

ICON



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FOREWORD

Hello!

Many of you may know me from the other Massif Press RPG, *Lancer*, or from my webcomic *Kill Six Billion Demons*. This is a free play test of the next game I intend to publish after completing our Lancer kickstarter content. My ethos is to give people content, then ask them to pay for it later if they like it, so this test is entirely free to play and distribute. Much like Lancer, the final product will have a free version with all player facing content.

This game was born from my love of fantasy. I love that old-school mysterious, enormous-world fantasy vibe that is reproduced so well in animation, comics, and games. This game is inspired by the feeling I think you might get when you look at the main cover. I took inspiration from anime, the works of French comic artist Mœbius, studio Ghibli, and video games like Shadow of the Colossus, Dragon's Dogma, and the legend of Zelda.

I love tactical combat and strategy games, but also more freeform narrative games. Here I have mashed the two together. You can use either or both. The narrative portion is a more stripped down version of the action system of *Blades in the Dark*, by John Harper, which I think is an excellent lightweight system and probably my favorite game currently.

Feedback

This is a play test and hasn't been hammered out quite yet. It was written, illustrated, and formatted by one person. There might be spelling or formatting errors. stuff that doesn't work, feel good, or certain combinations of abilities that are too strong, weak, etc. You can send feedback to ksbdabbadon@gmail.com

Work on this game will be slow while I finish *Lancer* content and it probably won't receive publishing for a little while so there is plenty of time to test it. There'll be regular but slow content for it, including 8 more jobs and at least 3-4 more bonds. Thanks for your patience.

Character sheets

I include character sheets as more of a proof of concept/for visual learners than anything. They might be a little rough so I apologize in advance. There's a separate .zip file you can download.

Links and support

You can find my other work at <http://lancerrpg.com> and <http://www.killsixbilliondemons.com>

If you like this playtest and want to support my work, please consider supporting me over at my patreon: <http://patreon.com/killsixbilliondemons>.

Thanks for playing! I hope your games are enjoyable.

- Tom "Abbadon" Parkinson-Morgan

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ICON

LEGACY OF THE ARKENLORDS

Long ago, the cruel and prosperous Arken Imperium crushed the nations of Arden Eld. With its military might and its command of magitech and ancient etheric sorcery, it slew the Titans who held up the four pillars of the world and cast them down, proclaiming itself an eternal empire. It spread itself from sea to sea, altered the land itself with great projects, raised mighty cities of iron and stone, and bent the elden magics to its will, setting its sights on the seat of the makers themselves. The Arkenlords became swollen with power that drove them far beyond the concerns of petty men, and made them blind to their own rapidly approaching doom. When it finally came, it was as rapid as it was inevitable. A great inexorable destruction wracked the empire, shattering it, and scouring the land. In its wake, monsters crawled from great pits to feast on its remnants, and in time retreated to the deep earth, leaving only smoldering ruins.

THE GREEN AGE

A thousand years have passed. The land settled, and healed, and a gentler, greener age slowly dawned over the land. The shattered, labyrinthine ruins of the old empire now lie entombed in the verdant earth, their depths occasionally disgorging monsters, mysteries, and ghosts of the old world, but over and around them the world has recovered. Forests have grown over ancient galleries, floral meadows have sprung up covering old battlegrounds, and sparkling streams now flow through the collapsed and teetering stones of old aqueducts and overpasses.

Over the ruins and in their shadows, life has flourished, as it always will. Now towns and villages dot the landscape, nestled in glades and valleys and surrounded by farms and fields

plowed over the skeletons of ancient war machines. Cities are few and far between, and connected over the long stretches of idyllic wilderness by crumbling roads dotted with the caravans of traveling peddlers and traders.

The era is peaceful and pastoral. The land is fertile and good, and the land is broad and beautiful. Trade is flourishing between towns and war is, for the most part, a distant memory of a darker time.

THE SHADOW

The people of Arden Eld, such as they are, live in an era of contentment and prosperity. Yet at the edges of their lives, the shadow of the past looms.

The paths through the wilderness between towns are treacherous, sometimes dangerous. The ruins of the Arkenlords are everywhere, jutting out of the land and riddling the earth itself. For the most part, the ruins are quiet, a mournful reminder of a forgotten and terrible past. Occasionally, however, the ruins will disgorge creatures of the old world - monsters born of the Doom or the strange energies harnessed by the empire. Left unchecked, these Blights can endanger the roads, fields, and forests of the world above - sometimes becoming threatening enough to imperil whole towns.

Quite often an entire ruin will surface, pushed up and out of the earth by some unknown seismic force or elden magic. These surfacing ruins are often more active than their long-dead counterparts and will rarely burst from the earth very close to villages or in the middle of cities, causing great destruction.

Deep within the ruins themselves lurk the Relict remains of the old empire, the undead fragments of its servitors and sorcerers - and deeper within, greater prizes. When the Doom befell the Arken, it shattered the land so quickly that entire chambers were sunk deep into the earth, or buried in

underground caverns or passages mostly intact. Within these preserved ruins is also buried the Arkentech of the old empire - magical and technological creations and devices of terrifying import. The ruins themselves are so seeped in the elden sorcery of the old lords that they exude Dust - the essence of condensed raw magic highly sought after by the wrights and technological artisans of the world above.

Brave or daring adventure seekers or treasure hunters often venture into these ruins in search of wealth or power, and are frequently rewarded, despite the terrible danger that these expeditions pose.

THE CHURNING AGE

Now, the world stands at the edge of a new age - the Churning Age.

More and more adventurers plumb the ruins of the old world in search of its treasures. Factions of the trade guilds and city councils now turn their eyes to the terrible potential of arkentech, and seek it greedily. Great Aetheric airships, built with the power scraped from the ruins, now soar into the sky in search of crumbling spires or ancient catacombs to plunder. In response, the ruins themselves have become more active - disgorging more monsters, becoming more unstable, and more often rising up from the earth itself in terrifying seismic displays.

The Churn threatens to throw the Green Age into tumult. A treasure fueled sickness has made its way into the hearts of Kin. There are even those who whisper, more and more openly, about the legacy of the Arkenlords, of the need for strength, wealth, power, and war banners to be hoisted once again. Cities eye each other with suspicion. Travelers grip their cloaks tightly and tighten their sword belts, and for the first time, banditry has sprung up over the stones and passes of the old imperial highways.

At the very edge of this age is you.

You belong in this world, and you are tied to its fate. You are cursed to wield great power, but how you choose to wield it is up to you.

Many in your position use it to plumb the depths of the old world in search of treasure and fame. Others use it to drive back the Blights and protect the villages of the Green from the specters of the past, or keep the roads and ways safe for the young and old alike. Some work as mercenaries for the city guilds and take to the sky in great airships, while others wander the land helping the lost or forgotten. Some use their power to kill to cut away threats to the world, others to defend those they hold dear.

Will you defend the Green Age? Will you help usher in the Churning Age? Or will you cast all aside to turn the great wheel of history and allow its stagnant blood to flow again? Whoever you are, it is your decisions that make you who you are, and cement your place in the Tale of Ages.

You are an Icon.

PLAYING THE GAME

ICON is a role playing game for two or more players. An ideal group is 3-5. One player will act as the game master (GM) who will adjudicate the rules and help create and move the narrative forward.

This game assumes you know what a role-playing game is. If this is your first RPG and you're unsure, there are plenty of resources available online to bring you up to speed.

TWO MODES OF PLAY

ICON has two modes of play: **narrative play**, and **tactical combat**. The rules for these modes are different and there is next to zero overlap between them. It's entirely possible to run a game of ICON entirely in one mode or the other, and rules are provided to play the game only in narrative mode if you so desire. Typically games will start in narrative play and remain there whenever there is storytelling, free role playing, or a need to move the story somewhere. When there's a point of tension that can only be decided through the drama and violence of combat, then the game swaps to a grid-based tactical game, with more clearly defined turn order and more structured rules.

EXPEDITIONS AND INTERLUDES

In ICON, characters are adventurers that go on **expeditions** in order to accomplish a goal. On an expedition they can **camp** to restore their lost health and ease their minds. After the expedition finishes, they can pause the action to take an **interlude**, a longer pause in the action.

Some goals are more long term than a single expedition. Any goal that takes multiple expeditions to complete is called a **quest**.

CHAPTER

Campaigns of ICON are split into 3 chapters. Over the course of their adventure, characters will become increasingly more powerful, represented by levels. Every chapter represents four levels

(1-4, 5-8, 9-12). Each chapter represents a different scale of power, and enemies, challenges, and stakes will increase in severity accordingly. Moving on to the next chapter is a decision taken by the players, who can choose to stay in a certain chapter as long as they like (but will have a cap on their power as they cannot level up past the chapter limit).

ROLLING DICE

In ICON, there are different dice rolls for narrative play and tactical combat.

In **narrative play**, characters use d6s.

When the outcome of an action is unclear, risky, or contested, a character names their goal and makes an **action roll**, rolling a number of d6s equal to an action rating on their sheet and choosing the best result. The GM tells the player before they roll the **effect** and **risk** of their action. On a 1-3 the character fails to accomplish their goal and suffers the risk, on a 4-5 they succeed but may suffer the risk anyway, take some other consequences, setback or reduced effect, and on a 6 they succeed with no complications. There's many more details on on action rolls in the section on narrative play.

In **tactical combat**, characters mostly use **d20s**.

The two rolls in tactical combat are **attack rolls** and **saves**.

Characters usually make an attack roll when they take a hostile action against another character with the attack tag. For an **attack roll**, a character rolls a d20 (and may also roll a number of d6s, or add another number), then compares the final result to their target's defense, beating it if they match it or roll higher.

Characters make saves to avoid or end harmful ongoing effects, such as dragon breath, poisonous gas, being stunned by a boulder, or something similar. For a **save**, a character rolls a d20 (usually with no modifiers). On an 11 or higher, they save against the effect successfully, ending or avoiding it.

There's many more details on attacks, saves, and tactical combat in the rules in that section.

BOON AND CURSE

Some abilities give rolls **boon** or **curse**. These modifiers represent situational modifiers that can happen during a dangerous and chaotic adventure. Many character abilities will give boons built in and many enemy effects will give curse.

For narrative play, when a roll has a boon, add an additional d6 to the roll for each boon. When a roll has any curse, subtract a d6 for each curse.

For tactical combat, when a roll has a boon, roll an add a d6 to the total d20 roll for each boon. If more than one boon is added to a roll, choose the highest d6 result, no matter how many rolled. For curses, do the opposite (subtract 1d6 per curse, subtracting the highest for multiple curses).

Boons and curses cancel each other out, 1 to 1 (don't even roll).

For example:

- A character makes an attack roll with two boons and +0 to the roll. They roll 1d20, and gets a 13. They roll 2d6 (one for each boon), and gets a 3 and a 4. They take the highest boon result (a 4) and add it to the total, for $13+4 = 17$.

- A character makes a save with 2 curses and 1 blessing. The blessing cancels one curse. They roll 1d20, and get a 12, then roll 1 remaining curse and get a 4. Their total result is $12 - 4 = 8$, a failure.

SETTING AND TONE

ICON's setting is kept relatively loose for you to adapt to your game. Several aspects of narrative play and tactical combat are kept loose for you to decide what is important to you in your game. When a section of the game does this, it'll mention it directly, and give you some options or examples.

For example, non player characters that are reduced to 0 hit points in tactical combat are *defeated*. By default, the game does not assume

that defeated means dead. You can decide if you want to run a game with a different tone that players can decide whether to defeat or kill an enemy they reduce to 0 hp, if an enemy is always killed when reduced to 0 hp, or if an enemy is never killed when reduced to 0 hp unless characters take some extra action.

Here are the game's other setting elements:

SETTING CONCEITS

The game takes place in a world called Arden Eld (old Arden).

Arden Eld is **old, wild, and untamed**. Where civilization exists, it is **green, pastoral, and idyllic**, except for the cities, which are **few and far between**. There are no nations the way we think of them today, but there are tight knit communities and city states.

Arden Eld is **post apocalyptic, and full of ruins**, dungeons, caverns, and other unexplored and dangerous spaces. There was an **ancient, cruel, and technomagically advanced** empire that collapsed under its own hubris, irrevocably changing the land. In these deep and perilous spaces there is great treasure in the form of **lost magic and technology**.

Arden Eld is a **fantastic** world. The technology of Arden Eld is roughly medieval, but the existence of arkentech means there are firearms, automata, skyships, and other ancient machines all over the place. High technology tends to be **rare, coveted, and buried**.

Arden Eld is full of **monsters** that pour forth from the ruins, but those **monsters are never people**. People may contest, thwart, fight, or even try to kill the characters, but their **violence is always motivated**.

GAME CONCEITS

ICON is a game about playing **heroic characters** that **fight for their ideals**. They go on **expeditions** to **fight monsters, explore ruins, and gather power**. During **interludes**, they build, heal, and learn. Eventually they may end up changing or saving the world. Heroic in this context doesn't necessarily mean

'altruistically motivated' but fated, or larger than life.

ICON fits into a 'mythic fantasy' or 'high fantasy' type of game, where the heroes can perform feats of incredible strength, speed, or magic, and the beliefs and ideals of the heroes are central.

CHANGING THESE CONCEITS

As a game master you are welcome to change, add, or tweak any of this content for your own setting or use. Certain aspects of ICON, however, are core to the game and before running a game using this system, think carefully about these aspects.

If you want to run a game that is more grounded or low technology, it will probably not fit with the base tone and setting of this game. Characters are heroic and powerful and have many abilities that give them a lot of narrative agency. Magic and technology is everywhere.

ICON does not care about minutely tracking time, supplies, detailed wounds, etc., nor does it care about tracking currency for the most part, except when it matters.

Players always have the initiative in ICON, especially in narrative play. Running a slow, tile-by-tile dungeon crawl with traps, puzzles, etc is not well suited to ICON without modifying the way you think about these challenges. The game prefers to move through these aspects narratively and quickly.

If you want to run a nonviolent social game with little combat, it is possible, but ICON's focus on monster fighting, battles, and exploration of dangerous spaces (even if done narratively) is a core part of the game.

NARRATIVE PLAY

Narrative play is the default mode of play of ICON. Whenever you're talking, exploring, investigating, or on the move, you're probably in narrative play. It covers pretty much everything outside of tactical combat. In Narrative play, the primary goal of the players and the GM is to play to find out what happens in the story, and the **story itself is the medium of play**.

Players typically say what their characters do and say, and the game master tells them how the world or other characters respond to them. It's a bit like a conversation back and forth between the GM and the players.

Narrative play can be very loose and unstructured, and you can play a long time without touching any dice. However, **when the outcome of an action is unclear, difficult, dangerous, or contested**, a player makes an **action roll**.

THE ACTION ROLL

To make an action roll, players **state their intent**, then pick an **action** on their character sheet that they think best describes their action. Based on the action chosen, the GM judges the **risk** and **effect** of that action. Then the player makes an action roll, rolling 1d6 per dot of the chosen action and picking the highest result. For actions with a rating of 0, players roll 2d6 and pick the lowest.

Check the final result:

- **1-3:** The character fails to accomplish their goal directly and suffers the full consequences
- **4-5:** The character is successful, but at a cost
- **6:** The character is successful
- **6,6:** - Critical Hit! The character is successful and has increased effect

BONUS DICE

You might get bonus dice or dice penalties on a roll from allies helping you, in the form of Boons (+1d6) and Curses (-1d6). These cancel each other out 1 to 1.

These are sometimes written as +1d or -1d for simplicity.

The most important rule to remember is that you can't get more than +2 or -2 additional dice on any roll, no matter how many dice you get otherwise.

ACTION RATINGS

When an action roll is required, players decide which rating best fits their action.

- **Sneak** - Move with stealth and silence. Perform actions without notice. Spring an ambush.
- **Excel** - Act with concentrated precision or skill. Hit a tiny target at range. Catch a falling coin. Balance on a narrow wire. Squeeze through a tight space.
- **Survey** - Scan and assess a broad area or situation. Spot at a distance. Look for tracks, clues, paths, or hidden things.
- **Channel** - Sense, talk to, understand, or attune with magical forces or creatures. Interact with, alter, or dispel magical forces or constructs. Hold a ritual.
- **Charm** - Sway with charisma, appeals, or diplomacy. Call in favors. Cause distraction or misdirection. Lie to someone's face.
- **Command** - Use force of will and presence to lead or intimidate. Strong-arm or intimidate someone. Lead or organize a group of people.
- **Tinker** - Interact with, understand, or use alchemy, magitech, or other technology. Fix, pick, or break locks or mechanisms. Craft, deconstruct, improve, or alter technology.

- **Study** - Look at something or someone up close and with great detail. Discern someone's intentions. Perform research.
 - **Recall** - Dredge up useful lore, history, rumor, or memory. Remember important details about monsters or ruins.
 - **Traverse** - Climb, swim, leap. Run swiftly. Chase or flee. Pilot a vehicle or ride an animal.
 - **Smash** - Overwhelm with physical or magical force. Hurt someone. Throw a punch or blast down a door with a magic spell. Wreck an object or obstacle.
 - **Endure** - Push yourself to your limits. Power through pain, cold, heat, or harsh environments. Lift or drag something enormously heavy.
- When you want to move quietly past the Wyrms without it noticing you, you're probably **Sneaking**.
 - When you want to kick down the heavy dungeon door, you're probably **Smashing** it.
 - When you want to figure out how to dispel the ward over the door, you're probably **Channeling**.
 - When you want to cut the drawstrings of the guard's trousers with a swipe of your sword, you're probably **Excelling**.

You'll notice that some of these actions have a little overlap, but are flavored differently. For example, taking someone's purse from them could be cutting it from their belt (with **Excel**) - quick but not necessarily quietly. Alternately, it could be taking it quietly with **Sneak**. You could even perhaps **Charm** them to divert their attention while you take it off them. A heavy dungeon door could be **tinkered** (if it has a lock). Alternately, it could be **smashed** with a fireball, or perhaps someone could **endure** lifting and holding it open for the group to pass through.

All of these different situations have different narrative outcomes and might be more risky or more or less effective depending on the situation. The key thing is that players **always choose the approach** and the action they want to use. The GM is free to suggest actions, and also to decide **whether an action is riskier or even effective**. This is where the meat of narrative play in ICON lies. Players can use their creativity to form approaches to problems, and the GM acts as the judge to set the stakes.

RISK AND EFFECT

When a player suggests a course of action and names their goal, the GM decides how risky the action is and how effective it's going to be, based on the narrative.

Risk can be **controlled**, **risky**, or **desperate**. Effect is usually **weak**, **normal**, or **powerful**.

By default, all actions are **risky** and have **normal** effect. Risky means there is some degree of consequence if a character fails - this is usually the case! Normal effect just means that there's an expected outcome, i.e. what the player expects to happen will happen.

Controlled risk means there are few or weaker consequences for failure. When a situation or action is controlled, the character usually has a good position, plenty of time, or relative safety. **Desperate** risk means great or dire consequences for failure. When a character finds themselves in a bad situation or throws themselves into one for a faint hope, that's desperate.

When effect is **weak**, it's less effective than the player expects. For example, a character tries to **tinker** a gemstone loose that's powering a magical trap, but only succeeds in prying it out half way, making them have to take additional action. When an effect is **powerful**, it's more effective than expected. For example, a character trying to **recall** or **survey** a way out of a maze with powerful effect may figure the whole thing out and gets the party out in one roll.

NO EFFECT AND SUPERPOWERED

Sometimes the GM can judge an action can have no effect at all. For example, the GM might decide trying to **charm** monsters to persuade them that your actions are just may not have any effect. Trying to **traverse** by leaping up a 50 foot wall probably doesn't have any effect unless it's already been established your character can jump that high.

Sometimes an action has extraordinary effect, is heroic or outsized in scale, or pushes beyond mortal limits. This level of effect is called

superpowered. Characters can get a superpowered effect by pushing their effect beyond powerful through their abilities or getting a critical hit on a powerful action. A superpowered effect can accomplish feats that we normally wouldn't think possible - like **traversing** that 50 foot wall in a single leap, **smashing** a tower to rubble with a blow of your sword, **sneaking** through a whole army, or supernaturally **recalling** the exact words of an ancient emperor, lost to time.

FORTUNE

When a character is trying to accomplish a task that isn't particularly dangerous or doesn't have obvious consequences, but the action is difficult or the outcome is unclear, they can make a fortune roll. This a roll that uses **actions** as normal, but the outcome is slightly different, based on what the character is trying to do:

- **1-3:** Poor result or outcome
- **4-5:** Expected or average result or outcome
- **6:** Good result or outcome
- **6,6:** Excellent result or outcome

The most common application of these rolls is when **gathering information** about a situation, or during interludes. For example, a character **surveys** a group of monsters from a distance. The GM judges that it's too far for there to be any danger, so the player makes a fortune roll and gets a 4, getting average information.

Researching and working on long term projects are usually all fortune rolls. Tests of ability can be a fortune roll - a character can roll **traverse** to see how fast they show up at a scene, for example, or **endure** to win a drinking contest. Tests of knowledge are also usually fortune rolls. A character might roll **recall** to see how much they remember about the corrosive properties of Wyrmbile, or they might roll **tinker** to test their familiarity with a magitech device.

The GM can also make a fortune roll if they want to leave a situation up to chance. How's the weather? Is the town elder busy today? How rocky *are* the river rapids up ahead?

JUDGING RISK, EFFECT AND SETTING TONE

These two tools together - risk and effect - are kept slightly loose for a reason. They let you set the tone of the game you want to play, and also give the GM tools to judge situations based on the story.

How much can a powerful or super powered action do in your game? Can a superpowered **smash** destroy a boulder or a whole tower? Does changing the mind of the enchantress take a powerful **charm** or a normal charm? Can a character **command** a whole army by themselves with normal effect or is that effect weak without aid?

Which actions end up being more or less risky and the consequences of character action also sets the tone. If a character attempts to leap across a wide chasm, is that a **desperate** action, or merely **risky**? Can a character even jump across a chasm that wide unaided, or will they have no effect without a superpowered action?

MIGHT AND MAGIC

One last note - you might notice that there are no explicitly magical effects in the actions. The outcome of the actions and the type of action is what's important. Whether in the story your character is using their skill, physical strength, or magical forces to perform the action makes no difference - all heroes are ICONs, after all, and all equally capable of great feats. However you flavor the action is up to you - you choose which action rating you think best fits your activity in the story. **Survey** could be your character using magically enhanced eyesight to scout a situation, or just your character's keen senses. You could **sneak** on your own two feet or with a magical cloaking spell, or you can **recall** by consulting an arcane tome instead of your own memory. You could even **channel** by using your own senses, awareness, and intuition, instead of magical ability.

PLAYER INITIATIVE

In ICON narrative play, the **Game Master never rolls** (except maybe to make a fortune roll here and there, as stated above), and players always have the initiative. Non-player characters, traps, hazards, etc are not treated like individual entities with their own 'turns' or action ratings, but rather like a part of the scene or story, with

the story itself being the most important thing! Characters take action, and the GM responds by narrating what happens next.

The only way players can take consequences is through their own actions. The extent of those consequences are up to the GM, however, which could include them 'losing' the initiative by forcing them to react to a situation. In tense situations, a GM can always turn things back on the players and force them to react, even when players have a successful roll. Always look to ask the question "What do you do?"

ONE ROLL

Most tasks can be accomplished in **one roll**, but you can decide how far one roll goes in your game.

- Will one roll let you sneak into the castle, or will you need to take a series of actions?
- Will one roll let you convince the knight of your worthiness, or will you need to prove your mettle to them with further actions?
- Will one roll let you fight your way out of the monster infested flooded passage, or will you play out tactical combat to get out instead?

Stretching the value of a single roll can let you control the tone of the game and how it's framed - how much time and action is covered - and you can vary it from scene to scene.

CLOCKS

Let's think about sneaking into the castle in the section above - there may be several discrete tasks or obstacles that need to be cleared - guards, locks, trapped doors, you name it. One roll may not feel right for the purposes of this task. If the journey in doesn't particularly matter, a character *could* make a single roll to sneak in and have to figure out how to get out. Or, if this is something we want the story to brush past or montage through without much further consideration or consequence, we could do the whole thing in a single roll (perhaps this is a scene from the character's history, or the task is far below their skill).

Sometimes a task is too complex or daunting to be completed in one roll. Sometimes a task might

take more time, or multiple steps, to complete, and doing everything in one roll just doesn't feel right.

In all these cases, it's best to use a **clock!**

When you have a clear challenge or goal, you can set out a clock with an even number of segments (4, 6, 8, 10, 12). You can draw out an actual clock, split into segments, or use a tracker, or simply tick off check marks if you like. The longer the clock, the more complicated or challenging it will be to fulfill. Name the clock after the challenge or goal, not necessarily the method. For example, you can have a clock that says 'Guards', 'Traps', and 'Alarm'.

When characters take action related to a clock that would further it in some way, they will **fill in segments on that clock** with their actions on a successful roll equal to their effect:

- Fill in 2 segments for normal effect
- 1 for weak,
- 3 for powerful,
- and 5 for super powered actions.

When the clock fills up completely, the **task or challenge it represents is complete or surpassed**. No further action is necessary from the characters.

In the previous example, we could set out a single clock (maybe a longer one, such as 10 segments) for the whole castle, called something like 'The Castle'. Alternately, we could set out a few (shorter) clocks representing each major obstacle as the characters come across them - like 'Guard in the hallway', 'Big complex lock', 'Hidden Trapped Room', judging the characters successful if these smaller clocks are filled in.

Clocks abstract out a whole task, scene, or series of events. It's certainly possible to just use a series of normal rolls for many complex tasks (and a lot of tables will play that way). However, using clocks to represent complicated tasks ensures you're only rolling when there's persistent narrative tension, constrains the number of rolls made for any given task, and creates clear parameters for success. It allows the story to progress and means you don't have to waste time lingering on tasks that would otherwise require a lot of rolling, all of which we find extremely

effective for speeding up play. You can use them to move more quickly and efficiently through narrative scenes. If you'd prefer to keep things looser, then don't worry over making clocks for every little thing.

PROJECT CLOCKS

You can easily use clocks to track progress on a long term project, especially the kind that characters might try to work on during an interlude.

PROGRESS CLOCKS

You can also use clocks to track the status or time pressure of a larger ongoing situation in the world or campaign, such as a war, a spreading Blight, a faction's political influence, or an assassination plot. These progress clocks tend to move by themselves. Tick segments on these clocks when the story or campaign moves forward. A good time to do this is after an interlude. When ticking these clocks, tick one segment if the situation progressed a little, two if it progressed as normal, and three if there was great progress. For example, if you have a clock tracking the progress of a war and it's drawing to a close, you might tick three segments on that clock at the end of downtime.

FAILURE STATES

You can also create clocks that fill up as a result of failures, rather than successes, establishing fail states for situations. These clocks get filled in as consequences of failed rolls or complications of Risky or Heroic rolls. For example, if a group of PCs were trying to flee from a band of mercenaries, you might set out two clocks: one that represents the PCs' safe escape and one that represents the mercenaries catching up to them and forcing a fight. The Escape clock fills up when PCs successfully put some distance between them and their pursuers, while the Capture clock fills up when they either fail those actions or have to make trade-offs. You might fill in two segments whenever a PC fails a roll and fill in a single segment as a complication if they roll a 4-5.

GM PRINCIPLES

Here are some basic principles for the GM to follow when running ICON:

- **Keep away from 'no'.** 'Yes, and...', and 'Yes, but...' keep the story moving and keep things in the player's hands. You can always tell a character an action isn't possible given their approach without denying them completely. Offer alternative approaches or suggestions to problems, and let player creativity be rewarded. "You can't open that door by smashing it down by yourself, it's too heavy. If you could find something strong to use as a battering ram though..."
- **Let players choose how to move the action forward.** Give players choices and let them choose how to proceed. Players should nearly always be the ultimate drivers of action in your story, not your NPCs, plots, or events. You can always force the players to react by throwing something unexpected on at them if you want to mix it up. "Railroading", or taking away player agency, only typically becomes a problem when you deny players the chance to take action or intervene in a situation.
- **Play to find out what happens.** It's perfectly fine to have a plan or outline for a session or expedition. If there's a scene or event you really want to happen, however, and the players totally avoid it, then let it happen! You can find a way to introduce it later. Players will often deviate from the path you lay out for them, and the story is often better for it.
- **Foreshadow consequences and threats.** If you're going to shoot someone with a crossbow, show the players a glint of it from a window first. If the fall off the mountain is going to inflict critical harm, you should probably tell players how steep and dangerous the mountain path looks. The game has a very easy way to foreshadow threats built in with *risk*.
- **Make characters look good.** Characters are heroes. If they fail, they should never fail due to incompetency.

COMPLICATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

Characters take some sort of consequences or complications for their actions on any final action

result except a 6 - something that will happen fairly often!

Consequences are typically narrative in nature and will depend on the nature of the action that the character is taking in the fiction. For example, a character trying to leap a chasm might fall, stumble, or find themselves clinging to the edge if they don't get a full success. The severity of consequences should **depend on the risk** of the action that a character is taking, with **more severe consequences the worse the risk was**. For a controlled action, consequences are minor, for a desperate action major, and for a standard risk action they should be somewhere in the middle. In the previous example, a character might fall completely into the chasm if the action was desperate (probably getting majorly hurt!), find themselves clinging to the edge on a risky action, and maybe drop something on the way over in a controlled action but otherwise make it over safely.

Here's some broad suggestions for the GM when inflicting consequences.

1. **Put someone in a bad spot** - Increase the risk of their next action. Put them in a worse position than before, like teetering on the edge of a cliff, separated from the group, sliding off a rooftop, or in the middle of a crowded guard post.
2. **Start a ticking clock** - Start a ticking clock for a much worse consequence. Perhaps a character knocks a pillar, now the whole room is about to collapse.
3. **Tick an existing clock** - Tick 1-2 segments for a partial success, tick 2-3 for a failure. If the action was desperate or controlled tick more or less.
4. **Offer a hard choice** - Make characters choose between two harder outcomes - do you want to recover the key to the ancient door or let the treasure chest fall into the abyss?
5. **Weigh them down** - Present characters with a sudden obstacle or hindrance - pin them under a heavy boulder, give them an annoying hanger-on at the party, blow out all the torches and make the room pitch black
6. **Make them lose initiative** - The character misses a window of opportunity or loses valuable time. They lose sight of the thief they're pursuing, a door slams shut on them,

or they are late to the peace summit. Put them on the back foot.

7. **Reduce effect** - Give characters less effect on a successful action, perhaps making them have to roll again.
8. **Inflict strain, as established** - Inflict **strain**. There's more on strain below. For a risky action, inflict 2, for a controlled action, 1. For a desperate action, inflict 4 strain, or in rare cases, inflict critical strain.

FORESHADOWING CONSEQUENCES

It's good practice as a GM to foreshadow or hint at the possible consequences behind a character's actions. This is especially important for consequences with hard outcomes, such as strain. *Establish* consequences in the story first. This is pretty easy and intuitive to do:

- "The robber levels their dagger at your chest. It looks pretty sharp."
- "You can take a shortcut to get ahead of the fleeing courier, but you'll lose sight of her - better hope you catch up."
- "You can definitely sneak past the sleeping giant, but he's sleeping lightly and the slightest noise will probably wake him up."

Sometimes players will even suggest possible outcomes or consequences for their own actions - in which case you should run with it. You can also communicate this pretty easily by setting risk for actions. Don't worry too much about doing it every time, just try to remember when you inflict hard or severe outcomes to communicate the possible outcomes before the character takes the action - and allow players to back out of their ideas if they want. This helps the game feel fair.

STRAIN AND BURDENS

When a character is physically hurt, mentally drained, or narrowly avoids injury from a situation, they take **strain**.

In base ICON, characters are heroic and larger than life. Only the stresses and stakes of **tactical combat** can **truly hurt characters**. Outside of combat, they take **strain**. Taking strain represents the mental and physical effort a character must put into avoid serious bodily

injury, taking injury anyway and pushing through the pain, taking mental stresses, or suffering through a difficult situation. Strain can represent everything from actual bodily injury to exhaustion, enervation, tiredness, or exposure to the elements. Strain taken is 1, 2, or 4. Characters can also take critical strain.

Average strain is 2, usually taken as a result of **risky** actions. This is usually something like getting swiped at by an average monster, a short but painful fall, slashed at by a weapon, eating something poisoned, exhausted from a long trek, frozen in the blinding wind, dizzy from a lack of sleep, etc.

Minor strain is 1, usually taken as a result of **controlled** actions - still enough to be painful. Bad bumps, scrapes, minor wounds, animal bites, tiredness, sickness, etc.

Major strain is 4, usually taken as a result of **desperate** actions. Major strain is something very painful or hurtful, like a long fall, getting smashed by a boulder, smacked around by a large monster, burned by a fireball, going days without sleep or food, getting badly sick or poisoned, shot in a vital place with an arrow, etc.

Critical strain is something that a normal person probably wouldn't survive, such as falling off a cliff, getting crushed in the jaws of a wyrm, falling into lava, riddled with arrows, etc. You'll survive - you're an ICON after all, but in order to do so, you'll have to push through a lot.

BREAKS AND BURDENS

Characters have a limited number of strain boxes, usually 4. If they **would tick a box** and their boxes are **already full**, or if they take **critical strain**, they **break** and are too hurt or overwhelmed to continue in the current scene, unable to move or act on their own. A **broken** character only act by pushing or receiving aid (see more on stress below). When they do, they don't get the regular benefits of pushing or gaining aid, just the ability to act normally.

When a character breaks, they clear their strain boxes and take a **burden**, and at the end of the scene they cease to be broken and can act normally.

A **burden** is more long-term strain to a character and represents the mental and physical ordeal of the adventuring life. How much a burden interferes with a character is up to that character's player, but they get xp for letting it do so. When you take a burden, write the nature of the burden underneath it. It could be a long term injury of some kind that the character ignores, scars, a change in attitude, tiredness, sickness, etc.

Possible burdens (not an exhaustive list, just examples):

- **Injuries:** broken leg, broken arm, gashed ribs, monster bite, etc
- **Corruption:** Infection, disease, illness, dark magic
- **Negative emotions:** Anger, resentment, jealousy, rage, hatred
- **Exhaustion:** tiredness, ennui, sadness

INVOKING BURDENS

If a character has any burdens, they can invoke their burdens in narrative play. The GM chooses one of the following, based on the nature of the burden.

- **Get into trouble** - the character starts trouble, requiring some action to get out of it
- **Increase the risk** of their actions this scene (typically to desperate)
- **Reduce the effect** of their actions this scene to weak

For example, a character has the 'Broken Leg' burden and chooses to invoke it when their party is doing a scene to climb a mountain. The GM decides that this characters actions will be more risky during this scene because of the leg.

'Get into trouble' means starting trouble where there is none. For example, a character with the 'exhausted' burden decides to get into trouble. The GM decides this character wanders off, not aware of their surroundings, while the party is traversing a monster-infested tunnel. A character with the 'anger' burden decides to get into trouble - the GM decides that the character acts out at an inopportune moment.

When getting into trouble or invoking a burden means changing a character's behavior or making them act out-of-character, the GM can say what happens but it can be up to the player to act it out.

If you invoked a burden **at least once** during a session **get 1 xp** at the end of that session per separate burden you invoked.

HEALING BURDENS AND STRAIN

Characters can heal **all strain** when they **camp** or when they finish an **interlude**.

Burdens can *only* be healed during an interlude, during the special **Heal Burdens** step. Burdens are represented with a clock of 4, 6, or 8 segments, and characters can only heal them slowly. Characters can fill in any burden they like when they take one.

3 BURDENS

A character with 3 burdens can still break, clearing all strain, but doesn't mark an extra burden. Instead of recovering and returning to themselves at the end of the scene, however, they remain broken until the expedition is over (they can still push or receive aid to act normally).

A character with 3 burdens is in bad shape emotionally and physically and can often be 'retired' or take a break from adventuring - they can still heal burdens during interludes and can return to expeditions after healing.

COMBAT IN ICON

ICON has a tactical combat system, but this system doesn't have to get used to represent every occasion when violence breaks out. You have a couple options, including not playing with tactical combat at all!

USE TACTICAL COMBAT

By default, ICON assumes GMs and other players will be using the tactical combat system in the second half of this book. This system is only for when the *stakes or the tension are high* and must be resolved through combat. In tactical combat, characters can **actually be hurt or killed**, and they are going to use the **full extent of their might** - all their destructive magical and physical power. If the scene doesn't warrant that, or the

characters don't have the ability to go all out, it's not worth tactical combat. For most situations involving violence, assess whether it's important enough to dip into tactical combat. If you get into other situations, it might be better to play it out as a narrative scene, using clocks. This is a way you can set the tone and pacing for your game.

- Is a bar brawl a tactical combat, where the stakes are high and characters will use the full extent of their powers and abilities, or is it a narrative scene using Excel, Smash, Endure, and Command to overwhelm and outwit your rowdy opponents?
- If the local militia shows up to arrest the players, is that a tactical combat or a negotiation? Can it degrade into a tactical combat or can players make other rolls to avoid fighting?
- If the characters find a large Arkogre guarding the entrance to a dungeon, can they talk to it, or will they have to fight it in tactical combat if they fail to sneak past?

Transitioning into tactical combat is usually done smoothly out of narrative scenes or as a tension break when things go sour. When the characters fail to sneak past the Relict, when they burst into the baron's hall hell bent on confronting them, or when they stand in defense of the town as the wave of monsters approaches.

NARRATIVE COMBAT

As an alternative or companion to tactical combat, you can play combat scenes out exactly like you'd play out any other narrative scene - using action rolls, clocks to track challenges, etc.

COMBAT ACTIONS

If using narrative combat, you can use a character's **combat ratings** when they inflict violence in narrative play. There are three ratings:

- **Skirmish:** Act with mobile, fast, and quiet violence. *Powerful* against numerous foes, but *Weak* against larger, tougher, or armored foes.
- **Snipe:** Act with long range, precise, but slow violence. *Less Risky* at a distance. *More Risky* up close.

- **Crush:** Act with strong, loud, and close violence. *Powerful* against larger, tougher, or armored foes. *Weak* against numerous foes.

Characters start with **one rating at 2, one at 1, and one at 0**, and can improve them like any other action rating. The flavoring and theming of a character's action and attacks is up to the player, and any rating could be used for physical or magical combat.

In a narrative combat situation, characters don't have to just use combat ratings, but can use any action to progress a clock, as long as its effective.

In this situation, don't treat monsters or foes like you would in a traditional rpg, but instead use clocks, risk, and effect to represent them. The GM can adjudicate or adjust these based on the qualities of the foes characters are facing, deciding which actions in the moment would be more or less effective.

For example, characters are fighting a Wyrms in open combat. The Wyrms itself might be represented with a 10 or 12 segment clock (a pretty powerful foe!) with segments filled in as characters take actions against it. A character flinging daggers at a mighty armored wyrm with **Skirmish** might have no effect, or be a weak and desperate action. A different character trying to hit that wyrm's weak scale with a **snipe** action might have normal effect and the action might merely be risky. However, another character using **Survey** might try and spot openings for the rapier-wielding player, changing their effect, or a character might use **Smash** to topple a pillar onto the Wyrms to immobilize it, **Endure** to grapple its jaws and hold its attention, **Charm** to distract it, etc. All these actions can key into each other and all of them could potentially fill out the Wyrms' clock to defeat it.

CHAPTER

Chapter is a rough approximation of power level in ICON, and narrative play is no exception. The following rule applies for Chapter in narrative play:

When the players come across a challenge, assign a Chapter to it. Chapter 1 is for threats and

challenges characters could be expected to handle as beginning adventurers. Chapter 2 is for established adventurers, and Chapter 3 is for legendary adventurers.

Character's actions are **more effective** and **less risky** against threats and challenges 1 chapter lower than them. Against threats and challenges 2 chapters lower than them, characters can surpass them without rolling at all, or in one roll.

The opposite is true. Character's actions are **less effective** or **more risky** (or both!) against challenges 1 chapter higher than them, and have reduced effect twice and increased risk against challenges 2 or more chapters higher, which could mean they have no effect at all!

Characters can tackle higher Chapter threats by mitigating risk and effect as normal, such as through using Superpowered actions.

In the above example with the Wyrms, the GM might rule that the Wyrms is a Chapter 2 foe, a powerful monster, and players will be less effective against it (and take more risky actions) if they want to tackle it now. Or they could rule it's a legendary monster and players have no current recourse against it without special preparation or superpowered actions.

What constitutes chapter appropriate depends on the tone of your game, and what superpowered effect can do in your game. Here's some examples for a game I'd run, however:

Chapter 1

- Fighting a small band of bandits or an average monster
- Scaling a high manor wall
- Swimming across a river
- Surviving in the wilderness for a few weeks
- Sneaking into a camp undetected
- Charming a merchant into better prices
- Commanding a few lackeys
- Deciphering odd runes from a ruin

Chapter 2

- Fighting a large group of well trained soldiers
- A tough, intelligent, or powerful monster
- Scaling a huge castle wall
- Sneaking into a guarded castle
- Riding a monster without a saddle

- Forging a new set of armor in a night and a day
- Creating a new legendary alchemical formula
- Enduring a fall off a high peak
- Riling up an entire crowd into revolution

Chapter 3

- Commanding an entire army
- Fighting a whole regiment of soldiers by yourself
- Traverse by flying through the air
- A legendary monster
- Scaling an epic peak with your bare hands
- Swimming across an ocean channel
- Stealing the crown off the king's head while he holds court
- Surviving being hurled into a hostile dimension for a few weeks
- Charming an ancient sorcerer into aiding you
- Making ground-breaking discoveries in magitech. Forging new forms of magic.

You can absolutely adjust this up or down. Perhaps Chapter 3 actions are less heroic or high fantasy and require superpowered effect to accomplish.

PLAYER CHARACTERS IN NARRATIVE PLAY

In ICON, every character has a unique drive - something that represents how they move through and interact with the world. This is called their **Bond**. You can think about it like a character 'class' or archetype, except your character's Bond is purely for narrative play. Think about how your character acts around other people, what motivates them, and what ideals they hold near - that's your Bond.

Each Bond gives you bonuses to certain actions and powers that help you play to that archetype or give your own unique spin on it. When you make a character, you'll choose the Bond you'll have for the rest of the game, with some exceptions.

Bonds all have some variation of the following features:

- Ideals
- Stress
- Bond Powers

IDEALS

These short sentences or activities can be ticked if you performed them during a session at least once. At the end of a session, if you ticked at least one, get 1 xp. If you ticked all of them, get 2 xp.

