



Sample file

Age of the
TEMPEST

PLAYER'S HANDBOOK

Sample file

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FOREWORD

This game is fun and exciting.

Age of the Tempest – Sword of the High King is an adventure roleplaying game about brave rebels living in the woods, fighting the evil Emperor and his cronies. A roleplaying game is like a story, where you get to wear the hero's shoes. Are you a knight, a witch, a princess or a swineherd? You decide! You don't even have to be human, as players can also choose to play one of the mysterious aarni or the other non-human peoples of Nathar. You can specialise in cunning, fighting or amazing feats of dexterity – or go for something completely different. You may have played board games or computer roleplaying games, where the rules or the programming set limits on the horizon of the story. These games are fun to play, but at times you may want to scale those impassable mountains or do something else that the designers did not plan for. In a roleplaying game it's possible! The only barrier is your imagination.

Let's give it a try...

Your leather boots pound the dirt, as you sprint through the forest towards the treasure. The pine branches scrape at your face, but you keep your eyes locked on the red jewel shining on the pedestal like a small sun.

You are only a few dozen feet away when a small, red humanoid with antlers and fangs springs at you from the underbrush. The monster hisses and stabs at you with its spear. "The jewel issss mine!"

You draw your trusty sword from its scabbard and parry the spear jab. You step forward, trying to lunge at the monster with your sword, but at that moment you hear more sounds from behind you. Two more monsters attack! You're surrounded! You could manage one, but three might be too many. Could you snatch the jewel with a quick jump and spring away? Or must you stand and fight?

The creatures leer at you and close in...

There! You are already living the story! This is a game where you do not need a television, phone, tablet, computer or game board to tell you what's happening. The movie screen in your head is enough, and you are the one who decides what your character is going to do next.

There are usually a few players and one Game Master in a roleplaying game. Each player describes the actions of their character, while the Game Master is the narrator, describing the scene and what the supporting characters and monsters are doing.

Will your character succeed in her attempt? That is not decided by you or the Game Master, but by a toss of the dice. The game features six different types of dice, used in different situations and for different tests. Take good care of them.

You can get to know the game by trying the solo adventure starting on the next page. Once you have played through it, you will have learned the basics of *Age of the Tempest – Sword of the High King*. Then you will be ready to create a character of your own, and take them on many adventures in the world of Nathar. When you have your character, all you need is a few other players, one of whom will act as the Game Master.

Welcome to the world of roleplaying!

Mike Pohjola



PROLOGUE: A FLIGHT THROUGH THE WOODS

Welcome to Age of the Tempest! You will need a pen, a few sheets of paper and the dice which came with the game. Start reading from the section called **Cliff**.

CLIFF

The branches scrape at your face. You hear the sounds of pursuit behind you and despite your exhaustion, decide to press on.

It may have been a mistake to help the poor blacksmith in your village, but you could not stand idly by and watch Sir Julius Pelorian whip the poor man. Witnessing injustice has always made your blood boil. You run through the green forest. Blood from the wound in your forehead drips into your eyes. Suddenly, the ground in front of you seems to fall away, and you find yourself standing on a high cliff. You can see the forest, far down below. Julius Pelorian and his warriors are right on your tail. Will you brave the cliff?

You know that capture means a cell in the dungeons – or the gallows.

You step forward, sliding down the side of the cliff, grasping at rocks and roots for purchase.

Your character's skill to stay upright and avoid injuring themselves is measured by *focus* points. Your character has 16 focus points. You can write "Focus 16" in the margins of this page or on a separate sheet of paper. As your character falls, they lose three focus points. Cross over 16 and write down 13, indicating the new amount. Had your character's focus fallen to zero, they would have stumbled and fallen straight off the cliff.

You make it to the bottom, but the heavily armored group of warriors pursuing you will have to find a safer spot to descend. The evil knight Julius Pelorian stands at the edge of the cliff, shaking a mailed fist at you. "We will find you!" he yells,

LOST

After the cliff you spend some time wandering in the woods. You spot what you think is a path leading deeper into the woods, but it turns out to be an animal trail. You decide to turn back, but fail to find the way to the cliff.

Wandering on, you end up on a rocky slope, with

stroking his narrow mustache. "And then you'll suffer!"

