Sandcastle
Table-talk Role Playing Game

National Astronomical Observatory of Japan

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Core Rules

What is a TRPG, Table-Talk Role Playing Game?

A Table-Talk Role Playing Game, sometimes called a Table-Top Role Playing Game, (abbreviated TRPG or TTRPG) is a storytelling game you play with other players.

"Role Playing" is a common form of entertainment employed in many different kinds of games. You take on the "role" of a character different from yourself. Unlike a role in a play, in role playing there is no script and you have to ad lib, thinking of what your character would do and say, like children playing cops-and-robbers. In a TRPG, rather than running around a playground with other children or sitting solitary at a computer manipulating an inworld character, you sit at a "table" and "talk" with the other players, describing what your character is doing in words. Thus the name "Table-Talk Role Playing Game." (In the modern world, players who can't gather together physically sometimes gather at a digital "table" such as a video conferencing system or chatroom.)

In games, like in real life, people sometimes disagree. In TRPGs, players will often disagree about things like whether or not a character can leap across an open pit, or hit a flying dragon with an arrow, or spot an ambusher lying in wait down a dark alleyway. TRPGs use rules for resolving these disagreements. Some of the rules are simple statements, such as how far a human character can walk in 6 seconds or how much a suit of chainmail armor weighs. Other rules involve an element of chance: hitting a cyclops with a sword swing, catching hold of the railing when a rotten plank in an old bridge suddenly collapses under your feet, how badly you get hurt if you fail to catch hold of the railing and fall into the river below the old bridge, or recognizing the insignia of the evil duke on a pendant flapping furiously in a strong wind. To resolve things with an element of chance, most TRPGs use dice or similar methods to generate a random number, and adjudicate the results based on that number. The TRPG which you are reading right now, Sandcastle TRPG, is one of the ones that uses dice, so right now don't worry about the dice-less methods used by some other TRPGs.

In TRPGs there are two kinds of participants. Most of the participants, simply called "players," take on the role of a single character and guide that character through the story. One participant gives up the right to play a character and instead runs the rest of the world. This participant describes the weather, explains what the players' characters see as they walk down the road, and plays the roles of other people and creatures the main characters meet, including the villains. This participant also takes on responsibility for administrating the games rules and is the final arbitrator of

any disputes which arise during the game. In the Sandcastle TRPG, this participant is referred to as the Game Master (often abbreviated as GM). Other games use other terms.

You should have at least three participants for a TRPG game session: one Game Master and two or more players to play the role of individual characters who team up to overcome the challenges the GM presents to the group. In groups with more than about eight players, it becomes difficult for everyone to participate in the storytelling and the group should probably be split into smaller groups, each with its own GM.

As stated before, a TRPG is a storytelling game. The story is what happens when the players' characters interact with the GM's game world. Like children's games of make-believe, there are no winners or losers in a TRPG. The goal is for everyone to work together to tell a fun and memorable story. The characters in the story will often have goals of their own, such as finding a buried treasure chest or rescuing a princess locked in a tower. And the GM will set up obstacles between the characters and their goal. The GM's goal is not to defeat the players and their characters. The GM's goal is to challenge the players so they can have fun working through the problems. The characters should usually be able to overcome the GM's challenges and achieve their mission, but sometimes they will fail. Maybe the characters can't find the buried treasure, or maybe one of the characters gets eaten by a chimera. Success isn't fun unless there is also the chance for failure. But even if the characters lose, if it was a fun story, then the players and the GM have won.

What is Sandcastle?

Sandcastle is a simplistic TRPG intended for new players, veterans who want to get back to basics, or anyone who needs a lightweight rules system for a quick game.

TRPG stories can be grouped into roughly two types. Stories with a linear or branching-tree structure are referred to as "dungeons." The players must play through the encounters in the order they are presented with limited choices about which encounter to take on next. A "dungeon" gives this type of adventure a physical structure; each encounter is set in a separate room and doors and corridors link each encounter to a limited selection of other encounters. However "dungeon" is a misnomer. Real world dungeons were prisons, not elaborate complexes designed by a demented genius to torment adventurers. Most dungeons consisted of only a couple of rooms at most. And they were often located in towers, not underground. "Castle" is a more accurate term for a group of linked rooms. These rooms were often located one on

GM: The wooden door creaks softly when you open it.

Player 1: I hope no one heard that.

GM: The room on the other side of the door appears to be a small study. There is a writing desk with a feather quill, ink well, and blank pages sitting on it. Above the desk is a shelf with half a dozen books. On the other side of the room stands a wardrobe. And in the far wall, a barred window looks out into a garden courtyard. The gentle breeze coming through the window carries the heavy scent of lilacs.

Player 1: I'll move into the room and want to check out the books on the shelf.

Player 2: I walk over and try to open the wardrobe.

Player 3: I turn around and stand watch to make sure nothing sneaks up on us again.

GM: OK, the books on the shelf appear to be about gardening and horticulture.

Player 1: I'll check the drawers of the desk next.

GM: The wardrobe isn't locked. You can open it if you want to.

Player 2: I'll go ahead and open it.

GM: The wardrobe is empty except for a suit of chainmail armor draped on a wooden mannequin. In the meantime, there is no apparent activity down the hall in either direction.

Player 3: No "apparent" activity. Do you mean there's no one there, or I just didn't notice?

GM: You'll just have to wait to find out.

Player 2: I'll close the wardrobe.

GM: The chainmail clad mannequin holds out its wooden hand to prevent the door from closing.

Player 2: Oh, this isn't good. Guys, we've got trouble!

GM: And here we'll go ahead and enter combat.

top of the other in a tower structure making it impossible (save climbing through a window) to reach a room without passing through the ones below it.

In contrast, an adventure where the players have control over the order in which they play through the encounters, possibly bypassing some encounters all together, is called a "sandbox." The idea being that the party can play in any part of the "sandbox" they would like to, without the GM setting up barriers to channel them. The sandbox metaphor is based on the idea that sand can be sculpted into almost any shape to accommodate an equally wide array of games and stories.

Of course most stories contain elements of both castles and sandboxes. Sandcastle aims to be a game system to accommodate both sandbox and castle style adventures.

Setting: The Domain

Sandcastle is based in a medieval swords-and-sorcery fantasy setting. This setting is known as The Domain. It is a world of knights in shining armor, mysterious sorcerers, terrible monsters, wilily dwarves, elegant elves, and beautiful damsels (who are just as likely to do the saving as to be saved). There are majestic castles, mysterious ruins to be explored, enchanted glades, and dark forests brimming with evil. The culture is primarily northern European, but the climate is closer to a Hollywood movie studio backlot; temperate and fair throughout the year so that knights in full armor don't need to worry about overheating and bare-chested barbarians (both male and female) don't need to worry about feeling a chill. Various setting elements are borrowed ad hoc from other cultures, other times, and popular imagination. The inhabitants of The Domain include the full gambit of skin tones, body types, sexual orientations, and lifestyles.

The setting of The Domain is an attempt to return to the early, simpler days of TRPGs. This is outdated culture content by design, intended for a niche audience and may not be appropriate for all readers. The setting is reflected in the rules and cannot be completely removed from the game. If there are parts you don't like, you can change them when using Sandcastle for your own games.

Why did a research institute create a TRPG?

When the COVID pandemic struck, like the rest of the world, NAOJ (National Astronomical Observatory of Japan) had to rethink our activities. The traditional ways to introduce people to science such as laboratory tours,

hands-on experiments, classroom visits, etc. become impossible due to COVID restrictions. We needed a new approach. Based on the success of our GALAXY CRUISE gamification project for galaxy classification (https://galaxycruise.mtk.nao.ac.jp/en/) we decided to create an online game. The game needed to be freeform, to be able to incorporate a wide range of content. TRPGs are one of the most versatile types of games. And TRPGs have the advantage of well established online infrastructure. TRPGs were early adapters to the internet, back from the days of play-by-email and chatroom-based games. Today, there are multiple sites dedicated to hosting online TRPGs and we found that with a little ingenuity the now ubiquitous video-conferencing systems also work pretty well.

Because there is already a wide selection of educational games for people who want to play them, we knew that our TRPG needed to be first and foremost a game people will want to play as a normal game. In the Core Rules, scientific references are included only where, honestly, they enhanced the game.

Units

Sandcastle uses metric units. A conversion table for imperial units is included at the end of the rules book for reference.

Dice Notation

Sandcastle uses cubic, 6-sided dice for random number generation. Roll a die and use the rules to determine the outcome based on the number rolled. Often multiple dice are rolled and their results are added together to generate the number. For example, if you roll 2 dice and the numbers 6 and 3 are face up on the dice, then the result of the roll is 9 = 6+3.

To let you know how many dice to roll, Sandcastle uses a notation of a number followed by "d6," meaning "six-sided dice." 2d6 means to roll two dice and add the results together. Sometimes rather than using the exact result of the dice roll, an additional number will be added to or subtracted from the result. "2d6–2" means to roll two dice, add them together, and then subtract 2 from the result.

Sandcastle also uses a division system to generate a smaller range of random numbers by dividing the number rolled on the die. These virtual dice come in two varieties, two-sided (d2) and three-sided (d3).

To roll a d2, roll a normal six-sided die and divide the result by 3, rounding up to generate a random number between 1 and 2. So if the number face-up on the actual six-sided die is 1, 2, or 3, then the result of the d2 roll is treated as 1; if the number face-up on the actual six-sided die is 4, 5, or 6, then the result of the d2 roll is treated as 2.
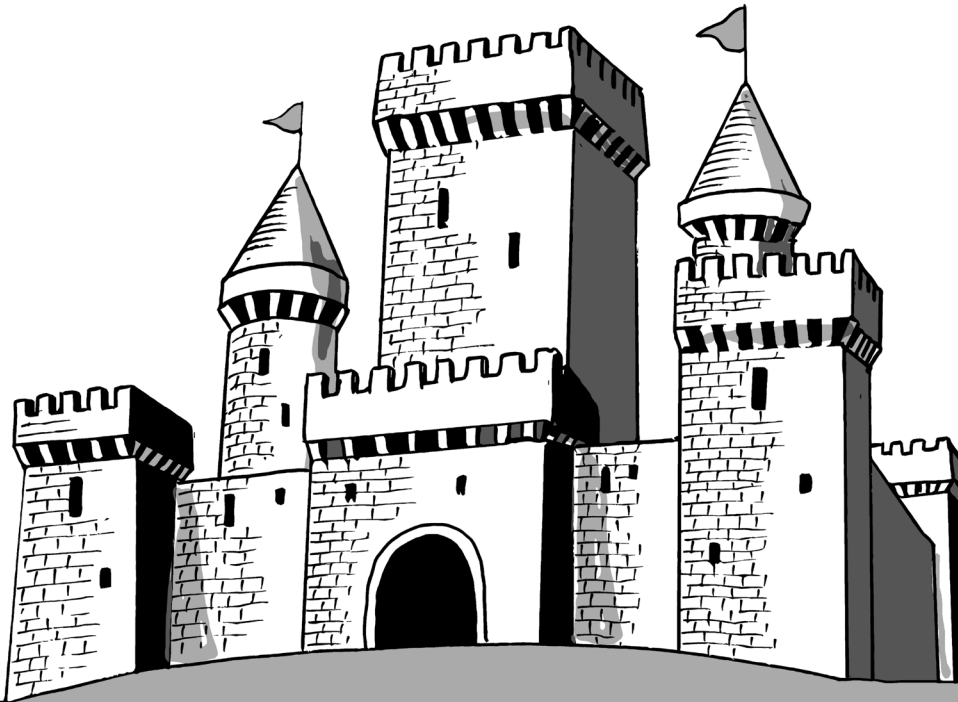
Likewise, to roll a d3, roll a normal six-sided die and divide the result by 2, rounding up to generate a random number between 1 and 3. So if the number face-up on the actual six-sided die is 1 or 2 then the result of the d3 roll is treated as 1; if the number face-up on the actual six-sided die is 3 or 4 then the result of the d3 roll is treated as 2; if the number face-up on the actual six-sided die is 5 or 6 then the result of the d3 roll is treated as 3.

When rolling multiple d2 or d3, count each die individually. "2d3" means role two three-sided dice and add the results together. 2d3 is NOT equivalent to 1d6, because the averages and probability distributions are different.

Attribute Checks

The most common type of dice roll in Sandcastle is called an attribute check. Every character and monster in Sandcastle has the same six attributes: strength, dexterity, endurance, awareness, willpower, and presence. For brevity, each attribute can be abbreviated as a single letter, as noted in parentheses.

Strength (S): This is a measure of physical power based on muscle. It is used for heavy lifting and striking foes in melee combat.

Dexterity (D): This is a measure of agility and coordination. It is used for quick, precise motion and it makes you a more elusive target in combat. Dexterity is also used to resist damage from fire or cold (red or blue energy).

Endurance (E): This is a measure of stamina and fortitude. It is used for sustaining strenuous activity and holding your breath. It also modifies the number of hit points (hp) you have; hit points represent the amount of damage that you can sustain before falling in combat. Endurance is also used to resist damage from poison or electricity (green or yellow energy).

Awareness (A): This is a measure of your ability to perceive and make sense of your surroundings. It is used for noticing hidden objects and for hitting targets with ranged attacks. It is also used for checks based on intelligence or memory, or more correctly it helps your character to notice clues in the surroundings to put that knowledge into context and apply it to the current situation.

Willpower (W): This is a measure of your ability to resist outside influences. It is used to avoid coercion and resist malignant magical effects know as hexes. Willpower is used to persevere rather than give up when researching

the answer to a difficult question. Willpower is also used to resist the damage from holy or evil effects (orange or purple energy).

Presence (P): This is a measure of your ability to exert your will on the world. It is used for persuasion and manipulating magical forces.

Attributes range from −2 to +2 for human characters. +0 represents an average adventurer character. −2 is very bad, −1 is bad, +1 is good, and +2 is very good. Non-human monsters may have attributes outside of this range, being better (or worse) than humanly possible.

To make an attribute check, roll 3d6 and add the relevant attribute to the result. Other modifiers may also apply. Add all of the applicable modifiers to the total, then compare the final result to a target number (TN). If the final result of the dice roll after all modifiers have been applied is equal to or greater than the TN, then the check is a success. If the final result of the dice roll after all modifiers have been applied is less than the TN, then the check is a failure. The GM is usually responsible for setting the TN, deciding the applicable modifiers, and interpreting how success or failure on a check plays out in the game.

Opposed Checks

Sometimes, attribute checks represent a contest between two characters. For example, a spy attempting to sneak past a guard unnoticed, or one character trying to force open a door while someone on the other side is trying to hold it shut. In these cases, rather than making a check against a set TN, each character makes a check, and the character with the higher result succeeds. A tie indicates no change in the status quo; continuing the above examples, the spy couldn't find an opening to try to slip past the guard, but the guard hasn't noticed the spy either. In the case of the door, the door hasn't opened yet, which happens to be what the character holding it shut wanted.

Character Generation

Your character serves as your alter-ego or avatar in the game. Each character is comprised of several components which define how the character interacts with the world. A character sheet is provided to help you get your character ready for play. The steps in preparing your character are:

1) Personalize your character sheet.
2) Record your starting level.
3) Decide on your character concept (including base attributes, subspecies, and combat style).
4) Calculate your final attributes.

5) Calculate your secondary statistics.
6) Choose your skills.
7) Choose your guild.
8) Purchase starting equipment and figure out how to carry it.
9) Determine your defense, movement, and armor penalties based on the armor you purchased in step 8.
10) Calculate the attack bonuses and damages for your weapons.
11) Flesh out your character.

There are other important parts of the character, such as the appearance, personality, and background story. They will be covered later, but first let's look at how to create a character's game mechanics.

1) Personalize your character sheet.

There will often be multiple character sheets on the table during game play, or stuffed into a folder between game sessions. A single player may create different characters to use in different game sessions. To be able to find the character sheet you want quickly, first write both the player name and the character name at the top of the character sheet. If you would like to give more thought to the character's name later, it is still a good idea to assign a working name at the start of character generation and change it later.

2) Record your starting level.

Sandcastle uses a system of levels to measure the power of a character. There are six levels in Sandcastle ranging from 0 to 5. A level-0 character is a non-heroic character; a level-1 character is a novice adventurer; a level-5 character is a near legendary hero. A character's level is used in various calculations related to the combat style and skills.

The GM will set the level of the characters at the start of the character generation process. Most times characters will start at level 0 or level 1. If you continue to play the same character through multiple adventures, the character will grow in knowledge and power and can advance to higher levels. In Sandcastle, experience gained through adventuring is measured in experience points (xp). When creating a new character, you start with the minimum number of xp needed for your starting level. On the character sheet, find the level the GM assigned as the starting level. Fill in all of the circles, representing xp, to the left of the starting level. Level-0 is located on the far left, with no circles to the left of it, because level-0 characters start with 0 xp.

The process of gaining xp and advancing in level is described in the Experience section.

3) Decide on your character concept.

In Sandcastle, your character concept consist of three elements that largely determine how the character will interact with the game world. These three elements are base attributes, subspecies, and combat style. These three elements are inner-related but can be assigned in any order. Different players have different preferences about where to start.

3A) Base Attributes

Every character and monster in Sandcastle has the same six attributes: strength (S), dexterity (D), endurance (E), awareness (A), willpower (W), and presence (P). See Attribute Checks in the preceding Dice Notation section for a full description of the attributes.

You are free to assign whatever values you would like to the base attributes for your character, so long as the following 2 rules are followed. Each base attribute must be a value between −2 and +2. The sum of all the base attributes must be exactly 0. Record your base attributes in the spaces provided on the character sheet.

An attribute value of +0 represents an average adventurer character. −2 is very bad, −1 is bad, +1 is good, and +2 is very good. Any modifiers for your subspecies (described later) will be added to your base attributes to determine your final attributes.

If you are unsure what would be good values for your character's base attributes, each combat style (listed later) has a list of quick-build attributes which would be suitable for a character using that combat style.

3B) Subspecies

Not all heroes in the world of Sandcastle are human. There are also dwarves, elves, and oni. All of these other peoples have been known to intermarry with humans and produce viable offspring, so they do not meet the scientific definition of separate species. However, in the world of Sandcastle, they aren't considered human either. Therefore they are referred to as subspecies.

Dwarves, elves, and oni have attribute modifiers which are added to the base attributes to determine the final attributes used in game play. These modifiers represent the ways that these subspecies are inherently better (and worse) than normal humans in certain ways. Humans

do not have attribute modifiers, instead they can choose an additional (third) skill during step 5. The various subspecies, including their attribute modifiers are described in detail below.

Dwarves: Dwarves are a small, spry people standing about half as tall as humans. They are expert artisans, working as all kinds of craftsmen: metal smiths, cobblers, masons, brewers, etc. They are diligent workers, but also have a playful side, especially if it means having a laugh at the expense of "big people." Their small size means that dwarves lack muscle mass and leverage (strength −1), but it gives them an advantage for dashing around dangerous areas without becoming targets (dexterity +1). They are famous for their stubbornness and have an innate resistance to magic (willpower +1). However, they are easily overlooked and underestimated by the bigger peoples, and their resistance to magic makes it harder for them to use it themselves (presence −1).

Elves: Elves are sylvan beings from a mystic realm which is completely removed from the mundane world, yet never far away. Elves are roughly the same size as humans, but are often of light build. The most notable feature is their long, pointed ears. Elves lack physical fortitude (endurance −1) but have sharp senses and quick minds (awareness +1). Their natural aptitude with magic gives them an aura of mystery and power which demands respect (presence +1). But they are mercurial and prone to give up if they meet with any significant resistance; in addition their natural aptitude with magic acts like a lightning rod, making it harder for them to resist its effects (willpower −1).

Humans: Humans are the most diverse and versatile subspecies. They are quick learners and able to adapt to a variety of environments. To represent this individuality, rather than adjustments to the attributes, humans learn an additional (third) skill, as opposed to two skills for other subspecies. The skills are explained in more detail in step 5. Human does not necessarily mean "ordinary." A hero who is two-thirds god one-third mortal, a wild man raised by wolves, a statue given life by a goddess of love, a boy born from a giant peach, a mermaid given legs to walk on land, a clone, and a princess from the Moon are all examples of humans. If a character isn't obviously a dwarf, elf, or oni, then it is probably human.

Oni: Oni have large muscular bodies, standing a full head's height taller than humans. ("Oni" is both the singular and the plural). The majority of oni are sadistic bullies. A small number turn to spiritual enlightenment, or use their natural violent tendencies for a righteous cause. But even these good oni cause significant collateral damage during their quests. Oni can be found causing mayhem in the mundane world, in the heavens, and in the hells. Their ugly faces are marked by heavy brows, bulging eyes, and a large bulbous nose. Oni skin tones vary wildly through the entire spectrum of human skin tones, as well as greens, reds, and other colors. Their heads may sport one or two horns, but these are too small to be used as weapons. There are also oni with animal heads, cow headed oni (sometimes called minotaurs) and horse headed oni being the most common. Oni have large skeletal frames covered with bulging muscles (strength +1) and hearty internal organs (endurance +1). But they are also musclebound with poor fine-motor coordination (dexterity −1). Their senses are no less acute than a human's, but they have trouble attaching significance and meaning to what they see and hear (awareness −1), or maybe they just don't care.

The following table summarizes the subspecies attribute modifiers.

Subspecies Attribute Adjustments
Human: no changes
Dwarf: S −1, D +1, W +1, P−1
Elf: E−1, A +1, W −1, P +1
Oni: S +1, D −1, E +1, A −1

Record these modifiers in the spaces provided on the character sheet. Add these modifiers to your base attributes to determine your final attributes. After these adjustments are applied, the final attributes for all player characters will fall within a range of −3 to +3.

3C) Combat Style

The Domain, the setting of the Sandcastle TRPG, is a dangerous place, and characters who travel around will soon find themselves pressed into fights, even if only in self-defense. Sandcastle is written for a small group of player characters (PCs) to work together to fight against the GM controlled enemies, so a character's combat style is defined by the role the character fills in small-group combat. Each combat style has special abilities to help the character fulfil that function in a fight. There are four combat styles in Sandcastle: energer, harrier, hexer, and striker.

All characters level 1 and above have a combat style. It is not possible for a character to have multiple combat styles. Level-0 characters do not have a combat style, level 0 is the base upon which all the combat styles will build starting from level 1. When creating a level-0 character, leave the Combat Style space on the character sheet blank, although it is acceptable to design your character thinking ahead to what combat style you would like to use if the character

lives long enough to reach level 1.
Each combat style lists the following information.

Key attribute
Quick-build attributes
Preferred attack
Special actions

The key attribute is the attribute that the combat style's abilities are based on. Characters who have a high value in the key attribute for their combat style are likely to succeed more often. So it is usually recommended to build a character so that the key attribute is greater than +0. On the other hand, playing cross type can help to compensate for a character's weaknesses and take foes off guard. But it will make the character more difficult to play.

The list of quick-build attributes provides suggested attribute values if you'd like advice on how to build a character of a given combat style. This can be useful for the GM when he needs to quickly generate a minor character for the story quickly.

If the combat style has a preferred attack, it will be listed here. A preferred attack is one that the combat style is particularly good at, and more likely to hit the target.

Finally each combat style grants access to certain special actions, things that other combat styles can't do. Examples of things special actions can do are give you a second chance to hit an opponent after an attack misses, give you an opportunity to avoid damage from attacks, or give you magical powers you can use in a fight. These special actions are listed in the following descriptions for reference and explained in detail at the end of the Playing the Game section.

The choice of combat style will also affect how a character's secondary statistics are calculated in step 4.

Level-0 Characters

Sometimes characters with no combat training will find themselves thrust into the middle of an adventure. These are called level-0 characters. Compared to heroic characters, they have fewer hit points, fewer power points, no special abilities, and usually have access to only inferior equipment. If they survive their first dangerous adventure, they quickly learn to fend for themselves and can choose a combat style, becoming level-1 characters using the rules for that combat style.

Examples of level-0 characters include a farm boy returning home to discover that his family has been murdered; a peasant in an angry mob armed with a torch or pitchfork to storm a monster's castle; a wagon driver ambushed by monstrous robbers; a cloistered princess taking her first steps outside of the royal walled garden; a shy dwarf peaking over the top of a giant mushroom to make her first human friend; an elven scholar confronted by a mob of xenophobes determined to burn his library of foreign books and him along with it; an oni forced to swear an oath to protect the weak after being defeated by a holy man; a retired baker who is accused of treason with no explanation and thrust into a prison wagon with a badly rusted lock. Their stories are just beginning.

Key attribute: none
Quick-build attributes: S +0, D +0, E +0, A +0, W +0, P +0
Preferred attack: none
Special actions: none

Energer

Energy archers (contracted to Enegers) are long-range shooters attacking with ranged weapons and creating motes of magical energy to fling at the enemies. A character's reserve of power points (a secondary statistic calculated in step 4) is used to power these magical attacks. Energers have more power points than other fighting styles but it is still a limited supply, so energers must conserve their resources, deciding when and how much power to expend. But when energers unleash their full potential, the results can be devastating, changing the course of a battle in an instant.

Key attribute: awareness
Quick-build attributes: S −1, D −1, E +0, A +2, W +1, P −1
Preferred attack: Energers add their full level as a bonus to attacks which deal energy damage.
Special actions: Create Mote, Energy Explosion, Energy Shield, Energy Shot, Energy Shunt, Multi-Shot

Harrier

Harriers are high-mobility fighters. They move around the battlefield to strike where the opposition is most vulnerable. They are opportunists and have special abilities to take advantage of when targets lower their defenses. Because they harry enemies, harriers are the most likely to be targeted by enemy attacks. To help keep them out of trouble they are quick on their feet and have good defenses.

Key attribute: dexterity
Quick-build attributes: S −1, D +2, E +1, A −1, W +0, P −1
Preferred attack: none
Special Actions: Cut and Run, Dogged Pursuit, Energy Shunt, Fleet Footed, Follow-up Strike

Character Concept Examples

1) Starting from Base Attributes

The player Eric wants to create an elegant noblewoman character, Lady Elisha Glittermoon. She should have a commanding personality and a strong will, but need not be physically imposing. Eric assigns his character the following base attributes.

S −2, D +0, E −1, A +0, W +1, P +2

Next he decides to choose his subspecies. Elves have a bonus to presence, so he takes the elf subspecies and notes the attribute modifiers (E −1, A +1, W −1, P +1). Presence is Lady Elisha Glittermoon's highest attribute. Presence is the key attribute for hexers, so Eric picks the hexer combat style.

2) Starting from Subspecies

The player Saeko wants to play a dwarf named Tamtam, so she starts with the dwarf subspecies. She looks at the dwarf attribute modifiers (S −1, D +1, W +1, P −1). She wants to create an iconic dwarf, so she chooses base attributes to accentuate the modifiers for being a dwarf.

S −1, D +2, E +0, A +0, W +1, P −2

Saeko could have pushed Tamtam's willpower up to +2 by lowering her strength down to −2, but overspecialization is always dangerous, so she assigns a mixture of 1's and 2's. It looks like dexterity will be Tamtam's highest attribute. Dexterity is the key attribute for harriers. So Saeko chooses the harrier combat style for Tamtam.

3) Starting from Combat Style

The player Jamal decides to create a striker, Gilbert Hightower. He starts with the quick-build base attributes for a striker, but he doesn't like the idea of having an awareness less than 0. Jamal wants Gilbert to be a well-rounded warrior, specialized in melee combat as a striker, but also competent with a bow. So he changes the quick-build attributes around to make awareness a little higher at the expense of endurance. This gives him base statistics which look like this.

S +2, D −1, E −1, A +1, W +0, P −1

Jamal then considers which subspecies to take. Oni would raise his strength, which is the key attribute for strikers. But it would also lower his dexterity and awareness. That's a trade he doesn't want to make. The attribute modifiers for elves and dwarves also require a trade-off. For the well-rounded warrior Jamal envisions, human is the best choice. And with a human he can look forward to picking an extra skill at a later stage in the character generation process.

4) Integrated Approach

The player Samantha wants to play Thunderfist, a "storm god" oni inspired by Edo-Era Japanese paintings. Thunderfist will be an oni, and an energer, capable of flinging bolts of lightning at opponents. To be a successful energer, Thunderfist will need a high awareness. This is difficult, because oni have a penalty to awareness (S +1, D −1, E +1, A −1). So Samantha knows that in her base attributes she's going to have to push awareness as high as possible to overcome the penalty. Thunderfist also needs to be an imposing figure, capable of striking fear and awe into others. This will require a high presence, which isn't typically associated with either oni or energers. Finally, since the oni subspecies adds a bonus to strength, she might as well press that advantage. So Samantha assigns Thunderfist the following base attributes.

S +1, D −2, E −1, A +2, W −1, P +1
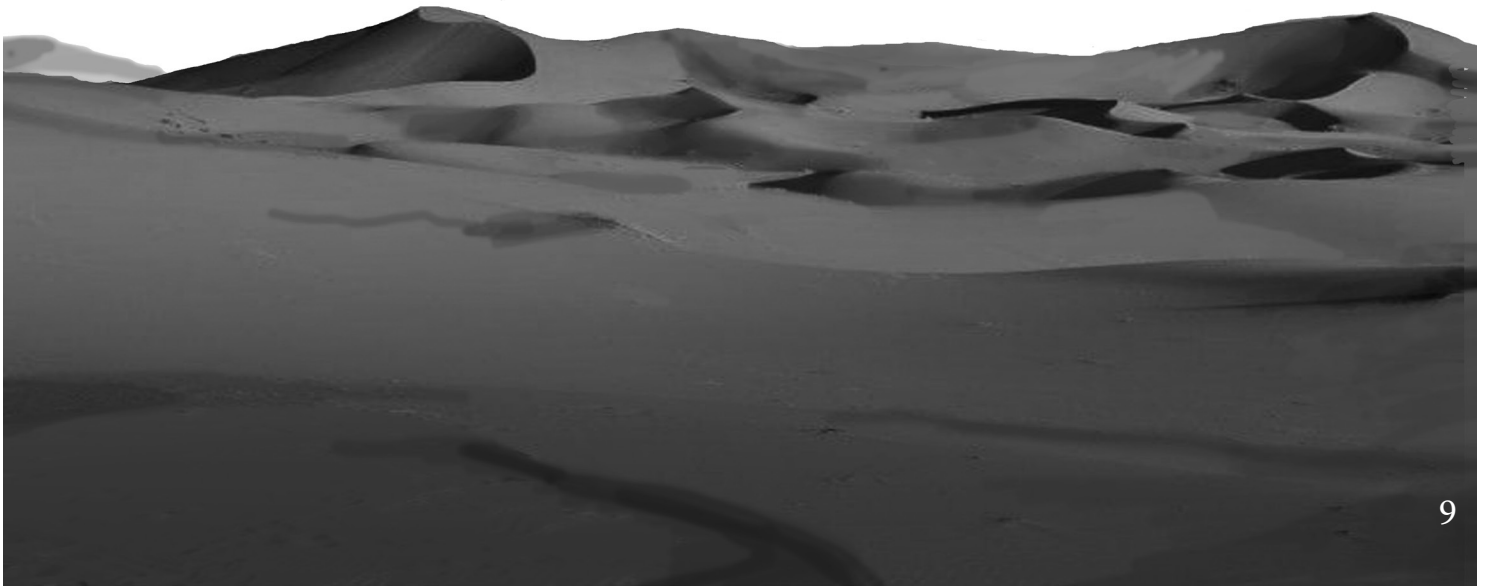
Hexer

Hexers are strategic fighters. They use magic abilities, known as hexes, to hinder the opposition without inflicting damage directly. They can make it harder for enemies to attack, or make enemies easier to hit. They can also drain an enemy's power points, limiting the opposition's ability to use special actions. Hexers can and usually do carry weapons to fight with enemies who have been weakened by hexes, but most prefer to remain in the rear and let their friends do the actual skull bashing.

