

13th Age Second Edition:

Heroes' Handbook

A fantasy roleplaying game by
Rob Heinsoo & Jonathan Tweet

Art by
Lee Moyer & Aaron McConnell
and many more

Edited by
Trisha DeFoggi

Layout by
Jen McCleary

©2025 Fire Opal Media, Inc.; Published exclusively by Pelgrane Press Ltd., All rights reserved.

This publication may include copyrighted material from third parties. Such material is the property of its respective owners.

Product Identity: The following items are hereby identified as Product Identity, as defined in the Open Game License version 1.0a, Section 1(e), and are not Open Content: All trademarks, registered trademarks, proper names (characters, icons, place names, new deities, etc.), dialogue, banter and comments from Jonathan and Rob, plots, story elements, locations, characters, artwork, and trade dress. (Elements that have previously been designated as Open Game Content are not included in this declaration.)

Open Content: Except for material designated as Product Identity (see above), the game mechanics of this Fire Opal Media game product are Open Game Content, as defined in the Open Gaming License version 1.0a Section 1(d). No portion of this work other than the material designated as Open Game Content may be reproduced in any form without written permission.

13th Age is published by Pelgrane Press under the Open Game License version 1.0a Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. *13th Age* is a trademark of Fire Opal Media, Inc. ©2025 Fire Opal Media, Inc.. All rights reserved.

www.fireopalmedia.com and www.pelgranepress.com.
First printing by Standart Impressa. Printed in Lithuania.



Rob Heinsoo

robheinsoo.com

With thanks to Lisa Eschenbach, my home-forest 9th level ranger; the Wednesday Night Elysombrans; Greg Stafford & Orlanth Adventurous; and those who love the many true ways of gaming.



Jonathan Tweet

grandmotherfish.com

To Dr. Roald Tweet.
Thanks, Dad, for introducing me to roleplaying games, to tight writing, to close reading, and to the world of ideas.

13th Age



Lee Moyer

leemoyer.com

With deepest thanks to the extraordinary Venetia Charles, Aaron, Rich, and the other wonderful artists I've been lucky enough to work with.



Aaron McConnell

aamcconnell.com

Conceptual Illustration. Mentored by Lee Moyer. Lives in Portland, Oregon. Inspired to adventure by Ruby and our two mischievous gnomes.

Credits

Designers
Rob Heinsoo, Jonathan Tweet

Artists & Illustrators
Lee Moyer, Aaron McConnell
Simone Bannach, Andi Brown, Joshua Calloway, Laura Galli, Heinrich Kley, Cristiana Leone, Pat Loboyko, Rich Longmore, Dagmara Matuszak, Roena I. Rosenberger, Paul Tobin, Naomi VanDoren

Art Directors
Lee Moyer, Rob Heinsoo

Editor
Trisha DeFoggi

Layout
Jen McCleary

Editorial Assistance
Tim Baker, Ross D'Souza, John-Matthew DeFoggi, Miguel Friginal, Federico Pederzolli, the *13th Age* Discord group

Icon Connection Exemplars
Tim Baker, John-Matthew DeFoggi, Jay Godden, Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan, Simon Rogers, Wade Rockett

Character Sheet
Miguel Friginal

Two Playtesters Who Did the Most to Shape 2E
Federico Pederzolli, Michael Todd

Playtesters Deserving Special Thanks
Tim Baker, Jeb Boyt, Jonathan Charlton, Earth Seraph Edna, Exocist, Jay Godden, Alan Hillgrove, Martin Killmann, Robert Layton, Jean Antoine Maro, Brian Slaby, Antti Vepsä

Additional IE Design & Development
Keith Baker, Cal Moore, Mike Fehlauer Hayes, Rob Watkins

Warriors of the Three
Eric Iacono, Michael Maneval, Patrick Joynt

Fire Opal Board
Lisa Eschenbach, Chad Dylan Long, Rob Heinsoo, Jay Schneider

Fire Opal Admin
Debbie Scally, Jeremy "JV" Virden

Legal Services
The Apex Law Group PLLC
Peter J. Smith

Producer
Rob Heinsoo

Executive Producer
Jay Schneider

for Pelgrane Press

Publishers
Cathriona Tobin, Simon Rogers

Crowdfunding & Social Media @
İbrahim M. Çelik

Customer Support
Becky Smith

From Crowdfunding

Ancient Red Dragons Who Added to Our Map
Steve Hollaway (Crab God Island, *GMG*: 14)
Douglas G A Murray (Wonderton, *GMG*: 29)
Théa Marie Ryde (Traversorwen, *GMG*: 27)

Storm Giants Gifting Us with Heroes
James Almblade (Ruxilinus the Two-Headed Wizard)
Teresa Oswald (Zila: cleric, and her girlfriend Syrwen: bard)
Théa Marie Ryde (Larkyn Dryden: paladin)
Jess Whitaker (Ephemera: rogue)

New Organizations Created By Our Medusa Nobles . . .
. . . many to appear in *Bestiary 3: Icon Followers*.
MAGE (Occam's Eye)
The Unswaying Scales (Anthony Vaughn)
The Mended, *HH*: 248 (James Farrow)
The Unforgiven, *HH*: 248 (Wade Rockett)
The Repairers of Reputation, *HH*: 255 (Alex Paciga)
Pale Knights of the Ebon Blade (Trey McLemore)
The Old Blood (James Grieve)
The Double-Edged Axe (Jiri "Almi" Kucera)
Priestess' Most-Loving Grace (Théa Marie Ryde)
Shadowhood Sails of the Bitterwood Coast (Spraypaint & Vellsword)

Iconic Retinues
The Golden Order (Yann Abaziou)
Forge Defenders (Teren Cadash)
Lich King's Processional (Sean Clayton)
Ogre King's Marauders (Exocist)
The Hammers of Anvil (Joseph Flanik)
The Hidden Blades (Thomas Freed)
The Queen's Eyes (Smaug, Thorin, and Ivar Hyland)
Overworld Cabal (Occam's Eye)
Knights of the Necropolis (Tim Raspin)
Cathedral's Rays (Théa Marie Ryde)
The Long Shadows (Merrick Schincariol)

The Playtesters Who Made the Game Better!

Adrian, Adrian Young, Alan Hillgrove, Albin (with Rille, Bazo, Selander, och Blixt), Aleksi Nikula, Aleksi Niskavaara, Alex Grisafi, Alex Henslee, Alex Keane, Brad Wilke, Tyler Jackson, Alex Tortosa, Alex Young, Alexander Hobsbawn, Alexander W Corrin, Alexi Tsakis, Andre Luis, Andrew Jerome, Annie Davies, Antti Vepsä, Arcangel Noche, Ashley Munday, Austin Williams, Beltar, Ben Feehan, Ben Straub, Blake Caparoon, Brian Gerdwagen, Brian S. Stephan, Brittany Luyet, Brodie Lister, Bruno Mares, Bryant, Casey Finley, Casual Justice (Erick Allen, Rebecca Chappell, David Gibson, Douglas Heitzenrater, Edwin Mullin, & Michael Mullin), Cesar Tardim, Christian Broomfield, Christopher "cPip" Pipinou, Clark K. Olson-Smith, Dalton Butler, Daniel Ries, Danny Wall, Dario Barrasa, David Moore, Denis F., Dirk Action, Dominic Gaboury, Maitho Gaboury, Victor Savignac, Douglas, Dragons' Lair community (Alessandro “Ian Morgenvelt" Sayed, MasterX and Silver Element)", Earth Seraph Edna, Elay Kornecki, Elias Campbell, Ellie Harris, Emanuele Deserti, Emily Mierendorf, Eric Begnaud, Eric Van der Wee, Escalation Fanzine playtesters (Tim Baker, Patricia Baker, Dan Mengelkamp, Tara Mengelkamp, Kylee Pullin, Rhiannon Pullin, Durkon, Martin Lund, Caleb Shoemaker), Evan Berg, Evan Franke, Evan Lockary, Ezekiel Michle de Guia, Falconloft, Federico Pederzolli (with Kewin Rausch, Cristian "the little hylian", Michele Morandini, Paolo Pederzolli), Fight Orgy (JP Seabury [GM)], Paul Overy, D Leach, P Moore, K Wester), Flonne, Fredrik Wallenberg, Fynikz , Gabriel Chilante, GearsAndKeys, Gianluca Roncati, Gothar, Graham Gass-Mejia, Greg Scarborough, Haley Butler, Hans Schnekloth, Heather Ellis, Ian Dorsey, Iker, Ivan “Bear” Meyerovich, J. M., Jason Sunday, Jean Antoine Maro, Jeb Boyt, Jenny Cadmus, Jeremy Morris, Tyler Heichel, Connor Morris, Jess Whitaker, Jillian Wyckoff, Jim Bruls, Jim Powers, J-M DeFoggi, Joe Fulgham, Joel Agee, John Edwards (with Daniel Lapres, Donovan Mitchell, Ethan Herbertson, James Morgan, Robert Dempsey), John Murphy, John Walker, Jonathan Charlton, Jonathan Roberts, Joshua Randall, Julius Mikužis, Justin Woods, Kal-el of Kansas, Kayla Dorsey, Kelly Geller, Ken Burruss, Kit’s Gang, Konrad, Krisanta de Guzman, Kyle Anderson, Kyle Harder, Lawrence Augustine R. Mingoa, Lido RPG Club, Lily Fox, Lisa Wise, Loz Hensel, Luigi G., Mannheim Group, Marc, Marcelo Parabocz, Marcloure, Mark Jessup, Mark Lawrence, Mark Pileggi, Martin Killmann, Matt Miller of Flagstaff AZ, Matt Smith, Matthew Aaron, Max Hilbrunner, Michael, Michael A. Guerra, Michael Keon, Michael Maneval, Michael O. Holland, Michael Stromm, Michael Todd, Michael ‘Zini’ Zein, Michele Serafini, Mike Tandy, Mikko Kujala, Molly Osmus, The Munskatonic Librarians (Shawn Amundson, Mark Ford, Jason Lund, Paul Munson, Russell Snee, Chad Sommerfeldt, and Scott Lien), Nicolas Drapala, Nob, One Hit Point Wonders (Michael O. Holland, Stephen O. Holland, Dennis K. Crouse II, Terrin "That's Too Many Goblins" Lerch, Aydan W. A. Baldwin, Ethan C. George, Daxton S. Newberry, Jess C. Buchalter, Bill Buchalter, Stephen Noa), Os Onzeficadores (Gabriel, Arthur, Dagostin,Jordan, Marcel and Melina), Patryk Adamski aka Ruemere, Paul Hughes, Paul Jenchowski, The Plattsbuddies (John, Kris, Cory, Mike, Jake, and Chris), Randy Miller, Ray Brockman, Rebecca Lauffenburger, Richard E, Richard Fannon, Robert Layton, Rob Lightner, RolEcuador, Ruven Wolff, Sean D, Sean Dawson, Sean Dunstan, Sebastian Zoellner, the Shadows over Gaia playtesters (Rena, Cal, Jeff, Reddie, Kira, and Sid), Simon Rogers, Stephen ’TrueWOPR’ Hewston, Steve Chapman, Steven Haywood, Tanja Kuusniemi, Terry Guldimann, The Intrepid Outcasts, Tim Watters, Timothy Raspin, Tony Link, Totally Awesome Roleplay Terrace (Wordse, tula rose, MEATSHED, Zarah, Karneios, KingFats95, Action Shakespeare, Fiona The Gay Tiefling. Tornado), Trick Weekes, Tristan Fishel, Tristan Zimmerman, Tuomas Kuusniemi, Ula, Ulisee Sansò, Vincent Dang, Wagner Lague, We Hate Klorg!, Wes H, Will Plant (with Simon Plant and Neil de Carteret), Yes, Zachary Joyner, Zane Williams

The Backers Who Made the Game Possible!

1954796132, "Filkertom" Tom Smith, 1¢, 3 Dogs Gaming, 8bitninja, A, A G, A.J.Gibson, aareth, Aaron, Aaron, Aaron, Aaron Achartz, Aaron Delisio, Aaron Donogh, Aaron Dykstra, Aaron Feagans, Aaron Freed, Aaron Hurtsellers, Aaron M Berndt, Aaron McConnell, Aaron Morder, Aaron Rennex, Aaron Roudabush, Aaron Smith, Aaron Widrick, Aaron Young, A Backer and Long Time Fan, Abby Henríquez Tejera, Abby McNaron, Abhishek Ray, abrahambarber, adam, adam, , Adam, Adam Ackerman, Adam Ashworth, Adam Atack, Adam Bloom, Adam Boisvert, Adam Boucher, Adam Caverly, Adam Crompton, Adam Crossingham, Adam Dagna, Adam Davis, Adam Dray, Adam Everman, Adam Fischer, Adam Jeter, Adam Johnson, Adam Jung, Adam Karabalic, Adam Klein, Adam Kuhr, Adam Longley, Adam Lyzniak, Adam Martin, Adam Mealing, Adam Muth, Adam Nolan, Adam Norwick, Adam Rajski, Adam Rawlings, Adam Roeger, Adam Smith, Adam Ude, Adrian Breau, Adrian Carpio, Adrian Hermann, Adrian Smith, Adrian Young, Adrien Rault, Aegnor, AeonianAnakim, aesmael, Aidan Low, Aidan Von Walsh, Aidan Walsh Chan, Aiden, Ailucia, AJ Hunter, Ajay Sandhu, Akara Vera, Akira, AL Lajeunesse, Al Wyvern, Alain Sarti, Alan, Alan C Elliott, Alan Heller, Alan Kohn, Alan Tool, Alasdair Watson, Albastine, Albert, Albert Nakano, Albin Nilsson, AlchemicFox, Alec James Radecki, Alejandro Cortes, Aleksandr Danilov, Aleksi Nikula, Alex, Alex B., Alex Baldwin, Alex Burke, Alex Fradera, Alex Gagnon, alex gaynor, Alex Greenshields, Alex Hurst, Alex Keane, Alex L., Alex Major, Alex Maneval, Alex Marchant, Alex Milgrom, Alex Morgan, Alex Mullenix, Alex Neilson, Alex Paciga, Alex Rinehart, Alex Siu, Alex Wolf, Alexa Draconis, Alexander, Alexander Darby Moorhouse, Alexander Hollis, Alexander L Stone, Alexander Ren Eldritch, Alexander Tigwell, Alexander Wulf Vilina, Alexandre do Valle Ferreira, Alexandre L. Lescarbeau, Alexis Black, Alexis Bouteille, Alicja, Allen, Allison Bloome, Allison Knight, Alloyed, AlmiusCZ, Alok Baikadi, Alphastream, Alycia Leroux, Ami Kievit, Amit Netanel, Amy Loriley, AmyStall, Ana, anderland, Anders Fogelberg, Anders Håkon Gaut, Anders Månsson, André Brandhorst, Andre Gangel-Ganesch, André Luis Soares, Andre Tcherepnin, Andrea Fabbri, Andrea Stadtfeld, Andreas Berger, Andreas Starrsjö, Andreas Zuercher, Andres Santiago Perez-Bergquist, Andres Zanzani, Andrew, Andrew, Andrew, Andrew, Andrew, Andrew Asplund, Andrew Betts, Andrew Blandford, Andrew Burnford, Andrew Chenery, Andrew Chizhik, Andrew Clark, Andrew Collins, Andrew Cowie, Andrew Crawford, Andrew Denton, Andrew Fish, Andrew Fox, Andrew Franke, Andrew Garinger, Andrew Hall, Andrew Hunter, Andrew Jenkins, Andrew Jenson, Andrew Kirk, Andrew Knapik, Andrew Loughlin, Andrew Luczak, Andre Manalo-Hebert, Andrew McLaren, Andrew Middleton, Andrew Mills, Andrew Moreton, Andrew Niebres, Andrew Oatway, Andrew P., Andrew Phippen, Andrew Read, Andrew Reichert, Andrew Sawin, Andrew Swyers, Andrew Wing, AndrewTBP, Andrii Gusarov, Andru Matthews, Andy Dulson, Andy Gibson, Andy Hirth, Andy Kitkowski, Andy Kwong, Andy McMillan, Andy Mello, Andy Price, Andy Raff, Andy Rau, Angel Baker, Angelo, Ann Van den Broeck, Annakie, Annika, Anonymous, Anonymous, Anthony, Anthony Bertini, Anthony Foderaro, Anthony James Hartley, Anthony Lewis, Anthony Link, Anthony Lorelli, Anthony Tarola, Anthony Thomson, Anthony Valentine, Anthony Vaughn, Anthony Wu, Antoine Laroche, Antonio Soriano, Antti Vepsä, Anubhav Balakrishnan, Apaphous, Are Sørli, argent_eden, Argentus, Ari Suntioinen, ARIAKAS, Aritz Cirbián, ArJayDee, ArmorForSheep, Arne Pettersen, Arne Sahlberg, Arrow, Arseni Kritchever, Artem Mateush, Arthur Decaneas, Arthur Dougherty, Arthur Lender, Arthur Russakoff, Artur Biesiadowski, Artur Cieniuch, Ash Knight, Ashley Dawson, Ashley Singh, Ashton, Ashton West, Ashtrail, Ashwath Ganesan, AsmodeusDM, Assertive, Astatine, Astrid, Asverd, AT, Athena Brown, AtsurVF, aufrank, August Baker, august clark, Aulywood, Aurélien Hublier, Aurélien Thion, Aurelien Vincenti, Aurora B, Austen, Austin Hofeman, Austin Hoffman, Austin Hunter Jorgensen, AwesomeRash, awkwardparakeet, Awogg Woggz, AWRyder, Ayush Singh, Azarias, Azhrei Vep, Azrael Woehlert Kertesz, Azrael188, B Ruano, B. Keith Barron, B. W. Martin, Bad Goblin Games, Baddy Wrong Legs, Baden White, Baraqijal, Barbara Webb, Barbora Dušková, Barrett, Barrett, Barrett Stanko, Barrister, Barron Chugg, Barthel Jackson, Basil Shepherd, Bayushi Fukishu, Bazyli40, Bea DnD, Beachfox, Becky Burrows, Beerey, behippo, Bel, Belonie, Ben, Ben, Ben, Ben, Ben A Hammer, Ben Brighoff, Ben Cardwell, Ben Duckworth, Ben Erickson, Ben Haase, Ben Kirkwood, Ben McKenzie, Ben Momentum, ben naylor, Ben Roby, Ben Ronaldson, Ben Shields, Ben Stewart, Ben Straub, Ben Taels, Ben Torell, Ben VA, Ben Webster, Benjamin Danforth, Benjamin Falkner, Benjamin Garber, Benjamin Loy, Benjamin R., Benjamin Rawls, Benjamin Sala, Benji K, Benzie Dio, Beth Signor, Bette Grandjean, Beyond the Ledge Press, BeZurKur, Bhargava Urala, Bill Bridges, Bill Buchalter, Bill Frye, Bill Henderson, Bill V, Billy, Billy Coghill, Bizio, Björn Lück, Blake, Blake Campbell, Blake Webb, Blue, BlueBardsCastle, BluegrassGeek, Bo Thomsen, Bob Drucker, Bob Hagala, Bob Mosdal, Bob Richardson, Bobby Carpenter, Bogdan, Bogdan, Bonhomiegames.uk, Bonneri, Borja Bermejo (Bormer), Bos taurus Diceworks, Boyd Stephenson, bpoole110, Brad Durham, Brad Russell, Bradford Olivo, Bradlee Castillo, Bradley Brandt, Bradley Cobb, Bradley Smith, Brady Williams, Brahm, brandenlee, Brandes Stoddard, Brandon Goodling, Brandon John, Brandon McCormick, Brandon Schmidt, BrBr, Breanne Long, Bren Rowe, Brendan M, Brendan Webberly, Brennan O'Brien, Brent Killackey, Brenton Bade, Brett Abbott, Brett B, Brett Martin, Brett Pyke, Brett Volz, Brian, Brian, Brian B. Carter, Brian Bentley, Brian Bremer, Brian Bush, Brian Chafin, Brian Creswick, Brian David Hungerford, Brian Essex, Brian Gerdwagen, Brian Gurd, Brian Hess, Brian J. Geiger, Brian Kurtz, Brian Long, Brian Manula, Brian Marrs, Brian McDonald, Brian Peace, Brian Roberson, Brian Robson, Brian Rogers, Brian S. Stephan, Brian Smithson, Brian Sniffen, Brian Southworth, Brian Thomas Habing, Brian Urbanek, Brian503, Brianna Barnard, Brittany Luyet, Brodie Lister, Brock Auston, Brook Freeman, Brooks G Banks, Brooks Moses, Bruce James Gardner, Bruce Leeroy, Bruce Moser, Bruce Turner, Bryan Bartnik, Bryan Brake, Bryan Burns, Bryan Cramer, Bryan Murphy, Bryan Reason, Bryant Durrell, Bryant T. Biek, Bryce Duzan, Bryce Ellsworth, Bryce T, BSS, BT, Buck Gardner, Buttonsnupnup, Byron, Byron Crouch, Byron McMullen, BZ, C.J. Stott, cabral, Cackleberry Games, Caitlin C, Caitlin Sager, Cal Moore, Caleb, Caleb Alexander, Caleb Compston, Caleb Rogers, Calegrenan, Calvin Bridges-Avalos, Cam Banks, Cameron, Cameron D Johnson, Cameron Eeles, Cameron J Thrower, Cameron Jacobs, Cameron Kahrs, Cameron Orwin, Cameron Paine, CamRawls, Canezar, CantStrafeRight, Canvas, CaptainNorway, Cara Nardone, Cardboard Labs, Carey Williams, Carl, Carl, Carlo Aceytuno, Carlos Alberto Almenara Acosta, Carlos Eduardo da Silva Leal, Carlos Javier Reyes, Carlos Ovalle, Carsten Damm, casey, Casey Finley, Casey Forsberg, Casey McGirt, Cassandra Bonter, Castiel, Cate, Catriona Maberry, Cayla Sander, Cgeist7, Chad, Chad Bergeron, chad brown, Chad Freeburg, Chad Kirkendall, Chad Nash, Chadwick Shinabargar, Chaosium Inc., Charles, Charles, Charles Allen, Charles Black, Charles Corrigan, Charles Cynowa, Charles Lowe, Charles Nikolic, Charles Paradis, Charles Passmore, Charles Summerhill, Charles Ulveling, CharlesComm, Charlie Schams, charlie shi, Charlotte Butcher, The Charnel God, Chase Henderson, Chaz, Chaz Kelley, Chelsea, Chiefnoah, Chip Warden, Chloe Fkf, Chris, Chris B, Chris Berg, Chris Chittleborough, Chris Cifrino, Chris Cole, Chris Collins, Chris Conte, Chris Cowger, Chris Cundiff, Chris Cunliffe, Chris D., Chris Del Gigante, Chris Dolunt, Chris F, Chris Flipse, Chris Gonnella, Chris Gunning, Chris Gwinn, Chris Henderson, Chris Huddleston, Chris Johnson, Chris LaCross, Chris Lloyd, Chris MacDougall, Chris Miller, Chris Mitchell, Chris Murray, chris olsen, Chris ORegan, Chris Pipinou, Chris Querfurth, Chris Raikakos, Chris Rampersad, Chris Reinke, Chris Sellers, Chris Shields, Chris Sims, Chris Snyder, Chris Specker, Chris Spivey, Darker Hue Studios, Chris Taylor, Chris Turner, chrissyspill, Chris the Owl, Christian, Christian, Christian Ankerl, Christian Brock, Christian Broomfield, Christian Eilers, Christian Kuck, Christian N, Christian Ramos, Christian Retterer, Christian Smucker, Christian Torstensson, Christian von Baumbach, Christine S, Christoph Beberweil, Christoph Flandorfer, Christophe de Aristizabal, Christopher, Christopher "Kier" Conroy, Christopher Boyd, Christopher Burnham, Christopher Fong, Christopher French, Christopher Gehrman, Christopher Grover,

Christopher K Coker, Christopher "Kit" LaHaise, Christopher Lin, Christopher McDonough, Christopher Marlin-Warfield, Christopher MW, Christopher Newton, Christopher "Nezzeraj" Rowe, Christopher Nicholas Nieporte, Christopher North, Christopher P Stilson, Christopher Pettway, Christopher Phillips, Christopher Querfurth, Christopher R. Nelson, Christopher Reeves, Christopher Robichaud, Christopher Scott, Christopher Shea, Christopher Sniezek, Christopher Tatro, Christopher Williams, Christopher Yates, Christy, Chronx6, Chrys Sellers, Chuck Dee, Chuck Frizzell, ChuckleDuck, Ciarán Buteux, Cindy Robertson, CinnamonCoffee87, Cistern, CJ Saguini, CJ Stanton, Claire Seeger, Clark Olson-Smith, Clay Hanson, Clayton Burdette, Clayton Rennie, Cliff Hilliard, Clint Smith, Clinton Boudreaux, cmart, coal the coward, Coby, Codey, Cody Strike, Colin L McCulloch, Colin Matter, Colin Simmonds, Colin Snyder, Colin Wallace, ColinR, Collin White, Colton Morton, Conard Carroll, Conrad Rader, Constantine Markides, coppet, Corbin Heist, Corey, Corey, Corey Boudreault, Corey Liss, Cori Thompson, Corin L, Cornell Daly, Corwyn, Cory, Cory Birdsong, Cory Hirano, Courtney Cullen, Craig, Craig Bishell, Craig Dunn, Craig Higdon, Craig Majors, Craig Neumeier, Craig Rasmussen, Craig "Stevo" Stephenson, Creed, CreepyShutIn, Cristin Chall, CrookedOhmu, Curt Doernberg, Curtis Fortier, Curtis Hay, Curtis Spriesterbach, Curtis Tom, Daanyaal du Toit, Damian Schumm, Damien Brunetto, Damian Young, Damon Vanhee, Dan, Dan, Dan Chavis, Dan Conley, Dan Culliton, Dan Derby, Dan Giroday, Dan Kovel, Dan Layman-Kennedy, dan mccluskey, Dan & Tara Mengelkamp, Dan Moran, Dan Neeley, Dan Rogart, dan sinclair, Dan Weber, Dan Weiss, Dan Zelitch, Daniel, Daniel, Daniel, Daniel, Daniel Andersen, Daniel D. Mani, Daniel Deveney, Daniel Edmonds, Daniel Fiala, Daniel Fidelman, Daniel Hansen, Daniel Hoffmann, Daniel Hooyboer, Daniel Lapres, Daniel Ley, Daniel MacDougall, Daniel Mark Shelden, Daniel Nexon, Daniel O'Hanlon, Daniel P Owens, Daniel Peterson, Daniel Sample, Daniel Seppala, Daniel Shupe, Daniel Simpson, Daniel Stokes, Daniel Wanegar, Daniel Wismer, Danny Atwood, Danny Mendoza, Darcy Newling, Daric Morris, Dark Lord Potato, Darren Anderson, Darren Hennessey, Darren Hsiung, Darren Hubbard, Darren Kessell, Darren Velez, darreninthenet, Daryl Putman, Dave, Dave Aldridge, Dave Cake, Dave Chalker, Dave Dodson, Dave Fallon, Dave Fetterman, Dave G, Dave Harrison, Dave Smith, Dave van Bale, Dave Weinstein, DaveTonucci, Davi, David, David, David, David Abraham Dueck, David Ballard, David Bloom, David Bore, David Bowie, David Bresson, David Bretton, David Buswell-Wible, david canela, David Clarfield, David Cummings, David Dobelman, David Donohoo, David Duerschlag, David Ellis, David Finke, David Garrison, David Gosselin, David Hartlage, David Haskins, David Hopf, David Hubbard, David Jamnik, David John Ellis, David Kaehler, David Kirkpatrick, David Klemish, David Lai, david last, David Mager, David Malmström, David Marble, David Marshall, David Millar, David Montgomery, David Mowry, David Nadj, david nissen, David Novak, David "Ogi" Ogan, David Paul, David Paul, David Quick, David Rivas Ascaso, David Rubin, David Scott, David Sealy, David Shank, David Siegel, David Sommerfeld, David Springer, David Stengle, David Stephenson, David Stoll, David Tonucci, David Tripp, David wells, David Wood, David Woodlock, David Zimmerman, davidmoore, Dawid Wojcieszynski, Dawson, Dax Thomas, Daxton, DCaspall, Dead Fish Books, deadairis, DeadlyReed, Deanna Gilbert, Deathmetalbard, Deborah, Delos Adamski, Dengarm, Denis Bökenkröger, Denis Gaty, Denise Atwood, Dennis Guillette, Dennis MacAvaney, Dennis Park, Density Media, Der_Morten, Derek Guder, Derek Hacault, Derek Petrey, Derek Schmidt, Derek William Branim, Desmeos, Despar "The Rat King", Devin, Devin Croak, DevoDog, Devon Finninger, DexX, dhuddleston, Didas_94, Diego Pereira, DigitalySane, Dillon Russell, DinkyToyz, Dinosawer, Discgolfer1981, DivNull Productions, dlshocker, DM Sterling, DoctorCool, Dom Faulkner, Dom Hero Ellis, Dominic, Dominic Gaboury, Dominic Lopez, Dominic Stangl, Dominik Janson, Don Arnold, Donald Bishop, Donald Purvis, Donald S. Crankshaw, Donovan Hurter, Donovan Jeska, Donovan Ranney, Dorian Sipetan, Dorian Wright, Doublehex, Doug, Doug Nordwall, Doug Schnur, Doug Tabb, doug woller, Douglas G A Murray, Douglas MacIntyre, Douglas Meserve, Douglas Molineu, Douglas Vandenburgh, Dov Richman, Dr Moose, Dragodoth, Dreamstreamer, Drew Christopher, Drew Grgich, Drew McAuliffe, Drew morgan, Drew Rosenheim, Drew Taylor, Drew Wendorf, drompot23, Drone, drrockso20, dtmahanen, Duncan Clyborne, Dusan, Dustin Dunaway, Dustin Turner, Dustyn Mincey, Dwayne Jeng, Dylan Baker, Dylan Grozdanich, Dylan McHugh, Dylan Sinnott, DZgamer, Echelon Game Design, Ed, Ed Bryan, Ed Johnson, Ed Matuskey, Edcrab, Edd Glasper, Eddie C., Eddy Abinette, Edgar Francis IV, Eduardo Gonçalves, Eduardo Rios, Edward, Edward Chan, Edward Chiasson, Edward Da Fonseca, Edward Ingold, Edward Kabara, Edward S. Bjes, Edwin R. Karat, Elizabeth Murray, Edwin Robertson, EffX, El Ben, El Fideo, Elaewin, Elhannan, eli, Elijah Blackwell, Elijah Chamberlin, Elijah Rainey Edwards, Elika Aumônier, Eliza, Elizabeth Campbell, Ella Watts, Ellie, Ellie, Ellie Vidal, Elliot Smith, Elmer Tucker, elockary, Elopetersen, ElyEzer Lima da Costa, Élysée Syrova, Emalkartha, emacgregor, Emanuele Deserti, Emanuele Lillo, Embrace Becoming, Emerson Call, Emiliano Marchetti, Emma Crooks, Emma Marlow, Emma McClain, Emmybuns, Enrico Magnani, Enrique Esparza, Eoin Murray, Eric, Eric, Eric, Eric, Eric, Eric Aldrich, Eric Alexander, Eric Begnaud, Eric Chase, Eric Christensen, Eric Coates, Eric Driks, Eric Edwards, Eric Edwards, Eric Fell, Eric Gaspar, Eric Hanson, Eric Heupel, Eric Kreag, Eric Looc, Eric MacCallum, Eric Mains, Eric Manley, Eric Metcalf, PhD, Eric Parker, Eric Pecile, Eric Pickney, Eric Pullen, Eric S. Cummings, Eric Shuman, Eric Strimple, Eric Swiersz, Eric Taylor, Eric Troup, Eric Van der Wee, Eric Vesbit, Eric Williamson, Erica Claybaugh, Erik, Erik Berman, Erïk Hanson, Erik Larson, Erik Ogan, Erik Scholefield, Erik Soong, Erik Warming, ErikPeter H Walker, Erin Brioche, Ervin Hearn III, Es, ESarr, Est Cal, Ethan Berry, Ethan Krebs, Ethan Larkin, Ethan Skemp, Ethan Zimmerman, Eugene P, Evan, Evan A Bright, Evan Beitz, Evan Franke, Evan Kelly, Evan Lockary, Everett, Evil Midnight Lurker, evilprofessorzog, Ewald Große-Wilde, Exany, Exocist, Fabian Chung, Fabio Bertone, Fabio P S Santos, Fabrice Merlin, fahbflkas, Falkus, Faxfire683, Fearmy Games, Federica Ugliano, Federico Casé, Federico Pederzolli, Federico Salazar, Federico Valeri, Felipe Bovolon, Felix Isaacs, Felix Morscheck, FelTK, Ferdinando, Ferdinando Faure, Fery Tomi, Fett, ffanxii4ever, FGJustice, FigmentImage, Filleh, Filthy Monkey, Flazzy, Flo, Florent Poulpy Cadio, Florian Schneider, Florian Schnetker, FluffySquirrel, FlyingCodeMonkey, flyinglama, Fnorder, Forrest Faulk, foundcause, Francesco Catenacci, Francis Arachea, Francis Corsbie, Francis Fernandez, François Jauvin, Frank "Mottokrosh" Reding, Frank Blazkiewicz, Frank Carr, Frank Dickerson, Frank Manna, Frank Serio, Frank W King, Frankie, Franko F, Franz Janson, Fraser, Fred Lloyd, Fred Paepke, Francesco Plebani, Fred Schwerdt, Fredrik Wallenberg, FreyAlfheim, Fritz Baugh, Frostbite07, furstenberger, Fuselage, Fynikz, Gabe Campbell, Gabe Obermayer, Gabriel, Gabriel, Gabriel Antwiler, Gabriel Dagostin, Gabriel Helman, Gabriel Quinn Martin, Gabriel Schive, Gabrielle Salerni, Game Dave, GameLikeGaston, Games and Stuff, Games Plus, Gareth Anderson, Gareth Kensak, Gareth Morgan, Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan, Gareth Williams, Garg, Garm, Garou, Garrett Henke, Gary Achenbach, Gary Anastasio, Gary D Karr, Gary J. Anderson, Gaute Juveth, Gavin, Gavin Dow, Gavin Hayes, Gavin L G Steele, Gavin Moore, Geert-Jan Kruijff, Gen Giggles, Genevieve Andreas, Geo Kersey, Geoff Kloess, Geoffrey, Geoffrey Sears, Geoffrey Sperl, George Kordonis, George M, George Phillips, George Pitre, George Webster, Georgia Denson, Gerald Rose, Gerard Cagayat, GertjanF, Geza Letso, GG, GhostWolf69, Gihan Bandaranaike, Gil, Gilbert Ho, Ginger Stampley, Gintaras Valiulis, GK Coleman, Gkiouzepas Spyridon, Glen Taylor, glitch, Goblin Monk (Scott), Goblinoir, Goci Nicole, Gold Zephzellian, Gordon Dietz, Gordon Kagan, Gordon Pfeil, Gordon Wiley, GornSpelljammer, Graf, Graham Gass-Mejia, Graham Poole, Graham Ruston, Graham Thorpe, Graham Wilkes, Graham Wills, Grant, Grant Anderson, Grant Lowe, Grant Morgan, Greg, Greg, Greg Atkinson, Greg Filpus, Greg Katopody, Greg Krywusha, Greg Marks, Greg Walters, Gregor Verhoeven, Gregory Adams, Gregory Kelton, Greig Hannis, GreySquirrel, Griffin D. Morgan, Grogian, Grubnash, Grumpy Bear Stuff, Grumpy Moonkin, Grzegorz Konojacki, Guilherme Martinez, Guillaume Pulyk, Guillaume Tirefort, Guolfo, Gustavo La Fontaine, guy hancock, Guy Milner, Guy P. Runkle, Guy Reece, gwathdring, Gwen Williams, Gwendolyn Granum, Gyzmotnik, Hack Cubit, hagakure, Håkon Mølstre, Haldis, Haley Staudmyer, Halion, Hamish Thomson, Hamscher, Han Bi, HANATAKA Shinya, Hank Metzger, Hannah McKay, Hope Penelope Gross, Hannah Poulton, Hannah Wiltbank, Hans Schnekloth, Hans-Henning Vogt,

Harlander, Harpal Khalsa, harri havis, Harrison Liu, Harry Mace, Harrycoins, Heath Newton, Heather, Heather, Heather Seybold, Heebiejeebie, Henning Kasper, Henrik Bons, Henrique Jucá, Henry, Henry McKeen, heptat, Herb Nowell, herb seifert, heretic888, Holbob, Holger, Hollow Mask, Holt Kernodle, HunterJE, Huston Burke, Huston Todd, Hyperlexic, I. J. Betty, Iain Haukka, Iain Rhodes, Iamslangford, Ian Bailey-Leung, Ian Barnes, Ian Dawes, Ian Freeman, Ian Skinnari, Ian Macpherson, Ian mathieson, Ian Oakley, Ian Somerville, Ian Sturrock, Ian Thake, Ian Urbina, Ian V., Ian Woodley, ICOTom, Ida Suominen, Ido Merchav, Ig0774, Igor Coura de Mendonça, Igor Fragiacomo, Ilgner Alves, Ilkham Zulkorneev, ilnira, Imikari, inAbag, incandescens, infernalExDraco, Ingo Lenzen, Inigo, Intergalactic, Isaac Betty, Isaac Carr, Isaac Gifford, Isaac Lee, Isaac Rolfe, Isael Barroso Alvarez, ishtarre, iskinnari, Isuru Rangana Sirisinghe, Itai Reinhardt, Itakal, Itamar Gruber, Itay "The Horev Effect" Horev, ItoSora, ItsMeLiberty, Ivey H, Ivo Goudzwaard, J, J Folo, J W, J. Michael Bestul, J. R. Scherer, Ja, Jack, Jack Charlton, Jack Gulick, Jack Kelly, Jack Kuszel, Jack Preston, Jack Raymond, Jackson Gaydon, Jackson Heenan, Jacky Zawyrucha, Jacob, Jacob, Jacob Haines, Jacob Henry, Jacob Herlitz, Jacob Hielscher, Jacob M, Jacob Navarro, Jacob Rohde, Jacob Wachtman, Jacqueline Zawyrucha, JADXQ, Jae, Jae Lerer, Jaime Rivera, Jake de Oude, Jake Ellis, Jake Parker, Jake Raschke, Jake Walker, Jakob Collins, James, James Alan Gardner, James Alley, James Almblade, James Arthur Harrison, James Bass, James Beard, James Bell, James C Washington, James Carlson, James Dyer, James Farrow, James Farwell, James Feore, James Jefferson, James Kiley, James Lauber, James Meredith, James Miles, James Monaghan, James Nelson, James Palmer, James RePass, James Robertson, James Schultz, James Smith, James Taylor, James Turner, James V Nutley, James White, James White, James Worley, JamesB0ndage, Jamie Crawford, Jamie Scotland, Jamie Wheeler, JamieXIII, Jan Zaleski, jani, Jan-Luca Wellers, Jarac Rassen, Jared, Jared Bond, Jared Levine, Jared Lightle, jarek, Jarrod Lawson, Jarvis, Jason, Jason, Jason Anderson, Jason Baker, Jason Bean, Jason Beighel, Jason Best, Jason Booth, Jason Campbell, Jason Cliff, Jason Crossett, Jason D, Jason Dincauze, Jason Duff, Jason E Andersen, Jason Fisher, Jason Grant, Jason Hippe, Jason Lees, Jason M, Jason Martin, Jason Miller, Jason N Dennis, Jason Petry, Jason Redford Drifter-Trenner, Jason Schinji, Jason Schneiderman, Jason Smith, Jason Stierle, Jason Sunday, Jason Vanhee, Jason Ward, Jason Whittle, Jason Wilson, Jason Wright, Jason Yacalis, Jason Zowin, Javier Morales, Javier.S, Jay Bedell, Jay Godden, Jay Grember, Jay Kemberling, Jay M Williams, Jay Minton, Jay Moore, Jazzahn, jbowtie, JD, Jean GAMBA, Jean Mennella, Jean-Philippe Guérard, jeandarme, Jeb Boyt, Jebadiah Utecht, Jed Lackritz, JedidiahKick, Jędrzej, Jeevan Chahal, Jefepato, Jeff Alvidrez, Jeff Berry, jeff croff, Jeff Cunningham, Jeff Fontenot, Jeff Foresee, Jeff Fournier, Jeff Hershberger, Jeff McElroy, Jeff Mueller aka The Mighty Jerd, Jeff O'Neal, Jeff R, Jeff Workman, Jefferson Dunlap, Jeffery Chin, Jeffrey, Jeffrey Backer, Jeffrey Binder, Jeffrey Kramer, Jeffrey Maynard, Jeffrey Morgan, Jeffrey Osthoff, Jeffrey Rowen, Jeffrey S. Ross, Jeffrey W. Kahrs, Jeffrey Zepeda, Jem Kilty, Jemma Roberts, Jennifer, Jennifer Coffin, Jens, Jer, Jer Leedy, Jeramie Cooper, Jeremiah McCarroll, Jeremy, Jeremy Aurik, Jeremy Barkley, Jeremy Duehring, Jeremy Ennen, Jeremy Handler, Jeremy Kear, Jeremy Secaur, Jeremy W. Sherman, Jeremy Warren, Jeroen Rombouts, Jeromey Walls, Jeromy French, Jerry Autieri, Jerry Rahll, Jess Whitaker, Jesse, Jesse Butz, Jesse Gile, Jesse Grimes, Jesse Moore, Jessy Maldonado, Jesus Omar Luzon, Jesus Ramos, Jett, Jevon Heath, Jez, JF Paradis, JH, Jigawik, Jim, Jim Becker, Jim Dagg, Jim Harris, Jim Roberts, Jim Ryan, Jim Sensenbrenner, Jimmy K, jinchan, Jin-Woo Shin, JJ, JLtheking, Joachim Jungner, JoAnne Spencer, Jodi and Clint Black, Jodie, Joe, Joe Geary, Joe Jones, Joe Martino, Joe McCleskey, Joe Rooney, Joe Theaker, Joe Zabrowski, Joel, Joel Agee, Joel Badeaux, Joel MacRitchie, Joel Marshall, Joel Siragher, Joey Neuendorff, Joey Trapp, Johann Cappaert, Johannes Petersen, Johdi Ananmalay, John, John Abbott, John A. Dover, John Anderson, John Beard, John Bogart, John Card II, John Clayton, John Cmar, John Cornwell, John Daly, John Dawson, John Dees, John Dornberger, John Doull, john e graham, John Edwards, John F. Watson, john ferrick, John Fisher, John Geyer, John H. Bookwalter Jr., John Haines, John Haines, John Hume, John Joyce, John K., John Kehoe, John Kingdon, John Kinney, John M Campbell, John Maloney, John McKay, John Moldt, John Murphy, John Novak, John Nunn, John O'Connell, John P, John Rinck, John Sawyer, John Tanzer, John TK Veltman, John Walker, John Warren, John Wright, John WS Marvin (Dread Unicorn Games), John Zhang, Johnathon Goodenow, John-Michael Warkentin, Jon, Jon, Jon Finn, Jon Snodgrass, Jon Terry, Jonah Fishel, Jonas, Jonas Karlsson, Jonas Poffyn, Jonas Schiött, Jonathan, Jonathan, Jonathan Adams, Jonathan Agens, Jonathan Charlton, Jonathan Delahaye, Jonathan Dove, Jonathan Galarneau, Jonathan Hill, Jonathan James, Jonathan Korman, Jonathan Ly Davis, Jonathan Martin, Jonathan Martin, Jonathan Michael Andrews, Jonathan Reece, Jonathan Roberts, Jonathan Sari, Jonathan Seamons, Johnathan Stimson, Jonathan St. James, Jonathan Stromberg, Jonathan Taylor, Jonathan Turpin, Jonathan Wight, Jonathan Wilder, Jonathas, Joonas Katko, Jordan E., Jordan Milton, Jordan Springer, Jordan Williams, Jordan Young, José Luis Porfírio, Josema Romeo, Joseph Barder, Joseph Bendickson, Joseph Bradlyn, Joseph Flanik, Joseph Hearn, Joseph Kozik, Joseph Noll, Joseph O'Neil, Joseph Parsley, Joseph Strunk, Joseph Tyne, josh, Josh Becker, Josh Brown-Clay, Josh Brubaker-Salcedo, Josh David, Josh Drobina, Josh F., Josh Graham, Josh Kale, Josh Lease, Josh Moeller, Josh Rasey, Josh Rensch, Josh Street, Joshua, Joshua A Robinson, Joshua David Bailey, Joshua Feingold, Josh Flora, Joshua Hankin, Joshua Hudner, Joshua Randall, Joshua Reubens, Joshua Rodgers, Joshua Rogers, Joshua Rose, Joshua Thornton, Josue Santillan, JP Seabury, jparcoll, JS Wisniewski, JShark13, Juan Milano, juan muerza, Jude Purrington, Juho Fröjd, Jukka Särkijärvi, Julia Janiszewski, Julian, Julian Kay, Julian Pitten, Julien, Julien Cordry, Julien le Beau-Martin, Julien Zakaib, Juliet Anderson, Junhong Moon, Jussi Hannunen, Justen Hunter, Justice R, Justin, Justin Baker, Justin Burnside, Justin Gordon, Justin Lomelino, Justin M. Flint, Justin Nelson, Justin Scott, Justin Townsend, Justin Vander Schaaf, Justin Ziegler, Justo Diaz, Justus Stewart, Jyri Soppela, K Arroyo, Kaiyi Huang, Kal Ahmed, kalonZombie, kalyptein, Kanaris, Kangbo, kaosblaze, Karen, Karl Hultman, karl smith, KarlTheGood, karim & Julia O. S., Karrius, Kassiday, Kate Kirby, Kayla Dorsey, KBKarma, KC Roberts, kdorman13, Keel Curtis, Keith, Keith Causin, Keith E. Clendenen, Keith E. Hartman, Keith Steinbock, Keith Zalinger, Kel McKay, Kelly Digges, Kelly Fisher, Kelly MacDougall, Kelson Craigs, Kelvin P, Ken Anderson, Ken Ringwald, Ken Sexe, Ken Shields, Ken Wicks, Kenneth Austin, Kenneth Day, Kenneth Hummel, Kenneth Kindsfater, Kenneth Lathan, Kenneth Ring, Kenobi, Kent Jenkins, Kent Stein, Kevan Forbes, Kevin, Kevin, Kevin C. Baird, Kevin Carboni, Kevin Dardik, Kevin Denehy, Kevin Dixon, Kevin Doherty, Kevin Flynn, Kevin Hoy, Kévin Lefèvre, Kevin Leintz, Kevin Maschler, Kevin Oliver, Kevin Smith, Kevin Sullivan, Kevin Wine, Kexder, Keyton Weissinger, Khelbiros, Kiara Plumridge, KidMystic, Kieran Clare, kikai, kim kaurin, Kimberly Trigg, Kinetic Gibbon, Kinetic-duet, King Wedgie, Kinshasa Beatboy, Kirasha Urqhart, Klas Holmertz, Klausgreen, Klor, Koltreg, KonaSilverblood, Kostadis Roussos, KOticneutralFTW, KP3228, Krisby90, Krista Bennett, Kristen MacLean, Kristian Grossman-Madsen, Krisztián Reizinger, Kun, Kurt Zdanio, kustenjaeger, KW, Kwestby, Kyle, Kyle R. Anderson, Kyle D, Kyle Drumm, Kyle Hilliard, Kyle Kinder, Kyle Kinder, Kyle MacKay, Kyle Nolla, Kyle Novich, Kylie Fournier, Kyra, Kyra van den Berg, Kyre, L. B., La_Volpa, Laidback Dungeon Master, Lambda, Lane Coursey, Larissa, larry haught, Lars Jakob Jensen, Laurie Koudstaal, Layton Hill Snover III, Lazenich, Lazislacker, Leandro Mena Ugarte, LeAnn LaFollette, Leave The Silver, Lee, Lee gilbert, Lee Stanford, Lee Stetson, Lee Van Sickle, Leeanne Krecic, Leeder, LeeW, Leishmaniose Deanovani, Leisure Games (North London), LeK00, leo, Leó Páll Hrafnsson, Leonard Anthony P. Arcilla, Leprejuan, Leslie Brown, Leudo, Leviathan2379, LevROLL, Lex van der Raadt, LGooms, Liam Astley, Liam DiNapoli, Liam Frost, Liam Galea, Liathan, Lily Steckman, Lio Leeuwerink, Lisa Gamero, Lisa Wise, Lisa Wright, Liza B, llabllama, Lloyd Moore, LMA, Lok, Lokinor, LordOryx, Lore Ravendark, Lorne Carlile, Lou Anders, Lou Bajuk, Louis Koplin, Louis R. Evans, Louis-Philippe Cliche, Louis-Philippe Desroches, Lowell Francis, Loz Hensel, Luc Charbonneau, Lucas Lomnicki, Lucas Remington, Lucas Skrdlant, Lucas Steinbeck, Lucas Yew, Lucateal, Luigi, Luis Enrique Torres, Luis Ernesto Rentería Álvarez, Luis Miguel García Suárez, Luka Stopar, Lukas Rettenbacher, Lukas Sommerauer, Luke, Luke Baumstark, Luke Edwards, Luke Platfoot, Luke Poore, Luke Zergiebel, Lumla, Lunar, Luthross, M, M., M. Alan Hillgrove, M. McClelland, M. Sean Molley, M.J. G., M29G, MacenKrace, Maikel Heetveld, Maiku08, Malc Arnold, Malthesia, mamba,

Man Yellow, Mandrake, Manuel D'Errico, Manuel Molinier, Marc Brooks, Marc Carozza, Marc Fini, Marc Gagné, Marc Kevin Hall, Marc Kobayashi, Marc Young, Marc Zbyszynski, Marceia Egler, Marcello Marceddu, Marcello De Velazquez, Marco Gonzalez, Marco Howard, Marcos, Marcos Loures, Marcus Smith, Marek Kryštof, Marie Efromson, Mario, Mario Dupont, Mario Magallanes, Marion Kruse, Mark, Mark Argent, Mark Bruce, Mark Caldarola, Mark Chen, Mark Cogan, Mark Fares, Mark Flory, Mark Francis, Mark Gants, Mark Giles, Mark Gossage, Mark Green, Mark Hollaway, Mark J Modugno, Mark Kenney, Mark Lindan, Mark Mealman, Mark Mobbs, Mark Morrison, Mark Olson, Mark Parker, Mark Pepper, Mark Platfoot, Mark Poles, Mark S, Mark Schiavo, Mark Sponholtz, MarkC, Markku, Markus Fries, Markus Plate, Markus Raab, Markus S., Marleon Cumpston, Martijn Faassen, Martin, Martin, Martin Chesnay, Martin Denmark, Martin Dennis, Martin Goodson, Martin Heim, Martin J. Manco, Martin Killmann, Martin Six, Marty Chodorek, Mary Garner, Mateo Porciúncula, Mathew Breitenbach, Mathias Belger, Mathieu Arthus-Bertrand, Mathieu LORANGE, Mathieu Miron, Matt, Matt Aylard, Matt Ballert, Matt Bates, Matt Bogen, Matt Cortez, Matt Dowd, Matt Frazita, Matt Gwinn, Matt H, Matt Haddix, Matt Hemker, Matt Laubenthal, Matt Logan, Matt Maranda, Matt Martinez, Matt Miller, Matt Smith, Matt Sullivan, Matt Trent, Matt Weber, Matteo Piovanelli, Matteo Siano, Matteo Spataro, Matthew, Matthew Aaron, Matthew B, Matthew Ceplina, Matthew Clarke, Matthew D. Gandy, Matthew Davey, Matthew Federico, Matthew Gill, Matthew Hain, Matthew Hewett, Matthew Hoyt, Matthew J Weidman, Matthew Jordan, Matthew Kinde, Matthew Knight, Matthew Krykew, Matthew Locke, Matthew Luellen, Matthew R. Martinez, Matthew Martino, Matthew McHale, Matthew Moorman, Matthew O'Neill, Matthew Panesis, Matt Pascal, Matthew Pennington, Matthew Petruzzelli, Matthew Planton, Matthew Rosen, Matthew Russo, Matthew Samuel, Matthew Smith, Matthew Sutherland, Matthew Varley, Matthew Winslade, Matthew Zubritsky, Matthias Schaffrath, Matthieu Dayon, Mattias Lygard, Matty Pearson, Max Cartwright, Max Dickeson, Max Kaehn, Maxim, maxime, Maximilian Geiger, Maximilian Schmuecker, Maxwell Fraser, Maxwell S Hallock, Maya Maday, Maybonics, Mccracken, McIntosh Harrington-Sweithelm, McKayla Roundy, Meg Ziegler, Melissa Guglich, Melissa Smith, Melody Haren Anderson, Mendel, Merrick Schincariol, Mesha, Mesphin, Mev, Micha, Michael, Michael, Michael, MICHAEL, Michael, Michael, Michael, Michael, Michael, Michael Abbott, Michael Alford, Michael Barreda, Michael Barrett, Michael Bowman, Michael Boyle, Michael Brand, Micah Brandt, Michael Brookbank, Michael Bunicci, Michael Cantor, Michael Daniel, Michael De Plater, Michael De Rosa, Michael DeMeritt, Michael DiBlasio, Michael E, Michael Eve, Michael Feldhusen, Michael Felton, Michael G. Palmer, Michael Gomez, Michael Gorodin, Michael Gorsuch, Michael Harris, Michael Hasko, Michael Hill, Michael O. Holland, Michael Johnson, Michael Kirkbride, Michael Kruckvich, Michael Kuykendall, Michael L Gorbett, michael lawrence, Michael Makarius, Michael Maneri, Michael Maneval, Michael McLaughlin, Michael Mehringer, michael mentz, Michael Moore, Michael Mullenix, Michael Nathanael, Michael Parker, Michael Paulini, Michael Richards, Michael Rivet, Michael Robbins, Michael Roebling, Michael Roxs, Michael Ruiz, Michael S, Michael S. Wallack, Michael Schiffer, Michael Schwartz, Michael Scott, Michael Sharland, Michael Sokalski, Michael Thurston-Lantz, Michael Tree, Michael Turbe, michael vener, Michael Vermilye, Michael Verstelle, Michael W. Mattei, Michael Weisner, Michael Wight, Michael "Stargazer" Wolf, Michael Wood, Michael Zein, Mick, Mid Life Crikey, Miguel Ángel, Miguel Carmo, Miguel Friginal, Miguel Garcia Jr., Mihai Sereanu, Mihir Kedia, Mika Turunen, Mike, Mike B, Mike Coleman, Mike Davey, Mike Davies, Mike Ferdinando, Mike Gingold, Mike Maughmer, Mike J. Murtha, Mike Kenyon, Mike M., Mike McClure, Mike Mistele, Mike P, Mike Roberson, Mike Rudziensky, Mike S., Mike Schwartz, Mike Sixel, Mike W, Mike Welham, Mike Westley, Mike "Cheesewyrm" Whelan, Mike Zwick, mikeymoe5555, Mikhail Bonch-Osmolovskiy, Mikhail Gordin, Mikkel Hosbond, Mikko Kämäräinen, Mikko Västi, Mikloshe, Mildra The Monk, Miles Grubbs, MillHill, Minh Nguyen, Miri, Mirko Froehlich, Mitchell, Mitchell Desabrais Tremblay, Mitchell "Cow" Owne, mlund, molly, Monamie, Monarda, Mondo Talks, Monica, Monte Young, Moon, Morgan, Morgan Weeks, Morrier, Morris McClelland, Mourterou Thibault, Mpk, mrlr, MrShish101, Ms. Anthropy, mtodd513, Muh Arts, Murloc the Cat-Faced Wizard, MustrumRidcully, mws, Myguel Dupéré, Naglfar, Nagulan, NamelessBW, Naram Qashat, Natalie, Natasha Violet, Nate, Nate G, Nate Horn, Nate Laleman, Nate McFadden, Nate S, Nathan, Nathan Arnold, Nathan Atkinson, Nathan Ellsworth, Nathan GearsandKeys, Nathan Jackson, Nathan Johndro, Nathan Land, Nathan Magnuski, Nathan Nolan, Nathan Reed, Nathan Tingler, Nathan Yahya Anderith, Nathaniel R., Nathaniel Reid, Neal, Neal Buck, Neal Dalton, Neal Devlin, Neal Hebert, Neal Scott, Neall Raemonn Price, Nefal, Neil Allain, Neil Barnes, Neil de Carteret, Neil Merryweather, Neil Schiff, Nekohime, Neobakugans, Nerf, Nessalantha, Nevrose, Newt Newport, Nghiem Pham, Nicholas, , Nicholas Avenell, Nicholas Barosso, Nicholas Bobbie, Nicholas Cassidy, Nicholas de Vry, Nicholas Fletcher, Nicholas Fong, Nicholas Garrison, Nicholas Grainger, Nicholas Guarino, Nicholas King, Nicholas Lanata, Nicholas Matzen, Nicholas McGinness, Nicholas Taylor, Nicholas Watkins, Nick, Nick Armet, Nick Brooke, Nick Brown, Nick Calder, Nick Clarkin-Wright, Nick edwards, Nick Hopkins, Nick Johnson, Nick Larocco, Nick Lippolis, Nick Louie, Nick Muir, Nick Nerdvana, Nick pater, nick tomko, Nicki, Nicolas, Nicolas Schouten, Nicolas Taylor, Nico Paoli, Niels De Prins, Niels Hauksson, Niels Lanser, Nigel Bolden, Nigel Pick, Nihei, Nik Renshaw, Niklas Berg, Niko Koivumäki, Nikolas Kieker, NilfalTap, nilsn, NineConsonants, NinjaDuckie, niwdog73, nmathew, No(r)a Haynes, Noah Groves, Noah McCammon, Noah Sax, Noble Knight Games, Noel Warford, notBowen, notyours, Nuttacon, nyarly23, Occam's Eye, Octavio Arango, Oddly, Odyssey, Ofer Goldstein, Oguzhan Andic, Oisin McColgan, oldstevo, Oliver D. Dickerson III, OLStefan, Oly, om_henners, ordinal, Ordo, Orian-Ice, Orion, Orko, Orr Busic, Orren Merton, Orryn Raulnor, Osterneth, Ostrakon Mu, otaznik, Ovidio Beoulve, Owen Cartwright, Owen Fitz-Gerald, OwlbearCamus, Øyvind, P Aguilera, P-A Beaulieu, PandaDad, Panoptic, Paramo, Pascal Pflugfelder, Pat Martin, Patrick, Patrick, Patrick, Patrick, Patrick Bicket, Patrick Cottle, Patrick Dughi, Patrick Garrison, Patrick Haugh, Patrick Healey, Patrick Johnston, Patrick Jones, Patrick Kinsella, Patrick Leder, Patrick M. Demo Jr., Patrick Martin Frosz Nielsen, Patrick Mayrhofer, Patrick McCann, Patrick P., Patrick Weekes, Patryk Olejnik, Paul, Paul Alexander Butler, Paul Alfred Brown, Paul A. Zimmer, Paul Baalham, Paul Bushland, Paul C, Paul Cave, Paul Charvet, Paul Cordes, Paul Cosgrove, Paul Duggan, Paul Echeverri, Paul Hughes, Paul J, Paul Louch, Paul Mazumdar, Paul Overy, Paul Ryan, Paul Schaughency, Paul Snow, Paul Van Arcken, Paul Venner, Paul Vogt, Paul Weimer, Paulo D'Alberti, Pedro, Pedro Calvo, Pedro Garcia, Pedro Ivo Braun, Pedro Vieira Junior, Pegana, pelwer, Perry Young, Persial, Pete DiMaria, Pete Nixon, Pete Shaw, Peter, Peter Engebos, Peter Gourlay, Peter Griffith, Peter Hentges, Peter J O'Brien, Peter Knoch, Peter Newby-Rogers, Peter Nix, Peter Pfoertsch, Peter Ryzanych, Peter Smith, Peter Swan, Peter Wedder, PhatPhire, Pheasants, Phil Dicemechanic, Phil Francis, Phil Ladouceur, Philip, Philip Adler, Philip Kirner, Phil Pepin, Philippe Boulle, Philippe Marcil, Philippe Niederkorn, Philippe-Antoine Menard, Phillip Stephen Wright, Phillip Stewart, Phillip Suttkus, Phillip WIse, PhlegmaTREEc, Piero Di Giovacchino, Pierre, Pietro Caruso, PJ Coffey, PJ Williams, PK Sullivan, Pooh, prncingpnyinn, Pulf, Pupaphobic, Puppetminion, Purim, Qalmlea, Quentin Kimbrell, Quill Delaney, Quinn Hebertson, Quin Wiseman, RD, R R Clark, Raf Bressel, Rafael Padilha, Rafael Vargas, Rafał Niechciałkowski, Rafe Richards, RaiKay, Rajan Khanna, rake21, Raleigh Rex, Ralf Schemmann, Ralph Grajo, Ralph Mazza, Raman, Ramon, Ramsey Beilke, Randal Stone, Randall N. Bills, Randall Wald, Randall Wright, RandoGuy, randomcitizenx, Randy Estep, Randy Koeneke, Randy Miller, Randy Mosiondz, Randy Smith, Raphael Itzykson, Raveled, Ray Slakinski, Raymond Bennett, Raymond Fox, Raymond Irving, Realm Master K, Reaper Steve, Rebecca Chappell, Rebecca Lawrence, Red Dice Diaries, redhawk2085, Reece Anderson-Badger, Reese Miller, Régis, Reid A Dawson, Reid Whitaker, Reinier Dobbelmann, Rem Diaz, Remo Disconzi Filho, Remy, Ren, Renata Pinho Nogueira, Rena (The Worst Poet), Renato Da Rocha Leão Crivelli Nunes da S, RenzoJuken, Reto M. Kiefer, rexlapinii, Reyquiem, Rhea Shelley, Rhiannon Pullin, Rhys Grimshaw, Ric Castle, Ricardo Campos, Ricardo Diniz, Ricardo Nacarini, Ricardo Pereira Ramalho, Riccardo Lenzi, Rich Fowler, Rich Hilborn, Rich Spainhour, Rich Warren, Rich Wilcox, Rich Williams, Richard A Goncalves, Richard A Prendergast, Richard Bellamy,

Richard Christopher August, Richard Clyne, Richard Dufault, Richard Fannon, Richard Fryer, Richard Green, Richard Harper, Richard Hirsch, Richard Johnson, Richard Lee Hurst, Richard Leitch, Richard Mundy, Richard Rivera, Richard Troester, Richard White, Richard Francis, Richter, Rick F, Rick Hair, Rick Hull, Rick Star, Riley Brown, Riley Crowder, RK (Fred) Dewees, Rob Barrett, Rob Bush, robdog, Rob Donoghue, Rob Dunning, Rob Gallant, Rob Getz, Rob Hebert, Rob Huntley, Rob James, Rob Knop, Rob Lightner, Rob McDermott, Rob McNeill, Rob Meerscheidt, Rob Mildon, Rob Randolph, Rob Torno, Robb Young, Robert, Robert, Robert, Robert "Trebor" Carey, Robert Ahrens, Robert Aronson, Robert Carnel, Robert Christiansen, Robert Davis, Robert Dorgan, Robert Esser, robert flinchum, Robert H. Mitchell Jr., Robert Heller, Robert Hillier, Robert Huss, Robert J Schwalb, Robert J. Lawrence, Robert Loper, Robert McConnell, Robert N. Schultz, Robert Newman, Robert Politte, Robert Rae Mohr III, Roberto Hoyle, Robin McNair, Robin S King, Robin Smith, RobJ, robosnake, Rod Batten, Rod Millard, Rodd Closson, Rodrigo Murillo, Roger, Roger Dilfer, Roger Johnston, Roger Messier, Roger Stone, Rogue Comet, Roland Bahr, Roll 4 Gravity, Rolyn Trotter, Roman Windham, Roman Kuzyk, ron beck, Ron Christopher, Ron Desroches, Ron Harnik, Ron Martin, Ronin, Ronja_L, Ronnie Grahn, Rory Alexander Farrell Madden, Rose Knight, Rosemary M, Rosenrot Engelsträne, Ross Cheung, Ross D'Souza, Ross Harkin, Ross Richey, Rowan Collier, rowland, Roy Zemlicka, RoyalCinccino, Rudy Concepcion, ruemere, Rufus4711, Rui Manuel Almeida, Rune, Rupert Watters, Russell Barlow, Russell Larkin, Russell Rice, Ruth Windham, Ruutiukko, RVH, rwiiebe, Ryan, Ryan Abrams, Ryan Anghelone, Ryan Blackstock, Ryan C. Christiansen, Ryan Caveney, Ryan Desgroseilliers, Ryan Haver, Ryan Hughes, Ryan Junk, Ryan Lee Bolstad, Ryan Mannix, Ryan Marcin, Ryan Montgomery, Ryan O'Brien, Ryan Patterson, Ryan Robertson, Ryan Shatford, Ryan Templeton, Ryan Wendling, S Naomi Scott, S. Ben Melhuish, S. Pate, Sabrina Hyland, Sacha Ratcliffe, Sage Genesis, Saigo, Sailingmaster, Salvatore Insalaco, Sam, Sam, Sam Blanchard, Sam Clements, Sam Dannemiller, Sam Mac, Sam McArthur, Sam Peterson, Sam Santos, Sam Sobel, Sami Khan, samkanai, Samuel G Young, Samuel Lagace, Samuel Lantz, Samuel Larsén, Samuel Mott, Samuel Tyler, Samwise, Sarah Jones, Sarah Kelley, Sarah Milmoe, Sarah Puls, Sarah Williams, Šárka K, Sascha Demmer, Saturnine, SavageArtificer, Savannah Broadway, Schattenriss, schultz, Scot Ryder, Scott, Scott B, scott bauer, Scott Baxter, Scott Blanch, Scott Bruckner, Scott Dexter, Scott Douglass, Scott Dunlop, Scott Gregson, Scott J. Molony, scott jenks, Scott Krok, Scott Lien, Scott Longberry, Scott MacIsaac, Scott McElhinney, Scott Moen, Scott Schmitt, Scott Stefanski, Scott Thede, Scott Trautsch, Scott Wyngarden, Scroll for Initiative, Sean, Sean, SEAN, Sean, Sean Ainsworth, Sean Becker, Sean Billinger-Hessom, sean carroll, Sean Dawson, Sean Goodroad, Sean Hall, Sean Hudgin, Sean Jack, Sean Jenkins, Sean Krauss, Sean Lincoln, Sean M Dunstan, Sean Manzano, Sean McCabe, Sean McCauliff, Sean Nokes, Sean Pagliarulo, Sean S, Sean Stead, Sean Tadsen, Sean Vincent Wells, Sebastian, Sebastian Deterding, Sebastian Gregory, Sebastian Rieger, Sebastian Zoellner, secondrevan, Seklos, seravin, Sergey, Sergio Silvio Herrera Gea, Seth, Seth, Seth Eckel, Seth Pingree, Seth Thomson, Seth Tomko, Seth W. Stauffer, Shad, Shadari, Shakepshere, Shane, Shane Cubis, Shane Jackson, Shane Kennedy, Shannon Prickett, Shawn, Shawn Amundson, Shawn Conard, Shawn McLaughlin, Shawn P, Shawn Peterson, Shawn Wood, Shedcape, Sheepy, Shiva Adler, Shotofentropy, Siân LW, Siffed, Sigilbeckons, Sillysaurus, Silver Sy, Simon, Simon Bogaerts, Simon Brunning, Simon Francis-Jones, Simon Heisler, Simon Johnston, Simon Proctor, Simon Štern, Simon Vallieres Rondeau, Simon Ward, Simon Wiippola, Siobhan, sjacik, Sleazebaggins, Slorder, Small Cog Creative, Smashedwookie, Snarkayde (Philip), So Small A Thing, Soham Hazra, Solomon Stone Romney, SoManyRats, Soulscode, spacht, Spencer Buteyn, spidergoat, Spinachez, SprayPaint, Sri Puranam, Stacey Riley, Stacy Forsythe, Stan Park, Stanford Prescott, Stanislav, Stas' Gawel, Stealthy_Llama, Stef Pletinck, Stefan M, stefano tagliaferri, Steffen, Steffen, Stefon Mears, Stephan, Stephan, Stephan Pennington, Stephane, Stephane Rochat, Stéphane Rousseau, Stephanie Bryant, Stephanie Franklin, Stephen Diamond, Stephen Faure, STEPHEN GUCKER, Stephen Hardy, Stephen L McMorland, Stephen Luciano, Stephen & Julie Mabie, Stephen Palmer, Stephen F L Parish, Stephen Paterson, Stephen Perpitch-Harvey, Stephen Peters, Stephen Sarno, Stephen Smith, Stephen Wales, Stephen Wilcoxon, Sterling, Steve, Steve Chapman, Steve Darlington, Steve Dempsey, Steve Flores, Steve Holder, Steve Hollaway, Steve Juranich, Steve Kenneally, Steve Mumford, Steve Orpin, stevec, stevejreg, Steve Parm, , Steven, Steven, Steven Byrd, Steven Gravel, Steven Hammond, Steven Handy, Steven "Thee Yetti" Hanaway, Steven Johnson, Steven Latta, Steven Morgan, Steven Prather, Steven Schneider, Steven Setzer, Steven Trinkl, Steven W, Steven Warble, Steven Warzeha, Steven Watkins, Stevenoa81, Stewart Polshaw, StimSim, Stu, Stuart, Stuart Dean, Stuart Dollar, StuartWatkins, Sune Jensen, Suzi Sherwood, Svenna, Svolod, Symbol Tenor, Taejas Kudva, Tai Kuroba, Tammy Dotts, Targrus, Taylor Walston, TC, TeaAndSpite, Ted Johnson, tegan jenkins, tellute, Tender Lamb Shanks, Teresa Patton Munoz, terrasaur, Terry Chadwick, Terry Jachimiak II, Teth, Tevis Woods, That Old Tree, The Creative Fund by BackerKit, The DubVee, The Freelancing Roleplayer, The Loopymonkey, The Magus, The Weight, Théa Marie, Thea-Marie Ryde, thehawk, Thelonicon, Theo, Theodore Lee, The Glandons, TheRpgAcademy.com, TheWittleWolfie, Thierry CHAUCHEYRAS, Thlaylie, Thomas, Thomas, Thomas Beirne, Thomas Cole, Thomas Davis, Thomas Eric Cleator, Thomas Faßnacht, Thomas Fitch, Thomas Freed, Thomas Gerlick, Thomas Grey, Thomas Henry, Thomas Iverson, Thomas Kavanagh, Thomas Milazzo, Thomas Mitchell, Thomas Richardson, Thomas Rider, Thomas Shey, Thomas Sielker, Thomas Sticka, Thomas Traub, Thomas Webb Williams, Thoobn, Thorsten Sick, Ticketybob, Tiggas, Tigris, Tim Baker, Tim Baumgarten, Tim Czarnecki, Tim Ellis, Tim Gonzalez, Tim Hayes, Tim Isakson, Tim Keating, Tim Patton, Tim Roberts, Tim S, Tim W Brown, Tim Watters, Time Traveler, Timolution, timothy, Timothy Alexander Raspin, Timothy Choate, Timothy Driscoll, Timothy Fricker, Timothy J Sweetser, Timothy LeGower, Timothy Seratt, Timothy wolford, timpatim, TJ, TJ Root, Tobias Goedbloed, Toby Cox, Todd, Todd Beaubien, Todd Keck, Todd Ransom, Tom, Tom, Tom Bowen, Tom Burns, Tom Chapman, Tom Fagerlund, Tom Hillenbrand, Tom Lommel, Tom McCarthy, Tom McCollum, Tom Morris, Tom Ryan, Tom Taylor, Tommaso, Tommi Sundström, Toni, toni, Tony Whitesell, Tony Winkler, Torin Stefanson, Tovarah - Weresheeptiger of Sin [DOoD], TPalm24, trashclown, Travis, Travis, Travis Fields, Travis H., Travis Johnsen, Trent Borne, Trevor, trey causey, Trey Lucas McLemore, Trey Palmer, trimeta, Trip Space-Parasite, Tristan Crocker, Tristan Fishel, Tristan D. Knight, Tristan Smith, Triumph Gardner, Troy, Troy Duffy, Troy ODell, Troy Pichelman, Troy Smith, Trung Bui, Tubstout, Tucker, Turbiales, twerp, Tyge Sjöstrand, Tyler, Tyler Duckworth, Tyler G, Tyler Hildebran, Tyler Samson, Tyler Titsworth, Tyler Wolfe, Uland Grawe, Ulf Bengtsson, Ulfvan, Unaibaraka, Uncle Winston, Urdlen, vahmoud, Vasha6789, Valorey Lawrence, Vasil Lyutskanov, Vasilie Crisan, Vaughan Cockell, , Veck, Vedrin, Velarius Silverworm, Veronica Cloud, Vic Polites, Vic Smith, Victor Balcazar, Victor Navone, Victor Sofield, Victoria Chen, Victoria Elizabeth Guzik, Viktor TriumphVincent Arebalo, Vincent DiCello, Vincent Mayer, Vincent Sayson, Vincze Gergő Csongor, vinnyphantom, Vítězslav Zeman, Vitus, VivalaHell, Vízhányó Mihály, Vojtech Pribyl, Volker, vorluke, Vortak Games, vyo, W M, W Ryan Carden, Wade Rockett, Waffles Enjoyer, Warrick, Wawoozle, Way, Wayne Perg, Wayne Rossi, Wcl, Weber, Wednesday Boy, Wes, Wes Dodd, Weseid73, Wesley N Goodwin, Wesley Green, Wesley Noble Hewitt, Weston Harper, wflack, whyktor, WickedFish, Wilbur Yokan, Will, Will Bailey, Will Briggs, will chapman, Will Hancock, Will Triumph, William, William Ausband, William C Johnson Jr, William Carroll, William Ellsworth, William Fiore, William Fisher, William Holyday, William Jason Mathews, William King, William Kohlway, William M Wilson, William M. Tift, William Mark Woodhouse, william mozley, William Nessly, William P, William Plant, William Staab, Willow, Willow Palecek, wirelessosprey, Witchbunceri, wolpaladin, Wordse, Wormri, Wright Johnson, Wyatt, Xavier, Xavier Aubuchon-Mendoza, xavier feldman, xObserveRx, xtroce, Y. Schnellbach, Yamikala, Yang Wu, Yann Abaziou, YannO, YeJee Kim, Yetanotherpanda, Yes, Yi Zhou, Yohann, Yonatan Spira, Yong Seng Choon, YPGuzman, yunart, Yuri Button, Zacana, Zach Cullimore, Zach Norton, Zach Phillips, Zachary Pollak, Zachoi, Zakariya Dehlawi, Zaphikel, Zapo, Zeb & Eion Taylor, Zel'eschia the many, zemesouvien, ZeroSaber, Zita, Ziva, Zoltán Komora, Zombified, Zonto, Zorblag, Πίλγριμμος Χειμωνέτος, 이안, 이재르앙, 이학준

OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a)"Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b)"Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d)"Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3.Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5.Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6.Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying, or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title, and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10 Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12 Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13 Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14 Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15 COPYRIGHT NOTICE
Open Game License v 1.0a Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

System Reference Document. Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc; Authors: Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, based on material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook. Copyright 2009, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Jason Bulmahn, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams.

Castles & Crusades, Copyright 2004, Troll Lord Games; Authors: Davis Chenault, Mac Golden.

13th Age. Copyright 2013, Fire Opal Media, Inc.; Authors: Rob Heinsoo, Jonathan Tweet, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams.

13th Age Bestiary. Copyright 2014, Fire Opal Media, Inc. and Pelgrane Press Ltd; Authors: Ryven Cedrylle, Rob Heinsoo, Kenneth Hite, Kevin Kulp, Ashley Law, Cal Moore, Steve Townshend, Rob Watkins, Rob Wieland.

13 True Ways. Copyright 2014, Fire Opal Media, Inc.; Authors: Rob Heinsoo, Jonathan Tweet, Robin D. Laws, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams.

Shadows of Eldolan. Copyright 2014, Pelgrane Press Ltd.; Author: Cal Moore.

The Book of Loot. Copyright 2014, Pelgrane Press Ltd.; Author: Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan.

Eyes of the Stone Thief. Copyright 2014, Pelgrane Press Ltd.; Author: Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan.

The Strangling Sea. Copyright 2015, Pelgrane Press Ltd.; Author: Robin D. Laws.

13th Age Game Master's Screen and Resource Book. Copyright 2015, Pelgrane Press Ltd.; Authors: Cal Moore, Wade Rockett.

The Escalated Barbarian. Copyright 2016, DASTOW LLC; Authors: Stacey Janssen, David Noonan.

High Magic & Low Cunning: Battle Scenes for Five Icons. Copyright 2016, Pelgrane Press Ltd.; Author: Cal Moore.

The Crown Commands: Battle Scenes for Four Icons. Copyright 2016, Pelgrane Press Ltd.; Author: Cal Moore.

Fire & Faith: Battle Scenes for Four Icons. Copyright 2017, Pelgrane Press Ltd.; Author: Cal Moore.

Lions & Tigers & Owlbears: 13th Age Bestiary 2. Copyright 2017 Pelgrane Press Ltd., Authors: Rob Heinsoo, Ashley Law, Liz Argall, Jaym Gates, Lynne Hardy, Paul Fanning, Cal Moore, Carrie Rasmussen, Wade Rockett, Aaron Roudabush, Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan, Michael E. Shea, Ruth Tillman, Jonathan Tweet, Steven Warzeha, Emily Westfall.

Dark Pacts & Ancient Secrets. Copyright 2017, Martin Killmann; Author: Martin Killmann.

13th Age Glorantha. Copyright 2018, Moon Design Publications, LLC; Authors: Rob Heinsoo, Jonathan Tweet, Jeff Richard, Greg Stafford, Cal Moore, Ashley Law, Reinier Dobbelmann.

Loot Harder: A Book of Magic Treasure. Copyright 2018, Pelgrane Press Ltd.; Authors: Ashley Law, Paul Fanning, Carrie Rasmussen-Law.

Book of Ages. Copyright 2018, Pelgrane Press Ltd.; Author: Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan.

Book of Demons. Copyright 2018, Pelgrane Press Ltd.; Authors: Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan, Rob Heinsoo.

Shards of the Broken Sky. Copyright 2019, Pelgrane Press Ltd.; Authors: Ashley Law, Rob Heinsoo, Paul Fanning.

Pathfinder Core Rulebook (Second Edition). Copyright 2019, Paizo Inc..; Designers: Logan Bonner, Jason Bulmahn, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, and Mark Seifter.

Book of the Underworld. Copyright 2020, Pelgrane Press Ltd.; Authors: Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan, Rob Heinsoo, J-M DeFoggi.

Elven Towers. Copyright 2020, Pelgrane Press Ltd.; Author: Cal Moore.

Dark Alleys & Twisted Paths. Copyright 2019, Martin Killmann; Author: Martin Killmann.

Crown of Axis. Copyright 2021, Pelgrane Press Ltd.; Author: Wade Rockett.

Drakkenhall: City of Monsters. Copyright 2022, Pelgrane Press Ltd.; Authors: Liz Argall, AnneMarie Boeve, Benjamin Feehan, Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan, Cal Moore, Corey Reddin.

Red Moon and Warring Kingdoms. Copyright 2024, Evan Franke; Authors: Evan Franke, Ian Franke, J-M DeFoggi, Tim Baker.

Spirit of Alchemy. Copyright 2025, DG Murray; Authors: Douglas G A Murray, Daniel Ries.

13th Age Second Edition Gamemaster's Guide. Copyright 2025, Fire Opal Media, Inc.; Authors: Rob Heinsoo, Jonathan Tweet.

13th Age Second Edition Heroes' Handbook. Copyright 2025, Fire Opal Media, Inc.; Authors: Rob Heinsoo, Jonathan Tweet.

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Welcome to *13th Age* Second Edition! 1
Story & Crunch 1
Ancestors 1
Starting *13th Age* 1
Heroes' Handbook 1
Gamemaster's Guide 2
Personal Style 2
P.S.: Introducing the Icons 2
The Archmage 2
The Crusader 2
The Diabolist 3
The Dwarf King 3
The Elf Queen 3
The Emperor 3
The Great Gold Wyrm 3
The High Druid 3
The Lich King 3
The Priestess 3
The Prince of Shadows 3
The Three 3

Chapter 1 Example of Play 5

The Priestess versus the Lich King 5
A Demon-Killing Strike Team 5
Choosing the Character's Class 5
Choosing the Paladin's Kin 5
Her One Unique Thing! 6
Ability Scores and Bonuses 6
Paladin Gear and Starting Gear 6
Basic Attacks 8
Hit Points and Defenses 8
Fun with Paladins: Healing and Smiting 8
Picking Three Talents 8
Inventing Backgrounds 9
Choosing Icon Relationships 9
Choosing a Feat 9
Shaping the Story Together 12
Game On 13
Rolling for Icon Connections 13
Travel & Information 13
Into the Haunted Cemetery 13
Attacked by Death Cultists 14
Rallying, Smiting, Healing, and More 14
A Quick Rest and Ready for More 16
Who Are These Death Cultists? 16
Alyssa's First Icon Connection 17
A Mob of Ragged Cultists 18
The Cleric's Icon Connection 18
Third Battle: More Mooks 18
Quick Rest and a Step Toward 2nd Level 19
A Zombie Boar! 19
Skulls, Death Saves, Healing Potions, and More 19
The Unholy Altar and the Statue's Head 20
Healing Up 20
Shadows and Portents 20

Chapter 2 Creating Characters 23

Character Creation Overview 23
Character Creation Checklist 23
Abilities 24
Generate Ability Scores 24
Standard Arrays 24
Ability Score Modifiers 25
Combat Stats 26
1st level Hit Points 26
Armor Class 26
Physical Defense 26
Mental Defense 27
Initiative 27
Recoveries & Recovery Dice 27
Attacks and Powers 27
Next Steps 27

Chapter 3 Kin 29

Cultures and Appearances 29
Kin Powers 29
Humans 29
Human Kin Powers 30
Dwarves 31
Dwarven Kin Powers 31
Elves 32
The Three Shards of the Elven People 32
High Elves 32
High Elf Kin Powers 32
Silver Elves 32
Silver Elf Kin Powers 35
Wood Elves 35
Wood Elf Kin Powers 35
Gnomes 37
Gnome Kin Powers 38
Half-Elves 38
Half-Elf Kin Powers 39
Halflings 40
Halfling Kin Powers 40
Troll-kin 42
Troll-kin Kin Powers 43
More Unusual Kin 44
Dragonics 45
Dragonic Kin Powers 45
Forgeborn 46
Forgeborn Kin Powers 46
Tieflings 48
Tiefling Kin Powers 49
Holy Ones 51
Holy One Kin Powers 51

Chapter 4 Classes 53

Class Basics 53
Ease of Play 53
Key to Attacks, Spells, and Powers 54
Range 56
Usage Patterns 56
Choosing and Casting Spells 57
Spell and Power Progression 57
Other Damage Types 58
Weapon Rules 58
Shifting Choices as You Adventure 59
Customization 60
Starting Stats for 1st Level Characters 60
Barbarian 61
Overview 61
Gear 62
Barbarian Level Progression 63
Barbarian Stats 64
Barbarian Basic Attacks 64
Barbarian Class Features 65
Barbarian Feats 65
Adventurer-Tier Talents 66
Champion-Tier Talents 68
Epic-Tier Talents 69
Barbarian Ancestor Spirit 69
Bard 70
Overview 70
Bard Class Features 71
Gear 73
Bard Level Progression 74
Bard Stats 75
Bard Basic Attacks 75
Bardic Instrument Talent Structure 76
Bard Talents 76
Brass: Horns & Trumpets 77

Dance: Poise & Motion 78
Drums: Rhythm & Percussion 79
Flutes & Pipes & Ocarinas 80
Strings: Lutes & Harps & Guitars 82
Voice: Singing & Chanting & Calling 83
Overture (Bard Talent) 84
Brass Overture 84
Dance Overture 84
Drum Overture 84
Flute Overture 85
Strings Overture 85
Voice Overture 85
Songmaster (Bard Talent) 86
Bard Feats 86
1st Level Spells & Songs 86
3rd Level Spells & Songs 89
5th Level Spells & Songs 91
7th Level Spells & Songs 92
9th Level Spells & Songs 93
Cleric 94
Overview 94
Gear 95
Cleric Level Progression 96
Cleric Stats 97
Cleric Basic Attacks 97
Terms Used in Cleric Powers 98
Cleric Class Features 98
Cleric Feat 99
Class Talents 99
1st Level Spells 102
3rd Level Spells 106
5th Level Spells 107
7th Level Spells 108
9th Level Spells 109
Fighter 111
Overview 111
Gear 111
Fighter Level Progression 112
Fighter Stats 113
Fighter Basic Attacks 113
Fighter Class Features 114
Fighter Feats 114
Adventurer-Tier Talents 114
Champion-Tier Talents 116
1st Level Maneuvers 116
3rd Level Maneuvers 117
5th Level Maneuvers 117
7th Level Maneuvers 118
9th Level Maneuvers 118
Flexible Attack Talent Rules 118
Flexible Attack Maneuver & Its Powers 120
Paladin 122
Overview: Reliable Offense and Defense 122
Gear 123
Paladin Level Progression 124
Paladin Stats 125
Paladin Basic Attacks 125
Paladin Class Features 125
Paladin Feat 126
Adventurer-Tier Talents 126
Champion-Tier Talents 128
Epic-Tier Talents 130
Ranger 132
Overview 133
Gear 133
Ranger Level Progression 134
Ranger Stats 135
Ranger Basic Attacks 135
Ranger Class Features 136
Ranger Feat 137
Ranger Talents 137
Caster Talents 137
Hunter Talents 138
Warrior Talents 140
Animal Companion Talent Rules 142
List of Companions and Special Attacks 144
Animal Companion Stats 145
Rogue 147
Overview 147
Gear 148
Rogue Level Progression 149
Rogue Stats 150
Rogue Basic Attacks 150
Rogue Class Features 150
Rogue Talents 152
Rogue Feats 154
1st Level Powers 155
3rd Level Powers 156
5th Level Powers 157
7th Level Powers 157
9th Level Powers 158
Sorcerer 158
Overview 158
Gear 160
Sorcerer Level Progression 161
Sorcerer Stats 162
Sorcerer Basic Attacks 162
Sorcerer Class Features 162
Sorcerer Feats 164
Sorcerer Class Talents 165
1st Level Spells 168
3rd Level Spells 170
5th Level Spells 172
7th Level Spells 174
9th Level Spells 176
Wizard 177
Overview 177
Spells 178
Gear 178
Wizard Level Progression 179
Wizard Stats 180
Wizard Basic Attacks 180
Wizard Class Features 181
Wizard Talents 182
Wizard Feats 185
Wizard Spells 186
1st Level Spells 188
3rd Level Spells 192
5th Level Spells 193
7th Level Spells 194
9th Level Spells 195
Shared Talent: Familiar or Pet 197
Rituals 198

CHAPTER 5
UNIQUE HEROES 201
Your One Unique Thing 201
One Unique Thing Examples 204
Backgrounds 206
Short List of Possible Backgrounds 206
Assigning Background Points 207
Skill Checks 207
Making Skill Checks 207
Natural 20s and 1s with Skill Checks 208
Failures for a Better Story 208
Feats 210
Universal Feats 211
Feats List Online 213
Gear 214
Armor Categories 214
Melee Weapon Categories 214
Ranged Weapon Categories 214
Coinage and Economy 215
Icon Relationships 215
Relationship Points 216
Gamemaster Advice: Icons 217
Heroic Icons 217
Ambiguous Icons 218
Villainous Icons 218
Relationships are About Utility, not Strength 219
Icons' Organizations 219
Changing Relationships 219
Advice for Players 219
Create Dramatic Stories 219
Telegraph Your Intent 220
Leveling Up 220
Benefits of Leveling Up 220
Incremental Advance 221

CHAPTER 6
ICONS & ICON CONNECTIONS 223
Section 1: Icons 223
The Icon in the World 223
The Icon and Your Hero 223
Using Connections 223
Archmage 224
The Archmage in the World 224
The Archmage and Your Hero 225
Using Connections 226
Crusader 228
The Crusader in the World 228
The Crusader and Your Hero 229
Using Connections 230
Diabolist 231
The Diabolist in the World 231
The Diabolist and Your Hero 232
Using Connections 233
Dwarf King 235
The Dwarf King in the World 235
The Dwarf King and Your Hero 236
Using Connections 237
Elf Queen 239
The Elf Queen in the World 239
History of the Three-Part Crown 239
The Elf Queen and Your Hero 240
Using Connections 241
Emperor 242
The Emperor in the World 242
The Emperor and Your Hero 243
Using Connections 243
Great Gold Wyrm 245
The Great Gold Wyrm in the World 245
The Great Gold Wyrm and Your Hero 246
Using Connections 247
High Druid 249
The High Druidin the World 249
The High Druid and Your Hero 250
Using Connections 252
Lich King 253
The Lich King in the World 253
The Lich King and Your Hero 254
Using Connections 255
Orc Lord 256
Priestess 259
The Priestess in the World 259
The Priestess and Your Hero 260
Using Connections 261
Prince of Shadows 262
The Prince of Shadows in the World 262
The Prince of Shadows and Your Hero 263
Using Connections 264
The Three 266
The Threein the World 266
The Three and Your Hero 267
Using Connections 268
Section 2: Icon Relationships 269
Icon Relationship Overview 269
Rolling Your Icon Dice 269
Using a Narrative Icon Connection 271
Narrative Benefits 271
Narrative Twists 272
GMing Benefits and Twists 273
Techniques for Narrative Connections 274
Information 274
Invent Something New 276
Raw Iconic Power 277
NPCs 278
Organizations 281
Help in an Upcoming Battle 281
Shortening a Battle 283
Aid from Spirits 284
Flashbacks 285
Player Initiative 286
Connections to the Future 287
Using a Combat Connection 288
Connections in Introductory Games & One-Shots 289

CHAPTER 7
COMBAT RULES 291
Combat Summary 291
Combat Sequence 291
Cyclic Initiative 291
Actions on Your Turn 292
Escalation Die 292
Miniatures 293
Combat Actions 293
Actions 293
Movement 293
Position 293
Whereabouts 293
Engaged or Unengaged 294
Opportunity attacks 296
Special Actions 298
Rally 298
Fight in Spirit 298
Combat Assist 298
Retreat (Party Action) 299
Attacks 301
Attack Targets 301
Attack Bonuses 301
The Heroes' Basic Attacks 301
No-Trigger Attacks 301
Crits, Critical Hits 302
Fumbles 302
Damage on a Miss 302
Stacking Rules 303
Damage & Healing 304
Damage 304
Recoveries 304
Staggered 304
Unconscious 304
Mooks 305
Death and Dying 305
Death Attacks and Last Gasp Saves 306
Rest and Recharge 306
Quick Rests 306
Full Heal-ups 307
Combat Modifiers 307
Don't Sweat Modifiers 307
Shooting into Melee 308
Invisibility 308
Special Attacks and Effects 308
Coup-de-Grace 310
Grabbing & Grabbed 310
Ongoing Damage 311
Saves 311
Random Directions 313
Resistance 313
Teleportation 313
Temporary Hit Points 313
Two-Weapon Fighting 314
Unarmed Attacks 314
Combat Option: Honorable Combat 314

APPENDIX A
CHARACTER OPTIONS 316

APPENDIX B
DICE APPROXIMATIONS 318

APPENDIX C
ONE PAGE ICON SHEET 319

APPENDIX D
INDEX & GLOSSARY 320

APPENDIX E
THE CHARACTER SHEET 329

Introduction

Welcome to *13th Age* Second Edition!

What if you could play a tabletop roleplaying game with familiar rules and a familiar setting, but imaginative storytelling and dice-rolling action were ramped up beyond what you're used to? That's *13th Age*!

The two of us were the lead designers of two editions of the world's oldest roleplaying game, and when we designed *13th Age* in the early 2010s, we did it for ourselves and gamers like us—not for corporate shareholders.

In company with art director and painter Lee Moyer, a dozen other talented artists, a couple hundred playtesters, over three thousand Kickstarter backers, and insightful gamers who have been playing and commenting for the past thirteen years, we've created our second edition as a two-book set. We've tweaked or reworked just about every element of the game, all while keeping the changes in scope so that you can still use the adventures, bestiaries, and sourcebooks we published for the first edition.

The two of us have devoted our careers to tabletop games because they foster creativity and personal connections. In a world filled with media designed to suck you into someone else's work of imagination, tabletop roleplaying games call on you and your friends to be creators. Your characters are unique. Your campaign is unique. And the experience that you build together will be like no one else's stories.

Story & Crunch

13th Age aims to blend what are sometimes thought of as opposing gaming styles.

Story: Gamemasters get a familiar-feeling world designed to be customized for each campaign. Players get special rules providing them with narrative authority that draws on their creativity.

Crunch: Tabletop roleplaying games also have a tactical element in which you make tricky decisions and hope for good dice rolls. *13th Age* leans into the action by presenting players with battles where they have clear tactical decisions to make and dice rolls really matter, while simplifying the ticky-tacky rules for distance and movement. Each class plays differently and each monster delivers its own special challenge.

Ancestors

We describe *13th Age* as an "F20" game. That's Robin D. Laws' term for a fantasy game that's based on rolling 20-sided dice. We've built on the inspirations provided by Gary Gygax, Dave Arneson, and the rest of the earlier F20 designers.

Less obviously, thanks to our integration of storytelling techniques adapted from indie gaming and storytelling games, we owe thanks to relative youngsters such as Vincent Baker and John Harper.

Starting *13th Age*

Our first edition was aimed at players with any amount of roleplaying experience . . . and experienced gamemasters. The examples we've added to this second edition—starting with **Chapter 1 Example of Play**—should make it easier for first time gamemasters to run *13th Age*. Use the chapter summaries below as a guide, and be advised that both books contain an index that doubles as a glossary.

Heroes' Handbook

This book contains most of what players need to know to create a character and play a game.

Chapter 1 Example of Play: An introduction to the game from the perspective of a player joining a new campaign and playing through several battles and incidents as a 1st level paladin. Aimed at newcomers to the system and possibly of interest to old hands.

Chapter 2 Creating Characters: The basics of generating your hero and a character creation checklist that takes you through the first four chapters.

Chapter 3 Kin: Elf? Dwarf? Human? Dragonic? They're here, along with story notes from our default setting and a selection of kin powers.

Chapter 4 Classes: Nine classes to choose from. The chapter starts with a list of which classes are easiest and most complex to play.

Chapter 5 Unique Heroes: We've got elements that make your hero unique and give you a chance to help shape the campaign, backgrounds that define your skills, feats that round out your effectiveness, and three points of icon relationships.

Chapter 6 Icons & Icon Connections: The first half of the chapter details the twelve icons. The second half provides rules and examples for using connections with those icons during play to change your campaign's story!

Chapter 7 Combat Rules: This chapter tells you how to apply those crunchy spells and maneuvers you picked up in the Classes and Kin chapters. It's our streamlined version of F20 combat, with guaranteed escalation and no measuring.

Heroes' Handbook Appendices: Character options, dice approximations, character sheets, and the full index/glossary for both this book and the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

Gamemaster's Guide

Many players will also want to read **Chapter 8 Dragon Empire** from the *Gamemaster's Guide* to get a feel for the default setting. The other popular chapter from the *Gamemaster's Guide* will be **Chapter 11 Treasure**.

The *Heroes' Handbook* and *Gamemaster's Guide* flow together as two pieces of the same story, so we kept the chapter numbers going from one book to the next.

The *Gamemasters Guide* starts with . . . .

***GMG* Chapter 8 Dragon Empire:** A deliberately half-designed outline of the geography and history of our default setting, intended to give players and GMs room to improvise.

***GMG* Chapter 9 Running the Game:** Gamemaster advice for setting up campaigns, inventing adventures, running sessions, and building battles.

***GMG* Chapter 10 Monsters:** The adversaries!

***GMG* Chapter 11 Treasure:** The loot!

***GMG* Chapter 12 A Bad Moon & the Wrong Stars:** An introductory adventure for between two and six 1st level heroes. Not for players!

***GMG* Appendices:** GM options, variant rules, monsters from the Example of Play, a price list, and tables.

Personal Style

We wrote *13th Age* for gamers like us, and in the pages of these two books we speak directly to you. We explain how you can take the rules and use them to create the experience you want at the table. We each bring a different personal style to the game, and these differences give us a lot to talk about. One of us, for example, likes to design rules that prevent players from suffering too much, while the other . . . well, you'll see.

We often provide options for which rules to use and how to use them. The two of us don't run *13th Age* the same way, and you won't play it the same way that either of us do. When it comes to how you and your friends play *13th Age* at the table, we value personalization over consistency.

Enjoy!

Rob Heinsoo & Jonathan Tweet
April, 2025

P.S.: Introducing The Icons

Before we get into the Example of Play, we should mention one of the ways *13th Age* provides a half-designed world that players refine with their heroes' own stories.

It's traditional for fantasy gaming campaigns to have massively powerful NPCs as part of the background, such as high druids, high priests, emperors, wizards, the grandmaster of the thieves' guild, and so on. Done right, they frame the action in the setting without crowding the player characters off the stage. In narrative-driven games, it's common for your player character to be connected to a clan, house, or other faction. With *13th Age*, we combine these concepts: those common archetypes have grand roles in the campaign setting, and each player character is meaningfully connected to one or more of them.

The text in this rulebook describes the icons in their default state, but you and your friends should take this material and riff on it. The way your group decides to describe and handle the icons for your campaign helps customize the experience that y'all create and share.

Chapter 9 Running the Game describes how the gamemaster may tailor the icons to their campaign.

Chapter 5 Unique Heroes describes how you'll choose relationships with one or more of the icons.

Chapter 6 Icons & Icon Connections shows how those relationships will affect the story of each session and shape the campaign.



The Archmage

has preserved the Empire for centuries, tamed wild nature, and created astonishing new lands. His College has investigators and arcane engineers across the Dragon Empire, and his wizards often venture outside the safety of the Empire and into the underworld or the distant wilds. (See page 224 for the full write-up of the Archmage.)



The Crusader

is the armored fist of the dark gods. Demons threaten to destroy the world that the dark gods want to rule, so the Crusader draws upon the dark gods' power to destroy demonkind. The Crusader's sprawling army of demon-killers can mean serious trouble to local civilians, and those who serve the dark gods secretly do a lot worse than their public campaign against the Abyss. (page 228)



The Diabolist

is the villainous icon most likely to be behind monstrous incursions that adventurers might be called in to deal with. Her followers may be steeped in all sorts of cursed knowledge or ancient blasphemies, as may be those who are trained to defeat them. Their signature feat is summoning and perhaps controlling demons, but the Diabolist has pacts with all manner of monsters, which in turn also serve her cultists. While the Diabolist and her cultists are, well, diabolical, they like their evil to be personal. They accent their wickedness with occasional mercy and kindness. (page 231)



The Dwarf King

is lord of Forge, the dwarves' new homeland beneath the mountains. He'd love to reclaim the dwarven Underhome lost to war against the dark elves and the creatures of the deeps. But now that the Empire is stumbling, the dwarves find themselves manning the mountain walls that shield the Empire from the orcs and monsters of the north. (page 235)



The Elf Queen

rules the Court of Stars, the one place where wood elves, dark elves, and high elves still come together as peers and allies instead of as rivals or enemies. Honed by centuries of experience, the Queen's innate magic at least equals the Archmage's spells. Her followers may be connected mystically to her. (page 239)



The Emperor

rules the Dragon Empire, named for the mounts of its mightiest warriors. The Empire unites and protects people from one end of the Midland Sea to the other, but signs suggest that the age is turning. Will the Empire fall or shift to a new balance? (page 242)



The Great Gold Wyrm

is the world's protector and the inspiration for holy orders of paladins and independent heroes. The Wyrm himself is physically bound within a divine seal that prevents the Abyss from erupting into this world, but his dreams and his agents move throughout the world, helping those who fight and die for what's right. (page 245)



The High Druid

is the champion of the resurgent Wild. She is the spiritual and magical leader of the spirits of nature and of the elements, liberating them from the chains of the Empire. Meanwhile, she also calls people to live a new way. She might shake the Empire to pieces, or she might save its people from the Empire's collapse. (page 249)



The Lich King

is the lord of the undead, a fallen tyrant who intends to conquer the Dragon Empire and restore his ancient kingdom. Death and forgotten graves are everywhere, and so are his followers. (Page 253)



The Priestess

hears all the gods of light and speaks for those who please her. She is part oracle, part mystic, and part metaphysical engineer. She created the Cathedral, a towering, ever-growing temple with rooms or entire wings dedicated to the various faiths that she favors. In most campaigns, she leads a vast or multi-faceted religious organization with Imperial support and a good deal of independent power. (page 259)



The Prince of Shadows

is part thief, part trickster, and part agent of change. To some he is a hero; to others a villain. He has squandered the riches of the dwarves, murdered the hopes of a dragon, and plundered the dreams of a god. Countless thieves, spies, charlatans, daredevils, smugglers, and heroes are part of the Prince's vast but unseen network—whether they know it or not. (page 262)



The Three

were among the first dragons to walk the world. The Red is a living engine of destruction. The Blue is a sorceress, perhaps even the original mother of all sorcery. The Black is the master of shadows and assassins. Unlike the Great Gold Wyrm, who must fight alone, the Three have learned to join forces. The Blue has agents that operate freely within the Dragon Empire, the Black and the Red operate where the Empire is weak. (page 266)



CHAPTER 1

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

If you are new to *13th Age*, this chapter is for you! It shows you how the game works at the table, including creating a character, combat rules, and connecting to icons. Each section has references to pages in this book or in the *Gamemaster's Guide* (abbreviated as *GMG*) that cover the rules in play.

Two-page summary: The two-page character creation summary on pages 10–11 complements this example, and is also going to be useful whenever you're creating a character.

Experienced players: If you've already spent a good deal of time playing *13th Age*, most of this example of play will seem familiar.

The Priestess versus the Lich King

Jane is playing in her first *13th Age* campaign. The GM is experienced with the system and has ideas about how they want to orient the campaign around a particular group of **icons**. The GM hopes to focus on player characters working for the Priestess and fighting the Lich King. The Priestess, who speaks for the gods of light, and the Lich King, who commands the undead, are icons—campaign-defining NPCs so powerful that they don't have stats, whose organizations and followers shape the world. The GM shows players the **Introducing the Icons** section on the previous page.

In addition to these two icons, the GM includes the Prince of Shadows as an ambiguous icon. "You'll probably work with him at some point," says the GM, "and he might betray you. No promises." Other icons are also involved, but they'll be secondary to the main conflict.

The GM has decided that this campaign is going to exclude one of the normal icons, the Diabolist. He wants to start the campaign immediately after the end of the "Demon War," a great and terrible war he is making up for this campaign, in which the Diabolist was definitively defeated. But the Dragon Empire is weakened from the war, and its enemies are attacking.

- Quick one-paragraph summaries of the twelve icons are on the previous page.
- Page 223 and the rest of the first half of **Chapter 6 Icons & Icon Connections** fully introduce the icons and what they mean to the heroes.
- The full writeup of the Priestess ♀ is on page 259.
- The Lich King ✝ is on page 253.
- The Prince of Shadows ♡, or someone pretending to be the Prince of Shadows, has a full writeup on page 262.
- *GMG:* 34 covers setting up a campaign with Your Cast of Icons.

A Demon-Killing Strike Team

The GM specifies that Jane's character and the other heroes should already know each other after having fought together in the war. He suggests that they were thrown together late in the process as an *ad hoc* strike team, and they proved they could fight well together. Now that the Demon War is over, the heroes don't yet know what comes next. The players like the GM's premise well enough, so they run with it. Everyone knows there will be time to develop this history later if it becomes important.

- See **Your Campaign's Identity**; *GMG*: 33.

Choosing the Character's Class

To start her first *13th Age* character, Jane browses **Chapter 4 Classes**. She resonates with the paladin and barbarian classes, which are both good for first-timers. To help her decide which **class** to play, she checks what the other players have planned. One's playing a rogue, another a sorcerer, and another a ranger. The last player wants to play a cleric or a paladin. The rogue, sorcerer, and ranger are all good at dishing out damage, so the other undecided player opts for the cleric, to provide plenty of healing. Since the party is still heavy on offense, Jane chooses to play a paladin to better defend her friends.

- The nine character classes are ranked by complexity on page 53.

Choosing the Paladin's Kin

Since the campaign takes place after the Demon War, Jane thinks about making her paladin a tiefling or a holy one, but in her mind's eye the character is a human woman. She looks at the kin powers available to humans to be sure there's at least

one she would like, and she likes all three of them, especially the one that gives her a chance to deal double damage. She writes "human" for **Kin**. For **kin power**, she writes "Push It" on her character sheet, plus some notes to remind her what it does.

- The Kin chapter, starting on page 29, describes humans, dwarves, three types of elves, half-elves, halflings, troll-kin, gnomes, dragonics, forgeborn, holy ones, and tieflings.
- Jane's character sheet is on page 10, and the blank character sheet for you to copy as needed is at the back of this book.

Her One Unique Thing!

Now that Jane knows she's playing a human paladin, she comes up with her **One Unique Thing**. This free-form trait helps position a character in the game world, and Jane spends some time musing on it. She asks the GM what sort of pantheon the Dragon Empire has, and he says she can pretty much make up what she likes, especially because deities are mostly in the background. Then Jane looks at the paladin section in the Classes chapter to see if some details there spark her imagination. She sees the phrase "God-Touched" in a header, and she gets an idea. Her paladin is the only person in this **age** who can hear the voice of a certain goddess who died ages ago. That's where the paladin gets her divine power. Jane likes this idea because "dead goddess" is a wide-open concept that she can develop in all sorts of ways. Her plan is to balance the familiar image of a human paladin with the weirdness of worshiping a dead goddess.

Jane writes "I alone hear the voice of a goddess long dead," in the spot on the character sheet for her One Unique Thing. The goddess is going to have an interesting name that will be slightly difficult to pronounce, so Jane chooses a more normal name for her hero: Alyssa.

The GM likes Alyssa's One Unique Thing. Since the campaign has the heroes working for the Priestess, the GM talks with Jane about how Alyssa is going to relate to that icon. Jane says she wants to be allied with the Priestess' people but not part of the Priestess' religious organization. In fact, some of the Priestess' people think it's a little weird that Alyssa can hear the goddess' voice but the Priestess can't.

The GM wonders if this is enough to make Alyssa's relationship with the Priestess **conflicted** instead of **positive**. Jane thinks not, because she wants her goddess to be a god of light, someone who the Priestess would want to hear from, if the god hadn't died. Even so, the GM recognizes that Jane has set it up so there may be unexpected consequences of Alyssa's *unique* involving people who are mostly allies, and that's going to be good for the story.

- Your One Unique Thing sets your hero apart from everyone else in the world and it may tell the GM what you hope the campaign could be about. Advice about *uniques* starts on page 201.
- In our history of the Dragon Empire, we left great yawning gaps so you and the others at your table could have lots of room to make stuff up. What little history we do offer is meant for you to riff off or change. See *GMG*: 30.
- Details on positive, negative, and conflicted icon relationships are on page 217.

Ability Scores and Bonuses

Ability scores are six numerical values that represent a character's core traits, like Strength, Dexterity, and Charisma. Each class has ability scores it cares a lot about and other scores it doesn't rely on.

Jane uses the standard array of **ability scores** (page 24), and she assigns her scores based on how important they are to a paladin (page 122). She writes her highest score, 17, in Strength. Then, in order of importance, she assigns scores to Constitution (score of 15), Charisma (14), Dexterity (13), Wisdom (12), and Intelligence (10). She chooses two abilities to each get a +2 bonus, and she chooses her highest two: Strength and Constitution. She changes the numbers to 19 and 17, respectively. She thinks about putting a +2 on Charisma instead of Strength, but she keeps it on Strength because she will be using Strength to attack.

For each ability, the character has a corresponding **bonus**, from 0 to +4. Alyssa's Strength is 19, so Jane writes +4 in the little box next to the Strength score. Dexterity (13) is +1, Constitution (17) is +3, Wisdom (12) is +1, Intelligence (10) is 0, and Charisma (14) is +2.

Many characters would prioritize Dexterity over Charisma, but Jane noticed that paladins get more uses of several class features based on Charisma . . . and better yet, the Blessing of Heaven feature lets paladins use their Charisma in place of Dexterity when determining Armor Class.

- Ability scores are defined on page 24. They're also shown on the one-page character creation summary that shows up on page 10. You'll want to use the summary as you make your first hero. And maybe your second.
- Paladin class features are on page 125, if you want to follow along.

Paladin Gear and Starting Gear

Next, Jane looks through the paladin class description to flesh out Alyssa.

Paladins wear heavy armor, and Jane pictures Alyssa's armor as shiny and new, a reminder that she has only recently become a paladin. Most paladins use a one-handed weapon with a shield, and Alyssa is no exception. The Paladin Stats table shows that the paladin's bonus to **Armor Class** is the middle of

three ability bonuses: Constitution, Charisma, and Wisdom. (As mentioned, other heroes use Dexterity instead of Charisma, but paladins have the Blessing of Heaven). Alyssa's bonuses for these three abilities are +3, +2, and +1, so the middle value is +2. In addition, add the character's level, +1. With a base AC of 17 for heavy armor and a shield, Alyssa has an AC of 20, probably the highest in the party. Few *13th Age* tables worry much about gold-piece costs or encumbrance; the game mechanics don't either.

Alyssa's **weapon** is a scimitar because Jane has liked scimitars ever since she was a kid. For ranged attacks, she uses throwing weapons rather than bows so she won't have to put down her shield. She considers throwing axes but settles on javelins, let's say three of them.

Alyssa starts with a **healing potion**, as does every other hero in the party. It's assumed that 1st level heroes have the wherewithal to equip themselves with healing potions one way or another, and sometimes the GM weaves that into the plot. (*GMG*: 171.)

Alyssa also has the mundane clothes, personal effects, and adventuring gear that make sense for her. Jane doesn't track the cost of armor, weapons, or other gear, nor how many gold pieces Alyssa has, because the GM has bought into the designers' sense that those details aren't so important.

Jane sketches a rough image of what Alyssa's shield looks like, with a stylized blue comet emblazoned on it. She also draws Alyssa's scimitar.

✪ We're going to cheat. Here's Aaron McConnell and Lee Moyer's version of Alyssa!



Basic Attacks

The **Basic Attacks** description for the paladin class specifies that Alyssa's attack bonus with her **basic melee attack** is "Strength + Level vs. AC." Her Strength bonus is +4, and her level is 1, so she writes down +5 as her melee attack bonus. A hit deals "*Weapon* + Strength damage." For Alyssa's scimitar, a one-handed martial weapon, "*Weapon*" means 1d8 (a d8 per level), and her Strength modifier is +4, so a hit deals 1d8 + 4 damage. The average roll on a d8 is 4.5, which rounds up to 5. If Jane likes, she can choose to deal 9 damage per hit instead of rolling 1d8 + 4. Her melee attack misses deal her level in damage, or 1 at 1st level.

Alyssa's **basic ranged attack** is based on her Dexterity (+1 bonus), so her attack bonus is +2 and her damage is 1d6 + 1 (or 5 on average). For a paladin, there's no miss damage for basic ranged attacks. Paladins are better at melee.

- Different character classes deal varying amounts of damage with the same weapon! As you might expect, paladins are on the high end, and wizards are on the lowest rung. page 123 has the paladin's weapon chart.
- Weapon-focused classes like the paladin base most of their attacks on their basic attack; hence the name! Spellcasters only make basic attacks using weapons as a last resort, especially when they can't cast an at-will spell instead. Full basic attack rules are in the Combat chapter on page 301.

Hit Points and Defenses

The Paladin Level Progression table shows that Alyssa's starting **hit point** total is "(8 + Con mod) × 3." Her Constitution mod is +3, so that's 11 × 3 or 33, a high number of hit points for a 1st level hero, representing the paladin's ability to be smashed, cut, blasted, and burned but continue to fight.

Alyssa's **recoveries** are each "1d10 + Con mod," or 1d10 + 3 (on average, 9). When a healing spell, healing potion, or the rally action lets her heal using a recovery, that's how many hit points she'll heal. *13th Age* heroes all have a limited number of recoveries so they can't heal an indefinite amount of damage.

On the Paladin Stats table, Jane sees that a paladin's **initiative** (like everyone else's) is "Dex mod + Level." Her Dex mod is +1, so her initiative bonus is +2. Odds are many of Alyssa's allies and enemies will act before her each round.

Physical Defense is based on how strong, tough, and agile you are (Str, Con, and Dex). It helps protect you from many different forms of elemental and energy damage, including dragon breath, fireballs, and poison. The Paladin stats table shows Jane that Alyssa's **Physical Defense** is "10 + middle mod of Str/Con/Dex + Level." The middle bonus out of Str (+4), Con (+3), and Dex (+1) is +3, so Alyssa's PD is 10+3+1, or 14.

Mental Defense represents how smart, insightful, and forceful you are. Alyssa's Mental Defense (MD) will protect her against mental enchantments, illusions, psychic attacks, and mundane trickery. Alyssa's Mental Defense is "12 + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha + Level." Int is +0, Wis is +1, and Cha is +2, so Alyssa's MD is 12+1+1, or 14.

- The Paladin Stats Table is on page 125.

Fun with Paladins: Healing and Smiting

Now come the fun parts!

First, there's the cool things Alyssa has in common with other paladins. All paladins have the **class features** Lay on Hands and Smite. Lay on Hands heals an ally, and Smite deals extra damage to a foe. Jane jots some notes down about both features, including how often she can use them.

- The Paladin class features are on page 125.

Picking Three Talents

And then there's the choice of three class talents every 1st level *13th Age* hero gets to make—character defining powers and aptitudes chosen from a larger list.

From the list of paladin talents, Jane picks Bastion, which she can use to absorb half the damage an enemy is dealing to one of her allies. That suits Jane's sense that Alyssa is a dedicated protector. Second, she picks Bold, partly because she sees Alyssa as the hero in the front, jumping into battle, and partly because she really likes that Bold provides a bonus on attacks that Alyssa could choose to use against the undead. Finally, she picks Undaunted, which lets her make saves earlier, reducing the duration of bad effects, such as ongoing damage or being stunned. Jane wants Alyssa to be reliable and durable, so Undaunted makes sense.

She writes descriptions of these talents on the character sheet, and she enters them in the Usage columns.

- Experienced players sometimes organize their character concept around talents, so it could be that you'll be thinking about them earlier than Jane. The write-ups of adventurer-tier talents show up after class stats and features.

Inventing Backgrounds

Now that Jane knows more about Alyssa's combat style, it's time to invent at least two **backgrounds** for Alyssa. Each background both describes a character's personal history and provides a hero with bonuses on relevant skill checks.

A couple other players are using their backgrounds to align their heroes with the narrative that they were part of an *ad hoc* strike team in the Demon War. Jane sees that as a small and recent part of Alyssa's story. She thinks of herself as the strike team's newbie, and she's going to use her backgrounds for more significant elements of her history.

For her first background, Jane wants to cover all the regular stuff a paladin can do, so she writes down "Prophet of a dead goddess." The GM asks whether Alyssa, as a prophet, is going to be eating bugs, wearing sackcloth, and doing other traditional "prophet" stuff. Jane clarifies that Alyssa calls herself a prophet, but she's a heavily armed prophet who divinely kicks ass. Her prophet background is about interpreting signs, bringing traces of her dead goddess to light, and convincing others to follow her path.

For Alyssa's other background, Jane writes, "Street smarts." This background relates to her previous life on the dark streets of the big city. The GM suggests it would work more like a background if Jane named what Alyssa was doing when she developed those street smarts. Jane changes "Street smarts" to "Former Shadow Port street urchin." Jane has the option of creating more backgrounds, but sticks with the two she has created.

She has 8 points to split between them, with a maximum of 5 in any one. She puts 5 in "urchin" and 3 in "prophet." "I was an urchin for a lot longer than I've been a paladin," says Jane. These points serve as a bonus on skill checks, so Alyssa gets +5 on any skill check that's plausibly related to her experience living as an urchin, such as secretly tailing someone or feigning innocence to authorities. Thanks to her "prophet" background, she'll get +3 on checks for stuff we mentioned above, and to understand proper temple etiquette, to impress people with her virtue, and that sort of thing.

✪ Rules for creating your backgrounds start on page 206.
✪ Rules for using your backgrounds for skill checks appear on page 207.

Choosing Icon Relationships

Jane has three **icon relationship points** to assign to icons. The GM reminds her that she's free to bring in an icon other than the main three, but Alyssa's character concept fits both the Priestess and the Prince of Shadows. She considers specifying that her dead goddess is an enemy of the Lich King, but she'd rather focus on the Priestess and the Prince, so she sticks with those two icons.

For the Prince, she devotes two of her three icon dice, indicating a powerful connection. "I think I met him once," says Jane, "but of course you can never be sure." Jane chooses to make the relationship positive. She thinks of making it conflicted or even negative, but she likes the idea of a paladin being on good terms with the Prince of Shadows. She assigns her third icon die to the Priestess, and she changes her mind and defines the relationship as conflicted. "She's not sure what to make of my weird, dead goddess," says Jane.

The GM reminds her that in this campaign the Prince might end up as a major villain. Does she want her character to be narratively connected to someone who might turn out to be an enemy? Jane says that sounds like fantastic trouble for a paladin to get into.

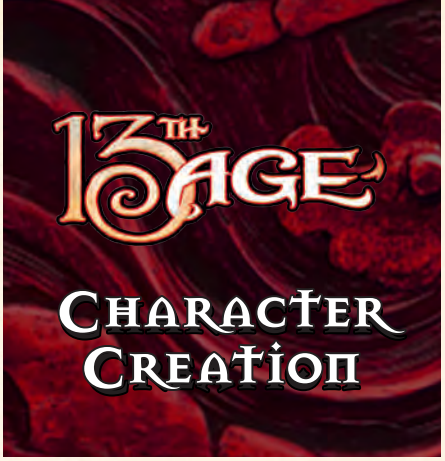
✪ Rules for choosing your icon relationships start on page 215.

Choosing a Feat

Each character starts with one adventurer-tier **feat**. Most feats are associated with specific talents, powers, or spells. Feats tend to modify your hero's chosen powers rather than transforming your hero's capabilities the way talents do.

Jane likes the Lay on Hands feat that provides a second use of *lay on hands*. But she already suspects that Alyssa is going to be taking hits, and *lay on hands* uses Alyssa's recoveries, not the recovery of the ally she chooses to heal. So she opts for the adventurer-tier feat associated with Bastion, and gets a 9th recovery.

✪ Most feats are listed directly under the talent, class feature, or spell they modify. The few universal feats that can be chosen by anyone appear on page 211, and a short table of feats more generally associated with kin and class appears on page 212.



Write down **ability modifiers** for each ability score: **+0** for 10-11, **+1** for 12-13, **+2** for 14-15, **+3** for 16-17, and so on. You will use these in most of your dice rolls. ❺

Assign **17, 15, 14, 13, 12, 10** to the six **ability scores** (higher is better). Add **+2** to two of them. If unsure, check the recommendations for your class. ❹

Every character in *13th Age* is unique. Were you foretold to spark the apocalypse? Can you, alone, speak with birds? Their **one unique thing** makes your character different from everyone else in the Dragon Empire. ❻

Is your ranger more of a hunter or more of a warrior? Every class offers unique benefits known as **talents**. Mix and match three adventurer-tier talents to differentiate your character from others of their class. ❼

A **background** is a bit of story about your character that defines a broad category of their experience. Is your character a "hunted outlaw" or "served in the Imperial Legion"? Make up a few backgrounds and assign between 1 and 5 points to each. You have 8 points to spend total. ❽

When making **skill checks**, roll a D20, add your level (1), one of your ability modifiers, and any one background that applies. ❾

Your character has a relationship with one or more **icons**, the powerful forces behind the Dragon Empire. Distribute three dice between them, and for each, choose if it's positive, negative, or conflicted. ❿

13th Age

Alyssa — NAME
Paladin — CLASS
Looks like a younger cousin of the sorcerer — DESCRIPTION

ONE UNIQUE THING

I alone hear the voice of a goddess long dead

Nál-Shanág

ABILITY SCORES

ARMOR CLASS

SCORE	19	13	17
	+4 MODIFIER	+1 MODIFIER	+3 MODIFIER
	STRENGTH	DEXTERITY	CONSTITUTION

PHYSICAL DEFENSE

TALENTS

Bastion
Bold: Immune to fear. +1 vs enemies not engaged with allies. +1 vs demon/devil/dragon/undead (type chosen at start of arc).
Undaunted: Roll saves at start, instead of end, of turn.

DEFENSES & INITIATIVE

PHYSICAL DEFENSE	ARMOR CLASS	MENTAL DEFENSE
14	20	14

INITIATIVE: +2

BACKGROUNDS

BACKGROUND	BONUS
Prophet of a dead Goddess	+3
Former Shadow Port street urchin	+5

SKILL CHECK = 1 (LEVEL) + ABILITY MODIFIER + BACKGROUND

ICON RELATIONSHIPS

#D6	+/±/–*	ICON	5+ ↻	USED ↻
2	+	Prince of Shadows	☐☐▨	☐☐▨
1	±	Priestess	☐▨▨	☐▨▨
			☐☐☐	☐☐☐

*+ positive, ± conflicted, or – negative relationship.

FEATURES, POWERS & SPELLS

ACTION	NAME	TRIGGER
Qck	Lay On Hands	CQ Spell. Use re… an ally within…
Free	Smite	Next attack d…
Free	Bastion	When nearby al… damage. Feat…
Free	Push It	When escalation… make a 2nd … attack does … on miss half …

D…ing your turn: one each of **standard** > **move** > **quick**, and any …
ch…ges/refresh at new level ✡ changes at new level or with in…

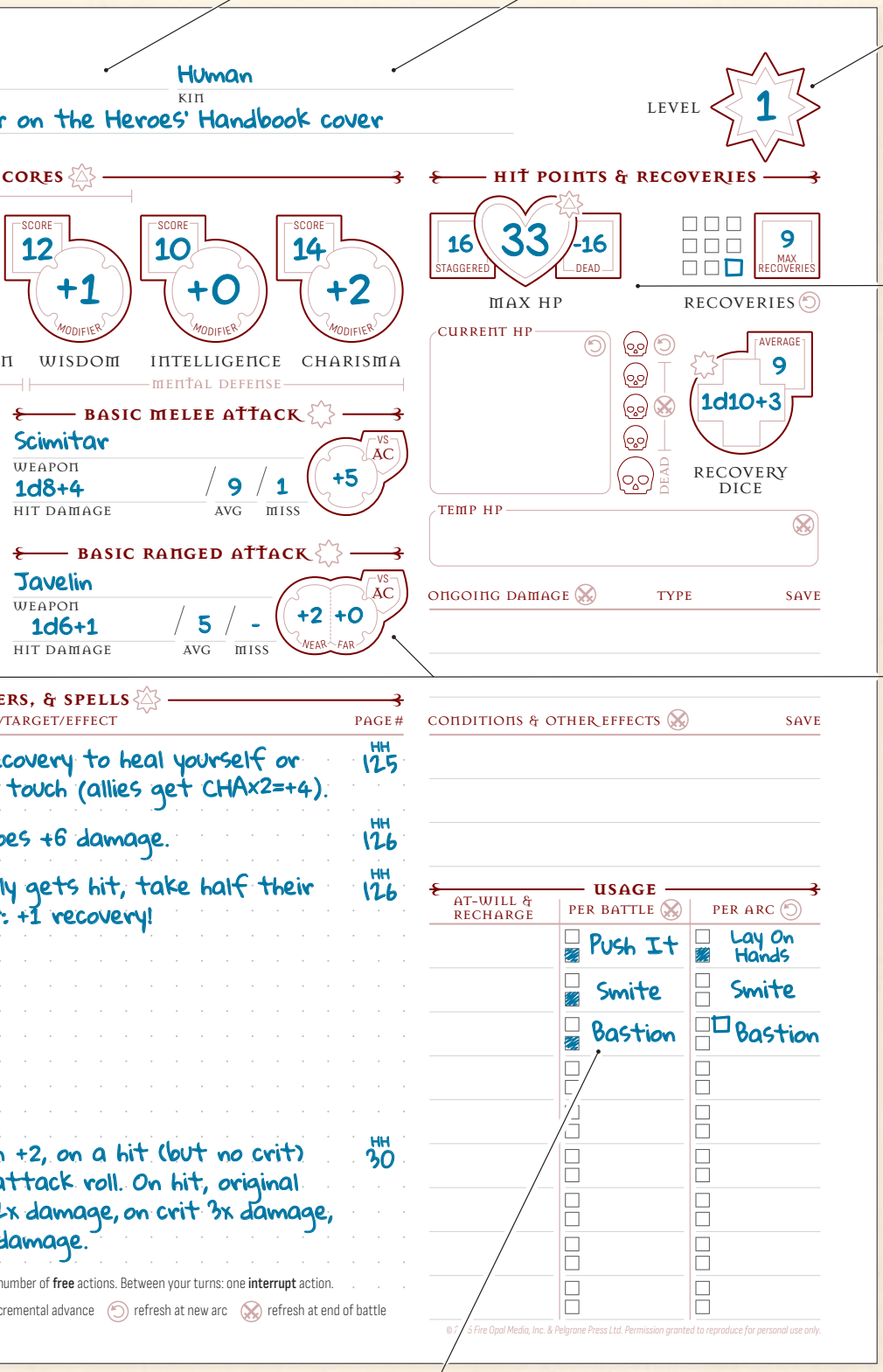
Read the class description to select your character's initial features, powers, and spells. For the ones used in combat, note down the **action type** (**standard**, **quick**, **move**, or **free**), and a summary of their effect. Passive and out-of-combat powers have their own *Miscellaneous Feaures & Powers* section in the back. ⓫

❸ Your character's **class**—whether *bard, sorcerer,* or any of the many others—determines their archetype and the powers they have access to.

❷ Choose a **kin**—human, elf, dwarf, and others are available. Each kin provides a choice of **kin powers**. Choose one and note it down (see how in step 11).

❶ Your player character (**PC**) starts at **level 1**. As they journey through the world, they'll grow stronger by gaining levels, unlocking new powers over time.

START HERE



❿ **Hit points** (**HP**) measure how much damage you can take before falling unconscious. At level 1 your **max HP** is the base value for your class, plus your CON modifier, multiplied by 3.

Recoveries can be used to heal, normally during rests. Most heroes have 8 uses per arc. You roll **recovery dice** (based on your class and CON modifier) to heal. As you gain levels you roll more dice!

⓮ Your character starts with basic **gear**, including the armor and weapons of your choice. Consult the class description and note them down, and your armor's **base AC**, in the back of the sheet.

Your **armor class** (**AC**), **physical defense** (**PD**), and **mental defense** (**MD**) are target numbers for attack rolls against your character. For each, **use the middle ability modifier of the three listed below**.

AC = DEX/CON/WIS + level (1) + armor's base AC for your class.
PD = STR/DEX/CON + level (1) + class PD value.
MD = WIS/INT/CHA + level (1) + class MD value.

Initiative = DEX + level. It represents your speed in combat.

Consult your class to determine **attack bonuses** and **weapon damage**. Adjust by how well your class handles your chosen weapon and armor.

⓭ You gain a **feat** every level. Feats enhance talents and powers you already have, although some **universal feats** are also available. Choose one adventurer-tier feat and record it in the back.

Symbols throughout show when you recover powers and update your PC.

- Recover after a battle.
- Recover after an arc.
- Update when gaining an incremental advance or level.

⓬ Each of your character's powers has a usage pattern. Some can be used **at-will**—whenever you need to. Others, a certain number of times **per battle** or **per arc** (an **arc** usually lasts three or four battles). Black out the checkboxes you don't need, and use the others during play, crossing them out when you use a power.



Shaping the Story Together

The GM asks the players each in turn what their heroes' icon connections are, and he writes them down. He eyeballs the resulting list to see which icons the heroes are most connected to, and later he'll keep these icons in mind when building out his campaign.

Jane spends more time thinking about Alyssa's *unique*. Next to where her character sheet says, "I alone hear the voice of a goddess long dead," Jane writes, "Nál-Shanág." The GM asks what Jane wants to establish about this goddess, and Jane says, "Not much." She'll develop the goddess more as she gets comfortable playing the character.

When the characters are done or mostly done, the players introduce their respective heroes. In the party is a tiefling rogue who defected from the Diabolist, a high elf sorcerer who secretly swallowed something Diabolical and now wields some of that fallen icon's power, a wood elf ranger and son of an elder oak, and a dwarven cleric who is the only dwarf ever invited to join a certain prominent cult devoted to the Priestess. The GM asks the players questions about their heroes because he's going to weave their plot threads into the overall narrative of the campaign.

In the process of creating their characters, the players have all added elements to the setting. The tiefling's player says that in this campaign, tieflings are something new, spawned for the first time during the Demon War. The dwarf cleric's player invented a special cult devoted to the Priestess so their character would have an exclusive organization to join. The wood elf's player invented the "elder oaks," which are wise trees who speak with authority in the Queen's Wood. The sorcerer's player invented a mysterious food or substance that the sorcerer ate, a detail that's likely to come up later on in the hero's career. And Jane invented Nál-Shanág, Alyssa's long-dead goddess.

There are thoughts on how heroes' backgrounds and *uniques* can help create the story of a campaign on page 204.

Game On

And now the party is ready for their first adventure.

Jane finds a miniature that looks more or less like Alyssa, and the other players find miniatures for their heroes, too.

The GM says the campaign is going to be based in the great city of Glitterhaegen, and that the party has assembled there to continue their work as a strike team working for the Priestess. A "Saint Martial" representing the Priestess gives the party their first mission: to investigate a cursed cemetery a few days' ride inland. They should throw down whatever has risen there, or at least report back about what it is. The Saint Martial answers the heroes' questions, and if the players don't think of all the right questions, that's OK. The GM specifies that the Saint Martial and the party talk at some length, albeit "off screen." Later, if the players think of something they want to know, probably the heroes heard it from the Saint Martial and the GM will fill them in. Since each 1st level player character starts their career with an adventure-tier healing potion, the GM has fun with a scene in which the Saint Martial benevolently dispenses a potion with her personal mark to each of the heroes.

Now that the players know the premise of the mission, they make choices such as which spells to prepare. The paladin is a simple class with few such choices to make. Even the decision of which type of enemy to target via the Bold talent can wait until Alyssa is about to go into battle.

A party typically has to fight an **arc** of four battles before regaining their recoveries, recovering all their spells, replacing used potions, etc. Jane reviews the resources she has that are going to see her through Alyssa's four battles. She has nine recoveries, each of which heals 9 hit points (or 1d10 + 3). She can use her kin power, *push it*, once per battle. She can Lay on Hands once per arc, and it uses up one of her recoveries. She can Smite once per battle, plus two additional times per arc because her Charisma mod is +2. She can use Bastion once per battle, plus three additional times per arc because her Constitution mod is +3. There's no limit to how often she can use Bold, Undaunted, or her basic attacks.

For information on how the arc mechanics make every die roll in combat matter, see page 307.

Rolling for Icon Connections

For each of the heroes' icon relationships, the player checks to see if that relationship becomes an **icon connection** they can use at some point this arc. To determine icon connections, each player rolls their three icon dice, a d6 for each die associated with an icon. For the Priestess, Jane rolls one die: a 5 (a connection). For the Prince of Shadows, she gets a 2 (no connection) and a 3 (no connection). Alyssa has one icon connection with the Priestess, and Jane can use it outside of combat to influence the narrative.

Rolling for icon connections is on page 269.

Travel & Information

Once the players say they are ready, the GM fast-forwards through the travel sequence, as the party rides up the Imperial roads to a nearby town. The Saint Martial has supplied riding horses for the journey, along with supplies and a guide, so the players can focus on being heroic instead of on logistics.

