

NAME

LOOK

STATS MOVES

HISTORY

highlight



• Do something risky

COOL

highlight



• Attack or threaten someone;
• Join battle

HARD

highlight



• Seduce or manipulate someone

HOT

highlight



• Read a person;
• Read a situation

SHARP

highlight



• Grasp outward

WEIRD

highlight

ARMS & ARMOR

WOUNDS

Not life-threatening

Life-threatening

Dying

Come back with -1 Hard.

Come back with +1 Weird.

Change to a new playbook.

Die.

Help or interfere; Session end

BONEPICKER SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, they choose 1:

- You get +1 to your history with them, and they get +1 to their history with you.
- You recover 1 spent devotion, but they get -1 to their history with you.
- You recover 1 spent devotion, and you must answer any one question they ask.

IMPROVEMENT

experience >>improve

- Get +1sharp (max sharp+3)
- Get +1cool (max cool+2)
- Get +1hard (max hard+2)
- Get +1hard (max hard+2)
- Get +1weird (max weird+2)
- Get a new bonepicker move
- Get a new bonepicker move
- Get an **acolyte** (detail with the MC)
- Get a move from another playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- Get +1 to any stat (max stat+3)
- Retire your character to safety
- Create a second character to play
- Change your character to a new playbook
- Choose 3 basic moves and advance them
- Advance the other 3 basic moves

THE BONEPICKER

THE BONEPICKER

When you're lying in the dust of fallen empires guts aspilled, for whom do you pray? The gods? This is their doing, all of it. Your bold comrades? If you could rely on them you wouldn't be here. Your precious old mother? She's a darling but what will she do for you but weep and mourn. No, you pray for death's gray bird, a bonepicker, to lay a hand upon you, and the cauter, and to tell you whether you will live or die.

BONEPICKER MOVES

Battlefield grace: while you are caring for people, not fighting, you get +1armor.

Canny: when you grasp outward into the world's psychic maelstrom, roll+sharp instead of +weird.

Detachment: you can choose to roll+sharp instead of roll+history when you help someone who's rolling.

The second devotion: burn incense against reluctance, whisper someone's name to the world's psychic maelstrom, and spend 0-3 devotion. Roll+devotion spent. On a 10+, choose 2. On a 7-9, choose 1:

- The world's psychic maelstrom whispers back whether they are alive or dead.
- The world's psychic maelstrom will protect them from harm, if it is able.
- The world's psychic maelstrom will do them harm, if it is able.
- The world's psychic maelstrom whispers back who they are with and what they are doing.
- Recover 1 of the devotion you spent, if you spent any.

On a miss, ask the MC what the world's psychic maelstrom whispers to you.

Still-room: you get a still-room, a **ceremonial space** (cf) of healing. Bring your patients into it and you can contemplate, understand, and transform them like a mystic can contemplate and transform reality.

Necromancer: when someone dies in your care, you can use them for **augury**. This is contrary to your devotion, but still, you can.

OTHER MOVES

EQUIPMENT & TRAPPINGS

THE BONEPICKER

YOUR DEVOTION

○○○○○○○ spent

Your devotion allows you to speak life to the living and death to the dying. The trappings of your devotion include some or all of:

- *The cauter*
- *The gray bird's wing*
- *Bandages, knives, split-twig clamps, needles, a glass blade*
- *The seven salves: awakening, blood-stop, bone-set, leaping-heart, proof-against-pain, unawakening, and wound-knit*
- *The four incenses: against grief, against fear, against despair, and against reluctance*
- *The misericorde (3-harm, intimate)*
- *The blindfold*

When you are fully rested, prepared, and initiated, you have a measure of 6 devotion. When you attend yourself to the wounded, you choose how much of your devotion and endurance to give them, measured as 0–3 devotion “spent.”

You begin play with your full measure of 6 devotion. At need, you can spend 1 keep to recover 2 devotion, if your circumstances allow you the time to rest, prepare and renew your initiations.

When you **devote yourself to someone with 1–3 wounds**, you heal their wounds, 1 by 1. These must be fresh wounds; there is no cure for old wounds. Ask the MC how long it'll take, and how little they can exert themselves without undoing your work. Then your patient chooses: you spend 1 devotion and salve them against pain and fear; or else you spend none, and they spend their recovery in misery like everyone else.

When you **devote yourself to someone with 4–6 wounds**, roll+devotion spent. On a hit, you heal them down to 3 wounds, and choose 2 (on a 10+) or 1 (on a 7–9):

- *They fight you and you must apply unawakening. How long will they be out?*
- *The pain, incense, and salves make them babble the truth. Ask them what secret they spill.*
- *Their body is eager to be healed. Recover 1 of the devotion you spent, if you spent any.*
- *They're at your complete mercy. What do you do to them?*
- *Their course of recovery teaches you something about your own devotion. Mark experience.*
- *They owe you for your time, attention, and expense, and you're going to hold them to it.*

On a miss, their life is ending. Speak death to them or defy your devotion.

When you **speak death to the dying**, whisper the words and deliver mercy.

When you **devote yourself to someone who has just died**, spend 2 devotion. They come back, but you choose how they come back. Choose from the regular list, or else choose 1:

- *They come back in your deep, deep debt.*
- *You and they both come back with +1weird (max weird+3).*

○ **You have an acolyte.** Whenever you spend your devotion, first your acolyte spends 1 on your behalf. Thus, to roll+1, spend 0; to roll+2, spend 1; to revive someone who has just died, spend only 1; and so on.

YOUR KEEP

At the beginning of the session, spend 1, 2, or 3 keep for your lifestyle. If you can't or won't, tell the MC and answer her questions. You can earn your keep by: *working the hard earth; tending to the health of a dozen families or more; serving in a powerful NPC's army; serving a powerful NPC as priest and healer*; or other means as you can negotiate them.

In addition to your lifestyle, you might spend your keep on: *a night in high luxury and company; someone else's protection, service, or labor; a weapon or other equipment; tribute to a warlord; the bribes required to turn someone's eye or secure someone's complicity; rich or beautiful clothing*; or other things as you can arrange for them.

THE BONEPICKER

To create your bonepicker, choose **name, look, stats, moves, equipment,** and **history.**

NAME

Ama, Bishe, Cailo, Curdarre, Five, Imsha, Jerre, Mala, Naise, Pavia, Poise, Sara, Tell.

HISTORY

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or concealed.

Dark skin, light skin.

Sturdy gray robes.

Haggard face, kind face, lively face, pretty face, rugged face, or strong face.

Bright eyes, caring eyes, clear eyes, hard eyes, laughing eyes, or quick eyes.

Big body, compact body, rangy body, spare body, stout body, or sturdy body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- *Cool+1, Hard=0, Hot+1, Sharp+2, Weird-1*
- *Cool+1, Hard+1, Hot=0, Sharp+2, Weird-1*
- *Cool-1, Hard+1, Hot=0, Sharp+2, Weird+1*
- *Cool+2, Hard=0, Hot-1, Sharp+2, Weird-1*

MOVES

You get all the basic moves, and choose 2 bonepicker moves.

EQUIPMENT

You begin play with:

- *The trappings of your devotion, without an acolyte.*
- *A small practical weapon.*
- *Coin or goods worth 2 keep.*
- *Clothing suitable to your look (you detail).*

Small practical weapons (choose 1):

- *Dagger (2-harm)*
- *Fighting baton (2-harm, defensive)*
- *Fighting knife (2-harm, close in)*
- *Head-breaker [brass knuckles] (2-harm, close in, dirty)*
- *Short sword (3-harm)*

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for history. On your turn, ask 1, 2, or all 3:

- *Which one of you do I see as doomed to self-destruction?*
For that character, write history-2.
- *Which one of you put a hand in when it mattered, and helped me save a life?*
For that character, write history+2.
- *Which one of you has been beside me all along, and has seen everything I've seen?*
For that character, write history+3.

For everyone else, write history+1. You keep your eyes open.

On the others' turns, answer their questions as you like.

At the end, choose one of the characters with the highest history on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

GOALS

During play, it's your job to have your character make and pursue goals. They can be any goals you want, long term and short-. Begin by thinking what your goals might be this very morning, as play begins.

IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your history with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the options. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

NAME

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STATS MOVES

HISTORY

highlight



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• Read a person;
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• Grasp outward

WEIRD

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ARMS & ARMOR

WOUNDS



Not life-threatening



Life-threatening

Dying

Come back with -1 Hard.

Come back with +1 Weird.

Change to a new playbook.

Die.

Help or interfere; Session end

CHILD OF BATTLE SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, you annul their special move. Whatever it is, it doesn't happen.

IMPROVEMENT

experience ○○○○○>>improve

- Get +1hard (max hard+2)
- Get +1hot (max hot+2)
- Get +1sharp (max sharp+2)
- Get +1weird (max weird+2)
- Get a new child of battle move
- Get a new child of battle move
- Get an **ally** (cf; detail with the MC)
- Get a **war-band** (you detail) and **leadership**
- Get a move from another playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- Get +1 to any stat (max stat+3)
- Retire your character to safety
- Create a second character to play
- Change your character to a new playbook
- Choose 3 basic moves and advance them
- Advance the other 3 basic moves

THE CHILD OF BATTLE

There are, in this world of fallen empires, those more dangerous than the rest. The children of battle, the ones who carry themselves apart, the ones who glitter like bare blades in the dust. Lower your eyes when you pass them; they are the flame into which moths and fools fling themselves.

CHILD OF BATTLE MOVES

Anointed for battle: paint your skin with symbols of terror and power and they count as armor: 2 armor if you're otherwise naked or nearly naked; 1 armor if you're wearing non-armor clothing. When you wear armor, use it instead.

Ice cold: when you attack or threaten an NPC, roll+cool instead of +hard. When you attack or threaten another PC, roll+history instead of +hard.

Like the viper: when you enter into a charged situation, roll+hot. On a 10+, hold 2. On a 7-9, hold 1. Spend your hold 1-for-1 to make eye contact with an NPC present; they freeze or flinch and can't take action until you break it off. On a miss, your enemies immediately identify you as their foremost threat.

Merciless: when you inflict harm, inflict +1 harm.

Perfect instincts: when you've read a charged situation and you're acting on the MC's answers, take +2 to the roll instead of +1.

Visions of death: when you go into battle, roll+weird. On a 10+, name one NPC who'll die and one NPC who'll live. On a 7-9, name one NPC who'll die OR one NPC who'll live. The MC will make your vision come true, if it is within their power. On a miss, you foresee your own death, and take -1 ongoing until the battle ends.

OTHER MOVES

EQUIPMENT & TRAPPINGS

DISTINCTIVE WEAPONS

○ A distinctive dagger (2-harm)

Hilt (circle 1):	Blade (circle 2):
Copper	Broken-backed
Crude	Curved
Golden	Flame-shaped
Hide-wrapped	Heavy
Inlaid	Leaf-shaped
Intricate	Long
Ivory	Notched
Jeweled	Of unusual metal
Plain	Razor-sharp
	Shining
	Slender

○ Distinctive armor (2-armor)

Qualities (circle 2):	
Antique	Of unusual metal
Brilliantly enameled	Ornate
Elaborate helmet	Sculpted breastplate
Enameled black	Striking helmet
Menacing	Supple chain mail
Mirror-polished	Velvet brigandine

○ A distinctive shield (+1armor, off-hand)

Quality (circle 1):	
Unusual blazon	Unusual material
Unusual design	Unusual shape

Other distinctive weapons:

- A magical spell that strikes your enemies with blades of darkness (2-harm, thrown, area, ignores armor)
- A matched set of onyx-handled throwing daggers (2-harm, thrown)
- A recurved bow and leaf-blade arrows (3-harm, at range, specialized, 2-handed)
- A variety of hidden blades, spikes, and garrotes (2-harm, close in, dirty, infinite)

○ A distinctive sword

Length (circle 1):	Blade (circle 2):
Short (3-harm)	Age-darkened
Long (4-harm)	Curved
Bastard (4-harm, 2-handed, reach)	Enchanted
Great (4-harm, 2-handed, reach, heavy)	Etched
	Flame-shaped
	Leaf-shaped
	Light
Hilt (circle 1):	Notched
Crude	Of unusual metal
Golden	Patterned
Graceful	Razor-sharp
Hide-wrapped	Runed
Inlaid	Shining
Ivory	Single-edged
Jeweled	Straight
Plain	Supple

○ A distinctive hand weapon

Base (circle 1):
Chain (1-harm)
Haft (1-harm)
Handle (1-harm)
Staff (1-harm, 2-handed, reach)
Options (circle 1-2):
2-handed (+1 harm, heavy)
Blade: curved / heavy / short (+1 harm)
Blade: long (+2 harm)
Chain (+1harm, gruesome)
Chisel head (+1 harm, pierces armor)
Flail (+1 harm)
Hardened, shod, or studded (+1 harm)
Hook (+1 harm)
Parrying (defensive)
Piercing spike (+1 harm, pierces armor)
Spikes (+1 harm, gruesome)
Weighted head (+1 harm, gruesome)

YOUR KEEP

At the beginning of the session, spend 1, 2, or 3 keep for your lifestyle. If you can't or won't, tell the MC and answer her questions. You can earn your keep by: *working the hard earth; extorting, raiding, or robbing a wealthy population; executing a murder on behalf of a wealthy NPC; serving a powerful NPC as bodyguard; or other means as you can negotiate them.*

In addition to your lifestyle, you might spend your keep on: *a night in high luxury and company; someone else's protection, service, or labor; a weapon or other equipment; tribute to a warlord; the bribes required to turn someone's eye or secure someone's complicity; rich or beautiful clothing; or other things as you can arrange for them.*

THE CHILD OF BATTLE

To create your child of battle, choose **name**, **look**, **stats**, **moves**, **equipment**, and **history**.

NAME

Alabaster, Bind, Culistair, Fasha, Hawk, Joy, Marred, Never, Pity, Pyre, Sun, Zephyr.

HISTORY

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, or transgressing. Dark skin, light skin.

Austere clothing, fanciful clothing, plain clothing, or rich clothing.

Boyish face, girlish face, handsome face, smooth face, striking face, or sweet face.

Arresting eyes, calculating eyes, frosty eyes, indifferent eyes, or merciless eyes.

Angular body, gorgeous body, muscular body, sweet body, or slim body.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for history. On your turn, ask the other players which of their characters you can trust.

- For the characters you can trust, write history -1.
- For the characters you can't trust, write history +2.

You are indifferent to what is safe, and drawn to what is not.

On the others' turns, answer their questions as you like.

At the end, choose one of the characters with the highest history on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool+3, Hard-1, Hot+1, Sharp+1, Weird=0
- Cool+3, Hard-1, Hot+2, Sharp=0, Weird-1
- Cool+3, Hard-2, Hot+1, Sharp+1, Weird+1
- Cool+3, Hard=0, Hot+1, Sharp+1, Weird-1

MOVES

You get all the basic moves, and choose 2 child of battle moves.

EQUIPMENT

You begin play with:

- 3 distinctive weapons or armor.
- Coin or goods worth 4 keep.
- Clothing suitable to your look (you detail), including at your option light armor (1 armor) or heavy armor (2 armor).

GOALS

During play, it's your job to have your character make and pursue goals. They can be any goals you want, long term and short-term. Begin by thinking what your goals might be this very morning, as play begins.

IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your history with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the options. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

NAME

LOOK

STATS MOVES

HISTORY highlight



• Do something risky

COOL highlight



• Attack or threaten someone;
• Join battle

HARD highlight



• Seduce or manipulate someone

HOT highlight



• Read a person;
• Read a situation

SHARP highlight



• Grasp outward

WEIRD highlight

ARMS & ARMOR

WOUNDS

Not life-threatening

Life-threatening

Dying

- Come back with -1 Hard.
- Come back with +1 Weird.
- Change to a new playbook.
- Die.

Help or interfere; Session end

MESMERAST SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, you immediately plumb their psychic depths, whether you have the move or not. Roll+weird as normal. However, the MC chooses which questions to ask.

IMPROVEMENT

experience >>>improve

- Get +1cool (max cool+2)
 - Get +1sharp (max sharp+2)
 - Get +1hard (max hard+2)
 - Get +1hard (max hard+2)
 - Get a new mesmerast move
 - Get a new mesmerast move
 - Get 2 new or replacement mesmerast trappings
 - Get a **small holding** (you detail) and **wealth**
 - Get a move from another playbook
 - Get a move from another playbook
-
- Get +1 to any stat (max stat+3)
 - Retire your character to safety
 - Create a second character to play
 - Change your character to a new playbook
 - Choose 3 basic moves and advance them
 - Advance the other 3 basic moves

THE MESMERAST

THE MESMERAST

Mesmerasts are the weird, creeping, spying psychic sorcerers of this world of fallen empires. They have powers of compulsion, sorcerous puppet strings, alien hearts, dead souls, and eyes like broken things. They stand in your peripheral vision and whisper into your head, staring. They place polished stones upon your eyes and read your secrets.

