



 **RUBY
RADIANCE**

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CREDITS

RUBY RADIANCE 6E

DRAMA HIJINKS ADVENTURE

If you are reading this book, you have heard about tabletop roleplaying games and Dungeons and Dragons through cultural osmosis, and you were curious. It seems like good old fun.

But then you checked it on the internet and damn, that is quite a steep price for entry. And one of you needs to buy even more material? And be something they call a Dungeon Master? And study three whole books? Seems harsh on your time and wallet. All you wanted to do is to be a gay elf with your friends.

There has to be another way to check this Dungeons and Dragons thing.

We intend this book to be just that: an accessible, inclusive entry into the world of roleplaying games. A budget, drama-focused game that may touch the same subjects as that game of dragons and dungeons.

A gateway into a fantastical world of Drama, Hijinks and Adventure.

This will be a bit different from playing Dungeons and Dragons or similar roleplaying games.

We focus in replicating the experiences that may have got you interested. The gameplay you may have experienced on *Critical Role*, *Stranger Things*, *The Adventure Zone*, *Dice Funk*, or any other new media depiction of the hobby.

We hope to **get you to play.**

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THIS GAME IS ABOUT...

A simple, accessible, game about fantasy heroics that requires little investment of money and time.

Roleplaying for an audience and/or drama that emulates your favorite shows and the games they play.

The type of dungeoning and dragoning your favorite streamers and podcasters indulge on.

Big damn character-driven drama and a constant storm of hijinks and heroic opportunities.

Associated with Hasbro, any of its subsidiary companies or any of the brands/intellectual properties they own and manage.

It is not Dungeons and Dragons.

Not part of the OSR (Old School Renaissance). It breaks many of their principles in order to stick closer to the principles of new media rather than old-school roleplaying.

A proper reflection on the capitalist, imperialist/colonizing elements of certain mainstream fantasy games. We tried our best to remove these elements from the text, but we are far from satisfied with the results; they are too ubiquitous and unchallenged on most of the touchstones we seek to emulate. We strive to do better; others actually do so: please support their work.

THIS GAME IS NOT ABOUT...

PLAYING THE GAME

The game is, at its core, a conversation back and forth between players. Of course, conversations don't often flow in a fair and orderly manner: people talk out of turn, others are more comfortable, and privileged voices tend to be louder. The rules of the game aim to make the conversation more manageable and focus on the story of drama and hijinks you came together to tell.

It is easy to get overwhelmed. If at some point you are unsure, take a break and return to the conversation:

Tell the group what you want to see happen.

Ask a lot of questions, with additional follow-up questions.

Listen to the most quiet voices.

What do you need to play

This book.

Character sheets, index cards and/or other means of note taking.

A bunch of d20s (20-sided dice, it is the weird big lumpy dice of all the memes). You will want at least two different colors*.

Players. One of them will be a special type of player, responsible for playing the world. This player is the Ringmaster (RM if you are feeling nasty).

*You can use conventional dice, also known as d6s. More on that later.

Play Cycle

Every time an adventure resents itself, your group starts a new episodic story, an arc. We call these **Rings**.

You play through that Ring for a few game sessions, progressing towards the overarching seasonal plot, which we call a **Campaign**.

We will talk about play structure on the section about being the **Ringmaster**: the player responsible for managing the game world.

Start a new adventure

Go on an adventure.

Accumulate Drama and Hijinks.

Return to your adventuring base.

Level up.

Go on downtime scenes.

Confront your drama.

Get new toys.

Start a new adventure.

BEFORE YOU START PLAYING

Read the game Principles

Establish safety and tone through
Ground Rules

Make characters as group

BEFORE YOU START PLAYING...

PRINCIPLES

For All Players

Create interesting challenges.

Get involved in each others stories.

Be awesome when the spotlight falls on you.

Turn the spotlight towards others.

Make this history your own.

Embrace Hijinks and Drama.

Push your Drive.



For The Ringmaster

Portray a world of high adventure and drama.

Be a fan of the characters.

Create problems not issues.

Listen and ask questions.

Delegate responsibility.



GROUND RULES



There are no problems if you don't get the other rules of this book right, or if you tinker and adapt them; however, these rules are not optional or supplementary: these are the most important rules for playing this game.

Create Trust and Safety

Make sure everyone you are playing with is someone you trust and feel safe. If you would be uncomfortable socializing with them in any other setting, you should not play with them. If you are playing in a public setting, with some people you don't know and people that you unfortunately know all too well, make clear the level of vulnerability and intimacy you will engage with. Comfort and safety are the most important elements of the game; without that you cannot have a good cooperative storytelling experience. The game is supposed to be fun for everyone.

Everyone at the table should try to communicate whenever they are uncomfortable and check on each other constantly. Ask questions, state clearly what you want from a scene, and

brief and debrief after any scene and/or before moving on.

Intermissions and Breaks

An intermission would be a commercial break, a zone of money, a little jingle between scenes or any form of a call to action. The game evokes similar breaks in the action, with intermissions. You can use the restroom, go for snacks, or keep a finger on the pulse of the game and discuss how to handle content safely. It is very important to remind yourselves that anyone can call for an intermission, in part of its most important function: to take a break and decide how y'all going to handle a particular scene bordering on the uncomfortable. Always err on the side of safety, call an intermission and after the break, consider one of the following options:

Ask for another player to change something on the scene. Or **rewind.** Or **replay it constantly.** Just say what you want to change and change it. No negotiation, no compromise, no prying questions.

Ask the Ringmaster to change the current scene. Either cut to another scene, fast-forward, fade it into the background or even change the entire setup. The Ringmaster should always integrate player feedback during the game; this becomes their sole priority once safety concerns have been raised.

Take a long break. If you are uncomfortable, leave. Everyone else must be as accommodating as possible. You can leave for the duration of a scene, or a session, or the game altogether. The other players should take a break, reconvene, stop or continue the game. If you continue the game without the absent player, do so with as much compassion and respect as possible.

Content and Consent

When players get together to play a game, there is an assumption that they want this, an implicit consent to be part of the game. They want drama, they want hijinks, they want adventures. But more often than not, the "this" that they want is not so clear, or there are degrees. You may expect some violence, but have limits to the degree it dominates the game. One player may be okay with violence, but prefer toned down descriptions and more fade to black. While other player is not okay with violence enacted to and by them, but has no problems with it being something other players engage with.

The content you want in your shared game should be part of the conversation before the game. Hold a "writers' room" meeting, where the Ringmaster presents a short list of content and themes they have been tinkering with. Players take turns adding some content they would enjoy exploring during the game.

After they have compiled a list, pass it around. If you are not clear how something on the list can be interpreted, read it aloud and let everyone say how they interpret that content. Then, make a Yes and No column next to the themes.

Keep the list rotating among players.

If there is something that you don't want to see at the table at all, **scratch it.** It will NOT be a part of your story.

If you think it should happen off-camera, and the game should fade to black when approached, **write F next to it.**

If you do not want to be involved on that content, **write your name on the "No" column.**

If not only you want to engage with the content, but want it to be a focal theme or point of your plots, **write your name on the "Yes" column.**

The content and consent list should be kept available to anyone at all the time. We treat it as an open, living document that can and should be edited at any point. **Whenever you change something to the list, inform the Ringmaster and other players.**

Consent and Content

YES NO

~~Animal Violence~~

~~Sexual Violence~~

Religious conflict

Claude
Isabelle

Dimitri

≠ Torture & Gore

Sandra

Natural Disasters

Priyanka

CHARACTER CREATION

Every player but the Ringmaster has a character they play. Each character has:

Attributes, an Attainment and an Approach to adventuring.

An Ancestry

A Drive and Iconic Item

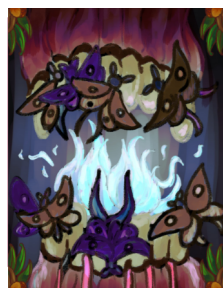
Magic and Level

Attainment

Your Attainment is a general term to your combined abilities, how you have survived and proven yourself on the road and as an adventurer. There are many paths as there are adventurers.

Each Attainment offers **three skills**. Two are general groups of abilities in which your character excels—**Attributes**. The third skill is an **Approach**, an ability that changes how you interact with the rules of the game.

Attributes

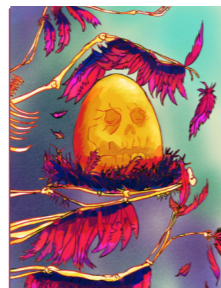


Strength

Feats of might, brute force and direct violence.

Dexterity

Speed or precision, and ability to avoid direct violence.

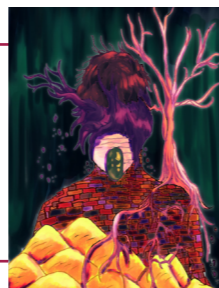


Constitution

Endurance, stamina and ability to resist violence.

Intelligence

You know that it is raining.

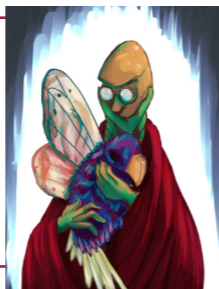


Wisdom

You know that you should get an umbrella.

Charisma

You know that you can share the umbrella.



Approaches

Weapon Mastery

You may reroll any number of light dice once per Combat roll.

Unbridled Fury

You may add two dice (one light, one dark) to any Combat you take part on.

Unearthed Lore

You have 3 schools of magic. Start with an active school. Change schools when rolling 1 or 20 on Weak dice and Face Challenge.

Majestic Patronage

You have two schools of magic. Whenever you gain Drama, you may bargain with your patron for a single-use of ANY spell.

Righteous Smite

You may reroll any number of dark dice once per Combat roll.

Inspiring Mockery

You can add a dark dice to a Face Challenge or Combat roll in which you are not involved.

Sneaky Assault

You do not have to give your Weak light dice to another character when retreating from Combat. You can add a dark dice to the Combat pool to rejoin Combat.

Divine Command

You have two schools of magic. Whenever you cast a spell on someone with Drama 5, your deity makes a request of them. If they accept, reduce their Drama by 1.

Despondent Leadership

After someone gain Drama during Combat, you may remove their Weak Dice from the Combat roll.

Natural Communion

You have two schools of magic. Whenever you cast a spell or gain Drama, you may shift into an animal form.

Attainments

Here are some example Attainments using the Approaches on this page. Feel free to create new ones!

Fighter Skilled in *Strength, Wisdom, Weapon Mastery*

Barbarian Skilled in *Strength, Constitution, Unbridled Fury*

Wizard Skilled in *Intelligence, Wisdom, Unearthed Lore*

Warlock Skilled in *Charisma, Constitution, Majestic Patronage*

Paladin Skilled in *Strength, Charisma, Righteous Smite*

Bard Skilled in *Charisma, Dexterity, Inspiring Mockery*

Rogue Skilled in *Dexterity, Intelligence, Sneaky Assault*

Cleric Skilled in *Wisdom, Charisma, Divine Command*

Warlord Skilled in *Strength, Intelligence, Despondent Leadership*

Druid Skilled in *Wisdom, Constitution, Natural Communion*

CHARACTER CREATION

Ancestry

Beyond your Attainment, you also have your **Ancestry**—your background, what you inherited, what you carry with you. It includes previous occupations, important life events and the fruits of a previous generations' work.

Each of them gives you an additional skill.

You may pick from this list, roll or create your own. Backgrounds from other *Rooted in Trophy* games can be used as Ancestries.



- 1 **Daring Pirate** (skilled in Swashbuckling)
- 2 **Guild Journeyman** (skilled in Craftsmanship)
- 3 **Folk Hero** (skilled in Solidarity)
- 4 **Communal Farmer** (skilled in Cooperation)
- 5 **Veteran Mercenary** (skilled in Extortion)
- 6 **Elven Emissary** (skilled in Diplomacy)
- 7 **Dwarven Teamsters** (skilled in Packing)
- 8 **Goblin Muledriver** (skilled in Animals)
- 9 **Orcish Courier** (skilled in Inscription)
- 10 **Noble Scion** (skilled in Vainglory)
- 11 **Cult Acolyte** (skilled in Ritual)
- 12 **Confidence Artist** (skilled in Deception)
- 13 **Roguish Outcast** (skilled in Streetwise)
- 14 **Regional Performer** (skilled in Entertainment)
- 15 **Lone Wolf** (skilled in Forsaken Lore)
- 16 **Wandering Outsider** (skilled in Pathfinding)
- 17 **Learned Sage** (skilled in Conventional Wisdom)
- 18 **River-Folk Child** (skilled in Traveling)
- 19 **Devoted Agent** (skilled in Spycraft)
- 20 **Survivor** (skilled in Enduring)

Drive

People with available choices don't become adventurers. You had to take this life, because it is the only way you can fulfill your Drive.

Most people belong to communes, social clubs, tribes, families and guilds. These provide shelter, food and healthcare, as well as other essential amenities. Anything bigger requires collaboration and drawing from the labor of one or more communities, with individual consumption compensated with your character's work: that's a **Drive**.

You dream big. You want something that requires so much consumption, such large collaborations and the work of multiple communities. A lifetime of conventional, safe work would not be enough to make up for this. You have to become an adventurer if you want to make your dream real.

Your Drive is what sets you on this road. Each Drive gives you one last **skill**, something you learned on its pursuit. You also have an **Iconic Item**—a treasure your community entrusted to you out of respect for your sacrifice and determination.