Key attribute: presence
Quick-build attributes: S −1, D −1, E +0, A −1, W +1, P +2
Preferred attack: none
Special actions: Attack Hex, Counter Hex, Defense Hex, Move Hex, Multi-Attack Hex, Multi-Defense Hex, Power Drain

Striker

Strikers are frontline melee fighters. They go toe-to-toe with the enemy, felling enemies by striking hard and directly dealing damage. Strikers also act as a shield for their friends; strikers can stop enemies from rushing past them to get at the other characters. Because of this role, they are also the most likely to take damage in combat and have the most hit points to help them survive the abuse.

Key attribute: strength
Quick-build attributes: S +2, D −1, E +1, A −1, W +0, P −1
Preferred Attack: Strikers add their full level as a bonus to melee attacks.
Special Actions: Backswing, Counter Strike, Hit Hard, Pin Down, Vengeance Strike

4) Calculate your final attributes.

To calculate your final attributes, add the modifiers from your subspecies to your base attributes. These final attributes are the ones you will use to calculate the character's secondary statistics (see step 5). These are also the attributes you will use during game play.

Combat style does not have a direct effect on a character's final statistics, but as stated earlier, it is usually best to build a character so that the key attribute for his or her combat style is greater than +0.

5) Calculate your secondary statistics.

Combat is a regular occurrence in the Sandcastle fantasy adventure TRPG, so it is handled in detail. There are 10 secondary statistics which are determined based on your

10

Final Attribute Calculation Examples

Continuing the preceding character generation examples from step 3:

1) Elf Hexer Lady Elisha Glittermoon (Player: Eric)

Attribute	Base	Subspecies		Final
Strength (S)	-2		=	-2
Dexterity (D)	+0		=	+0
Endurance (E)	-1	-1	=	-2
Awareness (A)	+0	+1	=	+1
Willpower (W)	+1	-1	=	+0
Presence (P)	+2	+1	=	+3

2) Dwarf Harrier Tamtam (Player: Saeko)

Attribute	Base	Subspecies		Final
Strength (S)	-1	-1	=	-2
Dexterity (D)	+2	+1	=	+3
Endurance (E)	+0		=	+0
Awareness (A)	+0		=	+0
Willpower (W)	+1	+1	=	+2
Presence (P)	-2	-1	=	-3

3) Human Striker Gilbert Hightower (Player: Jamal)

Attribute	Base	Subspecies		Final
Strength (S)	+2		=	+2
Dexterity (D)	-1		=	-1
Endurance (E)	-1		=	-1
Awareness (A)	+1		=	+1
Willpower (W)	+0		=	+0
Presence (P)	-1		=	-1

4) Oni Energer Thunderfist (Player: Samantha)

Attribute	Base	Subspecies		Final
Strength (S)	+1	+1	=	+2
Dexterity (D)	-2	-1	=	-3
Endurance (E)	-1	+1	=	+0
Awareness (A)	+2	-1	=	+1
Willpower (W)	-1		=	-1
Presence (P)	+1		=	+1

Secondary Statistics

	Level 0	Energer	Harrier	Hexer	Striker
bab	+0	+lv/2 or +lv	+lv/2	+lv/2	+lv/2 or +lv
Preferred Attack	None	Energy	None	None	Melee
db	+0	+0	+lv/2	+0	+0
Resistances					
BR	+0+D	+lv+D	+lv+D	+(lv/2)+D	+(lv/2)+D
GY	+0+E	+lv+E	+(lv/2)+E	+(lv/2)+E	+lv+E
OP	+0+W	+lv+W	+(lv/2)+W	+lv+W	+(lv/2)+W
HR	+0+W	+(lv/2)+W	+(lv/2)+W	+lv+W	+(lv/2)+W
hp	4+E	(5+E)x lv	(6+E)x lv	(5+E)x lv	(7+E)x lv
pp	1	1+(lv x2)	1+lv	1+lv	1+lv
Interrupt Actions	1	1	1+(lv/2)	1	1

(Round all fractions up.)

combat style, level, and final attributes. Your subspecies does not have a direct effect on your secondary statistics. (Because subspecies modifiers are used to determine your final attributes, there can be an indirect effect.)

There are sometimes you divide a number by 2 when calculating your secondary statistics. In all cases round fractions up.

The secondary statistics are as follows:

bab (base attack bonus): All characters gain a bonus to attribute checks to attack an enemy. The bonus is equal to one-half of the character's level, rounded up. In addition, some combat styles have a preferred attack type. When using a preferred attack type, add the character's full level to the attribute check.

preferred attack: A preferred attack is one that the combat style is particularly good at, and more likely to hit the target. When making a preferred attack, add your full character level to the attribute check, not half the level as normal. Not all classes have a preferred attack. For strikers the preferred attack type is melee, meaning using a melee weapon to strike an adjacent opponent. For energers, the preferred attack type is energy, meaning attacks which do energy damage. See the Playing the Game section for more information about attack and damage types.

db (defense bonus): The harrier combat style gains a bonus to defense equal to one half the character's level (rounded up). Other combat styles do not gain a defense bonus.

Resistances: All characters gain a bonus to attribute checks to resist the effects of magical damage, other types of energy damage, and baneful magical effects known as hexes. Depending on the combat style, this bonus is equal to either the character's level or 1/2 of the level. There are four resistances, one for avoiding the effects of magical hexes, and three tied to different types of energy damage. Energy types (colors) are explained in more detail in the Damage section. The resistances are BR (blue and red energy) based on dexterity attribute checks, GY (green and yellow energy) based on endurance attribute checks, OP (orange and purple energy) based on willpower attribute checks, and HR (for resisting hexes) based on willpower attribute checks.

hp (hit points): This is a measure of the amount of damage a character can take before collapsing. To calculate a character's total hit points, start with the base value listed for each combat style, add the character's endurance attribute, then multiply by the character's level.

pp (power points): This is a measure of a character's reserve of inner life-force power. It is used for powering magical attacks and using special abilities which push beyond the character's normal limitations. The number of pp varies depending on the combat style and is listed in the Secondary Statistics table.

Interrupt Actions: Most characters have a single interrupt action. The harrier combat style grants an additional number of interrupt actions equal to one half the character's level rounded up (lv/2). See the Combat section for more details about the types of actions.

Secondary Statistics Calculation Examples

1) Dwarf Harrier Tamtam (Player: Saeko)

Final Attributes

Strength (S)	−2	Awareness (A)	+0
Dexterity (D)	+3	Willpower (W)	+2
Endurance (E)	+0	Presence (P)	−3

Assuming that Tamtam starts play at level 1, her secondary statistics will look like this:

bab	+lv/2	>>	+1/2 rounded up	>>	+1
Preferred Attack	None	>>		>>	None
db	+lv/2	>>	+1/2 rounded up	>>	+1
Resistances					
BR	+lv+D	>>	+1+3	>>	+4
GY	+(lv/2)+E	>>	+(1/2)+0 rounded up	>>	+1
OP	+(lv/2)+W	>>	+(1/2)+2 rounded up	>>	+3
HR	+(lv/2)+W	>>	+(1/2)+2 rounded up	>>	+3
hp	(6+E)x lv	>>	(6+0)x1	>>	6
pp	1+lv	>>	1+1	>>	2
Interrupt Actions	1+(lv/2)	>>	1+(1/2) rounded up	>>	2

2) Human Striker Gilbert Hightower (Player: Jamal)

Final Attributes

Strength (S)	+2	Awareness (A)	+1
Dexterity (D)	−1	Willpower (W)	+0
Endurance (E)	−1	Presence (P)	−1

Let's take a look at what Gilbert Hightower's secondary statistics will look like at level 4. Maybe he starts play at level 4, or maybe he fought his way up to level 4 through gaining experience points. In either case, the secondary statics will come out exactly the same.

bab	+lv/2 or +lv	>>	+4/2 or +4	>>	+2 or +4
Preferred Attack	Melee	>>		>>	Melee
db	+0	>>		>>	+0
Resistances					
BR	+(lv/2)+D	>>	+(4/2)−1	>>	+1
GY	+lv+E	>>	+4−1	>>	+3
OP	+(lv/2)+W	>>	+(4/2)+0	>>	+2
HR	+(lv/2)+W	>>	+(4/2)+0	>>	+2
hp	(7+E)x lv	>>	(7−1)x4	>>	24
pp	1+lv	>>	1+4	>>	5
Interrupt Actions	1	>>		>>	1

These benefits are summarized in the table above. Find the column corresponding to your combat style, and perform the calculations indicated based on your level and final attributes.

Your base attack bonus (bab), preferred attack, and defense bonus (db) will be used in additional calculations in step 9 (determining defense) and step 10 (determining attack bonuses for weapons). Note them on your character sheet for easy reference. Your resistances (BR, GY, OP, HR), hit points (hp), power points (pp) and interrupt actions are ready to be used in-game, go ahead and fill them in on your character sheet.

6) Choose your skills.

In Sandcastle, every action your character attempts which has a chance of failure is resolved through an attribute check. Roll 3d6 and add the relevant attribute and any other modifiers the GM assigns; then determine the total and compare it to the TN to determine whether or not the action is successful.

In addition to the base attributes, player characters also possess skills, areas of expertise where they excel. A skill could be the result of training, practice, innate talent, or most likely a combination of these factors. A skill provides a bonus when attempting an action which falls under the domain of that skill. Unlike a player character's final attributes which are fixed, the skill bonus increases with level.

Choose two or three skills for your character. Human characters have three skills, all other subspecies (dwarf, elf, oni) have two skills. When attempting actions relevant to one of your skills, you can apply a bonus equal to your level. It is only possible to apply one skill to any given action.

Some attribute checks, usually reactions in response to hazards, are defined as "unskilled" meaning that no skill bonuses can be applied. The GM is the final arbitrator of what modifiers can be applied to a check.

Sandcastle uses 12 skills.

Arcana	Deception	Life Sciences
Athletics	Engineering	Physical Sciences
Charm	Entertainment	Social Sciences
Domestic Science	Intimidation	Stealth

Read the descriptions of the skills and choose the two which best fit your image of the character. If you can't

decide, you can select skills based on which ones work best with your character's attributes. Skills are not tied to one specific attribute, depending on what your character is attempting, a skill may be used in combination with different attributes. Following is a list of skills normally used with each attribute.

Strength	Athletics
Dexterity	Athletics, Domestic Sciences, Engineering, Entertainment, Stealth
Endurance	Athletics
Awareness	Arcana, Charm, Deception, Domestic Sciences, Engineering, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Social Sciences, Stealth
Willpower	Arcana, Charm, Engineering, Intimidation, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Social Sciences
Presence	Arcana, Charm, Deception, Domestic Sciences, Entertainment, Intimidation

Choosing a skill tied to one of your higher attributes will help you accel even more in checks related to that skill. But choosing a skill tied to one of your lower attributes can be a good way to help compensate for your natural weaknesses.

Skill Descriptions

Arcana: This is the knowledge of magic. You can use it to recognize magical creatures and notice magical effects. You can also manipulate magical forces to produce minor effects like opening a magic seal on a door or causing a plant to suddenly grow new branches and sprout flowers out of season. Arcana is most often used with awareness for noticing and recognizing magical things; willpower for researching questions related to magic; and presence for manipulating magical forces.

Athletics: This is moving your body to confront physical challenges such as swimming across castle moats, jumping
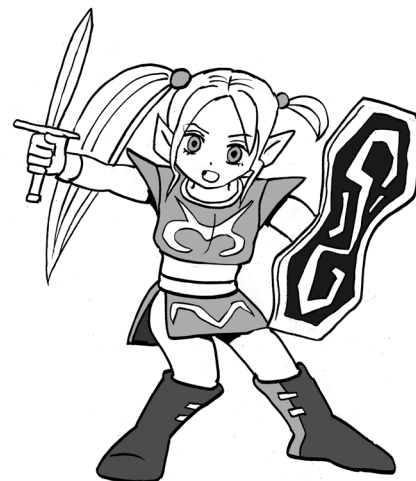
Dwarf Harrier

up onto tables, climbing vine covered walls, balancing on narrow ledges, or swinging from chandeliers. Depending on what you are attempting, the GM will tell you whether strength or dexterity is more appropriate for the check. Maintaining strenuous activity such as swimming or hanging from a cliffside may require an endurance check.

Charm: This is enticing people to do what you want. Charm can be any combination of flattery, wit, sparkling eyes, a winning smile, and sex appeal. Targets are usually fully aware that you are manipulating their feelings, but still can't refuse. Charm is used with presence for influencing others. Because you know the tricks, you can also use charm with willpower to resist attempts to charm you. You can also use it with awareness to notice if someone in the room is attempting to charm a target.

Deception: This is lying and manipulating the truth. Deception is normally used with presence when attempting to lie, disguise yourself, or pass for someone or something else. You can also use deception with awareness to spot other liars. If you successfully deceive the target, that doesn't automatically mean that the target does what you want, only that the target believes you.

Domestic Sciences: This is a body of practical knowledge relevant to running a household. It includes cooking, cleaning, laundry, and mending cloths. Because adventures are often wanderers without a family to look after them, there are times you'll have to perform these tasks yourself. You can also use domestic science to put a room back in order after a fight or after having searched through it. You can also use domestic sciences to spot places that other people missed when cleaning, meaning you can use it for investigating crime scenes where the perpetrator tried to clean up the evidence, or checking to see if food has been tampered with, possibly poisoned. Domestic science is normally used with dexterity for cleaning, washing, and mending. It is used with awareness when searching a room because you know the places where dirt and secrets are normally hidden. You can sometimes use domestic sciences with presence because fresh baked cookies or a good meal will put almost anyone in a better mood.

Engineering: This is applied knowledge about simple mechanical systems, construction, masonry, metallurgy, and related fields. Engineering includes a knowledge of mining techniques, but knowledge of geology and valuable ores is covered by physical sciences. Engineering is often used with awareness to spot structural weak points or suspicious construction which may conceal a hidden door or trap; figure out which rope to cut to escape a net trap; or recall other information relevant to the current situation. Use willpower when researching the answer to a difficult

question. It can also be used with dexterity to manipulate mechanical systems, possibly in ways other than they are design to operate, such as picking a lock. Engineering can also be used with dexterity to repair devices such as broken wagon wheels or elevator pullies.

Entertainment: This is performing to please an audience. Possible forms of entertainment include acting, music, dancing, and comedy, among many others. This skill is normally used with presence. But for complicated musical instruments, intricate, high-speed dances or juggling, dexterity is more appropriate. Acrobats should use the athletics skill instead. Acting allows you to portray a believable character within the frame of a theatrical performance; trying to pass for someone else outside of the theater uses the deception skill instead. Most performers at least dabble in two or three forms of entertainment. Talk with the GM to determine how wide your character's repertoire is.

Intimidation: This is making people scared to oppose you. Intimidation is not subtle; the target knows when you attempt to intimidate it and will likely be resentful regardless of whether or not the check succeeds. Successful intimidation means that at least for the time being, the target is more scared than resentful. Intimidation need not be physical intimidation; a threat to damage the target socially or economically can be much more efficient in many situations. Intimidation is used with presence to try to intimidate a target and with willpower to try to resist intimidation. Strength cannot be used in place of presence, even if you threaten the target physically and smash objects as part of the intimidation; without the force of personality to carry your intimidation, such attempts end up looking like childish temper tantrums.

Life Sciences: This covers biology, botany, zoology, organic chemistry, and other related fields. Science in Sandcastle is anachronistically advanced, using modern terms and concepts. You can use life sciences to recognize natural plants and creatures (magical creatures are covered by arcana). You can also identify creatures from limited information like footprints or scales left behind. Life sciences also includes knowledge of animal behavior. You can also use it to recognize diseases and other maladies in humans and other animals; this knowledge gives you a limited idea of how to treat those illnesses (not enough to restore hit points directly, but enough to know where a plot device such as an antidote or cure can be found). Life sciences is normally used with awareness to recognize natural organisms or recall other information relevant to the current situation. Use willpower when researching the answer to a difficult question.

Physical Sciences: This covers chemistry, physics, astronomy, geology, meteorology, and other related fields. Science in Sandcastle is anachronistically advanced, using modern terms and concepts. You can use physical sciences to navigate by the stars, spot unstable rock formations, recognize the smell of acids or poisonous gasses, or notice the signs that the weather is about to change. Physical sciences is normally used with awareness to recognize minerals or solutions, or recall other information relevant to the current situation. Use willpower when researching the answer to a difficult question.

Social Sciences: This covers history, anthropology, macro-economics, archeology, heraldry, sociology, and other related fields. Science in Sandcastle is anachronistically advanced, using modern terms and concepts. You can use social sciences to identify different cultures based on their artifacts and buildings, find the important buildings in an unfamiliar city, and recognize common imagery and motifs in art and local festivals. In Sandcastle, social sciences covers human and near-human civilizations. Strange creatures from other realms are handled by arcana. Social sciences is normally used with awareness to figure out who's who in an unfamiliar social setting or to determine what culture built an abandoned castle, or recall other information relevant to the current situation. Use willpower when researching the answer to a difficult question.

Stealth: This is the art of going unnoticed. Stealth can be used for hiding in bushes, tiptoeing down dark corridors in the middle of the night, flinching small items, or just keeping your head down in a crowd and trying not to be noticed by the guards at the city gates. Disguises and trying to pretend to be someone else are covered by deception. Stealth is normally used with dexterity for sneaking around and with awareness for spotting other people sneaking around.

7) *Choose your guild.*

In The Domain, the world of Sandcastle, the nickname "Adventurers' Guilds" refers to three independent organizations, none of which are actually guilds. The guilds have branches scattered across The Domain to facilitate information exchange between like-minded individuals. A guild will also store excess gear for members while they are on an adventure. Guild branches are often run by retired adventurers, armchair generals who collect useful information as a hobby without doing anything dangerous, or the now grown and beautiful daughters of adventures who died or went missing.

Before setting off on an adventure, you can check with the nearest guild branch for information which might help during the adventure. If you perform tasks which further the goals of the guild, your reputation within the guild will improve, granting you access to better and more accurate information. Reputation ranges between 0 to 5. When first creating your character, your reputation will normally be 1 in the guild you join. Your reputation is 0 for guilds you do not belong to.

You cannot belong to more than one guild. You are not required to belong to a guild, but membership provides in-game benefits and carries no drawbacks.

More information about using the guilds in the game is provided in the GM Manual (GMM). For now, just worry about selecting a guild based on your character's motivation for adventuring, or the type of hints you'd like to receive from the guild.

Beacon Sanctuary: This is an appropriate guild to join if your motivation for adventuring is to help people or you want hints to deal with role-playing encounters, or hints about where to find magical armor and protective magical items during and adventure.

Beacon Sanctuary provides food, a safe place to sleep, and a sympathetic ear for people with nowhere else to go. The mess hall doubles as a tavern providing good food, good drink, and pleasant company to those needing a more temporary respite from their troubles. In both of these roles, Beacon Sanctuary collects much information about villains and problems in the local area. Beacon Sanctuary provides this information to adventurers in hopes that they will solve the root problems. Beacon Sanctuary is also good at deducing the locations of protective magical items, and may pass this information on to adventurers who could put the items to good use. Branches of Beacon Sanctuary are of sturdy construction and well lit, providing a calm sense of security. Water fountains are common to provide comforting background noise. Although technically a non-religious organization, the decor almost always includes decorations such as statues, tile mosaics, or fresco paintings depicting the many gods and goddesses venerated in The Domain.

Actions which will improve your reputation in Beacon Sanctuary include rescuing captives, freeing slaves, removing threats to villages (like a poisonous monster which is fouling the town water supply), or convincing villains to reform rather than fighting them.

College of Recovery: This is an appropriate guild to join if your motivation for adventuring is to find treasure or

you want hints to deal with obstacles and traps, or hints about where to find utility magical items to help with non-combat challenges.

The College of Recovery is dedicated to "recovering" and studying valuable and interesting objects. Simple gold and gemstones are of no interest; members of the College of Recovery collect things that can be studied to learn more about the world, such as tomes of forgotten lore, rare flowers, exotic mineral formations, works of art, ingenious mechanical devices, or ancient clay tablets. The most valued items are those which provide hints to other treasures yet to be discovered. To this end, members of the College of Recovery ask adventurers to "recover" these items from ancient ruins, monster lairs, and the clutches of evil-doers. To aid in these tasks, the College of Recovery provides information about the types of defense measures which protect the treasures, and clues to locating magical items to help to make overcoming obstacles easier. This information is gleaned both through the study of related artifacts and reports from previous, unsuccessful expeditions. At a branch of the College of Recovery, every shelf is crammed full of books, scroll tubes, loose pages of notes, scientific instruments, and eclectic bric-a-brac. Exhibits proudly display items recovered from the local area. Because many of the items in these collections have been recovered from evil owners, dark themes are common such as demon statues with glowing eyes, tapestries

Oni Striker

depicting massacres, or golden sarcophagi complete with mummified occupants. To the unenlightened who can't appreciate the craftsmanship of such items, the local branch of the College of Recovery can be a pretty creepy place.

Actions which will improve your reputation in the College of Recovery include bypassing difficult obstacles, solving riddles, finding secret locations, and bringing back rare items for study.

Slayers' Lodge: This is an appropriate guild to join if your motivation for adventuring is to kill monsters or you want hints to deal with combat encounters, or hints about where to find magical weapons and offensive magical items during an adventure.

Slayers' Lodge caters to monster slayers who want to brag about their exploits and listeners eager to hear such stories of bravery. Slayers' Lodge keeps little in the way of written records, but every local branch is cluttered with trophies slain in the local area: taxidermy animals, mounted heads, hides, teeth, feathers, antlers, and reconstructed skeletons of local animals and monsters. Weapons and armor taken from intelligent adversaries are also on display, as well as paintings or tapestries of the battles. Just walking around the lodge can give you a good idea what kind of opposition to expect in the area. For more information, grab a drink and a slice of the game-meat roasting over the fire and sit down to listen to the storytellers recount tales of great battles, both ancient and recent. In addition to information about the monsters and villains in the local area, the storytellers also like to recount tales of powerful weapons rumored to be lying around.

Actions which will improve your reputation in Slayers' Lodge include killing dangerous and exotic monsters and bringing back trophies to display in the lodge. You need not land the killing blow yourself, but need to have actively participated in the battle. After all, when hunting dangerous monsters, a decoy who lures the monster out of its lair or a hexer who weakens the monster during the fight are also vital and exciting jobs.

8) Purchase starting equipment and figure out how to carry it.

During an adventure, there is a limit to how much you can do with your bare hands. It helps to have equipment to overcome challenges. In particular you'll want weapons and armor to help you overcome violent challenges. Some equipment, such as magical items, can only be obtained as rewards or the spoils of victory during an adventure. But there is also a fair about of useful mundane equipment

which can be purchased in cities and reasonably sized towns. This equipment is available for purchase during character generation. Later, after having accumulated more money through adventuring, it is possible to buy additional items from this list, provided you can find a store which has them in stock.

This section lists equipment commonly available in The Domain.

The economy of The Domain is based on coins. Every petty lord feels the need to mint his own coins, but because the value of a coin is determined by the amount of metal in it, not who's face is on it, any one coin is effectively equivalent to any other. For amounts worth less than one coin, a coin can be carefully cut into eight equal pieces, breaking the coin to make change. In Sandcastle a monetary amount listed as a number followed by "c" indicates coins; a number followed by "p" indicates pieces. Eight pieces equals one coin.

Starting Funds

When you first generate a character, you receive starting funds to spend on equipment. Any money left over after purchasing equipment becomes your initial available funds to be used in-game.

Level-0 characters receive 5 c to spend on starting equipment.
Higher level characters receive 40 c per starting level (40 x lv) to spend on starting equipment.

Quick-Build Starting Equipment

To save time you can choose to start with the following standard equipment, a balanced selection suitable for most characters.

Level-0 Standard Starting Equipment

Waterskin slung over shoulder
Belt pouch containing
  Trail rations (1 day)
  Tinderbox
  2 coins and 0 pieces
  Space for 0.5 kg of loose items
Choose 1 improvised weapon (small, large, or a torch) carried in hand

Level-1 Standard Starting Equipment
Leather armor
Bow slung over shoulder
Quiver hung from belt containing
  Arrows (x20)
Short sword hung from belt
Shoulder pack containing
  Bedroll
  Trail rations (2 days)
  Waterskin
  Space for 1 kg more gear
Belt pouch containing
  Grooming set
  Tinderbox
  6 coins and 3 pieces
  Space for 1 kg of loose items

Armor

	Cost	Armor Bonus	Armor Penalties	Mass
Leather armor	10 c	+1		4.5 kg
Scale mail	20 c	+2		20 kg
Chainmail	25 c	+3	D-1	25 kg
Shield	7 c	+1		3 kg

Notes:

Armor applies an armor bonus to your defense when worn.

Chainmail armor is heavy, so wearing chainmail applies a −1 penalty to your dexterity for all purposes other than calculating defense and BR resistance.

The mass of the armors is listed for the purposes of carrying or storing armor you find. You do not have to consider the literal mass of armor you are wearing, but some armor like chainmail (see above note), is heavy enough to hamper your movements when wearing it.

Elf
Energer

Weapons

	Cost	Damage	Notes	Mass
Improvised, large	0 c	1d3+1+S	2 handed	varies
Improvised, small	0 c	1d2+S	melee+thrown	varies
Arrows (x20)	1 c	--	used with bow or crossbow	1.5 kg
Bow	7 c	1d6	ranged, 2 handed	1 kg
Greatsword	20 c	2d6+S	2 handed	7 kg
Club	1 p	1d3+S		1.5 kg
Crossbow	10 c	1d6+2	ranged, 2 handed	2.5 kg
Dagger	2 c	1d3+S	melee+thrown	0.5 kg
Flail	7 c	1d6+1+S		2 kg
Hand ax	3 c	1d3+S	melee+thrown	2 kg
Long spear	5 c	1d6+2+S	2 handed	4 kg
Longsword	10 c	1d6+1+S/1d6+2+S	1 or 2 handed	2 kg
Mace	5 c	1d6+S		2.5 kg
Quarterstaff	2 p	1d6+S	2 handed	2 kg
Short sword	7 c	1d6+S		1.5 kg
Short spear	3 c	1d6+S	melee+thrown	2 kg
Torch	special	1d2	red energy	0.5 kg
Warhammer	10 c	1d6+1+S	melee+thrown	3.5 kg
Wrist blades	5 c	1d3+S		1 kg

Notes:

Damage indicates how many hp a target loses when struck by an attack with this weapon. Add your strength when determining the damage done by melee attacks.

Most weapons are melee weapons, meaning that they can be used to attack adjacent targets. Some weapons, such as short spears, can be wielded in hand or thrown at targets, these weapons are detonated as "melee+thrown." Bows and crossbows cannot target foes within melee range, but can target foes a distance away, so they are referred to as "ranged" attacks. Finally, some weapons are heavy, unwieldly, or complicated, requiring two hands to use, detonated as "2 handed." If a weapon doesn't have any notes, then it is a melee weapon wielded in one hand. Additional explanations for weapons with special rules are given below.

Notes on Indivdiual Weapons

Crossbow: It requires a minor action to load a crossbow and a major action to attack with it.

Longsword: A longsword sword is light enough to be wielded in one hand, but the hilt is large enough to be gripped with two hands. A longsword does 1d6+1+S damage when wielded in one hand and 1d6+2+S when wielded in two hands.

Torch: A torch is a special case of an improvised weapon. It deals red energy damage rather than normal damage. See the Damage section for more information about types of damage. Torches are typically sold in bundles of six for 1 p. You do not add your strength to the damage done with a torch. In a dark area, a torch casts light sufficient to effectively illuminate objects for an 8 meter radius around it. Seen from far away, in the dark with a clear line of sight, the light from a torch can be seen all the way to the horizon, approximately 5 km, but varies depending on elevation and local topography.

Wrist blades: Wrist blades consist of a set of one, two, or even three blades attached to the back of a tight-fitting glove. The blades are arranged so as to extend past the knuckles when the fist is clenched. The wrist blades can be used as a weapon while leaving the hand free

for complicated activity like climbing, casting a hex, or controlling an energy mote. It is possible to carry objects, even other weapons in the hand, but due to the weight and awkward size of the wrist blades, the hand can't make effective attacks with other weapons. Likewise, an item carried in that hand must be dropped before the wrist blades can used as weapons.

Supplies

	Cost	Notes	Mass
Backpack	2 c	(carries 15 kg of gear)	2 kg
Bedroll	1 p		2 kg
Belt pouch	4 p	(carries 2 kg of gear)	0.5 kg
Grappling hook	1 c		2 kg
Grooming set	3 c		0.5 kg
Horse	40 c		
Mess kit	2 p		0.5 kg
Oar	3 c		2.5 kg
Quiver	1 c	(carries 20 arrows)	0.5 kg
Rope (15 m)	5 c		2 kg
Rowboat	30 c		
Sack	1 p	(carries 7 kg of gear)	0.5 kg
Saddle	10 c		11 kg
Saddlebags	4 c	(carry 25 kg of gear)	3.5 kg
Shoulder pack	1 c	(carries 7 kg of gear)	1.5 kg
Shovel	2 c		2.5 kg
Skiff	100 c		
Tinderbox	1 c		0.5 kg
Tool set	8 c		2.5 kg
Trail rations/day	4 p		1 kg
Wagon	20 c		
Waterskin	1 c	(negligable mass when empty)	2 kg (full)

Grooming set: This small case holds a steel mirror, comb, razor blade, soap, and possibly one or two types of cosmetics or perfumes. Many different variants exist to suit the tastes of different genders and subspecies.

Oar: A set of oars is included in the price of a boat (rowboat or skiff, listed below). But oars may be broken or lost during an adventure, so oars can also be purchased separately as replacements or spares. In a pinch, an oar can be used as a two-handed improvised weapon.

Rowboat: This is a small watercraft with space for a rower, two passengers, and their gear. It can only be used in calm water on lakes, rivers, and past the breakwater. It must be rowed or drift with the current. It is not suitable for long journeys.

Skiff: This 10 m long watercraft can hold up to 10 occupants and their gear. It can be propelled by 2 characters rowing in tandem or by a simple sail. It can be used for day trips, or uncomfortably for an overnight trip. It can be used on lakes and rivers or in the ocean and can reach coastal islands.

Room & Board

Lodgings and food consistently cost 5 p per day (4 c 3 p per week) at the taverns, roadhouses, and inns frequented by adventurers. This price includes stabling and fodder for character's mount as well if applicable. Lodgings less expensive than this are normally not available. If characters want to enjoy a rich lifestyle after a particularly successful mission, they can easily spend two or three times this amount.

Carrying Gear

You have five locations where you can effectively store items on your person: one slung over each shoulder, one on each leg, and you can carry a belt pouch for small items. Carrying or strapping more than this to your person makes it difficult to move and difficult to find the item you need in the chaos of combat. Items hanging from a belt count as "leg" items, because they effectively prevent you from using any item strapped directly to the leg. All other items must either be carried in your hands, or stuffed into a pack. But a pack must also be carried on one (shoulder pack) or two (backpack) shoulders. You can also carry one belt pouch containing up to 2 kg of small items such as coins, keys, tools, or rations.

If you feel the need to carry more gear than this, you can carry a full sack (7 kg) in each hand.

Two-handed weapons can be carried (but not wielded effectively) in one hand, or strapped over a shoulder when not being used. A longsword (which can be wielded one-handed or two-handed) can be hung from a belt. Although wielded with only one hand, a shield or a short spear can't be hung from a belt and must be slung over a shoulder.

A rope with a grappling hook tied to the end counts as one item for the purpose of being slung over a shoulder or hung from a belt.

You can benefit from wearing only one suit of armor at a time. "Layering" armor doesn't provide any additional bonuses to defense. Likewise, you cannot layer magical armor to gain additional magical bonuses to defense or attribute checks. If a character somehow does end up wearing multiple suits of armor, the GM has the final say about which, if any, provides benefits and what penalties apply to dexterity or awareness checks, etc.