STRESS

All Bonds have a certain number of *stress* boxes (usually 3). By default, stress can be used in the following ways:

- **Push:** Tick 1 stress to add +1 Boon (+1d6) to any action roll or improve its effect (normal > powerful) for example
- **Aid:** Tick 1 stress to help another character. They get +1 Boon on their action, but you also share in any consequences of their action (strain, bad situations, etc). A character can only benefit from aid once on an action roll.
- **Resistance:** Tick 1 stress to reduce strain suffered as a consequence of your actions by 1. Can only be taken once per roll.
- **Team Action:** You make an action as a group. Choose a leader, who spends 2 stress. The leader makes an action with *increased effect* and the outcome or consequences apply to the whole group. For example, a Team Sneak can get a whole group of characters through a difficult situation. A team narrative combat action (like Snipe or Skirmish) lets a whole group fight at once.

Some characters have more or less stress boxes, or can use stress in different ways.

If a character is maxed out on stress, they're **stressed out**. A stressed out character can't spend any more stress and some Bonds may get bonuses when they're stressed out.

STRESS RELIEF

Characters relieve all stress when they finish an **Interlude** or when they **camp**. They can also heal it any time by fulfilling their stress relief triggers, unticking a box each time this happens. These are different for each Bond, and can only trigger once in the same scene. They sometimes get you into trouble.

USING STRESS WHILE BROKEN

If you're broken in a scene (you maxed out on harm and took a burden), if you push or receive aid, you can act normally for a single roll. You don't get the bonus die or effect, however.

BOND POWERS

Bond Powers are special abilities that either give you the ability to do something without rolling, or boost your existing actions or abilities. They are very powerful and help distinguish your character. You can further define what your characters' specific powers look like and where they come from.

- **Scene:** Some powers or Bond features (like stress relief) apply until the end of the current *scene*, or can only trigger once a scene. A scene is a contiguous series of events where we don't 'cut away' from the action. When we enter a new sequence of action or dialogue (like a new room in a dungeon, a new challenge, a different conversation happening in a different place) the previous scene is over. This is pretty easy to judge naturalistically.
- **Limited Powers:** Certain Bond Powers can only be used by spending Stress, and many can only be used a certain number of times per game session. You get these powers back at the start of a new session.
- **Range:** A few powers have a loose effect range - these are hand (within hand's reach), close (within speaking distance), far (within shouting distance), and vision (within distance of vision)

GAMBITS

Normally you can only take powers from your own Bond. However, once you have four powers from your own bond (including your starting power), you can take a Gambit, which is a power from any bond.

KNACKS

Some powers give you a knack. A knack is a skill or area of expertise or knowledge, usually specific. When you can apply your knack to a roll, get +1 Boon (+1d6) on the roll.

SET UP

All characters can make an action roll to **set up** another character - for example by distracting the merchant while your ally sneaks up behind them, studying a monster for a weak point, or charming a mercenary your ally wants to hire. Your roll has no effect by itself, and you can still take consequences, but your ally gets +1 boon or increased effect on the action you set up if your roll is successful. Some bond powers give more powerful set ups or key off setups.

PLAY EXAMPLE

Here's a quick play example.

PLAY EXAMPLE: THE HALL OF DEATH

The GM is playing with two players, Alice and Marco. Alice's character has the Bond of the Mighty, James' character has the bond of the Pathfinder.

The character are exploring a ruin and reach a hallway. The GM knows this hallway is trapped with pressure plates (on the floor) which will cause poison darts to fly out from the far wall. A tough scenario!

The GM can do a couple things here. If characters take action without checking the hallway out, the traps end up being an obvious *consequence* for their actions, and their actions are probably risky, if not desperate! If characters take a moment to survey the hallway and get good information, the GM can make their actions more effective or more controlled moving forward, since they know about the traps.

The GM can also decide to let the whole thing get covered in *one roll*. Or, if the trap is more dangerous or complicated, they can set up a clock for it.

The GM can use good practices and *foreshadow threats* here by showing the players that the hall might be trapped.

Let's see some permutations of each of these scenarios.

The introduction:

GM: You come to a long stone hallway, choked with dust, and probably only wide enough for one person at a time to move down. It's pretty long and the far end is too dark to see. Propped against the wall on your side is an old rusty breastplate, a piece of armor long abandoned, as though someone took it off in a hurry. It's pock-marked with small holes.

One roll, players don't gather information:

Alice: I forge ahead, carefully.

GM (taking the initiative): Ok! There's a click as you step on a pressure plate. You hear the soft hiss of air at the other end of the room, and you see a flurry of darts heading your way! What do you do? Your action is probably going to be pretty risky.

Alice: Damn. Ok... I'm going to bring my shield up and try and *endure* the darts.

GM: Great, I'd say that's pretty effective but desperate.

Alice rolls 3 dice for her character's Endure action and rolls a 1, 2, and 5, a mixed success. Darts shoot into her character, inflicting 3 strain on her.

Alice's player chooses to spend 1 stress for resistance to reduce the strain by 1. The darts having activated, the hall is clear and the characters can move on.

One roll, gathering information:

Alice: I'm going to check this hall out.

GM: Ok, give me a fortune roll for that, since you seem safe where you are.

Alice (rolls survey, gets a 4): I'm going to survey the hall for threats. A 4.

GM: Squinting your eyes, you can just make out strange cracks in the floor ahead of you. It's hard to tell, but you're pretty sure this hall is trapped, with pressure plates.

The scenario plays out as above, but the risk for Alice's character's action is now controlled, since she knows about the trap. Now she only takes 1 strain when she's hit by the darts, which she spends resistance to ignore.

Using a Clock, gathering information

The GM decides this trap is a bigger threat, something they want to spend a short scene on.

They set out a 6 segment clock to represent the hall.

Marco: I have a bad feeling about this hall. I'm going to get closer to *study* the stonework

GM: Ok, give me a roll. It's a little riskier to study since you have to get close, but I'll say its more effective. I'll say its still controlled.

Marco (rolls study, gets a 1): Ok, I'll take it. I have 0 in survey so I'd rather use study. Ah, a 1.

GM (Inflicting strain): Oh yeah, it's definitely trapped. A flurry of darts shoot out through the darkness right at you. Since your action was more powerful, I'm giving you some progress on this clock (*The GM ticks 2 segments on the clock.*

Normally they'd tick 1 or none on a '1' roll).

However, you're still getting shot, for only 1 strain, and you're sure there's more plates in the hall.

Marco: I'll take it.

Alice: Can I boost Marco's character on my shield to get them across the hall and give them a bonus die?

GM: Sure. You can make a roll to set up Marco if you like, or just tick a stress to aid him.

Alice: Ok. I'm going to roll for it. Is... *excel* a good action for this?

GM: Probably, or *smash*, I think, since you're using force.

Alice: My smash is better, so I'll use that.

GM: Ok, it's going to be controlled risk for you I think

Alice (rolling a 4): A 4.

GM (putting her in a worse spot): Great, you boost Marco in the air. However, you have to take a couple steps forward, and now you're in the middle of the hallway. Anything you do from here is going to be way more risky.

Marco: Let's do this. I'm going to traverse by kicking off the walls. I'm also going use my pathfinder power *Windrider* to *push myself* for another die and choose to *not touch the floor*.

GM: Great, that's two bonus dice, one from Alice's character and one from your push, and you have better effect from your cool power. I'll say since you don't have to touch the floor, your action is going to be less risky, so instead of being risky it's going to be controlled.

Marco (Rolling 1,2,2,3): Great. Oh shit, a 3.

GM: No problem. You still get two ticks on the clock from your better effect (*The GM ticks two more segments, bringing the clock to 4/6*).

Marco: Ok, but I'm a dead man, right?

GM (offering a choice): Your action was controlled thanks to your power, so you don't get riddled with darts, but you've got a tough choice. You don't make it quite down the hall, and you're close enough to see the mechanism. Do you try and leap forward disable it now, and maybe get poisoned for your trouble, or do you try and make another roll? I'll let you finish the clock right now if you want.

Marco: I'm going for it.

GM: Ok! You dive forward and jam your blade into the mechanism. A vaporous cloud of poison pours out from the dart holes as the trap deactivates. You're going to take 2 strain from the poison.

Marco: Ouch. That would give me a burden.

Alice: Can I use my stress ability to take the strain instead by pushing Marco aside?

GM: Yeah... but you're not close enough - you were put in a bad position, right?

Alice: Ah, ok. Can I just throw my shield and smash the mechanism before it manages to poison Marco?

GM (Avoiding saying 'no' to this creative solution): Sure, I think that would reduce the strain, but give me a roll. Risky, since you're trying to do it quickly from far away!

Alice: Ok, I'm going to use 1 stress to push this. (Rolls 2, 3, 6). A 6!

GM: Cool. You hurl your shield and crumble the wall, sealing off the vapor. Marco only takes 1 strain.

Marco: Nice.

FLEXIBILITY AND TONE

You can see each of these scenarios changes both the narrative weight of the scene, and the number of actions players need to overtake it. For example, a player with powerful or superpowered effect could take care of the clock in the third example with just one or two rolls!

Think about how this scenario might change depending on the tone of game you want to run. In a more grounded game, maybe getting riddled with darts is more strain, or even critical strain on a desperate action. Maybe diving down the hallway, bouncing off the walls, isn't possible without powerful or superpowered effect (Marco did use an ability there to justify it, so keep that in mind).

If the characters are in a higher chapter than the treat, a hall like this, in the fiction, may not pose much of a threat. The GM can ignore it, make it a single roll, or make it a shorter clock. If the characters are in a lower chapter than the hallway, maybe it poses a huge threat and is super risky, and the character's actions are less effective.

MAKING A CHARACTER

To make a character in ICON:

1. First choose what kind of **Kin** they are, then choose what **Culture** they're from. Get an action bonus based on your culture.
2. Pick a **Bond** that you think represents your character narratively. You can choose **one bond power**, take the Bond's basic actions, and can fill in **4 more dots on actions**, taking none higher than 3 right now. If you're using narrative combat, fill in combat ratings (2,1,0).
3. If you're playing with tactical combat, then, pick a **Job** for tactical combat. You get two **abilities** from your job. There's more on tactical combat and all jobs after this section.

You're done! In the first session you can choose something for your **camp** with your group and set out on your first expedition.

FOLK OF ARDEN ELD

The collective peoples and folk of ICON are collectively referred to as Kin. Kin have lived in Arden Eld since time immemorial.

When you make a character, choose what Kintype you are. There's no statistical or mechanical differences in game terms for whatever Kin you pick. It's true, for example, that Troggs as a whole are larger and stronger than most Thrynn. However, each individual is different, and more importantly **you are a hero**.

Your bond is more important for determining the kind of person you are. If you want to play up the unique attributes of your Kin, you can pick a bond that fits that fantasy, and pick actions that fill out what you want your character to be strong at. A strong, physically powerful Trogg may want to pick the Mighty Bond. An agile Xixo who is an excellent swimmer may pick the Pathfinder bond.

Broadly speaking members of all Kin can be found in every part of the world and every walk of life in ICON, and none have any ancestral nation, 'homeland', or monoculture, especially due to the ancient influence of the Arken Empire.



THRYNN

The Aethrynn, or Thrynn (most commonly) are found everywhere across Arden Eld. They are an adaptable, diverse people with a strong sensitivity to Aether and a strong connection to arkentech, some say because they are direct descendants of the Arken that survived or fled the Doom and the dark age that followed. They make up a large part of airship crews and captains in the great Guilds due to their potential for aether sensitivity making them excellent pilots.

Thrynn are made up of a dazzling swathe of backgrounds that span the continent. They tend to live in clans that cluster into villages, towns, and city associations. Symbology and culture of the ancient Thrynn clans, called the Seven Families, are present in many modern cultures of Arden Eld, and some draw strength and purpose from their ancient texts and teachings.

Some Thrynn will occasionally have small glowing 'star-marks' on their body, especially when attuned to or channeling strong sources of Aether.

These can form constellations of stars or twisting branch-like patterns under their skin. Occasionally these marks are strong enough that even being near to a strong source of Aether is enough to light them up.

Very rarely, Thryn are born with delicate vestigial insect-like wings, not capable of flight. Children born this way are given special attention, having been divinely marked, and often have roles in the community leadership or priesthood prepared for them. They may grow into these roles or eventually reject them.



TROGG

Troggs, also called Ogres, are horned demi-giants that are few in number but outsize in stature. Legend has it that the Troggs descend from the Titans who originally kept the four pillars of the world stable before they were slain by the Arken, or at least have some titan blood running through their veins. Adult Troggs typically stand anywhere between six and eight feet tall, and never stop growing throughout their very long lifetimes, sometimes living four or five hundred years and growing to truly enormous stature. All have horns of various size and shapes, and some are born

with tails. The Troggs reproduce slowly, have few children, and treasure them greatly. Trogg children spend a long time maturing and only reach adulthood around forty years old.

Like other Kin, Troggs are hugely diverse in their backgrounds and cultures but due to their small number tend to be loners or outsiders to the communities they join. In legends, they are supernaturally tolerant of heat and can handle even molten metal with their bare hands, though how much this holds up in real life varies from Trogg to Trogg. Very traditional Troggs worship the Elden Flame, the primal force of creation, and give themselves over to the study of smithing or the aetherial arts. Since Trogg artisans live a long time, they can accumulate several lifetimes of knowledge that Kin from a similar background could accumulate.



BEASTFOLK

The variety of animal-like Kin found across Arden Eld can be broadly called Beastfolk. They are the most common Kin and the most diverse physically. There are many clans of beast folk:

- *The Lopen* are cat or rabbit-like folk originally from the great plains.
- *The Garou* are wolf or dog-like folk from the deep forest and islands.
- *The Goblins* or *Vodya* are amphibious river-dwelling kin.
- *The Lorito* are feathered, birdlike kin originally hailing from the high steppe.

Beastfolk tend to be shorter in stature than Thrynn, though some are taller and hardier. They live around the same time as Thrynn and typically (but not always) have large families. Beast folk are present in every culture, from desert dwelling nomads, to pastoral farmers, to city guilds.

Traditional Beastfolk have a strong connection to the earth and the forest. They are strong woodsfolk, hearty eaters, and excellent hunters. They have better senses than other Kin and are sensitive to the changes in wind, moisture, and earth that signal the weather, the crops, or the changing of the seasons. Their excellent sense of taste and smell lead a lot of beastfolk to become excellent cooks (or picky eaters).

XIXO

The insectile or crustacean-like Xixo (ZIK-zo) are a group of water-dwelling kin that can traditionally be found as traders up and down the waterways of Arden Eld. Xixo are excellent swimmers and can hold their breath for long periods of time (up to an hour). They vary widely in physiology, though they are unique in that during spawning season they can change sex, and many Xixo swap around throughout their lives. Though they can have weak eyesight, they are highly sensitive to smell and chemical signals and Xixo can communicate simply emotions or moods to each other through pheromonal markers, leading to the stereotype that they can read each other's minds.

Though individual Xixo live much shorter lives than other Kin, typically living until their mid 40s, they have perfect memories, able to recall everything in their lives with absolute clarity. A common understanding among the Xixo is that other Kin are terribly cursed - living twice as long as the Xixo, but eventually forgetting a large part of their lives.



CULTURES OF ARDEN ELD

When you make a character, choose what their cultural background is. Unlike your ancestry, these do give you **+1 to two specific actions** as they represent your background, upbringing, or skills.

Culture is far more important than Kintype. A Trogg and a Xixo from the same village are far more alike than two Troggs from different part of the world.

These are the six broad cultures of Arden Eld and don't necessarily represent every culture present in the world. Every type of Kin is present in every culture in varying degrees.

YEOKIN

+1 to two: Survey, Traverse, or Endure

The vast majority of people in Arden Eld live in the Green, the swathes of peaceful farmland, villages, townships, and trading posts in between the arkenruins. Life in the villages is hard work but generally pleasant, and organized around the

yearly harvests. Neighboring villages tend to depend on each other for trade, safety, and information, and come together for festivals (of which there are many, especially in the summer months). The villages typically are run by a city elder, or a council of elders and have a strong connection to nature and its cycles. Faithful villagers tend to pay their respects to the spirits or the Titans at local forest shrines or holy sites such as pools or groves.

Villagers tend to be proud of their local traditions, festivals, and gods. Most villages have a regional cooking or craft specialty, and people will often visit from many towns over just to sample them. One village might specialize in iron and smithing work, another might be known for the quality of its steamed buns, and another might have miles of beautiful grazing pastures and be known for the quality of its milk and dairy products.

Regional village councils sometimes will gather a militia to defend against a surfacing ruin or a blight, and those towns very close to the ruins typically have a wall to keep out roaming monsters. Many villages, especially those deep in the wilderness, will train some or most of their members in old and secretive martial arts techniques unique to each village that can be used to defend the village in times of crisis.

Community, hard work, respect for nature, and family are strong values for Yeokin. Outsiders can sometimes see them as parochial, stubborn, and uncultured.

ISLANDER

+1 to two: Smash, Endure or Command

The islands around Arden Eld are an oddity, in that most of the arkenruins out there are sunken beneath the ocean. Unfortunately, this has only made them more active. The island chains are beautiful, sun-soaked places that seem paradise-like to many Kin, but the people that live there are tough and disciplined, having to constantly defend their idyllic-seeming homes from horrors that rise unendingly from the sea. Islanders are prolific sailors, strong drinkers, and prodigious fighters. They tend to have a dark sense of humor and more than a touch of bravado. Most of their living is made through fishing, carpentry, mercenary work, and through trade and

commerce with the mainland. Islanders have strong taboos about going back on promises, and value someone's word very strongly.

Respect for strength, a healthy sense of humor, reliability, and independence are all strong values for Islanders. Outsiders can sometimes see them as insular, surly, or loud.

LEGGIO

+1 to two: Excel, Tinker, or Survey

The villages of the Green rely on a healthy network of trade caravans, peddlers, crafts-kin, menders, and healers of all kinds. Parts of these networks are made up of local farmers and traders, but over time some of the caravans have grown into permanent residences and a quasi-religious way of life for the people that crew them, who have come to be known as the Leggio. Their massive, colorful caravans make seasonal rotations around Arden Eld, stopping in the cities to resupply, and are broadly welcome wherever they show up, since it means a chance to buy, repair, and indulge in all the necessities and luxuries so sorely missed. The Leggio always eat well and trade fairly with the towns, and will often take on travelers who are seeking safe passage to the next village, post, or city.

Nearly all Leggio have some sort of family trade or skill they are specialized in (sometimes multiple), and many famous or legendary artisans, smiths, and weapon makers come from old Leggio families. Leggio Grand Caravans can be two (or sometimes three!) stories high and are carved with family histories. They are pulled by draft beasts and sometimes captive monsters, who are kept docile by Leggio beast tamers.

Leggio are nearly all armed and trained in fighting since they were young as they often have to pass through dangerous or blighted areas in order to reach a town in need. They regard their duty to keep towns supplied as sacred and pray to the Titan of chance to give them safe passage.

Craft, sociability, discipline, and hospitality are all strong values for Leggio. Outsiders can sometimes see them as brash, overly friendly, or nosy.

CHURNER

+1 to two: Sneak, Charm, or Traverse

A sporadic, nomadic culture, churners live a dangerous and daring existence, especially compared to most people of Arden Eld. In their caravans and camps, they follow around Arkenruins as they surface, and make their living off them in whatever way they can. Sometimes this involves venturing into the ruins themselves (though never too far for most Churners, they leave that up to the adventurers and the foolhardy), and scraping Dust from the ruins, or searching the surface levels for fragments of Arkentech. Most of the time this involves directly servicing the adventurers themselves who venture into the ruins by supplying them with necessary food, supplies, arms and armor, and elixirs. When a new ruin is discovered or surfaces from deep beneath the earth, it is not uncommon for a Churner camp to appear at the edge shortly after, like a spray of brightly blossoming flowers over a grave.

Especially brave Churners will sometimes set up shop within the surface levels of a dungeon, sometimes maintaining large crops of herbs, fungi, or other staples that will only grow in the dust-soaked environment of the arkenruins. The more daring of them will hire themselves out as guides, tinkers, or hirelings for wealthier adventurers. Due to their unique living circumstances, most Churners tend to know more about monsters than any other culture, mostly their spoor, habits, and how to avoid them.

Churners are a highly itinerant culture, and while some travel together, they tend to congregate only when a new dungeon surfaces and the old sites dry up. Many of them are former adventurers who have settled out of obligation or necessity and seek a slightly more respectable existence, but others are skilled merchants, crafts-kin, cooks, smiths, and suppliers that come from old families of Churners and run their tents and wagons with a high respect of the Churner Code (*honesty, safety, convenience*). Recently, due to the increasing ruin activity, the number of Churners has been rapidly increasing, and a lot of the old and more respectable families complain of grifters, swindlers, and ill-intentioned shady merchants sullyng their reputation.

Dependability, hustle, professionalism, and caution are highly valued by Churners. Outsiders can sometimes see them as deceptive, opportunistic, or exploitative.

CHRONICLER

+1 to two: Study, Recall or Channel

The ancient monasteries of the Chroniclers dot Arden Eld, overlooking its deep valleys from mountain perches, or buried deep in the rifts of its canyons. Within is buried ancient knowledge - and sometimes dangerous secrets.

Chroniclers are a unique, isolated culture - a quasi-religious society of monks and acolytes built around the Chambers - the great monasteries of the continent, whose building predates the Arken and survived their fall. There are twelve of these ancient edifices, and they are typically located in extreme or hard to reach locales, requiring them to be self sufficient. Small monastery towns and trading posts grew up around them over time, forming a tight-knit communities that revolved around and intermeshed with monastery life - moving with their festivals, rituals, and traditions.

The Chambers are part temple, part archive, and part prison. As legend goes, they were built to protect the great secrets of the making of the world. Some of their inner vaults now lie empty, and three of the Chambers are broken and hollow ruins, whatever was contained within long disgorged into the world. The inner passages and halls of the Chambers are rumored to be full of all kinds of secret knowledge, ancient weaponry, and old and powerful evils - though none can say for sure.

As for the Chroniclers themselves, they live in a strict, hierarchical, and somewhat spartan society, but one which values justice, education, equality, and honesty. Ascending up the ranks of the priesthood takes a long time and a lot of ceremony, and only the most senior monks are allowed into the central halls of a Chamber.

It is not uncommon at all for monks to dip and out of the priesthood in order to have families, explore the world, or go on missions of utmost import for the monastery. Junior temple acolytes wishing to become higher members of a Chronicler order are often required to leave the

temple for a while to find purpose in the greater world.

Chroniclers highly value knowledge of all kinds, and tend to be highly educated. This drive often pushes traveling chroniclers to explore ruins, challenge authorities, or pry where they don't belong, often getting them into danger.

Truth, justice, discovery, and tradition are important values to Chroniclers. Outsiders can see them as secretive, old-fashioned, or stiff.

GUILDER

+1 to two: Command, Channel, or Study

There are no nations in Arden Eld, but its cities are growing in both size and influence. Their cobbled streets and teetering towers are expanding and stretching to the sky, and the fires of industry and arkentech burn deep in their bellies.

Those that live in the cities are known as Guilders, and often belong to one of the great Trade Guilds, loose and oligarchical organizations that regulate the trade and production of certain items between cities and act as informal government associations of sorts. Cities are often ruled by the guilds or their proxies and to most people of Arden Eld are chaotic, overcrowded, wondrous, and very smelly places where the food is greasy, the markets are bright and burgeoning, and the sights are as incredible as they are strange.

Cities are the centers of technology and magic in Arden Eld and are the chief drivers of the hunger for Dust and arkentech, which the technomagical institutes and Guilds use to produce mechanical and magical wonders. Citizens of the great cities of Arden Eld are the most diverse in background and profession, and tend to enjoy a higher standard of living than those in the Green, with access to many conveniences such as rail and airship travel, running water, and arkenlamp lighting. However, they also are the most unequal, with many Kin languishing crammed into hot and overcrowded residences in the increasingly mazelike city depths, while the Guild Barons at the top scrape most of the benefits off for themselves while claiming to be acting for the benefit of all. Some predict the coming of the Churning Age will extend this way of life even out to the Green, and fear what that portends.

Guilders tend to be more educated, more knowledgeable about Aetheric principles and more connected to magic and science than other Kin, who they may see as backwards. They also tend to be very tolerant and welcoming, and the most worldly of Kin.

Tolerance, patience, drive, and friendliness are highly valued by Guilders. Outsiders can sometimes see them as haughty, know-it-all, or pampered.

ICON

BOND:

NAME:
 KINTYPE:
 CULTURE:
 PRONOUNS:
 LOOK:

Gain stress:
 1: Push/aid: 1: Resist: 2: Team action

STRESS: MAX ()

STRAIN

IDEALS 1 xp for one, 2 xp for all

STRESS SPECIAL:
 STRESS RELIEF:

AMBITIONS

1XP
2XP
3XP

BURDENS Broken?

Invoke for 1 xp. Tick 2 segments during an interlude, 3 if someone helped you.

ACTIONS

Sneak	
Excel	
Survey	
Channel	
Charm	
Command	
Tinker	
Study	
Recall	
Traverse	
Smash	
Endure	
Crush	
Snipe	
Skirmish	

BOND POWERS

BONDS

THE PATHFINDER

Discover new things, meet new people, learn new things. The Pathfinder is always looking to horizon. They're the first to clamber up the mountain, leap across the river, or dash down the slope. The road is their friend and they can't wait to see what's around the corner.

+2 Traverse

IDEALS

- I addressed challenges with curiosity, discovery, or understanding
- I expressed my heritage, background, or beliefs through my actions
- I saw, heard, or tasted something truly unique

Max stress: 1

Stress relief: Relieve stress when you enter a new scene.

Stress special: Leading traverse or sneak actions doesn't cost stress for you

Strain: 4

POWERS

- **Saddleborn** - Get a **knack** for riding animals or piloting vehicles
- **Windrider** - When you push yourself to take a **traverse** or **sneak** action, you also get increased effect and choose one of the following for the action: *you don't touch the ground, you don't make a sound, you can't be touched while moving*. You can spend 1 additional stress for additional effects.
- **Dabblers** - Get +1 point to put in any action rating. At the start of an interlude, you must swap this point around to a new action. It can't take any rating higher than 4.

- **Freesoul** - You can escape from any restraint, grab, shackle, hold, or prison cell without rolling. You can conceal this ability if you wish.
- **Lay Burdens** - 1/session, When you enter a populated location, tick 1 segment on up to two burdens of your choice.
- **Airfeel** - When you camp or start an expedition, you can ask any of the following questions about the next day or so of travel and get a yes or no answer from the GM:
 - Is it a long, dangerous, or arduous journey?
 - Is the journey defended or contested?
 - Are you currently being pursued, tracked, or hunted?
- **Colortongue** - You can understand and speak all languages and read all scripts.
- **Horizon Sweeper** - When you're outside, your **survey** actions have increased effect and aren't affected by weather or time or day.
- **Memory of the Sole** - Name a location you last set up camp. The GM will determine the difficulty of the journey there by answering the questions below. When the next scene starts, you and up to ten other willing people can choose to be safely there if you take 2 strain for each 'yes' answer, which could cause you to break. Work backwards to figure out how you got there (the scene doesn't necessarily have to take place the next hour or day, for example).
 - Is it a long, dangerous, or arduous journey?
 - Is the location defended or contested?
 - Are you currently being pursued, tracked, or hunted?
- **Lightspeed** - 1/session - Your next **traverse** action has superpowered effect
- **Gambit of Momentum (requires 4 powers):** Take a power from another Bond

THE SEEKER

Uncover forbidden knowledge, untangle people, teeter on the edge of sanity. The Seeker wants answers - about the world, about magic, about monsters, about themselves - all of it. Their keen wits let them cut through any situation, even if they may not like what they uncover.

+2 Study

IDEALS

- I addressed challenges with investigation, intuition, or instinct
- I expressed my heritage, background, or beliefs through my actions
- I questioned my own understanding of the world

Stress: 2

Stress relief: Relieve stress when you discover something hidden, forbidden, or secret.

Stress special: When stressed out, you get +1d on study, channel, or recall and can aid in those actions without spending stress.

Strain: 4

POWERS

- **Heartsight** - 1/session - Close your eyes. You can view a location within far distance for 1 minute as if you were there as an invisible observer, hearing and seeing everything. You cannot move your point of vision, and your body is immobile and vulnerable while taking this action, and you can end it any time. You don't have to be able to see the location you're trying to view.
- **Library Organ** - 1/session - Get +1d on study, channel, and recall actions for the rest of the scene, but -1d on all other actions
- **Argus** - You get a **knack** for sensing danger, hidden traps, or ambushes, and can use this knack on any action when surprised.
- **Darksight** - You can see in the dark, which could make your risk and effect better. Your **study** and **channel** actions get increased effect in darkness.
- **Unhinge** - Your desperate actions have increased effect
- **Dark Clarity** - 2/session - Close your eyes and **study** the ambient emotional state of someone in close distance from you (make a roll). If your action is successful, your next action against that person gets +1 boon and increased effect. If your action fails, take 1 strain and regain a use of this ability.
- **Possession** - 2/session - Ask a presence inside you for advice. The GM will answer. Get +1d on the next action to follow the advice as if the presence aided you.
- **Instinctive** - 2/session - Describe a course of action to the GM you plan to take in the same scene. You will receive an answer that is truthful, if unclear, that comes from a feeling. The GM can choose from the following options: Wheel (good/positive outcomes), Stone (bad/negative outcomes), and Chaos (a mix of good and bad outcomes).
- **Geist** - When you touch someone skin to skin and tick 2 stress, even if you break contact, you can see through their eyes and experience their sensations and ambient emotional state, though you can do little but observe, and they are not aware of your presence. The effect lasts until the end of the scene, or until you use this ability again, and while you're concentrating on it, you cannot do anything yourself except sit in quiet focus, otherwise the effect breaks. A player character must be willing.
- **Living Tome** - 1/session - Increase the effect of your next **Recall** or **Study** action to Superpowered
- **Gambit of Knowledge (requires 4 powers):** Take a power from another Bond

THE MIGHTY

Use your prodigious physical or magical strength to destroy obstacles and help your friends. The Mighty revels in strength and power, and presents an unbreakable front to the enemy, but uses that power not to oppress and control, but to protect the vulnerable and stand against evil.

+2 Smash

IDEALS

- I addressed challenges with strength, leadership, or force
- I expressed my heritage, background, or beliefs through my actions
- Someone challenged me or my friends and I didn't back down

Stress: 2

Stress relief: Relieve stress when you take strain for others, or take strain while aiding others

Stress special: When an ally *close* to or closer suffers strain, you can take the strain for them. You can resist it as normal.

Strain: 5

POWERS

- **True Grit** - When you break, you remain in control of your character for the rest of the scene. If you would remain broken longer than

that (you have 3 burdens for example) this effect ends at the end of the scene.

- **Iron jaw** - You can't suffer critical strain (take 4 strain instead)
- **Volcanic** - 2/session - When someone or something harms an ally in your presence, you can trigger this ability to get +1d or increased effect (choose) on all actions against them for the rest of the scene
- **Hammersoul** - Your **Smash** actions have increased effect when you're stressed out
- **Overpower** - You can push by taking 2 strain instead of spending stress for **Endure** and **Smash** actions
- **Stoneskin** - The first time you take strain in a session, reduce it to 0
- **Force of Will** - 1/session - You can choose to automatically treat your next **Command** action roll against another character as a 6. The GM can decide a character is too strong willed for this to work on them, but if they do, heal 2 stress.
- **Half Light** - When you gather information about violence or possible threats, you can use **Endure**, **Smash**, or **Command**
- **The Wall** - 1/session - This scene only, reduce all strain suffered by 1, to a minimum of 1
- **Make Total Destroy** - 1/session - Increase the effect of your next **Smash** action to superpowered
- **Gambit of Strength (requires 4 powers):** Take a power from another Bond

THE WOLF

You are a tough exterior covered in scars. Your competency makes you strong, but you also can't let anyone see where you're vulnerable. The wolf stands strong alone, but can't forget that they ultimately rely on the pack.

+2 Excel

IDEALS

- I addressed challenges with precision, coldness, or intimidation
- I expressed my heritage, background, or beliefs through my actions
- I let my mask crack

Stress: 4

Stress relief: Relieve stress when you fix someone else's mistakes.

Stress special: You cannot take or benefit from aid or team actions.

Strain: 4

POWERS

- **Clarity** - If you **break**, clear all stress, and you can **push** your next action for free
- **Scarcoat** - +1 max strain per Burden you have

- **Blood Scent** - You get a **knack** for tracking or intimidating anyone or anything that's wounded
- **Go for a Walk** - 2/session - When you act completely alone, you can trigger this ability to get +1d or **increased effect** on your action
- **Cornered** - When you are clearly outnumbered in a hostile situation, reduce all strain you suffer by 1, to a minimum of 1
- **Viper** - If there's any question about who acts first in a scene, it's you. If there's multiple characters with this power, roll off.
- **It's Nothing** - During Heal Burdens, heal 2 extra ticks on a burden of your choice if nobody helps you heal burdens. Heal 1 tick on two burdens if someone does help you heal, instead of just one burden. You can't help other people heal burdens.
- **Crack Shell** - When you're stressed out, you can benefit from aid actions and team actions normally, and can take aid actions without spending stress.
- **Bishop** - When you **set someone up**, that person gets both +1d *and* increased effect on the set up roll.
- **Wick** - 1/session - Increase the power of your next **Sneak** action to superpowered
- **Gambit of the Fang (requires 4 powers):** Take a power from another Bond

THE HARLEQUIN

Trick, humiliate, and dance around the powerful. The Harlequin despises those who take themselves too seriously, and delights in slipping in and out of conversations, roles, and situations.

+2 charm

IDEALS

- I addressed challenges with cunning, subterfuge, or deceit
- I expressed my heritage, background, or beliefs through my actions
- I talked my way out of a charged situation

Stress: 3

Stress relief: Relieve stress when you get in trouble with someone or something powerful

Stress special: When you're stressed out, get +1d on sneak

Strain: 4

POWERS

- **Mirrormask** - You can always tell if someone is lying if you can see their face, though the nature of the lie is unclear
- **Mercurio** - You can change your appearance completely by spending 2 stress, including height, weight, gender presentation, etc. You must appear as Kin (a person), but you could be a different Kintype, and otherwise everything else is up to you. This effect lasts until you camp, or until you eat or drink something, and while active you get a **knack** for impersonation.
- **Mockingbird** - You get a **knack** for mimicking sounds or voices
- **Fast Friends** - 2/session - You can choose to automatically treat your next **charm** action roll as a 6. If you do, its effects only last a minute until its target(s) realize they were manipulated.
- **The Big Show** - Critical hits on **excel**, **charm**, or **sneak** actions relieve 1 stress for all party members who witness your feats
- **Habitual Line Stepper** - 2/session - You instantly disappear from sight and re-appear somewhere nearby in close distance. You don't have to see your destination, but you are shunted back to your starting point if it's occupied or obstructed (like trying to hop into solid rock, for example).
- **Quickfingers** - 1/session - Name an object nearby that you can see that could fit or carry in one or both hands. By the start of the next scene, you have possession of it. If you stole it, the person you stole it from will find out within the hour
- **Ridi Pagliacci** - You can invoke each of your burdens instead of spending a stress, once a session for each burden
- **Exuent** - When you lead an action to flee or escape trouble, don't spend stress.
- **Tongue of the Bards** - 1/session - Increase the power of your next **Charm** action to superpowered
- **Gambit of the Laughing Titan (requires 4 powers):** Take a power from another Bond

THE BRIGHT

You gather your group with cheer and good attitude. You use your power to fix, heal, and mend. You can be quiet, but when you're loud, people listen.

+2 Command

IDEALS

- I addressed challenges with diplomacy, positivity, faith, or empathy
- I expressed my heritage, background, or beliefs through my actions
- I defused a potentially violent situation

Stress: 5

Stress relief: You can't relieve stress.

Stress special: You can relieve someone else's stress by 1 by spending 1 stress.

Strain: 4

- **Push through** - You can spend 1 strain instead of spending stress to take aid actions
- **Divine Luck** - When you take strain as a consequence, roll a 1d6 fortune roll. On 6, reduce the strain suffered to 0.
- **Illuminate** - Your **Charm, channel,** and **tinker** actions have +1 boon and increased

effect with or against characters or creatures that trust you.

- **Untangle** - When you help someone else lift burdens, you increase their segments healed by +1, and heal 1 segment yourself
- **Pangloss** - When you fail a desperate action, your next action can be **pushed** for free.
- **A Better Way** - When you **channel** to understand how something or someone is hurt or broken, get +1d and increased effect
- **Mender** - 2/session - You can **channel** or **tinker** to heal someone's strain. Check the final result:
 - 0-3 - Characters can gain 1 stress to heal 1 strain
 - 4-5 - Character heals 1 strain
 - 6 - Character heals 2 strain
 - 6,6 - Character heals 4 strain
- **Encourage** - 2/session - Spend a use of this ability to use aid without spending stress or exposing yourself to consequences
- **Take Hope** - When you critical hit on an action roll, you can tick a segment on one of your or a single ally's burdens
- **Gaia** - 1/session - Increase the effect of your next **Channel** or **Command** action to superpowered
- **Gambit of the World Soul (requires 4 powers):** Take a power from another Bond

THE BRAVE

Use your courage, luck, and wits to smash head on into problems. The Brave is always at the front line, hurling themselves at problems, and hoping their allies will pick up the pieces. They're at their best when relying on fate, teamwork, and the power of perseverance.

+2 Endure

IDEALS

- I addressed challenges with perseverance, friendship, and passion
- I expressed my heritage, background, or beliefs through my actions
- I trusted someone with my life

Stress: 3

Stress relief: Relieve stress when you charge forth without a plan

Stress special: When you lead a team action, get +1d on the action

Strain: 4

POWERS

- **Strike the road** - The first **team action** you lead in a session costs you 0 stress
- **Stronger Together** - When you **reduce strain** (from resistance or otherwise), allies that suffer strain from the same action (if they

aided you or were in a team action) also reduce incoming strain by the same amount

- **Luck as a Constant** - When you critical hit, lose 1 stress and 1 strain
- **All in** - Using **Aid** to help a character taking a desperate action costs 0 stress for you
- **Joyluck Wind Thrower** - When you take a desperate action, you can take +1d on the action. If you do, you can't resist, gain aid, or reduce or transfer strain suffered in any way.
- **The Sun**- 1/session - Gain increased effect on all actions for the rest of the scene
- **Coordinate** - Aiding you on team actions costs 0 stress
- **Heart of Hearts:** 1/session - You can flash back to a scene from your past or hometown and describe how your memory of that time inspires you in the current moment. You can treat your next roll as though you rolled a critical hit (6,6). You can only use this ability three times ever, and when you expend its third use, replace this power with another one.
- **Team Player** - When any ally **sets you up**, you have **increased effect** on your next roll
- **Brave Destiny** - Your critical hits have **superpowered** effect
- **Gambit of the Wheel Smashing King (requires 4 powers):** Take a power from another Bond

TACTICAL COMBAT

When you go into a situation in ICON where high-stakes violence is about to break out, it's probably time to go into tactical combat. Combat in ICON is for answering the tensions or questions that words alone can't solve - when the outcomes are important, and true mettle is tested. Typically heroes fight against the monsters and horrors that clamber within and without the sunken chambers of the arkenruins, but sometimes you may find yourself fighting against other people when an argument can't be solved any other way.

In combat, the non player characters, including the foes, are controlled by the game master, and there is usually (but not always) an objective of some kind.

WHEN TO GO INTO COMBAT

Go into tactical combat **when the tension and the stakes of the story can't be resolved except through battle.**

When you go into combat, establish the **stakes** - what each side wants out of the combat. This can be as simple as survival. If you can't get a clear answer, then there's probably no reason to play out tactical combat!

COMBAT IN ICON

Tactical combat in ICON is a **game** that is **intentionally an abstraction**. It's a different mode of play to narrative play, and has more tightly constrained rules.

Tactical combat in ICON is **grid based** (a square grid is used, with each square representing 1 space = 5 feet on each side) and **turn based**. On your turn, you can move up to your speed and take **two actions**. Sometimes you will take both actions to do something. You may also use **Interrupts** off your turn, if you have them. Allies and enemies

alternate taking turns. When everyone (allies and foes alike) have taken their turn, a **round** passes, and a new round begins.

This section is **basic combat rules**. For advanced combat rules (with more detailed explanations of some statuses, effects, and each section), you can see further down this section. Each class and subclass has the combat rules, statuses, and effects most relevant to it explained at the start of its section.

YOUR CHARACTER

Like your Bond, your character has a **Job**, chosen at level 1. Your **job** has a **class** (basically an over-job, a category of sorts) and gives you your basic game **statistics** and **abilities** which you can use in combat. Let's go through them quickly.

- **Health:** Determines how healthy your character is. Multiply health four times to get your **Hit Points**. When you gain **vigor** (a shield that goes over your health, usually from healing) it's equal to a multiple of your health value. Other effects can heal you equal to your health value, so it's a quick shorthand.
- **Hit Points (HP):** 4x your health, representing your character's physical state, energy, and ability to avoid damage. Once you run out and go to 0, you are **defeated**. You're **incapacitated** (can't do anything, need help to get up) and take a **wound**. Certain abilities care about if you're below 50% or even 25% hp.
- **Wound:** When you take a wound, fill in 25% of your hp. You normally get wounds from being defeated. You can't typically recover or heal a wound until you take an interlude. If you accumulate 4 wounds, you die.
- **Elixirs:** Outside of combat, a character can take a few moments to drink an elixir to heal hit points by 50%. Characters all start any expedition with 2.

- **Defense:** How hard it is to land a blow on you in combat. A hostile character must beat or match your defense with a to-hit roll to hit you with an attack (and you have to do the same to them)
 - **Armor:** Subtract all damage taken by your armor (unless that damage has the **pierce** tag).
 - **Speed:** Affects how far you move when you take a standard move, run, or dash.
 - **Size:** How many spaces (square) you take up on the battlefield. Player character are all size 1.
-
- **Attack bonus:** Depends on job. Add this number to your attacks.
 - **Damage:** Damage in ICON depends on your job, and comes in different degrees. Every class has a damage die (d6, d8, etc) and a fray damage value (a low, fixed amount).
 - **Saves:** When you make a save, roll 1d20, and save against the effect on an 11+.
 - **Resolve:** Resolve is a resource you build up slowly over combat and you must spend to use your most powerful abilities, called **Limit Breaks**.
 - **Traits:** Passive abilities, based on your job, class, or your relics, that always apply to your character. These are unique to your job and class.
 - **Abilities:** The actions you can take in combat, based on the jobs you have taken. You can have six abilities active on any expedition, and one Limit Break. All abilities have **talents** which are unlockable improvements to each ability. All abilities, even Limit Breaks, have a **master talent** which further improves the ability.
 - **Gambit:** One of your abilities (just one, typically) can be taken outside your class.