MESMERAST MOVES

- Alien & compelling:** when you try to seduce someone, roll+weird instead of roll+hot.
- Mesmeric initiate:** you get +1weird (to weird+3).
- Plumbing psychic depths:** when you have time and physical intimacy with someone — mutual intimacy like holding each other in your arms, or 1-sided intimacy like kneeling over them while they're bound — you can reach your mind into their soul. Roll+weird. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7-9, hold 2. Spend your hold 1 for 1 to ask their player questions:
 - What was your character's lowest moment?
 - For what does your character crave forgiveness, and of whom?
 - What are your character's secret pains?
 - In what ways are your character's body and mind vulnerable to me?
 On a miss, you inflict 1 harm upon your subject, ignoring armor, to no benefit.
- Sorcerous puppet strings:** when you have time and intimacy with someone — again, mutual or 1-sided — you can plant a command inside their mind. Roll+weird. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7-9, hold 1. At your will, no matter the circumstances, you can spend your hold 1 for 1:
 - Inflict 1 harm upon them, ignoring armor.
 - They take -1 to the roll they're making now.
 If they fulfill your command, it counts for all of your remaining hold and they're free. On a miss, you inflict 1 harm upon them, ignoring armor, to no benefit.
- Unworldly senses:** when you read someone, roll+weird instead of roll+sharp. Your victim has to be able to see you, but you need not interact in any way.
- Whispering malice:** you can roll+weird to get the effect of attacking or threatening someone without making any physical motion. Your victim has to be able to see you, but you don't have to interact. If your victim forces your hand, your mesmeric will counts as a weapon (1 harm, ignoring armor).

OTHER MOVES

MESMERAST TRAPPINGS

Choose 2:

○ **Incense: against reserve.** *Burn it where your subject will breathe it.*

While someone is breathing the smoke of incense against reserve, if you read them or use a mesmerast move on them that gives you hold, you get +1 hold — see **reading a person**, **psychic delve** and **sorcerous puppet strings**.

○ **Invested surrogate.** *Place it where your subject will be able to see it.*

For your purposes — see **unworldly senses** and **whispering malice** — if someone can see your invested surrogate, it is as though they can see you.

○ **Object of radiant misery.** *Breathe upon it and whisper the incantation to bring it to life.*

An invisible creature violently assaults the souls of everyone present, except you. They cannot defend themselves. It hits them for 1 harm apiece, ignoring armor, and then returns to lifelessness.

○ **Salve: the crown of peace.** *Anoint your subject with it.*

Protects your subject from all mesmerast moves and trappings. This effect lasts through one full day and into a second, or until washed away.

○ **Salve: the flayed nerve.** *Anoint your victim with it.*

If you anoint someone with the flayed nerve, and you inflict harm upon them with a mesmerast move or trapping, inflict +1 harm — see the **object of radiant misery**, **psychic delve**, **sorcerous puppet strings**, and **whispering malice**. This effect lasts through one full day and into a second, or until washed away.

○ **Violation glove.** *Wear it.*

For your purposes — see **plumbing psychic depths** and **sorcerous puppet strings** — merely touching their skin with your violation glove counts as time and intimacy with them.

OTHER EQUIPMENT

YOUR KEEP

At the beginning of the session, spend 1, 2, or 3 keep for your lifestyle. If you can't or won't, tell the MC and answer her questions. You can earn your keep by: *working the hard earth; interrogating a warlord NPC's prisoners; serving a powerful NPC as kept mesmerast; extorting or blackmailing a powerful NPC; or other means as you can negotiate them.*

In addition to your lifestyle, you might spend your keep on: *a night in high luxury and company; someone else's protection, service, or labor; a weapon or other equipment; tribute to a warlord; the bribes required to turn someone's eye or secure someone's complicity; rich or beautiful clothing; or other things as you can arrange for them.*

THE MESMERAST

To create your mesmerast, choose **name**, **look**, **stats**, **moves**, **equipment**, and **history**.

NAME

Arrama, Brace, Charmer, Foraire, Pallor, Sin, Sundown, Thast, Xansti.

HISTORY

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or concealed.

Dark skin, light skin.

Bizarre clothing, grand clothing, rags, robes, or vestments.

Bony face, flushed face, plump moist face, scarred face, smooth face, or scarred face.

Caring eyes, dead eyes, deep eyes, pale eyes, ruined eyes, soft eyes, or wet eyes.

Awkward angular body, crippled body, fat body, slight body, or soft body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool+1, Hard+1, Hot-2, Sharp+1, Weird+2
- Cool=0, Hard=0, Hot+1, Sharp=0, Weird+2
- Cool+1, Hard-2, Hot-1, Sharp+2, Weird+2
- Cool+2, Hard-1, Hot-1, Sharp=0, Weird+2

MOVES

You get all the basic moves, and choose 2 mesmerast moves.

EQUIPMENT

You begin play with:

- 2 mesmerast trappings.
- A small fancy weapon.
- Coin or goods worth 8 keep.
- Clothing suitable to your look (you detail).

Small fancy weapons (choose 1):

- Antique dagger (2-harm)
- Glass-edge knife (2-harm, close in, delicate)
- Hidden knives (2-harm, close in, infinite)
- Jeweled skull-pick (2-harm, specialized, valuable)
- Ornate dagger (2-harm, valuable)

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for history. On your turn, ask 1, 2, or all 3:

- Which one of you has slept in my presence (knowingly or unknowingly)?
For that character, write history+2.
- Which one of you have I been watching carefully, in secret?
For that character, write history+2.
- Which one of you most evidently dislikes and distrusts me?
For that character, write history+3.

For everyone else, write history+1. You have weird insights into everyone.

On the others' turns, answer their questions as you like.

At the end, choose one of the characters with the highest history on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

GOALS

During play, it's your job to have your character make and pursue goals. They can be any goals you want, long term and short-. Begin by thinking what your goals might be this very morning, as play begins.

IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your history with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the options. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

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• Read a situation

SHARP

highlight



• Grasp outward

WEIRD

highlight

ARMS & ARMOR

WOUNDS



Not life-threatening



Life-threatening



Dying

Come back with -1 Hard.

Come back with +1 Weird.

Change to a new playbook.

Die.

Help or interfere; Session end

WOLFSHEAD SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, they immediately change their history with you to +3. They also choose whether to give you +1 or -1 to your history with them.

IMPROVEMENT

experience ○○○○○>>>improve

- Get +1hard (max hard+3)
 - Get +1cool (max cool+2)
 - Get +1sharp (max sharp+2)
 - Get +1weird (max weird+2)
 - Get +1weird (max weird+2)
 - Add or remove an option for your war-band
 - Add or remove an option for your war-band
 - Get a **small holding** (you detail) and **wealth**
 - Get a move from another playbook
 - Get a move from another playbook
-
- Get +1 to any stat (max stat+3)
 - Retire your character to safety
 - Create a second character to play
 - Change your character to a new playbook
 - Choose 3 basic moves and advance them
 - Advance the other 3 basic moves

THE WOLFSHEAD

THE WOLFSHEAD

When the golden empires of the world fell, their machinery of war did not save them. Their monstrous engines of war, their hundred-mile supply trains, their armies of thousands and hundreds of thousands, their legions of Countless, their legions of Immortals — when the empires fell, all fell.

In this time of dust, what is left is what there was before: a sword, an axe, a human creature with the will to wield them, a human creature with the will to lead.

WOLFSHEAD MOVES

☉ Bloody-crowned: when you try to impose your will upon your war-band, roll+hard. On a 10+, all 3. On a 7-9, choose 1:

- They do what you order (otherwise, they refuse).
- They don't fight back over it (otherwise, they do fight back).
- You don't have to make an example of one of them (otherwise, you must).

☉ Foragers and thieves: when you have your war-band search their wallets and saddlebags for something, roll+hard. It has to be something small enough to be carried. On a 10+, one of you has just the thing. On a 7-9, one of you happens to have something similar, that will perhaps serve. On a miss, one of you used to have just the thing, but come to discover that now it's missing, likely stolen in turn.

OTHER MOVES

EQUIPMENT & TRAPPINGS



YOUR MOUNT

Kind (circle 1):

Camel (*fast=0, strong+2, hungry=0, size 5, stubborn*)
Elephant (*fast-1, strong+3, hungry+2, size 20, cowardly*)
Horse (*fast+1, strong+1, hungry+1, size 5, temperamental*)

Fast **Strong** **Hungry**

Size **Harm** **Armor**

Looks (circle 2):

Battle-scarred, caparisoned, ferocious, hale, half-wild, handsome, powerful, ragged, regal, sleek, ugly, underfed, well-fed, well-groomed.

Wounds 

YOUR WAR-BAND

By default, your war-band consists of around a dozen warriors, with mounts like yours, an eclectic assortment of arms and armor, and no discipline to speak of (2 *harm*, 1 *armor*).

Then, choose 2:

- Your war-band numbers 20 or so.
- Your war-band's well-armed (+1 *harm*).
- Your war-band's well-armored (+1 *armor*).
- Your war-band's well-disciplined (*choose 1 drill*).
- Your war-band's well-disciplined (*choose 1 drill*).
- Your war-band's well-disciplined (*choose 1 drill*).
- Your war-band includes several skilled archers and all have bows (*tag: at range*).
- Your war-band's nomadic at heart, and able to keep and care for its mounts without needing a permanent home (*tag: mobile*).
- Your war-band's self-sufficient, able to provide for itself by raiding and scavenging (*tag: rich*).

And choose 1:

- Your war-band's mounts are in bad shape and need constant attention (*tag: vulnerable: undermounted*).
- Your war-band's loose-knit, with warriors coming and going as they choose (*tag: vulnerable: desertion*).
- Your war-band is in significant debt to someone powerful (*tag: vulnerable: obligation*).
- Your war-band has powerful enemies (*tag: vulnerable: reprisals*).

YOUR KEEP

At the beginning of the session, spend 1, 2, or 3 keep for your own lifestyle, plus 0, 1, or 2 keep for your mount's *hungry*. If you can't or won't, tell the MC and answer her questions. You can earn your keep by: *working the hard earth; extorting, raiding, or robbing a wealthy population; executing a murder on behalf of a wealthy NPC; serving a powerful NPC as bodyguard*; or other means as you can negotiate them.

In addition to your lifestyle, you might spend your keep on: *a night in high luxury and company; someone else's protection, service, or labor; a weapon or other equipment; tribute to a warlord; the bribes required to turn someone's eye or secure someone's complicity; rich or beautiful clothing*; or other things as you can arrange for them.

THE WOLFSEAD

To create your wolfshead, choose **name, look, stats, moves, equipment, mount, war-band**, and **history**.

NAME

Arned, Brunt, Burke, Damre, Diene, Juck, Kaley, Maise, Malerre, Tambore, Truth.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, or transgressing.

Dark skin, light skin.

Filthy clothing, functional clothing, poor clothing, stolen clothing, sturdy clothing.

Broken face, narrow face, rugged face, strong face, or weathered face.

Calculating eyes, kind eyes, narrow eyes, scorched eyes, or weary eyes.

Fat body, rangy body, squat body, sturdy body, or wiry body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- *Cool+1, Hard+2, Hot-1, Sharp+1, Weird=0*
- *Cool+1, Hard+2, Hot+1, Sharp=0, Weird-1*
- *Cool+1, Hard+2, Hot=0, Sharp+1, Weird-1*
- *Cool+2, Hard+2, Hot-1, Sharp=0, Weird-1*

MOVES

You get all the basic moves, and both wolfshead moves.

GOALS

During play, it's your job to have your character make and pursue goals. They can be any goals you want, long term and short-term. Begin by thinking what your goals might be this very morning, as play begins.

IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your history with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the options. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

EQUIPMENT

Detail your mount and your war-band.

In addition, you begin play with:

- *Armor and 2 no-nonsense weapons.*
- *Coin or goods worth 2 keep.*
- *Clothing suitable to your look (you detail).*

Armor (choose 1):

- *Leather coat, helmet, boots (1 armor).*
- *Breastplate, helmet, boots (2 armor).*
- *Mail coat, helmet, boots (2 armor).*

No-nonsense weapons (choose 3):

- *Bastard sword (4-harm, reach, 2-handed)*
- *Battle-axe (3-harm)*
- *Dagger (2-harm)*
- *Fighting knife (2-harm, close in)*
- *Lance (2-harm, mounted, specialized)*
- *Shield (+1armor, off-hand)*
- *Sword (4-harm)*
- *War-mace (3-harm, gruesome)*

HISTORY

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for history. On your turn, ask 1, 2, or all 3:

- *Which one of you used to fight in my war-band?*
For that character, write history+1.
- *Which one of you believes that you could outfight me, if it came to it?*
For that character, write history+2.
- *Which one of you once stood up to me, war-band and all?*
For that character, write history+3.

For everyone else, write history-1. Their affairs are not, you suppose, your concern.

On the others' turns, answer their questions as you like.

At the end, choose one of the characters with the highest history on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

NAME

LOOK

STATS MOVES

HISTORY

highlight



• Do something risky

COOL

highlight



• Attack or threaten someone;
• Join battle

HARD

highlight



• Seduce or manipulate someone

HOT

highlight



• Read a person;
• Read a situation

SHARP

highlight



• Grasp outward

WEIRD

highlight

ARMS & ARMOR

WOUNDS

Not life-threatening

Life-threatening

Dying

Come back with -1 Hard.

Come back with +1 Weird.

Change to a new playbook.

Die.

Help or interfere; Session end

SWORD MASTER SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, you take +1 forward. At your option, they take +1 forward too.

IMPROVEMENT

experience ○○○○○>>improve

Get +1cool (max cool+2)

Get +1hot (max hot+2)

Get +1sharp (max sharp+2)

Get +1weird (max weird+2)

Get a new sword master move

Get a new sword master move

Get a **war-band** (you detail) and **bloody-crowned**

Get a **small holding** (you detail) and **wealth**

Get a move from another playbook

Get a move from another playbook

Get +1 to any stat (max stat+3)

Retire your character to safety

Create a second character to play

Change your character to a new playbook

Choose 3 basic moves and advance them

Advance the other 3 basic moves

THE SWORD MASTER

THE SWORD MASTER

When the great empires of the golden age fell, with them fell law and society. This world in their dust is ugly, desperate, violent. What's yours is yours only while you can hold it in your hands. There's no peace. There's no stability but what you carve, inch by inch, out of the ruins and wilds, and then defend with murder and blood.

SWORD MASTER MOVES

Battle-hardened: when you do something risky, roll+hard instead of roll+cool.

Battlefield instincts: when you grasp outward, roll+hard instead of roll+weird, but only in battle.

Bloodcrazed: whenever you inflict harm, inflict +1 harm.

Cauterer: you know how to cauterize a wound, set a bone, supplicate death for life. This counts as a bonepicker's devotion (cf), with a maximum of 2 devotion.

Knight-killer: for purposes of commanding the field, a mounted enemy has no advantage over you. If you fight in a war-band, consider the war-band to have drilled against cavalry.

It's not the sword that makes the warrior: for purposes of commanding the field, an armed and armored enemy has no advantage over you when you're unarmed. Fighting unarmed, you inflict 2-harm instead of 1-harm.

No fool, I: name your escape route and roll+hard. On a 10+, you win free and you're gone. On a 7-9, you can go or stay, but if you go, it costs you: leave something behind, or take something with you, and the MC will tell you what. On a miss, you're caught vulnerable, half in and half out.

Ruthless: you get +1hard (to hard+3).

OTHER MOVES

EQUIPMENT & TRAPPINGS

WEAPONS

Terrifying Weapons of War (choose 1):

- Crossbow & quarrels (3-harm, at range, slow, pierces armor)
- Greatsword (4-harm, reach, 2-handed, heavy)
- Poleaxe (3-harm, reach, 2-handed)
- Staff-sword (3-harm, reach, 2-handed)
- Spiked flail (3-harm, reach, gruesome)

Serious Weapons (choose 2):

- Bastard sword (4-harm, reach, 2-handed)
- Battle-axe (3-harm)
- Battle pick (3-harm, specialized, pierces armor)
- Cat-gutter [short sword] (3-harm)
- Shield (+1armor, off-hand)
- Shod cudgel (3-harm)
- Shortbow & arrows (3-harm, at range, specialized, 2-handed)
- Sword (4-harm)
- War-mace (3-harm, gruesome)

Backup Weapons (choose 1):

- Dagger (2-harm)
- Fighting knife (2-harm, close in)
- Head breaker [brass knuckles] (2-harm, close in, dirty)
- Staff (2-harm, defensive, reach, 2-handed)
- Weighted chain (2-harm, gruesome)

Armor (choose 1):

- Leather coat, helmet, boots (1 armor)
- Breastplate, helmet, boots (2 armor)
- Brigandine, helmet, boots (2 armor)
- Hide cape, helmet, boots (2 armor)
- Laced plates, helmet, boots (2 armor)
- Leather apron, helmet, boots (2 armor)
- Mail coat, helmet, boots (2 armor)

YOUR KEEP

At the beginning of the session, spend 1, 2, or 3 keep for your lifestyle. If you can't or won't, tell the MC and answer her questions. You can earn your keep by: *working the hard earth; extorting, raiding, or robbing a wealthy population; executing a murder on behalf of a wealthy NPC; serving a powerful NPC as bodyguard;* or other means as you can negotiate them.

In addition to your lifestyle, you might spend your keep on: *a night in high luxury and company; someone else's protection, service, or labor; a weapon or other equipment; tribute to a warlord; the bribes required to turn someone's eye or secure someone's complicity; rich or beautiful clothing;* or other things as you can arrange for them.

THE SWORD MASTER

To create your sword master, choose **name**, **look**, **stats**, **moves**, **equipment**, and **history**.

NAME

Chaplain, Etienne, Grekkor, Jonker, Kelle, Regine, Rue, Touner, Vanne, Viktor.

HISTORY

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or concealed.

Dark skin, light skin.

Battered old armor, immaculate armor, mismatched armor, well-kept armor.

Bony face, blunt face, dull face, plain face, scarred face, or worn face.

Cunning eyes, desperate eyes, raging eyes, sad eyes, or wise eyes.

