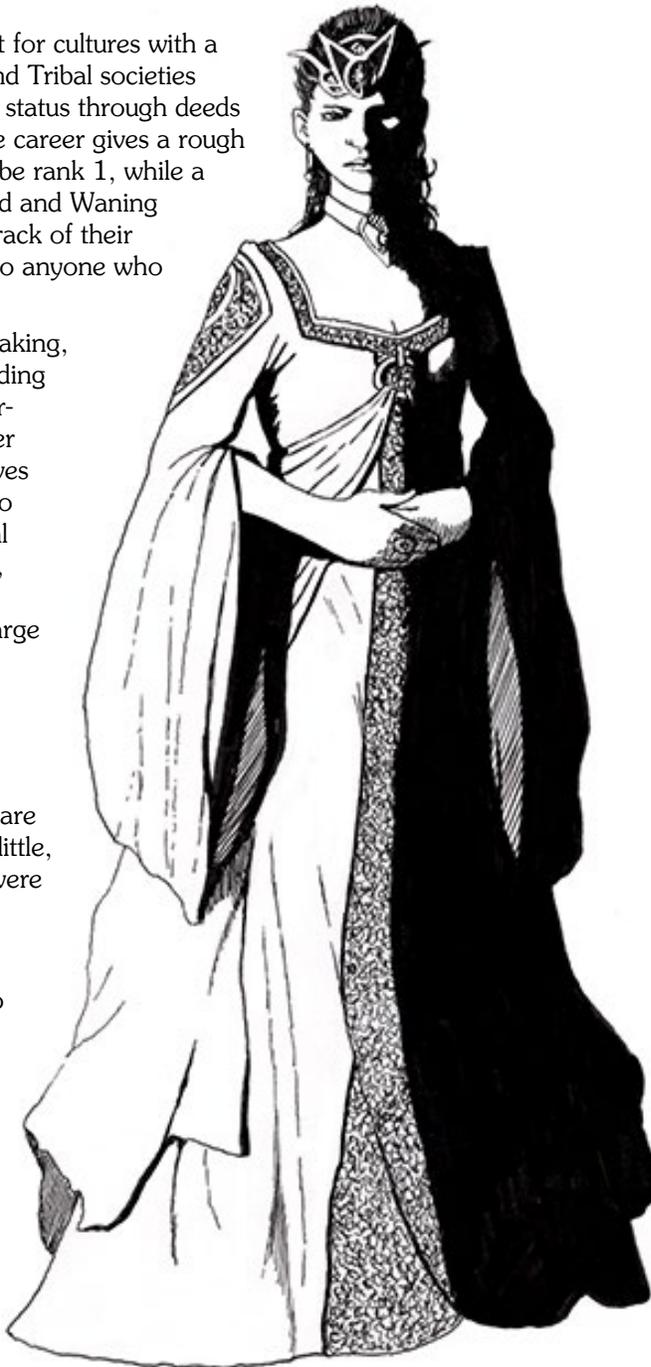
Favored Culture: Civilized

Fighting: Nobles are often expected to know how to fight, and have the time and money for personal training. Some follow the Finesse school of combat.

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Attractive, Biting Comment, Born to the Purple, Carouser, Contacts, Detect Deception, Frugal/Great Wealth, Glib/Silver Tongue, Inspire, Heirloom Weapon, High-Born, Horseman/Born-in-the-Saddle, Inspire, Reputation

Addicted/Cravings, Amorous/Lustful, Arrogant, Boastful/Braggart, Delicate, Dissipated, Enemy, Greed, Honor Bound, Memorable/Distinctive Appearance, Obsession



NOMAD

Alternate Names: *Desert Rider, Marauder, Steppe Warrior*

Martial Career +1/+2

Warriors of the desert, steppe, and rolling prairie, nomads have been hardened by a life in the saddle, eking a living in some of the harshest environments on earth. They have integrated the horse (or camel, or horse-analog) into their unique style of warfare, emphasizing hit-and-run attacks and mounted archery. Like barbarians, nomads typically hail from scattered tribes. Every generation or so, however, a warlord comes along to weld these disparate groups into a mighty horde—and the whole world trembles at the thunder of their hooves!

Nomads are masters of their native terrain, and hone skills suited to these environments. A desert nomad, for example, might be adept at finding water, while nomads of the plains can signal over long distances using smoke. All nomads are good at animal handling, riding, survival, and spotting/setting ambushes.

A nomad can use their rank to offset any penalties for actions from horseback, such as shooting a bow. Fearless, they can also add their rank to Resolve Checks.

Attributes: Strength and Agility. The latter is particularly important for handling a bow and lance.

Adventuring: As their name implies, nomads are always on the move, and therefore prone to adventures. Nomads are sometimes hired as scouts or caravan guards in addition to auxiliary cavalry.

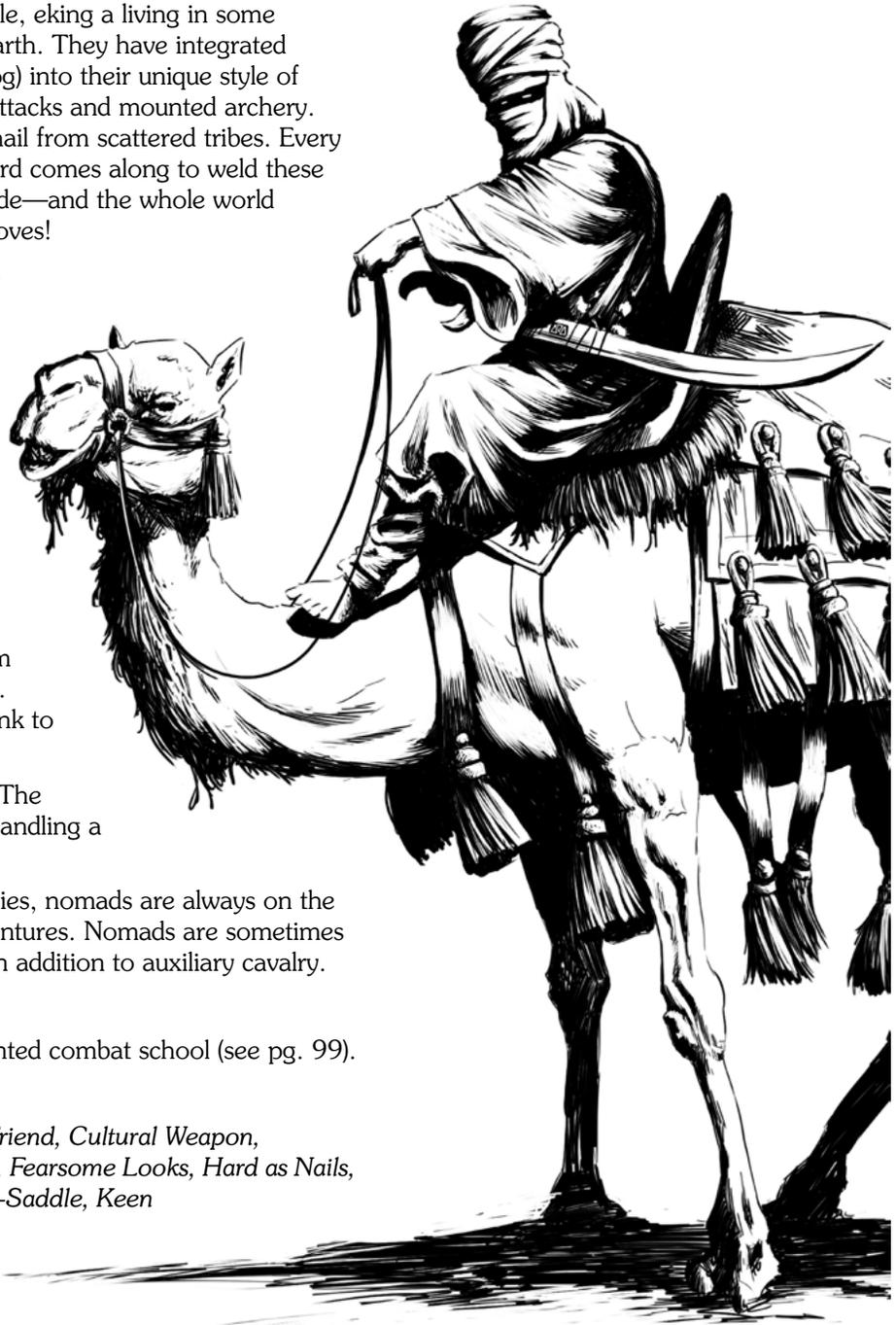
Favored Culture: Tribal

Fighting: Nomads favor the Mounted combat school (see pg. 99).

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Alert, Athletic/Born Athlete, Beast Friend, Cultural Weapon, Environment-Born, Fear Resistance, Fearsome Looks, Hard as Nails, Hard to Kill, Horseman/Born-in-the-Saddle, Keen Eyesight, Quick Recovery, Scorns the Heat, Stealthy/Sneaky, Thick Skinned

Arrogant, Boastful/Braggart, Country Bumpkin, Enemy, Hatred of . . ., Illiterate, Landlubber, Missing Eye or Ear, Savage, Taciturn, Temper/Hot-Headed



PRIEST

Alternate Names: Cleric, Cultist, Monk

Non-Martial Career

Priests formally represent Divinities, ranging from the High Lama of a widespread religion to the humble caretaker at a local spirit's shrine. Depending on the setting, they may wield faith-based powers or simply be glorified bureaucrats (see **Magic**, pg. 131). Priests can have considerable influence even without supernatural abilities. Most are literate.

A priest's career rank indicates their status within an order. For example, a rank 0 priest might be an initiate, a rank 4 priest a bishop, etc. Priests can be sorcerers as well—especially those who venerate ancient, eldritch creatures.

Real Divinities grant Faith/Fate Points to their priests. At the GMs discretion, a priest's chanting or holy symbol can provide resolve protection (see **Mechanics**, pg. 96). If using the optional social interaction rules, a priest can add their rank when influencing someone of the same faith.

Priests are good at oration, comforting people, canon law, and lore. For those strong in faith, priests can add their rank when making Resolve Checks against the supernatural.

Attributes: Mind and Appeal are most important.

Adventuring: Priests occasionally wander to spread their faith, search for relics, and make pilgrimages. It isn't unusual for a group of travelers to encounter a priest while on the road. Priests can help to shield companions against the supernatural.

Favored Culture: Civilized

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Comforting Words, Divine Blessing, Hard to Shake, Inspire, Knowledge/Learned, Marked by Fate/Marked by the Gods, Nose for Magic, Ward

Arrogant, Combat Paralysis, Fanatic/Zealot, Frail, Hatred of . . ., Out of Shape/Elderly, Poor Eyesight, Slow to Act/Unprepared, Tedious



ROGUE

Alternate Names: Brigand, Scoundrel, Thief

Martial Career +1

This career covers a broad range of people who make a living with their wits (and quick fingers) rather than honest toil. Rogues can range from haggard cutpurses to smooth-talking tricksters, 'second-story' thieves to hardened bravos, and much, much more. Most stick to large cities, though adventurous rogues can range far in search of lost treasures. The career is open to all, offering opportunity for those clever and daring enough to take what they want.

The skillsets of this career can vary widely. Traditional rogues excel at getting into places they shouldn't, like someone else's purse or behind the triple-locked doors of a secret vault. Silver-tongued types are good at deception and emotional manipulation. All rogues are skilled at concealment, stealth, filching items, and climbing.

This career pairs particularly well with assassin, merchant, and courtier (noble). At the GMs option, rogue skills that 'overlap' with those from other careers can 'stack' (e.g., a rank 2 rogue, rank 1 assassin could add 3 ranks when making a stealth check).

Attributes: Agility and Mind. Scoundrels favor Appeal, too.

Adventuring: Clever rogues are another S&S adventuring staple, whose specialized skills can mean the difference between life and death—when they're not trying to rip off their companions.

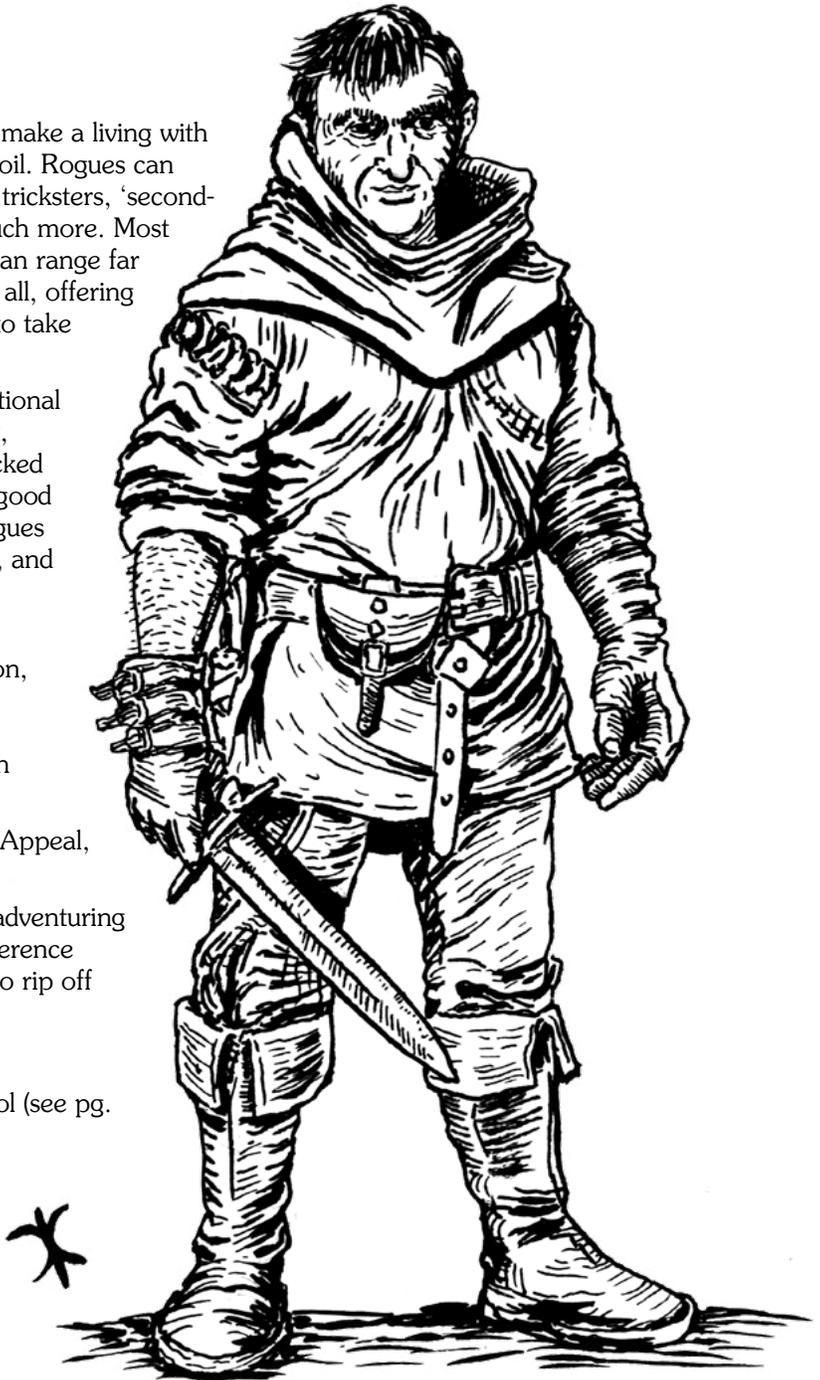
Favored Culture: Civilized

Fighting: Rogues follow the Dirty combat school (see pg. 97).

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Alert, Carouser, Cat-like Agility, Deft Hands, Detect Deception, Escape Artist, Glib/Silver Tongue, Keen Hearing, Low-Born, Night Sight, Stealthy/Sneaky, Tools of the Trade

Addicted/Cravings, Boastful/Braggart, Bounty/Hunted, Enemy, Greed, Illiterate, Missing Eye or Ear, Obsession, Spendthrift, Urbanite/City Dweller, Untrustworthy



SAILOR

Alternative Names: *Mariner, Pirate, Privateer*

Martial Career +1

Sea travel is the primary means of long-distance transport in most S&S settings, enabling both trade and naval warfare. Therefore, professional mariners are always in demand. The career is a tough one, with danger a constant threat—whether from storms or ships packed with bloodthirsty corsairs. In some areas press-gangs forcibly ‘recruit’ crews, meaning a sailor’s life is not always by choice. Heroes who don’t start with this career often pick it up as a result of their far travels.

Sailors are good at piloting ships and boats, navigation, tying knots, and swimming. They get a free language pick at rank 1 to reflect their travels. Sailors can use their rank to decrease any penalties associated with fighting onboard a ship (i.e., a storm-tossed deck). At the GM’s discretion, a sailor of rank 3 or above can take a ship as their equipment pick.

Attributes: Strength and Agility for the rigors of sea. Captains often have good Appeal and Mind.

Adventuring: Sailors journey to far-off places as a matter of routine, making them ideal adventurers. They are the professional explorers of their era, vital to reaching unknown continents or the ruins of a lost island empire. Entire campaigns can be run with sailors, traders, and their mercenary bodyguards dropping anchor in exotic ports around the world.

Favored Culture: Civilized

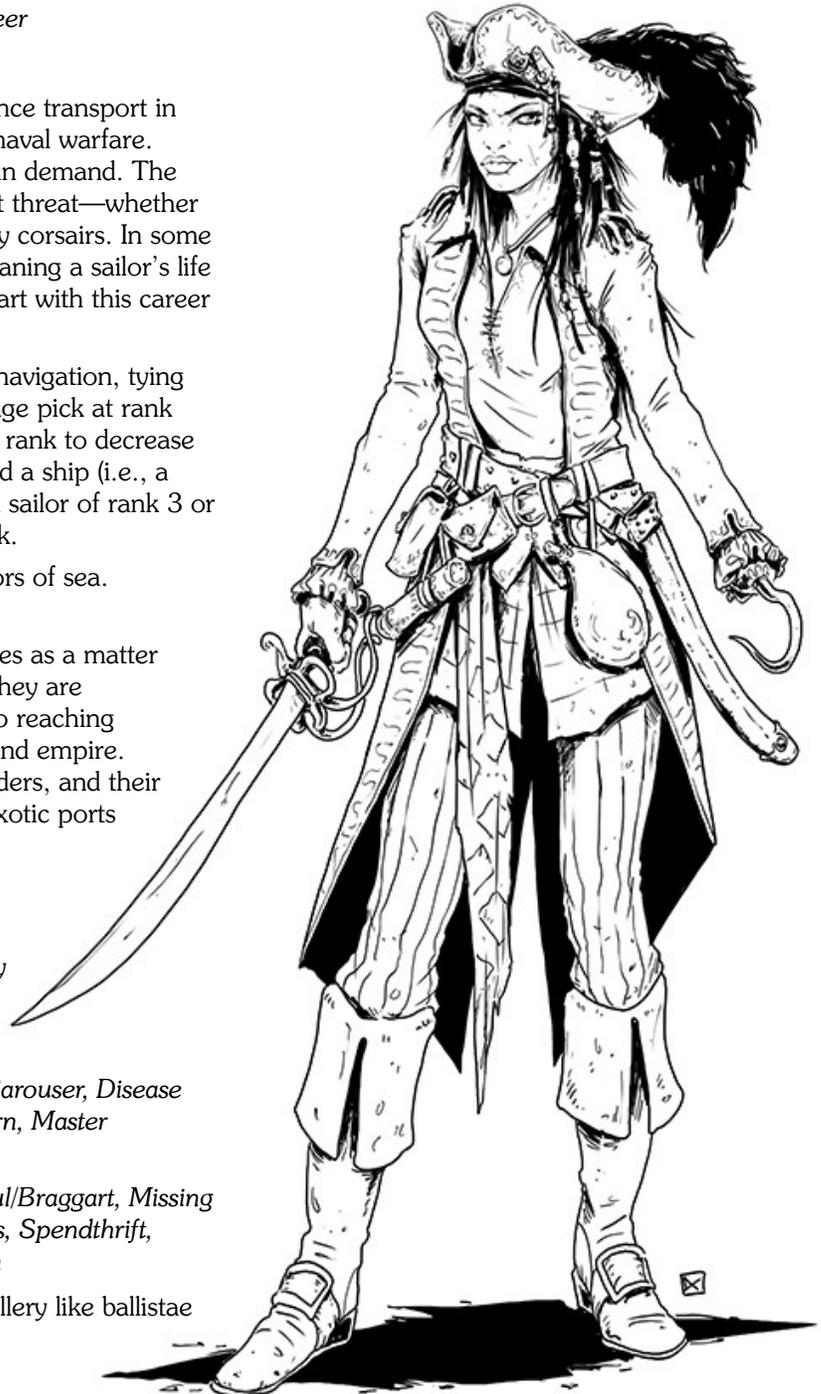
Fighting: Veterans of boarding actions and waterfront back-alleys, sailors follow the Dirty school of combat.

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Alert, Born-on-Board/Born-at-Sea, Brawler, Carouser, Disease Resistance, Grappler, Keen Eyesight, Low-Born, Master Gunner, Master Mariner, Mighty Fists*

Addicted/Drunkard, Amorous/Lustful, Boastful/Braggart, Missing Eye or Ear, Missing Limb, Notorious/Infamous, Spendthrift, Taciturn, Temper/Hot-Headed, Ugly & Brutish

*in pre-gunpowder settings this concerns artillery like ballistae and catapults.



SCHOLAR

Alternative Names: *Scribe, Librarian, Philosopher*

Non-Martial Career

Scholars are educated individuals who preserve, study, and pass on their learning to others. Though knowledgeable across a wide range of subjects, they often specialize in a certain field; mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, history, botany, etc. Scholars maintain libraries and teach at universities or other centers of learning. Nobles sometimes serve as their patrons, or hire them to educate their children. Scribes have the onerous duty of copying and re-copying vital texts by hand, to ensure hard-won knowledge isn't lost to time.

Scholars are good at recalling obscure (and often useful) information, research, deductive reasoning, and debate. In quasi-medieval settings they are members of the clergy, with a rank or two in priest as well. At the GMs option, scholars can take an additional language for each rank in this career.

Needless to say, scholars can't take the *Illiteracy* flaw.

Attributes: Mind is all-important.

Adventuring: Full-time scholars rarely leave their studies or teaching enclaves, and thus make poor adventurers. They are often NPCs sought by heroes for very specific bits of information (e.g., the location of a ruined city in the heart of a lost continent). A 'wandering scholar' who sets out to learn through direct experience is possible—and also likely young.

Favored Culture: Civilized

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Absent Minded, Artistic, Contacts, First-rate Facilities/Excellent Library, Genius/Savant, Knowledge/Learned, Linguist

All Thumbs, Arrogant, Combat Paralysis, Delicate, Frail, Fear of . . ., Obsession, Poor Eyesight, Slow to Act/Unprepared, Tedious, Thin Skinned, Timid, Urbanite/City Dweller



SLAVE

Alternative Names: Bondsman, Serf, Thrall

Non-Martial Career

This unfortunate career is one of the hard realities of S&S settings, where people are treated as property and considered spoils of war. Some societies have entire economies based on slavery. There is usually some kind of justification provided—the slave comes from a cultural ‘other’ or was a former citizen who mismanaged their debts. Serfs are indentured farmers tied to a noble’s estate, forbidden to leave the lands they work.

Slaves usually bear a visible mark of their status such as a brand, iron collar, or shackles. Though they can be granted freedom by their ‘owners,’ this is a relatively unusual occurrence. Most slaves have to engineer their own escapes.

Slaves have skillsets related to their daily tasks, so a serf knows how to farm, a galley-slave has some familiarity with sailing, etc. All slaves are good at enduring hardship, petty thievery, stealth, and overhearing information.

Attributes: Strength for a hard life. Appeal and Mind could also increase chances of survival.

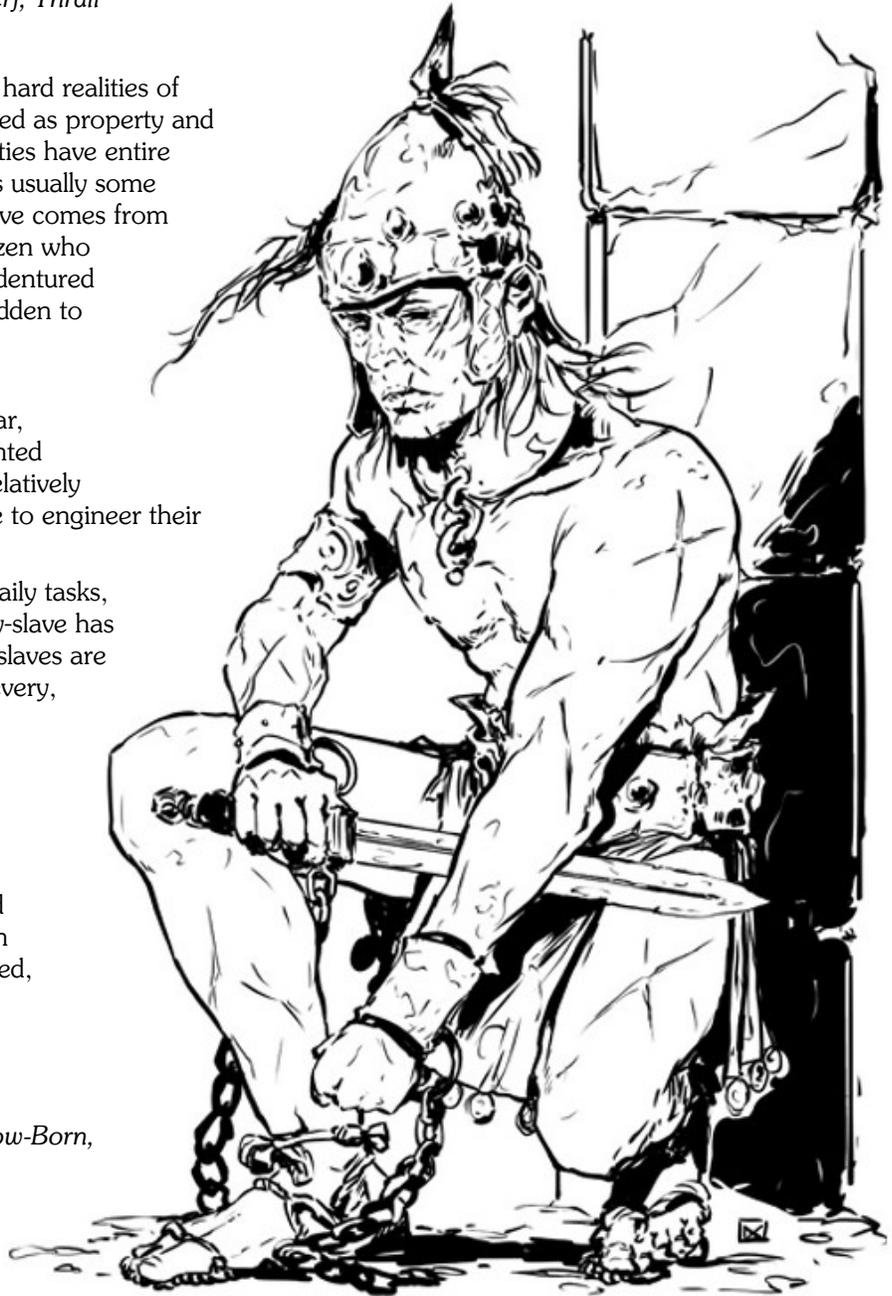
Adventuring: Heroes with this career are *ex-slaves*; how they gained their freedom is often an adventure in itself. Some may still be actively hunted, prompting them to wander.

Favored Culture: Waning

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Alert, Escape Artist, Keen Hearing, Low-Born, Quick Recovery, Stealthy/Sneaky, Strength Feat, Thick Skin

Bereft, Bounty/Hunted, Combat Paralysis, Hatred of . . ., Illiterate, Landlubber, Naivety/Gullible, Stigma, Stressed, Taciturn, Timid



SOLDIER

Alternate Names: *Guard, Mercenary, Warrior*

Martial Career +1/+2

These are the professional warriors of Civilized cultures, spilling blood and taking wounds on behalf of their rulers in endless cycles of conquest. Though 'softer' than their wild counterparts, the barbarians, a soldier's training and discipline make them undisputed masters of the battlefield.

Soldiers fill specific roles within large armies, including infantry, skirmishers (missile troops), cavalry, artilleryists, etc. All soldiers are good at spotting danger, maintaining their gear, looting, and have at least a basic grasp of tactics.

Rank in the soldier career can correspond to formal command rank, or simply reflect experience. The former ranges from militia (rank 0) all the way to general (rank 4 or higher). High-level commanders usually have a rank or two in noble as well.

Mercenaries are soldiers who fight for whoever pays them. Though considered to have dubious loyalty, they seldom find themselves out of work.

As courage is a job requirement, soldiers can add their rank when making Resolve Checks. At the GM's option, they can also add their rank to priority checks.

Attributes: Strength and Agility. Able commanders need Mind or Appeal as well.

Adventuring: Soldier PCs are usually wandering mercenaries, free of full-time commitments to an army or ruler.

Favored Culture: Civilized

Fighting: Soldiers favor the Disciplined combat school (see pg. 98), though cavalry might choose Mounted.

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Alert, Athletic/Born Athlete, Battle Cry, Born in Armor, Brawler, Carouser, Cultural Weapon, Hard as Nails, Horseman/Born-in-the-Saddle, Heirloom Weapon, Inspire, Inured, Tactician, Sweeping Attack, Thick Skin, Two-Weapon Fighter

Addicted/Drunkard, Amorous/Lustful, Boastful/Braggart, Code, Stressed, Taciturn, Temper/Hot-Headed



SORCERER

Alternate Names: *Enchanter, Magician, Wizard*

Non-Martial Career

Sorcerers represent the scholarly tradition of magic. They glean their powers from study of the written word, as recorded in iron-bound grimoires, papyrus scrolls, and ancient stone tablets. A sorcerer, therefore, cannot take the *Illiterate* flaw.

Whether this magic is the dark, soul-corrupting sort or the risky-but-neutral kind is determined by the player (see **Magic**, pg. 110).

Sorcerers tend to be reclusive sorts, with a reputation for oddness. The nature of their work is solitary, involving countless hours spent peering at crabbled runes or interrogating ghosts from previous epochs. As a result, they are often suspicious of other sorcerers. Further, they deliberately cultivate a mysterious aura, supplementing their spells with trickery and mundane deceptions whenever possible. A sorcerer who overhears a juicy piece of information, for example, may claim this knowledge was revealed by demons, or simple prescience.

Magic boons can help distinguish sorcerers. Some command djinn or elementals with the *Intermediary Spirit* boon, for example, while others narrow their focus to specific spell 'colleges' through *Magical Affinity*. Still others take the perilous route of making *Pacts* with infernal powers.

Sorcerers are good at arcane lore, crafting, research, and mental fortitude. They can add their rank when making Resolve Checks against the supernatural.

Attributes: Mind is paramount.

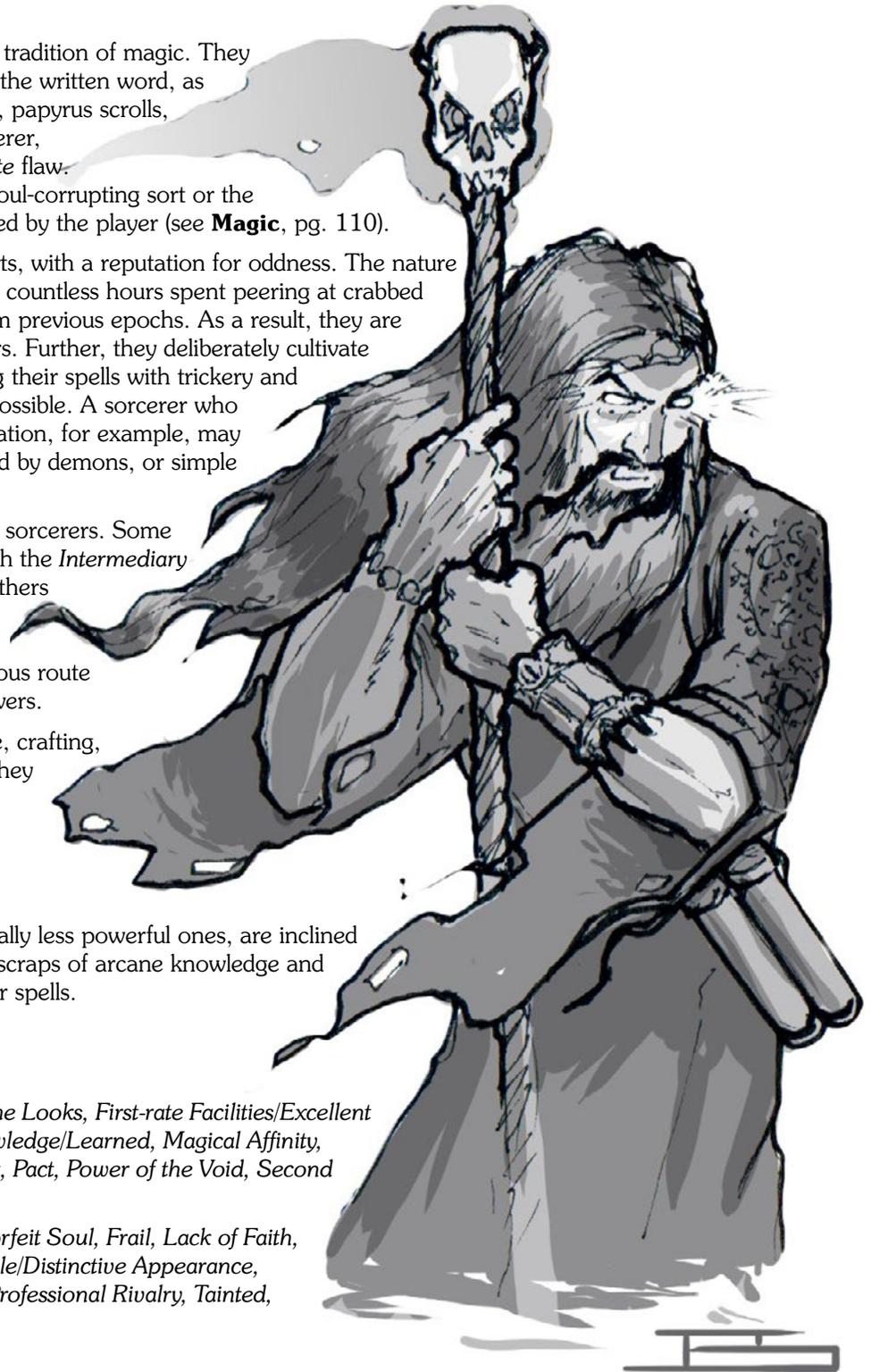
Adventuring: Sorcerers, especially less powerful ones, are inclined to adventure in order to procure scraps of arcane knowledge and find obscure components for their spells.

Favored Culture: Civilized

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Familiar, Fear Resistance, Fearsome Looks, First-rate Facilities/Excellent Library, Intermediary Spirit, Knowledge/Learned, Magical Affinity, Magic of the Ancients, Night Sight, Pact, Power of the Void, Second Sight, Ward

Apprentice, Arrogant, Delicate, Forfeit Soul, Frail, Lack of Faith, Madness, Marred Soul, Memorable/Distinctive Appearance, Notorious/Infamous, Obsession, Professional Rivalry, Tainted, Unsettling



TEMPTRESS

Alternative Names: Courtesan, Lorelei, Lothario

Non-Martial Career

This career encompasses men and women who use their physical charms to further a personal agenda. Though seduction may be *implied* in the pursuit of these goals, that doesn't mean the temptress has to follow through! Akin to the femme fatale of pulp crime stories, these characters usually target people with wealth and power, such as nobles or merchants. Materialistic goals aren't their only motive—the temptress may be seeking revenge, for example.

This career pairs well with assassin, noble, and rogue. Temptresses are good at seduction, persuasion, emotional manipulation, and 'reading' people. At the GMs option, they can 'twist the knife' and add their rank to resolve damage against the targets of their 'affection.'

Attributes: Appeal is primary, followed by guileful Mind.

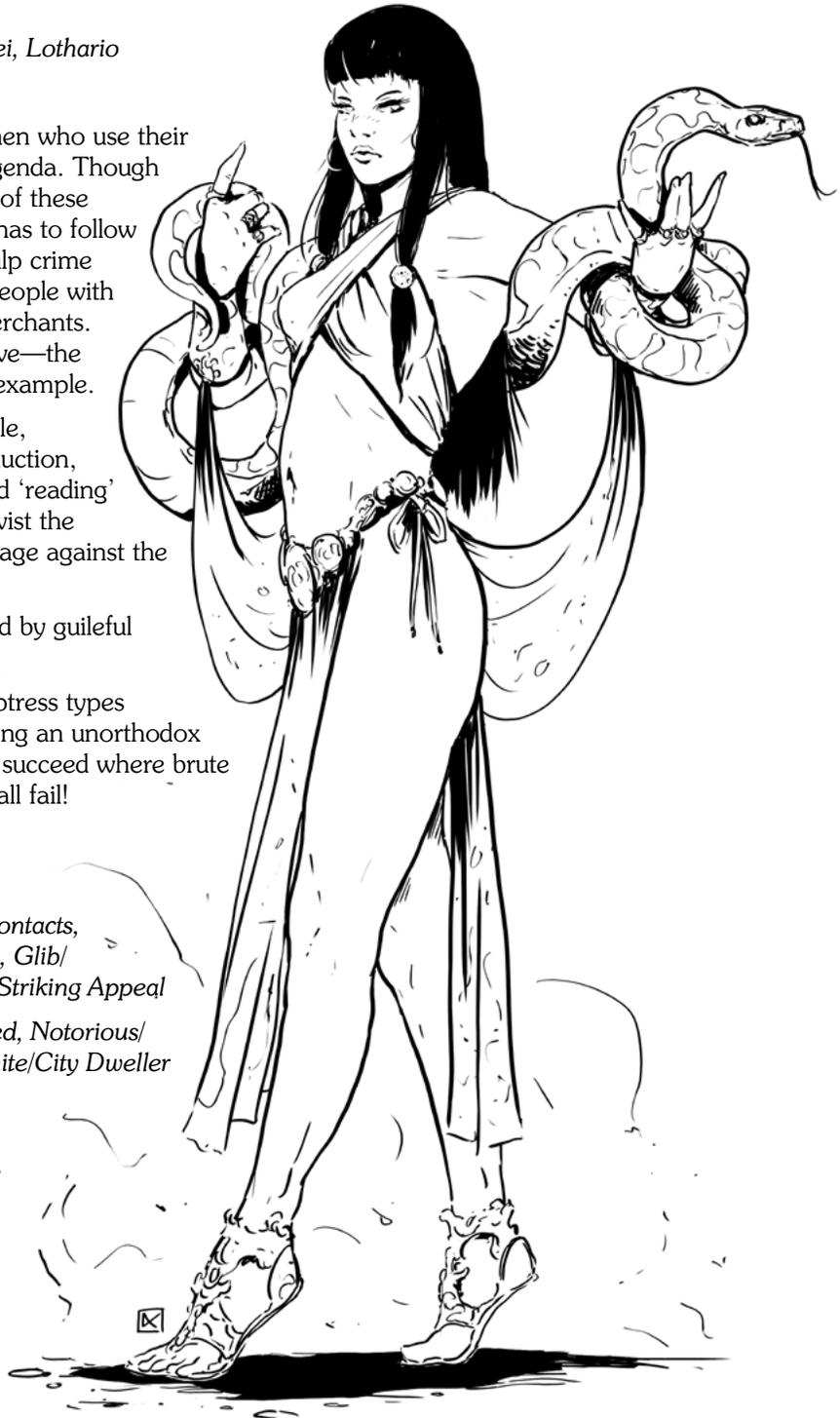
Adventuring: Opportunist rogue/temptress types appear frequently in S&S fiction and bring an unorthodox set of skills to the table. Sex appeal can succeed where brute force, magic, and conventional trickery all fail!

Favored Culture: Waning

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Attractive, Biting Comment, Carouser, Contacts, Detect Deception, Friends in High Places, Glib/Silver Tongue, Inspire, Stealthy/Sneaky, Striking Appeal

Combat Paralysis, Delicate, Enemy, Greed, Notorious/Infamous, Obsession, Spendthrift, Urbanite/City Dweller



TORTURER

Alternative Names: Executioner, Gaoler, Inquisitor

Martial Career +1

When criminals are caught, someone has to do the dirty work of lopping off heads or extracting information through expert 'questioning.' This lot falls to the torturer career, which includes people who routinely handle prisoners and staff the dank dungeons of evil rulers. Reviled by common folk, torturers wear a hood when performing their duties in public. As symbols of the State, they are often selected from large, hulking specimens, to better strike fear into the populace. Headsmen usually carry an axe for non-nobility or a heavy, two-edged sword when shedding blue blood.

Torturers are good at intimidation, inflicting pain, interrogation, and possess a brutal knowledge of human physiology. Through experience, they know how far to 'push' a subject before unconsciousness or shock sets in. At the GM's option, they can add their rank in damage when potentially delivering a *coup de grace*.

Attributes: Strength is paramount. Agility can also be useful for landing a clean blow.

Adventuring: Torturer PCs are likely no longer plying their trade, though a wandering executioner is possible, selling their unique skills as they travel.

Favored Culture: Waning

Fighting: Because of their rough environs, many torturers are familiar with the Dirty school of combat (see pg. 97).

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Fearsome Looks, First-Rate Facilities, Friends in Low Places, Hard to Shake, Inured, Low-Born, Strength Feat, Tools of the Trade

Illiterate, Lumbering, Notorious/Infamous, Savage, Stressed, Taciturn, Ugly & Brutish, Unlucky/Cursed, Untrustworthy, Urbanite/City Dweller



WITCH

Alternate Names: *Druid, Shaman, Warlock*

Non-Martial Career

Witches practice magic based on spoken (vs. written) lore, making them the sorcerers of Primal and Tribal cultures. Witchcraft is also practiced in Civilized societies by people who are illiterate or lack access to scholarly training. Like sorcerers, they can follow a 'dark,' corrupting path, or a 'not-as-dark' neutral one (see **Magic**, pg. 110).

Witches can only cast spells of Magnitude equal to or less than their rank, so a rank 0 witch can cast Cantrips, a rank 1 witch First Magnitude spells, etc. However, witches can prepare magical potions and salves as per an alchemist of *half* (round down) rank.

Witches are more likely to work in groups, called covens, than solitary sorcerers. A witch's rank indicates their general standing in the coven hierarchy.

Witches are good at arcane lore, animal and plant lore, crafting, and understanding of the natural world. They can add their rank when making Resolve Checks against the supernatural.

Attributes: Mind, though coven leaders often have Appeal, too.

Adventuring: Like barbarians, witches can wander from scattered tribes to the heart of civilized lands, usually in search of arcane knowledge. Their nature-oriented skills make them effective on wilderness journeys.

Favored Culture: Tribal

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Attractive, Beast-Friend, Familiar, Fear Resistance, Intermediary Spirit, Knowledge/Learned, Leech, Magical Affinity, Magic of the Ancients, Night Sight, Pact, Power of the Void, Second Sight, Ward

Apprentice, Bounty/Hunted, Country Bumpkin, Enemy, Fanatic/Zealot, Forfeit Soul, Frail, Hatred of . . ., Illiterate, Marred Soul, Memorable/Distinctive Appearance, Ugly & Brutish, Unsettling



WORKER

Alternative Names: *Builder, Hireling, Laborer*

Non-Martial Career

This is a catch-all for unskilled labor, from a burly dockworker unloading cargo to a builder dragging stone blocks for a massive pyramid. The pay is poor and encouragement comes via the whip, but workers are free rather than slaves, and console themselves with this fact. Because jobs can be seasonal, workers tend to move from place to place.

Aside from skills picked up from specific tasks, workers are good at endurance, lifting heavy objects, living rough, and carousing. Higher-ranked workers can be foremen or shift-bosses who earn better wages but are also reviled by their underlings.

Attributes: Strength is primary; Agility can also be important with more dangerous jobs.

Adventuring: Workers live day to day and have little to keep them in one place for very long. This, coupled with good physical conditioning makes them excellent adventurers.

Favored Culture: Civilized

Suggested Boons/Flaws:

Athletic/Born Athlete, Brawler, Carouser, Giant Strength, Hard to Kill, Inured, Low-Born, Mighty Fists, Strength Feat, Quick Recovery, Thick Skin

Addicted/Drunkard, Amorous/Lustful, Country Bumpkin, Illiterate, Missing Eye or Ear, Spendthrift, Taciturn, Temper/Hot-Headed, Ugly & Brutish




ADAI



LIST OF BOONS AND FLAWS

For the *Codex*, several boons and flaws from *Everywhen* have been changed slightly to better fit the setting, while others have been replaced or prohibited. Boons marked with an * are unusually powerful and require the GMs permission.

Prohibited Boons: *False Avatar*, *Grounded*, *Meme Resistance*, *Power of the Mind*, *Psionic Sensitive*, *Telekinetic*, *Telepathic*.

Prohibited Flaws: *Clouded Mind*

Changed: *Ace* (changed to *Master Mariner*), *Comforting Words* (does not require the psychiatrist career), *Field Medic/Healing Touch* (name changed to *Leech*), *Friend* (changed to *Companion*), *Legendary Weapon* (changed to *Heirloom Weapon*), *Trademark Weapon* (changed to *Cultural Weapon*).

| | | |
|----------------------------|------|---|
| <i>Aesthetic Armor</i> | Boon | Reduces social penalty of armor by your Appeal attribute, pg. 54. |
| <i>Amorous</i> | Flaw | Penalty die when attempting to resist physical temptation, pg. 58. |
| <i>Bag of Tricks</i> | Boon | Gain an Uncommon invention once per adventure for 1 Hero Point, pg. 54. |
| <i>Band</i> | Boon | Accompanied by d6H Rabble followers during an adventure, pg. 54. |
| <i>Battle Cry</i> | Boon | Opponents suffer a penalty die on Attack Rolls, or free resolve attack, pg. 55. |
| <i>Bereft</i> | Flaw | One equipment pick only at character creation, -2 to CR, pg. 58. |
| <i>Born in Armor</i> | Boon | Decrease armor Agility penalty for each point of Strength, pg. 55. |
| <i>Born Swimmer</i> | Boon | Bonus die on swimming, diving, holding breath, etc., pg. 55. |
| <i>Born to the Purple*</i> | Boon | Nobles only; you stand to gain a substantial inheritance, +2 CR, pg. 55. |
| <i>Brash</i> | Flaw | Overly bold; penalty die when trying to resist challenges/danger, pg. 58. |
| <i>Code</i> | Flaw | Personal standards you won't violate, or lose all Hero Points, pg. 58. |
| <i>Companion</i> | Boon | A Tough level 'sidekick' with some additional advantages, pg. 55. |
| <i>Cowardice</i> | Flaw | Avoid personal danger and take a penalty die if this flaw is known, pg. 58. |
| <i>Cultural Weapon</i> | Boon | Take a bonus die when using a 'signature' cultural weapon, pg. 55. |
| <i>Dark Secret</i> | Flaw | A personal secret that would be catastrophic if revealed, pg. 58. |
| <i>Deadeye</i> | Boon | All ranged attacks are considered one increment less, pg. 55. |
| <i>Dissipated</i> | Flaw | Seek out pleasurable activities to excess, with consequences afterward, pg. 58. |
| <i>Familiar</i> | Boon | Tough magical companion; you can perceive through them for 1 AP, pg. 55. |
| <i>Fated</i> | Flaw | You can't spend Hero Points in a situation prophesized to kill you, pg. 58. |
| <i>Forfeit Soul</i> | Flaw | Pay 2 Hero Points to Defy Death as your soul is already claimed, pg. 58. |
| <i>Guardian Spirit</i> | Boon | A friendly spirit protects you with a penalty or bonus die/Defy Death, pg. 55. |
| <i>Heirloom Weapon</i> | Boon | Does +1 step damage with Penetration 1 and won't break, pg. 55. |
| <i>Heroic Bond</i> | Boon | You can share Hero Points with someone else with Bond, pg. 56. |
| <i>Hexed</i> | Flaw | Bear a curse with variable effects, usually a penalty die, pg. 58. |
| <i>Honor Bound</i> | Flaw | Overly protective of your honor; penalty die to avoid duels, pg. 59. |
| <i>Intermediary Spirit</i> | Boon | Magical companion that acts as a casting requirement for spells, pg. 56. |
| <i>Iron Grip</i> | Boon | Grip strength is Strength +1, bonus to climbing, resist disarm, pg. 56. |
| <i>Leech</i> | Boon | Renaming of <i>Field Medic</i> or <i>Healing Touch</i> , pg. 56. |



| | | |
|-----------------------------|------|---|
| <i>Long-Lived*</i> | Boon | No extra flaw when playing an older character, other possible benefits, pg. 56. |
| <i>Madness</i> | Flaw | Mental illness with variable effects, cf. <i>Morgazzon's Curse</i> , pg. 59. |
| <i>Magical Affinity</i> | Boon | Bonus die, -1 AP when casting specific 'theme' or 'college' of spells, pg. 56. |
| <i>Marred Soul</i> | Flaw | Sorcerers or witches only; penalty die on certain social interactions, pg. 59. |
| <i>Martial Artist</i> | Boon | Do d6L unarmed damage, + half Mind or Agility in lieu of Strength, pg. 56. |
| <i>Master Mariner</i> | Boon | Renaming of <i>Ace</i> boon, bonus die when handling watercraft, pg. 56. |
| <i>One-Third Divine*</i> | Boon | Extra Hero Point + <i>Hard to Kill</i> , other potential advantages, pg. 56. |
| <i>Pact*</i> | Boon | Lower difficulty when casting spells, acts as a casting requirement, pg. 56. |
| <i>Poisoner</i> | Boon | Bonus die with poisons, compound as if a rank 1 alchemist, pg. 57. |
| <i>Primitive</i> | Flaw | Primal or Tribal origins only, suspicious around higher tech, pg. 59. |
| <i>Professional Rivalry</i> | Flaw | Penalty die when interacting with someone with the same career, pg. 59. |
| <i>Relic</i> | Boon | Minor talisman charged with 1 Faith/Fate Point, recharges, pg. 57. |
| <i>Reputation</i> | Boon | Well known for a particular skill or trait; bonus die on interaction rolls, pg. 57. |
| <i>Scorns the Heat/Cold</i> | Boon | Inured to hot or cold climes; 1 pt. environmental protection, pg. 57. |
| <i>Second Sight</i> | Boon | Can sense spirits, ghosts, <i>Familiars</i> , <i>Intermediary Spirits</i> , etc., pg. 57. |
| <i>Sick</i> | Flaw | Long term physical ailment with varying negative effects, pg. 59. |
| <i>Stigma</i> | Flaw | Penalty die on social interactions for being outside the 'norm,' pg. 59. |
| <i>Tainted*</i> | Boon | Supernatural bloodline with variable benefits, pg. 57. |
| <i>Tandem Fighter</i> | Boon | Bonus die when fighting alongside another hero, pg. 57. |
| <i>Totem Animal</i> | Boon | <i>Beast-Friend</i> to a chosen animal, which won't attack you, pg. 58. |
| <i>Voice</i> | Boon | Bonus die from attractive voice or mimicry, pg. 58. |
| <i>Vow</i> | Flaw | Lose all Hero or Faith/Fate Points if you violate a formal oath, pg. 59. |
| <i>Wary</i> | Boon | 'Danger sense,' allowing a Mind roll to detect imminent harm, pg. 58. |
| <i>Witchmark</i> | Flaw | Distinctive physical feature 'tagging' you as a witch or sorcerer, pg. 60. |
| <i>World-Weary</i> | Flaw | Jaded and bored, penalty die + no resolve refresh if using Motivations, pg. 60. |

BOONS

Aesthetic Armor

You own a uniquely crafted suit of medium armor that does not incur Agility penalties. Also, this armor both enhances and displays your physique to maximum advantage, reducing any social penalties by your Appeal attribute.

Bag of Tricks

At the cost of one Hero Point, you can produce an Uncommon invention *once* per adventure. The gadget must be small enough to fit in the bag, but can be undefined until you pull it out.

Band

You have attracted a group of loyal Rabble followers. They may be fellow thieves, a mystic cabal, hirelings, etc. At the beginning of an adventure roll d6H; this is how many members of your *Band* you'll be able to call on during play. Rather than follow you around, they can show up when needed, provided you can offer a logical explanation as to how. In some situations, such as being lost at sea, this will not be possible. If the *Band* is slain to the last member, you need time to recruit more—you won't be able to call on them next adventure.



Battle Cry

You can utter a blood-curdling cry that makes your enemies falter. Opponents suffer a penalty die on their Attack Rolls the round you cry out. This can be done once per day; more if you pay a Hero Point for each additional use. Alternately, you can make a 'free' Resolve Attack (see pg. 94) on the same round you make a standard attack. Cf. *War Cry*.

Born in Armor

You feel naked without armor, and can use it to best effect. Your Strength score offsets armor Agility penalties on a 1:1 basis (e.g., no Agility penalty for a Strength 1 character wearing medium armor).

Born Swimmer

You grew up near bodies of water and swam frequently. As a result, you are quite at home in the water—take a bonus die when swimming, diving, holding your breath, and related activities.

Born to the Purple*

This boon is only available with the noble career. You are close in line for inheriting substantial holdings to go along with your title (from a barony on up to a kingdom). The GM decides this 'power level,' but generally it corresponds with your rank in noble. This can also be dangerous, as influential people may want you out of the way—consider taking the *Bounty*, *Enemy*, or *Hunted* flaw as well. In the meantime, you have access to considerable wealth. Add +2 to your Credit Rating if the optional Resource rules are used.

Companion

You have a close friend who accompanies you on adventures. This can be a trained animal, a sidekick, or even a love interest. As a player, you can control your *Companion's* actions (within reason) and have them act independently, though in general they tend to stick close.

Companions are treated as Toughs. They can be killed, but you have the option of spending Hero Points to invoke Defy Death on their behalf. Losing a *Companion* is traumatic, causing d6H lasting resolve damage. At the GM's option, you can invest XP/AP in your *Companion*. At 5 XP/AP, the *Companion* is 'promoted' to Hero status and can be played as an alternate character—though they now have better things to do than follow you around all day!

Cultural Weapon

You are adept with a weapon strongly associated with your origin culture, e.g., a Balearic sling, a Nordic axe, etc. When using this weapon or a reasonable facsimile, you gain a bonus die on your Attack Roll.

Deadeye

You possess uncanny hand-eye coordination with ranged weapons. All shots are considered one range increment less.

Familiar

This boon is only available to sorcerers or witches. You share a mystic bond with a spirit creature (demon, elemental, etc.) that takes the form of a size Tiny to Small animal. Treat as a Tough. The *Familiar* has the power of human speech and can be sent on errands like conveying a message, spying, or even filching an object. For the cost of 1 AP per hour, you can perceive whatever your *Familiar* is currently perceiving.

Familiars can also function as *Intermediary Spirits* for casting spells, though this boon must be taken separately. They usually have some uncanny feature, such as a black cat with lambent red eyes, a rat with paws like human hands, etc. *Familiars* can heal instantly by sucking the blood of their master, restoring 1 point for every lifeblood drained (see the *Witchmark* flaw, pg. 60). You take d6H resolve damage if your *Familiar* is slain; however, they can assume a new corporal form between adventures.

Guardian Spirit

You've got someone watching over you—a friendly ancestor, the ghost of an ex-lover, a patron saint, etc. In times of danger, the *Guardian Spirit* manifests to try and keep you from harm's way. Once per adventure, the *Guardian* will inflict a penalty die on someone trying to hurt you or bestow a bonus die by giving you advance warning of a threat (cf. *Wary*). Additionally, if you run out of Hero Points, the *Guardian Spirit* can invoke Defy Death on your behalf, though doing so will cause it to disappear forever.

Heirloom Weapon

You have inherited or otherwise acquired a weapon of extremely fine workmanship. This weapon does +1 step damage (see **Mechanics**, pg. 90) and has the Penetration 1 quality.



The weapon is difficult to break—if the Splintered Shield, Shattered Sword option is invoked, it goes flying from your hand instead of shivering to pieces.

Heroic Bond

You are bound by fate to another PC or NPC hero. This boon only functions if the other character also has *Heroic Bond*. You can freely share Hero Points between each other, even if separated by vast distances. This boon is only available for PCs who have established links prior to play (see pg. 68) or have several adventures together under their belts.

Intermediary Spirit

This boon is only available to sorcerers or witches. You have command over a Minor Entity (see *Everywhen*, pg. 94) or a Minor Demon (see *Barbarians of Lemuria*, pg. 131) who assists in casting spells. The Entity or Demon must possess the *Sorcery* power/boon. The *Intermediary Spirit* can be used as a casting requirement for First and Second Magnitude spells, but grows recalcitrant if employed frequently—see the **Magic** chapter, pg. 112, for more details.

Iron Grip

Your hands and fingers are strong as a vise! Your grip strength is equal to your Strength+1, though this does not affect lifeblood total. Attempts to disarm you incur a penalty die, and you gain a bonus die when climbing.

Leech

You have an affinity for healing others; this is a renaming of the *Field Medic* (*Everywhen*) or *Healing Touch* (*Barbarians of Lemuria*) boon.

Long-Lived*

Though not immortal, your natural lifespan is much longer than normal—by up to a century. This can be for sorcerous or genetic reasons. When opting to play an older character (see pg. 26), you do not have to take an additional flaw if you have this boon. At the GM's discretion, *Long-Lived* can have other benefits, such as recalling obscure historical events (that you lived through) or familiarity with lore thought forgotten.

Magical Affinity

You are adept with a specific type, or 'college,' of magic, such as divination, necromancy, summoning, etc. (cf. *Arcane Domains, Everywhen* pg. 82). When casting spells from this college, you gain a bonus die on your Arcana Roll and AP cost is decreased by 1 (minimum cost 1). You can only take this boon once per rank in sorcerer or witch. See the **Magic** chapter, pg. 113, for more details on colleges.

Martial Artist

You have been trained in formal unarmed combat. Though this is often associated with the 'Mystic East,' it can come about in any culture where possession of weapons is prohibited. Your base damage for unarmed combat is d6L and you can add half your Mind or Agility (rounded down) in lieu of Strength. If you take a penalty die on your Attack Roll, damage is normal rather than fatigue.

Master Mariner

A renaming of the *Ace* boon, in this case applying to boats and ships. When navigating, steering, or otherwise operating watercraft, take a bonus die.

One-Third Divine*

Somewhere in your family tree lurks a Divinity, watching over you from the heavens, sea, or underworld. You gain an additional Hero Point and the *Hard to Kill* boon. Additionally, this *Divine* bloodline, if known, can grant you a bonus die when interacting with priests of the Divinity, or be used to justify your entrance into a high station (like king, or emperor). Because this boon is powerful, you must take an additional flaw—perhaps the enmity of a rival Divinity!

Pact*

This boon is only available to sorcerers and witches. You have bartered your soul to some malign entity in return for supernatural power. When casting spells, you always take the *lower* Difficulty modifier for the Magnitude. Additionally, the *Pact* counts as a casting requirement for First and Second Magnitude spells. A character choosing this boon must take the *Forfeit Soul* flaw.



At the GM's discretion, your character might also have an extended lifespan, though you will *look* your age (unless you hide it with an illusion!).

Poisoner

You are adept at the making and handling of poisons. Gain a bonus die when attempting to identify a specific poison or its effects, or to avoid some mishap such as accidentally poisoning yourself. You can compound poisons as if a rank 1 alchemist. See the **Equipment** chapter, pg. 86, for some examples of poisons.



Relic

You have a *minor* magical item, such as the knucklebones of a saint or a good luck talisman. This object is charged with a single Faith/Fate point that recharges every adventure session.

Reputation

Your character has established wide renown for skill, bravery, exceptional talent, etc. "*That's the famous pit fighter Reyna Scarlet. She killed two people with just her teeth!*" Take a bonus die on social interaction rolls where this could be a factor, especially when dealing with impressionable types. Cf. *Notorious/Infamous*.

Scorns the Heat/Cold

Whether from the frozen north or blazing desert, you are inured to specific temperature extremes as a result of long exposure. You have 1 point of environmental protection (see **Mechanics**, pg. 107) from extreme cold or heat and gain a bonus die when rolling to resist its effects.

Second Sight

You can see ghosts/spirits, have occasional glimpses of the future, and sense the presence of the supernatural (usually as a prickling sensation at the back of your neck). All these abilities function at the GM's whim and are not completely dependable.

People with *Second Sight* are traditionally born with a caul (membrane) covering their eyes. As this boon sometimes unnerves people, it is often kept secret. Cf. *Nose for the Unnatural/Nose for Magic*.

Tainted*

Your bloodline is supernatural, typically through an ancestral dalliance with some creature or even having a demon or entity as one of your parents. As a result, you bear some unusual physical feature (cf. *Witchmark*), such as faintly glimmering eyes, pronounced canines, small horns, etc., which can be concealed and is not usually noticed.

Though this sounds like a flaw, Tainted confers several benefits. First, pick a free boon associated with your heritage. A hero with a vampiric parent, for example, might take *Night Sight*. The boons *Magic of the Ancients* and *Power of the Void* do not incur an extra flaw in this case. Also, you gain a bonus die when interacting with creatures from your bloodline (cf. *Race-Friend*). Finally, your hybrid status can confer a bonus die in certain situations. A hero with ghoulish ancestors, for example, could get a bonus die when trying to digest rotten food.

Tainted characters can't take the *Attractive* boon. They may be subject to magical wards that affect eldritch creatures (at the GM's discretion) and must take an additional flaw when selecting this boon—*Unsettling* is a popular choice.

Tandem Fighter

You are well-accustomed to fighting alongside another hero, whether PC or NPC. Said hero must also take this boon for it to function. When in close proximity to each other, you can *both* take a bonus die on all Attack Rolls. This boon is only available between PCs who have established links prior to play (see pg. 68) or have spent significant time together.



Totem Animal

Choose an animal native to your homeland. This animal won't harm you even if magically controlled, and you gain the *Beast-Friend* boon when interacting with it.

Voice

You have an appealing voice. Gain a bonus die on social interaction checks where this could be a factor, including singing or giving a speech. Alternately, you are skilled at mimicry, with the uncanny ability to make your voice sound like someone else's.

Wary

You can sense imminent danger. You never take a penalty to priority checks when someone is attacking by surprise. Also, the GM can ask you to make a Mind check when approaching some unknown hazard (like walking into a trap); on a success, you get an intuitive warning before this occurs.

FLAWS

Amorous

Your physical needs are strong. Take a penalty die when attempting to resist persuasion by an attractive person. Cf. *Lustful*.

Bereft

You own very little, monetarily or otherwise. Perhaps this is a result of your situation (e.g., an ex-slave), or because you have taken a vow of poverty. Whatever the reason, take only one equipment pick at character creation. Additionally, if using the Resource rules (see *Everywhen*, pg. 59), take a -2 to your Credit Rating.

Brash

Boldness can be a good thing, but you push it too far. Take a penalty die when attempting to resist a challenge, or some danger that good common sense would otherwise discourage.

Code

You have a set of professional standards you won't violate. This varies widely by career, but even thieves and pirates can follow certain rules of conduct. Examples might be: never attack an unarmed opponent, always help others in distress, never steal from a fellow thief, never compromise a client, etc.

The consequences of violating a *Code* are severe: lose all your Hero (or Rival/Villain) Points until you can atone.

Cowardice

You avoid personal danger at all costs, seeking the safest spot when potential harm is thrust upon you. Most people react negatively if they know you're a coward; take a penalty die on any social interaction rolls. Cf. *Cowardly*.

Dark Secret

You harbor a damning secret that will doom you socially if it ever comes to light. Among other things, this can make you more susceptible to blackmail, or Resolve Attacks (see pg. 94) pertaining to this secret.

Dissipated

You have grown accustomed to over-indulgence in sensual pleasures. This compels you to seek out feasts, festivals, revels, orgies, etc., wherever you go, and then spend inordinate amounts of time partying. Recovering from these fetes requires at least a day, or you take a penalty die on all actions.

Fated

You have been prophesized to meet your doom in a certain situation, such as fighting in defense of your homeland, or at the hands of a loved one. The *Fate* can't be so specific that it would never likely come about. When in this situation, you can't spend any Hero Points—which doesn't mean you *will* die, but does make it more probable. Note that *Fate* does not make you invulnerable to other forms of death.

Forfeit Soul

You have bartered your immortal soul to some malign power. Using the Defy Death option now costs 2 Hero or Rival/Villain Points instead of 1. It's hard to spring back to life when infernal hands are trying to drag down what's rightfully theirs!

Hexed

Perhaps because of an affront made by your family long ago, or crossing the wrong person in the course of your career, you bear a hex. Usually, this works as a standard flaw, incurring a penalty die in certain situations. The specific nature of the hex can be anything, but is not meant to be totally damning. Examples include bad luck (a penalty die once per



adventure, at an inopportune time), frequent illness (penalty die to overcome diseases), horrific nightmares (fatigue during the day, incurring a penalty die when trying to concentrate), etc.

Because the hex is magical in nature, spells can temporarily alleviate the harmful effects. The only way to permanently get rid of *Hexed* is to buy it off, however.

Honor Bound

You are scrupulous about your personal honor, to the point of dying for it. Take a penalty die when resisting the temptation to duel someone over a social injury, perceived or otherwise. Characters with the boon *Low-Born* cannot take this flaw.

Madness

You suffer from some form of mental illness, often perceived by others as a supernatural curse. Common examples might be phobias, which incur a penalty die when faced with specific situations, or bouts of melancholia, which cause problems during an adventure if a '1' is rolled on a d6. Note that this doesn't have to accurately portray mental illness in the real world. Cf. *Morgazzaon's Curse*.

Marred Soul

This flaw is only available to sorcerers and witches. Your dabbling in dark magic has eroded the appearance of your immortal soul, noticeable by animals, supernatural creatures, and those with *Second Sight*. Said beings will feel uneasy in your presence as per the *Unsettling* flaw.

Primitive

This flaw is only available to characters from Primal or Tribal cultures. Though you may have had contact with civilization, not much has rubbed off. You tend to view tech higher than Stone Age with suspicion and attribute most occurrences to supernatural causes. Also, many of the social 'niceties' seem silly to you, such as using cutlery or always deferring to nobility—with appropriate consequences.

Professional Rivalry

You generally don't like other people who follow your same profession (i.e., career), if for no other reason than petty pride. Take a penalty die when interacting with them socially. This flaw is a favorite among alchemists and sorcerers.



Sick

You have some type of chronic illness, like leprosy, epilepsy, or a heart condition. It might eventually be the death of you, but for now you manage most of the time. The GM rolls a d6 at the beginning of an adventure: on a '1' result the illness will be a factor. It might cause a penalty die on certain rolls, inflict weakness (-1 Strength), or just cause you to cough at an inopportune moment.

Stigma

Your culture, religion, or nationality is viewed with thinly veiled hostility by the current, prevailing majority. When relevant, this can impose a penalty die on social interactions, or make you a likely scapegoat for blame. Note that *Stigma* does not necessarily persist across different cultures or areas; when travelling to distant lands, this flaw might not be in effect (GM's call).

Vow

Your character has taken a formal oath, like chastity for a priest, or swearing fealty to a lord. If you violate the oath, lose all Faith/Fate or Hero Points until you can atone (cf. *Code*).



Witchmark

This flaw is only available to sorcerers and witches. You have some physical mark from dabbling in the supernatural. Usually this is a strangely shaped ‘birthmark,’ but can be something as overt as cloven hooves. Though concealable, the mark will cause most people to react with fear and revulsion. Characters with the *Familiar* boon will often feed them directly through the *Witchmark*.

World-Weary

You’ve seen it all (at least you think so) and have been everywhere, twice. Nothing surprises you, but consequently, nothing seems particularly appealing. Take a penalty die when interacting with optimistic types. Further, if using the optional **Motivations** rules (see pg. 68), you do not gain a resolve refresh when acting in accordance with a motivation.