At the town, the heroes are welcomed, and the locals tell them everything they know about the nearby cemetery. They say that in broad daylight the cemetery seems safe, but ever since the head of the guardian statue that stands by the main gate went missing, nights are dangerous around the graveyard. A foul, frigid wind blows out of the cemetery, and it weakens or sickens those caught out in it. If the heroes can find the statue's missing head, they expect whatever curse has been activated will be dispelled. "The locals assure you you're absolutely safe as long as you're in the cemetery during daylight," says the GM, and everyone knows that the heroes are not going to be safe for long.

For another example of getting to the action quickly, GMs should see the introductory adventure, *GMG*: 194.

Into the Haunted Cemetery

By this point, everyone at the table is ready for action, so the GM summarizes the next day's trek to the cemetery, all under a clear blue sky. At the gate, their guide shows them the guardian statue, now headless. While the guide stays behind, the heroes walk into the cemetery, looking for any possible source of evil power.

The GM asks the players to put their miniatures down on the table to represent their marching order. Jane puts Alyssa in the lead, and the dwarf cleric joins her. The group isn't using a grid map this session, since the rules neither require nor support it, but they'll be pushing their miniatures around some obstacles the GM is setting up as mausoleums.

Sure enough, the GM narrates that the party is walking among countless, ancient mausoleums when they sky goes suddenly dark, with myriad reddish stars and no moon. From one side comes a small band of fanatical death cultists, shrieking maniacally.

Ahead of time, the GM has balanced this battle as a **1st level battle**. For simplicity, he's used all **standard-strength**, 1st level monsters. By default, a 1st level party of five heroes fights seven such monsters, and that's what the GM has set up, inventing two simple 1st level antagonists using the Monster Stats table and our Do It Yourself (DIY) advice. Five are human fanatics, who fight in melee; and two are high elf devotees, who prefer to use magical ranged attacks.

If you're the GM, you'll want to know that the Battle Building rules start on *GMG*: 41.
The DIY advice for creating monsters starts on *GMG*: 160.
GMs might also want to know that the stats for new monsters made for this example of play are in the *GMG* appendices



Attacked by Death Cultists

Before Jane rolls initiative for the battle, she remembers that she can choose one enemy type as a special enemy for the rest of the arc. She chooses undead, of course. The GM reminds her that she could wait and decide in a later battle, but Jane knows Alyssa's mind: "There aren't any undead in this fight, but come on, these are death cultists. We're in a cemetery. Undead must die!"

Jane rolls initiative, a d20 with her +2 initiative bonus. She rolls a 16 for a total of 18. Every other player rolls initiative as well, and the GM rolls for the cultists—one initiative roll for the human fanatics and one initiative roll for the high elf devotees. Heroes and foes act in initiative order, which stays the same from round to round. Some GMs ask for help from a player to track initiative, but this GM lists the initiative in order on an index card and handles initiative himself. The first to act are the fanatics, with an initiative of 21.

The fanatics descend on the party, wielding elaborate polearms that look like they were looted from an evil warlord's tomb. The fanatics were already **nearby** when they came around the corners of mausoleums, so they can reach the party and attack. There's no measuring; being nearby an enemy means you can use a move action to reach them. All five fanatics run up and attack the two heroes in the front: Alyssa and the cleric. The GM has two fanatics attack each hero, and he randomly assigns the fifth one to attack the cleric, pushing each miniature up against the hero they're about to attack to show that they are **engaged**.

The fanatics' attack bonus is +6, and the two attacks against Alyssa total 13 and 18. "Armor Class 20," says Jane. The attacks against AC could only hit Alyssa if the die roll plus the attack bonus reached 20, so both attacks bounce off Alyssa's armor and shield. But the three attacks against the cleric's AC of 17 are better: a 23, 19, and 9 mean the fanatics land two hits for 8 damage each.

Alyssa's thing is protecting the party, so she uses her Bastion ability. She takes half the damage one of the fanatics just dealt to the cleric, meaning she and the cleric each take 4 damage. Alyssa's hit points drop from 33 to 29. She can use this talent once per battle, plus three additional times per arc. Jane notes that she's used it once this battle, marking a checkbox on her character sheet.

Next, it's Alyssa's turn, and she attacks a fanatic with her scimitar. Jane rolls the d20 and adds +5 for her basic melee attack bonus, for a total of 18. The GM reminds her that her Bold talent gives her a +1 bonus against foes that aren't engaged with her allies, so the total rises to 19. The fanatics have an AC of 17, so that's a hit. For damage, she rolls 1d8 + 4 and gets a total of 8, and the fanatic's hit points drop from 30 to 22.

After Alyssa, each other hero takes a turn, as do the enemy devotees. The two devotees each target three heroes with their attacks. The sorcerer and ranger each get targeted twice, while the cleric and Alyssa are each targeted once. The devotees speak *blasphemous words*, and Alyssa can feel necro energy creeping

into her soul. The devotee's attack roll against Alyssa is 12 +6 for a total of 18. That easily hits Alyssa's Mental Defense of 14. She takes 5 damage, dropping her hit points to 24. Most of the devotees' other attacks likewise hit the other heroes.

The party's high elf sorcerer uses *burning hands* to target two enemies, and they choose the fanatic that Alyssa wounded as one of the targets. The attack roll against the wounded fanatic hits for 9 damage, dropping the fanatic to 13 hit points.

At the end of the first round, it looks grim for the heroes. They're outnumbered, and none of the foes have been defeated. That's the way things usually look on the first round of combat. Now, the GM takes the biggest 6-sided die he has and places it on the table with the "1" facing up. "The **escalation die** is at 1," he says, meaning that this round, all heroes get +1 on their attacks. Each round, the escalation die increases by 1 until it reaches 6, where it stays for the rest of the fight.

- Fights start out hard, but the heroes benefit from the escalation die and most monsters don't! (page 292)
- Movement rules and character's distances from each other—far-away, nearby, and engaged—are explained on page 293 and 294.

Rallying, Smiting, Healing, and More

At the start of the second round, the five fanatics attack, and this time one of them scores a lucky hit on Alyssa. Her hit points are down to 16, meaning she is staggered, at half hit points or below. (These cultists don't have attacks that work better against staggered heroes, but some monsters do.)

Alyssa goes next, and she decides to **rally**. Instead of using her standard action to attack, she uses it to pull herself together. This action allows her to heal using a recovery. She marks off one of her nine recoveries, and her recoveries are worth 9 hit points each (or 1d10 + 3), so her hit points rise from 16 to 25.

She could have used *lay on hands* and still been able to attack this turn, but that's a precious 1/arc resource she plans to save for a badly wounded comrade.

This round, the devotee's spell misses Alyssa's Mental Defense. The spell deals 1 damage even on a miss, so Alyssa's hit points drop to 24. The party's high elf sorcerer uses *burning hands* again, as there's no limit to how often they can cast it. The rogue, who "disappeared" last round using their *shadow walk* power, reappears next to the devotees and hits one with the special double-damage attack that follows *shadow walk*. The ranger shoots and slays the same devotee, and the cleric continues battling the fanatics.

At the start of the third round, the escalation die goes to 2. A fanatic gets another lucky hit on Alyssa, so she's back to 16 hit points.

On Alyssa's turn, Jane tells the GM that she wants to break free from the fanatics and run over to the surviving devotee. The GM confirms that the devotee is nearby, so she can reach it with a single move action.



Unfortunately, moving away from enemies provokes opportunity attacks from them unless you successfully disengage, and doing that requires a successful disengage check.

Every character gets a standard action, a move action, and a quick action on their turn, and you can always use a standard action for another move or use a move action for another quick action. Jane decides to avoid the opportunity attacks and instead uses her move action to take a chance at disengaging. She rolls a d20 and, since she's engaged with two foes, she needs to roll 12+. She rolls a 4 and fails the check. Her move action is used up in the attempt, and she doesn't want to spend her standard action to move and take opportunity attacks, since she would no longer be able to attack this turn. Since she still has her standard action, she can attack a foe that she's engaged with.

This time, Jane uses Alyssa's Smite attack against the fanatic that she wounded before. The escalation die raises her attack bonus from +5 to +7, and the Bold talent raises it to +8, so she gets a total of 17 on her attack roll. "That's exactly what you need," says the GM, and now the players know that the fanatics' AC is 17. Her average damage is 9 (1d8 + 4) plus 6 (1d10) for the Smite for a total of 15. The fanatic had only 13 hit points, so it's dead. The players raise a little cheer as the battle starts to tilt their way. Jane knows that *13th Age* can be about cool images, so she says, "I know my shield isn't a true magic item, but as I cut down the fanatic, my shield flares with my god's power, a burst of flame that destroys their spear." The GM loves it, saying "That's great, it's part of your story showing up in combat. Nice touch." And he makes a private note of the word "flame."

Jane used her move action to try to disengage, her standard action to attack, and a free action to turn her attack into a Smite attack. Finally, she takes one more action on her turn, a **quick action** to use her Lay on Hands feature to heal the beleaguered cleric. Jane marks off the one use of *lay on hands* that she gets each arc, and she crosses off a second recovery, leaving her with seven, since *lay on hands* uses one of Alyssa's recoveries. The cleric heals as if they'd used a recovery of their own, which means 8 hit points, +4 thanks to Alyssa's Charisma.

The rest of the third round plays out well. The surviving devotee manages to disengage from the rogue and cast its spell again, but it doesn't target Alyssa. The cleric and the ranger manage to take down a second fanatic, leaving three in the battle, along with the devotee.

On the fourth round, the escalation die advances to 3. The fanatics attack, hitting the cleric but not Alyssa.

On Alyssa's turn, she again uses her move action to attempt to disengage. This time, she needs only an 11+ (one foe, not two), and she easily succeeds. She moves to the surviving devotee, engages it, and makes her melee attack. The rogue is also engaged with the devotee, so Alyssa doesn't get her +1 bonus from Bold.

Alyssa can use Smite once each battle, and she can use it two additional times per arc. She decides to use one of her additional 1/arc Smites for this attack. Thanks to the escalation die, her attack bonus is now +8, and she easily hits the devotee's AC (15). That's 15 damage, which is not enough to finish off the devotee. Jane decides to *push it* with her 1/battle human kin power. She rolls her *push it* attack, and the second roll is 9 for a total of 17. Since that's a hit, her damage is doubled, and she deals 30 damage to the devotee, killing it!

Now that there are only three foes left and the escalation die is at 3, the players feel confident. By the end of the round, they've killed a third fanatic, leaving only two.

On the fifth round, the escalation die reaches 4. Alyssa uses her move action to move up to the remaining fanatics and then attacks one of them. She decides to save her Smite and makes a basic attack, which now has a bonus of +9. She hits a fanatic for 9 more damage. The other four heroes finish off the remaining fanatics, and the fight is over.

A Quick Rest and Ready for More

After the battle, the heroes get a **quick rest** that lets them get in shape for the next battle. In the next battle, Alyssa will once again be able to freely rally once, Smite once, and use Bastion once. She erases the checkmarks she put on those powers.

Alyssa has only 16 hit points at the end of the fight, so she uses two recoveries, which heal 9 hit points each. That's a total of 34 hit points, and her max is just 33, so the extra hit point is lost. Alyssa has used four of her nine recoveries, which is a lot for just one battle.

During the quick rest, the other heroes use recoveries to heal up, and they reset their per-battle powers so they can use them again in the next fight. They have three more battles to go in this arc before their hit points, recoveries, and limited-use powers all reset during a full heal-up.

Rules for quick rests are on page 306.

Who Are These Death Cultists?

The heroes are curious about the fanatics and devotees, and they examine the bodies for clues about what's going on. In addition to grisly details about ritual scars and decorations made from bones, the GM says that each foe has multiple overlapping scars on the underside of the left wrist, "as if someone with fangs has been biting them there again and again over months or years." One player says, "Does it look like a vampire has been drinking blood from their wrists?" and the GM uses his evil smile and nods. Unfortunately, these enemies did not have the guardian statue's missing head.

The heroes don't spend any time rummaging through the enemies' belongings looking for silver pieces, and if they collect the weaponry to sell back in town, no one mentions it. The game focuses on heroics.

Alyssa's First Icon Connection

The party continues to explore the ancient cemetery. When the GM mentions that there's a ruined shrine beside the grave of a mighty warrior, Jane has an idea. "Could I use my icon connection with the Priestess to say that I recognize the iconography of the shrine? And that it's a shrine to my goddess?"

The GM loves the idea, and then says that before they work out the details of what's happening, he wants to know whether the icon connection will come with a twist!

Players get what they want when they use an icon connection to add something to the narrative, but they also roll a d20 as the *twist die*. If the roll is 1–5, there's a twist, and the GM adds something unexpected to the story: player happy; GM happy.

The twist roll is a 7. The GM says, "OK, no twist. Jane, do you want this to be a shrine to Nál-Shanág from when she was alive, or do you want this ancient warrior to have been like you, a worshipper of a dead goddess?"

Jane wants this to be a shrine to the living goddess. The adventurers poke around the remnants of the shrine, and inspect the iconography of the tomb, and the GM asks if it's OK for him to fill in some details. Jane agrees and the GM says that the shrine obviously dates from the 3rd Age when Nál-Shanág was alive. (The official setting is open-ended, so the GM can say anything he wants about the 3rd Age.) Most of the iconography is what Alyssa recognizes, except that Nál-Shanág's sacred scimitar is replaced with a splendid green flame.

The GM faces Jane with a question: how does Alyssa react to this different iconography? There's no right answer, and whatever she does is bound to have narrative consequences. Alyssa prays at the broken altar for guidance, but the GM isn't about to tell Jane what to do, so he improvises a deflection: "The goddess' guidance has always been that you should trust your own judgment." Jane asks if she has to decide right now, and the GM says of course not. The cleric and the ranger say they will help Alyssa clean up and restore the shrine, and Alyssa says thank you, but that offer should wait until they find what's happened to the guardian statue's head.

Both Alyssa and the GM make plans to revisit the shrine later.

If Jane had rolled a twist with Alyssa's icon connection at the shrine, the GM would have made up something strange and potentially ominous about the warrior buried there, and even without the twist that could still be a plot element in the future.

✪ The icon connection twist rules are on page 272, followed by many pages of examples of using icon connections.



A Mob of Ragged Cultists

As Alyssa steps away from the broken shrine, the party hears the sounds of wild drumming, coming from a section of the cemetery that's been taken over by tangled trees. They follow the sound and soon enough come upon a mob of 15 ragged death cultists, dancing to the drumming of another high elf devotee, who's backed up by three more human fanatics.

The high elf sorcerer thinks maybe it's time to "try talking with these people," and the GM lets him talk while everyone else is rolling initiative. Then the GM says that although talking might ordinarily be an excellent idea, there are some enemies–and some sessions–where talking just isn't a likely scenario, and this is pretty much a combat situation.

The sorcerer takes the point but plays it up by continuing to try to talk through the first and second rounds of combat.

The battle features a new type of enemy. The 15 ragged cultists in the mob are **mooks**, with one-fourth the hit points (8) and half the damage (4) of standard 1st level monsters. In addition, damage to a mook is tracked as damage to the mob as a whole. Since mooks are weaker than standard monsters, five of them count as a single standard monster. The 15 mooks count as three monsters; add in the three fanatics and the devotee, and the monster's side has the equivalent of seven monsters.

On her first turn, Alyssa deals 9 damage to the mooks, which kills one (8 hp) and leaves 1 point of damage on the mob. Damage from other heroes accumulates on the mob, killing one mook every time the total reaches 8 or more.

On the second round, Alyssa uses her 1/battle Smite for 15 damage. Since there was already 3 damage on the mob, 15 damage is enough to finish off one mook, kill a second one, and leave 2 damage on the mob. Alyssa gets to tell everyone about the cool move she used to take out two cultists at once, catching their spears with her shield before whirling around with her scimitar and sending one in each direction.

There were plenty of mooks at the start of the battle, but the party cuts them down pretty quickly and then shifts their focus to defeat the fanatics and the spellcasting devotee.

After the battle, the party gets another quick rest, and the GM fills them in on the ritual area where the fight just took place. It's a big, open space in the woods, where the tombs and gravestones are so worn down that the ground is pretty flat. The heroes gain more icky information about the local death cult by looking through the devotee's scrolls, and they can see a well-used trail leading away from this space and out of the woods.

- The GM has reskinned the ragged outlaw (*GMG*: 132) as a ragged cultist. No text or stat changes are necessary; since it's the players' first adventure, the GM isn't using any of the ragged outlaw's nastier specials.
- Rules for mooks in combat appear on page 305.
- Advice for building battles with mooks show up on *GMG*: 44.

The Cleric's Icon Connection

As the heroes are examining the ritual space and the dead cultists' effects, they spot a spirit spying on them through the trees. The GM means the spirit to be a harmless distraction, something the heroes can interact with but not really benefit from. The player running the dwarf cleric, however, has other ideas. He uses an icon connection with the Priestess and says that the spirit finds itself compelled to follow the cleric and aid him. The GM runs with it, although he specifies that the aid will be in terms of how the cleric's story plays out, not in terms of bonuses on die rolls. Then, the cleric's player rolls the d20 to see if there's a twist, and the roll of 3 means there is! Fun for the players; fun for the GM!

Everyone can see the spirit is that of a human cleric, dressed like an adventurer. In addition, the cleric can see by the symbols on the spirit's surcoat that it belongs to the cleric's own special cult. The spirit floats out from among the trees and toward the cleric, to whom it says in ghostly slow motion, "Com . . . rade."

The cleric talks with the spirit at some length, but the spirit is clearly not all there. (Death can do a number on you.) It repeatedly assures the cleric, "I . . . will . . . help . . . you . . . avenge . . . me." Everyone knows the cleric is going to get some help and (thanks to the twist) that something weird is going to happen.

Third Battle: More Mooks

The party follows the spirit along a trail, out of the woods, and into the courtyard of a central temple, which is ruined but passable. Here, they find a large group of temple guards who were guarding a larger door, paying no attention to the corridor the spirit just brought the heroes through.

The third battle is against 15 more ragged cultist mooks (equivalent to three monsters) backed up by four death cult guardians with bows and arrows (reskinned archer outlaws, *GMG*: 133). The archers stay **far away** as the mooks advance. Some ranged spells target only nearby foes and can't reach targets that are far away.

For this battle, since the spirit guided them to a surprising position, the GM lets all the heroes get a +4 bonus on their initiative checks. Yes, the GM said not to expect a bonus on die rolls, but most GMs go soft on that rule if you have a good story—initiative bonuses are the place to loosen up.

First, the party cuts through the mooks, and then they close in on the archers. Since the archers are far away, it takes two move actions to get close to them. A hero can make two move actions in a single turn by giving up their standard action, which is usually used to make an attack. Once they are engaged in

melee, the archers are easy to deal with. Using their bows would draw **opportunity attacks** from the heroes engaged with them, so the archers that fail to disengage are stuck using their melee weapons, which deal less damage than their bows.

In this battle, when Alyssa uses *push it*, she misses the reroll and deals only half damage with her Smite (7 damage) instead of double (30).

When the fight is over, the party sees that the spirit that had been guiding them is gone.

- Far-away is the range that takes two moves to reach an enemy, but it's not a problem for most ranged attacks.
- Advice on using initiative bonuses for surprises and ambushes is on *GMG*: 50.
- Another example of initiative bonuses from an icon connection can be found on page 276.
- Opportunity attack rules are on page 296.

Quick Rest and a Step Toward 2nd Level

Now that the party has won three fights, each hero gets an **incremental advance**, which means getting a little bit of 2nd level right now. Jane thinks about taking the feat to make her Smite feature stronger, but instead she opts for 2nd level hit points. She looks on the Paladin Level Progression table and sees that her hit point maximum will rise from 33 to 44. She's currently suffering from 4 points of damage, so her current hit point score rises from 29 to 40. "Getting knocked around a little has toughened me up," says Jane.

- Incremental advance rules are on page 221.

A Zombie Boar!

With the roaming guards dispatched, the party ventures into the unholy temple. The players say that their heroes advance slowly and cautiously, but to save time, the GM summarizes their progress quickly rather than playing it out step by step. Once the heroes descend a set of stairs to a lower level, new foes attack them.

The last battle is against five more human fanatics and a giant zombie boar. The boar is a **double-strength** monster, with double the hit points and double the damage of a standard 1st level monster. Naturally, it counts as two monsters. Also on the enemies' side is a death-cult ritualist, a gaunt human who's there to perform evil rituals, not to fight. She's a "weakling," meaning she has half the hit points and deals half the damage of a standard monster. The ritualist counts as half a monster, putting the battle's monster equivalent total at 7.5 instead of the usual 7. As the players soon learn, the ritualist wears a magic ring, which she uses to prevent the damage from the first successful attack against her.

The last battle is bound to be the toughest because the heroes are already worn down. They've **used most of their recoveries** to heal from earlier damage, and they've used up most of the special powers that can be used only once per arc, such as Alyssa's *lay on hands*. On the other hand, the players know that this is the last battle this arc, so they can cut loose with everything they have left without worrying about saving anything for the next battle. And Alyssa finally gets to fight an undead monster! Her Bold talent gives her +1 on attacks against it.

At the end of the first round, the spirit reappears and says, "Watch . . . out!" Of course, it's too late to make a difference; this is the twist. For the rest of the battle, the spirit breaks in every round, usually providing advice just after it becomes no longer useful. For example, a moment after the cleric suffers a critical hit, the spirit appears and says, "Dodge . . . left!" A year from now, "Dodge . . . left!" will be one thing everyone remembers about this session.

- The giant zombie boar and the death-cult ritualist are DIY monsters of the GM's creation. You'll find them in the *GMG* appendices.
- If you're wondering what happens when you run out of recoveries, see page 304.

Skulls, Death Saves, Healing Potions, and More

On the third round of the battle, the giant zombie boar takes Alyssa's hit points to –5, knocking her **unconscious**. Half of Alyssa's maximum hit point score is 22, so she would die at –22 hp. For now, she's safe. She also gains one **Skull**, which measures how near she is to death. If she accumulates five Skulls in battle, she dies, even if her hit points are above –22. When Alyssa's turn comes up, she rolls a d20 as a death save. Her roll is 12, not high enough for her to recover on her own. Instead, she gains a second Skull, and her turn ends.

At this point in the battle, things are looking grim, and the players discuss whether they should **retreat**. If they retreat, the combat ends immediately, and the party escapes without further incident. The drawback is that retreating entails suffering a **narrative loss**, as determined by the GM. The players agree not to retreat yet, but if the battle doesn't swing their way, they will have to flee on a later round.

On the fourth round of battle, before Alyssa's turn comes up, an ally uses a standard action to pour a **healing potion** down her throat. She heals 9 hp from her recovery, with a bonus of +5 hp from the potion. Unconscious characters heal from 0 hp, so she now has 14 hp. She's conscious again, and she acts normally when her turn comes later that round. She decides to rally, raising her hp to 23 and using her ninth recovery—her last for the arc.

With Alyssa back in the fight and the escalation die now at +3, the fight is looking better. "Nál-Shanág guide my blade," she says, and the dice back her up. The next time Alyssa hits the zombie boar, she *pushes it* with her human kin power and deals 18 damage, dropping the boar from 46 hp to 28. Since the zombie boar's starting hit points were 60, it is staggered at 30 hp or lower. By default, staggering a hero or monster has no particular effect, but this monster has a special drawback: once it's staggered, it starts to fall apart, taking 5 damage every time it acts!

The players forget about retreating, and soon the zombie boar and the remaining fanatics are killed. The sorcerer finishes off the ritualist with a *chaos bolt* spell that randomly deals psychic damage. The player specifies that the spell **shocks the ritualist unconscious** rather than killing her, and the party has a prisoner to bring back to town. The party has made it through all four battles in the arc.

- Skulls are covered with death and dying on page 305.
- Retreats that incur a narrative loss are on page 299.
- Healing potions open the Treasure chapter, *GMG:* 170.
- Ppage 304 discusses the option to knock an enemy unconscious instead of slaying it.

The Unholy Altar and the Statue's Head

In the lower level of the temple, the heroes find what they are looking for: an unholy altar that is channeling necromantic energy into the site. Here, they find the head of the guardian statue, placed in the center of a jagged magic circle on top of the altar. The heroes take the head, and to be on the safe side, they overturn the altar and confiscate all the ritual tools. The supernatural night immediately fades, and daylight returns to the cemetery.

The heroes remove the ritualist's magic ring. It's a *ring of defense*, an intricately worked iron ring that gives the wearer a chance each battle to prevent 20 or more damage from an attack. The party decides that the cleric should have it because it's bad news for the whole party if the cleric is knocked unconscious. Magic items are more or less alive, and this one has picked up a creepy vibe from being used by death cultists. In the next adventure, when the cleric successfully uses the ring for the first time, it finally adapts to its new owner and loses its unsettling energy.

The high elf sorcerer's player was bothered by the death cultists' vampiric scars. Since the arc is ending and they didn't use their icon connection, they now use a conflicted connection with the Lich King to establish that the sorcerer recognizes something among the ritual paraphernalia, some token that lets them identify this cult or at least have a direct connection to it somehow. That's a plot hook to be fully explored in a future adventure, and this time the twist die rolls an 8, so there's no twist.

The heroes collect any valuables they might find, such as significant jewelry, but no one tracks gold-piece values or personal wealth totals. Maybe the heroes turn their loot over to the Saint Martial, maybe they keep some as trophies, maybe they sell it and throw a party. The only treasure that really gets tracked are magic items.

With the head of the statue and the ritualist as a prisoner, the party returns to the guide waiting for them at the gate. Together, they ride back to town, where the heroes are hailed as . . . heroes!

- True magic items are covered starting on *GMG:* 172.

Healing Up

With the arc completed, the party gets a **full heal-up**. They get back their lost hit points, expended recoveries, used spells, etc. Back in Glitterhaegen, the Saint Martial replaces each used healing potion. Heroes keep unused healing potions but don't accumulate additional ones.

- Full heal-ups are covered on page 307

Shadows and Portents

The GM reminds Jane about the unfamiliar iconography at the shrine to Nál-Shanág, and Jane decides that life is too short for half-measures. She's going to have Alyssa either embrace the flame like a new revelation, or else reject it whole-heartedly. Jane asks the GM, "Do you know what's up with the flame already, or are you going to make it up after you hear Alyssa's decision?" "I have a pretty good idea," says the GM. Jane thinks for a moment and says, "If Alyssa is going to change course, it won't be until after I've played her for a while. When she thinks about the flame iconography from the shrine, it feels wrong to her somehow. She never wants to think about that imagery ever again, and she sure isn't going back in there to fix up the shrine. And I never mention it to the rest of you because I'm sure there's nothing to it."

The cleric's player riffs on this, saying "I come and find you and say, 'So you said you wanted to go back there and clean up that old shrine. I'm ready, let's go!'"

Jane shakes her head and says, in character, "That is a shrine from a different age, and my message is for this one." Everyone at the table knows that the party hasn't seen the last of the flame symbol from the 3rd Age.

Before rolling for new icon connections, the ranger and the rogue have their last opportunity to use their own icon connections. The ranger uses a connection to the Lich King

(it's a conflicted relationship of course!) to say that their reports from the cemetery attract the attention of a more experienced ranger, who comes to provide help against the death cult. There's no twist, and the player and GM agree to pick this up when the next arc starts. The rogue's player passes.

To set up the next adventure, the GM tells the players that the Priestess' people gathered important information from the captured death cultist. The heroes are going to be sent on a second mission against the death cultists, this time with inside information from the prisoner, as well as assistance from the experienced ranger who was just invented and added to the story. The GM says the next mission will be into a former hellhole, one that was abandoned by its demons but has apparently been taken over by the cult.

"I hope there are more undead this time," says Jane, and the GM snorts and fails to keep a straight face because the 1st level heroes are about to go up against another of his creations: demonic undead!





CHAPTER 2

CREATING CHARACTERS

This chapter walks you through creating a character. Most of the information you'll need to round-out your character is found in subsequent chapters.

CHARACTER CREATION OVERVIEW

Many elements of character creation in *13th Age* will be familiar to F20 players. *13th Age*'s additions to the F20 heritage include the following ideas:

- Ability score bonuses can be applied as you like by all the kin. Your choice won't limit your class selection.
- Instead of choosing specific skills, you put points into broad **backgrounds** that can be used to assist a variety of skill checks.
- Character creation involves indie-game style elements such as inventing One Unique Thing about your character and orienting your PC around relationships with the most powerful NPCs in the world, the demigod-like icons.

CHARACTER CREATION CHECKLIST

This is an overview of what's to come. Detailed treatment of the first few items on this checklist appears in this chapter, and each other element of creating your character is covered in Chapters 3 through 5.

If you need someplace to record all of the pertinent information, there's a character sheet at the back of the book that you can print, or you can download one at **13thage.com**.

Gamemaster input before you start: The setting is designed to be customized, so ask your GM if there's anything you need to know about the setting before you create your hero.

Think ahead: Before you assign your ability scores, you should know at least your hero's class. Lots of players start by choosing a class, a kin, and a "One Unique Thing" (see below). Then they fill in the details, starting with abilities.

Generate abilities (this chapter): We suggest using a standard array of ability scores, but there are options for players and groups that would rather roll.

Combat stats (this chapter): Use powers, abilities, and base stats from your class to calculate basic attack bonuses and damage, power/spell attack bonuses and damage, Armor Class, Physical Defense, Mental Defense, Hit Points, and Initiative.

These stats may not make complete sense until you've seen the combat rules in Chapter 7 and chosen your character class and powers in Chapter 4.

Kin (Chapter 3): If you've played an F20 game as an elf, human, dwarf or something wilder, you've played with kin rules. Ours give you a choice of a kin power.

You choose your kin from this list:

- Human
- Dwarf
- High Elf
- Silver Elf
- Wood Elf
- Gnome
- Half-elf
- Halfling
- Troll-kin
- Dragonic
- Forgeborn
- Holy One
- Tiefling

Class (Chapter 4): Every class gets special powers it can use, but the classes play very differently from each other. You choose your class talents and then select your 1st level powers, maneuvers, or spells.

You choose your class from this list:

- Barbarian
- Bard
- Cleric
- Fighter
- Paladin
- Ranger
- Rogue
- Sorcerer
- Wizard

As you'd expect, the basics of character creation also apply to the six classes in *13 True Ways*: chaos mage, commander, druid, monk, necromancer, and occultist, as well as the demonologist in *Book of Demons* and the ten classes in *13th Age Glorantha*.

Your One Unique Thing (Chapter 5): You invent some narrative-oriented trait that makes your character unique! You could be the only halfling to escape the Diabolist's Circus of Hell, the three-time runner-up in the dwarven games, or the reincarnation of an ancient god, now trapped in mortal form. Don't worry, we have plenty of advice.

Backgrounds (Chapter 5): You invent at least two backgrounds, which determine things your character is likely to be good at by defining their history. You might even make something up that helps shape the campaign.

1st level feat (Chapter 5): You get a feat choice every level. Feats improve class features, talents, powers, or spells; and some improve your general capabilities. They're not like the character-defining feats in some other F20 games—our game's equivalent of the way the term "feat" is used in some other games are the **talents** connected to each class. To start playing faster, you can start without your first feat and choose it later.

Ordinary gear (Chapter 5): Select what sorts of weapons, armor, and other gear your character has and describe it in a way that expresses your character. *13th Age* puts less emphasis on gear than some other games, and your class tends to define the ordinary gear you have and what would be best for you. For example, if you're a character who fights best in heavy armor, we let you start in heavy armor.

Icon relationships (Chapter 5): Define your hero's connections to one, two, or even three of the icons.

Abilities

We use the six traditional abilities of our F20 heritage.

Strength, abbreviated as Str: Your bodily power and capacity for force. It's good for more than hurting things (as if hurting things was not enough).

Constitution, abbreviated as Con: Your toughness and endurance. It's the one ability that every class in this book needs.

Dexterity, abbreviated as Dex: Your agility, reflexes, and handiness. It factors into Armor Class, Physical Defense, and Initiative, making it generally useful.

Wisdom, abbreviated as Wis: Your intuition, insight, and perceptiveness. Unfortunately, this trait seems to serve unholiness as well as it serves holiness.

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

Charisma, abbreviated as Cha: Your force of personality and social grace. Hard to define; hard to miss when it addresses you by name.

Generate Ability Scores

We advise using the *standard arrays* presented below to generate ability scores. Other methods that some tables prefer are mentioned in the **Ability Score Options** sidebar and in Appendix A.

Standard Arrays

Here are two standard arrays of scores that create diverse characters.

Assign one of these sets of six scores to your abilities as you like, then add +2 to two of your ability scores.

Default Array

Your six base ability scores are . . . 17, 15, 14, 13, 12, 10

Most players focus by adding +2 to the highest two scores, ending up with 19, 17, 14, 13, 12, 10. If, on the other hand, you want three great scores, add +2 to your second and third best scores, leaving you at 17, 17, 16, 13, 12, 10.

This array has better scores than you could buy using the first edition's point-buy system. This array offers less flexibility than the point-buy system did, so we made it more generous overall.

Good-at-Everything Array

With this array, your base scores are . . . 15, 15, 15, 14, 14, 12.

With the two +2s, you end up with 17, 17, 15, 14, 14, 12.

Below-Average Abilities

By default, none of the heroes in *13th Age* are weaklings, klutzes, lunks, fools, or boors. If you enjoy playing a lunk, boor, or someone who's below average in some way, you can go right ahead and portray your character that way regardless of your PC's actual ability scores. If you want to drop an ability to 8 or less in order to support your vision of the character, feel free. Hopefully you'll avoid being a drag on the rest of the party.

Speaking of drags on the good times, if you're playing a necromancer from *13 True Ways*, dropping your Constitution score is an option.

Ability Score Modifiers

Each ability score corresponds to a bonus that gets added to die rolls, such as attack rolls and damage rolls.

Here are the modifiers for each ability score. If you need to go higher or lower, you can see the pattern.

Starting at 5th level, you double your modifier before adding it to damage rolls and healing rolls. Starting at 8th level, you quadruple it. When making a 1st level hero, you don't need to worry about this math.

ABILITY	MODIFIER
22–23	+6
20–21	+5
18–19	+4
16–17	+3
14–15	+2
12–13	+1
10–11	0
8–9	–1
6–7	–2
4–5	–3
3	–4



ABILITY SCORE OPTIONS

If you prefer more luck when you create characters, use the *roll 'em* option on page 317 in the Appendix. Or use *roll four*, which guarantees two high scores and leaves the rest to the dice.

If you prefer perfectly tailored control when you create player characters, use the *point buy* method, also on page 316.

There shouldn't be any problem mixing characters built with different methods, but if players at your table have a history of getting upset about perceived inequities, choose one method for everyone.

Ability Scores and Bonuses

ARRAY	BEST		2ND BEST		3ND BEST		4TH BEST		5TH BEST		WORST	
Default (focused)	19	+4	17	+3	14	+2	13	+1	12	+1	10	0
Default (three great scores)	17	+3	17	+3	16	+3	13	+1	12	+1	10	0
Good at Everything	17	+3	17	+3	15	+2	14	+2	14	+2	12	+1

Combat Stats

See **Chapter 7 Combat Rules** for the details on how combat works.

1st Level Hit Points

Yes, hit points measure how much damage you can take.

1. Find the base value for your class (6, 7, or 8) in the *Starting Stats for 1st Level Characters* chart on page 60.
2. Add your Con modifier to get your "hit point value."
3. Multiply your hit point value by 3 to get your total hit points at 1st level.

(For higher-level characters, multiply the sum by a higher "hit point factor," as shown on your class progression table, up to ×24 by 10th level. In effect, your hit points rise by 1/5, 1/4, or 1/3 every time you level up.)

DEFENSE RATIONALE

Using multiple ability scores to determine the three defenses prevents any one ability from becoming dominant. Armor Class, Physical Defense, and Mental Defense are each based on a single ability score, the ability that's chosen for that calculation is determined by the character's two other scores. In each case, you look at three ability modifiers and use the middle value (not the highest or the lowest). If two or more modifiers are tied, you use one of those tied scores as the middle score. (For example, with modifiers of +3, +3, and +1, the middle score is +3.)

Armor Class

Armor Class (AC): AC is based on how tough, quick, and alert you are (Con, Dex, and Wis). Rely on AC to protect you from most weapon attacks, claws, bites, and tentacles.

1. Find the base AC value for your class (10 to 16) in the *Starting Stats for 1st Level Characters* chart on page 60 of the Classes chapter.
2. Find the middle value among your Con modifier, Dex modifier, and Wis modifier. (Not the highest, and not the lowest, unless two or more of the ability scores are tied.) That value is your AC modifier.
3. Add the AC modifier to your base AC value.
4. Add +1 at 1st level (and increase by +1 at each additional class level).

AC EXAMPLE

For example, a character with a Con of 10 (modifier +0), Dex of 15 (modifier +2), and Wis 14 (modifier +2) has a middle value modifier of +2 in the three abilities that determine AC. Their AC modifier is +2. They'll add their level to get their AC.

Physical Defense

Physical Defense (PD): PD is based on how strong, tough, and agile you are (Str, Con, and Dex). Rely on it to protect you from many different forms of elemental and energy damage, including dragon breath, fireballs, and poison.

1. Find the base PD for your class (10 to 12) in the *Starting Stats for 1st Level Characters* chart on page 60.
2. Find the middle value among your Str modifier, Con modifier, and Dex modifier. That value is your PD modifier.
3. Add the PD modifier to your base PD.
4. Add +1 at 1st level (and increase by +1 at each additional class level).

Mental Defense

Mental Defense (MD): MD is based on how smart, insightful, and forceful you are (Int, Wis, and Cha). Rely on it to protect you against mental enchantments, illusions, psychic attacks, and mundane trickery.

1. Find the base MD for your class (10 to 12) in the *Starting Stats for 1st Level Characters* chart on page 60.
2. Find the middle value among your Int modifier, Wis modifier, and Cha modifier. That value is your MD modifier.
3. Add the MD modifier to your base MD.
4. Add +1 at 1st level (and increase by +1 for each class level).

Initiative

Initiative: Initiative shows how quickly you tend to react when trouble starts. You'll add your Initiative to a d20 roll each battle.

1. Start with your Dexterity modifier.
2. Add +1 at 1st level (and increase by +1 at each additional class level).

Recoveries & Recovery Dice

Recoveries measure your ability to recover from damage, specifically damage as it is modeled by losing hit points, a frequent problem when you're exploring dungeons and fighting monsters. Most characters start the game with 8 recoveries. See your class progression table for your exact amount. (See page 304 for rules on how recoveries work, or check out the **Example of Play** at the beginning of this book.) Some classes and talent choices may give you more recoveries.

Each class also has a different recovery die, usually a d6, d8, or d10, as specified in the class write-up. When you roll a recovery, you'll roll a number of recovery dice equal to your level and add your Con modifier to find out how many hit points you regain. (5th level: double your Con mod; 8th level: quadruple, and there's another bonus of +5 points per epic level, a problem for later!)

As a 1st level hero, you're rolling one die and adding your Con modifier.

Attacks and Powers

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

Next Steps

You've probably been thinking about what type of hero you'll play.

You've got a choice of kin (page 29), a choice of class (page 53), a One Unique Thing that distinguishes you from all other heroes (page 201), a variety of backgrounds that contribute to both your story and your skills (page 206), a choice of an adventurer-tier feat (page 210), and to cap it off, relationships with one or more of the icons (page 215).

We'll be going a step at a time, and the next chapter is for your choice of kin.





CHAPTER 3

KIN

This chapter is all about your kin! Not your mom or your dad or your brother or your sister; your kin!

The widespread kin: The most common kin types in our version of the Dragon Empire are humans, dwarves, elves, gnomes, half-elves, halflings, and troll-kin. These people are part of our geopolitical background; they're all available as player character kin, and they're in most campaigns whether your players want to play them or not.

The more unusual kin: Of course, there may be all sorts of unusual characters in your campaign. Options for more unusual kin appear on page 44. These include dragonics, forgeborn, holy ones, and tieflings. These kin are more likely to be defined by what a player adds to the story of the campaign with their character's backgrounds or One Unique Thing. There's also a list of kin we've introduced in other *13th Age* books in the appendices on page 316.

Other kin: Players can always come up with their own unique stories. The system is designed to be simple enough that gamers can improvise. If you want to play a different sort of kin from those listed here, pitch the idea to your GM. You might find your pitch easier to make if your new choice lines up closely to the mechanical features of an existing kin.

Cultures and Appearances

We like using humans, elves, dwarves, and other people of various ethnicities and styles in our campaigns and in our art. Some map to cultures in the game world, while others are part of the magical mixing pot. The identity and appearance of your character is up to you, and we extend a similar welcome to our artists and GMs.

Kin Powers

Each kin option provides a choice of powers. Only exceptional people possess these kin powers. Player character types are not that common! Not every high elf in the world has *highborn teleport* (page 32) or one of the other high elf kin powers. In fact, if an NPC elf has *highborn teleport*, it's probably a sign they are someone special, or might have become someone special if fortune had turned their way.

Every hero can choose one kin power. If your character's personality or magical affiliations change over time, perhaps you'll switch to a different kin power later in your character's career.

Customizing your kin: Ability scores are independent of kin choices; therefore it's possible to play a pretty-good character of any class, no matter what kin you're playing. Given that you're making your character unique with a One Unique Thing and a variety of backgrounds, there's also room for characters who look like one kin and play like another. Leverage backgrounds and *uniques* if you wish, or let your character's story evolve during play.

Examples: Thanks to your One Unique Thing (page 201), are you the only human adopted by the Dwarf King? Maybe you look like a human but say *That's Your Best Shot?* like a dwarf (page 31).

Are you a silver folk (drow) paladin but none of the kin powers of the silver elves match your self-image? Perhaps you teleport in a silver flash and think of your kin power as *silverspark teleport* instead of phrasing it in the high elf style? (page 32).

With your GM's approval, you can mix and match kin looks, outlooks, and powers as you like.

FEATS ATTACHED TO KIN POWERS

The full rules for feats appear in Chapter 5. For now, what you need to know is that you get to choose one feat per level, and while you're 1st–4th level you must choose adventurer-tier feats. Sometimes, the feat connected to your kin power is a champion-tier feat, which means you must wait until you reach 5th level to take that feat.

Humans

They're everywhere, at least in the Dragon Empire.

In our default setting, six of the seven major cities of the Dragon Empire are predominantly human, the exception being Concord and its "fusion culture" of nonhuman kin. Even Drakkenhall, the City of Monsters, probably has a human plurality, along with minorities of most every other kin.

You can tweak the mix of humans, elves, and everyone else in your version of the Empire anyway you like, of course. Our assumption is that the Wizard King ran the first human empire in the area, and the Dragon Empire is the second. We figure some of the Dragon Emperors, as well as other icons, have been nonhumans. Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan followed this notion a bit in *Book of Ages*, and you could too.

Abilities: Humans are so common they serve as a baseline of sorts. Dwarves, for example, might find humans a little shallow, but they think much the same of most other kin, as well. High elves might consider humans a little slow, but that's also what they secretly think of wood elves. Despite these general trends, exceptional humans (such as player characters) can be as wise as any dwarf (Wis) and as smart as any high elf (Int).

Typical qualities: Your human hero might be tall, ambitious, idealistic, short-sighted, adaptable, and/or status-conscious.

Human Kin Powers

Choose one of the following kin powers: *push it, quick to fight*, or *resourceful*.

Push It (Kin Power)

Once per battle, when the escalation die is 2+ and you hit (but don't crit) a target with an attack, you can choose to attempt to *push it* as a free action. If you do, your attack has no effect on that target until you make a second attack roll against the target with the same attack bonus. If the second roll hits, you deal double damage with the hit; if the second roll crits you deal triple damage! On the other hand, if you miss with the second roll, the original attack deals only half damage against that target . . . and if your second roll is a natural 1, your attack deals no damage and has no effect, like any other fumble.

Champion Feat: If you miss when you *push it*, the kin power is not expended; you can use it again on a later turn this battle.

Quick to Fight (Kin Power)

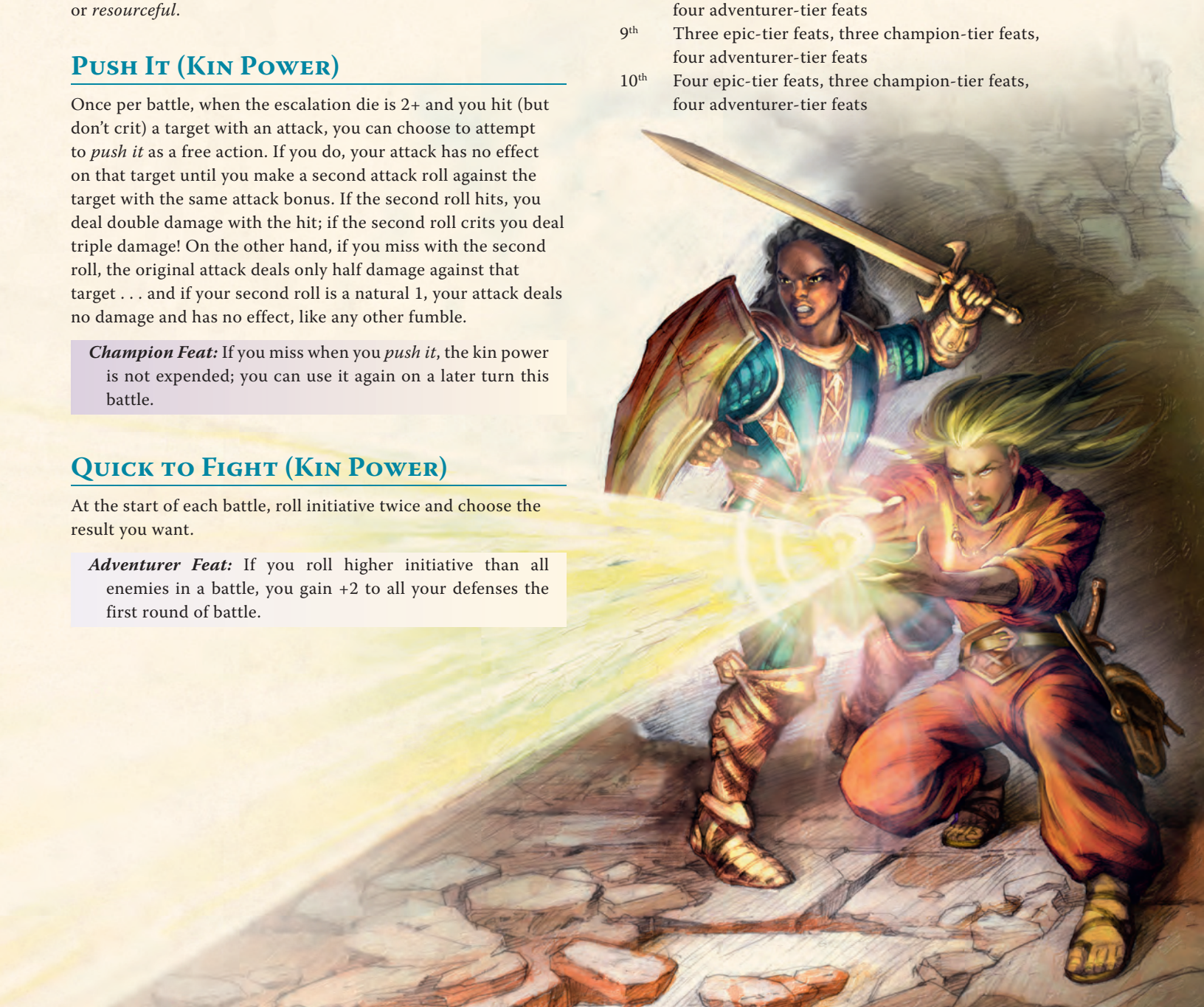
At the start of each battle, roll initiative twice and choose the result you want.

Adventurer Feat: If you roll higher initiative than all enemies in a battle, you gain +2 to all your defenses the first round of battle.

Resourceful (Kin Power)

You have a bonus feat of the highest tier you qualify for. For clarity, here's how your feat options look from 1st level to 10th level. Note that you can always use a feat choice to choose a lower-tier feat. For example, a new champion-tier feat can be used to select a new adventurer-tier feat, instead (page 210).

1st	Two adventurer-tier feats
2nd	Three adventurer-tier feats
3rd	Four adventurer-tier feats
4th	Five adventurer-tier feats
5th	Two champion-tier feats, four adventurer-tier feats
6th	Three champion-tier feats, four adventurer-tier feats
7th	Four champion-tier feats, four adventurer-tier feats
8th	Two epic-tier feats, three champion-tier feats, four adventurer-tier feats
9th	Three epic-tier feats, three champion-tier feats, four adventurer-tier feats
10th	Four epic-tier feats, three champion-tier feats, four adventurer-tier feats



Dwarves

Based on other sources, you might expect dwarves to be clannish ale-brewers who are fascinated by treasure. If so, you're right!

Dwarves are short, sturdy people who prefer to live in vast underground cities. They pride themselves on being stalwart guardians against the giants of the upper mountains and against the monstrosities of the underworld.

Clans and clan lore: Dwarves are usually organized in extended clans. By extended we mean many members and many memories—dwarves love to keep track of the past and apply it to the present.

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

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

History: See the entries on the mountain named Forge (*GMG* page 18) and the Dwarf King icon (page 235) for the default history of the dwarves.

Abilities: Dwarves are known for being sturdy (Con), profound (Wis), and strong (Str). No one expects them to be crowd-pleasers (Cha), but some of them are ingenious (Int) or agile (Dex).

Typical qualities: Your dwarf hero might be courageous, respectful, harsh, blunt, literate, and/or traditional.



Dwarven Kin Powers

Choose one of the following kin powers: *comrade defender*, *never give in*, or *that's your best shot?*

Comrade Defender (Kin Power)

Once per battle, when you intercept an enemy moving to attack an ally, make a no-trigger melee attack (see page 301) against that enemy before it can take another action.

Adventurer Feat: Your attack has a +2 attack bonus.

Never Give In (Kin Power)

Once per battle, when you heal using a recovery, make a save with a +2 bonus against a temporary effect as a free action.

Adventurer Feat: The first time the save fails each battle, you don't expend the power, though you can only use it once per turn.

That's Your Best Shot? (Kin Power)

Once per battle as a free action, after you have been hit by an enemy attack, you can heal using a recovery. If the escalation die is less than 2, you only get half the usual healing from the recovery. Unlike other recoveries that might allow you to take an average result, you have to roll this one!

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

Adventurer Feat: If the escalation die is 2+ when you use *that's your best shot?*, the recovery is free (see page 304 for the recovery rules and free recoveries).

Elves

A puzzle with three parts.

The Three Shards of the Elven People

The Elf Queen wears a crown of three parts or "shards:" black amethyst and obsidian for the silver elves, green emerald and flowering plants for the wood elves, and diamond and pure *force* for the high elves. The three sorts of elves refer to themselves as the three Shards of the Crown. Ages ago, the Elf Queen wore a unified crown, but that crown was lost in the war with the dwarves, and so was true unity among the three branches of the elves. Perhaps in some age to come the elves will once again unite.

Heritage of the Sword (Elf Feat)

All elven heroes can take the following adventurer-tier feat.

People talk about how deadly an "elven sword" is, but it's really the elf who's deadly.

Adventurer Feat (Heritage of the Sword): If you can already use swords that deal d6 and d8 damage without attack penalties, you gain a +2 damage bonus with them at adventurer tier, a +4 damage bonus at champion tier, and a +8 damage bonus at epic tier.

Otherwise, if your class would ordinarily have an attack penalty with such swords, you can now use them without penalties.

High Elves

High elves are renowned for being learned, sophisticated, and magical. Also long-lived, snooty, and impossible, depending on who's talking.

Also known as light elves or bright elves, high elves are world-famous for their learning, artistry, magical prowess, and style. They live in spiral towers that rise above the trees of the elven woods, and people come from near and far to learn from them or to appeal to them for aid. High elves are relatively common in human cities, and they prefer upper-story homes with views of the sky. It can be a lot of pressure for people to expect you to be smart and charming, but high elves make it look easy.

A high elf's most striking feature is their eyes. In your campaign, maybe their eyes change when they've been using magical power.

Abilities: High elves live a long time and claim they have good memories, which may explain how they've learned to be witty (Int) and well-spoken (Cha). They're not the first friends you turn to when you're moving furniture (Str & Con); "that's what *levitation* spells are for."

Typical qualities: Your high elf might be eloquent, self-confident, earnest, ambitious, unimpressed, well-drilled, well-dressed, universally competent, and/or fond of wordplay in forgotten languages.

High Elf Kin Powers

Choose one of the following kin powers: *eminence*, *highblood teleport*, or *mystic initiative*.

Eminence (Kin Power)

Once per battle, ***either*** reroll an attack against Mental Defense ***or*** force an enemy that hits you, but doesn't crit, with an attack against Mental Defense to reroll the attack against you with a –4 penalty.

Adventurer Feat: You can now use both elements of *eminence* once apiece each battle.

Highborn Teleport (Kin Power)

Once per battle as a move action, place yourself in a nearby location you can see.

Champion Feat: Deal 15 force damage to one enemy engaged with you before or after you teleport; 30 damage at epic tier.

Mystic Initiative (Kin Power)

Before rolling initiative, you can choose one of your allies. Your ally receives a +5 bonus to initiative this battle; you get a –5 penalty to your initiative. You both gain 4 temporary hit points (5th level: 8 temp hp; 8th level: 16 temp hp).

Champion Feat: Once per arc, before rolling initiative, declare you are claiming full mystic prerogatives for this battle. After all combatants have rolled initiative, swap your final initiative result with the enemy that has the highest initiative result.

Silver Elves

Silver elves enjoy their singular reputation if it keeps you out of their way.

Also known as drow, dark elves, and the silver folk. Humans and dwarves think of silver elves as cruel people with a penchant for sadistic entertainment, painful sports, forbidden



knowledge, insidious poisons, blood feuds, vicious sarcasm, and worship of an unspeakable spider demon; but that's an exaggeration. The silver elves themselves play up how scary they are, and others are more than willing to believe it. The silver folk are loyal to their Queen, and this assures others they can accept them in the Dragon Empire—rumors notwithstanding.



Some rumors are the silver folk's own doing. It's a point of pride among drow, for example, that some of the ages' greatest villains have come from their kin, and so they have exaggerated the villainy of the drow of past ages.

In truth, most silver folk aren't any more evil than humans and high elves, which is to say, they *can* be quite evil, while plenty of individuals are mostly good. The menacing reputation of the drow derives from several sources: the grudge that dwarves still carry for when the drow drove them out of Underhome, the silver elves' punitive penal code, their striking looks, their dark humor, and their admittedly creepy-looking subterranean culture. Sometimes, silver elves are even willing to take the blame for actions taken by high elves or wood elves. Doing so serves the reputations of both parties.

Unlike the drow of many fantasy worlds, our silver elves are accepted as part of mainstream society, albeit often at a distance. People treat them as fellow citizens, if not as everyone's favorite fellow citizens. They are loyal to the Queen, and she is bound in mutual oaths to the Dragon Emperor and to the Dwarf King. Critics say the Elf Queen couldn't be the queen of the silver elves unless she herself manifested drow nature in some way.

Players: If you're playing a silver elf, talk to the GM about how you expect people of the Dragon Empire to treat one of your kin. If you want to play the scary outsider, then common folk fear but respect the silver elves. If you want to play a misunderstood aristocrat, maybe you want the common people to fear your kin, while others are curious and admiring.

Abilities: Silver elves have an easier time earning respect (Int) than affection (Wis). They're graceful (Dex), with a demeanor that's hard to ignore (Cha). Others might underestimate how strong and tough they can be (Str & Con).

Typical qualities: Your silver elf might be mercurial, observant, unflappable, calculating, aggrieved, laconic, sarcastic, and/or painfully honest.

Silver Elf Kin Powers

Choose one of the following kin powers: *cruel*, *devious strike*, or *shadow-step*.

Cruel (Kin Power)

Once per battle as a free action, deal ongoing damage to a single target you hit, but do not crit, with a natural even attack roll. The ongoing damage is 15 at adventurer tier, 30 at champion, and 50 at epic. As usual, a normal save (11+) ends the damage.

Champion Feat: Once per arc, you can instead use *cruel* to deal 5 ongoing damage per level against a target you have missed or had a natural odd attack roll against. (Yes, you could even deal the ongoing damage with a natural 1; you're *that* cruel.)

Devious Strike (Kin Power)

Once per battle, when an ally's melee attack misses a foe you are engaged with, you can make a no-trigger melee attack (page 301) against that enemy as a free action. Add +4 to your attack roll.

Adventurer Feat: If your *devious strike* hits, gain a +2 bonus to all your defenses until an enemy attack misses you.

Shadow-step (Kin Power)

Once per battle, when an enemy moves to engage you, roll a normal save as an interrupt action. If the save succeeds, you disappear into shadow, removing yourself from the battle. The enemy can continue its move and attack a different target, if it wishes.

At the start of your next turn, you return to the battle nearby the spot where you stepped into shadow. Unlike the rogue's Shadow Walk talent, you don't gain any attack advantages the turn you return from shadow.

Adventurer Feat: If your *shadow-step* save fails, the power is not expended. You can use it again later this battle.

CROSSING SHARDS

High elf and wood elf heroes rarely possess each other's kin powers. But silver elf heroes have something of the high elves' magic and the wood elves' grace, and it wouldn't surprise us if your hero's *unique* or backgrounds told a story of a silver elf with a kin power from the kin of a different shard.

Wood Elves

In the oldest texts, wood elves are known as the gray elves, but there's nothing gray about these vibrant people. These days they're also known as wild elves, green elves, and just plain elves.

Of the three shards, wood elves are the least arrogant, the most numerous, and the most likely to share a meal, a song, or a warband. They usually live in elven woods, either on the ground in ingenious tents or among the branches of the trees in beautifully balanced treehouses. Their love of action and exploration drives many of them across the land, and they're the most common sort of elf in human lands.

While the great city of Concord represents a blend of many cultures, the wood elf esthetics are particularly strong there, with plentiful trees and treehouses.

Ever since the High Druid established her new center well within the Dragon Empire, wood elves have been in high spirits. She and the Elf Queen are sisters in some metaphysical sense, although no one is sure what that means in practical terms.

Abilities: Wood elves are famous for their alacrity and dance moves (Dex), and they're usually attuned to their physical and metaphysical environments (Wis). Others rarely consult them on questions of book-learning (Int), and most wood elves are fine with that. Some are extremely friendly and vivacious (Cha), while others train single-mindedly for war (Str).

Typical qualities: Your wood elf might be graceful, plain-spoken, energetic, forceful, brave, lithe, limber, and/or wavy-haired.

Wood Elf Kin Powers

Choose one of the following kin powers: *elven grace*, *fortunate fey*, or *Queen's eye*.

Elven Grace (Kin Power)

At the start of each of your turns, roll 1d8 to see if you get an extra standard action. If your roll is equal to or lower than the escalation die, you get an extra standard action that turn. You then stop rolling for *elven grace* until you've taken a quick rest. Alternatively, you can opt not to take the extra action and keep rolling each turn.

Champion Feat: Once per arc, roll a d4 for *elven grace* instead of a d8. If you don't get an extra action, this option is not expended.

Fortunate Fey (Kin Power)

Three times per arc, but never more than twice per battle or scene, you can reroll a d20 roll that is not an attack roll or an initiative roll and that has not already been rerolled. You must abide by the reroll and can't reroll again or benefit from any other tricky methods of replacing the reroll.

Champion Feat: You can now use *fortunate fey* rerolls five times per arc.

Queen's Eye (Kin Power)

Once per battle, when the escalation die is 2+, turn your miss with a ranged attack into a hit.

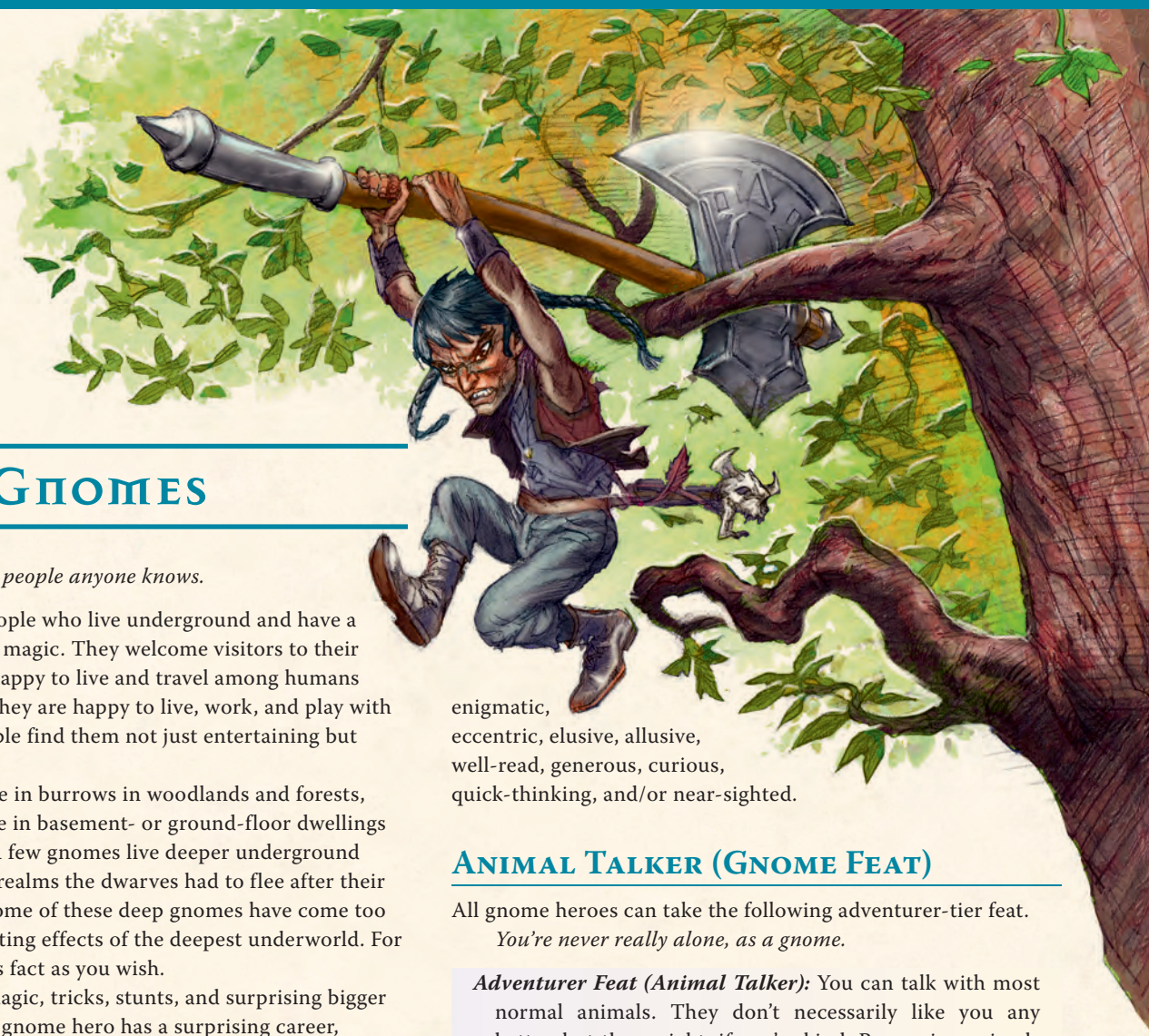
Champion Feat: Once per arc, instead of turning a miss with a ranged attack into a hit, you can turn a hit with a ranged attack into a critical hit.

USING FORTUNE

Examples of how *fortunate fey* can be useful include rerolling . . .

- a save
- an attempt to maintain a bardic song
- a disengagement attempt
- a trick die from the cleric's Trickery domain
- a magic item or spell recharge attempt after a battle, so long as you didn't use *fortunate fey* twice that battle already
- a skill check
- a d20 twist roll when you use an icon relationship advantage!





Gnomes

The strangest normal people anyone knows.

Gnomes are small people who live underground and have a remarkable talent for magic. They welcome visitors to their towns, and they are happy to live and travel among humans and dwarves. While they are happy to live, work, and play with others, plenty of people find them not just entertaining but perplexing.

Most gnomes live in burrows in woodlands and forests, while plenty more live in basement- or ground-floor dwellings in towns and cities. A few gnomes live deeper underground somewhat above the realms the dwarves had to flee after their war with the drow. Some of these deep gnomes have come too close to the soul-twisting effects of the deepest underworld. For your gnomes, use this fact as you wish.

Gnomes enjoy magic, tricks, stunts, and surprising bigger people. Perhaps your gnome hero has a surprising career, adventuring as a barbarian or a paladin.

As companions and guard animals, gnomes train a special breed of floppy-eared fox. Gnome foxes love to do tricks.

Abilities: Gnomes are known to be clever with their feet, their hands, and their minds (Dex & Int). Others see them as a little too odd or magical to be deep (Wis) or silver-tongued (Cha). They're expected to generally be weaker than average (Str), but that doesn't account for gnomes who dig.

Typical qualities: Your gnome might be energetic, enigmatic, eccentric, elusive, allusive, well-read, generous, curious, quick-thinking, and/or near-sighted.



Animal Talker (Gnome Feat)

All gnome heroes can take the following adventurer-tier feat.

You're never really alone, as a gnome.

Adventurer Feat (Animal Talker): You can talk with most normal animals. They don't necessarily like you any better, but they might, if you're kind. Burrowing animals tend to be on your side. Dire beasts won't talk with you, or pretend they can't, and with magical animals you never know, it's a beast-by-beast situation.

Twice an arc, you can make a normal skill check for your tier to gather useful information from an animal you're talking with, or a hard check if you're dealing with a magical beast. Other conversations can be fun, but tend not to reveal the type of information adventurers are after. In addition, if you also have the *fox friend* kin power, once per arc you can gather useful information from your fox without having to roll a skill check.

Gnome Kin Powers

Choose one of the following kin powers: *confounding*, *fox friend*, or *magicker*.

Confounding (Kin Power)

Once per battle, when you roll a natural 16+ with an attack, you can also daze the target until the end of your next turn.

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

Fox Friend (Kin Power)

You have one or more floppy-eared foxes as friends.

Once per battle, choose one of the following powers to represent your fox's contributions to your adventures.

No no no no: As a free action, reroll a save.

Saw it coming: As a free action, force an enemy to reroll a natural odd melee attack against you.

Yep yep yep: On your turn, gain an extra quick action.

Champion Feat: You can use two different *fox friend* powers per battle.

Magicker (Kin Power)

You can craft minor illusions and use arcane magic almost as if you were a wizard.

Illusions: As a standard action, at-will, you can create a strong smell or a sound nearby. Nearby creatures that fail a normal save notice the smell or sound. Creatures that make the save may notice it but recognize it as not exactly real. This may not be very useful in combat situations, but it can certainly keep you entertained in taverns and temples.

Almost a wizard: Choose one when you choose this kin power: either you can cast cantrips as if you were a wizard (page 180), or you gain the wizard's Magic Missile feat as a bonus feat and can therefore cast *magic missile* as if you were a wizard.

If you choose cantrips, you are also free to choose the Cantrip Mastery wizard feat. If you choose Magic Missile, you are free to take the feats that improve it (page 185).

But, we hear you gnomes saying, what if we *are* wizards? Can we still choose this kin power? Yes, gnomes, you can. If you're a wizard and you take this kin power, you either gain Cantrip Mastery as a bonus feat OR cast *magic missile* as if you were one level higher. (Yes, gnome wizards, you're part of the reason the wizard's *magic missile* spell goes up to 12, because who knows what's possible?)

Half-Elves

Between two worlds, and usually accepted by both.

Half-elves are a paradox: they are few in number but likely to pop up anywhere. They live freely among elves and humans, and they're surprisingly common among dwarves, gnomes, and others. They gravitate toward roles that involve interacting with others, such as merchant, diplomat, minstrel, tutor, healer, or charlatan.

Most half-elves are the offspring of two half-elf parents, while plenty more have one elven parent and one human. A few half-elves, however, are born spontaneously to elven parents or to human parents, a magical echo of a time long past. For a twelve-year span at the start of the 1st age, after the elves and humans had defeated the Wizard King, half of the births to both human parents and elven parents were half-elves. This spontaneous magical event represented the shared victory of the two kin, and since then half-elves have always been part of the Dragon Empire. Half-elves thus serve as a living symbol of the friendship between elves and humans. So long as half-elves are still spontaneously born to both human and elven parents, the ancient bond between the Elf Queen and the Dragon Emperor is sure. Their presence in human society serves the interests of the Elf Queen, and their presence among elves likewise benefits the Emperor.

Some elves are quick to point out that half-elves aren't "true elves," but in practice the elves of one shard often get along more readily with half-elves than they do with "true elves" of the other two shards.

Abilities: Half-elves are adept at fitting into any social situation they find themselves in (Cha). Although they are physically slighter than humans, they can be remarkably resilient (Con). Others might be surprised to meet a strong half-elf (Str), but half-elves are nothing if not surprising.

Typical qualities: Your half-elf might be well-spoken, responsible, tough, thoughtful, elf-eared, unflappable, and/or single-minded.

WHAT'S A HALF-ELF TO YOU?

Traditionally, half-elves have been a popular player character type because they're human enough to be totally relatable and elven enough to have some extra flair. If you're playing a half-elf, you can customize half-elf nature to suit your character. Maybe you want half-elves to be called by a different name, one that shows that they're genealogically distinct from elves. By default, half-elves are at home in both elf and human circles, but maybe you would rather play them as outsiders to both kin.

Half-Elf Kin Powers

Choose one of the following kin powers: *concordance*, *resilient*, or *surprising*.

Concordance (Kin Power)

When you create your character, you may choose any kin power from any other PC kin as your kin power. Each time you level up, choose a kin power you have never had before to replace the kin power you had. In other words, you have only one kin power at a time, like other people, but it's always changing. This isn't meant to be a min-max move—choosing random powers is best, although it could be a wonderful exception when what's been happening in the campaign strongly suggests a direction you should lean.

In story terms, you may have learned something new, or changed your outlook, or made unexpected friends, or suffered a grievous blow. Your cycle of experiences is *probably* based on empathy and increasing understanding instead of happenstance, but if you're a chaos mage or sorcerer, *concordance* can adopt your personal spin.

For simplicity's sake, here are 30 kin powers to make randomizing easier. We left out a couple that made less sense, but if you are comfortable embracing *concordance* as powerful magic, even the dragonics' *breath weapon* works. Feel free to mix in kin powers from other books if you have them.

1: *push it*; 2: *quick to fight*; 3: *resourceful*; 4: *comrade defender*; 5: *never give in*; 6: *that's your best shot?*; 7: *fighting free*; 8: *killer instinct*; 9: *lethal*; 10: *eminence*; 11: *highborn teleport*; 12: *mystic initiative*; 13: *elven grace*; 14: *fortunate fey*; 15: *Queen's eye* or one of the kin powers from other books mentioned on page 316; 16: *cruel*; 17: *devious strike*; 18: *shadow-step*; 19: *confounding*; 20: *magicker*; 21: *evasive*; 22: *perseverance*; 23: *skitterfoot*; 24: *rise above*; 25: *halo*; 26: *karmic soul*; 27: *never say die*; 28: *rugged*; 29: *curse of chaos*; 30: *deadly trickster*.

Champion Feat: You gain a second and different random kin power. Even if you are accustomed to choosing your kin power, this second one is random, and can duplicate a power you have already had.

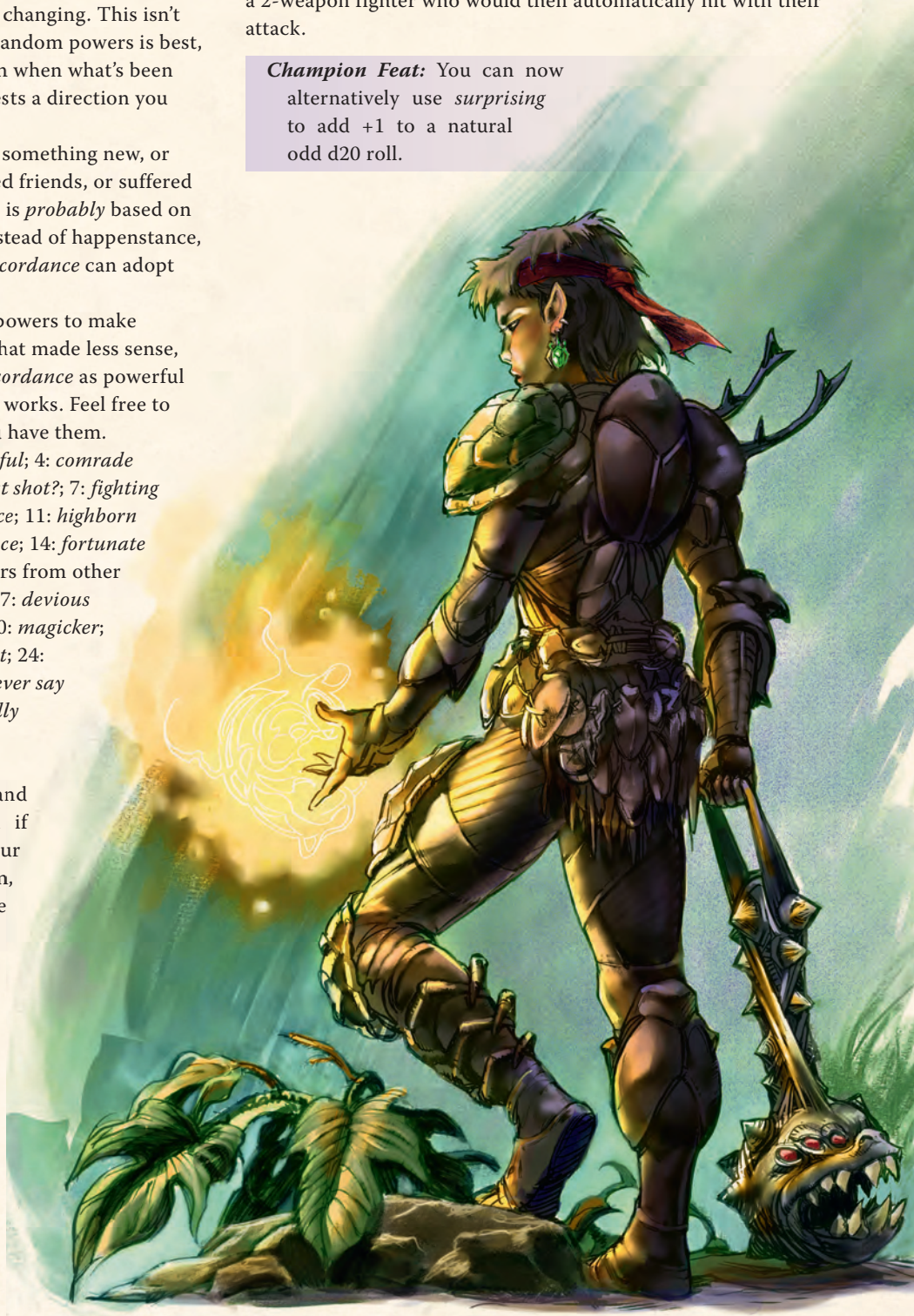
Resilient (Kin Power)

Once per battle, reroll a d20 roll that isn't an attack roll and use the rerolled result. If the reroll is a natural 11+, you may also heal using a recovery as a free action.

Surprising (Kin Power)

Once per battle, subtract –1 from the natural result of one of your own natural odd d20 rolls. This power turns a natural odd roll into a natural even roll or drops a natural 3 to a natural 2 for a 2-weapon fighter who would then automatically hit with their attack.

Champion Feat: You can now alternatively use *surprising* to add +1 to a natural odd d20 roll.





Halflings

Stay-at-home halflings and ramble-wide halflings have little in common beyond fondness for pipe-weed and pie.

While halflings have their own towns, their societies resemble those of humans more than any other kin. Their preferences lean toward the homely, with gentle customs, cozy homes, thoughtful gifts, and plenty of comfort food. They maintain these quiet ways because the upstarts among them head out into the wider world to make their fortunes. Unlike the halflings who live among their own kin, the halflings found in human society tend to be daring, curious, and restless. Most humans are happy to see halflings show up even though they sometimes cause trouble, and plenty of humans are happy to see them show up precisely because they cause such interesting trouble.

Halfling origins: It's common for a halfling to close a long and implausible tale by saying, "And that's how halflings came into the world." Halflings always laugh, and in fact no one is sure where halflings originally came from. Gnomes sometimes say they're descended from "stray" gnomes. Some elves say the tranquil halfling towns of Burrow, Old Town, and Twisp are the halflings' original homes, and the halflings themselves are the source of the towns' remarkable peacefulness. Halflings that live as river nomads sometimes say that halflings once lived in the Midland Sea, and they were driven out with all the other "monsters" when an ancient Dragon Emperor pacified it. The Priestess once gave a sermon in which she said that a previous Prince of Shadows found the first halflings when they were still just a possibility in the minds of the gods, and he brought them into reality because they are destined to save the world one day. Plenty of halflings like this story, and if a Prince of Shadows was involved it would explain why divinations about halfling origins give contradictory results. The Priestess, for her part, doesn't remember giving this sermon.

The halflings once had a different name for their kin, but it is forbidden, and ancient texts were edited to strike that name from the record.

Abilities: Halflings tend to be nimble (Dex) and resilient (Con). No one goes to them for life advice (Wis), or at least not twice. If you make Strength your halfling's highest ability, it makes grognards cry.

Typical qualities: Your halfling might be good-hearted, mischievous, outgoing, sneaky, observant, humble, hungry, and/or curly-haired.

Halfling Kin Powers

Choose one of the following kin powers: *evasive*, *perseverance*, or *skitterfoot.*

Evasive (Kin Power)

Once per battle, force an enemy that hits you with an attack to reroll the attack with a –2 penalty and keep the second result.

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

Perseverance (Kin Power)

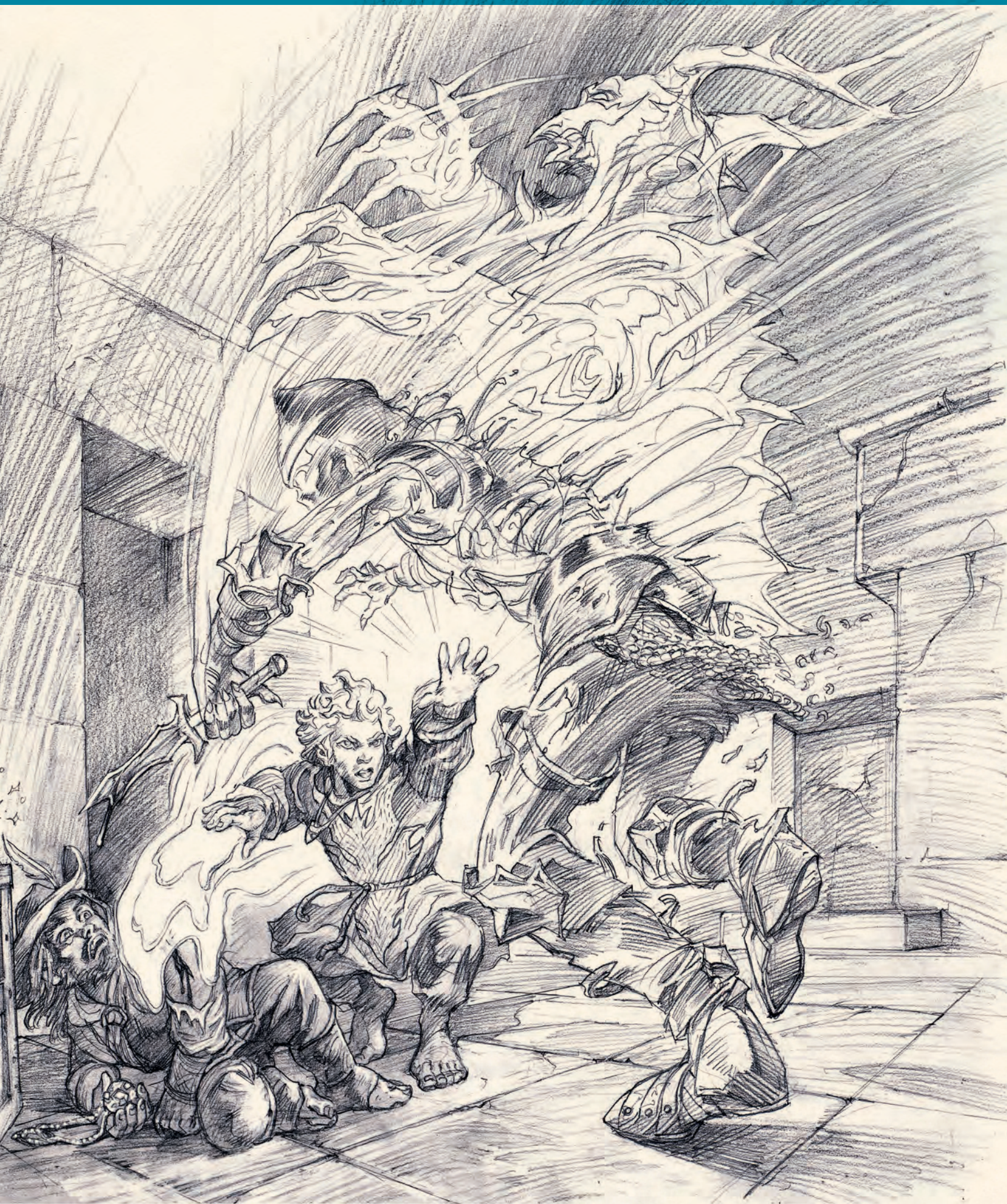
Whenever you roll a natural 1 or 2 with an attack, you gain an attack reroll that can be used on any later turn during this battle as a free action.

Adventurer Feat: You don't have to use the reroll this battle; you can use it any time during this arc.

Skitterfoot (Kin Power)

Once per battle as free action, turn your failed disengage check into a success. You gain a +2 AC bonus against opportunity attacks until the end of the battle.

Champion Feat: You can now use *skitterfoot* twice per battle. (Naturally, the AC bonus against opportunity attacks doesn't stack.)



Troll-kin

Also known as the Druid's folk, wood trolls, and half-orcs, troll-kin are big, tough, slightly fanged, and slightly monstrous people associated with the High Druid.

Once rare in the Empire, they have now earned citizenship and are increasingly common, especially where they can find a reward for fighting. Within the Empire, popular reaction to troll-kin showing up is mixed.

Outside the Empire, they identify strongly with their various clans and are often hostile to troll-kin of other clans. Inside the Empire, they tend to use the High Druid's name for them, troll-kin, despite neither looking nor acting anything like the big-nosed regenerating monsters everyone calls trolls. The "troll-kin" name might refer to a magical secret or to a personal joke; the High Druid isn't saying. Elves sometimes refer to them as the Druid's folk. Dwarves sometimes call them wood trolls.

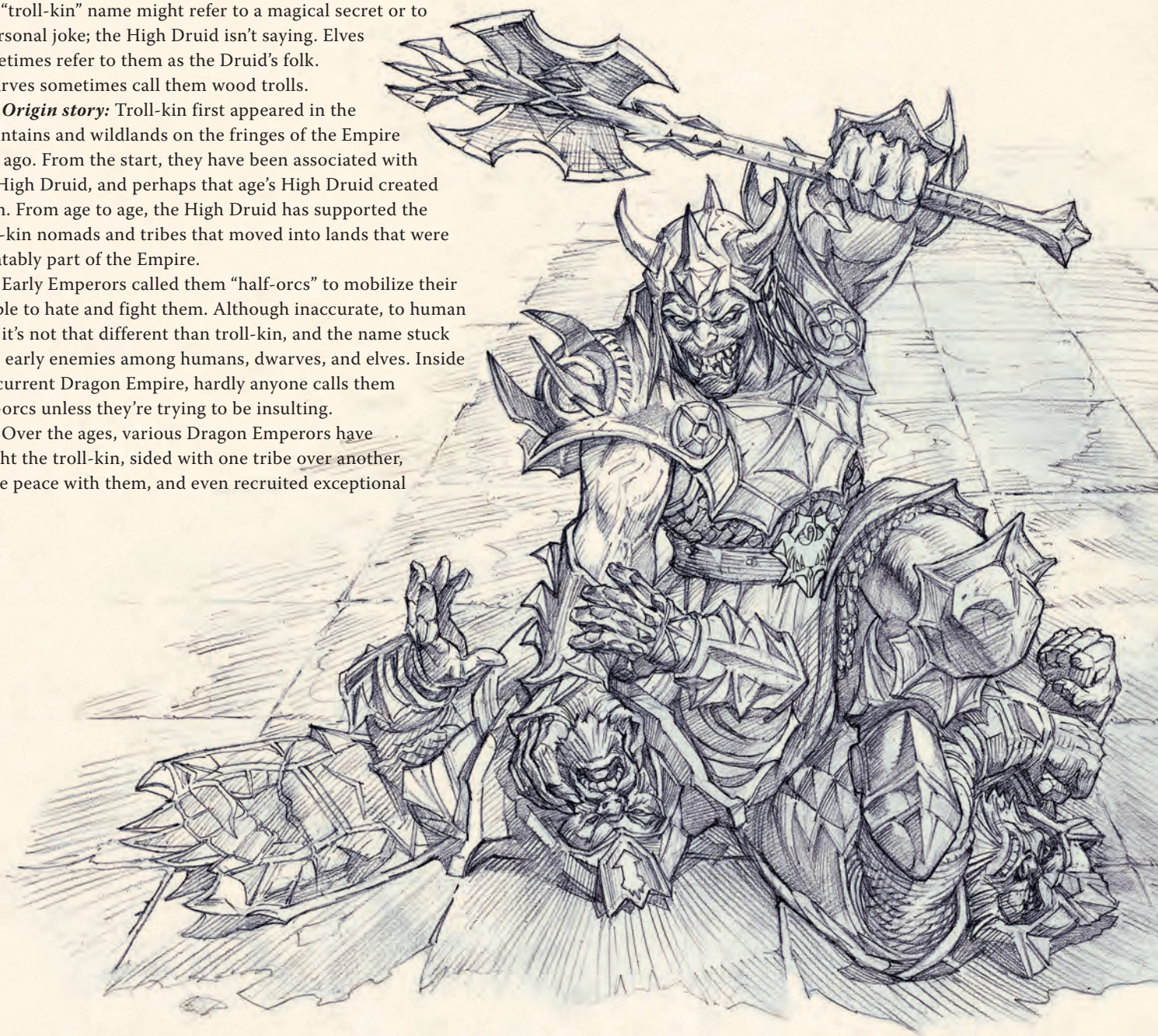
Origin story: Troll-kin first appeared in the mountains and wildlands on the fringes of the Empire ages ago. From the start, they have been associated with the High Druid, and perhaps that age's High Druid created them. From age to age, the High Druid has supported the troll-kin nomads and tribes that moved into lands that were debatably part of the Empire.

Early Emperors called them "half-orcs" to mobilize their people to hate and fight them. Although inaccurate, to human ears it's not that different than troll-kin, and the name stuck with early enemies among humans, dwarves, and elves. Inside the current Dragon Empire, hardly anyone calls them half-orcs unless they're trying to be insulting.

Over the ages, various Dragon Emperors have fought the troll-kin, sided with one tribe over another, made peace with them, and even recruited exceptional troll-kin to compose elite units of personal guards or shock troops. A few generations ago, a far-seeing Emperor made history by welcoming troll-kin *en masse* as citizens of the Empire. The move paid off.

In the 13th Age: Troll-kin used to be rare in the Empire, but now they're common. This age's previous Dragon Emperor made a sweeping decree welcoming them as citizens, and in turn they helped his Imperial armies drive back orcish hordes that had invaded the Empire. These days, there are plenty of troll-kin who are newly arrived from their homelands on the frontier and plenty more whose parents were born in the Empire and who know no other life.

When they're not marching in or commanding the Imperial legions, troll-kin flock to Axis, the Imperial city of war and gladiatorial games, and to Drakkenhall, the Great Blue Wyrm's half-ruined city of monsters. There are also troll-kin in Concord.



MONSTROUS OR NOT?

Our default troll-kin is designed to rehabilitate the half-orc character type, which traditionally had a sordid origin. Troll-kin are not related to orcs, and they're explicitly welcome in the Dragon Empire. If you're running a troll-kin hero, you can talk to the GM about how much hostility you'd like everyday people to feel toward your kin: maybe none, maybe a lot. For some players, part of the appeal of the half-orc-style hero is that they are monstrous enough to be suspect in polite company. Other players might prefer that troll-kin be recognized as valiant warriors who helped save the Empire from the Orc Lord.

The troll-kin's combat-oriented kin powers also make them suitable for a hero with any sort of monstrous back story: a gnoll, a lycanthrope that can no longer shift into beast form, a mutant, an experiment of the Archmage's gone wrong, etc. If your hero is not really a troll-kin, decide what that means for troll-kin in the Dragon Empire. Maybe all the troll-kin in the setting are like your character, or maybe your character is their own thing, separate from the Druid's people.

Sometimes they maintain areas of their own, other times they prefer to blend in with others. They are more likely to work as sailors or caravan guards, traveling between all the cities, than to settle permanently in cities other than Axis, Concord, and Drakkenhall. Certainly, interactions with mountain and wasteland clans go much better when troll-kin are part of the guard company.

Inside the Empire, there are sizeable troll-kin clans in several of the largest forest and mountain ranges. In smaller forests, the clans frequently mix in with human, elven, and half-elf groups, particularly when the High Druid is involved.

The size of the troll-kin population beyond the Empire isn't clear.

Orc Lord interactions: When the Orc Lord appeared earlier this age, some nobles suspected troll-kin would choose to aid the orcish hordes. It turns out they should have been more worried about opportunistic human traitors.

Most troll-kin chose the High Druid or the Emperor over the Orc Lord. Troll-kin legionnaires fought off invasions in the Empire, while troll-kin clans resisted the hordes in the mountains. Of course, with the Orc Lord gone, it's possible the conflict between the High Druid and the Emperor will escalate.

Separate paths: Unlike elves, who at least share a fiction that they should be united under one Queen, troll-kin don't pretend they ever all got along with each other. They handle themselves as soldiers, magicians, hunters, or farmers—whatever's required or appealing. When conflicts surface, it's possible that opposed groups of troll-kin might choose honorable combat (page 314). They may even have helped spread the concept of honorable combat throughout the Empire.

Icons: Troll-kin are most associated with the High Druid and the Emperor. The new High Druid seems ready to challenge the Emperor, creating a potential conflict within the troll-kin population. Troll-kin are also partial to the Crusader and the Prince of Shadows. When they go entirely bad, they might rally to the Three, or the Diabolist, but generally not to the Lich King. Necromancy seems antithetical to vibrant people originally influenced by the High Druid. Of course, unique heroes are different . . . .

Abilities: Troll-kin are known for their physical prowess (Str, Dex & Con). Most people wouldn't expect them to be learned (Int), prudent (Wis), or well-spoken (Cha), but sometimes the gruff exterior hides those very traits.

Typical qualities: Your troll-kin might be rugged, powerful, tested, wary, straight-talking, proud, fearless, hedonistic, scarred, and/or fanged.

Troll-kin Kin Powers

Choose one of the following kin powers: *fighting free*, *killer instinct*, or *lethal*.

Fighting Free (Kin Power)

Once per battle, you can use an attack roll that is a natural 16+ as both an attack roll *and* as an immediate save roll against a condition of your choice. You choose which resolves first, the save or the attack.

Adventurer Feat: You can now use *fighting free* on any roll that is a natural 13+.

Champion Feat: You get a second use of *fighting free* in a battle when the escalation die reaches 3+.

Killer Instinct (Kin Power)

After rallying at least once in a battle, you deal +3 damage with attacks for the rest of the battle (5th level: +6; 8th level: +12). (As explained in the Combat chapter (page 291), damage bonuses like this apply only to hits and crits, not to miss damage.)

Adventurer Feat: Now, the damage bonus is cumulative in a battle, stacking each time you rally.

Lethal (Kin Power)

Once per battle, when the escalation die is 1+, reroll an attack that is not a natural 1 and use the roll you prefer as the result.

Adventurer Feat: If the *lethal* attack reroll is with a weapon, deal +7 damage if it hits (5th: +15 damage, 8th: +25).

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

More Unusual Kin

The people outlined in this section are everywhere in some campaigns, but are rare or non-existent in others. As PCs, they fit happily into most campaigns, but you might want the gamemaster's input before playing one.

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

If the character you want to play or emphasize in your game isn't included here, we say bring it in. Some newcomers come in on flying realms, others surface in dungeons or are created by icons, and a few have been in the world all along, but were hidden in secret places. "The only one of my kind" is a fine One Unique Thing.



Dragonics

Also known as dragonspawn.

Who doesn't want to play a big, scaly, draconic humanoid who, perhaps, spits fire? By default, these ancient creatures are rare, living mostly in the wilder or more violent areas of the Empire, which perhaps includes Axis. They comprise separate populations reflecting the different sorts of dragons they're related to, and the different groups get along with each other about as well as you'd expect.

We envision dragonics as mostly related to the five evil sorts of dragons, as reflected in their looks, their attitudes, and perhaps their breath weapons. On the other hand, it's your story. Maybe your hero is instead related to metallic dragons allied with the Dragon Empire, such as the bronzes or silvers.

Dragonics might be descendants of dragon and humanoid ancestors, the imperfect spawn of dragons, creatures of the dragon gods, or descendants of ancient people who magically achieved a level of draconic power.

Dragonics make excellent NPCs and enemies, so your GM may well have plans to use this kin, such as when Jonathan gave them a big role as enemies and allies in one of his campaigns. Since there are different sorts of dragonics, you can usually make your vision for your PC work alongside your GM's vision for dragonics in the world at large.

Abilities: Dragonics' ample muscles make them look strong, and they are (Str). The spark of draconic power in their souls gives them confidence and presence (Cha). Generally given to lives of action, they can be as tough and fast as anyone (Con & Dex). They're not known to be sensitive, insightful, or clever (Wis & Int), but their scaly exteriors might hide a powerful soul.

Typical qualities: Your dragonic may be aggressive, big-hearted, stoic, envious, loud, irrepressible, secretive, flamboyant, poetic, and/or sharp-eyed.

Chromatic Resistance (Dragonic Feat)

All dragonic heroes can take the following adventurer-tier feat.

You're not a dragon. Sometimes you're more *than a dragon.*

Adventurer Feat (Chromatic Resistance): You gain *resist energy 14+* to the following energy types: acid, cold, fire, lightning, and poison. (You take half damage from attacks of these types unless the attacker rolls a natural 14+.)

Dragonic Kin Powers

Choose one of the following kin powers: *breath weapon*, *energized attacks*, or *rise above*. (You might also consider renaming the holy one's *overworld wings* as *draconic wings*.)

Breath Weapon (Kin Power)

Once per battle, make a close-quarters *breath weapon* attack as a quick action using your highest ability score against one nearby enemy's Physical Defense. On a hit, the attack deals 10 damage of an energy type that makes sense for your character (5th: 20 damage; 8th: 50 damage).

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

Energized Attacks (Kin Power)

Once per battle when the escalation die is 2+, you can use your draconic energy to boost an attack. The attack deals +10 damage to the target, hit or miss, and the bonus damage is of the energy type that fits your character's draconic ancestry. If the attack has multiple targets, choose one to suffer the extra damage. Once per battle when the escalation die is 5+, you can boost a second attack (5th: +20 damage; 8th: +40 damage).

Champion Feat: You can boost your attack against two targets, not just one.

Rise Above (Kin Power)

Once per battle on your turn, for your entire turn, ignore the effects of one condition affecting you. Ongoing damage counts as such a condition, but *rise above* lets you ignore only one "dose" of the damage in cases where it built up from multiple attacks. (To be clear, you ignore the effects during your turn, and can still save against them at the end of your turn if they are "save ends" effects.)

Champion Feat: Ignore the effects of up to three conditions, with each "dose" of ongoing damage counting as one condition.



Forgeborn

Also known as dwarf-forged.

Although they were originally constructed by the dwarves, these mechanical and alchemical creatures are certainly alive. Like dwarves, most of them work in large teams on projects devoted to the well-being of the Dwarf King's people, and like dwarves, a few of them end up in the darndest places. A forgeborn might have relatively limited personal experiences, but it still has all the capacities for emotion, connection, and spirituality that other people have.

If no one's playing a forgeborn, they are mostly out of the story, operating off stage and working for the Dwarf King. That means if you're playing a forgeborn you can rewrite forgeborn identity without making the GM have to change much of anything. Maybe you want them to be lacking in some important personal capacity or to have a certain reputation.

On the other hand, since forgeborn don't have much of a footprint in the setting, your GM might have some special use in mind for them. Maybe your GM wants them to be common as Imperial guards or something. Chances are there's room for what both of you want to see in the forgeborn.

The mechanicals' mechanics: If you prick a forgeborn, does it not bleed? Your forgeborn suffers bleeding, poison, and everything else normally. Or alternatively, take the Mechanically Efficient feat below to play a hero who is more "noid" and slightly less "human."

Abilities: Built tough (Con)! Built to lift and carry (Str)! Machine-like precision (Dex)! But observing more than the builders expect (Wis).

Typical qualities: Your forgeborn might be calm, wide-bodied, humorless, gem-eyed, heedless, slow to listen, quick to decide, stubborn, and/or curious.

Mechanically Efficient (Forgeborn Feat)

All forgeborn heroes can take the following adventurer-tier feat.

If life is an adventure, you're built so well that you are guaranteed to forge your own surprisingly dangerous path.

Adventurer Feat (Mechanically Efficient): You have *resist 16+* to necro and poison, ensuring that you may take some damage from necromancy and poison, but rarely as much as other heroes. In addition, whenever you would be stunned, you are instead shocked. Other conditions affect you normally.

Forgeborn Kin Powers

Choose one of the following kin powers: *never say die* or *rugged*.

Never Say Die (Kin Power)

The first time each battle that you drop to 0 hp or below, roll an easy save if you have a recovery available. On a 6+, instead of falling unconscious, you stay on your feet and can heal using a recovery. Add the recovery hit points to 0 hp to determine your hp total.

If the save fails, you fall unconscious but do not expend *never say die*, and you can use it again the next time you drop.

Adventurer Feat: You don't die at five Skulls; you die at six Skulls. And you don't die at negative hit points equal to half your normal hit points; you die at negative hit points equal to two-thirds of your normal hit points.

Champion Feat: (adv-required) You add the escalation die to your death saves.

Rugged (Kin Power)

Your recovery dice increase by one size. d4 < d6 < d8 < d10 < d12 < 2d6 < 2d8.

Adventurer Feat: Increase your total number of recoveries by +1.



Tieflings

Also known as demontouched.

Tieflings have been touched by hellish power, but they insist they are independent from the Diabolist. Tieflings are humanoid but visibly demonic, with exotic skin color, horns of one sort or another, and usually a tail.

Some people say the current Diabolist is a tiefling. Most tieflings say, "You've got to be kidding. She started as a human. Don't blame us."

What the hells?: This kin is just begging for an interesting story that fits your campaign. Are they demons that have "made good," or are they cursed humans or maybe elves? Do they have their own society based in the Red Wastes and along the Demon Coast, or are they a small lineage that lives solely within the Empire? Probably they prefer Drakenhall to Santa Cora, but could they be prominent in Concord? We suggest they feel curiously at home in Horizon, and you can figure out why on your own.

Abilities: Tieflings are generally strong of mind (Int) or of body (Str), but usually not both. No one expects them to be prudent (Wis) or pleasant (Cha), and individuals have been known to make a show of being neither. That said, the touch of the hells guarantees that no general rule applies to all tieflings.

Typical qualities: Well-traveled, savvy, skeptical, abrupt, scholarly, fond of gambling, elitist, loquacious, sarcastic, prominently horned, and/or grumpily reliable.

IMPROVISING CURSES

You and your GM need to be ready to improvise on the spot for *curse of chaos* to work smoothly and in your favor. If you'd rather keep things clearly defined, go with *deadly trickster*.





Tiefling Kin Powers

Choose one of the following kin powers: *curse of chaos* or *deadly trickster.*

Curse of Chaos (Kin Power)

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

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

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

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

Champion Feat: Whenever a nearby enemy rolls a natural 1 on an attack against you, you get a bonus immediate use of *curse of chaos* against them regardless of whether you've used the power this battle.

Deadly Trickster (Kin Power)

At the start of each battle, your natural initiative roll provides a temporary bonus.

Natural odd roll: This result becomes a trick die. As a free action once per battle when the escalation die is 2+, give your *trick die* to a nearby ally or enemy who is about to make an attack roll. The *trick die* result becomes the natural result of their roll instead.

Natural even roll: You gain a +2 bonus to the first attack roll you make in this battle.

Champion Feat: When your initiative roll is even, you also get to use it as a *trick die* when the escalation die is 3+.



Holy Ones

Also known as aasimar.

These near-human kin are touched by the bright gods. If they appear in any numbers in your campaign, we suggest they have come to live in and around the Cathedral in Santa Cora. Holy ones might also be found here and there in various monasteries and temples. In your campaign, perhaps they live semi-secretly among humans, or maybe they're all divinely touched dwarves.

Abilities: Holy ones come across as wise and appealing (Wis & Cha), and it's no act. Others expect them to be flexible rather than tough (Str & Con), but the touch of the bright gods sometimes grants them the toughness needed to be a paladin.

Typical qualities: Compassionate, proud, earnest, pun-averse, well-coifed, quick-learning, and/or fond of bright colors.



Holy One Kin Powers

Choose one of the following kin powers: *halo, karmic soul*, or *overworld's wings*.

Halo (Kin Power)

Each battle as you roll initiative, gain a +2 bonus to all defenses until you are hit by an attack or until the battle ends. (If you like, think of it as your halo flicking on in the presence of danger!)

Adventurer Feat: Once per battle, you can restart your *halo* kin power as a free action when the escalation die reaches 2+.

Karmic Soul (Kin Power)

Every natural 7 you roll with a save or a skill roll is a success. A better than normal success, which lets you lord it over less-holy mortals, if you're so inclined.

Champion Feat: Every natural 7 you roll with an attack is a hit.

Overworld's Wings (Kin Power)

Once per battle as a free action, you gain *flight* and can fly until the end of your turn. See *GMG*: 59 for the *flight* rules. At 5th level, your *flight* lasts until the end of your *next* turn.

At 8th level, you also gain a 1/arc use of *flight* that lasts until the end of the battle.

Adventurer Feat: You gain a +4 bonus to disengage checks while flying.

FEATHERS OR FORCE?

It's up to you whether your wings physically unfold from your back, unfurl as magical force constructs, or are invisible except to clerics and demons.

As *draconic wings*, this kin power also makes sense for a dragonic with gradually strengthening wings.



CHAPTER 4

CLASSES

Class Basics

Before we get into the specifics of each class, here's some advice on how simple or complex it is to play each class to help guide your choice.

Ease of Play

Below you'll find an assessment of the classes running from simplest to most complex. The difficulty spectrum isn't as clearly defined as it was in 1E because some of the "simpler" classes have new options.

- The **paladin** relies on a short list of class talents instead of powers. At adventurer-tier, it's the simplest class to play for newcomers.
- The simplest versions of the **barbarian** are designed for the player who wants to roll dice and slay without worrying too much about the rules. The somewhat more complex versions of the barbarian still offer fewer choices during play than most other classes.
- The **fighter** is simple to play. If you opt for the Flexible Attack talent, you'll have interesting decisions about how to use your attack rolls.
- In its simplest form, the **ranger** may be simpler than the fighter, at least at low level. But there are more serious decisions to make when building your character. If the GM hands you a pre-generated ranger, the class is probably no harder than the fighter to play, maybe simpler. But choosing how to divide your talents between Hunter talents, Warrior talents, and Caster talents may be a bit much for brand new players. GMs: Find out what a new player wants out of their ranger and advise them accordingly.
- The **rogue** is about as complicated as the more complicated versions of the fighter. You track how much Bravado you have, and are constantly disengaging and trying to use your Sneak Attack or Rush Attack damage effectively. Using Shadow Walk to disappear from most fights for a round simplifies the rogue, though it may complicate the lives of the rogues' allies.
- The **sorcerer** is slightly complex because of the option to cast spells for double the effect in two rounds by more or less taking a round off. In some iterations, the sorcerer might be simpler to play than the rogue, and it's definitely simpler than the cleric. But the decisions you make while playing a sorcerer are important—each choice has a lot of impact. It's easy to play a sorcerer; it's harder to play a sorcerer optimally.
- We used to think the **cleric** was simpler to play than the sorcerer and rogue, but we were wrong. Interesting choices include domain invocations that should be cast at the beginning of a battle, maintaining a balance between healing and fighting, and spells that can be cast for power or for broad effect. Jonathan gets tired of playing a cleric because there are so many little decisions to make. Rob loves playing a cleric for the same reason.
- The **wizard** rivals the bard as the most complex class, especially if you choose all the options that allow improvisation and ad-libbing. Without those free-form talents, it's no more difficult than the sorcerer.
- The **bard** has a variety of options because each of its talents supply effects that trigger when hitting with an attack or when an enemy misses, along with healing magic that requires the bard to pay attention to what's happening at the table. The bard also has spells, persistent songs, and unique features from their talents. Figuring out how to use these options in combat can be fun for a confident player who enjoys unpredictability instead of consistent results; however, it will likely be overwhelming for a first-time player. Even if a first-time player "always plays bards," they might start with a simpler character who becomes a bard after a couple levels! The bard is the class voted most likely to use index cards or some other form of organizing spells, reactions, and options.
- The six classes from *13 True Ways* (**chaos mage**, **commander**, **druid**, **monk**, **necromancer**, and **occultist**) are at least as complicated as the improv-heavy wizard. So is the **demonologist** in *Book of Demons*. Of these classes, the necromancer often works for beginners. The monk and demonologist can also work with a bit of guidance from the GM.
- The ten classes from *13th Age Glorantha* start simpler than 2E's barbarian and scale up to more complex than the wizard. In ascending order, they look something like this: **Orlanthi warrior**, **troll warrior**, **Humakti**, **rebel**, **berserker**, **windlord**, **storm voice**, **trickster**, **hell mother**, and **earth priestess**. The hell mother and earth priestess are not recommended for new players and are sometimes more involved to play than the bard, depending on talent and spell choices.

Key to Attacks, Spells, and Powers

Each character class has its own lists of talents, powers, maneuvers, and spells to choose from, as well as a level progression that maps access to the list.

We're going to look at several of the most common elements of attacks, spells, and powers before we dive into the details of specific classes. We'll start with a key to the spells and powers using the examples of the cleric's *cure wounds* spell (page 106), the barbarian's *barbarian basic melee attack* (page 55), and the sorcerer's *lightning fork* attack spell (page 170).

A. *Name:* There's nothing surprising about the name of each spell, power, or attack.

B. *Flavor text:* Powers and maneuvers seldom have flavor text. Most spells do now that we're providing an example of how your spellcaster might perceive their spell, or how it might look to others.

C. *Keyword line:* This line presents the most important elements of the spell or power, using diamonds to keep its range, usage pattern, action required, and special elements separate. **Range** and **usage pattern** always show up in the keyword line, and they are both so important and varied that we'll discuss them in their own sections immediately below this key. If the **action required** to use the spell or power isn't specified, it requires a standard action, and that's the case for *barbarian basic melee attack* and *lightning fork*. By contrast, *cure wounds* specifies that it only requires a quick action to cast. The other mechanical elements that sometimes appear on the keyword line are **special** mechanics that have keywords, like the *chain spell** keyword in the sorcerer's *lightning fork*. The special mechanics are either explained in the spell or as part of the structure of the class.

D. *Target:* Attacks usually specify their targets. If a ranged attack doesn't specify a target, the default is to attack a nearby enemy. If a melee attack doesn't specify a target, the default is to attack an enemy you're engaged with. Many spells and powers that have effects instead of making attacks don't bother having a separate target entry, the effect lines go ahead and tell you which creature or creatures are affected.

E. *Attack line:* If it's an attack that requires an attack roll—and almost all of them do—this line tells you which ability score modifier you're using, whether to add your level (you almost always do), and which of the target's defenses you're attacking.

F. *Hit:* This shows the damage and effects if you hit. There may be several such lines that correspond to different natural rolls that hit. In many cases, these other triggers correspond to different natural rolls, and have additive effects on your hit.

G. *Miss:* This shows the damage and effects if you miss. May potentially include variations. If there's no miss line, the default is there's no effect on a miss.

H. *Effect:* Many powers and spells don't require an attack or a hit. You use the power/spell and something happens. Some attacks create effects that occur each time they're used as well as rolling for an attack. In our example spells, *cure wounds* has the same effect every time you cast it.

I. *Level-by-level improvements*: Many spells, and some powers, get better and better as you reach higher levels.

J. *Feats:* Many spells, powers, talents, and attacks have feats associated with them.

A. Lightning Fork

B. *Lightning would rather be cut loose than controlled.*

C. Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc*** ◆ *chain spell**

D. **Target:** One nearby enemy

E. **Attack:** Charisma + Level vs. PD

F. **Hit:** 14 (4d6) lightning damage.

G. **Miss:** Damage equal to your level × 3.

İ.

2nd	18 (4d8) dmg
3rd	22 (4d10) dmg
4th	28 (8d6) dmg
5th	35 (10d6) dmg
6th	45 (10d8) dmg
7th	55 (10d10) dmg
8th	70 dmg
9th	90 dmg
10th	110 dmg

J. ***Adventurer Feat:*** You can now target far-away targets with *lightning fork*, but once you target a far-away target, you can't bring the *lightning fork* 'back' to target a nearby enemy.

Champion Feat: If you cast this spell when the escalation die is 3+, the spell is a *recharge 11+* spell for this casting only instead of an arc spell. If the recharge roll fails, the spell goes back to being an arc spell.

**Chain Spell:* Each time you make a natural even attack roll, you also attack a new foe who is nearest to the current target. If you cast a chain spell that fails to chain, you can use the spell again in a subsequent battle.

A. Cure Wounds

B. *For the rest of the battle, you'll find yourself humming a sacred hymn you've never heard until now.*

C. Close-quarters spell ◆ **arc/desperate** ◆ Quick action to cast

D. **Effect:** You or a nearby ally can heal using a recovery. The target heals +2 hp per point on the escalation die. At your option, you can expend the recovery instead of your ally, in which case the ally heals as if it were their own recovery.

İ.

4th	Same as 3rd
5th–6th	Now +3 hp per point on the escalation die
7th–8th	Now +5 hp per point on the escalation die
9th–10th	Now +8 hp per point on the escalation die

J. ***Champion Feat:*** If the escalation die is 3+, this spell recharges with a quick rest, but only once per arc.

A. Barbarian Basic Melee Attack

C. Melee attack ◆ **At-Will**

D. **Target:** One enemy

E. **Attack:** Strength + Level vs. AC

F. **Hit:** *Weapon* + Strength mod damage
- 5th–7th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 2)
- 8th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 4) + 5
- 9th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 4) + 10
- 10th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 4) + 15

G. **Miss:** Damage equal to your level



Range

If a non-attack power or spell doesn't have a specified range, it's either going to tell you in its **effect** lines (like *cure wounds*) or it's clearly affecting you.

If an attack power or attack spell doesn't have a specified range, it's a melee attack against an engaged enemy (see the rules for **Combat**, page 294, for details on engagement).

There are two other typical ranges, both of which get called out in the keyword line when possible.

Ranged attacks are, by default, against a single nearby foe (see page 293 for rules about distance) but many ranged attacks have special targeting rules, which are spelled out. Ranged weapon attacks also interact with the capabilities of specific weapons, as explained on page 214. If you use a ranged attack when engaged with an enemy, that enemy can make an opportunity attack against you (page 296). Sometimes "ranged" is abbreviated as "R", particularly in older books.

Close-quarters attacks may look like ranged attacks, but they're designed to be used when enemies are on you, and they do not draw opportunity attacks from engaged enemies. Each close-quarters attack notes its targets—if there's a close-quarters attack that doesn't specify its targets, it's a typo! (Earlier books abbreviated close-quarters as C instead of CQ.)

Usage Patterns

Each spell, power, or maneuver has its own usage pattern. Some can be used at-will, others only once per arc, and there's a usage pattern for every frequency in-between.

If character class powers don't specify how often they can be used, they're usually at-will instead of limited. Spells always specify whether they are at-will or have a more limited use.

Common Usage Patterns

The most common usage patterns for spells and powers also apply to magic item powers (*GMG*: 177).

At-will: As often as you would like to and can legally use the action required. This is the only usage pattern that isn't "limited-use."

Recharge 16+, recharge 11+, or recharge 6+: After a battle in which you use this spell or power, roll a d20. If you roll equal to or higher than the recharge number, you get the spell or power back. You can roll for all expended recharge powers after each battle, even if you used the spell/power in an earlier battle.

1/battle: You regain 1/battle powers after taking a quick rest. Sometimes written as once per battle.

2/battle: Like 1/battle, but twice. Sometimes written as twice per battle.

1/arc: Just once per arc. You regain arc powers after taking a full heal-up. Occasionally referred to as an arc power.

2/arc: You can use the power twice per arc, but not twice in the same battle.



arc/desperate: This is a 1/arc power, but it also recharges once per arc when you fail a death save OR spend your last recovery, whichever happens first after you've used the power. It's possible that you'll fail a death save or spend your last recovery without having used the power, so it fails to recharge.

Choosing and Casting Spells

Spells are chosen and used somewhat differently than in several other F20 games.

Choosing spells: All spellcasters choose the spells they will cast in an arc at the beginning of the arc. (See **Shifting Choices as You Adventure** on page 59 for details.) Your class progression table tells you how many spells you choose at each level.

When you choose a spell, you gain the ability to cast it that arc. The number of times you can cast it depends on the spell's usage pattern, which can range from at-will, to once per battle, to just once per arc. See the previous section for the Common Usage Patterns.

You can only choose each spell once. For example, you can't choose a 1/arc spell like *bless* and cast it twice per arc.

Cast at your level: All spellcasters cast each spell at their own level! That sentence gets an exclamation point because this is a big change from *13th Age* 1E and from most other F20 games.

Each spell specifies its effect as its casting level increases. If you're a 2nd level sorcerer, you cast *burning hands* for the effect listed at 2nd level, not at 1st.

Spell and Power Progression

Most of the spells characters use have higher-level versions. Those versions allow you to choose the spell as a higher-level option if you like, rather than choosing an all-new spell.

Each spell has effects listed from its starting level, always odd, up to 10th.

Improvements for higher-level spells include new damage amounts and additional effects. Instead of being wordy, we've often opted to avoid repeating ability score modifier and damage types over and over—when a spell starts by dealing a certain type of damage, it continues doing so at higher levels.

As a rule, spells written in 2E style no longer add ability score modifiers to damage, we've moved to a die-roll-or-average-damage only system. But maneuvers and powers for weapon-using attacks do add ability score modifiers to damage. Basic melee and basic ranged attacks show these ability score modifier improvements and most class weapon attacks play off the basic attacks.

Improved effects: Like damage, effects at higher amounts replace earlier amounts rather than being cumulative. For example, the sorcerer's *unearthly glamour* lasts for half an hour at 5th level, an hour at 7th level, and two hours at 9th level. These increasing time periods aren't cumulative; each level of the spell tells you exactly what the duration is.

Spells that add entirely new effects at higher levels add those effects to the spell's original effects.

ROLLING A D3

To roll 1d3, roll a d6 and interpret the results: 1–2 = 1, 3–4 = 2, 5–6 = 3.

Dice Rolling Conventions

How many dice do you want to roll? You have options . . . and we have recommendations, starting with the system we use in most of our games.

We think the game plays best using average damage results, at least as soon as you're playing champion tier. The rest of the options are included in case you want to experiment.

Average damage: We use the average results for damage dice as soon as we're playing champion-tier characters.

We now feel strongly enough about using average damage at epic tier that we've started moving away from providing damage dice expressions, going straight to averages.

This system is fast. Getting less variance in your results is also advantageous for your character, while the possibilities of crits and misses and powers and spells that have varying effect based on natural rolls keeps things unpredictable. In particular, taking average for recoveries makes a ton of sense, and even our players who prefer to roll as many dice as possible tend to start using average results for recoveries after rolling a few snake-eyes.

When characters consistently make multiple attacks that roll/generate damage separately, using average damage speeds up the game for everyone. Our playtesters noted that rolling damage dice for multiple attacks and targets slows the game down. They were right. Use average damage instead.

Roll 'em: Literally roll all the damage dice you get. We're fine with this at lower levels, and it can sometimes play OK at champion tier. If you're still rolling all your damage dice at epic tier, the game slows down a lot. We don't recommend it, and that's why most spells and powers switch to average damage at epic tier. If you're uncomfortable with that and want to roll every die, see **Appendix B: Dice Approximations**.

Just one die: Instead of rolling multiple dice, roll just one die and multiply it by the number of dice you would have normally rolled. You get a more exciting roll in less time, so for people who can handle wild swings in fortune, it's a win-win. For damage rolls you end up making a lot, you can go faster by writing down the possible results ahead of time for each die result. Include your damage bonuses in the totals so you don't

have to do addition in the middle of combat.

Theoretically, this method works, and it makes every die roll dramatic; however, it's psychologically tough, and our attempts to use it in an entire champion-tier playtest ended after one session.

Max/Min: How do you get the speed of average damage with thrill of rolling damage and then some? Roll a single die as your damage roll. If it's even, you deal max damage. If it's odd, you deal minimum damage.

Only 1d6: Almost as simple as Max/Min, and definitely more satisfying. Roll 1d6. 1: minimum damage; 2-5: average damage; 6: maximum damage. If you're using average damage, this can be a good way to increase the drama around a particularly crucial attack. It can also be used by that one player who always wants to roll some damage, though not necessarily all of it.



When we worked on 3rd Edition, *we found that faster combat is more fun, and I think that holds true for average damage. Sometimes, I roll max/min for damage. It's appropriate, for example, when playing my unhinged derro occultist (using stats for a gnome). Rob tried rolling max/min when I was the GM, but in general I don't want him to. He is eerily good at hitting 50-50 dice rolls and coin tosses.*

Other Damage Types

Damage types, such as fire or acid, provide a lot of flavor, and *vulnerability* or *resistance* to a type of damage can influence the outcome of certain battles. Catching fire, for example, can be memorable, if nothing else. Here are the different types of special damage.

Acid: This is any type of corrosive liquid, gas, or magical substance that eats away at flesh. Drops of it cause pain, and vats of the stuff might not leave a trace of you behind.

Cold: You might call it ice, but it's not always solid and chunky, so we call it cold.

Fire: If it looks like fire, and burns like fire, it's fire—whether it's blasting out of a spell, spewing from a dragon's breath, or radiating from a demon you shouldn't get too close to.

Force: Magical energy—pure and shimmering. It's often accompanied by a background hum, and it's most commonly encountered in wizard spells like *magic missile*.

Holy: Pure divine energy, commonly encountered in cleric and paladin spells. The undead are often vulnerable to it. Its smell and sound effects depend on the spell or on the character's or GM's attitude toward the divine.

Lightning: This is what your character calls "electricity." It smells like ozone and makes your hair stand on end.

Necro: Putrefaction energy associated with the undead. It is a direct wound to your life force, and it smells of the grave. In earlier books, this was called "negative energy," which always bothered us, since we don't use positive energy as an energy type. But if you like that term more, use it.

Poison: This damage often hits you as ongoing damage, as the poison races through your veins. There's enough magic at work in the poisons in our fantasy world that they can often damage creatures that wouldn't be affected by "poison" in our world.

Psychic: Anything that wrecks a creature's mind and causes anguish that can kill. Usually, the only thing you see is a look of pain or horror on the victim's face, but big psychic damage also gives you nosebleeds, earbleeds, a slight widening of the eyes, and ultimately, an exploding cranium.

Thunder: Your character has heard that storm giants attack with lightning and thunder, rather than electricity and sonic energy.

Weapon Rules

Attacks that deal *Weapon* damage operate slightly differently than spells.

Weapons and Classes

Each class has its own weapon chart in its **Gear** section, which shows how well members of that class use weapons of each category. Many classes take attack penalties with serious weapons, others (like the rogue) have weapons they're especially proficient with that do more damage than you'd expect.

Two-weapon fighting: If your class can wield two weapons at a time and gain the benefit of hitting with a natural 2, your class lists two-weapon fighting as one of your weapon options. If it's not listed—as for the bard, cleric, sorcerer, and wizard—it's not an option. (The rogue is a special case.)

Weapons with character: Describe your character's weapons in a way that suits your character's story. One barbarian's two-handed martial weapon might be a big, spiked club, while another's might be a fine dwarven greataxe ("And I didn't steal it, if that's what you're thinking.")

Describe your character implicitly by telling the other players what their weaponry looks like, as well as their armor. In epic poetry, the gear described in such an account is known as the hero's panoply, so tell the other players what your character's panoply is . . . and then improve it with magic treasure! (*GMG*: 172.)

Weapon Damage Progression

Unlike spells, most powers that include *Weapon* damage don't usually require new versions as the power level rises. The damage from weapon attacks automatically scales up, as explained below.

Each weapon is assigned a damage die type according to the weapon's properties. This die type is normally notated as *Weapon* in attacks and powers. Each weapon attack that hits deals 1 *Weapon* die of damage per character level + an ability

modifier determined by class. As shown on the weapon damage progression table below, the ability modifier is doubled at champion tier and quadrupled at epic tier.

This improves slightly at epic tier, the same way that math for healing using a recovery (page 304) improves at epic tier. For each epic level you have, add +5 to *Weapon* damage. In other words, at 8th add 5, at 9th add 10, and at 10th add 15. See below for the progression from 1st to 10th level.

Weapon Damage Progression Table

(LEVEL × *WEAPON* DAMAGE DIE) + [ABILITY MOD]
1st level: 1 *Weapon* die + (Ability mod)
2nd level: 2 *Weapon* dice + (Ability mod)
3rd level: 3 *Weapon* dice + (Ability mod)
4th level: 4 *Weapon* dice + (Ability mod)
5th level: 5 *Weapon* dice + (Ability mod × 2)
6th level: 6 *Weapon* dice + (Ability mod × 2)
7th level: 7 *Weapon* dice + (Ability mod × 2)
8th level: 8 *Weapon* dice + (Ability mod × 4) + 5
9th level: 9 *Weapon* dice + (Ability mod × 4) + 10
10th level: 10 *Weapon* dice + (Ability mod × 4) + 15

For example:

- *A 1st level fighter with a Strength of 18 attacking with a long sword deals 1d8 + 4 damage.*
- *That same fighter at 3rd level attacking with a magic +1 long sword deals 3d8 + 5 damage.*
- *A 7th level fighter with a Strength of 20 attacking with the same long sword deals 7d8 + (2 × Strength mod damage) + 1, so 7d8 + 11.*
- *At 8th level, that same Strength 20 fighter, still devoted to their +1 sword, deals 8d8 + (4 × Strength mod) + 1 + 5 for their first epic level, so 8d8 + 26. And since we highly recommend that epic-tier attacks use average damage if you haven't already been using average damage, the fighter's normal hits deal 62 damage (36 + 26) and their critical hits deal 124 damage!*

DIE-SIZE STEPS

There are a few powers and effects that increase, or decrease, die sizes by one or more steps. In case it's not obvious, here's how those sizes step up or down:

d3 < d4 < d6 < d8 < d10 < d12 < 2d6 < 2d8 etc.

Attack Wording & Multiclassing

As a rule, your attack from one class can't interact with the talents and powers and feats from another class. We don't want to have to identify every single attack and talent in every single class with class designations as a constant reminder of that fact.

Which is not to say that we have skipped all such designations. We often write things like "barbarian melee attack" and "rogue no-trigger attack." But if we don't write it out, don't assume that's because we want it being applied to multiclass experiments!

It's also true that in many instances in which we've written the class designations, it's because we're making a point about your options. For example, the Barbaric Cleave talent says, "Once per battle, make a barbarian melee attack as a free action after one of your melee attacks drops a non-mook enemy . . . ." This wording means that you could use any of your barbarian melee attacks, notably *raging strike* if raging; and most likely your basic melee attack if you're not.

Shifting Choices as You Adventure

We want players to have fun and avoid getting stuck playing with options they're no longer happy with. That said, great fantasy heroes don't revise *all* their abilities willy-nilly—with the arguable exception of the trickster, as presented in *13th Age Glorantha*!

Our guidelines for allowing player characters to change their chosen spells, powers, talents, and feats follow. If you disagree with us and are more or less forgiving, it's no big deal. If your players care about such things, mention your versions of these guidelines early in the campaign.

We'll start with the options characters change all the time and move toward rarer changes.

Spells: You can change the spells you have ready at the start of each arc. We don't see any reason to penalize or favor some spellcasters over others on this count. If your PC is a spellcaster and you want to choose different spells that are legal for your character, go ahead.

As always, you can choose a given spell only once—you can't double-up on a limited-use spell.

Feats: Characters need to revise feat choices often, partly because feats are attached to spells and powers that you can swap in and out. Unless it starts to get in the way of the group's game time, players can change feat choices whenever they're changing other elements of their character.

Powers: Non-spell powers are a bit harder to swap around than spells, but not that much harder. You can reselect your power choices when you gain a level. You've had the time to gain experience and power, so go ahead and shift your focus if you like.

Talents: Talents are a core element of your character. If you're going to rearrange your talents, you should have a good reason. That good reason could be something significant that has happened in your character's life, such as a personal transformation or revelation. Or it could be that you've realized you never really made use of the talent, or it turned out not to be fun to play. You don't need a compelling story reason if you are revising your character to have fun, but it wouldn't hurt to make one up!

Customization

Feel free to tinker toward what's fun and what best suits your character.

Borrowing one talent: There were at least two campaigns in the 2E playtest in which almost every character had chosen a talent from a different class to make them feel something like a multiclass character. A fighter with Paladin's Challenge (naturally), a wizard with a clerical domain, or a sorcerer with the rogue's Shadow Walk? Those seem OK, and Shadow Walk is written to prevent a sorcerer from gathering power after disappearing into shadow!

Trying to *min-max* talents from other classes isn't cool, but simple swaps that feel right in the campaign can help the campaign feel unique.

Backgrounds as skill sets: Does your fighter want to accomplish feats of stealth and thievery more associated with the rogue? Choose a background like *former Santa Cora temple thief* and there's every chance your GM will let you apply the background to rolls for being stealthy or quickly searching for loot.

Similarly, our players frequently rename their attacks and spells and describe them in new ways to suit their characters' personalities and icon connections.

Multiclassing: Our full multiclassing rules aren't in this book. Instead, there's a detailed version of multiclassing on pages 103-111 of the original core book's sequel: *13 True Ways*. If you don't want to go to that trouble, borrowing a talent and a spell might take you a long way.

Some of the rules for how individual classes work, such as requirements for having a hand free when casting spells, don't work in combinations with the gear other classes generally use. Treat restrictions loosely if you're hacking together a multiclass, and work with your GM to make your character playable.

Cha-cha-cha-Changes

Returning players will find a list of serious changes from *13th Age* 1E on the Pelgrane website. Here's a short list of serious changes it might be easy to miss if you're experienced and diving quickly into play.

- **Basic attacks** are better defined and now interact with all of the heroes' abilities and powers. What we used to refer to as "basic attacks" in 1E are now called *no-trigger attacks*, and they're mainly used for opportunity attacks and some bonus attacks.
- Characters using **ranged spells** and **ranged attacks** now take opportunity attacks from engaged enemies no matter who the spell or attack targets. You can't avoid an opportunity attack just by targeting an enemy you're engaged with.
- As a rule, you don't have to take lower-tier **feats** to take the higher-tier feats attached to the same talent, spell, or power.
- **Intercepting** is now an interrupt action, which matters more now that there are more interrupts in heroes' powers and spells.
- The **conditions list** on page 308 has changes you'll want to track.

Starting Stats for 1st Level Characters

CLASS	BASE HP	USUAL BASE AC*	BASE PHYSICAL DEFENSE	BASE MENTAL DEFENSE	RECOVERIES	RECOVERY DICE
Barbarian	7	12	11	10	8	d12/lvl
Bard	7	12	10	11	8 or 9	d6 or d8/lvl
Cleric	7	11 or 14	11	11	8	d8 or d10/lvl
Fighter	8	15	10	10	9	d10/lvl
Paladin	8	16	10	12	8	d10/lvl
Ranger	7	13	11	10	8 or 9	d6 or d8/lvl
Rogue	6	12	12	10	8	d8/lvl
Sorcerer	6	10	11	10	8	d6/lvl
Wizard	6	10	10	12	8	d6/lvl

*The base AC numbers assume that the PC is in the armor that suits them best; see the class write-ups for details. PCs who know how to fight using a shield get +1 AC when they have a shield in one hand (which means they can't use a two-handed weapon at the same time).

Barbarian

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

Overview



Play style: A barbarian character can be straightforward and easy to play. It's a good class for a new player or the player who wants to have fun without worrying much about rules getting in the way of awesome attacks.

Unlike most of the other classes, barbarians don't gain new powers every level. Instead, most of their extra *oomph* comes from their class talents. The simplest barbarian player characters keep decisions to a minimum while contributing with mighty attacks and awesome bravado.

Ability Scores: Strength is the most important score for a barbarian. After Strength, Constitution is usually next in line, since you'll take damage often and a high Constitution increases your hit points. Both Dexterity and Wisdom can contribute to your Armor Class as well as the types of skill checks your adventuring companions frequently rely on you to make.

Backgrounds: Barbarian heroes in *13th Age* often come from nomadic or non-agricultural groups, but not always. Sample backgrounds include *wolf clan champion*, *caravan outrider*, *Starport mountain guide*, *former volcano priest*, *wasteland survivalist*, *underworld spider clan refugee*, *reluctant gladiator turned eager champion*, *Iron Seacoast hunter*, *dire beast hunter*, *dire beast guardian*, or *dire beast guardian for the High Druid's grandmother*.

Not all barbarians come from the frontiers and the wilderness. Some barbarian heroes are simply powerful warriors with fewer tricks and more rage than other heroes. Such barbarians can come from most anywhere in the Empire, and they would be perfectly at home with backgrounds listed for the fighter (page 111).

Feel: Some barbarians are straightforward, raging warriors. Others have a few touches of magic, provided by talents like the adventurer-tier Beast Aspect and the epic-tier Ancestral Warband.

Icons: Barbarians from the frontier are often related in one way or another to the High Druid, the Three (especially the Red), or even the Diabolist. Barbarians from the more urban empire might be drawn to the Crusader or to icons associated with their own kin, and both the Dwarf King and Elf Queen have inspired heroes who rage.

Gear

If you wish, you could present your character as someone encountering the Dragon Empire for the first time, using gear crafted by nomads outside the map. Most groups in the Empire's vicinity have had some contact with the Empire, if only through its legions, so your gear could easily be a mix of items crafted in the wilds and in the cities.

A 1st level barbarian usually starts with a single adventurer-tier healing potion, which lets you heal using a recovery with a bonus of +5 (+1d8) hit points healed. Using a potion or applying one to an unconscious ally requires a standard action, and in general, used potions are replaced at the start of each arc. For more information, see the *GMG*: **Healing Potions** (page 170) and **Acquiring One-Use Items** (page 171).