Battered body, compact body, hard body, huge body, stocky body, stringy body.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for history. On your turn, ask 1, 2, or all 3:

- Which one of you once left me bleeding, and did nothing for me?
For that character, write history-2.
- Which one of you has fought shoulder to shoulder with me?
For that character, write history+2.
- Which one of you is the prettiest and/or the smartest?
For that character, write history+3.

For everyone else, write history-1. You find no urgent need to understand most people.

On the others' turns, answer their questions as you like.

At the end, choose one of the characters with the highest history on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool+1, Hard+2, Hot-1, Sharp+1, Weird=0
- Cool-1, Hard+2, Hot-2, Sharp+1, Weird+2
- Cool+1, Hard+2, Hot-2, Sharp+2, Weird-1
- Cool+2, Hard+2, Hot-2, Sharp=0, Weird=0

MOVES

You get all the basic moves, and choose 3 sword master moves.

EQUIPMENT

You begin play with:

- 1 terrifying weapon of war.
- 1 serious weapon.
- 1 backup weapon.
- Armor.
- Coin or goods worth 2 keep.
- Clothing suitable to your look (you detail).

GOALS

During play, it's your job to have your character make and pursue goals. They can be any goals you want, long term and short-. Begin by thinking what your goals might be this very morning, as play begins.

IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your history with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the options. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

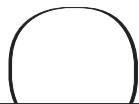
NAME

LOOK

STATS MOVES

HISTORY

highlight



• Do something risky

COOL

highlight



• Attack or threaten someone;
• Join battle

HARD

highlight



• Seduce or manipulate someone

HOT

highlight



• Read a person;
• Read a situation

SHARP

highlight



• Grasp outward

WEIRD

highlight

ARMS & ARMOR

WOUNDS



Not life-threatening



Life-threatening

Dying

Come back with -1 Hard.

Come back with +1 Weird.

Change to a new playbook.

Die.

Help or interfere; Session end

STRONGHOLDER SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, you can give the other character gifts worth 1 keep, at no cost to you.

IMPROVEMENT

experience ○○○○○>>improve

Get +1hard (max hard+3)

Get +1cool (max cool+2)

Get +1hot (max hot+2)

Get +1sharp (max sharp+2)

Get +1weird (max weird+2)

Choose a new option for your stronghold

Choose a new option for your stronghold

Remove an option from your stronghold

Get a move from another playbook

Get a move from another playbook

Get +1 to any stat (max stat+3)

Retire your character to safety

Create a second character to play

Change your character to a new playbook

Choose 3 basic moves and advance them

Advance the other 3 basic moves

THE STRONGHOLDER

THE STRONGHOLDER

In the golden age of empires now fallen, there were no strongholders. There were lords and ladies, who must bow to the great crowned heads; and the great crowned heads must kneel on their faces before empires.

An empire was not a battered baked-mud fortress at the curve of a river, it spanned nations and continents. An army was not a little band of sword-arms, it was a thousand thousand in rank, mounted on war-horses, on chariots, on elephants, on engines of war whose skeletons still, here and there, stand.

STRONGHOLDER MOVES

Leadership: when you have to order your war-band to advance, regroup, hold position, hold discipline, or put their damned backs into it, roll+hard. On a hit, they do it. On a 10+, they snap to: take +1forward. On a miss, they do it, but you'll hear about it from them later.

Wealth: When your stronghold is secure and your rule unchallenged, at the beginning of the session, roll+hard. On a 10+, you have plenty at hand and available for the needs of the session. On a 7-9, you have plenty, but choose 1 want. On a miss, or if your stronghold is compromised or your rule contested, your hold is in want. The precise values of your plenty and want depend upon the details of your stronghold.

OTHER MOVES

EQUIPMENT & TRAPPINGS

YOUR KEEP

Your stronghold provides for your day-to-day living, so while you're there ruling it, you need not spend barter for your lifestyle at the beginning of the session.

When you give gifts, these might be worth 1 keep: a month's hospitality, including a place to live and meals in common with others; a night in high luxury and company; a bodyguard's protection; a servant's service; a weapon or other equipment; a half-hour's worth of your undivided attention, in private audience; rich or beautiful clothing; or, of course, the requisite coins.

In times of abundance, your stronghold's plenty is yours to spend personally as you see fit; your share, levy, or tax. You can suppose that your subjects' lives are the more abundant too, in proportion.

WEAPONS

By default, your stronghold is home to several families, totaling 50–75 souls, who survive by farming and hunting (*plenty: 1 keep, want: hunger*). It's protected by simple ditches, fences, and low fieldstone walls (*walls: 2x*). It musters and regularly drills around 20 warriors, and it has an armory of mixed and makeshift weapons and simple armor (*2 harm, 1 armor, choose 1 drill*). Your stables keep mounts for 8 warriors, plus pack animals; choose camels (*fast=0, strong+2, hungry=0, size 5, stubborn*), elephants (*fast-1, strong+3, hungry+2, size 20, cowardly*), or horses (*fast+1, strong+1, hungry+1, size 5, temperamental*).

Then, choose 4:

- Your subjects are many, 100–150 souls (*plenty: +1 keep, want: disease*).
- Your subjects are few, 20–40 souls (*want: anxiety instead of want: hunger*).
- Your subjects include skilled tradespeople (*plenty: +1 keep, want: idleness*).
- Your stronghold commands local river trade (*plenty: +1 keep, want: obligation*).
- You are allied with a neighboring stronghold (*plenty: +1 keep, want: obligation*).
- Your stronghold defends a coastal landing (*plenty: +1 keep, want: raiders*).
- Your stronghold defends a busy market crossroad (*plenty: +1 keep, want: strangers*).
- Your stronghold is defended by concentric ditches and stone walls (*walls: 3x*).
- Your stronghold includes a small library of histories and maps (*plenty: insight*).
- Your war-band is large, mustering 40–50.
- Your war-band is well-disciplined (*choose an additional drill*).
- Your war-band's armory is well-stocked and maintained (*+1 harm, +1 armor*).
- Your war-band engages in lucrative raiding (*plenty: +1 keep, want: reprisals*).
- Your stables keep mounts for 16 warriors, in addition to pack animals.

And choose 2:

- Your subjects are uncivilized and rude in their habits (*want: disease*).
- Your subjects are mostly old and young, with few able adults (*want: famine*).
- Your subjects follow a sybaritic cult (*plenty: -1 keep, want: fanaticism*).
- Your war-band is small, mustering only 8–12.
- Your war-band is a pack of bloody hyenas (*want: savagery*).
- Your war-band's armory is very poor (*-1 harm, -1 armor*).
- Your stables keep no mounts for warriors, only pack animals.

STRONGHOLD

Tags

Plenty

Want

SUBJECTS

Souls

Losses 

Notables:

WAR-BAND

Number

Harm Armor

Tags

Drills

- Against cavalry
- In defense
- In ranks

Losses 

THE STRONGHOLDER

To create your stronghold, choose **name, look, stats, moves, equipment, stronghold,** and **history**.

NAME

Blache, Boleyr, Borbeq, Dunnerre, Lin, Marca, Simos, Sumia, Ucli.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, or transgressing.

Dark skin, light skin.

Distinctive clothing, fine clothing, grand clothing, or practical clothing.

Aristocratic face, cruel face, gorgeous face, soft face, stern face, strong face.

Commanding eyes, cool eyes, forgiving eyes, generous eyes, languid eyes, or sharp eyes.

Fat body, massive body, sensual body, soft body, tall spare body, or wiry body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool-1, Hard+2, Hot+1, Sharp+1, Weird=0
- Cool+1, Hard+2, Hot+1, Sharp=+1, Weird-2
- Cool-2, Hard+2, Hot=0, Sharp+2, Weird=0
- Cool=0, Hard+2, Hot+1, Sharp-1, Weird+1

MOVES

You get all the basic moves and both stronghold moves.

EQUIPMENT

Detail your holding.

In addition, you begin play with:

- Dagger (2-harm)
- Shield (+1armor, off hand)
- Sword (3-harm).
- Mail coat, helmet, boots (2 armor).
- Clothing suitable to your look (you detail).

HISTORY

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for history. On your turn, ask either or both:

- Which of you have been with me since before?
 - For those characters, write history+2.
 - Have any of you ever betrayed or stolen from me?
- For those character, write history+3.

For everyone else, write history+1. It's in your interests to know everyone's business.

On the others' turns, answer their questions as you like.

At the end, choose one of the characters with the highest history on your sheet.

Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

GOALS

During play, it's your job to have your character make and pursue goals. They can be any goals you want, long term and short-. Begin by thinking what your goals might be this very morning, as play begins.

IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your history with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the options. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

NAME

LOOK

STATS MOVES

HISTORY

highlight



• Do something risky

COOL

highlight



• Attack or threaten someone;
• Join battle

HARD

highlight



• Seduce or manipulate someone

HOT

highlight



• Read a person;
• Read a situation

SHARP

highlight



• Grasp outward

WEIRD

highlight

ARMS & ARMOR

WOUNDS



Not life-threatening



Life-threatening



Dying

Come back with -1 Hard.

Come back with +1 Weird.

Change to a new playbook.

Die.

Help or interfere; Session end

HOCUS SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, you each hold 1. Either of you can spend your hold at any time to help or interfere with the other, at a distance or despite any barriers that would normally prevent it.

IMPROVEMENT

experience ○○○○○>>>improve

- Get +1cool (max cool+2)
- Get +1hard (max hard+2)
- Get +1sharp (max sharp+2)
- Get a new hocus move
- Get a new hocus move
- Choose a new option for your followers
- Choose a new option for your followers
- Get a **small holding** (you detail) and **wealth**
- Get a move from another playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- Get +1 to any stat (max stat+3)
- Retire your character to safety
- Create a second character to play
- Change your character to a new playbook
- Choose 3 basic moves and advance them
- Advance the other 3 basic moves

THE HOCUS

THE HOCUS

When the empires fell, did their gods fall with them, swept away by the same psychic maelstrom of hate and violence? Or, was it that their gods abandoned them, leaving them exposed to the maelstrom at last? Or again, was it that their gods turned on them, and the maelstrom was their unsheathed sword?

Here in the dust of their fall, only this is certain: the gods are gone, and the maelstrom remains.

HOCUS MOVES

Fortunes: fortune, plenty, and want all depend upon your followers. At the beginning of the session, roll+fortune. On a 10+, your followers have plenty. On a 7-9, they have plenty, but choose 1 want. On a miss, they are in want. If their plenty lists keep, like 1 keep or 2 keep, that's your personal share, to spend for your lifestyle or for what you will.

Charismatic: when you try to manipulate someone, roll+weird instead of roll+hot.

Frenzy: when you speak the truth to a mob, roll+weird. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7-9, hold 1. Spend your hold 1 for 1 to make the mob:

- Bring people forward and deliver them to you.
- Bring forward all their precious things.
- Unite and fight for you as a war-band (numbering as appropriate, 1 or 2 harm, 0 armor).
- Fall into an orgy of uninhibited emotion: coupling, lamenting, fighting, sharing, celebrating, as you choose.
- Go quietly back to their lives.

On a miss, the mob turns on you.

Prey to inexpressible impulses: you get +1weird (to weird+3).

Sanctified: the world's psychic maelstrom gives you +1 armor.

Seeing souls: when you help or interfere with someone, you can roll+weird instead of roll+history.

OTHER MOVES

EQUIPMENT & TRAPPINGS

THE HOCUS

YOUR FOLLOWERS

By default you have around 20 followers, loyal to you but not fanatical. They have their own lives apart from you, integrated in the local population (*fortune +1, plenty: 1 keep, want: desertion*).

Characterize them (circle 1):

Your court, your cult, your disciples, your emissaries, your family, your students.


When you travel, they (circle 1): *travel with you, or congregate in their own communities.*

Then, choose 2:

- Your followers are devoted to you (*plenty: +1 keep, and want: hunger instead of want: desertion*).
- Your followers are involved in successful commerce (*+1 fortune*).
- Your followers, in ceremony, can reach into the world's psychic maelstrom (*plenty: augury*).
- Your followers are joyous and celebratory (*plenty: revelry*).
- Your followers are rigorous and argumentative (*plenty: insight*).
- Your followers are hard-working, frugal, and scorn frivolity (*plenty: +1 keep*).
- Your followers are eager, enthusiastic, and successful recruiters (*plenty: growth*).

And choose 1:

- You have few followers, 10 or fewer (*plenty: -1 keep*).
- Your followers aren't yours, you're theirs (*want: demands instead of want: desertion*).
- Your followers rely entirely upon you for their lives and needs (*want: desperation*).
- Your followers love wine and drugs (*plenty: stupor*).
- Your followers disdain fashion, luxury, and convention (*want: disease*).
- Your followers disdain law, peace, reason, and society (*plenty: violence*).
- Your followers are decadent, perverse, and violent (*want: savagery*).
- Your followers have pure and perfect hope in a better world after death (*want: suicide*).

Number	Plenty	Notables:
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Fortune	Want	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Losses 		

YOUR KEEP

At the beginning of the session, spend 1, 2, or 3 keep for your lifestyle. If you can't or won't, tell the MC and answer her questions. You can earn your keep by: *working the hard earth; serving a powerful NPC as auger and advisor; serving a powerful NPC as ceremonist; serving a population as counselor and intercessor; or other means as you can negotiate them.*

In addition to your lifestyle, you might spend your keep on: *a night in high luxury and company; someone else's protection, service, or labor; a weapon or other equipment; tribute to a warlord; the bribes required to turn someone's eye or secure someone's complicity; rich or beautiful clothing; or other things as you can arrange for them.*

THE HOCUS

To create your hocus, choose **name, look, stats, moves, equipment, followers, and history**.

NAME

Always, Cat, Dust, Gull, Hope, Jackal, Lark, Must, Rabbit, Sorrow, Trout.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or concealed.

Dark skin, light skin.

Grand vestments, immaculate vestments, or tattered vestments.

Ascetic face, determined face, dirty face, innocent face, open face, or severe face.

Burning eyes, clear eyes, dazed eyes, forgiving eyes, or suspicious eyes.

Bony body, fat body, fit body, graceful body, lanky body, or soft body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool=0, Hard+1, Hot-1, Sharp+1, Weird+2
- Cool+1, Hard-1, Hot+1, Sharp=0, Weird+2
- Cool-1, Hard+1, Hot=0, Sharp+1, Weird+2
- Cool+1, Hard=0, Hot+1, Sharp-1, Weird+2

MOVES

You get all the basic moves. You get **fortunes**, and choose 2 more hocus moves.

EQUIPMENT

Detail your followers.

You also begin play with:

- *A simple weapon.*
- *Coin or goods worth 4 keep.*
- *Clothing suitable to your look (you detail).*

Simple weapons (choose 1):

- *Cudgel (2-harm)*
- *Dagger (2-harm)*
- *Fighting knife (2-harm, close in)*
- *Staff (2-harm, defensive, reach, 2-handed)*

HISTORY

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for history. On your turn, ask either or both:

- *Which of you are my followers?*
For those characters, write history+2.
- *One of you, I've seen your soul. Which one?*
For that character, write history+3.

For everyone else, write history+1. You're a good and quick judge of others.

On the others' turns, answer their questions as you like.

At the end, choose one of the characters with the highest history on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

GOALS

During play, it's your job to have your character make and pursue goals. They can be any goals you want, long term and short-. Begin by thinking what your goals might be this very morning, as play begins.

IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your history with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the options. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

NAME

LOOK

STATS MOVES



• Do something risky

COOL

highlight



• Attack or threaten someone;
• Join battle

HARD

highlight



• Seduce or manipulate someone

HOT

highlight



• Read a person;
• Read a situation

SHARP

highlight



• Grasp outward

WEIRD

highlight

ARMS & ARMOR

WOUNDS

Not life-threatening

Life-threatening

Dying

Come back with -1 Hard.

Come back with +1 Weird.

Change to a new playbook.

Die.

HISTORY

highlight

Help or interfere; Session end

MYSTIC SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, they immediately speak to you, as though they were a thing and you'd rolled a 10+, whether you have **things speak** or not. The other player and the MC should answer your questions between them.

This is the only time that move works on people. Otherwise, only things.

IMPROVEMENT

experience ○○○○>>>improve

Get +1cool (max cool+2)

Get +1hard (max hard+2)

Get +1sharp (max sharp+2)

Get a new mystic move

Get a new mystic move

Get **followers** (you detail) and **fortunes**

Add 2 options to your ceremonial space

Add 2 options to your ceremonial space

Get a move from another playbook

Get a move from another playbook

Get +1 to any stat (max stat+3)

Retire your character to safety

Create a second character to play

Change your character to a new playbook

Choose 3 basic moves and advance them

Advance the other 3 basic moves

THE MYSTIC

THE MYSTIC

Empires fell. Empires always fall. The world is alive.

MYSTIC MOVES

Bonefeel: at the beginning of the session, roll+weird. On a 10+, hold 1+1. On a 7-9, hold 1. At any time, either you or the MC can spend your hold to have you already be there, with proper tools and knowledge, with or without any clear explanation why. If your hold was 1+1, take +1 forward now. On a miss, the MC holds 1, and either you or the MC can spend it to have you already be there, but somehow pinned, caught, or trapped.

Implacable: when you do something risky, roll+weird instead of roll+cool.

Things speak: whenever you handle or examine something interesting, roll+weird.

On a hit, you can ask the MC questions. On a 10+, ask 3. On a 7-9, ask 1:

• Who handled this thing before me?

• Who made this thing?

• What has this thing seen and heard?

• What secret does thing know?

• What's wrong with this thing, and how might I put it right?

On a miss, ask the MC what the world's psychic maelstrom whispers to you.

Unsettling insights: you get +1 weird (to weird+3).