ALLIES

During character creation, NPCs with significant ties to a hero are often identified. These can be friends, contacts, mentors, parents—even pets who will likely show up in an adventure at some point, if not immediately. Though such characters can be defined during play, *Apprentices*, *Companions*, *Familiars*, and *Intermediary Spirits* (as per the boon or flaw) benefit from some initial attention. A name, stats, and brief description help to round out the ‘parent’ hero’s larger concept.

As the S&S genre is known for sidekicks, the *Friend* boon was ‘buffed’ to *Companion*, which allows the hero to spend Hero Points on their associate’s behalf, potentially keeping them around longer. These are created as Toughs (see *Everywhen*, pg. 92, or *Barbarians of Lemuria*, *Mythic* pg. 11). In S&S literature, sidekicks act as character foils, accentuating a hero’s traits through opposites (e.g., a light-hearted companion to offset a deadly serious hero), or as comedy relief. They can also be used as a compliment for skills and abilities the hero doesn’t have.

Example

The sketchy sorcerer Phaestus takes both the Companion and Familiar boons at character creation.



The latter clearly serves as comedy relief; Phaestus defines his Familiar as a fire-salamander named Pyroxenes, who has a foul mouth and likes to spend his off-hours curled up in a (lit) brazier.

Though competent, Phaestus is a not-so-intimidating physical specimen, who routinely has dealings with the criminal element. Therefore, a bodyguard would make a useful foil. He defines his Companion as a 6’3” barbarian woman named Sigrid. When Phaestus’s sorcerous reputation fails him, Sigrid’s muscles—and skill with an axe—keeps the riffraff in line. As is often the case with opposites, there could be a dawning attraction between the two, though neither will admit it.

FACTIONS

Akin to allies and enemies, a hero's backstory will occasionally involve organizations, ranging from a small gang of thieves to a worldwide cult. This is particularly true when taking the *Bounty/Hunted* flaw, which implies a larger group has the resources to track a hero down. Rather than being a static part of the character's history, these factions will likely resurface at several points during a campaign and could serve as an ongoing hook for adventures.

As with *Enemy*, the GM usually takes over the task of fully defining a faction, invoking the Rule of Remoteness where necessary.

Example

*The assassin Senjam Singh learned his lethal trade from a mysterious group known as the Grandfathers. These were former spiritual ascetics who took up contract killing when a local warlord burned their temple and forced them to hole up in a mountain fortress. Since that time, the Grandfathers have become quite wealthy, dispatching their agents at the behest of powerful clients or when the Master of Assassins, the Grandfather himself, deems it necessary. Unfortunately for Senjam, he is now on their hit list after going rogue (he has the *Bounty/Hunted* flaw).*

Since this 'assassin's guild' hails from an India analog culture far from the campaign setting, the Grandfathers pose few constraints on the GM. However, he decides that a small branch has been established in a nearby city under the guise of spice merchants, and soon will be paying Senjam a visit . . .

LIFE EVENTS

Players sometimes like a random element when creating a hero's backstory. Though lifepath generators have appeared in many RPGs, *Barbarians of Lemuria* and *Everywhen* already have this mechanic baked into character creation—the sequence of a hero's careers suggests a lifepath. However, that's not to say significant events couldn't further shape a character's history, for good or ill.

The following d6,6 tables present some of these potential events. The tables are grouped in general categories (Calamity, Windfall, Family and Friends, Intrigue, Conflict, and Supernatural) to provide some background color as well as suggest mechanical effects, in the form of boons and flaws. **These tables are completely optional.** Further, results can be modified to better fit a player's conception for their hero.

If using the **Motivations** option presented on pg. 68, these events can also suggest personal reasons for adventuring.

It is recommended to only roll once or twice on the tables. For some results, a key issue is *when* the event occurs during the course of the hero's careers. Choose or roll a d6 for the event to occur at the beginning (1-2), middle (3-4), or towards the end (5-6).

Example

Var Nok is a Primal shaman from the volcanic badlands of Murnia, where clans of obsidian-armed savages clash with each other for daily survival. Var's player rolls 4,4 on the Life Events table and gets the 'Intrigue, Racket' result. A second roll of 5 indicates this happens late in his career.

The player envisions Var running a scam on the rest of his tribe, wherein he pretends to 'hear' spiritual counsel coming from an old bear skull in the chieftain's tent. This works fine for many winters, and Var enjoys great status, until a rival shaman named Hakk Strike-Eye shatters the relic and produces a 'talking' skull of his own, taken from a saber-toothed cat.

Dejected, Var Nok is forced to leave his tribe, but still yearns for the easy life of a huckster. As suggested under potential boons/flaws, he takes Greed and chooses Opportunism as an adventuring motive. The enterprising shaman plans on wandering to more Civilized lands, hoping to find a whole new crop of suckers!



CALAMITY

Life for most in S&S settings is nasty, brutish, and short. You, however, have had more than your share of misfortune, though sometimes there's a silver lining. As they say, "that which doesn't kill you . . ."

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| 1,1 | <p>Left for Dead Whether buried under a pile of corpses on the battlefield, or nearly succumbing to plague or a serious accident, you were considered a goner. Though you managed to survive, the experience of being abandoned has left a bitter taste in your mouth.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Hard to Kill, Stressed</i> Possible Motivations: Survival</p> |
| 1,2 | <p>Severely Wounded Like Left for Dead above, but you were ministered to until you recovered. You may feel a debt to someone as a result.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Quick Recovery, Missing Eye or Ear or Limb</i> Possible Motivations: Obligation</p> |
| 1,3 | <p>Robbed! Someone took a significant possession from you—more than losing a couple coins in the marketplace. This could be anything from a family heirloom to a ship, or a piece of property. You now have a healthy paranoia about protecting what's yours.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Alert, Bereft</i> Possible Motivations: Opportunism</p> |
| 1,4 | <p>Double-Crossed A close friend or associate betrayed your trust for their own gain, potentially ruining your career, reputation, financial standing, love life, etc. You have neither forgotten nor forgiven, and trusting people is now much harder.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Detect Deception, Hatred of . . .</i> Possible Motivations: Vengeance</p> |
| 1,5 | <p>Imprisoned You may have been wrongfully accused or just caught red-handed, but you ended up rotting in a gaol until your sentence was up or you engineered an escape. In Primal or Tribal societies, this means undergoing an ordeal in lieu of incarceration. You may have issues with authority as a result.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Escape Artist, Bounty/Hunted</i> Possible Motivations: Vindication</p> |
| 1,6 | <p>Exiled You were banished from your homeland (if early in your career), or a place you later called home for something you did or were reputed to do. Though you may long to return, there will likely be repercussions for doing do.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Inured, Notorious/Infamous</i> Possible Motivations: Displaced</p> |



WINDFALL

Even in a dog-eat-dog world, positive things can still happen. Don't be surprised, however, if your hard-bitten companions aren't jealous of your good fortune!

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| 2,1 | <p>Mentor Someone with good intentions took you under their wing and patiently taught you everything they knew. If this happened early in your career, the mentor could be your parent(s). As a result, you may feel indebted and want to continue the tradition.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Knowledge/Learned, Apprentice</i> Possible Motivations: Idealism</p> |
| 2,2 | <p>Major Success You accomplished something <i>big</i> in your career—fought with heroic distinction in a battle, banished a demon, captured a ship, created a masterpiece, etc. If this happened early on you may now be struggling with faded glory.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Reputation, Arrogant</i> Possible Motivations: Destiny</p> |
| 2,3 | <p>Rich! Whether through luck, hard work, or a well-timed theft, you struck it rich. If this happened early in your career, you may have already blown through all the money (which is why you're adventuring now . . .)</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Frugal/Great Wealth, Spendthrift</i> Possible Motivations: Opportunism</p> |
| 2,4 | <p>True Love At some point you met the love of your life. Other things got in the way, but you still hold a torch for this person, and they likely feel the same way about you. Maybe, someday, you can be reunited.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Positive Attitude, Obsession</i> Possible Motivations: Seeker</p> |
| 2,5 | <p>Parting Gift Someone gave you a present with no strings attached, possibly as repayment for a good deed or a token of affection. You've treasured this item ever since.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Heirloom Weapon or Relic</i> Possible Motivations: Obligation</p> |
| 2,6 | <p>From on High You did something to gain the favorable attention of a noble, or chieftain in a Primal or Tribal culture. Now someone powerful owes you a favor! This brush with the rich and famous, however, may have left you with a swelled head.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Contacts/Friends in High Places, Boastful/Braggart</i> Possible Motivations: Power</p> |



FAMILY AND FRIENDS

You can pick your friends . . . but you can't pick family. Some of these results, especially Black Sheep and Sibling Rivalry, will have happened early in your career by default.

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| 3,1 | <p>Inheritance You were due to inherit something significant; a title, farm, or even a whole duchy, but someone swindled you out of it—likely another family member. Rather than press your claim you had to leave for your own safety, though you may yearn to someday regain your rightful property.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Hatred of . . .</i> or <i>Obsession</i> Possible Motivations: <i>Redemption</i></p> |
| 3,2 | <p>Black Sheep Nothing you did was good enough, which your disappointed parents/guardians let you know at every opportunity. Also, you were the go-to scapegoat for anything that went wrong, from a failed crop to a barbarian invasion. Small wonder you left home!</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Comforting Words</i>, <i>Overly Modest</i> Possible Motivations: <i>Vindication</i></p> |
| 3,3 | <p>Sibling Rivalry You have a brother or sister (or even a twin!) who has always been jealous of your personal gifts, and vice-versa. Though the relationship has been more competitive than hateful, it could boil over into conflict at some point in the future.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Athletic/Born Athlete</i> or <i>Attractive</i> Possible Motivations: <i>Power</i></p> |
| 3,4 | <p>Friend in Need You got someone out of a jam, likely at great risk to yourself. Now this person feels indebted to you and has vowed to return the favor.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Companion</i> or <i>Contacts</i> Possible Motivations: <i>Idealism</i></p> |
| 3,5 | <p>Adopted Possibly from tragedy or just expedience, you were raised by someone other than your biological parents. This could result in a wild twist of fate, e.g., a barbarian child reared by civilized, aristocratic parents, an heiress raised in a brothel, etc.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Linguist</i>, <i>Naivety/Gullible</i> Possible Motivations: <i>Seeker</i></p> |
| 3,6 | <p>Mortal Enemy You have acquired a major nemesis; someone who is out to kill you or discredit you utterly. This may have been the result of something you did, an accident, or just being in the wrong place at the wrong time.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Bounty/Hunted</i> or <i>Enemy</i> Possible Motivations: <i>Survival</i></p> |



INTRIGUE

At some point you had a brush with skullduggery, though this doesn't necessarily make you a rogue or even a 'bad' person. You may have been on the receiving end of malfeasance or fallen into these events by chance.

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| 4,1 | <p>Scandal You were involved in a major scandal that ended badly, such as a failed coup, a love affair, etc. Likely, you had to leave the area or quit a career to avoid fallout. If the scandal occurred early, this might be the reason you left your homeland.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Glib/Silver Tongue, Untrustworthy</i> Possible Motivations: Displaced</p> |
| 4,2 | <p>Wild Rumors Your reputation took a hit after someone spread (untrue) rumors about you, or perhaps you sowed speculation concerning someone else. As in Scandal above, this likely meant you had to start anew elsewhere.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Biting Comment, Notorious/Infamous</i> Possible Motivations: Survival</p> |
| 4,3 | <p>Major Crime You played a role in a heist, assassination, kidnapping—something significant. Though you weren't caught, this likely did not go according to plan. Any ill-gotten gains are long gone, and the other people involved might be tempted to snitch.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Sneaky/Stealthy, Dark Secret</i> Possible Motivations: Redemption</p> |
| 4,4 | <p>Racket You had a good scam going . . . for a while. This could have been anything from taking bribes in a high position to a simple marketplace swindle, but you were eventually caught or edged out by another racketeer. Your taste of the easy life may have left you wanting more.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Deft Hands, Greed</i> Possible Motivations: Opportunism</p> |
| 4,5 | <p>Blackmail You have the goods on a prominent or powerful person, who you are exploiting for your own gain. While blackmail is usually done for money, it can also be used for political favors or to keep someone safe, e.g., you are blackmailing a king so your family won't be killed.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Contacts, Enemy</i> Possible Motivations: Power</p> |
| 4,6 | <p>Framed You were set up to take the fall for something you didn't do. Just who was responsible may still be unknown, but you had to take the consequences. Depending on when this event occurred during your career, you may have been able to clear your name or are still struggling to do so.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Bounty/Hunted</i> or <i>Notorious/Infamous</i> Possible Motivations: Vindication</p> |



CONFLICT

S&S settings are wild, violent places where might makes right and bloodshed can erupt at any time. As with Intrigue, you don't have to be a warrior to have a brush with these experiences—just a survivor.

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| 5,1 | <p>War You were caught up in a major war or Tribal conflict. You could have participated directly as a combatant or were just affected by it (e.g., displaced as a refugee). Though you survived, you may have some lasting scars. Note that in some areas this could've been a major naval battle instead of a land conflict.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Hard as Nails/Hard to Kill, Missing Limb</i> Possible Motivations: Bloodlust</p> |
| 5,2 | <p>Skirmish Similar to War above, but the battle was smaller and likely inconclusive. There's also a greater chance you played a significant role.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Inspire, Missing Eye or Ear</i> Possible Motivations: Idealism</p> |
| 5,3 | <p>Duel At some point you went <i>mano-a-mano</i> against an enemy. This could have been a formal affair, such as a fight between nobles, a scrap among warriors to establish pecking order, or even a bare-knuckle dustup between two rival merchants in the marketplace. Regardless, the fight was epic.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Two-Weapon Fighter or Brawler</i> Possible Motivations: Vengeance</p> |
| 5,4 | <p>Siege You were holed up in a settlement and had to participate in a protracted, defensive battle. For Primal or Tribal cultures, this could have been a cave or an earthen work fortress. You don't like talking about what you had to do to survive.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Inured, Taciturn</i> Possible Motivations: Survival</p> |
| 5,5 | <p>Murder You killed someone, whether out of self-defense, by accident, or sheer cold-bloodedness. This was not in the 'line of duty' for martially oriented careers, but outside the usual context. The person may have been prominent, and you may have been able to cover it up . . . for now.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Bounty/Hunted or Dark Secret</i> Possible Motivations: Redemption</p> |
| 5,6 | <p>Ambush You were taken unawares by a hostile force. This could've been anything from being 'jumped' by a gang in a back alley to a merchant caravan suddenly hit by raiders. Though you managed to survive, you've cultivated a healthy sense of paranoia since.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Wary, Fear of . . .</i> Possible Motivations: Displaced</p> |



SUPERNATURAL

Even in ‘low magic’ settings, people interact with the unknown every now and then. The experience is always memorable and tends to widen the worldview of those involved.

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| 6,1 | <p>Haunting You have seen a fully manifested ghost or other spirit, perhaps as a result of growing up in a haunted dwelling or coming across one during your travels. Though chilling, this may have sharpened your sensitivity to the spirit world.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Second Sight, Haunted</i> Possible Motivations: Curiosity</p> |
| 6,2 | <p>Assault! An aggressive supernatural creature attacked you and/or your kin. Likely you did not have the means of destroying it at the time, or was taken unaware, and the thing is still out there . . .</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Hard to Shake, Stressed</i> Possible Motivations: Vengeance</p> |
| 6,3 | <p>Cursed You received the unwanted attentions of a sorcerer or witch, in the form of a hex. Though you may have been able to throw it off, this could’ve put you in debt to another sorcerer. You might also be more resistant to magic as a result.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Ward, Hexed</i> Possible Motivations: Obligation</p> |
| 6,4 | <p>Relic You came across an object imbued with magical power, and possibly the legend behind it. If the item was powerful, you no longer have it—though you might lust to get your ‘precious’ back! If the item was minor, it might still be in your possession, and now you have a thirst for finding more.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Relic, Obsession</i> Possible Motivations: Power</p> |
| 6,5 | <p>Entity You had a brush with a powerful entity, likely a demon or eldritch horror, though in dualistic settings the creature could be more benign. The fact that you’re still around may mean there’s something special about you.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Nose for the Unnatural/Nose for Magic, Unsettling</i> Possible Motivations: Seeker</p> |
| 6,6 | <p>Vision You had a prophetic vision, perhaps sent by a Divinity . . . or maybe just a really vivid hallucination. Either way, you likely believe it to be true. This may cause you to act irrationally or even take up some grandiose quest.</p> <p>Possible Boons/Flaws: <i>Divine Blessing, Madness/Morgazzon’s Curse</i> Possible Motivations: Destiny</p> |





OPTION: THE SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS

If you've got a spare career slot and envision your hero as the wandering type, consider rolling (d6) on the table below. These are 'hard luck' careers that people fall into rather than choose, and therefore may only entail taking rank 0 or 1 before moving on (or escaping!).

1. Sold into bondage, take the **slave** career.
2. Forced into hard or hazardous labor, take **worker**.
3. Fall in with the wrong crowd to survive, take **rogue** or **pirate**.
4. Press-ganged, take **sailor**.
5. Drafted or forcibly recruited, take **soldier**.
6. Marooned or lost in a wild area, take **barbarian**.

LINKS

Even in brief campaigns, it's a good idea to have players determine how (or if) their heroes know each other before the action starts. As with backstories, this doesn't have to be complicated: "*We met on the same ship that brought us to this accursed city,*" or "*we did a stint as caravan guards on a dangerous journey up north.*" S&S heroes often strike up acquaintances easily, if for no other reason than mutual protection. Even potential rivalries can be settled later. "*Once we find the idol of the Sapphire Serpent, we'll fight to see who keeps it.*"

PCs who have spent enough time together previously enjoy certain benefits. First, if they speak different languages, they have acquired enough fluency to communicate in a pidgin of both tongues. Second, they have access to the boons *Heroic Bond* and *Tandem Fighter* if desired.

At the GMs discretion, players who come up with compelling links can be awarded an extra Hero Point for the first adventure.

MOTIVATIONS

Though heroes come from countless backgrounds, they all share one thing in common—*something* caused them to take up the dangerous life of an adventurer. This could be anything from the curiosity of a spoiled noble to the desperation of a lowly cutpurse, tired of sleeping in the street. Motivations help guide a hero's actions in a less restrictive manner than 'alignment.'

Mechanically, when a PC acts in accordance with a motivation *and* this complicates their current situation, the GM can award a refresh of d6 resolve points. The refresh can be limited to one use per session if players abuse the rule. Some potential motivations include:

- **Bloodlust** (enjoys the thrill of fighting and killing; a particularly dangerous motivation).
- **Curiosity** (wants to 'see the world,' possibly as a result of isolation or limited experience).
- **Destiny** (feels fate has a larger purpose in store for them, whether real or not).
- **Displaced** (a refugee from a Vanished culture, war, cataclysm, or an exile).
- **Idealism** (guided by a strong belief system, possibly a religion or *Code*).
- **Obligation** (trying to repay someone else, or live up to a *Vow* or promise).
- **Opportunism** (the most common; out to get what they can in an unforgiving world).
- **Power** (naked ambition, a favorite of sorcerers, nobles, and would be conquerors).
- **Redemption** (needs to atone for some past misdeed through altruism).
- **Seeker** (wants knowledge or spiritual experience; non materialistic).
- **Survival** (just wants to get by; maybe an outlaw on the run or escaped slave).
- **Vengeance** (seeking retribution; a classic motive, though often empty once fulfilled).
- **Vindication** (has something to prove from a past negative experience).

OPTION: NON-HUMAN ORIGINS

Unlike most fantasy worlds, which have a strong Tolkien influence, S&S settings feature human protagonists, distinguished by their origin cultures and personalities rather than pointy ears, hairy feet, etc. Non-human characters occasionally show up in S&S literature, however, and in the spirit of flexibility a few 'classic' examples are presented here. The GM has final say in allowing their use. As with player-generated cultures, these races all follow the Rule of Remoteness in terms of their placement in a campaign setting.

With two exceptions, these are offshoots of humanity that have evolved down a different path. S&S usually posits races as evolving rather than being created by a Divinity; given enough time, 'normal' humans living in similar environments will start to resemble these variants.

Beastmen

Also known as ape-men, these are humans who have slipped back on the evolutionary scale, becoming something intermediary between humans and 'lower' primates. As such, they have a stooped, hairy, and bestial appearance, similar to robustus, but much more savage (cf. *Grooth, Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 85). Beastmen regularly practice cannibalism and are attacked on sight by humans. They often worship primordial, elder gods or dark beings—this may be a holdover from the debauched practices of a Waning or Vanished culture. Beastmen culture is always Primal.

Suggested Boons: *Brawler, Fearsome Looks, Giant Strength, Hard-to-Kill, Jungle-Born, Keen Sense, Night Sight, Quick Recovery, Strength Feat*

Suggested Flaws: *All-Thumbs, Clumsy, Country Bumpkin, Landlubber, Lumbering, Memorable/Distinctive Appearance, Primitive, Savage, Simple, Stigma, Taciturn, Temper/Hot-Headed, Ugly & Brutish*



Diluvian

Sometimes known as merfolk, these are humans evolved for living in coastal shallows, perhaps to evade predators. As aquatic mammals they can't breathe underwater, but they can submerge for long periods before needing to come up for air. Thus, they don't build underwater cities (legends of diluvian cities are the ruins of Vanished cultures consumed by flood), though they might have settlements on or near the surface. Because of issues with fire and metalworking, diluvians come from Primal or Tribal cultures.

Physically, diluvians look very similar to humans, with a slight webbing between fingers and toes, and sometimes a blue-green cast to their skin. They tend to desiccate easily, though this can be countered with frequent baths.



Suggested Boons: *Born Swimmer, Scorns the Cold, Keen Smell*

Suggested Flaws: *Feels the Heat, Poor Eyesight, Primitive*

Gracile

Sometimes known as elder man, this is an ancient offshoot of humanity with a slender, taller build. Their features tend towards facial symmetry, making them appear attractive. Gracile cultures are usually Ancient, with the artistic, complex, and mystic Traits. Despite their frequent claims to the contrary, they are not any more intelligent than humans, just longer-lived. Graciles enforce their remoteness, sometimes going so far as to kill or enslave unfortunates who wander into their 'secret' territory.

Suggested Boons: *Attractive, Beast-Friend, Horseman/Born-in-the-Saddle, Cultural Weapon (bow), Knowledge/Learned, Long-Lived, Magic of the Sorcerer Kings*

Suggested Flaws: *Addicted/Cravings, Arrogant, Delicate, Fanatic/Zealot, Frail, Stigma*

Night Children

Also known as mound-folk, this is an offshoot adapted to living in subterranean environments, usually vast cave complexes. According to their legends, night children fled underground to escape some natural cataclysm or human invasion and have been hostile since. Nocturnal when above ground, they occasionally go on forays into human territory for not-so-wholesome reasons.

Physically they are smaller, pale, have large, staring eyes and more cartilage in their skeletons for squeezing through tight spaces, though this gives them a wormlike motion disturbing to behold. They are often vampiric and/or cannibalistic, preying on humans as a food source.

Suggested Boons: *Blind Combat, Escape Artist, Keen Hearing, Night Sight*

Suggested Flaws: *Addicted/Cravings, Dayblind (penalty die on physical actions taken in full daylight), Delicate, Frail, Landlubber, Stigma, Unsettling*

Robustus

Also called cavemen, this is another ancient branching of humanity, though perhaps closer to modern humans than gracile. Robustus tends towards a squatter, broader build, with short, powerful limbs and heavy facial muscles. Cultures are usually Tribal, with the artistic and industrious Traits. Emphasis is placed on craftsmanship, whether working stone, iron, or even steel. For this reason, human cultures often seek out robustus for trade.

Rather than dying out, robustus appears to be slowly becoming more like contemporary humans, with each generation growing progressively taller, less broad, etc.

Suggested Boons: *Artistic, Deft Hands, Disease Resistance, Giant Strength, Hard to Kill, Keen Smell, Knowledge/Learned, Quick Recovery, Scorns the Cold, Strength Feat*

Suggested Flaws: *Naivety/Gullible, Simple, Taciturn, Tedious*





Synthetic

This 'race' sometimes shows up in dying Earth/far future settings with a quasi-scientific feel. Synthetics are created rather than born, usually in a vat, cauldron, pool of vital liquids, etc., and given sentience when their bodies are fully grown. The creator is invariably a powerful alchemist or sorcerer, 'playing God' out of idle curiosity or for some benevolent purpose, such as helping civilization recover after an apocalypse.

Physically, synthetic heroes appear as tall, perfect specimens, with high-superhuman attributes. Game-wise, this means they are granted extra boons at creation. However, they are also blank slates with little in the way of actual experience. To reflect this, consider extending the cap on initial boons from 3 to 5, but limit the hero to only 1-2 points in 1 career.

Suggested Boons: *Attractive, Cat-like Agility, Giant Strength, Hard to Kill, Keen Sense, Quick Recovery*

Suggested Flaws: *Can't Lie, Country Bumpkin, Naivety/Gullible, Simple, Taciturn, Unsettling*

Serpent Men

This is a race of humanoid saurians who evolved intelligence very early on, establishing a civilization in the steaming jungles of the Mesozoic Era. Their vast empire died out as the climate cooled, forcing them underground for the warmth of geothermal fissures. Serpent men prophecy holds that the Earth will eventually warm again, allowing them to abandon their subterranean vaults and once again seize greatness.

Their culture is Ancient or Vanished, with the mystic and scholarly Traits. In addition to hosting great sorcerers, serpent men also have advanced knowledge of biology and toxicology. Those who have regular interaction with the surface world have developed a special Glamour spell (see **Magic**, pg. 124) with the reduced cost of 1 AP, allowing them to maintain a human guise over extended periods.

Suggested Boons: *Beast-Friend (serpents only), Escape Artist, First-rate Facilities/Excellent Laboratory, Genius/Savant, Jungle-Born, Keen Smell, Knowledge/Learned, Magic of the Ancients, Poison Resistance, Poisoner, Power of the Void, Scorns the Heat*

Suggested Flaws: *Arrogant, Fanatic/Zealot, Feels the Cold, Landlubber, Obsession, Poor Eyesight, Unsettling*





3 EQUIPMENT

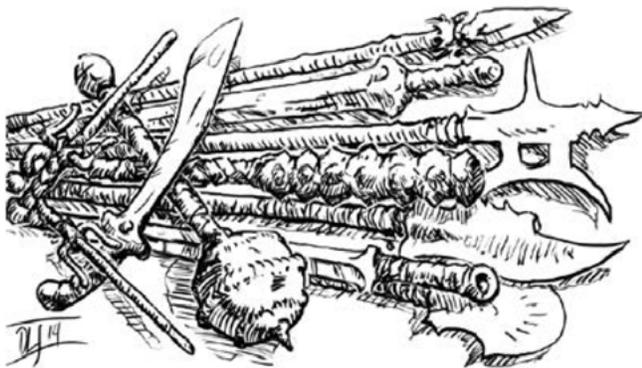
HEROES AND THEIR GEAR

Most fantasy RPG players bear a great reverence for equipment. Any encumbrance rules are cheerfully ignored as PCs tote an arsenal of weapons and tools (sometimes piled on a donkey) down into the stony bowels of a 'dungeon.'

This sort of over-preparation is not in the spirit of *Barbarians of Lemuria* or *Everywhen*. It also stands in stark contrast with S&S stories, where a hero might begin a tale by climbing onto the deck of a pirate ship, naked save for a loincloth. Or in *media res*, running from bloodthirsty wolves across some frozen waste, with only the chains that had once bound them as a weapon. "Don't get too attached," would seem good advice for S&S characters when it comes to equipment.

However, players will likely resent any heavy-handed implementation of this by the GM. Though they may be able to swallow the idea of abstract coinage, players want their trusty sword with them across adventures, for at least *some* continuity in an episodic world! Therefore, it's encouraged to denude PCs sparingly, perhaps with the understanding there will be an opportunity to re-equip—*after* they've broken out of a gaol, or climbed free from a darkened, filth-ridden oubliette.

Also, remember characters can spend a Hero Point to invoke Twist of Fate (see *Everywhen*, pg. 33, or *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 62), allowing them to have some piece of equipment they can reasonably account for.



ENCUMBRANCE RULES?!?

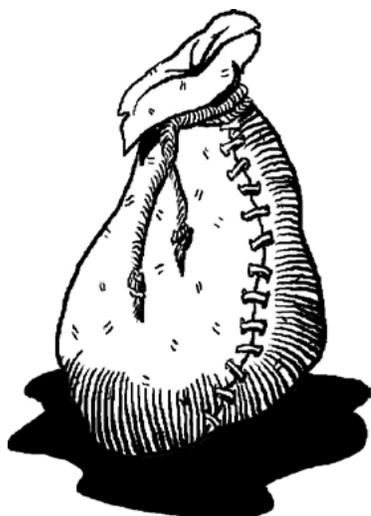
Players shouldn't have to worry about encumbrance in most situations. However, if they appear to be abusing this free-and-easy spirit the GM can impose a medium or heavy encumbrance level, with an Agility penalty corresponding to armor protection (-1 or -2). Also, carting around all that weight can inflict a penalty die on non-combat actions, like climbing or making a Strength check to avoid exhaustion. That should keep the hoarders in line!

CURRENCY

As noted in the introduction (**We Don't Count Torches Here**, pg. 11), neither *Barbarians of Lemuria* or *Everywhen* encourages keeping exact track of money. S&S heroes typically blow through all their coinage between adventures, giving them a never-ending reason to adventure. Consequently, GMs can be lavish when handing out loot, instead of determining an amount calibrated exactly to the opposition faced. More often the main problem is just *transporting* all the stuff!

For descriptive purposes, minted coins start appearing in Civilized cultures. Primal and Tribal cultures use the barter system (as do many rural Civilized settlements), with flint, livestock, and metal often used as a basis for exchange. Pieces of trade metal can be weighed out on scales, and some Tribal cultures use hack silver, so named because bits can easily be cut off for transactions. Of course, portable wealth like jewelry, gems, and furs, as well as tools and weapons, also serve this purpose.





Most Civilized cultures eventually adopt the silver standard, giving older, gold coins a special allure. In Waning cultures, the currency has become debased, with citizens routinely ‘shaving’ small pieces off coins and rulers adding cheaper metals during the minting process, leading to a spiral of inflation. Ancient cultures may have moved beyond using currency altogether (or use exotic materials, like radium) and the coins of Vanished cultures could be particularly valuable, especially to collectors!

CREATIVE ANACHRONISM

Some of the weapons and equipment depicted here come from different eras of history. Though scholarly players just *love* pointing out these discrepancies, a strictly accurate approach isn’t necessary for the genre. S&S writers often mixed anachronisms. For example, High Medieval cavalry might charge armies from Antiquity, or watchmen carry crossbows while chariots clatter in the streets outside. Though some of this may have resulted from scant research, more likely it was just expediency—not letting facts get in the way of a good story.

Five technological eras are presented in this chapter as a general guide (see **Tech Levels**, opposite). However, if some players want to arm their noble warriors with rapiers and buff coats, while others wear mail hauberks and wield broadswords, by all means, let them!



HANDLING HOARDS

If using the optional resources rules in *Everywhen* (pg. 59), heroes who come across treasure hoards can increase their Credit Ratings (CR), at least temporarily. A hoard can be assigned a + ‘x’ value (3,4,5 etc.) for making purchases, to reflect the character’s newfound wealth. This value diminishes by one or more with each major purchase made. A Calamitous Failure on a check means the hoard was somehow squandered!

TECH LEVELS

As the *Codex* posits cultures at different stages of development, the idea of ‘tech level’ makes a useful means of comparison. These are broad eras from history (for the most part), and don’t place any substantial limitations on PCs. A hero from a Primal culture, for example, can pick up a metal sword and swing it like anyone else. That same hero could learn to load and fire a harquebus after minimal training, at least in game terms. The *Primitive* flaw (pg. 59) can be a factor, however.

Each era description includes ‘new’ sample weapons detailed in this chapter. The five eras are:

- **Stone Age**
- **Bronze Age**
- **Iron Age**
- **Renaissance**
- **Advanced**

A sixth era, ‘**Modern**,’ is mentioned, contemporary with our own, to describe the weapons and equipment Outsider heroes (see pg. 24) occasionally bring with them when they visit S&S realms.



STONE AGE

Weapons and tools are made from bone, flint, wood, and where available, obsidian. Metal armor provides an additional 2 points of protection against weapons from this era, and Stone Age weaponry breaks on a Calamitous Failure. Primal cultures (see pg. 18) use tech from this period.

Any armor worn is made from furs or hides and provides Light protection at best. Shields are not generally used.

Sample Weapons: Atlatl, Bolas, Throwing Stick

BRONZE AGE

Bronze, an alloy of copper and tin, is the chief metal for weapons and tools during this period. Though its strength relative to iron is debatable, bronze weighs more, and the scarcity of tin makes it harder to produce.

Protection in this era tends to focus on large shields vs. body armor, though greaves and helmets are used. Very wealthy people sometimes commission a bronze cuirass, sculpted to resemble human musculature.

Linothrax armor, made from multiple layers of linen sewed or glued together, can bestow up to medium protection.

Sample Weapons: Pike

IRON AGE

The default tech level for most S&S settings, this encompasses up to the High Medieval era. Iron is used to create body armor of increasing protective value, and 'anti-armor' weapons begin to appear. Some cultures produce high-grade steel (see sidebar, pg. 77) with superior durability. Armor shifts from mail to plate in later periods. Complete armor protection and upgraded armor (see pgs. 81 and 76) become available.

Sample Weapons: Lance, Morningstar

RENAISSANCE

Gunpowder weapons appear in this era, though as is often pointed out, they don't immediately become dominant. To give them more punch, these have been 'buffed' from *Everywhen* stats to d6H damage, as well as having the Penetration 2 quality against Iron Age armor or lower. The Defense bonus from shields is negated. Matchlocks are the default triggering mechanism, requiring a lit fuse to fire. This can limit their use in certain conditions such as heavy wind or rain.

Sample Weapons: Bombard, Grenado, Harquebus, Pavise Shield, Rapier, Saber, Stiletto

ADVANCED

This is a fictional era for Ancient cultures that have developed 'super-science' resembling magic. More prevalent in a dying Earth setting, Advanced tech doesn't necessarily mean our current conception of 'modern.' Weird inventions making use of crystals, sound waves, radium, ether, psionics and pseudo-scientific concepts usually take precedence over, say, an automatic pistol or a light switch. See the description of Ancient cultures on pg. 19 for more details. Weapons from this era completely ignore armor protection, unless pitted against something just as esoteric, like energy shields (see *Everywhen*, pg. 57).

Sample Weapons: Radium Gun

Note: Weapons brought to S&S settings by Outsider heroes (see pg. 24) are considered to come from the Modern era (see *Everywhen*, pg. 39). Stats for guns of this type are available in *Dogs of W.A.R.* (both editions) in addition to the *Everywhen* core book. Otherwise, assume guns do d6H damage with a range increment of 15' for pistols and 60' for rifles. Optional rules for automatic fire can be found in the **Settings** chapter, pg. 238.



PROJECTS AND MASTERPIECES

In the *Everywhen* system, craft-oriented careers besides alchemist can accrue Downtime Project points (DPs) to create items between adventures. These function exactly like Craft Points in *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, except that the items created by non-alchemists are mundane rather than exotic (e.g., no lighter-than-air metal, magic potions, etc.). However, Uncommon or Legendary inventions (see *Everywhen*, pg. 103-104) and preparations (see *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 138) are possible, in the form of ‘masterpiece’ armor, weapons, and tools. If the craftsman is working with an alchemist of at least equal rank, Mythic level masterpieces are possible.

Note that these rules are for players wanting to create their own items. The GM can assign qualities to equipment as they see fit.

Uncommon masterpieces (-1 Difficulty, 2 DP/CP) can have one of these qualities:

- Well-Balanced; bonus die on Attack or Task rolls.
- Hardness; re-roll any ‘1’ results on damage, though the second roll must be taken.
- Sharpness; increases damage 1 step (see **Mechanics**, pg. 90) or bestows a bonus die on damage rolls.
- Penetration 1.
- Break-Resistant; weapon won’t break on a Calamitous Failure. If the Shattered Sword, Sundered Shield option is invoked, the weapon snaps clean (even result on a d6) or goes flying from the wielder’s hand (odd result).

Legendary masterpieces (-2 Difficulty, 4 DP/CP) can have any two of the qualities above, and one of these:

- Penetration 2.
- Upgraded Armor; the base d6 protection becomes d6H.
- Lightweight; decrease the Agility penalty by 1 for the armor type. Lightweight large shields have no Agility penalty.
- Unbreakable; if the Shattered Sword, Sundered Shield option is invoked, the weapon goes flying from the wielder’s hand.



SWORDS, SORCERY... AND GUNS?

Some definitions of the S&S genre explicitly prohibit gunpowder weapons. Poetically, the gun is seen as destroying the romanticism associated with swords and swordplay, and thus, heroic fiction. However, much of Robert E. Howard’s works include swashbuckling stories with muskets and cannon, and still manage to convey the ‘feel’ of S&S.

Aside from loading times and unreliability, firearms can be further nerfed by enforcing the ranged weapons in melee rules (*Everywhen*, pg. 38). Basically, guns take a -2 or -4 penalty on Attack Rolls when the firer is in melee; the former modifier is for pistols and the latter for long guns.

Mythic masterpieces (-4 Difficulty, 8 DP/CP) can have these qualities:

- Weapons are Well Balanced and Unbreakable, do 2 steps higher damage, and bypass armor, except when used against Mythic level armor.
- Armor is Upgraded, incurs no Agility penalties, and protects at the next highest step for its type.
- Tools grant a bonus die on all Task Rolls and have further abilities as determined by the player and the GM (e.g., a diamond tipped auger that bores through metal or stone).



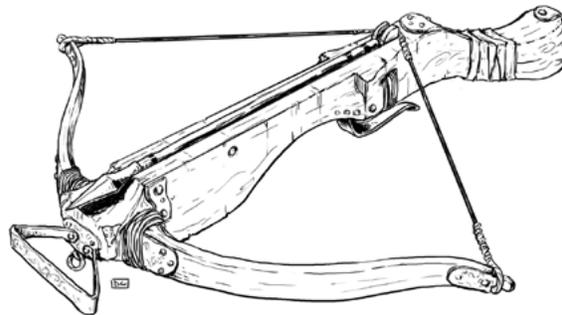
SUPERIOR STEEL

In many S&S settings, certain cultures are renowned for their advanced metallurgy, producing a type of high-carbon steel much sought after for armor and weapons. Historically, this would be represented by Damascus or Toledo steel. Such products are identifiable by a distinctive watermark or 'damask' pattern in the metal.

Weapons fashioned from this steel have the Penetration 1 or 2 quality, as well as being difficult to break (Toledo swords were 'proofed' by bending them in a half circle without snapping, and then striking the blade against a helmet with full force). Use the Break-Resistant quality as described on page 76. Add +1 to the CR cost.

Suits of armor fashioned from superior steel have the Upgraded quality. CR is +1 or +2.

Aside from various equipment bonuses, the mystique associated with such superior metals makes a good plot hook for adventures. PCs wanting to create their own Legendary or Mythic masterpieces might first have to source this steel before they can begin investing DP/CP.



WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

CR (Credit Rating) values are included with each description for GMs using the optional Resource mechanic (*Everywhen*, pg. 59). 1H and 2H means the weapon is used one-handed or two-handed, respectively.

Atlatl

A simple lever with a hook on one end to accommodate a javelin. The atlatl extends the arm, adding the thrower's full Strength bonus for damage. Range increment is 30.' 1H, CR 1.

Bolas

Used for herding and hunting. When thrown they do d3 + half Strength damage or incur the Entanglement 1 property. Range increment is 15.' 1H, CR 1.

Garotte

A strangling cord, sometimes made of wire. It must be employed from behind as part of a surprise attack; on a hit, the target takes d6 continuous damage per round. The target needs to make a Strength or Agility check modified by the wielder's Strength or Agility to break free. Concealable. 2H, CR 1.

Knife

Knife blades are shorter than daggers, doing only d3 + Strength damage. However, their presence in any medieval-analog setting as is so ubiquitous they have the Unobtrusive property, as well as Concealable and Short. Range increment is 10.' 1H, CR 1.

Lance

A mounted weapon, the lance does base d6 damage, raised 2 steps when used with a charge (see **Mechanics**, pg. 101). Lances have the Long quality and can be used with a shield. 1H, CR 2.



Morningstar

A spiked ball (sometimes two or three) swung from a length of chain. This flail weapon is rather unwieldy (-1 on Attack Rolls) but has the Penetration 1 quality and ignores the Defense value of shields. On a Calamitous Failure it strikes the wielder. D6 + Strength damage, 1H, CR 2.

Net, Barbed

The woven cords of this net are inset with bone or metal barbs. When thrown (range increment 5'), it has the Entanglement 2 property. On a failed attempt to escape, the ensnared target takes d3 damage. 2H, CR 1.

Pike

Pikes are a specialized weapon used in Formation Fighting (see **Mechanics**, pg. 98). Use the stats for a polearm; in addition, pikes have the 'Very Long' quality, meaning the wielder gets a bonus die on Attack Rolls when fighting someone with a 'Medium' (almost all 1H weapons) or Short weapon. However, they are unwieldy when used outside a formation, incurring a penalty die on Attack Rolls. Pikes negate a Charge attack. 2H, CR 2.

Radium Gun

An exotic, 'super science' weapon possessed by certain Ancient cultures. The gun is vaguely pistol-shaped; a specially shielded chamber inside holds a shard of glowing radium crystal. When fired, a section of the chamber opens, allowing potent 'etheric emanations' (hard radiation) to escape out the barrel. This beam only damages organic targets, but freely ignores armor and cover up to 5' thick.

Damage is 2d6 with a range increment of 15.' Whenever a natural '2' comes up on the Attack Roll, the radium shard is exhausted and must be replaced for the gun to fire. 1H, CR 7.

Rapier, Light

Also known as a small sword, this 'gentleman's weapon' can be worn without social penalties. Quick and light, the blade can only be used for thrusting. Damage is d6L + Strength. At the GM's option, the sword adds 1 to the wielder's Defense against a single melee opponent. 1H, CR 2.



WEAPON QUALITIES

The *Everywhen* rules include several special qualities when using certain weapons (see pg. 53 in the core book). For convenience, the qualities cited in the *Codex* are described here:

Area

Damage is divided between targets in a 10' radius.

Concealable

Anyone trying to notice the weapon takes a penalty die on their attempt.

Entanglement X

A successful Attack Roll with this weapon restrains a target instead of causing damage. This prevents most physical actions until the target can break free with a successful Agility or Strength roll; the X value imposes a negative modifier.

Indirect

Cover and Defense benefits don't affect Attack Rolls.

Long

Take a bonus die on Attack Rolls when fighting someone with a Short weapon.

Penetration X

The weapon ignores X amount of armor protection when rolling damage.

Short

Take a penalty die on Attack Rolls when fighting someone with a Long weapon.

Unobtrusive

The weapon is generally perceived as a tool, and therefore doesn't cause much alarm.

| Weapon | Damage | Notes |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|
|---------------|---------------|--------------|

Melee Weapons

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----|--|
| <i>Garotte</i> | d6 | Must be used from behind, continuous damage, Concealable |
| <i>Knife</i> | d3 | 10' thrown, Concealable, Short, Unobtrusive |
| <i>Lance</i> | d6 | Long, used with charge from horseback, can use shield |
| <i>Morningstar</i> | d6 | Penetration 1, ignores shield Defense, -1 to Attack Rolls |
| <i>Pike</i> | d6 | 2H, Very Long, penalty die when used outside of a formation |
| <i>Rapier, Light</i> | d6L | +1 Defense, no social penalties |
| <i>Saber, Cavalry</i> | d6 | Used with charge from horseback |
| <i>Spear</i> | d6 | 20' thrown, Long, negates charge when readied |
| <i>Stiletto</i> | d3 | Concealable, Penetration 1, Short, add Strength or Agility to damage |
| <i>Sword</i> | d6 | |
| <i>Whip</i> | d3 | 10' range, Entanglement 1 with stunt, add half Strength damage |

Missile Weapons

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----|--|
| <i>Atlatl</i> | d6L | 30' increment, add full Strength damage |
| <i>Bolas</i> | d3 | 15' increment, damage or Entanglement 1 |
| <i>Net, Barbed</i> | d3 | 5' increment, Entanglement 2, damage on failed escape roll |
| <i>Radium Gun</i> | 2d6 | 15' increment, exotic weapon, ignores armor and up to 5' cover |
| <i>Throwing Stick</i> | d3 | 20' increment, add half Strength damage |

Gunpowder Weapons

| | | |
|------------------|--------|---|
| <i>Bombard</i> | d6H, 3 | 120' increment, siege weapon, crew of 6 to fire |
| <i>Grenado</i> | d6+1 | 5' increment, Area, Indirect |
| <i>Harquebus</i> | d6H | 15' increment, Penetration 2, ignores shields, 2 rounds to reload |

Saber, Cavalry

Cavalry sabers are curved, slashing swords wielded from horseback. Damage is raised 2 steps when used as part of a mounted charge (see **Mechanics**, pg. 101). 1H, CR2.

Spear

The premiere weapon of the Bronze Age, humble spears deserve some additional attention. Cheap to make, easy to train with, the spear can be thrown (range increment 20') and used with a shield. They can also be 'planted' or readied for use as an anti-cavalry weapon (see **Mechanics**, pg. 101). Spears have the Long quality. 1 or 2H, CR 1.

'Great spears' also exist, usually with a cross guard near the head to keep impaled targets from working their way up the shaft. These do d6H + Strength damage and cannot be thrown. 2H, CR 2.

Stiletto

Favored by assassins, this is a long, thin-bladed dagger that does d3 + Strength or Agility damage, whichever is higher. The later simulates multiple, precise thrusts. Stilettoes have the Penetration 1, Concealable, and Short qualities. 1H, CR 1.

Sword

The titular weapon of the S&S genre. Though spears and polearms may reign supreme on the historical battlefield, the versatile sword is the choice of most heroic adventurers. A 'status' weapon, swords are sometimes lovingly adorned with gems and precious metals. When Legendary or magic weapons appear, they're usually swords. 1H, CR 2 or higher.

Some later period swords have an extended hilt, allowing for 2H use if desired. When wielded this way, these do d6H + Strength damage. CR 3 or higher.



For color, swords from different cultural-analogs can use their historical names, such as the claymore, gladius, xiphos, tulwar, et. al. This has no effect on game mechanics.

Throwing Stick

A heavy stick, often distinctly curved. Does d3 + half Strength damage with a range increment of 20.' 1H, CR 1.

Whip

A tool that doubles as a weapon. The whip can strike up to 10' for D3 + half Strength damage against an unarmored target. Tricks like disarming or tripping someone are possible with a -2 penalty to the Attack Roll. When used to ensnare a limb, the whip has the Entanglement 1 quality. 1H, CR 2.

GUNPOWDER WEAPONS

The *Codex* limits these to three: the harquebus, bombard, and primitive grenado. GMs can expand on this with flintlock or wheellock pistols and muskets, cutting down on reload time and increasing the effective range. When discharged in quantity, black powder creates large clouds of smoke (penalty die for Cover or spotting things). A Calamitous Failure means the weapon explodes in the wielder's face, doing damage as listed. A miss result on an Attack Roll can also be interpreted as a misfire, "flash in the pan," etc.

Bombard

AKA "wallbreaker," a heavy artillery piece used to create breaches in fortifications. Bombards are not meant as anti-personnel weapons. They require a crew of 6 and fire heavy stone balls. Damage is d6H, scale 3 (see **Mechanics**, pg. 90), with a range increment of 120.' CR 5.

Grenado

An early grenade, detonated with a slow match. Some are loaded with Greek fire (see pg. 84) instead of powder. Damage is d6+1, with the Area and Indirect qualities for the explosive version. Range increment is 5.' 1H, CR 2.

Harquebus

A matchlock musket with a backwards-curving lever, called a serpentine. It uses a slow-burning cord ('match') to ignite the pan. The harquebus is often carried with a resting-stick to steady the weapon while firing. It takes at least 2 rounds for a skilled user to reload. Rain and other wet conditions prevent effective use.

Harquebus rounds have the Penetration 2 quality and ignore the Defense value of shields. Damage is d6H with a range increment of 15.' 2H, CR 3.



ARMOR

For descriptive flavor, some examples of armor from different eras and cultures are presented here. These are completely optional and don't affect game mechanics except where noted.



Light Armor

Typical light armor for a medieval-analog setting includes a padded coat (gambeson), possibly with leather bracers and greaves. The Renaissance era saw the introduction of stylish buff coats, essentially long, heavy leather jackets.

In the East, thick silk shirts were sometimes worn as light protection, especially against arrows.

Medium Armor

This can include a lone breastplate, cuirass, or composite-style armor like brigandine ('coat of plates'), consisting of metal plates sewn between leather or canvas. A cuirass of Eastern lamellar with pieces of lacquered leather or iron, linked together by silken cords or chain, would also fall under this level of protection.

Heavy Armor

Heavy armor implies protection covering most of the body, including the neck and joints. Examples might include a breastplate with a gorget or mail coif, chain sleeves and leggings with greaves, and mail 'mittens' or gauntlets to protect the hands, with heavy, padded cloth worn underneath. A full suit of samurai armor (the o-yori) provides similar coverage, consisting of lacquered iron plates laced together with tough silk cords.

Heavy armor is worn only on the battlefield or when expecting major trouble. Adventuring types wouldn't wear this level of protection when simply traveling or exploring lost ruins, and definitely not when tavern-crawling through a large city!

Complete Armor

Really heavy metal protection! A suit of complete armor usually means articulated plate with no real vulnerable areas—a dagger through the visor or under the armpits being the exceptions. As noted in *Everywhen*, this kind of armor can't be 'piecemealed' to a lower grade to reduce weight.

As per *Everywhen*, pg. 55, complete armor bestows d6 (static 4) protection, with a -3 Agility penalty and 2 step reduction in social reactions. A Strength of 1 or higher is required to simply move around in armor of this type. Usually, only nobles or generals on the battlefield would wear complete armor.

Concealed Armor

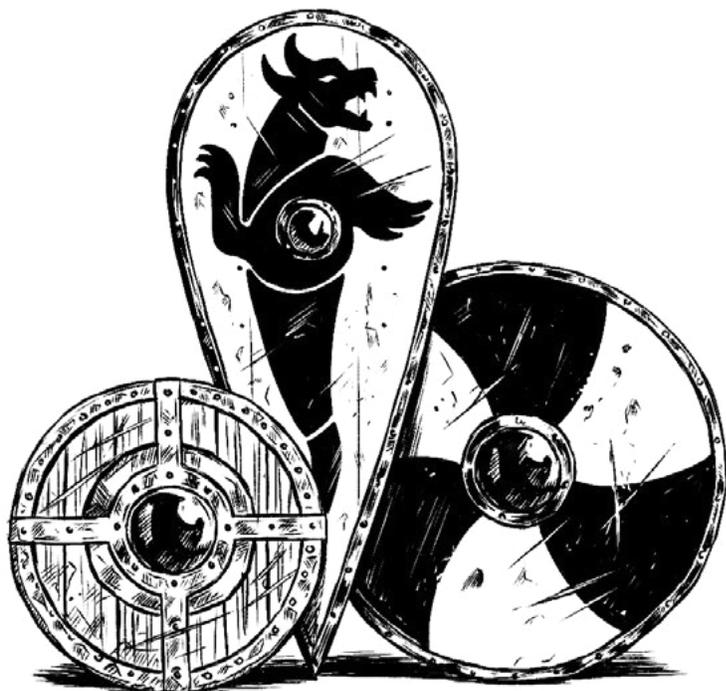
This is usually a breastplate or vest of overlapping scale armor, muffled to prevent noise and intended to be worn under heavy clothing. Protection is medium with a -1 Agility penalty; social penalties are negated, however. A Tough (-2) Mind check is required to tell if someone is wearing concealed armor. CR 3.

Helmet

Helmets come in an array of distinctive types, from a samurai's stylized kabuto with face mask, to a conquistador's crested morion. The curving, visored sallet (or salade) is commonly associated with European knights. In the ancient world, the full Corinthian helmet (often depicted fashionably pushed back on the forehead) and the Roman galatea, with a horsehair or feathered crest, are two visually striking examples.

Shield, Pavise

A type of very large shield, the pavise is often employed by archers and crossbowmen. The pavise can be planted firmly in the ground and provides cover (penalty die on missile attacks) in addition to the standard Defense bonus. When wielded instead of planted, the pavise decreases Agility by 2. CR 2.





SKINMAIL

S&S heroes are notorious for wearing little to no armor, or perhaps strategically placed ‘armor’ with no apparent function other than to titillate, as with the (in)famous chainmail bikini. Same goes for helmets, which hide attractive features and the dramatic expression of emotion. The reason for this is simple: skin on covers sells.

Barbarians of Lemuria and the *Codex* have mechanics to reflect this bias, in the form of the *Battle Harness* and *Aesthetic Armor* boons. Other skin-promoting protection includes the Sundered Shield, Shattered Sword and That Was Close! Hero Point options. Also, the Guard option presented in **Mechanics**, pg. 102, allows for protection when wielding a weapon without armor.

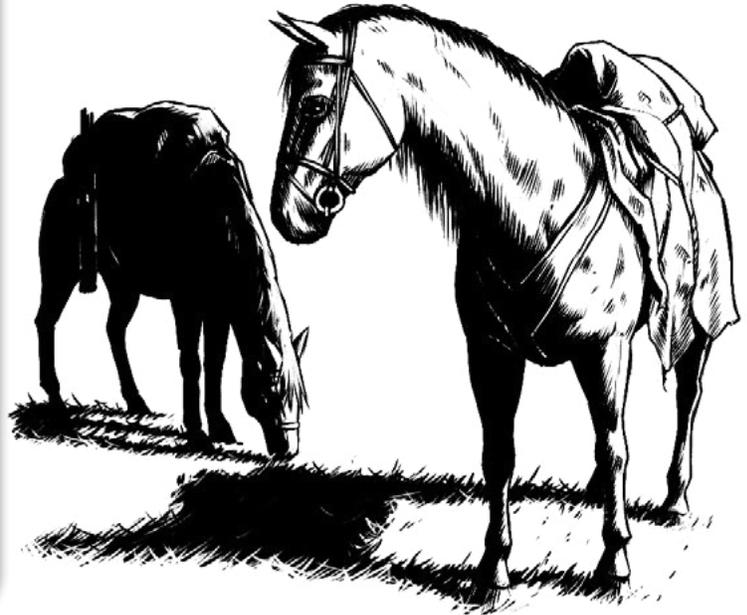
‘Silenced’ Armor

This is a full suit of medium armor, carefully muffled to make less noise. Though the -1 Agility penalty remains, there is no penalty for stealth-related rolls. Armor of this type requires frequent maintenance (oiling, stuffing cloth between links, etc.) in order to retain its ‘silenced’ property. CR 3.

Note: The excellent *Everywhen* supplement, *Weapons and Armour*, available for pay-what-you-want on DriveThru RPG, offers a detailed guide to war-gear from China, India, Japan, and Mesoamerica. Take a look here: <https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/302219/Weapons-and-Armour>

HORSES AND OTHER MOUNTS

The primary mode of transportation in most S&S settings, horses can also include horse-analogs; large creatures that can bear a human rider using four legs or two (cf. kroark, parvalus, and sand runner from *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*). Analogs make a good



substitution for horses in sword and planet settings, or anywhere the GM wants to establish an alien or ‘weird’ atmosphere.

Draft or plow horses are CR 2.

Riding horses are generally CR 3 or higher.

Warhorses are trained specifically for combat. They bear heavily armored riders and can fight independently in the thick of melee by rearing, kicking, and biting (see **Bestiary**, pg. 145). Most warhorses purchased by PCs should be Tough, but Hero level mounts, with their own legends and pedigrees, are possible. CR 4 or higher.

In desert climates, **Camels** are often used in lieu of horses, especially by nomads or merchant caravans. CR 2 for riding or draft versions, CR 3 for war-trained camels.

In tropical climates, **Elephants** fill these roles as well, though they can ‘spook’ in the midst of combat and trample friendly troops. When used for riding or war, elephants often bear howdahs; carriages for elegant passengers or archers. CR 4 or higher.





MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT

Acid

A single vial of low-grade acid does d3 damage and burns through an inch of metal or wood (cf. *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 139). More potent versions are Uncommon alchemical preparations, doing 2 pts. lasting damage per round of contact until washed off or neutralized with a base. Armor protection counts on the first round only; the acid will eat through it on subsequent rounds.

Acid can be used as a weapon. On a Mighty Success, the wielder can opt to temporarily blind or permanently disfigure (-1 Appeal) a target with a Precision Strike. CR 2 or higher.

Antivenom

An Uncommon preparation, standard antivenom converts damage from alchemical poisons to fatigue only. Antivenom for specific animal types (e.g., a giant scorpion) requires a sample of venom from the creature to create a dose. CR 3.

Astrolabe

Appearing as an elaborate metal disc with many pointers, this handy little device can be used to accurately identify the positions of stars, making it a useful tool in navigation, among other things. Usually found in the possession of alchemists and sorcerers. CR 4.

Athame

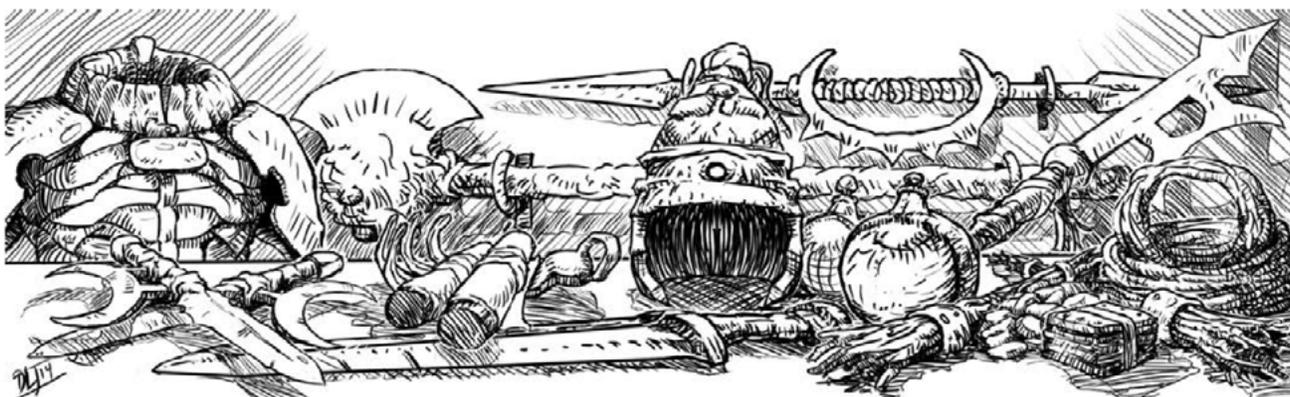
Also called an arthame, this is a knife with a black hilt, favored by witches for use in ritual magic. The owner has often forged (and sometimes enchanted) the blade themselves, resulting in a crude appearance. An athame counts as an item of magical paraphernalia (see *Everywhen*, pg. 82, or *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 144). Damage is d3 or d6L, depending on blade length. CR 1.

Barding

Horse armor. This can range from leather skirts to fine plate, as ornate and complex as anything humans wear. Barding is rated light, medium, or heavy as per standard armor. Penalties to Agility also drop the horse's overall speed, which is one of the reasons light cavalry is so much faster on the battlefield. CR 3 or higher.

Black Powder

Depending on the frequency of firearms in the setting, this is generally a Common or Uncommon preparation. Black powder is also used in making fireworks, signaling rockets, etc. CR 2.



**Boat**

A standard fisherman's boat. Can be rowed or sailed, and seats up to six. CR 3.

Candles

Made from smoky tallow or more expensive beeswax, candles can be used to provide dim illumination in subterranean 'dungeons' . . . but more often allow people to see clearly at night. Candles are often part of magical paraphernalia as well. CR 1.

Cart

The primary means of hauling goods, drawn by horse or mule. There is typically room for one driver and passenger; more if people travel in the back. CR 3.

Clothing, Cold Weather

Heavy clothing, often fur-trimmed, designed to protect against the cold. Wearing a suit negates most environmental cold penalties (see **Mechanics**, pg. 107). At the GMs discretion, it can also function as light armor, though incurs a -1 Agility penalty in this case. CR 2.

Clothing, Fine

Clothing worn by nobility or upstarts with money, like merchants. Fine clothing allows entrance to court and banquets without being glared at by your social betters. For men, includes shirt, doublet, hose, and a fine robe or cape (possibly fur-trimmed), with hat (possibly feathered). For women, includes a long dress and chemise, likely with a headdress, veil, or hairnet. Fine clothes are made of the best linen, wool, velvet, cloth of gold, or silk, and can be trimmed with pearls, semi-precious stones, lace, etc. CR 3 or higher.

Clothing, Hot Weather

Loose-fitting clothing with long sleeves and some type of head coverage, usually a wrap. This provides protection from direct sunlight and stops sweat from evaporating too quickly. Take a bonus die when making a Strength check to avoid heat exhaustion. Note that this stacks with the *Scorns the Heat* boon. CR 1.

Flash Powder

This Uncommon alchemical preparation produces a bright flare when ignited (usually by tossing a handful into a fire or brazier). A favorite gimmick of charlatan and hedge-magician types. If a target is standing near open flame, flash powder can be used to blind on a failed Hard (-1) Agility check for d3 rounds. CR 2.

Grapnel

Attached to a rope, this can be used to scale surfaces otherwise impossible to climb. Requires a successful Agility roll to set, modified by range (10' increment). CR 2.

Greek Fire

Also known as naphtha, this fierce combustible can be flung from catapults in clay pots or loaded in a grenado or glass vial. Greek fire burns atop water and is Demanding (-4) to extinguish. Against a single target it does 2 points lasting flame damage per turn; a grenado's worth can burn for 2d3 turns. Treat as an Uncommon preparation. The recipe is a closely guarded secret. CR 2.

Healer's Kit

Typically, a bag stuffed with dried healing herbs and clean bandages. The herbs are steeped in warm water before use and can be made into a poultice or paste. Cf. Physician's Kit. CR 2.





Holy Water

Not for sale, this item can be procured from most temples to beneficent Divinities that have a font (ceremonial receptacle). Priests of beneficent Divinities can also produce a flask of holy water in a special ceremony taking 1 hour and the expenditure of 1 Faith/Fate point. Holy water can damage demons and other creatures with the *Unholy Vitality* power (see **Bestiary**, pg. 153). Damage is typically d6H lasting from a full vial.

Lamp

The most common form of nighttime illumination, lamps are bowls or dishes that burn oil with a floating wick. CR 1.

Lantern

A glass-encased metal cage holding a candle or lamp, to protect the flame from the elements. CR 2.

Lock

Made by smiths, a simple lock is a Common project using a spring mechanism and turning key. These are Moderately (0) difficult to pick by those who know how. More complex locks can be created as an Uncommon project with a Difficulty rating equal to the smith's rank. CR 2 or higher.

Lockpick Set

A ring of different sized skeleton keys, tension bar, and various picks. CR 2.

Lodestone

Suspended from a cord, or placed on a floating wooden chip, a lodestone needle will point to magnetic north. Useful for navigating land or sea. CR 2.

Magical Paraphernalia

This can include an athame or sword, hazel wood wand, animal horns, candles, runestones, vials of mercury, bells, talismans, pieces of chalk, astrological charts, etc., accumulated by sorcerers and witches in the practice of magic (see *Everywhen*, pg. 82, and *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 144). Not normally sold, these collections are sometimes 'raided' by rival practitioners.



**Mule**

A common beast of burden in most S&S settings, often used by traders. Sure-footed, they can traverse even hilly or mountainous terrain while carrying up to 300lbs. on their backs. Also sometimes used as a mount by sidekicks and/or comic relief! CR 2.

Musical Instruments

Anything from pipes to drums, or a primitive guitar, the laud (lute). CR 1 or higher.

Physician's Kit

For the more scholarly healer-types, this includes forceps, a lancet, bandages, herbs, salves, and glass vials for collecting urine samples (used in diagnosis). Cf. Healer's Kit. CR 3.

Poison

These are (discretely) purchased from an alchemist, mountebank, or witch. Most are ingested, snuck into an intended victim's food or drink. There are three grades; low (Common preparation, d3 damage on a failed Moderate Strength roll), standard (Uncommon preparation, d6 damage on a failed Tough roll) and high (Legendary preparation, 2d6 damage on a failed Demanding roll). 'Knockout' poison does fatigue lifeblood or resolve damage. CR 1, 2, or 3, respectively.

Poison, Contact

AKA 'blade venom,' this is poison that is rubbed or smeared on a sharp weapon like a dagger or arrow to administer. These are trickier to make than ingested poisons (one difficulty level higher if using alchemy or downtime project rules) and follow the same grades. Paralysis blade venom is also possible. CR 2 or higher.

Poison, Paralysis

This poison also comes in three grades, with Moderate (0), Tough (-2), and Demanding (-4) Strength checks required to avoid paralysis for up to an hour. A paralyzed target can pay a Hero or Rival Point to resist the paralysis for 1 round, and as many subsequent rounds that they have points. CR 2 or higher.

Regalia

Religious clothing, also known as vestments. Cost varies according to the status of the priest and the religion's orientation towards pomp. Regalia functions as formal attire when attending high-status functions (see **Clothing, Fine**). CR 1 or higher.

Rope

Standard hemp rope carried in coils. Can support a maximum of 800 lbs. CR 1.

Sea Chest

A locked wooden box used by a mariner to carry their personal belongings. Also doubles as a seat or a rower's bench. CR 2.

Ship

Depending on the setting, this is a sailing ship with 1 to 3 masts. Galleys and longships can also accommodate rowers for travel in unfavorable conditions and are easily beached; sail-only ships usually have rowboats that can tow them or provide ship-to-shore transport. The most advanced model would likely be a caravel, with lateen sails, very high freeboard, 2 to 3 masts, and a crew of 20. Typical cargo capacity is up to 60 tons. CR 6 or higher.

Very advanced Ancient cultures might have multi-decked war-barges, with anti-ship siege weapons, Greek fire projectors, and even a crude steam engine!



**Spyglass**

A telescope made of collapsing brass sections, providing up to 10x power. Typically used by mariners, this grants a bonus die when attempting to spot things far away. CR 4.

Strongbox

A heavy box of iron or bronze, usually under 2' in length and 6' high, equipped with a lock. Intended for valuables like jewelry, coinage, or gems, and the closest thing to a safe in most settings. CR 3.

Tarp

A 10' by 10' piece of heavy canvas, water resistant. Versatile tarps can be slung/pitched as tents and have other uses for outdoor survival. CR 2.

Torch

A convenient means for providing illumination, torches can be makeshift, fashioned from branches and wound with dry, flammable material, or 'professional,' with resinous wood and soaked bindings. When swung as a weapon against creatures vulnerable to fire, the torch does d6L damage. CR 1.

Travel Provisions

AKA trail rations, these are foodstuffs intended for long journeys. Often heavily cured meat, like salt pork or smoked jerky, along with hardtack, hard-baked biscuits that can be softened with liquid before eaten. Small beer (lower alcohol content) is often a popular accompaniment. CR 1.

Wagon

Drawn by one or two horses, and capable of carrying up to half a ton. CR 3.

Wineskin

At the GM's discretion, a long swig from a wineskin can provide resolve protection (see **Mechanics**, pg. 96) or count as a short rest for healing purposes. CR 1.





4 MECHANICS

KEEP IT SIMPLE, STUPID!

The *Barbarians of Lemuria* engine has often been described as ‘eminently hackable.’ Because the rules are so simple and intuitive, many gamers come up with their own modifications before they even start playing!

Wherever possible, the options presented here make use of existing rules instead of introducing new ones. ‘Little’ or ‘spot’ rules are avoided in favor of the core 2d6 mechanic. Modifications that look good on paper don’t mean much if they’re forgotten in the heat of play.