Individual coins have negligible mass, but when trying to carry back a hoard of coins, 50 coins have a mass of 0.5 kg. Because money in The Domain is based directly on the amount of metal contained, all treasure in the form of coins, pieces, or bullion is worth 100 c per kg.

9) Determine your defense, movement, and armor penalties based on the armor you purchased in step 8.

Wearing armor adds an armor bonus to your defense. A character's defense is equal to 10 plus his dexterity, plus the defense bonus based on his combat style and level, plus any armor bonuses from armor being worn or a shield being carried. (10 + D + db + armor+shield). Record this value in the defense space on your character sheet. It will be used when determining if enemy attacks hit or miss you.

On the downside, some armor is heavy enough to impede you when wearing it. This is represented as a penalty to dexterity and possibly awareness. Of the armor listed in the standard equipment available for purchase, leather and scale mail armor carry no penalties. But chainmail imposes a −1 penalty to your dexterity for all purposes other than calculating defense and BR resistance. Even heavier armor listed in the Game Masters' Manual (GMM) imposes penalties to both dexterity and awareness. If you are wearing chainmail or heavier armor, note these penalties in the armor penalties column next to the attributes on the character sheet. Remember to apply this penalty to all checks using that attribute, except for reactions using your BR resistance.

All player characters (human, dwarf, elf, and oni) start with a movement value of 10 m. This is how far you can move with a movement action. Actions and movement are explained in more detail in the Combat section.

Some special armor is also heavy enough to decrease your movement. (And some magical armor can actually increase your movement.) If you acquire a suit of special armor described in the GMM, you may have to change your movement value. Refer to the description of the armor to see if there are armor penalties or a change to your movement value.

20

10) Calculate the attack bonuses and damages for your weapons.

Next list the weapons you purchased in step 9 on the character sheet and calculate the total attack bonuses (abbreviated as "att") and damages for them. Calculate these attack bonuses and list them with the weapons for quick reference on the character sheet. For weapons that can be used either as melee or thrown weapons, remember to note the attack bonuses for both cases.

Damage is easy, simply copy the damages given on the equipment table into the appropriate spaces on the character sheet. At this point you can plug in your final strength attribute where "+S" is listed to save time when calculating later.

Some special weapons listed in the Game Masters' Manual (GMM) add a bonus to the attack bonus and damage values. When you acquire a magical weapon (or special non-magical weapon), be sure to include its bonuses when recording the weapon on your character sheet.

Melee Attacks

For energer, harrier, hexer, and level-0 characters, the attack bonus when using melee weapons is one half the character level (rounded up) plus strength.

$$att = +(lv/2)+S$$

For striker characters, the attack bonus when using a melee weapon (their preferred attack) is the character level plus strength.

$$att = +lv+S$$

Ranged Attacks

For all characters, the attack bonus when using a ranged weapon (including thrown weapons) is one half the character level (rounded up) plus awareness.

$$att = +(lv/2)+A$$

Magical Attacks

Energer and hexer characters can use magic to attack targets without using weapons.

The attack bonus for an energer's energy based ranged attacks is equal to his level plus his awareness.

$$att = +lv+A$$

The enerer's energy explosion ability and a hexer's hexes do not require an attack check. Instead, the targets are allowed a reaction to try to avoid the effects. The TN for this reaction is 10 plus the level and key attribute of the character making the magical attack. The key attribute is awareness for energers and presence for hexers.

Energy Explosion TN = 10 + lv +A
Hex TN = 10 + lv +P

If you are playing an energer or hexer character, note these values on your character sheet for easy reference during game play.

11) Fleshing Out Your Character

You now have a character with attributes, a subspecies, combat style, secondary statistics, skills, a guild, and equipment. But there is much more to a character than just the game mechanics. For starters what does he or she look like? What kind of personality? Likes and dislikes? Moral values?

Adventurers don't just spring into existence; they have their own life histories leading up to the first adventure.
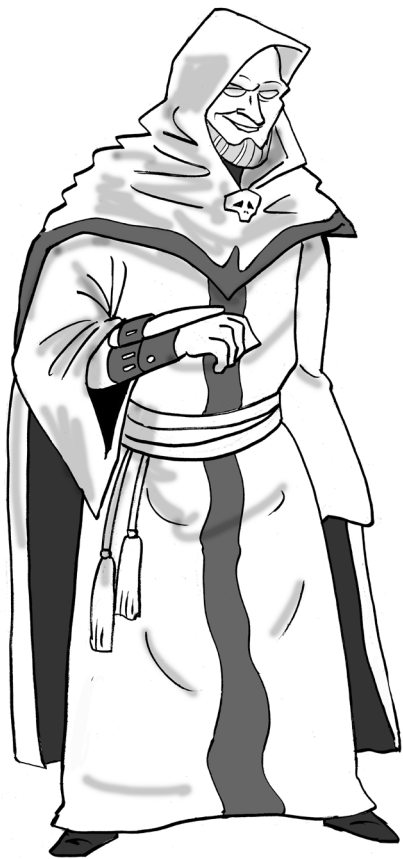
Human Hexer

What kind of culture does your character come from? Most of The Domain is a northern European fantasy setting, but it also contains a hodgepodge of other quasihistorical and non-human cultures from popular imagination, so it could be possible to have a party comprised of a medieval viking dwarf, a Renaissance swashbuckler, an elven engineer from Atlantis, a pharaoh-princess cow-faced oni, an energer modelled after a wild-west gunslinger, and a shogunate samurai. (Despite the apparent differences in culture and technological sophistication, all parts of The Domain use the same standard equipment, skills, guilds, and combat styles.) How did your character fit into that culture? Why did your character leave to begin life as an adventurer?

You can create as much or as little backstory for your character as you would like. A couple sentences will suffice, or you could write a full novella. Just remember, the backstory is what happened before the real adventure starts, so don't make it too exciting and dangerous. Once you have an idea about the type of character you would like to play, talk to the GM and figure out a way to make the character concept fit into the game the GM is planning.

Playing the Game

Encounters, Adventures, and Campaigns

Now that you have your character, it's time to band together with the other players' characters and set out on an adventure. In Sandcastle adventures are broken into a series of encounters. An encounter is like one scene out of a movie or book. The party is confronted by some obstacle that they must overcome. This could be as simple as choosing which path to follow at an unmarked intersection, or as complicated as swimming across a moat and grappling up the side of a wall under a barrage of arrow fire.

At the start of an encounter, the GM describes the situation. The players then decide what they want their characters to do in response to the obstacle and the GM decides if any attributes checks are necessary. If any GM controlled characters are active in the encounter, the GM decides how they react to the party's actions. Once any needed dice rolls have been made, the GM adjudicates the outcome and describes the results to the players. The players then decide how to react to this new situation and the process repeats until either the players are satisfied with the results or something has rendered them incapable of changing the situation; for example the goblin they were chasing got away, or the party was beaten unconscious in a fight.

Once an encounter has been resolved, the party will have to decide what to do next, usually involving moving to a new location. The party then continues on its way until it encounters another obstacle, and a new encounter starts.

Encounters can be grouped into three (non-exclusive) categories: role playing, obstructions, and combat.

Role playing encounters involve talking to GM controlled characters (GMC). The party may need information from the GMC, or want to convince the GMC to do something for the party. These encounters are normally handled through speaking in-character, possibly augmented with attribute checks to attempt to charm, deceive, or intimidate the GMC, or checks to resist attempts on the part of the GMC to charm, deceive, or intimidate the party.

Obstruction encounters are things which come between the party and their goal. This could be a physical obstruction like a locked door or a raging river; or an information obstruction like trying to find a secret door; finding and identifying the ingredients for a magical brew; or a logistics problem like how to get around a waterfall when rowing a boat upstream (or not falling over the waterfall if going down stream). Adventures in Sandcastle also include many deliberately placed obstructions like boobytraps and coded messages. Obstruction encounters are usually resolved by a combination of thinking, planning, teamwork, and attribute checks, often involving skills.

Combat encounters are fights; something is actively trying to hurt the party and the party is hitting back. Combat is handled in detail in its own section.

Not all encounters fit easily into these three categories. For example, if someone accidentally knocks open a cage of rare birds in the marketplace and the party has to try to get them back, this could be seen as a role playing encounter, trying to coax the birds back; or as an obstruction encounter, trying to trap the birds; or as a type of non-lethal combat trying to catch the birds without hurting them. Encounter types are useful generalizations, not rigid categories.

A group of encounters stung together in a story about achieving a goal is referred to as an adventure. Rescuing a hostage being held captive by a tribe of ogres in a ruined castle might involve tracking the ogres through the mountains to find the castle, climbing over the walls, sneaking past the sentries (or quietly picking them off), locating the hostage's cell, overcoming the guards, and opening the cell door. There may be other encounters not directly related to this goal: semidomesticated wolves lying outside the castle waiting for table scraps, a crafty ogre shaman who tries to convince the party to work for him instead of completing the mission, a dramatic fight with the ogre chief, an abandoned demonic worship alter in the ruins, or maybe the hostage refuses to leave until the party recovers her jewelry from a strongbox in a different part of the castle.

Most game groups will play through a single adventure in one game session lasting anywhere from a couple of hours to a full day. Groups which like to plan and discuss in detail may take two or three sessions to complete an adventure. Between adventures the party will have time to rest and recuperate, possibly going up in level thanks to the experience gained on the last adventure.

A group of adventures strung together to tell the story of the player characters' exploits is called a campaign. The adventures in a campaign may be completely self-contained and episodic, or there could be reoccurring themes and GM characters. A game group may continue a campaign for months or years. It is also possible to play nothing but independent one-shot adventures with new characters each time.

Combat

Combat is one of the most dangerous situations your character will encounter regularly. As such it is handled in somewhat more detail, so that even if your character falls during the combat, you'll have the comfort of knowing the encounter was adjudicated fairly.

Most of the time it suffices to know roughly where your character is, or roughly how long it takes to complete an action. But in combat where swords are swinging, arrows are flying, and energy explosions are going off, a couple of meters or a couple of seconds can mean the difference between life and death. So time and position are tracked more exactly during combat.

Time and Action

For simplicity the chaotic flow of combat is broken into turns. During a turn one side will have a chance to act, and then the other side will have a chance to act, like during a chess match. Unlike chess where only one piece can move at a time, in Sandcastle all of the characters on one side of a fight can act simultaneously. One turn during which both sides have a chance to act corresponds to roughly 6 seconds of time in the world of Sandcastle, so that there are 10 turns in 1 minute. Having the players describe their actions and adjudicating the outcomes takes significantly more than 6 seconds of real world "wall clock" time.

Sometimes it will be obvious which side gets to act first, like when giant spiders drop down out of the trees onto the characters. Other times it will not be clear, like when the party rounds a corner and is confronted by a sentry, or when a role playing encounter goes wrong and both sides try to draw their swords the fastest. In these cases, both sides roll a single die, and the side that rolls the highest wins. In the case of a tie, give the first chance to act to the PC party. The order in which the player characters take their actions normally shouldn't matter, so let the players decide among themselves, like letting the hexer go first to weaken the opposition before the others attack. If there is a disagreement among the players, like a friendly rivalry to see who can draw first blood, have the players both roll a die, similar to deciding which side goes first.

During each turn you can take only a limited number of actions. You can take one major action, one minor action, and one interrupt action. Harrier characters gain extra interrupt actions. In addition, there are free actions, things so simple that they don't even require a minor action. You can take as many free actions as the GM deems reasonable. You can also make as many reactions as necessary.

A major action is something that requires concentration: swinging a sword, firing a bow, directing an energy mote, reading a long inscription, or working a lock. A minor action is something that doesn't require concentration and can be done in tandem with a major action: walking your movement value in meters (normally 10 m for most characters), opening a normal door, glancing around a room, jumping down a short distance, or controlling your mount. Free actions are even simpler than minor actions: dropping an item, speaking a short sentence, gesturing to an ally. An interrupt action is similar to a major action in that it can be an attack or complex action, but you can only make an interrupt action when a target leaves itself exposed or does something else to create an opportunity. Rules explaining what kinds of situations create the opportunity for an interrupt action are given in the action descriptions. A reaction is reflex action to protect yourself when targeted by adverse effects like a hex, energy explosion, or pit trap.

A list of the most common actions is given below, with notation to indicate what kind of action (major, minor, interrupt, free) is usually required to use it. In addition, each combat style has a list of special actions which characters belonging to that combat style can use. Some actions, including many special actions, require that you expend power points (pp) as part of the attempt to conduct the action. These points are lost even if the action fails.

In the end it is up to the GM to determine what type of action is needed to conduct a specific activity, or if an activity is too complicated to be conducted in the din of combat.

Actions

Assist [Major]: You can use a major action to help another character succeed on a check. Declare which character you are assisting, and what action you are assisting with. If the target attempts the designated action before the start of your next turn, he gains a +1 bonus to the attribute check. The GM has the final say about whether effective aid can be rendered or not.

Attack [Major]: Attacking a target with either a melee or a ranged weapon requires a major action. See the section on Position and Movement for more details about the difference between melee and ranged attacks. You can attack with a weapon you are holding in one or both of your hands. If you are not holding a weapon, you must first use a minor action to draw and ready it (see Ready/Store Item). If you are holding a normal bow, drawing and nocking the arrow are included as part of the attack action. A crossbow however requires a minor action to load. See Attack Check rules later in this section for information about how to determine if an attack is successful, and what the effects are.

To make a melee attack, make a strength check with the bonus granted by your combat style. To make a ranged attack, make an awareness check with the bonus granted by your combat style. If your check is equal to or greater than the target's defense, the attack hits. See the Damage section to determine how much damage the hit does.

Control Mount/Vehicle [Minor or Major]: If you are fighting while riding on a horse, other animal, or while driving a vehicle like a wagon, you must use a minor action each turn to control the mount/vehicle. In normal circumstances, no check is needed, but you must have one hand free to control it. In difficult situations (calming a panicked mount, moving over rough or steep terrain) a presence check may be needed to control a mount/vehicle. When controlling a mount/vehicle you can cause it to move up to its normal movement value as part of the action to control it. If you use both your major and minor action to control the mount/vehicle, you can cause it to move up to double its normal movement value. If you do not use a minor action to control a mount/vehicle, it goes out of control. If a living mount or horse drawn wagon goes out of control, it can usually be trusted to act rationally, moving in the same direction and speed as its

was last ordered, or coming gradually to a stop. A non-living magical or technological vehicle which goes out of control will start swerving erratically, and may crash depending on the surroundings.

Drop [Free]: You can drop a held item to the ground as a free action.

Heroic Save [Interrupt, Cost 1 pp]: As an interrupt action, when a character near you is targeted by an attack but before the dice for the attack are rolled, you can spend 1 pp to move up to your full movement value and place yourself in the target's location. (If playing on a grid, move the character you are saving to an adjacent empty square.) You become the new target of the attack. You can also use heroic save to push a character out of other dangerous situations, such as a pit trap or the path of a runaway wagon. In these cases, you suffer the effects of the hazard in place of the original target.

Hustle [Major]: When you hustle, you can use your major action to perform a second minor action during your turn, such as making two move actions, or opening a door and moving into the room, or pulling a magic potion out of a belt pouch and drinking it. Often a hexer will foregoing using his major action to make an attack in order to cast an additional hex.

Manipulate Object [Major or Minor]: As a minor action, you can perform simple actions with an object such opening a door, drinking a potion, pulling a lever, or kicking over a bucket. Complicated manipulation that requires concentration such as untying a knot, opening a lock, or carefully setting down a delicate glass vase should instead require a major action, and possibly an attribute check. In the end it is the GM's decision what kind of action is needed to manipulate an object.

Mount/Dismount [Minor]: As a minor action you can mount or dismount from a vehicle or mount.

Move [Minor]: As a minor action, you can move up to your full movement value. See the next section on Position and Movement for more details about movement rates.

Ready/Store Item [Minor]: As a minor action you can take out or put away an item slung over your shoulder or fastened to a leg or belt (Drawing a sword, strapping on a shield, shouldering a bow etc.). You can also ready/store items in a belt pouch. Items stored in packs and sacks are not readily accessible, and you should avoid hunting through bags during combat if possible. If you don't have time to put an item away properly, you can drop it to the ground as a free action.

Parting Shot [Interrupt]: If an enemy you are engaging in melee combat moves beyond melee range, you may make a final melee attack as an interrupt action. See the next section on Position and Movement for the definition of melee range.

Wait [Delays Major Action]: Instead of acting, you can wait to see what the opposition does first. Then, as the GM describes the actions of the GMC, you can cut in and take your major action at any time. The last action the GM described is completed and the effects are resolved before your action takes effect. A common example of waiting is overwatch: waiting for a target to appear and then attacking it with a ranged attack.

Position and Movement

Like time, position and movement are handled numerically in Sandcastle. The Sandcastle combat system is designed to be played on a square grid, like chess or shogi. Each square represents a 2 m x 2 m area in the world of Sandcastle. Of course, the characters aren't aware of the grid, it is simply a useful game mechanic for quantitating their positions.

Only one character can occupy a given 2 m square; characters in Sandcastle observe social distancing at all times. Large creatures, like giants or dragons, may occupy more than one square. Unlike chess or shogi, combat in Sandcastle rarely happens on an empty field. There could be walls, furniture, streams, trees, fallen logs, boulders, open pits, or other objects which shape the flow of combat. These items are also placed into discrete grid squares. Thin items like doors or curtains might correspond to the edges between squares. Some objects may block movement into that square entirely, like a boulder or wall. Other objects may make it difficult but not impossible to move through a square, like a table that must be climbed over or crawled

Common Movement Values	
Most flying creatures, including dragons	20 m (10 squares)
Horse	20 m (10 squares)
Canine, Chimera	14 m (7 squares)
Character in speed armor (See GMM)	14 m (7 squares)
Unarmored or lightly armored human, dwarf, elf, oni character	10 m (5 squares)
Homunculus	8 m (4 squares)
Snake	6 m (3 squares)
Character in plate mail armor (See GMM)	6 m (3 squares)

under. In the end it is up to the GM to adjudicate how these objects affect the occupied square.

All characters have a movement value, the number of meters the character can move as a minor action. Most characters have a movement value of 10 m, corresponding to 5 squares on the combat grid. This value might change if the character is wearing a suit of special armor described in the Game Masters' Manual (GMM). On the previous page is a list of the movement values for common characters and monsters for reference.

Diagonal movement is possible, but every second square moved diagonally counts as 2 squares because moving diagonally represents a longer distance than moving straight. The table below summarizes the amount of movement that must be expended to move diagonally during your turn.

Diagonal Moves	Total # of Movement Squares Expended
1st	1
2nd	3
3rd	4
4th	6
5th	7
6th	9
7th	10
8th	12
etc.	

You can move through a square occupied by a character friendly to you, but you cannot stop in a square occupied by another character. If you do not have enough movement left to move back out of an occupied square at the end of your movement, then you must stop before entering the occupied square. You cannot move through a square occupied by a hostile character.

Characters in adjacent squares are said to be within melee range of each other, or said to be engaged in melee. Each square has eight adjacent squares, four touching side to side and four touching corner to corner.

Ranged attacks can target opponents farther away than melee range, out to a certain maximum range specified by the type of attack. You cannot use a ranged attack against a target within melee range of you. The maximum range for thrown weapons is 8 m (4 squares). The maximum effective range for a bow or crossbow is 24 m (12 squares). Energer and hexer magical attacks also have a range of 24 m. Unlike normal ranged attacks, energy and hexer special

Attack Ranges	
Melee	adjacent squares only
Thrown weapons	8 m (4 squares)
Bows & crossbows	24 m (12 squares)
Magical attacks	24 m (12 squares)

actions can be used on targets within melee range.

Determine range the same way as counting movement, using the direct line between you and the target. If there is a significant obstacle along the direct path between you and the target (like a wall or a large tree), then you cannot attack that target.

For determining the area of an energy explosion, or other wide area attack, use the same method of determining distance as for a ranged attack, but start from the center of the explosion, not the attacker.

Large Creatures and Wide Area Attacks

If any part of a large creature (i.e., any square occupied by that creature) is within the area affected by a wide area attack, such as an energy explosion or dragon's fiery breath, , then the creature takes full damage from the attack. If two or more squares occupied by the creature are in the affected area, the creature still takes only the normal amount of damage.

Mounts and Vehicles

A character riding on a mount or vehicle occupies the same square as the mount/vehicle. Large vehicles like wagons or boats may occupy more than one square and accommodate more than one passenger. In these cases, divide the vehicle itself into 2 m x 2 m squares and decide where each passenger is riding.

Sandcastle rules only cover "open" vehicles like wagons and rowboats which provide no cover to occupants, but also do not block the occupants' view of their surroundings. When attacking a mounted character, the attacker must decide whether to attack the character or the mount/vehicle. For wide area attacks, if a square occupied by the character and mount/vehicle is caught in the affected area, then both take damage.

Abstract Position

If it's not possible to use a combat grid, for example when playing through an online meeting platform, it is normally

sufficient to use a rough descriptive system for determining position. Generally fights break into five regions: the front line where the main melee is taking place; a left flank and a right flank where it might be possible to slip around the melee if the flanks aren't being guarded; and two backfields where characters can make ranged attacks towards the main melee, flanks, or the opposition backfield.

Attack Checks

To attack a target, make an attribute check and add all applicable modifiers. Add half your level (rounded up) as a bonus to your attack checks. If attacking with your preferred attack, add your full level instead. If your total check result after all modifiers is equal to or greater than the target's defense, the attack hits successfully; determine damage as described in the following section. If your total for the attribute check is less than the target's defense, then the attack misses.

For a melee attack make a strength check.

For a ranged attack make an awareness check.

Your total modifier to an attack check (based on your level, final attributes, and preferred attack if relevant) is denoted by "att."

Defense

A character's defense is equal to 10 plus his dexterity, plus the defense bonus based on his combat style and level, plus any armor bonuses from armor being worn or a shield being carried. (10 + D + db + armor+shield). A monster's defense will be listed in its description.

Damage

Being a hero means facing a certain amount of danger. In addition to the thrilling near misses, there are also times that you're not missed and get hurt. These cuts, bruises, bashes, gashes, burns, toxin reactions, unholy chills, and other unpleasantries are referred to collectively as "damage." Damage is measured in hit points (hp). The more powerful an attack, the more hp it does. The more hp a character or monster has, the more damage it can withstand before collapsing.

For most attacks, the amount of damage delt is determined by a dice roll. This represents the random chance of landing a solid blow or a grazing hit. There may be additional modifiers added to the roll. What dice to roll and what modifiers to apply is listed in the description of the weapon, special action, monster, or hazard.

For melee attacks and attacks with thrown weapons, add your strength to the damage. (This includes all standard weapons in the Equipment List other than bow, crossbow, and torch.) A successful hit always does at least 1 hp of damage, even if your strength is –1 or less, or other penalties would reduce the damage to less than 1. Damage is classified as either normal damage or energy damage. Normal damage represents physical assaults. Things which cause damage by means other than physically smashing or cutting you are collectively referred to as energy. Energy damage is further divided into 6 types, each identified by a color: red, blue, green, yellow, orange, and purple. Each color has an opposite (red vs. blue, green vs. yellow, purple vs. orange).

Red	If an attack is hot, fire, or lava, then it is probably red.
Blue	If an attack is cold, water, ice, or wind, then it is probably blue.
Green	If an attack is acidic, bacterial, poisonous, rotting, or radioactive, then it is probably green.
Yellow	If an attack is desiccating, petrifying, electrical, or sand, then it is probably yellow.
Orange	If an attack is bright, good, sunlight, soul, ki, or cleansing, then it is probably orange.
Purple	If an attack is dark, evil, corrupting, haunting, or psychic, then it is probably purple.

Not all energy attacks are magical; a common torch does red damage, and a poisonous snake bite does green damage.

If you have to guess what color a certain type of energy damage is, your first gut reaction is the correct answer.

Many types of energy attacks deal both primary and automatic damage. Getting burned or poisoned for example is going to hurt at least a little, this is represented by the automatic damage; but through quick reflexes, a strong constitution, or sheer willpower it might be possible to shrug off the worst of the effects. In these cases, the energy attack description will include a TN for a reaction to avoid the primary damage. Use the appropriate energy resistance calculated as part of the secondary statistics in step 5 of character generation.

Energy Colors and Resistances		
Abbreviation	Colors	Relevant Attribute
BR	Red/Blue	Dexterity
GY	Green/Yellow	Endurance
OP	Orange/Purple	Willpower

You can add either one half your level, rounded up (lv/2) or your full level (lv) to reactions to avoid the primary damage of energy attacks. Which types of reactions use +lv and which use +lv/2 are listed on the combat style chart in the Character Generation section (and also in a table at the end of this rules book for easy reference).

Hardened or Vulnerable

Some creatures are more or less vulnerable to different kinds of damage. If a creature is hardened against a certain color of damage, it takes only half damage (rounded up) from attacks of that color. If a creature is vulnerable to a certain color of damage, it takes double damage from attacks of that color. It is also possible to be hardened or vulnerable to normal damage.

In general, if a creature has an attack that deals a certain color of energy damage, or is hardened against a certain color, then the creature is probably vulnerable to the opposite color.

Losing hp (hit points)

When a successful attack is made against you, subtract the damage from your current hit points. Losing hp doesn't adversely affect you until you lose all of your hp. If an attack deals damage equal to or exceeding your current hp, you drop to 0 hp (no negative numbers). When you drop to 0 hp, you collapse. Maybe not completely unconscious, but incapable of any meaningful action.

Holding Your Breath

When you are swimming underwater or aware that a room is filling with poisonous gas, you can hold your breath to avoid the effects. You can hold your breath for a number of turns equal to 10 plus your endurance (10 + E). Double this duration if you have forewarning and can spend a turn pre-breathing to build up oxygen. While holding your breath you don't suffer any negative effects from being underwater or being exposed to poisonous gas, etc. After this amount of time has passed, you involuntarily inhale and suffer the consequences. Inhaling while submerged in water, quicksand, magical brew, or another liquid means that you start to drown; you immediately drop to 0 hp and will die if not fished out quickly. If you cannot inhale

because you are being squeezed by a constrictor snake or hangman's noose, you immediately drop to 0 hp and will die if not freed quickly.

Dying and Healing

In Sandcastle, the difference between a casualty and a fatality is which side controls the field at the end of the battle. The winning side can patch up their wounded and carry them back to safety. The losers are left for dead or mercifully finished off (possibly eaten) by the winners. Sometimes the victors may decide to save their opponents, for example as hostages to be interrogated or ransomed, or if the villagers who attacked the party were actually good people being mind-controlled by a warlock.

Resting, Recovering hp and pp

After a week of rest and recovery, a wounded character returns to full hp and pp, ready for the next adventure.

There are also some magical items which will restore lost hp or pp instantaneously. Even when using items which restore hp or pp magically, it is not possible to gain more than your full amount of hp or pp. This is your maximum amount, representing uninjured good health and adequate rest.

Experience

Now that you've survived an adventure and recovered from your wounds, you're ready to set off on a new adventure. You've probably learned from the adversities of your previous endeavors and are now better prepared to face new trials. In Sandcastle, adventurers honing their abilities and growing in power and wisdom is represented by accumulating experience points (xp).

At the end of each adventure the GM will award xp to characters who participated in the adventure. All characters in the group receive the same amount of experience (except for catchup points described below). Characters receive 1 xp each, just for having survived the adventure. If the party succeeded in its goal during the adventure, each character receives and additional xp (total 2 xp). The GM is the final arbitrator of whether or not the party succeeded.

If the characters in the group have different total amounts of experience, any character with less experience than other characters will receive an additional 1 xp to catch up. This helps if someone had to miss a game session, or joined the group late, or if someone had to start a new character after the previous one got killed.

Experience & Character Advancement

Level	Minimum xp
0	0
1	1
2	3
3	6
4	10
5	15

After receiving experience at the end of an adventure, add them to the running total of all the xp the character has ever received and compare your xp total to the chart above. If your total is equal to or greater than the minimum xp needed for a higher level, you advance to that level. In preparation for the next game session, recalculate your secondary statistics based on your new level.

When creating a character of level 1 or higher, the character starts with the minimum number of xp needed for that level, as indicated in the chart above.

On the provided Sandcastle character sheet, xp are represented by circles to be filled in as you accumulate xp. On the character sheet, start filling in circles from the left; one circle for each xp. Your current level is the highest level with no remaining unfilled circles to its left.

Special Actions

The proceeding rules are general, applying to all characters. This section explains the special actions available to each combat style which allow them to push beyond their normal limits to excel at their various roles in combat.

Energer Special Actions

The hallmark of energers is their ability to invoke magical energies to attack enemies or create protective shields.

Using these abilities (with the exception of energy shunt) requires first creating an energy mote to act as the catalyst for the more dramatic magical effects. Creating, manipulating, or using a mote requires speaking magical incantations and making intricate hand movements. So these actions can only be performed when you are able to speak and have at least one hand free. You cannot be carrying anything in your free hand when creating or manipulating an energy mote.

For most energer abilities (with the exceptions of create mote and energy shunt), you can choose how many pp to expend when using the ability. You must spend at least 1 pp and can spend up to your level in pp on a single use. The number of pp you expend affects the calculations to determine the results of the special action. The more points spent, the more potent the results; but this also depletes your reserve of pp more quickly. In addition, these energy based abilities will have the same color as the mote used to create them. Many monsters are hardened or vulnerable against certain colors of energy, so an energer must be a tactician, deciding what color of mote to create and when and how many pp to expend.

Create Mote [Minor]: As a minor action, you can create a mote of pure energy which hovers near you and glows with magical light. A mote has no physical substance. It is about 10 cm in size and can appear as a simple ball of light, a glowing skull, a burning eye, a rune of light, a winged fairy, or any other shape you and the GM can agree on.

Creating a mote does not require expending power points (pp), but using a mote to produce an energy effect will require pp. You can only maintain one energy mote at a time. At level 1 choose one color of energy; energy motes you create are always this color. At level 3 select a 2nd color; you can now choose which color to use when you create an energy mote. At level 5 choose a 3rd color. A mote can only be one color at a time. You must use a minor action to change the color of a mote. You can dismiss a mote without using it as a free action.

A mote provides the same amount of illumination as a torch (8 meter radius). You can reduce this light to almost nothing or return it to full brightness as a free action. This light is tinted to match the color of the energy (orange, green, red, etc.).

Energy Explosion [Major, cost: 1~lv pp]: As a major action you can expend a number of pp equal to or less than your level and cause your mote to fly straight towards an area up to 24 meters away. Once the mote reaches the designated area it explodes, blasting all targets in the area with energy. The radius of the explosion is 2 meters (1 combat square) for every pp spent to create the explosion (pp x2 m). The automatic damage is equal to the number of pp used and the primary damage is 1d3 for each pp used. Any allies of yours who are caught in this area are also affected by the damage, so be careful where you set off an energy explosion. Targets can attempt a reaction check to avoid the primary damage. The resistance used for this reaction is based on the color of energy used to create the explosion. The TN for this reaction is 10 + your level + your awareness (TN = 10 + lv + A). Regardless of whether or not

any targets take damage from the explosion, the mote and expended pp are lost.

Energy Shield [Major or Interrupt, cost: 1~lv pp]: As a major action, you can expend a number of pp equal to or less than your level and cause your mote to expand into a 2-meter diameter sphere protecting you or another character up to 24 m away from energy attacks. You can also use energy shield as an interrupt action to protect yourself when you are targeted by an energy based attack. You must declare that you are using energy shield before the GM reveals whether or not the attack was successful, and the shield will take effect before damage is determined. The shield's hp total is 3 times the number of pp used to create it (pp x3).

After being created, the energy shield moves with the protected character. The shield lasts until it is destroyed, you create a new energy mote, or you are reduced to 0 hp.

Energy attacks against the protected character must first overcome the shield. When the protected character takes damage from energy, first subtract the damage from the shield's hp. It is not possible to recharge a shield's lost hp. If the shield is reduced to 0 hp, any remaining damage is applied to the protected character. The shield is hardened against (takes half damage from) energy of the same color as the mote the shield was created from. The shield is vulnerable to (takes double damage from) the opposite color.