Feel free to create your own Drives, skills and Iconic Item. You can adapt Drives from *Rooted in Trophy* content by designing the associated skill and Iconic Item.



1 **Start a mystery cult** (Miracles; holy symbol)

2 **Become the dean of the Corvine Conservatory** (Music; instrument)

3 **Transform into a dragon** (Awe; wings)

4 **Create a new people** (Ideology; banner)

5 **Slay one of the ur-beasts** (Monsters; spear)

6 **Obtain immortality** (Legends; cup)

7 **Sail beyond the horizon** (Sailing; astrolabe)

8 **Bring war to the hegemon** (Guerilla; sword)

9 **Ascend as a demigod** (Power; staff)

10 **Enter the Vault of Souls** (Death; rattle)

11 **Organize a new commune** (Solidarity; voting-pole)

12 **Be allowed use of a fallen star** (Astral-gazing; hammer)

13 **Establish a new social club** (Logistics; keys)

14 **Fulfill a polemical vow** (Determination; tattoo)

15 **Explore the deep-sea arboretum** (Diving; coral branch)

16 **Requisition rare tomes for a new library** (Bookbinding; catalog)

17 **Have a region design and support a park** (Animals; backpack)

18 **Open a new route across inhospitable terrain** (Engineering; drill)

19 **Go on a world tour** (Culture; brush)

20 **Regicide** (Violence; dagger)

CHARACTER CREATION

Magic and Level

Everything in the world is a bit magical. Every culture has its own scales or view of magic power, but mechanically all is represented by its Level. **Characters start at Level 1**, and grow in power at every successful adventure.

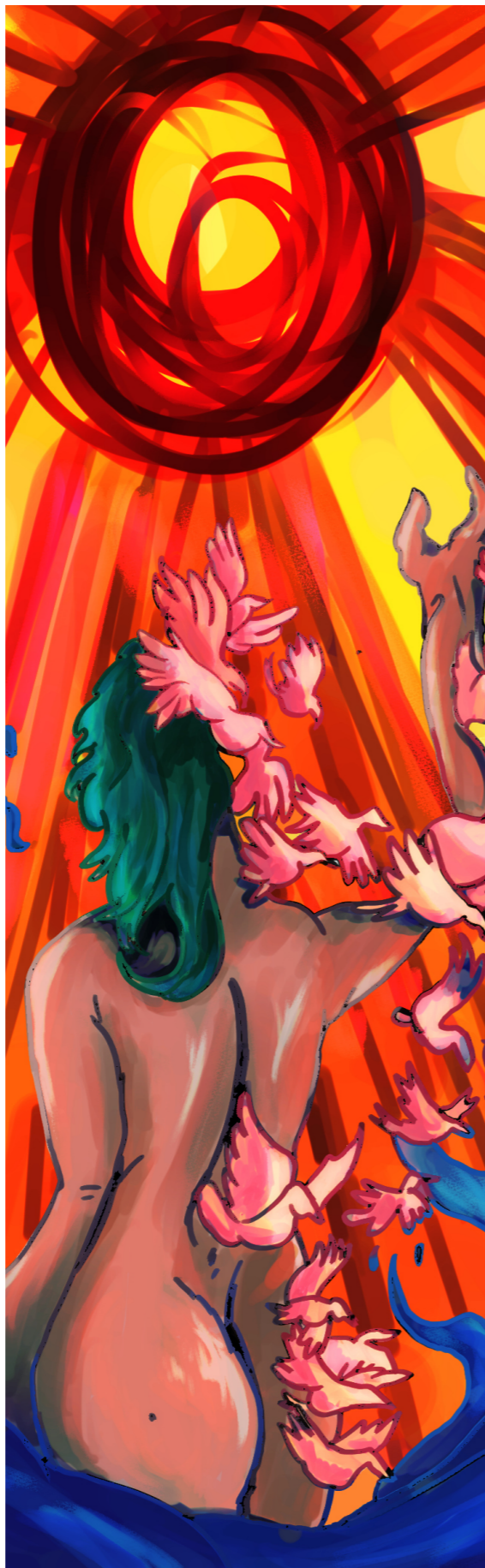
Magic can come forth in many ways. Most are subtle, like small effects, subconscious manipulation or in helpful mundane ways. Every adventurer knows at least one way to channel magical potential as spells, using a thematic focus—or School—to control their power.

Each adventurer has one School, with certain Attainments giving access to additional Schools.

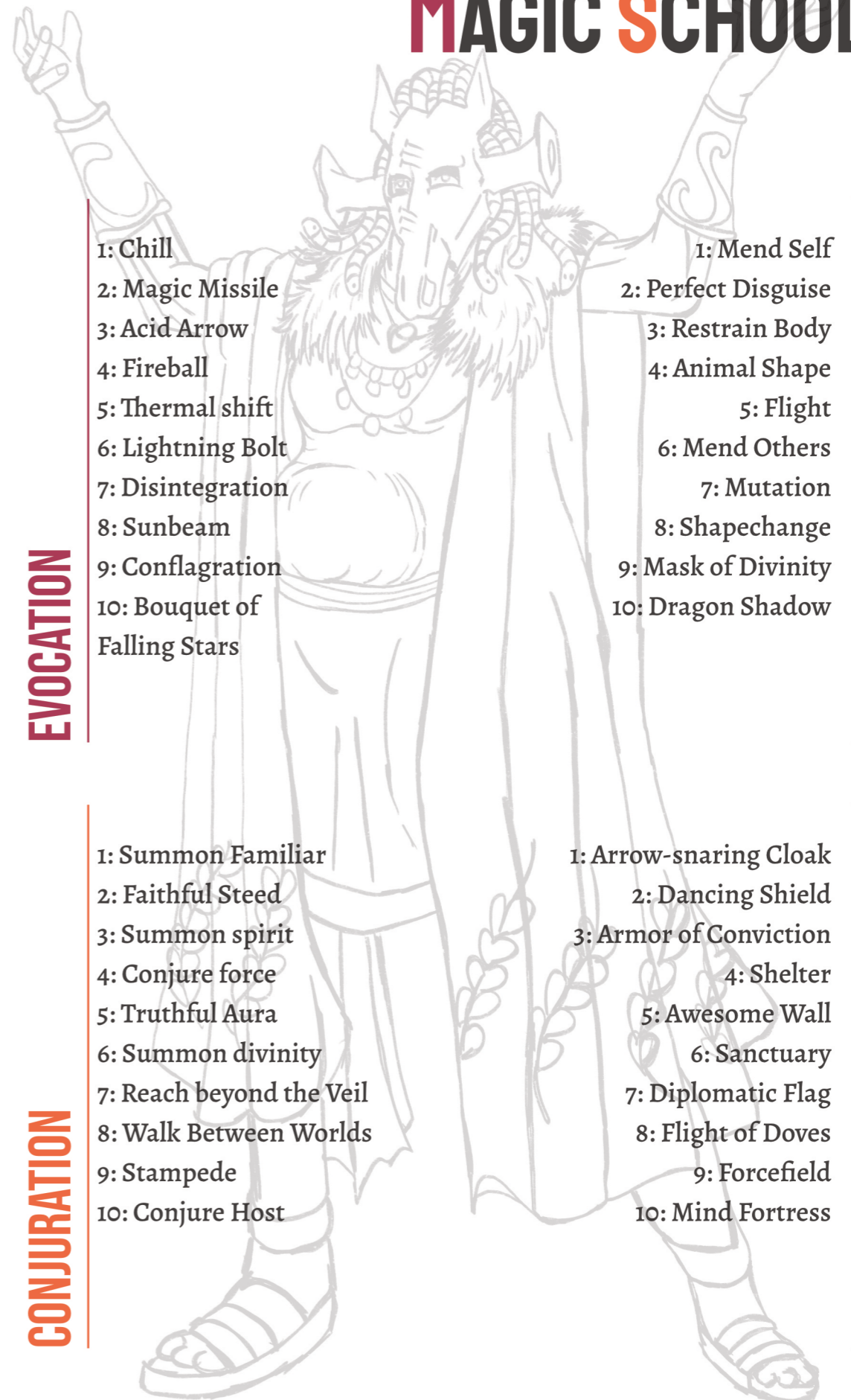
Anyone can cast spells of their Level or lower.

A spell is usually cast as a Challenge roll or as part of one. As the spell caster tampers with fate, **they must roll with the Drama dice when using magic.** Most of the time, a spell has the same Challenge as the level a character unlocked it, but changes in circumstances (preparing a ritual advance, assistance, rare reagents, rushing the casting or stretching what the spell allows) can modify the Challenge.

Feel free to add more Schools and/or Spells of different sources. *Rooted in Trophy* rituals and other heroic fantasy games make good inspiration for Schools



MAGIC SCHOOLS



EVOCATION

- 1: Chill
- 2: Magic Missile
- 3: Acid Arrow
- 4: Fireball
- 5: Thermal shift
- 6: Lightning Bolt
- 7: Disintegration
- 8: Sunbeam
- 9: Conflagration
- 10: Bouquet of Falling Stars

- 1: Mend Self
- 2: Perfect Disguise
- 3: Restrain Body
- 4: Animal Shape
- 5: Flight
- 6: Mend Others
- 7: Mutation
- 8: Shapechange
- 9: Mask of Divinity
- 10: Dragon Shadow

TRANSMUTATION

CONJURATION

- 1: Summon Familiar
- 2: Faithful Steed
- 3: Summon spirit
- 4: Conjure force
- 5: Truthful Aura
- 6: Summon divinity
- 7: Reach beyond the Veil
- 8: Walk Between Worlds
- 9: Stampede
- 10: Conjure Host

- 1: Arrow-snaring Cloak
- 2: Dancing Shield
- 3: Armor of Conviction
- 4: Shelter
- 5: Awesome Wall
- 6: Sanctuary
- 7: Diplomatic Flag
- 8: Flight of Doves
- 9: Forcefield
- 10: Mind Fortress

PROTECTION

MAGIC SCHOOLS

CHARACTER CREATION SUMMARY

FOREST

- 1: Honey Heist
- 2: Clear Path
- 3: Tap Water
- 4: Animal Communion
- 5: Call of Nature
- 6: Primordial Empathy
- 7: Elemental Storm
- 8: Bestow Intellect
- 9: Awake The World
- 10: Power of the Season

TIME

- 1: After-image
- 2: Freeze Wounds
- 3: Haste
- 4: Burden of Time
- 5: Prediction
- 6: Scry Past
- 7: Importune Future Self
- 8: Time-out
- 9: Daily Rewind
- 10: Save Point

SPACE

- 1: Promptly Retreat
- 2: Blink
- 3: Call Object
- 4: Twist Path
- 5: Stretch Space
- 6: Phase Shift
- 7: Everlasting Portal
- 8: Teleport
- 9: Labyrinth
- 10: Create Plane

OCEAN

- 1: Slicing Cut
- 2: Water-walking
- 3: Soaring slice
- 4: Water Darts
- 5: Underwater Movement
- 6: Acid Rain
- 7: Spinning Whirlwind
- 8: Become Water
- 9: Tidal Wave
- 10: Cleansing Deluge

Attainment

Pick an **Attainment**

OR

Create a new Attainment by selecting **two Attributes** and **one Approach**

Ancestry

Select, roll or create an **Ancestry**. This grants you **an additional skill**.

Drive

Select, roll or create a **Drive**. This grants you **an additional skill** and an **Iconic Item**.

Level

Set your Level at 1.

Magic

Select or create one magic **school**. If your Approach allows it, select or create additional schools.



ADVENTURE

ADVENTURE

You can get a **different-colored d20** (the **Drama Die**) if you declare yourself **personally invested on this situation and willing to risk your well-being**. You always must use this dice if you are using magic.

Once you roll dice, check the results on the regular and Drama Dice:

Each 11+ Result is a **Success**.

Each 20 is a **Critical Success**. It counts as 2 successes.

“Adventuring” is a pretty romantic definition of what you do. You run around getting into trouble. When you deal with this trouble or circumvent an obstacle, you **Face Challenge**. If whatever troubles you fights back, you engage in **Combat**. You can improve your odds and add extra spicy drama by engaging in **Hijinks**.

And then you do it again.

This section covers the rules that let you interact with the world of your story.

They are summoned by the conversation and add new interesting topics to it.

If any dice is a 1, a Critical Failure happens. It does not detract from your progress resolution, but **adds a complication that occurs as result of your attempts to overcome the challenge**.

You can always **reroll the Drama Die**, until you are satisfied with the result, unless:

You got a Critical Failure

The Drama Die was the highest result rolled.

Face Challenge

You start by assembling a pool of dice. Describe what you are trying to accomplish and how. Take a d20 for each:

You have at least a skill that applies.

You use your Iconic Item in an useful way.

You spend a Magic Item.

You need several successes to overcome an obstacle: the number required is its **Challenge**. The Ringmaster assigns the obstacle Challenge value, often between 1 and 10 and based on the level of the situation.

Once you obtain the required successes through one or more Face Challenge rolls, **you accomplish what you sought to do**.

The Drama Die demands special attention. **If the Drama Die is the highest die or tied with the highest, increase your Drama by 1**; expect some personal drama to drop on you at the moment it would be most awkward. Bonus points if

You can also get **additional d20 dice** by accepting **Hijinks** from another player or Ringmaster.

it is related to your Drive.