Barbarian Armor

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

ARMOR TYPE	BASE AC	ATK PENALTY
None	11	—
Light	*12*	—
Heavy	13	–2
Shield	+1	—

Barbarian Weapons

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

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

MELEE	ONE-HANDED	TWO-HANDED
Small	d4 dagger	d6 club
Light or Simple	d6 hand-axe, warclub	d8 spear
Heavy or Martial	d8 longsword, battleaxe	d10 greatsword, greataxe
Two-weapon fighting	Two 1-H weapons, hit w/nat 2	—

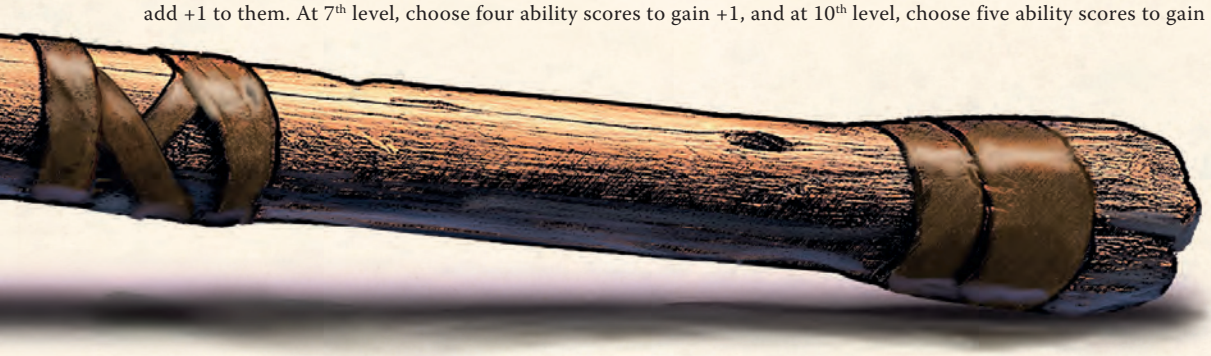
RANGED	THROWN	CROSSBOW	BOW
Small	d4 dagger	d4 (–5 atk) hand crossbow	—
Light or Simple	d6 javelin, axe, spear	d6 (–5 atk) light crossbow	d6 shortbow
Heavy or Martial	—	d6 (–5 atk) light crossbow	d8 longbow



Barbarian Level Progression

BARBARIAN LEVEL	TOTAL HIT POINTS	RECOVERY DICE	TOTAL FEATS	CLASS TALENTS	ABILITY SCORE BONUSES*
1st level	(7 + Con mod) × **3**	1d12 + Con mod	1 adventurer	3 adventurer	
2nd level	(7 + Con mod) × **4**	2d12 + Con mod	2 adventurer	3 adventurer	
3rd level	(7 + Con mod) × **5**	3d12 + Con mod	3 adventurer	3 adventurer	
4th level	(7 + Con mod) × **6**	4d12 + Con mod	4 adventurer	3 adventurer	+1 to 3 abilities
5th level	(7 + Con mod) × **8**	5d12 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 1 champion	3 adventurer 1 champion	
6th level	(7 + Con mod) × **10**	6d12 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 2 champion	3 adventurer 1 champion	
7th level	(7 + Con mod) × **12**	7d12 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 3 champion	3 adventurer 1 champion	+1 to 4 abilities
8th level	(7 + Con mod) × **16**	8d12 + (Con mod × 4) + 5	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	3 adventurer 1 champion 1 epic	
9th level	(7 + Con mod) × **20**	9d12 + (Con mod × 4) + 10	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	3 adventurer 1 champion 1 epic	
10th level	(7 + Con mod) × **24**	10d12 + (Con mod × 4) + 15	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	3 adventurer 1 champion 1 epic	+1 to 5 abilities

*Unlike the other columns, the Ability Score Bonuses column doesn't show your total bonuses at that level. At 4th level, choose three ability scores and add +1 to them. At 7th level, choose four ability scores to gain +1, and at 10th level, choose five ability scores to gain another +1.



Barbarian Stats

Initiative, AC, PD, MD, Hit Points, Recovery Dice, Feats, and some Talents are level dependent.

KEY ABILITY SCORES	Strength, Constitution, maybe Dexterity
INITIATIVE	Dex mod + Level
ARMOR CLASS (LIGHT ARMOR)	12 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
ARMOR CLASS (SHIELD AND LIGHT ARMOR)	13 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
PHYSICAL DEFENSE	11 + middle mod of Str/Con/Dex + Level
MENTAL DEFENSE	10 + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha + Level
HIT POINTS	(7 + Con mod) × Level modifier (see **Barbarian Level Progression** table)
RECOVERIES	Usually 8
RECOVERY DICE	(1d12 per Level) + Con mod (5th level: Con mod × 2; 8th level: Con mod × 4)
BACKGROUNDS	8 points, max 5 in any one background
ICON RELATIONSHIPS	3 points
TALENTS	3 (see **Barbarian Level Progression** chart)
FEATS	1 per Level

Barbarian Basic Attacks

The *barbarian basic melee attack* and *barbarian basic ranged attack* are the attacks barbarians use when they aren't raging. Like most attacks, they require a standard action and can interact with any of the barbarian's talents, feats, and powers.

Barbarians' rage attacks: The barbarian wants to rage as often as possible to use *raging strike* or *raging throw*. We'll cover the rage rules in detail in the class features section on the next page. For convenience, we're printing the two barbarian rage attacks here, next to the basic attacks they're based on.

No-trigger attacks: When your barbarian gets an opportunity attack or is granted a bonus attack action, that's usually a no-trigger attack. No-trigger attacks are exactly like your basic attacks, except they can't trigger or make use of your own powers and effects such as Barbaric Cleave, Unstoppable, or Violence—the powers that give your barbarian their *oomph*. See page 302 for notes on the bonuses no-trigger attacks do interact with.

Barbarian Basic Melee Attack

Melee attack ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One enemy
Attack: Strength + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Strength mod damage
5th–7th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 2)
8th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 4) + 5
9th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 4) + 10
10th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 4) +15
Miss: Damage equal to your level

Raging Strike

Same as *barbarian basic melee attack* except . . .

At-Will when raging
Special: Your crit range increases by 4, usually to 16+.
Miss: Damage equal to twice your level

Barbarian Basic Ranged Attack

Ranged attack ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One nearby or far-away enemy, depending on the weapon's range
Special: Barbarian thrown weapon attacks add Strength to damage instead of Dexterity
Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Dexterity damage
5th–7th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 2)
8th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + 5
9th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + 10
10th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) +15
Miss: —

Raging Throw

Same as *barbarian basic ranged attack* except . . .
At-Will when raging
Special: Requires thrown weapon.
Special: Your crit range increases by 4, usually to 16+.
Miss: Damage equal to twice your level

Barbarian Class Features

All barbarians share three class features: Grim Determination, Legendary Prowess, and Rage.

Grim Determination

When you have one or more Skulls, you gain a +1 bonus to all your defenses. (No, not literal skulls; see page 305 for the Skull rules.)

When you have two or more Skulls, the bonus increases to +2 to all your defenses.

Adventurer Feat: Your crit range with basic melee and thrown weapon attacks also increases by the same amount as your defenses. (Yes, this is cumulative with the crit range increase from Rage.)

Champion Feat: Once per battle you can reroll a death save.

Legendary Prowess

At times your strength exceeds what should be possible for a mortal adventurer.

Whenever you fail a Strength or Constitution skill check, you can reroll the skill check once and abide by the reroll.

Rage

All barbarians rage. When raging, you can use a *raging strike* or *raging throw* on your turn instead of making basic attacks.

Duration of rage: Whenever you start raging, you continue raging until you fail a death save or until the end of the battle. If you fail a death save and stop raging, you can start again by using any of the methods below.

Special effects: When your barbarian rages, what does that look and sound like? Do they bellow, curse, spit, or froth at the mouth? Biting one's shield is traditional but optional.

How to Start Raging . . .

. . . Automatically: Once per arc, as a free action on your turn, you can start raging.

. . . With some effort: If you're not already raging, at the start of each of your turns you can roll a d12 "rage" die as a free action to find out if you start raging. Add the escalation die to the roll, and if the result is 9+, you start raging. If you don't rage, take a normal turn.

. . . As a possible response to getting hit: The first time you are damaged by an enemy attack each battle, if you're not already raging, roll a d12 "rage" die as a free action using the same rules and target numbers as above in *with-some-effort*. (This includes taking miss damage from an enemy attack but not ongoing damage.)

Adventurer Feat: While raging, you gain a +4 bonus to both your PD and your MD.

Champion Feat: Now you can roll a "rage" die to try to start raging every time you are conscious and damaged by an enemy attack instead of only the first time each battle.

THE RAGIER THE BETTER

The new barbarian Rage feature lets your barbarian rage more often. Since raging is your signature feature, we wanted to give you a chance to rage every battle. The original version of Rage was so good that the only way to balance it was to prevent you from using it most of the time. The new version puts the focus on critting rather than on hitting reliably, so you get to rage more often.

YOUR RAGE, YOUR STORY

You don't have to stick to the classic Cimmerian model of a raging barbarian. Maybe you rage because of a pact you made with poisonous mushroom spirits. Maybe your *unique* is that you are *half-werewolf* and the wolf wants to be free. Maybe you aren't "raging" at all, because in your case, the rage mechanics represent heightened martial focus, which you must struggle to maintain.

Barbarian Feats

Any barbarian can take these feats.

Harsh Response

"Go ahead and try."

Adventurer Feat: Once per battle as a free action, when an enemy makes an opportunity attack against you, you can make a no-trigger attack against them after the opportunity attack. In addition, if you are fighting with two 1-handed melee weapons, this Harsh Response no-trigger attack has its crit range increased by 2.

Zenith of Power

Zenith Feat (incremental advance when 10th level): Take an additional barbarian talent, any tier.

Adventurer-Tier Talents

Choose three of the following adventurer-tier class talents.

Unlike most other classes, barbarians can also access champion- and epic-tier class talents at higher levels. You get an additional barbarian class talent at 5th level, and again at 8th level.

The simplest barbarian: If you're new to the game and aiming to keep things simple, these three talents should work for you: Barbaric Cleave, Strongheart, and Unstoppable. Replace Strongheart with Violence to add another aggressive decision point.

More choices: If this isn't your first rampage and you'd like more decisions during play, consider Beast Aspect, Two-hander, and Whirlwind.

Barbaric Cleave

Once per battle, make a Barbaric Cleave melee attack as a free action after one of your melee attacks drops a non-mook enemy, or three mooks, or the last mook in a mob. If you are not engaged with any other enemies when you trigger Barbaric Cleave, you can use a move action as a free action to engage a nearby enemy, and then attack. (If you're raging, you can use *rage strike*; if not, use your no-trigger attack.)

Adventurer Feat: Once per arc, when your Barbaric Cleave attack misses, use a free action to turn the miss into a hit.

Champion Feat: You gain a +2 attack bonus with Barbaric Cleave attacks. Once per arc when the attack hits, you can heal using a recovery as a free action.

Epic Feat: You can now use Barbaric Cleave 2/battle, but only once per round.

Beast Aspect

You channel the ferocity of dire wolves, dire bears, tigers, or other great wilderness predators.

Over the course of each arc, choose up to two different benefits from the following list. You can't choose the same benefit twice, but each benefit has its own usage pattern, and some benefits can be used more than once per arc. You can choose and use a benefit as a free action.

(anger) Twice per arc, after rolling an attack when you are *not* raging, expand your critical hit range by +1 for that attack.

(endurance) Once per arc, until the end of the battle, you gain a +1 bonus to all your defenses while raging. While staggered and raging, the bonus changes to +2.

(ferocity) Once per arc, when an enemy misses you with a melee attack roll of a natural 1-3, you gain an extra standard action on your next turn.

(power) Once per arc, until the end of the battle, on your turn you deal an additional +8 damage (5th level: +15 damage; 8th level: +30 damage) with melee attacks against enemies you were not engaged with at the start of your turn.

(recovery) Once per arc, when you use a recovery, heal the maximum you can gain with that recovery.

(speed) Twice per arc, after rolling initiative, add +5.

(survival) Once per arc, reroll a death save with a +2 bonus.

Adventurer Feat: You can now choose three of the Beast Aspect benefits instead of two.

Champion Feat: Survival increases to +4 on the death save, speed increases to +10 initiative; and endurance increases to +2 and +3.

Epic Feat: (replaces adv) You can now choose four of the Beast Aspect benefits each arc instead of two.

Building Frenzy

The first time you miss with a melee attack each turn, you deal a cumulative +2 damage with your subsequent melee attack hits until the end of the battle, up to a maximum of +12 damage.

2nd	+3 per miss, +18 max
4th	+4 per miss, +24 max
6th	+6 per miss, +36 max
8th	+10 per miss, +60 max
10th	+15 per miss, +90 max

Adventurer Feat: Count the first time you are staggered each battle as a miss that builds your frenzy.

Champion Feat: (replaces adv) Now you can count both the first time you are hit each battle and the first time you are staggered each battle as misses that build your frenzy.

Epic Feat: (requires champ) Now you can count every time you are hit each battle and the first time you are staggered each battle as misses that build your frenzy.

Heavy Iron

You can fight in heavy armor. Instead of a base AC of 13 in heavy armor, you have a base AC of 14 in heavy armor, with no attack penalty. In addition, you take half damage from opportunity attacks.

In heavy armor, you are better protected, but the feeling of protection reduces your ability to rage. When raging, your crit range is only increased by 2, instead of 4.

Adventurer Feat: Once per arc, you can turn a crit that targets your AC or PD into a regular hit.

Champion Feat: Once per battle, when hit by an attack that targets AC or PD, you can avoid all effects other than regular damage. This includes avoiding ongoing damage.

Epic Feat: Once per arc, as an interrupt action, you can take half damage from all attacks against you by a specific enemy this turn.

Strongheart

Once per battle, as a free action, when an enemy hits you with an attack against Physical Defense or Mental Defense, you can make the enemy reroll the attack. The rerolled attack automatically misses if it is a natural odd roll.

Adventurer Feat: Increase your total number of recoveries by 1.

Champion Feat: You gain +1 PD and +1 MD. When you heal using a recovery, you can roll a save against a temporary effect.

Epic Feat: (replaces adv) Increase your total number of recoveries by 2.

Two-hander

You are extremely dangerous with two-handed melee weapons. While you are raging, your *Weapon* dice when using two-handed melee weapons bump up one size, usually from d10s to d12s.

In addition, once per battle as a free action, you can daze an enemy that is staggered after you attack it in melee with a two-handed weapon, so long as your attack deals at least 1 point of damage. (In other words, you can often daze a foe, even when you miss.) The dazed effect lasts until the end of your next turn.

You gain a second use of this daze effect when the escalation die is 4+.

Adventurer Feat: Once per arc, as a free action, when an enemy moves to engage you while you are using a two-handed melee weapon, make a no-trigger melee attack against the enemy before its next action.

Champion Feat: One battle per arc, as a quick action, express the peril of getting too near you by starting a battle-long effect that forces damaged enemies engaged with you to take –2 penalties to their attacks, so long as you are fighting with a two-handed weapon. (Undamaged enemies aren't affected).

Epic Feat: Your Two-hander effect against a staggered enemy weakens them (save ends) instead of dazing them.

Unstoppable

Once per battle, declare you're using Unstoppable before making a melee attack. If your attack hits the first target, you can heal using a recovery.

Adventurer Feat: Once per arc, when you heal using Unstoppable, you gain double the hit points.

Champion Feat: Once per arc, when you hit using Unstoppable, you can end up to three temporary conditions affecting you.

Epic Feat: Increase your total number of recoveries by 1. In addition, you can use Unstoppable twice per battle.

Whirlwind

Once per battle, you can make a Whirlwind attack as a standard action when you are engaged by two or more enemies. Make a melee attack against up to three targets. For each such attack, if you roll a natural 1–3, that creature makes an opportunity attack against you.

Adventurer Feat: Once per arc, when you use Whirlwind while not raging, you start raging.

Champion Feat: Once per arc, turn a miss with a Whirlwind attack into a hit.

Epic Feat: You no longer have to be engaged by two or more enemies to use Whirlwind, and you can can take your move action in-between your Whirlwind attacks. Each creature you hit with an attack from Whirlwind this turn cannot make opportunity attacks against you this turn, either for you moving or for you rolling a 1–3.

Violence

Once per battle, when you're about to make a melee or thrown weapon attack, you may decide to add +1d8 to the attack roll. In addition, the crit range of this attack expands by the escalation die.

You may not use Violence in conjunction with any other talent, so it doesn't synergize with Slayer, Unstoppable, Whirlwind, etc. On the other hand, it works fine with *raging strike*!

Adventurer Feat: After making your attack roll and rolling the Violence die, you can spend a recovery to reroll the Violence die.

Champion Feat: If you spend a standard action to rally, you get another use of Violence this battle.

Epic Feat: The bonus is now +1d12. Once per arc, use Violence an additional time that battle.

Champion-Tier Talents

At 5th level, you gain an additional barbarian class talent of champion tier. If you prefer, you can instead take an additional adventurer-tier talent, and if you do, you get its adventurer feat for free. (We're being generous because the barbarian deserves the support.)

My Turn

Once per battle, as a free action, when an enemy hits you with a melee attack, you can make a no-trigger attack against that enemy after their attack.

Champion Feat: If you are raging, your attack can be a *raging strike* instead of a no-trigger attack.

Epic Feat: If your attack misses, you don't expend this power.

Shrug It Off

Once per arc, as a free action while raging, you can turn a critical hit you are dealt into a hit that deals half the damage of a normal hit. Then you can heal using a recovery.

Champion Feat: You can use Shrug It Off twice per arc. As usual, just once per crit.

Slayer

Once per battle, when the escalation die is 1+, use Slayer as a free action when you are about to make a melee attack against an enemy you were not engaged with at the start of that turn. If the attack hits, deal +1d8 damage per level you possess (8th level: +1d10 damage per level).

Slayer applies to both your turns and enemy turns. You can either move to engage a new creature on your own turn, or ready an attack and clobber a monster that engages you on its turn. (See **Readying an Action** on page 292.)

Champion Feat: The damage bonus is now +1d10 per level (8th level: +1d12 per level).

Epic Feat: You can now use Slayer twice per fight.



Epic-Tier Talents

At 8th level, you gain an additional barbarian class talent of epic tier. If you prefer, you can instead take an additional talent of adventurer tier or champion tier, and if you do, you get its adventurer or champion feat for free.

Ancestral Warband

Once per arc, as a quick action or standard action (see below!) when the escalation die is 1+, you can call on the spirits of your ancestors to fight alongside you until the end of the battle.

If you use a quick action to call your ancestors, one ancestor spirit appears beside you to fight as an ally. If you use a standard action, two or three ancestors appear beside you—you get to choose, but as you'll see, calling more ancestor spirits makes it less likely you'll be able to use the spell in the next arc.

Your ancestor spirits use the escalation die and count as allies. They take their turns immediately before or after your turn, and will fight on even if you fall unconscious or are slain.

Arc recharge: After the battle, make a special d20 recharge roll to see if you can use the Ancestral Warband talent in the next arc. If you called a single spirit, the recharge roll is 6+. If you called two spirits, the recharge roll is 11+. If you called three spirits, the recharge roll is 16+.

If the roll succeeds, you can keep Ancestral Warband as a talent and use it in the next arc. If the recharge roll fails, you'll need to choose a different talent for the next arc, though you could return to Ancestral Warband later in your adventures.

Barbarian Ancestor Spirit

Your ancestors are doubtless a colorful lot. Play it up!

8th/9th/10th level troop [Spirit]

Initiative: Same as barbarian, and usually acts before or after barbarian

Spear, sword, axe, dagger-claw +15/16/17 vs. AC—35/45/60 damage.

AC	**25/26/27**		
PD	22/23/24	**HP**	**100/120/150**
MD	21/22/23		

Epic Feat: Your Ancestor Spirits are always raging, so their critical hit range is expanded by +4 and they now deal 15/27/36 damage on a miss.



Bloody Resolve

Once per arc, when an enemy's attack reduces your hit points to equal to or less than your Constitution ability score, ignore all damage past your Constitution score and make a no-trigger attack as a free action, or a *rage attack* as a free action if you are raging. Yes, this can stop you from being reduced to 0 hp.

Epic Feat: You can now use Bloody Resolve twice per arc, and your Bloody Resolve threshold is now equal to 30 + your Constitution ability score. (For example, with a Constitution of 18, your Bloody Resolve threshold would be 48.)

Relentless

While raging, you have *resist damage 14+* (when an attack targets you, the attacker must roll a natural 14 or higher on the attack roll or it only deals half damage).

Epic Feat: Whenever you score a critical hit against an enemy, you have *resist damage 18+* until the start of your next turn. (Unlike the main effect of this talent, this Epic Feat works both when raging and when not raging).

Bard

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



Overview

Play Style: Bards are magical, musical, playful, helpful, and tricky. Bards are flexible characters with many options in roleplaying situations and in combat. They're not the best character choice for beginning players, but they can be a lot of fun for experienced or extroverted players who enjoy mastering different types of abilities.

Ability Scores: The bard's two most important ability scores are Charisma (used as the attack ability for spells) and either Strength or Dexterity, depending on which ability you choose to use for your basic melee attacks. Unlike many characters, the bard gets a choice.

Kin: The playful spirit, lyrical soul, and magical aptitude of a bard is often found among humans, high elves, half-elves, and gnomes. In many campaigns, high elf bards have the most renown. Gnomes have a reputation as crowd-pleasers. Alternatively, your bard might be a dwarven chanter, an aasimar hymnist, or some other kin with a less common take on the class.

Backgrounds: Music, swordplay, and arcana offer diverse paths that lead to becoming a bard. If you're stuck for inspiration after the sample backgrounds that follow, look at the sample lists for fighters, rogues, sorcerers, and wizards—most could apply.

Your bard might be a *wandering minstrel*, *Cathedral musician*, *Drakkenhall court jester*, *mercenary herald*, *two-time runner-up in the Twisp games of song and satire*, *dungeon-town tavern owner*, *failed hedge wizard*, *frustrated diplomat to the court of the giant queens*, *spy*, *royal taster*, *caravan guide*, *military anthem composer*, *Imperial commissar*, *Grey Harbor smuggler*, *Necropolis drummer*, *party circuit maven*, *battle skald*, *Imperial dance instructor*, or a *dwarven battle cry instructor*.

Icons: The icons easiest to associate with your bard might be the Elf Queen and the Prince of Shadows, but bards thrive on surprises! Your bard could be connected to any of the icons, and you might want to relate your character's magical music to one or more of them.

Bard Class Features

The bard has several unique features complementing a more-or-less normal approach to its spells.

Spells

Bards use arcane spells that function like those of other spell-casting classes. Some spells are arc, some recharge, and some are once per battle. At-will attack spells? The bard doesn't have them unless they choose the Overture talent . . . or a bard with the Voice talent could opt to *spell jack* an at-will spell from another class.

Most spell attacks are based on Charisma, while melee weapon attacks use the bard's choice of Strength or Dexterity, and ranged attacks use Dexterity.

Bardic Talents

Six of the bard's talents represents a style of magic associated with a bardic instrument. Once a bard has mastered one of these six instruments, all their magical acts and musical performances can incorporate the instrument's power, even if they're using a different instrument entirely. In other words, you don't have to be using or even carrying a particular instrument to use the magic associated with it.

For example, most bards sing or use their voice to some extent. A bard with the Dance, Drums, and Flutes talents can use the riffs and magics associated with those instruments while singing in a tavern, or humming a few notes in a deadly battle, or whistling a few short notes on a stolen pan-pipe. Lesser musicians are limited by the instruments at hand, while bards can harness their magic to become their instruments. When performing, they usually get better results with actual instruments, but they don't *need* the instruments to perform adventurer-style magic.

Music in battle: Bards often carry their instruments into battle, but not in the same way they wield a sword or manipulate a wand. A bard's instruments know the score. An instrument a bard has mastered might play itself during combat. Alternatively, it could be that the bard performs by beating percussion on a sword-hilt, humming like a flute, and whistling like piercing brass. Some bards maintain a constant musical flow or patter. Others only use music as punctuation for high points. Your bard's style is up to you.

An extremely well-prepared bard *player* might come prepared with snatches of flute, drum, or brass music that accompany them during a fight. The *13th Age Soundtrack* by James M. Semple, available from the Pelgrane Press web store, can help!

The openings: The explanations of the types of magical powers provided by the bardic talents appear on page 76, followed closely by the details on the talents themselves.

Bardic talent feats: Each of the six bardic instrument talents has a single adventurer-tier, champion-tier, and epic-tier feat associated with it. Instead of having separate blocks of text devoted to each feat's effects, you'll find the improvements that each tier of feat provides to that instrument's powers woven in beneath the talent's four different types of spell and power. Not all feats provide bonuses to all the elements of your talent.

Bardic Songs

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

Sustaining a song: Each song specifies what type of action starts the song and what type of action can sustain the song. On the turn after you start a song, if you want to sustain the song, spend the type of action specified by the spell at the start of your turn and roll a d20 against the song's sustain check target. If you *succeed*, you can continue the song with its sustained effect that round and attempt to continue it at the start of your next turn, as well.

The final verse: If you attempt to sustain a song and *fail,* you get the song's final verse effect immediately, and then the song's power ends. You could even deliberately fail the attempt to get the final verse effect. You can't start another song that round.

If you elect not to sustain a song at the start of your turn, its effects end immediately, and you do not get the effects of the song's final verse. Choosing to end a song by not sustaining is a free action, so you're free to act as you wish, including starting a different song. (Yes, this is a change from 1E.)

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

You can interpret the music you create with your bardic song any way you like. Some bards want to sing every stanza, but songs have no necessary connection to the Voice talent. Some bards play music in snatches during a song, others create the music magically, augmenting it with their voice, instruments, or the percussion of their swords.

Song problems: The magic in a bard's song allows the song to continue even when the bard takes short breaks to speak or cast spells. If you are knocked unconscious, hindered, confused, silenced, or stunned while you are sustaining a song, the song's effects stop temporarily but can be picked up and sustained if you are conscious and back to normal by the time your turn comes up. Think of it as song limbo—the energy of the song continues but has no effect until the bard is conscious or unstunned or otherwise able to sustain it. If you're not conscious *and* capable of sustaining the song on your turn, that prevents you from getting the final verse effect. Yes, that means that being confused prevents you from getting the final verse,



but being charmed would not, unless the song was an attack like *song of thunder*.

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

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

Bardic Control Thresholds

Bardic spells sometimes use the following hit point thresholds to determine if an enemy is a legal target. The 11th level is included because we've added a few ways for spells to have an effective power that's one level higher than their caster's level. If you need to go above 11th level, double the threshold from three levels lower.

1st	Target with 34 hp or fewer
2nd	Target with 40 hp or fewer
3rd	Target with 52 hp or fewer
4th	Target with 68 hp or fewer
5th	Target with 80 hp or fewer
6th	Target with 104 hp or fewer
7th	Target with 136 hp or fewer
8th	Target with 160 hp or fewer
9th	Target with 208 hp or fewer
10th	Target with 272 hp or fewer
11th	Target with 320 hp or fewer

Social Skills

Even rude bards understand that they are rude, and know how to maneuver social situations to their benefit, or to the benefit of their friends.

An adventurer-tier bard has three uses of Social Skills per arc, increasing to four uses per arc at epic-tier.

For one use of Social Skills, a bard can reroll a failed skill check involving social interaction, diplomacy, or other personal interactions between free-willed beings. Similarly, for a single use of Social Skill, a bard can allow a nearby ally to reroll such a skill check.

For an additional use of Social Skill, decided before the reroll, the bard tells everyone how something they do, or did before, or arranged ahead of time, is now providing a +3 bonus on the skill reroll.

Adventurer Feat: You have an additional use of Social Skill each arc. In addition, the bonus for the additional use on a reroll is now +5 instead of +3.

Ghost Sound

Ranged spell ◆ Standard action ◆ X uses per arc, where X = your Charisma modifier

Effect: This spell creates false noises emanating from somewhere nearby. The effect is like an exceptionally good

version of throwing your voice, if your voice could create a wide variety of sounds. Guards and watchmen really should learn that you can't trust everything you hear with this cantrip readily available, but really, what choice do they have? Attempted distractions with the cantrip are DC 15 challenges in adventurer environments, higher as you move into champion and epic environments . . . or the GM could let them succeed automatically if they're truly imaginative. (If someone is using *ghost sound* against the PCs? Use similar secret Wisdom skill checks to identify the sound as a magical fake.

Glows

Ranged spell ◆ Standard action ◆ X uses per arc, where X = your Charisma modifier

Every bard can either cast *light* like the wizard (page 181) or use *dancing lights* like the sorcerer (page 163). It's usually one or the other for each bard, choose your light!

Spells with Replacement

There are several bard spells with a usage pattern that's (almost!) unique to the bard.

The turn after you cast an arc/replacement spell, you can replace it with a bard spell you didn't already prepare this arc. Each spell or song with this usage pattern specifies two spells you can choose between. You will cast the new spell at a level lower than you cast the spell that's being replaced.

Obviously, that's usually your own level, so that the new spell will be cast one level lower than your level. (Multiclassing from *13TW* generally lowers that by a further level.)

The current arc/replacement spells are *charm someone*, *song of self*, and *shocking pause*. You'll note that none of these spells are 1st level spells, so there's no problem figuring out what lower-level versions do.

Strength Melee or Dexterity Melee

You have a choice of whether Strength *or* Dexterity is the ability score you'll use to make melee attacks. Experienced players find that Dexterity pays off frequently in our system, so the bard who chooses Strength Melee instead of Dexterity Melee gets some unique benefits.

If you choose Strength:

- Your recovery dice bump up to d8s and you get one extra recovery, usually increasing your number of recoveries to nine.
- You do not have an attack penalty when using a shield. Shield use is open to you.
- You gain a bonus 1/arc use of each of your combat riffs from Bardic Instrument talents, so long as the attacks that trigger the Riffs are bardic melee attacks.

Gear

At 1st level, bards start with nonmagical musical instruments, a melee weapon, a ranged weapon, light armor, and any minor elements of gear that their backgrounds suggest.

1st level bards also start each arc with a healing potion, though they don't accumulate if the potion from the previous arc went unused. (See *GMG*: 171 for details.)

Bard Armor

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

ARMOR TYPE	BASE AC	ATK PENALTY
None	*10*	—
Light	*12*	—
Heavy	13	–2
Shield	+1	–1

Bard Weapons

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

MELEE	ONE-HANDED	TWO-HANDED
Small	d4 dagger	d6 club
Light or Simple	d6 mace, shortsword	d8 spear
Heavy or Martial	d8 longsword, scimitar	d10 (–2 atk) greatsword, dire flail

RANGED	THROWN	CROSSBOW	BOW
Small	d4 dagger	d4 hand crossbow	—
Light or Simple	d6 javelin, axe	d6 light crossbow	d6 shortbow
Heavy or Martial	—	d8 (–1 atk) heavy crossbow	d8 (–2 atk) longbow

Bard Level Progression

BARD LEVEL	TOTAL HIT POINTS	RECOVERY DICE*	TOTAL FEATS	SPELLS & SONGS OF YOUR LEVEL	ABILITY SCORE BONUSES**
1st level	(7 + Con mod) × **3**	1d6 or 1d8 + Con mod	1 adventurer	2	
2nd level	(7 + Con mod) × **4**	2d6 or 2d8 + Con mod	2 adventurer	3	
3rd level	(7 + Con mod) × **5**	3d6 or 3d8 + Con mod	3 adventurer	3	
4th level	(7 + Con mod) × **6**	4d6 or 4d8 + Con mod	4 adventurer	4	+1 to 3 abilities
5th level	(7 + Con mod) × **8**	5d6 or 5d8 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 1 champion	4	
6th level	(7 + Con mod) × **10**	6d6 or 6d8 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 2 champion	5	
7th level	(7 + Con mod) × **12**	7d6 or 7d8 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 3 champion	5	+1 to 4 abilities
8th level	(7 + Con mod) × **16**	8d6 or 8d8 + (Con mod × 4) + 5	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	6	
9th level	(7 + Con mod) × **20**	9d6 or 9d8 + (Con mod × 4) + 10	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	6	
10th level	(7 + Con mod) × **24**	10d6 or 10d8 + (Con mod × 4) + 15	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	7	+1 to 5 abilities

Note: Although not listed on the table, this class gets three talents. It does not gain more at higher levels.

* Bards who use Dexterity as their melee attack ability use d6 recovery dice; bards who use Strength as their melee attack ability use d8 recovery dice.

** Unlike the other columns, the Ability Score Bonuses column doesn't show your total bonuses at that level. At 4th level, choose three ability scores and add +1 to them. At 7th level, choose four ability scores to gain +1, and at 10th level, choose five ability scores to gain another +1.



Bard Stats

Initiative, AC, PD, MD, Hit Points, Recovery Dice, Feats, and some Talents are level dependent.

KEY ABILITY SCORES	Charisma, Dexterity or Strength
INITIATIVE	Dex mod + Level
ARMOR CLASS (LIGHT ARMOR)	12 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
PHYSICAL DEFENSE	10 + middle mod of Str/Con/Dex + Level
MENTAL DEFENSE	11 + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha + Level
HIT POINTS	(7 + Con mod) × Level modifier (see **Bard Level Progression** table)
RECOVERIES	Usually 8
RECOVERY DICE	(d6 or d8* per Level) + Con mod (5th level: Con mod × 2; 8th level: Con mod × 4)
BACKGROUNDS	8 points, max 5 in any one background
ICON RELATIONSHIPS	3 points
TALENTS	3
FEATS	1 per Level
SELECT SPELLS	Beginning of arc

* Bards who use Dexterity as their melee attack ability use d6 recovery dice; bards who use Strength as their melee attack ability use d8 recovery dice.

Bard Basic Attacks

The *bard basic melee attack* and *bard basic ranged attack* are the weapon attacks you'll most often use when you're not casting a spell. Like most attacks, they require a standard action and can interact with any of the bard's talents, feats, and powers.

As mentioned above in the Strength Melee *or* Dexterity Melee section, you choose whether your melee attacks will be based on Strength *or* on Dexterity.

No-trigger attacks: When your bard gets an opportunity attack or is granted a bonus attack action, that's usually called out as a no-trigger attack. No-trigger attacks are exactly like your basic attacks, but they can't trigger or make use of your own powers. For example, you can't use a combat riff from one of your instrument talents after hitting with a no-trigger attack.

Bard Basic Melee Attack

Melee attack ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One enemy
Attack: Strength/Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Strength/Dexterity damage
5th–7th level: *Weapon* + (Str/Dex mod × 2)
8th level: *Weapon* + (Str/Dex mod × 4) + 5
9th level: *Weapon* + (Str/Dex mod × 4) + 10
10th level: *Weapon* + (Str/Dex mod × 4) +15
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Bard Basic Ranged Attack

Ranged attack ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One nearby or far-away enemy, depending on the weapon's range
Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Dexterity damage
5th–7th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 2)
8th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + 5
9th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + 10
10th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) +15
Miss: —

Bardic Instrument Talent Structure

There's a structure to the six bardic instrument talents. Each instrument provides its own flavor of combat riff, healing magic, miss-effect, and unique keynote ability. The lists below explain the four general types of powers, benefits, and spells each talent offers.

Full write-ups follow in the talent-by-talent section below.

Combat Riffs

Each talent provides a 1/battle combat riff, a magical effect that requires a free action immediately after the bard has hit with a melee attack. No-trigger attacks, like your opportunity attacks and some attacks granted by allies or magic items, can't trigger combat riffs.

Think of the combat riff as a rider on a bardic melee attack that hits. You can only use one combat riff per turn.

As mentioned on page 72, bards using Strength as their melee attack ability gain a bonus 1/arc use of each of their combat riffs.

Here's a summary of the combat riffs. See the individual talents for the full write-ups.

Brass: *Trumpet call* (Give a nearby ally a d4 inspiration die.)
Dance: *Move it* (Nearby ally gets move action.)
Drum: *Beatdown* (Deal thunder damage to enemies engaged with you or your allies.)
Flute: *Flutter* (Attack avoidance if you have an ally with you.)
Strings: *Simple Chord* (One nearby ally gets to save against a temporary effect.)
Voice: *Power Word* (Daze low hit point or damaged enemy.)

Healing Magic

You gain access to some form of healing magic with each instrument talent. It's generally not as straightforward as clerical healing.

Here's a talent-by-talent summary of the healing magics. They're deliberately not all precisely equal. See the individual talents for the full write-ups.

Brass: *Brassy* (Roll a great attack, heal an ally.)
Dance: *Perfect step* (A hero who successfully disengages can heal.)
Drum: *Upbeats* (Ally that hits with a natural odd attack can heal.)
Flute: *Oh trill* (Roll a terrible attack, heal an ally.)
Strings: *Easy listening* (Healing bonuses during a quick rest.)
Voice: *Avenge me* (Heal as you drop.)

Miss-Effect

You gain a miss-effect from each instrument talent: a (roughly) once per battle effect you can use as an interrupt action when an enemy misses with an attack.

In the special case in which your adventuring party includes two or more bards, only one miss-effect can be used per enemy attack! First spoken, first triggered.

Here's a summary of the miss-effects. See the individual talents for the full write-ups.

Brass: *You Get the Horns* (Attacker becomes vulnerable to the first attack against it.)
Dance: *Pass-By* (You get a disengage check.)
Drum: *Downbeat* (Possible daze.)
Flute: *Random Twitter* (Eliminate a mook.)
Strings: *Strum Along* (Next ally to attack the target gets an attack bonus.)
Voice: *Take Heart* (Ally gains temporary hp.)

Keynotes

Each instrument talent offers something unique—a keynote.

You'll benefit from all three of the keynotes provided by your bardic talents.

Here's a summary of the keynotes. See the individual talents for the full write-ups.

Brass: *Piercing Tones* (Spells that target nearby can target far-away, for you.)
Dance: *In Motion* (Forces an attacker to reroll.)
Drum: *Heavy Drumming* (Attack bonuses for Skulls!)
Flute: *Tricky* (Your very own *trick die*, once per arc.)
Strings: *Accord* (Cast an ally's at-will spell as a quick action; but there are consequences.)
Voice: *Jack of Spells* (Learn a spell from another class.)

Bard Talents

As mentioned earlier, the six bardic instrument talents represent distinct methods of playing music and performing magic. You don't have to be using or even carrying the instrument you've gained magic from; once you've learned its magic, you can access it using any instrument, tapping a rhythm, humming, singing, or using a wand or other arcane magic item.

The instrument talents are followed on page 84 by Overture, a talent that provides access to at-will ranged attacks and a healing spell. The Overture talent's gifts depend in part on the instrument talents you've chosen.

The bard requires attention: Each bardic instrument talent provides multiple powers you'll want to keep track of during other players' turns. It's not great for newcomers, and even experienced players can benefit from organizing their miss-effects and other triggered powers on cards.

The simplest bard: If keeping track of potential triggers sounds like a chore, take the Overture and Songmaster talents along with one bardic instrument talent that appeals to you. Choose songs rather than normal spells to take advantage of Songmaster and go over the song rules with the GM. Alternatively, you could maximize Overture's potential for making at-will ranged attacks by skipping Songmaster and choosing two instruments. You'd have more triggers to track, but hanging back out of melee is generally easier than mixing it up with sword play.

Brass: Horns & Trumpets

Your favored magic relies on piercing tones from horns, warhorns, trumpets, flugelhorns and other metallic instruments powered by your own wind. Trombones and tubas are a bit anachronistic for a high medieval world, but most versions of the Dragon Empire are high magic worlds, and we're sure you can find wonderful medieval horns to up-gun if you wish.

If you've mastered Brass, your magic blasts out with greater range than other bards, inspiring allies or making enemies vulnerable.

Like other bardic talents, Brass provides a combat riff, healing magic, a miss-effect, and a keynote.

Range: Note that the spells that are part of Brass all target nearby or far-away targets because of the Brass keynote: *piercing tones*.

Instrumental Adventurer Feat: You gain all benefits listed as Brass adventurer feats for *trumpet call*, *brassy*, *you get the horns*, and *piercing tones*.

Instrumental Champion Feat: (requires adv) Ditto, but for the champion feats.

Instrumental Epic Feat: (requires champ) Ditto, but for the epic feats.

Trumpet Call (Brass Combat Riff)

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle** ◆ Free action after hitting with a bardic melee attack

Effect: Choose a nearby or far-away ally and grant them a 1d4 inspiration die. After rolling an attack, the ally can spend the die by rolling it and adding the inspiration bonus to their result. If the die isn't spent before the end of the battle, it's lost.

Adventurer Feat: The inspiration die can now also be spent on a save, a disengage check, or a skill check.

Champion Feat: Your inspiration die is now a d6 instead of a d4.

Epic Feat: Once per arc, your inspiration die is a d8!

Brassy (Brass Healing)

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle** ◆ Free action when your attack roll is a natural 16+

Effect: A nearby or far-away ally can heal using a recovery.

Adventurer Feat: Add your Charisma modifier to the healing provided by *brassy*.

Champion Feat: Once per arc, you can heal using a recovery at the same time that *brassy* allows an ally to heal.

Epic Feat: The recovery (or recoveries, when you use the advantage given by the champion-tier feat) provided by *brassy* is now a free recovery.

You Get the Horns (Brass Miss-Effect)

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle** ◆ Interrupt action when a nearby or far-away enemy misses with an attack

Target: The creature that missed.

Effect: The enemy is vulnerable to the first attack against it before the end of your next turn. (Vulnerable is explained with the other conditions on page 309.)

Adventurer Feat: The enemy is instead vulnerable to the next two attacks against it before the end of your next turn.

Champion Feat: Once per arc, the vulnerability effect becomes a "save ends" effect that requires an easy save (6+).

Epic Feat: Once per arc, when you use *you get the horns*, an ally can reroll a single attack against the vulnerable enemy as a free action.

Piercing Tones (Brass Keynote)

Your spells and bardic powers and songs that can target nearby creatures or targets can also target and affect far-away creatures and targets.

Adventurer Feat: Once per battle on your turn, you can use an attack that is normally a melee attack to target a nearby enemy.

Champion Feat: Nothing added.

Epic Feat: Nothing added.

PIERCING INTENT

The intent of this keynote power is that any bardic power or spell that refers to nearby targets or effects can also be ready as referring to far-away targets or far-away creatures and objects that can be affected. For example, the *move it* combat riff from Dance normally allows a nearby ally to use a move action as a free action. Thanks to *piercing tones*, *move it* could allow a far-away ally to use a move action. Note that *piercing tones*' adventurer feat might allow a combat riff like *move it* to be used after a melee attack against a nearby enemy, but that's a once per battle option.

Dance: Poise & Motion

You don't need us to tell you about the inspirations you could draw from diverse histories and the wonderful augmentations possible once you've added magic to dance. Dance is about motion, dodging, and recovery.

Like other bardic talents, Dance provides a combat riff, healing magic, a miss-effect, and a keynote.

Adventurer Feat: You gain all benefits listed as Dance adventurer feats for *move it*, *perfect step*, *pass-by*, and *in motion*.

Champion Feat: (requires adv) Ditto, but for the champion feats.

Epic Feat: (requires champ) Ditto, but for the epic feats.

Move It (Dance Combat Riff)

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle** ◆ Free action after hitting with a bardic melee attack
Effect: One of your nearby allies can use a move action as a free action.

Adventurer Feat: You can use the move action yourself instead of giving it to an ally.

Champion Feat: Twice per arc, *move it* can affect two of your nearby allies instead of one; or affect you plus one ally if you prefer.

Epic Feat: Nothing added.

Perfect Step (Dance Healing)

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle** ◆ Free action when you or a nearby ally succeed with a disengage check
Target: The hero who successfully disengaged
Effect: The target can heal using a recovery.

Adventurer Feat: Add your Charisma modifier to the healing provided by the recovery (5th: double your Charisma mod; 8th: quadruple your Charisma mod).

Champion Feat: You gain a second use of *perfect step* when the escalation die is 4+.

Epic Feat: No additional effect.

Pass-By (Dance Miss-Effect)

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle** ◆ Interrupt action when an enemy you are engaged with misses with an attack
Effect: You can make a disengage check.

Adventurer Feat: You can grant the disengage check to a nearby ally.

Champion Feat: The disengage check has a +2 bonus.

Epic Feat: Twice per arc, *pass-by* can affect two nearby allies, or yourself and one other nearby ally.

In Motion (Dance Keynote)

Once per battle, so long as you have hit with at least one attack earlier in the battle, you can force an enemy to reroll an attack against your AC. The enemy must use the reroll.

Adventurer Feat: The enemy now uses the lower of the two rolls.

Champion Feat: *In motion* can now work against attacks vs. PD as well as AC.

Epic Feat: No additional effect.

Drums: Rhythm & Percussion

Even when you aren't beating a hip drum with one hand and swinging a sword with the other, there's something percussive about your magic. You might start combat with a single gong or a staccato drum riff, or you might keep time with your weapon and whatever metal is at hand. Maybe your drumstick is a mace, or maybe the basket of your sword is a modified tambourine!

How you feel about lesser drummers is up to you. You might be unwilling to mix your magic with weaker drums or you might know how to use the support.

Thematically, if you've mastered Drums you put the hurt on enemies and gather tempo as the escalation die rises.

Like other bardic talents, Drums provide a combat riff, healing magic, a miss-effect, and a keynote.

Adventurer Feat: You gain all benefits listed as Drums adventurer feats for *beatdown*, *upbeats*, *downbeat*, and *heavy drumming*.

Champion Feat: (requires adv)
Ditto, but for the champion feats.

Epic Feat: (requires champ)
Ditto, but for the epic feats.



Beatdown (Drums Combat Riff)

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle** ◆ Free action after hitting with a bardic melee attack

Effect: Deal thunder damage equal to your Charisma modifier to 1d3 enemies engaged with you or at least one of your allies (5th level: double your Charisma modifier; 8th level: quadruple your Charisma modifier).

Adventurer Feat: Beatdown now targets up to 1d4 enemies.

Champion Feat: After using *beatdown* once in a battle, you can use it again a second time later that battle when you've hit with a natural even melee attack roll.

Epic Feat: Each enemy damaged by *beatdown* must roll a normal save (11+). If the save fails, the enemy is dazed until the end of its next turn.

Upbeats (Drums Healing)

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle** ◆ Interrupt action when an ally scores a natural odd hit

Effect: The ally can heal using a recovery.

Adventurer Feat: Add +1d4 healing per point on the escalation die.

Champion Feat: +1d8 healing per point on the escalation die instead.

Epic Feat: +1d12 healing per point on the escalation die instead.

Downbeat (Drums Miss-Effect)

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle** ◆ Interrupt action when a nearby enemy with 34* hp or fewer misses with an attack
Special: Instead of rolling for this attack, you can choose to make your attack roll a natural 10. (Only roll if the GM tells you that's not enough for a hit.)
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: The target is dazed until the end of its next turn.
Miss: —
* **Target Progression as you Level Up:** Use the Bardic Control Thresholds on page 72.

Adventurer Feat: Bump your level up by +1 to determine the spell's hit point threshold.

Champion Feat: Once per arc, also deal damage equal to triple your Strength or Dexterity modifier to the target of *downbeat* (8th: five times that modifier).

Epic Feat: Once per arc, the target is weakened instead of dazed.

Heavy Drumming (Drums Keynote)

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Twice per arc** ◆ Interrupt action after a nearby ally has rolled an attack
Effect: The ally gains a bonus to the attack equal to the highest number of Skulls possessed by any of their allies. Dead = five Skulls!

Adventurer Feat: *Heavy drumming* can now be used three times an arc.

Champion Feat: Nothing added.

Epic Feat: The bonus is now the total number of Skulls for all party members.



Flutes & Pipes & Ocarinas

Quick trills of piping fit smoothly into spells. Magic flutes have a solid heritage, and you're the musician who can turn any flute magical.

Like other bardic talents, Flutes provide a combat riff, healing magic, a miss-effect, and a keynote.

Flute magic tends to be trickier than the other bardic instruments.

The keynote is a bit more powerful than others, and is therefore limited to once an arc instead of twice an arc like most other keynotes.

Adventurer Feat: You gain all benefits listed as Flutes adventurer feats for *flutter*, *oh trill*, *random twitter*, and *tricky*.

Champion Feat: (requires adv) Ditto, but for the champion feats.

Epic Feat: (requires champ) Ditto, but for the epic feats.

Flutter (Flutes Combat Riff)

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle** ◆ Free action after hitting with a bardic melee attack
Target: The creature you hit with the basic melee attack.
Effect: Until the start of your next turn, if you have at least one other ally nearby, the target can't attack you.

Adventurer Feat: You no longer need to have a nearby ally. The target simply can't attack you.

Champion Feat: Nothing added.

Epic Feat: Nothing added.

Oh Trill (Flutes Healing)

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle** ◆ Free action when your attack roll is a natural 1–5
Effect: A nearby ally can heal using a recovery.

Adventurer Feat: Once per arc, the recovery is a free recovery.

Champion Feat: Now triggers on a natural 1-7.

Epic Feat: Once per arc, two nearby allies can heal using a recovery instead of one.

Random Twitter (Flutes Miss-Effect)

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle** ◆ Interrupt action when a nearby enemy misses with an attack

Effect: If there is least one nearby mook, explain how the magic of the flute combined with the enemy miss eliminates a mook. (Keep track of damage already dealt to the mob separately, you're eliminating a mook rather than dealing a specific amount of damage.)

Adventurer Feat: If there are no enemy mooks nearby, the attacker deals damage equal to its level to itself or one of its nearby allies, whichever makes flute-sense (5th level: damage equal to double their level; 8th level: triple their level).

Champion Feat: Cancel any miss damage the target would have taken from the attack.

Epic Feat: Once per arc, take out two mooks instead of one.

Tricky (Flutes Keynote)

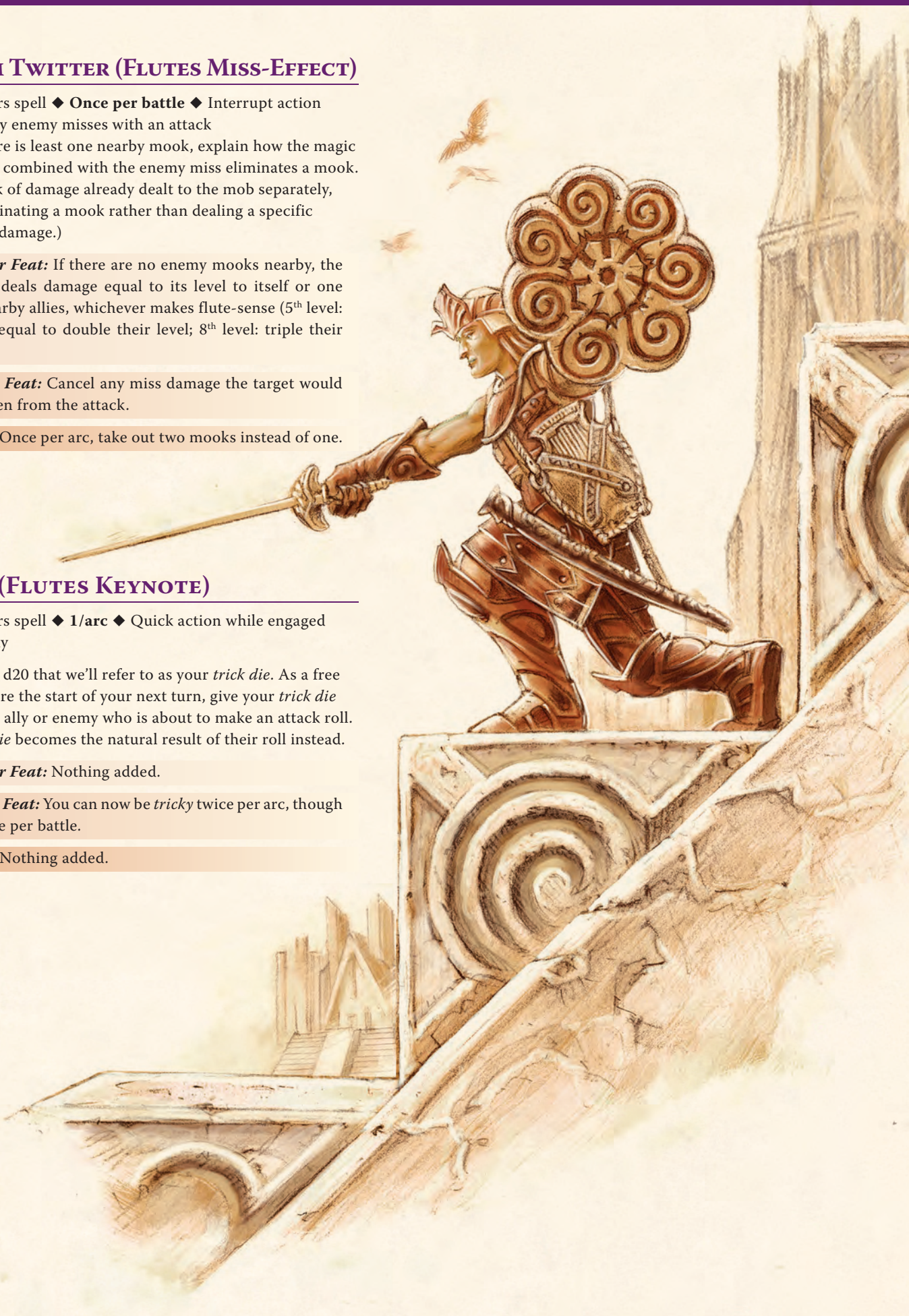
Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Quick action while engaged with an enemy

Effect: Roll a d20 that we'll refer to as your *trick die*. As a free action before the start of your next turn, give your *trick die* to a nearby ally or enemy who is about to make an attack roll. The *trick die* becomes the natural result of their roll instead.

Adventurer Feat: Nothing added.

Champion Feat: You can now be *tricky* twice per arc, though only once per battle.

Epic Feat: Nothing added.



Strings: Lutes & Harps & Guitars

Fiddles and violins and sitars and guitars may or may not be anachronistic, but there are certainly harps, lutes, violas, and zither-variants aplenty.

Thematically, Strings magic is all about teamwork, sometimes in surprising ways. Why play one note when you can play a chord?

Like other bardic talents, Strings provide a combat riff, healing magic, a miss-effect, and a keynote.

Adventurer Feat: You gain all benefits listed as Strings adventurer feats for *simple chord*, *easy listening*, *strum along*, and *accord*.

Champion Feat: (requires adv) Ditto, but for the champion feats.

Epic Feat: (requires champ) Ditto, but for the epic feats.

Simple Chord (Strings Combat Riff)

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle** ◆ Free action after hitting with a bardic melee attack

Effect: One nearby ally can attempt a save against a temporary effect. (See page 311 for an explanation of temporary effects.)

Adventurer Feat: Twice per arc, your ally can add the escalation die to their save.

Champion Feat: Once per arc, a *simple chord* save becomes an easy save (6+). Simple!

Epic Feat: Once per arc, *simple chord* affects two nearby allies instead of one

Easy Listening (Strings Healing)

Out of combat spell ◆ **1/arc**

Effect: During this quick rest, add your Charisma modifier to the healing given by each recovery.

Adventurer Feat: *Easy listening* is now usable 2/arc.

Champion Feat: At 5th level, you now add double your Charisma modifier. At 8th level, you now add triple your Charisma modifier.

Epic Feat: Nothing added.

Strum Along (Strings Miss-Effect)

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle** ◆ Interrupt action after a nearby enemy misses with an attack

Target: The enemy who missed.

Effect: Your next ally to attack the target adds double the escalation die as an attack bonus instead of just the escalation die.

Adventurer Feat: Add +4 to the damage if the attack hits.

Champion Feat: Increase the damage bonus to +8.

Epic Feat: Increase the damage bonus to +14.

Accord (Strings Keynote)

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Quick action when the escalation die is 3+

Effect: Choose a willing nearby ally. You cast one of their at-will spells using the same quick action you used for *accord*. You can substitute Charisma for any other mental ability score used in their spell, otherwise cast the spell by the book. Yes, that means that if it's a ranged spell and you're engaged, you'll take an opportunity attack. Your ally cannot cast the spell you've used for *accord* until after a quick rest.

Adventurer Feat: The escalation die only has to be 2+ when you cast the spell.

Champion Feat: You can use *accord* again later the same battle, using the same spell you borrowed before, when the escalation die reaches 6+, even if something terrible has happened to your ally in the meantime.

Epic Feat: You can now use *accord* 2/arc rather than 1/arc.

LACK OF ACCORD

Work out your potential *accords* ahead of time if you crave control. Winging it is fun, but it will slow down the game. If you can't get anyone else to come to *accord* quickly, move on instead of wasting time hanging. A merciful GM would give you back your quick action.

Voice: Singing & Chanting & Calling

Given the demands that adventuring puts on sword-arms and wand-hands, it's no surprise most bards use their voices quite a bit. Some use their voices to channel magic drawn from other instruments. You're one of the bards who turns singing into magic.

Or perhaps you're more of a chanter than a singer. Or a poet, turning deadpan free verse into *words* that hurt.

Thematically, Voice magic comes closest to the damage, healing, and control spells used by other spellcasters.

Like other bardic talents, Voice provides a combat riff, healing magic, a miss-effect, and a keynote.

Adventurer Feat: You gain all benefits listed as Voice adventurer feats for *power word*, *avenge me*, *take heart*, and *jack of spells*.

Champion Feat: (requires adv) Ditto, but for the champion feats.

Epic Feat: (requires champ) Ditto, but for the epic feats.

Power Word (Voice Combat Riff)

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle** ◆ Free action after hitting with a bardic melee attack

Target: The creature you hit with the basic melee attack.

Effect: Daze a target that now has fewer hit points than you until the end of the target's next turn.

Adventurer Feat: The spell can now daze a target that has hit points no greater than your hit points +10.

Champion Feat: The spell can now daze a target that has hit points no greater than your hit points +20.

Epic Feat: The spell can now daze a target that has hit points no greater than your hit points +50.

Avenge Me (Voice Healing)

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle** ◆ Free action as you drop to 0 hp or below

Effect: A nearby ally can heal using a recovery and add your Charisma modifier to the healing. The ally gains a +2 bonus to attack and damage with its next attack.

Adventurer Feat: The bonus to attack and damage increases to +4.

Champion Feat: The healing bonus increases to triple your Charisma modifier.

Epic Feat: The healing bonus increases to five times your Charisma modifier.

Take Heart (Voice Miss-Effect)

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle** ◆ Interrupt action when a nearby enemy misses with an attack

Effect: A random nearby ally gains 1d4 temporary hit points per level you possess. (Temporary hit points are explained on page 313. And yes, if the rest of your adventuring party is oriented towards generating temporary hit points, *take heart* can end up randomly accomplishing less than expected because temporary hit points don't stack.)

Adventurer Feat: Nothing added.

Champion: Use 1d6, not 1d4.

Epic Feat: Use 1d8.

Jack of Spells (Voice Keynote)

Unlike other keynotes, this element of your talent is an option you can choose to ignore.

Choose one spell from the spell list of the cleric, necromancer, sorcerer, or wizard to cast at your level. The spell counts against the number of spells or songs you can prepare—it's not a bonus spell. You can't jack spells that come from class features, talents, or feats. In other words, you can't jack the cleric's *heal* spell (a class feature) or the wizard's *magic missile* (a feat).

You cast the spell you've jacked as if you were a member of that class. If the spell relies on a class feature, like the cleric's ability to cast for power or cast for broad effect, you cast this spell as if you had that class feature. You can even improve the spell you've jacked by taking its feats up to your tier, if it has any, and if it makes sense to do so.

You can replace the use of Intelligence or Wisdom in the spell with Charisma. If there are other ability scores used in the spell you've jacked, you'll just have to use them.

Feats: Feats for the Voice talent don't help Jack of Spells. If it seems worthwhile, you're free to spend a normal feat on a spell you've jacked.

THE JACKABLE AND THE FORBIDDEN

The four classes accessible to spelljacking have similar straightforward approaches to their spells. Some future classes will probably join that list. Meanwhile, the chaos mage, demonologist, druid, and occultist treat their spell lists differently than the bard. You might be able to make a case that a specific forbidden spell fits your hero's *unique* or backgrounds, but the non-jackable classes feature weird usage patterns and power levels. What's "at-will" for the chaos mage of *13 True Ways* isn't at-will for any other spellcaster; the druid and demonologist's spells often care about how many class talents you have; and the occultist's spells barely make sense for the occultist.

Overture (Bard Talent)

This talent provides one or more bonus, at-will spells that can enable you to fight in the party's back row instead of needing to step into melee. These are bonus spells in addition to the spells you choose from normal class progression.

The number of bonus at-will spells you gain depends on the number of bardic instrument talents you possess. Each instrument talent has an associated at-will spell.

Most bards with Overture have two instrument talents and therefore gain two at-will spells of their level.

Combat riffs: Overture also alters the combat riffs associated with each bardic instrument talent, allowing them to be used when you hit with a ranged or close-quarters bardic spell, not just with a melee attack.

Champion Feat: Each battle, you can choose one Overture at-will attack spell you do not ordinarily know, and cast it until the end of the battle as if you possessed its associated talent.

Epic Feat: Once per battle, turn a miss (but not a fumble) with one of your Overture spells into a hit.

Brass Overture

Screaming Brass

"It's like every bad note ever blown, concentrated for one unlucky member of the audience."

Ranged spell ◆ **At-will**
Special: The effects of the spell's misses depend on the escalation die.
Target: One nearby or far-away enemy.
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 7 (2d6) thunder damage
Escalation 0–1 Miss: Damage equal to your level.
Escalation 2–3 Miss: Half damage.
Escalation 4+ Miss: Half damage, and the critical hit range of your next attack increases by 3 (usually to 17+).

2nd	9 (2d8) damage
3rd	11 (2d10) damage
4th	14 (4d6) damage
5th	18 (4d8) damage
6th	22 (4d10) damage
7th	28 (8d6) damage
8th	35 damage
9th	45 damage
10th	60 damage

Dance Overture

Dance of the Spell-Sword

"Force blades whir into my enemy and swirl around my sword."

Ranged spell ◆ **At-will**
Target: One nearby enemy.
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 8 (3d4) force damage, and your next melee attack roll has its critical hit range expanded by 2 (usually to 18+).
Natural 16+: One ally engaged with the target can roll a disengage check as an interrupt action.
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

2nd	10 (4d4) damage.
3rd	13 (2d12) damage
4th	17 (3d10) damage
5th	20 (3d12) damage
6th	26 (4d12)damage
7th	33 (6d10) damage
8th	40 damage
9th	50 damage
10th	65 damage

Drum Overture

Drum Work

"The beat has been killing me; now it's your turn."

Ranged spell ◆ **At-will**
Special: The first time each battle that your natural attack roll with *drum work* is equal to or lower than the number of recoveries you have expended in this arc, you can reroll the attack if you miss.
Target: One nearby enemy.
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 8 (3d4) thunder damage
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

2nd	10 (4d4) damage
3rd	13 (2d12) damage
4th	17 (3d10) damage
5th	20 (3d12) damage
6th	26 (4d12) damage
7th	33 (6d10) damage
8th	40 damage
9th	50 damage
10th	65 damage

Flute Overture

Jester's Tune

"It hurts them if they laugh, but it hurts worse if they don't."

Ranged spell ◆ **At-will**
Target: One nearby non-staggered enemy.
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD
Hit: 7 (2d6) psychic damage, and if the target misses with its next attack roll, it deals half its attack's damage to itself as well as any of its usual miss effects. Don't apply any of the attack's other effects when it damages itself.
Miss: —

2nd	9 (2d8) damage
3rd	11 (3d6) damage
4th	14 (4d6) damage
5th	18 (4d8) damage
6th	22 (4d10) damage
7th	28 (8d6) damage
8th	35 damage
9th	45 damage
10th	60 damage

Strings Overture

Lingering Melody

"You can see the tune circling around my target, waiting to burst."

Ranged spell ◆ **At-will**
Target: One nearby enemy.
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD
Hit: Your next ally to hit the target with an attack before the beginning of your next turn deals an additional 15 (6d4) psychic damage
Miss: Psychic damage equal to your level, no lingering effect waiting for an ally to hit.

2nd	20 (3d12) damage.
3rd	25 (7d6) damage
4th	32 (9d6) damage
5th	39 (6d12) damage
6th	49 (9d10) damage
7th	59 (9d12) damage
8th	80 damage
9th	100 damage
10th	120 damage

STRENGTH IN VAIN

There's no rule against using Strength as your melee attack score and also having Overture, but they don't combine extremely well. One of the Strength feature advantages is that you gain a bonus 1/arc use of each combat riff, but you must trigger that use with a melee attack.

Voice Overture

Voice of Thunder

"I love the moment when my allies' eyes get big and my enemies' ears explode."

Ranged spell ◆ **At-will**
Special: Some of the spell's effects depend on the escalation die.
Target: One nearby or far-away enemy.
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 7 (2d6) thunder damage
Escalation 0–1 Miss: —
Escalation 2+ Miss: Damage equal to your level.
Escalation 3+ Natural even hit: If staggered after the damage, the target is shocked until the end of its next turn

2nd	9 (2d8) damage
3rd	11 (3d6) damage
4th	14 (4d6) damage
5th	18 (4d8) damage
6th	22 (4d10) damage
7th	28 (8d6) damage
8th	35 damage
9th	45 damage
10th	60 damage



Songmaster (Bard Talent)

Roll an extra d20 when you attempt to sustain a bardic song and choose which result you want to use.

Adventurer Feat: If both the dice you roll to sustain a song roll high enough to sustain the song, one conscious nearby ally gains temporary hit points (page 313) equal to double your level. (8th: triple your level.)

Champion Feat: Once per arc, you can start a new song on the same turn that you used the final verse effect of a different song.

Epic Feat: Each time you use a song's final verse, gain temporary hit points equal to triple your level.

Bard Feats

All the Best Stories (Adventurer-Tier)

Once per arc, when you or an ally use an icon connection that ends up having a twist, you can heighten the effects of both the icon relationship advantage and the twist. This one goes to 11! All the best stories have desperate moments! What doesn't kill us makes us so much more interesting to sing stories about! (Icon connections and twists are covered in detail on page 273.)

Just as many icon relationship advantages have nothing to do with the heroes' intentions, you may not even know that you're the one responsible for everything getting super-dramatic all-of-a-sudden. This type of drama is just where bards live. And if your adventuring party has a bard, the rest of you live here, too.

Combat Gambit (Adventurer-Tier)

Once per battle, as a free action, take an ally's attack roll as your own. The ally rerolls their attack, and you keep their original natural roll and use it as your next attack roll this battle.

Endless Patter (Adventurer-Tier)

Once per battle, when you are hit by a melee attack, you can force the enemy to reroll the attack with an attack penalty equal to your Charisma modifier.

Loremaster (Champion-Tier)

You cannot take this feat if you have taken the Mythkenner feat.

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

Gain a single point of relationship with the Archmage, Dwarf King, Elf Queen, or Lich King. Add the point to a relationship you already have up to your normal maximum, or start a new one—positive, conflicted, or negative. (If your campaign isn't using these icons, choose someone similar.)

Mythkenner (Champion-Tier)

You cannot take this feat if you have taken the Loremaster feat.

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

Gain a single point of relationship with the Crusader, the Priestess, or the Great Gold Wyrm. Add the point to a relationship you already have up to your normal maximum, or start a new one—positive, conflicted, or negative. (If your campaign isn't using these icons, choose someone similar.)

1st Level Spells & Songs

Ascending Notes

"A ghostly tune plays lightly around you, and you can hear it clearly, even through the sounds of combat."

Ranged spell ◆ **Recharge 11+** ◆ Quick action to cast
Special: The spell's effects depend on the escalation die.
Target: One nearby ally.
Escalation 0–1 Effect: The target gains a +1 bonus to all attacks until the end of the battle.
Escalation 2–3 Effect: The target gains a +1 bonus to all defenses until the end of the battle.
Escalation 4–5 Effect: The target heals using a free recovery.
Escalation 6+ Effect: The target gains all three bonuses.

Champion Feat: The attack and defense bonuses each rise to +2.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Spells names are placeholders meant to leave all available space for your spark. Please rename them with abandon. For songs, we provided alternative names to show what our bards might call them. You can pick any name you



like, or call them something else entirely.

Befuddle

"I speak an impossible riddle in a language that doesn't exist, and it's about his mom."

Ranged spell ◆ **Recharge 11+**◆ Standard action, or quick action if the escalation die is 2+
Target: One nearby creature with 34* hp or fewer.
Special: The spell's effects depend on the escalation die.
Special: Instead of rolling for this attack, you can choose to make your attack roll a natural 10. (Only roll if the GM tells you that's not enough for a hit.)
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD
Hit Escalation 0–1: The target is dazed until the start of your next turn.
Hit Escalation 2–3: The target is charmed until the start of your next turn (see page 308 for the charmed condition).
Hit Escalation 4+: The target is confused until the start of your next turn.
Miss: —
* **Target Progression as you Level Up:** Use the Bardic Control Thresholds on page 72.

Adventurer Feat: Recharge check is now 6+.

TARGETING KNOWLEDGE

We're not trying to make you waste your spells. When you want to cast a spell like *befuddle* or *charm someone* that reliably affects enemies beneath a certain hit point threshold, the GM should tell you whether you have a good target.

Call for Heroes

"I sing a bit of one of the old stories as my force-bolt *flares into the demon's maw. The next one of my companions who picks up the tune will gain strength."*

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/battle**
Special: The spell's crit range expands by a value equal to the escalation die.
Effect: Unless the attack roll is a natural 1, before the start of your next turn, one ally who hits with an attack can heal using a recovery as a free action. It doesn't have to be your first ally to hit! Each ally who hits gets to decide whether they will use the healing effect, until one decides yes. If no ally hits, or no one uses it before your next turn, it's lost.

Target: One nearby or far-away enemy.
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD
Hit: 6 (1d10) psychic damage
Miss: —

2nd	7 (2d6) damage
3rd	9 (2d8) damage
4th	11 (2d10) damage
5th	14 (4d6) damage
6th	18 (4d8) damage
7th	22 (4d10) damage
8th	30 damage
9th	40 damage
10th	50 damage

Cutting Words

The "incantation" your bard speaks is an insult that cuts the enemy down to size, typically related to the target's background, plans, identity, heritage, failure, or relation to the heroes. You might tell a giant, "You should have picked on someone your own size," or tell a vampire, "They were right about you; you really do suck."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/battle**
Target: One nearby staggered creature
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD
Hit: 18 (5d6) psychic damage
Miss: Damage equal to double your level.

2nd	22 (4d10) damage
3rd	28 (8d6) damage
4th	35 (10d6) damage
5th	45 (10d8) damage
6th	55 (10d10) damage
7th	70 (2d6×10) damage
8th	90 damage
9th	110 damage
10th	140 damage

Song of Heroes

aka Song of the Valorous Few, Lay of Victory, Blades' Delight

Bardic song ◆ **Recharge 16+ after battle** ◆ Quick action each turn; 11+ to sustain
Opening & Sustained Effect: You and your nearby allies gain a +1 attack bonus until the start of your next turn.
Final Verse: The effect ends immediately, but one ally of your choice gains a +2 bonus to their next attack roll this battle.

Adventurer Feat: *Song of heroes* is now *a recharge 11+* spell.

Champion Feat: (replaces adv) As the adventurer feat, and

the bonuses each increase by +1, to +2 for early verses and +3 for the final verse.

Survivors' Song

aka Still Kicking, Not Dead Hardly, Some Vim

Bardic song ◆ **Recharge 16+ after battle** ◆ Quick action each turn; 11+ to sustain

Opening & Sustained Effect: You or a nearby ally gain 4 (1d6) temporary hit points. You can change the target as you like, remembering that temporary hit points don't stack (page 313).

Final Verse: One target of your choice that gained temporary hit points from the song can heal using a recovery.

2nd	5 (1d8) temp hp
3rd	6 (1d10) temp hp
4th	7 (2d6) temp hp
5th	9 (2d8) temp hp
6th	11 (2d10) temp hp
7th	14 (4d6) temp hp
8th	20 temp hp
9th	25 temp hp
10th	30 temp hp

Soundburst

The sound your bard creates might be a thunderous drumbeat, the blare of an ungodly trumpet, or your bard's own laugh detonating over the target.

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**

Target: 1d3 nearby enemies in a group

Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD

Hit: 11 (3d6) thunder damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn if it has 34* hp or fewer after your hit.

Miss: Half damage, and deal thunder damage equal to your level to each of your allies engaged with the target.

* **Target Progression as you Level Up:** Use the Bardic Control Thresholds on page 72.

2nd	14 (4d6) damage
3rd	18 (5d6) damage
4th	22 (4d10) damage
5th	28 (8d6) damage
6th	35 (10d6) damage
7th	44 (8d10) damage
8th	55 damage
9th	70 damage
10th	90 damage

Adventurer Feat: You can now target 1d4 + 1 enemies in a group with the spell.

Vicious Mockery

"I improvise a rhyming doublet about how the giant scorpion's body is too big for its little bug brain to manage."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**

Target: One nearby enemy

Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD

Hit: 14 (4d6) psychic damage, and 10 ongoing psychic damage. While the target is taking the ongoing psychic damage, when it misses with one of its own attacks, it takes half the damage the attack would have dealt if it had hit.

Miss: You take psychic damage equal to your level.

2nd	18 (4d8) damage; 10 ongoing
3rd	23 (5d8) damage; 10 ongoing
4th	32 (7d8) damage; 10 ongoing
5th	36 (8d8) damage; 20 ongoing
6th	49 (9d10) damage; 20 ongoing
7th	65 (10d12) damage; 20 ongoing
8th	75 damage; 40 ongoing
9th	100 damage; 40 ongoing
10th	130 damage; 40 ongoing

Adventurer Feat: A natural even miss does not expend the spell.

3rd Level Spells & Songs

Charm Someone

"I tell the demon, 'I want to be your friend,' and no one has ever said that to it before. It stops to consider the offer, at least for a little while."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**

Special Replacement: On your next turn after casting this spell, replace it with a bard spell you didn't already prepare that is one level lower than your own level and chosen from this short list: *ascending notes*, *survivor's song*.

Target: One nearby creature with 52* hp or fewer

Special: Instead of rolling for this attack, you can choose to make your attack roll a natural 10. (Only roll if the GM tells you that's not enough for a hit.)

Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD

Hit: The target is charmed (easy save ends, 6+). (Charmed creatures can't attack. Charmed effects are canceled if a charmed creature is attacked by an enemy; see page 308).

Miss: —

* **Target Progression as you Level Up:** Use the Bardic Control Thresholds on page 72.

Dramatic Recovery

"Playful notes of a flute fill the air, and they give you renewed hope and energy."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc**

Targets: A number of nearby allies equal to the escalation die.

Effect: Each ally can heal using a recovery.

Escalation 3+: You can target yourself with the spell.

Song of Self

aka The Selfish Song, Lalala La Lalala, Warding Song

Bardic song ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Quick action each turn; 11+ to sustain

Special Replacement: On your next turn after finishing this song, replace it with a bard spell you didn't already prepare that is one level lower than your own level and chosen from this short list: *befuddle*, *cutting words*.

Opening & Sustained Effect: You, the bard, gain a bonus to two chosen defenses (AC, PD, or MD) equal to the escalation die until the start of your next turn. Unusually, the value of the bonus rises with the die as you sustain the song. The chosen defenses don't change.

Final Verse: You gain the bonus to a single chosen defense until the start of your next turn.

Song of Thunder

aka Drums of Doom, Ballad of Destruction, Chords of Flesh Cutting

Bardic song ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Standard action each turn; 16+ to sustain

Opening & Sustained Effect: Make the following attack against 1d4 + 1 nearby enemies.

Special: Each time you sustain the song, add another +4 (1d6) to its damage this turn and subsequent turns.

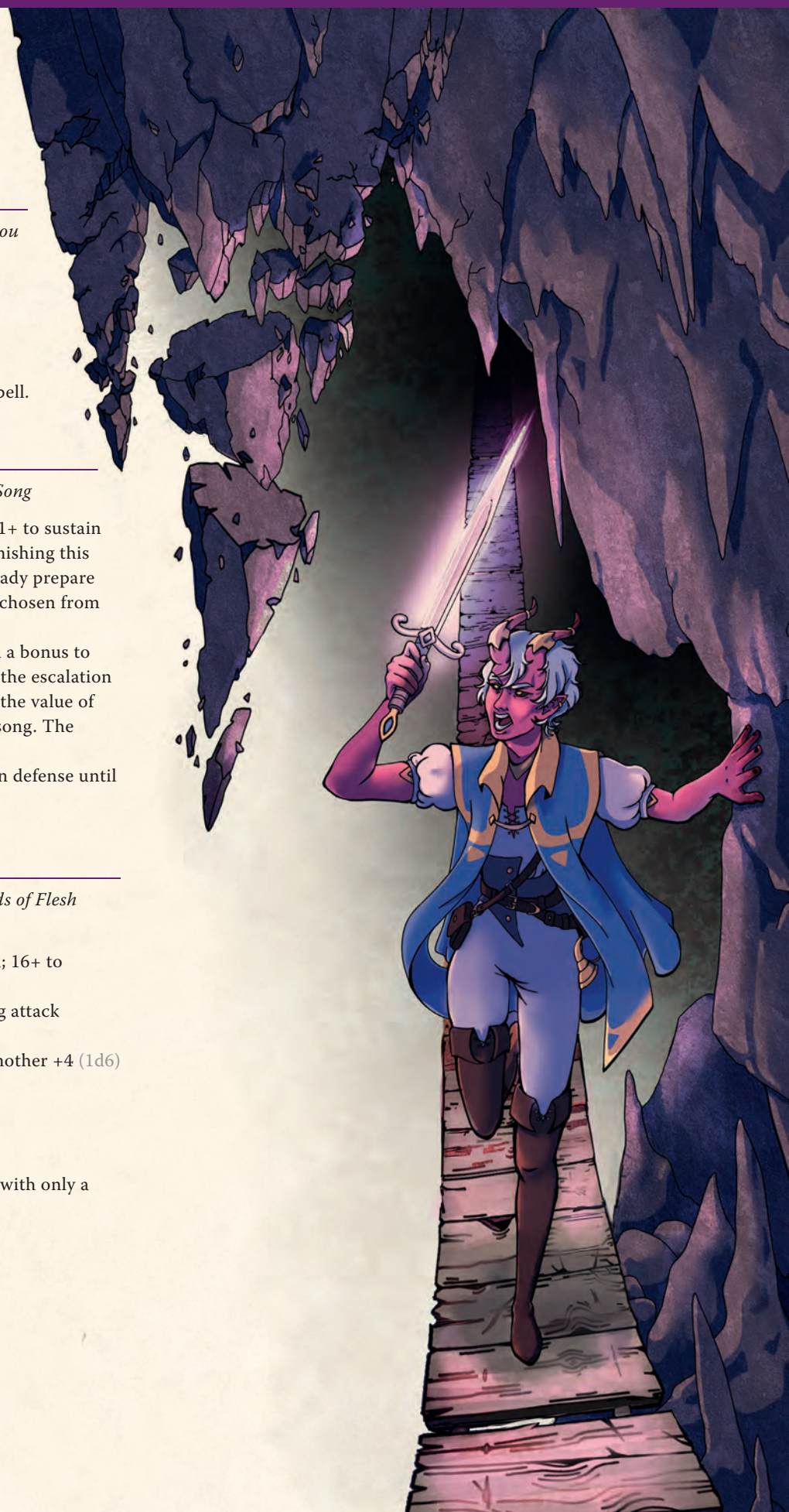
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD

Hit: 20 (3d12) thunder damage.

Miss: —

Final Verse: Make the attack again, but this time with only a single target.

4th	25 (7d6) damage; sustain +5 (1d8)
5th	32 (9d6) damage; sustain +6 (1d10)
6th	39 (6d12) damage; sustain +7 (2d6)
7th	49 (9d10) damage; sustain +9 (2d8)
8th	60 + damage; sustain +10
9th	80 damage; sustain +15



10th 100 damage; sustain +20

Champion Feat: The number of targets increases to 1d4 + 2.

Harmonic Deterrence

"I sing in two separate tones at once, and they clash and fight with each other, creating dissonance that hurts both the ettin's heads."

Ranged spell ◆ **Once per battle**
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD
Hit: 14 (3d8), and 5 ongoing psychic damage (hard save ends, 16+). Each time the enemy uses an action to attack, the ongoing psychic damage increases by 5.
Miss: ongoing psychic damage equal to your level (save ends).

- 4th 18 (5d6) damage; 5 ongoing; +5 increase.
- 5th 20 (3d12) damage; 10 ongoing; +10 increase.
- 6th 28 (8d6) damage; 10 ongoing; +10 increase
- 7th 31 (9d6) damage; 15 ongoing; +15 increase.
- 8th 45 damage; 15 ongoing; +15 increase
- 9th 55 damage; 20 ongoing; +20 increase
- 10th 80 damage,; 20 ongoing; +20 increase

5th Level Spells & Songs

Arrow of Verse

Depending on your bard's style, this spell might manifest as words of power sung as a dirge, as a piercing tone from an unseen harp, or as secret verses from your clan's ancient songs.

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**
Special: You can cast *arrow of verse* a second time against the same target later this battle when the escalation die is at least 3 points higher than it is currently.
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD
Hit: 45 (10d8) psychic damage
Miss: Damage equal to your level × 3.

- 6th 55 (10d10) damage
- 7th 70 (2d6×10) damage
- 8th 90 damage
- 9th 110 damage
- 10th 140 damage

Champion Feat: Second casting now only requires that the escalation die be 2 points higher.

Epic Feat: (replaces champ) As champion feat, and usage is now 2/arc.

Emulate Faith

Does your bard have secret knowledge of forgotten deities? Do they have a connection to the Priestess or Crusader that lets them channel the powers of the gods? Are they just a consummate faker, inventing bogus gods as needed and supplicating them with nonsense prayers?

Close-quarters spell ◆ **2/arc** ◆ Quick action to cast
Special: You can't choose this spell if you are a multiclass cleric or have some other form of access to the cleric domains.
Effect: Use one of the invocations from the cleric's domain talents. Interpret the invocation favorably. For example, the Healing invocation provides an extra use of the *heal* spell, so you would gain a single use of the *heal* spell.

There are a few special considerations to keep in mind when you emulate faith . . .

First, you're a storytelling bard, and you should have a story about the god or gods you are temporarily invoking to shine their light/darkness onto the heroes. It's also possible that you're emulating the icons, an ironic use of worldly connections.

Second, there's a limit to how many times you can cast this spell, because once you have used a specific invocation, you can't use that invocation ever again.

And finally, remember that your adventuring party can only use one invocation per battle. Will your group's cleric appreciate you emulating faith when they've got the real deal?

Rallying Cry

When your bard casts this spell, maybe they call on some heroic ideal or connection that could inspire the other heroes. "We must not fail the Great Gold Wyrm!" "We survived the clockwork vampires and the magma hounds! We can't let these unglamorous giants bring us down!" "This battle shall not be the end of our epic tale!"

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc**
Effect: Up to 3 nearby allies can each attempt to rally by succeeding with an easy save (6+). The save isn't more difficult if that hero has already rallied this battle, but subsequent rally attempts by that hero are, per the usual rules (page 298). If at least one ally succeeds and rallies, you can also attempt the easy save to rally.

Champion Feat: Now affects up to 5 nearby allies.

Shocking Pause

"A sudden calm washes over the melee, and everyone feels the urge to confront their foes with words and declarations rather than violence. Even the barbarian's rage is channeled into oratory."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc**

Special Replacement: On your next turn after casting this spell, replace it with a bard spell you didn't already prepare that is one level lower than your own level and chosen from this short list: *dramatic recovery, harmonic deterrence*.

Effect: Until the start of your next turn, all creatures in the battle or arriving in the battle, both allies and enemies, take no actions other than rolling saves, rolling death checks, and talking! Even if creatures in the battle would ordinarily not be able to communicate, for this round, they can all understand each other, and even bestial creatures not normally considered to have language may express their opinions.

It's like a time stop, except time isn't stopping, it's just that all actions are pausing so that everyone involved can communicate. It's not meant for monologuing or ranting or lying, because enemies can do that to each other at any time. Treat this moment as if both sides will seriously communicate and possibly say more than they want to. It's the bard's magic getting enemies to talk to each other for a moment, and both sides might confess hidden plans, secret alliances, or upcoming reinforcements.

Of course, it *should* work more in the heroes' favor, but sometimes heroes get caught up by the spirit of the truthing

The escalation die doesn't advance, but it doesn't decrease either.

Songs go into limbo: If you're in the middle of a song, you don't have to maintain it, it has no effect, and it comes out of limbo when the *shocking pause* ends.

WHEN PAUSE = SHOCK

There are moments when it would be a bad idea to cast *shocking pause*. Say, when an ally is taking way too much ongoing damage and needs a spell or potion to keep them from dropping. Like the *silence* spell in many incarnations of F20 fantasy, *shocking pause* can mess up the heroes more than the enemies if the caster's timing is bad.

Song of Magic

aka Spellweaver, The Horizon Song, Song of Blazing Starlight

Bardic song ◆ **1/arc when the escalation die is 1+** ◆ Quick action each turn; 11+ to sustain

Opening & Sustained Effect: Each nearby ally who casts a spell while you're performing *song of magic* can roll an easy save (6+). Success indicates that they can cast that spell one level higher than they were casting it.

Final Verse: The first spell you cast this turn can be cast one level higher.

10TH LEVEL BLUES

Using this song on 10th level allies? When you're also 10th level? It's a personality test for the GM. Either *song of magic* is useless at 10th level, or you'll work with the player to come up with something cool and exactly appropriate to the spells being cast. In general, damage spells deal about 25% more damage when they're one level higher.

Wink Wink

"Each time I teleport, the sound of a strummed harp comes from the place I'm standing and the spot I teleport to."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Quick action to cast

Effect: You gain the ability to teleport to a nearby location as a move action later this battle. The number of times you can use this teleport effect is equal to the value of the escalation die when you cast *wink wink*. Don't cast it when there is no escalation die! If you end the battle without having used all your teleport moves, good for you.

Epic Feat: You can now teleport to far-away locations as well as nearby ones.

7th Level Spells & Songs

Connection

"Each of you seems to feel a second heart beating in your chest—the other one's heart."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Quick action to cast

Targets: Two nearby willing allies (possibly including yourself).

Effect: Until the end of the battle, when one of the targets takes damage, the target with the most hit points takes that damage instead (your choice on ties).

The effect doesn't occur while a target is at 0 hit points or below. Temporary hit points are added to actual hit points to determine which target has more hit points at any given moment.

Discombobulate

"I whisper magic words into my hand and throw them at the demon. It hears a dozen conflicting orders and randomly obeys them, one after another!"

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**

Target: One nearby creature with *136 hp or fewer.

Special: Instead of rolling for this attack, you can choose to make your attack roll a natural 10. (Only roll if the GM tells you that's not enough for a hit.)

Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD

Hit: The target is confused until it rolls two successful easy saves (6+).
Miss: The target is dazed until the end of your next turn.
* **Target Progression as you Level Up:** Use the Bardic Control Thresholds on page 72.

Song of Blood & Legends

aka Dance of Give and Take, Heroes' Measure, Rhyme of Victory

Bardic song ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Standard action each turn; 16+ to sustain
Opening & Sustained Effect: Each nearby ally who hits at least one enemy with an attack during their turn can heal using a recovery.
Final Verse: One nearby ally can make a no-trigger attack as a free action and heal using a recovery if the attack hits at least one target.

8th	Same as 7th
9th–10th	The recovery granted by the attack on the final verse is free.



Song of the Dancers

aka Dance of Fools, Shake & Swing, The Queen's Waltz

Bardic song ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Move action each turn; 16+ to sustain, or 14+ if you have the Dance talent
Opening & Sustained Effect: Nearby allies who use a move action gain a +2 bonus on their next d20 roll this turn. If the three enemies nearest to you use a move action on their turn, they become vulnerable to the first attack against them until the start of their next turn.
Final Verse: 1d3 nearby allies can each immediately use a move action as a free action.

9th Level Spells & Songs

Inspire Legends

"The drums reach a crescendo as we turn the battle's tide."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc**
Special: Escalation die must be 3+.
Targets: Yourself and up to two nearby allies.
Effect: Each target can choose two of the following effects:
- Heal using a free recovery as a free action.
- Automatically succeed at a single easy or normal save.
- Gain an attack reroll with a +4 bonus to use later this battle.
- Gain a +2 bonus to all defenses until dropped to 0 hit points.

Epic Feat: Now affects you and up to four nearby or far-away allies.

Song of Power

aka The _____ Song [name changes to match its spell], the Song Arcane

Bardic song ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Standard action each turn; 16+ to sustain
Special: When you prepare this song, choose a non-song spell that you *can* cast but have chosen not to prepare this arc and have already cast this arc using some other magical loophole. It could be a bard spell, or it could be a spell you've jacked from another class. You can only choose a given spell once-ever for *song of power*, and the spell can't be a spell like *meteor storm* that has effects for multiple rounds already.
Opening & Sustained Effect: Cast the chosen spell as if it were a song. In other words, you get whatever effects the spell has, but it's a close-quarters song generating the effects. And if you sustain the spell, you can cast it again.
Final Verse: You gain a +5 bonus to all your defenses until the end of your next turn.

Cleric

All mortals call on the gods, but when a cleric calls, the gods sometimes listen.

Overview

Clerics combine the rare gift of divine power with training in one religious tradition or another. Adventuring clerics learn to fight as a practical matter, if not as a sacred mission.

Some clerics are syncretists, happily blending their own prayers and rites with those of their neighbors. Other clerics follow the secret ways of occult clerical schools, devoted to one god or a handful of gods. Most clerics, and most religious people in general, speak of "the gods" to outsiders and call their own gods by name when speaking with insiders. The gods have watched over their creation for all the ages. Each cleric has a good idea of who these gods are and what they're about, though each cleric's answer may be different than the next's.

The clerics' gods: When players ask, "What god or pantheon can my cleric worship?" we usually say, "Any you like." Many fantasy worlds and games define themselves, at least in part, by their gods and religions and pantheons. By contrast, *13th Age* focuses on the icons as the great and immanent powers of the world, while the gods are distant.

The gods may have walked the world in the days of myth, but not in the more recent ages, which are dominated by empires and icons. The empires may give allegiance to their gods; the icons are surely influenced by the gods. But the gods themselves do not walk the world or even talk directly with mortals, which is part of what makes the Priestess such a special case.

Our home campaigns have recruited deities from all over the multiverse, including gods from other d20 fantasy campaigns, earthly cultures, and fantasy authors such as Robert E. Howard. Your campaigns don't have to use our multiversal approach; for a full discussion of the gods of *13th Age* and the different approaches used in our campaigns, see **About Gods** in the *GMG* (page 37).

Player's choice: As a cleric, the gods are part of your character's story. You are free to use some artistic license in choosing your character's god or pantheon, so long as you aren't screwing with the GM's campaign plans. When choosing your deity, remember that you'll be able to choose three domains with your talent options. You might have a god with a diverse portfolio, or you may welcome the roleplaying experience of representing a pantheon of allied deities. At least two of the icons, the Priestess and the Crusader, encourage you to incorporate your chosen gods within a broader coalition of good or evil deities.

Play style: The decisions necessary to play a cleric skillfully and the responsibility of tracking your allies' need for healing suggest it is a class better suited to an experienced player. You can shape each battle using one of your invocations, but your choice of invocation won't always be clear.

The Justice, Trickery, and War domains require the most consideration and should be chosen by players who love to pay close attention to everyone else's turn.

SIMPLE FAITH

For the simplest possible 1st level Vestments cleric that gives you fewer things to keep track of on the fly, choose the Healing, Protection, and Strength domains as your class talents. The simplest spells are probably *bless*, *javelin of faith*, *cure wounds*, and *shield of faith*, which give you one at-will attack, one arc healing spell, and two spells that can help your allies.



Ability scores: Wisdom and Strength are your two most important abilities. You'll use Wisdom for most of your spells and Strength for most melee attacks. Charisma can also be significant, particularly if you choose talents and spells that highlight your force of will and persuasiveness.

Backgrounds: Running from the ordinary to the idiosyncratic, here are some backgrounds a cleric might possess: *village healer, archivist, military chaplain, temple guard, bartender, reformed thief, abyssal survivor, wasteland prophet, dwarven hierophant, initiate of the Stellar Chorus, bishop of Foothold, multiversal pantheist, failed First Triumph crusader unwillingly chosen by a chaos god* (like Zila, pictured here with her bardic troublemaker girlfriend, Rashel), *Cathedral guide,* and *tutored by angels.*

Icons: The Priestess understands clerics. So do the Great Gold Wyrm, the Crusader, and the Dwarf King, though these icons might have a narrower range of faith they are fully comfortable with than the Priestess does.

All the icons can fit an individual cleric's story. The interplay between god and icon may even explain the icon relationship. For instance, an elven cleric's otherwise positive relationship with the Elf Queen might count as a conflicted relationship because of the elf's angst-freighted devotion to the dwarven god of the forge.

Gear

At 1st level, clerics have a melee weapon, decent armor, a holy symbol (but not the type of symbol that qualifies as a true magic item), and other minor possessions suggested by their backgrounds. They might even have a shield and a crossbow.

One way or another, they'll also start their first arc with an adventurer-tier healing potion.

Cleric Armor

Clerics aren't as skilled at using armor as fighters and paladins, though they are all trained with shields. Those who choose to emphasize spellcasting wear light armor, like padded leather and chain shirts. Clerics who fight more like warriors generally wear heavy armor like chainmail, ringmail, scale, or even plate armor. See the Armor *or* Vestments class feature below for the decision point.

ARMOR TYPE	BASE AC	ATK PENALTY
None	10	—
Light	*11*	—
Heavy	14	–4
Shield	+1	—



Cleric Weapons

Just as various clerics worship all sorts of gods, they also wield all manner of weapons. A respectable mace is most common, since it requires relatively little martial training and traditionally represents authority, but there's nothing to prevent a cleric from wielding a shortsword, and many do. As for ranged weapons, clerics favor crossbows, as do most adventurers with limited weapon training.

MELEE	ONE-HANDED	TWO-HANDED
Small	d4 dagger	d6 club
Light or Simple	d6 mace, shortsword	d8 spear
Heavy or Martial	d8 (–2 atk) longsword, warhammer	d10 (–2 atk) greatsword, dire flail

RANGED	THROWN	CROSSBOW	BOW
Small	d4 dagger	d4 hand crossbow	—
Light or Simple	d6 javelin, axe	d6 light crossbow	d6 (–2 atk) shortbow
Heavy or Martial	—	d8 (–1 atk) heavy crossbow	d8 (–5 atk) longbow

Cleric Level Progression

CLERIC LEVEL	TOTAL HIT POINTS	RECOVERY DICE	TOTAL FEATS	SPELLS OF YOUR LEVEL	ABILITY SCORE BONUSES**
1st level	(7 + Con mod) × **3**	1d8 + Con mod	1 adventurer	3*	
2nd level	(7 + Con mod) × **4**	2d8 + Con mod	2 adventurer	4*	
3rd level	(7 + Con mod) × **5**	3d8 + Con mod	3 adventurer	4*	
4th level	(7 + Con mod) × **6**	4d8 + Con mod	4 adventurer	5*	+1 to 3 abilities
5th level	(7 + Con mod) × **8**	5d8 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 1 champion	5*	
6th level	(7 + Con mod) × **10**	6d8 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 2 champion	6*	
7th level	(7 + Con mod) × **12**	7d8 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 3 champion	6*	+1 to 4 abilities
8th level	(7 + Con mod) × **16**	8d8 + (Con mod × 4) + 5	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	7*	
9th level	(7 + Con mod) × **20**	9d8 + (Con mod × 4) + 10	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	7*	
10th level	(7 + Con mod) × **24**	10d8 + (Con mod × 4) + 15	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	8*	+1 to 5 abilities

Note: Although not listed on the table, this class gets three talents. It does not gain more at higher levels.

*A cleric who chooses the Vestments feature instead of the Armor feature gains an additional spell, which must be at-will.

**Unlike the other columns, the Ability Score Bonuses column doesn't show your total bonuses at that level. At 4th level, choose three ability scores and add +1 to them. At 7th level, choose four ability scores to gain +1, and at 10th level, choose five ability scores to gain another +1.

Cleric Stats

Initiative, AC, PD, MD, Hit Points, Recovery Dice, Feats, and some Talents are level dependent.

KEY ABILITY SCORES	Strength, Constitution, maybe Dexterity
INITIATIVE	Dex mod + Level
ARMOR CLASS (ARMOR FEATURE: HEAVY ARMOR)	14 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
ARMOR CLASS (ARMOR FEATURE: HEAVY ARMOR & SHIELD)	15 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
ARMOR CLASS (VESTMENTS FEATURE: LIGHT ARMOR)	11 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
ARMOR CLASS (VESTMENTS FEATURE: LIGHT ARMOR & SHIELD)	12 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
PHYSICAL DEFENSE	11 + middle mod of Str/Con/Dex + Level
MENTAL DEFENSE	11 + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha + Level
HIT POINTS	(7 + Con mod) × Level modifier (see **Cleric Level Progression** table)
RECOVERIES	Usually 8
RECOVERY DICE	(1d8 per Level) + Con mod (5th level: Con mod × 2; 8th level: Con mod × 4)
BACKGROUNDS	8 points, max 5 in any one background
ICON RELATIONSHIPS	3 points
TALENTS	3
FEATS	1 per Level
SELECT SPELLS	Beginning of arc

Cleric Basic Attacks

The *cleric basic melee attack* and *cleric basic ranged attack* are the weapon attacks you'll most often use when you're not casting a spell. Like most attacks, they require a standard action and can interact with any of your cleric's talents, feats, and powers.

It's worth noting that several of your spells are melee spells that use your weapon's magical bonus, if any, and count as melee attacks instead of close-quarters or ranged attacks.

No-trigger attacks: When your cleric gets an opportunity attack or is granted a bonus attack action, that's usually called out as a "no-trigger" attack. No-trigger attacks are exactly like your basic attacks but they can't trigger or make use of your own powers. Sometimes, this becomes a gray area that could go either way; for example, if you're making a no-trigger attack you can't use the Strength domain adventurer-tier feat (page 102) to add to your damage, but if you used the invocation of Strength earlier in the battle, should you really be prevented from dealing triple damage if the no-trigger attack scores a critical hit? Your allies could deal triple damage with a critical, even on a no-trigger attack, so some passive bonuses can still apply to no-trigger attacks.

Cleric Basic Melee Attack

Melee attack ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One enemy
Attack: Strength + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Strength damage
5th–7th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 2)
8th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 4) + 5
9th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 4) + 10
10th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 4) +15
Miss: Damage equal to your level

Cleric Basic Ranged Attack

Ranged attack ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One nearby or far-away enemy, depending on the weapon's range
Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Dexterity damage
5th–7th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 2)
8th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + 5
9th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + 10
10th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) +15
Miss: —

Terms Used in Cleric Powers

You'll find the following terms listed under various powers clerics can use.

Cast for power/cast for broad effect: Cleric spells that provide these two options can be used in two different ways: either with a more powerful effect, usually focused on one target (power), or with a weaker effect cast on multiple targets (broad effect).

Spells cast for power cannot target the caster. Spells cast for broad effect can.

Free recovery: Some powerful cleric's spells let characters recover hit points as if they were using a recovery without actually spending a recovery.

Heal using a recovery: The character the cleric targets with the healing effect uses one of their own recoveries and rolls their own recovery dice.

Cleric Class Features

Clerics have five class features:

- Armor OR Vestments
- the *heal* bonus spell
- *holy light*
- Ritual Magic
- Turn Undead

Armor or Vestments

Each cleric chooses whether they will advance their faith as heavily armored warriors or as lightly armored spellcasters.

It's not actually as cut-and-dried as it sounds. Of course, armored clerics still cast spells (though they may not be as good at attack spells), and lightly armored clerics can fight in melee as warriors (though they're obviously more at risk). Still, the feature you choose influences what you're better at doing, and it will also affect how you cast the *heal* bonus spell. So, choose one: Armor or Vestments.

Armor: Provided that your Strength ability score is at least 15, you lose the –4 attack penalty for fighting in heavy armor. You also use d10s as your recovery dice instead of d8s.

In addition, for certain melee spells, you'll use Strength as the ability score for attacks and damage. The individual spells call that out when it applies.

Vestments: You fight best in light armor. You gain an additional spell of your level, which must be an "at-will" spell. At 1st level, for example, you'll start with one 1st level "at-will" cleric spell and three other 1st level spells of your choice.

In addition, for certain melee spells, you'll use Wisdom as the ability score for attacks and damage. The individual spells call that out when it applies.

Healing

Bonus spell: All clerics know the *heal* spell in addition to the spells they choose and memorize each arc.

Heal

Close-quarters spell

Special: You can use this spell twice per battle. Quick action to cast (1/round)

Target for Armor Cleric: You or one ally you are close enough to touch.

Target for Vestments Cleric: You or a nearby ally.

Effect: The target can heal using a recovery.

Adventurer Feat: When you use *heal* on an ally, add your Wisdom modifier to the amount of healing (5th: Wis × 2; 8th: Wis × 4).

Champion Feat: When you cast heal on an ally, you can let them use one of your recoveries instead of their own recovery.

Epic Feat: Once per arc, when you use heal, every nearby ally has the option to heal using a recovery.

Holy Light

At will, you can surround yourself with gentle radiance, like a torch flickering somewhere above your head. Few clerics can keep their *holy light* on *all* the time, since it takes a bit of effort. Think of it as something that can be used around one-third of the time you are adventuring.

Holy light might be interfered with by hostile magic, especially when adventuring in dark environments that are beyond your tier.

Ritual Magic

Clerics can cast their spells as rituals (see page 198).

Turn Undead

Turn undead is a bonus spell for all clerics. You don't have to choose it as one of the spells you can cast in an arc, it's always available to you. But as you'll see, unlike other 1/battle spells, it has a casting cost.

Turn Undead

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle**

Special: This is a bonus spell. Each casting requires the cleric to expend a different spell as a free action before using a standard action for the spell. The expended spell must be a 1/arc spell or a 1/battle use of *heal*.

Target: The nearest 1d3 nearby undead creatures. Add +1 creature for each point of your Charisma modifier.

Attack: Wisdom + Level vs. MD
Hit vs. non-mook: 9 (2d8) holy damage, and the target is afflicted (save ends). Each time an afflicted foe makes an attack, even a no-trigger attack, it first takes 4 (1d6) damage. If the attack involves multiple attack rolls or targets, it still takes the damage once.
Hit vs. mook: Full damage, but no other effects.
Miss: Half damage, but no other effects.

2nd	11 (3d6) damage; afflict 5 (1d8)
3rd	13 (2d12) damage; afflict 6 (1d10)
4th	17 (3d10) damage; afflict 7 (2d6)
5th	20 (3d12) damage; afflict 9 (2d8)
6th	26 (4d12) damage; afflict 11(2d10)
7th	33 (6d10) damage; afflict 14 (4d6)
8th	40 damage; afflict 20
9th	50 damage; afflict 25
10th	60 damage; afflict 30
11th	80 damage; afflict 40

Cleric Feat

There's only one generally available cleric feat at present, and it's aspirational.

One More Spell (Cleric Zenith Feat)

Zenith Feat (incremental advance when 10th level): You gain an additional cleric spell of your level.

Class Talents

Choose **three** cleric talents. Most of the talents are phrased as divine domains, the spheres of power wielded by the god or gods the cleric worships. The one talent that isn't a domain itself, Cathedral's Light, gives you access to other domains, and you'll find it at the head of the talent list.

Domains: Each domain provides a power. Most of the domain powers can be improved by feats. Each domain also provides an invocation you can use once per arc.

When domains are listed as One-Thing OR Another, we expect that you'll choose the domain as one of the two choices, for example as either Death or Life, but we use the same basic mechanics for either option. Feel free to give your domain choice a name that's more appropriate to the gods your cleric worships.

Explain your mix of domains in any way that works for you. You might have a god with a diverse portfolio, you might worship more than one god, or your goddess may have lesser saints or avatars that provide blessings which differ from her usual interests. If you're stuck for inspiration, remember that the Priestess' Cathedral harbors dozens of pantheons.

On invocations: Each cleric talent/domain comes with an invocation that you can use once per arc as a quick action. Most invocations offer advantages you'll want to have from the start of a battle, so you should use an invocation on an early turn, if possible.

One invocation per battle: Only one invocation can be used by each side in a battle. The first invocation used during a battle rules out any subsequent invocations for that side.

Ordinarily, only the heroes have invocations ready, but that could change.



Dear Playtesters

Some of you hated the idea that only one invocation could be used per battle. You hated it so much, possibly from a we-want-to-be-free-to-create-all-parties-even-parties-with-multiple-clerics perspective. We're not going to change the rule for you, but let's approach this as a game design opportunity.

If we're right, and there are power-up issues with allowing a single cleric to use multiple invocations during a battle, or worse, letting more than one cleric use an invocation during a battle, then charge a cleric who wants to break the rule an adventurer-tier feat. If both the party's clerics want to cast invocations in the same battle, ask them both to take an adventurer-tier feat that represents the power to blend magic from different domains. The clerics will feel special, and you'll have responded to a rule you find restrictive with a feat that embraces the power-up.

Cathedral's Light

Special: To choose this talent, you must have at least one positive or conflicted relationship point with the Priestess (or your campaign's equivalent) or convince the GM that this limitation does no one any favors.

At the beginning of each arc, randomly choose two cleric domains you do not already possess.

Until your next full heal-up, your relationship with the Priestess and her Cathedral of many gods has gifted you with these domains and their associated invocations! Have fun specifying which specific gods or pantheons have gifted you with their power.

Adventurer Feat: You have the adventurer feat for one of the two new domains you have been gifted. You choose which one.

Champion Feat: (requires adv) You have both the adventurer feats for your arc's new domains, and your choice of one of the champion feats, if the domains happen to have champion feats.

Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan suggested there should be a random table of domains to roll on. Well, OK. Roll a d12 and ignore any domains you already possess.

Random Domain Table (d12)

RESULT	DOMAIN
1	Friendship or Love
2	Healing
3	Justice or Vengeance
4	Knowledge or Lore
5	Life or Death
6	Perfection or Beauty
7	Protection or Community
8	Storm
9	Strength
10	Sun or Anti-Undead
11	Trickery or Cunning or Illusion
12	War or Leadership

Domain: Friendship *or* Love

You and all your nearby allies gain a +2 bonus to Mental Defense (MD). When an effect like confusion would make you or one of your allies attack one of your true allies, the character about to attack can roll a normal save. If the save succeeds, they don't have to make the attack.

Champion Feat: Once per arc, you can use a free action to cancel a charmed, confusion, or shocked effect on yourself or one of your nearby allies. You can do this even if you wouldn't ordinarily be able to use any actions.

Invocation of Friendship/Love*:* Unlike other invocations, this must be invoked with a free action and decided upon immediately before the heroes roll initiative.

Randomly determine two members of the adventuring party. Unlike many invocations, the cleric can be chosen as a legal target. The two chosen characters are *special allies* for this battle.

Increase the initiative result of the slower special ally to match the special ally who rolled a higher initiative. Each turn, the special allies can choose who will act first, and who will act immediately after them.

When the second ally to act attacks an enemy the first ally also attacked that round, the enemy is vulnerable to their attacks. This changes every round, and can obviously be more effective if both allies have multi-target attacks.

In addition, when the special allies heal using a recovery, they can spend either ally's recovery, though the amount of healing is not affected.

Each special ally has their crit range increased by 2 against enemies engaged with the other special ally.

Domain: Healing

When you cast a spell other than the *heal* spell that lets you or an ally heal using a recovery, add your Wisdom modifier to the amount of healing (5th: Wis × 2; 8th: Wis × 4).



Adventurer Feat: The first *heal* spell you cast after using this invocation allows the target to heal using a free recovery instead of spending a recovery.

Champion Feat: The invocation of healing gives you two additional uses of heal this battle instead of only one.

Invocation of Healing: This battle, you gain an additional use of the *heal* spell (see **Class Features**).

Domain: Justice *or* Vengeance

Once per battle, when an enemy scores a critical hit against you or one of your nearby allies *or* drops you or one of your nearby allies to 0 hp or below, you gain an *attack-reroll blessing*. Immediately choose a nearby ally and give them the blessing as a free action; you can't hold on to it.

An ally with this blessing can use it to reroll an attack as a free action this battle. An ally can only have one such blessing on them at a time.

Adventurer Feat: You can now dispense the *attack-reroll blessing* up to twice a battle, though only once per turn.

Champion Feat: (replaces adv) As adventurer feat, but up to three times per battle.

Invocation of Justice/Vengeance: This battle, add double your level to the miss damage of your attacks and the attacks of your nearby allies. (For example, your *cleric basic melee attack* will deal triple your level as miss damage while this invocation is active.)

Domain: Knowledge *or* Lore

You gain 4 additional background points that must be used somehow in relation to knowledge or lore.

In addition, three times per arc you can reroll a skill check involving knowledge. Interpret the word "knowledge" as loosely as your GM allows.

Adventurer Feat: In the round after the reroll you've provided, the chosen character gets another standard action on their turn as a free action.

Champion Feat: (replaces adv) As above, and you now roll a d4 for the invocation, not a d6.

Epic Feat: You gain a different positive relationship point each arc with a random icon, purely because the icon has realized you know something they need to know. This changes every arc and it might contradict your usual icon relationships. Enjoy.

Invocation of Knowledge/Lore: You must use this invocation during your first round of a battle. When you do, you get a quick glimpse of the battle's future. Roll a d6; as a free action at any point after the escalation die equals the number you rolled, you can allow one of your allies to reroll a single attack roll with a +2 bonus thanks to your vision of this future.

Alternatively, if that doesn't fit your vision of your character, simply phrase the bonus as awareness of this enemy's capabilities or weaknesses.

Domain: Life *or* Death

Each battle, the *first* time an ally near you becomes staggered, that ally immediately heals hit points equal to five times your level.

Adventurer Feat: You and your nearby allies gain a +1 bonus to death saves.

Champion Feat: The healing effect now applies to both the first and second allies who become staggered during a battle.

Epic Feat: Your first use of the resurrection spell is free; it doesn't count against your total. (If you take advantage of this feat, you can't swap it out later.)

Invocation of Life/Death: One battle per arc, you and each of your allies can each separately add the escalation die to a single save you make. In addition, during this battle, you and your allies do not die from hit point damage when your negative hit points equal half your normal hit point total; instead, you die when your negative hit points equal your full hit point total.

Domain: Perfection *or* Beauty

Each battle, your first nearby ally to fumble by rolling a natural 1 with an attack can reroll and abide by the result. If the rerolled attack still misses, you take damage equal to double your level. (You can't use this in combination with Justice/Vengeance's power. Choose one of the two powers if you have both domains.)

Champion Feat: Once per arc, you can use the fumble-reroll effect against the first two fumbles by allies.

Invocation of Perfection/Beauty: This battle, when the escalation die is 1+, each of your nearby allies at full hit points gains a +1 bonus to all attacks and defenses.

Domain: Protection *or* Community

Once per battle, you can affect two additional allies when you cast a spell *for broad effect*.

Champion Feat: Whenever you target one or more allies with a spell, one ally of your choice can roll a save against a temporary effect.

Invocation of Protection/Community: This battle, critical hits against you and your nearby allies deal normal damage instead of critical damage.

Domain: Storm

Once per battle, as an interrupt action, deal thunder or lightning damage equal to 3 times your level to a nearby or engaged enemy that misses you with an attack (5th: 4 times your level; 8th: 5 times your level).

Adventurer Feat: You can now use this interrupt action as many times in the battle as you like when the escalation die is 2+.

Invocation of Storm: This battle, you and your allies improve your crit range by 1 with attacks against creatures that have taken thunder or lightning damage this battle.

Domain: Strength

You can wield heavy/martial weapons without an attack penalty.

Adventurer Feat: Once per arc, as a free action, when the escalation die is 3+, you can deal extra damage to one target you hit, but do not crit, with a melee attack. The damage bonus is a number of d8s equal to your Strength modifier or your level, whichever is higher.

Champion Feat: (replaces adv) You can use d12s instead of d8s for the bonus damage dice. (When using average damage, count each d12 as 7 points.)

Invocation of Strength: This battle, you and your nearby allies deal triple damage instead of double damage on critical hits with melee attacks.

Domain: Sun *or* Anti-Undead

When you wish, your melee and spell attacks can deal holy damage instead of the type of damage they normally deal.

In addition, you cast *turn undead* at one level higher than your level.

Adventurer Feat: You gain a +2 bonus to all defenses against attacks by undead.

Champion Feat: You gain *resist damage 16+* to three types of damage: fire, holy, and necro.

Invocation of Sun/Anti-Undead: This battle, your spells and attacks that normally target nearby creatures can target far-away creatures, and your spells and attacks that normally target engaged creatures or allies you are next to can target nearby creatures. (Yes, this means you can use melee attacks against nearby enemies.)



Think of this invocation as if the cleric were the rising sun, shining brighter every round. If streams of sunlight have story effects during the battle, all the better for the glory of the sun.

Domain: Trickery *or* Cunning *or* Illusion

Twice per arc, but only once per battle, when you are engaged with an enemy, use a quick action to roll a d20 that we'll refer to as your *trick die*.

As a free action before the start of your next turn, give your *trick die* to a nearby ally or enemy who is about to make an attack roll. The *trick die* result becomes the natural result of their roll, instead.

Adventurer Feat: Your *trick die* can be used for any one d20 roll, not just an attack.

Invocation of Trickery/Cunning/Illusion: This battle, attacks against you by enemies that moved to engage you during this turn miss on natural odd rolls.

Domain: War *or* Leadership

Once per turn when you attack an enemy, hit or miss, your allies gain a +1 attack bonus against that enemy until the start of your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: The bonus now applies against all enemies you attack; you no longer have to single out one foe if you use a spell that attacks multiple enemies.

Champion Feat: Allies that have at least one Skull gain a +2 bonus from this power instead of +1.

Invocation of War/Leadership: Until the end of the battle, all *Weapon* attacks by you and your allies have their crit ranges expanded by 1 (usually to 19-20).

1st† Level Spells

We've put the three at-will spells available at 1st level—*combat boon*, *javelin of faith*, and *sacred violence*—at the top of the spell list. If you're playing a Vestment cleric, at 1st level you have both three freely chosen spells, like Armor clerics, and one bonus spell, which must be one of the at-will spells.

Combat Boon

"As I strike the dragon, Vash hears my voice in her head speaking the secret name of Anagatha, the patron saint of wyrm-killing."

Melee spell ◆ **At-Will**
Special: If you have the Armor feature, use your Strength as the attack ability. If you have the Vestments feature, use your Wisdom as the attack ability.
Target: One engaged enemy.
Attack: Strength/Wisdom + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Strength/Wisdom holy damage, and one conscious nearby ally can roll a save against a temporary effect. (Yes, the damage increases like basic attack damage.)

2nd	Same as 1st
3rd–4th	You can now be the character to roll a save against a temporary effect
5th–6th	The save gains a +1 bonus
7th–8th	The save bonus increases to +2
9th–10th	The save bonus increases to +3

Adventurer Feat: If you score a natural 16+ with the *combat boon* attack, the subsequent save automatically succeeds.

Champion Feat: One nearby conscious ally can roll a save against a temporary effect, even if your attack misses.

Javelin of Faith

What is this spell when your cleric casts it? A spirit of vengeance? The penetrating and merciless light of truth? A word of utter denunciation?

Ranged spell ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Wisdom + Level vs. PD
Hit: 9 (2d8) holy damage.
Natural even hit: You can take a bonus quick action this turn.
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

2nd	11 (3d6) damage
3rd	13 (2d12) damage
4th	17 (3d10) damage
5th	20 (3d12) damage
6th	26 (4d12) damage
7th	32 (9d6) damage
8th	40 damage
9th	55 damage
10th	65 damage

Adventurer Feat: If you score a natural even hit and don't want the extra quick action yourself, as a free action you can gift it to a nearby ally on their turn, before the start of your next turn.

Champion Feat: You can now target a far-away enemy with the spell. The spell also deals +7 damage against an undamaged target (8th: +14).

TARGETING MOOKS

Mooks count as targets at full hit points until one or more mooks in the mob have been slain.

Sacred Violence

The gods will destruction as often as creation.

Melee spell ◆ **At-Will**
Special: If you have the Armor feature, use your Strength as the attack ability. If you have the Vestments feature, use your Wisdom as the attack ability.
Target: One engaged enemy.
Attack: Strength/Wisdom + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Strength/Wisdom holy damage, and the damage increases at higher levels like your basic attack damage.
First natural 16+ of the battle with this attack: You gain another use of your *heal* spell this battle.
Subsequent natural 16+ with this attack this battle: The target is vulnerable to the next attack against it.

2nd	Same as 1st
3rd–4th	Now deals miss damage equal to your level
5th–6th	Natural even hits add +5 damage
7th–8th	Natural even hits add +10 damage
9th–10th	Natural even misses deal half damage

Adventurer Feat: The trigger for gaining a use of *heal* is now a natural 14+.

Champion Feat: Attack now targets PD unless the target is staggered. (That's right: sacred violence works better against foes that are still fully dangerous!)

Epic Feat: You can gain two uses of *heal* each battle instead of one.

Bless

If you need a ritual to empower a weapon, a warrior, or even a strategic battle plan, bless is your best friend.

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Quick action to cast
Effect: You can cast this spell for power or for broad effect.
Cast for power: One nearby ally gains a +2 attack bonus until the end of the battle.
Cast for broad effect: Choose up to three nearby allies; each target gains a +1 attack bonus until the end of the battle.

2nd	Same as 1st
3rd–4th	You can now target yourself for broad effect.
5th–6th	Once per arc, if you cast *bless* when the escalation die is 3+, it recharges with your next quick rest.
7th–8th	Twice per arc, if you cast *bless* when the escalation die is 3+, it recharges with your next quick rest.
9th–10th	If you cast *bless* when the escalation die is 3+, it recharges with your next quick rest.

Epic Feat: Once per arc, the bonus applies to both crit range and attack bonus.

Hammer of Faith

"My great stone hammer glimmers and hums as I call on the dwarven ancestors to speed my swing."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc**
Effect: Make a basic melee attack as part of casting this spell. Deal +5 (1d8) damage on this attack and all other melee attacks you make this battle.

- 2nd: +6 (1d10) damage
- 3rd: +7 (2d6) damage
- 4th: +9 (2d8) damage
- 5th: +11 (2d10) damage
- 6th: +14 (4d6) damage
- 7th: +20 (3d12) damage
- 8th: +25 damage
- 9th: +30 damage
- 10th: +40 damage

Adventurer Feat: While this spell is in effect, your melee attack misses now deal at least half damage.

Judgment

For your cleric, is this the "axe of judgment," the "blinding light of judgment," the "bloody hunger of the judgmental spirits," or what?

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**
Targets: All nearby staggered enemies
Attack: Wisdom + Level vs. MD
Hit: 22 (4d10) holy damage.
Miss: Holy damage equal to your level.

- 2nd: 28 (8d6) damage
- 3rd: 33 (6d10) damage
- 4th: 44 (8d10) damage
- 5th: 52 (8d12) damage
- 6th: 65 (10d12) damage
- 7th: 75 (3d4 × 10) damage
- 8th: 100 damage
- 9th: 130 damage
- 10th: 160 damage

Champion Feat: Now a close-quarters spell that deals half damage on a miss.

Epic Feat: Now a *recharge 16+* spell instead of once per arc.

Mark of Enmity

"Prepare to pay for your sins."

Melee spell ◆ **Once per battle**
Special: If you have the Armor feature, use your Strength as the attack ability. If you have the Vestments feature, use your Wisdom as the attack ability.
Target: One engaged enemy.
Attack: Strength/Wisdom + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Strength/Wisdom holy damage; also roll a d4, and if the result is equal to or lower than the escalation die then the target is weakened until the end of your next turn.
Miss: Damage equal to your level; also roll a d8, and if the result is equal to or lower than the escalation die then the target is dazed until the start of your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: The d4 changes to a d3, and the d8 changes to a d6. In addition, the attack's critical hit range increases by 2 (usually to 18+).

Champion Feat: The weakened effect now lasts until the end of your next turn, and then continues until the target succeeds with an easy save at the end of its own turn.

Epic Feat: (replaces champ) As Champion Feat, and when the escalation die reaches 4+, you can use mark of enmity a second time.

Mighty Healing

As their wounds knit together, each hero feels the presence of some angelic force and hears words from a hymn that can't be sung by mortal tongues.

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc**
Effect: You can cast this spell for power or for broad effect.
Cast for power: One nearby ally can heal using a single recovery and regain double the usual number of hit points.
Cast for broad effect: Choose up to three nearby creatures (including yourself); each target can heal using a recovery.

- 2nd: Same as 1st
- 3rd–4th: The spell can now target far-away allies
- 5th–6th: Power grants an additional 20 hit points; broad provides an additional 10 hit points
- 7th–8th: Power grants an additional 30 hit points; broad provides an additional 15 hit points
- 9th–10th: Power grants an additional 50 hit points; broad provides an additional 25 hit points

Champion Feat: One of the creatures healed by this spell can use a free recovery instead of spending one of their recoveries.

Shield of Faith

The gods protect the worthy . . .
and honestly, they're not that choosy.

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Quick action to cast
Effect: You can cast this spell for power or for broad effect.

Cast for power: One nearby ally gains a +2 bonus to AC this battle.

Cast for broad effect: Choose up to three nearby creatures (including yourself); each target gains a +1 bonus to AC this battle.

2nd	Same as 1st
3rd–4th	The bonus also applies to PD.
5th–6th	The bonus increases by +1 while the target is staggered.
7th–8th	The bonus also applies to MD.
9th–10th	If the escalation die is 3+, you can use this spell in a subsequent battle

Zenith Feat (incremental advance when 10th level): The bonuses double, so *cast for power* is +4, and *cast for broad effect* is +2.

Spirits of the Righteous

What ritual observances does your cleric practice to win these spirits as allies?

Ranged spell ◆ **Once per battle**
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Wisdom + Level vs. MD
Hit: 11 (3d6) holy damage, and your nearby ally with the fewest hit points gains a +4 bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.
Miss: Your nearby ally with the fewest hit points gains a +2 bonus to AC until the end of your next turn.

2nd	13 (2d12) damage
3rd	17 (3d10) damage
4th	20 (3d12) damage
5th	25 (7d6) damage
6th	32 (9d6) damage
7th	40 (6d12) damage
8th	50 damage
9th	60 damage
10th	80 damage

Champion Feat: On a hit, you also gain the bonus to defenses until the end of your next turn.



Warrior's Inspiration

"By the gods, fight on!"

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle**
Effect: A nearby ally can heal using a recovery and make a no-trigger attack as a free action. The attack deals holy damage in addition to any other damage types.

Adventurer Feat: Add your Charisma modifier to the hp healed (5th: Charisma mod × 2; 8th: Charisma mod × 4).

Champion Feat: The ally can make one save apiece against each temporary condition, including ongoing damage.

Epic Feat: You can use *warrior's inspiration* twice per battle.

3rd Level Spells

Cause Fear

True perspective can terrify.

Ranged spell ◆ **2/arc**
Target: One nearby enemy with 80 hp or fewer
Special: Instead of rolling for this attack, you can choose to make your attack roll a natural 10. (Only roll if the GM tells you that's not enough for a hit.)
Attack: Wisdom + Level vs. MD
Hit: The target takes no actions until its next turn. On the target's next turn, if it is unengaged, it uses one move action to move away from you and makes no attacks and no further moves. If it is engaged, the target attempts to disengage as its first action, moves away if it succeeds, and then makes no further attacks or moves. If it fails to disengage, it moves away as its second action, drawing opportunity attacks. If for some reason it cannot move away, it still makes no attacks.
Miss: The target hates you for trying to scare it, and it wants to hurt you most of all, but it won't be any stupider than usual in pursuing that goal.

4th	Target 100 hp or fewer
5th	120 hp or fewer
6th	150 hp or fewer
7th	200 hp or fewer
8th	250 hp or fewer
9th	300 hp or fewer
10th	400 hp or fewer

Adventurer Feat: You can cast this spell as a close-quarters spell if you target an enemy engaged with you.

Epic Feat: Once per arc, you can cast this spell with a quick action if you target a foe you have hit this turn.

LEGAL TARGETS

Remember that spellcasters and attackers know whether enemies are legal targets before casting their spells (see **Targeting** on page 296). You'll know whether you can use *cause fear*, *judgment*, or *turn undead* against a target before casting. In the case of *cause fear*, you'll also know whether using natural 10 as the attack roll will hit or not.

Cure Wounds

For the rest of the battle, you find yourself humming a sacred hymn you've never heard until now.

Close-quarters spell ◆ **arc/desperate** ◆ Quick action to cast
Effect: You or a nearby ally can heal using a recovery. The target heals +2 hp per point on the escalation die. At your option, you can expend the recovery instead of your ally, in which case the ally heals as if it were their own recovery.

4th	Same as 3rd
5th–6th	Now +3 hp per point on the escalation die
7th–8th	Now +5 hp per point on the escalation die
9th–10th	Now +8 hp per point on the escalation die

Champion Feat: If the escalation die is 3+, this spell recharges with a quick rest, but only once per arc.

Divine Endurance

"I can see the ancestral spirits that protect my allies. You can't? Huh. Well good thing you don't have to see them to be protected by them."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**
Effect: You can cast this spell for power or for broad effect.
Cast for power: One nearby ally gains 40 temporary hit points.
Cast for broad effect: Choose up to three nearby creatures (including yourself); each target gains 20 temporary hit points.

4th	Power 50 temp hp; Broad 25 temp hp
5th	Power 60 temp hp; Broad 30 temp hp
6th	Power 80 temp hp; Broad 40 temp hp
7th	Power 100 temp hp; Broad 50 temp hp
8th	Power 120 temp hp; Broad 60 temp hp
9th	Power 160 temp hp; Broad 80 temp hp
10th	Power 200 temp hp; Broad 100 temp hp

Champion Feat: You can cast *divine endurance* as if it were 1 level higher (11th: Power 120 temp hp; Broad 60 temp hp).

Epic Feat: You can cast *divine endurance* as a move action.

Strength of the Gods

If your GM is tolerant, a ritual using this spell might physically bolster someone, allowing them to accomplish a feat of great strength, fortitude, or maybe even mental resistance.

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Quick action to cast
Effect: You can cast this spell for power or for broad effect.

Cast for power: One nearby ally deals +7 (2d6) damage with melee attacks this battle.

Cast for broad effect: Choose up to three nearby creatures (including yourself); each target deals +4 (1d6) damage with melee attacks this battle.

4th	Power +9 (2d8); Broad +5 (1d8)
5th	Power +11 (3d6); Broad +6 (1d12)
6th	Power +14 (4d6) ; Broad +7 (2d6)
7th	Power +18 (4d8); Broad +9 (2d8)
8th	Power +20; Broad +10
9th	Power +25; Broad +12
10th	Power +35 ; Broad +18

Weal Boon

"I feel your pain."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Quick action to cast
Effect: Remove a Skull from an ally you are next to, then roll a d20.

1–5: You take a Skull.
6–10: You take a Skull and your ally can heal using a recovery.
11–15: Your ally can heal using a recovery.
16–20: Your ally can heal using a free recovery.
21+: Your ally can heal using a free recovery, and you or another nearby ally can also heal using a free recovery.

4th	The d20 roll gains a +1 bonus
5th–6th	The d20 roll gains a +2 bonus
7th–8th	The d20 roll gains a +3 bonus
9th–10th	The d20 roll gains a +4 bonus

Champion Feat: Remove two Skulls instead of just one.

Epic Feat: Your bonus is 5 higher than normal (7th–8th: +8; 9th–10th: +9).

5th Level Spells

Crisis of Faith

"The sound of a mighty bell tolls out across the chamber. It tolls for the gnolls."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **2/arc**
Effect: If an enemy is one of the five enemies closest to you, the first time it misses in a turn, it takes 17 (3d10) psychic damage. At the end of each of your subsequent turns, this effect ends unless you succeed at a normal save.

6th	22 (4d10) damage
7th	27 (6d8) damage
8th	35 damage
9th	45 damage
10th	55 damage

Champion Feat: The spell affects an enemy if it is one of the six enemies closest to you, and the save to keep *crisis of faith* going is now easy (6+).

WHAT CRISIS?

This unusual spell effect doesn't require you to be conscious or taking any actions, just alive and in the battle and able to roll a save. *Crisis of faith* affects the enemies who are nearest to you when they attack—you don't have to track which enemies were closest when you cast the spell.

Respite

As the giant's axe is swinging down at you, you suddenly feel as though you are safely back in the Cathedral, and the giant's axe is so far away that it can hardly touch you.

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Recharge 16+** ◆ Interrupt action to cast
Effect: Target a nearby ally who is being hit by an attack. If the target succeeds at a normal save, *respite* prevents half the damage from the attack. If the save fails, the spell's recharge roll automatically succeeds when you get a quick rest.

Champion Feat: You can now target yourself with the spell.

Epic Feat: (replaces champ) You can now target yourself with the spell, and the save is an automatic success.

Sphere of Radiance

"My version of the spell isn't a sphere. It's a pair of ancestral elven spirits that strike our enemies with their swords, and the life force the enemies lose is transferred to you."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc**
Effect: You or one nearby ally can heal using a recovery. Then make the following attack.
Target: Up to two nearby enemies
Attack: Wisdom + Level vs. MD
Hit: 25 (7d6) holy damage.
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

6th	32 (9d6) damage
7th	39 (6d12) damage
8th	50 damage
9th	60 damage
10th	80 damage

Champion Feat: The recovery is free.

Zenith Feat (incremental advance when 10th level): Target one additional ally or one additional enemy.

7th Level Spells

Boon of Giant-Killing

"I call on St. Branad the Monster-Killer, and her spirit fills Gnata, so that her deadly power strengthens his sword arm and her divine force protects him."

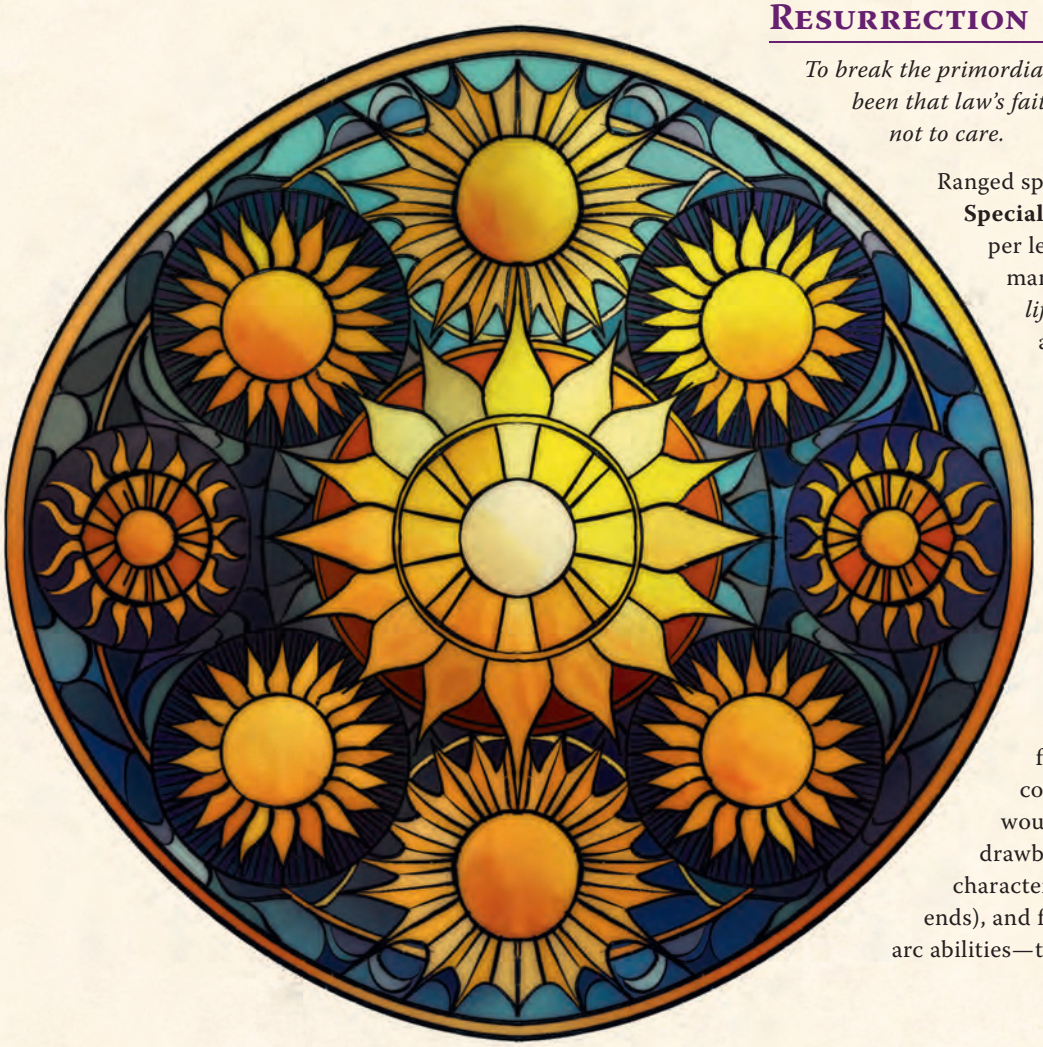
Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**
Target: One nearby, normal-sized, humanoid ally!
Effect: For the rest of the battle, the target's crit range against large and huge creatures (and anything bigger!) increases by the value of the current escalation die; in other words, unlike most other escalation-die related effects, this modification to crit range keeps increasing after you've cast the spell. In addition, the target gains 70 temporary hit points that can only be used against damage dealt by large or bigger creatures.

