
VAGABOND
PULP FANTASY ROLEPLAYING GAME
sample file

CHECKS

To make a Check, roll a d20 and compare the result against that Check's Difficulty to determine if the Check is a Crit, Pass, or Fail:

Crit: d20 rolls a 20
Pass: d20 rolls equal to or above Difficulty.
Fail: d20 rolls below Difficulty.

When you Crit on a Check to Attack or Cast or a Save, you gain a benefit:

Attack/Cast: You can deal damage to the Target(s) equal to the Stat used.
Save: You aren't affected by what provoked the Save, and can use an Action.

Favor & Hinder

Circumstances may Favor or Hinder a Check:

Favored: d20 roll with a d6 bonus.
Hindered: d20 roll with a d6 penalty.

Favor and Hinder cancel each other out 1-for-1, and they don't stack. A roll is either Favored or Hindered and only one d6 is rolled for either.

COMBAT

Time is measured in Rounds, which are broken up into Turns for each Group in the Combat. Beings involved in the Combat will be placed in one of these Groups, getting an Action and Move on their Turn.

Turn Order: Heroes take the first Turn. If there is a risk of surprise, the Heroes must pass a Detect Check. Those that fail can't act on the Heroes' first Turn.

Actions

You can take your Action at any point during the Turn, choosing from the Actions below, or in a way that isn't accounted for here.

Attack: Make an Attack Check with your Weapon, dealing its damage on a pass.
Cast: Cast a Spell.
Hold: Use an Action or Move on an Off-Turn.
Jump: Spend half your Speed to leap up to that distance horizontally.
Rush: Gain Speed this Turn equal to your Speed.
Use: You interact with or use an Item.

Move

Your Speed is how far you can Move during your Turn, which you can break up as you like.

Flanking

If at least two Allied Beings are Close to a Foe, the Foe is Vulnerable if it is no more than one size larger than the Allies.

Defending

You can either Block or Dodge attacks if you aren't Incapacitated.

Block: Endure Save, which is Hindered if the attack is a Ranged attack.
Dodge: Reflex Save, which is Hindered if you are wearing Heavy Armor.

If the Save passes, you ignore one of the attack's highest rolled damage dice.

Armor/Immune/Weak

Armor, Immune, and Weak affect damage.

Armor: Subtracted from Attack damage.
Immune: Unharmed by the damage.
Weak: Ignores Armor and Immune, and deals an extra damage die.

Focusing

Focusing lets some effects stay active over time. Your Focus on an effect ends early if you drop it or Focus on another effect.

Dying

Beings can die in any of the following ways:

- Their HP is reduced to 0,
- Their body is destroyed,
- They have 5 Fatigue (p. 13).

Dead Beings can't regain HP.

ENEMY CHECKS & SAVES?

Anything under the control of the GM does not roll for its Checks and Saves. They are assumed to pass unless the Heroes' Check or Save succeeds.

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NPC Reaction

2d6	Reaction
2-3	Violent, attacks immediately
4-6	Hostile, likely to attack
7-9	Untrusting, possibly confused
10-11	Neutral, open to leaving peacefully
12+	Friendly, willing to become an Ally

Morale

Enemies make Morale Checks at the following times during a Combat:

- The first death in their Group.
- Their HP is at half or less, or half their Group is Incapacitated.

To check Morale, roll 2d6 and consult the Group's Leader's statblock. If the 2d6 result is higher than its Morale, the Group fails and either retreats or surrenders.

Zone

To determine how an Enemy acts during Combat, it is given a Zone:

Frontline: Move Close to Melee.
Midline: Moves Close to Attack, then Move to Near after. If a Midliner is at half HP or lower, it acts as Backline.
Backline: Stays Far for Ranged and Spells.

CASTING SPELLS

To Cast a Spell, your hands must either be open, or holding a spellbook, staff, or trinket. When you Cast a Spell, you determine:

1. Are you casting it to deal Damage, cause the Effect, or both? Choosing to only deal 1d6 damage or cause the Effect requires no Mana. Choosing to do both costs 1 Mana.
2. Who the Spell Targets with its Delivery.
3. How long it lasts, known as Duration.

When to Make Cast Checks

When you Cast a Spell, you don't make a Cast Check unless an unwilling Being is a Target.

Damage

Spells with a Damage Base can be cast to deal d6 damage. You can spend Mana to increase the damage by 1d6 per Mana spent to do so.

Effect

The Spell's effect describes what it subjects the Target to, unless Cast only to deal damage.

Duration

Spell damage is instant and the effects last until your next Turn unless you Focus when you Cast it. If you do, the Spell lasts until you stop the Focus. If the Spell includes an unwilling Being as a Target, you must spend 1 Mana and pass a Cast Check to keep the Focus each Round.

Continual: Continual duration doesn't require Focus, and lasts until dismissed (no Action).

Delivery

Delivery	Cost	Increase
Aura	2	+1 per +5 feet to the radius
Cone	2	+2 per additional 5-feet of length
Cube	1	+1 per additional 5-foot-cube
Imbue	0	+2 per additional Target
Glyph	2	Special
Line	2	+1 per 10 feet of extra length
Remote	0	+1 per additional Target
Sphere	2	+1 per +5 feet to the radius
Touch	0	—

Aura: 10-foot-radius from you, affecting Targets of your choice within.
Cone: 15-foot cone Area in front of you.
Cube: 5-foot cube Area you can see.
Glyph: Creates a 5-foot-square glyph on a Target you can see, where there is no other glyph within Close. The Spell is cast in a 5-foot cube from the glyph when you choose. Afterwards, the glyph disappears.
Imbue: Targets a Weapon equipped by a willing Being within Far. If it hits a Target while Imbued, you can spend 1 Mana to Cast the Spell as if by Touch against the Target without using an Action.
Line: 5-foot-wide, 30-foot-long, 10-feet-tall Area. Expanding the Area's width by 5 feet or height by up to 10 feet doubles the Cost.
Remote: An ambience or bolt on a Target.
Sphere: 5-foot-radius sphere in sight.
Touch: A Close Target, or yourself.

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CONTENTS

Introduction

Preamble **2**

Discretion **5**

Basics **7**
The Dice 7
Stats 7
Checks 8
Hit Points & Damage 8

Adventuring

Adventuring Overview **9**
Targeting 9
Vision 9
Time 10
Movement 10
Position 11
Rest 11
Temperature 11
Damaging Objects 12
Progress Clocks 12
Statuses 13

Encounters **14**
Combat 14
Running Enemies 15

Exploration **17**
Crawl 17
Travel 18

Downtime **19**
Activities 19

Heroes

Hero Creation **20**
Skills & Passives 20
Saves 22

Ancestries **23**
Human 23
Dwarf 24
Elf 24
Halfling 25
Draken 25
Goblin 26
Orc 26

Classes **27**
Leveling Up 27
Alchemist 29
Barbarian 31
Bard 33
Dancer 35
Druid 37
Fighter 39
Gunslinger 41
Hunter 43
Luminary 45
Magus 47
Merchant 49
Pugilist 51
Revelator 53
Rogue 55
Sorcerer 57
Vanguard 59
Witch 61
Wizard 63

Perks **64**
Perk List 64

Gear

Gear **74**
Inventory Slots 74
Starting Packs 75
Armor & Weapons 76
Price Lists 78
Alchemical Items 83

Magic

Spells **90**
Spell List 92

Relics **99**
Relic List 102

Bestiary

Statblocks **109**
Threat Level 111
Humanlike 112
Index of Beings 115
Artificials 118
Beasts 124
Cryptids 134
Fae 153
Outers 158
Primordials 168
Undead 176

Quests

Structure **182**
Overview 182
Preparation 183
Travel 183
Crawl 183
Confrontation 184
Aftermath 185

QUEST: **Ruinous League** **187**

Appendices

Appendix A: Terminology **190**

Appendix B: Guidelines **191**
Guided 192
Solo/Co-Op 193

Appendix C: Compatibility **194**
Conversions 195

Appendix D: Backers **197**

Appendix E: Play Tools **202**
Hero Record 202
Quest Sheet - Travel 204
Quest Sheet - Dungeon 205
Paper d20 206
Paper d6 207

Sample file

PREAMBLE

Drawing inspiration from Medieval romance stories, dungeon synth, and dungeoncrawlers of the past 50 years, *Vagabond* is a tabletop action roleplaying game where the Players take on the role of daring and powerful Heroes exploring dungeons and thwarting villains.

Pulp Fantasy

Also known as 'sword and sorcery', pulp fantasy stories are tales of high-action and dangerous adventure. You're in the right spot if the cover is illustrated by Frank Frazetta, Boris Vallejo, Julie Bell, Darrell K. Sweet, or Michael Whelan. Its name comes from pulp magazines like Weird Tales that published these sensational fantasy stories of epic Heroes with rippling 8-pack abs saving a hot chick from lizard men on Mars. This evolved into full-length novels which inspired *Dungeons & Dragons* in the 70s and 80s.

Peoples' first impression of fantasy tends to be of a hobbit walking a vast world with a fellowship of capable friends. This is fair considering the impact of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, but this series doesn't quite fit the mold of what we consider 'pulp fantasy' and is most-often distinguished as 'Tolkienesque fantasy'. While Tolkien was the first to create a vast fantasy universe with its own history and mythology, his stories are focused more on a journey than punchy fights and dialogue that became prevalent in series like Robert E. Howard's *Conan the Barbarian* or Michael Moorcock's *Elric of Melniboné*.