If you get a Critical Success or Failure on the Drama Die, a Twist happens. Resolve

the roll as normal, but something was not quite what it appeared to be. The Ringmaster will introduce dramatic new development.

Face Challenge, 6E Style

When using d6s instead of d20s:

Dice Pool

Add a conventional d6s for each of these:

Having an appropriate skill

Using your Iconic Item

Spending a Magic Item

Accepting a Hijinks

Add a different colored d6 (Drama Die) if you are willing to risk your well-being or using magic.

Successes

You need to get a number of successes determined by the Ringmaster.

Each 4,5,6 is a Success.

Every 6 after the first counts as two successes (Critical Success).

Critical Failure

If you get two or more 1s, there was a Critical Failure. Gain a complication.

Drama Dice

You can reroll the Drama dice as long as it is not the highest result or there is no Critical Failure. Add another Drama Die whenever you reroll them.

Drama

If a Drama die is the highest or tied to the highest result, gain 1 Drama.

Twist

If a Drama Die is a 6 during a Critical Success and/or a 1 during a Critical Failure, a twist happens.

Hijinks

You can ask for Hijinks whenever you Face Challenge. Each player (including the Ringmaster) can make a suggestion. After listening to the whole group, the Ringmaster proposes any number of them for your consideration.

A Hijinks is something that happens during the roll—no matter if you fail, if you succeed or if there is twist or further complications. **A Hijink always happen.** They should never invalidate your success and your progress, but make the situation more interesting. Some suggestions for Hijinks:

Introduce a character.

Share a spotlight with another player character.

Separate someone.

Force a dilemma.

Consume a resource.

Reveal a dramatic truth.

You can refuse, accept, or combine any numbers of Hijinks. If something doesn't quite work for you, you can suggest changes that would make it fun and comfortable.

If a Hijinks affects your character in a way that makes you uncomfortable, you have right of veto over it.

Hijinks, 6E Style

When using d6s instead of d20s:

Hijinks work as in the d20 rules, but the extra dice they grant is a conventional d6 instead.



Combat

Whenever a combat starts, the Ringmaster assembles a dice pool to represent the chaos of the battlefield.

A light-colored d20, laid in front of each player or color-coded. This is the Weak Point of each party member, and what makes them vulnerable.

A dark-colored d20 for each party member. This represents their skill as combatants, and their capacity to overcome their enemies.

Add an additional dark-colored d20 if you know the creature's Weakness.

Roll all assembled dice.

Compare dice against twice the enemy Level plus any modifier the Ringmaster applies to find its Challenge value.

Each enemy has a Level from 1 to 10, determined by the Ringmaster. As such, you will be fighting against 2-20 most of the time.

Use of spells, traps, and preparation may reduce an enemy's Challenge value. Ambushes, complications and allies may increase it.

If two or more dark dice beat the enemy Challenge, they defeat the opposition.

If any dark dice match the number of a light dice, that player suffers an injury or loss that makes them vulnerable; increase their Drama by 1, as their dramatic elements will exploit this opportunity.

If the two highest dark dices results are lower than the monster's Challenge, the opposition has not been defeated.

You have two choices:

Retreat

Continue in the fight.

When you retreat, you must give your Weak Point light die to another player, as they have to cover for you.

Once you determined which combatants have retreated/stayed in the fight, add a dark die and re-roll all the dice. Resolve as before.

Repeat as many times necessary or until everyone in one side of the combat retreats.



Casting Spells in Combat

After the first round, you may retreat, give someone else your Weak Dice and Face Challenge against the spell level.

Combat, 6E Style

When using d6s instead of d20s:

Dice Pool

Give a light-colored d6 to each player. That's their Weak Point.

Add a dark-colored d6 for each player in the fight.

Add a dark-colored d6 if they know the creature's Weakness

Add a dark-colored d6 for each round after the first.

Determine Challenge

A combat has a Challenge value equal to 6+highest Level among the opposition. Reduce or increase it by 1 or 2 depending on tactical disadvantages and advantages.

Resolving a Round

After rolling the dice:

If any dark dice is equal to a character's light dice, they are hit in the Weak Point. They gain 1 Drama.

If the sum of three highest dark dice results equals/beats the Challenge, you win the combat.

If the sum of the three highest dark dice is lower than the Challenge, start a new Round.

Retreat

Give your light-colored to another player.

Start the Next Round

Add a dark-colored dice and reroll all the dice.

Unearthed Lore

Wizards may change schools when they roll a 6 on their Weak Point and when they get a Critical Failure or Success on Face Challenge.

DRAMA



DRAMA

Adventures and quests are nice, but we are here for Drama. Drama is how we get our characters into trouble, allowing them to face the world and grow.

Drama has a value between 1 and 6

Characters always have some Drama going on. It starts at 1.

Whenever a character increases their Drama, the Ringmaster prepares an **immediate setup**. This is how you advertise future badness, collecting information that you can use to escalate Drama.

You do this by asking someone at the table (often the player of the character subjected to Drama) a **leading question**.

Here are some examples:

How do you feel as things seem to go your way?

What tells you that the owner of this place shares your tastes?

Who walks in just in time to witness this moment?

Why do you hesitate before accepting the sword?

Which of you thinks they deserve to be the new captain?

Where were you the last time you saw the banner of the Hegemon?

The ritual needs an additional component. What is it?

Build upon the answers.

Once the player has a pretty good idea of the Drama they are involved in, they give it a **Theme**. Are they dealing with a curse? A nemesis? Escaping their past? Dealing with the consequences of poor dice rolls and even worse choices?

Managing Drama

Adventures are good at throwing themselves into their job to not have to think about their Drama. This never ends well, and that is how we like it.

Losing yourself in other people's troubles is not without **Consequences**.

Once you get to Drama 5, you can get too invested in the current adventure so you don't have deal with your shit. You either get too involved with relevant characters, take unnecessary risks or commit great sacrifices.

Roll a dark d20; if you get 11+, you can take a Consequence to reduce your Drama to 1. You can do this multiple times during any adventure you get to Drama 5.

If you are using d6s, you need a dark d6 under your current Drama after you get to Drama 5. If you do, you can take a Consequence and reduce your Drama to 1.



Consequences

Consequences represent ongoing complications, something that stands between you and your Drive and/or impairs your adventures.

Consequences may make Challenges and Combats more difficult, create complications in the fiction, or escalate the stakes of ongoing Drama.

You can clear Consequences between adventures.

If at any point your character **has six consequences, it is impossible for them to continue the current adventure**: they must retire temporarily and may need to reconsider if their Drive is worth the continuous risks of adventuring.

Players create Consequences for their characters when they succeed at **Managing Drama**.

Example Consequences

Broken Arm
Missing Eye
In Love.
Running From The Law
Indebted to the King
Reluctant Leader
Wolf-cursed
Dragonmold Carrier
Phasing Out of Reality
Mortal Wound
Charmed
Caught in a Lie
Disgraced Reputation
Oathbound
Exhausted
Magic Drain
Disarmed
Seasickness

Escalating Drama

Once a character's Drama gets to 6, their past and future catch up with them. Each new scene during the adventure, the Ringmaster should remind the table that this threat is coming home and cannot be ignored any long. They can do so by:

Remind them what is at stake.

Threaten their Drive.

Present a dilemma.

Reveal a terrifying secret.

Let enemies rejoice in their temporary triumph.

Show the effects of their neglect on the world.



Confront Drama

After an adventure end, a **character with Drama 6 must confront their Drama**. Turn the spotlight towards them and have them be awesome.

Characters can call in any favor, use any tool at their disposal, discharge all magic and techniques they have mastered. After they narrate all they do, decide as a group what it takes for them to accomplish their goal and how well they deal with the Drama.

They contain the threat—for now. The Drama will eventually return, but that is a problem for future you.

The threat has to be engaged directly. Facing it becomes the next Adventure.

The plan is solid but takes time. The character will be too busy to join the next Adventure.

It requires great personal sacrifice. Change your Drive.

The character is no longer willing or able to continue adventure. Retire the character.

The world reacts to the ongoing drama. A major change occurs to the setting.



DOWNTIME

DOWNTIME

Three times per Downtime, each character may:

Remove a Consequence and play out how.

Get a Magic Item from their support network.

Any time not spent questing or adventuring is considered **Downtime**.

Downtime can last one or more sessions, during which you let the game breathe, the plot relax and your player's explore other elements of their character's. It is a time to meet the home and support network of characters, to see them interact with each other without the stress and violence of their occupation.

And sometimes that is when characters face their demons.

After completing an Adventure or Quest, engage in Downtime.

Play any number of scenes as the characters celebrate their successes and prepare for new endeavors. **Then, for each character:**

Resupply

Improve Iconic Item

Level up scene

Magic Items

Magic is ubiquitous but unique in its manifestations, hard to predict even when codified into spells and schools.

Magic Items are particularly rare; Iconic Items are powered by the will and Drive of their wielders, but most objects imbued with magic energies tend to lose their power when left unattended. This means magic tends to be powerful but unreliable.

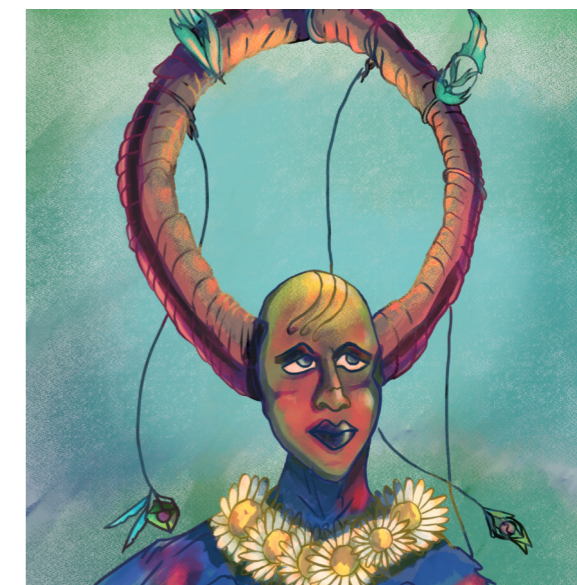
Magic Items are **one-use items** that lose their power after being unleashed. **They can be used to create an effect or as part of a Face Challenge.**

Whenever you want a new Magic Item, Put five dark and five light dice inside a bag. Pull out two dice, roll them and check on the following lists.

Resupply

The game assumes the characters are able to resupply adventuring supplies without major issues. Unless a Consequence would impede so, everyone gets armor and weapons repaired, a pack full of rations and whatever useful trinkets they may want.

More intricate assistance is limited by resources and time.



2 Sanguine Thermometer

Take the temperature of a relationship.

3 Brittle Brick

Crush to undo a mortal work.

4 Ceramic Magpie

Whisper into it a secret that is hidden from the world--until it breaks.

5 Iron Coin

Whatever you offer when offering it may be exchanged by the coin.

6 Split Lens

Find anyone's weakness.

7 Bone Whistle

Summon a powerful spirit.

8 Bean Rattle

Calm the restless.

9 Dark Water Clock

Create a secret hour for those with your blessing.

10 Crystal Fame

Bring fire to those beyond your reach.

11 Limestone Knife

Escape your current dilemma and take control of fate.

12 Bottled Spring

Release an awkward amount of water.

13 Sacred Goose

Dispel all illusions and reveal hidden threats.

14 Oozing Brush

Write a message that refuses erasure.

15 Canned Joy

Create a powerful illusion.

16 Bronze Piston

Prototype an ingenious machine.

17 Stirring Groma

Create a bridge between two locations.

18 Fractal Spire

Protect from a lethal wound.

19 Rocket Boots

Reach the unreachable.

20 Dragon Tears

Shape the environment and command local reality.

21 Velvet Glove

Take whatever you set your heart on.

22 Living String

Restrain or bind the restless.

23 Roaring Flag

Issue an unrefusable challenge.

24 Resonating Tattoo

Bare and amplify the potential of the bearer.

25 Escape Fruit

Say its name aloud to escape this place.

26 Silent Bell

Conjure a ghostly feast of your favorite food.

27 Fencing Stick

Piercing and knocking, you deny a fair fight.

28 Mirrored Locket

Exchange places with someone.

29 Urban snowflake

Melts with the echoing sounds and smells of a crowd.

30 Mutual bracelet

Someone shares what torments and empowers you.

31 Bottled Eclipse

Snuff all light and condemn an area to darkness.

32 Clay Flesh

Mend all wounds and illnesses.

33 Bloodhound Ball

Nobody can elude the tracking skills of this spectral dog.

34 Vengeful Canary

Alarms fail, sentries are distracted and scents subdued, allowing for the perfect ambush.

35 Charmed Cat

This ebony cat will share with you its impossible luck.

36 Personal Stamp

Write someone's name on it .

37 Topographic Marker

Mark a resource or vein and teleport it to a location of your choosing.

38 Ferocious Stapler

whatever it staples together, stays together.

39 Automata Merchant

Get any magic item you need, right now.

40 Magic scroll

Comes with a spell and may cast it.

2 Wishing Cricket

Make a wish, but the cricket demands something in exchange.

3 Drunken Parrot

Release to spread discord and hostility between two groups.

4 Horse Blinders

Hide something from everyone's senses.

5 Moonstone Memory

Record a memory that can be relived by anyone holding the stone.