Attacks which deal normal damage are unaffected by an energy shield.

Energy Shot [Major, cost: 1~lv pp]: As a major action you can expend a number of pp equal to or less than your level and cause your mote to fly straight towards a target up to 24 meters away. This is treated as a ranged attack, using your awareness and preferred attack bonus (att = +lv+A). If the attack hits, roll 1d6 for each pp expended in the attack and add the results together to determine the damage. Regardless of whether or not the attack hits, the mote and expended pp are lost.

Energy Shunt [Reaction, cost 1 pp]: When you successfully use a reaction to avoid the primary damage of an energy based attack, you can expend 1 pp to negate the automatic damage from the attack as well.

Multi-Shot [Major, cost: 1~lv pp]: As a major action you can expend a number of pp equal to or less than your level and cause your mote to break into multiple fragments and fly towards different targets up to 24 meters away. This is treated as a ranged attack, using your

awareness and preferred attack bonus (att = +lv+A). You can simultaneously attack a number of targets equal to the number of pp expended. Make one attack check and compare it to the defense of each target. If an attack hits, it deals 1d6 points of energy damage. Regardless of whether or not any of the attacks hit, the mote and expended pp are lost.

Harrier Special Actions

Harriers rely on their quick reflexes to keep them out of trouble, and let them exploit even the smallest opening in the opposition's defenses. They have more interrupt actions than the other combat styles and a selection of special actions based on interrupt actions allowing them to take advantage of opportunities others would miss. Some of these abilities allow them to move extra distance so that they can reposition themselves in the most advantageous location as the chaotic flow of combat changes.

Cut and Run [Interrupt]: When an opponent in melee combat with you takes damage from any source, you may use an interrupt action to move up to your full movement value. If the opponent, or anyone else within melee range of you, has an interrupt action remaining, he can use it in response to your movement.

Dogged Pursuit [Interrupt]: When an opponent moves out of melee range with you, you can forgo using an interrupt action to make a parting shot melee attack against the opponent and instead use an interrupt action to move up to your full movement value to follow the opponent.

Energy Shunt [Reaction, cost 1 pp]: When you successfully use a reaction to avoid the primary damage of an energy attack, you can expend 1 pp to negate the automatic damage from the attack as well.

Fleet Footed [Interrupt]: When you use a minor action to move your full movement value, you can use an interrupt action (on yourself) to move up to your full movement value again.

Follow-up Strike [Interrupt]: When an opponent in melee combat with you takes damage from another source not related to you (such as an attack by one of your allies), you may use an interrupt action to make a melee attack against that opponent.

Hexer Special Actions

Hexers use magical effects known as hexes. A hex doesn't directly damage the target but gives the target bad luck for a short period of time (one turn). This bad luck is

represented in game mechanics as a penalty to one of the target's numerical statistics. Within the world of Sandcastle, how exactly a hex achieves these results through tainting the target's aura or arranging an unfavorable mana flow around the target is an academic question with no consensus, even among hexers; the term 'hex' just says it all. In addition to hexes, this combat style also has the ability to drain the target's reserves of power points, as well as the ability to neutralize the hexes of others.

Counter Hex [Interrupt]: As an interrupt action, when you or another character up to 24 meters away which you are aware of and can see is affected by a hex (fails a HR reaction), you can attempt to counter the hex. Make an unskilled presence check against a target number equal to the original TN for the hex resistance (HR) reaction. If the presence check is successful, the original hex has no effect on the target character. In the case of multi-attack hex and multi-defense hex, other targets are still affected normally by the hex.

Countering a hex requires speaking magical incantations and making intricate hand movements. So these actions can only be performed with you are able to speak and have at least one hand free. You cannot be carrying anything in your free hand when countering a hex.

Hex [Minor]: As a minor action, you can place a hex on a target up to 24 meters away that you are aware of and can see. The target must make a hex resistance (HR) reaction with a target number equal to 10 + your level + your presence (TN = 10 + lv + P). If the reaction fails, the target suffers a penalty until the start of your next turn. A target can only suffer from one of each type of hex at a time (for example, only one attack hex), but can be affected by different hexes at the same time (for example, an attack hex, and a move hex). The different kinds of hexes and the associated penalties are listed below.

Casting a hex requires speaking magical incantations and making intricate hand movements. So these actions can only be performed with you are able to speak and have at least one hand free. You cannot be carrying anything in your free hand when casting a hex.

A character targeted by a hex experiences a creepy feeling of doom. He doesn't necessarily know where the hex came from, but knows whether or not he was able to successfully resist the effects. Likewise, since all characters in Sandcastle have at least rudimentary magical skills, they can sense that "somethings not right" when a nearby character (up to 24 meters away) is targeted or under the effects of a hex. In terms of game mechanics, the effects of a hex are not "secret," so the GM and player of a hexer

character can explicitly state when a hex is attempted and whether or not it is successful in front of the other players to keep game play moving.

Attack Hex: If the HR resistance reaction fails, the target suffers a penalty equal to one half your level, rounded up, on all attack checks until the start of your next turn.

Defense Hex: If the HR resistance reaction fails, the target suffers a penalty equal to one half your level, rounded up, to defense until the start of your next turn.

Move Hex: If the HR resistance reaction fails, the target's speed is reduced by 4 meters until the start of your next turn.

Multi-Attack Hex: Choose a number of targets up to one half your level, rounded up. Each target must make a HR resistance reaction. If the reaction fails, that target suffers a −1 penalty on all attack checks until the start of your next turn.

Multi-Defense Hex: Choose a number of targets up to one half your level, rounded up. Each target must make a HR resistance reaction. If the reaction fails, that target suffers a −1 penalty to defense until the start of your next turn.

Power Drain [Major]: As a major action you can attempt to drain power points from a target. Make a melee attack (att = +(lv/2)+S) using your hand against the target. This attack does no hp damage, but if the attack is successful, you can expend 1 pp to cause the target to lose 1d3+1 pp. You do not gain the power points lost by the target, they simply evaporate, much the same way as a normal attack reduces the target's hp.

Striker Special Actions

A striker's role in combat is straight forward: engage the enemy in melee combat and inflict damage. The striker combat style special actions reflect this strategy, giving the striker opportunities to make additional attacks, do more damage with an attack, or prevent enemies from disengaging from melee.

Backswing [Minor]: If you make a melee attack using a major action and miss, you can immediately use your minor action (if you haven't spent it already) to make a second melee attack against the same target.

Counter Strike [Interrupt]: When an opponent makes an unsuccessful melee attack against you, you can use an interrupt action to make a melee attack against that opponent.

Hit Hard [Major, cost 1 pp]: As part of using a major action to make a melee attack, you can choose to expend 1 pp to add double your level (instead of the normal level x 1 bonus) to that attack (att = +(lv x2) +S). If the attack hits successfully, you also add your level as a bonus to the resulting damage. This damage is the same type as the weapon you are using.

Pin Down [Interrupt]: When you successfully use the parting shot interrupt action to attack a target which is moving out of melee range with you, you can choose to prevent the target's movement, forcing it to remain in melee combat with you, rather than doing damage with a parting shot attack.

Vengeance Strike [Interrupt, cost 1 pp]: After an opponent makes a successful melee attack against you, you can expend 1 pp and use an interrupt action to make a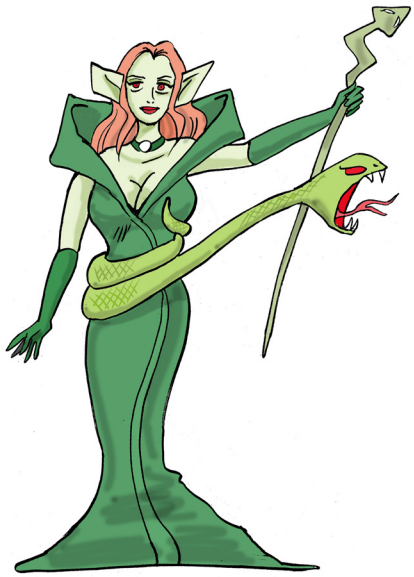 melee attack against that opponent. Even if the opponent's attack reduces you to 0 hp, you can still use vengeance strike before collapsing.
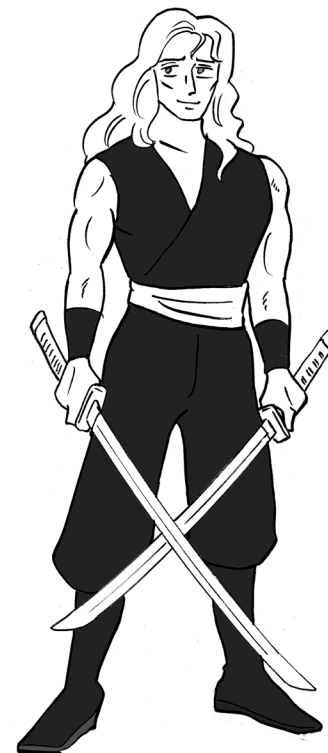
Ready for Adventure

Game Masters' Manual

How to Use the Game Masters' Manual

This Game Masters' Manual (GMM) contains information and advice to help a Game Master (GM) run a Sandcastle adventure. The other players do not need to read this manual, but are free to do so if they would like to better understand how the "behind-the-scenes" rules work. There is no secret information which will spoil the game if all the players know it.

Using the Adventurers' Guilds

The three adventurers' guilds (Beacon Sanctuary, College of Recovery, and Slayers' Lodge) are tools for the GM to use to help make game go more smoothly. The guilds serve three "backstage" functions: the first is to give the PCs a role-playing connection to society. The second is to hook the players and draw them into adventures the GM has created. The third function is to provide the players with background information about the adventure to make the story more enjoyable.

The adventurers' guilds represent a PC's "other friends" beyond the limits of the adventuring party. Because they have branches throughout The Domain, the guilds are an easy way for the PCs to find a place where they fit into the local culture no matter where they wander. Likewise, reputation is an easy way to track a character's rise in social status as he makes a name for himself through adventure.

Whenever the party travels to a new location, it is a good bet their first stop will be the local branch of one or more of the guilds. This allows the GM to introduce the features of a new setting or culture through its influences on the local branches of the adventurers' guilds, without having to develop entire cities.

While at the guilds, the characters will hear stories and rumors about adventure opportunities in the area. These can motivate the characters and their players to undertake the adventures the GM has planned.

The characters don't have to just passively listen to the information the GM distributes through the guilds, they can also make inquires of their own. Guild information checks, based on reputation, provide a game mechanic for handling legwork by the characters to gather information before setting out on an adventure.

Based on the playstyle of your group, the guilds could be used as a minor game mechanic to give the party a little extra help or as a central part of the overarching story. At the minimum, before each game session the GM could ask each player to compose a question to ask one of the guilds, then the GM makes a guild information check in secret and based on the result, provides the player with information which may prove useful during the adventure. At the other extreme, an entire gaming session could be used to role play going around to the various guilds, describing the iconic decor, interacting with memorable guild GMCs, and collecting bits and pieces of information and advice for the next foray.

Reputation

Reputation (abbreviated as "R") is a number between 0-5. Non-members who visit a guild have a reputation of 0. New members start at reputation 1, and increase it one point at a time by performing feats which further the guild's goals. See the descriptions of the guilds in the Core Rules for examples of accomplishments which can increase reputation within each guild. This increase in social standing in turn has in-game benefits by providing the PC with better and more accurate information which can help make adventures a little easier.

The GM can award reputation points for good game play (good role playing, good tactics, good sportsmanship) or for accomplishing in game goals, particularly those in-line with the philosophy of the guild. Reductions in reputation might result from deliberate actions which hurt other adventurers (in particular other PCs) or run directly counter to a guild's goals. Reductions in reputation should be rare, or at least less common than increases, so that a character's reputation is roughly equal to his level. At one extreme, the GM could use reputation as a type of "societal hit points" constantly increasing and decreasing based on in-depth role playing of guild politics. Or for simplicity the GM could simply set the reputation of each character equal to his level. Regardless of how the GM determines reputation, an increase should feel like a reward for a job well done.

Guild Information Checks

Before setting out on an adventure, the PCs can stop in at their respective guilds to see if the guild has any information relevant to the upcoming excursion. When a character poses a question to a guild the GM should make a guild information check in secret and consult the following table below. To make a guild information check, roll one die and add the character's reputation with the guild (1d6+R) to determine what kind of information the guild provides. It is possible to ask a question to a guild that you do not belong to, in this case your reputation within the guild is 0.

Guild Information Chart (1d6+R)	
Result	Amount of Detail
1-4	No useful information
5+	Basic area knowledge
8+	Specific knowledge
10+	Secret knowledge

A result indicating specific or secret knowledge will also give the character access to the more general information. Most of the time the more general information will be contained or implied in the specific or secrete knowledge. It is possible that some of the information the PC receives is in error. If the roll results in a false lead (see below), then the most specific type of information gained is outdated, irrelevant, or simply wrong. But even in the case where the most specific information is incorrect, any more general information gained will be correct.

No Useful Information: The adventurers' guilds are busy places. Sometimes you can't find someone to answer your questions. Or maybe a quick search turns up nothing of interest; or maybe a retired adventurer keeps rambling on about his own exploits without answering your question. As your reputation within the guild increases, people will take more time to look into matters for you.

Basic Area Knowledge: The kinds of creatures common in the area, the kinds of magical items or treasure usually kept by this kind of enemy, the kinds of traps often used in this kind of setting, the powerful and active organizations in the area.

Specific Knowledge: The kinds of creatures in the enemy ranks; magical items or treasures known or rumored to be in the possession of the enemy; traps and defensive measures known or rumored to be used by the enemy; the existence of secret passages or hidden areas; the names and personality quirks (likes, dislikes, mannerisms, etc.) of major GMCs in the adventure.

Secret Knowledge: The number, deployment, and command structure of enemy forces; the exact locations of magical items or treasures (relative to other nearby objects); the locations of traps or secret passages and how to bypass/open them; rivalries, secret agendas, or divided loyalties among the enemy. Never forget that even when the roll indicates "secret knowledge," as the GM you control what information the players have. Never give them any information which would spoil a surprise or make the adventure too easy. On the other hand, make the

information relevant and useful enough that the player's feel that the guild has given them an inside advantage.

False Lead: If a 6 is rolled on the die (before adding reputation) for a guild information check, then the information the guild provides is "too good to be true," and might be mistaken. Roll a second die, if the second die roll is less than or equal to the character's reputation with the guild, then the information is correct. If the second die roll is GREATER THAN the character's reputation, the information provided is wrong, or at least irrelevant to the adventure. In the case of a non-member (reputation 0), there is no need to actually roll a second die since any result will be greater than 0.

Guilds as Plot Hooks

The adventurers' guilds can serve as plot hooks to draw the players into adventures created by the GM. There are several ways this can be done. These methods are not exclusive, and the GM should feel free to use different patterns to keep the game from becoming monotonous.

Guild Conflicts

The guild information check mechanics make it beneficial to have at least one member of each guild in an adventuring party. This encourages role playing between the players by giving their characters differing motivations. As GM, you should make sure that these conflicts of interest work as differences in priorities, not as an either-or choice pitting one player against another. For example, if the party stumbles upon a demon using a jeweled dagger and grimoire of forbidden lore to conduct a human sacrifice ceremony, a Beacon Sanctuary member will want to rescue the hostage, a Slayer's Lodge member will want to slay the demon, a College of Recovery member will want to recover the grimoire (and maybe the dagger) for study. It's possible in theory to achieve all of the goals, but in the chaos of battle there may be tough decisions about what to do first.

Some conflict within the party is unavoidable. A Beacon Sanctuary member wants to try reasoning with a villain while a Slayers' Lodge member wants to start bashing heads from the beginning. After defeating a golem, a Slayer's Lodge member wants to mount its head on the wall of the lodge, but a College of Recovery member wants to bring it back intact to be studied by the college. As GM, it is your job to make sure that conflicts between the characters don't turn into conflicts between the players, and that everyone feels that his character has achieved his goals, at least most of the time.

It is possible for different guilds to give different PCs different motivations for going on a certain adventure. But not every PC needs a tailored individual motivation for every adventure. Sometimes you go along to help your friends.

Hiring Hall

The most direct way for a guild to motivate the PC to undertake an adventure is by asking the party to perform a mission for it. There will be some reward for completing the mission, such as a cash payment.

In the hiring hall capacity, guilds can also be used to introduce a new PC when a new player joins the group or a replacement PC after one of the player's character died. When the party visits the guilds, it is natural that they will meet other adventurers. The group could role play the new member joining the party, or the GM could have the guild hire the PCs individually and assign them to work together.

Reputation

Reputation is another way for the guilds to motivate the PCs. By completing a mission in line with a guild's philosophy, a PC can increase his reputations within the guild. The PCs may even go to the guilds and request an assignment in hopes of increasing their reputations.

Treasure Hunt

A sneaky way to use the guilds to motivate the PCs is by using the guilds' knowledge of rumors about magical items and treasure. When a PC wants a new magical weapon, or armor, or other useful item, as GM you can place the item as part of the hoard in a castle. Then use the guilds to give the PCs rumors about the location of the desired item, sending the PCs "of their own free will" to the adventure you have already designed. This way you can give the characters the items they want, without it feeling contrived: of course they found what they were looking for, the guilds told them where to look.

Challenge Levels

Monsters and obstructions are given levels to indicate how dangerous they are. A monster the same level as the party should be a worthy adversary, and may even cause some of the party members to drop to 0 hp, but in the end the party can reasonably expect to win. That being said, monsters will usually face the party at full hp and pp while the party will march through several encounters without stopping, losing more hp and pp with each battle. Thus, even a monster of the same level can be an overwhelming challenge to a tired party.

Monsters a level or two lower than the party level are still challenging enough to be interesting. In particular facing a group of lower level monsters requires a different strategy than a single big brute, and multiple opponents make it easier for all PCs to get involved in the combat.

A monster even a single level higher than the party has a good chance of crushing the party, leaving no survivors. These should be epic battles undertaken only after careful planning and preparation.

Sandcastle assumes that a party will be able to face about 3 or 4 hazards or monsters before needing to retreat to
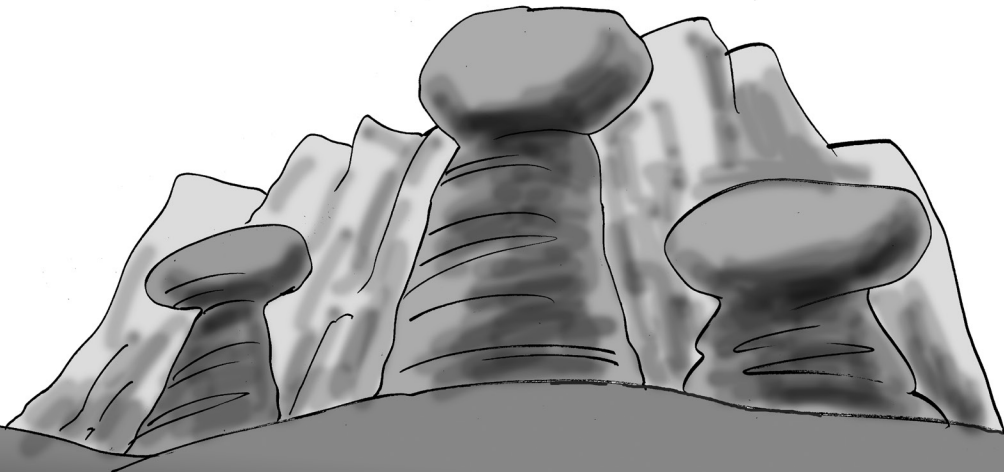
Providing Healing Potions

You can also use healing potions (See Magical Items) to control the flow of the adventure. Healing potions restore hp and pp, allowing the characters to push on farther in the face of adversity. Healing potions are designed so that one potion should fully restore a level 0 or level 1 character, even one who has been reduced to 0 hp. But for a level 5 character, the restored hp and pp represent the expenditure of about 1 turn of combat. Healing potions offer you a way to save low level characters (and players) who are still learning what to expect from Sandcastle. But by higher levels, the characters and players should have learned to pace themselves.

heal their wounds. In addition there are challenges such as solving a riddle, finding a secret passage, or interrogating a captured enemy. These challenges carry little danger of reducing the party's hp, so you can mix them with hazards and monsters to make an adventure.

Obstructions

While combat is an important part of Sandcastle, the characters will also face a variety of other obstructions between them and their goals. For example crossing a raging river, falling off a cliff, sneaking past a guard, finding the components for a magic ritual, or avoiding boobytraps. These other obstructions can be divided into hazards (which have the potential to inflict hp damage) and challenges (which will slow down or stop the party, but don't have associated damage).

It is not normally necessary to break into combat turns to resolve the party's encounter with an obstruction. Either everyone is acting at once with little worry about interfering with each other, or else it should be obvious who is taking action or needs to react.

Like combat, more difficult obstructions are needed to give high level parties a sense of accomplishment in overcoming them, but could prove impossible for lower level parties. Thus the need to balance the obstacles to the level of the party. The table below gives some guidelines for appropriate TN and amounts of damage.

Although results of 3-18 are possible when rolling 3d6, the actual result will fall in 8-13 about two-thirds of the time. So when planning as a GM, you should assume that any given roll will fall within this range. Modifiers will then be added to this base range. The modifiers increase with level, and can be split into 2 categories Normal/Unskilled and Energy/Skills.

Hazards and Challenges Difficulty

Level	Auto Damage	Primary Damage	Normal/ Unskilled TN	Energy/ Skill TN
0	0	1	8-13	8-13
1	1	1d2	8-13	8-14
2	2	1d3	8-13	9-15
3	3	1d6	8-13	9-16
4	4	2d6	8-13	10-17
5	5	3d6	8-13	11-18

Hazards

Hazards are obstructions that will have immediate consequences: falling into a pit, running through a burning building, dodging spears shooting out of the walls, or getting caught in a giant spider's web. Avoiding hazards is something that training doesn't help with, it relies on instinctual gut reactions or pure physical prowess, as such skill bonuses can't be used. Some hazards do normal damage (a falling boulder, falling down a staircase, a crossbow attached to a tripwire), others do energy damage (a poison needle, a magical holy ward, lava). Use the TNs given in the proceeding table for Normal/Unskilled and Energy respectively.

The damage from hazards may or may not include automatic damage. Hazards which inflict normal damage usually do not include automatic damage. If you dodge out of the way of a falling boulder or an arrow trap, it is a clean miss. Likewise, succeeding on a reaction to avoid falling off a ledge means you can catch yourself before you fall; scary but doing no actual damage. Hazards which inflict normal damage usually require a dexterity reaction to avoid, but other types of reactions are possible. For example, a strength reaction would be needed to resist being crushed by tunnel walls slowly pressing together.

Hazards which inflict energy damage may or may not include automatic damage. Getting splashed with acid, electrocuted, or triggering a blast of divine wrath by walking through a warded doorway, is going to hurt. It is a question of how much it is going to hurt. Thus these hazards will include both primary and automatic damage. Other forms of energy hazards, such as poison darts or jets of flame can be dodged entirely, thus will include only primary damage. The GM can use both types of hazards when designing a castle to be explored.

Some traps, particularly those which mimic weapon attacks, don't allow a reaction. Instead the GM rolls an attack check for the trap. The total attack bonus (att) is

equal to the level of the trap. If the attack check is higher than the target's defense, the attack hits and inflicts damage. The damage is determined by the level and includes only primary damage, no automatic damage.

Finally, hazards may trap the target. A falling net, a snare, a porticus, or a simple door that swings shut and locks automatically, do not inflict direct damage but can still be deadly because they can trap a character or the entire party for the enemies to deal with at their leisure. Dodging out of the way as a trap starts to snap shut requires an unskilled dexterity reaction. (At the GM's discretion, a dexterity reaction might not be allowed, for example a pressure plate in the floor that closes a door 16 m down the hallway.) Once caught, breaking free of a confining trap normally requires a strength check (a major action, not a reaction) to force the trap open. Or inflicting enough damage on the trap can destroy it, thus freeing the trapped characters.

Pit traps with sheer walls or bear traps are examples of traps which both inflict damage and confine the victims.

There is some unavoidable overlap and ambiguity in the different types of hazards. A stream of acid or bolt of unholy energy released by opening a trapped chest might be avoidable (unskilled dexterity reaction to avoid the primary damage, no automatic damage), unavoidable (automatic damage and a GY/OP reaction to avoid the primary damage), or attack traps (the GM makes an attack roll of behalf of the trap, no automatic damage). In the end it is up to the GM to determine how to adjudicate the effects of a hazard.

Challenges

A challenge is something that is not immediately dangerous, but will require effort to overcome. Typical challenges include locked doors, walls to be scaled, navigating across wilderness without getting lost, deciphering ancient inscriptions, finding clues at a crime scene, or getting information from an uncooperative GMC (game master character). Challenges usually don't require spit-second reactions, so the party can discuss how to approach them and use skills and teamwork to overcome them. The Energy/Skill TN is most appropriate for challenges.

As a general rule, a failed skill check associated with a challenge should not lead directly to damage. Even if you fail on a domestic sciences roll to notice that food has been tampered with before eating it, resisting the poison will be a GY reaction. Likewise, a character should not be able to use a skill check to inflict damage. (Athletics doesn't help to hurl heavy objects at a target. Life Sciences doesn't let you craft poisons.)

Skills can however help keep you out of dangerous situations. Catching yourself when a weak step crumbles under your foot is an untrained dexterity reaction, but noticing the weak step before you step on it would be an awareness-based engineering check. Breaking free from the grip of a constrictor snake is an untrained strength check, but recognizing the snake as a constrictor and knowing to keep your distance would be an awareness-based life sciences check. Athletics won't help you avoid slipping on an oil slick, but it could let you jump over the puddle rather than walking through it.

Because people naturally play to their own strengths (a silver-tongued shyster who lies even when there's no reason not to tell the truth, or a musclebound barbarian who's first reaction to any obstacle is "bash it down") you can expect to see high skill check results on a regular basis. But on the other hand, set the TN too high and if a character without the relevant skill finds himself confronted with the same situation, the plot comes grinding to a halt. And remember there is always more than one way to skin a cat. If a party has failed to charm, lie, or intimidate their way into the royal court, maybe they can gain entrance as performers (entertainment) or kitchen staff (domestic sciences). Or if all else fails, give the "bash it down" barbarian a chance to try.

Locks

Locks are a frequently encountered challenge. There are two types of locks in Sandcastle, privacy locks and security locks.

Privacy locks are for little more than courtesy. They can be opened without any specialized tools or knowledge, just by jiggling them until they pop open; although the engineering skill and a skeleton key can certainly speed up the process. The GM sets a TN for opening the lock based on the Skill TN column in the Challenges and Hazards

Table above. Key locks can be picked with a dexterity-based engineering check. Combination locks can be opened by listening and feeling for the right clicks with an awareness-based engineering check. Magical locks can be opened with a presence-based arcana check. (In Sandcastle everyone has at least a little magical talent, so even without any training, enough finger-wiggling and chanting mumbo jumbo will convince a magical lock to open.) Finally, a quick jerk or kick (unskilled strength) can pop open most privacy locks.

The GM should assume the adventures will be able to bypass privacy locks after a little effort. Still, privacy locks are popular because they are much more affordable than security locks and they slow down potential intruders or jailbreakers, increasing the chances of getting caught.

Each security lock is a unique masterpiece created by an expert craftsman or wizard. Security locks are used as plot devices and will not open by any means other than the proper key, combination, or other trigger. Security locks are rare, found on treasure vaults, ancient crypts, and the laboratories of paranoid wizards. If you truly want something protected, a security lock is the best choice, but there is a limit to the trouble people will go through to lock a passage. First, security locks are all custom built and prohibitively expensive. And second, in the end no matter how good the lock is, determined adventurers can always try to bash down the door or tunnel through a wall.

Secret Reactions

There are times when you may not what a player to know that his character has just made a reaction check. For example an awareness check to spot a clue or realize that a GMC is lying. Just knowing that a check was needed lets the player know that things are not as they seem, prompting him to play the situation more cautiously.

In these cases you can make the check for the player, rolling the dice somewhere the players can't see the results, adding all the modifiers, and only informing the player if the check is successful. But just hearing dice rolling can alert some attentive players that something is amiss. Rolling dice often, sometimes for no reason, can disguise this, or if you want, you can just assume that all secret reaction dice rolls return a value of 10 to make the check without using dice.

Role Playing

Sandcastle is a table-talk role playing game, the players take on the roles of their characters in the world. But the level of emersion will vary from group to group and from player to player. Some players will want to have long conversations with game master characters (GMCs), just to enjoy the world. Other players want to skip all conversation and get to the fighting. Sandcastle allows you to tailor the amount of role playing to fit your group.

The rules mechanics for social interaction are handled primarily through the presence and willpower attributes and the charm, deception, and intimidation skills. When dealing with the adventurers' guilds, reputation is used in place of skills. Every social encounter could in theory be decided by a single opposed check; the player declares which skill he is using, then the player rolls the dice adding his presence and the skill bonus. Then the GM rolls the dice for the GMC, using awareness, willpower, or presence and possibly a skill as appropriate, and adjudicates the outcome by comparing the roles.

It would also be possible to have the entire conversation in character, using debate and logical arguments to convince the GMC to cooperate with the adventurers.

A hybrid approach is most common, allowing the conversation to proceed naturally and calling for occasional checks at key points when the players try to get a specific piece of information or aid from the GMC. This way all the players can participate in the roleplaying, even if they lack the relevant skills, but in the end, it will be the players/characters who invested in social skills who get the results. The GM can apply ad hoc bonuses or penalties to the checks depending on how the players are role playing the situation: a small lie that supports the target's already held beliefs will be more convincing that an elaborately contrived fabrication running directly counter to what the target wants to hear.

Tips for Handling Mounts and Vehicles in Combat

Sandcastle is a close-quarters, melee combat game. Vehicles and mounts are included to add flavor to the world, not to change the focus of the game. The intentionally limited range and ammunition for ranged attacks help to keep the action on the front line.

When cavalry (mounted on animals or vehicles) and infantry (on foot) collide, the cavalry must come close enough that the infantry can counterattack. Thus, very little actually changes as compared to a normal melee.

When two cavalry forces collide, they will still need to come within range to attack each other. But it may be better to use the abstract position system given in the Core Rules, because the front line of hand-to-hand combat can

move erratically around the battlefield as mounted knights clash and disengage, and as sci-fi vehicles circle around for another pass, but the limitations of the weapons will encourage both sides to close to melee with fire support from the backfield.

The difference is that when cavalry is involved in a battle, the faster side can end the engagement at any time, simply by outrunning the enemy. (This is more historically correct than you might think.) Likewise, flying creatures can freely disengage with ground-based opponents. The hardest part of slaying a dragon can be cornering it in a confided space where it can't fly away. A striker's pin down special ability and a harrier's dogged pursuit ability can make it more difficult for an enemy to disengage.

In cases where two cavalry forces are of equal speed (both mounted on horses for example), the result can be a chase. In the abstract position system, a chase functions as a normal combat with the following special rules. Any character who doesn't spend an action to control his mount/vehicle each round abandons the chase. The same is true for a character who fails a presence check to maintain control in difficult circumstances. Chases usually have a goal line, such as racing through a gate, or across a politically sensitive boarder, where the fleers will be safe. This sets a limit on the number of turns the pursuers have to stop the fleers. If the combat is still unresolved after the time limit has elapsed, the fleers escape to safety and the pursuers come to a stop, cursing at a raising drawbridge or a vision obscuring forest. If a chase happens on an open plain with no obvious goal, the GM should start to call for increasingly difficult presence checks to urge on the tired mounts; for vehicles, endurance checks by the driver might be more appropriate.

