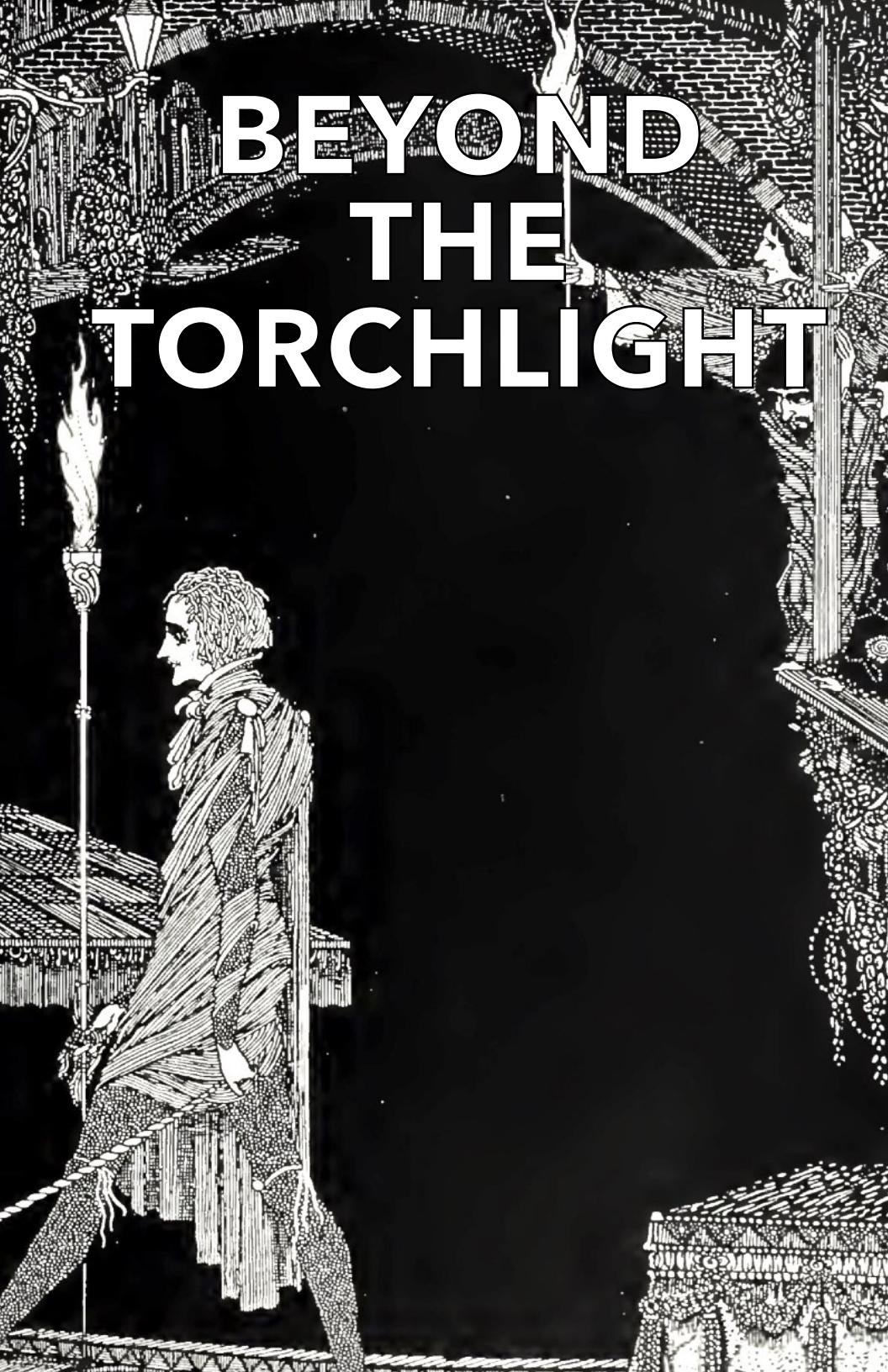


# BEYOND THE TORCHLIGHT



# **BEYOND THE TORCHLIGHT**

**M.A. SUPERT**

Saturday, January 10, 2026

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V1.0 Playtest*

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*I fear in our age of enlightenment we have lost sight of the things that dwell  
in the dark.*

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# CHAPTER 1

## PRINCIPLES & CONCEPTS



*Beyond the Torchlight* is a West Marches style adventure game where players reside in a town at the edge of the known world. Characters must venture out into the wilderness to find valuable treasure or other resources. Those resources can be used for personal use, to grow an influence or business, to improve the town, or to be sent back to the civilized world to attract finished goods/services.

### WHAT IS A WEST MARCHES CAMPAIGN?

A *West Marches* campaign is a term popularized and originally developed by Ben Robbins. It was developed as a method to accommodate the unpredictable availability of his players and his own difficulties with designing adventures.

There is no overarching story or plot and games can be run and played by multiple game masters and players in any combination. Adventures consist of sorties out from the safety of the town into the wilderness and can occur with any combination of players or if needed in parallel with other groups. Information and resources about the world are gathered and brought back to the town and shared with the

entire community. The further you adventure from the town, the greater the risk of the unknown, but the greater the reward.

## THE WORLD OF BEYOND THE TORCHLIGHT

The world of *Beyond the Torchlight* is a wild and dangerous place set in the throws of age coming to an end. Centuries of decline, decay, and defeat have rendered it empty. Old growth forests, ancient mountains, and vast plains and rivers mark the land, but nowhere are signs of new growth. The land stands depopulated, wild and cold, waiting for something. Waiting for the rejuvenation of a future spring.

The glory of the races and empires of old have come and gone, leaving their remnants scattered across the world as a lost memory.

Encroaching upon this world is the realm of magic, known as the *Wynwild*. The *Wynwild* brings forth mysteries and strange creatures as it merges into ours.

While exploring the wilderness players will come across ancient artifacts of great power that they cannot understand. These artifacts can be of great value or great power and often come with a great risk. The deeper you venture into the wilderness, the more you might find.

# GAMEPLAY CONCEPTS

## CLASSLESS

Beyond the Torchlight is a classless system. The equipment, tools, and items characters find while adventuring define their experience and abilities. It might be common for a character to change their equipment in town to suit the adventure they are about to embark on or for the player to select from multiple players to rotate through adventures.

## ANSWERS COME FROM INTERACTIONS AT THE TABLE

To do something, describe your character doing it; if you need to roll, the GM will let you know. Look to the environment and investigate the situation by asking the GM questions. You will need to describe to the GM what you want to do and you may have traits or abilities that can enhance or inhibit that action.

## YOUR CHARACTERS AREN'T HEROES

Your characters aren't heroes, they are adventurers setting out into the dangerous world to eke out a new life and find treasure. The challenges they encounter in the world will be the events that define their life and their story.

## COMBAT IS DANGEROUS

Don't expect encounters to be "balanced". Approach combat with as much trepidation and preparation you might in real life. Know when to run away and cut your losses.

## THE WORLD IS MAGICAL, YOU AREN'T

Your characters will not have magical abilities, but they will find magical artifacts and items along the way that they can use. Magic is dangerous and a relic of an unknown and dying world presents untold wonder and risk at the same time.

## DELIGHT IN THE GLORY AND LOSS

The world is a harsh mistress. Untold riches and wonders can be found out in the wilderness, but untold horrors and challenges also await. Be creative with the challenges set before you and revel in their success and eventual failure.