You have already suffered. The Eagle Warriors attacked and gravely wounded you before you made your escape. You are not afraid of the Eagle Warriors, but there were just too many of them. What matters is that you managed to help the blacksmith, who had only stolen the food to feed his starving children. You took the blame and the beating. Perhaps it was a mistake, as the children will be hungry again tomorrow, and you won't be there to help.

Where to now? You do not know the trails of Smokewood Forest, nor do you know where to find a hiding place.

Let's see whether your character finds their way through the woods. This requires *instinct*, one of your character's six basic attributes. Your character's instinct is 9 (slightly below average) and therefore their *instinct bonus* is only +2. To see whether your roll is a success or a failure, add your instinct bonus to your die roll.

The game package includes six different dice. The biggest is an almost round die with triangular sides. It is a 20 sided die, also known as a d20. Roll the d20 and add your instinct bonus of +2 to the roll. You will get a number between 3 and 22. If the result is under 12, your character will get lost in the woods. Move to the chapter titled **Lost**. If you rolled 12 or more, your character will not get lost. Move to the chapter titled **South**.

a stream on the other side, and a path beyond the stream. You make your way across the slope, but the rocks shifts under you, making you stagger.

Subtract two points of focus from your total, bringing it down to 11. Then move to the chapter titled **Stream**.

SOUTH

You remember that when you came to the cliff it was morning, and the sun was on your left. That means you were heading south. You also notice that most of the trees have branches growing on only one

side. That must be south, so you walk that way.

*After a while, you spot a small stream, with a path on the other side. Move to **Stream**.*

STREAM

You wade a little up the stream, in order to obscure your tracks. You climb out of the water onto the opposite bank, and step onto the path, walking deeper into the woods.

The early summer day is warm. The sunlight shining through the forest roof catches the white flowers floating in the air.

A little further in, you notice someone sitting on a large rock. Is it one of the Eagle Warriors? No, it is a woman, barefoot and clad in a white dress.

“Come closer” she says, smiling at you. She must have noticed you despite your attempts at stealth. There is something about the woman that makes you trust her, so you walk up to her.

“I am Inya” the woman says. “I am a witch. I was searching for herbs in the woods. May I feel your face?” At this point you realize that Inya is blind.

She places her soft hands on your face and slides them across your features. It feels nice.

“Can you tell me a little about yourself?” Inya asks.

Inya is a witch. Not an evil witch who eats little children, but a good witch who brews healing potions and helps the needy. Julius Pelorian is a knight. The witch and the knight are character classes. Other human character classes are the ranger, the minstrel, the princess or prince, and the swineherd.

In Age of the Tempest, each character has a class, which represents their chosen profession and background. Each player chooses a class, and the game group usually includes characters of different classes. If you wish to play a non-human hero, your character could be one of the myste-



rious aarni, a playful whiskerling or a strong stallion. You can read more about them further in the book.

In this starter adventure, your character is a knight. Unlike the wicked Julius Pelorian, you still believe in justice and the knightly virtues. Write down “Knight” as your character class.

You introduce yourself to Inya, as she touches your forehead.

“You’re wounded!” she gasps. “Let me heal you.”

Inya pours water from a skin on her belt onto a wad of linen, and wipes the blood from your face. Then she presses two fingers onto your wound and mutters something in a language that you do not recognize. With her other hand, she traces a symbol in the air that seems to glow with a greenish hue. Or did you just imagine it?

“There,” Inya says. You touch your forehead lightly. It doesn’t sting any more. The wound has disappeared.

Your wounds and the shape your character is in are measured with hit points. Your character usually has a maximum of 22 hit points. Due to your wounds, your hit points have fallen to 12. Thanks to Inya’s healing powers, they’re back to 22 (Your hit points can never exceed 22). Write down “Hit points: 22”.

“This wound was made by a weapon,” Inya says. “Who struck you?”

You tell Inya how you got into trouble with Pelorian and the Eagle Warriors by helping the blacksmith. “The Eagle Warriors have persecuted the common folk ever since Emperor Zangavius seized power in Nathar,” Inya says.

Nathar is your native land. Zangavius usurped the rightful king several years ago. This is the first time that you realize that the present, difficult times are due to the actions of Zangavius. Inya seems to read your thoughts. “Yes, Julius Pelorian is but one of Zangavius’ many cronies. But fortunately there are those who fight against the wickedness of Zangavius and Julius Pelorian.”

You have never heard of this resistance. “What do you mean?” you ask her.