It leans in on character studies through an exploration of established fantasy archetypes. We didn't exactly explore Gandalf's wizardry impacting his worldly outlook like Conan's barbarism. You're not just shown the world the author has created, you're given a protagonist to experience it through.

Tolkien fantasy is a zoo, pulp fantasy is a safari.

Origin of Pulp Fantasy

It was Arthurian legends, Norse mythology, Grimm's Fairy Tales, and stories like *Beowulf* that originally inspired fantasy as a genre in the 1900s. The worlds, gods, and creatures of these tales can be found spattered throughout fantasy stories and games, but they aren't themselves "pulp" fantasy. This subgenre's birth can likely be dated to around 1932, when Robert E. Howard's "*The Phoenix on the Sword*" was published in Weird Tales, the first published appearance of Conan the Barbarian.

The focus of narrative in the Conan series shifted towards action over exploration and introspection. That's not to say it didn't have these elements, just that Howard leaned heavier on the fights than what we had seen in fantasy previously. This push towards the thrilling with less emphasis on the fantastical helped to define the fantasy stories we read today, and more-directly influenced the first tabletop roleplaying game developed by Dave Arneson and Gary Gygax.

The Familiar Strange

There's a saying in the field of medicine, "When you hear hoofbeats, think of horses, not zebras." This is the polar opposite for fantasy. When making Conan, Howard seemed to have originally envisioned the story taking place in the real-world, but worried about the time and research required to maintain historical accuracy. Instead, Howard chose to place Conan in Hyboria, a fantastical "vanished world" that blended Celtic, Germanic, Greek, Mesopotamian, Norse, and Slavic mythology with magic rooted in the high fantasy of Tolkien. This kept Hyboria recognizable and relatable as a world like our own, helping readers relate to an otherwise unrelatable world with wizards and lizardmen.

This is an immersion technique authors have used for decades, "Take the familiar and make it strange." This phrase is attributed to

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the German Romantic poet Novalis, and was a core philosophy to Romantic era artists. Think of any fantasy world and consider how it applies this principle:

- Brandon Sanderson's allomancy is magnetism keyed out to an entire metal magic system.
- Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* is balanced on four elephants standing upon a giant turtle.
- *Fullmetal Alchemist* adapts the law of conservation of mass as a magic system.

These techniques helped flesh-out the worlds and make magic systems understandable and relatable. Many of these stories pull monsters from real-world mythologies, use horrors that prey on our human fears, analogously explore real-world topics through a fantasy lens, and even go so far as to just use real-world locations.

Thwart the Villains

Pulp Fantasy stories are about the successes and failures of the Heroes, not the enemies. A story isn't made more interesting if a villain's plans don't work because they failed a check.

Tactical Action Fantasy

Vagabond doesn't gamify social interactions. That is handled by roleplay with your table. This system is built for quick Combat and engaging Exploration. You have tools at your disposal to think of alternatives to violence, but don't be sword-shy. **Feel free to stab the bad guy.**

Further, combat is intended to flow seamlessly with exploration. Combats should be moments of confrontation, not a reason to milk tension out of every action. Combats will be short. Some foes may die in a single blow. Bosses might be entirely thwarted by clever players. **That's the intent.**

As such, it is the Heroes who must prove their attempts at thwarting the villains' plans succeed. **Enemies do not roll for their attacks, defenses, and checks as they are assumed to succeed unless the Heroes intervene.**

Action First, Cinema Second

Vagabond's combat system focuses on quick, power fantasy violence over narrative tension. ***This is an action game, not a tactical war game.*** Mechanics are granted as a storytelling toolkit, so feel free to use its flathead screwdrivers on Phillips-head screws if it works for you.

Ancestries, Classes, Weapons, Perks, and Spells grant mechanics for combat and exploration, not fluff and flair. They were designed to say "Yes, and..." for what you want to do instead of saying what you *can't* do.

There are restrictions and limits, and this spirit should always be interpreted in good faith. There are Guidelines to help convey this spirit on (Appendix B: Guidelines, p. 191), but everything therein should be viewed as a guide.

Common Sense is King

The game's expression is intended to allow for quick rulings over precision simulation. If a rule causes a question, try to rule in the Heroes' favor and keep the story moving.

Order of Operations

Follow PEMDAS/BODMAS when applying things like Armor to reduce damage taken. For example, if a Being halves damage from attacks and has Armor 3, and takes 10 damage from an attack, they halve the damage first (for 5 damage) and subtract 3 from the remainder (for 2 damage).

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Touchstones

The following touchstones are cultural landmarks for the Pulp Fantasy genre, and a great place to get an idea for the kinds of characters, monsters, and mayhem you'll encounter in *Vagabond* campaigns.

Anime/Manga

- ***Berserk.*** *Kentaro Miura (1989)*
- ***Claymore.*** *Norihiro Yagi (2001)*
- ***Faraway Paladin.*** *Kanata Yanagina, Kususaga Rin (2015)*
- ***Fullmetal Alchemist.*** *Hiromu Arakawa (2001)*
- ***Princess Mononoke.*** *Hayao Miyazaki (1997)*
- ***Record of Lodoss War.*** *Ryo Mizuno (1988)*
- ***Vinland Saga.*** *Makoto Yukimura (2015)*

Film

- ***Army of Darkness.*** *Sam Raimi (1992)*
- ***The Beastmaster.*** *Don Coscarelli (1982)*
- ***Clash of the Titans.*** *Desmond Davis (1981)*
- ***Dragonslayer.*** *Matthew Robbins (1981)*
- ***Excalibur.*** *John Boorman (1981)*
- ***The Northman.*** *Robert Eggers (2022)*
- ***Princess Bride.*** *William Goldman (1987)*
- ***Willow.*** *Jonathan Kasdan (1988)*

Literature

- ***Conan.*** *Robert E. Howard (1932)*
- ***Dungeon Crawler Carl.*** *Matt Dinniman (2020)*
- ***Elric of Melniboné.*** *Michael Moorcock (1961)*
- ***Farseer Trilogy.*** *Robin Hobb (1995)*
- ***First Law Trilogy.*** *Joe Abercrombie (2006)*
- ***The Gentleman Bastard.*** *Scott Lynch (2008)*
- ***The Witcher.*** *Andrzej Sapkowski (1986)*

Music

- ***Alchemy of the Stars.*** *Cosmic Sorcerer*
- ***Bubbling Cauldron.*** *Fiendish Imp*
- ***Deja Vu.*** *Mort Garson*
- ***Souls that Dance on the Edge of a Sword.*** *Jim Kirkwood*
- ***Starguide.*** *Castlesiege*
- ***Tarkus.*** *Emerson Lake and Palmer*
- ***YYZ.*** *Rush*

Video Games

- ***Dark and Darker.*** *Ironmace (2023)*
- ***Dark Souls.*** *FromSoftware (2006)*
- ***Darkest Dungeon.*** *Red Hook (2016)*
- ***Dragon Quest.*** *Square Enix (1986)*
- ***Elden Ring.*** *FromSoftware (2022)*
- ***Fire Emblem.*** *Intelligent Systems (1990)*
- ***Legend of Dragoon.*** *Japan Studio (1999)*
- ***Legend of Zelda.*** *Nintendo (1986)*
- ***Elder Scrolls: Skyrim.*** *Bethesda (2011)*
- ***Slay the Spire.*** *Mega Crit Games (2019)*
- ***Slice & Dice.*** *Tann (2024)*

Tabletop Games

- ***Dragonbane.*** *Free League (2023)*
- ***Drakar och Demoner.*** *Äventyrsspel (1982)*
- ***RuneQuest.*** *Chaosium (1983)*
- ***Warhammer Fantasy Role-Play.*** *Games Workshop (1983)*
- ***Zweihänder.*** *Andrews McMeel (2017)*

TV Series

- ***Adventure Time.*** *Pendleton Ward (2007)*
- ***Merlin.*** *Julian Jones, Jake Michie, Johnny Capps, Julian Murphy (2008)*
- ***Mighty Mightor.*** *William Hanna, Joseph Barbera (1967)*
- ***The Herculoids.*** *Alex Toth, William Hanna, Joseph Barbera (1967)*
- ***Xena Warrior Princess.*** *John Schulian, Robert Tapert (1995)*

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DISCRETION

Playing roleplaying games can lead to situations that may make certain players feel uncomfortable with the experience. The most important thing your group can do before you even start play is to make sure everyone is on the same page about how you all might explore these themes if they come up.

Core Expectations

This is a game of power fantasy violence, delving into dangerous locations, and brutally killing terrifying monsters. These are core tenets of the game. If players aren't up for this experience, *they should play a different game*.

What this game isn't is an excuse to subject others to an experience they aren't in for. Nor is it a justification for mirroring real-world bigotry. Players are expected to take on the role of Heroes. We consider violence against evil-doers as meaningfully different from violence to "rid the world of all orcs." Killing something just because it was born as what it is potentially leans into mirrors of real-world bigotry and justifications for genocide.

Be Fans of Each Other

One player's success is everyone's success, GM included. This is not a competitive game. There are no winners or losers. This is a toolkit to help embody a heroic pulp fantasy character going against the dangers presented by bizarre magic, unfamiliar monsters, and ancient lairs. Help each other succeed, try to find moments to give others a spotlight, and work as a team to defeat the evils that plague the realms of your imagination.

Don't Like It? Change It

If a player is not enjoying a decision they made in building their Hero, have a discussion about changing that decision with the permission of the GM.

Historical Inaccuracy

Pulp fantasy pulls inspiration from pre-1900's eras and cultures. Stone Age, Bronze Age, Medieval, and Renaissance are the key eras of inspiration, with heroic legends of England, Germany, Macedonia, Mesopotamia, and Scandinavia being primary cultural influences.