8th	85 temp hp
9th	110 temp hp
10th	140 temp hp

Resurrection

To break the primordial law of life and death, you must have been that law's faithful servant—or be powerful enough not to care.

Ranged spell
Special: You can cast this spell only once per level. You'll have to keep track of how many times you cast the spell *in your life*. You must have most of the corpse available to cast the spell. There's no time limit on resurrecting a dead PC, so long as you have the corpse (unless that becomes a silly exercise in resurrecting adventurer-tier characters into an epic-tier game!) NPCs should probably be a lot easier to resurrect if they haven't been dead long.
Effect: You can bring a creature back to life in more or less normal condition. By more or less normal, we mean that you could cast your first resurrection in the middle of combat or during an adventure and we would advise something like the following drawbacks: expend half the resurrected character's recoveries, start them dazed (save ends), and flip a coin for each of their once-per-arc abilities—tails, it's expended.



Limited Casting: The first time in your life that you use the spell, you can cast it quickly—with a single standard action. Using the spell removes one of your spell slots until you gain a level (you get one less spell per full heal-up).

The second time in your life you cast the spell, it takes longer—at least three or four rounds—and costs you something, like half your hit points and arc powers/spells. The person you are resurrecting comes back at something like one-quarter strength.

The third time you cast the spell, it must be as a ritual. The spell chews you up and leaves you with only a few hit points, then it gnaws at the person you resurrected, who takes arcs to recover well enough to qualify as an adventurer or combatant.

The fourth time you cast the spell, it nearly kills you. The resurrection succeeds, but the person you resurrect is going to be a mess for a month or more, regardless of any other magic tricks ya'll got going.

The fifth time you resurrect someone (thanks to a boon from an icon, a powerful magic item, or some other method allowed by the GM that lets you use *resurrection* beyond your normal limit), that's the end of your story and you die. There's only a 50% chance the *resurrection* spell works on the target. You've used up your quota of *resurrection* magic. You're not coming back via this spell, either.

Surprise, that was the good news. The bad news is that if the target of your *resurrection* spell has been resurrected more times than you have cast the spell, there is a nasty 50% chance that the experience will play out using their higher number of resurrections instead of the number of times you have cast the spell.

8th	Same as 7th
9th–10th	You no longer need to have most of the corpse to perform this spell

RESURRECTION IN THE WORLD

The icons don't live forever because there is always a limit to magic that can bring you back from the dead. What's true for icons is equally true for heroes. Even if you've become invaluable to an icon, it's unlikely the icon will be able to resurrect you personally if things go horribly awry. It's safe to assume that most of the icons are well on their way to using up their *resurrection* quotas, particularly long-lived icons like the Archmage. The current Emperor? The Priestess? They might have a *resurrection* to give, but will your PC be able to prove they are the being most deserving of a second chance in the 13th Age?

There may be a few NPCs capable of performing *resurrection*. They would be wise not to advertise their power. Beings capable of a *resurrection* are sometimes victims of hostile takeover attempts, as powerful beings seek to assure themselves of a *resurrection* in reserve.

9th Level Spells

Overworld Travel

How does your spell work? Does it summon a flying land, harness an elder sky being, or simply turn all the travelers into swiftly moving wind?

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc**

Special: You must cast this spell outdoors.

Effect: You and a group of nearby allies can travel up to and through the overworld to most any location in the world you can name.

The trip through the overworld is magically warded by the spell. Travel takes between an hour and a day, depending on distance and the amount of effort the spell must exert to maintain the warding. Party members who go off-plot and skip off into the overworld for a side adventure are on their own.

The destination can be in the overworld or in the land. It can't be in the underworld—this is the wrong spell for destinations there.

In a pinch, the versions of this spell cast by icons have been known to move invading armies and refugees from doomed cities. It's possible that the player characters could manage something similar but it's not guaranteed.

10th	You can cast this spell to move up to 100 people

Prayer for Readiness

This prayer comes to us from ages past, first uttered by a holy woman named Gliss.

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Free action to cast as the heroes are about to roll initiative

Effect: You can cast this spell for power or for broad effect.

Cast for power: One nearby ally gains two special blessings! At any point later this battle, but only once per turn, the ally can spend a blessing by saying "thank you" to your god, gods, or pantheon as a free action to reroll a d20 roll, and abide by the result.

Cast for broad effect: Choose three nearby creatures (including yourself); each target gains a single blessing, as described above.

Epic Feat: The first two blessed rerolls that fail or miss are not expended.



Fighter

The grit and guts it takes to be a true fighter may be as rare and magical as the brains and arcane spark it takes to be a wizard. Plenty of poor slobs across the world get pressed into military duty, and though some fighters may start out that way, there's much more to a true fighter: skill, discipline, toughness, and an uncanny ability to get in harm's way . . . with a double dose of harm for the other guy

Overview

Play style: Playing a fighter is relatively simple, unless you take the Flexible Attack talent, and even at 1st and 3rd levels, Flexible Attack isn't that hard to keep track of.

For new players, the simplest talents are probably Cleave, Heavy Warrior, and Tough as Iron. *Big swing*, *carve an opening*, and *escalation strike* are correspondingly simple maneuver choices.

Ability scores: You need Strength for your attack. You might want Constitution for hit points when the enemy attacks you. Some fighter talents and attacks also reward high Dexterity, and a couple reward your highest mental ability score.

Backgrounds: Here are some backgrounds to get you started with your fighters: *traveling swordmaster*, *mercenary captain*, *Iron Sea raider*, *shieldwall spearman*, *Giantwalk Mountains explorer*, *Drakkenhall bouncer*, *well-dressed thug*, *city guardsman*, *Sea Wall veteran*, *former gladiator*, *former orc captive*, *bankrupt nobleman*, *crooked gambling ring duelist*, *underworld goblin-hunter*, *Undermarch caravan guard*, *former Imperial legionnaire*, and *former Imperial legionnaire in the XIII Legion during the Imp & Balor Campaign*.

Icons: We first saw many fighters devoted to the Dwarf King, Emperor, and Crusader. By this point, we've seen fighters dedicated to all the icons, including the Prince of Shadows.

Gear

At 1st level, fighters start with a melee weapon or two, a ranged weapon if they want it, armor, and standard nonmagical gear that is suggested by the character's backgrounds.

Like other 1st level heroes, fighters find a way to get hold of an adventurer-tier healing potion, or its equivalent in other consumables. (*GMG:* 171).

Fighter Armor

Fighters usually wear heavy armor: flexible chainmail, resilient scale armor, or sturdy steel plate. For our purposes, it all provides about the same amount of protection.

If you are the odd fighter who prefers to fight only in light armor, knock yourself out—you're better in light armor than most other heroes. But you're still more likely to get knocked out of the battle than if you were wearing heavier stuff.

ARMOR TYPE	BASE AC
None	10
Light	13
Heavy	*15*
Shield	*+1*

Fighter Weapons

The typical fighter has several weapons, each demonstrating professional design, expert forging, and perhaps a little customization on the fighter's part. The fighter's relationship with their weapons may be obsessive, like a carpenter's relationship with their tools. A fighter's go-to weapon may be a sword, but it may also be something more exotic, such as a flail or a warhammer.

Most fighters carry shields, which are customized to represent the wielder's status, personality, or history. Fighters who avoid shields are usually better with two-handed weapons, but some fight with a weapon in each hand. Fighters are familiar with all manner of ranged weapons, and sturdy longbows are common.

MELEE	ONE-HANDED	TWO-HANDED
Small	d4 dagger	d6 club
Light or Simple	d6 shortsword, hand axe	d8 spear
Heavy or Martial	d8 longsword, warhammer	d10 greatsword, greataxe
Two-weapon fighting	Two 1-H weapons, hit on/nat 2	—

RANGED	THROWN	CROSSBOW	BOW
Small	d4 dagger	d4 hand crossbow	—
Light or Simple	d6 javelin, axe	d6 light crossbow	d6 shortbow
Heavy or Martial	—	d8 heavy crossbow	d8 longbow

Fighter Level Progression

As a fighter, your weapon attack maneuvers deal damage based on your level. All maneuvers function at your level. You can change which maneuvers you know and have ready whenever you gain a level, or even more often if you've got a story ready to explain your new training routine.

FIGHTER LEVEL	TOTAL HIT POINTS	RECOVERY DICE	TOTAL FEATS	MANEUVERS KNOWN*	MANEUVER POOL AVAILABLE	CLASS TALENTS	ABILITY SCORE BONUSES**
1st level	(8 + Con mod) × **3**	1d10 + Con mod	1 adventurer	3	1st level	3	
2nd level	(8 + Con mod) × **4**	2d10 + Con mod	2 adventurer	4	1st level	3	
3rd level	(8 + Con mod) × **5**	3d10 + Con mod	3 adventurer	4	3rd level	3	
4th level	(8 + Con mod) × **6**	4d10 + Con mod	4 adventurer	5	3rd level	3	+1 to 3 abilities
5th level	(8 + Con mod) × **8**	5d10 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 1 champion	5	5th level	4	
6th level	(8 + Con mod) × **10**	6d10 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 2 champion	6	5th level	4	
7th level	(8 + Con mod) × **12**	7d10 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 3 champion	6	7th level	4	+1 to 4 abilities
8th level	(8 + Con mod) × **16**	8d10 + (Con mod × 4) + 5	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	7	7th level	4	
9th level	(8 + Con mod) × **20**	9d10 + (Con mod × 4) + 10	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	7	9th level	4	
10th level	(8 + Con mod) × **24**	10d10 + (Con mod × 4) + 15	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	8	9th level	4	+1 to 5 abilities

* The Flexible Attack talent reduces the number of maneuvers you know by 1.

** Unlike the other columns, the Ability Score Bonuses column doesn't show your total bonuses at that level. At 4th level, choose three ability scores and add +1 to them. At 7th level, choose four ability scores to gain +1, and at 10th level, choose five ability scores to gain another +1.

Fighter Stats

Initiative, AC, PD, MD, Hit Points, Recovery Dice, Feats, and some Talents are level dependent.

KEY ABILITY SCORES	Strength, Constitution, Dexterity
INITIATIVE	Dex mod + Level
ARMOR CLASS (HEAVY ARMOR)	15 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
ARMOR CLASS (SHIELD & HEAVY ARMOR)	16 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
PHYSICAL DEFENSE	10 + middle mod of Str/Con/Dex + Level
MENTAL DEFENSE	10 + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha + Level
HIT POINTS	(8 + Con mod) × Level modifier (see **Fighter Level Progression** table)
RECOVERIES	Usually 9 (because of Extra Tough)
RECOVERY DICE	(1d10 per Level) + Con mod (5th level: Con mod × 2; 8th level: Con mod × 4)
BACKGROUNDS	8 points, max 5 in any one background
ICON RELATIONSHIPS	3 points
TALENTS	3 (see **Fighter Level Progression** table)
FEATS	1 per Level

Fighter Basic Attacks

The *fighter basic melee attack* is the starting point for most of your class maneuvers and attacks. The *fighter basic ranged attack* is an option when you're using a bow or a thrown weapon, but it doesn't integrate with most of your maneuvers. Like most attacks, both these basic attacks require a standard action and can interact with any of your fighter's talents, feats, and powers.

No-trigger attacks: Your fighter's opportunity attacks are no-trigger attacks that have the same stats as your basic melee attack but can't trigger any other powers or interact with your talents and feats. Some of the bonus attacks you'll get from maneuvers are called out as no-trigger attacks, others have no such restrictions. See page 301 for the rules on no-trigger attacks.

Fighter Basic Melee Attack

Melee attack ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One enemy
Attack: Strength + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Strength damage
5th–7th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 2)
8th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 4) + 5
9th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 4) + 10
10th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 4) +15
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Fighter Basic Ranged Attack

Ranged attack ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One nearby or far-away enemy, depending on the weapon's range
Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Dexterity damage (though thrown weapons add Strength damage instead)
5th–7th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 2)
8th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + 5
9th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + 10
10th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) +15
Miss: —

Fighter Class Features

Fighters have four class features: Extra Tough, Fighter Maneuvers, Momentum, and Threatening.

Extra Tough

You start with nine recoveries instead of the usual eight.

Adventurer Feat: Increase your total number of recoveries by 1.

Zenith Feat (incremental advance when 10th level): Whenever you are conscious with more than 0 hit points and the escalation die advances, add 20 to your maximum hit points until the end of the battle. This raises your current hit points by 20 as well, as they rise to catch up with your new maximum.

Fighter Maneuvers

You'll choose a number of Fighter Maneuvers as shown in the **Fighter Level Progression** table. Each maneuver is an attack.

Most of the maneuvers are interesting variations on your basic melee attack, but for the record, your basic attacks and your opportunity attack are not termed maneuvers.

Momentum

If you haven't been hit since the end of your last turn, you have Momentum. You don't start battles with Momentum, you gain it at the end of your first turn, and at the end of all subsequent turns.

Benefit: When you have Momentum, you can roll an extra d20 with your first melee attack roll on your turn and choose the result you prefer.

Losing your Momentum: You lose Momentum until the end of your next turn when you're hit by an attack. Merely being damaged by an attack that misses you isn't enough; it takes a hit from an enemy to temporarily lose your Momentum. As always, a critical hit counts as a hit.

A corner case: You also lose Momentum if you drop to 0 hit points or below without having been hit since the end of your last turn. Thanks to miss damage, ongoing damage, and peculiar monster powers, it can happen.

Champion Feat: If your natural initiative roll is even, you start the battle with Momentum.

Epic Feat: Momentum now applies to the first and the second melee attack rolls you make on your turn.

Threatening

Whenever an enemy attempts to disengage from you, it takes a penalty to its check equal to your Dexterity or Constitution modifier, whichever is higher.

The penalty doesn't apply if you are stunned, grabbed, or otherwise incapable of making an opportunity attack.

Adventurer Feat: If you are wearing light armor, you gain the "maintaining contact" option of the ranger's Control the Range talent on page 140! The text in the "maintaining contact" paragraph applies to you, nothing else.

Champion Feat: Whenever an enemy attempts to disengage from you and fails, it's vulnerable to your attacks for the rest of the battle.

MOMENTUM AND BRAVADO

In 1E, the rogue had a class feature called Momentum that was like the fighter's Momentum in 2E, but less suitable for the rogue. In 2E, the fighter's Momentum is either on or off, you don't "spend" Momentum the way the rogue spends Bravado.

Fighter Feats

Final Talent is for the fighter who wants to master one final discipline. True Bond represents your potential for a supernatural bond with your armor or weapons.

Final Talent

Zenith Feat (Incremental advance when 10th level): Take an additional Fighter talent from any tier.

True Bond

Zenith Feat (Incremental advance when 10th level): Form a connection with one epic magic weapon, armor, or shield. It can speak to you and gains the following additional once per battle ability.

Weapon: Turn its hit into a crit with an easy save (6+).

Armor: Force an enemy to reroll its attack against your AC.

Shield: Force an enemy to reroll an attack against your PD with a –5 penalty.

Bring in other story notions as your campaign suggests.

Adventurer-Tier Talents

Choose three of the following class talents.

All fighters get an additional fighter class talent at 5th level.

Cleave

Once per battle, make a no-trigger melee attack as a free action after one of your fighter attacks drops a non-mook enemy to 0 hp or slays two or more mooks in a mob.

Adventurer Feat: If you have your move action available, you can use it before making your Cleave attack to reach an enemy you are not already engaged with.

Champion Feat: If you are using a two-handed melee weapon, you can use Cleave twice each battle, but only once a round.

Epic Feat: Gain a +4 attack bonus with your Cleave attacks.

Counter-Attack

Once per battle, when an enemy misses you with a natural odd melee attack roll, you can make a no-trigger melee attack dealing half damage against that enemy as a free action.

Adventurer Feat: Your Counter-Attack now deals full damage.

Champion Feat: If you are fighting with two weapons, you can use Counter-Attack twice per battle, though only once per round.

Epic Feat: If you are fighting with two weapons, you can now also use Counter-Attack against a natural even miss.

Flexible Attack

This unusual talent gives you access to a style of attack that other fighters, and indeed most other heroes, do not possess.

Since it's a fundamentally different approach to rolling an attack, and it has its own set menu of attack options as you rise in level, we've placed the full write-up for the Flexible Attack talent at the end of the fighter class, on page 118.

For now, you should know that choosing Flexible Attack as a talent reduces the number of fighter maneuvers you know by 1.

Heavy Warrior

Once per battle, as a free action, while wearing heavy armor or using a shield, when you are hit by an attack that targets AC, you can take half damage from that attack instead.

Adventurer Feat: Once per arc, you can use Heavy Warrior twice in a battle (against different attacks).

Champion Feat: If you are wearing heavy armor *and* using a shield, reduce the damage by 10 after halving it (8th level: reduce the damage by 20 after halving it). In addition, you can now also use the power against an attack that targets PD.

Epic Feat: Twice per arc, as a free action, you can add the number of recoveries you've used to a save you roll.

Power Attack

Once per battle, as a quick action, when the escalation die is 2+, you can wind up a Power Attack; if you use your standard action this turn to make a modified no-trigger melee attack (not a maneuver or a flexible attack); your attack roll suffers a –4 penalty but you deal double damage if it hits, or triple damage on a crit.

Adventurer Feat: You can now use Power Attack with a fighter maneuver or a flexible attack. If the maneuver or flexible power involves multiple attack rolls, only the first attack roll is affected by Power Attack.

Champion Feat: Power Attack is now usable when the escalation die is 1+ instead of 2+.

Skilled Intercept

Unlike other characters, you're capable of shaking free of engagement to intercept when an enemy moves past you.

Once per round, as an interrupt action, roll a normal save to intercept an enemy who is *moving* past you. You can pop free from one or more enemies to move and intercept the attack (if you are engaged with more than one enemy, the others can make opportunity attacks against you).

If the save fails, you do not spend the interrupt action, so you could still make a normal interception later in the round if you manage to shake free of engagement. (You do spend the round's use of Skilled Intercept in this case, that's why the talent starts with the redundant "once per round, as an interrupt action" text.)

If the save succeeds, you move to intercept and the moving enemy makes its attack with you as a target instead. If you're wearing heavy armor or using a shield and the attack hits, you only take half damage.

Adventurer Feat: Getting hit by an enemy you are intercepting does not make you lose Momentum. In addition, you can add the escalation die to your save to pop free and intercept.

Champion Feat: (replaces adv) As above, and you gain a bonus to your defenses against the moving enemy's attack equal to 2 or the escalation die, whichever is higher.

Epic Feat: Once per battle, you can use a Skilled Intercept save to intercept a moving enemy when the enemy is not even moving past you. If your save succeeds, you steal a march and move past any other enemies and allies.

Tough as Iron

Once per battle, you can rally using a quick action instead of a standard action.

Adventurer Feat: Once per arc, you can rally twice during a battle as a quick action, without needing to roll a save for the second rally.

Champion Feat: Increase your total number of recoveries by 2.

Epic Feat: When you roll a natural 19 or 20 on an attack, you gain an additional use of Tough as Iron this battle.

Champion-Tier Talents

You can choose one champion-tier fighter talent at 5th level; or you may instead choose an additional adventurer-tier fighter talent.

Comeback Strike

Once per battle, as a free action, make a no-trigger attack after a fighter attack used during your turn misses all its targets.

Champion Feat: Twice per arc, you can use Comeback Strike twice in a battle.

Epic Feat: You gain a +4 attack bonus with your Comeback Strike attacks.

Never Defeated

When you heal by spending one of your own recoveries, you gain a +2 bonus to your AC until the end of the combat round after this one.

Champion Feat: The bonus is now to all your defenses.

Epic Feat: When you rally, you can spend an additional recovery to heal additional hit points. You don't get to double the defense bonus from Never Defeated.

1st Level Maneuvers

Big Swing

Same as *fighter basic melee attack* except . . .

1/battle

Special: You must use both a standard action and a move action to use this maneuver. Increase the attack's crit range by the escalation die.

Miss: Half damage.

Adventurer Feat: If you are using a two-handed melee weapon and your first *big swing* attack in a battle misses, you can use *big swing* a second time in that battle.

Epic Feat: Change the target line to "One or two enemies."

Carve an Opening (At-Will)

Same as *fighter basic melee attack* except . . .

Hit: Same damage as basic attack, but your crit range with melee attacks expands by a cumulative +1 this battle until you score a melee critical hit. When you score a melee critical hit, your crit range drops back to normal.

Adventurer Feat: Once per battle, expand your crit range by 1 when you miss with *carve an opening*.

Champion Feat: Expand your crit range by 2 when you hit instead of 1.

Escalation Strike

Same as *fighter basic melee attack* except . . .

2/battle

Hit: Base damage is the same as the basic attack, but you add a +2 cumulative bonus per point on the escalation die.

3rd	+3 damage per point
5th	+4 damage per point
7th	+6 damage per point
9th	+8 damage per point

Adventurer Feat: Use the damage table below this adventurer feat instead.

1st–2nd	+3 damage per point
3rd	+4 damage per point
4th	+5 damage per point
5th	+6 damage per point
6th	+7 damage per point
7th	+8 damage per point
8th	+10 damage per point
9th	+12 damage per point
10th	+15 damage per point

Grit & Scrap

Same as *fighter basic melee attack* except . . .

1/battle

Hit: Same damage as basic attack, and you gain a +2 bonus to all your defenses until the end of your next turn and temporary hit points equal to your level plus the escalation die.

Adventurer Feat: If you miss with the attack, you can use it again later this battle.

Champion Feat: If you have one or more Skulls, you gain an additional use of *grit and scrap* each battle.

Melee Footwork (At-Will)

Same as *fighter basic melee attack* except . . .

Special: If you are engaged with more than one enemy, this attack gains a bonus equal to the number of enemies you are engaged with.

Hit: Same damage as basic attack, but you can not use *melee footwork* with your next standard action attack.

Miss: No damage on a miss.

Adventurer Feat: If this attack hits, you—or an ally engaged with at least one of the enemies you are engaged with—can make a disengage check with the same *melee footwork* bonus you used on the attack as a free action.

3rd Level Maneuvers

Once you are 3rd level, you can choose as many 3rd level maneuvers as you wish or keep using the maneuvers you learned at 1st level.

Battle Drill

Same as *fighter basic melee attack* except . . .

1/arc
Special: You can't use your Cleave talent the same turn that you use *battle drill*.
Hit: Same damage as basic attack, and you can make a modified no-trigger attack as a bonus attack. If your bonus attack hits with a natural even attack roll, you can make a second bonus basic melee attack, and so on. You can make a maximum number of bonus attacks this way equal to your highest mental ability score modifier, so long as the bonus attacks continue to hit with natural even attack rolls.
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Adventurer Feat: If none of the attacks you make with this maneuver hit, you can use *battle drill* again later this battle.

Epic Feat: Usage becomes 2/arc.

Combat Surge

Same as *fighter basic melee attack* except . . .

1/battle
Hit: Same damage as basic attack, and you will not lose Momentum before the start of your next turn unless you are hit *twice* by enemy attacks or dropped to 0 hit points.

Grim Intent

Same as *fighter basic melee attack* except . . .

1/battle
Special: As you attack, roll a number of *Weapon* dice equal to the escalation die to create a *grim intent* damage pool for this turn (5th: 2 *Weapon* dice per point of escalation; 8th: 3 *Weapon* dice per point of escalation).
Hit: Same as basic attack, plus damage equal to the *grim intent* damage pool. You also deal damage equal to half the *grim intent* damage pool to yourself. If you score a critical hit, double the damage to the target and deal no damage to yourself!
Miss: You deal half the *grim intent* damage pool to the target and half to yourself.

Champion Feat: You can use *grim intent* 2/battle.

5th Level Maneuvers

Poised Defense

Same as *fighter basic melee attack* except . . .

1/battle
Hit: Same damage as basic attack.
Natural even hit or miss: You can heal using a recovery.
Natural odd hit or miss: You can heal half your normal recovery and roll a normal save; if the save succeeds, you do not spend a recovery. If the save fails, you spend it. (Note that you can choose not to heal at all and keep the recovery.)

Champion Feat: If the attack misses, you can use *poised defense* again later this battle.

Epic Feat: You can use *poised defense* at-will when the escalation die is 5+, even if you already expended its 1/battle use earlier in the battle.

Positioning Strike (At-Will)

Same as *fighter basic melee attack* except . . .

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you get a +4 bonus to your defenses against opportunity attacks; in addition, you take only half damage from opportunity attacks.

Champion Feat: The effect improves so that you take only one-quarter damage from opportunity attacks until the end of your next turn.

Thump & Bash

Same as *fighter basic melee attack* except . . .

1/battle
Natural even hit: Target is dazed until the end of your next turn.
Special: At 7th level, a natural even hit weakens the target instead of dazing it.
Miss: Damage equal to your level. If you are fighting with a two-handed weapon, you do not expend this use of *thump & bash*.

Champion Feat: You can use *thump & bash* 2/battle.

7th Level Maneuvers

Chop Bludgeon Stab

Same as *fighter basic melee attack* except . . .

Recharge 16+ (or recharge 11+ if used when the escalation die is 2+)
Targets: Up to three engaged enemies, with one attack each.
Special: You can take your move action between two of the attacks.

Champion Feat: Misses now deal half damage instead of damage equal to your level.

Epic Feat: You can now target up to four enemies, with one attack each.

Blood & Blades

Same as *fighter basic melee attack* except . . .

Arc/Desperate
Special: When you use this attack, roll a d8. If you roll equal to or higher than the number of recoveries you have remaining, your level of success bumps up by one notch; a fumble becomes a miss, a miss becomes a hit, a hit becomes a crit, and a crit does triple damage.
Miss: Half damage.

Champion Feat: If your d8 roll fails, you regain *blood & blades* after the battle and can use it again in the next fight.

Epic Feat: (replaces champ) As above, but roll a d12 instead of a d8.

9th Level Maneuvers

Inescapable Strike

Same as *fighter basic melee attack* except . . .

1/arc
Hit: Same damage as basic attack, and you gain a damage bonus to the attack equal to twice your level.
Miss: Reroll the attack and double the extra damage bonus (quadruple your level). You can reroll your missed attacks a number of times equal to the escalation die, with the damage bonus doubling each time. If you miss with the final attack, well, that's bad, but ordinarily you'll manage to hit at some point in the process.

Epic Feat: You may now use *inescapable strike* 1/battle.

I Say Thee, Nay!

Same as *fighter basic melee attack* except . . .

1/battle ◆ Interrupt action
Target: One enemy who is attacking you while engaged with you.
Effect: You roll your attack at the same time the enemy rolls their attack. If your natural attack roll is equal to or higher than the enemy's natural attack roll, you attack first—interrupting their attack and possibly canceling it if you slay them. If your natural attack roll is lower than theirs, your attack is canceled, and this maneuver is expended.
Miss: Half damage.

Epic Feat: You can spend a recovery to reroll your *I say thee, nay!* attack.

Flexible Attack Talent Rules

Special: The Flexible Attack talent also uses one of your fighter maneuver choices. If you have the Flexible Attack talent as a 1st level fighter, you will choose two 1st level maneuvers from the fighter list instead of three. As you'll see, this limitation is offset by the fact that the talent comes with three possible flexible attacks at 1st level, and more as you level up.

Flexible melee attacks: Attacks that are flexible are an exception to the normal decision-making sequence. When you decide to make a flexible attack, state your intent so everyone knows you are not using one of your other maneuvers. You choose your target first, make your attack roll, and then use the *natural* unmodified die result to determine which of your eligible flexible attack powers you will trigger. You still use the modified roll to determine whether you hit, but the choice of which available flexible attack powers you'll use depends on the die sitting in front of you.

You can only trigger one flexible attack power at a time. The attacks are designed so that it's unlikely you'll encounter a situation in which you can't trigger any of your attacks with a specific roll. If that happens, treat your attack as a normal *fighter basic melee attack*.

No-trigger is a no: You can't use a flexible attack when you make a no-trigger attack.

Choices increase as you level up: As you'll see, this talent comes with a list of powers and their triggers. Some flexible attacks are similar to what a fighter can accomplish with traditional maneuvers; other flexible attacks add something new.

At 1st level, you have three flexible attack powers available to you: *defensive fighting*, *hack & slash*, and *steady iron*. There's no choice to make about which flexible attack powers you know, you have all three and you add others as you level up. At 3rd level, you gain *slice an opening*; at 5th level you gain *heavy blow*; and so on.



Two triggers, two effects: Each flexible attack power has two ways it can be triggered! The effect that's more difficult to trigger generally has correspondingly more impact.

Given that many of the attacks have usage patterns like "1/battle," using the lower-powered trigger can be a decision that prevents you from using the higher-powered attack later in the battle. That's the type of decision you're signing up for when you take the Flexible Attack talent!

Momentum: Flexible attacks work extremely well when you have Momentum and are rolling two d20s for your first attack roll instead of one.

One flexible attack requires another: IMPORTANT! When you make one flexible attack, you cannot use a non-flexible fighter maneuver on your next standard action. Your second flexible attack in a row—or something less optimal, like an unmodified basic melee or basic ranged attack—frees you up to use any of your normal fighter maneuvers for your next attack, or you could use flexible attack again and start a new cycle of two flexible attacks in a row.

Normally, this requirement plays out over two rounds. The most common one-round exception is probably a wood elf fighter who succeeds with *elven grace* and uses two flexible attacks in a row to finish the two-attack cycle.

Flexible Attack Maneuver & Its Powers

These are the attack powers fighters with the Flexible Attack talent can access when they make a flexible attack. Unlike the fighter's normal maneuvers, there's no choice of which flexible powers you know; you can use all of them listed up to your level. Your choices are made when you roll a flexible attack and decide which power to trigger.

There's a table at the end of the section that may be simpler to use in play than reading through the prose versions of the powers.

Overview: There are three flexible attacks available at 1st level with additional attacks becoming available at 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th levels.

Fighter's Flexible Attack Maneuver

Same as *fighter basic melee attack* except . . .

Special: Use your natural attack roll to trigger one of your flexible attack powers. If there are somehow none to trigger, your attack functions as a basic attack.

1st Level Flexible: Defensive Fighting

flexible attack power ◆ **at-will when triggered** ◆ effect depends on trigger

Triggered by a natural odd hit or miss: You gain +1 AC until the end of your next turn, or +2 AC if you are using a shield.

Triggered by a natural even hit: You gain +2 AC until the end of your next turn, or +3 AC if you are using a shield.

Adventurer Feat: You also gain the bonus to Physical Defense.

Epic Feat: (replaces adv) You gain the bonus to both Physical Defense and Mental Defense.

1st Level Flexible: Hack & Slash

flexible attack power ◆ **at-will when triggered** ◆ effect depends on trigger

Triggered by natural 11+: Deal damage equal to your Strength modifier to a different engaged enemy that is not the target of your attack (5th: double your Strength mod; 8th: quadruple your Strength mod).

Triggered by natural 16+: As a free action, make a half-damage, no-trigger melee attack against a different engaged enemy.

Adventurer Feat: If you have a move action to use, you can move before using the triggered damage or half-damage attack vs. a different enemy.

1st Level Flexible: Steady Iron

flexible attack power ◆ **1/battle** ◆ effect depends on trigger

Triggered by a natural even hit: Gain temporary hit points equal to your Constitution modifier (5th: double your Con mod; 8th: quadruple your Con mod).

Triggered by a natural even miss: You have Momentum on your next turn unless you fall unconscious before then. (In other words, getting hit won't stop you from having Momentum.)

Adventurer Feat: Usage changes to 2/battle.

3rd Level Flexible: Slice an Opening

flexible attack power ◆ **at-will when triggered** ◆ effect depends on trigger

Triggered by a natural odd hit or miss: Expand your melee crit range by 1 until you score a critical hit.

Triggered by a natural 14+: Expand your melee crit range by 2 until you score a critical hit.

5th Level Flexible: Heavy Blow

flexible attack power ◆ **1/battle** ◆ effect depends on trigger
Triggered by a natural odd hit: Reduce the target's AC by 2 until the end of the battle.
Triggered by a natural even hit vs. an enemy that was staggered before you hit them: Target is dazed until the end of your next turn (or weakened, if you are using a two-handed melee weapon).

Champion Feat: Target's AC is now reduced by 3.

7th Level Flexible: Press the Assault

flexible attack power ◆ **1/battle** ◆ effect depends on trigger
Triggered by a natural 5, 10, 15, or 20: You gain a bonus, no-trigger attack as a free action on your next turn.
Triggered by a natural 2–4 when the escalation die is 2+: Gain an immediate no-trigger attack as a free action.

9th Level Flexible: Gauging Style

flexible attack power ◆ **1/battle** ◆ effect depends on trigger
Triggered by a natural 6-10: As an interrupt action later this battle, you can force an enemy to reroll a melee hit against you (but not a crit).
Triggered by a natural 18+: Like a natural 6–10, but it also works against a crit.

MULTICLASS FLEX?

If you're using the *13TW* multiclassing rules, start a 1st level multiclass fighter with only two of the three flexible attack powers that normal fighters gain at 1st level.

Fighter's Flexible Attack Powers

FIGHTER	NAME	USAGE	TRIGGER 1	TRIGGER 2
1st level	**Defensive Fighting**	At-will	**Natural odd hit or miss:** +1 AC (shield +2) until end of your next turn.	**Natural even hit:** +2 AC (shield +3) until end of your next turn.
1st level	**Hack & Slash**	At-will	**Natural 11+:** Deal damage equal to your Str mod to a different engaged enemy (5th: double Str mod; 8th: quadruple Str mod).	**Natural 16+:** As a free action, make a half damage, no-trigger attack vs. different engaged enemy.
1st level	**Steady Iron**	1/battle	**Natural even hit:** Gain temporary hp equal to your Con mod (5th: double Con mod; 8th: quadruple Con mod).	**Natural even miss:** You have Momentum on your next turn unless you fall unconscious before then.
3rd level	**Slice an Opening**	At-will	**Natural odd hit or miss:** Expand your melee crit range by 1 until you score a critical hit.	**Natural 14+:** Expand your melee crit range by 2 until you score a critical hit.
5th level	**Heavy Blow**	1/battle	**Natural odd hit:** Reduce the target's AC by 2 until the end of the battle.	**Natural even hit vs. an already staggered enemy:** Target is dazed until end of your next turn (or weakened, if you are using a two-handed weapon).
7th level	**Press the Assault**	1/battle	**Natural 5, 10, 15, 20:** You gain a bonus no-trigger attack as a free action on your next turn.	**Natural 2–4 when escalation die is 2+:** Gain an immediate no-trigger attack as a free action.
9th level	**Gauging Style**	1/battle	**Natural 6–10:** As an interrupt action later this battle, you can force an enemy to reroll a melee hit against you (but not a crit).	**Natural 18+:** Like 6–10, but it also works against a crit.

Paladin

In every age, extraordinary souls have stepped forward to carry the battle flag of justice. By the will of the gods, paladins are both protectors and avengers whose campaigns of awesome justice serve as warnings to any who threaten those under their protection. The people depend on them, lords celebrate them, and monsters hate them. People have never needed paladins more than they do in the 13th Age.

Overview: Reliable Offense and Defense

Play Style: Paladins are heavily armed and armored fanatics of divine justice. By default, they are devoted to the gods, but what makes *your* paladin holy? An ancient god of your clan? A righteous cause? Something else entirely?

Like the barbarian, the paladin is simple to play. Your choices during combat come from your talents, since you don't choose new attacks or spells as you rise in level. Almost every attack you make uses your *paladin basic melee attack*, but you can augment it by using Smite or one of the other abilities from your talents.

Paladins who want a bit more complexity can choose talents that let them cast a bard's or cleric's spell or use a cleric's domain.

Ability scores: Strength is your attack ability. Secondarily, Charisma and Constitution both benefit a paladin. You'll note that Wisdom isn't on this list; you're the holy warrior with force of personality rather than wise perception of the gods' will.

Kin: Other F20 games tend to skew paladin-hood toward humans, either because humans are short-lived compared to elves and dwarves, or because it's easier to imagine zealous humans, since we all know some. You don't have to follow that route. Different campaigns portray different kin as the zealous types who are drawn to becoming paladins. Maybe your *unique* or your backgrounds highlight how your paladin is different than other paladins from your kin.

Backgrounds: Paladin backgrounds commonly represent military training, official duties, and perhaps monastic instruction, for example: *Concord city guard, combat medic, bodyguard, outlaw hunter, Sea Wall captain, Golden Citadel archeologist, Elf Queen's courtier, First Triumph Inquisitor, Red-lettered Sister Knight of the Priestess' Most Loving Grace* (like Larkyn Dryden of Traversorwen, pictured at right), *veteran of the orc wars, hellhole commando, ex-priest of the Diabolist.*

Icons: Most paladins are law-abiding and good, with either the Great Gold Wyrm or the Priestess as their patron. It can be fun to put your own spin on the "holy warrior" concept, and maybe that means being sponsored by a corrupt Dragon Emperor or by the spirit of a Dwarf King from a previous age.

But paladins don't have to be entirely good. The Crusader inspires many evil paladins—they share a hatred of demons with the Great Gold Wyrm's paladins without any of their compassion for the demons' victims. Even worse, from the Great Gold Wyrm's perspective, the Blue's hold on Drakkenhall has given it a stable base to inspire and train paladins devoted to the Three. If you want to play a paladin somehow devoted to evil, look at the Evil Way talent.



EVIL HEROES?

The Evil Way talent is there for campaigns that can tolerate an evil or evil-curious "hero." The talent is deliberately a bit obnoxious, but it could be responsibly used by a hero with issues who also listened to icons of light. In our experience, most tables don't want to handle the dysfunction of a truly evil hero. Some players *can* handle roleplaying subtle or situational evil that allows them to function as a non-destructive part of a campaign, but you'll want to get player consent from the rest of the group.

Gear

Your 1st level paladin might start with a fine longsword earned in Imperial service, a custom-made suit of heavy armor, a sturdy shield that bears the symbol of their sect or regiment, and an assortment of military-grade traveling gear. They might also have a secondary weapon, such as a spear or a crossbow.

Either through a temple, or an icon's representatives, or as a donation to their cause, 1st level paladins manage to get hold of an adventurer-tier healing potion before the action truly begins.

Paladin Armor

Paladins typically wear the heaviest of heavy armor—a full suit of plate—probably with a glorious surcoat. Smart paladins carry shields. If you prefer some other look, such as chain mail or scale, any sort of heavy armor will do.

Your base AC is the highest among the classes, and the more ways you can find to increase it, the better.

See the **Paladin Stats** table to calculate your Armor Class.

TYPE	BASE AC
None	10
Light	12
Heavy	*16*
Shield	*+1*

Paladin Weapons

By tradition and inclination, paladins fight with one-handed melee weapons so they can carry shields. A heavy, shining sword is the traditional weapon of great heroes, but some paladins choose to wield an unorthodox weapon that speaks to their heart.

While a fighter may have any number of weapons, each with different mechanical features or storytelling schticks, a paladin usually has a single, beloved melee weapon they treat as a trusty companion.

Although they relish face-to-face combat with their enemies, prudent paladins carry utilitarian ranged weapons. They are trained with all the best ones.

See **Basic Attacks** to calculate your paladin's attack bonuses and damage rolls for your melee and ranged attacks.

MELEE	ONE-HANDED	TWO-HANDED
Small	d4 dagger	d6 club
Light or Simple	d6 scimitar, shortsword	d8 spear
Heavy or Martial	d8 longsword, battleaxe	d10 greatsword, halberd
Two-weapon fighting	Two 1-H weapons, hit w/nat 2	—

RANGED	THROWN	CROSSBOW	BOW
Small	d4 dagger	d4 hand crossbow	—
Light or Simple	d6 javelin, axe	d6 light crossbow	d6 shortbow
Heavy or Martial	—	d8 heavy crossbow	d8 longbow

Paladin Level Progression

PALADIN	TOTAL HIT POINTS	RECOVERY DICE	TOTAL FEATS	CLASS TALENTS	ABILITY SCORE BONUSES*	SMITE DAMAGE BONUS
1st level	(8 + Con mod) × **3**	1d10 + Con mod	1 adventurer	3		+6 (1d10)
2nd level	(8 + Con mod) × **4**	2d10 + Con mod	2 adventurer	3		+9 (2d8)
3rd level	(8 + Con mod) × **5**	3d10 + Con mod	3 adventurer	3		+11 (2d10)
4th level	(8 + Con mod) × **6**	4d10 + Con mod	4 adventurer	3	+1 to 3 abilities	+13 (2d12)
5th level	(8 + Con mod) × **8**	5d10 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 1 champion	4		+17 (3d10)
6th level	(8 + Con mod) × **10**	6d10 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 2 champion	4		+20 (3d12)
7th level	(8 + Con mod) × **12**	7d10 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 3 champion	4	+1 to 4 abilities	+26 (4d12)
8th level	(8 + Con mod) × **16**	8d10 + (Con mod × 4) + 5	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	5		+33 (5d12)
9th level	(8 + Con mod) × **20**	9d10 + (Con mod × 4) + 10	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	5		+39 (6d12)
10th level	(8 + Con mod) × **24**	10d10 + (Con mod × 4) + 15	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	5	+1 to 5 abilities	+52 (8d12)

* Unlike the other columns, the Ability Score Bonuses column doesn't show your total bonuses at that level. At 4th level, choose three ability scores and add +1 to them. At 7th level, choose four ability scores to gain +1, and at 10th level, choose five ability scores to gain another +1.

Paladin Stats

Initiative, AC, PD, MD, Hit Points, Recovery Dice, Feats, and some Talents are level dependent.

KEY ABILITY SCORES	Strength, Charisma, Constitution, rarely Wisdom
INITIATIVE	Dex mod + Level
ARMOR CLASS (HEAVY ARMOR)	16 + middle mod of Con/Charisma/Wis + Level
ARMOR CLASS (SHIELD AND HEAVY ARMOR) (SHIELD & HEAVY ARMOR)	17 + middle mod of Con/Charisma/Wis + Level
PHYSICAL DEFENSE	10 + middle mod of Str/Con/Dex + Level
MENTAL DEFENSE	12 + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha + Level
HIT POINTS	(8 + Con mod) × Level modifier (see **Paladin Level Progression** table)
RECOVERIES	Usually 8
RECOVERY DICE	(1d10 per Level) + Con mod (5th level: Con mod × 2; 8th level: Con mod × 4)
BACKGROUNDS	8 points, max 5 in any one background
ICON RELATIONSHIPS	3 points
TALENTS	3 (see **Paladin Level Progression** table)
FEATS	1 per Level

Paladin Basic Attacks

Paladin Basic Melee Attack

Melee attack ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One enemy
Attack: Strength + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Strength damage
5th–7th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 2)
8th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 4) + 5
9th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 4) + 10
10th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 4) +15
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Paladin Basic Ranged Attack

Ranged attack ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One nearby or far-away enemy, depending on the weapon's range
Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Dexterity damage (though thrown weapons add Strength damage instead)
5th–7th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 2)
8th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + 5
9th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + 10
10th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) +15
Miss: —

Paladin Class Features

Paladins heal and slay. Their four class features are Blessing of Heaven, Fearless, Lay on Hands, and Smite.

Blessing of Heaven

Any paladin can choose to use Charisma in place of Dexterity when calculating their Armor Class.

All paladins probably want to do this, but there could be some strange exception somewhere.

Fearless

You are immune to *fear* abilities and to any non-damage effects of attacks named or described as "fear" attacks.

Lay on Hands

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Quick action
Effect: You can heal yourself, or an ally next to you, with a touch. You spend a recovery while the recipient heals as if they had spent the recovery. When you heal an ally, add your Charisma mod × 2 to the healing provided by *lay on hands* (5th: Charisma × 4; 8th: Charisma × 8).

Adventurer Feat: You can use *lay on hands* 2/arc. Unlike most arc powers, you can use it more than once in the same battle.

Champion Feat: (replaces adv) You can now use *lay on hands* 3/arc.

Epic Feat: (replaces champ) You can now use *lay on hands* 4/arc.

Zenith Feat (incremental advance when 10th level): When you use *lay on hands* on an ally, you can spend up to 30 of your hit points to heal your ally additional hp, double the amount you lost. You can't drop to 0 hp doing this, it's not that kind of double-edged feat.

Smite

You can use this feature once per battle, plus an additional number of times per arc equal to your Charisma modifier.

As a free action, before you make a *paladin melee attack*, you can declare that you're using a Smite attack. Add your Smite damage bonus (shown below) if you hit.

When Smiting, the paladin should utter some word or phrase relevant to why the target is worthy of destruction, such as "villain!" or "This is for Violet!"

1st	+ 6 damage (1d10)
2nd	+ 9 damage (2d8)
3rd	+ 11 damage (2d10)
4th	+ 13 damage (2d12)
5th	+ 17 damage (3d10)
6th	+ 20 damage (3d12)
7th	+ 26 damage (4d12)
8th	+ 33 damage (5d12)
9th	+ 39 damage (6d12)
10th	+ 52 damage (8d12)
11th	+ 65 damage (10d12)

Adventurer Feat: When your Smite attack drops a non-mook foe to 0 hit points, you do not expend that use of Smite.

Champion Feat: You gain a +2 bonus with Smite attacks.

Epic Feat: When the target of your Smite is left with 100 hit points or fewer, it is also weakened until the end of your next turn.

Zenith Feat (incremental advance when 10th level) Each time you miss with Smite, you deal +20 damage (cumulative) with all Smite attacks for the rest of the arc.

Paladin Feat

Talent of the Gods

Zenith Feat (incremental advance when 10th level): Take an additional paladin talent, any tier.

Adventurer-Tier Talents

Choose three of the following adventurer-tier class talents.

Unlike most other classes, paladins can also access champion-tier and epic-tier class talents at higher levels. You get an additional paladin class talent at 5th level, and again at 8th level.

If you're looking to play a very simple paladin, try Alyssa, the paladin we created in the Example of Play (page 5).

Bastion

Once per battle (but see below), as a free action, when a nearby ally is hit by an attack, you can choose to lose hit points equal to half that damage and have your ally take only half the damage instead. The damage you lose can come from temporary hit points, but it isn't affected by damage resistance or other tricks to avoid the damage.

You have an additional number of uses of Bastion equal to your Con modifier each arc.

Adventurer Feat: Increase your total number of recoveries by 1.

Champion Feat: The enemy whose attack you blunted is vulnerable (save ends) to attacks by both you and the ally you helped with Bastion.

Epic Feat: When you use Bastion, your ally takes no damage. You still lose hit points equal to half the damage.

Bold

You gain a +1 melee attack bonus against enemies that are not engaged with any of your allies.

You also gain a separate +1 bonus to your attacks against a single type of enemy for an entire arc, chosen once from this list as you roll initiative for a battle: demon, devil, dragon, giant, undead. You don't have to choose during the first or even the second battle, but if you haven't yet made the choice, there's no bonus.

Adventurer Feat: Once per battle, as an interrupt action, when the escalation die is 2+, choose a nearby ally who has just missed with an attack. Exhort them with the power of your deity or your own fearless soul; your ally can reroll their attack, abiding by the reroll, and until the end of the battle your ally is also immune to *fear* powers and to any non-damage effects of attacks named or described as "fear" effects.

Champion Feat: You gain a +2 bonus to death saves.

Epic Feat: Your nearby allies gain a +1 bonus to death saves.

Divine Domain

Special: You can choose Divine Domain a second time, if you wish, at 5th level or at 8th level.

Choose one of the domains listed in the cleric's class talent list. You gain all the domain's advantages, including the ability to use the domain's invocation once per arc.

If the domain you choose is designed to help a cleric's spells and attacks, reinterpret the talent to help your paladin powers. You can take the domain's feats if you wish; reinterpret them similarly, if necessary.

Here are some notes on how to translate the domains over to the paladin.

Friendship* or *Love: The domain works as written for the paladin.

Healing: You can use the Wisdom modifier bonus when you cast *lay on hands*. The domain's feats don't do anything for you, but the invocation gives you an additional use of *lay on hands* in this battle.

Justice* or *Vengeance: All elements of the domain function as written.

Knowledge* or *Lore: Unusual for a paladin, but it functions as written.

Life* or *Death: Functions as written, but note that the domain's epic feat will only become useful to you if you have somehow gained access to the *resurrection* spell, such as with the God-touched talent.

Perfection* or *Beauty: Works as written.

Protection* or *Community: Reinterpret this domain's mechanics to support *lay on hands*:

Once per arc, you can target two allies you are next to when you cast *lay on hands*. You need only spend one recovery to heal both allies. The invocation works fine as-is.

Storm: Unsurprisingly, Storm works fine as-is for paladins.

Strength: The standard domain effect isn't something you need, so let's give you a small conditional advantage:

Once per arc, you can deal half damage on a miss with a melee attack instead of the normal miss damage. The feats and invocation work as well for you as they do for anyone.

Sun* or *Anti-Undead: The first sentence of the domain effect applies. Replace the second sentence of the domain effect with the following: You can cast the cleric's *turn undead* once per battle, but must expend a recovery, a use of Smite, or a use of Lay on Hands to do so.

The invocation works for you to a limited extent; your melee attacks are not affected, and cannot be used against nearby enemies, nor can your Paladin's Challenge.

Trickery* or *Cunning* or *Illusion: With regrets, we acknowledge that this works OK as-is. This probably isn't a typical domain for paladins, but who's typical?

War* or *Leadership: Works fine as-is.

Evil Way

Special: To take this talent, you must have at least one Positive or Conflicted relationship with an evil icon or an icon considered villainous in your campaign. Usually, that's the Crusader, the Diabolist, the Lich King, or the Three, but your campaign may have added others.

Bonus smiting: You gain an additional use of Smite each arc.

Your evil smite: Once per battle, before rolling to hit when you make a Smite attack, you can spend a recovery from a nearby unconscious ally, or an ally rolling last gasp saves, to convert your Smite attack into a critical if it hits. The ally doesn't have to agree to this use of their recovery. It would be nice if they did; it's just not necessary.

Adventurer Feat: Once per arc, when the escalation die is 3+, the ally you steal the recovery from doesn't have to be unconscious or last-gasping; they merely need to be staggered. When you steal a recovery from a merely staggered ally and miss with the Smite attack, that ally gains a Skull.

Harmful hands: In addition, you lose the Lay on Hands class feature. It is replaced by the *touch of death* spell, detailed below.

Touch of Death (Evil Way Spell)

"This helps me almost as much as it hurts you."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Quick action

Special: You must spend a recovery to cast this spell, or two recoveries if the escalation die is lower than 3.

Target: One engaged enemy

Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD or PD, whichever is lower

Hit: You deal necro damage to the enemy equal to the amount you normally heal with a recovery. Then, you heal half that much damage.

Miss: You deal necro damage to the enemy equal to half the amount you normally heal with a recovery.

Champion Feat: You gain a cumulative +1 bonus to all your saves for each of your nearby allies that has at least one Skull.

Epic Feat: You can now cast *touch of death* 2/arc, though only once per battle.

God-Touched

Choose one limited-use spell of your level or lower from the cleric's spell list. You can cast this spell as if you were a cleric, using Charisma as the attack ability. (As usual, you can change your chosen spell when you take a full heal-up.) If you like, rename and reflavor the spell to suit your backgrounds.

Adventurer Feat: You brandish your melee weapon as your holy item. You can use Strength as the attack ability for cleric's spells you cast. Bonuses that a magic weapon provides to the attacks also apply to these spells.

Champion Feat: You can now cast two cleric's spells of your level.

Paladin's Challenge

Any time you hit an enemy with a melee attack, you can choose to Challenge that enemy as a free action. Until the end of the battle, provided that both you and the enemy you've Challenged are conscious and capable of making an attack, you both take a –4 attack penalty against all other creatures *and* a –4 penalty to disengage checks from each other.

You can only have one enemy Challenged at a time. Both you and the creature you have Challenged can briefly "turn off" the attack penalty for the rest of that turn by making an attack roll against the rival.

For example, a monster with more than one attack or attack roll can also attack your allies without penalty on its turn, provided it attacks you first. (Note that this would not help the monster with an opportunity attack against one of your allies later in the *round*.)

Your Paladin's Challenge can end in a few different ways. First, your Paladin's Challenge ends if either you or the creature you are Challenging falls unconscious or drops to 0 hp. Second, you can end your current Challenge and start another when you hit a different enemy with an attack (assuming you hit with the –4 penalty). Third, you can choose to end the Challenge if an enemy flees far-away from you.

An enemy can only be the subject of one Paladin's Challenge at a time; a new Challenge overrides the previous one.In the unlikely case where two paladins are fighting each other, any use of Paladin's Challenge locks them into a Challenge that only ends when one of them drops.

Adventurer Feat: Once per battle, when the escalation die is 1+, Challenging your foe increases the damage from the melee attack by 10 (5th: by 20; 8th: by 45)

Champion Feat: Every time you miss a Challenged foe, your crit range against that foe increases by 1 until you crit it or the Challenge ends.

Epic Feat: Enemies you Challenge are vulnerable to your subsequent attacks, so long as the Challenge is in effect. This doesn't affect the damage from the hit that allows you to Challenge.

ADJUDICATING CHALLENGES

If the paladin disengages, pops free, or teleports away from the enemy, feel free to allow the enemy to ignore the Challenge. The paladin should seek to confront the Challenged creature, rather than avoid it.

Undaunted

When you are hit with a temporary effect, you can make an immediate save to throw it off. As usual, an effect that does not have an associated save requires a normal save to cancel.

Adventurer Feat: Once per battle, after rolling a save, you can add your Charisma modifier to the result.

Champion Feat: Once per battle, as a free action during your turn, you can choose to lose hit points equal to your level to reroll a save.

Epic Feat: You gain a +1 bonus to Physical Defense and Mental Defense.

Voice of Song

Choose one limited-use spell of your level or lower from the bard's spell or song list. You can cast this song or spell as if you were a bard, using Charisma as the attack ability. (As usual, you can change your chosen spell when you take a full heal-up.)

Note that you are choosing from the bard's main spell list, not from the spells associated with the bard's talents.

Your songs might take the form of hymns or war songs, or perhaps you break the stereotype.

Adventurer Feat: You brandish your melee weapon as your arcane item. You can use Strength as the attack ability for bard spells and songs you cast. Bonuses that a magic weapon provides to the attacks also apply to these spells or songs.

Champion Feat: Choose two limited-use bard songs or spells instead of one.

Champion-Tier Talents

At 5th level, you gain an additional paladin class talent. Choose one of these champion-tier talents, or take another adventurer-tier talent if you prefer.

Champion of the Light

Special: You can only take this talent if you have at least one positive relationship point with a heroic (and preferably holy!) icon, and no positive relationships with villainous icons.



Your nearby allies gain a +1 bonus to all saves.

You gain a +2 bonus to all your defenses during the first round of each battle and when the escalation die is 4+.

In addition, all your melee and ranged attacks deal holy damage when you want them to.

Champion Feat: Once per arc, for each battle you have previously fought this arc, you gain an attack reroll blessing that you can use as a free action yourself or give to a nearby ally to use as a free action later this battle. For example, if you are in the middle of your second battle, you'll gain one reroll blessing. If you have fought three battles and are fighting again, you'll gain three reroll blessings.

Epic Feat: When you cast *lay on hands* on another character that has at least one positive icon relationship point with a heroic icon, they can heal using your recovery roll instead of their own.

Improved Smite

Bump up your Smite damage by one level.

If a creature you hit with a Smite attack is staggered after your hit, the creature is also weakened until the end of your next turn.

Champion Feat: The first time you gain a Skull each battle, gain an additional use of Smite useable in that battle or the next, even if the next battle is in the next arc.

Epic-Tier Talents

At 8th level, you gain an additional paladin class talent. Choose one of these epic-tier talents, or take another lower-tier talent if you prefer.

Holy Avenger

Your melee weapon—probably, but not necessarily a sword—transforms into a paragon of weapons, while retaining its own magical powers, if any.

One prohibition: You can't turn a cursed weapon into a Holy Avenger.

Your Holy Avenger weapon is an epic-tier melee weapon with a default +3 attack and +3 damage bonus.

In addition, the weapon has all four of the following powers. If your original weapon was a true magic item that already had one of these powers, choose a different melee weapon power to add to your Holy Avenger (with your GM's permission), so that your weapon ends up with five different powers.

Haughty (any melee weapon; 2/arc): When you hit with an attack using this weapon, if that enemy is the most dangerous foe in the battle (or tied for most dangerous, GM's assessment), you deal +12 damage to it.

of Unstinting Virtue (melee weapon; 2/arc): When you make a basic attack with this weapon, roll a save against a temporary effect.

Vain (melee weapon; twice per battle): When you hit with this weapon, deal +20 damage to that enemy if you are the only one engaged with it.

of Vengeance (melee weapon): When you hit with this weapon while you are staggered, deal +12 damage to that enemy.

Epic Feat: The first time in each battle that you or one of your allies takes a Skull (usually for dropping to 0 hit points), your next attack with the Holy Avenger that scores a normal hit turns into a critical hit.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR AVENGER

In case you haven't yet read **Chapter 11 Treasure** in the *Gamemaster's Guide*, we'll give you a brief explanation of how true magic item powers work.

Haughty is something you can use twice each arc, though not twice in the same battle. It adds +12 damage a pop. *Vain* is available much more often—twice per battle—but it requires that your friends stay out of your way. *Vengeance* is an effect that's always with you—if you're staggered, you're going to deal more damage.

Damage bonuses stack! Since magic item powers usually take free actions to activate, you could stack *haughty* and *vengeance* and even *vain*.





Great Dragon

Special: You can only take this talent if you have at least one positive or conflicted relationship with a heroic icon (preferably one that has something to do with dragons!), and no positive relationships with villainous icons.

This talent changes you a bit. In a metaphysical sense, you're no longer a simple humanoid. It's true that you're *technically* still a humanoid; but you could also be considered a dragon in humanoid form.

You gain several "all the time" abilities and a once per arc metaphysical transformation called *great dragon incarnation*.

First, the abilities that are always with you.

- You have a single *dragon-trick* available each battle when the escalation die reaches 1+ (see the **Dragons** entry on page 93 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*).
- You can never be cut off from using the escalation die.
- You gain *resist 16+* to attacks against your PD.

And now for the metaphysical transformation power, which is also accompanied by another breath weapon-style attack that can be used while the *great dragon incarnation* spell is active!

Great Dragon Incarnation

"The Wyrm is with us!"

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Quick action to cast

Effect: Until the end of the battle, you maintain your normal form while being surrounded by the magic of an elder dragon. You gain the following abilities until the end of the battle: *flight*, *size adjustment*, *dragon-tricks*, and the sorcerer's *golden shield* spell.

Flight: You can fly extremely well and quickly.

Size adjustment: If an effect questions what size you are, you count as huge, despite occupying the normal amount of space in the world or as a miniature on a table! Bump up your recovery dice and *Weapon* dice by one size each (d8s become d10s, d10s become d12s, etc., as shown on page 59).

Dragon-tricks: You don't just gain a dragon-trick when the escalation die reaches 1+, you also get another trick when the escalation die reaches 3+ and another when it's 5+.

Golden shield: While *great dragon transformation* is active, you can cast a modified version of the sorcerer's *golden shield* spell at your level. Your version can be cast as quick action if the escalation die is 2+. Here's how that spell reads when cast at 8th level and beyond.

Dragon's Golden Shield

"It's the gold of sunrise, shining from the dragon form around me before it bursts upon our enemies."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ *breath weapon: add escalation die to crit range* ◆ Standard action, or quick action if escalation die is 2+

Target: One nearby or far-away enemy, or up to two engaged enemies.

Attack: Wisdom OR Charisma + Level vs. PD

Hit: 40 fire damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Effect: You gain 50 maximum hit points until the end of the battle as the power of the Great Gold Wyrm inspires you. Raise your current hit points by 50 to catch up with your higher ceiling.

9th	50 damage; +60 hp
10th	65 damage; +80 hp

Epic Feat: You gain an additional icon relationship point with the Great Gold Wyrm or the Three or with some other draconically relevant icon in your campaign. It should match your hero's established relationships or enmities.

Ranger

Some rangers get their training in an official ranger corps, serving the Emperor or another legitimate authority. Others are initiates into half-wild gangs, resourceful nomads who know more ancient secrets than their rough manner might suggest. Rangers from different lands or traditions respect each other, though they can still be ruthless rivals. In the wilderness, rangers are held in awe, provided the common people even know they're there. In the city, rangers are notorious for complaining about the conditions of urban life, but they are renowned as outlandish party guests.



Overview

Play Style: Like the barbarian, the ranger can be simple to play, though it's not as simple as it was in 1E. Most of your choices during play come from your class talents, since you don't choose new attacks or spells as you gain levels.

Depending on which talents you choose, you'll have access to actions that sometimes increase the amount of damage you deal with a specific attack or that sometimes give you a second turn later in a round.

Ability Scores: Unlike most other classes, you can choose to use your Strength or your Dexterity as your attack ability in melee. Dexterity and Strength are your main ability scores, though it's possible you'll prioritize one and ignore the other. Wisdom also matters for several elements of the class, and it's likely many of the skill checks you make in the wilderness will play off Wisdom.

Kin: Tradition and natural inclination make a wood elf the archetypal ranger. Synergy with various kin powers and flexibility in approach allows anyone from human to troll-kin to halfling to stride into the role if they so choose.

Backgrounds: Rangers are *trackers, bounty hunters, members of secret orders of frontier guardians, agents of druidic circles, survivors of distant massacres, beast slayers, former-beasts-turned-elven, mid-canopy Wild Wood tree dwellers, initiates of the Golden Bough, Dire Wood assassins, dwellers on the Sea Wall, Koru behemoth nomads, overly committed orc slayers, wandering tinker folk*, and occasionally even *secret monarchs of vanished kingdoms*.

Icons: The High Druid and the Elf Queen rule the green spaces. The High Druid and the Three lay claim to the wastes. And a few hooded rangers who keep their stories straight and their motives plausible may know something of the Prince of Shadows.

SIMPLICITY

To make a simple ranger as a new player, choose Combat Archery, First Strike, and Ranger's Pet as talents, with Dexterity Melee as your class feature. You're a ranged attacker who crits often, doesn't have to worry much about being engaged, and has their choice of fun pets.

A more complex build uses Control the Range, one of the two double-attack talents, and Elemental Nature to cover all the angles.

Gear

At 1st level, rangers start with light armor, a melee weapon or two, a ranged weapon or two, and other mundane gear as suggested by their backgrounds or a life in the wilds. That "or two" is a lot more important for them than most characters, since two-weapon fighting is one of the ranger's signatures. See the basic rules for **two-weapon fighting** on page 314.

A 1st level ranger nearly always finds a way to start each arc with a single adventurer-tier healing potion.

Ranger Armor

Rangers prefer leather armor: scuffed and camouflaged for the wilderness; scuffed or buffed for civilization. A touch of metal is alright, but nothing too heavy. Rangers who fight without armor lose several points of AC compared to rangers fighting in light armor. Rangers who fight in heavier armor take attack penalties, as do some rangers who use a shield.

ARMOR TYPE	BASE AC	ATK PENALTY
None	10	—
Light	*13*	—
Heavy	14	–2
Shield	+1	–2*

* Rangers who choose to use Strength as their melee attack ability can use shields without suffering an attack penalty.

Ranger Weapons

Rangers often wield two melee weapons at the same time, battering their opponents with furious swings. They often use swords, but axes are also common. Less frequently, a ranger fights with two different weapons, such as a flail and an axe.

Rangers are skilled with all manner of ranged weapons, and personally crafting your own longbow—with or without magic—may be a point of pride. Rangers' weapons are often tricked out with feathers, beast claws, or other natural adornments.

MELEE	ONE-HANDED	TWO-HANDED
Small	d4 dagger	d6 club
Light or Simple	d6 shortsword, hand axe	d8 spear
Heavy or Martial	d8 longsword, warhammer	d10 greatsword, greataxe
Two-weapon fighting	Two 1-H weapons, hit w/nat 2	—

RANGED	THROWN	CROSSBOW	BOW
Small	d4 dagger	d4 hand crossbow	—
Light or Simple	d6 javelin, axe	d6 light crossbow	d6 shortbow
Heavy or Martial	—	d8 heavy crossbow	d8 longbow

Ranger Level Progression

RANGER LEVEL	TOTAL HIT POINTS	RECOVERY DICE	TOTAL FEATS	CLASS TALENTS	ABILITY SCORE BONUSES*
1st level	(7 + Con mod) × **3**	1d6 + Con mod	1 adventurer	3	
2nd level	(7 + Con mod) × **4**	2d6 + Con mod	2 adventurer	3	
3rd level	(7 + Con mod) × **5**	3d6 + Con mod	3 adventurer	3	
4th level	(7 + Con mod) × **6**	4d6 + Con mod	4 adventurer	3	+1 to 3 abilities
5th level	(7 + Con mod) × **8**	5d6 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 1 champion	4	
6th level	(7 + Con mod) × **10**	6d6+ (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 2 champion	4	
7th level	(7 + Con mod) × **12**	7d6 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 3 champion	4	+1 to 4 abilities
8th level	(7 + Con mod) × **16**	8d6 + (Con mod × 4) + 5	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	5	
9th level	(7 + Con mod) × **20**	9d6 + (Con mod × 4) + 10	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	5	
10th level	(7 + Con mod) × **24**	10d6 + (Con mod × 4) + 15	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	5	+1 to 5 abilities

* Unlike the other columns, the Ability Score Bonuses column doesn't show your total bonuses at that level. At 4th level, choose three ability scores and add +1 to them. At 7th level, choose four ability scores to gain +1, and at 10th level, choose five ability scores to gain another +1.

Ranger Stats

Initiative, AC, PD, MD, Hit Points, Recovery Dice, Feats, and some Talents are level dependent.

KEY ABILITY SCORES	Dexterity, Strength, Wisdom
INITIATIVE	Dex mod + Level
ARMOR CLASS (LIGHT ARMOR)	13 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
PHYSICAL DEFENSE	11 + middle mod of Str/Con/Dex + Level
MENTAL DEFENSE	10 + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha + Level
HIT POINTS	(7 + Con mod) × Level modifier (see **Ranger Level Progression** table)
RECOVERIES	8 for Dexterity Melee rangers, 9 for Strength Melee rangers
RECOVERY DICE	(1d6 OR 1d10 per Level)* + Con mod (5th level: Con mod × 2; 8th level: Con mod × 4)
BACKGROUNDS	8 points, max 5 in any one background
ICON RELATIONSHIPS	3 points
TALENTS	3 (see **Ranger Level Progression** table)
FEATS	1 per Level

* Rangers who use Dexterity as their melee attack ability use d6 recovery dice; rangers who use Strength as their melee attack ability use d10 recovery dice.

Ranger Basic Attacks

The *ranger basic melee attack* and *ranger basic ranged attack* are the weapon attacks you'll use often, especially if you're not making use of the double-attack talents. Like most attacks, they require a standard action and can interact with any of the ranger's talents, feats, and powers.

As discussed in the **Dexterity Melee or Strength Melee** section of the Class Features below, you choose whether your melee attacks are based on your Dexterity or your Strength.

No-trigger attacks: When your ranger gets an opportunity attack or is granted a bonus attack action, that's usually called out as a no-trigger attack. No-trigger attacks are exactly like your basic attacks but they can't trigger or make use of your own powers. For example, you can't use *double melee attack* or the Sword Way talent when making a no-trigger attack.

Ranger Basic Melee Attack

Melee attack ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One enemy
Attack: Strength/Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Strength/Dexterity damage
5th–7th level: *Weapon* + (Str/Dex mod × 2)
8th level: *Weapon* + (Str/Dex mod × 4) + 5
9th level: *Weapon* + (Str/Dex mod × 4) + 10
10th level: *Weapon* + (Str/Dex mod × 4) +15
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Ranger Basic Ranged Attack

Ranged attack ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One nearby or far-away enemy, depending on the weapon's range
Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Dexterity damage
5th–7th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 2)
8th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + 5
9th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + 10
10th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) +15
Miss: Damage equal to your level.



Ranger Class Features

All rangers have the Tracker class feature.

Dexterity or Strength Melee

All rangers also have the choice of whether to use Dexterity or Strength as the ability score for making melee attacks. Experienced players know Dexterity pays off frequently in our system, so the ranger who chooses Strength melee instead of Dexterity melee gets some unique benefits.

Choosing Dexterity is its own reward, since Dexterity is also useful for Initiative, AC, and ranged attacks. **However, if you choose Strength:**

- Your recovery dice bump up to d10s and you get one extra recovery, usually increasing your number of recoveries from 8 to 9.
- You do not have an attack penalty when using a shield, though you might still choose to fight with two weapons instead.

Tracker

Even if you are not an *exceptionally talented wilderness tracker* thanks to your backgrounds, you are at least a more experienced tracker and wilderness route finder than most heroes. Non-rangers might not even be able to attempt to track in situations where you can find clues.

An adventurer-tier ranger has three uses of Tracker each arc, which increases to four uses at epic tier.

For one use of Tracker, a ranger can reroll a failed skill check involving wilderness survival, route-finding, knowledge, and yes, tracking. Similarly, for a single use of Tracker, a ranger can find a way to allow a nearby ally to reroll such a skill check.

For an additional use of Tracker, decided before making the roll, the ranger narrates how something they know or set up before these events is now supplying a +3 bonus to the skill reroll.

Adventurer Feat: You have an additional use of Tracker each arc. In addition, the bonus for the additional use on a reroll is now +5 instead of +3.

Champion Feat: You can track as well in urban areas as you do in the wilderness.

Epic Feat: (requires champ) Odds are that tracking is no longer entirely physical for you, if it ever was. You can track flying creatures and creatures that normally wouldn't be trackable, and it's likely that even teleportation gives you a hint of direction. It's your call whether your tracking ability comes from nature spirits, icon connections, your unique, or some other supernatural contacts that have come to you through your long adventuring career.

Ranger Feat

Terrain Stunt (Ranger Feat)

Any ranger can choose this adventurer-tier feat. Its effects improve slightly as you rise through the tiers.

Note: Don't take this feat unless you enjoy improvisational storytelling!

Adventurer-tier Ranger

At the start of each battle in a non-urban environment, roll a d6. Any time after the escalation die reaches that number, you can use a quick action to execute a Terrain Stunt. Normally, you can only use Terrain Stunt once per battle; but circumstances, geography, or excellent planning may suggest you can pull it off more than once.

Terrain Stunts are improvisational effects that play off your preternatural understanding of the wilderness and all the diverse forms of the natural world. Things like knocking a hornets nest no one noticed onto your enemy's head, maneuvering a foe onto a soggy patch of ground that slows them down, shooting the cap off a mushroom spore in a dungeon that erupts on your enemies, getting your enemy's sword wedged into a stalactite, finding the tree branch that lets you vault up to attack the flying demon that thought it was out of axe range, and similar types of actions are all Terrain Stunts. As a ranger player with Terrain Stunt, you get to say things about the terrain that the GM may not have realized. (If your suggestion is silly or ludicrous, the GM can veto it and ask you to work with nature, not with nonsense.)

Normally, Terrain Stunts don't deal much damage—no more than your level and usually less. But they can definitely daze an enemy for a round, make an enemy stuck for a round, or occasionally even hinder an enemy if you've managed to pull off something super-surprising. They shouldn't create "save ends" effects.

Champion-tier Ranger

You can use a Terrain Stunt once more each battle after the escalation die reaches 6+.

Epic-tier Ranger

Once per arc, roll a d4 instead of a d6 to determine your Terrain Stunt's escalation count.

URBAN RANGERS

If your ranger is as adept in urban environments as in the wilderness, you can use Terrain Stunt in cities and towns. Let's set a bar: If you want to use Terrain Stunt in urban environments, you must have at least 3 points in backgrounds that back up your status as an urban ranger.

Contrarily, if you decide that you are an urban ranger with no wilderness skills (yes, we've seen this), keep your Terrain Stunts to the city!

Ranger Talents

As a 1st level ranger, you'll choose three of the following class talents.

You get an additional ranger class talent at 5th level, and again at 8th level. The 5th and 8th level talent selections can be champion-tier talents if you wish.

Three types of talents: Ranger talents are divided into three categories: Caster, Hunter, and Warrior. Each talent type provides a special benefit if you have at least one talent of that type.

Caster talents often connect to your ranger's backstory as well as provide spells. They are not accompanied by a special power, but they do provide a +2 bonus to MD.

The four Caster talents are Elemental Nature, Fey Queen's Enchantments, Ranger Ex Cathedral, and Shadow-Touched (*champion tier*).

Hunter talents involve powers and actions that make sense for rangers whose training involved hunting rather than combat. Hunter talents often appeal to rangers who fight with bows and make ranged attacks, but they can also be useful for rangers who prefer to fight in melee. You get bonus *lethal hunter* powers for having at least one Hunter talent.

The five Hunter talents are: Animal Companion (which can also be chosen as a Warrior talent), Cunning Aim (*champion tier*), First Strike, Ranger's Pet, and Twin Arrows.

Warrior talents involve powers and actions that make sense for rangers whose training or experience involved actual combat. There are several Warrior talents that improve melee combat skills, but there are also a couple that provide huge benefits for heroes who prioritize ranged attacks. You get bonus *skirmisher* powers for having at least one Warrior talent.

The seven Warrior talents are Animal Companion (which can also be chosen as a Hunter talent), Blur of Blades (*champion tier*), Combat Archer, Control the Range, Storm of Arrows (*champion tier*), Sword Way, and Two-Weapon Technique.

Caster Talents

A ranger who understands magic is a ranger who is hard to beat with magic.

If you are a single-class ranger with one or more Caster talents, you gain a +2 bonus to your MD.

Elemental Nature

Adventurer-tier Caster Talent

Once per arc, you can cast one of the following four spells: *flame blossoms*, *river teeth*, *thunder strike*, or *wild heal*.

To stay out of the way of the rest of the talent choices, the full write-up of this talent and its four spells appears at the very end of the ranger section, after the Animal Companion rules, starting on page 142.

Fey Queen's Enchantments

Adventurer-tier Caster Talent

Choose a limited-use spell from the sorcerer class. You cast this spell as if you were a sorcerer, though you can't gather power. Choose which mental ability score you want to use as the attack ability if you don't want to use Charisma. You can change your chosen spell whenever you take a full heal-up.

5th level: You can now cast two limited-use spells of your level from the sorcerer class.

Adventurer Feat: Once per arc, you can gather power like a sorcerer (page 164) to empower your sorcerer spell. As an overspill effect, when you gather power, you gain a +2 bonus to the defense of your choice until the start of your next turn.

Ranger ex Cathedral

Adventurer-tier Caster Talent

Choose one limited-use spell of your level from the cleric's spell list. You can cast this spell as if you were a cleric, using the ability score or scores of the spell as written.

You can change your chosen spell whenever you take a full heal-up. If you like, rename and reflavor the spell to suit your backgrounds.

5th level: You can now cast two limited-use spells of your level from the cleric class.

Adventurer Feat: You can cast the cleric class feature *heal* spell (page 98) once per battle as if you were an Armored cleric, meaning that you need to be next to an ally to cast it on them.

Champion Feat: (replaces adv) You can now cast *heal* as if you were a Vestment cleric, targeting a nearby ally instead of an ally you are next to. (Still just 1/battle.)

Shadow-touched

Champion-tier Caster Talent

That's right: this is only available starting at 5th level.

You gain the *shadow-slip* power. In addition, your twist range with all icon relationships increases by 1, usually to 1-6. When not engaged, you have a +1 bonus to all your defenses.

Shadow Slip

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Once per battle** ◆ Interrupt action when hit (but not critted) by an attack

Effect: Reduce the damage by half and teleport to a nearby location.

Improved version, accessible via the epic feat: *Shadow slip* now works against critical hits. Additionally, you can cancel any conditions imposed by the attack you are slipping away from, including ongoing damage, stunned, confusion, etc.

Epic Feat: You can now use the improved version of *shadow slip,* as seen above.

Hunter Talents

Even rangers who aren't hunters fight as if their enemies were prey.

If you are a single-class ranger with one or more Hunter talents, you gain access to the *lethal hunter* power. As you'll see in its write-up below, you start with a once per battle use and a separate once per arc use of *lethal hunter*, and you can gain more uses via feats.

Lethal Hunter

The Hunter ranger's bonus power.

1/battle and **1/Arc** ◆ Quick action once per turn when the escalation die is 1+

Use before making an attack on your turn, without using *double ranged attack* or *double melee attack*. Hit or miss, the attack deals an additional +X damage, as shown below.

This breaks the usual rule that damage bonuses only add to hits and crits, not to misses. The only way *lethal hunter* won't deal its damage is if you fumble with a natural 1.

And yes, if you crit with the attack, the damage is doubled like the rest of your damage.

1st	+9 (2d8) damage
2nd	+11 (2d10) damage
3rd	+14 (4d6) damage
4th	+18 (4d8) damage
5th	+22 (4d10) damage
6th	+28 damage
7th	+36 damage
8th	+44 damage
9th	+56 damage
10th	+72 damage
11th	+88 damage
12th	+112 damage

Adventurer Feat: You gain an additional use of *lethal hunter* each arc.

Champion Feat: Bump your *lethal hunter* damage up one level. For example, as a 10th level ranger, you'd get a +88 damage bonus.

Epic Feat: You gain an additional use of *lethal hunter* each battle.

Animal Companion

Adventurer-tier Hunter OR Warrior Talent that requires two talent choices

Special: Unlike other ranger talents, you can take Animal Companion as a Hunter talent or a Warrior talent.

Special: Animal Companion uses two of your talents, leaving you with only one other talent at 1st level. If you'd prefer a simpler way to have an animal friend for just one talent, see the Ranger's Pet talent.

You have an animal companion who fights alongside you.

The Animal Companion talent has several choices and rules that would get in the way of presenting your other talent options. We're presenting Animal Companion's details at the end of the ranger section, starting on page 142.

First Strike

Adventurer-tier Hunter Talent

Your crit range expands by 2 (usually to 18+) for the first attack roll you make against each enemy during a battle. A mob of mooks counts as a single enemy.

Adventurer Feat: If you use First Strike to target an enemy that has not yet acted this battle, your crit range expands by an additional 2 points, usually to 16.

Champion Feat: Your First Strike crit range applies to all your attacks made against an enemy in the turn you first attack it. For example, if you use the Twin Arrows talent and attack the enemy twice, both attacks would benefit from First Strike.

Epic Feat: The crit range of your First Strike attacks expands by 1 (usually to 17+).

Ranger's Pet

Adventurer-tier Hunter Talent

See page 197 for the Familiar or Pet talent that is available to the ranger, sorcerer, and wizard.

The broad outlines of the talent are the same for all three classes, but the *end is not the end* element of the talent means different things to different heroes.

Briefly, instead of spending two talents for an Animal Companion that fights alongside you, you spend one talent for a devoted pet that provides you with a couple useful abilities and a *last-ditch* power for when hope is scarce.

And yes, for you, it counts as a Hunter talent.

Could you have both Animal Companion and Ranger's Pet? Yes! Hope your critters get along.

Twin Arrows

Adventurer-tier Hunter Talent

When you attack with a ranged weapon that does not need to be reloaded, your default option is to make a *double ranged attack*.

Double Ranged Attack

Same as *ranger basic ranged attack* except . . .

Special: Your weapon damage dice drop one notch, usually from d8s to d6s.

Target: One or two nearby or far-away enemies, depending on the weapon's range

Special: Declare before you roll whether you have a single target or if one target is the first and another is the second.

Effect: Roll 2d20s and make one damage roll simultaneously. With two targets, the higher d20 roll goes against your first target and the lower d20 roll goes against your second target.

Natural even hit: Normal damage.

Natural odd hit: Half damage. (Yes, this includes odd crits, meaning a natural odd crit deals normal damage, not double.)

Natural even miss: Damage equal to your level.

Natural odd miss: No damage.

Champion Feat: When you make a *double ranged attack* on your turn, your lower roll gains a +4 attack bonus if it is against a different target.

. Cunning Aim

Champion-tier Hunter Talent

Available at 5th level

So long as you are not engaged, you can use a quick action to aim at a nearby or far-away enemy. If you attack that enemy with one or more ranged attacks against AC this turn, your attacks target PD instead of AC.

Champion Feat: If one of your attacks against PD hits, your ranged attacks against that enemy that normally target AC can target PD instead until the end of the battle.

Epic Feat: Twice per arc, you can psych-out an enemy and use Cunning Aim to target MD instead of AC! If you have this talent's champion feat, a hit with the ability switches your targeting to MD for the rest of the battle against that enemy as if you had hit while targeting PD.

Warrior Talents

Lightly armored rangers fight in an unpredictable whirl.

If you are a single class ranger with at least one Warrior talent, you gain access to the *skirmisher* power. You start with a once per battle use and a separate once per arc use of *skirmisher*, and you can gain more uses via feats.

Skirmisher

The Warrior ranger's bonus power.

1/battle and **1/Arc** ◆ Quick action once per main turn (not on a skirmisher turn!) when the escalation die is 1+.

Effect: When you use *skirmisher* on your turn, you set up a subsequent turn later this round. Take a second turn, referred to as your skirmisher turn, at half your initiative, rounding down.

If your skirmisher turn arrives and you no longer wish to take it, you can cancel the turn without expending that use of *skirmisher*. This applies even if you're unconscious or otherwise incapable of acting.

All effects that trigger at the start or end of your turn, like rolling for *elven grace*, ongoing damage, and saves against ongoing or temporary effects, only take place on your regular turn. Likewise, effects due to end at the end of your turn also only end at the end of your regular turn.

Your skirmisher turn: You get two actions on your skirmisher turn—a standard action and a move action. Remember that standard actions can be used as moves and quick actions if you wish, and moves can downgrade to quick actions.

Adventurer Feat: You also get a quick action on your skirmisher turns.

Champion Feat: (replaces adv) As the Adventurer Feat, and you gain an additional use of *skirmisher* each arc.

Epic Feat: When you use *skirmisher*, roll a d20 and add the escalation die and the number of Skulls living party members possess. If you roll 20+, you do not expend this use of the *skirmisher* action.

Combat Archery

Adventurer-tier Warrior Talent

You do not take attacks of opportunity from an enemy you target with a ranged *Weapon* attack that turn. In addition, if an enemy does make an opportunity attack against you for making a ranged attack against a different target while engaged with that enemy, the opportunity attack occurs *after* your attack.

For example, if you are engaged with a single enemy, and target that enemy with a ranged *Weapon* attack, that enemy does not get an opportunity attack against you, even if you follow up with a second attack against a different target using *double ranged attack*.

If you are engaged with two enemies, and manage to use something like *double ranged attack* to attack both, neither would get an opportunity attack against you. If you only attack one of them, the other would get an opportunity attack after your attack.

Three or more enemies? You're usually not getting away with that cleanly, and should probably try to disengage first!

Adventurer Feat: Once per arc, when the escalation die is 3+, turn a hit with a *ranger ranged attack* into a crit.

Champion Feat: You take half damage from opportunity attacks.

Epic Feat: You can make opportunity attacks with your ranged weapon as if it was a melee weapon.

Control the Range

Adventurer-tier Warrior Talent

You have access to two related actions that show your mastery of melee footwork and distance.

Escaping contact: When you are hit by a melee attack during an enemy's turn, you can roll a disengage check as an interrupt action at the end of that turn.

Maintaining contact: After an enemy has successfully disengaged from you and has finished its turn, you can roll a disengage check of your own as an interrupt action, even if you are not currently engaged. If the check succeeds (normal 11+ modified for extra enemies) you can move as with any other successful disengage check, so long as you move to engage the enemy who moved away from you earlier. You can't be intercepted during this move, but there may be times you can't catch up to the enemy—when they fly and you don't, for example.

Adventurer Feat: Once per battle as an interrupt action, when an enemy has moved to engage you, you can roll a disengage check after that enemy's move has ended and before any other actions.

Champion Feat: Gain an additional 1/battle use of *skirmisher*.

Sword Way

Adventurer-tier Warrior Talent

You cannot choose this talent *and* Two-Weapon Technique.

Special: Requires that your melee attacks use Strength as their attack ability.

When fighting with a one-handed or two-handed melee weapon, you deal +3 damage (or 1d4) when you hit with a natural even melee attack roll. As shown below, the damage increases as you level up.

Sword Way works fine if you're fighting with a weapon in one hand and a shield in the other.

We expect most players to rename this talent. Axe Way, Spear Way, Flail Away, Dance of the Curving Blade, Brand of Justice—all good.

2nd	+4 (1d6) damage
3rd	+5 (1d8) damage
4th	+7 (2d6) damage
5th	+11 (2d10) damage
6th	+14 (4d6) damage
7th	+18 (4d8) damage
8th	+22 damage
9th	+28 damage
10th	+36 damage

Adventurer Feat: Once per battle, deal half damage on a miss with a melee attack instead of the attack's normal miss damage.

Champion Feat: Once per battle as an interrupt action, you can force an enemy to reroll a melee attack against you that is not a critical hit. You get another use of this action when the escalation die reaches 4+.

Epic Feat: You gain another 1/battle use of *skirmisher*.

Two-Weapon Technique

Adventurer-tier Warrior Talent

You cannot choose this talent *and* Sword Way.

When fighting with two one-handed melee weapons, your default attack option is to make a *double melee attack*.

Double Melee Attack

Same as *ranger basic melee attack* except . . .

Special: Your weapon damage dice drop one notch, usually from d8s to d6s.
Target: One or two enemies
Special: Declare before you roll whether you have a single target or if one target is the first and another is the second. (If you are engaged with only one enemy, both attacks go against that same target.)
Effect: Roll 2d20s and make one damage roll simultaneously. With two targets, the higher d20 roll goes against your first target and the lower d20 roll goes against your second target.
Natural even hit: Normal damage.
Natural odd hit: Half damage. (Yes, this includes odd crits, meaning a natural odd crit deals normal damage, not double.)
Natural even miss: Damage equal to your level.
Natural odd miss: No damage.

Adventurer Feat: Gain +1 AC when fighting with two weapons.

Champion Feat: Once per battle, while fighting with two weapons, use an interrupt action to make an enemy reroll a melee attack against you. If their attack misses, you can make an opportunity attack against them as a free action.

Epic Feat: If your first attack drops an enemy, you can use a move action as a free action before resolving your second attack roll. Use the second attack roll you already rolled against the second target.

Blur of Blades

Champion-tier Warrior Talent

Available at 5th level

Once per battle, when your melee attack on your normal turn—not a skirmisher turn—drops a non-mook enemy, or two mooks, or the last mook in a mob, trigger Blur of Blades as a free action to gain another use of your *skirmisher* power later this battle. As usual, it takes a quick action on your turn to set up *skirmisher*, so you might use it the same turn that you earn it with Blur of Blades or you may wait until later in the battle.

Champion Feat: After triggering Blur of Blades, you gain an attack reroll that can only be used on a skirmisher turn later this battle.

Epic Feat: Once per arc, you can trigger Blur of Blades during a skirmisher turn.



Storm of Arrows

Champion-tier Warrior Talent

Available at 5th level
You gain the *arrow storm* attack.

Arrow Storm

Ranged attack ◆ **2/arc**
Targets: Up to a number of nearby or far-away enemies equal to the escalation die + 1. Make one attack against each target.
Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Dexterity damage
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Champion Feat: *Arrow storm* misses now deal half damage.

Epic Feat: Once per arc, you can target each enemy with up to 2 attacks when using *arrow storm*.

Animal Companion Talent Rules

You must show how much you care by spending two talents to have an animal companion. Your companion is the same level as your ranger.

Congratulations: Your loyal animal companion fights alongside you until your enemies drive it away. And then it comes back!

When you take the Animal Companion talent, choose an animal from the **List of Companions and Special Attacks** (page 144). You can communicate with your companion well, though it generally doesn't talk in a way that anyone else can understand.

Each creature has an advantage—a special power or bonus that is always in effect while the animal is in play. Each companion also has a unique creature attack.

While adventuring, your animal companion stays nearby and can *scout* once per arc.

Scout: Once per arc, your companion can separate itself from the party and make a reconnaissance run of an area or location, and it may even manage that feat unseen; make a normal skill check for the environment's tier to get your companion to *scout* unseen. Even if the skill check fails, inhabitants of the area might mistake the companion for a normal beast, that's a roleplaying story decision up to the GM.

Companions in battle: At the start of each battle, your natural initiative roll determines whether your animal companion starts in play or must be called into the fight. If your initiative roll is a natural even roll, your companion starts the battle in play alongside you. If your initiative roll is a natural odd roll, your companion must be called into the battle. (See the constant companion feat on page 143 if you'd like your companion to be more reliable.)

We say "alongside you" but you can instead specify that your companion is always roaming a bit; in this case, the GM will randomly place your animal companion somewhere nearby you.

Hit point threshold: The **Animal Companion Stats** table lists a hit point threshold for each level. The threshold isn't precisely the same thing as a standard hit point pool. Instead, the threshold is the amount of damage that temporarily removes the animal companion from the battle!

Track damage, conditions, and effects until the companion's hp threshold is reached, then remove it from play.

You can use a healing potion to heal your animal companion, but the recovery that's spent comes from you, and you'll only be removing damage that's been done toward their current threshold. It's usually a terrible idea, because you can die, but your animal companion knows to duck and cover and won't be killed in normal circumstances, even if it is driven out of a battle too many times to return.

Calling into play: Once per turn, you can spend a quick action to try and call your creature into the fight, or to call them back into the fight if they've been driven out by taking damage up to or beyond their hp threshold. See the *call them in* power below.

Companion actions: Your animal companion can fight alongside you without you having to direct it or spend actions. It takes its turn after your turn, and it can't delay or ready an action (unless you take the independent companion adventure feat just below!).

Companions' actions are usually more limited than the heroes'. Unless you take the feat that makes your companion more independent, its options on its turn are either to stay close and guard you (preparing to intercept if an enemy moves to engage you, but not other members of your party), to move and attack a creature attacking you, or to move and attack the nearest enemy. Using the companion's special attack is a special case; your companion can act as independently as you like on a turn when it uses its special attack.

Companion action economy: Your animal companion acts after you finish your turn. If you delay or ready your action, your animal companion also delays to act after you.

Like other creatures, the companion has a quick action (though there aren't many cases in which the companion is likely to use their quick action), move action (usually used to engage enemies attacking the ranger or the nearest enemy), and a standard action (usually used to make the default attack shown on the **Animal Companion Stats** list). It can also use an interrupt action to intercept and can make opportunity attacks.

Companion Power: Call Them In

At-will when your companion is out of the fight ◆ Quick action
Effect: In a battle in which you have not yet used your companion's special attack or successfully used the *call them in* companion power, roll a normal save (11+).

Once you've succeeded with one *call them in* power, the second use requires a hard save (16+). All subsequent *call them in* attempts require an extremely hard save (20+).

If the save fails, your animal companion remains out of the fight.

If the save succeeds, place your companion next to you, but unengaged with enemies. It's "fresh" in the sense that it's

unaffected by any conditions or damage it may have been suffering when it was driven away.

If your companion has been driven away this battle by taking damage over its hit point threshold, it comes back into the battle in a random nearby location determined by the GM.

Attacks: Your companion's melee attacks use the *animal companion basic attack* unless otherwise specified. Both the powers in the general pool and the creature powers belonging to specific animals tend to use the default attack as their base, modifying it with additional damage or effects.

Escalation: Animal companions use the escalation die when they attack.

Allies, but not allies for magic: Spells and effects that count or target allies generally don't affect animal companions. For example, the cleric's Justice domain can't count a critical hit against an animal companion as a critical hit that can spur a Vengeance reroll. A cleric casting *bless* can't choose the animal companion as one of the spell's targets, and so on.

On the other hand, your animal companion is something like a passive ally. It can count as an ally to let a rogue use Sneak Attack, for example.

Adventurer Feat (Communicative Companion): Your companion is a talking animal and communicates with the rest of the adventurers when it chooses. It could be that the GM and other players (!) talk for your companion as much as you do, because if it now feels like you have two characters monopolizing the group's time, this feat is being abused. But you probably have a say in what its personality is like.

Adventurer Feat (Independent Companion): Your companion can move as freely as any other hero. It takes it turns before or after your turn, as you choose.

Adventurer Feat (Relentless Companion): Your companion's attacks now deal miss damage equal to your level.

Adventurer Feat (Savage Companion): Your companion gains an additional two bonus 1/arc uses of its special attack. Only one 1/arc use per battle.

Adventurer Feat (Tough Companion): Raise your companion's damage threshold by a level.

Champion Feat (Constant Companion): Your companion starts every battle in play.

Champion Feat (Pack Mentality): When the escalation die is 2+, your companion rolls 2d20s when attacking an enemy engaged with one of its allies.

Epic Feat (Many Friends): Once per arc, you have a bonus companion, some other animal that automatically appears as you roll initiative. It doesn't have to be the same type as your usual companion. Keep track of the call them in difficulty for each creature separately.



Animal Companion Basic Attack

Melee attack ◆ **at-will**

Target: One enemy

Attack: Companion's attack bonus vs. AC (see the **Animal Companion Stats** list)

Hit: Companion's melee damage

Miss: –

List of Companions and Special Attacks

Each type of animal companion has a different advantage and a different special attack.

Advantages like *bear's a bruiser* and the panther's *stalker* affect all attacks that companion makes, including opportunity attacks, their *animal companion basic attack*, and their special attack.

Unless otherwise specified, the advantages apply only when the companion is in play.

Each **companion special attack** is either a 1/battle power or has a recharge roll listed. There are also feats that can give you a number of 1/arc uses of the special attack.

As noted, using your companion's special attack bumps up the difficulty of *call them in* by one step in that battle.

Bear

(also Giant Badger, Wolverine)

Advantage

Bear's a bruiser: The bear's hp threshold is one level higher than other animal companions.

Claws and Maw

Special melee attack ◆ bear companion ◆ **recharge 6+** ◆ bumps *call them in* difficulty up one step

Special: This attack improves the *animal companion basic attack* by a) increasing the damage by 2 levels; and b) rolling a second d20 against the same target. Use the highest roll for the main attack and the second roll for a half-damage attack against the target. (That's half-damage at the improved higher level!)

Boar

(also Spiky Lizard)

Advantage

Spiky & abrupt: You, the ranger, get a +2 bonus to initiative all the time, even if your companion is not in play.

Gore and Slash

Melee attack ◆ boar companion ◆ **arc** ◆ bumps *call them in* difficulty up one step

Special: This attack improves the *animal companion basic attack* by a) increasing the damage by 3 levels; and b) improving its crit range by double the escalation die.

Eagle

(also Falcon, Hawk, Owl, Vulture)

Advantage

Flyer: It flies and can make melee attacks against flying creatures.

Disadvantage

The eagle's hp threshold is one level lower than other animal companions.

Flyer Strafing Run

Close-quarters attack ◆ **recharge 11+** ◆ bumps *call them in* difficulty up one step

Special: This attack improves the *animal companion basic attack* by a) increasing the damage by 1 level; and b) targeting up to three nearby enemies in a group. Place the eagle/falcon/hawk/owl/vulture next to the ranger after the attack as if it had teleported. But really it flew, evasively.

Floppy-eared Gnomish Fox

(also, Badger, Fox-with-Normal-Ears, Wombat)

Advantage

Distraction: You have a +2 bonus to disengage checks.

Severe Irritant

Melee attack ◆ fox companion ◆ **recharge 11+** ◆ bumps *call them in* difficulty up one step

Special: This attack improves the *animal companion basic attack* by a) increasing the damage by 1 level; and b) letting you gain a *tricky teleport swap* close-quarters spell if it hits. The *tricky teleport swap* spell can be cast as a move action, allowing you to trade places with your nearby animal companion once later this battle.

Panther

(also Lion, Tiger)

Advantage

Stalker: The panther's crit range expands by 3 against enemies that are not engaged by other allies, not even you, the ranger.

Hunt 'em Down

Melee attack ◆ panther companion ◆ **1/battle when the escalation die is 1+** ◆ bumps *call them in* difficulty up one step

Special: This attack improves the basic animal companion attack by a) increasing the damage by 2 levels; and b) hit or miss, making the target vulnerable to the next attack against it.

Snake

(also Giant Spider, Giant Poison Toad)

Advantage

Poisoner: The snake's attacks deal ongoing poison damage equal to twice your—the ranger's—level on a natural attack roll of 18+.

Poison Bite

Melee attack ◆ snake companion ◆ **recharge 11+** ◆ bumps *call them in* difficulty up one step

Special: This attack improves the *animal companion basic attack* by a) increasing the damage by 1 level; and b) dealing 5 ongoing poison damage on a hit (hard save ends, 16+) (5th level: 10 ongoing poison; 8th level: 20 ongoing poison).

Wolf

(also War Dog, Coyote, Hyena, Jackal)

Advantage

Wolf's on your side: If the escalation die is 2+, bump the wolf's melee damage up a level.

Loyal Friend

Melee attack ◆ wolf companion ◆ **recharge 6+** ◆ bumps *call them in* difficulty up one step

Special: This attack improves the *animal companion basic attack* by a) increasing the damage by 2 levels; and b) allowing one ally engaged with the target to roll a disengage check as a free action if it hits. If it's the companion's beloved ranger, the disengage check gets a +4 bonus.

Animal Companion Stats List

Choose whether your animal companion's PD or MD is its higher stat.

0th level Animal Companion
Attack +5 vs. AC
Damage 3 (1d4)
AC 16
PD (or MD) 14
MD (or PD) 10
Damage Threshold 6 hp

1st level Animal Companion
Attack +6 vs. AC
Damage 4 (1d6)
AC 17
PD (or MD) 15
MD (or PD) 11
Damage Threshold 8 hp

2nd level Animal Companion
Attack +7 vs. AC
Damage 6 (1d10)
AC 18
PD (or MD) 16
MD (or PD) 12
Damage Threshold 10 hp

3rd level Animal Companion
Attack +9 vs. AC
Damage 7 (2d6)
AC 19
PD (or MD) 17
MD (or PD) 13
Damage Threshold 12 hp

4th level Animal Companion
Attack +10 vs. AC
Damage 9 (2d8)
AC 21
PD (or MD) 19
MD (or PD) 15
Damage Threshold 15 hp

5th level Animal Companion
Attack +11 vs. AC
Damage 11 (2d10)
AC 22
PD (or MD) 20
MD (or PD) 16
Damage Threshold 25 hp

6th level Animal Companion
Attack +13 vs. AC
Damage 14 (4d6)
AC 23
PD (or MD) 21
MD (or PD) 17
Damage Threshold 30 hp

7th level Animal Companion
Attack +14 vs. AC
Damage 18 (4d8)
AC 25
PD (or MD) 23
MD (or PD) 19
Damage Threshold 40 hp

8th level Animal Companion
Attack +15 vs. AC
Damage 22 (4d10)
AC 26
PD (or MD) 24
MD (or PD) 20
Damage Threshold 60 hp

9th level Animal Companion
Attack +17 vs. AC
Damage 30
AC 27
PD (or MD) 25
MD (or PD) 21
Damage Threshold 80 hp

10th level Animal Companion
Attack +18 vs. AC
Damage 40
AC 28
PD (or MD) 26
MD (or PD) 22
Damage Threshold 100 hp

11th level Animal Companion
Attack +19 vs. AC
Damage 50
AC 29
PD (or MD) 27
MD (or PD) 23
Damage Threshold 120 hp

12th level Animal Companion
Attack +20 vs. AC
Damage 75
AC 30
PD (or MD) 28
MD (or PD) 24
Damage Threshold 160 hp

13th level Animal Companion
Attack +21 vs. AC
Damage 90
AC 31
PD (or MD) 29
MD (or PD) 25
Damage Threshold 200 hp

NATURE MAGIC

Here's the full text of the Elemental Nature talent that would have been in the way if kept in alphabetical order.

Elemental Nature

Adventurer-tier Caster Talent

Once per arc, you can cast one of the following four spells that take a standard action to cast: *flame blossoms*, *river teeth*, *thunder strike*, or *wild heal*.

Use Wisdom or Charisma as the ability score to power the spells that require an attack ability. The spells that deal damage use dice rolls but don't add your ability score to damage. Like druidic spells, they benefit from magic items that affect divine magic: holy symbols and staffs.

5th level: You can now cast two Elemental Nature spells per arc, though not more than one per battle. (The adventurer feat below modifies that separately, providing a way to cast another Elemental Nature spell once per battle.)

Adventurer Feat: When the escalation die reaches 4+, you gain a 1/battle use of one of your Elemental Nature spells that you have not already cast this battle.

Flame Blossoms (Fire)

"My fire flowers are shaped like flowers that might grow in this place. The smell though, that's just the burning."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**
Targets: 1d3 + 1 nearby enemies in a group
Attack: (Cha/Wis) + Level vs. PD
Hit: 10 (3d6) fire damage, and 5 ongoing fire damage.
Miss: —
Effect: Starting on your next turn, until the end of the battle, you can use a quick action once per turn to increase the *flame blossoms*' ongoing fire damage by 5 against each target that hasn't saved.

2nd	14 (4d6); 5 ongoing and increase
3rd	18(4d8); 5 ongoing and increase
4th	21 (6d6); 5 ongoing and increase
5th	27 (6d8); 10 ongoing and increase
6th	35 (10d6); 10 ongoing and increase
7th	41 damage (9d8); 10 ongoing and increase
8th	54 damage; 15 ongoing and increase
9th	70 damage; 15 ongoing and increase
10th	82 damage; 15 ongoing and increase

River Teeth (Water)

"There's no visible trace for enemies to see, but we all feel the current picking us up, carrying us together, bursting toward the surface."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc**
Targets: You and/or an ally or allies, up to a number of creatures equal to the escalation die.
Effect: Each target can save against a temporary effect it is suffering from. One target that succeeds with a save can use an at-will attack as a free action.

Thunder Strike (Air)

Thunder follows true lightning.

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**
Target: One nearby or far-away enemy
Attack: (Cha/Wis) + Level vs. PD
Hit: 14 (4d6) lightning damage.
Miss: —
Effect on your next turn: If you wish, you can use a quick action to cast the spell's second part, a follow-up attack!
Target when cast: 1d3 random nearby enemies
Attack: (Cha/Wis) + Level vs. PD
Hit: 9 (2d8) thunder damage.
Miss: —

2nd	18 (4d8); follow-up 11 (3d6)
3rd	22 (4d10); follow-up 14 (4d6)
4th	27 (6d8); follow-up 18 (4d8)
5th	36 (8d8); follow-up 22 (4d10)
6th	44 (8d10); follow-up 28 (8d6)
7th	54 damage; follow-up 36
8th	72 damage; follow-up 44
9th	88 damage; follow-up 56
10th	110 damage; follow-up 72

Wild Heal (Earth)

"A gift from the earth, which endures."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Quick action
Targets: You or one nearby ally, and one randomly chosen nearby ally that has taken damage and isn't already a target of the spell.
Effect: Each target heals using one of its recoveries.

Rogue

Rogues are a mixed bag. Some are thugs who have learned enough tricks to get a step ahead of the other thugs. A few are mad, driven by a reckless sense of adventure. Most are quick with a smile, a blade, and a getaway. They receive various sorts of training: from a spymaster's school, a thieves' guild, a cult of the Black dragon, an independent operator, or an ambitious ogre mage. Rogues prefer never to be called assassins. And you know very well what will happen to you if you do.

Overview

Play Style: Our rogue can be more of a challenge to play if you choose the Rush Attack option instead of Sneak Attack. Sneak Attack powers require the rogue to team up with allies, which is slightly simpler than the movement required for Rush Attacks. Bravado powers often depend on scoring hits against your enemies; and they can, in turn, help your offense and help you survive. If the newbie in the group plays the rogue, give them props for skilled play.

If that newcomer wants guidance, we suspect that Sneak Attack is the easier of the two class features. Murderous and Tumble are simple talents, and Shift, Wriggle, and Roll is also easy. If simple rogue powers are desired, you could go with *evasive strike*, *deadly thrust*, and *roll with it*.

Ability Scores: Dexterity rules. Second place often goes to Charisma. Strength can be helpful too, or Wisdom for those rogues who care a great deal about spotting danger and traps.

Backgrounds: *Street thug, cat burglar, diplomat, professional gambler, artifact reclamation enthusiast* (like Ephemera, pictured at right), *Imperial customs agent, courtier of Wicked Prince Jack, semi-repentant jewel thief, renowned acrobat, con artist, bartender in a hobgoblin bar, hellhole infiltrator, temple spy master, thieves' guild organizer, former child pirate, spy-masquerading-as-a-dandy*, or *rat catcher*.

Icons: The Prince of Shadows puts a touch on so many rogues that it might be harder to find rogues who *don't* have his traces. The Elf Queen, the Diabolist, and the Three have their reasons for knowing rogues, and rogues have reasons for knowing them.



Gear

At 1st level, a rogue starts with the clothes on their back and the dice in their pockets; also, various bladed weapons, a music box that certainly didn't belong to them yesterday, and some armor. Plus, various oddments suggested by their backgrounds.

One way or another, your 1st level rogue has acquired an adventurer-tier healing potion.

Rogue Armor

Rogues prefer leather armor when there is a chance that the pointy weapons will be pointing at them.

ARMOR TYPE	BASE AC	ATK PENALTY
None	11	—
Light	*12*	—
Heavy	13	–2
Shield	+1	–2

Rogue Weapons

A trained rogue is as deadly with a shortsword or wicked big knife as a paladin is with a longsword. Although rogues' weapons vary, they are virtually always light, which allows rogues to strike with speed and precision rather than raw force. A rogue may have a superstitious connection to a "lucky knife" or other favored weapon. For ranged weapons, rogues are skilled with shortbows, throwing axes, and other light weapons.

Note that we're not talking metaphorically in the first sentence above: as you'll see on their weapons table, rogues deal as much damage in melee with daggers and shortswords as fighters deal with longswords. They also deal a bit more damage than anyone else when throwing daggers and knives and other small bladed weapons.

MELEE	ONE-HANDED	TWO-HANDED
Small	d8 dagger	d6 club
Light or Simple	d8 shortsword, wicked knife	d8 spear
Heavy or Martial	d8 (–2 atk) longsword, scimitar	d10 (–2 atk) greatsword
Two-weapon fighting	Two 1-H weapons, hit w/nat 2	—

RANGED	THROWN	CROSSBOW	BOW
Small	d6 dagger	d6 hand crossbow	—
Light or Simple	d6 javelin, axe	d6 light crossbow	d6 shortbow
Heavy or Martial	—	d8 (–1 atk) heavy crossbow	d8 (–2 atk) longbow



Rogue Level Progression

ROGUE LEVEL	TOTAL HIT POINTS	RECOVERY DICE	TOTAL FEATS	POWERS KNOWN	POOL AVAILABLE	ABILITY SCORE BONUSES*
1st level	(6 + Con mod) × **3**	1d8 + Con mod	1 adventurer	3	1st level	
2nd level	(6 + Con mod) × **4**	2d8 + Con mod	2 adventurer	4	1st level	
3rd level	(6 + Con mod) × **5**	3d8 + Con mod	3 adventurer	4	3rd level	
4th level	(6 + Con mod) × **6**	4d8 + Con mod	4 adventurer	5	3rd level	+1 to 3 abilities
5th level	(6 + Con mod) × **8**	5d8 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 1 champion	5	5th level	
6th level	(6 + Con mod) × **10**	6d8 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 2 champion	6	5th level	
7th level	(6 + Con mod) × **12**	7d8 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 3 champion	6	7th level	+1 to 4 abilities
8th level	(6 + Con mod) × **16**	8d8 + (Con mod × 4) + 5	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	7	7th level	
9th level	(6 + Con mod) × **20**	9d8 + (Con mod × 4) + 10	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	7	9th level	
10th level	(6 + Con mod) × **24**	10d8 + (Con mod × 4) + 15	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	8	9th level	+1 to 5 abilities

Note: Although not listed on the table, this class gets three talents. It does not gain more at higher levels.

* Unlike the other columns, the Ability Score Bonuses column doesn't show your total bonuses at that level. At 4th level, choose three ability scores and add +1 to them. At 7th level, choose four ability scores to gain +1, and at 10th level, choose five ability scores to gain another +1.

Rogue Stats

Initiative, AC, PD, MD, Hit Points, Recovery Dice, Feats, and some Talents are level dependent.

KEY ABILITY SCORES	Dexterity, Charisma
INITIATIVE	Dex mod + Level
ARMOR CLASS (LIGHT ARMOR)	12 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
PHYSICAL DEFENSE	12 + middle mod of Str/Con/Dex + Level
MENTAL DEFENSE	10 + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha + Level
HIT POINTS	(6 + Con mod) × Level modifier (see **Rogue Level Progression** table)
RECOVERIES	Usually 8
RECOVERY DICE	(1d8 per Level) + Con mod (5th level: Con mod × 2; 8th level: Con mod × 4)
BACKGROUNDS	8 points, max 5 in any one background
ICON RELATIONSHIPS	3 points
TALENTS	3
FEATS	1 per Level

Rogue Basic Attacks

The *rogue basic melee attack* and *rogue basic ranged attack* are the weapon attacks you'll use when you're not using one of your rogue attack powers. Like most attacks, they require a standard action and can interact with any of the rogue's talents, feats, and powers. Most of the rogue attack powers are based on the basic attack.

No-trigger attacks: When your rogue gets an opportunity attack or is granted a bonus attack action, that's usually called out as a no-trigger attack. No-trigger attacks are exactly like your basic attacks, except they can't trigger or make use of your own powers. For example, you can't use add Sneak Attack damage or gain Bravado when making a no-trigger attack.

Rogue Basic Melee Attack

Melee attack ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One enemy
Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Dexterity damage
5th–7th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 2)
8th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + 5
9th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + 10
10th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) +15
Miss: Damage equal to your level

Rogue Basic Ranged Attack

Ranged attack ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One nearby or far-away enemy, depending on the weapon's range
Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Dexterity damage
5th–7th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 2)
8th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + 5
9th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + 10
10th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) +15
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Rogue Class Features

Some rogues are good at rushing forward to hit enemies that may not have expected the attack. Other rogues excel at sneak-attacking alongside allies. A skillful few do both—see the Both Styles Now talent on page 152

All rogues have a knack for avoiding the traps their clueless allies would stumble into. And many of the rogue's powers function best, or only, when the rogue spends a point of Bravado, a resource they usually gain by fighting well.

Bravado

There's no limit to how many points of Bravado you can have, but your Bravado resets to 0 when you take a quick rest or a full heal-up.

There are two standard ways to gain a point of Bravado.

Initiative: You gain a point of Bravado when your natural initiative roll is even.

Hitting: You also gain a point of Bravado the first time you hit with a rogue attack on each of your turns. (In other words, hitting with an opportunity attack won't give you a point of Bravado.)

BRAVADO ISN'T MOMENTUM

In 1E, the rogue had a class feature called Momentum. That version of Momentum is gone, and the rogue's 2E resource, Bravado, can accumulate as a numerical resource when the rogue hits with an attack. You spend Bravado one point at a time for specific powers, and you *don't* lose it when the rogue gets hit.

It's also possible to choose talents and attacks that don't interact with Bravado.

Rush Attack

As a class feature, choose either Rush Attack or Sneak Attack.

Once on each of your turns, your rogue melee weapon attack deals an additional +1d6 damage against an enemy you were not engaged with at the start of your turn if you hit. Decide whether you are using Rush Attack before rolling an eligible attack.

2nd	+5 (2d4) damage
3rd	+7 (2d6) damage
4th	+9 (2d8) damage
5th	+11 (2d10) damage
6th	+14 (4d6) damage
7th	+18 (4d8) damage
8th	+22 damage
9th	+30 damage
10th	+40 damage
11th	+50 damage
12th	+60 damage

Adventurer Feat: When the escalation die is 2+, bump up your Rush Attack damage by two levels.

Champion Feat: Once per battle, reroll an attack that qualified for Rush Attack damage.

Epic Feat: Once per arc, when your Rush Attack slays a non-mook enemy, gain a bonus move action and a bonus standard action this turn.



Sneak Attack

As a class feature, choose either Rush Attack or Sneak Attack.

Once on your turn, when you make a *rogue melee weapon attack* against an enemy engaged with one or more of your allies, you can deal +3 (1d4) damage if your attack hits.

Special: For each Sneak Attack feat you choose, bump up your Sneak Attack damage by one level. For example, if you're 5th level with both the adventurer-tier and champion-tier feats, you deal Sneak Attack damage at 7th level.

2nd	+4 (1d6) damage
3rd	+5 (1d8) damage
4th	+7 (2d6) damage
5th	+9 (2d8) damage
6th	+11 (3d6) damage
7th	+14 (4d6) damage
8th	+20 damage
9th	+25 damage
10th	+30 damage
11th	+40 damage
12th	+50 damage
13th	+60 damage

Adventurer Feat: Your Sneak Attack also works against enemies who are charmed, confused, dazed, shocked, stunned, vulnerable, or weakened.

Champion Feat: Once per battle, when the escalation die is 1+, use a quick action to deal your Sneak Attack damage to an enemy you are engaged with that qualifies as an enemy you could deal Sneak Attack damage to.

Epic Feat: Three times per arc, as a free action, you can add your Sneak Attack damage to any hit against one target that would not otherwise have qualified for the damage.

Skulduggery

Depending on your character's backstory, you might instead phrase this talent as something related to Thievery.

Even if you don't take backgrounds that represent a history as a *thief, cat burglar, spy, or espionage agent*, you have a flair for this type of thing and a healthy dose of luck.

At adventurer-tier, you have two uses of Skulduggery per arc; this increases to three uses at 5th level and four uses at 8th level.

For one use of Skulduggery, a rogue can reroll a failed skill role involving thievery, spotting or disarming traps, criminal contacts, espionage tricks, and so on. The list of possible applications is broader than the similar class features of the bard and ranger, so Skulduggery has fewer uses.

For an additional use of Skulduggery, decided before making the roll, the rogue narrates how something they know or set up before these events is now supplying a +3 bonus to the skill reroll.

Adventurer Feat: Regardless of your level, you gain the bonus power *thief's strike* (see page 157) in addition to your normal number of powers.

Champion Feat: You have an additional use of Skulduggery each arc. In addition, the bonus for the additional use on a reroll is now +5 instead of +3.

Epic Feat: Twice per level, you can steal something with a successful *thief's strike* that you would ordinarily not be able to steal, but the Prince of Shadows could. A dream. A vision. A spell. Someone's hope. The memory of how to get into the central crypt and bypass all the wards. The theft may not always be permanent, but it'll last long enough so you can get everything you need out of it.

EPIC THEFT

The Skulduggery epic feat effect is not mundane thievery. It's epic magic. Like the Prince of Shadows, you can never steal the same thing twice. Keep it interesting.

GMs, we suggest that if you think the theft is temporary, give the victim, if alive, a hard save every couple of weeks to spontaneously recover what was taken. Alternatively, it could be an enemy's weird quest that the hero needs to thwart.

Rogue Talents

Choose three of the following class talents.

Both Styles Now

If you chose Rush Attack as your class feature, you also gain Sneak Attack. If you chose Sneak Attack, you now gain Rush Attack.

You can't use both Rush Attack and Sneak Attack at the same time. Choose as you make an attack whether you are using Rush Attack or Sneak Attack.

This talent doesn't have more feats itself, but you now have access to the feats connected to your new attack style.

Murderous

Your crit range against staggered enemies expands by 2.

Adventurer Feat: You also gain a +2 attack bonus against staggered enemies.

Champion Feat: Staggered enemies are always vulnerable to your attacks.

Epic Feat: Your crit range against staggered enemies expands by 2 (now +4, so usually 16+).

Shadow Walk

You gain the *shadow walk* at-will power:

As a quick action *before* you have used a standard action this turn, you can make the following *shadow walk* attack against the enemy with the highest Mental Defense.

Shadow Walk

Close-quarters attack ◆ **At-Will if used while not engaged; expended until end of battle if used while engaged** ◆ Quick action

Target: Nearby enemy with the highest MD

Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD

Special: Hitting with *shadow walk* does not give you a point of Bravado.

Special: Instead of rolling this attack, you can spend a point of Bravado to turn it into an automatic hit.

Hit: Remove yourself from play and take no further actions this turn or until the start of your next turn. At the start of your next turn, return anywhere nearby that you could have moved to normally during your turn, and deal double damage with your first attack roll that turn. (As usual, add your relevant Sneak Attack or Rush Attack damage first before doubling.) (And no monkeying around with delaying and such here: return on your initiative and take your turn.)

Miss: No effect. You can't attempt to *shadow walk* again until your next turn, but you still have your standard action this turn, and possibly your move action.



Adventurer Feat: You can add the attack bonus of a melee weapon or arcane implement you are wielding to the *shadow walk* attack roll.

Champion Feat: You gain a point of Bravado if you choose to roll the *shadow walk* attack and hit.

Epic Feat: If you wish, you can reappear from your *shadow walk* in a nearby location you wouldn't have been able to reach unimpeded physically; for instance, on the other side of a portcullis or door, or high up a wall.

SHADOW WALK AWAY?

Shadow Walk is powerful, cool, probably a bit magical depending on how your character interprets *shadow* . . . and a bit selfish! Some new players don't understand, at first, how much pressure *shadow walk* puts on their allies who can't slip off into the concealing dark. Of course, most rogues have no problem with the dynamic.

Shift, Wriggle, and Roll

Once per battle, when you are hit by a nearby enemy, you can force the enemy to reroll the attack with an attack penalty equal to your highest mental ability modifier.

Adventurer Feat: If the rerolled attack misses, you gain a point of Bravado.

Champion Feat: Once per arc, you can use Shift, Wriggle, and Roll twice in a battle.

Epic Feat: If the rerolled attack you've forced is a miss, you can pop free of all enemies, move to engage the enemy that attacked you (if it's necessary to move) and make a no-trigger melee attack against that enemy as a free action.

Tumble

You gain a +3 bonus to disengage checks. In addition, while you are moving, if an enemy moves to intercept you, you can make a disengage check as a free action to avoid that enemy. (Since you may not have seen the intercept rules on page 296 yet, we'll mention that only one enemy can try to intercept you each turn. You are uniquely likely to get past the interceptor and reach your real target; and don't forget that *magic boots* will help your disengage checks.)

Adventurer Feat: Add the escalation die to your disengage attempts.

Champion Feat: As a free action, you can spend a point of Bravado to reroll a disengage check with an additional +2 bonus.

Epic Feat: Whenever you take critical hit damage, roll a hard save (16+). If you succeed, you somehow Tumbled out of the way of whatever was about to smash or mind-flay you, and instead take only half the damage of a normal hit, and none of the attack's non-damage effects.

Rogue Feats

Smooth Talk is for rogues who have a way with words. Rogue of Two-Weapons is for rogue who want to fight well with weapons in each hand. Danger Trigger is for rogues who want better odds of surviving until epic tier, and is a feat that keeps improving. Swashbuckle is for rogues who want to be legendary from the beginning.

Danger Trigger (Adventurer-tier Rogue Feat)

Adventurer-tier Rogue

If enemies gain an initiative bonus for surprising or ambushing you, you gain the same initiative bonus as them—your unconscious spirit reacts to the ambush and your conscious mind catches up.

Champion-tier Rogue

If you roll higher initiative than all enemies in a battle, you gain a point of Bravado.

Epic-tier Rogue

Once per arc, if you have a higher initiative result than any enemies in the battle, you can use one quick action before the battle truly begins. (Yes, you could try to use *shadow walk*.)

Rogue of Two-Weapons (Adventurer-tier Rogue Feat)

You can now wield two melee weapons and get the two-weapon fighting advantage described on page 314: hitting with your melee attacks on a natural 2.

Smooth Talk (Adventurer-tier Rogue Feat)

Are you a con artist, a trickster, or just plain likeable? You gain the benefits of the bard's Social Skills class feature. You'll find the write-up on page 72. You can't take the feat that makes it better unless you smooth talk the GM.

Swashbuckle (Adventurer-tier Rogue Feat)

Once per battle, you can pull off a daring stunt the likes of which others could scarcely conceive. Yes, it's improv night at the rogue show, and you're the star, baby, the star. You'll probably want to make an attack as part of the stunt, and that's alright, but you'll need to roll normally for the attack. The fun is in doing something outrageous like dodging between the legs of giants, vaulting on a 12-foot pole over the heads of onrushing orcs, or cutting open bags of flour just in time to make them go *poof* and daze a couple foes for a round.

Of course, *13th Age* is a game where everyone might attempt stunts like this at some point. But you're the swashbuckler who is prone to automatically succeeding, often, instead of needing a difficult skill check, or any check at all, to pull off such a stunt.

We went back and forth over whether Bravado was involved, but we think not. You can Swashbuckle even if you have no Bravado, and since you're rolling normally for the attack, you've already got a pathway to a point of Bravado.

IMPROVISATIONAL STUNTS

Most of the other improvisational abilities live in the spellcasting classes because magic is great for handwaving odd effects. Swashbuckle may be a bit more of a challenge. You can adjust the tone and delivery of Swashbuckle for your campaign. You might want it to be savagely funny rather than slapstick funny. If you think that a player is trying to get away with too much with a Swashbuckle stunt, have them roll a d20 and give them a proportion of what they want based on the quality of their roll (higher is better).

1st Level Powers

Some of the rogue's attack powers are closely modeled on their basic attacks. Others are different enough to have line-by-line rewrites, though they also specify that the damage they deal improves at 5th level and beyond, exactly like basic attacks.

Evasive Strike (At-Will)

Same as *rogue basic melee attack* except . . .

Hit: Same basic attack damage, and you can pop free from the target.

Adventurer Feat: If you drop the target with your *evasive strike* attack, you can pop free from *all* enemies instead.

Champion Feat: If you hit with *evasive strike* and spend a point of Bravado, you gain a +2 bonus to AC and PD against the next attack that targets you this battle. (8th level: The +2 defense bonus now also extends to your MD.)

Deadly Thrust

Melee attack ◆ **At-Will, but costs 1 Bravado**
Special: Hitting with *deadly thrust* does not give you Bravado
Target: One staggered enemy
Attack: Dexterity + Strength + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Dexterity damage + Strength damage

5th–7th	*Weapon* + (Dex mod × 2) + (Str mod × 2)
8th	*Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + (Str mod × 4) +5
9th	*Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + (Str mod × 4) + 10
10th	*Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + (Str mod × 4) + 15

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Adventurer Feat: Half damage when you miss.

Champion Feat: Once per arc, reroll a miss on a *deadly thrust* attack with a +4 bonus.

Flying Blade (At-Will)

Same as *rogue basic ranged attack* except . . .

Special: You must use a small, bladed weapon or a hand crossbow with this attack. (For you, those are both d6 weapons when used for a ranged attack.) If you spend a point of Bravado before rolling your attack, you can add your Rush Attack or Sneak Attack damage to the hit, even if the target would not normally be eligible for that damage.
Target: One nearby enemy

Adventurer Feat: If you have a magic melee weapon, it can share its default bonus with the small, bladed weapons you're throwing with *flying blade*, so your attacks don't fall behind the curve. If you're using a hand crossbow, reloading is a free action for you even if it isn't magical.

Epic Feat: Once per battle, throw blades at two targets instead of one, or fire the hand crossbow at two targets with a free reload between attacks.

Roll With It

1/battle ◆ Interrupt action
Trigger: A melee attack that targets AC hits you
Effect: Reduce the damage from the attack by double your level. If you spend a point of Bravado, you take half damage from the attack, instead.

Adventurer Feat: The power can trigger with *any* attack against AC, not just melee.

Champion Feat: (replaces adv) As above, and it's now usable 2/battle.

Slick Feint

Melee attack ◆ **At-Will, but costs 1 Bravado**
Special: Hitting with this attack doesn't give you Bravado
First Target: One engaged enemy
First Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD
Hit: Psychic damage equal to your level, but no other damage of any type, and you can make an improved melee attack against the same target or a different engaged target.
Natural even hit or miss: The target is also dazed until the end of your next turn.
Miss: Your attack action is over; the feint was a screw-up.
Second Target: The same enemy as the first attack or a different engaged enemy.
Second Attack: Dexterity + Level +4 vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Dexterity damage, and improve damage at 5th level and above exactly like your basic attack progression.
Miss: Half damage.

Adventurer Feat: If the second attack is against a different target than the first attack, the second attack can be against PD, not AC.

Champion Feat: If the first attack against MD misses, you get your point of Bravado back.

Sure Cut

Melee attack ◆ **At-Will, but costs 1 Bravado**
Special: You must be able to deal your Sneak Attack or Rush Attack damage to the target.
Target: One enemy
Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Dexterity damage, and improve damage at 5th level and above exactly like your basic attack progression. (Hitting also adds your Sneak Attack/Rush Attack damage, as usual.)
Miss: Sneak Attack or Rush Attack damage + damage equal to your level.

Champion Feat: When you hit with *sure cut*, the target is vulnerable to the next attack that targets it.

Tumbling Strike

Same as *rogue basic melee attack* except . . .

1/battle
Effect: You gain a +2 bonus to all disengage checks you attempt this turn. You can also move to engage an enemy, make this attack against it, and then use a quick action to attempt to disengage from it (the quick action disengage lets you move again if you succeed). If your disengage check fails and you're stuck in place, you at least get to make this attack.

Adventurer Feat: You can reroll a disengage check you're making with *tumbling strike* and abide by the reroll.

3rd Level Powers

Bleeding Strike

Same as *rogue basic melee attack* except . . .

1/battle
Target: One enemy who is eligible to be damaged by your Sneak Attack or your Rush Attack
Natural even hit: Same base damage as basic attack, and an additional 10 ongoing damage (5th: 20 ongoing damage; 8th: 40 ongoing damage).
Natural odd hit: Same base damage as basic attack, and half as much ongoing damage as the even hit.

Adventurer Feat: You can use *bleeding strike* a second time in a battle by spending 1 point of Bravado.

Champion Feat: Misses with *bleeding strike* now also deal half the ongoing damage they would have dealt with a hit (in addition to the standard basic attack's miss damage equal to your level).

Deflection

1/battle ◆ Interrupt action ◆ Costs 1 Bravado
Trigger: A melee attack misses you
Effect: The attack hits an engaged enemy other than the enemy that just missed you, but the attack deals only half damage and none of its other effects.

Champion Feat: The power also triggers on a ranged attack against AC.

Epic Feat: (replaces champ) The power now triggers on any miss against your AC or PD.

So Cool

2/arc ◆ Quick action when the escalation die is 1+.
Effect: Gain a point of Bravado.

Champion Feat: When you use *so cool*, roll a normal save. If you succeed, gain a second point of Bravado.

Suppressing Strike

Same as *rogue basic melee attack* except . . .

1/battle ◆ Costs 1 Bravado
Hit against a standard-strength or weakling foe: Target is hindered until the end of its next turn.

Adventurer Feat: The hindered effect can now also work against staggered double-strength targets.

Champion Feat: (replaces adv) As above, and the hindered effect can now also work against staggered triple-strength targets.

Epic Feat: You gain two additional uses of *suppressing strike* per arc.

Thief's Strike

Rogues with the Skulduggery talent can acquire this attack as a bonus power at 1st level with a feat; other rogues can choose it if they like at 3rd level.

Melee attack ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One enemy
Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. PD
Hit: Half of *Weapon* + Dexterity damage (including Sneak Attack or Rush Attack damage if any, as usual), and roll a normal save (11+). If you succeed, you can pickpocket an item from the target that they are not holding. (If you roll 16+ with the save, the target doesn't realize you pickpocketed them.) The damage increases like your basic attack damage.
Miss: —

Adventurer Feat: Twice per arc, you can deal full damage with *thief's strike* instead of half damage.

5th Level Powers

Cut After Cut

Melee attack ◆ **arc/desperate**
Effect: This power lets you make a number of modified *basic rogue melee attacks* equal to the escalation die. You can't score a critical hit with any of these attacks; if you do, treat it as a normal hit.
Target of the basic attacks: One or more enemies
Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Natural even hit: *Weapon* + Dexterity damage, increasing at 5th level and beyond the same as basic attacks.
Natural odd hit: Half of *Weapon* + Dexterity damage.
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Epic Feat: You can now score a critical hit with the attacks.

Flick of the Wrist

Interrupt action ◆ **1/battle** ◆ Costs 1 Bravado
Special: Use this power instead of intercepting when you would be allowed to intercept an enemy moving past you.
Effect: You can make a no-trigger ranged weapon attack against the moving enemy. (Reminder: it can't add Sneak Attack or Rush Attack damage, gain Bravado, or trigger any other effect.)

Champion Feat: Once per arc, use *flick of the wrist* a second time in a battle.

Sly Dodger

Interrupt action ◆ **recharge 11+** ◆ Costs 1 Bravado
Trigger: An enemy's attack roll is about to hit you
Special: You lose your next quick action. If you have somehow already lost your quick action on your next turn, you can't use *sly dodger*.
Effect: Add the escalation die to all your defenses against this attack roll.

Champion Feat: The defense bonus now also applies to any other attack rolls made against you by the same enemy this turn.

Epic Feat: If the enemy's attack misses you when you use *sly dodger*, you can immediately take a move action as a free action.

7th Level Powers

Cutter's Gambit

Melee attack ◆ **1/battle** ◆ **quick action**
Special: Roll a d4 when you decide to use the attack. If you roll higher than the escalation die, you spend the quick action but do not make the *cutter's gambit* attack or expend *cutter's gambit*.
Target: One enemy
Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Hit: Half of *Weapon* + Dexterity damage, and if the attack deals Sneak Attack or Rush Attack damage, this doesn't count as your one use of Sneak Attack/Rush Attack per turn. (Damage increases at 5th level and beyond like your basic attack.)
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

No, You Missed

Interrupt action ◆ **recharge 11+ after battle** ◆ Costs 1 Bravado
Trigger: An enemy targets you with an attack that includes other targets
Effect: The attack against you automatically misses and has no effect or damage against you. GM, don't even roll the attack against the rogue.

Ok, Teamwork, OK

2/arc ◆ Free action during your turn ◆ Costs 1 Bravado
Trigger: You miss all targets with an attack
Effect: Randomly select a nearby conscious ally. That ally can take an additional standard action on their next turn.

9th Level Powers

Coup de Killer

1/arc on your turn when the escalation die is 2+ ◆ Free action
Effect: One engaged enemy becomes helpless for a moment; then you deal a critical hit to that enemy with a basic melee attack without rolling to hit. Sneak Attack/Rush Attack damage applies, as usual, but you don't gain Bravado from this.
Then, roll a normal save (11+). If the save fails, you gain a Skull. You could kill yourself if it's your fifth, but that seems unlikely—unless you are seeking a glorious exit.

Epic Feat: Spend 2 Bravado to use *coup de killer* a second time in an arc.

Death's Twin

1/battle ◆ Costs 1 Bravado
Effect: You can make two *rogue basic melee attacks* at any point during your turn, each against a different target. The first attack doesn't expend your Sneak Attack/Rush Attack for the turn, so you can use it for both attacks.

Epic Feat: If your attack against your first *death's twin* target is a natural even hit or miss, you can make your second basic attack against that same target.

Key to Shadow

Melee attack ◆ **2/arc**
Effect: You can make a no-trigger melee attack. (Reminder: it can't add Sneak Attack or Rush Attack damage, gain Bravado, or trigger any other effect.) If it hits, you can enter shadow as if you had successfully used *shadow walk* (page 153), meaning you'll make a double-damage attack when you exit shadow on your next turn. You don't have to have the Shadow Walk talent to use this attack, but you can't use this attack on the same turn as coming out of the shadows.

Epic Feat: The attack is now a basic melee attack instead of a no-trigger melee attack, so you can add Sneak Attack/Rush Attack damage and gain Bravado if it hits.

Sorcerer

When the Empire was young, there were no sorcerers. Today, it seems they're everywhere. In the earliest ages, each icon held dominion over their own magic power. Only servants of the Archmage, for example, could use an Archmage's arcane secrets. Age by age, arcane and divine power has slipped from the icons' hands into the spells of mortals who control it as best they can . . . or simply let fly. Sorcerers are notoriously reckless with their spells. Wizards say that a sorcerer doesn't so much cast a spell as uncork it. Elves say you never talk to the same sorcerer twice; dwarves say not even once.