YOUR TURN

You want to strike Julius Pelorian with your sword, so you make your to-hit roll with $d20+5$. Your character is a skilled swordfighter. Julius Pelorian has a defense rating of 13. If you roll under 13, you missed and you should go to **Julius’s Turn**. If your roll was over 13, you hit Julius. If the die roll (without the +5) was a 20, your attack was partic-

“The Greenhoods are rebels living here in the Smokewood,” Inya says. “They protect the common folk from the Eagle Warriors, give them food and rescue prisoners. They are led by Thelga Nettlebolt.”

You want to find out more, but at that moment you hear the thud of boots and the clanking of armor.

“We had better go,” Inya says.

Suddenly the branches hiding the two of you from sight are pulled aside. The smirking face of Julius Pelorian is there, right above you.

“Hiding, are we?” the cruel knight asks, pointing his sword at you. “We have some unfinished business.”

Then Julius Pelorian notices Inya. “What have we here? You’ve found more beggars to help? This one’s blind, no less!” Julius Pelorian lets out a wicked laugh, striding over to Inya. She is just getting up, propped by her walking stick. Pelorian kicks at her cane, sending both the cane and Inya sprawling onto the ground.

“She can’t even stand,” Julius Pelorian sneers.

That is too much for you. You draw your sword. The Eagle Warriors start to step between the two of you, spears and axes in hand. Julius Pelorian makes a dismissive gesture with his free hand.

“Stand back men, I’ll teach this little runt a lesson.” Pelorian steps forward, and slashes at you with his sword. You barely manage to dodge the attack.

A fight has broken out!

Write down “Julius Pelorian: Hit points 30”.

Start the fight by rolling initiative, to see who goes first. It is an important roll, particularly if more than two combatants take part in a fight.

Your initiative roll is $d20+2$, so you roll the 20-sided die and add two to the result.

Julius Pelorian is slower than you, as his initiative roll is $d20+1$. Roll initiative for Julius Pelorian as well.

If your result is equal to or greater than Pelorian’s, you move before him. Move to **Your Turn**. If Julius rolled higher than you, move to **Julius’ Turn**.

ularly successful. This is called a critical hit!

If you landed a regular hit (not a critical one), grab another die. One of the dice is a 10-sided die, a $d10$. It has five segments on both sides in the shape of pie slices. These segments are numbered from 0 to 9. In this case 0 means 10. You will need this die to determine how much damage your



weapons inflict. The damage done by different weapons is determined by different dice, but since both of you are wielding broadswords, you only need the d10.

Roll the d10 to determine how much damage your sword caused. Subtract the result from Julius Pelorian's hit points.

If you scored a critical hit, you will cause 12

JULIUS' TURN

Julius strikes at you. He rolls $d20+4$ to hit. If he rolls over your defense rating of 12, he scores a hit. Otherwise, go to **Your Turn**. If the die roll (without the +4) is 16 or more, Julius has scored a critical hit!

Julius' sword does d10 damage when it hits. (See the above chapter about finding a d10.) Roll

points of damage. Subtract the total from Julius Pelorian's hit points. You will later see that most enemies have weak spots, which your character can strike with a critical hit.

If Julius has hit points remaining, move to **Julius' Turn**. If Julius Pelorian is reduced to 0 hit points or less, move to **Victory over Julius**.

d10 and subtract the result from your hit points.

If Julius scored a critical hit, his damage is 12 points, which you should subtract from your hit points. If you have hit points remaining, go to **Your Turn**. If you are down to 0 or less hit points, go to **Julius Wins**.

VICTORY OVER JULIUS

You manage to strike the sword from Julius Pelorian's hand and prepare to give him a hiding with your blade.

At that moment, the Eagle Warriors step forward to prevent you. You realise you cannot beat all of

them, and take a step back towards Inya.

"Eagle Warriors, shoot them!" the beaten Julius snarls from the ground.

Go to Inya's Plan.

JULIUS WINS

Julius Pelorian trips you, steps on your sword arm and points his blade at your throat. "This is what happens when you mess with Sir Julius Pelorian" he jeers. "Eagle Warriors, grab them both. They will be hanged tomorrow."

As the fight is over and you are still alive, you can add one hit point. It means that you are in bad shape, but able to walk unaided.

Go to Inya's Plan.

INYA'S PLAN

Inya steps to your side and grasps your hand. Her cane glows with a green light, and you notice tendrils of fog snaking out from the underbrush and trees behind you. Suddenly, the whole clearing is cloaked in a thick fog.