However, it would not be inspired or influenced by these things if it did not put a twist on them. *This game is a fantastical ideation of these eras and cultures, not a realistic depiction.* The real-world weight of a longsword or suit of armor has no mechanical impact on how the game is played as-written.

This is twofold for the laws and social issues of these periods and places. We see no reason to allow these to restrict or otherwise punish players for making decisions about their character. These issues can also cause players themselves to feel unwelcome at the table, which directly contradicts the spirit of the game. It is up to your table to determine how you would like to handle these topics, and we encourage you to make sure your table is on the same page about them at a Session Zero.

Event Play

When it comes to quick play at conventions or events, a full Session Zero isn't feasible. As such, try to use your best discretion for running the game for a group of strangers, keeping in mind that more adult topics aren't ideal for this kind of setting.

Session Zero

Before starting a multi-session campaign, we suggest taking the time for a "Session Zero." Session Zero involves the GM and players meeting to get on the same page about the themes and topics of the campaign, as well as to create their Heroes. We refer to the time you spend going over the themes and topics as "Establishing Discretion".

During this time, you are working on

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a "social contract" of sorts, to make sure everyone knows what topics others aren't comfortable having on the table for the game. Herein are a few tools you can use to set the discretion for your table.

Differing-Identity

In your games, you might embody characters whose gender, ethnicity, neurotypes, spiritual practices, and sexuality may vary from your own. Consider the following advice when doing so. **This is a guide, not an authority.**

Give and Take Feedback Gracefully

You may make mistakes along the way while portraying a character from a marginalized identity you don't share. When others give you good faith feedback on your portrayal, be open to their constructive critique. Particularly if they do share that identity.

Avoid Stereotypes and Tropes

Simple as. Tolkien used ancestries in fantasy to break down social barriers, as showcased with the friendship of Gimli and Legolas. If you bring in real-world racial division, this often gets handled more clumsily and potentially offensively due to the nature of improvisational storytelling.

Avoid Identity Trauma Narrative

It's fine for your character to mention that they have experienced some type of discrimination in the past, but we advise avoiding diving into heavier descriptions of situations of bigotry and violence. Especially if you do not share the identity of that marginalized identity.

Lines & Veils

Lines & Veils are a helpful tool in adjusting your table's preferences for certain topics that may come up in-game. In short, these are categories for how some potentially troubling topics will be handled narratively:

Line: I do not want this to be brought up.
Veil: I'm fine with this subject happening off-screen, and not described.

During your Session Zero, it's worth taking the time to check in with everyone to see what their comfort level is with these topics, particularly if you want to dive into more mature themes outside of those Expectations covered earlier here. Ask your table how they'd feel about these topics if you anticipate including them.

This is not a checklist to tell a GM they can't use these elements. It's meant to make sure everyone at the table would be okay with what elements are included. This makes sure everyone at the table is on board for what could come up, and helps keep each other enjoying the game as much as possible.

The following list are topics known to be common triggers, but is in no way conclusive:

- Abortion
- Blood
- Bugs
- Cancer
- Claustrophobia
- Demons
- Eyeballs
- Freezing to Death
- Gaslighting
- Genocide
- Gore
- Harm to Animals
- Harm to Children
- Heatstroke
- Homophobia
- Miscarriage
- Natural Disasters
- Paralysis/Restraint
- Police Aggression
- Pregnancy
- Racism
- Rats
- Real World Religion
- Romance
- Self-Harm
- Severe Weather
- Sex
- Sexism
- Sexual Assault
- Spiders
- Starvation
- Terrorism
- Thirst
- Torture

These guidelines are inspired by those in Rowan, Rook and Decard's *Eat the Reich*.
We also thank Monte Cook Games for their *Consent in Gaming Checklist*.

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BASICS

Vagabond is a tabletop roleplaying game where Players play the role of a Hero in the world created by the Game Master (GM). You describe your Hero's actions in the scene. When the success of these actions is uncertain, you will make dice rolls called Checks to determine the outcome.

THE DICE

You'll need a four-sided (d4), six-sided (d6), eight-sided (d8), ten-sided (d10), twelve-sided (d12), and twenty-sided (d20) die.

Cumulative Roll (xd6)

Numbers before dice (such as **2**d6) use that many dice for the roll, and add the dice together for the result.

Exploding Roll (d6!)

Exploding rolls use an exclaimation mark, and add a bonus die of the same size if it rolls its highest value (ex: 6 on a d6!). It continues doing so on any bonus dice rolls as well.

Countdown Dice (Cdx)

Roll Countdown dice each Round. If it rolls a 1, it shrinks one size (ex: d6 to d4). A roll of 1 on a Cd4 ends the countdown.

d66 Rolls

Roll two d6. Use the first d6 for the tens value and the second d6 for the ones value.

STATS

Stats are the six numbers that describe your Hero's characteristics. They range from 2 to 7, and determine your Passives, Attack Difficulties, Skill Difficulties, and Saves.

Might: Endurance, strength, and vitality.
Dexterity: Agility, coordination, and reflex.
Awareness: Accuracy, perception, and wisdom.
Reason: Deduction, intelligence, and logic.
Presence: Charisma, soul, and wit.
Luck: Destiny, fate, and success.

Stats are covered further in (Heroes, p. 20).



THE DICE

Sample file

CHECKS

To make a Check, roll a d20 and compare the result against that Check's Difficulty to determine if the Check is a Crit, Pass, or Fail:

Crit: d20 rolls an unmodified 20.
Pass: d20 rolls equal to or above Difficulty.
Fail: d20 rolls below Difficulty.

To determine this Difficulty, subtract the Check's Stat from 20. If you are Trained with the Check, double the Stat.

Difficulty = 20 − (Stat (×2 if Trained))

Crits

When you Crit on a Check to Attack or Cast or a Save, you gain a benefit:

Attack/Cast

You can deal damage to the Target(s) equal to the Stat used.

Save

You aren't affected by what provoked the Save, and can use an Action.

Favor & Hinder

Circumstances may Favor or Hinder a Check:

Favored: d20 roll with a d6 bonus.
Hindered: d20 roll with a d6 penalty.

Favor and Hinder cancel each other out 1-for-1, and they don't stack. A roll is either Favored or Hindered and only one d6 is rolled for either.

FAVOR/HINDER EXAMPLE

A Hunter is shooting an arrow at a shark. The Target is underwater, which Hinders the Ranged Check. In this case, a d20 and a d6 are rolled, subtracting the d6 result from the d20 result for the Check.

However, an Ally Sorcerer sees the Hunter is trying to make a shot, so they Cast a Spell that Restrains the shark and Favors the Check. The Hinder is now cancelled by the Favor, and a normal d20 roll is used.

Then, as luck would have it, the Hunter's Relic Longbow magically hones-in on its Targets, which Favors the Check! The roll is Favored, so a d20 and a d6 are rolled, adding the d6 result to the d20 result for the Check.

ENEMY CHECKS & SAVES?

Anything under the control of the GM does not roll for its Checks and Saves. They are assumed to pass unless the Heroes' Check or Save succeeds.

HIT POINTS & DAMAGE

Hit Points (HP) indicate condition, stamina, and ability to avoid death. Damage causes you to lose HP. To determine your HP, see (p. 20).

Damage

During play, you will deal and take Damage, which is subtracted from the Hit Points (HP) of who takes the damage. Damage has a minimum of 0 (you can't take negative damage).

Damage Source

Rather than specific damage types, the GM decides if an Ability applies to a source of damage. When you attack with a weapon, describe how you do, such as piercing with a sword or slashing. Spells are more specific, with Freeze being cold, or Gas's poison stench.

Dying

Beings can die in any of the following ways:

- Their HP is reduced to 0,
- Their body is destroyed,
- They have 5 Fatigue (p. 13).

Dead Beings can't regain HP.

UPON DEATH

If your Hero dies, you are encouraged to make a new one and rejoin the party when possible. If your group can devise a reason for why your Hero survived, consider your options there. Quick play and fun should be prioritized.

Armor/Immune/Weak

Beings can have Armor, Immune, or Weak to certain damage, which affect it in the following ways:

Armor: Subtracted from Attack damage.
Immune: Unharmed by the damage.
Weak: Ignores Armor and Immune, and deals an extra damage die.

Sample file

ADVENTURING OVERVIEW

The Encounter, Exploration, and Downtime Chapters will all mention the following rules.

TARGETING

Anything subjected to an effect is a Target. In order to be a viable Target, it must be within the Scene and must be perceivable.

Distance

Distance	Measurement
Close	Within 5 Feet of you.
Near	Between 5 to 30 Feet from you.
Far	Beyond 30 Feet away from you.

Distance Terms are used to quickly determine how far an effect can choose a viable Target. The following illustration shows how Distance applies using a battlemat grid:

Close: Yellow
Near: Blue
Far: Grey



DISTANCES

ALL THESE SQUARES MAKE A CIRCLE?

Distance and Targeting are intended to make rulings quick. The general rule here is, if Pythagoras gets brought into the conversation, you're thinking too hard about it. *If any part of a Being fits in a Targetable area, it is affected by it.*

VISION

Darkness causes those without a Sense capable of otherwise seeing to act as Blinded (p. 13).

Senses

Sense	Description
Allsight	Isn't fooled by illusions or invisibility.
Blindsight	It can see even if it is Blinded.
Darksight	It can see in darkness.
Echolocation	It can see by hearing.
Seismicsense	It can see anything touching ground it is touching.
Telepathy	It can see anything that can think.