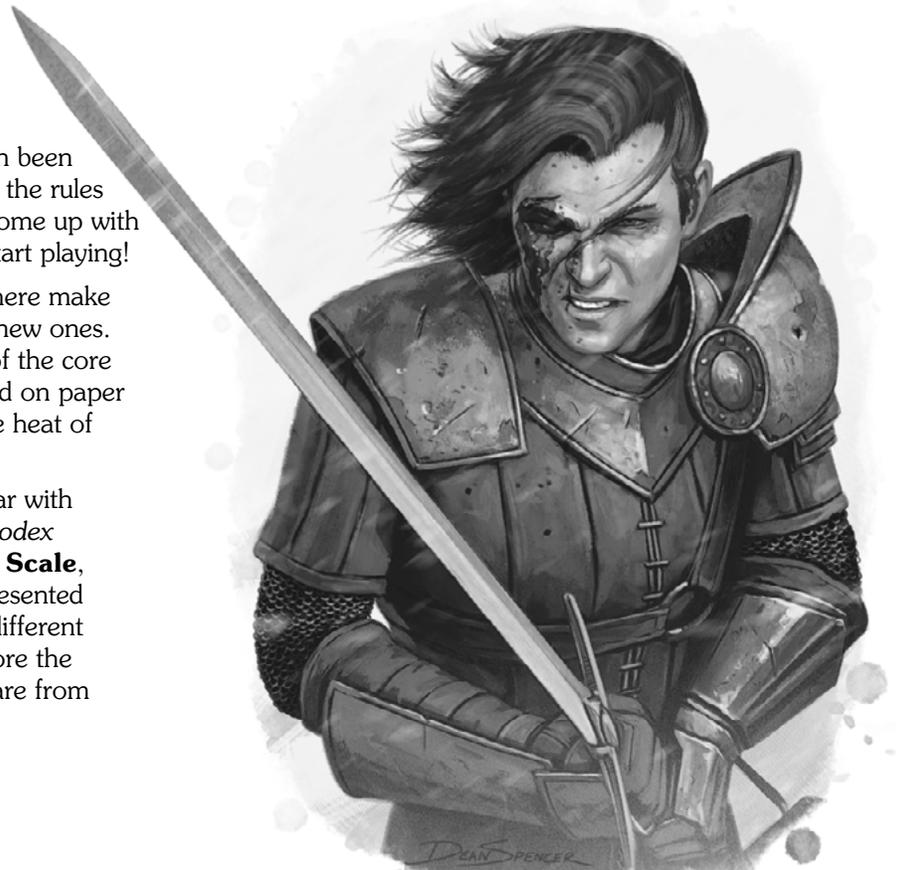
For *Barbarians of Lemuria* players unfamiliar with *Everywhen*, some mechanics used in the *Codex* (notably **Damage Types**, **Damage Steps**, **Scale**, **Resolve**, and **Resolve Protection**) are presented here. As elsewhere, similar concepts with different names are presented with a ‘/.’ Terms before the slash are from *Everywhen* and those after are from *Barbarians of Lemuria*.

DAMAGE TYPES

Everywhen recognizes 3 types of damage, which determine how quickly lifeblood heals back.

- **Fatigue** is non-lethal, ‘knockout’ damage. All fatigue damage heals back after a short rest. If damage of this type drops lifeblood to 0 or below, the character is unconscious rather than dying. No rolls for stabilization are necessary.
- **Normal** represents most damage dealt. After combat, one-half (round up) heals back with a short rest.
- **Lasting** is the damage remaining after a short rest. This type heals more slowly, at a base of 1 pt. per day of light activity. Healers can mitigate the amount (see *Barbarians of Lemuria*, *Mythic* pg. 17, or *Everywhen*, pg. 49).

Everywhen also features an innovative track system for recording damage. Though this approach can speed play, it may confuse newer players. For this reason, the *Codex* uses the standard subtraction of lifeblood found in *Barbarians of Lemuria*.



After combat, lasting damage can be ‘healed’ with the GMs permission by converting it to a temporary flaw. This wound inflicts a penalty die on all related checks and persists for a number of days equal to the damage converted.

Example

Phaestus gets stabbed during a back-alley ambush for 5 points normal damage. Following combat he takes a short rest and recovers (5/2, round up) 3 lifeblood. The remaining 2 points are lasting, which would normally reduce his lifeblood total until it heals. However, with the GMs permission Phaestus opts to take a wound instead. He writes ‘Leg Puncture 2’ on his character sheet. For the next two days, Phaestus’s painful wound will incur a penalty die on most physically related checks, including melee Attack Rolls.

Note that this wound option can be applied to lasting resolve damage as well (see pg. 93).

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|-----|----|-----|------|-----|------|------|-----|------|
| 0 | 1 | d3 | d6L | d6 | d6H | 2d6L | 2d6 | 2d6H | 3d6L | 3d6 | 3d6H |
|---|---|----|-----|----|-----|------|-----|------|------|-----|------|

KEY

- **0**— no damage, but bonuses from Strength *et al.* may still increase this.
- **1**—1 point damage.
- **d6L**— roll 2d6 and drop the *higher* die.
- **d6H**— roll 2d6 and drop the *lower* die.
- **2d6L**— roll 3d6 and drop the *highest* die.
- **2d6H**— roll 3d6 and drop the *lowest* die.
- **3d6L**— roll 4d6 and drop the *highest* die.
- **3d6H**— roll 4d6 and drop the *lowest* die (maximum damage result).

DAMAGE STEPS

Everywhen uses a damage ‘step’ system represented by the track above.

Base damage from weapons can be modified by a wielder’s Strength as normal, but also by stepping *up* or *down* on the track in certain situations. To increase damage by one step, shift to the next damage level on the *right*. To reduce damage by one step, shift to the next damage level on the *left*.

Example

Reyna Scarlet wields a tulwar (sword), which normally does d6 damage plus her Strength of 1. She gets a Mighty Success in combat and invokes Vital Blow, which raises her weapon’s damage by 3 steps. Starting at d6 and shifting three columns to the right yields a base 2d6 damage, plus 1 for her Strength. Ouch.

*Reyna later finds herself wrapped in the coils of a giant snake, over 35’ long. The serpent’s great size gives it a lifeblood of scale 2, meaning Reyna’s sword damage is stepped down by 2 shifts on the track (see **Scale**, opposite). A d6 moved 2 shifts left yields d3 base damage, plus 1 for her Strength. Reyna’s blade is no more than a small knife compared to the giant serpent!*



SCALE

Everywhen’s scaling rules (pg. 31) simulate jumps in power level without using massive values or large numbers of dice. To keep things simple, the *Codex* uses scale when comparing the Strength and lifeblood of formidably sized creatures (see **Bestiary**, pg. 139), though the mechanic could be potentially applied in other situations. Scale rules can be ignored in favor of *Barbarians of Lemuria* creature stats, which posit maximum Strength scores of 18 and lifeblood of 100 (see the *Mythic* edition, pg. 100).

Scale is tied to Damage Steps and ranges from scale 1 (normal, or assumed scale) to 3. For damage purposes, the scales of Strength and lifeblood are compared, with any differences resulting in shifts *up* or *down* on the Damage Steps track, depending on who is hitting who. Every point of difference results in 2 shifts.

So, if an elephant, with a Strength of 4, scale 2, slams into a human with a lifeblood of 10, scale 1, the difference between the two scales (2–1), equals 1 in favor of the elephant. The animal’s base damage of d6H is stepped *up* by 2 to 2d6, potentially enough to flatten the human with one blow.

If that same human survives and (foolishly) punches the elephant, the results are radically different. The human’s Strength of 0, scale 1, is compared to the elephant’s lifeblood of 13, scale 2, again equaling 1 in favor of the elephant. The human’s base unarmed damage of d3 is stepped *down* 2 shifts on the damage track to 0—ineffective, as his Strength score of 0 doesn’t add anything.



If the elephant later charges a rhinoceros with lifeblood 13, scale 2, the two scale 2 values (2 -2) cancel each other out. The elephant does its base d6H damage against the rhino.

Clear as mud? The following example can help clarify scale in a more standard context. Note how more dramatic combat can be when it doesn't involve attrition of massive lifeblood totals.

Example

Kyros the Cyclops has Strength 4, scale 2, and lifeblood 15, scale 2. The trickster hero Alcaeus of Lemnon steals Kyros's favorite drinking horn and hides it in the cave of the cyclops's cousin, Lykos. When Kyros finds the horn, he becomes enraged and accuses Lykos of stealing it. Heated words lead to violence, and Kyros smacks his cousin with a two-handed maul.

The maul normally does d6H+4 damage, scale 2, because of Kyros's great Strength. However, since Lykos has scale 2 lifeblood the two values (2-2=0) cancel each other out. Kyros rolls d6H+4 damage and scores 9, -1 for Lykos's protection, for a total of 8 lifeblood. Lykos's total drops to 7 and the giant decides to leg it, hoping his cousin will eventually calm down.

Alcaeus later confronts Kyros directly, bringing with him several companions the wily hero got drunk to bolster their courage. Holding his bronze shield above him, Alcaeus darts forward and stabs Kyros in the thigh with his spear. The hero's attack would normally do d6 damage, +1 for Alcaeus's Strength. However, as Kyros's lifeblood is scale 2, the spear's base damage of d6 is reduced 2 steps to a measly d3. Alcaeus rolls 2, +1 for his Strength, for 3 damage total, reduced by Kyros's protection to 2. The cyclops's lifeblood drops to 13 from a grazing wound.

Now it's Kyros's turn. He brings his leaden maul squarely down on Alcaeus with a successful Attack Roll. Because the cyclops has scale 2 Strength, his base damage is stepped up 2 from d6H to 2d6, +4 for his Strength. He rolls a whopping 13 points, enough to squish Alcaeus! The spearman wisely opts to spend a Hero Point and invoke Splintered Shield, Shattered Sword. His shield crumples and goes flying, but leaves Alcaeus intact.

Two rounds later, Kyros has just pulped Alcaeus's good friend, Philon. Yelling his rage, Alcaeus runs up his dying companion's back and launches himself at the giant, his spear gripped in both hands above his head! He gets boxcars (double 6's on his Attack Roll) and opts to burn another Hero Point, turning his Mighty Success into a Legendary one. Alcaeus takes Vital Blow and Precision Strike. Normally, Vital Blow would raise the spear's d6 damage 3 steps, but this is reduced (3-2) to only 1 step because of Kyros's scale 2 lifeblood. The spear-thrust does d6H+1 damage, for 6 total, reduced by Kyros's protection to 5. Further, Alcaeus declares the spearhead enters the cyclops's single eye with his Precision Strike. Blinded, Kyros goes blundering off into the night, swearing vengeance!



RESOLVE

Besides iron thews and feline reflexes, S&S heroes are also distinguished by their unwavering resolve. A combination of courage and sheer will, resolve can be tested by horrific, eldritch creatures, or something as mundane as a barbarian's murderous glare.

The *Codex* uses the resolve rules presented in *Everywhen*, with a few minor changes (see sidebar, opposite). Additionally, options for simulating fear and mental fatigue *without* the resolve mechanic are presented on pg. 96, for GMs wanting a simpler approach.

Resolve is akin to 'sanity' and 'willpower' from other RPG systems. When a character encounters something particularly disturbing, their resolve can be damaged just like physical attacks damage lifeblood. For Heroes and Rivals, resolve is equal to 10 + Mind. Tough NPCs get 5 + Mind and Rabble have 2-3 resolve apiece. The *Hard to Shake* boon adds +3 to this total.

Resolve damage comes in three types:

- **Fatigue**; emotional shock that is easily recovered from once you rest and regain your bearings (e.g., being intimidated by a barbarian).
- **Normal**; seeing something outside the realm of usual experience, haunting you for a while afterwards (e.g., a ghoul suddenly bursts from a shadowed crypt).
- **Lasting**; an experience with sanity-blasting repercussions, turning your world on its head (e.g., a necromancer unleashes a Third Magnitude spell, bringing a slaughtered army back to 'life').

If resolve is reduced to 0 or lower, the character is out of the fight; emotionally drained, overwhelmed, or just plain catatonic. However, *they automatically stabilize if brought to -1 or lower resolve*. No action is required, and the afflicted character won't slip into permanent madness. S&S characters are a tough-minded lot!

Resolve damage recovers at the same rate as lifeblood; fatigue heals fully, and half normal damage (round up) heals after a short rest. Lasting damage heals at a base rate of 1 pt. per day of light activity, which can be mitigated by the *Comforting Words* boon as well as the attentions of a healer or entertainer.

Example

The hero Reyna Scarlet, with a Mind of 1, has 11 resolve total. A hostile sorcerer successfully targets her with a *Phantasm* spell (see **Magic**, pg. 126), creating the illusion of a toppling pillar. Reyna takes d6 normal resolve damage as the 'pillar' falls on her, for 5 points. This drops her resolve total to 6. After dispatching the sorcerer, she opts to take a short rest and recovers (5/2, rounded up) 3 points, bringing her up to 9 resolve. Still a little shaken by the experience, she continues her adventure.



RESOLVE CHANGES

The resolve mechanic works exactly as presented in *Everywhen*, with two exceptions:

- Tough and Rabble NPCs also have resolve, rather than using lifeblood for this purpose.
- Characters automatically stabilize if their resolve damage enters the critical track (e.g. if resolve total drops below 0). This means characters can't go 'permanently insane' as a result of resolve loss.

RESOLVE CHECKS

S&S heroes can expect to have their courage tested to the core. When faced with a supernatural horror, a ferocious animal, or a particularly intimidating NPC, the GM can call for a Resolve Check. Similar to 'sanity' or 'fear' rolls from horror RPGs, a failed check results in resolve damage and other potential consequences. Certain spells (e.g., *Dread Gaze*) also use this mechanism.

The GM decides when to ask for Resolve Checks. Typically, this is done to heighten tension, especially when coming across a threat for the first time. However, it's recommended to use Resolve Checks sparingly. You don't want heroes reduced to quaking



wrecks before an adventure's climax! Also, familiarity with horrific creatures tends to lessen their impact. For example, if you've already seen ghouls at the beginning of an adventure, the GM can rule no further Resolve Checks are necessary.

Depending on the severity of the threat, the GM assigns a Difficulty Modifier, or Fear rating. This could be anything from the disturbing, non-Euclidean geometry of a ruined city (Moderate) to an enraged grizzly bear (Hard), or a Lord of Entropy manifesting as a 30' bloodstained warrior (Demanding). Menacing animals and creatures already have a Fear rating assigned (see **Bestiary**, pg. 139).

To make a Resolve Check, roll Mind + any relevant careers or modifiers – the Fear rating. Certain boons and flaws (e.g., *Fear Resistance*, *Timid*) can further modify this roll. Failure means you take d6 resolve damage (usually normal; see pg. 92). Also, if a Resolve Check is failed while in combat, you hesitate and lose priority on your next action.

Certain careers can modify the Check. Barbarians and soldiers, for example, add their career rank to the roll. In this case, only the *highest* relevant career is added—they don't 'stack.'

Example

The Gallic barbarian, Gecerix, is facing the chieftain of the Suebi tribe in single combat. As the two men square off, a strange, bestial growl escapes the chieftain's throat. He drops to all fours, while the wolf-pelt pinned to shoulders begins to squirm . . . and grows. In seconds, russet fur has enveloped his muscular body; white fangs sprout from his mouth, and his eyes shine with a feral gleam. The chieftain is a skin-turner!

The GM decides to ask for a Resolve Check. Skin-turners have a Fear rating of 1. Gecerix has a Mind of 1 and 2 ranks in barbarian, his highest relevant career. He rolls $2d6 + (3 - 1) 2$ and gets a 6. Failure! Gecerix takes 4 normal resolve damage as he is facing a supernatural creature. Further, he will lose priority on his next action.

With cold sweat breaking out, Gecerix takes an involuntary step back. He's about to go toe-to-toe with a ravaging lycanthrope, and he doesn't have an ounce of silver on him!

A character who rolls a Calamitous Failure on a Resolve Check freezes, unable to take any action for a round. On the flip side, if a Mighty Success occurs, the character has two options:

- **Emboldened**—This simulates a jolt of adrenalin as the 'fight' instinct overtakes 'flight.' You get a bonus die on Attack or Strength rolls against the object of your fear for a scene.
- **Encourage**—Your bravery serves as inspiration to those around you. Allies get a bonus die when making their Resolve Check, or re-roll if previously failed.

A Legendary Success allows the character to invoke *both* Emboldened and Encourage.

As with lifeblood, any lasting resolve damage can be converted to a temporary mental flaw, persisting for a number of days equal to the damage done. Mechanically, this usually means a penalty die when faced with a specific situation. The GM and player work together to come up with something appropriate.



Example

After (narrowly) surviving his battle with the loup garou, Gecerix takes a short rest and recovers 2 points of resolve damage. He opts to convert the remaining 2 points of lasting damage into a mental flaw, bringing his resolve total back to 11. The GM and player agree for the next 2 days Gecerix will suffer a penalty die on any rolls involving wolves, as memories of the fight burn in the back of his mind.

RESOLVE ATTACKS

Physical attacks aren't the only form of conflict. Sometimes a menacing stare is enough to stop someone in their tracks. Even in the heat of combat, cutting words can be hurled back and forth like sword-thrusts. This kind of psychological warfare takes two forms: **intimidation** and **taunts**. If a PC is making the attack, treat as a 2d6 roll + Attribute + appropriate career – negative modifier (usually the target's Mind). If an NPC is attempting to taunt or intimidate, treat as a Resolve Check for the targeted hero, with modifiers as outlined below.



Resolve Attacks require your action for the round, so use them carefully!

Intimidation

Describe how you are threatening your target—this can be non-verbal. Backing the intimidation with a menacing display (like holding up a severed head) adds a +1 or +2 to the roll, at the GM's discretion. Add your Strength plus your highest rank in any martial career (barbarian, soldier, etc.) with your opponent's Strength or Mind as a negative modifier. The *Fearsome Looks* boon grants a bonus die to your roll.

Magic can also be used for intimidation. The round *after* you cast a spell, add its Magnitude plus your highest rank in sorcerer or witch. Your target's Mind acts as a negative modifier.

Taunts

Taunts are more circumstantial than intimidation. Throwing insults around doesn't necessarily bother thick-skinned S&S characters much. These are most effective when used in context. For example, if an opponent flubs an Attack Roll (or even better, *really* flubs it with a Calamitous Failure), this provides an opening for a taunt. Another example might be an opponent rolling minimum damage ("You call *that* a hit?). Taunts that play off a target's flaws (*Arrogant*, *Fanatic/Zealot*, *Temper/Hot-Headed*, etc.) are also viable.

For taunts, add your Mind or Appeal, plus your highest rank in any career where social guile is important (entertainer, merchant, noble, etc.). The *Biting Comment* boon grants a bonus die. The target's Mind or Appeal acts as a negative modifier.

A successful Resolve Attack does d6 resolve fatigue damage, meaning people can recover from it quickly. At the GM's option, targets whose resolve has been dropped to 0 or less by a taunt can fly into a rage, attacking their tormentor with reckless abandon (+2 on Attack Rolls, but -2 to Defense).

Rolling a Mighty or Legendary success on a Resolve Attack allows for some special advantages:

- **Awed**—The resolve damage done is the number of Rabble incapacitated by the attack. Just like with Rabble Slayer, you gain narrative control for how this happens.
- **Cut to the Core**—Resolve damage is increased 2 steps to 2d6L.
- **Bruised Ego**—Resolve damage done is normal instead of fatigue.

A Legendary Success allows for *two* of these outcomes.

Example (Intimidation)

Bad habits have finally caught up with the sketchy sorcerer, Phaestus. Thugs from the Black Hand Gang corner him in an alley and demand the (steep) interest on his loan, which poor Phaestus doesn't have. The situation escalates . . .

Several rounds later, Phaestus spends his last AP summoning a cloud of searing flame to fry half the gang. The next round, he attempts to intimidate. "Who else wants some?" he snarls, pointing at the nearest thug—his fingers are still smoking from the spell. Phaestus is a rank 2 sorcerer and he just cast a Second Magnitude spell, so 2 + 2 minus the Rabble thug's Mind of 0 nets +4. Phaestus makes his roll easily and bumps it to a Mighty Success. He takes Awed and rolls a 4 on his resolve damage, causing 4 thugs (the rest of the gang) to flee. Phaestus finds himself alone with a pile of burnt corpses and mounting debt.

Example (Taunt)

Konrad of Mainz is locked in combat with a member of the Varangian Guard. His opponent has just landed an axe-blow, but the protection from Konrad's mail hauberk completely soaks the damage. "Soft steel," he says, grinning. "Soft as the man behind it."

Konrad rolls 2d6 and adds his Mind score of 1, plus 1 rank for the noble career. The Varangian has 0 in both Appeal and Mind, so there is no negative modifier. Konrad scores a modified 9 and does 3 points of resolve damage. His opponent's warrior pride has been hurt, but the Varangian fights on!



RESOLVE BOONS & FLAWS

The following boons and flaws from *Everywhen* affect resolve, and can be made available to *Barbarians of Lemuria* characters:

Comforting Words (boon)

Gain a bonus die whenever rolling to help someone recover from mental trauma (i.e. resolve damage). You must have the entertainer, healer, or priest career to take this boon.

Hard to Shake (boon)

You are used to ignoring weird and troubling events. Add +3 resolve to your total.

Haunted (flaw)

You have difficulty letting frights go. You need treatment by someone with the entertainer, healer, or priest career to recover any lasting damage to your resolve.

Inured (boon)

You have a particularly hardened attitude, which adds +1 to your total resolve damage reduction (or d6-4 if no other resolve protection is used).

Overly Sensitive (flaw)

When you take resolve damage, take an extra point of fatigue damage due to your imagination working overtime.

Positive Attitude (boon)

When taking it easy while healing back to full health, your normal daily healing rate is 2 points of lasting resolve damage.

Timid (flaw)

You lack self-assurance and are easily alarmed. Deduct 2 from your resolve total.

Note that the **Grounded** boon was removed as all characters automatically stabilize from critical resolve damage.



RESOLVE PROTECTION

Just like armor, certain actions can provide protection against resolve damage. These are generally ‘morale boosts’ that serve to strengthen the psyche. Some potential examples:

- An entertainer reciting epic poetry, or singing a paean—light protection, d6-3.
- Drinking alcohol (i.e., ‘liquid courage’)—light protection, d6-3 if tipsy (-1 Mind) or medium protection, d6-2 if drunk (penalty die on mental and Agility based tasks).
- A soldier or noble, giving a rousing speech before heading into battle—light protection, d6-3.
- A priest, chanting a litany against evil—light protection, d6-3.
- A priest invoking Armor of Faith (see **Magic**, pg. 132)—light, medium, or heavy protection (d6-3, d6-2, d6-1), depending on the number of Faith/Fate Points expended.

RESOLVE SIMPLIFIED

If having to track both lifeblood and resolve sounds like too much record keeping, the GM can simply treat resolve damage as a negative modifier on the character’s *next* action, whether an Attack or Arcana Roll, an Attribute check, etc. So, if a character would normally lose 3 resolve, they instead take a -3 modifier on their next roll, as fear or shock robs them of their concentration. Resolve protection would again apply in this case. The negative effects don’t persist past this roll or the length of a combat, whichever comes first.

OPTION: RESOLVE IMMUNITY

Once a character has passed a Resolve Check against a particular animal or creature, the player can opt to make them ‘immune’ from any further Checks, at the cost of 1 XP/AP. This should be noted on the character sheet.



OPTION: FEAR CHECKS

Fear Checks can simulate shock and horror without using resolve. Make a 2d6 roll with modifiers as per a Resolve Check; on a failure, you lose priority in combat as normal. Further, take a penalty die on all rolls involving the object of your fear until you score a success. Once this occurs you have ‘overcome’ your terror and the penalty is negated. This can also be achieved by spending a Hero Point.





COMBAT SCHOOLS

Both *Barbarians of Lemuria* and *Everywhen* assume some careers can be useful in combat, conferring an advantage with the GM's approval. A classic example would be an assassin striking a target from behind, doing additional damage equal to their rank. Combat Schools help to specify what these advantages are, though other interpretations can (and should) arise during play. Mechanically, the advantages are all tied to rank, and aren't meant to be earth-shatteringly powerful—you need to spend a Hero Point for that.

The Combat Schools are arranged in five broad groups: **Dirty**, **Disciplined**, **Ferocious**, **Finesse**, and **Mounted**. Some of these schools are embraced by several careers, such as fighting Dirty, practiced by rough-and-tumble types the world over. The specific advantages of a Combat School can be used a number of times in an adventure equal to your rank in the *highest* career associated with the school.

This principle of highest career also applies when adding ranks for a bonus—they don't 'stack.' For example, Rokas the Razor, a rank 2 rogue, rank 1 assassin, can use Sneak Attack from the Dirty school twice an adventure, with a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls. Additionally, as it's harder to keep using a tricky maneuver on the same opponent, the GM may only allow a specific advantage to be used once per combat.

Characters who have access to different Combat Schools can switch between them, but only enjoy the benefits of one at a time. A hero with ranks in barbarian and soldier, for example, can use Formation Fighting one round and go Berserk the next, but won't retain any advantages from the former!

Dirty (assassin, rogue, sailor, torturer)

This is an informal, opportunistic school, used in close quarters with the advantage of surprise. Smaller, more concealable weapons (or bare hands) are favored over those with a longer reach—it's hard to catch someone unawares with a greatsword!

Sneak Attack

You strike someone hard and fast, before they see it coming! This can range from the classic backstab to a sucker punch, provided your opponent isn't expecting the attack. Sneak Attack requires priority in situations where the target is aware of your presence. Add your rank to attack and damage rolls for a single strike. Additionally, damage from smaller weapons like daggers or fists is increased by 1 step.

Cheap Shot

You pull off a momentary distraction in combat, like spitting in your opponent's face, bluffing there's someone behind them, etc. This must be described by the player. On your target's next action, they take a negative modifier to their Attack Roll equal to your rank.



Disciplined (soldier)

This school relies on relentless drill, with training taking over in situations where there's no time to think. Adherents are taught how to work in unison and maintain awareness of the bigger tactical picture. 'Field' (e.g., medium or larger) weapons are emphasized, often used in conjunction with a shield.

Formation Fighting

You are adept at fighting alongside your companions, taking advantage of their reach, any shields, flanking, etc. When adjacent to an ally, add 1 to either your Attack Rolls or Defense for each ally up to your rank. This lasts for a combat unless your allies move away or are neutralized.

Brother/Sister in Arms

When adjacent to an ally, you can sacrifice 1 point of your Defense to protect them, up to your rank total. This can last for the length of a combat.

Ferocious (barbarian, some beastmasters)

This school isn't formally taught; it's an instinctive mode that kicks in during combat. The general philosophy assumes 'offense is the best defense' by putting down an opponent as quickly as possible.

Berserk

You enter a bestial state, allowing your survival hardwiring to take over. This can happen immediately if wounded or forced to make a Resolve Check (see pg. 92); otherwise, it requires a round to transition, though you can still act during this time. While berserk you can add your rank to Attack Rolls or damage and ignore any Resolve Checks. This lasts the length of a combat and leaves you exhausted afterwards, incurring a penalty die on most rolls until you rest.

Unerring Instinct

If caught in a situation where you would normally take a penalty to Attack Rolls because of confusion or a loss of senses (e.g., a tavern brawl suddenly plunged into darkness because someone knocks over a candle), your rank offsets any penalties on a 1:1 basis. This lasts the duration of the combat.

Finesse (gladiator, noble)

This school relies on intensive training with a mentor, focusing on the more technical aspects of combat. Finesse fighters combine speed and skill for flashy maneuvers, often to the delight of spectators—and the dismay of opponents. They tend to use lighter, more balanced weapons.

Flourish Attack

Instead of a normal attack, you execute a jaw-dropping demonstration of weapon skill—flicking a blade from hand to hand, whirling a saber over your head, etc. Your demoralized opponent suffers a penalty to their next Attack Roll equal to your rank.

Precise Strike

You attack with uncanny accuracy rather than brute force. In lieu of Strength, you may add your Agility or Melee combat ability to damage, up to your rank. Alternately, you can use your rank to offset any penalties for stunts or other tricky maneuvers on a 1:1 basis (see **Stunts**, pg. 102).



Mounted (nomad, some soldiers)

Not surprisingly, this school focuses on fighting from horseback, though some principles can also apply to standard melee combat (e.g., Inspired Charge). As noted in the soldier career, cavalry types often follow this school versus the infantry-oriented Disciplined.

Inspired Charge

When charging an opponent, whether you're mounted or not, add a bonus to your attack *and* damage rolls equal to your rank. This is in addition to any other bonuses from executing a charge (see **Mounted Combat**, pg. 101). When on foot, charging can only be done the first round of a combat.

Living Cover

You use your mount's larger silhouette to protect yourself from attacks. Add 1 to your Defense for each rank. Note, however, attacks that would hit you if not for this bonus strike your mount instead! Alternately, you can sacrifice *your* Defense to make the mount harder to hit, up to your rank total. This lasts for the length of the combat.

HERO/RIVAL/VILLAIN POINT OPTIONS

Some additional options are presented here, including That Was Close! from the *Everywhen* ruleset.

- **Cast Wide the Carpet of Death**
- **Flesh Wound**
- **Grievous Wound**
- **Reap Red Ruin**
- **Red Hilt**
- **Shredded Armor**
- **Something to Remember Me By**
- **That Was Close!**

Cast Wide the Carpet of Death

AKA Bulwark of Bodies, this option can only be invoked after you've downed several opponents in melee combat (like with Rabble Slayer). All the corpses piling up are making it harder for opponents to get at you! Rabble can't use the Horde option, and only two opponents can attack you in a round. If targeted by missile fire, you get the benefit of cover (penalty die on ranged attacks).

Flesh Wound (Mighty Success)

A mercy option; this converts all damage inflicted to fatigue, regardless of the weapon used. Swords might strike with the flat of the blade, arrows strike a non-vital spot, etc. Useful for keeping important NPCs alive.

Grievous Wound

A 'gritty' alternative to Defy Death, this allows a character taken below 0 lifeblood to remain conscious . . . at a cost. The offending blow has done permanent damage in the form of a flaw; severing a limb, puncturing an eye, slicing off an ear, severely scarring the face, etc. Both player and GM determine a suitable injury. Potential flaws include *Memorable/Distinctive Appearance*, *Missing Eye or Ear*, *Missing Limb*, *Mute*, *Poor Eyesight*, and *Poor Hearing*.

On the plus side, the character is treated as being at 1 lifeblood, though can do little else other than move (slowly), as they clutch at their wound to keep from bleeding out.

Reap Red Ruin (Mighty Success)

When invoked, your attacks become a whirlwind of steel, damaging multiple opponents in a single round. Reap Red Ruin only works against Rabble and Toughs. On a successful attack, roll damage as if 3 steps higher, adding Strength as usual. This creates a 'pool' of damage that can be meted out to any adjacent Rabble or Tough foes as you see fit. As with Rabble Slayer, this allows for narrative control in describing how the damage is inflicted, if desired.



Example

Reyna Scarlet is locked in fierce melee with the Satrap's spearmen, including 2 Tough lieutenants and 2 Rabble. She hits one of the lieutenants with her tulwar and spends a Hero Point to invoke *Reap Red Ruin*. The sword's d6 is stepped up to 2d6, plus 1 for Reyna's Strength, for a total of 9 points damage. She decides one of the Toughs will take 6 points and one of the Rabble 3, which is enough to drop both. Her vicious backhand blow severs a pair of carotids and splits a head wide like a muskmelon, leaving two of her foes unscathed—this round, anyways!

Red Hilt (Mighty Success)

This option is only available for stabbing or thrusting melee weapons. Your attack sinks deep into the target—and lodges there. You do +1 step damage, ignoring any armor protection. However, the weapon also becomes 'stuck.' You (or the target) can pull it out next round with a Moderate (0) Strength check, inflicting base weapon damage (also ignoring armor). If the weapon remains lodged, it incurs a penalty die on most actions until removed.

Shredded Armor

Cf. Sundered Shield, Shattered Sword. Your armor takes the brunt of damage, downgrading it by one class of protection as mail is ripped apart, plate rent, etc. Heavy armor becomes medium, medium becomes light, and light is destroyed. The armor's original Agility and social penalties are unaffected, however. Since the armor is close to your body, you still take fatigue damage equal to one-half (round down) of the damage inflicted.

Something to Remember Me By (Mighty Success—Rivals/Villains Only)

A favorite of evil NPCs, this Rival/Villain Point option increases damage by 1 step, all of which becomes lasting. The vicious wound inflicts a penalty die on most physical actions (aside from Attack Rolls) until it heals. Heroes won't be shrugging this one off anytime soon!

That Was Close!

If using the optional resolve rules, you can spend a Hero Point to transfer any lifeblood damage points into the equivalent resolve damage points.



MOUNTED COMBAT

Fighting from horseback (or horse-analog back) has unique advantages. The *Codex* presents some simplified rules from *Everywhen* (pg. 41) to simulate this.



- Assuming you have room, you can charge an opponent and do increased weapon damage (+2 steps) if you hit. Certain weapons (i.e. lances and sabers) are specially designed for this. The bonus counts for the first round of a charge only. If you wish, you can ‘cycle charge’ afterwards by spending a round moving away, turning, and charging your opponent again.
- Alternately, the mount’s Strength can be added to the weapon damage on a charge, instead of the step increase.
- An opponent with a readied or ‘planted’ pole weapon negates a charge. You must melee attack such a target normally, without the damage bonus.
- If in melee combat with an unmounted opponent who doesn’t have a Long weapon (see **Equipment**, pg. 78), you gain a bonus die on your Attack Roll due to reach.
- You cannot effectively use a two-handed melee weapon while mounted.
- Using a bow from horseback incurs a Tough (-2) Difficulty Modifier to the Attack Roll. This penalty is mitigated by the nomad career (see pg. 41).
- You need to have priority for the round and declare that parrying will be your action.
- You can parry *one* attack; note your opponent’s modified Attack Roll total. This is the number you must equal or beat with your own standard (Agility + Melee + 2d6) Attack Roll to successfully block the attack.
- On a Mighty Success, you can Riposte or Disarm. The Riposte is a counterattack made that same round; make an Attack Roll as normal, though no Hero Points can be spent on the result.
- On a Legendary Success you can Riposte *and* Disarm.

Example

Reyna is fighting Moktar Dahoud, a burly bruiser armed with a square-headed mace. Given how much damage her opponent can dish out, Reyna decides to try something subtle. She has priority for the round and declares she will parry. Moktar scores a modified 7 on his Attack Roll—technically a miss, but Reyna can still parry. She rolls a modified 10, which she bumps to a Mighty Success by spending a Hero Point. Reyna opts for Disarm, knocking the mace out of a startled Moktar’s grasp after she sidesteps and parries his clumsy blow.

THE PROBLEMATIC PARRY

The act of parrying a blow is usually subsumed into existing rules; it could be a factor of your Defense, or the reason an opponent fails to strike you (vs. an outright miss). There are several good reasons for this, chief being that rolling for active defenses slows play. It can also make the structure of a combat round more complicated, with ‘full actions,’ ‘reactive actions,’ etc.

However, there are times when parrying (with the possibility of a riposte) would seem like a good strategy. Therefore, drawing inspiration from *Barbarians of Lemuria*, *Legendary* edition, the following optional rule for an ‘active’ parry is presented:





OPTION: GUARD

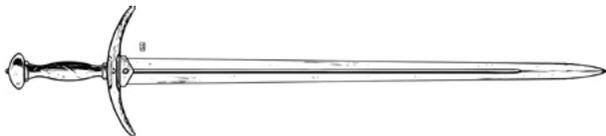
S&S heroes often find themselves without armor or shield, with only a trusty blade to protect them. In such situations the optional guard rule can help keep their hides intact.

- The character must be unarmored, unshielded, and possess a melee weapon to use guard.
- Guard provides d6-3 protection, +1 for each point of Melee Combat Ability diverted to guard vs. Attack Rolls. This simulates parrying, using the weapon to threaten, taking advantage of reach, etc.
- Guard provides no protection from Ranged weapons and can only be applied to Melee attacks the wielder is aware of.

Example

Konrad of Mainz, the disgraced ex-Templar, awakens face down in a strange house. He has no memory how he got here, though the pools of nearby vomit suggest drinking was involved. As he rises unsteadily, a knife gleams in the semi-darkness. A cutthroat!

Konrad is wearing only a stained nightshirt for 'armor.' Luckily, however, he still has his poniard handy. While his opponent closes, he draws the long dagger to fend in the Armenian style. Before any rolls are made, Konrad's player announces he is diverting 2 points from his Melee Combat Ability to guard, granting him d6-1 protection for the vicious fight to come!



STUNTS

Combat stunts involve some trick or feat of arms outside the normal rules. Players often come up with clever ideas in the heat of action and want to try them out. This should never be discouraged, especially in a rules-lite system.

However, because stunts usually come with penalties, players can be afraid to attempt them. Also, detailed rules can slow play and kill momentum. Stunt mechanics should therefore be neither so complicated nor risky no one ever wants to use them.

Rather than presenting hard and fast rules to cover every conceivable situation, GMs are recommended to adjudicate stunts on the spot, **with everyone's understanding such rulings are for the current situation only**. Why is this so important? Because rules-lawyering players will otherwise cite these as 'precedent' to justify some abuse of the system. "But you let Bob use a severed arm for a +1 Defense bonus," they'll whine, "so why can't I use two for +2?" etc., etc.

Generally, stunts should not be as powerful as Mighty Success options. Any effects or changes in status they achieve are temporary, usually lasting the next round only. Stunts are particularly effective when using the surrounding environment, are paired with another character's actions, or just make sense in the context of the situation (see the examples to follow). Stunts are *not* flat bonuses; they are framed as 'if, then' statements, i.e., 'if you roll x, then you'll get y.'

Example One

*Reyna Scarlet is fighting a group of Tough zombies and having a hard time getting past their high protection (see **Bestiary**, pg. 173). As her player has watched a lot of horror movies, she figures hitting them in the head will be more effective. The GM assigns a -2 penalty to her Attack Roll for this 'called shot,' as the slow-moving zombies aren't particularly good at defending their vital spots. If she hits, her damage will bypass their Unholy Vitality protection.*

Example Two

Gecerix and his friend, Ursa of the Iceni, are teaming up against a Roman centurion equipped with a tower shield. Gecerix wants to use the curved head of his battle axe to hook and pull the shield aside, so Ursa can spear the unprotected soldier. The GM rules he can do so with a successful Attack Roll in lieu of damage.

Example Three

The raven-haired witch, Tamsin Shalles, has challenged Gretch Greentooth for leadership of the Stone Cabin Coven. Not only is the older Gretch a veteran of many such contests, she wields an enchanted athame called Gutspiller, known for messily disemboweling opponents. As Tamsin is fond of her taut abdominal muscles, she vows to be cautious!

The two are fighting beneath a skeletal blackthorn tree with a bubbling cauldron nearby. Though the GM intended these details as set dressing, Tamsin's player decides to use the environment to her advantage. She attempts to kick the cauldron over and spill its steaming contents at her rival's feet! The GM rules this as an Agility check in lieu of an attack. If Tamsin's kick lands, Gretch will suffer a penalty die the next round as she finds herself ankle-deep in boiling blood.

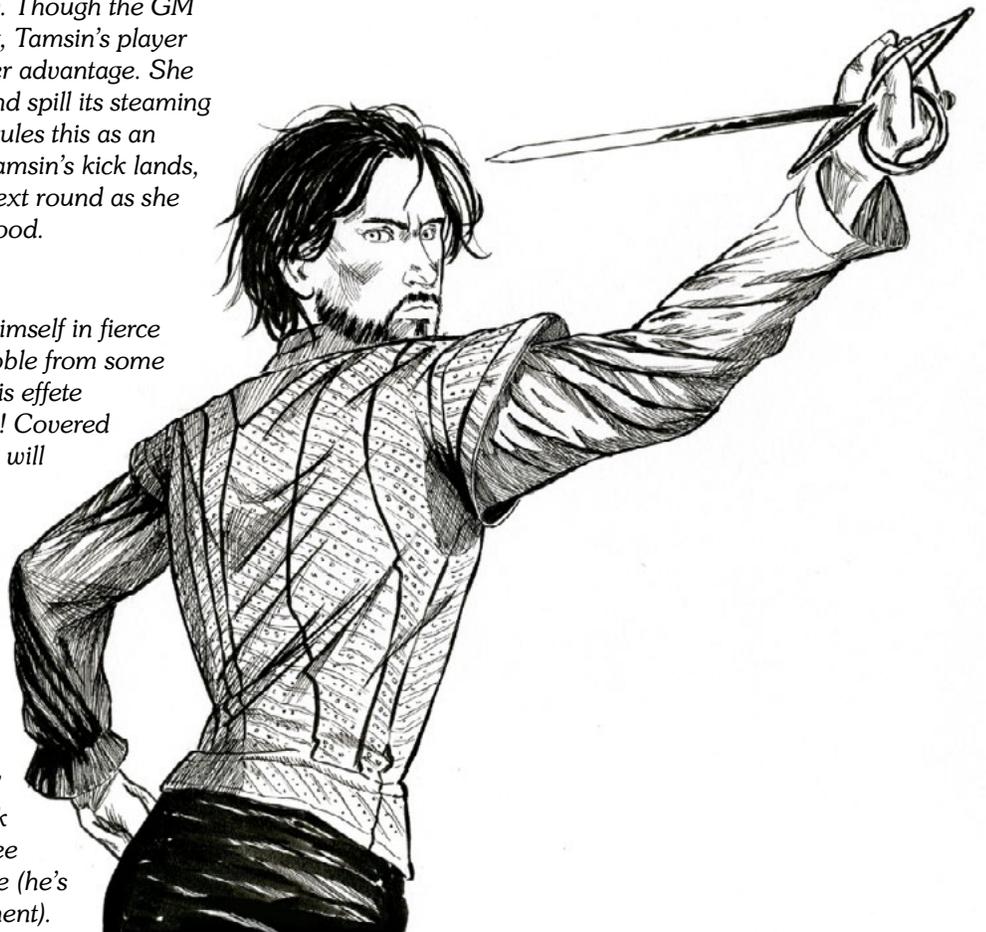
Example Four

The barbarian hero, Cruaidh, finds himself in fierce combat with a perfumed, silk-clad noble from some decadent southern city. Trouble is, this effete dandy wields his rapier like a demon! Covered in a half-dozen cuts already, Cruaidh will lose the fight if he can't end it soon.

Cruaidh's player proposes using his broadsword, along with his massive Strength, to knock the flimsy rapier aside. Long enough, at least, to get past his opponent's guard (high Defense) and land a good cut. Not only does this sound plausible, but the stunt described is a legitimate technique called a 'beat.' The GM lets Cruaidh make an Attack Roll modified by his opponent's Melee Combat Ability instead of his Defense (he's trying to hit the sword, not his opponent).

A success means no damage, but the noble will have to spend the next round bringing his sword back into 'play,' allowing Cruaidh to attack against a reduced Defense.

Note: Well-meaning GMs sometimes take an overly zealous approach to stunts, penalizing players if they think they're being too repetitive or 'boring' in combat. This is *not* recommended. Requiring players to come up with creative attacks every round gets old real fast, and cheapens the spontaneity of stunts.



DUELING

Often at the climax of an adventure, a single hero and villain square off for some serious *mano a mano*, while companions and minions watch from the sidelines. Dueling rules are reserved for cinematic moments when the stakes are high, and combat is not the usual attrition of lifeblood. Advantage can shift back and forth before a final, often fatal, blow is delivered. Though traditional S&S stories focus on swordfights, duels can be fought with any weapons, including naked fists.

Both participants must agree to duel. The action takes place over 3 combat rounds, with a beginning, middle, and end phase. If both parties are still standing at the end, another set of 3 rounds can follow (see below).

Contestants try to generate Edge, representing the back-and-forth momentum of a fight. No actual damage is scored until the end of the duel, though the amount can be much higher than usual. Priority isn't checked for—the action is considered simultaneous. Both sides make Attack Rolls as normal, subtracting Defense, and noting the modified result. The higher roll 'wins' the first round. Edge is calculated by subtracting the lower result from the higher. This positive value carries into the second round, where the 'winner' gets to add a bonus die to their Attack Roll. A 'tie' results in a stalemate, with no Edge being generated and no bonus die.

Make Attack Rolls for the second round and again compare results. The lower roll is subtracted from the higher, and this amount is either added to or subtracted from Edge, depending on who 'won' (see the example). Edge can shift, meaning the 'loser' from the previous round can now be the 'winner.' Again, the value carries to the next round, and the contestant with the Edge gets a bonus die on their next Attack Roll. If Edge shifts to 0, then a stalemate has occurred, with neither side gaining a bonus die.

On the third and final round, the 'winner' with the Edge gets to apply damage. This is increased by a number of steps equal to the Edge total. The 'loser' can opt to yield and potentially avoid damage, but the 'winner' then gets narrative control of the duel's outcome—up to and including a *coup de grace*. If the loser is still standing and both parties opt to, the duel can continue for another 3 round bout.

During a duel contestants can only spend a Hero/Rival/Villain Point to make a second Attack Roll, keeping the higher of the two results.

Scoring a Mighty Success on the Attack Roll has two possible outcomes. If a character would have otherwise lost the turn (because their score was still lower), they automatically win with Edge 1. If they would've won, their normal Edge score is *doubled*.

Note that if a winning duelist generates a massive amount of Edge by the third round—enough that their damage exceeds 3d6H on the damage track, they have achieved an Overwhelming Dominance. In this case, the winner gains narrative control over the loser's fate whether they have opted to yield or not.



Example

We return to the wilds of the Black Forest, where Gecerix is settling a blood feud with the chieftain of the Suebi tribe . . . who happens to be a werewolf! Both player and GM agree the dueling rules would be appropriate here. To help his odds, Gecerix burns a Hero Point and invokes Twist of Fate: he suddenly 'remembers' the stout silver pin fastening his cloak, gifted to him by a lady admirer.



STEALTH

First Round: Gecerix gets a modified Attack Roll of 9, while the chieftain scores a 7. Gecerix wins the round with (9 - 7) Edge 2. He thrusts his spear past the lycanthrope's outstretched claws, feeling the leaf-shaped blade sink deep. Maybe werewolves aren't so tough!

Second Round: Despite his bonus die, Gecerix rolls an 8 total, and his opponent an 11. Because the chieftain rolled higher, he wins the round and generates (11 - 8) Edge 3. Gecerix's Edge of 2 is subtracted from this amount, yielding Edge 1 in favor of the chieftain. With a fanged grin, the impaled werewolf works his way up the spear shaft, drawing close. To Gecerix's horror, the skin-turner's flesh knits itself closed around the wound.

Third Round: The chieftain scores a 10 with his bonus die and Gecerix only rolls 6. Not liking this result, Gecerix spends a Hero Point and re-rolls, this time scoring a Mighty Success! His modified Attack Roll is 14, netting him (14 - 10) 4 Edge. Normally, he would win with a final Edge score of 3 (4 Edge - the chieftain's Edge 1). However, because he scored a Mighty Success, this result is doubled to Edge 6.

The skin-turner locks both taloned hands around Gecerix's throat, ready to tear the tender flesh beneath. His hot wolf's breath reeks from a recent kill. For a moment time freezes, and the events of Gecerix's storied life marches past his mazed brain. But only a moment. He remembers—the silver pin! His fingers flash to his cloak.

*Edge 6 raises the pin's d3 damage 6 steps to 2d6H, +2 for Gecerix's strength as he plunges the silver shard into the chieftain's eye. Gecerix rolls lucky 13 for damage, ignoring the werewolf's Unholy Vitality (see **Bestiary**, pg. 153) and taking him below 0 lifeblood. The sacred metal turns red-hot, bursting the chieftain's eyeball before it sears into his brain. Howling, the Suebi hurtles backwards, dying even as his wracked body warps back into human form.*

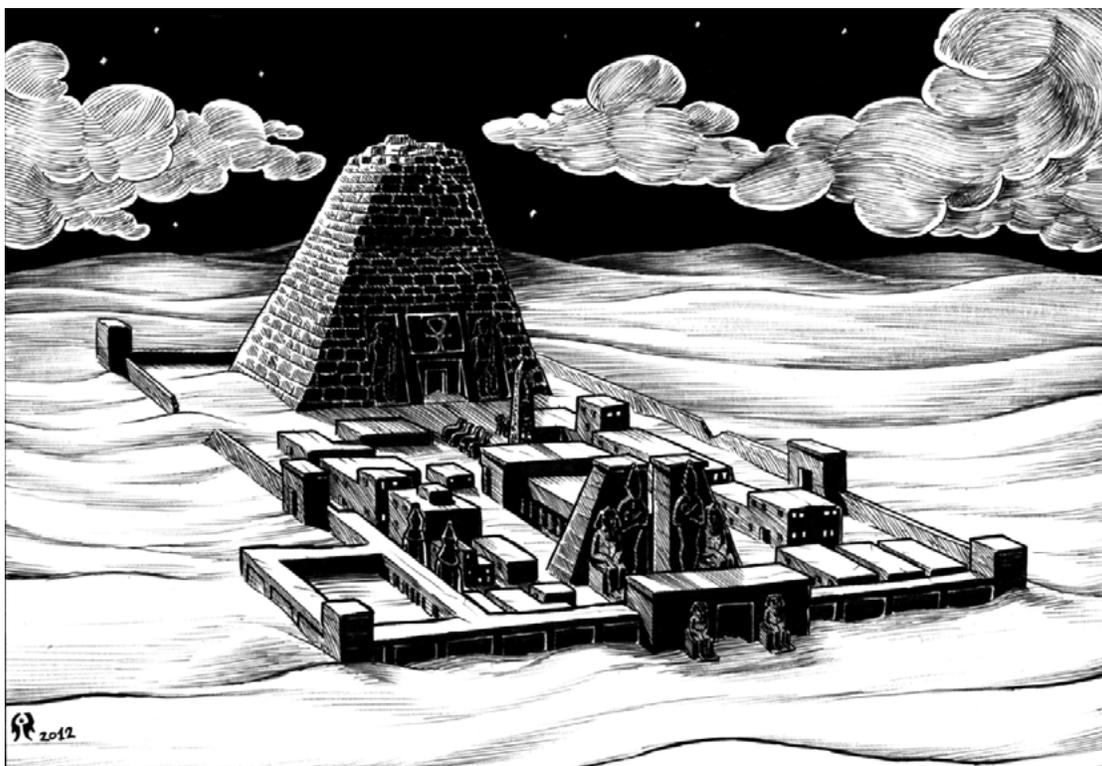
Sneaking is a relatively common occurrence in S&S adventures. Whether attempting to slink by a chamber filled with drug-addled serpent priests, or creeping up on the king's throne to 'create' a new dynastic succession, stealth rolls are involved.

- When **PCs** are making a stealth check, roll 2d6 + Agility + highest rank in an appropriate career (such as assassin, barbarian, hunter, or rogue) – the highest Mind attribute of the target(s). Further modifiers (like alert sentries or wearing plate armor) are possible. The *Stealthy/Sneaky* boon adds a bonus die to the check.
- When a group of PCs are trying to be stealthy, everyone must roll. A failure on any of the checks means the attempt has failed and the target(s) are alerted.
- If a PC sneaking in a group scores a Mighty Success, they can negate the failed stealth rolls of any companions. In this case, the hero is so 'on point' they can prevent a crucial misstep!

This system 'reverses' depending on who is doing the sneaking:

- If **NPCs** are trying to be stealthy, PCs roll 2d6 + Mind + the highest rank in any appropriate career (as noted above) – the NPCs Agility or highest rank in an appropriate career (whichever is higher) to detect them. The *Alertness* or *Wary* boon grants a bonus die on the PCs check.
- Every PC being sneaked up on can make a check. If a group of NPCs are sneaking, have PCs roll against the NPC with the *worst* Agility/career (if applicable).
- If a PC gets a Mighty Success, they are forewarned enough to gain a bonus die on any ensuing priority rolls.





CHASES

S&S encounters are not necessarily ‘balanced’ by a precise, mathematical system as in some RPGs. This means running away occasionally becomes necessary. Like car chases in modern action movies, foot chases present an opportunity for nail-biting drama. As the joke goes, to ‘win’ you only have to be the second-to-last slowest!

Before rolling, the GM establishes a ‘finish line’ condition, such as reaching the tree line at the edge of a clearing, a ship ready to cast off, the gates of a fortified manor, etc. This establishes when the chase is over and how many rounds of checks are required to reach safety (usually up to 3). Players roll $2d6 + \text{Agility or Strength (whichever is higher)} + \text{highest rank in any relevant career (barbarian, rogue, scout, etc.)} - \text{the pursuer's Agility}$. The *Athletic/Born Athlete* boon adds a bonus die. Really big pursuers are harder to outdistance; Large size incurs a -1 modifier, Huge -2, and Enormous on up -4.

Each PC rolls and notes their modified amount. With a success (or multiple successes) they make it. With a failure, the pursuer(s) get an attack on whoever blew the roll. If multiple PCs are being chased by a single

pursuer, the lowest failed roller gets attacked. If the lagging character survives the attack, they can try to flee again the following round.

A character scoring a Mighty Success can outdistance pursuers enough they no longer need to roll. Alternately, they can double back to help any companions, negating their failed checks.

Note that scarpering is a *particularly* good idea when facing giant eldritch horrors!

Example

Khamose of Nubia, Swift Takiyah, and Nomsa, Wise Woman of the Savannah, are fleeing from a horde of crocodile cultists. Scant yards behind, the enraged voice of the cult's high priest booms out: "Seize them! They have slain our living God, the sacred Mamba Nyepi!"

The GM establishes the ‘finish line’ as a gate leading out of the walled temple district, carelessly left unguarded (thanks to a Hero Point burned by Khamose). Because the trio were spotted near the edge of the district, the GM rules the chase will only take one round. The pursuing cultists are all Rabble with an Agility of 0.

Khamose has both a Strength and Agility of 2, as well as rank 1 in barbarian. He gains a net 2 (Agility) + 1 (barbarian) – 0 (the Rabble's Agility), +3 and rolls a modified 9, reaching the gate just in time. True to her moniker, Takiyah has it even better with an Agility of 3, 1 rank in beastmaster (she grew up chasing gazelles), and the Athletic/Born Athlete boon, for a total of +4 and a bonus die. She scores a Mighty Success and easily outdistances Khamose.

Nomsa, however, is a different story. She has Agility 0, no applicable careers, and the Out of Shape/Elderly flaw. With her penalty die, she rolls a modified 5 and fails. The pursuing cultists are about to overtake her! However, because Takiyah rolled a Mighty Success, she opts to intervene. With a mild grunt of annoyance, she doubles back, scoops up the lagging Nomsa and carries her through the gate!



WHEN IN DOUBT, PLAYER - FACING

In most situations, opposed rolls are best handled as player-facing (i.e., players make the roll, not the GM). This helps to preserve the illusion of control and keep heroes as the primary focus. For example, picking pockets could be handled the same way as stealth; if PCs are doing the filching, they roll 2d6 + Agility + rank in thief career – the target's Mind. If the PCs are the subject of a pickpocketing attempt, they roll 2d6 + Mind + rank in thief career – the NPCs Agility or rank in thief career, whichever is higher.

Note that player-facing rolls grant heroes the possibility of a Mighty Success, bestowing an additional advantage and making the outcome more exciting.

SLOWER PROGRESSION

Barbarians of Lemuria and *Everywhen* are often used for one-shots, but a GM wanting to run a longer S&S campaign might consider limiting XP/AP to a base of 1 per adventure (see *Everywhen*, pg. 98). This prevents heroes from growing too powerful too quickly. However, it is still recommended to award 'extra' XP/AP when players show great ingenuity, heroism, or overcome a particularly tough obstacle.

ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE

Certain hazardous situations (i.e., drowning, being surrounded by fire, immersion in acid, etc.) do a fixed amount of damage per round or hour. This damage can be normal or lasting, depending on the severity. Specialized gear, such as cold- or hot- weather clothing (see **Equipment**, pg. 84) can provide protection against this damage just like armor.

Common environmental hazards are summarized below. See also the *Everywhen* core book, pg. 69, for additional examples.

- Drowning; 1 pt. normal damage per round.
- Cold or hot weather; 1 pt. normal damage per hour.
- Small fire; 1 pt. lasting damage per round.
- Large fire; 2 pts. lasting damage per round.
- Strong acid; 3 pts. lasting damage per round.

Falling does normal damage based on the distance fallen; armor does *not* protect against this. For realism's sake, a character who suffers damage equal to half their lifeblood or greater sustains a wound (see pg. 89) like a sprained ankle or broken leg, incurring a penalty die on related actions until healed. The *Everywhen* core book (pg. 69) has a much more granular table for fall damage.

- 10' fall; d3 normal damage.
- 20' fall; d6 normal damage.
- 30' fall; 2d6 normal damage.
- 50' fall; 3d6 normal damage.





5 MAGIC

LOW FREQUENCY—BUT HIGH POWER

S&S settings are often described as ‘low magic.’ An average person can go their entire lives without witnessing any (real) supernatural events. They might see a charlatan pull off a trick or two, buy a love potion or receive advice from a soothsayer, but that would be the extent of it. There are no ‘magic emporiums’ with powerful enchanted weapons hanging in the window. Common wisdom holds that *real* magic is “damn dangerous stuff,” and best avoided, if possible.

Contrast this with typical fantasy RPG settings, where magic is both common and totally reliable. A frequent criticism describes this approach as “just magic grafted onto a medieval world.” *Real* sorcery, so the reasoning goes, would reshape human society into something profoundly different. Castles, for example, would be designed to prevent besiegers from flying over the walls. Rich people would pay to have their loved ones routinely brought back from the dead, cured of all diseases, etc. A ‘serious’ GM therefore needs to sit down with a spell list and think through all the implications before building a world.

Happily, such preparation isn’t necessary with S&S settings. Magic *isn’t* common, and just because a spell works on Tuesday doesn’t mean it will tomorrow. Or next week. Magic stays in the shadowy background, except when the GM wants it front and center.

This doesn’t mean magic isn’t powerful, though. Most S&S literature posits sorcery as mightier than the sword. Bronze-thewed barbarians triumph over wizards because they’re the heroes, and have plot armor to back them up. Sorcery can be fickle, and subject to arbitrary rules, but it can do the impossible—and should always be feared.



REGIONAL MAGIC

Magic isn’t the same everywhere. Just like cooking, language, art, and other nuances of culture, sorcery comes in flavors. Arab-analog *sahir* command djinn and the powers of illusion, for example, while India-analog mystics wield hypnotic magic. Certain ‘evil’ kingdoms could be associated with necromancy and summoning, while more benign ones use divination and evocation of elementals. When sorcerers travel, they become aware of this subtle shift in magical forces.

One way to reflect this is to have origin cultures associated with one or more colleges (see pg. 113). Players from these homelands can choose *Magical Affinity* as their initial boon. Further, some areas may be saturated with magic due to a liminal location, an ancient Place of Power, etc. These regions could grant an Easy (+1) or even Very Easy (+2) modifier to Arcana Rolls made locally.

SORCERERS AND WITCHES

Though it doesn’t confer any benefits, there are plausible reasons why a character might take ranks in *both* sorcerer and witch (chief being it sounds ‘edgy’). However, the two careers don’t stack. In essence, you are either casting a spell as a sorcerer or a witch, not an amalgam of both. Take the *higher* of the two ranks when calculating Arcane Points and modifying your Arcana Roll or pick one if the ranks are equal.

Similarly, witches who take ranks in alchemist use the higher of the two careers (rank in alchemist or rank in witch/2, round down) for determining Downtime Project or Craft Points, making preparation rolls, etc.





DARK VS. NOT-AS-DARK

Magic is a decidedly dangerous calling in S&S settings. When a would-be sorcerer or witch sets their foot on the path of arcane power, a perilous road stretches before them, filled with horror and perverse enticement. A misstep could mean more than death—it could cost one’s immortal soul! By contrast, magic in standard fantasy RPGs is often depicted as whimsical, humorous, and so commonplace as to be mundane.

Both *Barbarians of Lemuria* and *Everywhen* feature a corruption mechanic to simulate the price sorcery demands of body and soul. This entails taking an additional flaw for each rank past the first in sorcerer or witch (see *Barbarians of Lemuria*, *Mythic* pg. 35, or *Everywhen*, pg. 80). Additionally, some of the magic-oriented boons, like *Power of the Void* or *Magic of the*

Sorcerer Kings, require an additional flaw if taken. The *Codex* includes the *Everywhen* option of a “neutral but risky” sorcery path that does not require an additional flaw for each rank taken after the first in a magical career. As noted in the **Heroes** chapter, however, this doesn’t mean the neutral path is ‘good,’ or so-called ‘white magic’—it means it’s *not as dark*, or basically, a lesser evil.

A sorcerer or witch who takes the *Pact* boon (see pg. 56) is automatically on the corrupting path, as are those with *Magical Affiliations* in the college of demon summoning or necromancy. Otherwise, it’s up to the player’s concept of their hero to decide which path they take.

ON BOLT - SLINGING

Magic in traditional fantasy RPGs (and videogames) involves sorcerers flinging brightly colored beams (or bolts, fireballs, rays, etc.) at their targets with explosive results. For this reason, wizardly types are sometimes referred to as ‘walking artillery’ or ‘glass cannons,’ the latter describing their ability to dish out damage rather than take it. While certainly exciting, this approach of mindless blasting wipes out the subtlety associated with S&S magic, which favors illusion, beguilement, curses, and—when a heavy hand is necessary—the summoning of powerful entities.

However, direct damage spells *do* appear in traditional S&S, so making them forbidden isn’t necessarily adhering to the genre. Also, this approach would likely frustrate the expectations of many players. Therefore, the sample spells presented in this chapter include ‘flash and bang’ style magic.

As a guideline, First Magnitude spells do d6 damage and Second Magnitude do 2d6. ‘Area effects’ for damaging spells are generally not encouraged, though against Rabble or Tough targets Spreading Damage (see sidebar) is possible. While an Attack Roll is usually not necessary for such spells to hit (‘touch’ spells

are an exception), they can conceivably be blocked or dodged, meaning a target can pay Hero or Rival/Villain Points to invoke That Was Close! or Splintered Shield, Shattered Sword to avoid damage, depending on the context.

Also, keep in mind that a strong barbarian armed with a greatsword can do more damage on a Mighty Success than a 2nd Magnitude Spell, with less hassle. Direct damage is therefore seen as minor league stuff—the heavy hitters summon powerful spirits when they want to put the hurt on someone!



OPTION: SPREADING DAMAGE

Against Rabble or Tough targets, some spells could conceivably ‘spill over’ with damage, similar to the *Sweeping Attack* boon (see *Everywhen*, pg. 19). For example, *Witchfire* (pg. 130) summons a gout of spectral blue flame doing d6 lifeblood. If the caster rolled 5 damage against a Rabble target with only 3 lifeblood, the 2 points of ‘extra’ damage could spread to another Rabble nearby.

Using this option depends heavily on the targets’ position and the nature of the spell.

OPTION: ‘JUICING’ DAMAGE

If a caster is willing to invest extra AP, they can ensure a spell will at least do a certain amount of damage. On a successful Arcana Roll, every 1 AP spent over the cost of the spell increases *minimum* damage by 1. So, a sorcerer or witch casting a First Magnitude spell can pay 3 extra AP for a minimum damage result of (3+1) 4 lifeblood. Damage rolled under this amount is treated as 4. The damage cannot be increased beyond the maximum possible.





OPTION: THE SINGULAR EFFECT

Using the same spell repeatedly can give magic a 'videogame' feel. This is especially true with direct damage spells, which can become a default action like repeatedly swinging a sword.

The Singular option makes casting the same spell progressively more difficult. If a caster attempts to use a spell more than once during a sitting, they take a cumulative -1 to their Arcana Roll and +1 AP cost. The GM can also add the Miscast requirement (see pg. 114), which won't lessen the AP cost in this case, but simulates the risk of warping reality with the same magic excessively.

INTERMEDIARY SPIRITS

Magic in S&S settings is often associated with supernatural entities, from infernal demons to more benign elementals and a host of spirits in between. Magical effects don't always originate directly from the sorcerer or witch—they can come from the entities controlled by them.

In game terms, there are two ways to simulate this approach. One is through summoning spells, detailed on pg. 115. The other is the *Intermediary Spirit* boon. These spirits are treated as either Minor Entities (see *Everywhen*, pg. 95) or Minor Demons (see *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 131) that have the *Sorcery* boon as one of their powers. Note that these creatures don't necessarily have infernal origins; depending on the setting, they could be helpful ghosts, bound fae, or even djinn. As noted earlier, *Familiars* can be *Intermediary Spirits*, though this boon must be taken in addition.

Intermediary Spirits can serve as a casting requirement for spells. This reduces the Arcane Point cost (though points still come from the caster, not the spirit), and makes Second Magnitude spells available for casting 'on the fly,' without lengthy preparations or special items. Third Magnitude spells, however, are beyond the spirit's ability.

Intermediary Spirits are contrary by nature and resent their servitude. If used more than once during an adventure they bestow a cumulative -1 to the Arcana Roll, as they become increasingly surly from 'overwork.' On a Calamitous Failure the spirit has been deeply offended and will vanish for the rest of the adventure. *In extremis*, a sorcerer or witch can command an *Intermediary Spirit* to attack an opponent, or use its AP to power a spell, but such an action frees the spirit from bondage once the encounter is over. Though the actions of *Intermediary Spirits* are normally invisible, characters with the *Second Sight* boon or the *Witchsight* spell can perceive them.

Intermediary Spirits represent a great opportunity for role-playing if the GM is inclined to treat them as an NPC. Their contrarian personalities and general sarcasm can make the 'routine' casting of a spell anything but.

Example

Al-Afzar has an Intermediary Spirit, the djinn Semsem. During an adventure Afzar encounters a barred door and decides to open it using sorcery. The GM rules this is a First Magnitude spell of Moderate difficulty. Afzar's player identifies casting requirements of Intermediary Spirit, Obvious Gestures, and Line of Sight, dropping the AP cost to 3. He rolls to activate the spell, adding his sorcerer rank of 1 and his Mind of 1. He gets a 9 total and succeeds.

"Consider it done, accursed master," the djinn says, and shrinks to the size of a sandflea. After slipping under the door, he grows back to normal height and lifts the bar.

*Later that evening Afzar is running from the town watch. He wants to levitate to a third story window and hide. The GM decides this is a First Magnitude spell of Hard complexity; Afzar again includes the casting requirement Intermediary Spirit. However, as Semsem has already been used this adventure he is less-than-enthusiastic. Afzar rolls with a -1 for the djinn's cranky attitude and -1 for the spell's complexity. He gets a 6 total and fails. With the guardsmen close at his heels, he decides to Overexert himself (see *Everywhen*, pg. 81) and rolls an additional d6 the next turn. With a 3 result, the spell is successful.*





The GM interprets the outcome thusly: the djinn grows to prodigious size and hoists Al-Afzar into the air. Halfway up, however, he groans theatrically and makes as if to drop the hero (the failed first roll). “Perhaps, accursed master,” he says, “you should lay off the couscous. My muscles are beginning to fail.”

Afzar growls back: “Drop me, and I’ll tattoo the Seal of Solomon on your worthless forehead!” With newfound alacrity, the djinn hauls him up the rest of the way.

THE COLLEGES OF MAGIC

Similar to the Arcane Domains presented in *Everywhen*, pg. 82, the *Magical Affinity* boon posits that spells can be divided into different ‘schools’ or ‘colleges’ with a unifying theme. For example, a setting might have a nature college followed by benign druids and shamans, with spells of animal communication, shapeshifting, summoning beasts, controlling the weather, etc. The same setting could also have a college based on forbidden necromancy, with spells for summoning (and interrogating) ghosts, animating corpses, cheating death, and turning flesh necrotic.

As noted in the boon’s description, having an *Affinity* for a particular college grants a bonus die on the Arcana Roll, as well as reducing the spell’s cost by 1 AP (though this cannot drop below the minimum Magnitude cost). The *Magical Affinity* boon can be taken once per rank in sorcerer or witch; additional *Affinities* (and colleges) can be purchased with each rank thereafter.

Example

Phaestus is a rank 1 sorcerer with a Magical Affinity for fire magic. On achieving rank 2 in sorcerer he can take Magical Affinity again, paying the usual XP/AP for a new boon. This time, he takes the college of illusions, making him adept with this style of magic as well.