STRENGTH OF SPIRIT

You may notice that unlike other RPGs, in ICON, your health, defense, attack bonus, armor, and even damage are **determined by your job**, not your gear. In general, this game expects in tactical combat for your character to be as well armed and armored as they possibly can, given their training, background, and powers. The armor, weapons, and look of your character is up to you. If you're not well armed and armored, then don't go into tactical combat!

That isn't to say there isn't power to be found in gear and weapons, but ICON only cares about the truly legendary stuff. During your adventures, you will recover and unlock powerful **Relics**, ancient magic that can take the form of armor, weapons, or enchanted items. These relics must be leveled up alongside your character by infusing them with **Dust**, which you can recover as a reward from your exploits. Dust can also be used to empower your group as a whole by investing it into your **Camp**, or infused into more temporary items of power, called **Arkentech**.

COMBAT, STEP BY STEP

THE GOLDEN RULE(S)

There are two general rules that apply to this section

1. Specific beats general. Armor usually reduces all damage, however the pierce tag, which says it ignores armor, takes precedent, because it's more specific.
2. Round up to the nearest whole number.

TURN ORDER

A player character always takes the first turn in any combat in ICON (players can decide which). Once their turn is finished, the game master will choose a hostile character to take their turn. Players then choose another player character or allied npc to go, then the game master chooses a hostile character, then so on and so forth, alternating. Once there is only characters of one side left, they take their turns one after the other in any order. The round then starts with a character from the opposite side that ended the last round (so if the round ends with a player character turn, it will start with an npc turn).

SLOW TURNS

At the start of a combat, at the start of any round, or if they are forced to (because they become inflicted with the **slow** status, for example), characters can take a slow turn. Slow turns follow the same rules for every other turn (they alternate ally-enemy-ally-enemy), except slow characters take their turns **after all other non-slow characters have acted** (imagine it like its own mini-round). Some abilities get powered up when

used on a slow turn, or you may choose to take one for a tactical advantage.

THE GRID

Combat in ICON is fought on a square grid, with equal space representing 5 ft on each side. The grid is an abstract of the battlefield, so it's not necessary to translate everything perfectly. When measuring distances and range, measure from the edge of the origin space (or character).

CHARACTER

Any character that can take action or takes up space is called a **Character**.

ON YOUR TURN

On your turn in any combat, you can **move up to your speed**, then take **two actions**. Some abilities cost both your actions to perform. You can only use one ability with the **attack** tag per round, no matter what, and you can **only use each action or ability once** on your turn (no duplicate actions).

MOVING

A character can make a single **standard move action** on their turn at any point during their turn, moving spaces up to their speed. All characters get this action for free on each of their turns.

All movement in ICON, whether granted by an ability or effect, must be taken orthogonally (in straight directions, no diagonal movement), unless specified, and it can't be broken up by other actions. You can stop at any point during movement to take an action or interrupt, but if you do, the movement ends. There are exceptions to both these rules but unless specified all movement in ICON works this way.

You can't move through **obstructions** that block your movement (by default hostile characters or terrain), unless an ability allows you to do so. You can move through allied characters but not end your turn in their space.

If you move through spaces adjacent to a hostile character, each space of movement costs **+1 more space** to move through. This is called **engagement**.

Moving through certain terrain on the battlefield can also slow your movement. **Difficult terrain**, like mud, snow, or swamp, increases the cost by **+1 space**. Moving up elevation also costs **+1 space**.

These effects can all stack.

If movement would cost too much to even make a move (moving past an enemy in the snow might cost 3 spaces to move 1 space for example), then the movement can't be taken.

DASHING

Dashing is a special form of movement. When you dash, your movement ignores **engagement**, so you can move normally past other characters, and also doesn't trigger **interrupts** (so other characters can't take advantage of it to attack or harm you).

BASIC ACTIONS

Tactical combat is a highly structured game in ICON. Activities that are not specified here or covered by the rules here can't be taken by character in tactical combat, the same as in any board game or video game you might enjoy. If you want to improvise, be creative, or add a flourish to your abilities, you can do it within the constraints of your character's abilities and actions - there are plenty to choose from!

Run (1 action): Move half your speed, rounded up.

Dash (2 actions): **Dash** your **speed**.

Interact (1 action): Interact with something on the map that takes more than a few moments, such as pulling a lever, opening a heavy door, picking up a heavy object, etc.

Rescue (1 action): Help an adjacent **defeated** ally. They end the incapacitated state on themselves and heal to full hit points, minus any wounds they've taken.

Basic attack (1 or 2 actions): Make a basic light or heavy attack

Whack (1 action): Kick, punch, or throw something from the environment. Deal 1 physical damage as an effect to a character in range 3.

That's it! These actions seem rather limited because all characters in ICON, including the foes you will face, also have powerful **abilities** they can use. If you do want to improvise, use the constraints of the rules offered here or in your abilities. For example, if you want to knock over a heavy boulder so it smashes into your enemy, the GM might rule that it's a basic **heavy attack**.

NO REPEATS

When you take an action, **you can't repeat it in the same turn**. You can only run, rescue, or whack once on a turn regardless of how many actions you have left, for example! This also applies to all abilities.

FREE AND LIMITED ACTIONS

Some abilities take **Free Actions**. These abilities don't take an action slot to use and must be used on your turn, but still follow the No Repeats rule.

Other actions, often free actions, are **limited**. These abilities are written as **X/turn** or **X/round** (like 1/turn, 2/turn, etc). These abilities **can break the no repeats rule** but can only be used a specified number of times a turn or round instead.

ATTACKS

You can only make **one action with the attack tag per round** in ICON, no matter what the action cost is. Every character can perform **basic attacks**, which are melee or ranged depending on job.

To make any attack, including basic attacks, choose a hostile character in **range** and **line of sight**. Roll **1d20 plus any boon or curse, plus your attack bonus**. This is called a **to-hit roll**. If your total equals or surpasses your target's defense, you **hit**. If not, you **miss**. Attacks have different effects depending on hit, miss, or critical hit.

- Light attack (1 action): On hit, deal **light damage**. On miss, no effect.
- Heavy Attack (2 actions): On hit, deal **heavy damage**. On miss, deal **light damage**. If your total roll is **20+**, your attack is a **critical hit** and deals **critical damage**.

Let's break down attacks a little more:

TARGETING AND RANGE

You can only make attacks against foes in **range** and **line of sight**, unless specified. Range can be measured in any direction, including diagonally.

Attacks can be either **ranged** or **melee**.

- For **ranged attacks**, a character must be at least partly within the listed range of the attack to be a valid target. Make ranged attacks with **+1 curse per adjacent hostile character** to you. Ranged attacks also care about **cover**
- For **melee attacks**, a character must be adjacent to be in range for an attack, unless a higher range is specified. Melee attacks ignore cover. Adjacent means in any adjacent space, even if that space is higher or lower
- Ranged and melee attacks get **terrain advantage**: +1 boon against targets standing on lower terrain than you, and ranged attacks gain +1 range for every level of height you have on your target. If someone attacks you on higher terrain, or your foe is on higher terrain, they get **+1 curse** instead.

Line of sight means you can see and interact with the character. This is pretty self explanatory but has more specificity in the advanced combat section.

COVER AND LINE OF SIGHT

All terrain in ICON has height (more on terrain shortly), from 1-3. Player characters are size 1, but other characters such as monsters can be larger or smaller.

- If character is adjacent to terrain the same height as it, it can draw line of sight to other characters past that terrain, and other characters can draw line of sight to it, but it gains **cover** from them. The character adjacent to terrain gains **resistance** to damage from any ranged attack that they have cover from.
- If a character is adjacent to terrain that is higher than it, it cannot draw line of sight to any

characters past that terrain, and you can't draw line of sight to it.

TYPE

Attacks and other actions can be physical or magical. Physical attacks deal physical damage and prompt physical saves, and magical attacks deal magic damage and prompt magic saves. Some characters and monsters might be stronger or weaker against one of the other.

DAMAGE

Damage in ICON is based on job and has two values, **fray damage**, and a **damage die** (like d6, d8, etc).

- **Fray damage** is a fixed value equal to your power. When you deal fray damage, deal the damage listed (you don't need to roll anything!).
- Other damage values are set based on your damage die. These are **light**, **heavy**, and **critical damage**.
- When an attack tells you to deal light damage, roll **one of your damage dice**, and apply the total result as damage. For heavy damage, **roll two**, and for critical damage, **roll three**. Simple!

INCREASING DAMAGE

If an ability lets you increased damage, it will either grant you **bonus damage**, **boosted damage**, or **double damage**.

- For **bonus damage**, roll one more die than normal each time you gain bonus damage, then choose the highest 1, 2, or 3 dice based on the damage you are dealing. For example, with a damage die of d6 and gaining bonus damage twice on a light attack, you would roll 3d6 (3, 5, 2), then pick the highest single die, because it's a light attack (5 damage).
- For double damage, **simply roll and then double the entire result** before applying it. This doesn't stack, so if you gain double damage twice, it still only multiplies the whole pool twice (not 4 times).
- A few abilities will **boost damage** to the next category (light > heavy for example). Critical damage cannot be boosted further.

Fray damage cannot be boosted or benefit from bonus damage, but it can be doubled.

CRITICAL HIT

A **critical hit** triggers on any total attack roll of 20+. Normally only heavy attacks gain benefits from critical hits, but certain light attacks may have effects that trigger on critical hits.

ATTACK, ABILITY, AND EFFECT

Attack abilities and actions often have two components: attack and effect. Together, this makes up an ability.

- The **attack** component often requires a **to-hit roll**, requires a primary target, and has different triggered effects based on hitting, missing, or critical hitting. Effects that trigger **on hit**, **on miss**, or **on crit** only apply on attack.
- The **effect** component of any ability or attack **simply happens**, though it might prompt saves or rely on the attack hitting first. There's more on this in the advanced combat rules.
- The **ability** refers to the whole thing (attack and effect)

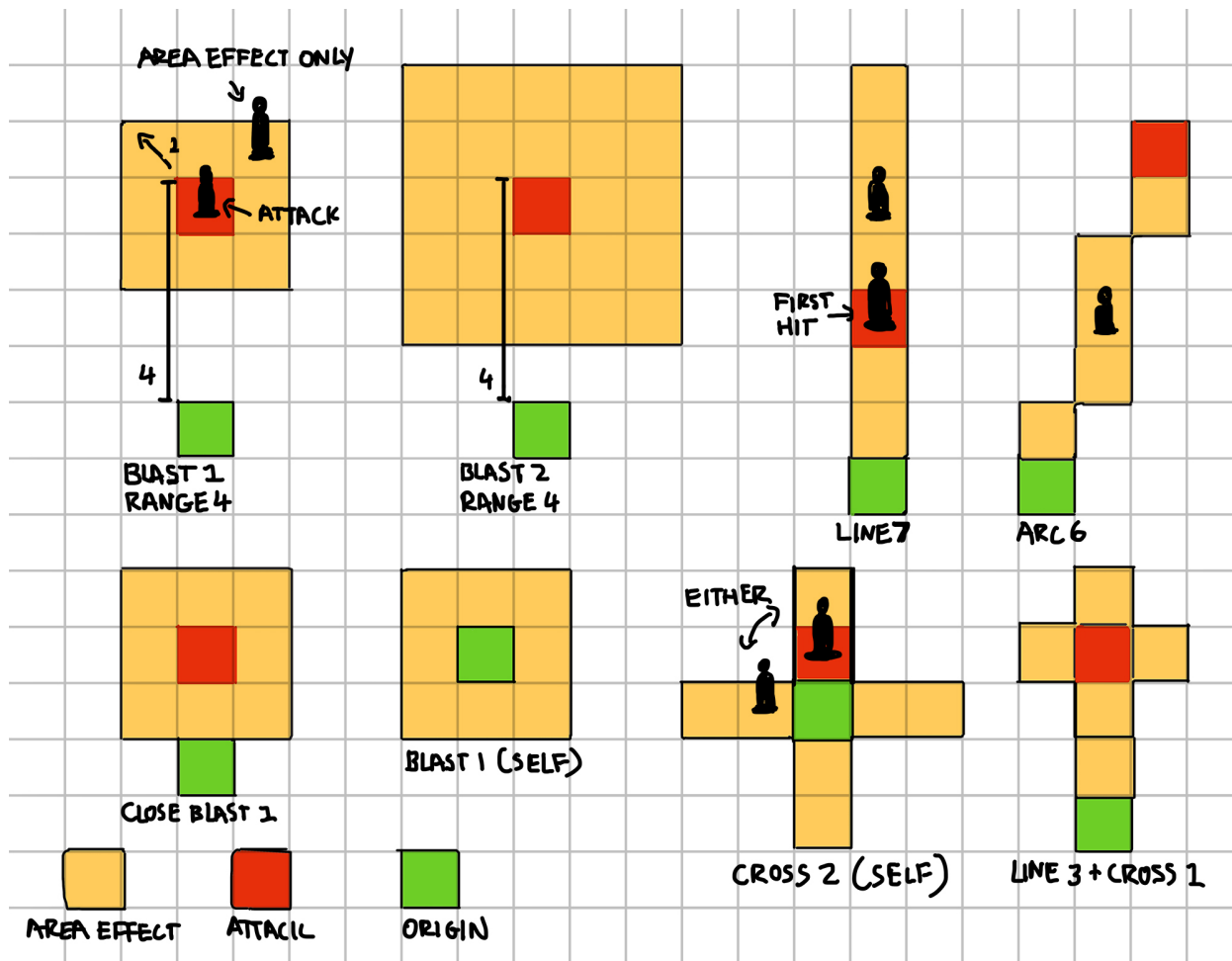
The important thing to remember is that any ability or effect that empowers or triggers off an attack only **counts or empowers the attack component** (the to-hit roll part) and not the effects, unless specified.

If an ability triggers off or empowers an ability, it empowers the whole action (attack and effect). For example, an ability that gives you bonus damage on your next ability increases *all* damage.

SAVE

Some attacks or effects require a save from the character they target to avoid some nasty effect, like extra damage or a status. To make a save, roll 1d20. On an 11 or higher, you save successfully, usually ignoring the effect.

Characters typically save for every status (a negative effect) on them at the end of each turn, ending them on a success.



AREA OF EFFECT (AOE)

Some attacks and abilities specify an area of effect (AoE). If that's the case, you can target any character or any space on the ground in range, including allied characters. Area of effect attacks have an **attack space** and **area spaces**.

- For a character in the attack space, make an attack, with a to-hit roll, and apply the **attack** part of your ability.
- For a character in the area space apply the listed **area effect**.
- Some AoEs have additional effects. If so, apply them to all spaces.

This might mean that an AoE attack doesn't actually end up having an attack component and doesn't make any to-hit rolls (you can target it so that only area spaces hit characters), so choose your targets carefully!

Area effects triggered by abilities or effects only have area spaces. They merely apply area effects (such as a save) to the whole area.

AOE PATTERNS

Most AoEs have a listed pattern, sometimes combining the two. Unless specified, the origin space is the original owner or caster of the ability.

- **Line:** A line of X spaces long, with at least 1 space adjacent to the origin space. Cannot be placed diagonally. Attack space is the first character other than the caster in the area.
- **Blast X:** A central space, with x spaces around it in every direction, placed in the range listed from the origin space. Attack space is the central space.
- **Close blast X:** A blast that must be placed so that at least one space of the total area is adjacent to the origin space
- **Arc X:** X contiguous spaces, with at least one directly adjacent to the origin space. If it has a listed range, can be placed in range. Spaces can be placed diagonally or orthogonally, but each space must be further away from the origin space than the last. Attack space is the final space.
- **Cross X:** X spaces in every orthogonal direction, drawn from the origin space. Attack

space is the first character hit (attacker's choice if there's a tie) or the origin space if the attack has a listed range.

If the origin space is not listed, or is listed as **(self)**, the origin space is the user of the ability. **Abilities with no listed range or a target of (self) don't affect the caster.** If the ability has a range, the origin space can be anywhere in that range, and the ability can affect the caster, so be careful!

COMBINED AOES

If an ability has a combined effect area, the combined area is placed in the **attack space** of the first pattern. For example, an area that is line 3 + cross 2 would be a line 3 area with cross 2 radiating out from its attack space. If patterns overlap, they extend the area and don't affect the overlapped area twice.

The secondary area of a combined AoE does not have an attack space, but extends the total area effect.

ABILITIES

Every job has **abilities**, including additional **light** or **heavy attacks**, specified in each job.

Each ability can only be taken **once per turn**, and **only one attack** can be made per round.

Abilities have an action cost, a listed range, and might have tags, indicating special properties (such as inflicting a status or dealing damage), or the type of ability they are. These tags are all listed in the job descriptions and in the advanced combat section. Non-attack abilities can only be used on specified character in range and line of sight (the same rules as attacks).

A character can only take 6 available abilities and one limit break with them on any given expedition, even if they've learned more abilities. They can swap them out before each expedition if they choose, so some characters may choose to have a larger tool kit available to them.

TARGETING

Abilities will specify targets: Self, Foe, Ally, Characters, Summon, or any combination of these.

- **Self:** You! Abilities can't target yourself unless specified.
- **Allies:** An allied character other than you
- **Foe:** A hostile character.
- **Summon:** A character controlled or owned by another character (summoner). Hostile summons can be targeted as normal. Allied summons can only be targeted by abilities and only count for abilities if the ability specifically mentions it can target or count summons.

If an ability merely specifies '**characters**', it means **all of the above** except yourself.

Like attacks, **all abilities require line of sight** unless specified.

EFFECTS

Many abilities apply **effects**, including some attacks. Effects simply take place when specified and don't require a to-hit roll. Even if abilities deal damage, they don't count as attacks unless they have the attack tag.

Some effects can take place **out of turn**, and don't take an interrupt slot to activate, making them quite powerful.

STATUSES AND BLIGHTS

Many effects apply a **status** or force a **save** to avoid gaining a status. Statuses apply ongoing negative effects to a character.

Blights are similar to statuses but are more elemental in nature and cause certain abilities to become stronger. Characters take 1 damage to every unique blight they are affected by at the start of their turn, ignoring armor. Unlike statuses, blights cannot be cleared automatically and last until the end of combat, or until they are removed by abilities.

Ongoing statuses cannot be removed and are usually caused by an ability you used yourself.

CLEARING STATUSES

At the end of any characters own turn, they can make a save against each status currently affecting them, ending them on a successful save.

SPECIAL STATES

There are two **special states** that also can't be removed and don't count as statuses - **bloodied** (when a character is under 50% hp), and **incapacitated** (when character is reduced to 0 hp)

INTERRUPTS

Some abilities are called **interrupts** and can be used off your turn. You can use each interrupt a number of times indicated by the tag (Interrupt 1, Interrupt 2, for example) between your turns, only one interrupt during any turn (yours or another character's) and get them all back at the start of any of your turns. Imagine them like a card that you play and can draw again at the start of your turn.

Like they sound, interrupts have a **trigger** which *interrupts* any action currently being taken, and then immediately apply **effects**.

RESOLVE AND LIMIT BREAK

Limit breaks are the most powerful abilities in ICON. Every character unlocks limit break at level 2.

Limit breaks are abilities (with an action cost, etc) that may or may not be attacks, and don't count against number of abilities taken. All Limit Breaks cost a unique resource, called **Resolve**, to use.

Resolve is split into two pools, **party** and **personal** resolve. Party Resolve goes up by 1 after every round in combat, and depletes to 0 after combat ends

Personal resolve is gained at a rate of 1 after every combat, and resets to 0 after you **camp**. You might want to push on instead of resting in order to get the most out of your abilities.

When you spend Resolve to use a limit break, you can use any combination of party or personal resolve, but party resolve is shared between all

members of the group, so any use of it must be used with the consent of your your team members. Resolve is always spent at the beginning of the action.

VICTORY AND DEFEAT

When any character (hostile or player character) is reduced to 0 hit points, they are **defeated**. Defeated player characters are **incapacitated** (can't do anything), don't cause engagement, are immune to damage, gain a **wound**, and remain that way until someone uses the rescue action to bring them back to their feet. If a player character with 3 wounds would become defeated and gain a 4th wound, they instead **die**.

Defeated enemy characters are **incapacitated**, don't cause engagement or obstruction, and are immune to damage and effects. Depending on the tone of your game or the scene, defeated could mean slain or killed, or merely beaten and unable to fight any longer. Battles in ICON typically aren't to the death, unless monsters are involved.

Characters (player characters, npcs, and hostile characters) can also spend their entire turn to give up and **admit defeat** any time, becoming **defeated** (without gaining any wounds as a player character), or **flee the battlefield** by moving off the edge of the grid. Combat ends when every character of one side is defeated, dead, or has fled the battlefield.

If all player characters are defeated or dead, they are **totally defeated** as a party. The outcome of this will depend on your GM and the tone of your game, if you're totally defeated, you're at the mercy of your foes, but it's up to the GM whether your foes use the opportunity to escape, teach you a lesson, leave you tied up, dump you in a pit somewhere, or merely attempt to finish you off (perhaps unsuccessfully).

MONSTERS AND KIN

Foes in ICON are split into Monsters, which fight to the death typically, or Kin, which fight for a reason. Kin typically don't fight to the death - they're people and value their own lives. More details on this in the Foes section.

THE BATTLEFIELD

Each space on the battlefield has a type:

Ground - Flat, no special effects.

Difficult Terrain - Costs +1 space of movement to move through

Dangerous - Take piercing damage equal to the chapter number for each space you move into or through

Impassable - Blocks movement of all kinds unless it has phasing, and always blocks line of sight. Could be a pillar or a solid rock wall that goes to the ceiling.

Terrain - Categorized by height, 1-3. Blocks movement. Provides cover if you're the same height. Blocks line of sight if you're smaller. Characters can move up and stand on top of terrain. Costs +1 movement per difference in height to move up a level but not down a level. Terrain can represent a large object or obstruction on the map, such a cart, a boulder, a chunk of ruin, or just something like a hill. If you want terrain to be **destructible**, give each space 10 hp per height, and attacks automatically hit.

When measuring range, measure it flat even if the terrain is elevated (don't worry about doing Pythagorean math!).

SIZE:

Battlefields should be around 15x15, 20x20 or 25x25 or so. You can go smaller or larger, and change the proportions.

TERRAIN ADVANTAGE

- **Cover:** Characters gain **resistance** to damage from ranged attacks while they are in cover
- **Height advantage:** +1 boon on any melee or ranged attack against a target on lower elevation than you, and increase range of ranged attacks by +1 space for each level of height of the terrain you're standing on.
- **Height disadvantage:** If you attack a character in higher elevation than you, get +1 **curse**

DIFFICULT TERRAIN

Difficult terrain represents mud, snow, swamp, or water. It could also be something like a river, deep water, or rubble.

INTERACTABLES

You can rule that certain terrain objects or spaces are interactable, like levers, switches, heavy doors, force fields, traps, etc. Interacting with them (as an action) changes some part of the map or has some effect, such as dealing light damage in an area, creating cover, creating new terrain, or summoning foes or allies.

ALTERNATE VICTORY CONDITIONS

There'll be more on this in the final game, but having alternate victory conditions can make your combats more interesting and interactive. Here's a few for you:

- **Escort:** Characters have to escort an ally or object, who is an intangible object or ally, to the other edge of the map and flee off the edge by ending their turn there. The ally or object can be 'picked up' by a character as an interact action. While carried by a character, that character cannot attack, run, or dash, but can take other actions. They can drop the character or object in a free adjacent space as a free action, and also drop them when they are hit by an attack or reduce to 0 hp. Enemies can also pick up the object or ally. Characters fail if they haven't taken their escort to the goal in six rounds.
- **Control:** Mark three zones in three different parts of the map. At the end of the round, a side (ally or foe) scores 1 point if they have more non-summon, non-mob characters in the point than the other side. Elites count for two characters, monstrosities count for four. Most points at the end of round 6 wins.
- **Holdout:** Characters must try and survive. Use 2x the point budget for a normal fight. Deploy the normal budget of enemies at the first round, then bring in half at the start of the third round, then half more at the start of the fourth. If characters aren't totally defeated by the fourth round, they win.

FALLING

If a character is shoved or moves so that they would move down more than 1 space of terrain,

they take physical damage for every space they fall (2 or 3 damage). Characters fall immediately.

EDGE

The GM might rule that a certain area of the map is an edge, like a pit or a cliff. Characters shoved off an edge are removed from play. They can avoid this by passing a generic save, stopping at the edge. Otherwise, remove them from play for the rest of the round. If they're a player character, they can return to play as close to where they moved off an edge at the start of their next turn. If they're a foe or NPC, the GM can rule whether they come back or not. Mobs (weak foes) never come back from getting shoved off an edge.

Flying characters can cross but not end their turn in an edge area.

As an optional rule, the edge rule can also apply to the edge of the battlefield, with every edge of the battlefield that is a possible exit being treated as an edge.

CREATING AN INTERESTING BATTLEFIELD

Battlefields that have cover, interactables, objectives, terrain of different heights, difficult or dangerous terrain, or odd shapes will be far more interesting than a plain empty field.

Asymmetrical battlefields can also be more interesting than perfectly symmetrical ones. Try to fill at least half your battlefield with points of interest.

VIGOR, ELIXIRS, CAMPING, AND HEALING

In ICON, it's rare to heal in combat. Instead, characters that heal (for example, from the Cure ability) often gain **Vigor**, which is a temporary shield that goes over your hit points. Damage goes to vigor first when you take it. Vigor gained is always some multiple of your health value (1x, 2x, 3x, etc), and any vigor shield gained replaces the last shield instead of stacking with it. You lost all vigor at the end of every combat. For a little more on vigor, see the advanced combat rules.

Between combats, characters can either drink an **elixir** to heal 50% hp, or **camp** regain all of their hp. Camping is limited, and characters only embark on an expedition with 2 elixirs by default. Some camp upgrades or abilities allow you to heal **wounds**, but generally wounds are only fully healed when you end an expedition and enter an interlude.

COMBAT GLOSSARY

There are more details on combat in the advanced combat section, including detailed explanations of action order.

You don't need to memorize all these specific rules - they are placed here for your convenience (these rules are the rules used by every single job!). The most relevant rules are summarized with each class..

COMBAT CONCEPTS

Resistance to X - Take 1/2 damage from X, rounded up

Armor X - Reduce all incoming damage by X

AoE - Area of effect, usually has a specific pattern. Only one space in an area of effect is the attack space and requires a roll, the others apply area effects automatically.

Auto-hit - This attack doesn't require an attack roll but automatically hits.

Charge - When used on a slow turn, this ability becomes more powerful.

Cleanse - A character that's cleansed can remove all blights and marks and immediately save against all effects

Combo - Actions with Combo have two or more versions. When you use a combo action, your next combo action (on any turn, and not necessarily the same action) uses the next part of its combo, looping back to the first part after the final part.

Cover - Gain resistance to ranged damage from any attack you have cover from

Cure - A character that's Cured gains Vigor 1, or Vigor 2 if they're bloody

Damage - Every class has a damage die. Damage comes in three varieties, light (1 die), heavy (2 dice), or critical (3 dice).

- **Bonus Damage** - Roll one more damage die each time you gain bonus damage and choose the highest 1, 2, or 3, depending on the base damage.
- **Boost Damage** - Increase damage to the next level (light>heavy for example)
- **Double Damage** - Double total damage. Only applies once.

Dash - Special movement that ignores engagement and doesn't trigger interrupts

Elixir - Heal 50% hp outside of combat per elixir drank. Start with 2 by default.

Fly - A flying character has melee evasion and ignores terrain effects, engagement, and obstruction from ground based obstacles and characters. Moving over terrain doesn't cost extra movement.

Fray damage - Low fixed damage.

Immune to X - Not affected by X in any way. A character that's immune to damage or effects doesn't even count as taking them.

Intangible - Can be targeted, but immune to all damage, effects, conditions, and blights. Doesn't cause obstruction.

Mark - Place your mark on a specific character. You can only place one mark at a time on each enemy or ally and each ability can only place one mark. If you place a new mark on a character with a mark from you, you can choose which to keep or which to discard.

Obstruction - Can't move through something that causes obstruction. By default this is hostile characters and terrain.

Phasing - Can ignore obstruction and pass through, but not end your turn in, terrain or characters.

Shove X - Move a character involuntarily X spaces in a line away from you. If they would move into another character's space, or a piece of terrain, they **Collide** and stop, taking fray damage.

Slay - An effect that triggers when this action reduces a character to 0 hp. Can only trigger once per action.

Slow - Go after all other characters. If multiple characters take slow turns, it takes the same order as regular turns (ally/enemy/ally)

Summon - A character controlled by its Summoner. Abilities that target allied characters cannot target summons unless specifically mentioned. Summons don't take turns, actions, or movement on their own unless specified. By default, summons have defenses equal to their summoner's and hp equal to 50% of their summoner's. When reduced to 0 HP, they are removed from the battlefield instead of becoming defeated. They are also removed if their summoner is defeated.

Teleport - Instantly move to a free space within range. You cannot teleport while immobilized or stunned.

Terrain effect - Something that creates or modifies the terrain spaces on the battlefield.

BLIGHTS

The Blights are Burning, Electrified, Poisoned, and Frostbite. A character takes 1 piercing damage at the start of their turn for each different blight they are afflicted by. Moves become stronger when used against a character suffering from these blights, depending on the move. Blights can only be cleared by **Cleanse** or other abilities that specify they can clear blights.

STATUSES

Blind - Can only target adjacent spaces

Dazed - +1 curse on attacks

Hatred of X - When taking actions against a hostile character, must include X character as a target for the action to be valid.

Immobilize - Max speed reduced to 0

Pacified - Max damage reduced to 1. Breaks on taking damage.

Stunned - Take 1 less action. Unlike other statuses, automatically clears at the end of your turn. Doesn't stack.

Staggered - Attackers gain +1 Boon against a staggered character

Slow - Must take a slow turn while slow.

Vulnerable - All damage taken increased by 1

SPECIAL STATES

Bloody - Under 50% hp

Incapacitated - Speed reduced to 0, can't take actions, movement, or use abilities. Immune to all damage. Characters that are defeated and incapacitated by default when reduced to 0 HP. Player characters take a wound when they're defeated.

ONGOING STATUSES

Ongoing statuses cannot be purged or removed (for example, by becoming sturdy or unstoppable).

POSITIVE EFFECTS

Counter - Deal fray damage to your attacker after being attacked, hit or miss.

Defiance - Prevents hit points from being reduced past 1 hp. When this triggers, remove this effect.

Dodge - Immune to all damage and effects on miss or successful save. Immune to damage and effects from the non-attack spaces of AoE attacks and abilities.

Evasion - Roll a d6 when targeted by an attack. On a 4+, the attack automatically misses. Check before the attack roll.

Guardian - Special interrupt. When an ally you can see in range 3 is targeted by an attack, you can dash up to 2 spaces towards that ally. Then, if you're adjacent, you can change the target of the attack to you.

Pierce - Ignores armor.

Regeneration X - Gain vigor X at the end of your turn

Skirmisher - Can move diagonally

Stance - Ongoing effect. A character can only have one stance active at a time and can drop a stance by taking a new stance or as a free action at the start of their turn.

Stealth - Cannot be directly targeted except from an adjacent space. Breaks on taking or dealing damage.

Sturdy - Immune to shove, daze, stagger, and stun

True strike - Ignores dodge, evasion, and does not trigger guardian

Unstoppable - Immune to all statuses and can't be shoved.

Vigilance - Hostile characters can't dash in your engagement and can't move through your space for any reason

Vigor X - Gain a shield that goes over your hit points, equal to X times your health value. Damage goes to Vigor before Hit Points. Vigor does not stack, and when you gain Vigor you can choose to keep the old value or gain the new value. Lose all vigor at the end of combat.

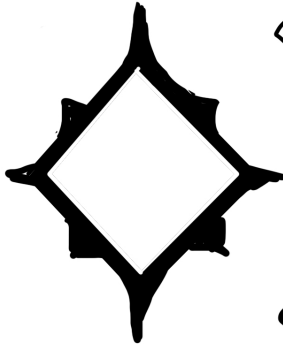
ICON

JOBS

NAME:
KINTYPE:
CULTURE:
PRONOUNS:
LOOK:

Traits

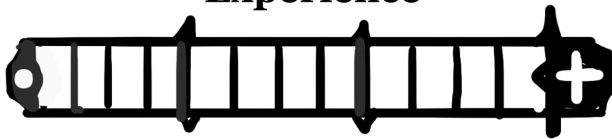
LEVEL:



lv.4

Traits

Experience



+ ability
or talent

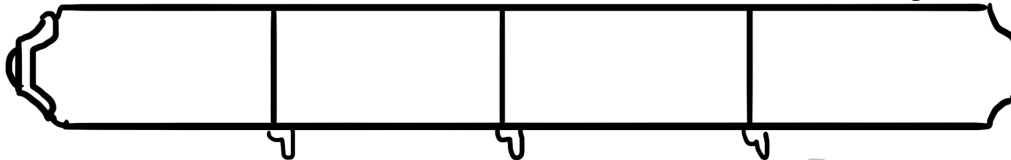
+ ability
or talent

lv.8

Traits

Health:

HP:
4x Health



Wound: fill in one segment.

Armor



VIGOR:

Shield that goes over HP. Can only keep one at a time.



Elixirs

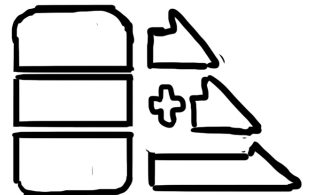
Drink out of combat to heal 50% HP.



SPEED:

Run:

Dash:



DUST:



RELICS:

	LV2	LV6	LV9
I			
II			
III			
IV			

ICON

ABILITIES

Name:
Action Cost:
Target:
Attack:

Effects:

Name:
Action Cost:
Target:
Attack:

Effects:

Name:
Action Cost:
Target:
Attack:

Effects:

Name:
Action Cost:
Target:
Attack:

Effects:

Name:
Action Cost:
Target:
Attack:

Effects:

GAMBIT

Damage: Fray Light Heavy Critical

Attack bonus:

LIMIT BREAK

Name:
Action/Resolve Cost:
Target:
Attack:

Effects:

RESOLVE:

CHOOSING YOUR JOB

At level 1, pick a job from those available to you. There are 8 available in this playtest, two for each class. You get all the traits from your **class** (basically a meta-job, of which there are 4), plus the traits from your **job** itself. You can then pick two abilities from your **job**. If you're unsure, pick the first two abilities listed, you'll have plenty of opportunities to choose others.

When you gain xp, at 4 and 8 xp you'll be able to pick new abilities and strengthen your current abilities through **talents**, although you can only equip **six abilities at a time** to take on expeditions.

GAMBITS

When you level up, you will eventually get the opportunity to **pick another job**. This allows you to swap from Expedition to Expedition to different jobs as needed. You can take abilities from your new job and use them just as you would your primary job abilities, however you can only equip abilities that are from the **same class as your job** with **one exception**, called your **Gambit**.

For example, if your job is Bastion and you also have a Spellblade job, you can equip exactly one Spellblade ability and any number of Bastion abilities. A Bastion character can equip and use any number of Demon Slayer abilities, however, since they are from the same class (and vice versa!).

Characters can learn 3 jobs (one per chapter) and can learn every ability in the jobs they unlock given the choice, so they have high degree of flexibility.

TRAITS AND LIMIT BREAKS

Your **traits** and your **Limit Break** are unique to your active job only, so think carefully when selecting your jobs.

RELICS

At level 2, then at levels 6 and 9, characters pick up a Relic.

Relics represent extraordinary or powerful artifacts from the old world, lost with its ruin. They might be enchanted weapons, magitech armor, or something similar. There's a suggestion for each Relic as to the form it takes, but this can be loose. It's up to the player to decide how they came across the relic in their adventures, or whether it's something they are working on creating themselves. They don't have to take any action to receive the relic, but will have to work on it by infusing Dust into it to unlock its benefits.

Relics provide powerful passive bonuses to a character in combat, no matter what job they currently have. They have four unlockable levels, with each level giving increasing benefits. Some Relics give a % chance for certain effects to occur (use a d100 or a d% dice to check for them). Relics can be leveled up by infusing them with Dust, which is the magical essence sought after by the powerful factions of Arden Eld.

ASPECTS

The fourth level of a Relic is called an Aspect, and provides more powerful benefits. Aspects can be unlocked either with their (high) Dust cost or by completing a task listed in the Aspect as part of an expedition. If the Aspect task is completed once by any character, aspecting the same relic costs only 4 dust from that point onwards.

JOBS

CLASS: Stalwart	54
Bastion	56
Demon Slayer	59
Class: Vagabond	62
Shade	64
Freelancer	67
CLASS: Mendicant	70
Seer	72
Sealer	76
CLASS: WRIGHT	80
Enochian	82
Spellblade	86

CLASS: STALWART

Weapon master and unparalleled soldier

Stalwarts are sturdy and tough warriors, with heavy armor and abilities that let them stand their ground, protect their allies, and control space. Stalwarts largely eschew the use of ranged attacks and magic but are mythic soldiers and gods of the battlefield, able to perform incredible feats of physical prowess and resilience.

Bastions boast the **Guardian** ability, allowing them to take hits for their allies, **Daze**, which makes it harder for enemies to land attacks, and **Vigilance**, which makes it much harder for characters to move around them. They are also the only class that can become **Sturdy** normally, making them totally immune to stun, shove, and other nasty effects.

CLASS TRAITS:

Vigilance: Enemies can't dash in your engagement or move through your space for any reason.

Toughness: Start every combat with vigor 1.

Guardian (Interrupt): Once a round, if an ally in range 3 is targeted by an attack, you may dash 2 spaces towards that ally if you're not adjacent to them. Then, if you're adjacent, you may swap the primary target to you instead, even if you're not in range.

METER: HEROICS

Stalwarts can perform Heroics, more powerful versions of their regular abilities. They get **one free Heroic use** of an ability per combat, however, other abilities may allow additional uses of Heroics.

STALWART GAMBIT.

If you take a Stalwart ability as a non-Stalwart class, you get **Heroics**

CLASS STATS:

Chapter 1:

Health: 6

HP: 24

Elixirs: 2

Armor: 2

Defense: 8

Speed: 3 (Run 2, Dash 3)

Attack bonus: +1

Fray damage: 2

Damage: D6/2d6/3d6

Basic Attack: Physical Melee or Physical Range
3

Chapter 2:

Health: 8

HP: 32

Elixirs: 2

Armor: 3

Defense: 10

Speed: 3 (Run 2, Dash 3)

Attack bonus: +2

Fray damage: 2

Damage: D8/2d8/3d8

Basic Attack: Physical Melee or Physical Range
3

Chapter 3:

Health: 12

HP: 40

Elixirs: 2

Armor: 4

Defense: 12

Speed: 3 (Run 2, Dash 3)

Attack bonus: +3

Fray damage: 3

Damage: D10/2d10/3d10

Basic Attack: Physical Melee or Physical Range
3

MOST RELEVANT RULES

Resistance to X - Take 1/2 damage from X, rounded up

Armor X - Reduce all incoming damage by X

Bloody - Under 50% hp

Charge - When used on a slow turn, this ability becomes more powerful.

Counter - Deal fray damage to your attacker after being attacked, hit or miss.

Dash - Special movement that ignores engagement and doesn't trigger interrupts

Dazed - +1 curse on attacks

Defiance - Prevents hit points from being reduced past 1 hp. When this triggers, remove this effect.

Elixir - Heal 50% hp outside of combat per elixir drank. Start with 2 by default.

Hatred of X - When taking actions against a hostile character, must include X character as a target for the action to be valid.

Guardian - Special interrupt. When an ally you can see in range 3 is targeted by an attack, you can dash up to 2 spaces towards that ally. Then, if you're adjacent, you can change the target of the attack to you.

Immobilize - Max speed reduced to 0

Regeneration X - Gain vigor X at the end of your turn

Shove X - Move a character involuntarily X spaces in a line away from you. If they would move into another character's space, or a piece of terrain, they **Collide** and stop, taking fray damage.

Slow - Go after all other characters. If multiple characters take slow turns, it takes the same order as regular turns (ally/enemy/ally)

Stance - Ongoing effect. A character can only have one stance active at a time and can drop a stance by taking a new stance or as a free action at the start of their turn.