## FOREGROUND GROWTH

Characters do not grow based upon how many things they kill or how much loot they steal. They grow based upon the specific experiences they have while adventuring. Growth should always be tied to a specific experience a character has in the game.

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# CHAPTER 2

## TOWN CREATION



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- ❖ Roll a full 7-Dice Set. The dice locations are the location of houses in the town
- ❖ Roll of 6 or higher can assigned a *Profession*. Any dice lower than 6 are a “Laborer”

---

When setting off into the wilderness you will first need to set up a new town before you create your character. Each player at the table will contribute to the creation of a town by developing multiple characters/families. Players will then be able to use any character they have created for adventuring.

To create a set of characters roll a full set of seven standard TTRPG dice. All players at the table will roll their dice at the same time onto the table. Where the dice land will determine the shape of the town and the location of each character's home/business. Designate one player to translate the town layout to a piece of paper for future reference.

If a new player joins the game or has lost all their character's they may re-roll their dice again to create new characters, homes, and businesses. The homes of dead

characters can live on as abandoned, haunted, or occupied by the remaining family or purchased by a new character.

## ASSIGNING CHARACTERS

Starting with the highest d20 roll on the table, each player will assign a character or profession to each of their dice on the table. The player's main character will be assigned to the building in their dice roll with the highest score on the dice. This may or may not be their d20 dice.

For any dice that have rolled a six (6) or higher, the player may roll on the *Profession* table to assign a trade/profession.

Any dice with a six or lower is automatically labeled as a "Laborer". These characters can still be playable characters.

Players are encouraged to expand their selected *Profession* as they see fit. A Laborer can be anything from a factory worker, to an office worker, to a miner, depending upon your setting.

## PROFESSIONS

D12	Professions
1	Laborer
2	Farmer
3	Herder
4	Tradesman
5	Servant
6	Merchant
7	Trader
8	Military
9	Scholar
10	Scoundrel
11	Artisan
12	Spiritual Leader



# CHAPTER 3

## CHARACTER CREATION



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- ❖ Choose a name for your character
- ❖ Roll 1d6 for your *Breath*
- ❖ Roll 3d6 “Down the Line” for your *Characteristics*
- ❖ Roll 1d3 for each *Trait*

---

### HOW DOES HEALTH WORK?

Health in *Beyond the Torchlight* is comprised of both a character's *Breath* and their *Characteristics*. If the damage received equals any *Characteristic*, then a character is *Incapacitated*.

#### BREATH

Breath reflects your character's ability to withstand the rigors of combat or avoid damage.

- **Roll 1d6 to determine your character's starting Breath.**

Breath is not your character's health, but is their ability to act during intense situations such as combat, hazardous weather, or any other situation requiring extreme exertion.

Damage taken by the character is first applied to their *Breath* before it is subtracted from the appropriate *Characteristic*.

## CHARACTERISTICS AND TARGET NUMBERS

*Characteristics* represent a character's innate abilities, their physical capability, and mental acuteness. They comprise of one's *Strength*, *Agility*, *Fortitude* and *Cunning*.

- *Roll 3d6 to determine the value for each of your Characteristics.*
- The total on the dice represents the Difficulty Check (DC) for that Characteristic. The DC is the number other players must beat when they roll against you.
- Twenty (20) minus the DC is the Characters' Saving Throw (ST). Whenever when they attempt something risky of their own action. They must roll above their ST for a success.

Characters will always roll dice if they are the ones taking an action. They will either roll to beat another character's DC or roll to beat their own ST if there is a risk to themselves.

## EXAMPLE - DIFFICULTY CHECK

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*Player 1 rolls 3d6 for their character Elsa's Strength, Agility, Fortitude, and Cunning with the following results: 11, 13, 5 and 11.*

*A thief is trying to pickpocket Elsa, but Elsa is pretty dextrous meaning that she has a high chance of detecting the thief trying to pickpocket her. The thief will roll 1d20 and must beat Elsa's Agility DC of 13 in order to be successful. The thief rolls a 9 and is caught by Elsa. The thief turns and makes a run for it sprinting across a roof top and jumping to the next building.*

*Elsa pursues the thief and makes a jump across the gap between the buildings. This is a dangerous jump so Elsa will need to make a Saving Throw to see if she makes it. She needs to beat her Agility ST of 7 to successfully make the jump. She rolls an 11 and successfully jumps over the gap.*

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Characteristic	Difficulty Check	Saving Throw
Strength	11	9
Agility	13	7
Fortitude	5	15
Cunning	11	9

## TAKING DAMAGE

When characters take damage while adventuring, the damage will first be applied to their *Breath*, until it reaches zero and any additional damage will be applied to one of their *Characteristics*. See *Combat* for additional information

- At the conclusion of combat or a strenuous activity, characters may rest for ten (10) minutes in a safe location to "catch their breath" and restore their points.
- If the characters are carrying any *Fatigue*, they may only recover 1/2 their *Breath*, rounded down.

Characters will use their *Characteristics* to make checks or saves in situations that may have consequences.

Characteristic	Check or Save
<b>Strength</b>	Requiring physical power or strength
<b>Agility</b>	Requiring speed or reflexes
<b>Fortitude</b>	Requiring willpower, endurance, resilience, resistance or constitution.
<b>Cunning</b>	Requiring mental acuity, perceive one's surroundings, manipulate or deceive people

## TRAITS AND PROFESSIONS

In addition to their base *Characteristics*, players will have additional *Traits* that can modify their *Characteristics* in certain situations.

- A character's profession can also be used when appropriate to modify a *Characteristic*.
- *Traits* will generally allow a character to gain additional information during role-play or may provide an

*Enhancement* or *Impairment* when doing a task that requires a roll.

## TRAITS

*Characteristics* and *Traits* work together during gameplay to further allow players to define who their character is and how they may act during different situations. *Traits* may be used during *Difficulty Check*, *Saving Throws* or role-play to inform players how their character may act. *Traits* may also modify the dice roll in a positive or negative way.

An applicable trait to a situation may add and *Enhancement* or and *Impairment* to a *Difficulty Check* or *Saving Throw*. Traits can be both positive and negative to the outcome of a roll.

Players should select/roll one set of traits from each Characteristic group to apply to their character.

Roll (1d6)	Strength	Agility	Fortitude	Cunning
1-2	Dominant and Imposing	Nimble and Reactive	Resolute and Determined	Insightful and Wise
3-4	Unyielding and Resilient	Stealthy and Subtle	Tough and Hardy	Deceptive and Manipulative
5-6	Calculated and Precise	Delicate and Elegant	Adaptive and Malleable	Analytical and Strategic

## Strength

### Dominant and Imposing

Your character possesses an overwhelming physical presence, raw power, and an instinct to assert control. You attempt to physically intimidate, exert brute force in a direct confrontation, or establish immediate authority through sheer presence. You are: *Intimidating, Menacing, Controlling, Provocative*.

### Unyielding and Resilient

You excel at resisting those forces which try to move you, holding your ground, and shrugging off impacts. You are: *Determined, Stoic, Durable, Uncompromising, Hardy*.

### Calculated and Precise

Your character understands the mechanics of force, how to apply it efficiently, and use leverage to their advantage in physical tasks. You are: *Deliberate, Intentional, Detailed, Meticulous*.