Wisdom: when a character comes to you for advice, tell them what you honestly think the best course is. If they do it, they take +1 to any rolls they make in the doing, and you mark experience.

The world's fraying edge: some component of your ceremonial space, or some arrangement of its components, is uniquely receptive to the world's psychic maelstrom (*add augury*). Choose and name it, or else leave it for the MC to reveal during play.

OTHER MOVES

EQUIPMENT & TRAPPINGS

YOUR CEREMONIAL SPACE

Choose which of the following your ceremonial space includes. Choose 4:

- Acolytes (Carna, Theuy, Pammene, eg)
- A bloody altar, abnegated by sigils
- Captive birds
- A garden of useful plants
- A great, smoky crystal, a closed window
- A labyrinth
- A library of books and scrolls
- The magician's iron tree
- A mooncatching pool
- A relic of the golden age of empires
- A shrine to one of the chained gods
- A spring of fresh water
- Standing stones
- Supplies for compounding incense and salves
- Tools for engraving and inscription
- A vulvic grotto

In your ceremonial space you can discover the truth about something, transform something, or imbue something with magical power. Tell the MC what, and answer the MC's questions. Once the MC understands your undertaking, they'll tell you what it will require.

MC, choose 1-4 of the following:

- *It's going to take hours/days/weeks/months of work and attention.*
- *First you'll have to get/build/fix/figure out __.*
- *You're going to need __'s help and insight.*
- *It's going to cost you a great deal of money.*
- *You cannot be certain of your results; they'll be weak or unreliable.*
- *It's going to mean exposing yourself (plus any others who work with you) to serious danger.*
- *You're going to have to add __ to your ceremonial space first.*
- *It's going to take several/dozens/hundreds of tries.*
- *You're going to have to take __ apart to do it.*

MC, connect them all with "and," or throw in a merciful "or."

Once you've accomplished the necessities, you can proceed to accomplish the thing itself. Ask the MC the details of what you've learned or created.

YOUR KEEP

At the beginning of the session, spend 1, 2, or 3 keep for your lifestyle. If you can't or won't, tell the MC and answer her questions. You can earn your keep by: *working the hard earth; serving a powerful NPC as oracle and counselor; serving a population as celebrant and judge; conducting research for a powerful NPC*; or other means as you can negotiate them.

In addition to your lifestyle, you might spend your keep on: *a night in high luxury and company; someone else's protection, service, or labor; a weapon or other equipment; tribute to a warlord; the bribes required to turn someone's eye or secure someone's complicity; rich or beautiful clothing*; or other things as you can arrange for them.

THE MYSTIC

To create your mystic, choose **name, look, stats, moves, equipment, ceremonial space,** and **history.**

NAME

Andai, Barad, Burdock, Etrenne, Fauci, Iassica, Iosta, Lah, Olive, Tal, Whitiien.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or concealed.

Dark skin, light skin.

Practical clothing, simple vestments.

Expressive face, open face, plain face, or pretty face.

Appraising eyes, calm eyes, dancing eyes, quick eyes, or squinting eyes.

Fat body, hunched body, slight body, strange body, stumpy body, or wiry body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- *Cool-1, Hard=0, Hot+1, Sharp+1, Weird+2*
- *Cool=0, Hard-1, Hot-1, Sharp+2, Weird+2*
- *Cool+1, Hard-1, Hot=0, Sharp+1, Weird+2*
- *Cool+1, Hard+1, Hot-1, Sharp=0, Weird+2*

MOVES

You get all the basic moves, and choose 2 mystic moves.

EQUIPMENT

Detail your ceremonial space.

You also begin play with:

- *A simple weapon.*
- *Coin or goods worth 6 keep.*
- *Clothing suitable to your look (you detail).*

Simple weapons (choose 1):

- *Cudgel (2-harm)*
- *Dagger (2-harm)*
- *Fighting knife (2-harm, close in)*
- *Staff (2-harm, defensive, reach, 2-handed)*

HISTORY

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for history. On your turn, ask 1, 2, or all 3:

- *Which of you is the most strange?*
For that character, write history+1.
- *Which of you is the most curious?*
For that character, write history+1.
- *Which of you is the biggest potential problem?*
For that character, write history+2.

For everyone else, write history-1. You have other things to .

On the others' turns, answer their questions as you like.

At the end, choose one of the characters with the highest history on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

GOALS

During play, it's your job to have your character make and pursue goals. They can be any goals you want, long term and short-. Begin by thinking what your goals might be this very morning, as play begins.

IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your history with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the options. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

NAME

LOOK

STATS MOVES

HISTORY

highlight



• Do something risky

COOL

highlight



• Attack or threaten someone;
• Join battle

HARD

highlight



• Seduce or manipulate someone

HOT

highlight



• Read a person;
• Read a situation

SHARP

highlight



• Grasp outward

WEIRD

highlight

ARMS & ARMOR

WOUNDS



Not life-threatening



Life-threatening

Dying

Come back with -1 Hard.

Come back with +1 Weird.

Change to a new playbook.

Die.

Help or interfere; Session end

NIGHTSHADE SPECIAL

If you and another character have sex, choose 1:

- You take +1 forward and so do they.
- You take +1 forward, but they take -1 forward.
- They must give you a gift worth at least 1 keep.
- You get +1 history with them; at your choice, they get +1 history with you.
- You can **hypnotize** them as though you'd rolled a 10+, even if you haven't chosen to get the move.

IMPROVEMENT

experience ○○○○○>>>improve

- Get +1cool (max cool+2)
 - Get +1cool (max cool+2)
 - Get +1hard (max hard+2)
 - Get +1sharp (max sharp+2)
 - Get a new nightshade move
 - Get a new nightshade move
 - Get **followers** (you detail) and **fortunes**
 - Get a **war-band** (you detail) and **bloody-crowned**
 - Get a move from another playbook
 - Get a move from another playbook
-
- Get +1 to any stat (max stat+3)
 - Retire your character to safety
 - Create a second character to play
 - Change your character to a new playbook
 - Choose 3 basic moves and advance them
 - Advance the other 3 basic moves

THE NIGHTSHADE

THE NIGHTSHADE

The oldest living remember it, a childhood time of terror, the great cities of empire thrashing, burning, falling. Thousands of years of culture, the greatest achievements of civilization, lost in dust and smoke and hate.

There is a new beauty come into the world now, though, wild, sharp. The glittering frost, the slim blade, the poison flower. There's little in it of kindness, but still, it is beautiful.

NIGHTSHADE MOVES

Artful & gracious: when you perform your chosen art — any act of expression or culture — or when you put your chosen art before an audience, roll+hot. On a 10+, spend 3. On a 7-9, spend 1. Spend 1 to name an NPC member of your audience and choose one:

This person must meet me.

This person must have my services.

This person loves me.

This person must give me a gift.

This person admires my patron.

On a miss, you gain no benefit, but suffer no harm or lost opportunity. You simply perform very well.

Breathtaking: you get +1 hot (to hot+3).

Hypnotic: when you have time and solitude with someone, they become fixated upon you. Roll+hot. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7-9, hold 2. They can spend your hold, 1 for 1, by:

• Giving you something you want.

• Acting as your eyes and ears.

• Fighting to protect or champion you.

• Doing what you ask them to do.

For NPCs, while you have hold over them they simply can't act against you. For PCs, instead, any time you like you can spend your hold, 1 for 1:

• They distract themselves with the thought of you. They're doing something risky.

• They inspire themselves with the thought of you. They take +1 right now.

On a miss, they hold 2 over you, on the exact same terms.

Lost: when you whisper someone's name to the world's psychic maelstrom, roll+weird. On a hit, they come to you, with or without any clear explanation why. On a 10+, take +1 forward against them as well. On a miss, ask the MC what or who the world's psychic maelstrom brings to you instead.

Radiant passion: when you make a show and display of passion — anguish, desire, fury, any — no one who can see you can do anything but watch. You command their absolute attention. If you choose, you can exempt individual people, by name.

OTHER MOVES

NIGHTSHADE TRAPPINGS

Gorgeous weapons (choose 2):

- A dagger with a worked-gold hilt and golden blade inlay (2-harm, valuable)
- A hunting bow and swan-fletched arrows (3-harm, at range, specialized, 2-handed)
- A jasper-handled throwing knife (2-harm, thrown)
- A magical spell that strikes your enemy's heart as with skewers of glass (2-harm, hrown, ignores armor)
- A magical spell that turns your enemy's blade aside at the last instant (+1 armor)
- A slim and jewel-hilted sword (4-harm, valuable)

Precious things (choose 2):

- A case of cedar-wood, beautifully carved with many figures.
- A circlet of beaten gold, primitive in style but shockingly rich in design.
- Gold and silver coins showing the faces of ancient emperors, drilled to wear as jewelry.
- A magical spell that, cast in darkness, hides you from the view of both friend and enemy, until once you speak aloud.
- A magical spell that, cast in a high and exposed place, calls to you the spirit of its wild wind. Ask the spirit three questions about what it has touched.
- A magical spell that, cast upon a pair of shoes, carries their wearer high into the air, to alight safely where they choose.
- A polished glass lens in an engraved silver frame. Peer through it; it enlarges what you examine.
- A polished silver mirror, backed with cavorting figures in inlaid gold.
- A trailing cape made of the winter fur of leopards.
- A veil of silk, shining white, weighted with polished stone beads.

OTHER EQUIPMENT

YOUR KEEP

At the beginning of the session, spend 1, 2, or 3 keep for your lifestyle. If you can't or won't, tell the MC and answer her questions. You can earn your keep by: *working the hard earth; performing for a public audience, for their coins; performing for a private audience, for their commission; appearing at the side of a powerful NPC*; or other means as you can negotiate them.

In addition to your lifestyle, you might spend your keep on: *a night in high luxury and company; someone else's protection, service, or labor; a weapon or other equipment; tribute to a warlord; the bribes required to turn someone's eye or secure someone's complicity; rich or beautiful clothing*; or other things as you can arrange for them.

THE NIGHTSHADE

To create your nightshade, choose **name**, **look**, **stats**, **moves**, **equipment**, and **history**.

NAME

Dune, Dusk, Gazelle, Grace, Heron, June, Lion, Mercury, October, Plum, Venus.

HISTORY

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or androgyne.

Dark skin, light skin.

Fine clothing, luxurious clothing, spectacular clothing, understated clothing.

Beautiful face, fresh face, strange face, striking face, or sweet face.

Arresting eyes, bright eyes, cool eyes, dark eyes, laughing eyes, mocking eyes, shadowed eyes, or troubled eyes.

Calloused hands, expressive hands, quick hands, steady hands, strong hands.

Fat body, lush body, slim body, toned body, unnatural body, or young body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool+1, Hard-1, Hot+2, Sharp+1, Weird=0
- Cool=0, Hard=0, Hot+2, Sharp=0, Weird+1
- Cool-1, Hard=0, Hot+2, Sharp+2, Weird-1
- Cool+1, Hard+1, Hot+2, Sharp+1, Weird-2

MOVES

You get all the basic moves, and choose 2 nightshade moves.

EQUIPMENT

You begin play with:

- 2 gorgeous weapons.
- 2 precious things.
- Coin or goods worth 2 keep.
- Clothing suitable to your look (you detail).

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for history. On your turn, ask 1, 2, or all 3:

- Which one of you is my friend?
For that character, write history+2.
- Which one of you is my lover?
For that character, write history+1.
- Which one of you is in love with me?
For that character, write history-1.

For everyone else, write history+1 or history-1, as you choose. You find no urgent need to understand most people.

On the others' turns, answer their questions as you like.

At the end, choose one of the characters with the highest history on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

GOALS

During play, it's your job to have your character make and pursue goals. They can be any goals you want, long term and short-term. Begin by thinking what your goals might be this very morning, as play begins.

IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your history with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the options. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

NAME

LOOK

STATS MOVES

HISTORY

highlight



• Do something risky

COOL

highlight



• Attack or threaten someone;
• Join battle

HARD

highlight



• Seduce or manipulate someone

HOT

highlight



• Read a person;
• Read a situation

SHARP

highlight



• Grasp outward

WEIRD

highlight

ARMS & ARMOR

WOUNDS

Not life-threatening

Life-threatening

Dying

Come back with -1 Hard.

Come back with +1 Weird.

Change to a new playbook.

Die.

Help or interfere; Session end

ANointed SPECIAL

When you and another character have sex, ask them to do something for you. Whether they agree or refuse in the moment, if they go on to do it, both you and they mark experience.

IMPROVEMENT

experience >>improve

Get +1cool (max cool+2)

Get +1cool (max cool+2)

Get +1hard (max hard+2)

Get +1sharp (max sharp+2)

Get a new nightshade move

Get a new nightshade move

Get **followers** (you detail) and **fortunes**

Get a **war-band** (you detail) and **bloody-crowned**

Get a move from another playbook

Get a move from another playbook

Get +1 to any stat (max stat+3)

Retire your character to safety

Create a second character to play

Change your character to a new playbook

Choose 3 basic moves and advance them

Advance the other 3 basic moves

THE ANointed

THE ANointed

Before the empires fell, there were sacred places in the world, where pure water flowed and spoke and sang to its chosen anointed. Before the empires rose, there yet were. Now the empires have fallen, and there yet are.

No empire created the sacred waters, and the fall of no empire destroyed them.

ANointed MOVES

Lawbringer: when someone breaks your law, roll+cool. On a 10+, choose:

- You let them off with a warning, reduced penalty, or reprieve.
- You make an exception for them and they have no blame.
- They must face the full penalty.

On a 7-9, they must face the full penalty. On a miss, or if you are unable to enact judgment for any reason, responsibility falls to you, and you must face the penalty yourself, or present yourself otherwise accountable.

Peacemaker: when you call for two rivals or enemies to come to you and meet, to settle things between them, roll+cool. On a hit, they must both come, at the time you specify. On a 10+, choose 2. On a 7-9, choose 1:

- They must come alone.
- They must come unarmed.
- They must bring gifts, peace offerings, prisoners to exchange, or tokens of good will.

On a miss, they can make demands of you, and come only if you accede.

Stranglehold: you can attack or threaten someone with deprivation as your weapon, inflicting *d-harm* (water).

All are welcome: when you personally welcome newcomers in, roll+sharp. On a 10+, ask 3. On a 7-9, ask 2. On a miss, ask 1 anyway:

- Are they hiding any weapons?
- Are they hiding any valuables?
- Are they hiding a disease?
- Are they hiding my enemies among them?
- Are they keeping any malicious secrets?

Step into the flow: when you lead a group in true ceremony, roll+cool. On a 10+, choose 2. On a 7-9, choose 1:

- Any sick NPC present is healed.
- Any distraught NPC present is calmed.
- Any injured NPC present is healed.
- Any bereft NPC present is comforted.
- Any lost NPC present is reassured.
- The source speaks to you.

On a miss, the world's psychic maelstrom interferes. Open your brain instead.

OTHER MOVES

THE SOURCE

You have a source of abundant pure water. Choose the water's special quality:

- It is the only reliable source of clean drinking water around.
- It has healing properties, and can count as a bonepicker's **acolyte**.
- A prosperous marketplace, largely self-governing, has grown up around it.
- It is sacred to a god / the gods / the ghosts of the dead / life itself (circle 1).

Choose 3-5 features of the source's atmosphere, surroundings, and culture:

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> hot springs | <input type="radio"/> lush vegetation | <input type="radio"/> faith & ritual | <input type="radio"/> birds & birdsong |
| <input type="radio"/> art | <input type="radio"/> fragrant water | <input type="radio"/> a grotto or cave | <input type="radio"/> music |
| <input type="radio"/> wide flat rocks | <input type="radio"/> a deep well | <input type="radio"/> sex | <input type="radio"/> strong currents |
| <input type="radio"/> fish | <input type="radio"/> a reflective pool | <input type="radio"/> fountains | <input type="radio"/> leisure |
| <input type="radio"/> icy cold water | <input type="radio"/> refuge & security | <input type="radio"/> a grove of trees | <input type="radio"/> dance |
| <input type="radio"/> tended gardens | <input type="radio"/> calm & quiet | <input type="radio"/> personal liberty and a relaxation of mores | |
| <input type="radio"/> a basin of a unique material | | <input type="radio"/> glazed tile sluice-ducts and plumbing | |
| <input type="radio"/> giant & invulnerable stone cisterns | | <input type="radio"/> mysteriously luminous plant life | |
| <input type="radio"/> dreams of deep and subtle portent | | <input type="radio"/> seductive dreams of pleasure and wonder | |

Many people have come to the source over time, and some of them have become your chosen friends. Detail 3 of them with a name (*Gage, Babylon, Lissa, Porter, Nieperre, Splendor, ___*) and a role (*guardian, foundling, lover, exile, potter, brewer, self-appointed guide, healer, dyer, prophet, librarian, wizard, ___*). They give you **insight**.

_____, my _____

_____, my _____

_____, my _____

The source has laws that all must obey. You didn't create these laws, but it's your responsibility to enforce them. Choose 3-5 laws and the penalties for breaking them.

Laws

- Offer sacrifices of blood / labor / precious things.
- Surrender your arms .
- A slave who crosses the threshold is free.
- Leave your grudges outside.
- Everyone drinks. Everyone eats. No one goes without.
- Do no violence and no intentional harm.
- Honor the god / the gods / the ghosts of the dead / all living things.
- Everything belongs to everyone. Give freely.
- Don't touch what isn't yours.
- Keep your agreements.
- Settle your grievances privately by trial and ordeal.
- Speak the truth.
- _____

Penalties

- Disenfranchisement
- Disfigurement
- Execution
- Exile
- Forced labor
- Forced poverty
- Formal combat
- Imprisonment
- Public humiliation
- Punitive violence
- Restitution
- _____

YOUR KEEP

The source provides for your day-to-day living, so while you're there, you need not spend keep for your lifestyle at the beginning of the session.