At the GMs discretion, taking *Affinity* in certain colleges (e.g., necromancy and summoning) automatically puts the sorcerer or witch in the corrupting magic camp (see **Dark Vs. Not-As-Dark**, pg. 110). This doesn’t restrict sorcerers or witches from casting such spells, but it does require them to ‘pick a side’ if they want to have an *Affinity* for doing so.

OPTION: SEASONAL MAGIC

Many players are used to the concept of the four elements of fire, air, earth, and water from innumerable RPGs and videogames. What if a GM wanted to introduce a new way of working with these familiar themes? Magic based on the four seasons (assuming a setting is Earth-like and has four seasons) could have colleges like this:

The Winter College

As the ‘dead’ season, this college is associated with the power of death and infernal cold. Animating the dead, control of blizzards, causing darkness or madness, and spells that do direct damage from frostbite could all fall under this category. Members of the Winter college follow a corrupting path. This college is directly opposed by Spring.



(SEASONAL MAGIC, CONTINUED)

The Autumnal College

Fall is a liminal season, straddling the worlds of the living and the dead. Divination, communication with ghosts, slowing down time, preservation of food (and flesh), dimming of light, perceiving the spirit world, and causing bouts of dread and fear are all spell effects associated with this college. Practitioners can follow either the corrupting or neutral path.

The College of Spring

The season of life and rejuvenation. Though 'insta healing' spells are strongly discouraged in S&S settings, recuperative ones (like Restorative Sleep, see pg. 127) are possible with this college, as well as spells that exorcise or ward evil and provide protection. Practitioners of this college must follow a neutral vs. corrupting path. Directly opposed to Winter.

The College of Summer

The season of brightness, diversion, and warmth. Spells dealing with the conjuration of light, direct damage through searing heat, illusions, banishment of darkness or fear, protection from cold, and beguilement (especially through charm or perceived beauty) are all possible. Practitioners of this college seldom follow a corrupting path.

For the directly opposed colleges (Winter and Spring), the bonus Arcana Roll die normally associated with their spells is negated when cast during the opposing season, e.g., a winter college sorcerer casting spells during the spring. Also, a magician cannot take both opposed colleges as an *Affinity*.

ARCANA ROLLS

Attempting an Arcana Roll is a dramatic event, with much potentially hanging on the success or failure. In keeping with the core mechanic, some options for rolling high or low are presented here.

MIGHTY AND LEGENDARY SUCCESS

- On a Mighty Success, the caster is refreshed 1 AP per Magnitude of the spell and takes a '6' result on any effect die for damage, potency, etc.
- On a Legendary Success, the caster is completely refreshed the AP cost of the spell. Additionally, the spell does maximum damage, achieves full potency, etc.

SNAKE EYES

A 'natural 2' (i.e. both die come up 1) is always a bad thing when making Arcana Rolls. Snake eyes causes a Miscast result (see below) unless a Hero Point is spent to re-roll or turn it into a normal failure. This means spellcasting always carries an inherent risk. Accepting the consequences of a Miscast (before rolling on the table) grants a Hero Point, just as with a Calamitous Failure. Some spells have a specified Miscast in their descriptions, which obviates rolling.

MISCAST

More competent spellcasters are in less danger than neophytes when bungling an Arcana Roll. Subtract the caster's highest rank in sorcerer or witch from the Magnitude of the spell attempted (Magnitude - rank). If the result is *positive*, add it to the 2d6 roll below. If *negative*, then subtract.

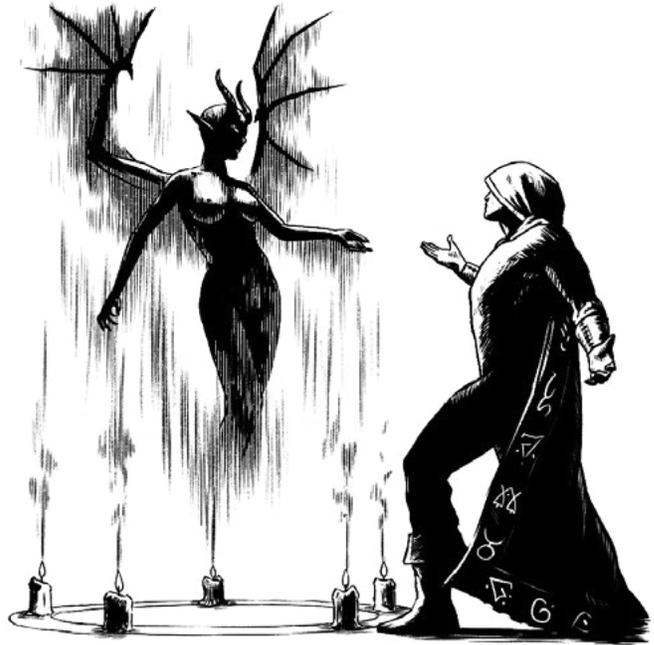
Example

Phaestus, a rank 1 sorcerer, attempts a Second Magnitude spell and gets a natural 2 on his Arcana Roll. Subtracting his rank from the Magnitude yields +1 (a potentially more dangerous result) on the Miscast Table.



MISCAST RESULTS

| | |
|--------------|--|
| 2-7 | Though the spell fails, you must still pay the AP cost as modified by casting requirements taken. |
| 8-10 | As above, but the AP cost is the maximum for the spell's Magnitude (2 for Cantrips, 5 for First, 10 for Second, and 15 for Third). If this exceeds your <i>current</i> AP total, you take the difference in resolve damage. |
| 11-12 | The spell succeeds, but not in a good way. If offensive, the spell either targets you or centers on your person. Any damage done is subtracted from your resolve rather than lifeblood (i.e., it can't kill you). If protective or otherwise beneficial, the spell targets an opponent (if applicable). Other complications are possible—this may require creative interpretation by the GM. |
| 12+ | As in the previous result, but damage done is lifeblood vs. resolve (it <i>can</i> kill you!). |



SUMMONING

As noted previously, S&S literature often posits magic as stemming from powerful spirits or extra-dimensional entities. Cowled sorcerers summon demons from the safety of magic circles, ready to bargain what remains of their mortal souls in return for earthly power, while covens exhort chthonic spirits to rise from their tombs and extract vengeance against sworn enemies. The opportunity for the GM to roleplay these malevolent creatures can make magic *much* more satisfying than the traditional 'wave and BOOM' approach to spellcasting!

Summoning a spirit is usually a two-part process; first casting a Summoning spell (see pg. 129), followed by either a spell of Binding (pg. 119) or bargaining with the entity over its 'terms of service' (see *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 132). The latter involves giving the entity something it wants, from virgin blood and souls for standard evil types to Rare Ingredients (as per the Casting Requirement) or even objects d'art for more discriminating spirits.

Another possibility is allowing the entity to do what it wants, i.e. spread havoc across the countryside, destroy a directly opposed elemental spirit, etc. If the conditions are right, the summoned creature can simply agree on the spot.

Summoning often gets short shrift in actual play, not only because it's dangerous, but because the act of calling forth and then Binding (or bargaining with) a spirit is time consuming. One way to address this is to 'hang' or 'cache' a ritual spell so it can be ready for instant use later.

In game terms, the summoner attempts their spells just prior to the start of an adventure; any AP spent in the process won't be available during that session. However, if successful, they have the option of calling forth the spirit as a one-round action during play. Of course, this means NPC summoners can 'hang' spells as well . . .





DEMONS OF KNOWLEDGE

Not all entities are summoned for bloodshed and servitude. Some spirits act as consultants, providing information, prescience, or insight. A common example would be calling on a knowledgeable spirit for legends concerning a lost city of the ancients. Entities of this sort have the *Special Knowledge* supernatural boon (see *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 131 or *Everywhen*, pg. 96) and impart wisdom at rank 4/6 of a career, usually scholar. These types of spirits don't have to be bound; demons of knowledge seem to enjoy sharing their pedantic insights, as they so seldom have an appreciative audience!

Example

Phaestus has finally tracked the Black Hand to its secret lair, where he plans to settle his gambling debts once and for all—by killing the gang's leader! Unfortunately, the Hand has its own magical backup, in the form of the raven-haired witch, Tamsin Shalles.

“Not so fast, blondie,” sneers the young woman. “If you want to meet the chief, you’re going to have to get past me, first. And my friend.”

At a gesture, the scraggly cat nuzzling Tamsin’s ankles sits upright . . . and begins to change. Sulfurous smoke belches forth to obscure the feline. When it clears, an 8’ goat-headed, triple-horned humanoid covered in sable fur stands next to the witch, muscular arms folded.

“Black Barnabus here wants to have a word with you,” she says, a smile touching her full lips. “I think he’ll prove more than a match for that stubby little salamander you keep in your robes. What’s his name, again? Pyroxenes?”

Phaestus squares his shoulders. “My ‘little’ accomplice took the night off.” He nods at a lantern hanging nearby. The meager flame inside flares, bursting the glass in a sudden flash. Rippling orange waves pour forth, to strike the floor and coalesce into a giant serpent, with two pairs of talon-tipped hands. The air around the beast shimmers and sparks.

“Tamsin,” Phaestus says, “say hello to Ingens Ignatius!”

In the example above, both Phaestus and Tamsin have previously summoned and bound Lesser Demons (see *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 131) or Lesser Entities (see *Everywhen*, pg. 95), with stats prepared beforehand. Both the witch and sorcerer start play with their AP reduced by the amount necessary for the summoning and binding. While these entities fight it out, and with little AP left to toss spells, both Phaestus and Tamsin draw their blades to settle matters hand to hand!

CASTING REQUIREMENTS

Several additional casting requirements for spells are presented here. Notably, with the standard rules Second Magnitude spells can be difficult to cast ‘on the fly,’ restricting them to downtime ritual use. Though this is very much in keeping with the spirit of S&S magic, these additional requirements allow sorcerer and witch PCs access to more powerful spells in the thick of a fight.

Dire Portents (First/Second Magnitude)

The eerie effects associated with casting the spell (e.g., a suddenly darkening sky, rush of cold wind, sulfurous stench, etc.) are particularly disturbing, necessitating a Resolve Check (see **Mechanics**, pg. 92) for the caster’s companions. The Fear Rating depends on the spell’s Magnitude; -1 for First or -2 for Second. This



requirement can only be taken if the caster has allies and can't be used as a 'free' Resolve Attack on enemies. The caster is unaffected.

Eye Contact (First Magnitude)

You need to establish eye contact with your target, limiting most range to 15.' This requirement cannot be taken along with Line of Sight.

Intermediary Spirit (First/Second Magnitude)

As noted under the boon's description, *Intermediary Spirit* can be used as a casting requirement, though the entity will balk if tasked repeatedly!

Intimate Materials (First/Second Magnitude)

As presented in *Everywhen*, pg. 83, Intimate Materials can also be used as a casting requirement for some Second Magnitude spells (e.g., *Ensorcell*, *Sever Lifeforce*).

Miscast (First/Second/Third Magnitude)

On a failed Arcana Roll, the caster must roll on the Miscast table (see pg. 115). In this case, the caster cannot gain a Hero Point as if accepting the consequences of a Calamitous Failure. However, a Hero Point can be spent to either re-roll or avoid the consequences of the miscast.

Pact (First/Second Magnitude)

As noted in the boon's description, *Pact* can serve as a casting requirement in addition to decreasing the difficulty of a spell.

Resolve Loss (First/Second Magnitude)

Casting the spell drains mental stamina (cf. the Wounds requirement). Resolve damage is d3 normal for First Magnitude spells and d6+1 for Second. Note that if the caster's resolve is dropped to 0 or less, the spell still takes effect!

True Name (Second/Third Magnitude)

A variation on Special Item or Rare Ingredients. All Lesser Entities/Demons and Greater Entities/Demons have a secret 'true' name they guard at all costs. This Name can be invoked as a casting requirement for Summoning and Binding spells. In the latter case, the demon or entity's Mind is treated as 0 when the caster makes their Arcana Roll (see the Binding spell, pg. 119).





SAMPLE SPELLS

The following pre-defined spells are all themed for S&S settings. These should be considered examples rather than a substitute for free-form magic, which is still strongly encouraged. If desired, individual pages can be printed and the spell descriptions handed out like cards for players at the beginning of an adventure. Casters can modify the spells as they see fit, including adding additional requirements to bring the AP cost down.

Note these spells have prosaic names rather than Vancian-style titles like ‘Asquo’s Beguiling Delusions’ or ‘The Threefold Bane of Utter Somnolence,’ not due to a lack of love for Jack Vance’s work, but to keep the spells readily identifiable during play.

Some spells have a dark band next to their description, indicating a corrupting influence, like this:



REVIVIFY

Magnitude: Third **Difficulty:** Heroic (-8)
Requirements: Casting Time, Ritual Sacrifice, The Stars ARE Right
AP Cost: 13

An ancient and forbidden spell, this can bring a person back from the dead, no matter how many eons may have passed—though their condition will be a cruel mockery of life. People so Revivified are always evil, regardless of how they behaved in the past. Though they appear to be in their physical prime, there is something ‘off’ about them (e.g. they must take the *Unsettling Illus*).

Revivified people are far from invulnerable. They can ‘die’ a second time through conventional means, and don’t have access to Rival Points. Further, an obscure Second Magnitude spell can put them back down, provided the text can be located and the spell cast in their immediate vicinity.

As noted previously, sorcerers or witches on the ‘non-corrupting’ path can still cast these spells, but not as part of a college with the *Magical Affinity* boon (i.e., they can’t get a bonus die or AP cost discount).

HARRYHAUSEN’S LAW

What makes a spell more S&S versus generic fantasy? A handy rule of thumb is the Law of Harryhausen. When thinking about how the effects of a spell might look, ask yourself: is this something that could be animated by old school special effects wizard Ray Harryhausen? If the answer is ‘yes,’ then the spell is true to the S&S genre.

Example

The witch Tamsin Shalles and her companions encounter a wide chasm, blocking their progress. As finding an alternate route will take days, Tamsin wants to cast a spell allowing herself and her companions to safely cross. In a typical fantasy RPG this might involve a ‘flying’ spell, with the PCs zipping through the air like Superman. Not very S&S.

Luckily, Tamsin’s player is more creative than that. She waits until nightfall and conjures a small army of imps from the flickering campfire. The creatures work throughout the night and vanish with the first rays of dawn. However, a suspension bridge built from polished ebony planks and silver fittings now stretches across the chasm. As the last PC crosses over, the bridge vanishes behind like a dream. Only Tamsin knows the full price paid for this demonic construction!

BANISH

Magnitude: Second **Difficulty:** Tough (-2)

Requirements: Casting Time, Resolve Loss

AP Cost: 9

This spell forces Summoned spirits back to their original plane. The name (not necessarily True Name) or general appearance of the creature must be known to the caster, and the target's Mind acts as a negative modifier to the Arcana Roll. With a success, the spirit immediately leaves.

BARRIER

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Hard (-1)

Requirements: Line of Sight, Obvious Technique

AP Cost: 4, plus 1 AP to maintain the Barrier each round thereafter.

This spell weaves a shimmering curtain of potent elemental force (e.g., fire, cold, lightning, etc.) up to 10' long. The Barrier obscures vision but doesn't block it, can't be moved once placed, and can't be cast directly on someone (cf. Planar Rip). Anyone passing through the Barrier, including the caster, takes 3 points lasting environmental damage (see *Everywhen*, pg. 69). The Barrier can be shaped into a roughly 3' circle to surround a single target.

BINDING

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Hard (-1)

Requirements: Line of Sight, Obvious Technique, Resolve Loss

AP Cost: 3

This is a 'follow-up' spell, allowing the caster to coerce a spirit they have Summoned to their will. The spirit's Mind acts as negative modifier to the Arcana Roll; if its True Name (see pg. 117) is known and invoked, this penalty is dropped. Once bound, the spirit can't attack the caster and must fulfill a task before they can return (peaceably) to their plane. Some capricious spirits have been known to follow the 'letter of the law' when completing a task, so this must be worded carefully! Clearly suicidal tasks or those with an unspecified timeframe (e.g., "guard me forever") will be ignored.

BULWARK

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Hard (-1)

Requirements: Line of Sight, Obvious Technique, plus Intimate Materials if cast on others.

AP Cost: 4 or 3

This defensive spell conjures an invisible 'second skin' warding the caster's flesh against physical attacks (cf. Scale-Skin, *Barbarians of Lemuria*, pg. 148). The Bulwark grants d6 protection and sheds sparks when struck, revealing its presence. An opponent with Witchsight (pg. 130) can see the Bulwark and bypass its protection by taking a -3 to their Attack Roll.



CALL BEAST

Magnitude: First

Difficulty: Moderate (0)

Requirements: Casting Time, Distracted (Line of Sight, Obvious Technique for Placate Beast)

AP Cost: 4

The caster summons a single animal native to the region, up to Large size, with which they are able to communicate (cf. Summon Beast, *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 148). The animal is well disposed towards the caster and will perform a single (non-suicidal) task before leaving. A variation of this spell, Placate Beast, can calm even an enraged lion, though it won't allow control.

CALL SHADOWS

Magnitude: First

Difficulty: Moderate (0)

Requirements: Line of Sight, Obvious Technique

AP Cost: 4 for 1 minute, plus 1 AP per minute thereafter.

The caster plunges an area the size of a large room into total darkness. The caster can still see clearly, as well as creatures or spirits not hampered by the lack of light. In order to cast the spell, a significant amount of darkness or shadows must be nearby (i.e., it can't be cast in the middle of a clearing in broad daylight).

CALL TEMPEST

Magnitude: Second

Difficulty: Demanding (-4)

Requirements: Distracted, Miscast

AP Cost: 9

This spell conjures a violent windstorm that can be used for various effects (cf. Control Weather). The gusts are strong enough to knock a single target down (d6 fatigue damage + Knockdown; see *Everywhen* pg. 26), force back multiple targets approaching the caster, bat aside most projectiles (spears, arrows, etc.), or create a whirlwind of flying debris (2 pts. environmental damage per round). Other effects are possible. The Tempest can last for a combat or scene, but requires the caster's active concentration to direct, or will otherwise die down.

CHANGE SHAPE

Magnitude: Second

Difficulty: Tough (-2)

Requirements: Casting Time, Lunar, Special Item (skin or personal object of new form)

AP Cost: 8

A popular spell with witches. The caster alters their physical form into an animal or another person. This is not an illusion, but an actual physical transformation. The caster retains their Mind attribute and gains the base Strength and Agility of their new shape if animal (see **Bestiary** for examples). The spell lasts for up to a week, or until the caster decides to change back. On a Miscast, the spell succeeds but the caster is 'stuck' in the new shape until the spell can somehow be broken!



CLOAK OF SHADOWS

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Moderate (0)
Requirements: Casting Time, Obvious Technique
AP Cost: 4

A relatively simple spell of concealment (cf. Invisibility), the Cloak only works at night or in semi-darkness. It weaves a garment of dense shadow, making the caster difficult to spot. Attempting any stealth checks while covered in a Cloak of Shadows grants a bonus equal to the caster's rank in sorcerer or witch + Mind attribute. This bonus 'stacks' with the *Stealthy/Sneaky* boon and any other stealth affiliated careers (barbarian, hunter, rogue, etc.). The Cloak lasts for one night.

CONTROL WEATHER

Magnitude: Second **Difficulty:** Tough (-2)
Requirements: Casting Time, Resolve Loss
AP Cost: 9

This spell allows the caster to change the weather, calling rain out of drought ridden skies or calming the tempestuous force of a tornado. Though it could be used to summon a thunderstorm, it does not give the caster the ability to zap select targets with lightning bolts. Control Weather is commonly used by sorcerers to grant favorable winds for seagoing ships. A Miscast result conjures the weather *opposite* than intended.

COUNTERSPELL

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Moderate (0)
Requirements: Line of Sight, Obvious Technique
AP Cost: 4

A 'preemptive' spell. The caster chooses a single target; the *next* spell that target casts suffers a negative modifier to their Arcana Roll equal to the caster's highest rank in sorcerer or witch. The target must pay the AP cost of their spell even if it fails. The caster can maintain only one Counterspell at a time.

DIVINATION

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Hard (-1)
Requirements: Casting Time, Distracted
AP Cost: 4

A very common spell for predicting the future, though subtle and often misperceived. It takes many possible forms, from reading cards to casting horoscopes or peering into a crystal sphere or flickering fire. The amount and quality of information revealed is entirely at the GM's whim. Even on a successful roll the results can be 'cloudy' or involve cryptic riddles. For very specific information, like the location of a hidden treasure or the name of a long dead monarch, a knowledgeable ghost or demon is usually summoned instead (see Summon Lesser Spirit, pg. 129).



DREAD GAZE

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Moderate (0)
Requirements: Eye Contact, Obvious Technique
AP Cost: 4

This spell fills the caster's eyes with burning malevolence, which can then be directed at a single target. The target's Mind acts as a negative modifier on the Arcana Roll. With a success, the target is treated as having failed a Resolve Check (see **Mechanics**, pg. 92), taking d6 normal resolve damage and losing priority on their next action.

DREAD TOUCH

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Hard (-1)
Requirements: Line of Sight, Obvious Technique
AP Cost: 4

A 'melee' offensive spell, steeped in evil. The caster's hand turns necrotic black and does d6 damage + the caster's Mind, ignoring armor. Touching someone in combat requires an Easy (+1) Attack Roll. Because an Attack Roll is involved, Mighty or Legendary successes are possible. The spell lasts the length of a combat.

ENCHANT WEAPON

Magnitude: First, Second **Difficulty:** Hard (-1) or Tough (-2)
Requirements: Casting Time, Resolve Loss or Casting Time, Lunar, Resolve Loss
AP Cost: 4 or 8

This spell temporarily imbues a weapon with mystic force. The First Magnitude version bestows a bonus die on Attack Rolls with the weapon and does an additional point of damage per the caster's highest rank in sorcerer or witch. This lasts the length of a scene. Projectiles must be enchanted individually (e.g., each arrow or slingstone would receive the enchantment, instead of a bow or sling).

The Second Magnitude version is much more potent. Weapons enchanted with this spell do scale 2 damage (see **Mechanics**, pg. 90) and have the Penetration 2 characteristic (e.g., they ignore 2 points of protection). Alternately, a caster who is also a priest of a benevolent Deity can consecrate the weapon so that it ignores any protection from *Unholy Vitality* (see **Bestiary**, pg. 153) or demonic or entity boons like *Armor*. The Second Magnitude version lasts until the weapon slays an opponent of Tough level or higher.



ENSORORCELL

Magnitude: Second **Difficulty:** Demanding (-4)
Requirements: Casting Time, Intimate Materials
AP Cost: 9

A more potent version of Mesmerize (cf. Beguile, *Barbarians of Lemuria*, *Mythic* pg. 148). The target's Mind acts as a negative modifier on the Arcana Roll. On a success, the target falls completely under the caster's control, following all orders—including suicidal ones—until the spell is somehow broken. The target can pay a Hero/Rival/Villain point per round to attempt to disobey a command, requiring a Mind check with the caster's Mind or Appeal as a negative modifier.

EVISCERATE

Magnitude: Second **Difficulty:** Demanding (-4)
Requirements: Miscast, Resolve Loss
AP Cost: 9

A powerful direct damage spell. The caster presents their open hand to a target within 10' and beckons, calling forth internal organs. Damage is 2d6 lifeblood, ignoring any armor protection. If this is enough to kill the target, their heart, lungs, or other viscera flies to the caster's hand in a scarlet eruption!

EXORCISE

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Hard (-1)
Requirements: Line of Sight, Obvious Technique
AP Cost: 4

This spell forces back a single supernatural creature or drives it out of someone who has been possessed (including reanimated dead, see the **Bestiary** on pg. 173). The target's Mind acts as a negative modifier on the Arcana Roll. With a success, the creature is driven back 10' and won't willingly approach the caster for the length of scene. An exorcised zombie will de-animate as the spirit leaves the body. Creatures who are Rivals/Villains can pay a Rival/Villain Point to resist the effects.

FETTERS

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Hard (-1)
Requirements: Line of Sight, Obvious Technique
AP Cost: 4 for 1 minute, plus 1 AP for each minute thereafter.

This spell conjures restraints to hold targets fast. Up to d6 Rabble or a single Tough or Rival/Villain can be affected. The target's Mind acts as a negative modifier on the Arcana Roll. With a success, the target is held immobile, dropping their Defense to 0. Targets so restrained can still talk and cast spells without the Obvious Technique requirement. The manifestation of the Fetters can be anything from entwining branches to chains or hordes of grasping imps, depending on the caster's wishes. Rival/Villain targets can pay a Rival/Villain Point to overcome the Fetters effects.



FLOATING SHIELD

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Hard (-1)
Requirements: Obvious Technique, Special Item
AP Cost: 4

This defensive spell requires a conventional shield or a disc-shaped metal object (like a dinner plate); even a coin can be used, which will grow to the appropriate dimensions when the spell is cast. The Shield orbits the caster, interceding itself against physical attacks as per a large shield (+1 Defense against up to 2 opponents). This requires no conscious effort from the caster; both of their hands are free to fight, cast spells, or even bear another (normal) shield! The spell lasts the length of a scene.

FREEZING FOG

Magnitude: Second **Difficulty:** Tough (-2)
Requirements: Casting Time, Resolve Loss
AP Cost: 9 for an hour; 1 AP for each hour thereafter.

This spell summons a rolling, blue-gray fog that obscures vision to 10' and can cover a large area, such as an entire village or castle. At the caster's whim the vapors become icy and do 1 pt. of environmental cold damage (fatigue) per round to targets without appropriate protection (heavy furs, fire, etc.). The spell can only be cast if a large body of water such as a river, lake, swamp, or ocean is nearby.

GHOSTLY VALET

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Moderate (0)
Requirements: Casting Time, Obvious Technique
AP Cost: 4

This spell manifests an invisible, inaudible personal servant that can act independently of the caster. The valet can't communicate outside of taking orders, and has Strength 1 for fetching small objects, opening doors, pouring tea, etc. Orders to attack people or destroy things are politely ignored. The spell lasts for a day.

GLAMOUR

Magnitude: Cantrip, First **Difficulty:** Easy (+1) or Moderate (0)
Requirements: Line of Sight, Obvious Technique
AP Cost: 1 or 4

A common spell, and favorite of witches. The caster alters either their own or someone else's appearance through a simple illusion. The Cantrip changes a person's facial features for a single round, while a First Magnitude Glamour can change (or appear to, anyways) a person's entire body for up to a day. The First Magnitude Glamour can also bestow the *Attractive* boon or *Ugly & Brutish* flaw along with the altered semblance. Certain reflective surfaces (such as a silver-backed mirror) can reveal the target's true form, however.



HAND OF GLORY

Magnitude: Second **Difficulty:** Hard (-4)

Requirements: Miscast, Rare Ingredients

AP Cost: 9

This spell creates a powerful talisman capable of paralyzing several targets. It requires the left hand of a murderer's corpse and a special candle made from the corpse's rendered fat. When presented strongly, the intended target(s) must make a Mind check with the caster's Mind + ranks in sorcerer or witch as a negative modifier. 2d6 Rabble, d6 Toughs, or 1 Rival/Villain can be affected; Rabble automatically fail their check. Affected targets are rendered motionless, rooted to the spot where they stand. Rivals/Villains can pay 1 Rival/Villain Point *per round* to overcome the effects. The spell lasts for the length of a scene.

HEX

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Moderate (0)

Requirements: Line of Sight, Obvious Technique, Intimate Materials (for damaging version)

AP Cost: 4 or 3

Also known as the Evil Eye, this is a go-to offensive spell. The target's Mind serves as a negative modifier on the Arcana Roll. If successful, the target suffers a penalty die on all actions for the length of a scene. A victim who *realizes* they've been Hexed also takes d6 normal resolve damage. If the caster has Intimate Materials belonging to the target, they can opt to do d6 lifeblood damage in lieu of the penalty die, ignoring armor.

Hex can also be cast on an object instead of a person. The item's next use is subject to Calamitous Failure. A sword will miss (and may strike its user), armor fail to provide protection, rope fray and snap, etc.

INVISIBILITY

Magnitude: Second **Difficulty:** Tough (-2)

Requirements: Casting Time, Rare Ingredients

AP Cost: 9

This is 'true' invisibility (cf. Pass Unnoticed, *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 148). Actively shielded by spirits of the air, the caster remains invisible for up to a day unless they wish to be seen. A person using the Witchsight spell (pg. 130) can potentially spot them. Blood shed from the caster becomes visible, as well as footprints in water, grass, etc. When physically fighting, opponents can't apply their Defense against the caster and suffer a -4 penalty to Attack Rolls unless they have the *Blind Fighting* boon.



MESMERIZE

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Moderate (0)

Requirements: Line of Sight, Obvious Technique

AP Cost: 4

The caster uses their voice and gaze to enthrall a single target, making them vulnerable to suggestion (cf. *Compel*, *Barbarians of Lemuria*, *Mythic*, pg. 148). The target's Mind acts as a negative modifier on the Arcana Roll. With a success, the target ceases hostility towards the caster and will follow a single, reasonable command, e.g., "Your arm must be tired from swinging that sword. Why don't you set it down?"

MIRROR

Magnitude: Second **Difficulty:** Demanding (-4)

Requirements: Casting Time, Resolve Loss

AP Cost: 9

This clever charm protects against offensive spells—and then some! Mirror reflects First Magnitude spells targeting the caster back to their source. Against a Second Magnitude spell, the caster must make a Mind check modified by their ranks in sorcerer or witch, minus the rank of the offending caster. On a success, the incoming spell is nullified. Otherwise, it affects the caster normally. The Mirror won't work against Third Magnitude spells and lasts for a scene.

PHANTASM

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Moderate (0)

Requirements: Line of Sight

AP Cost: 5

A common spell, this weaves a single illusion, either out of thin air or masking an existing object. The illusion has no physical presence itself. If used to attack, the target's Mind acts as a negative modifier on the Arcana Roll. A success does d6 normal resolve damage. The illusion lasts for a scene or a single round if used to attack.

PLANAR RIP

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Hard (-1)

Requirements: Line of Sight, Obvious Technique

AP Cost: 4; 1 AP for each round thereafter.

This spell tears a jagged hole in the fabric of reality, within range of the caster's sight. Elemental effects (e.g., blasting winds, stinging sand, etc.) or infernal heat or cold comes pouring through the breach, depending on the nature of the plane 'tapped.' These effects do 2 points normal environmental damage (see **Mechanics**, pg. 107) per round to anyone who remains within 10' of the rip. Certain supernatural creatures or entities may be immune to these effects, depending on their origin (demons immune to infernal heat, for example). The breach cannot be moved.



PROJECT KA

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Moderate (0)

Requirements: Casting Time, Ritual Cleansing

AP Cost: 4

Upon casting this spell, the sorcerer or witch enters a deep trance state, allowing their intangible astral spirit to leave their body, usually for reconnaissance. This 'ka' can float or fly at speeds up to a fast walk, and freely pass through solid objects. Though invisible, the ka can be sensed by the *Second Sight* boon or *Witchsight* spell, as well as *Familiars*, *Intermediary Spirits*, ghosts, and most Summoned creatures. Immune to physical attacks, the caster's ka can still be targeted by spells, taking resolve damage in lieu of lifeblood. If reduced to 0 resolve or less, the ka will be violently forced back to the caster's body, and the caster will remain unconscious until they recover.

While in the trance state, the caster's earthly form is vulnerable. If attacked, disturbed, etc., the caster can swiftly return to their body, but doing so will cause them to be disoriented (penalty die on most actions) for an hour after 'waking.'

RESCIND

Magnitude: Second **Difficulty:** Tough (-2)

Requirements: Miscast, Resolve Loss

AP Cost: 9

This potent charm negates magic cast by others. A single spell of ongoing duration (i.e., *Binding*, *Bulwark*, *Ensozcell*, *Freezing Fog*, *Hex*, *Invisibility*, etc.) can be targeted, though not Third Magnitude spells. The Mind of the targeted spell's caster, or their highest rank in sorcerer or witch, whichever is higher, acts as a negative modifier on the Arcana Roll. With a success, the targeted spell immediately ends. Note that a Summoned creature cannot be banished with this spell (you need *Banish* for that), though the *Binding* on it can.

RESTORATIVE SLEEP

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Hard (-1)

Requirements: Line of Sight, Obvious Technique

AP Cost: 4

This is the closest thing to a 'healing spell' in the *Codex*, though its purpose is to aid recovery rather than instantly repair wounds. The spell stabilizes a single, willing target at up to -5 lifeblood and plunges them into a deep slumber for d6 hours. While asleep, the subject heals the caster's rank in sorcerer or witch of lifeblood or resolve damage (any type), in addition to the benefits of a short rest. Once cast, the spell can only be used on a subject again if they sustain new wounds. Any lasting damage healed leaves behind a black, ragged scar.



REVIVIFY

Magnitude: Third **Difficulty:** Heroic (-8)
Requirements: Casting Time, Ritual Sacrifice, The Stars ARE Right
AP Cost: 13

An ancient and forbidden spell, this can bring a person back from the dead, no matter how many eons may have passed—though their condition will be a cruel mockery of life. People so Revivified are always evil, regardless of how they behaved in the past. Though they appear to be in their physical prime, there is something ‘off’ about them (e.g., they must take the *Unsettling* flaw).

Revivified people are far from invulnerable. They can ‘die’ a second time through conventional means, and don’t have access to Rival/Villain Points. Further, an obscure Second Magnitude spell can put them back down, provided the text can be located and the spell cast in their immediate vicinity.

SEVER LIFEFORCE

Magnitude: Second **Difficulty:** Demanding (-4)
Requirements: Casting Time, Intimate Materials
AP Cost: 9

A deadly spell, often used in assassinations. The caster, using Intimate Materials possessed by the target, cuts the cords binding them to life. Sever Lifeforce can be cast over any distance. The target’s Mind acts as a negative modifier on the Arcana Roll. A success does 2d6 lifeblood damage, ignoring any mundane protection (Spiritual Protection does count, however).

SIMULACRUM

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Moderate (0)
Requirements: Line of Sight, Obvious Technique
AP Cost: 4

A specialized illusion, the caster weaves a ‘semi-real’ replica of themselves, which can perform simple actions and follow pre-set commands. The Simulacrum basically acts as an intelligent decoy; it can’t attack, cast spells, or effect the environment much, beyond opening doors, lifting small objects, making noise, etc. If struck for 1 pt. of damage the Simulacra will begin to ‘unravel,’ disappearing in d6 rounds. 2 or more pts. destroys it utterly. Otherwise, the Simulacrum lasts for a scene.

SPIRITUAL PROTECTION

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Moderate (0)
Requirements: Casting Time, Intimate Materials
AP Cost: 4

A versatile defensive spell. The caster wards their flesh (or someone else’s) against the supernatural, providing d6 protection against spells and physical attacks made by entities, demons, or other magical creatures. The spell does not ward against normal physical attacks, however. Sorcerers or witches (if they have enough AP) will sometimes cast this prior to a summoning as extra ‘insurance.’



SUMMON GREATER SPIRIT

Magnitude: Third **Difficulty:** Formidable (-6)
Requirements: Casting Time, Ritual Sacrifice or The Stars ARE Right
AP Cost: 14

A dread summoning spell, used to call forth a single Greater Entity (see *Everywhen*, pg. 95) or Greater Demon (see *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 131). Due to their power, these spirits usually must be bargained with rather than bound, and will definitely be angered by anyone so impudent as to trifle with them. In addition to arch demons, elemental lords, eldritch gods, and grand djinn, these can also be the physical avatars of Divinities (see pg. 133). Assuming they are properly cajoled or coerced, the spirit will perform one task before departing.

SUMMON LESSER SPIRIT

Magnitude: Second **Difficulty:** Tough (-2)
Requirements: Casting Time, Lunar or Ritual Sacrifice
AP Cost: 9

A potent summoning spell that calls forth a single Lesser Entity (see *Everywhen*, pg. 95) or Lesser Demon (see *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 131). Unless bound or bargained with, the spirit will usually be hostile, and may attack. Otherwise, it performs a single task before returning to its plane. This type of spirit can be 'hung' or 'cached' for quick use later, as per **Summoning**, pg. 115. The spirit can be a powerful ghost, a demon, djinn, eldritch creature, elemental, etc.

SUMMON MINOR SPIRITS

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Hard (-1)
Requirements: Casting Time, Resolve Loss
AP Cost: 4

A basic summoning spell that calls forth d6 Rabble Critters (see *Everywhen*, pg. 95) or one Minor Demon (see *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 131). These do not have to be bound and will perform a single task specified by the caster, before disappearing in a puff of foul-smelling smoke (if infernal) or fading from sight. These spirits can be anything from sprites to imps to tiny elementals or nature spirits, depending on the caster's wishes.

VEX THE DEAD

Magnitude: Second **Difficulty:** Tough (-2)
Requirements: Casting Time, Resolve Loss
AP Cost: 9

This ritual spell animates human remains by calling their souls back from beyond the gulfs of night. Up to 2d6 corpses can be revived as Rabble skeletons or zombies (depending on how old the remains are; see **Bestiary**, pg. 173), or d6 Tough versions. A minimum of the caster's rank in sorcerer or witch will animate in either case. These undead servants follow the caster's commands and last the length of an adventure, if not destroyed sooner.



WARD

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Hard (-1)
Requirements: Casting Time, Obvious Technique
AP Cost: 4

This spell impedes evil supernatural creatures (or spirits, entities, etc.). The caster traces a sigil on a single person or over an entrance like a doorway or window. Supernatural creatures are hesitant to approach the person or area so warded. Rabble automatically shy away; Tough or Rival level creatures can attempt a Mind check with the caster's Mind or rank in sorcerer or witch, whichever is higher, as a negative modifier. On a success they can approach the Ward but suffer d6 lasting damage in the process. The Ward lasts a scene; the caster can only maintain one at a time.

WERELIGHT

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Moderate (0)
Requirements: Line of Sight, Obvious Technique
AP Cost: 4

This spell summons a ghostly, floating light about the size of a person's hand, reminiscent of a will o' the wisp. The Werelight can move independently of the caster to any distance within sight, providing illumination or a potential distraction. The spell lasts one scene.

WITCHFIRE

Magnitude: First/Second **Difficulty:** Moderate (0)/Tough (-2)
Requirements: Line of Sight, Obvious Technique/Miscast, Resolve Loss
AP Cost: 4/9

Also known as Balefire, this spell conjures a handful of pallid, clinging flame that provides dim illumination for up to an hour. The witchfire can be lobbed at a target up to 20' away and burns with infernal cold for d6 damage (2d6 for Second Magnitude). Only cold weather clothing (see **Equipment**, pg. 84) or spells can provide any protection.

WITCHSIGHT

Magnitude: First **Difficulty:** Moderate (0)
Requirements: Casting Time, Resolve Loss
AP Cost: 4

Also known as Piercing the Veil, this powerful spell bestows both the *Second Sight* and *Night Sight* boons for the length of a scene. Additionally, the caster can perceive the true nature of *Familiars* and *Intermediary Spirits* and has a chance to see through illusions, including *Invisibility*. The caster makes a Mind check, modified by the Mind of the illusion's caster. If successful, the illusion is perceived for what it is.





DIVINE MAGIC

Magic granted by Divine Beings is a tricky subject for the S&S genre. In most settings, when Divinities opt to intervene in mortal affairs, their influence is quite subtle—usually nudging heroes with a vision or other portent. Further, many would-be ‘Divinities’ turn out to be eldritch creatures from beyond time and space, fervently worshipped by superstitious humans. When such creatures do bestow favors on their followers (beyond not eating them), it is usually along the lines of teaching spells and/or granting ranks in sorcerer or witch.

However, at least one popular S&S setting featured a dualistic cosmic balance, with Divinities representing the forces of Order and Entropy taking a very active hand in things. Heroes and villains were used as pawns in an ongoing larger struggle, and Divinities (or at least their avatars) could show up on a battlefield to sway the outcome.

The *Codex* posits 3 potential levels of Divine power:

- Divinities seldom manifest, if at all. Priestly magic is limited to the traditional one-off boons and flaws associated with Faith or Fate points, as described in *Everywhen*, pg. 89, or *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 10. Even these manifestations are subtle; if a priest’s prayers stop an arrow from hitting its target (because of the penalty die invoked), the arrow simply appears to *miss*. There are no flashy effects, and a skeptic witnessing the event will claim pure coincidence. This is the **low** power level.
- Divinities grant minor miracles to especially faithful disciples (see **Priestly Powers**, below), in addition to the standard one-offs. These effects are still subtle, but a skeptic would be harder pressed to explain them away. This is the **medium** power level.
- Divinities occasionally show up to take a personal hand in things. In addition to the effects described above, Hero and Rival/Villain priests can call for **Divine Intervention**, though the odds of this happening are quite low—unless the Divinity wants to manifest. This is the **high** power level.

Finally, note that priestly magic and sorcery are not mutually exclusive in S&S. Many priests are also sorcerers or witches. Classic examples might include a priest of a benevolent Divinity who dabbles in non-corrupting spells like Banish, Exorcise, and Ward to better protect the faithful, a druid devoted to chthonic forces, or a soul-blasted sorcerer who actively worships a personification of evil.

PRIESTLY POWERS

The following represent ‘minor miracle,’ spell-like powers a priest of a benevolent Deity might be able to invoke by spending Faith or Fate Points. Though no Arcana Roll is required, the GM may see fit to impose one or more casting requirements for the power to work. Particularly appropriate ones are Auspicious Hour, Casting Time, Group Ritual, Lunar, Obvious Technique, Personal Ordeal, Place of Power, Ritual Cleansing, and Special Item. In this case, these won’t lower the Faith or Fate Point cost—they’re simply requirements.



Armor of Faith

The priest prays, holds aloft their holy symbol, or chants a litany granting Resolve Protection (see **Mechanics**, pg. 96). Protection is light (d6-3), medium (d6-2), or heavy (d6-1) for the expenditure of 1, 2, or 3 Faith/Fate Points, respectively. The Armor lasts for a scene.

Bolster Courage

By spending a Faith/Fate Point, the priest can add their rank to any nearby companion's Resolve Check (see **Mechanics**, pg. 92). This 'stacks' with existing bonuses for Mind, boons, other careers, etc.

Consecrate Weapon

For 2 Faith/Fate Points, the priest can temporarily 'enchant' a weapon so that it ignores any *Unholy Vitality* protection a creature might possess (see **Bestiary**, pg. 153). This entails praying over the weapon, tracing a symbol on the blade, anointing it with sanctified water, etc. The priest can only Consecrate one such weapon at a time. The effects last for a combat.

Counter-Prayers

A priest can pray (or chant loudly, sing, etc.) to disrupt spellcasting. Doing so requires the priest's full concentration. Any hostile spells directed at the priest or their companions takes a negative modifier equal to the priest's rank on the Arcana Roll. This ability costs 1 Faith/Fate Point and lasts an entire scene.

Divine Will

The priest adds their rank to their Mind score as a difficulty modifier for spells with mind-influencing effects, like *Ensorescell*, *Mesmerize*, *Phantasm*, etc. This only affects spells targeting the priest. Cost is 1 Faith or Fate Point per use.

Exhortation

The priest can attempt to force out a possessing spirit without using an *Exorcise* (see pg. 123) spell. The afflicted must be physically restrained while the priest chants holy mantras and presents the symbols of their faith. This requires an hour and the expenditure of 1 Faith or Fate point. At the end of the ritual, the priest makes a Mind check modified by their career ranks

and the Mind of the possessing spirit as a negative modifier. On a success, the spirit has been cast out and cannot make another possession attempt for at least 24 hours.

DIVINE INTERVENTION

The *ultimate* in flashy, non-subtle magic, calling for Divine intervention can only be attempted by Hero or Rival/Villain level priests, and only in dire straits.

The Difficulty for such an appeal is always Formidable (-6) or Heroic (-8), depending on how often Divinities interact with mortals in the setting. A priest expends all their Faith or Fate Points and rolls 2d6, adding both their career rank and the number of points spent. The GM may grant a bonus die if the nature of the intervention is especially relevant, such as a priest attempting to invoke a war god on the field of battle. Though the desired outcome is described before rolling, the GM has final say how the intervention manifests.

- On a **Calamitous Failure** the Divinity is angered and will punish the priest at some point in the future. The severity of this punishment depends on the Divinity's nature, but could be extreme.
- On a **failure** nothing happens.
- On a **normal success** the Divinity affects a miracle, which is subtle by nature and could be interpreted as simple coincidence. For example, a breeze could snuff a torch before a sacrificial altar is lit, a wave-tossed ship somehow navigate a storm, etc.
- On a **Mighty Success** the hand of a Divinity is apparent. A torrent of rain could fall from clear skies to douse a burning fortress, an earthquake scatters a unit of cavalry in mid-charge, etc. If possible, this miracle is consistent with the Divinity's *modus operandi*, i.e., lightning bolts sent by a storm god.





- On a **Legendary Success** the Divinity manifests directly, often through an avatar. Witnessing this occurrence requires a Resolve Check (see **Mechanics**, pg. 92). The power displayed can rival a Third Magnitude spell in its effects, and any avatars present will be at least the equal of a Greater Entity or Demon (see *Everywhen*, pg. 95, or *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 131). Note that destroying an avatar in no way ‘kills’ a Divinity; this just prevents them from manifesting again anytime soon.

Example

The army of anti-hero Larkann Iyllstone, warrior-priest of Entropy, has at last cornered the high priest of Order, Vadim the Stern, in an ancient citadel carved from basalt. Vadim’s Clockwork Knights make a surprise midnight sally from the tower, to strike at Larkann’s encamped forces. Knowing that Order may well be deposed in the coming battle (on this continent, anyways), Vadim’s patron, Ilarion, Forger of Justice, appears in a crack of lightning at the head of the charging Knights. Roused by the sound, Larkann slips from his tent in time to see the Order Lord laying into

his troops with a great flanged mace, scattering them like so many locusts. If Larkann doesn’t act quickly, his entire army will rout! Rolling his head back, he calls to the velvet-dark sky. “Chorax! Aid me! A hundred penitents squirming on your altars, Chorax!”

Larkann is a rank 2 priest with 3 Faith/Fate Points (he has the Divine Blessing boon). In this particular setting, calling for Divine intervention is a Formidable (-6) task. Larkann needs a (2+3-6) 10 or greater on a 2d6 to invoke his patron’s aid. He gets lucky and rolls a 10 exactly, though a normal success won’t likely be enough.

“Chorax,” Larkann screams, “gore and anima, for your glory!” Larkann spends a Hero Point and bumps this to a Mighty Success.

The stars dim, as a blood-red film seems to stain their luster. A croaking voice echoes down from the cosmos: “Trouble me no further, little plaything. Take this—but know that your incessant pleadings are growing tiresome.”

A rift appears in the night sky, somehow darker than the surrounding void, and through it squirms a trio of bat-winged abominations, writhing like so many maggots hatched from the carcass of hell! They spiral straight down for Ilarion’s avatar, one alighting on his mighty mace-head while the other two entwine his limbs with their obscene tails. Now indisposed, Ilarion can no longer reap his bloody harvest among the ranks of Entropy.

With a sigh, Larkann draws his demon-forged greatsword and prepares to wade into battle, hoping to rally his forces before it’s too late.

MAGICAL ARTIFACTS

In contrast to most fantasy RPGs, magic items in S&S follow the ‘low frequency, high power’ credo presented earlier. Minor magic items are things like luck talismans and Relics (see pg. 57) rather than +1 swords or potions of healing. When magic items do show up, they are often plot devices, to be used and then lost, destroyed, or reclaimed by higher powers, rather than permanently residing in a character’s inventory. In many cases, heroes won’t want to keep the item around—they may bear a curse, or at least draw undesired attention!



Players who lust after ‘special’ items can usually be satisfied with high-quality equipment, such as finely crafted swords and armor (see **Projects and Masterpieces**, pg. 76). Even better, such PCs can take a rank or two in alchemist and begin making their own magic items—the time and rare materials required can inspire whole adventure arcs. This approach helps ensure the creation is more memorable than something taken off a freshly slain corpse.

Finally, the oft-cited S&S trope of “no magic shops” deserves some attention here. In many traditional fantasy RPGs, magic items can be bought and sold at warehouse-sized shops in big cities, or sometimes even along with mundane supplies like rope and candles at a village trading post! Such ready access to the arcane waters down its flavor. While a large city in an S&S setting might have a dealer in rare books (with a few grimoires discretely offered), or a wizened ‘herb merchant’ who sells occult ingredients on the side, the only reliable source of magical talismans and potions would be a street vendor—almost invariably a con artist of some sort, hawking worthless trinkets. The most likely place to find a collection of magic items would be in a sorcerer’s hoard, though getting your hands on one would be quite perilous!

Some examples of potential S&S magic artifacts follow.

Armlet of Vin

This piece of jewelry can adorn the upper arm or wrist, depending on the wearer’s size. It appears to be made of bluish-green metal (actually a Venusian alloy), with four large, teardrop shaped citrines set equidistant. An alien entity inhabiting the gems psionically attunes itself to the wearer, granting a unique power. Whenever the wearer is in danger, the armlet manipulates their emotional state to whatever would be most advantageous for the situation. Examples include fearlessness when faced with terror (the *Fear Resistance* or *Fearless* boon), berserk fury in a physical fight (see the *Ferocious* combat school, pg. 98), anxiety when approaching an unknown threat (the *Wary* boon), etc.

Brazen Limb

A prosthetic arm made of polished brass, ‘powered’ by magical clockwork. The Limb changes to either left or right, depending on the wearer’s needs, and affixes itself permanently to an arm stump—only death will remove it. The limb has a Strength of 3 for lifting, grip, and weapon damage purposes. Additionally, it grants a bonus of +1 protection to the wearer.



Demon Alembic

This appears as a high-quality alchemical apparatus made from glass and copper tubing. The burner ignites at a touch and seems to have an inexhaustible fuel supply. The device has a Demon of Knowledge (see sidebar, pg. 116) bound inside, which whispers into the mind of whoever operates the alembic. Due to the creature's expert instruction, anyone using the device can make alchemical preparations as an alchemist 2 ranks higher (or rank 2 if they do not have the alchemist career). However, the device is corrupting and will necessitate taking a flaw if used regularly.

Ebon Rod

This is a much-feared weapon carried by sorcerers and witches; a stout ebony stick shod in cold iron at one end. When swung forcefully it does d6L + Strength physical damage, but also d6 normal resolve damage. The latter is unaffected by armor save Spiritual Protection (see pg. 128). If a target's resolve is reduced to 0 or lower they will grovel and cower at the wielder's feet, helpless with terror.

Ex Nihilo

This is a slender, two-edged sword with a cross guard wrought to resemble the scales of justice. The hilt is extended, allowing for one or two-handed use (d6 or d6H damage, respectively). Ex Nihilo's strange, terrible power makes it much sought by both heroes and villains; it steals karma when striking notable people. If a hero wields the sword and strikes with the right side of the blade, Ex Nihilo drains 1 Rival/Villain Point (if the target has any), which can be used to replenish the wielder's own Hero Points, though not past their maximum value. The opposite is true if a Rival/Villain wielder strikes with the left side of the blade.

For all its vaunted power, Ex Nihilo bears a curse: it never seems to stay in one person's hands for very long. At the start of an adventure, roll a d6; on a 1, the blade has disappeared, seeking a new master. The next time the character sees it, Ex Nihilo may well be wielded by an enemy!

Heart of Namuzu

An ancient uncut gemstone, not of this Earth, that glows a putrid green. When placed on the chest of a corpse, no matter how old, it unerringly casts a Revivify spell (see pg. 128). Only one person can be so revived at a time, and the holder of the gem can opt to instantly reverse the process.

Helm of Cimon

A bronze helmet cast in the Classical style, shaped to resemble a lion's head. Exquisitely crafted, it bestows 2 pts. of protection without causing an initiative penalty. However, the helmet is also cursed. Whenever the wearer is under the influence of a mental flaw (i.e., *Greed, Madness, Temper/Hot-Headed*, etc.), or if their resolve has been reduced to 3 or less, the spirit of Cimon will attempt possession. The wearer must make a Mind check with Cimon's Mind of 3 as a negative modifier. If failed, the ancient general takes over—at least partially. The wearer now has a Mind of 3 (if higher), the military command abilities of a rank 5 soldier, and the *Tactician* boon. They also have a new *Obsession* flaw; to restore the glory of an ancient Mediterranean-analog culture. The only way to break the curse is to remove the helmet, something the possessed character will fight to prevent.

Powdered Adamantium

This appears as an exceptionally fine, dull gray powder. When hurled at an opponent within 5', the target must make a Demanding (-4) Agility or Strength check to avoid blindness for 2d6 turns (permanent on a Calamitous Failure), as well as d6 lasting damage ignoring armor, as the ferruginous dust works into their lungs. The powdered metal is also dangerous to the handler; if not kept in some kind of receptacle, any unprotected flesh touching it takes 2 pts. of environmental damage per round of contact.

Ring of Ouroboros

This is a loop of time-worn silver, formed by the depiction of a snake swallowing its own tail. The ring was crafted during the height of the serpent men empire and is highly sought by sorcerers. When worn it adds 2 levels in the sorcerer career, over and above whatever the wearer might already possess, as well as the *Magical Affinity* boon for necromancy and summoning spells. Further, any entity or demon successfully Summoned by the wearer is automatically considered Bound without having to cast the spell (see pg. 119).

Possessing the ring puts its owner on the path of corrupting magic if they are not already so inclined.





Scarab of Khemsaf

This is a large scarab carved from yellowed bone, with a silver pin affixed to the flat side. When worn, it casts Mirror whenever the wearer is targeted by a hostile spell. Treat the scarab as a rank 3 sorcerer with a Mind of 3 when attempting to negate Second Magnitude spells. After each use roll 2d6; on a 4 or less the scarab's magic is spent and it crumbles to fine powder.

Scarlet Nucifera

A powder made from ultra-rare water flowers, highly sought by sorcerers. Inhaling Nucifera causes bizarre, violent dreams that speeds the recovery of AP. A sorcerer or witch will regain either their rank or Mind in AP, whichever is higher, for each night spent under the drug's influence, regardless of the Magnitude previously expended. However, due to the disturbing nature of the dreams, no resolve can be recovered during that time. Once used regularly, Nucifera becomes hopelessly addicting.

Shield of Order

This appears as a large shield made of some lightweight, ridiculously strong silver-white metal, with an embossed rim. Unbreakable, the Shield confers the advantages of a large shield with no Agility penalties. If the wielder invokes the Sundered Shield, Shattered Sword option, the *opponent's* weapon breaks when it strikes the Shield! Supernatural weapons or masterpiece creations may be spared at the GM's discretion—in such cases the weapon goes flying as if the owner had been disarmed.

Any agent of Entropy or sorcerer or witch on the corrupting path will be burned for 3 points of lasting damage per round of touching the Shield.

Sulfurous Lozenge

This is a hybrid alchemical/sorcerous item that appears as a tightly wrapped packet, about the size and shape of a fat coin. A magical sigil for 'fire' is stamped in wax on one side. When thrown, the sigil bursts aflame, igniting the powder inside. Yellowish, foul-smelling smoke immediately billows forth, causing d6 fatigue damage per round to anyone within 10' who fails a Tough (-2) Strength check. The lozenge burns out completely in 3 + d3 rounds.

Table of Yun

This rack-sized torture device resembles a dead spider lying on its back, with each of the 'legs' bearing a sinister-looking steel implement at their tip. Once a subject has been restrained, the legs curl inwards and move of their own accord as the Table does its work. A demon has been bound into the device, animating it with the skills of a rank 6 torturer. The owner of the Table can activate/deactivate the process at will, thereby extracting information (or really, *really* punishing someone).

Tamsin's Tooth

This appears as a crudely formed athame (see **Equipment**, pg. 83) with the blade snapped off near the hilt. Only an inch of jagged metal remains (d3 + Strength damage). However, the blade's spiritual essence is still intact, and can be seen with Witchsight. When used against entities, demons, and incorporeal ghosts, the Tooth does d6 + Strength damage ignoring any protection, including *Unholy Vitality*.

Waermund's Cauldron

A massive cauldron made from silver plates, blackened by time and countless peat fires. What decorations can still be seen suggest an underworld motif, with dead figures crawling from deep fissures in the earth. Horned demons wielding flails spur them on.

The Cauldron was crafted by a powerful coven several centuries ago for use in ritual magic. When filled with fresh blood, it can store up to 10 AP 'donated' by willing sorcerers and witches. Further, it can be used as a casting requirement for even Third Magnitude spells, and grants a bonus die on all Arcana Rolls involving summoning or necromancy.





6 BESTIARY

FEROCIOUS FAUNA

The *Codex* distinguishes between mundane (albeit sometimes huge!) animals and supernatural creatures, which get their own sections. The selection offered here is usable across a variety of settings, from a 'standard' S&S world to something more historically based, or even beyond to the dim reaches of a dying Earth.

The differences between the *Barbarians of Lemuria* and *Everywhen* systems are most evident when figuring stats for animals and creatures. As elsewhere in the *Codex*, dual entries are provided whenever the systems offer different takes; these are indicated with a '/', with values for *Everywhen* given before the slash and those for *Barbarians of Lemuria* after. The values affected are size, Strength, lifeblood, and damage done from attacks (see the **Conversion Notes** sidebar, pg. 139).

If using the scale rules (see **Mechanics**, pg. 90), scale 2 or higher attributes are noted with a comma after the value. For example, an animal with a Strength of 2, scale 2 is listed as Strength 2,2.

If using the *Everywhen* system, most of the animals and creatures presented are Tough specimens (see *Everywhen*, pg. 92). A couple are treated as Rivals/Villains, with access to Rival/Villain Points, as well as careers, boons, etc.

Some of these entries have a Fear rating (see **Resolve Checks**, pg. 92) if the GM wants to inject extra gravitas into an encounter. Appeal is generally not listed for animals and creatures.

ANIMALS

The primeval forests, trackless deserts, and steaming jungles of S&S worlds are dangerous places, where the ancient rule of tooth and claw remains supreme. Encounters with animals, however, can provide more than just conflict. With some clever thinking, animals can be avoided, outsmarted, or even recruited as new allies on an adventure!

Some examples of Pleistocene megafauna are included here, for use in primordial settings (see pg. 247). If populating an alien world instead, remember that animals can always be 're-skinned' as analogs. A



heavily forested planet, for example, might have bear-analogs as an apex predator, or an ocean world could host a variety of shark-analogs.

Rabble-level animals are much less dangerous, and usually encountered *en masse*. Converting animals to Rabble or Rival threats is detailed on pg. 94 of the *Everywhen* core book. Briefly, Rabble animals have stats just like Rabble level NPCs, while Rivals/Villains, in addition to better lifeblood, priority, and attacks, have access to Rival/Villain Points. This last is especially useful if an animal is going to serve as the primary antagonist for an adventure.

Fear

As noted previously, some animals, especially big predators, have a Fear rating. Resolve damage from a failed check is always d6 fatigue; people recover from the (mundane) shock of a wild animal relatively quickly. Certain careers, like barbarian and hunter, can add their rank to these checks. Using Resolve checks with animals is always optional, best reserved for surprise and 'jump scare' situations.

Grappling

Big, ferocious animals like bears and lions fight by mauling opponents in close quarters, rather than gamely swiping with their paws like a fencer. If using the *Everywhen* rules, assume they have the *Grapppler* boon (e.g., they don't have to achieve a Mighty Success to initiate a grapple.).

If using *Barbarians of Lemuria*, allow animals to add their Strength in lieu of Agility to Attack Rolls once they've landed a successful attack. This only works with animals of Huge size or less (see *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 100).

NEW ANIMAL TRAITS

Ambush

If undetected, animals with this trait incur a penalty die on their opponent's priority check when attacking.

Charge

An animal with this trait gets a bonus die on its Attack Roll the first round only, provided there is enough room to execute a charge.

Trample

Due to the animal's size, or large numbers, their attack hits automatically unless the intended target(s) spend a round getting out of its way.



CONVERSION NOTES

BoL and *Everywhen* have different takes on determining stats for various sized creatures, especially larger, stronger specimens. *Everywhen* uses a scale system (see **Mechanics**, pg. 90), while *Barbarians of Lemuria* assigns values based on size (see the table in *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 100). Generally speaking, creatures have a bigger lifeblood pool in *BoL*, but do less damage on average than in *Everywhen*.

BoL rates priority based on size, ranging from Rabble priority for smaller creatures to Villain for larger ones. *Everywhen* handles this 'straight,' with priority based on the creature's designation as Rabble, Tough, or Rival. Additionally, *BoL* size categories are more granular, with 12 categories, while *Everywhen* only has 6. To keep things simple, *Everywhen* creatures are assumed to have the same scale for Strength, lifeblood, and size (e.g., an elephant is size scale 2, with scale 2 Strength and lifeblood).

The differences between the two systems are most telling when figuring (roughly) equivalent lifeblood for the same creature. For *Everywhen* stats, lifeblood for Huge or higher sized animals and creatures was computed by adding the *BoL* Strength score to a base 5 (for Tough adversaries) and making the total scale 2 or 3.



ALLIGATOR / CROCODILE

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Swamp, River

Traits

Ambush

Attributes

Strength 4

Agility 1 (1)

Mind 2

Appeal

Lifeblood 9/10

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

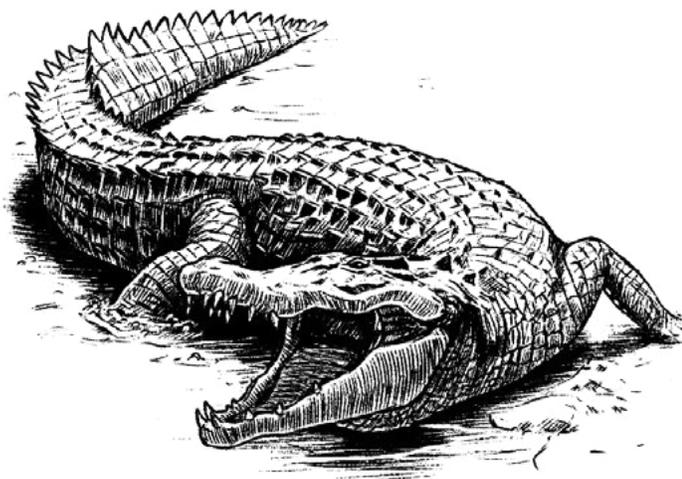
Damage d6+2/d6

Defense 0

Protection d6 2

Fear 1

This sinister reptile likes to lurk partially submerged in rivers and watering holes, waiting to pounce. Their effective Agility is -1 when on land. Crocodiles can grow larger than their alligator cousins and are found in saltwater habitats as well. Certain cults in Egyptian and African analog cultures sometimes revere these creatures as sacred animals.



APE, GORILLA

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Jungle, Savannah

Traits

Ferocious Attack

Attributes

Strength 4

Agility 1

Mind 1

Appeal

Lifeblood 9/10

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

Damage d6+2/d6

Defense 0

Protection d6-4

Fear 1

Gorillas in S&S settings tend to be more aggressive than their real-world counterparts. Big, alpha males are also often depicted as solitary (cf. lions), though in truth are usually found in packs. Gorillas attack by grappling, then biting and rending in close quarters with their great Strength.

APE, GREAT GRAY

Size: Large

Normally Found: Jungle, Mountain, Ruin

Traits

Ferocious Attack

Attributes

Strength 5

Agility 0

Mind -1

Appeal —

Lifeblood 10/15

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

Damage d6+3/d6H

Defense 0

Protection d6-4

Fear 1

These are a fictional progenitor of gorillas; larger, more savage, with either silver or stark white fur. They are often found haunting jungle ruins and may represent a Vanished culture that has slunk even further back on the evolutionary scale than beastmen (see pg. 154). In some setting, great gray apes are worshipped by Primal tribes for their ferocity.



BABOON

Size: Small

Normally Found: Jungle, Mountain, Ruin

Traits

None

Attributes

Strength 1
 Agility 2
 Mind -1
 Appeal —
 Lifeblood 6

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee
 Damage d6L
 Defense 1
 Protection 0
 Fear —

These stats represent the largest baboon specimens, perhaps an alpha male in a group of Rabble. Though they usually avoid humans, a nasty temper and 4” canines make them potentially dangerous. Like gray apes, they have been known to haunt ruins.

BAT, SWARM

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Anywhere

Traits

Special

Attributes

Strength —
 Agility —
 Mind -2
 Appeal —
 Lifeblood 8

Combat Abilities

Attack Special
 Damage Special
 Defense 3
 Protection 0
 Fear —

Though normally not aggressive, black and brown bats are territorial, and can swarm people who stumble into their caverns or close to their lairs. Targets caught in a swarm can avoid damage by lying flat until the bats move on. Otherwise, they take 1 pt. of environmental damage per round from multiple bites, stopped by medium armor or higher. Anyone so bitten must make a Hard (-1) Strength check an hour later, or be subject to a nasty fever and convulsions (-1 to Strength and Agility) until the wounds heal.

Damaging a swarm is difficult, reflected in the high Defense value. Dropping the swarm’s lifeblood to 0 means the bats have been driven off, rather than killing every single one.





BEAR, BLACK

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Forest, Mountain

Traits

Ferocious Attack, Keen Smell

Attributes

Strength 4
 Agility 1
 Mind 2
 Appeal
 Lifeblood 9/10

Combat Abilities

Attack +1 melee
 Damage d6+2/d6
 Defense 0
 Protection d6-4
 Fear

Generally, the smallest of the ursine species, but plenty tough. They are omnivorous and less aggressive; the *Ferocious Attack* trait only comes into play when defending their young.

BEAR, BROWN

Size: Medium to Large

Normally Found: Forest, Mountain

Traits

Ferocious Attack, Keen Smell

Attributes

Strength 5
 Agility 1
 Mind 2
 Appeal
 Lifeblood 10

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee
 Damage d6+3/d6H
 Defense 0
 Protection d6 4
 Fear 1

Brown bears are larger, more aggressive specimens than their black furred cousins. Some Primal and Tribal cultures hold that barbarians can only gain their berserk ability (see **Mechanics**, pg. 98) if they single handedly kill a bear and consume its heart in a special ritual.

BEAR, CAVE

Size: Large

Normally Found: Mountain

Traits

Ferocious Attack, Keen Smell

Attributes

Strength 2,2/8
 Agility 0
 Mind -2
 Appeal —
 Lifeblood 13,2/40

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee
 Damage d6+2,2/d6x2
 Defense 0
 Protection d6-3
 Fear 1



Cave bears are Pleistocene megafauna weighing over a ton. They subsist on a purely meat diet and have the *Poor Eyesight* flaw when outside their lairs in daylight.



BOAR

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Forest

Traits

Charge

Attributes

Strength 2
 Agility 2
 Mind -2
 Appeal —
 Lifeblood 7

Combat Abilities

Attack +1 melee
 Damage d6L+1/d6
 Defense 1
 Protection d6-4
 Fear —

These stats represent a big male, with tusks up to 4" long. Boars charge when feeling threatened, attempting to disembowel opponents. Their tusks are sometimes used to reinforce hide armor and helmets. Hunting (and eating) wild boar is a generally a privilege of the nobility.

BULL

Size: Large

Normally Found: Plains

Traits

Charge, Poor Eyesight

Attributes

Strength 5
 Agility 0
 Mind 2
 Appeal
 Lifeblood 10

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee
 Damage d6+3/d6H
 Defense 0
 Protection d6-4
 Fear

Revered by some cultures for their strength and virility, bulls often figure prominently in religion. They have been known to charge people when feeling ornery. Shaggier, undomesticated versions called aurochs can be found in the wild.

These stats can also be used for large beasts of burden like oxen, water buffaloes, etc.



CRAB, GIANT

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Coastal

Traits

Armored

Attributes

Strength 3
 Agility 0
 Mind 2
 Appeal
 Lifeblood 8/10

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee
 Damage d6+1/d6
 Defense 0
 Protection d6 2
 Fear 1

These armored brutes are amphibious predators, lurking in the shallows and shoals along coastlines. Their strength and sharp pincers make them particularly dangerous, though humans actively hunt them as a tasty food source. Diluvians (see pg. 69) prize their shells for making tough but lightweight armor.

These stats represent large predatory birds. Their higher Defense value is applicable only when in flight. Falcons are smaller than hawks but prized by nobility. The sport of training birds for hunting (falconry, or hawking) is practiced across many cultures.