## Agility

### Nimble and Reactive

our character is quick to react, possesses swift reflexes, and can reposition themselves with precision. You are fast, unpredictable and hard to catch. You Are: *Cautious, Reactive, Spry, Quick.*

### Stealthy and Subtle

You excel at moving unseen, unheard, and unnoticed, blending into the environment or making actions that are difficult to detect. You excel at performing actions that require misdirection or quiet execution. You are: *Elusive, Deceptive, Cautious, Sly.*

### Delicate and Elegant

Your character moves with natural grace and efficiency, executing complex and delicate tasks effortlessly. You can perform sequences of actions that flow seamlessly ranging from dancing, to acrobatics, to lock-picking. You are: *Agile, Graceful, Nimble, Sophisticated.*

## Fortitude

### Resolute and Determined

Your character possesses unwavering willpower, and the ability to maintain focus and resolve in the face of adversity. You have the ability to maintain concentration under physical duress and pain. You are: Determined, *Persevering, Stoic, Steadfast.*

### Tough and Hardy

You possess great endurance, and can withstand significant physical punishment or environmental hardships over extended periods. You can push through pain and fatigue when others cannot. You are: *Gritty, Robust, Durable, Resilient.*

### Adaptable and Versatile

Your character can rapidly adjust to new situations, fluidly shifting their state of mind or physical approach to overcome challenges. You Are: *Accommodating, Cooperative, Helpful, Impressionable.*

## Cunning Insightful and Wise

Your character possesses a keen intellect, sharp observation skills, and an ability to quickly grasp hidden truths, motivations, or patterns. You are: *Thoughtful, Judicious, Sensible, Prudent.*

## Deceptive and Manipulative

Your character excels at misdirection, charming others, lying, and influencing individuals or groups to their own ends. You Are: *Deceitful, Fraudulent, Scheming, Devious.*

## Analytical and Strategic

Your character possesses a methodical mind, capable of breaking down complex problems, planning ahead, and understanding logical systems. You are: *Logical, Inquiring, Calculating, Deliberate.*

## SPECIAL TRAITS, SKILLS, AND IMPRINTS

As characters progress in their adventures, they can gain up to two additional positive *Special Traits* or *Skills*. These enhance their proficiency in specific tasks.

- *Special Traits* or *Skills* can be acquired through narrative role-play led by the GM, or through training, education, or similar methods.
- Players may choose to "forget" a trait or skill if they exceed the two-trait limit.
- Traits and skills must be specific. A player can gain a *Skill* with a rapier, but not in "fighting" or "swords."
- *Special Traits* and *Skills* can also be improved or gained from feats achieved during gameplay. For example, if a character rolls a *Precision Strike* and kills a significant creature, they may gain knowledge on the weak point of that creature and all attacks on that creature moving forward may be *Enhanced*.

## IMPRINTS

Characters can also receive an *Imprint* as a result of an emotional or traumatic event. An *Imprint* is an event in a character's life that leaves an indelible impression upon them. *Imprints* can be positive or negative and can be the result of something like a near death experience or witnessing a wondrous event.

## Enhancements and Impairments

*Enhancements* are temporary benefits, while *Impairments* are temporary drawbacks, applied during gameplay.

- Enhancements add a +2 to a roll and Impairments add a -2 to a roll.
- Both are progressive and can stack.
- In role-play situations without dice rolls, the GM may provide or withhold information based on the relevant *Trait*. (See examples under Examples - Adventuring.)

## Training

Characters can improve their abilities through training or accomplishments achieved during their adventures.

*Special Traits* and *Skills* progress through three levels of proficiency:

Proficiency	Bonus	Time to Learn
Train	+2	1 Month
Expert	+4	1 Year
Master	+6	10 Years



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# CHAPTER 4

## EQUIPMENT



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- ❖ Roll 1d6 for Weapon Damage Type
- ❖ Roll 1d4 for Weapon Size
- ❖ Roll 1d4 for Armor Amount
- ❖ Roll 1d6 for Armor Resistance

---

All characters start with one weapon and possibly armor. Roll on the tables below to determine the damage type and size of your weapon, and if you have armor.

Weapons and armor are very expensive to make and maintain and have a cost to keep in a useable condition after each adventure.

- If you roll for a *Small* or *Medium* weapon you can choose either a melee or ranged weapon.
- Your weapon can be any type so long as it matches the damage type. A sword can be Small or Oversized. It is up to you.

# WEAPONS

## Weapon Damage Type

1d6	Damage
1-2	Bludgeoning
3-4	Piercing
5-6	Slashing

## Melee Weapons

1d4	Size	Damage	Attributes	Inventory Slots
1	Small	1d4	One-Hand, Hidden	1
2	Medium	1d6/1d8	One-Hand, Versatile	2
3	Large	1d10	Two-Hand	3
4	Oversized	1d12	Two-Hand, Reach	4

## Ranged Weapons

Size	Damage	Attributes	Inventory Slots
Small	1d4	One-Hand, Hidden	1
Medium	1d6	Two-Hand	2

## Attribute Descriptions

- **One-Hand:** Weapon must be wielded with one hand
- **Two-Hand:** Weapon must be wielded with two hands
- **Versatile:** Weapon can be wielded with one or two hands. Damage dice for single handed is 1d6 and for two handed is 1d8.
- **Hidden:** Weapon can be concealed on a person, as they are wearing at least basic clothing.
- **Reach:** Weapon has extended reach, player can attack into adjacent *Action Lane* a provided the environment will allow for the reach.
- **Reload:** Weapon takes one action to reload after firing.
- **Thrown:** Any weapon can be thrown, however unless it is explicitly a ranged weapon, the player must retrieve that weapon in order to regain its possession. Any thrown ranged weapon either returns to the player or the player carries multiples as necessary.

Players do not need to track ammunition for any standard weapons, however the GM may ask them to track ammunition for any special, magic, or improvised weapons or ammunition.

## ARMOR

Roll on the tables below to determine your starting armor and its primary resistance.

- Armor is an expendable resource that can be consumed when damage would be applied to one of your *Characteristics*.
- Players can choose to apply any amount of their available armor to damage received.
- When your total armor score reaches zero, your armor is broken and must be repaired.
- Different types of armor have resistances to types of damage. If an armor is resistant to a damage type, it does not decrease.

Roll a 1d4 for *Armor* amount and then a 1d6 to determine the type of damage resistance the *Armor* has.

1d4	Armor Amount
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	None

1d6	Resistance Type
1-2	Bludgeoning
3-4	Piercing
5-6	Slashing

## EXAMPLE

*Elsa has 3 Breath and is wearing Medium Armor, resulting in a total of 3 Armor. Her armor is resistant to Piercing damage. She is shot with a bow and arrow for a total of 5 damage. Her armor absorbs 3 of that damage and does not decrease, with the remaining 2 damage points going against her Breath, decreasing it down to 1.*

*On the next round she is hit with a war-hammer for Bludgeoning Damage for 4 damage. Her armor is not resistant to bludgeoning damage, so it absorbs 3 points, but is broken in the process, with the remaining 1 point of damage passed on to her Breath or her Fortitude Score.*

- Weapons take up an inventory slot equal to its amount either on the belt or in the Backpack.
- Armor must be stored in the Backpack and cannot be worn on the belt. Armor takes up inventory slots equal to its Armor Amount, but does not decrease when it takes damage.
- Characters may hold a torch with a shield hand, but cannot wield another weapon or wield a two handed weapon. Inventory slots must be available to stow a shield.
- Broken armor and shields can be discarded to free up inventory slots.

## REPAIRING WEAPONS AND ARMOR

- At the end of an adventure weapons and armor must be repaired.
- Magic weapons and armor do not need to be repaired, but may need time to “recharge” abilities or armor.