Sample file

TIME

The following Terms are used for in-game time:

MEASURING TIME

Term	Approx. Time	Example Task
Round	10 Seconds	Move and take an Action.
Minute	6 Rounds	Fight, pick a lock.
Scene	10 Minutes	Search a room, a Breather.
Hour	6 Scenes	Burn out a torch, research.
Shift	6 Hours	Travel, Rest.
Day	4 Shifts	Recover from Fatigue.

Focusing

Focusing lets some effects stay active over time. Your Focus on an effect ends early if you drop it or Focus on another effect. If the effect is a Spell, other rules apply (p. 90).

MOVEMENT

Speed indicates how far something can Move on its Turn during Combat by walking. When using a battlemat for Combat, each square equals 5 feet (2 meters). Heroes will have Encounter, Crawl, and Travel Speeds, detailed in the following Chapters.

Falling

Falling onto a hard surface deals 1d6 per 10 feet fallen, to a maximum of 20d6 at 200 feet, landing Prone if the damage is taken.

Difficult Terrain

A Being spends 2 feet to Move 1 foot in Difficult Terrain. Some examples include:

- Climbable walls and squeezing in tight spots.
- Move in liquid deeper than half your height.
- Dense vegetation, rubble, and spiked rocks.

Speed Types

Speed Type	Description
Climb	Moves at full Speed while climbing. Beings without it are Vulnerable (p. 13) while climbing.
Cling	As Climb, but it can also Move on ceilings.
Fly	Can Move through the air at full Speed.
Phase	Can Move in occupied space, but is forced out to the nearest open space and takes 5 damage if it ends its Turn in occupied space.
Swim	Moves at full Speed while swimming. Beings without it are Vulnerable (p. 13) while in liquid deeper than half their height.

Riding Mounts

A Being can be Mounted if it is willing and the rider is at least one size smaller than them. Mounts are controlled by the rider.

RIDING ANIMALS & LAND TRANSPORT

Beast/Item	Travel Speed (mi/Shift)	Cost	Capacity
Animals			
Camel	10mi	10g	12 Slots
Elephant	8mi	20g	96 Slots
Horse, draft	6mi	4g	14 Slots
Horse, pony	6mi	3g 50s	10 Slots
Horse, riding	16mi	7g 50s	12 Slots
Horse, war	8mi	25g	16 Slots
Mule	6mi	3g	11 Slots
Cart		5g	50 Slots
Saddle & tack		2g 50s	+5 Slots
Wagon		15g	150 Slots

Sample file

POSITION

Size describes the space something occupies. A Being can't Move through a Foe's space without special Abilities unless allowed or if it is at least two sizes larger than the Foe.

Size

Size	Height	Occupies...
Small	<3 ft	1 unit*
Medium	3 - 10 ft	1 unit
Large	11 - 20 ft	1 - 4 units
Huge	21 - 40 ft	5 - 9 units
Giant	41 - 60 ft	10 - 16 units
Colossal	>60 ft	17+ units

* - Occupies this space, but doesn't prevent movement

Flanking

If at least two Allied Beings are Close to a Foe, the Foe is Vulnerable (p. 13) if it is no more than one size larger than the Allies.

Grappling

Physically causing a Target to be Restrained by using your body is Grappling. A Being that is physically restraining a Target has its Speed halved, unless the Target is smaller. The methods for resolving this differ for Heroes and Enemies:

Beginning a Grapple

Heroes: Attack Action and passed Brawl Check to begin the Grapple (p. 20).

Enemies: Those that employ grappling will do so as a Melee Attack that Restrains, forcing the Hero to defend (p. 14).

Ending a Grapple

Heroes: Action to try to end the Restrained Status as an Endure or Reflex Save, doing so on a pass and regaining half their Speed.

Enemies: It can use its Action to try and end the Restrained status, forcing the Hero to make a Brawl Check to maintain it. On a fail, the Restrained Status ends and the Being regains half their Speed.

REST

Rests require a Shift of light to no activity. You gain the benefits of the Rest if you are fed and rested, which restores your HP, Luck, and Mana to max. If your HP is already at max, the Rest instead removes 1 Fatigue.

LODGING EXPENSES

Quality	Cost/Day	Quality	Cost/Day
Horrible	1s	Comfortable	20s
Poor	2s	Luxury	40s
Modest	10s	Opulent	1g

Breather

Once per Shift, you can eat a Ration and drink some water to regain HP equal to your Might.

TEMPERATURE

Each Shift a Being spends in Bitter Cold or Sweltering Heat will require an Endure Save. On a fail, it gains 1 Fatigue.

Beings that are Immune to Cold damage automatically pass this Save in Bitter Cold. Similarly, Beings Immune to Fire damage automatically pass this Save in Sweltering Heat.

Extreme Temperatures

Extreme environments may shorten the time for which these Saves are made. For example, moving through the inside of a volcano could call for the Check against Sweltering Heat every Hour or Scene, being in a plane of elemental fire might call for it every Round.

Sample file

DAMAGING OBJECTS

Attacks against Objects that aren't equipped are assumed to hit. The Material an Object is made of determines Armor, and its HP is equal to its Size. You can assume flammable materials are Weak to Fire, stone is Weak to Blunt, etc.

Object Armor & HP

Material	Armor
Fragile: Cloth, paper, crystal, glass	0
Light: Hide, leather, wood	1
Medium: Bone, chain, stone, wood	2
Heavy: Metal	3
Dense: (+1) metal	4
Titanic: (+2) metal	5
Near-Indestructible: (+3) metal	6
Size	**HP**
Small	1
Medium	4
Large	16
Huge	50
Giant	200
Colossal	1000

PROGRESS CLOCKS

Progress Clocks track dynamic plot points. Events unfold as a clock advances. Recruitments may arrive, a portal may open up, etc. When moving from Scene to Scene, a Clock is likely advancing.



Shown here are a 4- and 6-segment Clock. 4-segment Clocks can be used for tracking Shifts during a day, and 6-segment Clocks for tracking evolving factors during a Crawl.

For example, the following Clocks could be used for a Quest where the party is hired to find a murderer. Let's say an invisible stalker killed a king. The court suspects the prince, and he will be hanged in 4 days unless his name is cleared.

We start tracking this on three 4-segment Clocks that track Shifts (segments) that pass over 3 Days (clocks). The party spends a Shift investigating, and the Clock now has one segment filled, making the Quest's Clock appear as:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
			The prince is hanged.

The party gets word from a drunkard that a blistering gust blew through the city streets the night of the murder, and hears about a court mage who was spurned by the king. They hear he headed north out of town and decide to Travel and track him down. They spend a Shift doing so, and the Clock now appears as:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
			The prince is hanged.

Sample file

STATUSES

Statuses may occur as a result of magic, features, attacks, or other effects.

Berserk — STATUS

It can't Focus, and it can only Attack, Move, and Rush. It doesn't make Morale Checks, and it can't be Frightened.

Blinded — STATUS

It can't see and is Vulnerable.

Burning — STATUS

A die roll indicates damage it takes at the start of its Turns, unless an appropriate action is taken to end it (such as dousing fire).

Charmed — STATUS

It can't willingly attack the charmer.

Confused — STATUS

Its Checks and Saves have Hinder, and Saves against its Actions have Favor.

Dazed — STATUS

It can't Focus or Move unless it uses an Action to do so.

Fatigued — STATUS

Fatigue is measured from 0 to 5. With 1 or more Fatigue, the following rules apply:

- Each Fatigue occupies an Item Slot.
- At 3 or more Fatigue, it can't Rush.
- At 5 Fatigue, it dies.

Frightened — STATUS

It has a -2 penalty to damage it deals.

Incapacitated — STATUS

The following rules apply:

- It can't Focus or use its Actions or Move.
- It fails all Might and Dexterity Checks.
- It is Vulnerable.

Invisible — STATUS

It can't be seen by normal senses and those that can't see it (p. 9) act as Blinded for Checks and Saves involving it.

Paralyzed — STATUS

It is Incapacitated and its Speed is 0.

Prone — STATUS

You can either drop or stand from Prone by using 10 feet of Speed. While Prone, the following rules apply:

- It can only move by crawling (2 feet of Speed for 1 foot of movement) and it can't Rush.
- It is Vulnerable for the purposes of Melee Attacks and Dodge Checks.

Restrained — STATUS

It is Vulnerable, and its Speed is 0.

Sickened — STATUS

The following rules apply:

- It has a -2 penalty to any healing it receives.
- Additional effects may be indicated in parenthesis, which apply while it is Sickened.

Suffocating — STATUS

Beings that aren't immune to Suffocating begin doing so after not breathing for 1 Minute.

Heroes: Each Round while Suffocating, roll a d8. If the result is equal to or greater than their Might, they gain 1 Fatigue.

Enemies: Each Round while Suffocating, they gain 1 Fatigue.

Unconscious — STATUS

The following rules apply:

- It is Blinded, Incapacitated, and Prone.
- Close Attacks Targeting it always Crit.

Vulnerable — STATUS

Its Attack Checks, and Saves against Attacks have Hinder. Attacks against it have Favor.

Sample file

ENCOUNTERS

Any meeting between the Heroes and NPCs is an Encounter. Time is fluid, but can turn to Combat when violence is (un)necessary.

You can use the following tables to determine something's Distance from the Party, as well as their initial Reaction to keep encounters varied.

NPC Distance

d6	Distance from You
1	Close
2 - 4	Near
5 - 6	Far, if possible

When needed, you can use this table to determine something's distance from you when first encountered.