Bonuses and Penalties

Combat rarely happens on a level playing field, figuratively or literally. The terrain, angle of the Sun, weather, etc. might make an attack or skill check harder or easier than it would normally be. It is the job of the GM to adjudicate these effects and apply a bonus or penalty to the roll. A full list of possible bonuses and penalties is beyond the scope of Sandcastle, but in general they should be used sparingly to avoid complicating the game. Still there are times when things are going to be difficult, like trying to search a room for clues while rain and wind flurry in through a hole in the roof, or trying to shoot an arrow through a window at a character inside a castle, or trying to use the athletics skill to swim in a stormy ocean. There are also times things will be easier, like trying to break a metal bar that's already half rusted, or attacking an enemy who hasn't noticed you and is looking the other way, or having concerned passersby

stretch out a blanket to catch you as you jump down from a burning belltower. Most bonuses and penalties should be +/− 1 or 2. Occasionally maybe a +/− 3. Anything more than that and it would be better to declare the attempt an automatic success or failure.

Treasure

There are several ways to reward the characters after a successful adventure. The most immediate and tangible way being treasure. Treasure can be broken down into money and magical items. The characters can use money to buy goods and services, most notably lodging and basic equipment. Magical items will help during future adventures.

Sandcastle does not include any explicit rules for selling or buying magical items and other loot from adventures. Magical items are rare, and not available at any price. On the other hand, imagine a group of blood-stained strangers coming into town and trying to sell dangerous (possibly cursed) magical items of questionable ownership. Finding a buyer for any particular item could be an entire adventure in itself, with the adventurers' guilds being the first places to start asking around.

So a character might have gold embossed platemail armor and a gem encrusted sword, but still be short on cash and looking for a job. You can use this to keep the characters
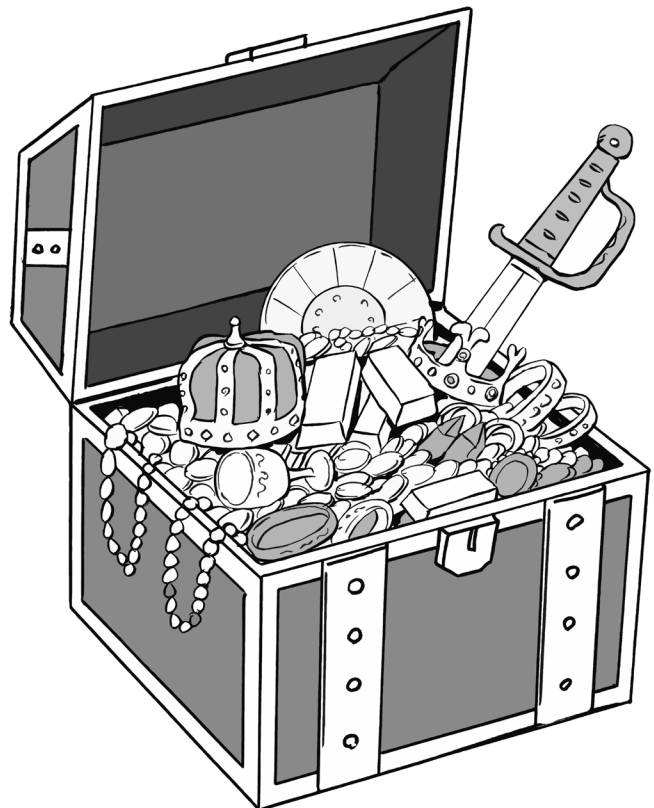
motivated to keep adventuring even as they become more powerful.

Lodging for a week (the time it takes to recover hp and pp) costs 4 c 3 p. There will also be other expenses like trail rations and expended arrows. But as long as a group nets about 10 c per character per adventure, they can continue their exploits. If they want to upgrade their equipment (horses or boats being prime examples) they'll need more money. But assuming that large purchases will require saving over several adventures, a haul of 50 to 100 c for a single adventure for the entire group should be more than enough. This is the total for all money received as payment or rewards, and the funds recovered from treasure troves and slain enemies. If the party amasses too much wealth, they will start to have trouble carrying it, 100 c have a mass of 1 kg and will take up space that could be used for carrying other gear.

The players and their characters like getting magical items as rewards because these items make them more powerful. But mass and space limitations will limit the amount a character can carry with him. Characters only have seven locations to store and carry gear on their person: right shoulder, left shoulder, right leg, left leg, right hand, left hand, and a belt pouch. Likewise a character can only wear one suit of armor at a time. So the players will quickly learn that if their characters pick something up, they also have to put something down. This will lead to some difficult decisions: is it worth leaving behind a rank 1 truestrike longsword to pick up a rank 2 truestrike dagger? Is it worth carrying a magical shield on my arm, knowing I might have to leave it behind if the next challenge requires climbing? A handy whip can be useful, but is it worth taking up a location that could be used for a weapon instead?

After the dangerous part of an adventure is over, determined characters might go back and use sacks, or a wagon, to clean out a castle of anything of value. But with a limit to what they can carry with them on their next adventure, there is little incentive to take more than what they need right now.

Magical Items

Magical items are grouped into three ranks (1, 2, and 3) in increasing level of power. Rank 1 items are appropriate awards for level 0 and 1 characters. Rank 2 items are appropriate awards for level 2, and 3 characters. Rank 3 items are appropriate awards for level 4 and 5 characters.

Some of the items are listed as non-magical. There are no restrictions on who can use magical items and there are

no magic suppressing effects in Sandcastle where magical items will suddenly stop working. But when examining treasures, many players will ask, "Is it magical?" And some players enjoy playing superstitious characters who refuse to use magic. So this tag is included for reference.

Mass

If no mass is listed for a magical item, it has the same mass as the corresponding non-magical item listed in the equipment section of the Core Rules.

Assault, Protective, and Utility Items

Magical times are grouped into three, non-exclusive categories of assault, protective, and utility, based on the function of the item. Assault items do damage to a target; protective items protect the users; and utility items help to overcome non-combat challenges or change the flow of combat. The category is listed along with the rank of the item. The GM can use these categories as guidance when deciding what kinds of items a villain would have, or what items to leave in treasure hoards. But the primary function of these categories is tied to guild information checks (see the Guilds section earlier in this GMM). Slayer's Lodge can provide information about where to find assault items, Beacon Sanctuary provides information about defensive items, and the College of Recovery provides information about utility items. Based on the category, the GM and players/characters know the best guild to ask for leads on a certain item.

Like everything in Sandcastle, this is a generalization and the GM is free to create exceptions. Beacon Sanctuary could be of help when looking for legends about a chromatic (orange) longsword wielded by a legendry battle-priest; Slayers' Lodge might know where to find a telescope useful for spotting enemy troop movements; or the College of Recovery might have information about a suit of livelong armor due to the cultural significance of that particular suit of armor.

Recognizing Magical Items

It takes a TN 12 awareness-based arcana check to detect an aura indicating that an item is magical. Likewise when examining a non-magical item, a TN 12 awareness based arcana check will confirm that it is non-magical. The TN for identifying a magical item and determining its properties is based on the rank of the item (TN = 12 + rank). Identifying an item is an arcana check based on awareness, or willpower if appropriate reference materials are available for in-depth research.

Magical Items as Starting Equipment (Optional)

In principle magical items should be rewards for the players and their characters. As such a new character should not be allowed to start play with magical items. This also gives you as the GM control over how many and what kinds of items the characters have access to. However, there may be times, such as for a quick pick-up game, when you want the characters to start play with more powerful items than usual. The list below provides guidelines in case you want to let the characters start play with magical items. These items are in principle chosen by each player, with GM approval.

Magical Items as Starting Equipment (Optional)	
Starting Level	Starting Magical Items
Level 0	No items
Level 1	1 Rank 1 item
Level 2	2 Rank 1 items
Level 3	2 Rank 1 items, 1 Rank 2 item
Level 4	2 Rank 1 items, 2 Rank 2 item
Level 5	2 Rank 1 items, 2 Rank 2 item, 1 Rank 3 item

Resizing Armor

Armor must be custom fitted to each wearer. Asking a blacksmith to resize the armor is one option. But due to the ubiquitous magic in Sandcastle, it is faster and cheaper to reshape the armor magically. This requires 10 minutes and a successful arcana-based presence check; the TN to fit armor to a wearer is 10 + the defense bonus provided by the armor. Superstitious characters who refuse to use magic can resize leather, scale, or chainmail armor manually with a successful dexterity-based domestic sciences check instead.

Random Color Table

Some items (usually including "chromatic" in the name) produce effects based on one color of energy. The GM is free to choose the color, based on where the item was found or who created it. If it's not obvious what color an item should be, the GM can determine the color of the energy by rolling once on the following table. Once the color has been decided, it doesn't change.

Random Colors (1d6)	
1 Red	4 Yellow
2 Blue	5 Orange
3 Green	6 Purple

Sample Items

Chromatic Blade (Rank 1, 2, 3; Assault)

Chromatic blades look like swords at first glance, but the blade is actually a giant crystal that pulses with faint inner light. This light is strong enough to look really pretty in the dark, but not enough to provide useful illumination. Chromatic blades come in 4 sizes: dagger, short sword, longsword, and greatsword. A chromatic blade functions as a normal weapon of its type, but it deals energy damage rather than normal damage. (The color of light pulsing within the blade indicates the color of the energy damage.)

Rank 1	Dagger
Rank 2	Short sword or longsword
Rank 3	Greatsword

Chromatic Dragonslayer's Shield (Rank 1, 2, 3; Protective)

A dragonslayer's shield acts as a normal shield (+1 to defense), in addition its magical properties can be activated as a minor action or an interrupt action to provide additional protection against energy attacks. When activated the shield drains a number of pp from you equal to its rank and then allows you to produce an effect equivalent to the energy shield energer special ability without expending a mote. Thus it can be used by any type of character, not just energers. This energy shield lasts for 10 minutes, until you put the shield down, or until all of its hp have been expended. The strength of the energy shield is based on the number of pp used to power it, that is to say the same as the rank. If this is more pp than you have remaining when you activate the shield, it drains all of your remaining pp and produces no effect.

Chromatic Evoker's Wand (Rank 1, 2, 3; Assault)

Evoker's wands are about 40 cm in length and come in a variety of appearances and materials: wood, metal, dragon bone, etc. Despite the different appearances, all function the same. When activated an evoker's wand drains a number of pp from you equal to its rank and then allows you to produce an effect equivalent to the energy shot energer special ability without expending a mote. Thus it can be used by any type of character, not just energers. Characters who aren't energers use their normal ranged attack bonus (att = +(lv/2)+A). The strength of the energy

shot is based on the number of pp used to power it, that is to say the same as the rank. If this is more pp than you have remaining when you activate the wand, it drains all of your remaining pp and produces no effect.

Mass: 0.5 kg

Chromatic Knight Armor (Rank 2, Rank 3; Protective)

Chromatic knight armor is magical plate mail armor, painted entirely in one color, or at least in shades of a single color. It functions as livelong plate mail armor of the same rank, (Rank 2 or 3). In addition, the wearer is hardened against one color of energy. (This is also the color that the armor is painted.) However, the wearer also becomes vulnerable to the opposite color of energy.

Chromatic Storm Club (Rank 1, 2, 3; Assault)

This large black-iron mace is covered with spikes. In melee, it functions as a normal mace. In addition, by taking a major action to swing it around and expending a number of pp equal to the rank, you can create a whirlwind of magical energy. You are safe in the eye of this storm, but all characters within melee range of you take 1 hp of automatic damage per pp expended and must make a resistance reaction with a target number equal to 10 plus the rank plus your strength (TN = 10 + rank + S) or take an additional 1d3 points of damage per pp expended (i.e. 1d3, 2d3, or 3d3). The type of resistance used is based on the color of energy. If you try to activate this energy storm when you have fewer pp remaining than the rank of the club, it drains all of your remaining pp and produces no effect.

Chromatic Wizard's Robes (Rank 1, 2, 3; Assault, Protective, Utility)

These are normally heavy, full-length robes, however mini-skirt versions are also known to exist. Chromatic wizard's robes are worn as armor and provide a bonus to defense equal to the rank. In addition, whenever the wearer expends pp to produce an energy effect (energy explosion, energy shield, energy shot, etc.) of the same color as the robes, add 1 to the actual number of pp expended when calculating the effects. However, when the wearer expends pp to produce an energy effect of the opposite color, subtract 1 from the actual number of pp expended when determining the power of the effect. These adjustments apply both to effects produced by combat style special actions and to effects produced by using magical items. The pp adjustments are +1/−1, and do not change with rank.

Mass: 3 kg (2 kg for miniskirt variety)

Demon Armor (Rank 3 Protective, Utility)

This magical scale mail armor includes a face plate crafted in a frightening visage and horns on the helmet. This armor provides a +3 bonus to defense. In addition it

provides a +1 bonus to intimidation checks, both to intimidate others and to resist intimidation.

Druid's Cudgel (Rank 1, 2, 3; Assault, Utility)

This oaken club functions as a truestrike club of the same rank. In addition it grants a bonus equal to its rank to charm checks to influence the reactions of natural, non-magical animals.

Elven Chainmail Armor (Rank 2; Protective, Non-magical)

Elven chainmail armor is made from light but strong metal, and can be fitted perfectly to the wearer so as not to impede movement. It provides the same defense bonus as normal chainmail armor (+3) but is lighter and does not impose a penalty to dexterity.

Armor bonus +3   Mass: 20 kg

Elven Climbing Claws (Rank 1, 2, 3; Assault, Utility)

Elven climbing claws are a variety of wrist blades, but the tips are curved so that they can only be used for slashing, not for stabbing. This shape allows them to function as climbing spikes in addition to being used as weapons. Elven climbing claws add a bonus equal to their rank to attack and damage rolls, like truestrike weapons. In addition, when worn as a pair, they provide the same bonus to athletics skill checks for climbing.

Emblazoned Shield (Rank 1, 2, 3; Protective, Utility, Non-magical)

This shield prominently displays the heraldic colors and symbols of a great hero or legendary organization. Used as a shield, an emblazoned shield acts as a normal shield (+1 to defense). Carrying an emblazoned shield marks you as the spiritual successor to its former owner. This grants you a bonus equal to the rank to charm skill checks to influence the attitudes of civilized people (humans, elves, dwarves, oni, and some monsters at the GM's discretion). But this respect comes with heavy responsibility. It will be assumed that you are worthy of carrying the shield and people may call upon you to mediate disputes or risk yourself to help others, without compensation of course.

Enchanter's Wand (Rank 1, 2, 3; Utility)

Waving an enchanter's wand in your hand adds a bonus equal to its rank to presence checks to produce magical effects, such as opening magic wards or changing the color of a princess's dress. It provides no bonus to combat magic such as energer abilities or hexes.

Mass: 0.5 kg

Evil Eye Mask (Rank 1, 2, 3; Assault, Protective, Utility)

This ceramic masquerade mask is carried on a short stick rather than worn directly on the face. When you look through the eye holes at a target up to 24 m away as a minor action, the target must make a hex resistance (HR) reaction with a TN equal to 10 plus the rank of the mask plus your presence (TN = 10 + rank + P) or suffer the effects of an attack hex (−1 penalty to all attack checks until the start of your next turn).

Mass: 0.25 kg

Familiar Token (Rank 2; Assault, Protective, Utility)

Familiar tokens come in a variety of forms: a fist sized crystal orb, a mirror, a wand, a small statue or doll, etc. You can use this token to summon a familiar (see homunculus variant in the Monster R&D) out of thin air as a major action. Another major action can cause the familiar to disappear. You can use a minor action to command the familiar to take a single action (either major or minor). The familiar will follow the orders of whoever holds the token. Any damage sustained by the familiar heals at the normal rate (i.e. fully healed after 1 week of rest).

Mass: 0.5 kg

Handy Whip (Rank 1; Utility)

A handy whip is a magical bull whip. It doesn't function as an effective weapon, but can be used as part of an action to manipulate objects up to 4 m away. Only simple tasks can be performed: grab an object, pull a level, knock over a bottle, knock open a trunk lid, etc. Any strength or dexterity checks required as part of the action are made at a −2 penalty. If you use a handy whip to try to manipulate an object worn or carried by another character, that character has a chance to react. A handy whip can also be used to grab low branches or rafters and act as a rope for swinging across pits or climbing out of quicksand, etc.

Then it is just as easy to make the whip let go, so that you don't have to leave it behind.

Mass: 0.5 kg

Hexer Mace (Rank 2, 3; Assault)

This black iron mace is crowned with a bulb in the shape of a human skull. It functions as a rank 1 truestrike mace. In addition, after making a successful strike, you can choose to do normal damage, or instead of normal damage you can choose to expend 1 pp and cause the target to lose a number of pp equal to the rank of the hexer mace. You do not gain the pp lost by the target. If wielded by a hexer character, this power drain increases to 1d3+rank.

Liar's Writ (Rank 1, 2, 3; Utility)

When you unfurl this scroll as part of a deception skill check, it contains a short written passage and seal corroborating whatever lie you are spinning. You have to know about what you want the writ to say before you open it. The quality of this forgery is not particularly good, and it won't pass a close inspection, but it is still enough to lend credibility to your story, at least temporarily. As such, a liar's writ grants a bonus equal to its rank to deception checks. When not being used as part of a charade, the writing on a liar's writ turns into meaningless squiggles.

Mass: 0.5 kg

Lightbringer Weapon (Rank 1; Assault, Utility)

A lightbringer weapon sheds light equivalent to a torch (8 meter radius). It can be lit or extinguished as a minor action, but it can't be dimmed; it is either on or off. All lightbringer weapons are melee weapons which can also be thrown, useful for when you want to see what is up ahead in a dark corridor. To determine the type of weapon randomly, use the table below.

Random Lightbringer Weapons (1d6)	
1-2	Dagger
3-4	Hand ax
5	Short spear
6	Warhammer

Lionskin Armor (Rank 1, 2, 3; Protective, Utility)

As the name implies, this leather armor is made from the skin of a lion. Lionskin armor provides a defense bonus equal to its rank. It also provides the same bonus to strength-based athletics skill checks for lifting, dragging,

pushing, or bending objects. It provides no bonuses for throwing or attacking. Nor does it provide any bonus to unskilled strength checks.

Livelong Armor (Rank 1, 2, 3; Protective)

Livelong armor are suits of magical armor which provide greater than the normal bonus to defense. Livelong armor can be leather, scale mail, chainmail, or platemail. The total defense bonus is based on the rank (see table below). Except for this bonus, livelong armor functions as a normal suit of the same kind of armor, including the penalties to dexterity and awareness.

Livelong Armor Bonuses			
Type/ rank	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3
Leather	+2	+3	+4
Scale mail	--	+3	+4
Chainmail	--	+4	+5
Plate mail	--	+5	+6

Livelong Shield (Rank 2, 3; Protective)

A livelong shield functions as a normal shield except that it grants greater than the normal bonus to defense. The total defense bonus is equal to the rank.

Lucky Blade (Rank 1; Assault, Non-magical)

A lucky blade is a non-magical weapon, but there is something special about it: maybe the craftsmanship, the balance, a holy rune carved into it, or sentimental value. Something just makes this blade lucky. A lucky blade functions the same as rank 1 truestrike weapon, except that it is non-magical.

Plate Mail (Rank 1; Protective, Non-magical)

Full plate mail armor is rare in Sandcastle and not available for purchase at any price. It can only be found or presented. Plate mail armor is heavy, imposing a −2 penalty to dexterity for all purposes other than calculating defense and RB resistance. Plate mail armor also limits vision and hearing (and makes a good deal of noise itself) imposing a −2 penalty to awareness checks. In addition your movement value can be no higher than 6 m when wearing plate mail.

Defense Bonus: +4 Mass: 30 kg

Rope Snake (Rank 1; Utility)

When activated, this magical rope climbs like a snake up rough surfaces and ties itself around a secure object at the top. It can also fling itself straight up, or across an open pit, or slither across a slippery surface like ice, along narrow rafters, or swim across a raging river. A rope snake has an effective athletics skill bonus of +5 for climbing, jumping, balancing, or swimming to a target to tie itself to. It has an effective bonus of +3 for any unskilled checks required. A rope snake can only tie itself to stationary objects. A rope snake can also be told to untie itself from an object and coil back up.

Mass: 0.5 kg

Skeleton Key (Rank 1, 2, 3; Utility, Non-magical)

A skeleton key is designed to provide a reasonable match for most key-based privacy locks. It provides a bonus equal to the rank to engineering checks made to open locks.

Mass: 0.25 kg

Speed Armor (Rank 1, 2, 3; Protective, Utility)

This armor resembles tight fitting clothing. It does little to physically stop attacks, but speeds up your movements and reactions, helping you to avoid attacks instead. Speed armor provides a defense bonus equal to its rank. It also provides the same bonus to athletics checks for running

and jumps with a running start. Wearing speed armor increases your movement value to 14 m, regardless of the rank.

Mass: 1 kg

Stage Light Crystal (Rank 1; Utility)

When tossed in the air, this fist sized crystal ball will float about your head and shoulders, while glowing and emitting soft music. The illumination provided is equivalent to a torch (8 meter radius). You can reduce this light to almost nothing or return it to full brightness as a minor action. The volume of the music can't be adjusted and will continue to play at the level of a normal conversation for as long as the crystal is floating around you. The color of the light and the mood/tempo of the music change to reflect your actions. As such a stage light crystal provides a +1 bonus to entertainment checks, but it also imposes a −1 penalty to stealth checks. (A tension building violin solo while you are trying to sneak down a corridor will give you away every time). The crystal can be taught specific routines to back you up, but it is a very temperamental performer and will argue with you about artistic taste by emitting hash flashes of light and discordant notes. And there are no additional game mechanic benefits for training the crystal, so it is usually best to let it improvise. Using multiple crystals as backup performers increases the bonus to entertainment checks, but provides no additional illumination: +2 bonus for two crystals; +3 bonus for three crystals. Additional crystals beyond three provide no additional novelty or bonus. The crystals move slowly and can easily be plucked out of the air and stowed when not in use. Although they are slow, they are complete cowards and good at staying out of danger: they will hide behind you and otherwise avoid taking damage in combat.

Mass: negligible

Stinger Blade (Rank 2; Assault)

When carrying this short sword in your hand, you gain an extra interrupt action each turn. Wielding a pair of stinger blades, one in each hand, grants two extra interrupt actions.

Stealth Armor (Rank 1, 2, 3; Protective, Utility)

This magical black-leather armor often includes a hood which can be pulled up over the head. Stealth armor provides a defense bonus equal to its rank. It also provides the same bonus to stealth skill checks to avoid being detected. This is a magical bonus and not necessary

dependent on the dark color of the armor blending into the shadows. Thus, it also applies to stealth check to move quietly or remain hidden among drifts of clean, white, newly-fallen snow, etc.

Swimming Armor (Rank 1, 2, 3; Protective, Utility)

This dark-gray or blue leather armor is made from shark skin. Swimming armor provides a defense bonus equal to its rank. It also provides the same bonus to athletics checks for swimming. As an additional bonus, add the rank to your endurance when calculating the amount of time you can hold your breath.

Tangle Whip (Rank 1, 2, 3; Assault, Utility)

A tangle whip is a magical bull whip. It can't be used to inflict damage, but while wielding it in one of your hands, you can use the striker pin down interrupt action even if you are not a striker. In addition, the tangle whip adds a bonus to pin down attack checks equal to its rank.

Mass: 0.5 kg

Truestrike Weapon (Rank 1, 2, 3; Assault)

A truestrike weapon, grants a bonus to attack rolls (att) and damage roles made with it. The amount of the bonus is equal to the rank. Except for this bonus, the weapon functions the same as a normal weapon of the same type. A truestrike weapon can be any type of weapon, but truestrike bows and crossbows require arrows to use.

Voodoo Doll (Rank 1, 2, 3; Assault)

When you carry this crudely formed doll in your hand you can use it to redirect hexes intended for you. When you successfully make a hex resistance (HR) reaction to avoid the effects of a hex, you can choose to use an interrupt action to channel the hex through the doll and towards a new target (or targets) for the hex. Since you are only redirecting the hex, not casting it, the normal requirements of needing to be able to speak and having one hand free do not apply. A target can be up to 24 meters away from you, and you must be aware of and able to see the target. This new hex is the same type as the hex which was negated by the HR reaction. The TN to resist this new hex is 10 plus the rank of the voodoo doll plus your presence (10 + rank + P). If this new hex is successful, the penalty lasts until the start of your next turn. For an attack or defense hex, the resulting penalty is equal to the rank of voodoo doll. For a redirected multi-attack hex or multi-defense hex, the

resulting penalty is -1, and you can choose a number of targets up to the rank of the doll.

Mass: 0.5 kg

Wild Armor (Rank 1, 2, 3; Protective)

Suits of wild armor ("wild" as in "wild card") provide a bonus to defense when worn and come in literally any form: ballgowns, clown costumes, barbarian loincloths, chitinous living exoskeletons, the ever-popular chainmail bikinis, anything. The defense bonus is equal to the rank. Due to the magical qualities, wild armor is completely unencumbering and does not interfere with vision or hearing; even in deep-sea-diving-suit-shaped wild armor, the character can act without penalties. The GM should decide the shape (and mass if it becomes relevant) of wild armor found in the game, based on the setting and the types of items the players would like. Or better yet, ask the players for input when deciding the shape. Once the shape of a given suit of wild armor has been decided, it cannot be changed (except possibly through some in-game plot device contrived by the GM.)

Wild Weapon (Rank 1, 2, 3; Assault)

Wild weapons ("wild" as in "wild card") function as melee weapons and come in literally any form. Even forms that at first glance wouldn't make effective weapons: crystal rods, frying pans, feather quills, rubber chickens, anything. Due to the magical qualities, the combat performance of a wild weapon depends only on its rank, not on its physical form. The GM should decide the shape (and mass if it becomes relevant) of wild weapons found in the game, based on the setting and the types of items the players would like. Or better yet, ask the players for input when deciding the shape. Once the shape of a given wild weapon has been decided, it cannot be changed (except possibly through some in-game plot device contrived by the GM.)

Rank 1 Wild Weapon (one-handed)
Damage: 1d6+S

Rank 1 Wild Weapon (two-handed)
Damage: 1d6+1+S

Rank 2 Wild Weapon
As above, in addition functions as a rank 1 truestrike weapon (+1 to attack and damage roles)

Rank 3 Wild Weapon
As above, in addition functions as a rank 2 truestrike weapon (+2 to attack and damage roles)

Wizard's Staff (Rank 1, 2, 3; Assault, Protective)

A wizard's staff is an ornately carved quarterstaff topped with a crystal, orb, skull, or other ornament. A wizard's staff holds a number of power points (pp) equal to its rank. When carrying the staff in your hand, these power points can be used to fuel any ability you could normally expend pp on, including expenditures to use magical items. These points cannot be combined with your own pp to produce stronger effects. The number of remaining pp does not change if the staff is passed from one character to another. Spent points return after a week of rest.

Potions

Potions provide a one-time magical effect when ingested or splashed on a target.

Mass: negligible

Beast Repellant (Rank 1; Protective, Utility)

One vial of beast repellant contains enough of this foul-smelling liquid to cover one character. Animals and animal intelligence level monsters must make a successful unskilled TN 12 willpower check as a minor action before attacking a character wearing beast repellant. After one successful check, no future checks are needed and the beast can attack as normal. The check can be repeated each turn if necessary, but most beasts will lose interest after a turn or two. If the animal is attacked or cornered by any members of the party, it can counterattack to defend itself as normal. The effects of beast repellant last for 12 hours or until washed off. During this time, the character will also suffer a −2 penalty on all presence checks to influence humans and other intelligent creatures due to the horrid smell.

Chromatic Splash Vial (Rank 1, 2, 3; Assault)

This stoppered glass vial can be thrown at a target (ranged attack, range 8 m). The vial shatters on impact and releases its contents dealing damage to the target. The amount of damage is based on the rank.

Rank 1	1d3 hp
Rank 2	1d6 hp
Rank 3	2d6 hp

If the attack misses, the vial still shatters, wasting the contents. Because chromatic splash vials deal energy damage, energer characters can use their preferred attack bonus (att = +lv+A) when throwing a vial. Different colors of chromatic splash vials have different descriptive names (orange: holy water; purple: unholy water; etc.). Non-

magical versions of green (acid) and red (Greek fire) are also known to exist.

Flashbang Vial (Rank 1, 2, 3; Assault, Protective, Utility)

When this vial is thrown against a hard surface (range 8 m, no attack roll needed), it shatters and the contents react explosively, producing a disorienting burst of light and sound. A character in the square where the flashbang vial detonates must make an unskilled TN 13 willpower reaction or suffer a penalty to attack checks (att) and defense until the end of the thrower's next turn. The penalty is equal to the rank. Nonmagical versions of flashbang vials also exist.

Healing Potion (Rank Any; Protective)

A healing potion restores 2d6+2 hp and 1d3+1 pp when drunk. A character who has been reduced to 0 hp cannot raise a potion vile to his lips by his own effort, but has enough of a swallow reflex to imbibe a potion poured into his mouth by a friend.

Potion of Chromatic Dragon's Breath (Rank 2; Assault)

After ingesting a potion of dragon's beath, you exhale an 8 m long jet of energy (4 squares in a straight line originating in a square adjacent to you). Anyone caught in the blast takes 2 hp of automatic damage and 2d2 hp of primary damage. Targets can attempt a TN 14 resistance reaction check to avoid the primary damage. The type of resistance reaction needed is based on the color of energy.

Releasing the dragon's breath is a free action, it occurs automatically when you exhale, normally immediately after imbibing the potion. If you wish to wait to release the dragon's breath, follow the normal rules for holding your breath. If the amount of time you can hold your breath expires and you still have not released the dragon's breath, it detonates inside you dealing 2 hp of automatic damage and 2d2 hp of primary damage to you. You can attempt a TN 16 resistance reaction check to avoid the primary damage.

Research Equipment (Optional)

Research equipment includes non-magical items which provide the characters with new ways to investigate their environment. Research equipment provides no combat bonuses, and thus won't unbalance the game, even in the hands of low level characters. But the GM will need to prepare, or improvise descriptions of the information gained through the research equipment. Conversely, with a little preparation, research equipment can be used to introduce real science concepts as part of game play. Because it requires additional preparation, research equipment is listed here separately, so the GM can decide whether or not to include it in the campaign.

Field Guide (Rank Any; Utility, Non-magical)

A field guide is a large, heartily-bound volume of heavily illustrated and cross-referenced pages summarizing basic information about a certain area of knowledge. You can use the Knowledge Skills Table below to randomly determine which subject a field guide covers, or select the subject based on where the book was found. With a field guide you can make a willpower based skill check to look up information related to the subject covered in the guide; you can do this in the field rather than having to make a trip to a library. Referencing a field guide requires 1d6x5 minutes. However, only basic information (TN 14 or lower) can be found in its pages. More detailed information requires a trip to the library.

Knowledge Skills Table (1d6)	
1	Arcana
2	Domestic Sciences
3	Engineering
4	Life Sciences
5	Physical Sciences
6	Social Sciences

Mass: 1.5 kg

Magnifying Glass (Rank Any; Utility, Non-magical)

This single lens with a handle for carrying it provides a magnification of 10 times for viewing nearby (arm's length) objects. A magnifying glass provides no direct bonus to awareness checks, but using a magnifying glass you can see details that would be literally impossible to perceive with the unaided eye.

Mass: negligible

Telescope (Rank Any; Utility, Non-magical)

This ingenious assembly of lenses in a collapsible tube provides a magnification of 25 times and a 100 fold increase in light gathering power for viewing faint, distant objects. A telescope can be used to study objects on the ground out to the horizon, approximately 5 km, but varies depending on elevation and local topography. A telescope provides no direct bonus to awareness checks, but using a telescope you can see objects (both on the ground and

in the heavens) which would be literally impossible to see with the unaided eye.

Mass: 0.5 kg

Thumper Staff (Rank Any; Utility, Non-magical)

This hollowed-out quarterstaff is capped with taunt membranes at both ends to enhance acoustic vibrations. By bouncing it on the ground, a thumber acts as both the source and receiver for a crude form of seismic surveying. By listening to the sound the thumper makes as it bounces, it is possible to detect changes in the subterranean structure: hollow spaces, trap doors, buried walls, shallow graves, now overgrown packed-dirt roads, detritus covered daises, changes in geological compositions, etc. Because it works by bouncing, a thumber can't be used on soft surfaces like snow or mud. A thumper provides no bonuses to awareness checks, but allows awareness checks to be made to notice changes beneath the ground with no signs on the surface. A thumper can also be used as a normal quarterstaff.