You might spend your keep on: *a night in high luxury and company; someone else's protection, service, or labor; a weapon or other equipment; tribute to a warlord; the bribes required to turn someone's eye or secure someone's complicity; rich or beautiful clothing; or other things as you can arrange for them.*

THE ANOINTED

To create your anointed, choose **name, look, stats, moves, equipment, source, and history**.

NAME

Calistoga Chalice, Green, Kariba, Latha, Myint, Nasus, Quahanna, Rebia, or Swift.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or concealed.

Dark skin, light skin.

Ornate clothing, simple clothing, bare rags, vestments, or half-dressed.

Open face, scarred face, weathered face, placid face, strong face or beautiful face.

Soft eyes, calm eyes, distant eyes, liquid eyes, deep-set eyes, or watchful eyes.

Huge body, mended body, wiry body, tiny body, graceful body, or angular body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool+2, Hard-1, Hot+1, Sharp+1, Weird=0
- Cool+2, Hard+1, Hot=0, Sharp+1, Weird-1
- Cool+2, Hard+1, Hot-1, Sharp+1, Weird=0
- Cool+2, Hard-1, Hot+1, Sharp=0, Weird+1

MOVES

You get all the basic moves. You get **lawbringer**, and choose 2 more anointed moves.

EQUIPMENT

Detail your source.

You also begin play with:

- A simple weapon.
- Coin or goods worth 4 keep.
- Clothing suitable to your look (you detail).

Simple weapons (choose 1):

- Cudgel (2-harm)
- Dagger (2-harm)
- Fighting knife (2-harm, close in)
- Staff (2-harm, defensive, reach, 2-handed)

HISTORY

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for history. On your turn, ask either or both:

- Which one of you once gave me water in the wilderness, real or metaphoric?
For that character, write history+3.
- Which of you, like me, serve the source?
For those characters, write history+2.

For everyone else, write history+1. You saw them coming.

On the others' turns, answer their questions as you like.

At the end, choose one of the characters with the highest history on your sheet.

Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

GOALS

During play, it's your job to have your character make and pursue goals. They can be any goals you want, long term and short-. Begin by thinking what your goals might be this very morning, as play begins.

IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your history with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the options. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

NAME

LOOK

STATS MOVES

HISTORY

highlight



• Do something risky

COOL

highlight



• Attack or threaten someone;
• Join battle

HARD

highlight



• Seduce or manipulate someone

HOT

highlight



• Read a person;
• Read a situation

SHARP

highlight



• Grasp outward

WEIRD

highlight

ARMS & ARMOR

WOUNDS



Not life-threatening



Life-threatening



Dying

Come back with -1 Hard.

Come back with +1 Weird.

Change to a new playbook.

Die.

Help or interfere; Session end

NECROMANCER SPECIAL

When you and another character have sex, but only the first time you have sex with them, give them a necromancer move.

You can ask them which they prefer, or choose for them.

IMPROVEMENT

experience ○○○○>>improve

Get +1cool (max cool+3)

Get +1hard (max hard+3)

Get +1sharp (max sharp+3)

Get +1weird (max weird+3)

Exchange one of your necromancer moves for another

Exchange one of your necromancer moves for another

Exchange one of your necromancer moves for another

Get **followers** (you detail) and **fortunes**

Get a move from another playbook

Get a move from another playbook

Get +1 to any stat (max stat+3)

Retire your character to safety

Create a second character to play

Change your character to a new playbook

Choose 3 basic moves and advance them

Advance the other 3 basic moves

THE NECROMANCER

THE NECROMANCER

There are things ancient in this world of fallen empires, ancient and terrible. Ghosts; intrusions of the world's psychic maelstrom into the living world, perhaps, or lawless spirits of antiquity that survived, hidden, the golden age of law. They are terrible and unrelenting. You have made of yourself their vessel.

NECROMANCER MOVES

Ravenous ghosts: in the presence of [circle 1: human blood, any blood, raw flesh, writing, terror, poison, the moment of death], any action you undertake, other than to seek it directly and urgently and consume it in rapture, is made risky by the intensity of your ghosts' craving.

Fury: when you attack or threaten someone, there's no appeasing you. Ask them anyway, but if they submit or back down, it provokes you; count it as refusing. If they get away from you, you must pursue them and press the attack. Furthermore, whenever you have the opportunity to spend 1 to inflict terrible harm, you must do so.

Compelled: when someone asks you to do something, if they promise [circle 1: human blood, any blood, raw flesh, writing, terror, poison, the moment of death] to you, even without offering evidence that they can or will make good, it counts as seducing or manipulating you and hitting with a 10+. This is true even if they're an NPC.

The other one: one of your ghosts lives sometimes as you. Tell the MC to create the other one as a perversion of birth. Once per session, or more if you choose, tell the MC that now you're the other one, and mark experience. Ask the MC what you do.

Always whispering: you share thoughts and senses with other necromancers. At any time, you can ask the MC what they're seeing, hearing, feeling, and thinking about, and you can read them if you choose, even from afar. At any time, you can also ask the MC if there are other necromancers, and who, or who's new.

Degeneration: at the beginning of the session, roll+hot. On a 10+, rewrite your looks slightly for the better. On a 7-9, rewrite your looks slightly for the worse. On a miss, rewrite your looks significantly for the worse. Rewrite freely, not limited to choosing new looks options from your list.

The lily of the pits: if you have [circle 1: human blood, any blood, raw flesh, writing, terror, poison, the moment of death] to consume, you don't need or desire anything else. At the beginning of the session, spend no keep for your lifestyle, and tell the MC that you toil not, and yet are arrayed in charnal splendor.

OTHER MOVES

GHOSTS

Inhuman strength and reflexes: your ghosts make you many times stronger and quicker than other people. Any time you think that your inhuman strength or reflexes might help you, ask the MC to choose 1:

- You get +1 or +2 to your roll, or you get +1choice or +1hold after your roll.
- You can **do something risky** to do it, when a normal person would be simply incapable.
- You inflict +1harm, +2harm, or your attack ignores armor.

Inhuman flexibility: your ghosts can contort your body into bizarre, appalling, and unnatural configurations. You can fit through or into spaces that no one could possibly fit into, in order to hide, escape, or gain entry. You can also impress, dismay, or frighten someone without using seize by force to do it. The MC can have you **do something risky** to hold a position for a long time, to take the most extreme positions, or to move while contorted.

Inhuman resilience: no amount of harm can make your life untenable. Treat harm past the 5th mark as painful and temporarily debilitating, but not lasting. At the beginning of the next session, reduce your harm to 3 marks.

The MC might decide that certain kinds of extreme harm — immolation or beheading, for instance — count as an exorcism attempt, as follows.

Exorcism: you might be able to be exorcised. Maybe a mystic or a bonepicker with a still-room can help, or a mesmerast or a hocus with augury. Maybe you have another plan of your own. In any case, seeing an exorcism attempt through to its conclusion immediately makes your life untenable.

The only way to be sure of exorcism is to change to another playbook, and to agree with the MC that your ghosts belong to your old life that you're leaving behind. Seeing an exorcism attempt through gives you an opportunity for this, but doesn't require it or guarantee it.

EQUIPMENT & TRAPPINGS

YOUR KEEP

At the beginning of the session, spend 1, 2, or 3 keep for your lifestyle. If you can't or won't, tell the MC and answer her questions. You can earn your keep by: *working the hard earth; making a spectacle of yourself; or other means as you can negotiate them.*

In addition to your lifestyle, you might spend your keep on: *a night in high luxury and company; someone else's protection, service, or labor; a weapon or other equipment; tribute to a warlord; the bribes required to turn someone's eye or secure someone's complicity; rich or beautiful clothing; or other things as you can arrange for them.*

THE NECROMANCER

To create your necromancer, choose **name, look, stats, moves, ghosts, equipment,** and **history.**

NAME

Breaklock, Celebrant, Messenger, Nightingale, Phantasm, Reine, or Severed.

Abott, Allegrar, Children, Cutchapel, Dega, Filth, Lazarus, or Orizon.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, or concealed.

Dark skin, light skin.

Rags, vestments, rich clothing, a shroud.

Luminous beauty, thin-drawn beauty, ripe beauty, scorching beauty, grotesque beauty, ravaged beauty, hidden beauty, pallid beauty, lost beauty, luscious beauty.

Huge body, mended body, wiry body, tiny body, graceful body, or angular body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool+1, Hard+2, Hot-1, Sharp+1, Weird+2
- Cool-1, Hard+1, Hot+1, Sharp+2, Weird+2
- Cool+1, Hard-1, Hot+2, Sharp+1, Weird+2
- Cool+1, Hard+2, Hot+1, Sharp-1, Weird+2

MOVES

You get all the basic moves. Choose 3 necromancer moves.

Note that the necromancer moves aren't always to your benefit, but that playing to them anyway is the fun of the playbook.

EQUIPMENT

You begin play with:

- An intimate weapon, if you want one
- Coins or goods worth 2-keep, if you need it
- Coins of goods worth 6-keep, if you prefer
- Clothing suitable to your look (you detail)

Intimate weapons:

- *poison needle* (deadly: intimate)
- *drugged needle* (s-harm intimate)
- *chipped glass blade* (deadly: intimate)
- *misericorde* (deadly: intimate)
- *wire garrotte* (d-harm:air intimate)

GHOSTS

Your ghosts give you inhuman strength, reflexes, flexibility, and resilience.

Tell the MC that if she wants to, she can create necromancy as an affliction of some kind. If she does, there are likely other necromancers in the world, but if she doesn't, for now at least, you are alone.

HISTORY

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for History. On your turn, consider these: human blood, any blood, raw flesh, electricity, terror, poison, the moment of death.

Ask one or both:

- Which one of you has provided me with [choose one of the above]?
- For that character, write Hx+1.
- Which one of you has blocked me from [choose one of the above]?
- For that character, write Hx+2.

For everyone else, write Hx-1. They have been shadows to you before now.

On the others' turns, answer their questions as you like.

At the end, choose one of the characters with the highest history on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

GOALS

During play, it's your job to have your character make and pursue goals. They can be any goals you want, long term and short-. Begin by thinking what your goals might be this very morning, as play begins.

IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your history with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the options. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

NAME

LOOK

STATS MOVES

HISTORY highlight



• Do something risky

COOL highlight



• Attack or threaten someone;
• Join battle

HARD highlight



• Seduce or manipulate someone

HOT highlight



• Read a person;
• Read a situation

SHARP highlight



• Grasp outward

WEIRD highlight

ARMS & ARMOR

WOUNDS

Not life-threatening

Life-threatening

Dying

Come back with -1 Hard.

Come back with +1 Weird.

Change to a new playbook.

Die.

Help or interfere; Session end

ARCHWIZARD SPECIAL

When you and another character have sex, they choose 1:

- What you consider to be "sex" is abstract and essentially nonphysical, unrecognizable as sex.
- What you consider to be "sex" is just a simple act of human intimacy, hardly sexual at all.

Either way, their special move doesn't happen.

IMPROVEMENT

experience ○○○○>>>improve

- Get +1hot (max hot+3)
- Get +1weird (max weird+3)
- Get +1cool (max cool+2)
- Get +1hard (max hard+2)
- Get +1sharp (max sharp+2)
- Your *auxiliarius* gets a **war-band** (you detail) and **bloody-crowned** or **leadership** (you choose)
- Your *auxiliarius* gets **followers** (you detail) and **fortunes**
- Your *auxiliarius* gets 3 **mesmerast trappings** (you choose which)
- Get a move from another playbook
- Get a move from another playbook
- Get +1 to any stat (max stat+3)
- Retire your character to safety
- Create a second character to play
- Change your character to a new playbook
- Choose 3 basic moves and advance them
- Advance the other 3 basic moves

THE ARCHWIZARD

THE ARCHWIZARD

with Elliot Baker, sort of

The golden empires fell, roaring, in unleashed fire and howling anguish. You were there and you took no notice.

ARCHWIZARD MOVE

ⓧ **Bizarre behavior:** whenever it comes to you to do something novel, turn to your *auxiliarius*. Ask them:

- Do I think that you'd consider this to be an appropriate act?

If they tell you that you would think so, then you may proceed without further consideration. If they tell you that you would not think so, you may choose to proceed anyway, but first roll+hot. On a 10+, very well, carry on. On a 7-9, your *auxiliarius* can choose to erase one of your stat highlights, as though they'd **seduced or manipulated** you and you'd refused them. On a miss, they cannot continue as your *auxiliarius*. Make someone else your *auxiliarius* now (whether they want to or not).

OTHER MOVES

EQUIPMENT & TRAPPINGS

YOUR KEEP

At the beginning of the session, tell your *auxiliarius* to spend 1, 2, or 3 keep for your lifestyle. They have to. If they can't, it's not your concern, they'll have to work it out somehow with the MC.

In addition to your lifestyle, you might spend your *auxiliarius'* keep on: a night in high luxury and company; someone else's protection, service, or labor; a weapon or other equipment; tribute to a warlord; the bribes required to turn someone's eye or secure someone's complicity; rich or beautiful clothing; or other things as you can arrange for them.

YOUR WIZARDRY

To perform your wizardry, you must:

- Stand with your feet planted firmly on the earth, either real or symbolic;
- Move your hands and arms freely, to execute without restraint your wizardly gestures;
- Pronounce the words of your spell in a voice clear, loud, and unflinching.

Cracking open the world:

When you perform your wizardry, you can **crack open the world**. Roll+weird (minus your current penalty, if any, below). On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7–9, choose 1, but also choose: either you suffer 1-harm (*elemental, ignores armor*) or your *auxiliarius* does. On a miss, choose 1, but you and your *auxiliarius* both suffer 1-harm (*elemental, ignores armor*).

- You ease minutely the chains of the carrion god. The sky darkens with vultures and in every skull grates the sound of blade on bone. *Tell the MC that all the NPCs here now together form a hunting pack, and ask what they do.*
- A year passes like clouds before the sun. You are unaffected, and so is anyone you choose to name: you stand in reverie a moment, then stir yourself, and a year is gone. *Ask the MC and the players of any characters you chose to leave behind what has changed in the passing year.*
- You sever this site from its accustomed place in the natural world. Gravity, distance, illumination and color, wildlife and ecology — all become alien. *Tell the MC that this is now shifting ground, and ask what happens.*
- You contend with the living sky and provoke it to fury. Winds rage, thunder roars, and the sky throws down its levin spears. *Tell the MC that this place is now a furnace, the wind and storm is a relentless beast, and the levinbolts are vicious devils, and ask what happens.*
- You invert the life of a person whose face you can now see and whose name you can now speak. Their flesh becomes wood, their blood veins of amber, their skin paper, their bones stone, their eyes glass, their lips carnelian. Their nails become moths and their hair becomes worms. *They die. If a player's character, if they come back with +1 Weird, something of their transformation remains. If they come back with -1 Hard or change playbooks, the transformation fades instead, and they return to life when it's past.*
- You pronounce enchantment upon this place or upon something in it. *Tell the MC that it becomes a candle (impulse: to illuminate and to cast shadows), a cradle (impulse: to bring the new to fruition), a doorway (impulse: to allow passage to the forbidden), a mirror (impulse: to return what it sees), or a sickle (impulse: to harvest the ripe or carve away the dead). Ask the MC what happens, now and as play proceeds.*

Indulging vulgar concerns:

- When you perform your wizardry, instead of cracking open the world, you can **indulge vulgar concerns**. Roll+hot. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7–9, choose 1, and add 1 to your current penalty to weird. On a miss, choose 1, and set your current penalty to weird to -9, making a miss practically certain. Choose:
- You create from a handful of pebbles a handful of gold and jewels, and give them over to your *auxiliarius*. Your *auxiliarius* gets 10 keep.
 - You create from a handful of pebbles a handful of coins, and give them over to your *auxiliarius*. Your *auxiliarius* gets 3 keep.
 - You create from a pebble a single coin, and give it over to your *auxiliarius*. Your *auxiliarius* gets 1 keep.

Your penalty to weird begins at 0. When you try to crack open the world, apply your current penalty, then reset your penalty to 0.

Current penalty to Weird:

THE ARCHWIZARD

To create your archwizard, choose **name, look, stats, moves, auxiliarius, trappings,** and **history**.

NAME

Anxi..., Iocurre..., Jarre..., Lucere..., Puliarus..., Regnes..., Tarphele..., Udosto..., Xivone...

...of the Amber Wing, ...of the House of Kab, ...of the Starless Depth, ...of the Three Alders, ...the Golden, ...the Jovial, ...the Maugist, ...the Mighty, ...the Silent, ...the Unforgetting.

LOOK

Man, woman, ambiguous, transgressing, sexless, or concealed.

Dark skin, light skin.

Rich vestments, plain robes, bizarre clothing.

Enchanting face, drawn face, chiseled face, open face, covered face, lined face, pleasant face.

Warm eyes, intense eyes, darting eyes, luminous eyes, hooded eyes, vacant eyes, blind eyes.

Ancient body, sunken body, skinny body, fat body, towering body, hulking body, young body.

STATS

Choose one set:

- Cool+1, Hard-1, Hot+2, Sharp=0, Weird+1
- Cool-1, Hard=0, Hot+2, Sharp+1, Weird+1
- Cool+1, Hard-1, Hot+1, Sharp=0, Weird+2
- Cool=0, Hard+1, Hot+1, Sharp-1, Weird+2

MOVES

You get all the basic moves. You get **bizarre behavior**.

You can perform your wizardry freely.