NPC Reaction

2d6	Reaction
2 - 3	Violent, attacks immediately
4 - 6	Hostile, likely to attack
7 - 9	Untrusting, possibly confused
10 - 11	Neutral, open to leaving peacefully
12+	Friendly, willing to become an Ally

Roll 2d6 to determine an NPC's Reaction. You can also use the Reaction table when determining if you convince an Enemy to end Combat or other social Checks.

COMBAT

Combat begins when a Being physically harms another. Time is then measured in Rounds, which are broken up into Turns for each Group in the Combat. One Round lasts about 10 seconds.

Beings involved in the Combat will be placed in one of these Groups, getting an Action and Move during their Turn.

Turn Order: Heroes take the first Turn. If there is a risk of surprise, the Heroes must pass a Detect Check. Those that fail can't act on the Heroes' first Turn.

VARIANT RULE: CLOCKWISE TURN

Groups that would like more order to the Turn can choose to instead act clockwise from the GM.

Actions

You can take your Action at any point during the Turn, choosing from the Actions below, or in a way that isn't accounted for here.

Attack: Make an Attack Check with your Weapon, dealing its damage on a pass.
Cast: You cast a Spell (p. 90).
Hold: Use an Action or Move on an Off-Turn.
Jump: Spend half your Speed to leap up to that distance horizontally.
Rush: Gain Speed this Turn equal to your Speed.
Use: Interact with or use an Object.

Move

Your Speed is how far you can Move during your Turn, which you can break up as you like.

Defending

You can either Block or Dodge attacks if you aren't Incapacitated.

Block: Endure Save, which is Hindered if the attack is a Ranged attack.
Dodge: Reflex Save, which is Hindered if you are wearing Heavy Armor.

If the Save passes, you ignore one of the attack's highest rolled damage dice.

Ending Combat

Combat ends in a victory for the Heroes when all their Enemies are defeated, typically through one of the following means:

Death: Enemies are dead.
Surrender: Accepted surrender.
Flee: A side successfully Retreats.

Retreating

If a Group flees, they must spend their Action and Move doing so. Unless another Group is giving chase, the combat ends after this Turn.

Sample file

Running Enemies

In Guided play, GMs control Enemies. Enemies have a sequence of prioritized Actions and a Zone that describes how they use their Move (p. 110). Enemies also have a Morale score, as described below.

Zone

To determine how an Enemy acts during Combat, it is given a Zone:

Frontline: Moves Close for Melee Attacks
Midline: Moves Close to Attack, then Move to Near. If a Midliner is at half HP or lower, it acts as Backline.
Backline: Stays Far from opposing forces for Ranged Attacks and Casts.

Morale

Enemies make Morale Checks at the following times during a Combat:

- The first death in their Group.
- Their HP is at half or less, or half their Group is Incapacitated.

To check Morale, roll 2d6 and consult the Group's Leader's statblock. If the 2d6 result is higher than its Morale, the Group fails and either retreats or surrenders.

Action Gambit

A GM can always choose from the Actions available to the Enemy. However, their Actions are listed in order of priority for how they would typically use them. If the top-most Action isn't available, go down the list to the next one.

Multi Actions

Multi Actions allow it to take multiple Actions with its Action. If one of the Actions isn't available, it can still use the Multi Action option, but it doesn't use the unavailable one.

Recharge

Actions that Recharge do so after a certain amount of time. If a countdown die is indicated, this die is rolled each Round.

Statblock Reading Example

This Griffon's Zone is Frontline, and its Morale is an 8. The top Action is Multi-Attack, making it its prioritized Action if available. As a Frontliner, the Griffon will Move into Melee to use its Multi-Attack. It retreats on a Morale Check (2d6) of 9 or higher.

Griffon TL: 3.7
Large Cryptid

Hybrid creatures displaying both the head, wings, and forelegs of an eagle, and hind-quarters of a lion. Known to pick up horses and drop them for sport.

HD: 7 (31 HP) **Speed:** 30' (Fly 80')
Zone: Frontline **Morale:** 8 **# Appearing:** d4
Armor: 2 [as Chain]
Weak: Shock

Actions

Multi-Attack: 2×Claw and 1×Beak
Beak [Melee Attack]: 9 (2d8)
Claw [Melee Attack]: 2 (d4)

Sample file



ZONES

EXPLORATION

This chapter covers the rules for moving over larger distances for longer periods of time. You do not need to roleplay every single moment or detail everything your Hero does minute-by-minute, and the game will "fast forward" through mundane moments.

CRAWL

The Dungeon Crawl is named for the room-by-room "crawling" sequence. This is a small scope exploration phase, and the majority of where most campaigns will spend their playtime.

Time

Crawling is measured in Scenes. When you Move to Crawl, a Scene passes.

Progress Clocks

A Crawl Clock is a 6-segment Clock that measures Scenes. If using a Clock, one segment is filled when a Scene passes or the party makes a lot of noise. These also require a check for Random Encounters.

Movement

You can Move up to your Crawl Speed to an accessible Area during a Crawl if precise measurement is needed. Your Crawl Speed is equal to three times your base Speed.

Random Encounters

Anything that would fill a segment of a Progress Clock would also require a check for random encounters. These include the Scene changing, the Party making lots of noise, or failing a Skill Check out of Combat.

Break Down the Door

Follow Damage to Objects (p. 12). Without countermeasures, each Check attempt to break the door down makes a lot of noise, even on a passed Check.

Lockpicking

Lockpicking is a Finesse Check which also requires the Hero making the Check to have a lockpick or similar tool in-hand. On a fail, the lockpick is broken and it counts as having made a lot of noise.

Spot Hidden

When looking for anything that isn't in plain sight, you'll need to search during the Scene. If you spend this time searching in an area that has anything hidden in it (typically a 10' square area), you will find it.

Traps

Trap	Save	Damage & Effect
Blade	Reflex	d8
Cave-In	Reflex	3d6 and Restrained
Darts	Reflex	d6
Dread Wave	Will	Frightened (1 Hour, unless dispelled)
Electric Shock	Endure	d6 and Dazed (1 Round)
Flame	Reflex	Burning (Cd6)
Gas	Endure	Sickened (Cd6 damage)
Psychic Stun	Will	Paralyzed (1 Hour, unless dispelled)
Snare	Reflex	Restrained
Spikes	Reflex	d6 (×2 if falling)

Traps have an associated Save and Effect that those who fail the Save are subjected to. If a Trap is triggered, Heroes who aren't surprised by it can choose how they react. A helpful reaction may grant them Favor on the Save.

Lowest Luck

If it's ever unclear who may be Targeted by a Trap, default to the Hero(es) who have the lowest amount of Luck in their Luck Pool.

Sample file

TRAVEL

Journeying to far-off locations requires Travel. This is more common in long campaigns across vast lands than one shots, and is a large scope exploration phase of the game.

Time

During Travel, Time is measured in Shifts. When you Move to Travel, a Shift passes.

Progress Clocks

Travel Clocks are 4-segment Clocks that measure Shifts. One segment is filled when a Shift passes, which requires a check for Complications.

Limitations

Once you benefit from a Rest, you can Travel for two Shifts. After that, any Shift you Travel until you Rest again will give you 1 Fatigue.

Procedure

When Travelling, maps are easiest-measured on a Hex Grid, where each Hex represents 6 miles. Follow these steps when you Travel:

1. **Move:** The party appoints a Navigator who leads them when they Travel. The party determines their Pace and they Move into the Hex they travelled to.
2. **Complications:** Roll on the Complications table. Your Travel Pace may affect the Complication roll, as detailed below.
3. **Survey:** If adjacent Hexes to the new Hex have not been revealed, do so now.

Movement

Pace	Mult.	Complication Roll
Slow	×0.5	Add a d6, use two highest.
Normal	×1	Normal
Fast	×2	Add a d6, use two lowest.

To determine the amount of miles you can Move when you Travel per Shift at a Normal Pace, divide your Speed by 5. A Group can only Travel at the pace of its slowest member.

Your Travel Pace multiplies the distance you Move that Shift by the Multiplier (Mult.).

WATER TRAVEL

Vessel	Travel Speed (mi/Shift)	Cost	Capacity
Canoe	12mi	5g	5 Slots
Caravel	30mi	1000g	1000 Slots
Galley	24mi	3000g	3000 Slots
Keelboat	6mi	300g	300 Slots
Longship	30mi	1000g	1000 Slots
Rowboat	6mi	5g	30 Slots
Sailboat	30mi	1000g	1000 Slots
Warship	24mi	2500g	2500 Slots

Foraging

You can Forage while you Travel at a Slow Pace, as detailed on (p. 19).

Hazardous Lands

Biomes such as Jungles, Mountains, and Swamps halve the number of miles you can Move to Travel each Shift.

Complications

d66	Complication
11	**Hazard:** Group must pass Reflex Saves or take 2d6 damage (Avalance, Landslide, etc).
12	**Lost:** Navigator must pass a Survival Check or the group returns to the previous hex.
13	**Obscurement:** (Fog/Smoke/Sandstorm) Hinders sight-based Checks beyond Near for d6 Shifts.
14-15	**Storm:** This hex and all adjacent hexes are Difficult Terrain for Cd4 Shifts.
16	**Temperature:** (Sweltering Heat/Bitter Cold) in this hex and all adjacent for Cd4 Shifts.
21-66	No complication.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Instead of a Complication, you can choose to have a Random Enounter occur on a roll of 11-16. These will vary depending on the environment, and the GM can always choose the Encounter. Some Quests will feature their own Random Encounter table as well.