Cursed Items (Optional)

Cursed items are optional; it is the Game Master's discretion whether or not to use any of the cursed items listed here in the campaign. Cursed items are also assigned categories (Assault, Protective, Utility) in case a false lead (see Guild Information Checks earlier in the GMM) sends the party looking for a cursed item.

The magical auras of cursed items resemble the auras of beneficial items, so it is easy to mistake cursed items for beneficial ones. Correctly recognizing a cursed item requires a TN (14+ rank) arcana check. If this check fails by less than 2 points, i.e. if a TN (12+rank) check would have succeeded, the character incorrectly identifies the cursed item as a beneficial item. Once characters have figured out that an item is cursed, either through correct identification or through painful experience, getting rid of the item is as simple as putting it down and leaving it behind.

Falsestrike Weapon (Rank 2, 3; Assault, Cursed)

A falsestrike weapon appears to be a normal truestrike weapon, but rather than adding a bonus to attack (att) and damage rolls, it imposes a penalty equal to the rank on both rolls. (Minimum damage 1 hp for a successful strike.)

Potion of Poison (Rank 2 Assault; Protective, Utility, Cursed)

Some potions of poison are prepared deliberately as tricks, but most result from other potions going rancid. If incorrectly identified, a potion of poison appears to be a normal type of potion. When ingested this potion deals 2 hp of automatic damage and 1d6 hp of primary damage to the drinker. This is green energy damage. You can attempt a TN 14 GY reaction to avoid the primary damage.

Shortlife Armor (Rank 2, 3; Protective, Cursed)

Shortlife armor appears to be normal livelong armor (or wild armor), but imposes a penalty to defense equal to the rank.

Shortlife Shield (Rank 2, 3; Protective, Cursed)

A shortlife shield appears to be a normal livelong shield, but imposes a penalty to defense equal to the rank.

Power Drain Item (Rank 2; Assault, Protective, Cursed)

A power drain item appears to be a normal magical item which requires expending pp to activate (chromatic evoker's wand, chromatic dragonslayer's shield, etc.). When activated a power drain item drains 1d3 pp from the wielder but produces no other effects.

Science Fiction (Sci-Fi) Items (Optional)

Sci-fi items are optional; it is the game master's discretion whether or not to use any of the sci-fi items listed here in the campaign. Sci-fi items can be found in forgotten ruins of advanced cultures, or crash-landed alien ships. There are even some technologically advanced cities in The Domain where Sci-Fi items are part of everyday life.

Sci-fi items are not magical. Instead, they run on wireless power transfer (WPT): a power broadcaster fills the space around it with invisible electromagnetic waves which can be absorbed by devices to provide the energy to work. Sci-fi items don't require batteries or rechanging; they will work continuously anywhere WPT is available. Conversely, if taken beyond the WPT area, sci-fi items become inert curios. Thus in one city or mountain valley in The Domain, hover bikes and hover cars could be an everyday sight, while in the next town over, hover vehicles are regarded as absurd rumors.

Sci-Fi vehicles have intuitive controls that respond dramatically to even slight adjustments. Controlling a vehicle is a matter of asserting your will over it, thus

requiring a presence check. Sci-Fi vehicles have hp and a defense value, since they might be used in combat. In general, field repairs to restore hp to a vehicle should not be allowed; a visit to a repair facility is required.

Chromatic Ray Gun (Rank 1, 2, 3; Assault, Sci-Fi)

This pistol emits a ray of energy at a target up to 24 m away. As a ranged energy attack, it requires an awareness attribute check including your base attack bonus (bab) to hit the target. This is an energy attack, so energer characters can use their preferred attack bonuses (att = +lv+A). The amount of damage, and the official designation for the ray gun, are based on the rank. Ray guns come in all 6 chromatic varieties, but once the color of a specific ray gun has been determined, it doesn't change. Ray guns can be carried and fired in one hand.

Rank 1	(Personal Ray Gun) 1d3 hp
Rank 2	(Security Ray Gun) 1d6 hp
Rank 3	(Military Ray Gun) 1d6+2 hp

Mass: 1.5 kg

Hover Bike (Rank Any, Utility, Sci-Fi)

The ultimate in off-road suspension, a hover bike floats up to 1 meter above the ground or the surface of water. It has limited power and can carry only the driver.

Hover Bike			
Crew 1	Passengers 0	Speed 40 m	Defense 10
hp 18 (hardened normal damage)			

Hover Car (Rank Any; Utility, Sci-fi)

In some technologically advanced areas of The Domain, hover cars have replaced horses and wagons as the standard form of transportation. Floating up to 1 m above the ground or the surface of water, a hover car can provide a smooth ride for a driver and 3 passengers. Like all vehicles in Sandcastle, a hover car is open-topped.

Hover Car			
Crew 1	Passengers 3	Speed 40 m	Defense 9
hp 38 (hardened normal damage)			

Kinetic Bullpup (Rank 1, 2, 3; Assault, Sci-Fi)

A kinetic bullpup fires a wave of kinetic force at a target up to 8 m away. A kinetic weapon has a stronger recoil than other energy weapons (thus the reason for the bullpup configuration). So being able to hold the weapon steady is more important that an accurate aim when firing. Thus even though it is a ranged attack, attacking with a kinetic bullpup requires a strength attribute check including your attack bonus to hit the target. A kinetic bullpup is not considered a preferred weapon for any combat style. (att = +(lv/2)+S) The strong recoil also means that while a bullpup can be carried in one hand, it can only be fired effectively when gripped under the barrel with the other hand. A kinetic bullpup does normal damage. The amount of damage, and the official designation for the kinetic bullpup are based on the rank.

Rank 1	(Personal Bullpup) 1d3+2 hp
Rank 2	(Security Bullpup) 1d6+2 hp
Rank 3	(Military Bullpup) 2d6 hp

Mass: 3 kg

Forcefield Generator (Rank 1, 2, 3; Protective, Sci-Fi):

A forcefield generator is worn as a belt. It is not considered armor, so it can be "layered" with worn armor. Multiple forcefield generators cannot be layered with each other for additional effect. When activated the forcefield generator surrounds the wearer in a 2-m diameter shimmering bubble. When the wearer takes damage from a sci-fi ranged attack weapon, reduce the damage from the attack by the rank of the forcefield generator. If the original damage is equal to or less than the rank, the forcefield stops it entirely (Minimum damage 0).

Mass: 1 kg

Mech Armor (Rank Varies; Protective, Utility, Sci-Fi)

Mechanical assist armor (mech armor) is sci-fi versions of other types of armor, which are powered by WPT instead of magic. Mech armor reproducing the effects of lionskin armor, speed armor, or swimming armor are some of the most common. In the event of the sudden loss of WPT, mech armor is equipped with an automatic emergency escape system, small explosive charges that pop the suit open so that the wearer can wiggle out.

Mech Equipment (Rank Varies; Utility, Sci-Fi)

At the GM's discretion, mechanical assist versions (mech versions) of any magical item may be available. These items are all non-magical and will only function in areas where WPT is available.

Mech Weapon (Rank 1, 2, 3; Assault, Sci-Fi)

A mechanical assist weapon (mech weapon) functions as a truestrike weapon of the same rank, except that it is non-

magical and only functions in areas where WPT is available.

Network Connection Accessory (Rank Any; Utility, Sci-Fi)

A network connection accessory (NCA) is a piece of jewelry or clothing, such as a bracelet, necklace, headband, glove, or goggles that allows the wearer to connect to a data network. Many, but not all WPT power broadcasters have an associated data network. When an NCA is activated, an array of holographic monitors and button consoles spring to life around the character. A character accustomed to using an NCA can use these buttons and monitors to perform the following actions.

Assist: Using the video conferencing and RPS features (see below) together, it is possible to use the assist action to help any friendly character on the network with an NCA. This is done by analyzing the RPS data and giving the friendly character advice about the positions of enemies or other information to overcome a challenge. Like always, what actions can be assisted in this way are subject to GM approval.
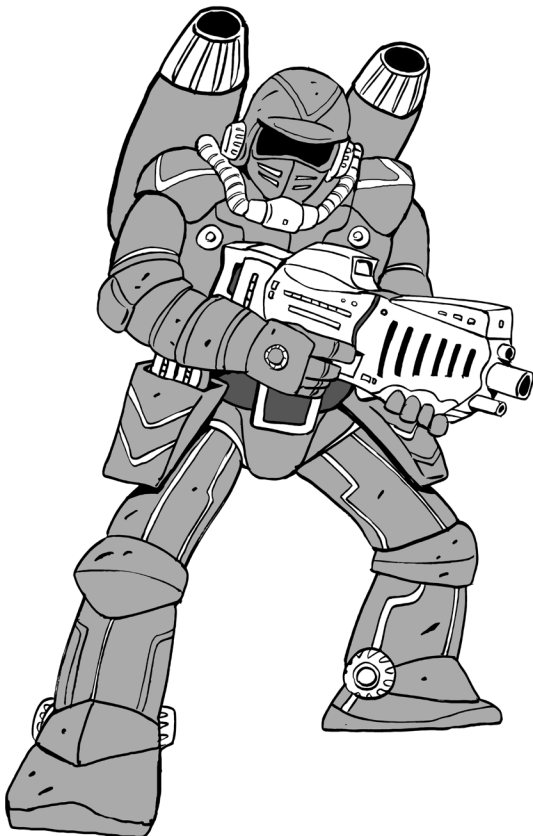
Funds Transfer: In some towns with extensive data networks, a system of digital commerce has been established. This allows an NCA holder to send or receive funds electronically. Money is still based on coins and pieces, but no physical coins change hands. You can visit a central bank to exchange digital and physical coins, making deposits or withdrawls from your account.

Library Access: Digital libraries of unimaginable volume are available on most data networks, allowing you to make a willpower check to research a question without having to physically visit a library. The information in a digital library will be colored by the culture that created it. Thus, a digital library from a lost civilization would contain no recent information; or an alien library might contain much information about bizarre creatures from distant worlds, but no information about the local fauna. In a technologically advanced area of The Domain, the library will contain not only academic information, but also local news, advertisements, calendars of upcoming events, weather forecasts, and pieces intended purely for entertainment.

Real-time Positioning System: A real-time positioning system (RPS) is an interactive, holographic map of the area covered by the data network. This map updates continuously to reflect changes in passable routes. Although sudden changes, like a barricaded door, collapsed bridge, or cut fence may take time to be noticed and updated. You can display your position on this map, as well as the position of publicly know information such as landmarks and addresses. This makes it virtually impossible to get lost while using an RPS. Other characters can share their locations with you, becoming visible on your RPS. In addition, a collection of seemingly infinite and omnipresent video feeds provides real time images (and recorded logs) of any publicly accessible location within the data network area. You can use these video feeds to make visual or audio based awareness checks across any distance and physical barriers, but the sheer amount of information is so vast, that the GM is free to increase the TN for the check unless you narrow down the area you are searching. (Because ranged attacks are awareness based checks, this means it is possible to use the RPS to target enemies you can't see directly; the RPS can also be used for targeting hexes. But in both cases normal rules for range and obstacles still apply.)

Video Conferencing: An NCA can contact other characters with NCAs on the data network and have a video conference, regardless of the physical distance and any barriers between the characters. The other characters must be willing to accept the call. Text-based chat and file-sharing functions are also available. In towns and regions

with widely used data networks, the three adventurers' guilds maintain artificial intelligence receptionists able to respond to data network calls at any time to answer questions or provide advice on the guild's behalf.

Mass: negligible

Protection Weave (Rank 1, 2, 3; Protective, Non-magical)

Protection weave is normal looking clothing woven from advanced personal protection materials. It functions the same as wild armor of the same rank except that it is non-magical. Because protection weave does not require power, it functions as normal in areas where WPT is not available.

Monster Rules & Data

Using the Monster Rules & Data

TRPGs like Sandcastle evolved out of tablet-top military strategy games. As such combat is a major element, perhaps disproportionally so. Players expect their characters to face fearsome and exotic monsters. As the GM you need to remember that monsters are more than just punching bags for the PCs. Every monster is a complete creature with its own agenda, an agenda that brings it into contact with the PCs. While there are certainly enough fantasy monsters that will fight the party to the death on matter of principle alone, there are many other monsters who will backdown once wounded, or avoid the fight entirely if it is in their best interest. You should each monster in character and reward players who find non-violent ways to deal with monsters. Even members of Slayers' Lodge will sometimes pass over the small fries to save their strength for their true quarry. Bribing a sentry or scaring away a power-leech bat with a flash of light doesn't mean that the party "avoided" the challenge; they overcame it.

That being said, The Domain is no place for pacifists. Sometimes the PCs are just going to have to crack some skulls to get things done. The Monster R&D (Rules & Data) provides you with a selection of fantastic monsters to challenge the characters and keep the players interested in the frequent and unapologetic blood-soaked violence of Sandcastle.

Few Monsters, many Variants

In order to conserve space, the monsters listed here often include multiple variants which use slight modifications to the game statistics. It's the GM's descriptions of these creatures which can make the combats completely different experiences for the players, even if the monster statistics are almost the same.

Humanoid monsters are covered in their own section. Humanoids are some of the most diverse and versatile monsters, so they are custom built using rules similar to those for the player characters.

At the end of the Monster R&D you can find a list of templates that can be used to modify the monsters for even more variety.

Monster Name	
Level	
defense:	
hp:	
pp:	
Move:	
Attributes: S ; D ; E ; A ; W ; P	
Resistances: RB ; GY ; OP ; HR	

Traits

Attack Actions

Special Actions

Description

Variants

Monster Entry Format

Monsters are presented in the format shown above.

Monster Name is a name commonly applied to the monster. Other names may be used in some parts of The Domain.

Level indicates what level of party would make for a balanced fight with the monster. See Challenge Levels in the Game Masters' Manual for more information about how to choose monsters of an appropriate level to challenge the party without overwhelming them.

Defense, hp, and pp have the same meanings for monsters as they do for PCs. Even if a monster has no innate abilities which use pp, they are still listed for use when applying templates to the base creature.

Move indicates how many meters a monster can move with a single minor action, the same as for PCs. But monsters may have exotic forms of movement such as swimming or flying which will also be listed here.

S D E A W P indicate the monster's core attributes. These are the same as for the PCs: strength, dexterity, endurance, awareness, willpower, presence, in that order.

Resistances indicate the modifiers applied to reaction

rolls made by the monster. There are three scores for chromatic damage (RB = Red, Blue; GY = Green, Yellow; OP = Orange, Purple) and one for hex resistance (HR). The modifiers listed here include the modifiers from the attributes. This is the total modifier applied to the check.

Traits indicate various idiosyncrasies of the monster. Any skill bonuses are listed here. Because skills can be used in combination with different attributes, the skill bonuses listed here are applied in addition to the appropriate attribute when making a skill check.

Attack actions indicate the ways a monster can assault a target. The actions listed here are always available to the monster. Attack actions are described in the following format.

Name [Action Type] +total attack bonus, melee/ranged damage (damage type)
For example:
2 Claws [Major or Interrupt] + 7 melee 1d6+3 hp (normal damage)
Poisonous Bite [Major or Interrupt] +9 melee 1d6+5 hp (green energy)

If a monster has the multi-attack ability (the ability to make more than 1 attack with a single major action), the number of times it can make this attack with a single action is listed first. Then comes the name of the attack, followed by the type of action in brackets. Most attacks can be made either major or interrupt actions, but some can only be made as one or the other. The total attack bonus (att) listed next includes all modifiers for attributes and innate talent.

Special actions are actions which require the expenditure of pp or have other prerequisites to use as well as actions which don't inflict damage directly. Special actions may not always be available, or the GM might choose for a monster not to use them in order to conserve resources.

Like PCs, monsters have a limit to the number of major, minor, and interrupt actions they can take. So choosing which attack or special action to use on a given turn requires strategy.

Description includes not only the physical appearance of the monster, but also notes on behavior, and how it fits into the game world.

Variants lists different monsters which can be created by making minor changes to the monster's statistics or description. Chromatic variants are common, creating a new monster by changing the energy color of its abilities.

Sample Monster List

Apparition

Level 3
defense: 17
hp: 30
pp: 4
Move: 10 m
Attributes: S −3; D +4; E +0; A +2; W +2; P +3
Resistances: RB +7; GY +3; OP +5; HR +4

Traits
Hardened Purple
Vulnerable Orange

Restricted Territory: An apparition can never leave or be forced out of its territory.

Unhampered Movement: Within its territory, an apparition can fly, move through obstacles, and pass through closed doors and even solid walls at full speed. An apparition can pass through a space occupied by another creature, even a hostile one, but cannot stop in an occupied square. If an apparition moves away from melee range with an enemy, it presents the normal opportunity for a parting shot.

Attack Actions
Spectral Touch [Major or Interrupt] +4 melee 2d6 hp (purple energy)

Special Actions
Defense Hex [Minor]: As per the hexer special action. −1 to defense until the start of the apparition's next turn. A successful TN 11 HR reaction is needed to avoid the penalty.

Energy Shield [Major or Interrupt] (cost 2; purple energy): As per the energer special action, but without requiring a mote. The shield has 8 hp. Hardened Purple, Vulnerable Orange.

Description
Commonly called ghosts, these apparitions are not necessarily the souls of the dead. Apparitions can also be created to serve as guardians. An apparition is tied to a certain location, as small as a single room, or as broad as a forest. An apparition attacks intruders entering its home, but is smart enough to distinguish between living creatures who pose a threat to the territory and those who don't. It is

Apparition (continued)

capable of conversation and can sometimes be reasoned with, even bribed with proper offerings.

Apparitions can pass through solid obstacles, but can pick up and manipulate small objects when they choose to do so. Attacks also affect them normally. A favorite tactic is to rise up out of the floor in front of a target and attack without warning.

If reduced to 0 hp, an apparition temporarily dissipates, but will reform within a week. Thus once combat begins an apparition will fight to the end. Permanently ending a haunting will require a plot device created by the GM.

Variants

Chromatic Variants
The statistics above are for typical creepy apparitions infused with evil (purple) energy, but any color of energy is possible. Change the hardened and vulnerable traits, and the color of energy used by the attack and special actions. Typical chromatic variants include: soul knight (orange), sand devil (yellow), and Green Lady of the Woods (green).

Bear, Black

Level 1
defense: 12
hp: 14
pp: 2
Move: 12 m
Attributes: S +2; D +0; E +2; A +1; W −4; P +0
Resistances RB +1; GY +2; OP −3; HR −3

Traits
Multi-attack: With one attack action a bear can make two claw attacks. An interrupt action attack will be one claw attack.

Attack Actions
2 Claws [Major or Interrupt] +3 melee 1d3+2 hp (normal damage)

Bear, Brown

Level 2
defense: 13
hp: 43
pp: 3
Move: 12 m
Attributes: S +4; D +0; E +3; A +1; W −2: P +0
Resistances: RB +1; GY +4; OP +0; HR +0

Traits
Multi-attack: With one attack action a bear can make two claw attacks. An interrupt action attack will be one claw attack.

Attack Actions
2 Claws [Major or Interrupt] +4 melee 1d3+4 hp (normal damage)

Bear, Polar

Level 4
defense: 15
hp: 68
pp: 5
Move: 14 m
Attributes: S +6; D +1; E +3; A +1; W +0; P +3
Resistances: RB +3; GY +5; OP +2; HR +2

Traits
Hardened Blue

Large: A polar bear occupies two 2-m squares when walking on all fours.

Multi-attack: With one attack action a bear can make two claw attacks. An interrupt action attack will be one claw attack.

Attack Actions
2 Claws [Major or Interrupt] +8 melee 2d6+6 hp (normal damage)

Description
Bears are highly versatile, coming in a variety of sizes and colors, and inhabiting climates ranging from ice flows to tropical jungles. They can climb trees and swim across rivers; and are capable of fighting either on two legs or on all fours. Depending on the disposition of the individual, a bear could be a gentle giant easily startled by the party, or a serial mankiller out for blood. Nearby settlements may

view bears as harmless if left alone, or as threats to livestock that must be eliminated, or as trophies to be hunted for their skins. In more urbanized areas bears take on roles ranging from circus clowns and gladiators, to uninvited interlopers scrounging for garbage, to semidivine beings regarded with fear and awe. Because of this versatility, when designing an adventure, anytime you need a simple, straight-forward, non-magical animal which will be an appropriate challenge for whatever level the PCs happen to be, a bear is always a good choice.

Variants

Generic Beasts
With their ability to swim, climb trees, and fight both on two legs and all fours, bears are versatile enough to act as a stand-in for many other animals. Provided you don't let the players get a peek at your notes, you should be able to use the bear statistics to convincingly portray different sizes of primates (baboons to gorillas) and big cats (panthers to tigers) as well.

Canine

Level 0
defense: 14
hp: 6
pp: 2
Move: 14 m
Attributes: S 0; D +3; E +3; A +3; W −1; P 0
Resistances: RB +3; GY +3; OP −1: HR −1

Traits
Pack Tactics [Free]: Any character who starts his turn within melee range of 2 or more hostile canines must succeed on an unskilled willpower reaction or suffer a −2 penalty to defense until the start of his next turn. The TN for this reaction is 10 plus the number of hostile canines within melee range. This effect is automatic and doesn't require any action on the part of the canines.

Attack Actions
Bite [Major or Interrupt] +1 melee 1d2 hp (normal damage)

Special Actions
Pin Down [Interrupt]: As per the striker special action, using the same attack bonus as the bite attack.

Description
Caines include guard dogs, wolves, dingoes, jackals, etc. A lone wolf is enough to terrorize travelers or villagers, but it is in packs that caines show their true strength, working together to bring down prey much larger than themselves. The definition of the "pack" can be flexible enough to include human handlers. Their ability to distinguish between friends and strangers makes them useful guard animals. Compared to other beasts, canines can be easily trained to respond to a variety of commands, making them useful additions to almost any GMC fighting force. In open battle, they will attack with reckless abandon and work to drag down foes, making it easier for their handlers to land attacks of their own. Even many high-level GMCs will first "unleash the hounds" to soften up the opposition.

Variants

Bugbee
Use the stats as is.

Description
Bugbees are arachnid monsters the size of a small canine with eyes running along the length of their body and a large vertical mouth of sharp teeth. Bugbees attack in swarms, counting on sheer numbers to bring down prey. Bugbees swallow large chunks of flesh out of their victims and use gastroliths to help break up the matter. These gastroliths include not only stones, but small metal items such as jewelry and coins. So adventurers will sometimes hunt bugbees in hopes of a quick payoff. Because bugees can live for decades or centuries, a long-lost artifact or the key to a security lock can sometimes be found by cutting one open.
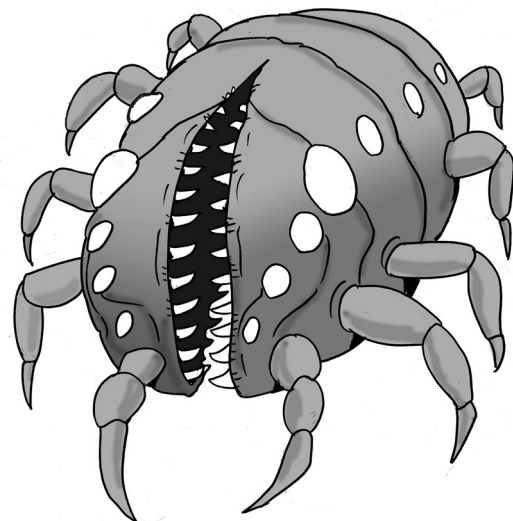
Canine (continued)

Hellhound[Templates: chromatic (red)]
Hardened Red
Vulnerable Blue

Special Actions
Fiery Breath [Major or Interrupt] (cost 1 pp; red energy): The hellhound belches out a jet of flame 8 m long and up to 2 m wide. All creatures caught in the blast take 1d2 hp of primary damage and 0 hp of automatic damage (red energy). A successful TN 10 RB reaction is needed to avoid the primary damage.

Description
Fiery demons in the shape of dogs, hellhounds can be trained like ordinary dogs. Some hellhounds escape their handlers and go feral. It is not uncommon to find a hellhound leading a pack of normal canines.

Robo-dog [Templates: Animatron]
Hardened Normal Damage
Amphibious: A robo-dog is watertight and can operate underwater.
Slow: 10 m move
Ungainly movement (−1 to defense and all attacks)
Integrated equipment: NCA

Description
Robo-dogs are popular pets in areas where sci-fi equipment and creatures are common. Some models are capable of speech. They are programed to be friendly towards people and will normally give strangers the benefit of the doubt. Robo-dogs are designed as pets and are ineffective combatants, but have remarkable resilience. The real danger they pose is that as guard dogs, they can use their integrated NCA to instantly alert the entire facility as soon as they decide something isn't right.

Celestial Bull

Level 6
defense: 20
hp: 70
pp: 7
Move: 16 m
Attributes: S +7; D +5; E +5; A +3; W +6; P +5
Resistances: RB +8; GY +8; OP +9; HR +9

Traits
Quick Reflexes: The Celestial Bull can make 4 interrupt actions per turn.

Attack Actions
Horns [Major or Interrupt] +9 melee 2d6+7 hp (normal damage)

Special Actions
Counter Hex [Interrupt]: After failing a HR reaction, the Celestial Bull can use the hexer counter hex special action on himself once to try to negate the hex. The Celestial Bull seems to have divine protection from hexes.

Charge [Interrupt]: Whenever the celestial bull moves into melee range of a target, he may make a horn attack against that target as an interrupt action. After the attack has been resolved, he can continue the rest of his move action if he has not yet moved the full distance.

Cut and Run [Interrupt]: As per the harrier special action.

Energy Shunt [Reaction]: As per the harrier special action.

Fleet Footed [Interrupt]: As per the harrier special action.

Description
The Celestial Bull is the earthly incarnation of the great bull constellation. He might be summoned down to Earth or fall accidently from the sky. Since the Celestial Bull cannot return to the sky and cannot eat Earth grass, he soon becomes enraged with hunger and starts attacking anything unlucky enough to cross his path until he's destroyed. But the Celestial Bull is only an incarnation of the great bull constellation; the familiar shape of the great bull can still be seen overhead in the winter night sky, even when the Celestial Bull is rampaging on Earth.

Chimera

Level 4
defense: 16
hp: 50
pp: 8
Move: 14 m
Attributes: S +5; D +3; E +4; A +4; W 0; P +5
Resistances: RB +7; GY +6; OP +2; HR +2

Traits
Skills: Athletics, Stealth +4

Hardened Blue
Vulnerable Red (Even though a chimera breathes fire, it is vulnerable to red energy.)

Large: a chimera occupies two 2-m squares.

Independent Action: The lion part, goat part, and snake part of the chimera act independently. As such a chimera has 3 major actions, 1 minor action, and 3 interrupt actions per turn.

Multi-attack: With one attack action the lion part of a chimera can make two claw attacks and one bite attack. An interrupt action attack will be one claw attack.

Attack Actions
2 Claws [Major or Interrupt] + 5 melee 1d6+3 hp (normal damage)

Lion Bite [Major] +6 melee 1d6+5 hp (normal damage)

Snake Bite [Major or Interrupt] +6 melee 1d6+5 hp (green energy)

Goat Headbutt [Major or Interrupt] +4 melee 1d6+3 hp (normal damage)

Special Actions
Counter Strike (Goat) [Interrupt]: As per the striker special action, using the same game mechanics as the goat headbutt.

Fiery Breath (Goat)[Major] (cost 2 pp): The chimera breathes a jet of flame 8 m long and up to 2 m wide from the goat's mouth. All creatures caught in the blast take 2d6 hp of primary damage and 4 hp of automatic damage (red energy). A successful TN 15 BR reaction is needed to avoid the primary damage.

Fleet Footed [Interrupt]: As per the harrier special action. Any head can use its interrupt action to use this ability.

Pin Down (Lion) [Interrupt]: As per the striker special action, using the same game mechanics as the claw attack.

Vengeance Strike (Snake)[Interrupt] (cost 1 pp): As per the striker special action, using the same game mechanics as the snake bite attack.

Description
A chimera is the prototypical amalgamation monstrosity, with the forepart of a lion, a snake for a tail, and a fire-breathing goat's head sprouting between its shoulder blades. Each of the heads is capable of independent action, giving the chimera multiple actions per turn. This multiplicity also gives the chimera a high defense, because there is no dead angle to exploit. A chimera's counter-intuitive hardened and vulnerable energies mean that a party is likely to waste energy on inefficient attacks unless they do their homework before confronting a chimera. A chimera is deadly in melee combat, but the lack of long-range attacks means it can't counterattack if you can keep it from getting too close. But with athletics, stealth, fleet footed, and pin down, a chimera is really good at getting too close.

Chimeras are some of the more powerful monsters in The Domain and are accustomed to being able to rampage with impunity. They are particularly fond of slaughtering domesticated cattle. They show no fear of humans and have been known to devastate entire villages. Local rulers will sometimes offer a reward for the destruction of a rampaging chimera. Many branches of Slayers' Lodge want to add this fearsome creature to their collection, the only problem is "Which head do you mount?"

Cockatrice

Level 2
defense: 14
hp: 20
pp: 6
Move: 10 m
Attributes: S +0; D +1; E +1; A +2; W +3; P +3
Resistances: RB +3; GY +3; OP +4; HR +4

Traits
Skills: Arcana +2

Hardened Green
Vulnerable Yellow

Cockatrice (continued)

Multi-attack: With one attack action a cockatrice can make one bite attack or two claw attacks. An interrupt action attack will be one bite or one claw attack.

Attack Actions

Bite [Major or Interrupt] +2 melee 1d6 hp (green energy)

2 Claws [Major or Interrupt] +1 melee 1d3+1 hp (normal damage)

Special Actions

Defense Hex [Minor]: As per the hexer special action. The resulting penalty to defense is −1. A successful TN 15 HR reaction is needed to avoid the penalty.

Fiery Breath [Major] (cost 1 pp; red energy): The cockatrice belches out a jet of flame 8 m long and up to 2 m wide. All creatures caught in the blast take 1d3 hp of primary damage and 2 hp of automatic damage (red energy). A successful TN 14 RB reaction is needed to avoid the primary damage.

Petrifying Gaze [Major] (cost 1 pp; yellow energy): This attack targets a single creature that the cockatrice can see out to a range of 24 m. The target takes 2 hp of automatic damage and 1d3 hp of primary damage (yellow energy). A successful TN 15 GY reaction is needed to avoid the primary damage.

Vengeance Strike [Interrupt] (cost 1 pp): When a cockatrice is struck with a melee weapon, the poisonous blood of the cockatrice can travel up the weapon and affect the wielder. This is treated as the striker vengeance strike special action, using the same game mechanics as the bite attack.

Venom Spit [Major] (att= + 4; cost 1 pp; green energy): As per the energer energy shot special action, but without requiring a free hand or an energy mote.

Description

A cockatrice is a magical beast combining the head and body of a rooster with the tail of a snake. Sometimes also called a basilisk, it has a bewildering array of ways to hurt adventurers. With three different colors of energy weapons at its disposal, but a limited pool of power points, the cockatrice will first use its arcana skill to read the auras of its opponents, looking for chromatic defenses, including chromatic wizard's robes, and then use the most efficient color to attack, often softening the target up with a defense hex first.

Cockatrice eggs can be created through alchemy, so that in addition to appearing in the wild, cockatrices can also be found in research laboratories. They are not easily domesticated and prone to attack their handlers, but this element of danger makes some researchers and collectors even more eager to have a cockatrice in their menagerie.

Demon

Demon	
Level 6	
defense: 18	
hp: 80	
pp: 13	
Move: 10 m walk, 20 m fly	
Attributes: S +6; D +6; E +7; A +7; W +8; P +8	
Resistances: RB +9; GY +10; OP +11; HR +11	

Traits

Hardened Purple
Vulnerable Orange

Flight: At the GM's discretion, a demon can fly over obstacles on the ground.