## SHIELDS

Shields allow a player to prevent a *Precision Strike* from rolling an additional damage dice against the player. *Shields* break when armor breaks. Shields are repaired when armor is repaired.

**Note:** *Because shields are tied to your available armor players will need to think about when to use their armor.*

Equipment Item	Coin
Animal Trap (2 Slots)	15
Backpack	2
Ball Bearings (Bag of 100)	10
Bedroom	1
Bell	1
Bellows	5
Blank Book (50 pages)	25
Caltrops (Bag of 10)	10
Candle Lantern	5
Candles (x5)	1
Chalk	1
Charcoal and incense (x3)	5
Chest with lock and key (3 Slots)	30
Clothes, common	2
Clothes, fine	15
Clothes, traveler	5
Common Tool (i.e. hammer)	5
Crowbar	2
Fishing Rod and Hooks	10
Grappling Hook	2
Grease	5

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Equipment Item	Coin
Herbalism Kit	5
Holy Symbol (of your choice)	5
Hunting Horn	10
Lock-picks (x3)	3
Makeup and Perfume Kit	25
Manacles	12
Map/Scroll Case	10
Mess Kit	2
Musical Instrument	10-30
Oil, flask	1
Paper (x5 sheets)	2
Pen and Ink (for 50 sheets)	10-30
Pencils x3, 50 sheets each)	2
Perfume (vial)	5
Pitons (x10)	5
Pouch	5
Prayer Book	25
Refuge	100
Refuge Material (each)	50
Rations (x3)	5
Rope (25 ft)	5

Equipment Item	Coin
Scholars Robes	10
Sealing Wax	1
Shovel	2
Signal Whistle	5
Soap	1
Stakes (x4)	5
Steel Mirror	15
Tarp	5
Telescope	45
Tinderbox	1
Torch	1
Waterskin	2

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# CHAPTER 5

## ADVENTURING



One of the most important things an adventuring party will do is to explore the wilderness around them, spending days or weeks outside the safety of their town.

### THE ADVENTURING DAY

The adventuring day is divided into four *Phases*.

- Morning
- Afternoon
- Evening
- Night

During each *Phase*, the party may take one of the actions listed below for the location they are currently in. At the start of each action, the GM or a member of the party shall make a dice roll to determine if an encounter occurs during that *Phase's* action.

## Available Actions

- Travel
- Explore
- Forage
- Make Camp
- Interact

### Travel

The party travels to an adjacent location to one they are on. Locations and features such as terrain, mountains, rivers, etc. are revealed on the adjacent location and may be revealed on further locations per the GM's discretion based upon sight or weather. For example the characters are likely to see a very high and well known mountain peak on an adjacent location if the weather is clear.

### Explore

The party explores the current location/hex revealing up to a total six (6) features such as ruins, towns, caves, hidden groves, etc per the GM's discretion. One feature may be revealed per attempt.

**Note:** *Locations do not necessarily contain six features and a search could turn up no additional features. The GM may decide whether to keep the amount of features per location hidden.*

## Forage

The party may choose to forage for plants, search for food or seek out fresh water if they are available on the current location. Items may not be available depending upon the terrain and the GM's discretion. The GM may also add *Enhancements* or *Impairments* to the search depending upon the terrain, weather conditions or the state of the party.

### Foraging for Plants

Foraging is searching for plants or herbs useful for the creation of potions, salves, or used in magic. Some plants are only available in certain climates or locations.

### Searching for Food

Party members are required to consume one (1) ration per day. A ration consists of one unit of food and one unit of water. The party may choose to spend one phase searching or hunting for food or searching and collecting water

Roll 1d6 to determine how much food or water the party is able to recover while searching. The party may choose to spend more than one *Phase* searching for food and water.

## TERRAIN MODIFIER

Terrain	Food	Water
Grassland	0	-1
Forest	2	1
Coastal (Fresh)	1	N/A
Coastal (Salt)	1	-1
Desert	-1	-2
Mountains	1	0

### Make Camp

The party sets up camp to prepare for and complete a rest. The party must rest for at least one *Phase* per day or they will gain one level of *Fatigue*.

If the party is undisturbed they are able to rest and party members lose all their *Fatigue* at the start of the next *Phase*.

If the party is disturbed during their rest with an encounter or with another disturbance such as severe weather, they may only detract 1d4 *Fatigue* to be distributed amongst the party. Fatigue may be recovered in any combination per the party members.

### Interact

The party may choose to interact with one feature that they have discovered inside their current location. This could be dungeon *delving*, approaching a town/village, lair exploration, a long NPC interaction, etc...

**Note:** When interacting with a feature such as a dungeon the time spent exploring the dungeon can usually take place during this same Phase unless your players explicitly state they will spend more than one Phase there.

## Getting Lost

If the party is traveling through the wilderness to a new location, they have a 1 in 6 chance of getting lost.

- After the GM describes the general information in the location, the party must roll a 1d6. On a roll of 1 the party arrives at the new location, but becomes lost.
- If the current location contains bad weather, or rough terrain add an additional point to the d6 roll. (e.g bad weather is a 2 in 6 chance, bad weather and bad terrain is a 3 in 6 chance.)

If the party is lost, they must spend an additional *Phase* trying to find their way, rolling a 1d6 with the appropriate modifiers for weather and terrain. Should the party fail their roll again, each character gains a level of *Fatigue*, and must attempt to find their way again at a future *Phase*.

**Note:** *The party does not need to attempt to find their way immediately after becoming lost. They may choose to setup camp or forage, but they may not leave their current location to explore, find new locations, or Features, until they find their way.*

## Weather Conditions

Weather can be determined for each adventuring day or *Phase* with a simple 2d6 roll. Good and bad weather exists on a simple -10 to +10 scale. At the start of the adventure when the party leaves the city the weather will start at zero (0), meaning the players have “fair” weather.

A designated player will roll 2d6 at the start of each adventuring day or per the request of the GM. One d6 will serve as a positive and one will serve as a negative to the weather. If the weather exceeds +/- 6 on the scale it will change to either exceptional or poor weather. The specific conditions will be narrated by the GM or players per the scene.

*Enhancements* and *Impairments* can be added to the roll as necessary based upon the GM's discretion.

## WEATHER EXAMPLE

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*Player 1 has been asked to roll for the weather conditions for the current day. The weather currently sits at -3, meaning that the weather is currently fair, but it looks like the winds may be changing.*

*Player 1 Rolls 2d6. Their red dice represents bad weather and her green dice represents good weather. She rolls a six (6) on her red dice and a two (2) on her green dice, brings her total to -4. This adding this to the existing -3 on the weather scale means that the weather not totals -7 meaning that the weather has not turned to bad weather.*

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*The GM narrates a rainstorm that rolls up over the mountain.*

---

### Fatigue

If characters are unable to sleep, are deprived of a critical resource, or challenged with an extreme condition such as weather, they will gain a level of *Fatigue*. When a character gains *Fatigue* it is added to one of their inventory slots. If they have no open slots available, they must drop a piece of equipment to free up an inventory slot.

## SETTING UP A REFUGE

A *Refuge* is a secure set of supplies that players may create and place in the wilderness that will allow them to complete a rest to recover their *Characteristics* in addition to *Breath*.

- A *Refuge* can be a cave, an old hunting cabin, a secure room, or any other location the players can secure. A *Refuge* may prove to be the difference between life and death when adventuring deep into the wilderness.
- Players will have to construct supplies from their town and bring them to the *Refuge*.
- A *Refuge* is an expendable resource and each time the players use it, they expend some of those resources.
- A *Refuge* requires 100 Coin to establish and 50 coin for each *Refuge Material* cache.
- A *Refuge* is 5 Inventory slots to transport and includes all basic necessities such as pots and pans, medical supplies, tools, bedding, etc.
- *Refuge Materials* are 2 inventory slots each and contain all of the basic materials for food, equipment repair, etc.