EAGLE / GREAT HAWK

Size: Small

Normally Found: Everywhere

Traits

Flight, Keen Eyesight

Attributes

Strength 1
 Agility 3
 Mind 2
 Appeal
 Lifeblood 4/5

Combat Abilities

Attack +1 melee
 Damage d6L
 Defense 2 (3)
 Protection 0
 Fear

ELEPHANT

Size: Huge

Normally Found: Savannah, Forest

Traits

Trample, Charge

Attributes

Strength 4,2/8
 Agility -2
 Mind -1
 Appeal —
 Lifeblood 13,2/40

Combat Abilities

Attack +0 melee
 Damage d6H,2/d6x2
 Defense 0
 Protection d6-3
 Fear 1



Though actively hunted for its ivory, the mighty elephant is trained in some cultures for war or as a beast of burden. They are normally not aggressive unless threatened, or maddened by fire. When using their trunks to manipulate objects, elephants have an Agility of 0.



HORSE

Size: Large

Normally Found: Plains, Steppe

Traits

Docile Attack

Attributes

Strength 4
Agility 1
Mind -2
Appeal —
Lifeblood 9/15

Combat Abilities

Attack +0 melee
Damage d6+2/d6
Defense 0
Protection 0
Fear —

By far the most common mode of transport across S&S settings, horses (or horse-analogs) are bred for work and war. Draft and warhorses are larger, with Strength 5 and Lifeblood 10/15. Warhorses don't have the *Docile Attack* trait, and are trained to kick, trample, and bite in the thick of melee. Rival level horses sometimes serve as the mounts for great heroes.

These stats can also be used for camels.

INSECT, SWARM

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Anywhere

Traits

Special

Attributes

Strength —
Agility —
Mind -3
Appeal —
Lifeblood 8/10

Combat Abilities

Attack Special
Damage Special
Defense 4
Protection 0
Fear —

Crypts, ancient ruins, and decrepit hovels are often crawling with bugs. These stats represent a 'living carpet' of biting, stinging insects (i.e., ants, scarabs, spiders, etc.). Swarm attacks automatically hit unless the target spends a round trying to brush or otherwise fend them off (a Moderate Agility check). Damage is 1 pt. normal lifeblood per round, ignoring armor, plus 1 pt. of fatigue resolve damage per round once engulfed.

The swarm's high Defense represents the difficulty of doing collective damage. Attacks affecting a large area, like flaming oil, however, hit automatically. Anyone taking lifeblood damage from a venomous swarm (such as scorpions and certain spiders) must make a Moderate (0) Strength check to avoid an additional d6L damage once combat is over.



JAGUAR / LEOPARD

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Jungle, Savannah

Traits

Ambush, Excellent Hunter

Attributes

Strength 1
Agility 3
Mind -2
Appeal —
Lifeblood 6/10

Combat Abilities

Attack +1 melee
Damage d6
Defense 1
Protection 0
Fear 1

These solitary hunters occasionally attack humans if cornered or hungry enough, preferring the advantage of surprise. Many jungle-dwelling cultures prize these felines for their skins.

LION, CAVE

Size: Large

Normally Found: Jungle, Steppes

Traits

Ambush, Excellent Hunter

Attributes

Strength 6
Agility 2
Mind -2
Appeal —
Lifeblood 11/15

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee
Damage d6+3/d6H
Defense 0
Protection d6-4
Fear 1

These Pleistocene era apex-predators are known as Cave Lions or Sabretooth Cats, the latter named for their 8," curving fangs.

LION/TIGER

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Jungle, Savannah

Traits

Ambush, Excellent Hunter

Attributes

Strength 4
Agility 2
Mind -2
Appeal —
Lifeblood 9/15

Combat Abilities

Attack +1 melee
Damage d6+2/d6
Defense 1
Protection 0
Fear 1

These are the 'big' cats. Though often depicted as solitary in S&S stories, they can form prides with up to 15 members. Seen as the King of Beasts, they are thought to have a connection with nobility, including the belief that they won't attack their human 'equals.'



LIZARD, GIANT

Size: Small

Normally Found: Coastal, Desert, Jungle

Traits

Poison (Special)



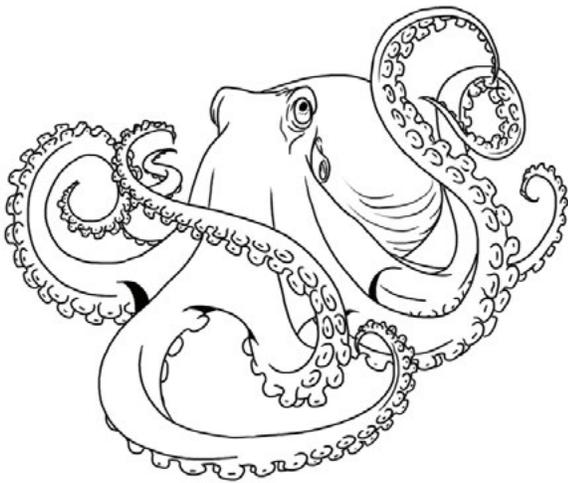
Attributes

Strength 0
 Agility 2
 Mind -2
 Appeal —
 Lifeblood 5

Combat Abilities

Attack +1 melee
 Damage d6L
 Defense 1
 Protection 0
 Fear —

These stats are for full-grown monitor lizards, which reach up to 5' in length. They are territorial and have been known to attack humans. Their bite carries a special low-grade venom that causes a nasty infection (bite damage becomes lasting) if a Tough (-2) Strength check is failed.

**OCTOPUS, GIANT**

Size: Large

Normally Found: Coastal, Ocean

Traits

Multiple Attack

Attributes

Strength 4
 Agility 0
 Mind -1
 Appeal —
 Lifeblood 9/15

Combat Abilities

Attack +1 melee
 Damage Special
 Defense 0
 Protection 0
 Fear 1

Whether lairing in grottos or sunken ships, large cephalopods generally mean trouble in S&S settings (cf. giant squid). These stats are for an older octopus grown large, likely with an aggressive disposition.

The giant octopus can reach targets up to 10' away on land while staying partially submerged. Tentacle attacks can be made against up to 4 targets; a successful hit means the target is grabbed and can be hauled close for a bite attack (d6H damage) the next round. A grabbed character can escape by making a Strength or Agility check with the octopus's Strength of 4 as a negative modifier, or by severing the limb holding them (4 pts. of damage with a slashing weapon). Limb damage doesn't subtract from the octopus's 'core' lifeblood of 9/15.

RAT, SWARM

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Anywhere

Traits

Special

Attributes

Strength —
 Agility —
 Mind -2
 Appeal —
 Lifeblood 10

Combat Abilities

Attack Special
 Damage Special
 Defense 3
 Protection 0
 Fear —

These stats represent a horde of normal sized rats, ravenous enough to attack humans. Rat swarms hit automatically unless the target spends a round fending them off with a Moderate (0) Agility check. Damage is d3 lifeblood and 1 pt. fatigue resolve damage per round, though armor protection counts. Anyone bitten must make a Moderate (0) Strength check an hour later to avoid a nasty infection, causing an additional d3 lasting lifeblood damage.



RHINOCEROS

Size: Huge

Normally Found: Savannah

Traits

Charge, Trample

Attributes

Strength 2,2/8

Agility -1

Mind -2

Appeal —

Lifeblood 13,2/40

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

Damage d6H+2,2/d6x2

Defense 0

Protection d6-2

Fear 1

Big, brutish herbivores, often hunted for their ivory. Like elephants, rhinos will charge if threatened, but are otherwise generally docile.

RHINOCEROS, WOOLLY

Size: Huge

Normally Found: Plains, Steppe

Traits

Charge, Trample

Attributes

Strength 3,2/8

Agility -1

Mind -2

Appeal —

Lifeblood 13,2/40

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

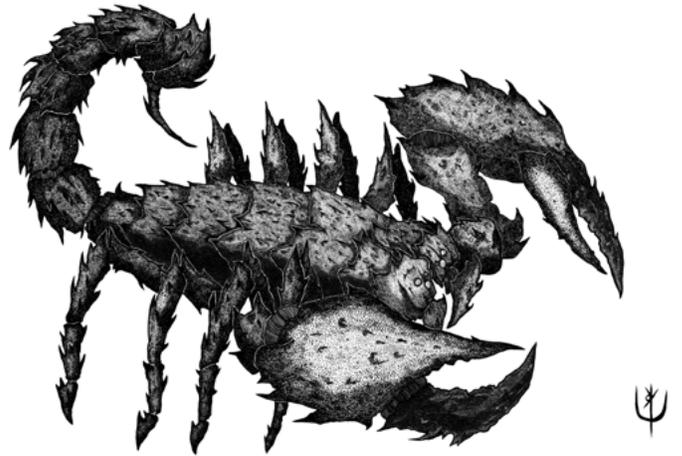
Damage d6H+2,2/d6x2

Defense 0

Protection d6-1

Fear 1

The woolly rhino is a Pleistocene version, slightly larger with a thick coat of fur and double horns; a smaller one curled behind the front.



SCORPION, GIANT

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Desert

Traits

Poison

Attributes

Strength 1

Agility 1

Mind 2

Appeal

Lifeblood 6/10

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

Damage Special

Defense 0

Protection d6-3

Fear 1

These insectile terrors are low to the ground, but the stingers in their tails can reach all the way to the head of an adult human. Aggressive, the giant scorpion attacks with either its stinger (d6L) or claws (d3+1). The former injects venom if it successfully penetrates a target's protection, necessitating a Hard (-1) Strength roll to avoid an additional d6 damage, and a second Hard roll 2 rounds later to avoid paralysis, lasting for d3 hours.



SHARK

Size: Large

Normally Found: Ocean

Traits

Keen Smell, Ferocious Attack

Attributes

Strength 5

Agility 1

Mind -2

Appeal —

Lifeblood 10/20

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

Damage d6+2/d6H

Defense 0

Protection d6-3

Fear 1

These successful marine predators are exemplified here by the large Bull or Mako species. Their *Ferocious Attack* ability activates when blood is drawn in water, sending all sharks nearby into a feeding frenzy. Shagreen (shark hide) is the leather of choice in many cultures for hilt-wrappings and scabbards.



This massive constrictor is a descendent of the Titanoboa, a holdover from the Paleocene that can grow up to 40' long. Those few remaining are apex predators, often actively worshipped by any Primal or Tribal cultures in the area. Though not poisonous, the creature's jaws can swallow targets whole once they have been crushed within its powerful coils. The snake initially bites to initiate a grapple and wraps its body around for continuous damage on subsequent rounds as per a constrictor snake (see pg. 150).

SNAKE, COLOSSAL

Size: Huge

Normally Found: Jungle, Swamps

Traits

Special

Attributes

Strength 3,2/8

Agility 0

Mind -2

Appeal —

Lifeblood 13,2/40

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

Damage d6H+1,2/d6x2

Defense 0

Protection d6-3

Fear 2

SNAKE, CONSTRICTOR

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Jungle, Swamps

Traits

Special

Attributes

Strength 3

Agility 0

Mind -2

Appeal —

Lifeblood 8/10

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

Damage Special

Defense 0

Protection d6-4

Fear 1



These represent the largest of the constrictors, including anaconda, pythons, and boas. They attack from concealment, biting to secure a hold and then wrapping their coils around a victim. With a successful attack, their bite does d3 damage and initiates a grapple. On the following rounds, the target automatically takes d6L+1 constriction damage, ignoring armor, in lieu of a regular attack.



SNAKE, VENOMOUS

Size: Tiny/Very Small

Normally Found: Desert, Jungle, Swamp

Traits

Poison

Attributes

Strength -2
Agility 2
Mind -3
Appeal —
Lifeblood 1/2

Combat Abilities

Attack +3 melee
Damage d2+ venom
Defense 3
Protection 0
Fear —

Snakes are a common reptilian foe in S&S settings. When encountered in slithering hordes, treat as Rabble; these stats are for a single Tough specimen. Snakebites do d2 damage; if this exceeds the target's protection, venom is injected as well. Usually, this requires a Tough (-2) Strength check to avoid d3 lasting damage, plus a penalty die on Agility actions because of pain. Within an hour, another Tough check is required to avoid an additional d6 lasting damage. *Much* more potent venom exists, however.

SPIDER, GIANT

Size: Small

Normally Found: Anywhere

Traits

Poison

Attributes

Strength 0
Agility 2
Mind -2
Appeal —
Lifeblood 5

Combat Abilities

Attack +1 melee/ranged
Damage d6L+ venom
Defense 3
Protection d6-4
Fear 1

These bloated, scuttling horrors are roughly the size of a pig. They spin webs and can cast ropes of sticky silk at targets (treat as having the Entanglement 1 property). The spider's bite does d6L damage; if this penetrates a target's protection, they must make a Tough (-2) Strength check to avoid d6 lasting damage, and a second Tough check 2 rounds later to avoid paralysis. Targets so paralyzed are then bound up with webs for later feeding.



SQUID, GIANT

Size: Huge/Massive

Normally Found: Ocean

Traits

Ambush, Multiple Attacks

Attributes

Strength 6,2/10

Agility -1

Mind -1

Appeal —

Lifeblood 15,2/50

Combat Abilities

Attack +0 melee

Damage d6H,2/d6Hx2

Defense 0

Protection d6-4

Fear 2

Not quite a kraken, this is a conceivable giant cephalopod about 50' long, with two powerful 'main' tentacles, enormous eyes, and a vicious beak. Capable of pulling down boats, as well as menacing the decks of ships, these aquatic nightmares strike terror into the hardest of crews. A target hit by a tentacle will take the damage listed before being dragged to the creature's maw the next round for an automatic bite attack (same damage, but with the Penetration 2 quality), unless a Demanding (-4) Agility check is made.

WOLF /LARGE DOG

Size: Small

Normally Found: Everywhere

Traits

Keen Smell

Attributes

Strength 1

Agility 2

Mind -2

Appeal —

Lifeblood 6/10

Combat Abilities

Attack +1 melee

Damage d6L

Defense 1

Protection 0

Fear —



Wolves and large feral dogs roam the wilds of S&S settings as a ubiquitous threat to travelers and shepherds alike. When encountered in large packs, treat the bulk as Rabble with a Tough alpha male leader. These stats can also be used for hyenas.

WOLF, DIRE

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Everywhere

Traits

Keen Smell

Attributes

Strength 2

Agility 1

Mind -2

Appeal —

Lifeblood 7/15

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

Damage d6+1/d6

Defense 0

Protection d6-4

Fear 1

Pleistocene era *canis lupus* are called dire wolves, similar to their cousins in all but size and more aggressive temperament.



WOOLLY MAMMOTH

Size: Huge

Normally Found: Plains, Tundra

Traits

Trample

Attributes

Strength 5,2/8

Agility -2

Mind -2

Appeal —

Lifeblood 13,2/40

Combat Abilities

Attack +0 melee

Damage d6+5,2/d6x2

Defense 0

Protection d6-3

Fear 1

Actively preyed on by early humans, these shaggy beasts are roughly the size of an elephant, with curving 15' tusks. In a Primordial setting, they may be trained as the Stone Age equivalent of a tank, mounting a howdah with several javelin-throwers or archers aboard.

CREATURES

These are monsters from myth and nightmare. Generally, GMs are encouraged to use such creatures sparingly. This might seem contrary to instinct, as most fantasy RPG adventures feature 'dungeons' with monsters crammed together like some underground zoo. However, just as with magic, throwing scads of creatures at PCs can cheapen the experience.

Along these lines, GMs are recommended to depict creatures as individual NPCs, with their own names, legends, motivations, and unique personalities, even when their general purpose is to eat people.

Creatures tend to be singular, instead of a generic 'race' with its own niche in a fantasy ecosystem (though exceptions, like beastmen and serpent men, exist). Some may even have been human once, transformed into monsters after committing some hideous crime.



As with animals, most stats given here represent Tough level creatures. Rival/Villain level monsters can show up, however, to make for particularly memorable opponents.

Most creatures have Fear ratings, as their very existence shakes mundane sensibilities. Any resolve damage incurred is normal (or possibly lasting) instead of fatigue (see **Resolve Checks** pg. 92). However, once encountered, the GM can rule subsequent Resolve Checks aren't necessary, as PCs swiftly become used to the presence of such horrors.

NEW CREATURE TRAITS

Inherent Magic

Some creatures are so steeped in sorcery they can forego Arcana Rolls. Spells function more like innate powers, with no casting requirements beyond a glance or simple gesture—Third Magnitude spells are an exception. Such creatures must still pay AP, however. Also, since they don't roll, they can't gain the benefits associated with a Mighty or Legendary success (see **Magic**, pg. 114).

Creatures with the *Sorcery* boon usually possess this trait.



Mind affecting spells, such as *Ensorcell* or *Mesmerize*, become player-facing if cast (see **Mechanics**, pg. 107) on a hero. The targeted PC makes a Mind check, modified by ranks in sorcerer or witch, with the creature's Mind as a negative modifier. On a success, the spell's effects are shrugged off.

Example

The ancient lamia Ziraat has cornered Tamsin Shalles in the ruins of a vast necropolis. "You are my boon companion, human," she says, her reptilian eyes flashing like coins. "Put down that dagger and follow me to my lair."

Ziraat is using *Inherent Magic* to cast the *Mesmerize* spell. Naturally, Tamsin attempts to resist. She rolls 2d6 + her Mind of 2 and witch rank of 2, minus Ziraat's Mind 2 (net +2), and scores a 9. Good enough. "We've just met," Tamsin says, smiling coolly. "I think it's a little early to start inviting me home."

Non-Terrene

The creature has an alien physiology, with different or redundant organs, an amorphous body, etc. Similar to *Unholy Vitality*, this trait provides medium (or higher) protection against conventional attacks, though not magic. Weapons 'not of this Earth,' e.g., made from meteoritic iron or alien metal, bypass the protection completely.

Creatures with this trait get a +3/+2 bonus to lifeblood as per the *Tough as Nails/Hard to Kill* boon. Depending on their natural habitat, they may also ignore some types of environmental damage (e.g., freezing cold, vacuum, etc.). Finally, the *Vital/Crushing Blow Mighty Success* option doesn't cause extra damage against such creatures. On the downside, this trait also bestows the *Unsettling* flaw; animals are always spooked by such an alien presence.

Undead

Corpses brought back to the semblance of 'life' possess this trait. Though being dead is no picnic, the condition does confer certain advantages. Creatures with this trait feel no pain and are inured to most environmental effects, including environmental cold damage. They may also have the *Tough as Nails/*

Hard to Kill boon and/or a high protection, especially against certain attacks (e.g., a skeleton resistant to impaling damage from arrows).



Unholy Vitality

The creature possesses an infernal constitution and can absorb terrific punishment. Similar to *Non-Terrene*, this trait provides medium or higher protection against all but a few attacks, related to the specific weaknesses of the creature. Spells and *Consecrated Weapons* (see **Magic**, pg. 132) bypass this protection, however. Creatures with *Unholy Vitality* heal any lasting damage at a rate of 1 pt. per hour whether they rest or not, unless damaged by their specific weaknesses, which heal at the normal rate.



BEASTMAN

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Badlands, Jungle, Ruins

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Thick Skin

Attributes

Strength 2
Agility 1
Mind -1
Appeal —
Lifeblood 7

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee
Damage d6+2
Defense 0
Protection 1 pt.
Fear 1

'Subhumans' who have slipped back on the evolutionary scale (see **Non-Human Origins**, pg. 69), these creatures epitomize savage, Primal tribes. Known cannibals, beastmen are attacked by ordinary humans on sight. Their 1 pt. of protection comes from the *Thick Skin* boon. Though beastmen can only craft Stone Age tools, they'll use any weapons they can get their hairy hands on!

Chieftains are Rival/Villain level specimens, with 0 Mind and the *Giant Strength* boon.

CHIMERA

Size: Large

Normally Found: Mountains

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Fire Breath (special), Multiple Attacks, Poison

Attributes

Strength 4
Agility 1
Mind -1
Appeal —
Lifeblood 14/20

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee
Damage d6+2/d6H
Defense 0
Protection d6-4
Fear 1

The chimeras of Classical mythology have the head and body of a lion, a fire-breathing goat's head jutting up from the back, and a serpent for a tail. However, the name can imply a number of fantastic creatures, typically combining the body of a lion with other animals. A gryphon, for example, has the head, wings and talons of an eagle, while a mantichore has a human's head, a bat's wings, and a scorpion tail—in both cases attached to a lion's body.

The Classical chimera can attack three times a round, biting or clawing for the damage listed, breathing fire for 2d6L damage (ranged attack, range increment 10,' damage can be split among adjacent targets) and biting with its serpent tail for d3 damage + poison (-2 Strength check to avoid d6 lasting damage, plus an additional check 1 hr. later for another d6 lasting).

For gryphons add the *Flight* trait and drop the others. For manticores add *Flight* and keep *Poison*, but drop *Fire Breathing*. Manticores can *Multiple Attack* twice a round, clawing for damage listed and stinging with its tail for D6L damage + poison as given above.





COCKATRICE

Size: Tiny/Small

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Special

Attributes

Strength -1
Agility 3
Mind -2
Appeal —
Lifeblood 4/5

Combat Abilities

Attack +0 melee
Damage Special
Defense 2
Protection 0
Fear 1

The mythical cockatrice has the head and legs of a rooster, membranous wings, and the body of a serpent. Both the creature's bite and gaze turn targets to stone. Cockatrices can stare at one target per round, who must avert their eyes to avoid a Demanding (-4) Strength check. On a failure, the target is petrified. A cockatrice's bite has the same effect, though it cannot both stare and bite in the same round. Petrified characters aren't dead and can be restored to flesh through sorcerous or alchemical means.

CYCLOPS

Size: Huge/Massive

Normally Found: Coastal, Mountains

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Naivety/Gullible

Attributes

Strength 4,2/10
Agility 0
Mind 0
Appeal —
Lifeblood 15,2/50

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee
Damage d6H+4,2/d6Hx2
Defense 0
Protection d6-4
Fear 2

Cyclopes are an ancient race of giants that once built massive cities and structures, often at the behest of others. Though they herd animals to support their cavernous appetites, they'll eat humans raw if the mood strikes them. Cyclopes possess the *Naivety/Gullible* flaw, representing their ability to be easily tricked.

Cyclopes use giant spiked clubs or mauls in combat. Their singular eyes are often sought by sorcerers, who use them in scrying rituals.



DEMONS

These are infernal creatures of the underworld, some of whom were once human. Though they take delight in corrupting people, most demons show up on the earthly plane at the behest of sorcerers or witches. Depending on the nature of Divinities in the setting (see **Magic**, pg. 131), demons can be vulnerable to benevolent priests.

These creatures were 'built' using the intelligent entities (see *Everywhen*, pg. 95) and demons rules (see *Barbarians of Lemuria*, pg. 131). They have access to supernatural boons/demonic powers, which are specified in their description.



DEMON, GREATER

CHORAX, LORD OF ETERNAL STRIFE

Attributes

Strength 6
Agility 2
Mind 3
Appeal 1
Lifeblood 16,2/36

Combat Abilities

Initiative 1
Melee 4
Defense 1
Protection d6
Fear 2

A powerful Duke of Entropy who enjoys much reverence among humans, Chorax embodies the infernal ideal of might makes right. As a patron of warfare, he is highly respected for his tactical knowledge and skill in arts bellicose. Followers of Entropy often invoke his name prior to a trial by combat. However, the demon takes greatest delight in the carnage and despair caused by war's aftermath. For this reason, ceremonies to Chorax are usually held on a battlefield after the fighting is over, when corpses lie stacked in shoals of bloodied flesh.

Chorax typically manifests as an armed gallant with a beautiful, feminine face, though his true form is that of a bloated corpse dressed in gilded finery, with the head and carapace of a cockroach. His greatsword, *Orifice*, is 8' from hilt to tip and does 2d6+6 damage on a strike. He has the supernatural boons/demonic powers *Heavily Armored*, *Sorcery*, *Special Knowledge* (rank 4/6 soldier), *Destructive Attack*, *Unnatural Metabolism*, and *Vulnerability* (consecrated weapons), as well as the *Inherent Magic* trait. Chorax has 13 AP for spells and 5 Rival/Villain Points.



DEMON, GREATER

MATER MISERIAE



Attributes

Strength 4
Agility 1
Mind 5
Appeal 1
Lifeblood 14,2/34

Combat Abilities

Initiative 2
Melee 0
Defense 4
Protection d6-2
Fear 2

This Duchess of Entropy appears as a handsome woman wrapped in a black shawl. Over the course of several minutes, she ages rapidly from youth to crone, cycling back again just before death and putrescence sets in. Nine floating eels always accompany her, either coiled around her body or flapping ribbon-like in the air. The creatures both playfully and voraciously nip at her flesh, with the wounds healing back only moments later.

Though her cult is heavily steeped in mystery, Mater Miseriae is commonly associated with the pain of change and creation, as well as the deception of time. Along with her two sisters, Mater Mors and Mater Vlnus, she is rumored to be tied to a physical location in this world rather than the infernal planes. Witches often pledge their souls to her as part of a *Pact*.

In combat, Mater Miseriae stirs her pet eels into a feeding-frenzy and sends them against opponents while she hangs back and casts spells. These wriggling horrors are classed as Toughs, with Agility 2, Defense 2, 5 lifeblood, and the *Flight* power. Their bite does d6L damage.

Mater Miseriae possesses the supernatural boons/demonic powers *Armor*, *Regeneration*, *Sorcery*, *Special Knowledge* (rank 4/6 witch), and *Unnatural Metabolism*, as well as the *Inherent Magic* trait. She has 14/16 AP.



DEMON, LARVAE

Size: Small

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Minor Fear (Special)

Attributes

Strength 0
Agility 0
Mind 0
Appeal —
Lifblood 3

Combat Abilities

Attack +0 melee
Damage d3
Defense 0
Protection 0
Fear 0

Larvae are loathsome servitor demons, formed from nascent souls damned to hell. All are classed as Rabble. If they demonstrate enough potential, some may eventually be promoted to a higher grade of fiend. The creatures resemble bloated worms with human faces, atrophied limbs, and drooling mouths full of sharp teeth. Their glossy pink skin gives off a foul stench. Larvae constantly mutter obscenities and sing holy mantras backwards to better terrify their enemies.

Though pathetic, larvae still manage to have a Fear Rating of 0. Resolve loss is d3 normal on a failed check.

Attributes

Strength —
Agility —
Mind 1
Appeal —
Lifblood —

Combat Abilities

Attack Special
Damage Special
Defense —
Protection —
Fear Special

“My name is Legion, for we are many.”
Mathew (8:28-34)

A common form of non-corporeal demon, visible only by magic (i.e., Witchsight) or to those with *Second Sight*. They appear as hazy, malevolent faces floating in mid-air. Legion demons attack by possession; targets need to make a Mind check with the demon's Mind (1) as a negative modifier. Career ranks in priest, sorcerer, or witch add to the check. On a success, the demon is repulsed and can't attempt to possess the character again for 24 hours. Failure means the target has been taken over. This process is horrifying to behold: the afflicted levitates into the air, vomiting blood and howling prophecies in a distorted voice. Anyone witnessing the spectacle must make a Tough (-2) Resolve Check.

PCs can pay a Hero Point to make another attempt at throwing off possession once per day. Otherwise, only an Exorcise spell or Exhortation by a priest (see **Magic**, pg. 132) can free them. A host who survives possession takes d6 lasting resolve damage from the ordeal.

DEMON, LEGION

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Non-Corporeal, Possession (Special)



DEMON, LESSER

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Giant Strength

Attributes

Strength 2

Agility 1

Mind 0

Appeal —

Lifeblood 7

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

Damage d6L+2

Defense 0

Protection 0

Fear 1

The typical Tough demonic specimen functions as a soldier in the vast armies of hell. They appear as tall, muscular humanoids with cloven hoofs, forked tails, and ram's horns. Their taloned hands do d6L+2 damage in lieu of weapons. All have the *Giant Strength* boon.

DEMON, SUCCUBUS

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Seductive, Special Knowledge

Attributes

Strength 0

Agility 0

Mind 1

Appeal 4

Lifeblood 10/20

Combat Abilities

Attack +0 melee

Damage d6

Defense 2

Protection 0

Fear 1

These demons (male form incubi) appear as statuesque, incredibly beautiful women, usually with red hair. They can manifest talons (d6 damage) and batwings, but otherwise stay in human form. Succubae have the *Seductive* and *Special Knowledge* (rank 4/6 temptress) supernatural boons/demonic powers. They possess a special vampiric bite for use in close quarters; this drains d6 lifeblood or resolve per turn, which can replenish their own totals.



DJINN

Djinn are a type of spirit possessing wondrous magical power and very human natures. Created from smokeless fire, they are long-lived (though not immortal), and need to eat, sleep, and rest just like their earthly brethren. Djinn can be vengeful to an extreme, though also remember a kindness. Many were imprisoned during a previous epoch and can occasionally be found inside various bottles or receptacles. In the wild they prefer remote, desolate places, and have been known to haunt wells, mountaintops, and deserts.

All Djinn have the *Sorcery* boon and *Inherent Magic* trait. They can cast the *Change Shape* spell (pg. 120) at a cost of only 1 AP.

Djinn are routinely invoked by sorcerers. Neither good or evil, dealing with them does not corrupt the soul, though djinn value their freedom and resent servitude in general. They are often bound as *Intermediary Spirits*.



DJINN, GREATER

AL-SIPTAH, MARID

Attributes

Strength 6
Agility 1
Mind 3
Appeal 2
Lifeblood 16,2/36

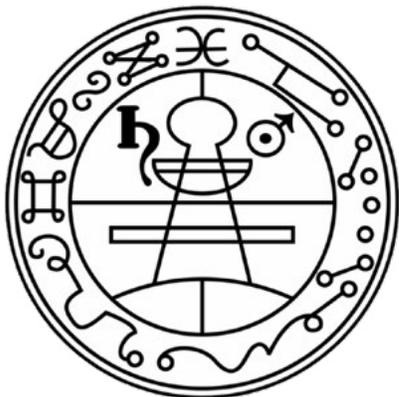
Combat Abilities

Initiative 2
Melee 4
Defense 0
Protection d6
Fear 1

A lord among djinn, Al-Siptah appears as a muscular male with blue skin and triple-forked beard, wearing a crown made from a golden conch shell. He was bound millennia ago by a powerful archmage, only to be released centuries later. Since that time Al-Siptah has been sought by power-hungry magicians, whose attentions he resents. He has developed a famously contrary nature after years of subservience—when commanded, Al-Siptah does the *opposite* of what he is told. If commanded to kill a hero, for example, he would summon a small troupe of physicians with a wave of his hands, who would then solicitously try to treat the hero! Sorcerers must therefore be careful with their words when dealing with him.

Though he prefers to use magic, Al-Siptah can summon a crescent-bladed scimitar from thin air (d6+6 damage) if necessary. He normally resides in the ruins of a great palace beneath the murky sea, but is constantly finding himself summoned elsewhere.

Al-Siptah possesses the supernatural boons *Heavily Armored*, *Non-Corporeal* (at will), *Sorcery*, *Special Knowledge* (rank 4/6 sorcerer), *Unnatural Metabolism*, and *Vulnerability* (Seal of Solomon), as well as the *Inherent Magic* trait. He has 14/16 AP.



DJINN, IFRIT

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Armor, Inherent Magic, Sorcery

Attributes

Strength 3
Agility 1
Mind 0
Appeal —
Lifeblood 13

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee
Damage d6+3
Defense 2
Protection d6-2
Fear 1

Ifrit (female form ifritah) are imposing djinn, taller and more muscular than their lesser brethren. They fly either through shape-shifting or via two pairs of wings sprouting from their backs. In combat, ifrit use either giant tulwars (d6H+3 damage) or natural weaponry (d6+3) such as horns, sharp teeth, etc. They possess the supernatural boons *Armor* and *Sorcery*, as well as the *Inherent Magic* trait. Ifrit have 5 AP.

DJINN, LESSER

Size: Small

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Inherent Magic, Sorcery

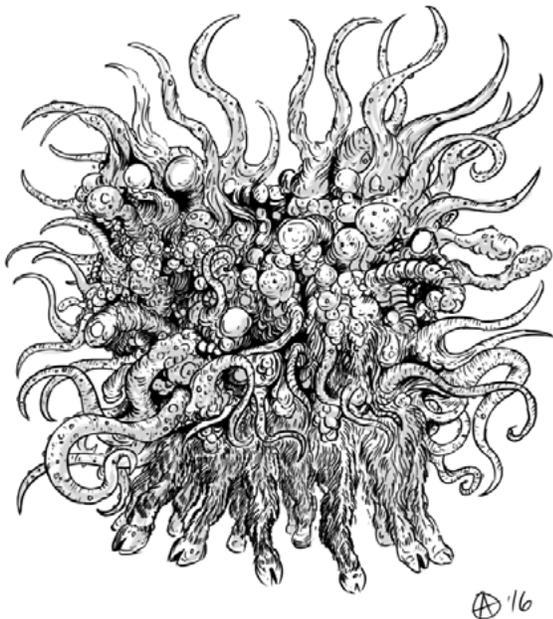
Attributes

Strength 0
Agility 1
Mind 1
Appeal —
Lifeblood 5

Combat Abilities

Attack +0 melee
Damage d6L
Defense 2
Protection 0
Fear 1

Rank and file djinn are typically small (about 13" tall), with elfin features and bright blue or red skin. Mischievous and contrary by nature, they are nonetheless often bound by sorcerers for use as *Intermediary Spirits* (see pg. 56). They possess the *Sorcery* supernatural boon and *Inherent Magic* trait (3 AP).



ELDRITCH HORROR

Size: Varies; usually Large

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Non-Terrene; varies, see description.

Attributes

Strength 5
Agility 0
Mind 1
Appeal —
Lifeblood 18/22

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 meleé
Damage d6+5
Defense 1
Protection d6-1
Fear 2

This entry represents any of a variety of eldritch creatures, demon-like but faring from vast reaches of extradimensional space, with alien motives and unspeakable desires. These creatures are often worshipped by foolish humans who mistake their otherworldly powers as divine; on occasion, horrors will sometimes grant sorcerous knowledge to a chosen few disciples.

Eldritch horrors can appear in a variety of shapes; toad-like, squid-like, amorphous, squamous, etc. Some of their physical aspects defy description, as horrors are not bound by physical laws as we understand them. All have the *Non-Terrene* trait; depending on how they manifest, horrors may also have tentacles (*Multiple Attacks*, x2), inchoate form (*Malleable Flesh*), spell abilities (*Sorcery* with *Inherent Magic* and 6 AP), or weapon-like appendages (*Enhanced Weaponry/ Destructive Attacks*). Much, much larger versions of horrors are possible, with attributes to match!



ELEMENTALS

These are powerful nature spirits, neither good nor evil, that are tied to the land. Like demons, they don't appreciate being called forth by sorcerers or witches and must be bound to service. Elementals can function as *Familiars* and *Intermediary Spirits*. The traditional Western concept of four elements—earth, wind, fire, and water—are represented here, though in settings with a more Eastern flavor these might be slightly different concepts (e.g., wood vs. earth) and a fifth element, like metal or void, added.

The elementals presented here are two types; Lesser Entities (see *Everywhen*, pg. 95), roughly equivalent to Lesser Demons (see *BoL, Mythic*, pg. 131), and Toughs. The latter are usually encountered as *Familiars* to sorcerers and witches.



AIR ELEMENTAL, SYLPHID

Air elementals appear in the form of a wispy forest nymph with the wings of a moth—when they choose to appear, which isn't often, as they usually remain invisible as per the Second Magnitude spell (see **Magic**, pg. 125). More powerful versions sometimes take the form of a giant hawk or whirlwind. Their usual temperament is high strung and flighty (no pun intended).

Attributes

Strength -1
Agility 2
Mind 1
Appeal —
Lifeblood 4

Combat Abilities

Attack +0 melee
Damage d6L-1
Defense 2
Protection 0
Fear —

Tough sylphids are usually encountered as *Familiars*. They have the *Non-Corporeal* boon when in 'air' form, though can become solid as desired.

SYLPHID, LESSER ENTITY

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Call Tempest (Special), *Inherent Magic*, *Non-Corporeal*, *Sorcery*

Attributes

Strength 1
Agility 2
Mind 1
Appeal
Lifeblood 11/20

Combat Abilities

Attack +1 melee
Damage d6+1
Defense 3
Protection 0
Fear 1

Lesser entities are summoned as per the Second Magnitude spell (see **Magic**, pg. 129). They have the *Non-Corporeal* and *Sorcery* boons (6 AP), the *Inherent Magic* trait, and can cast *Call Tempest* (see pg. 120) for only 3 AP cost.

SYLPHID, TOUGH

Size: Small

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Non-Corporeal

EARTH ELEMENTAL, GNOME

Earth elementals usually appear as wizened children, about a foot tall and dressed in leaves. Despite their size, they possess great strength. Gnomes are the most reclusive and shy of elementals. They are often sought to find buried treasure, remove physical obstacles, or build structures on a short timeframe.

GNOME, LESSER ENTITY

Size: Small to Medium

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Heavy Armor

Attributes

Strength 4
Agility 0
Mind 0
Appeal —
Lifeblood 14/20

Combat Abilities

Attack +3 melee
Damage d6L+3
Defense 1
Protection d6
Fear 1

Lesser entities are summoned as per the Second Magnitude spell (see **Magic**, pg. 129). They have the *Heavy Armor* power.



GNOME, TOUGH

Size: Small

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Armor, Giant Strength, Taciturn

Attributes

Strength 3

Agility 0

Mind 0

Appeal —

Lifeblood 8

Combat Abilities

Attack +0 melee

Damage d6L+3

Defense 2

Protection d6-2

Fear 1

Tough versions are typically found as *Familiars*. They have the *Giant Strength* and *Armor* boons, as well as the *Taciturn* flaw.

FIRE ELEMENTAL, SALAMANDER

Fire elementals usually appear as salamanders with crimson skin and vivid orange or yellow striping. They attack by touching opponents and manifesting great heat at the point of contact. More powerful versions will occasionally manifest as six-legged lizards or giant snakes, wreathed in crackling flames. They are known for being sharp-witted but also temperamental.

SALAMANDER, LESSER ENTITY

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Armor, Inherent Magic, Sorcery, Regeneration, Vulnerability

Attributes

Strength 2

Agility 0

Mind 2

Appeal —

Lifeblood 12/20

Combat Abilities

Attack +3 melee

Damage d6+2

Defense 1

Protection d6-2

Fear 1

Lesser entities are summoned as per the Second Magnitude spell (see **Magic**, pg. 129). They have the *Armor*, *Sorcery* (7 AP), and *Regeneration* boons, as well as *Vulnerability* (cold or water) and the *Inherent Magic* trait. They are immune to fire, including fire spells.



SALAMANDER, TOUGH

Size: Tiny/Very Small

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Regeneration

Attributes

Strength 1

Agility 1

Mind 2

Appeal

Lifeblood 4

Combat Abilities

Attack +0 melee

Damage d6L 1

Defense 3

Protection 0

Fear

Attributes

Strength 2

Agility 0

Mind 0

Appeal 2

Lifeblood 12/20

Combat Abilities

Attack +1 melee

Damage d6+2

Defense 1

Protection 0

Fear —

Lesser entities are summoned as per the Second Magnitude spell (see **Magic**, pg. 129). They have the *Malleable Flesh* and *Seductive* boons.

These appear as 6" salamanders, fond of curling up in open flames to rest. They are immune to fire and have the *Regeneration* boon. Tough salamanders are usually encountered as *Familiars*.

WATER ELEMENTAL, UNDINE

Water elementals manifest as an alluring young maiden wearing a diaphanous wrap or shroud. Their hair usually has a greenish tint. When in the water, more powerful versions can appear as predatory fish (sharks) or mer-creatures with long, serpentine tails. Undines are secretive and seductive; more malicious ones have been known to occasionally drown their lovers. All can breathe underwater.

UNDINE, LESSER ENTITY

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Coastal, Ocean

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Malleable Flesh, Seductive

UNDINE, TOUGH

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Coastal, Ocean

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Malleable Flesh

Attributes

Strength 0

Agility 1

Mind 0

Appeal 1

Lifeblood 5

Combat Abilities

Attack +1 melee

Damage d6L

Defense 1

Protection 0

Fear —

Tough Undines have the *Malleable Flesh* boon, reflecting their watery form's ability to take on different shapes, fit through openings, 'pour' into receptacles, etc.



FISHMAN

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Coastal, Ocean

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Night Sight

Attributes

Strength 2

Agility 0 (1)

Mind 0

Appeal

Lifeblood 7/10

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

Damage d3+2

Defense 0

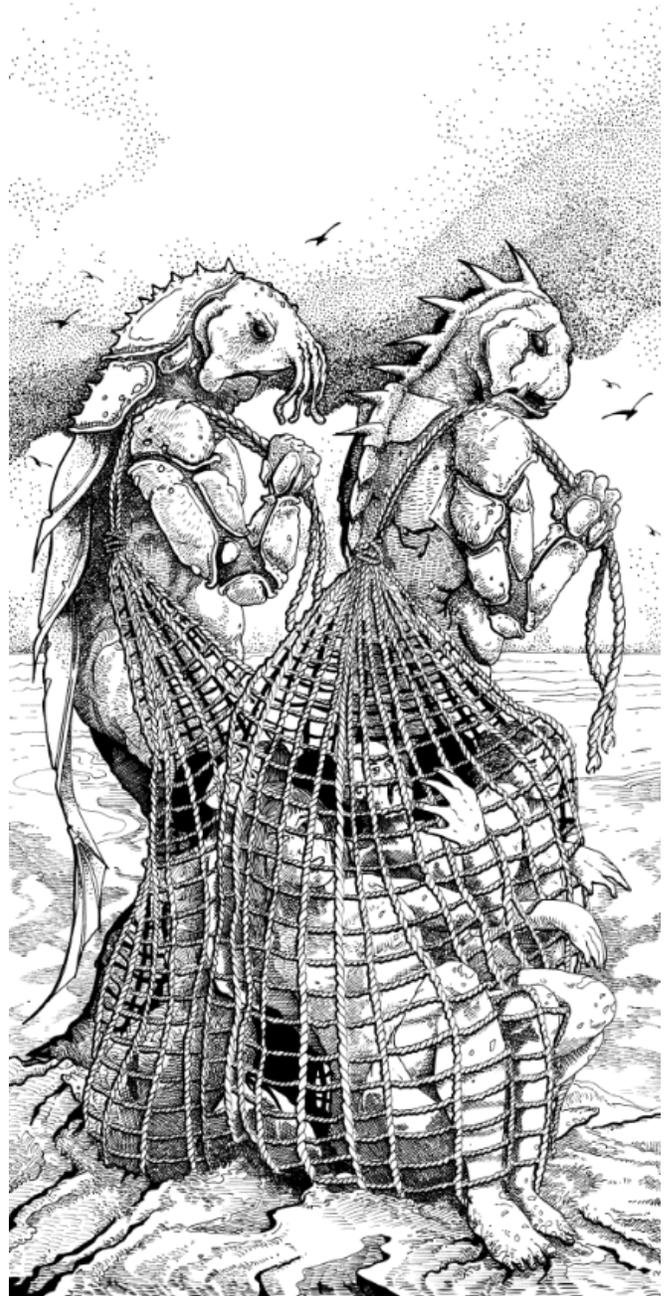
Protection d6-4

Fear 1

Sometimes referred to as 'Deep Dwellers,' or 'Deep Ones,' these ichthyoid horrors appear as stooped, amphibious humanoids with the heads and staring eyes of fish. They often live in coastal underwater settlements, preying on diluvians (see pg. 69) and humans alike. For their own strange reasons, fishmen are driven to mate with humans and will sometimes abduct them for this purpose, though whatever offspring this produces is whispered to be truly monstrous.

With their ability to breathe underwater and withstand the pressures of the depths, fishmen have access to sunken ships. They sometimes use the treasure they find to entice humans into procuring victims for them, or to otherwise strike unwholesome deals. Intelligent, many fishmen are sorcerers and/or priests of leviathan-like eldritch gods.

Fishmen have the *Night Sight* boon and can breathe outside water for extended periods of time. Their warriors carry barbed spears and knives carved from whalebone, as well as barbed nets (see **Equipment**, pg. 78) to entangle foes. They have an Agility of 1 when in the water.



GALLOWS TREE

Size: Huge

Normally Found: Forest

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Special

Attributes

Strength 6

Agility -1

Mind 0

Appeal —

Lifeblood 11,2/40

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

Damage Special

Defense 0

Protection d6-2

Fear 1

Gallows trees are created by the conglomeration of souls hung from their branches. Over time, the tortured spirits inhabiting the tree cause it to thirst for more 'company.' When encountered, d6 corpses will be hanging from what look like long, ratty nooses. These are actually tentacle like projections that can reach for 15' and allow the tree to animate corpses as Tough zombies (see pg. 173). The tentacles also act as a tether, limiting the zombie's reach. The gallows tree itself cannot move.

Each tentacle has a Defense of 2, 1 pt. of protection, and 5 lifeblood. Severing one causes the zombie so tethered to de-animate, without causing damage to the tree's core lifeblood. Anyone slain by the zombie's attacks will be reanimated, to join their new companions among the branches.

GARGOYLE

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Urban

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Ward

Attributes

Strength 2

Agility 1

Mind 0

Appeal —

Lifeblood 7/10

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

Damage d6L+2

Defense 0

Protection d6-1

Fear 1

Gargoyles are statues that occasionally become animate, due to the artistic passion and latent sorcerous abilities possessed by their creators. Like their 'parents,' gargoyles are generally melancholic rather than evil, given to long periods of brooding, though sometimes less benign passions (like lust or rage) are also imbued. Although no longer stone, their flesh is very hard and grants heavy protection. If they must fight, gargoyles use their talons and horns to good effect (d6L+2 damage).

GHOST

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Special

Attributes

Strength —

Agility —

Mind 0

Appeal —

Lifeblood —

Combat Abilities

Attack —

Damage —

Defense —

Protection —

Fear 1

Ghosts are the spiritual remains of people who died violently, by suicide, or with 'unfinished business' in the world of the living. They are always tied to a location or an object. Some merely replay the events of their death, while others interact in pursuit of an agenda. Ghosts are non-corporal and normally invisible, though they can be sensed by people with the *Second Sight* boon. By concentrating, they can make noise, move



small objects, and manifest visually, which requires a Resolve Check for those who see them.

An Exorcise spell can lay a ghost to rest, even if they are not inherently evil. Helping the ghost 'finish' a pressing task they had while alive has the same effect.



GHOUL

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Ruins, Urban

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Keen Smell, Night Sight

Attributes

Strength 2
Agility 0
Mind 0
Appeal —
Lifeblood 7/10

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee
Damage d6L+1
Defense 0
Protection 0
Fear 1

Ghouls are an ancient race that have evolved alongside humans, dwelling in darkened, charnel places among the dead. They dig extensive tunnels beneath graveyards and burial mounds, as well as haunt

mausoleums or tomb complexes. Like fishmen, they sometimes strike deals with nefarious humans, trading jewelry and other interred treasures for fresh (or not so fresh) meat.

Ghouls appear as stooped, slaving humanoids encrusted with grave mold, often wearing burial shrouds and other cerements looted from the dead. Most attack with their ragged nails and teeth, though some prefer to use weapons thoughtfully left as grave goods. A target wounded by a ghoul's natural attacks must pass a Moderate (0) Strength check, or any damage suffered becomes lasting from a nasty infection.

Ghouls have the *Keen Smell* and *Night Sight* boons. If subjected to daylight, they suffer a penalty die on all actions until they can find shade, burrowing into the ground if necessary.

GORGON

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Long-Lived

Attributes

Strength 1
Agility 0
Mind 1
Appeal —
Lifeblood 6/10

Combat Abilities

Attack +0 melee
Damage Special
Defense 2
Protection 0
Fear 1

Gorgons trace their lineage back to a race of mythical giants, though contemporary ones are *Long-Lived* instead of immortal. They appear as beautiful maidens with writhing snakes in place of hair. Gorgons possess a petrifying stare similar to cockatrices (see pg. 155). Their serpentine hair can only bite in close-combat and does d2 scratch poison damage as per venomous snakes (see pg. 150.) Much more powerful, Rival/Villain versions exist, usually with ranks in noble and witch.



HAG

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Forest, Swamp, Waste

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Amorous/Lustful, Pact

Attributes

Strength 0

Agility 1

Mind 2

Appeal -1

Lifeblood 5/10

Combat Abilities

Attack +1 melee

Damage by weapon

Defense 1

Protection 0

Fear —

Hags are witches who have made *Pacts* (as per the boon) and are now advanced in age, with some being well over a century old. The Tough version of a hag described here is a rank 2 witch with 7 AP. Most also have a *Familiar* and/or *Intermediary Spirit*. Not surprisingly, favorite spells of hags are Hex and Glamour. Lustful by nature, they delight in seducing young men before dropping the Glamour to reveal their true appearance.

HARPY

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Coastal, Mountains

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Flight

Attributes

Strength 1

Agility 2

Mind 0

Appeal —

Lifeblood 6/10

Combat Abilities

Attack +1 melee

Damage d6L+1

Defense 1 (2)

Protection 0

Fear 1

These creatures appear as golden-haired maidens with the bodies of vultures, said to spawn near entrances to the Underworld. Harpies are malevolent by nature and like to snatch things away from people, particularly food. They will also attempt to snatch children.

All harpies can fly. A select few are witches with the *Inherent Magic* trait, relying on spells of Mesmerism or Phantasm to assist in their wrongdoings. Their higher Defense value only applies while in flight.

LAMIA

Size: Large

Normally Found: Desert, Ruins, Waste

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Inherent Magic, Sorcery, Unholy Vitality

Attributes

Strength 3

Agility 1

Mind 2

Appeal —

Lifeblood 13/20

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

Damage Special

Defense 1

Protection d6-2

Fear 1

Lamiae are ancient vampiric demons that appear as beautiful women, with a serpentine, black-scaled body extending for 7' below the waist. They take perverse delight in drinking the blood of children and young males, often using Glamour, Mesmerize, and Phantasm spells to lure victims astray. They have the *Sorcery* boon and *Inherent Magic* Trait (7 AP). Lamia can cast Invisibility for only 5 AP.

Lamia bite in close combat for d6 damage, draining a like number of lifeblood or resolve per round. Points drained this way can heal damage done to the lamia. The creature can also slap with their powerful tail for d6+3 damage, or constrict a single target for d6+1 damage per round. The lamia's *Unholy Vitality* power provides 0 protection from consecrated weapons, fire, or silver.



MUMMY

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Bog, Desert, Ruin

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Undead, Unholy Vitality

Attributes

Strength 3

Agility -1

Mind 0

Appeal —

Lifeblood 11/12

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

Damage d3+3

Defense 0

Protection d6-1

Fear 1

These are undead creatures whose corpses have been well-preserved, either intentionally, through ritual and the use of special salts, or from exposure to certain environments, such as a peat bog or very dry, cold mountain air. The intentional type were often nobles and sorcerers during life; they possess the *Inherent Magic*, *Undead*, and *Unholy Vitality* traits, as well as the *Sorcery* boon (5 AP).

Mummies are usually found 'resting' atop a bier or in a sarcophagus. They will animate if disturbed or if their possessions are taken. Rival/Villain level mummies have much better stats and are usually animate all the time, in pursuit of some evil goal. These often hide their true appearance using a Glamour spell. The mummy's *Unholy Vitality* power provides 0 protection against consecrated weapons and fire.

OGRE

Size: Large

Normally Found: Forest, Mountain

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Thick Skin

Attributes

Strength 5

Agility 0

Mind -1

Appeal —

Lifeblood 10/20

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

Damage d6H+5/d6H

Defense 0

Protection 1 pt.

Fear 1

Stooped and covered with muscle, ogres can reach 8' if standing straight. Their forearms are disproportionately long like an orangutan's. Some scholars believe ogres are members of a 'lost race' evolved from Gigantopithecus, giving rise to legends of giants and trolls.

Ogre's favor two-handed clubs. Big, dumb, and anthropophagic, they are best avoided if possible.



RUKH

Size: Enormous/Gigantic

Normally Found: Island

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Flight

Attributes

Strength 3,3/14

Agility 1

Mind -1

Appeal —

Lifeblood 19,3/70

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

Damage d6+3,3/d6x3

Defense 0

Protection d6-3

Fear 2

Rukhs are predatory birds gigantic enough to pick up elephants and destroy merchant ships. They are usually found only on remote islands or other 'lost world' areas. The rukh's main motivation is to protect their young, and the massive avians will enact savage revenge on anyone who disturb their nests. They are just as likely to drop victims from a great height as swallow them whole. A PC ensnared in a rukh's clutches can pay a Hero Point to be deposited atop a mountain rather than slain outright.

These are hybrid plant-animals, believed to have been created by a demented sorcerer or perhaps fetched from an alien world. Unsatiated, they appear as lovely white flowers with a thorny stem, giving off a narcotic perfume (cf. Slith, *Barbarians of Lemuria, Mythic*, pg. 136). Catching scent of the blossoms necessitates a Moderate (0) Strength check per round to avoid falling asleep. The flowers fold over anyone who succumbs and begin sucking blood, draining 1 lifeblood every other round as they slowly turn crimson.

Killing a sanguine bloom involves digging beneath the fleshy roots to get at a large (3' across) coral-like brain, which pulses with metallic colors. The brain can take 5 pts. of lifeblood damage before expiring, which kills the entire colony of flowers.

SATYR

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Forest, Island

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Artistic

Attributes

Strength 0

Agility 2

Mind 1

Appeal -1

Lifeblood 5

Combat Abilities

Attack +0 melee

Damage d6L

Defense 2

Protection 0

Fear 1

Satyrs are frolicking nature spirits originally from a pleasant island environment. Fun-loving, they like nothing better than to play pan flute all day, recite filthy poetry, and leer. They look like wizened male children with a horse's tail and ears. Given their appearance and carnal nature, satyrs are sometimes mistaken as demons.

SANGUINE BLOOM

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Jungle

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Special

Attributes

Strength —

Agility —

Mind -1

Appeal —

Lifeblood 5

Combat Abilities

Attack —

Damage —

Defense 0

Protection 0

Fear —



SERPENT MAN

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Jungle, Subterranean

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Feels the Cold, Poisoner, Sorcery

Attributes

Strength 0

Agility 0

Mind 2

Appeal —

Lifeblood 5

Combat Abilities

Attack +1 melee

Damage d3 or weapon

Defense 1

Protection 1 pt.

Fear 1

This ancient, highly intelligent race once dominated during the Mesozoic Era. Most died out with the coming of the Ice Age, though a few escaped to the warmth of underground vaults or preserved themselves in magical stasis. Occasional cells of serpent men become active and infiltrate human institutions, disguising themselves through a special Glamour spell (see **Magic**, pg. 124) at the cost of 1 AP. They usually target courts and their rulers, manipulating them until they can be replaced with a serpent man impostor.

In addition to sorcery, serpent men are often knowledgeable scholars, focusing on biology and chemistry. They are rumored to worship an ancient snake Divinity of vast size lying coiled in the bowels of the Earth; many serve as (disguised) high priests in serpent cults that have spread among humans. They have the *Sorcery* (7 AP) and *Poisoner* boons, as well as the *Feels the Cold* flaw.

SKIN-TURNER

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Keen Smell, Night Sight, Unholy Vitality

Attributes

Strength 3

Agility 1

Mind -1

Appeal —

Lifeblood 8/10

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

Damage d6+3/d6

Defense 0

Protection d6

Fear 1

This is an inclusive heading for several types of were-beasts: wolves, bears, boars, tigers, etc. The stats above represent a skin-turner in wolf form. Werebears can have greater Strength while tigers greater Agility, as long as the net total for all attributes works out to +4. An intermediary, beast-humanoid shape is also possible. Experienced skin-turners can change form whenever they wish (the process takes a round of wracking pain) but must make a Mind check to resist transforming the night of a full moon. They get the advantages of their *Keen Smell*, *Night Sight*, and *Unholy Vitality* even when in human shape.

Skin-turners get their name from the belief their skin turns inside out when they transform—their fur is on the inside! In some cultures, they need a magical skin or hide to make this transformation; stealing it renders them powerless. Normally, the creatures spread their condition through the supernatural disease lycanthropy. A target reduced to 0 lifeblood or lower from their attacks ‘dies’ and makes a miraculous recovery the next night, only to discover their new affliction. Even virtuous people become savage beasts when transformed; a successful Exorcise spell can force them back into human shape, though it will not permanently reverse the condition. Removing the curse of lycanthropy is a Second Magnitude spell with the Special Item, Rare Ingredients, and Lunar casting requirements.

More powerful versions of skin-turners are treated as Rivals/Villains (cf. Vampire, Elder). These retain their intelligence when transformed and killing them can lift the curse of lycanthropy they have inflicted on others.

Their *Unholy Vitality* protection is 0 vs. silver, fire, or consecrated weapons.





VAMPIRE, ELDER

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Addicted/Cravings, Inherent Magic, Night Sight, Sorcery, Undead, Unholy Vitality

Attributes

Strength 4
 Agility 2
 Mind 2
 Appeal —
 Lifeblood 17/16

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee
 Damage d6+4
 Defense 2
 Protection d6
 Fear 2

These are Rival/Villain creatures, grown powerful after several centuries of unlife. They have 12 AP and can cast Call Beast, Call Shadows, Change Shape, Ensorescell, Mesmerize, and Phantasm, in addition to the powers of lesser vampires. They can forego traditional weaknesses (e.g., approach someone with a holy symbol) by paying 1 Rival/Villain Point per round.

As 'alpha' vampires, killing one of these creatures destroys any undead they have personally turned. Their *Unholy Vitality* protection is 0 vs. silver, fire, or consecrated weapons.

VAMPIRE, LESSER

Size: Medium

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Addicted/Cravings, Inherent Magic, Night Sight, Sorcery, Undead, Unholy Vitality

Attributes

Strength 3
 Agility 0
 Mind 0
 Appeal —
 Lifeblood 11/10

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee
 Damage d6L+3
 Defense 1
 Protection d6-2
 Fear 1

These stats represent Tough vampires. Powerless during the day, they take a penalty die on all actions when in sunlight and lose their enhanced Strength, *Unholy Vitality*, and AP, though they can still only be 'killed' by a stake through the heart or ritual decapitation (see below).

Lesser vampires have 5 AP to fuel various powers, including transformation into a cloud of mist or bat, rat, or wolf (2 AP), beguiling gaze (1 AP, target must make a Mind check at -1 or do nothing else but stare rapt into the vampire's eyes), fast healing (1 AP for 1 point of lifeblood), and summoning a horde of bats or rats to do their bidding (2 AP, can cause a penalty die if used as a distraction). Not all vampires possess these powers; newly 'turned' ones usually possess only their enhanced Strength and *Unholy Vitality*.

Vampires inflict the damage listed with their talon-like hands and fangs. They can only be permanently destroyed if staked through the heart or decapitated. Vampires are repulsed by the religious symbols of any faith they followed during life (Mind check to resist) and can pass on their condition; a target reduced to 0 lifeblood or less by a bite will appear to sicken and die, only to rise as a new vampire the next night. Their *Unholy Vitality* protection is 0 vs. silver, fire, or consecrated weapons.



ZOMBIE



Size: Medium

Normally Found: Anywhere

Boons / Flaws / Traits

Lumbering, Unholy Vitality

Attributes

Strength 2

Agility -1

Mind -1

Appeal —

Lifeblood 10/9

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

Damage d3+2

Defense 0

Protection d6-2

Fear 1

These are corpses, whether ancient or newly slain, revived by infernal necromancy. If enough flesh remains, they will be shambling zombies, with the stats listed above and the *Lumbering* flaw. Striking them on the head ignores their protection. If a particular zombie was known to a person during life, any damage from a failed Resolve Check will be lasting.

If their flesh is gone, the corpses rise as skeletons with 0 Strength and 2 Agility. These are much faster; treat as having the *Alertness* boon (e.g., opponents take a penalty die on priority checks), but only have 5 lifeblood and 0 protection against blunt weapons.

People who die under heinous conditions without proper burial occasionally rise as revenants. These have 3 Strength and 0 Mind, as well as the *Obsession* flaw; to seek revenge on whoever did them wrong!

Their *Unholy Vitality* protection is 0 vs. fire, consecrated weapons, or head-blows.

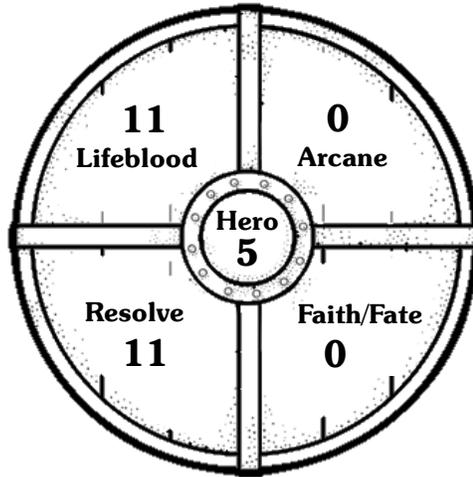




7 SAMPLE HEROES

REYNA SCARLET

| | |
|----------|---|
| STRENGTH | 1 |
| AGILITY | 2 |
| MIND | 1 |
| APPEAL | 0 |



| Career | Rank |
|-----------|------|
| Nomad | 1 |
| Slave | 0 |
| Gladiator | 2 |
| Soldier | 1 |



| Combat Abilities | Value |
|------------------|-------|
| Initiative | 0 |
| Melee | 2 |
| Ranged | 1 |
| Defense | 1(2) |

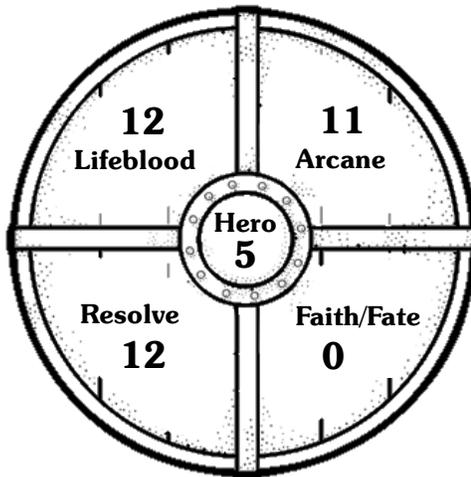
| Boons | Flaws | Weapons & Armor | Prot./Dmg. |
|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| <i>Alert</i> | <i>Notorious/Infamous</i> | Medium Armor | d6-2 |
| <i>Brawler</i> | <i>Taciturn</i> | Tulwar (Sword) | d6+1 |
| <i>Born in Armor</i> | | Buckler | +1 Defense |
| | | Circassian Dagger | d6L+1 |
| | | Composite Bow, 30' | d6 |

A child of the rolling steppe, Reyna was captured by a rival nomadic tribe and sold for a pittance. After donning a white concubine's mask, she strangled her new 'husband' with a silken girdle and escaped. Reyna wears this same mask into battle to mark her transformation on that fateful night.

Though she amassed considerable fame and martial skill as a pit-fighter, Reyna has since left that career to wander. She contemplates the words of a bleary-eyed shaman, who prophesized she will one day seize the mantle of the Red Queen (as her name implies) and rule over a vast host.

AL-AFZAR

| | |
|----------|---|
| STRENGTH | 2 |
| AGILITY | 0 |
| MIND | 2 |
| APPEAL | 0 |



| Career | Rank |
|----------|------|
| Merchant | 1 |
| Scholar | 0 |
| Soldier | 2 |
| Sorcerer | 1 |



| Combat Abilities | Value |
|------------------|-------|
| Initiative | 0 |
| Melee | 3 |
| Ranged | 0 |
| Defense | 1 |

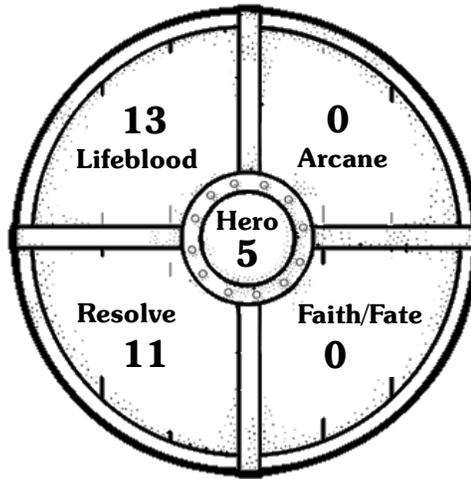
| Boons | Flaws | Weapons & Armor | Prot./Dmg. |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| <i>Intermediary Spirit</i> | <i>Feels the Cold</i> | Great Shamshir (2H Sword) | d6H+2 |
| <i>Desert Born</i> | <i>Memorable/</i> | Khanjar Dagger (Dagger) | d6L+2 |
| <i>Fearsome Looks</i> | <i>Distinctive Appearance</i> | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

A 6'4" Berber with brooding features, Al-Afzar was born of a merchant family. Though educated at a young age, his hulking physique and calm disposition led him down a soldier's path. After successfully guarding a caravan from attack, his grateful employer rewarded him with a gilded bottle, not knowing a djinn was bound inside. The creature, named Semsem, has since persuaded Afzar to pursue a new career as a sorcerer.

Al-Afzar wears a bright blue turban tied the in Berber style and carries an enormous shamshir over one shoulder, primarily for intimidation.

GECERIX

| | |
|----------|----------|
| STRENGTH | 3 |
| AGILITY | 1 |
| MIND | 1 |
| APPEAL | 0 |



| Career | Rank |
|---------------------|------|
| Noble | 0 |
| Barbarian | 2 |
| Soldier (Mercenary) | 1 |
| Hunter (Scout) | 1 |



| Combat Abilities | Value |
|------------------|-------|
| Initiative | 1 |
| Melee | 2 |
| Ranged | 0 |
| Defense | 1(2) |

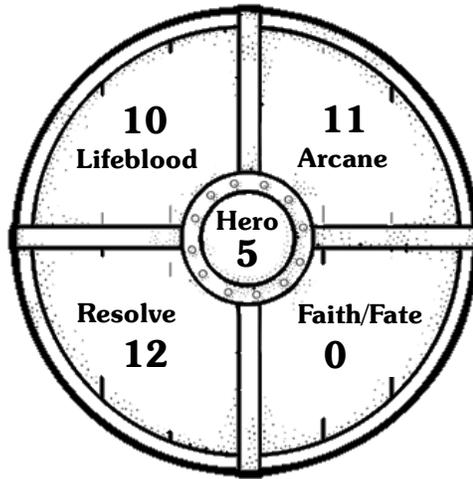
| Boons | Flaws | Weapons & Armor | Prot./Dmg. |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| <i>Giant Strength</i> | <i>Notorious/Infamous</i> | Light Armor | d6-3 |
| <i>Inspire</i> | <i>Obsession</i> | Shield | +1 Defense |
| <i>Cultural Weapon</i> | | Celtic Spear | d6+3 |
| | | Axe | d6+3 |
| | | Dirk | d6L+3 |

The son of an Averni chieftain, Gecerix became an outlaw after his father was killed in a bloody coup orchestrated by Rome. Vowing to sack the Eternal City in recompense, he searched the Germanic tribes for like-minded warriors and discovered, deep among the wilds of the Black Forest, a Suebi chieftain cursed with lycanthropy. Could this skin-turner's 'gift' be a weapon to wield against the Roman Empire?

Gecerix has a crooked nose from many breakings and a head of prematurely gray hair. Though well-trained with axe and sword, he favors the leaf-bladed spear of his homeland.