6 Endless Scroll

Whatever you write in it subtly appears in all printed medium.

7 Dragon Saga

Dragon biographies are too much for mortals, and reading from one can make anything fall asleep.

8 Clear Blood

Bring new life by pouring it over a target.

9 Blue Dust

Consume for a burst of azure arcane power.

10 Royal Flute

Charm a noble or another unjustifiable authority.

11 Weeping Key

Close or open any lock. You can create a lock where there is none, but the key will cry.

12 Still Mirror

Freeze the image reflected within forever.

13 Scorching Sunfire

Release a storm of plasma and light.

14 Sybil Head

Provides an unnervingly accurate prophecy.

15 Stone Egg

Boil to feed a village.

16 Many-Worlds Atlas

Take something from another universe into ours.

17 Pickled Tongue

Project your voice across any distance.

18 Jeweled Beetle

Can perform a single task with eighty eight years of skill.

19 Turtle-Drum

Split earth and water apart.

20 God-puppet

String and wood can still call miracles, as long as you play the part.

21 Misery Chimes

Traps a dream and allows you to visit it.

22 Blooming Worms

These hardworking animals can make a lot of organic matter disappear.

23 Thousand Heresies

The gods look away, which is convenient if you want to hide something from them.

24 Postcard of Adventure Past.

Teleport a group to a location you have been to

25 Golden Cloud

Give you the clout and bearing of a demigod

26 Triton Twin-Tail

Breath and maneuver underwater for a day and night.

27 Spotted Dictionary

Confuse and befuddle those unwilling to listen to you.

28 Grey Letter

Write down a letter to the past.

29 Clockwork Magpie

Steal anything, no matter how immaterial.

30 Antler Box

Open to cover an area in spikes and snares.

31 Deck of Curses

Split the deck to curse the deserving.

32 Shroud of Moths

Fly for the direction of a scene.

33 Earthshaker Foot

Tremors spread from where you stand.

34 Universal catalyzer

Perform any reaction at peak efficiency.

35 Crossed Rulers

Adjust something size up or down 10%.

36 Courier Badge

Gets you invited anywhere.

37 Snowflake Staff

Encase something in eternal ice.

38 Armillary Sphere

Find out when and where crossing will be allowed between this world and another.

39 Catalog of Forbidden Knowledge

Remember out a lost truth that has been purged from living memory.

40 Shining Tablet

Recreate functional simulacra of a ruined location.

2 Philosopher's Skull

Transmute lead into something of great value.

3 Census of True Names

Impose a magical geas/quest upon someone.

4 Fingernail Boat

Expand into a full-sized six persons boat.

5 Tar Ring

Convert a large area of organic matter into highly flammable fuel.

6 Contained disease

Unleash a terrifying pathogen in unpredictable ways.

7 Boardgame Piece

Re-position someone.

8 Curious portrait

Learn the identity of the figure in the portrait.

9 Polished shell

Provide comfortable shelter.

10 Roof tile

Never misses a target.

11 Mortician's Scalpel

Remove or add something from a body, without pain or loss for the target.

12 Red Sand

Crush into a wondrous gem.

13 Nauseous song

Disorient a crowd.

14 Stone trumpet

Give life to inanimate matter.

15 Asphodel flower

Quench all-consuming desire with contentment.

16 Glass Grass

Create a dangerous, vicious terrain.

17 Jade Bullets

Shoot someone into place.

18 Deck of cards

Shuffle to reroll all your dice.

19 Lightbox

Program it to repeat a simple task as long as the box lasts.

20 Pickled Starfish

Confer impossible regeneration and awful taste.

21 Vampire Feather

Grant the vampirism and prowess of a stryx.

22 Chicken Feet

Greatly increase overland travel.

23 Oathbreaker Veil

Become a pariah to allies and friend to enemies until you remove the veil.

24 Scapegoat Skin

Activate to pin your current action on the last person to touch the skin.

25 Blackstone Ichor

Earn the favor of a being beyond reality.

26 Cracked Teacup

Impose a ceasefire.

27 Coal Toaster

Produce ridiculous amounts of smoke.

28 Ruined Notebook

Allows you to change one of your magic schools.

29 Road Sign

Prevents ambushes and stops any traps from triggering.

30 Butterfly Coin

Throw it on salty water to gain the service of a carnivorous giant butterfly.

31 Grass Crown

Provide or receive rescue.

32 Tunneler Mask

Discoverer a structure invading a natural space.

33 Diamond Drill

Create a permanent shortcut.

34 Elegant Worm

See through matter of your choice.

35 Lion's Guile

Disappear into the shadows and remain invisible until sundown.

36 Glass Coffin

Preserve what is deposited within until reopened.

37 Amber Kris

Cut through anything but never break skin.

38 Bunny Slippers

Climb up any walls.

39 Sagacious Jewelry Box

Fuse two magic items within it, with unpredictable consequences.

40 Ebony hairclip

Store your current garb and look, ready anytime you put this on.

Improve Iconic Item

You can sacrifice Magic Items, channeling their energies. These powers are much weaker than the original item's, however, they are attuned to your character's will and thus, long-lasting.

You may do this once per Downtime.

When you sacrifice a Magic Item to feed your Iconic Item, roll a light and a dark die.

If the light is the highest, pick a light feature.

If the dark is the highest, you pick a dark feature.

If you get a tie, the Iconic Item gains a modified ability of the Magic Item sacrifice, created by the Ringmaster. Describe how the Iconic Item has changed to reflect its new abilities.

Light

- 1 Dancing:** the item can act on its own.
- 2 Dusk:** it is a treasure blessed by the Dusk Covenant (or celestial/"good" powers).
- 3 Defensive:** Once per adventure, negate Drama gain.
- 4 Hopeful:** communicate when an ally is in peril.
- 5 Awesome:** can perform a miraculous, impossible feat once per campaign.
- 6 Communal:** once per adventure you can lend it to another, giving them a Hijinks dice without further issues.

Level Up Scene

Once everyone is happy with what they accomplished during their Downtime, players take turns **playing their characters during a special scene.**

They increase their level by 1, and frame a scene where the evolution of their character is put under the spotlight. It can be as developing a relationship with a new character, learning a new technique, having a novel experience or getting an impressive toy that makes them more competent.

Once that is done, everyone is ready to **go back to Adventuring.**

Dark

- 1 Blooded:** bleed yourself and your enemy.
- 2 Phasing:** the item can phase through matter, with odd repercussions.
- 3 Ostentatious:** it inspires awe and draws attention.
- 4 Dawn:** is attuned to the Dawn Pantheon (or infernal/"bad" powers).
- 5 Deflective:** Once per adventure, deny a Drama gain at the expense of someone else.
- 6 Distressing:** Communicate whenever enemies are nearby.



EXAMPLES

EXAMPLES

We assume this book is not your first interaction with the concept of a roleplaying games, that media have imprinted ideas and expectations.

In the previous sections we laid out how to create characters and play the game. In this section we aim to meet you halfway: speak to the expectations on your head, tie them to the rules we described and give you a series of examples that helps you play the type of games you want to play.

Character Creation #1

Sandra wants to make a traditional warrior-thief hero. They pick **Fighter** as their Attainment: this gives their character the **Strength** and **Wisdom** Attributes and the **Weapon Mastery** Approach. They are not sure which Ancestry to pick, so they roll two d20s. Between the two results, they pick **Dwarven Teamster**, which gives them a skill in **Packing**. They decide their **Drive** is to **Recover a lost treasure of their people**, and give themselves skill in **Thievery** and a **broken sword** as their Iconic Item. Finally, they pick **Protection** as their School and set their Level and Drama at 1.

Character Creation #2

Joel is not satisfied with the Attainments; he wants a different take on a religious adventurer. He picks **Intelligence** and **Strength** as their Attributes and **Righteous Smite** as their Approach. He names this new Attainment "**Inquisitor**". He picks **Devoted Agent** as Ancestry, gaining **Spycraft**. For their Drive, he wishes to start a new **mystery cult** devoted to a new aspect of an existing divinity, gaining **Miracles** and a **holy symbol**. For their School they pick **Evocation**.

Character Creation #3

Alex wants to play a more complex take on a ferocious warrior, so creates a new Approach: "**Fanatic Frenzy**", which lets her add their Weak Dice to the results of a combat roll as long as it matched a dark-dice and caused her to gain Drama. For her Attributes, she picks **Strength** and **Constitution** and names this Attainment "**Berserker**". She rolls once for Ancestry and gets **Elven Emissary**, which gives her **Diplomacy**. She rolls for Drive and gets **Create A New People**, which gives her **Ideology** and makes her iconic item a **banner**. For her School, she picks **Transmutation**.

Face Challenge #1

Alex's character has been delayed and harassed by the bureaucrats of the local community (**level 2, petty**), who refuse to acknowledge her travel papers. With a lot of free time in this place, she starts to stir enough popular unrest and cause some trouble. Based on the description of the character's action, the Ringmaster says this benefits from **Diplomacy or Ideology**. Alex explains that she is using the banner during secret meetings, benefiting from her **Iconic Item**. Then, the Ringmaster asks Alex if her character is willing to risk their well-being; because they want to be hurried out of town and not jailed, she refuses. But she is willing to hear some **Hijinks**; the group bounces back and forth some ideas, and the Ringmaster proposes that no matter the outcome, an authority figure will know what Alex's did and will try to pin something on her. Alex is willing to go with that. She gathers a light-die for her skills, another for her Iconic Item and a third light-die for accepting a Hijinks. She rolls a 4, a 6 and 1. **That's two successes, enough to beat a Challenge 2.** The local bailiff escorts Alex's character out of town but discreetly sends some thugs after her...

Face Challenge #2

Joel's character has been kidnapped by the fae, and is trying to escape their enchanted realm (**level 7 region**). He is using both **Intelligence and Spycraft**, and it could be argued Miracles would help. He is willing to risk everything to get away, and sacrifices one of his **Magic Items**, a set of Crossed Rules that allow him to shorten distances. He can't think how the holy symbol, that he has previously established as the pommel of his weapon, could help. He asks for **Hijinks** but finds them too costly. That would be one die for skills, one for Magic Items, and a dark-die Drama die for risking everything: he rolls a 1 and a 2 on the regular dice and 6 on Drama dice. **Far from the seven successes required for a level 7 challenge, Joel will have to continue their challenge.** Under normal circumstances, he would be free to change the fiction and try again, but since their Drama die was the highest, they have to increase Drama by 1. However, the Ringmaster has a proposal for Joel...

Combat #1

Alex's characters makes camp, only to be attacked by two bandits (**level 1, troublemaker**) in the middle of the night. The Ringmaster gives them +1 for their number advantage, +1 for sneaking on Alex. That means Alex needs to beat a 9 with their combat result! Alex only has her Weak Die and a single dark die. She rolls a 4 on the Weak Die and a 5 on the dark side. Alex's character is able to fend off the attackers, exchanging blows and not risking anything. They could try to retreat, but figure that would lead to losing some of her stuff or having to run across the wild in darkness. Sticking to the fight, they add a dark die to their pool. They roll a 2 on their Weak Die, and a 1 and 2 on the dark dice. That's 3, and even with her Fanatical Frenzy, that would only bump the result to a 5. Because her Weak Die matches a dark dice, Alex's character increases her Drama by 1: the Ringmaster asks Alex what terrible truth strikes her as the light

of the campfire reveals the features of one of the attackers. Alex replies that she realizes these are not the bailiff's underlings, but people that have been following her from beyond the sea! The Ringmaster asks if she wants to continue. Alex's drama is pretty high, so she decides to do so. A Face Challenge follows to see what her escape costs her...

Combat #2

Joel and Sandra are fighting a charming satyr (level 5, enchanting music), armed with cold iron soaked in ivy-imbued honey: the fae's weakness. Sandra's character has successfully cast Armor of Conviction, lowering the difficulty of the challenge to 10. Each of them has their own Weak Die, and get two dark dice. They know the opposition's Weakness, so that is one extra die. Joel's Weak Die is a 4; Sandra's Weak Die is a 5. Their Dark Die are 2, 3 and 6! **The sum of the three highest dice is 11, which beats the satyr's 10!** Their preparations paid off and they are able to describe how they deal with the troublesome fae.

Face Challenge #3

Sandra's group has been having some trouble facing a magical-resistant construct (**level 7, titanium body**), so they intend to create a safe place to plot by casting Sanctuary. They give their Weak Die to another player and retreat combat. They put everything in: they use their **Wisdom**, sap the arcane energies from a **magic item**, get the **Drama die** for using magic and ask for **Hijinks**. The group suggests that the fighting and arcane turmoil will cause a cave-in; Sandra accepts. They get 1, 6 and 3 in their light die and 2 on the dark Drama die. **They decide to reroll dark die: they get another dark die and roll them.** A 3 and 4. That's still only two successes; Sandra wants to try to cast the spell faster; they reroll the Drama dice and add a third die. A 4 a 1 and a 1. A Critical Failure! This prevents further rerolls and adds a Complication and a Twist! Still, that's 2 successes, out of the 6 Sandra's

needs. The Ringmaster describes the start of the cave-in, separating Sandra's character from the rest of the team. As they prepare to continue casting the spell, they hear their father's voice coming from the construct...