Sturdy - Immune to shove, daze, stagger, and stun

True Strike - Ignores evasion, dodge, and guardian

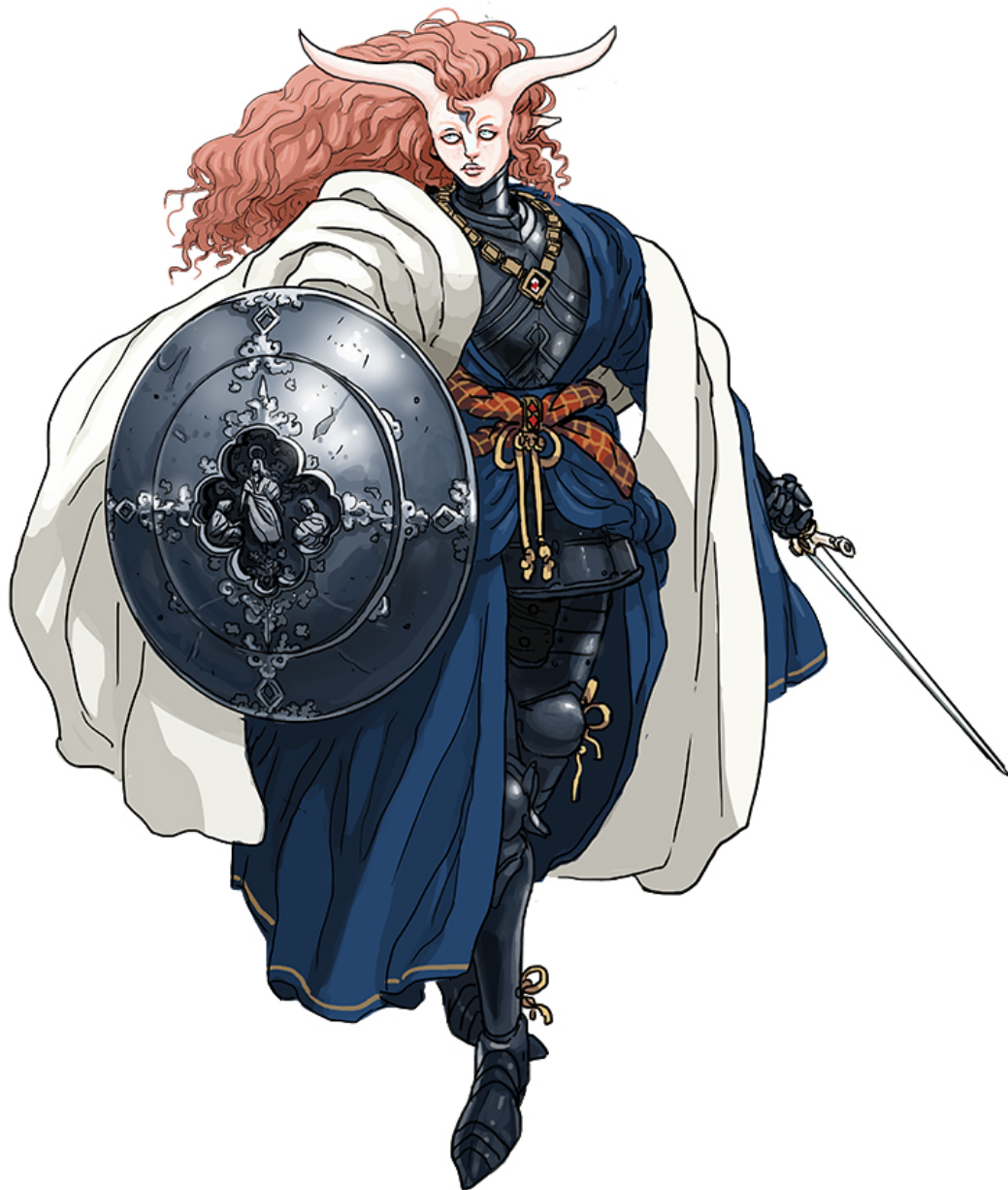
Unstoppable - Immune to all statuses and can't be shoved.

Vigilance - Hostile characters can't dash in your engagement and can't move through your space for any reason

Vigor X - Gain a shield that goes over your hit points, equal to X times your health value. Damage goes to Vigor before Hit Points. Vigor

does not stack, and when you gain Vigor you can choose to keep the old value or gain the new value. Lose all vigor at the end of combat.

Vulnerable - All damage taken increased by 1



BASTION

Proud and unbreakable knight

The Bastions are the shield lords of Arden Eld, larger than life figures that tread the ancient imperial roads with their heads held high and armor gleaming. From town to town they act as errant knights and mercenaries, protecting the weak and vulnerable, and driving back the Blights with hammer-like blows from their greatshields, which they throw like a discus with incredible force. The imperious and mighty presence of a Bastion in town is a stabilizing force and can become an event for a whole village. All Bastions follow an ancient and long-

forgotten hero's code, an old oath to stand against chaos in all its forms.

Traits:

Momentum: When you shove one or more characters with an ability, you can dash after one of them the same number of spaces you shoved them as an effect, ending adjacent to them if possible.

Bull's Strength: When you shove a foe and trigger Collide, they must physical save or also become dazed. If that foe is already dazed, they are stunned instead. When you trigger Collide on a foe with a non-Heroic ability, your next ability is empowered and becomes Heroic

Black Rock Punisher: Once during your turn, when you take an action that shoves, dazes, or

stuns a character that's immune to that effect (such as from *sturdy* or *unstoppable*), deal light damage to them as an effect.

Rook: Allied characters can use you for cover

ABILITIES

HERACULE

Light Physical Ranged Attack
Range 3, True Strike

Hurl your shield as a discus with irrepressible force.

Attack: *On hit:* deal light damage and shove 1.

Effect: *On hit:* a different foe in range 3 from your target is also shoved 1.

Heroic: All ranges and shoves from this ability increased by +1

TALENTS:

- I. *Charge:* Increase ranges by +1 and the primary target must physical save or be dazed
- II. Trigger Heracule's effect +1 times on hit

MASTER TALENT: ETERNAL DISCUS

Heracule's effect triggers +1 times, triggers even on miss, and the effect now deals fray damage

BATTERING RAM

1 Action

Use your shield, weapon, or armored fist and send your foe flying.

Effect: An adjacent foe must physical save or be shoved 2 spaces. On a successful save they are shoved 1 anyway.

Heroic: +1 curse on the save, and shove 4 instead on a failed save.

TALENTS:

- I. *Effect:* If your target collides, they release an explosion, dealing fray damage as a blast 1 area effect centered on them
- II. *Effect:* Shove all adjacent characters to your target's final position 1 space

MASTER TALENT: GATE SMASHER

Battering Ram's target can pass through characters while being shoved instead of triggering collide (you can choose for each character). If collide isn't triggered, characters

they pass through take fray damage and are shoved 1.

SHIELD SLAM

Heavy Physical Melee Attack

Crash your greatshield into the earth, sending up devastating shockwaves.

Attack: *On hit:* Deal heavy damage. *Miss:* Light damage. *Critical Hit:* Critical Damage.

Effect: All characters adjacent to your target take light damage, then are shoved 1

Heroic: Increase the range of the effect area to all characters in range 2 of your target

TALENTS:

- I. *Charge:* Primary target must also save or become immobilized
- II. If Shield Slam's effect shockwave shoves 2 or more characters, gain vigor 1.

MASTER TALENT: LAND WASTER

Before Shield slam's effect triggers, you tear up the very ground, creating a **terrain effect** of two rock spires, height 1 pieces of terrain in range 3 of you. When you use this ability again and summon new spires, any others placed by this ability crumble to dust.

VALIANT

2 Actions

Charge forth, with your shield held before you, battering aside foes.

Effect: Dash in a line AoE equal to your speed +2, phasing through characters.

Area Effect: Foes you pass through must physical save or become dazed, then shoved 1 to either side.

Heroic: Daze the first enemy in the area of effect, then shove them to the end of the line, moving them with you. They can physical save to avoid this effect.

TALENTS:

- I. *Charge:* Increase the dash by +2
- II. *Effect:* You may repeat the dash effect back to your starting point, but don't trigger any other effects. If you pass through 2 or more characters with any part of this move. gain vigor 1

MASTER TALENT: MARATHON

Heroic valiant is a free action

LIVING FORTRESS

1 action, stance

Become as the castle, unmovable and unbreakable. Arrows crash against your skin and you laugh.

Stance: While in this stance, your max speed becomes 0 and you cannot dash or teleport, but you become **sturdy**, gain **cover**, and for allies count as both a character and a height 1 piece of terrain for movement, cover, obstruction, and abilities. At the start of your turn, you can refresh this stance until the start of your following turn, or exit it.

Any characters standing on you when you exit this stance are shoved into an adjacent space as an effect

Heroic: Gain Regeneration 1 in Living Fortress

TALENTS:

- I. Grant sturdy to any allies while they are adjacent to you in Living Fortress
- II. Gain counter while in Living Fortress

MASTER TALENT: IRONSKIN

When you exit Living Fortress, become Unstoppable until you take at least 1 damage to hp

CATAPULT

Interrupt 1

Use your shield as a springboard to set up ally maneuvers or to deflect projectiles

Trigger: An ally moves into an adjacent space

Effect: Shove that ally 3 spaces in any direction. If they collide with a character, they take no damage, deal fray damage to that character, and can dash 1 as an effect.

Heroic: The shoved ally is shoved 5 spaces and deals light damage on colliding instead

TALENTS:

- I. Your shield becomes a valid target for allied ranged attacks. When targeted, you can expend Catapult to retarget the attack from your position to a new valid target in range 3.
- II. You can trigger catapult when targeted by a magic attack to gain evasion against the

attack. If the attack misses, deal light magical damage to your attacker as an effect.

MASTER TALENT: MANGONEL

Catapult becomes Interrupt 2

LIMIT BREAK: HELION

2 resolve

1 action

Your shield becomes the sun: a discus of light and motion, shattering enemy ranks and spurring allies forth.

Effect: You hurl your shield, and every foe on the battlefield in line of sight is shoved 1 space in a direction of your choice. Then you may shove all allies and allied summons 1 space in a direction of your choice.

MASTER TALENT: PERFECTED HELION

You can repeat this effect once on either allies or enemies.



DEMON SLAYER

Monster hunter and dark knight

Warriors of impossible strength and insane bravado, demon slayers are warriors that specialize in fighting the largest and most dangerous monsters to crawl out of the pits that riddle the land. They relish in fighting against impossible odds, training themselves in

forbidden techniques, arcane arts, and oversized weaponry that normal Kin would quake at wielding. They organize themselves into loose orders and train and hunt together, sharing tales and trophies of the colossal horrors they have slain. Some say in order to fight their quarry, the slayers must ingest demon blood to gain their strength, giving them dark and forbidden power that makes other Kin fear and respect them in equal measure.

Traits:

Wind Up: Foes save against the effects of any charged action with +1 curse

Demon Strength: Once on your turn, you can make any ability Heroic. If you do, you can't attack or use Heroics on your following turn.

Hissatsu: If you don't attack during your turn, your next attack ability deals double damage. This effect ends after you attack, hit or miss.

True Horn: You are sturdy from the start of each round until the start of your turn.

ABILITIES:

DEMON CUTTER

Light Physical Melee Attack
Arc 3, Combo

You slash your weapon in a deadly arc, sending cutting shockwaves out that rip through enemy armor.

Attack: *On hit:* deal light damage.

Area effect: Fray damage

Effect: Your attack target must physical save or become vulnerable

Heroic: Boost attack damage to heavy and gain pierce against foes larger than you

Combo: DEMON SPLITTER

Change effect area to line 3

TALENT:

- I. *Charge:* Action deals bonus damage and extend effect area by +1
- II. If you hit 2 or more targets, gain vigor 1

MASTER TALENT: BLOODY SWATHE

Increase size of Demon Cutter and Demon Splitter by +3

COMET

1 action, Line 3, True Strike

Your weapon becomes like a meteor, burning through the air as you smash it into the earth

Effect: You hurl your weapon in a line 3 **area effect**, dealing fray damage to characters it passes through. Place your weapon at the end of the line, or as close as possible. Your weapon becomes a piece of terrain (height 1) while it's out. You can't

attack until you move into or adjacent to your weapon space, ending this effect. Nobody else can pick it up. Any characters standing on your weapon when you pick it up are shoved to the side of their choice.

Charge: Line 5

Heroic: Your weapon releases a blast 1 explosion as an **area effect** when it lands. Characters caught in the area must physical save or take light physical damage.

TALENT:

- I. Spaces adjacent to your weapon become difficult terrain while it's out.
- II. *Effect:* When you pick your weapon up, deal fray damage to an adjacent foe and shove 1

MASTER TALENT: SINGING BLADE

If you choose, your weapon automatically returns to you at the start of your next turn, no matter the distance, drawing an Arc area equal to the distance between you. Characters it passes through are shoved 1 to either side, and you pick it up when it returns to you.

DRAKEN CROSS

Heavy Physical Melee Attack
Cross 2 (self), True Strike

Fill the air with the flurry of blades.

Attack: *On hit:* Deal heavy damage. *Miss:* Light damage. *Critical Hit:* Critical Damage.

Area effect: Light damage

Charge: Increase area of effect to cross 4 (self)

Heroic: Dash 1 and repeat the area of the attack, applying only the area effect. Characters can be hit again even if they were already damaged by this action.

TALENT:

- I. If this ability targets only one character, boost attack damage to critical damage.
- II. This action deals bonus damage against vulnerable targets

MASTER TALENT: JUDGEMENT

Gain Effect: Dash 1 and repeat the attack area, applying only the area effect. Stacks with the Heroic version.

WEAPON VAULT

1/turn, Free action

Use your great weapon as a vaulting pole, and soar into the sky.

Effect: Fly to any space next to an adjacent foe. That foe is shoved into the space you just left. Weapon vault can't be used on any turn you attack, and you can't attack on any turn you use weapon vault.

Heroic: You may dash 1 before and after Weapon Vault triggers.

TALENT:

- I. When you weapon vault, save against a status or end a blight or mark.
- II. *Charge:* Foe also must physical save or become dazed

MASTER TALENT: DEMON DANCE

Weapon vault becomes 3/turn

OVERKILL

1 action

Time to end this.

End your turn. Gain **effect:** Your next attack slams your foe's defenses on hit and leaves them wide open. On hit, your foe loses all armor and resistance. This effect ends after they are damaged by an attack.

Charge: Your target must also physical save or become vulnerable

Heroic: You can dash up to 3 spaces before releasing the overkill attack.

TALENT:

- I. While holding Overkill, you can dash 1 as an effect after taking damage
- II. Your Overkill ability also deals bonus damage

MASTER TALENT: BRAVER

When you take Overkill, you are unstoppable until the start of your next turn.

ROYAL GUARD

1 action, Stance

Bat aside every strike at you with supernatural precision.

Stance: When you take this stance, the next time you take damage from a foe, reduce it to 0. When you start a slow turn, refresh this stance.

Heroic: Gain counter while Royal Guard is active.

TALENT:

- I. When Royal Guard activates, deal bonus damage with your next ability
- II. You can spend Royal Guard on damage sources targeting adjacent allies

MASTER TALENT: DEMON SKIN

Royal Guard stacks twice. When it refreshes, add 1 stack.

LIMIT BREAK: SPLIT HEAVEN AND HELL

3 resolve
Free Action

Sever Divinity and cut through the threads of possibility. Pour all your rage into one blow and topple the Gods.

End your turn and charge up a **God Cutting Blow**. While you're holding this blow, you are slow (ongoing) and have resistance to all damage. This effect ends when you take an attack. Your next melee or ranged attack additionally releases a shockwave as a line area of effect that is 3 spaces wide and goes the length of the battlefield, passing through the primary target of your attack and phasing through all terrain or obstructions. All characters it sweeps through take light piercing damage with true strike as an area effect and are shoved 1 directly away from you.

MASTER TALENT: BURY THE LIGHT

Deal fray damage once to the final character hit by the shockwave for every hostile character the blow passes through before hitting them, up to six times.

CLASS: VAGABOND

Rogue, Scoundrel, and Blade for Hire

Vagabonds are the mercenaries and wanderers of Arden Eld. They know how to slip a knife through the chest plate of a knight or the armor of a monster, how to move quietly and quickly, and how to fling a knife with deadly precision.

Vagabonds boast high damage and even higher mobility. **Extended Dash** and **Skirmisher** lets them move faster and further than other classes, while **Dodge** lets them avoid damage unless targeted directly. They make use of **Stealth**, **Blind**, **Evasion**, and **Finishing Blow** to crush weak enemies and avoid their counterattacks

CLASS TRAITS:

Extended Dash - Your dash action can be taken for 1 action.

Skirmisher - You can move diagonally

Dodge - You are immune to all damage and effects from missed attacks. You become immune to all damage and effects when you save successfully against something. You are immune to the damage and effects of area effect spaces.

METER – FINISHING BLOW

Your actions with Finishing Blow become more powerful when they include a bloody foe as a target.

VAGABOND GAMBIT:

If you take a Vagabond Ability as a non-Vagabond class, you get **Finishing Blow**.

CLASS STATISTICS

Chapter 1:

Health: 6

HP: 24

Elixirs: 2

Armor: 0

Defense: 12

Speed: 4 (Run 2, Dash 4)

Attack bonus: +2

Fray damage: 1

Damage: D8/2d8/3d8

Basic Attack: Physical Melee or Physical Range
4

Chapter 2:

Health: 8

HP: 32

Elixirs: 2

Armor: 0

Defense: 14

Speed: 4 (Run 2, Dash 4)

Attack bonus: +3

Fray damage: 1

Damage: D10/2d10/3d10

Basic Attack: Physical Melee or Physical Range
4

Chapter 3:

Health: 10

HP: 40

Elixirs: 2

Armor: 0

Defense: 16

Speed: 5 (Run 3, Dash 5)

Attack bonus: +4

Fray damage: 2

Damage: D12/2d12/3d12

Basic Attack: Physical Melee or Physical Range
4

MOST RELEVANT RULES

Blind - Can only target adjacent spaces

Bloody - Under 50% hp

Dash - Special movement that ignores engagement and doesn't trigger interrupts

Dodge - Immune to all damage and effects on miss or successful save. Immune to damage and effects from the non-attack spaces of AoE attacks and abilities.

Elixir - Heal 50% hp outside of combat per elixir drank. Start with 2 by default.

Evasion - Roll a d6 when targeted by an attack. On a 4+, the attack automatically misses. Check before the attack roll.

Fly - A flying character has melee evasion and ignores terrain effects, engagement, and obstruction from ground based obstacles and characters. Moving over terrain doesn't cost extra movement.

Intangible - Can be targeted, but immune to all damage, effects, conditions, and blights. Doesn't cause obstruction.

Mark - Place your mark on a specific character. You can only place one mark at a time on each enemy or ally and each ability can only place one mark. If you place a new mark on a character with a mark from you, you can choose which to keep or which to discard.

Phasing - Can ignore obstruction and pass through, but not end your turn in, terrain or characters.

Pierce - Ignores armor.

Skirmisher - Can move diagonally

Slay - An effect that triggers when this action reduces a character to 0 hp. Can only trigger once per action.

Slow - Must take a slow turn while slow.

Stance - Ongoing effect. A character can only have one stance active at a time and can drop a stance by taking a new stance or as a free action at the start of their turn.

Stealth - Cannot be directly targeted except from an adjacent space. Breaks on taking or dealing damage.

Summon - A character controlled by its Summoner. Abilities that target allied characters cannot target summons unless specifically mentioned. Summons don't take turns, actions, or movement on their own unless specified. By default, summons have defenses equal to their summoner's and hp equal to 50% of their summoner's. When reduced to 0 HP, they are

removed from the battlefield instead of becoming defeated. They are also removed if their summoner is defeated.

Teleport - Instantly move to a free space within range. You cannot teleport while immobilized or stunned.

BLIGHTS

The Blights are Burning, Electrified, Poisoned, and Frostbite. A character takes 1 piercing damage at the start of their turn for each different blight they are afflicted by. Moves become stronger when used against a character suffering from these blights, depending on the move. Blights can only be cleared by **Cleanse** or other abilities that specify they can clear blights.



SHADE

Nocturnal Assassin

The legends say Shades make a deal with the Weeper, the dead Titan queen of night and air, to split their soul in two. Their shadow becomes animate, bestial and hungry. Over a week and a

day, they must fast and train their shadow to obey them, transforming them into assassins and spies of the highest order.

The Shades say the stories are rumors, and they get along with their Darksides. They do have a tendency to appear when least expected, in uncanny and unsettling ways.

Traits:

Shadow walk: While in stealth you have phasing

Soul Freeze: Attacks deal bonus damage to characters inflicted by Frostbite

Darkside: When you teleport for the first time on your turn, you leave a shadowy twin behind you in the space you left. Your darkside is a size 1 intangible summon. It doesn't take actions or movement on its own, but when you make an action that targets another character, you can make it from either your location or the twin's location. When you teleport again, you can choose to either replace your old twin or keep it.

Meld: You can spend your standard move to swap spaces with your shadow twin, teleporting. You can make this move even if your speed is 0.

ABILITIES

UMBRA

Light Ranged Magical Attack
Range 4.

By the power of darkness.

Attack: On hit: Light damage.

Effect: You may teleport to an adjacent space to your foe after the attack.

Finishing Blow: Inflicts frostbite. If your foe already has frostbite, boost damage (to heavy).

TALENTS:

- I. *Critical Hit:* Instead of teleporting adjacent to your foe, you may attempt to swap places with them, teleporting. They can magic save to avoid this effect.
- II. You may teleport 2 spaces in any direction instead of adjacent to your target

MASTER TALENT: NINJUTSU

Has the range of the battlefield against blinded or frostbitten characters.

SHRIKE

1 Action, Mark

With the flick of a wrist, you hurl a spectral blade, marking your foe with an umbral seal.

Effect: Flick a dagger at a character in range 3 and line of sight. That character must magic save or become marked. While marked, that character takes magical fray damage at the start of your turn and you may teleport adjacent to that character as

an effect. If your marked character dies, you can attempt to transfer the mark to a new character in range 3 of you as an interrupt (magic save avoids).

TALENTS:

- I. Gain stealth after you teleport
- II. When you teleport, inflict frostbite on your target. If they already have frostbite, deal fray damage again.

MASTER TALENT: TWINTAIL

You may throw an additional dagger at a different foe, marking both. You may teleport and deal damage to one or both foes when this ability activates.

DEATH BLOSSOM

Heavy Physical Melee Attack
Close blast 1

From beneath a cloak, out from flying sleeves, or hidden in coils of hair - infinite blades.

Attack: On hit: Deal heavy damage. *Miss:* Light damage. *Critical Hit:* Critical Damage.

Area Effect: Light damage

Effect: Attack target must pass a physical save or become blinded.

Finishing Blow: This ability inflicts frostbite and deals bonus damage to all characters

TALENTS:

- I. *Critical hit:* Increase blast size by +1
- II. After this attack, you may teleport to any adjacent space to an affected character

MASTER TALENT: SHUKUCHI

You can teleport 3 spaces before and after using this ability.

VEIL

1 Action, stance

Draw down a veil of shadows to mask your countenance. Harden your heart.

Stance: Gain stealth, and your next attack, hit or miss, forces a magical save or your target is blinded and is inflicted with frostbite. This stance ends after you attack.

TALENTS

- I. *Finishing Blow:* Refresh Veil

- II. Increase the range of all teleports by +1 under the effects of veil

MASTER TALENT: CENTIPEDE TECHNIQUE

Gain phasing with veil, and moving through terrain or other character's spaces with Veil costs 0 spaces of movement.

NOCTURNE

Interrupt 1

You capture a thin silver thread of spilled life force of a foe and use it to tear open a space of night and cold.

Trigger: You slay a foe.

Terrain Effect: Mark a blast 1 area around that character, then create a terrain effect in that area. This cloud of shadow does not create cover or block line of sight, but inside the zone, all characters (including you) have permanent stealth. The area disperses at the end of the next round. If you trigger this interrupt again, you can replace the zone or keep it.

TALENTS:

- I. When you score a **finishing blow**, refresh the duration of your Nocturne zone until the end of the next round.
- II. Keep stealth even if you leave the zone

MASTER TALENT: SPIDER TECHNIQUE

When a foe is defeated in the zone, increase its size by +1, up to a maximum of blast 3

DANSE MACABRE

1 action

You step through the air, emerging from the shadows of your foes, where they find only gleaming knives.

Effect: Teleport adjacent to a character or summon in range 3.

- If they're an ally or allied summon, repeat this effect.
- If they're a foe, you may deal fray damage to them, then roll 1d6. On a 3+, repeat this effect.
- Characters can only be targeted once as part of this action

Finishing blow: Repeat this effect without rolling.

TALENTS:

- I. *Finishing Blow:* Deal light damage instead
- II. After Danse Macabre resolves, you may teleport adjacent to any affected character.

MASTER TALENT: LIZARD TECHNIQUE

Deal fray damage once to the final foe targeted by this ability for every character you teleported to prior to them, up to three times.

LIMIT BREAK: ABYSSAL ECSTASY

1 Action, 2 Resolve

A prayer and a drop of blood, and soothing darkness cloaks the battlefield.

Effect: All allies and allied summons gain stealth, and all foes are blinded. These effects end if a character takes or deals damage, or saves against them with a magic save at the end of their turn.

MASTER TALENT: ULTIMA ECSTASY

The stealth effect from this ability does not break on you when you take or deal damage, but instead lasts 1 round. Extend this by 1 round when you slay a foe.



FREELANCER

Divine punisher, wielder of the Holy Chamber

Freelancers are free-roaming exorcists and hired guns, roaming the land and fighting blights, demons and bandits in the name of justice. They tend to act as wild cards: highly independent, highly effective, and sticking to their codes of honor.

Freelancers have their history in an ancient disgraced knightly order from one of the Seven Families of the Thrynn. They wield a bright metal six gun or long rifle with extreme skill, the bullets of which they infuse with raw Aether. Each gun is a relic passed down from master to student over the years, and can only be won in a duel with another freelancer. The freelancer's ultimate weapon is the Astral Chain, a holy gauntlet which they use to purge and bind demons and rogue spirits into their service as Seraphim.

Traits:

Aether Shell: Every third attack you make upgrades any hit into a critical hit.

Divinity Bullet: Your light attacks can critical hit. If they do, deal bonus damage.

Run and Gun: You can split up and interrupt any movement you make with ranged attack abilities.

Deadeye: Gain +1 Boon on to-hit rolls against marked characters of any kind, even if they were marked by another character.

ABILITIES

STRAFE SHOT

Light Ranged Physical Attack
Range 4

A flash of gun smoke, and the shine of gleaming steel.

Attack: *On hit:* deal light damage.

Effect: You may dash 2 before or after the attack.

Critical Hit: You may dash 2 after the attack

Finishing blow: Your target must magical save or become electrified. If they're already electrified, boost damage (to heavy).

TALENTS:

- I. Gain flying while dashing as part of this action
- II. *Effect:* After this action, deal piercing fray damage to a character in range 3

MASTER: SIDEREAL RODEO

Increase the distance of all dashes by +2 as part of this action

ASTRAL GUARDIAN

1 action, summon

Calling out their true name, in a flurry of celestial wings, you summon your bound spirit.

Summon: Summon an astral seraphim in range 3, a phasing, flying summon that trails after you.

- At the end of your turn, you can teleport your seraphim to a space in range 3 of you, otherwise it takes no action or movement on its own.
- You can target your seraphim with a ranged attack. If you do, the seraphim takes no damage or effects, but re-directs the attack to a new target in range 3 of the seraphim, using your attack roll, line of sight, and effects from the new location. Attacks that the seraphim re-directs electrify their target on hit.

- When you trigger a **Finishing Blow** with an attack against a character in range 3 of the Seraphim, they may teleport adjacent to that character and deal piercing fray damage

The seraphim lasts until you use this ability again, or until reduced to 0 hp.

TALENTS

- I. Allies can also ricochet attacks off the seraphim
- II. Attacks that ricochet off the seraphim ignore cover

MASTER: ARCHANGEL

Effect: When you ricochet a shot off the seraphim, after the attack resolves it shoots a flurry of divine bolts, dealing piercing fray damage to all marked or electrified targets in range 3 of it.

ASTRAL CHAIN

Heavy Ranged Magical Attack
Mark, Range 3

With your heavenly chain skillfully whirling through the air, you dispense divine justice.

Attack: *On hit:* Deal heavy damage. *Miss:* Light damage. *Critical Hit:* Critical Damage.

Mark: Your foe is marked, hit or miss. As long as your target is marked by you, at the start of your turn, if they are in range 3, they take magical piercing fray damage from you as a bolt of lightning shoots between you.

Critical Hit: You may shove your target 1 space towards you

Finishing blow: You sink a magical sigil into your foe. While marked, you can use your standard move to teleport within range 3 of them.

TALENTS:

- I. Gain evasion against your target while they're in range 3 of you
- II. Your attacks against your marked target may gain shove 1, but they can only be shoved towards you

MASTER: ASTRAL PUNISHER

When Astral Chain's damage or shoves trigger, they also triggers on all hostile characters within range 2 of your target

HOT CHAMBER

Interrupt 1

Fan the hammer.

Trigger: You score a critical hit

Effect: Fire up to 1d6 shells from a sidearm at foes in range 3 of you, each dealing fray damage. Each foe can only be hit by one shell.

TALENTS:

- I. If you fire 4 or more shells, gain stealth after this action
- II. Electrified characters can be hit by any number of shells

MASTER: VERTIGO BULLET

Effect: If you **slay** a foe with Hot Chamber, roll 1d6 again and add it to the shells remaining. This effect can only trigger once a round.

DIVINE BINDING

1 actions, mark

You lash out with Aetherial cords, lassoing your enemy in an inescapable web.

Mark: Mark a foe in range 3 of you and lash to them with an astral chain, then **end your turn**. If that target ends their turn further away from range 3 from you, the chain snaps. That foe must magic save or they take piercing fray damage and become blinded. The effect then ends, on a failed or successful save.

If you score a **finishing blow** or **critical hit** while your target is marked, shove your marked target 1 away from you

TALENTS

- I. Gain evasion against your marked foe while the chain is intact.
- II. You can plant your end of the chain in the space where you stand when you take this action.

MASTER TALENT: RIDE THE LIGHTNING

Interrupt: When the chain snaps, you can fly as an interrupt in an arc AoE as far as possible towards your foe until you are adjacent to them, by the shortest possible route. Every character you pass over takes piercing fray damage as an area effect.

ACE

1 action, stance

The world goes still, and is split by a bolt of lightning.

Stance: Your next hit is upgraded to a critical hit. When you critical hit, this stance ends.

Finishing Blow: Roll a d6. On a 5+, refresh this stance and gain stealth.

TALENTS

- I. The Ace attack also gains true strike
- II. When Ace refreshes, you can eject the bullets from your gun and deal fray damage to a foe in range 3 as an effect

MASTER: SUPERNOVA

Your Ace attack causes a blast 1 explosion around your target as an area effect. Characters inside, including your target, must magic save or become blinded.

LIMIT BREAK: AETHER OVERDRIVE

Heavy Ranged Physical Attack
4 resolve

Become one with your weapon. Smite your foes with high caliber justice.

Empty your gun to deal piercing physical fray damage +1 to each foe in line of sight and range 4. then Go Beyond Gun.

When you Go Beyond Gun, you draw on raw Aether to pull bullets from nothingness. You can fire an extra shell at any foe in range 4, dealing piercing fray damage +1. This can be the same or a different foe. You can then choose to keep firing shells at the same or different foe, one at a time. Before you fire each shell past the first, roll a d6. On a 2+, you can fire normally, on a 1, your gun jams and overheats. This ability continues until you overheat or have fired 6 shells. If your gun overheats, you are stunned and cannot attack until the end of your next turn.

MASTER TALENT: ULTIMA OVERDRIVE

Go Beyond Gun has the range of the battlefield and can fire up to 8 shells.

CLASS: MENDICANT

Wandering Healer and Storyteller

Mendicants are the wandering healers of Arden Eld. They travel from town to town, healing sicknesses of the body and soul, cleansing the damage dealt by the Blights, consulting with local spirits, and setting up wards against evil.

Many mendicants are highly learned scholars, but others come from folk practices, temple monks, green witch circles, or town priesthods.

Mendicants are the only class that can consistently heal by giving out **Vigor** with **Cure** and also end negative effects, blights, and marks with **Cleanse**. They have many alternate ways to trigger these powerful effects, as well as the very potent statuses **Staggered** and **Pacified**.

CLASS TRAITS:

Cure: 1 action - An ally in range 3 gains vigor 1. Increase to Vigor 2 if they are bloodied. Other actions can trigger Cure.

Cleanse: 1 action. An ally in range 3 ends all blights and marks and can immediately saves against all effects. Other actions can trigger Cleanse.

Bless: 1 action: Grant a blessing token to an ally in range 3

Resilience - Make all saves with +1 Boon

Succor - You can use Rescue at range 5 instead of adjacent.

METER - BLESSING

Certain actions give characters a Blessing token. Characters can only carry one Blessing at a time, and all blessings are discarded at the end of combat. Different Mendicant jobs interact with Blessings in different ways.

MENDICANT GAMBIT:

If you take a Mendicant Ability as a non-Mendicant job, you get **Bless** and **Blessing**. Characters can spend your blessings to **Cure** and **Cleanse** themselves as an action.

CLASS STATS

Chapter 1:

Health: 6

HP: 24

Elixirs: 2

Armor: 1

Defense: 10

Speed: 3 (Run 2, Dash 3)

Attack bonus: +2

Fray damage: 1

Damage: D6/2d6/3d6

Basic Attack: Physical Melee or Magical Range 4

Chapter 1:

Health: 8

HP: 32

Elixirs: 2

Armor: 1

Defense: 12

Speed: 3 (Run 2, Dash 3)

Attack bonus: +3

Fray damage: 1

Damage: D8/2d8/3d8

Basic Attack: Physical Melee or Magical Range 4

Chapter 1:

Health: 10

HP: 40

Elixirs: 2

Armor: 2

Defense: 14

Speed: 3 (Run 2, Dash 3)

Attack bonus: +4

Fray damage: 2

Damage: D10/2d10/3d10

Basic Attack: Physical Melee or Magical Range 4

MOST RELEVANT RULES

Resistance to X - Take 1/2 damage from X, rounded up

Auto-hit - This attack doesn't require an attack roll but automatically hits.

Charge - When used on a slow turn, this ability becomes more powerful.

Cleanse - A character that's cleansed can remove all blights and marks and immediately save against all effects

Combo - Actions with Combo have two or more versions. When you use a combo action, your next combo action (on any turn, and not necessarily the same action) uses the next part of its combo, looping back to the first part after the final part.

Cure - A character that's Cured gains Vigor 1, or Vigor 2 if they're bloody

Elixir - Heal 50% hp outside of combat per elixir drank. Start with 2 by default.

Mark - Place your mark on a specific character. You can only place one mark at a time on each enemy or ally and each ability can only place one mark. If you place a new mark on a character with a mark from you, you can choose which to keep or which to discard.

Pacified - Max damage reduced to 1. Breaks on taking damage.

Slay - An effect that triggers when this action reduces a character to 0 hp. Can only trigger once per action.

Slow - Go after all other characters. If multiple characters take slow turns, it takes the same order as regular turns (ally/enemy/ally)

Staggered - Attackers gain +1 Boon against a staggered character

Stance - Ongoing effect. A character can only have one stance active at a time and can drop a stance by taking a new stance or as a free action at the start of their turn.

Summon - A character controlled by its Summoner. Abilities that target allied characters cannot target summons unless specifically mentioned. Summons don't take turns, actions, or movement unless specified. By default, summons have defenses equal to their summoner's and hp equal to 50% of their summoner's. When reduced to 0 HP, they are removed from the battlefield instead of becoming defeated. They are also removed if their summoner is defeated.

Teleport - Instantly move to a free space within range. You cannot teleport while immobilized or stunned.

Vigor X - Gain a shield that goes

True strike - Ignores dodge, evasion, and does not trigger guardian over your hit points, equal to X times your health value. Damage goes to Vigor before Hit Points. Vigor does not stack, and when you gain Vigor you can choose to keep the old value or gain the new value. Lose all vigor at the end of combat.

BLIGHTS

The Blights are Burning, Electrified, Poisoned, and Frostbite. A character takes 1 piercing damage at the start of their turn for each different blight they are afflicted by. Moves become stronger when used against a character suffering from these blights, depending on the move.

Blights can only be cleared by **Cleanse** or other abilities that specify they can clear blights.



SEER

A fortune teller and unparalleled master of fate

The Seers are made up of all the orders of hedge witches, stargazers, corner prophets, folk healers, shamans, and all manner of individuals that find themselves attracted to reading the

Great Arcana, the esoteric practice of reading destiny itself, the Great Wheel of Arden Eld that determines the final fate of all things.

Through ritual, ceremony, and unrelenting practice, Seers gain the ability to predict and even defy a person's fate, using their Aether infused card decks to influence the turning of the Great Wheel and empower their allies with foresight, precision, and uncanny accuracy.

Traits:

The Wheel of Fate

Set up a deck made up of one suit of a 52 card deck (so 13 cards). At the start of any combat, draw 5 cards. Your hand and deck persist through combats. Discarded cards go in a discard pile. Once you draw through your deck, shuffle the discard pile and draw it as your new deck (meaning there's no replacement and you will eventually draw through the deck).

Foretell: Allies can discard 1 blessing token any time to allow you to tell their fortune as an effect. You can discard a card from your hand and immediately apply the effects to your target, no matter the distance or if you can see them or not. If you have no cards in hand, draw the top card of your deck instead, apply its effects, then discard it.

THE GREAT WHEEL

2 - **The Fool** - Ally must immediately dash 3 towards the nearest enemy and gains hatred of that enemy until end of their next turn.

3 - **The Scepter** - Teleport your ally to an adjacent space to you.

4 - **The Ewer** - Cleanse your ally and all characters adjacent to them, hostile or allied

5 - **The Devil** - Ally gains 3x vigor but gains a wound. If this would kill them, they are stunned instead and gain no vigor or wounds.

6 - **The Sword** - Ally's attacks gain Pierce until the end of their next turn, but their max armor is reduced to 0 for the same duration.

7 - **Death** - Ally gains Defiance.

8 - **The Chariot** - Ally's movement ignores engagement and terrain penalties until the end of their next turn.

9 - **The Papessa** - Ally becomes pacified and gains regeneration 1 while pacified.

10 - **The Emperor** - Ally gains stealth

J - **The Star** - Ally saves with +1 Boon until the end of their next turn.

Q - **The Moon** - Ally gains Evasion until end of their next turn

K - **The Sun** - Ally gains Counter and cannot gain or benefit from stealth until end of their next turn

A - **The World** - Ally becomes Unstoppable until the end of their next turn

Bend Fate: You can discard any number of cards when you roll a random d6 as part of any action to roll an extra die per card discarded and choose any result.

Skein (1 action): Draw two cards

Karma: Allied characters caught in your area effect spaces are resistant to their damage and are *Cleansed* after the action resolves. If they're caught in the attack space, they are immune to the damage and effects and are *Cured* instead.

ABILITIES

ASTRA

Heavy Magic ranged attack

Combo, Line 4 + cross 2

You call down the heavens themselves on your foes.

Attack: Auto hit: Deal light damage, inflict frostbite, and stagger your foe

Area effect: Light damage and inflict frostbite.

Combo: Fortuna

Close blast 1

Attack: Auto hit: Fray damage

Area Effect: Bless all allied characters in the area. All foes are staggered.

TALENTS

I. Staggered or frostbitten characters take bonus damage from Astra.

II. *Charge:* Increase area of effect for all areas by 1

MASTER TALENT: STARSHIELD

After you use Astra, roll 1d6. On a 1 or 2 nothing happens. On a 3-5, a shield of floating stars may surround you or an ally in the area of effect after the ability resolves, granting them resistance to all damage of the next attack they are hit with, then dispersing. On a 6, the shield manifests over both you and your chosen ally.

WILD CARD

1 Action, Summon (intangible)

You flick a beautifully illustrated ethereal card onto the battlefield, laden with the threads of potential.

Summon: Summon an intangible wild card onto the battlefield in range 5. When it's hit by an allied area of effect action, it explodes, extending the

area effect space of that AoE to encompass its area and destroying the card. Wild cards can be triggered by other wild cards.

TALENTS:

- I. *Effect:* After a Wild Card explodes, Bless an ally in range 3 of the card
- II. You can throw a Master Card instead of a regular card. It's not destroyed when it explodes, but using this ability again will replace the last card created.

MASTER TALENT: WILD GAMBLE

When you trigger a Wild Card with an AoE, roll 1d6. On a 1, nothing happens. On a 2-5, it inflicts a random blight on all affected characters (2 burning, 3 electrified, 4 frostbite, 5 poisoned). On a 6 it inflicts all blights.

Sleight of Hand

Light Magic Ranged Attack
Range 4

A flash of bright color, and a card is stuck to your foe, bursting with power.

Attack: Auto-hit: You attach a magical card to a foe in range

Effect: The next attack against the target gains +1 Boon. The next time an ally hits the target with an attack, the card explodes in a blast 1 area effect for fray damage and grants that ally a blessing. The triggering ally is immune to all damage from this ability.

TALENTS

- I. You can target an allied character with this attack to attach the card to them instead, marking them. It triggers on any attack, not just allied, and they're immune to its damage
- II. You can throw a card in an arc 3 area effect when you throw it, dealing fray damage to characters it passes through before it hits its target.

MASTER TALENT: PERFECT HAND

You throw two cards with this move at two separate targets

DOOM

1 action, mark

You crook a finger, and pull on the threads of fate, casting an irrevocable curse.

Mark: Mark a foe or ally with a magical card, which pulses with astral energy. At the end of any of the marked character's turns, you roll a d6. On a 6, the card explodes in a blast 1 **area effect** centered on that character. This becomes 4+ for frostbitten characters. A character can pass the card off to another adjacent character (allied or hostile) as an action on their turn. The card also explodes if the character is slain.

When the card explodes, characters in the area, including the primary character, must magic save or take fray damage and become staggered. The primary character takes light magic damage instead and automatically fails their save.

TALENTS

- I. If you hit the target with a critical hit, the card immediately explodes
- II. If a character is defeated while under the effects of Doom, the card may pass to a new character of your choice in range 3 of the defeated character.

MASTER TALENT: SEAL FATE

When Doom is passed at least once, it deals heavy damage instead of light to its primary target.

POLARIS

1 action

A distant glint in the heavens, portents of the devastation to come.

Effect: Choose a space on the battlefield in range 5, which becomes visible to all characters. At the end of every turn that passes after yours (allied or foe), roll 1d6. On a 6, a meteor lands in that spot, exploding for a blast 1 explosion, dealing light damage as an area effect and inflicting Frostbite. Frostbitten characters must also save or become immobilized. This effect ends at the start of your next turn.

TALENTS

- I. You can choose to make the meteor check on only allied or enemy turns (pick one) when you cast it. If you do, it checks at 5+
- II. Also check for the meteor falling at the end of your turn.

MASTER TALENT: GRAN POLARIS

The meteor check becomes 1 easier for every turn that passes (6 to 5+ to 4+ to 3+ and so on, down to 2+)

GRAN REVERSA

1 action, stance

Causality unmakes itself around you, as wounds heal instantly.

Stance: While in this stance, any time a character in range 3 of you takes damage, roll a d6. On a 5+, they are Cured afterwards as an effect. This applies to foes and allies alike.

TALENTS:

- I. Allies gain a blessing if this effect triggers.
- II. Foes this effect triggers on must also magic save or become pacified.

MASTER TALENT: FATAL REVERSA

If a character or summon (foe or ally) in the aura is reduced to 0 hp, roll a d6. On a 5+, they immediately gain and lose Defiance, immediately triggering it, and are returned to 1 hp instead.

LIMIT BREAK: HIGH PROPHECY

Free action, 3 resolve

A burning third eye of pure aetheric energy appears on your forehead. Possibilities unfurl before you, laid out like infinite gleaming threads.

Become slow (ongoing) until the end of your next turn. Until the start of your next turn, every d6 you roll is either a 6 or a 1 (you decide). This includes for boons, curses, and random d6s.