Sample file

DOWNTIME

Your downtime lets you prepare for the next outting, find new quests, establish a foothold in society, gather information, or just get wasted and wind up in a tavern brawl.

ACTIVITIES

These activities generally take a Shift to complete, but other Abilities may allow you to complete them sooner, or more efficiently.

Craft

Characters can use their downtime to make Items. Doing so requires Materials worth at least half the value of the Item and reasonable tools or an environment to make it.

Your Craft Difficulty sets the Value you can Craft per Shift on the following table. Multiple Shifts of work can be put into making an Item, which don't need to be consecutive.

CRAFT PER ACTIVITY VALUE

Difficulty	Value	Difficulty	Value
18 - 17	1s	10 - 9	5g
16 - 15	20s	8 - 7	7g 50s
14 - 13	50s	6	10g
12 - 11	2g 50s		

Scrapping: An Item can be scrapped for materials worth half the value of the Item.

Foraging

You can spend a Shift gathering food and Materials from the wilderness in environments that can provide them. You can also do so when you Travel at a Slow Pace.

When you do, make a Survival Check. On a pass, determine if you find Food or Materials:

Food: d6 Rations
Materials: (d6 × 5s) worth of Materials

Hunting

Anything you can harvest meat from gives Rations or Materials. The number of which equals its HP. For Materials, multiply this result by 5 to determine its value in silver. Harvesting can be done as part of a Scene.

Looking for Wild Game requires a Shift. When you do, make a Survival Check. On a pass, roll to see what Wild Game you discover. On a Crit, you can choose which Beast you find instead.

WILD GAME

d6	Beast	Rations per Beast
1	2d6 Wolf	9
2	d6 Fowl (as Hawk)	1
3	2d6 Vermin (as Rabbit)	1
4	d6 Deer	4
5	d6 Boar	13
6	d4 Cattle	18

Study

If you Study, you gain a Studied die which you can spend to gain Favor on a d20 roll you make in the next day. You must do so before the d20 roll resolves. You lose any unspent Studied dice after a day.

Additionally, you can change a choice offered by one of your Class Features when you Study (such as a Spell Known).

Sample file

HERO CREATION

Protagonists of the Story, Heroes are the main focus of any game of *Vagabond*. Hero creation is a four-step process:

1. Ancestry

d8	Ancestry	d8	Ancestry
1-5	Human	7	Elf
6	Dwarf	8	Halfling

Choose an Ancestry, which determines your Being Type, Size, and grants you Traits. You can roll d8 above instead.

2. Class

d66	Class	d66	Class
11-12	Alchemist	41-42	Magus
13-14	Barbarian	43-44	Merchant
15-16	Bard	45-46	Pugilist
21-22	Dancer	51-52	Revelator
23-24	Druid	53-54	Rogue
25-26	Fighter	55-56	Sorcerer
31-32	Gunslinger	61-62	Vanguard
33-34	Hunter	63-64	Witch
35-36	Luminary	65-66	Wizard

Choose a Class, which gives you Training and Features. You can roll d66 above instead.

3. Stats

d12	Stats	d12	Stats
1	5, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3	7	6, 6, 5, 3, 2, 2
2	5, 5, 5, 5, 3, 2	8	7, 4, 4, 4, 4, 2
3	6, 5, 4, 4, 4, 3	9	7, 4, 4, 4, 3, 3
4	6, 5, 5, 4, 3, 2	10	7, 5, 4, 3, 3, 2
5	6, 6, 4, 3, 3, 3	11	7, 5, 5, 2, 2, 2
6	6, 6, 4, 4, 3, 2	12	7, 6, 4, 2, 2, 2

Choose your Stats and assign them in any order. You can roll d12 above instead.

4. Gear

You start with 3g (300s) of Wealth to purchase your Gear. There are also Starting Packs you can choose from on (p. 75).

SKILLS & PASSIVES

The numbers that determine results of rolls are known as Stats. There are six Stats: Might, Dexterity, Awareness, Reason, Presence, and Luck. They are associated with Passives, Saves, Skills, and Weapons.

Might

Might is used for Max HP, Inventory Slots, Endure Saves, Brawl and Melee Checks.

Max HP — PASSIVE

Your Maximum Hit Points (Max HP) are equal to your Might × your Level. You regain lost HP when you Rest (p. 11), and by other means in-game.

Inventory Slots — PASSIVE

Your number of Inventory Slots is equal to (8 + Might). For more on Slots, see the Gear Chapter (p. 74). You can't carry any items that would exceed your maximum Slots.

Melee — SKILL

Attacking with Melee Weapons.

Brawl — SKILL

Exerting physical force. Used for Grapples, Shoves, and attacks with Brawl Weapons.

Attack: With Brawl Weapons (p. 76).
Grapples and Shoves: You can try to grapple or shove Beings that are your size or smaller.
Grapple: Grappling rules appear on (p. 11).
Shove: On a pass, you either shove it 5 feet or Prone. You must have a Brawl or Shield Weapon Equipped.

Sample file

Dexterity

Dexterity determines Speed, and is used for Reflex, Finesse, and Sneak Checks.

Speed — PASSIVE

DEX	Speed	Crawl	Travel
2 - 3	25'	75'	5mi
4 - 5	30'	90'	6mi
6 - 7	35'	105'	7mi

How far you can Move on solid ground. Your Speed refreshes at the start of your Turn.

Finesse — SKILL

Coordination and concealing your actions. Also used for thievery, and when attacking with Finesse Weapons.

Attack: With Finesse Weapons (p. 76).
Pickpocket: Check to steal or plant one unsecured Item of 1 Slot or less.
Lockpick: Check to pick a lock, which requires a lockpick (p. 17).

Sneak — SKILL

Concealing your location.

Stealth: Attempt to sneak up on a Being you are aware of. You can't do so with a torch or similar effect that sheds Light.

Awareness

Awareness is used for Reflex, Detect, Mysticism, and Survival Checks and Ranged Attacks.

Detect — SKILL

Reflexively sensing others.

Mysticism — SKILL

Understanding of the supernatural. Used by Druids, Luminaries, and Witches to Cast.

Survival — SKILL

Tracking and a knowledge of beasts, plants, and other aspects of nature.

Ranged — SKILL

Attacking with Ranged Weapons.



Reason

Reason is used for Will, Arcana, Craft, and Medicine Checks.

Arcana — SKILL

Application and knowledge of magic. Used by Magus and Wizards to Cast.

Craft — SKILL

Your skill to appraise and make Items. Difficulty with Craft determines the highest Value of items you can Craft (p. 19).

Medicine — SKILL

Education in non-magical healing.

Sample file

Presence

Presence is used for Will, Influence, Leadership, and Performance Checks.

Influence — SKILL

Social ability of coercion, deception, or negotiation. Used by Sorcerers to Cast.

Parley: Convince an Enemy to end hostilities.

Leadership — SKILL

Social motivation and diplomacy. Used by Revelators to Cast.

Command: Command those that wish to follow your orders.

Performance — SKILL

Cultural talent and ability to inspire awe.

Luck

Luck allows players to tip the scales of Fate.

Luck Pool

You have a pool of points of Luck equal to your Luck Stat, which you can spend as detailed below. You regain spent Luck when you Rest.

You can spend 1 Luck to do the following:

Advantage: Grant Favor on a d20 roll.
Fluke: Reroll an unresolved die you rolled.

VARIANT USE: PLOT ARMOR

For Solo/Co-Op play and Guided play without a healer, this variant use for Luck is recommended:

Plot Armor: Once per Round, if you are reduced to 0 HP, you can spend 1 Luck to regain d6 HP.

Misfortune and Chance

When the game needs to randomly determine what Hero is subjected to an effect, the Hero(s) with the lowest current Luck is typically subjected.



SAVES

Saves are Checks that represent your instincts and natural defenses against harm. The three Saves are Endure, Reflex, and Will.

Endure

Withstand physical harm, such as poisons, extreme heat, restraints, and petrification.

Endure Difficulty = (20 - (MIT × 2))

Reflex

Evade physical harm, such as explosions, quick traps, slipping grasp, and dragon's breath.

Reflex Difficulty = (20 - (DEX + AWR))

Will

Resist mental harm, such as charms, dreadful terrors, psychic enthrallment, and your resolve.

Will Difficulty = (20 - (RSN + PRS))

Sample file

ANCESTRIES

Ancestries grant Traits shared by every member of that Ancestry, such as their Type and Size. Not every world is home to all of these Ancestries, and the GM has the final say in what Ancestries are a part of the world they have envisioned.

Traits

Traits determine your Being type, determine your Size, and grant you Abilities. These work in-conjunction with the Features you will gain from your Class and Perks.

HUMAN

Humans are social beings that tend to be central in the development of major, diverse melting pot civilizations. Their tendency to develop wide, sprawling empires and a huge pool of cultures makes them extremely adaptable adventurers.

Human Traits ANCESTRY

Type: Humanlike **Size:** Medium

Knack: You gain a Perk and a Training.

Strong Potential: Increase one of your Stats by 1, but no higher than 7.

Sample file

ANCESTRY LORE

Each Ancestry gives an idea for what their traditional representations in fantasy have been. Feel free to use this lore, or replace it entirely with your own vision for your worlds. It has no bearing on any mechanical weight for the Ancestry, and is mostly provided as roleplay inspiration. *Vagabond* has no canon, no default setting, and no expectation on how Ancestries are represented in your game.