Managing Drama

Back to Joel's escape from the faerie realm: **he gets 1 Drama, which increases their Drama to 5.** The Ringmaster suggests that falling prey to fae influence would be an interesting **Consequence.** Because Joel does not want to confront their Drama or risk their Drive just yet, they try to Manage Drama. **They roll 1 under 5, so they take a Consequence and reduce their Drama to 1.** Joel describes as his character has to, against his best sense, drink and eat within the fae's domains. Exhaustion eventually gets to his character and he transforms during his slumber. He writes Stag Party as a Consequence.

Consequences

Since this would be Joel's sixth Consequence, Joel has to retreat his character's from the current adventure. He describes as he turns into a majestic stag of purple and green fur and starry eyes. The Ringmaster describes a mysterious archfae, emerging from the darkest woods to claim Joel's stag as their own as payment for the bounty of their domain. It seems it is entirely up to the rest of the group to save him.

Confront Drama

Sandra eventually managed to cast Sanctuary, reunite with the rest of the group and go on a journey between dimensions; **however, their Drama has hit 6** and its theme was family obligations. Their parents want them to abandon their quest, to forsake old cultural treasures and just live a peaceful life in the commune. They call their friends in the Corvine Conservatory, allies among other Travelers and the unique things they saw on their

adventures. After a heartfelt scene, the group decides that Sandra's character will get to them, but not before spending a season with them and **skipping the next Adventure.**



RINGMASTER



RINGMASTER

One of you will be the Ringmaster. You don't make a character like the others; instead, you play everyone else in the world and make sure it is an interesting, rich place worth saving.

Sounds overwhelming. Don't worry. You got this. This is easy. If at any moment you are unsure what to do, remember to:

- Listen to the players.
- Delegate to the tables.
- Take a break.
- Consult the rules.
- Ask more questions.

Everyone eventually strikes their own flow. You will find your own, as long as you focus on your group experience and needs. I will not tell you how to Ringmaster, that is how much confidence I have on you. Instead, I will help you what an overwhelming aspect of being a Ringmaster that aim to organize a long-campaign that mirrors the shows we seek to emulate: **structure**.

Season/Campaign

The traditional way these games are structured is as part of overarching campaigns or seasons; essentially, a season is a grouping of episodic adventures. Play with the structure as you wish, but for learning these games, we suggest:

Plan for five/six Adventures. This is a good number that allow character growth, the achievement of Drives and some

high-stakes Drama.

Have an overarching Theme. Having a well-defined single word theme can help otherwise dissonant episodic adventures come together. It can also help you focus when overwhelmed.

Keep looking for Touchstones. Touchstones are the elements that define your campaign, how you can evoke and play with its theme. Pay attention to your players; if they seem to come back to the same location or people, if they keep talking and asking about something, congratulations: there's your Touchstone.



Example

Our Ringmaster prepares their first campaign. They have a good idea for an adventure based on their players' characters and their backgrounds, so they write it down: "Goblin Mines of Feldelver". They leave the other five adventures empty. They will fill depending how the first one goes.

They consider the Drives of the player characters and settle on a theme: Home. They cannot wait to see which touchstones emerge during play



Episode/Adventure

An adventure is a single, self-contained story or quest. It will probably take between 1-4 sessions of play to get through. We can break an adventure down into the following elements:

Level. These numbers should give you guidelines for the difficulty of enemies and challenges during this adventure. Levels go between 1 to 10 and When in doubt, make the Level equal to the player's.

Summary. The premise of the adventure. A good summary should establish the initial setup as players arrive. A great one should outline what may happen should players not intervene.

Goal. The aim of the quests, why players are here. Most common victims of Twists and Hijinks; do not cling to it.

Cast. Six landmarks, events of characters crucial for the adventure. A name or evocative description is enough.

Reactions. How the adventure strikes back at characters when they fail and/or gain Drama. **Most of these replace Drama gain, unless you don't want it to.**

Example

Back at Goblin Mines of Feldelver, let's establish the summary and Goal.

Summary: A bold commune of goblins has taken mining in the dangerous Feldelver Mountain. Their hard work has helped resettle many refugees escaping the hegemonies, but something is off. Their shipments and requests have stopped and there are rumors of a Hegemon Army in Feldelver.

Goal: Find out what troubles the goblins of Feldelver.

For a starting adventure for new players, our GM sets its difficulty quite low.

Level 1.

For the Cast, our GM has a few ideas, but leaves two slots open for future developments.

Cast: Worker's Council, Erratic Automatam Hegemony Soldiers, Arcane-Captain Amarante

The goblins living in Feldelver and a trio of possible sources of their troubles. Finally, our GM comes up with some Reactions that represent the fickle nature of Feldelver's mines, ruins and spirits.

Reactions: Lost (Whenever you get Drama, you also get separated from the group.); Wild Magic (When you cast a spell, ask players for Hijinks or get Drama).

ADVENTURE SHEET

Summary

A bold commune of goblins has taken to mining in the dangerous Feldelver Mountain. Their hard work has helped resettle many refugees escaping the hegemonies, but something is off. Their shipments and requests have stopped and there are rumors of a Hegemon Army in Feldelver

Goal

Find out what troubles the goblins of Feldelver.

Reactions

Lost. Whenever you get Drama, you also get separated from the group.

Wild Magic. When you cast a spell, ask other players for Hijinks or you get Drama.

Cast

Worker's Council

Cast

Erratic Automata

Cast

Hegemony Soldiers

Cast

Arcane-Captain
Amarante

Cast

Cast

Cast Members

The cast elements of the adventure demand special attention. You don't have to establish most or even any element in advance, and you may write leading questions for players.

Level. In case the cast element has a different level from the adventure's average.

Six traits. Short but evocative, these should help you roleplay, describe and portray those locations. It can be overwhelming; we suggest you draw inspiration how something is perceived by different senses, their inner world, and questions you ponder when looking at that cast element and their role in the adventure. These traits players should learn easily when interacting with this element.

Core Flaw. While other traits may change or be made irrelevant, each element has a core defining element that they cannot overcome; this makes this flaw their weakness, which can be exploited to make challenges and combat easier. Whenever you wonder how a cast element would react to some action, look at this core flaw. Unlike other traits, these are hard to discern. Players should need magic, wit and take risks to learn them.

Reactions. Just like Adventures, Cast elements can have their unique way to react to players actions, specially their Drama and failure.

Example

Our GM leaves most elements vague for now and fill after some input from players, focusing only on Arcane-Captain Amarante. They picture a haughty and ambitious elf wizard.

Level: 2. They think Amarante is likely to be the antagonist of the adventure, and a general pain in the ass.

Traits: Cruel beauty, Sulphur and pine resin, Rough burn scars, Courteous mockery.

While they can see how Amarante looks, performs and smells, they are having problems nailing their motivation. So they write two of the Traits as questions to ask players:

Traits: What marks Amarante's disgrace in the eyes of the Hegemon? Why does Amarante seem to respect you as a peer?

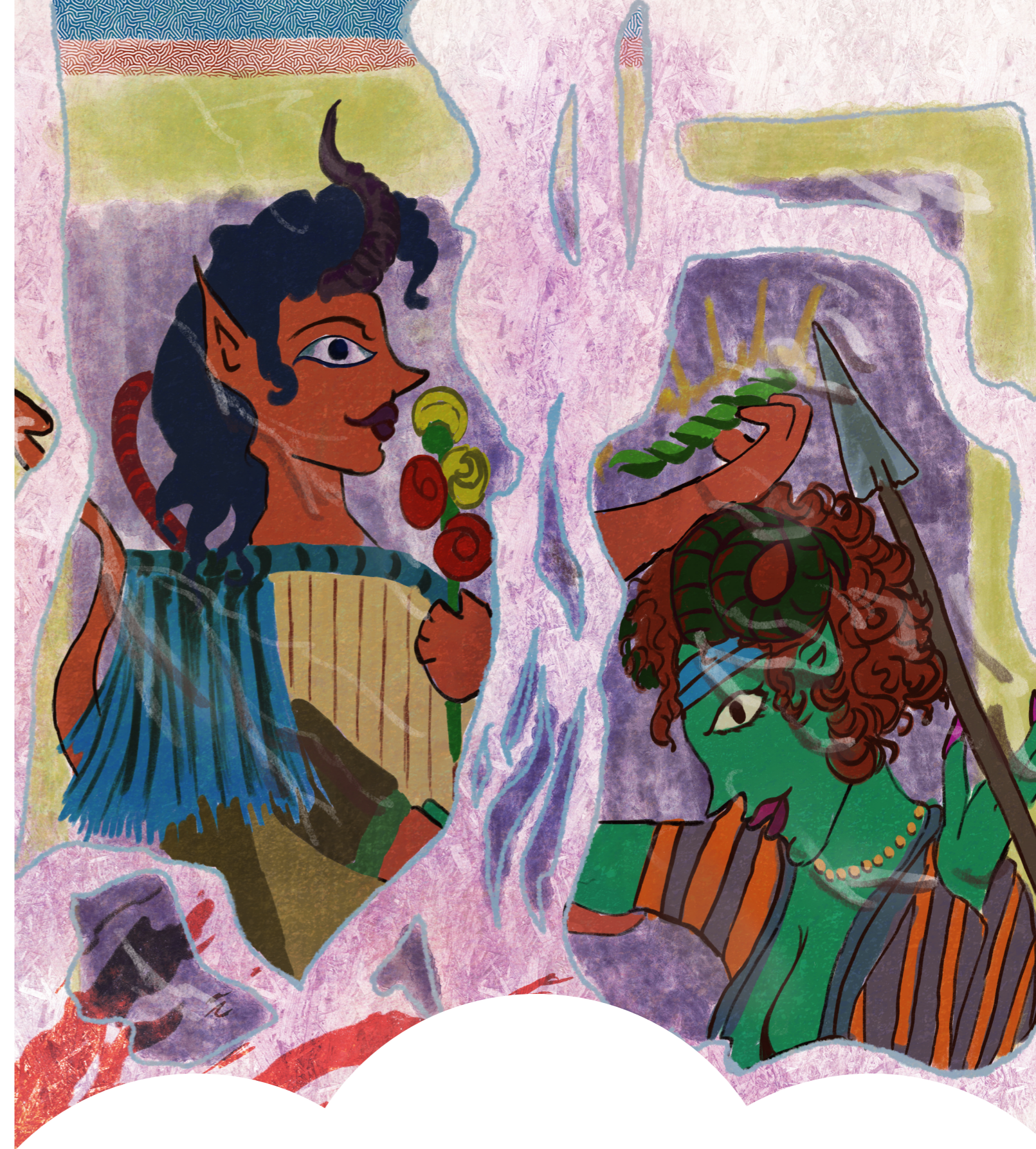
Getting a good feeling of the type of person Amarante is, our GM gives them the following Core Flaw: Hegemon instead of the Hegemon.

It seems Amarante strong opinion of themselves and usurping ambition keeps landing the elf wizard in hot water. Not much of wizardry on this character, so they decide to make those traits into Reactions.

Reactions: Spellsword. Whenever someone gains Drama fighting Amarante, Amarante can cast a spell of their level or lower. Arcane Cunning. If Amarante witnesses someone cast a spell, they may use it later that adventure.

CAST MEMBER SHEET

| | |
|---|--|
| Name <i>Arcane-Captain Amarante</i> | |
| Core Flaw <i>Hegemon instead of the Hegemon</i> | |
| Trait <i>Cruel beauty</i> | Trait <i>Sulphur and pine resin</i> |
| Trait <i>Rough burn scars</i> | Trait <i>Corteous Mockery</i> |
| Trait <i>What marks Amarante's disgrace in the eyes of the Hegemon?</i> | Trait <i>Why does Amarante seem to respect you as a peer? ?</i> |
| Reactions <i>Spellword. Whenever someone gains Drama fighting Amarante, Amarante can cast a spell of their level or lower.</i> <i>Arcane Cunning. If Amarante witnesses someone cast a spell, they may use it later that adventure.</i> | |



ROARING VALLEY

ROARING VALLEY

The Dawn came the world, and its pantheons made them people and their grand empires of awesome achievements in cruelty. Their divine command went unchallenged, until the dragon turned on them and freed the Dusk. The Dusk, the divinities and spirits that did not just build the world, that were the world. Chaos flowed back into the the world, but the Dusk made its Covenant with the people, sheltering them and allowing them to rebuild upon the vanity and hypocrisy of empires. They gave us The Valley, but it is up to all to make it Roar as the hegemony encroaches.

The Roaring Valley is what is commonly called a **setting**. A setting is an aggregate of facts, lore, and shared symbols that unify adventures and even campaigns; or in more straightforward terms, a setting is its own self-contained fictional universe.

An intellectual property, the works of an artist and/or company, they all can be settings. Your favorite show, is at least one setting. The Balance universe of the McElroys is a setting. The continent of Exandria is a setting. Each season of Dice Funk is its own self-contained setting, but part of a greater setting across time and dimensions...

Okay there is more to what makes a setting; ignore everything else: a setting is the game board where you play.

You can play this game on any setting or world you wish, create your own, or just use the scenarios of your favorite shows. We offer the Roaring Valley as a setting for your campaigns, should you wish one designed with new media, streaming and this game system in mind.

Roaring Valley Primer

Most folks live in fortified villages, with a dozen or so towns and cities where the rivers, ancient roads and railways meet.

Everyone has some relationship with magic, a gift from the divinities of the Dusk Covenant.