TRAPPINGS

You begin play with:

- a grimoire and paraphernalia (you detail)
- spells of defense
- a sanctum
- clothing suitable to your look (you detail)

Spells of defense:

- an invisible creature of molten copper, sworn to protect you from harm (3-armor)
- a slender cord that can become, at your will, a lashing, razor-sharp wire (2-harm)
- a spell that clenches the lungs of whom you indicate (1-harm, at range, ignores armor)

Sanctums (choose 1):

- a simple hut with plain, comfortable furniture
- a spacious country house, richly appointed
- a lonely tower or lodge, austere furnished

AUXILIARIUS

Everyone introduces their characters by name, look and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Before anybody assigns History, choose which of the other characters is your *auxiliarius*. You rely on your *auxiliarius* to tend to your mortal needs while you are occupied with your esoteric pursuits. Tell the player whose character you've chosen. They can't decline.

Go around again for history. On your turn, for your *auxiliarius*, write history+2. Leave everyone else blank for now.

On the others' turns, answer their questions as you like.

At the end, copy history straight over from your *auxiliarius*. Whom they know, you know. Whom they don't, you don't.

Finally, choose one of the characters with the highest history on your sheet. Ask that player which of your stats is most interesting, and highlight it. The MC will have you highlight a second stat too.

GOALS

During play, it's your job to have your character make and pursue goals. They can be any goals you want, long term and short-. Begin by thinking what your goals might be this very morning, as play begins.

IMPROVEMENT

Whenever you roll a highlighted stat, and whenever you reset your history with someone, mark an experience circle. When you mark the 5th, improve and erase.

Each time you improve, choose one of the options. Check it off; you can't choose it again.

THE BASIC MOVES

All player characters can use all the basic moves.

DO SOMETHING RISKY

When you **do something risky, dangerous, challenging, or demanding**, roll+cool. On a 10+, you do it. On a 7-9, you flinch, hesitate, or stall: the MC can offer you a worse outcome, a hard bargain, or an ugly choice. On a miss, be prepared for the worst.

Advanced: on a 12+, you transcend the challenge. You do what you set out to do, and the MC must offer you a better outcome, true beauty, inspiration, or a moment of grace.

ATTACK OR THREATEN SOMEONE

When you **attack or threaten someone**, roll+hard. On a 10+, they have to choose 1: submit to you, try to flee, or fight back. On a 7-9, they can also choose to prevaricate, try to placate you, back down with dignity, take a more secure position, or make a fighting retreat. If you're satisfied with their answer, you can accept it; otherwise, you may press your attack and **join battle** with them. On a miss, be prepared for the worst.

Advanced: on a 12+, if you're not satisfied with their answer, you can inflict harm on them as established, before joining battle with them.

JOIN BATTLE

When you **join battle with someone**, find who commands the field:

- If it's you, **press your advantage**.
- If it's your enemy, **survive against the advantage**.
- If it's neither, **meet as equals**.

...And bring the other battle moves into play as appropriate.

SEDUCE OR MANIPULATE SOMEONE

When you try to **seduce, manipulate, bluff, disorient, or lie to someone**, tell them what you want them to do, give them a reason, and roll+hot. **For NPCs:** on a 10+, they'll go along with you, unless or until some fact or action betrays the reason you gave them. On a 7-9, they'll go along with you, but they need some concrete assurance, corroboration, evidence, or show of good faith first. **For PCs:** on a 10+, both. On a 7-9, choose 1:

- if they do it, they mark experience
- if they refuse, erase one of their stat highlights for the remainder of the session

What they do then is up to them.

On a miss, for either NPCs or PCs, be prepared for the worst.

Advanced: on a 12+, only if they're an NPC, they do it, and furthermore you win them fully over to you. Tell the MC to erase their threat type and make them an ally. Choose 1:

- Ally: *confidante*.
- Ally: *guardian*.
- Ally: *representative*.
- Ally: *friend*.
- Ally: *lover*.
- Ally: *right hand*.

EARN YOUR KEEP

At the **beginning of every session**, spend 1, 2, or 3 keep for your lifestyle (plus 0, 1, or 2 more keep for your mount's *hunger*, if you have one). If you can't or won't, tell the MC so, and answer her questions.

If you need coins, goods, or keep during a session, tell the MC you'd like to work to earn your keep.

READ A PERSON

When you **read a person** in a charged interaction, roll+sharp. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7-9, hold 1. While you're interacting with them, spend your hold to ask their player questions, 1 for 1:

- *Is your character telling the truth?*
- *What's your character really feeling?*
- *What does your character intend to do?*
- *What does your character wish I'd do?*
- *How could I get your character to ___?*

On a miss, ask 1 anyway, but be prepared for the worst.

Advanced: on a 12+, hold 3, but spend them 1 for 1 to ask any question you like.

READ A SITUATION

When you **read a charged situation**, roll+sharp. On a hit, you can ask the MC questions. Whenever you act on one of the MC's answers, take +1. On a 10+, ask 3. On a 7-9, ask 1:

- *Where's my best escape route / way in / way past?*
- *Which enemy is most vulnerable to me?*
- *Which enemy is the biggest threat?*
- *What should I be on the lookout for?*
- *What's my enemy's true position?*
- *Who's in control here?*
- *Can I meet my enemy as an equal, or does one of us hold decisive advantage over the other?*

On a miss, ask 1 anyway, but be prepared for the worst.

Advanced: on a 12+, ask any 3 questions you like.

GRASP OUTWARD

When you **grasp blindly outward** from yourself into the world's psychic maelstrom, roll+weird. On a hit, the MC will tell you something new and interesting about the current situation, and might ask you a question or two; answer them. On a 10+, the MC will give you good detail. On a 7-9, the MC will give you an impression. If you already know all there is to know, the MC will tell you that. On a miss, be prepared for the worst.

Advanced: on a 12+, you reach through the world's psychic maelstrom to what's beyond.

HELP OR INTERFERE

When you **help or interfere with someone** who's making a roll, roll+your history with them. On a 10+, they take +2 (help) or -2 (interfere) to their roll. On a 7-9, they take +1 (help) or -1 (interfere) to their roll. On a miss, be prepared for the worst.

SESSION END

At the **end of every session**, choose one or two characters who know you better than they used to. If there are more than two, choose two at your whim. Tell those players to add +1 to their history with you on their sheet. If this brings them to history+4, they reset to history+1 (and therefore mark experience). If no one knows you better, choose one character who doesn't know you as well as they thought, or choose any character at your whim. Tell that player to take -1 to their history with you on their sheet. If this brings them to history-3, they reset to history=0 (and therefore mark experience).

THE PERIPHERAL MOVES

HARM & HEALING MOVES

By default, the following harm & healing moves are in play. The MC might decide to forgo them, case by case.

This move is unusual in that a hit is bad for the player and a miss is good:

When you **suffer harm**, roll+harm suffered (after armor, if you're wearing any). On a 10+, the MC can choose 1:

- *You're out of action: unconscious, trapped, incoherent or panicked.*
- *It's worse than it seemed. Take an additional 1-harm.*
- *Choose 2 from the 7-9 list below.*

On a 7-9, the MC can choose 1:

- *You lose your footing.*
- *You lose your grip on whatever you're holding.*
- *You lose track of someone or something you're attending to.*
- *You miss noticing something important.*

On a miss, the MC can nevertheless choose something from the 7-9 list above. If she does, though, it's instead of some of the harm you're suffering, so you take -1harm.

When you **inflict harm on another player's character**, the other character gets +1history with you (on their sheet) for every segment of harm you inflict. If this brings them to history+4, they reset to history+1 as usual, and therefore mark experience.

When you **heal another player's character's harm**, you get +1history with them (on your sheet) for every segment of harm you heal. If this brings you to history+4, you reset to history+1 as usual, and therefore mark experience.

When you hurt someone, they see you more clearly. When you heal someone, you see them more clearly.

COMMERCE MOVES

By default, characters have access to the commerce moves, but the MC might decide to limit them, case by case.

When you **go into a bustling market**, looking for some particular thing to buy, and it's not already obvious that you'll be able to find it for sale, roll+sharp. On a 10+, yes, you find it for sale. On a 7-9, the MC chooses one of the following:

- *It costs 1 keep's worth more than you'd expect*
- *It's not openly for sale, but you find someone who can lead you to someone selling it.*
- *It's not openly for sale, but you find someone who sold it recently, who may be willing to introduce you to their previous buyer.*
- *It's not available for sale, but you find something similar. Will it do?*

When you **make known that you want something**, that you'll pay to speed it on its way, roll+keep spent (max roll+3). It has to be something you could legitimately get this way. On a 10+ it comes to you, no strings attached. On a 7-9 it comes to you, or something pretty close. On a miss, it comes to you, but with strings very much attached.

INSIGHT

By default, nobody has access to insight, but the strongholder, hocus, and anointed all have options that give it to them.

When you **call upon someone or something for insight**, ask them what they think your best course is, and the MC will tell you. If you pursue that course, take +1 to any rolls you make in the pursuit. If you pursue that course but don't accomplish your ends, you mark experience.

AUGURY

By default, nobody has access to augury, but the bonepicker, hocus, and mystic all have options that give it to them.

When you **use someone or something for augury**, roll+weird. On a hit, you can choose 1:

- *Reach through the world's psychic maelstrom to something or someone connected to it.*
- *Isolate and protect a person or thing from the world's psychic maelstrom.*
- *Isolate and contain a fragment of the world's psychic maelstrom itself.*
- *Speak words into the world's psychic maelstrom.*
- *Open a window into the world's psychic maelstrom.*

By default, the effect will last only as long as you hold it, will reach only shallowly into the world's psychic maelstrom as it is local to you, and will bleed instability. On a 10+, choose 2; on a 7-9, choose 1:

- *It'll persist (for a while) without your actively holding it.*
- *It reaches deep into the world's psychic maelstrom.*
- *It reaches broadly throughout the world's psychic maelstrom.*
- *It's stable and contained, no bleeding.*

On a miss, whatever bad happens, the instrument of your augury bears the brunt.

MOUNT MOVES

By default, anyone with a mount has access to these moves.

When you **try to outrace another rider**, roll+the difference between your mounts' speeds. On a 10+, you outrace them. On a 7-9, choose: drive your mount to suffer 1 harm (ignoring armor) and outrace them, or else let them outrace you. On a miss, they outrace you.

When you **push your mount** to hard labor or long endurance, roll+your mount's strong. On a 10+, your mount proves capable and accomplishes it. On a 7-9, choose: push your mount beyond its capacity, to accomplish it, but inflicting 1 harm (ignoring armor); or else let your mount set its own limits and fall not too far short. On a miss, your mount balks.

CHANGING HIGHLIGHTED STATS

At the beginning of any session, or at the end if you forgot, anyone can call for new highlighted stats. Go around the circle, following the same procedure you used to highlight stats in the first place: the player with the highest history chooses one stat to highlight, and the MC chooses another.

You're allowed to ask someone to highlight a particular stat for you, but you aren't allowed to insist.

If you have a particular stat that, because of your moves, you never roll, you're allowed to insist that someone highlight a different stat instead.

THE BATTLE MOVES

COMMANDING THE FIELD

When two warriors meet, both armed, they meet as equals. The particular differences between them as warriors, between their positions, and between their weapons might give one an advantage over the other, but still they meet as equals.

Some advantages are so decisive, however, that holding one gives that warrior **command of the field**.

Decisive advantages:

- If you're armed and armored, and your enemy is neither, you command the field.
- If you outnumber or outsize your enemy by half again or more, you command the field.
- If you are able and armed to fight at range, but your enemy must cover the ground between you before engaging, you command the field.
- If you are mounted, and your enemy is on foot, you command the field.

Choosing your battle move:

- If you command the field, your battle move is to **press your advantage**.
- If your enemy commands the field, your battle move is to **survive against the advantage**.
- If you meet as equals, your battle move is to **seize by force** or a variation, to do **single combat**. Choose the latter if you have no objective but to injure and kill your enemy. If you have any other tactical or material objective, though, choose to seize by force.

Other PC combatants:

If another PC is fighting at your side or under your command, they should **help** if you're pressing your advantage, seizing by force, or doing single combat, and you should consult with them to make your choices. If you have to survive against the advantage, though, they do too, independently.

If your enemy is also a PC, and you meet as equals, you both make your moves simultaneously. If one of you commands the field, though, the one trying to survive against the advantage makes their move first, and the one pressing their advantage makes their move only on a miss.

Competing advantages:

If you and your enemy hold competing advantages — when you are 4 warriors armed with bows, and your enemy is a dozen warriors but not armed with bows, for instance — the MC judges whether one side's advantage remains decisive and commands the field, or whether they balance each other and you meet as equals after all.

If you disagree with the MC, nevertheless it's her judgment to make and so it stands. To avoid being startled by it, be sure to read the situation before you commit to battle.

ESTABLISHING AND EXCHANGING HARM

Establishing harm:

- If you're fighting for sport, not in earnest, you inflict 0 harm.
- If you're fighting in earnest, but unarmed, you inflict 1 harm.
- If you're fighting armed, you inflict harm according to your weapon.
- Subtract your armor from the harm against you, unless the attack specifically pierces, ignores, or otherwise bypasses armor.
- Some weapon tags give additional modifiers, depending on the circumstances.

Exchanging harm:

- Both sides simultaneously inflict and suffer harm as established.

When you take harm, ask the MC whether you should make the harm move. Ask even if your armor and other choices reduce the harm you suffer to 0 or less.

PRESS YOUR ADVANTAGE

When you command the field, your move is to **press your advantage**. Roll+hard. On a 10+, you inflict harm upon them as established, and then they have to choose: submit to you, try to flee, or force your hand upon them. On a 7–9, you inflict harm upon them as established, and then you choose 1:

- Offer them your terms, and ask whether they will accept them.
- Demand that they offer you their terms, and decide whether to accept them.

If you agree to terms, the battle ends. Otherwise, they have to choose, as for a 10+: submit to you, try to flee, or force your hand.

On a miss, you accidentally give them an opening of some kind. Ask the MC what it is and be prepared for the worst.

Outcomes:

- If you agree to terms, the battle ends.
- If they submit to you, your choice is to accept their submission or to strike them again while they're at your mercy. Either way, the battle ends.
- If they try to flee, your choice is to let them go, to strike them again in the back as they flee, or to try to block or pursue them. In the former cases, the battle ends. In the latter case, this phase of the battle ends, and to continue to fight you must move to rejoin battle with them.
- If they force your hand upon them, they give you no choice but to strike them again. This phase of the battle ends, and either you or they can choose to rejoin battle.

In any outcome, if you strike them again, inflict harm again as established.

SURVIVE AGAINST THE ADVANTAGE

When your enemy commands the field, your move is to **survive against the advantage**. Work out with the MC and/or the other player where you might be able to go and where you might be forced to go. Especially work out whether there's somewhere you can go where you'll be able to escape or somehow seize the advantage. Once done, Roll+hard. On a 10+, you're able to make your way to where you hoped. On a 7–9, choose:

- You're able to make your way to where you hoped, but your enemy strikes you, inflicting harm as established.
- You're forced to go where your enemy drives you, but your enemy's unable to land a blow.

On a miss, there's no surviving it. If your enemy's a PC, they **press their advantage** now. If your enemy's an NPC, they inflict harm as established now, and you must choose: submit to their mercy, break away and flee, or defy them and let them strike you again.

Outcomes:

- If you're able to make your way to where you hoped, this phase of the battle ends. You might be able to seize the advantage and rejoin battle.
- If you're forced to go where your enemy drives you, this phase of the battle ends. If you or your enemy rejoins battle, though, your enemy might still command the field.
- If you submit to your enemy's mercy, the battle ends with your submission.
- If you try to flee, this phase of the battle ends. Your enemy can choose to let you go, or can move to block or pursue you and rejoin battle.
- If you defy your enemy and let them strike you again, they inflict harm again as established. This phase of the battle ends, but either you or they can move to rejoin battle.

SEIZE BY FORCE

To **seize something by force**, exchange harm, but first roll+hard. On a 10+, choose 3. On a 7–9, choose 2:

- You inflict terrible harm (+1 harm).
- You suffer little harm (-1 harm).
- You take definite and undeniable control of it.
- You impress, dismay, or frighten your enemy.

On a miss, choose 1 anyway, but be prepared for the worst.

Variations:

- To **assault a secure position**, roll to seize by force, but instead of choosing to *take definite control of it*, you can choose to *force your way into your enemy's position*.
- To **keep hold of something you have**, roll to seize by force, but instead of choosing to *take definite control of it*, you can choose to *keep definite control of it*.
- To **fight your way free**, roll to seize by force, but instead of choosing to *take definite control of it*, you can choose to *win free*.
- To **defend someone else from attack**, roll to seize by force, but instead of choosing to *take definite control of it*, you can choose to *protect them from harm*.
- To **hold your enemy off while your allies take action**, roll to seize by force, but instead of choosing to *take definite control of it*, you can choose to *hold your enemy off*.

When your enemy is a PC:

You both roll your moves and both make your choices. Choose blind, committing to your choices before you know your enemy's.

There's only a single exchange of harm. All of the modifiers that you chose between you apply to it.

If you choose contradictory options — one of you to take definite control, the other to keep definite control of it, for instance — they cancel one another. It's the same as if neither of you had chosen them, and the matter remains contested.

SINGLE COMBAT

When you **do single combat**, no quarters, exchange harm, but first:

- **Against an NPC:** Roll+hard. On a 10+, you choose 3 and your enemy chooses 1. On a 7–9, you choose 2 and your enemy chooses 2. On a miss, you choose 1 and your enemy chooses 3.
- **Against another PC:** You both roll+hard. On a 10+, choose 3. On a 7–9, choose 2. On a miss, choose 1, and your enemy chooses an additional 1 against you.