Overview

Play Style: Sorcerers are self-taught genius freaks with an intuitive mastery of magic and possibly some damage. They tap into the icons' power with or without the icons' permission. Some are aligned with an icon, such as the lickspittle slaves of the Three, trained since before birth to be dragon sorcerers. Some are outlaws, such as a secret cult devoted to occult rituals, including initiation ceremonies that grant deathless and infernal power. Some sorcerers are simply one-off flukes resulting from astrological mismatches, early exposure to otherworldly forces, and other supernatural happenstance.

Since sorcerers are defined as more or less flukes, players have wide discretion in narrating what sorcery means for their PCs and in their campaigns. Players should personalize their sorcerers freely. Change the names and fiction for your character's powers. Adjust the details of your powers to make them fit your character fiction better. If your sorcerer was cursed at birth to wield the power of the Lich King, maybe your *breath of the white dragon* spell is called *breath of the grave*. Now instead of looking like a blast of ice, the breath weapon effect looks like creepy fog that freezes everything, accompanied by the sound of your own death rattle. Same effect, unique fiction.

Play style: A sorcerer makes a small number of big decisions. Can you afford to gather power for a big effect next round? Or do your allies need you to blast an enemy right now? And once you've gathered power, you need to pick the right target for your double-strength spell. Meanwhile, monsters engage you, and sometimes you are forced to accept an opportunity attack to get your big spell off.

Players who can handle dice swinginess may enjoy the sorcerer more. If you're not that type, steer clear of the more chaotic powers.

The simplest sorcerer: That being said, if you're new to the game and want to play a sorcerer, try these talents: Fey Heritage, Spell Fist, and either Chromatic Heritage (in which case you'll want the breath weapon spells at 1st level) or Undead Heritage



(to be slightly risk-adverse vis-à-vis critical hits). Take *burning hands* and *scorching ray* as your at-will spells. If you aren't using both *breath weapon* spells because of Chromatic heritage, choose one of them alongside *echoing thunder* as your other spell selections.

Ability Scores: Charisma is your most important asset. You get to decide whether your high Charisma represents a forceful personality or a winning personality.

Your second-choice ability score is less clear. Many sorcerers use magic that relies a bit on Constitution, others prefer speed and Dexterity.

Backgrounds: *Tribal shaman, former child avatar, Grey Harbor pirate captain, Axis spell-arena gladiator, wizard-academy disciplinary flunk out, Shadow Port city guard, sahuagin hunter, raised by magic items in a blue dragon's lair.*

Icons: Sorcerers often possess innate talent for magic that is impulsive and chaotic where wizardry is measured and studied. Sorcerers' inborn talent may come from their ancestors, from exposure to powerful rituals, from being raised near powerful magical sites, from unique circumstances of a player's creation . . . and even from contact with the icons.

Unlike wizards, whose spellbooks include magic from previous ages, sorcerers are better at drawing power from living or elemental sources. After ages of cross-pollination between rival magical systems, contemporary sorcerers blend elements from the traditions and power sources of at least six of the icons: the Archmage, Diabolist, Elf Queen, Great Gold Wyrm, Lich King, and the Three. Most sorcerers freely juggle spells that once belonged solely to one or the other of the icons. Most sorcerers have strong magical links to one icon, and many have sorcerous heritage links with multiple icons.

You can use the regular icon relationship rules to establish a relationship between your sorcerer and any of the icons. You can even narrate that your power comes from that icon, and you don't need to take a talent to accomplish that. The heritage talents grant you access to extra benefits, but you can explain your sorcerer's powers any way you like, with or without the talent.

Gear

At 1st level, a sorcerer usually has a simple melee weapon, a few changes of clothing, a wand or staff they might occasionally pretend is magical, and other paraphernalia suggested by their backgrounds.

Like other 1st level heroes, the sorcerer has managed to get hold of an adventure-tier healing potion. They might make a big deal about it.

Sorcerer Armor

ARMOR TYPE	BASE AC	ATK PENALTY
None	*10*	—
Light	*10*	—
Heavy	11	–2
Shield	+1	–2

Sorcerer Weapons

Lacking any special training, sorcerers use more casual weapons, such as short spears, shortswords, and axes. For ranged attacks they're better off using spells since ranged weapon skills are mostly beyond them.

As sorcerers come from a variety of backgrounds, they likewise can wield a variety of weapons. The weapons often look impressive, tricked out with magical charms and customized to intimidate foes, and that's because they're mostly for show.

MELEE	ONE-HANDED	TWO-HANDED
Small	d4 dagger	d6 staff
Light or Simple	d6 shortsword	d8 spear (–1 attack)
Heavy or Martial	d8 (–2 attack) longsword	d10 (–2 attack) greatsword*

RANGED	THROWN	CROSSBOW	BOW
Small	d4 dagger	d4 hand crossbow	—
Light or Simple	d6 javelin	d6 (–1 attack) light crossbow*	d6 (–2 attack) shortbow*
Heavy or Martial	—	d8 (–3 attack) heavy crossbow*	d8 (–4 attack) longbow*

* A sorcerer needs one free hand to cast spells. It's easy to get a hand free from a weapon you're good with—like a staff or a spear—for the time it takes to cast a spell, but if you take a penalty for using a two-handed weapon, the penalty applies to your spells also.

Sorcerer Level Progression

SORCERER LEVEL	TOTAL HIT POINTS	RECOVERY DICE	TOTAL FEATS	AT-WILL SPELLS OF YOUR LEVEL	SPELLS OF YOUR LEVEL	ABILITY SCORE BONUSES*	WEAPON DAMAGE AND HP BONUS FROM ABILITY SCORE
1st level	(6 + Con mod) × **3**	1d6 + Con mod	1 adventurer	2	2		ability modifier
2nd level	(6 + Con mod) × **4**	2d6 + Con mod	2 adventurer	2	3		ability modifier
3rd level	(6 + Con mod) × **5**	3d6 + Con mod	3 adventurer	2	3		ability modifier
4th level	(6 + Con mod) × **6**	4d6 + Con mod	4 adventurer	2	4	+1 to 3 abilities	ability modifier
5th level	(6 + Con mod) × **8**	5d6 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 1 champion	2	4		2 × ability modifier
6th level	(6 + Con mod) × **10**	6d6 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 2 champion	2	5		2 × ability modifier
7th level	(6 + Con mod) × **12**	7d6 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 3 champion	2	5	+1 to 4 abilities	2 × ability modifier
8th level	(6 + Con mod) × **16**	8d6 + (Con mod × 4) + 5	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	2	6		4 × ability modifier
9th level	(6 + Con mod) × **20**	9d6 + (Con mod × 4) + 10	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	2	6		4 × ability modifier
10th level	(6 + Con mod) × **24**	10d6 + (Con mod × 4) + 15	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	2	7	+1 to 5 abilities	4 × ability modifier

Note: Although not listed on the table, this class gets three talents. You do not gain more at higher levels.

* Unlike the other columns, the Ability Score Bonuses column doen't show your total bonuses at that level. At 4th level, choose three ability scores and add +1 to them. At 7th level, choose four ability scores to gain +1, and at 10th level, choose five ability scores to gain another +1.

Sorcerer Stats

Initiative, AC, PD, MD, Hit Points, Recovery Dice, and Feats are level dependent.

KEY ABILITY SCORES	Charisma, Constitution
INITIATIVE	Dex mod + Level
ARMOR CLASS (LIGHT ARMOR)	10 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
PHYSICAL DEFENSE	11 + middle mod of Str/Con/Dex + Level
MENTAL DEFENSE	10 + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha + Level
HIT POINTS	(6 + Con mod) × Level modifier (see **Sorcerer Level Progression** table)
RECOVERIES	Usually 8
RECOVERY DICE	(6 + Con mod) × Level modifier (see **Sorcerer Level Progression** table)
BACKGROUNDS	8 points, max 5 in any one background
ICON RELATIONSHIPS	3 points
TALENTS	3
FEATS	1 per Level
SELECT SPELLS	Beginning of arc

Sorcerer Basic Attacks

The *sorcerer basic melee attack* and *sorcerer basic ranged attack* are the weapon attacks you might fall back on when you're not casting a spell. Like most attacks, they require a standard action. You don't have many melee or ranged weapon powers for your basic attacks to interact with, though the Spell Fist talent has an option that makes it more likely you'll make some basic melee attacks.

No-trigger attacks: When your sorcerer gets an opportunity attack or is granted a bonus attack action, that's usually called out as a no-trigger attack. No-trigger attacks are exactly like your basic attacks but they can't trigger or make use of your own powers. Honestly, you're more likely to have to deal with the no-trigger attack rules when you've been confused or hindered.

Sorcerer Basic Melee Attack

Melee attack ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One enemy
Attack: Strength + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Strength damage
5th–7th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 2)
8th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 4) + 5
9th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 4) + 10
10th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod × 4) +15
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Sorcerer Basic Ranged Attack

Ranged attack ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One nearby or far-away enemy, depending on the weapon's range
Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Dexterity damage
5th–7th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 2)
8th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + 5
9th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) + 10
10th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod × 4) +15
Miss: —

Sorcerer Class Features

All sorcerers share three standard keywords used in their spells (*breath weapon*, *chain*, and *random energy*) and three class features (Dancing Lights, Gather Power, and Sorcerer's Glamour).

Breath Weapon

Dragons use the escalation die, and when your sorcerer casts a *breath weapon* spell, they get double-duty out of the escalation die.

In addition to the standard bonus to hit, the escalation die also increases your crit range by an equal amount. When the escalation die is 2, for example, you get +2 to hit, like always, *and* +2 on your crit range (typically 18+). When the escalation

die is 4 and you cast a *breath weapon* spell, it will have +4 attack and a crit range expanded by 4 (usually to 16+). And so on.

Spells based on the breaths of white and green dragons get the crit bonus even though these kinds of dragons have lost the escalation ability. Sorcerers have claimed that draconic power for themselves.

Like dragons' breath weapons themselves, *breath weapon* spells are close-quarters attacks.

How it looks: We like the idea of sorcerers literally belching out their *breath weapon* spells, but as always with your magic, the expression of these spells is up to you.

ALL OUR BREATH WEAPONS

Here's a quick list of the *breath weapon* spells and what they might accomplish for you.

1st: *Breath of blue lightning* deals lightning damage to one target and an ongoing "spark" of lightning damage that sometimes spreads to other foes.

1st: *Breath of white ice* deals cold damage to up to two enemies.

3rd: *Breath of black acid* hits up to two foes with acid damage, including ongoing acid damage that's easy to shake off.

3rd: *Golden shield* hits a foe (or two engaged foes) with some fire damage and gives the sorcerer extra hit points. Not healing, not temporary hit points—the real thing!

5th: *Breath of green poison* poisons up to three enemies, including ongoing damage that's tough to shake off.

5th: *Breath of silver mist* deals some cold damage to up to two enemies, and it grants the sorcerer a measure of the silver dragons' toughness (that is, a bonus to defenses).

7th: Sorcerers are unable to wield the Great Red Wyrm's fiery power. If your sorcerer is the exception to this rule, *breath of red fire* burns up to four foes. Sometimes it damages your allies that are engaged with those enemies, which is just how it goes.

9th: *Breath of empty void* deals necro damage to a foe and hinders them if they end up staggered. On a miss, it still deals half damage, plus some damage to the caster, which is what you deserve if you unleash the power of the void.

Chain

When you attack with a *chain* spell and get a natural even roll, you can roll another attack against a different enemy. It has to be the nearest possible target to the previous target, and it must be nearby the previous target. Keep on rolling attacks as long as you get even rolls and have new targets available. Each enemy can be targeted only once.

Most chain spells are technically arc spells, but the arc comes with an asterisk: arc*. Why the asterisk? Because if your chain spell's first attack roll is natural odd, you only expend its use that battle. You can still cast the chain spell again in a battle later that arc.

In other words, chain spells aren't entirely expended until they've had at least one natural even attack roll and qualified for at least a second target. If you get lucky and keep rolling even for three or four or five targets, congratulations on beating the odds. But you'll get at least two targets before the spell is burnt out for you that arc.

Adventurer Feat: Once per arc, when you cast any chain spell, you may chain the spell to one final additional target. This extra attack deals half damage with no chance of chaining again.

Dancing Lights

All sorcerers can cast the *dancing lights* spell as a standard action. Unlike the wizard's *light* cantrip, the sorcerer's *dancing lights* spell produces several varicolored light globes that bloom within 5 to 30 feet of the sorcerer every two to five seconds, for up to five minutes at a time. Sorcerers don't need torches, not even for roleplaying!

The sorcerer lacks precise control over the exact location or illumination provided by the lights, meaning that the GM can occasionally use them for dramatic plot purposes.

Sorcerers who stare into their own dancing lights too often become . . . well, that's up to your campaign, but it's not good.

Gather Power

This feature is the sorcerer's claim to fame. Once initiative has been rolled and a battle is underway, a sorcerer can spend a standard action to gather magical power, preparing themselves for casting a double-strength spell with their next standard action. Gathering power is loud and flashy, involving crackling lightning, rumbling thunder, and the flicker of magical light.

Sorcerers who want to gather power before initiative has been rolled can go through the motions but won't get any benefit for the act; you can fool yourself but you can't fool magic.

Gather power: When a sorcerer gathers power, it does not count as casting a spell. For example, you can gather power without taking opportunity attacks or having your action canceled by a power like the counter-magic attack from the wizard's High Arcana talent.

Spending power on empowered casting: After you have gathered power, you can use your next standard action to cast an empowered sorcerer spell. Empowered sorcerer spells deal double the damage of a normal sorcerer spell. Normally this means that you simply double the damage the spell deals *on a hit or a miss*; don't roll double dice, just double the results. Gathering power is mainly for damage spells, but we love our players so for most spells with non-damage effects we added in *ad hoc* benefits for when they're empowered.

If you decide not to use your next standard action to cast a spell, or spend your entire turn unconscious, or otherwise

miss the chance to use your next standard action to cast a sorcerer attack spell, you lose the power you've gathered. If you use your next standard action to gather power again, the spell you eventually cast still simply does double damage, not more than that.

You can spend your move actions and quick actions any way you like after you gather power and before casting your next empowered spell. Often you spend your move actions attempting to disengage from monsters that want to hit you really hard when you cast that big spell.

Ongoing damage: When you empower a spell that deals ongoing damage, the ongoing damage is doubled for the first turn.

WHICH SPELLS TO EMPOWER

Every time you empower a limited-use spell, you essentially double its impact. If it makes sense to cast at-will spells, don't bother to empower them first; just cast two at-wills, one after the other. But you don't specify what spell you are planning to cast while you gather power, so if the situation no longer warrants expending a limited-use spell, go ahead and cast an empowered an at-will spell instead.

Overspill effect: In addition, when you spend your standard action to gather power, you have the option of using a quick action afterwards that turn to generate a magical effect called an *overspill effect*, usually shortened to 'overspill.' As with gathering power, this magical effect does not count as casting a spell and cannot be canceled by effects that cancel spells.

Each sorcerer talent provides a limited-use overspill effect. Most can be used 1/battle. A couple can instead be used 2/arc.

Adventurer Feat: You gain the *surge shield* overspill. It automatically improves as you rise to champion-tier and epic-tier.

Surge Shield Overspill Effect

1/battle ◆ Quick action after gathering power

Effect: You gain a +2 bonus to AC until the end of your next turn. (5th: You gain a +2 bonus to AC and Physical Defense until the end of your next turn; 8th: You gain a +2 bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.)

Random Energy

Some sorcerer spells deal damage of a mostly random type. You decide how often you roll a d4 to set the type of random energy damage your sorcerer's spells deal. You could roll once a level, once per arc, once each time you cast a *random energy* spell, or do what Rob does: roll the first time you deal *random energy* each battle.

When casting a random energy spell, you have the option of trying to change the sort of energy it uses. If you succeed at a hard save (16+), you can decide which of these four energy types to use for that particular casting of the spell. Sorcerers usually fail at this task, which says something about sorcerers.

Random Energy Type (d4)

1: Cold
2: Fire
3: Lightning
4: Thunder

Sorcerer's Glamour

There's something impressive and exotic about sorcerers. Sometimes even those who have no reason to go along with a sorcerer's suggestions fall prey to the glamour of wild magic.

Unearthly glamour is an arc spell that you don't have to choose as one of your spells. Instead, at any point, you can swap unearthly glamour in for an arc spell that is not expended. Obviously if you've used all your arc spells, you can no longer swap in and cast *unearthly glamour*.

Unearthly Glamour

"To each person, the change in my demeanor is a little different. They might see me as smarter, safer, sexier, more intimidating, higher status, or whatever it is the makes a difference for that person. You all see me differently, too, when I have the spell on."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc**

Effect: You gain a +5 bonus to all Charisma skill checks for the next five minutes.

2nd	Same as 1st
3rd–4th	The effect lasts 15 minutes.
5th–6th	The effect lasts half an hour.
7th–8th	The effect last for 1 hour.
9th–10th	The effect lasts for 2 hours.

Sorcerer Feats

The sorcerer has a set of four different feats that each provide a bonus or benefit to a few limited-use spells. It's the sorcerer's answer to the question, "How do you make feats that apply to limited-use spells worthwhile?" For the record, we consider these feats off-limits to non-sorcerers who have somehow learned a sorcerer spell or two.

Reverberate (Champion-Tier)

The Reverberate feat applies to several limited-use spells, but not to the highest power once per arc spells.

Special Champion Feat: Once per arc, you can cast a spell that lists Reverberate as its champion feat a second time in the round after you cast it the first time. Note that this doesn't mean you can cast each Reverberate spell you know a second time; each arc you get one repeated casting.

Surging (Adventurer-Tier)

Surging lets you reroll the number of targets for its associated spells.

Special Adventurer Feat: Twice per arc, you can reroll the number of targets for any spell that lists Surging as its adventurer feat.

Wild Breath (Adventurer-Tier)

The Wild Breath feat applies to several of the sorcerer's breath weapon spells, including *breath of blue lightning* at 1st level. The adventurer-tier feat is enough to provide an increasing bonus when you are champion and epic-tier.

Special Adventurer Feat: When you cast any spell that lists Wild Breath as its adventurer feat, you deal 5 damage to an additional nearby enemy that is not otherwise targeted by the spell (5th: 10 damage; 8th: 20 damage).

Wracking Echo (Epic-Tier)

Wracking Echo adds extra damage to a chosen highly powerful spell.

Special Epic Feat: Once per arc, deal an additional 20 ongoing damage to one target that you hit with any spell that has the Wracking Echo feat.

Sorcerer Talents

Choose three of the following class talents.

Arcane Heritage (Archmage)

You have a greater understanding of magic than most sorcerers and even some wizards.

Once per arc, you gain a +10 bonus on a skill check related to magical knowledge or talent. Decide before you roll your skill check.

In addition, you can use one of your sorcerer spell choices to choose a wizard spell instead. This could be one of your two obligatory at-will spells or one of your other choices.

The spell counts as a sorcerer spell for you, you use Charisma as the attack ability and you can cast the spell empowered.

Cyclic: Cyclic spells work the same for you as they work for wizards. (See page 181.)

Judicious casting: If you choose a wizard spell that has a judicious casting option, you must cast it recklessly. Nothing judicious about your casting.

Adventurer Feat: Gain the wizard class feature: Cantrip, and gain 1 use per arc of the wizard's *utility spell* as a bonus spell.

Champion Feat: Once per battle, as a free action after you have rolled a spell attack, your spell can ignore all forms of resistance. For example, the *resist fire 16+* ability of a fire giant doesn't work against your *burning hands* spell if you have hit with a natural 14 and decide to use this feat.

Epic Feat: Once per battle, when an enemy cancels, counter-magics, or otherwise magically shuts down one of your spells, reverse the cancellation as a free action. Your spell works. "Take that."

Arcane Overspill Effect

fizzing bolt; **1/battle**.

Roll a d20.

1: No effect, and *fizzing bolt* is expended.

2–9: Deal force damage equal to your level to a nearby or far-away enemy.

10–19: Deal 1d4 × your level damage force damage to a nearby or far-away enemy of your choice (5th: 1d6 × level; 8th: 1d8 × level).

20: As 10–19, and do not expend *fizzing bolt*.

Chromatic Heritage (The Three)

When you cast a *breath weapon* spell, you can target one additional foe if you succeed at a hard save (16+).

Adventurer Feat: Once per arc, you automatically succeed at the above save.

Champion Feat: Your *flaring wings* bonus to disengage checks applies every time you gather power, regardless of whether you use an overspill effect.

Epic Feat: Once per arc you get a *dragon-trick* of your choice! (*GMG:* 93)

Chromatic Overspill Effect

Flaring wings; **2/arc**.

You can use your move actions to fly this turn. You gain a +3 bonus to disengage checks while flight from this overspill effect lasts. You must land by the end of your turn.

5th You don't have to land at the end of the first turn of flight, and you can extend your flight by succeeding with a normal save at the start of each of your subsequent turns. When the save fails, you'll have to land at the end of the turn.

8th The flight save is now an easy save (6+).

Fey Heritage (Elf Queen)

At the start of each arc, roll a d10 to determine which bonus Kin power you have that arc. This functions in all respects as another Kin power. You have two.

If you roll a Kin power you already have, roll again. See the Kin chapter for detailed explanations of each power.

1: *Eminence* (page 32)
2: *Highborn teleport* (page 32)
3: *Mystic initiative* (page 32)
4: *Elven grace* (page 35)
5: *Fortunate fey* (page 36)
6: *Queen's eye* (page 36)
7: *Cruel* (page 35)
8: *Shadow-step* (page 35)
9: *Surprising* (page 39)
10: Choose one of the above, but not a Kin power you had during the previous arc.

Fey Overspill Effect

redress; **1/battle**.
The next enemy to hit you with an attack becomes vulnerable to your attacks until the end of the battle.

Adventurer Feat: If you roll a twist with an Elf Queen relationship advantage, the twist should be Extra-Better-For-You now . . . and Extra-Interesting-for-the-GM later. The GM's twist can be held until the time is right. They'll forget, right?

Champion Feat: Roll twice, then use just one of the two bonus kin powers each battle.

Epic Feat: You gain *unearthly glamour* as a bonus spell instead of a class feature you have to swap for. When you cast *unearthly glamour*, roll a d6. On a 6, you also gain an icon connection with the Elf Queen that must be used by the end of the arc, like your other icon connections.

Infernal Heritage (Diabolist)

Once per arc, as a quick action, gain a random demonic ability until the end of the battle.

Roll two d6s and choose one of the dice as your result on the table below. (Yes, it's a modified version of the table for demons that appears on *GMG:* 77.)

Random Infernal Abilities (d6)

1: *Deathwish*—You take a –2 penalty to all defenses and gain a +3 attack bonus.
2: *Backlash*—On each enemy's turn, the first time it attacks you that turn it simultaneously takes psychic damage equal to double your level.
3: *Bad ending*—While staggered, you gain a +2 bonus with your attacks.
4: *Big hate:* You gain a +4 attack bonus until the end of the battle against the first enemy that hits you with an attack after you've rolled this ability.
5: *Teleport 1d4 times this battle*—As a move action, you can teleport anywhere you can see nearby.
6: *Demonic speed*—You can take an extra standard action each turn while the escalation die is 3 or 5.

Infernal Overspill Effect

Abyssal pulse; **1/battle**
1: No effect.
2–9: Deal necrotic damage equal to your level to a random nearby or far-away enemy.
10–19: Deal damage equal to your level + the escalation die to up to 2 nearby enemies. Choose the damage type: fire, necrotic, or poison. (5th: 3 enemies; 8th: 4 enemies).
20: As 10-19, but do not expend *abyssal pulse*.

Adventurer Feat: You gain both the random infernal abilities you roll on the d6. If both dice have the same result, reroll one of them until it's different.

Champion Feat: Your *infernal* overspill effect now damages an additional 1d4 enemies.

Epic Feat: When the escalation die reaches 6+, gain an ability of your choice from the list.

Metallic Protector Heritage (Great Gold Wyrm)

Whenever you cast an arc, recharge, or 1/battle sorcerer spell, gain a +1 bonus to all defenses until the start of your next turn.

Metallic Protector Overspill Effect

scales of gold; **1/battle**.
Gain a bonus to your AC equal to the escalation die until the start of your next turn. (Technically, it could stack with the talent's other defense bonus, but practically, there are only a few ways to arrange that.)

Adventurer Feat: The defense bonus also applies to one nearby ally of your choice.

Champion Feat: (replaces adv) As adventurer feat, and the defense bonus increases to +2 for both you and the chosen ally.

Epic Feat: The bonus now applies to all defenses, not just AC.

Sorcerer's Familiar

You have a familiar, a tiny or small animal or creature that aids your magic, gives you someone to talk to when your spells have scared off everyone else, and might or might not allow itself to be coddled (or even looked at) by the rest of the adventuring party.

You share slight variations of this talent with the ranger and the wizard, so we've placed the full write-up in a neutral zone on page 197.

Spell Fist

Your style of sorcery emphasizes in-your-face combat. So long as you are not staggered, you can use ranged spells while engaged with enemies without taking opportunity attacks. In addition, choose three of the four following advantages for your hero:

- (magic shields) You take half-damage from opportunity attacks.
- (blood ward) When staggered, you gain a +2 bonus to AC.
- (twist of power) Once per battle, you can use a ranged spell without taking opportunity attacks even while staggered.
- (explosive flares) Your critical hit range with sorcerer spells against enemies engaged with you expands by 2.



Spell Fist Overspill Effect

rippling power; **1/battle**
For each enemy engaged with you, you gain temporary hit points equal to double your level (5th: triple; 8th: quadruple).

Adventurer Feat: You can use the d8 melee weapons listed for sorcerers on page 160 without attack penalties.

Champion Feat: You gain the fourth Spell Fist advantage.

Epic Feat: Twice per battle, you can include one enemy engaged with you as an additional target of any attack spell you cast that targets other enemies.

Touch of Chaos

Capital-C Chaos may or may not be your thing, but lower-case chaos comes off you in waves.

After choosing your spells each arc, you gain a bonus spell selected at random from all the other sorcerer spells you could have chosen at your level. You will cast it at one level below your own level, except at 1st level, when you'll still cast it at 1st level.

If you're lucky, the spell you gain will be an arc spell or other limited-use spell. If you're not lucky, it could be another at-will spell. But it's just for this arc; you'll be lucky next time, *for sure*.

Touch of Chaos Overspill Effect

that prickly feeling on the back of everyone's neck; **1/battle**
Until the end of your next turn, expand the critical hit range of all your nearby allies and one randomly chosen nearby enemy by 1.

Adventurer Feat: Exclude at-will spells from the spells you acquire randomly from this talent.

Undead Remnant Heritage (Lich King †)

The first critical hit you take each battle is only a normal hit.

In addition, the attack bonus you gain from the escalation die is equal to either the current escalation die OR the number of Skulls you have, whichever is higher.

Undead Remnant Overspill Effect

Gatherum; **2/arc**
For every non-mook creature that has dropped to 0 hp at least once this combat, you gain temporary hit points equal to double your level (5th: triple; 8th: quadruple).

Adventurer Feat: You die at seven Skulls, not five like other heroes. You also die at negative 75% of your hit points, not 50% like other heroes.

1st Level Spells

The three at-will spells appear first.

Burning Hands

Worth a charred finger or two.

Close-quarters spell ◆ **At-Will** ◆
Targets: Up to two nearby enemies in a group
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 9 (2d8) fire damage.
Natural 1–10: You take 2 damage.

2nd	11 (2d10); Nat 1–10: you take 2
3rd	14 (4d6); Nat 1–10: you take 3
4th	18 (4d8); Nat 1–10: you take 4
5th	23 (5d8); Nat 1–10: you take 5
6th	28 (5d10); Nat 1–10: you take 6
7th	36 (8d8); Nat 1–10: you take 8
8th	50; Nat 1–10: you take 10
9th	60; Nat 1–10: you take 12
10th	80; Nat 1–10: you take 16

Adventurer Feat: The first time each attack that you roll a natural 18+ with a *burning hands* attack roll, you can choose another nearby target for the spell. The new target doesn't have to be part of the original group and can't have been one of the original targets.

Champion Feat: You can now target each enemy engaged with you with your *burning hands* spell in addition to any other targets.

Chaos Bolt

The best way to surprise the enemy is to surprise yourself.

Ranged spell ◆ **At-Will** ◆ *random energy*
Special: When you cast *chaos bolt*, you always roll the d4 for random energy, and you do not get to roll a save to change the damage type.

1: Cold damage
2: Fire damage
3: Lightning damage
4: Psychic damage

Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD (MD if psychic energy)
Hit: 7 damage of the type determined, and bonus effects for some high natural attack rolls (see table). Unless otherwise specified, the bonus effects last until the end of your next turn.
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

NATURAL ROLL	COLD, FIRE, LIGHTNING BONUS EFFECT	PSYCHIC BONUS EFFECT
16–18	5 ongoing damage, easy save ends; 6+ (5th: 10 ongoing; 8th: 20 ongoing)	dazed
19	stuck	charmed
20	weakened	confused

2nd	9 damage
3rd	11 damage
4th	14 damage
5th	18 damage
6th	23 damage
7th	28 damage
8th	40 damage
9th	50 damage
10th	60 damage

Adventurer Feat: You can now attack far-away targets with *chaos bolt*.

Champion Feat: Once per arc, you can cast two *chaos bolts* using a single standard action, so long as they target different creatures. (Empowerment affects both bolts.)

Epic Feat: (replaces champ) Twice per arc, you can cast two *chaos bolts* using a single standard action, so long as they target different creatures.

Scorching Ray

What's your scorching ray *like? A beam of white-hot light? A stream of flaming goo? Twin beams of fire essence that spring from your eyes?*

Ranged spell ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One nearby or far-away enemy
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 7 (2d6) fire damage, and 5 ongoing fire damage (easy save ends; 6+).
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

2nd	9 (2d8) damage; 5 ongoing
3rd	11 (2d10) damage; 5 ongoing
4th	14 (4d6) damage; 5 ongoing
5th	18 (4d8) damage; 10 ongoing
6th	23 (5d8) damage; 10 ongoing
7th	32 (9d6) damage; 10 ongoing
8th	35 damage; 20 ongoing
9th	50 damage; 20 ongoing
10th	65 damage; 20 ongoing

Adventurer Feat: Once per battle, you can reroll your *scorching ray* attack once, but if you do, you do not regain the use of the spell until after a quick rest.

Champion Feat: The save against the ongoing fire damage is now a normal save instead of easy.

Epic Feat: Your crit range with at-will sorcerer spells increases by 3.

Breath of Blue Lightning

"I love the taste of lightning!"

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ *breath weapon: add escalation die to crit range*
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 13 (2d12) lightning damage, and "Spark" 5 ongoing lightning damage, and when the target fails a save, deal 5 lightning damage to its closest nearby ally.
Miss: Damage equal to your level × 4.

2nd	17 (3d10) damage; Spark 5
3rd	23 (5d8) damage; Spark 5
4th	28 (8d6) damage; Spark 5
5th	33 (6d10) damage; Spark 10
6th	46 (7d12) damage; Spark 10
7th	59 (9d12) damage; Spark 10
8th	70 damage; Spark 20
9th	90 damage; Spark 20
10th	120 damage; Spark 20

Special Adventurer Feat: *Wild breath*—When you cast this spell, you deal 5 damage to an additional nearby enemy that is not otherwise targeted by the spell (champion caster: 10 damage; epic caster: 20 damage).



Champion Feat: When the target fails a save against the "Spark," the damage is dealt to the three closest nearby allies instead of to just one.

Breath of White Ice

A ritual powered by this spell might seal something closed with ice, form a temporary ice bridge, or otherwise get you out of a jam.

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ *breath weapon: add escalation die to crit range*
Target: Up to two nearby enemies
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 13 (2d12) cold damage
Miss: Cold damage equal to your level × 4.

2nd	17 (3d10) damage
3rd	20 (3d12) damage
4th	26 (4d12) damage
5th	33 (6d10) damage
6th	41 (9d8) damage
7th	49 (9d10) damage
8th	65 damage
9th	80 damage
10th	100 damage

Special Adventurer Feat: *Wild breath*—When you cast this spell, you deal 5 damage to an additional nearby enemy that is not otherwise targeted by the spell (champion caster: 10 damage; epic caster: 20 damage).

Echoing Thunder

"It's the sound of my patron, laughing at them."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/battle**
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 13 (2d12) thunder damage, and the first enemy that hits you with a melee attack before the start of your next turn takes 7 (2d6) thunder damage. (An empowered spell doubles this aftershock damage also.)
Miss: Damage equal to your level × 2.

2nd	17 (3d10) damage; aftershock 9 (2d8)
3rd	18 (4d8) damage; aftershock 11 (2d10)
4th	23 (5d8) damage; aftershock 14 (4d6)
5th	28 (8d6) damage; aftershock 17 (3d10)
6th	36 (8d8) damage; aftershock 22 (4d10)
7th	46 (7d12) damage; aftershock 28 (8d6)
8th	60 damage; aftershock 35
9th	70 damage; aftershock 45
10th	90 damage; aftershock 60

Adventurer Feat: The spell's aftershock damage is cued up even if the attack misses.

Special Champion Feat: *Reverberate*—Once per arc, you can cast this spell a second time in the round after you cast it the first time.

Energy Wave

"My wave of fire shall destroy you!" I yell, as I roll my die. And out comes a wave of acid, instead "You're not worthy of my fire," I say, as if I really mean it.

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ *random energy*
Target: Up to 1d4 + 1 nearby enemies in a group
Effect: Deal damage equal to double your level to each ally engaged with one or more targets unless that ally succeeds at a normal save. Yes, that's quadruple your level for empowered *energy waves*.
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 13 (2d12) *random energy* damage
Miss: Damage equal to your level × 3.

2nd	17 (3d10) damage
3rd	20 (3d12) damage
4th	26 (4d12) damage
5th	32 (9d6) damage
6th	39 (6d12) damage
7th	52 (8d12) damage
8th	65 damage
9th	80 damage
10th	100 damage

Special Adventurer Feat: *Surging*—Twice per arc, you can reroll the number of targets for any spell that lists Surging as its adventurer feat.

Lightning Fork

Lightning would rather be cut loose than controlled.

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc*** ◆ *chain spell**
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 14 (4d6) lightning damage.
Miss: Damage equal to your level × 3.

2nd	18 (4d8) damage
3rd	22 (4d10) damage
4th	28 (8d6) damage
5th	35 (10d6) damage
6th	45 (10d8) damage
7th	55 (10d10) damage
8th	70 damage
9th	90 damage
10th	110 damage

Adventurer Feat: You can now target far-away targets with *lightning fork*, but once you target a far-away target, you can't bring the *lightning fork* "back" to target a nearby enemy.

Champion Feat: If you cast this spell when the escalation die is 3+, the spell is a *recharge 11+* spell for this casting only instead of an arc spell. If the recharge roll fails, the spell goes back to being an arc spell.

* *Chain Spell:* Each time you make a natural even attack roll, you also attack a new foe who is nearest to the current target. If you cast a chain spell that fails to chain, you can use the spell again in a subsequent battle.

Resist Energy

Sorcerers make better allies when you can resist their spells.

Ranged spell ◆ **recharge 11+ after battle** ◆ *Quick action to cast*
Target: Up to two targets, which can be yourself or your allies. If the spell was empowered, choose up to double the normal number of targets.
Effect: Until the end of the battle, the targets gain *resist damage 16+* to two of the following energy types of your choice: acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder.

2nd	Same as 1st
3rd–4th	Choose three types of energy the targets gain resistance to.
5th–6th	Choose up to three targets.
7th–8th	Choose up to four targets.
9th–10th	Add necro, poison, and psychic to the types of energy the targets can resist.

Adventurer Feat: You may choose one additional target of the spell.

Champion Feat: The recharge roll drops to 6+.

Epic Feat: We're not about to let anyone spend an epic feat on this spell.

3rd Level Spells

Breath of Black Acid

Great for an obliteration ritual, and who doesn't need an obliteration ritual?

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ *breath weapon: add escalation die to crit range*
Target: Up to two nearby or far-away enemies
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 20 (3d12) acid damage
Natural odd hit or miss: 5 ongoing acid damage (easy save ends, 6+).
Miss: Acid damage equal to your level × 3.

4th	25 (7d6) damage; 5 ongoing
5th	28 (8d6) damage; 10 ongoing
6th	39 (6d12) damage; 10 ongoing
7th	46 (7d12) damage; 10 ongoing
8th	60 damage; 20 ongoing
9th	80 damage; 20 ongoing
10th	100 damage; 20 ongoing

Special Adventurer Feat: *Wild breath*—When you cast this spell, you deal 5 damage to an additional nearby enemy

that is not otherwise targeted by the spell (5th: 10 damage; 8th: 20 damage).

Champion Feat: The ongoing damage from an odd hit or miss now also applies to all natural rolls of 2+.

Catastrophic Blast

So powerful it's hard to aim.

Ranged spell ◆ **Recharge 11+** ◆ *random energy*
Targets: 1d3 + 1 nearby enemies
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD with a special penalty of –4 on the attack rolls
Hit: 32 (9d6) *random energy* damage
Miss: Every ally engaged with the target takes damage equal to your level 2 unless they succeed at a normal save.

4th	41 (9d8) damage
5th	49 (9d10) damage
6th	59 (9d12) damage
7th	75 (3d4) damage
8th	100 damage
9th	120 damage
10th	160 damage

Special Adventurer Feat: *Surging*—Twice per arc, you can reroll the number of targets for any spell that lists Surging as its adventurer feat.

Special Champion Feat: *Reverberate*—Once per arc, you can cast this spell a second time in the round after you cast it the first time.

Head Wrecker

"An invisible ball of blue sparks careens from one head to the other, and the two hobgoblins' eyes cross."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ *chain spell**
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD
Special: For the attack against the first target, your crit range is increased by 2, and the crit range expands by an additional 2 for each subsequent target in the chain.
Hit: 20 (3d12) psychic damage
Miss: Damage equal to your level × 3.

4th	25 (7d6) damage
5th	32 (9d6) damage
6th	39 (6d12) damage
7th	49 (9d10) damage
8th	60 damage
9th	80 damage
10th	100 damage

Epic Feat: The critical hit range is +4 and expands by 4 with each subsequent target.

**Chain Spell:* Each time you make a natural even attack roll, you also attack a new enemy who is nearest to the current target. If you cast a chain spell that fails to chain, you can use the spell again in a subsequent battle.

Unhallowed Torrent

Sometimes sorcerers put a little too much of themselves into their spells.

Ranged spell ◆ **Recharge 11+**
Special: You can cast the spell targeting one or multiple foes.
Special: If you expend one recovery when you cast this spell while it is not empowered, it becomes empowered. (You can't empower a spell twice!)

Cast targeting one enemy
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 20 (3d12) necro damage
Miss: Half damage.

4th	25 (7d6) damage
5th	32 (9d6) damage
6th	49 (6d12) damage
7th	49 (9d10) damage
8th	60 damage
9th	80 damage
10th	100 damage

Cast targeting multiple enemies
Targets: 1d3 + 1 nearby enemies
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 17 (3d10) necro damage
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

4th	21 (6d6) damage
5th	26 (4d12) damage
6th	33 (6d10) damage
7th	41 (9d8) damage
8th	50 damage
9th	60 damage
10th	80 damage

Special Adventurer Feat: *Surging*—Twice per arc, you can reroll the number of targets for any spell that lists Surging as its adventurer feat.

Special Champion Feat: *Reverberate*—Once per arc, you can cast this spell a second time in the round after you cast it the first time.

Golden Shield

"It leaves a sheen on my skin, and for the rest of the day I stand up a little straighter."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ *breath weapon: add escalation die to crit range*
Target: One nearby or far-away enemy or up to two engaged enemies.
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 13 (2d12) fire damage
Miss: Damage equal to your level.
Effect: You gain 15 maximum hit points until the end of the battle as the power of the Great Gold Wyrm inspires you. Raise your current hit points by 15 to catch up with your higher ceiling.

4th	17 (3d10) fire damage; +20 hp
5th	20 (3d12) damage; +25 hp
6th	26 (4d12) damage; +30 hp
7th	32 (7d8) damage; +40 hp
8th	40 damage; +50 hp
9th	50 damage; +60 hp
10th	65 damage; +80 hp

Special Adventurer Feat: *Wild breath*—When you cast this spell, you deal 5 damage to an additional target (5th: 10 damage; 8th: 20 damage).

Champion Feat: Double the maximum hit point increase if the spell is empowered.

Epic Feat: The spell can now target up to three nearby or far-away enemies or up to four engaged enemies.

Wild Flare

Sometimes, a spell has a mind of its own.

Ranged spell ◆ **Recharge 11+** ◆ *random energy*
Target: One random nearby enemy
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 35 (10d6) *random energy* damage.
Miss: Half damage.

4th	44 (8d10) damage
5th	52 (8d12) damage
6th	65 (10d12) damage
7th	75 (3d4 10) damage
8th	100 damage
9th	130 damage
10th	170 damage

Adventurer Feat: Once per arc, you may reroll the randomly determined target.

Special Champion Feat: *Reverberate*—Once per arc, you can cast this spell a second time in the round after you cast it the first time.

5th Level Spells

Breath of Green Poison

The cloud of poison gas is a lethal shade of green.

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ *breath weapon: add escalation die to crit range*
Target: Up to 3 nearby enemies in a group
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 32 (9d6) poison damage plus 10 ongoing poison damage (hard save ends, 16+)
Miss: Damage equal to your level x 2.

6th	39 (6d12) damage; 10 ongoing
7th	49 (9d10) damage; 10 ongoing
8th	60 damage; 20 ongoing
9th	80 damage; 20 ongoing
10th	100 damage; 20 ongoing

Special Adventurer Feat: *Wild breath*—When you cast this spell, you deal 10 damage to an additional nearby enemy that is not otherwise targeted by the spell (8th: 20 damage).

Champion Feat: Misses now deal an additional 10 ongoing poison damage, hard save ends, 16+ (8th: 20 ongoing).

Breath of Silver Mist

The magic of silver dragons can be wielded only by a sorcerer of true heart and righteous soul. Or maybe you can fake it.

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ *breath weapon: add escalation die to crit range*
Effect: A defense of your choice increases by +4 for the rest of the battle. If the spell is empowered, all your defenses increase by +4.
Target: Up to 2 nearby enemies
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 26 (4d12) cold damage
Miss: Damage equal to your level × 2.

6th	33 (6d10) damage
7th	41 (9d8) damage
8th	50 damage
9th	65 damage
10th	80 damage

Special Adventurer Feat: *Wild breath*—When you cast this spell, you deal 10 damage to an additional nearby enemy that is not otherwise targeted by the spell (8th: 20 damage).

Champion Feat: Your hit points also increase by +10 until the end of the battle (8th: +20).


LEE
CLOYER

Energetic Auras

"After my spell blasts our foe, phantom-like balls of lightning appear on your weapons, sliding up and down them, crackling and waiting to strike our enemies."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ *random energy*
Target (enemy): One nearby or far-away enemy.
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 23 (5d8) + *random energy* damage
Miss: Damage equal to your level × 2.
Targets (allies): A number of nearby or far-away allies equal to or less than the escalation die.
Effect: The next attack the ally makes deals +9 (2d8) energy damage on a hit, the same type of energy you dealt with the spell. If the ally attacks multiple targets, the effect applies only to the first enemy attacked. The effect ends at the start of your next turn.

6th	32 (9d6) damage; +11 (3d6) damage
7th	36 (8d8) damage; +14 (4d6) damage
8th	45 damage; +20 damage
9th	55 damage; +25 damage
10th	70 damage; +30 damage
11th	90 damage; +40 damage

Champion Feat: The spell now targets 1d3 + 1 allies, if that's higher than the escalation die.

Epic Feat: (replaces champ) If cast when empowered, bump the effect on your allies' attacks up by one level.

Energy Lash

"I try to cast breath of red fire *at the trolls, and out comes . . . [rolls d4 for* random energy *& d20 for save] . . . a petty blast of freezing ice. Next time, it will be* breath of red fire *for sure, I promise."*
Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ *random energy*
Target: 1d3 nearby enemies
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Effect: After casting this spell, choose a different sorcerer spell of your level that you have not already prepared or cast this arc. For the rest of the arc, the new spell counts as one of your prepared spells, but you must cast it one level below your own level.
Hit: 28 (8d6) *random energy* damage
Miss: You take damage equal to your level.

6th	35 (10d6) damage
7th	44 (8d10) damage
8th	60 damage
9th	70 damage
10th	90 damage

Special Adventurer Feat: *Surging*—Twice per arc, you can reroll the number of targets for any spell that lists Surging as its adventurer feat.

The Queen's Shadows

She gives her blessing to any who can steal it.

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc**
Special: After casting this spell in a battle, you gain a temporary overspill effect that can be used once when you gather power in your *next* battle (see below).
Effect: After the attack, you can teleport to a nearby location you can see.
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD
Hit: 39 (6d12) psychic damage
Miss: Damage equal to your level × 2.

6th	52 (8d12) damage
7th	59 (9d12) damage
8th	80 damage
9th	100 damage
10th	120 damage

Champion Feat: If you have at least one icon relationship point with the Elf Queen or the Prince of Shadows, *the queen's shadows* has a different usage pattern for you. You can still only cast it in one battle per arc, but during that battle, you can recast the spell as many times as you like. Each casting after the first deals only half damage and does not provide an extra use of the overspill effect. (Playing with variant icons? The spell fits with anyone shadowy, sneaky, or thieving.)

Step of the Shadow Queen (Overspill Effect)

Shadowstep; **1/next battle fought after using *the queen's shadows***
Use once when gathering power during the *next* battle you fight, after using *the queen's shadows* in the previous battle, to teleport to a nearby location you can see.

7th Level Spells

Accursed Drain

Sorcerers can pull power out of unseen dimensions—and maybe out of you.

Ranged spell ◆ **Once per battle**
Special: You can cast the spell as necro or psychic. Choose when cast.

Cast as necro
Target: 1 nearby or far-away enemy
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 27 (6d8) necro damage, and you gain 30 temporary hit points.
Even Miss: Half damage.
Odd Miss: Damage equal to your level.

8th	30 damage; 40 temp hp
9th	40 damage; 50 temp hp
10th	50 damage; 60 temp hp

Cast as psychic
Target: 1d3 nearby enemies
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD
Hit: 36 (8d8) psychic damage.
Special: If the attack rolled only a single target, a hit also weakens the target until the end of your next turn. If the attack rolled two targets, each hit also dazes the target until the end of your next turn. If the attack rolled three targets, it only deals damage. If you empowered the spell, then any temporary effects turn into "save ends" effects at the end of your next turn rather than ending at that time.
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

8th	45 damage
9th	55 damage
10th	70 damage

Special Adventurer Feat: *Surging*—Twice per arc, you can reroll the number of targets for any spell that lists Surging as its adventurer feat.

Special Champion Feat: *Reverberate*—Once per arc, you can cast this spell a second time in the round after you cast it the first time.

Special Epic Feat: *Wracking echo*—Once per arc, deal an additional 20 ongoing damage to one target that you hit with any spell that has the Wracking Echo feat.



THE GREAT RED WYRM DOESN'T SHARE

The Great White Wyrm lost control of its secret magic when the Wizard King killed it, and the Green's magic got loose after it became a follower of the Elf Queen. The Black and the Blue have shared their secret magic with devotees for ages, and inevitably some magic has escaped their control. The Great Red Wyrm, however, does not share. Sorcerers throw around magic from the other Four, but not the Red's magic.

Your sorcerer can't use either the *breath of red fire* or the *three dooms* unless your hero is an exception to the rule. Luckily for you, your hero is exceptional. To use either spell, first explain to your group what gives your sorcerer the capability to cast these spells. And if people see you using the Great Red Wyrm's magic, expect questions.

Breath of Red Fire

No sorcerers can use the magic of the Red, so what's your story?

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ *breath weapon: add escalation die to crit range*
Target: Up to 4 nearby or far-away enemies in a group
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 49 (9d10) fire damage.
Miss: Damage equal to your level × 2; each ally engaged to the target takes damage equal to your level × 4 unless they succeed at a normal save (11+).

8th	60 damage
9th	75 damage
10th	90 damage

Special Adventurer Feat: *Wild breath*—When you cast this spell, you deal 10 damage to an additional nearby enemy that is not otherwise targeted by the spell (epic caster: 20 damage).

Epic Feat: If the escalation die is 6+, this spell deals double damage (triple if empowered, triple on a crit, and quadruple on an empowered crit).

Cascade

With great power comes more great power.

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ *random energy*
Target: One nearby or far-away enemy
Special: The second time you cast *cascade*, it has two targets, nearby or far-away enemies in a group. The third time you cast it has three such targets, the fourth it has four targets, and so on. After the third and subsequent castings, roll a d6. If you roll less than the number of times you have cast the spell, you cannot cast it again, ever. (Casting *cascade* empowered counts as two two separate uses instead of one empowered spell, and that means you must roll twice to see if you can keep casting it.) Keep track of the number of times you have cast *cascade* previously if you temporarily remove it from the spells you have prepared for the arc.
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Hit: 55 (10d10) *random energy* damage
Natural even miss: Half damage.
Natural odd miss: Damage equal to your level × 2.

8th	70 damage
9th	85 damage
10th	100 damage

Special Epic Feat: *Wracking echo*—Once per arc, deal an additional 20 ongoing damage to one target that you hit with any spell that has the *wracking echo* feat.

Three Dooms

"I gained this spell in a dream, when the Three came to me, ate my mouth, and gave me a new one. I'm not quite sure what it will do when I cast it, and I'm dying to find out."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc*** *chain spell for three**
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. PD
Special: This chain spell has a maximum of three targets.

First target hit: 41 (9d8) acid damage and 20 ongoing acid damage (easy save ends).
First target miss: Damage equal to your level × 2.

Second target hit: 59 (9d12) lightning damage plus "Spark," 20 ongoing lightning damage, and when the target fails a save, deal 20 lightning damage to its closest nearby ally.
Second target miss: Damage equal to your level × 3.

Third target hit: 90 (2d8 10) fire damage.
Third target miss: Half damage; each ally engaged to the target takes damage equal to your level × 4 unless they succeed at a normal save (11+).

8th	First: 50 damage; 30 ongoing. Second: 70 damage; Spark 30. Third: 110 damage.
9th	First: 60 damage; 40 ongoing. Second: 85 damage; Spark 40. Third: 140 damage.
10th	First: 80 damage; 50 ongoing. Second: 100 damage; Spark 50. Third: 170 damage.

Special Adventurer Feat: *Wild breath*—When you cast this spell, you deal 10 damage an additional nearby enemy that is not otherwise targeted by the spell (epic caster: 20 damage).

Special Epic Feat: *Wracking echo*—Once per arc, deal an additional 20 ongoing damage to one target that you hit with any spell that has the *wracking echo* feat.

* *Chain Spell for Three:* Like a regular chain spell, but limited to three targets. Players with 7th level sorcerers know how chain works.

9th Level Spells

Breath of Empty Void

Barfing unholy energy into the world feels about as good as you might guess.

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ *breath weapon: add escalation die to crit range*
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Charisma + Level vs. MD
Hit: 90 necro damage and if the target is now staggered, it is shocked until the end of your next turn. If the spell was empowered, the target is shocked even if it's not staggered. (See Conditions on page 308 for shocked.)
Miss: Half damage; also, you take damage equal to double the target's level. You take twice that much damage if the spell is empowered.

10th	110 damage.

Special Adventurer Feat: *Wild breath*—When you cast this spell, you deal 20 damage to an additional nearby enemy that is otherwise not targeted by the spell.

Epic Feat: You can now target far-away enemies, and missing doesn't damage you.

Calling the High

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc**
Special: Requires five minutes or so to cast and can only be used out of combat. The sorcerous equivalent of a powerful ritual—and unlike a normal ritual it doesn't require a skill check to determine its success. It cannot be empowered.
Effect: Roll two d6s and choose one of the two results to select one of the six main sorcerous-heritage icons. If the two dice match, you may choose which icon comes into play:


1: Archmage


2: The Three


3: Diabolist


4: Elf Queen


5: Great Gold Wyrm


6: Lich King

You gain some surprising or bizarre magical effect associated with the power of that icon to assist you. The effect is entirely up to the GM, though the immediate impact of the spell should always be favorable for you. An effect associated with an enemy icon should probably be stealing power from that enemy or gaining advantages against it. Since this is an arc spell, sizeable impact is fine.

Examples of possible effects include brief-lived epic tier magic items, a temporary new talent, spells associated with the icon, new allies, or a special capacity to resist the enemy's strength or exploit their weakness.

Adventurer Feat: You roll three d6s and can choose the icon if any two of them match. (The chance of getting your preferred icon is 72%.) We know that you can't take this feat until you're epic level; you probably swap out one of your adventurer feats when you take it.

Wizard

Wizards are the masters of arcane energy. They use geometry, symbology, occult numerology, and a complex grammatical system to describe, and thereby control, magic. They fill their heavy, locked spellbooks with crabbed writing, secret codes, and convoluted designs.

Each wizard belongs to a school or at least a lineage, traced back from student to master. Of course, many wizard schools are aligned directly with the Archmage, but most are independent. Thanks to interlocking treaties among schools, most wizards from rival schools are sworn to respect each other. This restriction, however, seems to stoke competition rather than quell it.

Many "book-wizards" are more or less cowards who would rather study reality than experience it. The wizards that go adventuring are the rare sort who respond to mortal danger with greater focus rather than panic.

Overview

Play style: Our wizard is designed for experienced players who like a bit of improvisation. Most of the wizard's spells can only be used once per arc, so timing matters. If you want to play the simplest possible wizard, choose the Abjuration, Evocation, and Wizard's Familiar talents, then choose spells like *blur*, *shield*, *acid arrow*, *mana storm*, and *ray of frost*.

Ability scores: You don't get to master dangerous book-learning with your good looks. And you wouldn't be risking this dangerous book-learning if being a wizard *required* actual Wisdom. It's all about Intelligence.

Kin: High elves know they're the finest wizards in the world. So, they're a bit piqued that the Archmage is almost always a human—and that the last non-human Archmage was a gnome.

Backgrounds: *Magical prodigy*, *spell thief*, *hedge wizard*, *chronomancer's apprentice*, *Horizon City Guard* (i.e., magic cop), *transformed familiar*, *Koru behemoth cleaner*, *double graduate of multiple magical academies* (like Rux & Linus, pictured at right), *ship's wizard*, *Sea Wall veteran combat mage*, and *royal poisoner*.

Icons: The Archmage is the archetype. After the Archmage? Probably the Lich King (positive, conflicted, or negative), the Emperor (usually positive or conflicted), and the Elf Queen. She may personally favor sorcery, but she welcomes wizards in her service, particularly high elf and half-elf wizards.





Spells

Wizards usually learn arcane spells from books, but this isn't the type of game that wants to go into the details of getting ahold of spellbooks. Feel free to enhance the flavor of your game by building plots around the acquisition of spells and spellbooks.

No matter how you want your wizard to learn spells, you can handle a certain number of spells each arc. They don't have to be the same spells each arc. Every time you take a full heal-up, you can swap around your spells. Go ahead and assume that all the wizard's spells are part of the basic spellbook package and swap them in and out as you will. But when there are other spells you want to learn, the GM can figure out what adventures are required to track down those new spells.

Spell Progression

As with other spellcasters, your new spells at higher levels can be upgraded versions of spells you learned at lower levels.

Gear

At 1st level, wizards usually have a dagger sharp enough for butter or brawling, a robe or two, a well-balanced wand (though nothing *truly* magical), ritual components in pouches or being carried by extremely minor servitors who hide in the wizard's pockets, and other minor accouterments suggested by their backgrounds.

Like other 1st level heroes, wizards start the first arc with an adventurer-tier healing potion or its gp equivalent (see *GMG*: 171).

Wizard Armor

ARMOR TYPE	BASE AC	ATK PENALTY
None	*9*	—
Light	*10*	—
Heavy	11	–2
Shield	+1	–2

Wizard Weapons

Wizards might prefer you to think they never use weapons, but sometimes they're cornered and forced into it. In these tough situations, they resort to daggers, batons, staffs, and other relatively minor weapons. Often, these weapons serve double duty as magical tools or ritual implements, and such double-use helps wizards maintain their reputations as "too good" for physical combat.

MELEE	ONE-HANDED	TWO-HANDED
Small	d4 dagger	d6 staff
Light or Simple	d6 (–2 atk) shortsword	d8 (–2 atk) spear*
Heavy or Martial	d8 (–5 atk) longsword	d10 (–5 atk) greatsword*

RANGED	THROWN	CROSSBOW	BOW
Small	d4 dagger	d4 hand crossbow	—
Light or Simple	d6 (–2) javelin	d6 (–1 atk) light crossbow*	d6 (–2 atk) shortbow*
Heavy or Martial	—	d8 (–4 atk) heavy crossbow*	d8 (–5 atk) longbow*

*A wizard usually wants at least one free hand, or at least one hand on a spellcasting implement like a wand or staff, so they can cast spells.

It's easy to get a hand free from a weapon you're good with, like a staff, for the time it takes to cast a spell; but if you take a penalty for using a two-handed weapon, the penalty applies to your spells, also.

Wizard Level Progression

WIZARD LEVEL	TOTAL HIT POINTS	RECOVERY DICE	TOTAL FEATS	AT-WILL SPELLS OF YOUR LEVEL	OTHER SPELLS OF YOUR LEVEL*	ABILITY SCORE BONUSES**
1st level	(6 + Con mod) × **3**	1d6 + Con mod	1 adventurer	2	3	
2nd level	(6 + Con mod) × **4**	2d6 + Con mod	2 adventurer	2	4	
3rd level	(6 + Con mod) × **5**	3d6 + Con mod	3 adventurer	2	5	
4th level	(6 + Con mod) × **6**	4d6 + Con mod	4 adventurer	2	5	+1 to 3 abilities
5th level	(6 + Con mod) × **8**	5d6 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 1 champion	2	6	
6th level	(6 + Con mod) × **10**	6d6 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 2 champion	2	6	
7th level	(6 + Con mod) × **12**	7d6 + (Con mod × 2)	4 adventurer 3 champion	2	7	+1 to 4 abilities
8th level	(6 + Con mod) × **16**	8d6 + (Con mod × 4) + 5	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	2	7	
9th level	(6 + Con mod) × **20**	9d6 + (Con mod × 4) + 10	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	2	8	
10th level	(6 + Con mod) × **24**	10d6 + (Con mod ×4) + 15	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	2	9	+1 to 5 abilities

Note: Although not listed on the table, this class gets three talents. It does not gain more at higher levels.

* Your other spell choices could include more at-will spells if you wished. But that doesn't seem like a good idea to us!

** Unlike the other columns, the Ability Score Bonuses column doesn't show your total bonuses at that level. At 4th level, choose three ability scores and add +1 to them. At 7th level, choose four ability scores to gain +1, and at 10th level, choose five ability scores to gain another +1.

Wizard Stats

Initiative, AC, PD, MD, Hit Points, Recovery Dice, Feats, and some Talents are level dependent.

KEY ABILITY SCORES	Intelligence
INITIATIVE	Dex mod + Level
ARMOR CLASS (LIGHT ARMOR)	10 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
PHYSICAL DEFENSE	10 + middle mod of Str/Con/Dex + Level
MENTAL DEFENSE	12 + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha + Level
HIT POINTS	(6 + Con mod) × Level modifier (see **Wizard Level Progression** table)
RECOVERIES	Usually 8
RECOVERY DICE	(1d6 per Level) + Con mod (5th level: Con mod × 2; 8th level: Con mod × 4)
BACKGROUNDS	8 points, max 5 in any one background
ICON RELATIONSHIPS	3 points
TALENTS	3
FEATS	1 per Level
SELECT SPELLS	Beginning of arc

Basic Attacks

You're not likely to choose your basic attacks over casting an at-will spell, but sometimes you'll have to. Like most attacks, they require a standard action.

No-trigger attacks: When your wizard gets an opportunity attack or is granted a bonus attack action, that's usually called out as a no-trigger attack. No-trigger attacks are exactly like your basic attacks but they can't trigger or make use of your own powers or spells. Like the sorcerer, you're more likely to have to deal with the no-trigger attack rules when you've been confused or hindered.

Wizard Basic Melee Attack

Melee attack ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One enemy
Attack: Strength + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Strength damage
5th–7th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod x 2)
8th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod x 4) + 5
9th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod x 4) + 10
10th level: *Weapon* + (Str mod x 4) +15
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Wizard Basic Ranged Attack

Ranged attack ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One nearby or far-away enemy, depending on the weapon's range
Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC
Hit: *Weapon* + Dexterity damage
5th–7th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod x 2)
8th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod x 4) + 5
9th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod x 4) + 10
10th level: *Weapon* + (Dex mod x 4) +15
Miss: —

Class Features

Wizards have four class features: Cantrips, Cyclic Spells, Judicious Casting, and Ritual Magic.

Cantrips

Every wizard can cast a handful of cantrips each arc. You don't have to memorize or choose them beforehand; you can just cast them on the fly.

Most wizards can cast a number of cantrips equal to their Intelligence modifier each battle. If you're out of battle, that's about three to six cantrips every five minutes. (The Cantrip Mastery feat frees you up to cast cantrips at-will.)

Each cantrip takes a standard action to cast as a ranged spell. (Again, Cantrip Mastery helps, turning cantrip casting into a quick action.)

As you'll see from the short descriptions that follow, we're not concerned with pinning down exactly what wizards get out of these minor spells. Cantrips capture the sense that wizards are the most skillful practitioners of magic in the world, capable of offhand effects anyone else would have to accomplish through hard work (if at all).

We often phrase magical effects, particularly those created by wizards, as if they're being accomplished by tiny supernatural servitors. If your campaign is comfortable with more familiar magical phrasings, by all means, use those instead. Each wizard should determine how their magic looks and sounds.

At adventurer tier (1st–4th levels), cantrips with a standard duration last 10–60 minutes, plus 10 minutes per wizard level.

At champion tier, (5th–7th levels), most cantrips last 2–7 hours (1d6+1).

At epic tier (8th–10th levels), cantrips last between 5–12 hours (1d8 + 4).

Alarm: (standard duration) The cantrip creates a minor watch-sprite that can be instructed to scream if someone comes through an area or touches an object. Watch-sprites are notoriously stupid and sleepy, but with the right talking-to they might stay focused for the duration of the spell. At higher levels, the spell might summon little fanged spirits buzzing back and forth, which serve as both visual and actual deterrents.

Arcane Mark: (standard duration) The cantrip creates a magical sigil on an object or person. Wizards swear that all their arcane marks are visible to everyone, but people foolish enough to play cards with wizards should beware. (A deliberately invisible mark is a difficult perception or magic check to notice.)

Ghost Sound: Like the bard spell on page 72, but with frequency and duration established by the cantrip rules.

Knock: Locked door? Sealed treasure chest? You can handle it. This cantrip summons a magical servitor three to four times as big as your closed fist that swarms around the door and punches or pushes it open (depending on whether you want to be quiet or announce your presence), assuming you can succeed with an Intelligence check against the environment's DC using an appropriate magical background. Note that your *knock*-servitor doesn't do anything to avoid traps—if you want to open something *and* avoid traps, hire a rogue.

Light: (standard duration) This cantrip creates a fairly wide and consistent field of light, up to 30 feet in diameter. It could just be a glow from your staff, or it might be small light elementals flitting in quick circles around you. The created light isn't bright enough to dazzle anyone or to send underworld dwellers into seizures.

Mage Hand: This cantrip creates a small, telekinetic effect that lasts one round at most. It's also sometimes referred to as a "mage-slap" when higher-level wizards deliver rebuffs to their underlings. At best, it's about half as strong as the wizard's own strongest hand. At worst, it's half as strong as the wizard when they're weak from a bad fever.

Mending: This cantrip summons a variety of tiny (hand-sized and smaller) magical sprites who swarm over a chosen broken object and attempt to mend it (over the course of 1–6 rounds). Small-scale repairs, like torn wineskins, muddy clothing, a broken handgrip on a sword, and similar fixes that anyone could make with two to four hours of devoted work get handled in seconds. More elaborate repairs to complicated objects might require an Intelligence check or, at the GM's discretion, may only be possible if the wizard has taken the Cantrip Mastery feat.

Prestidigitation: This cantrip produces magic tricks like cheaty-juggling, pulling coins out of ears, small illusions created by dancing sprites, and the basic equipment of stage-casting. One casting usually gives you a minute of fun. But the magic has nowhere near as much real-world force as *mage hand*.

Spark: This is a minor fire creation spell, enough to light a pipe or a campfire, or even a page or two of an unprotected spellbook. It doesn't work against living beings or against things that couldn't easily be set on fire with a few seconds of steady application of a candle. It's a show-off spell—wizards don't have to light fires like ordinary people. The target of the spark must be nearby and within sight.



Cyclic Spells

Spells that have a cyclic usage can always be cast at least once per battle, and are only expended in that battle if they are cast when the escalation die is 0 or odd. In other words, if you cast a cyclic spell like *color spray* or *rebuke* when the escalation die is even, the spell is not expended and can still be cast later in the battle.

We'll do more with cyclic spells in future books. There's design space here we haven't fully exploited.

Judicious Casting

Some of the wizard's spells have different levels of effect and possible side effects, depending on how they are being cast. Each time you cast such a spell, you can decide which style of effect you prefer.

Examples include *fireball*—which you can cast carefully or recklessly.

Ritual Magic

Wizards can cast their spells as rituals (see page 198). If anyone can cast a ritual quicker than others, it's probably a wizard.

GAMEMASTER

Ritual mastery is likely to come into play more often outside of combat than in combat, when the wizard aims to accomplish ritual magic effects quickly instead of delaying the party and losing the momentum of the adventure.

Wizard Talents

Choose three of the following class talents.

Abjuration

Whenever you cast an arc wizard spell, you gain a +4 bonus to all your defenses until the end of your next turn. You can phrase the magical effect causing the protection however you like. Many abjurers create shimmering shields of magical force; others have swarming magical servitors that block attacks.

Adventurer Feat: Your Abjuration shields/wards degrade slowly instead of all at once, so when the +4 bonus ends, it becomes a +2 bonus that lasts until the end of your *next* turn.

Champion Feat: When you gain the +4 Abjuration bonus, one nearby ally shares the ward and gets a +2 bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.



Evocation

Once per battle, when the escalation die is 2+, you can spend a quick action to add an additional target to a spell that targets PD.

Adventurer Feat: When you use Evocation, you can reroll each natural attack roll that's less than or equal to the escalation die once. Abide by the rerolls.

Champion Feat: (replaces adv) As above and you can now use Evocation when the escalation die is 1+.

Epic Feat: You can now use Evocation with spells that target MD.

High Arcana

Your study of the highest orders of magic gives you two options that other wizards cannot match: increased ability to break through resistance with your spells, and the *counter-magic* spell.

Break resistance: Your spell attack rolls are considered to be 4 points higher for purposes of defeating a target's damage resistance. For example, if your *fireball* attack roll is a natural 14 against a creature with *resist fire 16+*, your roll is considered a natural 18 and overcomes the target's resistance, hit or miss.

Counter-magic: As a wizard with the High Arcana talent, you gain a bonus spell, *counter-magic*.

Counter-magic

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/battle** ◆ interrupt action to cast, with additional action cost if successful (see below)

Trigger: A nearby creature you can see initiates a magical ability, such as using a breath weapon, casting a spell, or triggering an optional magical power or defense.

Target: The nearby creature initiating the magic

Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. MD

Hit: The target's spell or magical power is canceled, and they lose the action they were using for the spell/power. If the spell/power is limited-use, that use is not expended, but the spell/power can't be used again this turn.

An elite-strength target can negate your cancellation with a hard save (16+), a double-strength target with a normal save (11+), and a triple-strength target with an easy save (6+).

Action cost: If the spell/power is canceled, you lose your next move action maintaining the counter. If the high-strength target saves and negates the cancellation, you can act normally on your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: You gain one additional use of *counter-magic* each arc.

Champion Feat: The saves for double-value and triple-value creatures each become one notch harder, and elite targets need a natural 20 to save against your *counter-magic*.

Epic Feat: If you successfully negate a limited-use spell or power with a natural even roll, your target also loses that use of the spell or power..

Mental Phenomenon

You use your exceptional intellect to move your body with utmost precision. Instead of using your Dexterity modifier to calculate your Armor Class, Physical Defense, initiative, and *wizard basic ranged attack* (not damage), use your Intelligence modifier. Also use it in place of your Strength modifier when making *wizard basic melee attacks* (not damage).

This talent allows you to be a lot better at things wizards aren't usually good at, such as attacks of opportunity, and it takes the place of a talent that would improve your magical capabilities. You might say it makes you a little less wizardly.

Prodigious Learner

There are at least two ways to interpret this talent. You probably know already which style works for your wizard, but if not, the answer will help shape your character's backgrounds.

Schooled: Are you a graduate of one of the wizard colleges of Horizon? A student of a famous wizard? A former wizard's familiar partially transformed into a humanoid, who learned a lot from your stint as a magical servant? Many forms of higher learning are possible.

Self-taught: Or do you have a natural flair for magic that lets you effortlessly duplicate the efforts of more experienced wizards?

In any case, the talent has the same core effect.

Bonus feats: At 1st level, you choose three additional adventurer-tier feats associated with the wizard class. Most wizards with the Prodigious Learner talent will therefore start with four adventurer-tier feats. A human wizard with the Resourceful kin power starts with five.

At 5th level, replace one of the bonus adventurer-tier feats with a bonus champion-tier feat.

At 8th level, replace one of the bonus adventurer-tier feats with a bonus epic-tier feat.

Vance's Polysyllabic Verbalizations

This talent is for players and GMs who enjoy improvisation and grandiloquence.

Most wizards use short incantations for their spells so they can mutter them quickly under the worst of circumstances. But some wizards bask in the glory of casting spells with elaborate titles and lofty vocabularies. If casting a mere "fireball" spell isn't enough, and what you really want to cast is *Rodrigo's Scintillating Plasms*, this is the talent for you.

You'll want to rename each of your 1/arc spells in the most over-the-top and highfalutin' style you can muster. Better yet, jot down two or three full-blown and appropriate names for each arc spell and use whichever one suits the occasion. Whenever you use Vance's Polysyllabic Verbalizations, proclaim your spell's full name, loudly and proudly.

We'll handle the mechanics of VPV first, then we'll turn to its aesthetics.

VPV mechanics: On your turn, when the escalation die is 1+, choose a 1/arc or other "per-arc" wizard's spell you want to upgrade with bonus loquacity. There are two upgrade options available to you, and you can use them separately or together on the same spell.

The faster upgrade requires only that you spend your quick action speechifying. This option is available to you simply by taking the talent.

The larger, and dicier, upgrade requires you to also take the talent's adventurer-tier-feat and then spend your move action waxing polysyllabic.

Both options are available as often as you like to use them and are willing to spend the extra action.

Quick action colorful bump: When you spend an additional quick action to cast the spell, your eloquence will result in a colorful bump, an improvised bonus effect having something to do with the way you renamed the spell!

The colorful bump is usually not in your control—the GM adds a small bonus effect that fits the spell's expanded nomenclature or your enunciation. Whatever the GM chooses, it should add to the storytelling power of the situation and be worth you spending an additional quick action to cast. In most cases, the bonus effect won't precisely match up with what the spell normally accomplishes.

Ideally, the extra effect suits the name of the spell and you and your GM collaborate to come up with something entertaining for everyone. Really powerful effects might require an easy or normal save. Note that if you proceed to fumble the spell, the extra effect might not be entirely to your advantage.

Here are some examples of colorful bumps: *Confusion*, cast as *Rubiya's loquacious addle-patter*, might cause the target to prattle incessantly about things they'd prefer not to talk about. For the GM, it's an opportunity to prattle willy-nilly at the players, imparting valuable information hidden within the blather.

Acid arrow, cast as *Salvador's Ever-Dissolving Spray*, might deal a small amount of acid damage to enemies near the target. It could be damage equal to the wizard's Intelligence modifier at the time of the attack, or slightly less acid damage each time the target attempts a save against the ongoing acid damage . . . with the GM offering a Faustian bargain of higher damage if the spray deals a lesser amount of damage to the caster's allies engaged with the ever-dissolving enemy!

Cast as *The Modrok's Bazaar Key*, *dimension door* lets the wizard disappear for a moment into a grand bazaar where time moves differently, returning with a strange or wondrous item that is *exactly* what the party needs, but that lasts only for a round.

For further examples of spell names, look up Jack Vance's *Dying Earth* books, Robin D. Laws' and Pelgrane's RPG *The Dying Earth*, or *Ars Magica* from Atlas Games.

Option #2, move action R&D: See the adventurer-feat below; you'll need it to use this option.

On your turn, when the escalation die is 1+, spend an additional move action to cast a wizardly arc spell of your level. Your adroit appellations engineer an aura of mystic multiplicity!

At 2nd level and above: As you cast the spell loquaciously, while spending an additional move action, roll a d12 and add the escalation die. If you roll an 8+, you gain a bonus spell! Choose a spell from the wizard's spell list that you have not prepared or cast this arc. You gain a version of this new spell that's one level below your actual level and ready to cast whenever you wish.

At 1st level only: You need a result of 10+ on the d12 to gain a bonus 1st level spell you have not prepared or cast this arc.

At any level: The bonus spell you gain doesn't have to be related to the words you used for the VPV spell, but extra karma points if it is! The new bonus spell can be any usage. It's worth noting that you normally can't use VPV R&D on a spell you have gained via the talent. (You could still use a quick action to give the new spell a colorful bump!)

For the record, you can't choose cantrips as your new spell, but you could choose *utility spell*.

Spell stats: Use your normal ability scores and level for your attack bonus but read the spell's effects from the line that's one level below your level.

Except at 1st level, if there isn't a version of the spell one level lower than your current level, you can't choose it. For example, a 3rd level wizard succeeding with R&D after a battle in which they used an additional move action to cast *lightning bolt* as *Raakel's refulgent rainbow* would not be able to choose a 3rd level spell like *teleport shield*, which has no 2nd level version. However, any spell that was originally 1st level can be cast as a 2nd level spell. Options would include any 1st level attack spell the 3rd level wizard had not already prepared. Even better, a spell like *shield*, cast at 2nd level, doesn't suffer from dealing less damage. Non-attack spells are excellent choices for R&D replacements.

Adventurer Feat: You gain the ability to use the move action R&D option.

Epic Feat: (requires adv) Three times per arc, you can use VPV R&D on the arc spells you gain using VPV R&D! They keep dropping a level lower each time.

WHY A D12?

You're rolling a d12 instead of a d20 for VPV's R&D check because you're already likely to be rolling one or more d20s for the spell's effects. We also want to be clear that this isn't a die roll that can be helped by d20-related powers like *fortunate fey* and the Trickery domain.

Wizard's Familiar

Your familiar is a tiny or small animal or creature that aids your magic, gives you someone to talk to when alone, can contribute a new spell when you've exhausted your spellbook, and adds unexpected touches to the story when you or the GM feel moved to improvise. A familiar might or might not keep watch as you sleep, depending on whether it's also sleepy.

You, the sorcerer, and the ranger share slight variations of this same basic talent. Instead of sandwiching it inside one or the other of these classes, we've opted to put the full write-up of the talent called Familiar or Pet after all the classes, starting on page 197.

Wizard Feats

Cantrip Mastery and Magic Missile are feats any wizard can choose.

- Cantrip Mastery is an adventurer-tier feat that follows the general rules for class feats appearing on page 210. It captures part of the fun of playing a wizard but isn't powerful enough to qualify as a talent. If you don't care about cantrips, skip ahead to find *magic missile*.
- Magic Missile is a sequence of three feats. The adventurer-tier feat lets you cast the *magic missile* spell during one battle per arc, and when you cast the spell, you'll roll a die to find out how many rounds you're allowed to cast the spell in that battle. The champion-tier and epic-tier Magic Missile feats each let you cast the spell in an additional battle and increase the number of missiles you unleash each time you spend a quick action to cast the spell.

Cantrip Mastery (Wizard Feat)

Cantrip Mastery improves as your character advances into champion tier and epic tier without you needing to spend more feats or resources. If you skipped Cantrip Mastery as an adventurer-tier and champion-tier character but decided to switch up your feats and take Cantrip Mastery as an epic-tier character, you'll get the epic-tier version of the feat.

Adventurer-tier wizard

Cantrips are at-will spells for you.

Unlike normal wizards, who use a standard action to cast a cantrip, you can cast a cantrip as a quick action.

If you or your GM create new cantrips, you can probably learn them along with the standard cantrips mentioned above, assuming you can track down someone to teach them to you or you find a written version of the spell.

If you want to do something particularly cunning or surprising with one of your cantrips and the GM isn't sure whether you could pull off that use of the spell, roll a normal save (11+) to cast the spell the way you envision it.

Champion-tier wizard

You can use cantrip-style versions of any wizard spell you have memorized, even if you have already expended that spell.

This may require some flexibility on the GM's part. It definitely requires some creativity by you, player-of-wizards! The key is that none of these cantrip-uses should be combat relevant or deal damage. A *fireball*-inspired cantrip could be enough to send up a magical flare, but not enough to damage a monster or set a village on fire.

Epic-tier wizard

You can replace one of your normal spells with a once-per-arc spell related to one of your cantrips that has much greater effect than the cantrip, about the power of one of your normal spells of that level. You and your GM must agree on a cool effect, so this isn't something you can do on the fly, it needs to be part of your prep work. Designing new spells isn't easy. For some campaigns, and some GMs, it's not going to be welcome, so if your GM asks you to stick to the spells you know from the books, have fun with the lower tiers.

CANTRIPS & IMPROV

A wizard who invests in the Cantrip Mastery feat is telling you that they want to be able to use magic for all sorts of minor effects that will probably enhance the game, at least in the long run. If the Cantrip Master wizard wants to create new cantrips that suit the spirit of minor magic, try to work with them to create something that works for everyone.

Speaking of working for everyone, unlimited cantrip casting isn't a license to hog the stage. Make sure the wizard isn't in the way of everyone else's roleplaying and actions.

Magic Missile (Wizard Feat)

The *magic missile* spell has a storied place in arcane lore. Ancient grimoires locate it before the 1st Age, but the spell was never worth much until the 5th Age. Modern wizards either disdain the outdated spell or make a point of truly mastering it.

Magic Missile

"An invisible dagger of force spins slowly but surely into the golem's face!"

Ranged spell ◆ **1+ battle/arc** ◆ Quick action to cast
Target: One nearby or far-away foe
Attack: Your indomitable insight vs. the target's material contingent nature; you always hit
Damage: 5 force damage, you deal full damage regardless of any so-called counter-measure, such as temporary hit points, resistance to damage, etc.
Effect: The first time you cast this spell in an arc, roll 1d2. This battle, that's the number of rounds in which you can cast a single *magic missile*, including this round. Each casting spends a quick action, and you can cast *magic missile* only once per round.

As you gain levels, you can cast *magic missile* more rounds in a battle in which you've chosen to cast the spell. When you reach 5th level, you can cast two missiles at a time, followed by four missiles at a time at 8th level!

When you cast more than one missile at a time, choose all their targets simultaneously.

Adventurer Feat: You can cast *magic missile* once per arc. You must have this feat to cast *magic missile* at all.

Champion Feat: (requires adv) You can cast *magic missile* in a second battle per arc, and you get +1 missile each time.

Epic Feat: (requires adv & champ) You can cast *magic missile* in a third battle per arc, and you get an additional +3 missiles each time. For example, at 8th level you'd cast 8 missiles/quick action for 2d6 rounds, 2/arc.

1st	1d2 rounds; 1 missile/quick action
2nd	1d3 rounds; 1 missile/quick action
3rd	1d4 rounds; 1 missile/quick action
4th	1d6 rounds; 1 missile/quick action
5th	1d6 rounds; 2 missiles/quick action
6th	1d8 rounds; 2 missiles /quick action
7th	2d6 rounds; 2 missiles /quick action
8th	2d6 rounds; 4 missiles/quick action
9th	2d8 rounds; 4 missiles/quick action
10th	2d10 rounds; 4 missiles/quick action
11th	2d12 rounds; 5 missiles/quick action

Wizard Spells

We'll start by listing the oddity in the wizard's spell list—the *utility spell* that automatically gives you flexible options between several useful spells.

Utility Spell

When you prepare spells during a full heal-up, instead of taking a standard spell, you can choose to memorize the *utility spell* at your level. When you take the *utility spell*, you gain access to a range of useful spells. The variety of utility spells to choose from increases as you cast the spell at higher levels. You cast all *utility spells* at your level.

Depending on your level, you'll be able to choose from among the following spells:

1st	*disguise self*
1st	*feather fall*
1st	*hold portal*
3rd	*levitate*
3rd	*message*
3rd	*speak with item*
5th	*pierce resistance*
5th	*water breathing*
7th	*invisibility purge*
7th	*scrying*

For example, if you memorize utility spell at 3rd level, that arc you'll be able to cast one of the following six spells at 3rd level: *disguise self, feather fall, hold portal, levitate, message,* or *speak with item.* You don't have to decide ahead of time which *utility spell* you cast. Unlike all your other spells, you can also memorize the *utility spell* multiple times.

Adventurer Feat: Each *utility spell* you take lets you cast two spells from the available options instead of one (5th: you can cast three instead of two; 8th: you can cast four instead of three).

PLAYERS: AN INVITATION TO BE CLEVER

Utility spells are not, by nature, balanceable. They don't deal damage or increase your Armor Class. How much mileage can you get out of *disguise self*? Maybe a lot, since it's partly up to you. *Disguise self* can let a 1st level wizard do things that no amount of damage could accomplish. The beauty of a spell without stats is that it encourages you to be clever.

1st Level Utility: Disguise Self

"Can I use the spell to look like a younger, better-dressed version of myself with a full head of hair?"

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc**

Effect: This spell provides you with an effective magical disguise that lasts about ten minutes, making the skill check to avoid unmasking one step easier: easy if it would have been a normal task, normal if it would have been a hard task, and hard if it would have been a ridiculously hard task. The spell only affects your general appearance, not your size. It can be used to hide your features behind the generic features of another person or kin. Using it to impersonate a specific creature makes it less effective as a disguise (GM, consider a –2 to –5 penalty, depending on the degree of difficulty).

2nd	Same as 1st
3rd–4th	The spell lasts for 1 hour.
5th–6th	The spell also provides smell; +2 bonus to any checks.
7th–8th	The spell also handles correct-sounding vocal patterns and rough mannerisms; +4 bonus to any checks.
9th–10th	You can now target an ally with the spell; you can also now use it on up to two creatures at once.

1st Level Utility: Feather Fall

"I never liked swishing back and forth like a feather, so I've modified the spell to make you feel like you need to flap your wings. You won't see them, but trust me, flap!"

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc**◆ Free action to cast

Effect: When you cast this spell, it arrests your fall, letting you glide down to the ground over a round or two. If you're falling a ridiculous distance, wait to cast it until you're nearing the ground or you risk turning back into a non-feather at the wrong moment.

- 3rd–4th: You can now target a nearby ally with the spell.
- 5th–6th: You can now target up to two nearby creatures with the spell.
- 7th–8th: You can now target up to five nearby creatures with the spell.
- 9th–10th: You gain some control over where a target falls, like a quickly gliding feather.

1st Level Utility: Hold Portal

If you effectively use this spell, tell us about it. Jonathan has been hoping to see it in action since 1978.

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**

Effect: You cast this spell on a door. For ten minutes, adventurer-tier creatures can't get through the door, not even by chopping it into splinters with an axe or blasting it with a fireball. Champion-tier creatures can batter it down; each attempt requires a DC 20 Intelligence skill check (including an applicable background) by the caster to resist the battering and keep the spell going. Epic-tier creatures can walk right through. (Yes, let the caster roll, even if they aren't present; it's their magic that is holding the door shut and intact and they'll know if it's getting battered down.)

- 3rd–4th: The spell now lasts for 1 hour. Adventurer-tier creatures are stymied. Champion-tier creatures can batter the door down or destroy it after three failed DC 20 skill checks by the spellcaster. Epic-tier creatures notice that the now-busted door had magic on it.
- 5th–6th: Champion-tier creatures take a few minutes to force the door open. It takes actual effort for an epic-tier creature to force it open, but they'll manage it after one failed DC 25 skill check by the spellcaster.
- 7th–8th: Champion-tier creatures are stymied for up to an hour by the door. It takes epic-tier creatures longer to get through now; three failed DC 25 skill checks by the spellcaster.
- 9th–10th: Now, epic-tier creatures curse and pry but can't get the thing open for an hour, barring bizarre magical circumstances that we all know we should probably expect, because there is something about an epic-tier environment that dislikes a locked door.

SOMETHING IN A DOOR

We suppose you could try casting *hold portal* on a window or a porthole. But part of the spell involves keeping a solid door intact that might otherwise be blown to smithereens. So, windows and portholes don't work so well. And if the opposition is powerful enough to teleport around the door or smash through the walls or floors? At least the portal held.

3rd Level Utility: Levitate

Makes a great party trick. Can also somehow keep an epic-tier party just out of reach of a lethal pack of feral vampires.

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**

Effect: Until the end of the battle, you can use a move action to rise straight up into the air or descend straight down. The spell won't move you horizontally, though you could levitate up to a ceiling and then scrabble sideways in an undignified manner. The up-or-down movement is about half as fast as your normal movement. While levitating, you take a –2 penalty to your attacks and are vulnerable to attacks against you.

- 4th: Same as 3rd
- 5th–6th: You can now cast the spell on a nearby willing ally instead of yourself.
- 7th–8th: You can now cast the spell as a quick action, and the spell can now affect two targets.
- 9th–10th: The spell can now affect five targets.

3rd Level Utility: Message

NPC wizards are more likely to use quiet spells like this one than to use flashy, high-damage spells that PCs cast right and left.

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Quick action to cast

Effect: You send a one to two sentence message to another person you know and have touched in the last week. Sending a message to a person you can see is always easy. Sending a message to a person you can't see requires an Intelligence skill check against the highest-tier environment you or the receiver are occupying. For example, sending a message to someone in a normal epic environment requires at least a DC 25 skill check—higher if it's a hard check because of magical interference or the GM's headache. The maximum distance you can send a message depends on the spell's level.

- 2nd: Same as 1st
- 3rd–4th: Across half a city, at most.
- 5th–6th: Across the entire city and a bit into the countryside.
- 7th–8th: Partway across the Midland Sea, or between any of the cities near each other; so, from Glitterhaegen to Concord or Horizon to Santa Cora, but not from Horizon to Drakkenhall.
- 9th–10th: Across the full Midland Sea, from any city to any other city, and maybe even from the Sea Wall to the Frost Range.



We're being deliberately vague. Reliable communication across great distances kills many plots. Sporadic and half-garbled communication across such distances enlivens plots. If you're using your own world maps, choose message distances that suit your game's story rather than trying to match our mile markers.

3rd Level Utility: Speak with Item

Sometimes, what an exhausted magic sword needs is a good pep talk.

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Quick action to cast

Effect: Speak briefly, mind-to-mind, with a magic item you are touching that is owned by you or one of your allies. If the conversation goes at all well (and it should, since this is a roleplaying note you can probably only fumble for story reasons), the item's owner gets a free power recharge roll if that item's power has been expended.

- 4th: Same as 3rd
- 5th–6th: You no longer need to be touching the item; it only has to be nearby.
- 7th–8th: If the conversation goes well, the item's owner gains a +2 bonus to the item recharge roll.
- 9th–10th: If the item recharge roll fails, you keep this spell, but the item you failed to convince won't talk to you until after your next full heal-up.

5th Level Utility: Pierce Resistance

"Your blades shimmer with an eerie light, and the black pudding suddenly looks a lot more hurtable."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Quick action to cast

Target: A total of 1d3 creatures, including yourself and/or nearby allies.

Effect: Until the end of the battle, the targets ignore the resistance power of any creature they target with an attack.

- 6th: 1d3 + 1 targets.
- 7th–8th: 1d4 + 1 targets.
- 9th–10th: 1d6 + 1 targets.

5th Level Utility: Water Breathing

Just because you can explore underwater by yourself doesn't mean you should explore underwater by yourself.

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Quick action to cast

Effect: You can breathe underwater for the rest of the battle (or about five minutes). You become aware a couple of rounds ahead of when the spell's magic is about to end.

- 6th: Same as 5th
- 7th–8th: You and up to 6 nearby allies can breathe underwater this battle.
- 9th–10th: The spell lasts for 4d6 hours.

7th Level Utility: Scrying

"I pull out a tiny gem and hold it up to my eye . . ."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**

Effect: You can use this spell to get information you shouldn't be able to get, peering in on other people's lives for a short period of time, usually no more than ten minutes at a time. It's not infallible and there are areas that may be warded at the GM's discretion. You must have touched the person you wish to spy on within the last month.

If you use a single standard action to cast the spell, you won't get much. Scrying works best as a sort of fast ritual; concentrating on the spell for a while with props like a scrying pool or a crystal ball works better.

What's the answer to protect yourself from scrying? Use this spell as a ritual . . . or perhaps the GM will make noticing scrying a hard skill check (16+).

- 8th: You must have touched the subject within the last 3 months.
- 9th: Within the last year.
- 10th: Within the last 5 years.

PLAYERS: NPCS CAN SCRY, TOO

Yes, if someone is scrying on you, they got near enough to touch you. Pleasant dreams.

7th Level Utility: Invisibility Purge

"I hold a pinch of flour to my lips and blow it into the air."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**

Targets: Any nearby enemies who are invisible, whether you know they are there or not

Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. MD, rolled by the GM

Special: This spell attacks invisible targets as if they were visible; there's no 50% miss chance for invisible targets.

Hit: The target turns visible and cannot become invisible again this battle.

Miss: If there are one or more invisible creatures nearby, you become aware of their presence. Not where they are or who they are, but that there are invisible creatures present.

- 8th: The spell also affects far-away targets you could normally see.
- 9th: On a miss, you also know the number of invisible creatures.
- 10th: On a miss, you also know the types of invisible creatures.

1st Level Spells

Since every wizard knows at least two at-will spells, we'll start the spell list with the three 1st level at-will spells you can choose from: *mana storm*, *ray of frost*, and *shocking grasp*.

Mana Storm

Unseen forces ebb and flow, and storm takes sudden form.

Ranged spell ◆ **At-Will**
Special: This spell has two different forms: attacking multiple targets with lightning when the escalation die is odd and attacking a single target with force when the escalation die is even (including 0). Feats taken to improve the spell apply to both its casting forms.

When escalation die is even or not in play
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. PD
Hit: 9 (2d8) force damage
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

2nd	11 (3d6) damage
3rd	14 (4d6) damage
4th	18 (4d8) damage
5th	22 (4d10) damage
6th	28 (8d6) damage
7th	36 (8d8) damage
8th	45 damage
9th	55 damage
10th	70 damage

When escalation die is odd:
Targets: 1d3 nearby enemies in a group
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. PD
Hit: 8 (3d4) lightning damage
Miss: —

2nd	11 (3d6) damage
3rd	13 (2d12) damage
4th	17 (3d10) damage
5th	20 (3d12) damage
6th	25 (7d6) damage
7th	32 (7d8) damage
8th	40 damage
9th	50 damage
10th	65 damage

Adventurer Feat: Targets can now be far-away, and the lightning version targets 1d3 + 1 foes.

Champion Feat: Once per arc, reroll a *mana storm* attack.

Ray of Frost (and Fire)

"It's a rush of frigid air. Moisture in the air turns to snow, and a sudden frost freezes the sap at the end of the icewind."

Ranged spell ◆ **At-Will**
Target: One nearby or far-away enemy
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. PD
Hit: 9 (2d8) cold damage
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

2nd	11 (3d6) damage
3rd	14 (4d6) damage
4th	18 (4d8) damage
5th	22 (4d10) damage
6th	28 (8d6) damage
7th	36 (8d8) damage
8th	40 damage
9th	50 damage
10th	70 damage

Adventurer Feat: When your *ray of frost* attack roll is a natural even hit, if the target is staggered after taking the damage, it is also dazed until the end of your next turn.

Champion Feat: You may target exactly six foes with *ray of frost*, in which case the spell deals half damage (hit or miss), but it's fire damage, not cold damage. If you can't target exactly six enemies you can't turn the spell into *rays of fire*. Metaphysically, these two versions of the spell are the same thing, but it's hard to explain to a non-wizard.

Shocking Grasp

"The shock knocks the spider back, hissing and fizzing."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **At-Will** ◆ Move action to cast
Special: *Shocking grasp* can only be cast as the first action on your turn. It's one of the few spells that requires a move action.
Special: (Judicious casting) When you cast this spell, you can choose to cast it *recklessly*.
Target: One enemy engaged with you; or if you cast the spell recklessly, all enemies engaged with you.
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. PD; if you cast the spell recklessly, use a single attack roll against all enemies.
Hit: 2 (1d3) lightning damage, and the target pops free from you.
Miss: 1 damage. If you cast the spell recklessly, you cannot cast *shocking grasp* again this battle.

2nd	3 (1d4) damage; miss: 1 damage
3rd	4 (1d6) damage; miss: 2 damage
4th	5 (1d8) damage; miss: 2 damage
5th	6 (1d10) damage; miss: 3 damage
6th	7 (2d6) damage; miss: 4 damage
7th	9 (2d8) damage; miss: 4 damage
8th	12 damage; miss: 5 damage
9th	15 damage; miss: 6 damage
10th	20 damage; miss: 8 damage
11th	25 damage; miss: 10 damage

Adventurer Feat: The spell deals damage as if it were one level higher.

Champion Feat: You can cast the spell as a quick action (still first action only), in which case it deals half damage on a hit and none on a miss.

Epic Feat: Once per battle, when you hit a target of the spell, they are also dazed until the end of your next turn.

Acid Arrow

"I pantomime holding a bow and drawing an arrow, and when I shoot, a bolt of acid fizzes toward the bugbear."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**
Target: One nearby or far-away creature
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. PD
Hit: 13 (2d12) acid damage, and 5 ongoing acid damage.
Miss: 5 ongoing acid damage, and you regain the spell during your next quick rest.

2nd	18 (4d8) damage; 5 ongoing
3rd	23 (5d8) damage; 5 ongoing
4th	32 (9d6) damage; 5 ongoing
5th	36 (8d8) damage; 10 ongoing
6th	46 (7d12) damage; 10 ongoing
7th	59 (9d12) damage; 10 ongoing
8th	70 damage; 20 ongoing
9th	100 damage; 20 ongoing
10th	120 damage; 20 ongoing

Adventurer Feat: Double the ongoing damage if you hit.

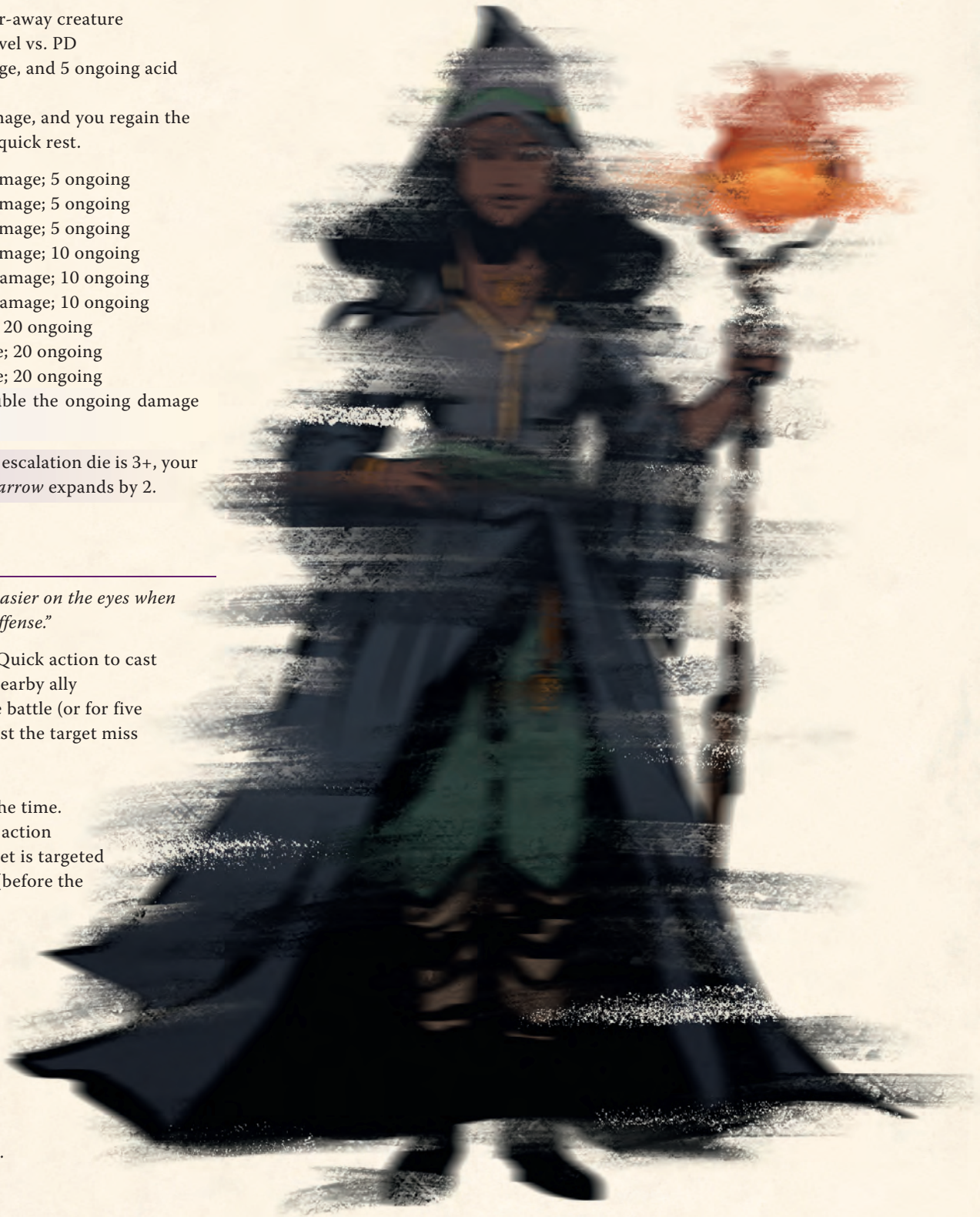
Champion Feat: If the escalation die is 3+, your crit range with *acid arrow* expands by 2.

Blur

"Honestly, you're a little easier on the eyes when the details are hazy. No offense."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Quick action to cast
Target: Yourself or one nearby ally
Effect: For the rest of the battle (or for five minutes), attacks against the target miss 20% of the time.

2nd	Same as 1st
3rd–4th	Miss 25% of the time.
5th–6th	Cast as a free action when the target is targeted for an attack (before the attack roll).
7th–8th	You can now target 1d2 creatures.
9th–10th	If the escalation die is 3+, you can use this spell in a subsequent battle this arc.



Color Spray

"I've told you before, Gnata, stop trying to see all the colors. It's meant to hurt your brain to look at them."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Cyclic: 1/battle OR At-Will when the escalation die is even**
Target: 1d4 nearby enemies in a group
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. MD
Hit: 9 (2d8) psychic damage, and if the target has 10 hp or fewer after the damage, it is weakened until the end of your next turn.
Miss: —

2nd	11 (3d6) damage; 12 hp
3rd	13 (2d12) damage; 16 hp
4th	17 (3d10) damage; 20 hp
5th	20 (3d12) damage; 24 hp
6th	25 (7d6) damage; 32 hp
7th	32 (7d8) damage; 40 hp
8th	40 damage; 50 hp
9th	50 damage; 60 hp
10th	60 damage; 80 hp

Adventurer Feat: Increase the hit point threshold of the weakened effect by 5 (5th: by 10; 8th: by 20).

Champion Feat: The spell now targets 1d4 + 1 nearby enemies in a group.

Force Salvo

"My wizard calls the spell force volley *because . . . [talks for five minutes about word roots]."*

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**
Targets: Up to four nearby enemies, one bolt each.
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. PD
Hit: 14 (4d6) force damage.

2nd	18 (4d8) damage
3rd	23 (5d8) damage
4th	28 (8d6) damage
5th	36 (8d8) damage
6th	46 (7d12) damage
7th	55 (10d10) damage
8th	70 damage
9th	90 damage
10th	120 damage

Adventurer Feat: You can now target far-away enemies, and your critical hit range with this spell expands by 1.

Champion Feat: Target up to five foes.

Epic Feat: You can target each foe with up to two bolts.

Rebuke

"I pour my disdain directly into its mind."

Ranged spell ◆ **Cyclic: 1/battle, OR At-Will when the escalation die is even**
Target: One nearby enemy with 70 hp or fewer
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. MD (no take 10)
Hit: Psychic damage equal to your level and the target is weakened *(–4 to attacks and defenses)*, easy save ends (6+).
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

2nd	90 hp or fewer
3rd	110 hp or fewer
4th	140 hp or fewer
5th	180 hp or fewer
6th	220 hp or fewer
7th	280 hp or fewer
8th	360 hp or fewer
9th	440 hp or fewer
10th	560 hp or fewer

Adventurer Feat: Damage on hits and misses is now double your level, and the save is now normal.

Champion Feat: When you roll a natural even miss against the target, you daze it until the end of your next turn.

Shield

"'Up steel,' I shout, and you hear the ogre's club collide with an invisible barrier."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **Recharge 11+ after battle** ◆ Free action to cast, when an attack hits your AC
Effect: The attacker must reroll the attack. You can choose either of the attack rolls, whichever is better for you. Alternatively, cast *shield* to prevent all damage you would be dealt by a *magic missile* attack.

2nd	Gain a +2 AC bonus against the rerolled attack.
3rd–4th	Gain a +3 AC bonus against the rerolled attack.
5th–6th	You can also use the spell against attacks that target your PD; replace references to AC with PD.
7th–8th	The bonus to AC/PD on the rerolled attack increases to +4.
9th–10th	The bonus to AC/PD on the rerolled attack increases to +5.

Adventurer Feat: Hit or miss, you take only half damage from any attack you use *shield* against.

Champion Feat: Instead of always affecting yourself, you can cast *shield* when an ally you are next to is hit.

Epic Feat: The spell deals 30 force damage to the attacker, negating the reroll if the attacker is brought down.

3rd Level Spells

Confusion

Hours of arcane study familiarize a wizard with how the mind works . . . and how it fails.

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**
Target: One nearby enemy with 80 hp or fewer
Special: Instead of rolling for this attack, you can choose to make your attack roll a natural 10. (Only roll if the GM tells you that's not enough for a hit.)
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. MD
Hit: The target is confused; easy save ends. (See page 308 for confused and other conditions).
Miss: —

4th	100 hp or fewer
5th	120 hp or fewer
6th	160 hp or fewer
7th	200 hp or fewer
8th	240 hp or fewer
9th	320 hp or fewer
10th	400 hp or fewer

Champion Feat: You can now target a far-away foe. After the target recovers from confusion, it is dazed (save ends).

Curse of Greater Pain

When casting: "You see a ribbon of nearly invisible energy eat into the guy and then wrap loosely around him." When it boosts an ally's damage: "The cursed ribbon is still there, and it rips into the guy in synch with your sword."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. PD
Hit: 13 (2d12) necro damage; additionally, the spell deals 13 (2d12) more necro damage every time the target suffers a hit or crit that deals damage, and half that amount of necro damage every time the target suffers a miss that deals damage (easy save ends, 6+).
Crit: Deal triple damage, but the extra damage from subsequent attacks stays the same.
Natural 16+: Choose a different target and roll a second *curse of greater pain* attack against it.
Miss: Half damage, no additional effect.

4th	17 (3d10) damage
5th	20 (3d12) damage
6th	23 (5d8) damage
7th	28 (5d10) damage
8th	40 damage
9th	50 damage
10th	60 damage

Adventurer Feat: You can now target far-away enemies, and your critical hit range expands by 1.

Epic Feat: If you miss, you may retarget the spell against a second foe instead of dealing half damage to the first one.

Lightning Bolt

"As I start the incantation, everyone's hair stands on end, even the two of you I'm not going to hit.

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc**
Targets: 1d3 + 1 nearby enemies in a group or in a (rough) line
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. PD
Hit: 22 (4d10) lightning damage.
Miss: Half damage.

4th	28 (8d6)
5th	35 (10d6)
6th	44 (8d10)
7th	55 (10d10)
8th	70
9th	90
10th	110

Champion Feat: A natural even hit also deals 15 ongoing lightning damage (8th: 20 ongoing lightning damage, and the save is a hard save, 16+).

Epic Feat: *Lightning bolt* can now be cast 2/arc, but the escalation die must be 3+ the second time.

Zenith Feat (incremental advance when 10th level): For your spells that deal lightning damage, increase the crit range by 2.

Teleport Shield

Space, time, and will are all manifestations of the same energy.

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc**
Effect: Once per round, for the rest of the battle, when an enemy moves to engage you, you can make the following attack against it as a free action before it has the chance to attack in melee.
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. PD
Hit: Teleport the enemy somewhere nearby you can see. You can place them in engagement with one of your allies, but you can't place them in a dangerous location (lava pit or mid-air or other cheesy tricks; it's a defensive teleport rather than the perfect offensive tool). The enemy also takes 17 (3d10) damage.

4th	20 (3d12) damage
5th	23 (5d8) damage
6th	28 (8d6) damage
7th	36 (8d8) damage
8th	50 damage
9th	60 damage
10th	80 damage

Champion Feat: When your *teleport shield* attack misses, the spell's attack is not expended that round.

Epic Feat: You can now teleport the enemy somewhere far-away that you can see; other restrictions still apply.

5th Level Spells

Denial

"The wraiths want to contravene the order of the universe and continue their own existence, but I deny it."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**
Target: Up to one target per point on the escalation die; only targets with 180 hp or fewer.
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. MD (no take 10)
Hit: Psychic damage equal to your level and the target is weakened (*–4 to attacks and defenses*), easy save ends (6+).
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

6th	220 hp or fewer
7th	280 hp or fewer
8th	360 hp or fewer
9th	450 hp or fewer
10th	560 hp or fewer

Champion Feat: Increase the number of targets by up to 1.

Epic Feat: When you roll a natural even miss with the spell, the target is also dazed (*–4 to attacks*) until the end of your next turn.

Dimension Door

"I come out the other side with dust all over me and an unearthly scent rising off me. The space between dimensions can be a little messy."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Move action to cast
Target: Yourself
Effect: You teleport somewhere nearby that you can see.

6th	Same as 5th
7th–8th	Your destination can now be far-away.
9t –10th	You can take one ally who is next to you along with you as you teleport.

Champion Feat: After using *dimension door* for the first time in a battle, you can roll a normal save each time you are hit by an enemy attack later in the battle. If the save succeeds, you gain an extra use of this *dimension door* teleport effect. Each time you use *dimension door*, it requires a move action.



Fireball

In places where wizards have a bad reputation, fireball is usually to blame.

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**
Special: (Judicious casting) When you cast this spell, you can choose to cast it *recklessly*.
Target: 1d3 + 1 nearby enemies in a group. If you cast recklessly, you can target 1d4 additional enemies, but then your allies engaged with the targets may also take damage (see below).
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. PD
Hit: 25 (7d6) fire damage, and 10 ongoing fire damage.
Miss: Half damage, including ongoing damage.
Reckless miss: Each ally engaged with at least one missed target takes half damage unless they succeed at an immediate save (11+); an ally engaged with multiple missed targets is damaged only once.

6th	33 (6d10) damage; 10 ongoing
7th	44 (8d10) damage; 10 ongoing
8th	50 damage; 20 ongoing
9th	65 damage; 20 ongoing
10th	90 damage; 20 ongoing

Champion Feat: You can wait to decide whether to cast the spell recklessly until after you have rolled for the initial number of targets.

Epic Feat: If you cast the spell recklessly, it becomes a *recharge 16+* spell for you the rest of the arc.

Zenith Feat (incremental advance when 10th level): All your spells that deal fire damage deal +10 fire damage, hit or miss, to each target.

It's traditional to roll heaps of dice with fireball. If you use average damage everywhere else but roll heaps of dice all for one special spell, roll them for fireball.

Haste

Wizard, don't be surprised if your allies encourage you to caste haste *on them. It's something of a rush.*

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**
Targets: Up to three nearby allies.
Effect: Each target can immediately take a single standard action. Any attacks are no-trigger attacks only.

6th	Same as 5th
7th–8th	You can now include yourself as one of the three targets.
9th–10th	Spell now has up to four targets.

Champion Feat: One target of your choice can reroll an attack roll or disengage check they make with their action. If the escalation die is 3+, all the targets may do so.

Invisibility

"I pull your image off you, fold it up, and tuck it into one of my pouches."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**
Target: Yourself or one nearby ally
Effect: Until the end of the battle (or for five minutes out of combat), the target becomes invisible until it attacks or uses some ridiculously flashy action.
High Arcana: The duration out of combat is 1 hour, instead.

6th	Same as 5th
7th–8th	You can now target 1d3 nearby allies (including yourself) with the spell.
9th–10th	Creatures made invisible by the spell have a 25% chance of remaining invisible the first time they attack or get flashy. Twice? They're visible.

ON INVISIBILITY

We don't believe in long-lasting invisibility that lets you attack without fear of becoming visible, not for the player characters and not for the monsters. Yes, we know long-lasting invisibility is a staple of the genre thanks to the special ring that hairy-footed little guy won playing the riddle game, but that's a one-of-a-kind ring. Save long-lasting invisibility for once-in-a-campaign stories rather than commonly available spells or powers.

7th Level Spells

Blink

"Each time you blink out, you catch a glimpse of the parallel dimension that you are blinking into. The daytime sky is full of black stars."

Close-quarters spell ◆ **1/arc**
Target: Yourself or one nearby ally
Effect: For the rest of the battle (or for five minutes), the target gains *resist damage 16+*. Enemies who can see invisible creatures ignore this resistance. Player, cast this spell just before combat, if you can.
Whenever the target uses a move action, there is a 50% chance that it can teleport somewhere nearby instead of physically moving.

8th	60% chance to teleport
9th	65% chance to teleport
10th	70% chance to teleport

Epic Feat: Resistance changes to *resist damage 18+* until the target is hit once, then drops to *resist damage 16+*. Increase the teleport chance by 20%, so that as a 10th level spell you have a 95% chance to teleport when you move.

Hold Foe

"I utter a single unpronounceable word, and the ogre mage flinches."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/battle** ◆ Quick action to cast
Target: One nearby enemy with 500 hp or fewer
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. MD (no take 10)
Hit: The target loses its next move action; if the escalation die is 3+, it loses its next standard action, instead.

8th	600 hp or fewer
9th	800 hp or fewer
10th	1000 hp or fewer

Champion Feat: You can cast the spell on two targets if they each have half the listed hit points or fewer.

Epic Feat: The target loses its next standard action instead of its next move action; if the escalation die is 3+, it loses its next standard action *and* move action.

Flight

"It's my favorite spell. Not my most powerful. My favorite."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**
Target: Yourself or one nearby ally

Effect: The target can fly until the end of the battle (or for five minutes). Your speed doesn't increase appreciably but you can move in three-dimensions. (Flight rules are on *GMG*: 59.)

- 8th The spell can affect two creatures.
- 9th When you cast the spell, you can choose one: the effect lasts for an hour OR you can target 1d4 + 1 creatures for the normal duration.
- 10th You get both the 9th level effects.

Power Word Kill

Before your wizard casts this spell for the first time, explain to the table the virtue or knowledge that your wizard uses to wield death magic without dying themselves.

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**
Targets: One nearby foe with 80 hp or fewer
Special: Instead of rolling for this attack, you can choose to make your attack roll a natural 10. (Only roll if the GM tells you that's not enough for a hit.)
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. PD
Hit: The target is dead, and we mean dead.
Miss: 40 poison damage; this damage cannot be prevented, reduced, or bargained away.

- 8th 100 hp or fewer; miss damage: 50
- 9th 120 hp or fewer; miss damage: 60
- 10th 160 hp or fewer; miss damage: 80

Transfer Enchantment

Some gifts are best passed along to others.

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. MD
Hit: 35 (10d6) psychic damage, and you can transfer one condition caused by your enemies from you or the ally you are next to over to the target. If timing is required, interpret the transferred condition as if you had caused it with this spell.
Miss: Half damage, and you regain the spell during your next quick rest.

- 8th 40 damage
- 9th 50 damage
- 10th 70 damage

9th Level Spells

Disintegrate

"The coruscating ray that flies from my wand looks thin and weak, but it shoots straight through the marilith."

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**
Target: One nearby enemy
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. PD
Hit: 60 damage, and the target is vulnerable (hard save ends, 16+). In addition, if the target drops to 0 hp from this attack, or drops to 0 hp before it saves against the vulnerable effect of this attack, it is gone, dusted, nothing remaining.
Miss: Half damage.

- 10th 80 damage

Epic Feat: Increase damage to 80 (9th level) or 100 (10th level). You can now target a far-away creature.

Meteor Swarm

When the powers of this world are not up to the task, the most powerful wizards call on help from above.

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc**
Special: Nothing more happens this round but roll 1d3 + 1 to determine how many meteors you have called. Next round, you can use a quick action to call down a meteorite, resulting in the attack described below. Each round, you can call down another meteorite until you run out. If for some reason you don't call down a meteorite on a given turn, that meteorite is lost; you can't save them up for later. We think of this spell as calling meteors out of the sky, but they're magical meteors that can strike your foes even inside or deep underground.
Target: Each meteor targets up to 1d3 + 1 foes in a group.
Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. PD
Hit: 70 damage of the energy type of your choice (cold, fire, lightning).
Miss: One-quarter damage.
Collateral damage: Each ally engaged with one or more enemies you are targeting takes half damage unless they succeed at an immediate normal save (11+).

- 10th 80 damage

Epic Feat: The miss damage increases to half damage.

Teleport

Sometimes, the shortest distance between two points is the snap of your fingers.

Ranged spell ◆ **1/arc** ◆ Move action to cast
Effect: You and up to 4 allies next to you can choose between making a tactical teleport to somewhere nearby or far-away that you can see, or making a long distance-jaunt, teleporting to any location in the world, underworld, or overworld that you have previously visited.
A tactical teleport moves you all together, repositioned as you choose. If you're in initiative order, stay there, this is a combat trick.
When you teleport long-distance, roll a d20. If you roll a 1, something weird happens and the GM is going to send you somewhere else interesting. Otherwise, you and your allies arrive at the desired location at the start of your next turn.



Any effects of spells or items cast before teleporting long-distance are dispelled and no longer function on arrival, so it's best to wait and use such spells after you arrive.

10th No risk of failing a long-distance teleport.

Epic Feat: Your allies don't need to be next to you before you cast the spell, just nearby. Alternately, if they are all next to you when you cast the spell, you can teleport to a location known to one of your allies.

Shared Talent: Familiar or Pet

The ranger, sorcerer, and wizard share variations of this talent. We'll open with the choice of your familiar/pet and the abilities they have in common. Then we'll turn to the powers, feats, and variations that separate the three versions of the talent.

Ranger players, we apologize for the nomenclature that follows. These general rules apply to your pet as well as to familiars, but you are outnumbered so we're using their term for your pet.

Choosing your familiar: Familiars are smallish creatures that, by definition, pose little threat to human-sized combatants in a fight. Typical familiars include cats, small dogs, frogs, hawks, owls, ravens, serpents, spiders, and toads. Other creatures are possible, particularly if your wizard has icon relationships that suggest a tiny imp, homunculus, ghostling, or raccoon would be appropriate. Wolves? Coyotes? Truly giant spiders? They're too big to be familiars. See the ability list below.

Intelligence and independence: Your familiar is probably as intelligent as a normal person. It can communicate with you most of the time, and it will stay close to your body unless you've chosen abilities that let it roam a bit. If the GM decides the story is improved by your familiar taking off to do its own thing (or perhaps even to fetch rescuers to get you out of that dungeon well), so be it. Your familiar is on your side but it's not perfectly in your control. If something terrible happens to your familiar and it gets blown up or eaten or otherwise destroyed, it comes back to you more or less intact the next time you get a full heal-up with a wild or magically persuasive story about how it escaped death. Alternatively, you could mourn your original familiar and get a new one. Certain elements of the Archmage's organization frown on wizards who go through too many familiars, but you're doubtless looking forward to that attention.

Not a damage target: We're not interested in tracking familiar hit points. Familiars are useless in combat, except as indicated by their abilities. Ordinarily, they aren't damaged by enemy attacks and spells, but if the story calls for it, well, exceptional events happen.

Familiars' abilities: As partly magical beings, familiars can have a variety of abilities. We don't tie specific abilities to specific familiars. You can, if that suits your sense of the world better, but we suggest most of the abilities that follow might be possessed by most of the possible familiars, though some of the resulting stories would be odder than others.

Choose **two** of the following abilities for your familiar. Use the parenthetical examples if they make sense to you, or invoke magic if you want to associate a creature with surprising abilities.

Agile: You gain a +2 bonus to Dexterity skill checks. (cat, hawk, raccoon, spider)

Alert, maybe even Insightful: You gain a +2 bonus to Wisdom skill checks. (cat, homunculus, raven)

Counter-bite: Each battle, if your familiar is close to you, it bites the *first* enemy that hits you with a melee attack after that attack, dealing 2 damage per level (no attack roll) to that enemy (5th level: 3 damage per level; 8th level: 4 damage per level). (non-toad, though fanged toads would suffice)

Flight: Flies as well as an overly cerebral hawk, which might, in fact, be precisely correct. It doesn't fly that often and usually sticks with you, but it can do so when its other abilities allow. (hawk, homunculus raven, owl)

Mimic: One battle per arc, you gain the use of the kin power (without feats) of one nearby ally. (raven, parrot)

Poisonous: Once per battle, when you hit an enemy engaged with you, you can add 5 ongoing poison damage per tier to the damage roll. (serpent, spider)

Scout: Once per arc, your familiar can separate itself from you and make a reconnaissance run of an area or location, and it may even manage that feat unseen (easy skill check for the environment to get your familiar to scout unseen). (any)

Tough: You gain a +1 save bonus; *tough* counts as two familiar abilities if you choose it. (dog, serpent, toad)

Talkative: Your familiar can talk like a person; but note that the GM speaks for the familiar more than you do. (any)

Ranger's Pet

Hunter Talent

You have a tiny or small animal as a pet, a (beloved?) creature that travels with you, may or not entertain your friends, and helps you when situations are dire.

Your pet's two main powers start out similar to those of the sorcerer's and wizard's familiars.

Close your eyes and let your pet tell you what to hit: Once per battle, while dazed, hindered, weakened, or stunned, you can make an attack as if you were not affected by that condition.

Your end is not your end: The first time you drop to 0 hit points in a battle, roll a normal save (11+). If the save succeeds, you don't take a Skull. In addition, you get a +5 bonus to your first death save each battle as your pet does its best to WAKE YOU UP (by shouting at you).

Adventurer Feat: Your pet gains another ability.

Champion Feat: (replaces adv) As above, and your pet gives a +5 bonus to your first two death saves each battle and a +3 bonus to all last gasp saves.

Sorcerer's Familiar

You have a familiar that is a tiny or small animal, a creature that aids your magic, gives you someone to talk to when your spells have scared off everyone else, and that might or might not allow itself to be coddled (or even looked at) by the rest of the adventuring party.

Familiars of sorcerers and wizards have two major powers in common. The first represents your familiar helping you cast a spell when you're in trouble. The second represents your familiar's ability to learn a bit of magic and help you when you are otherwise tapped out.

Close your eyes and let your familiar aim: Once per battle, while dazed, hindered, weakened, or stunned, you can cast a spell as if you were not affected by that condition.

The end is not the end: When you have expended your final limited-use sorcerer's spell, roll a normal save (11+). If the save succeeds, choose a spell of your level that you did not already cast this arc. Your familiar has the spell prepared and you gain it as if you had prepared it.

If the save fails, you can keep trying to access your familiar's spell by spending your standard action to roll a normal save. When you succeed with the save, you gain the spell, but you probably won't have an action handy to cast it until the next round—or the next battle if you've accessed your familiar's knowledge during a quick rest.

Mutato: Unlike the ranger and wizard, you don't choose two abilities for your familiar. Instead, you choose one permanent ability that suits your familiar's nature; the only limitation is that you can't choose *tough* as the permanent ability. Why only one ability? As with other sorcerer talents, you also gain an overspill power to use as you gather power.

Sorcerer's Familiar Overspill Effect

mutato; **2/arc**. Your familiar gains two more random familiar abilities until the end of this battle. At the end of the battle, roll a normal save. If the save succeeds, your familiar can keep one of the new abilities until the end of the next battle.

Your familiar might be like a normal creature at times, but not after it adapts to the abilities it gains from *mutato*!

Adventurer Feat: Your familiar gains *tough* as a permanent ability.

Champion Feat: Your familiar gains another ability, forever.

Epic Feat: (replaces adv) As adventurer feat, and the save to find your familiar's spell becomes an easy save (6+).

Wizard's Familiar

Your familiar is a tiny or small animal or creature that aids your magic, gives you someone to talk to when you would otherwise be talking to yourself, can provide a new spell when you've exhausted your spellbook, and contributes unexpected touches to the story when you or the GM feel moved to improvise. A familiar might or might not keep watch as you sleep, depending on whether it's sleepy.

You and the sorcerer have this much in common: Your familiars share two basic powers, though your feats interact with them slightly differently.

Close your eyes and let your familiar aim: Once per battle, while dazed, hindered, weakened, or stunned, you can cast a spell as if you were not affected by that condition.

The end is not the end: When you have expended your final limited-use wizard's spell, and have only at-will, cyclic, utility, and cantrip spells available to you, roll a normal save (11+). If the save succeeds, choose a limited-use spell of your level that you did not already cast this arc. Your familiar has the spell prepared and you gain it as if you had prepared it.

If the save fails, you can keep trying to access your familiar's spell by spending your standard action to roll a normal save. When you succeed with the save, you gain the spell, but you probably won't have an action handy to cast it until the next round—or the next battle if you've accessed your familiar's knowledge during a quick rest.

Adventurer Feat: Your familiar gains another ability.

Champion Feat: The save to find your familiar's spell becomes an easy save (6+).

Epic Feat: (replaces champ) Your familiar is reliable, and you don't have to roll a save to access its *end-is-not-the-end* spell. You get it as soon as you've cast your last limited-use spell.

Rituals

Most spells available to clerics, sorcerers, and wizards are either combat spells or are useful in combat. But our vision of the world is that many spellcasters use magic outside of combat for varied effects that a literal reading of the spell lists can't properly handle.

Our solution is to allow ritual casting of *any* spell known by a character who can use ritual magic. Clerics and wizards learn ritual magic as part of their training. Other spellcasters can learn ritual magic by taking the Ritual Casting feat (page 212).

As a rule, ritual casting is an elaborate sequence of magical actions. The usual process and complication of a ritual comes across as something like a combination of staging a puppet show (where the puppets are magical servitors) and cooking a five-course meal (where the final product is a desired magical effect).

Steps to take when casting a spell as a ritual:

- The player chooses the spell the ritual will use and expend. Once per battle, recharge, and at-will spells work fine for ritual casting, but are expended until the end of the arc.
- The player tells the GM what they are trying to accomplish and gathers ingredients for the ritual that feel right (or that the GM tells them are necessary). This can turn into a mini adventure itself if the GM and/or player want to take the story in that direction.
- The character spends 1d4 minutes/quarter-hours/hours preparing and casting the ritual. They can't cast other spells during this period. The ritual won't necessarily end if the PC takes damage, but it is ruined if a character falls unconscious or launches an attack of their own.
- The player makes a skill check using one of their character's magical backgrounds and whichever ability score the GM deems appropriate. Use the standard DC targets (or a special DC set by the GM), depending on the character's tier and the results the player is hoping to achieve. The higher the level of the spell the ritual consumes, the greater the effect.
- In certain cases, we've been known to allow an icon connection to replace the first and last steps in this ritual process. If a player uses an icon connection, the ritual becomes part of the narrative and the ritual's outcome becomes part of the story. A twist might require the spell or other resource to be burned, but a skill check probably isn't necessary when using an icon connection, unless the desired outcome is huge, like the *Healing the Forest* example on page 283.

Determining results: Choose outcomes that seem like logical (or magical!) outgrowths of the spell's normal effects. The effects don't have to play within the usual constraints of the magic system, and they don't have to be taken as a precedent for future rituals. Performing a magic ritual once actually makes it less likely that the same caster can perform the same ritual for the same effect again, because the world builds resistance to being broken. That's how we play it, anyway, since we think great magicians like the Archmage and Priestess are more limited in what they can accomplish with mighty magic than it might first appear. Examples of some ritual effects appear below.



Rituals for All

Many of our playtesters "extend the franchise" by allowing all spellcasters to cast rituals without having to burn a feat choice on Ritual Casting. If that suits your image of how magic works in your world, go for it. You're not hurting wizards and clerics by giving away something they also got for free. And we're just being stubborn by hanging on to our initial vision.

Failure means life gets interesting: As usual, use the fail forward mechanic: most rituals "work," but failure may provide results players did not properly bargain for, such as side-effects that send the story careening in a direction no one intended, complications with spirits that aid in the ritual but fail to disperse when the ritual is done, or coming to the attention of enemy spellcasters who note the partially-botched ritual as a disturbance in the aether.

Rituals expend the spell: No matter what outcome the ritual has, ritual casting expends the spell until the character's next full heal-up.

Timing options and combat: We're not specifying the exact period of time a ritual should require because we think that pace varies greatly by campaign. Some rituals feel right taking hours. Others seem like they could be accomplished in minutes, or perhaps even in 1d3 + 1 rounds if a dramatic situation requires a ritual solution. The important thing is that rituals prevent the caster from participating in combat as anything more than a target! If the heroes try to perform a ritual during combat, it's going to be a dicey proposition, as enemies try to take out the caster before the ritual is complete.

Note that rare instances of ritual casting during combat don't allow a hero to make a combat spell into an even better combat spell. Rituals aren't meant to be used to blast enemies into smithereens. Destruction *is* an option—imagine a ritual aimed at a tower or a magic portal—but not the type of destruction that occurs during a battle.

Summary: The PCs can use spells already in their arsenals as the basis for free-form magic that accomplishes non-combat effects. Part of the fun is setting the scene and explaining the ritual in the context of the world's magic; don't stint on the special effects budget!

Example ritual 1: The PCs acquire a fearsome bow created by the Diabolist. Simply carrying the bow threatens to overwhelm the rogue, who has no intention of using it. No NPC with an ounce of good intention is willing to take the risk to dispose of the bow. So, the wizard improvises a magic item destruction ritual using *acid arrow*, the perfect spell for disintegrating a demonic bow. Success means it works perfectly. Failure means the bow is destroyed, but the heroes will later discover that the demon inside the bow reincarnates somewhere else and the heroes are now its target.

Example ritual 2: Here's an example from our games of using a ritual during combat. The cleric's *unique* is that they stepped out of a painting created twice: once by the Elf Queen, and once by the Priestess. It's been established repeatedly that the cleric can step into magical paintings and travel between them, at least to get to the Court of Stars or the Cathedral. With the heroes trapped in a gallery of magical paintings, inside a factory run by the Diabolist, the cleric burns her *shield of faith* spell and spends three full rounds performing a desperate ritual to give the rest of the party the ability to follow her into the magical painting that looks the most like Santa Cora. Success means it works like a charm; failure means it works, but the demons follow them into the painting.



CHAPTER 5

UNIQUE HEROES

This chapter is about the choices you make to distinguish your hero from all others. It starts with your **One Unique Thing**, then considers the **backgrounds** that have shaped your hero's skills. Backgrounds flow into the **skill check** rules, followed by rules for **feats**. **Gear** gets a shout out, and the character creation info ends with guidance on choosing an **icon relationship** or three with the great powers of the world: the icons.

With character creation fully handled, we detour briefly into player advice for making the most of each campaign by creating **dramatic stories** and **telegraphing your intent**.

Looking ahead to your hero's successful career, the chapter ends with rules for **leveling up** and getting **incremental advances** along the way.

YOUR ONE UNIQUE THING

Each character should have a unique feature you invent when you create them. This One Unique Thing (sometimes referred to as a *unique*) is an unusual trait that sets your character apart from every other hero. The moment when all the players sit down together with the GM to create their characters' *uniques* is often the moment when a campaign comes to life.

The intent is not to create a new ability or power that will help you in combat; your character class already comes loaded with firepower and combat moves. Rather, the intent is to hint at a unique story that you and the GM will take advantage of and learn more about during the campaign. Good *uniques* frequently provide clues to how your character engages with the people, places, and things of the game world. Sometimes, good *uniques* drip with obvious story hooks for you and the GM. Other times, they're a promise of a mystery to be unfolded later.

No combat bonuses, no combat powers: To repeat: a unique feature shouldn't provide general practical value in combat. Not as a bonus you can count on, and not as a power or defined ability you can count on in combat.

If you find yourself asking, "What type of action do I need to use my One Unique Thing?" or "When do I get this bonus?" you are asking the wrong questions.

If a *unique* does amount to having a power, it should be a non-combat power that opens up new story angles. Talking with trees (whose voices are in the GM's control)? Being such a party animal that you can eat most anything (including maybe some poisons)? Always telling the truth in a way that other people *know* you are telling the truth? All okay. These powers open up roleplaying opportunities.

Story effects are great: Sometimes your *unique* will have a practical effect on what your character can do in the world, but it's within the context of the story, not the rules. Characters who are unique tend to have an impact on people and on

ONE UNIQUE THING: PLAYERS' EXAMPLES

- "I am a deathless pirate whose soul is trapped in a gem controlled by the Blue dragon."
- "I am the bastard child of the Emperor."
- "I am the oldest elf in the world."
- "I know the location of the three or four nearest Koru behemoths. I don't know why or what this means, but I always know."
- "I hear pain as music. Sweet, sweet music."
- "A paladin of the Crusader cut off my arm where I was holding a demon-bow . . . and in doing so, cut all the evil out of me. I am now a paragon of the path of the Great Gold Wyrm."
- "I am a dwarf who was born covered in dragon egg scales."
- "Someone stole my shadow. When I kill a monster I take its shadow, but only for a day or two. I'm not really OK with this."
- "I am the reincarnation of an ancient icon. I don't yet know which one."
- "I am the three-time winner of the dwarven drinking championships."
- "I was the rudest lady-in-waiting of the Imperial Court."
- "I was a cleric of a god of hearth and home. I died and entered my god's heaven, but my god was dead, and heaven was empty, so I walked back to life. Now I'm a fighter with a bittersweet feeling about the gods, and I believe that if I die again, I'll just walk back. I'm probably wrong about that. I'll likely just die. But I don't know that."

magical events, so if plots in the story are afoot because of your existence, it's certainly also the case that your One Unique Thing may provide unexpected resources for you or the GM to create and suggest during play.

Hints of power: Some *uniques* can suggest there are certain powers associated with the character's unique status or strange history. The suggestion and the possibility are fine—this is the stuff fantasy protagonists are made of: the hint that they might be capable of extraordinary things. But hints rather than definite powers are best. Any powers or abilities that surface out of your *unique* may come as a surprise to you and will be part of the cooperative story you and the GM weave over the campaign.

For example, if your character's One Unique Thing is that they were born of a virgin impregnated with the blood of the Blue (one of the Three), then you might be the only PC able to sense the growing power of a nearby sorcerer tied to the Blue. That's a cool story angle in the GM's control, not a *sense-magic-related-to-the-Three* power you control yourself.

Campaign pivots: Some *uniques* are so exotic or compelling that they create a strong impetus for the campaign to revolve around their storyline. That should be a good thing. *Uniques* are meant to be one of your opportunities to add to the story of the campaign. It's possible that you'll surprise the GM with plots or details they hadn't yet realized existed or were going to be part of the campaign, and that's part of the fun of running *13th Age*—the GM gets to be surprised as often as the players.

Of course, not everyone can take center stage at once. When every PC ends up with a potentially world-shaking plot suggested by the long-term consequences of their *unique*, the GM decides which stories play out in which sessions, and in which tiers.

