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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the teeming masses of souls that are born, live and eventually die in the spanning worlds of this reality are a handful of shining beacons of hope that show the rest what they are capable of. These brilliant stars of life are few and far between, making their appearances in the tides of normal lives truly special. They walk amongst their fellows like giants of deed and duty, living reminders that the world is shaped by the actions of the bold and powerful.

They are the legends of this world.

Legendary souls that have carved a niche in history through their actions, these heroes are what stories are written about and how epic tales are born. From the stalwart hero standing in the path of a hundred rampaging savages to the lonely wanderer who one day overthrows a corrupt king – Legendary heroes walk this realm in many forms. One universal truth, though, is that they seem to change the very pattern of the world in which they live.

These powerful and influential beings are often responsible for performing great deeds and services for others on a grand scale. Unlike the common hero who might champion the cause of a single mistreated servant, a Legendary hero would likely champion the cause of the kingdom that would allow such mistreatment to go on unchallenged. These heroes are a bane of evil and wickedness, raising their weapons against their foes no matter the odds or the possible cost. True legends are made from unquestionably strong stuff, with the results cascading down through future generations as folklore and fable.

Anyone can hope to eventually count himself amongst the small number of proven Legendary heroes. It takes dedication to a cause, the willingness to set aside personal goals in lieu of a higher purpose and more than a little luck in day to day struggles and adventures. It takes years – sometimes decades – to set the stage to turn a veteran hero into a legend. It seems to happen when the hero is least expecting it, born of a legendary act performed out of need rather than want. Sometimes the hero does not even wish to become a legend, but wears the heavy mantle of his heroism on broad shoulders. Not because he wants to, but because he has to.

The movements and choices of these select few are felt universally. The common mean wants to be them, the forces of good want to recruit them and the forces of evil fear and despise them. These are the adventurers that affect their worlds on an epic scale…

…and now you can join them.

How to Use This Book

This book is a guide to how to aspire to be, create and play as a Legendary character in the RuneQuest game setting. It explains what it takes to count a character amongst the ranks of the Legendary, and what it takes to survive there. It gives both Players and Games Masters the tools they need to add Legendary characters to their existing chronicles, or even to create a legendary campaign that should challenge even the previously unmatched characters of this level.

Legendary status adds a whole new power level to RuneQuest. This book contains scores of new abilities and skills that can be useful to any character, but will likely benefit characters of higher power and experience more than less-advanced heroes. Several of these new Legendary Abilities tie directly in with the massively augmented statistics required to obtain them – the kind of things that Legendary characters are made up of.

Also included in this book is a new way to get a high-powered character involved in larger scales of conflict. Using the of mass combat rules introduced in this book, Games Masters can host epic battles between armies in their games – using the Legendary characters as the driving forces behind one side or another. Whether it is a Legendary party standing in the path of a coming horde or leading the troops in a charge against teeming enemy forces, these rules will allow the Player Characters to be the ‘stars’ of the battle.
Introduction

Playing a Legendary character can be daunting as a Player tries to find new and challenging quests to steer his character’s choices and movements, so we have come up with several attractive goals for Games Masters to dangle in front of their Players. Between the addition of the new and ultimately powerful runes and many magical items and relics that could take decades to find and collect, we hope to give these characters something to aspire to.

For Games Masters, it can be very hard to deal with a chronicle full of exceptionally powerful Player Characters as they smash through well-laid plans with the brute force of their advanced characters. As a gift to the cunning masters of the chronicles out there, we have included a short bestiary of immensely powerful creatures and beings that should give any character a difficult time – even a Legendary character. With these beasts and their brethren at his disposal, a Games Master should be able to set decent opposition against his intrepid adventurers.

All in all, we hope that the addition of this book will inspire Players and Games Masters to create the epic and powerful tales that we have seen in so many of the novels, movies and comic books that have inspired us to create these games. Hopefully, the readers will embrace the material included herein and make some legends of their own.

What Does it Mean to Be Legendary?

Being a personality of Legendary status is more than just killing your first dragon or overthrowing your first corrupt emperor. It is a life comprised of a string of events so large and consuming that normal folk may disbelieve they ever happened unless they were there to witness them. It is having the cosmic forces of the universe vying for your success or failure, perhaps with your knowledge of their great game – perhaps not. It is what every glory-seeking adventurer wants to be, but sometimes regrets after having gotten there. Being a Legendary character is often more than a mortal soul should ever bear, even if it is the best fit for the job.

Legendary characters tend to always be where the action is (or perhaps the action is where they are), and fate finds a way to involve them in the happenings of the world around them – no matter how some may try to avoid it. They are the ones who deal with the problems that kings and rulers despair over. At any given time, in any given reality, there are countless royal servants and couriers trying to seek out their legends to deal with the problems they cannot solve themselves.

When someone finally comes to terms with the fact that he is indeed a legend, whether it is quickly and proudly or slowly and reluctantly, he can look forward to being famous in one way or another. Legendary Heroes become local legends for the deeds they perform, and their stories spread to other places as word of mouth transforms their deeds into epic tales of good versus evil, where good prevailed over unfathomable odds – which may or may not be true. The facts can sometimes get blurred, but the core of the story almost always remains based in the reality of what the Legendary character actually did.

The life of a legend is a mixture of epic events and the sometimes long and winding journeys between them. Rarely does a legend perform common duties like the vast majority of his fellows. A Legendary character’s reputation gives way for much kindness from his admirers. A village that recognises someone for his astonishing adventures might extend every ounce of hospitality to him, if only to get the hero to help them in some way. Some might just want to help the hero out of a moral obligation – to repay him for all the things he has done elsewhere. This is not to say that a legend will never pay for his meals or be forced to sleep in a stable from time to time, merely that his reputation can come with certain benefits.