MASTER TALENT: THOTH

5 resolve

This effect also extends to all characters in range 4 of you.



SEALER

Warrior monk and purger of evil

Traveling priests, monks, and mages, the Sealers roam the world from village to village, performing necessary rituals, marriages, ceremonies, and yearly festivals. They are a welcome sight in most villages, and most perform the important function of traveling judge, acting as an impartial party translating

for the will of the local spirits. They often travel with many blessed relics of the deities of the land or even portable shrines on their back.

In their other role, Sealers are legendary monster hunters and exorcists of unbelievable prowess and unshakeable faith. Whenever an especially bad blight or an arch demon appears, the Sealers are usually there to drive it back with ancient sealing magic, blessed brands, and flaming weapons.

Traits:

Blessed Weapon: Characters can spend your Blessings when they use an ability to give that ability bonus damage and +1 boon on any attacks.

Mantra of Sealing: When you hand out a blessing token, set out a d6 at 1 or tick it up by 1 to a maximum of 6. You can spend it for the following effects when you make an attack:

- **Cloud Riding:** Reduce your Mantra by 2. Teleport 2 before making the attack.
- **Seal:** Reduce your Mantra by 3. Gain effect: attack target must magic save or become pacified after the attack.
- **Smite:** Reduce your Mantra by 6. Your next attack inflicts burning and its damage is boosted.

Break Meridians: Your attacks against pacified targets are critical hits on hit. Your light attacks against pacified targets can critical hit, dealing bonus damage.

Martial Arts: You have dodge

ABILITIES

GOD HAND

Light Physical/Magical Melee Attack
Combo

Divine energy infuses you, allowing hammer-like blows that would fell a demon with even your bare hands.

Attack: *On hit:* deal light physical damage

Effect: *On hit:* an ally in range 3 of you is blessed.

Combo: DEVIL HAND

Attack: On hit, deal light magical damage

Effect: On hit, your foe is staggered

TALENTS:

- I. God hand can Cure your ally instead of Bless them. If it does, reduce its damage to 1.
- II. Devil hand inflicts Burning on hit. If a character is already burning, it deals bonus damage.

MASTER TALENT: FISTS OF HEAVEN AND HELL

Add a third part of the combo.

Combo: FISTS OF HEAVEN AND HELL

True Strike

Attack: *On hit:* deal light damage, either physical or magical, and inflict Burning. Deal bonus damage if your target is already burning.

Effect: *On hit:* your target is staggered and a character in range 3 of you is blessed.

BURNING SEAL

1 action, Mark

Bind an enemy in an astral seal, condemning them and crushing them under the weight of their own evil.

Mark: A foe in range 3 becomes pacified. It can end this condition on itself any time, including directly after this action, as an effect, but must then immediately magic save or become staggered and burning. If it's already burning, deal light damage.

TALENTS:

- I. *Charge:* Increase range to 6
- II. Bless all allies adjacent to the marked foe when it chooses to end the effect

MASTER: MILK SUTRA

Interrupt 2

Trigger: A foe chooses to end this mark,

Effect: You may pass it to a new foe in range 3 of that character.

MATSURI

Heavy Melee Magic Attack

Swing your weapon in a flaming arc that sends sprays of fire in bright displays, lighting up the sky.

Attack: *On hit:* Deal heavy magic damage and inflict Burning. *Miss:* Light Damage. *Critical hit:* Critical Damage

Slay or critical hit: Bless all allies in range 2 of your target

Effect: Gains true strike against burning foes.

TALENTS:

- I. *Critical hit:* Allies in range 2 of your target may teleport 1 space.
- II. *Charge:* Make attack roll twice and choose the higher result

MASTER TALENT: BLOOD FESTIVAL

The first time you hit with Matsuri in a combat, it deals double damage and ignores all armor and resistance to damage.

JUSTICE

Interrupt 1, Combo

Invoking the spirits of the land and air, you move at impossible speed, doling out blows faster than the eye can see.

Trigger: You score a critical hit or slay a foe

Effect: Teleport adjacent to every character in range 2 of you in any order. Foes become burning, allies are blessed.

Combo: JUDGEMENT

Interrupt 1, True Strike

Trigger: You score a critical hit or slay a foe

Effect: Roll a d6 for every foe in range 2 of you. On a 1, that character is struck by a fiery bolt from heaven, takes light piercing magic damage with true strike. Roll becomes a 1 or a 2 against burning characters.

TALENTS:

- I. Also roll a d6 for allied characters with Judgement. If they roll a 6, they are cured and blessed.
- II. You can teleport 1 space after triggering justice or judgement but before applying the effect

MASTER TALENT: GRAN JUDICATA

Add a third part of the combo:

Combo: GRAN JUDICATA

Interrupt 1

Trigger: You score a critical hit or slay a foe

Effect: Cure and Cleanse every bloody ally in range 2. Deal light piercing magic damage with true strike to every hostile character over 50% hp in range 2.

SANCTIFY

2 actions

You throw out a handful of glittering salt, scorching the spiritually impure.

Terrain Effect: You scatter salt in a close blast 1 area. Foes that start or end their turn in the area must magic save or become pacified.

Allies that end their turn in the area are cured and cleansed, then pacified. The area persists until you take this action again or until the end of combat.

TALENTS:

- I. **Charge:** Increase area to blast 2
- II. Magic attacks against allied characters in the area gain +1 curse. Allied characters magic save with +1 boon.

MASTER TALENT: ELDEN SALT

Sanctify inflicts light damage and burning as an effect to hostile characters in the area when you take this action, and hostile characters must immediately save or become pacified.

ENSHRINE

1 Action, mark

You place a holy seal over your ally, enveloping them in divine protection.

Mark: Mark an ally in range 3. While marked, foes that attack your target must magic save or become pacified after the attack resolves. The effect ends at the end of the marked ally's turn. The marked ally can extend the duration of this effect until the end of their following turn by spending 1 blessing token.

TALENTS:

- I. Your ally can teleport 1 as an effect after being attacked
- II. Your ally gains Counter while marked

MASTER TALENT: SHROUD FROM HEAVEN

Your ally also gains stealth after being attacked

LIMIT BREAK: PASSAGE TO THE AFTERLIFE

5 resolve

Heavy Magical Melee Attack

True Strike

You unleash the supreme Sealer war art, shattering the connections of your foe's vital energy to their body and hurrying on the transmigration of immortal souls.

Attack: *On hit:* Deal light damage three times. *Miss:* Deal light damage twice. *Critical hit:* deal light damage four times

This damage can't be boosted. Roll damage once, then apply it the number of times listed.

Effect: You may teleport adjacent to the target before the attack if they're in range 3. Every allied character in range 3 of the target can also teleport adjacent to your target. Your target then takes additional fray damage from each adjacent ally once.

MASTER TALENT: REACH HEAVEN THROUGH VIOLENCE

The teleport effect has the range of the battlefield for both allied characters and yourself. If your target is at or under 25% hp, they take fray damage twice from each ally instead.

CLASS: WRIGHT

Mage, thaumaturge, and master of the arcane arts

Wrights are those who have mastered the manipulation of the raw power of creation: Aether. All souls are connected to Aether, and everyone is able to connect to it and feel it to some degree. Those with training, potential, and ability can learn to form and shape Aether as natural as they move their own flesh and blood. Wrights wield terrifying power - and they know it.

Wrights become stronger the longer fights go on by the power of **Aether**, able to unleash some of the most spectacular attacks in the game, which they can use to **Infuse** their abilities. Wrights focus heavily on Blights and **Area of Effect** abilities.

Class Traits

Aether Rage: All Wrights have an empowered ability that triggers off high amounts of Aether

Wrightcraft: Wrights add flat damage to their damage as they level up and gain more fray damage than other classes

Aetherwall: Wrights gain automatic cover against all attacks that originate outside of range 3 from them.

Chain Reaction: 1/round, if you catch 2 or more foes in an abilities' area of effect, gain 1 Aether.

Supercharge: Wrights have very powerful Superheavy attacks, which consume their entire standard move as well as 2 actions.

METER: AETHER

All Wrights gather Aether during combat, passively gaining 1 at the start of their turn, starting with 0. Other abilities and **Chain Reaction** will generate Aether when used. Use a die to track Aether. Aether has a maximum of 6 normally but can be pushed beyond with certain abilities. All Aether disperses at the end of combat.

INFUSE X:

Many spells have upgraded versions that can only be cast by **Infusing** them by spending X Aether. Aether is consumed at the start of the action.

WRIGHT GAMBIT:

If you take a Wright ability as a non-wright class, you get **Aether** and **Supercharge**.

CLASS STATISTICS

Chapter 1:

Health: 6

HP: 24

Elixirs: 2

Armor: 0

Defense: 8

Speed: 3 (Run 2, Dash 3)

Attack bonus: +1

Fray damage: 2

Damage: D8/2d8/3d8

Basic Attack: Magical Melee or Magical Range 6

Chapter 2:

Health: 8

HP: 32

Elixirs: 2

Armor: 0

Defense: 10

Speed: 3 (Run 2, Dash 3)

Attack bonus: +2

Fray damage: 3

Damage: D8+1/2d8+2/3d8+3

Basic Attack: Magical Melee or Magical Range 6

Chapter 3:

Health: 10

HP: 40

Elixirs: 2

Armor: 0

Defense: 12

Speed: 3 (Run 2, Dash 3)

Attack bonus: +3

Fray damage: 4

Damage: D8+2/2d8+4/3d8+6

Basic Attack: Magical Melee or Magical Range 6

MOST RELEVANT RULES

AoE - Area of effect, usually has a specific pattern. Only one space in an area of effect is the attack space and requires a roll, the others apply area effects automatically.

Charge - When used on a slow turn, this ability becomes more powerful.

Cover - Gain resistance to ranged damage from any attack you have cover from

Cure - A character that's Cured gains Vigor 1, or Vigor 2 if they're bloody

Elixir - Heal 50% hp outside of combat per elixir drank. Start with 2 by default.

Fray damage - Low fixed damage.

Mark - Place your mark on a specific character. You can only place one mark at a time on each enemy or ally and each ability can only place one mark. If you place a new mark on a character with a mark from you, you can choose which to keep or which to discard.

Obstruction - Can't move through something that causes obstruction. By default this is hostile characters and terrain.

Pierce - Ignores armor.

Slay - An effect that triggers when this action reduces a character to 0 hp. Can only trigger once per action.

Slow - Go after all other characters. If multiple characters take slow turns, it takes the same order as regular turns (ally/enemy/ally)

Summon - A character controlled by its Summoner. Abilities that target allied characters cannot target summons unless specifically mentioned. By default, summons have defenses equal to their summoner's and hp equal to their health value. When reduced to 0 HP, they are removed from the battlefield instead of becoming defeated. They are also removed if their summoner is defeated.

Teleport - Instantly move to a free space within range. You cannot teleport while immobilized or stunned.

BLIGHTS

The Blights are Burning, Electrified, Poisoned, and Frostbite. A character takes 1 piercing damage at the start of their turn for each different blight they are afflicted by. Moves become stronger when used against a character suffering from these blights, depending on the move.

Blights can only be cleared by **Cleanse** or other abilities that specify they can clear blights.



ENOCHIAN

Unbridled Destruction

The Enochian Orders of wrights are the most chaotic of the mage orders. They have no official organization, most of their members being hedge wizards or self taught. Many Enochians disdain authority and work for hire, sleeping and eating where they can and relying on the communities

they work for to support them. Those that work on contract with guilds, armies, or mercenary companies tend to value their independence.

The power that condenses inside an Enochian is related to the element of fire, a wild spark that grows and wanes with their emotions and energy, but with control can be focused into power that can carve mountains, scorch forests, and boil rivers. In times of desperation, the

Enochians can feed this power with their own life force, a dangerous practice that the other orders of wrights look down upon. The Enochians, for their part, see other wrights as stiff and uncreative. They'd rather do it their way, after all.

Traits:

Inner Furnace: Enochians can burn their own life force instead of paying the Infuse cost for abilities. They take 1 wound for every 2 Aether gained. Any Aether gained as part of Inner Furnace is lost after the action resolves.

Embersoul: Gain defiance at the start of each combat. Heal 1 wound at the end of each combat if Inner Furnace was used.

Phoenix Rage: If you take damage that would reduce you to 0 hp, release a blast 1 explosion around you dealing light damage and triggering Chain Reaction, then spend all Aether. 15% chance per Aether burned you are instead instantly returned to 50% hp instead of becoming incapacitated.

Apocalypse: If you don't attack during your turn, for your entire following turn, your abilities that cause blasts have their size increased by 1 and they deal bonus damage if they're an attack

ABILITIES

PYRE

Heavy Ranged Magic Attack
Range 8, blast 1.

Power curls into a writhing ball in your hand, before it's unleashed on your enemies.

Attack: *On hit:* Heavy damage. *On miss:* Light damage. *Critical hit:* Critical damage.

Area effect: Light Damage

Effect: Inflict burning on all characters in the area

Infuse 3: EXPLOSION

Becomes a superheavy attack. Increase radius to Blast 2

TALENTS

- I. *Effect:* If the attack target is burning, it causes a secondary explosion, dealing fray damage to all affected characters
- II. *Chain Reaction:* Shove all affected characters 1 away from the center space

MASTER TALENT: MAX EXPLOSION

Infuse 5: MAX EXPLOSION

Becomes a superheavy attack. Increase range to 12, and radius to blast 3.

ELDEN RUNE

1 action

You carve a burning rune of power into the very ground beneath you.

Terrain Effect: Inscribe an Elden Rune on the terrain space underneath you. While standing on an Elden Rune, the range of your magic attacks with a listed range is extended by 3 spaces. The rune lasts until the end of the scene. A foe can scrub out an Elden Rune by moving over it.

TALENTS

- I. You can spend your standard move to teleport up to 5 spaces into or out of an Elden Rune space.
- II. While standing in an Elden Rune, the infuse costs of your spells are reduced by 1

MASTER TALENT: ARKENRUNE

The size of your Elden Runes extend to a blast 1 area, they can only be scrubbed out with an action, and their benefits extend to any allies standing in the area.

LANCE

Light Ranged Magic Attack
Line 6

A flash scorches the eyeballs, and a thin line burns through rock, flesh, and armor

Attack: *On hit:* Light damage

Area Effect: Deal fray damage.

Effect: *On hit:* Your attack target becomes burning. If they were already burning, attack deals bonus damage and gains pierce.

Infuse 2: VOLVAGA

Gain **Effect:** This attack ignores vigor completely and goes straight to hit points

TALENTS

- I. This attack ignores cover
- II. *Infuse 1:* Extend line effect by +3. You can repeat this infusion multiple times.

MASTER TALENT: DRAGON SLAVE

DRAGON SLAVE

Infuse 5

Superheavy ranged magic attack

Line 10

Attack: *On hit:* deal heavy damage. *Miss:* Light Damage. *Critical Hit:* Critical Damage

Area Effect: Light damage

Effect: After the attack resolves, every character in the area also releases a blast 1 explosion that deals light damage as an area effect. A character can be hit by multiple explosions.

SOUL BURN

1 action, stance

You stoke the furnace with the very essence of your being.

Stance: Burn your own life force into a protective shield of magical energy and gain **regeneration**

1. Refresh this stance until the end of your next turn if you trigger a **Chain Reaction** or if you **slay** a foe. Otherwise this stance ends at the end of your turn. When this stance ends and it's not the end of combat, lose 25% hp. This could cause you to go to 0 and become defeated.

Infuse 2: INCANDIUS

Your attacks deal bonus damage while you're in Soul Burn

TALENTS

- I. When Soul Burn ends or refreshes, shove all adjacent characters 1
- II. While in Soul Burn, foes that hit you with a melee attack gain burning

MASTER TALENT: MAX INCANDIUS

While in Soul Burn, you also have counter and dodge.

IMMOLATION

1 Actions, Mark

Use your target's own life force to spark a terrifying flame.

Mark: A foe in range 5 and line of sight must magic save or become marked by you. While affected by this mark, they are burning and when you hit them with an attack, they release a burst of flame, dealing fray damage as a blast 1 area effect

centered on them. They can save to remove the mark and all associated effects.

TALENTS

- I. Characters affected by the flame burst are shoved 1 away from the marked target.
- II. The flame can be released as a close blast 1 area instead.

MASTER TALENT: ELDFLAME

A character marked with Immolation takes fray damage at the start of their turn even if the mark or blight ends. This effect cannot be saved against, cleansed, ignores resistance and armor, and only ends when the combat ends or if you end it as an effect.

AETHERSHARD

1 action, summon

You crystallize ambient Aether with force of will, forcing it to take a useful form

Summon: Spend 1 Aether to **summon** an Aethershards in a free space in range 6.

Aethershards are intangible size 1 Summons. They count as foes for the purposes of Chain Reaction. When you target an Aethershards as part of any attack, they release a pulse of energy, releasing a blast 1 explosion dealing fray damage as an area effect, then roll a d6. On a 1-3, they disintegrate and are destroyed. Otherwise they remain until the end of the combat.

TALENTS

- I. When you take any action that spends Aether, you can teleport one of your Aether shards 3 spaces in any direction.
- II. You can choose to summon a Great Shard instead for 2 Aether. It counts as a size 1 piece of terrain that is immune to all damage and effects as well as a Summon, but still works the same way (and counts for Chain Reaction).

MASTER: LEY LINE

Blasts and lines can be supercharged if they hit an Aethershards. Any blast effect that hits an Aethershards increases its radius by 1. Any line effect or attack that passes through an Aethershards doubles its length. The Aethershards is always destroyed if activated this way.

LIMIT BREAK: GIGAFLARE

Superheavy ranged magic attack
4 resolve
True strike, pierce

Let the air become death. Ignite, and send them to Hell!

Area Effect: Deal light magic damage to every character and summon, hostile or allied, on the battlefield, ignoring cover. Characters in range 2 of you are exempt from this ability's AoE.

The damage from any version of this ability cannot be boosted.

Infuse 6: TETRAFLARE

5 resolve
Deal light damage twice instead.

MASTER TALENT: METEOR

Infuse 8: METEOR

6 resolve
Superheavy ranged magic attack
You can pay the resolve, aether, and action cost of this spell with your life force, dying as part of this action.
Deal light damage four times instead.



SPELLBLADE

Swordmaster, Wind Dancer

Spellblades are a martial order of highly trained wrights. Many of them come from the Guild Academies in the great cities of Arden Eld, where they often take prestigious posts in the local militias and city watch.

The lightning Aether that the spellblades wield is highly volatile, and requires intense training and focus to control. Once a spell blade has learned their craft, however, the speed, power, and precision at which they can act is intoxicating, crossing great spans of space in an instant, riding the Aetherial currents with a flash of gleaming steel.

Traits:

Aether Deflection: You may spend 1 Aether as an interrupt when targeted by an attack to immediately gain Evasion against that attack

Static Charge: The Infuse cost of your abilities is reduced by 1 for every electrified enemy in range 2, to a minimum of 1.

Storm Hilt Rage: If you start your turn at 6 Aether, during that turn your teleports have the range of the battlefield and you can teleport to any visible space as an effect before taking any action. At the end of that turn, reduce your Aether to 0.

Klingekunst: Every third line, arc, or cross ability you use has its area of effect increased by +3

ABILITIES

BOLT

Light Ranged Magic Attack
Line 5

A bright lance of lightning shoots from your weapon or hand, piercing your foes with a hundred shards.

Attack: *On hit:* deal light damage and electrify your foe.

Area spaces: Deal fray damage

Effect: If your foe is already electrified, deal bonus damage and you may teleport 2 after the attack.

Infuse 3: LEVINCROSS

Increase attack area to line 6 + cross 2. Area spaces deal light damage.

TALENTS

I. *Slay:* Teleport 2

II. Gains pierce against electrified foes

MASTER TALENT:

Infuse 5: GAE BOLG

Superheavy ranged magic attack
True Strike
Line 10 + cross 4

Attack: *On hit:* Heavy damage. *Miss:* Light Damage. *Critical Hit:* Critical Damage

Area Effect: Light damage

Effect: After the attack resolves, teleport to any space in the attack area

ODINFORCE

1 Action, Stance

You thrust your weapon skyward, and pierce the heavens.

Stance: Shoot a flurry of lightning bolts into the air. While in this stance, when you teleport, Odinfence has a chance to come down. Roll a d6 each time you teleport. On a 6, a bolt descends and hits a foe in range 3 of you, dealing light piercing magic damage as an effect and electrifying them. Odinfence ends when three bolts have come down.

TALENTS

I. Every third Odinfence bolt that comes down, the affected character must also magic save or become stunned.

II. *Slay:* Add +1 charge to Odinfence

MASTER TALENT: NOTHUNG

Odinfence's maximum bolts becomes 6

LEVINBLADE

Heavy Melee Magic Attack
Arc 4

You summon a blade of pure lightning energy, sweeping it in a shining arc.

Attack: *On hit:* Heavy damage and electrify your target. *Miss:* Light damage. *Critical hit:* Critical damage.

Effect: Teleport 1 space before or after the attack

Terrain Effect: If your attack target is already electrified, the attack area becomes difficult terrain for the rest of combat, or until you create terrain with this ability again.

Infuse 2: FREYA

Increase effect area and teleport by +2

TALENTS

I. Electrified characters treat this difficult terrain as dangerous

II. When you pass through at least 1 space of this terrain with any movement, gain flying until you take damage.

MASTER TALENT: BLADE MASTERY

Levinblade and Freya's effect area and teleport increased by +2

ÄTHERWAND

1 Action

You summon the highwinds to batter your foes.

Terrain Effect: Swipe your weapon to create a line 3 area of crackling winds in range 3. The area is difficult terrain for foes and foes that attempt to move into or start their turn in the wall's space must pass a magic save or be unable to move into the area and shoved 1 spaces back away from it. The area lasts until the end of the scene or until you use this ability again.

Infuse 1: Äthersturm

Area becomes line 5

TALENTS

- I. The area provides cover to allies
- II. Electrified characters take +1 curse on the save and are shoved 2 spaces instead

MASTER TALENT: HELLERWIND

Allies that pass through the area for the first time on their turn can fly 3 as a free action.

ELECTROMAGNETISM

1 Action, Mark

You charge your target with unstable magnetic energy, causing unstoppable attractive force.

Mark: A foe in range 3 must save or become marked, and electrified while marked. The area adjacent to but not under the marked character is difficult terrain and characters that end their turn within range 2 of the marked character must magic save or be shoved 1 towards them.

TALENTS

- I. Effect: The marked character takes 1 damage for every electrified character other than itself in range 2 at the start of its turn
- II. This mark can be placed on allies. If it is, they don't need to save and aren't electrified.

MASTER TALENT: DOOM BOLT

Your ranged attacks against the target while marked deal bonus damage and ignore cover.

STURMREITEN

2 Actions

You transmute yourself and your gear into pure lightning Aether, coursing through the boundaries between worlds in a moment.

Effect: Dash in a line 6 area. You gain phasing and intangible while dashing. Foes you pass through for the first time on your turn take fray damage and are electrified. Electrified characters take light damage instead.

Infuse 2: Instant Transmission

Becomes a free action.

TALENTS

- I. Moving through terrain or the spaces of electrified characters costs 0 movement
- II. Every character you pass through increases the movement remaining from Sturmreiten by 1. This effect only triggers once for each character per use of this ability.

MASTER TALENT: MJÖLLNIR

Dash in an Arc 8 area instead.

LIMIT BREAK: GRAN LEVINCROSS

Heavy Ranged Magic Attack
3 resolve
Cross 6, Range 6

Cut through the walls between worlds and unleash a roaring cataclysm.

Effect: Deal light damage and inflict electrified on all characters in the area, then teleport all characters out of the affected area into the nearest free space. Characters can pass a magic save to choose which side they end up on. Area becomes impassable terrain until the end of the next round.

Infuse 4: GIGA LEVINCROSS

Effect: Increase the size of the cross area to the entire map, splitting it into four sections of any size. You must have line of sight to the origin point.

MASTER TALENT: GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

Infuse 8: *Götterdämmerung*

Effect: Instead of the regular cross area, create a cross of sections going across the whole map, then a cross of sections going through each quarter of the map created by the first section. Increase damage to heavy.

RELICS

Relics start with no levels and take 6 dust to unlock a level and gain its benefits. Infuse 1 dust into a relic of your choice when you complete a tactical combat. Characters gain a relic at level 2, 6, and 9. Once a Relic is level 3, it can be Aspected by either infusing 12 dust or completing a legendary task. These tasks are suggestions and can be adjusted by the GM to fit your game. Once at least character has completed an aspect quest for a relic, other characters can complete it for 4 dust.

Relic actions that require a % dice to activate roll a d100.

Relic actions that are 'every X' actions carry over between combats.

CRIMSON KING

A blood red gem, similar to an Elixir Stone, set into your weapon or armor

- I. At full health, gain +1 boon on all saves
- II. When you lose a health segment or gain a wound (by spending it or losing it in combat), 10% chance to immediately regain the segment and ignore the wound.
- III. Every sixth time you slay at least one foe with an ability or attack, gain 25% hp. If you're at full hp, gain vigor 1.

Aspected: Every time Crimson King III triggers, heal a wound.

Aspect quest: Quench your relic in the still-warm blood of a wyrm

APE GOD

An elaborately carved, studded, and oversized gauntlet, incredibly heavy

- I. Immune to stun
- II. When you stun a character you can also shove them 1 in any direction
- III. Every sixth attack stuns on hit (no save).

Aspected: Every third attack forces a physical save, hit or miss, or your foe is stunned

Aspect quest: Climb the highest peak in Arden Eld

MAIDEN

A statuette of the Weeping Titan, impaled by spears

- I. At 25% hp or lower, gain counter
- II. Counter also applies on adjacent allies
- III. After being damaged by a hostile attack, gain counter until the start of your next turn.

Aspected: Counter stacks twice

Aspect quest: Gather and reforge true iron nails from the sarcophagus of a Relict Emperor

UNGOLIANT

A massive weapon carved from the fang of an ur-spider.

- I. Charged attacks gain +1 boon
- II. Charged attacks deal bonus damage vs slow targets
- III. Every third attack forces a save, hit or miss, or your foe becomes slow.

Aspected: Every third charged attack can be taken during a normal turn

Aspect quest: Weave the aethersilk of an ancient Ur-spider into your relic

ERYS

A horned helm or fur mantle with a demonic pattern

- I. Every third attack you make shoves 1, or shoves +1 if it already shoves
- II. Immune to shove
- III. Shoves shove +1 when you're at or under 25% hp

Aspected: Increase threshold of III to 50% hp

Aspect quest: Take the horns of a legendary beast as your trophy

ORPHEO

A cracked mirror, set on a pendant or into a shield or weapon hilt

- I. Gain defiance at the start of each combat.
- II. When defiance triggers, you may deal light piercing magical damage as an effect to a character in range 3
- III. Every sixth time you slay at least one foe with an ability or attack, gain defiance. If you already have full instances of defiance, trigger it and replace it.

Aspected: Defiance stacks twice

Aspect quest: Bathe in the water of the river that leads to the underworld

RUIN

A weapon, bow, or stave carved from ancient stone, a heavy slab of a thing.

- I. Immune to pacified
- II. You may trade in 1 boon, once per attack, for bonus damage.
- III. Your first attack in any combat does double damage

Aspected: Your first attack also gains pierce, true strike, and its listed ranges are increased by +2

Aspect quest: Gather rubble from the pillars of the oldest Arkenruin

SLEIPNIR

Odd wooden armor carved with the image of an eight legged horse.

- I. Every third action you take that dashes, fly instead
- II. Increase all flight as part of your abilities by +1
- III. When you start a flying movement, any adjacent allies can also fly 1 as an effect

Aspected: Gain flying every third turn from the start until the end of that turn

Aspect quest: Tame a titansteed, one of the enormous legendary wild horses

GLADESONG

A weapon carved from supple but durable gaia wood, sharper than any metal

- I. Attacks against characters standing next to an allied summon gain +1 boon
- II. Your summons gain vigor 1 when summoned
- III. 10% chance to duplicate a summon when first summoned

Aspected: Increase III chance to 25%

Aspect quest: Drink from the primeval Gaia pool

HERMES

Intricate, curling silver wings have been carved into this artifact, weapon, or armor

- I. Every third action you take that dashes, teleport instead
- II. Increase range of all teleports as part of your abilities by 1

III. Every third teleport action you make has its range additionally increased by +4

Aspected: Increase Hermes III to every other teleport action

Aspect quest: Weave a strand taken from the cloak of the Titan of trickery, the Laughing God, into your relic

MISTBORN

This weapon is made from seeping mist, and doesn't seem to be entirely present

- I. Every third attack you make, gain stealth after making the attack.
- II. Attacks from stealth deal bonus damage
- III. At 25% hp or lower, gain phasing, and gain stealth at the start of your turn.

Aspected: Increase threshold of III to 50% hp

Aspect quest: Sail to the edge of the world and bathe your relic in the mists there

ARENHEIR

This weapon or armor has the imagery of a great fierce wolf on it

- I. +1 boon on attacks against vulnerable targets
 - II. Piercing attacks deal bonus damage
 - III. Every third attack you make gains pierce
- Aspected:** All attacks gain piercing against bloodied characters

Aspect quest: Find the burial tomb of the ancient Berserker Titan, the Sundered Queen, and pray there

SCHEHEREZADE

This weapon emits a faint singing tone that can only be heard in a quiet room

- I. Every other turn, gain 1 blessing token on yourself. You can spend blessing tokens on yourself to grant yourself +1 boon on a save.
- II. You can also spend blessing tokens on yourself to also grant +1 boon on an attack
- III. When you gain a blessing token or grant a blessing token to any character, 10% chance to also Cure your target as an effect

Aspected: Increase III chance to 25%

Aspect quest: Recover a genuine page fragment of the legendary Tale of Ages

ESPER

This gem is a void of space within. If you stare long enough, you can see stars.

- I. Every third time you slay at least one foe with an ability or attack, you can cast Cure as an effect on your turn, targeting an allied character in range 3
- II. Increase range of all Cures by 3
- III. Cures can target foes and deal light magic damage as an effect.

Aspected: Cures against hostile characters gain true strike

Aspect quest: Find a shrine of the Titan of death, the Weeper, and survive the trials there

BYRAX

Goat horn engravings adorn this armor, weapon, or cloak, curling into intricate runes

- I. When you refresh a stance, dash 1
- II. When you refresh a stance, immediately save against a condition or end a blight affecting you.
- III. 25% chance of a stance automatically refreshing at the start of your turn

Aspected: You can hold +1 more stance than normal

Aspect quest: Find the resting place of the Hundred Sword Titan, take a splinter of one of his weapons, and reforge it.

MERCY

This gold-filagreed choker or torc is surprisingly light, and includes imagery of grasping hands

- I. When you use Rescue on a character, Cure them as a free action
- II. When you Cure another character with an ability that costs 1 or more actions, gain vigor 1
- III. First Cure you cast in combat has its efficacy doubled

Aspected: First Cure you cast grants a character Defiance

Aspect quest: Find and incorporate a twig of the eternal world tree into this relic

STORM LORD

This armor is wrapped in knotted holy cords and imagery of the sea during a storm.

- I. When you use a combo version of an ability, you may deal fray damage to all adjacent foes

- II. When you use the combo version of an ability, dash 1
- III. When you cast the base part of a combo, 10% chance to immediately perform the second part of the combo as a free action

Aspected: Chance of Stormlord III becomes 25%

Aspect quest: Ride the lightning to the palace of clouds and learn from the teachings of the long-dead Battle Titan, the Storm Lord

VESSEL

This weapon or armor seems surprisingly hollow, despite how durable it is. It's cold and heavy.

- I. Cure's effect on you increased to vigor 3 when you're at or under 25% hp
- II. When a foe breaks your vigor, deal piercing magic fray damage to them as an effect.
- III. Cure has no maximum range when targeting you and doesn't need line of sight

Aspected: 1/round, when you're cured, duplicate it on an ally in range 2

Aspect quest: Split a part of your soul into your relic at a deep shrine of the Black Blood Titan, the Holy Body

APOPHTIS

Coiling serpents cradle the hilt of this weapon or curl around the base of this necklace

- I. At the start of your turn, deal fray damage to all poisoned foes in range 2 of you
- II. Your attacks against poisoned foes gain *Slay*: Gain vigor 1
- III. Your attacks against poisoned foes deal 1 damage to their hp on hit, ignoring vigor, resistance, and armor.

Aspected: Your attacks against poisoned foes ignore vigor and go straight to hit points

Aspect quest: Infuse your relic with three scales of the ancient Wyrn Nidhogg

CLOUDPIERCER

This bright metal weapon crackles with latent power

- I. +1 boon on attacks against electrified foes
- II. When you electrify a foe, you may electrify a different character in range 3

III. When you hit an electrified character with an attack, deal fray damage to all other electrified characters in range 2 of that character

Aspected: Increase III range to 4

Aspect quest: Survive a day in the Hundred Year storm

SKIPJACK

This gem-incrusted gauntlet is intricately made and seems heavy, but is oddly light to wear.

- I. Increase the range of ranged and melee attacks against burning foes by +1 (melee attacks with no listed range can be made within range 2).
- II. You can bounce ranged attacks off allies or foes, inflicting no damage or effects but retargeting them to a new character in range 3 of the original target
- III. When you hit a burning ally or foe with a melee attack ability, you can create a fireball that copies and bounces the ability to a new character in range 3 of the original target, inflicting no damage or effects to the original target.

Aspected: 1/round, when you bounce an attack, 15% chance that you may duplicate it on a new foe in range.

Aspect quest: Find and use the workshop of the Forge Titan in the heart of Arden Eld

PLEIADES

A set of six star-diamonds, flickering with a distance light, set into earrings or a neck piece.

- I. At the start of your turn, inflict frostbite on all adjacent characters
- II. The area adjacent to you is also difficult terrain for frostbitten characters
- III. When you inflict frostbite on a character for the first time in a round, they are also shoved 1 space towards or away from you

Aspected: When you inflict frostbite on a character, they also become immobilized if they're bloodied (magic save avoids).

Aspect quest: Find and learn from the observatory of the Stargazer Titan.

TOWER OF BARBS

Coiling thorns have been set into this ranged weapon. The barbs sometimes curl towards your flesh.

- I. Deal bonus damage if a character is at maximum range of your ranged attack or line or arc area effect
- II. Range of ranged attacks increased +1
- III. Every third ranged attack ignores cover

Aspected: Every third ranged attack has any range you like, up to range 10

Aspect quest: Climb to the highest floor of the incredibly dangerous dungeon the Tower of Barbs

HUNTRESS

This supple leather bracer has been crafted with images of Gaia, the Hunter Titan

- I. Gain dodge against marked characters
- II. Attacks against marked characters deal bonus damage
- III. When you hit a marked character with an attack, teleport 1 in any direction

Aspected: When you hit a marked character with an attack, teleport them 1 in any direction

Aspect quest: Take the pelt of a legendary beast and incorporate it into your relic

ADVANCED COMBAT

These are some of the more unique or tighter combat rule explanations for ICON.

ATTACK AND EFFECT

Effects that improve an attack only apply to or trigger off the 'attack' portion of an ability that require an attack roll. Effects that empower the whole ability apply to everything. Effects never trigger or inherit effects meant for hits, misses, or critical hits (unless specified).

ADJACENT CHARACTERS

Characters that are in adjacent spaces are considered adjacent, even if they are on higher or lower elevation. For example, a character on a height 3 space could be attacked by a melee attacker, even if that melee attacker is at ground level or doesn't have enough movement to move up. They still get +1 curse to attack. We assume they climb or scabble up a little ways to take a swipe. A character on height 3 with an adjacency aura would still affect a character on height 1.

EFFECT AND INTERRUPT ORDER

Unless specified, effects happen in the order they are listed, and interrupts resolve with the most recently triggered interrupt first. For example, if a character's effect deals damage to an enemy, and the enemy has an interrupt that reads 'when this enemy takes damage', the enemy's interrupt would trigger first (even if they are killed by the damage), then the damage would be applied.

If a character owns multiple effects, and there's ambiguity in the order in which they trigger, they can determine the order.

'MAY' EFFECTS

Unless an effect says you *may* do something, the effect is not optional. For example, an effect that says 'dash 1 and repeat the attack area', you must dash and repeat the attack area unless it says 'you may dash 1 and repeat the attack area'

DAMAGE ORDER

When taking damage, apply any multiplications or additions on the attackers end first (such as double damage), then the defender applies armor or other reductions, then any multiplications or divisions on their end, such as from resistance. For an example, an incoming attack that deals 4 damage against a character with 1 armor and resistance would do $4 - 1 = 3$ damage from the armor, halved to 1.5 then rounded up to 2.

Vigor takes damage before hit points, and armor and resistance apply normally to it.

VIGOR AND WOUNDS

Taking a wound reduces your max hp by 25%, including the max amount of vigor gained. Even if you gain, for example, vigor 3 (75% of your hp) at 2 wounds, you will only gain vigor 2 since you have only 50% max hp.

THINKING ABOUT HEIGHT IN ICON

In ICON, you can't move straight up, just along the ground. Even flying characters are always treated as reachable by melee characters - we just don't track vertical space. If something is too high to be reached in tactical combat, either don't include it, or make it a flying object or character.

VALID SPACES FOR SUMMONING OR TELEPORTING

For a space to be valid for summoning, teleporting, or creating terrain pieces, it must be free and unobstructed, and you also need line of sight.

SHOVES

Shoves are not optional, and also cannot shove characters off the edge of the map unless you're playing with the optional Edges rule.

LINE OF SIGHT.

For all targeting there must be line of sight (you have to be able to see your target) and line of effect (your ability has to be able to trace a clear path to your target). For example, if you can see a character through a transparent magical forcefield

or a window, that forcefield or window still blocks your line of effect, so they can't be targeted.

IMMUNITY AND INTANGIBILITY

Intangible characters can be targeted, but don't take damage or effects unless specified. Characters that are immune (to damage, effects, a condition, etc) follow the same rule. If an effect relies on dealing damage, or hitting with an attack, for example, unless specified it won't trigger off an immune or intangible characters since they can't take damage or effects.

SPECIFIC TAG RULES

COMBO

Combo actions can be interwoven. For example, Ability A and B both have combo. I use ability A, and when I use ability B I will use its combo version, since I already used a combo move with A. This carries between turns.

MARKS

Any number of marks from different characters can be on one character, but each character can only mark another character once, and only one mark per ability causing it. For example, if I use the ability *Immolate*, which marks an enemy, the next time I use *Immolate* on a different character, the mark on the first character will fade. If I use a different mark ability on my immolate target, immolate will end on my target.

The same applies for allied marks (using one will override any existing mark placed by you).

EVASION AND DODGE

Evasion only applies to the attack component of an ability, turning it into a miss. Effects that don't require a hit or happen automatically go through evasion.

Dodge is a potent combo with Evasion because it allows a character with Evasion to ignore missed attacks completely and also ignore AoE spaces which can go through Evasion.

COUNTER

Counter deals damage as an effect and triggers even on ranged attacks or if the character with counter can't see their target.

STEALTH

Characters with stealth cannot be targeted directly except from an adjacent space, but could still be hit by an area effect, or effects that hit a certain range from a character. It's a good combo with dodge, since dodge allows characters to ignore areas effects.

VULNERABLE

Vulnerable applies +1 damage every time a character takes damage, for each separate instance of damage. For example, if as part of an action character takes light damage, then fray damage as an effect, they would take 2 extra damage (1+1). It is not a separate instance of damage, but increases the damage dealt.



EXPEDITIONS, CAMPS, AND INTERLUDES

EXPEDITIONS

Sessions of ICON are focused around **Expeditions**. Whenever you **leave a place of safety** with a **clear goal** in mind, you're on an **expedition**.

Typically in ICON this involves leaving the safety of a village, town, or city, and setting out into the wilderness to explore some ruin, claim some artifact, or stop some force from causing harm, but it doesn't necessarily have to be that simple.

For example, you could leave a place of safety inside of a city and remain there while you travel to confront the Ruin Barons, or solve the mystery of the murders by the docks, or something similar. If you're expecting to encounter opposition, danger, or uncertainty, you're probably heading into an expedition.

All expeditions have a clear goal at the start, even if that goal changes.

CAMPING

During an expedition, you can momentarily pause the action to **camp**. Camping allows everyone in the group to recuperate and eat and drink, healing **all strain, statuses, blights, stress, and hit points**. It only takes an hour or so and a place of relative safety for characters to be able to camp.

Characters **can only camp a certain number of times per expedition**, and when characters camp they **lose any resolve** they accumulated.

At camp, if characters have gained 4 or 8 xp, they can also unlock abilities or talents for their abilities (a sort of mini level up).

THE CAMP SHEET

Characters can **upgrade their camp**, name their group, and set group ambitions when they camp or go into an interlude using the **camp sheet**.

Think of the camp like a character sheet for the whole party - everyone benefits from it.

INTERLUDES

When the goal of an expedition is accomplished, abandoned, put on pause, or no longer relevant, and you return to a place of safety, the **expedition is over, and you go into an interlude**. An interlude is a longer period of more narrative time in which characters can rest, relax, and recuperate.

During an interlude, characters can **get rewarded** for their adventures, **spend xp and dust** to level up or improve, can **heal burdens** and **pursue ambitions**, and can freely **role-play**.

RETURNING TO AN EXPEDITION

Interludes should always aim to come back to an expedition at the end of each interlude, creating a loop of expedition > interlude > expedition.

STARTING AN EXPEDITION

When you set out on an expedition, take the following steps:

1. **Define your goal.** What are you hoping to accomplish? What are you setting out in search of? Who are you trying to stop? You can pose this as a question if you like, phrased like 'Will the heroes do X?'. We play to **answer this question**. If you're a GM, you don't need to have an answer yet, just an idea of how players might get there.

Example goals: Will the heroes recover the mysterious arkenrelic from the ruins that's rumored to be able to destroy an entire town? Will the heroes discover what is causing monsters to pour out of the oak hill dungeon and put a stop to

it? Will the heroes track down and stop the mysterious stranger who has been stealing from the village shrine? Will the heroes put a stop to the brewing fight between the towns of Barrowglade?

2. **Define the number of camps.** Before characters embark on an expedition, the GM sets the amount of times characters can camp. Supplies to camp in the wilderness are limited, and time is usually short. Camping lets characters heal and fully recuperate. For a short or time limited expedition, characters won't be able to camp. For other expeditions, characters should gain the ability to camp once for every 3 combat encounters the GM expects them to go through (so once for 1-3 encounters, twice for 4-6, etc), or if there is no tactical combat, about once for every three major obstacles GMs expect them to have to go through. Characters can camp at any time they have a few hours and enough safety in which to do so.