NINE-FINGERS NELL

| | |
|----------|---|
| STRENGTH | 0 |
| AGILITY | 1 |
| MIND | 2 |
| APPEAL | 1 |



| Career | Rank |
|-------------|------|
| Rogue | 2 |
| Entertainer | 1 |
| Witch | 1 |
| Merchant | 0 |



| Combat Abilities | Value |
|------------------|-------|
| Initiative | 0 |
| Melee | 1 |
| Ranged | 0 |
| Defense | 2 |

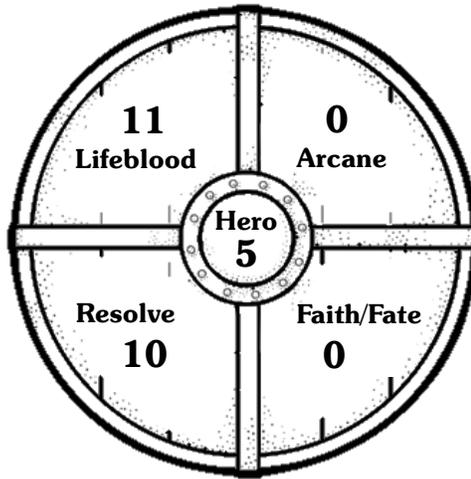
| Boons | Flaws | Weapons & Armor | Prot./Dmg. |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| <i>Deft Hands</i> | <i>Greed</i> | Short Sword | d6 |
| <i>Familiar</i> | <i>Urbanite/City Dweller</i> | Dagger, 10' | d6L |
| <i>Glib/Silver Tongue</i> | | | |
| | | | |

Nell appears as a middle-aged, not unhandsome woman with a stately presence that belies her humble origins. She dresses ostentatiously, wearing a feathered turban and gilded robes; on second glance, the feathers are seen to be faded, the robes somewhat threadbare. When among friends she allows her familiar, a russet-furred bat named Mycropes, to perch on her shoulder. The bat-thing has a human face and can speak in a croaking voice.

Nell began her career as a confidence artist, posing as a fortune teller as a way of getting close to wealthy marks, casing their homes, and returning at night to filch valuables. On one such outing she swiped a 'stuffed' bat that turned out to be a sleeping Mycropes; out of gratitude, the creature taught her a few dints of witchcraft, and the two have been working together since.

SENJAM SINGH

| | |
|----------|---|
| STRENGTH | 1 |
| AGILITY | 3 |
| MIND | 0 |
| APPEAL | 0 |



| Career | Rank |
|-----------------------|------|
| Soldier (Warrior) | 1 |
| Assassin | 2 |
| Entertainer (Tumbler) | 1 |
| Priest | 0 |



| Combat Abilities | Value |
|------------------|-------|
| Initiative | 1 |
| Melee | 1 |
| Ranged | 1 |
| Defense | 1(2) |

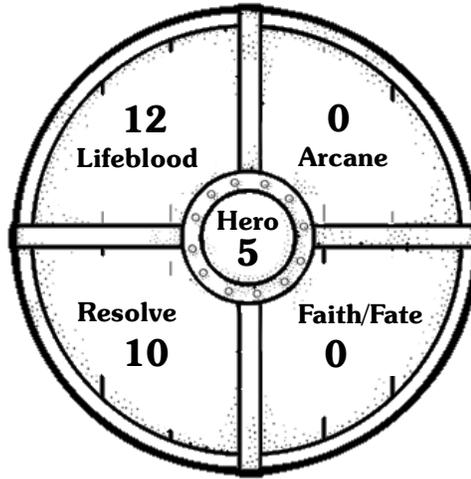
| Boons | Flaws | Weapons & Armor | Prot./Dmg. |
|-------------------|---------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Acrobat | Arrogant | Light Armor | d6-3 |
| Escape Artist | Bounty/Hunted | Khanda (Sword) | d6+1 |
| Poison Resistance | | Kukri (Dagger) | d6L+1 |
| | | Chakram, 10' | D6L |
| | | Silken 'Scarf' (Garotte) | Special |

A cultural fish out of water, Senjam used to ply his lethal skills in the mystic East before he betrayed his order, the Grandfathers, and found himself high on their hit list. Now he wanders the Western lands, disguised as either a priest or a tea merchant, and accepts the occasional contract kill to remain solvent. Even among this barbaric backwater, however, agents of the Grandfathers still hound him.

When not disguised, Senjam appears as a lanky, ascetic figure with a shaved pate, covered from the neck down in the crabbed tattoos of his order. Beneath his robes he conceals a small arsenal of exotic weaponry.

KHAMOSE OF NUBIA

| | |
|----------|---|
| STRENGTH | 2 |
| AGILITY | 2 |
| MIND | 0 |
| APPEAL | 0 |



| Career | Rank |
|---------------------|------|
| Nomad | 2 |
| Hunter | 1 |
| Rogue | 0 |
| Soldier (Mercenary) | 1 |



| Combat Abilities | Value |
|------------------|-------|
| Initiative | 0 |
| Melee | 1 |
| Ranged | 3 |
| Defense | 0 |

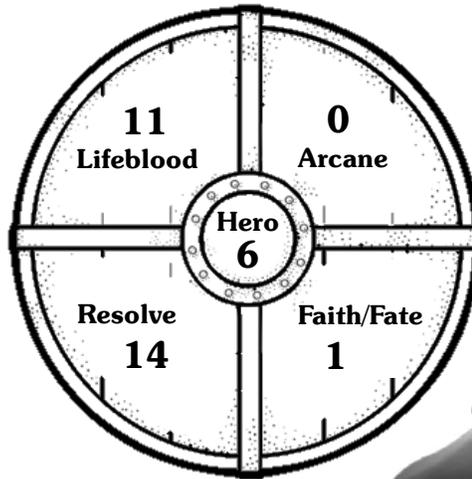
| Boons | Flaws | Weapons & Armor | Prot./Dmg. |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| <i>Cultural Weapon</i> | <i>Hatred of . . .</i> | Pitati Bow (Bow), 75' | d6+2 |
| <i>Desert Born</i> | <i>Landlubber</i> | Mace | d6+2 |
| <i>Mighty Shot</i> | | Kandi Knife (Dagger) | d6L+2 |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Khamose has ranged far from his homeland, fleeing a mysterious crocodile cult that seized power in Meroe. He ran afoul of the cultists after saving his sister from the sacrificial altar—and killing a high priest in the process. Though a stranger to the lands of the North, he has since found ready employment as a mercenary archer.

Standing 6' 7," hawklike Khamose towers over others. He keeps his scalp shaved and carries a gold hilted mace gifted him by Pharaoh. Someday he plans on returning to Meroe, though has vowed to do so at the head of his own army.

SIMÓN CANEZ

| | |
|----------|---|
| STRENGTH | 1 |
| AGILITY | 3 |
| MIND | 1 |
| APPEAL | 0 |



| Career | Rank |
|---------------------|------|
| Noble | 1 |
| Priest | 1 |
| Gladiator (Duelist) | 2 |
| Sailor | 0 |



| Combat Abilities | Value |
|------------------|-------|
| Initiative | 0 |
| Melee | 2 |
| Ranged | 0 |
| Defense | 2(3) |

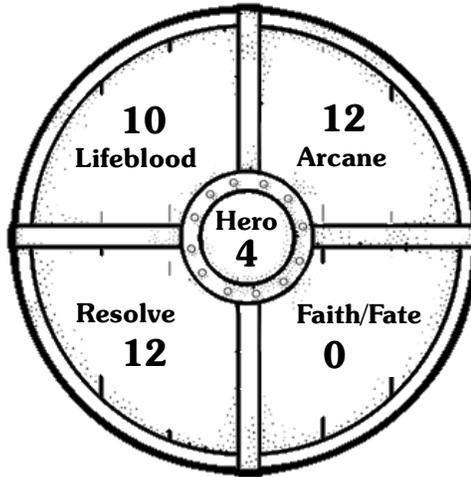
| Boons | Flaws | Weapons & Armor | Prot./Dmg. |
|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| <i>Cat-like Agility</i> | <i>Enemy</i> | Light Armor | d6-3 |
| <i>Hard to Shake</i> | <i>Obsession</i> | Salamanca Rapier (Sword) | d6+1 |
| <i>Marked by Fate/</i> | | Dirk | d6L+1 |
| <i>Marked by the Gods</i> | | Flintlock Pistol, 10' | d6H, Pen 2 |
| | | | |

Known as El Santo de Espadas (“The Saint of Swords”) or, in some circles, the Fist of Torquemada, Simón began his career as a humble friar from Cadiz. Word of his zeal and nigh-supremacy with a blade reached the Grand Inquisitor himself, who charged Simón to purge Spain of all heresy. However, he soon broke with the order after discovering its covert goal: to amass the arcane knowledge of sorcerers brought to the rack, torturing them for their secrets under the guise of ‘recanting.’

Now Simón roams North Africa and the Levant, fighting supernatural evil with the help of his oft-companion, the Bedouin sahir Jubayr al-Sadiq. He has vowed to locate the Black Cathedral, Torquemada’s secret repository of misery-wrested knowledge, and burn the profane library within.

TAMSIN SHALLES

| | |
|----------|---|
| STRENGTH | 0 |
| AGILITY | 0 |
| MIND | 2 |
| APPEAL | 2 |



| Career | Rank |
|-----------|------|
| Priest | 0 |
| Witch | 2 |
| Temptress | 1 |
| Rogue | 1 |



| Combat Abilities | Value |
|------------------|-------|
| Initiative | 1 |
| Melee | 0 |
| Ranged | 0 |
| Defense | 2 |

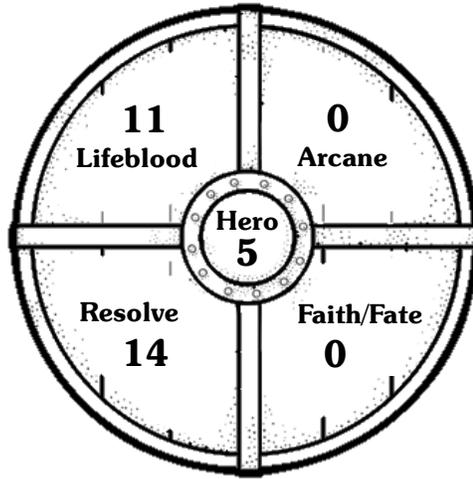
| Boons | Flaws | Weapons & Armor | Prot./Dmg. |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Attractive | Notorious/Infamous | Athame (Dagger) | d6L |
| Magical Affinity (Summoning) | Unlucky/Cursed Witchmark | | |
| Second Sight | | | |
| | | | |

Tamsin appears as a young, sharp featured woman with raven-black hair and a knowing smile. Opportunistic to her core, she was cast out of the Stone Cabin Coven by its leader, Gretch Greentooth, for being “too ambitious,” i.e., trying to take over. Since then, she’s thrown in with various criminal groups, including the notorious Black Hand Gang, renting out her magical abilities while attempting to seize power. So far, all her scheming has come to naught.

Firmly on the corrupting path of magic, Tamsin specializes in demon summoning. She has yet to barter her soul for a Pact, though not out of squeamishness—she’s still shopping around for whatever malevolence offers the “best deal.”

RAY "WRONG WAY" GRONSKI

| | |
|----------|---|
| STRENGTH | 1 |
| AGILITY | 1 |
| MIND | 1 |
| APPEAL | 1 |



| Career | Rank |
|-------------------|------|
| Farmer | 1 |
| Mechanic | 1 |
| Pilot | 2 |
| Soldier (Warrior) | 0 |



| Combat Abilities | Value |
|------------------|-------|
| Initiative | 0 |
| Melee | 1 |
| Ranged | 1 |
| Defense | 1 |

| Boons | Flaws | Weapons & Armor | Prot./Dmg. |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| <i>Athletic/Born Athlete</i> | <i>Enemy</i> | Flight Leathers (Light Armor) | d6-3 |
| <i>Hard to Shake</i> | <i>Skeptical</i> | .45 Automatic, 45' | d6H, Pen 2 |
| <i>Keen Eyesight</i> | | Virid Throwing Sword, 5' | d6 |
| | | Mk. II Knife (Dagger) | d6L+1 |
| | | | |

“Wrong Way Ray” was co-pilot aboard *The Black Pearl*, a B-29 Superfortress bound for Yokohama on a top secret mission. In the plane’s steel belly rested a single prototype bomb. A squadron of Zeroes cut all that short, however, and Ray was forced to bail out over open water. As he fell, a seething nimbus of green light began to swirl below him. The last thing he remembered was a sinister face at the center, beckoning, before everything went black.

Ray woke in a field next to the *Pearl*, which looked surprisingly intact. However, the two moons in the sky told him this wasn’t Poughkeepsie. Thanks to his ‘magic’ .45 and some helpful locals, he’s managed to survive so far. He’s even learned the identity of his summoner, a tyrant sorcerer named Gann Lorcii. Ray figures the mug was after the *Pearl*’s ‘special’ cargo rather than him, because the bomb’s gone missing . . . and he intends to get it back, before this wild, wonderful world is reduced to radioactive ash!



8 ADVENTURES



HELLFLOWER

Opportunistic PCs hear rumors of the infamous sorcerer, **Sforza the Scarlet Dreamer**, and his garden of ultra-terrene plants. Somewhere on the sprawling grounds lies the Heart of Aminah, a fantastic gem worth an empress's dowry. Many would-be thieves, it is said, now fertilize the garden's soil, after failing to filch the Heart. Still, Sforza employs no guards—no human ones, anyways—and as his name suggests, spends most of his time deep in narcotic slumber, dreaming of distant hells. Perhaps more clever adventurers, with boldness to match, can steal the gem from under old Sforza's nose!

Of course, heroes soon find this a more difficult proposition than imagined. Though the garden's wall is easily climbed, a living labyrinth waits beyond. The semi-metallic hedges comprising this maze are mobile, shifting position to confuse intruders. Worse, saber-

leafed trees, giant pitcher plants, and a trio of animate, sickle-wielding scarecrows haunt the grounds.

PCs eventually discover the renowned thief, **Naram Singh**, trapped by a horrible transformation. Naram knows the location of the Heart, but not its infernal secret—a secret that, if mishandled, could spell green doom for both the heroes and Sforza alike!

(Hellflower, AKA The Lotus in Hell's Well, is a straightforward adventure with a seemingly familiar premise; infiltrate a wizard's tower, or garden in this case, and steal a mystic gem. 'Seemingly' is the key word. Though Hellflower was influenced by a seminal Robert E. Howard story, players who have read the work court disaster if they assume this adventure follows a similar sequence of events!)



START

Hellflower assumes the most generic opening possible, making it easy to introduce a disparate group of PCs to the sword and sorcery genre. Sforza's garden, 'A Place of Mystery,' could be set in any out of the way locale, including a rundown section of a city, or the outskirts of an ancient ruin. The heroes glean rumors while patronizing a tavern, wineshop, and/or marketplace, perhaps one with a reputation for lowlife customers.

PCs begin with the general information summarized in the opening paragraph, including the garden's location. Pretty much *everybody* knows the legends surrounding Sforza and his priceless jewel. Heroes can attempt to learn more by making a Moderate (0) Appeal check, modified by ranks in entertainer, merchant, or rogue. The *Carouser* boon adds a bonus die.

On a Calamitous Failure:

The PC winds up offending somebody; d3 Rabble pick a fight.

On a Failure:

Nothing further is gained.

On a Normal Success:

The PC hears a rumor. Roll a d6:

1. *Sforza collects plants from the lowest levels of hell!* (True)
2. *The Heart of Aminah is not of this world.* (True)
3. *Sforza animates the corpses of those who've tried to rob him as guards.* (False)
4. *Sforza's sorcerous powers come from the Heart of Aminah.* (False)
5. *Sforza grows scarlet nucifera, an addictive substance much sought by sorcerers.* (True)
6. *Sforza hasn't awoken from enchanted sleep for over a decade now.* (False)

On a Mighty Success:

As with a normal success, plus roll on the table below. All these rumors are true.

1. *Sforza has a magic topiary, where bushes can turn into wild beasts!*
2. *The master thief, Naram Singh, has sworn to steal the Heart of Aminah. No one has seen him for weeks now . . .*

3. *The Heart of Aminah is kept at the bottom of a deep well, somewhere in the garden.*
4. *Sforza's manse is a greenhouse, at the center of a hedge maze that is always changing.*
5. *Sforza transforms ex-lovers and enemies into trees.*
6. *Beware the scarecrows!*

On a Legendary Success:

As with Mighty Success, plus roll d3 on the table below. All these rumors are true.

1. *"The jewel is in the lotus.' I kept hearing that repeated, over and over, by an insane thief who claims to have found the Heart of Aminah, and somehow managed to escape with his life. Not his mind, though, the poor bugger . . ."*
2. *Sforza keeps some kind of alien demon, bound in a well.*
3. *Sforza can only sleep under the narcotic influence of sanguine blooms, a dangerous flower he grows inside his greenhouse.*

Players can share information with each other as they see fit. A PC who withholds information but later reveals it at a dramatically appropriate time can be awarded a Hero Point for maintaining suspense!

THE APPROACH

From a distance, Sforza's garden appears as nothing special; a large, but somewhat rundown estate surrounded by a 10' wall of mortared stones. Various shrubbery and trees, especially cypress, can be seen poking above the wall. A weathered wooden gate, reinforced by wrought iron, bisects the wall at one point. The gate is barred on the other side. A sign posted nearby reads:

MIND THE PLANTS

The rough stones make it Easy (+1 to checks) for anyone trying to climb the wall. Inside, swards of lush tropical grass surround a hedge maze taking up most of the grounds.





THE THREE GUARDIANS

Next to the maze's entrance lies a small hillock with three wooden crosses planted atop it. Loose bindings hang from the ends of each crosspiece, along with a single binding tied high on the post. A PC with ranks in farmer or peasant can recognize this as an arrangement for keeping a scarecrow upright, though the crosses are ominously empty . . .

The three scarecrows, **Gourd Head**, **Turnip Head**, and **Pumpkin Head**, are magical constructs that freely roam the hedge maze, incessantly patrolling for intruders. They can show up singly or in groups whenever players seem bored, let their guard down, or are spending a lot of time engrossed in some task, such as trying to hack through hedges or set a large fire. Making noise while doing so increases the chance of being double- or triple-teamed.

The scarecrows use their *Stealthy/Sneaky* boon to creep up for surprise attacks and jump scares (i.e., Resolve Checks). Unless reduced to ash, their *Regeneration* power causes smashed pumpkin bits, severed limbs, and straw to slowly knit back together at the rate of 1 lifeblood per round. Downed scarecrows won't immediately rise again to attack; like the killer in a slasher movie, their bodies disappear once 'off camera,' only to show up again at the worst possible time!

If PCs are particularly tough, the GM can add a fourth scarecrow, **Squash Head**, using the stats below.

SCARECROW (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Strength 2 | Attack +2 melee |
| Agility 0 | Damage d6+2/d6H+2 |
| Mind -1 | Defense 0 |
| Appeal — | Protection d6-3 |
| Lifeblood 10/9 | Fear 1 |

As magical constructs, these creatures have the *Undead* trait (see **Bestiary**, pg. 153), in addition to the *Sneaky/Stealthy* and *Regeneration* boons. Gourd Head and Turnip Head have sickle blades (d6+2 damage) affixed to their right wrists, while Pumpkin Head wields a two-handed scythe (d6H+2 damage).



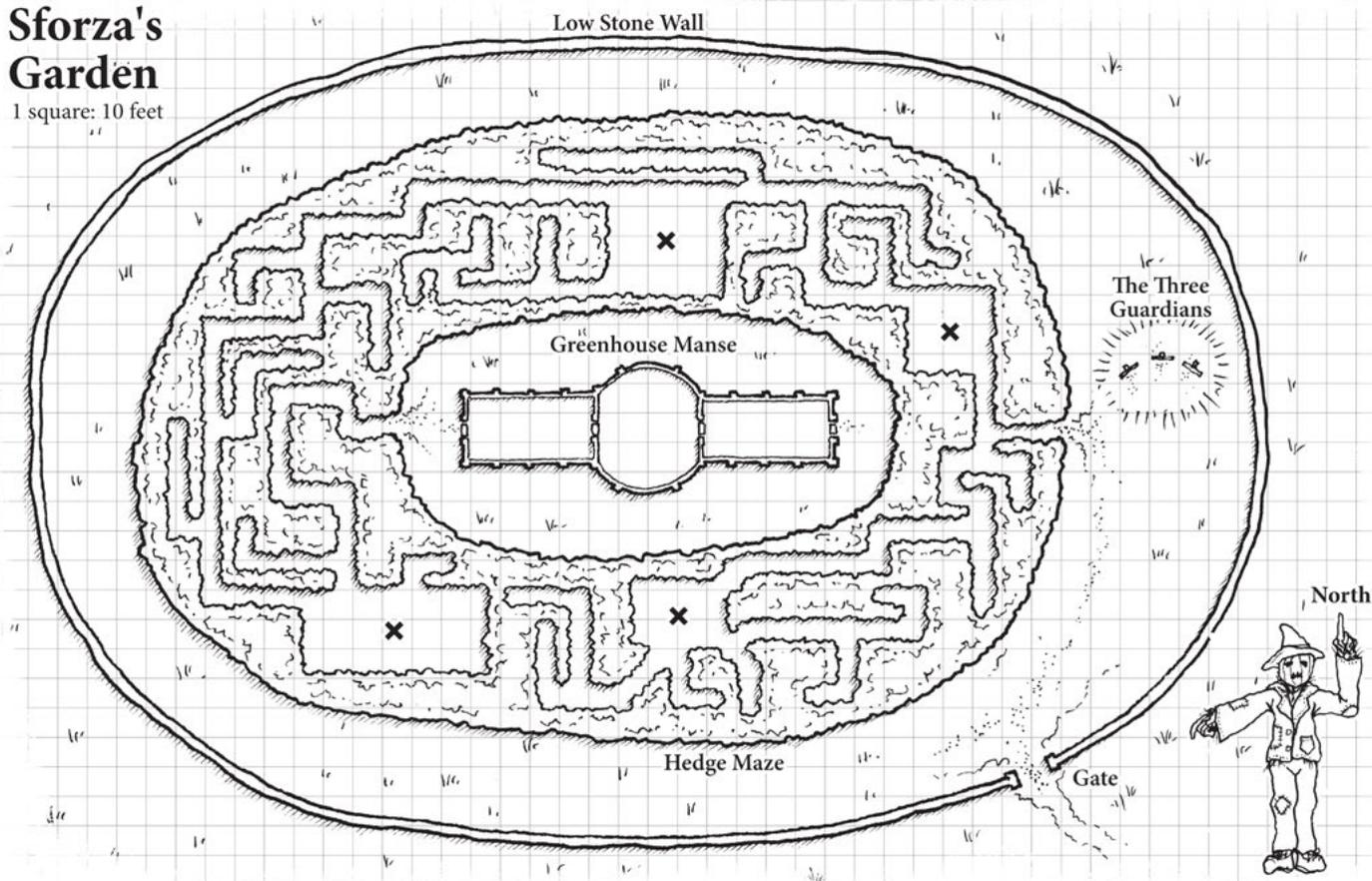
OPTION: EXPANDING THE GARDEN

If desired, the hedge maze can be expanded with additional encounters. Plant-based perils like a gallows tree (see **Bestiary**, pg. 166), giant sundew, clinging ivy, etc., would all be appropriate. Note that this can make the adventure more of a 'funhouse dungeon,' but to each their own.



Sforza's Garden

1 square: 10 feet



THE HEDGE MAZE

The bulk of Sforza's garden, including his greenhouse manse, lies within this sprawling labyrinth of alien shrubbery. The 'walls' are uniformly 5' thick and 12' tall, meeting in a natural arch over the passages, though not the various clearings (X's on the map). During the day, all this foliage turns sunlight into a verdant shadow. At night, the maze 'corridors' are dark as a tomb.

Like the saber trees (see pg. 189), the shrubbery is semi-metallic, making it difficult to hack through or set on fire—though PCs will almost certainly attempt to do so. Cutting a swath requires an edged weapon, a Tough (-2) Strength check, and about 5 minutes' worth of work. A Calamitous Failure fouls the weapon's edge, reducing its base damage by one step. Any fires set will only smoke heavily for a couple minutes before dying. Either act of vandalism draws a scarecrow in d6 rounds.

As rumors attest, the shrubbery is also mobile. The alien plants routinely uproot themselves and migrate, thereby 'resetting' the maze's layout. PCs can hear this

process as a vague rustling, audible in the distance. The constant change makes attempts to map the labyrinth or otherwise track progress (like the old winding string trick) useless. It also allows the GM to spring encounters as desired, without having to refer to a keyed map. However, PCs moving 'forward' will eventually reach Sforza's manse at the center of the maze, and those moving 'back' will eventually exit. The living labyrinth thus presents a time-consuming obstacle, but not an insurmountable one.

PITCHER PLANT TRAP

This encounter occurs while wandering the hedge maze. The 5' wide maw of a huge, subterranean pitcher plant is hidden in the shadowed ground ahead. Spotting the mouth requires a Tough (-2) or Moderate (0) Mind check (the latter if a light source is available). Otherwise, the only clue is a sudden, vinegary-sweet smell lingering on the air.





The first PC to step on the mouth falls into the pitcher plant's digestive gullet, unless a Hard (-1) Agility check is made. Success means the hero manages to catch hold of the ground nearby and crawl out. Otherwise, the unfortunate falls 8' into a shallow pool of acid, taking 1 pt. of lasting lifeblood per round until they can somehow get out.

The gullet walls are too slippery for climbing. 10 or more points of damage inflicted by a sharp weapon from inside the plant makes enough holes for the acid to drain out. As the pitcher is surrounded by loose earth, a PC who cuts their way through can eventually dig to the surface.

Note that escaping from the trap offers the *perfect* opportunity for a scarecrow attack, whilst the PCs companions are distracted trying to help.

SABER TREES

There are several of these semi-metallic trees planted around the labyrinth, though heroes will likely give them a wide berth after an initial encounter. The trees have scaled bark and numerous branches bearing long, sword-like fronds. If approached within 5,' the branches violently whip out in several directions, necessitating a Moderate (0) Agility check to avoid d6L+1 damage. The branches then slowly 'cock' themselves back into a ready position.

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 1 | Attack Special |
| Agility — | Damage d6L+1 |
| Mind -3 | Defense 0 |
| Appeal — | Protection d6-2 |
| Lifeblood 6 | Fear — |

LEECH GRASS

Yet another alien plant, this one from a Venus-like death world, leech grass appears as a patch of yellowed, dry weeds growing across a section of the hedge maze. This desiccated appearance is a predatory ruse; if anyone tries to pass over it, the grass springs to life, elongating as it attaches a series of toothsome suckers.

The process doesn't require an Attack Roll. Instead, roll d6L; if this gets past the target's protection, enough suckers have attached to do d3 points of lasting damage per round. A person so caught can escape with a Moderate (0) Strength check, but will take d3 damage as the teeth rip free.

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 0 | Attack Special |
| Agility — | Damage Special |
| Mind -3 | Defense 0 |
| Appeal — | Protection 0 |
| Lifeblood 5 | Fear 1 |

THE TOPIARY

A large clearing hosts an immaculately kept topiary, with a bubbling fountain of purple porphyry at the center. The shrubbery has been trimmed into various geometric shapes (spheres, cubes, cones) as well as life-size representations of animals, including a lion, tiger, bear, and hippogriff. Brass placards glint at the base of the creature-shaped growths.



The area serves as a trap for the idly curious. By staying on a central path leading to the fountain, PCs can pass through the area without trouble. However, if they stray too close to one of the dangerous creature topiaries, each hero doing so must attempt a Hard (-1) Mind check. On a failure, the beast comes to life and attacks!

This is an illusion, of course, but the affected PCs won't realize this during the fight. Run as a normal combat using the appropriate stats from the **Bestiary**—the hippogriff is a type of chimera (see pg. 154). Wounds sustained are treated as normal resolve damage; any hero brought to 0 or less goes unconscious rather than dying. To unaffected PCs, the character in question appears to be fighting a bush. They can still help out, however, by gamely slashing at the shrubbery; allow such heroes to join the 'combat,' though they can't take any damage, only inflict it.

In yet another example of Sforza's cruel sense of humor, the brass placards read:

IF YOU CAN READ THIS, YOU'RE TOO CLOSE!

S.

THE LOTUS POND

The labyrinth opens onto a clearing, most of which is taken up by a pond. Lotus flowers tinged with angry crimson streaks grow at the center. A one-man punt, 10' pole, and basket are beached nearby. The bright shapes of koi can occasionally be glimpsed in the murky water.

Sforza harvests scarlet nucifera here (see **Magic**, pg. 136) as a profitable sideline. If PCs are inclined, they can pole out and collect enough leaves to make several applications, provided they have ranks in alchemist, or simply sell the raw ingredients. However, this will likely invite a scarecrow attack at some point during the process.

Additionally, Sforza has cast a reoccurring Phantasm to harass intruders. Anyone at the center of the pond harvesting nucifera will glimpse a pair of large, gold-irised eyes with slit pupils glaring at them from under the water. They could belong to anything; a giant



pike, serpent, frog-like monstrosity, etc. The sight necessitates a Hard (-1) Resolve Check to avoid d6 normal resolve damage.

THE GROVE OF PENITENCE

Gnarled olive trees crowd this clearing. At first glance they appear unusually warped; closer scrutiny reveals the trunks are vaguely human-shaped, growing in wracked and awkward positions. Facial features can be discerned in the bark, invariably with sorrowful expressions. Most of the figures are female, with a few males here and there. Sforza has a bad habit of transforming ex-lovers and sorcerous rivals into trees, so that they can rue their mistakes over an extended lifespan.

PCs hear soft moans shortly after entering the grove. A tall, slender-sinewed man with vulpine features stands at the far end. He is rooted to the spot, literally—his forelegs are covered with bark and disappear into the soil. Viewing this partial transformation necessitates a Hard (-1) Resolve Check.



The unfortunate is Naram Singh, a master thief from the mysterious lands to the East, recently caught by Sforza while attempting to steal the Heart of Aminah. He behaves amiably enough, not just because of his predicament, but out of professional respect for anyone willing to brave Sforza's garden.

Digging up Naram in his present state will kill him; his feet and toes are now an extensive root system reaching for some 15' into the soil. The thief explains as much, knowing that otherwise he would have died by now from thirst and starvation. He needs a sorcerer or witch (not necessarily Sforza) to transform him back before he can escape. Towards this end Naram is willing to bargain. He knows the Heart is kept at the bottom of a deep well, and can give the approximate location relative to the grove. He also has 100' of silk rope with a hook coiled around his left shoulder.

If PCs can transform him on the spot (see below), Naram is more than happy to help them steal the Heart. He is, however, hopelessly treacherous, and will attempt to betray heroes sooner rather than later—especially once the Heart is recovered. Otherwise, Naram will bargain his knowledge against an oath the PCs return to help him. The oath he requires is a particularly long one, with phrases in an unknown language. If the GM is running *Hellflower* as part of a campaign, heroes who break their oath gain the *Hexed* flaw after the adventure is over.

Transforming Naram (or any of the other trees) back into human shape requires a Second Magnitude spell, along the lines of *Rescind* (see **Magic**, pg. 127). The caster takes a negative modifier of 3 (Sforza's Mind) as well as the spell's difficulty modifier on the Arcana Roll. An alchemist, given time, might also be able to come up with an effective antidote (an Uncommon or Legendary preparation; GM's call).

Transforming one of the other victims has a 1 in 6 chance of freeing **Verax of Scuta** (male) or **Thyaa the Terrible** (female), a Rival/Villain level character with rank 3 in sorcerer or witch, respectively. Hot for revenge against Sforza, either will offer to assist PCs on the adventure. However, like Naram, neither is the trustworthy sort, and will eventually betray the heroes. Freeing anyone else yields a Rabble (1-3 on d6) or Tough (4-6) NPC, grateful, but solely intent on escaping from the garden. Such a charitable action grants the transforming PC a Hero Point.

NARAM SINGH (RIVAL/VILLAIN)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities | |
|------------|------------------|----------------|
| Strength 1 | Initiative 0 | Lifeblood 11 |
| Agility 2 | Melee 1 | Resolve 11 |
| Mind 1 | Ranged 0 | Rival Points 5 |
| Appeal 1 | Defense 3 | Protection 0 |

Boons/Flaws

Alert
Cat-Like Agility
Arrogant

Careers

Worker 0
Merchant 0
Rogue 3
Assassin 1

Naram claims to have left the eastern lands from sheer boredom, having run out of any worthy challenges there. In truth, he fled after too many of his old exploits caught up with him. The master thief's pride will never allow him to admit this, however.

Normally, Naram prefers to use a katar (punch dagger; d6L+1 damage) liberally coated with cobra venom, though he has no weapons at present.

THE LOTUS IN HELL'S WELL

Armed with Naram's information, PCs can locate the well in a relatively short amount of time. Failing this, the GM can simply have them stumble upon the site, perhaps after additional encounters with dangerous plants and scarecrows. The well consists of a 3' tall stone ring, 8' in diameter, and roughly 90' deep. Though water glimmers at the bottom, a fall from this height is potentially fatal (3d6L damage). Naram's silk rope comes in handy here!

A rank smell of rotting vegetation, and a dim greenish glow grows stronger as PCs descend. Tendrils with fern-like fronds choke the water at the well's bottom, though amidst the chaos rests a serene lotus flower, its petals closed. The tendrils writhe on approach; an emerald vapor pours forth, to coalesce into the ghostlike form of an 8' tall, beautiful woman with bright green skin. Hovering over the lotus, she addresses PCs:





“So, Sforza, you return with more demands—wait, you are not that accursed sorcerer! Who are you, so bold as to invade my watery prison?”

The spirit introduces herself as **Aminah**, a captive of Sforza’s. Bitter tears spring forth as she describes her abduction: “I came to your world riding on a comet from my home, the green paradise of Naraka. Sforza was waiting for me. He cast me down into this well; bound me within, and amputated my limbs.”

As she speaks, several thick stubs near the lotus thrash feebly in the rank water, useless.

“Under threat of torture I taught him the darkest of plant magics. Now he visits me in my sunless pit on a whim, to glean whatever scraps of knowledge I might still possess. I wither here; I die. Yet your fateful arrival might bring a means for revenge. Behold!”

The petals of the lotus curl back, revealing a lustrous emerald the size of a peach-pit, covered with a thousand tiny facets. The Heart of Aminah!

“Take my heart. I give it freely, as the vessel of Sforza’s doom. It will kill him more surely than any blade or poison; you have but to wake the heart with a few drops of blood, then press it against his flesh with my blessing. But do not let him see it before you do so! Else he will prepare counter-magics to void the enchantment.”

PCs with the *Detect Deception* boon can make a Moderate (0) Mind check to tell something is ‘off’ about Aminah’s whole story, but her alien origins make this impossible to pin down.

Unlike Naram, Aminah does not demand any promises or oaths; PCs are free to take the gem. As soon as this happens, her ‘ghost’ disappears with a sigh, as the lotus leaves wither and the tendrils droop with sudden lifelessness. If PCs *don’t* take the heart, she entreats them to do so, but is otherwise powerless to enforce compliance.

Despite its gemlike appearance, the Heart is organic; a seed, and a means of escape for Aminah from the well’s confinement. Whether PCs follow her instructions or not, taking the Heart can have disastrous consequences (see the **Damned if You Do** . . . sidebar, pg. 195).

THE GREENHOUSE

This one-story structure consists of two wings connected to a central dome, all done in Victorian style with gothic arches, wrought iron, and plate glass. Humidity fogs the panels, obstructing any view inside. Unlocked doors open onto either wing. Breaking a panel awakens Sforza (see **The Slumbering Sorcerer**, pg. 193) and brings any surviving scarecrows to the area in d6+2 rounds.

Inside, the greenhouse is steamy and hot. PCs with the *Feels the Heat* flaw incur a penalty die on most actions, as will anyone in medium or higher armor. The left and right wings are workrooms with a bizarre array of orchids, ferns, lichens, and creeping vines. Books have been stacked willy-nilly amidst the greenery, along with an assortment of alchemical equipment. Poking around yields some interesting finds (roll d6):

THE SLUMBERING SORCERER

1. A phial of white powder, marked 'Emergency.' Even a small amount scattered on any alien plants causes them to wither and die in a 3' by 3' radius. This can be used to make a quick escape from the labyrinth, clear a path through the sanguine blooms in the domed area, or even as a weapon against Aminah (see pg. 194).
2. A phial of greyish-green powder, also marked 'Emergency.' This supercharged fertilizer has the *opposite* effect of #1, above. When cast upon alien plants it causes rapid, dense growth, potentially choking off a section of the labyrinth, healing any lifeblood damage done to a plant creature (or increasing its lifeblood total), etc.
3. A dried flower, pressed between the pages of a particularly thick grimoire. Inspection reveals the flower has a human face, frozen in a horrified expression. This necessitates a Hard (-1) Resolve Check.
4. A vial containing a pinkish-hued unguent, marked 'Remorse.' If smeared over one of the olive trees in the Grove of Penitents, including Naram, it restores full human form. There is only enough for one application.
5. D3 preparations of scarlet nucifera. Useful for restoring AP (though addictive), and highly valuable besides.
6. A potted corpse flower. Anyone who gets a good whiff of its horrid stench must pass a Tough (-2) Strength check or take 2d6 fatigue lifeblood damage.

Interior doors at the far end of either wing open onto the domed chamber.



Sforza the Scarlet Dreamer sleeps at the center of the domed room, surrounded by beds of white, rose-like flowers with thorny stems (sanguine blooms; see **Bestiary**, pg. 170). The humid air here is intoxicatingly sweet, thanks to the flowers' narcotic perfume. PCs trying to pass through the beds without taking precautions, such as holding their breath or wrapping a cloth around their nose and mouth, must make a Moderate (0) Strength check to avoid falling asleep. The vampiric flowers are quick to feed on those who succumb; hopefully, their conscious companions can drag them from the room before this happens.

Sforza reclines on an ebony couch, hands folded over his chest. This peaceful repose is guarded by a 6" thick slab of Invisible (as per the spell), leaded glass, magically suspended 1" above his body. Striking the glass wakens Sforza instantly, as does attempting to disturb his body in any way. If a greenhouse panel was broken earlier, the figure under the glass is a Simulacrum (see **Magic**, pg. 128), and the sorcerer is waiting to ambush heroes in an adjacent wing, possibly with Pumpkin Head as backup.

Though upset at having his rest disturbed, Sforza is impressed by anyone managing to penetrate so far into his sanctum. He attempts to talk first, relying on spells like Fetters or Mesmerize to incapacitate heroes if necessary, so he can get the whole story.

If PCs follow Aminah's instructions:

Pressing the blood-soaked Heart into Sforza's flesh requires an Attack Roll. On a failure, or if Sforza can see what the PC is attempting, he shrieks a warning as described in **If Sforza gets wind of Aminah's plan**. Once the seed touches his skin, the sorcerer is indeed doomed. The Heart sinks into him amidst screams of protest—which are choked off as a green tendril emerges from his throat! With horrifying speed, leaves and fronds burst forth all over his body. Aminah's new incarnation, using Sforza as so much potting soil, shreds him from the inside out. In seconds, the main tendril is pushing against the dome's glass ceiling, and questing roots thrust through the floor.



SFORZA (RIVAL/VILLAIN)

Witnessing this transformation necessitates a Tough (-2) Resolve Check. Hopefully, PCs get the bright idea to leg it, or they, too, will become plant-food (see **Endgame**). Dumping the phial of 'Emergency' white powder on Aminah while she's still (relatively) small might be able to kill the alien creature outright, or it may simply slow her growth long enough for PCs to make a speedy escape.

If Sforza gets wind of Aminah's plan:

"You fools! Don't you realize what that creature is? She came here on a comet from the green hell-planet Naraka, a reeking swamp world infested with her kind. Well it was I bound Aminah on arrival, or her tendrils would already be covering half this continent! Yes, I removed her palps—else she would have crushed you all and used your bloated corpses for nourishment!"

"A flower-demon, that one, a veritable fiend. She wanted you as her unwitting agents, to escape from the well and propagate swifter than a green tide. That 'jewel' everyone whispers about is naught but her seed. Wait, you didn't touch it, did you? With your bare skin?!?"

If necessary, Sforza burns a Rival/Villain point to invoke Diabolical Plan (see *Everywhen*, pg. 93). This allows him to gain priority and reel off the dialogue above, before PCs can attack. If one of the heroes did touch the Heart as described, Sforza bids them to examine their fingers. Minute, hairlike tendrils can be seen growing from the point of contact. The sorcerer attempts to capitalize on this, explaining he alone has the means of stopping the alien infection. Perhaps the heroes would be willing to run some errands for him, in exchange for the cure . . .

If PCs skipped the well encounter:

Heroes who simply bypassed Aminah and her well still need a climactic end to the adventure. In this case, Sforza attacks on general principles, perhaps as his surviving scarecrows come crashing through the glass for reinforcement. However, he saves a Rival/Villain point to attempt a Timely Escape.

If Sforza is killed, Aminah's limbs eventually grow back, meaning she can climb out of the well and begin infesting the Earth as planned. See **Endgame** for details.

| Attributes | Combat Abilities | |
|------------|------------------|----------------|
| Strength 0 | Initiative 0 | Lifeblood 10 |
| Agility 0 | Melee 0 | Resolve 13 |
| Mind 3 | Ranged 0 | Rival Points 5 |
| Appeal 1 | Defense 2 | Protection 0 |

Boons/Flaws

Knowledge/Learned (Plants)
Pact
Addicted/Cravings
Forfeit Soul
Obsession

Careers

Sorcerer 3
 Alchemist 1
 Scholar 1
 Farmer 0

Sforza appears as a tall man with corpse-pale skin, sharp features, and the shadowed eyes of an insomniac, despite his sleeping habits. He wears a hooded robe of brown homespun. The sides of his mouth and fingertips are stained crimson; sure signs of a scarlet nucifera addict.

At least a century old, Sforza bartered his soul long ago (hence the *Pact* boon). He takes pains to keep his past a mystery, though some of his ex-lovers in the Grove of Penitence could perhaps shed light on this. What is known is his penchant for traveling to alien worlds and obscure hells to collect flora.

If forced to physically fight, Sforza resorts to using a pair of garden shears (d3 damage).





DAMNED IF YOU DO . . .

If PCs opt to take the Heart of Aminah without confronting Sforza, their troubles aren't over. As noted earlier, touching the seed with bare skin results in a slow infestation of tiny green tendrils, which will eventually cover the hero's body. No healer, physician, or alchemist can be found to stop the spread (though the white 'Emergency' powder might be effective if PCs managed to grab it). This implies only Sforza might possess a cure—and PCs will have to brave his garden once again.

ENDGAME

If released, Aminah swiftly grows into a kraken-sized plant monster, dominating the garden and sending out tendrils to spread even further. If PCs want to clean up the mess they created, this could serve as an impetus for further adventurers, as they strive to thwart a triffid-like invasion. S&S heroes aren't generally known for public service, however; more likely they'll just want to vacate the area. As a result, this section of the campaign map will turn a uniform green . . .

If sold, the Heart of Aminah does, indeed, yield a fortune. Whoever buys it will end up getting infected though, which means the purchaser may want to have a word with PCs—if he or she can still talk!





WILD NIGHT IN ULTHMAR

A new thieves' guild, the Five-Finger Free Company, has muscled its way to the top of Ulthmar's criminal underworld, with a reputation for staging bold heists. They might have just bitten off more than they can chew, however.

The thieves cleaned out the family crypt of the Great Tyrant himself, hereditary ruler of Ulthmar. Their score? The Tyrant's grandfather's remains, a complete skeleton coated in platinum and strung together with silver wire. The 'eyes' are sapphire cabochons, worth a fortune in themselves. Shortly after the theft, the Company established communication with the Tyrant and are offering to ransom back the remains—one bone at a time.

Now every crook in Ulthmar, from light-fingered servants to criminal masterminds, is trying to figure out where the Free Company's holed up. Even the court sorcerers are grilling their infernal informants for the location, but so far, no luck.

Naturally, the PCs figure they can do better.

(Wild Night is gritty urban adventure, pitting heroes against the S&S trope of a crime-ridden port city, rife with a colorful underworld. A series of goose chase encounters eventually leads to a climactic battle aboard a 'haunted' sloop. Along the way, PCs meet a motley assortment of rogues, some of whom are dangerous while others merely desperate. Potentially, all this occurs over the course of a single crazy night.)

As the title implies, this adventure draws inspiration from S&S grandmaster, Fritz Leiber. A darkly humorous vein runs through the encounters, with an emphasis on 'dark,' providing plenty of opportunity for memorable role-playing. Though Wild Night isn't intended as a bloodbath, heroes looking for violence will certainly find it. Criminals have a reputation to protect, after all.)



START

Each PC has a lead on where the Five-Finger Free Company is located. None of these leads are correct, having been planted by the Company as part of a disinformation campaign. However, by following up on them, disparate heroes can be drawn together into a group (if necessary), before finding the clue that points to the *real* hideout.

Thieves' guilds usually operate out of 'fronts,' that is, some back room of a legitimate (or less than legitimate) business, rather than maintaining a formal presence. Though Ulthmar hosts a teeming underworld, no criminal organization is brazen enough to advertise their whereabouts.

The following are rumored to be potential locations of the Free Company's headquarters. PCs are aware of the general background associated with each:

- **Puig's Poke**

'The lowest dive in Ulthmar,' where the absolute bottom-layer of criminal scum go to drink. Much droze traffic (see sidebar, opposite) is said to take place here. The bar is tended by a trained baboon.

- **The House of Defecation**

A public lavatory with a dubious reputation, whose back alley is an unofficial dueling site for criminals.

- **Hell's Seraglio**

A temple dedicated to the Nine Sublime Virgins, practicing sacred prostitution. Hell's Seraglio is the temple's street name, referring to the crypts beneath and 'unusual' prostitutes working there.

- **The Parlor of Peaceful Repose**

A cut-rate mortuary and crematorium, run by the friendly Barbiano brothers. **Paolo Barbiano** gathers up the dead nightly with his 'corpse-cart' as a public service.

If there are more than four PCs, then some will get the same lead. If there are less than four, PCs can get multiple leads, or the adventure can be run with fewer encounters—see **Different Hooks for Different Crooks**.



ULTHMAR

Ulthmar is a chilly port city located on a river delta. Plagued by heavy fogs, corruption, and crime, the metropolis has seen better days. Once-resplendent public works lie cracked and forgotten, as the frenzied populace goes about their pursuit of filthy lucre.

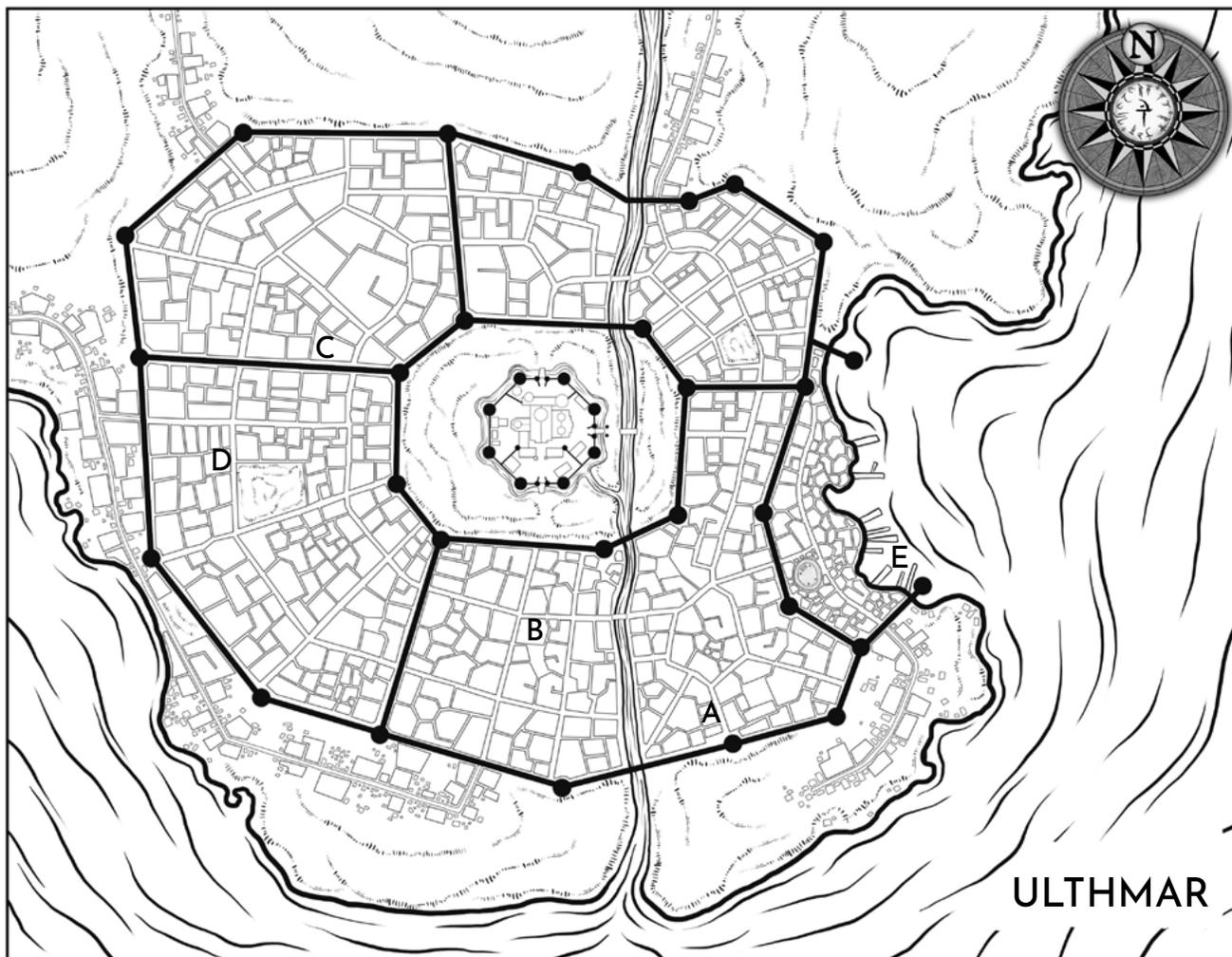
Ulthmar's wealth derives from grain exports. River barges carry wheat from outlying farms along the delta, to be stored in massive stone silos near the harbor and shipped across the sea. The city's reputation as a breadbasket cemented its prominence for centuries; however, the ruling family has since fallen into decadence, and younger city-states have arisen to challenge Ulthmar's monopoly.

The current Great Tyrant has survived a score of assassination attempts and two popular uprisings during his reign. He has done so by maintaining complete isolation, communicating with only a handful of favorites through messages shoved under the gilded doors to his sanctum. This hopeless paranoia allows for much intrigue among the royal family.

Another problem undermining the city is a new drug, called *droze*. This is actually ergot, harvested from neglected silos where the grain has been left to rot. Droze induces pleasant, calming hallucinations—as well as dry gangrene in fingers and toes after continued use. Unfortunately, the drug is being distributed by the Grain Inspectors Guild, who supplement their meager wages with the profits.

Ulthmar exemplifies a Waning culture (see pg. 19), with the duplicitous, maritime, and mercantile traits.





KEY

- A: PUIG'S POKE
- B: THE HOUSE OF DEFECCATION
- C: HELL'S SERAGLIO
- D: THE PARLOR OF PEACEFUL REPOSE
- E: SLIP 34

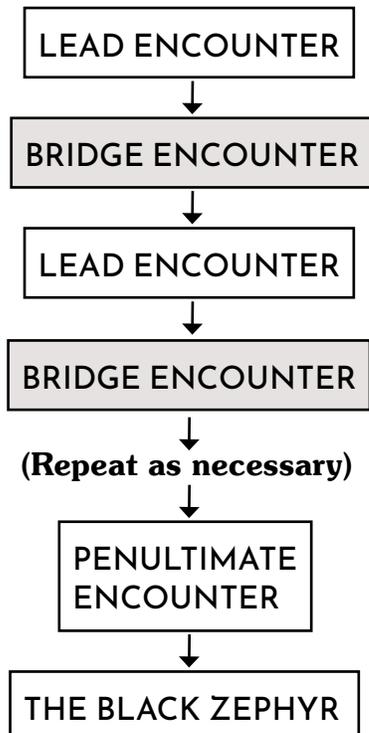
DIFFERENT HOOKS FOR DIFFERENT CROOKS

The four 'lead' encounters are modular and can be run in any order; they're red herrings, intended to get PCs moving. The GM can opt to use fewer (especially if playing with a smaller group) and thereby make the adventure shorter, or even add a couple, stretching play across several sessions.

Additionally, there are two 'bridge' encounters (**The Sheep's Feet Vendor** and **The Palanquin Bearer's Guild**) to run between the 'leads,' while the heroes are traveling from point A to point B. These ultimately direct PCs to the final encounter, **The Black Zephyr**, an abandoned sloop used by the Five Finger Free Company as their base of operations.

If PCs haven't met previously, the GM can have them run into each other as they follow up on their respective leads, rather than having the group all form at once. For example, player A, with the lead for **Puig's Poke**, can meet up with player B there while investigating, who in turn has the lead for **Hell's Seraglio**. And so on. Establishing the 'party' in this manner has a more organic feel than having all the heroes start in a tavern, though it means some players will have to wait until their characters are encountered.

FIG. 1: ADVENTURE STRUCTURE



PUIG'S POKE

Ulthmar's lowest dive is situated in an alley between two tenement hovels, so tall and dilapidated they lean together to form a roof. A plank set atop two crates forms the bar, and the only drink dispensed is 'leavings,' a mixture of various liquors, ales, and wines poured from the dregs of near-empty containers. The proprietor, Old Puig himself, lies facedown drunk behind the bar most of the time. Patrons toss an iron bit into a cup before ladling themselves a filthy mug of slate-grey liquor. Puig's pet baboon, **Sencha**, oversees the transaction, flashing her four-inch canines at anybody who gets a clever idea (see pg. 141 in the **Bestiary** for stats).

One or more PCs have heard there's a snitch hanging out at the Poke who knows the location of the Free Company. Unfortunately, the only customer here

who looks semi-conscious is a rough bit of business perched atop a barrel. He readily gives his name as "Shadowkin" to anyone who asks, an edgy moniker reinforced by a hooded black cloak, eyepatch, and more than a dozen knives strapped to various places on his body.

In actuality, 'Shadowkin' is **Cernig**, an impressionable young member of the City Watch, who fancies himself an expert at undercover work. Aware of the Poke's reputation for selling droze, he is trying to arrange a 'buy' of the drug. However, everyone at the bar, including Sencha, knows he's with the Watch and are pointedly ignoring him.

Cernig approaches PCs if they don't approach him first. Several of his knives fall out and clank against the alley floor in the process. Grimacing, he whispers "You're a likely-looking bunch. You have anything for me?" Cernig means droze, though the heroes might mistake him as asking for his snitch's fee. Let the comedic misunderstandings commence!

Rebuking or otherwise running off young Cernig earns PCs a round of polite applause. Leavings are on the house! Otherwise, a Watch patrol eventually shows up at the mouth of the alley and calls for Cernig to start his shift. Still trying to remain 'in character,' the red-faced *poseur* pretends like he's about to be hauled off to the gaol.

CERNIG (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 0 | Attack +0 melee |
| Agility 0 | Damage d6L |
| Mind 0 | Defense 0 |
| Appeal 0 | Protection 0 |
| Lifeblood 5 | Resolve 5 |

Cernig is the S&S equivalent of a 'wannabe' tough guy, who, unfortunately, doesn't have much going for him. Treat as a rank 0 soldier with the *All Thumbs* and *Naivety/Gullible* flaws.



THE HOUSE OF DEFECATION

This public lavatory was built by decree of the third Great Tyrant during Ulthmar's golden age. The structure has since fallen into partial ruin, though two privies remain unclogged and see regular use. A rear wall forming part of the notorious back alley still has bits of a mosaic, depicting pleasant pastoral scenes. This mural has been defaced with obscene graffiti, as well as the curious marks of a thieves' cipher used by various gangs to communicate. At the GMs option, some recently scrawled code could offer clues to another (false) 'lead' site.

One or more PCs have heard a rumor members of the Five-Finger Free Company are holding council in the back alley. A crucial meeting has been scheduled for tonight.

There is indeed something big about to go down, but not what PCs have been led to believe. The alley has become an arena for a sort of 'fight club' featuring someone's cruel idea of sport. However, things aren't going to go well for the fight's wretched organizers, and rough justice will soon be had.

When PCs arrive, a small crowd has already gathered in the alley, with people holding up fingers and shouting bets. A gaunt man in a fur-trimmed robe steps forth; this is **Thales**, an unscrupulous fight promoter. "Welcome to the evening's main event," he announces, waving a gilded staff. "We've got a spectacular matchup on the card tonight. To my right, drawn from the frozen forests of the North, comes the ultimate ursine marauder. You know him, you love him; he's Bjorn the Bear."

Cheers erupt for a tall, somewhat paunchy bald man with a long blonde beard. His eyes are bleary from drink and lack of sleep.

"And in this corner, fresh from the East Gate, a stranger to our city. He's got a bellyful of nothing and pockets stuffed with broken dreams, but by the Tyrant, there's a gleam in those bloodshot eyes! I give you the, ah, Raggedy Vagabond!"

Relative silence greets the contender, a beggar on the youngish side, not too emaciated, with some spring in his step. This last is due to a recent meal, the man's sole payment for his bout.

Unless heroes intervene, the 'Beggar's Battle' commences, and the two fighters close for brutal, no-holds-barred unarmed combat. Bjorn gets the initial



upper hand due to his size and strength, but the wily Vagabond manages to seize his beard and pull out a shock of hair. Wary now, the contestants begin circling each other. The lull angers the crowd; muttering imprecations, Thales pushes Bjorn into the contender, causing both to topple. The two exchange looks as a Spartacus moment passes between them. With a nod, Bjorn rises and breaks Thales's jaw with a savage roundhouse! The Vagabond, meanwhile, kicks a howling spectator full in the stomach, causing him to spew meat pie. Chaos descends!

The crowd's cheers turn into shrieks of terror as the alley turns into a human stampede. Depending on how close PCs are to the action, they may need to pass a couple Moderate (0) Agility checks to race out of the narrow space and avoid being knocked down for d6 fatigue damage. A more creative and daring action, like an acrobatic flip or climbing up the alley wall, could potentially get the hero to safety in one round.



At the GMs option, if this scene is being used to introduce a hero, the PC could serve as a stand in for the Raggedy Vagabond (but only if this doesn't offend the player's sensibilities). Additionally, if PCs intervene on Bjorn and/or the Vagabond's behalf, the two Toughs might be willing to accompany them on the adventure, or even alert heroes to one of the 'lead' or 'bridge' encounters.

THALES (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 0 | Attack +0 melee |
| Agility 0 | Damage d6L |
| Mind 1 | Defense 2 |
| Appeal 1 | Protection 0 |
| Lifeblood 5 | Resolve 6 |

A rogue with a penchant for blood sports, Thales was ejected from an inland city for bear-baiting and other fights involving animals. Since arriving at Ulthmar he's hit on his new 'Beggar Battles' schtick, which has proven popular so far. He dreams of one day managing gladiators in the 'big time.'

Treat as a rank 1 rogue, rank 1 entertainer with the *Glib/Silver Tongue* boon. His gilded staff can be used as a 2H weapon (d6L damage).

BJORN THE BEAR (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 2 | Attack +2 melee |
| Agility 0 | Damage d3+1 |
| Mind 0 | Defense 0 |
| Appeal 0 | Protection 0 |
| Lifeblood 7 | Resolve 5 |

A former seaborne trader from the north, Bjorn was forced to beg in the streets of Ulthmar after his ship lost all her cargo. Treat as a rank 1 sailor, rank 1 beggar. He has the *Brawler* boon.

RAGGEDY VAGABOND (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 1 | Attack +1 melee |
| Agility 1 | Damage d3 |
| Mind 0 | Defense 1 |
| Appeal 0 | Protection 0 |
| Lifeblood 6 | Resolve 5 |

This mysterious stranger is likely a bandit fallen on hard times, given the outlaw's brand on his left shoulder. Treat as a rank 1 rogue, rank 1 beggar. Like Bjorn, he has the *Brawler* boon.

HELL'S SERAGLIO

The Temple of the Nine Sublime Virgins once housed an actual religious order, fallen into disrepair until **Sister Ibis** and her crew restored the place, 'classing it up' with cheap marble facades, threadbare tapestries, and stolen furniture. The bordello's thin veneer of respectability is easily seen through if anyone bothers, though few clients care to. The Sublime Nine themselves are kept busy all night long, in secluded alcoves off the porticoed courtyard. 'Libations' and drinking couches are arrayed around a statue of an ancient fertility Goddess, hauled over from some remote isle across the sea.

One or more PCs have heard the Free Company has taken over Hell's Seraglio, a sideline venture run out of the crypts beneath the temple. The gang's members have allegedly disguised themselves as prostitutes.



Curtains screen the Seraglio's entrance, a narrow set of stairs leading beneath the nave. Sister Ibis, who serves as both madam and bouncer, explains this special part of the temple is strictly members only—though membership can be purchased on the spot. If PCs comply, Sister Ibis escorts them down, enjoying the theater of this 'descent into the underworld.' "*I will be your personal psychopomp,*" she explains, "*as we explore the wretched pleasures of hell together!*"

The crypt ceiling is low, forcing the 7' tall Ibis (and likely any barbarian PCs) to stoop. Light gutters from brass lanterns and shoals of red candles. Coupled with a thick incense-haze, the subterranean chamber really does resemble a level of hell. Sister Ibis announces that an "unusual" selection of companionship can be had here, "*for any—and I mean any—taste.*" Titters, howls, and shrieks echo from behind silk-shrouded niches, prompting the imagination to run wild about what might be going on.

PCs looking for information, or who peek behind a silk curtain out of curiosity, encounter **Zemfira**, who is unoccupied at the moment. She appears as a pale young woman with thick black hair, wearing a gold mask and curious bodysuit made of fine golden mesh. Zemfira is a true dhampir, born of a vampire and a living parent. As such, she has no bones, but can 'hold herself together' for periods using sheer will, assisted by the confines of her special suit. There is a large ewer with twin handles next to her couch; if necessary, she can 'pour' herself into the container for quick transportation.

Zemfira is a sparkling conversationalist, a storehouse of odd lore and hair-raising tales from the frozen kingdoms to the north. She is also an information broker, and can (for a price) confirm Hell's Seraglio has nothing to do with the Five-Finger Free Company. At the GMs option, she can provide an additional clue; for some reason, the old **Sheep's Feet Vendor** (see pg. 205) has been linked with spreading rumors about the Free Company, though no one knows why.

SISTER IBIS (TOUGH)

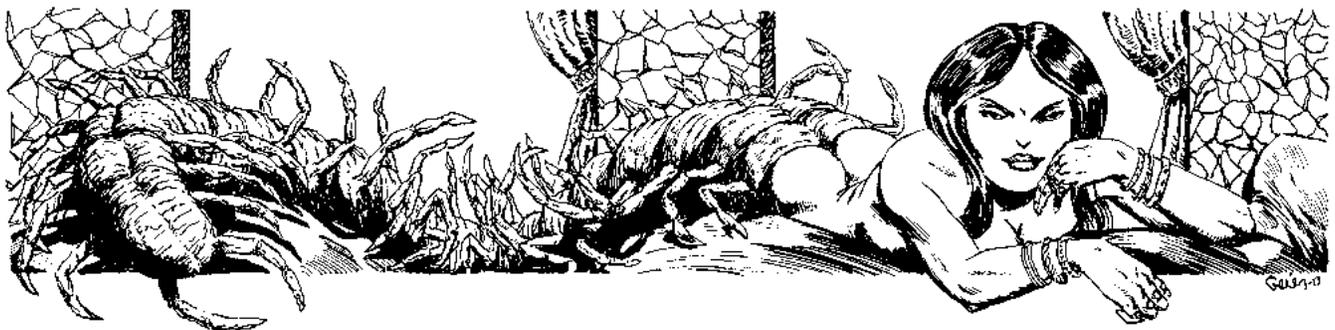
Attributes

Strength 2
Agility 0
Mind 0
Appeal 0
Lifeblood 7

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee
Damage d3+2
Defense 0
Protection 0
Resolve 5

Tall, with square shoulders and prominent hands (whose knuckles are thickly calloused), Ibis wears a flowing white dress and a gauzy veil covering the lower half of her face. As noted previously, she runs security for both the upper and lower levels of the temple. Treat as a rank 1 entertainer, rank 1 rogue. Ibis has the *Mighty Fists* boon, allowing her to add her full Strength to unarmed attacks.



ZEMFIRA (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 0 | Attack +0 melee |
| Agility 0 | Damage d3 |
| Mind 1 | Defense 2 |
| Appeal 1 | Protection 0 |
| Lifeblood 5 | Resolve 6 |

Naturally curious, Zemfira enjoys the company of the living and would like to travel further among the kingdoms of the south. Treat as a rank 1 temptress, rank 1 entertainer. She has the *Attractive* and *Night Sight* boons, as well as the supernatural/demonic power *Malleable Flesh* and *Unsettling* flaw.

THE PARLOR OF PEACEFUL REPOSE

The Parlor is a somber, one-story building set close to the Middens, a notoriously rough and tumble neighborhood of Ulthmar. Bars cover the windows, and a hanging sign depicts a white lily against a field of black. The front door is for legitimate customers only; all other business is conducted through an iron door off the back alley, connecting to the mortuary workroom. The community-minded Paolo Barbianco and his older brother, **Tomas**, run the place.

One or more PCs have heard the Barbiancos rent out a windowless 'safe room' for criminals on the lam, accessed by a secret door behind the crematory furnace. Key members of the Five-Finger Free Company are said to be hiding there.

When the heroes arrive, Tomas is in the workroom with 'clients' and Paolo is out making the rounds with his corpse cart, collecting the remains of hapless types who have perished on neighborhood streets, ostensibly to cremate them. Any knocks at the fortified front door are ignored. The back door is another matter; Tomas slides back a peephole and politely asks the nature of PCs business. A likely-sounding bluff stands a good chance of gaining entrance, as Tomas is a reasonable man, and the parlor sees a lot of night traffic.



Anyone invited back sees a large room with several stone biers and corpses atop. A trio of hooded figures, smelling like a charnel house, sit hunched in one corner. Tomas briefly introduces them as "grieving family," but says no more.

The trio are ghouls, of course, waiting for Paolo to arrive with the evening's provender. They won't attack unless attacked first, or if PCs try any strongarm tactics with Tomas. The elder Barbianco bluffly denies the existence of any secret doors or safe houses, and laughs outright at the idea of hosting the Five-Finger Free Company. "If only," he chuckles, "then I could get out of the stiffs business for good!"

As fate would have it, Paolo returns to the parlor d6 rounds after the outbreak of any hostilities, or if/when things start to escalate. Before wading in to defend his brother, the younger Barbianco blows on a curious whistle carved from a human fingerbone. The high pitched shriek summons a swarm of Rabble ghouls (2x PCs number, 3 lifeblood apiece) from the nearest catacomb entrance (see sidebar) d6+2 rounds later, to help out.

If PCs can keep things civil, a Hard (-1) Appeal check or bribe convinces Tomas to reveal his safe room, which really is concealed behind the crematory furnace. No gang of thieves are hiding inside, however, just some paraphernalia and a small shrine to a worm-like god. Tomas admits to trying his hand at necromancy, but doesn't seem to have the knack for it.



At the GMs option, the ghoul ‘customers,’ on overhearing the heroes interest in the Five-Finger Free Company, can offer (in a harsh, whispery voice) to trade information for fresh corpses, or the promise of same. The ghouls note **The Palanquin Bearer’s Guild** seems to be hot on the gang’s trail, spying on anyone who might have a lead and consolidating information. This tip turns out to be very true (see pg. 206).

TOMAS BARBIANCO (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 0 | Attack +0 melee |
| Agility 1 | Damage d3 |
| Mind 1 | Defense 2 |
| Appeal 0 | Protection 0 |
| Lifeblood 5 | Resolve 6 |

Well-spoken, Tomas is the ‘brains’ of the outfit, who handles most of the Parlor’s legitimate business. He has zero squeamishness about making money, but is generally honest in his own, twisted way. Though he isn’t aware of it, the corpse cart’s nightly rounds and ghoul’s voraciousness have kept disease outbreaks in the Middens at a record low for years.

Tomas has the *Artistic* boon, used to good effect when preparing bodies for viewing. Treat as a rank 1 craftsman, rank 1 rogue.