Players can spend one (1) *Refuge Material* per person per day to do the following:

- Rest and regain 4 points to all *Characteristics*.
- Repair weapons armor, or any non-magical adventuring equipment.
- Cure one persistent ailment such as poison, bleeding, etc.

## HEX-CRAWL PROCEDURES

The overland world outside the town is divided into a map covered with hex.

- Characters may travel through one hex during each *Phase* and at most four Hexes in a day.
- If characters do not rest at least once per day, or if they are out of water or food, they will gain *Fatigue* in one of their inventory slots.

Each hex consists of an area six (6) units across. This can be miles, kilometers or any other distance appropriate for the scale of your current play setting.

Terrain, weather or other environmental factors in a hex may hinder or inhibit characters' movement, induce *Fatigue*, or cause them to become *Lost*.

## POINT-CRAWL PROCEDURES

A *Point-crawl* can be used as a preference over a Hex-crawl system or when locations/destinations are known in the world or when players are interacting with features inside a hex.

Imagine a point crawl similar to a mind map, where important locations are identified as points or nodes. Those locations are connected with lines, that can range from roads, paths, overland travel, etc.

In general the adventuring rules apply similarly to a point crawl or a hex crawl.

- The GM may apply a *Phase* cost for travel on a route between points.

For example, traveling from a mountain fort to the town in the valley may cost 2 Phases.

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# CHAPTER 5

## DELVING



Delving is the process in which the characters leave the larger adventuring world and delve into a location such as a dungeon, mansion, or other specific location.

- Delving is divided into a series of turns. A turn represents either ten minutes of exploration time or the exploration of a single room or specific space.
- When not in combat the player can do one “active” task per ten minute room/scene. A player cannot for example be talking to someone, while actively searching for a hidden door.
- All players in the party should get an opportunity to participate in a scene if they choose and they may offer to help a companion in a task that is occurring.
- If a task requires a roll, each player helping will add an *Enhancement* bonus to the roll.
- Helping another player will typically count towards a character’s active task in a scene.

It should generally be assumed that players will be looking for traps and hazards while exploring, and they do not need to state that they are doing so, unless they are under stress or moving recklessly.

## DUNGEON TURNS

Dungeon exploration is a delicate balancing act of managing resources, and making strategic decisions. The more time spent searching, and lingering in dangerous locations means that there is a higher probably of an encounter. *Encounters* can involve running into monsters, but can also operate as timers where access or resource availability may change. The object of the party's hunt may no longer be in the room they expect it to be, if they take too long to get there.

### Dungeon Turn Movement

- Characters can move carefully about 200 ft. in a 10 minute turn.
- Characters moving carefully spot signs of all traps. Traps should be designed to be disarmed or subverted with ingenuity and creative thinking using common sense and inventory.
- Characters can quickly move 600 ft. in a 10-minute turn. Characters moving quickly may get a chance to roll a *Saving Throw* to notice a trap. Otherwise, they may trigger a trap if it is concealed.

## SEARCHING

- When characters enter a room the GM should describe the obvious information of the room, including any points of interest that players may wish to investigate further. A quick search covers roughly a 30x30' space, or one room.
- The players may spend 10 minutes (1 turn) to explore the room or location in detail.

### The Use of Skills and Characteristics

In most circumstances a roll to use a skill or characteristic shouldn't be requested from the GM to find or explore locations. Players should be explicit in what they would like to search for. The GM should provide enough information in a scene to encourage players to explore the scene.

*Skills* or *Characteristics* can and should still be used to judge how much additional information a GM may wish to provide from a character's efforts.

## SEARCHING EXAMPLE

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### **GM Describes the Room:**

*“Riddic, Elsa, Tahula, and Breyer enter a room. The room appears to be an old library that is in disrepair. Three of the walls are lined with bookshelves, many of which have fallen onto the floor and are damaged with age and rot. In the center of the room is a large oak table, lying upon the table is an open red leather bound book, which does not appear to show any signs of age or damage. On the far side of the room hangs a large faded tapestry covering the far wall.”*

*In this scene the items of interest for the party are clearly pointed out via the tapestry and the book lying on the table. The players are provided this information outright. The players may choose to explore the room in detail.*

*Riddic's background is a “Scholar”, so he states that he would like to investigate and find more out about the book on the table by reading it. The GM can then describe the contents of the book. Riddic's background as a Scholar provides an Enhancement which may provide additional information on the book or the writing without any additional roll required.*

*Breyer states that his background is an “Artisan” and he would like to investigate the tapestry on the far wall. He also has an Agility trait of “Delicate and Elegant” and states he is used to seeing artwork of this type. He gains two Enhancements which would provide him two additional pieces of information in the situation. As he approaches the tapestry he immediately realizes that the tapestry is trapped because the threading seems incorrect. As an Artisan he is able to interpret the scene in the tapestry as the solution to the trap and is able to pull the required threads on the tapestry to release the trap and have the tapestry roll up without any damage, revealing a hidden passage on the wall.*

---

## TRIGGERING ENCOUNTERS

A dungeon is alive and will have creatures actively moving around it. Loud actions, triggering traps, or taking damage will garner the attention of the denizens of a location.

The character who triggers the event should roll a *Saving Throw* of the GM's discretion to see if an *Encounter* occurs. If the character fails their roll an *Encounter* occurs.

### Wandering Monsters

Wandering Monsters occur based upon how dangerous the dungeon is and are checked on a per hour basis by rolling a 1d6. On a roll of a 1, a *Wandering Monster* encounter will occur.

### Other Encounters

Not all *Encounters* must result in combat. Some creatures may be willing to negotiate or make deals with the party. Other encounters could be environmental effects or other changes to the scene.

## TORCHES AND LIGHT

### Bright Light

- Characters can see any reasonable distance cast in bright light.
- Torches provide a 20' radius of bright light and candles will provide a 5' radius of bright light.
- Both provide no additional light or vision beyond that range.
- Lanterns will provide 40' of directional bright light 5' wide.
- Light sources last for one hour, unless stated otherwise.

### Dim Light

- Characters can see a maximum distance of 60' in dim light and can only see outlines of objects and creatures.
- Any attacks, magic, or skill rolls done in dim light are done so *Impaired*.
- If a torch or lantern is lit in *Dim Light*, any vision beyond the radius of the light source becomes *Darkness* and is no longer visible.

## Darkness

- Any area outside of a light source shall be considered in *Darkness*.
- It should be assumed that any dungeon or underground location will be in *Darkness* unless otherwise explicitly stated as being lit.
- Characters cannot see or attack any creature in *Darkness*.
- Non-human, non-playable creatures can see and attack in *Darkness*
- *Any Skill Check or Saving Throw attempted in Darkness* is done so *Impaired*. A *Skill Check* or *Saving Throw* that requires vision automatically fails and cannot be attempted.

## Light During Combat

- A torch can provide light for two adjacent combat lanes during combat, provided there are no obstructions. A candle can provide light for the nearest *Engaged* character in the *Combat Lane*.
- Most light sources can be placed on the ground during combat provided the ground is not wet, however some surfaces may catch fire.
- A lantern can provide light to one combat lane and can be directed with an *Action* to illuminate any *Combat Lane*

## RESTING

- Characters can spend one dungeon turn resting to recover their *Breath*.
- Characters can only rest in a safe location and must have *Bright Light* or *Dim Light* to complete a rest.