Sample profile

DWARF

Dwarves are built from sterner stuff, with some myths saying dwarves aren't born, they're forged. These myths speak of gods sculpting the dwarves shortly after the formation of mountains, granting them iron wills, silver tongues, and golden hearts.

They are an industrious people who hail from some of the most extreme environments. If dwarves discover rare ore, they don't look for a nearby river and suitable land for farming; they'll found the town right on the biggest vein they can find and figure the rest out later.

Dwarf Traits — ANCESTRY

Type: Humanlike **Size:** Medium

Darksight: You are not Blinded by Dark.

Sturdy: You have a +1 bonus on Saves against being Frightened, Sickened, or Shoved.

Tough: You have a bonus to your max HP equal to your Level.

ELF

Elves are known for their tall height, ethereal beauty, and inquisitive passion to witness awe. This passion embodies itself in their clothing, language, arts, and cuisine, as elves seek to make every moment one worth savoring. Of all the people that inhabit the world, it is likely none other lives as peacefully and permissively with the fae, fauna, and flora as the elves.

Elf Traits — ANCESTRY

Type: Fae **Size:** Medium

Ascendancy: You are Trained in a Skill from either Arcana, Mysticism, Influence, or in Ranged Attacks.

Elven Eyes: You have Favor on sight-based Detect Checks.

Naturally Attuned: You know a Spell and can Cast it with a Skill of your choice.



HALFLING

Plucky, hill-dwelling folk of the shire. Halflings are known to live life to the fullest, rise to any challenge, and bask even in their failures. They are fearless, quick to respond, and always capable of turning things in their favor.

Halflings settle on rolling hills, with food at the highest elevation, then homes, markets, and finally waste management at the lowest. It helps reduce the damage of floods, and keeps temperatures comfortable all year.

Halfling Traits — ANCESTRY

Type: Humanlike **Size:** Medium

Nimble: You have a 5 ft bonus to Speed and ignore Hinder on Reflex Saves if you aren't Incapacitated.

Squat: You can move through areas occupied by other Beings.

Tricksy: When you regain Luck from a Rest, you gain 1 additional Luck.

DRAKEN

Resembling humanoid dragons, Draken are relatives of the terrifying dragons of legend. Their scales come in a variety of brilliant colors, their maws house fanged teeth that often serve as a serrated clamp, and their fingers resemble the talonlike claws of dragons.

Draken Traits — ANCESTRY

Type: Cryptid **Size:** Medium

Breath Attack: You can make a 15-foot Cone breath attack. When you do, make an Endure or Will Save. On a pass, this attack deals 2d6!. Afterward, you can't use this Ability until you Rest or take 1 Fatigue to do so again.

Scale: You have a +1 bonus to Armor Rating.

Draconic Resilience: You take half damage from a source of your choice from either Acid, Cold, Fire, or Shock.

Sample File





GOBLIN

Havoc wagers known to delight in chaos, goblins are smaller humanoids of a typically green, yellow, grey, or bluish skin color. This instinctual delight for chaos often puts them at-odds with the codes and laws of other societies, but goblin ingenuity can be an indispensable asset.

Goblin Traits ANCESTRY
Type: Cryptid **Size:** Medium

Darksight: You are not Blinded by Dark.
Nimble: You have a 5 ft bonus to Speed and ignore Hinder on Reflex Saves if you aren't Incapacitated.
Scavenger: You have Favor on Endure Saves against being Sickened.

ORC

Mutant nightkin that take on a variety of appearances. Some with snouts and tusks, or fur and horns, or those with calloused and verdigris skin. They typically settle in close-knit tribes where "might is right", and have been known to establish themselves as commanders over goblin warbands.

Orc Traits ANCESTRY
Type: Cryptid **Size:** Medium

Darksight: You are not Blinded by Dark.
Beefy: You make Saves against being Grappled or Shoved with Favor, and have Favor on Checks to Grapple or Shove.
Hulking: You have a +2 bonus to Item Slots.

Sample file

CLASSES

Heroes take on an archetype, called a Class. Classes grant Training and Features, and provide a guide for how these Heroes best perform in Combat. You will gain Levels in your chosen Class, which grant you new and enhanced Features. Features may grant Magic or a Perk, both of which are detailed later in this book.

LEVELING UP

Your advancements as a Hero are signified with a Level in your Class. Each time you gain a Level, you'll gain each of the following:

- Your Max HP increases (p. 20).
- New and improved Class Features.
- On Even Levels, increase a Stat by 1, to a max of 7.
- On Odd Levels after Level 1, you gain one Perk as shown in the Class table.

Leveling Methods

There are two methods to determine when Heroes gain a Level; either the XP Questionnaire or Destiny.

XP Questionnaire

After each session, ask each of these questions and mark 1 XP for each "yes" you can give.

- Did you complete a Quest?
- Did you Fail and allow the Fail to resolve?
- Did you pass a Hindered Check?
- Did you make a discovery?
- Did you loot at least 50g of treasure?

Destiny

The GM may alternatively create a path for leveling, called a Destiny. A Destiny is 9 Milestones that mark major progressions in the Story. Each time a Milestone is completed, each of the Heroes gains a level.

DESTINY EXAMPLE

1. Clear out the abandoned mage's tower, discovering the macguffin for beat 2.
2. Close the wild portal, foiling the mage from beat 1's plans and gain knowledge of how to dimension hop for beat 3.
3. Uncover a plot to assassinate the future king in the past, requiring the portal from beat 2, and locking the Heroes in the past for beat 4.
4. Defeat the rampaging t-rex.
5. Seek out a way back to the present, eventually finding the medusa that will petrify the party until they are back to their original time.

Level Pacing

Pace	XP/Level	Est. Campaign Length
Quick	5 per Level	2 to 5 Months
Normal	5 × next Level	5 to 12 Months
Epic	7 × next Level	1 to 2 Years
Saga	10 × next Level	2+ Years

The GM sets the pace at which you gain Levels. The above table provides Pace examples, and Estimated Campaign Lengths to reach 10th Level with Weekly sessions.

Starting at Level 0

You can choose to start at Level 0, where you are a lowly vagabond who hasn't quite experienced the call to adventure. In doing so, follow these guidelines:

- Choose your Ancestry, Stats, and Gear.
- For Max HP, treat Level 0 as Level 1.
- Don't take a Class until Level 1.

Sample file


sample tile
ALCHEMIST

ALCHEMIST

> *Why respect knights when my potions can do anything that you can?*
>
> - Justin Kuritzkes, *Potion Seller*

Often sequestered in a lab, alchemists study the essence of creation. They are as curious as they are resourceful, and always have "just the thing for this."

Iconic Alchemists

- The Colorman, *Sacré Bleu*
- Diablo, *Marvel Comics*
- Dr. Jeckyll, *Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde*
- Tessa Cade, *Defy the Night*

Playing Alchemist

The alchemist is a low defense, high damage and utility blaster. It's recommended you stay Far from Enemies to use alchemical items.

Action: Use (Craft & Attack)
Move: Backline
Starting Pack: Alchemist or Assassin
Key Stat: Reason
Complexity: ★★★★☆

Training

Weapons: –
Skills: Craft and 4 others

Class Features

Level	Features	- Formulae - Known	Value
1st	Alchemy, Catalyze	4	50s
2nd	Eureka	4	1g
3rd	Perk	5	1g 50s
4th	Potency	5	2g
5th	Perk	6	2g 50s
6th	Mix	6	3g
7th	Perk	7	3g 50s
8th	Big Bang	7	4g
9th	Perk	8	4g 50s
10th	Prima Materia	8	5g

Alchemy — FEATURE

Alchemist: 1st Level

You can attack with alchemical items using Craft.

Formulae: Choose 4 alchemical items (p. 84) with a value no higher than (your Alchemist Level × 50s). You only need to provide 5s of materials to Craft these items and have Alchemy Tools equipped.

You learn to Craft 1 other alchemical item this way every 2 Levels in this Class hereafter.

Catalyze — FEATURE

Alchemist: 1st Level

You gain the Deft Hands Perk (p. 68), and you can Craft alchemical items with the Use Action.

Eureka — FEATURE

Alchemist: 2nd Level

You gain a Studied die (p. 19) when you Crit on a Craft Check.

Potency — FEATURE

Alchemist: 4th Level

The damage and healing dice of your alchemical items can explode.

Mix — FEATURE

Alchemist: 6th Level

You can take the Use Action to combine two alchemical items together, causing their effects to both occur when you Use the combined item. This combined item lasts for the Round, then goes inert.

Big Bang — FEATURE

Alchemist: 8th Level

You gain a d6 bonus to the damage and healing of your alchemical items, and they can explode on a roll of their two highest values.

Prima Materia — FEATURE

Alchemist: 10th Level

Once per Day, you can use your Action or skip your Move to Craft an alchemical item with a value as high as 10g without materials.

Sample file


sample file
BARBARIAN

BARBARIAN

Hatred outlives the hateful.

- Brian Tinsman, *Rancor flavor text (Magic the Gathering)*

Primal warriors that fight with the power of unbridled anger. The legends speak of their kills almost as their own unique deeds, using the barbarian's name as a past-tense verb.

Iconic Barbarians

- Brock Samson, *The Venture Bros*
- Conan, *Conan the Barbarian series*
- Guts, *Berserk*
- Logen Ninefingers, *First Law Trilogy*

Playing Barbarian

The barbarian is a medium-high defense bruiser. Stick to an Enemy's face, and hit them very hard.