PAOLO BARBIANCO (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 3 | Attack +2 melee |
| Agility -1 | Damage d6+3 |
| Mind 0 | Defense 0 |
| Appeal 1 | Protection 0 |
| Lifeblood 8 | Resolve 5 |

Burly Paolo is the parlor’s ‘brawn,’ his muscles built up from endless cart-pushing and body-hoisting. He is protective of his older brother and pragmatic about the family business. “*Ghouls gotta eat too, you know.*” He always carries a short sword, though everybody knows he enjoys the protection of shadowy forces. Paolo has the *Giant Strength* boon. Treat as a rank 1 worker, rank 1 rogue.

GHOULS (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 2 | Attack +2 melee |
| Agility 0 | Damage d6L+1 |
| Mind 0 | Defense 0 |
| Appeal — | Protection 0 |
| Lifeblood 7 | Fear 1 |

These three are the above ground reps who regularly deal with the Barbiancos. They trade *anything*—jewelry, fine clothes, gold teeth—looted from burials recent and ancient for their ‘meat.’ If pressed, the ghouls attack with their ragged claws and filthy teeth in lieu of weapons.



THE GHOUL UNDERWORLD

Just like Paris and Rome, a collection of ancient catacombs rings Ulthmar, with narrow tunnels linking to the city sewers. Though shunned by everybody else, this subterranean labyrinth serves as habitat to Ulthmar’s ghouls. It also doubles as an ‘underground highway,’ allowing travel across the city while bypassing the Watch, rival criminals, inner walls, etc.

People who have done favors for the ghouls are sometimes gifted a bone ring allowing safe passage through the catacombs. Well, *usually* safe, anyways.



THE SHEEP'S FEET VENDOR

A popular figure on Ulthmar's bustling streets, **Svlenka** hawks sheep's feet fried with white wine and rosemary. The old woman has a knack for seeming to be everywhere at once, but never center stage, always pushing her cart on the periphery.

There is much more to this humble snack vendor than meets the eye. Though few know it, Svlenka is a spy for the Great Tyrant, the head of his so-called 'Flying Squad' who operate as secret police. Her overheard information has foiled many a heist against Ulthmar's prominent citizens. In addition to having the ears of a cat, Svlenka has received special training in an Eastern monastery, making her a more dangerous combatant than she appears.

Svlenka is the source of all the disinformation PCs have been receiving about the Free Company. She has been instructed to spread these rumors—she believes by the Great Tyrant himself, though it baffles her as to why. In truth, the orders came from his niece, **Chiaris**, who has been intercepting her uncle's messages between him and the Flying Squad.

Like **The Palanquin Bearer's Guild** (see pg. 206), Svlenka appears between 'lead' encounters. Ideally, she should be presented as background description, with PCs hearing her cries of "*Sheep's feet, get your sheep's feet here, nice n' greasy!*" PCs familiar with Ulthmar easily recognize her. However, as she keeps appearing, players may become suspicious. Svlenka is following the Palanquin Bearers, who in turn are following the heroes as they try to locate the Free Company.

Svlenka's skill and training make her a surprise badass. Her cart doubles as an arsenal of secret and improvised weapons (see sidebar, pg. 206). If approached with hostile intent, she first yells for help, summoning 2d6 Rabble (2 lifeblood apiece) loyal customers. "*Hey,*" comes the cry, "*someone's mugging the sheep's feet vendor! Get 'em!*" In addition to special weapons, Svlenka uses acrobatics to vault over the cart so that only 2 combatants can melee attack her each round.

Otherwise, Svlenka feigns ignorance if asked any pointed questions, falling back on her guise of a feeble-minded peddler. PCs with the *Detect Deception* boon might be able to see through this, however.

As a spy, Svlenka maintains a healthy sense of self-preservation. She will spend a Rival/Villain point to make a Timely Escape whenever prudent, abandoning her cart in the process.

Svlenka's cart contains some interesting clues. In the back of a cupboard, hidden behind sprigs of dried rosemary, are several messages stamped with the seal of the Great Tyrant. Each message is a false rumor, very similar to the 'leads' PCs received earlier:

The Five-Finger Free Company is hiding in the Old Owl theater, disguised as members of an acting troupe.

The Five-Finger Free Company is holed up in the gong farmer's shack, near the cesspool on Tithe Street.

The Five-Finger Free Company have a base in the riverfront warehouse, behind the Stevedore's Guild.

And so on. This revelation should have players scratching their heads. Why would the Great Tyrant be spreading disinformation about the gang that robbed him?

SVLENKA (RIVAL/VILLAIN)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities | |
|------------|------------------|----------------|
| Strength 0 | Initiative 0 | Lifeblood 10 |
| Agility 2 | Melee 0 | Resolve 11 |
| Mind 1 | Ranged 1 | Rival Points 5 |
| Appeal 1 | Defense 3 | Protection 0 |

Boons/Flaws

Acrobat
Contacts/Friends in High Places
Keen Hearing
Dark Secret
Urbanite/City Dweller

Careers

Noble 0
Spy 2
Rogue 1
Merchant 1

Born to minor officaries in the Great Tyrant's court, Svlenka has spent a long career climbing the ranks of the secret police. She uses greasepaint and her



prematurely gray hair to accentuate her natural age of 38. Svlenka longs to quit the streets for a nice desk job (peddling is hard on the feet!), but her work is far too valuable for the Tyrant to place her anywhere else.

SVLENKA'S ARSENAL

These weapons all use Svlenka's ranged combat ability. She spends Rival/Villain points like water, bumping normal successes into Mighty ones.

- Dish of sizzling grease; does d6L damage and incurs a penalty die for d3 rounds afterwards when splashed on a target. Svlenka can opt to spread this effect between 2 adjacent targets. A Mighty Success causes blindness for the length of the combat.
- Hand crossbow; does d6L damage and is coated with a Tough (2) paralysis poison. On a failed Strength check, the target is paralyzed for d6+2 rounds. Range increment 15.'
- Jar of 'special essence' spices; target must pass a Hard (-1) Strength check or choke for d6 fatigue damage for d3 rounds, plus incur a penalty die. A Mighty Success causes blindness for the length of the combat.
- Red hot throwing skewers; does d3 damage + 2 points of environmental (heat) damage per round until pulled out (requires an action). Range increment 5.'
- Thrown cleaver; d6L damage. Range increment 10.'
- Smoke bomb; obscures a 15' radius area in oily black smoke. Svlenka uses this to facilitate a Timely Escape.

THE PALANQUIN BEARER'S GUILD

Headed by **Stout Talvys** and his enforcer, **Kirisk One-Hand**, this human taxi service has become an underworld force to be reckoned with. Palanquin

bearers need to pass a rigorous exam demonstrating their knowledge of Ulthmar's labyrinth streets. This, coupled with the overhearing of choice gossip, gives them an edge in criminal enterprise.

Stout Talvys is personally heading an effort to find the Free Company, using all the information at his disposal to check out potential locations. Once he's found their HQ, he plans to send in his small army of weak minds and strong backs to nab the platinum skeleton for himself!

First he's got to find it, however. Towards that end, he has been keeping tabs on the heroes as they investigate their leads. As with Svlenka, PCs first notice the palanquins and their bearers as part of the city's regular backdrop. After the first 'lead' encounter, however, a Moderate (0) Mind check spots a gilded palanquin that appears to be following them at a discrete distance. Any PC knowledgeable about Ulthmar recognizes the litter as belonging to Talvys, a self-styled crime lord.

If approached, the palanquin attempts to make a getaway, with the bearers using their knowledge of side-streets (and fleet feet) to their advantage. Pursuers will be drawn into an ambush as soon as they leave the well-lit thoroughfares. 2x PCs number Rabble bearers (3 lifeblood apiece) leap out of the shadows with clubs and knives, intending to slow the heroes down long enough for Talvys's litter to escape.

Even if PCs don't pursue, Talvys arranges a similar ambush for PCs at some point, ideally when they are travelling between their third and fourth 'lead' encounters. The composition is the same as described above, though the ambushers use clubs only and are restrained in their tactics; Talvys, suspecting the heroes have some vital knowledge about the Free Company, wants to interrogate them.

In the unlikely event PCs are defeated, they will be bound and dragged to the gilded palanquin, where Talvys and Kirisk ask a series of pointed questions about the Free Company's whereabouts. Finally convinced they know less than he does, a disgusted Talvys leaves them alive (but still bound) in some dark alley, at the mercy of the night.



PCs attempting to intimidate any captured bearers need only a Moderate (0) Strength or Appeal check to make them talk. They explain Talvys is trying to eliminate all the potential locations for the Free Company, one by one, until he at last finds their hiding place.

What Talvys doesn't know is that someone is watching him . . . (see **The Penultimate Encounter**).

STOUT TALVYS (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 0 | Attack +2 melee |
| Agility -1 | Damage d6L |
| Mind 2 | Defense 0 |
| Appeal 1 | Protection 0 |
| Lifeblood 5 | Resolve 7 |

Talvys has let himself go, vowing never to walk again after years of carrying his 'betters' up and down Ulthmar's streets. From his mobile HQ, the gilded palanquin, he's plotted several successful snatch-and-grab heists, but nothing big enough for his growing ego. Locating the Free Company will change all that.

If necessary, Talvys defends himself with a wickedly curved poniard (d6L damage). Treat as a rank 1 worker, rank 1 rogue with the *Lumbering* flaw and *Knowledge* (Ulthmar's streets) boon.

KIRISK ONE-HAND (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 1 | Attack +2 ranged |
| Agility 1 | Damage d6L |
| Mind 0 | Defense 0 |
| Appeal 0 | Protection d6-3 |
| Lifeblood 6 | Resolve 5 |

Talvys's enforcer is a tough northerner and expert at knife-throwing. She wears a bandoleer with a half-dozen daggers (d6L damage, range increment 10') slung across her chest. Treat as a rank 2 rogue with the *Missing Limb* (right hand) flaw and *Deadeye* boon.

THE PENULTIMATE ENCOUNTER

After PCs have exhausted their leads and met both Svlenska and Stout Talvys, it's time to start wrapping things up. The real location of the Five-Finger Free Company will soon be forthcoming!

As noted earlier, Talvys's systematic labors have not gone unnoticed. The ringleaders of the Free Company, Chiaris, and her 'pet' sorcerer, **Gennaro**, are onto the would-be crime lord, and have decided he's getting too close. Chiaris has dispatched a group of Winnowers (see sidebar, pg. 208) to kill him.

As PCs are leaving the site of their final 'lead' encounter, they smell smoke and see fire flickering from a darkened alley. Investigation reveals the gilded palanquin has been set aflame. Talvys lies on the ground nearby, clutching a sword-wound in his stomach. Kirisk sits with her back to a wall, bleeding out. Not far from her, a Winnower lies dead with a throwing knife through his eye socket. Bodies litter the blood-soaked alley; mostly the corpses of palanquin bearers, but a few armored Winnowers here and there as well.

Talvys has had his pockets turned out and most of his fine clothing cut away. Groaning, he begs PCs to rescue his "*precious notes*" from the burning litter, explaining there is a secret compartment beneath the seat. "*Hurry, or all my work will be for nothing!*" Though he doesn't realize it yet, Talvys is mortally wounded, as is Kirisk.

Flames lick the palanquin's gilded frame, causing 1 pt. of environmental heat damage per round to anyone close. A Moderate (0) Mind check can locate the secret compartment promptly, however, provided PCs listened to Talvys's directions. Inside is a detailed map of Ulthmar, already smoldering.





Writing in Talvys's careful hand covers the map. Up at the top, in large letters, reads a single line: **INSIDE JOB??** Below that, black 'X's' have crossed out nearly three dozen locations about the city—all false leads, spread by Svlenska. Four labeled locations have question marks next to them; Puig's Poke, The House of Defecation, Hell's Seraglio, and The Parlor of Peaceful Repose. However, there is a *fifth* location unfamiliar to the heroes, also with a question mark; Slip 34, in the harbor district. Talvys came up with that possibility himself.

Before he dies, Talvys explains the Winnowers were trying to locate any information he might have, then decided to just torch the palanquin and leave. Alternatively, if PCs weren't able to find the map in time, Talvys can gurgle out "*Slip 34*," and expire. The GM should deduct 1 XP/AP from adventure rewards if this occurs, however.



THE WINNOWERS

This is an elite order of bodyguards, warriors, and assassins, hand picked for ruthless temperament. Ulthmar's nobility makes regular use of them, though anyone with enough coin can employ their services. They are readily identifiable by silver badges depicting crossed sheaves of grain, and their sickle-like, khopesh swords.

Most Winnowers are rank 1 soldiers, rank 1 assassins. They are known for absolute discretion regarding clients and are expected to kill themselves rather than divulge information about employers (the *Obsession* flaw).

THE BLACK ZEPHYR

Slip 34 is easy enough to locate in the less-than-wholesome harbor district, as it lies empty among an otherwise crowded welter of docks and quays. The harbormaster (if woken up) can verify the spot is available for rent. However, anyone investigating can't help but notice a sinister looking, derelict sloop anchored a bowshot away, in the deeper waters of the harbor. This abandoned craft, *The Black Zephyr*, is the reason no one wants to rent the slip.

Dock workers refuse to look in the sloop's direction without making signs to ward evil. The *Zephyr* is rumored to be both haunted and cursed, which explains why no one has tried to scuttle the ship. Ghostly apparitions are said appear atop her decks regularly.

Naturally, such a shunned location would make the perfect hideout for anyone wanting to lie low. And thus, the *Zephyr* has become the Free Company's base of operations while they complete ransom negotiations.

PCs looking at the sloop for a protracted period get the feeling they're being watched. On a Hard (-1) Mind check, modified by ranks in barbarian, sorcerer, or witch, they glimpse a particularly large rat with a 'tonsure' of mange, watching them from atop a piling some 15' away. This is **Grivas**, Gennaro's Familiar, who alerts his master there might be visitors coming soon.

The sloop is parked in 30' deep of foul harbor water. PCs can 'requisition' a rowboat and attempt to board, or even try swimming out to the craft, though the latter will entail Strength checks with a negative modifier

equal to any armor protection (-1 for light, -2 for medium, -3 for heavy) to avoid exhaustion. Additionally, the water is very cold, causing 1 pt. of environmental fatigue damage per 10 minutes spent submerged.

GRIVAS (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength -1 | Attack +0 melee |
| Agility 1 | Damage d3 |
| Mind 2 | Defense 2 |
| Appeal — | Protection 0 |
| Lifblood 4 | Resolve 7 |

This grotesque rodent, the size of a small cat, has an oversized head and constant scheming expression. If attacked by PCs, he leaps into the greasy water and attempts to swim away. Killing him inflicts d6H resolve damage to Gennaro, but also makes the sorcerer doubly aware of intruders.

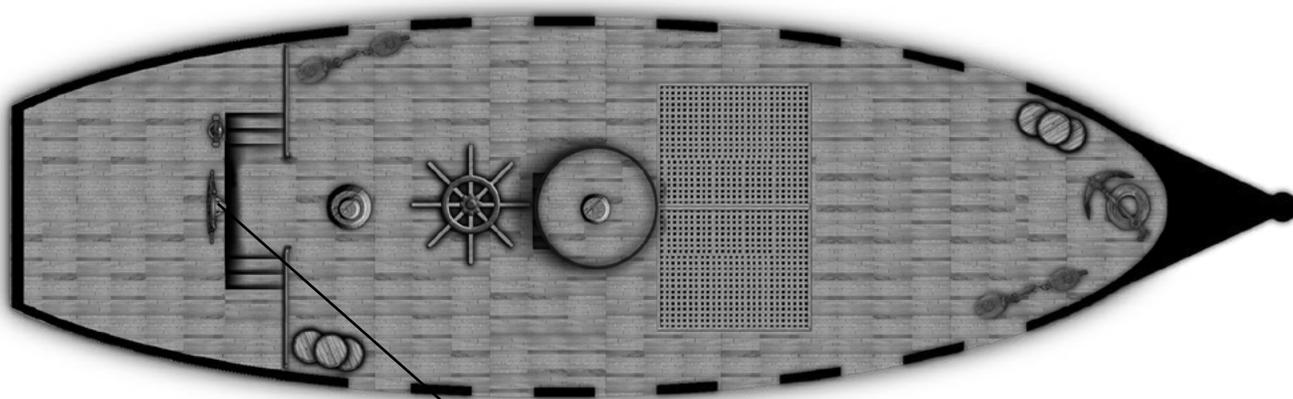
BOARDING ACTION

Approaching the sloop during daylight automatically alerts the sentries posted aboard (see below). At night, swimming PCs must each make a stealth check (see **Mechanics**, pg. 105) with a -1 modifier to avoid detection. Heroes aboard a boat need make only a single check, but if they haven't thought to muffle the oarlocks suffer a penalty die on the roll.

Whether they succeed with stealth or not, PCs hear a ghostly wail as they draw close to the sloop. The thieves on watch do this periodically at night to reinforce the ship's 'haunted' reputation. If detected, there is a second spooky effect: a bloated corpse is hauled up on a noose slung from the mainmast, and alchemical powders lit beneath it. A burst of lurid green light illumines the cadaver, which has its arms spread as if in warning (a Moderate Resolve Check). If this doesn't deter intruders, the sloop's crew goes to action stations.



THE BLACK ZEPHYR



The Aft Cabin

There are 1.5 x PCs number (round up) Rabble thieves aboard, armed with slings and knives, and at least 4 Tough Winnowers (+1 per PC over 4 in the party). If PCs are able to approach undetected, half this group will be on watch while the other half sleeps below decks. Otherwise, the thieves start casting sling stones and the Winnowers loose arrows at intruders. If this happens at night, everyone (including heroes returning fire) is at 4 on their Attack Rolls, due to the darkness.

The *Zephyr* has a low draught, making it relatively easy to clamber over the sides. However, the boards of her deck are warped, necessitating a Hard (-1) stealth check to move across without creaking.

RABBLE THIEVES

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 0 | Attack +0 melee |
| Agility 0 | Damage d3 |
| Mind 0 | Defense 0 |
| Appeal 0 | Protection 0 |
| Lifeblood 3 | Resolve 3 |

The rank and file members of the Free Company, recruited by Chiaris from other gangs. These thieves are more courageous than most, as they feel they are on the verge of securing the ransom money.

WINNOWERS (TOUGHS)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|---------------|------------------|
| Strength 1 | Attack +2 melee |
| Agility 1 (0) | Damage d6+1 |
| Mind 0 | Defense 0 (1) |
| Appeal 0 | Protection d6-1 |
| Lifeblood 6 | Resolve 5 |

These professional killers have been hired by Chiaris as bodyguards, and know not to ask any questions about what might be happening aboard the sloop. Each wears medium armor with an open-faced helm and carries a sickle-sword, buckler, and short bow. True to their contracts, they fight to the death.



THE AFT CABIN

At least 2 of the Winnowers will be positioned next to the door here, or all 4 if PCs have been detected. The cabin serves as private quarters for Chiaris and Gennaro. Tapestries and rich furniture have been brought aboard to make the room homier, though these niceties can't hide the rotting floorboards, rat droppings, and occasional skittering cockroach. Chiaris sleeps atop a canopied bed, while Gennaro gets the couch.

A locked strongbox containing the platinum skeleton is kept under the bed, surrounded by a magic circle of salt. This was placed by Gennaro to prevent scrying or other divination attempts to locate the remains.

At the sounds of any noise outside, Gennaro (already on alert from his *Familiar*), follows a pre-arranged plan. He binds and gags a willing Chiaris, before grabbing the strongbox and exiting via a secret panel in the rear wall. If necessary, he casts *Phantasm*, causing the illusion of a gorgon-like demon to walk out of the cabin and confront PCs, hopefully slowing them down. He then climbs into a skiff slung below the stern and attempts to paddle away. Unfortunately, said skiff is leaking, and the heavy strongbox, coupled with all that platinum, means he won't get far (see **Endgame**, pg. 212).

For her part, the bound Chiaris claims to have been taken captive by the Five-Finger Free Company and forced to help them steal the remains. Given her age and relatively innocent appearance, she puts on a good show. Chiaris is quick to add the Great Tyrant himself will reward the heroes handsomely for 'rescuing' her! None of the other members of the gang, or the oath-bound Winnowers, betrays her secret—PCs will have to figure that out on their own.

GENNARO (RIVAL/VILLAIN)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities | |
|------------|------------------|----------------|
| Strength 0 | Initiative 1 | Lifeblood 10 |
| Agility 1 | Melee 0 | Resolve 13 |
| Mind 3 | Ranged 0 | Rival Points 5 |
| Appeal 0 | Defense 1 | Protection 0 |

Boons/Flaws

Familiar
Magical Affinity (Illusions)
Obsession

Careers

Noble 0
 Alchemist 1
 Scholar 1
 Sorcerer 2

Gennaro's story is tediously familiar; feeling neglected at court, his talents unrecognized, the middle-aged sorcerer began dreaming of greater station . . . and then he met Chiaris. Besotted, first by her beauty, and later by her bold scheme to steal from the reliquary, the young woman kneaded him like clay with the promise (yet unfulfilled) of her affections. Gennaro's otherwise good sense has become useless; the only warnings about this one-sided relationship have come from Grivas, whose counsel the sorcerer completely ignores.

Gennaro has aristocratic features, a stubbly beard, and a paunch. His hairline makes him resemble Grivas more with each passing year. If confronted, he casts spells rather than physically fight.



CHIARIS (RIVAL/VILLAIN)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities | |
|------------|------------------|----------------|
| Strength 0 | Initiative 1 | Lifeblood 10 |
| Agility 1 | Melee 0 | Resolve 11 |
| Mind 1 | Ranged 0 | Rival Points 5 |
| Appeal 2 | Defense 2 | Protection 0 |

Boons/Flaws

High-Born

Contacts/Friends in Low Places

Greed

Careers

Noble 1

Temptriss 1

Rogue 2

Assassin 0

If heroes are somehow able to claim the relics for themselves, they inherit a host of problems. Essentially, PCs switch places with the Five-Finger Free Company, and now have a whole city after *them*, at least until they can arrange a ransom or otherwise divest themselves of the loot.

Heroes who see through Chiaris's flimsy deception, or otherwise attempt to turn her in, will have a difficult time proving her guilt to the Great Tyrant—Chiaris is his favorite niece. The much easier route would be to claim the generous reward money for her 'rescue' and move on, with the young thief now indebted to PCs for their silence. Of course, when have players ever chosen the *easier* route . . . ?

Chiaris, niece to the Great Tyrant, is also the head of the Five-Finger Free Company, who used her position to steal the platinum skeleton from under the noses of the palace guard. Suffering from youthful boredom as well as the usual inflated ego of aristocracy, she imagines herself a master thief, restrained from greatness by the duties of her station. When she wasn't filching pastries from the Great Tyrant's breakfast tray, she spent her childhood lounging in the family crypts, writing dark poetry—which is how she hit on the idea of stealing the remains.

Chiaris is a sleek young woman with olive skin, long dark hair, and almond-shaped green eyes. She usually wears a fur-trimmed robe of green silk, with a stiletto (d3 damage, see **Equipment**, pg. 79) concealed beneath.

ENDGAME

If Gennaro is able to attempt his watery escape, it won't end well. Weighted down by loot, his skiff slowly sinks into the frigid harbor. Unfortunately, the sorcerer can't swim . . .

The loss of the relics in the deep, murky water means that every treasure hunter and their brother will soon be crowding the bay, attempting to dredge or skin-dive for the strongbox. The presence of sharks, vicious competition, and undertows could make for an interesting adventure, should PCs decide to join in on the fun.



A PLAGUE OF SWORDS

While traveling through the green and pleasant lands of a Celtic-analog culture, PCs come across a village ravaged by a recent battle. The bizarre state of several corpses—some reduced to ash-mounds or frozen solid—suggest magic played a part. Heroes soon learn from a survivor that a once-friendly chieftain, **Casworon**, was behind the attack, and seemed intent on carrying off the village smith, **Owain**, along with many prisoners.

Entreated to pursue, heroes discover a sacred oak grove being burned for charcoal, and meet two of Casworon's henchmen, armed with strange, apparently cursed magic swords. They also have a chance to 'rescue' the young druid, **Ffion**, who can attest to the power of the enchanted blades. The nearby village of Dinwyth has been converted into an armed camp, apparently devoted to mass producing these swords, overseen by the captive smith, Owain.

PCs soon discover the horrible truth: an alien race known as the skraithe are using the blades to escape from their extra-dimensional prison. Can heroes stop the possessed Casworon before he frees the rest of his 'brothers' in a virus-like plague of swords and bloodshed?

(Plague is an 'alien invasion' scenario, set amidst the familiar fantasy tropes of soul-sucking magic swords and Celtic culture. Much of the enjoyment comes from players piecing together what's going on, though a vision-inducing plot device can help them figure it out. Good planning, with a healthy mix of bluff and distraction, will go a long way towards ensuring the heroes success, if not outright survival).

START

Heroes are travelling across the countryside, perhaps en route to a coastal settlement with access to ships. The area they are passing through is generally considered peaceful. Ahead, the moors give way to meadow, and the reassuring smell of woodsmoke heralds a nearby village. However, the smoke soon grows too thick for standard cookfires. The promised village has been razed to the ground; a burnt hillfort and palisade still stands, but the rest of the buildings



are heaps of cold ash. The smoke is coming from atop the hill.

PCs discover the remains of a pitched battle, strewn across the village grounds. A chariot lies overturned; the head of the horse pulling it has been cleaved lengthwise with near-surgical precision. The corpse of a spearman lies nearby, his body reduced to a human-shaped mound of ash. Another warrior's corpse has been completely desiccated. Other, normal corpses can also be found; decomposition suggests the battle took place at least a week earlier. Someone has been hard at work digging graves nearby.

Atop the hill, smoke pours from a circular hall with a (mostly) intact thatch roof. A pyre roars inside, with a blank-faced noblewoman and her crying newborn in attendance. The woman has rent her garments and covered her face with ash as befits a mourner. This is **Briaca**, who, along with her son, are the sole survivors of the village, Magh Muir.



“My husband lies atop the fire yonder,” she explains. “A noble chieftain, Kwyllion by name. Perhaps you’ve heard of him? He bade me and the babe to hide in a secret hollow beneath the hearth. I knew naught of the fighting, save the invaders came from Dinwyach and were keen to take our smith prisoner, above all else.”

Briaca admits to bafflement about the attack, as her husband and Casworon, the chieftain of Dinwyach, have been at peace the past ten years. “Close as brothers,” she adds. If asked about the strange conditions of the bodies outside, she nods. “Aye, magic was at work. The foulest kind. Look you at my husband’s corpse.”

Briaca motions towards the pyre. Though a fire blazes beneath him, Kwyllion’s blue-white flesh is frozen solid, and has yet to thaw. His fine mail shirt—a rarity in these parts—has been sheared open as if the links were made of paper, and the horrible wound beneath still seeps cold. The sword clasped across his chest has been sheared clean a couple inches above the hilt. Briaca notes with sad pride the weapon had been forged by their smith, Owain, widely reckoned as a master.

If PCs seem even slightly receptive, Briaca begs them to avenge her against Dinwyach. She explains her husband kept a rich treasure buried in the moors; if PCs can return with Owain, or even better Casworon’s head, she will gift them this hoard. Then she can leave Magh Muir and go live with her kin to the south.

As it happens, the path PCs have been taking leads to Dinwyach, so perhaps a reckoning with the chieftain there is fated!

BRIACA (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 0 | Attack +0 melee |
| Agility 0 | Damage d3 |
| Mind 1 | Defense 2 |
| Appeal 1 | Protection 0 |
| Lifeblood 5 | Resolve 6 |

A rank 2 noble, Briaca is in her mid-20’s, with curly chestnut hair. Her son’s name is Aneurin, and she worries for his future now that Kwyllion is gone. Briaca has several brothers among the southern clans whom she knows will take them in, but grieves the loss of her husband and Magh Muir. She has the *Inspire* boon.



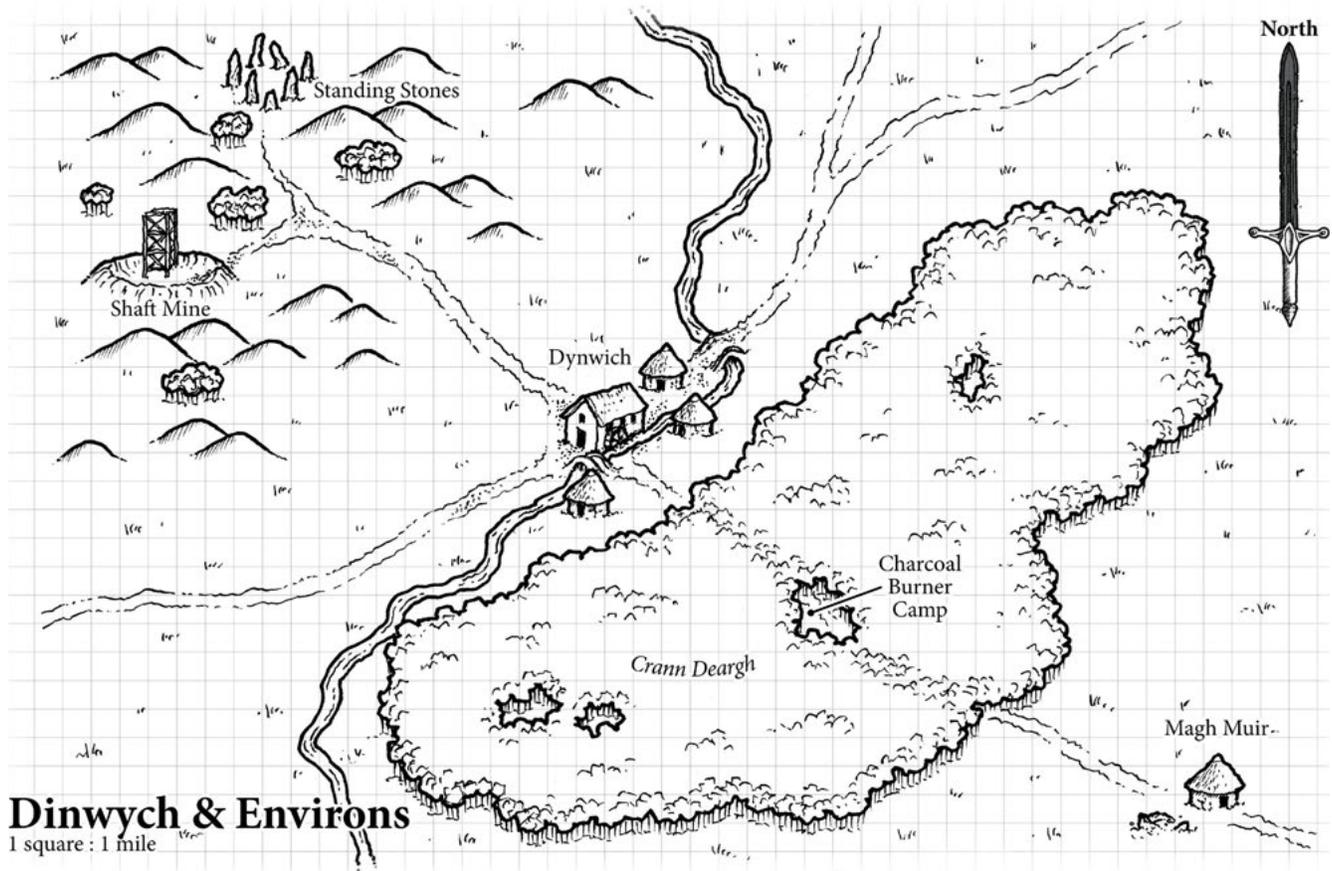
THE ALBANI PEOPLE

The Albani are a Tribal Celtic-analog culture native to Green Isle, with the agrarian, artistic, and raider traits—though this last is slowly being phased out as disparate clans unite to form larger and larger kingdoms. Presided over by wise druids and mighty chieftains, the Albani have a rich oral heritage of hero-cycles, riddles, and verse. Common starting careers for this culture are barbarian, entertainer (bard), farmer, hunter, and witch (druid).

THE CHARCOAL BURNERS

From the ruins of Magh Muir, the trail winds west through the dark woods of Crann Deargh. This is a worked forest of mostly ash and hazel; the trees are tended to grow straight branches for wattle. Any PC with ranks in druid, witch, or priest of a nature-oriented Divinity sense the area as special. Heroes with *Second Sight* spot movement out the corner of their eye, as nature spirits peer at them from behind trees.

Ancient oaks begin appearing, with carvings at their base recognizable by druids; these trees are not to be worked or cut down. However, shortly thereafter, PCs hear the ring of axes striking wood—and sharp cries of pain. Again, the smell of smoke carries down the trail.



Dinwyth & Environs
1 square : 1 mile

ENTER FFION

Ahead lies a scene of utter sacrilege: a charcoal-makers camp has been set up in the middle of a sacred oak grove. The trees are being felled (hardwood like oak makes the best charcoal), and the logs carefully burned in mud-caked mounds. Roughly two dozen men, women, and children are doing the work, 'hobbled' with ankle bindings that prevent them from running. 6 Rabble warriors of Dinwyth, painted in distinctive blue-gray woad, preside over the work party, making liberal use of corded lashes to speed things along.

Further observation yields more details. A young woman wearing the brown cloak of a novice druid has been tied to a tree. Around her lie several blue-cloaked corpses of senior druids. Farther back, a wagon loaded with wattle baskets of charcoal waits for more cargo. Lounging around the cart are a pair of Tough warriors, wearing mail shirts and armed with strange, black blades. The swords aren't kept sheathed, but held as if ready for use, despite the relaxed posture of the two men.

The Rabble are supposed to be keeping a watch on the tree line, but for the most part have their hands full with the workers. The two Toughs, **Aodh** and **Maeron**, seem more interested in talking quietly among themselves than anything else. Ergo, sneaking up on the camp shouldn't be impossible, especially if PCs wait until nightfall.

Heroes approaching the tree with the captive druid hear a snuffling sound. A badger, blind in both eyes, is chewing at her bonds. This is **Drewgi**, the *Familiar* of the young druid, Ffion. She cautions her would-be rescuers to silence; the badger will have her free in moments.

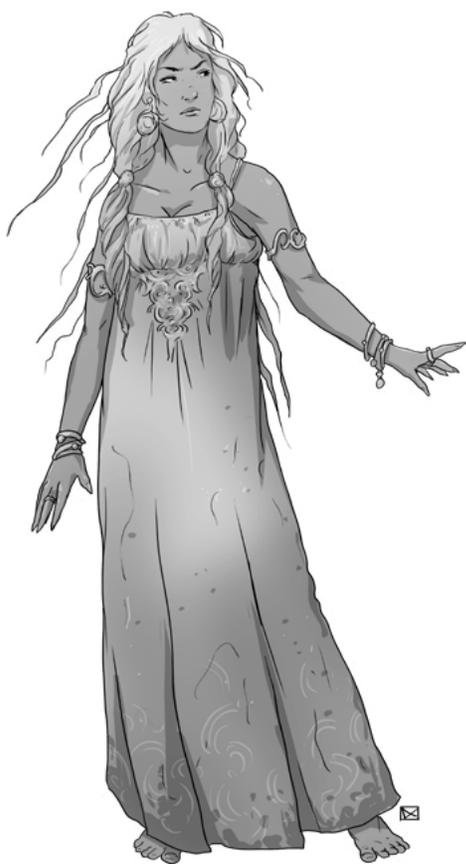
Ffion whispers what happened; warriors from Dinwyth attacked the sacred grove and put all the elder druids to the sword. She's not sure why she was spared, though the warriors seemed interested in taking as many able-bodied prisoners as they could. Dinwyth, and its chieftain, Casworon, have always respected the grove in the past. She has no explanation for the sudden betrayal.



Rather than flee the area, Ffion wants to free the work party and give her colleagues a decent burial. Perhaps the heroes could help with that? She warns PCs, however, about the strange black swords—she saw one miss a druid and cut clean through a tree trunk.

Ffion and Drewgi are willing to assist with whatever plan the PCs come up with. The workers are allowed to rest as soon as the sun goes down. Half the wood-painted Rabble and one Tough will keep watch while the other sleeps, then shift over at midnight.

Aodh and Maeron sleep on cloaks spread beneath the charcoal cart. If successfully snuck up on at night, PCs notice their eyes glimmer a pale orange when in complete darkness. They might also overhear the two speaking in a guttural, utterly alien language to each other at the change of watch.



FFION (HERO)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities | |
|------------|------------------|---------------|
| Strength 1 | Initiative 1 | Lifeblood 11 |
| Agility 1 | Melee 1 | Resolve 11 |
| Mind 1 | Ranged 0 | Hero Points 4 |
| Appeal 1 | Defense 2 | Protection 0 |

Boons/Flaws

Beast-Friend
Familiar

Careers

Hunter 1
Beastmaster 1
Witch 1
Priest 1

Ffion appears as a rugged young woman wearing her hair in loose braids. Born to hunter parents from the forests of Caer Myrrdch, she demonstrated a knack for animals and was sent to train with the druids of Crann Dearth. Now that her mentors have been slain, she seeks revenge against Casworon, as well as the source of the strange, corrupting magic she senses in the black blades. Towards this end she will prove a valuable ally to the PCs.

Ffion carries an athame (d6L+1) for spellcasting and self defense. At the cost of 1 AP, she can sense whatever her *Familiar*, Drewgi, does, sometimes to comical effect (see his description on pg. 217). She tends to use nature oriented spells as befits her druidic training; Call/Calm Beast, Fetters, and Summon Minor Spirits, but also Werelight and Witchesight (see the **Magic** chapter).

Ffion has 11 Arcane Points and 1 Faith/Fate Point.

DREWGI (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 1 | Attack +0 melee |
| Agility 1 | Damage d3 |
| Mind 0 | Defense 2 |
| Appeal 0 | Protection 1 pt. |
| Lifeblood 6 | Resolve 5 |

Blinded in a forest fire, wise Drewgi was nursed back to health by Ffion, and the two have formed a supernatural bond since. The sensory link they share goes both ways; when Ffion is in mental contact, Drewgi can see again through her eyes. He has the *Blind Fighting* and *Keen Smell* boons, the latter so acute as to sound ridiculous: “*Drewgi smells three men, one of whom has just killed someone; the other two reek of piss and ale.*”

AODH AND MAERON (TOUGHS)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|---------------------|
| Strength 1 | Attack +2 melee |
| Agility 1 | Damage d6H+1, Pen 2 |
| Mind 0 | Defense 1 |
| Appeal 0 | Protection d6-3 |
| Lifeblood 6 | Resolve 5 |

Formerly oath-bound warriors to Casworon, these two were among the first bestowed the ‘honor’ of wielding Skraithe blades (see sidebar). Now wholly possessed, their only motivation is to force humans into forging more of the magical swords, and thereby free their brethren from interdimensional prison.

RABBLE WARRIORS

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 0 | Attack +0 melee |
| Agility 0 | Damage d3 |
| Mind 0 | Defense 0 |
| Appeal 0 | Protection 0 |
| Lifeblood 3 | Resolve 3 |

These are warriors of Casworon, as of yet unpossessed, and eager to demonstrate their worthiness for bearing skraithe swords.

SKRAITHE BLADES

These appear as hand-and-a-half swords, forged from black iron with a bluish, glossy sheen. Baroque, demonic faces decorate the hilts and quillons; no two of the blades are the same. The style and workmanship are several centuries ahead of present Albani technology, which favors simple broadswords with a blunt tip.

Closer inspection shows runnels carved into the blade, connecting to weirdly twisting sigils. A blooded opponent fills these sigils with fresh red. Further, anyone touching the sword will notice it seems to ‘pulse’ or throb as if alive. It is alive; a type of extra-dimensional demon, a skraithe (see pg. 219), has been bound into the carbon matrix. The demon partially animates the blade, causing it to move in the wielder’s hand. This grants a bonus die on Attack Rolls and adds 1 to Defense against melee attacks. The blades also have the Penetration 2 characteristic and inflict +1 step damage on a successful hit.

If the wielder’s opponent is killed, the unfortunate corpse will be transformed in some bizarre manner, such as freezing solid, bursting into flames, having the flesh blasted clean from their bones, decomposing rapidly, etc. Each sword has its own effect.

All this comes at a cost, however, as the skraithe living in the blade will eventually possess the wielder. For each point of lifeblood inflicted, the demon grows stronger and drains a like number of resolve from the wielder. Once this hits 0, the skraithe takes over, with the wielder becoming a physical ‘vessel’ (see pg. 221).

The blades do not like being sheathed and will protest with a loud thrumming. Further, they don’t like fighting each other; someone in melee with a like-armed opponent will take a penalty die on their Attack Roll as the swords swerve to avoid each other. They shriek with ear-splitting outrage if two of the blades clash.



THE VILLAGE OF DINWYCH

Dinwych is an ancient settlement at the center of a tributary hub, recalling an earlier time when chieftains ruled here from the Rix Richathair, a legendary throne. The village bustles with activity as PCs approach, whether boldly, by stealth, or perhaps using the charcoal wagon as part of a disguise. Immediately noticeable are the rhythmic thuds coming from a large hammermill, powered by a waterwheel. The structure has been recently expanded upon with fresh timber; the blaze of multiple forge-fires can be glimpsed within.

Strangely, this massive smithy appears to be the center of attention in Dinwych, with supply-trains and hobbled slaves converging on it from several directions. By contrast, the fortified hall overlooking the town seems abandoned; it's gates open and unguarded, with no hearth fires lit. If Ffion is present, she notes with sadness how proud the hall used to look, with subjects lined up to see Casworon and take counsel from his "magic" chair. Any Albani hero can make an Easy (+1) Mind check, modified by ranks in bard, noble, or druid to recall the legend of the Rix Richathair, which was said to grant mystic visions (see **Sittin' on the Rix**, pg. 219).

With all the traffic coming and going, PCs are bound to run into an encounter as they slink about Dinwych. The GM can choose from the table opposite or roll a d6. Most of these can be avoided, if desired, with a few Easy (+1) stealth rolls, though encounter #3, the patrol, is another matter.

Encounter Table (d6)

- 1) An incoming train of 6 slaves, carrying sacks of bog iron ore towards the mill. 2 Rabble warriors guard them.
- 2) An incoming cart, heaped with iron goods; weapons, tools, knives, etc., all destined to be melted down at the mill. 2 Rabble warriors ride in the cart.
- 3) A patrol consisting of 1 Tough warrior armed with a skraithe blade, 3 Rabble warriors, and 2 Tough wolfhounds. They approach any strangers and seek to identify them.
- 4) An incoming group of 2 Tough warriors bearing skraithe swords and 4 Rabble warriors. They carry a single chest. Inside are ingots of bluish iron taken from the **Shaft Mine** (see pg. 223). This high-grade metal is destined for the mill.
- 5) An outgoing train of 4 slaves guarded by a single Rabble warrior. The slaves are not able-bodied, being either too old, sickly, or injured. They are bound for the **Ring of Standing Stones** near the mine (see pg. 223), slated for ritual sacrifice to enchant more skraithe blades. None are aware of this, though they do know Casworon has something 'special' in mind for them. The slaves are wearing linen robes embroidered with sigils similar to those on the skraithe blades, offering a clue to their fate.
- 6) The chieftain's former cupbearer, **Cwyll**, now an escaped slave and potentially helpful NPC. See his description on pg. 222. If not befriended by PCs, he will be recaptured and encountered again on **The Trail North**.



Use the stats for Rabble and Tough warriors from **The Charcoal Burners**. The slaves have all been taken from surrounding villages, attacked in the same manner as Magh Muir, and will be grateful to anyone who can assist in their escape.

Notably absent from these encounters is Casworon himself. The chieftain will be conveniently elsewhere as heroes poke around Dinwyth, though for dramatic purposes can put in an appearance just before riding north for the **Shaft Mine** (see the **Clash with Casworon** pg. 222).



SITTIN' ON THE RIX

Heroes may opt to head directly for the hammermill, deducing (correctly) that Owain the smith must be somewhere inside. However, investigating the abandoned hall can shed some light on the invasion taking place, with the help of Casworon's magic throne.

As noted previously, there are no guards at the hall and all gates and doors have been left unbarred. Inside the structure PCs find an empty table, cold hearth ashes, and discolorations on the walls where honored shields and weapons once hung (these have been melted down for their iron). At the table's far end sits a large throne of carved, cleft oak, now covered with dust. Such a sad end for the mighty Rix Richathaoir!

The first PC who takes time to clean or polish the chair is granted an extra Hero Point. The first PC to sit on the throne finds themselves beset with a dark vision, intended as a warning. They see a vast plain of misty darkness, lit by an occasional flash of lightning. On the horizon appears a high stone wall set with an iron gate. Moans can be heard as the gate draws closer, which buckles as if an enormous weight is being slammed against it. The gate opens a crack—just enough to glimpse the howling mob of skraithe (see below) massed on the other side, pressed together in horrible confines. A distorted voice calls from somewhere 'off camera,' and a single skraithe manages to squeeze its eel-like body through the gap.

The vision flashes to Green Isle, where an emaciated winter sun is rising on a landscape of denuded forests, charcoal mounds, and the silhouette of an enormous hammermill. Long lines of people march into the structure, single-minded as ants. The steady thud of the mill beats like a giant heart, and the rasp of its bellows echo like tortured breathing.

The vision ends. At the GMs option, the images of the alien skraithe are so disturbing as to necessitate a Moderate (0) Resolve Check, with d3 normal resolve damage on a failure. At any rate, the Rix has fulfilled its purpose, prophesizing what will happen if the creatures' plans go unchecked.

THE SKRAITHE

These demons resemble a length of fresh intestine, with wet, pinkish-purple skin and a spherical head, ending in a serrated, disc-shaped mouth like a lamprey's. Four finger-shaped appendages surround the mouth, capable of fine work.



THE SKRAITHE (CONTINUED)

Great magicians and scientists, the creatures had achieved a Renaissance level of technology before another, more benign race trapped them in a pocket dimension, for the benefit of sentients everywhere. Their only goal now is to escape imprisonment.

Human sorcerers have learned how to summon and bind skraithe into swords of wondrous power . . . which then possess their wielders. These puppet ‘vessels,’ in turn, summon more skraithe and bind them into more swords, creating a virus-like infection that could soon devour the world!

See the **Skraithe Possession** sidebar on pg. 221, for more details on this insidious process.

OWAIN

The mill runs at full production, day and night, with exhausted crews working in shifts. As noted previously, the supply trains streaming into the village all converge here, to have their goods carefully tallied before being taken inside.

The mill is heavily guarded. At any given time 1 Tough warrior per PC and 2x PCs number Rabble warriors stand watch outside the entrance. The Toughs are all armed with skraithe blades. If a fight is joined, waves of additional Rabble reinforcements can come swarming as the GM sees fit.

Providing a distraction can draw off half these forces (or more) depending on the method—anything from torching a hut to using magic. Ffion, if present, can help with the latter, though PCs still need to supply a plan.

Inside are half a dozen weary smiths and a like number of apprentices and artisans. Grey-haired Owain is among them. Though (relatively) well-treated by Casworon, these craftspeople are all prisoners and know it. Owain, acting as *de facto* leader for the group, demands to hear the PCs intentions. Anyone explaining they are here at the behest of Lady Briaca

gains his full attention. Additionally, a successful Appeal check or two will go a long way towards calming this already high strung group.

Owain knows something of the skraithe and the possession their swords entail, though he doesn't know the demons' true appearance or ultimate aims, beyond forging as many of the black blades as possible. He admits to a grudging fascination with their technology, and shows heroes the mill's advanced setup, which includes multiple trip hammers and an 'automatic' bellows. More importantly, he explains how Casworon has been alloying brittle bog iron with a bluish ore mined to the north. The resulting metal is much stronger, and seems to meet Casworon's fastidious requirements for blades.

Owain thinks the only way to stop the 'sword plague' is to kill Casworon, who is no longer the man everyone knew. Burning down the mill (something the smith is loath to do, given all its technical advancements) won't provide a permanent solution. Casworon can set up shop somewhere else, while his warriors use the black blades to conquer further clans. Owain explains the chieftain spends most of his time at a site to the north, overseeing the mining of the bluish ore. He suspects there is some final step in completing a skraithe sword, but doesn't know what this is.

If PCs want to pursue Casworon, Owain offers to accompany. However, his gout and arthritis give him the *Lumbering* flaw, potentially slowing the heroes down. Also, he doesn't know much about the mining site, as he hasn't left the mill since being brought to Dinwyth.



OWAIN (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------------|
| Strength 2 | Attack +1 melee/ranged |
| Agility 0 | Damage d6+2 |
| Mind 0 | Defense 0 |
| Appeal 0 | Protection 0 |
| Lifeblood 7 | Resolve 5 |

An older character (see pg. 26 in the **Heroes** chapter), gray-haired Owain is still burly enough to wield a hammer (can be thrown with a range increment of 5' for d6+1 damage). Though impressed by skraithe metallurgy, he recognizes the demons as a real threat and longs to avenge his beloved chieftain against Casworon.

Owain doesn't know it, but his physical infirmities are the main reason the skraithe have 'passed him over' for possession. He has the *Artistic* boon and the *Lumbering* flaw. Treat as a rank 3 craftsman (blacksmith).



SKRAITHE POSSESSION

PCs wielding a skraithe blade may end up getting possessed, at least for a short time. Each point of lifeblood inflicted by the sword 'feeds' the demon inside, allowing it to drain a like amount of (lasting) resolve damage from the wielder. PCs can sense their will getting weaker as the sword in their grip pulses stronger.

Once resolve reaches 0 or lower the wielder won't willingly give up their blade. They must make a Mind check with a negative modifier equal to their resolve deficit (e.g., a wielder at 0 resolve has a 0 modifier, -3 resolve has a -3, etc.). If failed, the skraithe takes over. Successful PCs must check again every time their resolve drops further—possession is inevitable.

Possessed characters have the singular goal of freeing their brethren from imprisonment. PCs can pay a Hero Point to attempt a Moderate (0) Mind Check every 24 hours to throw off skraithe control. If successful, they can abandon their sword and resume play with 1 resolve.

A successful Exorcise spell or Exhortation ritual will drive a skraithe out of their 'vessel,' with the skraithe's Mind of 1 acting as a negative modifier on the roll. A successful Banish spell targeting a skraithe sword will force the demon back to its prison, leaving behind a weird-looking, though otherwise normal blade.

NPCs freed of skraithe influence will be confused about their experience, but know enough to never touch a black blade again!



OPTION: CLASH WITH CASWORON

If the GM desires, PCs can catch a glimpse of the possessed chieftain before the final act(s) of the adventure, to heighten dramatic tension. Just as the heroes are finishing their discussion with Owain, shouts echo from outside the mill. The PCs have been discovered!

A tall warrior with a fine mail shirt and skraithe blade has just drawn up in a war chariot. Beside him is a leanly muscled driver, similarly armed. These are Casworon and his bodyguard, **Fiacre**, respectively. If this happens at night, the baleful orange glow can be seen in both men's eyes. With a hoarse cry, the chieftain summons 3x PCs number of Rabble warriors to storm the mill. Moments later, his chariot circles and goes clattering away along the north trail leading out of Dinwyth.

PCs can use the mill defensively in the fight, forcing the Rabble to enter singly through entrances where they can be dispatched. Owain and several of the smiths will help. The main purpose of this fight is to delay heroes rather than actually kill them. Casworon will spend a Rival/Villain Point to make a Timely Escape, if necessary.

With the chariot moving at speed, PCs won't be able to overtake Casworon before he reaches the **Shaft Mine**. Depending on how quick heroes are with their pursuit, the chieftain may have time to arrange an ambush as well (see pg. 223).

THE TRAIL NORTH

This old path, recently expanded, gradually inclines through lightly wooded hills. Shortly after leaving Dinwyth, PCs come upon a party of slaves intended for ritual sacrifice near the **Shaft Mine**. The group's composition is the same as #5 on the **Dinwyth Encounter Table** (pg. 218), including the single Rabble warrior on guard. If Cwyll wasn't encountered earlier, he will be here with the group. Also, if the **Clash with Casworon** encounter occurred, the group will be visibly shaken, as they were almost run down by the chieftain's chariot on his mad dash for the mine!

Golden-haired Cwyll is still shocked by his sudden reversal of fortune. Once a favorite of Casworon's, he has since been enslaved—and though he doesn't know the exact fate in store for him at the end of the trail, he knows it isn't good. The former cupbearer can explain his chieftain has become some kind of magician, though *not* a druid, of that he's certain. Cwyll recounts the day a peddler brought one of the accursed black blades to court, claiming it came from "*somewhere across the sea*." Casworon used the sword to easily defeat an old enemy. "*After that*," Cwyll explains, "*he changed for the worst. His eyes took on an orange glow in the twilight, and he broke all his old truces to go conquering.*"

PCs may hit upon the idea of using the linen robes as disguises, which could potentially get them past the sentries at the **Shaft Mine** (see pg. 223).

CWYLL (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 1 | Attack +0 melee |
| Agility 0 | Damage d6L+1 |
| Mind 0 | Defense 2 |
| Appeal 1 | Protection 0 |
| Lifeblood 6 | Resolve 5 |

Cwyll is ambivalent about joining PCs, as he feels Casworon is beyond all hope. Given his druthers, he wishes to travel far from the area, hoping to never set eyes on a black blade again. Treat as a rank 1 noble, rank 1 rogue. Cwyll has the *Attractive* boon, and the *Sickness* (epilepsy) flaw. His affliction with the 'falling disease' has spared him skraithe possession.





RING OF STANDING STONES

The trail splits in two branches, one winding up to the base of a nearby hill, and the other descending into a bowl-shaped depression. The former, shorter path ends at an ancient ring of standing stones, though these are much worn and in no way close to the scale of Stonehenge.

If investigated, the ring shows signs of recent use. Flecks of dried blood covers the stones, and the earth has been disturbed. Casworon uses the site to sacrifice victims as part of the skraithe blade enchantment/possession process.

Clever (and patient) PCs who deduce the ring's purpose can set up an ambush here, as Casworon will eventually show with four skraithe swords and a like number of sacrifices (he already has some in reserve at the Shaft Mine). In this case, the GM can skip straight to the **Ritual of Enchantment** encounter (pg. 225), thereby saving heroes a lot of trouble.

SHAFT MINE

The other branch dips abruptly—the 'bowl' was formed from a meteor impact, long ago. Casworon learned of this area after hearing legends of an explosive battle between 'Gods and heroes' said to have taken place here. Through careful dowsing, he discovered a source of meteoritic iron high in carbon content, perfect for making skraithe blades.

The trail leads to the bottom of the depression, where a circular earthwork ditch and wall have been dug around the shaft mine. The latter consists of a 30' pit with a ramp cut into the side, and a timber derrick erected over it. This is used for hoisting excavated ore out of the shaft, to be sifted and smelted into ingots. Casworon is overseeing this vital work from a shack built into the earthwork wall (the alien skraithe care nothing for grand halls or palaces, just solid engineering).

A low (4') palisade tops the wall, providing cover for the 2x PCs number Rabble sentries on duty, armed with javelins and yew bows. 2 Tough warriors armed with skraithe blades block the single breach in the earthworks, wide enough to drive a chariot through. In addition, Casworon (a Rival) and his bodyguard, Fiacre (a Tough) are onsite as well. The mine has a dozen Rabble slaves working it, who will not participate in any combat.

If the **Clash with Casworon** encounter occurred, the chieftain has already arrived and turned the complex into a trap. No sentries will be visible; these are all hiding behind the palisade section opposite the entrance. The breach-guards, along with Casworon and Fiacre, are hiding outside the complex, nearby. If PCs enter the apparently abandoned structure, Casworon's forces wait until they are well inside to spring an ambush. The sentries open fire with javelins and arrows, using the palisade as cover (penalty die on PCs return fire). If this occurs at night, torches will have been lit around the derrick, affording plenty of light. Meanwhile, the 2 Toughs, Casworon, and Fiacre, will rush to block the entrance, attempting to trap PCs inside.

PCs can otherwise attempt to sneak in or bluff their way past the breach guards, perhaps using the sacrificial robes as a disguise. This ruse won't likely hold up when they encounter Casworon, however. The chieftain attacks any intruders on sight.



If as a group PCs are brought below 0 lifeblood during any fighting here, and have at least 1 Hero Point remaining, they fall unconscious, to wake later and find themselves bound to one of the standing stones, awaiting sacrifice (see **The Ritual of Enchantment**, pg. 225)! If this happens and Owain, Cywill, or (especially) Ffion are with the group, then at least one of these NPCs manages to escape and will attempt to rescue the heroes at an appropriately dramatic moment.

If the fight is going against him, Casworon burns a Rival/Villain Point to invoke Timely Escape. He happens to have 2 incomplete skraithe swords bundled on his person, which he will promptly take to the **Ring of Standing Stones** and attempt to enchant before scarpering proper, thanks to his *Obsession* flaw. Canny players might therefore be able to catch him—see **The Ritual of Enchantment**.

CASWORON (RIVAL/VILLAIN)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities | |
|------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Strength 1 | Initiative 0 | Lifeblood 11 |
| Agility 0 | Melee 2 | Resolve 12 |
| Mind 2 | Ranged 0 | Rival Points 5 |
| Appeal 1 | Defense 2 (3) | Protection d6-2 |

Boons/Flaws

High-Born
Glib/Silver Tongue
Obsession

Careers

Noble 2
Barbarian 1
Entertainer 0
Sorcerer 1

Tall, with dark hair and a narrow, handsome face, Casworon comes from a lineage of chieftains and distinguished warriors. By all accounts a good ruler, he was known for restoring his clan's former glory through deeds rather than military expansion, and together with Kwyllion, brokered the peace between Dinwych and Magh Muir. This was all prior to his possession, of course.

As a 'vessel,' Casworon is singularly obsessed with freeing as many of his fellow skraithe as possible, whom he feels have been wrongly imprisoned. He sees humans as no more than clever livestock, valuable in that they can serve as a means of liberating his people.

As long as Casworon is wielding a skraithe blade, he can spend a Rival/Villain Point to invoke Infallible Parry. This allows him to block one melee attack that would have otherwise hit, even if it was a Mighty or Legendary Success. 'Lesser' blades so parried, i.e., ones that are not *Heirloom Weapons*, masterpieces, or also enchanted, will break on a 1-3 on a d6. Casworon will also use Rival/Villain Points to throw off any successful Exorcism spells targeting him.

FIACRE (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------------|
| Strength 1 | Attack +1 melee/ranged |
| Agility 2 | Damage d6H+1 |
| Mind 0 | Defense 0 (1) |
| Appeal 0 | Protection d6-3 |
| Lifeblood 6 | Resolve 5 |

Lean thewed Fiacre is Casworon's personal chariot driver and bodyguard. As a 'vessel,' his original personality has been subsumed, though a fierce loyalty to his chieftain remains. Though armed with a skraithe blade, Fiacre will attempt to hurl javelins (d6L damage) before closing for melee combat.

Fiacre has the *Cat-like Agility* boon, as well as the *Vow* (fealty to Casworon) flaw. Treat as a rank 1 barbarian, rank 1 soldier (charioteer).



THE RITUAL OF ENCHANTMENT

If Casworon has not been slain earlier, this encounter at the ring of standing stones makes a good adventure climax. There are several ways for PCs to get here; they could be waiting in ambush (see pg. 223), have tracked Casworon after he makes a Timely Escape, or be knocked out in combat and wake up bound to one of the stones! Appropriately, the ritual takes place at night.

If PCs have chosen to wait in ambush rather than assault the shaft mine, Casworon shows up at the site with Fiacre and 1x PCs number Rabble warriors (minimum 4), as well as 4 sacrificial slaves. If Casworon had to make a Timely Escape, he will be here by himself with only 2 skraithe blades to enchant. In the unlikely event PCs are incapacitated, Casworon will be present with Rabble and slaves as outlined above; Fiacre only appears if he wasn't slain or seriously wounded.

An uninterrupted Casworon goes through the ritual as follows. First, he thrusts 4 (or 2) un-enchanted skraithe blades into the earth, at the four cardinal directions. Then (if present), the 4 sacrifices are bound to the fang-like stones, directly behind the swords. A small fire is stoked; Casworon, eyeing the stars as if making calculations, chants in an alien tongue.

After the spell is finished, the stones begin exuding cold and a glistening effluvium, causing the bound captives to squirm. Saint Elmo's fire comes rolling off the stones like mist, to coalesce around the four blades (at this point, PCs watching need to make a Resolve Check with a -1 modifier).

The blades levitate out of the ground as they are entered by skraithe. At a nod from Casworon, the four Rabble 'vessels' (if present) step forward, seize the swords, and plunge them into the sacrifices, allowing the famished skraithe inside to 'drink.' As they do so, the skraithe in turn possess their vessels; the Rabble are spontaneously promoted to Toughs, and their eyes glow a familiar lurid orange. If fully completed, there are croaks of gratitude, as Casworon rushes forward to greet his newly freed brethren.

If Casworon is alone, there are no sacrifices, and the chieftain simply takes the 2 enchanted blades himself.

PCs waiting in ambush can interrupt this ritual any time they wish—the earlier the better. If they are bound as sacrifices, then one of the NPCs (most likely Ffion, as noted previously) will attempt to rescue them before they can be killed. Barring this intervention, a Hero Point may allow a PC to weaken their bonds sufficiently to break free. If unenchanted, the skraithe blades make serviceable weapons . . .

ENDGAME

As Owain suggested, killing Casworon stops the sword plague, at least for now. Leaderless, the skraithe vessels scatter, and the reputation of the cursed black blades follows close on their heels. Perhaps the mill, if still intact, can be used to melt the swords down.

However, just like a disease vector, as long as a single skraithe blade remains the outbreak will flare again, somewhere . . .

PCs who manage to Exorcise or Exhort the demon out of Casworon without killing him should be awarded an extra XP/AP. The grateful chieftain will make it his life's work to hunt down and destroy every last skraithe sword to try and atone for his actions.



THE SEVEN-SIDED PYRAMID OF ZAHN

Situated on the world's rim, the 'holy' wasteland of Zahn draws the occasional seeker of spiritual wisdom or lost knowledge. However, trespassers into this forbidden zone are zealously hunted by the **Inquisitors of Yun**, a religious order dedicated to the containment of 'heresies' said to be located here.

PCs are hired by the dubious **Lord Tarquin** to protect him as he journeys through the wastes, seeking the fabled seven-sided pyramid for a cure to his mysterious affliction. Along the way heroes meet the hermit **Mar Kedak**, also questing for the pyramid and a forgotten religious tract contained within, said to espouse The Ultimate Truth. Before they can enter this mystical edifice, however, PCs must contend with **Grand Inquisitor Aung** herself, hell-bent on protecting a secret that could forever change the world!

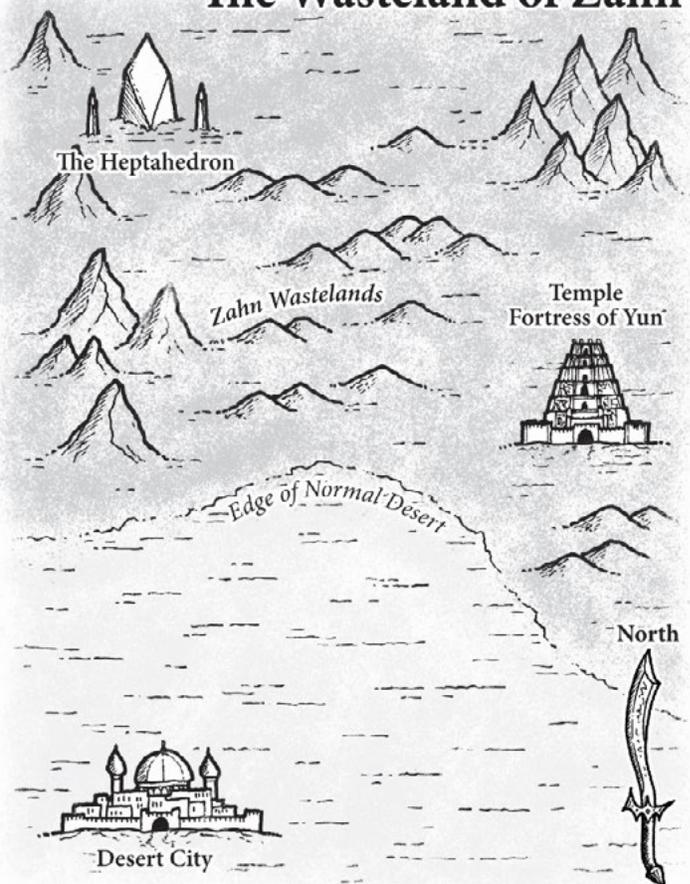
(Pyramid is a weird-fantasy adventure heavily influenced by S&S master Clark Ashton Smith. It uses the trope of a dubious patron as an opening hook, though what he's really after isn't power or riches, and may take even jaded players by surprise! The interstitial nature of the wastelands makes for a series of bizarre, fever dream encounters, reminiscent of old Warren fantasy comics or Heavy Metal magazine covers, with a Twilight Zone-style reveal at the end. The adventure is especially appropriate for dying Earth settings).

START

Heroes are met personally by Lord Tarquin, a handsome, well-heeled noble, who offers a helmet full of gold apiece to anyone willing to protect him on a perilous journey. Though friendly and animated, the young lord is clearly not a well man. Despite meeting with heroes in a sweltering desert city, he wears heavy clothing, as if swaddled against a chill. A physician attends him during the negotiations, giving him powders to mix with his wine or large pills to swallow. Tarquin grimaces frequently, as if experiencing sudden pains.

The sweating noble describes the wasteland of Zahn (see sidebar, pg. 227), and the heptahedral pyramid that lies at its center. Somewhere in the ruin, he explains, lies an artifact that could greatly ease his current affliction. *Detect Deception* or other means of determining falsehoods confirms he isn't lying.

The Wasteland of Zahn



The chief danger in locating this artifact is the "misguided zealots of Yun," a religious order who seek to protect the world from numerous 'heresies' contained among the wastelands—by hunting down and ritually torturing anyone who enters the area. His accounting of the Yun inquisitors matches general knowledge about the sect (see sidebar, pg. 228).

Tarquin is evasive if asked about his illness. On a successful Appeal check, however, he divulges the following: "It is a disease as much of the mind as the body, contracted not so long ago. There is no cure, just ongoing treatment." Again, any scrutiny reveals he is being truthful.

As additional incentive, PCs might already have had offers from collectors of obscure antiquities to locate some McGuffin near the pyramid. This could be why heroes have journeyed to the desert city in the first place. If so, Tarquin's gold only sweetens the deal!

LORD TARQUIN (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 0 | Attack +1 melee |
| Agility 0 | Damage d6 |
| Mind 1 | Defense 1 |
| Appeal 1 | Protection d6-3 |
| Lifeblood 5 | Resolve 6 |

A well-featured, blonde-haired noble in his early 30's, Tarquin appears younger due to his serene, untroubled face. He always dresses contrary to the weather, bundling up in the heat and exposing himself to cold. During the latter times his body can be glimpsed; a network of scars, burn marks, and poorly healed wounds cover his skin from the neck down.

The nature of Tarquin's affliction is revealed on pg. 234. Nosy PCs may be able to piece together the truth over the course of the adventure. Treat him as a rank 2 noble with the *Attractive* boon and *Addicted/Cravings* flaw. If necessary, he dons light armor (d6 3), and wields an ornate falchion (d6 damage) to protect himself.

DOCTOR QUAL (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength -1 | Attack +0 melee |
| Agility 1 | Damage d3-1 |
| Mind 2 | Defense 1 |
| Appeal 0 | Protection 0 |
| Lifeblood 4 | Resolve 7 |

Tarquin's personal physician, Qual, appears as a wizened, near-emaciated man with a peculiar gleam in his eyes. He wears conical headgear and carries a satchel filled with drugs, lancets, and other surgical instruments. Qual is always at his liege's side, ready to perform any treatments as needed. Treat as a rank 2 healer. He has the *Knowledge/Learned* boon and the *Taciturn* flaw.



ZAHN WASTELAND

Normal desert abruptly gives way to this liminal space; a sea of gray dunes, formed from the ashen detritus of uncounted centuries. The skein between worlds has grown thin here, prompting rumors that Zahn lies at the Earth's edge. At night the stars seem to draw closer, and freezing winds howl down from the void of space. By morning, a fine web of frost covers the dunes, only to melt away as a tired, swollen sun gropes over the horizon.