### Setting up a Refuge in a Dungeon

- Characters may create a *Refuge* in a dungeon provided the location can be secured from monsters, animals, or the elements.

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# CHAPTER 6

## COMBAT



Combat is expected to occur one to two times per play session, but should not be considered as a preferred outcome of most *Encounters*.

Combat is dangerous in a world where access to a place to rest and heal could be days away. The GM should attempt to telegraph an encounter and provide players an opportunity to negotiate, avoid, sabotage, or ambush their way through encounters. The enemy may be as smart as the players and may attempt to manipulate the situation or environment against the player characters.

# COMBAT GRID

Enemies				Players			
Rearguard Suppression	Defensive Protect	Steadied Rally	Aggressive Intimidation	Aggressive Intimidation	Steadied Rally	Defensive Protect	Rearguard Suppression
Bandit 3			Bandit 1		Tahula		
	Bandit 2						Breyer
		Bandit 4			Elsa		
Bandit 6			Bandit 5	Riddic			

Combat in *Beyond the Torchlight* is abstracted and scenarios can be played out either via “Theater of the Mind” or on a traditional tabletop grid.

The *Combat Grid* is used to represent character’s combat stances and the enemies that they may be engaged with.

## INITIATIVE

*Initiative* is determined for the first round of combat or for the round in which a player character joins combat. When combat begins players must make an *Agility Save* to determine if they act with *Initiative*. If a character fails, they do not act until the next round of combat.

Players may place their characters in the lane and position of their choice in order of their *Agility Save* from highest to lowest, provided an *Action Lane* isn't designated as a different location (i.e. a balcony, a cliff above, etc.)

If there is not enough room to place all characters in the preferred *Action Lane*, place any remaining characters in the next nearest *Action Lane* starting with the *Aggressive Stance* and moving backwards.

## ROUNDS

A round of combat consists of three turns. The player's turn, the GM's turn, and the environment's turn. After the *Agility Save* for the first round, all players will act simultaneously before the GM takes their turn in subsequent rounds.

On the player's turn, the PCs declare what they are doing before dice are rolled. Players can change the stance of their character, move, or complete an action. If a character attempts something risky (such as jumping from a second story window), the GM may call for a check/save.

Time during combat is abstracted and all characters involved in combat act and resolve their actions simultaneously. Damage is totaled and applied at the end of each *Round*. A character who is *Incapacitated* during combat goes down at the end of the *Round*.

**Note:** *If required for mechanical reasons a round of combat takes 10 seconds of time, but can be extracted to larger increments of time per the GM's discretion.*

## TURNS

Combat proceeds with three *Turns* in each *Round*. The players always act during the first turn followed by the GM and finally the environment.

Under certain combat situations, environmental or other actions may occur during the third *Turn* of combat. Lair actions, environmental effects, or other actions not tied to the players or the enemies will occur after the GM's turn and before the start of a new round.

At the end of a *Round* all characters will make any necessary *Saving Throws* from damage received. Those who fail will be *Incapacitated*.

## ACTIONS

Characters make one action and make one move while in combat in any order they choose.

Types of actions include but are not limited to:

- Stance Ability
- Attack
- Interact with the environment
- Use, administer, or give an item

Additional actions such as a Check/Save may occur depending upon the circumstances or the request of the GM.

All *Actions* must be declared before any *Attacks* are made. All *Attacks* against an NPC should be rolled at the same time and cannot be changed after they have been declared.

## ACTION LANES AND COMBAT STANCES

During combat characters will position themselves in rows, representing the *Action Lane* and in a column representing the *Combat Stance* in the *Combat Grid*.

### Action Lanes

A standard combat grid contains six rows or *Action Lanes*, which can accommodate a 20x20 to 60x60 unit room in most cases.

*Action Lanes* can be used to represent different locations if the combat scene requires it. If a fight occurs in a tavern with

a second floor balcony that is open to the main room, one or more *Action Lanes* can be designated to represent the elevated area and can designate if attacks are either *Enhanced* or *Impaired* between lanes.

## Movement

Characters can move to any *Combat Stance* or *Action Lane* that is on the same level as them. If an *Action Lane* is higher or lower in elevation, under dense cover or has any other feature that provides *Enhanced* or *Impaired* attacks, then the character can only move into that *Action Lane* from an adjacent lane.

## Combat Stances

Each column in the *Combat Grid* represents a *Combat Stance*. *Combat Stances* have an effect that always applies to the characters in that position and have an ability that characters may choose to use instead of taking an action.

### Aggressive Stance

- **Bonus:** Your attack rolls are *Enhanced*.
- **Detriment:** *Precision Strikes* against you are doubled
- **Ability:** Intimidation - Nearest engaged enemy's next attack is *Impaired*. Enemy may still move.

### Steadied

- **Bonus:** None.
- **Detriment:** None.
- **Ability:** Rally - All allies in adjacent squares may regain 1d4 *Breath*.

### On Guard

- **Bonus:** Attacks against are *Impaired*.
- **Detriment:** Cannot *Precision Strike*
- **Ability:** Protect Companion - May choose to defend an ally in one adjacent square, absorbing half (1/2) the damage dealt.

### Rearguard

- **Bonus:** If not *Engaged* character may retreat from battle.
- **Detriment:** Ranged only cannot attack. Cannot impart Engagement.
- **Ability:** Suppression - No damage dealt, but may prevent a character from moving lanes, going into/out of hiding, or *Retreating* from combat.

## ENGAGED CHARACTERS AND RETREAT

### Engaged

Any character that shares an Action Lane with at least one enemy is *Engaged*. If a character is *Engaged* they cannot *Retreat* from combat.

The nearest *Engaged* enemy is the enemy in the closest stance to the character and in the same *Action Lane*. A character can step in front of companion into a closer stance to pull engagement upon themselves and allow their companion to *Retreat*.

- Some weapons, magic items, or effects may affect only *Engaged* characters.
- Players in the *Rearguard* position with a ranged weapon can attack any position, but cannot impart engagement upon a character.

### Retreat

Characters may only *Retreat* from combat from the *Rearguard* stance and if they are no longer *Engaged* with an enemy. If a character retreats from combat they must wait at least one round after they have left before re-entering and must re-roll for *Initiative*.

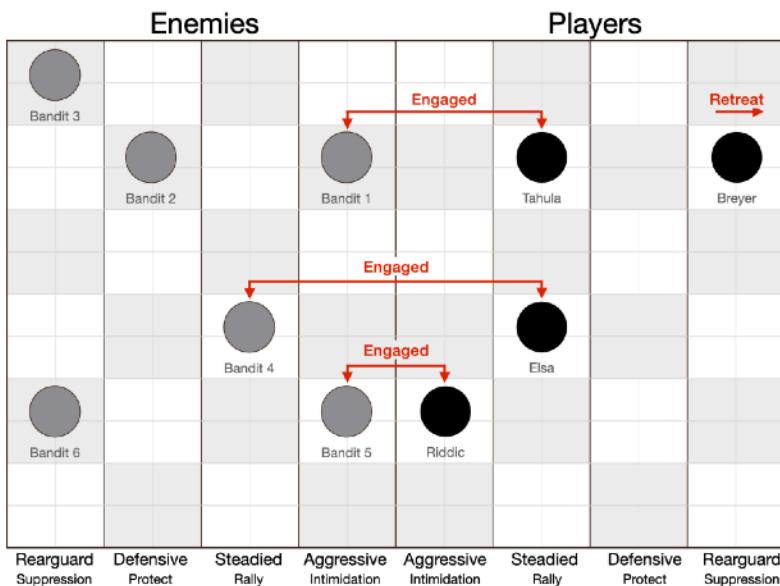
Characters who are not in combat may still be allowed to take turns for story or narrative purposes. Non-combat characters take their turn during the third turn in each round and may not directly influence combat or the environment where combat is taking place.