Characters'* uniques *can grow: As characters rise in power through champion and epic tiers, new revelations and the natural consequences of dozens of dramatic storylines shape and redefine their *uniques*. Stories grow, as they should.

Suggested backgrounds and icon relationships: Quite often, your One Unique Thing may suggest backgrounds and icon relationships that you'll choose in the next stages of character creation. That's fine. It makes perfect sense for a character whose *unique* is that they are a bastard child of the Emperor to have an icon relationship with the Emperor and some sort of background related to their history around the Imperial Court or wherever they lived in exile. But you don't have to work for this type of link, and don't force it if it's not what you want.

Art, not science: The One Unique Thing feature deliberately dances along the line between solid rules and improvisational storytelling. Try using our guidelines first. Then, once you're comfortable with the system, a high-powered campaign where everyone's *unique* comes loaded with true powers won't pose as many difficulties.

ONE UNIQUE THING: JONATHAN'S EXAMPLES

- "I am the incarnation of a hero who lived ages ago, and I'm sure Destiny has brought me back for a reason."
- "Unknown to me, I am fated to destroy the Lich King, but probably not in this age."
- "I am the daughter the Archmage doesn't know he has. Unfortunately, I don't have any proof, but I believe what my late mother told me."
- "I snuck into the Priestess' Cathedral to steal stuff, and ate some sacred bread that maybe I shouldn't have. I have no idea what, if anything, is going to happen to me."
- "Unlike other sorcerers, I charge up my arcane batteries by suffering."
- "I'm the only human to be called into the dwarven priesthood—ever."
- "I see dead people."
- "The stars sing to me. Sometimes they tell me things, and sometimes those things are true."
- "To you I might look like a halfling sorcerer, but I'm a dragon that's been stripped of its mighty form and power. Not that I'll ever tell anyone that."
- "I've been cut off from the mystic union the other elves feel with the Queen, and now I prefer the company of non-elves. I have developed a sort of reflexive, unconscious sympathy for other sentient beings, except for other elves."
- "I'm human, but I'm a member of a large, greenish-skinned group of people from a distant continent or world. Our ancestors came to this land ages ago, and we preserve our alien culture in a few isolated enclaves. Each enclave is locked in sworn vendettas against all the others, though these feuds are largely ceremonial. We have lots of odd traditions, but we also have secret wisdom about spirits and curses."



DELAYED *UNIQUES*

If players don't want to come up with a One Unique Thing right away, preferring to give the game a chance to develop first, it's fine to let some players feel their way into what is unique about their characters after the first or second session. This delay may come in especially handy if a player wants to figure out the tone of the campaign before settling on their big secret or special feature.



I don't need *the characters'* uniques *to be wild. The story works out fine when the One Unique Thing is something as prosaic as "I'm incredibly good looking and I get treated a lot better than I probably should just because I'm so good-looking." Of course, I'm also fine with far-out unique things like the human child of a zombie mother that we'll talk about in a few paragraphs. But in my games, the important thing is for the player to invent something that interests them about their character that's different from any of the other player characters.*

One Unique Thing Examples

Let's go through some examples with comments that sort through some options available to both player and GM.

Players Creating the Story

The world is half-created. We hit some high points, but we left a lot of things open. It wasn't because we were being lazy; it's because we want each campaign to pioneer new stories.

I am the only halfling knight of the Dragon Emperor: In most *13th Age* campaigns, there could be multiple warlike halflings serving the Emperor, but not in this campaign because Sir Gilly Tallfather wanted to be the only halfling knight in the world. Gilly's choice seemed likely to push the rest of the halflings firmly toward their hairy-footed pacifist origins, but it might also be possible that the Emperor saw something in Gilly that Gilly isn't aware of yet. Being a Knight of the Empire could turn out to be a lot more significant than Gilly realizes . . . .

I am the only acrobat who performed their way out of the Diabolist's Circus of Hell: Wow! Wonderful! We didn't know there was a Circus of Hell. But of course, there is. This halfling rogue walked with just a touch of brimstone. It was a convention game, so we didn't get deeply into the character. But when bad things happened around him, people just nodded knowingly and said, "Yeah, well, Circus of Hell."

I am the only human child of a zombie mother: This is the type of big picture *unique* that a GM can hang an entire campaign on. And Jonathan did, for a while, since the prophecies concerning this character seemed to be forcing at least three of the villainous icons to accelerate their timetables of destruction.

Cool Idea; Consequences Later

Some *uniques* sound so fun that everyone knows they're going to work out. The GM and players might not know what they mean to the story yet, but they know those *uniques* will have an interesting effect someday . . . .

I hear the spirits of ancient oceans, which manifest or shine through my bones and organs when I cast spells: This sorcerer appears human, until she casts spells. The oceans are mysterious, ancient oceans more-so, and so is this character's *unique*.

I have a clockwork heart made by the dwarves: Another convention halfling. We had no idea why this was true. In a real campaign, we'd find out, and the consequences would be interesting for everyone. In the convention game, the clockwork heart came in handy when a monster that should have killed the character fumbled with a natural 1; clearly the enemy's sword thrust encountered a powerful clockwork heart instead of halfling flesh-and-blood.

My eyes were unjustly put out in the elven Court, so the Elf Queen replaced them with magical opals: I referred to this wood elf ranger as the "Queen's Eyes." In a full campaign, her eyes would eventually have conveyed messages from the Queen, and perhaps other visions, with the problem being that the visions would appear to people looking at her opal eyes, not to her. Unlike reliable powers of prophecy or future-telling, which is what some player characters always want, these visions would have been unreliable and cryptic, images flashing across opals that would have to be interpreted on the fly.

I see truths in shadows that cannot be seen in the real world: The player of this character likes to pry out information he shouldn't really have. At first, he just wanted to be able to look at a person's shadow and tell if they were lying. Of course, I didn't want such a clearly defined power. And that's a terrible ability to allow into the game; along with mind control and seeing the future, being able to tell whether NPCs are lying can ruin dozens of excellent stories. So, I reinterpreted the *unique* to be fun for both of us: this character has a unique relationship with shadows. He does see things that no one else sees in them. But he doesn't see anything until I tell him what the shadows look like. He must interpret the fact that his ally's shadow just turned into the shadow of an axe (well, that wasn't hard, given that his friend had just picked up a roaring epic weapon), or that the shadow of a wizard's spellbook now looks like the shadow of a book on fire (much more cryptic).

I'm full of demons: This drow sorcerer made himself the GM's friend. He hinted that the demons might occasionally surface and provide a helpful power. But he admitted that ordinarily, the fact that he was full of demons created unfortunate skin conditions and even more unfortunate social awkwardness. And since this was his One Unique Thing, I

knew that in the long run, this wasn't going to be just any case of demonic possession. No, this was going to be serious juju. Clearly, his *unique* would also involve some form of icon relationship with the Diabolist. And possibly the Crusader.

I am bizarrely well-read, knowing everything about everything: Jonathan takes characters like this at their word, supplies more background points connected to knowledge, and looks forward to playing on their knowledge and paranoia as a means of motivating the campaign. They can't literally know everything, but they know a lot.

Rob notices that a character who has read a lot of books is not entirely unique, not in a world that contains an Archmage. So, he would find out if the player is interested in becoming the personification of an ancient library or a sentient reading-spell who has attained personhood. Jonathan wouldn't bother pushing in that direction, but he'd be perfectly happy if the player started with the weirder option for their One Unique Thing.

Seemingly Innocuous

Players with a great deal of experience playing d20 games sometimes have trouble coming up with ambitious *uniques*. When you've always understood that game balance is primary, it can be hard to let your unique flag fly free. So, we're okay with players who invent *uniques* that seem minor . . . at first.

I am the only elf in the world with human ears: A convention demo character. It's possible the player had something very special in mind for her future. It's also possible that round ears are sometimes just round ears and that being different in precisely this fashion was enough. In Rob's home game, the player would eventually uncover reasons why it was extremely interesting that this elf had human ears . . . unless the player didn't actually want to take center stage and deliberately chose a *unique* that gave them an out.

I am an elven pyromaniac: Wait, did we say innocuous? Perhaps we meant *simple*. This isn't necessarily a *unique* on any grand scale, but it's more than enough to work with. The player has specified that all other wood elves are *not* pyromaniacs, and that their character is a freak and a danger to society. It's sure to win them special friends and special enemies.

Too Much for 1st Level

Sometimes it's best to think of your *unique* as the first chapter in an epic story. You're an adventurer-tier hero. Someday, maybe, you'll be epic. There are *uniques* that would be right for an epic-tier character that aren't right for an adventurer-tier character.

I am a dragon rider: When Rob had a player who wanted to be a dragon rider, he said that seemed like a great thing for the character to grow into. At 1st level, Rob said that the character would be better off having a special rapport with dragons. In this case, the character established that part of their background involved having had a noble title stripped from them. It was an easy stretch to imagine that it was the post as the Keeper of Dragons in Axis, so that the character's rapport with dragons was natural and would stand them in good stead in champion tier, especially if they regained their titles.

I am the reincarnation of a previous Archmage/Emperor/High Druid and I remember everything: Well, no, you don't. You are a 1st level character rather than an icon. But as you rise in power, up toward 10th level, you will remember more and more.

Deliberately Pushing It

There's a fuzzy line with *uniques* that some players will insist on pushing. If you have a player who insists that their character's cool, story-based *unique* essentially amounts to a combat-relevant power they want to define, you *can* work with that. But you need to make it clear to everyone involved that the character is going to pay a price . . . and since the One Unique Thing is ordinarily free, the price has to matter. A PC with abnormally great power as an adventurer-tier character can expect to attract more than their share of dangerous attention. As the GM, you'll want to define these types of power in the story of the world in ways you *want* to take advantage of.

I am the only elf/dwarf/person in the world who can fly: Well, that definitely sounds like a power that's combat relevant. So here's how we would negotiate it. First, how do you fly? Are you saying that you are actually the only winged elf/dwarf in the world? Because if true, that's interesting. And if you have wings, well, sometimes you can fly, maybe. But come on, you're only an adventurer-tier character, and you're still figuring out this flying stuff. Your wings will be more powerful later.

That's how we handle the *overworld's wings* kin power for holy ones and dragonics, so maybe your wood elf or troll-kin takes an unusual kin power.



A winged dwarf? Let's talk about mechanical wings that require being fed true magical items to no other effect than occasionally powering the wings.

In both cases, there's a story element richer than simply, "I can fly." And there's a price that a pure power-gamer won't want to pay, but that could lead to more fun in the story of the game. If you decide to allow a *unique* that comes with a special power, it needs to be swapped for one of the character's normal kin or class powers, something roughly equivalent to the power that you've allowed.

***My mother is the living dungeon known as the Stone Thief and my father is an angel whose (failed) mission was to mellow her out*:** Syrwen looked like a petite and unassuming woman in outdated clothing. She chose a kin power from the holy ones and had a +5 background as *half-living dungeon*. Early in the campaign, she sometimes stashed objects in her dungeon half. Later, she teamed up with the party's bard to charm monsters from her mother's dungeon. Technically, you could argue that this was too weird and too much, but everyone enjoyed it. Syrwen wasn't stepping on other players; she was helping them survive a crazily dangerous living dungeon. Syrwen's *unique* helped the heroes connect with the campaign's core themes.

Backgrounds

Inventing backgrounds for your character lets you make up story elements to add to the game. Each background is a piece of your character's history that contributes to their ability to succeed with non-combat skills.

Instead of assigning points to skills, as you do in some other F20 games, in *13th Age* you assign a certain number of points (usually eight) to backgrounds. Backgrounds still allow you to choose how to allocate these points, which function as bonuses to d20 skill rolls; however, these points aren't pegged to individual skills. Instead, you put them into your character's backgrounds, which are broad categories of experience (cat burglar, for example) rather than specific implementations of that experience (such as climbing or hiding).

8 background points: Each character gets 8 background points. Assign your background points to as many backgrounds as you want, up to your total number of points. You can assign a maximum of 5 points (and minimum of 1) to a single background.

Backgrounds don't sync to a specific ability score, though some backgrounds obviously may get used more often with certain ability scores than others. For example, if your background is *silver-tongued sycophant*, you're probably going to use it for Charisma checks more than anything else.

Choosing Your Backgrounds

Most characters have two or three backgrounds, which represent their lives before they joined the adventuring party. If you're stuck, think about jobs your character has had. If you're still stuck, give the job a setting. Still stuck? Use the short list of backgrounds below or the lists at the start of each class section.

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

Some players choose backgrounds that correspond to their character's class. The most boring way to do that is to say, "Well, I'm a fighter, so I'll put 4 points into a *fighter* background." We usually don't settle for that in our campaigns. Instead, we ask players to figure out what type of fighting their characters did in the past. Did the fighter learn to use weapons as a *gladiator*? A *bounty-hunter*? A *bodyguard*? Or perhaps as a *former sentient magic weapon turned into a dwarf as a reward for long service* (which would probably also involve the character's One Unique Thing!) So long as the GM agrees, feel free to create a background story about a group your character was part of or perhaps a special magic or monastic style that's part of your character's past.

Getting specific: One fun way of giving your hero a wider range of experience is to make general backgrounds more specific.

For example, say that you put 3 points into the background *military chef*. You'll be good at cooking, adventure-worthy herbalism, military protocol, effectively managing underlings, buttering up superiors, and defusing arguments among young toughs before they turn into fistfights.

Add a specific detail, such as *military chef in the Crusader's field kitchen*, and you might also be able to apply this background to skill checks to identify demons (or pieces of demons), to intimidate local nobility, and to recognize poisons. (You'll inform the table that in this campaign, the Crusader eats every meal with a touch of poison. That might also explain why you lost the job in the end and have a conflicted relationship with the Crusader!)

Short List of Possible Backgrounds

The real fun is in inventing your own backgrounds, but here are some example backgrounds that players have used in our games. For more examples, see each of the class write-ups.

Child prodigy acrobat, beast trainer, disgraced architect, aristocratic noble, high-society assassin, Cathedral servitor, military chef, conwoman, dinosaur hunter, goblin exterminator, hunted outlaw, knight errant, Legionnaire of the 17th [Legion], palace handicraft-mage, heretical priest, refugee of the demon wars, monster-hunting scout, orphan shepherd, dutiful soldier, aristocrat's personal spy, temple acolyte, streetwise thief, heartbroken torturer, traveling martial arts pupil, tribal healer,

tunnel scout, wandering minstrel, and *warrior poet.*

As you might infer from this list, backgrounds are one more way for you to add details to the campaign background. If you're a refugee from "the demon wars," then there must have been some demon wars in the recent past.

Some backgrounds provide a way for you to add some meat to your One Unique Thing. For example: *derro-trained alchemist, transformed animal*, *magical dwarven axe*, or *Imperial insider* (for a bastard child of the Emperor).

Assigning Background Points

When you roll a skill check to find out if you succeed at a task or trick, the GM generally tells you which ability score is being tested. Then you (or in some cases the GM) choose the background you think is relevant to gain the points you have in that background as a bonus to the skill check. In rare cases, the GM may tell you that the background you're arguing for isn't relevant and you won't get to add the background points to the skill check. In other rare cases, your roleplaying approach to the situation and the background you've suggested using may change the GM's assessment of which ability score should be tested as the basis of the check.

Most skill checks require you to equal or beat a Difficulty Class (always abbreviated as DC and determined by the environment in which you're operating) to succeed. Other d20-mechanic games use a variety of ways to set skill check DCs; but as you'll see on page 53 of the *GMG* in the **Environment DCs for Skill Checks** section, we mainly care about whether your character is in an adventurer-tier, champion-tier, or epic-tier environment. Low-level characters can stray into areas in which they don't belong, but they shouldn't expect to succeed at many skill checks there!

Skill Checks

Making Skill Checks

D20 result + relevant ability modifier + level + the number of points in a relevant background vs. a DC set by the environment.

Heroes can't apply multiple backgrounds to the same check; the background with the highest bonus applies. For example, if Silke has *traveling acrobat* +2 and *cat burglar* +4, she gets a +2 bonus to her checks to tumble and a +4 bonus to her checks to pick a lock. If both backgrounds apply equally to a situation (such as a check to balance in a precarious place), she uses the +4 bonus. She does not add them together for +6.

The GM sets the difficulty of the check and decides which ability is relevant to the task. Players can tell amusing stories about why a hero's background or ability is relevant to a particular skill check, but in the end the GM has to be convinced, not merely amused.

Skill Check Example

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

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

- *Imperial mage* +4
- *Tooth of the Black Fang* (assassin training in the service of the Black Wyrm) +3
- *wild mountain tribe* +1

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

The GM buys it and decides Kasarak can use his *Black Fang* background instead, so the player rolls a d20 and adds +3 for *Black Fang*, +3 for Kasarak's level bonus, and the troll-kin's Constitution mod of +1—a total bonus of +7 vs. the normal adventurer-tier environment DC of 15. If the GM thought the mountain was particularly nasty, it would be a hard check, with a DC of 20.

OPPOSED ROLLS?

Other d20-rolling games frequently use "opposed" d20 rolls that pit skill vs. skill. Our system doesn't do that much, partly because we don't track skills for our NPCs and monsters. We use DCs set by the environment in which the skill check is occurring.

That said, if it's the dramatic tension of an opposed skill roll you're after, it's easy to swap in an opposed skill vs. an NPC for the static DC. Use the column marked **Trap or Obstacle Attack Roll vs. AC/PD/MD** on the **Environmental Threats** table (*GMG*: 55) as the NPC's skill bonus. Roll a d20 for the NPC as the PC rolls their own skill check; high result wins.

If two PCs are competing to see who does something first, or who does it better, by all means, use opposing skill checks and award speed or quality to the character with the better result.

GM Chooses the Relevant Ability Score

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

The wizard can't solve all her problems with her high Intelligence when her attempt to run across the floor without stepping on fluctuating ley lines requires a Dexterity skill check using her *kicked out of three wizard schools* background. The rogue might need to make a Dexterity check using his *cat burglar* background to confront the same problem.

A fighter might use his Wisdom in combination with his *Drakkenhall gladiator* or *wolf tribe champion* background to determine which enemy is the most dangerous while the conversation between the party and NPCs is still taking place. A bard with a good line of patter might be able to learn the same thing with a Charisma check, using her *Cathedral fund conwoman* background to get one of the enemies to point out who their strongest warrior is.

A fighter might have to make an Intelligence check using *half-legal bounty hunter* as the relevant background to identify the weapons (and thus a clue to the type of group using them) used on a group of villagers murdered by a secret cult. The cleric might not know much about weapon styles, but a Wisdom skill check using her *former cultist* background might help her identify the attackers based on fearful eyewitness descriptions. And so on.

Natural 20s and 1s with Skill Checks

When a player rolls a natural 20 on a skill check, the GM is free to give their character a hell of a lot more success than the player expected.

When a player rolls a 1 on a skill check, the skill check automatically fails, perhaps in a particularly bad way (a "fumble"). Often, a spectacular failure is more interesting than terrible.

Failures for a Better Story

In the old days, failing an important skill check usually made your heroic character look not so heroic after all. Sometimes, it even meant the story failed to move forward.

Today, we try to use failure as raw material to drive the story forward. Failures with skill checks shouldn't stop the action. Ideally, they shouldn't even slow it down.

A simple but powerful game mastering trick is to redefine a failed skill check as "things don't go as expected because something interesting happens," instead of "the PC isn't good enough to do this." Here are two general approaches to reframing failed skill checks that should help ensure a bad d20 roll doesn't lead to boredom.

Failing in Style

Feel free to interpret failures in ways that leave the heroes looking good!

Succeed backward: Sometimes when the hero fails to achieve their goal, it's because they succeed but don't get what they want. If the bard fails at a Charisma check to win over the ship's first mate, the bard indeed impresses the first mate, but circumstances turn the success into a failure. The bard was hoping to get inside information about the ship's mysterious cargo, but instead she finds out that the first mate is a member of a proselytizing cannibal cult. Instead of getting information, she must deflect the "friendship" the first mate offers. The hero was charismatic, but her attempt to gain the information failed. That improvised result drives more action into the story, making it a better option than the charismatic bard coming across as a boor who can't figure out how to make friends.

Be like Kirk: Sometimes when *Star Trek*'s Captain Kirk is being forced to walk somewhere under armed guard, he walks there as if he intended to do so anyway. Other times, he strikes out at the guards and gets free. Kirk, being Kirk, never tries to get past the guards and then fails because he's not up to the challenge.

For example, if a hero is tracking a spy through the streets of Glitterhaegen, and the player fails their "stay stealthy" Dexterity check to stay hidden, the GM says, "The spy crosses into an open square and turns in your direction. You are skilled enough to know you must stay back in the shadows or be spotted. You watch for as long as you can, but soon enough the spy moves on, and there's no reasonable way for you to follow them without revealing yourself." If a player insists on being unreasonable, maybe the GM lets them attempt a hard save to succeed. The results of a failed save should, in this case, be punitive and instructive.

It wasn't your fault: Sometimes when the hero fails at something, it's because of an unforeseen difficulty that explains the failure. Suppose the ranger fails their Wisdom check to guide the party expeditiously out of a haunted wood. Instead of telling the player their ranger just isn't that good at pathfinding, the GM says, "You follow the signs that would normally lead the party to an easy path, but these woods are subtly perverted, so the signs are all misleading. You learn the curse of these woods goes very deep, and it prevents you from using your knowledge to find a good path." Later, maybe the ranger gets to use something they learned about what's wrong with the woods.

DON'T SWEAT IT

The traditional way to interpret a failure is to see it as the character not being up to the task at hand. A low roll on the d20 implies some unexpectedly poor showing on the character's account. This interpretation is natural, and in practice we still use it sometimes, especially when combat or another event-in-progress is already keeping the story moving. Not all failures can be stylish, so don't sweat it if you miss a couple.

Style and Twists

The mental muscles you'll exercise coming up with ways to make failures "stylish failures" are similar to those you'll use when creating twists for icon connections. That doesn't mean they're identical. Twists with icon connections are not failures, and they may not have anything to do with "keeping the action moving." Still, the better you get at handling one of these forms of improv-theater, the better you'll get at handling the other.

Failure = Success, but Things Get Worse!

Feel free to interpret failure as moving the story forward, but not in a good way. Dramatically speaking, a negative result or a result that's a mix of good and bad is more interesting than a null result that stymies forward progress.

Success with consequences: Perhaps the rogue follows an agent of the Black Dragon through the alleys of Shadowport, and the player fails their Dexterity check to stay out of sight. Instead of telling the player their rogue loses track of his mark, the GM says he has no problem tracking the agent to a potter's shop serving as the false front for a cell of assassins. All the players at the table saw the failed check and heard the GM say everything is OK, so everyone at the table knows *something's* up, but only the GM knows what that something is. The agent being followed noticed the rogue, and when the heroes find the secret passage behind the potter's shop, there are more assassins there than would be fair. Adding monsters to an otherwise balanced encounter is a fine way to impose a practical penalty for a failed skill check. Bringing the action at the table to a crashing halt—not so much.

Failure exacts a price: Sometimes, players make a skill check to avoid paying a narrative price. If the rogue can find out where the Black Dragon assassins are meeting, then he doesn't have to appeal to his status-conscious cousin in the Imperial security forces for help. A failure means that, as a quid pro quo, the rogue must oblige the entire party to attend a child's birthday party for the cousin's bratty 7-year-old (costumes mandatory). From one GM to another, Jonathan highly extols the joys of forcing mighty heroes to accommodate the whims of a spoiled child. It's even better than making them flee, he assures you.





ON LANGUAGES

By default, the characters can talk to everyone they meet and can talk to most things they meet, as well. The common tongue is spoken more or less well just about everywhere. The game plays faster and smoother if you don't worry about only some of the party being able to talk to monsters or NPCs they meet.

But if you like games that are more specific about languages, decide what the languages are going to be in your campaign and then use the adventurer-tier and champion-tier linguist feats (see page 211) to provide access to them. Again, if a player makes a big deal about speaking languages as part of their background, we say give it to them. Don't charge feats unless there are going to be true advantages in your campaign for the character who has mastered many tongues.

GMs, if you're going to put work into thinking about languages, try using them as ways to make your campaign cooler, such as . . .

- A phantom from an earlier age whose ancient dialect is unintelligible.
- A manticore who speaks in broken phrases and randomly drops in words like "kill," "eat," and "meat" without noticing.
- An ancient tome whose unknown script can only be deciphered in Horizon.
- A demon that hisses in a blasphemous language, and you can intuitively understand what it means even though the words hardly sound like speech.
- Two high elves making jokes to each other in elven, jokes that just don't translate into any other language.
- An orc berserker who yells out a blood-curdling battle cry in orcish, and the orc troops scream in bloodlust. The characters don't know what the berserker said, but the GM tells the players he said, "Many parts are edible!"

Feats

You choose a feat at 1st level and at every subsequent level. You can choose a particular feat only once.

Feats appear in four tiers: adventurer-tier feats, champion-tier feats, epic-tier feats, and zenith-tier feats. Adventurer-tier feats are available to any character between 1st level and 10th level. Champion-tier feats are available starting at 5th level. Epic-tier feats are available starting at 8th level. Zenith-tier feats are only available as an incremental advance for 10th level characters, and so far as we can tell, by our rules, no hero will ever have more than one of them. You can always take a lower-tier feat in place of a higher-tier feat.

Feats Per Level

LEVEL	# OF FEATS
1st	1 adventurer
2nd	2 adventurer
3rd	3 adventurer
4th	4 adventurer
5th	4 adventurer 1 champion
6th	4 adventurer 2 champion
7th	4 adventurer 3 champion
8th	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic
9th	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic
10th	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic

As you'll see from digging through the character classes, most of the feats in the game are attached to specific class talents, attacks, and spells. There are also feats attached to kin powers in the Kin chapter.

If a feat is attached to a talent, power, or spell, you must have that talent, power, or spell to choose it.

When there is more than one feat attached to a specific talent or power, you don't have to start at the bottom and work up. You can usually choose a higher-tier feat without bothering with the lower-tier feat or feats attached to the talent or spell or whatever. The exception is when a higher-tier feat reads *adv-required*, or *champ-required*, in which case you must have the lower-tier feat to qualify for the higher-tier feat.

Replacement feats: There are a few champion- and epic-tier feats that *replace* a lower-tier feat. You need not have selected the lower-tier feat to take the higher-tier replacement feat, but if you did, you'll find that the higher-tier feat accounts for the lower-tier effect. It also opens up a lower-tier feat choice. See the champion-tier feat attached to the cleric's Strength domain on page 102 for an example.

OUR FEATS ARE DIFFERENT

Our feats are not like the character-defining feats used in some F20 games. Talents, powers, and spells can be character-defining distinctions between heroes. In *13th Age*, feats are usually more like interesting bonuses—incremental improvements to the spell, power, talent they're attached to. There are a few feats attached to champion- and epic-tier talents that make a great deal of difference, but most are deliberately not that ambitious.

Universal Feats

These feats are available to characters of any kin and class.

Further Backgrounding

Adventurer Tier: Add a total of 2 points to backgrounds you already have, or choose 2 points of new backgrounds that make sense for your character. The maximum number of points you can assign to a background increases by +1.

Champion Tier: Same as adventurer-tier feat.

Epic Tier: Same as adventurer-tier feat.

Improved Connections

Adventurer Tier: Once per level, you can treat a failed icon die roll as if it had succeeded with a 6. You must still roll for a twist when you use the icon connection.

Champion Tier: (replaces adv) You also gain an additional icon relationship die.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

In 1E, every champion-tier hero got another icon relationship die. 2E moves away from requiring that type of character change for all characters, but adventurers who have changed their allegiances and developed new connections need an opportunity to show it. You can use the new icon relationship point of the champion-tier version for a connection with an icon that has developed during play or to deepen one of your existing relationships.

Improved Initiative

You can take this feat only once. It improves as you rise in level.

Adventurer Tier: Gain a +4 bonus to Initiative checks.
At 5th level, the bonus increases to +5.
At 8th level, the bonus increases to +6.

Linguist

Adventurer Tier: If your campaign cares about languages, this is the feat you take to speak enough arcana, dwarven, elven, gnomish, gnoll, goblin, orcish, and other standard humanoid languages to comprehend enough of what most other humanoids are saying or screaming during battle. You are not fluent in all these languages, no one will mistake you for a native speaker, and your vocabulary is adventurer-centric—heavy on words connected to danger rather than philosophy or emotions. But if it's important to your character and it matches your backgrounds and story, sure, go ahead and be fluent in a few. You can also read enough to get by in all these languages.

Champion Tier: (requires adv) You can speak, read, and write all the humanoid languages fluently. Stranger languages are no problem for you either: giant speech, flame tongues, Abyssal, 4th Age reptiloid, lich-cant, etc. If someone is speaking it, you can probably figure it out given a bit of time to ponder and cross-reference.

There shouldn't be any *need* for an epic-tier linguist feat. If you really want one, you know what you want it for better than we do, and you could also probably let it incorporate what you got out of these two feats, so that you're only spending one feat instead of three.

Powerful Kin

Epic Tier: Gain a second kin power from your kin.

Precise Shot

Adventurer Tier: When your ranged or close-quarters attack targets an enemy who is engaged with an ally, you have no chance of hitting that ally. Yes, this applies to spells as well as weapon attacks.

Rapid Reload

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

Reach Tricks

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

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

LIMITING REACH

We suggest the Reach Tricks feat for the fighter and paladin only, and possibly the ranger if there's a ranger who's using a spear or halberd. It feels tacky for other classes, though a War domain cleric could make a case.

Ritual Casting

Adventurer Tier: You can cast any spells you know as rituals. Classes that are already ritual casters (cleric, wizard) don't need this feat. (See page 198 for the ritual casting rules.)

Skill Escalation

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

Strong Recovery

Adventurer Tier: When you roll recovery dice, add +3 to the result.

At 5th level, add +6 instead.

At 8th level, add +12 instead.

Toughness

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

At 5th level, the total bonus hit points increase to double your baseline hit point value.

At 8th level, the total bonus hit points increase to quadruple your baseline hit point value.

Zenith Adventurer

Zenith Tier (incremental advance for 10th level hero): You gain one epic-tier feat and one adventurer-tier feat.

FEATS LIST ONLINE

We've opted to move the giant list of feats online for 2E. We need the space. If you use the giant list to help you choose feats or plan ahead, you'll find it on the *13th Age* support page: https://pelgranepress.com/product-category/d20-games/archmage-engine/13th-age/.

Class and Kin Feats

PRE-REQ	FEAT NAME	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT	PAGE
Dragonic	Chromatic Resistance	A: *Resist energy 14+* to the five energy types associated with chromatic dragons: acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison.	45
Elf	Heritage of the Sword	A: Competence with swords for those who lack it, and a damage bonus with swords for those who already know how to use them.	32
Forgeborn	Mechanically Efficient	A: *Resist poison 18+* and less effect from being stunned.	46
Gnome	Animal Talker	A: You can talk with animals and gather information from them twice per arc.	37

Class and Kin Feats (continued)

PRE-REQ	FEAT NAME	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT	PAGE
Barbarian	Harsh Response	A: Once per battle, make a no-trigger attack against an enemy that has made an opportunity attack against you.	65
Barbarian	Zenith of Power	Zenith: You gain an additional barbarian talent, any tier.	65
Bard	All the Best Stories	A: Once per arc, heighten an icon connection and its twist.	86
Bard	Combat Gambit	A: Once per battle, take an ally's attack roll as your own. They reroll.	86
Bard	Endless Banter	A: Once per battle, force an enemy to reroll a melee atack against you with your Charisma modifier as an attack penalty.	86
Bard	Loremaster	C: Take two additional points of backgrounds and a single point of relationship with an icon. Excludes Mythkenner feat.	86
Bard	Mythkenner	C: Take two additional points of backgrounds and a single point of relationship with an icon. Excludes Loremaster feat.	86
Cleric	One More Spell	Zenith: You gain one more spell of your level.	99
Fighter	Final Talent	Zenith: You gain one more fighter talent from any tier.	114
Fighter	True Bond	Zenith: You have a very special relationship with an epic-tier magic weapon, armor, or shield.	114
Paladin	Talent of the Gods	Zenith: You gain an additional paladin talent, any tier.	126
Ranger	Terrain Stunt	A: You can use an improvisational combat stunt playing off the terrain.	137
Rogue	Danger Trigger	A: You're not ambushable, and it gets better as you level up.	154
Rogue	Rogue of Two-Weapons	A: You can now wield two melee weapons and hit on a natural 2.	154
Rogue	Smooth Talk	A: Gain the bard's Social Skills class feature.	154
Rogue	Swashbuckle	A: Once per battle you can pull of an amazingly daring stunt.	155
Sorcerer	Reverberate	C: You gain a follow-up second casting of select 1/battle spells.	164
Sorcerer	Surging	A: You can reroll the number of targets for a selection of spells.	165
Sorcerer	Wild Breath	A: Damage another enemy when you use a breath weapon spell.	165
Sorcerer	Wracking Echo	E: Once per arc, deal an additional 20 ongoing damage with one of several spells.	165
Wizard	Cantrip Mastery	A: You're a master of minor magics.	185
Wizard	Magic Missile	A, C, & E: First you learn to cast magic missile, then you become great at it.	185

Gear

Gear means both more and less in *13th Age* than in other F20 games. On the one hand, we are amping up the story content for your character, so the technical, gear-oriented details get amped down. On the other hand, you have more freedom to decide just what sort of gear your character has and what it means to you.

Traditional F20 games have your class modify how much gold you start with, which determines the gear you can afford, and your gear determines your armor class, combat damage, attack bonuses, crit ranges, etc.

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

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

That said, use the **Equipment Price Guide** in the Appendix as a guide to what costs what.

Armor Categories

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

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

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

Shield: We keep things simple and don't differentiate in game terms between bucklers, target shields, light shields, tower shields, or any of the other varieties. But the combat stories you tell might care.

Melee Weapon Categories

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

Small, one-handed: baton, small club, dagger, knife, sickle
Small, two-handed: big club, scythe
Light/simple, one-handed: hand axe, javelin (aka one-handed spear), mace, shortsword, wicked big knife
Light/simple, two-handed: spear, staff
Heavy/martial, one-handed: bastard sword, battleaxe, flail, hammer, longsword, morningstar, scimitar
Heavy/martial, two-handed: dire flail, dwarven double-axe, greataxe, greatsword, halberd, polearms, heavy warhammer
Two-weapon fighting: any two one-handed weapons the character can use (see page 314 for two-weapon fighting rules)

Ranged Weapon Categories

Use these ranged weapon categories as a guideline for the great number of things that can be thrown or shot.

Nearby Targets Only
Small, thrown: baton, club, dagger, knife, sickle
Small, crossbow: hand crossbow

Nearby Targets Okay; Far Away Targets –2 Attack
Light/simple, thrown: axe, javelin, spear

Nearby and Far Away Targets Okay
Light/simple, crossbow: light crossbow
Light/simple, bow: shortbow, sling
Heavy/martial, crossbow: heavy crossbow
Heavy/martial, bow: longbow

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

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

If the crossbow is your chosen weapon, you'll either want to invest in the Rapid Reload feat or get hold of a magic crossbow! Magic crossbows, or normal crossbows firing magic ammunition, can be reloaded as part of the standard action in which they are used to attack, just like longbows. Firing multiple shots? Not a problem with a magic crossbow.

SIZE AIN'T PENALIZED

Some F20 games say that small characters like halflings and gnomes use smaller weapons that deal less damage. If your vision of the world requires that, go ahead, but we prefer to play that the halfling and gnome adventurers in our game are exemplary heroes who aren't held back by their size.

Coinage and Economy

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

Coins of the Empire

So long as the symbol of the Emperor appears on one side, each of the Seven Cities has the right to stamp its own platinum, gold, silver, and copper coins. Axis and Glitterhaegen can be counted on to exercise this right fully; the other cities care less about their coinage, though it amuses the Blue to circulate coins from Drakkenhall.

It's generally understood that one city's coin is as good as another's, though trade disputes and people looking to start fights might complicate that. Sometimes, knowing what type of coinage someone is carrying can yield clues to where they've been and who they have been dealing with . . . .

The most common coins stamped by cities other than Axis are standard gold pieces. Gold pieces from Axis are often referred to as *imperials*, or "imps" by those showing disrespect. Gold pieces from Glitterhaegen are called *glits*. Newport contributes gold pieces commonly referred to as *nupes*, while gold pieces from Santa Cora are *saints*. No one uses slang for gold pieces from Horizon, probably because of lingering suspicions that disrespecting money from the wizards' city might trigger hidden booby traps. *Draks* from Drakkenhall *are* disrespected in parts of the Empire, but that doesn't mean they aren't accepted. Concord coins are rare enough that there isn't any slang for them, mostly because Concord is comfortable using anyone's coins as well as *towers* and *trines* (see below).

Occasionally, one of the cities will make special alloys and coins that are worth 5 gp or even 5 pp apiece. They're too rare to have slang names.

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

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

COINS FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

Campaign Coins makes dwarven tower coins! They also make icon symbol tokens you can use to track icon connections. Find them at https://campaigncoins.com/collections/13th-age.

Equipment Price Guide

As you'll have noticed, characters generally start with armor, weapons, and standard traveling gear. The price guide in the *GMG* Appendices includes such gear, for the sake of comparison, as well as some standard prices for common items found in the Empire. It also includes pricing for less common or more interesting items. It's in the *GMG* because, in the end, prices can change depending on the wishes of the GM and the way each campaign handles treasure.

Icon Relationships

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

If you haven't already, scan over the list of icons in the **Introduction** on page 2, then page ahead to Chapter 6 and read the full entry on any icon that intrigues you.

As you decide on the relationship to the icons that best suits your player character, remember that it's the nature of this magical world that even the most powerful figures need a lot of help to accomplish their goals. The icons have risen to power levels where they balance each other in an uneasy equilibrium. To further advance their agendas, the icons need heroes and champions to tip the balance in their favor. You should feel free to make your character central to big plot lines, if that's what suits you.

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

Relationship Points

Each character gets 3 icon relationship points. The number of points you spend on a relationship is a measure of its overall usefulness, since the relationship mechanic lets you roll one d6 per point invested in a relationship at the start of each arc (page 269). Alternatively, if you're using Jonathan's alternate icon connection rules, you'll roll one die per icon point when you're hoping to leverage your connection to the icon (page 270).

A bit of knowledge: If you're a player who prefers to skip over stuff you don't need to know, you may still want to read the full write-ups of a couple of the icons you're most interested in. Those write-ups appear at the start of the next chapter. Your group's campaign may diverge from our default view of the icons, but the write-ups will give you starting points.

Defining your relationship: For each icon with whom you have one or more relationship points, you decide whether the relationship is positive, conflicted, or negative. As you'll see below, it's easier to have positive and conflicted relationships with heroic and ambiguous icons, and to have negative relationships with villainous icons.

The nature of your relationship with an icon gets fully expressed during play when you use an icon connection, as we cover in Chapter 6.

Our suggestions for which icons qualify as heroic, ambiguous, and villainous appear below, but you'll see that we expect each GM to tinker with the icon identities to suit the campaign's story arcs and players' character concepts. (Detailed advice and several icon-shifting campaign examples appear on page 34 in the Running the Game chapter of the *GMG*.)

Heroes, naturally: *13th Age* assumes that you're playing as heroes. If you want to run a game about becoming archvillains, you'll probably want to flip the point maximums between the heroic and villainous icons.



Gamemaster Advice: Icons

Yes, this is the player's book. But choosing icon relationships must be a collaboration with the GM, who may or may not already have ideas about which icons are most active in the campaign.

These rules sort icons into three categories: heroic, ambiguous, and villainous. Since the GM and players collaborate to define the icons for each campaign, we can't tell you which icons definitely fit into which category. The rules here refer to how the icons *usually* fall on the heroic-villainous spectrum, but your campaign might vary.

Focus: In general, the GM frames the new campaign by naming one, two, or three icons the campaign is more or less "about" and defines the icons they chose. Then, the players add a few more icons related to their characters, and customize them. At this step, you should develop these concepts far enough that it's obvious whether they are heroic, villainous, or something else. If one player is connected to the Dwarf King, they can say whether that icon is more like a greedy militarist (ambiguous) or like a stalwart ally against evil (heroic).

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

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

The usual mix: We generally do a little pre-planning and offer guidance around the icon roles, followed by adjustment and retconning as our players create their *uniques* and backgrounds.

USING YOUR ICON RELATIONSHIPS

We'll cover the full rules for using icon relationships starting on page 269 in the Icons & Icon Connections chapter. For now, as a player, you need to know that at the start of each arc, you'll roll a d6 for each of your icon relationships to randomly generate one or more icon connections for the arc. You can use an icon connection to influence the story of the game—narrating events, contacts, or even flashbacks connected to the icon or its organization.

Heroic Icons

OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY
Archmage	Dwarf King	High Druid
Emperor	Elf Queen	
Great Gold Wyrm		
Priestess		

Positive Relationship with Heroic Icon (max 3 dice)



"The Priestess loves me; I can feel it."

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

Conflicted Relationship with Heroic Icon (max 3 points)



"I'm done with the Archmage. So done."

The icon harbors both favorable and unfavorable inclinations toward you. The conflict is often between two different levels of social interaction, such as, you're from a family to which the icon is indebted, but your personal behavior has caused real problems. You can usually manage it so that the connection benefits you more than it sets you back, but sometimes it bites you on the ass. Occasionally, if you're a troublemaker, you might have the opportunity to cause problems for the icon that relates to your conflict.

Negative Relationship with Heroic Icon (max 1 point)



"Officially, there's no Imperial reward for my capture. Unofficially, I watch my back."

Your hero can have a negative connection to a heroic icon, but only if your goal is to provoke drama and not to cause trouble.

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

Ambiguous Icons

OFTEN	SOMETIMES
Crusader	Emperor
Dwarf King	
Elf Queen	
High Druid	
Prince of Shadows	

Positive Relationship with Ambiguous Icon (max 3 points)



"The Elf Queen is in my heart, and I in hers."

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

Conflicted Relationship with Ambiguous Icon (max 3 points)



"The Dwarf King is proud of my powers, which I learned from him, but he can't accept my decision to walk in the sun with land people."

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

Negative Relationship with Ambiguous Icon (max 2 points)



"As a defector from the Crusader's war machine, I know a lot. Things I shouldn't know. Things nobody should know."

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

Villainous Icons

OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY
Diabolist	Crusader	High Druid
Lich King	Prince of Shadows	
The Three		

Positive Relationship with Villainous Icon (max 1 point)



"Yes, it's true I get my magic from the Great Blue Wyrm, but it's strictly a business deal."

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

Conflicted Relationship with Villainous Icon (max 2 points)



"My family are all grave-tenders, and we help keep the Lich King at bay with incantations of praise. I think a lot of people don't really understand the true Lich King."

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

Negative Relationship with Villainous Icon (max 2 points)



"Silver dragons taught me the secrets of thwarting the Diabolist's wicked schemes."

The icon is out to get you, at least in the abstract or by implication, and/or you're out to get most everyone who works for the icon. This relationship often implies some special knowledge you have about the icon or power against the icon.

Relationships are About Utility, not Strength

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

We had a PC in one campaign who was a bastard son of the Dragon Emperor who spent a good deal of time in the presence of the icon and in court, despite it being only a one-point relationship. The Emperor had a lot of bastards in this campaign, and although the connection was often recognized, not everyone in the Emperor's service was keen to help out yet another of his bastards. The Emperor's personal feelings about his son weren't the point.

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

To be clear, our games almost always treat the icons as off-stage characters. If you, as GM, want to bring an icon to center stage, make sure that NPC doesn't steal the spotlight from the player characters.

Icons' Organizations

Most of the time when the PCs are interacting with an icon, they're actually interacting with the icon's lower-level functionaries, acolytes, disciples, bureaucrats, lieutenants, barons, or priests—the types of people we'll have NPC and monster stats for in the upcoming *Icon Followers* book. The Icons & Icon Connections chapter contains many examples of organizations related to each icon.

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

Changing Relationships

When your character achieves champion level (5th), take another look at your icon relationships and see if you want to adjust them. Has your connection to an icon grown or perhaps shrunk? Do you have a connection to a new icon? Hitting champion tier is a big milestone and a good time to assess your character's story arc. Even if you keep your relationships the same in terms of points, it's likely that these relationships mean more at champion tier than they did at 1st level. In your character's case, what's different?

At 8th level, you reach epic tier, and that's a good time to put the same sort of thought into your icon relationships.

Advice for Players

Now that you know everything you need to know to create your first character, we want to share a slice of advice on how to generate the most fun with your character. We give the GM all sorts of advice but making the game enjoyable for everyone isn't just the GM's responsibility. Players can take active steps to set up a better game, too.

Create Dramatic Stories

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

For example, the smart thing to do when the party arrives at a new city might be to keep a low profile until the characters can get a read on the local scene. That's prudent. But what do your characters really want to do when they finish a long journey and arrive at a new city? Perhaps they want something more interesting, such as seeking out a famous inn to see whether its desserts really live up to their reputation as the "best in the land." Or maybe the characters have distant

relatives or old friends they feel duty bound to check in on. You can probably think of something more interesting to do than whatever the most prudent course of action would be. This sort of open-ended activity is a good opportunity for you to expand your character's horizons or reinforce their personality.

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

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

Telegraph Your Intent

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

For example, if you ask, "Just how far away is this enchanted glade where the magical boars were killed?" The GM might invent an answer based on what seems to fit the fictional world and say, "A couple days' travel inland." If, however, you first say, "I wish I could see the place where the boars were killed and try to glean some clues from the arcane signatures left behind by the killer," then the GM might invent an answer that helps your character do something interesting. Maybe the GM says, "The glade is just outside the city, but it's magically hidden so most people hardly know it's there. If you can persuade the local druids, you might be able to gain access."



Leveling Up

We used to advise getting through 1st level quickly, but that was a reaction to how other F20 games handled 1st level. 1st level heroes in 13th Age *can be just as much fun as higher-level characters, and if you want to move things along you can use incremental advances.*

Leveling Up

We've both presided over editions of the d20 game that tracks experience using experience points, but in practice, we think XP systems are better left to computer games. Rob runs three arcs per level, which keeps things moving. Jonathan runs four arcs per level, which makes incremental advances more meaningful. In other words, in our campaigns, characters level up after somewhere between nine and sixteen serious battles, and the whole party levels up together. Players who miss the session where everyone levels up can do so before the next session.

Those are our defaults. In practice, we fudge leveling speed all the time for dramatic purposes and the pacing of the specific campaign. Sometimes, it takes more time to level up, sometimes it takes less. If your players enjoy the champion-tier sweet spot most of all, consider extending it by leveling up more slowly.

Most of our players don't seem to mind the slower leveling up in *13th Age* as much as they previously did when we used XP systems. For one thing, each increase in level means a lot more. Also, the incremental advance system (see below) gives the characters measured benefits even when they're not leveling up.

Benefits of Leveling Up

When a PC does level up, they get the following benefits:

- +1 to attacks, defenses, and skill checks.
- One additional damage die with weapon attacks. (8th level and above also grants a cumulative +5 damage per epic-tier the character possesses; see **Weapon Damage Progression** on page 59.)
- About 25% more hit points (by class and level) as shown on the class progression table.
- One additional recovery die, as shown on the class progression table, and bonuses for epic tiers.
- An additional feat. Players may choose any feat whose prerequisites their character satisfies. Feats are classed as adventurer (can be chosen at any level), champion (can be chosen at level 5+), and epic (can be chosen at level 8+). Certain feats are 11th level zenith-tier feats, available only through an incremental advance when a PC is already 10th level.
- The ability to attune an additional magic item (see *GMG:* page 174).
- +1 to several ability scores at 4th level, 7th level, and 10th level. The class progression tables spell it out.
- At 5th and 8th levels, the ability score modifier contribution increases for damage and recoveries; when allowed to add an ability modifier, it's doubled at 5th and quadrupled at 8th.
- Possibly more powers and spells, and almost certainly an increase in the effect of spells and powers from earlier levels. The rules for acquiring or improving powers and spells vary from class to class, as noted in Chapter 4.

Incremental Advance

No more than once per arc, the characters get an incremental advance, which gives them a little bit of the benefit of leveling up. If that timing sounds fuzzy, it's because Jonathan tends to award them every arc and Rob only awards them once or twice per level.

Timing: Jonathan prefers to award the party an incremental advance just before the last fight in an arc. The characters may be wounded and weary from previous battles, but they face their next foe with redoubled resolve.

Rob prefers to mix things up and award incremental advances when the party seems to deserve it, often at the end of an arc when the players are already doing paperwork to get ready for the next adventure. He's also more likely to give an incremental advance to a single hero who performed admirably, while Jonathan keeps things even.

Tracking: Character sheets have an *Incremental Advances* section to track which advances a player chooses. They can take each incremental advance only once per level.

Four advancements are available at 10th level, giving characters access to "11th level" stats—in particular, the coveted 11th level zenith-tier feats. ("*These* go to eleven.") We imagine most campaigns come to climactic conclusions by the time the 10th level heroes have earned a few incremental advances.

Below is a list of incremental advancement choices:

Ability score bonuses: At 4th, 7th, or 10th level, players can add +1 to first three, then four, and finally five of their character's ability scores. In other words, as a 3rd, 6th, or 9th level character, this is an attractive advancement to choose.

Class feature: If a hero has a class feature that improves every level, with a level-by-level chart, they can bump their effective level up by one on that table. Examples include bardic control thresholds, the cleric's *turn undead* spell from their Turn Undead feature, the paladin's Smite, the ranger's Lethal Hunter, the rogue's Rush Attack, and the rogue's Sneak Attack feature. For some classes, this can be a zenith-tier advancement.

Counter-examples? It doesn't apply to the ranger's Animal Companion, which is a talent, not a feature. Nor can incremental advance apply to the wizard's Magic Missile feat, because, yes, it's a feat, not a class feature.

Feat: The player chooses a feat. For the purposes of this feat, their PC's level is one higher than normal. When they level up, they can switch this feat out for another feat of their choice. It's not cheating for a player to pick a feat that can help in upcoming battles and then swap it out when leveling up. Just come up with a good story for how that happens. Players can take a zenith-tier feat at 10th level.

Hit points: Your maximum hit points increase as if you were one level higher. If you are presently damaged while mid-adventure, your current hit points increase by the same amount.

Magic item: Characters can attune an additional magic item as if they were one level higher. Characters can take this increment at 10th level.

Mental Defense: Fortify your mind a touch early! Gain the +1 bonus to MD you would normally get when you next level up.

Physical Defense: Same story for dodging and toughing things out, a +1 bonus to PD ahead of time.

Power or spell: A character gains a single power or spell that they could take at their next level. And yes, if it's a spell, they cast the spell as if they were that next level! But weapon attack powers still deal damage using the character's actual level; you can't bump up a *raging strike*, and if you choose a new fighter maneuver, you still deal weapon damage with it based on your actual level. A character can take this advance only once per level.

Skills and Initiative: Add +1 to all skill and initiative checks. A character can even take this increment at 10th level.

Talent: If a PC's class gains a new talent at the next level (ranger and paladin at 5th and 8th, for example) the character can take that talent as an incremental advance one level sooner (at 4th or 7th level).

Ability multiplier: At 4th level, characters can choose to gain the 5th level benefit of doubling their ability modifiers when they apply them to damage, recoveries, etc. At 7th level, they can gain the 8th level benefit of quadrupling their bonus.

No attack bonus, AC bonus, or improved recoveries: Characters only get these valuable benefits the old-fashioned way.

Incremental Spell Advance Example

Here's an example of a wizard choosing a spell as an incremental advance.

Jasayz is a 2nd level sorcerer gaining an incremental advance after the second of four battles in an arc. They have already cast two of their three limited-use spells. At 3rd level, Jasayz is still going to have three spells that can be limited-use spells, so it's lucky that they have one uncast 2nd level version of a 1st level spell that can be replaced with a 3rd level spell like *catastrophic blast*. Another option would be to upgrade the uncast 2nd level spell to 3rd level. A third option would be to "level-up" one of Jasayz's two at-will spells, and that option would be available even if all their 1/arc spells were already expended.

When Jasayz becomes 3rd level, an incremental advance could be used to acquire an entirely new 4th level limited use spell, because a 4th level sorcerer can cast up to four limited-use spells alongside their two required at-will spells.



CHAPTER 6

Icons & Icon Connections

This chapter contains two intertwined sections.

Section 1: Icons profiles the twelve living icons of the 13th Age and provides details about how each can frame a campaign, contribute to heroes' backgrounds and ongoing stories, and play into icon connections. There's also an inquiry into the death of the thirteenth icon, the Orc Lord.

Section 2: Icon Connections focuses on the game mechanics that connect each hero to the icons. Sometimes, the elements heroes' icon connections add to the story are strictly narrative, affecting the heroes' standing among NPCs or the well-being of NPCs the characters care about. In other sessions, icon connections provide both narrative *oomph* and concrete assistance, such as helping the party overcome a hardship, avoid a setback, or gain an advantage in a battle to come.

The **Icon Connections** section ends with fifteen pages of in-play examples that draw on the goals, organizations, and raw iconic powers we discuss for each icon earlier in the chapter.

Section 1: Icons

Icons connect the player characters to the most powerful forces operating in the campaign. They affect the narrative first by serving as a framework for backstories and campaign plots and second through the player characters' icon connections.

The icons themselves are generally off-screen. They serve to orient the campaign and the heroes, but most of the connections involve power structures subsidiary to the icons. If, for example, your hero has a negative relationship with the Great Black Wyrm because they defected from the Black's circle of assassins, it's the assassins and their allies your hero tangles with, not the Black Dragon itself.

We outline the following information for each icon in this section.

The Icon in the World

A straightforward description of the default version of the icon.

The Icon and Your Hero

Most of the time, this information pertains to heroes who have relationships with this icon. Your hero's icon connections might suggest certain *uniques*, special backgrounds, or just character history. The bit about relationships can help you think through your character's positive, conflicted, and negative relationships. This section also discusses what it means for the party to be connected to the icon, possibly as a patron and perhaps as a main villain.

Using Connections

You define how your characters' icon connections work, and this section shows you how it's done for this icon. The icon connection examples that begin on page 274 elaborate on these themes.

Strengths and Virtues

Sometimes, an icon connection represents the special knowledge, skill, magic, or other capability your hero developed thanks to their relationship with that icon.

Raw Iconic Power

Even though most icons aren't spellcasters, an icon's being is magically connected to the world. Some heroes can embody the power of the icon(s) to which they are connected, especially those icons known to have a mystical connection to their followers, such as the Priestess. Sometimes, it's a conscious action, like casting a spell; other times, the icon's mystic force influences the world while the hero remains oblivious (see the discussion of active and passive heroes on page 274).

Organizations

Since the icons themselves are off-stage, the heroes most often interact with NPCs and organizations devoted to the icons, and you're likely to invent an organization to flesh out your hero's connection to an icon or two. These entries provide example organizations designed to serve certain narrative purposes. These organizations are offered as suggestions. They exist in your campaign only if you or your players decide to include them. If you do use them, feel free to develop and modify them to suit your campaign.

Along with what you and your GM create together, we've introduced many icon organizations already in the twenty or so *13th Age* books we've published since 2013. There are more coming in *Bestiary 3: Icon Followers*.

Powers and Places

Heroes sometimes find help in places where no mortal could reach them. Help can come in the form of spirits sent by the icon's followers, allied spirits that happen to be in the area, blessings or abjurations previously laid down by an icon, forgotten holy or arcane sites associated with the icon, or magical support sent from afar.



Archmage

The Archmage is the icon with the most arcane power. He makes a great icon for wizards, for unique creatures of his godlike experiments, and for heroes tasked with holding civilization together despite its enemies and its internal contradictions. He has also threatened the fabric of reality with experiments you'd have to be brilliant or hugely arrogant to attempt.

What sacrifice was the Archmage ready to make to help defeat the Orc Lord? Did the sacrifice occur?

The Archmage in the World

The Emperor rules the Dragon Empire, but it's the Archmage who holds it together. His magic rituals quiet storms, enliven crops, and stave off plague. Before the war against the Orc Lord, the Empire enjoyed order, security, and wealth, largely because the Archmage warded off chaos, peril, and calamity.

Everyday people order their lives according to the Archmage's unknowable schemes. Farmers plant various crops at different times—sometimes burning them down or leaving fields fallow—all coordinated according to the Archmage's inscrutable schedule. Merchants consult the Archmage's almanacs to find the best times to set sail and the proper times to ship one cargo or another. Rulers shift the dates of festivals or marriages, not to follow the stars but to follow schemes spelled out to them by the Archmage's superintendents. People sometimes complain about the Archmage's unpredictable instructions, as if he were a capricious bureaucrat, but they don't complain about bountiful harvests, safe sailing, or civil order.

The Archmage maintains wards that protect the Empire. Nodes placed at strategic points across the land tap into naturally occurring ley lines and direct their arcane energy into the wards.

From the floating towers of Horizon, the Archmage rules a worldwide force of wizards, scribes, arcane technicians, and servants. So long as things are going well, the common folk rarely encounter the Archmage's people. However, when things go awry, they show up to investigate mysterious phenomena, repair failing power nodes, locate diabolical cults, tame unruly elementals, and break curses that rulers or people have called down on themselves. The Imperial wizards are notorious for being tight-lipped about their true intentions, and they lie without compunction to cover their tracks. No one holds it against them; the Archmage knows best.

The Archmage oversees the *School of Imperial Wizardry*, and members of his inner circle run it day-to-day. The school tests and trains those with arcane potential, and its graduates join one of the Archmage's many Imperial projects.

Ages and Archmages

As often as not, an age may come and go without a mortal worthy to claim the title of Archmage. Thus, an Archmage's reign may last for decades or centuries. Eras in which an Archmage exists tend to be times of growth and recovery, though sometimes an Archmage merely prevents a descent into chaos.

Ages ago, a corrupt Archmage opened the Abyss and unleashed countless demons onto the land; he earned the title *Diabolist*. He was the first Diabolist, but he was sadly not the last. To this day, most people don't fully trust an Archmage.

Some ages have featured mighty, arcane icons reminiscent of the Archmage, such as the holy Hierophant, the doomed Rune Lord, and the dwarven Transmuter. Early Archmages measured themselves against the original Wizard King, but that was ages ago.

Allies in the Imperial Order

The Archmage swears undying fealty to the Emperor, although the traitorous Archmages of previous ages did the same—until they didn't. Along with the Priestess, the Archmage supports the Emperor and protects the people of the land, but the two travel in distinct metaphysical circles. The Archmage helped the Priestess build her Cathedral, but if they worked in unison on other efforts, they did so secretly. The Archmage's wizards sometimes come into conflict with the Great Gold Wyrm's paladins, but the official story is that the two icons are fine with each other.

If any heroic icon works happily with the Crusader, it's the Archmage.

Enemies and Rivals

The High Druid vocally opposes the way the Archmage dominates the forces of nature, and everyone's sure trouble is in the offing. The Prince of Shadows works mysteriously and at odds with the civil order, but whatever power struggle goes on between them is covert. Gossip suggests that if they're not at war with each other it can only be because they have reached some sort of accord. The Blue is an iconic, arcane power at the far end of the Empire from Horizon, and their mutual enmity manifests as decorous silence.

The Elf Queen and Dwarf King are heirs to ancient secrets that any Archmage would be happy to learn. While officially allies, their differences sometimes put them at odds with each other.

The Lich King and the Diabolist are enemies of the Archmage because they are enemies of the Dragon Empire.

Don't Worry...

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

The Archmage and Your Hero

The Archmage can provide your hero connections across the Empire, arcane support of various sorts, and possibly a truly exotic origin story. Your adventuring party could do worse than to have the Archmage as a patron, either for a particular adventure or for an entire campaign. He's the weirdest of the heroic icons, in case that suits you.

Uniques and the Archmage

Given the Archmage's vast reach across this reality and beyond, he provides a ready framework for heroes who are products of arcane experimentation (whether successful or only partially so), inhabitants of other planes pulled here through magic, embodiments of ancient people or forces channeled into this age, arcane constructs, etc. Such an origin story might leave your hero devoted to the Archmage, or resentful of him.

Arcane and Mysterious Backgrounds

Maybe your hero is the *happy graduate* of an *Archmage training program*, a *failed student* from that same program, a *magically "enhanced" scholar of historical and contemporary arcanism*, a *seen-it-all guard at the School of Imperial Wizardry*, or a *courtier* (not to say, "*spy*") *with special arcane training*.

Working for the Archmage

The Archmage is a top-notch patron: smart, magical, powerful, and possibly even able to teleport you out of danger at the last minute. He has countless functionaries to carry out routine operations, but for unusual missions of exceptional danger, perhaps an adventuring party is best. The Archmage's organizations include multiple orders or departments that could sponsor the party.

Missions for the Archmage often involve heading out to one distant locale or another where his regular operatives need heavy hitters. The local wizards or functionaries can provide information and arcane support, and they look to the heroes for muscle and, honestly, guts. Epic-level heroes may even be sent to pocket-dimensions or other places beyond this world.

In the GM's favor, the Archmage's missions are notoriously obscure. Besides killing monsters, adventurers hired by Imperial

wizards may find themselves burying ritual items in wastelands, painting sigils on the walls of ruins, or reading a fragment of a poem from the 12th Age into a darkened stairwell of a particular living dungeon that *must* be kept barely alive. Somehow, it's all very important to the Empire.

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

Relationship with the Archmage

Having the Archmage as a connection can help make sense of all sorts of interesting character backstories.

***Positive*:** Heroic careers are usually too free-wheeling for a character to work full-time in one of the Archmage's organizations, but plenty of player characters are associates or former members of these organizations.

***Conflicted*:** The Archmage's experiments sometimes have negative consequences, and your hero might have an uneven relationship with the Archmage as a result. If your hero has unique magical abilities, the Archmage might consider them a potential threat, but one to be managed rather than destroyed.

***Negative*:** It's hard to run a character who's the enemy of the icon who seemingly holds the Empire together, so any negative relationship needs a good story about why the hero isn't also an enemy of the Empire in general. It works okay for a hero to be a rival of or to have a bitter history with the Archmage.

Using Connections



The Archmage's magic is ubiquitous, so being connected to him gives a hero plenty of options.

Strengths and Virtues

Heroes associated with the Archmage often happen to have the specialized knowledge required to address a metaphysical challenge, especially one associated with the Archmage's enemies. At times, the heroes may have arcane items to support missions on behalf of the Archmage or Empire.

Channeling the Archmage

Your hero might be able to tap into the Archmage's power as it courses along ley lines or gathers in places of power. The Archmage operates primarily through his followers, and maybe your hero is that sort of follower.

Arcane Organizations

The Archmage's organizations reach far across the Empire and beyond, farther than any other icon.

School of Imperial Wizardry: The Archmage's largest and most visible organization. Apprentices spend plenty of time in the field working for the Archmage and learning as they go. For your purposes, you might invent departments within the school, such as those involved with documenting ruins or handling discipline of apprentices.

Red Staff Council: Wizards devoted to establishing and maintaining lines of communication with the sorts of beings Imperial diplomats find challenging, such as underworld monsters, overworld giants, spirits of natural or unnatural locations, clans devoted to alien deities, intelligent animals, sage-like sphinxes, and more. If the Empire needs to parley with its enemies, such as demons or the undead, wizards of the Red Staff take on the task.

League of Antiquarian Investigation: A small group of wizards, historians, and explorers who specialize in locating and researching the artifacts and knowledge of past ages. Sometimes they retrieve powerful magical items from cursed ruins to use in the Empire's defense, and sometimes they spend inordinate amounts of time on academic pursuits, such as documenting changes in spelling and grammar from one age to another. They might take a special interest in heroes with connections to past ages, and they might need heroes to get them into and out of distant or dangerous locales.

True Order of Free Mages: One of a few competing academies of wizardry. The question is the extent to which they compete in arenas that matter only to other wizards. Institutional competition could fuel many less-than-sensible missions and interactions.

The Finders: A ring of misfit wizard bounty hunters. They take turns, each spending a month hunting down outlaws and trying to outdo the others. Some Finders are officially connected to the Archmage, but not all. The Empire's traditional bounty hunters resent the competition and accuse the Finders of magically thwarting their efforts. Are the Finders slumming? Are they hiding the true object of their search? A hero connected to the Finders might run into these oddball allies anywhere, most of whom aren't on the hunt at any given time.

The Low Arcana Guild: Wizards and wizard-aligned explorers who focus on exotic arcana, gaining as much insight as possible into the powers of other icons, rituals that wizards technically shouldn't be expected to be able to master, and magic coming into the Empire from living dungeons, regular dungeons, other dimensions, flying realms, and realms that once flew, but crashed. Officially, they're independent from

the Archmage; unofficially, he uses them to pursue dangerous and uncertain lines of investigation that could put his reputation at risk.

Department of Overworld Affairs: A crew of the Archmage's elite followers seeking to establish an Imperial colony in the cloud lands inhabited by giants. Their hope is to preserve a portion of civilization when the 13th Age comes to an end. If the party is traveling through the overworld, this team could provide a way for your hero to use their connection to the Archmage.

Metaphysical Forces

The Archmage's magic is everywhere. You could use icon connections related to the Archmage's raw iconic force nearly anywhere, but for storytelling purposes there are locations where it concentrates to flashy effect.

Here and there across the land, the Archmage's enchantments guide the way, ward off danger, protect travelers, or otherwise aid those who come across them. Sometimes it takes special knowledge to notice or activate these enchantments.

Heroes working for the Archmage might have seeing stones or magic mirrors to communicate with headquarters. Epic-tier parties might be provided with magical scrolls, gems, or powders to perform powerful supernatural tasks, such as teleporting the party back home when the mission is finished or aborted. The most powerful implements provided are often experimental, and adventurers are required to report all misfires to the Logistician Supreme.

Sometimes, adventurers encounter magical enchantments and effects left over from the Archmages of previous ages. Heroes connected to the Archmage might be able to take advantage of or deactivate these ancient sites of power.



Arcanists Everywhere

It's easy to imagine you might find representatives of the Archmage in a city of any size. They might be arcane engineers tasked with maintaining the local nodes or apprentices on a field project related to nearby sites of interest. These allies might provide a hero with information, material support, or endorsement to help them win over the local authorities.



Crusader

There's nothing worse than the monsters of the Abyss wreaking unholy havoc on the mortals of the Dragon Empire, not even the heartless violence of the Crusader. And that's why they have a place in civilization. The Crusader is a good icon for heroes who value effectiveness over virtue and for campaigns where civilization is forced to choose the lesser of two evils. As the enforcer of the dark gods, they are the villain of luckier campaigns and the savior of the unlucky ones.

"Soldiers interested in fighting on the winning side—talk to me."

—Kallyr, Crusader recruiter and cleric of the dark gods

The Crusader in the World

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

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

If the enemy of your enemy is your friend, then the Crusader is everybody's friend because demons are everybody's enemy. The Crusader, however, is the sort of friend who will burn your house to the ground if they find it tactically advisable. The Crusader is renowned for conquering hellholes and remaking them as fortresses. The first hellhole they conquered was an especially large and perverted one near the Imperial capital, Axis. It was there the Crusader established their headquarters, known as First Triumph. When they conquer a hellhole, they bind the defeated demons and force them to garrison the new stronghold built or claimed at the former hellhole.

The Crusader leads an elite corps of ruthless warriors, spellcasters, and assassins. From the Crusader, they learn the lost ways of the dark gods and speak oaths long forbidden to those who walk in the light of day. Critics of the Crusader say that the

side-effect of this training is that all pity and love is burned from the hearts of the crusaders; indeed, a pitiless heart is not a side-effect but the very point of the training. Many crusader initiates prove unworthy of the challenge. The unworthy who die in training are luckier than the unworthy who live on, forever haunted by what they learned but failed to master.

Sometimes, the Crusader personally leads an assault on a hellhole, but more often they support such an attack through unnatural rituals performed back in First Triumph. Their main duty is to commune with the dark gods, conduct rituals no one wants to talk about, and send the dark gods' power out into the world.


While the heroic icons were busy defeating the Orc Lord, what was the Crusader up to, and how aware of their dealings are others? If the Crusader was the one who slew the Orc Lord, would they claim the kill?

An Icon with No History

The history books include accounts of iconic champions against evil, such as the Dawn Captain, but these champions were admirable, not despicable. Previous ages have also seen icons devoted to the dark gods, such as the Queen of Thorns, but none were devoted to defeating evil. The Crusader might be an ambiguous manifestation of one of these past icons, representing either a good icon whose fall shows how dark the 13th Age is or an evil icon whose need to protect civilization shows how endangered the Dragon Empire is. Alternatively, they might be a new icon. Certainly, they're something no previous age has ever seen. Some whisper that they are the Priestess' shadow icon—the Crusader's darkness brought into being by the Priestess' light.

Cautious Allies

The Crusader acknowledges the Emperor as the ruler of the land, though some suspect they would just as soon acknowledge the Lich King as such. Other heroic icons might try to work with the Crusader, but mostly these icons work around them.

The Crusader worships dark gods. The Three sponsor dark plots. Sometimes their interests align.

Enemies and Rivals

If the Diabolist fears anything in the worlds, she fears the Crusader—and she should. The Priestess works to protect people from becoming the Crusader's collateral damage, sometimes to the point of hindering their efforts. The bitter rivalry between the Crusader and the Great Gold Wyrm is unspoken but as thick as ochre jelly.

Don't Worry...

So long as demons keep them busy, the Crusader cannot pursue their second priority—stomping on the face of goodness and light.

The Crusader and Your Hero

Some players feel drawn to the Crusader, and we don't judge.

Uniques and the Crusader

The magic of all the dark gods might provide the justification you need for a unique origin story, especially one your hero might not share in polite company. For a memorable twist, your hero's story might reflect the Crusader's soft side, such as your hero being the only temple harpist who could bring tears to the Crusader's eyes.

Backgrounds and the Crusader

Your hero might have any sort of military background representing time spent in the Crusader's forces. In addition to *troops* sent into hellholes, the Crusader trains *spies*, *cult finders*, *scouts*, *arcane scholars*, *sorcerers*, *ritual officiants*, *battlefield physicians*, *danger zone messengers*, and *mess hall cooks*.

On Crusade

For an adventurer to undertake missions for the Crusader is a cause for bragging rights. These missions are frightful and challenging, never cakewalks or garrison duty. The Crusader has killed enough civilian bystanders that their agents have trouble operating in Santa Cora, near the Golden Citadel, and in several other locales. As a result, they occasionally hire adventurers from outside their organization to undertake missions in "hostile" territory.

The Crusader could work as an ongoing sponsor for the right sort of campaign, although association with them limits the number of parties to which the heroes get invited.

Those working for the Crusader may receive dark blessings, wicked spirits to animate their weapons or armor, effective runes, flammable oil for burning out cultists, healing potions that provoke a desire for vengeance, and inside knowledge of diabolical practices. The Crusader's people might provide monstrous spirits as guides or expendable soldiers who undertake the mission as penance.

Good-hearted adventurers might be dismayed to learn how many civilians are ready to point a finger at their neighbors as suspected cultists.

Relationship with the Crusader

They are the sort of icon that's best kept at a distance.

***Positive*:** Being on good terms with the Crusader is a cause for suspicion, but plenty of adventurers are more or less suspicious. It's easier for your hero to get along with others if the Crusader's people like you for special qualities other than heartlessness and lethality.

***Conflicted*:** Since the whole Empire's relationship with the Crusader is conflicted, this sort of relationship is easy to play out. Presumably, your hero is valuable enough to the Crusader that their people support your hero, even if they don't like them.

***Negative*:** For lots of heroes, a negative relationship with the Crusader makes more sense than a positive one; however, be sure to think ahead about how a negative connection would benefit you. If the Crusader's people aren't going to help you, and a network of anti-Crusader good guys doesn't make a lot of sense, all the benefits are likely to result from a past positive relationship. A conflicted relationship is more flexible because it leaves open the possibility of receiving help from the Crusader's agents.

Using Connections



The Crusader actively wants people to draw on the power of the dark gods and accept assistance from their organizations. People are more accepting of the Crusader's ways when they are in the dark gods' debt.

Dark Strengths and Virtues

The presence of the Crusader appears in the world as heavy armor, the mailed fist, collateral damage, demon-hating, demon-controlling, implacability, mercilessness, warrior squads, thug squads, assassins, the dark gods, hidden rituals, and the enemy of my enemy.

The Crusader's Raw Power

Their power is the power of the dark gods, and they like to share. This power strikes fear into mortal hearts, compels obedience, increases violence, inures people to evil, enforces ancient oaths, accepts sacrifices, and satisfies dark desires.

The Crusader's Organizations

The Crusader rules a disciplined and hierarchical military organization.

The Crusader's Corps: The army the Crusader commands, including all the offices and cadres that support it with non-military roles. The army is divided and sub-divided into units that achieve great loyalty to each other through bloody initiations and shared cruelties. These units have allegiance to particular dark gods, but they adore the Crusader first and foremost. Various specialized cadres and companies serve needs other than battle, such as spying, acquisition, diplomatic missions, and cult hunting. Those who swear into the Corps are said to be "of the body."

Hammer Company: Enforcers who seek out and destroy diabolical cultists operating in inhabited areas. They swear to take all "prudent" precautions against civilian casualties, and they use their own discretion to judge what is prudent. Technically, Imperial authorities oversee the Hammer Company's operations, but most of those in authority prefer not to look. Thanks to their inquiries, they end up gathering all sorts of compromising information that has nothing to do with demon worship, so they might help your hero with a wide array of interpersonal issues.

No Such Office: An unnamed office of spies and assassins so secretive that the Corps insists there is "no such office." Pragmatism forces them to work closely and profitably with criminal organizations and sometimes even the Great Black Wyrm's people. They infiltrate the official organizations and hierarchies of other icons, and their schemes exceed what might be strictly necessary to combat diabolism. Your hero might get assistance from No Such Office, but it always comes through intermediaries or through agents with rock solid cover stories.

Metaphysical Forces

The power of the dark gods pervades the worlds. It rises naturally in places of great evil, and servants of the dark gods call it up intentionally to create centers of dark power. Many sites where people or monsters worshiped the dark gods ages ago still exist, and the right incantation or sacrifice can turn seemingly innocent places into loci of evil. Unholy books, charms, weapons, or jewelry can likewise channel dark power into the world, especially when someone knows how to activate these items.

Diabolist

In better ages, there is no Diabolist. The 13th Age is not one of them. If you listen to her, you might believe her power over demons keeps them from running amok. Listening to her, however, has led any number of heroes astray. Most heroes connected to her are traitors to her cult or champions trained to defeat her minions. If your campaign is so dark that she's any sort of "good guy" or even ambiguous, we're sorry for you. It happens.

"Demon worship? It's true that we supplicate demons, praise them, and sacrifice to them, but worship them? No! Only she and she alone is worthy of worship."

—Jedmar Stitcher, diabolical cultist

The Diabolist in the World

The Diabolist controls fiends and tampers with forces even the Archmage avoids. She likes her victims screaming and her chaos pure, and claims, in her own defense, that the demons she summons would otherwise overwhelm the Great Gold Wyrm who seals the Abyss. People should thank her, really.

There are two differences between her and her demons: first, she aims to destroy personal enemies, not everything; second, she's capable of kindness, so long as it comes as a great surprise.

The longer she lives, the more this Diabolist looks like one of her demons. The stories claim she was originally a human woman, but when she glories in her full power (as pictured on page 191 of the *GMG*) you'd be hard-pressed to prove it.

The various silhouettes in this section represent shapes she occupies when it suits her, and if it's easier for your hero to have an iconic history with her in one of these forms, her "true form" might be as-you-like-it in your campaign.

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

The Diabolist leads a scattered and haphazard crew of fiendish cultists. They say that they worship



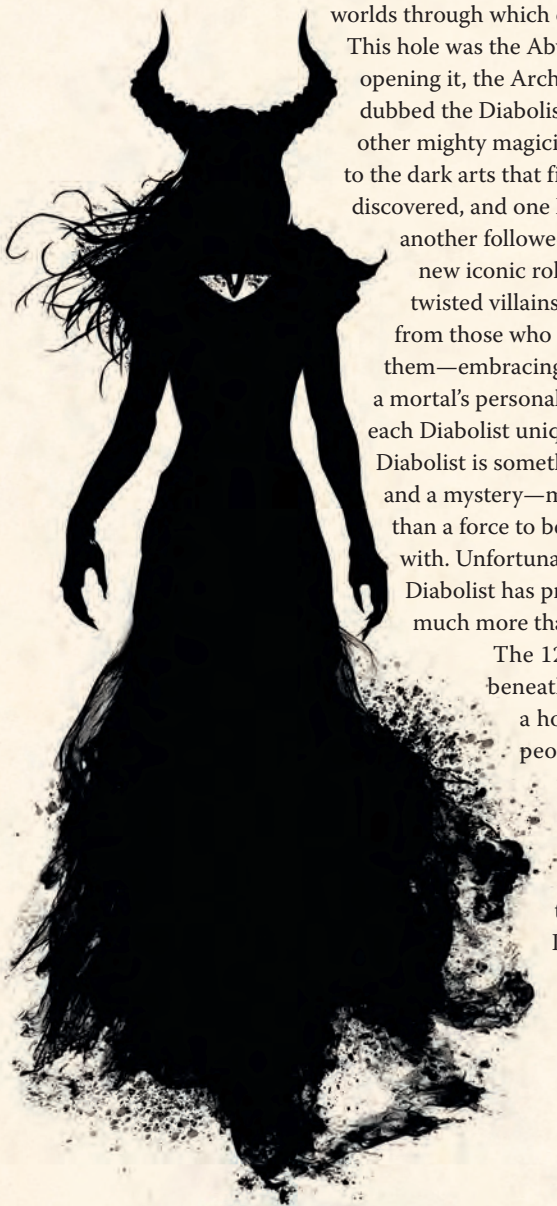
demons, but they mostly worship her. In turn, she alternately exalts them and brings them to ruin with her tests of fealty. With her help, they learn occult secrets, master unspeakable magic, and gloat over the destruction of their enemies. No cultist knows the extent of the cult or its ultimate goals. It is certainly more widespread than the Imperial authorities publicly admit.

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

Was the Diabolist forced to help her enemies defeat the Orc Lord? Or does she perhaps have designs on the orcs who are now left without a leader?

Diabolism through the Ages

There was no Diabolist in the earliest ages. Then, a corrupt Archmage turned to infernal powers and opened a hole in the worlds through which demons poured. This hole was the Abyss, and in opening it, the Archmage was dubbed the Diabolist. Since then, other mighty magicians have turned to the dark arts that first Diabolist discovered, and one Diabolist after another followed, taking on a new iconic role. Each of these twisted villains is different from those who came before them—embracing chaos amplifies a mortal's personal traits, making each Diabolist unique. Usually, a Diabolist is something of a rumor and a mystery—more of a legend than a force to be reckoned with. Unfortunately, the current Diabolist has proven herself to be much more than a scary story.



The 12th Age fell beneath the onslaught of a horrific plague, and people are pretty sure that plague was the doing of that age's Diabolist. Everyone hopes the current Diabolist remains pettier than the previous one.

Allies in Darkness

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

Enemies of the Hells

The Crusader is the Diabolist's worst nightmare, and she's no big fan of the Great Gold Wyrm, either. The Priestess protects good people from corruption, which makes her a real annoyance. All the heroic icons oppose her, albeit passively rather than proactively for the most part.

Don't Worry...

All the heroic icons are sure to resist any of the Diabolist's attempts to corrupt them.

The Diabolist and Your Hero

The Diabolist's magic and her penchant for indulging petty whims means that you can make up all sorts of things about how she is part of your hero's past.

Uniques and the Diabolist

It's common for a Diabolist-related unique to posit that your hero has some sort of infernal past, probably with an escape, transformation, or conversion experience that made your hero suitable for polite company. Your hero's *unique* might even relate to some positive trait of the Diabolist, such as soft-heartedness toward gnomes or a love of wordplay.

If you want one of the tiefling kin powers, such as *deadly trickster*, a *unique* related to the Diabolist can help.

Diabolical Backgrounds

Your hero with diabolical experience might have been a *corrupted librarian*, the *bodyguard of a cult leader*, the *spawn of a demon*, an *aristocrat with an ancestral curse*, or raised to be the *perfect sacrificial victim*. With anti-diabolical experience, your hero might have been a *cult hunter*; an *expert on diabolical tomes, sigils, implements, and incantations*; a *cult infiltrator and informer*; or an *orator* sent to rally people against the Diabolist.

Working For and Against the Diabolist

Too many reckless adventurers accept missions on the Diabolist's behalf. If adventurers knew what was best for them, they would probably choose safer careers than adventuring. Still, a few lucky adventurers have profited mightily from her

sponsorship, and they love to show off the remarkable weapons and talismans they acquired in consideration for their services.

Icons are more likely to sponsor your adventuring party to fight the Diabolist and her cults. Her followers might appear anywhere, and her whimsical orders might send them anywhere else, so any icon might need adventurers to beat them back.

Your GM might contrive some situation that obliges your party to coordinate and work with cultists toward some mutual goal, such as fighting dragons or undead against whom the Diabolist seeks vengeance. If you're lucky, the cultists will betray your party, and you'll enjoy the moral gratification that comes from fighting them, too. If you're less lucky, the cultists will be true to their word, and your heroes will have to live with the fact that they amicably cooperated with demon-worshipers.

Relationship with the Diabolist

The nature of the Diabolist makes conflicted relationships straightforward and positive relationships highly inadvisable.

***Positive*:** It's nearly impossible to make a positive relationship with the Diabolist work, and some players take that as a challenge.

***Conflicted*:** Since the Diabolist's wickedness is uneven and unfocused, she works easily as a hero's conflicted relationship. Sure, she's corrupted by chaos, but she's not as bad as the *last* Diabolist.

***Negative*:** Your hero has plenty of friends and allies if the Diabolist is their enemy. Sure, she's not as bad as the last Diabolist, but she's corrupted by chaos!

Using Connections



The Diabolist's chaotic magic gives you lots of options.

Strengths and Virtues

The magic of the Diabolist surfaces in heroes' lives as moral and physical corruption, wicked vice, turpitude, broken promises, extravagant selfishness, slander, freak accidents, terrible luck, missed opportunities, twisted knowledge, fervid adoration, perverse exaltation, unnatural growth, frenzy, whim, fickle feelings, and sharp claws.

The Diabolist's Raw Power

The power of the hells is chaos, and it manifests as destruction, disorganization, disease, perversion, unhealthy urges, unearned gifts, self-defeat, despair, pain, failure, fear, and fire. Manifesting this power is risky to body and soul, as is being in the vicinity when it manifests spontaneously.



Diabolical and Anti-Diabolical Organizations

The Diabolist's reach is wide, and her interests are varied.

Demon cults: The various secret societies that serve the Diabolist in exchange for demonic power and her fickle approval, as described above. Each cult has its own chosen name for itself: the Diabolist's people, the Circle of Power, the Ancient Corps of True Knowledge, the Rippers, the Fellowship, the Baron's friends, etc.

Morningstar Circus: A renowned company of sophisticated entertainers with complicated internal politics. At exclusive parties across the Empire, nobles, artists, courtesans, gamblers, and performers engage in witty repartee, illicit enjoyments, elaborate games, and the occasional unspeakable ritual—all staged by the crew of decadent high elves who run the nonpareil Morningstar Circus. The Circus is ages old, as it has been



resurrected in one age after another. For the elites of society, the gatherings managed by the Circus are highlights of the year or decade, and well-positioned people jostle for places of privilege at these events. In every major city, a contingent of Circus workers operates continually, and the stars of the organization travel from event to event, each at a different locale. Most of the performances, games, contests, feasts, and dances are open to anyone who scores an invitation to the event, but the real action happens in small, secret gatherings for the insiders. As it happens, the Diabolist's servants have infiltrated the Circus, providing exotic diversions that would otherwise be impossible. Likewise, agents of the Diabolist's enemies have infiltrated the Circus, and it's understood that the Circus must serve the Diabolist to some degree to keep her people involved and under surveillance. Or is it the Diabolist who must allow her enemies some victories to keep them involved? The Circus' reach is broad enough that other icons might also be involved. By being connected to the Circus, a hero might have special training regarding the Diabolist's ways, training in games and performance, compromising secrets to use against local dignitaries, or seemly and unseemly contacts just about anywhere. Inversely, a hero's positive, conflicted, or negative relationship with the Diabolist could help them gain assistance from the Circus, provided the hero ends up on the correct side of the secret power struggles within the organization.

Orphans: Local groups of survivors, centered around the specific hellhole that brought them together. A group's particular composition depends on the nature of their specific hellhole—and they are associated with whichever hellhole the party is involved with when you use your hero's conflicted or negative icon connection with the Diabolist.

Unless a hellhole deliberately practices catch and release, escape is difficult, which suggests that the Orphans might be survivors left behind when their loved ones were taken. The group could help survivors get on with their lives after the loss, in which case icon connections involving the Orphans may differ from the usual adventurer tropes. Alternatively, if a couple people escaped from the hellhole with messages from those still trapped, well, that might be enough to catalyze a group that has some inkling of how rescues might be attempted, and that's the type of action that involves heroes.

The Priestess' people would be sympathetic, and just about any icon might have a particular connection to the people who were taken, the people who survived, or the area where the hellhole appeared. Would followers of other icons get involved? The Crusader would be entirely unimpressed. This is a group for adventurers who want to get something done without the Crusader's "scorched earth" solutions.

The Third Chamber: A corps of secretive agents studied in the Diabolist's ways and powers, who use their knowledge to root out her cultists and undermine her machinations. Notoriously, they include former cultists and followers, as well as several monstrous agents. While independent, they operate under an official charter from the Emperor, and they might coordinate their endeavors with agents of the Great Gold Wyrm, the Priestess, the Archmage, or the Crusader. The original Chamber . . . you see, something happened . . . and then the Second Chamber . . . it's best not to dwell on the past. Lessons have been learned and all that.

Infernal Forces

Reality's intrinsic strength protects it from the infernal power of chaos that surges in the hells, but reality's strength is not always enough. Infernal power seeps in where demon-worshipers call it up, and ancient sites of evil are weak spots in reality where chaos might easily reappear. Hellholes are the most dramatic sites where infernal power enters the sane world, but this power also appears around demonic altars, infernal grimoires, unholy artifacts, and places scarred by great evil. Infernal power can even spontaneously seep in where people grossly violate what is true and right in pursuit of that which is corrupted and cruel.

Dwarf King

He's too stern, too harsh, and too powerful for the liking of less sturdy people. For adventurers, his drive is an inspiration. He's a great icon for dwarves and any other hero who is worthy of his respect.

In the existential war against the Orc Lord, what was the Dwarf King forced to relinquish? Was it power, secrets, treasures, or something else?

"All thanks, all praise, for Underhome's gold. All together, all pledged as the iron of the King. All awe, all gratitude for diamonds and the deeps."

—Dwarven hymn referring to wealth (gold), military might (iron), wisdom (diamonds), and the future (deeps)



The Dwarf King in the World

As the Emperor rules the land from Axis, the Dwarf King rules the underworld from Forge—the dwarves' underground capital city. He is the master of treasures, pressing a claim on all marvels pulled from the earth and all magic items forged by dwarves, which is most of them. His halls are filled with legendary wonders.

In addition to his role as a temporal ruler, he has a sacred role connected to the clans and to the spirits of the ancestors.

The Throne of Ages

It seems there has always been a Dwarf King or Queen of some description, although in bad times they were much reduced. Like the dwarves themselves, the monarchs varied from age to age: magnanimous or greedy, engaged with the land above or secretive, artistically gifted or given to cruelty. No one can say for certain whether the Kings or Queens reflect the changing character of the dwarven people or the opposite.

Ages ago, the dwarves lost their previous homeland, Underhome, in a war against the drow. They were driven out by an evil so powerful it corrupted even the drow who, everyone assumes, released it. The Dwarf King would love to reclaim Underhome, but the evil that lurks there has repelled every previous attempt to retake it.

The current Dwarf King has been well established in his role for generations and is a reliable ally of the Emperor. His kingdom, however, has been weakened by recurrent battles against the giants and by the invasion of the Orc Lord.

Allies of the Land

The leaders of civilization on the surface world work with the Dwarf King on their shared project of protecting their people from corruption within and chaos without. The Emperor, Priestess, and Archmage rightly consider him a solid ally, albeit one firmly committed to his own ways.

The Dwarf King honors the ages-old truce with the Elf Queen, and hostilities between dwarves and drow are mostly kept in check.

In the underworld, the High Druid is something of an ally. Her power extends to the wild caverns and chambers below the land, and she—like the Dwarf King—opposes the abominations found there. She has no love, however, for the dwarves' practice of taming and mining these subterranean expanses. Her underworld followers sometimes try to drive back dwarven miners and settlers, although the High Druid herself stays out of these conflicts.

Enemies Below and Above

When the drow advance their schemes in the underworld, they can be the worst sort of enemy, often allying with creatures that are second-worst.

The people of the land are grateful for the Dwarf King's willingness to protect the Empire, particularly from giants and recently from orcs, and he is sure to be paid fairly and well for his efforts. The enmity between the dwarves and the Three goes back to before the 1st Age, although both sides are mostly prudent enough to let hostilities simmer. The Three are not amused by the dragon-killing magic weapons the dwarves provide to surface-dwellers. The Prince of Shadows must have stolen the wrong treasure at some point, because the Dwarf King offers a princely ransom for his head.

Don't Worry...

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

The Dwarf King and Your Hero

The Dwarf King's martial bent makes him a natural icon for adventuring dwarves, for plenty of adventuring non-dwarves, and for some whole parties. Feel free to elaborate on the Dwarf King's nature and duties to give him a role that suits your hero's backstory.

Uniques and the Dwarf King

Dwarven heroes might attribute all sorts of unique features to the Dwarf King, or to the dwarven authorities who serve him. Your hero's *unique* might relate to ancient clans, reborn ancestors, ancestral curses, once-in-a-century rituals, magical dwarven transformations, recovered underworld artifacts, or corrupting influences from Underhome, the dwarves' lost homeland. A hero's *unique* often puts them in a halfway space between the Dwarf King and the surface world, such as when a dwarf is exiled from dwarven society or when a non-dwarf is recognized as a "dwarf in good standing" and inducted into dwarf-only orders or cults.

If you want a nifty dwarven kin power, such as *That's Your Best Shot?*, for your non-dwarf hero, your hero's *unique* probably has something to do with their surprising dwarfiness.

Dwarven Backgrounds

The Dwarf King oversees numerous specialized cadres, orders, cults, and societies, any of which could provide a special background for your hero. Non-dwarves with special talents could be recruited into certain of these groups, and even some dwarves would be excluded from most of them. Backgrounds related to the Dwarf King might involve military ventures, underworld exploration, alchemical secrets, dwarven religion, clan ancestors, or dragon-killing.

Working for the Dwarf King

The Dwarf King is likely to sponsor adventurers to explore dangerous areas in the underworld, either as an occasional mission or as a campaign theme. If the Dwarf King's sponsorship is central to your campaign, consider expanding his role to include the sorts of missions the party would undertake.

The Dwarf King's people might supply an adventuring party with solid intelligence about underworld enemies, valuable gifts for winning over NPCs, access to secret tunnels that lead to locations in the underworld and across the land, potions, runes, temporary blessings, guides to lead them through the underworld, and cave pigs (as beasts of burden). For specific uses, adventurers might receive tuning forks set to detect certain valuables or dangers, to open particular secret doors, to confirm their identities to agents with corresponding tuning forks, etc.

Agents of the Dwarf King might use miniature clockwork heads that can listen and speak to communicate over long distances, conveying messages back and forth to handlers back at headquarters. Powerful dwarves might also send dwarven spirits to relay messages to agents in the field or even provide them supernatural assistance.

Relationship with the Dwarf King

The Dwarf King works great as an adventurer's icon, although the nature of the Dwarf King is likely to vary from campaign to campaign.

***Positive*:** It's common that a hero previously worked directly for the Dwarf King and is now more of a free agent. Sometimes, the hero's origin or destiny makes the Dwarf King interested in them.

***Conflicted*:** If you want your hero to benefit from a conflicted relationship with the Dwarf King, perhaps that relationship represents a positive one that has gone south. The hero benefits from specialized knowledge or capabilities they learned while working for the Dwarf King, and they probably still have connections with dwarves or dwarven organizations they can use to their advantage.

***Negative*:** In the surface world, the Dwarf King is removed enough from everyday life so that a negative relationship with him is not a major issue in the way a negative relationship with other heroic icons could be. A negative relationship is more often like a conflicted relationship without an upside.

Using Connections



In general, the benefits a hero gains from an association with the Dwarf King are tangible: military training, specialized dwarven knowledge, good standing with dwarves and dwarven organizations, etc. The Dwarf King is also associated with magical and spiritual powers, so you might lean into this side of the Dwarf King's character in your campaign.

Strengths and Virtues

The Dwarf King and those associated with him are known for their steely resolve, loyalty to their people, faithfulness to promises, respect for tradition, military prowess, ingenious engineering, skilled craft and artistry, uncommon sturdiness, deep wisdom, ancient knowledge, hard-earned wealth, long-term vision into the past and future, and their ability and inclination to drink others under the table.

Raw Iconic Power

The Dwarf King embodies the hopes and virtues of the dwarven people; in return, he can inspire them in their times of need. A hero closely connected to the Dwarf King might channel his resolve, his wisdom, his trustworthiness, or even his physical strength. A hero might also be associated with a dwarven clan, cult, or organization that serves the Dwarf King, thus taking on particular virtues.

New and Ancient Dwarven Organizations

Dwarves are orderly, and they are given to organizing themselves into all manner of societies, cults, orders, teams, corps, and cadres.

Order of the Blazing Sun: The Dwarf King's official body of diplomats, bureaucrats, and officiants that serve the throne's purposes on the surface world. The order is subdivided into numerous offices, wards, and centers, each with its own ages-old history of glories and grudges; if your hero is associated with the order, that probably means they have a connection to one of these subdivisions. Those who petition the order with proper paperwork and fitting propriety find them to be notably capable, if not quick to respond. Officially, the various individuals are known as "sworn officers of the Order of the Blazing Sun." Colloquially, they're known as "Blazers."

Diggers: A widespread and usually informal alliance of dwarves dedicated to recovering the remains of dwarves who died in battle, perished in underworld exploration, fallen prey to servants of the Lich King or the Gold King, or were forgotten after perishing in the service of the Crusader. They recover these bodies so they can be buried, burned, or embalmed, according to the customs of their clans.

Diggers readily work with non-dwarves, especially outside of the underworld. Non-dwarves who die on these missions don't need to be retrieved, which makes things simpler all around. Usually, Diggers lead these missions, but sometimes enterprising adventurers retrieve dwarven bodies for them, and the pay is good. Since the Diggers are not primarily battle-oriented, they often call on non-dwarven muscle when a mission is likely to involve a measure of vengeance.

A player character with a background as a Digger may be especially skilled at underground extractions, or perhaps they're preternaturally tuned to ghosts. They might also have widespread contacts, investigative abilities, or diplomatic skills, since getting the dead back to where they belong is often complicated.

Spirits: Are the Diggers as concerned about releasing captive or enslaved dwarven spirits? Ghosts? Maybe not, or maybe so, if you think that's really cool.

Exceptions: Not all of the fallen need to be found. There may be some question as to who counts as a "dwarf in good standing," and the corpses of dwarves who died in cave-ins or rockfalls are considered to be at rest—"The stone knows its own."

The Cogs & Wheels: Inspired by a dwarven icon of past ages—the Princess of Cogs & Wheels*. She was a uniquely skilled engineer and inventor, and the "Coggin' Wheels" (as members are usually known) tend to share her interests . . . or to be dwarf-forged. If your campaign features dwarves who emphasize the patriarchy—or dwarves with prejudices against constructs like the dwarf-forged—The Cogs & Wheels make a fine antidote.

The story above is what most people remember about the Princess of Cogs & Wheels, if they remember anything. But the truth is she was ruthless and manipulative when she ruled Anvil in an age (or ages) when the Dwarf King stuck to the underworld. She was a powerful and subtle sorcerer, fond of manipulating other icons and rulers onto paths they had no intention of traveling.

Is the casual slang of the 'Coggin' Wheels' a cover? Who, and how many, in the Cogs & Wheels remember the truth? And what happens when they're the people you're calling on for help?

* For more on this icon, see *Book of Ages*.

Spearpoint: An ambitious, and possibly secret, attempt to leverage the existence of the dwarves' unusually high number of somewhat deviant kin. Azer, derro, followers of the Gold King, lava dwarves, renegade dwarf-forged, renegade dwarves, might all have a place in mainstream dwarven society . . . if they could prove they're loyal and trustworthy as members of a covert ops team operating in the underworld.

Is Spearpoint an earnest attempt to turn potential enemies into a trustworthy special-mission strike team? Or is it a cynical investigation into how much some people are willing to risk to be accepted in mainstream dwarfdom?

Spearpoint may not be secret in your campaign. If a player character has Spearpoint as a background, it may imply the program was successful—or perhaps just over.

A background related to Spearpoint can feel a lot different than what you'd usually expect from dwarves. Conflicted icon relationships with the Dwarf King make sense for heroes with Spearpoint associations because everyone involved with Spearpoint is conflicted in one way or another.

Clan Crystalsong: An ancient dwarven clan with time-honored connections to the Throne and a particular interest in the very thing in which your hero needs them to be interested: undead, mystical music, a past age that's related to your hero, whatever. Clan Crystalsong pursues its own goals in the underworld and the surface world as it works along unofficial channels, benefiting from ages-old bonds it formed with just the sort of people or monsters your hero needs them to be connected to. They have more knowledge than might, so they can help heroes on their adventuring careers while valuing the heroic deeds the party can accomplish. If another player already has dibs on Clan Crystalsong, and you want there to be a dwarf clan that's well-suited to your hero's backstory, that would be Clan Metal Gaze.



Metaphysical Forces and Raw Power

The Dwarf King is more or less related to all manner of supernatural sites and phenomena, mostly in the underworld but also across the land. Ruins of past dwarven strongholds might include sites of power, dwarven spirits, or curses just waiting to be stirred up. He also has pull with spirits and elementals related to stone, metal, gems, and magma.

Elf Queen

She may be the most exalted and worshipful icon; even the Priestess, with her adoring masses, is a youngling compared to the immortal power embodied by the Elf Queen. Elf and half-elf heroes of import are often connected to her, and non-elf heroes might also be blessed with such a relationship. The mystical connection that all elves have to their Queen is a natural source of power and wisdom. Even some humans and other non-elves manage to establish such a connection, provided they are worthy.

In the Dawn Age, the original Orc Lord was a destructive force the Elf Queen called forth to destroy the Wizard King (now the Lich King). The Orc Lord was perhaps the Elf Queen's dark shadow. This age's Orc Lord is likewise connected to the Elf Queen; how does that connect her to his vicious campaign of rampage?

"It would disgrace my Queen for me to accept your surrender on such generous terms. You might not remember what you dragonics did to us in the 4th Age, but she remembers."

—Sylanadrim, Captain of the Starleaf Rangers



The Elf Queen in the World

Hopeful visitors come from across the land to the Court of Stars in the Queen's Wood, where they hope to gain some of the Elf Queen's aid, wisdom, magic, or mercy. Her influence extends through all the elves across the land and in the underworld. She lives in them, and they in her.

History of the Three-Part Crown

There has always been an Elf Queen (or King), though sometimes they are hidden and unknown, leaving the elves weak and divided. The nature of the Queen changes depending on which sort of elf she is: high elf, wood elf, or drow. People of the 13th Age consider themselves lucky that this Elf Queen is a high elf; high elves have the best track record when it comes to both uniting the elves and working productively with humans and dwarves.

It seems every elf has a romantic view of one previous age or another, when "times were good." Depending on the elf, this age might be when arts and music flourished, when the woods thrived and reached far past their current limits, when high elves and wood elves helped the drow dominate the underworld, when an elf vizier advised the Dragon Emperor and rapprochement with the humans was at its peak, or when the elves turned isolationist and quit themselves of concerns outside their own territory.

The current Queen has ruled for most of the 13th Age.

Friends of the Court of Stars

The High Druid is figuratively the Elf Queen's half-sister of the woods, which might lead to collaboration or rivalry. The blood truce with the Dwarf King has created a long and prosperous peace, but the truce is technically temporary. The Emperor is a trusted ally, but the Emperor's Priestess and Archmage can weary her with their short-sighted view of the past and future.

Enemies Old and New

The enmity between the Three and the Elf Queen is deep and ancient. They consider the Great Green Wyrm to be her captive, a victim of her illusions and mind control. The Lich King hates her for summoning the original Orc Lord to kill him when he was the Wizard King. She can be a rival to the High Druid and the Dwarf King, and she is the enemy of any villainous icon that would threaten her people.

Don't Worry...

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

The Elf Queen and Your Hero

The Elf Queen is an attractive icon for your hero to be connected to because of how far her power extends, but she's more mysterious than other icons, such as the Emperor or the Archmage. The nature of the Elf Queen invites elaboration and even paradox, making her a fruitful icon for imaginative players and GMs. Elves and half-elves might naturally be connected to her, but there's plenty of story potential for non-elves who are connected to her, as well elves who are not.

Uniques and the Elf Queen

An elf or half-elf hero might have a special connection to the Elf Queen even if they've never met in person. A non-elf might have the sort of mystical bond with the Queen that elves take for granted. The Elf Queen summoned the original Orc Lord and enchanted the Great Green Wyrm, so her magic might likewise have called up, created, or transformed your hero.

If you want a keen elven kin power, such as *highblood teleport*, for your non-elf hero, a *unique* related to the Elf Queen can make sense of that power.

Elven, Sylvan, and Mystic Backgrounds

Your hero might have a history of training in one service or the other, either connected directly to the Queen or related to elven activities in general. The Queen and her elves train and employ magical researchers, mundane diplomats, envoys to spirits or mystical creatures, underworld rangers, various guards and soldiers, renowned entertainers, and spies.

Your hero's backgrounds might include *underworld war zone archaeologist*, *the age's most successful envoy to the dwarf lords*, *failed ward custodian of the Sapphire Seal*, or *definitely-not-a-spy who knows everyone important in Axis.*

In Her Majesty's Service

Elf adventurers consider it an honor to work for the Queen, and non-elf adventurers consider it something of a miracle. She makes a fine patron for an adventuring party because she is powerful like the Imperial icons, but stranger. Her mystic connection with elves makes it easy for her to provide guidance to her servants at a distance. She also has plenty of magical resources with which to equip those who serve her, including strangely intelligent animals, pixie dust with various qualities, magical flowers that live only in dreams, spoken incantations that recur in echoes that protect those they're spoken over, and extraordinary foods that do more than sustain the body. Most of these charms, objects, or visions have more going on than meets the eye.

Elf adventurers who don't work for the Queen might nonetheless find themselves guided by the Queen's dream sendings to join the perilous adventures of other elves who need their help. Presumably, the elves' adventurer allies are willing to pitch in.

Relationship with the Elf Queen

Most NPC elves are connected to the Elf Queen, though not in such a way as to have the sort of influence that a player character's relationship implies. Likewise, it's possible for PC elves to be connected in this way, mystically aligned with the Queen but unlikely to change the narrative on that account. Plenty of non-elf PCs might be related to the Elf Queen through mundane channels rather than mystical contact, just like a PC might be related to the Emperor.

Positive: Since the Elf Queen is on the side of civilization, positive relationships are straightforward. And because the Elf Queen has multiple facets to her, including the way she represents

the three kinds of elves, one hero's positive relationship might mean something quite different than another's.

***Conflicted*:** A conflicted relationship probably represents a good relationship gone awry or an outsider's relationship half-formed.

***Negative*:** It's hard to get much mileage out of a negative relationship with a heroic icon, but we imagine a sorcerer appropriating some of the Elf Queen's power against her wishes might do it.

Using Connections



The Elf Queen commands ancient knowledge, maintains contingents of personnel across the land, wields mysterious magic, and connects personally to elves everywhere, so it's usually easy to imagine how your hero's icon connection might come into play.

Elven Strengths and Virtues

The Elf Queen embodies the vitality of her people; the elves' knowledge, strength, and cunning; connections to ancient ages; stealth, deception, and illusion; grace, artistry, and sophistication; and the ability to create and transform.

Channeling the Elf Queen

This might be the one icon most likely to directly lend her power to a hero connected to her, or to inspire connections involving raw iconic power. Your hero might manifest her ancient wisdom, her power over the minds of others, her ability to charm and delight, her powers of creation and transformation, her awesome authority, her connection to nature, or her ability to unite elves of different sorts.

The Queen's Faithful Servants

Anywhere elves are, the Elf Queen is, too. More practically, she has a network of royal servants, diplomats, spies, sages, diviners, soldiers, priests, and magicians who serve her. Heroes might sometimes gain help through official channels, while other times the sympathetic officials might need to provide their help on the sly. In your campaign, the Elf Queen's royal service might be a separate caste with their own language, a stifling bureaucracy run by elderly elves, the secret power behind the scenes in Glitterhagen, motivated more by esthetics than by politics, and/or home to the Empire's best assassins.

Just about anywhere there are people in the Dragon Empire, heroes can find elves or non-elves who are somehow connected to the Elf Queen. A hero might be able to get help from traveling elven scholars, a settlement of wood elves living near a sylvan holy site, a caravan of high elf merchants, a squad of drow mercenaries, or humans who really love elves and insist that you tell them at some length all about being an elf.

The Wayfarer Corps: The service that operates throughout the Dragon Empire, with official diplomats and agents that pursue the Queen's goals through informal and social connections. They reflect the nature of the Queen in your campaign, possibly devious, interventionist, stretched thin, or otherworldly.

'Searchers: A loosely organized community of elf-loving humans who try to emulate all that's good about elfdom. They call themselves Researchers because they investigate elven history and culture. Others shorten the term to 'Searchers or refer to them in less flattering terms. At their best, they promote the erudition, sophistication, artistry, and ancient knowledge of the elves. At their worst, they're obnoxious wannabes who embarrass elves rather than impressing them. Even if they're misguided fanatics, they could provide various sorts of help to any heroes connected to the Elf Queen.

Her Majesty's Royal Lodge of Others: an official cadre of creatures who, like the Great Green Wyrm, go against their own kin to ally themselves with the Elf Queen. Their ranks include reformed outlaws, former cultists, far-from-home barbarians, kobolds, goblins, dragonics, gnolls, and even some undead. They operate outside the Queen's Wood, especially in the underworld. Since they enjoy the Elf Queen's patronage, human and dwarven cities are obliged to welcome them—or at least to not exclude them. They are powerful and sometimes cruel, reflecting a side of the Elf Queen about which some outsiders forget. You can imagine how the 'Searchers feel about them.

The Silver Sisterhood: an all-female, secretive cadre of drow scholars and explorers who investigate ages-old ruins across the land and throughout the underworld. They find ruins where no one else knew they existed, and they retrieve knowledge and treasures from sites that others believed were thoroughly explored. As a rule, they share their knowledge and techniques with no one—maybe your hero is the exception.

Places and Powers

The Queen's Wood is replete with centers of the Queen's power, such as nature shrines, magical glades, and ancient trees that protect their environs and speak to the few who warrant it. Spirits of nature attend to these places and can also be found elsewhere across the woods. Spirits of the elven dead also abide in such places and haunt territories related to their earthly lives. Elven sages often visit for extended stays or longer. The more the sages know, the harder it is to understand them.

Heroes might also benefit from the Elf Queens of past ages. For example, a hero might come across an ancient elven glyph in some random ruins that directs them to an ages-old elven crypt, a treasure cache, or a node of arcane power.



Emperor

The Emperor is the icon with the greatest temporal authority. He makes a great patron for heroes who fight to defend civilization.

"The Emperor promises you citizens a good chance of a peaceful life and promises us soldiers a good chance of a glorious end."

—General Karel Anhellion

The Emperor in the World

When the Emperor is strong, the people of the Dragon Empire are secure. His rule unites both the people and his allies. Imperial laws bring order, and the Emperor's countless rituals and observances magically balance and strengthen society. Likewise, when the Emperor is corrupt, weak, or sinful, disorder in the Empire always follows.

The Emperor rules from Axis, the Imperial capital, and he acts most directly through Imperial governors, agents, assessors, ambassadors, legates, functionaries, and soldiers.

In the war against the Orc Lord, what did the people of the Dragon Empire learn about their sovereign?

Ages and Emperors

The first Dragon Emperor (known as the Blessed Emperor) established the Imperial Seal in the 1st Age, and in the intervening years there was usually an able Emperor or Empress in Axis who embodied the ancient virtues of Imperial rule. Only a mortal of true worth can complete the arduous rites and ascend to the Dragon Throne.

During bad times, someone other than a true Emperor has ruled the land. These varied between false Dragon Emperors, hard-working regents, wicked usurpers, and even councils of warlords.

The current Emperor recently replaced a long-serving Emperor whose reign was sorely tested by the Orc Lord.

Leaders of Civilization

The Archmage and Priestess work closely with the Emperor and are frequently responsible for tackling Imperial problems in their areas of expertise. The Crusader and Great Gold Wyrm are ostensibly duty-bound to the Emperor, but they each interpret that duty as they see fit. The Dwarf King and Elf Queen are united with the Emperor in the pursuit of peace and security—and sometimes that's clear to everyone involved. The Blue Dragon is the Emperor's sworn ally, but most people aren't sure what to make of that fact.

Enemies of Justice

Before his death, the Lich King ruled the land as the Wizard King. He considers the Dragon Empire to be rightfully his, which makes him the Emperor's devoted enemy. Earlier in this age, the Orc Lord sought to kill the Emperor, like the first Orc Lord killed the Wizard King, but it was the Orc Lord who died. The Prince of Shadows defies the Emperor's laws, but some argue that there must be some sort of secret pact between them. The Diabolist, Black Dragon, and Red Dragon are all enemies of the Emperor to the extent that they threaten his people.

Don't Worry...

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

The Emperor and Your Hero

The Emperor is a good connection for a law-abiding or martial hero.

Uniques and the Emperor

With the right *unique*, your hero could be the reincarnation of a previous Emperor, a bastard by a dwarven or dragon mother, or an ambiguously otherworldly exile from the Emperor's court.

Imperial Backgrounds

Your hero might be an *Imperial Knight of Justice*, a *dropout from the cadre of Imperial spies*, or an *Imperial diplomat (on indefinite leave)*.

Imperial Patronage

Maybe your party is officially sponsored by the Emperor. If so, your heroes most likely work for a paramilitary organization within the power structure, reporting to increasingly powerful officials as they gain power themselves.

Missions for the Emperor often involve the other icons that work with the Empire and can take the party most anywhere. If based on the borderlands, the adventurers might be the official representatives of the Emperor, responsible for maintaining good relations with the creatures and barbarians who live there.

Imperial patrons sometimes communicate with their distant agents through couriers, trained ravens, or even messengers sent on dragon-back. Imperial forces also use magical scrolls, telepathic wizards, or far-seeing mirrors to instantly send or exchange messages, albeit limited ones.

Relationship with the Emperor

The Emperor is so powerful that you need to take care that a relationship with him—good or bad—doesn't dominate the campaign.

***Positive*:** It is straightforward for a hero to be aligned with the Emperor. Just make sure the relationship is loose enough that your hero can have a regular adventuring life.

***Conflicted*:** There's a lot of great narrative territory here, where the hero is aligned with the cause of protecting the Empire but somehow at odds with the Emperor. Since the Emperor is basically "the Man," plenty of players appreciate a little distance. Perhaps the conflict is less with the Emperor himself and more with the corrupt Imperial power structure.

***Negative*:** You need a good reason why it's all right for your hero to be at odds with the ruler who unites the Empire. You can't be the sort of PC that the other PCs want to turn over to the authorities. As an alternative to a negative relationship, you could always define your hero as an outlaw who hates the Emperor without investing a die in the relationship. That way, you don't have to improvise reasons for how this opposition could benefit your hero.

Using Connections



The Emperor connects your hero to temporal power recognized across the land.

Strengths and Virtues

Heroes associated with the Emperor can often solve problems thanks to their martial training or experience, their exceptional knowledge of Imperial law, their training in Imperial diplomacy, or their authoritative manner. A positive relationship with the Emperor can open doors anywhere in the Empire.

Channeling the Emperor

The Emperor's power is mostly material and practical, but a hero with a *unique* connected to the Emperor might be able to embody some of the Emperor's authority, his fortitude, or his martial prowess. Perhaps the metallic dragons for whom the Empire is named have strengths that the hero can sometimes draw on.



Imperial Organizations

A hero might gain help from any number of Imperial forces, agencies, military units, or other groups. Improvise a large or small organization when you need one and consider inventing one as part of your campaign's background.

Office Universal: A cadre of diplomats and magicians working to advance the mystical hypothesis that all icons who are part of the Empire owe part of their power to the Emperor and are working for him whether they know it or not. In a campaign focused on the Emperor, the Office could allow for an icon connection allied to the Emperor to turn into interactions with the Emperor's people.

Imperial Circle of Magi: A scholarly body devoted to remembering previous Emperors' horoscopes and accomplishments, in that order. They hope to guide the current Emperor toward propitious action. They generally do good, but they are perhaps a little "star-touched" after too much moon-gazing. To your hero, they're unpredictable allies who could show up anywhere their investigations take them and have any sort of knowledge needed. For twists, that knowledge leads to danger, or the magi themselves need help.

Servants of the Dread Emperor: A decidedly mixed bag of war enthusiasts, religiously devoted to an infamous Emperor from a past age, and to inciting violence against the enemies of the Empire. For a warlike hero, the Servants could be straightforward allies ready to provide support when they can. Alternatively, the Servants are troublemakers who Imperial authority must manage. This version provides for more unpredictability and makes it easy to think up twists. If your hero has a conflicted relationship with the Emperor, it could be because they are too close to the Servants.

The Followers of St. Amethyst: Known as "Amees," they follow an Imperial saint of the Blessed Emperor who set a high bar for faith in action. Students and graduates of her several modest monasteries excel at "difficult tasks managing Imperial assets." They serve as envoys to other icons or to lesser leaders and show remarkable knowledge of every territory they visit. Everyone expects them to be stuck up, priggish, lawyer-types, but *hoo-boy* they are not. Your hero can benefit from their help or (in a flashback) from having learned from them the very fact the party needs right now to prevail. Amees are likable, so you can expect that a twist might put them in danger or even bring them to harm. Alternatively, your rogue or paladin may have been an Amee, and won't *that* be interesting?

Honorable Comrades of the Second Chamber: An Imperial explorers' club dedicated to claiming and reclaiming territory for the Empire. Their tame projects involve identifying ancient ruins, calling them by name, and ritually blessing them as Imperial domains. Wilder projects might send explorers

to desolate mountaintops, monster-haunted wildernesses, barbarian tribes, living dungeons, and flying realms. Comrades might show up anywhere, possibly with new or ancient information about the environs. Do the metallic dragons fly them to their distant destinations or snub them? Which creatures in the claimed territories have been provoked to lash out at the Empire? Do common adventurers admire the Comrades, or dismiss them as well-funded posers? If you have a conflicted relationship with the Emperor, do the Comrades make a habit of claiming your finds, or do you stalk the Comrades' trips and swoop in on the good stuff?

Places and Powers

The Emperor's power is more material than metaphysical, but the Emperor's magic sometimes shows up in unlikely places. Imperial centers of power are more or less sacred, and ancient centers sometimes retain enough power to make a difference. Any given plot of land might be the site of a forgotten Imperial fortress or shrine from ages past. A nondescript town might have an ancient Imperial statue, one that could again emanate Imperial authority if someone knows the right protocols. An Imperial blessing given long ago to a dale, to a clan, or to a baton of rulership might still have force today. A forgotten champion who fell while protecting the Empire might linger for ages as a guardian spirit. Metaphysical power related to the Blessed Emperor often acts like divine magic, with the Blessed Emperor analogous to a deity. More commonly, the metaphysical power manifests the Emperor's authority, justice, and rulership.

Thanks to binding pacts sealed in previous ages, representatives of today's Emperor might find tribes, beasts, monsters, phantoms, or elementals that are bound to offer them safe passage or even provide them succor.

Civilization is Your Ally

It's easy to imagine a hero finding Imperial agents that can help them out. Your hero might gain important, secret information through privileged, Imperial connections—possibly in a flashback. Or your hero might gain general status or a particular NPC's respect when others associated with the Emperor recognize their worth or achievements. They might even receive an official blessing for their adventurous efforts, with the specific results left open to improvisation as the coming adventure requires. If another hero in the party excels, maybe you can use your hero's connection to give the other player's hero a blessing instead of your own. You might invent an Imperial lawyer, assessor, commander, prefect, or magistrate your hero provides help to, guaranteeing a return favor of some sort in the future.

Great Gold Wyrm

The only reason you're reading this rulebook about the 13th Age is that demons from the hells beyond the Abyss failed to overrun the worlds ages ago. And the only reason the worlds were not overrun is that the Great Gold Wyrm sacrificed his very body to serve as a physical and metaphysical barrier against the demons in hells below. Forced to remain at the bottom of the Abyss to maintain the divine seal, the Great Gold Wyrm connects with his followers through dreams, prayers, mystical visions, rituals, ideals, and the extremity of violence wielded against demons.

The Great Gold Wyrm is an ideal icon for paladins and other heroes who value ideals above personal safety. Though he is trapped in the Abyss, he remains always at your side.

As the heroic icons defeated the Orc Lord, what did the Great Gold Wyrm and his paladins contribute to the effort?

I am the shield.
You are the sword.
We are the flame.
They shall not pass.

—Traditional Golden Order battle chant

The Great Gold Wyrm in the World

While the Gold himself suffers at the bottom of the Abyss, his spirit and his agents travel far and wide. He calls the best and bravest to his service, most of whom either swear themselves into the Golden Order of paladins or offer their support to those who do so.

Life of the Great Gold Wyrm

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

Ages ago, the first Diabolist created the Abyss—a tear in reality through which demons from various hells swarmed forth. To save the worlds, the Great Gold Wyrm threw himself into the Abyss, closing the gap with his body. To this day, the Gold's physical presence and magical wards are all that prevent the Abyss from ripping the worlds wide open. Demons torment him constantly, and even though he destroys them or drives them off, some fear he grows weaker from one age to the next.

His paladins say that if true heroes could find a way to stop the gap, for even one night and one day, the Great Gold Wyrm would be free to reinvigorate his followers, restore the Golden Citadel, and beat back the Three.



Allies of Truth and Honor

The Great Gold Wyrm's chief ally is the Dragon Emperor, whom he considers a peer, not a superior. Over the ages, he has always supported the Emperor, so long as they remained true to their oaths. All the heroic icons respect the Gold and his Golden Order. The Crusader is mostly an ally, although the Gold's people are more likely to compete with the Crusader's people than to coordinate efforts with them.

Opposing Enemies of Sanity and Goodness

The Gold's chief enemy is the Diabolist. He has seen them come and go over the ages, and he knows that in some age there might come a Diabolist who finally defeats him. He has also been an enemy of the Three since back in the days when they were the Five. The Five and the Gold made common cause fighting the Wizard King, and the Great Red Wyrm helped drive back demons when the Abyss first opened, but those times are long past, and so is the truce between the Gold and the Three.

Don't Worry...

Everything will be all right, so long as the Great Gold Wyrm continues to survive his hellish torment, and the Abyss doesn't once again tear open to unleash hells upon the land.

The Great Gold Wyrm and Your Hero

For a truly heroic character, the Great Gold Wyrm is a promising icon—albeit a demanding one.

Uniques and the Great Gold Wyrm

The Great Gold Wyrm mystically connects to his followers, providing an easy reason for your character's backstory to include some sort of inspiration or transformation. A hero with a monstrous or diabolical origin might gain respectability through the Gold's patronage.

Some Backgrounds are Golden

Your hero might be the *chosen vessel of an ancient war spirit*, the *first graduate of the Cathedral's daycare mission*, or an *honorably discharged Imperial legionnaire*. Alternatively, you may have had rougher origins; something *like former street tough turned bodyguard*, *reincarnated cultist back to set things right*, or *reformed Crusader assassin*.

Killing Demons and More

A hero associated with the Gold is probably trained as a cultist hunter, demon finder, or sacred guardian. Alternatively, your hero's background might represent their past career as a diabolical cultist, a past that the Gold has saved them from.

Working for the Great Gold Wyrm

If you want your campaign to be about fighting cultists, battling demons, taking on hellholes, and venturing into the Abyss, the Gold is a more heroic option than the Crusader. Working for the Gold means defending the world while operating outside the official channels of authority the Emperor represents. The Golden Order is relatively small, and the Gold is in dire straits, so this icon lends an underdog mentality to a party that serves him.

The Great Gold Wyrm works as a patron in many of the same ways the Priestess does—as an admirable champion of holiness with mythic power and a devoted following. While the Priestess is beloved by the people, the Great Gold Wyrm is less human and more elite. Do-gooders devote themselves to the Priestess; the Great Gold Wyrm gets zealots of the first class. He sends his chosen few to battle against demons, evil dragons, cultists, and the most dangerous monsters that threaten the innocent.

Your adventuring band might work for the Gold on an ad hoc mission or two. Various orders of paladins and clerics draw inspiration and power from the Great Gold Wyrm, as do mystically chosen individual heroes. Certainly, some of these followers might need your party's unique capabilities for their special purposes.

The Golden Order can provide adventurers with equipment and intelligence, while the Gold himself provides mystical support. Officers in the Order might communicate remotely with their agents through a sacred book; open it in prayer to find poems, parables, or stories that tell you what the officer wants you to know. The Order has also earned plenty of supporters across the land, people who have formally or informally pledged to help those in the Gold's service.

Relationship with the Great Gold Wyrm

Since the Gold has relatively few devoted followers, and he communicates with them mystically, heroes often have personal connections to him.

***Positive*:** The Great Gold Wyrm might connect to anyone with a true heart who is devoted to his cause.

***Conflicted*:** Sometimes, a hero with a sordid past has the Gold's blessing even though they are not completely clear of that past. Sometimes, a hero who trained under the Great Gold Wyrm has fallen from grace.

***Negative*:** What kind of monster would have a negative connection to the Great Gold Wyrm? Maybe a servant of the Crusader.

Using Connections

Although his power is now limited, the Great Gold Wyrm is available to his faithful followers.



Draconic Strengths and Virtues

The lives and traits of the Gold's followers are marked by fortitude, trustworthiness, courage, resolve, vision, purity, altruism, wisdom, martial discipline, lethal skill, and self-sacrifice. His followers embody these virtues, and fate brings likeminded persons to their aid. This life is a spiritual test, and the Gold's followers are nailing it.

The Gold's Raw Power

The Great Gold Wyrm's powers involve destruction: destroying evil, resisting destruction, protecting others from destruction, and wisely discerning who or what must be destroyed or protected. Additionally, his godlike power can impress or cow mere mortals. The spells and rituals his paladins and clerics use derive from him, not from the distant gods above.

Sworn to Serve the Gold

The Golden Order is just one of the organizations that might interact with the heroes.

The Golden Order: The Great Gold Wyrm's ages-old body of elite paladins, clerics, and supporters. Its purposes vary from age to age as the needs of the world change. They joined in the war against the Orc Lord in the 13th Age, and perhaps the Diabolist's power spread while the Order was distracted. The Order includes whatever specialized teams, chantries, or libraries you might need for your campaign.

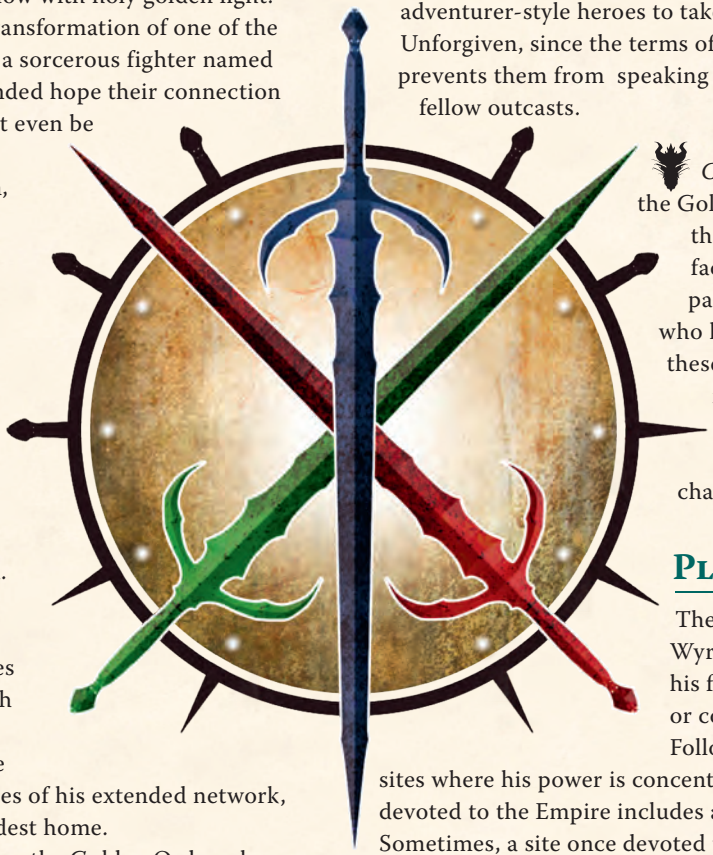
Lost Finders: A specially trained contingent within the Golden Order that seeks out diabolists operating secretly within civilized lands. Their efforts are constrained by the need for secrecy, both to prevent the diabolists from learning of their

actions and to keep the Crusader from discovering where the diabolists might be. The Crusader's tactics for dealing with diabolists involve a lot of dead bystanders. A hero might have trained with the Lost Finders, and they might provide a hero discreet assistance without them ever finding out someone helped.

The Mended: A small group of former cultists and demon-worshippers converted by the power of the Great Gold Wyrm. Their hellish scars, tattoos, and runes of power remain intact as reminders of past mistakes, but now when they perform magic or enter combat, their features glow with holy golden light. Encouraged by the remarkable transformation of one of the worst of the Diabolist's acolytes, a sorcerous fighter named Esme the Witch of Woe, the Mended hope their connection with the Great Gold Wyrm might even be capable of converting a demon. That's still a debatable aspiration, not an accomplishment.

Brother Fennigal: A saintly, old gnome with connections far and wide. He is chosen of the Great Gold Wyrm, and he suffers alongside the Gold in his dreams. In waking life, he serves as the center of an informal body of mystics, innocents, artists, travelers, scholars, and champions of good. As the Gold connects to him, he connects to his own followers, many of whom are not themselves worthy of direct communion with the Great Gold Wyrm. To help the Gold's cause, he draws on the knowledge, support, and resources of his extended network, although he rarely leaves his modest home.

Brother Fennigal can also call on the Golden Order when he needs real muscle. His network of faithful is practically invisible, a contrast to the high-profile Golden Order, and you'd be surprised to find out who has been to his home to pay homage and to learn. Even the followers themselves don't realize how vast and powerful the network is. Brother Fennigal lives wherever you need him to live when it's time to introduce him into the campaign. His followers might be anywhere.



The Unforgiven: Disgraced paladins exiled from the Golden Order and cut off from the Great Gold Wyrm for crimes of treachery, murder, cowardice, or greed. You can spot the Unforgiven by their self-inflicted scars and thousand-yard stares. These solitary outcasts travel the deep wilderness and remote wastes, seeking atonement by aiding those afflicted by demons (or crusaders?) until death claims them. Few people trust the Unforgiven; but they were great, once, and can be useful allies. As criminals and exiles, the Unforgiven may have access to people, places, and secrets denied to respectable warriors of the Light. In turn, the Unforgiven might ask adventurer-style heroes to take messages or gifts to other Unforgiven, since the terms of their exile include a geas that prevents them from speaking to, or even coming near, their fellow outcasts.

Circle of Swords: A cadre within the Golden Order specially devoted to the problem your hero is currently facing. Just your luck, there are paladins, clerics, or explorers who have also been looking into these ruins, or tracking this outlaw magician, or investigating this ancestral curse. They have the information, incantation, or charm you happen to need.

Places and Powers

The power of the Great Gold Wyrm might be found anywhere his followers currently congregate or congregated in ages past. Followers maintain shrines and holy sites where his power is concentrated. Sometimes, a holy site devoted to the Empire includes an idol connected to the Gold. Sometimes, a site once devoted to demons or an evil deity is converted into a sacred site filled with the Great Gold Wyrm's power. The Gold's faithful might reveal his power in a sacred scroll of hymns or in an ancient amulet blessed by him. Tombs of saintly followers have the Gold's blessing; some are sites of veneration, while others are forgotten. Even the long-lost corpse of an ancient champion who fell during battle might serve as a locus of the Gold's power, with the champion's ultimate sacrifice making the area as sacred as any ritual could.

High Druid

For the most part, High Druids of the past have been satisfied with organizing nature worship outside of the Dragon Empire. Unfortunately, the latest High Druid, an ambitious young half-elf woman, has established her center of power in the Wild Wood, well within the borders of the Dragon Empire. No one is sure how far she is willing to press her position.

The High Druid is a natural icon for player character druids (see *13 True Ways*), as well as many troll-kin, possibly rangers, and any hero with a decidedly natural bent. Other heroes might have unique connections to her that improve or complicate her relation to the icons that promote civilization.

"My name is Bear, which means 'Bear.' What are your names?"

—a talking bear in the Wild Woods, whose actual name is 'Many-Killer'



The High Druid in the World

The High Druid calls up the primeval power of nature and shares it with those who know the ancient ways. Druids make more use of her magic than anyone else, but plenty of regular people across the Empire follow the ancient ways with rites and prayers of nature and fertility. Spirits of the wild, intelligent trees, talking animals, and brutal elementals all incline toward her, and she shares her power with them. Even ordinary plants and animals grow strong and healthy under her influence, and wolves howl to both her and the moon.

Her influence is felt in all the wild spaces across the land through growth of impassable forests; through blossoms and fruits in great abundance; and through vastly increased amounts of game in the forests, schools of fish in the Midland Sea, and flocks of birds migrating across the land. Even Imperial officers admit that the High Druid's influence makes the Empire's wild lands healthier.

The Emperor, however, knows that the High Druid is raising expectations that nature might reclaim much of what the Empire has tamed, especially near the Wild Wood. The forest creatures would be happy to see the farms and cities returned to wilderness, and plenty of citizens in the area seem to like the idea of no longer owing taxes to the crown. It's a delicate balance because the High Druid's servants help the Empire beat back monsters from the Iron Sea (*GMG*: page 13). The Emperor is not eager to have a showdown with her.



In many of my campaigns, the High Druid is a deadly enemy to the Diabolist and the Lich King—the true destroyers of nature and the healthy, living world. The High Druid is no fan of the Emperor and the Archmage, but part of her issue with them is that horrors like the Diabolist can easily exploit their dominion. Jonathan prefers the High Druid to be less of a "good guy" in his campaigns.

The High Druid's power extends to some degree into the underworld, where the natural cycles of life and death play out in the vast caverns filled with fungi, mold, bugs of all sizes, and unusual beasts. To explorers from the surface world, this life looks unnatural, but it's really just a different kind of nature. Surface-dwellers have little appreciation for the High Druid's influence in the underworld.



As the heroic icons rallied to defeat the Orc Lord, what did the High Druid do to either help them or take advantage of their focus being elsewhere?

Ancient Beyond Ages

The High Druids trace their lineage back to before the Wizard King, but they don't have any documentation to prove it. Certainly, the magic they tap into is primordial, and they serve as a bridge from the old powers to the "new" world of gods and people.

During any age, only one High Druid exists at a time, and the position is often established through merciless battles to the death. The power of the druids ebbs and flows like the cycles of nature, so sometimes the High Druid is in decline or even absent. The current High Druid is ascendant.

Historically, High Druids have been content to operate outside the Dragon Empire proper. The previous High Druids of the 13th Age followed this precedent, but not the current one.

Friends of the Forest

The High Druid is a force unto herself. She is figuratively half-sister to the Elf Queen, but there's more sibling rivalry there than love. She works with the Emperor to resist incursions from the Iron Sea, but she does so to protect her own lands rather than to protect the Empire.

Enemies of the Wild

The High Druid challenges the Emperor's authority in territory the Empire has claimed, but the conflict has not yet developed into bloodshed. The Archmage restrains the tempestuous forces of nature to protect civilization, and the High Druid can feel nature's pain in her bones.