Zahn was once ground zero for a series of spiritual events that rippled out over the world, forming several religions. The nature of these events has been lost to time. People still journey here to poke for clues among the myriad ruins, though this is doubly dangerous; in addition to the predatory Inquisitors of Yun, certain abominations have wandered in from other times and places, and free-willed demons have been loosed to roam.

INTO THE WASTELANDS

Before setting out, Tarquin purchases supplies at the marketplace, including 2 pack mules (which he explains are necessary for hauling back artifacts) and several tents. He offers to equip heroes with anything they might need, including mounts, though warns animals spook easy in Zahn. No guides for the wasteland can be found, but Tarquin reassures heroes they won't be necessary. He already has a rough familiarity with the terrain, and besides, the massive seven-sided pyramid can be spotted from a great distance away.

Two days of foot travel reaches the edge of Zahn, which transitions abruptly from normal desert to ash-gray dunes. Crossing into the wasteland feels like crossing a barrier, with a dread, foreboding sensation immediately apparent. At night the temperature plunges to around 32 degrees Fahrenheit, or 0 Celsius. Strangely, Tarquin eschews warm clothing, preferring





instead to shiver. As noted earlier, this allows a glimpse at the patchwork of horrible wounds covering his body.

The silhouette of the pyramid soon appears on the horizon, making navigation easy. A similarly mammoth structure, craggy and imposing, appears far to the east. Tarquin explains this is the fortress temple of the Inquisitors, to be avoided at all costs. He also nervously scans the sky from time to time. If asked, Tarquin explains he is looking for a sorcerous construct called the **Floating Fane** (see pg. 231), which the Inquisitors use to spot trespassers and coordinate their 'hunts.'

ENCOUNTERS

Depending on how long the GM wants the adventure to run, heroes can encounter just a few bizarre events or several. Roll on the 2d6 table below or pick.

S=singular encounter. Once encountered, roll again if a duplicate result occurs.

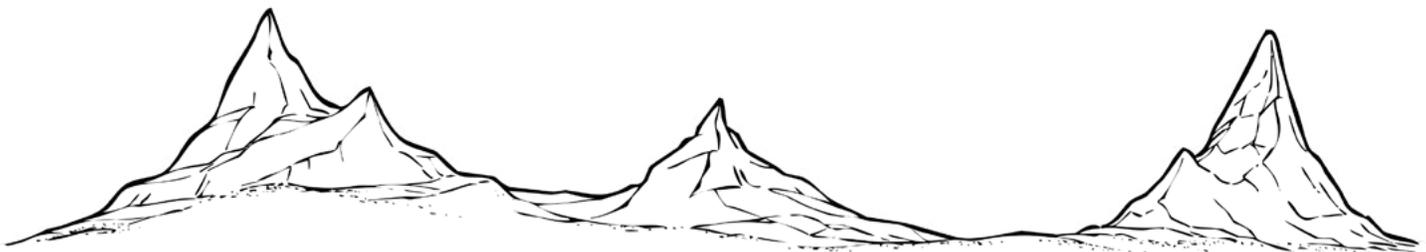
- 2: Legion Demon (S)**
- 3: Succubus (S)**
- 4: Caravel (S)**
- 5: Doubles (S)**
- 6-7: Ruins**
- 8: Ghost Pilgrims (S)**
- 9: Wailing Mirror (S)**
- 10: Inquisitor Scout Party**
- 11: Inquisitor War Party**
- 12: Floating Fane**

THE INQUISITORS OF YUN

This is a militant splinter sect of the larger Yun religion, grown dominant in this region. Originally monotheistic, the Yun faith has undergone countless transformations over the eons, mutating, absorbing other belief systems, and twisting in on itself as to become unrecognizable from the original spiritual movement. Some say Yun now stands for the exact *opposite* of its founding principles. This would seem to be borne out by the Inquisitors, who guard the Zahn wastelands so that no heretical belief can leak out to 'corrupt' the rest of the world.

Though they have ranks in priest, the Inquisitors are not granted actual Faith/Fate Points. They are, at best, master bureaucrats, arguing with each other over obscure theological points as they vie for ever-higher titles in a meaningless hierarchy. On the other hand, the Inquisitors have many competent sorcerers among their ranks, and certain devotees have greatly advanced the art of torture.

The Inquisitors operate out of a many-tiered temple fortress on the edge of the Zahn wastelands, adorned with over a thousand garishly painted statues depicting various saints, demigods, avatars, apostates, arch fiends, and mysteriarchs associated with their bewildering pantheon. They also employ a Floating Fane (see pg. 231) to assist in policing the forbidden wastelands.



Legion Demon

This free-willed infernal spirit is invisible except to Second Sight or magic (see **Bestiary**, pg. 158). It attempts to possess a randomly determined PC, but flies off if unsuccessful.

Succubus

The heroes hear frantic cries for help coming from over a nearby dune. If investigated, they discover a scantily clad woman waist deep in loose sand. She can be pulled free without much difficulty. The woman, who gives her name as **Akshari**, claims to have been abducted by Inquisitors and only recently escaped. She is, in fact, a succubus (see **Bestiary**, pg. 159), who will attempt to enthrall a single PC and vampirically feed off them during the night, only to disappear by morning.

Caravel

Ahead looms an amazing sight: an archaic sailing ship, with absurdly steep sides (a Spanish caravel), rests atop a dune as if cresting a wave. Her sails are trimmed, and anchor dropped, but no crew is visible. Scrabbling up over the gunwales requires a Hard (-1) Agility check, modified by ranks in sailor. A search reveals the ship is abandoned, though her cargo hold is full of lace, olive oil, and citrus, still relatively fresh.

The captain's cabin has a journal written in some long-forgotten language (potentially decipherable by someone with the scholar career, or magic). Apparently, the ship, *La Victoria*, left the port of Valencia bound for Venice, but ran into a freak storm. The journal is blank afterwards. The date of 1520 is given, though this likely means nothing to the PCs. How the caravel actually got here is anyone's guess.

If the GM *really* wants to mess with players, substitute the caravel with the rusted hulk of an immense craft, apparently made from metal. Faded letters along the bow read (again, in some arcane language) 'USS ELDRIDGE.'

Doubles

A small group approaches, making no overtly hostile gestures. As they draw closer, PCs experience a shock: the newcomers appear to be mirror images of themselves, though older, and much more bedraggled! After staring at PCs quizzically, the doppelgangers confer among themselves. "*Just how long have we been wandering here, anyways?*"

In truth, this is a pack of shape-changed lesser djinn (see **Bestiary**, pg. 160) having some fun at the heroes' expense. If confronted, they turn into vultures and fly away, guffawing merrily.

Ruins

The ancient remains of a structure lie ahead. Roll d6: 1) a large statue, made of porphyry, 2) a 30' leaning obelisk, covered with hieroglyphs, 3) a small shrine, with an empty fountain at the center, 4) a mausoleum of rotting marble, its doors thrown open, 5) a once-mighty temple, with a colonnade and collapsed roof, and 6) an octagonal stepwell, descending some 50' to a pool of rank water.

Ruins #3 through #6 can offer shelter during the night or provide a defensible location, though on a 1-2 (d6) are haunted by a ghost, skin-turner, lamia, or eldritch horror—GM's choice.

Ghost Pilgrims

This encounter only occurs at night. PCs are hailed by a half-dozen people dressed in religious regalia, who wish to share their fire or encampment. The group says little, commenting only on the cold or the desolation of the wastes. In better light, they are revealed as being slightly translucent. PCs realizing their guests are ghosts must make a Hard (-1) Resolve Check to avoid d6 normal resolve damage. The pilgrims fade with dawn's light.



Wailing Mirror

Unnerving cries echo over the dunes, becoming louder as PCs advance. The source of the lamentations soon becomes visible; a large mirror in a gilt frame, cracked, with only a few reflective shards left. On closer inspection, tortured, howling faces can be glimpsed within the glass. The experience necessitates a Hard (1) Resolve Check to avoid d6 normal resolve damage. If the mirror is covered with something the wailing stops, and the PC who did so is refreshed a Hero Point.

Inquisitor Scout Party

This consists of 1 Rabble Inquisitor per PC led by one Tough Inquisitor, with a chained, snuffling skin turner (a Tough were jackal) acting as bloodhound. If PCs are on foot and have been taking pains to travel stealthily, they can attempt Hard (1) Mind checks modified by ranks in barbarian, hunter, or nomad to spot the scouting party before they, themselves, are spotted.

Once the Inquisitors spot PCs, the leader lights the fuse on a special crossbow bolt and fires it skyward. This explodes in a cloud of sparks and colored smoke a round later, alerting a War Party in the area, which arrives in 3d6 rounds. The scouts move to attack, including the loosed were-jackal.

INQUISITOR (RABBLE)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 0 | Attack +0 melee |
| Agility 0 | Damage d3 |
| Mind 0 | Defense 0 |
| Appeal 0 | Protection 0 |
| Lifeblood 3 | Resolve 3 |

These are the rank-and-file among the byzantine order of Yun, looking to distinguish themselves for promotion. As low echelon members they wear dun-colored robes and minimal headgear. For descriptive purposes, they are armed with truncheons and light crossbows. Treat as rank 1 priests.

INQUISITOR (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------------|
| Strength 1 | Attack +1 melee/ranged |
| Agility 1 | Damage d6H+1/d6 |
| Mind 0 | Defense 0 |
| Appeal 0 | Protection 0 |
| Lifeblood 6 | Resolve 5 |

Captains among the Inquisitors are entitled to wear two-tiered satin hats, saffron robes, and scarlet cloaks. They wield crossbows and ceremonial greatswords. Treat as rank 1 priests, rank 1 soldiers.

WERE-JACKAL (TOUGH)

Use the stats for the standard skin-turner on page 171 of the **Bestiary**, but decrease Strength by 1 and increase Agility by 1.



Inquisitor War Party

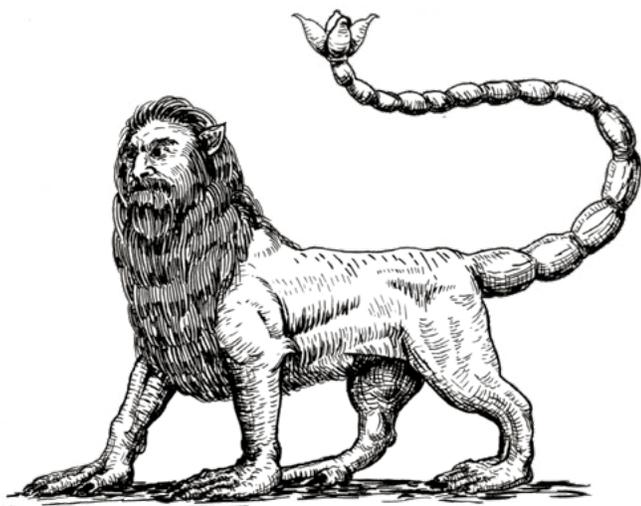
This consists of 1 Tough Inquisitor per PC, mounted on either a flightless hippogriff or a scorpion-tailed mantichora (50% chance of either). The Inquisitors wear medium armor with helms and carry lances, morningstars, and barbed nets. They charge with their lances the first round of combat, before closing to cast nets and melee. Anyone surrendering will be given quarter; captives are taken back to the fortress temple for ritual torture.

INQUISITOR (TOUGH)

Use the stats from the Scout Party encounter, though these have their Agility reduced to 0 by their medium armor (d6-2 protection). See the **Equipment** chapter, pg. 78 for weapon specs.

HIPPOGRIFF AND MANTICORE (TOUGH)

See the **Bestiary**, pg. 154 for stats. The mantichora have paralysis poison in their stingers, to better take prisoners (change damage to fatigue only, with targets taken to 0 or lower unable to move).



Floating Fane

This is a 20' fortified tower, erected atop a chunk of levitating stone. Three massive iron chains connect the stone base to three animated mastodon skeletons on the ground, serving as both ballast and a means of towing the fane. The tower normally rides about 500' in the air (about half the height of a typical hot air balloon). Aboard are 2 lookouts and a rank 2 sorcerer, all with spyglasses (see **Equipment**, pg. 87). The sorcerer has the *Familiar* and *Keen Eyesight* boons.

The Floating Fane functions as a mobile base of operations for coordinating hunting parties patrolling the wasteland. Using his *Familiar* (a vulture) and garish pyrotechnic magics, the sharp-eyed sorcerer aboard can communicate with Inquisitors on the ground, directing them to apprehend trespassers as necessary. At night, the fane rests stationary, though the sorcerer can cast *Witchsight* for continued surveillance if intruders are known to be in the area.

Assaulting the fane directly isn't a good idea. Each mastodon skeleton (a terror in its own right) has a Tough Inquisitor driver armed with a 10' lance, and mounts a howdah with 4 Rabble crossbowmen aboard. The howdah grants the latter cover (penalty die) from incoming fire. Further, the sorcerer will signal to a War Party in the area, which arrives in 3d6 rounds. Additional reinforcements can show up as the GM sees fit.

If PCs can see the Floating Fane, there's a chance the crew aboard can see *them*, especially if they are mounted or travelling fast. The best recourse is to try and hide in any ruins, or the lee of a nearby dune until it passes from sight. If heroes take no precautions, they will eventually be spotted. A vulture (the sorcerer's *Familiar*) begins circling over their heads. Soon, multiple Scout and War Parties will be converging on their position, as well as the Fane itself. Escape and evasion are the order of the day!

INQUISITOR (RABBLE/TOUGH)

Use the stats from pg. 230.



MASTODON SKELETONS (TOUGH)

Use the stats for woolly mammoths, pg. 152, except these now have the *Undead* trait, granting an additional +2/3 lifeblood. The creatures' bony status means impaling type weapons (spears, arrows, etc.) do no damage on a hit.

THE HERMIT

This encounter should take place sandwiched between random events, preferably around the second or third day of traversing the wastelands. PCs hear the sounds of a nearby scuffle; two stragglers from an Inquisitor scouting party have cornered a bearded man in a hermit's tattered robes, and are accosting him with truncheons. The hermit wields a bronze-shod quarterstaff. Though he seems to be holding his own for the moment, he looks like he could use some help.

Even if PCs don't intervene, the hermit, Mar Kedak, manages to defeat his assailants, though he suffers a nasty clout to the head, bringing his lifeblood down to 2. This will not sour his disposition towards PCs, however. The (possible) protection of an armed group is just what he's been looking for!

Kedak explains, to anyone who'll listen, that he's close to finding The Forbidden Tract of Yun, an ancient writing said to condense the religion's wisdom into a single edict. He believes the Tract is located somewhere within the seven-sided pyramid. Further, he suspects the Tract is the chief heresy the Inquisitors have been trying to contain; a spiritual truth so powerful, that if it were ever to get out it could change the world!

Anyone conversing with the hermit notices an inverted 'T' branded at the base of his neck. If asked about it, Kedak explains he had been caught by the Inquisitors several years ago and tortured, though he managed to escape. PCs who got a good look at Tarquin's wounds earlier can attempt a Hard (-1) Mind check to recall he had a similar brand in the same place. Tarquin refuses to speak of the matter, however.

MAR KEDAK (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength 0 | Attack +1 melee |
| Agility 1 | Damage d6 |
| Mind 1 | Defense 1 (2) |
| Appeal 0 | Protection 0 |
| Lifeblood 5 | Resolve 6 |

Scrapier than he should be for his age and general malnutrition, a thirst for spiritual truth drives this old hermit. He has the *Knowledge* (Yun religion) boon and *Obsession* flaw. Treat as a rank 1 beggar, rank 1 scholar.

HOWLS IN THE NIGHT

This is another 'sandwich' encounter that should occur prior to arriving at the pyramid, ideally at night, when heroes are encamped. Sleeping PCs are awoken by stifled cries coming from Lord Tarquin's tent! Anyone peering inside sees Doctor Qual hunched over his patient, who is biting down on a piece of cloth. Tarquin is using a lancet and candle to administer what looks like very painful surgery.

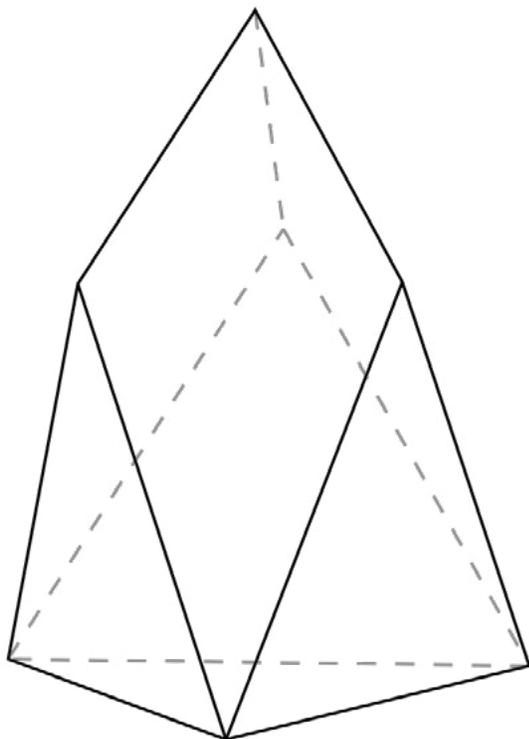
A Moderate (0) Mind check reveals something strange about the expression on Tarquin's face. He appears to be almost *rapt*, as if in a state of spiritual ecstasy.

Qual will be cross at anyone interrupting the treatment, ordering them to leave the tent. The next day, Tarquin politely asks PCs to respect his privacy. He offers no explanation as to what happened, other than his condition requires regular attention to keep in check.

THE SHINING HEPTAHEDRON

Once the GM feels PCs have had enough fun in the wastelands of Zahn, the seven-sided pyramid at last draws near. This enormous polyhedron, taller, though narrower at the base than the Great Pyramid of Giza, appears to have been carved out a single piece of





smoked quartz. Though not normally apparent, anyone looking at the structure with Witchsight will perceive the pyramid is only the tip of a much larger object poking into three-dimensional space, similar to the tip of an iceberg jutting above water.

As fate would have it, Grand Inquisitor Aung herself is present at the site when heroes arrive, having just finished checking the seals on the Forbidden Tract (see pg. 234). Her skeletal mastodon mount and personal bodyguard (1 Tough Inquisitor per PC) wait outside the entrance. Upon sighting the heroes, Aung casts Invisibility (see **Magic**, pg. 125) on herself, while the massive skeleton and bodyguard engages them in melee.

Aung's unseen voice taunts both Tarquin and Mar Kedak (if present), whom she seems to recognize. Between lashings with her barbed whip, she calls Tarquin a "*deviant*" and Kedak a "*sentimental idiot*." She also warns PCs that the world isn't ready for the heresies contained within the pyramid, which the Inquisitors keep secret for the benefit of all. She doesn't stick around, however; once the fight is going against her, or if her invisibility is somehow negated (as with a Rescind spell), she burns a Rival/Villain Point to make a Timely Escape, leaving the rest of the Inquisitors to their fate.

Once the Inquisitors are dealt with, PCs can investigate the pyramid—with a sense of urgency, however, as Aung will likely return with reinforcements. The temple complex surrounding the structure has eroded to the outlines of foundations and cracked stonework, though a cleared area can be found. Mar Kedak explains this is likely used by the Inquisitors to conduct the occasional ritual at the site.

The pyramid's 'entrance' turns out to be a jagged crack around 20' tall. Though the structure appears to be made from opaque quartz, the actual material is indestructible by human standards—a Third Magnitude spell wouldn't even chip the surface. The spidery tunnels and chambers inside the pyramid have therefore not been carved; they appear to have been formed by whatever incomprehensible force managed to crack the structure.

GRAND INQUISITOR AUNG (RIVAL/VILLAIN)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities | |
|------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Strength 1 | Initiative 1 | Lifeblood 11 |
| Agility 1 | Melee 2 | Resolve 12 |
| Mind 2 | Ranged 0 | Rival Points 5 |
| Appeal 0 | Defense 1 | Protection d6-3 |

Boons/Flaws

Alert
Inspire
Fanatic/Zealot

Careers

Noble 0
Scholar 1
Priest 2
Sorcerer 2

Aung's natural competence and zeal for enforcing orthodoxy fueled her quick rise to the top of the Inquisitor's order. Like many followers of Yun, she sees religion as a means to power, but has grown genuinely concerned about the 'corrosive' effects the secrets she guards could have on humanity.

Aung wears light armor and wields a barbed whip (d3 damage, see **Equipment**, pg. 80). Against protected foes, however, she switches to a ceremonial greatsword (d6H+1). She has 12 AP.



LORD TARQUIN'S PRIZE

A smaller corridor branches off the main fissure, leading to an oblong chamber used by the Inquisitors to store ceremonial objects; altars, robes, incense, etc. Among these is a sinister-looking table, with heavy restraints, and several articulated arms curling up over the sides. This is a Table of Yun (see **Magic**, pg. 136); essentially, a torture machine. Tarquin can't hide his delight at discovering the device so close to the pyramid's entrance.

If pressed, he will, at this point, divulge the nature of his obsession. Like Kedak, Tarquin was caught by the Inquisitors years ago and tortured. However, while on the rack he had a spiritual epiphany—he *liked* it. So much so, that after escaping he hired physicians like Qual to keep him supplied with cramp-inducing 'medicines,' painful treatments, etc. These all pale, however, to the insidious skill of the Table.

Tarquin asks shocked PCs not to judge. His obsession doesn't hurt anyone else, and his gold spends as well as the next man's.

Tract, which he tears away in order to reveal, potentially getting fried in the process.

Unlike the other writings, the tract is comprehensible to whoever sees it:

**ATTEND TO OTHERS,
AS YOU WOULD, YOURSELF, BE
ATTENDED**

THE FORBIDDEN TRACT

The main fissure continues into the heart of the pyramid, eventually widening in an abrupt dead end. Carvings of some archaic language cover every available surface, including the ceiling 20' overhead. Exactly how this feat was performed is not apparent; the quartz-like material is just as tough here as in the rest of the pyramid. Mar Kedak, if present, rubs his hands together with delight as he translates a few of the writings. To any but a metaphysician, however, these sound hopelessly confusing and pedantic.

A black velvet curtain has been affixed with glue and sealing wax to the dead-end wall, obscuring whatever may be written there. The seals have various arcane sigils stamped into them, which PCs with ranks in sorcerer can recognize as dire warnings. Parting or otherwise removing the curtain entails breaking the seals. At the GMs discretion, doing so could have no effect (the seals are just part of meaningless ritual), bestow a powerful Hex on the first person to break them, or explode for 2d6L damage in a burst of magical fire. Unless restrained, the fervent Kedak assumes (correctly) the curtain conceals the Forbidden





9 SETTINGS

THARAK IV: PLANET OF PERIL

Everybody snickered at doomsday preppers **Ezekiel “Zeke” Spradlin** and his buddy, **Dean “Twitchy” McCallum**, as they patiently gathered their arsenals in the alkaline desert of Southern Arizona. But nobody was laughing when a 50-megaton warhead exploded over the local airbase, as part of the opening salvo of World War Three.

The nuke ripped a hole in spacetime, dropping Zeke’s double wide trailer on an alien planet in a remote corner of the Milky Way. Luckily the planet, Tharak IV, turned out to be both habitable and inhabited. A tribe of indigo-skinned humanoids, calling themselves the Zeibani, extended friendly greetings to Zeke and Twitchy on arrival. Strangely, they seemed to be *expecting* the pair. As it happens, Zeibani prophecy has long held that outworlder heroes, armed with powerful weapons, would one day arrive to help throw off the yoke of Gann Lorcii, a sorcerer-warlord clutching the world in his iron grip.

Well, Zeke and Twitchy have seen enough old movies to know they’ve stumbled onto something good. With the power of their ‘thundersticks,’ they figure the primitive locals will soon be worshipping them like gods, especially after they get around to trashing this backwater despot for them. Hell, once the natives learn to barbecue properly, Tharak might feel downright homey . . . even if there isn’t any NASCAR on TV.

That’s what they figure, anyways.

(Tharak IV: Planet of Peril is a modern take on the sword and planet genre, throwing in several curves to keep players guessing. Naturally, the situation is not as simple as it might seem. The Zeibani are familiar with humans; they’ve arrived here before, and they’re always trouble—the warlord, Gann Lorcii, is one of them. Hence the need for a ‘prophecy’ encouraging the intruders to fight. Who knows? With their advanced technology, maybe they’ll wipe each other out.

Of course, there’s more to Tharak IV than Zeibani. The big planet plays host to the Virid, triple-limbed warrior mystics, and a whole slew of strange biomes populated by ferocious creatures. PCs will have to learn some new tricks adapting to this world, fast. Because firepower can’t solve everything, and ammo only lasts so long . . .)



PLANETARY DATA

Tharak IV

Diameter: 9,508 mi

Gravity: .73 G

Density: 3.92

Axial Tilt: 26 degrees

Length of Day: 32 hours, 5 minutes

Atmosphere: 76% nitrogen, 23% oxygen, trace methane and argon

Moons: Crucis and Mersei (captured planetoids)

Primary: Tharak the All-Blazing, class K star (orange dwarf)

Tharak IV is slightly larger than Earth, but with lower gravity due to its density. A single, monstrous ocean swallows 60% of the surface, surrounding a Pangaea-like landmass with few scattered islands. Average temperature is a comfortable 82 degrees Fahrenheit near the equator. Though it hosts massive deserts, abundant flora and fauna make conditions for life more hospitable than Earth-standard.

Tharak IV’s two moons are large (roughly Luna-sized) and orbit relatively close, exerting huge tidal pulls on the planet (see the **Dune Sea**, pg. 237). Crucis, ‘The

Elder,' has no atmosphere, though extensive ruins can clearly be seen on the surface. Mersei, 'The Interloper,' is green and appears to be habitable.

There are two species of intelligent life, the humanoid Zeibani and the three-armed, three-legged Virid. Both claim the other are aliens that arrived far back in the planet's history, shattering what had once been a utopian existence. The actual truth, and the reason for Tharak IV's recurring ties to Earth, light-centuries distant, are unknown.

In game terms, Tharak IV's lower gravity doesn't grant human PCs superpowers, though they will find themselves physically stronger than most of the inhabitants.

Dune Sea

Sprawling out from the equator is a vast inland 'sea' of desert, covered by dunes. The gravity of Tharak's two moons causes the sands to shift in a visible tide; Zeibani trade coracles can 'ride' the crests and furrows of the moving dunes to reach destinations linked by the desert. These craft can also erect small sails to move under wind power when necessary.

Mud Worms

Savannah-like areas bordering the desert host a unique insect predator. Giant mud worms normally hibernate roughly fifteen feet beneath the ground, but become active when seasonal rains soften the earth, allowing them to burrow up and prey upon fauna gathering at watering holes. After eating their fill, the worms then dig back down and wait for the mud to harden, granting them protection through their dormant cycle.

MUD WORM

Size: Large

Normally Found: Desert, Savannah

Traits

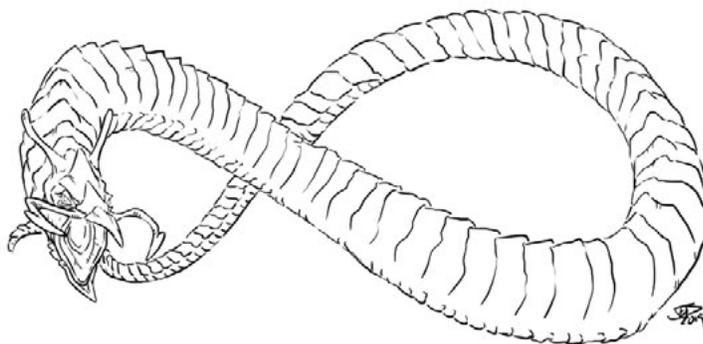
Ambush

Attributes

Strength 5
Agility 0
Mind -2
Appeal —
Lifeblood 10/20

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee
Damage d6+3/d6H
Defense 0
Protection 1 pt.
Fear 1



Pyrophyte Forests

One of the dominant trees on Tharak IV is a eucalyptus analog, giving off a pleasant-smelling oil. Clouds of purple fumes can be seen among the treetops at sunset. With the seasonal rain comes lightning, igniting these forests into huge conflagrations that can rage for days. The heat generated causes seed pods to burst and plant themselves among the ash-enriched soil, so that the process can begin anew.

Virid

The Virid are olive-skinned creatures with squat, fireplug bodies shaped by trilateral symmetry. Their conic 'heads' are immovable, with three equidistant eyes allowing for 360-degree vision. Much of Virid brain capacity appears allocated to coordinating their multiple limbs, granting them excellent Agility. They can speak Zeibani trade tongue in a piping voice by exhaling through their leg spiracles, though communicate with each other via a complex sign language.



Virid culture is Primal, with the mystic and remote traits. Though they can work metal, Virid follow a simple hunter-gatherer existence. Their martial skills are legendary, based on ceaseless practice and contemplation, and some Virid hire themselves out as mercenaries to feuding Zeibani tribes. Warfare among Virid themselves, however, is highly ritualized, appearing to outside observers as a bloodless display of *kata*.

VIRID (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|------------|------------------|
| Strength 0 | Attack +1 melee |
| Agility 2 | Damage d6 |
| Mind 0 | Defense 1 (2) |
| Appeal 0 | Protection 0 |
| Lifblood 5 | Resolve 5 |

Treat as a rank 1 warrior, rank 1 priest. Warriors use shields, spears, and special 'throwing swords' (range increment 5,' d6 + half Strength thrown, or d6H + Strength if used two-handed in melee). Like the Zeibani, they avoid armor.

Zeibani

Human-analogs of Tharak IV, the Zeibani have dark indigo skin, black hair, and shining copper eyes. The females are willowy and average taller heights than the males; both sexes, with their symmetrical, sharp features, are considered attractive by human standards. Though there are thousands of regional dialects, Zeibani speak a common trade language that is appallingly simple to learn.

Zeibani follow a semi-nomadic lifestyle, herding livestock and gathering food from Tharak IV's abundant flora. Their chief passion is trading for goods not available locally, and Zeibani merchants meet at select spots (usually mesas or other prominent natural features) at the beginning of each season for trade festivals.

Zeibani culture is Tribal, with the duplicitous and mercantile traits. They generally make poor warriors, though they do maintain scout troops and skirmishers for occasional territorial conflicts. When the fighting looks particularly tough, however, they employ Virid mercenaries.

ZEIBANI (TOUGH)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities |
|-------------|------------------|
| Strength -1 | Attack +0 melee |
| Agility 1 | Damage d6-1 |
| Mind 0 | Defense 2 |
| Appeal 1 | Protection 0 |
| Lifblood 4 | Resolve 5 |

Treat as a rank 1 nomad, rank 1 merchant. Most Zeibani eschew armor and shields; besides daggers, the fighters among them carry a distinctive spear with a half-moon shaped head, and two sharp prongs. This can be thrown with a range increment of 10.'



AUTOMATIC FIRE

Both *Everywhen* and *Dogs of W.A.R.* have rules to simulate automatic weapons. If the GM has neither book, use the stats for rifles on pg. 75 of the **Equipment** chapter. The shooter can opt to fire a burst, granting +2 to Attack Rolls and increasing damage by 2 steps (see **Mechanics**, pg. 90). This damage can be 'spread' among adjacent Rival and Tough targets (see **Magic**, pg. 111).

However, if either die on the Attack Roll shows a '1,' the gun has emptied its clip and must be reloaded to fire, requiring at least a round. If two '1s' are rolled ('snake eyes') the firer has exhausted all ammo carried.

“ZEKE” SPRADLIN (HERO)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities | |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Strength 2 | Initiative 1 | Lifeblood 12 |
| Agility 1 (0) | Melee 1 | Resolve 10 |
| Mind 0 | Ranged 2 | Hero Points 5 |
| Appeal 1 | Defense 0 | Protection d6-1 |

Boons/Flaws

Brawler
Carouser
Temper

Careers

Worker 0
Mechanic 1
Soldier 2
(Blank) 1

Brawny, affable Ezekiel “Zeke” Spradlin is in his late thirties, with thinning dark hair and a beer gut. After a stint in the Army, he made the acquaintance of several like-minded preppers, helping to fuel his acquisition of guns and survival gear. Years of internet research convinced him World War III was nigh, though the apocalyptic wasteland he’d been expecting somehow morphed into the wilds of Tharak IV. Go figure.

Zeke wears body armor, shooter’s sunglasses, and carries an assortment of automatic and heavy weapons taken from his arsenal. If he can ever convince himself to carry less gear (or ammo), his Agility penalty will drop to 0.

“TWITCHY” McCALLUM (HERO)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities | |
|------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Strength 0 | Initiative 0 | Lifeblood 10 |
| Agility 2 | Melee 0 | Resolve 10 |
| Mind 2 | Ranged 2 | Hero Points 5 |
| Appeal 0 | Defense 0 | Protection d6-2 |

Boons/Flaws

Deadeye
Excellent Facilities
Timid

Careers

Worker 1
Scholar 1
Scientist 1
(Blank) 0



Dean “Twitchy” McCallum, a skinny, nervous type, grew up with Ezekiel and depended on his big best friend for protection from bullies. Though he has taken online college courses, most of Twitchy’s abilities come from a knack for technology and numerous hobbies, including chemistry. His workshop, a portable shed located behind Zeke’s trailer, survived the move to Tharak IV.

Twitchy wears a Kevlar tactical vest with multiple pouches and carries a SMG. Though the two never talk about it, he is the superior marksman of the pair.



GANN LORCII (RIVAL/VILLAIN)

| Attributes | Combat Abilities | |
|------------|------------------|----------------|
| Strength 0 | Initiative 1 | Lifeblood 10 |
| Agility 1 | Melee 0 | Resolve 13 |
| Mind 3 | Ranged 0 | Rival Points 5 |
| Appeal 0 | Defense 1 | Protection 0 |

Boons/Flaws

Long-Lived
Magical Affinity (Summoning)
Power of the Void
Tedious
Untrustworthy

Careers

Alchemist 1
 Scholar 1
 Sorcerer 3
 Warrior 0

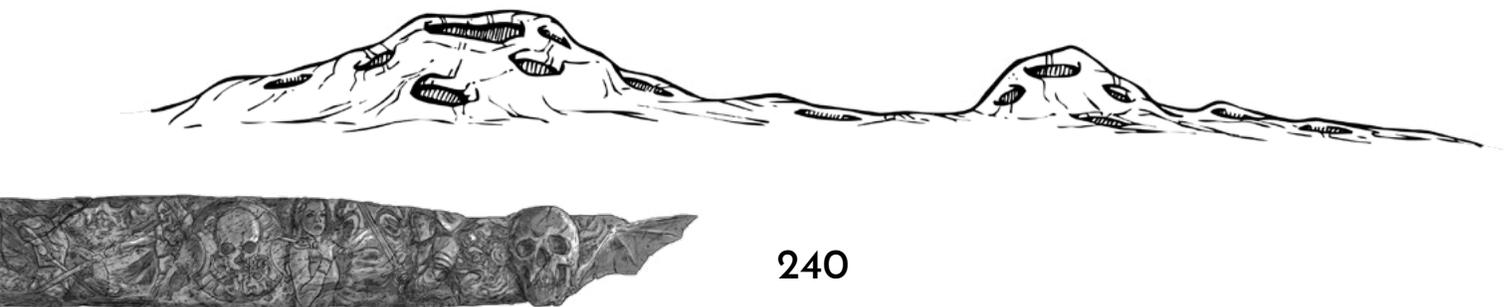
Lorcii is a human transplant to Tharak IV, and given his various proclivities appears to come from Earth, though exactly *when* is unclear. He summoned **Ray Gronski** (see **Sample Heroes**, pg. 183) years before in an attempt to gain a doomsday weapon. Though ultimately thwarted, he was not defeated, and his power remains unbroken. Lorcii seems intent on creating his own army of reluctant Zeibani and reshaping the planet in Earth's image.

Aside from his *Long-Lived* boon, most of Lorcii's staying power has to do with his mountain stronghold. Built into the side of a cliff some 300' above the ground, and approachable by only a few narrow passes, it has so far proven impregnable to anything the locals have been able to field.

Gann appears of indeterminate age, with protuberant eyes and a knowing smile. He wears a brass skullcap and favors black and green on all his clothing, as well as his minion's livery. Most of his magic involves summoning; at the GMs option, he has access to a menagerie of weird alien weapons, creatures, and enchanted objects brought from other places and times. Gann has 15 AP.

PLOT POINTS/SEEDS

- Zeke's girth is a sign of prosperity among the Zeibani, which makes him attractive to their women. However, he doesn't know the full extent of Zeibani mating habits . . . like black widow spiders, the oviparous females have been known to kill, and then devour their partners in a fit of passion!
- Zeke's rottweiler, Sugar, also survived the trip to Tharak IV. She has since mated with the local canine-analogs, giving birth to monstrously sized, though very obedient hybrids. The creatures are large enough to serve as mounts, and can be trained to fight in the manner of warhorses. Though traditionally the Zeibani don't have anything resembling cavalry, this might soon change—and forever change the power structure on the planet.
- Zeke and Twitchy discover they're not the first humans to visit Tharak IV, when they find an old Victrola phonograph at a trade festival. Though the Zeibani are tight-lipped about it (they don't want to blow their prophecy scam), a helpful Virid mystic recalls the legend of a "metal bird" and the brave human who appeared with it, decades ago. The human helped recover a "death egg" the bird had been carrying from Gann Lorcii, before going to live with a Virid tribe in a remote mountain settlement. The mystic can point PCs in the general direction.
- After journeying across treacherous alien terrain, Zeke and Twitchy at last arrive at the mountain village. There they meet Ray "Wrong Way" Gronski, now a hundred years old! With the help of local blacksmiths, he has painstakingly restored his B-29, *The Black Pearl*, in a hangar-like temple nearby. Though the engines no longer work, Gronski has discovered a special metal that resists gravity when an electrical charge is passed through it. He's fitted a 'keel' of this metal beneath the plane, allowing it to levitate off the ground.



Gronski wants to use the *Pearl* to assault Gann Lorcii's nigh-impregnable castle. His bold plan involves floating up to the structure and using the plane's last functioning M2 machinegun to clear the battlements, before a squad of Virid warriors leap from the bomb bay to take the fortress! However, he needs to figure out a means of propulsion, so the *Pearl* doesn't drift aimlessly. Perhaps Zeke and Twitchy can help with that. And though Gronski doesn't want to admit it, he's in no shape to lead the airborne offensive when *The Black Pearl* flies again!



OPTION: A CRUEL TWIST

If two survivalists armed to the teeth doesn't sound challenging enough for a sword and planet setting, the GM can always throw a curveball. Maybe standard gunpowder doesn't ignite so well under the pressure and atmospheric conditions of Tharak IV, making more of a fizzle than a bang. Most of Zeke's arsenal might therefore be useless, except for body armor, survival knives, and first aid kits.

However, word soon gets around that a Zeibani tribe from across the Dune Sea occasionally trade in fireworks, for use during festivals. Someone's figured out a formula that works. And since Twitchy happens to be a black powder enthusiast, if he gets his hands on the recipe, he can cast a couple smoothbore muskets—putting firearms back on the table!

CARNIFEX MUNDI

Over the war strewn corpse of an alternate Europe, a mercenary company wanders, selling their blades and martial guile to any despot, would be conqueror, or scheming noble with the coin to meet their fee. Carnifex Mundi, 'The World's Butcher,' had once numbered ten thousand strong, but now can muster only *ten* after countless battles gone awry. Even their sole camp follower has been recruited, and death doesn't necessarily mean dismissal from the company's ranks.

The darkness enfolding the world began with the invention of the printing press, during the hopeful dawn of the Enlightenment. Why? Because of two books put into circulation—*Of Infernal Necromancie* and the 'lost' *Book of the Dead*, recovered from Egypt, and translated into Latin. All progress has since stagnated, plunged back into the Dark Ages as commoner and noble alike pursue a cult of immortality, the promise of eternal life in *this* world rather than the next. Baroque cathedrals to the 'new' god Deus Mortis have appeared among city skylines, along with pyramids, obelisks, and cenotaphs from the Land of the Nile.

But the price of undeath must be paid in flesh, ground by the machinery of never ending war. Someone's got to turn the gears. And that's where Carnifex Mundi comes in . . .

(Mundi is a grimdark setting, inspired by the work of Glen Cook as well as movies like Kelly's Heroes and Flesh + Blood. PCs are created using the low-powered option on pg. 27, making survival a tougher prospect. Heroes need to take mercenary or soldier as one of their career slots, though this can be at 0 to reflect new recruits. The Grievous Wound option (pg. 99) used in lieu of Defy Death simulates a grittier feel for the setting.

Inspiration for characters can come from military-themed historical fiction, fantasy, and science fiction. Since PCs are less powerful, tactics and cunning are the order of the day rather than cinematic heroics, though the latter still can happen—and be more memorable for its scarcity. Though the setting posits an extremely pessimistic world, there is the shadow of a faint hope. Depending on their actions, PCs might find themselves unlikely saviors rather than just hard-bitten mercs, looking for their next meal ticket!)





PERSONALITIES

Colorful heroes with very human flaws round out the cast of a wandering mercenary company. *Anti*-heroes might be a more appropriate term, though to keep a Carnifex campaign from sliding into complete moral anarchy, the GM should offer a chance for players to be heroic at times.

Carnifex Mundi is sometimes smirkingly referred to as the “Decimari” (“The Decimated”), due to their much-depleted status. Never to their faces, however!

The General

The founding member of Carnifex Mundi is a well-preserved corpse known only as the General, carried everywhere the company goes on a curtained litter. Serving as one of the two litter bearers is considered a high honor. Though long dead, the General can still be consulted via necromancy, giving solid, hoarsely whispered advice from the weight of ages. His withered right hand clutches the company’s original charter, granted by the Holy Roman Emperor, in a gilded tube.

Leopold the III

An albino, with curly white hair and a cherubic face, Leopold has been designated the formal ‘captain’ of the company, though takes frequent counsel from his troupe. He is a tactical genius, educated at the University of Prague before Europe completely collapsed. His swordsmanship is considered second only to Father Ruiz’s.

Leopold wears a baroquely styled cuirass, feathered helm, and wields a falchion with a buckler. He endures constant mockery for being a fop.

| Attributes | Combat Abilities | |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Strength 0 | Initiative 0 | Lifeblood 10 |
| Agility 1 (0) | Melee 2 | Resolve 11 |
| Mind 1 | Ranged 0 | Hero Points 2 |
| Appeal 0 | Defense 1 (2) | Protection d6-1 |

Leopold the III (Continued)

Boons/Flaws

Tactician
Memorable/
Distinctive Appearance

Careers

Noble 1
Soldier 1

Attributes

Strength 0
Agility 2
Mind 0
Appeal 0

Combat Abilities

Initiative 0
Melee 0
Ranged 3
Defense 0
Lifeblood 10
Resolve 10
Hero Points 2
Protection d6 2

Father Ruiz

Tall, stout, and one-eyed, Father Ruiz has the distinction of being the oldest surviving member of the company, and by default, its informal leader. He is a master swordsman and middling priest, dabbling in both alchemy and the new faith of Deus Mortis. As team chaplain, he administers to his companion's (scant) spiritual needs.

In addition to a long Spanish sword, Ruiz carries a brace of grenados (see **Equipment**, pg. 80) across his chest. He wears light armor, helm, and a small Iberian style shield, the *caetra*.

Attributes

Strength 1
Agility 1
Mind 0
Appeal 1

Combat Abilities

Initiative 0
Melee 3
Ranged 0
Defense 1 (2)
Lifeblood 11
Resolve 10
Hero Points 2
Protection d6-2

Boons/Flaws

Alert
Comforting Words
Missing Eye

Careers

Priest 1
Mercenary 2
Alchemist 0

Maggs

A former camp follower, Maggs was pressed into service after demonstrating her skill with a latch (light crossbow). Now the team 'sniper,' she also doubles as a medic (along with Nazr Bey), sewing up wounds with a steady, expert hand.

Maggs carries the aforementioned crossbow, wears a buff coat (light armor) with helm, and uses a great spear (d6H damage) for hand-to-hand.

Boons/Flaws

Deft Hands
Illiterate

Careers

Healer 1
Mercenary 1

Woodchuck

A skinny youngster with buck teeth, Woodchuck serves as the company's 'beastmaster.' However, instead of ferocious animals at his disposal, he commands a stoat and a dancing bear, the latter rescued from a circus. The stoat is good for stealthy recon and the dancing bear a source of revenue when contracts are thin.

Woodchuck stays off the front lines, and thus avoids wearing armor. He wields a small sword (D6L damage) when fighting is absolutely necessary.

Attributes

Strength 0
Agility 1
Mind 0
Appeal 1

Combat Abilities

Initiative 1
Melee 0
Ranged 0
Defense 1
Lifeblood 10
Resolve 10
Hero Points 2
Protection 0

Boons/Flaws

Beast-Friend
Young

Careers

Beastmaster 2
Mercenary 0

Skelly Jim

The 'child' of the company's two sorcerers, Giacinta and Nazr Bey, Skelly Jim is actually a magical construct, formed from a patchwork of heavy armor, and moving under the power of reanimated bones ('donated' by former members of the troupe). A generous stuffing of straw and rags helps to pad out his suit. Skelly keeps his helmet visor down at all times; Nazr will sometimes cast Glamour to make him appear as a gallant knight.



Skelly wears heavy armor with helm and wields a two handed mace (d6H+3). Needless to say, he usually takes point, more as a moving shield than a spotter.

| Attributes | | Combat Abilities | |
|------------|--------------|------------------|--|
| Strength 3 | Initiative 0 | Lifeblood 16/15 | |
| Agility 0 | Melee 2 | Resolve — | |
| Mind -1 | Ranged 0 | Hero Points 2 | |
| Appeal — | Defense 0 | Protection d6 | |

| Boons/Flaws | Careers |
|---|---------|
| <i>Undead</i> (see pg. 153) <i>Lumbering</i> | None |

Nazr Bey

One of the company's two sorcerers, Nazr is a heavily bearded Turk skilled at weaving illusions. His past service in the court of Istanbul includes training as a physician, and he performs field surgeries for the company when necessary. He has a longtime rivalry with Giacinta, though this has cooled somewhat since their mutual construction of Skelly Jim.

Nazr Bey wears light armor when expecting trouble, along with a turbaned helm, though this incurs a -1 penalty on his Arcane Rolls. He wields a scimitar (d6+1 damage). Nazr has 11 AP.

| Attributes | | Combat Abilities | |
|------------|--------------|------------------|--|
| Strength 1 | Initiative 0 | Lifeblood 11 | |
| Agility 0 | Melee 1 | Resolve 11 | |
| Mind 1 | Ranged 0 | Hero Points 2 | |
| Appeal 0 | Defense 1 | Protection d6-2 | |

| Boons/Flaws | Careers |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Magical Affinity</i> (Illusions) <i>Professional Rivalry</i> | Healer 1 Sorcerer 1 Mercenary 0 |



Giacinta

The 'other sorcerer,' Giacinta is a former client who joined the company when she couldn't pay her bill—and needed to escape from her husband, a newly-risen vampire. A talented necromancer, she reanimates the General when necessary for his sage advice, and tosses Hexes at opponents in the heat of battle. Though she drops the occasional hint about her (very) dark past, Giacinta remains otherwise tight-lipped.

Giacinta wears no armor and only carries a dagger (D6L) for protection. Like Woodchuck, she generally hangs back during fighting. Giacinta has 11 AP.

| Attributes | | Combat Abilities | |
|------------|--------------|------------------|--|
| Strength 0 | Initiative 1 | Lifeblood 10 | |
| Agility 0 | Melee 0 | Resolve 12 | |
| Mind 2 | Ranged 0 | Hero Points 2 | |
| Appeal 0 | Defense 0 | Protection 0 | |

| Boons/Flaws | Careers |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Magical Affinity</i> (Necromancy) <i>Taciturn</i> | Noble 1 Sorcerer 1 Mercenary 0 |



The New Guy

At any given time, the company has a raw recruit, usually some fresh-faced kid just off the farm. Treat this character as Rabble with 3 lifeblood; when the adventure calls for something unfortunate to happen, it happens to the New Guy. Other members of the troupe place bets as to how long this 'fresh fish' will last.

If the New Guy ever survives an adventure, he or she can be promoted to Tough, or maybe even a playable hero if desired.

Other members can be added to the company's roster, to keep the group total at 10. These generally have colorful names like **Bardiche Bill**, **The Gleaner**, **Nodd Rogers**, etc.

THE HIERARCHY OF IMMORTALITY

With the widespread knowledge of necromancy and other death-denying magics has come a new, fervent desire to live forever. Why take the chance of eternal punishment in the next world when you can make your own paradise in this one? The faddish obsession has had disastrous consequences, as old Faiths are abandoned, and foul necromancy elevated as a 'divine' art.

There are several established ways of achieving immortality, ranked in terms of desirability:

Ghoul Transformation

This is regarded as the lowest means to eternal life, as foul-smelling ghouls can hardly be expected to entertain in polite society. It is now understood that long term exposure to ghoulish feter can gradually transform a subject into one of the creatures, provided said ghouls don't devour you, first! This form of immortality is pursued by only the poorest, most desperate hopefuls.

Vampirism

This approach is embraced by some members of the aristocracy, especially in France and Spain. However, it comes at considerable cost; without a steady supply of fresh blood, vampires literally rot on the bone. This 'wasteful' drain on human life, along with restrictions around daylight, make vampirism a second-tier choice.

Alchemical/Egyptian Ritual

The 'highest' form of immortality, this typically involves the construction of large pyramid palaces, sanctified by key rituals from the lost *Book of the Dead*. Once beneath the pyramid, aging can be held in abeyance, allowing the subject to live forever in a kind of stasis. However, said subjects must *remain* under the pyramid to keep time from catching up. This places great constraints on mobility. Some alchemists have discovered a preparation of *vitae essential*, distilled from living creatures, that allows for movement from pyramid to pyramid, but the effects are only temporary.

The demands of maintaining eternal life put great strain on mortal humans, in essence creating another level to the food chain. Europe's population surplus has evaporated under this insatiable yoke, and less people to work the fields means less food . . . creating a vicious circle. Thus, continual warfare (yet another drain) has emerged to secure dwindling resources.

THE NOUVEAU DEAD

The term "stinking rich" has taken on new meaning in a world where nobles maintain large numbers of reanimated servants. These subjects are much easier to care for, don't revolt, and can work tirelessly. However, as time goes by dry rot eventually sets in, and repeated coatings of lacquer can only go so far. New materials, in the form of fresh corpses, have become harder and harder to procure.

Given that undead servants are the mark of established money, some noble houses have gone so far as to maintain faux zombies. Living servants are kept gaunt, to the point of emaciation, and dust down their skin with white-powdered lead, creating a ghastly pallor. They also affect a stiff-limbed walk.

The wealthy maintain pleasure estates walled off from the rest of the world, to better enjoy eternal contemplation without interruption. These islands of decadent luxury include gardens, ponds, artificial grottoes, etc., ringed by heavy fortifications to protect against the hellscape outside.





CHURCH OF DEUS MORTIS

This new ‘faith’ has quickly assimilated older ones, making use of existing churches and temples while constructing gothic-style cathedrals with undead labor. The central, popular tenet is that most people won’t make it into paradise after they die, given their lapses of character during life. Purgatory takes too long and is unbearable, besides; therefore, the best option is to struggle for eternal life while still alive. Those without means (most followers) are exhorted to achieve this feat through pure will and fervent faith, though all manner of alchemical concoctions, special diets, and secret rituals are foisted off on the gullible—especially by lower-ranking clergy.

As this church is not a true Faith, priests of Deus Mortis are not granted actual Faith/Fate Points. Rumors persist that within the organization, however, are priests who never recanted their original beliefs, and who meet in secret to plot the overthrow of the corrupt new order. Perhaps they guard an ancient relic with the power to overcome this current obsession with immortality and bring back true death!

PLOT POINTS/SEEDS

- In what could be a major comeback for the troupe, Carnifex Mundi is hired as personal bodyguard by the ruler of London, Paris, Rome, or some other major city. However, at the official appointment ceremony said ruler is assassinated—apparently by one of the PCs!

The murder is actually a carefully orchestrated plot, masterminded by a court sorcerer using a Simulacrum (see **Magic**, pg. 128) of the hero. The deception, however, is not immediately apparent to either the PCs or the hundreds of people watching the ceremony.

Their patron now dead, the framed Carnifex members must fight their way out of the city, pursued by constables, soldiers, and other rival mercenary groups. The scenario plays out like the 1979 film *The Warriors*, based on the historical *Anabasis*, in which Greek mercenaries must escape Persia after their patron, Cyrus the Younger, dies attempting to seize the throne.



PRIMORDIAL

- Much of the original weapons and armor of Carnifex Mundi is now in the hands of a private collector, after the company was swindled decades earlier. Among the arsenal is an enchanted gorget, said to contain the soul of the General's chief aide, a brilliant warrior named Xenias. One of the gorget's reputed powers is the granting of (temporary) invulnerability.

Carnifex wants the gorget back. With such an artifact, new recruits would come flocking in droves, swelling the company's ranks to its former glory! To get it, though, the mercs will have to somehow bypass the collector's small army of guards on his private estate. Careful planning is required to pull off the heist!

- The troupe takes some much-needed rest at a peaceful, remote country village with a nearby vineyard. The lord here is unusually kind, taking in refugees and giving them work. All is not well, however. A local bandit lord with a 'slow' (undead) army wants to claim the village and profitable vineyard, substituting the refugee labor with reanimated workers.

The villagers and their lord can't pay much, but want to hire Carnifex to defend them in a *Seven Samurai* style adventure. Can PCs help turn the locals into an effective fighting force, while preparing the vineyard for an undead siege?



The skin of this Earth had barely cooled from fiery birth ere life began to spring forth. Beneath the canopy of primeval jungle, snakes walked upright, erecting their great cities of basalt as they perfected the evocation of alien demons. At the same time, shielded by fathoms of crushing ocean, trench-dwelling creatures, perhaps brought here by the comets that flooded the world, began sending out their minions in the form of early arthropods. These advance 'scouts' were devoured by the snake-men as soon as they crawled onto land. The deep-dwellers retaliated, sending leviathan beasts to crush the serpents' coastal cities. Thus, an eons-long war erupted between earth and sea.

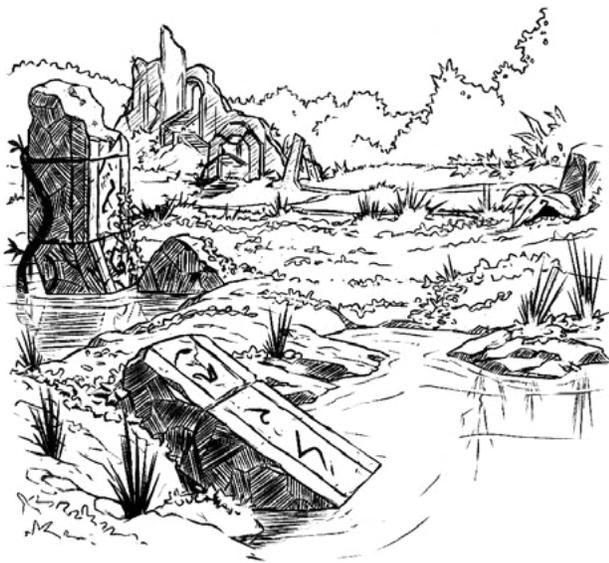
Even as simpler life evolved within the crucible of daily survival, the two sentient races fought. Both claimed to create humans as a by-blow of their earliest experiments, the snakes seizing clever primates as soon as they came down from the trees, the dwellers doing likewise with apes frolicking too close to shore.

Whatever their origins, humans have now waxed dominant, while their so-called progenitors have waned. The Earth has changed, and with her changes have come the harbingers of a new era. Blue-white glaciers mass along the jungle's horizon, threatening to scrape away the last of the serpent men's settlements, while tremors rock the ocean floor, crushing the trenches of the deep-dwellers even as new continents prepare to heave up from the water.

Humanity, meanwhile, has formed its first empire. Biremes range forth from the city of Yx, rebuilt upon the ruins of a much older edifice, to trade and pillage among the rugged tribes of plains, jungle, and tundra. Lore speaks of an ancient conflict between primordial forces, a dim ancestral memory in which humans played some crucial role. But, known only to a few, a shadow war between the snakes and the spiders still rages!

(Primordial is a traditional S&S world, set way back in the murky bowels of earth's history, where humans are the upstarts, enjoying their time in the sun as much older—and much more sinister—precursor races are dying out. However, as an antediluvian world, the timeline is even earlier than most; the series of cataclysms that will transform the Earth into something closer to our modern image has yet to occur. This sense





of coming apocalypse hangs over everything, similar to the foreboding doom of a dying Earth, and helps to establish a finite, pessimistic tone so familiar to S&S.

Primordial draws clear inspiration from Robert E. Howard, as well as the other two giants of Weird Tales, H.P. Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith, both of whom wrote extensively about the rise and fall of non-human empires lost to the eons. The trench-dwelling folk mentioned in the opening are not necessarily Lovecraft's ichthyoid Deep Ones, and their identity/description is left purposely vague, to add mystery alongside the more familiar concept of serpent men. Unlike in the other settings presented, descriptions of NPCs are absent—this early world is painted in broader strokes, with PCs playing a greater role as movers and shakers. As the saying goes, “there were giants in the Earth, in those days . . .”

THE YXIAN EMPIRE

Humanity's first empire is based in its first city, Yx, whose basalt foundations were laid by the serpent men. The coastal settlement was one of several destroyed by the trench-dwellers at the start of the Snake and Spider War; the serpent men stayed far inland from that point on. Yx again became inhabited during the rise of the diluvians (see **Non-Human Origins**, pg. 69) who extended the city out into the shoals and shallows of the adjoining bay.

Humans took over as the diluvians waned, though this likely involved a peaceful transfer through intermarriage and treaties. To this day, the priesthood of Yx uses spider, crab, and other arthropod imagery, while openly vilifying the serpent men and their kind. Certain noble bloodlines are known for webbed hands and feet, and the city's patron sea-god, Cancris, is said to be a façade for a much older Divinity worshipped by the trench-dwellers, known only to the upper echelons of the priesthood. The ruling castes also pay homage to this Deity, observing rites when the moon shines full over the harbor, away from the eyes of the rest of the populace.

In game terms, Yxian culture is Civilized, with the expansionist and militaristic traits. Technology is uniformly Bronze Age (see **Tech Levels**, pg. 75). The nobility is made up of generals, decorated warriors, priests, and sorcerers; Yxian meritocracy has made for a more cosmopolitan society, with plenty of upward mobility for those deemed capable.

Yx maintains the world's only professional navy of galleys and biremes, organized mainly to protect their sea trade routes from tribal pirates. Travel by sea, rather than overland through dense jungle and other harsh terrain is both faster and generally safer—massive sea creatures can put a damper on this, though Yxian galleys tend to be spared the depredations of oceanic horrors. This is often attributed to the protection of Cancris.

More famous than its navy is the Yxian army, the backbone of the empire. Originally this was a city militia of spearmen, though now has grown to incorporate a professional phalanx, heavy chariots, and auxiliaries from among the various tribes, including mastodon units from Hyperborea, gracile (see **Non-Human Origins**, pg. 70) mercenary archers, and fierce swordsmen of the Eastern Isles. This 'combined arms' approach has so far proven unstoppable, with Yxian forces experiencing defeat only by ambush or when supply lines are drawn out too far, as exemplified by several disastrous campaigns to the north.

Yx draws tribute from several inland city-states, who, by charter, can't build walls or maintain fortifications, much to the ire of local rulers. In this way, the 'mother city' has been quick to put down rebellions, though splintering as the empire grows larger is inevitable. The principal city states are Gath, Tirzeh, Xiloh, Myrv

Tepe, and Kirjeth. A disproportionate amount of Yx infantry is drawn from these settlements.

Given Yx's nigh military supremacy, its main threat stems from internal rot—intrigues within the court, often orchestrated by serpent men in human guise.

BARBARIANS AT THE GATES

As noted previously, the Yxian empire both fights and draws manpower from the various barbarian tribes and non-human civilizations surrounding it. Though other city-states in the empire occasionally rebel, these are always ruthlessly crushed before any significant traction can be gained. The other power-players beyond the empire's borders can be summed up by their relative directions:

To the North

The subpolar regions of Hyperborea host several barbarian tribes, most of whom have established an uneasy alliance with Yx. Feared for their hardiness and domesticated mastodons (use the stats for woolly mammoth, pg. 152), these tribesmen look forward to the next Ice Age, prophesied to bury their soft, warmth-loving neighbors under an avalanche of snow. "The ice waxes," is a common refrain heard here.

Rumors persist of a powerful witch king living near the pole, who rules from an iceberg fortress.

To the South

The last great city of the graciles, Eizon, lies amidst the southern jungles, hard in the shadow of a triple-coned volcano. During previous centuries this culture represented Yx's chief foe and obstacle to empire.

With their sorcerers, archers, and much feared 'dragons' (dimetrodons), the graciles had come within a hairsbreadth of toppling the human kingdoms. Fortunes have changed, however. Only a few dragons remain within the great stone hatcheries, their numbers dwindling as the world cools. Some graciles have been reduced to hiring out as auxiliary troops to the Yxian empire. However, with their allies the serpent men, the graciles still pose an active threat through subterfuge and guile.



DIMETRODON

Size: Huge

Normally Found: Jungle

Traits

Charge, Trample

Attributes

Strength 3,2/8

Agility 0

Mind -2

Appeal —

Lifeblood 13,2/40

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee

Damage d6+3,2/d6x2

Defense 0

Protection d6-2

Fear 2

These are larger specimens, about 20' long, bred for size and aggressiveness. Their dorsal fins are usually trimmed to allow an archer platform mounted. The dimetrodon can bite for listed damage or tail sweep (d6+1, scale 2/d6x2) up to 3 adjacent targets with a single attack.

To the East

Two large islands lie a day's sail from the coast of Yx, part of a crescent-shaped archipelago of smaller masses. The tribesmen dwelling here are fierce warriors and berserkers, who have learned to use



guerilla tactics against the empire. Though an island nation, they have no navy of their own, save coracles and fishing boats.

The islands play hosts to many dolmens scattered across its rocky shores, and there are whispers of an even older tribe, driven underground into a series of limestone caverns. These are night children (see **Non-Human Origins**, pg. 70), whose witches have access to fearsome chthonic magic.

To the West

The familiar jungle terrain here soon gives way to vast plains, populated by nomadic tribesmen who have domesticated horses. These hardy people worship the open sky and practice burial by exposure to the elements. Even further west are tribes unlocking the secrets of iron, though this knowledge is not widespread. The western regions are considered a frontier by the empire of Yx, marked for further expansion.

APOCALYPSE SOON

By prophecy and certain ominous signs—rumblings from the ocean's depths, icebergs massing along the horizon, and smoking volcanoes—there is a general sense of foreboding, that cataclysms will soon devour the world. As a result, doomsday cults have spread like wildfire, each predicting the specifics of the world's demise and how to survive it.

Most cults involve the veneration of some eldritch horror (see **Bestiary**, pg. 161), whose nihilistic worship offers answers in a growing climate of doom. Though the apocalypse is a certainty, no one knows precisely when it will come—in days, months, or even centuries. This hasn't stopped people from speculating, however. Everyone, from street philosophers to a king's perfumed soothsayer, seems to have a theory.

Some communities of serpent men have been dutifully preparing for the worst. Anticipating the next Ice Age, the creatures have been digging special stasis vaults far below the earth, near geothermal arteries. Serpent men prophecy holds that at some point in the far future, the Earth will warm again, allowing them to emerge and rebuild their mighty empire!

DEEP TIME

Though the Primordial setting seems 'early' (relatively speaking) for humans, countless chapters of history have already been written. Long before the rise of Yx, graciles had been carving out their own empire and butting heads with the serpent men. After suffering many defeats, the graciles forged an unholy alliance with the snakes, the former learning both sorcery and the breeding of 'dragons.' For their part, the graciles became agents of the serpent-men, and their settlements gradually served as a buffer against developing human tribes.

Similarly, early diluvians were overtaken by minions of the trench-dwellers—hideous, brain-devouring trilobites. These creatures essentially 'zombified' their victims, allowing the dwellers direct control. Now organized, the diluvians built great shoal cities from coral and igneous rock, to increase their population and better defend against attacks by the serpent men. Soon, the coastal shallows near ruined Yx became crowded with such structures, which eventually surrounded and claimed the ancient edifice. In current times, the Yxian crown and the helmets worn by her generals resemble the sinister trilobites of old, perched in feeding position atop the head.





BRAIN-DEVOURER

Size: Tiny/Small

Normally Found: Coastal, Ocean

Traits

Ambush

Attributes

Strength -1
 Agility 3
 Mind -2
 Appeal —
 Lifeblood 4

Combat Abilities

Attack +2 melee
 Damage d6L + special
 Defense 1
 Protection d6-3
 Fear 1

These aquatic fiends can still be found in lost shoal cities; an active threat to treasure-seekers poking among grottoes and half-flooded ruins. They are most dangerous when attacking from ambush; on a Tough (-2) Attack Roll, the trilobite attaches to the back of their target's head, doing d6 damage per round until dislodged. Anyone killed in this manner becomes reanimated as a pseudo-zombie (see **Bestiary**, pg. 173), under the trench-dweller's control.

HOMINIDS AND MEGAFAUNA

In addition to humans, communities of beastmen, diluvians, graciles, night children, and robustus (see **Non-Human Origins**, pg. 69) still exist among the vast stretches of forbidding wilderness. Though these could potentially serve as PCs, the GM should be careful allowing this option. Otherwise, novelty-seeking players may form an adventuring group with no actual humans!

The **Bestiary** chapter gives stats for Pleistocene megafauna; woolly mammoths and woolly rhinoceros, cave bears, sabretooth cats, and dire wolves. Along with colossal snakes and gray apes, these make a good substitute for the 'monsters' of traditional fantasy settings. Dinosaurs and other throwback creatures, such as the giant millipedes of the Permian era, or cannibalistic Gigantopithecus (use the stats for ogres, pg. 169), can also remind players their heroes are traipsing through a *much* earlier time.

PLOT POINTS/SEEDS

- PCs begin the campaign as barbaric outlanders, recently promoted to the Yxian court after victories on the battlefield. However, the heroes may soon be yearning for honest bloodshed once more, as they find themselves over their heads in the midst of court intrigues, coups, assassinations, and outright power-grabs by their scheming 'civilized' colleagues. Maybe PCs can help cleanse the corruption by exposing it, or 'go native' and try to seize the throne themselves!
- After an earthquake, the sea recedes along a section of coast, revealing an ancient diluvian city left eerily intact. Treasure hunters and sorcerers are lining up to loot the place, though ancient curses—and hordes of brain-devouring trilobites—await them.
- Rumors reach PCs the huge corpse of a trench-dweller has washed ashore near a coastal village. No human has laid eyes on such a creature before, and just the *shape* of this eldritch horror is said to be mind-shattering. The heroes soon discover the beached dweller isn't actually dead—and its powerful psionic abilities have spawned a new cult, plaguing the villagers with alien visions!



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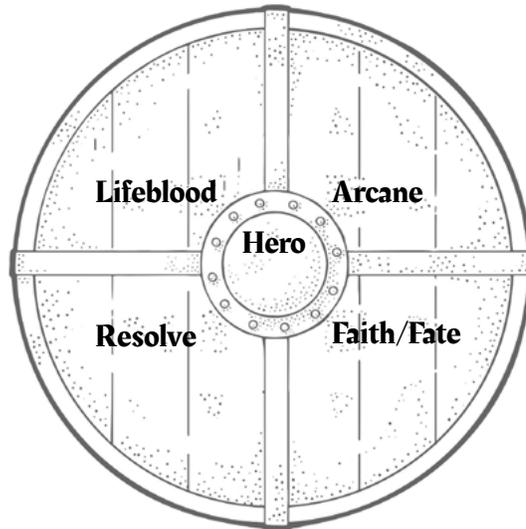
Name

STRENGTH

AGILITY

MIND

APPEAL



Combat Abilities

Initiative

Melee

Ranged

Defense

Career

Rank

| Career | Rank |
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Boons/Flaws

| Boons/Flaws |
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Weapons, Armor, & Equipment

Prot./Dmg.

| Weapons, Armor, & Equipment | Prot./Dmg. |
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XP/AP

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