When entering combat after it has already begun, characters enter at the *Rearguard* unless directed otherwise by the GM.

## ENGAGEMENT EXAMPLE

The adventuring party is currently in combat with six bandits. Riddic is in an Aggressive Stance and engaged with Bandit 5. Elsa is in a Steadied Stance and engaged with Bandit 4, and Tahula is in a Steadied Stance and engaged with Bandit 1.

Breyer is in the same Action Lane as Tahula, but he is not engaged with any enemy. Breyer can Retreat and leave combat this round as their action..



## ATTACKING

Any characters in the same *Action Lane* may be attacked with a melee weapon.

- If a melee weapon has “reach” the character may attack the closest character in one adjacent lane.
- Ranged weapons may attack any character in any lane from any stance.
- A character making a ranged attack from any *Stance* cannot engage an enemy and therefore cannot prevent an enemy from retreating.
- Melee weapons can only attack from the *Rearguard* if the character is *Engaged*. Melee weapons cannot use the *Suppression* ability.

To attack the player rolls the damage dice for their weapon, adds any *Enhancements* or *Proficiencies* and the total is applied to the enemy combatant.

### Precision Strike (Critical Hit)

If a character rolls the highest number available on their damage die, they rolled a *Precision Strike*. The character may roll an additional damage die, adding any *Enhancements* or additional bonuses as necessary.

- If a player is *Impaired* they cannot achieve a *Precision Strike*

### Dual Wielding

Characters who obtain a second weapon may choose to dual wield by holding the second weapon in their off-hand. If a character is untrained in the off-hand weapon, then all attacks made by the player (with both hands) will be *Impaired*.

- Players may only target a single enemy when attacking.
- Shields do not impart the *Impaired* condition when being wielded in the off-hand.
- When a player becomes trained in at least one weapon they are wielding, their attacks are no longer *Impaired*.

## DAMAGE

When a character takes damage it is first applied to any *Breath* that they may have. Once a character's *Breath* has been exhausted any remaining damage is applied to the appropriate *Characteristic*.

- **Strength:** Bludgeoning, piercing, slashing or other physical damage
- **Agility:** Cold, lighting, radiant, thunder or other damage that impedes movement.
- **Willpower:** Fire, poison, force, acid, or any other damage that affects endurance, or resilience.
- **Cunning:** Psychic, necrotic, curses or any damage that affects mental acuity or the ability to perceive one's surroundings.

## Characteristic Score Loss and Save Score Increase

Whenever damage exceeds a player's *Breath* it is applied to the appropriate *Characteristic*. That damage will accumulate and will be subtracted to their *Difficulty Check* (DC) number and added to their *Saving Throw* (ST) number.

Each time the player takes damage to a *Characteristic* they must roll a 1d20 *Saving Throw*. If the character succeeds, they are still on their feet and ready to fight, albeit weaker from the damage. If they fail, they gain a wound based upon the damage they received this round.

Damage	Wound
1	Stunned or Knocked Down
2-5	Flesh Wound or Scar
6-7	Concussion, Severe Wound, Fractured Limb
8-9	Severed Limb, Major Bleeding
10	Lethal Injury

## DAMAGE EXAMPLE

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*Elsa has a Breath of three (3) and she has been hit with a great sword resulting in six (6) total damage.*

*Elsa: Breath 3*

Characteristic	DC Check	Damage	Saving Throw
<i>Strength</i>	11	<b>- 3 +</b>	9
<i>Agility</i>	13	<b>- 0 +</b>	7
<i>Fortitude</i>	5	<b>- 0 +</b>	15
<i>Cunning</i>	11	<b>- 0 +</b>	9

*She subtracts the first three points from her Breath, bringing her Breath down to zero (0). She then takes the remaining three (3) points of damage and applies it to her Strength Characteristic. She must now make a Saving Throw (ST) against her new number 9+3. She rolls a 1d20 and rolls a nine (9) resulting in a failure. She took 3 damage to her Str she she receives a flesh wound that will result in a scar.*

---

## Dying, Stabilization, and Recovery

### Incapacitated

When damage equals a *Difficulty Check* (DC) number a character is *Incapacitated*. They fall prone to the ground and cannot take any actions. During their turn they may drag themselves one unit of measure (i.e. 5 feet, 1 meter, one combat square, etc.) in any direction.

Any additional attacks made against the character are *Enhanced* and any additional damage continues to be recorded.

- The character cannot make any *Saving Throws*.
- Wounds will still apply based upon the damage received.

### Dying

If a character is *Incapacitated*, but survives an encounter they fall unconscious and are *Dying*. While a character is dying they must apply 1d4 damage to call *Characteristics* that received damage.

- Characters must roll for damage even if the party *Makes Camp*.
- **If the damage for any *Characteristic* equals the value of the *Difficulty Check*, the character is dead.**

### Stabilization

A character may only become *Stabilized* through potions, magic, a *Refuge*, or by visiting someone who can perform medical procedures. When *Stabilized* a character remains unconscious until the end of the next *Phase*.

### Recovery

At the completion of the next *Phase* a character *Recovers* and is no longer *Dying*. They regain their *Breath* but do not gain back any *Characteristic* scores unless they are able to rest in a *Refuge* or in a bed.

When a character is able to rest, they regain 1d4 points to all *Characteristics* below their max value per day of rest.

Saturday, January 10, 2026



# *CHAPTER 7*

## RUNNING THE GAME



Coming Soon

Saturday, January 10, 2026



# CHAPTER 8

## EXAMPLES AND COMMON QUESTIONS



### COMBAT EXAMPLE

#### Round 1: Initiative

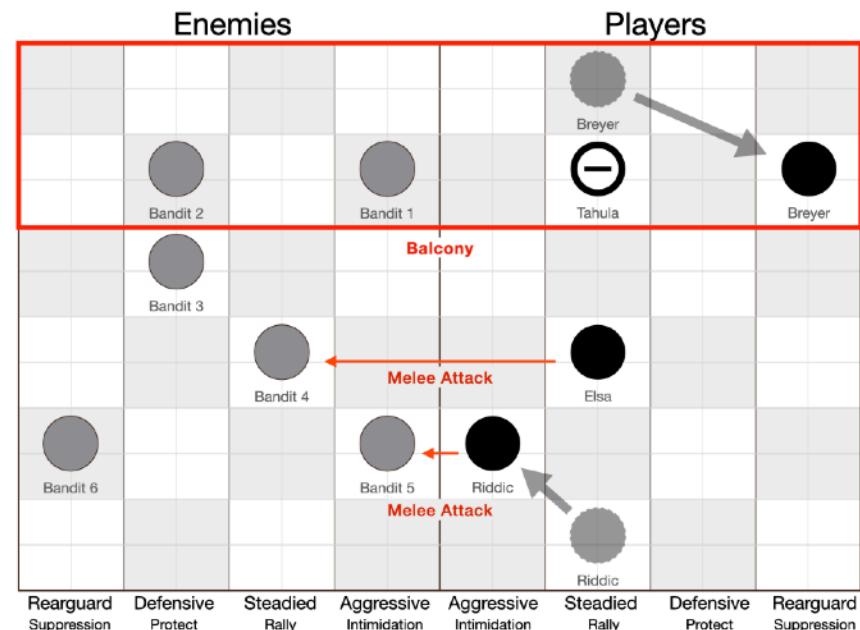
Enemies		Balcony		Players			
					 Breyer		
	 Bandit 2		 Bandit 1		 Tahula		
	 Bandit 3						
		 Bandit 4			 Elsa		
			 Bandit 5		 Riddic		
 Bandit 6							
Rearguard Suppression	Defensive Protect	Steadied Rally	Aggressive Intimidation	Aggressive Intimidation	Steadied Rally	Defensive Protect	Rearguard Suppression

Riddic, Elsa, Tahula and Breyer are in a tavern and a fight breaks out with a group of bandits. The party rolls for

*Initiative*, with everyone succeeding their *Agility Save* except Tahula.