"What's this?" Julius Pelorian bellows. "Eagle Warriors! The outlaws are trying to escape! Catch them!"

The two of you escape in cover of the magic mist. You silently vow vengeance on Julius Pelorian.

Inya leads you through the woods. You wonder at the sureness of her steps, despite her blindness. Soon the sounds of pursuit die down, as you arrive

at the bank of a burbling brook.

Inya grasps your hand. "You cannot go back to your village now. Julius Pelorian will not forget what happened," she says gravely. "You had better find Thelga Nettlebolt and join her Greenhoods.

There is a bridge down the river. Cross the river and walk in the direction of your shadow, and you will eventually make it to their camp. Give them my regards."

The sorceress gives you a quick hug, and then swiftly returns to the forest. You gaze at Inya's retreating figure, but then decide to follow her advice.

BRIDGE

Downstream, the river turns into rapids, with a large tree trunk crossing the water. It is hardly a proper bridge, but you suppose that it's better than nothing.

You step onto the bridge, and notice that it is swaying slightly. You had better not fall.

*It is time to roll dexterity. Dexterity is one of your character's six attributes. You used instinct before to find your way through the woods. The other four attributes are *strength, endurance, power* and *intelligence*. They are explained in detail later in the book. Your dexterity is 13, slightly above average. Your *dexterity bonus* is +4, so you roll d20+4.*

If you rolled below 12, you stumble first to one side, then to the other. You are barely able to keep

your focus on the log. Subtract three points of focus (3fp). If you rolled above 12, you have no trouble staying on the log.

You take a few careful steps on the log. At that moment, a huge man with grey skin and terrifying fangs leaps onto the other end of the log. He is a stallo, a people often employed in Nathar for tasks requiring immense strength. He grabs a heavy wooden staff, rumbling "This is as far as you go."

You ask the stallo to let you past, but the behemoth refuses to move.

You can't think of anything else, so you grasp a sturdy length of wood jutting from the water. "Move or I'll push you aside," you say to the stallo.

The large creature grins, taking a step forward. "I'd like to see you try, human."

STAFF-OFF

You've ended up in another fight, but this time it's not for hit points but for focus. The stallo's to-hit roll (what he rolls trying to hit you) is d20+2, his defense rating is 10 and his focus is 15. Your to-hit roll is d20+5, your defense is 12 and your focus is the number you have written on your paper sheet.

Both of you wield staves, which deal 2d6 damage to focus, which means two 6-sided dice. The game comes with one 6-sided die, also known

as a d6.

Start by rolling initiative. Roll d20+3 for the stallo. Can you beat his score with your roll of d20+4?

Roll to hit for both combatants (and for damage if hits are scored). Subtract hits from focus. If the stallo is brought to 0 focus, go to **Victory over the Stallo**. If your focus is reduced to 0, go to **The Stallo Wins**.

VICTORY OVER THE STALLO

You feint with your staff, and then quickly strike down, sweeping the stallo's feet from under him. He falls with a loud splash into the unexpectedly shallow water, lying there with a water lily on his head.

The stallo looks so silly that you burst out laughing. The creature eyes you with a stern expression at first, but then joins in your laughter.

Go to **Ashore**.

THE STALLO WINS

You attempt a feint as the stallo strikes, but the force of his blow sends you and your staff into the river. You rise from the water, wet and grumpy, and

tip the water out of your boots one by one.

Go to **Ashore**.

ASHORE

The stallo grins, asking you what you're doing in the area.

You tell him that Inya told you to find The ga Nettlebolt and to join the Greenhoods.

The stallo bursts out laughing.

"What's so funny?" you ask.

"I thought you were one of Julius Pelorian's cronies," the stallo says. "My name is Sarkan and I am a Greenhood. Come on, follow me and I'll take you to Thelga Nettlebolt."

If you ran out of focus, you now gain 1 focus point back.

Sarkan the stallo leads you to the edge of the

woods, where you can see some other adventurers trying themselves in the sun.

This concludes the prelude and sets the stage for the first actual roleplaying session – Episode I: The Secret of the Ruined Temple. However, you cannot tackle it alone; you need other players to join the adventure. One of you needs to be the Game Master, who will narrate the story. Will that be you?

First you must create a character, whom you will play in the game. Go to **Character Creation** on page 16.