Large Hands: A demon can wield two-handed weapons in a single hand.

Attack Actions

Flaming Sword (red chromatic greatsword) [Major or Interrupt] +12 melee 2d6+6 hp (red energy)

Bare Hands [Major or Interrupt] +9 melee 1d3+3 hp (normal damage)

Special Actions

Counter Hex [Interrupt]: As per the hexer special action. Many creatures can only use counter hex when they personally are target by a hex; but a demon does not face

that restriction and is able to counter a hex cast on any target up to 24 m away. Demons take pride in bending the rules of reality to their advantage.

Energy Explosion [Major] (cost 1, 2 or 3 pp; purple or red energy): As per the energer special action, but without requiring an energy mote. A TN 18 OP reaction is needed to avoid the primary damage if purple energy was used. A TN 18 RB reaction is needed to avoid the primary damage if red energy was used.

Energy Shield [Major or Interrupt] (cost 1, 2, or 3 pp; purple or red energy): As per the energer special action, but without requiring a mote. Demons can create either purple or red energy shields. A demon can only maintain one energy shield at a time.

Energy Shot [Major] (att= + 9; cost 1, 2 or 3 pp; purple or red energy): As per the energer special action, but without requiring an energy mote.

Energy Shunt [Reaction] (cost 1 pp): As per the eneger special action.

Immobilize [Major]: The demon can cause a dark shadow of swirling mist to appear on the ground over an area 6 meters across (3 x 3 combat squares). The target area can be up to 24 m away from the demon. Almost instantly, countless black-iron chains fly up out of this portal entangling all creatures in the area. The targets become immobilized, entrapped in the chains. Each target is allowed an unskilled TN 14 dexterity reaction to avoid the effects. Once a target is immobilized, the effect is perpetual, requiring no action on the part of the demon. An immobilized creatures has its movement value reduced to 0 m, but can still take other actions. The target can break free of the chains with an unskilled TN 14 strength check or by dealing 20 points of damage to the chains (defense 11, hardened purple, vulnerable orange).

Description

A demon is pure evil incarnate. Although they vary widely in appearance and mannerism, from grotesque rampaging brutes to aloof but cordial merchants of souls, these statistics can be used to represent any kind of demon. Demons are unredeemable evil, and while they may seem helpful at first, if you accept aid from a demon, in the end there will always be Hell to pay, literally. Demons are masters at wielding energy, capable of attacking with purple or red energy with equal ease. In addition to the moralistic reasons to slay a demon, its flaming sword is a coveted item for its own inherent power and the associated bragging rights.

Variants

Angel [Templates: Chromatic Orange]
Hardened Orange
Vulnerable Purple
Energy attacks do orange or red damage.
The golden chains produced by the immobilize attack are hardened against orange damage and vulnerable to purple damage.

Description
An inconvenient truth of theology, demons and angels are actually close relatives. Fallen angels are the type adventuring parties are most likely to fight; angels who rebelled against Heaven and were cast out. But far more terrifying than either demons or fallen angels are reaping angles. Whereas demons and fallen angels are inherently self-centered, meaning that they can be flattered or bribed, reaping angels have been sent out on a divine mission and will single-mindedly destroy anything that gets in their way. A reaping angel's job is not to judge and spare the righteous; its job is to send the harvest to the threshing room where the wheat will be separated from the chaff.

Ascended [Templates: Chromatic Orange]
Hardened Orange
Vulnerable Purple
Change chromatic blade to purple energy.
Energy attacks do orange or yellow damage.
The ropes of pure light produced by the immobilize attack are hardened against orange damage and vulnerable to purple damage.

Description
An ascended is an artificial divine being created through genetics, artificial intelligence, reverse engineered alien technology, alchemy, or other mad science. An ascended is so far beyond human, that its first action is almost always to escape its creators, often destroying the research lab in the process. An ascended usually appears as a beautiful, unoffensive, young human. An ascended may be charming and even talkative if caught in the right mood, but it is prone to throw sudden devastating tantrums over seemingly trivial comments. Likewise, ascended often attach great importance to accomplishing small tasks. Unfortunately, an ascended is so powerful that something as simple as making a trip to lay flowers on a grave can produce city-leveling collateral damage which is beneath the notice of the ascended. An ascended lacks the physical wings of a demon, but can manifest wings of pure light if it needs to fly. If pressed into melee combat, an ascended can use a free action to cause a sword hilt to extend out of its chest and then draw an impossibly large chromatic

Demon (continued)

(purple) greatsword out of its own body. This is apparently a very painful process with much screaming.

Deep Demon
Change chromatic blade to blue energy.
Energy attacks do purple or blue damage.

Description
The lowest level of Hell is actually tormented by ice and wind, not hellfire. Change the red energy abilities to blue for demons from the deepest depths of Hell.

Deathwyrm

Level 4
defense: 15
hp: 65
pp: 5
Move: 10 m crawl, burrow, swim
Attributes: S +7; D −3; E +6; A +6; W −2; P +4
Resistances: RB +1; GY +8; OP +2; HR +2

Traits
Skill: Stealth +4

Hardened Yellow
Vulnerable Green

Amphibious: Deathwyrms can operate underwater for extended periods.

Large: A deathworm occupies five 2-m squares (it can curl its body into any shape as long as the 5 squares form an uninterrupted line.)

Attack Actions
Bite [Major or Interrupt] +6 melee 2d6+7 hp (normal damage)

Special Actions
Heat Breath [Major] (cost 2 pp; yellow energy): The deathworm breathes an 8 m long, 2 m wide, blast of dry heat which desiccates targets. All creatures caught in the blast take 2d6 hp of primary damage and 4 hp of automatic damage (yellow energy). A successful TN 14 GY reaction is needed to avoid the primary damage.

Description
The deathwyrm is a killing machine, so efficiently evolved that it is little more than a mouth of razor sharp teeth and a furnace-like stomach. It appears as a 10 m long tawny colored worm or snake, and carries its head upright when attacking. A deathwyrm is always on the hunt, not even taking time to sleep or mate, instead relying on an almost plantlike system of pollen and stigma to reproduce. Although a deathwyrm lacks obvious eyes or nostrils, its entire skin functions as a sensory organ, allowing it to detect and target prey with frightening accuracy. It prefers to hunt in sandy deserts or areas of loose soil, allowing it to tunnel under its target and ambush by bursting out of the ground right next to the target. It can also swim and has been known to lunge out from lakes and rivers as well. When it cannot close to melee, a deathwyrm can belch out a blast of heat from its stomach, withering targets from a distance.

It is widely believed that deathwyrms evolved from dragons, or perhaps devolved would be a better term. But what evolutionary or magical process could have driven deathwyrms to specialize so exclusively on eating remains a topic of debate. From time to time a College of Recovery scholar wanting to test a new theory will hire adventures to track, capture, or kill a deathwrym for study. But the inherent danger of dealing with deathwyrms means that the debate remains for the most part academic.

Variants

Frostwyrm
Hardened Blue
Vulnerable Red
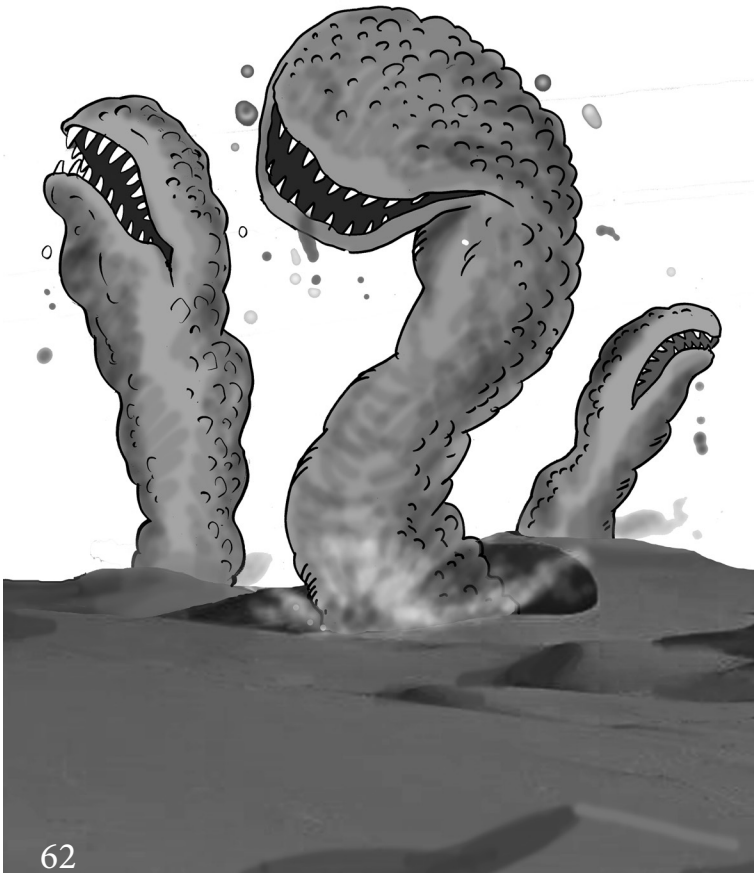
Heat breath changes to frost breath (blue energy, reaction changes to TN 14 RB)

Description
Frostwyrms are ice blue in color and live in cold climates where they burrow through snow or erupt out from ice covered lakes to attack prey.

Dragon

Level 5
defense: 16
hp: 50
pp: 10
Move: 10 m walk or swim, 20 m fly
Attributes: S +7; D +6; E +6; A +7; W +7; P +8
Resistances: RB +9; GY +9; OP +10; HR +10

Traits
Hardened Red
Vulnerable Blue

Amphibious: Dragons can operate underwater for extended periods.

Flight: At the GM's discretion, a dragon can fly over obstacles on the ground.

Large: A dragon occupies eight 2 m squares (2 wide 4 long) or four 2 m squares (2x2 square) when it rears back.

Multi-attack: With one attack action a dragon can make two claw attacks and one bite attack. An interrupt action attack will be one claw attack.

Quick Reflexes: A dragon can make 4 interrupt actions per turn.

Attack Actions
Bite [Major] +12 melee 2d6 +7 hp (normal damage)

2 Claws [Major or Interrupt] +10 melee 1d6 +7 hp (normal damage)

Special Actions
Fiery Breath [Major] (cost 3 pp; red energy): The dragon breathes a jet of flame 24 m long and up to 2 m wide and (12 squares x 1 squares). All creatures caught in the blast take 3d6 hp of primary damage and 6 hp of automatic damage (red energy). A successful TN 18 RB reaction is needed to avoid the primary damage.

Breath Bomb [Major] (cost 1, 2 or 3 pp; red energy): The dragon spits a glob of energy that flies up to 24 m and then explodes. This ability functions the same as the energer energy explosion special action, except that it doesn't require an energy mote. A successful TN 18 RB reaction is needed to avoid the primary damage.

Cut and Run [Interrupt]: As per the harrier special action.

Elusive [Interrupt]: When another character uses a major or minor action (not an interrupt action) to make a move action, the dragon may make its own move action as an interrupt action.

Fleet-footed [Interrupt]: As per the harrier special action. (Despite the word "foot" being in the name, the dragon can also use this option when flying.)

Description
The hallmark of fantasy for the last century: a flying, fire-breathing dragon. A dragon is a crafty fighter and will use complex tactics, usually using its fiery breath or breath bomb to get opponents to scatter, and then closing to melee to inflict heavy damage on isolated individuals. As soon as an organized counterattack starts, the dragon can use its quick reflexes, elusive, cut and run, and fleet-footed abilities to escape retaliation. A dragon will use obstacles or terrain to its advantage, such as walls or trenches that it can fly across to distance itself from opponents or which can force opponents into close confines to make them more vulnerable to an energy attack. Most dragons aren't shy about using their flying ability to abandon the fight entirely if the tide turns against them.

Dragons hold themselves aloof from mortal affairs, but almost all dragons form a kind of mutual defense treaty with the local humanoids referred to as a dragon pact. Dragon pacts range from unspoken understandings along the lines of, "You keep bringing me fat cows or I start eating people" to multipage constitutions guaranteeing the dragon control over an empire. But at its heart, a dragon pact comes down to the idea that it is in the best interest of the local population to keep the dragon happy.

Some peoples, especially primitive tribes of ugly humanoid monsters, embrace the dragon pact, worshiping the dragon as a divine protector of their people. In turn, a dragon watches over its protectorate, or at least doesn't torment it needlessly. This is simply because having obsequious neighbors saves the dragon trouble and feeds its ego, not necessarily due to any legitimate concern for the wellbeing of inferior beings.

Dragon (continued)

Even in the case of poor villagers being terrorized by an evil dragon, when the PCs show up to save the day they can expect a hostile, possibly armed, reception from any villages under the dragon pact. This is because if the party tries but fails to slay the dragon, they will only make the situation worse. The villagers will protect the dragon if only to protect themselves. Half the challenge of slaying a dragon is getting around the dragon pact.

Dragons accumulate hoards of money and magical items. These might be stolen, received as tribute, or simply leftovers from previous adventurers eaten by the dragon. A dragon will understand any magical items in its hoard and will use them to its advantage during a fight in its lair.

Variants

Chromatic Variants
Red fire dragons are the most common, but dragons corresponding to all six colors of energy exist. For chromatic variants, change the hardened and vulnerable traits, and the color of damage inflicted by the special actions. The type of reaction (RB, GY, or OP) needed to resist the energy based attacks will change depending on the color.

Purple dragons and orange dragons are long and serpentine, and capable of flight even though they lack wings. These two colors of dragons view their constant opposition not as a bitter contest between good and evil, but as part of a natural balance of light and darkness.

Flier

Level 0
defense: 12
hp: 1
pp: 2
Move: 8 m walk, 20 m fly
Attributes: S −4; D +2; E −1; A +1; W −4; P 0
Resistances: RB +2; GY −1; OP −4; HR −4

Traits
Skills: Stealth +2

Flight: At the GM's discretion, fliers can fly over obstacles on the ground.

Attack Actions
Bite [Major or Interrupt] +1 melee 1 hp (normal damage)

Description
Fliers include small birds and bats as well as fairies, giant insects, and small drakes. Although their attacks are ineffective, a sudden assaul by a flier when exploring dark woods or abandoned buildings can frighten even veteran adventurers. Due to their small size, and ability to simply fly over defensive walls, magical fliers make excellent spies. Also, a wave of bats or crows is enough to send most villagers and guards into a panic prior to the arrival of a GMC sorcerer and his other minions.

Variants

Power-leech Bat [Templates: power-leech]

Special Actions
Energy Drain [Major] (cost 1 pp): When a power-leech bat successfully hits with a bite attack, it has the option of spending 1 pp to cause the target to lose 1d3+1 pp. This is in addition to any hp damage caused by the attack.

Gibbering Insanity

Level 4
defense: 16
hp: 35
pp: 8
Move: 10 m
Attributes: S +4; D +4; E +6; A 0; W +5; P +7
Resistances: RB +6; GY +8; OP +9; HR +7

Traits
Skills: Arcana, Physical Sciences +4

Hardened Normal Damage: A gibbering insanity's anatomy is so alien that it's hard to know where to aim.

Amphibious: It is unclear if/how a gibbering insanity breathes, but prolonged periods underwater don't seem to cause an problems.

Attack Actions
Claws [Major or Interrupt] +6 melee 1d6+4 hp (normal damage)

Special Actions
Counter Hex [Interrupt]: After failing a HR reaction, a gibbering insanity can use the hexer counter hex special action on itself to try to negate the hex. A gibbering insanity is so alien that sometimes magic hexes fail to take hold.

Energy Shot [Major] (att= + 6; cost 1 or 2 pp; purple energy): As per the energer special action, but without requiring an energy mote.

Energy Explosion [Major] (cost 1 or 2 pp; purple energy): As per the energer special action, but without requiring an energy mote. A TN 16 OP reaction is needed to avoid the primary damage.

Energy Shunt [Reaction] (cost 1 pp): As per the eneger special action.

Gaze of the Void [Major] (att= +6; cost 1 pp): A beam of light shoots out from one of the gibbering insanity's eyes towards a living target up to 24 m away. If the beam misses, the gibbering insanity need not pay any pp. If the beam strikes the target, the gibbering insanity can pay 1 pp, to fill the target's mind with visions of such horror that the target loses 1d3+1 pp from the soul numbing terror.

Ichor Spray [Major] (cost 2 pp; green energy): The gibbering insanity spits an 8 m long stream of ichor from its "mouth." All creatures caught in the spray take 2d6 hp of primary damage and 4 hp of automatic damage (green energy). A successful TN 15 GY reaction is needed to avoid the primary damage.

Hymn of Drowning Sanity [Major] (cost 2 pp): The normal gibbering takes on a more chilling tone and all creatures within 8 m of the gibbering insanity, must make a successful unskilled TN 12 willpower reaction or loose 1d2+1 pp as their minds start to unravel.

Madness Hex [Minor]: This hex acts as either an attack hex or defense hex (50% chance of each, determined randomly each time it is used). The resulting penalty is −2 in either case. A successful TN 16 HR reaction is needed to avoid the penalty.

Move Hex [Minor]: The gibbering insanity twists the laws of reality, making it harder to move. A successful TN 16 HR reaction is needed to avoid the penalty.

Description
A gibbering insanity is an alien creature from far beyond the realm of The Domain. Its thought processes are so different from anything found in nature, that the only human word that can be used to describe them is "insanity." Although not necessarily inherently hostile, its complete lack of anything resembling ethics means a gibbering insanity feels no compunction about trying to steal an adventurer's gear or vital organs.

A gibbering insanity is humanoid in form and larger than an oni, but not quite big enough to be a giant. Its body is as alien as its mind, with anatomy for which no sensible words exist. But the humans who survive an encounter with a gibbering insanity describe it as having a head with flexible extrusions resembling tentacles or snakes. It has deep, soulful, very human eyes ablaze with inner madness. There is no consensus about the number and location of these eyes. Other small orifices, apparently combining the functions of the ears, nostrils, and larynx are scattered about the bulbus head. A gibbering insanity has two arms, attached normally at the shoulders. They seem to have a multitude of joints, allowing the arms and fingers to bend at sharp angles from random locations. The legs resemble tree trunks with writhing roots.

Gibbering insanities are thought to hail from the same dark realms as writhing blasphemies and twilight impossibilities. As such, gibbering insanities are often viewed as emissaries and heralds, paving the way for even greater evils. But the reality is much more complicated. Infinite worlds of horror lurk in the darkness beyond the edges of The Domain, each with its own incomprehensible agendas, sometimes aligned with each other, sometimes opposed, but always involving death and destruction.

The "gibbering" in the name refers to the constant drone of disjointed sounds apparently emanating from the holes in the head of a gibbering insanity. It is not uncommon for a gibbering insanity to have fanatic cultist human followers who seek to find meaning and enlightenment in the unending stream of gibberish.

Homunculus

Level 0
defense: 13
hp: 3
pp: 3
Move: 8 m
Attributes: S −3; D +2; E −2; A +1; W 0; P 0
Resistances: RB +1; GY +1; OP +1: HR −1

Traits
Hardened Purple
Vulnerable Orange

Attack Actions
Claw [Major or Interrupt] −1 melee 1 hp (normal damage)

Homunculus (continued)

Special Actions

Energy Spark [Major] (att= +1; cost 1 pp; purple energy): A homunculus can shoot a spark of energy up to 8 m. A target struck by this spark takes 1d2 hp of purple energy damage.

Energy Surge [Major] (cost 1 pp; purple energy): All creatures within melee range of the homunculus must make a TN 11 OP reaction or take 1 hp of primary damage (purple energy). There are 0 hp of automatic damage.

Energy Armor (cost 1 pp; purple energy): This ability functions the same way as the energy shield energer special action but doesn't require a mote and only provides 2 points of protection. This energy armor lasts for 10 minutes or until the homunculus is reduced to 0 hp. The homunculus can choose to lower the shield earlier. The shield is hardened against purple energy and vulnerable to orange energy.

Description

Homunculi are small humanoids, even smaller than dwarves. Homunculi are created through magic, alchemy, or mad science. They have ugly, asymmetric features, with a stooped posture and shambling gate as if they aren't put together quite right. Magical energy is an integral part of their vital functions, and they can wield this energy to attack or defend themselves. Homunculi are unquestioningly loyal to their master, following even suicidal orders without hesitation. As such, they can be found serving as low-level functionaries and guards in laboratories or religious, occult, and magical organizations.

Variants

Chromatic Variants

The statistics above are for a homunculus brought to life through purple energy, but any color of energy is possible. For chromatic variants change the hardened and vulnerable traits, and the color of energy used for the special actions. The type of reaction (RB, GY, OP) needed to resist the energy-based attacks will change depending on the color.

Cowl Spirit

Use the stats as is.

Description

These ghostly creatures appear as darkness filled robes, with points of light for eyes. The color of the robe corresponds to the color of magical energy which gives it life. Cowl spirits use the same statistics as homunculi

66

(chromatic variants are common) and fill the same roles. Their ghostly forms are creepy, but not as outright ugly as normal homunculi, so it is often a matter of taste which one an organization uses. When reduced to 0 hp, a cowl spirit evaporates leaving behind an empty robe that a resourceful adventurer can use as a disguise.

Familiar

Use the stats as is.

Description

A familiar is a helper spirit in the form of a cat, snake, or other small animal. Familiars use the same statistics as homunculi (chromatic variants are common). Owl, crow, bat, or other flying familiars are possible using the imp variant (see below). Although they can understand spoken language, most familiars can't speak, or at least choose not to. Wild familiar spirits are found in some parts of The Domain, and have been known to harass low-level adventurers.

Imp [Templates: Flying]

Move: 20 m (fly) 10 m (walk)

Description

Imps are technically summoned demons and not created creatures like homunculi, but they can be represented by about the same statistics and fulfill many of the same rolls.

Horse

Level 1
defense: 13
hp: 20
pp: 2
Move: 20 m
Attributes: S +5; D −2; E +4; A +1; W −2; P −1
Resistances: RB +2; GY +5; OP −2; HR −2

Attack Actions

Hooves [Major or Interrupt] +2 melee 1d3+2 hp (normal damage)

Description

Horses are the standard mode of transportation in The Domain, for those who can afford them. The typical horse in The Domain is similar to a Japanese samurai's Kisouma (Kiso horse), or a European pony, about 130 cm tall at the shoulder. They are short enough for even a dwarf to mount comfortably, but stout enough to carry even an oni in full armor. This is also the right size so that the horse just barely fits in the same 2 m space as its rider. This alleviates

many of the game mechanics problems (turning radius, headroom clearance for the rider, etc.) related to riding a mount in tight confines such as castle ruins or mine tunnels.

Variants

Hippocampus [Templates: Amphibious]
Amphibious: Hippocampi can breathe both in and out of the water.
Move: 8 m walk, 20 m swim

Description
A hippocampus is an equine monster with the tail of a fish in place of its rear legs, reducing its speed on land. Merfolk often use hippocampus mounts.

Nightmare [Templates: Chromatic (purple)]
Hardened Purple
Vulnerable Orange

Description
Nightmares are equine-shaped demons. They are fully intelligent and capable of speech. They loath to be ridden, so only the evilest, most powerful villains can break them to serve as mounts.

Skeletal Mount [Templates: Animatron]
Traits
Hardened Normal Damage
Amphibious: Skeletal mounts can operate underwater or other airless environments for extended periods.
Slow: 16 m movement
Ungainly movement (−1 to defense and all attacks)

Description
Ghost riders and headless horsemen may get the top billing, but without their spectral steeds, they're just non-descript ghoulies.

Salamander

Level 1
defense: 18
hp: 12
pp: 4
Move: 10 m
Attributes S +0; D −1; E +1; A −1; W −1; P −3
Resistances RB +0; GY +2; OP +0; HR −1

Traits
Hardened Red
Vulnerable Blue
Fire Resistant: A salamander takes no damage from non-magical fire or lava.

Attack Actions
Bite [Major or Interrupt] + 1 melee 1d6+1 hp (normal damage)

Special Actions
Energy Surge [Major] (cost 2 pp; red energy): All creatures within melee range of the salamander take 1 hp of automatic damage and 1d3 points of primary damage (red energy). A successful TN 11 RB reaction is needed to avoid the primary damage.

Description
Salamanders are bright-red, 1.5 m long lizards. They can be found living in volcanos or regions of hellfire. Some cultures revere salamanders as the living embodiments of fire, but in truth salamanders are very much flesh and blood. They can sometimes be captured and used as guard animals, but cannot be trained, thus require expert GMC handlers. The sturdy, colorful hides of salamanders and their variants (see below) are perennial favorites for decorations at Slayers' Lodge.

Variants

Cryomander [Templates: Chromatic (Blue)]
Hardened Blue
Vulnerable Red
Change the damage of the energy surge ability to blue.

Description
Cryomanders are relatives of salamanders, and prowl on and around glaciers.

Salamander (continued)

Electromander [Templates: Chromatic (yellow)]
Hardened Yellow
Vulnerable Green

Change the damage of the energy surge ability to yellow. As such the type of reaction needed to avoid the primary damage changes to GY.

Description
Electromanders are something of an oddity in that they don't have a favorite terrain. They are just as likely to live in a forest as in desolate scrubland. Thus it is widely believed that electromanders were produced through magical experimentation on normal salamanders and that they then escaped their creators.

Scorpion, Monster

Level 2
defense: 17
hp: 25
pp: 3
Move: 8 m
Attributes: S +4; D +2; E +2; A +2; W −2; P −4
Resistances: RB +3; GY +3; OP −1; HR −1

Traits
Multi-attack: With one attack action a scorpion can make two claw attacks or one tail sting. An interrupt action attack will normally be a tail sting, but could be one claw attack at the GM's discretion.

Attack Actions
2 Claws [Major or Interrupt] +3 melee 1d3+4 hp (normal damage)

Stinger [Major or Interrupt] +4 melee 1d6+1 hp (green energy)

Description
With a pair of pinchers, a flexible poisonous tail, and eight legs for maneuverability and stability, scorpions provide a versatile weapons platform for alchemists and mad scientists of The Domain to experiment with. Monster scorpions, about the size of a pony, are fearsome enough, but the range of variants will keep even the best prepared party guessing.

Variants

Jewel Scorpion [Templates: Chromatic, Energy Slinger]
Hardened One Color
Vulnerable Opposite Color

Special Abilities
Energy Shot [Major] (att= +6; cost 1 pp): As per the energer special action, but without requiring a mote.

Description
A magical version of a giant scorpion. In place of the stinger, a jewel scorpion has the ability to fire bolts of chromatic energy from its tail. The carapace of the jewel scorpion is brightly colored and matches the color of energy fired from the tail. The different varieties are usually referred to by the name of a gemstone rather than the literal color, e.g. a "sapphire scorpion." (amber = orange, amethyst = purple, citrine = yellow, emerald = green, ruby = red, sapphire = blue)

War Scorpion [Templates: animatron]
Hardened Normal Damage
Amphibious: War scorpions can operate underwater.
Slow: 10 m move
Ungainly movement (−1 to defense and all attacks)

Description
Sometimes mistaken for a "chrome" cousin of jewel scorpions, a war scorpion is an artificial animatron (magical or sci-fi), used to attack en masse and overrun an enemy, and to patrol sensitive locations such as military bases, computer cores, or research laboratories. In place of the poisonous stinger, a war scorpion has a powerful electro-shocker (melee attack, yellow energy damage).

Snake, Poisonous

Level 1
defense: 15
hp: 4
pp: 2
Move: 6 m
Attributes: S −4; D +3; E −3; A +1; W 0; P 0
Resistances: RB +4; GY +2; OP +1; HR +1

Traits
Skill: Athletics, Stealth +1

Attack Actions
Bite [Major or Interrupt] +3 melee 1d6 hp (green energy)

Description

Poisonous snakes are deadly enemies. Their small size causes many adventurers to underestimate them, but it is exactly their small size and stealth that lets them turn up in the most unexpected places and strike when you're least prepared. Snakes can show up in stark deserts, fetid swamps, or inside human domiciles. Any tree hollow, wash basin, treasure chest, or even your own unattended packs could become a hiding place. In the hands of a skilled GMC snake charmer, snakes can be taught to fight on command, adding strategy to their lightning quick strikes and poison. Snake charmers and their serpents can be found anywhere in a city from the street corners of the poorest districts to the halls of the royal court.

Variants

Feathered Serpents [Templates: Flying]
Move: 6 m (walk), 12 m (fly)

Description
Flying serpents with brightly colored plumage live in the jungles and deserts of The Domain. Now traders have carried feathered serpents far and wide so that they might be encountered anywhere. In addition to their wings, feathered serpents have hind legs which they use to perch or walk when not flying.

Fiery Serpent [Templates: Chromatic (red)]
Hardened Red
Vulnerable Blue
Change bite damage color to red.

Description
The bite of one of these brightly colored serpents literally burns. An infestation of fiery serpents is sometimes interpreted as divine punishment.

Hypnotic Snake [Templates: Hypnotic]
Special Action
Defense Hex [Minor]: As per the hexer special action, but without requiring speech of a free hand. −1 to defense until the start of the snake's next turn. A successful TN 11 HR reaction is needed to avoid the penalty.

Description
By holding its body upright and swaying side to side, this snake lures its target off guard and then strikes with lightning speed.

Spider, Hunter

Level 3
defense: 16
hp: 27
pp: 4
Move: 14 m
Attributes S +2; D +3; E +1; A +3; W −2; P −4
Resistances RB +3; GY +4; OP +1; HR +1

Traits

Skill: Athletics, Stealth +3

Large: Hunter spiders occupy 4 squares (2x2 square) on a combat grid.

Wall Walk: A hunter spider can move at full speed along walls and ceilings.

Attack Actions

Bite [Major or Interrupt] + 5 melee 2d6 hp (green energy)

Description

These giant tarantula-like hunter spiders catch their prey by ambush. Despite their large size, they are experts at camouflaging their lairs and strike with startling speed. They prefer easy meals and will usually attack scouts or stragglers rather than the main body of a group. Hunter spiders occupy 4 squares on a combat grid, but their legs account for most of that size, so that they can squeeze through human sized doors or reasonably sized windows to take up residence inside towers or other structures which at first glance would seem too small for them.

Variants

Security Spider [Level 4, Animatronic Version of Trapper Spider, see below]
Hardened Normal Damage
Amphibious: Security spiders can operate underwater for extended periods.
Slow: 10 m movement
Ungainly movement (−1 to defense and all attacks)
Change the skill used to notice web traps created by a security spider to engineering.

Description
A security spider is an alchemic clockwork or sci-fi robot version of a trapper spider. Despite its fearsome appearance, it is actually designed to capture intruders alive for questioning. After a fight if there are targets

Spider (continued)

with 0 hp, the security spider will bite them again, this time injecting pharmaceuticals to stabilize the target and prevent it from dying. The pharmaceuticals do not shorten the time required to recover hit points (1 week). Immobilized or unconscious victims will be carried to a secure holding area to be delt with by the security spider's master.

Web Spider [Level 4]
Special Actions
Immobilize [Major]: As a major action the web spider can spit a sticky strand of spider silk at a target up to 24 m away that it is aware of and has a clear shot at. The target becomes stuck to his surroundings, immobilizing him. The target is allowed an unskilled TN 12 dexterity reaction to avoid the effects. Once a target is immobilized, the effect is perpetual and non-magical, requiring no action on the part of the spider. The target can break free of the web with a successful unskilled TN 12 strength check or by dealing 10 points of damage to the web (defense 10, vulnerable red). Even if a target avoids the web, the square where the target was standing will remain sticky and may act as a trap for other characters. A web spider is immune to these web traps.

Description
A web spider has the same speed and poisonous bite as a hunter spider, and also has sticky webs to immobilize its prey. A web spider will use its sticky silk to create traps along walls, corridors, between trees, and across doorways. It requires a successful TN 13 awareness-based life sciences check to notice these spider webs, and a successful unskilled TN 10 dexterity check to pass through a trapped square without becoming stuck (increase the dexterity TN to 15 if the character failed to spot the webs before entering the trapped square). After laying traps, the web spider will hide and wait until something gets stuck in the web.