While the existing communities and known paths are (mostly) safe, one only needs to veer into the woods or mountains to find dangerous ruins, monster dens and rampaging spirits and divinities.

People organize themselves in extended families, communes, social clubs, tribes and guilds. One individual may belong to multiple groups, sharing their time and labor across them; no matter their abilities and effort, they are provided with shelter, healthcare, food and education.

Anything not provided by the local communes is handled by the different merchant guilds, clans and clubs; they often seek rare services and skills, while traveling between communes and offering what individuals may desire.

Sometimes, individuals have goals and desires that go beyond the consumption that communes and merchants can fulfill; these efforts require the goodwill and labor of multiple groups, and there is only one job that can earn one that privilege: adventurer.

Adventurers assemble in groups of like-minded individuals, tackling the tasks not covered by the majority of the people: fending off agents of the hegemony, dealing with rogue divinities, tracking and mapping monster migrations or delving ancient ruins.

PEOPLES OF THE VALLEY

The lineages and heritages that compose most of the inhabitants of The Valley speak to its past and the long shadow it casts.

Elves, dwarves and kin

The gods would miss the potential and chaos, and sought to preserve in a magical people. They embodied change, and the power to enact it through and with their environment; it comes to no surprise that they attuned themselves to powerful arcane energies, becoming a myriad of peoples and cultures. The most prominent ones are the cultural blocks of elves and dwarves. Them and their less common kin share an affinity with magic, an understanding of their environment, near-immortality and maturing from immaterial elfin spirits.

Humans and goblins

Dawn Pantheon theology proclaimed the various human and goblin as servants for nobler people, a disgusting view fitting those monstrous deities. They share a lot of characteristics that made them excellent workers: short lives, diversity, adaptability and strong bonds of community and love. While some state hyperbolically that The Valley was build by humans and goblins, that betrays the one unifying trait of these heterogenous peoples: their capacity for impossible charity, working entire lives to leave wonders and knowledge for those that will come after them.

Courtly Folk

While the Dusk Covenant protects The Valley from meddling from the faeries, they do not deter those mortals that seek them willingly. Those bittersweet encounters gave us no shortage of tragedies and comedies, but left its imprint on the cultures of the Roar. Generations of children-simulacra, fey migrants and those contract and spell-bound gave birth to its own culture: the courtly folk. Despise being a disproportionately small group, they have carved their own niche in The Valley. They focus in promises and contracts, curses and blessings, and more important, on the treatment of criminals and their rehabilitation.

Star folks

It may seem out of character for the Dawn Pantheon, but the last people they wanted in their world was one of true, boundless love; people that could explore beyond the veil of this world, capable of seeing love in being that even chaos was foreign to. No wonder many theologians argue this act of creation was the Dawn's sole concession to the Dusk. Most star folks never returned, still wandering... beyond. Some have come and introduced unique lineages, the two most successful being the Taminorel clan and the Dawned. The Taminorel have found boundless spirits of raw potential and strong emotions and gave them masks—and their flesh. Returning to the world with these demons, Taminorel built a mighty empire that challenged the gods themselves; some blame these demon-touched starfolk for the end of the Dawn era, while some thank them for the same. The Dawned are descended from star folk that loved even the distant Dawn pantheon, bringing their light into this world; people from The Valley struggle with their prejudice against them.

CANTONS OF THE ROAR

The loose federation of communes, social clubs and tribes of The Valley roughly divine themselves in six cantons. Each has its seat of power, which handles decisions that affect all and organize defense and diplomacy, and crisis response. While most people go through their whole life without interacting with the canton system, they are essential for the life of adventurers. Each canton has a half-dozen major settlements.

Bull

The biggest canton, Bull borders all others. More people live here than anywhere else, organizing themselves in countless different ways, preserving old cultures and creating new ones. Perhaps the most striking element of the Bull is the role magic and the Dusk Covenant plays. Sanctuaries simple and grandiose honor the Divine Workers, the Divine Means, and the ways they cooperate with mortals to stave off exploitation and suffering.

Oleria is more a temple complex than a city. It is a major center for festivals, for miracles and the meeting of people that miss each other. If you have a large, unreasonable demand your social groups cannot sustain, you come to Oleria to plead your case. Most adventurers start their careers in this sacred place.

Boar

Boar is a deliberately untouched canton. With more complex production acting elsewhere, the peoples of Boar are focused in harmonizing their lives with the ancient beasts of the world—and taking their hard-learned lessons

everywhere they go. Boar is also a place fitting for those that value privacy and solitude in a society of communal living; it is easy to lose yourself in its hills and forests, while still being supported by Boar's inhabitants.

Lurius is a city of games and competition. If you are proud of your skills, you are expected to test them in some ways on the many arenas, taverns and game rooms at some point on your life or nobody will take you seriously. A strange tourism industry has boomed, as beings and peoples beyond the Roar smuggle themselves into the Boar to witness and take part on these competitions.



Eagle

The fallen canton, Eagle proves that even all the accomplishments of the Roar are fragile and fallible. Hegemony forces took over most of Eagle, and a new generation has been born and raised knowing only this. Some secluded communes and resistance groups still live on, even after the canton has been cut off from the rest of The Valley.

In-fighting between hegemony has led them to abandon Eagle and created an opportunity for communards. The **Garden** was founded recently, a cell of freedom fighters, supported by the occasional adventurer that breaks into Eagle. Unfortunately, if the rumors are to be believed, the people of Eagle have been poisoned by hegemonic realism and may be dangerous allies.

Crow

The Crow canton is the gateway to the outside world, where the ambitions of hegemony are crushed over and over again. Voluntary forces occupy ancient fortresses on its many mountain passes, pirate fleets sail from its rich-delta and cunning diplomats and courtiers play enemy agents against each other.

Perch, home of the Corvine Conservatory and one of the major ports, is the seat of Crow administration. It is a town of tricksters and strange covenants, dedicated to the tenets of The Valley as the rest of the Roar.

Phoenix

No canton has inherited the most than Phoenix. Ancient and new infrastructure permeates most of the canton, and its maintenance is the main priority for the peoples that inhabit it. The beating heart of the Phoenix proves that there's another way, that all needs can be met with will and flowing work.



Taminoa is the center of the canton, and the closest thing The Roar's "capital". Massive parks and reserves flank extensive libraries and academies, with its center dominated by towering star folk ruins. Ferries and rails stretch in every direction, connecting every part of the Roar together.

Goat

Chaos never left this canton, and is a source of wonder and danger. The communities that inhabit Goat are rugged and curious, cataloguing the powerful spirits and magics that seem to erupt and how to harness them to improve lives.

Regem is a city on wheels, moving to accommodate the ever-shifting environment and as the building of new infrastructure demands. The tents of Regem are filled with shouting, as people present evidence and discoveries, as Goat reveals more secrets and continues to defy easy explanations

HOMEGROWN MYSTERY

Want an adventure to kick off a game? Or you just want an example of what an adventure in **Ruby Radiance** is like? This is it.

Summary

A local merchant has been murdered while visiting a remote settlement in the Boar. A detective is summoned to investigate the matter in what everyone assumes to be a political powder-keg. Surprisingly, concordance still rules between the local communities, its members anxious but supportive. After figuring out who called the Canton for a detective and the bizarre circumstance behind the murder, they set out to investigate emerging cults and its malicious rivals.

Setup

This adventure would make an excellent starting quest, for new adventurers just beginning to pursue their Drive and without too much of personal Drama. Let players introduce their characters, their feelings and preparations when learning they will begin their adventuring career pursuing a murderer. Use leading questions to give them space for an expanded characterization.

Which neatly packed memento you bring from home?

What is your favorite place in the world, which you visit one last time?

Why do you fear for what may happen while you are away?

Which of your social clubs throws you a surprise party?

Who accompanies you to the rail station?

Roaring Law

There are no police force, formal legal codes or institutional enforcement within the Roar. Communities protect themselves from threats to their existence and liberty by communal watches, sacred bands, social clubs and collective armories. These tasks are often the most undesired within a community, often assigned as punishment. These tasks don't carry any expectation of power and remain under the preview of associated communities.

Punishment is carried at the communal level, upon judgment by all communities affected.

Grievous crimes pursuit of criminals and the rehabilitation of those falls under the purview of social clubs of wardens. These wardens are specialists that study forensics, deduction, oratory, sentient culture and psychology; they are a diverse, unusual lot, with different titles conferred by their Canton of membership. Because of their rare skills and general dislike of violence, wardens are often accompanied by adventurers on the field.

In Crow, wardens are called Detectives.

Journey to Lurius (lvl 1)

Player characters must make their way from their home community and/or from Oleria to the Boar's capital of Lurius, where they are expected to join the Detective in charge of the case, brief and depart for their first official quest. Voyage across the InterCanton rail is (mostly) safe but full of opportunities (2d6) to meet other adventurous characters (2d6).



2D6 INTERRAIL OPPORTUNITIES

- 2 A **nature spirit** (lvl 2, phasing, thorny) is causing mischief in the engine room
- 3 Misunderstanding about beds on the sleeping car
- 4 A **member of the Conservatory** (lvl 4, bard) starts an impromptu concert in the lounge car
- 5 Invited for dinner by an adventurous type
- 6 Ended up in possession of lost correspondence.
- 7 Flash-flood disrupts the rails. Stuck for 1d6 hours. Can **help with the repairs** (lvl 3)
- 8 Scheduled maintenance. Spend 1d3 days in Taminoa
- 9 Rail syndicate strike!
- 10 The bar car is closed. Nobody talks about the why
- 11 Another traveler relaxing on the library car is seeking adventurers for a quest
- 12 InterCanton Train Robbery!

2D6 ADVENTURERS

- 2 The ambassador from an hegemon **Vollen** (lvl 3, scheming, spy)
- 3 Magistrate **Joline** (lvl 4, exhausted warden), escorting a prisoner to their exile
- 4 A **squadron of Hawk soldiers** (lvl 2, veterans) looking forward for some R&R
- 5 **Emma** (lvl 2, demon-scholar), on their way to a lecture at Perch
- 6 **Joan and Larisa** (lvl 1, explorers), just married
- 7 A Traveler looking for a new clan **Regaen** (lvl 2, hopeful, scarred)
- 8 Social worker on a way to an organizing crisis, **Alba** (lvl 1, rebellious)
- 9 Crystal engine **AKARRAN** (lvl 5, chipped) that has just finished a quest
- 10 A foreign mercenary **Irkkin** (lvl 3, shady past), trying to hide their confusion at life in the Roar
- 11 A **living spell** (lvl 6, Sanctuary), still trying to figure this sentience thing
- 12 Very nervous **Hul**, (lvl 3, indebted), going home for some Drama

Lurius (lvl 2)

Lurius (lvl 2, holiday, overcrowded) is particularly busy this week, as many local festivals overlap. This is an excellent chance to pull a traditional fantasy trope: carousing and resting on a cramped, noisy tavern. Expect a lot of boasting and toasting as they become the center of the attention. Everyone has questions about what it means to be an adventurer, what Drives them and what are their skills.

This is the city of competition: any pride and confidence in one's abilities will capture the attention of an experienced adventurer, **Noscia Lafarelle** (lvl 3, provocative, crusader). They will tease one or more members of the group, issuing a challenge to them. If they succeed or are good sports, Noscia will gift them one of their Magic Items and wish them good luck on their careers.

Briefing

The next day they have a meeting with a hangover, insomnia and/or Detective **Arden Ardin** (lvl 4, inquisitive, teacher at heart). Ardin was until recently a mute/deaf lecturer at the Corvine Conservatory, but an unlikely series of events resulted in them consulting for a detective. Ardin found they had the stomach, skills and taste for it, leaving the Conservatory to study under various wardens. This is their fourth case solo; nobody wanted to touch it, so they had to get a relatively inexperienced warden all the way from Perch.

They are eager, positive overseer. They will give the party a lot of leeway in how they assist with the investigation. More important, they will handle the boring stuff, leaving the Drama and excitement to their neophyte companions.

The group meets Ardin either at the tavern for breakfast or at the office of the social club responsible for calling the Detective: the Tusk Rangers.

Their contact is **Lucien Borles** (lvl 3, stonemason, archery champion), one of the current Captains. They summoned a warden, and have little to share they did not discuss by letter with Ardin. This conversation is for the player character's benefit.

Tusk Rangers (lvl3)

A social club dedicated to empowering and supporting disaffected youths and other minor troublemakers with weak or no communal ties. They offer a way to safely explore the Boar canton, teaching useful forestry and artisan skills, organizing camping trips and relief efforts for communities victim of nature's whims.

Most of its urban peacekeeping operations are handed are punishment to its more unruly members: night watch, weight and measures inspection, sewage maintenance, rail clean-up and road patrolling. There is a high turnover in its membership: it is very rarely for anyone to be a Ranger for more than a couple of years, learning some skills before being generously rewarded and joining other social club.

The six captains of the Tusk Rangers are assigned by the Lurius commune every year; most of them have at some point served as Rangers and know how hard and fulfilling this occupation can be.

Maddox Bulganin (lvl 6, haggling, scavenging), a merchant of the Boar Trade Syndicate (BTS) has been reported missing three weeks ago by their family and syndicate. He was found to have been murdered in the remote settlement of Nava-zain.