The top two *Action Lanes* represent a balcony inside the tavern. Attacks from the balcony to other *Action Lanes* are *Enhanced* and attacks from the ground floor to the balcony are *Impaired*, due to the elevation. Tahula and Breyer will start combat in the balcony because they were upstairs holding a table for the party.

### Round 1: Turn 1 - Player Turns



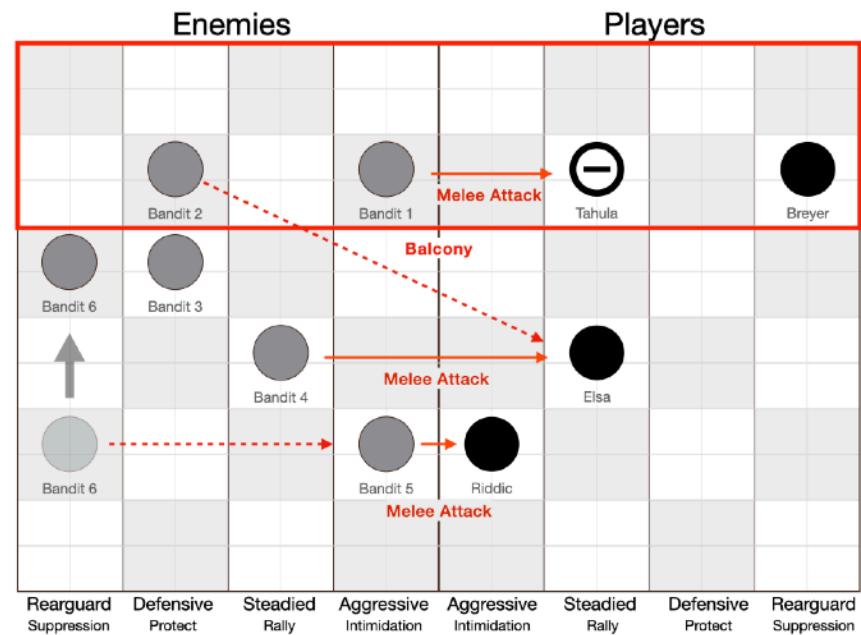
Riddic moves forward to an Aggressive stance, pulling out his oversized battle axe and attacking Bandit 5. His attack (1d12) is a +2 because it is *Enhanced* from his Aggressive Stance. He rolls 9 on the dice for a total of 11 damage.

Elsa remains in the Steadied stance and attacks with her short sword (1d6) at Bandit 4. She rolls max damage resulting in a *Precision Strike* and gets to roll for damage again for a total of 10 damage (6+4).

Tahula is unable to act this round because she failed her *Initiative*.

Breyer moves to the Rearward position on the Balcony shoots an arrow from their short bow and *Suppresses* Bandit 3, preventing them from moving next round.

## Round 1: Turn 2 - Bandit Turns



Bandit 1 attacks Tahula with their sword (1d8) for a total of 6 damage..

Bandit 2 remains in place and throws a dagger (1d4) from the second floor balcony at Elsa. The attack is *Enhanced* for

+2, due to their elevation on the second floor and results in a total of 4 damage.

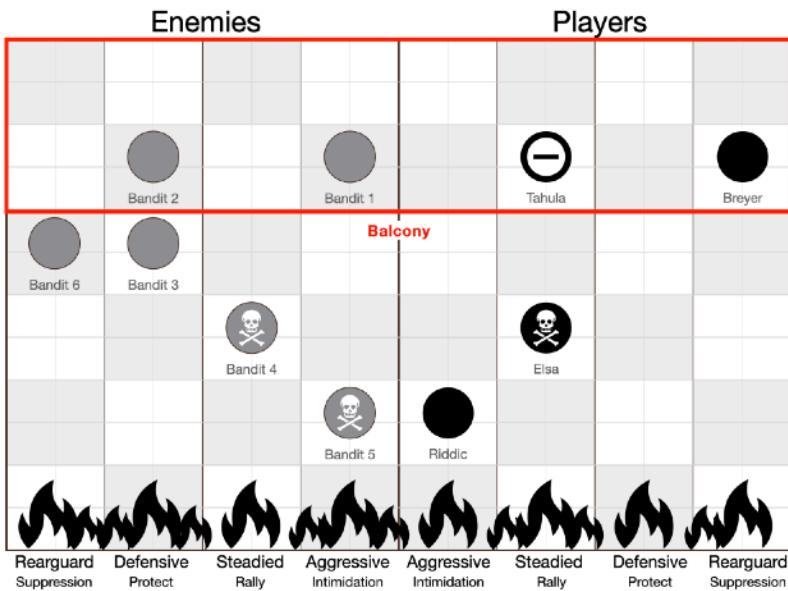
Bandit 3 is *Suppressed* and cannot move. There are no enemies in their combat lane and they do not have a ranged weapon or a weapon with reach. They are unable to attack this round. Could they find an improvised weapon like a liquor bottle to throw?

Bandit 4 stays in their *Steadied* stance and attacks Elsa with their shortsword (1d6). They roll a *Precision Strike* and roll their 1d6 again for a total of 11 damage. Elsa has taken a total of 15 damage so far this round. She is in trouble.

Bandit 5 is in an *Aggressive Stance* (+2) and attacks Riddic with their two-handed longsword (1d10) for 6 damage.

Bandit 6 moves toward the balcony. They cannot get up to the balcony yet, as they have to move from an adjacent lane, but they can next round. After moving they shoot an arrow from their short crossbow (1d4) at Riddic for 1 damage.

## Round 3: Turn 3 - Environment and Resolve Damage



The environment now takes its turn. Patrons in the bar now begin to panic with the fight that breaks out, several tables have been flipped over and a large cask of liquor was broken open, making the bottom most Action Lane flammable.

Damage is now resolved.

Bandit 5 and Bandit 4 received more than 10 damage damage. They fail their Strength saving throws and are *Incapacitated* from Riddic's axe attack and Elsa's short sword.

Tahula took 6 damage this round. Her armor absorbs 3 points and her *Breath* absorbs the remaining 3 with one point of *Breath* remaining.

Elsa received 15 damage. She has 3 *Breath* and 1 *Armor* which absorbs the first four points of damage. The remaining

11 points are applied to her Strength Trait. Her Strength DC is 11 and her Saving Throw is 9. The damage plus her strength Saving Throw equals 20, which means she cannot save to stay up. She becomes *Incapacitated*. She also receives a *Wound*, in this case either a severed limb or severe bleeding.

# ***GLOSSARY***

Coming Soon