Don't Worry...

Everything will be all right, so long as the Emperor and the High Druid don't go to war.

The High Druid and Your Hero

As an icon with an ambivalent relationship to civilization, the High Druid works for heroes or adventuring parties that have unusual stories. Troll-kin are associated with the High Druid, but your troll-kin hero doesn't need to have a relationship with the High Druid.

Uniques and the High Druid

If your hero is a bear transformed into human form, that *unique* is probably related to the High Druid in some way. Likewise, any sort of unusual, nature-oriented origin story invites a connection to the High Druid.

The Ways of Nature

Short of being a druid, heroes with a background related to the High Druid might have special knowledge of animals, potent herbs, wild lands, or nature spirits. Your hero might have a background as a *former bear with wolf-like senses* [yes, we know], *clan hunter*, *speaker with winds*, *chief shaman scout of the short-lived Axis druidic revival*, or *underworld explorer*.

Working for the High Druid

It's an unusual campaign that has a party sponsored by the High Druid. More commonly, the High Druid might sponsor a party for a particular mission, or ally with them to confront a threat to the natural order. She can provide magical support akin to what the Priestess could, and she might well provide magical animals as guides or scouts. Her spirits or birds could locate the adventurers in the field, bringing them intelligence or magical support. A party with the High Druid's blessing might find all sorts of help in the field from nature-oriented people, animals, and even plants.

Relationship with the High Druid

The nature of your hero's relationship with the High Druid depends a good deal on how she is situated in your particular campaign.

***Positive*:** A positive relationship with the High Druid might reflect your hero's uneasy relationship with the rulers of civilization, such as a conflicted relationship with the Archmage.

***Conflicted*:** It's easy for any hero in the Dragon Empire to have a conflicted relationship with the High Druid because she has a conflicted relationship with the Empire. The conflict may represent an ambiguous origin story for your character, or it might simply represent the ambivalent character of the High Druid—someone who promotes life and health while potentially threatening civic order in the Empire.



***Negative*:** A negative relationship can benefit your hero if it represents a falling-out that happened after your hero gained training, knowledge, and connections from the druids or if it means that your hero is trained to struggle against the High Druid's powers. Maybe your campaign features a network of warriors or magicians working to weaken the High Druid's influence.

Using Connections



The High Druid's power reaches almost everywhere.

Wild Strengths and Virtues

The High Druid's influence in a hero's life might manifest as robust health, fertility, a green thumb, purification, the cycle of life and death, recuperation, overcoming corruption, friendliness of beasts and birds, destruction of the unnatural, easy travel through the wilds, or intuition of natural forces.

The High Druid's Raw Power

Through the High Druid, your hero may be connected to the powers of life and death, which are found just about anywhere. They are most likely to manifest in wild areas, but nature has a way of reinserting itself into territory that's been tamed. The High Druid's power might manifest in your hero's own body and soul, or they might appear as the actions of nearby plants, animals, spirits, or forces of nature.

Servants of the Wild

As you might have guessed, those who follow the High Druid are . . . less organized than those who follow most other icons.

Followers of the Old Ways: All the druids, nature-devotees, moon priestesses, spirits, wise old women, and supernatural denizens of the wilds who worship in the manner of the High Druid and share in the power that she calls up from the depths of nature. They congregate in large or small groups, all recognizing each other as fellow travelers but without the hierarchy seen among, say, the Priestess' followers. They are strongest in the Wild Wood, and in their traditional territories outside the Dragon Empire, but Followers of the Old Ways play important roles in rural areas across the land. Their rites, prayers, and spells cure the sick, heal the wounded, bring fertility to crops and herds, and connect people to the cycles of nature.

In your campaign, this network might be popular among peasants but despised among city people, devoted to human sacrifice, trafficking in mind-altering berries, run by shapeshifters, or ready to rise up in revolt against the Emperor.

Certain territories within the Empire are home to people devoted primarily to the High Druid. They're sure to practice excessive rituals of life and death.

Heroes might find sympathy and succor from individuals aligned with the High Druid, such as nature-worshiping peasants or perhaps a wolf family, and be able to call on these followers for aid out of duty to the High Druid. However, any such "duty" is discretionary.

The Legion: Casualties are high among these Imperial legionnaires that defend the Sea Wall against the monsters of the Iron Sea. But not all the legionnaires who are lost or missing in action are slain. A few have the good fortune to be rescued by the Wall's other defenders—druids, warriors, and great beasts devoted to the High Druid. Over the seasons, some of these rescued legionnaires have chosen to stay in the Wild Wood with their rescuers instead of making their way back to their units.

Technically, they're deserters. In practice, they're mostly still using their skills to defend the Empire, or at least the parts of the Wild Wood that are under threat from the Sea Wall.

In your campaign, the Legion could be an origin point for a hero with a conflicted relationship with either the Emperor or the High Druid. Alternatively, your heroes choose a side, and the Legion becomes a wedge driven into Imperial control or a group of traitors who need to be dealt with covertly in a way that doesn't turn them into martyrs.

The Midnight Choir: A group of elves who, contrary to expectations, devote themselves to the High Druid and to the wisdom of nature. Strangely, wood elves compose the smallest contingent, with high elves a slim majority, followed by drow as the second most numerous. Although their leaders operate in a center within the Queen's Wood, members are much more numerous elsewhere—in wild areas across the land, in the underworld, and more and more in the Wild Wood. Small contingents of members travel across the land, visiting sacred groves and pilgrims, speaking to elves and humans as missionaries, and sacralizing wild areas to spread the power of the High Druid. One such team is highly active in Concord. For your own purposes, you might reconfigure the Midnight Choir to be composed of dwarves, gnomes, or whatever you need.

Metaphysical Forces

Wherever the wind blows, the water flows, or the earth stands, you might find the active power of the High Druid. The more natural life a place has, the more likely it is that the High Druid's power is located there. Sometimes, explorers find altars or magic circles devoted to nature magic, but more often a sacred place is a site of natural beauty and power. The power of the High Druid might manifest simply as a plant whose leaves or berries provide the healing power your hero needs.

Lich King

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

Across the Empire, the Lich King has amassed a surprising number of followers—those who seek power and hollow immortality in exchange for life and freedom. Heroes usually connect to him in reverse—as his sworn enemies, trained to defeat him and anything related to him. Sometimes, heroes are his former servants and followers who can turn what they learned during their service against him.

"Everyone is welcome in the Master's service."

—Olyno Jend, death cult leader



The Lich King in the World

During the day, the Empire is a land of light and song; at night, it is easy to look out your window at the moon-touched land and see that it still nearly belongs to the Lich King. Common people interact with the Lich King primarily by conducting funerary rites, sacrificing to the dead, and maintaining graveyards. These apotropaic rites keep the dead asleep and the Lich King's power at bay. When the people cannot maintain these practices, the curse of the undead is likely to rise.

The Lich King commands the undead, although many undead monsters merely pay him lip service. His death cults recur with distressing regularity. Just as death touches all the kin, so are all the kin found among his followers. Using the combined forces of covert cultists and servant spirits, the Lich King schemes to increase his power—and to rule the land again one day.

The Lich King operates in the realm between life and death, sometimes stalking the lands of the dead like a minor god and other times taking physical form in the mortal worlds. His center of power is the Necropolis, an island in the Midland Sea near Omen Island. There, he engages in blasphemous rites to preserve his existence and accepts sacrifices offered by his priests. Occasionally, he projects a phantom self to cult centers, where he empowers followers, accepts worship, and demands sacrifice.

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

† The original Orc Lord of the Dawn Age was the Lich King's mortal enemy, and he killed the Lich King when he was the living Wizard King. How might the fact that the Orc Lord returned, only to be defeated, relate to the Lich King?

History of the Fallen Wizard King

During the Dawn Age, the Wizard King ruled all the lands with magic and tyranny. The humans, the elves, and the dwarves joined forces to defeat him. Ultimately, it was the Orc Lord—a creature created by the Elf Queen—who killed him, dying himself in the process. With the Wizard King destroyed, the first Dragon Emperor ascended to the throne, and the 1st Age began. Ages later, however, the Wizard King returned as the undying Lich King, and he has schemed to retake "his" empire ever since.

The power of the Lich King's death cults rises and falls from age to age. During times of war or collapse, these cults spread, protecting those who join and menacing those who refuse. During decadent times, the cults gain underground popularity as anti-establishment movements that offer forbidden thrills to their adherents. Sometimes, vampires mingle with aristocrats or form cults of personality in isolated communities.

Death Has No Friends

All the other icons know better than to ally themselves with the Lich King.

Enemies of the Fallen King

The heroic icons, particularly the Priestess and the Dragon Emperor, are united in their opposition to the Lich King. The Emperor knows that he sits on the throne the Lich King wants, and the Priestess coordinates the sacred rituals that keep the Lich King at bay.

Don't Worry...

So long as the Lich King has no villainous allies, and none of the other icons fall under his sway, he will never reclaim the empire he lost.

The Lich King and Your Hero

The Lich King is a ready source for a hero's sketchy backstory or unseemly powers, and he's a fine nemesis for a hero devoted to life and order.

Uniques and the Lich King

People commonly interact more or less directly with the Lich King through funerary rites, and his cult followers might be found anywhere, so there are plenty of ways this icon could figure into your hero's *unique*.

Backgrounds and the Lich King

Your hero might be a *former death cultist* or a *necromancer's apprentice*. Alternatively, they might have trained as a *funerary ritualist*, a *scholar of the undead*, or a *death-cult hunter*.

Working Against the Lich King

The Lich King works as a nemesis but not as a patron. The party would gain resources from the icon or icons sponsoring them, but it's also possible the party could use some of the Lich King's resources against him. If they have special access to the death cults' knowledge, tools, and/or magic, they might have batons of rulership (made from thigh bones) that compel ghosts to obey or depart, incantations that win them audiences with vampires, pendulums whose swinging indicates the presence of the undead, passcodes that open phantom doors to hidden chambers, and rituals that turn corpses into the undead but can be performed in reverse.

Relationship with the Lich King

He has ages of knowledge to impart to those who are worthy.

***Positive*:** Since common rites keep the Lich King in line, it's conceivable that a hero could have a positive relationship that must likewise operate within strict boundaries. Your hero would need a good story for why they are not everyone's enemy.

***Conflicted*:** Even a conflicted relationship with the Lich King is likely to look like treachery, but it's more believable than a positive one.

***Negative*:** The benefits of this relationship derive from either what your hero gained from the Lich King prior to turning against him or what your hero gained from a career in which they worked against the Lich King and his death cults.

Using Connections



It takes a certain sort of hero to take advantage of a relationship with the Lich King.

Strengths and Virtues

The Lich King's influence might appear as ancient knowledge, eternal oaths, unending obedience, deference to authority, a vision that spans ages, unearthly endurance, invulnerability, or utter confidence.

The Lich King's Raw Power

The power of the Lich King might manifest in or around his followers as power over the undead, intuitive knowledge of life and death, a chill that drains will from the living, ghostly power to pass through that which confines mortals, or a force of personality that compels others to submit.

The Lich King's Servants and Enemies

The nature and extent of the Lich King's servitor cults is obscure to most and dependent on the campaign needs.

✝ *Death cults*: The bands of mortals and undead who try to serve themselves by serving the Lich King. In the mind of the Lich King, these groups are all connected in a vast hierarchy that determines who is superior or inferior to whom, and they have titles reflecting the roles they will have when the Lich King finally returns to power: Third Honor Cadre Second Class, Northeastern Auxiliary Chantmasters, First Necromantic Circle of Grayvale Province, Second Hour Company of the True Empire, etc. Likewise, each cultist has a rank and title defining their position: initiates of first to fifth rank; priests of flesh, bone, spirit, or pain; soldiers of first to third rank; sergeants, captains, and generals; various specialists; etc. In practice, these cults are mostly isolated from each other, and discipline is uneven. During good times, they can operate only far from the great cities. However, in times of disorder they spread deeper into civilization, and in times of decadence they may find covert favor among society's elites. Thanks to the tutelage of spirits and guidance from forbidden tomes, even a small, new cult has access to ancient knowledge and power.

✝ *Repairers of Reputation*: A secret society on Necropolis that, for an astronomical price, seem capable of moving a soul from a compromised body into a dead but well-preserved body, enabling the "repaired" person to start a new life. A hero involved with the Repairers might have a bizarre *unique,* powerful enemies, or weighty obligations worth evading at all costs. Depending on your campaign, it's a fair question whether this sect works with the Lich King or at somewhat cross-purposes.

✝ *Fire & Iron of the 13th Age*: A recently composed body of scholars devoted to understanding the ancient ways and current schemes of the Lich King's death cults. They base themselves loosely on similar cadres that existed in previous ages, with one major exception—the previous instantiations fought the Lich King's forces personally, and all suffered catastrophic ends, while the newly constituted body simply does the investigation and points others in the right direction. They might be sponsored by a particular icon, led by a certain eccentric, or composed primarily of a specific sort of scholar, as suits your hero's story.

✝ *Champions of Life*: A promising network of paladins, clerics, and idealists who made a great show of taking on the Lich King. They're all dead—or worse. Luckily for your hero, they left behind an array of maps to important locations, keys to unknown doors or chests, passcodes and incantations of that serve important but unknown purposes, intelligible clues to a small number of dangerous mysteries, and a network of admiring contacts who are eager to help those who want to pick up where the Champions of Life left off. Lost in field are more clues and sources of aid: signs carved into or chalked onto stone walls, diaries, protective talismans, second halves of scrolls ripped in two, sacred circles installed in dangerous areas, and possibly the unrestful shades of dead Champions. The remains of the Champions, enduring as undead monsters, are ready to thwart those who pursue these paths. Your hero might have trained with them before the catastrophe, or perhaps they were destroyed years ago, and your character somehow inherited a connection to them.

✝ *The Silver Hand*: A mystery cult that provides hope to those who have none by promising that death is not the end. Security. Prosperity. Change. A sense of belonging. Power. Eternal life. All this can be yours, with the Lich King as your master.

This rural cult and its program of expansion are detailed on pages 243-250 of *Bestiary 2*. A hero who got away from the cult might have family and contacts remaining inside.

Metaphysical Forces

You can find the power of the Lich King in graveyards and tombs—the more ancient and notable, the better. You might also find it at sites of great death or sites where great people have died, perhaps even at the remains of some ancient king or champion. Ancient and current death cults consecrated (or "desecrated"?) certain places as sites of unholy worship and sacrifice.



Orc Lord

The Orc Lord is dead, and that's good news. That said, the chaos he brought to the Dragon Empire outlives him. Your campaign might well involve handling the aftermath of his war against civilization.

The Orc Lord is not generally connected to any heroes. He was a villain, and now he's dead. Perhaps there's a player at your table who has some clever idea about how their hero might be connected to the Orc Lord, and maybe the Orc Lord has more presence in your campaign than he does in the default *13th Age* campaign.

What does it mean in your campaign that the Orc Lord is dead? Who killed him, and at what cost? How has life in the Dragon Empire changed forever, thanks to the war he brought?

"His hunger lives on in our bellies."

—Hrgach, ogre chieftain

A Foe from Ages Past

Until recently, the people of the Empire believed the Orc Lord was a figure of the ancient past, dead and gone forever. They were wrong.

Before the 1st Age, humans, elves, and dwarves waged a desperate war against the all-powerful Wizard King. To defeat him, the Elf Queen created the Orc Lord, who magically raised an army of orcs and helped defeat the Wizard King, dying himself in the process. Ages later, the Wizard King returned as the Lich King, but that's another story.

The Wizard King's dying curse turned the orcs back on those who defeated him, and orcs have recurred as enemies of civilization in every age since. Thankfully, no new Orc Lord ever reappeared, at least, not until the 13th Age.

In the 13th Age

To the distress of all, orcish activity increased across the lands, and a new Orc Lord arose. He armed and trained his orcs, turning them into a relentless army. Ogres, goblins, trolls, gnolls, giants, and others joined his campaign, with their warlords leading their own armies into battle. Under the Orc Lord's command, the orcs developed formidable magical powers, and it

took the united forces of elves, dwarves, humans, and troll-kin to defeat him. Now that this Orc Lord is dead, his armies have dissolved into roving bands of marauders. Several inhuman warlords that allied with him now vie to assert control over the monstrous armies. Axis is safe, but violence rages across the hinterlands.

How did the recent war against the Orc Lord end, and what remains of civilization? That's for your group to decide, and the details help define your campaign.

What Civilization Lost

One way to give a campaign its own character is to kill off some of the heroic icons, those who paid the ultimate price to defeat the Orc Lord. If the Empire loses the Emperor, the Archmage, the Priestess, the Dwarf King, or the Elf Queen, that makes the land more vulnerable to whatever threat comes next. Likewise, if the ranks of the military have been depleted, then monsters, bandits, and rebels can prey on the citizenry. What if a great city has been laid waste? Chaos is bad for civic life, but it's great for adventuring.

Orc Lord's Ending and the Rising Threat

With the Orc Lord dead, what great threat will civilization face next? Another great way to define a campaign is to determine the biggest threat to peace and security. Typically, the campaign starts with the players knowing what that threat is, but sometimes the GM wants the threat to come to light over the course of play.

Although each group should figure this out for each campaign, we offer the following examples to inspire you. Feel free to mix and match elements you like from different versions or make up something entirely new.

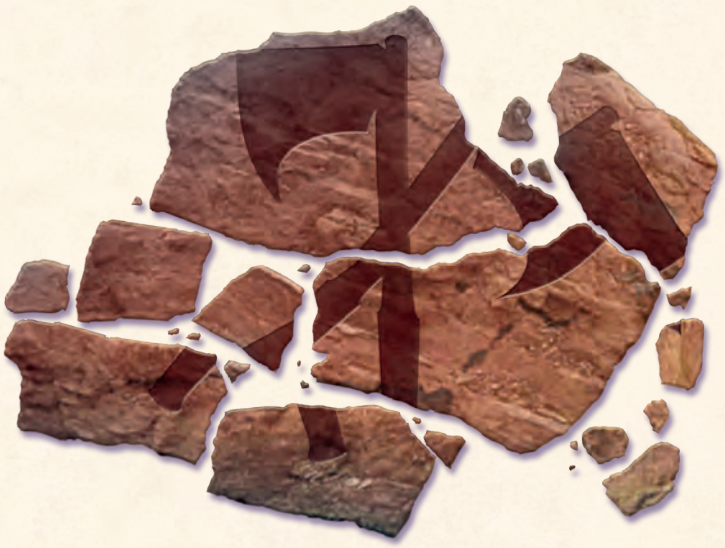
Axe of Seven Bloods: Remember how we said everything would be all right so long as the Dwarf King does not unseal the Hall of Vengeance and retrieve the legendary *Axe of Seven Bloods?* (page 236.) In this campaign, the Dwarf King secretly has the *Axe of Seven Bloods* and has already used it against the Orc Lord. The Dwarf King and his most devoted followers grow increasingly erratic and belligerent during this campaign, and about the time the heroes hit champion-tier, the dwarves are ready to go to war with either the Empire or the elves, depending on whether the Emperor or the Elf Queen has been most disrespectful. About the time the heroes hit epic-tier, the *Axe* has recharged and is ready for another swing.

The Creator is Destroyed: The current Elf Queen faced the metaphysical repercussions of her predecessor's creation of the original Orc Lord, and the returned Orc Lord died during the process of utterly destroying her. The silver elves are warring with the dwarves, who were badly weakened by the war against the Orc Lord. The wood elves and high elves are no longer united, and only the high elves care much about the Dragon Empire. The Great Green Wyrm has abandoned the elves. For now, he's an independent terror, but everyone is afraid he'll ally with his peers, and "the Four" will be an even greater threat than the Three were. With the Elf Queen dead, the Lich King finds it easy to turn dead elves into undead monsters, many of which are fearsomely powerful. Guess for yourself whether the drow accept his help to attack the dwarves.

The orc armies collapsed in disarray, and the Orc Lord is nowhere to be found. Divinations assure the Archmage and the Priestess that he is indeed dead, but who or what killed him? When the heroes (or others) discover the answer, is it good news or bad news?

Hail our Savior, the Crusader: The good news: the Orc Lord and the Diabolist are both destroyed. The Crusader tricked the two icons into working together, and when they inevitably turned on each other, the Crusader let them fight it out and then finished off both. The bad news: people now love the Crusader. Some say the Crusader deserves to sit on the throne in Axis or lead the rituals in Santa Cora. There have not yet been fanatical uprisings or demands from the Crusader, but they're coming. Meanwhile, the Lich King is attempting to locate the remains of the mightiest orcs, cultists, and monsters to form them into cadres of elite, undead servants. The news is even grimmer if some of the heroic icons were also killed in the war, especially if the Crusader secretly arranged for their downfall.

Horde Lords: This campaign is happy to leave the final mechanism of death mysterious, while suggesting the Orc Lord died because he was incompetent and wasted his chance at greatness. Now, there's a sort of bizarre tournament north of the Iron Wood, where various monsters and warlords are competing in battle. The competitors believe victory will make them an icon. Could it be true? Or it a cunning plot to get the would-be hordes to waste their strength killing each other off?





The Emperor is Dead: Just as the original Orc Lord died when he killed the Wizard King in the Dawn Age, so the returned Orc Lord perished while killing the Emperor. Now, not only is the Emperor dead, but his iconic power is broken—meaning no new Emperor will rise in his place. The Dragon Empire has fallen into disarray. Seers say this is the end of the Empire, and the next age will be the first of a new order. Meanwhile, the Empire's enemies are rising, while its allies falter. The three elf kin are at odds, and the Elf Queen is focused on saving her people. The drow are at war with the dwarves, and the Dwarf King can offer little support to the Dragon Empire. The High Druid stepped in to protect people from disorder, provided they agreed to unchain the wild. The Great Blue Wyrm's geas is broken, and she declared herself the independent ruler of Drakkenhall and more. Servants of the Lich King took control of part of the Empire. The Crusader claims the right to rule in the Emperor's stead. Good luck, everyone!

Another Wizard Killed: These Orc Lords have proven adept at killing wizards—first the Wizard King, and now the Archmage. At least he managed to kill off the Orc Lord in the process, like the Wizard King did ages ago. With the Archmage dead, and his wards and elemental controls faltering, nature is rising to pummel the settled lands. The High Druid's influence spreads far out of the Wild Wood to other sites across the Empire.

The Orc Lord Returns: Killing the Orc Lord took a terrible toll on the Dragon Empire, but it's done. The victory celebrations, however, are premature; the Orc Lord returns as a mighty, vampiric lich called the Blood Lord. The Blood Lord might qualify as an icon in his own right, but he serves as the Lich King's champion. Likewise, countless slaughtered orc soldiers return as zombies, ghouls, and ghosts. The Orc Lord's return was the Lich King's plan from the beginning; now, the real battle begins.

Don't Worry: Defeating the Orc Lord was costly in blood, treasure, and magic, but the Empire and its famed dragons were up to the challenge and won decisively. While people celebrate the victory, mourn the dead, and scavenge through ruins, they are oblivious to the danger that secretly spreads across the weakened Empire. And when this new danger rises, it will make people miss the Orc Lord.

Priestess

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

As the earthly representative of the gods of light, the Priestess is a natural icon for plenty of heroes, and she is often the patron of a campaign's adventuring party. Since she is a new icon, neither players at the table nor adventurers in the Dragon Empire can be sure how her career is going to play out.

When the warlike icons fought against the Orc Lord, what did they lose? Perhaps their lives? As a leader of the Dragon Empire, how did the Priestess rise to meet the challenge the Orc Lord brought?

"There have been others who listened to the gods. The Priestess also listens to us."

—a devotee of the Priestess

The Priestess in the World

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

Twelve Ages without a Priestess

The Priestess rose to power in this age as a new icon. Previous ages have included a few religious or godly icons, such as the Hierophant, the Thaumaturge, and the Fool, but none took the title "Priestess," and none spoke for the gods of light the way she does. Some think of her as the Fool returned in another guise.

Allies of the Light

Along with the Archmage, the Priestess serves the Emperor for the good of the people. She shares the Great Gold Wyrm's altruistic goals, but her servants and the Gold's have different styles and don't care to cooperate. She is on good terms with the Dwarf King, the Elf Queen, and even the High Druid, and she has several true devotees among the elves, the dwarves, and the druids.



Enemies of the Light

The people fear the Diabolist, the Lich King, and the Three, so they come to the Light for the Priestess' protection. Perhaps they end up making the Priestess stronger. Her true nemesis, however, is the Crusader. They draw citizens away from the Light and into the Dark; their gains are her losses.

Don't Worry...

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

The Priestess and Your Hero

Of all the icons, the Priestess is the one groups most often interpret as authentically benevolent, without the dark side other heroic icons often display. She's a bright star to follow in a troubled world.

Uniques and the Priestess

Because she has access to divine power from any number of gods and goddesses, the Priestess can readily figure into hero's unique identity, perhaps as a sponsor, an inspiration, a savior, or even a creator.

Backgrounds of Light

Your hero might have served the Priestess as a *traveling preacher*, a *popular healer*, a *spiritual bureaucrat*, or possibly even a *good-hearted security agent* or *spy*. You might also have entered her graces after an entirely different life, so check out all the other suggestions!

In the Priestess' Enlightened Service

When the Priestess selects heroes of great heart to brave the forces of evil for her, she sends them into danger with miraculous blessings. Her heart is large enough to accept a wide range of adventurers, including those who are unseemly, ill-favored, or brutal. When times were good, the Priestess could mostly rely on the Archmage and Emperor to send strike teams into danger and bloodshed, but no one expects times to be good again anytime soon. The Priestess makes a fine patron for a whole campaign, and she also works as a temporary patron for a party of heroes who proved themselves working for other heroic icons.

Heroes who operate under the Priestess' direction might speak with her authority, but her influence has more to do with charisma and reputation than any official power.

A party sponsored by the Priestess might be provided with healing potions, holy runes, protective spirits, long-range guidance or communication in prayer, blessings that protect them or counter the evil magic they're sent to face, and even sacred magic items.

Relationship with the Priestess

The Priestess has wide-ranging renown, so a relationship with her is potent; however, her authority is not really about official chains of command, so a relationship of any kind with her can be flexible.

***Positive*:** Good-hearted heroes might have any of various reasons for coming into her good graces. That said, it's easy for heroes to favor her without actually having the sort of pull or clout a relationship represents. Who doesn't love the Priestess?

***Conflicted*:** You can find plenty of narrative potential here with a hero who has a meaningful connection to her but might be something of a disappointment—too violent, too given to sordid pleasures, or too headstrong to obey the gods of light. A conflicted relationship might represent a positive connection that has become troubled or the hero's halfway progress from opponent to devotee.

***Negative*:** If you want the other players to like your character, maybe don't have a negative relationship with the Priestess. You might be able to dream up a negative relationship that's narratively satisfying, but good luck.

Using Connections



Your connection to the Priestess puts you in touch with divine magic and to her servants and devotees across the land.

Strengths and Virtues

Your hero might be able to influence the story through sacred rituals, knowledge from secret teachings, heart-warming hymns that soothe the savage beast, or simply the personal charisma that comes from being aligned with the gods of light.

The Priestess' influence might appear as wisdom from unexpected places, oblique communication from the divine, visits from benevolent ancestors, hope where hope is hard to find, clarity that penetrates deceit, kindness offered or received, obscure oracles that eventually make sense, dreams that are more than dreams, friends turning up unexpectedly, new and unexpected friends, or favors without anyone keeping track of who owes whom.

The Priestess' Raw Power

It's easy to imagine a hero personally manifesting the holy power of the Priestess, especially when speaking for the gods of light. A hero with the voice of the Priestess might be able to inspire, encourage, or rebuke. A connection to the Priestess might also allow a hero to channel the power of spirits, angels, or even deities. Even when the hero isn't paying attention, the gods of light might shine.

Spiritual Organizations

The Priestess' wide-ranging and varied activities provide plenty of options for inventing organizations to suit your hero or your campaign.

Lamp Bearers: An outreach organization devoted to building microcosmic shrines that capture the spirit of the Cathedral. The shrines are each no larger than a two-room cottage, at least on the outside. Each shrine looks dramatically different from the others because each somehow reflects the spiritual history or potential of its location. Inside, these shrines are full of surprises.

Blades of Light: A paramilitary organization devoted to the Priestess, although not necessarily guided by her. They are willing, even eager, to do the sort of dirty work the Priestess herself wouldn't request, and they swear an oath to never go within thirteen miles of the Cathedral. These soldiers are likely to show interest in a hero connected to the Priestess, which could play out well for any relationship: positive, conflicted, or negative.

The Circle of Purgation: A secret organization that seeks out and purifies shrines and sites aligned with the dark gods, including abandoned sites where evil lingers. Heroes with the right connections could get plenty of assistance from these doughty servants of the light. In turn, the Circle might call on trustworthy adventurers to assist in some of their more dangerous efforts, and they provide such allies with only the bare minimum of information regarding their missions. Naturally, purifying the dark gods' sites of power might bring the Priestess into direct conflict with the Crusader.

House of Light & Stone: A society of dwarves who devote themselves to the Priestess and the gods of light. Though they act well outside the traditions of their clans, they are growing in popularity and influence—and they are particularly common in dwarven communities found in the Empire's metropoles. You would probably only add this religious movement to your campaign if your hero is a dwarf related to the Priestess. If you're playing a Priestess-related elf, you could reimagine this organization as the *Circle of Leaves & Light*; and if you're a forgeborn, then maybe it's the *Order of Light & Steel*. Or, if your hero is some sort of monster, then maybe the *True Clan of Dawn* consists of the Priestess' followers among goblins, giants, minotaurs, and other surprising converts.



Powers of Light

Sites of divine power and divine entities are found across the land. Generally, these sites relate to certain local deities or traditions, and the Priestess' people find welcome there. Every community has temples and shrines devoted to the gods and goddesses that protect them, and the people honor the Priestess even though she has no ecclesiastical authority over them. Likewise, good spirits and angelic visitors respond to the Priestess' power without technically being her servants or creatures. Even abandoned shrines from ages past and the spirits that abide there usually recognize the power of the Priestess.

Conversely, there are plenty of communities that honor deities of the dark as well as the light. Worshipers might seek the blessing of bloody war gods or of bloodthirsty fertility goddesses, and they might propitiate gods of disease and ruin to keep them at bay. The Priestess would love to supplant these offerings . . . .

Missions

If your hero is anywhere near Santa Cora, free time connections could include exploring mysteries in the Cathedral or exploring the mysteries of the Cathedral. For a hero with a positive or conflicted relationship, a night or three in the Cathedral might awaken a personal spirit that manifests as a temporary blessing (*GMG*: 191), perhaps blossoming out of a piece of the hero's usual gear. If the relationship is conflicted, this could end up being partially ironic, as the magic of the Cathedral teaches the hero a lesson that may or may not be entirely welcome.

Prince of Shadows

As a mysterious trickster who operates both literally and figuratively in the shadows of civilization, the Prince of Shadows is a fine icon for adventurers who are likewise sneaky, especially in a campaign that's more about skullduggery in the great cities than looting the underworld. Players are often attracted to the romantic idea that the Prince of Shadows is something of a Robin Hood figure, and that's cliché because it's a fine trope. In some campaigns, the Prince of Shadows is a major villain, in which case heroes are connected to him through conflicted or negative relationships.

"While you were gone, a package arrived for you."

—your host, possibly also a spy

The Prince of Shadows in the World

The Prince of Shadows' exploits reshape the world nearly as often as they redistribute its wealth. He squandered the riches of the dwarves, murdered the hopes of a dragon, and plundered the dreams of a god. Although his exploits changed the world, no one knows his ultimate goals or motives. Your hero's attitude toward the Prince of Shadows depends on how they feel about anarchy, and perhaps how they feel about anarchy happening to them.

The Prince doesn't care about getting credit for his exploits, and not everyone even believes there *is* a Prince of Shadows. In some places, the Prince is blamed for every major theft, which provides cover for the Thieves' Guild and leads some to suspect that all the stories about the Prince are fabricated. All these unknowns work to the Prince's advantage.

While the Prince is famous for stealing precious treasures, the flip side is that he often works by doling out gifts, including valuables, secrets, visions, and even magic items. Recipients might or might not know where the gifts come from, as they usually come through intermediaries, who might or might not know that the gifts ultimately come from the Prince.

At any given time, the Prince might be anywhere from giants' castles in the overworld to forbidden vaults whose treasures are beyond mortal ken. Anyone seeking the Prince typically starts in Shadow Port; even if he's not there, his agents are. Visitors hope to gain an audience with him, but they have no way to know whether any "Prince" who meets with them is really the icon. One thing they *can* be sure of is that they will be thoroughly spied on before they get anywhere with his followers.

The Orc Lord's war offered a world of opportunity for a shady figure like the Prince of Shadows. What do the people know about his recent dealings? What do they not know?

Shadows of History

Various shadowy figures appear on the margins of official histories: the Masked Mystery, the Thief of Dreams, the Twilight Wanderer, the Phantom Bugbear, and others. Some of these mysterious figures are previous incarnations of the Prince of Shadows, and some are mere legends. Meanwhile, several previous incarnations acted in such secrecy that they are unknown today.

Allies of the Shadows

The Diabolist profited from certain of the Prince's "transactions," but the Priestess believes the Prince stole more from the Diabolist than the Diabolist suspects. Who can say? People who fear the Prince say he's working with the Great Black Wyrm or the Lich King. Those who admire him say he has a secret deal with the Archmage or the Elf Queen. Who can say?

Enemies of the Prince

The Dwarf King has offered a king's ransom in platinum for the Prince of Shadows' head, but no one knows why. Some say that's just a ruse and the two icons work together, united by their love of treasure. Rumor has it the Archmage tried to retrieve certain stolen artifacts from the Prince, but the stories are conflicted over what was stolen and whether it was recovered.

Don't Worry...

Everything is going to be all right, so long as the Prince of Shadows doesn't end up leading the forces of evil.



The Prince of Shadows and Your Hero

The Prince of Shadows is a splendid icon for a hero who wants a dash of mystery—a touch of gray beside the brighter heroes. He's also the icon best suited to covert associations. Write one of the upfront heroic icons on your character sheet. Then talk with the GM in private and clarify, "On my character sheet, when it says Dwarf King, it means Prince of Shadows."

Uniques and the Prince of Shadows

If the Prince is involved in your hero's unusual origin story, that story probably involves something the Prince stole: a transformative secret, a powerful artifact, something from the dream of a goddess, or whatever you need. Maybe your hero is the "treasure" the Prince stole, only to liberate them and send them on their way. The Prince's motives are obscure, and this incarnation of the icon is more of an unpredictable trickster than a greedy thief, so maybe you don't know why he stole what he stole or how it ended up in your hero's story.

A History with the Prince

Since the Prince secretly manipulates the lives of others, your hero might have gained training or experience the Prince chose for them without ever knowing the Prince was behind it. Your hero might have a background as a *physician*, an *explorer*, or a *detective* because they served the Prince in that role or because the Prince needed them to have that knowledge for future purposes. On the other hand, a hero who trained with thieves might have been told they were working for the Prince when they were not. If your hero's story needs a reason why they're no longer in the Prince of Shadows-related career they used to follow, then "*everybody else was killed on the last mission that went spectacularly awry*" is a broadly applicable plot point and might even be a background.

Caught up in the Prince's Schemes

Adventurers often work for the Prince of Shadows without ever knowing it. In some sense, anyone who accepts one of his gifts is doing the Prince's work. Sometimes, a mission that some other icon sponsors is secretly co-sponsored or even arranged by the Prince or his agents. Certain ambitious adventurers admire the Prince's style and aim to further his schemes, but that's a shifty path; what works for an icon can, as often as not, walk an adventurer into a wall of swords.

When heroes, wittingly or not, do the Prince's work, he supports them through what looks like serendipity. They meet the right people with the right information, they find the clues they need to solve the mystery, or they locate the special item they need in an ancient treasure trove.

An adventuring party sponsored full-time by the Prince would require a special cast of heroes—player characters built to be subtle, stealthy, and mysterious rather than showy and heroic. Likewise, the GM would have to prepare a special series of adventures to fit this theme.

Relationship with the Prince

Since the Prince of Shadows is ambivalent about heroic goodness, it's easy to have a positive, conflicted, or negative relationship with him.

***Positive*:** It might be easiest to define a positive relationship in such a way that your hero doesn't even know the Prince is on their side. Then you don't have to worry about your hero understanding the Prince's motives or capabilities. Even if your hero knows they are aligned with the Prince, they might never be sure what happenstance events in their lives are due to his machinations. Give some thought to how others would likely react if they knew your hero was in league with the Prince, or how your hero would react if they found out themselves.

***Conflicted*:** Maybe your hero once worked with the Prince's agents and renounced the connection only to have the Prince continue to meddle in their life for his own purposes. Likewise, need might force your hero to seek help from the Prince's network—despite promises to themselves that they would never. There's lots of good drama to be had in such a conflict.

***Negative*:** Plenty of people might hate or fear the Prince of Shadows, but in order to gain narrative benefits from a negative connection, your hero probably needs to have a history of counter-scheming against the Prince. Such a history could provide your hero specialized knowledge and contact with other sleuths devoted to countering the Prince. Your hero might also be one of the Prince's former minions, retaining their knowledge and contacts from that life. Even with a negative relationship, it's narratively convenient if the hero and the Prince are not actively out to get each other.

Using Connections

The Prince's assistance comes with a light touch.



Mysterious Strengths and Virtues

If your hero is associated with the Prince of Shadows, the Prince's influence might manifest as unsuspected secrecy, otherworldly stealth, clever schemes, defeated locks and wards, fortuitous meetings, unseen assistance, agents in deep cover, unforeseen gifts, secrets shared, or dupes unwittingly working for the Prince.

The Prince's Raw Power

The Prince's influence sometimes extends to supernatural power. A follower might benefit from the Prince's ability to lie, sneak, find, escape and evade, pursue, or gain entry where entry is forbidden or seemingly impossible.

The Prince's Organizations

The organizations that serve the Prince are covert, but plenty of people know something about their operations.

The Prince's people: The loose network of people who know they work primarily for the Prince. Most of this network is secret, even to its own members, and they have no "official" name, headquarters, or hierarchy. The Prince's people include thieves, assassins, fixers, magicians, shapeshifters, monsters, and spirits. Most of them have second careers that provide cover for their secret careers in the Prince's network. They're merchants, bankers, guild officers, diplomats, bureaucrats, innkeepers, physicians, and scholars, as well as thieves and muscle that work for bosses other than the Prince. Your hero might find the Prince's people anywhere, and they'll often benefit from those who are directed by the Prince's people without knowing they're doing the Prince's work.

The Thieves' Guild: Any of the local or regional bodies of more or less organized criminals. They all claim to have the Prince's official sponsorship, but it's anybody's guess how involved the Prince actually is. Certainly, none of these guilds could prosper unless the Prince allowed it, and at least some of the leaders are under the Prince's direction. Depending on your hero's story, they might be able to appeal for assistance here, which might be as close as it gets to directly asking the Prince for help.

The Handler's League: The notorious guild of stevedores, dockhands, porters, and others who load or unload commercial goods and construction materials. They operate around the Empire, especially near the port city docks, and they're widely understood to contain an active criminal element. They include all sorts of strong-limbed members, sometimes even gnolls and ogres. They cooperate with thieves' guilds and criminal families, and the Prince is well-represented among both the leadership and the laborers who are tasked with spying on the leadership. The joke is that when someone is causing a problem for the Prince, people from the league "handle" them, but it's no joke to the people who get handled.

Metaphysical Forces

A hero with the right sort of sensitivity or luck might find the Prince's power here and there around the worlds. If the Prince himself has been somewhere nearby, the magic that got him into or out of a place might still be active. Magic or spirits the Prince liberates might now haunt a place. Sometimes, the power of a previous incarnation lingers into the current age, such as a magical portal once used by the Midnight Traveler.





The Three

These three primordial dragons are straightforward villains whose servants and spawn are found everywhere—from the doomed caverns of the underworld to the floating cities of the overworld, and from Imperial courts to barbarian hinterlands. Players love to connect their heroes negatively to the Three. Sometimes, these heroes are trained in the ways of dragon-slaying, and sometimes they once worked for the Three or are even dragonspawn in some sense. The varying identities of the Black, the Blue, and the Red allow players to fine-tune their heroes' connections to the Three. As you might guess, the Three make a great ultimate villain for a campaign.

"They are the Destroyer, the Ruler, the Shadow-Queen. Kneel to none but the mightiest. Kneel to them."

—Takanal, troll-kin paladin devoted to the Great Blue Wyrm

The Three in the World

The Three were among the first dragons to walk the world. The Great Red Wyrm is a living engine of destruction. The Great Blue Wyrm is a sorceress, perhaps even the original mother of all sorcery. The Great Black Wyrm is queen of shadows and assassins. The Three are the evil counterpoint to the Great Gold Wyrm. They're not as strong as the Gold, but they're also not stuck in the Abyss. Unlike the Great Gold Wyrm, who must fight alone, the Three have learned to join forces.

One of the Three, the Blue Sorceress, somehow forced an entry into the official hierarchy of the Dragon Empire—she serves as the Imperial governor of Drakkenhall under geas from the Emperor and the Archmage. So apparently, the Three are only fully evil and dangerous outside of Drakkenhall; within Drakkenhall they are considered "the establishment." The Great Black Wyrm travels secretly across the Empire in humanoid or dragon form, visiting wild hunting grounds, evil monasteries in the hinterlands, and secret societies in the great cities. The Great Red Wyrm is not subtle enough to travel the Empire without a fight; therefore, he lives mostly beyond the Empire's borders or in the overworld.

If the Three didn't use the war with the Orc Lord as an opportunity to expand their power in the Dragon Empire, we'll eat our hats. What did these iconic dragons gain and at whose expense?

Ages of the Dragons

During the Dawn Age, five evil great wyrms terrorized the people: the White, the Black, the Green, the Blue, and the Red. The Great White Wyrm fell in battle against the Wizard King, leaving four evil great wyrms. Ages later, an Elf Queen ensnared the Great Green Wyrm, leaving only three. From age to age, these three have usually operated independently. Their power waxes and wanes, so that each sometimes holds iconic status and sometimes loses it. Their terrible deeds marked the ages, and their progeny often acted as major but mortal villains on the stage of the worlds.

During the 13th Age, the three evil great wyrms learned to work together, and together they regained iconic status.

Too Mighty for Friends

The Three have no allies—they sometimes hardly seem to be each other's allies.

Enemies Worthy of Dragons

In theory, the Great Gold Wyrm is the nemesis of the Three; in practice, he's sort of busy right now. The Three hate the Elf Queen for holding the Great Green Wyrm captive, but he's something of a loser, so maybe it's for the best that he's not tagging along with them. The Lich King (then the Wizard King) killed the Great White Wyrm in the Dawn Age, and he has a penchant for turning dead dragons into undead servants. However, the schemes of the Three and the Lich King rarely set them at odds. The heroic icons oppose the evil that the Three would do, but until the Three pose a real threat, the heroic icons have other problems. Of the heroic icons, the Dwarf King is the most eager to start chopping some wyrms, but for now he mostly provides dragon-chopping weapons to heroes who can put them to good use.

Don't Worry...

So long as the geas holds the Great Blue Wyrm, the Three can never unite in a war against the Empire.

The Three and Your Hero

These great wyrms might be evil, but there are plenty of ways to work them into your hero's story, especially if your hero is a little sketchy.

Uniques and the Three

A *unique* is a good way to explain your hero's relationship with the Three—such as how your hero gained entry to the Great Black Wyrm's order of assassins or how the Great Blue Wyrm's sorcery explains your hero's inhuman origin.

If you want your non-dragonic hero to have a dragonic kin power, such as *breath weapon*, then your *unique* should probably explain why your character has a touch of the dragon.

Backgrounds and the Three

If one of your hero's backgrounds involves the Three, they probably represent a nefarious past from which your hero has more or less extricated themselves. Maybe they were a *dragon-trained assassin*, a *sorcerer's apprentice working under the Blue*, a *Three-trained secret agent*, or a *dragons' physician*.

Working for the Three?

Maybe your party is going to undertake some ad hoc mission for the Great Blue Wyrm. It might make sense if the Blue has a common goal with a heroic icon, such as both she and the Archmage trying to track down a tiefling who stole some of her precious and sensitive magical raw materials. The Blue and the Black both have people across the land who secretly or unwittingly work for them, and these people might help the adventurers. The Blue can help a party with enchantments, ancient spirits, and little dragon-lizards that could serve as guides or messengers. The Blue might also serve as a patron for styles of magic the Archmage rejects. The Black can provide poisons, alchemical potions, stolen magical tools, and passably humanoid companions.

Most parties are more likely to fight against the Three, and to have these resources used against them!

Relationship with the Three

The great wyrms are pretty cool, and we've seen plenty of heroes that have conflicted or negative relationships with them.

***Positive*:** In most campaigns, a positive relationship with these villains is something of a trick. Jonathan's Three-aligned sorcerer ended up asserting his independence from them, and his positive relationship turned conflicted, so maybe your hero experiences something like that.

***Conflicted*:** A conflicted relationship lets your hero be associated with the great wyrms without being a villain, and

it sets up potential interpersonal conflicts with NPCs or other PCs who don't appreciate your hero's ambivalent position. The Three might hope to win your character over (or back), which offers a ready explanation as to why they don't kill your hero for disloyalty.

***Negative*:** For your hero to gain a benefit from being opposed to the Three, they probably need to be previously associated with the Three or currently associated with a network of people devoted to opposing them.

Using Connections

The way you use these connections depends on your hero's orientation regarding the Three.



The Wyrms' Strengths and Virtues

Dragons are just plain superior, so the strengths of the Three might manifest as power, indomitability, intellect, vision, and presence. The Blue is the mistress of mysteries and monsters. The Black brings murderous intensity, silent death, and targeted obliteration. The Red brings both literal fire and the fire of rage.

Raw Iconic Power of the Three

The power of the Blue might manifest as sorcerous power, ancient magic, or temporal authority. The Black's power is lethal, cunning, and methodical. The Red's rage and love of destruction can bubble up almost anywhere, spreading from heart to heart.

Organizations of the Three

The organizations of the Three work together when they have good cause, but mostly they pursue their separate interests.

The Imperial Governor's House of Drakenhall: Comprised of the Blue herself as the governor and all those who work for her, overtly and covertly. The Blue's emissaries are active across the Empire, and several unsavory types enjoy protected, diplomatic status thanks to her. Meanwhile, the control the Governor's House has of Drakenhall is often tentative.

Order of the Black Heart: All the criminal gangs, evil monasteries, assassin cadres, and monsters who serve the Great Black Wyrm. While working in civilized areas, they are subtle enough to prosper. They are sometimes useful to civic authorities who pursue legitimate goals, although they more often provide illicit services to these leaders and thus compromise them.

League of Fire: Numerous bands of barbarians and berserk warriors who worship the Great Red Wyrm and seek transcendence through violence. They follow the laws well enough to avoid hanging, but they tend to keep moving because they're not usually welcome for long in any one place. They back each other up in times of trouble, but they have no compunction against fighting each other.

Scale Breakers: An alliance of dragon killers, mostly dwarves, dwarf-forged, wood elves, and dragonics. They have an official charter from the Emperor, but they operate independently, drawing on help from the Archmage and the Dwarf King. Their scope includes defeating dragons where they threaten people and countering the "secret" schemes of the Blue and the Black. Feel free to customize the Scale Breakers to suit your Three-hating hero's story.

Metaphysical Forces

The Three embody supernatural draconic power, almost like demigods. For the most part, they wield this power, but it also lives in the world at large. Draconic power might inhere in sites where the great wyrms performed past mythic deeds, where forgotten cults called up draconic power for their violent rites, or where ancient sorcerers focused power from artifacts. These metaphysical forces might also manifest spontaneously around communities of dragonics, monsters related to dragons, or sorcerers that "leak" draconic power.

Section 2: Icon Relationships

A hero's icon relationships integrate that character into the campaign and provide a free-form way for players to address problems and add flair to the session and the campaign story. The player usually does the work of generating a story about how their hero's connections pertain to the events at hand, and the character either gets a tangible reward or sees the game's story develop more to their liking.

The narrative benefits available are covered in detail starting on page 271. Possibilities include help from an icon's organization, adding new details to scenes, positive interactions with NPCs, surprising flashbacks, and plot twists that surprise the GM.

This edition also includes a new option for a character to use an icon connection during combat, although using connections outside of combat is usually more impactful.

Icon Relationship Overview

At the start of each arc, a player randomly determines which icon or icons their hero is connected to for that arc. During the arc, the player spends these connections to affect the narrative or give their hero a bonus during combat.

Narrative connections: A narrative connection allows the player to add something interesting to the story of the game, such as going in a new and unexpected direction thanks to the icon's influence, contact with an NPC or a member of one of the icon's organizations, or spirits or magical powers harnessed by the icon.

Combat connections: A combat connection enlists some aspect of the icon's power to let the player add a second d20 roll when their hero makes an attack, a save, or any other single d20 roll.

Rolling for twists: After using an icon connection, you roll a d20 to find out if there's a twist. For narrative connections, a result of 1–5 indicates a twist. For combat connections, it's 1–10. Twists make the results of the connection more "interesting."

No hoarding: Any icon connections still unused at the end of the arc are lost, unless someone can think up a good, last-minute use for them. Before characters heal up, regain their expended powers, and roll for their new icon connections, consider whether there are stories still in motion that could benefit from an unused icon connection.

Rolling Your Icon Dice

At the start of an arc, each player rolls a six-sided die for each of their hero's icon relationship points. Each die corresponds to a specific relationship point, so keep track when you roll.

Each result of a 5 or a 6 gives your hero an icon relationship advantage with that icon to use later in the arc. There's usually no difference between a 5 and a 6, though individual characters might possess abilities or powers that make the result matter.

Connection with an automatic twist: If none of your icon dice rolls result in a 5 or a 6, your hero instead gets a connection with one icon of the GM's choice—perhaps not one of their regular icons. When you use this connection, you automatically get a twist!

The GM has the option to choose one of your hero's icons that suits the current story, a different icon that's related to recent events in your hero's life, an icon related to upcoming events, or a randomly determined icon. The GM typically consults with you to choose the icon, and they might leave the choice entirely up to you.

To generate a random icon, the GM rolls a d12 and consults the **Random Icon Connection Generator**. They might reroll if the result is one of your hero's regular icons or one that doesn't seem relevant to the current story. If your campaign has fewer than twelve icons, the GM can adjust the list of icons and roll a smaller die. If there are more than twelve icons, the GM chooses icons on the list to remove, and they can also substitute any of the campaign's extra icons.

Random Icon Connection Generator (d12)

RESULT	ICON
1	Archmage
2	Crusader
3	Diabolist
4	Dwarf King
5	Elf Queen
6	Emperor
7	Great Gold Wyrm
8	High Druid
9	Lich King
10	Priestess
11	Prince of Shadows
12	The Three



Icon dice-rolling examples: Adriana uses colored d6s to keep track of her character Selva's three different icon relationships. Selva Finskirk has a positive relationship with the Priestess (white), a conflicted relationship with the Elf Queen (green), and a negative relationship with the Dwarf King (red). At the start of the arc, Adriana's icon dice results are 5 (white), 3 (green), and 6 (red). For this arc, Selva has icon connections with the Priestess and the Dwarf King—though, since Selva's relationship with the Dwarf King is negative, that connection might involve others opposed to the Dwarf King rather than his agents. It's not clear yet whether either of the icon connections will come with a twist—she'll find out when she uses them later that arc.

After three hard battles, the party gets a full heal-up and starts a new arc. Everyone rolls their icon relationship dice again, and this time Adriana rolls a 3 (white), 4 (green), and 2 (red). None of her dice come up as a 5 or a 6, so Selva automatically gets an icon connection with a twist with the GM's choice of icon. The GM asks, "Adriana, do you want me to choose an icon, or do you want me to roll randomly?" Adriana opts for the random roll because it fits Selva's concept of fate.

Special icon connections: Occasionally, the GM might give a hero a one-use icon connection with an icon who is supporting them. If the Elf Queen grants a hero her blessing, probably through an intermediary, the blessing could be represented by an icon connection the player can use once. The connection might be limited to a certain mission or place, or it might end after it is used. Sometimes, each hero in the party gets a special connection like this.

Variant Dice Rolling

The two of us have always viewed icon connections differently. The main system, above, is how Rob runs the game. Jonathan handles icon dice differently! Here's the system Jonathan uses for rolling your hero's icon connections. This variant is for groups that prefer the excitement of uncertainty over the value of a known quantity. It also gives players more control over which icon connections to use, which sometimes allows them to better fit the story.

Rolling in the moment: Instead of rolling for icon connections at the start of an arc, roll for them any time during play when they might come up and make a difference. A result of 4, 5, or 6 indicates that the connection comes into play, and you collaborate with the GM to develop the connection as part of the story, as usual. You also roll for a twist as you normally would. If you roll a 1, 2, or 3, then that die doesn't activate, and you can try to roll again in another situation.

Once you successfully roll an icon connection, you can't roll again until the next arc.

When to roll: You can choose to roll any time you would normally use a pre-rolled connection, and you choose which die or dice to roll.

Example, light and shadow: Jackie's half-elf rogue, Peyotz, has two dice with the Prince of Shadows and one with the Priestess. (It's a long story.) When the party is in Concord looking for a contact who didn't meet them at the rendezvous point, Jackie figures that Peyotz's relationship with the Prince might help. She has two icon relationship points, so she rolls two dice, but they come up a 3 and a 1, so there's no connection with the Prince this time. Jackie could roll the die for Peyotz's connection with the Priestess, but she doesn't see how the Priestess would help, so she chooses not to. Later in the adventure, Peyotz is trying to talk her way out of a sticky situation, and Jackie decides to roll all three dice. She gets successes with both the Priestess and the Prince, so she chooses the Prince for her one icon connection this arc. "Just my luck, one of my interrogators works for the Prince and recognizes me as an ally. He's going to pull strings behind the scenes to make things work out." The GM agrees that's a reasonable outcome, and Jackie rolls for a twist, as usual.

Using a Narrative Icon Connection

The point of icon connections is to give players a tool to make significant additions to the action. Sometimes, these additions represent accomplishments the character couldn't achieve through their class powers or backgrounds alone. Other times, changes to the narrative result from NPCs, supernatural beings, or unseen forces related to the icon, rather than the character's own abilities. The overarching story of the campaign is in the GM's control, but icon connections give each player a voice. The GM might occasionally wonder aloud whether anyone has an icon connection they might be able to use, but it's not the GM's job to track who has or hasn't used them.

BENDING THE NARRATIVE

One way to think about icon connections is as instance of narrative gravity. For example, in superhero comics, a superhero "out on patrol" nearly always manages to run into a supervillain up to big trouble. It's as if space is curved for superbeings. Even when they try to avoid entanglements, someone else with superpowers is going to fly through a wall or land on the next street as the vanguard of an invasion fleet.

The same goes for heroes involved with icons in *13th Age*. Your hero may not have any intention of interacting with an icon's followers, organizations, or raw iconic power. But a hero's relationship makes that icon part of the hero's story and the icon's people or powers will surface again and again in the hero's adventures.

Narrative Benefits

As a player, you'll track your hero's icon connections. When you decide to use a narrative connection, it's your story to tell. Tell the GM and the rest of the table what you're adding to the story. Sometimes, other players may suggest details for how the connection plays out, but it's up to the player to decide whether to take these suggestions.

GM approval: The GM needs to approve your narrative connection. Most of the time, in a campaign that's humming, this is easy, but sometimes the details you're attempting to weave into the story may be oddly inappropriate or contradict too much that's already happened. In these cases, it's the GM's job to help you develop a use of your icon connection that fits the story. See the **Whiskers Saves** example on page 277 for an example of an icon connection that had to be reined in.

As with other improvised roleplaying moments, the ideal result when a story idea can't be fully accepted into the game is for the player and GM to work together quickly to come up with an acceptable version of the idea. As you'll see in the examples, one way the GM might negotiate this is to say "Well, that's a huge amount of impact from this icon connection. And it could work. But if we play it this way and there's a twist, the twist is going to be big too!" Yes, players, while narrating the icon connection is your joy and your responsibility, when you roll for a twist after finishing that narration, the joy of adding the twist goes to the GM!

At the GM's discretion, they might give you an even better result than you asked for, or they might have your connection lead to some advantageous turn of events later in the campaign.

Narrative surprises: Icon connections bring about the sort of narrative surprises that heroes in fiction enjoy to your gaming table. Narrative connections are not normally intended to be used during combat.

The heroes in fantasy stories often get help from friends and allies who are somehow connected to them. Similarly, heroes regularly have access to unorthodox training or experience that gives them an edge against the forces of a particular archvillain. Often, heroes are allied with the authorities, such as the crown and the temples, or with greater heroes and archwizards, who therefore provide them support.

The icons of the Dragon Empire and their many diverse organizations connect the heroes to the world's most powerful ongoing stories. When your character has a good opportunity, "spend" your icon connection to add something interesting or personally significant to the narrative.

There's a broad range of ways you can have fun using icon connections! Different groups and different campaigns may favor specific story techniques over other options, and that's OK. The examples later in this chapter depict the different ways you might choose to use icon connections.

Respect other players' characters: Narrating an icon connection gives you some authority over the story but not over other players' heroes. It can be fun to involve other heroes in an icon connection, but only when the story you're telling highlights the heroes, not when it messes with them. Just as the GM can intervene when your narration takes too many liberties with what the NPCs do, other players can veto narration that misuses their heroes.

Benefits: The icon connection examples in the rest of this chapter include diverting stories that illustrate various storytelling techniques, some of them quite unusual. Take inspiration from those examples, and if you're at a loss, refer to this general list of ways in which you can use an icon connection:

- **Gain knowledge** that helps the party choose the better option between two or more paths.
- **Add a new detail** to a scene, ideally something that's related to the icon's other followers or magical power. Don't contradict what has already been presented as definitely true. Instead, reveal additional aspects of the situation that no one has yet noticed.

- **Insert entertaining changes** to interactions and relationships with NPCs or icon-related organizations. See page 278 for NPC examples and page 281 for examples involving organizations.
- **Include interactions involving aid** from spirits or other messengers that are more magical than most NPCs (page 284.)
- **Acquire information** that sends the adventure, or even the campaign, in a surprising new direction (page 274.)
- **Secure help** that lets the party achieve a goal without paying the expected cost (such as time, favors, or recoveries lost or spent on a harrowing journey); allows the heroes to arrive just in the nick of time (instead of sadly, just a little too late); or gives the heroes backup in an upcoming battle (provided the help clearly relates to the specific icon providing the aid and the circumstances).
- Typically, the circumstances must be clear enough that everyone can see a direct connection between the icon's influence and the challenge the party faces. For example, it wouldn't work for a hero to call on the Priestess' blessing to get a combat bonus against a diabolical ambush on the general principle that the Priestess protects people. It's also true that this style of assistance frequently works best as an unintended *consequence* of a different narrative goal. The player tells a story that has its own logic and is worthwhile on its own—and the GM eventually decides to interpret the events of the story as factors that give the heroes a surprising advantage in an upcoming fight. (There are several such examples scattered ahead, as well as a full entry on page 276.)
- More rarely, **avoid a specific, upcoming battle** (see **Healing the Forest**, an example of such a rarity, on page 283.)
- **Cause an effect** based on the icon's metaphysical influence in the world—its raw iconic power. We give this technique a full range of examples, starting on page 277.
- **Have flashbacks!** See page 285.
- **Develop downtime experiences** your character has between adventures. See page 287.
- **Add story developments** set firmly in the future! You'll find a few on page 287.

Narrative Twists

When you use a narrative icon connection, roll a d20. If the result is 6+, the benefit your hero gains comes without any serious complications. If your result is 1–5, however, you get what you bargained for and then some. The GM also gets to have some fun, adding a twist that improves the story by making the heroes' lives a bit more interesting . . . but not so complicated that the connection turns bad for the heroes. The GM determines the nature of the twist, but you should feel free to make suggestions based on how you understand the situation.

Twists leave success in place: Our shorthand for narrative twists is, "Fun for players; fun for the GM." As a rule, an icon connection gets you as big a benefit when you roll a twist as when you don't. By default, the twist means that your success comes with a cost or drawback, ideally one that derives directly from the success itself. For example, if the party wins the trust of the surly innkeeper and gets information that helps them, perhaps after the party leaves, the innkeeper keeps talking about how impressed he was with them, and thus the enemy's informers catch wind of the heroes' actions.

Sometimes, it makes narrative sense for the heroes to get what they were after, only to then discover that what they were after wasn't all it was cracked up to be. For example, a hero uses the power of the Priestess to press a ghost into their service as a guide through ages-old ruins. The ghost faithfully and willingly fulfills its duties, but as a twist, its sense of the place is several ages out of date. The "healing fountain," for example, is now a pile of dry rubble. Maybe the ghost even sees things the way they used to be. "Drink up," the ghost exclaims. "Its healing power is miraculous."

Twists vary: We took pains to detail many varieties of twists, including possible twists with smaller and larger impacts as part of the same example, in the examples of icon connections in the next section. The GM uses their discretion to adjust twists up or down, with more serious twists assigned to icon connections used for bigger effects and lighter twists for connections that have modest or selfless results.

Obligations: If the GM isn't ready to complicate the current adventure, the twist might set up a future mission or storyline. Then, the GM can decide later what the twist means.

Conflicted relationships can be even more fun for the GM when they create obligations, since there's already tension in the heroes' relationship with the icon that could be played up on a future mission.

When the players are distracted or have forgotten about the obligation, let the other boot drop. "Remember when the spirits in the brook said you would owe their beloved a favor? Well, they found a way to get into the stream in this dungeon, and they're here with a message from the druids of the Wild Wood."

The favor might get called in at any point in the future, not necessarily during the same arc.

WHEN ICONS SURFACE BY SURPRISE

The players are responsible for keeping track of their icon connections and using them during play. As GM, you can sometimes make life easier for the players by letting their icon connections provide guidance for the story. Randomly generated icon connections may help you decide which icons will be active in the session you're about to play. Did the players roll multiple conflicted Elf Queen connections and none for the Archmage? Sounds like it's the Elf Queen whose agents are searching for the Glorious Opal Sphere, not the Archmage, as you had planned.

GMing Benefits and Twists

GMs: your players use icon connections for all sorts of changes to the narrative, and you balance the benefits and twists.

***Reduced benefits*:** If the player asks for too much, you can often scale down the result so that it's still a benefit but not enough to throw off the narrative. For example, if you've set up a conflict with a tribe of ogres who are meant to eventually be possible allies or enemies, it would short-circuit the story and be too big a deal for a player to use an icon connection (perhaps with the Emperor) to win over the ogres to their cause during their first encounter. However, depending on the circumstances, the connection might be enough to persuade the ogres to throw a feast in the hero's honor, and then you can improvise an NPC ogre who tells them that she believes in their cause and will work to win over the rest of the ogres. This way, the icon connection provides progress toward the hero's goal without bringing the challenge to a premature end.

***Bonus benefits*:** Occasionally a player's narration of an icon connection is modest enough that you want to provide some boon they didn't ask for. You might improvise some unanticipated benefit, such as NPCs who volunteer to help the party in ways the party was not aware they could. Other times, you might file the event away for a callback in the future. Players love it when an NPC they helped in the past comes back into the story later and is now in a position to return the favor.

True magic items: Each player is responsible for narrating icon connections for their hero. As you'll see in the **Techniques for Narrative Connections** section below, none of the narrative techniques include awarding your hero a true magic item. The GM is responsible for gifting magic items, and icon connections should be used to shape the narrative, not obtain loot.

That said, it often happens that a player narrates a wonderful icon connection at a point in a campaign where they are short a magic item or two as indicated by the **Magic Item Guidelines** table in **The Panoply** section of **Chapter 10 Treasure** (*GMG*: 173). No one should be narrating an icon connection just to get magic treasure, but when the GM knows it's time to gift a hero with a new item, it can be artistically and emotionally satisfying to connect the gift to a player's story!

Examples in which the GM gets into the flow of a player's icon connection story and adds a true magic item into the mix appear on pages 280, 281, and 284.

***Standard twist*:** The hero uses the icon connection to get something that helps them or the party. The player rolls for a twist, and, if there is one, the twist is something of a drawback or disadvantage. The hero still gets what they want and still derives a net benefit from the connection.

***Harder twists*:** If the player is asking for something that's bigger than usual but still within reason, you can balance it by raising the impact of the twist. You can say that if the twist is rolled, it's going to be a significant drawback. You can say that the connection entails an automatic twist. You can say that there's an automatic twist and the player must roll to avoid a *second* twist. Your options partly depend on what twists you can think up. If you can think of a big, gnarly twist, maybe the player rolls to avoid it. If, on the other hand, you have in mind a natural twist that's regular-sized, you can make it automatic.

***Narrative-only twists*:** If the icon connection has a modest result, such as something that the heroes might have been able to accomplish without using it, then the twist might be "for show" only. For example, if the heroes get the information they need from the mushroom-altered old gnome, maybe the twist is simply that in order to get it, one of the heroes has to patiently talk with him for an hour or two while he regales them with stories about when he was a young "stick ball" champion. The hero suffers, but there's no practical drawback or disadvantage.

***No twist*:** If the icon connection is selfless, maybe no twist of any kind is needed.

***Connections with automatic twists*:** If a player didn't roll any standard connections at the start of the arc, their connection comes with an automatic twist. If you end up adjusting this player's twist for balance, make the twist worse than it would normally be.

Twist tricks: The first GM's secret of creating twists is that if the players have fun with the twist, laugh at it, or feel it's perfect for the story, you can get away with as much or as little impact as you like.

The second GM's secret of creating twists is that if you don't have a good idea right away, tell the player the twist is going to hit later. Give yourself time to think about it. Something great will surface, and we've had moments where the players say, "Oh no, this is the twist from when so-and-so called on the Crusader earlier, isn't it?" And suddenly the situation becomes the twist and gets more serious as a result.

YOU CAN PLAY YOUR OWN WAY!

During the 12+ years people have been playing *13th Age*, some groups have figured out exactly how they like to use icon connections. We heard from several playtest groups who prefer the systems they've worked out at their table.

We can't rearrange our rules to suit each of those groups, but we can give our blessings! If your group plays many more roleplaying sessions than combat sessions, maybe rolling icon connections once per arc isn't enough, and you could go back to rolling icon dice more often, since you're using them exactly when they're supposed to be used: during narrative roleplay sessions.

On the other hand, maybe you're one of the groups that has become comfortable using icon connections as action points instead of as narrative tools. We hope you'll try the narrative method, but whatever works for you is great.

And that goes double for the groups who determine twists by flipping the red and green coded icon tokens from *Campaign Coins*! Living with a 50/50 chance of a twist so you can use the tokens? That's glorious!

Techniques for Narrative Connections

Narrating icon connections is not an exact science; it's a deliberately loose technique for adding narrative elements with varying degrees of impact. Sometimes, an icon connection is a momentary event that sparks laughter or respect. Sometimes, a story a player tells as part of an icon connection is so wonderful or insightful, it takes everyone by surprise, grabs the players' imaginations, and ends up shaping the campaign.

This section introduces various approaches to narrating icon connections and provides examples of each approach. The techniques are not separate; they're often compatible! An icon connection playing off an organization connected to an icon might also involve a flashback, while a connection invoking the icon's metaphysical power might also involve a specific NPC and access to new information, and so on.

The style and perspective of the examples vary, shifting to whatever feels fun. There are many ways to narrate an icon connection and just as many ways to tell the story!

We've been somewhat florid, often relating background details that bring out campaign flavor, but which are not necessary to understand the use of the icon connection. We've taken this approach for the fun of it and because examples of play have their own virtues.

Our sources: Many of these narrative icon connection examples are drawn from memorable moments in campaigns we or our friends ran. Others, we made up to make a point.

Icons: Each example starts by stating the icon that's involved.

Relationship: Some connections that involve positive or negative relationships might work fine for conflicted relationships, and vice-versa. We mention the relationship that best fits the example.

Active or passive hero: See the **Player Action or Hero Action** notes just below.

Story techniques: If we're sure the connection benefited from a story technique, we'll say so.

Player Action or Hero Action?

Both approaches make sense!

Heroes in stories sometimes get help without making any effort to get that help, such as when strangers they encounter turn out to be connected to them. Although using an icon connection is always an act that involves the player, the player's hero may or may not take any action. Consider the following methods, two of which frame the icon connection as assistance from outside rather than as an action or magic precipitated by the hero.

Active hero: "Now that we've arrived in the city, I seek out my fellow dwarves and use my connection to the Dwarf King to get us help."

Passive and receptive hero: "Now that we're here, the local servants of the Priestess hear of my arrival, send messengers to us, and offer to help us."

Passive and oblivious hero: "Now that we're here, agents of the Prince of Shadows pull some strings, and the Imperial governor welcomes us with an offer to help; we never learn that the Prince was behind it all."

Information

If you're already giving out enough information, what does it mean to give out more information? Unless information is meant to be mysterious, it's usually better if the PCs learn what they need to know. As in most roleplaying games, the GM tends to know more than the PCs about what's going on in the background in *13th Age*. But since the players control icon connections, is it okay for them to make up new information that helps them?

Yes and no.

Player suggestions: Players can come up with icon connections that are essentially new information, created on the spot. When done right, it's like adding something new to the world using their hero's backgrounds. But adding entirely new information the GM didn't expect may require discussion, and if it's too much, it can slow down the game. So, the GM has stronger veto power when players use icon connections to add new explanations of *what's really happening*.

Important information from the GM: Either as a flashback or as a new and current event, tell the player something hugely important about the story. Make sure this information is presented in such a way that it gives them an advantage. If they roll a twist, the information comes at a price or is dangerously incomplete, etc.

Secret information: Depending on the dynamics of your campaign, secret information that advances the character's agenda but doesn't necessarily help his or her allies may be a fine reward for an icon connection. But you probably don't want to be giving one player secret information often when the game's core dynamic is cooperative-heroics. Many groups who run full campaigns find secret goals to be more trouble than they're worth. One-shots or demo sessions are, in our experience, the exception—secret information works well for those.

The counterpoint to secret information is common knowledge that helps only one hero! Like members of a rock band, the heroes may have solo projects in addition to their group projects. And one way to create your hero's solo project in a way that makes sense to your bandmates/fellow players is to use an icon connection!

Information through skills* and *connections: If an icon connection isn't the right answer for a situation, a skill check might be. For example, the GM or Lucy's player (or even a different player) could say: "Lucy's studies with the College of Wizardry might have taught her something about these ruins, or maybe just about ruins like these."

Lucy's player could say "Yeah, so I'm going to make a check about arcane knowledge to find out what she might have learned." If Lucy's wizard makes a skill check, they'll succeed or fail forward to some extent, but the information they gain may not be the same, or as exciting, as if they had spent an icon connection to *make up cool stuff*.

Sometimes, we admit, we let a player try a skill check first. If it fails, the fail forward element becomes a suggestion like so: "Well, you actually remember a lot about ruins like these, but it's so much information that it's contradictory and not that helpful. But you have the feeling it has something to do with the Priestess, even though she technically didn't exist back then . . . ." And then the GM nods meaningfully to the player with a positive Priestess connection waiting to be used.

Golden Threads of the Imperial Guardians

Positive with the Emperor ◆ passive hero, and soon to be surprised hero! ◆ **organization connection; and information!**

This icon connection straddles multiple storytelling techniques. It could be in the Organizations section because it's all about an iconic organization that's part of the hero's One Unique Thing. But we'll tell the tale here, because the player realizes something new and that information slides seamlessly into the Way Things Are.

The hero is a kick-ass monk whose *unique* is that he is the last of his order, having survived his monastery's devastation because he was away on a diplomatic mission. Not just any mission, a mission in the service of the Emperor—the monks were an order of Imperial Guardians.

Far, far from home, the monk is surprised to be told by the GM that the corpse the party has discovered in a looted treasure vault is another member of his order, the well-preserved body of a woman of the Imperial Guardian Monastery.

The monk has an icon connection with the Emperor waiting to be used and the player seizes their chance to invent something new: "I'm using my icon connection with the Emperor! What no one else knew is that the members of my order all have secret golden threads sewn into our robes. Like these, right here, in my robe, and in the robes of my fallen sister, there. The magic threads are enchanted to write a secret cypher, the story of how we die. Yeah, yeah, like a black box but golden thread. So, I'm going to pull out the threads and decipher them! What do I find? How did she die?"

Is the player authorizing the GM to take over and make up the story of how the monk died? They confirm that this is the player's intention, the player has made up the story of the golden threads and wants the GM to be free to add something to their story.

The GM says that there's no need to roll for a twist. The deciphered threads say the monk was slain by Imperial diplomats, agents of the Emperor using a spell that the monk could not defend against because it was cast by friends. The history of the order of Imperial Guardians is thrown into question as the player and GM have cooperated to take the story in a direction neither had expected.

The offer for the GM to generate the story was generous. The story is twisted enough that no further twists are necessary. And a new plot has surfaced as part of an icon connection.

The Fey Road

Positive with the Elf Queen ◆ active hero ◆ **Information that flows into action** ◆ speed

In this campaign, the Archmage is also pretty much the Diabolist and the Elf Queen is the world's last hope. A strange cleric has emerged from a painting shared by the Elf Queen and the Priestess, as a half-elf. Created as a work of art, she sometimes knows more of the Queen's magic than you'd expect from a 2nd level character.



Today, the heroes are faced with a week-long journey to the North, through inhospitable forests, to reach the shore of the Iron Sea and investigate a fortress of the Archmage.

"Or we could take the Fey Road," says the cleric. "The Fey Road is strange and weird, but if you know what you're doing, and I do, it should only take hours."

The GM plays along. The Fey Road turns out to be controlled, locally, by an unsavory redcap, but the cleric pulls Court rank using the icon connection and says they'll take the road without his permission.

So the GM shows them the road: it looks like a murky pool with overgrown cattails behind a no-account ruin.

The cleric lights a candle, says "Follow me," and walks straight into the water, down steps that turn out to lead in from the side. The cleric is totally submerged, and the rest of the heroes look at each other, shrug, and follow.

And because it's a cool story set up by the power of an icon, it all works. The road is dry, gray, spooky, and lit by disturbing candles, at first, but eventually it seems to shake off the redcap's influence and pretty itself up.

Which, of course, is when the redcap's fachan allies are waiting to attack (reskinned ankhegs, for the curious). That's going to happen whatever the outcome of the twist roll!

Twist: Soon after the fight against the fachans, the heroes find disturbing tracks and the leftovers of a sacrifice. The Archmage's servants are also using the Fey Road? That shouldn't be possible!

Sprung from Prison

Conflicted with the Three ◆ active hero ◆ **information & flashback**

In Jonathan's Green Star campaign, the halfling rogue's foil was Cut-cut, a roguish halfling that the hero knew from his time working in the Great Blue Wyrm's secret service. This NPC was meant to be trouble, and soon enough he'd been captured by the local dragonics and held for execution. The hero paid him a visit, and the player used an icon connection with the Three to convince the dragonic guard that Cut-cut had to be released. "He's the son of Mildred," the player improvised. No one knew exactly what that meant yet, but the desired result was that Cut-cut would be freed.

This icon connection put Jonathan in a bind. He'd meant for Cut-cut's fate to be final, but just telling a player "No" went against what icon connections are about. There was also no clear way to offer a limited version of the result. As unlikely as it may be, *yes*, Cut-cut was set free. But there was no need to roll for a twist, this story had to come with a twist. Cut-cut was a marked halfling, living on borrowed time.

This turn of events taught Jonathan to make an NPC's "final" fate so final that the players don't get the idea that they can undo it. In this case, Cut-cut could have been already dead or at least shipped off to the chief of the dragonics downriver.

Invent Something New

There's a thin line between creating information about the world and using a connection to create new facts about the world. Don't over-analyze the categories. You can apply creativity in a number of ways, and no one is going to ask you to categorize your story.

Backdoor to Hell

Positive/Conflicted with the Crusader (or perhaps negative with the Diabolist) ◆ active hero ◆ **new creation & flashback**

Demons are headed to a hellhole with a stolen artifact, and if no one stops them they'll use it to perform a ritual to open the hellhole as a new mini-Abyss. The GM and players figure that the heroes will pursue the demons and try to stop the ritual. The paladin's player, however, has a different idea.

"You said that none of us had ever been to the hellhole before," he says, "but I went there once on a scouting mission when I worked for the Crusader. The Crusader taught us a ritual for teleporting into the hellhole, and I still have the infernal crystals needed to perform the ritual. We'll be able to get there before the demons and ambush them. They'll never suspect it." The player looks at the GM and hopes that this use of a Crusader connection doesn't go too far.

The GM considers the newly invented facts and figures she can work things out so that the connection provides a real benefit without overdoing it. "OK," she says, "what does it look like as you conduct the ritual? And what's the unseemliest detail?"

The player improvises a suitably hellish ritual, and the party is transported into the hellhole, where the paladin knows the terrain well enough to set up an ambush. When the demons arrive, the GM gives the heroes a +10 bonus to their initiative rolls.

Twist: The hellish nature of the ritual makes the paladin lose a recovery unless he succeeds at an immediate save. Or this drawback afflicts a random party member.

Blood of the Wyrm

Negative with the Great Gold Wyrm ◆ active hero ◆ **new creation, or information of a sort**

Negative relationships with the Wyrm are uncommon; the Wyrm's the quintessence of heroism, and who doesn't like heroism?

But you're convinced the Wyrm is dead, and that evil demons are using its spirit as a mask—that the dreams sent by the Wyrm are lies, and all the paladins of the Golden Order are deluded.

Now, the GM hasn't decided whether or not this is true—she likes the bleak, cynical, grimdark take on a usually unambiguously heroic and noble icon, but another player is playing a paladin, and she doesn't want to outright contradict the paladin's sense of the story (not yet at least). Therefore, you've been challenged to keep your uses of connections to the Gold ambiguous, without coming down definitively on either side of "the Gold's a demon puppet" or "the Gold's a hero."

So, while exploring the Underworld, you encounter an obstacle that the GM describes as a lake of boiling lava. Rather than risk taking damage in a skill check, you spend a Great Gold Wyrm connection and narrate that the "lava" is actually the burning blood of the Wyrm—and that there's a demon trapped beneath the lake. You can walk across the demon's limbs and cross safely, but it'll whisper horrible things about the Wyrm as you do. Lies or truths? That's for the future to decide.

Twist: The demon demands information about a hellhole the heroes have recently encountered. Do you lie to a demon? What could it hurt to tell the truth? Or do you make up truths in the spirit of the icon connection?

Raw Iconic Power

In the magical world of the Dragon Empire, it's easy for supernatural assistance to arrive almost out of nowhere. The "spirit of the Priestess" or of her trusted acolytes, for example, could manifest wherever there are believers or holy power, and it could grant many different magical boons to the party.

We listed several varieties of experience and magical power for each of the icons in the detailed write-ups at the start of the chapter. Some narrative icon connections draw on the power of the icon as a metaphysical force. The icons aren't gods . . . but you could qualify that statement by saying "Right, their power might be more accessible to (some of) their followers than the power of the gods."

Caution when used: The potential for an experience of the icon's raw power may depend on how you define your relationship with the icon and their other followers. It's a fine line because it's not the hero that has the power; the power is from the icon. This type of connection, therefore, generally feels better if the hero enjoys a miracle or receives a gift than if they accomplish wonders themself. It's an awesome experience but not one that can or should be repeated often. In Rob's campaigns, it's the kind of thing that makes him mention ahead of time that if there is a twist, it's going to be a very large twist.

Negative and conflicted relationships: Even if you're not exactly on the icon's side, there's a chance that your hero's story might tap into the icon's raw power. Assess your relationship. Are you a bit like the icon, but a rebel, so that some of the icon connections you experience might in a weird way draw on the icon's power? Or are you utterly opposed to the icon, so that even in a narrative sense, its metaphysical power is unlikely to come to your aid? Or perhaps your opposition is supported by NPC allies who have more connection to the icon than you do, so that "things happen" around you but it's not your actions that matter, just your presence.

Players can usually come up with a reason for an icon's power to manifest near a connected hero. Examples we see often include renegade wizards who defy the Archmage and elven exiles who exploit their connections with the Queen. Or in the case of **Whiskers Saves**, detailed below, a mysterious pet cat that catches souls meant for the Lich King.

Ineffable Light

Conflicted, or perhaps Positive with the Priestess ◆ passive hero ◆ **raw iconic power**

The heroes are questioning an uncooperative cleric. It's not going well. Suddenly, a hero who has a relationship with the Priestess uses that connection to describe how the divine light of the Priestess is shining from the close-lipped cleric's holy symbol. Betrayed by his own vows, he is compelled to answer truthfully! Inexorable and strange is the ineffable merch of the Priestess!

Analysis: Of course, compelling NPCs to tell the truth is a well-known plot-buster, so this example comes with a warning. Don't have plots that rely on heroes *not* being able to compel the truth out of NPCs.

Twist: The light has a lingering effect on the hero with the Priestess connection. Until the end of the arc, they must answer all questions truthfully, as well!

Let Them Rest

Conflicted with the Lich King ◆ active hero ◆ **pure narrative**

Your party battles a mighty ghostly guardian to reach the lower levels of an infamous dungeon. The party has defeated the guardian and its various minions, but the guardian impressed you. Rather than simply destroying it, you ask if you can use an icon connection with the Lich King to lay the ghost to rest. The guardian did its job for centuries, and it deserves a better end.

Twist: This is a selfless act. Maybe tell the player there might be a twist later, or maybe not. Then in some far future game when everyone has forgotten, a fragment of the guardian, held back by the Lich King, appears to save the heroes and discharge whatever debt the Lich King thinks it might owe them. But the Lich King didn't really let the guardian go, did he?

That's right: the twist could end up as a good thing, much later, for the heroes. Though not so good for the ghost they tried to help, maybe.

Alternatively, you should roll for a unfortunate twist from the start. This act may be selfless, but it's messing with life, death, and undeath. With a twist, the Lich King requires the hero to deliver an acceptable replacement guardian, or be cursed to become the guardian themselves after death.

Whiskers Saves

Negative with the Lich King ◆ receptive/passive hero, unless you count their surprisingly active familiar! ◆ **raw iconic power**

The heroes face the corpse of a former dwarf-forged ally, reanimated by a powerful wraith who now wears the dwarf-forged body like a suit of armor. After a few rounds, the GM's dice are on fire, while the heroes are clearly freaked out by the twisted reappearance of their old ally. The escalation die is irrelevant when you can't roll above a 5.

A critical hit from the wraith takes out the party's dwarven paladin. Worse, when the math is double-checked, the dwarf has



fallen several points below negative one-half his normal hit points. Time to die! "It's not just the rules, it's your destiny," says the GM.

Or is it?

The ranger, whose pet is a mysterious fey cat that is tied to the spirit of the ranger's dead mother, wants to double-down on his pet's ties to the realm of the dead.

"My cat already has a connection to my mother's spirit. What if that's not a fluke, but he can interact with the spirits of 'family' if they pass away near him? The paladin is family to me. He's always treated my cat well, too. I'd like to use my negative icon connection with the Lich King to have my cat catch the paladin's spirit before it can slip into the afterlife, so he can rejoin the fight."

In a campaign focused on the undead, a hero whose spirit was restored by unusual means sounds too good for the GM to pass up. Will a debt be owed to the fey for this act? Will the dwarven paladin be subject to spells that target undead? This can all be decided later, and the decisions will make things more interesting.

But this is a very powerful icon effect for an icon connection. Players shouldn't be allowed to expect that their icon connections are get-out-of-death tokens, especially not during a battle. The GM wants to agree, but there are extraordinary conditions.

First, this is a one-time escape. Second, the roll for a twist is actually going to be the roll for a *second* twist; the automatic twist is that the party has to retreat and take a narrative loss, it's too much to ask to bring the paladin back mid-battle. You normally can't use a narrative connection in battle, and in this case, that will stay true, since the battle is ended by using the connection.

If the roll for a second twist is a 1–5, the GM has fallen in love with the way the player originally phrased this situation: the cat "catches" the paladin's spirit. The cat starts catching many "interesting" spirits and bringing them back. Sometimes the cat brings spirits back to their bodies and sometimes it brings them to its owner, the ranger, as gifts, as if they were mice.

Details: The fact that this story rose from a negative relationship with the Lich King will shape the long-term consequences. But a conflicted or positive relationship might have fed into a similar story, in the short run.

With a forgiving GM who read the room and felt like violating the rule against narrating connections during combat, the paladin might have been allowed a hard save to have such a strong connection that they could come back into the battle. But that's not something Jonathan would have allowed, and maybe not even Rob.

NPCs

NPCs show up in many adventures. Not all of them are truly important, and sometimes the GM gets surprised by who the PCs take a shine to. If an NPC seems like a great part of the story, maybe one of the players should use an icon connection and upgrade their position in the narrative.

GM-introduced NPCs: Instead of waiting for players to mention NPCs that help them, the GM can have NPCs contact the heroes at different points. If it seems like the heroes are getting stuck, the GM could say, "Y'know, if someone had an icon connection waiting with [this icon] or [that icon], [this NPC you know] might be in a position to be much more helpful."

In campaigns that have established a significant NPC for each player character to relate to, this comes up naturally, without the GM having to say much. (See **Foils**; *GMG*: 40.)

Player-created NPCs: A player can usually use an icon connection to invent an NPC related to that icon. It's especially easy to invent an NPC as part of a flashback because it gives the GM space to elaborate details without having to get everything figured out for immediate, on-stage interaction. When players introduce NPCs into the action on the fly, they have to remember to roleplay as if they don't know anything about a possible twist . . . or just maybe, the GM rolls for this twist in secret.

Removing Trade Barriers

Positive with the Emperor ◆ active hero ◆ **NPC**

"So, baron, I understand your great-great-grandfather outlawed all trade between the peasants of Goldenvale and the dwarves, and that you're refusing to repeal this law. It would be terrible if my cousin, the Duke of Dwarfgate Province, were to hear of this." *[Slides icon connection token with the Emperor across the table to the GM.]*

"I'm sure that you'll reconsider this decision."

Commentary: We've mostly been presenting somewhat complicated and in-depth examples. Sometimes the most satisfying icon connections flow into the story as a natural consequence of thinking like your character . . . or thinking like a storyteller. Icon connections can play out quickly and easily

instead of needing a detailed story. Changing a troublesome NPC's behavior via iconic connections? Fair play.

Twist: There was a reason beyond mere greed that the tradition barred trade from Goldenvale. There's a mine near the village. When the villagers open it again at the behest of the dwarves, it turns out that it's infested with slime zombies. The baron blames the heroes for reopening the slime-mine but would forgive them if they came back and fixed the problem themselves. (The quiet part, dear GM, is that this is going to be an unpleasant adventure, and it turns out that the distinguishing characteristic of slime zombies is that their slime can dissolve magic items.)

Wardrummer's Redemption

Positive with the Priestess ◆ active hero ◆ **NPC (& future)**

A ranger/monk who worshipped a phoenix-god of life and rebirth spared an orc wardrummer bandit. Instead of killing the orc, the ranger used their icon connection with the Priestess to touch the orc's brow and tell him to take his musical talents to Santa Cora to join the Choir of Feathers.

The ranger wasn't trying to get anything out of this interaction but the satisfaction of having lived up to their god's full philosophy: experience new things to trigger revelations that allow you to kill the version of you that came before and be reborn a step closer to enlightenment. Mercy won the day.

To everyone's surprise, five levels later, the former wardrummer returned as an NPC cleric of the phoenix-god, shining as a beacon of hope during sketchy negotiations in Shadowport. The wardrummer became one of the group's favorite NPCs!

Analysis: One of the joys of long campaigns is that events and icon connections that played out much earlier can return after everyone has filed the incident away as long gone. The ranger's player wasn't trying to create an ally that would help the group when they were champion-tier and in trouble with the Prince of Shadows. But the GM kept track of this NPC and turned an early act of mercy into a redemption worthy of the Choir of Feathers.

Twist: With a twist, back before anyone knows how the story will play out, the GM decides to invent a problem for the phoenix-god, something that the heroes need to deal with or let the ranger-monk's story turn tragic. Maybe the phoenix-god is pulling some of its power obliquely from sources that had previously been exploited by the Three. The Priestess' acceptance of the wardrummer as a potential convert is accompanied by a mission for the heroes: guard a "wing" of phoenix-feathers as they are returned to their volcano home on the edge of the Dragon Wood.

Fox Friends

Negative with the Lich King ◆ receptive/passive hero ◆ **NPCs**

The heroes aim to rescue a trio of hostages before they can be sacrificed in a summoning ritual by a cult devoted to the Lich King. Unfortunately, the cult stronghold is deep in a swamp, and the PCs won't be able to reach the cultists until nightfall. The heroes dawdled earlier, and the GM doesn't feel guilty about serving them sad forensics instead of a glorious rescue.

The party doesn't have a track-finding ranger or unused connections with the High Druid, but it does have a sorcerer that has a negative icon connection with the Lich King waiting to be used.

The sorcerer's player asks, "Surely these undead cultists have made enemies around the swamp. Maybe druids? Or elves?"



The GM verifies that the player wants to use the connection from their negative relationship with the Lich King, then asks, "Do you want me to come up with something or have you got your idea?"

The player isn't confident about storytelling at that moment and nods for the GM to take it.

"OK, they have made enemies. And since a couple of you have good relationships with the High Druid, it's spirits of the High Druid . . . no, wait, at first you thought they were spirits, gliding over the mud, but it's a pair of slightly magical red foxes. They talk with the party members that have a relationship with the High Druid, and they never get wet or muddy as they show you the higher-ground route in and out of the bogs that will take you to where the "dead things stink." Maybe you'll be in time to save someone after all."

Twist? After guiding the heroes through some treacherous ground, while the two-leggers take a rest, the foxes say they are secretly (so secretly) part of a forbidden-taste competition with other druidic animal companions. They love trying food and drinks you can't get in the wilds, particularly not the swamps, where things go bad fast. Got any whisky? Candies? Cake? Ultimately, the heroes must hand over one of their healing potions to satisfy the foxes and get back on track.

Analysis: The GM has threatened NPCs that the heroes hope to save and made it clear that, under normal circumstances, the hostages are dead. The icon connection should get the heroes there in time to have a chance of saving their allies. But it's a d20-rolling game and that chance of saving their friends is going to have to be played out in combat!

Speaking of that combat, the fight might be easier than originally planned if the cultists would have gained power or summoned demons by finishing their ritual sacrifice. The GM could choose between slightly reducing the monster's effectiveness—say, by skipping nastier specials they'd intended the monsters to have. Alternatively, it would be appropriate to give the heroes a +5 or +10 initiative bonus for arriving unexpectedly.

Also, you'll note that this example shows a player asking for storytelling help from the GM. The GM shouldn't jump in to take icon narrations away from players, but when players ask for help, collaborate.

Eggs and Honor

Positive/Conflicted with the Three ◆ passive but receptive hero ◆ **NPC & future story element**

The heroes are helping two lizardfolk allies carry lizardfolk eggs across a dangerous river delta. The lizardfolk village was destroyed by aberrations, along with its egg creche, but these eggs had been more cunningly hidden by the lizardfolk women who laid them. Five of the twelve eggs are larger than normal, and swirling with black iridescence, and the heroes' lizardfolk allies have revealed that they were almost certainly sired by a great black dragon that had been hanging around the village a season ago. They'd heard it sometimes took form as a lizardfolk. Now they know why.

That would all be great except that now the heroes and the lizardfolk are being scouted by quick moving black dragons flitting on either side of the swamp. The heroes are weighed down with ten-pound eggs they're trying not to break—twenty pounds if they're iridescent and black—and it's one of the only times in the GM's gaming history that they've insisted players describe their characters' encumbrance. It feels like a black dragon ambush is minutes away.

And that's when the otherwise honorable dwarven ranger with a conflicted relationship with the Three (because of his *unique*, I Saved the Black Dragon's Life*)* has an idea.

"We know there are dragons after us. I want to use my icon connection to make it a dragon I know already, maybe someone who is almost a friend, and maybe we can arrange something that doesn't involve killing each other or us handing over all the eggs."

The GM loves the idea. Soon, a battle-scarred black dragon named Triskelion addresses the ranger from the watery half of a great hollow log. After suave pleasantries, Triskelion offers a deal. They owe the ranger, so they won't just kill the party. Instead, they'll fight an honorable battle (page 314). The winner gets the five great black eggs that clearly owe something to a black dragon. If the heroes fight well, they can keep the normal lizardfolk eggs.

Since the GM is building a "fair" battle, one of just three in the arc, with dragons—the over-powered player characters of the monster-world—they decide that rolling for the twist can wait until it's determined whether the heroes win or lose.

***The twist*:** If the dragons *lose*, they pronounce their intent to watch over the lizardfolk community to make sure the eggs and the young are taken care of, and not attacked by the aberrations who destroyed the previous village. That doesn't seem like a problem to the lizardfolk, nor to the heroes. In practice, what's good for these lizardfolk will mean increasing influence of the Three in what used to be High Druid territory. In addition, when the draconic lizardfolk reach adulthood, they'll be visited by the dragons and given the option to leave the village to join the service of the Three.

If the dragons *win*, Triskelion claims the dwarf ranger's assistance on a new matter. The heroes are headed back to civilization, yes? Out of the Fangs, back to Axis, yes? There's someone who needs to travel with them—a gnomish boy who appears to be about nine or ten. It's another of the dragon's children and this one has worn out his welcome in the swamps and needs to be delivered to his mother outside Shadow Port. "Her name is Kendra Sweetbitter. She'll look like a gnome. Don't lose him on the way. Really, don't lose him. We're choosing you because we know you can be trusted to do the honorable thing even when you hate it."

GM option: With or without a twist, and regardless of which side wins the honorable battle, this interaction seems likely to create future obligations. How would those obligations shift if the dwarf ranger had been short a couple magic items compared to **The Panoply** (*GMG*: 173)? Triskelion might finally

have remembered to deliver a present from the Black: a *cruel* battle-axe, meant to remind the ranger of their true range of possibilities.

My Gnomies, My Torturers

Positive with the Prince of Shadows ◆ active (sort of) hero ◆ **NPCs (and futures!)** ◆ spur of the moment creativity

On their way to arranging passage to the Stranglesea, the low-level heroes are ambushed by a group of gnome bandits. The hapless bandits fall quickly and when the GM asks if the players want them alive or dead, the gnome bard in the party says "Wait. Could I spend my icon connection with the Prince of Shadows to know these guys?"

"Sure. That's up to you."

"OK. I grew up with these guys. They used to torture me. They were my friends."

Cue scenes of groveling gnomic remorse.

In the campaign that this example draws from, Rusty, Gimblesnap, and Grimkin became the party's amoral servants. The whole scene became an ongoing narrative twist because thieves gonna be thieves. They always managed to deliver awesome birthday presents to the player characters. And in future sessions they even became alternate low-level heroes for Prince of Shadows-focused adventures that featured only gnome thieves as player characters.

Organizations

If a hero wants to deal with an entire organization, or a significant chunk of it, that might involve downtime activities or flashbacks rather than events during the adventure. When an adventure is underway, you're probably dealing with specific NPCs or monsters from the organization. You might be following up on past contacts or setting things up for other contacts in the future.

Calling on organizations that are part of your hero's backgrounds is *chef's-kiss* narration. Making up entirely new organizations because you need them at that moment requires the GM's approval and might be more easily handled via a newly introduced NPC, with their participation in icon-related organizations getting fleshed out later.

Here's an example of a new organization made up on the spot. The next section, **Help in an Upcoming Battle**, uses several more organizations in its examples.

The Cleaners

Positive with the Archmage ◆ passive hero ◆ **organization** ◆ spur of the moment

Your heroes have slain the necromantic cult that were trying to resurrect a long-dead dragon. Good for you! And more importantly, you've found a clue pointing to the location of the cult leader's hiding place. You're all set to rush off and follow this lead, but one of the other players starts fretting about the cult's necromantic temple that you've just raided. It's still full of traps and arcane lore and other dangers. The party stalls, caught between eagerness to follow the clue and worry that they're leaving the temple unguarded.

But you've got an Archmage connection waiting. "Don't worry, friends, the Archmage has a special dungeon decontamination team that specializes in clearing up former cult strongholds. They'll tidy up after we're gone."

That might be a little goofy in some campaigns, but it fit this campaign's style just fine.

Simple twist: After it's all over the decontamination team asks the PCs what they did with the dragon. "I thought you told us there was a dragon corpse to deal with. No such beastie." That's Just Great.

GM option: With or without the twist, the party sorcerer is waaaay short on true magic items, given recently drastic events, and the GM decides the necromantic cult might have had something for them. When the cleaners deliver their report to the heroes, they say, "Well, we found these but they're made of elven skin and we don't want to have anything to do with them. They thought you might be able to handle them. They're all yours, we only picked them up with tongs." And the sorcerer is now the proud (?) associate of a pair of *gloves of mind rot* (*GMG*: 182).

Call back: Next time the group doesn't have a full quorum of players, the GM hands out deliberately underpowered pre-generated 0th level scrubs, and you play a comedic one-shot where you're the decontamination team, a bunch of underpaid and likely doomed hirelings trying to cope with the aftermath of perils your regular characters strolled through.

Help in an Upcoming Battle

"Help" is a broad term. Most of the other narrative techniques can apply to this form of connection. What's the right amount of help from an icon connection? What's too much? What's too often?

Let's tackle that last question first. The most satisfying moments in which heroes gain help in an upcoming battle through an icon connection are when they don't realize that's what is about to happen. If the heroes are always trying to get help, the GM should ratchet up the intensity of the twists until the heroes vary their stories.

So what is the right amount of help? Here's a short list of bonuses that can work. What they have in common is that they make the heroes slightly stronger instead of making the opposition weaker. Reducing the monsters' strength doesn't sit well with the game's dramatic arc and resource economy. Empower the heroes, instead.

Initiative bonus: If an icon connection leads to the heroes getting the jump on their enemies, or knowing enough about the enemies' plans to surprise them or interrupt their actions, a +5 bonus to the initiative of all the heroes feels about right. +10

works also, though you might save it for times when a successful skill check combines with an icon connection. Initiative bonuses may not feel like much, but they can put the heroes a step ahead in a battle without reducing the enemy's strength.

Escalation bonus: Battles start with the math in favor of the monsters. If the escalation die starts at 1, that makes things about even the first round. Start at 2 and the battle is already going the heroes' way. You probably shouldn't start at 2!

A temporary blessing: Provide the hero using their icon connection with a temporary blessing (*GMG*: 191). It might even be a magic item power that will be particularly useful in the upcoming battle.

Compensate for weaknesses: If the sorcerer with the multi-target spells is missing this session and the heroes are about to fight a huge number of enemies that will be hard to defeat with single-target attacks, an icon connection might provide help by changing the order of the expected battles. Instead of being against an enemy the heroes are ill-prepared for, it will be against some other related villains. The battle math stays the same, but the matchup improves in the heroes' favor.

Shutting down the nasties: If an icon's power seems likely to be effective against the enemies, perhaps the hero who used the icon connection turns out to be able to shut down the monsters' nastier specials for this fight, simply by hitting them. It's not a freebie—combat is required.

Twilight Order

Positive with the Elf Queen ◆ active hero ◆ **organization connection & help in an upcoming battle**

The heroes just fought off a murderous mutated beast in a hostile forest. Several elven ghosts flew around the battle and supported the beast with magic but didn't join the fight, apparently choosing to guard the great heartwood tree in the next glade instead of leaving the glade to attack the intruders.

Now that the fight with the beast is over, the heroes mutter that they aren't really equipped to handle the ghosts right now. Without the cleric around, the party doesn't have anyone who is good against undead. They're badly beat up. Maybe they should explore somewhere else in the forest and come back here when the cleric's player is at the table.

That seems like a plan except that the elven sorcerer, who likes to stir the pot even when it's full of poison, doesn't immediately back away from the battle with the rest of the player characters. Instead, he stays to lever a broken bone out of the corpse of the mutated beast as a souvenir.

The elven ghosts scream in anger and come swirling out of their glade.

But just before the battle kicks off, the sorcerer's player says, "I'm going to use my icon connection with the Elf Queen."

The sorcerer reaches inside his vest and pulls out the symbol of the Twilight Legion, brandishing it at the ghosts like a law enforcement badge: "I'm a member of the Twilight Legion. You will stand down and assist my mission to the best of your abilities in the name of the Elf Queen." The player points out that the sorcerer's backgrounds include several points in *agent of the Twilight Legion*, which the player introduced to the game as the Elf Queen's secret intelligence service but hasn't done much with since.

One of the ghosts says that they were also part of the Twilight Legion, and it convinces the others that they need to respect this token of life beyond the forest. The rest of the ghosts seem relieved, and before they fly away so they technically don't have to witness the heroes entering the heartwood tree, they tell the heroes where the lycanthropic ambush is set up on the interior stairwell. That's going to be worth a +5 initiative bonus for the heroes, and instead of fighting ghosts, they'll be fighting weretigers.

Analysis: The heroes were already going to be able to postpone fighting the ghosts until the sorcerer's impulsive looting. Now they're not going to fight the ghosts at all, but instead have a bit of an advantage in what's probably their next battle.

Note that avoiding one battle the heroes didn't want to fight hasn't changed their progress toward the end of the arc and a full heal-up. They were halfway toward the end of the arc after fighting the beast and they're still halfway through the arc when they enter the tower.

With a twist: The ghosts who were members of the Twilight Legion might have had an unfinished mission that still haunted them, which they would whisper into the sorcerer's ear so that he could take the burden. Keeping the mission secret from people who aren't part of the Legion means that the GM could come up with the mission later, when they're not in the middle of running a session that has its own momentum.

And if the sorcerer shirks the mission? Ghosts of the Twilight Legion begin haunting the group in ways that get more and more obvious.

Three-Style Team-up

Conflicted with the Three ◆ active hero ◆ **NPCs and ending one battle to get ready for another**

The heroes are battling a kobold sorcerer and its minions inside the Library of Bu on the back of a Koru Behemoth, where both parties are looking for a certain book.

Despite the impressive surroundings, the battle is a comedy of incompetence, with fumble after fumble from both sides. Only the party's bard and the rival kobold sorcerer have fought well, achieving great things with fire spells despite being surrounded by flammable books.

At some point, after successive fumbles by the heroes, the bard's player says, "I know the name of some of the chief intelligence officers in Drakkenhall, right? That's where I got the *espionage* background and the conflicted relationship." The GM confirms that they'd allow it and says the bard knows a chief intelligence officer named Reedorox.

"OK, let's try something else," says the player. "I'm going to use the name of one of the higher-ups and I'm going to call out

to everyone and say, "Let's get it together! Reedorox needs the book, and she doesn't like to be kept waiting."

"Wait," says the kobold sorcerer. "You're getting the book for Reedorox?"

Stopping a fight mid-round is too much for an icon connection, but maybe with a successful check thrown in . . . . The GM tells the bard's player to make a Charisma check. It's going to be hard. But the points in *Drakkenhall Triple Agent* help. The barbarian shows off his neck tattoo of the Three, and the GM rules that it provides a +4 bonus to the check.

The bard's got Charisma to burn and she crits the check. Or she would. If skill checks critted. Which they can. When you want.

So, the kobold sorcerer and the bard exclaim at the unpleasantness that has scorched so many of the kobold's allies—all but one warrior who seems happy to be the survivor because it's a promotion!

They compare notes about what's going on at Drakkenhall, and why Reedorox (of all dragons!) wants the book, and whether that takes precedence over the kobold's mission, "maybe it does, maybe it does," admits the sorcerer. "First let's take care of the demons that are ahead of us, I'm pretty sure now that they're searching in the right room; we were definitely in the wrong one," says the sorcerer.

"Demons?" asks the party, as they prepare to bust down the door with the two kobolds as allies.

"Well, demons controlled by the Crusader of course," says the sorcerer as the door blows off its hinges.

Analysis: If the Charisma check had been a regular success, the kobolds would have given up the fight, but they would not have provided information about the demons and wouldn't have become allies. If the check had failed, the kobolds would have said that they hate Reedorox and the icon connection would have failed. Since ending a fight is more than a connection is usually capable of, the GM was comfortable making it contingent on the success of a hard Charisma check.

Twist: The sorcerer is not the lucky low-life it appears to be. It is going to survive the next fight somehow, no matter what, and it will return later for payback when it learns that Reedorox didn't want that book.

Commentary: An icon connection is not that likely to stop a fight in the middle. Maybe it depends on the opposition. And on being able to use both a highly plausible icon connection *and* a hard or ridiculously hard skill check!

In any case, no harm is done here by skipping the end of a fight. The kobold sorcerer fought way above its supposed capabilities, and would have been dead in a round if the bard had wanted that.

Of all the allies the GM feels OK about handing to the PCs, it's kobolds. Will the party face a minor ethical quandary if the kobolds survive the fight and discover that the book is not headed to Reedorox or any other agent of the Three? Or will the bard's powers of improvisation solve that as well?

Holy Flaws, Dwarf Mason!

Conflicted with the Dwarf King ◆ would-be passive hero who is forced to be active ◆ **organization and help in upcoming battle**

The heroes are tasked with helping defend Santa Cora against a siege. While talking about the walls of the city, the GM offhandedly mentions dwarven masons that maintain the fortifications. Leaping on this, and spending your Dwarf King connection, you invent the Cult of the Divine Crack, a dwarven religious sect that venerates imperfections and flaws, for only the divine is perfect. Fighting past the snickers of the small-minded, you argue that the cult can temporarily infuse the city walls with holy magic, making them briefly divine—and therefore perfect and unbreakable.

Twist: "Yes—and!" crows the GM. Because your relationship is *conflicted*, the rituals will fail until you personally reconcile with the Dwarf King. You don't need to go all the way to Forge—there's a statue of the Dwarf King in his aspect as Holy Mason in the Cathedral. Basically, you've just signed up to roleplay a dwarven therapy session, where you explain to the Dwarf King statue exactly why you don't like him. Get it all out—the safety of the city depends on your emotional catharsis!

Follow-up: This will absolutely help the player characters during their portion of the upcoming battle. Possibly it won't be active help, possibly it will be that the NPCs who would have been under threat will be protected by the walls, so the heroes can go on the offensive.

Also, if someone observes that maybe the dwarven masons should have appreciated that the dwarf hero had a flawed relationship with the King, the GM has choices: A) saying, "That's right. But that's not how the Dwarf King thinks," or B) saying "Oh don't worry. That relationship is still super-flawed."

Shortening a Battle

It's not a good idea to let an icon connection or any other trick dodge the climactic battle of a campaign. But what if icon connections could point to a potential route to shorten rather than avoid a battle? Here's a case in which the GM thought violence was the only option and the heroes narrated otherwise.

Healing the Forest

Positive with the Priestess and the High Druid ◆ active hero ◆ **raw magical power and almost avoiding battle**

It's the end of a major plotline. The heroes are trapped in a corrupted forest and are headed to fight the diseased spirit of a former High Druid.

But one player is new to gaming, and is playing a ranger with the Ranger Ex Cathedral talent.

"Why are we solving this with combat?" they ask. "That started the problem. We know that this forest is wounded. Can I try to heal it?"



"Huh," says the GM. In the end, the answer is "You can try!"

It takes both the ranger's icon connections, one from the Priestess and another from the High Druid. While the ranger performs a healing ritual, the rest of the heroes protect the helpless ranger from waves of attacks, most notably by a brain-damaged juvenile black dragon they fought earlier. The great healing requires successive normal, hard, and ridiculously hard ritual skill rolls, and the rest of the party fighting without their ranger. The GM allows the ranger to add the escalation die to the ritual skill rolls—not standard practice, but in keeping with a view of a ritual as a type of battle.

The ritual eventually succeeds while the battle is still raging. The ranger heals the spirit of the forest, ending the battle early before the heroes have slain all the forest's protectors. The grateful spirit of the former high druid asks the ranger to look after the now-healed dragon.

Commentary: It felt right to try. Multiple icon connections and a successful ritual (page 198) were required. Even then, combat wasn't avoided. It was just shuffled over to the PCs who hadn't thought of healing instead of fighting.

As GM in a situation like this, would you adjust the battle so that it was "fair" against the number of PCs who were fighting? Or would you keep the battle hard, since there was a possibility that it could be brought to an early and non-violent end? There's no wrong answer to that. You might let the twist roll decide.

With a twist: What would be more fun, is to follow-up the ranger's "adoption" of the juvenile black dragon with the hostile attention of the Three!

Aid from Spirits

In a world with powerful icon organizations that still can't be everywhere at once, spirit servitors can function as everything from communicators, to couriers, to delivery systems for non-combat magic. The icon write-ups earlier in this chapter include notes on spirits or other messengers that might serve each icon.

Spirits talk, share information, and can sometimes even leave gifts, but they don't have game stats, they're not warriors, and they're usually not capable of manifesting for long.

It's often the case that contact with spirits involves other storytelling techniques. The next example, below, **Calling the Ancestors**, plays out a lot like an expression of an icon's raw iconic power. But sometimes it's easier to personify the agents of that power! When we improvise magical effects, we often invent servitor spirits that cause the effects.

For example, a character with a boon from the Elf Queen might get directions to some special magical sap from a nature sprite. That's more cinematic than getting a mental message via telepathy. Spirit servitors are a useful plot device since they can basically show up anywhere.

The GM's responsibility is to avoid giving the impression that this type of magic is a truly reliable technology. Servitors can be dispelled. Tiny magical beings get lost or misplaced or eaten by demons. With a twist, they might arrive with a wild magic item or with information that seems askew, as if they were yanked from a distant age.

Calling the Ancestors

Positive with the High Druid ◆ active hero ◆ **aid from spirits & raw iconic power**

A human and dwarven harvest festival along the river has always been attended by the local elves, even though the elves are in league with this campaign's evil icons. They've come again this year, despite last year's celebration turning into a lethal brawl. It's clear to most that war with the elves' allies, the dragons, will come by the spring, so when four elves slip out of the forest, weapons sheathed above armor instead of festival clothes, the festival could all go wrong for the second year in a row.

But Lua, the troll-kin fighter in dwarven armor, has an icon connection with the High Druid, whose spirits supported him as a child when life among the dwarves was unfair. Lua walks toward the elves to greet them, and as he steps forward with hands raised to the sky, Lua's player describes how the wind picks up in great gusts, stirring the leaves, and suddenly the ancestor spirits of everyone in the valley who has celebrated the festival in years before arrive, swirling laughing eddies alongside the wind-blown leaves and shouting to each other and to the living, their children, elven and half-elven spirits flowing alongside human spirits, everyone celebrating together. "And that's how everyone remembers the festival later, as the year The Spirits Came Back to Dance."

Twist? This is a powerful narrative. The player may have gone too far naming the year before finding out whether there was a going to be a twist! But the GM is happy with the narrative and decides to keep it intact if there's a twist, but to pump up the twist as well. Lua's player rolls a d20, and if the roll is 1-5, there'll be a twist. Like so:

***There's a twist*:** After the festival, the heroes discover that the call of the spirits was stronger than anyone could have expected. Three of the elves who came out of the woods made contact with ancestors who convinced them that alliance with the dragons is a bad idea. The three elves have stayed in town with the humans. The fourth elf returned to the woods. Looking ahead, this isn't likely to go well for the townsfolk's new allies. Maybe the heroes want to protect the three elves, or maybe they go about their usual adventuring and have to clean up the mess after a dragonic hit squad takes out the elves.

GM option: Lua was short a magic item or two, as judged by **The Panoply** (*GMG*: 173). Later, after the festival has died down, the GM tells Lua that he can't seem to shake all the leaves off his perfectly normal cloak. But wait. Hold on. The cloak isn't normal anymore. It has become a champion-tier *elven cloak*, a perfectly appropriate yet ironic reminder of the day.

Flashbacks

Sometimes, it makes sense that a hero's boon from a connection was granted in the past. A player might use a connection with the Dwarf King to escape a labyrinth, saying "Suddenly I remember a bunch of nonsensical riddles the dwarves told me last year in Forge. Something clicks in my head, and I feel like I can lead us out of here!"

Flashbacks are especially useful in the middle of the action when you want to incorporate icon connections without slowing down the plot. Likewise, they're useful when adventuring in restricted environments, like pocket dimensions and living dungeons . . . or weird underworld labyrinths! Even when the heroes are far from the normal world of NPC contacts and the diverse powers of the Dragon Empire, a flashback can invoke a story element related to anyone or anything in the hero's backstory.

The trick with flashback connections is to tell a story that makes sense and that is timed to give your hero some help in their current situation. The player offers a good idea about what happened between their hero and someone connected to the icon . . . and then if there's a twist, the GM either tells them the rest of the story or nods and promises that more will be revealed later.

How Do You Kill a Vampire?

Positive with the Elf Queen ◆ active hero ◆ **flashback & information**

The nearly epic-tier heroes just finished a terrible battle against a vampiric spellcaster. The vampire's minions took a terrible toll, but they've all been slain, and now the vampire has been dropped to 0 hit points.

The GM reminds the party that long, long ago, they'd informed the heroes that vampires in this campaign weren't like other creatures. You couldn't just kill them, you had to use special ritual secrets, a bit of campaign background that the players never thought about again. And sure enough, what was left of the vampire's body is transforming into mist and starting to waft up and away toward the holes in the ceiling of the temple.

The player of Nelly, the weird cleric-who-presents-like-a-druid has an icon connection with the High Druid waiting to be used and isn't going to let this pass. "While the rest of you were partying at the Court that night, Nelly was communing with the druidic circle. And the third-oldest tree in the circle said that I was going to need to know how to truly kill a vampire. Only she called it a 'drinker.' She told the elf druids to teach me, and they did."

"Hah!" says the GM. "OK, that sounds perfect. So, what did they teach you? How do you do it."

"I'm not going to tell *you*," says Nelly's player. "Everybody turn your backs. Seriously now."

"This is where Nelly goes bad and becomes a vampire to stab us in the back," says the smart-ass player of the wizard.

But no, Nelly remains true and with incantations and gestures and an enchanted crownflower bulb from the garden in the Court of Stars, the vampire is truly done for.

Twists: Nelly's small ritual doesn't quite work as planned, and they realize that the equivalent of a druidic circle needs to be active. There is no druidic circle, but the GM says that the entire group of PCs will suffice. Now for the bad news: Nelly wasn't just being catty when they tried to keep everyone else from hearing the elder tree's vampire solution. Nelly was protecting the group, because the ritual isn't something you can easily move through your mind the way mortals are supposed

to let things go . . . unless you have access to the power of the Elf Queen. The fighter who has a relationship point with the Elf Queen is going to be fine, and Nelly is obviously OK, but the sarcastic wizard and everybody else is going to be haunted by weird memories that the ritual went wrong.

"Effects to be determined later," says the GM. "But hey, if this is the moment you want to find insight into the ways of the Elf Queen and change one of your relationship points, that would work." The wizard is naturally suspicious.

Notes: This information had no effect on the battle. Instead, it changed what happened in the narrative *after* the battle, preventing the vampire from escaping to become a recurring villain. It could have come up earlier during the fight if one of the heroes had remembered, "Wait, we don't actually know how to kill this thing."

Why was this an Elf Queen connection? Partly because it's what the hero had! Partly because in this campaign, the Elf Queen was the "Wild Queen," merged with the High Druid, as well as deeply allied with the Priestess.

The Courting Piece

Conflicted or Positive with the Dwarf King ◆ active hero ◆ **flashback**

Rob's dwarf-born troll-kin fighter is getting a visit from the eldest daughter of the most powerful of the local dwarven clans. She's the de facto chief. The troll-kin is proud of his dwarven identity, and he styles and armors himself as the most dwarven of dwarven heroes, but he doesn't know what this clan chief is going to think of him. Jonathan, the GM, has concocted this NPC as the hero's foil, set up to develop as either a friend or a political foe.

The "dwarf" has done what he can to get the heroes' base cleaned up. Now, Jonathan tells Rob that his character is expected to have a gift for the visitor, something that shows some thought. She'll likewise have a gift for him.

Instead of risking more complications with a skill check, Rob decides that this situation is exactly what he wants to use his icon connection for.

Rob spins a yarn to about having two exquisitely made playing pieces from the dwarven version of chess—artifacts created by a special dwarven crafter. Any game is enlivened by the presence of one such piece. The character brought the pieces along as potential gifts.

And the fighter gives the visiting noble the piece representing the Queen. During the visit the clan chief becomes impressed that the hero is a worthy dwarven citizen, despite being a troll-kin.

Analysis: It might seem presumptuous to tell the GM about a very expensive item you happen to have had made earlier in your career when you understood you were going to be sent on a diplomatic mission. The result, however, is just the sort of thing that icon connections are for: a successful social interaction with someone who is not ill-disposed to begin with.

Twist: With a twist, the noble daughter is abashed because the return gift she had for the hero is not very good. She had listened to advisors who told her that the deviant dwarf deserved nothing special. Awkwardness ensues, and will have to be handled later.

With no twist, Jonathan asks Rob what he would really like to accomplish with this icon connection, and Rob decides he'd like this to be a courting gesture, a perfect gift for a dwarf who will bring her own board and pieces the next time she visits.

Player Initiative

Players usually use icon connections to help them address a practical problem presented to them by the GM or to affect the narrative outcome of a social encounter. You can also use icon connections, however, to add elements to the story even when there's no challenge in front of you. You have some narrative authority to shape the world when you create your character, and you can likewise use icon connections to keep customizing the campaign.

When you have an icon connection left over at the end of the arc, that might be a great time to add something interesting to the world. The challenges of the arc are behind you, a world of possibilities is in front of you, and you can't save unspent connections into the next arc. You and the GM can work out what happens either at the end of the last session in the arc or at the beginning of the next session before you roll for your new icon connections.

Our Documents Are In Perfect Order

Conflicted with the Prince of Shadows ◆ very active hero ◆ **player initiative, and sort of organization and future** ◆ kinda campaign-changing

Near the start of a campaign, the players come up with the idea of using an icon relationship with the Prince of Shadows to forge a document that legitimizes a new thieves' guild with them as the officers. Of course, all such documents are forged, that's what makes them legitimate in the eyes of the Prince.

Fast forward, and the guild becomes the focus of the campaign. They get enforcer protection, lowered taxes, access to criminal specialists like fences, etc.

It isn't all stolen diamonds and high living, after all, the relationship with the Prince of Shadows is conflicted, so in this campaign the GM quickly invented a rival thieves guild on the other side of town that controlled the sewer systems. Gang wars!

Somewhat like when a character's *unique* turns out to define what a campaign is going to be about, this offhand icon connection ended up shaping the campaign.

Ideas like this surface all the time. Some stick!

Obviously, the rival guild was a bit of a twist. Maybe with a bigger twist the rival guild would have been wererats.

Analysis: It's hard to predict which events will resonate with a group and redirect a campaign! Icon connections are one of several storytelling tools that help the players and GMs realize what's going to be important to them. It's obviously a rare surprise when a single connection takes life so conclusively.

R&R in the Big City

Conflicted with the Diabolist ◆ passive but responsive hero ◆ **player initiative**

The party rode to Axis on an extended mission, and they have a few days to kick around town before their ship is ready to sail off. For once there's nothing that the adventurers need to accomplish—no secrets to ferret out, no NPCs to impress, and no criminals to hunt down. Jonathan likes to include free time like this in adventures so players can take some initiative in portraying their characters. There's no GM-provided challenge to tackle, so the players' imaginations are free to roam. Most of the players narrate things their heroes do, and it's all for roleplaying and character development rather than for consequences. One player, however, wants to play up their character's conflicted relationship with the Diabolist, so they use their icon connection to serendipitously stumble onto a circle of sketchy cultists, and to have their character win them over. Without an icon connection, heroes can always go looking around the city for interesting people to meet, but the icon connection raises the stakes and makes it consequential.

"They're not demon cultists, exactly," the player explains. "They're like me, demon-curious and engaged in some unseemly research that isn't legally classifiable as diabolism." The GM and the player have some fun inventing the creepy sort of place that these "researchers" would hang around, and the demented activities they'd do for fun. Other players toss in some ideas, such as throwing darts at a board inscribed with arcane symbols with good and bad aspects. "Don't hit the crow's eye, whatever you do!" As a result of this encounter, the player gains some NPC friends who might recur later in the campaign. Since the hero isn't getting any practical benefit out of the connection, the GM has one of the cultists give the hero a piece of paper with a matrix of letters written on it. "To be worn as a talisman for good luck," says the cultist. Maybe this talisman will make a difference one day, maybe not.

Twist: The player is sort of asking for it, aren't they. Maybe the talisman is cursed, or the hero falls under the suspicion of authorities who are spying on the cultists, or the hero becomes haunted by spirits, or the circle is part of a much larger secret society that entangles the hero in future shenanigans.

Connections to the Future

Sometimes the most satisfying way to influence the story is to plant seeds that won't be harvested until several sessions or levels later. What usually happens is that you spot something that could happen, a potential outcome of the events of the campaign, and you speak up and describe how the power of the icon, or the efforts of a particular group of NPCs, or a magical side-effect of a ritual performed earlier in the session turns an unlikely outcome (at best) into exactly what happens.

Well, maybe not exactly! The GM has something to say, even if there's no twist. Ideally, when you add something to the world, it becomes interesting, and in a game of heroic adventures, that means the thing you helped create may experience problems. GMs looking for a narrative loss when the heroes retreat from a future battle can do worse than to threaten such a creation.

Merciful Hegemony

Positive or Conflicted with the Emperor ◆ active hero ◆ **connection expressed as future story**

Your Imperial paladin has just used merciful logic and a difficult diplomacy skill check to prevent the people of a frontier village from hanging the two bedraggled bandits they caught during a blizzard. You decide to use your connection with the Emperor to turn this event into a definitive scene in the life of this community, promoting loyalty to the Emperor for a generation.

Locking in a social victory is a great use for an icon connection. This frontier village might have reappeared in the campaign even if it hadn't been the focus of a connection. Now it could become surprisingly important. Maybe it will rename itself and start a justice movement that affects other areas of the Empire. Or maybe the heroes will get the credit and acquire "fans" who think of them as paragons of Imperial justice. (That could also be a twist if it's only the paladin who cares about mercy!)

Twist? The village becomes known for its shrine of Imperial absolution: an outlaw who spends two years tending the shrine, without getting more than 20 yards from it, is forgiven their crimes and may start fresh. Is this a twist, you ask? It becomes one late in the heroes' career, when one of their committed enemies devotes themselves to caring for the shrine.

More prosaically, a straightforward twist would require the heroes to take the bandits to their destination: a two-year posting to a Sea Wall punishment legion defending against the Iron Sea.

Long Live the Cubists

Positive with the Archmage ◆ isolated environment ◆ passive and receptive hero ◆ **narrative connection expressed as future story**

The epic-tier player characters are in a pocket dimension created by the Archmage that has been co-opted by creatures of the Diabolist. When the heroes meet still uncorrupted cubist creatures created by the Archmage and abandoned after the Diabolist's attack, one hero finds their story compelling. The wizard has an Archmage connection waiting and decides to use

it to make the cube creatures succeed in their effort to become truly alive and self-determining.

How, exactly? It's not clear, because in this case it's nothing that the hero is doing, it's a narrated change in the world that plays out in the future, and certainly has something to do with the Archmage. This selfless narrative gesture could have interesting consequences. The GM is all for it, so they'll work something out between sessions and plan to reintroduce the cube people in some future adventure . . . depending in part, of course, on what the non-combatant cube people will have to do to survive the side-effects of the upcoming fight with the Diabolist.

Twist? In a pocket dimension co-opted by the Diabolist, it's tempting to get the cube creatures involved with that terrible enemy. But that's a terrible result for an icon connection that's supposed to be good. So, the GM instead increases the connection's success: a few sessions later, one or two of the cube creatures attain true life and glom onto the heroes, trailing them into danger and needing protection on and off for the next few arcs. It may turn out that cubist creatures with dimension-hopping powers are useful allies, so if this starts as a humorous and slightly annoying twist, it could turn into an advantage, especially if the heroes use another icon relationship later!

Alternatives: If a follower of the High Druid tried for the same result, the result would be a wilder infusion of true life compared to Archmage rationality. A twist, in that case, might result in a particular forest becoming wild-cubist territory, with strange consequences that might require something like a community transplant to the back of a Koru Behemoth.

A negative relationship with the Archmage could create dimension-hopping cubist creatures *who really hate* their original creator. Twist that connection and the hero who used the icon relationship becomes the de facto icon of the cubist creatures, a position that's not easy to fill when you don't have the power of an icon!

Using a Combat Connection

When you use an icon connection as a combat connection, you get an extra d20 to roll with an attack, save, disengagement check, or other combat action that you are about to take. You decide to use the connection and get the extra d20 before you roll. After rolling both dice, choose the result you want.

After finishing the action you used the connection to aid, roll a d20 to see if your combat connection has a twist; on a 1-10 there will be a twist later in the battle! Yes, it's a 50% chance of a twist instead of the normal 25% chance of a twist when using a narrative connection.



You don't have to deal with the twist now. That comes later, and it is in the GM's hands.

Combat connection stories: All our advice about making sense of a connection with an icon can apply to using an icon connection in combat. Explain how something about the icon helps you with the action you're about to take. It could be advice you got from an NPC earlier, or something about the icon's metaphysical impact on the world, or the momentary presence of a spirit.

If you're stuck, channeling raw iconic power may be the simplest story available. Don't spend too much time on the story because the point is to keep combat moving.

The fine print: Note that the bonus d20 only applies to a single roll. If you're using an attack that targets multiple enemies, you need to decide which of them you really want to hit.

In cases where you're already rolling two d20s, such as the fighter's Momemtum, the third d20 enters the pool as another possible result. Hint: a third d20 doesn't make as much difference as a second d20.

Resolving the twist: Later during this battle, or possibly even in a subsequent battle, the GM plays out the combat twist by giving a second d20 to an enemy's action! In general, the GM uses the twist against one of your allies instead of against you. Ideally the GM finds a way to make the twist feel like a natural outcome of an icon's involvement. That's usually a reference to an enemy icon rather than a friendly icon.

If you use an icon connection in combat at the very end of a fight, the GM might decide to wait until the next battle to determine whether you got a twist. You'll go into the next fight uncertain.

Known twists: If all the icon dice you rolled at the start of the arc came up empty, and you received an icon connection of your choice that carries an automatic twist, using it as a combat connection strikes us as legal but brazen.

Example of a combat connection: The barbarian is already raging and using their Unstoppable talent, which lets them heal but only if they hit with the attack. "I channel the fury of the Fire Wyrm against this iron golem," says the player, using their character's name for the Red Dragon. "The golem's lack of passion infuriates me." The player uses their icon connection with the Three (a conflicted relationship) and rolls two d20s for the attack. Both rolls are hits, and the player chooses the higher result that lets their raging barbarian crit. Next, the player rolls a d20, gets an 8, and suffers a twist. The other players at the table wonder which one of them is going to be the target of the twist.

This battle is against an outlaw wizard and his minions, and the GM doesn't see a natural icon connection for the iron golem or the wizard. Instead, when the wizard's other ally, a chimera, attacks the rogue, the GM says, "This monstrosity relishes the Red's spirit of fury and channels a little of that fury itself. Here comes the twist die!" The GM rolls two d20s for the chimera's first attack but not for the other two. Since the chimera's attack has extra effects for rolls of 14+, rolling an extra die increases both the chance for a hit and a chance for a bonus effect.

Connections in Introductory Games & One-Shots

Asking first time players to handle their character's spells and powers *and* to narrate one or more icon connections can be a lot. When we run introductory games at conventions or for non-gaming friends, we rely on the easiest techniques to help newcomers. Likewise, if your group is not accustomed to improvised storytelling in the middle of their games, these techniques may help.

One connection: For one-shot demo games with new players, keep the heroes to one icon connection apiece.

Magic treasure in one-shot games: As a rule, narrative connections are in the players' hands and only the GM gives away true magic items. But in a one-shot or with limited time to develop the storyline at a convention, feel free to speed things up. If new players are overloaded, the GM can take control of the narrative connections that are usually in the players' hands and pump up the storyline with player-approved connections that provide powerful treasure.

Flashbacks: When the heroes get stuck or have a problem that an icon connection could solve, ask one or more of the players whether there is something that happened to their heroes recently that has supplied them with knowledge or items that could help the party. Once you've suggested a flashback that works for everyone, other players may get into the spirit.

GM-introduced NPCs: Instead of waiting for players to use icon connections to invent NPCs that help them, the GM brings promising NPCs into contact with the PCs at different points. And then the GM says, "Y'know, if someone had an icon connection waiting with [this icon] or [that icon], they could turn this encounter into an event that helps you out or adds something new to the story."

Combat connections: It's the easiest story to tell. Some new players in convention games find it amusing that the advantage they gained is going to be a potential problem for someone else. If you're happy letting players in demo games get as many icon connections as they roll, combat connections could help make sure all the connections get used in one sitting.

Be transparent: Let the players know you're using icon connections a little differently because it's a one-shot. Help them see that icon connections are tools to be adapted for the group's need.



CHAPTER 7

COMBAT RULES

Most players will use this chapter to look up rules having to do with combat, such as what the *weakened* effect does. Some players like to read these rules before they create their first character, while others prefer to just skim them and jump right into character creation. The chapters that describe **kin** and **classes** use terminology defined in this chapter, such as **actions**, **attacks**, **damage**, etc.

For several detailed examples of combat, see the fights on pages 14, 18, and 20 in the Example of Play.

Combat Summary

Our combat system plays fast. Tactical choices are straightforward and significant, and every die roll matters. The system's clarity and flexibility make it easy for players to improvise and elaborate on the campaign's storyline, even as the characters are fighting for their lives.

Here is a summary of what each section of the combat chapter covers.

- **Combat Sequence:** Cyclic initiative, actions during a round, and using the escalation die.
- **Combat Actions:** Types of actions, positioning on the battlefield, movement options during combat, and special movement options.
- **Special Actions:** Fighting in spirit, retreating from a battle, and using recoveries to heal.
- **Attacks:** General attack rules, crits, fumbles, missed-attack damage, flexible attacks, unarmed attacks, and two-weapon fighting.
- **Damage and Healing:** Damage rules, recoveries, becoming staggered, and falling unconscious.
- **Mooks:** Rules for the minor monsters that are affected by damage differently than other creatures.
- **Death and Dying:** Death rules and death saves.
- **Rest and Recharge:** Quick rests and full heal-ups.
- **Combat Modifiers:** General rules, shooting into melee, and invisibility.
- **Special Attacks and Effects:** Conditions, *coup de grace*, grabbed, ongoing damage, saves, resistance, and temporary hit points
- **Honorable Combat Option**: Fights between almost-friends.

Combat Sequence

Combat starts with everyone involved rolling initiative; it cycles through several rounds; and it usually ends when one side or the other has either been destroyed or driven away.

Cyclic Initiative

Jonathan introduced **cyclic initiative** to F20 gaming twenty-five years ago, and we are never going back.

Roll once: Each creature or type of creature rolls to determine its initiative at the start of the battle (d20 + initiative bonus). As a hero, your initiative bonus is usually your Dexterity modifier plus your level. These results determine who acts first in each round.

As a rule, you'll want all monsters of the same exact type to share the same initiative roll. It's not worth rolling initiative for each separate warrior in a battle that includes five gnoll warriors. However, in a fight against three different types of gnolls that have different initiative bonuses, sure, roll initiative for each of the three monster types.

Exception: If the combat has only a couple of monsters and they happen to be the same type, you'll probably want the monsters to act on separate initiative counts.

Ties go to the monsters: This used to just be Jonathan's rule. Now we both use it, and you could, too.



I enjoy running combats in which player characters and their opposition are more likely to take turns acting. With three or more groups of monsters, I sometimes choose a range of initiative rolls (for example: +2, +7, +12, +19) and randomly assign them to different monsters. The player character rolls might still cluster somewhere, but the fight is more likely to start with a back-and-forth.

Special Initiative Actions

Use these special initiative rules from the standard OGL rules if you like, but don't feel obliged.

Delay: By choosing to delay, you take no action and then act normally on whatever initiative count you decide to act. When you delay, you voluntarily reduce your own initiative for the rest of the combat. When your new, lower initiative count comes up later in the same round, you can act normally. You can specify this new initiative result or just wait until sometime later in the round and act then, thus fixing your new initiative count at that point.