Such a reputation is not always good, however. Legends tend to have equally powerful enemies, and are sometimes even unaware of them. This can bring hordes of foes to the places that a hero has been or is going, putting everyone he comes into contact with in danger. Villages can lay in ruin after a legend has come and gone, torn asunder by enemies looking for clues as to where the hero has gone. No one is truly safe in a Legendary Hero’s path or in his wake, as his enemies.

For these reasons, most legends travel alone, or in small groups of other characters of similar status. Unless prepared to defend their holdings against the evils of their teeming enemies, they must be nomadic beings bent on battling the evils of the world on their
own terms – hopefully without putting too many innocents at risk. Unfortunately, when the legends’ enemies come for them at the worst moments, the loss of innocent lives cannot always be helped.

**Five Good Things about Being a Legendary Hero**

The following are five reasons a hero might aspire to achieve Legendary status. Each entry describes the effect that particular reason has on a character, his friends, perhaps the world around him and his adventures.

**Moral Stance**

Most Legendary Heroes are unequivocally good. What they do and how they do it upholds the forces of Order, figuratively if not literally. The styles of the adventures and quests they undertake often draw a firm line against the forces of darkness and Chaos. It is this defined sense of ‘good guys’ and ‘bad guys’ that some legends find solace in.

Knowing that they are doing the ‘right thing’ time and time again, Legendary Heroes can persevere in their actions without fear of questionable outcome. As far as they are concerned, they are always fighting for the right side. It is this moral blanket that can also blind these heroes to any repercussions that could occur due to their do-gooding.

Whether or not his morality is a shield, weapon or crutch depends on the individual hero, or the circumstances he immerses himself in. Being a Legendary Hero and wielding the sort of power that these heroes typically do is no easy task, but can be made easier by standing on the moral high ground.

**Rewards a Plenty**

At the end of every story or fable the hero is showered with adoration and gifts from the people he has saved, freed or otherwise performed his legendary deeds for. Kings give away princesses, common folk hold parades and celebrations and religions create new holy days in their names. Unless the hero waves these gifts of thanks off (which often incurs redoubled efforts to reward), he can count on having no lack of coin or service in the lands in which his reputation holds sway.

Power and influence over entire kingdoms can be the wage a hero is paid in some circumstances, with the hero becoming an honoured guest or even a surrogate member of the royal family through the duties he has performed on behalf of the rightful rulers of a land. When evil domination looms its black shadow over a populace, only to be cut free or shattered by the vengeful stroke of the hero’s weapon – nothing of this earthly plane seems enough to repay him.

One type of reward that seems to appear in legends all across creation is that of the unique or powerful relic. These items can be so old and powerful that the locals do not trust them in the hands of anyone save the lone hero that is willing to use them on the people’s behalf – and may be powerful enough to use it properly. By proving their abilities and worth through their epic adventures, Legendary Heroes earn the right to carry these items of great power. Through years of legendary travels and heroic quests, adventurers of this status have the opportunity to gather a number of these fabled items. In fact, some count on it.

**World Travel**

Even more so than a common bard or troubadour in a nomadic carnival, a Legendary Hero that still is active in his adventures will see lands that local folk might think a dream. Ancient ruins, sacred temples, ghostly islands and the like are where the quests of a legend often take these heroes to fulfil their duties. Powerful beings of darkness and evil – exactly the sort of antagonists that comprise so many of a legend’s enemies – tend to twist and warp the places in which they reside.

Not only do heroes often have to travel far and wide to get to their enemies’ lairs, they often need to obtain rare or very specific items or ingredients from faraway places in order to foil their foes’ plans. It is in the nature of the villain to attempt to further his own goals by making things as difficult as possible for anyone who tries to stop him. This leaves the task of stopping villains to those heroes willing to literally go to the corners of their existence (perhaps beyond!) to be victorious.
The constant dangers that a Legendary adventurer tends to uncover or attract in his travels ensures that heroes of this calibre move around a great deal. They live lives full of trials and discovery, and they are often led by their adventures to the farthest reaches of their worlds. Some might take note of special locations that they may one day return to, seeking that ‘perfect’ place to set down their weapons and retire from the lives they have chosen. More than a few legends seemingly disappear off the face of existence, when in reality they have simply gone back to their favourite memory of their travels – a place where they will be able to live in relative peace.

**Leave a Lasting Mark**

Legendary Heroes cannot help but make lasting changes in the places they perform their duties. The type of adventures set before them dictates major action and often involves some kind of greater good or community. Legendary Heroes are always subject to the fact that the vast majority of the worlds around them are likely to be less powerful than they themselves are... and therefore submissive to their whims and actions. It may or may not be a hero’s wish to force such change on local communities or histories, but it often happens.

Some heroes actually look to leave their mark on purpose, changing the world in subtle (or sometimes not-so-subtle) ways in hopes of making it a better place. By defeating the evils of a world while bolstering the forces of good, a Legendary Hero can shift the balance, altering a world’s environment on many levels. A kingdom that owes a hero the life of its king or queen will be much more likely to adjust its governing policies for that person. An army led by a living legend will often act in his image, becoming a multitude of instruments dedicated to the will of their leader. A community that watches as an epic hero slays the immortal beast that has been ravaging them will forever remember the act, and will produce like-