3. **Set your job and abilities, if you expect tactical combat.** Pick which combat job and which abilities you are using (up to 6). If you have any bonuses from your group (see the section below, such as elixirs or cooking), apply them now.

4. **Define rewards.** All expeditions normally reward 6 xp and 3 dust if they're successful. If there are extra rewards possible, define them here. If an expedition's not long enough to prompt rewards, it's probably not an expedition!

5. **Set out!** Don't worry about how you get there, or over-planning. Get your feet on the road and cut to the action.

WHY EXPEDITIONS?

Expeditions are used in ICON so that characters always have goal they are working towards, and they can expect the story to move at a certain pace and with a certain amount of tension. When we're on an expedition, things are probably dangerous or uncertain. There might be combat involved. Certain activities, like healing, can only be done a limited amount inside an expedition (it's not safe enough, or there's not enough time!), and certain actions, like getting rid of burdens, can't be taken in expeditions at all!

Expeditions don't have to take a single session to complete (and might often take multiple).

TIME AND SAFETY

Camping doesn't have to mean staying in a village, town, or city. It could just be a safe and clear spot for the characters to get the time and space to rest and recuperate. There could be a sanctuary in the middle of the wilderness, or a dungeon.

ALTERNATIVE AND EXTRA REWARDS

During play, the GM can always offer additional rewards for going after extra treasure, completing tasks for characters, slaying an especially powerful monster, etc. These rewards can be in the form of additional xp, dust, Arkentech, or might be something more substantial like camp upgrades or Aspected Relic upgrades (each Aspected relic has a little hook for a task players can complete to upgrade them without paying dust).

ABANDONING AN EXPEDITION

Characters can always abandon an expedition if they're too hurt to continue or if the goal has changed. Leaving an expedition unfinished abandons the original goal the characters had in finishing it, which may now be **beyond their grasp**. Whatever the case, if characters return to the expedition, the situation should have changed.

QUESTS

Sometimes you have a longer or more complicated task or goal, like exploring a large dungeon, going on an epic journey, or unseating a despot, in which case you're on a **quest**.

Quests take more than one expedition to complete. You can take interludes in the middle of a quest or take on other expeditions.

Each expedition can represent a small part of the quest (a leg of the journey, a wing of the dungeon, gathering allies to fight the king, etc), and characters can take interludes normally in between. For example, characters could take a quest to explore a large dungeon. The GM decides this will take about three expeditions to complete,

with each expedition's goal being to explore one part of the dungeon.

When you complete a quest, not only do you get the xp and rewards for all expeditions in the quest, but you also get additional xp equal to two times the number of expeditions you took to accomplish the quest, up to 12 xp.

This can allow a GM to set more long term goals for the characters. You can work on multiple quests at once.

INTERLUDES

Interludes are the spaces between adventures - the kind of freeform narrative play that most role playing games get into when characters aren't actively pursuing a quest or goal. They are the spaces between expeditions when characters have time to pursue their personal goals, gather information, do more casual roleplaying, shopping, etc. Every adventurer needs a break from the grind of fighting against the encroaching darkness.

When you end an expedition, you go into an interlude right away, and all interludes should end with the aim of launching another expedition. Certain actions can only be taken in an interlude, like healing burdens or pursuing ambitions.

While you're in an interlude, it's typically for couple days but you can decide how much times passes - if you want to play things out in a more strict, granular way, or if you want to 'montage' through events and have time move quickly. Interludes stereotypically take place in a town or city, but don't necessarily have to - characters could take an interlude in the wilderness if they like, as long as they have relatively safety to do so.

Each time you go into an interlude, **fully heal all strain, stress, hit points, and wounds**. If characters were successful during their expedition, they **get rewarded** (xp, dust, or other rewards). Characters can then **spend xp and dust to level up and improve** their job, bond, or relics.

Characters always do this at the **start** of an interlude, and for more details on payout and leveling see the section below.

All characters then get to do the following activities, in any order or combination:

HEAL BURDENS

Each character can **heal burdens**, ticking off a total of 3 segments on any of their burden clocks (4, 6, 8). If a clock is filled out completely, the burden is lifted and no longer bothers the character. If you like, play out a healing scene to describe what characters are doing to heal their burdens (there are prompts for this on the character sheet). If you like, you can forgo your own healing to **help someone else** heal their burdens, allowing them to tick **1 extra segment** on any burden. Each character can only be helped once.

PURSUE AMBITIONS

When you have a clear goal or project in mind, or you want to obtain something (power, allies, dust, access, information), you can write it as an **ambition**. The GM decides if the ambition is possible, or if a reduced version of it is possible instead. If your ambition is to become king, for example, the GM might decide that's too large of a step for now, but you might be able to pursue becoming a knight instead.

Then they decide how hard the ambition will be to accomplish and chooses which of the ambition clocks on your sheet it will take up (short, medium, long), and what filling that clock up will represent. The clocks are 4, 6, and 10 segments long.

During an interlude, each character can **pursue ambitions** by doing a scene or a montage describing how they're pursuing their goals, then making an action roll, filling out 1 segment on a 1-3, 2 segments on a 4-5, 3 segments on a 6, and 5 on a critical roll. Characters can work on the same ambition if they like, even if that ambition is another character's, but won't share in the xp.

When you make your characters, and during any camp or interlude, you can also write **group ambitions**, which reward everyone for working on them. A group ambition can only be worked on once during an interlude, and to work on one a

character has to give up working on their own ambitions.

You can write new ambitions any time, but if you change or abandon an ambition, clear any segments on the clock that's representing it. An ambition must be a clear goal or project, and the length of the goal (which clock it represents) is determined by the GM. You only have room for one ambition of each length. If you want to write a new minor ambition (4 segments) and already have one, for example, you have to change your current one.

Clearing ambitions rewards 1, 2, and 3 xp respectively. Clearing a group ambition rewards 1-3 xp to the whole group.

Ambitions are typically projects or long-term goals, like gathering information, researching, crafting, or organizing. It could be something like plotting revenge on a rival, learning a new skill, fixing up an old aethership, finding a secure route into a dungeon, deciphering old texts, or learning about your mysterious parentage.

Aside from the xp for clearing ambitions, the GM is free to give you some concrete benefit for completing them, like dust or camp upgrades. They are also free to tick segments on your ambition clocks if they feel like your actions further the goal, even if they weren't taken as a Pursue Ambitions action.

If a goal is complicated or world changing it may take multiple ambitions to complete. Alternately, it may require an expedition or quest to complete, in which case completing the ambition clock represents the preparation for that expedition or quest. When it's full, you're ready to take it on with your group.

FREEPLAY

Play out any scenes or role-playing activities you like! Interludes are meant to accommodate more relaxed role playing.

In general, Interludes are meant to represent an area of relative peace and quiet. However, lot of groups may get into trouble during an interlude, and the situation might change. Characters might go bargain with the thieves' guild only to try to

double cross them, wander a little too far out into the wilderness, or open a dangerous magitech device.

If characters get into trouble, you can play out a narrative scene or tactical combat to resolve the situation. If it's more complicated than a scene or two, you're probably heading into a surprise *expedition!*

If characters took strain, stress, or wounds during an interlude, they can heal them when an interlude ends. In general, characters are intended to start an expedition with all their resources at their disposal.

BRINGING IT BACK

Interludes should always aim to launch the characters into a new expedition of some sort. The characters **leave a place of safety** with a **clear goal in mind**.

THE CAMP

Adventurers in Arden Eld often get around on enormous aetherships, traveling wagons, vehicles, or caravans. They bring with them all kinds of supplies: portable shrines, elixir cauldrons, cooking pots, vittles, and lengths of rope for traversing caverns. **The camp** can be any of these things. It's representative of the gear, supplies, and transportation that the characters keep in common, and may take with them on an expedition.

When you start a group of characters at level 1, also start a **camp sheet**. Camp sheets have the following:

1. **Group Name:** You can name your group if you like, or leave it blank until later.
2. **Ambitions:** Write 1-3 long term goals for your group. If you accomplish an Ambition during an interlude, everyone in your group gets 1 xp, then write a new ambition. You can leave these blank for now if you like.
3. **Camp fixtures:** The various pieces of gear, shelter, and accoutrement that your group keeps around camp. Fixtures apply their benefits to everyone in the group and anyone can spend dust to purchase, upgrade, or use them. Start with **2 of your choice**.

FIXTURES

Here are the various camp fixtures and their upgrades. When you make your characters, start with two. Additional upgrades and fixtures can be bought during an interlude and take effect at the end of an interlude. Anyone can spend dust on them.

If camp upgrades are nested (bulleted below each other), you need to take the previous upgrade to get the one under it.

- **Upgrade 1:** Characters need to take this upgrade...
- **Upgrade 2:** ... before they can take this one!

Aetherpearls

Purchase: 6 Dust

Upgrade: 3 Dust

This small set of pearls are aetherically linked together, and can be inset into armor or worn as jewelry. There are always just enough for all player characters and no more.

Every character can add +1 to their channel, charm, or command ratings.

While wearing a pearl, characters can talk to any other character wearing a linked pearl within a mile. They must talk out loud and hear the other person's voice in their ear.

Upgrades:

- **Extended pearls:** Up to 6 additional pearls can also be given to NPC allies. Pearls can also be linked to any other pearl network within their range, connecting them together.
- **Resonant pearls:** When in a populous location with an aetheric field (like a city) the pearls don't have a maximum distance
- **Silent pearls:** Within the same room (or a very short distance) anyone wearing a linked pearl can communicate telepathically, without speaking out loud

Aethervault

Purchase: 3 Dust

Upgrade: 3 Dust

You can keep up to 6 Dust inside this crystalline prism, where it is safely stored. Characters can deposit or withdraw Dust from it by touching it. Only characters attuned to the prism (your group, and any NPCs you choose) can withdraw or deposit dust, and it is practically indestructible unless you hurl it into an high powered Aetherforge.

The vault has a clever but slow acting condenser inside. At the end of each interlude, if there is at least 1 Dust inside the Vault, it attracts more Aether, adding 1 Dust to the vault. If there's no room in the vault, not more Dust is generated.

Upgrades:

- **Empowered attunement:** Dust can be withdrawn or deposited into the Vault from anywhere.
- **Aether Sapphire:** Increase the vault's capacity to 12
 - **Aether Ruby:** Increase the vault's capacity to 16
- **Upgrade condenser:** If it's at least half full, the vault condenses 2 dust instead of 1.

Cabinet

Purchase: 6 Dust

Upgrade: 6 Dust

This dusty cabinet or traveling trunk allows you to keep additional gear with you.

During camp, you can swap out your abilities at will.

Upgrades:

- **Soulstone:** Characters can change jobs at camp
 - **Great Soulstone:** Characters are now able to take a second Gambit for their Bond.
 - **Elden Soul-stone:** Characters can take a second Gambit for their combat job. It must be from a job they've learned, and it must be from the same class as their other Gambit.

Cauldron

Purchase: 6 dust

Upgrade: 3 dust

A heavy iron cauldron and apothecary where characters can brew flasks.

Characters can brew one of the following **flasks** during an interlude by spending **1 dust**. Flasks can be drunk instead of taking an action roll (in narrative play) or as an action in combat.

Characters can only hold on to one flask at once.

- **Flask of Action:** A character can drink a flask to gain +1 boon and increased effect on their next narrative action
- **Phoenix flask:** An incapacitated character can spend a full turn to drink a Phoenix Flask to Rescue themselves at the end of that turn.
- **Cleansing flask:** A character can drink this flask to *cleanse* themselves (clear all blights and immediately save against all effects).

- **Power flask:** A character can drink a power flask to gain +1 boon and bonus damage on all actions until the end of their next turn.

GMs can offer flask ingredients as rewards for treasure collected during an expedition, or side tasks. If that's the case, forgo the dust cost for brewing a flask if you have the ingredients.

Upgrades:

- **Flask belt:** Characters can hold on to two flasks
 - **Improved flask belt:** Characters can hold on to up to three flasks

Add the following to your flask brewing by taking an upgrade for each. They cost increased dust to brew and take rarer ingredients.

- **Flask of Godly Speed:** 3 dust. Until the end of your next turn, double your speed and gain evasion
- **Flask of Godly Strength:** 3 dust. Double the damage of your next action
- **Flask of Godly Health:** 3 dust. Clear all blights and conditions and gain vigor 2
- **Flask of Divine Grace:** 2 dust. Increase the effect of your next narrative action to superpowered.

Cooking Pot

Purchase: 6 dust

Upgrade: 3 dust

When you embark on an expedition, or when you camp, one character can cook a meal for everyone.

A character's **cooking skill** is a unique action, starting at 1d6. A character can improve their cooking by spending 2 xp during an interlude to improve their cooking skill by 1, up to a maximum of 4.

Roll 1d6 per level of cooking skill and choose any die as the final result.

Meal effects apply to the **very next combat** you get into.

D6	Result
1	Burnt meal - No effect!

D6	Result
2	Nutritious meal - Ignore terrain penalties for difficult terrain and moving up terrain
3	Refreshing meal - Saves are successful on an 9+ instead of an 11+
4	Invigorating meal - Deal bonus damage in the first round of combat
5	Healthy Meal - Start combat with Vigor 1, or Vigor +1 if you already start with Vigor.
6	Hearty Meal - Resistance to all damage in the first round of combat

Upgrades:

- **Foraging:** Your group can forage or shop for ingredients during an interlude. Roll 1d6. You can hold on to that number until used during cooking. If you roll and save a 1, you can use it as insurance. Discard it when you roll a 1 cooking result to re-roll, taking the second result as final.
- **Improved ingredients:** When you cook, you can keep any 2 dice and combine their effects.
- **Variety:** If a different character from the last one cooks each time you camp or go into an interlude, roll +1d6 when cooking.
- **Masterclass:** If you get a critical hit on a cooking roll, the effects apply to *every combat* until you camp or go into an interlude.

Campfire

Purchase: 6 dust

Upgrade: 3 dust

Your camp has a bright and well fed fire. It's easy to take a load off and talk around the fire, and it burns brightly even in dark moments.

During Heal Burdens, characters can tick a free segment on a burden of their choice.

Upgrades:

- **Commonality:** Characters that help others heal their burdens instead of healing their own tick 2 segments instead of 1

- **Memories of purpose:** Once a session, all characters can relieve 1 stress merely by taking a moment to breathe.
- **Memories of hope:** When using memories of purpose, characters also heal 1 strain
- **Memories of home:** All characters gain +1 stress box and +1 max strain.

Elixir Stone

Purchase: 6 dust

Upgrade: 3 dust

This unsettling and extremely valuable blood red stone, found in the very deepest depths of the arkenruins, is condensed Dust and life essence in its purest form. When exposed to Aether, it bleeds a substance that can be condensed into elixirs.

Characters embark on an expedition with +1 elixir.

Upgrades:

- **Elixir Brewing:** When they camp, characters can replenish 1 elixir by spending 1 dust.
- **Deep Elixir Stone:** When they camp, characters can heal 1 wound by spending 1 dust and 1 elixir. This also heals the HP lost.
- **Clarity:** Characters can drink an elixir to heal 3 strain instead of hp

Portable Library

Purchase: 6 dust

Upgrade: 3 dust

A collection of well-worn tomes, manuals, and scrolls.

Every character can add +1 to their tinker, study, or recall rating.

Upgrades:

- **Training Manuals:** At the end of each interlude, each character gets +1 xp.
- **Focused Training:** Instead of healing burdens, characters can train to gain + 1 xp. Stacks with training manuals.
- **Arkentomes:** Characters can make rolls to recall or gather information about dungeon or monster lore at +1 dice

Shrine

Purchase: 3 dust

Upgrade: 3 dust

Shrine to the Titans, the slain precursors. Grants Divine Mercy. When characters would take their last wound and die, roll a d%. 25% chance that they ignore the wound instead and miraculously heal all wounds and hit points. Divine Mercy can only occur once for a character ever in their life time.

Upgrades:

- **Commune:** Once a session, a single character can pray at the shrine and ask a yes/no question about a person, place, or object. The GM will answer with one of the following: Wheel (yes, positive), Stone (no, negative), or Chaos (mixed outcome).
- **Absolution:** A broken character with 3 burdens can pray at the shrine during camp to recover from being broken.
- **Resurrection:** A dead character (someone who took 4 wounds and died) can be returned to life during an interlude by burning **10 dust**, as long as they died in the last year. The character is living on borrowed time as the dust is animating their body and must undergo a journey or expedition to make things permanent. The GM can set up an expedition or an ambition for this.

Spirit Idol

Purchase: 6 dust

Upgrade: 3 dust

You can pray at this shrine to summon it's aetheric spirit - usually in the form of an animal, small creature, or fairy. The spirit is friendly to your group, and can be played two ways: either as **an NPC**, or as **a character** (for a player to control).

The spirit can only be summoned as a character if it's controlled by someone who is not already playing a character, including the GM. Playing a spirit for a group is a good way for someone not familiar with role playing games, guesting for a session, or calling in remotely for a session to participate, since it is relatively simple.

As an NPC, the spirit has the following powers:

- **Narrative:** The spirit has 2 stress, regains all of it when you camp, and can burn it to give

someone **aid**. It doesn't take strain and doesn't take actions otherwise.

- **Combat:** The spirit is not a unit in battle, but can be invoked any time by a character as an interrupt to aid someone, giving them +1 boon on any attack or save. This ability works once per battle.

As a character, the spirit has the following powers:

- **Narrative:** The spirit has 2 stress, 2 strain, and rolls 1 dice for all actions. It heals all stress and strain at camp. If the spirit takes maximum strain, it must disperse for a scene and can take no more action, then re-enters the next scene with 0 strain. It can do everything a player can do otherwise.
- **Combat:** The spirit is a size 1 allied character with 10 hp, [10+chapter] defense, 0 armor, 4 speed, and no bonuses to saves. It heals to full HP after each combat. The spirit's attack bonus is equal to twice the chapter number. It can take a standard move and the following actions:
 - **Spirit slash (light magic melee or ranged attack, range 3):** Make an attack roll, adding power. Deals 1d6+chapter damage on hit, or chapter damage on miss.
 - **Push (1 action):** An adjacent character must physical save or be shoved 1 space
 - **Intimidate (1 action):** A character in range 3 must physical save or be staggered or dazed (spirit's choice).
 - **Dash (1 action):** The spirit dashes 2 spaces
 - **Spirit mark (2 actions):** A character in range 3 must magical save or become marked. While marked by the spirit, allies have +1 boon to attack the target.
- **If defeated in combat,** the spirit disperses and reappears in a space 3 from an ally at the start of the next round with full hp.

Upgrades:

- **Empowered spirit:** The spirit gains +1 stress and its combat ability as an NPC can be used twice a battle instead
- **Great spirit:** As character the spirit can choose to become Size 2 when it starts battle. If so, its speed is reduced to 2, but it also becomes Sturdy and deals 1d8 damage with its attack instead of 1d6
- **Spirit vengeance:** As a character, the spirit can do each of the following once a session: take a superpowered action, and deal double damage with its next attack

Survival Gear

Purchase: 6 dust

Upgrade: 3 dust

Knives, tanning racks, cooking spits, climbing gear, and supplies for wilderness survival.

Every character can add +1 to their traverse, smash, or endure rating.

Upgrades:

- **Rangers:** Increase health by 1 for all characters
 - **Toughened:** All burden clocks are 1 shorter
- **Footwork:** All characters can make up to 1 square of diagonal movement when they move
 - **Advanced footwork:** All characters can make up to 2 squares of diagonal movement when they move

Thieves' Gear

Purchase: 6 dust

Upgrade: 3 dust

Lockpicks, cloaks, keys, sacks for carrying loot, and magitech devices for spying or listening.

Every character can add +1 to their sneak, excel, or survey ratings

Upgrades:

- **Skeleton Key:** 1/session you can make any action roll to open, unlock, or activate a device or door *superpowered* in effect.
- **Shadow cloaks:** For the first combat after you embark on an expedition, start with *stealth*. Lose *stealth* at the start of the second round if you gained it this way.
 - **Whisper cloaks:** Also gain this benefit after you camp.

ADVANCEMENT AND REWARDS

The power of characters in ICON is measured by their level. Characters start at level 1 and level up to a maximum of level 12.

CHAPTERS

Levels are split into three chapters (1-4, 5-8, 9-12), and moving forward in a chapter is the decision of the players. Until the chapter passes, characters cannot level up past the cap of each chapter, and **characters that are maxed out on xp can donate it to any character**. This is to allow characters to catch up on experience if they're behind, invest Dust they have earned, and also allows them to set the pace of the game, since foes become slightly stronger in higher chapters of the game.

Moving up a Chapter **increases everyone's combat statistics, including those of the foes you face**.

EXPERIENCE

During their adventures, characters earn experience points, filling out an experience bar. At certain breakpoints in the bar, they will unlock new abilities or talents.

The xp bar is 12 ticks long. At 4 and 8 xp gained, **during an interlude or at camp** characters can **unlock a new combat ability** in any job they have, or **gain a new talent** for an ability they already have.

Once the bar is full (12 xp), they can clear all xp **at the end of an interlude** to increase their level by 1. Certain benefits are only gained on level up.

Characters gain xp the following ways.

When you start an interlude, immediately gain xp for any expedition or quests you finished (6 for expedition, 2 per expedition for a quest)

Check at the end of a session :

1. Did you fulfill at least one of your ideals? 1 xp.
All your Ideals? 2 xp
2. Completed at least one tactical combat encounter - 2 xp
3. Accomplished an ambition (group or personal) - 1-3 xp
4. Invoked Burdens - 1 xp per Burden invoked

Lvl	Chapter	Combat Benefit	Narrative Benefit
1	1	Choose a job and two abilities	Choose a Bond, a Bond power, and improve four actions
2	1	Unlock Limit Break and first relic	Improve two actions or gain a Bond power
3	1		Gain a Bond power
4	1	Choose a second job OR gain a mastery point	Improve two actions or gain a Bond power
5	2 - Stat up!	Gain Mastery Point to unlock a master talent for an ability	Improve an action
6	2	Unlock second relic	Gain a Bond power
7	2		Improve an action
8	2	Choose a third job OR gain a mastery point	Improve two actions or gain a Bond power
9	3 - Stat up!	Unlock third relic	Gain a Bond power
10	3	Gain Mastery Point to unlock a master talent for an ability	Improve an action
11	3		Improve an action
12	3	Gain Mastery Point to unlock a master talent for an ability	Gain a Bond power

DUST

Dust is the currency of Arden Eld and measured in abstract units. It is so prevalent in the arkenruins that merely venturing into them, small amounts can be scraped from the fingernails or the bottom of boots. It is primarily used to upgrade character's relics and their camp. Dust is earned in the following ways:

1. Completing a combat encounter infuses 1 dust into a relic of your choice.
2. The GM can offer dust rewards for retrieving extra treasure, artifacts, items, or completing extra tasks during an expedition, usually 1 or 2 dust. This dust can be carried on you and used in whatever way you like.
3. Finishing an expedition or quest rewards dust concurrent with how dangerous the quest is. By default this is 3 dust per player for an expedition, and 6 for a quest.

Characters can't personally carry more than 8 dust on them.

Dust can be spent in the following ways:

1. Upgrading a relic costs a total of 6 dust per level.
2. Upgrading a relic to an Aspected relic requires a level 3 relic and a total of 12 dust.
3. Buying a camp upgrade or fixture costs 3-6 dust.
4. Dust can be used to buy benefits from the camp or additional uses of arkentech.

ARKENTECH

Arkentech offers a way for GMs to offer additional minor rewards other than xp or dust.

Arkentech is a loose term for anything powerful that is scavenged from the dungeons and ruins of Arden Eld, whether it's a magitech wonder or something carved from a monster or beast.

Arkentech is a little less powerful than Relics, however, having limited use and requiring infusions of Dust to function further. Each piece of Arkentech has a number of uses, and the effect when it's used. To recharge Arkentech, a character must spend the listed amount of dust during an Interlude, restoring its maximum charges. This can either represent infusing the tech directly, or

simply buying extra ammunition, supplies, etc, on the market.

Characters can hold on to and use three pieces of Arkentech at once.

Arkentech can usually be bought or sold for Dust equal to its recharge cost. Once a character has a hold of a piece of Arkentech (even if they bought it), they can usually get recharges in a city, village, or town.

There's a limited amount of arkentech in this playtest as an example here, and a few more used in Deeptower, the example expedition, but you can use it as your own jumping-off point.

EXAMPLE ARKENTECH

Tech	Description and Effect	Uses	Recharge (dust)
Entropy Ammo	Spend an action to wreath your ammo in shimmering frost. For the rest of combat, your ranged attacks inflict frostbite on hit	2	2
Displacement Cloak	Wrap this cloak around you and blink in and out of existence to use your standard move to teleport instead	3	1
Relict Arbalest	An ancient Relict weapon that still functions, shooting bolts of lightning. You can make a light attack with it (line 5, heavy damage, secondary effect: light damage, effect: electrifies all targets)	1	2
Howler Venom	Venom from a howler beast. You can apply it as an action. Your next physical attack gains bonus damage, piercing, and the effect: Inflicts poisoned and dazed on hit	1	2
Alpha Howler Hide	Wrap your armor in tough howler hide. Apply before an expedition. This expedition, you start every combat with vigor +1	1	3
Decayed Plate	Strap on a piece of decaying armor for extra protection. As an interrupt when you're hit by any attack but before damage is applied, you can expend the plate to gain 6 armor against the attack.	1	2
Stave of Flame	Point this stave at a space on the ground in range 3 as an action to release a spark of flame as an effect, inflicting burning and fray damage to all characters in a blast 1 area.	2	2
Drift Oil	Use as an action to splash the oil about, reversing gravity and drifting into the air. Gain flying but also become immobilized. You can use this action again to end the effect.	1	1
Screecher gland	Step on the screecher gland as an action to make a horrible screeching noise. Characters in a blast 1 (self) area, including you, must physical save or become stunned	1	1



FOES

The ruins that litter Arden Eld and churn beneath its surface are sometimes peaceful, hollow affairs - full of dust and destroyed monuments to a dead empire. More often than not, however, they are host to innumerable monsters that slither, crawl, and stalk through their hallways, born of the Doom that befell the Arken Empire and the grand technomagical projects they undertook. These ruins can be deadly places despite the riches they offer, and occasionally when a ruin surfaces, it disgorges monsters continuously that boil over into the surface world, called a **Blight**. Minor blights can deform and destroy the landscape and threaten nearby villages, towns, and cities, and every few decades a blight surfaces that can threaten large portions of the world.

MONSTERS

The creatures that stalk the halls of the ruins are a mix of mundane beasts that have been warped by the ruins' influence, native fauna that have grown accustomed to dungeons, terrifying horrors from beyond the realms of understanding, and the remnants of the old empire, animated by the ruins' magic.

Monsters are dangerous and beyond reasoning with. Though some have some shred of intelligence, they are motivated by hunger, pain,

survival, or a supernatural desire for destruction. Monsters **can't be bargained with** and have **simple motivations** for violence (food, territory, aggression, or survival). In many cases (but not all), **monsters will fight to the death**.

KIN

The ruins draw all kinds of adventurers and contenders, seeking wealth and glory, and not all of them are pure in intent. Even outside of the ruin, in the cities and towns of the world, people of all kinds plot to exploit, hurt, or deceive their fellow Kin for personal gain.

Banditry and highway robbery is becoming increasingly high in the Churning Age, with the large number of blights and the decreasing safety of the roads. Mountain bandit or coastal pirate clans will often organize and maintain large hideouts, where they will periodically raid nearby towns for loot and captives. In the ruins themselves, some adventurers make a living not only off the ruins, but also off robbing their fellow adventurers. In the cities, wealthy criminal syndicates, sometimes masquerading (or acting openly!) as guilds, pursue enrichment at all costs, running kidnapping schemes, forcing labor, or using debt to control large numbers of people.

Mistrust has reached the point that some towns and cities have begun eyeing the legacy of the Arkenlords, arming themselves for what they see as a coming grand conflict between Kin. War between city states or towns, so rare between Kin in the Green Age, is becoming more common and increasingly severe in scale. Some powerful towns or city states see themselves as inheritors of an imperial legacy, with the warlords helping them titling themselves a new Emperor, seeking to unite the cities by force into Arden Eld's first nation. The ambitions of these self-styled Imperials remain unfulfilled - for now.

When Kin commit or threaten violence, it's **always motivated**. **Kin can be bargained with** (even if that bargain on your end is giving up all your money or throwing down your weapons in surrender!), they're people after all. **Kin will almost never fight to the death** and will often flee or surrender if their lives are threatened.

MONSTERS AND KIN

In combat, there are two rules to apply to monsters and kin:

1. **Kin always have reasons to fight.** If their demands or desire are met, then they are willing to bargain or avoid a fight.
2. **Kin will surrender or flee,** potentially ending a tactical combat, if they have suffered heavy losses or see there is no chance they will win. Typically this is easy to judge as a GM, but make a call when Kin are outnumbered 2 to 1 or more than half their forces have been defeated.
3. Kin won't kill without a reason.

The most important rule to stick by is that **monsters are never people, and people are never monsters.** If monsters are intelligent enough to be a character in their own right, or bargain with or be characters in their own right, **treat them like Kin.**

HOW TO USE THIS SECTION

In tactical combat, foes in ICON have statistics such as HP or armor, abilities, and actions just like player characters. On their turn, they can take 2 actions and move, also just like player characters. Unlike player characters, they are **limited to the actions in their profile**, and they are also **much simpler.**

Foes in ICON aren't listed out in individual detail, like in some role-playing games. Instead, there are **classes** and **jobs** for foes, much like for player characters, which informs how they function in tactical combat. A monster that's a soldier and a Thryn soldier will function much of the same (an up close fighter that gets more powerful when adjacent to an ally). The jobs are not strict definitions and can be 'flavored' any way you like. For example, if you need a flying monster that harasses enemies, you probably want a Hellion. If you want to represent a guard with a crossbow, you can choose an Archer (for a more mobile option) or an Arbalest (for a long range, slow, high damage option). The Hellion could just as well represent a soldier using a magitech device to fly around, however, and an Archer could represent a monster that launches spines, spits acid, or something similar. This flexibility allows

you to fit the 'fantasy' of the foes you are thinking of in your story and fit them to statistics that help them perform that role in combat.

There are four classes for foes, with numerous jobs inside. Each class grants every job its general **statistics** must like player jobs. When those statistics are different from the usual, it's listed in each job's stat block.

- **Heavy:** Slower, melee focused enemies that defend their allies with their higher hp and traits like Guardian, Vigilance, and True Strike.
- **Skirmisher:** Fast, mobile, short ranged enemies that deal high damage but are fragile themselves. Have many traits like Stealth, Evasion, Finishing Blow, and Dodge.
- **Leader:** Foes that improve the combat capabilities of their allies or heal them. Have traits like Cure, Shelter (bonuses to saves), or auras that improve or move their allies
- **Artillery:** Long range, slow enemies that become powerful if left alone by either creating or summoning more allies, or simply dealing more damage. Deal the highest damage but relatively little defense or health. Have traits like Pierce, Overdrive, Aetherwall, and inflict Blights

SPECIAL FOE RULES

Foes can all make a standard move like heroes, and can all run, dash, or interact with something. The usual rules around attacks, abilities, and effects apply.

However, foes have some special rules, tags, and traits that apply only to them:

- **Repeatable X:** This action is repeatable X number of times in a turn, ignoring the no repeats rule, including the 1/round attack limit!
- **Multiattack X:** This action can make X attack rolls, targeting the same or different characters.
- **Recharge X+:** After this ability is used, it can't be used again until it recharges. Roll a d6 at the start of the foe's turn for each ability. On the listed number or above, recharge the ability and it can be used again.
- Foes all deal **flat damage.** This is to speed up the game on the GM side, since you'll be playing many more characters.
- Foes can never choose to take a slow turn unless specified

Foes may have additional or unique tags, such as **Autocure** or **Prowl** (see jobs for more details!).

SPECIAL CLASSES

There are a few special classes for foes in ICON that change the gameplay of foes up slightly:

- **Mob:** Mobs are weak, numerous enemies with 1 hp. They can be used for a more 'heroic' feeling game where characters cut down enemy after enemy. They can overwhelm characters in numbers. When you take an enemy turn, you can take a turn for up to 5 mob-type foes.
- **Elite:** Elites are more powerful foes that take additional turns, have more hp, and take more actions. They are akin to 'mini-boss' encounters in a role playing game, representing a more powerful or skill enemy.
- **Monstrosity:** The most powerful foes in ICON. Monstrosities are fights worthy of an entire group, and meant to represent huge or legendary monsters, such as wyrms, giants, or elder demons. They take multiple turns, have phases (different actions and abilities based on different situations), have attackable locations that can disable or weaken their attacks, deal high damage, and have high hp.

FACTIONS

You might feel that having every 'soldier' type enemy fit one template will make things feel a little same-y, but to distinguish foes from another, there is one more component to Foes in ICON, which is **Faction**. Faction allows you to put a 'template' on top of enemies to give them bonus traits, change their statistics, or grant them a choice of additional actions. These faction templates help create a sense of unity among foes of different jobs and can change the experience of fighting them completely.

MAKING FOES AND BALANCING ENCOUNTERS

To make a foe, pick which job you think represents it, then choose one of the faction templates to apply to it. If there are optional actions, choose one or two.

Balancing encounters for ICON is very simple. Count the number of players, then add 1.

- 5 mobs is worth 1
- 1 regular foe is worth 1
- 1 elite is worth 2
- 1 monstrosity is worth the number of players.

For example, if I have 3 players, I can run 4 regular foes against them, or one elite and 2 foes, or 20 mobs.

To balance up or down, add or remove 1 or 2 points from the encounter budget. The most important balancing factor is action economy - ie how many fighters are on one side or another. If your players outnumber your foes, no matter how powerful their enemies are, they will typically win!

USING THE CHAPTER SYSTEM

Both foes and player characters increase slightly in stats each chapter. This system is here to let players that are behind on experience catch up and let players set the pace of their game. You can use this to do a couple of things:

- Increase the difficulty of combat encounters by adding foes from later chapters
- Decrease the difficulty of combat encounters by lowering a foe's chapter
- Keep foes in certain locations 'frozen' at a certain chapter to give players a sense of progression
- Keep foes at certain locations 'frozen' at a higher chapter to give players a potential challenge.

GLOSSARY OF FOES

MOB

Chaff

HP: 1

Speed: 3

Defense: 6+chapter

Attack: +1

Mob: This character doesn't trigger slay effects

0 armor, run 2, dash 3

Scrabble (2 actions): Deal 1 damage as an effect. If an ally is adjacent to the target, make an **attack**, dealing 3 damage on hit.

HEAVY

Health: 8/9/10

HP: 32/36/40

Speed: 3, run 2, dash 3

Defense: 6+ chapter

Armor: 2/2/3

Attack: +0/+2/+4

Fray Damage: 2/2/3

Damage: 3+chapter/5+chapter/7+chapter

Damage/save type: Physical

Soldier

Basic melee fighter, stronger in groups

Traits: Guardian, Vigilance

Rank and File: Gain true strike if adjacent to an ally

Slash (1 action, attack): On hit, deal light damage. On miss, deal fray damage.

Bash (1 action): An adjacent character must physical save or take fray damage and become dazed

Fortify (1 action, stance): Count as in cover and grant cover to adjacent allied characters, but cannot dash or run. End if shoved, dazed, staggered, or stunned.

Impaler

Shoves around characters and keeps them pinned.

Traits: Guardian, Vigilance

Pike (2 actions, melee attack). On hit, deal heavy damage and shove 1. On miss, deal fray damage.

Impale (2 actions, melee attack, true strike, recharge 5+): *On hit:* foe takes light damages and is shoved 3. The Impaler dashes after the target, following it. **Collide:** foe is also dazed and immobilized. *Miss:* light damage

Brute

Large foe that becomes dangerous across multiple turns

+50% hp, 0 armor, No Run, No Dash

Large: Increase size to 2

Traits: Guardian, Slow, Vigilance

Poise: Sturdy when not bloody

Sweep (1 action, melee attack, repeatable 2): Arc 3. **On hit:** Light damage, inflict daze. If a character is dazed, they must physical save or be stunned. **Area effect:** Fray damage

Shove (1 action): Adjacent foe must physical save or be shoved 1. **Collide:** daze.

Crusher (2 actions, recharge 4+): An adjacent foe makes a physical save or takes heavy damage and becomes immobilized. On a successful save, they take light damage. If already immobilized, boost damage to critical.

Knuckle

Heavily armored foe that defends allies

3 armor, Run 1, Dash 0

Traits: Guardian, Slow, Vigilance

Poise: Sturdy when not bloody

Overpower (1 action, melee attack, true strike): *On hit:* light damage. *Miss:* fray damage.

Shove (1 action): Adjacent foe must physical save or be shoved 1. **Collide:** daze.

Fortify (1 action, stance): Count as in cover and grant cover to allied characters, but cannot dash. End if shoved, dazed, staggered, or stunned.

Mark of Vigilance (1 action, recharge 4+): Mark a foe in range 3. The Knuckle and allies adjacent to the knuckle gain counter against the character and the marked foe gets +1 curse on attacks against the knuckle and any adjacent allies. Foe can pass a magical save at the end of their turn to clear the mark.

Sledge

Armored foe that crushes enemy defense

3 armor

Traits: Guardian, Vigilance

Flank: Loses all armor if 2 or more foes are adjacent.

Poise: Sturdy above 50% hp

Wind up (2 actions): Next Slam costs 1 action and gains +1 accuracy

Bash (1 action): An adjacent character must physical save or become dazed

Slam (2 actions, melee attack): +1 difficulty. Pierce. On hit, deal critical damage and character must save or become vulnerable.

SKIRMISHER

Prowl: Gains stealth at the start of their turn

Finishing Blow: Boost damage if character is bloodied.

Extended Dash: Can dash as 1 action

Skirmisher: Can move diagonally

Health: 6/7/8

HP: 24/28/32

Speed: 4, run 2, dash 4

Defense: 9+ chapter

Armor: 0

Attack: +2/+4/+6

Fray Damage: 1/2/3

Damage: 3+chapter/6+chapter/10+chapter

Damage/save type: Either

Assassin

Traits: Skirmisher, Extended Dash, Dodge, Prowl, Finishing Blow

Nimble: Has evasion unless suffering from a status

Bolt (1 action, ranged attack 4): *On hit:* light magic damage.

Deumbra (1 action, repeatable 2): Teleport 2

Lunge (2 actions, melee attack, recharge 6): May dash 4 before attack. *On hit:* Heavy physical damage. Trigger *finishing blow* if character has no adjacent allies.

Shortbow

Traits: Skirmisher, Extended Dash, Dodge, Prowl, Finishing Blow

Strafe shot (1 action, ranged attack 5): On hit: deal light damage. Can interrupt movement.

Pepper (1 action, repeatable 2): Deal fray damage to a character in in range 5.

Riddle (2 actions, ranged attack 5, recharge 5+): *On hit:* Deal fray damage four times. *Miss:* Two times.

Berserker

Traits: Skirmisher, Extended Dash, Dodge, Finishing Blow

Nimble: Has evasion unless suffering from a status

Revenge: Has counter under 50% hp

Vengeful Slash (Interrupt 1): When damaged for the first time a round, Berserker deals light damage as an effect to a random adjacent character (for or ally).

Furious Slash (melee attack, repeatable 2): *On hit:* Light damage. *Critical hit:* Character must physical save or become vulnerable.

Charge (1 actions, recharge 4+): Dash, then deal light physical damage to an adjacent character

Hellion

Traits: Skirmisher, Extended Dash, Dodge, Finishing Blow

Winged: Gains flying at end of their turn. Loses flying if shoved, dazed, staggered, or stunned.

Bolt (1 action, ranged attack 4): *On hit:* light magic damage.

Swoop (1 action, recharge 6): End turn and leave the battlefield. Return to the battlefield in a free space at start of next turn.

Dive (1 action): Fly in a line 3 area effect. Once character within the area must physical save or take fray damage, be shoved to the end of the line, and become blinded.

Skulk

Traits: Skirmisher, Extended Dash, Prowl, Dodge, Finishing Blow

Slippery: Gain evasion under 50% hp

Stab (1 action, melee attack): On hit: deal light physical damage. Gains pierce if the target has no allies adjacent.

Cheap trick (1 action): An adjacent foe must physical save or become blinded

Sprint (1 actions): Dash 6

LEADER

Health: 8/9/10

HP: 32/36/40

Speed: 3, run 2, dash 2

Defense: 7+ chapter

Armor: 1/1/2

Attack: +1/+3/+5

Fray Damage: 2/3/3

Damage: 3+chapter/5+chapter/7+chapter

Damage/save type: Either

Shelter: Adjacent allies get +1 accuracy on saves

Autocure: At the start of their turn, may grant vigor 1 to an ally in range 2

Incanter

Traits: Shelter, Autocure

Purity: Immune to Blights

Counter Curse (Interrupt): The Incanter or an ally in range 3 gains evasion against an incoming magic attack

Smite (1 action, melee attack): *On hit:* light damage. Character must physical save or be blighted. *Miss:* Fray damage

Punishment (1 action): A foe in range 4 must magic save or become staggered.

Purge (1 action, recharge 4+): *Cleanse* ally in range 3

Incantation of protection (1 action, stance): Allies in range 3 gain +1 boon on attacks and either magic evasion, sturdy, or true strike (choose one, each one replaces the last each time this stance is chosen). These effects do not apply to the incanter.

Zealot

Armor 1, Dash 1

Traits: Shelter, Autocure

Holy (2 actions, close blast 1): Attack: *On hit*, deal light damage. *Area effect:* Deal fray damage.

Effect: Characters must magic save or become staggered or blinded (Zealot's choice)

Succor (2 actions, recharge 4+): Target defeated ally, return them to life with the summon type and 50% max hp.

Shield of Faith (2 actions): Allied character in range 3 becomes marked and resistant to all damage while marked. This mark ends if they would be shoved, staggered, or stunned, or the zealot uses this ability again.

Commander

Armor +1

Traits: Shelter

Command Aura: Allies in range 3 have +1 boon on attacks.

Tactics Aura: Staggered, Dazed, or Stunned enemies in range 3 take +2 damage

Counter Strike (Interrupt): The commander or an ally in range 3 gains evasion against an incoming melee attack

Leader's strike (1 action, melee attack, repeatable 2): *On hit:* deal light damage and an ally in range 3 can dash 2 spaces.