You never get back the time you spend waiting to see what's going to happen. You also can't interrupt anyone else's action (as you can with a readied action).

Your initiative result becomes the count on which you took the delayed action. If you come to your next action and have not yet performed an action, you don't get to take a delayed action (though you can delay again).

If you take a delayed action in the next round, before your regular turn comes up, your initiative count rises to that new point in the order of battle, and you do not get your regular action that round.

On the other hand, if a player character delays their action until the next round, the GM has the option of saying that it doesn't look like the fight is escalating after all, and keeping the escalation die where it is instead of raising it this round!

***Readying an action*:** The ready action lets you prepare to take an action later, after your turn is over but before your next one has begun. Readying is a standard action.

You can ready a standard action, a move action, or a free action. To do so, specify the action you will take and the conditions under which you will take it. Then, any time before your next turn, you may take the readied action in response to that condition. The action occurs just before the action that triggers it. If the triggered action is part of another character's activities, you interrupt the other character. Assuming they are still capable of doing so, they continue their actions once you complete your readied action. Your initiative result changes. For the rest of the encounter, your initiative result is the count on which you took the readied action, and you act immediately ahead of the character whose action triggered your readied action.

Your initiative result becomes the count on which you took the readied action. If you come to your next action and have not yet performed your readied action, you don't get to take the readied action (though you can ready the same action again). If you take your readied action in the next round, before your regular turn comes up, your initiative count rises to that new point in the order of battle, and you do not get your regular action that round.

The GM is free to disallow this optional rule if they want to keep things moving.

Actions on Your Turn

Standard, Move, and Quick actions: Each turn, you can take one of each action, in any order. See **Combat Actions**, below.

Free actions: In general, you can take any number of free actions on your turn, unless the GM rules that it's just unbelievable. Creatures can also take free actions when it's not their turn as part of a triggering condition. Talking is a free action.

Make saves last: If you are subjected to an effect that requires a save, roll that save at the end of your turn. If you are taking ongoing damage, for example, you take the ongoing damage before you get a chance to end your turn by rolling a save against it. If you delay your turn, you must still take the damage on your regular turn.

ANATOMY OF YOUR TURN

Start of your turn: As a rule, there's not a lot that happens here.

Middle of your turn: You can use a standard action, a move action, and a quick action, in any order. Enemies that somehow earn an opportunity attack against you can get one opportunity attack per turn apiece.

End of your turn: The order of operations is important at the end of your turn.

- First, you take any ongoing damage.
- Second, you save against any ongoing damage and other conditions that can end with a successful save.
- Third, if you have created effects that are supposed to end at the end of this turn, they end now.

The rest of the round: You can only use an interrupt action when it's not your turn. You get one interrupt action per round, so after you've rolled initiative or when your turn is over, you're free to use an interrupt action at any point until the start of your next turn. Don't worry if you don't manage to use one—a lot of classes have no interrupt actions built into their powers and only end up using an interrupt action when they intercept a moving enemy.

Escalation Die

As the characters fight during a battle, they build up momentum and tactical advantages that help them defeat their foes. This increasing bonus to attacks is represented by the escalation die.

Start at +1 on the second round: At the start of the second round, the GM sets the escalation die at +1. Each PC gains a bonus to attack rolls equal to the current value on the escalation die.

Increase +1 per round to +6: Each round, the escalation die advances by +1, to a maximum of +6. This means you might want to wait until you're a couple rounds into a battle before you use your biggest attacks, so you're more likely to hit with them.

PCs only: As a rule, monsters and NPCs do not add the escalation die bonus to their attacks. A few of them *do* use the escalation die—these include dragons and other foes that you least want to get an attack bonus!

De-escalation: The escalation die represents increasing momentum in the battle. If the GM judges that the characters are avoiding conflict rather than bringing the fight to the bad guys, the escalation die doesn't advance. If combat virtually ceases, or heroes start coordinating actions at the end of a fight to take advantage of specific powers that provide healing or other long-term bonuses when they hit, the escalation die drops or resets to 0.

Power triggers: Some character powers key off the escalation die, such as the wizard's *mana storm* spell that takes different forms depending on whether the escalation die is even, odd, or at zero.

Odd or even: By the way, the escalation die is only "even" at 2, 4, and 6. At zero the escalation die doesn't exist!

Effects default to the escalation die when created: Powers and spells that use the escalation die to generate effects default to using the die result when the effect is created. Unusual effects that keep escalating are called out as exceptions.

STYLING ESCALATION DICE

The escalation die helps to speed combat to a close when it goes on for longer than normal. To keep track of the escalation die, use the biggest or coolest d6 you can find. Players really hate monsters or magic effects that reduce the escalation die, so don't forget to use this effect every now and then.

If you can't find a ten-pound monster d6 like the one Rob uses, set the escalation die on top of an upturned cup or other small pedestal so everyone can see it and remembers to use it.

Miniatures

The position and movement systems are streamlined enough for theater-of-the-mind play, if that's your jam. We happen to love miniatures. Minis help the GM and players agree on where everyone is. If you happen to be using pretty maps with grids or hexes, don't pay too much attention to those spaces.

Combat Actions

All the combat stuff you want to know about.

Actions

On your turn, you can take one standard action, one move action, one quick action, and a handful of free actions, in any order.

Standard actions: Usually, these are attacks or spells so good they're worth casting in place of an attack.

Move actions: These actions typically involve moving from one part of the battle to another or just moving a couple steps to a new opponent. Occasionally, a move action involves some other type of activity, such as opening a difficult door.

Quick actions: These are quick acts like drawing a weapon, opening an unlocked door, picking up something light off the ground, or reloading a light crossbow.

Substitute downward: You can use a standard action to take a move action, and you can use a standard or a move action to take a quick action.

Free actions: These actions take almost no time, like dropping something, speaking a few words or commands, taking an extra action as part of a power, or activating most magic item powers.

Interrupt actions: You can use one interrupt action when it's not your turn. You can't use another one until the end of your next turn. Intercepting uses your interrupt action. Otherwise, these types of actions are limited to certain classes and class powers; they're not something all characters have to think about.

Other actions when it's not your turn: In certain circumstances (see below), characters can make opportunity attacks, or otherwise act out of turn. These are usually free actions, though the GM may rule that a particularly juicy freebie requires an interrupt action.

Movement

Most movement involves getting into a fight or getting out of one.

The most important general rule is that a creature can use a move action to get to any nearby place, provided no obstacles prevent it and they don't get intercepted by an enemy!

Position

A creature's position matters a lot, but its precise location does not. There's no grid. Position amounts to two things: a creature's whereabouts, and who it's contending with in melee.

Whereabouts

Each creature has a general location on the battlefield. Its precise location doesn't matter. You can define your character's geographical location in any natural way, such as "standing behind the paladin" or "slinking along the wall while the rest of the party waits around the corner." It's understood that combat is dynamic and fluid, so a miniature can't really represent where a character "really is," only its vicinity.

Nearby: Generally, all the heroes and their enemies in a battle are nearby. That means they can reach each other with a single move action. Sometimes heroes or enemies can be far-away (see below).

A creature can use a move action to move to any nearby place, provided no obstacles prevent it.

Far-away: When creatures are far-away from each other, it takes (at least) two move actions for one to reach the other. Taking two move actions on your turn usually means giving up your attack for that round. Sometimes, the heroes and monsters start the battle far-away from each other. Most often, the melee combatants on each side meet in the middle, while archers or casters hang back, nearby the melee but far-away from each other. If you have a good far-away attack, you might also back away from a nearby melee. Make your intended position clear to the GM and make sure there's room for that maneuver.

Corner-case situations: In some exceptional circumstances, you might have a battle in which the melee combatants are in the middle of the fight and each side has ranged attackers hanging way back, far-away from the melee and out of range of the enemy's far-away ranged attackers. In this situation, make sure everyone understands that it would take four move actions for one of the far-away combatants to reach their opponents on the far side of the battle.

Behind: Generally, if you're behind an unengaged ally, and an enemy moves past that ally to get to you, your ally has the option to move and intercept (see below).

Next to: You might have to be next to an ally to use a power, such as healing.

Terrain: Creatures who throw spears and cast spells at each other across a chasm may be nearby but unable to reach other without running alongside the chasm to the rickety wooden bridge, which requires a move action to get across all on its own. (See **Pushing It** on page 297 for advice on how to handle creatures that try to get through such terrain risky-quick.) Your hero might be nearby the enemy spellcaster, but it might take two or more moves to get there.

It's also possible that you'll want to detour around a melee full of possible interceptors on the way to the enemy's back ranks, and that could also burn another move action.

EXTREMELY FAR-AWAY

If you set up a battle where all creatures start at extremely long distances from each other, so that it takes more moves than two moves to reach each other, that's up to you. We've done it occasionally ourselves, for story reasons, but we don't particularly recommend it. It slows the game down and gives a marked advantage to whichever side has better ranged attacks, unless there are plenty of obstacles or magical zones that prevent ranged attacks from dominating.

Engaged or Unengaged

In a battle, each combatant is either engaged (that is, locked in combat with one or more enemies) or unengaged (free). All you have to do to engage an enemy is move next to them. We don't tell you how many attackers can engage a single enemy—use what feels right to you.

Unengaged

By default, characters in a battle are unengaged. They can move freely, use ranged attacks, engage in battle, etc. If they try to move past a free enemy, however, that foe usually has the option to intercept them; see the **Engagement Chart** and the **Interception** section below.

Engaged

Characters are engaged when they are in melee combat with foes. Usually, you push the miniatures together to represent who's engaged with whom. Grognards call it "basing" your foe because the miniatures' bases are in contact. Characters who are engaged in battle have a hard time moving around without drawing opportunity attacks. The point of this rule is to give the battlefield some texture, so characters don't run all over it attacking whomever they prefer.

Engaged creatures can use melee attacks against the creatures they engage. They can use ranged attacks, but doing so draws opportunity attacks from the enemies that are engaging them, as does moving away from the enemies with whom they're engaged. They can use close-quarters spells, however, without drawing opportunity attacks.

Unengaged (that is, free) creatures have no limits on how they may move. They can't use melee attacks until engaged.

Swirling melee: Instead of treating engagement as if your hero and the enemies they're engaged with are frozen in place, think of engagement as a swirling melee, in which combatants move constantly while staying engaged. So, less like wargame counters stuck in a hex, and more like swashbucklers chasing each other around with ringing swords!

We use miniatures. If you're engaged with one enemy, you can use a move action on your turn to slide around them, staying engaged the whole time, either to engage another enemy or two on their other side, or just to get to the other side.

As an optional rule, you can also let someone who has scored an excellent melee hit drive their opponent back a bit. If it's a one-on-one fight, Rob lets a hit that staggers an opponent drive that opponent back a little, without changing the engagement situation. For other situations, when an engaged hero or monster wants the location of the engagement to shift slightly, use the dicey move rules on page 297.

Treat engagement with a bit of a fudge factor for sliding a step or two sideways. Heroes like the barbarian and fighter—who want to engage multiple enemies in order to use attacks like *whirlwind* and *hack & slash*—will have a lot more fun this way than if you play with engaged creatures locked into place.

Disengaging

You can always simply move away from the foes that engage you, but you draw an opportunity attack from each of those enemies when you do.

If you don't want to risk an opportunity attack, you can use your move action to attempt to disengage (a disengage check). If you try to disengage, roll a disengage check (11+). You can disengage from more than one foe with a single successful check, but your roll takes a –1 penalty for each foe beyond the first that you are disengaging from.

If the disengage check succeeds, you move away from the foes you were engaged with without drawing opportunity attacks. Use your move action normally, except that you can't re-engage the creatures you disengaged from.

Engagement Chart (what you can do)

WHEN YOU ARE ENGAGED:	WHEN YOU ARE UNENGAGED:
You draw opportunity attacks if you move	You move freely
You can make melee attacks against enemies engaged with you	You can't make melee attacks
Your ranged attacks draw opportunity attacks from enemies engaged with you	You make ranged attacks normally
Your spells (except for close-quarters spells) draw opportunity attacks from enemies engaged with you	You can cast spells freely
You can disengage safely as a move action by succeeding with a disengage check (11+)	You can engage enemies by moving into melee with them
You can't intercept enemies	You can use an interrupt action to intercept an enemy moving past you
You're considered nearby other combatants by default	You're considered nearby other combatants by default, but you can usually move far-away if you want



If you fail the disengage check, you don't move, you lose your move action for that turn, and you remain engaged. It sucks to lose your move action, but at least you don't take opportunity attacks! If you still have your standard action left, you'll usually want to attack with it. Sometimes, you'd rather use your standard action to try to disengage a second time or even just to move away and draw opportunity attacks if you're certain you need to move.

Popping Free

When a power, spell, or effect lets a creature end engagement without moving far, we say that the creature can "pop free of engagement," usually shortened to *pop free*.

When you pop free from an enemy, you're no longer engaged with that specific enemy, though you might still be engaged with others. There's no specific action that can be used to pop free. Instead, popping free of engagement is a bonus effect that's usually the consequence of a character's power, talent, attack, spell, or magic item power. It's also worth noting that you don't move much when you pop free of an enemy, you shake loose of being engaged but don't otherwise change your position; unless, perhaps, you've been popped free with a violent shove!

Opportunity Attacks

Opportunity attacks are limited-strength, bonus attacks that creatures sometimes make against enemies engaged with them. You can make an opportunity attack against an engaged enemy if it uses a ranged attack or moves away from you without disengaging first. An opportunity attack is a no-trigger melee attack against that foe as a free action, made just before the enemy's action that provoked the attack. You can't use limited-use or flexible attacks for an opportunity attack, only a no-trigger melee attack based on your basic attack.

See page 301 for details on heroes' and monsters' no-trigger attacks.

Intercepting

You intercept a creature when you use your interrupt action to move to stop and engage an enemy that would otherwise move past you. You must be unengaged to intercept. No, you can't try a disengage check to do it. No, we don't have a trigonometrical rule for what counts as "moving past you," but as GMs, we are more generous in ruling which heroes and monsters can intercept when the interceptor is protecting an ally from an attack instead of simply moving to catch someone running past. On the other hand, the ability to intercept onrushing enemies isn't a license to take other actions when enemies are moving.

When someone intercepts you, your move action usually stops in engagement with the interceptor. You *usually* do not have the option of continuing your move and accepting an opportunity attack. The standard consequence of being intercepted is that you use your remaining standard action to attack the creature that intercepted you.

The reason we're using words like "usually" is that in some cases, it will feel right to give an extremely fast or large creature the option to keep moving and suffer an opportunity attack from a much slower or weaker or smaller interceptor. Can a human or troll-kin fighter really stop that huge dragon from moving past them if the dragon doesn't want to stop? Maybe not, it's up to the GM. If the dragon keeps moving, the troll-kin gets an opportunity attack against it.

One interceptor per move: Don't let multiple creatures intercept a moving attacker. Interception is a one-on-one experience, even if the moving creature manages to get by the interceptor with a special power, like the rogue's Tumble talent (page 154).

One interrupt action per round: Remember that characters and monsters only get one interrupt action per round. If you're a character who uses their interrupt action for other tricks, you're not going to be intercepting that often.

Taking the rest of your turn: If you're intercepted while moving, your move action ends, but you still have the rest of your turn, unless the move was your last action. You're engaged, but you can take the rest of your turn normally, including bumping your standard action down to a move action and trying to disengage (or just moving away and taking the opportunity attack), or using your standard action to make an attack of your own.

It is forbidden . . . to intercept an enemy that disengaged from you this turn! This comes up when we play with minis and a creature successfully disengages and moves past the creature it was engaged with to attack someone else. But if a creature has disengaged from you this turn, they've already evaded you; if anyone is going to intercept them, it will have to be one of your allies.

Targeting Attacks

Most attacks have straightforward rules for choosing targets, but some require a little nuance.

Information transparency: We love giving players all the information they need to make meaningful decisions. We let players know who the mooks are, usually by describing them as "small fry," "a rabble," "a mob" or something of the sort. Likewise, we point out who the badasses are in the fight. We like it when the heroes know who they're up against. We'll always tell players when a creature becomes staggered and remind them which creatures are staggered, which are the most wounded, etc. We don't suggest telling your players how many hit points a monster has, but if a hero has a spell that only works against targets with 100 hit points or fewer, as the GM, you should tell your players whether the enemy they're targeting is over that limit. If the target has too many hit points, you might even hint how close they are to 100.

Jonathan even lets players learn the ACs and other defenses of their foes because it makes combat move faster. (Usually!)

Of course, once players are used to getting clear battlefield information, it can be fun to take that away by staging battles with reality distortion, malignant psychic interference, or a mysterious enemy or three.

Multiple targets: Most attacks that target multiple enemies at range allow you to skip all over the battlefield while selecting targets. However, when a spell or area-style effect targets multiple nearby enemies *in a group*, choose targets that are close together, in the same area instead of on opposite sides of the battle area. There shouldn't be big gaps between one creature and the next in a target group. Don't skip around, and you shouldn't bypass one creature that's closer to a previous target than the next creature you want to include in the group. If the group of enemies has fewer members than you have targets, you miss out on the excess targets. Spells that target foes *in a line* work analogously.

Special Cases

Here are rules for special situations involving movement and melee.

Allies: Powers and spells in various classes are written with the understanding that a character's allies are the other heroes in the party, with a possible addition for an animal companion. NPCs don't count as allies for abilities that count the number of allies who meet certain conditions, though you could certainly let a PC cast a spell on an NPC that would ordinarily benefit an ally.

Ambushes and surprise: See the **Starting a Battle** section on page 49 of the *GMG*.

Burrowing: Creatures with the *burrow* ability can move underground with a good deal of effort. It's a monster ability, not a player character ability, so it's covered in the monster rules in the *GMG*: page 59.

Charging: There is no standard "charge" rule as with most other d20 games that lets you move twice and still make a melee attack. A creature can move and attack as part of an interception if it has readied an action to attack and then intercepts.

Dicey moves: When a character tries to do something "dicey," such as running quickly on a ledge above a forge to grab a burning brand before it can be stamped on a dragon's egg, it's fun to roll for it. If the player is willing to accept the possibility of failure in order to achieve something heroic, that's the sort of action that gets everyone's attention.

GMs, if you want to consider the character's capabilities, ask for a skill check, usually at normal difficulty. If you don't have time to think about the details, ask for a save—easy, normal, or hard.

Flight: Heroes fly occasionally, but it's more commonly a monster ability. You'll find the flight rules in the *GMG*: page 59.

Pushing it: Thanks to our fuzzy distance rules, the most common dicey situation is when a hero or monster wants to move farther than you think is possible and still attack. That's especially true when the terrain gets rough, or vertical, or magically challenging. Use a dicey move to find out whether the creature gets as far as it wants to or whether it must use another move action to reach its destination or stop in the middle. If the terrain is risky, the most fun way to handle it is to give the character a chance to come through unscathed, but a similar chance of falling or slightly hurting themselves as they slam across a rickety bridge, hopscotch over lava, or climb a cavern wall while still managing to swing their sword. Some dicey moves clearly aren't that difficult, and would require a skill check with a normal DC. Ironically, dicey moves with hard and ridiculously hard DCs often serve to reward heroes whose ability scores and backgrounds show that they want to pull off amazing stunts.

Don't let player characters have all the fun! Monsters and villains that make surprising moves help remind everyone that they don't know *everything* that's about to happen. If a monster screws up and hurts itself smashing into a stalactite it had a chance to avoid, the world feels a tiny bit more real.

Speed: The game works fine without speed as a specific stat. If it's important to know who covers ground faster, the GM can use common sense to make a ruling, or use stats and skills to set up a speed contest. A "speed check" could be as simple as new initiative checks to find out who moves first and fastest, or as complex as an Athletics check (using Dexterity) vs. a Path Finding check (using Wisdom) to figure out which hero is faster. It's up to the GM and the context of the situation. But read on for a special case that occurs at the end of many battles . . .

Chases: The nearby and far-away ranges work fine for battles when most creatures involved want to fight, but they are less convincing when one side is just trying to run away. Who is faster, really? Can a monster or villain get away with a player character or two on their heels?

If the end of a battle has segued into a desperate chase, consider switching to a skill roll for the character or characters doing the chasing. If the characters seem faster, give them a big bonus on a skill check of normal difficulty. If the enemies seem faster, the skill check gets harder.

Rob makes quick bargains in these situations, saying things like "I'll let you use your Strength for this skill check, but that means you're just throwing yourself after them, so if the check fails, that's it, you're on the ground and they get away."



There was one movement wrinkle we didn't mention in the special cases. If we have a whole bunch of identical monsters acting on the same initiative, we usually move them all before rolling any of their attacks. Technically maybe we should finish one monster's actions before starting another, but in practice that's too clumsy.

Special Actions

Interesting actions are the spice of combat.

Rally

At least once per battle, every PC can use a standard action to *rally*, spending one of their recoveries to regain lost hit points (see **Recoveries**, page 304).

When your PC rallies, say a sentence or two about what gives them the will to keep fighting: is it honor, pride, the mission, vengeance, a chance to outshine a rival, or something unique to the situation and to your character's spirit?

If you want to rally again later during the same battle, take a quick action to make a normal save (11+). If the save succeeds, you can use your standard action to rally again this turn. If the save fails, you've burnt a quick action to no effect and can't try again until next round. You can rally any number of times in a battle, provided you succeed at these quick saves for every rally after the first.

TAKING AWAY THE RALLY ACTION

Theoretically, certain magical effects that sap a character's will to fight could prevent a character from rallying. But you would have to be cruel and abusive—or Jonathan Tweet—to set up a situation in which the heroes can't rally. Maybe they can still rally, but they must succeed at a quick save even for their first rally. Or, perhaps only the first PC to rally can do so.



Rallying is the gift that keeps on giving. When I was working on Ars Magica *in the '80s, I wanted a mechanic that somehow incentivized PCs to take a breather during combat instead of going full-tilt non-stop. Such a mechanic would help the PCs feel mortal. In the end, I couldn't figure out how to do it. Luckily, Rob did it with the rallying rule. Rallying is implicitly an act of vulnerability, a sign to the other players and GM that you've been pushed to a limit. For players, the rule adds an interesting choice in the heat of combat: to rally or not. If you don't rally when you should, you might regret it. For the GM, rallying has added value as an indication of the battle's degree of difficulty. If the PCs in your battles rarely rally, then go harder on them by building scarier battles.*

Fight in Spirit

It sucks to be shut out of the action, and here's a character's way to stay in the mix. You take this action when you are out of the fight altogether, which is rare. Perhaps your character is in another part of the dungeon or has been shifted to an alternate dimension. If your character can't do anything, then once per round you can specify how your character is still there "fighting in spirit" alongside the other party members. To earn this bonus, come up with some story about what your character has done that could boost party morale or skill.

For example, an unconscious barbarian might say, "The fighter watched me rage during all these fights, and now, with me down, he feels a little bit of my rage coming on."

+2 to a stat the first time each battle, +1 thereafter: You should expect to be able to talk your GM into giving any ally a +1 bonus to attacks, Armor Class, Physical Defense, or Mental Defense. The first time each battle that someone fights in spirit is special, so that can be a +2 bonus.

Out for the duration: If you're making death saves or you have a save to recover from an effect, then you can't fight in spirit. This is only for players who would otherwise truly be shut out of the fight, with no rolls to make.



If the players in your campaign are tactically effective like ours are, you might like to honor their capabilities by making combat harsher. Try any or all of these rule modifications.

Crit 18+: *Everyone's base crit range is 18+. One crit out of 20 rolls is not enough, but one out of seven feels pretty good.*

Knocked down: *A player character that is dropped to 0 or fewer hit points doesn't get up as easily when healed. Healing brings the character back to consciousness, but until the character spends a move action to "get up" or pull themselves together, they're weakened. The move action doesn't have any other effect.*

This rule doesn't apply to monsters, since monsters are taken out of the fight by being reduced to 0 hit points.

Implacable 20s: *If the attack roll is a natural 20, the damage can't be reduced, redirected, absorbed by temporary hit points, or otherwise avoided. The attack roll can't be rerolled (sorry, halflings).*

Combat Assist

Sometimes you realize that your ally needs help more than you need to hit with an attack. Somewhat in the spirit of fighting in spirit, you can spend a standard action in combat to give a nearby ally a +2 bonus on any upcoming attack roll, save, or check. Maybe you're yelling advice, maybe you're helping parry an attack, maybe you're grabbing their shoulder and pushing them in the right direction. Whatever it is, you give them a +2 bonus, though at the cost of what you might accomplish with a standard action yourself.

Retreat (Party Action)

The players decide as a group whether to retreat. At any point during the battle, any player can propose that the fight is going so badly the characters should give up and run for it. If all the other players agree, the heroes beat a hasty and successful retreat, carrying any fallen heroes away with them. When your friend is on their last death save, or when a vicious foe is about to deliver a *coup de grace* to a fallen hero, that's a good time to talk about retreating. The GM should pause at any make-or-break moment to remind the players that they can get away!

In exchange for using this extraordinarily generous retreating rule, the party suffers a narrative loss. At the GM's discretion, something the party or their patron was trying to accomplish fails in a way that going back and finishing off those enemies later won't entirely fix. There needs to be some permanent effect from a narrative loss, even when future heroic actions can keep things from getting even worse!

Don't worry, overcoming setbacks is exactly what heroism is about—you don't lose the campaign because of retreating—you lose something you cared about, but you live to seek vengeance.

A battle from which the heroes retreat still counts toward their next heal-up. In fact, the GM should count it as two battles if it was the sort of grueling fight we've seen at our table before the heroes are forced to retreat. If they haven't earned a heal-up and their resources are low, they can take a second narrative loss and get an unearned heal-up.



In response to 3E, *grognards lamented that parties hardly ever fled any more. It's true that running away isn't as much a part of the game as it used to be. The retreat rule makes sure parties can get away without leaving PCs behind and without taking more damage as they flee. Ideally, it lets players be more daring because the PCs can evacuate on a moment's notice, and it lets GMs cut loose with truly challenging encounters when the party calls trouble down on themselves. In* 13th Age, *PCs get all sorts of advantages, so we implore you, please, make them flee for their lives every now and then.*

Narrative Losses

The narrative loss rule is key to making combat meaningful. We all know most GMs probably won't kill the PCs permanently, but if the PCs can't fight their way through four battles—or three tougher battles—the in-game world suffers.

Usually, the heroes win their fights and succeed at their missions, resulting in what you might call "narrative wins." Wins are the good things that happen in the world when the heroes succeed, and narrative losses are the bad things that happen when they fail. Some losses are direct, causal results, such as the sacrificial victim being sacrificed instead of rescued. Other losses are more about the narrative than about simulating what went wrong, such the goblin army turning out to be bigger than anyone thought after the heroes retreat from goblins. Other losses express themselves as victories or successful machinations by the heroes' major adversaries, whether they appeared to be involved or not.

The great thing about a narrative loss is that it sets up a situation that requires future heroics!

The tough thing about a narrative loss is that it should have some permanent effect that can't entirely be undone, not even by future heroics.

Here are some examples of narrative losses that a retreating player character group might experience:

- The living dungeon gets stronger, and the heroes need to admit defeat, forcing higher-level heroes to leave their regular duties to put it down. It's not the end of the world, but it is a loss of face.
- The heroes were on their way to rescue a captive from unholy sacrifice. Naturally enough, the captive gets sacrificed.
- The monsters in the ruins steal away with the treasure, preventing the heroes from acquiring it. Pretty soon, the heroes find out the treasure is being used in horrible rituals against them or their allies.
- The monsters that caused the heroes to retreat become recurring villains, supporting enemy icons and engineering plots that start by badly hurting the PCs' allies.
- The curse the heroes were trying to stop spreads further across the land and afflicts more good people of the Empire.
- Countless demonic wasps come out of the hellhole. They capture many civilians, taking them back to the hellhole to be consumed alive. If the PCs prioritize one of their previous problems, it gets worse.
- The plan of the derro works, and now toxic fungi are spreading through a lower province in the Dwarf King's realm. People and allies the heroes care about are in trouble.
- The hoped-for alliance with the overworld ice giants is now impossible. In fact, the secret villain the PCs were supposed to unmask is now in league with the ice giant empress.
- The pocket dimension where the battle took place must now be sealed off, and the Archmage's wizards can no longer explore its magical wonders. Alternatively, that's what it seems like at first, and then the dimension blows up as the PCs try to deal with some other problem.
- The towns the heroes hoped to protect are overrun by enemy raiders and forced to accept protection from the nearby monastery of the Black Dragon.
- The Star Speaker gives her life to protect the people from the monsters the heroes could not defeat. The people are safe, but the Star Speaker is no more.
- Diabolical cultists loot and destroy the local Temple of Light, and the locals align themselves with the Crusader.
- The secret mission the heroes accomplished on a previous adventure becomes public to the wrong people, and everyone involved blames the heroes for not being more circumspect.
- The NPC who has provided the most help in the campaign suffers a terrible magical "accident." It wasn't an accident.



Attacks

Attacking and being attacked is what combat is all about.

Attack Targets

Normally, when you use an attack, you declare which attack you are using, choose its target or targets, then roll a d20 for each target to find out which targets you hit. Each attack writeup indicates what happens to a target you hit, and sometimes to those that you miss, with specific natural d20 rolls.

Target hit points: Some spells and effects target creatures with a certain number of hit points or fewer. The hit point value you use is based on current hit points, not starting hit points. Do you want to hit the dragon with your *hold monster* spell? Beat it down first.

Rerolls: Many powers and spells allow you to reroll an attack. The ability to "reroll an attack" refers to a single attack roll against a single target, not all the attack rolls of an attack or spell that has multiple targets. For example, if you choose to reroll one of the attack rolls for your *fireball* spell, you don't reroll all four of the attacks against different targets, you choose one attack to reroll.

On the other hand, if you get to reroll an attack that was somehow rolling more than one d20, you reroll all the dice for that single attack roll. For example, a troll-kin fighter using Aggression to roll 2d20s with *carve an opening* against an enemy rolls a 1 and a 4—not good enough. They use the *lethal* kin power to reroll the attack, and reroll both d20s.

This also applies to monsters! If your halfling uses *evasive* to make a medusa outlaw reroll its 2d20 opportunity attack, the medusa rerolls both d20s.

Attack Bonuses

Roll a d20 and add an ability bonus + your level + other modifiers, such as magic item bonuses, for each attack. Compare your total to the target's defense, usually Armor Class but sometimes Physical Defense or Mental Defense. If the total is equal to or higher than the defense, you hit. If you attack multiple targets, make multiple attack rolls. Your class defines which ability bonus you use on attack rolls, and the attack defines the effects of a hit or a miss.

These rules apply to all attacks, including weapon attacks, spell attacks, and attacks generated by powers and traps.

Ranged attacks: Any ranged attack (weapon, spell, power, ability, or whatever) draws opportunity attacks from enemies engaged with you.

Hits: Each attack specifies what happens when it hits, usually beginning with a specified amount of damage that is subtracted from the target's hit points. If the attack targets multiple enemies, you make a separate attack roll for each one, but roll damage only once. Heroes deal more damage with their attacks as they become more experienced and deadly.

Hits vary: Many attacks have special triggers for extra effects. Some triggers even specify that they function on a *miss*, or on *any natural even hit or miss*, or something similar.

Natural rolls can also trigger effects: One common case in which either a hit or miss can trigger an effect is when an attack refers to a specific natural roll, with a line like "*Natural 11+*" or "*Natural 2–5*." If you roll a specified natural result on an attack, that effect is triggered regardless of whether the attack hits or misses. These effects don't replace hit or miss effects, they add to them.

Crits also counts as hits: We'll cover critical hits in more detail below. For now, we're just calling out a technicality that you can usually forget about since it seems so obvious: effects that require a hit also trigger when you score a critical hit. If you roll high enough to crit but low enough to miss, that's still a crit.

TRANSPARENCY AND ATTACKS

The game moves faster if the GM lets players know what they need to know to make tactical decisions. For example, if a character has the option to reroll for an attack, let them know whether their attack hit before they decide whether to use that option.

The Heroes' Basic Attacks

Each hero has a basic melee attack and a basic ranged attack presented in their class write-up. Heroes can use a basic attack on their turn as a standard action, although they usually have better attack options.

Basic attacks are a starting point: The classes that focus on weapon attacks use their basic attacks as the starting point for their more interesting class attacks, maneuvers, and powers. Classes that would prefer to be attacking with spells use their basic attack as a last resort.

Monsters don't have basic attacks: In our cleaned up 2E terminology, monsters and NPCs don't make "basic attacks." 1E monsters that talk about basic attacks should usually translate that into a no-trigger attack.

No-Trigger Attacks

As detailed in each character class, a player character's no-trigger attack is a basic melee or basic ranged attack that cannot trigger other effects, powers, or talents.

The two typical situations that play out as no-trigger attacks are bonus attacks granted by hero and monster powers and opportunity attacks (page 296) caused by enemy movement or use of a ranged attack or spell while engaged.

Bonus attacks: Every bonus attack awarded in 2E specifies whether it's a no-trigger attack or a full attack (or standard action) that can be used as the hero or monster likes.

Opportunity attacks: Opportunity attacks are always no-trigger attacks for both heroes and monsters, unless a special power is breaking the rules. Heroes' opportunity attacks are straightforward as covered on page 296.

Monsters' and NPCs' opportunity attacks and other no-trigger attacks have one other wrinkle, covered at the end of this section.

No-trigger attacks have no frills: A hero or monster making a no-trigger attack can't trigger any of their powers, maneuvers, or talent effects. Roll to hit or deal a critical, deal damage or maybe miss damage, that's it.

What does apply: Bonuses to attack and damage that you've received from other sources usually apply—a *bless* spell from the party's cleric would give +1 bonus to an ally's no-trigger attack. Effects that increase your critical hit range apply to no-trigger attacks unless they're worded so that they don't. A target that's vulnerable to your attacks would be vulnerable to your no-trigger attacks. Other effects? Usually not.

NPCs' and monsters' no-trigger attacks: Use the creature's first melee attack as its basic attack, or its first CQ attack if it has no melee attack. If the attack normally attacks multiple targets, that doesn't apply to the no-trigger attack. The no-trigger attack is against just one target.

Consequently, monsters that spread their melee damage out across many attacks have weaker opportunity attacks than creatures that have one big swing. We can live with that, but we have one wrinkle to add: if a monster's first melee attack usually rolls multiple attacks, like a fire giant (*GMG:* 110), that monster's no-trigger attack rolls a number of d20s equal to its usual number of attacks, then uses the best die result and ignores the rest. For example, when made as an opportunity attack or other no-trigger attack, the fire giant's melee attack *flaming greatsword* rolls two d20s and chooses the best result. The fire giant deals less overall damage with a single no-trigger attack than with both the attacks that the attack normally calls for, but that single attack is more likely to hit and to crit, so it's still better than an attack rolled on a single d20.

When you roll a monster's no-trigger attack, don't trigger any effects that are based on specific die rolls. For example, suppose that an ancient white dragon (page 95) makes an opportunity attack against a hero who decides to cast a ranged spell despite being engaged with a fricking dragon. The dragon makes only one *claws and frigid bite* attack but rolls two d20s. The dragon rolls a 5 and a 17 and hits with the natural 17, dealing 25 damage. Normally, a natural 16+ would trigger the additional smaller claw attack, but since this is a no-trigger attack there's no added benefit to rolling 16+.

Monstrous corner cases: Monsters like the ochre jelly (*GMG:* 140) have a random number of attacks. If the number of attacks a monster rolls is highly variable or depends on having a number of targets, go ahead and use two d20s for their no-trigger attack.

Crits, Critical Hits

Every attack roll that is natural 20 is a crit ("critical hit") for double damage.

Crit effects: Standard crits deal double damage. At the GM's discretion, rolling a 20 while you have some major advantage over an opponent (such as a clean shot at the villain's magic pendant) might entail some additional superior result (such as shooting the pendant off the villain's chest).

Ongoing damage is also doubled when you crit, but only for the first turn. For example, an attack that deals 5 ongoing damage scores a crit. At the end of the target's next turn, they'll take 10 ongoing damage, but if they fail the save, that ongoing damage drops back to 5. Ongoing damage is scary, and even Jonathan thinks doubling it indefinitely is too much.

As a rule, other conditions and effects of damage are not doubled. GMs are free to break this rule for their favored monsters and make non-damage effects worse on a crit.

If you get lucky and manage to crit with a double-damage attack (through the effect of a talent, power, spell or other source), triple it instead. If you manage to double your triple damage, bump it up to quadruple, and so on.

GMs: We recommend rolling damage dice once and doubling it to speed play, but if you and your players love to roll lots of dice, feel free to roll double the amount of dice instead.

Crit range: The standard crit range is a natural 20. Some powers, spells, and events expand your crit range against a particular target. Each point of improvement in the crit range drops the number needed to score a critical hit by 1. For example, if the crit range expands by 2, you'll score a crit on a natural 18–20.

Fumbles

Rolling a natural 1 has no effect on the target, not even miss damage for attacks that deal miss damage. At the GM's discretion, rolling a 1 while in a precarious position (such as balancing on a narrow ledge) might entail some other bad result for the attacker (such as slipping off said ledge).

Damage on a Miss

Many heroes' attacks and some monsters' attacks deal damage on a miss (if nothing is noted, then a miss deals no damage). This damage represents minor wounds or the opponent becoming distracted or off balance or getting singed. If an attack deals damage of a certain type when it hits, the damage dealt with a miss is the same type.

Damage bonuses don't apply to attacks that deal miss damage unless the bonus specifies that it adds to miss damage. Most damage bonuses only apply to hits. For example, the elven adventurer-tier feat, Heritage of the Sword, provides a +2 damage bonus to some adventurer-tier elves using swords, but that damage bonus doesn't apply to most missed attacks. Similarly, a champion-tier magic sword that has attack and

damage bonuses of +2 doesn't add that bonus to miss damage when you deal miss damage equal to your level with a missed melee attack.

Half damage on a miss: On the other hand, when attacks specify that they deal half damage on a miss, or any other time an attack deals half damage, calculate the damage as if the attack had hit, then halve the damage.

Hits that get turned into misses: A few rare powers, such as the magic item power of the *cloak of inviolability*, turn hits into misses. Attacks that deal damage on a miss, or have other effects specified on a miss, still have their miss effects.

Monsters that miss: Most monsters deal no damage on a miss. Watch out for the ones that do!

Stacking Rules

In general, bonuses accumulate, or "stack." A bonus to one of your stats from a magic item can stack with a bonus created by an ally's spell and another bonus created by one of your own powers or spells. Two or more different spells or powers can even stack their bonuses, so a +1 attack bonus from your magic wand can pile onto a +2 bonus from an ally's power and another +2 bonus from another ally's spell for a total +5 bonus to your attacks. Huzzah! But what *doesn't* stack?

Magic item bonuses don't stack: If you have one magic item that gives you +1 AC, another magic item giving you +2 AC only provides you with the higher bonus: +2 AC.

Many condition penalties don't stack: As you'll see from looking at page 308, conditions like dazed and weakened and stunned come with attack and defense penalties, but condition penalties to the same stat don't stack. Just use the worst one.

Powers, spells, and abilities don't stack with themselves or with other game elements with the same name: This works for both PCs and monsters. As a PC, you can use multiple powers and spells that all happen to provide a bonus to AC, and they stack. But you can't stack bonuses from two castings of *shield of faith*, nor can you stack bonuses from two uses of the fighter power *defensive fighting*. Similarly, two vrocks with the *miasma of decay* nastier special (*GMG*: 83) wouldn't stack together and subtract 20 hp from every recovery.

Powers and spells that are cumulative and break this rule by stacking with themselves say so directly.



Damage & Healing

In *13th Age*, damage works like other d20 games. Healing uses hit points, but also involves recoveries, which is how PCs heal to fight another day.

Damage

Damage works pretty much as normal in d20 games. Each creature has hit points. You slay enemies (or occasionally knock them out) at 0 hp. At 0 hp, PCs begin using the **Death and Dying** rules (see next page).

Recoveries

Each PC normally starts the adventure with 8 recoveries, a stat that represents the PC's ability to heal or bounce back from damage. (Fighters start with 9.) Most healing spells and healing potions require you to use up one of your recoveries. So does using a standard action to rally during a battle and getting up after you succeed with a death save.

The basic mechanic when you use a recovery is always the same. Spend one of your recoveries. Then, regain lost hit points by rolling recovery dice equal to your level + your Constitution modifier. Your class indicates which recovery die you will use (usually a d6, d8, or d10).

At 5th level, you double the bonus you get from your Constitution modifier. For example, a 5th level barbarian with a Constitution score of 14 (Constitution modifier +2) has been cut up pretty badly. She uses a standard action during the battle to heal, rolling 5d10 and adding double her Constitution modifier, in this case 5d10 + 4.

At 8th level, you quadruple the Constitution modifier *and* add the epic-tier adjustment: +5 per epic level. In other words, at 8th add 5, at 9th add 10, and at 10th add 15. (This mirrors the weapon attack damage calculations discussed on page 59.)

Unusual exceptions: A few powerful true healing spells heal without requiring the use of one of your own recoveries, a mechanic that's usually expressed like so: "heal using a free recovery." A few other powerful spells and effects let you use more of your own recoveries at the same time, in effect healing twice as much while expending twice the resources.

Who dares, rolls; who cares, doesn't: Recoveries are one of the best places to skip die rolling and take the average damage. There's nothing like having allies maneuver across the battlefield to reach you with a healing spell, only to roll snake-eyes on your recovery dice. Players should be free to gain average hit points with a recovery instead of rolling. Anyone who rolls hoping to get lucky must be ready to swallow the bitter alternative.

No recoveries left?: If you need to use a recovery to heal and you have none left, you get half the healing you should get and take a –1 penalty to all defenses and attack rolls until you get a full heal-up. This penalty stacks if you burn multiple recoveries you don't actually possess.

Healing NPCs: The GM isn't tracking recoveries for NPCs, and most NPCs and monsters aren't healing the way the PCs do. But if you do use a healing spell or potion that requires a recovery on an NPC, let them heal up to 1/3 of their total hit points. If you use other healing effects on that NPC that require a recovery, and the NPC agrees to the healing, the subsequent healing-effects provide only 1/6 the NPC's total hit points and give them a cumulative –1 to all their defenses and attack rolls, like a player character who is out of recoveries.

GAMEMASTER

If you don't want to slow down the game while people figure out whether they are going to take average hit points with a recovery or roll it, ask each player for his or her recovery option beforehand and enforce that method until the party gets to a full heal-up.

Staggered

When you are reduced to half your hit points or fewer, you're staggered. There aren't any special rules that will always apply to you when you're staggered, but there are a number of monsters that prey upon those who are staggered, as well as character powers and spells that function differently when they are used by staggered heroes or target staggered creatures.

Unconscious

When you drop to 0 hp or below, you go unconscious. You can't take any actions until you're conscious again, though as you'll see in the **Death and Dying** section below, you do make a death save at the start of each of your turns that will give you a chance to get back into the fray, so stay in initiative order.

Monsters drop: When monsters drop to 0 hp, it usually means they've been slain, unless the characters' intent is to keep the monster alive and the attack seems like a potentially humane blow that could knock the monster unconscious, instead. Some attacks, particularly when gruesomely narrated, don't feel like attacks that can leave the target unconscious, but we leave that mostly up to you and your table's sensibilities.

Mooks

Damage dealt to monsters classified as mooks works differently.

Mooks are weaker monsters that attack in mobs and die that way, too. You track damage against the entire mob of mooks you're facing rather than against individual mooks. Five mooks are roughly equivalent to a standard monster.

Mook hit points: No matter which individual mook a hero attacks, the damage is tracked against the mob as a single entity. When the mob has accumulated enough damage to kill a mook, one mook is killed, and any leftover damage is applied again to the mob. Sometimes, the damage is enough to kill multiple mooks. The GM decides which mini to take off the table for each mook killed.

For example, the first attack against a kobold mook in a mob deals 5 damage, which doesn't kill it, as they have 6 hit points. The GM tracks the damage and when another attack deals 10 damage to a kobold in the mob, bringing the total to 15, the attack kills two mooks (6 hit points each) and leaves 3 damage on the mob.

Killing multiple mooks: Sometimes you deal a ton of damage to a mook with a melee attack and wind up killing additional mooks that weren't engaged with you. The GM should take pains to allow you all the kills you get, letting you narrate attacks that cleave multiple foes, sudden leaps, whirlwinds of blows, mooks that faint or turn and run, or whatever it takes to make sure the mooks get their due. Storytelling unexpected mook kills is worth the table time.

It's even more likely a spell targeting several mooks ends up blowing away mooks who weren't originally in the target zone, since a multi-target spell can target a single mob multiple times. We love that rule, and *fireball* loves that rule.

Mook actions: Each mook moves and attacks on its own, which gives each mob multiple attacks; that's why you want to kill mooks quickly, so you'll suffer fewer attacks.

Mook status is apparent: Most of the time the PCs should know that mooks are mooks. In special cases, as ruled by the GM, it's not obvious.

Multiple mobs: If a battle features multiple mobs of mooks, feel free to make things interesting by giving them different initiative numbers, even if they're identical creatures.

Staggering a mob: A mob of mooks becomes staggered when it has lost half its original bodies. For example, if a mob starts with four or five mooks, they're staggered when only two mooks remain.

This doesn't usually matter, as it's not something most heroes will care about. But certain hero talents and spells like the rogues' Murderous and the cleric's *judgment* care whether a target is staggered or not.

No ongoing damage: Mooks are immune to ongoing damage (page 311). Other conditions may affect a mook that survives an attack, but the heroes are better off using such effects, and especially ongoing damage, against serious enemies.



There are a lot of things we could call these crunchy little monsters. But we inherited them from Feng Shui, so let's just make it obvious.

Death and Dying

Heroes rarely die, but it does happen.

Down at 0 hp: When you drop to 0 hp or below, you fall unconscious, gain one Skull, and can't take any actions. Instead, you make death saves (see below) to avoid getting more Skulls.

If you have actual plastic skulls or something to track in-game Skulls, that's fantastic. Rob uses little Day of the Dead-style pottery skulls that were originally made to be earrings. Maybe you've got something cooler, or maybe you like to draw little skulls on the same scratch paper where you track hit points.

Dead at negative half: Keep track of how far below 0 hp you go. You die if you reach negative hit points equal to half your maximum hit points.

Healing while you're down: If you get healed while you are dying, ignore your current negative hit points. Start from 0 and add the hit points you've regained.

Make death saves while down: If you start your turn at 0 hp or lower, roll a death save on a d20. Death saves are a specific type of save but they're still save and affected by normal save bonuses.

Save result 15 or lower, you take one step toward the grave, gain 1 more Skull, and end your turn. If the additional Skull brings your total to 5, you die.

Save result 16–19,, use a recovery to return to consciousness. Start from 0 and heal up to the number of hit points you roll with your recovery. Tell everyone what form of courage, willpower, stubbornness, or quest brought you back from the brink of death. Getting up is all you can do on your turn.

Save result 20+, you not only heal as you would with a roll of 16–19, but you also take actions normally that turn. Tell the other players what goal or virtue inspired or caused your hero's extraordinary return.

Healing potions are great: Feeding a dying character a healing potion takes a standard action, and that includes digging the potion out of your own backpack or out of your fallen ally's backpack. Patrons commonly equip their agents with healing potions, and adventurers do what they can to acquire them.

Healing Skulls: Once you can take a quick rest, catch your breath, and pull yourself together, you can get rid of all your Skulls but one. That last Skull only goes away with a full heal-up.



Jonathan's four-Skulls variant: If you want to get your players' attention, tell them that in your hard-core campaign, heroes die at 4 Skulls instead of 5. We heard from several very experienced playtest groups who weren't threatened by death at 5 Skulls but took notice when 4 Skulls was enough.

Even a tenderhearted GM might use this option for short-term campaigns and one-shots.

End of the battle: Adverse effects against the heroes end when a battle ends. This even applies to death saves. If a hero is dying when a battle ends, they recover as if they'd succeeded on a death save.

Even Jonathan isn't interested in forcing a group that already won a battle to flee to keep a dying comrade from failing their last death save!

Ten years ago, I liked the rule from 7th Sea *that said heroes can be killed only by named enemies. Now I've seen how durable* 13th Age *heroes are, and I'm happy to see them fall to some unnamed brute who just gets lucky.*

Death Attacks and Last Gasp Saves

Some monsters are astonishingly deadly and can kill with a single attack (a death attack). "Kill" is used loosely here, in that a few of these monsters petrify or paralyze or otherwise entirely remove a PC from a fight.

Such attacks specify that they offer "last gasp saves." This means a PC affected by such a power will slowly turn to stone, or slip into paralysis, or crumble to dust, etc. The first turn after an effect forces a PC to start making last gasp saves, the PC can take only one action (standard, move, or quick) during their turn and ends their turn by rolling a hard save (16+). If this first save fails, the PC is now helpless and can take no further actions except to roll more last gasp saves.

The last gasp save functions like a death save—success means the PC has thrown off the condition and can act normally on their next turn, and rolling a natural 20 means they can take their turn normally that round. Failing four last gasp saves in a battle means you turn to stone, are paralyzed, are liquefied, or are adversely affected as indicated.

Additionally, an ally next to you can use a standard action to help you try to shake off the effect, letting you roll a bonus last gasp save that does not count against your total of four if you fail it. When an ally attempts to help you shake off the death attack in this way, recovery only requires a normal save (11+).

When you are about to roll your hero's fourth and final last gasp save, feel free to suggest to the other players that the party retreat instead.

No Skulls: As a rule, last gasp saves don't give you Skulls and aren't affected by how many Skulls you have.

As game designers, Rob and I hate "save-or-die" effects. The last gasp rules give you "save-or-save-or-save-or-save-or-die" effects. Without help, your chance of dying is 30%.

Rest and Recharge

After each battle, you can use a quick rest to get ready for the next battle. After four battles, or three tougher battles, you'll typically earn a full heal-up.

Quick Rests

The time spent on a quick rest isn't so much a true rest stop as it is clearing your head and catching your balance after a fight. You can almost always get a quick rest between battles. And if not, it's some weird corner case where the GM is either being a jerk, or they have some cunning plan for how the heroes will recharge their powers in the middle of combat.

Healing during a quick rest: When you take a quick rest, you can use as many recoveries as you want to heal yourself (or all the recoveries you've got if you don't have enough left to heal to maximum hit points!). You might have access to healing potions or spells that will give you more healing per recovery, or maybe you'll be stuck with the flat rolls.

Required healing: If you are staggered when you take a quick rest, you *must* try to heal yourself, either by using a recovery or by benefiting from a spell that provides some true healing. If you're damaged but not yet staggered, it's up to you whether you choose to heal yourself.

Roll to recharge powers: Roll a d20 for each recharge power (including recharge spells) that is presently expended to see if the power recharges. This includes recharge powers you used in the battle that just ended and recharge powers that you used earlier. If your roll equals or exceeds the recharge number for that power, you can use that power again this arc. If the roll fails, you can't use the power in your next battle, though you can roll for recharge again after that battle, and after each subsequent battle, until the recharge roll succeeds.

Full Heal-ups

Fate, karma, or some other subtle and unseen force propels the heroes through their adventures. As heroes, they prevail when they press on, not when they retreat and lick their wounds. Each arc consists of four battles—or three battles if the GM prefers to run more challenging combats. The heroes earn a full heal-up after they finish an arc.

Getting a full heal-up has nothing to do with the circumstances the heroes experience after the battle that ends the arc. Enjoying a restful night in an ally's castle can be an entertaining story, but it doesn't push you closer to getting your full heal-up. Arcs often end mid-adventure, while the heroes are endangered and far from safe ground.

13th Age differs from many other F20 games in this way. Recovering from damage, regaining powerful spells, and recharging magic items aren't things that happen when the heroes find a "safe place" to rest. Our take on heroic fantasy is that you must fight as heroes to regain your greatest powers. We're not simulating how fantasy characters might rest and recharge with a good night's sleep, we're pushing heroes through dramatic arcs that may take all the resources the heroes have to call on, or even a little more.

Roughly three OR four battles: The GM determines when the party has earned a full heal-up. In *13th Age* 1E, fighting four average battles earned you a heal-up. As you'll see on page 42 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*, the battle building tables now account for fighting three battles in an arc, an option we find better for more experienced groups that need to be challenged. The rationale of the battles-per-arc rule is that it helps everyone in the party manage their resources because they know about how much opposition they're going to need to get through.

Reset hit points, recoveries, and powers: Once you've completed an arc and get a full heal-up, your hit points reset to full. You also regain any recoveries you've used, and you regain or recharge all powers you've expended—yes, this means powers that are 1/arc are functional only once per full heal-up.

A fascinating dynamic of this rule is that when a party of heroes is beaten down, the best way to recover is to press on and win a few more battles!

Forced heal-up: If the party is short of a full heal-up but is too beat up to press on, they can retreat with their tails between their legs. Then, provided they can find some sort of safe place to do so, they can get the heal-up they haven't yet earned in battle. However, retreating and taking the heal-up entails a narrative loss. (See page 299.)

Ideally, the consequences of the narrative loss can be traced back to the decision to take the heal-up. For example, maybe it turns out that someone in the party knows a forbidden prayer to the Diabolist a desperate mortal can say to gain healing. The party gets a heal-up, but the Diabolist gets . . . something in return. It might also simply be that taking the time to rest gives the characters' enemies an advantage.

GM ADVICE ON HEAL-UPS

For storytelling credit, you can occasionally try to synch full heal-ups with some sort of event in the game world. For example, if the party gets a full heal-up just before they reach a town, have the town welcome them and treat them well, so the mechanical effects of the heal-up (on the player level) correlate with the events in the game world (on the character level).

Just as often though, a full heal-up arrives as the paladin says a prayer over the bodies of fallen enemies, cleans their sword on the enemies' banner, and readies themselves for the adventure's final push.

Special healing: What if the heroes find some special source of healing when they don't yet deserve a full heal-up? For example, what if their second battle in the arc frees a healing goddess' fountain shrine from evil cultists? Now that 2E's battles put an appropriate amount of pressure on the heroes, gaining one or two recoveries apiece can make a big difference. Unexpected restoration of a strong spell or power? That's like manna from the GM.

Combat Modifiers

In general, if you can do without a modifier, you should. It's more important for combat to proceed quickly around the table than to proceed accurately according to mechanical correspondence with the imagined fantasy world.

The universal combat modifier is +2 when you have advantageous circumstances. You can often talk your way into a +2 bonus, but good luck getting anything better than that. The bonus should relate to a special battle circumstance, not something abstract or generic, such as flanking.

Similarly, –2 is the right penalty for adverse situations. Throwing a javelin at a far-away target? Use a –2 attack penalty. The target has excellent cover? Use a –2 attack penalty, or provide a bonus to the target's AC or PD. That's if you care about the issue at all, because our advice is . . . .

Don't Sweat Modifiers

In general, don't worry about modifiers for range, flanking, position, cover, fighting across corners, etc.

Ganging up: There is no standard bonus for ganging up on an enemy. For some creatures (like rogues with their Sneak Attack feature), ganging up is its own reward. Some monsters have gang-up powers too.

IMPROMPTU MODIFIERS

GMs, if you want more combat modifiers than *13th Age* uses, feel free to port bonuses in from another system and use those. Another option, however, is to invent special and unique sources for combat bonuses. It's more interesting to get a +2 bonus to your attacks because you're a dwarf fighting in the ancient dwarven Hall of Blood, or because you probed your enemy's weaknesses in its dreams, than because you're simply flanking it. Also, make free use of the dazed and weakened conditions. If an effect is worth worrying about, it could be worth a 4-point swing in attacks or defenses.

Shooting into Melee

It's slightly risky to use a ranged or close-quarters attack to target an enemy that's engaged with one or more of your allies. Unless you are engaged with the target yourself, rolling a fumble (a natural 1) means you accidentally hit one of your allies that's engaged with the target for half damage. If you have more than one ally engaged with the target, choose who takes the damage randomly.

If the attack has other effects that apply on a miss, they also apply to the ally who is taking half damage.

This rule allows the fun of occasionally seeing a "friendly fire" incident! Monsters and NPCs shoot into melee with abandon.

Invisibility

There are a couple types of invisibility effects in the game: a spell or two for the PCs, and a monster power or two for the GM. Our version of invisibility is a lot less fiddly than most F20 games. If you want to sneak around invisible outside combat, you get a big modifier to any sneaking-around skill checks: +5 at least, unless you're dealing with creatures who can smell or otherwise detect you without looking at you.

However, once you start a battle or once enemies know you are in the area, our invisibility powers aren't perfect. You're hidden, but once people know you are around, they can see disturbances in the air and in the aether, signs that someone is roughly . . . about . . . there . . . .

So, attacks against invisible enemies have a 50% chance to miss completely, even before the attack roll. Attacks that miss in this fashion don't deal any miss damage or have effects on the invisible creature, though spell or attack effects unrelated to the target would still take effect.

Special Attacks and Effects

Effects are balanced to affect the battle enough for you to feel it, without affecting the battle so much that the fun gets thrown off.

Conditions

Besides taking damage, there are all sorts of ways for your day to get suddenly worse.

Charmed: You can't attack. This condition ends if you are attacked by an enemy. You can use your actions to do anything other than attack or delay, since for the moment it feels to you like there's some sort of terrible misunderstanding between friends. You know who your true allies are and can take actions to help them. But you also suspect that everyone else might be friends, though not to the point that you need to heal them or count them as allies.

It's a bard thing.

Confused: You take no actions when it isn't your turn. On your turn, you make a half-damage, no-trigger attack against a random nearby ally. If you don't have a nearby ally, you don't do anything on your turn. (See the **Clarifying Three Conditions** section below for the full explanation.) *Important note, GMs:* Confused shouldn't be a "save-ends" condition when applied to player characters; it should always end at the end of the target's turn or perhaps at the end of the turn of the monster that created the condition. (It can be a "save-ends" condition against monsters, but it rarely is.)

Derro sages can use their psychic powers to confuse you.

Dazed: You take a –4 penalty to attacks.

Stone giants stomp so hard they'll daze you.

Fear: Fear dazes you and prevents you from using the escalation die. (Most monsters don't use the escalation die anyway, but some do.)

Adult red dragons cause fear . . . partly because they use the escalation die!

Helpless: If you're unconscious or asleep, you're helpless—and a lot easier to hit. While helpless, you take a –4 penalty to all defenses, and you can be the target of a *coup de grace.*

If you fail your first last gasp save when a medusa is turning you to stone, you're helpless until a last gasp save succeeds or you fail four and are turned to stone!

Hindered: You can't cast spells, use powers (not even kin powers), use limited-use abilities, or make attacks other than no-trigger attacks. You can move normally, but you can't use limited-use abilities or powers to move. (See the detailed explanation in the **Clarifying Three Conditions** text below.)

A frost giant's touch freezes you so cold you're hindered.

Shocked: You roll twice for all d20 rolls (attacks, saves, skill rolls, etc.) and must use the lower result. Any power or ability you possess to roll more than one d20 is temporarily canceled while you're shocked. If you get to reroll a d20 roll while shocked, you must roll twice and use the lower result again.

You'll end up shocked if you listen too closely to a despoiler or a despoiler mage.

Stuck: You can't move, disengage, pop free, change your position, or let anyone else move you. You can, however, teleport! You're not otherwise penalized, necessarily. In fact, you can use the rare move actions that don't involve actual movement, like reloading a heavy crossbow. You can also substitute a quick action for your move action; it's not that the move action itself is lost, it's that you can't move.

When a giant web spider gets you, you're stuck.

Stunned: You take a –4 penalty to defenses and can't take any actions; but at the start of your turn, you can roll a hard save (16+). If the save succeeds, you can take one action on that turn. (This doesn't solve the stunned condition, it just lets you take one action; if it's a "save ends" effect, hopefully you'll save again at the end of your turn.)

When an owlbear rips your arm off, you're stunned.

Vulnerable: When you attack a creature that's vulnerable to that attack, you deal bonus damage equal to double your level, whether you hit or miss. If you score a critical hit, you deal bonus damage equal to triple your level! If you fumble (roll a 1), you deal 0 damage; as usual. Vulnerable can't help you when you fumble. *Exception*: Mooks and weaklings only deal damage equal to their level, not twice their level. (See **a corner case** explanation, below.)

Really nasty wyverns have poison that can make you vulnerable to all attacks.

Weakened: You take a –4 penalty to attacks and to defenses.

Giant hunting spiders have poisonous bites that will leave you weakened.

Clarifying Three Conditions

Three of the conditions require wordier explanations than we could handle outside the short list: confused, hindered, and vulnerable.

Confused—full text: You're uncertain what's going on and who your friends are. You take no actions when it isn't your turn, such as making opportunity attacks or activating magic items. Your actions on your turn are constrained as follows: at the start of your turn, randomly select one of your nearby allies as your target for the turn. If you are next to them already, make a half damage no-trigger melee attack. If you are not next to them, you can make an automatically successful disengage check against any enemies you are engaged with, use that move action to move to your target, and then make a half-damage no-trigger melee attack against them. One of your other allies could choose to intercept your move, in which case you'd attack them instead of the target. (If you usually fight with ranged weapons, you might make a half-damage no-trigger ranged attack against the target instead of a melee attack.)

Confused conditions placed on player characters should never be "save ends" effects; they should always end at the end of a turn—either the PC's turn or the turn of the creature that created the effect. When playing with monsters that didn't get this memo, adjust "save ends" confused effects so they end at the end of the target's turn.

Rob doesn't consider allies who have dropped below 0 hit points as possible random targets of your confusion attack. Jonathan thinks about it.

It's not an accident that few monsters in this core rulebook can cause the player characters to become confused. If you're using monsters and spells written before 2E that throw around the confused effect liberally, consider replacing it with weakened, hindered, shocked, or even charmed.

Hindered—more explanations: The hindered text above is concise, but it needs some clarification about what is and what is not a "limited-use" ability.

This condition has a huge impact on spellcasters and monsters that have powerful special abilities and less impact, though still appreciable, on creatures that rely on attacks that deal heaps of damage.

For clarity's sake, here are some things characters and monsters can do with no problem when hindered:

- Drink a potion.
- Rally.
- Intercept; but not using the Skilled Interceptor fighter talent.
- Make an opportunity attack.
- Make a save.
- Heal, if some other non-hindered character has healed them with a healing spell.
- Benefit from a kin power, like the forgeborn's *rugged*, or a statistical adjustment to recovery dice that's built into the hero rather than having to be activated, triggered, or "used."
- Benefit from a magic item power that boosts a stat if it is already active, like a *flaming* weapon.
- Deal automatic damage if they already have an enemy grabbed! (There could be an argument against this, but it seems OK to us. See the next page for the Grab rules.)
- Move.
- Keep flying, if they're already flying. But if they're not already flying, they must stay on the ground.
- Try to disengage.
- Keep raging, if already raging. But barbarians can't try to start raging or use *rage attack* while hindered, and *rage attack* is usually what makes raging worthwhile.

Vulnerable = vulnerability: It's worth noting that when monsters are vulnerable to a specific type of attack or damage, we use the word "vulnerability." Vulnerable and vulnerability are the same thing.

Vulnerable—a corner case: As usual, a natural 1 fumble attack against a vulnerable target still deals no damage, while a critical hit against a vulnerable target follows our normal doubling rules: doubling the double level ends up as triple your level damage from vulnerable.

Vulnerable—no effect on effects that aren't an attack: Ongoing damage and effects that aren't attacks aren't increased by vulnerable.

VULNERABLE EXAMPLE

Vulnerable damage adds to the damage an attack deals, hit or miss. For example, you're attacking a zombie with a sword that deals holy damage. You're 4th level and your average damage with the sword attack is 24 holy damage. If you get a normal hit that deals 24 damage, you add double your level, +8, because the zombie is vulnerable to holy damage. So the zombie takes a total of 32 damage. If you miss but don't roll a 1, you add the +8 vulnerability damage to the 4 damage you normally deal when you miss with a melee attack, for a total of 12. If you crit, doubling your attack's normal damage, you'll deal 60 points total: 48 from your sword +12 thanks to vulnerable.

Conditions Don't Stack

You can only be affected by a condition once at a time; for example, if two effects daze you, ignore the second dazed effect. In corner cases, where the versions of an effect are somewhat different, keep it simple and use the worst version. For example, if you're hindered (easy save ends) and are hit by another attack that hinders (normal save ends), forget the easy save version; you're now hindered (normal save ends).

Penalties from conditions don't stack: If you have two –4 penalties to attacks because you're both dazed and weakened, that's still only a –4 penalty to your attacks, not –8.

On the other hand, a penalty from something other than a condition—say, a battlefield hazard or having used more recoveries than you possess—would stack with a condition penalty.

Ongoing damage is different: This is slightly different than how ongoing damage works. Info on how ongoing damage accumulates is on the next page.

Conditions End When the Battle Ends

All conditions end automatically at the end of a battle, without the heroes needing to suffer more or make saves. Honestly, most conditions don't matter much if you are not in combat, anyway.

Coup-de-Grace

It's easier to take out a helpless enemy, but you must still concentrate on the attack. When you attack an engaged and helpless enemy, you score an automatic critical hit if you follow these three steps:

- Spend your move action and your quick action that turn for no effect except to prepare to deliver the *coup-de-grace*.
- Make a standard action attack on your turn against the helpless enemy you're engaged with.
- Your attack targets only the helpless enemy; you're focusing the entire attack against the helpless foe, even if the attack would normally target multiple creatures.

DIEHARD

These restrictions on eliminating a downed enemy usually function as protection for the PCs, who spend more time unconscious than most of the monsters. Picking on a helpless PC is a dirty trick, so just before you declare your automatic critical hit damage, remind the party they can retreat.

Grabbing & Grabbed

Some monsters can grab you; generally, they do so after a successful hit.

Automatic damage: When a monster that is grabbing you starts its turn, it deals automatic damage to you as a free action usable once on its turn. This automatic damage is in addition to the monster's normal actions and attacks.

Each monster that has the ability to grab its enemies specifies how much automatic damage it deals. For example, the gray ooze's *hungry mass* attack deals 20 damage and grabs you, and the automatic damage it deals to grabbed targets is 10 damage. The owlbear's *curving claws and razor-sharp beak* attack deals 25 damage and grabs you, and the automatic damage it deals to grabbed creatures is 20 damage.

The automatic damage that the grabby monsters published for 1E usually do equals half the damage the monster deals with its typical melee attack or its attack that grabs. As the owlbear above demonstrates, you don't have to stick to this baseline if you want to make a 1E monster's grab more threatening.

Other effects of being grabbed: When you are grabbed, you are engaged with the creature grabbing you and you can't move away unless you teleport, somehow pop free, or successfully disengage. You also can't make opportunity attacks against the creature that has you grabbed or against anyone else for that matter, though you can make normal attacks on your turn.

If you are smaller than the creature that is grabbing you, it can move and carry you along no problem. If you are the same size or larger, the creature grabbing you must let go of you if it wants to move.

One grab at a time? Use your judgment to decide whether a given monster can grab more than one enemy at a time. In *13th Age Glorantha*, the crimson bat's *maw* attack obviously can. An ankheg or bear equally obviously shouldn't be able to grab more than one target at a time. If an owlbear, for example, seems like a 50/50 judgement call, then make it a 50/50 die roll!

Getting away: Obviously, you want to get away when a monster has grabbed you, and the usual way you manage that is by trying to disengage. But you can also just fight back and hope to drop the enemy before their automatic damage drops you. Using a ranged attack when grabbed isn't fun because you're probably going to suffer an opportunity attack from being engaged, but those are just the rules.

PUNY GRABS

We don't want general grappling rules. If you decide to allow normal PCs and monsters to grab ahold of people, try something like this: their puny grabs function like real grabs, but the automatic damage the grabber deals at the start of their turn is half their unarmed damage as a hero, and one-quarter of the standard damage a monster deals at its level if it's a monster. (See page 314 for the **unarmed attack** rules.)

Ongoing Damage

A creature (including a PC) taking ongoing damage takes that damage at the end of its turn, immediately before it rolls its save against that ongoing damage. Success with the save (11+ unless otherwise specified) means the creature won't take the damage again; failure means the effect repeats at the end of the creature's next turn. Ongoing damage stacks with itself; yes, it's scary.

TOGETHER OR SPLIT

Rolling multiple saves against ongoing effects that deal the same type of damage and have the same required save is easier on PCs because they're likely to save against at least part of the damage. On the other hand, combining all the damage into one big save is faster and more dramatic, so feel free to let the player choose how they want to "save" from their poisons.

Most effects don't add to ongoing damage: Ongoing damage is usually specified as a set amount, and that amount isn't modified by much. Ability score modifiers, magic weapons, magic wands, and other things that add to normal damage do *not* add to ongoing damage.

Crits: When an attack that deals ongoing damage scores a critical hit, double the ongoing damage for the first turn. If the save against ongoing damage succeeds, the damage is over; if the save fails, drop the ongoing damage down to its normal amount. In other words, a critical doubles ongoing damage only once.

Alternatively, if this is annoying to remember, your game won't suffer if you decide ongoing damage isn't affected by critical hits. That's how we used to do it, and some playtesters prefer it that way.

Mooks are immune: Mooks ignore ongoing damage!

End of the battle: Once a battle is over, ongoing damage, like conditions and adverse effects, ends automatically without the PCs needing to take more damage or attempt another save. A player is welcome to narrate how their character shakes off the effect.

Saves

The save mechanic, a d20 roll with no standard modifiers, handles everything from power recharges to saves against power effects to death saves. There are three difficulties for saves. If a save doesn't specify what type it is, it's a normal save, 11+.

Easy: Roll 6+ on a d20
Normal: Roll 11+ on a d20
Hard: Roll 16+ on a d20

"Save ends" effects and saves at the end of your turn: Many effects specify that they are "save ends" effects. Just like when you're suffering from ongoing damage, you roll your saves against "save ends" effects at the end of your turn.

Temporary effects: Many effects that are not "save ends" effects specify that they last until the beginning or end of a specific creature's turn. Along with "save ends" effects, we refer to effects that end at a specific time on a specific turn as "temporary" effects. Effects that last until the end of a battle, or until some other condition is met, do not qualify as "temporary" effects.

Saves against all "temporary" effects: Our design intent is for effects that end on a specific turn to be in some sense less severe than "save ends" effects. "Save ends" effects might last for multiple rounds, whereas "end-of-turn" or "beginning-of-turn" effects generally only last for one round.

Effects that grant bonus saves are useful against both "save-ends" effects and against other "temporary" effects. This is new to 2E.

Since "end/beginning-of-turn" effects lack (by definition!) an associated save, use a normal save if you're lucky enough to receive a bonus save against the effect.

For example, a derro sage's *mind scream* attack hits the party's wizard, confusing the wizard until the end of the derro's next turn. Luckily for the wizard, the party's fighter goes next, and they have a *sword of liberation* (*GMG:* 189). The fighter hits with their magic sword and decides to use its power to give a nearby ally a bonus save. Since the confusion from the *mind scream* is an effect that ends at the beginning or end of a turn, it's a "temporary" effect. The wizard can succeed with a normal save, and if the save succeeds, the confusion ends early.

As a counterexample, a rogue hit by a clay golem's *bare brutal hands* attack suffers from *cursed wound* and can't heal above half their maximum hit points until the end of the battle. *Cursed wound* isn't a "temporary" effect, so a bonus save granted to the rogue can't be used against it.

About modifiers: Occasional talents, feats, and magic items provide small bonuses to saves. We deliberately limit the number of such bonuses. Saves are more interesting if they're based on the idea that a normal save usually has about a 50/50 chance of success.



Random Directions

If you don't have a handy method to generate a random direction and need to do so, set a d12 down next to your hero with the 12 pointed straight toward the GM. Then, roll a different d12 and match the result to the corresponding side of the die next to your character to determine the random direction.

Resistance

Resistance to energy types, and to any other type of damage, is rated as a number that corresponds to the attacker's natural d20 roll. Generally, we use *resist [damage] 12+* as the low end, *resist [damage] 16+* as serious resistance, and *resist [damage] 18+* as extreme resistance that's hard to overcome.

Failure to penetrate resistance halves the damage: When an attack with a damage type you are resistant to targets you, the natural attack roll must equal or exceed your resistance number to deal full damage. If the roll is lower than your resistance, the attack deals half damage.

For example, a fire giant has *resist fire 16+*. A wizard attacking the giant with a *fireball* has to roll a natural 16 or better on the attack roll to punch through the giant's resistance and do full damage. If the wizard rolls 15 or less, they only do half damage with the *fireball*, whether it hits or not.

Ongoing damage: If you take ongoing damage of a type you resist, use the original attack roll to determine whether you take the full amount of ongoing damage or half the amount (round down).

Immunity to normal energy: Any creature that has resistance to an energy type is also immune to normal energy of that type. Thus, a fire giant, or a PC using a *resist energy* spell, can walk through regular fire and crawl in lava without being hurt. But magical attacks, magical weapons, and spells are different: the damage they do can get past the resistance because of the will and magic behind them—they aren't normal/mundane elements of the world.

The corollary is that when a creature seems like it should be immune to a specific nonmagical energy, you could decide it has *resist [energy] 2+*. Creatures like fire giants are probably immune to normal fire, but we haven't wasted time calling out such minor notes. Apply this logic wherever you need it to make sense of monsters' environmental niches.

This resistance = immunity rule only applies to energy types, not to creatures like skeletons that have *resist weapons 12+*. They're not immune to non-magic weapons.

Damage sources that don't have attack rolls: If there's no attack roll, then there's no natural result and no way to beat the resistance. Damage from such sources is cut in half with no roll involved.



Jonathan likes the idea that any resistance provides immunity to nonmagical energy. Otherwise, we've never seen eye-to-eye on how resistance should be used in the game. I say resistance that still allows half damage when attacks fail to penetrate is more fun and keeps the game moving. Jonathan prefers all-or-nothing resistance and thinks resistance that allows half damage is namby-pamby.

Teleportation

A teleporting creature moves instantaneously from one location to another. A teleport effect doesn't trigger opportunity attacks from enemies who are engaged with the teleporting creature before or after the movement, nor can they be intercepted. As a rule, abilities that allow teleportation, such as the elven *highblood teleport* ability, don't draw opportunity attacks, unless you're casting a ranged spell to do it or something similarly awkward.

Temporary Hit Points

Temporary hit points might represent a surge of courage, a swarm of guardian spirits, or some other beneficial effect that keeps a character from harm. When you gain temporary hit points, keep track of them separately from your regular hit points. Temporary hit points don't stack; when you gain more temporary hit points while you still have temporary hit points remaining, use only the higher amount and ignore the lower amount.

When you take damage, subtract it from your temporary hit points first, and only apply damage to your regular hit points after the temporary hit points are used up.

Not exactly damage: If you take damage but lose only temporary hit points instead of actual hit points, you are not considered to have been "damaged" for triggering powers like the barbarian's ability to make a free *rage* check when first damaged by the enemy each battle.

Not enough to get you on your feet: Gaining temporary hit points won't bring a character who has dropped below 0 hit points back to consciousness. They would help that character absorb more damage dealt to them while unconscious, but if you want to get an ally back into the fight, you've got to give them actual healing.

Resets: Temporary hit points reset to 0 after a battle. As a rule, temporary hit points also reset to 0 when you roll initiative, unless you're using an effect like the necromancer's *zombie form* spell (*13TW*: 87), which is specifically intended to provide temporary hp in the next battle.

Two-Weapon Fighting

Although anyone can grab a weapon in either hand, bards, clerics, sorcerers, and wizards haven't been trained to fight well with two weapons. They don't get any bonuses for attempting to fight with a dagger or mace in their other hand.

Two-weapon fighting effect: The classes that *are* trained for two-weapon fighting enjoy this bonus: when fighting with a 1-handed weapon in each hand, if your attack roll is a natural 2, your attack hits! We aren't going to force you to do less damage if your off-hand weapon is smaller, like a dagger; we figure that you're good with your weapons and the combination is as good as your best weapon.

Otherwise, you fight as usual, generally using the weapon in your main hand to attack. Unlike some other F20 games, you do not get an extra attack for fighting with two weapons.

On the other hand—seriously—some classes and talents provide much greater advantages when fighting with two weapons. Those classes also still benefit from the hit-on-natural-2 effect, of course.



Normally, watching for a specific die result isn't all that much fun, but remembering to watch for a natural 2 when you are fighting with two weapons is something the whole table can help you with.

Unarmed Attacks

Punching or kicking an enemy without a weapon isn't ideal for most PCs. Use the following rules for this worst-case situation.

- Treat the attack as a no-trigger melee attack, using Strength as the attack ability and with a –2 penalty (regardless of your class) against AC.
- Your weapon damage for the no-trigger attack is 1d3 per level.
- As usual, add your Strength modifier to the damage at adventurer tier, double that at champion tier, and quadruple your Strength modifier at epic tier.

Resistance: For the record, when a monster like a skeleton has a *resist weapons* power, it also resists unarmed attacks. We just decided not to write out *resist weapons and unarmed attacks* every time we used the ability, given that so few heroes make unarmed attacks.

No opportunity attacks: As a rule, player character heroes don't make opportunity attacks when unarmed. Monks are an exception, since unarmed combat is their thing.

Combat Option: Honorable Combat

Normal *13th Age* combat mechanics handle deadly fights against monsters, but they may not be right for fights between rivals instead of enemies.

What happens when a group of paladins devoted to the Great Gold Wyrm disagree with the player characters about who should take responsibility for a captured evil sorcerer who has information that the PCs need? What happens when a rival adventuring party claims first dibs on a soon-to-surface living dungeon full of phat loot, saying they're better prepared to deal with this particular dungeon, and the PCs should hang around as backups? What happens when a circle of druids insists that the adventurers leave their section of the Blood Wood when it's not at all in the PCs' interests but also not a matter of life and death, especially given that the PCs know these druids will soon be defending the woods against monsters from the Iron Sea?

Honorable combat is an option that helps make sense of fights between groups that don't think of each other as mortal enemies.

You fall at one-third hp: When both sides have agreed to honorable combat, combatants drop out of the fight at 33% of their standard hp. They can heal themselves and other fallen allies (or even fallen rivals . . .) who have been taken out of the fight, but they take no further action in the fight, including using abilities to help or heal allies who are still battling. The fallen crawl or limp out of the battle, or they lie still and apply pressure to their wounds. Anyone targeting them with further attacks has broken the rules of honorable combat, and forfeits.

Deaths still occur. Mighty blows—especially against determined resistance from rivals who are about to fall but don't want to give in—can score crits and take out foes. But killing the enemy isn't the point. Hammer this home when rivals who have been knocked out of the fight use healing potions or healing magic to help restore fallen PCs.

Combat pacing: Use the escalation die as usual, but remember fights generally start slightly favoring the PC's enemies. There's a risk of an early loss if things go very badly for the PCs, but if any of them can hang on, the escalation die can pip them ahead in the end.

Not good, still honorable: In Rob's campaigns, PCs' icon relationships act as a guide to when honorable combat might be possible despite what good-oriented characters might expect of evil rivals. Negative icon relationships generate fights to the death. But positive and conflicted icon relationships might lead to honorable battles. (See the **Eggs and Honor** example on page 280.)

How bad is it to lose honorable combat?: It generally shouldn't be as bad as a narrative loss caused by retreating from a fight to the death. It's not that your enemies have won, it's that problematic allies are going to choose outcomes the heroes would have vetoed if they could. If a fight is truly honorable, perhaps the PCs will have surprising new allies.

To flee or not to flee: Which brings up a rule that's worth stating. If, for some crazy reason, the PCs start an honorable battle and then decide to retreat, they take a narrative loss as they go, along with whatever they're losing in the honorable battle. If you've engineered a situation where the PCs feel like this is the correct path, well, congratulations.

When stopping is hard: Raging barbarians might violate honorable combat, despite their friends' intentions—does that mean the barbarian needs to sit this fight out? What about summoned creatures, particularly if their summoner has fallen? These grey areas may generate surprises.

NPC betrayals: At the meta-level, players are accustomed to NPC betrayals. Therefore, they're not that interesting. When we use the honorable battle rules, our intent is not to experiment with NPCs breaking their agreement and continuing to fight after having fallen to 33% hp or below. If there is a case where a particular NPC goes crazy and keeps fighting, it's generally understood to count as a loss. The companions of a warrior who fights dishonorably are expected to surrender and help stop their wild-eyed companion. Out-of-control berserkers, aberrations, and wild former followers of the Orc Lord generally aren't invited into honorable battles; but if they are, it shouldn't be a surprise if they can't hold back.

PC betrayals: Some PCs are accustomed to breaking all the rules. If your PCs break the rules of honorable combat and try to get away with it, they should have iconic problems whether their rivals survive or not. Thus far, we haven't had any PCs betray honorable combat. If we did, we're pretty sure we'd transform all their icon relationships into conflicted relationships for at least the next level, and tie any icon twists, when it seemed right, into their status as oath-breakers.

Of course, this *might* matter less if the PCs are somehow using Prince of Shadows relationships or bardic magic to impersonate followers of an icon with which they're actually deadly enemies!

"Do we level up yet?": How much experience is an honorable battle worth? We think it's situational, and based in part on results.

If the heroes win an honorable battle without much trouble, the lower risk and easy victory suggest that the battle could be worth half as much as a normal battle of that difficulty.

If the heroes lose, or if several of them are knocked out of the fight, consider treating it as a normal battle and counting it toward the end of the arc, as usual.



APPENDIX A:

CHARACTER OPTIONS

If you'd like to try other kin, here's a list of the kin published in our 1E supplements. Then we've got ability score options for groups or players who have other aesthetics.

Following the kin list we've got three optional methods of generating heroes' ability scores, as well as the standard arrays we recommend from page 24.

More Kin

The kin that have appeared in other *13th Age* books are all perfectly useful in 2E. Quite a curious bunch, sprung from the minds of Ashley and Gar! I need to try a campaign with nothing but these newcomers!

Some of these don't need more kin powers—like ducks and trolls from *13th Age Glorantha* and maybe the lava dwarves and oozefolk in *Shards of the Broken Sky*. We'll go over all these earlier kin eventually, probably in the *Further Adventurers* book.

Twygzog (mushroom people; better looking than you'd expect), *13th Age Bestiary:* 87.

Alleykin (oh come on they're catfolk*), Book of Ages:* 90.

Arcanites (post-human servants of the fallen Wizard King), *Book of Ages:* 31.

Beastblooded (lycanthropic ancestors may be a blessing), *Book of Ages:* 77.

Lizardfolk (social chameleons and frenzied combatants), *Book of Ages:* 88.

Space Fleet Explorers (survivors of a crashed starship), *Book of Ages:* 52.

Spiritborn (descendant of spirits who survived a great purge by taking human form), *Book of Ages:* 95.

Unholy Ones, (humans touched by dark gods), *Book of Ages* page 57.

Lava Dwarves (fiery dwarves with possibly over-powered kin powers), *Shards of the Broken Sky:* 184.

Oozefolk (a bright idea of the Archmage made flesh; umm, not flesh exactly), *Shards of the Broken Sky:* 185.

Ophidians (snake people with poison fangs), *Shards of the Broken Sky:* 188.

Fauns (hoofed and horned humanoids who make great Rush Attack rogues), *Shades of Fey* from *13th Age Monthly*.

Ducks (Death-aspected feathered humanoids; no, seriously), *13th Age Glorantha:* 43.

Trolls (Chaos-battling elder race), *13th Age Glorantha*, page 45.

Ability Score Options

Your group may prefer alternatives to our standard arrays. Here are several methods used by groups in our orbit.

Point Buy

You get 28 points to buy your abilities using the chart below. Each ability has an associated ability modifier. Ability modifiers follow the standard system: subtract 10 from the ability score and divide by 2, rounding down. The chart only covers the ability scores you can buy, but the modifier bonus pattern continues above and below what's listed. For example, buying an 18 ability score and using a +2 modifier, a starting character can have an ability score of 20 and a +5 bonus, but you can't buy a 20 outright.

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

ABILITY	COST	MODIFIER
18	16	+4
17	13	+3
16	10	+3
15	8	+2
14	6	+2
13	5	+1
12	4	+1
11	3	0
10	2	0
9	1	–1
8	0	–1

Ability Scores: Roll 'em

Roll 4d6 for each of the six ability scores (Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma). Drop the low die in each roll. Add +2 to two of the scores. Put the scores into any order to best fit the character you want to play.



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

When we designed 13th Age, I always rolled my ability scores. These days, I almost always use the array, which I like a lot more than the point-buy system we used in the first edition.

On the other hand, when I'm running whacky one-shots for people I know, creating characters that aren't meant to be played from now on, so that we don't care at all whether stats are fair, rolling ability scores adds the unexpected.

That said, the next method does both!

Ability Scores: Roll Four

First, you get an 18 and a 16 to assign to the ability scores of your choice. One you've settled those scores, roll 4d6 for each of the four remaining scores, in order, dropping the low die in each roll. No further modifications, and no rearrangement of ability scores, you are who you've rolled!

Standard Arrays

Here are two standard arrays of scores that create diverse characters.

Assign one of these sets of six scores to your abilities as you like, then add +2 to two of your ability scores.

Default Array

Your six base ability scores are . . . 17, 15, 14, 13, 12, 10

Most players focus by adding +2 to the highest two scores, ending up with 19, 17, 14, 13, 12, 10. If, on the other hand, you want three great scores, add +2 to your second and third best scores, leaving you at 17, 17, 16, 13, 12, 10.

This array has better scores than you could buy using the first edition's point-buy system. This array offers less flexibility than the point-buy system did, so we made it more generous overall.

Good-at-Everything Array

With this array, your base scores are . . . 15, 15, 15, 14, 14, 12.

With the two +2s, you end up with 17, 17, 15, 14, 14, 12.

Ability Score Modifiers

Each ability score corresponds to a bonus that gets added to die rolls, such as attack rolls and damage rolls.

Here are the modifiers for each ability score. If you need to go higher or lower, you can see the pattern.

Starting at 5th level, you double your modifier before adding it to damage rolls and healing rolls. Starting at 8th level, you quadruple it. When making a 1st level hero, you don't need to worry about this math.

ABILITY	MODIFIER
22–23	+6
20–21	+5
18–19	+4
16–17	+3
14–15	+2
12–13	+1
10–11	0
8–9	–1
6–7	–2
4–5	–3
3	–4

Ability Scores and Bonuses

ARRAY	BEST		2ND BEST		3ND BEST		4TH BEST		5TH BEST		WORST	
Default (focused)	19	+4	17	+3	14	+2	13	+1	12	+1	10	0
Default (three great scores)	17	+3	17	+3	16	+3	13	+1	12	+1	10	0
Good at Everything	17	+3	17	+3	15	+2	14	+2	14	+2	12	+1

APPENDIX B

DICE APPROXIMATIONS

Not everyone will need this table. It's here for you if you need help converting damage dice expressions from low levels—or earlier *13th Age* books—into average damage.

It's also here for you, to a lesser extent, if you repudiate average damage and want to roll dice all the way up. It will also be useful if you're playing on a VTT, where rolling dice doesn't slow anything down, and you'd like to convert our average damage at epic tier back into an approximate dice expression.

Some averages that have multiple dice options put the most likely option in boldface.

Remember that when you average an odd number of dice, round up.

1d4: average 2.5, or 3 for the odd die.
1d6: average 3.5, or 4 for the odd die.
1d8: average 4.5, or 5 for the odd die.
1d10: average 5.5, or 6 for the odd die.
1d12: average 6.5, or 7 for the odd die.
1d20: average 10.5, or 11 for the odd die.

AVERAGE	DICE
2	1d3
3	1d4
4	1d6
5	2d4
5	1d8
6	1d10
7	**2d6**
7	1d12
8	3d4
9	2d8
10	4d4
11	3d6
11	2d10
13	5d4
13	2d12
14	**4d6**
14	3d8
15	6d4
17	3d10
18	4d8
18	5d6
18	7d4
20	8d4

AVERAGE	DICE
20	3d12
21	**6d6**
21	2d20
22	4d10
23	9d4
23	5d8
25	10d4
25	7d6
26	4d12
27	6d8
28	8d6
28	5d10
32	9d6
32	7d8
32	3d20
33	6d10
33	5d12
35	10d6
36	8d8
39	7d10
39	6d12
41	9d8
42	4d20

AVERAGE	DICE
44	8d10
45	10d8
46	7d12
49	9d10
50	2d4 x 10
52	8d12
53	5d20
ꕥ	ꕥ
55	10d10
ꕥ	ꕥ
59	9d12
63	6d20
65	10d12
63	6d20
70	2d6 x 10
74	7d20
75	3d4 x 10
ꕥ	ꕥ
84	8d20
90	2d8 x 10
95	9d20
105	3d6 x 10

APPENDIX C

ONE PAGE ICON SHEET

Here's a slightly abridged one-page version of the icon summary from the introduction to use as a handout.



The Archmage

has preserved the Empire for centuries, tamed wild nature, and created astonishing new lands. His wizards often venture outside the safety of the Empire and into the underworld or the distant wilds. (*HH*: 224)



The Crusader

is the armored fist of the dark gods. Demons threaten to destroy the world that the dark gods want to rule, so the Crusader draws upon the dark gods' power to destroy demonkind. (*HH*: 228)



The Diabolist

is the villainous icon most likely to be behind monstrous incursions that adventurers might be called in to deal with. Her cultists' signature feat is summoning and perhaps controlling demons, but the Diabolist has pacts with all manner of monsters. Her odd secret? She is occasionally kind. (*HH*: 231)



The Dwarf King

is lord of Forge, the dwarves' new homeland beneath the mountains. He'd love to reclaim the dwarven Underhome lost to war against the dark elves and the creatures of the deeps. (*HH*: 235)



The Elf Queen

rules the Court of Stars, the one place where wood elves, dark elves, and high elves still come together as peers and allies instead of as rivals or enemies. Honed by centuries of experience, the Queen's innate magic at least equals the Archmage's spells. Her followers may be connected mystically to her. (*HH*: 239)



The Emperor

rules the Dragon Empire, named for the mounts of its mightiest warriors. The Empire unites and protects people from one end of the Midland Sea to the other, but signs suggest that the age is turning. Will the Empire fall or shift to a new balance? (*HH*: 242)



The Great Gold Wyrm

is the world's protector and the inspiration for holy orders of paladins and independent heroes. The Wyrm himself is physically bound within a divine seal that prevents the Abyss from erupting into this world. (*HH*: 245)



The High Druid

is the champion of the resurgent Wild. She is the spiritual and magical leader of the spirits of nature and of the elements, liberating them from the chains of the Empire. There could be repercussions . . . (*HH*: 249)



The Lich King

is the lord of the undead, a fallen tyrant who intends to conquer the Dragon Empire and restore his ancient kingdom. Death and forgotten graves are everywhere, and so are his followers. (*HH*: 253)



The Priestess

hears all the Gods of Light and speaks for those who please her. She is part oracle, part mystic, and part metaphysical engineer. She created the Cathedral, a towering, ever-growing temple with rooms or entire wings dedicated to the various faiths that she favors. (*HH*: 259)



The Prince of Shadows

is part thief, part trickster, and part agent of change. To some he is a hero; to others a villain. He has squandered the riches of the dwarves, murdered the hopes of a dragon, and plundered the dreams of a god. Countless thieves, spies, charlatans, daredevils, smugglers, and heroes are part of the Prince's vast but unseen network—whether they know it or not. (*HH*: 262)



The Three

were among the first dragons to walk the world. The Red is a living engine of destruction. The Blue is a sorceress, perhaps even the original mother of all sorcery. The Black is the master of shadows and assassins. (*HH*: 266)

APPENDIX D

INDEX & GLOSSARY

A

ability: One of six character traits; see Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Wisdom, Intelligence, and Charisma. Ability scores figure into attacks, defenses, hit points, damage, skill checks, and more. Monsters don't have ability scores. *HH*: 24
ability scores (standard array) *HH*: 24
point-buy arrays and rolling *HH*: 292
Abyss, the *GMG*: 9
AC, Armor Class: A defense stat, the number that an attacker must roll to hit a target when using regular weapons. Technically it should be your "Armor Defense," but we love "Armor Class." *HH*: 26
actions (usually combat actions) *HH*: 292
adventurer: The adventurer tier comprises levels 1 through 4. This tier is the kobolds-and-ogres phase of your career. We sometimes call all PCs adventurers, but that refers to their role in the game world, not to their level in the game. *GMG*: 52
ally: One of your character's friends; or leaving affection out of the equation, one of the other members of your party or an NPC on your side. You are not your own ally; make of that what you will.
AM: Agemaster. What some smart-alec players call the GM, partly as branding but mostly because the GM is old.
ambush and surprise *GMG*: 50
animal companion rules *HH*: 142
Anvil *GMG*: 12
arc: A unit of game time, typically including three or four battles. Many key character resources, such as recoveries, get used up over the course of an arc and then replenished with a full heal-up. The party typically levels up every three to four arcs. *HH*: 307
Archmage *HH*: 224
- **Arcane Heritage sorcerer talent** *HH*:165
- **arcane organizations** *HH*: 226
- **full-page illo** *HH*: 52
- **Horizon, city of marvels** *GMG*: 21
- **Loremaster bard feat** *HH*: 86

armor *HH*: 214
attacks (melee, spell, ranged, close-quarters) *HH*: 301
attack bonus: Your level, plus your ability bonus, plus your weapon's magic bonus, plus any other bonuses you can scrounge up, added to your attack roll. Player characters also add the escalation die bonus. *HH*: 301
attack roll: A 20-sided die roll, to which you add an attack bonus. If the total is at least as high as the target's defense, the attack is a hit. If it's a natural 20, it's a critical hit. *HH*: 54
attacks, spells, and powers: the key *HH*: 54
at-will: You can reuse an at-will power freely. It never runs out. *HH*: 56
Axis, city of swords *GMG*: 12

B

background: One of a character's suites of skills, talents, knowledge, and experience. You, the player, define your character's backgrounds in free-form game-world terms. *HH*: 206
background points *HH*: 207
choosing backgrounds *HH*: 206
barbarian class *HH*: 61
bard class *HH*: 70
basic attack: One of a hero's baseline attacks. Each class has a basic melee attack and a basic ranged attack, usually made with weapons, that serve as the starting point for the more interesting attacks made by the weapon-focused classes. Some classes deal miss damage when their basic attacks miss; less combat-skilled classes don't. Monsters don't have "basic attacks." *HH*: 301
battle: A single fight scene, usually comprising several rounds of combat. Plenty of spells and powers are limited by how many times you can use them in a battle, and some have effects that last until the end of the battle. If you need to count game-world minutes, five or so should do. After a battle, a party typically takes a quick rest. *GMG*: 42
battlefield dangers *GMG*: 51
behind *HH*: 294
Bloodwood, the *GMG*: 13
Bravado: A resource tracked point-by-point that the rogue can spend to use specific powers or heighten the effect of their powers. Only the rogue has Bravado. *HH*: 151
building battles *GMG*: 41
burrow *HH*: 59

C

cast for broad effect *HH*: 98
cast for power *HH*: 98
Cathedral, the *GMG*: 13
Cha, Charisma: An ability, your force of personality and social grace. Hard to define, hard to miss when it walks by. *HH*: 24
champion: The champion tier comprises levels 5, 6, and 7. Your adventures in this tier take you far afield and to the halls of power. *GMG*: 52
changes from 1E *HH*: 60
character creation steps *HH*: 23
character creation summary *HH*: 10
charge, charging *HH*: 297
charmed: Charmed creatures can't attack. The condition ends if the creature is attacked by an enemy. *HH*: 308

chases.....*HH*: 297
choosing your spells: at the beginning of each arc.....*HH*: 57
classes.....*HH*: 53
class and kin feats table.....*HH*: 212
class spell progression (general).....*HH*: 57
starting stats for all classes.....*HH*: 60
class talents: Characteristics or powers that make a class special. Customize your character by choosing three talents out of several available to your class. Some classes get additional talents at champion or epic tier.....*HH*: 60
cleric class.....*HH*: 94
close-quarters attack: An attack (often a spell) that you can cast while engaged in battle, without drawing the usual opportunity attacks. In many spells, attacks, and monster stat blocks, it, appears with a "**CQ**:" in the attack line.....*HH*: 56
Cloudhome.....*GMG*: 14
combat.....*HH*: 291
combat actions.....*HH*: 293
combat assist: In combat, you can spend a standard action to give a nearby ally a +2 bonus on any upcoming attack roll, save, or check. Explain what you're doing to help your ally.....*HH*: 305
combat connnection.....*HH*: 288
combat modifiers.....*HH*: 307
combat sequence.....*HH*: 291
Con, Constitution: An ability, your toughness and endurance. It's the one ability that every class needs.....*HH*: 24
Concord, city of spires.....*GMG*: 16
conditions.....*HH*: 308
confused: Confused creatures can't take actions when it isn't their turn. When it's their turn, they make a half-damage no-trigger attack against a random nearby ally.....*HH*: 308
corner cases: If you're not sure how to handle a strange situation in the rules, choose what's fun!
coup de grace.....*HH*: 310
The Court, Court of Stars.....*GMG*: 14
cover: Serious cover against an attack could be worth a +2 bonus to AC and PD and maybe even to MD. We use cover rules only when there's a special reason to do so.....*HH*: 307
CQ: A note showing that a specific character or monster attack is a close-quarters attack, which can be used when engaged without drawing an opportunity attack. (1E used a C instead of a CQ.).....*HH*: 56
Crab God Island.....*GMG*: 14
crit, critical hit: On an attack roll, if the 20-sided die comes up 20, the attack is a crit and deals double damage. Some attacks and class talents do fun things with crits. If damage somehow gets doubled twice, the result is triple damage, not quadruple. If you manage to double your triple damage, bump it up to quadruple, and so on.....*HH*: 302
crit range: If you can score critical hits on natural rolls other than 20, you have an expanded crit range.....*HH*: 302
Crusader.....*HH*: 228
- **Battle Barge flying realm**.....*GMG*: 8
- **First Triumph**.....*GMG*: 16
- **fortresses**.....*GMG*: 17
- **full-page illo**.....*HH*: 290

customizing your character.....*HH*: 60

D

daily: 1E resources use the word day to refer to what we now call an arc, and 1E used the word daily for 1/arc.....*HH*: 56
damage: Attacks and special traits deal damage, which reduces the defender's hit points. Characters and stories are great and all, but it's also fun to reduce the bad guys' hit points.....*HH*: 304
miss damage.....*HH*: 302
damage bonuses: As a rule, they only apply to hits and crits. They're doubled for crits, but not added to miss damage unless that's called out as an exception.....*HH*: 302
damage types.....*HH*: 57
dazed: Dazed creatures take a –4 penalty to attacks.....*HH*: 308
DC (difficulty class): The number you need to roll with a skill check to succeed at a particular task.....*HH*: 207
death attack.....*HH*: 306
death and dying; death save.....*HH*: 305
defense: Armor Class, Mental Defense, and Physical Defense are defenses. They define how hard you are to hit with various sorts of attacks.....*HH*: 301
delay an action.....*HH*: 291
Dex, Dexterity: An ability, your agility, reflexes, and handiness. It factors into Armor Class, Physical Defense, and Initiative, making it generally useful.....*HH*: 24
Diabolist.....*HH*: 231
- **Abyss**.....*GMG*: 9
- **demons**.....*GMG*: 77
- **full-page illo**.....*GMG*: 192
- **hellholes**.....*GMG*: 19
- **Hell Marsh**.....*GMG*: 20
- **Infernal Heritage sorcerer talent**.....*HH*: 166
- **plague ended the 12th age?**.....*GMG*: 30

dice rolling conventions.....*HH*: 58
dicey moves.....*HH*: 297
die-size steps.....*HH*: 59
Dire Wood.....*GMG*: 16
disengage: You have a chance to get away from enemies you're engaged with in battle without risking opportunity attacks. It takes a move action and a successful disengage check (11+ on a d20). Increase the number needed by 1 point for each enemy you're engaged with past the first.....*HH*: 294
domains (cleric).....*HH*: 98
double-strength monster: Twice as tough and dangerous as a standard monster, often large or huge.....*GMG*: 58
dragonic, aka dragonspawn.....*HH*: 45
Drakkenhall, city of monsters.....*GMG*: 16
dungeons.....*GMG*: 7
Dwarf King.....*HH*: 235
- Forge.....*GMG*: 18
- full-page illo.....*GMG*: 168

dwarves.....*HH*: 31
dwarven mines.....*GMG*: 6

E

Elf Queen.....*HH*: 239
- Concord influence.....*GMG*: 16
- The Court of Stars.....*GMG*: 14
- elves, shards of the elven people.....*HH*: 32
- Fey Heritage sorcerer talent.....*HH*: 166
- full-page illo.....*HH*: 28
- half-elves.....*HH*: 38
- Queen's Wood.....*GMG*: 26

elite: Fifty percent tougher (hit points) and more dangerous (damage) than a standard monster.....*GMG*: 59

elven woods.....*GMG*: 6

elves.....*HH*: 32

Emperor.....*HH*: 242
- **Axis, City of Swords**.....*GMG*: 12
- **full-page illo**.....*GMG*: 2
- **half-elf origin story**.....*HH*: 38
- **manticore treaty**.....*GMG*: 128

engaged: In contact with at least one enemy and locked in battle. Engaged characters generally draw opportunity attacks if they use ranged attacks or spells. If they move away from enemies they are engaged with, they draw opportunity attacks unless they successfully disengage first. If you are using miniatures, push the miniatures together to show that they are engaged.....*HH*: 294

environment: The location or setting where the characters are adventuring, rated at one of three levels of difficulty: adventurer-tier, champion-tier, or epic-tier. The environment's tier determines the difficulty class for tasks as well as other factors. More often than not, characters fight in environments of their own tier, even if the monsters are from a higher tier.....*GMG*: 52

environment chart by level.....*GMG*: 55

epic: The epic tier comprises levels 8, 9, and 10. Characters in this tier are dealing with jaw-dropping challenges and battling really nasty critters.....*GMG*: 52

equipment (see gear)

escalation die: Starting on the second round of combat, the heroes get an attack bonus. It starts at +1 and increases by +1 each round until it maxes out at +6. To compensate, we cranked all the monsters' defenses up by 1. The party starts each battle in the hole and then fights its way up. Track escalation with the biggest or coolest d6 you have.....*HH*: 292

example of play.....*HH*: 5

F

familiar or pet: a shared talent with variants for the ranger, sorcerer, and wizard.....*HH*: 197

Fangs, the.....*GMG*: 16

far-away: Distant enough from your character that it would take two move actions to close the distance. Plenty of attacks can target nearby foes, while fewer can target far-away ones. Basically twice as distant as "nearby."".....*HH*: 293

fear: A creature under the effects of fear is dazed and can't use the escalation die.....*GMG*: 59

feats: Hand-picked bonuses or boosts to your powers, talents, or other traits. Characters gain one feat each level. Make your favorite attack better, master your favorite spell, or pick up a new special ability. Feats are ranked adventurer, champion, and epic. And a few zenith.....*HH*: 210
- **feats per level chart**.....*HH*: 210
- **universal feats**.....*HH*: 211

fight in spirit.....*HH*: 298

fighter class.....*HH*: 111

First Triumph.....*GMG*: 16

flee: This was the 1E term for what we now call retreat.....*HH*: 299

flexible attack: Instead of deciding which attack to use and then rolling, characters making flexible attacks roll first, then select an attack that the natural unmodified result of their attack roll can trigger. Fighters get this option in this book, and other classes might get flexible attacks in a future book.....*HH*: 118

flying realms.....*GMG*: 8

Forge.....*GMG*: 18

forgeborn, aka dwarf-forged.....*HH*: 46

free: In combat positioning, a free creature is not engaged by an enemy. When speaking of recoveries, a free recovery doesn't subtract from the number of recoveries you have to use that arc.

free action: An action that takes almost no time, especially activating a magic item. You can take any number of free actions, and you can even take them on other creatures' turns.....*HH*: 292

Frost Range, the

full heal-up: At the end of an arc, your hit points rise to maximum. You also get back all the spells cast, powers used up, recoveries used, and other limited-use features.....*GMG*: 18

fumble: When you roll a natural 1 on an attack or skill check. A fumbled attack has no effect on the target, not even miss damage. If you're shooting into a battle, you hit a random ally for half damage, and other special circumstances might likewise indicate untoward results. For skill checks, the check fails, sometimes in some particularly bad way.....*HH*: 307

fun: What rules should help you have.....*HH*: 302

G

gather power: A flashy sorcerer schtick in which the sorcerer spends their turn setting themselves up for a double-strength spell next turn. They also get a small benefit called an overspill effect as power whirls about them. *HH*: 163
gear *HH*: 214
armor and weapon categories *HH*: 214
money/coins *HH*: 215
price guide *GMG*: 217
Glitterhaegen, city of coins *GMG*: 18
gnomes *HH*: 37
gods *GMG*: 37
gold, gp (see money) *HH*: 215
gold piece rewards per arc option *GMG*: 71
Golden Citadel *GMG*: 19
Gorogan's Maw *GMG*: 19
grabbed *HH*: 310
Great Gold Wyrm *HH*: 245
Abyss *GMG*: 9
full-page illo *HH*: 222
Golden Citadel *GMG*: 19
metallic dragons in Axis *GMG*: 12
Metallic Protector Heritage talent *HH*: 166
Mythkenner bard feat *HH*: 86
Grey Towers, the *GMG*: 19
group, in a group: Spells and effects that target a number of enemies who are close together instead of being in opposite directions say that they target enemies who are in a group. It's a loose distinction from targeting anyone you like without skipping over enemies. If you are not playing with minis, wing it. *HH*: 297
group abilities *GMG*: 59

H

half-elves *HH*: 38
halflings *HH*: 40
hampered: 1E's word for what we now call hindered. *HH*: 308
healing (see recoveries) *HH*: 304
healing potions *GMG*: 170
Hell Marsh *GMG*: 20
hellholes *GMG*: 19
helpless: Unconscious and sleeping creatures are helpless. A helpless creature takes a –4 penalty to all defenses and can be the target of a *coup de grace*. *HH*: 308
high elves *HH*: 32
Highdock *GMG*: 21
High Druid *HH*: 249
Bloodwood defenders *GMG*: 13
dwarven mine regeneration *GMG*: 6
full-page illo *HH*: 22
Troll-kin connections *HH*: 42
Wild Wood *GMG*: 28
hindered: Hindered creatures can only make no-trigger attacks, but can still move normally so long as they don't use limited-use powers. Being hindered also forbids things like flexible attacks and monster special abilities. *HH*: 309
history of the ages *GMG*: 30
hit: Succeed with an attack. *HH*: 301
hit points, HP: A measure of how not dead you are. Damage reduces hit points. At 0 or lower, you're unconscious and making death saves, and if your hit points go too far in the negative you die immediately. Hit points measure not just your physical capacity to suffer wounds but also your will to fight and other intangibles. Use your recoveries to get back lost hit points.
holy one, aka aasimar *HH*: 50
Horizon, city of marvels *GMG*: 21
huge monster: Bigger than large, like a hydra or a storm giant. They are frequently also triple-strength monsters, but at higher levels they are often double-strength or less. *GMG*: 61
humans *HH*: 29

I

icon: One of the world's twelve mightiest archetypal figures. In most campaigns, the party is caught up in conflicts among the icons, and the heroes' achievements can tip the icons' balance of power. *HH*: 223
icon connection: Each arc, a hero can use one or more icon connections to influence the narrative. *HH*: 271
dramatic events *HH*: 271
introductory games and one-shots *HH*: 289
twists *HH*: 272
icon relationships: Each character is related somehow to one or more icon. *HH*: 269
ambiguous icons *HH*: 218
heroic icons *HH*: 217
icon relationship dice *HH*: 269
relationship points *HH*: 216
villainous icons *HH*: 218
immediate save: Sometimes an attack allows the target to avoid a special effect by succeeding at an immediate save. Most saves let you get free of a problem, whereas an immediate save lets you avoid the problem in the first place. *GMG*: 58
implement: Staffs, symbols, and wands—magic items used by spellcasters to improve their spells. *GMG*: 176
impromptu damage *GMG*: 53
incremental advance: In advance of your next level, you can gain some of that level's benefits. At or near the end of most arcs, you can choose one next-level benefit and start using it this level. Pick the advancement that you think you need for upcoming challenges. *HH*: 221
information transparency *HH*: 296
initiative: Highest initiative goes first, and so on. *HH*: 291
cyclic initiative *HH*: 291
instrument talent structure *HH*: 76

Int, Intelligence: An ability, your capacity for analytical and abstract thought. It is not the same as bookishness, just correlated..... *HH*: 24
intercept: Blocking an enemy from racing past you, especially when they're trying to get to an ally behind you. Since the characters in the battle are not actually toy soldiers on a table, they can move to intercept enemies moving past them when it's not their turn, within reason. Intercepting uses your interrupt action..... *HH*: 296
interrupt action: Like a free action, except that after using one you can't use another interrupt action until after the end of your next turn..... *HH*: 292
invisibility..... *HH*: 308
invocations: a one-per-battle resource connected to the cleric's domains..... *HH*: 98
Iron Sea, the..... *GMG*: 21
islands..... *GMG*: 7
Isle of Fire, the..... *GMG*: 21

J

Jedna's Folly..... *GMG*: 21

K

kin powers..... *HH*: 29
Kneedeep, the..... *GMG*: 21
Koru behemoths..... *GMG*: 22
Koru Straights..... *GMG*: 22

L

land, the..... *GMG*: 3
languages..... *HH*: 210
large monster: Big like a hill giant or a manticore. Often double strength, especially at adventurer and champion tiers..... *GMG*: 61
level: How extraordinary you are, from 1st, promising beginner, to 10th, world-renowned hero. Monsters go up to 14th level. Battles also have levels, indicating how dangerous they are.
leveling up..... *HH*: 220
† **Lich King**..... *HH*: 253
full-page illo..... *GMG*: 32
Loremaster bard feat..... *HH*: 86
Necropolis..... *GMG*: 23
Omen, powerless there..... *GMG*: 24
Undead Remnant Heritage..... *GMG*: 167
living dungeons..... *GMG*: 7
loot..... *GMG*: 51
lose: When you lose hit points, it's different from taking damage. You can't prevent hit point loss, but you do take lost hit points off your temporary hit points, if any, first.
Lost River, the..... *GMG*: 23

M

magic items: Special items that give heroes advantages and bonus powers. Heroes are presumably able to acquire healing potions and other one-use magic. True magic items, on the other hand, are acquired only through heroism of some sort. They are more or less alive, and heroes bond with their magic items almost as one does with a familiar..... *GMG*: 169
magic item powers..... *GMG*: 177
true magic item types..... *GMG*: 176
magic items, cursed..... *GMG*: 190
magic items, true..... *GMG*: 172
Magma Keeps, the..... *GMG*: 23
MD, Mental Defense: A defense stat, the number that an attacker must roll to hit a target when using mental manipulation, psychic attacks, spiritual destruction, stealth, trickery, obfuscation, etc..... *HH*: 27
melee spell: A spell that uses your weapon's magic item attack bonus, if any, and otherwise functions as a melee attack. In this book, only used by the cleric..... *HH*: 97
MEQ, monster equivalent: A measure of how strong a monster is compared to a standard monster of the designated level. Used to build battles that are fair or intentionally terrifying..... *GMG*: 44
Midland Sea, the..... *GMG*: 23
miss: When your attack roll isn't high enough, you miss. Most misses deal at least a little miss damage. Heroes and monsters in this game are so bad-ass that even when they miss you they can still mess you up a little..... *HH*: 302
miss damage: Damage dealt on a miss. A player-character's at-will attacks typically deal miss damage equal to that character's level, while some attacks deal up to half damage on a miss. Damage bonuses don't apply to miss damage unless the bonus specifies that it does..... *HH*: 302
mob: A group of identical mooks. See mooks..... *HH*: 305
mod, modifier: Most d20 rolls add the modifier from one of your character's ability scores to the roll. The modifier for an ability score equals your ability score minus 10, divided by 2, rounded down. All the character attacks that say they add an ability to the attack or damage roll are actually adding the modifier from that ability. We decided not to write mod or modifier thousands of times so we're explaining it as the default..... *HH*: 25
Momentum: A fighter who has not been hit or fallen unconscious since their last turn has Momentum, and can roll a bonus d20 with their first attack roll on their turn. (In 1E, momentum was the name of a rogue class feature, but Momentum is now where it belongs.)..... *HH*: 114
money..... *HH*: 215
monsters..... *GMG*: 58
monster design..... *GMG*: 160

monster equivalent chart..... *GMG*: 44
monster list..... *GMG*: 63
monster roles..... *GMG*: 45
monster special abilities by role..... *GMG*: 165
monster stat charts..... *GMG*: 161
mook: The lowest scale of monster, equivalent to a fifth of a regular monster's threat. GMs use them in handfuls. A mob of mooks has a single pool of hit points, letting powerful attacks cleave through them in twos and threes. But don't try damaging them with ongoing damage—they're immune..... *HH*: 305
Moonwreck..... *GMG*: 23
move action: You get one move action every turn, and you usually use it to close with the enemy or to get more distance from them. You can also use it to do things like climb or attempt to disengage. If you wish, you can even downgrade it and use it as a quick action..... *HH*: 293
movement..... *HH*: 293
multiclassing: See *13 True Ways*.
low-key advice..... *HH*: 60

N

narrative loss..... *HH*: 299
narrative twist with an icon connection: A 25% chance that the GM will also have fun with icon connection..... *HH*: 272
natural roll: The number that comes up on a d20, before adding any modifiers. It's relevant for critical hits, for fumbles, and for certain special attacks or defenses..... *HH*: 301
Necropolis, the..... *GMG*: 23
nearby: By default, all the participants in a battle are nearby each other. That means that they can get to each other with a move action, provided they can navigate any obstacles in the way. If there's a reason for someone to be farther out, they are far away..... *HH*: 293
nearest: If two or more creatures are tied for being nearest, choose the one you want, because this game isn't about measuring.
necro: The damage type associated with undead creatures and the draining of souls. In 1E we called it negative energy damage, but we changed the name to something shorter and sharper..... *HH*: 58
New Port, city of opportunity..... *GMG*: 24
next to: A few spells and powers require creatures to be next to each other. Use your best judgment for positioning if you're not using miniatures. Generally, allies engaged with the same enemy are next to each other..... *HH*: 294
no-trigger attack: Heroes' no-trigger attacks are based on their basic attacks but can't trigger any other effects or interact with the heroes' other abilities. Monsters' no-trigger attacks use the monster's first listed melee attack but can't trigger or cause effects other than damage. If the monster's attack normally allows multiple attack rolls, make all those rolls but use only the highest-rolling die as the single attack roll..... *HH*: 301
Nomad..... *GMG*: 24
Northern Colossus..... *GMG*: 24

O

obstacles and traps..... *GMG*: 53
Oldwall..... *GMG*: 24
Omen..... *GMG*: 24
One Unique Thing, *unique*: You invent something special about your character that makes them different from all others. It typically changes how your character's story plays out rather than affecting your stats or combat abilities..... *HH*: 201
***unique* examples**..... *HH*: 204
one-use magic items..... *GMG*: 169
ongoing damage..... *HH*: 310
Opals, the..... *GMG*: 25
opportunity attack: An attack you make when an enemy gives you an opening to hit it, usually by moving away from you without disengaging or by using a ranged attack when engaged with you. It's a free action and a no-trigger attack..... *HH*: 296
Orc Lord..... *HH*: 256
other actions..... *HH*: 293
overworld..... *GMG*: 3

P

paladin class..... *HH*: 122
panoply: A rough count of how many magic items characters could expect to have at different levels..... *GMG*: 173
PD, Physical Defense: A defense stat, the number that an attacker must roll to hit a target when using poison, a bull rush, a fireball, or other physical attacks without weapons..... *HH*: 26
per arc: Usable a specified number of times per arc..... *HH*: 56
per battle: Some character talents, powers, and spells can be used one time per battle, while others can be used a limited number of times. After using a per-battle feature, you get it back with a quick rest or full heal-up..... *HH*: 56
player advice..... *HH*: 219
pop free: Some effects let you break off engagement with an enemy, whether you pop free from them or they pop free from you. While you're no longer engaged with that specific enemy, you might still be engaged with others. Likewise, if you pop an enemy free from you, they might still be engaged with allies of yours. Unlike disengaging, popping free is the result of some effect, not an action..... *HH*: 296
position, positioning..... *HH*: 293
potion: Potions are one-use magic items that provide an effect to their drinker, especially healing..... *GMG*: 169
power: Powers are things a character can do or capabilities that a character has, often attacks of some sort..... *HH*: 57
Priestess..... *HH*: 259
The Cathedral..... *GMG*: 13
full-page illo..... *HH*: 4
Mythkenner bard feat..... *HH*: 86
Santa Cora..... *GMG*: 26

♀ **Prince of Shadows** ..... *HH*: 262
full-page illo ..... *HH*: 200
Glitterhaegen ..... *GMG*: 18
Shadowport ..... *GMG*: 26
Skullduggery epic feat ..... *HH*: 152
Proudfort ..... *GMG*: 26

Q

Queen's Wood ..... *GMG*: 26
quick action: You get one quick action each turn, although most characters don't use theirs most turns. You might use it to draw a sword, open a door, reload a crossbow, use a minor power, or cast a minor spell. ..... *HH*: 293
quick rest: A short break after a battle, allowing you to regain your used per-battle talents, powers, and spells. You also roll to recharge each used, rechargeable power. You can use recoveries to regain hit points as many times as you like, though a staggered character *must* use at least one recovery. ..... *HH*: 306

R

races: They're called kin. ..... *HH*: 29
rage: The barbarian's big deal. ..... *HH*: 65
rally, rallying: During a battle, you can use a standard action and spend a recovery to regain lost hit points. With luck, you can rally more than once in a battle, but with better luck you won't ever need to. ..... *HH*: 298
ranged: A ranged attack or a ranged spell of any kind draws opportunity attacks from enemies engaged with the attacker or caster. Some ranged attacks and spells can reach only nearby targets, while others can reach far away. Some powers and spells target foes at range without drawing opportunity attacks; they are designated as close-quarters. ..... *HH*: 56
ranger class ..... *HH*: 132
ready an action ..... *HH*: 292
recharge: After each battle, when you get a quick rest, you can roll for each of your used, rechargeable powers, including those used in a previous battle, to see if they recharge. They all recharge when you get a full heal-up. ..... *HH*: 306
recovery: Your ability to regain lost hit points. When you spend a recovery, roll 1 recovery die per level and add your Con modifier (x2 Con mod at champion tier, x4 at epic + 5 per epic level). That's how many hit points you heal. You can use 8 recoveries per arc, or more often if you're exceptional even for a player character. ..... *HH*: 304
recovery dice: The dice you roll to determine how many hit points you regain when you heal using a recovery. Depending on your class, your recovery dice are d6s, d8s, d10s, or d12s. ..... *HH*: 304
Red Wastes, the ..... *GMG*: 26
reloading ranged weapons ..... *HH*: 214
resting (see quick rest, full heal-up) ..... *HH*: 306
resistance: If your target has resistance against your type of attack, you deal half damage unless your natural attack roll equals or beats its resistance. Resistance is usually rated 12+, 16+, or 18+. ..... *HH*: 313
resurrection ..... *HH*: 108
retreat, retreating: Sure you're heroes, but sometimes you have to survive to be heroic another day. Retreating allows the party to escape safely even when the circumstances look dire. You just have to pay the price: a narrative loss. ..... *HH*: 299
ritual magic: The ability for a practiced ritualist to use magic in a free-form way, if given time to concentrate and improvise. ..... *HH*: 198
roads ..... *GMG*: 5
rogue class ..... *HH*: 147
round: In combat, a unit of time that's something between three and seven seconds, long enough for everyone to get to take a turn in initiative order. ..... *HH*: 291
rune: A one-use magical glyph that grants a magic bonus to a weapon, a spellcasting implement, or a piece of armor. In addition, a rune provides a random magic ability. The effect lasts for one battle. ..... *GMG*: 170

S

Santa Cora, city of temples ..... *GMG*: 26
save: A roll to get out from under a bad effect, usually made at the end of your turn. You have to roll 6+ (easy save), 11+ (normal), or 16+ (hard) with a d20 roll. If a save doesn't specify its type it's a normal save. As an exception, when allowed, an immediate save lets you attempt to avoid the bad effect in the first place. ..... *HH*: 310
Sea Wall, the ..... *GMG*: 26
Shadow Port ..... *GMG*: 26
seven cities, the ..... *GMG*: 3
shocked: You roll twice for all d20 rolls and use the lower result, even when making a reroll. Any trait that would let you roll more than one d20 is ignored. ..... *HH*: 309
shooting into melee ..... *HH*: 308
silver elf, *aka* silver folk, *aka* drow, *aka* dark elf ..... *HH*: 33
size: Some monsters are large or huge, which is mostly for flavor but which sometimes affects how a particular power works. ..... *GMG*: 61
skill check: A d20 roll made to see how successful you are using a skill. Roll a d20 and add your level, the modifier for the relevant ability, and a bonus for any background that applies. The same background can be used with different abilities. Your "bodyguard" background, for example, can be used with your Wisdom to size up a dangerous situation or with Charisma to give effective orders to people you're protecting. ..... *HH*: 207
environment/tier DCs ..... *GMG*: 53
opposed rolls ..... *HH*: 207
natural 20s ..... *HH*: 208
failing in style ..... *HH*: 208

Skull, Skulls: Each time you're knocked unconscious and each time you fail a death save, you gain a Skull. When you have 5 Skulls, you die. With a quick rest, you can clear all but one Skull. With a full heal-up, you clear them all. *HH*: 305
songs *HH*: 71
sorcerer class *HH*: 158
special actions: rally, combat assist, fight in spirit, retreat *HH*: 298
speed: Usually you move fast enough to get where you want to go in a battle. By default, any character is fast enough to close with anyone nearby, unless there are obstacles. If there's some real doubt as to whether you can cover a distance, instead of counting squares, the GM calls for a roll of some type, possibly a skill check (such as with an athlete, warrior, or acrobat background) or maybe just a save. *HH*: 297
spell: A magical attack or other effect. Spellcasting draws opportunity attacks from engaged opponents, unless it's a close-quarters spell. Some powers and class features are magical without being spells. *HH*: 56
stacking rules *HH*: 303
staggered: Reduced to half maximum hit points. Sometimes you can only use a particular power when your *target is staggered*. Sometimes it's only if you yourself are staggered or when you're not staggered. *HH*: 304
standard action: You get one standard action each turn and usually use it to make an attack. You can also opt to downgrade it and use it as a move action, or even as a quick action. *HH*: 292
standard arrays: the default array and the good-at-everything array; sets of six ability scores you can arrange as you like. *HH*: 24
Starport *GMG*: 26
Str, Strength: An ability, your bodily power and capacity for force. It's good for more than hurting things (as if hurting things weren't enough). *HH*: 24
strength (monsters): The scale at which a monster's hit points and damage potential are set. Elites, double-strength monsters, and triple-strength monsters have more hit points and deal more damage than standard monsters of the same level. Mooks and weaklings have fewer hit points and deal less damage. *GMG:* 58
stuck: Creatures that are stuck can't move, disengage, pop free, change position, or be moved by another, but can still teleport. They don't lose their move action, they just can't use it normally. *HH*: 309
stunned: Stunned creatures take a –4 penalty to defenses and can't take any actions. At the start of the stunned creatures turn, roll a hard save (16+). If the save succeeds, the stunned creature can take one action this turn, though this doesn't solve being stunned. *HH*: 309
surprise (ambush) *GMG*: 50

T

talents: Heroes start with three talent choices that frequently define their powers. Some classes gain new talents at higher tiers.
targeting *HH*: 296
teleport: Magically move from one spot to another without crossing the intervening space. Usually you have to see where you want to go. *HH*: 313
temporary effects: Effects that are either save-ends or that end on a specific turn, like at the end or beginning of a specific creature's turn. Spells and powers that grant bonus saves usually grant them against temporary effects. (No relation to temporary hit points!) *HH*: 311
temporary hit points: Bonus hit points that are not added to your normal hit point total but are the first hit points you lose when you take damage. They also don't stack with each other. Temporary hit points go away at the end of a battle. *HH*: 313
✦ **The Three** *HH*: 266
Chromatic Destroyer Heritage *HH*: 165
Drakkenhall *GMG*: 16
full-page illo *GMG*: 56
the Red doesn't share *HH*: 175
ultimate secrets 333
Throne Point *GMG*: 27
tieflings, aka demontouched *HH*: 48
tier: There are three tiers of play: adventurer (level 1–4); champion (level 5–7); and epic (level 8–10). The tier defines the difficulty of challenges that the characters face. *GMG*: 52
traps & obstacles *GMG*: 53
Traversorwen, Caravan of the Beekeepers *GMG*: 27
treasure rewards *GMG*: 51
triple-strength monster: Three times as much trouble as a regular monster, in hit points, damage per round, that sort of thing. Often huge, but not always. *GMG*: 58
troll-kin *HH*: 42
true magic items *GMG*: 172
turn: Each creature gets its own turn in initiative order during a round, its chance to shine or fumble. *HH*: 292
Twisp, Old Town, and Burrow *GMG*: 28
twist with a combat connection *HH*: 298
twist with a narrative icon connection *HH*: 272
two-weapon fighting: It's better in 2E than it was in 1E. Now you hit when your two-weapon fighting attack rolls a natural 2! *HH*: 314

U

unarmed attack ..... *HH*: 314
unconscious ..... *HH*: 304
Undermarch, the ..... *GMG*: 28
underworld ..... *GMG*: 3
unique: Shorthand for a player character hero's One Unique Thing ..... *HH*: 201
usage patterns of spells, powers, and items ..... *HH*: 56

V

Vigil ..... *GMG*: 28
vulnerable, vulnerability: When a creature is vulnerable to an attack, the attack deals bonus damage equal to double the attacker's level even on a miss! Exception: mooks and weaklings attacking a vulnerable target add bonus damage equal only to their level, not double their level. ..... *HH*: 309

W

Wake Islands ..... *GMG*: 28
weakened: Creatures that are weakened take a –4 penalty to attacks and to defenses. ..... *HH*: 309
weakling: A half-strength monster, with half the hit points and half the damage output of a standard monster. Possibly it's on the scene more for story reasons than as a core combatant. *GMG*: 59
Weapon damage ..... *HH*: 58
weapons ..... *HH*: 214
Wild Wood ..... *GMG*: 28
Wis, Wisdom: An ability, your intuition, insight, and perceptiveness. Unfortunately, this trait seems to serve unholiness as well as it serves holiness—maybe even better. ..... *HH*: 24
wizard class ..... *HH*: 177
Wonderton ..... *GMG*: 29
wood elves ..... *HH*: 35

Z

zenith: "Zenith" is not so much a full tier in its own right as an array of elements higher than 10th level. Heroes have a limited ability to access capabilities that are beyond 10th level, such as top-level healing potions or feats you take as incremental advances when you're 10th level. Monsters go well past 10th level, and epic-tier characters often tangle with zenith-tier monsters.
zenith-tier feat ..... *HH*: 210

APPENDIX E

THE CHARACTER SHEET

13th Age

NAME | CLASS | KIT | LEVEL

DESCRIPTION

One Unique Thing

Ability Scores

ARMOR CLASS

STRENGTH	DEXTERITY	CONSTITUTION	WISDOM	INTELLIGENCE	CHARISMA
SCORE / MODIFIER	SCORE / MODIFIER	SCORE / MODIFIER	SCORE / MODIFIER	SCORE / MODIFIER	SCORE / MODIFIER

PHYSICAL DEFENSE | MENTAL DEFENSE

Hit Points & Recoveries

STAGGERED | DEAD

MAX HP

MAX RECOVERIES

RECOVERIES

CURRENT HP

DEAD

AVERAGE

RECOVERY DICE

TEMP HP

ONGOING DAMAGE | TYPE | SAVE

CONDITIONS & OTHER EFFECTS | SAVE

Talents

Defenses & Initiative

PHYSICAL DEFENSE

ARMOR CLASS

MENTAL DEFENSE

INITIATIVE

Basic Melee Attack

WEAPON

HIT DAMAGE | AVG | MISS

VS AC

Basic Ranged Attack

WEAPON

HIT DAMAGE | AVG | MISS

VS AC

NEAR | FAR

Backgrounds

BACKGROUND | BONUS

Features, Powers, & Spells

ACTION NAME | TRIGGER/TARGET/EFFECT | PAGE#

Usage

AT-WILL & RECHARGE	PER BATTLE	PER ARC
	☐☐	☐☐
	☐☐	☐☐
	☐☐	☐☐
	☐☐	☐☐
	☐☐	☐☐
	☐☐	☐☐
	☐☐	☐☐
	☐☐	☐☐
	☐☐	☐☐
	☐☐	☐☐

SKILL CHECK = LEVEL + ABILITY MODIFIER + BACKGROUND

Icon Relationships

#D6	+/±/-*	ICON	5+	USED
			☐☐☐	☐☐☐
			☐☐☐	☐☐☐
			☐☐☐	☐☐☐

*+ positive, ± conflicted, or – negative relationship.

During your turn: one each of standard > move > quick, and any number of free actions. Between your turns: one interrupt action.

changes/refresh at new level | changes at new level or with incremental advance | refresh at new arc | refresh at end of battle

© 2025 Fire Opal Media, Inc. & Pelgrane Press Ltd. Permission granted to reproduce for person

MAGIC ITEMS

MAX ATTUNED

MORE FEATURES, POWERS, & SPELLS

ACTION	NAME	TRIGGER/TARGET/EFFECT	PAGE#
Std	Assist	Give a nearby ally a +2 on an upcoming attack, save, or check during combat.	HH: 305
Move	Disengage	Roll disengage check (11+, +1 per each engaged foe beyond first). On success, move without drawing opportunity attacks. On fail, stay engaged.	HH: 294
Int	Intercept	While unengaged, move to engage enemy that is moving past you.	HH: 296
Std	Rally	Spend a recovery to heal. If used, quick action normal save (11+) to use again.	HH: 298

During your turn: one each of standard > move > quick, and any number of free actions. Between your turns: one interrupt action.

USAGE

AT-WILL & RECHARGE	PER BATTLE	PER ARC
Assist	☐ Rally	☐ ☐
Disengage	☐ ☐	☐ ☐
Intercept	☐ ☐	☐ ☐
	☐ ☐	☐ ☐
	☐ ☐	☐ ☐
	☐ ☐	☐ ☐
	☐ ☐	☐ ☐
	☐ ☐	☐ ☐
	☐ ☐	☐ ☐
	☐ ☐	☐ ☐
	☐ ☐	☐ ☐
	☐ ☐	☐ ☐
	☐ ☐	☐ ☐
	☐ ☐	☐ ☐

POTIONS & RUNES

SPELL LIST

OF SPELLS

MISCELLANEOUS FEATURES & POWERS

FEATS

FEATURE	TIER	FEATURE	TIER
	Ⓐ		Ⓐ
	Ⓐ		Ⓐ
	◯		◯
	◯		◯
	◯		◯
	◯		

A = adventurer tier (lvl 1-4); C = champion tier (lvl 5-7); E = epic tier (lvl 8-10)

GEAR & NOTES

ARMOR | ARMOR AC | +SHIELD | =BASE AC

MELEE WEAPON | RANGED WEAPON

GOLD

INCREMENTAL ADVANCES

- △ GAIN NEXT LEVEL FEAT
- △ INCREASE MAX HP TO NEXT LEVEL
- △ +1 MAGICAL ITEM ATTUNEMENT
- △ GAIN NEXT LEVEL POWER OR SPELL
- △ +1 TO SKILL & INITIATIVE CHECKS
- △ +1 TO PHYSICAL DEFENSE
- △ +1 TO 3/4 ABILITY SCORES AT LEVEL 3/6/9
- △ GAIN 2x/4x ABILITY MULTIPLIERS AT LEVEL 4/7
- △ GAIN NEXT LEVEL CLASS FEATURE (SOME CLASSES ONLY)
- △ GAIN NEXT LEVEL TALENT (SOME CLASSES ONLY)
- △ +1 TO MENTAL DEFENSE

changes/refresh at new level | changes at new level or with incremental advance | refresh at new arc | refresh at end of battle

© 2025 Fire Opal Media, Inc. & Pelgrane Press Ltd. Permission granted to reproduce for personal use only.