Action: Attack (Melee)
Move: Frontline
Starting Pack: Gladiator or Warrior
Key Stat: Might
Complexity: ★★☆☆☆

Training

Weapons: Melee
Skills: Brawl and 3 from either Detect, Influence, Leadership, Mysticism, or Survival

Class Features

Level	Features
1st	Rage, Wrath
2nd	Aggressor
3rd	Perk
4th	Fearmonger
5th	Perk
6th	Mindless Rancor
7th	Perk
8th	Bloodthirsty
9th	Perk
10th	Rip and Tear

Rage — FEATURE
Barbarian: 1st Level

While Berserk and wearing Light Armor or no Armor, you reduce damage you take by 1 per damage die, and your attack damage dice are one size larger and can explode.

Further, you can go Berserk after you take damage or as part of making an attack. You remain Berserk this way for 1 minute, unless you end it (no Action) or go Unconscious.

Wrath — FEATURE
Barbarian: 1st Level

You gain the Interceptor Perk (p. 69), and can make its attack against an Enemy that makes a Ranged Attack, Casts, or that damages you or an Ally.

Aggressor — FEATURE
Barbarian: 2nd Level

You have a 10 foot bonus to Speed during the first Round of Combat, and having 3 or more Fatigue doesn't prevent you from taking the Rush Action.

Fearmonger — FEATURE
Barbarian: 4th Level

When you kill an Enemy, every Near Enemy with HD lower than your Level becomes Frightened until the end of your next Turn.

Mindless Rancor — FEATURE
Barbarian: 6th Level

You can't be Charmed, Confused, or compelled to act against your will.

Bloodthirsty — FEATURE
Barbarian: 8th Level

Your attacks against Beings that are missing any HP are Favored, and you can sense them within Far as if by Blindsight.

Rip and Tear — FEATURE
Barbarian: 10th Level

While Berserk, you reduce damage you take by 2 per damage die, rather than 1, and you gain a +1 bonus to each die of damage you deal.

Sample file



sample file

BARD

> *Bards were terrible at keeping secrets. They insisted on putting them to music.*
>
> – Tanya Huff, *Sing the Four Quarters*

Heralds of the awe-inspiring beauty of creation. While the painter and sculptor decorate space, a Bard decorates time.

Iconic Bards

- Edward Chris von Muir, *Final Fantasy IV*
- Jaskier, *The Witcher series*
- Kvothe, *The Kingkiller Chronicles*
- Sylvando, *Dragon Quest 11*

Playing Bards

The bard is a low/mid-defense, high support class with a focus on optimizing your Group's d20 rolls. It's recommended that you avoid melee on most Bard builds.

Action: Virtuoso
Move: Midline/Backline
Starting Pack: Musician
Key Stat: Presence
Complexity: ★★☆☆☆

Training

Weapons: –
Skills: Performance and 4 others

Class Features

Level	Features
1st	Virtuoso, Well-Versed
2nd	Song of Rest
3rd	Perk
4th	Starstruck
5th	Perk
6th	Bravado
7th	Perk
8th	Awe-Inspiring
9th	Perk
10th	Encore

Virtuoso — FEATURE

Bard: 1st Level

During Combat, you can use your Action or skip your Move to perform with a Musical Instrument you have Equipped. When you do, your Allies that can hear you gain Favor on certain rolls of your choice until your next Turn:

Inspiration: Healing rolls (as d6 bonus)
Resolve: Saves
Valor: Attack or Cast Checks

Well-Versed — FEATURE

Bard: 1st Level

You ignore Prerequisites for Perks, and take a Perk of your choice now.

Song of Rest — FEATURE

Bard: 2nd Level

During a Breather while you aren't Incapacitated, you and your Allies gain a Studied die and regain additional HP equal to (your Presence + your Bard Level).

Starstruck — FEATURE

Bard: 4th Level

When you perform Virtuoso, you can choose a Near Enemy who hears the performance and make a Performance Check. If you pass, you can choose one of the following Statuses that affects it for Cd4 Rounds: Berserk, Charmed, Confused, Frightened.

Bravado — FEATURE

Bard: 6th Level

Your Will Saves can't be Hindered while you aren't Incapacitated, and you can ignore effects that rely on you hearing them to be affected (such as a banshee's scream).

Awe-Inspiring — FEATURE

Bard: 8th Level

Your Virtuoso now grants two Favor.

Encore — FEATURE

Bard: 10th Level

Your Starstruck Feature can now affect all Near Enemies.

Sample file



Sample file

DANCER

She moves abstract just like a shadow dancing on the edge, like a storm cloud passing overhead, hypnotizing me.

– Dillinger Escape Plan, *One of Us is the Killer*

Practitioners of the alluring art of dance. They have a flair for enlivening their audience, drawing attention, and giving awe-inspiring shows.

Iconic Dancers

- Apsalar, *Malazan Book of the Fallen*
- Azura, *Fire Emblem Fates*
- Sandilene fa Toren, *The Circle Opens*

Playing Dancer

The dancer is a low-defense support with a focus on action efficiency. Grant Actions through Step Up, as your main offenses will occur when you Crit on Reflex Saves.

Action: Step Up
Move: Midline
Starting Pack: Courtesan or Musician
Key Stat: Dexterity
Complexity: ★★☆☆☆

Training

Weapons: –
Skills: Finesse and Performance, and 2 from either Brawl, Influence, or Sneak

Class Features

Level	Features
1st	Fleet of Foot, Step Up
2nd	Evasive
3rd	Perk
4th	Don't Stop Me Now
5th	Perk
6th	Choreographer
7th	Perk
8th	Flash of Beauty
9th	Perk
10th	Double Time

Fleet of Foot — FEATURE

Dancer: 1st Level

You gain the Treads Lightly Perk (p. 73), and the roll for you to Crit on Reflex Saves is reduced by an amount equal to (your Dancer Level divided by 4, round up).

Step Up — FEATURE

Dancer: 1st Level

Once per Turn, you can use your Action to perform an enlivening dance. Doing so allows you to roll a second d20 on Reflex Saves until the start of your next Turn and use the higher result, and it gives one Ally of your choice that sees you a second Action this Turn.

Evasive — FEATURE

Dancer: 2nd Level

While you aren't Incapacitated, you ignore Hinder on Reflex Saves and you ignore two of a Dodged attack's damage dice on a passed Save, rather than one.

Don't Stop Me Now — FEATURE

Dancer: 4th Level

Your Speed is not affected by Difficult Terrain and you have Favor on Saves against being Paralyzed, Restrained, or moved.

Choreographer — FEATURE

Dancer: 6th Level

When you use your Step Up Feature, the Ally gains Favor on the first Check they make with the Action you give them, and you both gain a 10 foot bonus to Speed for the Round.

Flash of Beauty — FEATURE

Dancer: 8th Level

When you Crit on a Save, you can take two Actions, rather than one.

Double Time — FEATURE

Dancer: 10th Level

You can Target two Allies with your Step Up Feature, rather than one.

Sample file


sample file
12/19/23
DRUID

DRUID

Why do birds suddenly appear,
every time you are near?

– Karen Carpenter, *Close to You*

Keepers of the wilderness, druids are mystics of nature that are adopted into beast-kind.

Iconic Druids

- Beast Boy, *DC Comics*
- Beorn, *Lord of the Rings series*
- Frank Zhang, *Percy Jackson series*
- Poison Ivy, *DC Comics*

Playing Druid

The druid is a mid-defense, mixed support and control class with a focus on Casting Spells and shapechanging to powerful beasts.

Action: Cast or Beast Attacks
Move: Midline
Starting Pack: Hermit
Key Stat: Awareness
Complexity: ★★★☆☆

Training

Weapons: –
Skills: Mysticism, and 3 from either Brawl, Craft, Detect, Medicine, or Survival

Class Features

Level	Features	Mana	Spells
1st	Primal Mystic, Feral Shift	4	4
2nd	Tempest Within	8	4
3rd	Perk	12	5
4th	Innervate	16	5
5th	Perk	20	6
6th	Ancient Growth	24	6
7th	Perk	28	7
8th	Savagery	32	7
9th	Perk	36	8
10th	Force of Nature	40	8

Primal Mystic — FEATURE

Druid: 1st Level

You can Cast Spells using Mysticism.

Spells: You learn 4 Spells, one of which must always be Polymorph. You learn 1 other Spell every 2 Levels in this Class hereafter.

Mana: Your Maximum Mana is equal to (4 × your Druid Level), and the highest amount of Mana you can spend to Cast a Spell is equal to (Awareness + half your Druid Level, round up). You regain spent Mana when you Rest.

Feral Shift — FEATURE

Druid: 1st Level

You get the Shapechanger Perk (p. 72) and you can take an Action granted by the Beast you turn into as a part of the Cast Action.

Tempest Within — FEATURE

Druid: 2nd Level

You reduce Cold, Fire, and Shock damage you take by (half your Druid Level) per damage die.

Innervate — FEATURE

Druid: 4th Level

You can use your Action to give a Close Being some of your Mana, or to end one Status affecting it from either Charmed, Confused, Frightened, or Sickened. This can be yourself.

Ancient Growth — FEATURE

Druid: 6th Level

While you Focus on a Casting of Polymorph that only Targets yourself, you can Focus one additional Spell. Further, your attacks with Beasts you Polymorph into count as (+1) Relics. This bonus increases every 6 Druid Levels hereafter, to a max of (+3).

Savagery — FEATURE

Druid: 8th Level

While you are polymorphed into a Beast, you have a +1 bonus to Armor.

Force of Nature — FEATURE

Druid: 10th Level

If you are reduced to 0 HP, roll a d10. If the result is equal to or lower than your Awareness, you are instead at 1 HP.

Sample file