Nava-zain (lvl 2, dispersed homesteads, pristine woodlands) is, like most places in the Roar, a hybrid village supporting a small permanent population and a substantial semi-nomadic one. The settlement is so new that it doesn't even have a commune charter yet.

There are conflicting social clubs that oversee the nascent community: the Legain family, the local Woaden clans, BTS (that commissioned the settlement) and the housing syndicate responsible for laying down infrastructure. The lack of a shared commune has made every warden that Lucien has contacted nervous; Ardin was the only one willing to take the job (if asked later, Ardin will confess that they knew Maddox's husband from the Conservatory and could not imagine the suffering the Bulganin family was going through).

Lucien does not understand who sent the request for a warden: it was an anonymous, magic-imbued letter. It was simple and to the point: Maddox had been found in Nava-zain, he had been killed in a way that couldn't be explained as an accident or natural disaster and they requested an Inquisitor. Lucien is intrigued by that last point: they did not call for a Magistrate or a warden, but by the title given to Bull's wardens. They will show the letter if requested.

Journey to Nava-zain (lvl2)

The Boar is a wild-place, even if it is more predictable than Goat. People spend a lifetime trying to find harmony with its untouched nature. Adventurers, by their own Drive, catch unwanted attention. There is not a rail line anywhere near Nava-zain; it will be a Challenge to get there. Here are some threats that may complicate their journey.

2D6 JOURNEY ENCOUNTERS

- 2 Hegemon knight and their companions (lvl 3, entourage, shiny)
- 3 Infamous assassin (lvl 3, trophy hunter, shadow-mage) hiding between jobs
- 4 A jaded lonely ex-adventurer (lvl 4, hermit, trap master) that wants to keep you away from their hut
- 5 Ravenous Butterfly-Hawks (lvl 2, starving, bird of prey, fearless)
- 6 3-5 Boars (lvl 2, territorial, tough, clever)
- 7 Bandits serving the so called Boar Monarch (lvl 1, tyrannical, not alone)
- 8 Fungal bloom (lvl 1, replicating, possessing-spores) on the look for biomass
- 9 Forest-cleanup construct (lvl 2, out-of-control, big spinning saw)
- 10 Non-sentient Woaden blues (lvl 2, plant, predator, ghost of intellect)
- 11 Fae courtiers (lvl 3, bickering), taking their disagreements outside and ready to have a duel
- 12 Boar Monarch (lvl 4, robber baron, proud, regal ambitions)

NAVA-ZAIN

Nava-zain (lvl 2)

The newest settlement of Boar, Nava-zain has still to develop its own identity. Its cohesion is a mystery for outsiders.

Overview

Four decades ago, when Woaden and Boar comunards found each other, they started a strange but profitable partnership. The BTS always supported itself from exporting rare woods, dyes and magical reagents; Woaden were quite eager to carefully cultivate those among their non-sentient kin in exchange for services from other cantons. As the relationship grew, BTS coordinated the building of more permanent communities. Nava-zain is the latest and most ambitious.

Boar Trading Syndicate

Before Lurius, before even Boar was its own canton, the dispersed peoples living in this region depended on a disorganized group of merchant-logisticians.

These essential workers eventually coalesced into their own guild, the Boar Trading Syndicate, or BTS for short. For most of its history, BTS was compensated with the means to perpetuate itself, its workforce and its operations. This changed around fifteen years ago, with internal and external analysts concluding the organization had reached critical expansion mass.

BTS is undergoing a process of devolution: it is being compensated on new Boar infrastructure. Settlements, smaller redundant social clubs and guilds, self-sustainable communities, etc.

Nava-zain

Summary: New settlement in the primal woods, shared between different peoples and divided among two mystery cults.

Goal: Solve the mystery of Maddox Bulganin's death.

Reaction: Unsafe Construction Sites

When someone increases Drama, you may instead threaten them with a construction accident.

Reaction: Primal Whispers

When someone increases Drama, you may reveal to them a unique wonder from the Boar wilds and a terrible secret.

Cast:

BTS Trading Post and Allyson Jur (lvl 1, bored trader)

Azure Mustard Woaden clan (lvl 3, sowing, computing)

Pulpy Cerulean Woaden clan (lvl 2, anxious, waiting for developments)

Ingagar Traveler tribe (lvl 4, fishing, awkward party)

Legain family (lvl 2, local innkeepers, barely holding together, pessimistic)

Garden House syndicate (lvl 4, tired veterans, construction stopped)

Kaba (lvl 3, sentient agrarian hauler, local wizard and sage)

Demon Jkerik'en (lvl 3, worship deprived, miraculous, murder weapon)

Guild members look forward for the future; they know some of them will live to see a Boar that no longer needs them.

There is a single permanent member in Nava-zain, the unenthusiastic Allyson Jur. They keep inventory and safeguard the keys to the communal stores.

Woaden Clans

People always told tales about the blue-stained predatory plants of the Roar, and how they ruled over swaths of primordial forest, fulfilling the desires of some vast intellect. Only a few generations ago have Roar comunards realized that not only are the Woaden intelligent, some of them possess sentience. They been invited to join the Covenant, even if neither side really knows what that entitles.

Less than 1% of the Woaden biomass has some degree of sentience. Only a minority of that have more than a fleeting illusion of self and conscience. Unburdened by such delusions of neuronal grandeur, most of Woaden plants process complex magic and organic processes; a Woaden cabbage-patch can solve complex problems faster than all the sages of the Conservatory working in tandem. The question is why would they bother.

Sentient Woaden organize themselves in clans, united by genetics and/or purpose. They are amused and terrified that there are entire species tormented by sentience and work hard to ease this burden and understand this trial together. Woaden take care of their unconcerned kin, growing rare matter to support their comunard conscience-siblings. Two clans live around Nava-zain and will join the nascent community.

The **Azure Mustard** clan is horrified by the potential for discord and harm between the peoples of the Roar, and have vowed to offer as much of their wisdom as possible. They made the propose of planting of two Woaden "cabbage patches" servers to assist the governance of Nava-zain. They are pretty

much traditional Woaden clan, as much as that is a thing.

The **Pulpy Cerulean** clan is a heterodox one, united by the belief that the world is essentially beautiful, and those burdened with self and conscience have a duty to seek and cherish beauty, empower themselves as individuals and stand against cruelty. They are always seeking works of art from beyond the Boar and are very proactive in learning about other cultures. Their positive outlook is not the only thing that separates them from other Woaden. Whatever makes them sentient seems to abhor flowering, so most sentient Woaden develop no sexual organs. That is not the case for Pulpy Cerulean: stockier and short-lived, they seem to grow extravagantly perfumed and colored bundles of flowers, customizing their sex for personal expression; they got the concept of genders from comunards and have embraced it with the same passion they embrace everything else.

Travelers

Supply and trade routs outside of the rail lines and navigable rivers is a cyclopean task; places like Nava-zain would not even exist if not for the civic and social services provided by semi-nomadic Traveler tribes. Multiple tribes have contributed labor for Woaden-BTS trade and for the inception of Nava-zain; it came to no surprise that the semi-permanent shelter facilities, running water and heating was the first infrastructure to be assembled.

While most of the year their wagons and tents cover half of the communal area, many Travelers are visiting the Lurius' region as part of its seasonal festivals. The only tribe player character's can meet during their stay on Nava-zain is the Ingagar.

The **Ingagar** are fishermen, rotating their stay across different water-bodies in the Boar and Phoenix. Once they have a good haul they seek friendly communes, where they build semi-permanent smokehouses and craft-shops; this is not

one of these times. One of their young ones seeks to become an Adventurer, and they have picked their usual stop at Nava-zain for a farewell party.

They were not expecting to find a murder investigation going on.

Legain Family

The Legain family was started by the union of the members of two Traveler tribes with one of first BTS traders to build a permanent outpost in the region.

The three women built the oldest building of Nava-zain, expanding the initial trading post into a fortified inn. The twenty-six members of the family inhabit the old inn and the six homesteads spread around the central ring.

Farming and hunting became less necessary once the Woaden moved in, and trade has been entirely the domain of BTS. As Nava-zain moves to become a full-fledged commune, the current generation of matriarchs ponders the future of the family. Their homes are going to be protected as personal propriety as long as a member of the family lives on it and they are bound to become a powerful voting block during the decisive years of the village's settlement. However, things are changing: the youngest work in construction, engineering and crafts. What the future holds? Nobody knows.

The **murder has shaken the Legain family**. They see this as an unwanted form of change, and they fear that other hardships will strike them.

Garden House

Yes, these people have come all the way from hegemon-occupied Hawk to build Nava-zain. This unusual syndicate started with the building boom across the Roar to house Hawk's refugees, favoring members of the fallen Canton. During a particularly odd time of time they were even the core of the

commune-in-exile, arranging the efforts to infiltrate and liberate Garden. They became a housing syndicate when it came to rebuild Garden, compensating various social clubs for their support by helping them establish fledgling chapters in Hawk.

A final transformation has occurred in the recent years: the Garden House syndicate turned to veteran militia members, freedom fighters, and those whose education and training suffered during hegemonic occupation, and provides them with a purpose to build a future and new communities. The many social contracts granted to BTS offer an unique opportunity: these people will be empowered and given a part in creating something new. There are way too many workers, more than a village the size of Nava-zain requires; it is the syndicate hope that these people become fulfilled communards and find purpose outside of war.

Others

There are a few people that do not belong to any of the other social clubs, hoping to join the commune or on their way somewhere else. Of particular note are:

Kaba, an old machine that to great sadness to the Woaden found a personality and self, abandoning all good sense by becoming a student of wild magics. They have noticed the weird spiritual energies created by the three mystery cults, but somehow, haven't noticed a murder has happened and there is a detective in town.

The spirit (demon?) Jkerik'en has seized into a lot of the eldritch power gathered by the misguided cult of the Horned Woods. They possessed and rode Maddox Bulganin into town, "dropping" the body when it was too worn to use. It has been trying to convince the cult members with visions and miracles to continue their gatherings, but they are too afraid. Jkerik'en was the murder weapon, and depending how you see Maddox's role, the murderer.

CRIME DRAMA



2D6 OUTSKIRTS ENCOUNTERS

- 2 Hypnotized **cattle** (lvl 1, hive-mind, demon-possessed)
- 3 **Disembodied Soul** (lvl 1, expelled from body, confused)
- 4 **Monkey-rat hybrids** (lvl 2, love smoked fish, two thumbs of thief)
- 5 **Spy-bird** (lvl 3, not from around here, hegemon agent)
- 6 **Bog corpse** (lvl 1, hard as rock, should not be walking)
- 7 **Glitching Cabbage Patch** (lvl 1, ghost in the greens, rampant growth)
- 8 **Echoing spell** (lvl 2, not alive, raw energy, purposeless)
- 9 More **boars** (lvl 2, territorial, have no chill, too many)
- 10 **Floral spirit** (lvl 2, demands sacrifices, deserves beauty)
- 11 A **stryx** (lvl 3, vampire, giant owl)
- 12 Active **fae ring** (lvl 4, pissed off fae, wild magic)

Look, the people of Nava-zain are nervous, anxious and did not call for any warden. They want to cooperate, and they are eager to get over this and return to normalcy. But you have any idea how difficult it is to get an adventurer? Here?

Detective Ardina is going to be busy going from meeting to meeting, buttering locals and covering up for all the Drama and Hijinks adventures you cause. Your group can find the following clues by asking people around or after being tricked into doing quests for them. Use the table on this page for ideas for short adventures or complications that may rise during the investigation.

While this information is helpful, it is non-essential. We can find core clues to solve the mystery on their respective sections: **who sent the letter to the Tusk Rangers, the existence of the mystery cults, the demon-summoning.**

If at any point players are stuck, **use Detective Ardina**. They will want to debrief with the party every day, know what they learned and formulate a hypothesis. They even have a clue they don't know about.

Maddox was not a regular visitor to Nava-zain. They only visited when the BTS needed someone to handle unique artifacts. Last time was three months away.

A working crew found the corpse, while performing scheduled maintenance on the cooling cellars under the BTS warehouse.

Alysson Jur and Maddox were the only people with keys to the place. It would take a master thief to break in. Alysson Jur knew when the crew would come and would have had plenty of time to move the body.

Alysson Jur used a rare memory crystal to record the crime scene. Magical experts or Kaba can use craft a ritual to project a perfect recreation.

A quick analysis of the crime scene reveals that Maddox's corpse had all the keys on his ring. The body seems to have wasted away, and not because of decomposition. Limbs lay as if bones were broken and never set, skin stretched over lean flesh. The skin was full of marks, hinting at lesions and bruises before and after dead.

There are no signs of struggle, any form of binding or restraints, tracks or footprints. It is almost as if Maddox died somewhere else, opened the door, walked in and just dropped. (Which is exactly what happened).

An ewe wrecked the enclosures of a nearby pasture, a few nights before they found the body. It has been seen once or twice, glaring at people before running into the wild. It looked almost possessed by something (it was).

Asking the Legain family about Maddox let's players know that Maddox married a second-cousin of the Legain. The husband, Emil Bulganin, left to the Corvine Conservatory and never returned to the Boar, deciding to settle down and marry Maddox and into the Bulganin family. The Legain family will also remark that young Emil was pretty close to Floribella Holypaw. Floribella, of course, is the person who sent the letter and is a member of two of the three mystery cults.