You can choose duplicates. Choose blind, committing to your choices before you know your enemy's.

- You inflict terrible harm (+1 harm).
- You suffer little harm (-1 harm).
- You score 1 toward seizing control.

After you exchange harm, which of you has spent more toward seizing control?

- If a tie, either of you can choose to end the fight by submitting to the others' mercy, or by breaking and trying to flee. If you both choose to fight on, though, then fight on.
- If you spent more toward seizing control, the fight ends with your enemy at your mercy.

USING A WAR-BAND AS A WEAPON

You can **use your war-band as a weapon** by having them attack or threaten someone or make a battle move against them. When you do, you roll the dice and make the choices, but it's your war-band that inflicts and suffers harm, not you yourself.

War-bands **inflict and suffer harm** as established:

- Your war-band inflicts harm equal to its listing's harm rating.
- Subtract your war-band's armor from the harm against them, unless the attack specifically pierces, ignores, or otherwise bypasses armor.

There are a number of **drills** a war-band can practice. Drilling is an act of regular, ongoing discipline and effort. You choose your war-band's drills, if any, in war-band creation.

- **Drilling against archers** trains you to effectively rush enemy archers. For purposes of commanding the field, it eliminates the advantage of an enemy that can fight at range, when you can't.
- **Drilling against cavalry** trains you to hold fast and break a cavalry charge. For purposes of commanding the field, it eliminates the advantage of a mounted enemy when you're on foot.
- **Drilling in defense** trains you to fight together to hold a position. When your war-band fights in defense of a position, for purposes of commanding the field, it counts as half again its number. (If the position has walls, their multiplier applies as well, as below.)
- **Drilling in ranks** trains you to fight in order, advance and retreat with discipline, and defend the warriors on your right and left. For purposes of commanding the field, your war-band counts double its number against a force that fights in disorder.
- **Drilling unarmed** trains you to fight effectively even without your weapons. For purposes of commanding the field, it eliminates the advantage of an enemy that is armed and armored, when you're not.

Walls and siege engines:

- **Walls:** for purposes of commanding the field, a war-band fighting to defend walls counts double or more its number against an attacking force, depending on the size and quality of the walls. Walls are rated 2x, 3x, 4x, or 5x in stronghold creation.
- **Siege engines:** siege engines reduce the advantage of your enemy's walls. Siege engines are rated siege-1, siege-2, or siege-3, and subtract their rating directly from the enemy walls' multiplier. (Siege engines also provide a bonus to the harm you inflict.)

WHEN A WAR-BAND SUFFERS HARM

When **your war-band suffers harm**, each 1 harm it suffers puts one warrior in ten, plus one mount in ten, out of the fight. 1 harm means 10%, 2 harm means 20%, 3 harm means 30%, and so on. These warriors are driven away, pinned down, wounded, killed, dazed, held off, or otherwise rendered noncombatant. Collectively, they are your *fallen*. If the battle continues, discount them from your war-band's number. Then, at the end of the battle, sum your fallen and count your dead among them.

Normally, a war-band breaks once it's taken 2 harm. You can hold your war-band together with **leadership** or **bloody-crowned**, though, until it takes 4 harm.

For PCs leading or fighting in the war-band, ask the MC how much harm you take, and answer the MC's questions about your role in the fight. Expect to take harm equal to the harm the war-band's taken, but the MC can modify it by 1 or 2 up or down.

When you **count your dead**, roll+harm, the total harm that your war-band has suffered. This move is unusual: a hit is bad for you, a miss is good. On a 10+, a solid and undeniable half of your fallen are dead or dying of their wounds. On a 7–9, less than half of your fallen are dead or dying of their wounds, a third or a quarter of them. On a miss, few of your fallen are dead or dying of their wounds, only one in five or one in six.

AMBUSH

Lay an **ambush** by preparing a disadvantageous position for your enemy to unknowingly take, then waiting in concealment for them to take it.

To draw them into your prepared position, you might be able to **seduce or manipulate** them.

Expecting your war-band to hold discipline while your enemy takes position might be **doing something risky**, or you might be able to force them to by using **leadership** or **bloody-crowned**.

Once your enemy's in position, spring your ambush by **attacking** them.

PITCHED BATTLE

Conduct a **pitched battle** by using **attack or threaten someone**, **seize by force** or **single combat**.

Start with **attack or threaten someone** only if your enemy was not expecting to meet you now, here, on this particular pitch, from this particular direction. Otherwise, start by establishing who commands the field and proceed directly to choosing battle moves.

Supposing that the forces meet as equals, if both war-leaders intend only to reduce the other's force, with no other objective, treat it as **single combat**. If either war-leader hopes to achieve any other tactical or material objective, though, use **seize by force** or a variation.

SIEGE

To **lay a siege**, you must commit a war-band to the effort. Roll+hard. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7-9, hold 2. During the remainder of the session, you can spend your hold 1 for 1 to declare that:

- For purposes of **wealth**, the stronghold is not secure, nor the strongholder's rule unchallenged.
 - No one inside the stronghold can leave it.
 - The people inside the stronghold are suffering d-harm: food.
 - The people inside the stronghold are suffering d-harm: water.
 - The people inside the stronghold are subject to a disease, which the MC should create as an affliction threat.
 - Your forces now launch a full assault upon the stronghold.
 - A small raiding party of your warriors try to slip inside the stronghold.
- On a miss, hold 2 as above, but choose 1 as well:
- Your besieging forces are themselves suffering d-harm: food.
 - Your besieging forces are bankrupting you; spend 3 keep now.
 - Your besieging forces are losing heart, in want, or prey to their vulnerabilities.

Renew your siege at the beginning of every session until you abandon it, or until your enemy submits, flees, sallies out, or somehow breaks it.

For a **PC besieged by an NPC**, roll+hard, once when the siege is laid, and again at the beginning of every session the siege continues. On a 10+, your enemy holds 2 as above, but cannot maintain the siege and abandons it at the end of this session. On a 7-9, your enemy holds 2 as above. On a miss, your enemy holds 3 as above.

KEEP AND LIFESTYLE

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SESSION

At the **beginning of every session**, spend 1, 2, or 3 keep for your lifestyle (plus 0, 1, or 2 more keep for your mount's hunger, if you have one). If you can't or won't, tell the MC so, and answer her questions.

Imagine four possible lifestyles, relative to one another, here in the dust of fallen empires. First is the typical one: you eat what the people around you eat, wear what they wear, sleep where they sleep. Spend 1 keep at the beginning of the session to live this life.

Next is better: you eat first and best, as an honored guest, a beloved leader, or a feared intruder. You wear finer clothing than the people around you, and sleep apart from them, in greater comfort. Spend 2 keep at the beginning of the session to live this life.

Next is better still: you do not eat the best of their food, but better food, food of your own, prepared by your own servants, of ingredients not available to the people around you. You wear clothing the like of which they have never before seen; kingly, queenly stuff. You sleep in luxury. Spend 3 keep at the beginning of the session to live this life.

Last is worst: you are starving, in rags, desperate, dying of hunger, thirst, and exposure. This is what it *should* mean to spend 0 keep at the beginning of the session, and it still might. But first, answer the MC's questions.

MC, start with, "then who will pay 1 keep to keep __ alive?"

If someone will, good. Let them work out the debt, gift, or exchange between them.

If no one will, though, choose:

- Choose an NPC who'll provide for them. Tell them so, and ask whether they'll accept their patronage. Likely there are strings attached.
- Ask them, "so, who do you think should pay for your keep? How do you approach them?" Play it out in summary or in detail.
- Give them an opportunity to work for their keep before it comes to its worst case. Ask them what they propose to do, and for whom, or choose an NPC yourself to offer them work.
- Or they are, yes, desperate and starving after all. Inflict harm, take away their stuff. Tell them their circumstances now and ask what they do.

Someone has to pay for their keep, or they have none.

EARNING YOUR KEEP

If you need coins, goods, or keep during a session, tell the MC you'd like to work to earn your keep.

Working the hard earth is worth 1 keep.

Other duties should be worth 2-4 keep, depending on both how onerous they are and how well you perform them. Expect 3 keep, be grateful for 4, and resent 2.

When you work, the MC gets to choose:

- The MC describes the work you do very quickly, in summary.
- You play out the work you do, making moves and conducting play as normal.
- Make a single move or a quick snowball of moves to see how it goes.

At the end, the MC tells you how much it was worth.

HARM RULES

SUFFERING HARM

You suffer harm **as established**: the harm rating of the enemy, weapon, or mishap inflicting the harm, minus your own armor, modified by any advantages or other modifiers that hold.

When you **suffer harm**, mark 1 wound for each 1 harm you suffer.

Wounds 1–3 are not life threatening; wounds 4–6 are. When you mark the 6th wound, your life is ending.

While your wounds 1–3 are fresh, they can be healed, but failing that, after a session passes, mark them over in pen. Old wounds linger.

When you **take a life-threatening wound**, wounds 4–6, mark that you're dying. Without healing, your wounds will get worse: as time passes, the MC can have you continue to take harm and mark wounds for no other reason.

When **your life is ending**, choose 1:

- *Come back with -1hard.*
- *Come back with +1weird (max +3).*
- *Change to a new playbook.*
- *Die.*

If you choose to come back, decide with the MC how many wounds you should come back with, if any.

WHEN AN NPC SUFFERS HARM

- **1 harm**: a disfiguring wound, pain, disorientation, fear if the NPC's likely to be afraid of pain.
- **2 harm**: wounds, unconsciousness, bad pain, broken bones, shock. Often fatal, eventually; occasionally immediately fatal.
- **3 harm**: often immediately fatal. Otherwise, terrible wounds, shock, and death soon enough.
- **4 harm**: usually immediately fatal, but sometimes the poor soul has to wait to die, mangled and ruined.
- **5 harm and more**: always fatal and, as harm increases, increasingly bodily destructive.

WHEN A MOUNT SUFFERS HARM

Always add an animal's *strong* to any armor it wears.

- **1 harm**: a minor wound or injury. The mount can press on for now, and will recover with rest.
- **2 harm**: a serious wound or injury. The mount can press on, at risk of the injury worsening, but will recover with rest and routine care.
- **3 harm**: a dangerous wound or injury. If you force the mount to press on, it will become life-ending. The mount can recover only with dedicated care.
- **4 harm**: a life-ending wound. You may be able to save the animal's life, but only with prolonged care, and it will never again be the animal it was.
- **5 harm and more**: always fatal and, as harm increases, increasingly bodily destructive.

These harm rules apply to pack animals as well.

S-HARM

s-harm means stun. It disables its target without causing any regular harm. NPCs suffering s-harm are simply unable to act. For a PC suffering s-harm, doing anything at all is risky and challenging; the challenge is "you're stunned" or "you're dazed."

D-HARM

A person suffers d-harm from deprivation. d-harm is strictly for acute cases of deprivation. For scarcity and chronic deprivation, create affliction threats instead.

Individual NPCs simply suffer the effects of d-harm as follows. For PCs suffering d-harm, tell them the effects they're suffering, and if they can't or don't alleviate their deprivation, inflict regular harm alongside it, in increments of 1-harm ap.

For a population suffering d-harm, the two questions are *how they behave*, and *how long they can last* before breaking up, tearing themselves apart, or dying.

d-harm (air), asphyxiation: Difficulty breathing, panic, convulsions, paralysis, unconsciousness, brain damage, death within minutes.

Inflicted on a population: Immediate panic. Social cohesion breaks down basically at once into a survival-driven desperation to find air.

d-harm (warmth), hypothermia: shivering, hunger, dizziness, confusion, drowsiness, frostbite, delirium, unconsciousness, irregular heartbeat, death in an hour or more, depending on the cold.

Inflicted on a population: Huddling together, despair, lethargy, resignation. Isolated individuals suffer worsening individual symptoms, so social cohesion can last basically as long as the individuals can.

d-harm (cool), heat stroke: headache, dehydration, weakness or cramps, confusion, fever, vomiting, seizures, unconsciousness, death in an hour or more, depending on the heat.

Inflicted on a population: Desperation, panic, lethargy, resignation. Social cohesion can last as long as the individuals can, as the less vulnerable individuals try to help the more vulnerable.

d-harm (water), dehydration: desperation, headache, confusion, delirium, collapse, death in 3 days.

Inflicted on a population: Rationing & hoarding, desperation, infighting. Social cohesion can last up to a week before breaking down into violence or dispersal.

d-harm (food), starvation: irritability, hunger, weakness, diarrhea, lethargy, dehydration, muscular atrophy, heart failure and death within 2–3 months.

Inflicted on a population: Rationing & hoarding, desperation, infighting. Social cohesion can last up to 2 weeks before breaking down into violence, cannibalism, or dispersal.

d-harm (sleep), sleep deprivation, irritability, disorientation, nodding off, depression, headache, hallucinations, mania, personality changes, bizarre behavior.

Inflicted on a population: Malaise, infighting, tantrums, desperation. For long-term acute sleep deprivation, create affliction threats instead.

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES

AGENDA

- Make this world of fallen empires seem real.
- Make the players' characters' lives interesting.
- Play to find out what happens.

ALWAYS SAY

- What the principles demand.
- What the rules demand.
- What your prep demands.
- What honesty demands.
- What storytelling demands

THE PRINCIPLES

- Barf forth Sword & Sorcery: fantasy, beauty, mystery, horror.
- Address yourself to the characters, not the players.
- Make your move, but don't break causality.
- Make your move, but never speak its name.
- Name everyone, make everyone human, make everyone mortal.
- Ask provocative questions and build on the answers.
- Use intermittent rewards and punishment.
- Be a fan of the players' characters.
- Think offscreen too.
- Sometimes, disclaim decision-making.

YOUR MOVES

- Push a player move.
- Make a threat move (*from one of your threats*).
- Inflict or exchange harm (*as established*).
- Announce off-screen or future badness.
- Put them in a spot.
- Take away their trappings or gear.
- Make them pay.
- Enact their trappings' or gear's downside.
- Tell them the possible consequences and ask.
- Offer an opportunity, with or without a cost.
- Turn their move back on them.
- After every move: "what do you do?"

ESSENTIAL THREATS

- Where the PCs are, create as a landscape.
- For any PC's war-band, create as brutes.
- For any PC's other NPCs, create as brutes, plus a grotesque and/or a wannabe warlord.
- For any PCs' mounts or pack animals, create as animals.
- In any local populations, create an affliction.

STORYTELLING

- Make maps.
- Turn questions back on the asker or over to the group at large.
- Digress occasionally.
- Elide the action sometimes, and zoom in on its details other times.
- Go around the table.
- Take breaks and take your time.

DECISION-MAKING

In order to play to find out what happens, you'll need to pass decision-making off sometimes. Whenever something comes up that you'd prefer not to decide by personal whim and will, *don't*. The game gives you four key tools you can use to disclaim responsibility. You can:

- Put it in your NPCs' hands.
- Put it in the players' hands.
- Create a countdown.
- Make it a stakes question.

THE FIRST SESSION

The players have it easy. They have these fun little procedures to go through and then they're ready to play. Your job is harder, you have a lot more to set up than they do. They each have one character to create, you have the whole fallen world, so you get the whole first session to create it in.

DURING CHARACTER CREATION

While the players are making their characters, here are some things to get out up-front:

- Your characters don't have to be friends, but they should definitely be allies.
- Your characters are unique in this world of fallen empires.
- I'm not out to get you. I'm here to find out what's going to happen. Same as you!

DURING THE FIRST SESSION

- MC the game. Bring it.
- Describe. Barf forth Sword & Sorcery.
- Springboard off character creation.
- Ask every question you think of.
- Leave yourself things to wonder about.
- Look for where they're not in control.
- Push there.
- Give every character good screen time with other characters.
- Do not follow characters when they're alone; summarize.
- Leap forward with named, human NPCs.
- Hell, have a fight.
- Start creating your threat map.

THE THREAT MAP

During play, keep notes on the threats in the world by noting them on your threat map.

The innermost circle is for the PCs and their resources. There, list the PCs' war-bands, followers, strongholds, and everything else they own that you'll be responsible to play. Many of your essential threats go here.

The next circle out, "closer," is for the NPCs that surround them and their immediate landscape. The third circle, "farther," is for things that they would have to travel in order to encounter. Things that they have only heard rumors of, or ideas you have that you have not yet introduced, you can write outside the circle, as "notional."