Twilight Impossibility

Level 6
defense: 19
hp: 80
pp: 13
Move: 10 m
Attributes: S +6; D +7; E +8; A +3; W +8; P +8
Resistances: RB +10; GY +11; OP +11; HR +11

Traits
Hardened Normal Damage

Amphibious: A twilight impossibility can operate underwater as well as it does on land.

Large: A twilight impossibility occupies two 2 m squares (side by side).

Shifting Colors: At the start of each of the twilight impossibility's turns, roll once on the random color table in the GMM. Until the start of its next turn, the twilight impossibility is hardened against the color indicated and vulnerable to the opposite color. If the twilight impossibility uses its energy shot or vengeance strike during this turn, the damage is the same color as the twilight impossibility's hardened trait for this turn.

Attack Actions
Unidentified limb [Major or Interrupt] +9 melee 2d6+6 hp (normal damage)

Special Actions
Bottomless Pit at the End of Worlds [Major] (cost pp 2): A black pit 6 m across (3 x 3 combat squares) opens up in the ground, all targets in the area must make an unskilled TN 14 dexterity reaction to jump to safety or fall into the pit. Those who succeed manage to jump to the edge of the pit or grab something to hang from. Those who fail the dexterity reaction disappear into the darkness of the hole. From the target's point of view, he falls through pitch-black space for time beyond reckoning, hours or even years, before "striking bottom" right where he was standing when the pit opened. Characters who fall like this suffer 2d6 hp of normal damage. To spectators outside the area of effect, it seems that the disappearance of the victims is just a trick of the light, and as soon as the darkness disperses, everyone is lying on the ground as if they had simply slipped and fallen. Whatever just happened, the victims are now prone and can use a minor action to stand on their next turn.

Counter Hex [Interrupt]: After failing a HR reaction, a twilight impossibility can use the hexer counter hex special action on itself to try to negate the hex. Sometimes when a twilight impossibility is targeted by a hex, it's almost as if there is simply nothing there for the hex to affect.

Energy Shot [Major] (att= + 13; cost 1, 2 or 3 pp; energy): As per the energer special action, but without requiring an energy mote. The color of the energy depends on the most recent result of the shifting colors roll (see above).

Madness Hex [Minor]: This hex acts as either an attack hex or defense hex (50% chance of each, determined randomly each time it is used.) The resulting penalty is −3 in either

case. A successful TN 18 HR reaction is needed to avoid the penalty.

Movement Hex [Minor]: The twilight impossibility twists the laws of reality, reducing the target's movement. A successful TN 18 HR reaction is needed to avoid the penalty.

Soul Rending Wave [Major] (cost 2 pp): With a loud dull thud, reality itself trembles. A palpable "wave" ushers forth from the twilight impossibility and all creatures withing 24 m must make a successful unskilled TN 13 willpower reaction or loose 1d3+2 pp as their souls wither.

Vengeance strike [Major] (att= +9; cost 1 pp): When a twilight impossibility is struck with a melee weapon, there is a chance (GM's discretion, considering the number of pp remaining) that a burst of energy will explode out of the wound doing 2d6 hp of energy damage to the attacker. The color of the energy depends on the most recent result of the shifting colors roll (see above).

Description
A twilight impossibility is a creature so evil and alien that its very existence shatters everything humanity thought to be true about the cosmos. A twilight impossibility seems to be a 3 m tall humanoid but always appears dark, indistinct, and shimmering, like a shadow beneath the surface of choppy water, even when it gets close enough to smite you with one of its mighty arms. Some think that even as powerful as a twilight impossibility is, it is only a pale shadow of an even mightier higher-dimensional being. A twilight impossibility doesn't communicate in any known language, though a deranged priest may claim to be able to interpret for it. More sinisterly, the trail of destruction it leaves is not random; even the sane mind gets the uncanny feeling that there is some pattern and meaning in the scattered wreckage and the odd angles of the mangled bodies of its victims.

Gibbering insanities and writhing blasphemies seem to have some knowledge of twilight impossibilities, and may work to summon one. However, a twilight impossibility will indiscriminately attack even these creatures from the void.

Writhing Blasphemy

Level 5
defense: 15
hp: 75
pp: 10
Move: 0 m
Attributes: S +5; D 0; E +2; A +3; W +8; P +5
Resistances: RB +5; GY +7; OP +11; HR +11

Traits
Skills: Arcana, Social Sciences +5

Hardened Green
Vulnerable Yellow

Extradimensional Senses: As a minor action, the writhing blasphemy can envision an 8 m diameter area up to 24 m away from the central body. The writhing blasphemy can fully perceive the area (sight, sound, smell, temperature, air currents, anything else that it would experience if actually there) but the perception is blurry (effective awareness +0). Extradimensional senses can be used to find targets for the dimensional rift or immobilize abilities.

Targets in the area being observed are allowed a TN 16 awareness-based arcana check to get an eerie feeling that they are being watched. This is often the only warning they'll have before a dimensional rift or immobilize attack.

Multi-attack: With one attack action a writhing blasphemy can make up to 4 tentacle attacks. A writhing blasphemy has countless writhing tentacles, but it can only coordinate 4 attacks with a single action. Each attack must target a different opponent. An interrupt action will be one tentacle attack.

Attack Actions
4 Tentacles [Major or Interrupt] +8 melee 1d6+5 hp (normal damage)
Although melee attacks, the tentacles of a writhing blasphemy can attack targets up to 8 meters away. Severed tentacles can be regrown almost instantly so counter attacks against the tentacles are ineffective in reducing the hit points of the central body.

Special Actions
Counter Hex [Interrupt]: After failing a HR reaction, a writhing blasphemy can use the hexer counter hex special action on itself to try to negate the hex. A writhing blasphemy is so alien that sometimes magic hexes fail to take hold.

Writing Blasphemy (continued)

Dimensional Rift [Major] (cost 1, 2, or 3 pp; green energy): This ability functions the same as the energy explosion enerer special action, except that it does not require an energy mote, or a straight line of sight towards the target. A successful TN 17 GY reaction is needed to avoid the primary damage if the writhing blasphemy has a straight line of sight. The TN is 14 if the dimensional rift was aimed using extradimensional senses.

Immobilize [Major]: As a major action the writhing blasphemy can cause a dark shadow of swirling mist to appear on the ground over an area 6 meters across (3 x 3 combat squares). The target area can be up to 24 m away from the central body. Almost instantly countless tentacles wriggle up out of this portal, entangling all creatures in the area. The targets become immobilized, entrapped in the tenacles. Each target is allowed an unskilled TN 13 dexterity reaction to avoid the effects. Once a target is immobilized, the effect is perpetual, requiring no action on the part of the writhing blasphemy. An immobilized creature has its movement value reduced to 0 m, but can still take other actions. The target can break free of the tentacles with a successful unskilled TN 13 strength check or by dealing 15 points of damage to the tentacles (defense 10, hardened green, vulnerable yellow).

Vengeance Strike [Interrupt] (att= +7; cost 1 pp): When a writhing blasphemy is struck with a melee weapon, there is a chance (GM's discretion, considering the number of pp remaining) that a pustule of green ichor will burst, splashing the attacker and dealing 2d6 hp of green energy damage.

Description

A dreaded abomination from the blackness beyond the farthest reaches of The Domain. The body and mind of a writhing blasphemy are twisted to the point that it's a mystery how it remains alive and able to functions. Some would argue that it's not even "alive." A bloated central mound 2 meters in diameter is surrounded by flailing limbs that can best be described as tentacles. A writhing blasphemy emits a constant hum that sounds like dozens of voices whispering gibberish, with an occasional string of disjointed, probably blasphemous, words. Cultist willing to risk being crushed by the tentacles seek enlightenment by scurrying close enough to listen to this babbling.

Although a writing blasphemy is a terrifying sight, the true horror is its ability to perceive and even attack across solid barriers before the targets ever see it. This allows the writhing blasphemy to "possess" a small compound or grove of trees. Finding and reaching the central body while under extradimensional attack is the first test, before facing the full onslaught of the tentacle attacks. Invaders immobilized or reduced to 0 hp before reaching the central body are often kept alive to be used in dark rituals.

Variants

Computer Core [Templates: Chromatic (yellow)]
Hardened Yellow
Vulnerable Green
Change the color of the dimensional rift and vengeance strike actions to yellow.
The electrical cables produced by the immobilize attack are hardened against yellow damage and vulnerable to green damage.

Description
A sci-fi variant which can attack with articulated cables and electrical shocks.

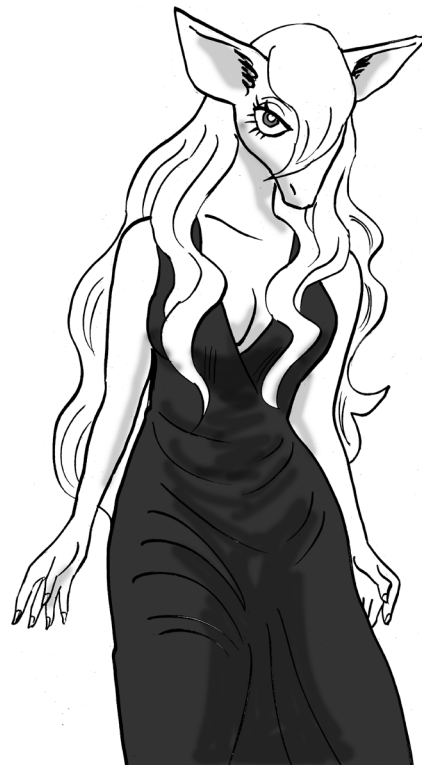Frozen Queen [Templates: Chromatic (blue)]
Hardened Blue
Vulnerable Red
Change the color of the dimensional rift and vengeance strike actions to blue.
The ice produced by the immobilize attack is hardened against blue damage and vulnerable to red damage.

Description
A beautiful middle-aged queen so obsessed with her fading youth and beauty that she encased herself in a block of

ice. Now she seeks to freeze others to join her in eternal, unchanging perfection.

Root of Despair
Use the stats as is, but in this case 'green' energy represents 'nature' rather than 'alien.'

Description
A Root of Despair is a tree, or giant rose, with an extensive network of articulated roots. It lies in wait in the heart of a forest or walled garden to trap unwitting prey.

Screaming Saint [Templates: Chromatic (orange)]
Hardened Orange
Vulnerable Purple
Change the color of the dimensional rift and vengeance strike actions to orange.
The spectral tendrils produced by the immobilize attack are hardened against orange damage and vulnerable to purple damage.

Description
The remains of a righteous holy man, so enraged at how decadent the world has become since his passing, that he is not just rolling over in his sepulcher, but lashing out with spectral tendrils, trying to scare people into repenting.

Humanoids

All of the creatures presented in detail in the preceding list of monsters have bestial forms or special abilities that mark them as very different, usually more powerful, than humans. Normal-sized humanoid fantasy races without innate magical abilities, who use tools and language, and can learn different skills and combat techniques should be built using the same rules as for player character creation. These characters controlled by the Game Master are referred to as Game Master Characters (GMCs).

Dwarves, elves, humans, and oni should be regarded as broad categories that can encompass many different types of humanoids. Some examples are given below. Since these humanoids are built using the standard character creations rules, does this mean they can also be used for player characters? Sure. Why not?

Dwarves: brownies, gnomes, goblins, leprechauns, trolls (small)
Elves: ancients elves, Avalon elves, dark elves, forest elves, pinup elf babes
Humans: pig-nosed brutes, fully resurrected mummy lords
Oni: ape-men, cyclopes, dragon-hybrids, minotaurs, neanderthals, ogres, saurians, trolls (large)
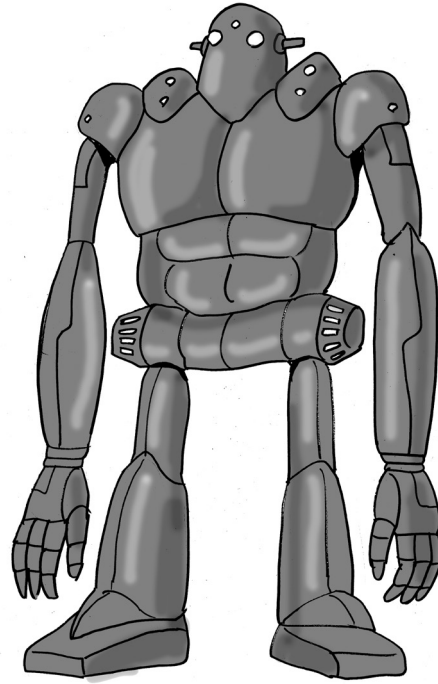
Sci-Fi Humanoids
Dwarves: greys, little-green-men
Elves: saucer people (antennae optional), pointed-ear aliens
Humans: imposters (aliens in human form), men-in-black
Oni: reptilians, sasquatches

Humanoid Special Cases
Altered Humans
Cyborgs, mutants, etc. Altered but still human.

Animal Ears
Bunny-girls, cat-girls, fox-girls, horse-girls, and all other kinds of animal-eared anime girls (tails optional but provide no game mechanics benefits) use the elf subspecies. In vintage manga, the male counterparts were depicted as towering muscular hulks with muzzles for mouths and fur covering their bodies. For these vintage males use the oni subspecies instead. Recently, more finely boned males with attractive faces, who are better characterized as elves, have come to the fore.

Canidents
Canidents are humans with two distinctive features: their irises are reflective, giving the impression that they glow in dim light; and their oversized upper canine teeth are retractable. Most of the time, the upper canine teeth are retracted and indistinguishable from a normal human's. But when the canident becomes emotionally excited, the teeth extend to 3 cm long; long enough to be scary, but not long enough to be effective weapons. These minor differences have no game effects and aren't enough to

Humanoids (continued)

make canidents more than just another strain of humans. Canidents however feel differently. They believe themselves to be related to vampires, werewolves, or other monsters. During the day, canidents live normal human lives. But after dark they gather in dimly lit halls and secret chambers for hedonistic celebrations. This debauchery causes their teeth to extend, so that they can prove their "pure blood" to others of their own kind. Woe be to a human found without reflective eyes and extended teeth at one of these parties. Even a known canident who has become jaded to carnal pleasures and doesn't show his teeth might be killed on the spot.

Canidents often go to great lengths to try to awaken their "true nature." Some even develop psychosomatic aversions to garlic, silver, sunlight, etc. Others believe that the canidents themselves are true monsters, and that the stories of vampires or werewolves with supernatural powers are mere myths.

There is another type of canident, those who reject the ways of their blood. They often cultivate a demeaner of stoicism or melancholy; not caring about anyone or anything, so that their teeth never extend. If they ever confront other canidents, the visceral hatred these reserved canidents have for their own kind is so great that they cannot stop their teeth from fully extending at a dramatically appropriate moment.

Created Humans

Androids, clones, living dolls, Frankenstein patchworks, and all other artificially created humans are exactly that: humans, often times more human than their creators. Most use the human subspecies, but other subspecies are possible; a dwarf sized mini-assistant; a love-doll with elven ears, or a hulking patchwork monstrosity with oni horns. Homunculi (see monster list), have an unerring talent for recognizing created humans, and treat them with contemptable familiarity as fellow sub-humans.

Critter Folk

A diverse group of creatures (using the statistics for dwarves), critter folk appear as approximately 1 meter tall, anthropomorphic woodland creatures. Critter folk society blends human sensibilities and the natural world in a seemingly crazy mix. A fox trickster trying to fast-talk a rabbit may want to steal his money or may want to cook and eat him. Missis Sparrow might serve wriggling worm spaghetti on fine porcelain dishes. An accused thief might have to wait until spring for trial because Judge Groundhog is hibernating for the winter. Except for the occasional rampaging Big Bad Wolf, critter folk mostly keep to themselves and don't cause trouble with humans, so their sylvian communities are accepted and left in peace across most parts of The Domain.

Polar Elves: Actually a misnomer; the short industrious elves crafting toys in the far north for good girls and boys are closer to dwarves in the Sandcastle rules.

Transformed: Mermaids, cranes, turtles, dragons, nature spirits, etc. who transform into human form for romantic reasons or are transformed involuntarily are treated as humans. Sandcastle doesn't contain rules for transformations, so any changes take place outside of game play. During gameplay, all transformed are stuck in human form.

Other Subspecies

At first glance it may seem easy to create new subspecies of your own design; simply assign two +1s and two −1s to different attributes. But this should be done with caution so as not to upset game balance. Oni are given a bonus to strength that increases their offensive power, balanced with a penalty to dexterity which lowers their defense and makes them easier to hit, thus preventing them from being unbalanced combat machines. Elves have increased presence but decreased willpower to prevent them from dominating social interaction. Dwarves have the opposite of both, making them tough nuts to crack, but limiting their ability to dominate over others. The subspecies in Sandcastle are intended to be flexible enough to include any character concept (that is balanced for fun and fair game play), but for those of you who still want to design your own subspecies, please try to balance them so that they aren't over specialized for any one task.

Advanced Humanoids

Advanced humanoids have special abilities that while not enough to make them invincible, are too powerful for player characters. Thus only GMC can use the advanced humanoid subspecies. Otherwise follow the normal rules for assigning combat styles and skills.

Giant
Giant Subspecies Attribute Adjustments
S +2; D −2; E +2; A −2; W +0; P +0

Traits
Large: Giants occupy two 2 m squares, side by side.
Large Hands: A giant can wield 2 handed weapons in a single hand.

Description
The giants of the Domain stand about 4 m tall. They live on the fringes of human society rather than in a separate society of their own. Ruins from a lost civilization of giants are found from time to time, but modern giants are so completely assimilated into human culture that even they know only the human legends about such structures. While there are certainly enough giants who make quiet livings as shepherds, lumberjacks, or sages, the PCs are most likely to encounter warrior giants. Warrior giants can be found living as feudal lords domineering over human subjects or serving as the champions of human armies. When the activities of the PCs bring them into conflict with a giant's organization, the giant is often the first to step forward to "swat" the annoyance. With their strength and large stature, many warrior giants naturally become strikers. But giants also have a fascination with magic, and a surprising number choose to follow the energer and hexer combat styles.

Merfolk
Amphibious: Merfolk can breathe both in and out of water.
Swimmer: Merfolk have a movement rate of 10 m when swimming.

Description
Merfolk are humanoid dwellers of the seas who covet the kingdoms of the land as well. Their religion holds that at the beginning of time, before the Sun was born, merfolk ruled all the territory above and below the waterline. When the Sun appeared, it dried out the land and drove the merfolk under the waves. Since then, they have resented both the Sun and the human usurpers. There may be some truth to the merfolk version of prehistory. Indeed merfolk can breathe both in and out of the water and their legs and arms with webbed extremities are equally well adapted to walking or swimming. Prolonged exposure to air and sunshine has an adverse effect on the health of merfolk, limiting terrestrial forays to about a week or less, but the onset of health problems is slow enough that there are no game mechanics for it; it is used only as a plot device. Merfolk venerate gibbering insanities, writhing blasphemies, and twilight impossibilities as embodiments of the primordial darkness they seek to reinstate. They have also been known to don concealing robes and participate in or lead human doomsday cults, figuring that anything which is bad for the surface dwellers must be good for the merfolk.

Zombie [Level-0 Humanoid Animatron]:
Hardened Normal Damage
Amphibious: Zombies can remain underwater or underground without air for extended periods.
Slow: 6 m move
Ungainly movement (−1 to defense and all attacks)

Attack Actions
Claws [Major or Interrupt] (att= −1+S) melee 1d2+S hp (normal damage)

Description
Level-0 humanoid (human, dwarf, elf, oni, etc.) animatrons, referred to as zombies, are feral beasts incapable of using weapons, but instead gain clawed hands which deal 1d2+S hp of normal damage (integrated improvised weapons). They also cannot use shields, but any armor worn will function as normal.

Equipment for Humanoids

Humanoid monsters rely on equipment, weapons, and armor the same way that player characters do. When assigning equipment to GMCs, you need not feel restricted to the rules for player character equipment. You can assign more or less equipment, even magical items, as appropriate to tailor the GMCs to match your vision. However, you need to assume that any equipment you give to GMCs will end up in the hands of the PCs (through trade, gambling, theft, or as the spoils of combat). So try to avoid giving GMCs powerful items which could upset play balance; the majority of GMCs should have fewer and less powerful items than the PCs already possess.

Templates

The templates listed here can be applied to different types of monsters, even humanoids. They are balanced so as not to change the monster's level. Templates cannot be applied to PCs. Many templates give the monsters new combat abilities, but since the limits of actions per turn and power points are still in place, using the abilities granted by a

Templates (continued)

template means trading off with other abilities they could have used. Still, a variant monster created with a template can be more deadly than expected just because it takes the party off guard.

Not every template is suitable for every monster. For example, there is no need to apply the flying template to a monster which can naturally fly. Since the energy slinger template uses a calculation based on level, it would be pointless to apply it to a level 0 monster.

Multiple templates can be applied to a single monster. For example, a flying animatron could be used to create a gargoyle while a power-leech chromatic (yellow) animatron would make a good mummy.

Amphibious

Amphibious: Amphibious creatures can operate both in and out of water.

Swimmer: Amphibious creatures have a movement rate of 10 m when swimming
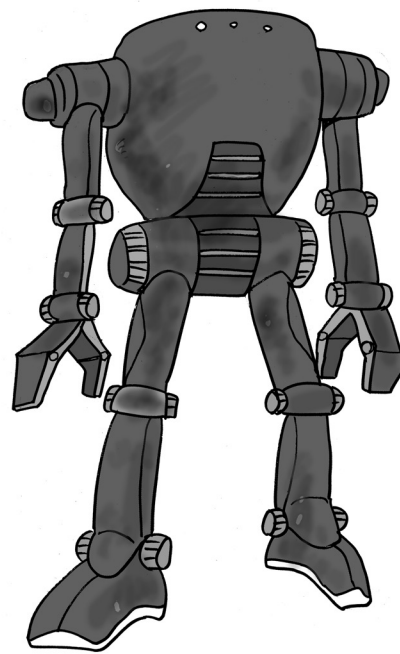
Animatron

Hardened Normal Damage

Amphibious: Animatrons can operate underwater or other airless environments for extended periods.

Slow: The movement rate of an animatron is 4 m less than that of the base creature.

Ungainly movement: There is something not quite natural about the movement of an animatron, imposing a permanent −1 to defense and a −1 penalty to all attacks.

Integrated equipment: Humanoid animatrons (not animatrons created using a monster as a base) can have non-magical armor, weapons, or equipment build into them. Their hides are as tough as armor, with claws as sharp as daggers, or fists as heavy as warhammers. Remember to include any penalties incurred by heavy armor when calculating the animatron's final dexterity and awareness attribute modifiers. This integrated equipment cannot be removed from the animatron or salvaged. For sci-fi robot animatrons, the integrated equipment can include forcefield generators, ray guns, or kinetic bullpups. Integrated equipment is not mandatory; if the plot calls for skeletal warriors carrying swords and shields, those items should be treated as normal equipment. High level animatrons often possess and use magical armor/weapons, negating any benefits from integrated equipment.

Description

Animatrons are not alive. Instead they think and act through artificial power alone. Examples of animatrons include stone creatures, skeletal beasts, and clockwork contraptions. Animatrons have no need to breath, eat, or sleep, thus are capable of continuing their activities 24 hours a day for eternity. The animatron template can be applied to any creature. Humanoid shaped statues/haunted-armor/bone-warriors use the base rules for humanoid creation, with levels in a combat style as needed to create the type of monster the GM wants.

The rate at which animatrons recovery hp and pp is left to the GMs discretion. The standard 1 week recovery time is a good default, unless there is a compelling need for an animatron which can't heal on its own, or can be repaired in less than a week.

Sci-fi animatrons powered by WPT are referred to as "robots." Robots will usually have an integrated NCA to connect with the local network.

Chromatic

Hardened One Color
Vulnerable Opposite Color

Energy Infused: The damage type for the monster's attack actions changes to the specified color, the same color energy as the monster is hardened against. Attacks which originally did normal damage may also become energy attacks at the GM's discretion.

Description

Chromatic monsters are infused with one color of energy, becoming a living embodiment of that that force. In addition to the "Chromatic (Specified Color)" designation, chromatic creatures are often given a descriptive adjective as a nickname: holy (orange), infernal (purple), flaming (red), frozen (blue), electric (yellow), or poisonous (green).

Energy Slinger

Special Actions

Energy Shot: As per the energer special action, but without requiring a free hand or energy mote. The number of pp which can be expended on a single shot is equal to 1/2 the monster's level, rounded up. The total attack bonus for the energy shot is equal to one half the monster's level plus its awareness (att = (lv/2) + A). The color of the energy shot is chosen when the monster is created and cannot be changed. (Though technically you could apply this template multiple times granting the creature multiple colors of energy shot abilities.)

Flying

Traits

Flight: At the GM's discretion, a flying creature can fly over obstacles on the ground. A monster's movement rate increases to 20 m when flying.

Hypnotic

Special Action

Defense Hex [Minor]: As per the hexer special action.

Sacred

Special Action

Counter Hex [Interrupt]: The monster has the ability to use the counter hex special action on itself when targeted by a hex. This ability can't be used to protect others from hexes. This ability can only be used once per hex, even if the monster has multiple interrupt actions.

Power-leech

Special Actions

Energy Drain [Free action] (cost 1 pp): Choose one of the monster's melee attacks. When the power-leech monster successfully hits with the chosen attack, it has the option of spending 1 pp to cause the target to lose 1d3+1 pp. This is in addition to the hp damage from the attack. The power-leech does not gain any pp lost by the victim.

Collected Reference Tables

Metric-Imperial Unit Conversion Table	
Metric Units	Equivalent Imperial Units (to 3 significant figures)
1 centimeter (cm)	0.394 inches
1 meter (m) [100 cm]	3.28 feet [3 feet and 3.37 inches]
1 kilometer (km) [1000 m]	0.621 miles [3280 feet]
1 liter	1.06 quarts [0.220 galons]
1 gram (g) *	0.0353 ounces
1 kilogram (kg) *	2.20 pounds

*Actually, grams and kilograms are units of mass, while ounces and pounds are units of weight/force. The above mass/weight conversions are only correct under standard terrestrial gravity (9.81 m/s^2 or 32.2 ft/s^2).

Subspecies Attribute Adjustments

Human: no changes
Dwarf: S −1, D +1, W +1, P−1
Elf: E−1, A +1, W −1, P +1
Oni: S +1, D −1, E +1, A −1

Skills and Commonly Associated Attributes	
Arcana	A, W, P
Athletics	S, D, E
Charm	A, W, P
Deception	A, P
Domestic Science	D, A, P
Engineering	D, A, W
Entertainment	D, P
Intimidation	W, P
Life Sciences	A, W
Physical Sciences	A, W
Social Sciences	A, W
Stealth	D, A

Collected Reference Tables (continued)

Secondary Statistics

	Level 0	Energer	Harrier	Hexer	Striker
bab	+0	+lv/2 or +lv	+lv/2	+lv/2	+lv/2 or +lv
Preferred Attack	None	Energy	None	None	Melee
db	+0	+0	+lv/2	+0	+0
Resistances					
BR	+0+D	+lv+D	+lv+D	+(lv/2)+D	+(lv/2)+D
GY	+0+E	+lv+E	+(lv/2)+E	+(lv/2)+E	+lv+E
OP	+0+W	+lv+W	+(lv/2)+W	+lv+W	+(lv/2)+W
HR	+0+W	+(lv/2)+W	+(lv/2)+W	+lv+W	+(lv/2)+W
hp	4+E	(5+E)x lv	(6+E)x lv	(5+E)x lv	(7+E)x lv
pp	1	1+(lv x2)	1+lv	1+lv	1+lv
Interrupt Actions	1	1	1+(lv/2)	1	1

(Round all fractions up.)

Common Movement Values

Most flying creatures, including dragons	20 m (10 squares)
Horse	20 m (10 squares)
Canine, Chimera	14 m (7 squares)
Character in speed armor (See GMM)	14 m (7 squares)
Unarmored or lightly armored human, dwarf, elf, oni character	10 m (5 squares)
Homunculus	8 m (4 squares)
Snake	6 m (3 squares)
Character in plate mail armor (See GMM)	6 m (3 squares)

Magical Attack Reaction TNs

Energy Explosion TN = 10 +lv +A
Hex TN = 10 +lv +P

Attack Ranges

Melee	adjacent squares only
Thrown weapons	8 m (4 squares) Excluding Melee Range
Bows & crossbows	24 m (12 squares) Excluding Melee Range
Magical attacks	24 m (12 squares) Including Melee Range

Color Opposites Table

Red vs. Blue
Green vs. Yellow
Purple vs. Orange

Random Colors (1d6)

1 Red	4 Yellow
2 Blue	5 Orange
3 Green	6 Purple

Non-Magical Armor

	Cost	Armor Bonus	Armor Penalties	Movement	Mass
Leather armor	10 c	+1		10 m	4.5 kg
Scale mail	20 c	+2		10 m	20 kg
Chainmail	25 c	+3	D−1	10 m	25 kg
Elven Chainmail	NFS	+3		10 m	20 kg
Plate mail	NFS	+4	D−2, A−2	6 m	30 kg
Shield	7 c	+1		--	3 kg

NFS: Not For Sale

Adventurers' Guilds Summary

	Beacon Sanctuary	College of Recovery	Slayers' Lodge
Values what kinds of accomplishments.	Do good deed & save people.	Solve mysteries & find treasure.	Kill monsters & collect trophies.
Offers advice about which kind of encounters.	Role Playing	Obstructions	Combat
Provides leads to find what kind of magical items.	Defense	Utility	Assault

Guild Information Chart (1d6+R)

Result	Amount of Detail
1-4	No useful information
5+	Basic area knowledge
8+	Specific knowledge
10+	Secret knowledge

Common Actions

Action	Action Type	Cost
Assist	Major	
Attack	Major	
Control Mount/Vehicle	Minor or Major	
Drop	Free	
Heroic Save	Interrupt	1 pp
Hustle	Major	
Manipulate Object	Minor or Major	
Mount/Dismount	Minor	
Move	Minor	
Ready/Store Item	Minor	
Parting Shot	Interrupt	
Wait	Delay Major Action	

Energer Special Actions

Action	Action Type	Cost
Create Mote	Minor	
Energy Explosion	Major	1~lv pp
Energy Shield	Major or Interrupt	1~lv pp
Energy Shot	Major	1~lv pp
Energy Shunt	Reaction	1 pp
Multi-Shot	Major	1~lv pp

Harrier Special Actions

Action	Action Type	Cost
Cut and Run	Interrupt	
Dogged Pursuit	Interrupt	
Energy Shunt	Reaction	1 pp
Fleet Footed	Interrupt	
Follow-up Strike	Interrupt	

Hexer Special Actions

Action	Action Type	Cost
Counter Hex	Interrupt	

Hex
    Attack Hex
    Defense Hex
    Move Hex
    Multi-Attack Hex
    Multi-Defense Hex
	Minor	

Power Drain	Major	1 pp

Striker Special Actions

Action	Action Type	Cost
Backswing	Minor	
Counter Strike	Interrupt	
Hit Hard	Major	1 pp
Pin Down	Interrupt	
Vengeance Strike	Interrupt	1 pp

Collected Reference Tables (continued)

Experience & Character Advancement

Level	Minimum xp
0	0
1	1
2	3
3	6
4	10
5	15

Challenges and Hazards Difficulty

Level	Auto Damage	Primary Damage	Normal/ Unskilled TN	Energy/ Skill TN
0	0	1	8-13	8-13
1	1	1d2	8-13	8-14
2	2	1d3	8-13	9-15
3	3	1d6	8-13	9-16
4	4	2d6	8-13	10-17
5	5	3d6	8-13	11-18

There are many more monsters in The Domain than can be described in the limited space in this tome. The GM is free to invent new creatures to torment adventurers.