Commander's mark (1 action): A foe in range 4 must magic save or become marked. While marked, they lose and cannot gain stealth, and attacks against them gain true strike. They can repeat this save at the end of their turns.

Forced march (1 action, stance): When Commander takes this stance, and at start of commander's turn, the commander and all allies in range 3 can dash 2 in the same direction.

Cantrix

Dash 2

Traits: Shelter, Autocure

Aetherwall: Cover from ranged attacks

Chant of investiture (1 action, stance, recharge 4+): An ally in range 8 is marked by the Cantrix and gains resistance to all damage, sturdy, and +1 boon on all attacks and saves while in range 8 of the Cantrix. While in this stance, the Cantrix reduces their speed to 0. It ends if the

Cantrix is shoved, stunned, dazed, or staggered, or if it takes this action again.

Slumber (1 actions): A character in range 8 of the Cantrix must magic save or become pacified. If already pacified, the character is also stunned.

Dissonance (1 actions, recharge 4+): A character in range 8 of the cantrix must magic save or be shoved 1 and drop all stances.

Escape (1 action) : The Cantrix swaps place with its marked ally

ARTILLERY

Health: 5/6/7

HP: 20/24/28

Speed: 3, run 1, dash 1

Defense: 7+ chapter

Armor: 0

Attack: +2/+4/+6

Fray Damage: 2/3/4

Damage: 3+chapter/6+chapter/10+chapter

Damage/save type: Magic

Overdrive X: Deals boosted damage if the current round is X or higher

Aetherwall: Cover from ranged attacks further away than range 3

Blightboost: If attacking a blighted character, gain an increased effect.

Illwright

Traits: Overdrive 4, Slow, Aetherwall

Resonance: Attacks deal boosted damage if they hit 3 or more targets.

Power overwhelming: If overdrive has triggered, gain flying and vigor 2

Blast (2 actions, ranged attack 8, blast 1):

On hit: Heavy magic damage and inflict blight.

Miss: Light magic damage. *Area effect:* Light damage. *Blightboost:* Increase to blast 2.

Flash (1 actions): A character in range 6 must magic save or take magic fray damage and be blighted

Aethersup (1 actions): Tick down Overdrive counter by 1

Siegewright

Traits: Overdrive 3, Slow, Aetherwall

Lob (1 actions, ranged attack 8): *On hit:* Light magic damage. Pierce, ignores cover, inflict blight. *Miss:* Fray damage. *Blightboost:* repeat the attack. The new attack does not have blightboost.

Fell Shot (1 action, repeatable 2): Mark 2 unoccupied spaces in range 8. Foes or allies that pass through these spaces take piercing magic fray damage as an area effect. At the start of the siegewright's turn, any spaces created by this ability disappear.

Entrench (1 action, stance): Aetherwall grants damage immunity to ranged attacks instead of resistance. Ends if the wright moves, is shoved, dazed, staggered, or stunned.

Alchemist

1 armor

Traits: Overdrive 3, Aetherwall

Acid Splash: Attacks deal piercing fray damage on hit or miss to all foes in range 2 of the target as an area effect

Mobile: Ignores difficult terrain and terrain effects

Spray (1 actions, close blast 1, repeatable 2): *On hit:* piercing fray damage and inflict blight. *Miss:* fray damage. *Area effect:* fray damage.

Blightboost: Increase to close blast 2.

Sticky solution (1 action, recharge 5+): An arc 3 area adjacent to the alchemist becomes difficult terrain for the rest of combat.

Flash (1 actions): A character in range 6 must magic save or take magic fray damage and be blighted

Summoner

Dash 1

Traits: Overdrive 3

Summon (1 action, repeatable 2): Summon two mobs (of any type, by default the chaff mob) with the summon type in unoccupied space in range 3 of the Summoner. They take a normal turn this round. If overdrive has triggered, summon 3 mobs with this action instead.

Puppetmaster (1 action, stance): An allied summon in range is marked. While marked, it

gains vigor 1, regeneration 1, pierce on all its abilities, and doubles its speed.

Great Summon (2 actions, recharge 6): Summon a soldier with the Summon type and 25% max hp.

Arbalest

Dash 1

Traits: Overdrive 3, Slow

Hurried shot (1 action, ranged attack 4): +1 curse. *On hit:* light damage.

Aim (2 actions): Boost damage of next ranged attack, and double range.

Heart Seeker (2 actions, range 5, pierce):
Attack: On hit: heavy physical damage. *Miss:* fray damage. Cannot target adjacent characters.

ELITE

ARCHON

Health: 8/9/10

HP: 64/72/80

Speed: 4, run 2, dash 4

Defense: 6+ chapter

Armor: 2/3/4

Attack: +0/+2/+4

Fray Damage: 2/2/3

Damage: 3+chapter/5+chapter/7+chapter

Damage/save type: Physical

Traits: Defiance, Guardian, Vigilance

Elite: Takes 2 turns and has 3 actions

Strength: All attacks have shove 1

Poise: Sturdy above 50% hp

Rage: Under 25% hp, gains *unstoppable* and *regeneration 1*.

Ravage (1 action, melee attack, repeatable 3): *On hit:* Fray damage, true strike, and character must physical save or be dazed. If a foe is already dazed increase damage to light.

Great Fortify (2 actions, stance): Reduce max speed to 0, but gain *cover* and *sturdy*, and apply to all allies while adjacent. Ends at start of

next turn. Immediately ends if reduced below 50% hp, and can't take while bloody.

Great Bash (1 action recharge 4+): Dash forward up to 3 spaces, then an adjacent foe must physical save or take light damage and be shoved 3 spaces. Collide: stun.

Blackheart (3 actions, melee attack, Multiattack 2): On hit: deal light damage. Miss: light damage. Boost on hit damage to heavy if character is stunned or dazed.

ROGUE

Health: 6/7/8

HP: 36/42/48

Speed: 5, run 3, dash 5

Defense: 9+ chapter

Armor: 0

Attack: +2/+4/+6

Fray Damage: 1/2/3

Damage: 3+chapter/6+chapter/10+chapter

Damage/save type: Either

Traits: Skirmisher, Stealth, Dodge, Finishing Blow

Elite: Takes 2 turns and has 3 actions

Evasion: Permanent evasion

Greater Stealth: Not targetable from outside range 3

Wicked Slice (2 actions, melee attack, multiattack 2): *On hit:* light physical damage. *Effect:* Boost damage vs blind characters.

Vile (1 actions): A foe in range 5 must magic save or become blind and blighted

Danse Macabre (2 actions, recharge 5+): Target a blast 2 area. Teleport three times. May deal light damage as an area effect to an adjacent foe each time. Must choose a different hostile character each time unless every character has been hit at least once.

Deumbra (1 action, repeatable 2): Teleport 2 spaces

ARCHPRIEST

Health: 8/9/10

HP: 64/72/80

Speed: 3, run 2, dash 2

Defense: 7+ chapter

Armor: 1/2/3

Attack: +1/+3/+5
Fray Damage: 2/3/3
Damage: 3+chapter/5+chapter/7+chapter
Damage/save type: Either

Traits: Defiance, Autocure
Elite: Takes 2 turns and has 3 actions
Great Shelter: Adjacent allies gain +1 boon on saves. At the start of the arch priest's turn, all adjacent allies can cleanse a blight, end a condition, or clear a mark.

Great Holy (2 actions, ranged attack 4, blast 2): *Attack: On hit:* Light damage. *Miss:* Fray damage. *Effect:* Foes inside must magic save or be staggered.

Seal (1 action): A foe in range 5 must magic save or become pacified.

Immaculate (1 action): An ally in range 5 becomes Intangible until the start of its next turn. Cannot choose the same ally twice in a row.

Gran Succor (3 actions, 1/combat): All defeated characters in range 3 are returned with the summon type and 50% hp.

ELDENWRIGHT

Health: 5/6/7
HP: 40/48/56
Speed: 3, run 1, dash 1
Defense: 7+ chapter
Armor: 0
Attack: +2/+4/+6
Fray Damage: 2/3/4
Damage: 3+chapter/6+chapter/10+chapter
Damage/save type: Magic

Traits: Overdrive 6, Slow, Aetherwall
Elite: Takes 2 turns and has 3 actions
Resonance: Attacks deal boosted damage if they hit 3 or more targets.
Unstable reality: After being damaged by an attack or effect, teleport 1 in any direction.
Power overwhelming: If overdrive has triggered, gain flying and vigor 2

Annihilate (2 actions, ranged attack 10, blast 1): *Attack: On hit:* Heavy damage and inflict blight. *Miss:* Light damage. *Area effect:* Light damage. *Blightboost:* Increase to blast 2. After attack resolves, summon a height 1 space of terrain in the area.

Liminal Arrows (1 action, recharge 5+): Mark all foes in line of sight and range 6. At the end of those character's turns, they take heavy magic damage if marked and not in cover from the Eldenwright, then the mark ends.

Fell Shot (1 action, repeatable 2): Mark 2 unoccupied spaces in range 8. Foes or allies that pass through these spaces take piercing magic fray damage as an area effect. At the start of the eldenwright's turn, any spaces created by this ability disappear.

Slip (1 action): Teleport 5

Aethersup (1 action): Tick down Overdrive counter by 1

MONSTROSITY

Monstrosities are built to be worthy foes for a whole party of characters. They have high hit points, abilities that can hit the whole party, and take turns after every player character turn. They have a few special rules:

- Due to their complexity, monstrosities **can take templates** (Beast, Demon, Relict, etc) but **can't take sub-templates** (Wight, Ghoul, Armor Demon, etc). Instead, re-flavor their abilities as you see fit.
- Monstrosities have **phases**, which change up their available actions and traits. Phases trigger based on set factors. When a phase triggers, the Monstrosity becomes immune to all damage and effects until the start of its next turn.
- Monstrosities have **targetable body parts** that can disable or weaken certain abilities. Body parts have the same defenses as the monstrosity but a separate pool of hit points, which doesn't affect its main hit points. However, any damage taken to body parts when they are reduce to 0 'spills over' to the main body.

DEMOLISHER

The Demolisher is pure strength and rage personified. It can be used to represent particularly colossal demons, giants, or huge armored beasts.

Health: 8/9/10
HP: [24/27/30] x number of player characters
Speed: 5, run 3, dash 5

Defense: 6+ chapter
Armor: 2/3/4
Attack: +0/+2/+4
Fray Damage: 2/3/4
Damage: 3+chapter/5+chapter/7+chapter
Damage/save type: Physical

Traits: Vigilance

Enormous: Size 3

Monstrosity: Takes 1 turn for every player character, and has 3 actions. If slow, only one of its turns is affected.

Colossus: Immune to immobilized and shove. Has phasing for characters and terrain smaller than it and can end turn in those spaces. Ignores movement penalties for terrain.

Monstrous strength: All attacks have shove 1. 1/round after attacking a character, create a space of height 1 terrain adjacent to the target.

Body parts:

Head (10 hp) - Demolisher becomes blinded (ongoing)

Lash (10 hp) - Demolisher loses its lash attack

Armament (10 hp) - Demolisher gets +1 curse on all its melee attacks. Destroyed Demolisher armament can be sold for 2 dust.

Phases: Phase change triggers instantly when reduced to 50% hp or lower.

Phase 1: Lumbering

Swat (1 action): Adjacent foe must physical save or be shoved 2 and staggered. Collide: also Stunned

Lash (1 action): The Demolisher whips a chain, hook, or tongue around a foe in range 5. They must physical save or be shoved 3 or as far as possible towards the demolisher.

Pound (2 actions, multiattack 2): Melee attack, range 2. *On hit:* Light damage. *Miss:* fray damage

Wind up (1 action, combo): End turn, become resistant to all damage. Can use Roar.

- **Combo: Roar (1 actions):** End turn. Characters in range 3 must magic save or take physical piercing damage, become immobilized, and shoved 1 towards the Demolisher. Can use smash.
- **Combo: Smash (3 actions, melee attack, close blast 1):** On hit: heavy damage, double damage, and character is stunned. Miss: Heavy damage. Area effect: Heavy damage.

Cannot move this turn, or use on any turn that it moved. **End turn** and combo returns to Wind Up.

Phase 2: Rage mode (50% hp or under)

Tantrum: Gain *hatred* of character that triggered phase change. Swap to the closest character at the start of each following turn. If multiple characters are evenly close, the demolisher can choose

Rage: Gain unstoppable and regeneration 1 at 25% hp.

Charge (1 action): Move 6. All characters it passes over must physical save or become shoved 1 to either side. Collide: Daze.

Swat (1 action): Adjacent foe must physical save or be shoved 2 and staggered. Collide: also Stunned

Lash (1 action): The Demolisher whips a chain, hook, or tongue around a foe in range 5. They must physical save or be shoved 3 or as far as possible towards the demolisher.

Rage Pound (2 actions, multiattack 3): Melee attack, range 2. *On hit:* Light damage. *Miss:* fray damage. If a character is hit by 2 or more attacks, they are immobilized.

Wind up (1 action, combo): End turn, become resistant to all damage. Can use Smash.

- **Combo: Smash (3 actions, melee attack, close blast 1):** On hit: heavy damage, double damage, and character is stunned. Miss: Heavy damage. Area effect: Heavy damage. Cannot move this turn, or use on any turn that it moved. **End turn** and combo returns to Wind Up.

NOCTURNAL

The Nocturnal relies on extreme mobility and fear to strike down its foes. It can be used to represent winged demons, gargoyles, bat-like beasts, or other vicious predatory and cunning monsters of the night.

Health: 6/7/8

HP: [18/21/24] x number of player characters

Speed: 6, run 3, dash 6

Defense: 9+ chapter

Armor: 0

Attack: +2/+4/+6

Fray Damage: 2/3/4

Damage: 3+chapter/6+chapter/10+chapter

Damage/save type: Either

Traits: Skirmisher, Dodge, Finishing Blow

Large: Size 2

Monstrosity: Takes 1 turn for every player character, and has 3 actions. If slow, only one of its turns is affected.

Colossus: Immune to immobilized and shove. Has phasing for characters smaller than it, can end turn in those spaces. Ignores movement penalties for terrain.

Body parts:

Head (5 hp) - Nocturnal always has the Blood Scent trait (phase 3) active.

Back (10 hp) - Nocturnal loses its Clinging Mists trait in phase I. Back spines can be sold for 2 dust if broken.

Wings (10 hp) - Nocturnal loses its ability to fly

Phases: Phase change triggers at the start of each round. The Nocturnal starts in phase II and can shift up or down one phase (so it can't shift from I to III for example). It must shift phases.

Phase I: Slasher

Hunter: Deals boosted damage to characters with no adjacent allied character or summon

Clinging mists: The Nocturnal is intangible and not visible on the map unless in range 3 of a foe or summon controlled by a foe.

Rake (1 action, repeatable 3): Fly in a line 3 area effect. Characters along the path take fray damage.

Amygdala (2 action): A character in range 3 must magical save or be forced to flee and shoved 4 in a direction of the Nocturnal's choice.

The Horror (1 action, melee attack, repeatable 2): Attack: On hit, deal light damage. Miss: fray damage. Effect: May teleport up to 3 spaces towards target before the attack. Cannot repeat this attack on the same target.

Phase II: Night lord

Take to Wing: Flying in this phase

Rake (1 action, repeatable 3): Fly in a line 3 area effect. Characters along the path take fray damage.

Amygdala (1 action): A character in range 3 must magical save or be forced to flee and shoved 4 in a direction of the Nocturnal's choice.

Blood drain (2 actions, melee attack): *On hit:* Heavy damage. *On miss:* Light damage. *Effect:* If made against a character with Vigor, removes all Vigor and the Nocturnal gains Vigor 1.

Phase III: Blood frenzy

Blood scent: Gains Hatred of the closest bloody character

Frenzy: 1/turn, when hitting with an attack, gains +1 action

Death Grasp (1 action, multiattack 3): Melee attack, range 6. On hit: deal light magic damage and shove character up to 5 spaces towards Nocturnal. Miss: shove 2 spaces towards Nocturnal

Rake (1 action, repeatable 3): Fly in a line 3 area effect. Characters along the path take fray damage.

Blood drain (2 actions, attack, Combo): *On hit:* Heavy damage. *On miss:* Light damage. *Effect:* If made against a character with Vigor, removes all Vigor and the Nocturnal gains Vigor 1. Gains a combo in phase 3

- **Combo: Embrace (2 actions):** Adjacent character must physical save. On a successful save, they are shoved 1 and take light piercing physical damage. On a failed save, they are reduced to half their current hit points, or 1 hp, whichever is higher, and the Nocturnal gains vigor 1.

BROOD LORD

The Brood Lord represents a monster that commands a legion of lesser minions, such as an enormous spider, a Relict Necrolord, or a insectile Demon.

Health: 8/9/10

HP: [16/18/20] x number of player characters

Speed: 4, run 2, dash 4

Defense: 7+ chapter

Armor: 1/2/3

Attack: +1/+3/+5

Fray Damage: 2/3/3

Damage: 3+chapter/5+chapter/7+chapter

Damage/save type: Either

Traits: Shelter, Autocure

Large: Size 2

Monstrosity: Takes 1 turn for every player character, and has 3 actions. If slow, only one of its turns is affected.

Colossus: Immune to immobilized and shove. Has phasing for characters smaller than it, can end turn in those spaces. Ignores movement penalties for terrain.

Legion: The Broodlord starts combat with 5 of its unique summons per player character, which can be placed in any space on the battlefield not within range 2 of players.

Brood Minions: The Brood Lord creates unique summons with its abilities. It can summon any combination of the following minions, which all have defense 7+chapter and 1 hp by default. They can move 4 spaces when the Brood Lord takes their turn, otherwise cannot take actions by themselves unless specified.

- **Clawing Brood:** Foes treat spaces adjacent clawing brood as difficult terrain.
- **Grappler Brood:** Characters that start their turn next to an Grappler brood must physical save or be shoved 2 in a direction of the Brood Lord's choice
- **Crusher Brood:** 1/1/2 armor. Characters that start their turn adjacent to 1 or more crusher brood must physical save or become dazed or staggered (Brood Lord's choice).

Body Parts:

Brood Control (15 hp): Brood can only move 2 spaces instead of 4, and brood assault becomes 1 action.

Spines (10 hp): Shadow spines can only be used once

Possession Gem (20 hp): Possession costs 3 actions. Characters can sell a possession gem for 4 dust.

Phases: The Brood Lord can switch phases at the start of each round. It can be forced to switch phases if it loses all its minions, in which case it happens instantly.

Phase 1: Darklurker

Lurk: The Brood Lord is intangible in this phase and cannot summon new minions. If all its summons are destroyed, it is immediately forced into phase 2.

Looming Shadow: The Brood Lord's space is difficult terrain for hostile characters and allied characters spend 0 movement to cross spaces in the area.

Brood assault (free action, 1/turn): Up to 3 brood minions make an attack, using the brood lord's attack bonus. On hit, deal fray damage. Deal fray damage twice if at least one other brood summon is adjacent.

Shadow spines (1 action, melee attack, repeatable 2): Close blast 1. *On hit:* light damage. *Miss or area effect:* Fray damage. Allies are immune.

Great Puppeteer (1 action): Up to three allies in range of the Broad Lord can dash 4

Possess (1 action, stance): An allied character or summon in range 10 of the Brood Lord gains +1 action, +1 boon on attacks and saves, and vigor equal to the Brood Lord's health. Can only possess one character at once.

Evolve Brood (3 actions): Destroy one brood summon and replace it with an Impaler, Sledge, or Skulk. This new unit has the summon type and only 25% max hp.

Phase 2: Despoiler

Spawn (3 actions, 1/round): The Brood Lord spawns a new unique minion in any space on the battlefield that's not in range 2 of a player. They summon 2 unique summons per players

Brood assault (free action, 1/turn): Up to 3 brood minions make an attack, using the brood lord's attack bonus. On hit, deal fray damage. Deal fray damage twice if at least one other brood summon is adjacent.

Shadow spines (1 action, melee attack, repeatable 2): Close blast 1. *On hit:* light

damage. *Miss or area effect*: Fray damage. Allies are immune.

Great Puppeteer (1 action): Up to three allies in range of the Brood Lord can dash 4

Possess (1 actions, stance): An allied character or summon in range 10 of the Brood Lord gains +1 action, +1 boon on attacks and saves, and vigor equal to the Brood Lord's vigor. Can only possess one character at once.

Screaming spire (3 actions): The Brood Lord summons a height 1 terrain piece in any free space not adjacent to a player character. Foes in range 2 of the spire take double damage from summons, and allied summons have dodge in the same area. Attacks automatically hit the spire, and it is destroyed after taking 10 damage. The Brood Lord can only create one spire at once.

WYRM

A Wyrms is a flying serpentine monster famous in legend and myth, a lesser god of destruction that wreaks havoc on towns and villages.

Health: 5/6/7

HP: [15/18/21] x number of players

Speed: 6, run 3, dash 3

Defense: 7+ chapter

Armor: 2/2/3

Attack: +2/+4/+6

Fray Damage: 2/3/4

Damage: 3+chapter/6+chapter/10+chapter

Damage/save type: Magic

Heavy Armor: Immune to pierce over 50% hp

Range of Arenheir: Overdrive 6

Enormous: Size 3

Monstrosity: Takes 1 turn for every player character, and has 3 actions. If slow, only one of its turns is affected.

Colossus: Immune to immobilized and shove. Has phasing for characters smaller than it, can end turn in those spaces. Ignores movement penalties for terrain.

Blightheart: Wyrms deal one of the four blights exclusively, except for in their God of Destruction phase. Pick one when creating the Wyrms.

Body Parts

Wings (15 HP): Cannot fly

Heartscale (15 HP): Loses Heavy Armor trait and all armor.

Horns (15 HP): Wyrms gains permanent hatred of the player that destroyed the horns

Tail (15 HP): Tail lash costs 3 actions. Characters can sell a Wyrms tail for 4 dust.

Phases:

Enters a new phase at the start of every round, in order (looping back to phase I after phase III). Since the Wyrms enters God of Destruction the round its Overdrive triggers, characters should aim to end the fight by then.

Phase I: Dominant

Cataclysm: At the start of each turn, create a rock spire, a height 1 terrain piece in range 3 of a player character.

Snap (1 action, repeatable 3): Character in range 2 must physical save or take piercing fray damage

Swat (1 action): Adjacent character must physical save or be shoved 3, staggered, and dazed. Collide: also Stunned

Eruption (2 actions): A Rock spire in range 3 emits a pool of blight, covering every adjacent space to the spire. The space is dangerous and difficult terrain, and characters that end their turn in the space are blighted.

Tail Lash (2 actions, melee attack, Arc 4):

Attack: On hit: Heavy damage. *Miss: Fray* damage. *Area effect*: Light damage and Shove 1. Must target a character in its area. Destroys any rock spires in the area.

Phase II: Soaring

Take to Wing: Flying in this phase

Rake (1 action, repeatable 3): Fly in a line 5 area effect. Characters along the path take fray damage.

Spitfire (1 action, repeatable 2): Mark a character in range 6. At the end of that character's turn, if that character is marked, the Wyrms shoots a blast of blight at them for a blast 1 explosion area effect. Characters within must magic save or take light damage and be blighted. The ball destroys any rock spires in the area.

Scorch (2 actions, attack): Range 8, Blast 1. *On hit*: light damage: *Miss or area effect*: light damage. Blightboost: Increase all damage to heavy.

Tail Lash (2 actions, melee attack, Arc 4):

Attack: On hit: Heavy damage. *Miss: Fray*

damage. *Area effect*: Light damage and Shove 1. Must target a character in its area. Destroys any rock spires in the area.

Phase III: God of Destruction

The Wyrms lose flying in this phase

Pulse of Destruction: The Wyrms' max speed is 0 this phase. Every turn but the last turn this phase, the Wyrms must take the radiance action. The Wyrms are unstoppable and have resistance to all damage in this phase. The Wyrms' last turn is slow, and it always takes Elden Chaos and Aftermath in order.

Radiance (2 actions): All characters not in cover from the Wyrms take light damage as an area effect.

Spitfire (1 action): Mark a character in range 6. At the end of that character's turn, if that character is marked, the Wyrms shoot a blast of blight at them for a blast 1 explosion area effect. Characters within must make a magic save or take light damage and be blighted. The blast destroys any rock spires in the area.

Elden Chaos (2 actions, ranged attack): The Wyrms breathe a beam of pure ancient chaos. The beam is a 3 wide line **area effect** that crosses through all obstacles, terrain, and goes across the whole battlefield. *Attack: On hit*, deal heavy magic damage three times and inflict all blights. *Miss or area effect*: Deal light damage twice and inflict all blights.

Aftermath (1 action): All characters except the Wyrms are dazed (save ends). Destroy all rock spires and clear all eruptions.

FACTIONS

RELICT



Relict are the most common danger that adventurers face in the ruins of Arden Eld. They are the spectral remnants of the Arken Empire, souls bound in an Aetheric network that runs through the ruins by an ancient Eldmage as a last ditch effort to save a dying people. The process was technically successful, but most relict have been left mindless husks - souls harnessed and stored in lightning powered sarcophagus-like nodes nestled throughout the ruins. Relict armor sits eerily still, or crumpled into a corner, until its a node senses intruders, the Relict within rippling out through conduits to manifest in crackling undeath.

There are some Relict - a priest class - that have retained more sense of themselves and work at dark purpose to resurrect the old empire and bring back the arkenlords.

Defiant Spark: All Relict have Defiance
Monsters: Relict do not flee or negotiate.
Faction Blight: Electrified

Relicts all have the Wight template applied to them by default:

Wight

Networked: +1 boon on all attacks if another Relict is adjacent to their target

Shuffle: A wight can move 1 space forward at the start of their turn. When they do this, they can also move any wights that are contiguously connected to them via adjacency.

For every 1 points worth of Wights in an encounter, one of the following templates can be applied to an enemy:

HEAVIES OR LEADERS:

Idol

Some Relict are walking statues powered by an amalgamation of feeble souls.

+25% hp

Large: Increase size to 2

Combat subroutine: Has hatred of the closest character

Imbued strength: All melee damage is boosted and gains shove 1.

Stone march: Slow and cannot dash, run, or teleport.

Heavy: Immune to shove.

Fused

Some relict have become fused due to damaged networks. The result is a large, fused mass of tormented souls.

+25% hp

Large: Increase size to 2

Deadsoul: Has evasion and dodge vs magic

Shambling: Permanently staggered and dazed

Release passengers: When defeated, summon 4 relict **chaff** mobs in free adjacent spaces.

SKIRMISHERS OR ARTILLERY:

Ghoul

Some relict have learned to survive by absorbing their brethren to boost their sense of self.

Sparkfeed (2 actions): The relict absorbs an adjacent defeated relict, destroying its ally and

gaining vigor 2. It doubles its speed for the rest of combat the first time it uses this ability.

Electrostatic death: When destroyed, this character explodes in a blast 1 area effect for light damage. If it used sparkfeed, boost this damage to heavy.



Wraith:

Tethered to the network, relict can float on the air with eerie grace, flickering in and out of existence.

Reduce hp by 50%

Immortal rage: When defeated, instead become Intangible for one round. At the end of that round, evaporate from the battlefield.

Ethereal: Flying, phasing, and intangible unless there's an adjacent foe

Slip (1 action): Teleport 3

RUIN BEAST

The ruins are full of wildlife that has adapted to their unique environment over time - or have been changed or warped by it.

Monsters: Beasts do not flee or negotiate.

Faction Blight: Poisoned

Ferocity: On the first round of combat, beasts double their speed.

Flank: While two or more beasts are adjacent to a character hostile to them, that character takes +2 damage from their attacks

Feral: Always have *hatred* of the character that damaged them last, or the closest character (can choose either).

Beasts have no restricted sub-templates. Instead, choose a type of beast, which gives it some additional traits and limits its job selection.

Heavy Beasts:

Stone Lizard

Thick hides and stony camouflage make these large beasts almost impossible to tell from boulders.

Dire Hide: Resistant to physical damage above 50% hp

Heavy Armor: Immune to pierce above 50% hp

Rolling Boulder: Gains character phasing, and when moving through foes for the first time in a round, they are shoved 1 to the side and take fray damage

Flank: If two or more hostile characters are adjacent, lost all armor

Halitoad

The enormous and foul-smelling Halitoad uses its long tongue to strangle and digest its prey.

Large: Increase size to 2

Stench: Melee attacks have +1 curse. Characters starting their turns in an adjacent space are poisoned.

Tongue lash (1 action): A foe in range 4 must physical save or be shoved 3 towards the Halitoad

Tongue Constrict (2 actions, stance, recharge 4+): Adjacent foe must physical save or become immobilized, stunned, and take light piercing damage at the start of the beast's turns. Beast cannot move while in this stance and it ends if beast is stunned, staggered, dazed, or shoved. A character can also repeat the save at the end of their turn to end this effect.

Horned Beast

Large omnivores that use their horns to tear up dungeon stones and get at the roots and insects within.

Large: Increase size to 2

Gore (2 actions, recharge 4+): The Horned Beast dashes up to 5 spaces. An adjacent character must then physical save or take light damage and be shoved for each space the beast moved, or half on a successful save.

Strength: All attacks gain shove 1

Howler

Part ape, part wolf, the Howler is a hyper aggressive monster with a bad temper.

Howl (2 actions, recharge 6): All non-howler characters in a blast 1 must physical save or be stunned

Rage: Gains unstoppable and regeneration 1 at 25% hp or lower.

Sonic screech (1 action): A character in range 3 must magical save or become dazed. If already dazed, shove 2 and deal light magic damage

Skirmisher beasts

Burrower

A heavy clawed mammal that chews up and digests raw stone into a slurry which it uses to make its lair.

Burrow (1 action, recharge 4+): Mark a character. At the start of the beast's next turn, if that character is still marked, it teleports to a space adjacent to that character, dealing light damage. If the character is flying, they take no damage. If the character is alone, they take heavy piercing damage instead and must physical save or become vulnerable.

Digging Claws: Attacks gain pierce if a character has no adjacent allies

Ironfeather

This greedy avian's feathers are spine-like and can be shot like quills at range.

Winged: Gain flying at the end of their turn. Lose flying if shoved, stunned, dazed, or staggered.

Feather spray (1 action, recharge 4+): Characters in a close blast 1 area take fray damage twice as an area effect.

Stalker

This reptilian creature will follow parties for days, and has the uncanny ability to mimic speech.

Ambush: Attacks that break stealth gain true strike and deal bonus damage

Chameleonic: When starting or ending its turn adjacent to cover, gains stealth

Decoy (Interrupt 1, recharge 5+): When hit by an attack, turns that hit into a miss and teleports 3 spaces to an unoccupied space it can see, which is its 'real' location.

Leader Beasts

Aethertick

This slow moving bug absorbs ambient Aether from its Environment.

Aether-fatted: Permanently slow. Rewards 1 dust after the fight if characters fought at least one Aether tick.

Absorb Aether: 1/round, gains vigor 1 when a magic ability is used in range 3

Rune skin: Resistant to magic damage above 50% hp

Disperse Aether (1 action, recharge 5+): Allies in range 3 gain vigor 1. Increase this to vigor 2 if the Aethertick has any amount of vigor.

Ruin Ape

Small and intelligent simians that form symbiotic, if slightly one-sided, relationships with other monsters.

Small: +1 curse on all physical saves. Shoves shove +1 against this character

Latch: Starts combat sharing the same space as another ally the same size or larger (can be targeted separately), reducing the ape's speed to 0 but moving when its mount moves, and gains cover while latched on. Knocked off if shoved, dazed, staggered, or stunned. Can latch on to a new allied character in range 3 with 1 action, teleporting to its space.

Spur (1 action, recharge 4+): The character the Ruin Ape is latched on to dashes 4 in a direction of the Ape's choice and can make an attack that takes 1 action or less as an interrupt

Yellow Creeper

This parasitic creature has a symbiotic fungus that it uses to control other creatures.

Spore (1 action): The Creeper puts down two intangible summons in free spaces in range 3. Characters that pass through these spaces gain spore infestation for the rest of combat. While they have a spore infestation, they are staggered and gain regeneration 1. Spore infestations can be Cleansed.

Spore detonate (2 actions, recharge 6): A character with a spore infestation explodes, dealing heavy damage in a blast 1 area as an area effect. Characters within the area can save to reduce damage to light damage. The host fails this save. The spore infestation on the targeted character then ends.

Puppet (1/turn, free action): A staggered character (foe or ally) in range 5 is shoved 3 spaces in a direction of the creeper's choosing.

Artillery Beasts

Ruin Centipede

These huge, man sized insects are a potent symbol of bad luck in most villages.

Acid Splash: Attacks deal piercing fray damage on hit or miss to all foes in range 2 of the target as an area effect

Toxic spines (1 action, recharge 6): A character in range 5 must physical save or become poisoned and instantly lose all vigor.

Gulper

This amphibian exudes a thick layer of slime when threatened, which it can spit as a weapon.

Slime Lob (1 action, recharge 6): The Gulper creates a blast 1 area of difficult terrain.

Characters in the area when it's created must save or become immobilized. The area lasts for the rest of combat, or until the Gulper uses this ability again.

Slippery: Gains evasion under 50% hp

Venomous: Inflict poisoned on any adjacent character that damages them

SCAVENGER

Scavengers is a particular term in Arden Eld, referring to the scions of the Churning Age - those who rush into the ruins in search of relics to extract for a quick profit. Many find that it is easier to have others do the hard work for them, then rob them blind on the way out.

Kin: Scavengers are kin, can be bargained with, and will flee or surrender if heavily outnumbered or heavily losing a fight

• **Motivations:** Scavengers are typically after the wealth in the ruins and won't fight if terms can be reached

• **Flee:** If a Scavenger has 4 or more valuables tokens, they attempt to flee the battlefield, fleeing successfully if they start their turn in an edge space of the battlefield with no hostile characters adjacent

Faction Blight: Poisoned or Burning

Valuables: If fighting scavengers, place 3 valuables tokens on the battlefield. Valuables are intangible tokens that can be picked up by any character by moving over their space. Characters drop them when defeated. At the end of an expedition, all characters gain 1 dust for every 2 valuables tokens the party has as a whole.

All scavengers have the **ruffian** template by default:

Ruffian

Corner fighting: At the start of their turns, ruffians can dash 1 as a free action

Greed: Deal +2 damage against characters with at least one valuable token

For every 1 points worth of Ruffians, one of the following templates can be applied to any job:

Toe-taker

Dust congregates under the fingernails and toes of travelers in the ruins, with predictable influences on the truly desperate.

Drop valuables: When reduced below 50% hp, toe takers drop 1 valuables in an adjacent space, plus any valuables they are already carrying.

Consumptive Greed: Toe Takers have hatred of any character with a valuables token and deal boosted damage against them.

Looter

Kin that care little for what they carry out, only that it glitters.

Loot sack: When defeated, a looter drops any valuables they have, plus 2.

Mug (2 action, recharge 4+): An adjacent character must physical save or become stunned. On a failed save, the Looter also steals all valuables from the character.

Quickfinger

Trained thieves from city guilds often find comfortable homes with scavenger bands.

Prowl: A quick finger gains stealth at the end of their turn

Decoy (Interrupt 1, recharge 5+): When hit by an attack, turns that hit into a miss and teleports 3 spaces to an unoccupied space it can see, which is its 'real' location.

Pick pockets (1 action, recharge 4+): An adjacent character must physical save or become dazed as their loose change is pilfered. The quick finger gains 1 valuables, even on a successful save.

Shank

Rough and tumble street fighters, come to the ruins to turn a quick guildler.

Backstab: When a shank makes an attack against a character adjacent to one of their allies, their attacks gain true strike or pierce (they can choose).

Sucker punch (1 action): An adjacent character must physical save or become dazed. If the character is holding any valuables, they also drop them in adjacent spaces.

IMPERIAL

The great cities of Arden Eld are growing, stretching at their limits. Some have crowned kings, dictators, or patricians. Other set their ambitions higher - to create a nation, or recreate the old empire - a terrible endeavor indeed. The leaders of the Imperials are single-minded people in love with regalia, the war-banner, the factory, and the clang of steel. They worship the musket. Their soldiers on the ground are less enthusiastic, but given the chance, they will trample the Green into mud and ashes none the less.

Kin: Imperials are kin, can be bargained with, and will flee or surrender if heavily outnumbered or heavily losing a fight

- **Motivations:** Imperials have orders they are following from whatever guild master, warlord, or under-baron they serve. Usually this is to capture a location, object of power, or person of interest. If characters can work around those orders, Imperials can usually be bargained with or even be helpful.
- **Flee:** When the commanding officer of an Imperial detachment is defeated, there's a 20% chance the remaining imperials will attempt to flee or will surrender on the spot.
- **Faction Blight:** Burning

- **Commanding Officer:** Designate one foe the commanding officer of the imperial detachment. They get a special template.

Special Mob: Auxiliary

Auxiliary

Made of of levies pressed into service from captured villages and towns and armed with heavy arquebuses.

HP: 1

Speed: 3, run 1, dash 2

Defense: 8

Attack: +1/2/3

Mob: This character doesn't trigger slay effects

Firelance (2 actions, ranged attack): Attack: On hit, deal 1 damage. Increase to 3 if in the command aura of an imperial officer.

Special template: Imperial Officer

Any job

Poise: Sturdy above 50% hp

Arkentech Power armor: Start combat with Vigor 1. Immune to blights, difficult, and dangerous terrain

Command Aura: Allies in range 3 of the Imperial officer have +1 boon on attacks. Other Imperial units may gain bonuses while in any Command Aura (this trait, or a trait with the same name).

Imperials all have the Legionnaire template applied to them by default:

Legionnaire

Receive orders: When this unit starts its turn in range of a command aura, it recharges all its abilities.

Rifle (2 actions, recharge 6): Ranged attack, range 8. On hit, deal light piercing damage and inflict burning.

For every 1 points worth of Legionnaires, one of the following templates can be applied:

Heavy Imperials

Praetorian

Armed with Arkentech armor, these heavy imperial troops are a fearsome sight.

Improved armor: Armor +1

Receive orders: When this unit starts its turn in range of a command aura, it recharges all its abilities.

Heavy Armor: Immune to pierce above 50% hp

Flank: If adjacent to 2 or more foes, lose all armor

Flame hurler (1 action, recharge 6): Line 3. True strike. Inflict fray damage and burning as an area effect on all within.

War Beast

This large, bear-like imperial beasts are bred for war and fitted with armor.

Improved armor: Armor +1

Large: Increase size to 2

Heavy Armor: Immune to pierce above 50% hp

Frenzy: When hitting with an attack, can immediately make another attack with an action cost of 1 or less as a free action. This free attack doesn't trigger frenzy.

Leashed: Designate another character the handler. Can only take 1 action maximum, loses all armor, and cannot trigger frenzy unless adjacent to the handler or in a command aura.

Skirmisher Imperials

Imperial Spy

Top line imperial operatives, trained at a guild academy

Receive orders: When this unit starts its turn in range of a command aura, it recharges all its abilities.

Disguise (1 action, recharge 6): A foe in range 5 must magic save. On a failed save, the Spy switches places with them, teleporting both characters.

Explosive Decoy (1 action, recharge 6): The Spy teleports 3 spaces, gains stealth, and leaves an explosive decoy in its space. The decoy is a summon with 1 hp. As an action by the spy, or when damaged, the decoy explodes for light damage in a blast 1 area effect, destroying it and inflicting magical fray damage and burning.

Imperial Demolitionist

Laden with explosives, demolitionists blow doors in ruins, gatehouses of cities, or collapse tunnels below armies.

Receive orders: When this unit starts its turn in range of a command aura, it recharges all its abilities.

Arkentech mine (1 actions, recharge 6): The Demolitionist places an intangible size 1 summon in a space in range 3. If any character moves or is shoved more than 1 space over or adjacent to the mine, it explodes for heavy damage in a blast 1 area effect and inflicts burning.

Detonate mines (2 actions): All mines laid by the demolitionist explode as if triggered.

Leader Imperials

Drillmaster

Retired officers that sometimes go into battle to complete the training of levies and legionnaires with brutal discipline.

Tactics Aura: Staggered, dazed, or stunned enemies in range 3 take +2 damage

Discipline (Interrupt 1): When an ally in the tactics aura misses with an attack, the Drillmaster can use this interrupt to cause them to re-roll the attack with +1 boon, taking the second result as the final result.

Artillerist

Furnished with the latest scopes and tech, Artillerists bring the imperial firepower to bear.

Firing Drills: The ranged attacks of allies in range 3 ignore cover

Spotter (1 action, recharge 4+): Mark a character in range 8 and line of sight. That character becomes Vulnerable (ongoing) to ranged attacks while marked and cannot gain stealth. A character can repeat the save at the end of their turn to end this effect.

Artillery Imperials

Imperial Sniper

A college-trained wright or gunwright with a pedigree in precision combat

Receive orders: When this unit starts its turn in range of a command aura, it recharges all its abilities.

Brace: When adjacent to cover, increase the range of all ranged attacks with a listed range by +3, and increase all line attacks by +3

Deploy cover (1 action, recharge 6, 2/ combat): The sniper creates a space of height 1 terrain in an adjacent space

Imperial Powdermage

Imperial wrights are often fitted with the latest in powder technology - rotary six guns that mimic the Holy Chambers wielded by the Freelancers.

Receive orders: When this unit starts its turn in range of a command aura, it recharges all its abilities.

Pistol (1/round, free action): The powder mage fires a pistol at a character in range 5, dealing piercing fray damage as an effect.

Pistol flurry (2 actions, recharge 6): The powder mage uses Pistol on all visible hostile characters in range 5.

DEMON

The origin of Demons is a mystery, but most scholars agree they appear to be closely related to the Doom. They are among the most dangerous and fearsome creatures that lurk in the deep levels of the Arkenruins, existing seemingly only to destroy. Whenever they appear, they drive other creatures to the surface in a Blight.

Monsters: Demons do not flee or negotiate.

Faction Blight: Any

Legion: When fighting demons, at the start of combat, place three Natsals on the map in unoccupied space somewhere outside of range 2 of players. These don't count for the total encounter budget.

Devour (2 actions): The Demon devours and absorbs an adjacent Natal or another defeated Demon, healing 25% of their HP and gaining vigor 1. A Natal devoured this way is destroyed.

Banish: A character can disintegrate an adjacent defeated demon as an action, returning it to the void from which it came.