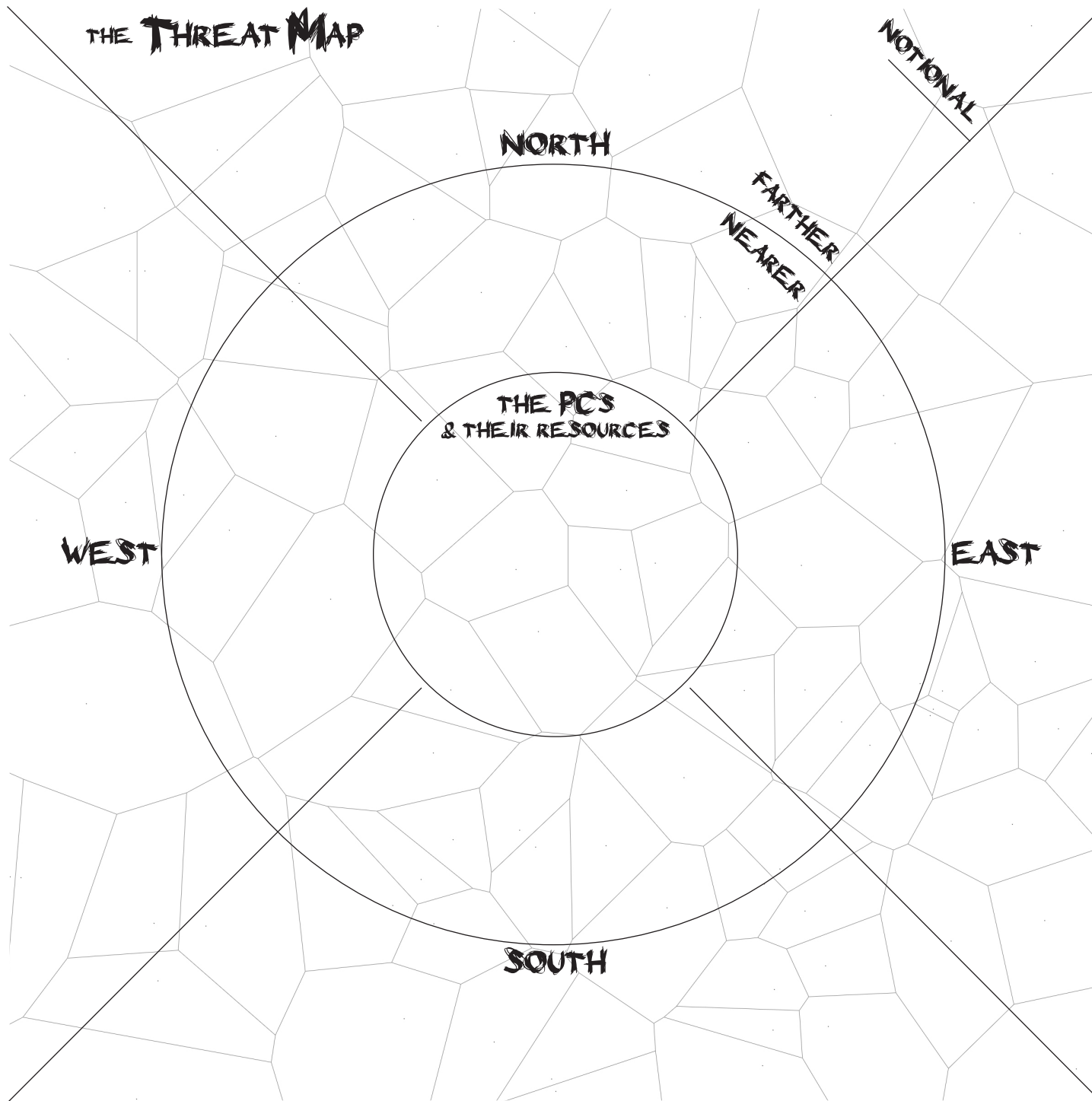
AFTER THE FIRST SESSION

- Go back over the threat map. Pull it apart into individual threats.
- Consider the resources that are available to each of them, and the resources that aren't.
- Create them as threats, using the threat creation rules.
- Before the second session, be sure you've created your essential threats.

IN SUBSEQUENT SESSIONS

Don't lose your good first session habits! Continue to springboard of prior play and ask every question you think of. Continue to look for where they're not in control and push them there. Continue to bring them on-screen in pairs and triples, not alone. The only new thing to do is to bring your prepped threats ever-increasingly into play.

THE THREAT MAP



NAMES

Tum-Tum, Giarle, Fleece, White, Lalai, Willim, Crine, Mercere, Preen, Ik, Shan, Isle, Ula, Djemmer, Baille, Amiene, Rufe, Iago, Ba, Mice, The Dog's Head, Iugo, Roarke, Monk, Pierren, Norveie, H, Omietta, Courvin, Jeanette, Rum, Peppering, Liver, Mathilde, Wisher, Partridge, Wrathschild, Brace Win, Bar, Krin, Parcher, Millier, Gromethe, Fosteia, The Dust Witch, Mill, Nouton, Teo, Missed, The Majesty, Twice, Eastarrow, Kettle, Putrid, Last, Clarion, Tern, Aborro, Miemi, Fianelly, Pellethe, Li, Harridan, Rice, Doe, Periwinkle, Fushe, Visage

RESOURCES

meat, salt, grain, fresh foods, staple foods, preserved foods, meat (don't ask), drinking water, hot water, shelter, liberty, leisure, fuel, heat, security, time, health, medical supplies, information, status, specialized goods, luxury goods, weaponry, labor, skilled labor, acclaim, loyalty, blood kin, strategic position, drugs, work animals, livestock, know-how, walls, living space, storage space, machinery, connections, access, raw materials, books, maps, magic

I WONDER...

Voronoi diagram from <http://www.raymondhill.net/voronoi/vhil-voronoi.html>.

THREATS

CREATING A THREAT

To create a threat:

- Choose its kind, name it, and copy over its impulse. Describe it and list its cast.
- Place it on the threat map. If it's in motion, mark its direction with an arrow.
- List its stakes question(s).
- If it's connected to other threats, list them.
- Choose a habitual or instinctive threat move or two and list them.
- If it has a harm rating, an armor rating, or other stats, list them.
- If it calls for a custom move, create it.

ESSENTIAL THREATS

- Where the PCs are, create as a landscape.
- For any PC's war-band, create as brutes.
- For any PC's other NPCs, create as brutes, plus a grotesque and/or a wannabe warlord.
- For any PCs' mounts or pack animals, create as animals.
- In any local populations, create an affliction.

BRUTES

- Hunting pack (to victimize anyone vulnerable)
- Sybarites (to consume someone's resources)
- Enforcers (to victimize anyone who stands out)
- Cult (to victimize & incorporate people)
- Mob (to riot, burn, kill scapegoats)
- Family (to close ranks, protect their own)

Threat moves for brutes:

- Push reading a situation.
- Burst out in uncoordinated, undirected violence.
- Make a coordinated attack with a coherent objective.
- Tell stories (truth, lies, allegories, homilies).
- Demand consideration or indulgence.
- Rigidly follow or defy authority.
- Cling to or defy reason.
- Make a show of solidarity and power.
- Ask for help or for someone's participation.

WARLORDS

- Slaver (to own and sell people)
- Hive queen (to consume and swarm)
- Prophet (to denounce and overthrow)
- God-king or -queen (to control)
- Bandit king or -queen (to own)
- Alpha wolf (to hunt and dominate)

Threat moves for warlords:

- Push the battle moves.
- Outflank someone, corner someone, encircle someone.
- Attack someone suddenly, directly, and very hard.
- Attack someone cautiously, holding reserves.
- Seize someone or something, for leverage or information.
- Make a show of force.
- Make a show of discipline.
- Offer to negotiate. Demand concession or obedience.
- Claim territory: move into it, blockade it, assault it.
- Buy out someone's allies.
- Make a careful study of someone and attack where they're weak.

ANIMALS

- Relentless __ (to keep moving)
 - Cagey __ (to protect what it carries)
 - Forocious __ (to defy danger)
 - Wild __ (to outrun)
 - Vicious __ (to kill and destroy)
 - Bold __ (to dominate others)
- bastard, bitch, devil, creature, thing, beast*

Threat moves for animals:

- Leap away.
- Smash into an obstacle.
- Smash through an obstacle.
- Veer stupidly into danger.
- Tear past.
- Spin, buck, and sunfish.
- Wander unheeding.
- Shoulder, kick, and bite another animal.
- Submit cowishly to another animal.
- Balk and stop abruptly.

GROTESQUES

- Cannibal (craves satiety and plenty)
- Outcast (craves restitution, recompense)
- Pain addict (craves pain, its own or others')
- Plague rat (craves contact, intimate and/or anonymous)
- Manipulator (craves mastery)
- Perversion of birth (craves overthrow, chaos, the ruination of all)

Threat moves for grotesques:

- Push reading a person.
- Display the nature of the world it inhabits.
- Display the contents of its heart.
- Attack someone from behind or otherwise by stealth.
- Attack someone face-on, but without threat or warning.
- Insult, affront, offend or provoke someone.
- Offer something to someone, or do something for someone, with strings attached.
- Put it in someone's path, part of someone's day or life.
- Threaten someone, directly or else by implication.
- Steal something from someone.
- Seize and hold someone.
- Ruin something. Befoul, rot, desecrate, corrupt, adulter it.

LANDSCAPES

- Prison (to contain, to deny egress)
- Breeding pit (to generate badness)
- Furnace (to consume things)
- Mirage (to entice and betray people)
- Maze (to trap, to frustrate passage)
- Fortress (to deny access)

Threat moves for landscapes:

- Push terrain.
- Reveal something to someone.
- Display something for all to see.
- Hide something.
- Bar the way.
- Open the way.
- Provide another way.
- Shift, move, rearrange.
- Offer a guide.
- Present a guardian.
- Disgorge something.
- Take something away: lost, used up, destroyed.

AFFLICTIONS

- Disease (to saturate a population)
- Condition (to expose people to danger)
- Custom (to promote and justify violence)
- Delusion (to dominate people's choices and actions)
- Sacrifice (to leave people bereft)
- Barrier (to impoverish people)

Threat moves for afflictions:

- Push reading a situation.
- Someone neglects duties, responsibilities, obligations.
- Someone flies into a rage.
- Someone takes self-destructive, fruitless, or hopeless action.
- Someone approaches, seeking help.
- Someone approaches, seeking comfort.
- Someone withdraws and seeks isolation.
- Someone proclaims the affliction to be a just punishment.
- Someone proclaims the affliction to be, in fact, a blessing.
- Someone refuses or fails to adapt to new circumstances.
- Someone brings friends or loved ones along.

TERRAIN

- A precipice (to send someone over)
- A wall (to bring someone up short)
- An overhang (to bring danger down upon someone)
- An exposed place (to expose someone to danger)
- Shifting ground (to cost someone their bearing)
- Broken ground (to break what crosses)

Threat moves for terrain:

- Push reading a situation.
- Inflict harm (1-harm or d-harm).
- Stall someone.
- Isolate someone.
- Bring someone somewhere.
- Hide evidence.
- Give someone a vantage point.
- Give someone a secure position.

SPECIAL THREATS

ARMIES

Military forces larger than a war-band, numbering in the hundreds or thousands or even more, represent a whole changing complex of threats.

An army on the march:

- Create it as *terrain: a wall*, crossing the landscape.
- Its instinctive threat move is to *push a military encounter*.

An army unleashed upon civilians:

- Create it as an enormous *grotesque: cannibal*.
- Its instinctive threat move is to ruin something.
- It has an additional threat move: *push a military encounter*.

An encamped army:

- Create it as a *landscape* threat.
- Choose which landscape threat by weighing the characters' relationship to the army: allies? enemies? or what?
- Its instinctive threat move is to *push a military encounter*.

A live battlefield:

- Create it as *terrain: an exposed place*.
- Its impulse is specifically to kill everyone present, without regard.
- Its instinctive threat move is to *push an encounter with warriors*.

A recent battlefield:

- Create it as *terrain: broken ground*.
- Its instinctive threat move is to *push an encounter with the slain*.

A routed army:

- Create it as an enormous, multipart *animal*.
- Choose whether to make it a *relentless thing* or a *wild thing* by weighing the speed and desperation of its retreat.
- Choose whether its instinctive threat move is to *tear past* or to *wander unheeding*, by the same judgment.
- It has an additional threat move: *push a military encounter*.

MILITARY ENCOUNTERS

Camp followers:

- Create them as *brutes: family*.
- They might individually be armed, 2-harm. They won't be armored.

A champion warrior:

- Create them as your choice of *warlord*.
- They're armed with the best, 3- or 4-harm 2-armor and a +1armor shield.

A deserter:

- Create them as a *grotesque: outcast*.
- They might be armed, 2-harm 1-armor.

A press gang:

- Create it as *brutes: a cult*.
- It's a war-band numbering 5-10, 2-harm 1-armor.
- Its orders are to seize potential soldiers and press them into service.

A raiding party:

- Create it as *brutes: a hunting pack*.
- It's a war-band numbering 10-25, 2-harm 1-armor.
- Its orders are to murder its enemies and steal what it can carry away.

A scouting party:

- Create it as *brutes: a hunting pack*.
- It's a war-band numbering 2-6, 2-harm 1-armor.
- Its orders are to discover its enemy's vulnerabilities.

The slain:

- Create them as your choice of *grotesque* or your choice of *terrain*.

Warriors at leisure:

- Create them as *brutes: sybarites*.
- They constitute a war-band numbering 6-30, 2-harm 1-armor.

Warriors at war:

- Create them as your choice of *brutes*.
- They constitute a war-band numbering 6-30, 2-harm 1-armor.
- They're eager to attack.

Warriors hard-pressed:

- Create them as *brutes: family*.
- They constitute a war-band numbering 6-30, 2-harm 1-armor, some wounded.

A war-captain:

- Create them as your choice of *warlord*.
- They're well-armed, 3- or 4-harm 2-armor.

ENCHANTMENTS

Enchantments can be places or things. They might appear normal or unnatural, and when they make their moves, they might be subtle or visibly, explicitly magical. Either way, make their nature evident to anyone who reads a situation and asks appropriate questions or who grasps outward.

Threat moves for enchantments:

- Bring forth a *monster*.
- Interrogate someone.
- Bring forth surreal visions and imagery.
- Reveal something hidden to someone.
- Change something into something else.
- Offer a gift, an answer, or a weapon.
- Open a passage between places or people.

Enchantments respond actively to the characters who come in contact with them. To guide you, ask the players questions from the enchantment's point of view.

Example questions: *What are you proud of? What stands out about you? What is strange about you? What are you thinking about just now? What memories cling to you? What do you hope, wish, long for, dread, despise, fear? What is new in your life? What is old in your life? What was once in your life, but is now gone?*

A candle:

Impulse: *to illuminate and to cast shadows*. A candle highlights what it sees and creates a shadowy inversion of the same.

A cradle:

Impulse: *to bring the new to fruition*. A cradle takes the nascent, the possible, or the incomplete and gives it full expression.

A doorway:

Impulse: *to allow passage to the forbidden*. A doorway will take you where you shouldn't go, and let in what shouldn't come in.

A mirror:

Impulse: *to return what it sees*. A mirror creates, not a shadow or inversion, but an honest reflection of what it sees.

A sickle:

Impulse: *to harvest the ripe or carve away the dead*. A sickle seeks what is finished, to bring it to harvest or to take it away.

MONSTERS

A monster of anguish:

- Impulse: *to destroy the future*.
- Qualities: *bound, driven, gargantuan, nightmarish, recurrent, symbolic*.

A monster of the depths:

- Impulse: *to destroy sense*.
- Qualities: *awakened, catastrophic, cultic, gargantuan, many, nightmarish*.

A monster of filth:

- Impulse: *to destroy health*.
- Qualities: *awakened, catastrophic, many, nightmarish, spreading, symbolic*.

A monster of fire:

- Impulse: *to destroy the past*.
- Qualities: *bound, catastrophic, driven, gargantuan, nightmarish, spreading*.

A monster of silence:

- Impulse: *to destroy trust*.
- Qualities: *awakened, bound, driven, many, nightmarish, spreading*.

Threat moves for monsters:

- Attack wildly or indiscriminately.
- Attack with forethought and intent.
- Feint, misdirect, or bluff.
- Panic a person or a population.

Monstrous qualities:

- Awakened: *some specific human action awoke the monster or brought it here*.
- Bound: *the monster's life and fate is bound to a particular person's*.
- Catastrophic: *the monster's moves can affect whole landscapes and populations*.
- Cultic: *create its worship as an affliction*.
- Driven: *the monster is intent upon a particular person, place, or situation*.
- Gargantuan: *the monster is the size of a tree, a building, a sailing ship, a town, a mountain*.
- Many: *the monster isn't one, it's a horde, a swarm, a population, a colony*.
- Nightmarish: *the monster's appearance and abilities are unnatural, impossible, surreal, freaky, phantasmagorical*.
- Recurrent: *when killed, the monster returns. It must be defeated in its nature or purpose*.
- Spreading: *the monster will spread to nearby places, nearby populations*.
- Symbolic: *the monster's appearance and abilities are symbolic of its nature, evocative, psychological, not representative*.

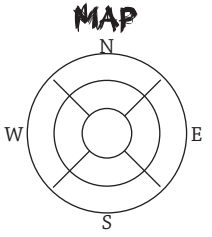
THREAT #

Is called:

Kind:

Impulse:

Description & cast:



Connected Threats

Stakes:

Habitual & instinctive threat moves:

Harm **Armor** **Other ratings:**

Losses

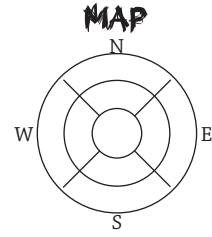
THREAT #

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Kind:

Impulse:

Description & cast:



Connected Threats

Stakes:

Habitual & instinctive threat moves:

Harm **Armor** **Other ratings:**

Losses

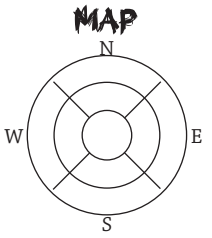
THREAT #

Is called:

Kind:

Impulse:

Description & cast:



Connected Threats

Stakes:

Habitual & instinctive threat moves:

Harm **Armor** **Other ratings:**

Losses

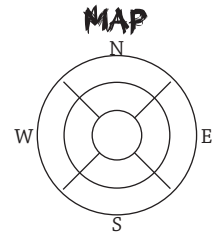
THREAT #

Is called:

Kind:

Impulse:

Description & cast:



Connected Threats

Stakes:

Habitual & instinctive threat moves:

Harm **Armor** **Other ratings:**

Losses