At any mention of magical or supernatural involvement, or the name of Emil Bulganin, Detective Ardina will inform the players that Emil is one of the prime scholars of the controversial categorization of entities as spirits or demons. The positions of his spouse, Maddox, assured they had an extensive personal collection of alleged demonic artifacts.

Any substantial amount of time studying the woods nearby or the limits of the future village will reveal that groups of people keep coming in and out of the woods at odd times. These people are members of the mystery cult, tending to their spiritual needs during these testing times.

Woaden seedlings have been computing nonsense (this is because of demonic influence).

Anyone sensing or studying magic will find the subdued energies of the mystery cult's rituals. The locals will dismiss it as the weirdness of a fae ring (the thing they use to scare outsiders away from the Sapphire Grove). Long study will reveal it cannot be fae magic: too serene but disrupted by blood-soaked malice.

The Warden's Letter

Floribella Holypaw (lvl 3, warlock, high femme, flowery Woaden) is a student of Dusk Covenant theology that divides their days between Nava-zain and Oleria. They have joined the mystery cults of Eternal-Song and Horned Woods.

They don't know why Maddox died, but suspect it may have been related to the Horned Woods. Why would they be on Nava-zain if not for that? Consumed by nightmares and visions of regret (actually the influence of the demon Jkerik'en, trying to get Floribella to take leadership of the cult), they sent the letter. They wrote it on the train to Oriela, so the word Inquisitor slipped their mind.

Ironically, Floribella never learned that Maddox was Emil's spouse; their petals will fall if they learn their cult leader was married to their childhood sweetroot. They will lose all chlorophyll when they realize this makes them the **only suspect**.

Mystery Cults

The reason why these peoples have developed such solidarity and harmony without apparent social unity? Well, they have a shared culture: almost everyone in Nava-zain belongs to one of the two mystery cults. Three of them (two now) even belonged to the third.

The two major cults are harmless, beneficial even. They both result from syncretic evolution of Woaden culture, with communal ceremonies happening in the same **Sapphire Grove**, where thousands of Woaden seedlings dream and compute in beds of moist moss. The secrecy of the two mystery cults is to save everyone a lot of awkwardness and trouble; it does not fall neatly within the Covenant, it is an ancient part of sentient and non sentient culture and would cause a lot of troublesome questions to priests and theologians. Better to keep this local.

Both cults celebrate the powerful and serene Woaden intellect as a mean to

commune with the primal woods. The **Silent-Blooming cult** is about overcoming the anxiety of self, losing in feeling the light and sounds of the woods for hours, meditating on an empty mind and undergoing ego-death in special festivities. The **Eternal-Song** is all about cheering conscience, bringing the fruits of it to the unburdened intellects of the Sapphire Grove; cultists share mysteries in song, stories, communal crafting and even ritualized acts of love and conflict.

The third cult is an abnormality, a bone spike jammed into the bountiful soil of the primordial Boreal Boar, the powerful spirit that nurtures most of the canton. The mystery cult of the **Horned Woods** is old, perhaps older than the Dusk Covenant. They seem to appear at the time of great upheaval, spikes emerging from ancient trees and underwater grottoes. Bone demons within promise the power to protect the woods, if only one pays the price, if only one will sacrifice what makes them weak.

Maddox heard about the Blood-Water Grotto from a hermit. Planning to retire as a scholar to spend more time with their husband, Maddox figured that an sociological study on demon cults of the Boar would be a great introduction to the Conservatory. Maddox found a lot of curious and intelligent individuals across their trade meetings, including Floribella and Brendan Harrier (lvl 2, construction worker, sir-no-appearing-in-this-adventure) from Nava-zain. Instead of seeking sanction and support from the Phoenix, the Crow or the Bull, these people were too smart for their own good: they contacted the impossibly old bone demons and got their secrets and power.

While this current incarnation of the Horned Woods got quite adept at controlling and restraining the bone demons, they were not the only spirits sealed within the spikes. Jkerik'en, a marrow imp, managed to ride Maddox and escape outside. Panicked, the merchant/cult leader went deeper into the wilds, fighting to keep Jreik'en from possessing them. They succeeded in life, but eventually died from exhaustion.

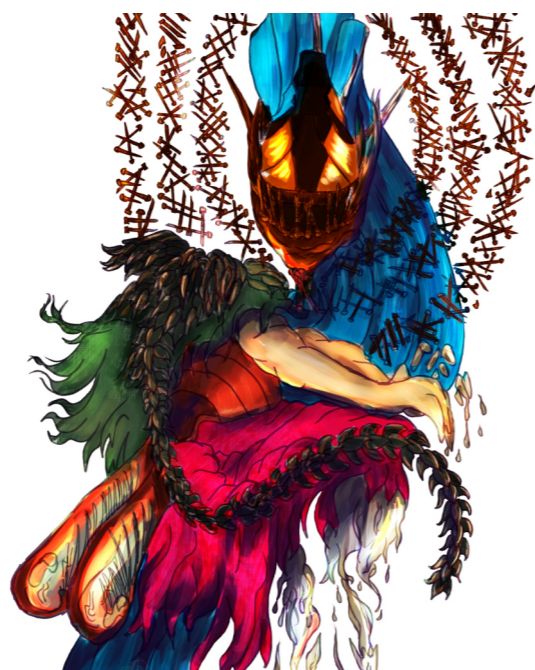
Jreik'en had grown stronger in the knowledge inside Maddox's mind, running around between cult safehouses, destroying or changing the ritual notes and introducing flaws that their kin could exploit. When they went to check on the BTS post in Nava-zain, their time was up: the body no longer viable, the weakened Jkerik'en had to possess something nearby.

Possessing an ewe, Jreik'en spied on the people of Nava-zain and figured out who to target to get the Horned Woods back. Eventually, the sheep body could bear no more; Jkerik'en pulled its spirit towards a new cabbage patch server, where it is currently scattered across a bed of Woaden seedlings. If aware of the investigation, Jkerik'en will try to make Floribella look like the culprit, so the players go away. It is very easy to deal with Jreik'en once they find it: any Woaden can just twist the seedlings, hardening their fused biomass into a calcified spike. The demon, sealed forever.

Case closed?

Once the demon Jkerik'en has been identified, the case is done. It is up for the players to interpret the situation and determine how culpable Floribella (and other cultists) are. Detective Ardina will note that Maddox Bulgarin may have prevented a worst version of the Horned Woods from emerging, but their work was only half-done. They decide this version of the events will bring peace to the family. What to do about the Hollow Woods? They leave that to Nava-zain and the players.

There is still the Blood-Water Grotto and its demonic bony spike. Perhaps someone should do something about that; Floribella's assistance will give Weakness in any combat with any of the demon within. The bone spike is a terrifying construct with a nasty arsenal of magic (lvl 5, reaction: momentary possession, near indestructible, demon sorcery), and it is far from the only challenge within.



2D6 BLOOD-WATER GROTTO

- 2 **Howling steam** (lvl 3, obscuring, despairing, steaming hot)
- 3 **Osteo blast** (lvl 4, deadly trap, concussion force)
- 4 **Blood-flooded section** (lvl 3, creepy, wet, no air)
- 5 **Shard storm** (lvl 3, senses living, high speed projectile, too many)
- 6 **Skeleton gang** (lvl 2, determined, not a brain among them)
- 7 **Bone demon** (lvl 3, ethereal, teleporting, bone weapons)
- 8 **Ground Ribs** (lvl 4, sharp, piercing, can reach places)
- 9 Returning **cultist** (lvl 2, wrong place, wrong time)
- 10 **Decoy bone spike** (lvl 2, illusion magic, feels too easy)
- 11 Bonetouched **warlock** (lvl 4, mercurial, almost unlimited power)
- 12 **Marrow Imp** (lvl 1, possessive, undetectable, disturbing)



WHAT NOW?

So, you tried this game and you decided you actually like this hobby. Great, always happy to welcome new people. You can stick around, and honestly, if there is interest on this game I would love nothing more than expand the Roaring Valley and made even design whole campaigns for this game. But more important, I would love to hear about your games.

The best way to become better a player or games facilitator is to try new games. These are some games that I have compiled, based on different genres, ease of play and the novel experiences they teach. I'm not recommending that certain game; we know you know of it.

[Trophy \(Dark and Gold\)](#): Trophy, the original progenitor of the Rooted in Trophy engine, offers a quite different experience than this game with similar mechanics. Dark and Gold are games about despairing people, braving a cursed forest and ruins for their very survival or as a last-ditch attempt to fulfill their goals. If you want horror, deadly experiences, and gritty fantasy you will want to check these games.

[Fellowship](#): A prime example of a fantasy game, with emphasis on community and grand heroics. You do not just play a dwarf or giant but THE dwarf or THE giant, a champion of your people. The original game was about facing a terrifying Overlord, but two variants of the game have been released: one centered about exploring a vast world of people in need and mysterious wonders, another about rebelling against a world where the Dark Lord won.

[The King is Dead](#): An easy to learn game that gets all that A Game Of Thrones energy. The King is dead, and warrior princes and princesses of five great houses vie for control of the throne. Easy

to learn and easy to teach, it explores character interactions through a series of unique mini-games.

[Bleak Spirit](#) and [Shadow of the Demon Lord](#): Want to bring some Dark Souls experience to your role-playing stories? These games are for you. Bleak Spirit focuses on emulating the atmosphere and grim decaying tone of Souls-like games, allowing everyone at the table to be surprised as they try to understand their character and the world through loose pieces of lore. Shadow of the Demon Lord focuses in giving an experience more similar to playing Dark Souls, focusing in system mastery, learning how to predict mechanics and attacks and a nasty, brooding, doomed world.

[Numenera](#): Want to play fantasy but with the power of memes? Play in a future so distant, everything is basically magic. With a solid system, easy to learn, and with plenty of supported products to expand your game.

[For the Queen](#): The best way you can spread your newfound love for roleplaying games. A brilliant story game about a queen traveling with their beloved companions, players take turns asking questions to each other, learning their relationship with the queen and each other.

[Masks](#): One of most accessible superhero games, Masks does a great job emulating the stories about young heroes. With its clever systems, it allows you play exactly the story you want to tell, allowing your character to learn their place in the team, in the city, and clash against the expectations of adults. It delivers on drama, adventure and awesome action.

[The Quiet Year](#): One of the most unique story games, you play a post-apocalyptic community, rebuilding during a year of relative peace. You take turns through the seasons, establishing mysteries and characters, slowly building up projects. What will you build together? And what will survive past Winter?

[Dread](#): One of the most ingenious horror games ever, Dread conjures the tension and thriller of the genre into a physical object: a tower of wooden blocks. Each pull makes things harder, and if the tower falls, your character is doomed—to death or worse. A must try and an easy game to introduce new players!

[Fate/FAE](#): Fate Core and Fate Accelerated are powerful narrative systems that allow a lot of versatility while using the same ruleset. You can find a decade of resources, with tools how to implement any genre or world in this ruleset. A great game to practice building your own games and worlds.

[Apocalypse World](#): The ultimate post-apocalypse game, this is the Mad Max Fury Road of role-playing games. Even if post-apocalypse is not your thing, it spawned an entire new lineage of games. Perhaps you want the drama of teenage monsters of Monsterhearts? Or you prefer to go monster hunting and mystery solving with Monster of the Week? There is for sure a Powered by the Apocalypse game out there for you.

[Blades in the Dark](#): Another dying fantasy world, this one is more Bloodborne, Dishonored, and Thief. Play a crew of thieves, doing daring jobs in a sunless world. You cannot really win, but damn if you are not going to get away with as much cash as you possible before your enemies and traumas catch up with you.

[Sunset Kills](#): Relive the best hits of urban fantasy through 90s and 00s television with a clever take on Powered by Apocalypse. Want some Buffy, Charmed, Torchwood or Supernatural action and accessible rules? This one is for you.

[Zombie World](#): More of a boardgame than a traditional roleplaying games, this game gives you an easy to learn and assemble apocalypse-in-the-box. Not the most drama-focused game, it still offers a good roleplaying experience for beginners.

[Good Society](#): An extraordinary game, this Jane Austen RPG offers something

for players of all level of experience. The game has a lot of replayability, high-value components, and a structure that facilitates flow and good practices. A must-play for lovers of drama and hijinks!

[Dream Askew/Dream Apart](#): These two games offer a lived experience on community and stories about community. Their mechanics focus in negotiation and shared responsibility of characters and the world.

[Fall of Magic](#): Hard to get, but a gorgeous game that is sure to get everyone's attention. Full of roleplaying prompts, highly evocative scroll-map and with an unique tactile experience. Try this game if you have the opportunity!

Ruby Radiance is a game about adventure, hijinks and drama aimed at beginners and players of all levels of skill.

Within you will find all the tools necessary to immerse yourself in the world of roleplaying games.

Play Heroic and Fantastic Heroes on any Quest you can imagine.

Designed to emulate your favorite actual play podcasts and shows.

Simple system that you can play with conventional dice or d20s.

Dynamic combat system.

You will never have to use more than one page of rules.

Drama system helps you hit the narrative and fiction beats you love.

Uses the Rooted in Trophy system and is compatible with most Trophy content.

Play your favorite adventures and modules of popular games with these rules.

Includes a campaign setting and introductory adventure.



RUBY RADIANCE

A GAME BY LUDOVICO ALVES