Special Mob: Natal

Natsals are immature demons, smooth, pale-skinned humanoids. Wherever demons appears, breaching the veil between worlds, they inevitably pour forth.

Natal

HP: 1

Speed: 3

Defense: 5

Attack: +0

Mob: This character doesn't trigger slay effects

Summon: Natsals disappear when reduced to 0 hp.

0 armor, run 2, dash 3

Void vomit (2 actions): Deal 1 piercing damage as an effect to a character in range 3.

Demons have no restricted sub-templates. Instead, pick a type of Demon, which limits its job selection and gives it some traits and actions.

Heavy Demons

Starving Demon

These skeletal demons swell to enormous size when they absorb their defeated foes.

Flesh Hook (1 action, recharge 4+): A character in range 4 must pass a physical save or be shoved towards the demon as much as possible

Cleave (1 action, repeatable 2): Deal piercing fray damage as an effect.

Feast: Devour only costs 1 action for this Demon, and it can dash 1 before using it

Engorge: Increase size by 1 and gains +1 action for the rest of combat if it feasted.

Armor Demon

These knight-like demons fight with no sense of self preservation and crush all before them.

Hellforged: Increase armor by +3

Heavy Armor: Above 50% hp, immune to pierce

Flank: If adjacent to 2 or more hostile characters, lose all armor

Crush Bones (2 actions): Choose an adjacent character. That character is immobilized and the Armor Demon becomes Slow. At the start of the Armor Demon's next turn, if that character is still adjacent, they take critical piercing damage with true strike as an effect. The targeted character can save against this effect as normal.

Gaping Demon

This demon is almost all mouth, teeth, and tongue, which nearly splits its body in two.

Large: Increase size to 2

Feast: Devour only costs 1 action for this Demon, and it can dash 1 before using it.

Invigorate: When the Mouth Demon uses Devour, it also recharges any abilities it has

Swallow Whole (2 actions, recharge 5+): A adjacent character must physical save or be removed from play as they are swallowed. While swallowed, they share the space with the Mouth Demon, their max speed is 0, they can only use actions that target the Mouth Demon, and become untargetable and intangible. At the start of each of their turns, they take light piercing damage, and at the end of their turn they can save against this effect. Saving against this effect places them in a free adjacent space

Skirmisher Demons

Hollow Demon

This demon is barely there, a hole in reality that sucks in the air at the edges. Hands occasionally grip the edges of the hole.

Reduce hp by 50%

Ethereal: Flying, phasing, and intangible unless there's an adjacent hostile character

Void Touch: Inflicts blight with all attacks, hit or miss

Pure Void: When a Hollow is destroyed, create impassable terrain in its space. At the start of each round, summon a Natal in an adjacent space to the void. Destroy the void after combat.

Prowling Demon

This bestial demon has the ability to become insubstantial, retreating to the void from whence it was spawned when in danger.

Defiance, Prowl

Phase slip: After being damaged for the first time in a turn (any turn), become intangible until the start of the following turn

Void shift (2 actions, recharge 6): Teleport to a visible space

Screaming Demon

This demon is full of holes that make a high pitched shriek when it moves.

Large: Increase size to 2

Terror: Characters that attempt to move into an adjacent space for the first time on their turn or start their turn there must pass a magic save or treat spaces adjacent to the Demon as impassable terrain. If they start their turn there and fail a save, they are shoved 1

Shrieking: When the Screaming Demon attacks, characters in range 2 of it must physical save or lose any stances they are holding

Leader Demons

Bulging Demon

This demon's grayish skin shifts and bulges unnaturally.

Regeneration 1

Large: Increase size to 2

Disgorge: When reduced to 50% hp, summon two natal in free spaces in range 3

Last Revenge: When reduce to 0 HP, explodes in a blast 1 area effect. Non-demons in the area must magical save or take light magic damage and be blighted. Summon 3 Natsals in the area.

Venomous: Inflict poisoned on any attacker if struck by a melee attack

Cutter Demon

This demon's arms end in cutting blades with black, reflective edges.

Void rift (1 action): Create a line 3 area of difficult terrain in range 5. This area lasts until the end of combat or until the demon uses this ability again. Demons can use it for cover and ignore its difficult terrain

Void Slip: The Defiler can spend 1 space of movement when moving into a Void Rift to move to the space of any other void rift.

Detonate rifts (2 actions, recharge 6+): Any characters standing in or adjacent to a void rift must magical save or take heavy damage, be shoved 1, and become inflicted with frostbite. All rifts then disappear, and the Defiler cannot make any more rifts this combat.

Puppeteer Demon

This silent demon is made up of woven strings, and can unweave itself to link to the vital forces of other creatures

White Strings: All demons and allied summons in range 3 can dash 3 spaces as an effect. All foes in the area must magic save or be shoved 1

Black Strings (1 action, recharge 5+): A character in range 5 must magic save. On a failed save, they teleport up to 3 spaces to the nearest ally and deal light damage to them as an effect.

Detonate Natal (1 action, recharge 5+): A natal in range 3 is destroyed, and explodes for a blast 1 explosion area effect. Characters in range must magic save or take light magic damage.

Artillery Demons

Lurking Demon

This reptilian demon's skin constantly shifts to match its surroundings.

Dodge

Chameleonic: When starting or ending its turn adjacent to cover, gains stealth

Void rift (1 action): Create a line 3 area of difficult terrain in range 5. This area lasts until the end of combat or until the demon uses this ability again. Demons can use it for cover and ignore its difficult terrain

Unstable Demon

This demon is a barely controlled chaos, its very form constantly twisting and warping

Implode: If the Unstable Demon reaches its overcharge counter, it explodes, dealing light piercing damage as an area effect to all non-demon characters on the battlefield.

Chaos: Unstable demon attacks inflict all four blights

Color Demon

This demon is a color that cannot be named.

Looking at it too long hurts.

Distorted Soul: Above 50% hp gain resistance to all physical damage and gain flying. Below 50% hp, gain resistance to all magic damage and gain

Absorb Aether.

- **Absorb Aether:** Gain 1 vigor when a magic ability is used in range 3.

Distort space: All Natsals in range 3 are intangible

DEEPTOWER

Deeptower is a simple expedition for **level 1** or **level 2** characters. Try it at level 2 if you want to test limit breaks and for characters to have more options. You can use it as a jumping off point to get people into the game and write your own material.

REWARDS: 6 xp, 3 dust. There's some extra arkenotech and dust possible, and camp upgrade.

CAMPS: 1

THE TOWN

Oxbridge is a small, tight-knit farming community, a collection of twenty or homesteads, barns, and a small town square surrounded by fields of green and small town shrine to the local spirits. Ruins haven't surfaced near here for generations, and the valley surrounding the town is quiet, bucolic, and peaceful. It's a cozy town, with a welcoming, peaceful, and friendly vibe. The thatch of the houses is overgrown with grass, neighbors sit outside in the evenings and gossip, and the gardens and windowsills are lush with wildflowers and vegetables. Everyone knows each other.

There's also the eponymous Ox bridge, just outside of town, where the local herders drive their cattle before coming into town to trade. It's old, perhaps pre-empire, massive, and made of red stone that has weathered the rest of time.

THE TOWER

There's an undercurrent of anxiety running through the town. Just three days ago, an Arkenruin surfaced about half a day by foot, up in the foothills. This is probably the reason the players are here. The ruin is close enough to the town that it presents a significant danger if left unexplored, and there is doubtlessly still a strong concentration of Dust and arkenrelics within for the adventurous or greedy - which will doubtlessly draw scavengers.

The top of the tower broke off and was lost somewhere during its ascent from the deep earth, but the bottom half is still intact. The Chroniclers who noted the event on their seismographs have named the sinister ruin **Deeptower**.

PERSONS OF INTEREST AND HOOKS

Here are some folk that players might run into in town, and a quick description of each. You can use any or all of them as hooks for players to go to the tower.

Elder Yu:

Beastfolk (goblin), Yeokin, he/him

A wizened goblin beast folk who is the town elder. He speaks slowly and his great age is apparent. He has two foster sons and has kept the town safe for two decades or so.

Hook: Elder Yu may get a boy to approach characters as they come into town, imploring them to see him, or may have called them in the first place. He's in a desperate state. His foster son Gwyn has been missing for several days after staying out later for work, and his other foster son Cado is in a terrible depression because of it. There are also lights in the tower, making the Elder think that people are camped there, or worse. He suspects that Gwyn's disappearance was connected to the tower or people who have come to plunder it. Yu will promise payment in dust if characters can find what happened to his son and bring him back... or his body.

Cado

Thrynn, Yeokin, he/him

A teenager. Anxious and quiet, and gangly. Won't talk to the players without some prodding or action on the part of the players to get him to open up. Players might see him acting suspiciously around town.

Hook: Cado and his foster brother, Gwyn, heard about the riches in the tower from Quell, the Churner who was passing through town. Quell promised to pay them handsomely if they could bring her back something from the ruins, and while exploring, they were ambushed by Relict and split up. Cado fled, leaving Gwyn, and has felt

so guilty about it he can't tell his foster father what really happened. He'll tell characters this out of some sense of guilt and even take them to the ruins, but will refuse to come with them further without extreme convincing.

Quell

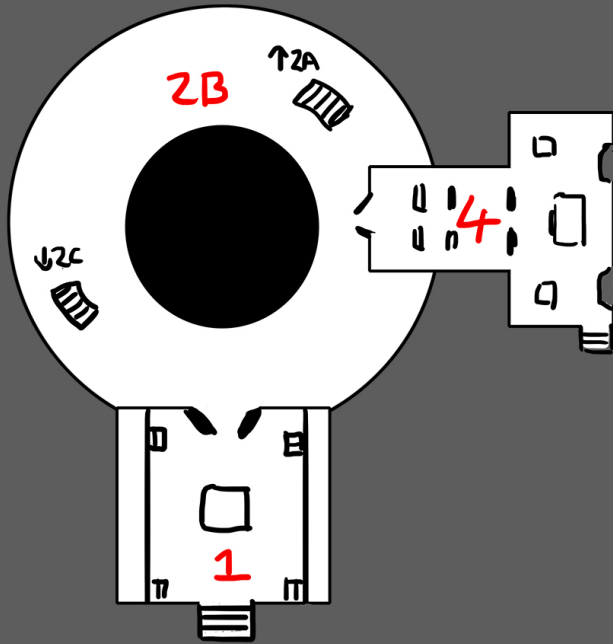
Trogg, Churner, she/her

Quell is a Churner, a traveling merchant who was in town for the night when the tower surfaced. She has a dark sense of humor and keeps her true intentions hidden.

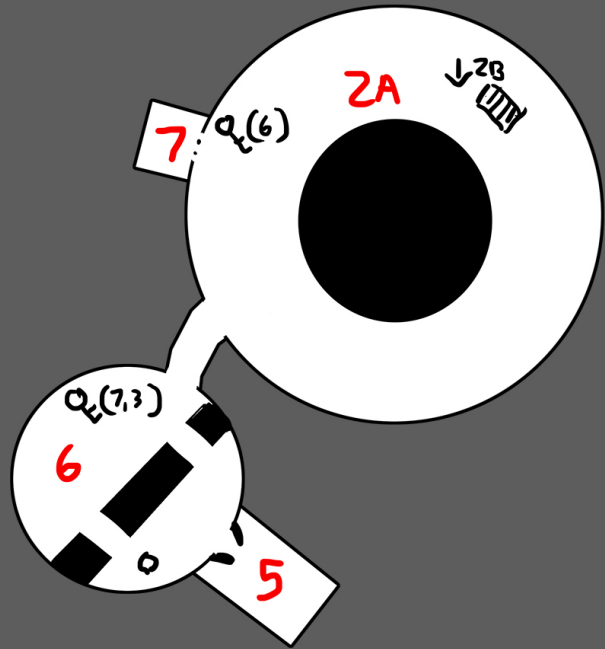
Hook: Quell knows towers like this can have powerful arkenrelics hidden deep inside, and paid Yu's sons to go scout it out, not expecting them to actually enter the tower. She felt so terrible about what happened that she pulled some strings and hired a mercenary band, Carel's Brigadiers, to go get the kid out. The band is still at the tower and hasn't returned. She's genuine in her remorse, but secretly has also promised the band she'll fence any relics they find as payment. She's not planning on actually selling the relics, but intends to split town as soon as she gets her hands on anything. She might get the characters to go fix her problem for her, promising payment.

DEEPTOWER

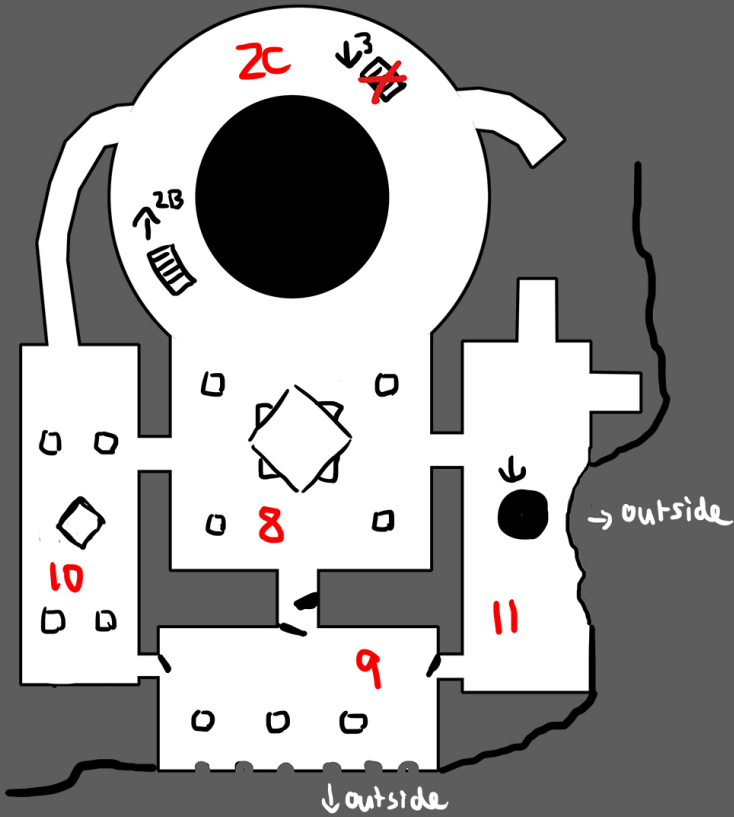
LEVEL 1



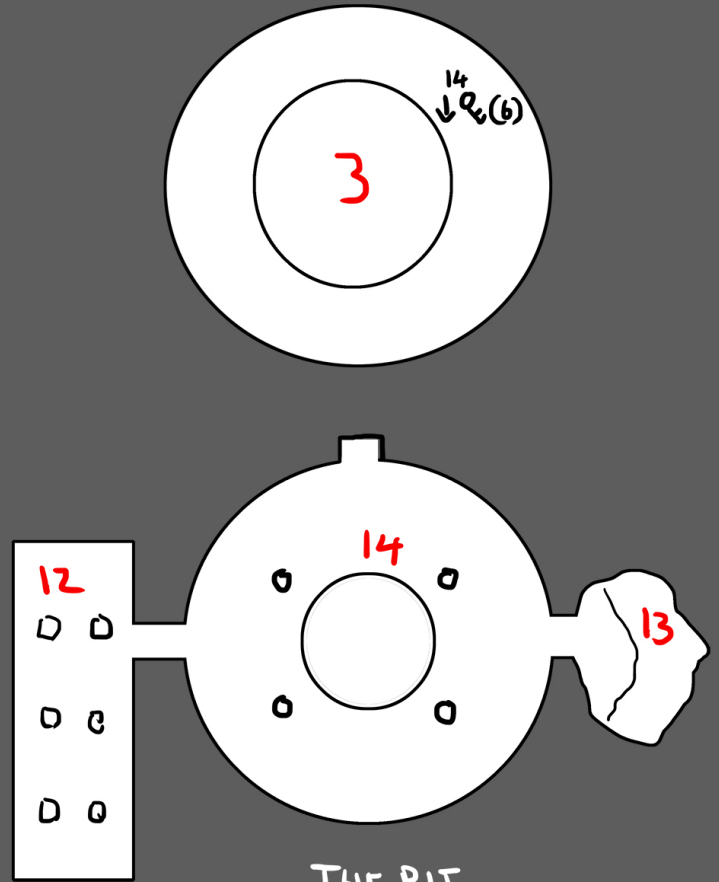
LEVEL 2



SUBLEVEL 1



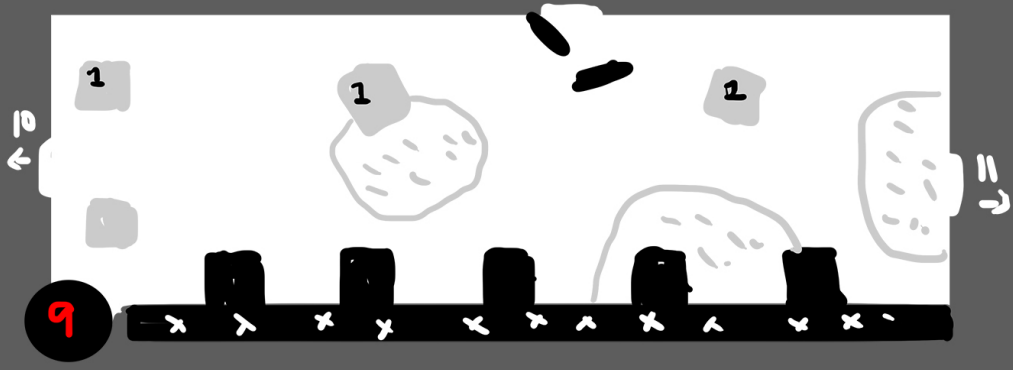
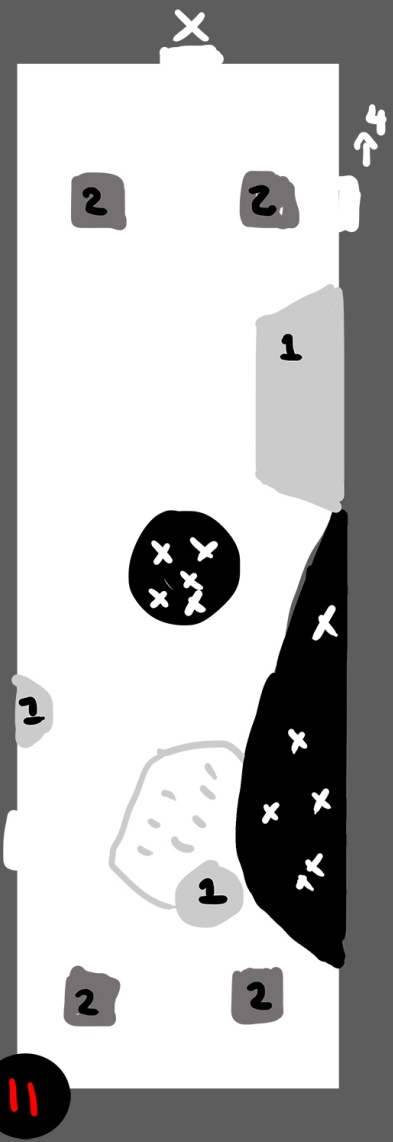
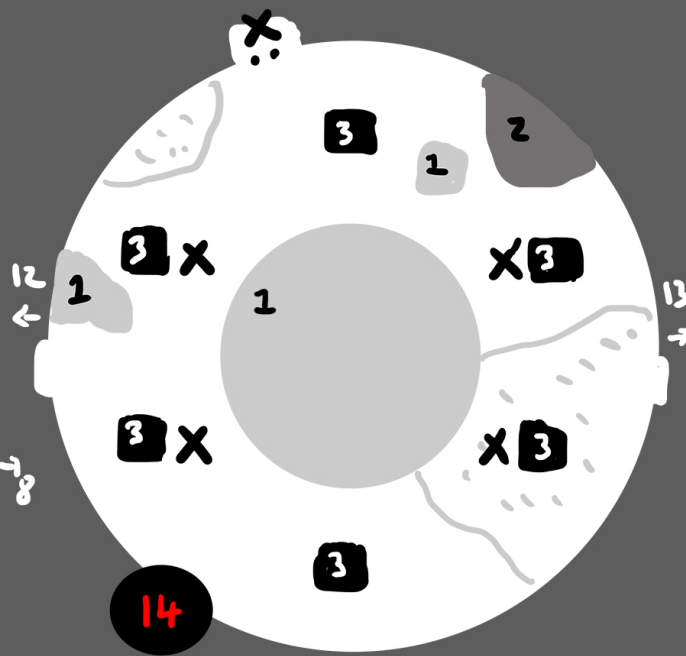
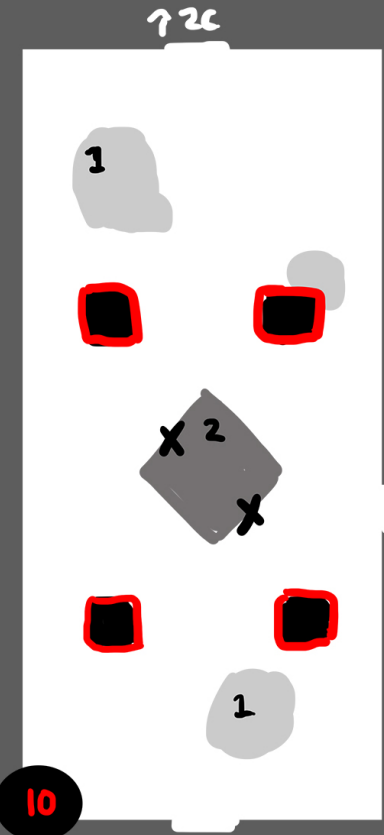
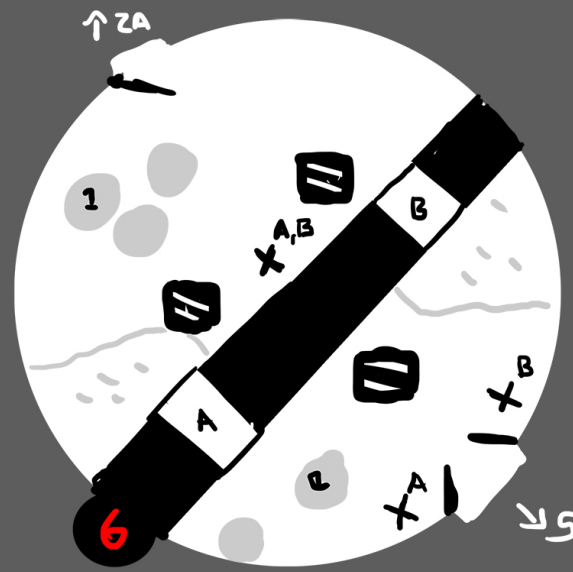
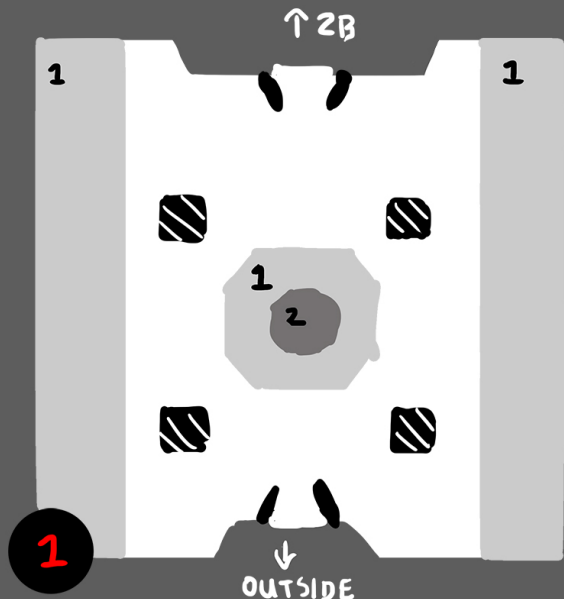
SUBLEVEL 2



COMBAT

KEY

- 1 2 3 Destructible
- TERRAIN (HEIGHT) IMPASSABLE
- N DIFFICULT
- X INTERACT
- X
X
X EDGE/FALL



THE TOWER

Setting out for the tower is not a particularly hard journey, though a lot of it is uphill. The tower, when it comes into view, juts out of the mountainside like a broken fang, the top split off, leaving part of it open to the air. The earth around its base is torn up and characters who linger in the area will occasionally feel minor seismic tremors in the earth.

There are several areas that characters could enter the tower (if you want to check for this information, you could have a character make a fortune roll to gather information). The first and most obvious route is through area 1 at the gate. The second is an open gallery on the second story, area 5, that looks like it would take some climbing to get to. Cado can tell the players that he entered this way with his brother. The third, and least obvious (requiring some looking to notice) is a windowed part of the tower jutting down the cliff face (area 9) that characters could climb through, a difficult and more dangerous proposition, and the open part of the wall around from there, area 11, which takes some further climbing.

1. THE GATE

COMBAT ENCOUNTER: GATEKEEPERS

The main tower gate is open but not undefended. Relict stand undying watch over it, their empty shells eerily still until the presence of life causes them to hiss and spark into motion.

For every two players, add one of either:

Wight Soldier
Wight Impaler

Then fill the remaining with the following enemies depending on your players and preferences:

Fused Brute
Wight Summoner
Wraith Illwright
Wraith Skulk



A good mix of Heavies with ranged attackers will make a more satisfying fight. The summoners and illwrights, if included, stay back.

At the start of the fight, the main gate starts to close. Characters can prevent this for a round if more player characters than hostile characters stand in the objective zone at the center of the map. If the gate closes for three rounds, it remains so permanently (for the meantime) and characters will have to find another way around.

2B. THE GALLERY, MAIN LEVEL

This room is overgrown with dark, leafy greenery already and lit faintly from above during the day with thin shafts of sunlight. A dark pit in the center of the room is a shaft that descends all the way to the pit entrance (area 3). There are stairs that lead up to level 2A and down to 2C.

The door to area 4 is jammed closed but could be opened with one or two actions from the players. It makes a lot of noise and could alert Carel and his men in area 7 on failure.

4. THE KNIGHT

A crumpled figure in ancient arkentech armor has collapsed on an altar at the end of the room here, lit by a sunbeam. Adjacent to the altar is a stair leading down. Rows of stone pews mark the way there.

A dark miasma has seeped from the knight's helmet, a curling black mist that seeps across the floor and sinks low across the stone, which looks corroded.

It's a 6 or 8 segment clock to try and move across this room safely and deal with the knight somehow without touching the life-leeching miasma, which can inflict harsh strain on the players. Removing the helm will cause the body within and the armor to collapse into dust.

Rewards

The helm is a dangerous arkenrelic worth 2 dust if players take it out. It can be investigated with an action or two from the players to learn that the helm is broken. It can be fixed as a minor ambition during an interlude to gain the following:

Helm of Mist

Arkenrelic

Effect: Activate this arkenrelic to start a combat with Stealth

Uses: 2

Recharge (Dust): 2

The stairs lead down to area **11: THE WELL**

2A: THE GALLERY, UPSTAIRS

The top of this room is open to the sky and elements. Greenery has poured in over the edges over the last few days. There's a narrow corridor going to area 6. This room has a couple of grates with bars in them, behind which is darkness. Investigation of the spaces shows that they were empty but once may have served as cells. One of them has someone inside (7).

5. OLD GATEHOUSE

A second gatehouse juts out of the building here. It's a little climb up. Climbing without alerting the Relict in area 1 or Carel in area 6 is probably a 6 segment clock that could end in a fight or a confrontation. Cado is happy to point the characters here.

The gatehouse door is ajar and voices can be heard from behind it. Crumbled pillars have almost sealed it off, but there's enough space to squeeze through.

6. CAREL'S BRIGADE

The mercenary scavenger Carel and his men are here, camped out across the bridge.

Carel

Thrynn Guilder, he/him

Well dressed, callous, calculating

- Carel is willing to talk and negotiate with the players, especially if Quell sent them.
- Carel knows that Gwyn is somewhere down in the lowest level - he can hear the boy calling out for help sometimes.
- Carel knows there's a patrol of Imperials from the city Encross that landed by airship about a day away and have entered the lower levels somewhere. He's deciding whether it's worth risking his men's lives to tussle with the imperials. If characters can deal with the imperials, he'll let them use the key he has to get into the pit.
- Carel is planning to double cross Quell and Yu and try to ransom Gwyn back to the town. He might let this slip accidentally, or if the players press him.
- Carel has the key to the door to the Pit, rather conspicuously around his neck. He also has a key to the cell in area 7 where Marat is being kept.
- Carel and his men have already clearly looted the top levels of the ruins

If negotiations go poorly, he's not beyond attempting to rob them blind (of any dust they're carrying), knock them out, and kick them out of the tower. If Carel's band is defeated, he'll surrender and leave the tower if asked.

If characters use the key to get into the pit, Carel and his men will attempt to ambush the characters on the way out. They will demand any treasure the players found as a finders fee, fighting the players if they refuse. Canny characters can also get away before they're cut off.

ENCOUNTER: CAREL'S BRIGADIERS

Carel is an elite and takes up 2 points:

Shank Rogue

The rest can be filled from the following, at 1 pt each:

Ruffian Arbalest

Looter Sledge

Shank Assassin

Ruffian Incanter

If fought in area 6, the levers on the map can be pulled with the interact action (1 action) to raise or lower the bridges on the map.

7. MARAT, THE TRADER

Inside this cell is a Xixo Leggio trader (upbeat, talkative, they/them), named Marat. They don't seem particularly concerned about being locked in a cell, telling characters they can get out any time. In fact, Carel locked Marat in here after catching them in the ruin just yesterday.

Marat has some extra elixirs, will trade them for 1 dust (1 dust, or 1 dust worth of goods for 1 elixir), and will loudly try and get characters to buy, possibly alerting Carel in room 6. They will also constantly hint to the characters about Carel and his band in room 6 and ask if they come across a key to return and let them out (it's no trouble, really).

2C: SUBLEVEL 1

This level is dark, with little light penetrating it. Sprawled across the landing here are desiccated, skeletal remains. The stair down is blocked by debris and climbing safely to area 3 will require some action by the players.

The hall to the east (that would go to area 11) is blocked by debris that could be cleared by a superpowered action. The hall to the west is open, but the heavy stomping of armored feet can be heard down it.

8: THE COURTYARD

In the center of this courtyard is a huge statue of imperious looking Arkenlords, decayed over time. Braziers set into of the stone in this room glow with artificial green fire.

At the pinnacle of one of the arkenlord's staffs is a massive looking ruby, which nobody seems to have noticed it. Grabbing it, it can be sold later for **2 dust**. On investigation, the hollow eyes of the statues are trapped and will shoot beams of lightning at characters that venture close. It's easy enough to skirt around the edge of the room to avoid the traps. Climbing up the statue without falling, making a ton of noise, or activating a trap in the room is fairly risky, and requires a clock.

One of the lords very obviously held a key in her hands, but that key is missing (Carel in room 6 has it).

The entrance to room 9 is barricaded and will take muscle to get through unless the barricades are removed from the other side. Characters attempting to get through the barricades might alert the imperial patrol in room 9.

9. THE FIFTH ENCROSS LEGION

A patrol from the Fifth Encross Legion has set up here after landing their airship a day or so away and marching in on foot. Encross is a large city-state with a cruel patrician and ambitions to become a nation-state. Fortunately, it is rather far away, and this is only a scout patrol.

The gallery is open to the air at points. Characters can climb in down the cliff face and through the window, but it might be a tough endeavor (probably a 4 or 6 clock at least). Complications, other than falling or slipping, could involve alerting the imperials.

The imperials arrived a day ago, trying to make it down to the bottom chamber in order to retrieve the artifact they suspect is there. They have no idea about Cado and Gwyn, though they are aware of Carel and his men. They lost a soldier to the armor demon exploring area 10, and after checking out area 11 have determined there may be a way down to the lower level through the well there.

The commanding officer of the patrol is Hela Valstrakker.

Hela

Beastfolk (garou), Guilder/Imperial, she/her
Ambitious, patriotic, confident, disdainful.

Hela wears a suit of arkentech power armor which gives her a bulky frame and an oversized sense of confidence.

Hela's orders are to secure the tower and retrieve the artifact from its lower levels at all costs. She's willing to talk to the players, but may try and get them to stand down or surrender first, attacking if they refuse. If she defeats the players, she'll capture and interrogate them, but probably let them go. If defeated, she'll try and retreat with her

men to the airship and return to Encross if allowed. Here's what she knows:

- She's frustrated and upset after losing a man in her initial forays, and after discovering Carel's band, the group is deciding whether they need to mount an assault on the mercenaries or not.
- The well in room 11 probably leads to a way down but is blocked by some sort of monster. If characters can deal with it, she'll deal favorably with them and send some men to accompany them.
- Area 10 has a dangerous monster in it, some sort of demon, but it seemed to also house a relict node, which could contain dust.
- Demons means this tower might disgorge more parts of itself, and ultimately a blight, if not quieted.
- If told about Gwyn, her posture towards the characters will soften, and she'll promise to help the players out if they help her, and they let her get out with the relic.
- If they promise to deal with Carel and bring back his key, Hela will scoff but gladly accept.

ENCOUNTER: ENCROSS PATROL

Hela has the following profile:

Officer Knuckle

Fill out the rest of the encounter with the following options, costing 1 point each:

4x Auxiliaries
Legionnaire Soldier
Legionnaire Siegewright
Artillerist Commander
Imperial Spy Shortbow

The pools of oil (difficult terrain) on the map can be ignited by damaging them with any magic attack (attacks auto hit) or attack that inflicts burning. They become difficult and dangerous terrain.

Alliance: If they promise to help clear out the courtyard for the Imperials or fight Carel for his key and are successful, Hela will accompany the characters in their fight with the Nocturnal.

11. THE WELL

This room is lit by bright sunlight coming in through the cracked wall during the day. Characters can climb here from outside, or climb up to the entrance from here, but it's a long and difficult climb.

There's muffled, deep snoring coming from the enormous well, which is coated in a thin layer of slime and has an absolutely otherworldly stench coming from it. Characters that get close without waking it up can see that the well is clogged by a Halitoad. It's possible for creative players to find other ways past the toad (luring it away from the well, setting a distraction, etc) but failure means it will immediately wake up and attack them.

COMBAT ENCOUNTER: WELL BEAST

The creature in the Well is a Halitoad, a huge beast monster. Its noise attracts other monsters to the fight from the outside.

Halitoad Brute

Fill out the rest with any combination of the following, but save 1 point.

Ironfeather Shortbow
Howler Impaler
Gulper Siegewright

After two rounds, a Stalker beast enters the fight.

Stalker Berserker

Clearing the toad from the well reveals a set of stairs going down.

10. BATTLE CHAMBER

The sounds of heavy footfalls echo through this room, which is filled with the crumpled skeletal remains of warriors, and the broken armors of Relict.

The center of the room has a sunken Sarcophagus-like structure, the relict node. A statue atop this node once held a huge gleaming mace, almost as big as a man, but it has been torn

off by the demon in this room. The node is damaged.

A massive armor figure treads the room in a circle. Occasionally, a relict will flicker to life only to get swatted aside and disperse. The figure is an Armor Demon, which has been trapped here in a nonstop battle for centuries.

The demon will immediately attack upon noticing the characters. Without its attention, the node roars to life and summons Relict.

COMBAT ENCOUNTER: DREAD KNIGHT

Armor Demon **Archon**

Also joining the fight are Natals, which the armor demon can consume to heal itself.

3x NATALS

Along with the demon are Relict, which can be chosen from the following:

Wraith **Illwright**
Ghoul **Skulk**
Ghoul **Berserker**

At the start of round 2, summon two more relict.

The Relict are not allies of the armor demon, nor is it allies of them. They will generally attack whatever is closest.

The four pillars in the room can clearly be attacked and destroyed (10 hp each). If 2 or more pillars are destroyed, or at the start of round 3, the whole room collapses into the second combat map, room 12, which is adjacent to the Pit room. All characters without dodge take light damage as an effect and are dazed (save ends).

Rewards:

The relict node in the room is damaged and can (unusually) be disabled. It's fairly difficult, but the aetheric network in the area can be shut down, disabling the Relict at the gate (area 1) and also in the room. Characters that discover this can spend an entire turn during combat to accomplish this effect.

The node has a chamber full of **2 dust**, which can be retrieved after combat, or with an interact action in combat.

The armor demon's mace can be taken as Arkentech. It can barely be swung by a normal person, requiring magical infusion to supernaturally lighten it.

Dread Mace

Arkentech

Uses: 1

Recharge: 3

Gain new ability:

Obliterate

Superheavy melee attack

Attack: On hit, deal heavy damage and target must physical save or become stunned. Miss: Light damage. Critical Hit: Critical damage and character must physical save or become stunned.

3. GREAT SEAL

The very bottom of the tower is sealed by a circular door. Inspection shows it has been inscribed with arkenrunes of sealing. The door is sealed with an extremely powerful mechanism. A long clock or a superpowered action could serve to get it open, or the key from Carel in area 6 could be used to open it right away. Opening it reveals a yawning void, with a narrow staircase descending downwards against the wall. It's a long fall.

12. COLLAPSED ROOM

This room's exits and entrances are all blocked by rubble, except the exit to room 14. Normally characters won't enter this room unless Room 10 collapses into it. If they enter this room, Room 10 hasn't collapsed, and the archon is still alive, with some light they can see its heavy footfalls shake dust from the ceiling. If the room above has collapsed, characters can climb up out of it again with only a little effort.

13. BOTTOM OF THE WELL

The staircase that leads down here from the well breaks off about 15 feet from the floor, requiring characters to take some action to get down safely.

The room is pitch black without light. The well is dry, having drained during the tower's ascent from the deeps, but there's still a thin film of water and clinging on the floor here.

A shoe, belonging to Gwyn, is stuck in the mud, close to the entrance to area 14. If characters make enough noise here, Gwyn will call out for help with a hoarse voice from the adjacent area.

14. THE PIT

This is the lowest chamber in the tower, a circular chamber with recesses in the walls inset with iron bars, like prison cells. It stinks of stale air and rotting meat.

In one of these cells is Gwyn, the adoptive son of the Elder, and Cado's adoptive brother.

Gwyn

Beastfolk (Lopen), Yeokin, he/him

Gwyn is a very tired, hungry, and frightened teenager, only a little older than Cado. He's been trapped down here for days by the Nocturnal after fleeing from monsters. He managed to squeeze through the bars in one of the cells, which seem to be anathema to the demon, and has only been drinking what little rainwater has seeped down here. He hasn't seen the sun in days.

In the center of the chamber is a plinth with a blood red stone inlaid into it, and a set of pitons, that used to pin a pair of iron shackles to the plinth. The pitons have been torn free in the tower's ascent. The shackles are around the wrists of a colossal, batlike demon that will unfurl itself from the shadows and attack the players at a point of its choosing after they enter the room, or if they notice it, starting a combat encounter. Sneaking in and out without alerting the demon is possible but probably requires superpowered effort, or a difficult clock (10 or 12 segments).

COMBAT ENCOUNTER: THE WRETCH

Gwyn, with some convincing can be freed from his cage with the Interact action in combat. He is too weak to walk. Treat him like an intangible ally that can be picked up with Interact. While carrying Gwyn, characters cannot dash, run, or attack.

This room is the former prison of **The Wretch**, a Nocturnal demon, a powerful **monstrosity**, which will allow characters to enter the room before attacking if it notices them.

THE WRETCH

Demon Nocturnal

Also joining the fight are Natsals, which the nocturnal can consume to heal itself.

5x NATALS

On the map there are four braziers. A brazier can be lit with an action, or stifled with an action by a Natal or the Nocturnal. Torches emit a blast 1 area around their own spaces. They count as friendly summons for the Nocturnal's clinging mists ability, and the Nocturnal is vulnerable (ongoing) in their light.

Characters can flee from the fight, taking Gwyn with them, if it's going poorly. The Nocturnal is repulsed by even a thin sliver of sunlight coming down either the well (in area 13) or the stair out of the pit or way out of the collapsed room (area 3 and 12) and will not follow the characters out of its chamber.

Rewards:

In the area, set into the central plinth that was trapping the natal, there is a precious **Elixir Stone**, a powerful relic and **camp fixture**. Characters that can make it out with the stone get the fixture for free at the start of the next interlude, or can sell it for 4 (total) dust.

CAMPING AT THE TOWER

Characters will have the opportunity to camp once, which only takes an hour or two. Leaving the tower and camping safely outside is always possible. If characters are on good or neutral terms with Carel or the Encross Imperials, or have gotten them out of the way, they can safely camp on their levels. Camping on the lowest level is impossible.

LEAVING THE TOWER

Characters that get out safely (or flee) will find the following, depending on the situation:

- If Carel and his band haven't been defeated, and the imperials are still active, they'll give up and split town, taking their loot with them
- If Carel is still around but the imperials are not a factor, he'll let characters leave with Gwyn, but demand they cut him and his brigade in on the valuables, including the elixir stone. He can be convinced otherwise with a lot of effort (or healthy intimidation), otherwise he will attack.
- If Hela and the Imperials are around and on good terms with the players, and Carel has left, she'll let them go with their valuables and Gwyn, but demand the Elixir stone before they leave, or she'll order her soldiers to take it by force. She can be convinced otherwise, but it's difficult.
- Neither Carel nor Hela will kill player characters if they can help it. If players are defeated, they'll be dumped somewhere outside the tower, with Gwyn. Carel will rob them and split town, Hela will take the stone, leave them with 2 dust, and leave.

AFTERMATH

Returning Gwyn to the town will make his foster father extremely happy, and Quell very relieved. Characters can collect payment (6 xp and 3 dust per player). Quell will pay characters an extra 1 dust per player if they know the true story to keep quiet. If players try to indict Quell and offer convincing evidence, Yu will kick her out of town after some deliberation, banning her for a year. Quell won't be that upset about it.

Marat safely escapes from the tower, regardless of if characters free them or not.

HOOKS

The game can safely go into an interlude (probably in town) at this point. If you want to use this as a jumping off point for another expedition, here's some hooks you can use:

- Carel's mercenaries have purportedly set up shop robbing passerby at the Ox Bridge, and they've joined forces with another, much nastier band of scavengers, the Skull Kickers. Elder Yu calls a town council to convene.
- Hela reports back to Encross, who reaches out to your band with a proposal: there's been a

blight near the border, and crossings aren't safe. If you can deal with it, the patrician will pay you personally.

- The second part of the tower surfaces nearby.
- Marat finds your band and has a proposal: bring them back to their Leggio family, a few days from here. There's a big problem though - Marat has a *terrible* price on their head.